

SYRACUSE PEACE COUNCIL'S

# Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace and Social Justice November-December 2014 #839

SYRACUSE PEACE COUNCIL'S 44<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

# PLOWSHARES



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Plowshares this year!  
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Plowshares is Central New York's premier multicultural crafts fair, celebrating a world where people enjoy their work and have control over it. It is a major fundraiser for the Syracuse Peace Council.

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## SPC INFO

### SPC Steering Committee 2014

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**Editorial & Layout Coordinator:** Amelia Lefevre. **Proofing:** Rae Kramer, Andy Molloy. **Web:** Simone Richmond.

### peacecouncil.net

Read the *PNL* online (issues dating to 1936!). See all our projects and events.

### SPC Committees & Projects

**Bikes 4 Peace:** fixing bikes and working cooperatively with youth  
**CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine & Israel:** education, action  
**Ground the Drones & End the Wars:** education, demonstrations, outreach  
**Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation:** education, Onondaga Lake cleanup  
**Fundraising:** overall planning to raise funds to support SPC's work  
*Event Committees:* Birthday, Bowllathon, Plowshares  
**Finance:** analysis, reports, budget, general oversight  
**Peace Newsletter:** produce SPC's monthly newsletter

### Affiliated Projects & Coalitions

**Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse:** faith & secular groups  
**United as One:** working for justice in the local justice system  
**We Are NY:** labor and community activists working for the common good  
**New Yorkers Against Fracking:** statewide coalition opposing hydrofracking  
**GMO Free CNY:** works against genetically modified organisms in food  
**Move to Amend:** works against corporate control of the democratic system

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### Peace Newsletter

**Sponsored by the Syracuse Center for Peace & Social Justice**

**Article submission criteria:** Contact [pnl@peacecouncil.net](mailto:pnl@peacecouncil.net) or 472-5478.

**Advertising:** Call 472-5478 or visit our website for rates and sizes.

**Calendar:** Submit items for the January *PNL* calendar by December 15.

## Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace & Social Justice

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**Subscribe Today!**

### The Syracuse Peace Council (SPC),

founded in 1936, is an antiwar/social justice organization. We are community-based, autonomous and funded by the contributions of our supporters.

SPC educates, agitates and organizes for a world where war, violence and exploitation in any form will no longer exist. We challenge the existing unjust power relationships among nations, among people and between ourselves and the environment. As members, we work to replace inequality, hierarchy, domination and powerlessness with mutual respect, personal empowerment, cooperation and a sense of community.

Present social injustices cannot be understood in isolation from each other nor can they be overcome without recognizing their economic and militaristic roots. SPC stresses a strategy that makes these connections clear. We initiate and support activities that help build this sense of community and help tear down the walls of oppression. A fundamental basis for peace and justice is an economic system that places human need above monetary profit. We establish relationships among people based on cooperation rather than competition or the threat of destruction.

Our political values and personal lives shape and reflect each other. In both we are committed to nonviolent means of conflict resolution and to a process of decision-making that responds to the needs of us all.



# Educate, Agitate, Organize: SPC IN ACTION

compiled by Carol Baum

## Come Together at Plowshares

At this time of year when the night is lengthening, the Plowshares Craftsfair and Peace Festival lights up our hearts and spirits. Plowshares is Central New York's premier multicultural craftsfair, celebrating a world where people enjoy their work and have control over it. It is a marketplace both of ideas and beautiful hand made items.

It is more than a craftsfair – it is a community gathering of people who hope and work for a better world. It is our annual window into the world we're working toward – supporting the local economy, promoting work for peace and social justice and just plain having fun.

Spend the day! There is so much to do at Plowshares. It features 130 local craftspeople and community groups. You'll find clothing, jewelry, ceramics, decorative objects, herbal medicinals and more – you name it and you'll probably find it there. When you need a shopping break, enjoy the ongoing live entertainment, savor the tasty food for sale from *The Mission* restaurant, or just hang out with old and new friends.

There's also the fun of exploring the SPC Marketplace (featuring a wide array of peace and social justice books, calendars, t-shirts, stickers, buttons and more), hoping to win one of the very diverse SPC raffle prizes this year, holding your breath as you bid on one of SPC silent auction donations (including services, tickets to shows, a weekend at a cabin, a house concert by a local musician and more), and checking out the SPC crafts table to purchase crafts donated by participating vendors.

Plowshares is SPC's biggest fundraiser of the year. Volunteers and the staff collective have been bustling to get ready and the weekend itself needs many more volunteers (hint, hint). You can help even



SPC Birthday Dinner speakers Paula Johnson and Janis McDonald (left), founders of SU Law School's Cold Case Justice Initiative, enjoy soup with committed SPC activists at our 78th Birthday celebration on November 1. See page 4 for a full Birthday Dinner report. Photo: Carol Baum

now by getting the word out – post flyers (PNL subscribers have one enclosed), tell your friends (bring a newbie or two), post on social media or put a lawnsign in your yard. Contact Carol if you can help in this way.

So mark your calendars: SPC's 44<sup>th</sup> annual Plowshares Craftsfair and Peace Festival is at **Nottingham High School** (3100 E. Genesee St., Syracuse) from **10am–5pm on Saturday, December 6** and **11am–5pm on Sunday, December 7**. We're looking forward to seeing you there!

## SPC Supports SU Students' Activism

On November 3, The General Body, an alliance of Syracuse University student groups and individuals, held the fourth rally since September to protest the current administration's attacks on diversity, inclusion and transparency. After the rally, students, faculty and community members

marched to the administration building to present their 43-page list of grievances and demands. They then sat down in the lobby, stating that they would continue to sit there "until Chancellor Syverd makes a public and written statement to the SU community committing to a plan of action that addresses each item listed in the grievances and demands document." We have been inspired by them, commend them for their dedication and thoughtful action and stand in solidarity with their organizing work and demands. See [www.thegeneralbody.org](http://www.thegeneralbody.org).

## NOON's Thanksgiving Circle for Peace and Hope

For the seventh year, Onondaga people and Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON) will gather together on the north shore of Onondaga Lake to express thanks for the goodness of the Earth and to each other for our ongoing friendship, as we work side-by-side in peace and hope for healing, justice and environmental restoration. Please join us at **10 am on Thursday, November 27 at Willow Bay**. Dress for

continued on next page

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[www.peacecouncil.net](http://www.peacecouncil.net) • OFFICE HOURS: M-F, 11 am–5 pm



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Michael Messina-Yauchzy: [michael@peacecouncil.net](mailto:michael@peacecouncil.net)

## SPC in Action / from previous page

the weather. We'll have light refreshments. Contact Carol or Amelia.

