Speakers from International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons to speak in KC area April 28

By Lu Mountenay

It’s a big deal! Two speakers from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons—Matthew Bolton, PhD, and Emily Welty, PhD—will be in the KC area April 28 to emphasize a humanitarian approach to the international concern about nuclear weapons.

In a breakthrough on Oct. 27, 2016, the United Nations adopted a resolution to begin negotiations on a treaty to outlaw nuclear weapons. Bolton and Welty spoke at the UN in support, representing non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Fast forward: ICAN wins the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize (woo-hoo!), with the Nobel Committee praising ICAN as “the leading civil society actor in the endeavor to achieve a prohibition of nuclear weapons under international law.” Hmmm … right in sync with the PeaceWorks vision of “a world … without war and its weapons.”

Bolton, associate chair of political science at Pace University in New York, is a former resident of Independence, where his parents are active in the peace community. He is an expert on multilateral disarmament policy-making. The two countries of which he is a citizen, the US and the UK, are being “intransigent and counterproductive, holding up progress,” says Bolton, suggesting they are providing diplomatic cover for nuclear states.

“This is the moment,” Bolton says, “for anyone who wants to protest the proliferation of nuclear weapons—this is your chance to support a cause with significant impact. It’s incredibly exciting.” Bolton adds that by this time next year, he and his wife, Dr. Emily Welty, hope we will have a ban on nuclear weapons.

Welty, vice moderator of the World Council of Churches Commission on International Affairs,
was. The Vietnam War opened my eyes to the systemic violence and militarism of our society. The civil rights movement revealed our racism and economic oppression. A new kind of hero came on the scene, one who affirmed love as stronger than hate, nonviolence as more powerful than force. This was no Lone Ranger; this was a community organizer.

Fifty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. saw clearly, and called out, the evil triad that still confronts us today. “We must see now that the evils of racism, economic exploitation, and militarism are all tied together,” he said. “You can’t really get rid of one without getting rid of the others. ... The whole structure of American life must be changed.”

This vision of a fundamentally restructured America was the picture he painted in his iconic “I Have a Dream” address on the Washington Mall. This vision of a fundamentally restructured America was what took him to Memphis, and to his death, in solidarity with sanitation workers. And this vision of a fundamentally restructured America is what he planned for a Poor People’s March on Washington, DC, but never saw realized.

But, you know, dreamers and their dreams never truly die, as long as someone takes up the torch. How sad, that Dr. King’s diagnosis of our society’s ills in 1967 is still current today! Yet how hopeful that his prescription has not become outdated in those 50 years!

The Poor Peoples’ Campaign being resurrected here and across the nation is a rebirth of Dr. King’s dream, expanded to include care for the environment—in recognition that the US military is the largest single user of oil, and a leading contributor to global warming.

A word about the Lone Ranger’s silver bullets: On TV, the Lone Ranger says he uses silver bullets as a symbol of justice, but more important, silver bullets serve to remind the Ranger of just how heavy a price firing a gun can be.

Peacemakers recognize how heavy that price is, and disarm themselves willingly, beginning with a disarmed heart. They also recognize “there are no silver bullets,” no simple guaranteed solutions for difficult problems. The civil rights movement wasn’t an overnight success. The Poor Peoples’ Campaign will surely be no different.

Let’s run the race with patience, encouraging each other, upholding one another in times of discouragement. And let us be ever mindful of the words of Dr. King: “Hope is the final refusal to give up.”

—Jim Hannah serves on the PeaceWorks-KC Board.

See free film urging media to present Palestinian views

Citizens for Justice in the Middle East, a KC-area organization that advocates justice and equal rights for all people in Palestine-Israel, will show the free film “The Occupation of the American Mind” on May 3, Thursday, at 6:15 pm.

