



PEACEWORKS KANSAS CITY OCTOBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Affiliated with
PeaceAction



4509 Walnut, Kansas City, MO 64111 · 816-561-1181 · PeaceWorksKC.org · PeaceWorksKC@gmail.com

After the rain, the sun shines ...

By Mary Hladky

Our 32nd annual PeaceWorks KC Local Art Fair, in Theis Park, was inundated with rain on Saturday, Sept. 23, keeping patrons away. Sunday, Sept. 24, was a perfectly glorious day with robust sales. But even with Sunday's strong sales, we were unable to reach last year's total sales. No matter! Our diverse group of artists and customers enjoyed the fair and its many offerings. Artist Rochelle Wisoff-Fields summed it up: "undampened spirits!"

Theis Park provides a beautiful setting for people to enjoy a peaceful time perusing the overflowing creativity of art from 70+ artists. Fairgoers enjoyed a multitude of paintings, pottery, handcrafted jewelry, watercolor gift cards, marbles and wood bowls.

After the rain, the sun shines
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*Patrons wander the sidewalk, many visiting most of our 70+ artists.
—Photo by Jim Hannah*

Ann Suellentrop comes to trial Oct. 25 for opposing nuclear weapons

Ann Suellentrop resisted nuclear weapons by stepping across the property line at the local nuke-parts plant in KC MO on Memorial Day, May 29. Ann refused to return across the line when police warned her to. For her civil resistance, she comes before a judge Oct. 25. Come support her!

When: rally at noon Wed., Oct. 25; enter courthouse at 1pm

Where: KC MO Municipal Court, 511 E. 11th St. (11th & Locust)

A vice chair of PeaceWorks KC and former director of the national Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, Ann has fought nuclear weapons 15 years and has come to court for resis-

tance two other times. At a court hearing Aug. 17, Ann's co-defendants, Kimmy Igla and Rylan Scott, who also refused to step back from the property line May 29, were advised by their lawyer, Julie Gibson, to plead guilty, which they did. Gibson focused on the possibility of six months' imprisonment and/or a fine of \$500. Kimmy and Rylan were given fines of \$165.50 and suspended imposition of sentence—if they obey all laws and stay away from the KC nuclear weapons plant for a year, they will have no record of a conviction. At that hearing, Ann refused to plead guilty and therefore comes to trial Oct. 25 in Courtroom G, before Judge Katherine Emke.

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We gathered as ‘a group conscience’ mourning lives lost at Hiroshima, Nagasaki

By Elise Cossairt

As I sat there on Aug. 6, in Loose Park, watching the rainbow in the pond’s fountain, an intense feeling of sadness washed over me. The fact that unattainable exact figures (in the hundreds of thousands) of people had lost their lives this week, 78 years ago, left an intense pain in my chest. It is my belief that we are all interconnected and life is the most valuable and precious gift. All those women, children, and men were robbed of the ability to reap the benefits of this gift. Countless others were left suf-

fering and in turmoil. This was only the beginning.

The volunteers that spoke and gave their time were phenomenal! The stories and poetry brought tears to my eyes as we all gathered as a group conscience, to remember and

grieve the lives that were lost. I got chills when the poets shared their interpretations. Hiroko Komiya’s retelling of Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes was a gut-wrenching expression of what the natives of Hiroshima and Nagasaki endured. These battles are something I can only imagine. If I combined all my worst experiences, they couldn’t surmount to losing my home, my family, or my life.

My only hope is that humanity can learn from our mistakes and build

a better, more collective, world for generations to come. If we refuse to grow, we will surely suffer the same experiences over and over again. None of the people killed will ever get to appreciate the rainbow in the fountain, the beauty of a poem, or the comfort of being surrounded by love. ♡

—Elise Cossairt is a data analyst at Amazon, and a lover of all creatures. She likes to help those in need and care for her numerous pets.



The Loose Park fountain in KC MO and flags of countries that have ratified the nuclear weapon ban treaty graced the setting for the Hiroshima & Nagasaki Remembrance Aug. 6. —Photos by Jim Hannah

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. Eric Schmitt
(R-Mo.): 202-224-5721

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver
(D-5th dist., Mo.):
202-225-4535

Rep. Sam Graves (R-6th
dist., Mo.): 202-225-7041

Rep. Mark Alford (R-4th
dist., 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



Hiroko Komiya, right, who is principal of the Kansas City Japanese School, and others of Japanese descent, plus their partners, were among some 75 persons recalling the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks and seeking peace for our world.



