Will America’s nuclear waste be passing through Missouri?

By Mary Hladky

Kevin Kamps of Beyond Nuclear sounded the alarm recently about large amounts of dangerous nuclear waste passing through Kansas City unless we work to stop it. Speaking March 21 at the Rime Buddhist Center in KC MO, Kamps said legislation is being discussed to ship nuclear waste from eastern states (75 percent of U.S. nuclear reactors are east of the Mississippi) to western states, with much of this traffic passing through KC. The containers used for these rail and semi-trailer-truck shipments have been called into question, many being defective. Kamps advocates hardened on-site storage (HOSS) close to the point of generation instead of moving nuclear waste across the country.

Nuclear waste in MO? — continued on page 2

Race Issues ARE Peace Issues

By Jane Stoever

PeaceWorks is sponsoring “Race Issues ARE Peace Issues,” a panel discussion and workshops on April 27, Sat., 3-6pm, at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 4501 Walnut, KC, MO. PeaceWorks asked Lucky Garcia, a former Army soldier who served in the Iraq War and current community organizer and writer, to coordinate the event. I recently interviewed her for this Q&A.

Q: Why did you choose this title for the April 27 event?
A: Very violent things are happening in the United States and in Kansas City. Young people of color being hunted down by the police, being shot and killed while unarmed—it’s not a peaceful life for them. There is no rest, no peace. Nor for refugees seeking help. According to The Kansas City Star, there were 47 police killings from 2005 to 2016, in Kansas City, MO. There have been several more since 2016. In this political climate, acts of cruelty are not limited to police violence and the separation of families because of their documentation status—many white supremacists now feel emboldened to inflict violence on people of color and LGBTQ people.

Q: Who is the audience for this program?
A: We are calling together PeaceWorks members and other
Nuclear waste in MO? — continued from page 1

We need to eliminate nuclear power plants and their current waste storage pools (not HOSS) for many reasons:

- There are 125 nuclear reactors in the U.S. They have produced enormous amounts of waste that will remain radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years, with nowhere to safely put it.

- Accidents, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, or other disasters can trigger a nuclear accident. The current historic flooding of the Missouri River threatens the Cooper nuclear power plant in Nebraska. Cooper continues to operate at full capacity with record flood levels, which is potentially very dangerous to human life. There are three nuclear power plants on the Missouri River.

- Nuclear plants and the waste storage sites are national security threats as they are potential targets for terrorist operations.

- There is an increased cancer risk to people living near or working in power plants, and for millions of people exposed to nuclear waste traveling through the U.S. via railways, highways, and waterways.

We all need to do our part to prevent nuclear waste from traveling across the country. We need to make our objections clear to our legislators. PeaceWorks KC and Beyond Nuclear are both good places to keep on top of this issue.

—Mary Hladky is vice chair of the PeaceWorks Board.

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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. Josh Hawley (R-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. Sharice Davids (D-3rd district, Kan.):
913-621-0832

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Mark your calendar...

- “Scarred Lands & Wounded Lives,” documentary on effects of war and production of weapons, All Souls, 4501 Walnut, KC, MO, 6:30-8:30 pm 4/6.
- Rally with Kansas City Students Demand Action for gun control; proposed for 4/20; place to be determined; contact Henry Stoever, 913-375-0045, henrystoever@sbcglobal.net.
- DC Days, lobbying with Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, 5/19-22, contact Ann Suellentrop, annsuellen@gmail.com.
Race Issues ARE Peace Issues  — continued from page 1

activists, largely white people in social justice organizations, to look at what’s happening in our back yard. We need to do more together on local issues as well as on global issues, such as war, nuclear tension and nuclear weapon production. We hope this event will help get the peace activist community on the same page, to strengthen our collective power. We also hope to see participants who strive to empower people in our neighborhoods for peace and racial justice.

Q: What groups will have members speaking on the panel, leading the workshops, and tabling?
A: We have a strong and diverse set of speakers who I hope will present a good overall picture of the issues that people of color struggle with in the Kansas City area.

