

Speakers and Presenters at April Convergence, 2013



Kevin Zeese:

Kevin Zeese, co-director of Its Our Economy, is an attorney who has been a political activist since graduating from George Washington Law School in 1980. He works on peace, economic justice, criminal law reform and reviving American democracy. His twitter is @KBZeese.

He advocates for democratizing the economy as co-director of It's Our Economy and works to oppose to war and shrink the military budget through Come Home America. Zeese co-hosts, Clearing the FOG radio which airs on We Act Radio, 1480 AM. Zeese serves on the steering committees of the Bradley Manning Support Network which advocates for alleged whistle-blower, Bradley Manning, and October2011.org which organized the Occupation of Washington, DC on Freedom Plaza and seeks to end corporatism and militarism.

His recent election integrity work has included challenging the activities of the national Chamber of Commerce through StopTheChamber.org, as well as the activities of Karl Rove's Americans Crossroads as part of AmericanCrossroadsWatch.org and seeking to overturn the Citizen's United decision, including filing complaints against Justice Clarence Thomas, as part of ProtectOurElections.org. Zeese has also led the effort to prosecute Rupert Murdoch of NewsCorp for hacking into private phones and bribing officials.

He has been active in independent and third party political campaigns including for state legislative offices in Maryland, governor of California and U.S. president, where he served as press secretary and spokesperson for Ralph Nader in 2004. He ran for the U.S. Senate in 2006 and was the only person ever nominated by the Green Party, Libertarian Party and Populist Party.

Zeese serves as president of Common Sense for Drug Policy. He is a co-founder of the Drug Policy Foundation, now known as Drug Policy Alliance.



Margaret Flowers:

Dr. Margaret Flowers is a pediatrician from Baltimore who served as congressional fellow for PNHP in 2009-2010. She is on the board of Healthcare-Now and on the coordinating committee of the Maryland Healthcare is a Human Right campaign. She is co-director of ItsOurEconomy.us and co-host of ClearingtheFOGRadio.org. She was a core organizer of the Occupation of Freedom Plaza in Washington, DC.



Rafia Zakari:

Rafia Zakaria is the first Pakistani American woman to serve as a Director for Amnesty International USA, the world's largest human rights organization with over 300,000 members in the United States. She is an author and human rights activist.

Rafia writes a weekly column for DAWN Pakistan's largest English newspaper and is a frequent political analyst on BBC World News. Her work has appeared or been quoted in the New York Times,

AlJazeera, BBC, CBC, HuffPost Live, and numerous other news venues.

She is author of the forthcoming book "The Upstairs Wife: an intimate history of Pakistan" which focuses on the transformations in private relationships during times of political tumult (Beacon Press)

Education: Rafia is an attorney (JD Indiana University 03) and PhD candidate in Political Philosophy at Indiana University. She teaches Political Theory, American Constitutional Law and the Politics of Islam. Her dissertation is entitled "Negotiating Identity: Sharia, multiculturalism and Muslim women."



Heather Layton:

Heather Layton is an interdisciplinary artist and Senior Lecturer of Art in the Department of Art & Art History at the University of Rochester, where she teaches courses in painting, mixed media, performance art and social intervention. She received an MFA in Painting from the State University of New York, New Paltz, in 2002 and a BFA in Art Education from Syracuse University in 1997. Her career interests focus on the role that art can play in addressing conflict at the personal, national, and international level by crossing socially defined borders of race, religion, nationality, and culture. Her

work has been exhibited in over 25 exhibitions in the past five years and she has given artist talks in countries including the United States, Oman, Nagaland (India), and Pakistan, where she was a keynote speaker for the international conference "Social Intervention 2012: A Better Future for the Coming Generation". She has had solo exhibitions at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center in Buffalo, NY, the International Gallery for Contemporary Art in Anchorage, Alaska, the Arts West Gallery at Elon University in Elon, NC, and at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY.

