

THE

NEW PEOPLE

VOL. 48 No. 4 May 2018

2018 NEW PERSON OF THE YEAR: MONICA RUIZ

BY MONICA RUIZ

Editor's Note: Monica Ruiz is Community Organizer for Casa San Jose, an organization dedicated to assisting immigrants in the Pittsburgh region and a former project of the Thomas Merton Center. Ms. Ruiz will be awarded the Center's NewPerson Award for 2018 on June 26th. She describes below the nature of her work and how she came to be such a dedicated advocate for immigrant rights.

For many years I worked in direct practice as a social worker, primarily with Latino youth, who often had drug, alcohol, and mental health issues. When I moved to Pittsburgh, I wanted to continue that work, but with a focus on the systemic changes that needed to take place to create the conditions for them to have better lives. So, I went back to the University of Pittsburgh to get a Master's in Social Work in community organizing and social administration.

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2018 NEW PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

When: Tuesday, June 26th,
6PM - 9PM

Where: National Association of
Letter Carriers Hall, 841 California
Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

For more information, visit
<https://www.thomasmertoncenter.org/2018-new-person-award>

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MARCH AND APRIL IN PICTURES



Protesting wage theft in O'Hara Township. More on Page 7. (Photo: Matthew Bauer)



Young opponents of gun violence pack Pittsburgh's Fifth Avenue on March 24th for the March For Our Lives action. More photos of the action on Page 14. (Photo: Mark Dixon)

FIGHTING FOR JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY AT THE POST-GAZETTE

BY NEIL COSGROVE

At this moment, the journalists of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *Denver Post* have a lot in common. Both groups work for the only daily newspapers in their mid-size metropolitan areas, struggling to produce the kind of reporting no other media entities in their regions can replicate. And both are now in open conflict with owners more interested in profits than in the unique civic functions performed by their publications.

One significant difference between the two publications is that the *Post* has an editorial page editor who still supports the *Post*'s basic mission, as evidenced on April 8th by the publication of editorials sharply criticizing the paper's owners for debilitating cuts in staffing. "News Matters," read the headline of the main editorial, while "describing executives at Alden Global Capital, the paper's hedge-fund owner, as 'vulture capitalists,'" the *New York Times* reported.

Continues on page 11.....

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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East End Community Thrift Store Hours:
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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.

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

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

Advertising prices range from \$15 for a business card size to \$250 for a full page. There is a 10% discount when purchasing 6 months of ad space at a time, and a 20% discount when purchasing a year of ad space at a time. An additional 10% discount is available for non-profit organizations and faith-based groups.

For more information and to help distribute the paper: Call 412-361-3022 or email newpeople@thomasmeritoncenter.org.

Human Rights

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

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Amnesty International
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Association of Pittsburgh Priests
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Battle of Homestead Foundation
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The Big Idea Bookstore
412-OUR-HEAD
www.thebigideapgh.org

The Black Political Empowerment Project
Tim Stevens 412-758-7898

CeaseFire PA
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North Hills Anti-Racism Coalition
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PA United for Single-Payer Health Care
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Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty
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TMC supports these organizations' missions.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY GABRIEL MCMORLAND

This month, I want to invite friends and members of the Thomas Merton Center to get involved in an activist research collective we're beginning this summer. Philadelphia, Buffalo, Washington DC and other cities all have volunteer groups mapping out the power structure of their region, following the money, and sharing information to help communities demand justice. Strategic research has always made movements stronger by understanding the power and vulnerabilities of real estate developers, politicians, CEOs, university trustees, big banks, and the connections between them.

We hope some readers will want to participate in:

- An ongoing project to map out the connections between powerful people and organizations affecting people in Pittsburgh, and share this resource online using LittleSis.org.
- Special projects to assist activist groups requesting support, such as past voting records of politicians or the financing of real estate deals.
- Workshops to learn the basics of strategic research, and presentations from other researchers with specialized skills to share, such as understanding corporate financial documents or filing right to know requests.
- Open work sessions where you can drop in and help with ongoing research projects for as long or short as you want, meet other people, and enjoy snacks.

Would you like to get involved? Does your community organization or activist collective want help with a research question? As always, I welcome conversations at gabriel@thomasmertoncenter.org

Gabriel McMorland is the Executive Director of the Thomas Merton Center.

2018 NEW PERSON OF THE YEAR: MONICA RUIZ (CONT'D)

BY MONICA RUIZ

My current position as Civic Engagement and Community Organizer at Casa San José gives me an excellent place to do that. Casa improves the lives of Latino immigrants through helping them find services, legal protection, livelihoods, healthcare, shelter, and most importantly, self-sufficiency. It is working to bring them and their neighbors closer together. It is striving to advance policies to create a city, country and world of justice and opportunity for all. It is encouraging all people to treat each other with love and acceptance.

What I mainly do at Casa San José is to organize and advocate for Latino immigrants. I set up clinics to help immigrants learn their rights, get legal advice, find out about opportunities, prepare for ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids, and maintain DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) authorization.

I organize visits to legislators and policy makers, teams to protect those picked up by ICE, training sessions for

advocates, and community meetings. I bring groups of immigrants and supporters to marches, workshops, and convenings. I speak publicly about immigrants and especially their current persecution everywhere I can: at demonstrations, hearings, meetings, workshops, universities, churches, and other venues. I work closely with many other organizations in Pittsburgh who are also seeking a just and welcoming city.

Much of the passion for this work comes from the fact that I am a child of immigrants, my husband is an immigrant, and every morning when I wake up I know that because of the color of my skin, I will experience discrimination. But it is mainly Casa's strong values and mission, along with my own Catholic faith, that guide my work at all times.

Monica Ruiz is the Civic Engagement and Community Organizer at Casa San José as well as the 2018 Merton Center New Person Award Recipient.

NEW PERSON AWARD 2018 Save the Date



Monica Ruiz, Community Organizer
Casa San José

Monica Ruiz is the Community Organizer for Casa San José, an organization dedicated to assisting immigrants in the Pittsburgh region. Monica works to improve the lives of Latino immigrants through helping them find services, legal protection, healthcare, shelter, and self-sufficiency. She also fights for an Allegheny County of justice and opportunity for all. Monica will be awarded TMC's 2018 New Person Award on June 26th. We hope to see you at the National Association of

Letter Carriers Hall to celebrate Monica and her work with us!

WHEN

Tuesday, June 26th, 6PM - 9PM

WHERE

National Association of Letter Carriers Hall
841 California Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

SUSTAIN TMC THROUGH MONTHLY GIVING AND MORE

Please consider becoming a sustaining member by becoming a Monthly Peacemaker. You can become a Peacemaker on the TMC website, and your monthly giving will bring a greater stability to the Center's financing.

Another idea is to make a gift to honor or remember someone who inspires or has inspired you by making our world more peaceful and more just. Molly Rush has offered a few people to consider: Dr. Dan Fine, Neil McCaulley, Don Fisher, Sr Elizabeth Carroll, Rev. Leroy Patrick, Warren Metzler, Edith Wilson, Cary Lund, Ursula Yeager, Jerry Starr, Don McIlvane, Ellen Berliner and Anne Steytler. I would add Miguel D'Escoto, a past Merton Award winner who passed

away earlier this year (See the article about him in this issue.), Daniel and Phil Berrigan, and our own Molly Rush, who continues her commitment to peace and justice in so many ways, are other possibilities.

You can send a check to the Merton Center at 5129 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224, noting the person in whose honor or memory you are making your gift in the memo section, or donate online at www.thomasmertoncenter.org.

Other ways to support the Center include:

- Gift memberships – introduce others to the Merton Center through a subscription to The New People.

• Become a Cornerstone Sustainer with a gift(s) of \$500 or more annually.

• Remember the Merton Center in your will. Learn more about the Molly Rush Legacy Fund at the TMC website.

Whatever way you choose to support the Center financially is most welcome. Recent events locally, in several parts of the country, and internationally remind us over and over again why the Merton Center is so important to us and to our community.

P.S. If your membership has expired or you are not yet a member, please renew or become a member today. (See form included on the last page)

BOMBS AWAY

STOP BANKING THE BOMB TEACH-IN

BY Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign

Four members from the Stop Banking the Bomb campaign presented at a teach-in at the University of Pittsburgh's Barco Law Building on March 25. The educational event was designed to inform the public on how the nuclear age affects our political, economic and social life, and to demonstrate why our institutions need to divest from nuclear arms.

The first presentation, given by Zeba Ahmed, focused on the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan. Many people, especially those not living in Japan, do not know how much the nuclear disaster was misunderstood and mishandled by the authorities. Immediately following the earthquake and tsunami, Japan recommended that anyone within 12 miles of the plant evacuate. But in the following weeks and months, experts detected very high levels of radiation in villages about twice that distance away. This prompted the Japanese to expand the evacuation zone to 19 miles.

Amazingly, more than seven years later, radioactive water from Fukushima is still flowing into the Pacific Ocean, causing much consternation among local fishermen and environmental activists. Nearby towns in the Fukushima Prefecture were completely evacuated, and very few people live there today.

Andrew Ohl then gave a talk on U.S. nuclear strategy in which he explained the motives for maintaining a large nuclear arsenal. The most recent

Nuclear Posture Review justifies our nuclear arsenal by claiming that other nations won't follow our example of nuclear arms reduction. But looking at history, Ohl demonstrated that the U.S. has been more than willing to use nuclear weapons to intimidate enemies like the USSR.

The real reason the U.S. has nuclear weapons, Ohl asserted, is to preserve its political hegemony around the world. Looking at the use of nuclear weapons on Japan at the end of World War II, Ohl demonstrated that the real aim of the U.S. was to end the war before the USSR turned its attention to the Pacific sphere - even though Japan was making plans to surrender. By this time (mid-1945), the U.S. was in a position to command quite an empire after the war was over.

The next presenter, Peter Deutsch, a retired physics professor at Penn State Beaver, took the floor. His talk focused on the technical aspects of North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Throughout his presentation, he dismissed the alarmism surrounding North Korea's ability to target the U.S. with an ICBM strike, arguing that the country's missile targeting systems haven't been adequately tested, due to international constraints. The only real nuclear tests the country has carried out occurred underground.

Even if North Korea did decide to shoot a missile our way, Deutsch believes

that the missile would not survive re-entry into the atmosphere, because the technology hasn't been perfected. However, he said, a nuclear strike could knock out parts of our energy infrastructure if a bomb were to detonate above our lower atmosphere. As a solution, Deutsch advocated that we focus on our energy infrastructure rather than nuclear proliferation and intimidation.

Tom Taylor gave the last presentation. His analysis of the military industrial complex in the U.S. touched on the nuclear triad system of submarines, aircraft and ICBMs - delivery mechanisms funded and constructed largely by the private sector. The government doesn't construct nuclear weapons, but relies on several defense contractors to do this work. These contractors need loans from financial institutions like banks in order to operate.