One Struggle KC
One Struggle KC is a Black-led coalition of Kansas City activists seeking to connect the struggles of oppressed Black communities, locally and globally. Disproportionate policing in communities of color and poor communities has led to an unprecedented incarceration rate of members of those communities, which feeds the Prison-Industrial Complex (including immigration detention centers) that profits off the backs of Black and Brown communities.

Workshop: Accessibility and Inclusion in the Arts.

Advocates for Immigrant Rights and Reconciliation (AIRR)
AIRR recognizes and is working tirelessly to keep families together and end the humanitarian crisis our immigrant community is facing. AIRR insists that all people, no matter where they were born, deserve a chance at a safe and dignified life. AIRR is committed to empower and uplift the voices of the immigrant community and provide them with the tools they need to better protect themselves and their families.


Al-Hadaf
Al-Hadaf is a Palestinian-led activist group dedicated to the realization of a free Palestine, and to a cultural and political revival within the Palestinian-American community in Kansas City.

Workshop: Deep dive into the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement (BDS Movement) and what it looks like for anti-Zionist communities locally and globally.

Showing Up for Racial Justice Kansas City (SURJ KC)
SURJ KC is a local network organizing white people for racial justice in accountability to People of Color (POC). Through Personal Support, Political Education, and Solidarity Action, SURJ KC moves white people to act as part of a multi-racial majority for racial justice.

Workshop: Principles for Mobilizing White Folks for Racial Justice

Q: What events in your life have paved the way to your poetry and community organizing?

A: I come from a long line of strong Chicana/Indigenous women who didn’t have much but fought every day for our survival. Sharing resources, supporting each other, resilience and the power of women is all I have ever known. Having fought in the Iraq War definitely set me up for leftist activism and truth seeking. I started writing poetry, stories, and essays at a young age, but writing about the effects of war, poverty, and mental illness have really taken my writing to a new place. *

—Jane Stoever leads PeaceWorks’ Communications Team.
PeaceWorks Annual Meeting 2019

Harsh reality met bold hope at the PeaceWorks Annual Meeting March 10 in KC MO. “We are concerned about the fate of our planet,” Henry Stoever, the chair of the PW Board, told the 43 attendees. During a recent drive through Bannister Federal Complex, home to KC’s former nuclear weapons parts plant, Stoever said, “We don’t see containment of these waste products” as BFC is supposedly cleaned up. Stoever added, “We say, ‘Not in my name!’ as nuclear weapons are used to threaten other countries.”

Concerning PW finances, Treasurer Dave Pack said, “We are in a sound financial position and have been, going back a number of years.”

Joseph Wun of the PW Board observed, “A lot of people in Kansas City care for creation, but many don’t know there’s a plant here making nuclear weapon parts.” He said the four targets of the revived Poor People’s Campaign—racism, militarism, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation—“intersect in nuclear weapons.”

Presenting the Kris and Lynn Cheatum Community Peace Award, Mark Semet of the PW Board said, “The Learning Club started with one site and now has six. Its tutors help students develop their potential.” Receiving the award for the Learning Club, founder Brad Grabs noted, “Many kids live with a lot of struggle, a lot of difficulties.” A Schlagle High School senior, an undocumented person trained to mentor a Learning Club youngster whom Grabs called Billy, remarked, “I need Billy, and he needs me.”

Lu Mountenay, a PW Board member, received the Charles E. Bebb Peace Merit Award. She was shocked. All she could say in reply was, “Thank you!” Jim Hannah, a PW Board member, wrote a tribute to Mountenay read by Ann Suellentrop, also a PW Board member. “This year’s recipient is a peace activist almost by birth,” wrote Hannah. Her mother established the preschool program “Play Group” that paved the way for Head Start in Seattle, he explained. Mountenay has been arrested four times for crossing the property line at KC’s new nuclear weapons plant, Hannah wrote, quoting her statement from Memorial Day 2018: “I won’t be around in the next 50 years to protect my grandchildren when the poison leaks from the land at the new plant and contaminates the earth, water, and air as it has at Bannister. But hopefully my grandchildren will know that I stood on one side of the line and then crossed over for justice.” Maurice Copeland, winner of the 2018 Bebb Award, gave Mountenay her plaque.

