A viral attack, a virtual response: PeaceWorks’ 30th art fair goes online

2020 was shaping up as a banner year for PeaceWorks-KC’s annual art show.

The number of artists exhibiting last year was the highest ever, at 130, and the pool of artists was expected to continue to grow.

The percentage of minority artists represented at the fair was also on the rise, following intentional efforts of invitation and connection. And the number of performing artists who filled the air with music and spoken word was growing as well.

Furthermore, after last year’s torrential rain-out Saturday afternoon all but ended the fair, PeaceWorks leaders this year hoped for kinder, milder weather.

It was, in short, going to be a grand celebration of the art fair’s 30-year anniversary—what many of the exhibiting artists fondly call “our favorite art fair.”

A new moniker was even introduced to mark three decades of support for local artists and the justice-and-peace efforts of PeaceWorks: PeaceWorks KC Local Art Fair.

Once more, local and affordable art would be offered in support of both art and peace.

The stage was set for celebration.

Then came the pandemic.

Art fairs and nearly all other public venues folded their tents as COVID-19 swept the land.

This was a serious blow to PeaceWorks’ aims: promoting peace through art, and funding its mission of a world without war and its weapons. When the painful decision was made to cancel this year’s tent city, a great void was created.

Fittingly, it was an artist who refused to be rained out at last year’s art fair who came forth with a creative alternative.

Art fair online — continued on page 4

UN treaty vs. nuclear weapons gets 50 ratifications, will ‘enter into force’ Jan. 22

Victory! The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) announced Oct. 24: “The big moment is finally here. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) just reached the 50 ratifications needed for entry into force! Just now, Honduras ratified the treaty, bringing about a historic milestone. In 90 days, the TPNW will enter into force and become binding international law!”

The TPNW, signed by 124 of the 193 countries within the UN July 7, 2017, enters into force Jan. 22. Its scope is vast. It prohibits nations from developing, testing, 

UN nuclear treaty ratified

— continued on page 2
producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons, or allowing nuclear weapons to be stationed on their territory. The entry into force means that, in international law, nuclear weapons are illegal.

Ambassador Vanessa Frazier of Malta, an earlier rati-fier, said after the 48th and 49th ratifications by Jamaica and Nauru Oct. 23, “We can almost taste the treaty.” While noting the excitement in the air, Frazier warned that the world is at risk of losing many of the gains of arms control regimens in years past, citing the withdrawal of the US from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Register now for online Peace Literacy Workshop

Meeting human needs is absolutely fundamental to finding peace within, and that is the foundation for peace in the world. So says Paul Chappell, director of the Peace Literacy Institute. He will facilitate the online workshop PeaceWorks-KC is cosponsoring: the Peace Literacy Workshop 2-7 pm EST (1-6 pm CST) Feb. 7, 14, and 21.

Peace literacy focuses on a skill set that promotes well-being at the personal, social, and political levels. Chappell finds that trauma—especially childhood trauma, racial trauma, and war trauma—gets tangled in our non-physical needs, including purpose, inspiration, and self-worth.

Persons may register for between $150 and $350, depending on their resources. Before the workshop, registrants receive the book Soldiers of Peace, by Chappell, and course worksheets. Contact PeaceWorks Board Member Ann Suellentrop at 913-271-7925 for first-hand information on the workshop and skill set. To register, e-mail Jo Ann Deck at jdeck@peaceliteracy.org.

Suellentrop likes to quote Chappell: “Peace literacy is a human right. Without this skill set, how can we expect people to be able to create a peaceful world?”

To peace activists, it came as no surprise that the Associated Press, on Oct. 21, said the US was urging countries that already ratified the treaty to withdraw. Reportedly, a letter disclosed to the AP says the five original nuclear powers (the US, Russia, Great Britain, France, and China) and NATO allies “stand unified in our opposition to the potential repercussions” of the TPNW, charging that the treaty “turns back the clock on verification and disarmament and is dangerous.”

“PeaceWorks is adamant that the historical record indicates exactly the opposite,” says Spencer Graves, secretary to the PeaceWorks Board. “The world is lucky we have survived the nuclear age this long. The continuation of nuclear proliferation increases the risks of nuclear Armageddon: Fifteen years ago, there were only 8 nuclear weapon states; now there are 9. A decade earlier, there were only 7.”

PeaceWorks-KC will observe the treaty’s entry into force Jan. 22. Find info on PeaceWorksKC.org.

