



MEET THE NEW TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Sheryland Neal has a background in performance, theatre, and broadcast journalism. She holds a MFA in Film and Digital Technology from Chatham University and Bachelor's degree in Communication from Central State University.

Sheryland is one of three artistic directors of Timbeleza and a performing member of the Pittsburgh Samba Group. Recent travels include expeditions to Santiago, Havana, Trinidad, and Holguin, Cuba, and a residency in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro and Salvador).

In addition to working on creative projects with local and international companies, non-profits, and individuals, she is a prolific screenwriter, videographer, photographer, filmmaker, and documentarian.



Sheryland Neal, Photo Credit: Kitoko Chargois

POST-GAZETTE DRAMA CONTINUES

BY NEIL COSGROVE

Twenty-two months into so-far fruitless contract negotiations, the drama at Pittsburgh's only daily newspaper continues to unfold. *Post-Gazette* journalists sought to present their side of the story by distributing leaflets at two December events—at a Rotary Club meeting in which newspaper publisher John Robinson Block was arguing his side, and at a *Post-Gazette*-sponsored "Health Forum."

"We find it incredibly hypocritical that the *Post-Gazette* would sponsor a forum on health-care disparities," opined Michael Fuoco, president of the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh, "when it has chosen to illegally slash the health-care benefits of about 400 members of the Guild and other PG unions."

Fuoco was referring to the P-G's refusal to fund a 5% increase in their employees' 2018 health insurance premiums, even though the paper is required by contract to do so, and even though the regional National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and an administrative judge have said the *Post-Gazette* is in violation of the law by not doing so. Moreover, the publishers have decided they will not fund an additional 5% premium increase scheduled for 2019; the journalists' union has filed a second

complaint with the NLRB.

Meanwhile, Executive Editor David Shribman, a former Pulitzer-Prize winner respected and trusted by his fellow journalists, stunned the newsroom in late December by abruptly resigning. What most surprised staffers was that it was previously no secret Shribman was planning to retire at age 65 in August, 2019.

Maybe Shribman, like many others, grew tired of a conflict with no end in sight. Block Communications keeps citing yearly losses incurred by the *Post-Gazette*, though the publishers are notably vague about the exact sources of those losses. For their part, the journalists are fed up with not having a pay increase in 13 years, with cuts in both pay and benefits, and with the tactics of King and Ballow, a law firm from Nashville with a reputation for union-busting at newspapers.

The Newspaper Guild met with King and Ballow for the 19th time in 23 months on January 31st, but so far the only way the firm appears to be earning their fees from the Blocks is through appeals of the NLRB ruling.

The sharp turn to the right of the *Post-*

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Organizing the Future

ONE DEMOCRATIC STATE

BY KEN BOAS

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), was founded in Jerusalem in 2003. Its mission - to resist the illegal demolition of Palestinian homes. ICAHD, with its Palestinian, Israeli, and International allies, has rebuilt over 200 Palestinian homes and handed over the keys to the Palestinian owners. (ICAHD Founder, Jeff Halper, speaks in Pittsburgh February 3 and 4.)

The Palestinian home, often occupied by three or more generations of Palestinians, is the beating heart of Palestinian life. To demolish the home, as the Israelis well understand, is to break down the foundation of centuries old Palestinian culture. The relentless destruction and dispossession of Palestinian homes and their inhabitants have always been understood by ICAHD as a metaphor for the larger and more systematic state terrorism, dispossession and incremental genocide against the Palestinian people.

For Palestinian women, the home is the center of their power and status within the male dominated community. This loss is devastating. For the children, fear and long-term trauma and depression are engendered. And for the men, to hopelessly witness the destruction of the home they have proudly maintained for generations, a sense of anger, impotence, and deep despair overcomes them. All of this is exactly what Israel wants -what they have

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WOMEN'S MARCH PHOTOS



Women's Marchers follow Lady Liberty down Grant Street, on their way to Market Square in Pittsburgh on January 19th. Photo Credit: Neil Cosgrove

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www.prisonerstories.blogspot.com

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TMC supports these organizations'
missions.

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MERTON CENTER NEWS

LOOKING AHEAD: MERTON CENTER TURNS 50 - LETS CELEBRATE! BY MOLLY RUSH

Once dismissed as that “little storefront on Southside whose goal, no less, is peace and justice in the world,” nearly 50 years later that continues to be our mission. The goal, of course, remains the same; the challenge continues, so that’s where you come in.

In 1970, the war in Vietnam, despite years of protests, raged on. The battle for civil rights was at the forefront, and world hunger was acute.

Three groups--the Association of Pittsburgh Priests, Catholic Interracial Council, and the Religious Education Forum--formed CEASE, Catholics for an End to Slaughter and Exploitation. CEASE organized protests, educational activities and public prayer vigils.

It soon became evident that what we needed was a full-time organization with an office and staff.

A big undertaking, but we went ahead, fundraising (40 priests pledged \$5 to \$20 a month). Larry Kessler, President of CIC, took on the task of making our

dream come true. We rented an office at 1111 East Carson St., Southside, with a meeting room in the basement that was always busy. Soon, nicely furnished, we opened in the spring of 1972.

Larry was Director, Three nuns, Janet Brink, Stella Smetanka, and Betty Sundry, and I came on as staff, with monthly stipends of \$150. The Urban League provided a receptionist to welcome visitors. The Giving Tree shop sold Third World handcrafts. The New People monthly newsletter, 8-1/2 by 11, was typed, cut and pasted together.

From the start, everyone seeking justice was welcome. This was and is our main strength. Member support has allowed the freedom to take on the powers that be.

2020 marks 50 years since CEASE led the way. And in 2022 we will celebrate our 50 years of struggle and community. Don’t you think both are causes for celebration? Not simply as an exercise in nostalgia, although it is important to share our amazing history and the

thousands of members who are part of that history.

Mainly it’s a real opportunity to inspire, invite and encourage others to find their voice, envision change, proclaim and act on the belief that the struggle for peace and justice enriches lives, builds friendships, and makes change possible despite the odds.

I also see it as a chance to get our story out more broadly, as well as inspire others to bring their vision and energy to the task of building a new world. (And, by the way, help pay the bills.)

I have seen changes come about through patient struggle. Our first year we were approached by Dignity, a gay Catholic group who needed a place to meet and pray. Of course we said “welcome!”

Today gay marriage is legal; unheard of then.

In the 1970s we campaigned nonviolently against Rockwell, contractor for the B1 bomber. And in the 1980s, the River City Campaign held weekly vigils for

10 years at Westinghouse, going to jail many times at both headquarters. We met with top executives. Westinghouse sold their defense electronics business in 1995. Rockwell moved to Milwaukee. Today the PNC Banking the Bomb campaign protests continue the struggle.

Local, national and international issues continue to be a focus, from the environment to housing to migration to racism and more. Always it’s activism that is the core of our being. It’s the initiatives of our members and collaborators that keep us going.

We have a story to tell and the 50th anniversary is an opportunity to shout it from the housetops. And have a good time. Please contribute with your ideas, memories, energy and enthusiasm. We’ll need your help to shine some light on the Center and look to the future. Join us!

Molly Rush is a member of the Editorial Collective.



Photo by Neil Cosgrove: Guests at the TMC Fundraising Dinner with Post-Gazette columnist Tony Norman on January 22nd share a moment. The next dinner, scheduled for February, will be with Mayor Bill Peduto. All the dinners are hosted and prepared by Howard Aikens and Christine Wolfe. If interested in attending one, contact the Merton Center.

WE REMEMBER

Marvin Bellin, MD passed away on November 22, 2018. He was a Cornerstone Sustainer of the Merton Center and member of the Physicians for Social Responsibility and Physicians for a National Health Program. We are grateful for Marvin’s “enduring sense of social justice.” We extend our sympathies to his wife, Judith, and children Sam, Josh, and Becky, and six grandchildren.

Marilyn Schaub, PhD died on October 27, 2018. She taught for many years in the Theology Department of Duquesne University. Her daughter, Helen, served as an intern at the Thomas Merton Center. Marilyn and her husband Tom, who preceded her in death, were members of the Merton Center. Helen has suggested donations to the Merton Center in memory of her mother. We offer our sympathies to Helen, her husband and young son.

Joyce Feinberg, Dr. Richard Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, brothers Cecil and David Rosenthal, husband and wife Sylvan and Bernice Simon, Daniel Stein, Melvin Wax and Irving Younger were tragically murdered in their house of worship at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018. We embrace their families, friends, and fellow worshipers in their great loss.

