



THOMAS MERTON CENTER

PITTSBURGH'S PEACE & JUSTICE NEWSPAPER

THE NEW PEOPLE

VOL. 47 No. 6 November 2017

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2017 Thomas Merton Award

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Crystal Jennings speaking at the Don't Criminalize Transit Riders action outside of Dom Costa's office in Morningside. Artwork was created by Christina Castillo. (Photo: Kim Dinh)

Director's Letter:

Don't Criminalize Transit Riders By Gabriel McMorland

Should the Port Authority of Allegheny County use armed police and press criminal charges to collect \$2.75 transit fare on busses and trains?

On the rainy morning of Thursday October 12th, more than forty people filled the street outside the small Morningside office of Port Authority board member and state representative Dom Costa, chanting "Transportation, not deportation" and "public transit – not a checkpoint!" The delegation delivered more than three hundred postcards from Costa's constituents and transit riders calling on him to publicly oppose the Port Authority's plans to start using armed police and criminal charges to collect transit fares on the trains and, eventually, the busway. Since February 2017, the Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAAC) has evaded vocal opposition from the Don't Criminalize Transit Riders campaign - led by the Alliance for Police Accountability, Casa San Jose, Pittsburghers for Public Transit, and the Thomas Merton Center. PAAC originally announced they would begin this new and dangerous policing practice in July 2017, but our campaign pushed them to delay implementation. Now, with a growing number of supporters, we hope to see PAAC publicly commit to abandoning these plans before the end of the year.

After hiring additional police officers, PAAC will assign them to stop riders and check if they paid their \$2.75 fare on the way into the system. If riders cannot prove they paid, the police will issue a criminal citation with a \$300 fine, and a judge could send riders to jail after repeat charges. Officers will also check for outstanding warrants when issuing citations, which will automatically alert Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regardless of whether the rider has any actual criminal warrants. ICE regularly issues "administrative warrants" asking local police to hold immigrants in custody, but these are not signed by a judge and the resulting detention by local law enforcement violates immigrants' constitutional rights.

This policing plan will immediately endanger low-income people, immigrants, youth, people with disabilities, and people of color. We oppose the harsh criminalization of everyday life activities and the dragnet approach that turns our transit into checkpoints. Beyond that, we know asking police to engage in thousands of additional interactions each week will lead to predictably disastrous consequences. PAAC already operates one of the largest police forces in Allegheny County, and PAAC officers recently murdered Bruce Kelly Jr. and aggressively arrested Somali immigrant youth downtown. PAAC's police force includes

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45th Thomas Merton Award goes to the Center for Constitutional Rights By Joyce Rothermel

The Board of the Thomas Merton Center has chosen the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) for its highest honor. Founded in 1966 by attorneys who represented civil rights movements in the South, CCR is a non-profit legal and educational organization committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change.

The 45th Thomas Merton Award will be presented to the organization's current Executive Director, Vince Warren, at the award dinner to be held on Monday, November 20 at 6 PM at the Sheraton Hotel in Station Square. All *NewPeople* readers and friends are encouraged to attend.

Commenting enthusiastically on

the current Executive Director, former CCR board member Jules Lobel, calls "Vince Warren...a great speaker, a dynamic leader and a wonderful human being. It will be inspiring to hear him speak." During the interview Jules Lobel revealed great insights into the reasons behind TMC's choice by referring to his own experiences.

"I first learned about CCR when I was a lawyer with the progressive law firm of Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky and Lieberman. (That's Joni Rabinowitz's father, a Merton Center member). I was assigned to work on a case challenging Reagan's travel ban in 1981 on travel to Cuba - which has still not been totally lifted. We

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#GiveBig Thomas Merton Center

The Thomas Merton Center will be participating in #GiveBigPittsburgh on Tuesday, November 28th, 2017. *Pittsburgh Magazine*, in partnership with the Pittsburgh Foundation, is launching a new regional fundraising initiative. To donate to TMC, go to <https://pittsburghmagazine.com/givebig> on Tuesday, November 28th any time that day. For other opportunities to support TMC, see page 7.

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NEWPEOPLE - 1

The Thomas Merton Center works to build a consciousness of values and to raise the moral questions involved in the issues of war, poverty, racism, classism, economic justice, oppression and environmental justice.

TMC engages people of diverse philosophies and faiths who find common ground in the nonviolent struggle to bring about a more peaceful and just world.

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Thomas Merton Center

Monday—Friday: 10 am to 4 pm

East End Community Thrift Store

Tuesday—Friday: 10 am to 4 pm
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The East End Community Thrift (Thrifty) is an all volunteer-run thrift shop which provides quality, low-cost, used clothing and household goods to the surrounding community. Thrifty needs volunteers and shoppers! Please contact us at (412) 361-6010 and ask for Shirley or Shawna, or stop in at 5123 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224. Email shawnapgh@aol.com.

We are mission driven volunteers who look to build love and community by serving others in times of need.

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The New People is distributed each month to 2,500 people who belong to diverse organizations, businesses and groups. The deadline for all submissions is the 13th of the month for the following month's issue.

To Submit Articles, Photos, or Poems: Visit www.thomasmertoncenter.org/submit

To Submit an Event to the TMC Calendar: Visit www.thomasmertoncenter.org/calendar

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For more information: Call 412-361-3022 or email newpeople@thomasmertoncenter.org.

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TMC Projects

Human Rights

Book'Em: Books to Prisoners Project
bookempgh@gmail.com
www.bookempgh.org

Cities for CEDAW

Fight for Lifers West
fightforliferswest@gmail.com
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Fightforliferswest.org

Greater Pittsburgh Interfaith Coalition
Anne Wirth 412-716-9750

Human Rights Coalition / Fed Up
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412-802-8575, hrcfedup@gmail.com
www.prisonerstories.blogspot.com

Pittsburghers for Public Transit
412-216-9659
info@pittsburghforpublictransit.org

Steel Smiling
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Stop Sexual Assault in the Military
412-361-3022
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Anti-War/Anti-Imperialism

Anti-War Committee
awc@thomasmertoncenter.org

TMC Partners

(Affiliates are independent partner organizations who support the nonviolent peace and justice mission of TMC. - Articles may not necessarily represent the views of Affiliates)

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412-654-9070 abolitionistlawcenter.org

Amnesty International
info@amnestypgh.org - www.amnestypgh.org

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The Big Idea Bookstore
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The Black Political Empowerment Project
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Larry Blalock, evolve@atlanticbb.net

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PA United for Single-Payer Health Care
www.healthcare4allPA.org
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412-421-4242

(TMC projects follow TMC guidelines and receive financial and ongoing resources and support from the Thomas Merton Center.)

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jumphook@gmail.com;
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Environmental Justice

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Religion and Labor Coalition
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TMC is a Member of

Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network
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Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty
Martha Conley 412-361-7872,
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TMC supports these organizations' missions.

Merton Center News

Gabriel McMorland (left) and Carl Redwood (right) speaking at the Thomas Merton Center Membership Annual Meeting on September 30th.
(Photo: Maren Cooke)



TMC Members Gather for Annual Meeting

By Joyce Rothermel

Special thanks to all who participated in this year's annual TMC membership meeting at the Mercy Motherhouse on Sat., September 30. Mark Dixon, TMC board member, served as MC. He and Ginny Hildebrand led everyone in song, "Look on the Bright Side of Life" to get us started. Current TMC board members and Cornerstone Sustainers were recognized, while the new Director new staff members Gabriel McMorland, Krystle Knight and Kim Dinh were introduced. Highlights of many of the activities of the past year were shared by Gabriel with a power point of photos shown by Kim.

Ken Joseph introduced nominees for the board for 2018 and each gave a short self-introduction: current board members up for re-election are Michael Drohan, Wanda Guthrie, Ken Joseph, and Tyrone Scales. Those seeking election for their first three-year terms are Fatema Juma, Emily Neff, Thomas Samilson (unable to attend), and Robert Wilson (also unable to attend). Board ballots are being sent to all TMC members, to be returned by the time of the annual dinner, November 20. There are eight openings for the six open seats. Your vote is important.

Carl Redwood gave an update on the work of the Pittsburgh Cauldron, of which he spoke when he received the New Person Award in June. On the

handout he circulated, we learned that the Preamble of the Group has been set:

"We are Allegheny County residents who believe in the need for radical change of our economic and political system. That system does not provide for the needs of the overwhelming majority of people in our city and county. Our governments should not be run by and for the interests of the small elite who built and expanded their enormous wealth and power by means of endless wars and a for-profit system that uses racism to divide us. We believe that through local activism, in combination with independent participation in elections and neighborhood organizing, local communities can begin the long process of radical change. We seek liberty and justice for all, no matter our race, ethnicity, gender, ability, religion or sexual orientation."