Eri Sakata, of Japanese and Black heritage, speaks before sharing this poem at the Hiroshima & Nagasaki Remembrance Aug. 6 in KC MO. —Photo by Jim Hannah

Morning Newspaper

By Eri Sakata

We sat in the kitchen inside a house atop a hill surrounded by rice paddies in Osaka, Japan. With tennis ball hands, I grasped grey newspaper my grandfather unearthed from sliding closet doors. Furrowed, silver-speckled brows adorned his forehead, his shoulders tilted with urgency. My ojichan, who I often called Papa, gestured towards the paper—marked with a life-time of yesterdays. With juvenile pupils, I saw it—stained in black and white: an image of a country shaken, shuddering, crumbling with rubble. The headline whistled through my conscience with irony. The country where I envisioned my home was cited as the creator of the rubble. The sole producer of the carnage. The country I CALLED home pursued pain towards the people—the family I knew as home. Though the paper whispered bruised and wisened stories from the past—its tone was a still and solemn shout through my mind.

That day, my grandpa instilled within my conscience a rawness—an enlightening truth previously absent from my youth. America—globally poised as a vision of freedom, unity, and liberation—hung like a falsified fairytale from the nape of my perspective. Its red-striped flag lay tattered amongst the crimson rubble of my Japanese ancestors. Amongst the carnage at their fingertips. Amongst the headlines of my childhood. The nuclear past seemed not far from reach, nestled within the safety of that kitchen. And since that day, the red-striped flag has NEVER hung the same. ♡

Concert aims to oppose bigotry, champion human dignity

A Dec. 2 concert in KCMO will mark 40 years since the founding of the Institute on Research and Education on Human Rights. Founder Leonard Zeskind continues to be tapped by local and national media for data on the white nationalist movement and other militant, anti-democratic, far-right groups.

Help sustain IREHR by attending the Dec. 2 concert at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 4501 Walnut, KCMO. A reception and silent auction will be held at 6pm; the concert starts at 7pm, with tickets costing \$20. Among the performers will be Danny Cox and the women’s folk music group Rosy’s Bar & Grill. ♡



Leonard Zeskind —Photo courtesy of Leonard Zeskind



Danny Cox —Photo courtesy of Danny Cox

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**

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 PeaceWorks
 4509 Walnut St.
 Kansas City, MO 64111

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After the rain, the sun shines ... — *continued from p. 1*

Also, MoPeace's street theater performed a skit with quite a bit of humor, addressing the serious topics of war, its weapons and the suffering in Ukraine. Our attendees also got to speak with nonprofit organization leaders who tabled to inform us of the good work being done in the Kansas City area. Richard Mabion spoke about his work to counter the climate crisis and noted government funds available to create "green" jobs providing meaningful, good-paying jobs for inner-city residents. Rachel MacNair, of Better Ballot KC, stressed the need to adopt ranked choice voting because it's more democratic than voting for only one candidate. Other speakers included Steve Kellog from Friends Committee on National Legislation, Theodore John of Veterans for Peace, and representatives of Citizens for Justice in the Middle East.

PeaceWorks believes our local art fair is an important event for the community. The fair not only financially supports the artists but PeaceWorks activities throughout the year. We believe art is a form of sharing. Art can challenge us, make us think and feel. Art can bring people together, build community, educate and change attitudes. That's work we believe in.

So many people commented that they really enjoyed the fair and are looking forward to next year. And that's the best indicator of success!! ♣

—*Mary Hladky is a vice chair of PeaceWorks KC.*



Above: Hard rain brought hail before the storm let up, allowing patrons to return to our fair.



Left: Jon Shafer of the Penn Valley Friends Meeting shares his Quaker heritage with our social justice circle. He obtained conscientious objector status to all wars during the Vietnam war. —Photos by Jim Hannah



Right: PeaceWorks Treasurer Dave Pack stands at a table behind cashiers (from left) Richard Rostenberg, Peggy Ekerdt, Jim Galliber, and David Ekerdt.