(The above memorials were inadvertently omitted in the December-January issue of The New People. Our apologies for the delay. In gratitude for their lives of service and caring in our community; we remember them.)

BEHIND OUR BACKS BY BETTE McDEVITT

While we’ve been paying attention to a few other things — the shutdown, the climate, the chaos of the last few years in the U.S. - nuclear weapons profiteers have been cooking up something new. It’s called the B61-12: a gravity bomb dropped from fighter jets and heavy bombers, currently in design and set for mass production in 2020. In the photo below, we see a mockup of the planned tool of mass incineration, rolled into a hearing room of Congress. Consider the privilege that allows these corporations who promote death and destruction to pull off a trick like that. Only with the help of their congressional puppets.

I learned about this latest evil act, only on January 3 of this year, in an email from the Women’s League for Peace and Freedom. John LaForge, on the staff of Nukewatch, took

on a tedious task of documenting the corporations who are involved in the making of this weapon, along with phone numbers and addresses. He suggests that readers contact them, shame them, protest in front of their offices, and call for divestiture by individuals and institutions. A list of the complicit companies and what contact information could be found is in an accompanying article. We invite you to put pressure on them.

It’s a tradition in our town and in our movement to protest publicly. One of our founders, Molly Rush, went after GE as a maker of nuclear weapons in the 1980’s, and we in Pittsburgh continue a very public protest with the Stop Banking the Bomb campaign focused on the massive PNC Bank. PNC has given loans and/or underwritten bonds to two of the companies scheming

up this latest tool of death and destruction, Bechtel and Orbital ATK. A list of the remaining death dealers with whom PNC does business appears below.

Keep in mind that there will be a shareholders’ meeting in April.

You can follow PNC Stop Banking the Bomb” events on Facebook.

PNC Financial Services has made an estimated US\$1.186 billion available to the following nuclear weapons companies, and has also provided loans for an estimated amount of US\$ 752 million to nuclear weapon companies. The table shows all loans closed since January 2013 or maturing after August 2016.

PNC has underwritten bonds for the following companies who participate in making nuclear weapons:

million are managed by PNC.

Northrop Grumman \$87 million	Moog \$23 million
General Dynamics \$46 million	Orbital ATK \$20 million
Huntington Ingalls \$59 million	Textron \$47 million

Information for these charts comes from the stopbankingthebomb.org website.

Bette McDevitt is a member of the Editorial Collective and the Raging Grannies



Bechtel \$70 million	Moog \$133 million
BWX Technologies \$128 million	Orbital ATK \$140 million
General Dynamics \$46 million	Textron \$100 million
Huntington Ingalls \$133 million	

Finally, shareholdings of Northrop Grumman in the amount of \$181

DEATH DEALERS BY BETTE McDEVITT

The following information on the companies involved in making the New Nuclear Bomb, the B-61 was given by John LaForge, a staff writer for *Nukewatch*. The information was also published in the *Duluth Reader*.

Up to date contact information from the companies websites:

• Consolidated Nuclear Security Corp. (CNS) is the giant partnership that operates the sprawling Y-12 nuclear weapons complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and produces the bomb-grade uranium “jacket” of the future B61. CNS’s members are a Who’s Who of the nuclear war system including: Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Bechtel National, and Orbital ATK, among others.

Contact information: Y-12 National Security Complex, Bear Creek Rd., Oak Ridge, TN 37830.

• Boeing has designed and is producing the “tail kit” for the new B61-12, steerable fins that will radically improve accuracy, and give the H-bomb new military capabilities.

Contact information: Boeing Defense, Space and Security, PO Box 516, St. Louis, MO 63166; 314-232-0232.

• Lockheed Martin, the world’s biggest military contractor, is helping Boeing make the B61-12 in effect the world’s first “smart” nuclear bomb.

Contact information: 6801 Rockledge Dr., Bethesda, MD 20817; 972-603-9818.

• Sandia National Laboratory in New Mexico is the lead designer for the B61-12, which is expected to cost over \$12 billion. Indeed, all three national nuclear weapons laboratories -- Los Alamos and Sandia in New Mexico, and Lawrence Livermore in California -- have

contributed to the design of the B61-12. Think of it as a jobs program for PhD dead enders.

• Bechtel National, Inc. normally “puts the US on the cutting edge of missile development” as its website says, but at Y-12 it’s got a piece of the B61 golden goose. Contact information:

12011 Sunset Hills Road, Reston, VA. 20190-5918, 571-392-6300

• Orbital ATK, Inc. (formerly Alliant Tech Systems) is also in on the B61 boondoggle at Y12. Headquartered in Dulles, Virginia, ATK designs and builds missile propulsion systems, military electronics, precision weapons, armament systems, and large- and small-caliber ammunition -- including 120mm depleted uranium shells. Acquired by Northrop Grumman in June, 2018.

Contact information: Orbital ATK, 45101 Warp

DEALING WITH CHICKEN HAWKS

DEATH DEALERS CONT'D FROM PAGE 4

Drive, Dulles, VA 20166; 703-406-5000.

•Honeywell runs the Kansas City Plant in Missouri, making non-nuclear components for all nuclear warheads including the B61s, and has contracted to run the Sandia National Lab.

Contact Information: Honeywell / Kansas City Plant: 14510 Botts Rd., Kansas City, MO 64147; 816-488-2000; & New Mexico location, 2540 Alamo SE, Bldg. A., Albuquerque, NM 87106; 505-267-4020.

•Integrated Technology Corp. is an information management firm; while Fluor Federal Services, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Fluor Corporation of Irving, Texas, provides engineering, procurement, construction, commissioning, operations, maintenance, and project management.

Contact information: Integrated Technology Corp., 1228 North Stadem Dr., Tempe, AZ 85281; 480-968-3459.

(Fluor Federal Services Corp, George Washington Way, Richland, WA 99354; 509-392-5888 99 media)

•Longenecker & Associates, Inc. is a consulting firm that provides specialized, technical and management services to nuclear industries, particularly the planning of "startup and commissioning" of nuclear systems and facilities.

Contact information: Longenecker & Associates, Inc., 2514 Red Arrow Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89135; 702-493-5363.

Bette McDevitt is a member of the Editorial Collective and of the Raging Grannies



The Religious Society of Friends (better known as **QUAKERS**)

A Peace & Social Justice Active Spiritual Community invites
you to join us Sundays 10:30AM for waiting worship

4836 Ellsworth Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: (412) 683-2669

www.quaker.org/pghpamm/



ONE DEMOCRATIC STATE CONT'D BY KEN BOAS

always wanted since 1948 and earlier, when the first Kibbutz movement in the early 20th century began by taking Palestinian land, dispossessing the people, and building the Kibbutz for Israeli farmers. To break the spirit of the Palestinian is the essential motivation for home demolition and the entire ‘matrix of control’ imposed on the Palestinian people. It isn’t about security, it isn’t about punishment, it’s about how to make life so unbearable for the people that they will give up.

ICAHD always realized that rebuilding was a stopgap measure. It did serve to send notice to Israel that there was resistance, and it did bring people from all over the world to witness the Palestinian side of the story. But it did not slow down the Israeli movement to Judaize all of Palestine and repress and dispossess the Palestinians. As permanent Occupation turned into Apartheid, a new strategy was necessary.

Two years ago, Jeff Halper, the founder of ICAHD, author and nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, and a group of Palestinians and Israelis, began to move in another direction. A number of factors entered into this major shift in thinking, although the essential understanding had been clear for

years: the impossibility of a two-state solution. We need go no further than to realize that two states mean that Zionism recognizes that Palestinians have an indigenous right to the land. It will never willingly do this. As well, if one looks at the massive settlement tracts throughout the West Bank, the dispossession of Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, the theft of Area C (60% of the West Bank), and the recently passed draconian Nation-State law for Jews only, it is obvious that a state for the Palestinians on any of this land was never the intention of Israel.

In the face of all this, there was only one viable response. And this response is the current focus and work of ICAHD: One Democratic State from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. This means a democratic secular state with equal constitutional rights for all the people, including the right of return for the Palestinian diaspora. As Halper and others have realized, it is time to stop wasting time burying the two-state solution or trying to ‘manage’ the so-called Occupation. The heart of this new campaign is acting upon the well-established historical fact that Israel is a Settler-Colonial regime, and that

democratic statehood must come from complete decolonization.

Halper, in his recent article, writes: “Regardless of Zionism’s claim to have begun as a genuine national movement, once it chose the form of settler colonialism it made decolonization the only acceptable form of resolution. It is Zionist/Israeli policies and actions that have eliminated any other form of accommodation other than decolonization.

