

September 21, 2016 Newsletter

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Ongoing Discussion

**The International Day of
Peace
September 21**

**Lions Club Peace Poster
Grand Prize Winner 2015-2016**

**Celebrate the International
Day of Peace at noon with the
rest of the world. Stop for a
moment to give gratitude for
what you are doing and what
you will do next for peace.**

**Questioning the Heart and
Mind**

2016 Presidential Campaign

We invite you to join Beyond War Northwest in bringing important issues to the attention of the American voter and raising the level of the national debate between now and the November 2016 Presidential election. We believe that many candidates are not motivated to think through important questions regarding preventing war because they don't understand that their constituents care.

This list of questions is designed to facilitate deeper thinking by candidates and everyone. **These questions are designed to motivate and create curiosity** about constructive, nonviolent conflict resolution, and about how we might go about building a world beyond war.

Please:

1. share these questions widely in conversations,
2. talk about them with your friends,
3. ask them in town hall meetings with elected officials and candidates and in telephone calls to their aides, and
4. present them to your communities in letters to the editor and opinion editorials.

Please ask these questions only with



"Share Peace" by Yumo Zhu, 12 years old, China

Sponsored by Dalian Gao E Fu Lions Club

Each year, Lions clubs around the world proudly [sponsor the Lions International Peace Poster Contest](#) in local schools and youth groups. This art contest for kids encourages young people worldwide to express their visions of peace. For more than 25 years, millions of children from nearly 100 countries have participated in the contest.

an attitude of goodwill.

Contact us at beyondwarnw.org to report your experiences. Be sure to send us copies of any published letters to the editor, or opinion editorials, including the masthead of the newspaper.

Please note that Beyond War Northwest is working on a self-facilitated study series which will be available in 2017 and will address these questions. Sign up on the Beyond War Northwest web site to receive a newsletter.

[Click here](#) to see the questions.

**Lane County Oregon, home of
Beyond War Northwest has been
preparing to host a refugee
family for months.**

Millions of families worldwide are living as refugees, uprooted by war, persecution or natural disaster. A few of these families are finding a new home in Lane County, thanks to a refugee placement program that is spearheaded by a local community task force and

The theme of the 2016-17 Peace Poster Contest is "**A Celebration of Peace.**" Students, ages 11, 12 or 13 on November 15, are eligible to participate.

**A Survivor's Response to
Terrorism:
7 Billion Acts of Goodness**

We all know where we were on the morning of September 11, 2001, and how the tragedy of that day affected our lives. We also know how the American government, under the Bush administration, reacted by launching military invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq to wage war against the terrorists and the threat of terrorism. And we know that the aftermath of those wars continues to affect our lives, our county, those nations, the Middle East and the entire world.

I had never had the experience before of meeting anyone who had been at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, until last month, when a survivor came to Eugene to speak about his experience, and its aftermath. The speaker, Ram Singal, an engineer, who worked for the World Trade Center, was in his office on the 64th floor, of the second tower, when the first plane hit.

coordinated by Catholic Community Services of Lane County.

Local faith-based groups, service organizations, and concerned community members have joined together to form the Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County. The coalition is working with CCS to welcome and support the refugee families coming to Lane County. Select one of the links below for ways that you can get involved. [Click here](#) to read more (second blog)

Our own Jim Anderson and his wife, Pat, are involved in these good works. Imagine the relief of arriving in our beautiful city and the sadness of feeling unsafe in one's own country. Welcome to Lane County, Oregon. May you receive only love and caring from our community.

Submitted by Anne O'Brien

He described for us what it was like to be on the inside of that tower (which we can all imagine from the outside) trying to lead a group of fearful people to safety. He narrated for us their daunting journey down 64 floors, in almost total darkness, with pipes bursting, electrical wires dangling, and people on the brink of death, all around them. All of this, while not knowing what was really happening, besides the apparent fact that their lives were dangling as precariously as the towers crumbling around them.

Due to his familiarity with the building, Mr. Singal was able to lead the group of survivors to a stairwell, and when it was blocked, to another. And when that one too was blocked, to a third, and final stairway, mercifully not blocked, which allowed them to finally escape the building and then run for their lives, as the second tower fell. It collapse just a few minutes after they emerged from their arduous descent.