## Anti-Drones Activists Persist

At 4 pm on Wednesday, December 4, Mark Colville will be sentenced at the Town of DeWitt Court House (5400 Butternut Dr., East Syracuse) for his nonviolent civil resistance action at Hancock Air Base in December, 2013. Before the trial even started, Judge Jokl told Mark that he would be sentenced to the maximum penalty if he were found guilty. Two of his five charges carry a maximum sentence of one year each so we are very concerned as to what the sentence will be. Please come to support Mark at his sentencing. We expect there will be a press conference before court. Check SPC's website or contact Carol for updates.

Please sign the petition urging Judge Jokl, in sentencing Mark, to recognize international and US Constitutional law and consider Mark's utter lack of criminal intent for his peacemaking actions at the base. PNL subscribers have a copy

enclosed. Otherwise, download it from SPC's website or pick up a copy at SPC.

Mark has been making good use of his time while still free. He is on a speaking tour of Upstate NY and was in Syracuse

the weekend of October 31. He spoke at St. Lucy's and Plymouth Churches people and also briefly at SPC's Birthday Dinner.

There are also several trials and hearings scheduled in November and December, all of which are open to the public. See [upstatedroneaction.org](http://upstatedroneaction.org) for specifics. Contact Carol.

## BDS for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel

CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel is working on developing a strong and focused BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) campaign, teaming with Ithaca-based Ariel Gold, a regional staffperson



Linda Bergh presents over \$800 in proceeds from *My Name is Rachel Corrie* to director Josh Perlstein and actor Ashley Malloy for *The Freedom Theatre in the West Bank of Palestine*.  
Photo: Michael Messina-Yauchzy

for Friends of Sabeel – North America (FOS-NA). Sabeel is an international peace movement initiated by Palestinian Christians to seek a just peace as defined by international law and existing United Nations resolutions. FOS-NA has already developed BDS literature focused on an international contractor that has significant presence in Syracuse, and Ariel will be meeting regularly with us. Members have also recently attended two BDS conferences and done background research on BDS campaigns. We will also continue to hold periodic vigils for peace in Palestine and against US military funding to Israel.

Recently, we were proud to contribute over \$800 from the proceeds of our co-sponsored live performance of the play *My Name is Rachel Corrie* to benefit The Freedom Theater. Based in Jenin Refugee Camp in the northern West Bank, this

professional theatre company works to involve and empower youth and women in the community and to explore the potential of arts as an important catalyst for social change. We'll continue to promote and sponsor educational events—keep watching SPC's website, Facebook page, and E-newsletter. To join the committee, contact Michael at SPC.

## 78 and Going Strong!

Over 120 SPC activists and supporters came out to wish us a Happy 78<sup>th</sup> Birthday on November 1. Guests enjoyed a fine meal followed by a dynamic presentation by Janis MacDonald and Paula Johnson, founders

of SU Law School's Cold Case Justice Initiative. Paula and Janis detailed their motivations to start the program and the first Civil Rights-era murder case they had reopened for investigation. They also shared perspectives on continuing issues of racial justice including police brutality in primarily poor communities of color.

The Birthday Dinner is both a major educational event and a substantial annual fundraiser

for the Peace Council. We're happy to say the event was successful in raising over \$3,000 to support ongoing organizing for peace and social justice. Thank you so much to everyone who made the dinner a success, especially the speakers Janis and Paula; the cooks Marie Summerwood and Carole Resnick (menu coordination), Leslie Bliss, Jess Maxwell, Phil McCarten, Donna Muhs-McCarten, Kim McCoy Mike Miller, Dan Noble and children, Julianne Oldfield and Rose Viviano; Nancy Hallock (table host coordinator) and the table hosts; the coordinating committee of Barbara Humphrey, Amelia Lefevre and Crystal Lau; the advertisers in the written program; and everyone else who attended and volunteered their time and services.

## STREET HEAT

Show your opposition to war and the Reaper drones! Bring your own sign or use one of ours.

### First Tuesdays: 4:15-5 pm

Every first Tuesday from November through March. Gather at Hancock Air Base Entrance (*E. Molloy Rd., between Thompson & Townline Rds.*)

Questions? Contact Ed or Ann,  
315-478-4571

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# Perpetual War: Purpose, Methods & Effects

Amelia Lefevre

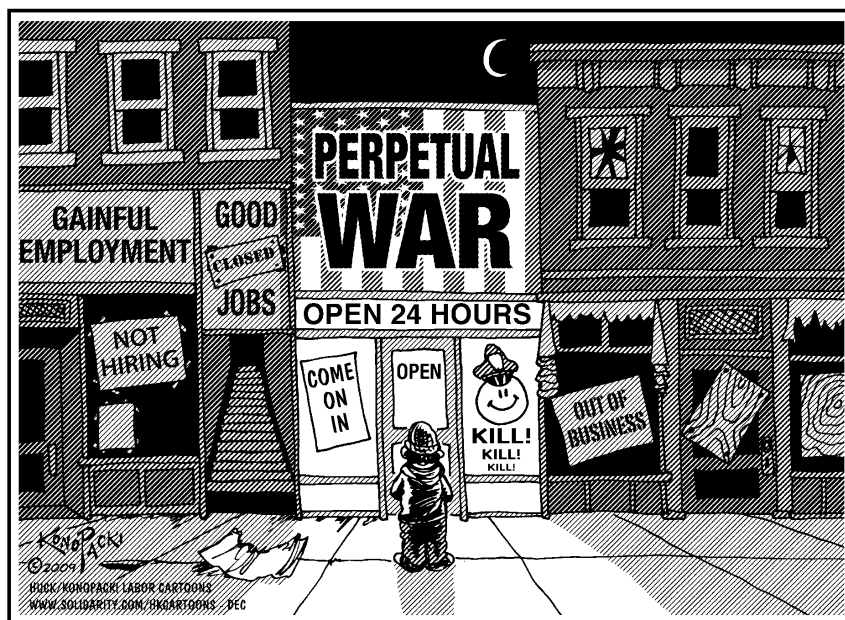
*Author's note: The following piece was originally written as companion material to the SPC Steering Committee statement printed last month (PNL #838, Oct. 2014) titled, "A Better Approach to ISIS: Don't Bomb!" The October article contends that the US has a demonstrable role in aiding ISIS' progress so far. Adapted now to stand alone, the purpose of this article is to place that role in a context. The context is a global system of economic control dominated by US and other governments partnered with multinational corporations.*

## Purpose of Perpetual War

The United States' covert manipulation of the political situation on the ground in Iraq and Syria, discussed in the companion piece to this article, are merely the current observable manifestations of its deeply and historically imperialist nature. To respond only to current events is to turn a blind eye to the great machinery of global capitalist control, so we must look more deeply at the role of perpetual war in our society.

