July 6 speaker to cover ways to turn clock back from midnight, + a few other challenges

Even though, for now, peace has broken out with North Korea, our administration’s trump cards are saber-rattling, nuclear threats, and war games. For a breath of sanity, come to analyst Peter Lumsdaine’s presentation, “Turning the Clock Back from Midnight: How We Can Address the Crisis of 2018 and Renew Eco/Justice/Peace Work for the 21st Century.”

When: Friday, July 6, 7-9 pm
Where: Community Christian Church, 4601 Main St., KC MO, Centennial Hall (downstairs)

The title of Lumsdaine’s talk refers to The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists’ Doomsday Clock that on Jan. 25 was turned to 2 minutes to midnight, as close as it’s ever been. The subtitle’s “Crisis of 2018” conveys the destruction involved in our war-mongering, our nuclear weapon regeneration, and our rule-by-threat-and-tweet policies. The subtitle’s “Eco/Justice/Peace Work” challenges us to hope and action.

In his PeaceWorks-sponsored talk, Lumsdaine will link environmental, economic justice, peace, and nuclear concerns with intensified organizing strategies, challenging the dangerous escalation of US policy toward Iran, and implications of rapidly emerging 21st-century technologies.

A member of Washington State’s Physicians for Social Responsibility, Lumsdaine’s research has taken him to the “inner security zones” of Vandenberg Air Force Base, Cape Canaveral, and the US prison system, as well as to Pine Ridge, SD; Standing Rock, ND; Hiroshima; Nagasaki; Korea; Guatemala; the Philippines; Mexico; and occupied Iraq. For info on Lumsdaine’s talk, contact Henry Stoever, 913-375-0045.

Aug. 5, Hiroshima, Nagasaki Remembrance; other events at other times

Join PeaceWorks-KC in the annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance Aug. 5. We begin at 6:30 pm with potluck and have our program at 7:30 pm at the south end of the lagoon in Loose Park, just west of Wornall Road and 53rd Street in KC MO.

In our mourning and our hope, we share supper, hang peace cranes from the trees, ring a gong for each year since 1945, meditate, hear speakers, and sing. For info, contact Henry Stoever, 913-375-0045.

Some PeaceWorks members also gather for an hour from the exact moments on which the US dropped the bombs in Japan (8:16 am on Aug. 6 in Hiroshima, noon on Aug. 9 in Nagasaki). The PeaceWorks gatherings occur at 14510 Botts Rd., the public entry road to KC’s new nuclear weapons parts plant, the National Security Campus, facing Mo. Hwy. 150. Come on Aug. 5 at 7:16 pm to mourn the deaths in Hiroshima and on Aug. 8 at 11 pm to mourn the losses in Nagasaki. For info, contact Daniel Karam, 816-600-1297.
5 arrested Memorial Day in annual witness for nuke-free world

By Jane Stoever

From the old nuclear weapons production plant to the new plant 8 miles away, the Memorial Day message rang out: Stop making a new generation of nuclear weapons!

For the seventh time, PeaceWorks-KC led a Memorial Day witness at both the old and new plants to seek a nuke-free world. The gathering at the old KC Plant at Bannister Federal Complex at 10 am soon led to the mile-long walk toward the entry road for the new plant, the National Security Campus. Then came a rally with 65 persons; a die-in to mourn the deaths of 150+ persons from contaminants at the old plant; and civil resistance, with five persons crossing the property line at the new plant and being arrested.

The first line-crosser released from custody, Brian Terrell of Maloy, Iowa, told the crowd of supporters that the charge the resisters was given was trespass. He said he’d plead not guilty, seeing his action as needed to try to prevent a nuclear war. “I will answer to these false charges in court!” he insisted. The Municipal Court trial date is yet to be set; stay tuned!

Attorney Henry Stoever, the chair of the PeaceWorks Board, said he would cross the line for the third time, partly because “the world is in ever greater peril of a nuclear exchange or the use of one or more nuclear weapons than in the past.”