“Defining a process of decolonization, then, brings us closer to an actual plan. As important as resistance, protests, BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) activism, lobbying, campaigning and other actions may be, a political struggle cannot be resolved without an end-game – and in the case of Palestine/Israel an end-game formulated and led by Palestinians, with strategic support from critical Israelis and the international civil society. We need to translate the requirements of decolonization into a political plan, a vision of the future, and an effective strategy for getting there. The One Democratic State Campaign (ODSC), has formulated a 10-point program for establishing a single democratic state in historic Palestine based on the

principle of decolonization.” <https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/10/12/choices-made-from-zionist-settler-colonialism-to-decolonization/>

Jeff visits Pittsburgh and all are welcome. The two events are at the Unitarian Church in Shadyside: Sunday, February 3, 1:00 pm, and on Monday evening Feb. 4, 7:00 pm –9:30 pm. Donations Requested. (If you have any question, please email me for details at kpboas@gmail.com.)

Please take advantage of this rare opportunity to meet with Jeff Halper. Jeff will talk about the One State Campaign and its 10-point program, followed by an open discussion of this and other issues.

Ken Boas is Chair of Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions -USA.

I CAN'T HEAR BY PETER ORESICK

I can't hear when I am sleeping.
I fear the stalker, the tomb
robber, the contractor
who measures my sleeping soul.

His hatred,
my tomb.

Let this wall be my tongue.
I am always awake, sick of your chatter
& your noxious grin.

You ignore the evidence,
you don't know the procedures.
You make it up as you go.

I can't hear you. My ears are deaf
to your monologues. You exist but
I never seek you out. I can fend for
Myself. My portfolio is slowly
growing.

I know what to do:
Keep silent. Everyone will walk away
in time, abandoning me like a corpse
at the lip of a grave.

This is science. This is living.
Only a set of genes like my mother's
could foretell a life like mine.

I don't know these punks.
I can't hear their music.
My brain can't hear. Seek
the enemy & flush him out.
Hate is a boom box blaring
From a block away, daring you
to silence the music.

Peter Oresick (pronounced o-RES-ik) (1955-2016) was a poet, publisher, professor, and painter of Carpatho-Rusyn descent. The son and grandson of glassworkers, Peter grew up in the working-class factory town of Ford City, PA located northeast of Pittsburgh on the Allegheny River. His work explores the themes of work, workers, and the working class, as well as family, regional history, and the interplay between the sacred and the secular. His poetry volumes include Iconoscope: New & Selected Poems, Warhol-o-Rama, and Definitions.

PROVOCATIVE SPEAKERS

JEFFREY SACHS - SHOCK DOCTOR

BY JOHN HEMINGTON

Jeffrey Sachs will soon be speaking in Pittsburgh. He has become the establishment's bright liberal light by opposing the right-wing 'Freedom Caucus' and supporting efforts to combat global climate destabilization. His past actions, however, are a poor foundation for such acclaim.

Jeffrey Sachs is best known for his work as president of the Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID). The HIID was known for its unstinting efforts, in league with George Soros, Larry Summers and CIA-related organizations, to spread neoliberal 'shock doctrine' policies to the world. These were an outgrowth of Milton Friedman's 'Chicago Boys' economic destruction, first tried out in Chile following the ouster and murder of Dr. Salvador Allende in 1973.

To quote from *The Internationalist* (October 2011):

"Dr. Sachs was contracted by hardline capitalist regimes from Bolivia to Russia. His task: to design an economic 'shock treatment' that produced misery and death for untold numbers of working people." (Emphasis in original)

Sachs was known as the leader of the 'Harvard Boys,' a clique of America's supposed 'best and brightest' young economists out to save the world for neoliberal corporate interests. This he

accomplished with a tremendous energy akin to a religious fervor. He and his team worked closely with numerous governmental and non-governmental front organizations closely affiliated with the CIA and Treasury Department, such as USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Sachs first major effort was in Bolivia, where he was determined to smash the tin miners' union on behalf of rightist president Victor Paz Estenssoro and former dictator Hugo Banzer, and to impose neoliberal economic policies. A decree was issued by Paz which virtually made strikes illegal, shut down the mines, fired miners and "relocated" more than 20,000 to tropical areas. All these actions followed the advice given by Dr. Sachs. As a result "... the social costs... were immense," *The Internationalist* reported. "Paz passed the costs of stabilization onto the lower classes. . . In 1986 the purchasing power of the average Bolivian was down 70 percent... Unemployment reached 20-25%, and nearly all social welfare benefits were swept away."

Next on the list, accompanied and supported by George Soros, was Poland. Here Sachs worked to convince Lech Walesa and Solidarność to move toward neoliberal 'shock therapy' in order to quickly convert the economy

to capitalism. It appears that the utter destructiveness of this policy on the Polish population was never revealed to Walesa or the members of his union. The privatization policy meant mass unemployment, the destruction of social benefits and the rise of anti-woman, anti-worker attitudes and a rise of xenophobia. It also made a number of oligarchs quite wealthy.

However, Bolivia and Poland were mere stepping stones to the ultimate prize – Russia. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union moves were afoot to establish a blend of socialism and capitalism to ease the move away from the Soviet version of socialism. But Russia needed financial help in order to move forward and the IMF moved in to offer loans, but with a string attached. Russia had to employ neoliberal shock therapy if it was to receive the loans. Thus appears HIID in the persons of Jeffrey Sachs, David Lipton and George Soros to guide U.S. chosen stooge Boris Yeltsin through the process of thorough neoliberalization. As characterized in *The Nation*:

"The activities of HIID in Russia provide some cautionary lessons on abuse of trust by . . . foreign advisers, on US arrogance and on the entire policy of support for a single . . . group of so-called reformers. The . . . story is a familiar one in the ongoing saga of US foreign policy disasters created by those

said to be our best and brightest."

The shock treatment's result in Russia "was a thorough disaster, one of the worst collapses in human history," noted the *Left Business Observer*. It produced millions of deaths, the gross domestic product was sliced in half, poverty increased tenfold, health care was devastated, the mortality rate increased by 75%, life expectancy for men dropped by 7 years, and the nation was turned over to ruthless oligarchs. Short of all-out global war there is nothing much to compare it with.

John Hemington worked as a general practice lawyer for about ten years before transitioning into computer law and eventually into computer management. He worked as Information Technology Director for 16 years at the Watson Institute in Sewickley before retiring. He is an avid student of history and politics, with a particular interest in neoliberalism's history, development and impact on today's world.

ASSOCIATION OF PITTSBURGH PRIESTS ANNOUNCES ITS 2019 FALL SPEAKERS SERIES

Looking ahead to the spring, the Association of Pittsburgh Priests invites you to put the dates of this year's spring speakers' series on your calendars now. All events will be held at Kearns Spirituality Center, 9000 Babcock Blvd., in Allison Park.

The first speaker this year is Jeffrey Sachs, Ph.D., an award-winning economist with degrees from Harvard and Columbia Universities. Sachs is currently the Quetelet Professor of Sustainable Development at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. As an advisor to the United Nations, he helped to develop the global Sustainable Development Goals. A co-editor of the *World Happiness Report*, Sachs is also the author of 17 books, the most recent of which is: *Building the New American Economy: Smart, Fair, and Sustainable*.

Sachs will speak on the topic: "Poverty Requires a Faith Response: What Can We Do?" on Monday, March 25 at 7 PM. Sachs has concretely responded to the dire poverty in our world by guiding policies and efforts in developing countries toward sustainable development. (See article above.)

Although Dr. Sachs is Jewish in faith, Popes John Paul II and Francis

have sought him out for input into encyclicals, most recently for *Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home*. Sachs calls it "magnificent, breathtaking...compellingly holistic. It inspires in its profundity." He is similarly enthusiastic about the Church's social teaching: "I love the leadership the Church shows in goodwill to humanity. Pope Francis has said repeatedly that his encyclicals are a call to all of humanity...they touch me very deeply." If you have wondered what responses we can make to poverty, join us as Sachs teaches us how the Social Gospel of the Church can bring justice and peace in our world.

The second speaker will be Greer Gordon, Ph.D., a theologian, author, and lecturer, known for her teaching, publications, and work in the fields of evangelization and catechesis. Among her publications is *A Profound Understanding of the Feminine Person and the Plan of Salvation*. Dr. Gordon is one of eight women invited by the Vatican to respond to John Paul's Encyclical on Women and is the author of the monthly prayer journal *Give Us This Day*.