The film documents the unbalanced presentation of the Israel-Palestine conflict in US media in favor of Israel and calls for balanced reporting. CJME hopes to incorporate both Palestinian and Jewish voices in a panel discussion following the film at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 4501 Walnut, KC MO.
March for Our Lives

An estimated 7,000 people gathered in Theis Park, KC, MO, to protest gun violence March 24, the day survivors of the Parkland, FL, shooting of 17 high school students and adults marched on Washington. The KC crowd at the March for Our Lives rallied and then marched to the heart of the Plaza. Speaking to the throng at the rally, Henry Stoever, chair of the PeaceWorks Board, said, “I ask you to pledge to work to contact every voter, every neighbor, every friend about gun violence.” One of the elder organizers planning the event with the students, he added, “I apologize that my generation has not taken action” to make our schools safe, our public spaces safe. “This is about a basic constitutional right to life and liberty,” Stoever insisted. The crowd, bursting with young people, cheered. Many speakers at the event were teens. Among them, Danielle Foster of Lincoln College Preparatory Academy was quoted by The Kansas City Star as saying, “We teens are fed up with all the violence.” Mary Barron, communications director for the march, said she was “as proud as I possibly could be” of all the students who spoke to reporters for the Star, the Shawnee Mission Post, four TV stations, and three radio stations.

ICAN speakers in KC

introduced the Statement in Support of the Multilateral Negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Ban in 2017 to the UN General Assembly. The support statement reads in part: “Nuclear weapons are incompatible with the values upheld by our respective faith traditions which are also foundational elements in the development of international law—the right of people to live in security and dignity; the commands of conscience and justice; the duty to protect the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard the planet for current and future generations.”

To hear more of Bolton’s and Welty’s urgent and challenging message, including a Q&A period, come to the Stone Church on Saturday, April 28, across the street from the Peace Temple. If you are an academic, a peace activist, or are concerned about your children’s future, this is an event you won’t want to miss!

—Lu Mountenay is a PeaceWorks Board member.

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From Doomsday Clock to action steps

By Ann Suellentrop

Note: Ann Suellentrop, of the PeaceWorks Board, shared these reflections March 11 during the PeaceWorks Annual Meeting, using points from experts.

It is now 2 minutes to midnight!

This is the Doomsday Clock. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, begun in 1945 by those who helped develop the first atomic weapons, created the clock in 1947. They used the imagery of apocalypse (midnight) and the contemporary idiom of nuclear explosion (countdown to zero) to convey threats to humanity and the planet. This Jan. 25, the bulletin’s scientists moved the minute hand forward to 2 minutes to midnight, as close as it was during the height of the Cold War in 1953. The clock, never closer to midnight, indicates the world’s vulnerability to catastrophe from nukes, climate change, and new technologies.

What hope is there in these dire circumstances?

We are the hope! We are, believe it or not! Us regular folks!

Did you know we all just won the Nobel Peace Prize? On Dec. 10, leaders of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons accepted the prize. ICAN, a network, includes some groups I belong to: Physicians for Social Responsibility, Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, and PeaceWorks! On July 7, 2017, following a decade of advocacy by ICAN and its partners, 122 nations voted to adopt the historic agreement, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It enters into legal force once 50 nations ratify it.

We can take action to push for the Ban Treaty.

Right here in Kansas City, and in St. Louis, nuclear weapons are poisoning this and future generations. A group formed last summer, the Coalition Against Contamination, to address dangers across Missouri. They are dealing with the demolition of the old nuclear bomb parts plant at the Bannister Federal Complex in KC, which used more than 2,400 toxic chemicals since 1949. Many sick and dying former workers from the plant want to alert the surrounding neighborhood to the massive and permanent pollution there. PeaceWorks may join the Poor People’s Campaign in a protest of militarism May 28 (see p. 8).

