

SYRACUSE PEACE COUNCIL'S

# Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace and Social Justice

July-August 2015 #844

**Shall we have  
atom bombs  
and hydrogen  
bombs...**

**the hellish  
destruction of  
men, women  
and children...**

**or shall  
we have  
peace in  
the world?**

**—Paul Robeson**

*Paul Robeson is pictured speaking to a crowd of thousands gathered to demonstrate against nuclear weapons in Trafalgar Square (London) on June 28, 1959 (flashbak.com). Words from his 1950 speech to the National Labor Conference for Negro Rights (African Americans Against the Bomb, 2015).*

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## SPC INFO

### SPC Steering Committee 2015

Carol Baum, Jack Brown, Rachel Cary, Barbara Humphrey, Vani Kannan, Ben Kuebrich, Kimberley McCoy, Michael Messina-Yauchzy, Julianne Oldfield, Amelia Lefevre, Simone Richmond, Ursula Rozum, Diane Swords, Brian Tackett, Richard Vallejo, Aly Wane

### SPC's Peace Newsletter

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### peacecouncil.net

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

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**Peace Newsletter:** Amelia Lefevre

### Affiliated Projects & Coalitions

**Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse:** faith & secular groups

**United as One:** working for justice in the local justice system

**New Yorkers Against Fracking:** statewide coalition opposing hydrofracking

**Move to Amend:** works against corporate control of the democratic system

**Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars**

## 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.

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## Peace Newsletter

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

**Article submission criteria:** Contact pnl@peacecouncil.net or 472-5478.

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

**Calendar:** Submit items for the September *PNL* calendar by August 17.

## Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace & Social Justice

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# Educate, Agitate, Organize: SPC IN ACTION

compiled by Carol Baum

## CELEBRATE

### NOON Raises \$4,000 to Support Traditional Mohawk Community

On June 19, Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation raised nearly \$4,000 to support the traditional Mohawk resettlement at Kanatsiohareke (near Fonda, NY). Scores of people helped make the event successful by donating their musical talents (Jo Anne Bakeman, Mark Hoffmann and Sandy Bigtree), silent auction items or volunteering. The event was held at May Memorial Unitarian Society and co-sponsored by the Green Sanctuary/Social Justice Committee. Onondaga clanmother Freida Jacques was a key organizer and solicitor of auction items.

Mohawk elder and Kanatsiohareke founder Tom Porter opened the event with a Thanksgiving address of inspiration and challenge. In 1993, Tom led a group of Mohawks to resettle their ancestral homeland in the valley that carries their name. Their community is the realization of a 200 year-old dream, since the Mohawk were "ethnically cleansed" from the area. Kanatsiohareke has sustained its efforts against great odds. Learn more at mohawkcommunity.com. —Andy Mager

### Syracuse Common Council Moves to Amend

*"BE IT RESOLVED, that this Common Council of the City of Syracuse, New York supports an amendment to the United States Constitution to establish that (1) artificial legal entities are not entitled to the same rights and protections as natural persons under the Constitution; and (2) spending money to influence elections is not 'free speech' as defined under the First Amendment, assuring the power of federal, state*



Marchers carried signs demanding an end to structural racism at a march and rally responding to the racist attack in Charleston, SC in June (see page 4 for report). Photos: Kim McCoy



and local governments to limit, regulate, and require disclosure of all the sources of all money spent to influence elections...." The resolution quoted was passed on June 22 by a 9-1 Syracuse Common Council vote.

Syracuse joins 654 other municipalities calling to overturn the court doctrines of "corporate personhood" and "money as speech" (AKA "Citizens United") which are the basis for billions of corporate ad dollars influencing our elections. The resolution comes after a 3-year campaign by Move To Amend of Syracuse & CNY (MTA). The resolution also received support from the Greater Syracuse Labor Council, labor union locals, the Alliance of Retired Americans, SPC, DREAM Freedom Revival, Public Citizen and 1,107 Syracuse residents who signed petitions.

