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RE: Central Ohio Peace Network (COPN) will host the IRAQ WAR MEMORIAL MARCH and PEACE FORUM at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium

On March 19, 2008, the Central Ohio Peace Network (COPN) will host the **IRAQ WAR MEMORIAL MARCH and PEACE FORUM** at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium (Use the South Entrance). The Forum will begin at 6:30p.m. and will feature presentations and discussions about the peace movement and related issues of healthcare, poverty, jobs and economic justice.

Connie Hammond of Progressive Peace Coalition says the event will highlight the costs of war and how they broadly affect our communities. "People are concerned about the economy, jobs, healthcare," she says. "We could do a lot to for people with the money we're spending on the war." COPN, an umbrella organization, consists of various local groups opposed to the Iraq War. A number of community organizations will be on hand March 19, and the evening will educate and encourage people to get involved in their areas of concern and interest.

Local organizations will table the event and provide literature and information about how to get involved. Numerous speakers, musicians and poets will provide programs and entertainment. The event is free to the public. COPN encourages donations of clothing items for veterans and non-perishable foods for the homeless, which will be collected in the Atrium.

A Gathering of Community Interests, sponsored by Faith Communities Uniting for Peace, precedes the Peace Forum at St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church, 59 East Mound Street at 4:30p.m. This program is followed at 6p.m. by a march to the Statehouse.

COPN has commemorated the beginning of the Iraq War every year since it began with marches and demonstrations. "We wanted to do something a little different this year," Hammond says, "something that recognizes and honors those who have paid the ultimate price for the war, but also something that focuses on the economic and social fallout we're all experiencing and what we can do to help."

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