Tom Fox, a former editor and publisher of the National Catholic Reporter, noted that Pope Francis said last November that the possession of nuclear weapons is immoral—against the will of God. “It stands, then, as clear as a thunderclap on an open

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Memorial Day mile-long march: Debbie Penniston, left, and Teegan Coffman, on tricycle, lead some of the 50 marchers to the entry road for the National Security Complex. Debbie’s poster showed her husband, Bob, who worked at the old plant for 28 years as an engineer and died of an inoperable brain tumor about a year after his diagnosis at age 49. Debbie said, “Over the last 9½ years since Bob’s death, I’ve found myself growing angrier with the government because they did not take responsibility for the unsafe environment they subjected my husband and many other employees to.” She asked, “How many years will it take to contaminate this new site?”—Photo by Vicke Kepling
Right before resistance: Lu Mountenay, with microphone, says, “Here I stand with four thorns in the side of militarism!” From left, they are Sunny Jordan Hamrick, Tom Fox, Brian Terrell, and Henry Stoever. Lu added, “I, too, am a bothersome weed on the property of death, perhaps a dandelion—hear me roar!” She led the crowd in cheering as the five crossed the property line. — Photo by Mark Semet

From left, Bennette Dibben, a PeaceWorks Board member, and Vicke Kepling, of Springfield, MO, show off one of Vicke’s posters at the rally. — Photo by Mark Semet

Tiona Horning displays her “Ban the Bomb” poster as she walks with others past the new nuke-parts plant. — Photo by Kim Hoa Fox
Poor People’s Campaign

The Poor People’s Campaign, based on the movement Martin Luther King Jr. began in 1968, assails poverty, racism, militarism, and—in this 50-year-anniversary renewal—also ecological degradation. The renewed PPC kicked off May 14 in state capitals, followed by rallies and opportunities for civil resistance in the next 4 weeks, capped with a march on DC. The PPC is designed to endure, to evolve into other rallies, resistances, and visits to legislators and officials. The campaign is a spiritual and moral undertaking that the PeaceWorks-KC Board whole-heartedly supports.

Mary Hladky asks, ‘How are we supporting our troops when 20 veterans die by suicide every day?’

Note: Here are excerpts from the talk given by Mary Hladky, vice chair of the PeaceWorks-KC Board, May 29 in Jefferson City, at a Poor People’s Campaign protest of militarism. Soon after Hladky issued this critique, she and 16 others blocked a street, were arrested, and were released.

I am Mary Hladky. My son, Ryan, was an Army Infantry Officer. During his deployment in Afghanistan, the troops experienced the highest death and injury rates of the war.

Today, I want to talk to you about the war economy and the incalculable harm this obsession does to all Americans, and especially soldiers.

War drains the treasury of money. The Costs of War Project at Brown University says US wars over the past 16 years have cost $5.6 trillion. Our officials justify this spending in the name of national security. There is little left, it seems, for the welfare of the people.

These same officials defend these massive expenses as part of “supporting the troops.” But supporting our troops should mean bringing them home and taking care of them when they return.

How are we supporting the troops when many military families need public assistance such as food stamps to make ends meet, while defense contractors rake in record profits?

How are we supporting the troops when many military bases are “superfund” sites full of toxic chemicals endangering the health of military families?

There are 3 million veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These soldiers have seen more combat than veterans of any other wars. Many have experienced moral injury – a violation of a person’s moral values, their core beliefs. The shame, guilt, and torturous remorse that becomes moral injury often results in suicide.

How are we supporting our troops when 20 veterans, from all wars, die by suicide every day?

Today, here and across the country, and all over the world, our voices declare our work for a more peaceful world, the hope of a movement: to realize that true security is not measured by the size of our military, but the welfare of our people.
Civil disobedience at age 78: ‘A vocation within a vocation’

By Benedictine Sister Barbara McCracken

There is a sickness of the soul in our political life, as the Poor People’s Campaign says, and it will take all of us to heal it. The blessing that my religious community gave me and a long-time involvement in justice issues led me to the Poor People’s Campaign and my first-ever arrest.