Gordon will speak on the topic: "Truth in the Heart: The Church, Entitlement, and Sexual Crimes" on Sunday, April 14 at 2 PM. Rape,

molestation, seduction, sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment have all become exposed in the Church. The perpetrators and their silent accomplices who hid such acts are slowly being identified for their sinfulness. If we would be, as we claim to be, Christ in the midst of the world, then we must identify and reject the spirit of entitlement that has allowed priests and bishops to set themselves above the standards of Christian moral-ethical living. We must be bold in our analysis of facts, uncompromising in our defense of truth, and unrelenting in eliminating clerical entitlements. Dr. Gordon will present an analysis of what has happened and offer concrete suggestions as to how the Church may proceed in returning to a people who cherish God's love for "truth in the heart." Please join us for a prayerful exploration of the crisis in our Church.

A final Listening and Sharing Event will be held on Tuesday, April 30 at 7 PM. The clergy sexual abuse of minors, the cover up by our bishops, and the up to now inadequate response of the Vatican is perhaps the greatest scandal in the history of the American Catholic Church. After a brief report on initial efforts being made to respond locally, those who gather will share their feelings, thoughts and recommendations. Opportunities for

involvement afterward will be offered.

The fee for the upcoming talks is \$20 each. For the April 30 event, there is no charge. Participants can register at the door the day of the talks. For more information and questions, contact Fr. John Oesterle at 412-232-7512 or johnoesterle2@gmail.com. You are also invited to visit www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com. Pre-registrations can be made to the Association of Pittsburgh Priests, P.O. Box 2106, Pittsburgh, PA 15230.

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

A FRACTURED ENVIRONMENT

AMITY AND PROSPERITY, ELIZA GRISWOLD ON THE FRACTURING OF AMERICA

BY MIKE SCHNEIDER



Photo of Eliza Griswold

Eliza Griswold is an accomplished, award-winning poet, who also writes for *The New Yorker* and covers southwestern Pennsylvania politics. This year, she published *Amity and Prosperity, One Family and the Fracturing of America*, a product of seven years getting to know people who live in the Washington County communities of her title. *Amity* brings to readers sharpened awareness about the ramifications of the natural-gas boom we've been living through. Recently it made *The New York Times* list of 100 Notable Books of 2018.

Griswold's narrative tracks a years-in-the-making metamorphosis in the life of Stacey Haney, a single mother, nurse and owner of a family farm near Amity. In 2004, with no ill-will toward the fracking industry, Haney hoped to finance long-needed improvements to a rickety barn where she sheltered goats, pigs and Bob

and Doll, her donkey and mare. Haney knew, through talk in the community, that other property-owners had been cashing in, selling leases that could yield thousands of dollars per acre, substantial money in this economically-depressed Appalachian region.

Beyond the chance for income, writes Griswold, Haney also thought about wider concerns related to fossil fuel. Tired of her country sending young people to die over oil, she saw the war in Iraq as more of the same. She felt the USA should rely on domestic energy, and if she could promote that while helping herself financially, why not? A wave of oil-and-gas industry public-relations — with virtually no reporting at the time about what could go wrong — also influenced her decision.

Many *NewPeople* readers can guess how this story turns out. Over a course of years, Haney's life became an almost unimaginable tragedy, with drastic deterioration in the quality of her well water and an accumulation of health problems for her daughter and son. Eventually, the family had to leave their farm, and Haney became enmeshed in a life-consuming fight for redress from Range Resources.

A large part of the sadness of *Amity* is the almost total futility Haney experienced in seeking help from state and federal agencies. Several representatives from

the EPA and Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection visited and investigated the nearby leaky fracking pond. Repeated lack of follow-through, however, which Griswold documents, is increasingly frustrating, even to someone such as this reader, not personally undergoing the frustration.

Amity unfolds also as an account of how someone uninclined to activism changes with time and refuses to back down — even when backing down may seem like the prudent course. Part of Haney's learning, and some of her friends as well, is about how “one may smile and smile and be a villain” — including amiable people (some of them Washington County locals) paid by Range to handle interactions with the community.

Later chapters recount an ultimately successful legal battle that led to a landmark decision, *Robinson Township v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, in which Pennsylvania's Supreme Court held unconstitutional most of “Act 13” — a 2012 law to facilitate fracking. The decision breathed new life into Article I, Section 27 of Pennsylvania's constitution, which mandates that the state “conserve and maintain” public resources “for the benefit of all the people.” Robinson is an outcome of advocacy by husband-and-wife pro bono attorneys, John and Kendra Smith of Washington, most of whose prior practice involved representing the oil-and-

gas industry. In response to seeing Haney and others steam-rolled by fracking companies, they applied their legal expertise on behalf of local communities.

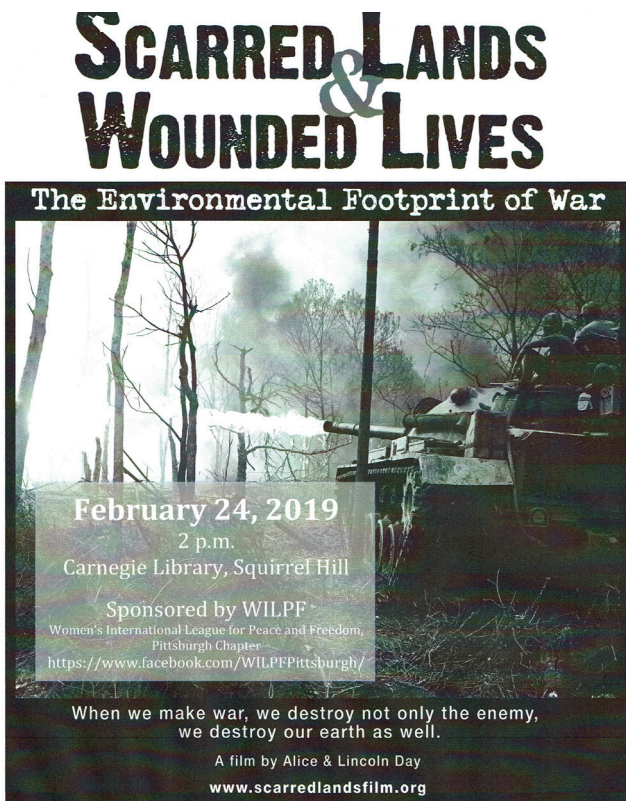
Readers may appreciate a below-the-surface aspect of *Amity*, in that Griswold — Princeton trained, a fellow at Harvard Divinity School — had to win the confidence of people apprehensive, if not outright biased, about so-called educated elites. From her June appearance at Carnegie Lecture Hall, one could surmise that she's helped by her unshowy, down-to-earth manner.

A virtue of Griswold's writing is its surface neutrality. She writes as a journalist and reports without an apparent axe-to-grind. She marshals abundant reasons to appreciate how Haney and others in her situation would choose to take the money and believe they were doing, ethically and morally, the right thing. *Amity's* convincingness, in no small measure, reflects Griswold's ability to be in the background — a writerly presence perhaps most noticeable by how much she's not telling the reader what to think.

Mike Schneider won the 2016 Robert Phillips Prize in Poetry from Texas Review Press, which in 2017 published his chapbook “How Many Faces Do You Have?”

THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF WAR

BY EDITH BELL



The environmental footprint of war must be a major topic of discussion in the context of global warming, yet it is often ignored.

On February 24 at 2 p.m. at the Carnegie Library in Squirrel Hill, Women's International League for Peace will present the film, “SCARRED LANDS & WOUNDED LIVES.” Discussion will follow the film.

The event is open to the public. Free admission.

<https://www.facebook.com/WILFPittsburgh/>

Here is a brief overview of what the film presents: The scale of environmental damage over the last half century is unprecedented. Falling water tables, shrinking forest cover, declining species diversity - all

presage ecosystems in distress. In *SCARRED LANDS AND WOUNDED LIVES*, filmmakers Alice and Lincoln Day recognize our deep dependence on the natural world and the significant threat to that world posed by war and preparations for war. These trends emanate from forces of humanity's own making: unsustainable demands on natural resources, species loss, and ruinous environmental practices. Ironically, however, war - that most destructive of human behaviors - is commonly bypassed.

In all its stages, from the production of weapons through combat to cleanup and restoration, war pollutes land, air, and water, destroys biodiversity, and drains natural resources. Yet the environmental damage of war and preparation for war is routinely underestimated, underreported, and even ignored. The environment remains war's silent casualty.

An estimated 150 wars have been fought since World War II. Many are civil wars, others are fought over natural resources such as water, fishing rights, or for diamonds in Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Congo.

During the Gulf war, Iraqi soldiers torched 500 Kuwaiti oil wells, causing water pollution and black smoke throughout the area. Its damage to the ecosystem is still unknown. Military debris from the long war in Iraq pollutes the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, as well as the land and air.

