PeaceWorks to raffle off quilt at Annual Meeting 3/1

We extend a warm invitation to our members, and their guests, to come to PeaceWorks-KC’s Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 1, 2-4 pm, at 4509 Walnut St., KCMO. JOIN US for food, fellowship, and a short play, “Putting Nukes on Trial in KC,” performed by some of the 15 members arrested and convicted of crossing the property line at the nuclear weapons parts plant last May. We will give awards to a person and a group fostering peace.

We will raffle off the stunning 74” x 74” custom-made quilt shown here, created and donated by Milda Lewis. Raffle tickets are available for $5 per ticket or $10 for three tickets; order them through PeaceWorks at 4509 Walnut, KCMO, 64111. For info, contact Tom Mountenay, 816-377-1550.

Annual Meeting participants will vote on candidates for these positions:

Raffle Tickets: 3 for $10 or 1 for $5.
Call Tom Mountenay for information: 816-377-1550.

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Peacemaker Rev. John Dear talks in KC area 3/7-8

Rev. John Dear, an internationally recognized leader for peace and nonviolence, will give talks in Kansas City, MO, and Independence on March 7-8.

A priest, activist, and author, John for years directed the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the largest interfaith peace organization in the US. After Sept. 11, 2001, he was a Red Cross coordinator of chaplains at the Family Assistance Center in New York, where he counseled thousands of relatives and rescue workers. John, who has traveled the war zones of the world, has been arrested some 80 times for peace. He led Nobel Peace Prize winners to Iraq, has given thousands of lectures on peace, and served as a pastor of several churches in New Mexico. John arranged for Mother Teresa to speak to various governors to stop impending executions, and he helped draft

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John Dear — continued from p. 1


On Saturday, March 7, from 9 am to 4 pm, John will lead a workshop with three sessions: nonviolence toward ourselves; nonviolence toward others, all creatures, and Mother Earth; and nonviolence as a grassroots movement to transform the world through a culture of peace and justice. The themes flow from John’s recent best-selling book, The Nonviolent Life. The workshop, at Avila University, costs $25 ($10 for students), lunch included; get tickets at jpat.org. PeaceWorks is cosponsoring the workshop.

On Sunday, March 8, from 2 pm to 4 pm, John will reflect on the nonviolence of Jesus. From Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, to his public campaign in Jerusalem and his death and resurrection, John says Christians today are all called to practice nonviolence and work for a new world without war, poverty, racism, nuclear weapons, and environmental destruction. This Sunday event, free and open to the public, will take place at the Community of Christ Temple in Independence, MO.

—By Jim Hannah of the PeaceWorks-KC Board.

Annual Meeting — continued from p. 1

Board co-chairs—Sunny Jordan Hamrick, Cris Mann, Henry Stoever; Board vice chair—Mary Hladky; Board secretary—Spencer Graves; Board treasurer—Dave Pack; Board members—Jenny Semet, Mark Semet. The officers hold one-year terms, and the members hold two-year terms. Candidates for the Nominating Committee are Mary Hladky and Cris Mann. More candidates may be added before and during the Annual Meeting.

As nuclear weapons, wars, and military conflicts expand, along with the increasingly devastating climate catastrophe, we need to share some time together to celebrate our successes, support each other, and make plans for a better future in 2020. Please feel free to bring to the Annual Meeting a peace-loving friend!

—By Mary Hladky, vice chair of PeaceWorks Board
Justice via KC Tenants

By Bennette Dibben with Elie Hudson

On Thanksgiving Day of 2012, a fire in my apartment forced me to move out. Thankfully, I had renter’s insurance. This paid for a hotel room. With the fire on my rental history, it was difficult to find another apartment. Eventually I found an apartment complex and was shown a display unit. I signed a lease. But the actual apartment unit I was to move into was infested with mold. When I brought this to the attention of the property manager, she refused to give my deposit back or break the lease. She said it was my fault. According to her, I should have seen the mold and not signed the lease. For my health, I refused to move into the unit.

