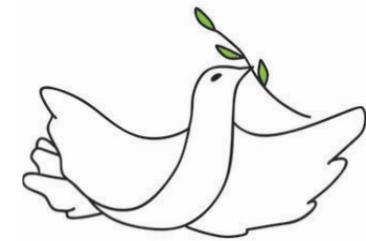


THE NEWPEOPLE

PITTSBURGH'S PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWSPAPER OF THE THOMAS MERTON CENTER



VOL. 50 No. 4
May/ June 2020

ANNUAL AWARD WILL HONOR YOUTH POWER COLLECTIVE WITH INTERACTIVE BROADCAST

BY SYMONE SAUL

Every year, the Thomas Merton Center (TMC) has honored local, transformative activists who are creating lasting change in Pittsburgh and beyond with the New Person Award. More than ever, youth are stepping up into their undeniable roles as game-changers in society. They are gracefully, passionately and urgently shaking the system down with trembling force to activate the promises that past generations have yet to deliver on. They have proven that youth have the fire to carry the torch of justice, progress, and revolution. And none in Pittsburgh are more alight with tenacity than the burning flame of the Youth Power Collective.

Co-founders Nia Arrington and Christian Carter will accept the New Person of the Year award as the Youth Power Collective. Their campaign started in 2017, leading the school walkouts in response to Betsy Devos' appointment as Secretary of Education and again after the Parkland, Florida school shooting. Since then,



L-R: Christian wears puffer jacket Versace, hoodie Eckhaus Latta, acid-wash jeans Feng Chan Wang, badges his own, trainers Asics. Nia wears wrap dress Rejina Pyo, hoop earrings, badge her own, lace-up boots Coach 1941, Photography Ryan McGinley, styling Emma Wyman. Photo, caption, and styling for DazedDigital.com.

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PITTSBURGH MUTUAL AID BRIDGES GAPS IN CRISIS INFRASTRUCTURE

BY CHERYL BAUER

The crisis situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic for many neighbors in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County has highlighted the starker vulnerabilities in our society, but it has also provoked a tremendous response from our communities to fill gaps where our government and economic systems are currently crumbling.

Pittsburgh Mutual Aid (PMA) is a grassroots volunteer effort to meet the present needs of our neighbors in crisis with existing supplies, food, and programs in our communities. PMA provides a safe space for Pittsburgh area residents to request assistance or offer resources that they are personally able to share. Inspired by a framework that emerged among students at Carnegie Mellon University as they faced the impact of COVID-19, PMA grew into a city-wide operation after posting an expansive online spreadsheet, dubbed the "Resource Library." There public users post personal requests for assistance or any resources they are able and willing to offer, such as help running errands, purchasing essential items like food, cleaning supplies, or facemasks, delivering groceries, and finding transportation or other resources in their neighborhood. We recognize that many charitable initiatives

and non-profit endeavors are limited in scope by whatever resources are allocated to them directly, and depend on those resources to fund their operations as well. PMA resources are offered, organized, and distributed entirely by local volunteers. There are no staff and no overhead, so everything given, whether as cash or donations-in-kind, is redistributed to people and families who have requested help through PMA.

Since the project's inception as a simple Google form and resource list in March, a website and Facebook page have been launched as a result of further volunteer efforts. The new website, www.pittsburghmutualaid.com, consolidates information about local resources and provides direct links to the PMA request and offer form or to donate funds to the cause. A team of volunteers review all requests and offers and work to find available matches. Volunteers are also taking calls and returning messages for PMA at 412-301-6127, and can assist those without the ability to complete the online form.

This effort wouldn't be successful without the generous contributions of time, money and labor from the community. In addition to the re-

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REMEMBERING PAT FENTON

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VIRAL INEQUALITY

BY NEIL COSGROVE

Western Pennsylvanians cheer for health care workers now, but will UPMC allow its hospital service workers to organize a union once the pandemic has eased? Americans now pray that our food supply chain holds up, but will those same Americans later acknowledge that half of our farmworkers are undocumented immigrants who deserve a living wage, health insurance, and a path to citizenship, not deportation?

The stark inequality steadily evolving within our economy over the past 40 years is long apparent to all but the most obtuse among us; but that awareness has been abstract for many. The pandemic makes the marginalized, the poor, the chronically desperate clearly visible, in large part because they are the ones upon whom our own lives so greatly depend. Can we now so easily dismiss those people who gather and prepare our food, clean our buildings, and care for our small children as "unskilled" peons who exist in shadows we choose not to penetrate?

It's ludicrously obvious folly to attempt to fight a pandemic while tens of millions of Americans lack health insurance, including more than half of farm laborers and a significant number of so-called "gig workers" who also perform "essential service," not to mention what one study cited in *Business Insider* estimates could be up to 35 million people who lose their coverage once "furloughed" from their employer-related policies. How many of these people will ever be tested? How many of them will die of the coronavirus without ever receiving proper diagnosis

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The New People is usually distributed each month to 2,200 people who belong to diverse organizations, businesses and groups.

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To Submit an Event to the TMC Calendar: Email Calendar@ThomasMertonCenter.org

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For more information or to help distribute the paper: Call 412-361-3022 or email [NewPeople@ThomasMertonCenter.org](mailto>NewPeople@ThomasMertonCenter.org).

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TMC supports these organizations' missions.

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FAREWELL, PAT

REMEMBERING PAT FENTON

No one person can do justice in remembering all that Pat has meant to us - his friends and colleagues at the Thomas Merton Center. We are grateful to all who share their treasured memories of Pat with us.

Pat was very special to me. He was with the Merton Center from the beginning. He brought his skills and good spirits to the Board where his reports as Treasurer were very complete and concise. The last time I saw him was at the planning committee for the TMC 50th anniversary. He loved looking through the earliest issues of the New People. I miss him so much. -- **Molly Rush**

One of the things that led Pat to leave the priesthood was, he really didn't think he was any better than anybody else, yet everybody was treating him as though he was. Pat felt 'he could not be authentic' in that role. His commitment to the poor was persistent, steadfast, action-oriented. His mentor, Jack O'Malley, is prophetic. Pat was the practitioner, patiently dealing with banking and government and HUD bureaucracies. He didn't like hierarchy, and yet he ended up working in Action Housing for years dealing with the banks, which are about as hierarchical as you could get, with HUD, which was impossible to deal with. I live in Uptown near Mercy Hospital. Action Housing (where Pat worked) has built or renovated three properties, opened and operated them here in Uptown in the twelve years I've been here. Pat was faithful in going to Mass (and we heard some really unhelpful sermons!). He balanced work with family, play, and openness to keep learning. The Osher classes at Pitt have lost one of their best students. He was authentic, not a people-pleaser, yet open to people who differed in opinion. He will do everything he can to keep Donald Trump from being re-elected in November. -- **John Oesterle**

Pat Fenton - a friend who accepted friendship.

Pat Fenton - who did not know social status, financial ability or race and ethnicity.

Pat Fenton - who had a date with his love Ginny Cunningham every Friday night.

Pat Fenton - who worked hard and played hard.

Pat Fenton - who made the best soups.

Pat Fenton - who refused church fish fries because they did not serve beer.

Pat Fenton - that good looking Irishman whose spirit and memory will remain always.

-- **Bonnie DiCarlo**

One of the major points about Pat's life is that he had a great sense of faith. I believe that Pat's main motivation for being so faithful to the call of social justice in his life came from a very profound spiritual awareness. He was extremely faithful to that awareness in how he approached not only people, but also the major issues of peace and justice. He will be greatly missed and never replaced. His spirit will live on forever. -- **Denny Kirk**

And dear Pat, Jack and I have tried to pull specific memories but the inescapable view ~~ A gentle, humble man, young at heart always, a dear friend to our kiddos when they were in grade school. While we were attending St Joe's in Manchester Pat was a huge presence for them at Sunday Liturgy, always a friendly, happy smile and a warm welcome to the wee folks. We are so pleased he was a kind gentle man to them, a role model in many ways. We realize he will be greatly missed by family, friends and ourselves. -- **Anne and Jack MacFadyen**

My memories of Pat Fenton over the past 40+ years range from the ridiculous to the

sublime. A few days before he passed, I was looking at a picture of him taken when a group of us went to Cape May, New Jersey together. Those were the days when the beach at Cape May disappeared at high tide. He is sitting by the water on a pile of rocks protecting his fair Irish skin with a big towel over his knees and a hat pulled over his forehead shielding his face. Another time a van of us were driving to Notre Dame for CCUM urban ministry seminars. Pat was taking his turn at the wheel swearing he wasn't sleeping when his eyes were closed on the long straight boring trek from Pittsburgh to South Bend. He liked to do that. Maybe it was his way of getting out of driving. I remember his delight in quoting the Peter Sellers character, Chauncey/ Chance from the movie Being There as we'd all laugh and repeat the words. Years later, dinner and lunch with Pat and Ginny were warm and delightful moments that, as we grew older became kind and thoughtful sharing and listening conversations about life's changes. Pat's best characteristics seemed to bloom and come into relief after he married Ginny.

Pat loved his service empowering and protecting the disadvantaged and marginalized. He understood the frustrations and dead ends of people's lives and how that could translate into the same type of difficulty when serving them, but he could nuance the possibilities for them so well because of his insight, skills and deep compassion. He helped me with such cases more than once.

In my time at the Merton Center, Pat was a dedicated, smart and grounded board member, always the voice of reason and witness to the values and history of the organization. He could be like a dog with a rag when it came to fiscal responsibility. And again, he was an ever attentive listener. He and I even considered co-directing the Center at one (very short) time. Fortunately, he thought better of it and we dropped the idea.

Through everything, Pat was fun. And funny. He had an Irish wit that sees the incongruities of life and raises us above the mire like music and art to oneness of our best selves. Pat's life, his friendship, was a ministry to all of us. Thanks, Pat. May the angels take you into Paradise. May you rest in peace. We miss you. -- **Marcia Snowden**

I first met Pat in 1975 when I spoke to the Association of Pittsburgh Priests about forming an organization to press for changes in conditions at Kane Hospital, the largest public nursing home in the country with 2200 beds. I had co-written a report condemning the conditions and the Senate Committee on Aging had held hearings exposing severe problems there.

Pat told me he would be interested in helping and he became a critical member of the Committee to Improve Kane, sacrificing endless hours of his time for many years. I then worked with him as part of a nursing home ombudsman project to protect residents in nursing and boarding homes and bring about systemic changes in our long-term care system, as part of a state-wide effort.

Pat showed extraordinary compassion, patience and dedication in his work on these issues. He could always be counted on to come to strategy meetings, attend and speak at many public actions such as a protest in the county commissioners' meeting where we held paper cut outs to demonstrate staff shortages, resulting from low pay. When there was disagreement about how to proceed, Pat offered his expertise of reconciling differences to help in reaching a consensus. He did this in a calm, kind and deliberate way that I will always remember.

I will never forget Pat's invaluable support in closing a boarding home operator with years of publicized abuse, including illicit drugging of residents and theft of their personal income. Family members

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and a parish Catholic sister contacted us for help. Pat helped me every step of the way in developing a strategy that culminated in a meeting with family members and concerned citizens, where the mayor of the area committed that she would take action. The Mayor revoked the illegal zoning permits of the home, leading to its eventual closing. The operator never opened again.

Pat lived his values of compassion and social justice for the most vulnerable through his unwavering devotion to the work of our organization and many others. I will never forget his smile, kindness, steadiness, and his deeply felt commitment. I will be forever grateful to him. -- **Mary Lewin**

I had the privilege of knowing Pat Fenton in his early years as a priest. We both lived at the Holy Rosary rectory in Homewood. He was a hospital chaplain at the time. He did enjoy much living in Homewood and serving among the people. He was keenly sensitive to social justice issues. He was much concerned about the poverty of many of those living in the area. He would attend Community meetings, especially those around racial and social justice. Later when he served as pastor of the former Corpus Christi Parish in Lincoln-Lemington we worked together on concerns of our neighborhoods. Later his work with Action Housing would afford him more opportunities to serve people. He certainly helped to make the world a better place. May God bless him for his goodness. -- **Fr. David H. Taylor**

Pat and I became good friends very quickly. It all started at St. Regis Church. I knew Ginny before I met them together when we were all looking for a priest who would give a meaningful homily. After Don Fisher retired, we moved on to Sacred Heart where we discovered Mark Skerdish until he was transferred out of the pulpit. Then on to St. Mary of the Mount, where we became Michael Stumpf groupies. During this time Pat and Ginny asked Bonnie and me to be witnesses to their marriage in the church officiated by Fr. Walt. I met John Oesterle there, who became part of a growing group of friends who met for breakfast at J.J.'s after Mass. From the beginning Pat and I talked about the homilies and our own understanding of the Scriptures. Other social groups developed that Pat and I participated in: dinners with our respective other social friends, including a group of former priests. In all of these groupings the conversation in one way or another was meaningful, reflecting a very deep aspect of the lives of the participants. When he and I talked about these encounters, Pat's response was simply "good" or "it could have been developed further," which always meant "more social justice". Pat's Irish wit always cut me down to size when I became too esoteric, but it was always respectful and with love, which is how I felt for him. Since his death I have missed him more daily, but I am convinced that he will be more present in his absence.