Its Platform has two tenets: 1) Human Rights for All: full employment, universal health care, quality housing, affordable and accessible public transit, quality affordable education and a safe, healthy environment, and 2) Government for the People, not the Rich: We need a city and county government in which people can truly participate and have control over local decisions that affect their lives and in which government policies

and practices are public for everyone to access and discuss.

Questions of clarification were presented by participants to better understand how this effort differs from the work of other groups in the area. Carl invites TMC members to get involved. To find out more and to participate, contact Carl and his fellow planners at Pghcauldron@gmail.com

Gabriel then shared the current efforts of the Center regarding collaboration with Casa San Jose, Pittsburghers for Public Transit, those working on safe and affordable water in Pittsburgh, and the Anti-War Committee. He encouraged everyone to attend this year's Merton Award dinner honoring the Center for Constitutional Rights on Nov. 20. He then solicited comments and input from the members. Passionate responses came from Rich Fishkin (see article on Page 8) about access to good media and Shirley Gleditsch about the current nuclear threat. A questionnaire was given to each member seeking suggestions for the future: issues, activities, board member suggestions, and nominees for the 2018 New Person and Thomas Merton awards.

Laura Wiens from Pittsburghers for Public Transit and Ron Read from the Anti-War Committee spoke of the efforts of their groups and ways for

TMC members to get engaged. Time was then allotted for members to visit the tables of the several TMC projects who attended: Casa San Jose, Fight for Lifers West, Anti-War Committee, Pittsburghers for Public Transit, Pittsburgh for CEDAW (short for the UN "Convention to End All Discrimination Against Women"), School of the Americas Watch, and the Eco-Justice Working Group. Compassionate Pittsburgh also had a table in which literature about nonviolent communication was available.

Members reconvened for the prize drawing. Rob Conroy won the \$100 gift card for Giant Eagle and the meeting concluded with Ginny and Mark's own version of "Have You Been to Jail for Justice?" Special thanks to the Sisters of Mercy for the gift of the wonderful meeting space and hot beverages. We hope to see more of you at the upcoming Merton Award Dinner honoring the Center for Constitutional Rights on Monday, Nov. 20 at 6 PM at the Sheraton Station Square.

(A few copies of the peace dove print we had at the meeting are still available at the Center for a donation. Stop by to see them if interested. Thanks to volunteer Bette McDevitt for staffing the "sales" table.)

Joyce Rothermel is chair of the Merton Center Membership Committee.

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As a member, *The NewPeople* newspaper will be mailed to your home or sent to your email account. You will also receive weekly e-blasts focusing on peace and justice events in Pittsburgh, and special invitations to membership activities. Now is the time to stand for peace and justice!

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A Tragedy of Imperialism

The Korean Tragedy: Imperialism Run Amuck

By Michael Drohan

In order to understand the present dangerous standoff between President Trump and President Kim Jung Un of the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK), some understanding of the historical background is necessary, if not essential. In this article, given length limitations, I can only provide a mere sketch of the relevant historical trajectory of present-day Korea.

Korea, North and South, was until the end of the 19th century one united land called the Josean Empire, but its autonomy was constantly threatened by foreign interests. Russia, China, Japan, France, Great Britain and the US vied with each other during the 19th century to colonize and control this ancient empire. In 1866, the Manchus of Mongolia invaded, took control of Korea and went on to control China and become Emperors of China. China and Japan went to war over Korea in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. It ended with the Shimonoseki Treaty of 1895, which gave Korea some independence and put an end to Chinese control.

The next epoch of Korean history was what might be called the Japanese colonial era. It began with the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, in which the Japanese defeated Russia. Until 1910 Korea was a Protectorate of Japan and in that

year the country was annexed by Japan. Japanese rule of Korea lasted until 1945 and it rivaled in brutality other colonial regimes such as the British, French and Portuguese. The Japanese suppressed the Korean language, religion and culture unmercifully, giving rise to great antipathy between the two countries. Resistance in Korea was widespread and in 1919 a Provisional Government in exile was formed in Shanghai. During World War Two, the Japanese exploited Korean women, whom the military used as prostitutes, naming them ‘comfort women’.

Japanese control over Korea ended with the surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945 and then began the new colonial/imperial period, with the contest between the Soviet Union and the US for hegemony over this land. The US resented the Soviet liberation of Korea and the upshot was the establishment of two occupation zones on September 8, 1945, the US controlling south of the 38th Parallel and the Soviets north of that line. The Provisional Government of Korea, established in 1919, was ignored in these decisions, principally because the US considered it too aligned with the Soviets. There is a fair amount of symmetry here with what happened in Vietnam. The US became the colonial successor in both cases, in Vietnam of the

French and in Korea of the Japanese. The liberationist movements in both countries tended to be progressive and socialist and found allies in the Soviet Union. The US, for its part, created reactionary puppet regimes in the south of both countries. The contest between the two factions and their imperial backers resulted in the Korean War of 1950-53, which ended in a stalemate and an armistice.

Fast forward to today: The Cold War has long since ended and the Soviet Union no longer exists. The US, however, still has 28,500 soldiers, sailors and Marines occupying South Korea and it trains Korean soldiers, supplying them with the most modern weapons of warfare. More recently the US has installed THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) anti-missiles systems in South Korea, which gives the US the possibility of performing a first strike on North Korea with impunity. Every year or so, the US, in conjunction with Japanese and South Korean forces, carries out war games simulating invasions of North Korea with various attack scenarios. In this context, North Korean semi-paranoia of being attacked by the US is not an irrational reaction. The North Korean impetus to develop nuclear weapons would seem to be not at all crazy in their attempt to prevent their annihilation.

In many ways the conflict between the DPRK and the US is anachronistic. The US is still fighting colonial wars which should have long since ended. The solution is not complicated, or only becomes complicated when the US is led by a President who has no understanding of history or what is really at stake. He seems to consider the DPRK to be a threatening global political and economic power, whereas it is a poor developing country that does not want to go the way of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya.

The solution is relatively straight-forward. The US has to end its military exercises with South Korea and Japan, which are intensely threatening to the DPRK. The US has also to halt sanctions, which are another form of warfare on North Korea and cease moves that diplomatically isolate it. When these actions are taken, diplomatic dialogue between all parties can be entered upon and a peace treaty signed. Once the DPRK is assured that the US has no hostile intentions in their regard, the cessation of the nuclear arming of the DPRK would almost certainly follow.

Michael Drohan is a member of the Editorial Collective and of the Board of the Thomas Merton Center

The Merton Center Presents the 45th Thomas Merton Award to the Center for Constitutional Rights (Cont’d)

By Joyce Rothermel

were co-counsel with CCR and Michael Ratner (former CCR Executive Director) on the case, which we won unanimously in the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals, only to lose 5-4 in the Supreme Court.

“I was impressed with CCR’s work and got to be friendly with Michael. In 1983, Michael asked if I would be interested in bringing a CCR case challenging CIA aid to the (Nicaragua) contras, and I said yes. I did the case as a CCR case, we won in the District Court, and I was asked to join the Board. I ended up serving until 2016. “In the 1980s, I was particularly impressed with the CCR’s challenges to US interventionism in Latin America, their combination of legal and political work, and their use of international law in US courts.”

When asked what he thought were CCR’s greatest achievements, Jules produced a long list.

- CCR won the stop and frisk case in New York City, which helped create political momentum to curb the unconstitutional stopping of Black and Latino people throughout the nation.
- CCR litigated and won the Guantanamo case establishing that war on terror detainees had the right to habeas corpus.
- CCR litigated and won the wom-

en’s right to abortion cases in New York and Connecticut before Roe v. Wade. (They were the precursor of Roe.)

- CCR won and established the right of aliens who suffer injury in violation of international law to sue in Federal Court, leading to hundreds of cases challenging human rights abuses abroad in US Courts.
- CCR was the legal arm of the civil rights movement in the South in the 60s along with the National Lawyers Guild.
- CCR used their legal cases to challenge US intervention in the 1980s in Nicaragua and El Salvador and helped to build a political movement against that intervention.
- CCR represented Haitian boat people seeking asylum in the US, challenging the Bush/ Clinton policy of sending them back to Haiti and detaining those with HIV at Guantanamo.
- CCR challenged solitary confinement in Ohio, California and around the country.

Jules explains, “All of the cases and campaigns above represent either important victories to a popular movement, or instances where CCR utilized the legal struggle to help an important political movement grow



Photo: Center for Constitutional Rights’ website

and gain momentum.” And maybe most astonishing, Jules declares, “CCR has survived all these years as a radical, independent legal force for justice and fundamental societal change.”

