

## Cape News, February 4, 2005

By NADIA C. HARMSEN

A conference on peace brought together men from Falmouth, Burundi, and Washington state.

Now the three men will bring a presentation on peace to Falmouth.

"Opening A Space for Peace in Burundi and Central Africa," will be held at the First Congregational Church on , Falmouth Green at 7 PM Friday.

Residents will hear stories from Prosper Ndabishuriye of Burundi, a father of five, who was one of hundreds of thousands of victims who lost their homes during more than a decade of ethnic clashes between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes in Burundi. More than 200,000 Burundians have been killed because of the fighting.

Mr. Ndabishuriye is the general coordinator of Youth in the Reconstruction of a World in Destruction, an organization dedicated to promoting peace "through the rebuilding of hearts and homes."

The nongovernmental organization has rebuilt more than 1,500 homes since its inception in 1994.

Michael Seymour of Clinton, Washington, is the president of the Heritage Institute of Washington, a progressive educational organization based on the philosophy of educating for humanity. The institute focuses on the interdependence and interconnectedness of humans and nature, and the achievement of peace and global stability through this realization.

The two organizations have formed a partnership to further the peace-building effort in Burundi and the world through rebuilding homes, education, and youth leadership.

The partnership is in the process of rebuilding 800 homes in Burundi.

"The hope is that this event will raise awareness of what the organizations are doing and the situation in central Africa," said Stuart J. Baker of Cachalot Lane, organizer of the Upper Cape event.

"It costs \$600 to buy basic materials to build a basic home in Burundi."

Mr. Seymour and Mr. Ndabishuriye are traveling throughout the United States with the presentation.

The free event is open to the public, but donations would be appreciated.

Mr. Baker met the two men at the Practice of Peace conference held at the Whidbey Institute on Whidbey Island, Washington, in November 2003.

Owner of Creative Contractors Corporation, a building company in Falmouth for more than 20 years, Mr. Baker became involved with mediation dispute and resolution.

He has attended many conferences on the subject and said the Practice of Peace conference had a profound impact on his life.

With a background in psychology and counseling, he was intrigued with the interactions and relationships of his employees and clients.

"At work, I was being asked to solve minor disputes," added Mr. Baker.

A long-time friend, attorney Jeffrey W. Oppenheim of Coleridge Drive, encouraged Mr. Baker to take mediation training through Cape Cod Dispute Resolution Center Inc. in Orleans, so Mr. Baker could become a mediator for Falmouth Court.

"Most judges send small claims or landlord/tenant cases to mediation first before having a trial," said Mr. Baker who has been a mediator for four years. "There is an 80 percent settlement rate in these cases because of mediation."

Mr. Baker and Mr. Oppenheim have started their own dispute resolution business, which uses the same name as Mr. Baker's construction company-Creative Contractors Corporation.

Their mediation team will specialize in construction disputes.

After he "became aware of the power of cooperation and choosing to cooperate," Mr. Baker said, it changed his life.