Above: David Bayard of Skyboy Photos displays his photography, poetry, and woodwork.



Top right: Melanie Bolden, mixed media artist, combines swirls and delicate designs. Can you see the kiss?



Middle right: Robin Urton of Dreambird Art shares her often nature-inspired paintings and prints.

Below: A young fair-goer takes careful aim at a toilet seat, wanting to toss away the nuclear weapon toy. He got a prize for succeeding, under the watchful eyes of Rose Roos, left, and Debra Demeter at the table. The signs say what is wasted with nuclear weapons and war: lives and billions of dollars.

Bottom right: ROYALEARTH oils are the product of Kristin McGill.



Add to your bucket list

New PeaceWorks KC member Linda said after attending the PeaceWorks KC Local Art Fair, “I’m adding civil disobedience to my bucket list”—civil disobedience, that is, at the KCMO nuclear weapons plant. She spoke with Henry Stoeber of the PeaceWorks Board, who later said, “It’s like John Lewis telling us, ‘Speak up, speak out, get in the way. Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America.’” ♀

Ann Suellentrop comes to trial — *continued from page 1*

During the rally before the Aug. 17 hearing, reporter Jim Hannah posed this question to the three: Why'd you do it? Why'd you cross that line?

Ann cited her 45-year career as a pediatric nurse to explain her decision to engage in nonviolent action for nuclear abolition. "I'm a mandated reporter if children are being abused, or even threatened," she said. "I could be fined, or even put in prison for failing to report such violations. This nuclear weapons enterprise is a corporate abuse of our tax money because they are wasting billions of dollars on these death machines that could kill billions of children. Nuclear weapons are totally evil. They constitute child abuse. There have been many children who have died of leukemia who live around nuclear weapons sites and nuclear energy sites. It's the same poison. We've made such a mess, with no plan and few resources for clean-up."

Kimmy Igla said that her interest in nuclear abolition was an outgrowth of earlier activism on environmental concerns, saying this aspect of planetary health is often

neglected. This prompted her to become a member of the PeaceWorks KC Board. "I feel anti-nuclear work is part of climate justice," she said. "This is not something I hear a lot of young people talking about. There's a lot of denial around this issue. It's so hard keeping resources for environment that I don't want to see a billion dollars (the annual budget of the KC nuke plant is \$1.2 billion) going for nuclear weapons. And what about the clean-up of damage we've already done?"

Kimmy also mentioned going with Ann to DC Days in Washington, DC, where she heard a Navajo woman testify about the devastating health effects on First Peoples who lived, and continue to live, on land contaminated by

uranium mining. They're breathing air contaminated by nuclear testing.

Rylan Scott said that their interest in opposing nuclear weapons grew out of their friend Kimmy's involvement in this issue, heightening Rylan's awareness of the nuclear threat. Rylan was asked



Ann Suellentrop tells Jim Hannah about nuclear weapons: "We built these things; we can un-build them!" —Photos by Kriss Avery

about the recent movie "Oppenheimer," portraying the life and times of the "father of the atomic bomb." Rylan expressed disappointment that the film did not note the health effects on "downwinders" who were living near Los Alamos, NM, the site of the first US test of an atomic bomb. "And the use of black-and-white footage gives the impression that it's over and done with, but it's not. It's still happening to this day. They're creating nuclear weapons all the time. It's maddening!"

Ann, in explaining her decision to plead not guilty, said that the criminal activity was not her non-violent peace witness, but was instead the continued manufacture of nuclear weapons of mass destruction that could result in a nuclear winter. "We built these things; we can un-build them," said Ann. "The nuclear abolition movement is gaining momentum." She summed up her response to nuclear weapons: "When you're in a hole, quit digging!" ♡



From left: Rylan Scott, Kimmy Igla, and Ann Suellentrop pose before going into their courtroom.

KC Vets for Peace win Chapter of the Year Award

By Christopher Overfelt

Chapter 97, the Kansas City chapter of Veterans for Peace, received the 2023 Chapter of the Year Award from the Veterans for Peace Board. Veterans for Peace, an international organization, works against militarism and violence in local communities and around the world. Local chapters exist throughout the United States and in other countries. The Kansas City chapter participated in several anti-war and anti-violence events throughout 2023.

