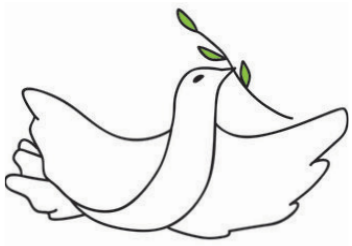


# THE NEW PEOPLE



VOL. 48 No. 9  
November 2018

## PEOPLE ARE SAYING NO TO PNC'S NUKES

BY PAUL DORDAL

"Wow, I had no idea!" "Really, nuclear weapons?" "I don't want to be a part of a bank that invests in nukes."

These are just some of the responses we get when we tell the public at our pickets about PNC Bank's investments in six different nuclear weapons manufacturers. PNC's loans and investments amount to over \$600 million of our money, which then is used to fund what Dwight Eisenhower correctly called, the Military Industrial Complex. Several of the companies that PNC has invested in are involved in manufacturing nuclear weapons and some of them sell weapons to other countries fueling global war and destruction. General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, Orbital ATK, and Textron are just a few so-called "defense contractors"

that PNC invests in who sell these insidious weapons of war and create an unsafe world for all of us.

PNC has shown no willingness to even discuss this untenable situation with us. They don't answer communications from concerned citizens who inquire about PNC's immoral investments. Thus, we have begun to increase the number of public information pickets and rallies in Pittsburgh and around the region. On October 13, 2018, the Stop Banking the Bomb campaign coordinated pickets in Pittsburgh, PA, Dayton, OH and Lancaster, PA. We are planning at least twenty-four new actions in the year to come.

Several new groups have endorsed

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## CONGRATULATIONS, EDITH BELL, NEW DISTINGUISHED DAUGHTER OF PENNSYLVANIA



Edith Bell (right) with daughter, Alice, and son, Dan, taken at DD luncheon at Governor's mansion.

On October 3, 2018, Governor Tom Wolf and First Lady Frances Wolf honored six women as Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania, in recognition of their profound contributions to the world in which they live. Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania began in 1948 to honor resident women who have made significant impacts in the commonwealth in either

a professional capacity or community service. All nominees are selected from the recommendations of non-profit organizations within Pennsylvania. Among the 2018 honorees is Pittsburgh resident and sixteen-year Thomas Merton Center Member, Edith Bell.

Edith survived the Holocaust, though not without the loss of her parents, and

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## THOMAS MERTON AWARDEE ARCHCITY DEFENDERS WORKS DAILY FOR JUSTICE

BY NEIL COSGROVE

ArchCity Defenders, the 2018 Thomas Merton Award winner, is living proof that when an organization's mission fits a clear and present need, rapid growth and renown can follow.



In 2009, three friends from St. Louis University Law School started the organization after witnessing how vulnerable the city's homeless were when caught up in the legal system, almost inevitably, for such petty crimes as panhandling, trespass, and drug use. But the three newly-minted lawyers

Photo: Blake Strode of ArchCity Defenders. Photo courtesy of ArchCity Defenders.

Thomas Harvey, Michael-John Voss, and John McAnnar — also knew that legal services alone would be inadequate, if they hoped their clients could ever escape the dire circumstances in which they found themselves.

So ArchCity Defenders (ACD), named for St. Louis's 630-foot Gateway Arch, the tallest monument in the United States and the tallest arch in the world, decided to adopt what they call "holistic legal advocacy," an approach that goes beyond mere representation and into such activities as helping clients find housing and employment, and other services like treatment for addiction. Gradually, the organization's mission grew to include "combating the criminalization of poverty and state violence against the poor and people of color," as Blake Strode, ACD's Executive Director puts it.

Indeed, the now notorious use of fines, penalties, cash bail, and jail time by municipalities in the St. Louis region, to both supplement tax revenues and intimidate minority citizens, was a clear impetus for expanding the scope of ArchCity's activities.

In 2015, ArchCity filed class-action lawsuits against Ferguson and Jennings, arguing that these cities were in truth operating debtors' prisons, in which multitudes were jailed primarily because they were poor. Jennings has since settled for \$4.75 million in an attempt to make whole "almost 2,000 people who had been locked up for a combined total of 8,300 days," according to *The Nation* magazine. Not surprisingly, the city of Ferguson is still holding out.

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## THRIFTY

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](mailto:shawnapgh@aol.com).

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

## PUBLISH IN THE NEW PEOPLE

*The New People* is distributed each month to 2,200 people who belong to diverse organizations, businesses and groups. To Submit Articles, Photos, or Poems: Visit [www.thomasmertoncenter.org/submit](http://www.thomasmertoncenter.org/submit). Deadline to submit is the 13th of every month.

To Submit an Event to the TMC Calendar: Visit [www.thomasmertoncenter.org/calendar](http://www.thomasmertoncenter.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@thomasmertoncenter.org](mailto:newpeople@thomasmertoncenter.org).

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Cities for CEDAW  
[pgh4CEDAW@gmail.com](mailto:pgh4CEDAW@gmail.com)

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412-607-1804  
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Greater Pittsburgh Interfaith Coalition  
Anne Wirth 412-716-9750

Human Rights Coalition / Fed Up  
(prisoner support and advocacy)  
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[www.prisonerstories.blogspot.com](http://www.prisonerstories.blogspot.com)

Pittsburghers for Public Transit  
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Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition  
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[marcellusprotest.org](http://marcellusprotest.org)

Pittsburgh 350  
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[World.350.org/Pittsburgh](http://World.350.org/Pittsburgh)

Shalefield Stories  
(Friends of the Harmed)  
412-422-0272  
[bridgetshields@gmail.com](mailto:bridgetshields@gmail.com)

Westmoreland Marcellus Citizens Group  
724-837-0540  
[lfpochet@verizon.net](mailto:lfpochet@verizon.net)

## Economic Justice

Harambee Ujima/Diversity Footprint  
Twitter @HomewoodNation

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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)

Abolitionist Law Center  
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Association of Pittsburgh Priests  
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[www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com](http://www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com)

Battle of Homestead Foundation  
412-848-3079

The Big Idea Bookstore  
412-OUR-HEAD  
[www.thebigideapgh.org](http://www.thebigideapgh.org)

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

CeaseFire PA  
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Citizens for Social Responsibility of Greater Johnstown  
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The Global Switchboard Pittsburgh  
412-471-7852  
[admin@globalswitchboard.org](mailto:admin@globalswitchboard.org)  
[www.theglobalswitchboard.org](http://www.theglobalswitchboard.org)

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email: [info@arc.northpgh.org](mailto:info@arc.northpgh.org)  
[www.arc.northpgh.org](http://www.arc.northpgh.org)

PA United for Single-Payer Health Care  
[www.healthcare4allPA.org](http://www.healthcare4allPA.org)  
[www.PUSH-HC4allPa.blogspot.com](http://www.PUSH-HC4allPa.blogspot.com)  
412-421-4242

Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi  
412-761-4319

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Pittsburgh BDS Coalition  
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Pittsburgh Palestine Solidarity Committee  
[info@pittsburgh-psc.org](mailto:info@pittsburgh-psc.org) [www.pittsburgh-psc.org](http://www.pittsburgh-psc.org)

Raging Grannies  
412-963-7163 [eva.havlicsek@gmail.com](mailto:eva.havlicsek@gmail.com)

[www.pittsburghraginggrannies.homestead.com](http://www.pittsburghraginggrannies.homestead.com)

Religion and Labor Coalition  
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SW PA Bread for the World  
Joyce Rothermel 412-780-5118  
[rothermeljoyce@gmail.com](mailto:rothermeljoyce@gmail.com)

United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)  
412-471-8919 [www.ueunion.org](http://www.ueunion.org)

Veterans for Peace  
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Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)  
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412-621-9230  
[office@piin.org](mailto:office@piin.org)

Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty  
Martha Conley 412-361-7872,  
[osterdm@earthlink.net](mailto:osterdm@earthlink.net)

TMC supports these organizations' missions.

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2018 TMC Annual Membership Meeting  
TMC Fall Member Events



# NOVEMBER STAFF UPDATES



TMC Annual Membership Meeting. Photo credit: Joyce Rothermel.



Work by Armor Plumbing from October 15 to 19 replaced this clearly damaged sewer line behind the East End Community Thrift Store ("Thrift"), owned and operated by the Thomas Merton Center. The sewer line replacement was made possible through the generosity of those many who contributed to the drive that funded the work. Photo credit: Neil Cosgrove.



The job involved deep excavation. Photo credit: Neil Cosgrove.

## UPDATE FROM TMC DIRECTOR

BY GABRIEL MCMORLAND

We're combining this month's staff updates and my November director's letter into one short message of gratitude, a reflection of how busy we've been in this time of transition. We're in the midst of hiring a full-time technology and operations coordinator and new student workers, and I'm impressed by our staff's flexibility, stepping into new roles from tech support to publishing the *NewPeople* newspaper. I'm personally grateful to both our previous student worker and also our outgoing tech/ops coordinator Kim Dinh for the training and documentation they provided to make this possible.

In recent weeks, we've hosted our annual membership meeting, coordinated multiple repairs on our 5123 Penn Avenue Thrifty building, prepared for the upcoming election of our board of directors, started the *NewPeople* Fellowship for writers of color, and made plans to celebrate the work of 2018 Thomas Merton Awardee ArchCity Defenders. Krystle Knight also organized residents to testify at the October board meeting of the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, calling for debt forgiveness and a moratorium on water shutoffs. She also phone banked TMC members making sure we turned out to support the striking UPMC workers. Despite a cataclysmic rainstorm, I heard later from somebody who was inside the US Steel tower that the workers' rally could be heard inside the upper floors.

I'm grateful to all our members, volunteers, and *NewPeople* readers. I would love to see readers respond to the intentional questions we discussed in small groups at our annual membership meeting. Feel free to respond by writing a piece for the *NewPeople* or by emailing me directly at [Gabriel@thomasmertoncenter.org](mailto:Gabriel@thomasmertoncenter.org).

- *What first drew you to the TMC? Thinking back however long you've been affiliated with the TMC, what are some favorite memories of either actions or campaigns the TMC was involved in that you were most excited about?*

- *How can we make our social justice movements center on and include more women, queer, transgender, and people of color?*

- *We're facing major global threats: climate change, nuclear war, increasingly high-tech global militarization, etc: what are the historic and cultural forces at the root of these problems?*

- *What issues are most directly impacting you and people you know?*



## CATHOLICS PONDER A CRISIS IN THEIR CHURCH BY JIM MCCARVILLE

In the months since a searing Grand Jury Report on clergy sexual abuse was released, Catholics throughout western Pennsylvania have been contemplating the causes, the cures, the pain created, and the complicity of action and/or inaction of their leaders, and of themselves.

According to the Report, in the six decades, from 1940 to 2002, 300 PA priests were accused of actions ranging from child rape to inappropriate attention to 1,000 children. While some of those accused are innocent (some had even been cleared), undoubtedly more are yet to be discovered.