Here is my annual membership for PeaceWorks

- Membership: $40
- Donor: $50+
- Major Donor: $100+
- Family Membership: $60
- 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: (___) ______
Kansas Poor People’s Campaign demands Medicaid expansion

By Charles Carney

Dennis Russell said he gave his right eye so rich people in Kansas could become a little richer. On Sept. 29, when 55 persons, including four PeaceWorks-KC leaders, marched for expanded Medicaid in Kansas, the 60-year-old Russell said he could not get the glaucoma in his right eye treated for years because he had no health insurance. Now that he has Kansas Medicaid, his eye doctor is telling him it is too late to repair the sight in his right eye, and he will probably never see again out of that eye.

Dennis spoke at the rally and march in Kansas City, KS, led by the Kansas Poor People’s Campaign (PPC). The Kansas House has twice passed expanded Medicaid, but Senate President Susan Wagle and Gene Suellentrop, a committee chair, refuse to let the bill leave committee and go to the full Senate. The bill has broad bipartisan support.

At the Sept. 29 rally and march, I called for more “affordable, evidence-based, trauma-informed solutions” for people in addiction recovery. “Kansas cannot incarcerate its way out of its addiction crisis,” I stated, adding that expanding Medicaid would save thousands of lives and rescue rural hospitals.

Kathy Downing, a PPC leader, spoke just outside the University of Kansas Health Systems, at 42nd and Rainbow. She outlined gross disparities in child mortality between Wyandotte and Johnson counties. In states where Medicaid has already been expanded, she said, such disparities are greatly reduced.

Jalisa Davis of Miller Dream, a community organization, also spoke up for children. “The health care system continues to be detrimental to us as a nation. Our children have suffered extensive trauma and are being asked to function normally in a system where they haven’t been shown value.”

PeaceWorks-KC Board member and nurse Ann Suellentrop insisted, “We need health coverage for everyone, because the sooner health problems are discovered, the better for the patient. For example, if a person with diabetes can find out early on and get it under control, they will be able to prevent amputations, losing kidney function, or going blind.”

Ginger Ferguson’s anxiety and PTSD flared up and she could not join in the event. However, PeaceWorks Board member Kristin Scheer read her statement, saying she lost her health insurance when she needed it the most—right as the COVID-19 pandemic began in March. “It shouldn’t be this hard,” wrote Ferguson, age 60. “I started paying into this system when I was 14. It wouldn’t be so insane if we simply had Medicare for All, like every other developed nation.”

Chris Overfelt, of the PeaceWorks-KC Board, marched with his Veterans for Peace flag and chanted slogans such as, “We are a new unsettling force, and we are powerful,” and “Somebody’s hurting my people, and I won’t be silent anymore.”

—Charles Carney, treasurer of the Kansas Poor People’s Campaign, serves on the PeaceWorks-KC Board. The Kansas PPC has thanked PeaceWorks for its recent $500 donation.

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
Art fair online — cont. from p. 1

“How about a virtual, online art fair?” asked David Bayard. And like a whirling dervish he set out to do just that. There was only one artist’s tent this year, a tent set up in David’s garage to exhibit works of his fellow online artists. From there he and other volunteers conducted about 10 hours of live interviews with artists, inviting attendees to visit artists’ online booths for live chats and shop online from artists’ websites.

When asked how many hours he invested in his “Virtual Online Art Extravaganza,” David allowed as to how he “quit counting after 350 hours.” In his response we perhaps could all take a lesson on how to cope with COVID-19: hold to a hopeful vision, “possibilitize” creatively, and take action to make it so.

Thank you, David, for your artistry and activism! And thanks to all our artists for daring with us to venture online, for art and peace!

—Jim Hannah serves on PeaceWorks’ Communications Team.

Artists in PeaceWorks KC Local Art Fair

PeaceWorks-KC encourages you to contact the artists who participated in our first online fair Sept. 26-27. Thank them with a purchase for your holiday gifts.

• **2BGlass**, Tate Bezdek, 2bglass.com, 530-417-1998: hand-blown glass.

• **All Things Abstract**, Roxanne Brown, 913-999-1176, roxannenicoled77@yahoo.com: abstract art paintings.

• **Amani Lamps & Pots**, Tarris Rosell, instagram.com/amanilamps, 913-909-3863: pottery lamps, etc.

• **Artist KC**, Christianne Bohannon, artistkc.com, 816-260-7839: KC-themed paintings and pets, acrylic on canvas & wood.

• **Artwork by Haley**, Haley Sellmeyer, 913-428-0638, haleyseym.com: acrylic paintings, mixed media.