Good Reading

***Superpower* by Ian Bremmer**

I've just finished reading *Superpower*, a book by Ian Bremmer which examines three possible scenarios for American defense and foreign policy for the next President. They are Indispensable America, Moneyball America and Independent America. He says he wrote this book as an exercise for himself to consider which of these three plans had the most appeal. Indispensable America is the most costly which closely parallels our current approach and postulates that as the world's only superpower, we need to continue our present policies and perhaps even enlarge upon what we're currently doing.

Moneyball America says we should consider our strategic interests and fund those alliances that only advance our strategic interests. Finally, Independent America is



Ram told us what it was like to be on the inside of the towers. And surprisingly, he also told us what it was like to be inside his mind during the ordeal. He knew the building, yes; but he knew his mind and soul as well. Mr. Singal is a student and teacher of a meditation philosophy called Raja Yoga, as taught by the Brahma Kumaris. Because he had had many years of meditating under his belt, before that tragic day, Ram had the capacity to remain positive and to share his belief with the other survivors that they would all get out alive. He stated to the audience that the main reason he was able to remain positive and was never fearful for his life, is that right away he began to help the others, who were terrified. He was so busy leading them, and reassuring them,

somewhat akin to Moneyball, only it acknowledges that we cannot be all things to all people and that by constructing a more caring and equitable society here at home, we can lead by example and reduce our defense expenditures and use the savings to fund education and medical care and other social needs. He also says that it is time for Japan and Korea and Germany and France and other developed nations of Europe to pay more of their own defense expenditures. He says further that too much allegiance or opposition is paid to the prevailing views of the political party in power, so very little critical thinking is applied to what we should really do as we go forward.

I think it's a book that is long overdue and, as an examination of our defense and foreign policy, it is very worthwhile to consider. My view is that our outsized defense budgets do no one any good and that we definitely need to carefully

and letting them go first, and helping them find another way out, that he did not have time to begin to worry for his own life. In helping others, he did not have time for his own fear.

Mr. Singal also told us about how he managed the aftermath of the event, the trauma that for so many can become PTSD. When he awoke the next day, he felt an intense need to know who the perpetrators were. His need, however, was not focused on looking for someone to blame, but rather on seeking the perpetrators in order to be able to offer them his forgiveness. But at that time, no one knew who had been responsible for the attack. Therefore, because he felt such an acute need to forgive someone, he decided to turn his need to forgive towards himself. He forgave himself for all of his own misdeeds and transgressions that he could remember, and then he had the sudden experience of feeling a great lightness of being and intense joy. He now looked crazy to his fellow survivors and friends at this stage; they insisted that he was in a state of shock. And perhaps they were correct at some level, but Ram's "craziness" did not devolve into mental illness, burning hatred, or acts of revenge. In the

think through what we can and cannot do.

Reviewed by Jim Anderson

Beyond War Northwest is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Oregon, USA. Our Federal EIN is: 20-0912219.

aftermath of September 11, 2001, his crazy "lightness of being and joy of being alive" evolved into a decision that he would now dedicate his life to doing good works for others.

Mr. Singal has created an organization dedicated to that end called 7 Billion Acts of Goodness. The purpose of this organization is to cultivate humanity's inner capacities, i.e. our spiritual capacities, so that we may more readily carry out acts of goodness and kindness towards others. To clarify, the aim is not necessarily to perform 7 billion acts, but rather to teach people how to meet the overwhelming stress, sorrow and violence in the world with a cool head and a warm, open heart. Cultivating such spiritual strengths will empower people to be able to express more goodness in our world until it spreads out exponentially and touches 7 billion hearts. If you would like to carry out acts of goodness in conjunction with millions of others around the world, instead of some of the more typical responses to terror, you can learn more about his project and its philosophy by visiting the website at actsofgoodness.org. And may ripples of goodness and joy wash over you, and pass on their way to the furthest and farthest reaches of every

human heart, all 7 billion of them.

Kara Steffensen

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Beyond War NW
1490 W. 26th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97405

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