Join 10th Memorial Day witness for a nuke-free world

Mindful of COVID-19, with masks and social distancing, PeaceWorks-KC is holding a one-mile walk and then rally for a nuclear-weapon-free world this Memorial Day, May 31.

PeaceWorks’ Annual Meeting: inspiring!

By Mary Hladky
For the first time, PeaceWorks-KC used Zoom to hold its Annual Meeting, with 57 persons attending on March 7. It was both inspiring and happy. We were serenaded with joyful live music, played our homemade Peace Jeopardy, and learned how much PeaceWorks-KC accomplished during a very long, difficult COVID-19 year.

PeaceWorks-KC was financially supported by its members and received a very generous donation from the Benedictine Sisters. We posted, at various spots in KC MO, four billboards calling for a...
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nuclear-weapon-free world. We celebrated the entry into force of the international Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the Ban Treaty), started a book club, and are in the process of developing a peace walk.

I am proud to be part of this hardworking organization that continues “the work” no matter the challenging times!

Through our online process, we selected these leaders.

Board officers. We re-elected to one-year terms Co-chairs Sunny Jordan Hamrick, Cris Mann, and Henry Stoever; Vice Chair Mary Hladky (myself); Treasurer Dave Pack; and Secretary Spencer Graves.

Board members. We re-elected to two-year terms Directors Ann Suellentrop and Leigh Woody. Continuing as directors are Charles Carney, Christopher Overfelt, and Kristin Scheer. In addition, Bennette Dibben, our staff assistant, attends Board meetings.

Nominating Committee. We elected (or re-elected) to this committee Charles Carney, Cris Mann, and myself.

After the elections, we watched Jim Hannah puzzle contestants in our Peace Jeopardy game; he wrote most of the game. The contestants, chosen for their KC-area peace-and-justice work, were Kathy Downing, of the local coordinating committee of the Poor People’s Campaign; Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, MD, war resister and founder of Argentine Family Health; and Michael Savoioir, union activist and retired Teamster. They tackled “answers” and came up with “questions” such as “Who is Harriet Tubman?” and “What is the greenhouse effect?” For the record: Kathy won!

Ann’s pitch for peace

One of our Annual Meeting speakers, Director Ann Suellentrop, said 54 countries have ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As more and more countries ratify, she said, “It is up to us from the grass roots to make the Treaty work, to promote it. We must speak up for the Treaty, because there are over 13,400 nuclear weapons in current arsenals, many on hair-trigger alert. They can end life as we know it in a half-hour’s time. Just ask the people of Hawai’i who during a false alarm a couple of years ago were calling their loved ones to say good-bye from their bathtubs.”

Ann continued, “Emerging technologies in the fields of offensive cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, and autonomous technologies will have a significant impact on military behavior. We do NOT want to see a nuclear weapon that can decide on its own to launch itself!”

For Ann’s full talk, see https://peaceworkskc.org/nuclear-weapons/we-have-to-make-the-treaty-work-on-banning-nukes.

Calling all artists

Artists, please save Sept. 25-26 for the PeaceWorks KC Local Art Fair--this year at Theis Park.

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: (___)_________
Memorial Day — continued from page 1

We’ll gather at 10:30 a.m. at Prospect Avenue and Mo. Hwy. 150, parking on Prospect. Jim Hannah will welcome us, uplift us, as we begin our one-mile trek on the public sidewalk, alongside the new plant for making/procuring parts for nuclear weapons. We’ll carry a flag for each country (54 and counting!) that has ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. “The Ban Treaty is so hopeful, so miraculous,” says Ann Suellentrop. “The beautiful flags from countries all over the world call to mind the hibakusha (survivors of the 1945 nuclear bomb attacks), the indigenous, the downwinders, and indeed the majority of nations that demand an end to this nuclear madness!”

Around 11:30 a.m., we’ll end our walk at Botts Road, by the entry to the National Security Campus, the nuke-parts factory. We’ll hear from Maurice Copeland, a 32-year employee/supervisor at the KC Plant that from 1949 to 2014 was at Bannister Federal Complex, now being “decontaminated”—do you believe that—from more than 2,000 toxins the federal government documented there.

We’ll enter into a die-in on public property, naming people who died from the old KC Plant toxins. Suellentrop will reflect on the silence we’ll keep, lying on the ground for the die-in, yearning for a new world free of nuclear illnesses, threats, and horrors. Enough!—our bodies will say.