—By Jane Stoever. Mark Semet took the photos; see his videos from the meeting on Facebook at PeaceWorksKC.
Dibben testifies to EPA

Bennette Dibben, who staffs the PeaceWorks office, testified Feb. 28 at the KC, MO, hearing of the Environmental Protection Agency. She tried to prevent a redefinition of “the waters of the United States” (WOTUS) by the federal government. Specifically, says Dibben, the Trump administration is trying to take out of the definition protection for “ephemeral” waters such as springs, groundwater, ponds and streams—rising from precipitation.

Concerning the importance of springs, she told EPA representatives that the EPA itself says 62 percent of Missourians rely on “intermittent, ephemeral and headwater streams.” She said Missourians and visitors “enjoy the abundance of springs in our state,” as well as the caves created by springs. In 2017, some 7,300 caves existed in Missouri, housing wildlife in a unique ecosystem, she added.

Dibben also noted, “Military bases are poisoning our groundwater.” Two compounds widely used in foam to extinguish fires during practice by air force personnel and others are PFAS (per- and poly-fluoralkyl substances) and PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid). “These compounds are known as ‘forever chemicals’ because they don’t break down in nature,” Dibben said. “Exposure to PFAS causes cancer and developmental effects in fetuses.”

PeaceWorks sponsored a talk by Pat Elder, who targeted the PFAS and PFOS in foam used to put out fires at sites such as the former Richards Gebaur Air Force Base in KC, MO (see p. 6). The New York Times, quoted in the March 15 Kansas City Star, noted, “Facing billions of dollars in cleanup costs, the Pentagon is pushing the Trump administration to adopt a weaker standard for groundwater pollution caused by chemicals that have commonly been used at military bases and that contaminate drinking water consumed by millions of Americans. The Pentagon’s position pits it against the Environmental Protection Agency.”


White Aloe Branch Stream in Parkville, MO, where children’s nature groups like to explore.

—Photo by Robyn Haas

What? Four new Board members?

The PeaceWorks Board just grew. It has four new members—Dennis Gallie, Lee Gum, Cris Mann, and Jo White—thanks to the election March 10 at the Annual Meeting. Welcome, new energy!

The participants in the Annual Meeting re-elected the officers to one-year terms: Board Chair Henry Stoever, Board Vice Chair Mary Hladky, Board Treasurer Dave Pack, Board Secretary Sunny Jordan Hamrick. Re-elected to two-year terms on the Board are Spencer Graves, Jim Hannah, Ann Suellentrop, Leigh Woody, and Joseph Wun. Continuing members of the Board (completing the second year of their two-year terms) are Lu Mountenay, Jenny Semet, and Mark Semet. Mary Hladky and Lu Mountenay serve on the Nominating Committee.

Persons who received thank-you certificates and have left the Board are Ron Faust, Lauren Hall, and Bennette Dibben (she now serves as clerical staff to PeaceWorks). ♦

Leigh Woody, doing clean-up at the Annual Meeting, inspires us with her energy and hope!
Palestinian survivor of 1948 Catastrophe to speak at Avila on April 16

By Jamie Jackson

On Tuesday, April 16, Avila University is sponsoring an opportunity for Kansas Citians to meet a survivor of what is now called al-Nakba (the Catastrophe). The May 14, 1948, event resulted in half of all Palestinians being driven into exile while thousands of others were killed. Mariam Fathalla was then just 18. She and her husband fled to Lebanon where she has since raised three generations within the confines of a refugee camp.

Fathalla comes to Kansas City with Amena ElAshkar, 24, a Palestinian journalist and translator, granddaughter and great-granddaughter of Nakba survivors. She has known no home other than a refugee camp.

The 89-year-old Fathalla and 24-year-old ElAshkar will share their story as two stateless Palestinians living in Lebanon at this free event sponsored by Avila University’s Buchanan Initiative for Peace and Nonviolence, and by four local organizations: Jewish Voice for Peace KC, Al-Hadaf KC, Citizens for Justice in the Middle East, and KC For Refugees. In an era when the dilemma of so many refugees worldwide promises to only get worse, this is Kansas City’s opportunity to better understand the challenge.