In the St. Louis area, the first uranium processing was done for the Nagasaki bomb during the Manhattan Project. The radioactive wastes there have caused numerous cancers and other illnesses. One site, the WestLake Landfill, has an underground dump fire approaching the radioactive waste dump. This is the worst eco-disaster in America, according to Erin Brokovich. The EPA proposes removing only about a quarter of the radioactive waste and covering the rest with a concrete cap and not buying out the families who live nearby. We can send comments to the EPA by April 23. Online comments can be submitted at: R7_WestLakeLandfillPublicComments@epa.gov.

Let’s get together and smash that clock forever!

New officers, Board members

Participants in the PeaceWorks-KC Annual Meeting March 11, at Simpson House in KC MO, elected the following officers and members of the Board of Directors: Board Chair Henry Stoever, Board Vice Chair Mary Hladky, Board Treasurer Dave Pack, Board Secretary Sunny Jordan Hamrick, returning Board Member Lu Mountenay, and new Board Members Jenny and Mark Semet. Continuing members of the Board (completing their two-year terms) are Bennette Dibben, Ron Faust, Spencer Graves, Lauren Hall, Jim Hannah, Ann Suellentrop, Leigh Woody, and Joseph Wun. Mary Hladky serves on the Nominating Committee.

Lu Mountenay brandishes her poster. — Photo by Jim Hannah
McDonald’s worker reflects on power—together!

By Bryan Scarcella

Note: Michael Enriquez of Stand Up KC introduced Bryan Scarcella at the PeaceWorks Annual Meeting March 11 and called him “a perfect representation of how broken our economy is.” Scarcella, 32, has had low-wage and fast-food jobs his entire working life. Now a leader in Stand Up KC, he’s striving for $15 an hour minimum wage and a union.

We have to remember how working people get our power. Fifty years ago, speaking to those Memphis sanitation workers on strike, Dr. King said, “We can all get more together than we can apart; we can get more organized together than we can apart.”

Power is the ability to achieve purpose, power is the ability to effect change, and we need power. What is power? Walter Reuther said once that “power is the ability of a labor union like UAW to make the most powerful corporation in the world—General Motors—say yes when it wants to say no.” That’s power.

 attempts to divide us. Because racism hurts black and brown workers, but it also hurts white workers. An injury to one is an injury to all! And no one is free until we’re all free.

My low pay means not having access to health care. It means I haven’t turned on the heat in my apartment for years.

Workers like me have been without these things for too long. But when all workers come together—black, white, and brown, gay and straight, men and women, native-born and immigrant workers—nothing can stop our power to win better for all of us!

Fifty years ago, Dr. King stood on the strike lines in Memphis because he knew workers needed unions to have equal treatment, dignity, and respect on the job. That is as true now as it was then. Today our movements are ready to do whatever it takes to win a union so that all Americans—not just the wealthy and powerful—can have a shot at a decent life.

Together, we WILL make companies say yes when they want to say no!

Contact elected officials
Mayor Sly James: 816-513-3500
City Council: 816-513-1368
President Donald Trump
202-456-1111 comments
202-456-1414 switchboard
Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.): 202-224-6154
Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.): 202-224-5721
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-5th dist., Mo.): 202-225-4535
Rep. Sam Graves (R-6th district, Mo.): 202-225-7041
Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-4th district, Mo.): 202-225-2876
Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.): 202-224-4774
Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.): 202-224-6521
Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-3rd district, Kan.): 202-225-2865

Special thanks to Swall, Wallin

Two former PeaceWorks-KC Board members were honored with certificates of recognition from the Board during the Annual Meeting March 11: Scarlett Swall and Debbie Wallin. Swall resigned recently after coordinating membership since early 2015, boosting the total of PeaceWorks members from about 61 in 2014 to more than 200 now. Wallin was a “volunteer extraordinaire,” said Dave Pack, the Board’s treasurer. He noted Wallin’s contributions since 2010, including financial operations recording, depositing, and acknowledgement of memberships and donations, and UNplaza Art Fair accounting, artist payments, application processing, communications, booth planning, and day-of-fair organizing.
Maurice Copeland receives annual Bebb Award