This witness will be PeaceWorks’ 10th annual Memorial Day event to call for an end to nuke-making. Henry Stoever began our yearly walk in 2012, a 9-mile trudge from the KC Plant to the bean-field bought for the new plant. This year, lifting up hope, we’ll bring food for Harvesters (see p. 8). See you May 31! *

DC Days training for lobbying online, free

Every year, the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability conducts training for lobbying and schedules lobbying meetings at offices of US senators and representatives. It’s called DC Days. This year—voila!—ANA is holding the training online in April, and anyone can speak and ask questions. The April training will cover the top issues related to nuclear weapons and radioactive waste.

In addition, DC Days online sessions in May will feature ANA leaders lobbying Department of Energy officials (nuclear weapons production/storage/funding comes under DOE) and heads of congressional committees that approve nuclear weapon policies and appropriations. ANA will hold these May lobbying sessions online, but watchers (like us) will not be able to speak.

“After we receive lobby training and watch actual lobbying, we will be able to more effectively do our own Zoom meetings with our elected officials!” says Ann Suellentrop, a past president of ANA and longtime Board member of PeaceWorks-KC. Let Suellentrop know if you’re interested. Contact her at 913-271-7925 or annsuellen@gmail.com. *

Contact elected officials

Mayor Quinton Lucas: 816-513-3500
City Council: 816-513-1368
President Joe Biden: 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. Roger Marshall, MD (R-Kan.): 202-224-4774
Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.): 202-224-6521
Rep. Sharice Davids (D-3rd dist., Kan.): 913-621-0832

On Memorial Day 2017, resisters "die-in" under the eye of KC MO police—there to protect the nuke–parts operation that by now costs taxpayers $1 billion per year. —Photo by Jim Hannah
Rally condemns cruelty to women in Turkey, worldwide rise in domestic violence

By Jane Stoever

A gathering of about 60 persons highlighted violence in Turkey against women as well as domestic violence everywhere. The local chapter of Advocates of Silenced Turkey organized the rally March 6 in Kansas City, Mo.

The international Advocates of Silenced Turkey, in its news release for International Women’s Day, March 8, noted, “The current administration (of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan) uses arbitrary arrests and prolonged pretrial detentions to imprison courageous women who have opposed oppression. Today, the number of women arbitrarily incarcerated as political prisoners stands at more than 5,000. Among those persecuted are more than 700 mothers who have been imprisoned with their infants. … In 2020, 300 women were killed.”

“We’re recognizing the thousands of women imprisoned or killed in Turkey for their community service and support of democracy, human rights action,” said Eyyup Esen, Ph.D., who was born and raised in Turkey and now represents the Dialogue Institute of Kansas City. “We are calling for freedom for the women and their children who are victims of discrimination, violence, and persecution.” Another speaker at the KC rally said many women in Turkey have been arrested simply for working outside the home.

Speaker Itto Outini, an immigrant from Morocco with a master’s degree in journalism, said she suffered domestic violence at age 17 when a relative blinded her. Now a Fulbright scholar, Outini quoted an author: “Saving one person is like saving the whole world.” Outini added, “Hurting one person is like hurting the whole world.” She said of immigrants, “We come here to live, to breathe. If you say you are against something in Turkey, you get punished. We all should stand up and speak for each other!”

Representatives of two local domestic violence shelters addressed the rally. Carlen Davis, a community outreach educator for Friends of Yates in Kansas City, Kan., said about 75 percent of the women and families who come for help to Friends of Yates are persons of color. Karena Jemsen from Newhouse in the north-east area of Kansas City, Mo., said their 88-bed emergency shelter welcomes women, men, and children who are victims of domestic violence. Four million women across the world are victims of domestic violence, she said, and in 2019 in Missouri, domestic violence programs served more than 36,300 clients. Domestic violence “disproportionately affects women of color and immigrants,” Jemsen added.

—Jane Stoever leads the PeaceWorks-KC Communications Team.
Want to help plan 2022 ‘Peace Is the Way’ journey by foot, by bike?

By Charles Carney

As a straight white male of privilege, I have been steeped in a culture of dominance and entitlement. This is not a statement of guilt or shame. It is simply a statement of truth.