When asked about the reason for his own engagement in CCR, Jules says with gratitude, “I have never wanted to be just a progressive lawyer or a solid academic professor, but have always striven to be a radical activist. CCR has given me the opportunity to merge my legal skills with political activism.”

The work of CCR continues to edu-

cate the nation as it practices law. It is currently active in the movement against police brutality and violence against people of color, in struggles of LGBT people for their rights here and internationally, against the abuses and illegalities of the ongoing war against Islamic terrorism. It supports immigrant rights, and generally opposes to the Trump agenda.

Joyce Rothermel serves on the Editorial Collective of The NewPeople.

Seeking A New Economy

Work Hard Pittsburgh the Co-operative Way

By Ron Gaydos

Can a company be profitable enough to influence the economy and still be devoted to its employees, its community, and its environment? About 50 men and women working out of a storefront office in the Allentown neighborhood think so.

Never willing to dismiss the potential for good of some well-aimed cash, Work Hard Pittsburgh (WHP) co-founder Josh Lucas says “progressives don’t do a good enough job of amassing wealth to make social change. We can’t fight this battle with one hand tied behind our back, and that’s the hand trying to reach the wallet!”

Sounds good, but doesn't that also present the danger of sweeping you into the whirlpool of value-extracting capitalism? His answer is that “organizations with the most resources get to communicate and influence the structure of the economy”.

Walking that tightrope of money, power, and social equity, being smaller and community-oriented, WHP is building that influence. As member Kelauni Cook said, “I would hope as the co-op continues to grow, we can involve more people directly from the community - of all races, economic levels and backgrounds - who could benefit from the [same] services, support, and friendship that I receive from Work Hard every day!”

Neighborhood Allies, an organization dedicated to inclusive, innovative, and equitable community development, gave WHP a grant to work with a lawyer to develop a practical model for

cooperative ownership and governance.

On October 1 the co-working company owned by Josh Lucas and Jason Phillips became a 50-member producer and investment cooperative. It maintains a facility for professionals to operate their one—or two—person businesses in a homemade but functional environment. But now those members own the facility, the common equipment, the responsibility of maintaining everything, and the opportunity to pool assets to invest in promising business opportunities together.

Full disclosure: I’m a member of the Work Hard Cooperative and Work Hard is a member of the organization I co-founded and run, the Pittsburgh Chamber of Cooperatives. The Chamber has also advised Work Hard on integrating the cooperative principles into its governance and member operating agreement.

Thanks to a \$250,000 grant from Allegheny County, WHP is able to start off in control of its facility and use that asset as a base for future investment in the area’s cooperative economy.

Why do it this way rather than as a regular top-down company? Mr. Lucas can tell you how hard it is to gradually relinquish control of his “baby” to a larger group of co-owners, but “it’s for wealth building for people traditionally locked out of opportunities to build wealth themselves.” Gradually, members are starting to share responsibilities and taking initiative in the cooperative’s real estate development and management, membership policies,

and sales and marketing.

Work Hard is already providing wealth building opportunities that include people traditionally locked out of profitable business opportunities themselves.

“We need wealthy, prosperous organizations to take the lead, to advocate for and demonstrate the viability of doing business while supporting the rights of workers and addressing community needs, and applying political pressure for government to do the right thing,” declares Mr. Lucas. “We live in the system we live in,” so we have to work within it to some extent to be relevant, and the cooperative model is a good way to accomplish these goals.

Putting this premise into practice, WHP has a co-op-owned digital services subsidiary based on the producer cooperative model, where independent member businesses collaborate on professional engagements for mutual benefit. “I dig the idea,” says Buzzy Torek, Work Hard member and owner of the Epicast Network, a media engineering company. “It’s an important idea and a cool opportunity. Now I have more reasons to collaborate and more motivation to be successful myself because we all have a stake in it.”

WHP has also established Pittsburgh Academy, a coding boot-camp-style school where graduates pay a tuition fee only once they attain full-time employment in the field. Academy grads are also welcomed into the Work Hard world to stay as long as they like to

work on their careers or business ideas.

“It’s given me a great network of people who can plug me into the resources and opportunities I need to further my career as a software developer,” says Academy graduate Kelauni Cook.

Many members started out at WHP just to get into the co-working space, and have appreciated Work Hard’s larger aspirations to help transform the economic landscape. “I joined Work Hard because I was looking for affordable, shared office space to work alongside like-minded people,” says member Anthony Stewart, founder of environmental consulting firm DECO Resources. “Work Hard has been like a family. My time here so far has provided one of the most amazing experiences of my life.”

Can Work Hard influence the economic culture in the region and beyond? Yes, according to member Brian Conway, a freelance writer and reporter. “I think that Work Hard Pittsburgh is just beginning to realize the tremendous amount of potential and talent we hold in-house and I am excited to see if together we can make a positive impact in Allentown, the Hilltop area and Pittsburgh as a whole.”

Ron Gaydos is a consultant in inclusive economic development, entrepreneurship, and organizational strategy. Ron is a Co-Founder of the Pittsburgh Chamber of Cooperatives. (www.PittsburghChamber.coop), which grew out of the Thomas Merton Center’s New Economy Campaign.

Mark Dixon to Give Climate Review

By Jim McCarville

Mark Dixon will share stories about the 2015 Paris Climate Summit, its significance, and our prospects for a livable future. He will speak at 7 PM, on Tuesday, November 28 at CMU’s Cohon University Center (5032 Forbes Avenue) in Oakland.

Mark presents a candid view of the current state of the climate, the political climate and the activism that informs it. He speaks to our prospects for reducing greenhouse gas emission as well as the the possibility of removing them from the atmosphere.

Mark is an award-winning filmmaker, photographer, activist, and public speaker exploring the frontiers of social change on a finite planet. After graduating from Stanford University with a degree in industrial engineering, Mark worked for start-up companies in Silicon Valley. Once he committed himself to climate change activism, he turned to documentary filmmaking.

Mark is currently working on a new documentary entitled "Inversion: The Unfinished Business of Pittsburgh's Air." He has given presentations on environmental topics to diverse audiences including Carnegie Mellon University, Yale University, Stanford University, Sony Pictures, TEDx Pittsburgh, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Mark also serves on the board of the Thomas Merton Center. His activism photography has been featured in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture. You can read more about Mark’s work at <http://lens.blue/>.

The lecture is free but registration is required. CMU’s Osher members may register by calling 412-268-7489. If you are not an Osher member, send an email to jim.mccarville@gmail.com.

Jim McCarville is a member of the TMC Board of Directors.



Affordable Care Act Enrollment

2018 Marketplace Open Enrollment

Whether you get coverage through the Marketplace or not, you'll need to enroll in minimal essential coverage during the annual open enrollment period or qualify for special enrollment.

Starts:
November 1, 2017

Ends:
December 15, 2017

Learn more at obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-sign-up or by going to the official Marketplace at healthcare.gov



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Alienating Fans From Players

Take Me Out to the Ballgame: National Identity, Populism and Professional Sport

By Jo Tavener

Editor's Note: While we often talk about sport only within the history of the actual games via team and player stats, when it comes to players bending a knee at the National Anthem we have entered an entirely different world, one that makes sense only in terms of sport ideology and labor relations. In order to set the current controversy of Black football players bending a knee within such a context, we need to return to the cultural history of baseball, starting in the 19th Century when much of the ideology of sport and the relations of owner to fan to player were shaped.

Baseball, like America, is sui generis. It springs from the soil full blown, creating the values, the culture, the meaning of being American. Baseball represents the nation, its competition, its manner of play, its dugout chatter, its stories and lore. By the 1870s there was such a thing as “baseball diplomacy,” with players showing off the game in Egypt, in France and England. On arriving home Walt Whitman remarked, “[Baseball] the hurrah game! – it’s our game: [it] has the snap, go, fling, of the American atmosphere – belongs as much to our institutions, fits into them as significantly, as our constitutions, laws: is just as important in the sum of our historic life.” The Supreme Court agreed with Whitman when it provided the game with its antitrust exemption in 1922.

Celebrated as protecting the nation’s civil life, baseball evoked a patriotism, an abiding populist strain in our political rhetoric, which claimed baseball resided in the public sphere, where we are not workers or bosses but all citizens, equal to one another as Americans.

That rhetorical stance and its accompanying emotions set up a potential conflict with the business of baseball. To paraphrase team owner Albert Spalding, baseball is like any business, making bats and balls and cultivating skilled workers as others make laundry soap for launderers. Players are paid to skillfully use the bats and balls. Their job is to win the game. The baseball diamond is their industrial floor, where they work to produce wins for fans and money for their employers.

