

OUR VISION:

We envision a future in which countries work together to abolish war, protect our rights and freedoms, and solve the problems facing humanity that no country can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions that will apply the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities.

OUR MISSION:

We are a membership organization working to build political will in the United States to achieve our vision. We do this by educating Americans about our global interdependence, communicating global concerns to public officials, and developing proposals to create, reform and strengthen international institutions such as the United Nations

ROOT CAUSE, CORRECTIVE ACTION

Claude Buettner, President, Minnesota Chapter, CGS

What differentiates CGS from countless other worthwhile organizations that make claims on our time and contributions? It is CGS's emphasis on issues that go beyond the short list of fashionable issues that may have "traction" at a given moment. Our core belief is that the solutions to the root causes of serious global problems that are beyond the ability of individual nations to solve will be found in just and effective international institutions.

Even as our organization's name changed in recent years from World Federalist Association to Citizens for Global Solutions, we have looked forward to progress on the horizon. (It is interesting that the name Citizens for Incremental Solutions wasn't even considered in the sometimes heated name change debate.) Our Vision Statement on every newsletter is a touchstone to help us recalibrate which incremental issues to work on to support our long-term goals to abolish war while protecting our rights and freedoms.

What may have been "good enough" in the way of international institutions in earlier centuries no longer suffices to keep the world on track. Today's youth will live out their lives in a much different setting than that of their parents and grandparents.

The 1988 book, *Planethood*, provides a brilliant explanation of the urgent need to move away from an international free-for-all that keeps all nations permanently on the edge of disaster. Co-authored by Benjamin Ferencz, a Nuremberg war crime trials chief prosecutor, and Ken Keyes, *Planethood* was widely distributed for years by many in the peace movement (see the American Journal of International Law review: <http://www.benferencz.org/books/planrev.html>). The book is easily available for a few dollars on most Internet web sites for used books. I highly recommend it.

Examine the root causes of international insecurity and work on corrective action. The end product may be world federalism in some form; but let's stay focused on the need to find global solutions for global problems, all the major global problems, as they are inter-related and feed on one another (nuclear arms including the 96% controlled by the US and Russia, environmental degradation, overpopulation, and so forth). In this way we position ourselves in a more relevant way by emphasizing the process that will wean us from our archaic tolerance for impending disaster due to might-makes-right thinking.

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM

Free and open to the public.

Where? **Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church,**
511 Groveland Avenue, Minneapolis (at Lyndale & Hennepin) **Park** in church lot.

Thursday, March 20, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

“Developing” and “developed” countries face different challenges and their perspectives are thus frequently at odds. This session will provide an overview of the nature of key problems faced by developing countries and of the historical and geographic contexts in which they arose and it will help us to know what to look for in interpreting international conflict and advocate effective and just solutions. It will raise controversial hypotheses on the relationships between developing and developed countries that have led to conflict and will offer some ideas for solutions.

Presenter: PROFESSOR GAIL HUGHES. Dr. Hughes’ eclectic background includes service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Lesotho and as an Independent Volunteer teaching development studies in Botswana; Ph.D studies at the U. of M. with a specialization in curriculum studies; a year of post-graduate research at the East-West Center in Hawaii; twelve years as a program evaluator with the Minnesota Community College System; teaching interdisciplinary social science and sociology at St. Cloud State University (in part in the Honors Program); and, at present, teaching graduate courses in the School of Education at Capella University. Dr. Hughes is also a Board Member of CGS, Minnesota.

Thursday, April 17, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

BUILDING A WORLD BEYOND WAR

This session will begin with an inspirational videotape produced by Beyond War, an organization based in Eugene, Oregon. The video, which seeks to provide a “road map for citizens,” begins with scenes from Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salam / Oasis of Peace, a village in Israel where Arab and Jewish children go to school together and learn one another’s language and culture and where their parents interact on a daily basis. This sets the stage for exploring three fundamental ideas for the promotion of peace and four complementary strategies for the prevention of war. Open discussion will follow the presentation.

Moderator: POLLY MANN. A writer and poet, a pioneer of the peace movement in Minnesota, and a candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1988, Polly Mann is a co-founder of WAMM (Women Against Military Madness), a charter member of Every Church a Peace Church, and a member of Veterans for Peace. In 1989, she and her WAMM colleague, Marianne Hamilton, were the second recipients of the annual Hawkinson Peace Award; and, in 2003, Ms. Mann also received the Headwaters Award, “honoring a lifetime commitment to social justice.”

Thursday, May 15, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

CUBA, VENEZUELA AND THE BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION

A program description will appear in the next Newsletter of CGS Minnesota. Save the date.

Presenters: Professors August Nimitz and Barbara Kennedy. Dr. Nimitz, an award-winning professor of political science at the University of Minnesota, specializes in ethnic politics, Marxism and political transformations. Dr. Kennedy is a professor of Spanish at Century Community and Technical College and has taught and developed courses in Latin American culture and civics, global studies and women in a global perspective. Both have extensive field experience in the areas to be considered.