MTA will soon start a "Movement Education Program" of short readings and discussions about building a diverse and inclusive movement. MTA meets the

third Thursday each month at 7 pm at the Center for Peace and Social Justice. Contact Michael Messina-Yauchzy at 663-5640 or [syracuse@movetoamend.org](mailto:syracuse@movetoamend.org).

—Michael Messina-Yauchzy

### Anti-Drone Court Cases Have Mixed Results

Anti-drones activists recently received a legal setback in fighting the Orders of Protection (OOPs) that have been issued to those participating in nonviolent civil resistance actions at Hancock Air Base (which pilots drones over Afghanistan and trains drone pilots). The OOPs make it criminal to be within a certain distance of the Base, except during legally permitted protests. In an appeal brought by the District Attorney's office, a decision favorable to us made by a lower court was rendered moot. The way the decision was framed makes it less likely to be able to successfully argue against the OOPs in the way that was tried here.

The best way now to attack the OOPs is by appealing to people's convictions of violating their OOPs, which occurs when

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they return to the base to participate in another civil resistance action. There are two appeals in the hopper, and recently four more people are charged with contempt of court for violating their OOPs. We are determined to work our way through the court system until justice is served. With this ruling, cases that had been postponed will most likely be scheduled for the fall.

Meanwhile, after a recent four-day jury trial, four drone resisters were acquitted of disorderly conduct and obstructing government administration, while being found guilty of trespass (a lesser charge). They participated in a non-violent civil resistance action in April, 2013. Check the SPC website for sentencing dates.

## March Against Racist Violence

Over 100 people gathered with the Peace Council on June 23 to stand in solidarity with the community of the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC following the racist attack that killed nine people on June 17. We marched around the Farmers' Market in Clinton Square, ending at the Jerry Rescue monument. Speakers responded directly to events in Charleston and called more broadly for an end to systemic racism and for all people of our region to get active in undermining white supremacy. The Peace

## STREET HEAT

Get out in the streets every week speaking out against war and Reaper drones. Bring your own sign or use one of ours.

**Tuesdays 4:15-5 pm**

**July 21** Hancock Airbase Entrance  
(E. Molloy Rd., between  
Thompson & Townline Rds.)

**July 28** Adams & Almond Sts.

**Aug 4** Hancock Airbase Entrance

**Aug 11** Mattydale/Northern Lights

**Aug 18** Hancock Airbase Entrance

**Aug 25** Mattydale/Northern Lights

**Every Saturday 9-10 am**

Regional Market, Park St. entrance

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



Koy Adams (left) and Talina Jones (above) reminded the crowd that as horrific as the Charleston attack was, it is nothing new for the Black community. Both strongly called for immediate action to change the system. Photos: Kim McCoy

Council extends our deepest gratitude to speakers Koy Adams, Talina Jones and Emily Napier for their generosity of time and thought.

SPC is now working on a plan for ongoing involvement in the Black Lives Matter movement and anti-racist work in a broader sense. Look for updates in upcoming emails and PNLs. Contact Amelia.

## PARTICIPATE

### SPC Garage Sale

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! SPC's annual garage sale is happening September 12-13: Saturday 9 am – 4 pm, Sunday 9 am – 12 pm, 401 Scottholm Blvd., Syracuse. Drop off your "gently used" items Wednesday-Friday, September 9-11 between 3 pm and 10 pm. Wanted: household and sporting goods, books, DVDs, games, toys, furniture, linens, tools, plants, art, jewelry, lamps, holiday items, appliances and MORE. Please NO clothing, old electronics, or things that DON'T work. Helpers WELCOME for set-up and sale. Food provided. Questions? Call Rae, 445-2840.

### Ground the Reaper Drones

SPC's Ground the Drones, End the Wars Committee recently made summer and fall plans.

- *The Predator Performances.* We have been performing *The Predator* in libraries over the summer and look forward to more venues. The play takes 20 minutes and is a great vehicle for stimulating discussion. Contact us with suggestions of venues.
- *NYS Fair Tableau.* The next planning meeting for our yearly street theater

outside the main entrance of the NYS Fair is **Monday, July 20 from 6-8 pm**. Contact Carol for location.