After great contemplation, it weighs upon my heart to carry out a “walk for peace” and a “bike for peace” from McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, KS, to the Honeywell plant in Kansas City, MO, in May 2022. Officers at McConnell refuel planes that carry nuclear weapons while the planes are still in the air. For me, to accept the dominant paradigm that nuclear weapons are a necessary evil is as abhorrent as accepting racism, sexism, and heterosexism. As a life-long social worker, it is as abhorrent as saying poverty and homelessness are unsolvable! Also, the belief that “Man (sic) has dominion over the earth” is a ticket right into our own extinction—either by nuclear holocaust or abrupt climate catastrophe, or some combination of both.

So I will be coordinator or “head cat herder” of “Peace Is the Way,” when we’ll walk or bike through Kansas next year. It is a journey of downward mobility from privilege to solidarity. It is a journey away from the addiction of violence and fossil fuels to honoring and listening to Mother Earth. It is a journey to expand our consciousness into the reality that nuclear weapons are illegal! It is a journey to hear stories of First Nation Peoples and people who were forced onto this land into the violence of slavery. We will honor the Earth by walking or biking, not driving, and by treading lightly, cycling lightly. We will seek divestment from the violent culture of resource inequality, sex trafficking, and public lynchings of countless George Floyds and Breonna Taylors. The journey hopefully will foster our simplicity, deepen our sense of community, and break down false barriers of class, race, and sex.

Will you join us for a day, a week, or the entire trip? Will you help plan this journey? Do you have gifts like networking or “camping out” skills? Do you just want to see Kansas and walk or bike through the Flint Hills? Will you email me—at donnacharles_1@sbcglobal.net—and perhaps join us in any small or large way? Thank you!

—Charles Carney, a social worker in Kansas City, KS, serves on the Board of Directors of PeaceWorks-KC and is a leader of the Poor People’s Campaign in Kansas.

Yemen in crisis

News reports indicate the US has supported the Saudi-Arabian-led war in Yemen, begun in 2015, through arms sales and technical assistance. Yemen for several years has faced the world’s largest humanitarian crisis, with 24 million people in need of aid and 20 million “food insecure,” with babies and children starving to death. Then COVID-19 struck. For info and a way to donate, go to yemenfoundation.org. ♦

Mark your calendar…

- May 31, Memorial Day walk/die-in (page 1)
- Aug. 8, Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance, possibly Loose Park
- Sept. 25-26, PeaceWorks KC Local Art Fair, Theis Park, 47th to 49th St. at Oak St., KCMO
- October, Bike for Peace (page 7)
- May 2022, “Peace Is the Way” walk/bike
Greetings from social justice groups

Note: Eight groups sent these greetings to PeaceWorks-KC; they were read during our online Annual Meeting March 7.

Greetings from Cherith Brook. With all the services we provide, a strong sense of peace is fostered. We try to create the conscious community Dr. King talked about. The staff and volunteers are committed to nonviolence. We study the Sermon on the Mount: blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God. And we have seen God’s work. We are in the process of joyfully redefining what is most important to our community, zeroing in on our role as the Shower House. The power of grace that moves through Cherith Brook daily moves out from there across the city, across the country, and across the planet. (from Chris Stohrer)

Thank you, PeaceWorks-KC, for giving Grandparents Against Gun Violence the opportunity to share a message for your Annual Meeting—it is an honor. PeaceWorks has supported us since we began in 2013—and not only do we appreciate that support, but we have learned so much by watching the work of your dedicated volunteers. We share a vision for a better world—PeaceWorks for A healthy world of justice and peace without war and its weapons, and GAGV that All people in our community are safe from gun violence. We are proud to work with you, and together we will Speak Up and Act Up to educate the public and the government about the need for peace and safety. And we will succeed! (from Judy Sherry)

The Green Party, Kansas City Chapter salutes PeaceWorks-KC for your continuing dedication and efforts in pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Perhaps your voice could be louder and more effective, but just that a voice is being raised in this society and time is significant and inspiring. It is hoped that future Green activity and effort will help expand this voice and effort in pursuit of nuclear disarmament and a more peaceful, safer world. There is a hope that the Green Party and PeaceWorks can find ways to support one another, especially in resisting environmental degradation. (from Daniel Karam)

