



A 360-degree view in 36 months

BY **BERT ETLING FOR THE TIDINGS** February 25, 2019

This week we celebrate the third anniversary of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission's biweekly column in the Tidings. Those 78 ACPC columns are tiles in a mosaic creating an image of what it means to have a "culture of peace" — what it is, how it shows up in our lives and insights into its impact and value.

Some background: A 1999 United Nations Culture of Peace resolution called for a transformation from a culture of war and violence to one of peace. After years of preparatory discussions and work by Ashlanders inspired by that resolution, on Sept. 21, 2015, the UN International Day of Peace, the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission was launched in a community-wide celebration. Its mission: To foster a community-wide movement dedicated to transforming attitudes, behaviors and institutions into ones that foster harmonious relationships with each other and the natural world.

The column debuted in February 2016. As then-editor, I saw ACPC as a vital thread in the community tapestry. Adding it offered another voice to the community conversation hosted by the Tidings.

It's more than exceeded my expectations. Diverse and distinguished writers have shared insights into a broad variety of topics, each offering a facet of the gem that is a culture of peace. Every part has its own contours; whether columnists have grasped a leg, trunk, tail, tusk or ear of the elephant at hand, they're all exploring the same creature.

A sampling of column headlines shows the breadth of topics covered: "The cost of war vs. the cost of peace"; "Cultivating a culture of peace takes a series of choices"; "Engage in the pursuit of peace; it won't pursue you"; "Peace through feeding the hungry"; "Looking beyond woundedness to humanness"; "Bridging peace by connecting with others"; "Peace when conflict seems to rule the dialogue"; "Respecting our common

humanity”; “Growing peace by providing shelter”; “Peace is more than the absence of war”; “Peacebuilding is a way of life”; “Sowing seeds of compassion”; “Guarding against the bias virus”; “Working on peacefully resolving differences”; “Nurturing a sustainable culture of peace”; “Peace Commission & Peace House: Complementary paths to peace”; “Religion’s role in violence and peace”; “Ashland police department partners for peace”; “What is a ‘culture of peace’?”; and “Toward peaceful coexistence with nature.”

Past ACPC columns are online at dailytidings.com/lifestyle/culture-of-peace and at <https://www.ashlandcpc.org/ashland-daily-tiding-articles> (along with a selection of other Tidings articles about ACPC).

The columns have consistently been positive, affirmational and aspirational. They’ve been about building bridges, not tearing things down or erecting obstacles; about do’s, not don’ts.

The ACPC logo depicts interlocking rings in a variety of colors around an image of the Earth. Taken together, these columns are a written manifestation of that logo: a variety of contributors with a common center.

The articles are meant to educate, inspire and be a call to action for our local piece of the global community. It’s important to articulate that vision. One of the values of expression is its ability to communicate goals, to offer a way forward. In doing so, it offers a point with which to align, like a magnetic pole. Then we can direct our resources in that same direction, working side-by-side and pulling together instead of at cross purposes or in conflict.

The ACPC Culture of Peace column has been and continues to be an essential tool in helping build a better community. Happy birthday!

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