Layton and her collaborator and husband, Brian Bailey, started the U.S./Nagaland Artist and Cultural exchange program to unite professional artists from distant parts of the world through a system of reciprocal hospitality. In 2012, they were named "Citizen Diplomats" by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Their most recent exhibition, Home Drone, at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, publicly questioned the United States' drone program in northern Pakistan. Layton and Bailey were artists-in-residence at the Grand Central Art Center at California State University, Fullerton. Their work has been featured on PBS NewsHour and in Popular Science magazine, City Newspaper, the Democrat and Chronicle, the Valley Advocate, the Morung Express, and Pakistan Today. In June 2013, Layton will be

traveling to Slovakia for a residency at the At Home Gallery in Samorin, Slovakia. She currently lives with Brian in Rochester, NY.



Nick Mottern:

Nick Mottern has worked as a reporter, researcher, writer and political organizer over the last 30 years. While in the US Navy he was in Viet Nam in 1962-63. He graduated from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in 1966, and he has worked as a reporter for the Providence (RI) Journal and Evening Bulletin, a researcher and writer for the former US Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, a lobbyist for Bread for the World and a writer and co-organizer of speaking tours in the United States on US involvement in Africa for Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. In this job he visited a number of African nations and war zones in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Mozambique as well as Israel and the West Bank. He is the author of "Suffering Strong", recounting experiences of his first trip to Africa. He has also been involved in grassroots action in the Lower Hudson Valley. He manages www.consumersforpeace.org and www.KnowDrones.com. He is director of the 2012 national Know Drones Tour. His articles have appeared in Truthout since 2008.



Mark Johnson:

Mark C. Johnson, Ph.D., became the executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation/USA on March 1, 2007. FOR has 18,000 members and addresses 100,000 friends and allies in 45 chapters and 65 affiliates nationally. Mark did his alternative service as a conscientious objector in Lebanon, living and teaching in Beirut from 1967-1974. On behalf of FOR's international work he travels regularly to Colombia and Iran and throughout the Middle East and blogs at <http://www.forusa.org>.



David Swanson:

David Swanson's books include: War Is A Lie (2010), When the World Outlawed War (2011), and The Military Industrial Complex at 50 (2012). He is the host of Talk Nation Radio. He has been a journalist, activist, organizer, educator, and agitator. Swanson helped plan the nonviolent occupation of Freedom Plaza in Washington DC in 2011. Swanson holds a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Virginia. He has worked as a newspaper reporter and as a communications director, with jobs including press secretary for Dennis Kucinich's 2004 presidential campaign, media coordinator for the International Labor Communications Association, and three years as communications coordinator for ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. He blogs at <http://davidswanson.org> and <http://warisacrime.org> and works as Campaign Coordinator for the online activist organization <http://rootsaction.org> Swanson also works on the



communications committee of Veterans For Peace, of which he is an associate (non-veteran) member.

Sarah Ahmed:

Sarah Ahmed's family lived in Baghdad where her father was a professor in the Engineering Department at Baghdad University when the US Shock and Awe War came and upended their world. In around 2006, Sarah's father received death threats. Sarah was attending Baghdad University in the Dentistry program at the time. She insisted on staying behind to attend school when the rest of the family left for Amman. Sarah graduated from Baghdad University in 2010, and joined her family in Jordan. Sarah studied in Damascus with the Iraq Student

Project, and later spent a year as a top student at the University of Rochester before family obligations took her back to Jordan. She was a speaker at the yearly conference of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.



Debra Sweet:

Debra Sweet is the Director of World Can't Wait, initiated in 2005 to "drive out the Bush regime" by repudiating its program, forcing it from office through a mass, independent movement and reversing the direction it had launched. Based in New York City, she leads World Can't Wait in its continuing efforts to stop the crimes of our government, including the unjust occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the torture and detention codes, as well as reversing the fascist direction of U.S. society, from the surveillance state to the

criminalization of abortion and immigrants. She has worked with abortion providers for twenty-five years, organizing community support and helping them withstand anti-abortion violence. Since the age of 19, when she confronted Richard Nixon during a face-to-face meeting and told him to stop the war in Vietnam, she has been a leader in the opposition to U.S. wars and invasions. Debra says, "Stop thinking like an American, and start thinking about humanity!"