Before I could find an apartment to live in, the insurance coverage for the hotel ran out. I became homeless. A friend gave me a place to stay; otherwise, I would have been living on the street.

I was left financially hurting, without recourse or any way to obtain justice. I did not have something like KC Tenants to help me.

I now know I am not the only person with this kind of story.

In February 2019, a multigenerational, multiracial group of tenants came together to demand safe, accessible, affordable homes for everyone. We call ourselves KC Tenants. We made housing a key issue in elections. We campaigned for a Tenant Bill of Rights, written by the people closest to the problems. On Dec. 12, the City Council passed a Tenant Bill of Rights, which should ensure protections and enforcement measures for KCMO tenants.

With a Tenant Bill of Rights, my story would have been different. Before signing a lease, I would have received disclosure of past issues in the unit. I would have known about the mold. I would not have lost thousands of dollars. This is not too much to ask for. All of us deserve justice and healing.

To follow KC Tenants in our journey to bring housing justice to Kansas City and beyond, visit kctenants.org and sign up to receive updates, or e-mail tara@kctenants.org.

—Bennette Dibben chairs the PeaceWorks-KC Action Committee; Elie Hudson belongs to KC Tenants. See a longer version of this story at PeaceWorksKC.org.

Contact elected officials

Mayor Quinton Lucas: 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

45% of households in Kansas City are renters.

(Source: rentcafe.com/average-rent-market-trends/us/mo/kansas-city)

KC Tenants at a public rally
Lies have drawn us into endless wars. We can never again blindly trust what our government tells us. We must question everything, demanding the truth. The recently released Afghanistan Papers, which are internal government documents that exposed the lies told to the American people, documented early on that the Afghanistan War was a debacle and could not be won. Yet our government chose to continue that war, now in its 19th year. Unconscionable.

If we want to support the troops, we must make sure they are not sent to die for another senseless war. We must speak out in defense of our sons and daughters so they don’t pay the ultimate price for Trump’s rash and foolish decision. A war with Iran could engulf the whole region and quickly turn into a global conflict. For all who believe in peace, for all who are opposed to yet another catastrophic war, now is the time to ACT.

Call the Senate switchboard and ask to speak to each of your Senators, 202-224-3121. Demand diplomacy and de-escalation before another war erupts. NO WAR WITH IRAN.

—By Mary Hladky, vice chair of the PeaceWorks-KC Board

Stop the madness: no more war

By Mary Hladky

On Jan. 2, President Trump kicked off the New Year by unilaterally ordering, without consulting Congress, the assassination of Qasem Soleimani, Iran’s most senior military leader. The assassination of Soleimani, a member of the Iranian government, is a violation of international law and the US Constitution, and is morally wrong. This crisis began almost two years ago, when President Trump abandoned the Iran nuclear deal, then launched an economic war on Iran by imposing devastating sanctions affecting everyday Iranians. And now, the assassination, another act of war, has put Americans, and those living in the region, in grave danger.

The Trump Administration has been trying to convince the American people that we were in imminent danger to justify its crime. Now Trump is saying it doesn’t matter if Soleimani was an imminent threat. Providing no evidence, Trump is asking Americans to just take his word for it.

Coming to KC in April!

PeaceWorks-KC will host two renowned anti-nuclear-weapon activists this spring. The two “rock stars” of nuclear disarmament, Ardeth Platte and Carol Gilbert, will visit the KC area April 15-19.

Carol and Ardith are Dominican nuns who have spent time in prison for numerous protests against nuclear weapons. They are touring the US to teach about the UN’s Nuclear Ban Treaty and deliver copies of the treaty to nuclear weapon manufacturing companies.

PeaceWorks encourages Kansas-City-area universities, churches, and other groups to give the nuclear weapon protesters speaking opportunities. Contact Ann Suellentrop at anssuellen@gmail.com soon to arrange an appearance by Sister Ardeth and Sister Carol.