Another strain on the rhetoric surrounding American sport is the nature of our fandom. As spectators we expect to see a well-played game performed by highly skilled athletes. We hope, even demand, that our team wins. Though the leagues are national, the teams are rooted in their local setting; the fans identify with the home team they love...or hate – depending on the game’s outcome. No one loved their team more than did Brooklynites their Dodgers. Still, when the team lost, the players were no better than bums! Celebrity hasn’t changed that. Instead, it has added even more pressure to win the game.

The core contradiction is this: though we look upon our players as heroes, we are the ones paying good money to see the game. Ultimately, they work for us! Their job is to win for us! When they win, we win! Our city wins! When they lose one game, it’s expected. When they lose a stretch of games, we wonder why they get paid so much. The man-boys who used to play for the love of the game have

disappeared. Their big salaries gall us, especially when they’re losing!

Something changed in our relation to the game and its players when the game moved off the field and into a stadium; when the players no longer formed a cooperative and managed themselves (1840s-50s); when teams were owned by men who turned players into indentured servants and made a profit off their play (1890s onward); when fans began to identify with ownership via team loyalty, and players became celebrity entertainers as much as athletes.

As sport was reshaped by the growth of consumer capitalism, spectatorship came to objectify players, alienate workers and eventually strand the fans. Maybe one or two on a team became franchise players, wedded to the team and town, but most were itinerant workers, moving from team to team until no one would hire them. If those were the stakes, why not do whatever it takes to win; use enhancement drugs if necessary, play for one’s own stats and, as shown by the Black Sox scandal of 1919, fraternize with gamblers as a form of worker defiance. Gambling, baseball’s original sin, was an unworkable projection of the relation of fan to player to team.

What worked was fantasy ball. When fans experience the game as a business and themselves as dupes, what could be better than turning to fantasy ball, becoming a fantasy owner oneself, and dealing with players through their stats and what they can do for us – if only for bragging rights, though gambling among these pseudo-owners abounds. In a similar manner, the NFL found a way to make gambling part of the fan experience, largely because football was a corporate creation from its construction, with fans in its corner from the outset

The professional team and spectator sport are not the only sport experience. There’s little league baseball and football. There’s high school and college sports, letters to be won, the high of braggadocio and the problematic notion of the “amateur” college athlete – over all of it hovers the history of baseball and how it shaped the sport/nation dynamic as well as the contradictions arising from the productive relations of both amateur and professional sport. As a great French philosopher once said, “man does not live his conditions of production; he lives his relation to the conditions of production.” That is the arena of ideology, controversy and politics.

Jo Tavener is a member of the NewPeople editorial collective and the Thomas Merton Center.



Tuesday, November 14, 2017

6:30 p.m.

Letter Carriers Union Hall, 821 California
Avenue, 15212

THE PLOT TO SCAPEGOAT RUSSIA by Dan Kovalik

How the CIA and the Deep State Have Conspired to Vilify Putin, while continuing their policy of permanent war

“A powerful contradiction to the present US narrative of the world... As shown here, fake news is thriving in Washington, DC.” —OLIVER STONE

Dan Kovalik is a union lawyer with the United Steel Workers (USW), and an internationally-recognized Human Rights activist and attorney, having travelled more than 30 times to Columbia and Venezuela, as well as to the Congo, Iran and other hotspots around the globe. His firsthand accounts and union perspective are critical contributions to understanding US military activity around the world.

For those involved in important domestic fights, such as healthcare, the environment, labor rights and union drives, immigration, discrimination, upcoming elections, etc., the US military wars and fronts around the world, as well as the yearly increasing, already bloated military budget for these adventures, will greatly impact budgets and available funds, domestic programs and every struggle down to the local and community level. We hope you will attend this important presentation and discussion.

In Profits We Trust

Pro Sports, Politics and Profits Are Indivisible

By Neil Cosgrove

Harold Lasswell's definition of politics as "who gets what, when, how" is probably the most widely accepted one in the field of political science.

By that definition, the complaint of many fans that an athlete's body position during performances of the national anthem brings politics into professional sporting events certainly has validity. Growing numbers of African-American athletes have used those performances to protest our unequal system of justice, and lingering economic and social inequality.

Where many of those same fans err is in their assumption that team owners' decisions about performances of the anthem and other displays of supposedly "patriotic" fervor, not to mention the insistence that there is only one way to display respect for the flag, the anthem, and the country itself, are somehow not political. As is often the case, this mistaken assumption stems from historical ignorance or amnesia. The motive for patriotic displays and the manner in which they have been performed have always been political, reflecting the economic concerns of owners wishing to maintain and grow the value of their franchises through currying the favor of their ticket-buying fans and the politicians who have actively subsidized their enterprise.

During the baseball season, for instance, games are daily events and before controversy exploded regarding the Vietnam War performance of the anthem was reserved for Sundays and holidays, Joshua Levin recently observed in the *Washington Post*. Levin argues that baseball owners were also well aware during the mid-to-late '60s that football was beginning "to surpass baseball as America's most popular sport" and that NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle was using player deportment during the anthem, Air Force flyovers, USO tours, and other devices as demonstrably "political acts" meant to shore up support for an increasingly unpopular war.

Those with a long memory will recall that these same sports franchise owners were actively using National Guard and reserve units to keep their star athletes out of Vietnam and playing on their teams. In his book *Vietnam Shadows*, Arnold R. Isaacs recounts what the head of Maryland's National Guard said at the time. "We have an arrangement with the Colts. When they have a player with a military problem, they send him to us." The practice was common, to the extent that Colin Powell complained bitterly about it decades later in his autobiography.

Such rampant hypocrisy may not be surprising if one recognizes that faux patriotism and staying on the right side of the political aisle can contribute to the bottom line. By now, it's common knowledge that the Department of Defense paid \$5.4 million to 14 NFL teams from 2011-14 to put on pre-game flag ceremonies and veteran tributes. But that is chump change if one considers what political influence can do for the sale value of the sports franchise itself, especially when public funding of a stadium or arena is involved.

One good example is the tale of former



Photo: forbes.com

Texas Air National Guardsman George W. Bush. The website *Quora* reports that in 1989 our former president helped form a syndicate that purchased the Texas Rangers baseball team for \$89 million. Bush's personal stake was \$600,000 but his true value was demonstrated in 1991, when he convinced the city of Arlington, TX to fund most of a new \$191 million stadium, which improved the team's value so much that it was sold in 1998 for \$250 million. Bush's cut was \$14.9 million.

NewPeople readers may consider public attempts to correct gross racial inequality more patriotic than standing erect in front of a flag. But owners of NFL teams are probably most concerned with what the estrangement of players and paying customers might do to their profits. (See the article on Page 6). Nearly 70% of professional football players are currently African-American (up from around 30% in 1970), making defense of athletes from Trump's charge they are "sons of bitches" necessary in the heat of that moment.

But 83% of the NFL's fan base is white, according to the *Real GM* website, and a great many of those folks have already indicated that they find the players' political statements detract from their paid entertainment more than the flag-waving does. Given recent declines in pro football's attendance figures and television ratings, for several reasons, it's not surprising that the owners considered changing the NFL operations manual to say that players "must stand at attention" during the anthem (instead of the former wording, "should stand"), with individual players and teams receiving such punishments as fines and losses of draft picks if they don't. When player anthem protests dwindled the owners withdrew the proposal.

Until the next wave of political expression by players occurs because, for NFL owners, the best patriotic gestures and the best politics are the kind that maximize profits.

Neil Cosgrove is a member of The NewPeople Editorial Collective and the Merton Center Board.

Remember the Merton Center on #Giving Tuesday, November 28

By Joyce Rothermel

#GivingTuesday, this year on November 28th, is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media. It is celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.). With the widely recognized shopping events, Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

Plan now to visit www.thomasmertoncenter on Tuesday, November 28. When you make your donation on line on that day, a generous donor of the Merton Center has offered to match your gift and that of others up to \$5,200. This end of the year gift can help the Center continue its efforts and finish 2017 in the black. Whether through #GiveBigPittsburgh or directly on the TMC website—please give to TMC on November 28th.



Another reminder, if you are 70.5 years of age or older, and have an Individual Retirement Account (not a Roth IRA) that requires a minimum distribution, you may direct all or part of it to charitable organizations before the end of the calendar year. By doing so, you will not have to pay taxes on that portion of your RMD. Congress made this provision permanent in 2015. Whatever funds you direct to the charitable organizations, however, cannot be later claimed as a charitable tax deduction when submitting your annual federal tax return. For more information, please call TMC member Bonnie DiCarlo at 412-480-5247.