Listening Sessions were held at several parishes and church organizations. The five sessions I attended were all heart-wrenching. Yet, those who spoke talked about a certain healing, just “not to be ignored any longer.” Many said it shook their faith in the institution. None said it shook their faith in God. All wanted to know “what are the next steps?”

Four levels of concerns were expressed.

First was the need to address the widespread crime of the abuse. A sin, a crime, and a violation of human dignity and rights. And the need for Justice to be served.

Second, and more important to many, was the need to address the failure of Church leaders to protect the children abused

during that period. And the need for Justice to be restored. (A much smaller number of cases were cited after 2002, when the reporting process changed, reducing the complicity of Church leaders after that date, but certainly not eliminating it.)

Third was the need to address the violation of trust that the laity – and the honorably practicing priests – had placed in their leaders, leaders who put a higher value on the reputation of the institution than they put on the care and protection of the faithful.

Fourth was the need to address the inattention of the lay members who had granted unchecked privileges to Church authorities; and the need for the laity to ensure that they not become complicit going forward, by not speaking up now.

Church leaders have referred to well-intentioned mistakes, treating problem priests with psychological counseling, once thought to be the solution to the “illness.” In any case, the consequences of such bad “good intentions” are horrendous – so horrendous they cannot be ignored. And they should have been stopped sooner.

Both Pittsburgh’s current Bishop Zubik and previous Bishop (now Cardinal) Wuerl were named in the report as having transferred accused priests. Both cite that new procedures are in place to report

any allegation of abuse immediately. In fact, Wuerl was a pioneer in changing the old policies that predominated in the Church across the country. One problem, that of timely reporting of accusations, has been fixed. They can take credit for that. Unfortunately, that is not the only problem.

Restorative Justice is a process of making the victim, and for that matter even the perpetrator, whole again – and not just in a financial sense. For the victims, some who have passed the damages on for generations, more than counseling will be required.

To make the Church whole, it will take courageous leadership. And dialogue with the Laity.

In that dialogue, Church leaders will have to deal openly with the problem of clericalism -- the excessive pride in the institution and the personal attachment to the emoluments of the offices held. They will also have to acknowledge that the inclusion of women in positions of high influence may result in greater protection of children. They will also have to address how the mandatory requirement of celibacy contributes to a culture of secrecy and how the recruitment and training of seminarians, and even of Bishops, needs to involve the Laity.

Unselfish leadership is required.

When the Pope accepted Cardinal Wuerl’s resignation, he praised his unselfishness, helping the Church move forward. Not every Bishop need resign. But every bishop must own this crisis.

Twenty years ago, it is said, 80% of the people in Ireland identified as Catholic. A commentator for the Pope’s recent visit reported that today only 20% so identify.

This may be the greatest crisis in the Catholic Church since the loss of the Papal States in 1870. But most agree, the Church emerged from that crisis a better Church.

If the Church in the US, and in particular the Laity, ignore this opportunity, it may go the way of Ireland. On the other hand, there is an opportunity for it to emerge stronger.

And for the Laity, follow up sessions are already being planned. There is a common theme. It is time to reclaim the Church as the People of God. A retreat is being planned by the Social Justice Seekers on Nov. 16-17. For information, contact jmac002000@gmail.com.

***Jim McCarville is a member of the Thomas Merton Center and the Association of Pittsburgh Priests.***

## OPPORTUNITY FOR DISTRESSED CATHOLICS KEVIN HAYES

This is an invitation to Catholics—practicing, former, wavering, and progressive --- who are dealing with the clergy abuse tragedy in the Catholic Church, the upheaval of merging parishes, little evidence of Catholic Social Teaching in the pulpit, and/or major disgust with the policies being put forth by the current church hierarchy. And this invitation is also for those who are seeking personal energy and commitment to live out their faith. If you are in any of these categories of people, THIS OPPORTUNITY IS FOR YOU.

Consider participating in the retreat following the midterm elections, beginning on Friday night, November 16 at 7 PM and continuing all day, Saturday, November 17 at the Epiphany Association, 820 Crane Avenue in the Beechview neighborhood of Pittsburgh. The theme of the retreat will be Reconciliation. Friday night we will hear from Maureen Crossen (Professor Emerita

in Theology, Carlow University), who will delve into the theme of reconciliation, and have invited Pittsburgh Playback Theater to join us. (Playback Theater explores the human condition through improvisational storytelling, raising consciousness while encouraging creative wisdom and action.)

On Saturday, there will be times for prayer, learning new skills, reflection and small group sharing with special attention in the afternoon given to experiences and situations in our lives that are in need of reconciliation. Lunch is included on Saturday.

To register online, go to the following web site: [bit.ly/reconciliation\\_retreat](http://bit.ly/reconciliation_retreat). Once you register, you will need to send a check to pay. The suggested costs are: both Friday night and Saturday (\$25); Friday night only (\$10); Saturday only, including lunch (\$20). If you cannot afford the suggested cost, you may send what you can and still

be welcomed. Checks can be made payable to the Thomas Merton Center, with “Retreat” written in the memo section of the check. Mail your check to The Thomas Merton Center, 5129 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

If you are not able to register online, you can send a note with your check and write your name and anyone else registering on the note, along with the check corresponding to the portion for which you registering. As an option, Friday night registrations can be made at the door. For participation on Saturday, rsvp’s are needed by Wednesday, Nov. 14 to assure you receive a lunch. For more information, call Joyce Rothermel at 412-780-5118.

While this retreat is especially designed for area Catholics who are concerned, struggling or in distress right now, others (including of other faiths) who are interested are also welcome to participate.

Planners of the retreat include members of Social Justice Seekers, Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi, the Association of Pittsburgh Priests and the Thomas Merton Center.

***Kevin Hayes is a coordinator for the retreat and a leader in the Social Justice Seekers group.***

Retreat for Distressed Catholics

Nov. 16-17

Epiphany Association

820 Crane Avenue

Beechview

[bit.ly/reconciliation\\_retreat](http://bit.ly/reconciliation_retreat)

# MARTYRS OF HOPE, A NEW LOOK AT THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

BY ED T. AND DONNA W. BRETT

Ed T. and Donna W. Brett *Martyrs of Hope, A New Look at the Struggle for Justice in Central America*

In 1988 we authored *Murdered in Central America*, a book about U.S. missionaries who were killed in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras by authoritarian governments who viewed them as “communists” because of their work with the poor. Writing that book changed our lives. We were moved by these church people who, guided by the gospels and the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, were willing to risk their lives in a nonviolent struggle for justice.

While we were doing our research in the mid-1980s, Ronald Reagan was re-elected president in a landslide and was at the height of his popularity. In the name of a misguided form of anti-communism, Reagan and Congress were enabling brutal military dictatorships in Guatemala and El Salvador, while also financing a violent counterrevolution that sought to topple the new Sandinista government in Nicaragua. By placing our missionary subjects within the historical and cultural context of the lands where they served, we hoped that our North American readers would conclude that U.S. policy in the isthmus was morally bankrupt, counterproductive, and in need of change.

In the three decades since our book was published much has changed. The Sandinistas have come to power

through democratic elections in Nicaragua, but unfortunately have themselves degenerated into a violent dictatorship in an attempt to hold on to power. In El Salvador the former revolutionary Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front has also been democratically elected and is struggling to define itself. The Catholic Church has its first Latin American pope, a man who deeply admires the martyrs of his native hemisphere and embraces the church’s obligation to “hear the cry of the poor” as an essential part of being Christian. Yet North Americans—especially those not yet born in the 1980s—still know very little about the struggles for justice in the Central American isthmus in the last quarter of the 20th century, and the adverse role played then by our government. Consequently, we decided it was an opportune time to write a revision and update of our 1988 book.

What we found as we began our research was that the pool of resources available to us in the 1980s had greatly expanded. Important primary sources—original correspondence from the missionaries to family and friends, audio cassette tapes, retreat notes, reports, and other documents—have been carefully collected by the religious orders of the martyrs and placed in their institutional archives. In addition, investigative findings—the most notable of which are the Moakley Report, commissioned by the U.S. Congress, and the United Nations Truth Commission Report—

were published in the 1990s, shedding valuable new light on the violence that took place in El Salvador during its civil war. Moreover, some missionaries who had worked with the U.S. martyrs but for safety reasons could not be interviewed, since they still remained in Central America, were now available to share with us their recollections and insights. For all these reasons our planned “revised and updated” version, when finished, turned out to be a very different book than its predecessor. And therefore we gave it a brand new title, *Martyrs of Hope* (Orbis Books).

Unlike our first study, which treated eleven missionaries, our new book is limited to seven—Father Stanley Rother and Brother James Miller, who were gunned down in Guatemala, and the four churchwomen, Sisters Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, and Maura Clarke, and lay missionary Jean Donovan—who were raped and executed in El Salvador. For reasons which are explained in the book, we have also included Sister Carla Piette, a companion of the martyred church women who died in a flash flood in El Salvador.

We have also added new chapters that trace the accomplishments and setbacks in the struggle for justice in Guatemala and El Salvador after the deaths of our seven missionaries up until the present. We include here the shameless complicity of the U.S. government in covering up massacres and assassinations, including but not

limited to those of our seven subjects. We do so based on concrete evidence that is largely indisputable and is not biased speculation.

Today is a time in history when the Catholic Church has suffered from a variety of self-inflicted scandals and when some of its leaders seem more concerned with preserving the prestige and power of the church as an institution than with serving the poor and marginalized. We are living in an age when it should be obvious that the church, in order to remain relevant, must reevaluate its priorities so that it places emphasis more on “serving” than on “judging.” Our Central American martyrs stand tall as models for a church of the future. They were ordinary human beings, flawed in some ways as we all are, who opened themselves to “the cry of the poor” and, as a result, were transformed. They were capable of inspiring thousands nearly four decades ago and are no less so today.

*Martyrs of Hope* may be purchased from the authors for \$25 or, if you don’t mind paying postage, from Amazon.

***Ed and Donna Brett are authors and members of the Thomas Merton Center. They can be reached at [ed.brett@larouche.edu](mailto:ed.brett@larouche.edu) and [donnawbrett@gmail.com](mailto:donnawbrett@gmail.com).***

# DISMANTLE BORDER IMPERIALISM: END WHITE SUPREMACY

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

Again this year, the School of the Americas Watch (SOAW) is gathering at the U.S.-Mexico border. They will converge in Nogales, Arizona for the 3rd SOA Watch Border Encuentro, November 16-18, to dismantle border imperialism and to struggle and create power to the people. Several people from the Pittsburgh area will again be participating. Casa San Jose is raising money to send immigrant families, youth, DACA folks, and allies. Donations for them can be sent to Casa San Jose at 2116 Broadway Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15216 and will go for transportation, lodging, and food.