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—By Mary Hladky, vice chair of the PeaceWorks-KC Board
By Ann Suellentrop

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, the NPT Rev Con, is held at the United Nations in New York every 5 years to assess the progress toward nuclear disarmament by the world’s nuclear powers. This was promised by the NPT in 1970, but instead of disarmament there is now a resumption of the nuclear arms race among the nine nuclear weapons powers.

If you are interested in attending the NPT Rev Con April 27, or the prior civil society conference at the Riverside Church April 24-26, contact me soon at 913-271-7925. To pass security at the UN, you must be registered by March 6.

Due to the frustration of non-nuclear-weapon-armed nations over the lack of progress toward disarmament, the UN passed the Nuclear Ban Treaty in July 2017 by an overwhelming vote of 122 nations. It will become international law when 50 nations ratify it. It is two-thirds of the way there.

Ann Suellentrop accepts award during world peace ceremony

“There are two main threats to our survival: nuclear weapons and the climate crisis,” Ann Suellentrop told a crowd of more than 125 persons Dec. 31, 2019. She spoke at the Rimé Buddhist Center in Kansas City, Mo (peaceworkskc.org/nonviolence/ann-suellentrop-accepts-award-during-world-peace-ceremony), at the 6 a.m. program held annually on New Year’s Eve morning, the World Peace Meditation. The center gave one award, the Bodhisattva Award, during the program—to PeaceWorks-KC—and asked Ann to receive the award in recognition of her peace work in many circles.

Ann highlighted PeaceWorks’ efforts in the 2000s to oppose KC’s local bomb-parts plant that opened in 2014. “This was the first new nuclear weapons factory built in the U.S. in 32 years,” she noted. “We testified at the public hearings, lobbied elected officials … and held many protests at the new plant, which has resulted in about 150 arrests for trespassing.

An African-American judge (in Municipal Court) compared us to Rosa Parks and said, ‘I can’t just put you in jail!’ So he gave us essays to write.” The audience laughed, taking delight in the judge’s creativity.

Spring 2020 peace events, said Ann, will likely include talks in KC by two Dominican sisters, Ardeth Platte and Carol Gilbert, about the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), that led to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Ann asked people to go with her to an international conference in Tennessee May 22-25 on abolishing nuclear weapons.

Ann offered the audience copies of the new book Warheads to Windmills, on converting funds for nuclear weapons to funds for solar panels, windmills, and other efforts to save the planet. She noted the power of the films “Harriet,” on Harriet Tubman of the Underground Railroad, and “A Hidden Life,” about Franz Jaggerstatter, beheaded for refusing to swear allegiance to Hitler. Ann closed her remarks by saying, “To me, these films showed people who made up their minds to courageously stand up against evil. We can do the same!”
Nuclear weapon protesters found guilty; testimony & videos online

By Spencer Graves

In 2019, 17 persons—seeking a nuclear-weapon-free world—crossed the property line at the nuclear weapons parts plant in Kansas City, MO. The 15 line-crossers who came to trial Nov. 1 spoke about why they did this action. Surprisingly, the judge allowed each defendant time to testify. Nevertheless, all 15 defendants were found guilty and were sentenced to community service as well as having to pay hefty court costs and probation fees.

A visit to PeaceWorksKC.org will give you stories, the defense lawyer’s (Henry Stoever’s) remarks, the judge’s decisions, and videos and pictures from the civil resistance on Memorial Day, 5/27/19. For example, defendant Jim Hannah of Independence said, “At one time, slavery was the law, and my ancestors broke the law. I believe there’s a higher law concerning these destructive weapons.”

Videographer Mark Semet and defendant Spencer Graves have posted videos and an approximate transcript of the trial on Wikiversity. See https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Fifteen_anti-nuke_protestors_tried_for_2019_trespass_on_the_Kansas_City_Plant#Opening_statement_by_defense_attorney_Henry_Stoever_(HS).