-- **Joe DiCarlo**

I've known Pat Fenton since he was a seminarian assigned to St. Joseph Parish in Manchester where I was pastor in the late 60's and 70's. He was a quiet attentive presence in the community where he had the innate skill of listening and learning from the community; realizing he didn't know everything, but, in fact, had much to realize. At the same time, he was never intimidated by differences of culture and race, remaining open and caring, listening and engaged. Pat never "went along." He had strong convictions and would not back down from his very strong convictions about social justice and human dignity, which he carried from the streets to the boardroom. As an independent, critical thinker, he never sought acceptance and popularity over principle but was always prepared and did his homework. He was not afraid to take on anyone.

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VIRAL INEQUALITY

and treatment?

Laura Perkins, Emergency Response Organizer for Casa San Jose here in Pittsburgh, told us of a client she took to a nearby hospital for treatment of pneumonia. The hospital staff made him wait outside, and then refused him treatment because of a lack of health insurance. A second hospital did treat him, and subsequently sent him a hefty bill. President Trump has assured hospitals the federal government will reimburse them for uninsured treatment of COVID patients, but this patient tested negative for the virus. (Was it a "false negative," of which there have reportedly been many?)

In a letter to state and regional political leaders, Pittsburgh's Black Political Empowerment Project, Urban League, NAACP, and 1HOOD Media drew attention to the disproportionate numbers of coronavirus deaths among African Americans in Louisiana, Michigan, Chicago and Milwaukee. "The extreme poverty rates in African American communities across the

country," stated the letter, "along with the health care disparities, high levels of diabetes, respiratory problems, hypertension, and the more crowded living conditions in many of these neighborhoods," increase vulnerability to the virus.

"Name almost any American city," health care reporter Akilah Johnson told *Slate*, "and you'll see similar things: gaps in wealth, in home ownership, in access to insurers, in access to medical care, in access to clean air" that can be traced back to "historic redlining and residential segregation."

"Higher-income neighborhoods are more often getting tested," Tiffany Gary-Webb, a University of Pittsburgh public health professor, told an April Virtual Town Hall, adding there were "anecdotal reports about how some people can't even get transportation to get tested in Philadelphia." And yet, as Jasiri X of 1HOOD Media commented at the same event, "Most of the essential workers look like us." The American Civil Liberties Union

told Governor Wolf, while advocating for race and ethnicity data on the infected, that "only 20 percent of Black workers and 16 percent of Latino workers are able to work from home."

Casa San Jose's mission is to serve Pittsburgh's Hispanic and immigrant communities. Perkins sees a "safety net for citizens—options that our community doesn't have" but also "prejudice against people who use resources that they are entitled to." Opposition among some in Congress to the extra \$600 a week allocated to the unemployed in the \$2.2 trillion CARES bill was yet another manifestation of that prejudice. We live in a country where working people who dutifully pay taxes are either denied benefits, or made to feel guilty for using a government benefit, while those who disproportionately avoid taxes can count on the government to back-stop their ill-advised, greed-induced, business decisions.

About that unemployment insurance. Only because of the federal stimulus have "gig workers" been included in the system. Weekly payments

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won't be enough for service workers earning Pennsylvania's \$7.25 an hour minimum wage, or \$2.83 an hour for tipped restaurant staff. "Any money they receive," advocates argue, according to the *Post-Gazette*, "is calculated on their \$2.83 base wage plus tips that are often under-reported."

The inequities inflicted on our economy's victims both before and during this pandemic, including in housing, in education, in other basic human needs, cannot be encompassed within this article. Suffice it to say that all the anxiety, all the suffering, and yes, all the cheering will be for naught if we do not emerge with a permanent sense of how much our prosperity depends on those victims. They need to be justly rewarded and sustained if we are to do better the next time, and there surely will be a next time.

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

SAVING OUR HOMES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 AND BEYOND

BY CRAIG STEVENS

"Housing is Healthcare...Without a home or shelter, you're lifeless. We were suffering from the lack of quality, affordable housing, decent paying jobs and healthcare before Covid19 struck. It doesn't affect politicians and the rich." Jala Rucker, Pittsburgh Union of Regional Residents

The Covid-19 pandemic has graphically exposed the overall economic and social inequities in our society. A glaring example of this is the mounting affordable housing crisis for poor, working and, increasingly, middle class households. The health and lives of people living in shelters and on the streets or being held in jails, prisons, and immigrant detention centers are in even more danger.

Before the onset of the pandemic, as many as 140 million people in the US were poor or low income (National Poor People's Campaign). Pittsburgh has a gap in the affordable housing supply for over 17,000 households with incomes up to 50% of the city's median income (Pittsburgh's 2016 Affordable Housing Task Force). This affordable housing gap is worse for African Americans, whose median income is less than half that of white households (2018 American Community Survey).

With the pandemic, a growing number of renters face rising debt, eviction and possible homelessness. Homeowners fear losing their homes to foreclosure, and the wealth they have built up through homeownership. In April alone, almost a third of US renters did not pay their rent, according to the National Multifamily Housing Council.

Federal, state and local governments have not made the changes in policy or provided the funding needed to meet the challenge of securing peoples housing during the course of COVID-19. Only \$9 billion of the nearly three \$3 trillion dollars appropriated as of mid-April in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Acts were allocated to support US Department of Urban Development's (HUD) subsidized and financed rental housing and homeownership programs, and for community and economic development programs for states and localities, far short of the housing needs related to the pandemic.

State and local governments and courts put in place moratoria on eviction and foreclosure legal actions. However, many of these moratoria are scheduled to end in May, including in Pennsylvania - except for HUD assisted housing program evictions and foreclosure moratoria, which the CARES Act extended to July 25. A major benefit for HUD assisted tenants (10% of Pittsburgh's affordable housing) is they can reduce their rent immediately if they certify lost income.

The worst of the housing crisis will come if financially struggling tenants and homeowners must pay up their back rent or mortgage payment or face eviction or mortgage foreclosure when these moratoria end.

Locally, Pittsburgh's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) provided \$300,000 to a COVID-19 emergency rent and mortgage assistance program. United Way's

2-1-1 Helpline is serving as the referral agency for this and other local housing assistance programs. The Federal CARES Act HUD funds allocated to Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and other local and state housing programs could significantly boost programs like the URA's.

Meanwhile, local grass roots groups like Pittsburgh Mutual Aid network, the Hill District Consensus Group, and Pittsburgh Union of Regional Residents (PURR) are organizing to provide small emergency housing grants and mutual aid in accessing needed resources and benefits for families and individuals. In early April, UrbanKind Institute and the All-in-Pittsburgh Alliance, released an "Open Letter to Pittsburgh Area Landlords: Re: Mortgage Deferral and other Assistance to Landlords to Help Protect Tenants from Eviction," co-signed by representatives of over 100 organizations and groups. Listed in the letter are ten commercial lenders "offering mortgage forbearance or deferral to help ensure that renters who have lost income due to COVID-19 can remain in their homes, both now or into the future".

The most far reaching response to this crisis are national, state and local campaigns and legislative proposals. The Pittsburgh Union of Regional Renters (PURR) launched the local CancelRent# campaign with the support of Pittsburgh United and other progressive and housing justice groups and activists. At the national level, People's Action and Homes for All and the Right to the City Alliance launched the Homes Guarantee and Beyond Recovery campaigns,

with calls to "Cancel Rent, Cancel Mortgages, Guarantee Homes for All."

Now there is a groundswell for sweeping state and federal legislation and action. On March 31, PA House Representatives Sara Innamorato, D-Allegheny, Summer Lee, D-Allegheny, Elizabeth Fiedler, D-Phila, and Danielle Friel Otten, D-Chester, announced a legislative proposal to support a rent and mortgage freeze to assist tenants and landlords and homeowners during the pandemic. On April 17, Congressional Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) introduced the "Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act," to "institute a nationwide cancellation of rents and home mortgage payments through the duration of the coronavirus pandemic (and) establish a relief fund for landlords and mortgage holders to cover the losses from cancelled payments."

Clearly, it will take a mass movement and strategic political action to save people's homes. Another world is possible, where quality, affordable housing will be a human right for all, rather than a limited commodity to be bought and sold by the highest bidder among the rich and powerful. In late May, U.S. House of Representatives passed the HEROES Act, a third round of COVID-19 relief funding which would provide \$100 billion in housing assistance. However, the Republican controlled Senate is dragging its feet on this much needed aid.

Craig Stevens is a member of the New People Editorial Collective.

WILL WE REMEMBER?

LAUDATO SI, COVID-19 AND “NORMALCY”

Laudato Si, Pope Francis’s letter on our abuse of the environment and on the abuse of our fellow men and women, is five years old this month. While it is based on the traditions of Catholic Social Teaching, the age of coronavirus gives it new meaning for our lives.

It taught that the root causes of our abuse of the environment and the abuses of our fellow men and women are the same – greed, domination and the idolatry of the individual.

It shows us that the difficulty in correcting these social conditions (environmental sins) is, in part, due to the fact that we don’t make a personal connection to the conditions that caused them and an individual’s obligation to correct them. We are like the son or daughter born into a criminal or slave-holding family, who, blinded by the wealth it creates, refuses to consider the consequences, and rationalizes that they “just inherited the condition.” We also are collectively too blinded by our financial system to consider that system’s devastation of the planet and destruction of so many people’s lives.

Laudato Si lays bare our complicity. It makes the unconscious conscious.

Yet we persist in denial. Why?

We think it too hard. We will have to change everything. Our habits are too deeply ingrained. Our personal greed too great. And anyway, we didn’t create these inequalities, “We just inherited them.”

Yes, we inherited a system of inequality and planetary destruction, but the new habits of confinement and social distancing provide us an opportunity. We see it all around us; the skies are clearer, the air cleaner, the birds are singing louder.

But we also see the inequalities in access to healthcare,

computer learning and economic safety nets more clearly.

There is a cost to sustaining improvements in the environment, just as there is a cost to correcting the inequalities our current situation reveals.

How will we choose to go forward?

The Pope wouldn’t be Catholic if he didn’t tell us that our first problem is blind, individualistic reliance on financial, economic and technological tools instead of on God. But he also tells us that previously accepted religious principles, like the poor biblical translation “domination of the earth” instead of “care for the earth,” are equally to blame. We need a new awareness that makes sense in our time of our role in the world and our relationship to all creation and the Creator responsible for it.

In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis takes the traditional Catholic social teaching of “Solidarity,” previously applied as an antidote to man’s abuse of his brothers and sisters, and applies it as an antidote to abuse of the planet. Solidarity is not well understood when the word stands alone; the best definition that I have seen was given by David Brooks, a non-Christian, in the March 19, 2020 *NY Times*. He wrote:

“Through plague eyes I realize there’s an important distinction between social connection and social solidarity. Social connection means feeling empathetic toward others and being kind to them. That’s fine in normal times. Social solidarity is more tenacious. It’s an active commitment to the common good — the kind of thing needed in times like now.

“This concept of solidarity grows out of Catholic social teaching. It starts with a belief in the infinite dignity of each human person but sees people embedded in

BY JIM MCCARVILLE

webs of mutual obligation — to one another and to all creation. It celebrates the individual and the whole together, and to the nth degree.

“Solidarity is not a feeling; it’s an active virtue. ... It’s solidarity that causes a Marine to risk his life dragging the body of his dead comrade from battle to be returned home. It’s out of solidarity that healthcare workers stay on their feet amid terror and fatigue. Some things you do not for yourself or another but for the common whole.

“It will require a tenacious solidarity from all of us to endure the months ahead. We’ll be stir-crazy, bored, desperate for normal human contact. But we’ll have to stay home for the common good. ... Those also serve who endure and wait.

“I wonder if there will be an enduring shift in consciousness after all this. All those tribal us-them stories don’t seem quite as germane right now. The most relevant unit of society at the moment is the entire human family.”

When this is over, I wonder, will we remember the value of the medical and sanitation workers, of truck drivers and grocery workers, of the people we called essential workers? Will we remember the debt the young paid for the old by taking positions in the front lines? Will we remember the inequalities exposed in race, education, health, housing and economic safety nets? Will we remember the clean skies and the birds singing?

Or will we only remember “normalcy”?

