



This month's circle tale was written by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea of PeerSpirit.

## **Circle Tale #39, March 2003 In Circle with the World**

It is still peaceful and beautiful around the PeerSpirit office, with early daffodils in bloom and little dogs lolling in the yard waiting for a walk between our office tasks. We answer phone calls and emails, head into town to run errands: what incredible, luxurious privilege surrounds us in an ordinary day. Our neighbor, a carpenter, is whistling while he works, "Gonna lay down my sword and shield... down by the riverside." Riding the notes of this familiar tune we send a prayer out into the wider world. War is declared. We have no idea what really lies ahead.

Last month three of us -- Ann, Christina, and our accountant, Stephanie -- made commitments to act in this historic moment. Stephanie vowed to make a prayer card with her son's face on it, to urge people to pray for all the young adults caught up in this conflict. She wrote a powerful story about herself and her son, a boy known to many in this small community, and it was printed in the local paper. She made a poster for her office window and notices people stopping to reflect a moment. She says, "The VFW called, wanting to help provide my son a sense of home town support, and it gave me a chance to talk to someone I might not have met any other way."

Christina got her t-shirt printed that says "Democracy is dialogue, Let's talk, listen, and act." She has been wearing it around the island and out on the road. She says, "Putting on that shirt requires me to show up for people's reactions. Mostly they smile or look away. But I keep asking strangers, with a genuine curiosity, 'What do you think? How do you feel?' I had an interesting conversation with a group of flight attendants who talked about helping people cope with the fearful atmosphere of flying these days, and another talk with the shuttle bus driver on the way to an airport. I'm finding people want to talk, want to be asked, want to be listened to."

Ann vowed to keep contacting her representatives, and has been in conversation with the office staff of our congressman and both senators. "I have usually gotten through to a real person at these offices. I have been especially impressed with the staff in our congressional representative's office, Rick Larsen. They seem eager to engage, to have a short conversation, not just tally me 'for or against' on an issue. I've also started communicating more deeply within my family. The teenage niece who is my goddaughter wrote a stunning poem on her political feelings that she shared in school and with me. We are all learning to say what we feel and think, whether or not we expect people to agree with us."

Dr. Robert Muller, now age 80, who was present at the founding of the United Nations and has devoted his entire life to working in and supporting that institution, takes great hope in the process of the past six months. In a recent speech he said, "Never before in the history of the world has there been a global, visible, public, viable, open dialogue and conversation about the very legitimacy of war." Dr. Muller asserts that this dialogue has now created two superpowers in the world: the United States and the merging, surging voice of the people of the world.

In the coming weeks, months, perhaps for the rest of our lives, we have a place in this powerful conversation. Soon, may it be soon, the Iraqi people will join us and we will keep on talking into the crack of possibility that has opened in the world that is bigger than politics or war.

What to do today:

Pray for goodness for all people to come out of this situation. Pray for goodness in all people to rise to this situation. Ask someone, "How are you really doing?" and stop to listen. Practice citizenship 20 minutes a week.

*If you have a tale to tell, contact the PeerSpirit office and we'll help you share it.*

*For more information on many applications of circle, visit our web site at [www.peerspirit.com](http://www.peerspirit.com) and subscribe to our monthly Circle Tale newsletter using the subscription mechanism at the top right of the page. Your e-mail address will **not** be shared or used by anyone other than PeerSpirit, and you can unsubscribe yourself at any time.*