

*“Theater of War in a House of Peace” **

We would like to schedule the Wilson Chapel with a continuously rolling series of events, installations, concerts, exhibits, readings, performances, silent vigils, etc. for the academic year, 2010-11. Proposals are welcome from individuals or groups from the art, music, dance and theater departments, or from the dorms, or the academic departments, which expresses feelings about War and Peace. Hopefully, enough students, staff and faculty will participate to fill the academic schedule from orientation to graduation.

The impetus for this project is the feeling that we are a nation at war, but the nation has no, and makes no, emotional acknowledgement of this mortal fact. We are the source of mayhem, murder, chaos, destruction, self-destruction, dislocation, dismemberment--and all of that is “over there.” We bring home a whole other set of distresses with the soldiers, their traumas, experiences and memories, which also go unacknowledged, although the First Lady admirably has made this one of her priorities. This is not about the war policy itself; that is a subject for another venue. The idea here is to give ourselves the opportunity to acknowledge the fact of war, inventory the costs of war, and make an observance that is not funereal but inspirational of peace.

Another goal for this project is to focus community attention on the unfairness of the recruitment practice, which puts the burden of war on a very small portion of our population. This project should get us thinking, studying, researching, and advocating for an alternative. A starting point is the Universal National Service, where everyone from 18 to 22 is given options for service like the military, the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, hospitals, urban schools, etc. Our students should have the opportunity to leave Skidmore having been challenged to think about a prime ethical issue that concerns their age group and has gotten buried.

Have an idea? Questions? Want to help organize? Interested in creating something?

CONTACT: Rick Chrisman

Director of Religious and Spiritual Life

Case Center 309, Phone ext. 8340, rchrisma@skidmore.edu

*Part of the title and some of the idea is taken from a touring production called Theater of War which, since 2008, has presented readings of Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Philoctetes* to military communities across the United States. “These ancient plays timelessly and universally depict the psychological and physical wounds inflicted upon warriors by war. By presenting these plays to military audiences, our hope is to destigmatize psychological injury and open a safe space for dialogue about the challenges faced by service members, veterans, and their caregivers and families” [from their website].