Escaping Dystopia

Review of Book: "No is Not Enough" By Michael Drohan

In a sense, the title of this book belies its contents. It is primarily a powerful dissection of what might be called the Trump phenomenon and its origins. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the book spells out an alternative to the present dire situation which the US and the world faces. The postscript of the book is entitled "The Leap Manifesto: A Call for Caring for the Earth and One Another." It is a proclamation that another world is possible, a world which is the inverse of everything that Trump symbolizes and wants to impose on the world.

A theme going through the book is that it is a mistake to focus on the personality of Trump and to fantasize that all would be well if only he were impeached or somehow removed from office. "Trump is not a rupture at all" Naomi Klein says "but rather the culmination of a great many dangerous stories our culture has been telling us for a very long time. That greed is good. That the market rules. That money is what matters in life. That white men are better than the rest. That the natural world is there for us to pillage. That the vulnerable deserve their fate and the one percent deserve their golden towers. That anything public or commonly held is sinister and not worth protecting. That we are

surrounded by danger and should only look after our own. That there is no alternative to any of this."

Thus, Trump is merely the avatar of a Weltanschauung that threatens humanity and the planet. In another place Klein states "even if this nightmarish presidency were to end tomorrow, the political conditions that produced it, and which are producing replicas around the world, will remain to be confronted." The author traces the rise the Trump ideology back to Reagan and the Bushes and, more broadly, to the ideology of neoliberalism that both major political parties share.

Ms. Klein devotes a good part of the book elaborating on the role of branding in the contemporary capitalist economies and how it has corrupted every dimension of the economic process of production, distribution and consumption. The book walks one through the historical development of the branding process leading to the present situation, where corporations realize that to be successful (make mega-profits) they must primarily produce brands as opposed to products. Corporations had realized in the 1980s that the market was flooded with almost identical products and many consumers were making decisions

based on price, not brand name. To the rescue came the Nikes, Apples, Starbucks and their clones with a different idea, namely that of creating "a transcendent idea or brand surrounding your company." So Starbucks, for instance, proclaimed that it was not really selling coffee but the idea of the "third place," not home, not work, and could charge a premium of several times the price of a coffee for it. Since the focus of the Nikes of the world was to produce brands, they outsourced the production of the goods to lowest wage markets of the world and washed their hands of responsibility for just wages or working conditions.

Donald Trump, according to Klein, goes a step further in that his brand is his name, which symbolizes power, privilege and impunity. She states, "his brand is being the ultimate boss, the guy who is so rich, he can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, and to whomsoever he wants (including grabbing whichever woman he wants, by whichever body part he wants)." The flaunting of wealth accumulation and all its signifiers, such as gold curtains and private jets, are his signature identifiers. In regard to how he accumulated his fortune, Ms. Klein records an illuminating anecdote of how he duped Colonel Qaddafi of Libya out of millions as follows: "I

rented him a piece of land. He paid me more for one night than the land was worth for a whole year, or for two years, and then I didn't let him use the land. That's what we should be doing. I don't want to use the word screwed, but I screwed him. That's what we should be doing." Trump said these words on *Fox and Friends* in 2011.

Trump's cabinet is replete with fellow travelers, of whom Klein states "to an alarming extent, he has collected a team of individuals who made their personal fortunes by knowingly causing harm to some of the most vulnerable people on the planet, and to the planet itself, often in the midst of crisis." She details that in his cabinet, eight individuals are worth as much as half the world.

Ms. Klein's book is a pretty broad expose of most facets of the Trump kingdom, exposing it with all its ugliness. But Klein is insistent that just saying no and critiquing the Trump disaster is not enough. In that spirit, she spells out the alternative and ends the book with a template of an alternative to the Trumpian dystopian blueprint.

This author is a member of the Editorial Collective and of the Board of the Thomas Merton Center

Radio Activists: Lost & Found By Rich Flshkin

For me WAR is the enemy, the capitalist military industrial complex is the agency. War sucks all the money from our national budget and all the guts from our democracy. As Phil Agee said, "capitalism is inherently unfair and unstable, it requires a national security state, a police state, to maintain law and order by force."

Phil Berrigan reminded us that "truth is the first casualty of war." Can our constitutional rights be far behind? Censorship is the order of the day. As Howard Zinn said, "governments lie, especially when it comes to war."

And now we can add climate change. My personal favorite is Florida Governor Rick Scott banning the terms 'climate change' and "global warming" and replacing them with "atmospheric reemployment!" Equally egregious is the Israeli government's attempts to silence the Divestment movement by equating criticism of Israel's Palestine policy with anti-Semitic hate speech!

"In times of universal deceit," George Orwell once said, "speaking truth to power is a revolutionary act." Enter the radioactivist, defender of free speech on our public airwaves, precious to democracy but tragically undervalued and too often ignored by peace and social justice activists.

Remember, the First Amendment guarantees an individual's right to express and to be exposed to a wide

range of opinions and views. It was intended to ensure a free exchange of ideas, even unpopular ones. The Communications Act of 1934 allocated radio spectrum space for non-commercial stations to fulfill this fundamental right of democracy.

It is a true "tragedy of the commons" that over the years these laws have been gutted and paved over by privatization. Pittsburgh's media landscape, including community radio, is a classic case study in media monopoly and consolidation. WYEP-FM is a pale, anemic shadow of it's original self, a now privatized place "where the music matters," and the conversations of democracy are silenced. As far as WE-SA-FM is concerned; it features NPR, aka National Propaganda Radio, where censorship is rampant. Please see the FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) study of NPR's political guest list.

Enter the radioactivist. This year's Merton Center award winner, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), has a radioactive cousin, Law and Disorder Radio, heard locally every Monday at 9 am on WRCT - 88.3 FM and on the internet at lawanddisorder.org. It should be required listening, a "continuing education" for all activists!

WRCT presents a great block of radio-active public affairs programming on Mondays with Democracy NOW! (M-F, 8am), Law and Disorder (9am) and

David Barsamian's Alternative Radio (10am). David calls it "Audio Energy For Democracy!"

Please! Please! Please! support these great programs by listening, donating, telling others and, last but certainly not least, fighting to get them on WESA/WYEP, Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting.

Recommended Podcasts:

- Economic Update, Richard Wolff, Marxist Economics
- FAIR
- Project Censored

Books:

- *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, Robert McChesney
- *The New Media Monopoly*, Ben Bagdikian
- *War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us To Death*, Norman Solomon

Report:

- *A Storm of Silence: Media Coverage of Climate Change and Hurricane Harvey*, Public Citizen

(Continue on Page 10)



Information provided by VoteAllegheny

2017 Elections Calendar

October: Tuesday **10/24/17**—LWV Pgh publishes Voters Guide in the New Pittsburgh Courier <http://www.NewPittsburghCourierOnline.com/>

November: Friday **11/3/17**—Last day for county to receive civilian absentee ballots

Tuesday **11/7/17**—General **election** for Pgh Mayor, County Sheriff, City & County council seats, some borough executives, judges (all levels), school boards, and polling place election officials

Monday **11/27/17**—Board of Elections meeting to certify election

VoteAllegheny is a group of volunteers committed to ensuring that citizens of Allegheny County have safe, reliable, accessible, recountable, voter-verifiable elections. Join us at our weekly meetings on Sundays at the Smallman Street Deli on Murray Ave at 4pm, or visit us online at VoteAllegheny.org

Budgets for the Rich

Budget Impasse a Threat to General Welfare

By Molly Rush

In the 1970s, corporate tax rate was 28%, while today it is under 15%. Governor Tom Corbett cut funds for human services to the poor, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Moreover, seven out of ten companies in Pennsylvania pay no corporate income tax. Why? Their “home offices” are in a drawer in Delaware. It’s called the Delaware Loophole. Companies registered at this tax haven, include Apple, Coca Cola, Google and Wal-Mart, among thousands of others. Also registered in Delaware are the 400 companies of the Marcellus Shale Coalition and billionaire Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway, now very active locally.

Donald Trump has 378 companies

registered in Delaware, including Trump Tower. “I don’t feel guilty, right?” Also, Hillary and Bill Clinton have registered ZFS Holdings, in part to cover her speaking and book income.

On March 6th the *Citizens Voice* reported that Governor Tom Wolf proposed joining 23 other states that already have closed the loophole. Wolf also supported making businesses and their subsidiaries file their tax returns as a single company. Republicans rebuffed him, despite a \$2 billion budget deficit. At the same time they want to lower the current corporate tax rate.

So small businesses and we taxpayers foot the bill while the corporations get

off the hook. Why should a family making \$36,000 pay taxes while a profitable corporation gets off scot free?