Aside from explicit wars waged by the US, such as in Afghanistan and Iraq, our government operates offensive military campaigns with drones throughout the Middle East and northern Africa. The US public largely ignores these efforts, started under Bush, Jr. and expanded under Obama, since it is not our own family members that are being endangered and slaughtered. Additionally, the US government regularly provides arms and military training to governments and other groups of its choice (for example, a murky list of approved rebel factions in Syria). In recent years these efforts have taken the guise of the War on Terror, part of a necessary global effort to protect US Americans and "American Values."

However, digging below the surface we often find it is not USers or even a value system that is being protected, but rather the interests of large corporations. These companies seek to maintain control of resources to maximize profit with little re-



gard for their workers, local people and the environment. If local residents were able to exercise full self-determination, they might understandably choose to expel such exploitive practices from their communities. However, the US and its allies work to stomp out any such resistance with tactics ranging from proxy wars to economic pressure and sometimes even direct military intervention.

The US and its allies perpetrate warfare to preserve corporations' profit-making capabilities, and additionally many corporations benefit directly from military activity, regardless of its purpose. This is the structure known as the "military-industrial complex." Boiled down to its simplest form, it works when corporations get lucrative (taxpayer-funded) contracts to produce expensive weapons and other warfare technology, and then these companies financially support politicians who try to throw more business in their direction. Politicians and corporate executives benefit monetarily; US workers and civilians in targeted countries suffer.

military-industrial complex would not be able to operate without complicity from the media. A major pillar of perpetual war is a story to tell the public that provides cover for their actions. It is extremely important that the US and its allies are always portrayed as the good guys, working for the greater good, and that implies the presence of a bad guy or a force out to hurt.

One aspect of this storytelling is euphemistic, and often extremely hypocritical, language. We say we are fighting for "democracy" when what we really support is whichever government will allow our corporations to take advantage of their resources and workers. We use "humanitarian" missions as pretexts for massive, politically-motivated military force, such as in the case of the US/NATO bombing of Libya in 2011, while in reality the intervention allowed for thousands of militias to form across the country and the resulting slaughter of multitudes of innocent people.

Complementing our portrayed role as the saviors of victimized peoples around the globe, we are presented with fear-based

## Methods of Perpetual War

The network of corporations and political leaders that comprise the corrupt

Amelia is a staff organizer at SPC.

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# The Struggle Continues

Mazin Qumsiyeh

I return to this country (and it is one country) to find the situation more tense than it was two weeks ago when I left. An Israeli colonial settler runs over Palestinian children killing one 5-year-old and injuring another. A Palestinian native runs over Israeli border police in Jerusalem killing one officer and injuring several. Such incidents are increasing.

Zionism started here as a colonial movement

to change a multi-religious flourishing Palestine into JSIL (the Jewish state of Israel in the Levant). The support of western powers was and continues to be critical for JSIL's establishment and (increasingly more expensive) maintenance. Colonial movements must destroy the native society and build a new society.

In the case of Palestine (now called Israel), the destruction is breathtaking. Seven million of us are refugees or displaced people (out of a population of 12 million). Land left for us to live on in historic Palestine is about 8% (that includes the ghettos left for us in the Galilee, Naqab, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank). Millions of settlers from Europe and other parts of the world now control 92% of the land, more than 90% of the water, all border crossings, and all other natural resources in the country.

The Zionist policy of might makes right has meant that human rights and international law are not applicable here. This adds to the frustration and anger of the native people. The natives were deprived of real leadership (previously the Palestinian Liberation Organization) and instead has now a "Palestinian Authority" (PA)



*The author snapped this shot of Har Homa, an illegal Israeli settlement in east Jerusalem, in a 2005 visit.*

approved by the US/Israel. The PA men, more concerned for their jobs than the future of Palestine, now act as subcontractors for the occupation. This was the trap that was created in the negotiations in Norway in 1993 (subsequently referred to as the Oslo accords). Since then, the number of Israeli colonial settlers in the West Bank alone rose from 180,000 to 650,000. More and more life for the remaining Palestinians has become unbearable (unless they are from the elite of the PA, most in Ramallah). The chauvinistic, schizophrenic system marches along the road of fascism oblivious to the future. Homes are being destroyed, millions of us are denied the right to live in most of our country and even the right to visit and pray in churches and mosques in Jerusalem. The efforts of transforming the country to look more "Jewish" accelerate especially around Jerusalem creating more tensions. Local Palestinians with no place to go are getting desperate. The pressure is building as a pressure cooker builds steam. Acts of individual violence that we see are merely a symptom of this unsustainable system. And the danger is spreading. The Jewish State of Israel in the Levant (JSIL) has to have new states like Sunni (ISIS) and Shia and others so that it becomes "naturalized" instead of the only apartheid system in Western Asia.

Still our choices are there: 1) might makes right, or 2) human rights including abolishing religion based states and insist

on secular democracies. The first path leads to a lose-lose situation and the second to a win-win for all. There is no lose-win scenario (as MLK once said, we either live together in equality as fellow human beings or we perish together as fools).

Hanging between the two roads will mean only more extremism, more violence, and more injustice. Choosing democracy, human rights, and justice is not easy and we pay a price (financial, physical, etc). It is we the people who must push for that (everyone now recognizes that our politicians are mostly hypocritical, self-centered fools).