Bridget Guarasci (Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Franklin & Marshall College), in her article “Environmental Rehabilitation and Global Profiteering in Wartime Iraq,” reports, “Iraq's soil is polluted from military debris including unexploded ordnance, spent cartridges, and military vehicles as well as radioactive material like depleted uranium from US munitions. During the Gulf wars in 1991 and in 2003, the US shot about 1,200 tons of ammunition in Iraq, compounding the contamination problem.

“As a result, rates of cancer grew exponentially: the overall incidence of breast and lung cancer, leukemia and lymphoma have doubled and tripled. In 2013, scientists documented 140,000 cases of cancer in Iraq, with 7,000 to 8,000 new cases registered each year since then. For Iraqi women, the incidence of breast cancer increased from 26.6 in the pre-war period to 31.5/100,000 in 2009 with 33.8 percent of breast cancers diagnosed in girls less than 15 years old. Birth defects have also increased exponentially.”

Iraq is only one of many suffering areas. In Yemen the destruction of the sanitation system has caused cholera, not to mention the starvation caused by the continuous bombings.

As the world focuses on the death of people in wars, we are destroying our planet and making it unlivable for future generations of humans and many other species.

Edith Bell is the coordinator of the Pittsburgh branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and a long time peace and justice activist.



Long-time Merton Center member Edith Bell (right) joins with fellow Women's International League for Peace and Freedom members to leaflet at the January 19th Women's March in Pittsburgh. Photo Credit: Neil Cosgrove.

POST-GAZETTE DRAMA CONTINUES CONT'D BY NEIL COSGROVE

Gazette's editorial pages, highlighted by the June firing of long-time P-G cartoonist Rob Rogers, has in the meantime created some anxiety and mistrust among *NewPeople* readers in particular and progressives in general. Has there been a less obvious but similar shift in the paper's news content? Are readers receiving the same level of coverage generated by local reporters as previously?

"We actually have added staff (to fill some vacancies) and enterprise and investigative reporting continues as in the past," Fuoco told us. "We are doing the same amount of local and regional reporting and still have reporters in Harrisburg and

Washington, D.C."

A rough analysis performed by the *NewPeople* of four *Post-Gazette* editions during a recent week appears to support Fuoco's statement. We examined the main and local news sections for Sunday, January 6 and Monday, January 7, and the main, local, and business sections for Wednesday, January 9 and Thursday, January 10. Regarding the front page of the main news section, 14 of 20 by-lined or otherwise attributed articles were written by *Post-Gazette* reporters.

The Sunday main front page is usually reserved for in-depth work by local reporters, although a Thursday front-page piece on air

pollution from the Clairton coke works demonstrated the value of having beat reporters cover a breaking story.

Predictably, 18 of 19 clearly attributed articles on the local front pages were done by P-G staff. One by transportation beat reporter Ed Blazina described how the Port Authority was using research by Merton project Pittsburghers for Public Transit for mapping rider routes in the Mon valley. In all, 24 different *Post-Gazette* reporters were by-lined in the sections we examined.

As for articles attributed to outside news sources, the Associated Press led with 18, followed by the New York Times with nine, CNN with

eight, and the Washington Post with six. "We follow the national template, which comes out of the New York- and Washington-based media," John Robinson Block told WESA, while ruefully adding he thought that coverage was "shamefully biased against the President."

On March 31, 2019, it will be two years since the *Post-Gazette's* contract with the 150 members of the Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild expired.

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

WOMEN'S MARCH PHOTOS



Women's Marcher's turn from Fifth Avenue into Market Square in Pittsburgh on January 19th. Photo Credit: Neil Cosgrove.



A speaker addresses the crowd at the City-County Building before the start of the National Women's March--Pittsburgh on January 19th. Photo Credit: Neil Cosgrove.

COUNTY COUNCILMEMBERS PROPOSE POLICE REVIEW BOARD

BY CHERYL BAUER

In the wake of the shooting of Antwon Rose in the summer of 2018, Allegheny county residents and activists amplified their call for greater accountability of county law enforcement agencies with the demand for a county-wide citizen police review board. Following four public hearing sessions in August and September 2018 to explore implementation of such a review board, County Council members DeWitt Walton and Paul Klein submitted legislation on December 18, 2018 to establish the William Russell Robinson Independent Police Review Board. The ordinance is currently under review by the Special Committee on Independent Police Review, and is intended to facilitate a greater sense of public trust in an era of rising hostilities between law enforcement and communities.

The proposed structure of the board will include nine members, all required to be county residents for at least one year prior to their appointment. Council members will nominate and select six members and the County Executive will select the remaining three, with each serving up to two terms of either three- or four-years. Like the Pittsburgh

Citizen Police Review Board, established in 1997, two seats are reserved for residents with prior direct experience in law enforcement, and current law enforcement personnel are not permitted to serve on the board. Going a step further, to ensure a balanced perspective with knowledge of the legal process beyond the enforcement of law, the county board will reserve one seat for an individual with a background as an attorney, judge, or auditor. The remaining six seats are intended to represent the diversity of the county residents, though no quotas were given. Only the Allegheny County Police Department activities are subject to review under the ordinance, but other municipalities can opt-in to participate. Non-municipal police agencies, such as university police departments, would not be eligible for participation.

A number of provisions with respect to the necessary function of law enforcement have been included in the ordinance, as well as deterrents for abuse of the complaint process. Civilian complaints submitted to the board for review could be submitted in person, by phone, by email, or electronically via

the county website, and will require a signed and notarized statement from the complainant. Complaints found to be false accusations will be escalated to the County District Attorney for investigation. With affirmative votes of at least six members, the board can initiate preliminary inquiries as may be necessary, without receiving a complaint. The board may also request officers, documents, and other evidence or testimony to be presented in support of their investigations, and if such a request is not fulfilled as defined within the ordinance, the board may petition the Court of Common Pleas to compel compliance.

With respect for the necessity of cooperation by law enforcement agencies and officers, any statements provided by law enforcement officers in cooperation with an investigation conducted by the board will not be shared with any law enforcement agent or agency without consent of the officer giving the statement. The board may also initiate studies, hold public hearings, and make recommendations on policy matters; however, the board may not review any department's policies, training

procedures or operational guidelines without the department's cooperation, and the board will not have the authority to file charges if the findings of an investigation confirm misconduct. If misconduct was found to have occurred, the complainant and officer(s) involved will be notified, as well as the individual with authority over the department involved.

The full ordinance, Bill no. 10909-18, as well as the minutes from the public hearings held in the fall, can be viewed on the County website at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/county-council/police-review-board-meetings.aspx>. If the measure passes council vote, it will be sent to County Executive Rich Fitzgerald for approval. County residents interested in voicing support for the bill can contact the county council at 412-350-6490. County Executive Fitzgerald's office can be contacted at 412-350-6500.

Cheryl Bauer is a member of the New People Editorial Collective

SUPPORT MUMIA ABU JAMAL: CONTACT PHILADELPHIA D.A. LARRY KRASNER

BY JEFF C

We've come a long way with Mumia abu Jamal. On Thursday, 12/27/18, a Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas judge ruled that he can re-argue his appeal case.

Way back on June 3, 1995, Gov Tom Ridge signed a death warrant for Mumia to be executed on August 17, 1995. On August 8, Judge Sabo granted a stay of execution with just NINE DAYS to go. The stay of execution was expected because no one in the history of capital punishment had been executed that quickly. Plus, there were lots of questions remaining about the fairness of the original conviction in 1981. Many experts wondered aloud why Judge Sabo waited so long to issue the stay. Inwardly, few had any doubt.

In 1999, Ridge signed a second death warrant. This time it took Judge Yohn just 13 days to issue a stay order.

In 2001, Judge Yohn overturned Mumia's death sentence.

Now thanks to JUDGE LEON TUCKER we finally have a chance to see Mumia's conviction overturned.

I think of all the political prisoners whom this country has wrongly executed: the Haymarket Martyrs, Joe Hill, Sacco and Vanzetti, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg among others. We are so lucky to have come this far with Mumia. Let's not let up for one moment!

Please contact Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner and urge him to refrain from appealing this decision. He was elected on a campaign of justice reform, but he will be placed under a whole lot of pressure from the Fraternal Order of Police. We need to show him that we have his back when he does the right thing.

DA Larry Krasner
Philadelphia District Attorney
Three South Penn Square
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3499
215-686-8000
DA_East@phila.gov
DA_Central@phila.gov
DA_Northwest@phila.gov
DA_South@phila.gov
DA_Southwest@phila.gov
DA_Northeast@phila.gov

Jeff C is a worker like you, struggling just to get by.