The demands for the events at the Border Encuentro include:

- An end to US economic, military and political intervention in Latin America, and the closure of SOA (School of the Americas)/WHINSEC (Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.)

- Demilitarization and divestment of borders.

- An end to the racist systems of oppression that criminalize and kill migrants, refugees and communities of color.

- Respect, dignity, justice and the right to self-determination of communities.

This past year marks yet another in the history of U.S. state violence in Latin America and domestically against Latino/a communities. SOA Watch has continued its track record of confronting the violence in Latin America sponsored by the United States and in addition to the name change of the School of the Americas, SOA Watch has succeeded in:

- Forcing Congress to release the torture and disappearance manuals, used in Latin America and the Middle East, created in Ft. Wachuka and Ft.

Benning, that exposed the brutality of these programs that not only taught graduates how to execute abuses but also how to deal with the victim’s family and larger public pressure responding to the abuses.

- Uplifting the root causes of migration and underscoring U.S. policies that lead to devastation within Latin American countries, but also violent policies domestically such as family separation.

- The formation of a radical grass-roots movement accompanied by a strong base of solidarity activists and a shifting political consciousness that incorporates an understanding of the role of U.S. state violence.

- Organizing 28 years of direct actions at Fort Benning and at the U.S. – Mexico border with annual attendance that has galvanized tens of thousands to action.

- Introducing the Berta Caceres Act in Congress in 2016 & 2017 commemorating and calling for accountability for Berta, a Honduran environmental rights activist murdered by the Honduran government and facilitated by an SOA graduate.

To learn more about this year’s Border Encuentro, to register, endorse and support its efforts, go to [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org)

***Joyce Rothermel is a past participant at the first SOA Watch Border Encuentro in 2016 and an active member of the Anti-War Committee of the Thomas Merton Center.***



# VILLAINOUS CHARACTERS

## TODAY’S COMIC BOOK VILLAINS

BY ROBERT JEDRZEJEWSKI

Growing up on Pittsburgh’s Southside in the 1940s was “hard scrabble” at best. Fortunately, we didn’t realize how poor we were. Often shrouded in soot and noise from the J&L steel mill, the streets were our playground and the nuns in Catholic school our gentle “jailers” from 8 to 3. We escaped into comic books; they were our booze. It’s how we learned to read and fantasize. They were junk, but they were our junk. They gave us the kick that for a little while at least, we were the bosses and had a place to hide where we could not be got at by “grownups.”

Of all the comic book heroes, by far the favorite champions of the childhood cognoscenti were Batman and Robin, who weekly combatted and overcame the villainous denizens of the crime world who threatened us from all sides. We would argue over who was their most formidable foe: The Joker, The Penguin, Two-Face, The Riddler, The Cat Woman, Clay Face, etc.

Fast forward some 75 years: “Plus ça change, plus c’est la meme chose” (The more things change, the more they remain the same). Look out your window. We are in a kind of comic book world. Fantasy has morphed into reality. The political scene in Washington verges on the surreal, something that attempts to express the workings of the subconscious by fantastic imagery and irrational juxtaposition of subject matter.

Among those wanting to do us in from all sides: in the Oval office, we have”The Groper” and his sycophantic sidekick, “The Toady” (Trump and Pence). In the Senate, scaring the bejesus out of us, are “Wrinkles” (McConnell), “The Grouch” (Grassley), “The Snake” (Hatch), “The Growler” (Graham), “The Flake” (Flake), “Stutters” (Collins) - in the House of Representatives: “Dr. Vermin” and “The Dark Legion” (Ryan and the Freedom Caucus). And finally, in the Supreme Court, one who may prove to be the most formidably malign: “The Sniveler” (Kavanaugh).

Things look dark. The real characters described above represent archetypes of the grownups who made us need to have fantasies in the first place. In the past, the Caped Crusaders could be relied upon to ameliorate the situation. Where are Batman and Robin now when they are desperately needed? Maybe they’ll appear after the election on November 6th. Or am I just dream-fantasizing again? Help me out here!

*Robert Jedrzejewski is a member of the Thomas Merton Center.*

## MURDER IN THE EMBASSY?

BY MICHAEL DROHAN

On October 2, 2018, Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi Arabian citizen and also a permanent resident of the US, walked into the Saudi Embassy in Istanbul and has never been seen or heard of again. However, there are reliable reports that his screams as he was tortured and murdered, and the dissection of his body in the Embassy, were recorded. Reportedly he wore an iwatch synced with his iphone, which was in possession of his fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, who was waiting outside the embassy. There appears to be no alternative narrative to the one that says Jamal Khashoggi was murdered in the Saudi Embassy by 15 agents of the Saudi government, who flew in to Istanbul the day of his alleged assassination.

Jamal Khashoggi’s alleged fate stands as an inconceivable act of savagery and violence beyond words, prosecuted by the Saudi government. But in another sense, what allegedly happened is of a piece with normal life within the Saudi Kingdom, namely ruthless repression and barbarity towards anyone who would dare criticize the atrocities committed by the Saudi monarchy.

Executions by beheading are practiced in Saudi Arabia to this day, making it unique among the countries of the world. In 2015, there were 158 beheading executions in Saudi Arabia, over 70 of them involving foreign nationals. 2016 began with the mass execution of 47 prisoners in public on January 2. One of them was a prominent Shia cleric named Nimr al-Nimr, a vociferous critic of discrimination against the Shia minority. In a word, one of the best kept secrets, in the US especially, is that life in Saudi Arabia is hell for anyone who would dare criticize the Kingdom. It is a throwback to medieval monarchical autocracies in its savagery and brutality, with no parallels in any other country in the world. This is a reality that our media, by and large, scarcely ever delves into.

From what we know of Jamal Khashoggi, he was an ardent supporter of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed Bin Salman, and the reforms he introduced to the Kingdom. However, this did not prevent him from criticizing the Saudi state, especially on two fronts. One was the brutal execution of war on the poor country of the Yemen, with repeated bombings of school buses and innocent civilians. The other was the denial of civil rights and free expression within the Kingdom. Jamal worked as a columnist for the *Washington Post* and was a frequent spokesperson on affairs in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia. But above all, he loved his homeland and saw himself as a loyal citizen who wanted some day to return to his beloved native land.

Almost as shocking as the fate of Jamal Khashoggi is the reaction from Washington to his disappearance. In particular, the reaction of President Trump almost defies belief, coming from a leader of a supposed democracy and the “free world.” When questioned about the possibility of pulling back on the arms sale of \$100 billion worth of lethal weaponry and armaments to the Saudis, Trump rejected the idea. If the US, he argued, cancelled the deal then Russia or the European Union would step in to supply them. What logic and moral obtuseness! And in addition, the deal’s cancellation would have a negative effect on Boeing, Raytheon, General Dynamics and their like, Trump stated; it would be negative for jobs.

So crass a response to the murder of an innocent man is sadly illustrative. Were this a case of Iran, Venezuela, or some of the other bogeymen in Trump’s ravings, there would be sanctions at the least, if not threats of an outright invasion. Clearly,

## AFTER THE MOVEMENT

BY PETER ORESICK

Reading,  
weary again.

I think of Marx’s eyes:  
hard, indefatigable pepper-  
corns.

Outside, sprinklers  
whir and spin, persistent  
as the March of Dimes  
volunteer. I give, I give.  
These books are sunlight.

trapped in clear jars—limp light.  
A person could live fishing  
or berrying. Some life.  
No, I want to be that squirrel  
bounding across the high voltage wire

while kids on skates, kids in cars,  
rage below.  
Moonlight: lead me over.

From “Iconoscope: New and Selected Poems” by Peter Oresick

*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. Peter Oresick edited two collections of working-class poetry—Working Classics: Poems on Industrial Life and For a Living: The Poetry of Work. His poetry volumes include Iconoscope: New & Selected Poems, Warhol-o-Rama, and Definitions.*

the Khashoggi case takes back the veil on the US’s and Trump’s concern for human rights anywhere in the world.

The first country that President Trump visited in early 2017, after being installed as President, was Saudi Arabia. He lavished praise on this medieval, autocratic brute-ocracy. I think it would be fair to say that he had not schooled himself in any of the social and political realities of the Kingdom. He practices cultivated ignorance when it is convenient. All he could see then and now in regard to Saudi Arabia is dollar signs and oil. When questioned on the Khashoggi case, he lavished praise on the Saudis and on how much he has gained himself from his deals with the Saudis. He maintained that they would pay any price for his apartments and condos. In a word, he has reduced the Presidency to shilling for the arms industry and to functioning as an instrument to line his own pockets.

For justice for Jamal Khashoggi, his fiancée Hatice Cengiz and his family, we have to rely on civil society and people’s movements. This atrocity cannot stand. The Saudis have to be exposed for what they are and what they represent.

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

# CONFRONTING FASCISM

## MOVING ALONG THE FASCIST ROAD BY MICHAEL DROHAN

Early in October a man was sworn in to the US Supreme Court who, during his confirmation hearings, lied and perjured himself. Allegations against him of sexual assault remain inconclusive, due to rushing the confirmation and a shabby FBI investigation. With one exception, the entire Republican Senate voted for his confirmation.

Whatever the truth is regarding sexual assault charges leveled against him, it appears from his previous rulings that he will vote for a full blown assault on women's rights. In addition, in accord with his previous rulings, one can expect he will favor motions ruling that the reigning President, so long as he is a Republican, cannot be convicted of criminal conduct.

To add insult to injury, President Trump has flipped the script by apologizing, on behalf of the nation, if you don't mind, to now-Justice Kavanaugh for the cruel and unjust charges leveled against him. It is not an exaggeration to assert that these developments put one more nail in the coffin of democracy in the US.

In another development, direct out of the playbook for fascists, President Trump holds rallies weekly across the country to rile up the base. In our own neck of the woods, he held one such rally in Erie, Pennsylvania. At

these sessions, he dishes out red meat to the cheering audience as he lambasts his purported enemies, local, national and international. It is the one forum where he can be truly himself as he delivers invective against women, Democrats, immigrants, minorities and on and on. Christine Blasey Ford, the woman who accused Judge Kavanaugh of attempted rape, was the latest object of his scorn, ridicule and disparagement, as he mocked her publicly.

### The Zeitgeist of Our Times

In trying to understand the dangerous moment we are in, it is important to step back and see how we have come to this moment. There is a tendency to personalize our situation and see it all as the result of the Trump personality phenomenon. That would be a mistake. Just like Hitler in Germany, Trump did not come from nowhere. He articulates the fears, the anger, the disillusionment and the resentments of millions of Americans, especially those of older white men.

Many of these people, again especially white working class males, feel that the American dream has passed them by. Just as in Germany in the 1930s, they have identified a scapegoat -- immigrants, especially of the illegal kind. Welfare recipients, they allege, live better than they

do. Women, in their worldview, have become too militant and demanding of equal rights. The Me Too movement scares them. Ever since the inglorious defeat, and withdrawal in defeat from Vietnam, they feel that the US is no longer cock of the walk.