Bruce Gagnon:

Bruce Gagnon (born 1952) is Chair, Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. He was an early member of the Anti-Defense Lobby in the 1970's regarding the U.S. space program.

"The role of the U.S. in the new world corporate order is going to be to export security. That means endless wars and weapons in space. The Pentagon will send our kids off to foreign lands to suppress opposition to corporate globalization. How will we ever end America's addiction to war and violence as long as our communities are dependent on military spending for jobs? We must work to convert the military industrial complex to sustainable technologies like windpower, solar, and mass transit."

Kathy Kelly: Kathy Kelly co-coordinates Voices for Creative Nonviolence, (www.vcnv.org) a campaign to end U.S. military and economic warfare.

During each of nine recent trips to Afghanistan, Kathy Kelly, as an invited guest of the Afghan Peace Volunteers, has lived alongside ordinary Afghan people in a working class neighborhood in Kabul. She and her companions in Voices for Creative Nonviolence believe that "where you stand determines what you see." They are resolved not to let war sever the bonds of friendship between them and Afghan people whom they've grown to know through successive delegations. Kelly and her companions insist that the U.S. is not waging a "humanitarian war" in Afghanistan.

Kelly has also joined with activists in various regions of the country to protest drone warfare by holding demonstrations outside of U.S. military bases in Nevada, upstate New York, and, most recently, at Whiteman Air Force base in Missouri.



Tighe Barry: Tighe Barry is a coordinator for CodePink Women for Peace. He has a background in theater, and contributes to the presentation of CodePink street theater events. He also has traveled to Pakistan twice and to numerous other countries in the Middle East.



Ann Wright:

Ann Wright is a retired Army Reserve colonel and a 29-year veteran of the Army and Army Reserves. She was also a diplomat in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghanistan and Mongolia. She resigned from the Department of State on March 19, 2003, in opposition to the Iraq war. She is the co-author of "Dissent: Voices of Conscience"



Noor Mir: Noor is the anti-drone campaign coordinator for CODEPINK and is based in the Washington, D.C. office, although she calls Islamabad, Pakistan her home. She graduated from Vassar College in 2012 with a major in Political Science and minors in French and English. While studying abroad at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, she took courses on international law and targeted killings and was driven by what she learnt to turn it into a year long research thesis on drone warfare in Pakistan. Noor is passionate about killer drones, humanitarian law and race relations.



Steven Downs:

Steve Downs is an attorney by profession. He served in the Peace Corps in India for 4 years. For over a quarter century he investigated corrupt judges as the Chief attorney in Albany for the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct between 1975 and 2003. He is a co-founder of Project Salam and has written extensively on the case of Yasin Aref and Muhammad Husain in Albany, NY. Steve serves as a member of the Board of Directors and Steering Committee of the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms



Horace Campbell:

Horace G. Campbell is a noted international peace and justice scholar and Professor of African American Studies and Political Science at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York. Born in 1945 (Montego Bay, Jamaica), he has been involved in Africa's Liberation Struggles and in the struggles for peace and justice globally for more than four decades. From his years in Toronto, Canada, to his sojourns in Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, the United Kingdom and parts of the Caribbean, he has been an influential force offering alternatives to the hegemonic ideas of

Eurocentrism. In an attempt to theorize new concepts of revolution in the 21st century he has been seeking to expand on the ideas of fractals and the importance of emancipatory ideas [1] He currently teaches in the Department of African American Studies at Syracuse University.



Joe Lombardo:

Joe Lombardo is co-coordinator of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC). He is also a member of the Upstate NY Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars and founding member of Bethlehem Neighbors for peace. Joe is a member of CSEA local 99 and the Troy Area Labor Council. A life long union activist, Joe is a former staff person for the National Peace Action Coalition, one of the major coalitions that opposed the Vietnam War.



Elliott Adams:

Elliott Adams recently returned from an 8-day delegation to Gaza with Veterans For Peace and Physicians For Social Responsibility. Elliot is past national President of Veterans For Peace, was a paratrooper in the infantry serving in Viet Nam, Japan, Korea, and Alaska. He has served his local community in a variety of capacities such as: President of the School Board, Mayor, Committee Chair of BSA Explorer Post 17, President of Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, and Master of the Masonic Lodge.