- *Drone Fly, Children Die Vigil* – **Sunday, July 26 from 9-11 am** at the main entrance of Hancock Air Base (6001 E. Molloy Rd., Mattydale). This is a vigil of compassion for the civilian victims of weaponized drone terrorism. Please bring photos of drone victims and signs expressing empathy. Organized by the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars.
- *Drone Resisters Trial Support.* Since all the Hancock drone resister trials occur in the Town of Dewitt Court, Syracuse-area activists are called upon for hospitality for our out-of-town friends, as well as supporting folks in court. Visit SPC's website for court dates (note that these can change).
- *October Anti-drone Walk* from Hancock Air Base to Niagara Falls Air Base. The Niagara Falls Base is being groomed to be another drone operations site, similar to Hancock. The SPC Committee will be working on the walk from Syracuse to Oswego. We'll need walkers, supporters and organizers. Contact Carol.

### Issue Outreach at the Downtown Farmers' Market

For the second summer, SPC is tabling at the Downtown Farmers' Market on **Tuesdays around lunchtime**. Volunteers from SPC committees and allied groups are asking passersby to sign petitions and make calls to legislators, and providing them with

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# Racism, Colonialism and Nuclear Terrorism

## 70 Years After Hiroshima

Diane Swords

The murder of nine black churchgoers in South Carolina on June 17 was a terrorist act. This follows a number of killings in the past year that received long overdue attention, carried out by police, whose acquittal in most cases indicates the sanction of the state. While this systemic white supremacy is by no means new, there is a widespread sense that it must be called its true name.

The most concentrated act of terrorism in world history, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was carried out 70 years ago. At the April 2015 review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the US led the nuclear powers in abandoning the requirement to move towards disarmament. We are being brought to the brink of annihilation as the US embarks on a 30-year \$1 trillion “revitalization” of strategic nuclear weapons systems.

Why raise these unspeakable realities together?

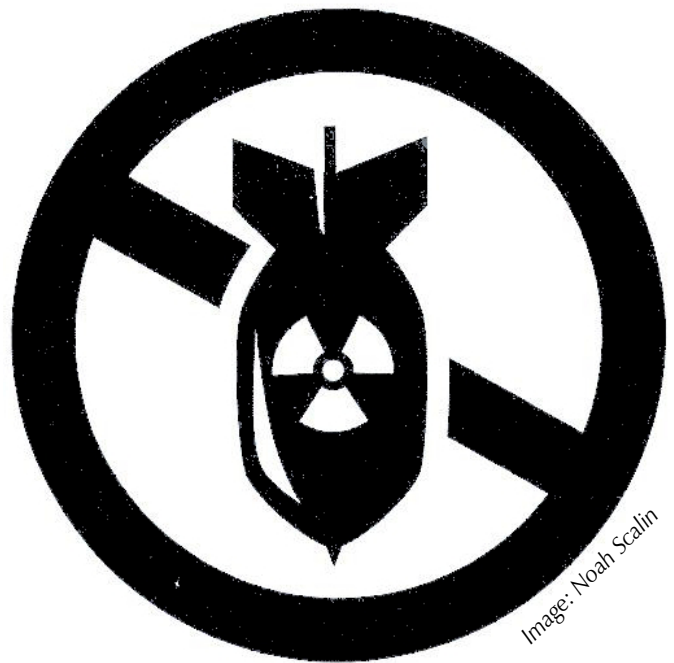
Activist and researcher Joseph Gerson points to racism against the Japanese as a factor in the decision to use nuclear weapons on humans in 1945. Calling it “part of the collective unconscious of the time,” he cites sources from *Life* magazine to Hollywood to the Pentagon using language comparing the Japanese to lice and describing them as “degenerate moral idiots.”<sup>1</sup> Comments in 2015 are strikingly similar. In his 2014 article “On the Connections Between Police Brutality, Torture, and Nuclear Weapons,” historian and Syracuse native Vincent Intondi writes, “Sadly, one cannot possibly be shocked that the police, who are agents of the state, would shoot unarmed black men and then describe them as “it” and “demons” when one reads the grotesque ways in which the US tortured nonwhite people abroad, and have repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons on nonwhite people around the world.”<sup>2</sup>

Anti-militarism is often viewed as separate from social justice and functions to keep activists from working together. Two facts refute this myth: 1) the production, possession, and deployment of nuclear weapons disproportionately harms and impoverishes disenfranchised people globally, and 2) African Americans have seen the connections between racism, imperialism and militarism, and acted courageously against nuclear terrorism from the beginning.