More recently, the US has become stuck in the quagmire of Afghanistan where, after 16 years of conflict and war, we have created a nightmare for the people of that poor country. Even if people do not want to admit it, the American empire is shattered and America's self-appointed role as the "indispensable country" is just an ugly joke.

What I have just described can be understood as the zeitgeist of our times, which Donald Trump senses and exploits. If he were to disappear in the morning, the movement of which he is an expression would not disappear. There are many would-be Trumps in the Senate and the House of the US Congress, as witnessed in the recent confirmation of a Supreme Court Judge. Those who support them may not be able to articulate what is happening, but they sense that patriarchy, white supremacy and the global dominance of the US are slipping away from under their feet. Their feelings are best articulated in the most extreme groups of the KKK and the alt-right, when they speak of rights for white people and say that

the US is a white man's country. This is the reality which we have to recognize as we organize and mobilize.

### What to Do?

The economic underpinning of the zeitgeist of our times is the growth of massive inequality both nationally and globally. The growth of income of the top one percent and their accumulation of wealth is unparalleled in human history. This is the real reason for the fate of the angry, disillusioned, white working class. Instead of recognizing this reality, Trump has once more flipped the script by warning his audiences against the dangers of "socialism" and "Democrats". By socialism, no doubt, he means demands for redressing inequality and poverty.

In other words, he is using the old tactic of frightening people from discovering the true roots of their economic malaise. If those roots were revealed, people might also discover that Trump himself exemplifies in the starkest manner the true reason for their plight. Our task is to uncover this truth and fight against inequality and injustice. Without the roll back of inequality, we cannot defeat the sham of Trumpism and creeping fascism.

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

## WHAT DO WE DO THEN? BY MOLLY RUSH

Let's suppose that the Democrats regain control of the House and Senate this year and the presidency in 2020. The question that torments me is this. What will it take to undo the damage done by this Administration?

Consider what has happened to major departments such as the Environmental Protection Agency. Key scientists fired. Much data collection eliminated. Harvard Law School has identified 27 dozen key rules that were reversed, including fracking on federal and Indian lands that could lead to 89,000 extra deaths

and over a million who will suffer with respiratory problems.

Clean air, clean water, protection for endangered species and from toxic chemicals are just a few of the safeguards that protect our health. Without those safeguards we risk the very future of the planet.

The Department of Energy had standards to protect us from dirty bomb explosions, electric grid attacks, deadly radioactive leakages, the ability to track nuclear weapons, as well as deadly emissions. The National Weather

Service tracks hurricanes, saving countless lives. Studies by Health & Human Services, among many others, helped identify the spike in opioid addiction. All killed.

Rants against regulation have proven very effective. Industry lobbyists within and without the Government provided the fuel that polluted the system.

Can even the best efforts by a progressive government put Humpty Dumpty together again? It will take digging by the media and the experts who helped put these reforms in place, as well

as education, sufficient funding, pushback on politicians and corporations to recognize their own self-interest - plus hard work by the general public (that's you and me) to put us on what I hope may be a difficult but urgent path that, unfortunately, will take time.

The reality is we have no choice. The lives of future generations depend on us.

***Molly Rush is a cofounder of the Thomas Merton Center.***



## DON'T ARM POLICE OFFICERS IN SCHOOLS BY YAZMIN BENNETT-KELLY

*Editor's Note: On October 24th, the Pittsburgh Public Schools Board voted down the proposal to arm the district's police force. We feel the article below retains it's relevance as an argument against arming school police officers.*

On October 1st, 2018, Chief George Brown of the Pittsburgh Public Schools police asked the district's policy committee to allow school officers to carry firearms. "I want to stop whatever's coming from the outside from coming inside," Chief Brown said. "We're trying to keep the streets out of our schools, so our kids can sit down, laugh, joke, and get an education."

But the notion that arming officers protects our youth completely ignores the racial disparities inside of the Pittsburgh Public School district. It is no secret that black and brown students are marginalized. Allegheny County Schools suspend black students at a rate seven times higher than their non-black peers, according to the University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems. Furthermore, Pittsburgh Public Schools have been criticized for suspending students of color at disproportionately high rates.

The stigmas and stereotypes stakeholders have against black students leads to marginalization and criminalization. In response, many district schools have adopted restorative practices, which have been shown to reduce expulsion and suspension rates, promote high academic performance, build healthy relationships, and create a more positive school climate for staff and students.

Arming school police officers would only reverse the progress that restorative practices create. Arming police officers in the school lessens a child's opportunity to sit down, laugh, joke, and get the education Chief Brown says he's aiming for. What about the students who live in areas that have high crime rates? Do they deserve to come to school and feel unsafe as well? Schools should be safe spaces, not intimidating spaces.

Black students are more likely to be victims of the school-to-prison pipeline and police brutality. Consequently, there is a sense of distrust between our communities and police officers. The fact is, there are police officers from suburban communities policing neighborhoods and communities they know nothing about. They do not understand the culture or community in which they work. We have seen how this plays out when unarmed teenage black boys are murdered by police officers.

Arming school police officers could turn into more policing of students than protecting students. PPS district board member Moira Kaleida told Chief Brown that the same students who are disproportionately arrested by school police officers would be affected by a policy change. "We know who gets shot," she said. "We know that it's going to be the young black students. We know it's going to be the kids with disabilities."

What message does arming school police officers send to students? While we would love it to be that our officers care for and wish to protect our youth, the message it really sends is that firearms are necessary when dealing with youth in this district. Our students are aware of

the racial disparities in our society. Our black youth experience racial profiling and discrimination. They are aware they are more likely to face harsher punishment than their white peers just because of the hue of their skin.

Adopting restorative practices was a step by the PPS in the right direction. Addressing and confronting the real issues that take place within the district would be the next step. Address the implicit biases. Hire more counselors certified in Trauma Therapy. Our youth face enough traumatic events, coming to school does not need to be another one. Schools should prepare our youth for success, not prison.

I attended Pittsburgh Public Schools from kindergarten to twelfth grade. I remember walking through the metal detectors, wondering why we were being searched. I eventually concluded that it was only to keep us safe. I also remember whom I saw every day on the other side of the metal detectors. My school's security guards welcomed me. I especially remember my high school security guards. They always had warm smiles and breakfast for you if you were late. They did not have guns, nor did they need them. They broke up fights, mediated conflicts, brought people back together, gave pep talks, and made me feel safe, all while unarmed.

The United States has a long history of mistreating, criminalizing, and policing black and brown students. Disproportionate expulsion/suspension rates lead to poverty, unplanned teen pregnancy, and the school-to-prison pipeline. The education system does not necessarily favor black youth, who face

harsher punishments for doing the same acts as their non-black peers. Allowing school police officers to carry firearms would negatively impact the climate of the school, the students' safety, and black students particularly.

Chief Brown should know there will be no laughs if an accident occurs and a student is harmed by an armed school police officer. There will be no laughs once suspension, expulsion, and arrest rate multiply. Right now, we should be encouraging our youth and ensuring that they are "promise ready." Black and brown students deserve innocence and a piece of their childhood that does not include trauma. African-Americans are deeply affected by constantly seeing people who look like them murdered, especially at the hands of the police. Our youth deserve to heal and feel safe during their healing. School should not look like a war zone. School should be a safe space and arming school police officers makes it the exact opposite.

***Yazmin Bennett-Kelly is a student at Carlow University and a NewPeople fellow.***

## WHAT IS THE DEADLY EXCHANGE?

**BY BOB MASON**

The Deadly Exchange refers to "a campaign to end police exchange programs between the United States and Israel. These programs facilitate an exchange of worst practices, including racial profiling, mass surveillance, police shootings, and violent suppression of dissent," according to Jewish Voice for Peace.

At the beginning of 2018 seven local organizations--the Alliance for Police Accountability, Casa San Jose, Democratic Socialists of America-Pittsburgh, Friends of Sabeel North America-Pittsburgh, If Not Now-Pittsburgh, Jewish Voice for Peace-Pittsburgh, and Veterans for Peace of Western Pennsylvania--formed the Pittsburgh Coalition to End the Deadly Exchange.

The Coalition's mission statement reads: "We are a coalition of local organizations committed to justice, uniting in opposition to police training programs between the United States and Israel. These programs, organized

and financed by non-governmental entities including businesses and pro-occupation organizations, contribute to the militarization of police in the United States and the mistreatment of vulnerable populations and communities throughout the United States and Israel-Palestine. Through solidarity, community-building and public outreach, we seek to raise awareness as well as to prevent local civic and community leaders from participating in these programs."

Since forming, the Coalition has conducted a workshop at the Summit Against Racism and a teach-in at Community Forge in Wilksburg, participated in protests against massacres of Palestinians in Gaza and the brutality of Trump's immigration policies, led a successful petition campaign to get Congressman Mike Doyle to become a co-sponsor of the "No Way to Treat a Child" legislation (H. R. 4391), addressing the oppressive detention of Palestinian children and teens, and joined the Pittsburgh March

for Peace on August 25th. We are also continuing to support the activists in the Woodland Hills School District who are working to remove armed and oppressive police from their schools.

The goals of the campaign are:

- Pass local resolutions / legislation to end City and County authorities' participation in the Deadly Exchange;
- Pressure regional organizations promoting these programs to suspend their involvement or activity;
- Push for alternative methods of engagement for local authorities, centered on accountability, safety, and community relations; and
- Actively work with and support other locally based organizations who seek to protect and support local communities through confronting injustice, police brutality, immigration policy and demographics-based targeting.

For more information about the campaign to end the Deadly Exchange and how you can get involved, like and follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/PGHDECoalition/ or email us at pghdeadlyexchange@gmail.com.

***Bob Mason is a member of the Thomas Merton Center and Jewish Voice for Peace, one of the organizations that formed the Coalition.***



## BLACK AND BLUE ABOUT LAW ENFORCEMENT BY NEIL COSGROVE

In *The Black and the Blue* (Hachette, 2018), former Arlington, VA police officer and Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) agent Matthew Horace brings his perspective as a black cop to the ongoing discussion of racism in American law enforcement.

Horace, with the help of professional journalist Ron Harris, describes how many black officers join law enforcement reluctantly, in the hope of gaining steady, middle-class, societally helpful employment, but with lifelong experiences of the routinely oppressive interactions that occur between cops and African-American communities: “Like other black men, I feel the frustration, the humiliation and the rage just knowing I’m at risk for doing nothing more than just breathing.”

To illustrate the origins of those feelings, Horace details once again the infamous police killings of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and Laquan McDonald, but also, and perhaps more valuably, the personal experiences of himself and fellow black cops, and lesser known cases of gross injustice inflicted on African-Americans. The effect is to demonstrate—beyond a reasonable doubt—just how endemic in American police departments is “a culture of disregard ... for the people they are paid to serve,” in which loyalty to fellow cops supersedes an officer’s oath to protect the public.