Photo: Jeff C wearing his FREE MUMIA T-shirt, ready to tell Mumia's story and to recruit letter writers. On his lap is his best friend, Lexi J.

A DIFFERENT WORKING CLASS

UNDERSTANDING THE HEARTLAND, A REVIEW BY MICHAEL DROHAN

The author, Joe Bargeant, was born in Winchester, Virginia, a town of approximately 27,000 people in the Shenandoah Valley of North-Western Virginia. The town, founded in 1752, has a veneer of fame from hosting the Stonewall Jackson Museum and the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley. According to Bargeant's account, it is a depressed rural town that represents best the vast rural landscape that put George W. Bush and then Donald Trump in the office of President.

Bargeant describes himself as the one who got away from Winchester via Vietnam and the chance of a higher education, which almost all his grade school classmates never had. The culture and life of the working class in Winchester he relates corresponds little to what is generally understood to be the blue collar working class of large cities like Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Chicago.

Bargeant maintains that Winchester is "an unacknowledged parallel world to that of educated urban liberals". His part of town contains the town's most hard-core working class neighborhoods where one finds \$20,000 a year laborers and \$14,000 a year fast food workers. Apart from the service sector of the town, the principal employers are Newell Rubbermaid and a GE electric lamp factory. But even these are threatened species with the advent of Walmart which put the screws on Rubbermaid to reduce prices to the extent that relocation in Mexico, at least partially, was their only option. Despite the glamour and grandeur of central Winchester, the general housing stock of Winchester is dismal, consisting of mobile homes and modular homes of poor quality.

One of the main social characteristics of this so-called heartland is a rejection of what they call liberalism and liberal values. Most of the inhabitants oppose welfare schemes, workers unions, human rights laws, affirmative action, environmental regulations, OSHA regulations and, above all, any increase of gun laws. For those whom the liberal state have meant to help by such regulations, one might find such a mentality puzzling to say the least.

Bargeant's way of explaining this phenomenon is by pointing to a lack of education bordering on illiteracy, magnified by the influence of right wing television and radio. The average American spends about one third of his or her waking life watching television. Bargeant maintains its neurological effects are profound. It produces what he calls the American hologram, meaning that the average American reflects what the television writes on his/her brain surface and projects it as the way the world is and should be.

Another aspect of the heartland culture which Bargeant delves into is religion and the role it plays in their life and culture. Bargeant's brother Mike is the pastor of the local Baptist Church and he attests to having driven out demons from some of his flock. The religion that Bargeant maintains is dominant in his own town is a mish mash of fundamentalist Christianity that subscribes to End Times theology and belief in the Rapture at the end of times. In general, what is called Reconstructionism characterizes their world view and their interpretation of the Bible.

In the Reconstructionist view, capital punishment is defended for a wide range of "crimes" such as blasphemy, witchcraft, adultery, sodomy and homosexuality. The espousal of this form of Christianity makes heartlanders open to full-blooded support for Israel and the wars in the Middle East. As a precursor of the Rapture, which is to take place in Israel, the Jews must retake the entire biblical lands from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. Here is where the religion of the heartland and the warrior state and American exceptionalism overlap in their world view, providing ample gun fodder for the military industrial complex in its Middle East endeavors. Defense of gun rights are a given in the heartland and any curtailment of them is anathema.

One of the upsetting facets of Bargeant's book is his belief that the effort to regulate gun rights is a misguided obsession of liberals; an opportunity for "the fearful rich and the Republicans to capitalize on in order to kick liberal asses in elections". He also maintains that gun possession results in the saving of thousands of lives each year, that school shootings and gun accidents among children are declining, contrary to statistical evidence. Gun violence, in the opinion of heartlanders and Bargeant, is largely due to "meth-heads" and "gangbangers" whom one is unlikely to meet up with at a gun show.

In the closing chapter of his book, Bargeant gives a profile of what one might call a real estate tycoon named Bobby Fulk (not his real name). Despite his great wealth Bobby is functionally illiterate, anti-union, pro-death penalty and pro-war, much like that other real estate tycoon, Donald Trump. Such are the folks that the heartlanders look up to and consider astute.

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



OTE

Information provided by VoteAllegheny

2019 Elections Calendar

February: Tuesday **2/19/18**—1st day to circulate nomination petitions for candidates in major parties (D&R) for the May primary

March: Tuesday **3/12/18**—Last day to circulate nomination petitions for the May primary

Wednesday **3/13/18**—1st day to circulate nomination papers for political bodies (including independents) for November election

April: Wednesday **4/3/18**—Verify your voter registration for May primary

<https://www.paVoterServices.state.pa.us/Pages/VoterRegistrationStatus.aspx>

Monday **4/22/18**—Last day to postmark voter registration before primary, or register online <http://register.votespa.com>

May: Tuesday **5/7/18**—Board of Elections meeting before primary

Wednesday **5/8/18**—LWVGP publishes Voters Guide in the New Pittsburgh Courier <http://www.NewPittsburghCourierOnline.com/>

Tuesday **5/14/18**—Deadline to deliver civilian absentee ballot application

Friday **5/17/18**—County must receive absentee ballots by 5:00pm

Monday **5/20/18**—deadline to postmark military and overseas absentee ballots

Tuesday **5/21/18**—PRIMARY ELECTION for some judges, Allegheny County Executive, County Council (districts 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13 and at-large seats), County District Attorney, County Controller, County Treasurer, Pgh City Council (odd # districts), City of Pgh Controller, Pgh School Board (even # districts).

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

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

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S STRIKE U.S. CALLS FOR ACTION ON MARCH 8

BY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S STRIKE USA CHAPTER

It is in the spirit of a renewed radicalism, solidarity and internationalism, that the International Women’s Strike U.S. (IWS US) calls for action on March 8. IWS US continues to be a national organizing center by and for women who have been marginalized and silenced by decades of neoliberalism directed towards the 99% of women: to wage-earning and domestic laborers, women of color, Native women, disabled women, immigrant women, Muslim women, Jewish women, lesbian, queer and trans women. During 2018 we have seen extraordinary actions, including general strikes, organized and led by women and involving other working-class sectors in countries like Argentina, Spain, and Ireland to demand the end of violence against women, attacks on abortion rights, the end of temporary, short term, and contracted-out work, and many other things. The mass mobilization of women from popular and working class sectors is on the rise, and a new class struggle feminism is emerging. We see our efforts as part of a new international feminist movement that builds a bridge between women’s resistance and labor resistance. We are against Trump— and his misogynist, white nationalist policies—but also against the conditions

that produced Trump, namely the decades of growth of economic inequality, the criminalization of Black and Latino youth, police violence, sexual violence, and imperial wars abroad. We aim to build relationships of solidarity between diverse organizations of women, and all those who seek to build a global feminist, working class movement.

We demand an end to poverty and economic instability, both of which disproportionately affect women. We demand an end to wage inequality, to the separation of migrant families and deportations, to the new “Trans Ban” of the Trump administration, to the increased militarism of our society, to the pervasive gender violence which was made ever more visible in the nomination of Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. On March 8th 2019, we need to take it to the streets, and organize strike actions in our workplaces to build a movement that would reverse the assault on reproductive rights, stop the devaluing and overexploitation of caregiving and reproductive labor, end the mass incarceration of Black and Brown youth, and that would dismantle the emboldened white nationalist or “alt-right” groups.

Finally, March 8th 2019, will once again launch a year of international mass mobilization and strikes of women all over the world. In the United States, we want to be in solidarity with the strike language of our sisters abroad, for we are very much aware of the nefarious role played by the U.S. government in reinforcing the exploitation and oppression of women and working class people all over the world. To the extent possible, we seek to revitalize the strike tactic in our own country, recognizing that 2018 was a year of formidable strike actions, organized from below, and led by women. From the teachers in West Virginia and Arizona to the hotel workers in the Marriott and Hilton chains, successful strikes of women have shaken our labor movement and delivered the goods. At the same time, we recognize that rallies, picket lines, teach-ins, and forums will be first steps to reclaiming March 8 as day for working women in many areas of the country.

To learn how to get involved in Pittsburgh’s International Women’s Strike Coalition, e-mail pgh.iws@gmail.com and search for pghM8womensstrike on Facebook to follow the page for updates and meetings.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S STRIKE U.S. PLATFORM

An End to Gender Violence

All women deserve a life free of all forms of gender violence: domestic and institutional, in the streets and in the workplace. Working women, girls, trans women, dis/differently abled women, indigenous women and women of color face the worst aspects of direct institutionalized violence, be it in the form of police brutality, immigration raids, and day-to-day violence in the form of state policies that create and consolidate poverty in our communities. Against all such state, capitalist and personal violence, we demand that our life and labor be treated with dignity for they form the basis of this society.