Jim McCarville is the Vice-President (Lay Member) of the Association of Pittsburgh Priests and lectures on Pope Francis and Catholic Social Teaching.

POEM: OLD PHOTO OF THE GREAT BASIN EXPERIMENT STATION

I was three or four, white-blond curls, standing with my friend, Nathalie, a year older. You can’t clearly see our rescued fawn, Billy Deer, his mother killed during hunting season. Someone found him, brought him to the Station. Nathalie and I mothered him, feeding him milk in a baby bottle. Behind us stand the families of the Station, the Director, my father, just behind us; Mother, well to the left in a flowered dress; big Paul Hansen, Nathalie’s dad, to the right; plump Mama Dell who cooked for the field assistants. Behind us is our house, white with green roof, little gazebo off to the left, where we liked to play.

In the foreground, black-eyed susans in the oval and behind, towering aspens on the way to the tennis courts, the amphitheater built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, where Nathalie and I performed our made-up opera, Penelope and Pythagarus—loved the extravagant names—to empty benches. Operas like the ones we listened to

BY LIANE ELLISON NORMAN

on the Saturday Metropolitan Opera broadcasts on the old radio with its cathedral-shaped wooden arch.

We imagined we dressed in slinky black dresses, had long fingernails we could shove through our enemies’ necks, then painted our nails with the blood.

Born in Montana, raised in Utah, Liane Ellison Norman has studied at Grinnell College and Brandeis University; has lived in Montana; Utah, Canberra, Australia; Washington, DC; Kathmandu, Nepal; Kanpur, India and now Pittsburgh, PA. She is a published poet, long time activist, author of Hammer of Justice: Molly Rush and the Plowshares 8.



2020 Elections Calendar

May: Monday 5/18/20—Last day for County to receive registration—postmarks don’t count! <http://register.votespa.com>

Tuesday 5/19/20 3:00—Board of Elections meeting before primary – online at <https://bit.ly/2xXs6a7>

Wednesday 5/20/20—League of Women Voters publishes Voters Guide in New Pittsburgh Courier

Tuesday 5/26/20—Last day to apply for absentee or mail-in ballot

June: Tuesday 6/2/20—Last day (8pm) for County to receive civilian absentee & mail-in ballots at Elections Office (not polling place!)

Tuesday 6/2/20—**PRIMARY ELECTION**
Ballot include US Pres & VP, Congressional representatives, state Attorney General, Auditor General, Treasurer, State Senators in odd # districts, all Representatives in General Assembly, Delegates to National Conventions, Republican state & county committee persons

Monday 6/22/20 10:00—Board of Elections meeting to certify the primary, held online.

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 at Mineo’s Pizza in Squirrel Hill on Sundays at 4pm, or visit us online at VoteAllegheny.org

Let's discuss issues of war, poverty, racism, classism, economic justice, human rights, and environmental justice.

TELL US YOUR STORY IN 850 WORDS.
LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD.

ThomasMertonCenter.org/submit

NewPeople Newspaper

DOROTHY DAY LIVES ON

DOROTHY DAY: DISSENTING VOICE OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY

BY BYRON BORGER

The radical activist turned Catholic agitator, Dorothy Day, visited Pittsburgh often from her impoverished Manhattan neighborhood where she served the poor and destitute. Once she spoke at a gathering at the activist-oriented Thomas Merton Center, then located on the city's South Side. Few people in the room had been arrested for civil disobedience as often as Dorothy Day, although she would grow to admire several legendary Pittsburghers who took their faith from the pews to the streets, protesting the nuclear weapons business of Rockwell International and starting missions of mercy like Jubilee Soup Kitchen and the Duncan + Porter House of Hospitality, which was inspired by her own Catholic Worker houses.

Even the secular unionists and socialist comrades were in awe of a woman who seemed to be a blend of the charitable Mother Teresa and the liberation theologian Oscar Romero, perhaps one of the most potent social critics of the 20th-century. It was a significant evening; even the Center's namesake, the monk Thomas Merton, hadn't met the woman who published his underground essays, penned under a pseudonym.

The event is not mentioned in the exceptionally detailed new biography *Dorothy Day: Dissenting Voice of the American Century* by John Loughery and Blythe Randolph, although Pittsburgh shows up several times in the hefty volume. After her 1927 conversion to Roman Catholicism, Dorothy Day often took retreats with a Father Hugo in Oakmont and in the 1930s she was enthralled with progressive labor activism, visiting steelworkers and coal miners here.

Mr. Loughery and Ms. Randolph have both earned acclaim for their skillful work as biographers. *Dorothy Day: Dissenting Voice* is magisterial and glorious; it captures intimate details and offers new insights into Day's colorful life even as it places her in the broader context of radical movements and the landscape of causes during the 20th century. It understands her "long loneliness" set alongside the sorts of injustices documented in Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*.

There have been many smaller biographies and books about Dorothy Day and her Catholic Worker movement. It has been decades since a major work has been produced on her; and it may be that Mr. Loughery and Ms. Randolph have given us the definitive biography. *Dorothy Day's* quite readable prose and deep understanding of social history also captures her fascinating, enigmatic — some might say aggravating — devotion to Jesus Christ and the Catholic church even as she railed against injustice, war, church duplicity and compromise. As the biographers put it: "An impassioned critic of unfettered capitalism, U.S. foreign policy, the nuclear arms race and the debacle of the Vietnam War, Day was at the same time as skeptical of many of the tenets of modern liberalism as she was of political conservatism. She was outspoken as well about what she saw as the complacent, conflicted role of religion in our national life."

Before her Christian conversion, Dorothy Day lived a life of left-wing activism — knowing Wobblies and Communists and anarchists and pacifists — rooted in her excitable, bohemian lifestyle. She met and

befriended many of the leading literary lights of those days (Edna Saint Vincent Millay, Eugene O'Neill, Hart Crane, Mary Gordon.) Mr. Loughery and Ms. Randolph know well the arts and literary scenes of the first quarter of the century and tell us the significance of the plays she attended, the novels she read, the writers she worked with (or slept with) in Chicago, New Orleans or New York.

That she was writing for banned socialist magazines, crossing paths with John Reed (think of the movie "Reds") and getting arrested with suffragettes even while debating Dostoevsky and e.e. cummings with artists and playwrights, makes her story fabulously entertaining. The authors are excellent guides to the politics and cultural reformers who so influenced the era and the 20-something Day. The biography becomes, in the words of Barbara Ehrenreich, "a surprisingly intimate history of twentieth-century America."

There is a moving chapter explaining Dorothy Day's decision to baptize her daughter (born out of wedlock) and her own compelling conversion to Catholicism. As always, Mr. Loughery and Ms. Randolph report what Day was reading (in literature, theology, philosophy and politics; it becomes evident that one simply cannot understand Dorothy Day without diving deep into her own reading and intellectual questions). The final three-quarters of this 400-plus page book explores the founding of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper (at its zenith with a subscription of more than 100,000), the houses open to the poor and mentally ill, the farms, the communes, the fights, the prayers and

the protests.

The chapter on her 1980 death and funeral begins with these lines: "Dorothy Day's passage from this world was in the spirit of the Catholic Worker itself: intense, chaotic, spare, sad, passionate, celebratory, anti-intuitional, and personalist to the last." Mourners poured in, more than 800 "who represented the disparate strands of Dorothy's life." These included Cesar Chavez, I.F. Stone, Abbie Hoffman, Robert Ellsberg, Frank Sheed, Daniel Berrigan and *Newsweek's* Kenneth Woodward. The biographers know, though, that Dorothy Day's service to the hungry received no reprieve, and neither could her followers. They continue.

After the funeral, mourners went back to Maryhouse, where a 10-gallon kettle of pea soup was simmering and loaves of brown bread and baskets of oranges were filling a table nearby. There were so many to feed that day.

(The book was published by Simon & Schuster. It can be purchased through Hearts and Minds bookstore — www.heartsandmindsbooks.com. This review originally ran in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* earlier this year.)

Byron Borger owns, with his wife, Beth, Hearts & Minds, an independent bookstore in Dallastown, PA. He regularly reviews books at their store newsletter, *BookNotes* (www.heartsandmindsbooks.com/booknotes) He served on staff of the Thomas Merton Center in 1981.

THE INFLUENCE OF DOROTHY DAY CONTINUES IN 2020

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

Earlier this year, Journey Films released a new documentary entitled: "Revolution of the Heart: The Dorothy Day Story." The 57-minute documentary by director Martin Doblmeier brings Dorothy's autobiography, *The Long Loneliness* to life. Through rare archival photographs, film footage and interviews with actor/activist Martin Sheen, public theologian Cornel West, Jim Wallis of Sojourners, popular author Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB, and many others, viewers experience Dorothy's amazing life story.

Dorothy Day has been described as a mother, grandmother, Catholic convert, anarchist, prophet, journalist, pacifist, and saint. The film profiles Dorothy as one of the most extraordinary and courageous women in American history. Pope Francis in his speech to Congress in September, 2015 said, "A nation can be considered great...when it strives for justice and the cause of the oppressed as Dorothy Day did." Dorothy was co-founder with Peter Maurin of the Catholic Worker movement. It began as a newspaper to

uncover rampant injustices during the Great Depression and soon expanded to become a network of houses of hospitality to welcome those who are poor and destitute.

A peacemaker, Dorothy resisted all forms of military intervention. She protested U.S. involvement in World War II, was arrested multiple times protesting America's nuclear weapons buildup, and led nationwide resistance against the war in Vietnam. On this issue, she corresponded with Thomas Merton, often printing his writings on peace and non-violence. The Thomas Merton Center presented her with its annual Thomas Merton Award in 1973.

Today, the number of Catholic Worker houses continue to grow and the newspaper is still a prophetic voice speaking truth to power. The Catholic Church is now considering her for sainthood.

I encourage everyone concerned about peace and social justice to see the film and read the new book on Dorothy's life that is reviewed by Byron Borger

in this issue of the *NewPeople*. The film has been shown recently on PBS and can be ordered at www.journeyfilms.com. When the Merton Center reopens, we hope to have a group showing and discussion there. The DVD is also available for loan. Contact me at rothermeljoyce@gmail.com.

Joyce Rothermel lived at the Amos House, a catholic worker type community, in Garfield from 1984 - 1995.

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Send a message to NewPeople@ThomasMertonCenter.org to get started

Missing Person

TONEE TURNER



Age: 22
Height: 5'2"
Weight: 132 lbs
Hair: Black, curly, chin-length

Ms. Turner was last seen around 6 p.m. at Dobra Tea in Squirrel Hill December 30 around 6:00 p.m.

Anyone with information regarding her whereabouts or sees her is asked to call Pittsburgh Police Missing Persons detectives at 412-232-7141.

PANDEMIC GAP MOMENT

RE-IMAGINE AMERICA IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

BY PATRICIA DEMARCO

We are in a state of emergency. Global warming, global pollution, especially from plastics, and the COVID-19 pandemic present a trio of crises that require global collaboration and a sense of commitment to the future to solve. Our country is deeply divided and out of balance in response to any single crisis, totally rudderless and struggling to address these overlapping issues. But sometimes, addressing a constellation of crises together brings solutions closer. This moment in time offers an opportunity to re-set our trajectory. We can reimagine America on a path in harmony with Nature.

The emphasis on economic outcomes above all else as both a metric for progress and a guide for public policy has torn great holes in the social safety net and shredded basic environmental protections for clean air, fresh water, fertile ground and biodiversity. Policies based heavily on economic profits to corporations are destroying these gifts of the living Earth - the ecosystem services, our life support system. We need to change direction and restore the balance among economy, environment and society.

Three important facts illustrate the urgent need to change direction:

The U.S. ranks last in overall health care among developed nations. In a comprehensive study of US health parameters compared to other developed countries, Americans

showed inferior health standards in nine categories including adverse birth outcomes, obesity and diabetes, chronic lung diseases, heart disease, and injuries and homicides. Overall, the U.S. has fewer hospitals and hospital beds per capita compared to other similar countries.

The current U.S. emissions trajectory is totally inadequate to keep emissions to no more than a two-degree Celsius rise above 2005 levels. With coal, oil, natural gas, mining, logging and commercial agricultural interests heading federal agencies, there is no advocate in the government to protect the public interest or to safeguard the future.

The income equity gap in the U.S. is wider than ever and has been accelerating. While Americans enjoyed a shared growth in prosperity from the end of World War II into the 1970s, the gap between the most and least wealthy has been growing, with declining numbers of Americans at the high wealth end of the scale. In 2018, 38.1 million American people lived in poverty (11.8% of the population), and 93.6 million live close to poverty (29.9% of the population).

We can be better than this!

The stark reality of the inequities in our economy, our social network and our environment cannot stand if we are to build a more resilient, a more equitable and just, and a more

environmentally healthy society.

