

Coalition forms to oppose Iraqi war

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By DANIEL STURM

Concerned about uncoordinated activities against a war in Iraq, activists in Lansing have formed a coalition to bring some order to local efforts.

The Greater Lansing Network Against War in Iraq, made up of 18 groups, was born a week ago when about 40 people representing religious and social action groups met at the Peace Action Center in East Lansing to discuss coordination and cooperation. The network held its first formal meet Tuesday night at the Central United Methodist Church. One of the organizers, East Lansing resident Kenneth W. Harrow, said many groups realized they were out of touch with others in the area that shared the same interests. "I noticed there's kind of a haphazard anti-war movement. This new network is giving us a better means to communicate with each other."

At the end of October, Harrow, an English professor at MSU, and other faculty, staff, and student activists formed a coalition against the war in Iraq, through an organization of teach-ins, recalling the peace marches against the Vietnam War. "Back then the dimension of the protests were considerably larger," said Harrow, a student in the MSU humanities department at the time. In Harrow's view, the protests proved that people could actually stop a war through peaceful means. As a student he joined a march on Grand River Avenue that led to a three-day university shutdown. Academic units such as the anthropology department took a stance against the war and canceled classes for days.

Harrow said that the new coalition is asking the federal government to avoid war. "These kinds of proposals were made during the time of Vietnam War." A similar proposal was recently made to Michigan State University's Academic Council, Harrow said, and will be debated Nov. 26. But the Associated Students of Michigan State University (the undergraduate student government) recently rejected the proposal, arguing that to take a stance on war was not an academic issue. Michael Perez, a co-founder of the Students for Peace and Justice on campus, said this response does not reflect the mood on campus. Perez is organizing a student teach-in against the war in Iraq at 4:30 p.m. at 146 Giltner Hall. The demonstration is part of a nationwide "Not in Our Name" campaign to oppose the Bush administration's plans for war.

Members of the new network are: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Shalom Center for Peace; Cristo Rey Church; St. Casimir Catholic Parish; St. Johns Student Parish; Amnesty International; Peace Education Center; Pax Christi Michigan; Pax Christi Lansing; Lansing Peace Vigil Community; Red Cedar Friends Meeting; Greater Lansing Youth for Peace and Justice; Lansing Peace Coalition; the MSU Faculty, Staff, and Student Coalition Against the War in Iraq; Students for Peace and Justice; People for Positive Change; Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing Social Action Committee; and Peace Education Center.

For more information, contact Lea Shelton at the Peace Education Center, (517) 337-8087, or Bob Roth at the Shalom Center for Justice and Peace, 485-9477.

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