Greetings, PeaceWorks, from the Kansas Poor People’s Campaign, as well as from Rev. William Barber and Rev. Liz TheoHarris of the national campaign. We are grateful to you for your campaign last year “to promote human care and to end warfare.” Thank you for your efforts in demilitarizing police and for working with us to bring community oversight to the Unified Government Police Department in Wyandotte County. We enjoyed hearing some of our own PPC members speak on Spencer Graves’ KKFI program on New Year’s Eve. We are grateful for PeaceWorks’ excellent presentations at one of our “Take Back Your Lunch” programs that we hold every Wednesday at noon. Thank you for ongoing efforts to connect militarism and poverty. We stand in solidarity. (from Charles Carney)

The Learning Club sends warm greetings to PeaceWorks-KC. We have been so grateful for your annual contributions to our students in our after-school and summer programs in the urban core of KCK and KCMO. Throughout the pandemic, we have supported students at all six of our sites with safe, in-person programming, including a fun and educational summer program last year, along with daily study halls during the school year where students can connect to our Internet and get help with their online classes. The students we serve are some of the most disadvantaged students in our community. We are also grateful for all PeaceWorks does to promote peace at local, national, and global levels! Keep up the great work! (from Brad Grabs)
Bike for Peace group heads our way in October

The Norway-based Bike for Peace activists are planning a US tour this summer and may reach KC in October. Norwegians Tore Nærland, founder of Bike for Peace, and Tore Vestby, a conservative politician and a leader of Mayors for Peace, both of whom visited KC in 2014, are looking forward to protesting the nuclear weapon parts plant in KC MO, the National Security Campus.

They may visit peace groups and/or universities in Des Moines, Omaha (STRATCOM is there—the US Strategic Command, with responsibility for “strategic deterrence, nuclear operations, global strike, targeting,” etc.), Atchison, KS, and Leavenworth, KS. Bike for Peace will begin and end their US tour in the KC area. For further info, contact Ann Suellentrop at 913-271-7925 or anssuellen@gmail.com.

Greetings from the School of Metaphysics, an organization deeply steeped in peace. The Kansas City, KS, branch of the School of Metaphysics is offering a Spiritual Ethics class on Sunday afternoons in person at the school branch. The cost of the course is $54, including the book PeaceMaking, building from teachings of Nobel Peace Prize winners. For details, email kansascity@SOM.org or call 913-236-9292. A practice of peace we often use comes from our Universal Peace Covenant: “We must transcend whatever separates us. Through giving love and respect, dignity, and comfort, we come to know peace.” (from Chris Stohrer)

Thank you, PeaceWorks-KC, for your vital work for peace and justice. We applaud these efforts as we work towards the shared goal of the abolition of the institution of war. World BEYOND War debunks the myths that war is just, necessary, inevitable, or beneficial, instead cultivating a culture of peace.

The core pillars of our work are peace education, weapons divestment, and closing military bases, which we see as three essential steps towards dismantling the war machine. Please reach out about ways we can collaborate and amplify your work for a world beyond war! (from Greta Zarro)
Help Harvesters

PeaceWorks-KC cares, agreed? We pitch in for peace and justice, right? So, with a bow to justice, PeaceWorks opened a donor account with the food bank Harvesters. They aim to “feed hungry people today, and end hunger tomorrow.” How do you find the PeaceWorks account with Harvesters? Go to harvesters.org/virtualfooddrive and click on “Join a team.” Under “Team name,” type Peace Works KC. Hit enter, scroll down to the Peace Works KC category, and click on it with your credit card ready. Even a $1 contribution helps provide 3 meals. If you have tech problems, call Jane Stoever, 913-206-4088.

One bright idea: Those of us who do not need the stimulus payment through the coronavirus relief bill might send some of that check to Harvesters. Bingo! Then, come May 31, Memorial Day, while we rally for a world free of nuclear weapons, we’ll add the food-in-hand part of our Harvesters support. We’ll meet at Prospect and Mo. Hwy. 150 at 10:30 a.m. for our walk to the entry road of the National Security Campus, where parts are made or procured for nuclear weapons. Both at the beginning and the end of the one-mile walk, we’ll have boxes for donations.

Here are Harvesters’ suggestions.

Food

- Canned vegetables (low sodium)
- Canned fruits in 100% juice
- Dried fruit (no-added-sugar preferred)
- Canned chicken, tuna, salmon (packed in water)
- Brown rice
- Whole-grain pasta
- Dried beans or canned low-sodium beans
- Peanut, almond, or sun butter
- Canned soup (chicken, tomato or vegetable)
- Cereal – hot and cold (whole-grain, low-sugar preferred)

Household products

- Soap
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- Toilet paper ♫