THE UN AS ELECTION MONITOR: NEED FOR A GREATER ROLE

Russia has just elected a new president in a political exercise that few outsiders would regard as fair. In December, Kenya, widely seen as one of the beacons of democracy in Africa, held a presidential election that appears to have been rigged and has resulted in widespread violence between ethnic groups that had previously lived together in harmony. And, in February, Pakistan conducted parliamentary elections that were surprisingly fair, despite their being held in an atmosphere of acute tension and their being overseen by the regime of a widely disliked military strong man. How should the international community assess the legitimacy of these and other elections, including our country's own presidential contests of 2000 and 2004? Are there ways by which electoral abuses can be greatly reduced, if not entirely eliminated? And, if so, to what extent can and should the UN be involved? Let's explore this issue.

Fairness and accountability are the hallmarks of good electoral procedures and many democratic states have adhered admirably to those standards. All too often, however, the standards are flouted. Public distrust of governmental agencies overseeing elections is so widespread, in fact, that it is impossible for certain states to make a successful transition from periods of marked political turmoil to parliamentary democratic rule without prior agreement to involve neutral outside observers of the election through which that transition is to be brought about.

A remarkably wide range of inter-governmental and non-governmental agencies has played some role as election observers. Among them are the UN's Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD), OSCE, European Union, Council of Europe, African Union and the Carter Center. The last of these has monitored at least 69 elections in 27 countries since 1989.

Electoral observers are, in the main, ordinary citizens who believe in democracy and wish to see it work to the extent that most pay their own way to where the elections are to be held. Numerous Minnesotans have already done so. Under the auspices of Witness for Peace, for example, two CGS members, Drs. Don Irish and David Harris, were observers of the historic 1990

election in Nicaragua. (Don has prepared a fascinating and highly instructive memoir of that experience.) In compliance with a UN-brokered accord of 1992, former CGS Board member, Wayne Wittman, and a half dozen or so other Minnesotans, have been observers of every election held in El Salvador since 1994. And in 1994 the late Hamline University Professor, Wesley St. John, helped monitor South Africa's first post-apartheid election.

In 2005, the Carter Center, together with the UNEAD, promulgated a *Declaration of Principles and Code of Conduct* that, if followed, would ensure fair elections wherever they are held. A number of NGOs have formally endorsed this document. Citizens for Global Solutions has yet to do so, but should.

In my view, UN-monitored elections (or elections monitored by UN-approved agencies) should now become the norm. The establishment of a ready reserve of trusted and experienced election observers would make this possible. A General Assembly resolution endorsing that position would be a welcome development. Even though such a resolution would be non-binding, it would still face considerable initial opposition, based on considerations of national sovereignty, especially from countries with weak democratic credentials. But, as is made clear by the GA's recent adoption of the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine, sovereignty implies a state's *obligations* to its citizens as well as the *rights* of the rulers to behave as they wish. Thus, I believe that passage is an attainable goal and that it would result in the view that no national election would be certified as legitimate until the UN -- preferably through a reformed Human Rights Council -- rendered a judgment to that effect. States with nothing to hide would come aboard quickly. Others, with some prodding by civil society, would gradually follow suit. And, in time, post-election carnage, such as we have recently witnessed in Kenya and elsewhere could become a thing of the past.

Joe Schwartzberg

If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are to be found in democracy, that will best be attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.

Aristotle

Good habits, and not force, are the pillars of law and justice; and the exercise of justice is the exercise of freedom.

Simón Bolívar

**Join or renew your membership in
Citizens for Global Solutions!**

Whether you wish to become a new member of CGS or to renew,
Please send a check in the appropriate amount to **Citizens for
Global Solutions, P.O. Box 96222, Washington, DC 20090-6222.**
That will automatically make you a member of our local
chapter too. Contributions for the political work of the national
organization (non-deductible) will also be welcome.

**Please enroll me as a member of Citizens for Global
Solutions. My dues are enclosed**

Individual, \$25. Couple, \$30

Additional contribution to national organizations \$_____

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**Dear Minnesota Member of
CGS,**

Although we try to keep our chapter's
expenses to a minimum, our treasury is now
seriously in need of replenishment. One way to
save is on postage. If you would prefer to
receive our Newsletter by e-mail, please let us
know. Just send your e-mail address to our
Secretary, Mary Rose Goetz, at
fcmsg@comcast.net with a request to be put on
the e-mail list and we'll do the rest. Also, if
you'd like to contribute to the educational
work of our chapter, please make a check (tax
deductible) out to the "Citizens for Global
Solutions Educational Fund" and send it to the
national office at the address in the panel to the
left noting that it is to support the work of the
Minnesota Chapter.

Citizens for Global Solutions

(formerly the World Federalist Association)

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The central task of our time is to evolve a new system of world order
based on principles of peace and justice.

Professor Richard Falk