The largest financial institutions in our country, Read noted, have hundreds of millions of dollars invested in defense contractors. To give an example from the Pittsburgh community, PNC Bank currently has \$600 million in loans to defense contractors who manufacture and maintain our nuclear arsenal.

The teach-in was a success, and our campaign hopes to see more people from the community at our next event. A video of the teach-in can be seen on YouTube; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUkSDZbSVWo&t=3440s>

or on the Facebook page listed below. Stop Banking the Bomb continues to hold regular informational pickets and hopes to organize another teach-in soon. To keep up with the campaign or to get involved, please visit facebook.com/stopbankingthebomb or stopbankingthebomb.org.

Stop Banking the Bomb is made up of people concerned about the policy and proliferation of nuclear weapons and is focused on investment in the making of these weapons by Pittsburgh's largest bank.

Invitation to TMC Potluck, Presentation and Discussion on the Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign

All are welcome to attend the upcoming potluck at the Merton Center on Wednesday, May 23 from 6:30 - 8:30 PM on the topic of the Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign, endorsed by the Merton Center.. Rev. Paul Dordal, coordinator of the campaign and member of Veterans for Peace, will share with us the campaign's origin, objectives and progress to date. He will seek comments, suggestions and support for those who participate. Bring food or beverage to share and help spread the word. RSVP to the Center at 412-361-3022. (See accompanying article "Stop Banking the Bomb Teach-in.")

BOMBING JAMES COMEY AND STORMY DANIELS

BY MICHAEL DROHAN

On Saturday, April 7, 2018 a gas attack on the city of Douma in Syria, was reported. Douma is a suburb of Damascus formerly controlled by two jihadist factions, Jaish al-Islam (Army of Islam) and al Nusra Brigade. Both of these jihadist groups are supported by the Saudi Arabian Government. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was informed of the attack and it immediately set in motion the process for sending a team to Syria to investigate the alleged attack. The OPCW reported on April 17 that their team had reached Beirut and were on their way to Syria. The Syrian Government and the Russian Federation had given the green light early in the week of April 9-14 for the investigation to go ahead.

However, the US Government and President Trump came to the judgment that there was an attack and that it was conducted by the Syrian Government on its own people. As yet no determination had been made by any objective body such as the OPCW as to whether there was a gas attack or who had possibly perpetrated it. During the week of April 9-14, a barrage of tweets, attacks and threats directed towards the Syrian

government, preceded an assault of 107 cruise missiles on supposed chemical weapons facilities in Syria by the US, France and the United Kingdom the night of April 14th.

Many sources report, however, that since 2014, at least, there have been no chemical weapon facilities in operation in Syria and that the US claims are insincere. The US pretence in regard to the cruise missile attack is that it is a humanitarian intervention to defend and preserve human life. However, the government and President Trump has deemed Syrian victims of that country's civil war as unwelcome even to visit the US. This is the substance of the so-called Muslim ban of 2017. In fact, only 11 Syrian refugees have been admitted to the US in 2018 thus far.

On the face of it, the April 14 missile attack on Syria bears all the marks of an international crime. It was an attack on a sovereign country which had never attacked or threatened to attack the US. In response to a question about the legality of the attack on Syria, General Mattis declared at a press conference on April 14 that Article 2 of the US Constitution gave the President the authority to conduct the attack. This

hardly bears examination, however. Article 2 declares the President to be Commander in Chief of the military and Congress only has the power to declare war. This is according to Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution.

In point of fact, Congress for some decades now has failed to execute its duty and seems to have abdicated its responsibility. Since granting President G.W. Bush the Authority to use Military Force (AUMF) in 2001, every subsequent President has made the presumption that this act is still in force.

Few, if any, believe that humanitarian impulses guided Trump to war in Syria. It is hardly a coincidence that Trump's missile blasts came in the same week that his legal fixer, Michael Cohen, had his offices and residence raided by the FBI in search of documents related to Trump's dealings with the porn star, Stormy Daniels. It was also the week that James Comey brought out his new book on his firing by Trump as head of the FBI. It is not too far-fetched to conclude that the principal intent of the missile attacks was to blow Comey and Stormy Daniels off the airwaves and the press. This was a tactic employed by President Clinton in regard to Monica

Lewinsky in the 1990s, and the debased level to which foreign policy has been reduced in the age of Trump.

The situation in Syria is tragic. Since 2011 when the first uprisings of the Arab Spring took place in Syria, its people have suffered unimaginably. There are at least 4 million Syrian refugees wandering around the Middle East and parts of Europe. A similar number are internally displaced. There are many countries fighting proxy wars in Syria: the US, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, France and Turkey to name a few. Each has their own, often different, agenda. The victims are the Syrian people. This latest foray by the Trump administration only adds to the suffering of the Syrian people. President Trump hardly knows where Syria is on the map and is only guided by animus towards Muslims, Iranians and Lebanese Hezbollah and by efforts to hide his tawdry life with porn stars and playmates.

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

ACTING ON FAITH

WHY I AM A MONTHLY TMC PEACEMAKER

BY JIM RAY

Several years after graduating from McCormick Theological Seminary I began a career in Campus Ministry at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. This was in January 1963. Three weeks later I received a phone call that was to change my life and put me on the way to being a radical peacemaker.

That call from a local pastor invited me to go to the August 1963 March On Washington. I had never done anything like that before but agreed to go. That experience, of being there with over 200,000 people of all colors and backgrounds from across the nation, listening to Dr. Martin Luther King, John Lewis and other leaders in the Civil Rights Movement, and hearing Bob Dylan sing "the Times they Are A' Changin'" moved me to understand that I was meant to follow in the way of the radical Jesus.

That is, I was to confront the "way things were" which were holding down far too many of God's people, especially African-Americans, with whom I had little experience until that day. Thus, several weeks later I joined a picket line in front of the home of the Chancellor of The University of Illinois to protest the fact that few African-Americans were being hired to work at any level at the university. That protest resulted in a proper change in the hiring practices.

In 1964, as a result of another of those calls that continued to change my life and approach to ministry, I received a call from the National Office of the General Assembly of my Presbyterian denomination, asking me to go to Hattiesburg, Mississippi to join a picket line with African-Americans who were there so their people could go up the outside stairs to register to vote without getting assaulted. It was Holy Week, only several weeks before the three young Civil Rights workers were found buried in an earthen dam 30 miles away.

That experience of being with only 3 or 4 whites on a picket line of 25-30

black persons, and living for the week in the rear of a black-owned TV repair shop, going each night to an African-American church where I had never heard such great preaching and singing about resisting the "powers that be," did change my understanding of ministry. What a change to only feel safe with black persons and fearful of whites who would "give us the finger" as they walked by our our 8am-5pm, slowly moving, picket line.

The local Presbyterian church was just down the street from where we were picketing, and one day my Presbyterian pastor colleague, who had gone with me from Champaign-Urbana, decided to walk down there after the day was over. But we could not muster the energy to go inside for fear of causing a ruckus.

I began to realize once more what the "street preacher Jesus" was about when he threw the money changers out of the Temple, and continued to challenge the overbearing Roman authorities as he demonstrated to his people how they should live their lives. For in his perspective God's kingdom was in the here and now in their midst.

Several years later, in 1968, I moved with my family to Pittsburgh, where I was in ministry at the University of Pittsburgh. I was on the staff of University and City Ministries, where I became involved with a multi-racial congregation, the Community of Reconciliation. Shortly after arriving I learned that no African-Americans were being hired to build the new U.S. Steel Headquarters and the Three Rivers Stadium. The Black Construction Coalition was formed and began protest marches seeking needed employment. I joined another of the many marches that by now had become a normal, non-violent way to call attention to the plight of marginalized people.

To my surprise I discovered a number of the members of the Community of Reconciliation participating in the March. I thought, "YES", this is what

it means to live out your faith. The marches resulted in jobs for African-Americans! On those marches in 1968 I met some folk from the Thomas Merton Center, which began friendships, and I became involved with the Merton Center, finally joining the Board sometime in the late 1970's. There I found companions who understood what being a person of faith really means. It means resisting those "powers that be." It means "putting boots on the ground."

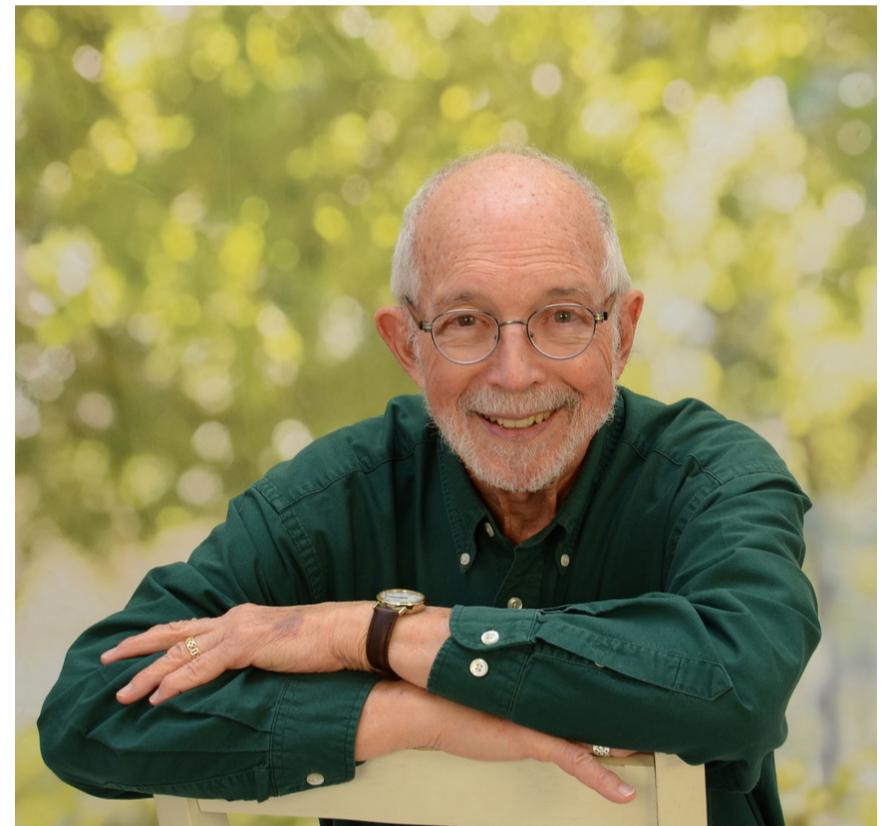
My years of relationships with so many of those Merton Center faithful also meant that when I left Pittsburgh in July 1983 to move to Youngstown, OH to be the Protestant campus minister at Youngstown State University, I would

continue my financial support for the Center. Thus I have been contributing over all those 35 years, making a monthly donation. AND I KNOW IT IS MONEY WELL SPENT!