We’re in the midst of a \$2.2 billion deficit while Republicans allow the state’s credit rating to plunge. Schools and other vital services can’t pay their bills while legislators refuse to increase taxes. Meanwhile they oppose a loophole that would fill some gaps. So the state’s credit rating has already been lowered.

By September 15th schools and Medicaid recipients faced having their payments put on hold. At this writing on October 13th, legislators were evidently prepared to accept suffering and chaos rather than come up with a solution.

It’s past time for we constituents to hit home by contacting our legislators to express our frustration with their behavior. Go to <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/> to learn how to contact your Senator and House member. Get your friends together and meet with him/her and tell your stories. We need a win.

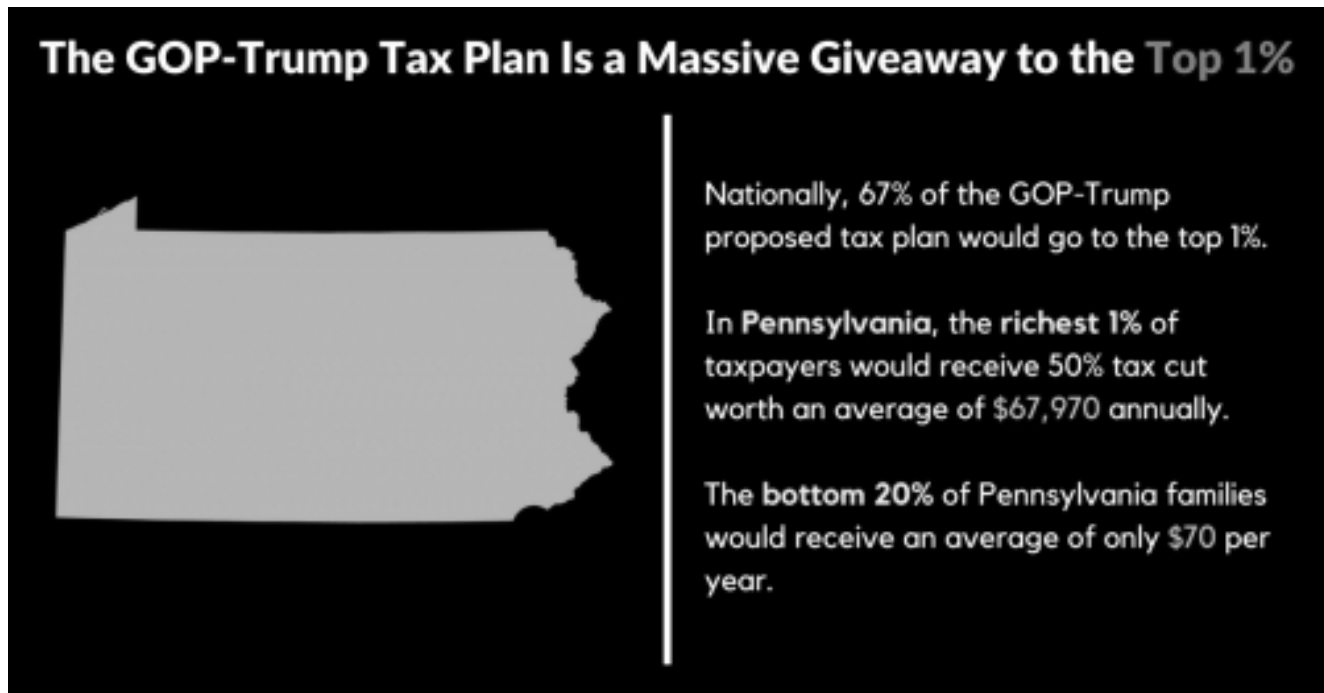
The 2018 election is coming up and we must begin right now to organize, educate and protest this indifference to the welfare of their constituents.

Molly Rush is a member of theTMC board and the Editorial Collective.

The Republican Tax Plan: Less Money; More Problems

By Emily Cleath and Kristie Weiland-Stagno

Image: thirdandstate.org



use is one you’re probably familiar with, a myth that 44% of Americans believe: if you give more wealth to millionaires it will strengthen our economy and trickle down to everyone else.

The Trickle Down Failure

We’ve been running the trickle-down economics experiment for decades. The Trump/Ryan tax plan largely duplicates a series of tax cuts Kansas passed in 2012. Kansans repealed those cuts this summer after they stalled the state’s economy and almost bankrupted their government. Nationally, research shows that tax cuts haven’t produced greater growth. Quite the opposite: raising taxes, like during the Clinton and Obama administrations, produced years of economic growth.

At Just Harvest we run the largest free tax filing assistance program for low-income working families in Allegheny County. We know a tax-scam when we see one.

President Trump and House Speaker Ryan are trying to sell the public on a scheme they’re calling “tax reform” to, they claim, simplify the tax code, give tax breaks to everyone, and help our economy.

This year we helped nearly 3,000 tax filers. We know how complicated tax returns are and who it is that benefits from which tax breaks. The Trump/Ryan plan is a swindle to primarily make the wealthy wealthier.

Objective independent organizations – the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, and the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center – all found that most of the money the government will be returning to taxpayers will go to the richest 1%.

Makes Rich richer, Poor poorer

Here are just a few examples of the rich getting richer:

1. Corporate tax rates, paid mostly by wealthy Americans, are cut by 40%;
 2. The top tax rate on the richest individuals is lowered from 39.6% to 35%;
- and

3. The tax on people inheriting estates over \$5.5 million is eliminated.

Low- and middle-income Americans will not get the same windfall.

1. The lowest individual tax rate increases from 10% to 12%.
2. While the standard deduction will double, the personal exemption will be eliminated, meaning families with more than 2 children may pay more in taxes.
3. Low-income working families claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which lifts more children out of poverty than any other program, will be subjected to a mini-audit beforehand, with paperwork no other taxpayer is required to do and delaying their sorely-needed refund by months.

Making tax returns harder and more confusing for EITC recipients is not “simplifying the tax code.” Does any of this sound fair to you?

It’s Counterproductive

Moreover, it’s counterproductive. Taxes are needed to protect the most vulnerable, ensure a basic standard of living, invest in our communities, and give all people a chance to succeed. Taxes are how we pool a portion of what we’ve earned thanks to the benefits of civil society – transit and energy infrastructure, schools and job training, public health systems – to

support that society.

Those who have benefited more should contribute more. Instead, the Trump/Ryan plan cuts taxes for corporations and the super-wealthy (including Trump and most U.S. legislators). It will cost everyone else \$2.4 trillion over the next ten years.

If they want to afford these giveaways and avoid more debt, which they frequently decry, legislators will have to make \$2.4 trillion in cuts. How can they do this? The companion Trump/Ryan budget plan – which is key to their tax plan – will slash and dismantle domestic programs and services.

House Republicans approved a budget resolution in October that the Senate may have voted on before you read this article. The House plan eliminates the Affordable Care Act and has huge cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security Income (for people with disabilities), SNAP/food stamps, school meals, affordable housing and child care, cash assistance, college aid, high-quality public schools, job training and development, public health services, research and development, and environmental and consumer protections; everything the government does to make this country great.

The rationale that tax plan supporters

The wealthy don’t need a penny more. Low-income people need more tax breaks, and they’ll put that money into the economy immediately by spending it. All of us will benefit in some way from a nation

- where everyone can get by,
- where one in five children don’t live in poverty,
- where millions don’t have to rely on government assistance or work 2-3 jobs just to put food on the table,
- where we don’t pay people poverty wages and give tax breaks to corporations so they can pass that money on to their CEOs and shareholders,
- where quality childcare, education, healthcare, and housing are affordable for all, and
- where everyone has clean air to breathe and water to drink.

These are the reforms our country needs and that Just Harvest and the Thomas Merton Center work to advance every day. Join us.

Emily Cleath and Kristie Weiland-Stagno are staff members of Just Harvest, a Center for Action against Hunger.

Pilgrims for Peace

Alternative Pilgrimage to Palestine/Israel

By Marge and Neil Himber

This year, 2017, marks 100 years since the Balfour Declaration on Palestine, 70 years since the UN Partition plan, 50 years since the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, and 30 years since the beginning of the first Palestinian intifada.

With this backdrop, TMC members Neil and Marge Himber participated in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in August, arranged through the Siraj Center for Holy Land Studies (www.sirajcenter.org). It was much more than a visit to holy sites. The Palestinian guide and bus driver provided first hand accounts of growing up as Christian living under military occupation today.