Re-Imagine America in harmony with Nature!

There are no technological barriers to making rapid and meaningful changes toward sustainable climate solutions. All of the technologies necessary to address the major sources of global warming and global pollution are in hand and will improve in effectiveness as they become more widely adopted. Over 73% of Americans want action on climate change but are deeply divided on partisan lines (67% of Democrats and 21% of Republicans)

We stand at a crossroad now. In one direction, we can continue toward a future based on petrochemical industries - build-out of infrastructure that will bind our economy to natural gas and plastics for another fifty years. Or we can recognize the ultimate futility of this pursuit and turn our investments, our education tools, our might and political will toward building a sustainable future. The tools for doing this are at hand:

- Renewable energy systems;
- Regenerative agriculture that captures carbon and restores the fertility of the land;
- Non-fossil-based materials in a circular supply chain; and
- Preserving the biodiversity of the earth in living ecosystems.

The League of Women Voters Re-Imagine project gathers communities to re-shape future growth. The prompt begins: "Pretend the \$1.6 Billion of incentives given to the Shell Appalachia Petrochemical Plant could come to your communities instead." Responses focus on renewable energy systems to reclaim blown off mountain tops or to enhance the productivity of farmlands with solar arrays and wind systems. People want to replace plastic materials by growing hemp, flax, and bamboo with local manufacturing. Organic farming in both urban and traditional agricultural areas gains popularity. Local investment and equitable, inclusive opportunities are important. Re-Imagine initiatives focus on preserving and enhancing features that contribute unique character to communities and preserve the specialness of place and identity.

If the government infrastructure can be aligned to support and empower community plans, the innovation and resilience that can emerge will become a platform for a new America; an America where communities come together as part of the land - an America that truly empowers people. The Green New Deal framework provides a starting point for this effort.

Patricia DeMarco is an award-winning author, a Rachel Carson scholar and Member of the Forest Hills Borough Council.

THE CLARITY OF TREES

What can we do? Is there any hope? How many of you have been waking up to these questions, before or during this pandemic?

Those are also the top two questions people ask of Richard Powers, the author of the Pulitzer Prize winning book *The Overstory*. (If you have not read *The Overstory* yet - seriously consider reading it.)

Richard Powers gave a brave and deeply inspiring talk as a part of the Pittsburgh Arts and Lectures series in December last year. He did not shy away from telling us, about 1800 people, about studies that show increasing global temperatures correlate with increase in aggressiveness, violence and suicides. "Talking about hope becomes increasingly difficult. How to talk about this without increasing anxiety and yet be hopeful, useful and true?"

Earlier in the day about 25 educators gathered at the Frick Environmental Center for a meet and greet with Richard. "We have internalized that humans and nature are separate and different. Yet we are starting to realize that we did not win the war against nature. The rules are changing." Mary Ann Steiner, a friend and colleague of mine, and I shared our personal tree story with the group: On Arbor Day

2019, a 40-foot black cherry tree fell on top of the car we were driving. The car was totaled, we survived unharmed. The author confirmed what we had assumed: People share their tree stories with him all the time. He finds them essential. "Trees operate on different rules than we do. They challenge our beliefs. Yet, they are living beings and it's time we start taking them as living agents. Once you let go of the human-nature binary, a rich new view opens."

In the evening, from the Carnegie Music Hall podium, Richard spoke about an awakening and transformative experience that revealed to him just how "plant-blind" he had been. Until then, he had bought into our collective story that excludes a huge part of the living Earth - non-humans. "I had our story all wrong: plot, character, moral. It all seemed to be faltering. There was life out there."

His conclusion does not put all at ease: "If your definition of hope is to get past the finish line with all the stuff, then I'm not your man." Richard Powers is convinced that even if we are able to end our carbon emissions, but don't examine our deep held beliefs and the stories we tell ourselves; we and our systems will remain in trouble. "How badly we have mistaken the survival of the fittest. Each survival is caused by

many acts of collaboration. The fittest is the most connected individual."

This 'Tree Whisperer' has found a new kind of hope: Inter-being, co-arising and co-evolution. "Trees have been around for about 300 million years and survived many extinctions. It's not the world that is ending, but our failed human experiment." He invites us to a life of connections and meaning. "Reside yourself with the Earth and become part of the community."

With *The Overstory*'s wisdom lingering in my mind, I took a morning walk in Frick Park and it dawned on me: Maybe those in denial or disconnected to our crisis are dormant, like trees in winter. Maybe they are so overwhelmed, they forgot what it means to be wildly and vibrantly alive? It did not take long before the second insight landed: When I let my fear and anger turn into resentment towards those who don't see and feel the same urgency as I do, I, too, become less alive and more disconnected.

So how on Earth are we to be on this Earth? Paradoxically, this global Gap Moment brought to us by the pandemic adds a new layer of urgency to our questioning. We have a vision and a to-do list for a better future. We see pathways to get there. The clock is ticking.

Sherri Mitchell, an attorney and activist, writes in her book *Sacred Instructions, Indigenous Wisdom for Living Spirit-Based Change*: "Conquest is the vehicle that drives colonization. It has been the modus operandi for seventeen centuries. It has infiltrated all areas of our lives. The tendency to overthrow runs deep. The goal of much of our activism has been to topple one system and replace it with another. This practice perpetrates the cycle of domination...."

Maybe the best thing we can do is to pause, even if it means short snippets of time here and there. Pause before we speak, pause before we act on behalf of all we hold dear. We can let go of only what we are aware of. When we let our body and mind settle, a new clarity arises. Maybe it's the clarity of trees.

*Kirsi Jansa is a documentary filmmaker of *Sustainability Pioneers and Gas Rush Stories*, a *Creatives for Climate* activist and an informal climate educator. She offers *Tara Rokpa Healing* relaxation courses and is in training to become a *Work That Reconnects & Active Hope* facilitator. More info: www.kirsijansa.com.*

ENDANGERED HELPERS

TRANSIT WORKERS AND RIDERS, OUR LIVES AT STAKE

Essential workers rely on public transit to staff their jobs at grocery stores, hospitals, pharmacies, and more. Public transit workers are working tirelessly, and sometimes paying with their lives, to keep our cities moving forward.

Although Covid-19 has decimated our public transit system and endangered the lives of transit riders and workers across Pittsburgh and the country, public transit has never been more important. On April 16th, Pittsburghers for Public Transit hosted a virtual press conference to call for measures to protect and support these essential transit workers and riders.

Steve Palonis, President and Business Agent of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 85, representing over 2500 Port Authority workers, outlined the ways his union has fought for worker protections; winning Personal Protective Equipment for workers, testing, and policies that allow workers to recover at home without losing personal vacation time.

PA House Rep Jake Wheatley explained how his proposed House Bill 2380 “Emergency Relief for COVID-19 Workers Act” would ensure that all

frontline workers, including transit workers, would be compensated for the risk that they take for themselves and their families by reporting to work every day. PPT also called on state and federal elected officials to support this measure and PA Senator Bob Casey’s proposed Heroes Fund legislation in Washington DC. Passing hazard pay legislation would help avoid devastating transit labor shortages that have caused transit systems to drastically reduce transit services during this crisis.

Pittsburghers for Public Transit also highlighted organizing wins like fareless transit, rear door boarding, and ramping up cleaning efforts. However, because some bus routes continue to have high ridership, PPT urged the Port Authority to increase service frequency on select routes to allow for proper social distancing.

PPT collected more than 70 survey responses from riders who are continuing to take transit, many of whom are working in essential industries like healthcare and supermarkets. These busy routes pass through predominantly black and brown communities, and these communities are also more at risk

with COVID-19. Now that there are strict limitations in place on transit carrying capacity, it is important that we are not exchanging crowding on buses for crowding at bus stops. One grocery store worker who responded to PPT’s Covid-19 transit rider survey, who asked to remain anonymous in solidarity with other essential workers, said:

“Public transit is essential for getting me to my shift at a Pittsburgh grocery store. But as a response to Covid-19, our transit agency cut back on the number of buses that run routes. That means it’s harder for me to get to work, and that the buses are more crowded. Believe me; it’s stressful to get onto a packed bus after spending so much effort distancing the rest of the day. As someone who’s also being called an “essential worker,” I can relate to transit drivers in this time. We’re risking our lives, but we’re workers - not martyrs. It’s critical that our employers and public transit agencies give us the compensation and protection we deserve.”

With the current mandate that all riders wear masks, PPT has begun raising funds to provide these masks to 1100 riders. PPT Executive Director

BY DAN YABLONSKY

Laura Chu Wiens participated in a panel discussion on April 29th, hosted by Carlow University’s Social Justice Institute, to talk about how COVID-19 has exacerbated existing hardships in our most vulnerable communities, and also highlighted the fact that the crisis has proven that we are actually capable of making sweeping changes to our existing systems to better serve these communities - changes like providing free transfers to all riders or even abandoning the fare structure altogether.

Pittsburghers for Public Transit will continue to mobilize with riders and workers to push for protections to get us past this crisis, as well as expanded resources to build back our transit system better than before. Read more about PPT’s press conference, campaigns, how you can contribute, and join them in the struggle at PittsburghForPublicTransit.org.

Dan Yablonsky is the Director of Communications & Development at Pittsburghers for Public Transit – a project of the Thomas Merton Center.

POLITICIANS, PANDEMIC ATTACK NEWSPAPERS, POSTAL SERVICE

BY NEIL COSGROVE

The stimulus packages passed by Congress and signed by the President over the last two months are designed to prevent economic collapse and sustain “life-essential” activities such as health care and food supply. But what about those institutions that sustain our already badly wounded democracy—stitutions like a free press and a postal service? Too many of our politicians have decided those institutions aren’t worth the money or the effort needed to sustain them.

This country’s founders sought to ensure a free press with the ratification of our constitution’s First Amendment, recognizing its importance to a vibrant civic life and “marketplace of ideas.” That marketplace has shrunk considerably in the decade-and-a-half since the internet and social media started significantly eating into newspapers’ advertising revenue and circulation. “At least 1,800 newspapers went out of business since 2004,” reports the *Seattle Times*.

Despite this attrition, the *Seattle Times* adds, “Local newspapers continue to provide most original reporting in their communities.” Readership of those newspapers’ content has risen dramatically during the pandemic, but a crippled economy has meant a 20% to 30% further drop in ad revenue, according to the International News Media Association.

For many news outlets this latest threat is existential, and the wreckage has been carefully tracked by

Kristen Hare of the Poynter Institute. Locally, Trib Total Media has combined its two print outlets – the *Greensburg Tribune-Review* and the *Valley News Dispatch* – and laid off news staff. The *Pittsburgh Current*, an alternative paper, stopped issuing a print edition, since the gathering places in which that edition were distributed have been shuttered. (A reality even *The NewPeople* has had to reckon with.) Alt-weeklies, dependent as they are on arts and entertainment advertising, have been particularly hard hit. Across the state, the *Wilkes-Barre Times-Leader* dropped its print edition for three days a week.

Nationally, large circulation dailies such as the *Denver Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *San Jose Mercury News* have laid off news staff, as has McClatchy, which owns 30 newspapers across the country. Gannett, owner of more than 100 newspapers, has cut the salaries of any one in their newsrooms making more than \$38,000. Even digital news outlets are feeling the pinch, with *Vox* furloughing more than 100 workers for three months.

Eighteen U.S. senators have lobbied for inclusion of funds to support local journalism, pointing out that state governors consider journalists essential workers and arguing that “communities have become increasingly reliant on their reporting amidst the public health crisis.” All 18, unfortunately, caucus with the Democrats—not surprising given a Republican administration unhappy with anyone who refuses to embrace

the “reality” it has been peddling to the public for three-and-a-half years.

The Trump administration seems equally unconcerned regarding the fate of another constitutionally guaranteed institution, the Postal Service. Article I spells out that the establishment of Post Offices is a specific duty of the Congress.

Already weakened by a lame-duck 2006 Republican Congress insisting that the USPS pay over \$5 billion a year to the U.S. Treasury to pre-fund retirees’ health care, as the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reports, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has insisted that stimulus bills cannot include any support for the Postal Service. Free of any taxpayer funding for the last 40 years, the USPS relies on mail revenues to function, and those revenues are down a reported 30% due to the pandemic. Both Postmaster General Megan Brennan and Mark Dimondstein, leader of the American Postal Workers Union, have predicted USPS will run out of money and have to cease operations between July and September.

Gene Collier of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* points out such a collapse would jeopardize delivery of prescription drugs, pandemic relief checks, and census correspondence. United Parcel Service and FedEx handled less than 7.5% of the units of mail the Postal Service did in 2019, and could hardly be expected to step in and absorb the work, or to deliver without higher charges to

rural parts of the country.