I went to Topeka—the PPC staged protests in about 30 state capitals—for the first two Mondays of the six-week PPC resistance events. On the second Monday, May 21, I and 17 other Kansans were arrested around noon for “occupying” a conference room at the office of Secretary of State Kris Kobach. He is the architect of voter suppression in Kansas and, increasingly, in other states. Some 18,000 Kansans have been unable to register to vote at a motor vehicle bureau because Kobach’s regulations require showing a birth certificate or passport to register. Since 1990, from my work in Wyandotte County, I’ve been aware of Kobach’s hatred of the entire community of persons with a Spanish-speaking background in this country.

On May 21, handcuffed with a thick plastic tie, my hands back to back, I was led from the conference room single file with the others arrested, to a waiting bus. Eventually our information was taken down by hand by the Kansas Highway Patrol. The body search was quick but thorough. Only shoes and socks had to be removed. The 14 of us women were put in a holding cell with a wooden bench on two sides that could hold 13 of us.

Finally they started to call us for processing—photos, fingerprinting, questioning, and paperwork—during which we waited some more. I hope my ten hours in detention will count as time served.

My civil disobedience became a vocation (a calling) within a vocation. There’s an element of mystery, a spiritual dimension, to why I did the action.

The deportations going on right now, in the US, divide family members. Parents are deported; children are put in juvenile detention centers and can’t get out. Recently, within two weeks, 600 children were separated from their families. This evil cries out for resistance. The Poor People’s Campaign, using civil disobedience, may be needed more now than when Martin Luther King began it in 1968.

—Sister Barbara McCracken of Atchison, KS, at age 78 was “by far the oldest resister” in Topeka May 21, she says. A long-time PeaceWorks-KC member, her work in Kansas City, KS, included teaching at Donnelly College, staffing Shalom Catholic Worker House for the homeless, and being Keeler Women’s Center’s assistant director. She now visits prisoners and helps keep her community’s investments aligned with its commitment to justice and peace.

The last row of persons doing this May 14 Jefferson City sit-in against economic exploitation features PeaceWorks members, including (from right) Henry Stoever and Theresa Maly.

— Photo by Jane Stoever
What if bombs dropped on Hiroshima, Nagasaki never exploded?


Indulge in the loveliness! The artwork will be installed at the Truman Library and Museum in Independence by Aug. 25, to remain until Oct. 28. The exhibit theme is “What If?” It is part of the national and international Open Spaces project.

The narratives for the pieces are written by Phong Nguyen, husband of Sarah. His book Pages from the Textbook of Alternative History, in one chapter, tells of a fictional past in which the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were averted.

The Open Spaces description of the exhibit says that in Sarah Nguyen’s reimagining, “the bomb Little Boy turns out to be a dud, and instead of detonating, passes through a cherry tree and lands with a thud, rolling and settling, then over the years gathering moss and lichen, where we encounter it today in a pastoral setting, surrounded by cherry blossoms.”

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plain in Kansas that the building of these weapons is equally immoral,” said Fox. He asked, “Do we have any choice but to speak out against these perilous weapons? I think not.”

Sunny Jordan Hamrick, of the Christian community Jerusalem Farm in Kansas City, called to the police and security guards across the purple property line before crossing it. Hamrick said, “In our back yard, we grow rye. I have three slices of rye bread here (not from the rye at “the Farm”), and I want to break bread with you after crossing the line.” Soon, they accepted his offer, and he shared the remaining bread with the protesters after he was released.

‘Heartbroken, furious’ about immigrants’ loss of asylum

By Jane K. Stoever

I am heartbroken and furious about the latest dehumanization of immigrants, reversing asylum protections for domestic violence survivors who’d suffered extreme abuse and were escaping unthinkably dangerous conditions.

These cases were never easy to bring or win.