Maurice Copeland, who worked for 32 years at the Kansas City Plant at Bannister Federal Complex, received the Charles E. Bebb Peace Merit Award from PeaceWorks-KC March 11 at the group’s Annual Meeting. During his last 12 years at the KC Plant, which made parts for nuclear weapons, Copeland supervised the tool and die room and the engineering shop. He retired in 2000, when, he says, he “could no longer work in good conscience” at the plant because he was not allowed to give sufficient precautions to employees working with highly toxic substances. Maurice was and is a friend to countless workers and family members who became sick or died from contaminants at the KC Plant. Accepting his award, Copeland thanked PeaceWorks-KC members who have trespassed at the KC Plant or the new plant, the National Security Campus, to protest production of nuclear weapons. Concerning trespassers’ trips to jail, Copeland said March 11, “You didn’t have to do that! You didn’t have to encompass some of the things we were encountering!”

Cherith Brook Catholic Worker receives Cheatum Award

PeaceWorks’ annual Kris and Lynn Cheatum Community Peace Award went this year to Cherith Brook Catholic Worker, a center of community and compassion in KC MO. During the PeaceWorks Annual Meeting, Joseph Wun, of the PeaceWorks Board and of Jerusalem Farm in KC, paid the following tribute to CBCW and its founders and community members, Jodi and Eric Garbison.

The Cherith Brook Catholic Worker is a community of humans who seek to recover relationship, to live and struggle, in mutual recognition, the works of mercy. Its members are crafters of new creation, of beloved community. As they express at a morning orientation and training for new volunteers, it is not a philanthropic organization. It is not a charity. It is the work of resistance, the work of obedience to the Gospel that calls for radical—root-level, rooted, down in the dirt—hospitality. Three times a week, CBCW hosts friends, many of whom experience that vicious condition of American poverty we term homelessness. At CBCW, guests may shower, find a clean pair of clothes, and share at table a meal, a sit-down meal, a place to rest and to be served. It is a place to see, to know, to believe, as Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, noted, that we know God by the breaking of bread, and we know each other by the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore. Which is to say, we know mercy, we know compassion, we know peace, by the breaking of bread, and know each other by the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore.

So believe and be the community we recognize here today for their ardent example of peace works. Awards can be tricky, recognition risky; Dorothy Day knew this, resisted the notion that she could be termed a saint for her life’s work. For she did not want to be dismissed. Know, then, that today, this moment is not a dismissal. It is, at once, an affirmation and a charge to continued growth and instruction. So here, now, and ever more, may we commend your devotion to the works of mercy, and may you continue to proceed, with humility and humor, in faith, hope, and love.
Garbisons come to trial for resisting arrest and hindering police

By Virginia Davis

On Sept. 21, 2017, Jodi and Eric Garbison of Cherith Brook Catholic Worker, near 12th Street and Benton in KC MO, were involved in an incident with four police officers. The Garbisons were arrested and charged with hindering a police investigation and resisting arrest. On March 2, more than 110 people gathered to support the Garbisons at the KC MO Municipal Court trial. Judge Ardie Bland presided, and Eric and Jodi’s lawyer was Sara Hofeditz Christensen. Over the course of four hours, three officers testified, followed by Eric, son Henri, Jodi, and daughter Diana.

The supporters joined in prayer and song right before the trial, and Jodi said: “Regardless of the outcome, we know the truth. We hope and pray that today’s trial exposes and sheds light on the absurdity of the actions by police—the aggression and violence toward our community this past year and in our neighborhood.

You standing with us makes today bearable for us as a family. Your presence today bears witness to the strength and hope we have for change.”

In the courtroom, Officer Mahoney testified that on the night of Sept. 21, the officers arrived at Cherith Brook to conduct a residence check for a frequent guest there. Eric explained that while this guest received his mail at Cherith Brook, he did not live there. The three officers at the front door prepared to leave. Then Henri arrived home in his truck, pulling into the parking lot at about 9 pm, in the dark.