The day I got back to the US, the "elections" gave us an even more subservient congress bent on further destruction of the economy to serve special interests. Some of us pay heavier prices than others and some are even killed (many of my own personal friends were killed in non-violent demonstration). Some lose jobs or homes. Some are injured. Some spend years as political prisoners. But this is a struggle that is existential and must be engaged in. How to do it and maintain dignity, humanity, and inner peace is a challenge. You can't be neutral on a moving train, so apathy is collusion with oppression. When our short time on this earth nears its end, will we regret standing by or will we be proud that we tried our best to make it better? The choice is obvious.

Aluta continua (the struggle continues). ♡

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*Mazin teaches and does research at Bethlehem and Birzeit Universities. His website is [qumsiyeh.org](http://qumsiyeh.org).*



# Holder's Legacy: The Constitutional Implications of Al-Aulaqi v. Panetta

Vani Kannan

In September 2014, after nearly six years in the position, Eric Holder resigned as Attorney General. Popular media celebrated Holder's record on civil and voting rights. However, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) criticized his record on national security. In particular, the ACLU focused on his leadership in the Justice Department approval of the CIA-led extrajudicial assassinations<sup>1</sup> of US citizens abroad who were deemed a threat to the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Anwar Al-Aulaqi (also spelled Al-Awlaki) and his son, Abdulrahman, represent two of these assassinations. Both were killed in 2011, in two separate drone strikes in Yemen. The ACLU, along with the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and Nasser al-Aulaqi (Anwar's father and Abdulrahman's grandfather), filed a suit against former CIA director and current defense secretary Leon Panetta. In April of this year, the case was dismissed by the US District Court for the District of Columbia.<sup>3</sup>

Because the plaintiffs decided not to appeal the case, it has faded from public discourse in recent months. However, it is important to understand the long-ranging Constitutional implications of this court ruling, particularly in light of debates surrounding Holder's legacy as attorney general.

The constitutional-rights-based framework of this article risks sacrificing a more inclusive, transnational understanding of the horrific effects of drone warfare on non-US-citizens in the countries most impacted by it (including, but not limited to, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Somalia<sup>4</sup>). Anwar and Abdulrahman Al-Aulaqi represent just two out of thousands

of civilian casualties—because they are US citizens, their cases were much more widely publicized in the US than others. It is crucially important to become familiar with this case, because it implies that the rights to due process of law and the right to

directed the killings violated several standards, particularly the imperative to “take all possible steps to avoid harming civilian bystanders.”<sup>8</sup>

Ultimately, *Al-Aulaqi v. Panetta* was dismissed on the grounds that the court



Anwar Al-Aulaqi at Dar al Hijrah Mosque on Oct. 4 2001, in Falls Church, VA. Tracy Woodward/The Washington Post/Getty Images

could not assess whether the assassination was constitutional.<sup>9</sup> This decision invoked the military and state secrets' privilege, which has the power to dismiss cases “in exceptional circumstances” in the interest of national security. This court opinion justifies the assassination of Anwar on the grounds that he was considered a terrorist leader, and argues that Abdulrahman was killed accidentally by a drone strike targeting an Egyptian man named Ibrahim Al-Banna.<sup>10</sup>

Anwar was killed in a “personality strike” which indicates that the US was specifically targeting “an individual whose identity is known.”<sup>11</sup>

A “signature strike,” on the other hand, describes a strike in which “the US conducts targeting without knowing of the individuals targeted. This is a controversial practice, because it profiles people based on “behavior or affiliations.”<sup>12</sup>

There is considerable conflict surrounding the justification for the drone strike that killed Abdulrahman. The Obama administration reserves the right to target “military-age” Muslim men (21 years or older), and after Abdulrahman was killed, Western newspapers mistakenly reported that he was 21, not 16.<sup>13</sup> Other reports define the assassination as “collateral,” or accidental. Former White House press secretary Robert Gibbs infamously responded to questions about Abdulrahman's assassination by linking it to Anwar's affiliations:

I'm not going to get into Anwar al-Awlaki's son. I know that Anwar

a trial by jury are subject to reinterpretation during a time of war. But before moving on, I want to acknowledge that this case exists within a web of larger crackdowns on dissent in the post-9/11 era.

Legal analysts have argued that the question of whether the US government can legally assassinate a US citizen in another country raises questions that “reach to the core of constitutional rights to life and liberty.”<sup>15</sup> In *Al-Aulaqi v. Panetta*, the ACLU and CCR argued that the assassinations violated the Fourth Amendment prohibition on unreasonable seizures, the Fifth Amendment right to due process, the ban on singling out an individual or group for punishment without trial, and international law.<sup>16</sup> The plaintiffs acknowledged that assassination without due process is legally allowed as a last resort to “avert a concrete, specific, and imminent threat of death or physical injury,” and only “against individuals who are directly participating in hostilities against the United States.”<sup>17</sup>

However, they argued that senior CIA and military leaders who authorized and

*Vani is a doctoral student in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric at Syracuse University.*

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# Onondaga Sovereignty

*The following article is reprinted from Neighbors to Neighbors, Nation to Nation, an 80-page educational booklet co-created by the Onondaga Nation and Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON). 10,000 copies of the booklet were produced in April 2014, the culmination of a careful, years-long process. NOON is working to distribute the booklet to schools and libraries as well as individuals and families. Contact the Peace Council for information about how to get Neighbors to Neighbors, Nation to Nation for yourself or your community.*

*This article was originally published at [www.onondaganation.org](http://www.onondaganation.org).*

Although physically situated within the territorial limits of the United States today, native nations like the Onondaga Nation and the other members of the Haudenosaunee, or Six Nations Confederacy, retain their status as sovereign nations. The Haudenosaunee is a union of sovereign nations joined together for the common benefit of its citizens. Governed by a Grand Council of Chiefs who deliberate and make decisions for the people concerning issues both domestic and international, the Haudenosaunee began as a confederacy of sovereign nations aligned to deal with other native nations surrounding their lands and later, to negotiate with Europeans when the latter came into their territories beginning in the early 1600s.

Sovereignty is the state of existence as a self-governing entity, and it was in this capacity that the Onondagas and other members of the Haudenosaunee sat with delegates from England, France and the Netherlands in the years prior to American independence. During the colonial era, the Haudenosaunee made at least 50 treaties with European powers, most of which were expressions of peace and friendship. Some were made to share land, but the member-states of the Haudenosaunee retained their hunting, fishing, and gathering rights within the territory that they agreed to open to settlers.