Why would the administration so doggedly oppose funding such an essential service, funding that even numerous Republican legislators are seeking? One explanation, Dimondstein recently told *In These Times*, is that the White House’s 2018 Office of Management and Budget report “openly called for an opportunity to sell off the Post Office to private corporations.” Such privatization has long been an ambition of some Republican politicians, regardless of any constitutional stipulations about public ownership.

The Trump administration may also believe they can use the pandemic to destroy the postal unions. “The presidential task force that Mnuchin headed up actually called for an end to our collective bargaining rights,” Dimondstein said. The USPS currently provides around 630,000 middle-class jobs, employs the most veterans of any entity, and has one of the most diverse workforces.

On the level of “plausible paranoia” a collapsing Postal Service would also endanger the increasing need, in the midst of a pandemic, for “mail-in voting.” The ultimate in voter suppression, such a catastrophe, only partly the fault of the virus, would cap the destruction of our democracy and the institutions that sustain it.

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

SOLIDARITY FOREVER

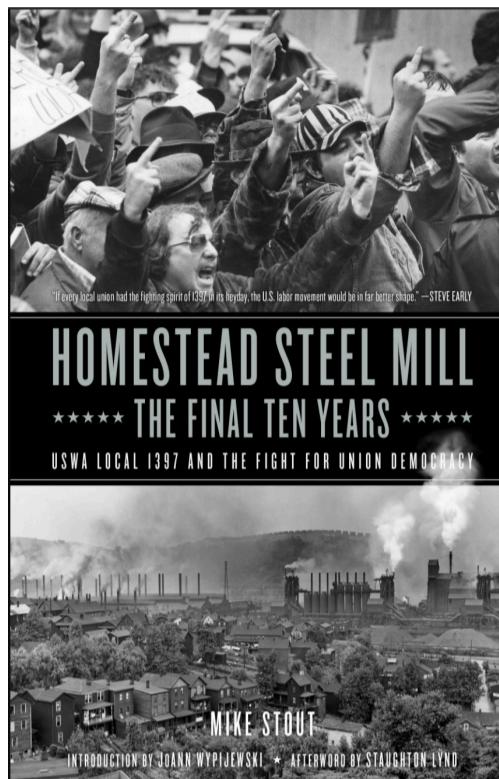
HOMESTEAD STEEL MILL, THE LAST TEN YEARS

Pittsburgh social justice activists, labor union radicals, and environmentalists would have to be deaf and blind and unaware to not know Mike Stout. Singer, prolific songwriter, stump speaker/agitator, Warrior of the Rainbow, Mike Stout with his guitar is a fixture at rallies and picket lines for worker and community health and safety; for union strikers and war resisters; for a Green New Deal with a just transition for displaced workers; for those committed to a responsible and compassionate socialism rather than the dog-eat-dog capitalism that is devouring us. With hundreds of original songs, what Mike stands for, he sings about.

Mike has written an account of the vibrant and militant Homestead Steel workers' struggle that only he could have written. The early section of the memoir will be of interest to many who know him because it explains the forging of his convictions. This book, however, is about an extraordinary time and place: Homestead Steel during the decade from 1978, when the USW Local 1397 Rank-and-File insurgency took over the local union, until 1987, when Mike rescued the history of the most famous USW Local from a dumpster.

Mike and I have collaborated for more than forty years. Before I was elected Chief Steward of UE 610 at the Union Switch & Signal and Mike became the Head Grievanceman at Homestead, we were drawn to the plant struggles in Youngstown, Ohio and were equally influenced by Staughton and Alice Lynd. With different titles in two historically different systems, our union responsibilities were the same: oversight of the grievance procedure and

the inside-the-plant operation of the union. While the UE was the purest remnant of the Old Left in Pittsburgh, USW Local 1397 be-



The *HOMESTEAD STEEL MILL - The Final Ten years USWA Local 1397 and the Fight For Union Democracy*. PM Press

came the archetypal expression of New Left unionism with its media conscious leadership and extraordinarily graphic, profane and inclusive *1397 Rank-and-File* newspaper.

Mike and I collaborated closely in the plant shutdown struggle as activists in the Tri-State Conference of Steel and organizers of the Steel Valley Authority. We were united by a conviction that to fight for the preservation of American manufacturing and working-class communities was a noble cause. The book's first chapter evokes the "strange beauty" of the mill as seen by an industri-

al crane operator from Kentucky with extensive radical experience in New York City (especially in anti-Vietnam War struggles). Instantly, he recognized what an intense and special place he'd landed in. "It was mystical, wild, especially during daylight, when the dust was going up and the sunlight was coming through the cracks in the roof. It was like you were in a theater watching a play; and the play was industrial production."

What set Homestead apart was its fighting spirit and its history. There is no labor struggle as well known as the 1892 battle along the Monongahela River between skilled industrial workers and Pinkerton hired guns over the governance of the revolutionary new industrial workplace that was emerging. The battle's shadow weighed heavily on American labor relations, but inside the vast mill historical memory, stirred by the upheavals of the 1960s and the Vietnam War, inspired solidarity.

What made the final ten years of the great steel mill's existence so meaningful was the democratic involvement and engagement of hundreds of workers in the struggle. Solidarity from below was spurred by an invigorated union grievance procedure that Mike effectively prosecuted on the members' behalf, and the most distinctive radical union newspaper ever produced. Mike's book is copiously illustrated with the art, photos and cartoons that unleashed free speech and promoted class conscious participation in the relation between workers and management. The book is a love letter to the communal solidarity of people who share the experience of a sometimes dan-

gerous, sometimes awesome, but always complex interaction of humans and powerful machinery.

The inside story of the historic mill's final decade inspires by display of the humor, imagination and intelligence of the membership, but there was also an outside strategy. The union reached out to the community, supporting food banks, other unions' struggles, environmental groups, religious allies and the Merton Center. Outside, we worked together in the Tri-State Conference on Steel to organize the Steel Valley Authority to challenge the property rights of major corporations with the threat of eminent domain. "If they abandon the facilities that created their wealth, let us take them and put them to use for the common good."

Mike Stout continues to sing out against war and racism, but his main focus at present is to bridge the urban-rural and the worker-environmentalist divides. He heads the first urban chapter of the Izaak Walton League, dedicated to the preservation and restoration of clean water and air. He campaigns for a Green New Deal that structurally engages all workers who grow, make and build what we need to survive in a just transition that preserves families, communities and unions. Mike Stout will always be a union man.

His heart was forged in Homestead Steel. For information on buying Mike's book, contact: miststout629@gmail.com

Charles McCollester is a longtime friend of the Merton Center and former professor of Industrial and Labor Relations at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

PITTSBURGH MUTUAL AID BRIDGES GAPS IN CRISIS INFRASTRUCTURE

source matching team, so far 18 volunteers and growing, PMA includes a team of volunteer fundraisers and organizers who have led efforts to re-distribute sums of up to \$250 per request for financial assistance. A Virtual Rent Party fundraiser was held on April 18, sponsored by Wheek Care Guinea Pig Rescue and featuring music by DJ KK, which raised \$900 in just a few hours. At last count, over \$20,000 in aid had been raised to provide direct financial support to over 70 recipients. A partnership with Ratzon: Center for Healing and Resistance in Bloomfield has given PMA the capacity to coordinate food distribution at their site in Bloomfield, where PMA volunteers can pick up prepared groceries from Ratzon's volunteer coordinators for delivery to individuals

and families. Individual volunteers and donors fund food and supply orders that exceed Ratzon's resources.

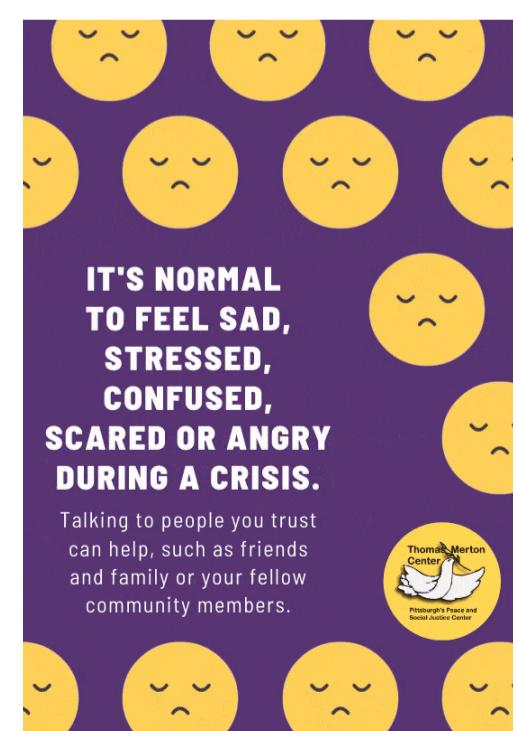
We wouldn't have been able to reach so many of our neighbors without the vital contributions of labor from our Social Media, Infrastructure, Flyering, and Developer teams whose work too often goes unrecognized. We are grateful and humbled that so many have come forward to support our mutual aid program and others like it in our town, our state, and across the nation.

Are you interested in helping out? Can PMA help you? Please call 412-301-6127 and leave a message with your name and contact information, or visit <http://www.pittsburghmutualaid.com> to fill out our form and let

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us know! Questions can be emailed to c19mutualaidPGH@gmail.com. Donations can be directed to PMA via CashApp (\$PghMutualAid), Venmo (@PghMutualAid), or GoFundMe (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/pgh-mutual-aid-covid19-emergency-fund>), and to Ratzon via Venmo (@Ratzon-Food-Distro). Follow Pittsburgh Mutual Aid on Facebook for updates and information about how you can find or offer help.

Cheryl Bauer is a member of the NewPeople Editorial Collective and the TMC, and a volunteer with Pittsburgh Mutual Aid.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR: DEMAND VISIONARY CHANGE

BY GABRIEL MCMORLAND

Let's spread peace through the pandemic. I invite readers to let TMC know how we might support you or your loved ones during this time of physical distance and sheltering. We know the dangers of Covid-19 extend far beyond the medical threats of the virus itself, and we can find hope and safety only by staying connected, staying organized, and demanding visionary change.

As the social crisis surrounding Covid-19 reveals glaring injustices in our broken systems, our collective work towards peace and justice calls upon our compassion, commitment, and wild imaginations of what's possible.

Just as with previous natural disasters, a politics of profit over

people and centuries of militarized oppression leave our institutions and power brokers unprepared to support people. The basic operations of our society turn out to be as precarious as the paycheck-to-paycheck, food-and housing-insecure lives long experienced by so many. We've spent decades squeezing the last dollars out of people in an ever-shrinking healthcare system, and packing millions of our most vulnerable into prisons that now become epicenters of Covid transmission. Most of the emergency relief measures proposed today have already been long standing demands from exploited and excluded communities for generations now.

TMC helped to launch the Pittsburgh Mutual Aid network, bringing

community members together to help each other by sharing food, running errands to the pharmacy, offering rides, or whatever else is needed. As part of the PA Poor People's Campaign statewide coalition, we're pushing to expand access to healthcare, food and housing, and other resources and protections. Stop Banking the Bomb reminds us that hair-trigger nuclear weapons become even more reckless in times when daily life itself is unreliable. We're also working with others locally to decarcerate Allegheny County Jail - to demand the release of people from the downtown death trap, to immediately address medical needs at ACJ, and to stop the needless arrests of people without any public safety justification.

Together, let's embrace the power of this moment to transform our world towards the vision of justice that TMC was founded to pursue. Please contact Gabriel@thomasmertoncenter.org to get involved, to become a member, or ask any questions.

Gabriel McMorland is director of the Thomas Merton Center and wants to hear from readers about how the COVID crisis affects you and what we can do together about it.

THE TMC HONORS YOUTH POWER COLLECTIVE WITH INTERACTIVE BROADCAST

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they've organized for student rights in Pittsburgh Public Schools and Point Park University, as well as working with nationwide coalitions of other Black-led student advocacy groups demanding change on a systemic level. They played a pivotal role in organizing, rallying, and mobilizing during the Antwon Rose II protests.

Nia asks us to "Imagine a country that comes together as a community and shows one another love despite our many differences. Imagine a country that listens to their youth and follows them into the future. It just might change our lives." The Thomas Merton Center hopes you'll join us in following their lead, supporting young People of Color and showing gratitude for the Youth Power Collective's

transformational work.

This year, the annual New Person of the Year Award will take place online and will be supplemented with an in-person event as soon as it is safe to do so.