Two years before Michael Brown’s death, for example, Fred Watson was accosted by a Ferguson, MO cop for the apparent

crime of sitting in his car watching kids play basketball. Eddie Boyd, an officer already notorious for brutality and intemperance, quickly threatened Watson with violence and filed a total of nine fabricated charges. For not only was Boyd a racist cop, he was also part of a Ferguson police department and criminal justice apparatus engaged in a policy of supplementing governmental budgets through fines, penalties, and bail bonds primarily imposed on the city’s majority African-American citizenry.

Watson, a navy veteran making \$100,000 a year in cybersecurity, lost both his security clearance and his job within two years of his arrest, because the local prosecutor refused to withdraw the obviously flimsy charges made against him. It would take five years in total, and the impressive efforts of Merton awardee ArchCity Defenders, before all the charges against Watson were dropped. By that time his career was in tatters; his savings were gone and he suffered from depression—a true case of a black “life ruined” through systematic injustice.

Horace devotes chapters to some of the country’s worst departments—New Orleans, Chicago, Baltimore, Philadelphia—and to a long history in which racist policing was clearly enforcing the legal and societal norms articulated by America’s established power centers. He contrasts his own experiences policing the mostly black crack addicts of the ‘80s and ‘90s with

current treatment of mostly white opioid addicts.

“With crack, it was either rehabilitation, death, or incarceration, and since the first choice was unavailable to most black addicts, they were left with the remaining two outcomes.”

In exploring potential solutions, Horace discusses the need for better training that addresses “implicit bias,” as well as improving the screening and qualifications for potential officers. (The news that the Cleveland cop who killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice has recently been hired by a rural Ohio police department is particularly disheartening.) Horace also highlights the problems of community neglect, of the breakdown of mental health care, and of the ingrained mistrust of police contributing to failures to remove murderous gang members from the streets.

It is in regards to gang violence that Horace makes a serious misstep, saying “if black lives matter, all of them must matter,” not just police victims. Former prosecutor Paul Butler chides Horace in the *Washington Post* for resorting to “the same false dichotomy” between police and gang violence favored by President Trump. “No one in the movement for black lives excuses any taking of life,” Butler writes.

Another problem is more a sin of omission in Horace’s exploration of how to break down the “blue wall of silence” perpetuated by police seeking to protect

their wayward fellow officers. The author rightly focuses on transforming department cultures, describing at length the efforts of police chiefs Eddie Johnson in Chicago and Michael Harrison in New Orleans. Harrison has gone so far as to fire not just officers guilty of egregious abuses of police powers, but also those officers who have failed to report such abuses.

But Horace utters not a word about the often problematic positions taken by police unions in regards to such abuses, especially when unions go beyond their appropriate role of ensuring individual members receive due process and openly challenge elected and appointed officials who have the temerity to criticize obviously racist attitudes and behaviors within departments. “These organizations have played a powerful role ... in resisting all manner of police reforms,” Flint Taylor has observed in *In These Times*. Horace’s failure to explore that role at all left this reviewer mystified.

*Neil Cosgrove is a member of the NewPeople editorial collective and the Merton Center Board*

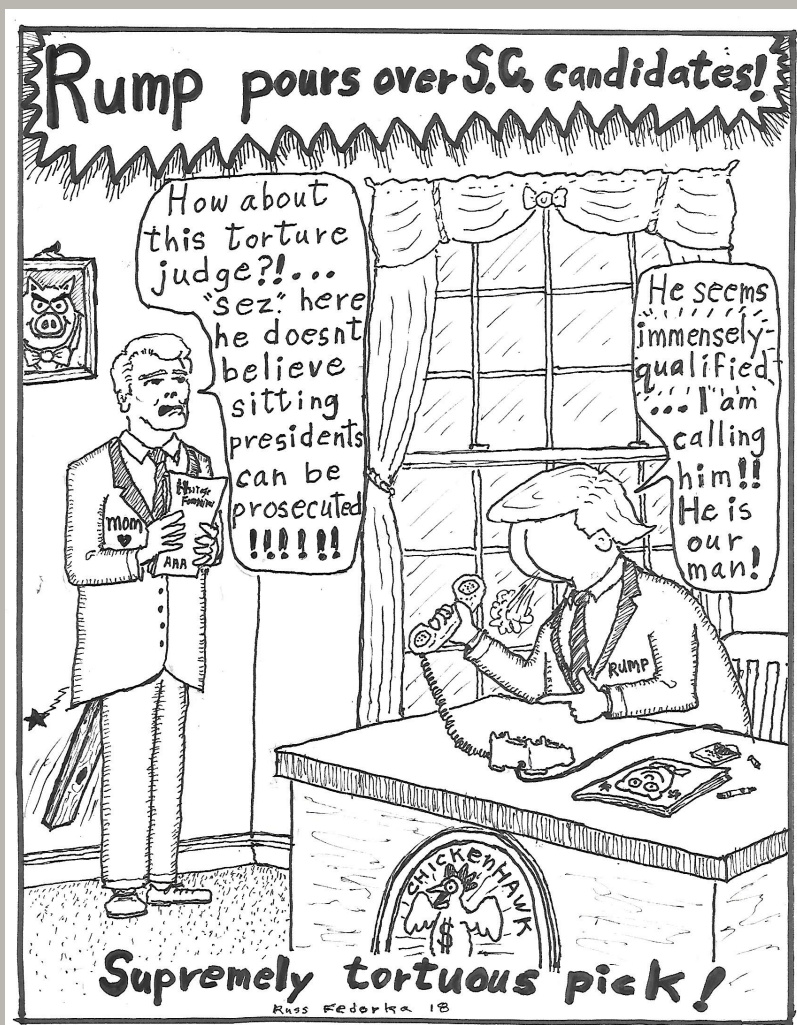


Photo: Women’s March on Washington, October 21st. Photo Credit: Joyce Rothermel.



# ACTIVISTS AGAINST RAPE AWARDED

## THOMAS MERTON AWARDEE ARCHCITY DEFENDERS WORKS DAILY FOR JUSTICE CONT'D BY NEIL COSGROVE

Overall, ACD has filed 16 class-action cases since 2014, successfully settling “about half,” the organization reports, with over \$7.4 million in damages collected. While those cases have been almost exclusively filed against St. Louis area municipalities, ArchCity’s successes and “holistic” approach have caught the notices of national media, including the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times* and *New York Daily News*, *The Nation*, and the *Huffington Post*.

From three volunteers in 2009, ACD now has 18 full-time staff members who “collaborate with organizers, universities, and racial justice organizations in St. Louis and around

the country.” As part of ArchCity’s media and policy advocacy, the organization now sponsors Excellence in Poverty Journalism Awards. Close to 30 local media outlets were nominated for the 2018 awards, which were handed out this past July.

Regardless of its rapid growth, ACD’s “attorneys routinely take clients to doctor’s appointments, help people move out of and into new apartments, give people rides to job interviews, and take kids to school,” the organization’s literature proudly states. “Our collaboration with social workers, organizers, and activists, and our trusted relationships with our clients is what

distinguish us from other providers of legal services to the impoverished.”

Executive Director Strode and co-founder Michael-John Voss will receive the Merton Award on behalf of ArchCity Defenders at the Center’s Award Dinner on November 28th at 6 p.m., at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in Oakland. (Tickets can be ordered at this link: [bit.ly/TMCaward2018](http://bit.ly/TMCaward2018)) Strode, at 30, represents both ArchCity’s expanding footprint and still youthful energy and commitment. He was hired in June, 2015 straight out of Harvard Law School, where he graduated with honors, to head up a project in which ACD sought to develop partnerships

with university organizations to address enforcement of housing law. His apparent leadership qualities and easy fit within ArchCity led to his appointment as Executive Director this past January.

“ArchCity Defenders is thrilled to receive the Thomas Merton Award,” says Strode. “To stand alongside a list of individuals and organizations as illustrious as the recipients of the Thomas Merton Award is an incredible recognition for which we are honored and grateful.”

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

## PEACE PRIZE GOES TO ACTIVISTS AGAINST WARTIME RAPE BY MARIANNE NOVY

While some were expecting that the Nobel Peace Prize of 2018 would go to one or more of the rulers involved in the steps toward rapprochement between North and South Korea, instead the Committee awarded the prize to two activists against rape as a weapon of war—a 25 year-old survivor and member of the Yazidis (a religious minority in Iraq), Nadia Murad, and a gynecologist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Dr. Denis Mukwege.

Nadia Murad went public about her rape by ISIS members, insisting on being photographed and giving her name, so she could advocate on behalf of rape survivors against sexual violence and against the murder and persecution of Yazidi and other minorities. She spoke before the UN Security Council, the US House of Representatives, and other bodies. As the Nobel committee said, “She refused to accept the social codes that require women to remain silent and ashamed of the abuse to which they have been subjected.”

While men and older women from her village were killed (including most of her family), she was taken to a slave market, forced to wear a revealing dress, sold to an Isis militant, and repeatedly raped by him and sometimes by his bodyguards. But eventually she escaped, and in 2016 she was named the United

Nations’ first goodwill ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

She is the first Iraqi and the second youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, after Malala Yousafzai, who was honored in 2014. Iraq’s new president, Barham Salih, congratulated her, hailing the award “an honor for all Iraqis who fought terrorism and bigotry.” A Tweet from the prime minister, Adil Abdul al-Mahdi, declared the prize to be “an acknowledgement of (the) tragic plight” of the Yazidi and “recognition for her courage in defending human rights of victims of terror & sexual violence.” A documentary about Murad, “On Her Shoulders,” will be released next month. She has published an autobiography, called *The Last Girl*, because she says “I want to be the last girl in the world with a story like mine.”

Dr. Mukwege, now 63, founded a hospital in the east of the DRC about 20 years ago, where he has become a specialist in treating women and girls who were raped with extreme violence. Over 50,000 girls and women have been treated under his care, many of whom were subject to atrocities including burning, shooting, and having their internal organs ripped apart. Some must travel there from a great distance and at grave risk to their own health and safety

after being sexually assaulted. He has provided them with psychological and socioeconomic support, as well as developing a legal program to help them obtain justice.

He has spoken out publicly, even at the United Nations, on behalf of the millions of abused women in the country criticizing violence in the rebels and the armed services as well as lack of concern by the government. He survived a kidnapping attempt and attempted shooting in 2012 after his speech at the UN. The Congolese government congratulated him for receiving the award, even though they criticized him for a tendency to politicize his humanitarian work. He is an advisor to the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation, a Netherlands-based international human-rights organization working to end sexual violence in wars, founded in his honor.

The Nobel committee praised both winners for putting “their own personal security at risk by courageously combating war crimes and securing justice for victims.” They said, “Each of them in their own way has helped to give greater visibility to war-time sexual violence, so that the perpetrators can be held accountable for their actions.”