After the Revolutionary War, the thirteen colonies each became independent states and began to conduct themselves as sovereign governments. Eventually, they set up a process for unified government similar to that of the Haudenosaunee. In fact, the Articles of Confederation began with: "The Stile (sic) of this Confederacy

shall be the United States of America." First, the new government worked under the Articles of Confederation and then, in 1789, they adopted the US Constitution. The Constitution specifically vested the President or his appointed representatives with the exclusive legal right to negotiate treaties, which are agreements between sovereign nations, and gave the Senate the exclusive power to ratify those treaties. The Commerce Clause further granted Congress the exclusive authority to regulate commerce with Indian nations.

Early US statesmen acknowledged the international status of Indian nations and the treaties made with them. Rufus King, one of America's founding fathers and later a US Senator from New York, equated Indian treaties with all other international treaties, such as those with Britain or France. Article VI of the US Constitution states that "treaties shall be the supreme law of the land."

## US-Haudenosaunee Treaties

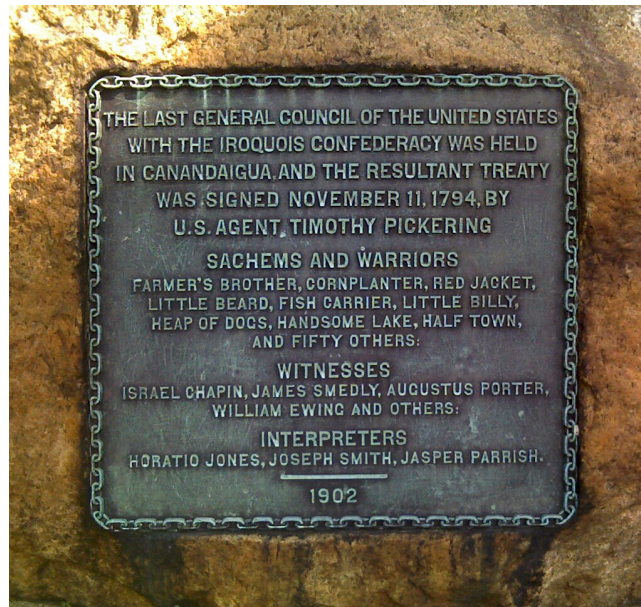
With this mutual understanding as a backdrop, the US government entered into three major treaties with the Haudenosaunee. Interestingly, two of these treaties remain in effect to this day, while a third, the 1789 Treaty of Fort Harmer, was superseded by the Treaty of Canandaigua in 1794. Validation of this treaty lies in the fact that the Haudenosaunee receives from the US annuities of \$4,500 in the form of bolts of muslin cloth, allocated each year from the US Treasury.

In 1871, the US ceased treaty-making with native nations. By that time, the US had entered into nearly 400 legitimate treaties with Indian nations. It is the contention of the Onondaga Nation, then, that it maintains and has never relinquished either its national or collective sovereignty as a member of the Haudenosaunee. Such sovereignty was defined by the Peace Maker as belonging to those nations that accepted the Great Law, subscribed to its spiritual, moral and social mandates, and placed themselves under the authority of the Governing Councils of Chiefs. There has never been any provision for transferring that sovereignty to any other entity, nor have the traditional chiefs of the Haudenosaunee ever consented to such a transfer.

## Sovereignty Defined

Like the individual states of the US, each member nation of the Haudenosaunee retains the authority to govern its own internal affairs. Within the framework of the Great Law and its own specific laws, each individual nation reserves the right to resolve internal disputes, pass laws for the welfare of their own community, regulate trade and commerce, control immigration and citizenship, oversee public works, approve land use, and appoint officials to act on its behalf.

Every member of the Haudenosaunee has the authority to defend its citizens against internal and external dangers and



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# Transphobia and Racism Within the LGBT Community

Elliott DeLine

While the gay rights movement has made many advances in the past decades, many of the most vulnerable members of the LGBTQ community are still struggling for basic rights and resources. Transgender people, working class, and people of color, are often overlooked by the largely white, middle class, cisgender\* LGB movement.

In Syracuse, we lack basic structures to care for transgender people, especially when it comes to healthcare. Many LGBTQ activists fail to recognize how the more vulnerable members of the community are so marginalized that their basic needs are not met. These needs include food, shelter, healthcare without discrimination, workplace protections, access to public bathrooms, and protection from harassment and assault. Ironically, it is those of us who stand out most – such as transgender people and queer people of color – who are most targeted by society, and yet least represented and visible within organizations and in the media.

I spoke with trans woman of color, author and activist Dane Edidi on this topic.

“I find that there is an air of racism and transphobia involved in the agendas [of LGBTQ organizations],” Dane said, “and the ways which they act as gatekeepers to legislation, funding, and media attention.”

“I have watched as bigger organizations with perhaps one or two trans people (and typically not of color) have used a system of tokenism to get funding and then in turn ignore the needs of the most marginalized.”

A great example of this is the way the Stonewall Riots are often invoked by white gay people as a turning point for their cultural revolution, when it was in fact led by transgender women and drag queens of color. Dane added, “The LGBTQ movement was sparked/created by trans women, drag queens and gender non-conforming people who were in turn pushed out/shamed and forgotten.”

How can this change? Dane said, “I believe we all deserve liberation but as I have stated these organizations should not get government funding and backing for doing trans work or even speak for the trans community when in fact they have no intention of creating spaces for trans-women of color in their organizations. If they really want to combat the war on trans people and in particular trans women of color, they will have trans women of color



in leadership positions and that means making decisions, that means paying for the work they do.’

Holly Ferry is a board member of CNY for Solidarity, non-profit organization that provides vital resources and support to gender variant individuals and the LGBTQ community and she also often runs Intersections, a support group here in Syracuse for LGBTQ people. She says that as a trans person, she feels she belongs in the LGBTQ community, but it was not always this way. At the first group she attended for transgender people, her experience was not a positive one.

“They didn’t give me any sort of resources or tips, and when I did ask questions, I’d get short answers,” Holly said. “They weren’t understanding of who I was and where I was coming from as a person...It wasn’t until I finally got resources from CNY for Solidarity that I even knew I had options. All I was ever really offered at the first group was a wig. Nothing about hormones or how to reach my goals. They didn’t even ask me about

[I]t is those of us who stand out most—such as transgender people and queer people of color—who are most targeted by society, and yet least represented and visible within organizations and in the media.

my goals or what kind of trans person I was. If you weren’t doing what they were doing, then you were wrong.”