For nearly 50 years, we've gathered together to celebrate the powerful mission of the Thomas Merton Center and help sustain the Center through fundraising events such as the New Person of Year Award. This year, we're excited to meet with you all online, through a mixed-media live broadcast which will include the Award presentation to the Youth Power Collective, as well as music, panel discussions, and other celebrations of past, present and future TMC members, actions and victories! We

hope you will take part by sending us your photos, videos, and memories of all things TMC! We're asking all our supporters to submit pre-recorded content to share with our friends and neighbors - protest songs, interviews with well-known social justice workers, testimonials, archived footage, and whatever else you can think of! We're here to assist with technical needs at info@ThomasMertonCenter.org.

Just because we're social distancing doesn't mean we can't be social! Send us a video about why you love the TMC or show us what social justice work you're involved in!

Additionally, we'll be offering even more fun and comprehensive sponsorships and advertising opportunities to make your donations

go farther than ever before! We're all in this together and need every one of you to keep Pittsburgh's Peace and Social Justice Center alive and strong! All donations before and during this event will go towards finding needed office space, repairs for the East End Community Thrift store, and the continued work of the Thomas Merton Center and its many campaigns and projects, including this *NewPeople* newspaper.

As chair of the Events Committee, Symone Saul conjures magical celebrations from your feedback, participation and expertise.

PLANNING BEGINS FOR TMC'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

BY MARK DIXON

A dedicated group of Thomas Merton Center community members began meeting this year to discuss plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Center. Founded in 1972, the Merton Center reaches its 50 year "birthday" in 2022, and discussions of celebratory activities have ranged from musical performances to lecture series to essay anthologies and beyond. This celebration presents an extraordinary opportunity to reflect on the Center's past accomplishments and launch it into a new era of supporting inspired activists and activism. All past, present, and future members of the Thomas Merton Center are welcome to join in the planning process, and can contact Mark Dixon for more information: markdixon@gmail.com, 412-204-6098.

The first planning meeting for the 50th Anniversary took place at the home of Molly Rush in January of 2020, where she shared several binders of the *NewPeople* from the

early years of the Center. Molly was joined by Charlie McCollester, Ken Joseph, Ros Maholland, Mark Dixon, and Pat Fenton.

You may have heard that Pat Fenton passed away over Easter weekend. We were honored to have his presence and insight at the first and second planning meetings, where he encouraged consideration of spiritual lessons revealed by Thomas Merton's life and words. Pat also spoke thoughtfully about the Merton Center's legacy of work against militarism and was eager to see the Center evolve into greater cultural relevance in the future. We will miss his voice and endeavor to carry his suggestions thoughtfully into the Anniversary planning process.

The second and third planning meetings brought in a few additional voices including Rosemary Trump and Bette McDevitt. Throughout all the meetings, discussions were lively, as participants reflected about the Center's priorities and actions over

decades of activism. These reflections informed additional conversations about the "next 50 years of activism" and how the anniversary can launch the Center into a new age and better serve the needs of activists in the future. Topics of spirituality, climate change, economic injustice, militarism, refugees, racism, worker solidarity, and "beloved community" emerged in wide-ranging discussions. Ideas for celebratory activities went well beyond a single 50th anniversary event, including (but not limited to):

An anthology of TMC-themed essays submitted by community members

- A collection of historical TMC photos
- A historical video compilation
- A listening forum to amplify diverse community voices
- A poetry reading
- A play or dramatic performance
- A lecture series

- TMC-inspired artwork

- Musical performances (Mike Stout plans to write a special song!)

Discussion also touched on ideas for fundraising to support these initiatives. Furthermore, on October 21, 2019, the Merton Center board of directors approved the allocation of \$10,000 to "fund activities to celebrate the 50th Anniversary." (Source: TMC Board Meeting minutes from October 21, 2019)

We are actively looking for more community members to participate in this exciting planning process! If you have ideas that you would like to be considered for the Anniversary, we welcome your contributions. Please contact Mark Dixon as indicated above..

Mark Dixon is a local filmmaker, activist, and Thomas Merton Center board member.

REMEMBERING PAT FENTON

At the same time, he had a deeply nurtured faith and spirituality that was treasured as a gift and never an obligation.

Pat was a good and loyal friend who always had my back and was very empathetic in tough situations. He had integrity and was not afraid to disagree. I can see him with a tilt of his head listening, brows slightly furrowed, asking care-filled questions. His wit and humor were infectious. His eyes twinkled when he let go of a hearty laugh. That great laugh is one of my favorite and most dominant memories of Pat. It rings in my heart. I miss you, my brother. -- **Fr. Jack O'Malley**

If there is one word which comes to mind when I think of Pat, it is the word gentle. As a gentle person, he was about the nearest we come to the incarnation of a non-violent human being. This seemed to mark his whole life. Then I think of his intense commitment to racial justice and the

struggle against racial injustice. His preferences in where he worked and ministered showed his commitment to the poor, the oppressed and those discriminated against in our society. And then there was his strong commitment to peace, non-violence and resistance to all wars, especially nuclear war. His refusal to pay taxes for war and war-making had a great impact on all those who resist the military-industrial-educational complex. May we all have the strength and courage to carry on the work that Pat gave his life to. -- **Michael Drohan**

Ed and I first met Pat in 1985 when he was pastor of St. Joseph's in Manchester. We had moved to Pittsburgh the year before and were just becoming acquainted with the TMC and the Pittsburgh community of activists. We were attending a baptism at St. Joseph's when Ed leaned over and whispered to me: "That man in front looks just like Cesar Chavez!" Then he said the same

thing to a woman sitting next to him, who said, "Well, that's because it is Cesar Chavez." So, later on we found out that Pat and Cesar were longtime friends through their social justice actions and we were privileged to be introduced to these two compassionate and courageous men at the same time. -- **Pat Fenton and the founder of the United Farmworkers Union. -- Donna Brett**

I knew and worked with Pat for more than 40 years and it was always a pleasure to work hand-in-hand with him. Pat had many wonderful qualities. Two that stand out for me were his faithfulness and perseverance. I saw these qualities most of all when he was working on challenging issues. One example is the work he did with Wood Street Commons as a staff person with Action Housing. He spent many hours bringing the facility into compliance, helping to find funding for the programs there, and finally making it stand on its own several months before he passed away. This

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same determination and faithfulness could also be found as a board member for several non-profit agencies that were going through difficult times. He could have found reasons to leave the boards or not renew his term; but he hung in there with them always believing that the challenges could be met and that the agencies could once again be viable. I consider myself blessed to have known Pat. -- **Fred Just**

We at the Thomas Merton Center owe a great debt of gratitude to Pat for his many years of dedicated and valued service on our board of directors for several terms through the years, most notably as treasurer over the past decade. At the time of his unexpected passing, Pat was serving on the Building Committee and the Planning Committee for the Merton Center's upcoming 50th anniversary to be commemorated in 2022. He leaves an inspiring legacy to all those who follow him.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

JUST HARVEST: ADDRESSING WORSENING HUNGER AND HARDSHIP

Shortly after Gov. Wolf gave the order to close nonessential businesses to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in PA, it was estimated that nearly half of the 1.3 million workers in the Pittsburgh region would be directly impacted. Since then, record numbers of people have lost income and needed help with food, medical care, and supporting themselves and their families. This will remain true for as long as this crisis continues and well into the economic "recovery."

Just Harvest's mission is more critical than ever: ensuring public assistance programs are accessible and supportive to the people who need them, and that government policy adequately responds to hunger and hardship. Low-income households have been devastated by both the pandemic and its economic impact. People of color comprise a hugely disproportionate share of these households under the burden of systemic racism.

In response to the current crisis and the longstanding inequities it has laid bare, Just Harvest is doubling down on our efforts to individually help those in need while addressing the systemic root causes of their distress. Our staff started working remotely when Gov. Wolf ordered business closures, but we immediately ramped up our direct assistance work on SNAP/food stamps, Medicaid, and TANF/cash assistance applications as well as case advocacy and eligibility screenings. With unemployment soaring, the calls we've been receiving for help accessing

these programs have increased significantly. We're helping more people – families, seniors, people with disabilities, and displaced workers -- access public benefits than we've helped in years. While millions wait for unemployment compensation, we are also working to raise awareness about other cash assistance programs, like TANF Diversion, that can help households with children. And we've provided people with the info they need, and phone assistance where possible, to file their taxes by the new July 15 deadline so they can maximize their tax refund and their stimulus payment.

Meanwhile, we are working in numerous coalitions to advocate for public policies that prioritize the well-being of those hit hardest by this pandemic. After years of disinvestment, elected officials are now trying to weave the shredded tatters of public assistance programs into an adequate safety net for tens of millions of people. Not surprisingly, we're seeing too many people fall through. So we're advocating to change rules that would increase access to public assistance programs but also improve the way they're operating, while promoting the broader government policies and investments that will protect people in the future. This means calling on Congress to increase SNAP benefits for all eligible households to help put food on people's tables and dollars into the economy. It also means demanding they remove

SNAP's unnecessary administrative barriers and work requirements for all populations going hungry – be they the unhoused, college students, or gig workers. (And then working with fellow advocates to do the same for key medical, housing, and cash assistance programs.)

The more than 1.7 million Pennsylvanians receiving food stamps must be able to use them safely. So we have been working to address the severe lack of online and mobile food purchasing options for SNAP benefit cards. Federal SNAP policy and funding, state administration, retailer and farmers market capacity, internet access, and technology all must be addressed to protect those shoppers from unnecessary exposure to the virus.

Similarly, a moratorium on evictions won't stop the rent eventually being due. Paid sick days aren't helpful if it will be months before you can take one, and at a non-living wage. And it's immoral to deem some workers "essential" but not give them the essential protections that will allow them to survive. Too many government officials view these as complex problems that require multiple layers of solutions so that capitalism isn't halted by human needs.

But the overarching problem is simple. Due to decades of growing wealth inequality and stagnant wages, nearly half of our population wasn't prepared for a common emergency, much less

BY EMILY CLEETH

a historic disaster. Worse, leaders in the White House, Congress, and Pennsylvania's General Assembly are still inclined to put corporate profits before the public interest in their response. They continue to push aside the most vulnerable people, delivering the bulk of government relief assistance to those who need it least.

Prior to the pandemic, government policy didn't prevent or end destitution, much less ensure adequate nutrition and a decent standard of living for all. Now, far more aggressive measures are needed at the federal, state, and local level to protect those who were already struggling before the virus hit, and the ones newly plunged into hardship. We've been supporting dozens of such measures put forward through efforts like the Poor People's Campaign, the People's Bailout, We the People PA, and the Pittsburgh Workers Organizing Table.

We hope this disaster is also an opportunity -- for us all to see much more of what we have in common than what divides us. In doing so, we can together forge new systems and rules, grounded in our shared values, to make this commonwealth and our nation what we all deserve them to be.

To get help or get involved, go to www.justharvest.org/covid-19.

Emily Cleeth is the Communications Coordinator for Just Harvest.

CLIMATE, AIR POLLUTION, AND THE GREEN NEW DEAL

The Green New Deal replaces the threadbare trope of “jobs versus environment” with a sustainable strategy for jobs and the environment. Right now, before COVID-19, self isolation, and a negative trading price on barrels of oil, we suffer in Allegheny County from a distorted and unbalanced marketplace that does place profits and health in opposition. Air pollution in Pittsburgh is an old story that remains current and urgent, along with climate pollution consequences. We can help lead the world out of the Carboniferous Pennsylvanian period into a post-carbon future with far lower pollution, a stable climate, and resiliency against boom-and-bust market shocks.

Our air is literally killing us, though it is important to note that Pittsburgh is not unique and other parts of the developing world have it far worse. Fine particles (smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter, PM2.5) are uniquely lethal; they are small enough to evade the defenses of our upper airways and to deposit in the air sacs deep in our lungs (the sacs that are ravaged by COVID-19). There they deliver concentrated doses of toxics; the lung responds with inflammation; and our risk of heart attack, stroke, and cancer rises. The current U.S. National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS), set under the Clean Air Act, is an annual average of 12 micrograms of PM2.5 per cubic

meter of air. Most of Pittsburgh is just in compliance with that standard; however, the best current health-effects research shows that the risk of dying from that level of exposure rises by about 1.5%. About 14,000 people die in our county every year, so this means more than 200 people die in our county from that pollution. Other estimates are higher, but even this level is a calamity. Far from protecting public health, as the EPA is required to do when it establishes a NAAQS, the current standard tolerates about 100,000 deaths per year across the U.S., and a far greater amount of affliction and lowered productivity.

At the time of publication, over 150 people have perished this year in our county from COVID-19. Typically, 80 or so are murdered, and 80 or so die in car crashes. Death by breathing comes close to all of those combined. We have done a lot since Earth Day 1970 and Pittsburgh as “Hell with the lid off,” largely because of the Clean Air Act. Cars are almost unrecognizably cleaner than they were before catalytic converters and relatively efficient engines were required – innovations inspired and forced by the Clean Air Act, and met impressively (with step-by-step protestation) by the auto industry. Acid rain emissions from un-scrubbed coal-fired power plants have also dropped dramatically, first because of mandated scrubbers and more recently as coal has begun to

lose its market grip. Without those successes, many more of us – 500 or more annually – would also be dying by breathing each year.