Please consider doing likewise as we continue to tell the world, in Bob Dylan's words,

"The Times They Are A' Changin'."

Jim Ray has been formally retired for over 20 years but keeps at the justice work which is still important. He started a Dialogue on Racism in greater Youngstown, which has gone through two cycles with over 80 persons and several churches involved.



Jim Ray (Photo provided by Joyce Rothermel)

Become a TMC Monthly Peacemaker Today!

Like Jim Ray, we invite you to consider financially supporting the TMC each month by becoming a monthly Peacemaker. It is easy and convenient. You can sign up to have monthly payments put on your credit card for whatever length of time and amount you choose. Simply go to www.thomasmeroncenter.org, click on the donate button, then click on "this form," complete the form and submit. Regular donations can also be set up at your bank to be sent directly to the Merton Center. Monthly giving helps sustain the daily operations of the TMC.



FAITH IN ACTION

BY BETTE MCDEVITT

Rev. Dordal is a member of the Thomas Merton Center and a coordinator of the Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign, which is targeting PNC Bank's investments in nuclear weapons manufacturers. The following is an interview of Rev. Dordal.

Q: Please tell us a little about your background. What churches have you been associated with, what led you to seek that further training in Catholic theology, and then, what it

meant to be a chaplain in the Army, and were you in a chaplain in Iraq?

A: I was raised in a Roman Catholic home in NYC, but in my teenage years, I strayed from my faith. It wasn't until I was 31, in 1995, that I had a dramatic epiphany and returned to faith in Jesus. I discerned a call to the ministry, but I first was ordained as a Protestant minister. Upon redeploying from Iraq in 2010, I decided to return to my Catholic roots and joined an Eastern rite Catholic Church. Studying

under a bishop for several years and studying Catholic theology at Duquesne University prepared me for my current vocation as an Eastern-rite priest.

As for my chaplaincy in the U.S. Army, it was at first a noble endeavor. I sincerely believed there was a great need for spiritual support of soldiers going to war. Nevertheless, it was while serving in Iraq during the war that my eyes were opened. I began to question my own moral convictions about my military service, but more importantly

I came to believe that US military involvement, not only in Iraq, but all around the world, was also gravely immoral.

Q: What was it that made you become an anti-war activist, and a very public one, willing to do civil disobedience?

A: Seeing first-hand the devastation of war on so many innocents in Iraq and also [my time] studying at Duquesne University sharpened my theological

Continues on page 12.....

PATHS TOWARDS INTEGRATION

SCHOOL INTEGRATION

BY MAGGIE WEAVER

"We conclude that the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" -- Chief Justice Earl Warren, 1954

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled to desegregate schools across the nation. The case, Brown vs. Board of Education, became a cornerstone of the civil rights movement.

Brown vs. Board of Education passed 64 years ago, and Pittsburgh schools are at the highest segregation point since the ruling.

The Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) system is made up of 54 institutions. These schools vary within three categories: public, charter and magnet. The PPS website divides the student population into three demographics: White (33%), African American (53%) and Other (14%).

With these statistics, PPS seems diverse-less than half of the overall population is white. But the numbers tell a flawed story.

Niche.com, a website that collects information on schools across the U.S., attributes grades to each school based on academic success, diversity, sports, food, teachers and more. The site ranks public and private schools by these grades.

Allderdice High School is listed by Niche.com as the number one high school in Pittsburgh. The school, located in Squirrel Hill South, has an 81% reading proficiency and a 64% math proficiency. 86% of students are expected to graduate. The student makeup includes 47.3% White, 41.5% African American and 11.2% Other.

Academy at Westinghouse, a high school located nearby in Homewood, is a completely different story. The students hold a 21% reading proficiency and an 8% math proficiency, the average graduation rate at 62%. Out of the 433 students that attend Westinghouse, 96.4% are African American, 2.9% Other, and 7% White.

The *Triblive*, a news source local to Pittsburgh, notes that Allderdice is classified as the "white school" by PPS pupils. [yet it is 40% black, thus arguably more diverse, in the literal sense of the term, than Westinghouse. The issue must partly be the tracking system at Dice.]

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reports that African Americans only make up 21.6% of Pittsburgh's population, yet make up 53% of the public school community; over 12 of the city's public institutions are composed of 90% black students.

With segregation of this magnitude, Pittsburgh Public Schools are harming educational success.

This "re-segregation" trend of PPS began in the 1980s, when families began to flee the city; white families are continuing to move towards suburbs today. Lower Burrell High School, located 20 minutes northeast of Homewood, is a physical representation of this flight.

563 students attend Lower Burrell,

95.2% of them White. 2% are African American, 2.8% Other. 77% hold a reading proficiency (compared with Westinghouse's 21%), and 67% are proficient in math (Westinghouse is 8%).

The *Triblive* reports that, "Schools with predominantly black students tend to have lower rates of achievement, graduation and post-secondary education, and higher rates of teacher turnover, absenteeism and discipline problems."

Students at Burrell and Westinghouse are isolated from diverse communities.

The Century Foundation, a think tank that collects research and political analysis, notes the benefits of racially diverse schools. Academically, students who attend an integrated institution will have higher test scores, graduation rates and college enrollment. Integrated classrooms boost leadership skills and self-confidence, while raising a racially-aware population.

Integration goes beyond school students. According to the *Post-Gazette*, a racially diverse staff "is associated with increased sales revenue, more customers, greater market share and greater relative profits."

In April of 2017, PPS publicized a new strategic plan, "Expect Great Things." This plan, in action from 2017-2022, targets school diversity and racial performance disparity. PPS aims to increase the success of African-American students and increase proficiencies in math and reading through all schools.

With the positives outlined, solutions seem straightforward: advocate for a higher rate of integration.

But it's not that simple.

School systems are a map of neighborhoods, communities divided by socioeconomic status. In Homewood, where Westinghouse is located, the average household income is less than \$25,000. In 2016, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Pittsburgh's median income for a household was just under \$42,500. The average in Lower Burrell is \$57,686.

The *Triblive* highlights Western PA's deeply segregated neighborhoods, stating, "blacks here fare far worse than whites on a slew of quality-of-life metrics, from employment to home ownership to educational attainment."

According to the article, one third of black Pittsburghers live in poverty, while only 15% of white Pittsburgh residents find themselves in the low-income pockets.

So, Pittsburgh attempts redistribution tactics. The reorganization of school district by neighborhoods in 1995 aimed to focus efforts on improving all schools, rather than drive students towards better performing institutions.

Stephen Kotok, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, reported that the neighborhood-oriented approach has, "seen pockets of successes, it's not the norm," in a conversation with *Triblive*.

As the city's endeavors lack success, is integration reliant on the families? I suggest something like this: The city endeavors haven't succeeded overall. But parents still have a choice.

They can choose to place their children in a private school, place their child's name in a charter school lottery or contribute to integration by staying within their neighborhood or magnet public schools.

The Environmental Charter School (ECS), is one of the highest rated upper schools in the Pittsburgh School system; Niche.com awards the school an A-. The upper school, located in Regent Square, is composed of 67.5% White students, 18.2% African American and 14.4% Other. In the fall of 2018, ECS is hoping to expand into Garfield, a primarily non-white neighborhood.

In an article regarding this recently-approved expansion published in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Ira Weiss, a solicitor for PPS comments that, "the district believes Environmental Charter's demographics aren't representative of the city school system as a whole."

Pittsburgh's group of magnet schools aims to target students with specific interests, such as the arts or technology. The Creative & Performing Arts School (CAPA), located in downtown Pittsburgh, achieves an A rating by Niche.com, listed as the second best public school in PPS (behind Allderdice).

57.4% of CAPA's 948 students are White, 30.9% African American and 11.7% Other.

Who holds the responsibility for desegregating PPS, the city or its residents?

The *Post-Gazette* refers to race in Pittsburgh as, "a tale of two cities, in as much as the two major racial groups have not found ways to live a more integrated existence in terms of where they live and the social activities they participate in."

Neighborhoods can be referred to by

their race; *Triblive* notes that students refer to Allderdice High School as "the white school."

The *Post-Gazette* reports that, "Segregated neighborhoods are products of public policies as well as the result of discriminatory housing practices by real estate agencies, mortgage lenders and private housing providers."

Pittsburgh's segregated education system is deep-rooted in the city's housing affordability. Low-income residents are forced into pockets of the city, unable to afford housing in the more affluent areas. This correlates with education quality; disadvantaged neighborhoods are linked to lower-performing schools.

In an effort for reformation, the *Post-Gazette* suggests that Pittsburgh use public funds to increase housing integration.

But in recent months, the developers have been tearing down affordable housing units in low-income neighborhoods, replacing them with luxury apartments, upscale groceries or pricey restaurants. Residents that populated these units are displaced, shoved out of the city or into less affluent neighborhoods.

In order to re-integrate the education system, Pittsburgh needs to reflect on its own diversity.

Developing affordable housing near schools with higher success rates will diversify the student population. Open spaces in charter and magnet schools specifically for low-income students. As a parent, keep children in the public school system.

An integrated community is proven to be beneficial for education. With intentionality, Pittsburgh can take steps towards a racially diverse and academically successful school system.

Maggie Weaver is a NewPeople intern and a member of the NewPeople Editorial Collective.

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LUXURY BUILT ON WAGE THEFT



"I am demanding that the company pay us. Not only do you expose yourself to the sun, it is dangerous to be up [on the roof]. One suffers from thirst, heat, and hunger up there. And it is unfair that they have not given us our money." - Gladys L. Translation was provided by Monica Ruiz. (Photo: Matthew Bauer)



A large banner was held up at the demonstration (Photo: Matthew Bauer)

Workers and organizers held up signs opposing wage theft at Chapel Harbor. (Photo: Matthew Bauer)

O'HARA RALLY CALLS ON CHAPEL HARBOR LUXURY DEVELOPERS TO STOP WAGE THEFT

BY KRYSTLE M. KNIGHT

Pittsburgh, PA - At 11:00 AM on Saturday, April 14th, immigrant workers and their supporters held a demonstration outside of Chapel Harbor at the Water in O'Hara Township to show support for five roofers who worked on the development's newest high-end luxury home properties last July, and have yet to be paid. The homes were developed by Stapleton Homes Inc., which currently owns the properties, and they are being marketed by Howard Hanna Real Estate Services. The five workers are owed approximately \$5,000 for roofing work completed during the summer heat. Stapleton Homes Inc. is owned by Kenneth R. Kane and Jay R. Richards.

Unfortunately, wage theft is common in the construction industry, particularly among immigrant workers. Large corporations often avoid direct responsibility through subcontracting.