In court, Henri testified that he saw a figure in dark clothing (soon identified as an officer) cross the path of his truck, coming to the driver’s side window. The officer was pointing a gun and shining a flashlight in his face. Officer Trost’s reasoning for pulling his gun was that “most parties suspected for a controlled substance,” which was true of the person they were looking for that night, “are armed.” However, the Garbisons’ attorney suggested it would have been unreasonable to mistake Henri, an 18-year-old, for a suspect in his 50s.

All witnesses agreed it was at this point that Jodi, seeing a gun pulled on Henri and his arms twisted out his truck window and pinned to the top of his vehicle, came out past the porch. Mahoney said Jodi and Eric became “very agitated and concerned for their son” and “uncooperative.” Mahoney said Henri was detained for trying to hit the officer with his truck when he pulled into the driveway.

Mahoney claimed that when Jodi followed him across the landing to figure out what was happening with her son, she was at an “arm’s distance,” a safety concern to his team. Mahoney grabbed one of her arms and twisted it behind her back, placing her under arrest.

Both Jodi and Eric, who was also arrested, said the police did not give a reason for their arrest despite being asked multiple times. Jodi and Diana told Judge Bland that Mahoney picked Jodi up off the ground and threw her face down into the asparagus before she was cuffed.

In the defense, Attorney Christensen focused on the Garbisons’ compliance, the officers’ incompetence, and the officers’ use of excessive force, given that the suspect was charged with a nonviolent offense.

In giving his decision, Judge Bland emphasized that the police succeeded in doing everything in their power to prevent Jodi and Eric from going down the steps from the landing and hindering the investigation. Bland said the police made it impossible for the Garbisons to hinder the investiga-

Supporters burst into applause at the verdict of the 4-hour trial. —Photo by Jeremy Ruzich

—Virginia Davis, who has participated in life at Cherith Brook since June 2017, will enter law school at UMKC this fall.
Mark your calendar...
Each Saturday, noon-1pm, Rally vs. Gun Violence, 47th St. & Main, KC MO; info at 913-375-0045.

Thurs., April 19, 6-8:30pm, with simple supper and program, Nuclear Weapons and War: Hope for the Future, presented by Ann Suellentrop; at Precious Blood Renewal Center, 2140 Saint Gaspar Way, Liberty, MO; donation encouraged; register by calling 816-415-3745.


Thurs., May 3, 6:15pm, “The Occupation of the American Mind,” film/panel on US media bias re Israeli/Palestinian conflict, at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 4501 Walnut, KC MO, see p. 2.

Week of May 20, DC Days for training/lobbying with the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability in Washington, DC. Visit lawmakers’ offices and discuss issues such as Trump’s Nuclear Posture Review that calls for smaller, more useable nukes and increasing spending for them past 1.2 trillion dollars over the next 30 years. Contact Ann Suellentrop for info, 913-271-7925.

Sat., May 28, PeaceWorks may join Poor People’s Campaign in a protest of militarism. For details, call Henry Stoever at 913-375-0045, and see PeaceWorksKC.org or PeaceWorksKC on Facebook.

Bridging gap between white and black

Debora Demeter, a PeaceWorks member and an African-American, had a bright idea: a reunion among herself and some others who helped integrate KC MO Catholic schools after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. Nick Haines of KCPT took Demeter up on her suggestion. Two white students who were part of the experiment and Alvin Brooks, who supported the student exchange, participated in the reunion. The result: the story “An Exchange of a Lifetime.” Not only did the students help integrate the schools; the experience also revolutionized their own views. “We are examples of white people and black people coming together,” says Demeter in the story. Her memories are not all kind—she tells, for example, of the time she and a new white friend took a walk in Demeter’s black neighborhood and some neighborhood children threw cans at them. To read the story, go to KCPT.org and search for the name Debora Demeter or for An Exchange of a Lifetime.