Although rape has been a weapon in war through much of recorded history, it was only in 2008 that the

United Nations Security Council officially recognized that “women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group.” The resolution demanded the “immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians.”

These awards are particularly timely in light of the #MeToo movement. The chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Berit Reiss-Andersen said that while wartime sexual assault and the #MeToo movement in general are significantly different, their goals share key elements: They both aim to acknowledge abuses of women, eliminate victim shaming, and support women who speak out about their sexual assaults.

*Thanks to the October 6 New York Times, the October 5 Guardian, and CNN online for the information in this article.*

*Marianne Novy is a member of the New People editorial collective.*



## BALLOT INITIATIVE PROMISES DISABILITY ACCESS, BUT WITH NO ACCOUNTABILITY

BY JESS BENHAM

Legislation protecting the rights of children with disabilities was very new when I was in grade school, and few schools knew their legal responsibilities. Though I would've qualified for a diagnosis and accommodations for disability, my elementary school was unwilling to work with my parents to support me as I learned and grew. Thankfully, I had CHIP health insurance, free school lunches, and a supportive church family who helped my parents when they could, but our lack of financial resources made it difficult for my parents to pressure our school district to provide the supports and services I needed to receive an equal education.

As the grown up version of that disadvantaged child, I, of course, want more resources for free school lunches, preschool, and after school programming. Nevertheless, I am in opposition to the Allegheny County Children's Fund Ballot Initiative because I want to make sure that funding for such initiatives remains under public control. Under this proposal, the funds would be controlled by the Office of the Allegheny County Children's Fund, and there is no public control over how the money would be allocated. As the Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network notes, we have no information "as to how the fund's advisory commission would be appointed, or how they would oversee

what is estimated to be nearly \$18 million in annual revenue."

Despite claims of grassroots support, the reality is that the signature collection process to raise this referendum on the ballot was conducted by paid canvassers, who didn't explain in detail the proposal at the doors, using emotional appeals about supporting children to encourage signing. Pam Harbin of Education Rights Network noted that, even after attending one of the coffee shop Q&A sessions, she still left with more questions than answers. I am not critiquing here my many friends who were part of the canvassing efforts; capitalism means that campaign workers take the work that is available. Instead, I am critiquing the system that fed canvassers only vague answers that seemed more like they were designed to shut down debate than to seriously address concerns.

This process was funded by non-profits who spent upwards of \$355,000 on the campaign as of June 2018. Sadly, the very real possibility is that public schools might receive none of this money; it may very well be allocated to the very same non-profits who are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on this campaign.

Setting these major concerns aside for the moment, there is also no guarantee that the funds would be spent in ways that would benefit all children,

especially those most disadvantaged. Both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were passed the year I was born. The IDEA applies while the child is at school – and is enforceable via state-funded objective mediation – unlike the ADA, which is only enforceable via a lawsuit funded by the plaintiff. Thus, when kids with disabilities are in school, they are entitled to supports, services, and accommodations, and those without significant financial resources still have the ability to enforce their rights through the IDEA.

This protection disappears during after-school and pre-school programs unless they are administered by the public school system, a condition that is not guaranteed under this referendum. It's true that such programs can't discriminate on the basis of disability or any other protected class status, but this protection is only enforceable via lawsuit. Lawsuits require significant investments of time and financial resources, as well as an understanding of a complex process, placing the burden on parents and guardians.

Furthermore, even if they don't explicitly discriminate, these programs aren't legally required to provide necessary accommodations and supportive services. So, while they can't bar the door

to kids with disabilities, they can and regularly do deny the accommodations and services that would enable kids with disabilities to participate.

This proposed amendment offers no additional protections for kids with disabilities and no guarantee that the funding will be equitably distributed. I worry that this funding will only serve to reinforce a system that disadvantages black, indigenous, and other kids of color; kids with disabilities; trans and gender non-conforming kids; kids from families with fewer financial resources; and other marginalized children.

We have existing mechanisms for funding educational initiatives through county government, and education activists have been fighting for years to increase funding for these existing mechanisms (which have public oversight, unlike this proposed amendment). Vote "no" when you see this on your ballot, and instead join organizations like Education Rights Network in fighting for better solutions.

*Jess Benham is the Director of Public Policy at the Pittsburgh Center for Autistic Advocacy, serves on the board of Autism Connection of PA, and works in an advisory capacity with a number of disability organizations in the Pittsburgh area and nationally.*

## COURTS REMAIN LAST RESORT FOR MANY IMMIGRANTS WITH TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

Over the past year or so, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for nationals of Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, El Salvador, Nepal, and Honduras. TPS is a life-saving immigration status that allows foreign nationals to remain in the U.S. if, during the time they were in the U.S., something catastrophic happened in their country of origin, preventing their safe returns. Some examples are war, famine, natural disaster or an epidemic. TPS allows people to work legally and be protected from deportation.

- Sudan: TPS for Sudanese people received a 12-month termination in October 2017 . The last day of TPS for the Sudan will be Nov. 2, 2018.

- Nicaragua: Nicaragua received a 12-month termination in November 2017 . The last day of TPS for Nicaragua will be Jan. 5, 2019.

- Nepal: Nepal received a 12-month

termination in April 2018 . The last day of TPS for Nepal will be June 24, 2019.

- Haiti: Haiti received an 18-month termination in November 2017 . The last day of TPS for Haiti will be July 22, 2019.

- El Salvador: El Salvador received an 18-month termination in January 2018 . The last day of TPS for El Salvador will be Sept. 9, 2019.

- Honduras: Honduras received an 18-month termination in May 2018 . The last day of TPS for Honduras will be Jan. 5, 2020.

In the wake of these termination decisions, several different cases have been filed in U.S district courts. The basis of most challenges is that the decisions stemmed from racial discrimination, violated required Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and Administrative Procedures Act (APA) procedures, and infringed on the Constitutional rights of TPS beneficiaries. In addition, one lawsuit

has been filed seeking to expand the rights of certain TPS beneficiaries to adjust to lawful permanent residence status in the United States, despite having initially entered without inspection.

On October 3, a federal district court for the Northern District of California granted a preliminary injunction that temporarily halts the termination of TPS for immigrants from four of these countries: El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua and Sudan. Nepal and Honduras do not appear in this injunction, meaning to date their termination dates are still in force.

Meanwhile, four other countries have received extensions from DHS.

- South Sudan: TPS for South Sudan received an 18-month extension in September 2017 . The next decision date for TPS for South Sudan will be March 3, 2019.

- Syria: Syria received an 18-month extension in January 2018 . The next decision date for TPS for Syria will be

Aug. 1, 2019.

- Yemen: Yemen received an 18-month extension in July 2018 . The next decision date for TPS for Yemen will be Jan. 3, 2020.

- Somalia: Somalia received an 18-month extension in July 2018 . The next decision date for TPS for Somalia will be Jan. 17, 2020.

Until Congress passes comprehensive immigration reform, many immigrants who have now made their homes and established their roots in the U.S. must rely on the courts for justice.

*Joyce Rothermel serves on the Editorial Collective for The New People.*



# ACTIVIST EVENTS

## IRISH ACTIVIST TO SPEAK IN PITTSBURGH BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL



Photo of Tony Flannery

This year’s Fall Speakers Series of the Association of Pittsburgh Priests will conclude with Tony Flannery, C.Ss.R. on Wednesday, November 7 at 7 PM at the Kearns Spirituality Center, 9000

Babcock Blvd. in Allison Park. The title of his talk is “Christian Teaching: New Images and Language for Contemporary Believers.”

Tony Flannery is a Redemptorist priest born in County Galway, Ireland. He is a founding member of the Irish Association of Catholic Priests and author of seven books.

In April 2012, Fr. Flannery was silenced by the Vatican for expressing his views on women’s ordination, homosexuality, and contraception. The following year, he rejected the Vatican’s order to remain silent, stating, “I refuse to be terrified into submission.” Since then, Fr. Flannery remains steadfastly active in church reform, contending, “Some Church doctrines are not scripture-based and come from a time when there was a very different understanding of the world and of humanity.” His most recent book, *A Question of Conscience*,

gives a full account of his dealings with the Vatican.

In his talk in Pittsburgh, he will share how his turbulent journey with the Church he loves has convinced him of a pressing need for fresh images, as well as for new language which more accurately reflects reality.

The fee for the final talk is \$20. Participants can register at the door the evening of the talks. For more information and questions, contact Fr. John Oesterle at 412-232-7512 or [johnoesterle2@gmail.com](mailto:johnoesterle2@gmail.com). You are also invited to visit [www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com](http://www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com). Pre-registrations can be sent to the Association of Pittsburgh Priests, P.O. Box 2106, Pittsburgh, PA 15230.

### Spring Speakers

Spring speakers are now scheduled: Monday, March 25, 2019, Jeffrey Sachs, noted economist, will speak at 7 PM on

“Poverty Needs a Faith Response: What Can We Do?” and on Sunday, April 14, 2019, Dr. Greer Gordon, a Roman Catholic theologian and author, will speak at 2 PM. Her talk will be entitled: “Truth in the Heart: The Church, Entitlement, and Sexual Crimes.” Please put these dates on your 2019 calendar now.

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.

*Joyce Rothermel is Chair of the Church Renewal Committee of the Association of Pittsburgh Priests.*

## CONGRATULATIONS, EDITH BELL, NEW DISTINGUISHED DAUGHTER OF PENNSYLVANIA CONT’D BY CHERYL BAUER

eventually became a citizen of the United States in 1960. Shortly there after, she joined the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Edith came to Pittsburgh in 2002 and, as an established member of WILPF, promptly set to work to plant a local chapter. Since the chapter’s inception, and with Edith’s tireless efforts to advocate, lead public meetings, and meet with city council members, Pittsburgh was named a participant in the Cities for Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Campaign, which resulted in the passage of the Gender Equity Ordinance. Pittsburgh has since named an Executive Director of Gender

Equity, a 15-member volunteer Gender Equity Commission, and funding for a city-wide gender analysis project.

In 2003, Edith co-founded the Pittsburgh chapter of Raging Grannies, an organization of women over 50 who are concerned with peace and justice issues, and who express themselves in song as a way to bring music to the movement. As a member of TMC, Edith has participated in the Merton Center’s Anti-War Committee and has served on its board of directors. Edith’s other volunteer efforts have included planning and participation in Remembering Hiroshima; Imagining Peace, and contributing letters to the editors of various local news outlets

advocating for peace and justice for the marginalized. She can also be found in attendance at local peace actions.

Those who have worked alongside Edith can best attest to her passion for peace and justice issues. “Even in her 90s she can speak with a passion that draws people in. She also did not let us forget the need for inclusion—an important yet often missing ingredient when coalitions rush to get something accomplished. There wasn’t a meeting that went by where Edith didn’t ask the questions ‘Who else should be sitting at this table? Who else should we be talking to?’ And she worked with us to help answer those questions.” -Marcia Bandes, Chair, Pittsburgh for CEDAW

Coalition.