The workers continue to demand their stolen wages with the support of the Wage Justice Coalition, a local labor and community coalition that includes the Thomas Merton Center, the Restaurant Opportunity Center (ROC), the Pittsburgh chapter of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), and the Pittsburgh pre-chapter of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA).

"We want Stapleton Homes to know that their business model, which is built on cheating working people of their hard-earned wages, is immoral and unacceptable. It's time they did the right thing and paid these workers," says Guillermo Perez of Pittsburgh LCLAA. "We've spent more than a month trying to get Kenneth Kane and Jay Richards, the co-presidents of Stapleton, to pay these folks but they refuse to take responsibility," adds Krystle Knight of the Merton Center. "The workers who provided many hours of labor improved the value of this luxury waterfront property and take pride in the arduous work they do to provide for their families. It is time we show these luxury real estate developers that their poor corporate citizenship is not just bad for business; it's bad for the community and the workers."

Krystle Knight is the Community Organizer at the Thomas Merton Center.



PLoughshares of Kings Bay

LATEST PLOWSHARES WITNESS ON ANNIVERSARY OF KILLING OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

Seven Catholic Plowshares activists were detained early Thursday morning, April 5, at the Kings Bay Naval Base, St. Mary's, Georgia.

They entered the base on Wednesday night, April 4. Calling themselves Kings Bay Plowshares, they went to make real the prophet Isaiah's command: "beat swords into plowshares."

The seven chose to act on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who devoted his life to addressing the triplets of militarism, racism and materialism. In their statement, which they carried with them, the group quoted King, who said: "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world (today) is my own government."

Carrying hammers and baby bottles of their own blood, the seven attempted to convert weapons of mass destruction.

Kings Bay Naval base opened in 1979 as the Navy's Atlantic Ocean Trident port. It is the largest nuclear submarine base in the world. There are six ballistic missile subs and two guided missile subs based at Kings Bay.

The activists went to three sites on the base: the administration building, the D5 Missile monument installation, and the nuclear weapons storage bunkers. The activists used crime scene tape, hammers and banners with Dr. King's quote: "The ultimate logic of racism is genocide." The ultimate logic of Trident is omnicide; and of nuclear weapons: illegal - immoral. They also brought an indictment charging the U.S. government for crimes against peace.

The activists at the nuclear weapons storage bunkers were Elizabeth McAlister, 78, Jonah House, Baltimore; Steve Kelly, S.J., 69, Bay Area, CA; and Carmen Trotta, 55, New York Catholic Worker.

The activists at the Administration building were Clare Grady, 59, Ithaca Catholic Worker; and Martha Hennessy, 62, New York Catholic Worker.

The activists at the Trident D5 monuments were Mark Colville, 55, Amistad Catholic Worker, New Haven, CT; and Patrick O'Neill, 61, Fr. Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker, Garner, NC.

All activists were detained at the Camden County Jail, Georgia. No one was injured.

This is the latest of 100 similar Plowshares actions around the world, beginning in 1980 in King of Prussia, PA.

Statement from the Kings Bay Plowshares:

We come in peace on this sorrowful anniversary of the martyrdom of a great prophet, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Fifty years ago today, April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee as a reaction to his efforts to address "the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism."

We come to Kings Bay to answer the call of the prophet Isaiah (2:4) to "beat swords into plowshares" by disarming the world's deadliest nuclear weapon,

the Trident submarine.

We repent of the sin of white supremacy that oppresses and takes the lives of people of color here in the United States and throughout the world. We resist militarism that has employed deadly violence to enforce global domination. We believe reparations are required for stolen land, labor and lives.

Dr. King said, "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world (today) is my own government." This remains true in the midst of our endless war on terror. The United States has embraced a permanent war economy.

"Peace through strength" is a dangerous lie in a world that includes weapons of mass destruction on hair-trigger alert. The weapons from one Trident have the capacity to end life as we know it on planet Earth.

Nuclear weapons kill every day through our mining, production, testing, storage, and dumping, primarily on Indigenous Native land. This weapons system is a cocked gun being held to the head of the planet.

As white Catholics, we take responsibility to atone for the horrific crimes stemming from our complicity with "the triplets." Only then can we begin to restore right relationships. We seek to bring about a world free of nuclear weapons, racism and economic exploitation.

We plead to our Church to withdraw its complicity in violence and war. We cannot simultaneously pray and hope for peace while we bless weapons and

condone war making.

Pope Francis says abolition of weapons of mass destruction is the only way to save God's creation from destruction.

Clarifying the teachings of our Church, Pope Francis said, "The threat of their use as well as their very possession is to be firmly condemned ... weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. They cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family, which must rather be inspired by an ethics of solidarity."

Nuclear weapons eviscerate the rule of law, enforce white supremacy, perpetuate endless war and environmental destruction and ensure impunity for all manner of crimes against humanity. Dr. King said, "The ultimate logic of racism is genocide." We say, "The ultimate logic of Trident is omnicide." A just and peaceful world is possible when we join prayers with action. Swords into Plowshares!

Elizabeth McAlister

Mark Colville

Clare Grady

Martha Hennessy

Stephen Kelly S.J.

Patrick O'Neill

Carmen Trotta

Press Release and Statement by Kings Bay Plowshares



Photo provided by Joyce Rothermel

CARYL CONRY BEAL

BY LOIS GOLDSTEIN

Think globally, act locally is a phrase that could have been written with Caryl Beal in mind. Caryl, who died on April 7, had strong beliefs that she linked to action. Her primary passions were World Peace, especially when linked to nuclear issues, and Living in a Democracy, by understanding what government is, what it should be, and how it can be influenced or changed. She believed in maintaining frequent contact with one's legislative representatives on local, state and national levels.

Caryl had been a loyal and generous supporter of the Merton Center for many years, served on the Peace Links board throughout its 20 plus years' history, and had been

a member of the League of Women Voters for more than 50 years. Her most recent cause had been to search for ways to educate people to understand and counter the anti-Public Education campaign being waged by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy De Vos, and others, under the banner of CHOICE.

Caryl's large, devoted family are planning to have a celebration of her life sometime in the near future. Stay tuned.

Lois Goldstein is a volunteer at the Thomas Merton Center.

MERTON'S LASTING LEGACY

WHAT THOMAS MERTON MEANS TO ME, A PRIEST AND WRITER

They whom we love and lose
are no longer
where they were before.
They are now wherever we are.

--St. John Chrysostom

Thomas Merton's journals, from 1939 to his death in 1968, in seven volumes reveal the intimate Merton (published by HarperCollins, 2009-2010). The third volume states on page 219: "I am a writer, and because for me to write is to think and live and also to some degree, even to pray."

I am a writer, too, having retired from active ministry and returning to my first calling, which started in a Benedictine boarding school as sports editor, then editor-in-chief of the student newspaper, *The Periscope*.

I had just finished *The Seven Storey Mountain* and was thinking about the possibility of my own religious vocation when I was stunned by what appeared to be Merton's weird premonition of his death "among the burnt men."

Having married an Irish girl and raising seven children, I read and reviewed many of the 50+ books penned by Merton in his lifetime. I also kept up with the

biographies, hagiographies, anthologies and studies of Thomas Merton in the '70s and '80s. What struck me most were the multiple traumas Merton suffered in his relatively brief lifetime, beginning with the death of his mother from cancer when Tom was a child, and the brain cancer death of his father when he was a teenager. More traumatic events followed in boarding schools, in rejection by Franciscans, and even at Gethsemane with the death of his only brother, an RAF pilot in WWII.

However, Merton experienced tremendous healing in two epiphanies in 1958 and 1968, also described in his journals as grace-filled mystical experiences. The first cleansing came at the corner of 4th and Walnut in Louisville when "I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people.... Not that I question the reality of my vocation, or of my monastic life: but the concept of 'separation from the world' that we have in the monastery too readily presents as a complete illusion." This was also recorded in Part Three of "Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander."

That was in 1958. Later, after he obtained permission to live alone in a hermitage beyond the confining walls of the cloister, Merton struck up a

beautiful but intense relationship with a young student nurse. That relationship was cut short in just three months when an intimate phone call was overheard and reported to the abbot. Thus, another major traumatic event.

Later, a chastened Merton was invited to an East-West dialogue on the Benedictine Rule at the Red Cross conference center outside Bangkok. He expanded his itinerary to meet first with the Dalai Lama in India, and then a pilgrimage to the massive statues of Buddha in Polonnaruwa in Central Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. At one of the most sacred Buddhist sites, Gil Vihara, Merton wrote: "Looking at these figures I was suddenly, almost forcibly jerked clean out of the habitual, half-tied vision of things, and an inner clearness, clarity, as if exploding from the rocks themselves, became evident and obvious.... All problems are resolved and everything is clear. The rock, all matter, all life, is charged with dharmakaya... everything is emptiness and everything is compassion." This is recorded in Merton's posthumous *Asian Journal*.

In 1968, Merton gave his final talk on Marxism and monasticism to the Benedictine monks and nuns in Thailand, saying he would "disappear" for a while and then was electrocuted by

BY WILL LAWBAUGH

a frayed DC electric fan cord, his final trauma, becoming one of the "burnt men" mentioned at the end of *Seven Storey Mountain*.

I did not know why Merton, especially in his many journals, resonated so deeply within me until my first major trauma: the death of my eldest daughter, Aimee (French for "beloved"), due to an epileptic seizure on top of an asthma attack at age 21. Since then, I have somehow endured many more major traumas, but I still find a measure of consolation in reading the many journals, books like *New Seeds of Contemplation* and studies by and about the only writer who seems to understand my dilemmas with compassion and non-violence, two traits Merton found in Buddhism. I even have a daughter who declares she is Buddhist. Most of all, I can be completely transported by the graceful prose of Thomas Merton. See for yourself by reading *The Fire Watch*, prelude to his most famous journal, *Sign of Jonas*. You will thank me.

The Rev. Will Lawbaugh lives and writes as a Resident Companion of The Community of Celebration in downtown Aliquippa. He can be reached at wlawbaugh@yahoo.com

"THE NUNS, THE PRIESTS, AND THE BOMBS" TO BE SHOWN IN PITTSBURGH JUNE 1-3

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

A wonderful opportunity is afforded to people in the Pittsburgh area June 1-3, 2018. That weekend, Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi, Veterans for Peace and the Thomas Merton Center are hosting the screening of the 2017 documentary, "The Nuns, the Priests, and the Bombs."

The film documents two Plowshares actions at two nuclear weapons facilities in the recent past. Nuclear disarmament activists, including Catholic nuns and priests, challenged the security and legality of nuclear weapons when they broke into two top-secret facilities: one known as the "Fort Knox" of uranium and the other a Trident nuclear submarine base.

Sr. Megan Rice, an 88-year-old nun, participated in the first of the witnesses

and will be with us for the Pittsburgh area screenings. The filmmaker is Emmy award-winning producer Helen Young.