Reproductive Justice for All

We stand for full reproductive justice for all women, cis and trans. We want complete autonomy over our bodies and full reproductive freedom. We demand free abortion without conditions and affordable healthcare for all, irrespective of income, race or citizenship status. The history of forced sterilization of Indigenous women and women of color in this country goes hand in hand with the attack on abortion rights. Reproductive justice for us means the freedom to choose both whether to have children and to have them at a time of our choosing.

Labor Rights

Labor rights are women’s rights because women’s paid labor in the workplace and unpaid labor at home is the basis of wealth in our society. All over the world millions

of women and girls are forced to work for slave wages in dangerous sweatshops and other ‘hell factories’ that kill thousands every year. In the United States 46% of union members are women and a majority of them are women of color. All women, irrespective of citizenship status, sexuality or race, must have equal pay for equal work, recognition of and resources for the unwaged caring work we do, free universal child care, paid maternity leave, sick leave, paid family leave and the freedom to organize a fighting union in the workplace. We demand the end of forced labor and the abolition of child labor. As working women who hold up half the sky we refuse to be divided over the kind of labor we perform, whether skilled or unskilled, formal or informal, sex work and domestic work.

Full Social Provisioning

Decades of neoliberal policies have seen the violent dismantling of social provisioning that has affected all women. While our working lives have been made increasingly precarious, social services that might have provided a safety net against such harsh exploitation of labor, have either been attacked or removed completely. Against these attacks, we demand an expansive restructuring of the US welfare system to serve the needs of the majority, such as universal healthcare, robust unemployment and social security benefits, housing, food security, free education for all. Welfare is a human right: we demand that the welfare system work to support our lives rather than shame us when we access such rights.

For an Antiracist and Anti-imperialist Feminism

Against the open white supremacists in the current government and the far right and anti-Semites they have given confidence to, we stand for an uncompromising anti-racist and anti-colonial feminism. We strike to end the targeting of black and brown, indigenous and native women and girls by capitalism for racialized and gendered exploitation. Movements such as Black Lives Matter, the struggle against police brutality and mass incarceration, for rights of Indigenous nations and the decolonization of Puerto Rico, for self-determination by Native women in Hawai’i and island nations in the Pacific colonized by the U.S. the demand for open borders and for immigrant rights and Justice for Palestine are for us the beating heart of this new feminist movement. We want to dismantle all walls, from prison walls to border walls, from Mexico to Palestine.

Environmental Justice for All

We believe that social inequality and environmental degradation are both due to an economic system that puts profit before people. We demand instead that the earth’s natural resources be preserved and sustained to enrich our lives and that of our children. The struggle of Water Protectors against the Dakota Access Pipe Line inspires us. The emancipation of women and the emancipation of the planet must go hand in hand.

HERE THEY COME BY BETTE MCDEVITT

2018 was the year for women in politics in Pennsylvania. In our area, Sara Innamorato, from the city, and Summer Lee, from Swissvale, were elected to the State House of Representatives and Lindsey Williams from West View was elected to the PA State Senate. Four women from the eastern part of the state were elected to the US House of Representatives. These victories are the work of many people, in movements that formed outside the usual political infrastructure. Lara Putnam, who participated in the activities, and teaches history at the University of Pittsburgh, had the good sense to document it.

Lara, although she speaks of her “small part” in the movement, has written at least four articles on the topic, the longest one written with her colleague, Harvard University political scientist Theda Skocpol. The article, “Middle America Reboots Democracy,” appeared in *Democracy, a Journal of Ideas*. It is readable, encouraging and exciting.

Taking a historical approach, the authors go back to the time after Obama’s election. “In 2008, a campaign-orchestrated mass movement drove Barack Obama into the White House. But that was left to rot. ‘Organizing for Obama’ went through various iterations, but none kept the citizen momentum going or channeled the hands-on participation of 2008 into a newly active, widely present Democratic Party.” I can vouch for that; I went to the first

volunteer effort after the election, an uninspired event that called for joining an established group in an established food distribution, while lacking the spirit and camaraderie of the Obama campaign.

We all know what happened next. As Lara and Theda point out, the far right rose up. Over 1000 Tea Party groups formed in 50 states, won local and state elections, took over the U.S. Senate, and created a conservative Supreme Court, thus bringing results that we will all live with for a long time. According to the article, the Democratic failure to match their efforts produced massive state house losses, some 900 seats between 2009 and 2016. The Democratic Party, scrambling to recover, began thinking in the usual terms, about PACs, and political strategy within the established party structure.

But other people were talking about the direction of the country, over the water cooler, at the gym, at PTA meetings and among their friends. They spoke of the need for transparency in government, more action, less talk, and in general more progressive legislation. The people were mostly women, mostly from the suburbs, some newly retired. They had some differing views, but enough common ground to come together and plan strategy for making change, which was their goal. Not unlike the Tea Party, they began to learn the electoral ropes. In the *New Republic*, Lara and Theda wrote, “From coal-country capitals like Washington, Pennsylvania, to well-heeled



Westchester, New York, grassroots leaders are winning seats on county and state Democratic Party committees and calling for more transparency, more outreach, more action.”

The women’s insightful comments on the diversity of viewpoints brought to mind the two elections of Conor Lamb. After his first victory in a special election, and before his second victory in the newly formed 17th Congressional district, Lara wrote, “Lamb’s campaign was powered by two core Democratic constituencies routinely portrayed as irreconcilable: college-educated suburban progressives and traditional blue-collar labor. They were not reconciled by a ‘magic’ message that somehow brought out the inner Republican in all. From the perspective of those in the trenches (and I was there alongside many others who did much more), it was not the message or the messenger that made [the election] different in 2018 from the past. It was the organizations and conversations that surrounded them.”

“The individual running for office may not be your dream candidate,” the women wrote, “but the newly formed coalitions understood pragmatism, and united behind the best candidate that could be elected. It is often the connectivity and the community, rather than the issues, that bring people together in support of a candidate.”

I asked Lara how people might come together around the issue of race and marginalized groups. “The general pattern is that grassroots groups are drawn from college educated woman who have the

Future Voters. Photo Credit: Lara Putnam

ability to devote time toward political activity and recognize that this is a privilege. Some groups are not as socially and economically diverse as one would like. The thoughtful response is to become allies, participating in events and marches organized by black women or transgender people, and to become active in fundraising for the candidates and projects they support.”

And for a final word, how about this from the two women? “For those wondering who is going to rebuild the foundations of U.S. democracy—assuming the national guardrails survive—the answer across much of the U.S. heartland seems clear. The foundation rebuilders in many communities across most states are newly mobilized and interconnected grassroots groups, led for the most part by Middle America’s mothers and grandmothers. They see the work to be done and are well into accomplishing it.”

Articles written by Lara Putnam and colleagues can be found by searching her name in the websites for the *New Republic*, (“Women Are Rebuilding the Democratic Party”) and the *Democracy Journal* (“Middle America Reboots Democracy, There Is No Civil War,” and “Who Really Won Pa 18?”).

Bette McDevitt is a member of the Editorial Collective and the Raging Grannies.



Laura Putnam and her son. Photo Credit: Lara Putnam

SOUTH AFRICA'S PRESENT; AMERICA'S FUTURE?

BY NEIL COSGROVE

In April, South Africa celebrates the 25th anniversary of the country's first democratic election, when its entire adult population was first able to vote. The African National Congress (ANC) became the governing party, after decades struggling to loosen the "European" minority's grip on the country's political and economic power. Nelson Mandela, a prisoner for 27 years, became president.

Unfortunately, while political apartheid is history, economic apartheid is still very much a reality, as this headline from news site *African Globe* succinctly puts it: "South Africa has the highest concentration of wealth in the hands of a few whites."

Turns out that it is a lot harder to reverse centuries during which a violent minority systematically and "legally" deprived a country's majority of political agency, property rights, and empowering education. In 1994, a little more than 8% of the population controlled the financial sector and the primary sources of the country's wealth, namely the mining of gold, diamonds and coal, along with livestock, vegetable and fruit farming.

Currently, the *African Globe* reports, 10% of South Africa's population possess "at least" 90 to 95% of the country's assets while earning "only" about 55 to 60% of all income;" 40% of the people, a so-called 'middle class,' "earn about 30% to 35% of all income but own only 5% to 10% of all wealth." The bottom half earn about 10% of all income and own no measurable wealth. Moreover, "wealth inequality within the majority African population," writes *African Globe*, "exceeds nationwide wealth inequality by far."