I asked Holly what makes Intersections different as an LGBTQ support group.

“The reception at Intersections was always warm. I never felt like I was judged there...At Intersections, people stopped and listened to me. The group was respectful and supportive, and not just run by one person. Intersections is shared. We ask everyone what topics they want and they are welcome to do their own.”

Joseph Mudge is the president of CNY for Solidarity. He is a transgender man, and believes it is important to have broad, transgender leadership in LGBTQ organizations. I asked him what he thought was the solution to the problem of transphobia, racism, and other forms of marginalization within the LGBTQ community.

“The solution is grassroots organizations, by trans people for trans people. Empowering transgender people, and not just ones who are ‘successful,’ but trans people who are actually experiencing hardship and who are needing resources. They will be in best touch with what they need.

\*A cisgender person is someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.

For more information on CNY for Solidarity visit [cnyforsolidarity.org](http://cnyforsolidarity.org).

*Elliott is a transgender author and activist living in Syracuse.*



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## Perpetual War / from page 5

characterizations of various actors (Gaddafi, Assad, ISIS) to convince us of the necessity of war. The entire propaganda project called the War on Terror is an excellent example of this tactic. Justifications for war abroad rely heavily on inspiring fear in the public at large, as do justifications for arrest and imprisonment of nonviolent offenders at home. Both types of warfare target primarily people of color.

## Effects of Perpetual War

Some of the military technology that is produced so amply comes back home to police departments and we see our civilian police getting equipped with riot or SWAT gear, tanks and similar vehicles, and now drones. Why do we need these things in our communities?

With these changes in the police force we see growing use of military-strength force against civilian populations, and predominantly in communities of color and poor communities. In her essential *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander details Drug War incentive programs throughout the 1980s and 90s that rewarded police departments for drug arrests with cash grants and military surplus riot gear. One retired police chief told the *New York Times*, "I was offered tanks, bazookas, anything I wanted." Along with the resulting abundance of military-style SWAT raids on the homes of suspected drug offenders came hundreds of cases of violence, often deadly, against people convicted of no crime. Like US war activity abroad, this unjustified taking of life is exacted upon disproportionately high numbers of poor people and people of color.

Looking more broadly than the Drug War, which has led to the imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of overwhelmingly black and brown nonviolent offenders, most recently the nation has seen the effects of fear tactics and police militarization on communities of color with the August 2014 killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO and the behavior of police in the days following his death. After the unjustified murder of an unarmed teenager and the shameful way the police left his body uncovered in the street for hours, the people of Ferguson (who are mostly black) took to the streets in protest. Media portrayals of "angry" "rioters" and "thugs" made the heavily militarized response of the Ferguson police (who are mostly white) seem justified to many. This is no different from the media's practice of portraying evil villains in faraway lands (who usually have brown or black skin) to justify US military action abroad.

Perpetual war abroad leads to increased violence with a racial bias here at home, and it also leads to structural violence against the poor. Over half of our national budget is devoted to the military and all manner of domestic human needs programs go woefully underfunded, from public education to affordable housing to healthcare to food assistance.

But we must not think of racism or racial disparity as some sort of byproduct of perpetual war. Racism and the doctrine of white supremacy are absolutely essential cogs in the war machine. Those who profit from the military-industrial complex need us to fear and hate each other so that we are unwilling to do what we are capable of: unite to shift global priorities away from profit making for a few and towards dignity and sustainability for all life.

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# Van Jones Unearths Valuable Truths at University Lecture

Erica Schwabach

Van Jones poured energy into the undeniable truths of “Green Jobs and Sustainability,” his speech and contribution to the University Lectures when he spoke in Hendricks Chapel at Syracuse University on September 30. The Chapel was the perfect locale for his rhetoric about actions such as building greater awareness, adopting the policy of unity, and awakening our deepest sense of human compassion in response to countless global injustices. Jones brought to light a multitude of issues ranging from police brutality and racial divide to social injustice and issues of climate change.

Van powerfully unified these complex issues and demonstrated their inherent, but often underrepresented, interconnectedness. He confronted environmental injustice: the unequal distribution of burdens from environmental hazards, such as air and chemical pollution. Low-income and minority communities and communities-of-color receive a disproportionate share of these burdens. Environmental injustice also concerns these communities’ underrepresentation in political affairs pertaining to environmental litigation and decision making.

Van spoke about his involvement in the People’s Climate March earlier this year in New York City; he walked the streets and saw firsthand what environmental injustice looked like. He marched beside and met eyes with indigenous peoples; peoples long ago robbed of their sacred lands. Those same lands are being slowly destroyed by pollution and related global climate changes. Van also marched beside young men and women of color from the Bronx; those who survive environmental injustice daily in the form of smog and city pollutants. Van passed countless victims who are taking the real brunt of climate injustice. He brought these issues to life with his recollection of the march; in contrast with inadequate coverage by our media and no focus from political leaders.



Van Jones, a renowned environmentalist and co-host of CNN’s “Crossfire,” spoke as part of the University Lecture series in Hendricks Chapel on September 30, 2014. Photo: Kadijah Watkins & Daily Orange

“These issues are both individual and intertwined; one isn’t bigger than the other.” Colton Jones, a Co-President of Students of Sustainability at Syracuse University, continued: “These are all injustice issues; members on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale are getting hit – they feel it. These are the unheard voices of the movement.” Colton’s passion for broadcasting the connection between social/racial injustice and environmental injustice was carried further by others in the room.

“Life is not being valued.” Declared Christine Edgeworth, the other Co-President of Students of Sustainability. She went on to reinforce Van Jones’s message of a missing ethical framework: “The people who are doing the injustice just don’t feel it – justice overall is clearly the larger issue here.”