Edith herself has remarked, “...I am very aware of what can happen when whole groups of people are declared subhuman, may they be Jews, Arabs, gays, African-Americans or Indians. You can treat them anyway you like, and your conscience won’t bother you, as they are not human. Therefore, I speak out when people are categorized and called names.”

**Cheryl Bauer is a member of The New People Editorial Collective.**

### Jazz at Emmanuel

2	Sept. 9	Come As You Are	2
0	Oct. 14	True Colors	0
1	Nov. 11	Harvest of the Heart	1
1	Dec. 9	No Vacancy/Vacancy	1
8	Jan. 13	Standing on the Mountaintop	8
	Feb. 10	The Heart of the Matter	
	Mar. 10	Wild Women Don’t Get the Blues	
	April 14	Broken Dreams	
	May 12	End/Beginning	

An ecumenical Jazz service ...  
Sunday evenings at 5:00 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church  
957 W. North Ave. The Northside. 412-231-0454

### FIRST OFFICIAL FUNDRAISER FOR 350 PITTSBURGH

The staff and volunteers of 350 Pittsburgh are happy to announce the first ever fundraiser for Pittsburgh’s chapter of 350.org. The event will be held Friday, November 16 th from 6:00pm to 9:00pm at the Stephen Hankin Art Gallery at 408 Lloyd Street in Point Breeze.

Enjoy the opportunity to mingle with other like-minded environmentalists, learn more about what 350 Pittsburgh is doing to fight Climate Change in our city, and become a part of the movement to better our climate! The evening will include food, drinks, options to purchase the beautiful art of Stephen Hankin, and live music. A donation of \$50 is requested for those who wish to participate, though any and all donations are greatly appreciated.

As 350 Pittsburgh gears up to take on Climate Change deniers during this election and beyond, we need YOUR help to get our campaigns off the ground. Donations for this event will contribute to 350 Pittsburgh’s efforts to make Pittsburgh run on 100% renewable energy, to stop the use of environmentally dirty money in our non-profits and charities, and to allow for greater advocacy throughout the year.

Please join us on November 16th to celebrate the hard work of our activists, enjoy each other’s company, and learn more about how to stop Climate Change in our city and the world. Please RSVP by emailing Jillian Zankowski at [jillian.zankowski@gmail.com](mailto:jillian.zankowski@gmail.com). We can’t wait to see you there!



# MAKING PNC BANK ACCOUNTABLE

## PEOPLE ARE SAYING NO TO PNC’S NUKES CONT’D

BY PAUL DORDAL

the PNC: Stop Banking the Bomb campaign, and a new sense of urgency has inspired others to join the campaign against PNC. We thank our newest endorsers for stepping up and getting involved with the campaign: Peace Action Network of Lancaster, Green Party of Lancaster County, and 1040 for Peace. Beaver County Peace Links, one of our original sponsors, will start their own Stop Banking the Bomb campaign against PNC in Beaver County.

Additionally, we are getting reports now of people who have begun to remove their money from PNC Bank. Two such concerned folks are Dixie and John Tymitz. Dixie reports that leaving PNC “was a long process and sad for us because we have enjoyed excellent service and nice people with whom we worked, but this is important.” She said she wrote the bank about her concerns and wasn’t even given a reply. Something that others have said has happened to them as well.

Dixie said, “Once we learned that PNC has over \$600,000,000 invested in corporations involved in the making of nuclear weapons, we said: NO! We do not want a single penny of our money to go for such a thing.” When we asked her what would she would like to say to PNC’s CEO Mike Demchak, Dixie replied, “We would like to say to the CEO and the board: Stop investing

in nuclear weapons. Just stop.” (See article below.)

Another now ex-PNC Bank customer, Bette McDevitt, recently closed her accounts as well. Bette said, “These investments are immoral; the money is sucked out of the community, brings no benefits, and only allows the war machine to keep on grinding out weapons of destruction.” Others have told us they closed their accounts as well, but did not want to be mentioned by name.

Though we would rather PNC divest of their loans and bond issuances to nuclear weapons manufacturers, we are now encouraging all people of conscience to consider pulling their money out of PNC until they Stop Banking the Bomb.

Our campaign will continue unabated until our two demands are met. We demand that PNC “divest” of their financial commitments to those six corporations involved in the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Second, that PNC adopts a corporate policy never to loan money to or in any way financially support corporations involved in the manufacture of or sale of nuclear weapons. We will win!

*Rev. Paul Dordal is a member of the Thomas Merton Center and an organizer of the Stop Banking the Bomb campaign.*

## WE CLOSED OUR PNC ACCOUNTS

BY JOHN AND DIXIE TYMITZ

On Monday, September 17, 2018, we finally finished the process of withdrawing our monies from PNC because of the Stop Banking The Bomb Campaign. Originally we thought that once we made that decision, we could simply walk in, withdraw our monies, close the bank accounts and leave. It took us over a month, a long month. It was difficult transferring from one bank to another. It was also sad for us, because we had enjoyed excellent service and nice people with whom we worked; but this was important and the one thing we could do to show we did not want our money to be used to loan to any company in order to produce and/or build nuclear weapons.

How did this all begin? First, we found out through the Thomas Merton Center what PNC Bank was doing. There were letters and we assume calls made to the bank to voice the concerns of many people who held accounts at PNC. Nothing was done by PNC to assuage our concerns. Then we met with a group of people holding PNC accounts to publicly protest. We stood outside the main office downtown. It was raining. We did not block the entrance or the sidewalk. We stood there with our signs, such as “PNC: DO NOT BANK THE BOMB!”. The Raging Grannies were there, their signature hats on, somewhat covered by small umbrellas or raincoats.

Two people went in the doors at one point and talked with officials. Then we all left, and went to our various homes to dry off and get warm.

The future plan was that if something positive was not done by a specific time, we would all withdraw our money, and close our bank accounts at the same time. We did not hear from anyone by the allotted time that we were to act together, so we started the process by ourselves. We first wrote a letter to PNC, explaining what we were doing and our reasoning. We praised the bank people for their years of excellent service.

It is important to us that people understand the following: We are NOT heroes. It did not cost us our means of living; we did not lose friends; we were not threatened. We did lose the 35 years of convenient service from this bank. But when we stood in the rain downtown, when we wrote to the bank and did not even receive the courtesy of a reply – well, you see our point.

*John and Dixie Tymitz are members of the Thomas Merton Center and the Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign.*



Information provided by VoteAllegheny

### 2018 Elections Calendar

**October:** Monday **10/1/18**—Verify your registration  
<https://www.paVoterServices.state.pa.us/Pages/VoterRegistrationStatus.aspx>

Tuesday **10/9/18**—Last day to postmark registration for general election.

Tuesday **10/23/18**—Board of Elections meeting before election

Wednesday **10/24/18**—League of Women Voters publishes Voters Guide in New Pittsburgh Courier

Tuesday **10/30/18**—Last day to apply for civilian absentee ballot

**November:** Friday **11/2/18**—Last day for county to receive civilian absentee ballots

Tuesday **11/6/18**—General **election** for US Senator (Casey’s seat), US Representatives in Congress, Governor, Lt. Governor, State Senators (even # districts), State Representatives in Assembly.  
Polls open 7am–8pm. [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com) for your polling place

Monday **11/26/18**—Board of Elections meeting to certify election

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



## TMC NOVEMBER POTLUCK LUNCH WITH MERTON SCHOLAR KATHLEEN TARR

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

This month we have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the namesake of the Thomas Merton Center at a potluck lunch on Saturday, November 10 at noon at the Merton Center in Garfield. Our guest speaker will be Anchorage-based writer, Kathleen Tarr, who has recently published, *We Are All Poets Here*, the first book to delve into the intimate details about Thomas Merton's journey to the wilds of Alaska in 1968. Kathleen Witkowska Tarr is returning to Pittsburgh, where she was born and reared. She is now considered a Merton Scholar.

Ms. Tarr will speak about her book, a genuine, authentic story about spiritual seeking in the midst of a chaotic, fragmented world. Tarr, a non-religious person herself, discovered Merton's writing when she randomly purchased his autobiography, *Seven Storey Mountain* while attending her last semester of grad school in Pittsburgh. The Trappist monk's ideas and life story transformed her. And when she returned to

Anchorage, she began a ten-year journey immersing herself in Merton's life, thoughts, and legacy.

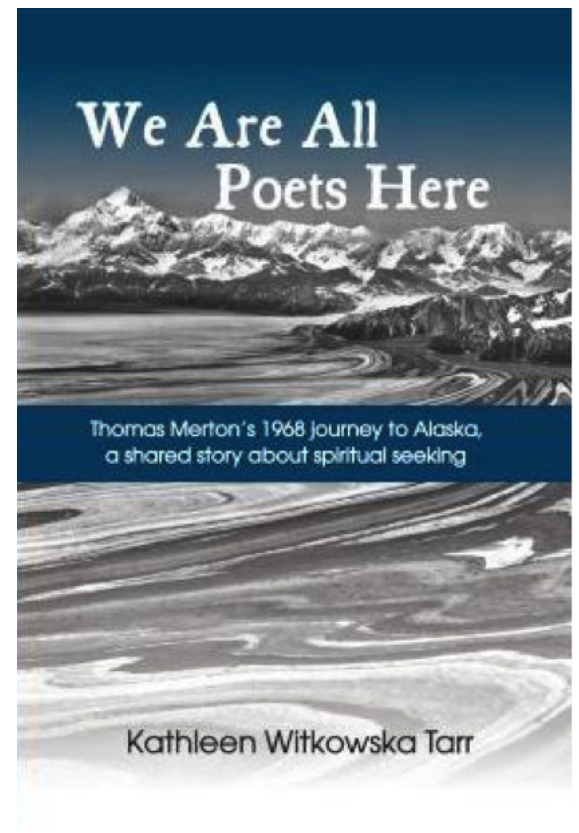
Writing about the 50th anniversary of Merton's journey to Alaska, Tarr says, "In the volatile year of 1968, with the country besieged by political upheaval, assassinations, campus protests, the Vietnam War, Cold War tensions and racial strife, Fr. Thomas Merton under the sponsorship of the new Archdiocese of Anchorage, set off for the peaceful wilds of Alaska for 17 days." It was a late addition to Merton's plans to travel to Asia. By the time he left Alaska, Merton wrote, "It would be folly for me not to consider Alaska as one of the best possibilities for a true solitary life, and I hope I can return here when I am through with Asia." Tarr will be able to fill us in on the experiences Merton had in Alaska during those 17 days that brought him to this conclusion.

Tarr weaves the story of her own spiritual awakening in

Alaska with Merton's profound observations and reflections. She says, "In physically retracing Merton's steps in Alaska and beyond, I reveal and reflect on what the extroverted monk saw and experienced—how our journeys are metaphorically connected, including mutual interests in Russian Orthodoxy and the restorative effects of nature."