It is now more than 25 years after the end of the Cold War and nuclear weapons are once again center stage. The North Korean crisis together with the uncertain future of the Iran nuclear deal and the strained relationship with Russia in Syria have increased tension surrounding the world's 15,000 nuclear weapons. The documentary profiles people on the frontlines of global efforts for the abolition of nuclear weapons and follows diplomatic efforts at the United Nations to prohibit the use and threat of use of these weapons.

The public is welcome to any of the

following screenings:

Friday, June 1, 7 PM at St. Winifred's Catholic Church Hall, 550 Sleepy Hollow Road in Mt. Lebanon.

Sat., June 2: 2PM at Stone House at the Connare Center, 2900 Seminary Drive, Greensburg

Sunday, June 3, at 2 PM at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Divine Providence, 9000 Babcock Blvd. in Allison Park.

Sunday, June 3 at 6:30 PM at Carlow University, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Oakland (yet to be confirmed).

A free-will offering will be taken up at each of the performances to help with regional campaigns working for the abolition of nuclear weapons and to

help with the continued distribution of the film.

(TMC co-founder and current board member Molly Rush was a member of the Plowshares Eight, the first plowshares witness in 1980 at the GE plant in King of Prussia, PA.)

For more information, call the planning team at 412-780-5118.

Joyce Rothermel is a member of the Anti-War Committee of the Thomas Merton Center.



Image from the documentary "The Nuns, the Priests, and the Bombs" (Photo provided by Joyce Rothermel)

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PERSECUTING PALESTINIAN YOUTH

SUPPORT HR 4391 & THE RELEASE OF AHED TAMIMI

BY KATE DAHER

On April 11, Pittsburgh Jewish Voice for Peace co-founder, Dani Klein, artist and professor Hyla Willis, Bret Grote from the Abolitionist Law Center, and this writer delivered a letter to Representative Mike Doyle's Southside office, signed by 50 well-known clergy, professors, lawyers, writers, and artists demanding that he use his position as an elected official to fight for the release of sixteen-year-old Palestinian child-prisoner Ahed Tamimi.

On December 18, 2017, Ahed Tamimi, a Palestinian from the small village of Nabi Saleh, slapped an Israel soldier who had planted himself on her family's land--what is called the slap heard round the world. Ahed struck the soldier in defiance after her fifteen-year-old cousin, Mohammed Tamimi, was shot by an Israeli bullet, causing him to lose one half of his skull. (Mohammed was arrested before he could complete his medical care). After a video of the incident went viral, Israeli occupation forces violently invaded the Tamimi family home and arrested Ahed. Her mother, Nariman Tamimi, was arrested a short time later.

The outcry for the teenager's freedom was immediate and international.

Demonstrations were held in cities around the world, as the young activist became a cause célèbre for the abuse suffered by those living under military rule, especially children.

Like all Palestinians living under the illegal occupation, Ahed was tried in an military court, for which she received an eight-month prison sentence.

According to Samidoun, the Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, "The vast majority of all military court cases in occupied Palestine end in plea bargains. Palestinian prisoners are forced into plea bargains, with threats of lengthy sentences that pose an all-too-real danger, especially with the inflated charges and lengthy indictments proffered against Palestinians."

The letter to Rep. Doyle includes a request that the Congressman sign on to HR 4391, a bill that prohibits the use of U.S. financial assistance to Israel from being used to for the ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian children in military detention.

The bill was introduced into the House by Minnesota Representative Betty McCollum and is supported by 21 representatives, but not one from

Pennsylvania. In a call to McCollum's Washington DC office, this writer learned that the Congresswoman considers this bill a high priority.

Since the start of the Second Intifada (Uprising) in September 2000, Israel has killed 2,000 children and imprisoned more than 14,000, of whom 350 are still held in Israeli prisons. Israel's human rights record has been widely condemned by human rights organizations and activists worldwide.

According to the *Congressional Research Report* dated April 2018, "Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II. To date, the United States has provided Israel \$134.7 billion in bilateral assistance and missile defense funding."

In the last three weeks the Israeli army has lobbed chemical gas canisters and bullets at unarmed Palestinians who are demonstrating for their internationally recognized right to return to their homeland in what is known as The March of Return. At least 17 Palestinians have been killed, and more than 1400 wounded.

Pittsburgh activists organized several

events and activities focusing on Ahed's arrest and imprisonment, including a December protest outside of the William S. Moorhead Federal Building in -8 degree wind chill weather, several letter-writing events and a petition campaign. Jewish Voices for Peace members met with Rep. Doyle to request that he use his office to petition for Ahed's release.

The Tamimi family has a long history of resistance to the occupation and the theft of their land, illustrated in the film, "Radiance to Resistance," which debuted at the Carnegie Library in East Liberty on March 12th. To schedule a screening of "Radiance to Resistance," or for more information about the campaign to release Ahed or to support HR 4391, contact this author or go to the link <http://bit.ly/doyle4391..>

Kate Dahir is a member of the Pittsburgh Palestine Solidarity Committee.



Information provided by VoteAllegeny

2018 Elections Calendar

May: Tuesday 5/1/18—Board of Elections meeting before primary

Wednesday 5/2/18—LWVGP publishes Voters Guide in the New Pittsburgh Courier <http://www.NewPittsburghCourierOnline.com/>

Tuesday 5/8/18—Deadline to deliver civilian absentee ballot application

Friday 5/11/18—County must receive absentee ballots by 5:00pm

Monday 5/14/18—deadline to postmark military and overseas absentee ballots

Tuesday 5/15/18—PRIMARY ELECTION for US Senator (Casey's seat), US Representatives in Congress, Governor, Lt. Governor, State Senators (even # districts), State Representatives in Assembly, Democratic and Republican State Committee Persons.

Polls open 7am–8pm. www.VotesPA.com for your polling place

June: Monday 6/4/18—Board of Elections certifies election results

August: Wednesday 8/1/18—Last day to circulate and file nomination papers nominating independent candidates or Minor Political Party candidates

VoteAllegeny 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 VoteAllegeny.org



Photo provided by Kate Dahir



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FIGHTING FOR JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY

BLOCK DECIDES TO KEEP GOUGING P-G JOURNALISTS BY NEIL COSGROVE

Confronted with an unfavorable National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruling that Block Communication, Inc. has violated labor law by refusing to pay a 5% increase in health insurance premiums for 150 members of the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh, the owners of the *Post-Gazette* have decided to continue on a familiar, but unfortunate path. They will appeal the ruling to an administrative judge, enriching a union-busting law firm rather than supporting their own employees.

It's a strategy similar to that Duquesne University has followed for the past several years, filing numerous appeals of NLRB orders that call for the school to bargain with its recognized adjunct faculty union, expending substantial funds on legal representation rather than on paying a living wage to struggling professionals, hoping, perhaps, that a conservative-leaning U.S. Supreme Court will someday relieve the institution of pesky obligations to the people who work every day to fulfill its proclaimed educational mission.

And it's the same tactic it appears Penn State and Pitt will be pursuing as

they seek to postpone or prevent union organizing by graduate students as well as, in Pitt's case, adjunct, tenure-track, and tenured faculty.

Back in January, the union representing the *Post-Gazette*'s reporters, photographers, print and web editors, and graphic artists filed an Unfair Labor Practices complaint with the NLRB, arguing that Block's refusal to pay an April 1 increase in employee health premiums clearly violated a requirement that "companies involved in bargaining [must] maintain the same level of wages and benefits of expired contracts." Block's contract with the Guild, and other of the newspaper's unions, expired more than a year ago. The regional director of the NLRB agreed with the Guild in March, but within the same week Richard Lowe of the Nashville, TN law firm representing Block in contract negotiations announced the paper would appeal the NLRB finding, and said he was prepared to take such appeals up to the NLRB national office in Washington, DC. The appeals have "no downside for him [i.e. Lowe]," the Guild commented drily. "In fact, it serves to continue to

line his pockets and fleece Block..."

Block Communications will claim they have to significantly change their contract with the *Post-Gazette* journalists in order for the paper to make money once again, while Duquesne makes spurious arguments about their "Spiritan tradition" somehow preventing them from negotiating with an adjunct faculty union. But the most salient fact to note is that both entities are spending significant amounts of money to combat unions, money that would be better spent on adequately compensating their highly skilled and motivated employees. So maybe it isn't really about the money, but about a deep-seated animosity towards unions and collective bargaining.

What is the source of such animosity? Maybe owners and university administrators have convinced themselves that collective bargaining will detract from their own power and influence. Maybe they are reluctant to admit that journalists and faculty members are the true engines of their enterprise. Maybe they are so short-sighted that they fail to realize

these producers, especially when organized, also ensure the productivity and stability of their enterprises. Poorly compensating educators has not resulted in happily successful, highly valued schools. Instead, where weakened teacher unions and poor pay are the norm, the result in the past few months, in states like West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Kentucky, has been schools closed by wildcat strikes. If good faith bargaining doesn't take place internally, then bargaining will occur in the streets.

The Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh has said there will be "consequences" resulting from Block's decision to ignore labor law, and to further gouge journalists who have been making concessions on wages, benefits, and staffing for the past dozen years. Whatever work actions the *Post-Gazette* journalists choose to take should be supported by organizations and individuals dedicated to social and economic justice.

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

FIGHTING FOR JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY AT THE POST-GAZETTE (CONT'D) BY NEIL COSGROVE

In contrast, John Robinson Block, owner of the *Post-Gazette*, refused to publish a letter from the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh critical of an editorial that ran on Martin Luther King Jr. Day entitled "Reason as Racism." The piece began by characterizing criticism of President Trump's racist description of African and Central American countries as "shit-holes" as "the new McCarthyism" and went downhill from there. The Guild local's executive committee wanted readers to know that none of their 150 members "had anything to do with that editorial and we stand together in solidarity against the bigotry, hatred and divisiveness it engenders." Block apparently wanted those same readers to remain ignorant of the wide gap that had opened between himself and the vast majority of its employees.

In early March, Block Communications dug its heels in further by combining the editorial pages of the two newspapers it owns—the *Post-Gazette* and the *Toledo Blade*—under a single editorial page editor—Keith Burris. Burris, it turns out, was the author of the infamous

"Reason as Racism" piece, which he wrote while working for the *Blade*, and which Block insisted both papers publish.

An observation made by Bill Moushey, a long-time investigative reporter for the *Post-Gazette* and now a Point Park University journalism professor, reflects what many in the Pittsburgh region are now thinking. "A newspaper is supposed to be the voice of a community," said Moushey. "Not thumb their noses at us."