Personal narratives of the sufferers and survivors of environmental injustice are integral to effectively combating them. These personal narratives are nearby,

and accessible, for those who choose to embrace them. SUNY-ESF student Mikayla Comas shares her personal story as a person affected by the overlap of social and environmental injustice and as a member of Divest-SU/ESF. Divest-SU/ESF is a campaign to persuade Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF to invest in renewable, cleaner energy sources and therefore divest their endowments from fossil fuels industries. Comas’s exposure to fossil-fuels in her home neighborhood of East Flatbush in Brooklyn is “Not proportional” to other neighborhoods. According to Comas, East Flatbush is a predominantly African-American/Caribbean-American neighborhood; the bus depot nearby her home struck her as the perfect example of how “Environmental justice and racial justice do tend to overlap.” She went fur-

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Erica is an Environmental Studies major at SUNY-ESF.

continued on next page

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## Onondaga / from page 8

to advocate for the peaceful resolution of conflict and the equitable distribution of collective resources.

The Haudenosaunee is a democracy, holding the power to resolve differences between member nations and to guarantee that its members are of one mind on matters of international treaties, territorial disputes, international trade, or any other issue that affects the long-term welfare of the Confederacy. The Chiefs of the Grand Council are designated advocates of peace

and hold the future welfare of the people in their hands. They are empowered to deliberate, to consider all options, to arrive at consensus, and to make decisions.

In the past, the chiefs, headmen and delegates of each nation were involved in the negotiation and acceptance of the terms of treaties with European governments, and later with the US government. These treaties were then presented to the Grand Council for approval. If accepted, a treaty came to represent the legal relationship between the US and the traditional nations.

Haudenosaunee sovereignty was not granted by the US, any more than US sov-

ereignty was granted by the English crown in the eighteenth century. Sovereignty is an inherent right that, in the case of the Onondaga Nation, was established with the formation of the Haudenosaunee and adoption of the Great Law of Peace.

The Onondaga Nation has had and continues to possess sovereign authority, both as a nation and as part of the Haudenosaunee. With such sovereignty comes the power to govern, make treaties, and act on behalf of the Onondaga people in relations with other sovereign nations. It is an authority that the Nation and its designated representatives take very seriously. ♻️

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## Van Jones / from previous page

ther, stating that “In the South Bronx, the average rates of asthma in this area are so much higher than the national average that people often call it ‘Asthma alley’... About 100 trucks go in and out of this neighborhood almost ten times a day.”

However other perspectives exist and one was strongly brought up the night of the lecture. “Divisive” was the word used to describe Van Jones’s rhetoric about white polluters by a student present that evening. The student’s allegation, provoked by Van’s description of the historical act of dumping waste chemicals in areas populated primarily by people-of-color, was addressed by Colton “...You have to acknowledge the race issue. Van Jones brought up a pivotal piece and character of the story.” Finally, at the lecture, Van himself laid the framework for an argument on the practicality and importance of discussing the whole truth: “...there is no way to get to the unity that we want without first talking about the disunity that we’ve had.”

Historical examples of success in combating an extensive injustice lend us another tool in combating the social and environmental justices presently faced. Facing these injustices opens us to the danger of searching for easy answers. Historical examples provide insight into the complex solutions demanded of activists in the pursuit of positive change.

One example from the past we can use to create wider spread social change is the nationwide divestment campaign from South African Apartheid, which established white minority rule in the country in the 1970s and 1980s. This campaign was so successful that “By the late 80s, over 150 colleges and universities had divested from

companies doing business with South Africa. This helped to push US law makers to impose sanctions and eventually the apartheid state fell,” says Ben Kuebrich, Doctoral student in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric at Syracuse University and member of Divest-SU. Complexities of this challenge include oppositions to the divestment campaign such as by the president at the time, Ronald Reagan, as well as other backlash from those who felt that there would be a negative economic impact on ‘ordinary black South Africans’. However, it is important to remember that while this example can serve us to show that a dedicated, strong effort by like-minded individuals can work for change for the betterment of society, it may not work in all environmental justice cases per se.

Another great method for combating environmental injustice is establishing dialogue and raising awareness through education. Betsey Hogan is a professor of writing at SUNY-ESF and she teaches a course titled EWP 390, “Literature of Nature” which traces environmental writing and literature through the 19th and 20th centuries. Hogan claims that it is difficult to find other sources besides predominately white, male voices such as John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Henry David Thoreau. Although these are great pieces of work, they do not represent or describe the minority voice nor the voices of people-of-color; the ones most affected by environmental injustice. A lack of diversity in voices discussing this matter can adversely affect our conceptions of who has and should have a legitimate say in environmental affairs and decision making. Hogan, as a result of this, focuses exclusively for one to two weeks of each semester on African-American nature writing. Camille T. Dungy’s Black Nature

is one of the works taught by Hogan; she relies Dungy’s work to engage the class participants and help them understand the importance of acknowledging the underrepresentation of voices and to facilitate participation in a conversation far more inclusive of, and relevant to, the larger environmental movement. Hogan describes this as, “...Meaningful to their thinking of these issues...the students are very moved by it. The students here tend to be very thoughtful about this and they want to talk about this absence.”

As we move forward in the struggle against environmental injustice and grow our knowledge for improving the imbalance between diversity and unity, many perspectives must be embraced. Edgeworth’s thoughts on the need for and benefits of collaboration on campus are encouraging; she comments that student leaders at SU are coming together to work as a team: “We need a collective effort; and from this there will surely be a ripple effect.”

Colton also remains positive and hopeful amidst struggle and controversy: “I think we are finally realizing that we have a loud voice and that voice is being heard. A new dawn is approaching. It’s time that we all wake up to our potential!”

Since Van Jones’ lecture more thought has been given to student activism in general, as shown in a piece written for the Daily Orange about increasing protests on campus and what this means for the SU community at large. However, future challenges can be seen in combating sensitive issues such as the environmental justice issues explored above. In order for direct action to be taken awareness of these issues needs first to be more widespread. Van Jones raised some energy around environmental injustice issues but now it’s our collective obligation to ride that wave as far as it will take us. ♻️



al-Awlaki renounced his citizenship . . . I would suggest that you should have a far more responsible father. If they're truly concerned about the well-being of their children, I don't think becoming an al-Qaeda jihadist terrorist is the best way to go about doing your business.<sup>14</sup>

Gibbs draws alarming links between citizenship, family, terrorism, and assassination—and opens up the possibility that Abdulrahman was killed a personality strike. In the article “Inside America’s Dirty Wars,” Jeremy Scahill lays bare these contradictions:

A former senior official in the Obama administration told me that after Abdulrahman’s killing, the president was “surprised and upset and wanted an explanation.” . . . Once it became clear that the teenager had been killed, he added, military and intelligence officials asserted, “It was a mistake, a bad mistake.” However, John Brennan, at the time President Obama’s senior adviser on counterterrorism and homeland security, “suspected that the kid had been killed intentionally and ordered a review. I don’t know what happened with the review.”<sup>15</sup>

How did Holder navigate these contradictions and justify the assassinations? By denying that there were contradictions at all. In a letter that he sent to Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Holder writes, “The decision to target Anwar al-Aulaqi was lawful, it was considered, and it was just.” He repeatedly invokes the “laws of war,” which seem to supersede constitutional rights in this assassination. Specifically, he argues that lethal force should only be used if a suspected terrorist cannot be captured. Despite the conflicting information surrounding Abdulrahman’s assassination, Holder maintains that he was killed accidentally—that he was, is, collateral.