Convicted of trespassing, most defendants raised the issue of morality for justification of crossing the property line. How can weapons designed primarily to kill civilians be moral, especially when their use could also kill the vast majority of humans and other living organisms on the planet? As a defendant, I was moved by an empirical argument: Two former US secretaries of state and two former US secretaries of defense claim that as long as the world maintains large nuclear arsenals, it’s only a matter of time before there is a nuclear war.

Go to Wikiversity and the PeaceWorks-KC website for more testimony from the peace activists. To offset their court fees, you can donate to PeaceWorks! ♦

—Spencer Graves serves as secretary on the PeaceWorks-KC Board.

Film portraits four young Palestinians detained/imprisoned

“Imprisoning a Generation,” a documentary film, follows the stories of four young Palestinians detained and imprisoned under Israeli military and political systems. Descriptions of the film indicate about 500 youths are imprisoned each year, with implications beyond their time behind bars. The free film is cosponsored by Community of Reason and Citizens for Justice in the Middle East. It will be shown Sunday, Feb. 16, at 2 pm at UMKC in Haig Hall, Room 301 (park free on level 4 of the parking structure at 52nd Street and Rockhill Road; use the breezeway to Haig Hall). ♦
Expand Medicaid in Kansas—KanCare

By Charles Carney

Danny is 58 years old in KCK. In 2018 he earned $6,200. Danny, blind in one eye, suffers from COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and memory loss. Yet because he was working, he earned too much for Medicaid in Kansas, and too little to participate in the Healthcare Exchange, aka Obamacare. Without any affordable health care options for low-wage earners, Danny cannot receive any kind of surgical remedy for his blindness. Whether due to lack of income, inability to jump through an infinite number of bureaucratic hoops, or lack of an obvious disability, there are over 150,000 people like Danny throughout Kansas. They all fall through the cracks, thanks to legislators’ apathy and a misinformed political agenda.

People like Danny were on the forefront of my mind as I travelled with others from the Poor People’s Campaign and PeaceWorks-KC on Jan.14 to advocate expanded Medicaid in Kansas. Melinda Hershberger from The Kansas City Star wrote “Lack of Medicaid is killing Kansans.” In July, a study of mortality rates in non-expansion states estimated that 288 Kansans have died prematurely every year since 2014, specifically due to our failure to adopt expansion. Totally unacceptable and senseless!

Danny and the 288 who are dying each year are not statistics. These are real people suffering real pain and spending nights in real homelessness with real medical and psychiatric needs. Expanding KanCare will bring hundreds of millions of our tax dollars back to Kansas, create 3,800 jobs, eliminate red tape, protect hospitals, prevent homelessness, and … make my job a lot easier!

According to the original founder of the Poor People’s movement, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Justice deferred is justice denied.” The time for Expanded KanCare is now. NO barriers! NO delays! ☝️

—Charles Carney, a member of the Poor People’s Campaign and PeaceWorks-KC, serves as a homeless-outreach social worker in Kansas City, KS. (See a longer version of this article on PeaceWorksKC.org.)

People rally at statehouse in Topeka in support of KanCare expansion. —Photo by Jim McLean

In addition, the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability will hold its annual DC Days to lobby against nuclear weapons and for nuclear waste cleanup April 19-22, in Washington, DC. You will learn all about nuclear weapons and waste from expert activists and also receive an excellent education in how to lobby effectively. Contact me if interested in attending, as noted above. ☝️

—Ann Suellentrop is a member of the PeaceWorks-KC Board.
Upcoming event

Gala for Justice and Peace

A fun event to promote PeaceWorks-KC and the UNplaza Art Fair, featuring live and silent auction of art provided by the UNplaza artists, fun food, and entertainment

Date: April 18, 2-4pm

Place: To be determined