Not surprisingly, the people who possess such accumulated wealth live in a privileged bubble, while the rest lack the resources to stimulate economic growth and overall well-being. In 2018 South

Africa's economy grew by a paltry 0.7%, says the *Jamaica Observer*, while unemployment exceeded 27%, more than the US rate at the height of the Great Depression.

As in the United States in recent decades, having a job is hardly a guarantee one will be well-fed and adequately housed. On January 1st, South Africa implemented its first minimum wage of 20 rand (\$1.39) an hour and 3,500 rand (\$243) a month. During a recent trip to South Africa this writer was able to directly witness just how such severe inequality and grinding poverty impacts daily living.

In South Africa, with its long and very recent history of legally sanctioned theft by a minority from the great majority of its residents, keeping body and soul together demands forms of "self-employment" and "entrepreneurship" that middle-class Americans would regard with distaste. But when one has no job, or one that pays very little, such "work" looks more like bald necessity. So-called "crimes of opportunity" abound, such as a 10-year-old snatching a necklace from a young woman's neck, and then getting away via a deftly executed broken-field run through traffic. Other "work" includes creative panhandling that may feature bits of street theatre and role-playing, ranging from practiced but quite believable tales of woe to wearing mime-like white face or Santa hats while extending tin cans or milk cartons towards the car windows of motorists idling at traffic lights. Some sell household goods at the same street corners. More direct entrepreneurial activity might include wealth distribution through the use of guns or knives; sometimes organized gangs pull off sophisticated scams at ATM kiosks.

My wife's relatives and friends, mostly "coloured" and "indian," to use apartheid-era passport designations, are definitely in the



A settlement of "temporary housing" in the South West Townships (Soweto) of Johannesburg. Photo Credit: Neil Cosgrove.

middle class—doctors, teachers, IT workers, musicians, accountants. Even they can struggle at times to find full-time employment, and their relative well-being produces a life-style most Americans would find inconvenient. They live behind concrete walls topped with barbed wire, go in and out of their homes through electronically controlled gates, turn motion-activated electronic beams on and off, pay for the availability of quick-response armed security teams. Some neighborhoods are walkable in daylight; many more are not, and late evening strolls are simply out of the question.

That's the environment severe inequality in wealth distribution creates, an environment Americans now witnessing growth in inequality themselves must recognize. The majority of Americans have been able to ignore, so far, the worst results of our own colonialist capitalism. Large numbers of our indigenous peoples were erased through conscious genocide during our colonialist period, and the brutally exploited among us—black, Hispanic, and white—have been historically confined to areas the middle and upper classes seldom, if ever, visit.

But globalization, regressive taxes, massive inheritance transfers, and a mindless adherence to a mythical "free market" ideology

have, over the past 40 years, rapidly expanded the numbers of Americans without property or capital. And contemporary South Africa shows it is much easier to distribute wealth fairly in the first place than it is to redistribute it once it has mostly fallen into the hands of a fortunate few.

The middle class South Africans I know, in their professional and volunteer work, demonstrate a social consciousness in marked contrast to the willed obtuseness about race and class for which the American middle class is notorious. Colored and Indian South Africans must daily confront the consequences of severe wealth inequality. In addition, many had family and friends of the previous generation who actively fought apartheid and, with their black counterparts, suffered exile, banishment (a particularly draconian form of house arrest), and imprisonment. Their country's past and present are always with them.

How much of America's future will depend on a long overdue understanding of our own past and present?

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TMC NOW ACCEPTING NEW PERSON OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS

The Thomas Merton Center is accepting nominations for the 2019 awards season! Every year we honor a local activist for their work towards peace and justice here at home with the New Person of the Year award in the summer. Last year we honored Casa San Jose's Monica Ruiz. In the fall, we honor a nationally or internationally known activist or organization for their achievements in creating a more peaceful and just world. Last fall we were thrilled to honor the ArchCity Defenders. We're making the call now to find who the 2019 awardees will be. Visit the link below to submit your suggestions. There are no limits to how many nominations you would like to submit. Let us know today!

<http://bit.ly/AwardsTMC2019>



Michael John Voss and Blake Strode of ArchCity Defenders, winners of the 2018 Thomas Merton Award. Photo by Steve Capri.

GET INVOLVED

WHO: Thomas Merton Center

WHAT: NewPeople Editorial Collective

WHERE: Thomas Merton Center, 5129 Penn Ave, 15224

Find out how to get involved with the *NewPeople*, a radical newspaper covering local and global news left out of mainstream corporate media. Since 1972, the volunteer writers and editors have published the monthly *NewPeople* newspaper with the Thomas Merton Center. We are looking for articles, poems, opinion pieces, and other writings that inspire honest, open, and progressive conversation about subjects related to the values and mission of the Thomas Merton Center.

For more information: newpeople@thomasmertoncenter.org

FEBRUARY 2018 EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, Feb 1 - Keystone Progress Summit (Day 1,) 5-11:30pm. JATC Local Union, 5 Hot Metal St # 100, Pittsburgh

Friday, Feb 1 to Mar 8 - A Hidden Wholeness: the Zen Photography of Thomas Merton, photographs on loan from the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY at St. Vincent College, 3rd Floor, Robert S. Carey Center, Gallery Hours: Tuesdays through Thursday, 3-6 PM, Fridays through Sundays, 1-4 PM. 724-805-2107.

Saturday, Feb 2 - Keystone Progress Summit (Day 2,) 5-11:30pm. JATC Local Union, 5 Hot Metal St # 100, Pittsburgh

Saturday, Feb 2 - Fight for Lifers West Meeting, 10-12pm. Thomas Merton Center Annex, 5119 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh

Sunday, Feb 3 - Jeffrey Halper, Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, 1PM. Unitarian Church, Shadyside.

Wednesday, Feb 6 - Achieving Medicare for All Discussion. 5:30-7:30pm. University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, 2117 Cathedral of Learning, 4200 Fifth AV, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 (Rm. 2017)

Thursday, Feb 7 - Southwest Chapter of Healthcare for All PA. 7:30-8:30pm. 2101 Murray Avenue, Squirrel Hill, First Floor

Saturday, Feb 9 - Opioid Response Advocacy Forum For Students & Professionals. 10-2pm. 130 De Soto St. Pittsburgh

Sunday, Feb 10 - Women in Black, Monthly Peace Vigil in Slippery Rock. 10-11am. Ginger Hill Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Wednesday, Feb 13 - The Orchestral Debut of “Casop: A Requiem For Rice.” 7-9pm. Carnegie Music Hall, 4400 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh.

Saturday, Feb 16 - Urban League Sunday 2019. 3:30-6pm. Ebenezer Baptist Church, 2001 Wylie Ave, Pittsburgh.

Sunday, Feb 24 - Screening of Scarred Land & Wounded Lives: The Environmental Footprint of war. 2-4pm. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Squirrel Hill, 5801 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh.

REGULAR MEETINGS

Sundays:

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

Mondays:

SW Healthcare 4 All PA /PUSH Meeting
3rd Monday, 6:30 —8 pm
Squirrel Hill Library
Contact: bmason@gmail.com
Association of Pittsburgh Priests
2nd Monday, 7—9 pm,
Prince of Peace Center, 81 South 13th St.,
Southside, 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. 15213

Tuesdays:

Green Party
First Tuesday of the month at Panera, Blvd of the Allies, Oakland, 7pm
Black Political Empowerment Project
Second Tuesday of the Month, Hill House Association, 2nd Floor, 1835 Centre Ave. 6pm.

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
EveryWednesday, 7:30-9:30 pm. Contact isopgh@gmail.com for location.
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

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.

BECOME A MEMBER

Subscribe to The NewPeople by becoming a member of the Thomas Merton Center today!

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

Join online at www.thomasmertoncenter.org/join-do-nate or fill out this form, cut out, and mail in.

Select your membership level:

____\$15 Low Income Membership
____\$15 Youth / Student Membership
____\$25 Introductory / Lapsed Membership

____\$50 Individual Membership
____\$100 Family Membership
____\$500+ Cornerstone Sustainer Membership
____Donation \$_____
____Monthly Donation– Become a TMC Peacemaker \$_____

Or Become an Organizational Member:

____\$75 Organization (below 25 members)
____\$125 Organization (above 25 members)

____ I would like to receive the weekly activist Eblast
____ I would like to receive The NewPeople newspaper mailed to my house
____ I would like to receive The NewPeople newspaper via email

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, or visit:

www.thomasmertoncenter.org