The cost of air pollution is obvious and immediate; it kills us here and now. When environmental economists put a price on those deaths, it comes to about \$2 billion per year, here in Allegheny County. Climate pollution (especially carbon dioxide emission from fossil-fuel combustion) also costs us dearly; but it is far harder to calculate that cost, here and now. The costs are spread around the world, and they persist into the distant future. It takes about 100,000 years for the atmosphere-ocean system to recover from the effects of emitting CO₂ now. That is forever in any human context. The “easy” (fairly local and fairly immediate) costs of climate change come to about \$50 per metric ton of CO₂ emissions – the total costs are far higher, perhaps \$400 per ton or more. To put that in context, burning a barrel of oil produces about ¼ ton of CO₂, so the climate damages of that barrel of oil are about \$100. Put another way, \$1 per ton is \$0.01 per gallon at the pump, so \$400 per ton is \$4 per gal. The swings in crude oil and gasoline prices seem mild in comparison.

Regardless of those climate costs, when we stop the CO₂ emissions by decarbonizing our energy system, as we must, we will slash the emissions

and formation of PM2.5 by about a factor of 4. (Some of the PM2.5 will remain because it comes not from fossil-fuel combustion, but from other sources such as emissions from cooking food and from trees.) Regardless of those climate costs, the cost of breathing will also plummet, and we will save perhaps 150 lives every year, here and now. How do we do that? We live close to our work. We bike. We ride electric trains and buses, we drive electric cars, and we generate that electricity first and foremost with wind and solar power. Many of these we can do now, other parts will require infrastructure investments and innovation (for example long-range power transmission to outdistance the weather variability of wind and sunshine). By recognizing the huge pollution and climate costs of business as usual, we will provide huge incentives for the innovations we need to fully realize the Green New Deal.

Neil M. Donahue is the Thomas Lord University Professor of Chemistry at Carnegie Mellon University. He directs the Steinbrenner Institute for Environmental Education and Research and is a fellow of the American Association for Aerosol Research and the American Geophysical Union, as well as one of the world's most highly cited Geoscientists. He is a Pittsburgh native.

THE US'S CONTINUED PERSECUTION OF VENEZUELA

The other day, I heard a fairly lengthy report on NPR about the struggles of Venezuela in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. Incredibly, the word “sanctions” was not mentioned once in this broadcast. I say “incredibly” because US sanctions against Venezuela have been hampering that country’s fight against disease and preventable death for years. Yet, the compliant US media seems to take great pains to conceal this reality.

According to a report put out by the Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) and co-authored by economists Mark Weisbrot and Jeffrey Sachs, more than 40,000 Venezuelans were killed by US sanctions in one year alone, 2017-2018, and they estimated that an even larger number of Venezuelans would die as the result of a new and harsher round of sanctions imposed at the beginning of 2019. Weisbrot and Sachs based these numbers upon the estimate of Venezuelans needing certain life-saving drugs (e.g., HIV medications, insulin, chemotherapy drugs) which Venezuela has been denied by US sanctions. If anything, their estimates were quite conservative. For his part, former UN Special Rapporteur, Dr. Alfred de Zayas, estimates that around 100,000 Venezuelans have died due to US sanctions.

And now, of course, the sanctions have become even more deadly as the Covid-19 pandemic spreads throughout Latin America. As a good article on *Common Dreams* by Leonardo Flores explains, “[r]egarding coronavirus specifically, the sanctions raise the costs of testing kits and medical supplies, and ban Venezuela’s government from purchasing medical equipment from the U.S. (and from many European countries).”

This is why the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, has called for an end to sanctions on countries like Venezuela in order to allow them the ability to fight the pandemic. As Ms. Bachelet reasonably asserts, “at this crucial time, both for global public health reasons, and to support the rights and lives of millions of people in these countries, sectoral sanctions should be eased or suspended. In a context of global pandemic, impeding medical efforts in one country heightens the risk for all of us.”

But, of course, the US has not heeded such calls and, in fact, has only upped the aggression against Venezuela, recently sending warships to waters near Venezuelan shores on the pretext of fighting drugs. However, as the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) explains, the US

government’s own data belie its claims that Venezuela and President Maduro are trafficking in drugs. Moreover, “former Vice Secretary of the United Nations and Former Executive Director of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime Pino Arlacchi reminded . . . that Venezuela has always been outside the main cocaine trafficking circuits between the world’s main producer and consumer; Colombia and the United States.” And, of course, the fact that Colombia supplies the US with nearly all of its cocaine has not disqualified Colombia from remaining the US’s closest ally in the region.

And so, the US’s naval maneuvers near Venezuela can only be seen for what they truly are – old fashioned, imperialist “gunship diplomacy” aimed at regime change. That this is being carried out during a deadly pandemic only makes it even more truly reprehensible.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that, despite US sanctions, threats and provocations, the Venezuelan government is doing an exemplary job with what it has to fight the current pandemic. Indeed, it is doing much better than its neighbors, and better than the US. Venezuela has had only 345 Covid-19 infections with only 10 deaths, as of May 2. And this is because the Maduro government,

BY DAN KOVALIK

unlike the Trump Administration, acted quickly and decisively to handle the Covid-19 outbreak, declaring a health emergency, prohibiting crowds from gathering and canceling various international flights even before the first case was reported. Then, after the first case was confirmed, the government then moved quickly to close non-essential businesses and to impose a national quarantine which ninety percent of the country has honored, thus saving thousands of lives.

In other words, Venezuela does not need “saving” by the US, as so many government officials and media pundits would have us believe. Rather, Venezuela simply needs the US to stop its economic and military assault upon it, and to allow it to work through its own problems as any sovereign nation has the right to do.

*Daniel Kovalik is the author of *The Plot to Overthrow Venezuela* (2019) and the just-released *No More War: How The West Violates International Law by Using “Humanitarian” Intervention to Advance Economic and Strategic Interests*.*

DEAR MR. DEMCHAK

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT DEMCHAK AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PNC

The April 28 annual shareholders meeting for PNC was held virtually because of the ban on large gatherings created by the pandemic. This was the third PNC shareholders meeting held since the Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign began in Pittsburgh. Some campaign members who are PNC shareholders, and their guests, participated in last year's meeting, voicing the campaign's request that PNC divest of their financial commitment to corporations involved in the manufacture of nuclear weapons, and adopt 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. At that time, President Demchak refused and the public comment period ended.

Since then, the Stop Banking the Bomb (SBTB) campaign has continued its monthly pickets at PNC's downtown headquarters and monthly pickets at retail banks throughout the area. (Over the past few months, the pickets have been indefinitely suspended due to guidelines for public gatherings.) Some SSBT campaign supporters have closed their accounts, explaining to PNC officials the reason for their decisions to change banks based on current PNC policy to invest in and make loans to nuclear weapons

producers. When safe practices allow, pickets will resume. Those interested in exploring the closing of their PNC account(s) are encouraged to contact the Campaign through the Thomas Merton Center.

This year, only one SSBT campaign member was successful in gaining entrance to the virtual meeting and he reported there was no opportunity for comments or questions. So instead the campaign PNC shareholders have issued an open letter to President Demchak and the PNC Board of Directors.

Dear Mr. Demchak and PNC Board of Directors:

We, members of the Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign and PNC shareholders, had a few questions to ask at today's PNC annual shareholders meeting, but there seems to have been no opportunity within the 2020 meeting for them.

We are making our statement with questions public today, but wanted to communicate them to you directly.

Statement for PNC Share-holders Meeting

Humanity, at this crucial moment in history, stands in grave peril as we are threatened with extinction from

the possible use of nuclear weapons, worsening climate change and now the COVID-19 virus. In the last year the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* has set the Doomsday Clock to 100 seconds to midnight, down from 2 minutes where it stood last year.

Nevertheless, the figures that we have been able to ascertain assert that PNC has \$1,154,000,000 invested and made available in loans to companies which are engaged in the production and sale of nuclear weapons.

Arising from this we, as share-holders, have three questions:

1. Are our figures on PNC's investments and loans in weapons of mass destruction entities accurate, and if not, how much have we invested in and loaned to these weapons companies?

2. In this moment of crisis for humanity and the planet, we ask if the Directors have made any progress in moving towards disinvestment in these weapons of mass destruction since our last share-holding meeting, in which our campaign, Stop Banking the Bomb, implored PNC to divest completely from investing in and making loans for nuclear weapons and adopt 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?

3. Further, is it not more appropriate for PNC to invest and make loans to health-saving and promoting ventures such as COVID-19 vaccines and renewable sources of energy that preserve the well-being of the planet and the human race?

We hope you will respond to these serious questions.

In other areas of your work, we stand in solidarity with you as you navigate the way through these economically uncertain times. We realize how important the roles of banks are both in terms of your services and as a very large employer affecting the lives of many of our neighbors here in Pittsburgh and the entire PNC footprint.

Sincerely,

PNC Shareholders and Members of the Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign

Peter Deutsch, Michael Drohan, David Hughes, Elizabeth McDevitt, Joyce Rothermel, Rev. Bernard Survil, and the Thomas Merton Center

Joyce Rothermel is a member of the coordinating team of the Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign.

Poor People's Campaign

A NATIONAL CALL for MORAL REVIVAL

MASS POOR PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY & MORAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON IS GOING DIGITAL

On June 20th, we will hold the largest digital and social media gathering of poor and low wealth people, moral and religious leaders, advocates, and people of conscience in this nation's history. A global pandemic is exposing even more the already existing crisis of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and militarism, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. On June 20, the 140 million poor and low-wealth people across this nation will be heard!

IN THE MIDST OF CHANGING TIMES, OUR MOVEMENT CONTINUES...

...because we won't be silent anymore.

...because everybody has a right to live.

...because poor and low wealth people will suffer most in this crisis.

...because our demands must remain front and center in this critical election year.



The movement continues! On 6/20, the #PoorPeoplesCampaign goes digital with a mass online gathering to demand that 140 million poor & low-income people across the nation are heard. Our demands must be front & center in this critical election year! Join us: June2020.org!

REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH

KAIRUS
THE CENTER FOR
RELIGIONS, RIGHTS,
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Twitter: @UniteThePoor

Facebook: @anewppc

Website: poorpeoplescampaign.org



STEPS TOWARDS ACTIVISM

BREAD FOR THE WORLD WORKSHOP WITH REV. EUGENE CHO

This year's annual Bread for the World Advocacy Workshop, originally scheduled for April 19, was postponed due to the pandemic's guidelines restricting public gatherings in Pittsburgh. The delay has opened up an opportunity to invite Rev. Eugene Cho to be with us for our first virtual workshop (a Zoom event) on Saturday, May 30 from 1:30 – 3 PM. Rev. Cho, the new president-elect of Bread for the World, will introduce himself to the SW PA Bread Team and all workshop attendees and provide an update on the current efforts of Bread for the World, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and how our Pittsburgh Bread Team and network of congregations can help. This year's Bread for the World focus is twofold: global nutrition for mothers and young children and domestic child nutrition programs reauthorization.

Other speakers at this year's workshop will be Ann Sanders from Just Harvest, who will provide details on the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, Sam Applefield from the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, who will provide an overview of the

Pittsburgh Food Policy Council's Strategic Plan, and Linda Ambroso, who will provide tips for effective congressional office visits.

Participants will receive information about Bread's annual Lobby Day on June 9, which will be virtual this year.

Those interested in participating in the May 30 advocacy workshop are invited to register at [bread2020.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). Please extend the invitation to other interested members of your own congregations.

What Is Bread for the World?

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. By changing policies, programs, and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist, we provide help and opportunity far beyond the communities where we live. We can end hunger in our time. Everyone, including our government, must do their part. With the stroke of a pen, policies are made that redirect millions of dollars and affect millions of lives. By making our voices heard in

Congress, we make our nation's laws more fair and compassionate to people in need.