• **Back Door Pottery**, Rebecca Koop, 816-483-6964, backdoorpottery.com: mugs, porcelain, dinnerware, Egyptian paste beads, mosaic tiles.


• **Beth Budesheim—Painted Journeys**, 816-305-4670, bethbudesheim.com/paintings oil & acrylic paintings: healing mandalas, goddesses, wings, love.

• **Bohemian Moon**, Heather Benoit-Moli, 816-877-1641, bohemianmoonboutique@gmail.com: unique collection of handmade goods, pottery, gemstone jewelry, clothing, home décor.

• **Brickhouse Partners Ltd**, Brian Reagan, 419-740-0011, bhpltdohio.com: patent art pros.


• **Designingrose**, Ariel Rose, ariel@designrose.com, 913-221-6946: small to medium size ceramic sculpture.

• **Designing Rose**, Rachel Rose, designingrose.com, 913-221-6946: jewelry, watercolor paintings, bead weaving & mixed media.


• **Ebb & Flow Studio**, William Taylor, 210-875-8787, wftaylor79@gmail.com: hand-blown glass art.

• **Gary E. Bachers**, garybachers.com, 903-244-2447: wax pencil drawings, full moon.

• **Greek Gypsy Sister**, Carol Potter, 816-838-4008, vintagegypsy52@gmail.com: upcycled wearable art, unique clothing.


Open letter to artists

By Cris Mann

As I moved from booth to booth as part of the online PeaceWorks KC Local Art Fair, 2020, I wondered: What is the connection between art and peace?

Interviewing some of you artists was such a joyful experience, and I could not understand why. I have no art experience, can barely follow directions on such simple things as putting together an Ikea bed frame. The experience seemed to unlock in me a renewed understanding about the role of art in our society—a view that was long ago squelched by those seeking fame, exclusion, and competitiveness.

Interviewing artists revealed that all of you represent appreciation for beauty, personal expression, and in-
Election reflection: Keep building peaceful communities

By Christopher Overfelt

The Democratic Party appears poised to take not only the presidency but also the Senate. This is consistent with the pattern of the past few decades: Each party succeeds the other in power with very little changing in the policies that most affect ordinary Americans.

Foreign-policy-wise, neither party has been able to reign in the bloated military budget that siphons so much taxpayer money into the pockets of the wealthy. Nor have they been able to stop the flow of weapons that issue from America and to repressive regimes around the globe. The UN has declared Yemen to be the single worst humanitarian catastrophe in the world. Since 2015, tens of thousands of children there have died of starvation, and thousands more are dying as we speak. These terrible deaths are not due to natural catastrophe, but are instead due to a war prosecuted by Saudi Arabia, with the logistical aid and weapons supplied by the United States.

Domestically, neither party has been able to stem the tide of substandard education and unaffordable health care and housing. Over the past 50 years in America, the cost of living has skyrocketed while wage growth has not kept pace. The unmitigated rise of corporate power and the decline of government power have contributed to these conditions.

In the wake of the Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court, we live in an era where public policy goes to the highest bidder. If Democrats do succeed in passing laws around climate change, health care, education, and gun control, it is possible a pro-corporate Supreme Court will nullify these changes. This is where groups like PeaceWorks, Vets for Peace, and the Poor People’s Campaign can be effective. We can build peaceful communities, even amid civil strife and political violence. No matter who takes power next year, the work towards peace will continue. History shows that politically weaker groups of people, through collective action, can strive and thrive in the face of overwhelming power. As a group, PeaceWorks can help build a society in which respect and grace are given even in times of political turmoil.

Peace takes practice. If we are going to advocate for peace in our communities and in other places, we must first practice it ourselves. Grace and love are fundamental aspects of peace. When we fail, we must be able to allow ourselves grace and we must extend that grace to others when they fail. This goes for politicians, people whom we disagree with, and even the political systems that govern us. ⚜

—Christopher Overfelt of the PeaceWorks-KC Board of Directors is active in Veterans for Peace and the Poor People’s Campaign.