But some readers' knee-jerk reaction of cancelling their P-G subscriptions remains highly problematic, threatening the economic viability of an enterprise that, as mentioned above, cannot be duplicated by any other entity, not by a weekly publication like the *Pittsburgh City Paper*, not by an on-line news source like *The Incline*, and not by any of our local television stations. Instead, progressives need to support the reporters, photographers, print and web editors, and graphic artists who, as Guild members, are fighting ownership's insistence on the right to make them part-time and to

hire as many freelancers as they wish. Currently, staffing is still at a level that allows for valuable investigative reporting and for beat assignments in which reporters can build expertise and credible sourcing.

In the midst of their difficult contract negotiations with Block, and a struggle for the very survival of big-city daily newspapers, the Newspaper Guild local hopes the public can discern the significant differences between what *Post-Gazette* journalists do each day and the content found on its editorial pages. For example, while many progressives chafed at the P-G's endorsement of losing candidate Rick Saccone in the Pennsylvania 18th Congressional District special election, Michael Fuoco, Guild President, wants readers to remember "there would not have been a Congressional race in the 18th but for the investigative work of the *Post-Gazette* in exposing Republican Tim Murphy as a hypocrite regarding abortion."

Since owners of the supposedly "liberal media" are often supportive of right-wing

political agendas, keeping separation between op-ed content and the news operation seems more important than ever. At the end of March, Sinclair Broadcast Group forced their local news anchors to read a company-generated editorial on the air, word-for-word. During the 2004 presidential campaign "all Sinclair stations had to run an hour-long program attacking John Kerry's service in Vietnam," writes Matthew Dessem of *Slate*, and the company promptly "fired their Washington bureau chief" when he took note of the program's inaccuracies.

If Sinclair is now allowed to merge with Tribune Media it will gain access to 72% of U.S. television viewers, *Slate* notes. In the Pittsburgh region, Sinclair already owns WPGH (Ch. 53) and WPNT (Ch. 22). Those facts alone speak to the absolute necessity of the *Post-Gazette* remaining viable, and of the journalists employed by the paper holding on to their independence.

Neil Cosgrove is a member of the NewPeople editorial collective and the Merton Center board.

LIFTING ONE'S VOICE

FAITH IN ACTION (CONT'D)

BY BETTE MCDEVITT

convictions about the senselessness and immorality of war. Additionally, I came to recognize that I could not only "believe" in nonviolence, but I had a moral responsibility to act publicly on those convictions.

Q: In your online bio, you mention the "revolutionary Jesus." Our readers might like to know if that plays a large part in this this decision.

A: Absolutely! I had a second sort of epiphany after Iraq, and I recognized that Jesus's life was a ministry of radical confrontation of empire and its systems of violence and injustice. Jesus did not come only to die a spiritual death on behalf of all people, but his sacrifice was the revolutionary beginning of a whole new way of being human and ordering society. Now, this beloved Kingdom of God (Paul's own phrase) that Jesus proclaimed in word and deed is our responsibility to enact, empowered by the Holy Spirit. This means that as a Christian, I must intentionally confront the evils of empire, especially the U.S. empire with its 800+ military bases, thousands of nuclear missiles and, most dangerously, its evil system of imperial capitalism that perpetuates violence and oppression in our world.

Q: How did you come to the Merton Center to work for peace?

A: A few years ago, when I decided to follow my convictions of becoming a peacemaker, I joined Veterans For Peace (VFP). However, there was no active VFP chapter in Pittsburgh at the time, so I made my way to the Thomas Merton Center and joined the Anti-

War Committee. There I found kindred spirits, both Christian and non-Christian alike, who had the same passion to bring peace and justice to our hurting world.

Q: I would guess that finding so many people sharing your concern and supporting your action has been encouraging, and would you comment on that?

As a full-time hospital chaplain, I do not have a local parish that I am a part of. In many ways members of the Merton Center, Veterans For Peace, and other people from the wonderful justice groups that I am connected to have become a "church" community to and with me. Maybe it could be called Church on the Way.

Sometimes, when I think that our work is too daunting and the struggle too hard, I look to people like Joyce Rothermel, Edith Bell, Michael Drohan, and other Merton Center members who have been doing this work for many years and I say, "That's me. I am in this for the long haul." Also, I keep this Spanish liberation theology phrase in mind: Luchar por la justicia es rezar (To struggle for justice is to pray).

Q: To bring in the local aspect, how did you come to make your home in Pittsburgh?

A: My family moved to the Pittsburgh area in 2004 from the Bronx, NY when I was called to pastor a church in Aliquippa, PA. My family is now settled in Penn Hills, PA, where we have lived for the last ten years. It took a while to transition from the culture of NYC, but we are truly Pittsburghers now.



The Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign calls attention to PNC Bank's investment in nuclear weapon manufacturers on April 24th. (Photo provided by Bette McDevitt)

OFF OUR ROCKERS AND INTO THE STREETS

BY BETTE MCDEVITT

You may have seen us over the years. Raging Grannies, wearing hats salvaged from attics, shiny beads reminiscent of Mardi Gras, and buttons with slogans that catalog past causes and campaigns. We've been singing at rallies, on street corners, in parades, places where we are invited and many where we were not invited.

We've been doing this since 2003. When some of us saw what was coming with the invasion of Iraq, we put out a call for elderly women to gather to sing. A couple of us had seen Raging Grannies in other cities. My own first sighting was at the Nevada Test Site, where the Vancouver Raging Grannies sang to us and kept our collective spirits up. Edith Bell had seen another Gaggle in Washington, D.C. There are Gaggles in many U.S. and Canadian towns and cities, and some in other countries.

Because Pittsburgh has a large peace and justice community, we got a rapid response to our call for women to sing. Also, the timing was right; people wanted to gather to protest the war we saw coming. Our first public appearance was at the huge rally in Oakland on a Sunday in January where the snow fell without stopping. The entire event, bringing us together, remains clear in my mind.

We say, in our opening song, that we are a "gaggle of grannies" but that's not altogether the case; some of us are not grannies. We're simply of a certain age, and been around long enough to have seen things that need fixing. Many of us didn't know each other before joining the group, but newcomers soon learn that we are of one mind regarding issues of peace and justice, and not at all afraid to speak out or sing out. If there are any disagreements, it's usually about when to take a breath.

In these chaotic days, there is no shortage of issues, and at our twice monthly meetings, we sometimes write new words to old tunes or borrow songs from other Granny Gaggles, on a shared website.

If you are interested in joining the Grannies or finding out more about us, look at our website, <http://pittsburghraginggrannies.homestead.com/> or contact us at 412-661-7149, PittsburghRG@gmail.com. Having a "singing" voice isn't the issue; but having a voice to express your hopes for a better world, and sometimes your outrage, that's what counts.

The song below was written by Mel Packer, a member of Pittsburgh's peace and justice community. We're honored to sing it, and take it very seriously.

**"REFUGEE" song to tune of Johnny We Hardly Knew Ya aka When Johnny Comes Marching Home
(New lyrics by Mel Packer 12/18/15)**

They once had a home that made them proud
Haroo, Haroo
But came the bombs, the sound so loud
Haroo, Haroo
Walls caved in, the roof came down
Buried too many under the ground
No place to go where the wind doesn't blow
Disaster all around.

CHORUS
With guns and bombs and bombs and guns
Haroo, Haroo
With guns and bombs and bombs and guns
Haroo, Haroo,
Blew up their homes, stole their land
Smashed it all into rubble and sand
Left no choice, they died in the sea
As nameless refugees

They gathered the value of all they had
Haroo, Haroo
Fled from war, a land gone mad
Haroo, Haroo
A desperate flight they had to make
Not a real choice when your life is at stake
For the home they loved is reduced to dust
From wars that others wage.

CHORUS
Water comes in, the boat goes down
Haroo, Haroo
Headlines read "Ten Washed Ashore"
Haroo, Haroo
Who really knows, how many more
Bodies never made it to shore
Nameless people we'll never know
Just call them "refugees"

FEAR TRUMPS PRINCIPLE

AND THE WINNER IS... BY BETTE MCDEVITT

Sorry, folks, it's not you. It's Lockheed. In the recent 1.3 trillion dollar budget, the defense contractors will share a large hunk of our tax money; \$700 billion dollars, the largest increase in 15 years. Rep. Kay Granger, Republican from Texas, chair of the House defense appropriations committee explained why. "Our military is trying to recover from 16 years of war." No mention of the victims, dead, alive, refugees, wounded, from these ongoing wars. Stay tuned, the participants change; one day, Syria, the next day Yemen, but the constant is the United States.

So we know who the losers are, and thanks to the reporting of the *Washington Post* writer, Christian Davenport, reprinted in the *Post-Gazette*, we know who the winners are.

Lockheed's gain was in aircraft. The Pentagon will get 143 new planes, including 20 of the stealthy F-35. At first, when campaigning, Mr. Trump didn't like them. "Wasteful spending" he said. Now he likes them. "That beautiful F-35. It's stealth. You can't see them. Is that correct? It better be correct."

The Navy, not to be outdone, will get \$3.4 billion for new ships, and to make sure that we are omnipotent on land as well as air and sea, we will get 20 additional missile silos at Ft. Greely, Alaska. And just to be extra safe, two more of Lockheed's missile defense systems, a bargain at \$1 billion.

And what does it cost us. According to the National Priorities Project, of every dollar you pay in income taxes, 23¢ goes to the military—but only 5¢ goes to our troops in the form of pay, housing allowances and other benefits. That doesn't include the 6¢ that supports our veterans by providing health care, income support and job training, among other benefits. Meanwhile, 11¢ goes to military contractors, including 1.7¢ for the Pentagon's biggest contractor and maker of the F-35 jet fighter, Lockheed Martin.

It must have been a grand day for Mr. Trump when he signed the final bill, H.R. 1625, with his spineless sycophants fawning over him, while quaking at what he might say. He was, for one who lies and resorts to name calling, placid though terrifying.

Here, to close, are a few of his quotes.

"So we're extremely proud of what we've been able to do when it comes to our military. Our military will be far superior to any military anywhere in the world. That's very important for us. You see the players out there. You see what we're dealing with."

"We're spending a lot of money on nuclear — our nuclear systems — to upgrade, and in some cases, brand new, whether it's submarines — nuclear submarines — and others. So we'll have, by far, the most powerful nuclear force on Earth, and it will be absolutely in perfect shape and condition. And, hopefully, praise be to God, we don't ever have to use it. But there will be nobody that's even close."

Bette McDevitt is a member of The NewPeople editorial collective, and the Raging Grannies, who are really really mad.



The Raging Grannies (Photo: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

TRADING PRINCIPLES FOR POWER

BY CHERYL BAUER

The election of Donald Trump in 2016 is not only evidence of the power held by self-identified white, evangelical Christian voters, but of an enormous shift in principle of an electorate notorious for its adherence to rigorous moral standards.