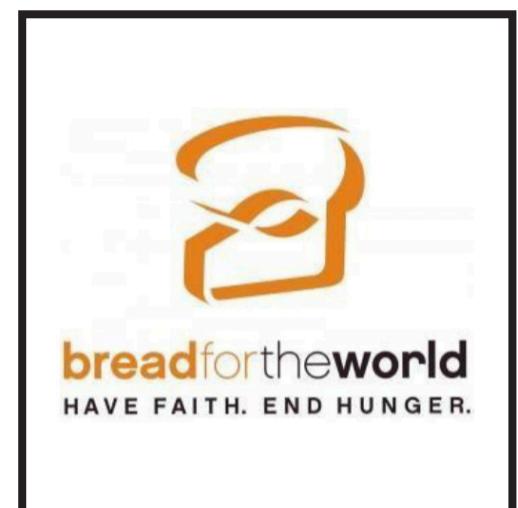
Bread for the World members write personal letters and emails and meet with our members of Congress. Working through our churches, campuses, and other organizations, we engage more people in advocacy. Each year, Bread for the World invites churches across the country to take up a nationwide Offering of Letters to Congress on an issue that is important to hungry and poor people. As a non-profit, Bread for the World works in a bipartisan way. Our network of thousands of individual members, churches, and denominations ensures Bread's presence in all U.S. congressional districts. Together, we build the political commitment needed to overcome hunger and poverty.

The SW PA Bread for the World Team is a regional Bread for the World Chapter. The Bread Team meets periodically at Christian Associates of SW PA located at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. We host an annual Bread for the World Workshop

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

in the spring and promote the annual offering of letters in area Christian Churches and Congregations, meet with the US Senators and Representatives in their local offices, and attend the annual Bread for the World Lobby Day in early June.

Joyce Rothermel serves as co-chair of the SW PA Bread for the World Team and is a current board member of Bread for the World.



KINGS BAY PLOWSHARES 7 VIEWED FROM CATHOLIC PITTSBURGH

BY BERNIE SURVIL

The Kings Bay Plowshares 7 (KBP7) are due to be sentenced over the course of three sessions on June 8, 29, and 30, 2020. Most likely, they will be sentenced to serve several years for their felony conviction as they opposed the existence of Trident Sub nukes. This is what Molly Rush and others began as the King of Prussia Plowshares in 1980 has been replicated over 100 times. Parallel to what the apostles argued in defense of their witnessing in the Jerusalem temple, The Seven argued they were exercising the right described in the "Freedom of Religion Restoration Act" of 1993.

Further, they explicitly based their defense on Catholic theology. Witnesses Bishop Joseph Kopacz of Jackson, MS and Prof. Jeannine Hill Fletcher, Theology Department, Fordham University, both testified before the court to the orthodoxy of the defendants' position. The defendants' use of the theological term "sacramentality" of the action resonates with the universal church's understanding: A sacrament is a symbolic rite – an outward sign – in the Christian religion, in which an ordinary individual can make a personal connection with God.

The Seven's entry into the Trident Base's perimeter, and then defacing the memorial identifying the Base, constituted a sacrament, bringing God's condemnation down upon the base. In effect, The Seven were smashing the idol which nuclear weapons were perceived to be. An idol is that which proposes to deliver what it cannot deliver. Nuclear Weapons

cannot provide security. A road-side poster north of Bradford, PA on Route 219 reads: "Everyone needs a Savior." Worshippers of Nukes consider the Tridents their savior. The court agreed when it decided that the U.S. government has an overriding obligation to SAVE the nation by maintaining in readiness the Trident Fleet. The court saw Trident as an appropriate means, despite the defendants' belief and behavior to the contrary.

The Seven are all professing Catholics, as was their lead defense attorney, Bill Quigley of Loyola School of Law. As have been MOST of Plowshare action perpetrators. The members of the jury were most likely Christians but not Catholic. There is a single Catholic parish in Brunswick, GA where the Federal Courthouse is located, but numerous, large Christian Churches. The jurors most likely were not aware that all recent Popes have said what Saint John XXIII said in his 1963 document "Pacem in Terris," that nuclear weapons must be abolished.

Pope Francis upped the ante by asserting: The very possession of nuclear weapons is unacceptable. If not the Brunswick GA jurors, should not one expect Pittsburgh Catholics to be aware that even possession of nukes is unacceptable?

Despite the fact that the KBP7 emerged from a solid Catholic tradition regarding nuclear weapons, Southwestern Pennsylvania Catholic leadership and faithful hardly consider the KBP7 witness parallel to that of the apostles saying to the Jewish religious establishment: "We

must obey God before men." (Acts of the Apostles). Otherwise, the current pickets of PNC Bank Headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh should have attracted Catholics by the thousands, besting the number of fans filling PNC Park for a big game. As Joyce Rothermel has reminded us, writing in the *NewPeople* about Stop Banking the Bomb, the DoomsDay Clock is at its closest to midnight as it has ever been. It's even closer than when Nike missile bases surrounded Pittsburgh in the 1960's to protect the steel industry from a Russian nuclear attack.

Let me suggest that readers take on this mission: WAKE UP CATHOLIC PITTSBURGH. I base it on recent conversations I've had with Catholic Peace activists nationally. Typical are the Dallas people who have been trying to simply sit down with the bishop – a Pittsburgh native -- or his assistant to organize Dallas Catholics to oppose nukes. The bishop's office is unwilling to set up such a meeting. Is that conceivable?

Try it yourselves. No need to be a Catholic yourself. Just arm yourself with papal statements about abolishing nukes. Two by two, arrange to sit down with the pastor, a parish priest, a parish deacon to see what this or that parish can do to help Pope Francis abolish nukes. Be courageous. Start with the pastor of St. Kilian, Cranberry Township or Saints John and Paul, Franklin Park. If you prefer the South Hills, there's St. Bernard's, Mount Lebanon, St. Louise de Marillac, Upper St Clair or St. Benedict the Abbot, McMurray. St.

John Fisher, Churchill has a pastor with a Ph.D. Try him.

Phillip Berrigan's widow, Liz McAllister, age 79, is one of the KBP7. Phil once remarked: It's not where your head or your heart are, but where your ass is that matters. Phil put his body on the line time and again. He spent years in prison for protesting nukes. To participate in WAKE UP CATHOLIC PITTSBURGH would at most mean you'd be subjected to rejection when you try to put your behind on a chair in a room with a Pittsburgh Catholic leader, such as a priest or deacon.

Fr. Bernard Survil, bsurvil@uscatholicpriests.us Ph: 724-523-0291 30 April, 2020

Background and updates about the KBP7: KingsBayPlowshares7.org/

Fr. Survil attended these Plowshares trials: Willow Grove, Philadelphia, "Here they are Plowshares," Bismarck, ND; KBP7, Brunswick, GA, in addition to visiting Molly Rush & Sr. Anne Montgomery, detained in Berks County jail, fresh from perpetrating the Sept, 1980 King of Prussia action damaging nuclear missile nose cones. He and Molly attended the 30th Anniversary of that at Oak Ridge, TN, site of the Y-12 Nuclear Complex.

NEWPEOPLE READER SURVEY

1. Name *

2. Phone

3. Email

4. How often do you read the NewPeople? *

Mark only one oval.

- Every issue
- More than five times a year
- Less than five times a year
- Almost never

8. What has been the most valuable to you about the NewPeople? (Choose one) *

Mark only one oval.

- Info on Upcoming events
- Reporting on recent events in local Pittsburgh campaigns and justice issues
- Reporting on recent events in places outside of the Pittsburgh region
- Analysis of global issues
- Amplifying the work that you're personally involved in
- Other: _____

9. What do you most want to see more of in the NewPeople? (Choose one) *

Mark only one oval.

- Info on Upcoming events
- Reporting on recent events in local Pittsburgh campaigns and justice issues
- Reporting on recent events in places outside of the Pittsburgh region
- Analysis of global issues
- Amplifying the work that you're personally involved in
- Other: _____

10. What topics/issues would you like to see included more in the NewPeople?

5. When you read the NewPeople, how much of the paper do you read? *

Mark only one oval.

- The entire newspaper
- More than half the articles
- Less than half the articles
- Other: _____

6. The NewPeople could have more in depth content if it was published less often would be less timely with current events. How often should we publish? *

Mark only one oval.

- Monthly
- Every other month
- Quarterly

7. Would you like to volunteer with the NewPeople? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes, writing
- Yes, editing
- Yes, photography
- Yes, art/drawing
- Yes, website updates/technology

11. In addition to articles, what kinds of content would you like to see more of? (check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- Poetry
- Photography
- Crosswords, word search other puzzles
- Art, comics, cartoons
- DIY instructions

Other: _____

HELLO NEWPEOPLE READERS!

TAKE OUR READERSHIP SURVEY! WHEN YOU'RE DONE, MAIL THEM TO:

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ATTN: NEWPEOPLE NEWSPAPER
5129 PENN AVE
PITTSBURGH, PA 15224**

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AND, THANKS!

#SAYTHEIRNAME

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 DANTE PARKER - MICHELLE CUSSEAX - LAQUAN MCDONALD
 TANISHA ANDERSON - AKAI GURLEY - TAMIR RICE - RUMAIN BRISBON
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 NATASHA MCKENNA - TONY ROBINSON - ANTHONY HILL - MYA HALL
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 ALEXIA CHRISTIAN - BRENDON GLENN - VICTOR MANUEL LAROSA
 JONATHAN SANDERS - FREDDIE BLUE - JOSEPH MANN
 SALVADO ELLSWOOD - SANDRA BLAND - ALBERT JOSEPH DAVIS
 DARRIUS STEWART - BILLY RAY DAVIS - SAMUEL DUBOSE
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 ALONZO SMITH - TYREE CRAWFORD - INDIA KAGER - LA'VANTE BIGGS
 MICHAEL LEE MARSHALL - JAMAR CLARK - RICHARD PERKINS
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THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN: A NATIONAL CALL
 FOR MORAL REVIVAL WILL HOLD A VIRTUAL MARCH
 ON WASHINGTON, DC ON JUNE 20. IT PLANS TO BE THE
 LARGEST ON-LINE GATHERING OF POOR AND IMPACTED
 PEOPLE, AND PEOPLE OF CONSCIENCE IN THIS
 NATION'S HISTORY. TO LEARN MORE AND REGISTER,
 VISIT WWW.JUNE2020.ORG.

CONTACT GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS
 FOR UPDATED MEETING DATES AND TIMES

REGULAR MEETINGS

Sundays:

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

Vote Allegheny

Every Sunday 4 PM. Mineo's Pizza 2128 Murray
 Ave, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15217. Contact
 RBandes@c9n.com

Mondays:

SW Healthcare 4 All PA

First Mondays, 7:00. Crazy Mocha, 2100 Murray
 Ave, Squirrel Hill 15217. Contact bmason@gmail.com

Association of Pittsburgh Priests

2nd Monday, 7-9 pm. Prince of Peace Center, 81
 South 13th St., Southside, Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILP)

2nd Monday, 7:00-9:00 PM. Thomas Merton Center, 5129 Penn Ave., Garfield 15224

Amnesty International #39

2nd Wednesday, 7-9 pm. First Unitarian Church, Morewood Ave. 15213

Tuesdays:

Green Party

1st Tuesdays, 6 pm. Panera Bread, 3401 Blvd of the Allies, Oakland 15213. Contact: info@alleghenygreens.org; 412-532-9194

Coalition Against Violence/BPEP

Third Tuesdays, Noon. BPEP Office, Freedom Unlimited. 2201 Wylie Ave, Hill District 15219 412-212-8775; cav.pgh@gmail.com

Weekly Positive Initiative to Reinforce Change (PIRC) Support Group

For re-entrants and their supporters. All are welcome, no need to RSVP. Tuesdays, 7:00-8:00 pm. New Hope/ UM Church, 112 W North Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Wednesdays:

Amnesty International #39

2nd Wednesdays, 7-9 pm
 First Unitarian Church, 605 Morewood Ave, Shadyside, 15212.

Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

1st Wednesdays, 7-8 pm. First Unitarian church, Ellsworth & Morewood Avenues, Shadyside

Pittsburghers for Public Transit

Second Wednesday. Social hour 6 pm to 7 pm, meeting 7 pm to 8:30 pm. 1 Smithfield St Pittsburgh PA 15222

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

Black Political Empowerment Project

Planning Council Meeting. 2nd Thursdays, 6 pm B-PEP Office, Freedom Unlimited. 2201 Wylie Ave, Hill District 15219. 412-212-8775; bpepweb@gmail.com

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. 5119 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

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

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

The NewPeople is invested in fostering a conversation around topics that affect communities and vulnerable groups both locally and globally. We encourage contributions from the public that will generate conversation and we invite perspectives that are not widely considered. Opinions that are expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Thomas Merton Center or its Editorial Collective.

BECOME A MEMBER

\$50 Individual Membership

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\$ _____

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\$75 Organization (below 25 members)

\$125 Organization (above 25 members)

I would like to receive the weekly activist Eblast

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Please complete and return to TMC. Thank you!

Name(s):

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Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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Mail to TMC, 5129 Penn Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Call 412-361-3022 for more information, or visit:

www.ThomasMertonCenter.org

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

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-donate or fill out this form, cut out, and mail in.

Select your membership level:

\$15 Low Income Membership

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