Separating families, caging children, eroding due process, and denying relief to victims of domestic abuse or gang violence--this is not who we are, and our resistance must continue so these horrors don’t.

Note: The writer, who directs the University of California/Irvine Domestic Violence Law Clinic, is the daughter of PeaceWorks Board chair Henry Stoever. She wrote the above statement in condemnation of Attorney General Jeff Sessions’ announcement June 11 that immigration judges could no longer let persons stay in the US because of domestic violence or gang brutality in their home countries.

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
Sen. Ed Markey warns of ‘a mobile Chernobyl’ of nuclear toxins

By Jane Stoever

The specter of “a mobile Chernobyl” arose recently when Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., decried a plan to renew funding for the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository. The site was approved in 2002, funding was discontinued in 2011, and now Congress may revive the funding. Markey railed against the Yucca revival during a meeting May 22 in Washington, DC, where the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA) gave Markey an award. Markey said the original plan for the repository “had nothing to do with science. It had everything to do with political science, just picking a location, regardless of the earthquake fault, regardless of the river nearby, regardless of whether or not it would ever be constructed.” Problems plagued its development, leading to the slashing of its budget.

He continued, “It didn’t make any difference whether $10 billion would be wasted or $20 billion because the nuclear industry wanted a place to bury this stuff, and to move it across our country, in trucks from every location, a mobile Chernobyl, regardless of what the dangers on the streets of our nation might be.”

Film exposes media bias in reporting Israel/Palestine conflicts

By Jamie Jackson

More than 100 people gathered May 3 at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church to watch the documentary film Occupation of the American Mind: Israel’s Public Relations War in the United States. The film explores how our understanding of the 70-year conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has been shaped by a largely one-sided viewpoint. Audience members stayed for nearly two hours after the film to ask questions of four panelists chosen to reflect diverse views in the community about the media’s role in shaping American opinion. Panelists were the Rev. Sam Mann, retired pastor with a lifetime devotion to civil rights; Fatima Mohammadi, Islamist activist; Peter Morello, UMKC professor of journalism; and Richard Hellman, former editor of the Jewish Chronicle.

Short video clips from the Q&A with the panelists, by Brian Sullivan, are posted at peaceworkskc.org.

Citizens for Justice in the Middle East and the Social Responsibility Board of All Souls co-sponsored the event, and PeaceWorks-KC helped publicize it.

—Jamie Jackson is a member of Citizens for Justice in the Middle East, in the Kansas City metro area.

Here is my annual membership for PeaceWorks

- Membership .................. $40
- Donor ..................... $50+
- Major Donor ............... $100+
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- Group Membership ........ $75
- Limited-Income Membership ... $5+
- Newsletter Subscription .... $10
- Lifetime Membership .......... $1,000
- Sustaining Membership ...... $5+/mo.
- Send newsletter electronically

Mail to: PeaceWorks 4509 Walnut St. Kansas City, MO 64111

Make check to: PeaceWorks or, for tax deductibility, to Missouri Peace Foundation.

E-mail address: ______________________________________________
Name: ______________________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________________
City, State, ZIP: _____________________________________________
Daytime phone: (____) _______ Evening phone: (___) _______
Ask artists: apply to UNplaza Art Fair by 7/20

This year’s UNplaza Art Fair—with local artists’ creations, with sales benefitting artists and PeaceWorks—will be Sept. 22-23. And just around the corner from now is the deadline for artists to apply: July 20.

The UNplaza Art Fair will be at Southmoreland Park, at Oak and Emanuel Cleaver Blvd. in KC MO, with space for new artists. All self-made products are fair game: paintings, pottery, purses; sculpture, scarves, stained glass; photos, fashion, fandangoes. Anything goes, homemade.

Artists, download the application from PeaceWorksKC.org. Or ask PeaceWorks to e-mail you the application; call 816-561-1181. All of you with artist friends: Spread the word about the deadline. Thanks!

A sampling of treasures at last year’s UNplaza Art Fair. —Photos by Mark Semet