In 1998, Dr. James Dobson, a psychologist, author, radio host, and founder of the Family Research Center and Focus on the Family, wrote a letter to his subscribers and congregants, scornfully detailing Bill Clinton's un-fitness for office on grounds of moral failure in the wake of his conduct with Monica Lewinsky: "As it turns out, character DOES matter. You can't run a family, let alone a country, without it. How foolish to believe that a person who lacks honesty and moral integrity is qualified to lead a nation and the world! Nevertheless, our people continue to say that the President is doing a good job even if they don't respect him personally. Those two positions are fundamentally incompatible. In the Book of James the question is posed, 'Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring' (James 3:11 NIV). The answer is no."

The Southern Baptist Convention passed a "Resolution on the Moral Character of Public Officials" during their June 1998 meeting, affirming "that moral character matters to God and should matter to all citizens, especially God's people, when choosing public leaders" and imploring "government leaders to live by the highest standards of morality both in their private actions and in their public duties, and thereby serve as models of moral excellence and character..."

Trump's lavish lifestyle and reckless business practices were never a secret, nor his numerous affairs or divorces. Weighed against the moral priorities of the Christian right voting base, these deficiencies should have been enough to steer this group towards any of the other less morally repugnant candidates. For a minority, it proved to be — write-ins skyrocketed compared to previous elections, notably in red districts. In Knox County, TN, 3,837 people wrote-in their vote, an increase over 7 times the 528 write-ins cast in 2012. A staunch conservative evangelical in my own family expressed deep dismay with the Republican National Committee, choosing to reject the party's nominee by writing in a GOP Senator who had dropped out of the race early on.

Christianity Today, a conservative Christian magazine founded by the late Billy Graham, boasting print readership of 336,000 and 8,000,000 monthly page views of their online site, reported in an article dated June 22, 2016 that "Dobson previously stated that after Rubio and Trump 'announced they would accept the Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage, we knew we could not support them.'" The article was later updated: "In an interview, Dobson [sic] said he had reason to believe Trump had recently accepted Christ. 'I believe he really made a commitment, but he's a baby Christian,' he said." (A "baby Christian" wouldn't be given charge of a stack of bulletins in the evangelical churches I've attended, let alone a group of people, but I digress.)

By September 2016, a video of Trump describing how best to grab a woman was made public. Later that month, Dobson was on record again with *Christianity Today*, "I don't vote for candidates or political parties. I support those who will lead the country righteously, honorably, and wisely. In many

ways, this is a single-issue election because it will affect every dimension of American life: the makeup of the Supreme Court. Antonin Scalia's sudden death made this election the most significant of our lifetime. The next president will nominate perhaps three or more justices whose judicial philosophy will shape our country for generations to come."

Voters themselves seem to have been particularly moved by Trump's appeals to their deepest fears. Pledges to build a wall at our southern border; to suspend immigration from certain Muslim countries, and to refuse to take their refugees of wars the U.S. has committed to; to eliminate gun-free zones in schools and military bases; to rebuild our "depleted" military; these and other sentiments appealed to the threats already perceived to their religious and second amendment rights. These ideas also seemed to empower a strong response to mass shootings and homegrown terrorism, despite most of these acts being executed by white males.

Since 2005, Baylor University's Sociology Department and the Institute for Studies on Religion have conducted a series of surveys to study American religious beliefs, behaviors, and values. "American Values Mental Health and Using Technology in the Age of Trump: Findings from the Baylor Religion Survey, Wave 5" (September 2017) reveals that nearly half of the evangelicals surveyed believe that Muslims are a physical threat. Respondents from rural areas expressed the greatest fear of immigrants, with 13% agreeing that immigrants from Mexico are "mostly dangerous criminals," while 48% believe that refugees from the Middle East "pose a terrorist threat" to the U.S. One of the first Trump supporters I spoke to during the campaign cited his wall proposal and emphasis on improving national security as the factors most influential in his decision.

The Christian right has long advocated for such states' rights as denial of marriage and partnership benefits to homosexuals and access to abortion services, and rejection of state-mandated curricula for students. Other pet causes are abstinence-only sex education and religious-based conscience clauses for medical practitioners. Many outside this culture are perplexed at the group's insistence that all citizens abide by these imperatives, but there is a deep-seeded common motivator: fear that our failure to live as a moral nation will be the cause of not just our nation's downfall, like Sodom and Gomorrah, but of a severe penalty to be paid at God's judgement. The stars aligned in 2016 - or was it deus ex machina? The prospect of securing a conservative Supreme Court, a devout, fundamentalist Christian running mate, and unresolved Bush-era fear of terrorism ushered in a new era of ideology for the formerly "Moral Majority".

True progress moves everyone forward, even those pulling hardest against it. Evangelicalism is not the only brand of Christianity observed in the U.S., but it has become the most politically vocal against social progress. May all reflect on the mission of service to the needs of others Christ has called his church to and find a common ground again. After all, this is the true sin of Sodom and cause for its destruction: "She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy." (Ezekiel 16:49)

Cheryl Bauer is a member of the NewPeople Editorial Collective.

GUNS AND SECURITY



Top left: A sign that reads "Our Schools Need Funds Not Guns" at the March for Our Lives action in Pittsburgh. (Photo: Mark Dixon)

Top right: Many students and non-students gathered downtown Pittsburgh for the March for Our Lives action to oppose gun violence. (Photo: Mark Dixon)

Bottom left: The March for Our Lives action in Florida. (Photo: Joyce Rothermel)

SECURITY FIRM AT ODDS WITH VALUES OF MANY IN NORTH HILLS COMMUNITY

BY SISTER MARY TRAUPMAN

Trib Media, 3-28-18:

"The North Allegheny School District canceled a training session scheduled for March 28 by its security consultant after a parent complained about posts the company's owner [Sam Rosenberg] made on social media, according to the superintendent..." [company is INPAX]

How the program was originally described:

NA School Safety Information Night

"...Join us to gain insight on the training staff members receive from INPAX, learn what the District is currently doing and has done in the past regarding security in its buildings, find out about assistance provided to students, and hear from the three police departments that serve NA."

[No mention of guns and shooting]

The Post-Gazette, 3-28-18

"The North Allegheny School District has called off active-shooting training for parents tonight after 'inappropriate' social media posts by the company, according to the district's website.

"North Allegheny is reconsidering its partnership with the contractor, Pittsburgh-based INPAX, which has worked with the district for several years, according to the message on the district's website..."

"North Allegheny nixed the training

after some parents raised concerns about the company with the district and school board and described the posts as 'violent, homophobic and anti-Muslim.'

The parents asked not to be identified because of concerns for their safety."

[The most significant statement noted above is, "The parents asked not to be identified because of concerns for their safety."]

Does this suggest that INPAX and its founder Sam Rosenberg may be threatening? Does this raise the question about a proper role model for our students today?

Memo from School to parents and community partners, 4-5-18

"...There is also deep concern related to the language surrounding the owner's assertion that he can train teachers to 'spot the wolves.' His [Rosenberg's] assertion is that precursors to violence in children are 'as predictable as boiling water.' Not only is this language dehumanizing, but all current research by experts in the field of child psychology, psychiatry, and medicine points to the contrary. To date, neither NA nor the owner of INPAX have been able to provide evidence of any training or qualifications that would suggest that the owner of INPAX is an appropriate person to teach faculty and staff how to recognize 'true warning indicators that a student may become violent,' as stated

in the advertising materials provided to parents and the community by North Allegheny."

All of the above quotes from the media and from the school district pointed out a number of problems with this entire venture. Who could dispute the need for safety training? However, INPAX held the position that safety training must include training in shooting a gun. INPAX supported the notion that one can never be truly safe unless one has a gun. Their flawed conclusion: the only way a society can be safe is to arm every single person, and teach that person how to shoot. Given this fundamental disconnect between the firm and many residents of the school district, North Allegheny and INPAX mutually agreed to go their separate ways in mid-April.

Related is a controversy over the construction of a shooting range at McCandless Crossing by INPAX. McCandless Crossing is a development of worship site, hotel, restaurants and other places of business and residences. McCandless Crossing is in walking distance of a number of worship sites, a hospital, a college, as well as an elementary school, pre-K through eight, which is less than 1000 feet of the shooting range.

The building at issue is an office building. The Town of McCandless issued a building permit for an office building. Over time this office building

became the site of a shooting range, instead of an office building with tenants. McCandless Crossing doesn't have enough parking as it is, and is very thickly populated with businesses. The nearest neighbor is a church with a very large parking lot. Will INPAX attempt to use the church lot as parking for their venture? A final determination in the best interest of the citizens of McCandless and the students in the North Allegheny school district must be made. The determination must also be in the best interest of the Sisters of Divine Providence and Providence Heights Alpha School, located directly across the street. The Sisters are very upset about having a shooting range in their front yard, on property that was once owned by the Congregation, and whose street address is Providence Boulevard.

Suggestion: go to the Town of McCandless website and view the meeting video of the meeting of July 17, 2017, including a presentation by Sam Rosenberg and the town council. The meeting was well attended by people wearing NRA hats. Begin at about 50 minutes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lr7eEL_Rgo0&feature=youtu.be

Sister Mary Traupman is a Sister of Divine Providence who is very concerned about the proliferation of guns, and the influence of the NRA.

LEARNING AND LOBBYING

COMCAST 21 TO AIR SHOW ON KOREA

BY CARLANA RHOSEN

On Thursdays in May/June, COMCAST 21 (VERIZON FIOS 47) will be running an informative panel discussion putting the current conditions in South Korea, North Korea, and U.S. relationships in perspective. It will air at 9 pm.

This discussion originally occurred at the Church of the Redeemer, Squirrel Hill, on February 18, against the background of increased tension between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, related to North Korea's recent bomb testing. The panel began with some historical background by Dan Simpson, of the *Post-Gazette* editorial board, formerly US ambassador to the Central African Republic, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire. Mr. Simpson raised the question of whether reunification of North and South Korea was in the interest of the US.

The first panelist, Prof. Samuel S. Stanton, Jr., a political scientist from Grove City College, said that most states would prefer to see Korea maintain current status quo, and not to unify. Although the Soviets helped North Korea move toward nuclear empowerment, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, left North Korea without aid or support. And once the U.S. labeled North Korea as a member of the "Axis of Evil," the possibility of meaningful discourse was further impeded.

Next, Prof. Ryan D. Grauer, from the Graduate School of Public & International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, discussed the efficacy of deterrent threats vs. persuasion, coercion and compellence. He said that focusing

on deterrents and sanctions, rather than insisting upon full disarmament, is most likely to be effective, given the current situation.

The third panelist, Elise Antel, of the Council on East Asian Studies at Yale University, graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, said that at a time when diplomatic relations need to be strengthened with South Korea in order to address the issue of North Korea, choosing to renegotiate South Korea's trade agreement, after many years of open trade, creates additional dissonance and tensions.

