Local South African Government Agrees to Spare Black Township

The following is a news release issued by the City of St. Paul, Department of Planning and Economic Development.

At a press conference held July 27th at the St. Paul City Hall, Councilman Bill Wilson and Rev. Oliver White reported that the municipality of George, South Africa, has agreed to drop its plans to forcibly relocate the community of Lawaaikamp, St. Paul's Sister Community. Wilson and White returned July 25th from a two week trip to South Africa.

"We were there on serious business," said Councilman Bill Wilson as he spoke of two unprecedented meetings that he and Rev. White were able to arrange between the white officials of George and the elected representatives of Lawaaikamp, a black township with 1,800 residents. "This was historic because blacks just don't go to city hall in George." After the first meeting where discussions began on alternative ways for the city to upgrade the community and allow current residents to remain, the mayor of George accepted an invitation from the Lawaaikamp residents and met with them in a home in their community. Never before in the 40-year history of the township had white officials been in Lawaaikamp for any purpose other than to pressure the residents to leave.

In a radio broadcast from Lawaaikamp in late July a member of the Lawaaikamp Civic Association related, "For the first time they (George city officials) came into our house and had tea and talked to people. That may change them as human beings and will change their attitudes.... They showed their preparedness of (sic) trying to find a common solution in solving the problems of Lawaaikamp."

Wilson released a copy of a July 18th press statement by the Lawaaikamp Civic Association, a.k.a. George Civic Association, which says the event "heralds a new approach by the George municipality to the requests of the Lawaaikamp Community who for the past four years have resisted forced removal to Sandkraal."

Wilson said progress was made by attempting to find a common ground between the city of George and the residents who want to stay on the land. The city claims it doesn't have enough money to upgrade the homes for its current residents. He said the forced relocation of each black community in South Africa is part of the federal government's scheme to move all black South Africans to independent homelands which would ultimately force 80 per cent of the population onto 10 per cent of the land. While on their 14-day trip in South Africa, Wilson and White visited other threatened communities that are forming relationships with U.S. cities to help prevent government efforts to move them.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu met with Wilson and White for 45 minutes in Cape Town and endorsed the United States/South Africa Sister Communities project as one of the most important U.S. anti-apartheid movements. Wilson invited Tutu to St. Paul in the spring of 1990 to be the keynote speaker at a proposed national conference on the Sister Communities movement.

At the press conference, Kim Lanegran, coordinator for the St. Paul-Lawaaikamp Sister Communities Project, said, "This was more than the St. Paul-Lawaaikamp Committee (steering committee for the project) had hoped for. It is a proud victory that must be shared with all the people of St. Paul because this entire project has been a grassroots effort. We take our lead from the courageous people of Lawaaikamp and deliver whatever help we can." She cautioned, as did Wilson and White, that St. Paul must remain vigilant and continue to work with Lawaaikamp to ensure that the government of George carries out its pledge to stop the forced removal.

Rev. White, Pastor of Camphor Memorial and President of the St. Paul Black Ministerial Alliance, related his experiences while staying in Lawaaikamp. He spoke of five-hour church services from which residents drew strength to carry on their struggle to remain in Lawaaikamp. White said, "If the world is not free none of us are free. We must be aware that God has reached out, taken St. Paul, a city in mid-western America, and changed life in South Africa."

FNVW has been active in this project since the beginning of 1988.

1989 Craft Sale Coming Soon: Saturday, December 2nd

by Betty Firth

The Craft Sale meets the criteria of a successful fundraiser. As well as making money for our organization, it provides an opportunity for people to get to know each other better as we prepare for the event. It also provides a wonderful gathering place for people to shop for gifts, enjoy delicious homemade food for lunch and get together with (F)friends from all over. As veteran Craft Sale participants know, you can also enjoy a massage and a puppet show during the day.

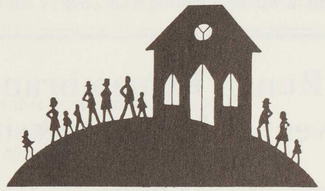
Plans are already well underway for this year's Craft Sale to be held from 10:00 to 4:00 on Saturday, December 2nd at the Minneapolis Friends Meeting House, 44th & York, Minneapolis. Judith James has organized a 2-day doll-making workshop to teach people to make peasant dolls designed by Kelli Fifield. People have been calling to offer their gifts and talents.

Can't knit? No problem! People offer services too such as painting a room, cleaning a garage, making a dinner for two, donating the use of a cabin for a weekend...the possibilities are endless!

Many varied donations came from retail merchants as well as tickets for concerts, plays and athletic events. Pat Rosaves (729-2100) is heading up the committee for soliciting these donations.

We would appreciate your help too. Next time you are at your favorite store or restaurant, ask the manager or sales clerk if they would be willing to donate something to the Craft Sale. It is easier to ask than you might think and people are very willing to give a contribution to a good customer. Last year one store gave us everything in their clearance corner, $1200 in value, and gained a nice tax write-off for the store.

If you would like to contribute a service, make something for the craft sale and/or teach others how to make it, please call. We will also be seeking volunteers to help in planning and working the day of the sale. Contact Betty Firth at 827-4285 or the FNVW office at 870-1501 for more information.



Introducing the Southern Africa Resource Center

By Erin Thomasson

The Southern Africa Resource Center (SARC) is a center for information on southern Africa. Located in FNVW's Peace Center, SARC began in March of this year to collect books, periodicals, videos, and educational materials on the southern Africa region. We offer a speakers bureau as a service for local schools, religious and other groups. We can also help in planning forums, conferences and other events.

SARC is a member of the Minnesota Southern Africa Network (MSAN), a coalition of local groups active in southern Africa issues. As part of SARC's educational and outreach work, we give support to *Arise!*, the quarterly newsletter of MSAN and the only Twin Cities publication focused exclusively on southern Africa. Currently, SARC is working on a campaign organized by national groups and the Twin Cities Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa to raise money for the people of Namibia. The Dollars for Democracy in Namibia Campaign was launched in recognition that in order to prepare for the November 1st national elections, the Namibian people desperately need monetary aid if fair elections are to be achieved. The money raised will help fund a massive voter educational campaign in Namibia and aid in the resettlement of exiled Namibian refugees who wish to return home. For more information, to make a donation, or to help with the campaign, call Mary Ellen Kaluza at 871-7722. Checks can be made out to PERA (Progressive Education and Research Association) and sent to Dollars for Democracy in Namibia, P.O. Box 7025, Mpls., MN 55407.

This summer the coordinators of SARC undertook a long-range planning process in hopes of better defining the group's direction and activities for the next few years. Being yet a small organization, SARC planners struggled to choose a few realistic goals on which to focus our energies in the near future. Our major goals include increasing threefold the size of our current collection of books, periodicals and videos. SARC also plans to organize a series of workshops on southern Africa for educators and the general public, and to work with the Department of Education to pursue the introduction of more curriculum materials on southern Africa into the school system. Another major goal is to create a diversified funding base to ensure our financial stability. (Currently we exist thanks to a small number of supporters and the generosity of FNVW.) Finally, we are beginning to organize and recruit members for our Board of Directors, who will play an instrumental role in the management, outreach, and fundraising of SARC.

The coming year promises to be an exciting time for SARC. Anyone interested in joining our efforts to create an important community resource for Minnesotans who want to learn about apartheid, racism, African history, and U.S. foreign policy is welcome to give us a call at the Peace Center: 870-1501. Financial contributions toward our work would be greatly appreciated. Donations of books and other items such as magazine/pamphlet racks and bookcases would also be welcome.