

Eyewitness: IRAQ



Sami Rasouli will speak to students, faculty, staff and the Eau Claire Community at **7 pm Monday March 31, 2008** in the **UW-Eau Claire Davies Center Council Fire** rooms.
Free public event & art display.

*If you've heard him before you know he is **THE unique voice on the ground in Iraq today.*** Sami Rasouli's presentation will include a slide show, lecture and question & answer session. Iraqi artwork will be available for sale to support NGO peace keeping efforts and the artists in Iraq. Northwoods Peace Initiative is again coordinating his speaking tour, and provides the following bio.

Sami Rasouli was born in Najaf in 1952 and spent the first half of his life in Iraq before coming to the United States where he lived in Minneapolis for many years, raised his family and ran a successful restaurant. He is 100% Iraqi and 100% American. He understands both cultures, speaks both languages, and is deeply committed to nonviolence as a method of conflict resolution. Sami still has a sense of humor four years after moving back to Iraq. As in the past, Sami doesn't charge a speaker's fee but accepts donations to continue his work in Iraq.

Mr. Rasouli can speak personally about the facts on the ground in Iraq as he sees them--as an Iraqi--about the human costs of war, and also about the Muslim and Christian Peacemaker Teams - the latter group was established in 1986 and is a model for the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT) which Sami founded. MPT look to what they consider the threads of nonviolence in the Koran to promote salaam between all religious and ethnic groups in Iraq and around the world.

This is Sami's fifth trip back to the United States since moving to Iraq in 2003.

His perspectives are unique and can be controversial as his travels and contacts bring him deep within the fabric of Iraqi society. His access to Iraq's people and situations, together with his cultural awareness, opens doors that most main stream media outlets cannot even conceive of and certainly don't report on. Sami is a storyteller. His ability to weave both gentleness and humor into the horror that is Iraq makes him both credible and approachable. He is not a reporter. He speaks from his heart about his home and his vision for a world free from hate and violence. Proceeds from Iraqi art sales and donations go both to the work of MPT and to support the artists. For more information on the MPT see <http://www.leftspot.com/jess/>

March 19th marks 5 years of US war and occupation in Iraq. To date, the war has cost US taxpayers 497 billion dollars. At least 853 American military personnel died in Iraq in 2007 -- the highest annual toll since the invasion and occupation began in March 2003, according to AP figures. The October 2006 Johns Hopkins Mortality Survey--the second study by researchers from the Bloomberg School of Public Health which used samples of casualties from Iraqi households to extrapolate an overall figure--reported 601,027 Iraqis are dead from violence between March 2003 and July 2006.

This appearance will be the **inaugural event in the Eberth Alarcon Memorial Peace & Justice lecture series** to be held at UW-Eau Claire, and is sponsored by UWEC Staff & Faculty for Peace & Justice and the Progressive Student Association with support from Veterans for Peace and the Red Cedar Peace Initiative.

To find links on war, war funding and the effects of militarism, peace & justice events, organizations and activities, see www.uwec.edu/sfpj
For information on this event please contact Karen at popekj@uwec.edu or 715 529 0272