Tarr will be at the Thomas Merton Center in Pittsburgh to lead a potluck discussion and to give a short reading from her book on Saturday, Nov. 10 from noon to 2 PM. The event is open to the public. To register, call the Merton Center at 412-361-3022.

**Joyce Rothermel is Chair of the TMC Membership Committee.**



*We Are All Poets Here* will be available at the potluck for purchase and signing. Kathleen Tarr can be reached at ktarralaska@gmail.com, or at www.kathleenwtarr.com.

## A NEW TMC FUNDRAISER SERIES: "DINNER WITH \_\_\_\_\_"

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

Meeting our annual budget every year is a great challenge for the Thomas Merton Center. Highly dependent on donations from members, we were ecstatic when we were approached by TMC member and past board member/treasurer, Howard Aikens with a wonderful fundraising idea.

Howard is a great vegetarian chef! Some of you may have had the opportunity to experience Howard's cooking over the years. Howard has graciously offered to host a recurring dinner with a guest of honor selected by TMC members and friends. "Dinner with \_\_\_\_\_." We can select people to fill in the blank. A chef-prepared meal with conversation, recalls the film "Dinner With Andre." TMC members and friends are invited to think of a local person with whom they would like to share a meal and conversation, perhaps someone who has been active on an issue, or has written on a topic of interest, and pass

on the suggestion to me or to the Center. It is also an opportunity to meet other members and friends of the Merton Center. In these tumultuous times, being with those of similar spirits is not just a good idea; it's a necessity.

Those who would like to attend will be asked to donate \$75 or more to the Merton Center. Howard and Christine will prepare and serve the dinner in their Point Breeze home, and donate the food and all the work of preparing it. They will serve ten people, including Howard, Christine, the guest, and seven others.

The first dinner was held in September: Dinner with Rosemary Trump. It was a great success. The meal was delicious; attendees enjoyed being with Rosemary and each other; and \$575 was raised for TMC. A second dinner will be served and enjoyed with Wali Jamal by the time this issue of the *NewPeople* is out in November.



Photo Credit: Joyce Rothermel.

Rosemary Trump has offered to be our wine pairer for the upcoming dinners, and will cover the cost of the wine.

The next dinner will be in December. Watch the TMC eblasts or call the Center to find out who the Dinner will be with and the date. Is there someone you would like to have dinner with? Suggestions are most welcome. Just email me with your ideas and/or interest at

rothermeljoyce@gmail.com

We are grateful to Howard, Christine and Rosemary for their generous and sustaining gifts to the TMC! Your participation will ensure their ongoing success!

**Joyce Rothermel chairs the Cornerstone Sustainer Committee of the Thomas Merton Center. (The Cornerstone Sustainer Committee are the organizers of the dinners.)**



## 2018 ANNUAL TMC MEMBERSHIP MEETING

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

Thanks to all who participated in this year's TMC annual membership meeting on October 6 at the South Avenue UM Church (our gracious hosts provided wonderful space and free parking). Board members Emily Neff and Fatema Juma greeted and registered members at the door. Ronni Weiss provided relaxing piano music and led us in song as we began and ended our time together.



Small group discussion. Photo Credit: Joyce Rothermel

Krystle Knight, TMC organizer, served as MC, guiding us through our meeting. The year in review was visible on slides, with the guiding commentary provided by Gabriel McMorland, TMC Executive Director. Current board members were recognized, along with current Cornerstone Sustainers and Monthly Peacemakers. Time was given for board nominees for the upcoming board elections to introduce themselves, telling what they would bring in service to the board if elected. (See article on this page about the board elections.) Gabriel provided some updates about the Center and told us about ArchCity Defenders, this year's recipient of the Thomas Merton Award to be presented on Wed., Nov. 28 at 6 PM at Soldiers and Sailors Hall in Oakland.

Representatives from Book'em (Jodi Lincoln), CEDAW (Marcia Bandes), and the Anti-War Committee (Ron Read) brought us up to date with their efforts and invited our participation and support. Darnika Reid gave a presentation about the work of a relatively new effort, the Coalition to End the Deadly Exchange. (See article about the Coalition in this issue.)

Small group discussions afforded members opportunities for meaningful sharing. All were asked to complete a short questionnaire for input into the upcoming activities of the TMC. A Q & A session, followed by announcements, was highlighted by Gabriel's announcement of the naming by Governor Wolf of TMC member Edith Bell as a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania. A ceremony was held on October 3 at the Governor's Mansion in Harrisburg. (See article about Edith Bell in this issue.) A drawing was held before the closing song for the winner of the survey raffle: two free tickets to this year's Merton Award event. The winner, Ginny Hildebrand, offered back both tickets as scholarships for others.

Thanks to all who helped make this year's event a meaningful and enjoyable experience!

*Joyce Rothermel serves as Chair of the TMC Membership Committee.*

## TUESDAY NOVEMBER 27 IS E-GIVING DAY

As *NewPeople* readers think about your end of the year giving, we hope you will consider putting the Thomas Merton Center on your list. An easy way to give is to participate in Giving Tuesday on November 27, 2018. Simply go to the Thomas Merton Center website at [www.thomasmertoncenter.org](http://www.thomasmertoncenter.org) and click on Donate. There you can make a secure gift by using your credit card. We hope to match your gift that day dollar per dollar stretching your already generous giving. While there, please consider turning your gift into a monthly sustaining gift by becoming a "Monthly Peacemaker" supporting the mission of the Merton Center year-round. You may also choose to make your gift in honor or in memory of someone you want to remember this coming holiday season.

Pittsburgh Magazine will also promote donations to TMC and other organizations on the day of giving as part of their Give Big initiative. Find the TMC by visiting: [bit.ly/TMCDayofgiving](http://bit.ly/TMCDayofgiving)

For more information, contact Gabriel McMorland at 412-361-3022.

## VOTE IN ELECTION FOR TMC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TMC members, remember to vote in this year's annual election for the Thomas Merton Center board of directors. We will mail out ballots to all members by November 1st, and we must receive your ballot in the mail by Monday, November 19th. You can vote for up to eight candidates from among the nominees listed below, or also write in a name on your ballot. Look for ballots in the mail!

Darnika Reid

M. Shernell Smith

Wanda Guthrie

Michaela Page

Daniel Sun

Symone Saul

Mark Dixon

Peggy Ward

Neil Cosgrove

Jordan Malloy

## ANOTHER WAY TO SUPPORT TMC BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR

If you are aged 70 ½ or older by the end of December and are like most people that age, you may be waiting until the end of the year to take the required minimum distribution from your IRA. You have been saving for years by contributing to your retirement, so it may seem unnatural when you are required to withdraw money from your account.

While there is nothing you can do to stop the withdrawal requirement, there is something really great that you can do with your withdrawal. The government allows IRA owners who are 70 ½ or older to contribute up to \$100,000 from their IRA to a qualified charity, like the Merton Center, each year. You do this by asking your IRA custodian to transfer money directly from your IRA to the Merton Center, without ever taking the distribution yourself. Doing it this way means that your withdrawal will not be taxed. When you get the distribution directed to yourself, it becomes taxable income.

To find out more, please call TMC member Bonnie DiCarlo at 412-480-5247.



Photo: Striking UPMC Hospital service workers march in downtown Pittsburgh, seeking higher wages and the right to form a union, which the health giant has consistently opposed. Photo Credit: Neil Cosgrove.



# NOVEMBER 2018 EVENTS CALENDAR

**Saturday, Nov. 3** - Fight for Lifers West Meeting, 10:00-12:00 PM at the Thomas Merton Center Annex

**Sunday, Nov. 4,** - Book'em Meets First Three Sundays of the Month for a Book Packing Session, 4:00-6:00 PM at Thomas Merton Center.

**Tuesday, Nov. 6** - Election Day

**Wednesday, Nov. 7** - Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (PADP) Meeting, 7:00-8:00 PM at First Unitarian Church (Ellsworth & Morewood Ave. ) For more information call 412-384-4310

**Wednesday, Nov. 7** - Association of Pittsburgh Priests Speaker Series, 7:00 PM at Kearns Spirituality Center

**Wednesday, Nov. 7** - Southwest Chapter of Healthcare for All PA, 7:30-8:30 PM at 2010 Murray Avenue, Squirrel Hill, First Floor

**Sunday, Nov. 11** - Book'em Meets First Three Sundays of the Month for a Book Packing Session, 4:00-6:00 PM at Thomas Merton Center.

**Sunday, Nov. 11** - Women in Black, Monthly Peace Vigil, 10:00 AM at Ginger Hill Unitarian Universalist Congregation

**Monday, Nov. 12** - Amnesty International #39 Monthly Meeting, 7:00-9:00 PM at First Unitarian Church, 605 Morewood Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

**Monday, Nov. 12** - Association of Pittsburgh Priests, 7:00-9:00 PM at St. Pamphilus Church, 1000 Tropical Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15216

**Tuesday, Nov. 13** - Black Political Empowerment Project Meeting, 6:00 PM at Hill House Association, Second Floor, 1835 Center Ave.

**Wednesday, Nov. 14** - Shale and Public Health Conference, 9:00-5:00 PM at 123 University Pl, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Contact: League of Women Voters of PA, shalemarchella@gmail.com

**Friday and Saturday, Nov. 16-17** - Reconciliation Retreat, 7:00 PM Friday and all day Saturday. Epiphany Association, 820 Crane Avenue, Pittsburgh.

**Friday and Sunday, Nov. 16-18** - SOA Watch Border, Encuentro, Nogales, AZ.

**Saturday, Nov. 17** - Fight for Lifers West Meeting, 10:00-12:00 PM at the Thomas Merton Center Annex

**Sunday, Nov. 18** - Book'em Meets First Three Sundays of the Month for a Book Packing Session, 4:00-6:00 PM at Thomas Merton Center.

**Monday, Nov. 19** - Monthly PUSH Meeting, 6:30 PM at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Squirrel Hill

**Monday, Nov. 19** - Deadline for Receipt of TMC Board Ballots

**Wednesday, Nov. 28** - Thomas Merton Award Dinner, 6:00-9:00 PM at Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum, 4141 Fifth Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Contact info@thomasmertoncenter.org

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.

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### Sundays:

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

### Mondays:

**SW Healthcare 4 All PA /PUSH Meeting**  
3rd Monday, 6:30 —8 pm  
Squirrel Hill Library  
Contact: bmason@gmail.com  
**Association of Pittsburgh Priests**  
2nd Monday, 7—9 pm,  
St. Pamphilus Parish  
1000 Tropical Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15216  
**Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILP)**  
2nd Monday, 7:00 PM  
Thomas Merton Center, 5129 Penn Ave  
**Amnesty International #39**  
2nd Wednesday, 7—9 pm  
First Unitarian Church, Morewood Ave. 15213

### 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 Wednesday, 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

## 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](http://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](http://www.thomasmertoncenter.org)