Check in with SURJ KC—Showing Up for Racial Justice

Showing Up for Racial Justice KC is a local network organizing white folks for racial justice. SURJ holds Facebook Live conversations every other Thursday, at facebook.com/SURJKansasCity. The organization in early November is holding the training Four Forms of Racism, with Nehemiah Rosell of PeaceWorks-KC as a leader. In late November, SURJ will present Disrupting Institutional Racism. December should bring the training Journey to Allyship. Additional sessions, coming later, will be SURJ 101: Disrupting Internalized White Supremacy and Calling In: Talking to People We Love about Racism. ⚜

Open letter to artists — continued from p. 5

clusiveness of ideas, all of which are components of peace and peaceful living. I asked you, “What would you say if someone today wanted to be an artist—what advice would you give them?” None of you were negative, even in this pandemic. All of you responded affirmatively in spite of the hard work that it takes, overcoming fears and the fact that the economy is dire. Each of you said, “Go ahead, be an artist!” Artists, I concluded, practice freedom of expression, an essential part of democracy, an essential part of peace. ⚜

—Cris Mann, a co-chair of the PeaceWorks-KC Board of Directors, was one of four PeaceWorks leaders who interviewed artists during the online art fair.
Climate crisis calls us to action

By Kristin Scheer

The news is bleak. By mid-September, wildfires raged in 15 states, taking homes, lives, livelihoods and infrastructure. The Atlantic hurricane system was so severe we ran out of names for storms using the English alphabet and used the Greek alphabet for only the second time.

Western Siberia recorded its hottest spring ever. The permafrost under the arctic terrain is caving in the heat. In late May, amidst this thawing, the city of Norilsk suffered its worst environmental disaster when an oil tanker collapsed and spilled over 21,000 tons of oil into the Ambarnaya River.

All the while, we are living through the worst worldwide pandemic in more than 100 years. By Oct. 25, 42 million coronavirus cases had been reported worldwide and 1,151,000 persons had died from the disease; the US had 8.7 million confirmed cases and 228,346 deaths. Deforestation and mass extinction leave us much more vulnerable to epidemics like this.

These crises and more are among disasters predicted by climate scientists who have sounded alarms for more than 50 years. And yet here we are. Change is upon us. And we have chosen that change largely by avoiding, ignoring, and/or denying the evidence.

We still have time to act to avoid some of the worst suffering predicted, and we must! We can’t wait for leaders to solve the problem for us. And we are speaking up. Greta Thunberg’s Friday for the Future protests went global in 2019. Millions of young people joined a climate strike to call for climate action.

Worldwide protests engaged people of all ages and added urgency to policy discussions surrounding climate change. More than 1,200 governments, including 26 national governments, declared climate emergencies in 2019. And a new Green Deal is being discussed in the United States.

Add your voice. Contact your elected officials. Tell them you know the climate crisis is real. If you’ve already contacted them, do it again. Our children and grandchildren will reap the rewards and pay the price for what we do and do not do today.

—Kristin Scheer, a Greenpeace activist, serves on the PeaceWorks-KC Board.

Artwork: “Wildfires,” fiber art depicting the Tick Fire in California, 2020, by Susan Ferguson (see p. 5).

KC Tenants

KC Tenants is an organization led by multi-racial, multi-generational poor and working-class tenants. They’re trying to ensure that everyone has a safe, accessible, and affordable home. KC Tenants contends that the coronavirus “will affect our poor and working-class community members the most. People who are housing insecure or currently homeless are at a higher risk of being exposed to the virus, becoming ill, and suffering catastrophic health outcomes.” The website kctenants.org gives the hotline 816-533-5435, plus links to resources.

Signs with spunk

’Tis the season to replace election yard signs with perennials. Or put a new sign in your window. PeaceWorks-KC got signs printed for you: Demilitarize Police, Defend Black Life.

To pick up one or more of these signs, e-mail PeaceWorksKC@gmail.com or call Henry Stoever, 913-375-0045. If you wish, give us a love offering. Thanks!
When silence is not golden

Shouting “Fire!” in a crowded theater, when there is no fire, is considered immoral—even illegal.

But what about the failure to shout “Fire!” if the theater actually is on fire? In today’s topsy-turvy world of alternative values, that’s a worthy question. Unprecedented wildfires, for instance, have been raging in the West. And an unprecedented virus is raging nationwide. Millions of acres of charred forests and 228,000 COVID-19 deaths would seem irrefutable facts of deadly proportion.

Yet truth climate change deniers and COVID-19 deniers remain silent, as the skies darken from smoke and hearts darken with grief.

Incredibly, some deniers are not only silent, but make unmasked attempts to obfuscate and conceal reality, thereby spreading the flames.

Yes, as a defense mechanism, denial has merit. It’s how we sometimes keep from being overwhelmed by imminent existential threats.

But at some point the realities of global climate change and global pandemic will be at everyone’s doorstep. There’s still time to face these “inconvenient truths” and take preventive measures to limit further devastation. But first we have to wake up and smell the smoke.

Then the responsible thing to do, for the common good, is shout “Fire!”

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This letter by Jim Hannah to the editor of the Independence Examiner is reprinted with permission.