Elliott left politics to become an activist. Attending untold numbers of demonstrations, working at many levels, from stapling signs to, doing logistics and, organizing work for United For Peace and Justice, War Resisters League, School Of Americas Watch, Peace Has No Borders, Veterans For Peace and many other organizations, at events across the country.

Elliott moved from being a soldier to a nonviolent warrior. He has also done nonviolence and social movement trainings for Fellowship Of Reconciliation, School Of Americas Watch, Peacemakers of Schoharie, Student Environmental Action Coalition, War Resisters League, Veterans For Peace and, other groups. He is currently Nonviolent Training Coordinator of Veterans For Peace.

He has dedicating his life to stopping this war in Iraq and Afghanistan and abolishing all war. This work has taken him from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Mexico border to Canada. From testifying before US Congress Judiciary Committee and attending Parliament in Canada to being arrested for the cause. He recently went to Gaza as part of a 7 day Physicians For Social Responsibility delegation.



Charlie King:

Charlie King is a folk singer and activist. He was born and raised in Brockton, Massachusetts in 1947 and cites the folk music revival of the 1960s, the American Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War era as his as musical influences. His songs have been recorded and sung by other performers such as Pete Seeger, Holly Near, Ronnie Gilbert, John McCutcheon, Arlo Guthrie, Peggy Seeger, Chad Mitchell and Judy Small. Honors include an "Indie" award for one of the top three folk recordings of 1984. In May 1998 the War Resisters League gave their

Peacemaker Award to Charlie and to Odetta. Pete Seeger nominated Charlie for the Sacco-Vanzetti Social Justice Award, which he received in November 1999.[1] Charlie King has released a dozen solo albums since 1976. He has also released three albums with the touring ensemble Bright Morning Star, and numerous compilation albums with other artists.



Colleen Kattau:

"Joe Hill would be proud. Great singer and organizer at the same time," Pete Seeger. Colleen Kattau is a vocalist songwriter in both Spanish and English. A dynamic performer, whose music is "Power and beauty steeping in a fine tea." She's performed on Amy Goodman's Democracy Now and is a featured artist at SOAWatch vigils.

"She has the best voice in New York State." Joseph Gaylord

"Colleen Kattau sings with a common passion that makes you believe

the world could be saved by beauty." Charlie King

"She is such a bright spirit, has a powerful voice, and seems to laugh and dance where ever she goes." Holly Near

About Colleen Kattau and Some Guys:

Progressive folk colored w/ south of the border beats and socio-enviro-fem conscious compositions with bass (Mike Brandt), sax and flutes (Jamie Yaman), drums (Dave Pandori), soaring and earthy vocals and guitar (Colleen).



Beth Harris:

Associate Professor at Ithaca College, Department of Politics Faculty, School of Humanities and Sciences Faculty, Native American Studies



Judy Bello:

Judy Bello is currently a full time activist thanks to the harsh and unforgiving work environment in the Software Development Industry. Finally free to focus on her own interests in her home office, she is active with The Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars, with United National Antiwar Coalition, CodePink and with Fellowship of Reconciliation Middle East Task Force. She has been to Iran twice with FOR Peace Delegations, and spent a month in the Kurdish city of Suleimaniya in 2009. Judy has recently returned from 2 weeks in Pakistan to talk to victims of the US drone campaign in Pakistan's FATA. She blogs at <http://blog.papillonweb.net>, and administers the Upstate anti-Drone Coalition website at <http://upstatedroneaction.org>. She can be reached at judith@papillonweb.net



Carol Baum: Carol is a staff person for the Syracuse Peace Center. And she teaches a course at Syracuse University.

Other Members of the Upstate Coalition:

Russell Brown, Vicki Ross of Buffalo,
John Hamilton, Ellen Grady, Dan Burgevin of Ithaca

Other Guests:

Peter Sinatra of Syracuse,
Kathy Smith of Rochester.