We found a Bethlehem surrounded by a thirty-foot-high concrete wall and Israeli military checkpoints. Drivers showed identification and sometimes had to open the trunk of their car for inspection. It was frustrating, humiliating and slow. It took the bus an hour to pass through the gate.

We were briefed by people who are working for justice in Palestine. We heard from Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh, the director of the Palestine Museum of Natural History. He had previously served as Research Associate at the Section of Mammals, Carnegie Museum of Natural History in

Pittsburgh from January 1990 to October 1999. See www.qumsiyeh.org.

At the Aida Refugee Camp, established in 1950 by Palestinians driven from their homes, we saw refugees living with frequent water shortages and power outages, only one school and no medical facilities. Some food and necessities were provided by the UN and charitable organizations. It was only one of 19 camps in the occupied territories

At B'tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Danielle Cohen described how her organization, staffed by Israeli Jews, reports on violence in the West Bank perpetrated both by the Israeli Army and Settlers. See: www.btselem.org

Then, at a Christian Peacemaking Team (CPT) office in Hebron, we learned how the faith-based CPT supports Palestinian, nonviolent, grassroots resistance to the Israeli occupation and the unjust structures that uphold it. They provide protective presence at three Israeli military checkpoints located in the H2 area of Hebron. See: www.cpt.org/work/palestine

We then rode to the Tent of Nations project, a 100-acre Palestinian

organic farm known as 'Daher's Vineyard,' in occupied Palestine. It has been owned by the Nassar family since 1916. They registered their land during the British Mandate period, and have Land Registration documents that list the boundaries. Daoud Nasser and his family manage the farm and are devout Christians. Their motto is "We refuse to be enemies."

Unfortunately the state of Israel has been attempting to confiscate the Nassar farm. Settlers backed by the Army have destroyed fruit trees and diverted water. Daoud spoke about this in Pittsburgh several years ago at a Friends of Sabeel (FOSNA) conference.

Omar Haramy, Administrator of The Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, described "A Palestinian Reading of the Bible." He concluded that a nonviolent answer to the occupation must include the world's churches. www.sabeel.org One speaker explained the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. Another from Addameer, a Palestinian prisoner support and human rights association, told about indefinite detention, torture and other violations against prisoner's basic human rights. See www.addameer.org

A Palestinian father and an Israeli father who had each lost a young daughter to the violence also spoke. They are members of Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF), a grassroots organization of bereaved Palestinians and Israelis. Their story was heartbreaking. Over 600 families are now members of PCFF. They reach out from their pain and loss to call for reconciliation and dialogue to prevent further bereavement. See www.theparentscircle.com

We felt blessed to have visited the Holy Land and to have met so many wonderful people. We were encouraged that peace with justice will come when, to borrow a phrase from Mother Theresa, we come to recognize Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor, the Palestinian, the refugee, the prisoner, and the oppressed.

Friends of Sabeel continues to offer alternative tours on a regular basis. Based on our experience, we highly recommend that anyone interested in peace in the Middle East participate in one of their pilgrimages.

Marge and Neil Himber are members of the Thomas Merton Center.



Photo: Marge and Neil Himber

Radio Activists: Lost & Found (Cont'd)

By Rich Fishkin

Call to Action:

Please Contact:
Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting Corporation
67 Bedford Square
Pittsburgh, PA 15203
412.381.9131
CEO, Terry O'Reilly: toreilly@wesa.fm
General Manager, John Sutton: jsutton@wesa.fm
General Manager, Abby Goldstein: abby@wyep.org
Director of Content & Programming, Mike Sauter: mike@wyep.org
Director of Education & Community Engagement, Matthew Spangler: matthew@wyep.org

In honor of the CCR Award, let's start using the "carrot and the stick," lobbying for LDR! If you are a member of WESA/WYEP, call and write,

asking them to put Law and Disorder Radio on. If you can do civil disobedience, occupy their broadcast studio on the South Side, a stone's throw from Station Square.

Lawyers and legal eagles, file a class action law suit. English majors, write letters to the editors of local newspapers, start a petition, and thank you very much!

I have been a peace and social justice videographer for many years in Pittsburgh, documenting many TMC events, spent 10 years in the trenches of cable tv franchising politics in Pgh, early public access producer, Peace TV. I became a radioactivist living in Tampa because of a great community radio station, WMNF, a Pacifica Radio affiliate. Please visit my youtube page at richfishpgh.

TMC Director on Criminalizing Transit Riders (Cont'd)

By Gabriel McMorland

a violent canine unit and, at a recent board meeting, PAAC considered purchasing an armored personnel carrier.

At the rally outside Costa's office, speakers called on the entire PAAC board and CEO to reverse their policy. Organizers highlighted Dom Costa because of his consistent voting record in Harrisburg sponsoring virulent anti-immigrant legislation, expanding police powers, and undermining civil rights. Still, we know that the PAAC board chair, CEO, and official spokes-

people continue to publicly support their reckless policing plans. The authorities continue to hide behind claims of technocratic inevitability, while our mayor and county executive remain silent.

We want to see our Port Authority succeed, see ridership increase, and have everyone feel safe moving through their daily lives. This plan undermines all of that. Let civilian employees handle fare enforcement with an administrative fine instead of criminal citations. This approach al-

ready works for parking tickets and the turnpike. We will not allow "modernizing" the system to excuse violence, fear, and the criminalization of our public lives.

Perhaps this plan comes more from willful ignorance than ill-will, but that is no excuse. The assumption that more policing leads to safer, more efficient public services comes from a largely white and privileged perspective. The violent ideology of law and order extends beyond the spectacle of politics to influence decision mak-

ers who see themselves as neutral, technocratic administrators. Their job is to keep transit riders safe, not to lash out with harsh punishments against the "theft" of a \$2.75 ride.

The campaign repeatedly presented PAAC with the following demands through letters from organizations, hundreds of petition signatures, dozens of people testifying at PAAC board meetings, and a meeting between organizers and interim PAAC CEO David Donahoe shortly after he was hired in summer 2017.

Provocative Speakers

The Theology of Biology

By Jim McCarville

Is there a theology of biology? A theology of evolution?

John Haught, a Georgetown University Distinguished Research Professor, thinks so. In fact, he told the Association of Pittsburgh Priests at their October Speaker Series event, that, in his mind, “theology does not make sense without them.” While most theologians look for meaning by reading scriptures, Haught wants us instead to learn to read the universe. He places theology, biology and evolution all in the unfolding “Big History” of the universe. However, unlike what he calls the oft-studied “outside stories” of biology and evolution, he calls theology the neglected or “inside story,” the evolution going on inside man from matter to life to mind. Mankind is such a recent part, he says, in the 14-billion-year story of evolution, that we shouldn’t expect to have all of the answers yet.

To understand these bold statements we have to step back to understand what he means by religion and theology.

In his book, *The New Cosmic Story: Inside Our Awakening Universe*, he defines religion as the pathways people seek “through the severest limits on life, not only the threat of death, but also the experience of fate, guilt, doubt and meaninglessness.” Not your traditional definition of religion.

Haught credits mankind’s “inside” evolution to our extraordinary skill to symbolize (to make one thing stand in for another) as an enabler of both language and religion. Early man, who was greatly exposed to the whims of nature, used this symbolic skill to seek appeasement of the supernatural through rituals and petitions.

Then he writes that in an axial (or evolutionary transitional) age that took place between two thousand and three thousand years ago, a remarkable evolution in human consciousness began. It was more symbolic, more mystical than what went before. It combined our sense of “being” with “goodness, truth, beauty and unity hidden beyond, or deep within, the world of ordinary experience.... It was the birth of a

new sense of rightness, a hidden realm that sometimes was called “god.” It was not just a set of interior intuitions, but a great event in the history of the universe. It was a personal awakening, a spiritual transformation. Our purpose, they taught, was for us “to awaken to this hidden realm ... and [to] allow ourselves to be transformed by it.” Haught says we find evidence of this awakening common in Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and many other modern religions.

Therefore, Haught looks for God’s revelation not only in reading books, but also in reading from the evolution of the universe. He wants us to look more into the process about where we are headed than in the traditions of where we have come from. Understandably, most historic religious analysis was developed before we had the insights of science. His key insight then is to recognize we can understand today we couldn’t understand before we had the advent of scientific analysis. Instead of fearing what science informs us, he wants us to embrace it – wholeheartedly.

We don’t have all of the answers yet. (Haught says that is why the bible places such a high value on the virtue of patience.) But Haught also says we may be spending too much time looking in wrong places. He urges us not to seek a perfect design, but to embrace biology’s and mankind’s design flaws as essential to our evolution and unfolding of life. We don’t have all of the answers because we are still evolving.