What does this mean—the justifications, and the fact that Al-Aulaqi v. Panetta was dismissed on the grounds that the courts cannot rule on the limits of the government’s claimed authority?<sup>16</sup> Jameel Jaffer, ACLU Deputy Legal Director and Director of ACLU Center for Democracy, expressed grave concern that the justice department has instituted “vague” and “elastic” definitions of “imminent threat” and “infeasible” capture—the terms that justified Anwar’s assassination.<sup>17</sup> Jaffer holds that through the Al-Aulaqi v. Panetta decision: “the government has the authority to carry out targeted killings of US citizens without presenting evidence to a judge before the fact or after . . . Without saying so explicitly, the government claims the authority to kill American terrorism suspects in secret.”

As Al-Aulaqi v. Panetta demonstrates, during a time of war, constitutional protections are considerably less secure, and the rights guaranteed to citizens do not necessarily hold across geographic borders. In the post-Holder era, will we see more and more people labeled “dangerous” and extrajudicially assassinated? While Holder has received accolades for his support for civil rights, we have to consider who is legally enfolded under his definition of “civilian,” and who—by virtue of religion, skin color, citizenship status, or geographic location—is not.

<sup>1-17</sup> Visit [www.peacecouncil.net](http://www.peacecouncil.net) for sources and endnotes.

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## Ring in the New Year with a Vigil for Peace

The New Year will be here before you know it! Start it off right with the New Year's Eve Vigil for Peace and Social Justice. Gather on **New Year's Eve at 5 pm at Clinton Square** in downtown Syracuse. Then gather with friends for soup and bread at 340 Midland Ave., Syracuse.

## ACTS Issues Assembly

SPC is a proud member of the Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS), a coalition of faith-based and community organizations working on issues of concern to Syracuse residents. The ACTS Issues Assembly will be held **Sunday, November 16 from 3-5pm** at Living Water Church of God in Christ (121 Huron St., Syracuse). Representatives from member organizations are invited to participate in this process to determine what issue areas the ACTS taskforces will focus on for the next two to three years.

## Seeking Winter/Spring Interns

It's time again for students—or anyone who has time and wants a valuable, unpaid work experience—to begin applying for internships. SPC typically takes on three to four interns per season. A priority need is for an intern with very good to excellent knowledge of MS Access to work on improving our database system. In addition, we typically need interns to work on event and issue organizing, including work with Ground the Drones and Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON).

## Activist Appreciation: Kim McCoy

Kim McCoy is a multitasking SPC activist. She is a regular on the cooking team for the SPC Birthday Dinner and is a creative cook for other events (who can forget the bowling pin cupcakes she made for SPC's Bowlathon one year). She is a go-to photographer for SPC actions, and many of the photos you have seen of drone-related activism are hers. For the

last few years Kim has worked on the SPC Marketplace Committee preparing for Plowshares Craftsair and then spent much of the weekend with set up, take down and staffing the Marketplace. In addition, she, along with Rose Viviano, make SPC feel very welcome whenever we have events at ArtRage Gallery – which is often.

Kim has been on SPC's Steering Committee for about six years. When she speaks, people perk up to listen – what she says is always to the point, insightful and useful. Her cooperative nature, reliability, sense of humor and many talents make her a delight to work with. Thanks, Kim, for being such a strong part of SPC!



Kim McCoy's amazing bowling pin cupcakes at the 2010 Bowlathon. Photo: SPC Archives

## Wastebed Amphitheater is a Go

Several members of Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation have spent the summer and fall organizing as part of the Citizens for a Better Plan coalition to prevent the County's proposed amphitheater from being built atop toxic wastebeds on the western shore of Onondaga Lake.

On November 3, the County Legislature voted to approve the bonding resolution (the funding for the amphitheater) as well as the Final Environmental Impact Statement. We are deeply disappointed in this result, and especially that a few legislators that we were counting on to vote against the project switched their positions at the last minute.

Despite our current disappointment, members of NOON remain committed to working for a more thorough clean up of

Onondaga Lake and surrounding areas. To keep up with our work or to get involved, contact Amelia or Carol.

## How the Dough Rises

There's no way around it—SPC has expenses and while we do wonders on a shoestring budget, we need your support in many ways. We recently sent out our Fall Fund Appeal featuring a letter from Barbara Humphrey and highlights of our last six months of work. If you received the mailing, please give now and as generously as you can. For those of you not on the mailing list, the letter is available on our website—where you can also make an online donation.

Fundraising from events such as Plowshares is also a significant source of funds, so please come out, have a good time, and buy a raffle ticket or bid on the silent auction.

## Center's Parking Lot Done Soon

In a project that took much longer than projected, the renovation of the Center's parking lot is expected to be completed by mid-November. This means that people coming to SPC's office will no longer have to park on the side streets. The inconvenience has been worth it; the parking lot will now be porous, allowing water to seep through to the ground instead of running off the pavement. In addition, the improved lot will be level with the back door, making the ground floor of the building will be completely accessible.

We thank you so much for your patience during with this project.

## Jail Oversight Postponed Again

Despite promises of a vote in the County Legislature on the jail oversight bill that United as One has been organizing around for the past five years, the legislation has been postponed once again. The bill, which would create an independent body to review reports of abuse in the Justice Center, needed to be approved by the Public Safety committee in its October meeting in order to be voted on by the full Legislature in November. However the committee meeting was canceled for unknown reasons. We continue to be hopeful that the vote will come in December. Contact Amelia. ☘