Sara Campbell is president emeritus of the Kansas City chapter of Veterans for Peace. Chapter officers, including veterans and associates, are Ted John as president, Lynda McClelland as vice president, Pat McClelland as treasurer, Anna Bedinger as secretary, and Jeff Humfeld as quartermaster, and I am an active member. In 2023, members of the KC chapter participated in several PeaceWorks events, includ-

ing the Memorial Day resistance at the Kansas City nuclear weapons plant and the Hiroshima/Nagasaki remembrance. We also help prepare and serve a meal once a year to the houseless at Cherith Brook Catholic Worker House. And every November, on

Veteran's Day, Veterans for Peace gathers at the Liberty Memorial to honor Armistice Day (the original name of the observance).

All are invited to join us this Nov. 11 at 10:30 am.

The 2023 award is especially significant for the Kansas City chapter. We feel that we received this award largely based on the efforts of Sara Campbell. Recently, longtime president Sara moved away from the Kansas City area to be closer to family. She worked tirelessly for many years to sustain and grow the Kansas City chapter of VFP. Chapter 97 sent the award with Sara as a fitting gift in her honor. ♡

—Christopher Overfelt serves on the PeaceWorks KC Board.



Sara Campbell, at front on right, and Diane Kubn hold the Chapter of the Year Award on Sept. 9; others, from left, are Ted John, Jeff Humfeld and Pat and Lynda McClelland.

—Photo by Jane Stoever

Dialogue & Friendship Dinner 10/25

With the theme “Dialogue and the Shape of Belief in a Fractured World,” the Dialogue Institute and Rainbow Foundation invite all to their 17th Annual Dialogue and Friendship Dinner.

The fundraiser dinner and program will be Wednesday, Oct. 25, 6-8:30 pm, at the UMKC Student Union Multipurpose Room, 5100 Cherry St., KC MO. The keynote speaker is Ori Z. Soltes,

PhD, from Georgetown University. The evening, says the Dialogue Institute, “stands as one of the most diverse and inclusive gatherings in Kansas City.” For more info, contact Eyyup Esen, PhD, at 785-979-1307, EEsen@TheDialogInstitute.org You may reserve a table for your group or obtain individual tickets for \$55 plus an added charge online at <https://rb.gy/yzoku>. ♡

Back HR 77

Ask your US representative to back House Resolution 77, Embrace the Goals and Provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

For info, see PreventNuclearWar.org/Legislation—and contact Dave Pack (DJPack.12645@gmail.com) concerning PeaceWorks visits to elected leaders. Thank you! ♡

MoPeace launches street theater

By Kristin Scheer

Look for street theater around Kansas City this fall. Cris Mann, Ann Suellentrop, Tommy Indigo, and I—all of us from the PeaceWorks KC Board—have established the MoPeace Street Theatre Thespians. We’ve been practicing a skit Tommy wrote, and we’ve shown up on First Fridays at the Crossroads and at the PeaceWorks KC Local Art Fair.

The skit asks how the US can justify its own military bases, calling them deterrents to war (there are over 800 US bases around the world), yet challenge the military bases of other countries as dangerous and threatening (there are less than 100 by all other countries put together). “Good grief!” says Tommy

in the skit. “Will you finally just tell me why Cuban missile bases are like Adolf Hitler, but American military bases in Ukraine are all puppies and rainbows?”



*Tommy Indigo, during the PeaceWorks art fair, slams war, weapons, and the military-industrial complex.
—Photo by Jim Hannah*

The skit “looks at issues of war and peace and calls into question our forever wars,” says Ann Suellentrop of MoPeace. “The skit is a way to reach people on the street

in a fun, provocative way.” She points to our high murder rate in the US as evidence of our “militaristic, violent culture” and suggests it is important to challenge people to think about this in an unexpected and different way. “The skit makes people laugh,” says Ann, “and when people are having fun, you can reach them in a disarming way.”

Cris Mann says of the skit, “It’s a conversation starter. How is it that war is always the answer, and what kind of world do we want to live in?” She’d like to see our team grow. “We’d love to have more actors and more talent to work with,” Cris says. “Our skit unleashes creativity that the world needs.” Reach out to Tommy@PeaceWorksKC.org or Cris@PeaceWorksKC.org to find out about coming performances and how to get involved. ♡