Reception and refreshments begin Tuesday, April 16, at 5:30 pm in Avila’s Thornhill Gallery, 11901 Wornall Rd, KC MO, with the presentation beginning at 6 pm. Contact peace@avila.edu with questions.

— By Jamie Jackson of Citizens for Justice in the Middle East

Speaker addresses unsafe water, military recruitment

By Mark Semet

Pat Elder, from World Without War, spoke Feb. 21 at a PeaceWorks-sponsored program at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in KC, MO. He discussed current, life-threatening toxins in our water systems—including surface and tap water—which have caused hundreds of cases of cancer in humans, from young mothers to all of us. These toxins are introduced into our environment unchecked by greedy corporations and the military, with little to no government monitoring. We can request testing of our water systems and save our future.

Elder also discussed unrestricted recruiting access by the military to our youth in public schools. They are heavily recruited, often without parental consent. Elder wrote the 2018 book Military Recruiting in the United States.

For videos by Mark A. Semet and Jenny Semet, see the Feb. 26 Facebook post at PeaceWorksKC by Mark Semet.
Media and democracy in KC

By Spencer Graves

The mainstream media create the stage upon which politicians read their lines. We can change this to improve the functioning of our political economy to benefit everyone.

When the quality of local news has declined, on average fewer people ran for political office, less money was spent on elections, incumbent politicians did not work as hard for their constituents, and the cost of government went up.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the mainstream commercial broadcasters in the U.S. fired nearly all their investigative journalists, except for those with popular programs such as “60 Minutes.” Journalists were replaced with the police blotter. The public thought that crime was out of control, when there had been no substantive increase in crime. A generation of politicians was elected to “get tough on crime,” and the incarceration rate in the U.S. increased by a factor of five.

Today the vast majority of incarcerees are high school dropouts convicted of nonviolent drug offenses. These incarcerations reduce neither crime nor substance abuse. We need research to understand the following:

• Which drug treatment programs are most effective?
• Which programs for children maximize learning while minimizing dropouts?
• How can we fund and manage media so they disseminate the scientific consensus, even when it conflicts with the advertising and political consensus?

If we get this information and act appropriately on it, we will all be safer and more prosperous.

—This article summarizes a talk Spencer Graves, of the PeaceWorks Board, gave recently. For a video of his talk, with references and narrative, see Wikiversity, https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Media_and_Democracy_in_Kansas_City_and_Elsewhere.
Make this Memorial Day memorable: Stand with those who say, ‘Stop the MADness!’

Nuclear MADness (Mutually Assured Destruction) is not just a catch phrase from the past. A new nuclear arms race is underway—a clear and present danger to all humanity. And Kansas City is ground zero for the MADness, where nearly all the non-nuclear components of the U.S. nuclear arsenal are crafted.

Obscene amounts of resources are being poured into the Kansas City National Security Campus and the NNSA (National Nuclear Security Administration) site office: $716 million in 2018; $761 million in 2019, and a staggering $1 billion being requested by the Department of Energy for 2020!

Is this how our generation, how each of us, will be remembered? As the ones who squandered earth’s resources on omnicidal weapons? As the ones who remained silent while civilization’s future was made forfeit?

Make this Memorial Day memorable! Be part of PeaceWorks Kansas City’s ninth annual peace witness, joining kindred spirits during these events:

10 am Witness at Bannister Federal Complex, 1500 Bannister Road, KCMO. Park on Lydia, east of Troost; walk to former Wayne entry on Bannister for short rally re toxins at the former nuke-parts plant.

11 am Gather at Prospect and Mo. Hwy. 150 (park on Prospect) for a one-mile walk to the main entrance to the National Security Campus.

11:30 am Rally at the entry road to new plant, 14510 Botts Rd., with talks from those who intend to cross the line and risk arrest—including our first-ever international peace witnesses, from Europe.

Noon Stage a Die-in on the public right-of-way at the entry road, commemorating more than 154 persons who’ve died from the Bannister plant’s contaminants, and those who may die in future nuclear attacks.

12:15 pm Cross the property line to protest nuclear weapons, with detention by the guards or police and with continued witness by those not crossing the line.

This Memorial Day, let’s honor the masses who have died in war by standing against weapons of mass destruction! *

—By Jim Hannah of the PeaceWorks Board