Last, Prof. Seung-Hwan Shin, of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at Pitt, emphasized that the South Korean people have never fully accepted the Colonial-like relationship, with the U.S. being in control. They have never been treated by the U.S. as a sovereign nation capable of managing their own foreign affairs and their relationship with North Korea. He pointed out that North Korea is a product of U.S. cold war policy. Finally, he asked whether Trump "deserves full credit" for current diplomacy between the North and South.

To understand the panel and the situation, it is useful to know more background. After World War II, in order to prevent communists from taking over all of Korea, the U.S. divided Korea into two parts, leaving the North to the Soviet Union, and keeping the South under U.S. rule, with the goal of containment.

The Korean War began when North Korea invaded South Korea during a

period when the Soviet Union was pushing against borders in Europe. The U.N. voted to send troops to stop the aggression. However, when MacArthur sent U.S. troops all the way to the Yalu River border of China, the Chinese entered the war and pushed Americans back to the 38th parallel. In the meantime, the U.S. carpet bombed North Korea to utter destruction.

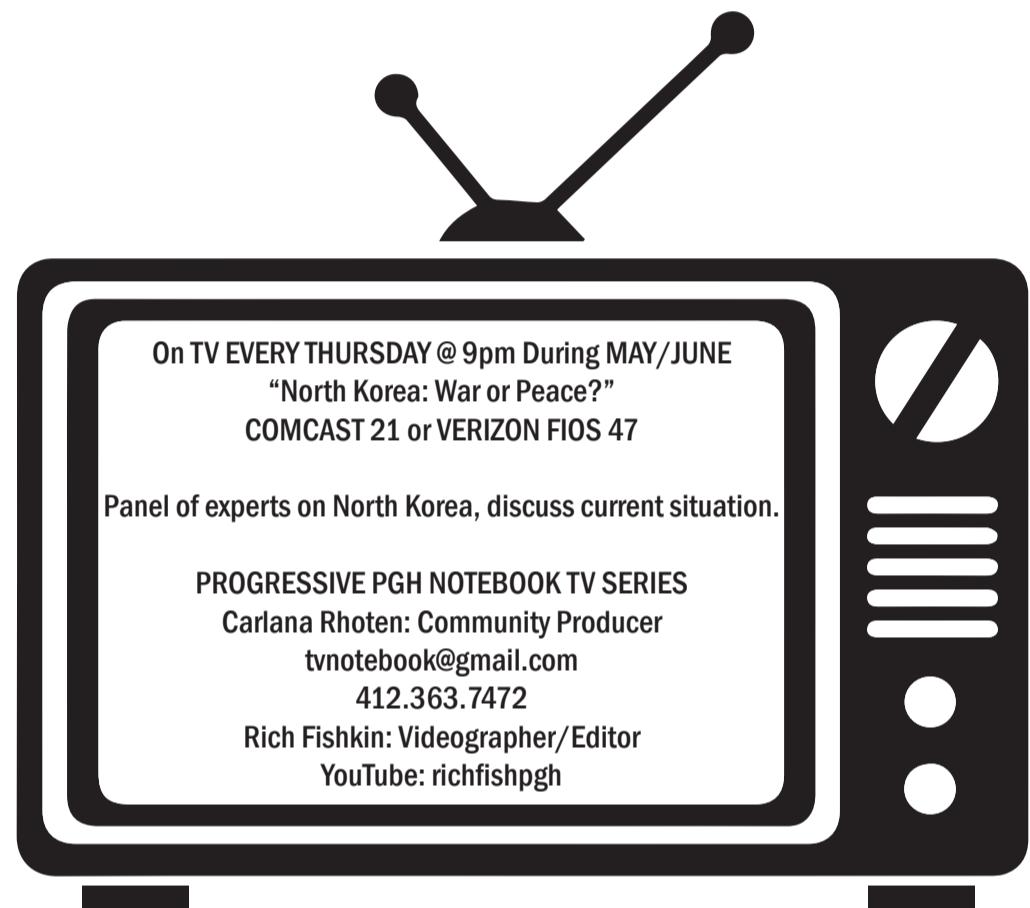
The fight ended, but there was never a peace treaty and the U.S. has kept approximately 30,000 troops in South Korea.

For years, the U.S. tolerated military

dictatorships, until the 1988 Olympic games gave South Koreans an opportunity to press for elections for the first time. Meanwhile North Korea has had several communist dictators, and more recently has become a nuclear power and has tested bombs and demonstrated their ability to fire missiles in Asian waters.

Carlana Rhoten is the Community Producer of the Progressive Pgh Notebook TV Series.

(Rich Fishkin is a Videographer/Editor. The program can also be seen at YouTube: richfishpgh)



SW PA BREAD TEAM LOBBIES CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FOOD PROGRAMS

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

Those who gathered for the annual SW PA Bread Team Workshop on April 15 heard from presenters Margaret Tran, regional organizer for Bread for the World, and Dennis McManus, Government Relations Director of the Gr. Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. The focus of their critical messages was on the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, the federal 2019 budget and renewal of the Global Food Security Act.

The U.S. Farm Bill not only sets most U.S. agriculture policies, but also authorizes both federal nutrition assistance programs and humanitarian relief for hunger emergencies abroad. This wide scope makes the Farm Bill vital not only to farmers, but to other residents of rural areas, people throughout the U.S. who do not have enough money for food, and countries where many people struggle with malnutrition and hunger. The major nutrition component is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

According to Bread for the World, "The Farm Bill can help put the United States on track to end food insecurity and hunger in our country and save millions of lives overseas. To do so, it must be

designed with strong and resilient food systems and good nutrition as its top priorities."

World hunger is now again on the rise after a period of decline. 815 million people suffer from hunger worldwide, and one in eight people are food insecure right here at home, including children, people with disabilities and the elderly.

Dennis McManus told us that the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (HR 2) was introduced in the House of Representatives in April and it is not the bill that anti-hunger advocates had been hoping for. He noted that the work requirements for SNAP recipients included in the bill make it more of a workforce development bill than a food security safety net one.

Newly sworn in Rep. Conor Lamb from the current 18th congressional district addressed the workshop attendees and expressed his dissatisfaction with the proposed bill. He says that his colleagues will work to amend it before it comes to the floor of the House for a vote. He believes there will be a much more bi-partisan approach to the reauthorization effort in the Senate. The

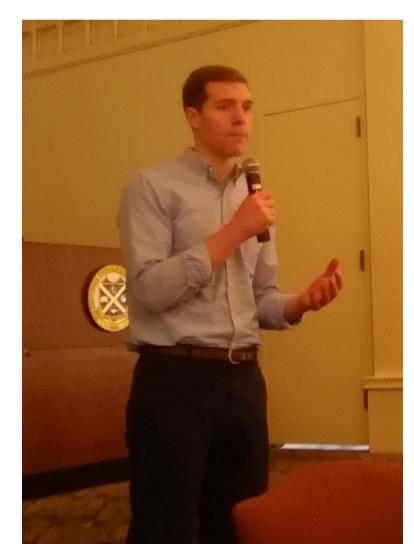
current Farm Bill expires September 30.

Members of the SW PA Bread Team will be visiting district offices between now and the national Bread Lobby days, June 11-12 in Washington, DC, to discuss our concerns about the budget considerations for 2019, the Farm Bill reauthorization and the renewal of the Global Food Security Act, also due to expire Sept. 30. The first of the district meetings will be with Elizabeth Fishback, regional director for Senator Casey on Monday, May 7 at 10 AM at the SW Bread Team meeting at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

For more information, to participate in district meetings, and to register for Lobby Day in Washington, DC, call Myra Mann at 412-882-6252 or me at 412-780-5118. Further information is available at www.bread.org

If time does not permit lobbying in person, voters are encouraged to express your concerns through personal letters, emails, and phone calls to Congress. To find updated sample letters on these very important issues, go to www.bread.org/activist

Joyce Rothermel serves as Co-Chair along with Myra Mann of the SWPA Bread for the World Team.



Connor Lamb (Photo: Joyce Rothermel)



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REGULAR MEETINGS

MAY 2018 EVENTS CALENDAR

05/10 - Songs of Protest and the Working Class

When: 7PM - 9PM
Where: The Pump House, 880 East Waterfront Dr, Munhall
Join singer/songwriters Tom Breding, musician in residence for the United Mineworkers; Jason Kendall, whose introspective and melodic songs are influenced by Chet Baker, Bob Dylan and the Beatles; and Mike Stout, songwriter of stories about working class heroes, for an evening of original compositions of working class ballads and protest songs about the tumultuous year 1968.

05/12 - The Heart of the Matter, an Intergenerational Dialogue

When: 1:30 PM- 3:30PM
Where: The Pump House, 880 East Waterfront Dr, Munhall
A participative round table of lived experiences from elders and young activists who, themselves, are facing a new global crisis. The impact on a generation coming of age of the Prague spring, Vietnam Tet Offensive, MyLai Massacre, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy assassinations, Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and American political upheaval.

05/14 - The Importance of Jerusalem to Christians, Muslims and Jews

When: 7:30PM
Where: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Auditorium, 616 N. Highland Ave
The public is invited to a free lecture by the Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek. Naim Stifan Ateek is a Palestinian priest in the Anglican Communion and founder of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem.

05/23 - TMC Potluck

When: 6PM - 8PM
Where: The Thomas Merton Center, 5129 Penn Ave

06/01 - "The Nuns, the Priests, and the Bombs" Screening

When: 7PM
Where: St. Winifred's Catholic Church Hall, 550 Sleepy Hollow Road in Mt. Lebanon

06/02 - "The Nuns, the Priests, and the Bombs" Screening

When: 2PM
Where: Stone House at the Connare Center, 2900 Seminary Drive, Greensburg

06/03 - "The Nuns, the Priests, and the Bombs" Screening

When: 2PM
Where: Motherhouse of the Sisters of Divine Providence, 9000 Babcock Blvd. in Allison Park

06/03 - "The Nuns, the Priests, and the Bombs" Screening

When: 6:30PM
Where: Carlow University, AJ Palumbo Hall of Science and Technology, Room 107, 3304 Fifth Avenue, Oakland

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

Tuesdays:

Green Party
First Tuesday of the month at Panera, Blvd of the Allies, Oakland, 7pm

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 Thursday, 6pm - 8pm, Hill House Conference Room 2
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, TMC Annex
Anti-War and Anti-Drone Warfare Coalition
4rd Saturday at 11:00 am at TMC, 5129 Penn Ave., Garfield, PA 15224

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Please complete and return to TMC. Thank you!

Name(s):

Organization (if any):

Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Email: _____

Mail to TMC, 5129 Penn Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15224
Call 412-361-3022 for more information.

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