It may be a hard concept for us to grasp, but he says evolution is the infinite slowly and continually sharing itself into the finite. This is a big part of the “inside story” of evolution, and Jesus, he says, is the perfect “self-humbling, self-emptying example” of this sharing. So, if we want to try to understand the concept of redemption, he says, look more into where we are going and less into fighting over where we have been. He calls this “faith.”

Jim McCarville is a member of the TMC Board of Directors.

Nelson-Pallmeyer to Speak on Faith and Violence

By Joyce Rothermel

The third in the Fall speakers’ series of the Association of Pittsburgh Priests features Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, on Thursday, November 9th, at 7PM.

Nelson-Pallmeyer is a nationally recognized teacher, writer, speaker and activist committed to nonviolent social change. He is a Peace and Justice Studies professor at St. Thomas University. Nelson-Pallmeyer, a Lutheran, has authored 13 books. At one stage in his career, he campaigned against Al Franken to be the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Minnesota. He decided however to withdraw prior to the election.

The title of Nelson-Pallmeyer’s talk is “Faith and Violence: Is Religion Killing Us?” He will examine the “violence of God” traditions in the Bible and the Quran, often embraced by ancient writers and some modern ones who emphasize “divinely sanctioned violence.” Nelson-Pallmeyer

notes that both ISIS and U.S. foreign policy rooted in American Exceptionalism share the dynamic of using religion to justify violence.

“Do not miss this challenging opportunity to deepen your insight on how religion has been used to foster violence,” invites Fr. John Oesterle, spokesperson for the Association of Pittsburgh Priests.

Nelson-Pallmeyer will also describe constructive pathways forward, visions of a more just, peaceful society, and encourage us to be “people willing to seek out and embody authentic hope.”

The series will conclude on Thursday, December 7th with the topic: “Nonviolence or Nonexistence: Christian Moral Relevance Today” by Bishop John Michael Botean, of the Romanian Catholic Diocese in Canton, Ohio. “Has the church lost its voice by ignoring Jesus’ teaching on nonvi-

olent, active love of friend and enemy?” asks Bishop Botean.

His talk will explore how, in the pastoral activity of the church, the salvation of souls must take precedence over preserving and promoting a political order. In 2003, Bishop Botean forthrightly condemned the U.S. war with Iraq, terming it “an objectively grave evil, a matter of mortal sin.”

The most outspoken critic of the war among his brethren, Bishop Botean previously worked at the Pax Christi USA Center on Conscience and War, headquartered in Cambridge, MA.

Both speakers will present their talks at the Kearns Spirituality Center at 7 PM, located at 9000 Babcock Blvd. in Allison Park beside LaRoche College and behind the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Divine Providence. The fee for the upcoming talks is \$20 each. Participants can register at the door the evening of the talks.

For more information and questions, contact Fr. John Oesterle at 412-232-7512 or johnoesterle2@gmail.com

You are also invited to visit www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com Pre-registrations can be made to the Association of Pittsburgh Priests, P.O. Box 2106, Pittsburgh, PA 15230.

The Association of Pittsburgh Priests is a diocesan-wide organization of ordained and non-ordained women and men who act on their baptismal call to be priests and prophets. Its mission, rooted in the Gospel and the Spirit of Vatican Council II, is to carry out a ministry of justice and renewal in themselves, the Church and the world.

Joyce Rothermel is a member of the Editorial Collective and is on TMC Board.



Photo: MPR News

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November 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
	Bob Mason Potluck on Medicare for All 6:30pm @ TMC		Darfur Emergency Coalition Meeting 5:30-7pm @ Carnegie Library, Squirrel Hill Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (PADP) meeting 7-8pm @ First Unitarian Church	Understanding Russia 7:30pm @ Pittsburgh Friends Meeting House		Fight For Lifers West Meeting 10am-12pm @ TMC Annex Block Party for Partners in Progress for Haiti 6PM @ the Harp & The Fiddle
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Book'Em Meeting 4-6pm @TMC Essence of Joy from Penn State University in Concert 3pm @ East Liberty Presbyterian Church A Forum for Sharing Thoughts on Peace 3pm @ Kearns Spirituality Center		Southwest Chapter of Healthcare for All PA 7:30PM @ 2101 Murray Ave Election Day	We Choose Education Equity: Trauma in school-to-prison pipeline 5:30pm @ St. James AME Church Palestinian film "To My Father" 7pm @ Pitt Law School	Association of Pittsburgh Priests Fall Speakers Series: Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer 7PM	SOA Watch—Convergence at the Border in Nogales, Arizona	SOA Watch—Convergence at the Border in Nogales, Arizona
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Book'Em Meeting 4-6pm @TMC Women in Black monthly peace vigil 10am @ Ginger Hill Unitarian Universalist SOA Watch—Convergence at the Border in Nogales, Arizona	Shale & Public Health conference 8:30am @ Pitt University Club Amnesty International #39 Monthly Meeting 7pm @ First Unitarian Church Association of Pittsburgh Priests Meeting 7pm @ St. Pamphilus Church Race in Pittsburgh: What's Happening to the American Justice System 7pm @ Church of the Redeemer	Black Political Empowerment Project Meeting 6pm @ Hill House Association The Plot To Scapegoat Russia Presentation & Discussion 6:30PM @ Letter Carriers Union Hall 821 California Ave	Darfur Emergency Coalition Meeting 5:30-7pm @ Carnegie Library, Squirrel Hill			Fight For Lifers West Meeting 10am -12pm @ TMC Annex
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Book'Em Book Packing Session 4 -6pm @TMC	2017 Thomas Merton Award 6pm @ Sheraton Hotel, Southside Monthly PUSH meeting 6:30pm @ CLP Squirrel Hill					
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
		#GivingTuesday	Darfur Emergency Coalition Meeting 5:30-7pm @ Carnegie Library, Squirrel Hill			Fight For Lifers West Meeting 10am -12pm @ TMC Annex

Regular Meetings

Sundays:



Book'Em: Books to Prisoners Project
First three Sundays of the month at TMC, 4-6pm
Contact: bookempgh@gmail.com

Mondays:



SW Healthcare 4 All PA /PUSH Meeting
3rd Monday, 6:30 —8 pm
Squirrel Hill Library
Contact: bmason@gmail.com



Association of Pittsburgh Priests
2nd Monday, 7—9 pm,
St. Pamphilus Parish
1000 Tropical Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15216
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILP)
2nd Monday, 7:00 PM
Thomas Merton Center, 5129 Penn Ave
Amnesty International #39
2nd Wednesday, 7—9 pm
First Unitarian Church, Morewood Ave. 15219

Wednesdays:



Darfur Coalition Meeting
1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 5:30 – 7:00 pm,
Meeting Room C Carnegie Library, Squirrel Hill
412-784-0256



Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (PADP)
1st Wednesdays, 7-8pm, First Unitarian Church, Ellsworth & Morewood Avenues, Shadyside
Pittsburghers for Public Transit
2nd Wednesday, 7pm, 1 Smithfield St., lower level



Thursdays:



International Socialist Organization
Every Thursday, 7:30-9:30 pm at the Thomas Merton Center



Global Pittsburgh Happy Hour
1st Thursday, 5:30 to 8 pm, Roland's Seafood Grill, 1904 Penn Ave, Strip District



Green Party Meeting
1st Thursday, 7 to 9 pm, 2121 Murray, 2nd floor, Squirrel Hill



Black Political Empowerment Project
2nd Thursday, 6 pm: Planning Council Meeting, Hill House, Conference Room B

Fridays:



Unblurred Gallery Crawl
1st Friday after 6 pm, Penn Avenue Arts District, 4800-5500 Penn Ave., Friendship and Garfield 15224



Hill District Consensus Group
2nd Friday, 10 am — 12 pm, Elsie Hillman Auditorium, Kaufmann Center
1825 Centre Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15219



People of Prisoners in Need of Support
3rd Friday, 7:00pm New Hope Methodist Church, 114 W. North Ave, Pittsburgh 15212

Saturdays:



Project to End Human Trafficking
2nd Sat., Carlow University, Antonian Room #502



Fight for Lifers West
1st & 3rd Saturday, 1 pm, East Liberty Presbyterian Church



Anti-War and Anti-Drone Warfare Coalition
4rd Saturday at 11:00 am at TMC, 5129 Penn Ave., Garfield, PA 15224

Thomas Merton Quote of the Month

“There is one winner, only one winner in war. The winner is war itself. Not truth, not justice, not liberty, not morality. These are the vanquished. War wins, reducing them to complete submission. He makes truth serve violence and falsehood. He causes justice to declare, but what is expedient as well as cruel. He reduces the liberty of the victorious side to a servitude equal to the tyranny which they attacked, in defense of liberty.”