
In This Monthly Column, We Spotlight
the People in Front of the Camera
and Behind the Scenes

DAYS OF OUR LIVES's
Charles Shaughnessy
Believes in a World
Beyond War

It began about four years ago. I did a play at the Mark Taper Forum in LA, an English play called *The Genius*. It dealt with, in a very broad way, the nuclear issue. A notice went up one day about a meeting for an organization called Beyond War. It was held between a matinee and an evening performance on a Sunday, so I just went around out of curiosity. It sounded interesting with regards to the work I was doing in the play.

I went to the meeting and I came away with an extraordinary kind of realization — this was absolutely something I could not wake up the next morning and not be involved in."

That is how Charles Shaughnessy (Shane Donovan, DAYS OF OUR LIVES) became part of Beyond War. In order for the human race to survive, the international, non-partisan organization believes that violence can no longer be used to resolve conflict; the detonation of the nuclear

bomb at Hiroshima rendered war obsolete. "We've let the genie out of the bottle," Shaughnessy explains, "and the weapons that we hold in our hands are too powerful for our own use. We are all one planet and we're all going to have to sink or swim together."

The primary purpose of the movement is educational — to make people aware of the crisis at hand. Letter-writing, petitions and lobbying are encouraged. Information is disseminated via local meetings and a monthly newsletter. Shaughnessy points with pride to the group's role in Central America: "Beyond War was very instrumental in encouraging the Contadora peace process that kind of gave birth to the



Arias process. We were out talking to [Nicaraguan President Daniel] Ortega and [El Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon] Duarte. It's a very hands-on, as well as grassroots, movement."

The actor is aware of how difficult it will be to change the world's mindset regarding war. And, he concedes that countries like Iran and Iraq are "extremely problematic." However, Shaughnessy feels the shift in attitude must begin somewhere, and that somewhere is in the US. "Whatever hap-

pens," he says, "America is still enormously influential and the rest of the world watches what we do and say very closely. It's the problem and the solution, right here at home. . . . The impetus has to be here."

Part of Shaughnessy's contribution involves lecturing. His first engagement was at Juniata College in Pennsylvania, where he spoke to an audience comprised of fifty percent soap fans, fifty percent peace fans. Somehow, it worked. "It was such a relief to be talking about something other than just whether Shane's going to get together with Kimberly. Important though that is, it was nice to have something else and to have an audience," Shaughnessy admits.

He cleverly involves all members of the audience in his talk, which is followed by a question-and-answer segment when the actor genially responds to all queries. Shaughnessy reveals, "The last two times I've done it, I've started off by saying, 'How many people here watch the soaps? How many people watch DAYS OF OUR LIVES? How many people have actually seen a nuclear missile?' Then I say, 'We're going to actually, somehow, involve those three, seemingly disparate images into this one talk.'"

He continues, "I speak about making a difference by writing to the soaps, and if you want to change the story lines, this is what you can do. And, by talking to your senator and your congressman, you can actually change the story line as far as our own lives are concerned. We are all actors and characters in the script — and the script is unfolding as we speak."

Charles and his wife, Susan, became active in the movement about four years ago.



YVONNE ARTHUR