### An Untold History

Intondi makes an important contribution with his book *African Americans Against the Bomb: Nuclear Weapons, Colonialism, and the Black Freedom Movement*. Intondi has compiled voices of many African Americans, famous and not.

Days after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Reverend J.E. Elliott, of St. Luke Chapel, condemned it: “I have seen the course of discrimination throughout the war and the fact



that Japan is of a darker race is no excuse for resorting to such an atrocity.”<sup>3</sup> Many African Americans agreed with Langston Hughes “that racism was at the heart of Truman’s decision to use nuclear weapons in Japan” yet not in Italy or Germany.<sup>4</sup> Black leaders emphasized the global context of the freedom struggle. Those possessing nuclear weapons were those who colonized peoples of color. At a large 1946 event organized by the Council on African Affairs, W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, and Mary McLeod Bethune, to name familiar civil rights figures, addressed the crowd on exploitation of Africa by colonial powers, especially by US importation of uranium for nuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup> Even during the McCarthy era when speaking out bore extreme consequences, “there was a consistent voice inside the black community making the case that freedom, peace and colonialism were links in the same chain.”<sup>6</sup>

Many figures known for civil rights activism were also active against the bomb. Bayard Rustin is recognized for the 1963 March on Washington and advising Martin Luther King, Jr. Much less is known about Rustin’s major role in international protests against nuclear weapons in places as distant as Britain, Moscow and the Sahara. He framed struggles for civil rights within this global context. Many claim that Dr. King first spoke against war in his 1967 “Beyond Vietnam” speech, excoriating the “giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism” and denouncing the diversion of funds from “the poverty program” to war in Viet Nam.<sup>7</sup> But ten years earlier he called for banning

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*Diane is a member of SPC’s Nuclear Free World Committee and an adjunct professor of Sociology at Syracuse University.*

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## Hiroshima / from previous page

nuclear weapons, and in a 1959 speech, questioned the value of social justice “in a context where all people, Negro and White, are merely free to face destruction by strontium 90 or atomic war.”<sup>8</sup> Coretta Scott King should be credited with peace activism early in the 1950s, later profoundly influencing her husband’s pacifism and anti-nuclear stance.

African Americans held central roles in disarmament organizations such as the Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy (SANE) and the Committee for Nonviolent Action in the 70s, 80s and 90s, but were not foregrounded on the national stage. They also formed predominantly black groups such as “Blacks Against Nukes” (BAN), and “Harlem Fight Back.” Black political groups like the Congressional Black Caucus have “included some of the most outspoken critics of nuclear weapons,” such as Ron Dellums.<sup>9</sup>

Anti-racism activists are aware that the role of people of color in US history is often obscured, so it is not surprising that the involvement of people of color in

anti-nuclear activism is not widely known. The “power elite” are threatened by activist unity and maintain their dominance by promoting a view that racism and militarism are separate issues.

### Nuclear Racism Today

Black Lives Matter, founded by three black women in 2012, spells out how the profit motive links racism and militarism. Their website asserts, “This country must abandon the lie that the deep psychological wounds of slavery, racism and structural oppression are figments of the Black imagination.” One of their key demands is, “...an end to the military industrial complex that incentivizes private corporations to profit off of the death and destruction of Black and Brown communities across the globe.”<sup>10</sup>

Production of nuclear weapons emits toxic and radioactive waste, and requires mining, testing, and massive diversions of money from marginalized communities. All over the world, mining is usually done on indigenous lands, destroying resources and sickening largely indigenous laborers. Waste dumps, too, are generally on the land of poor communities of color. Testing

has taken huge areas of indigenous land in patterns of colonial takeover inside and outside the US.

When first elected, President Obama expressed the urgency of nuclear abolition. *Boston Globe* columnist James Carroll writes of “The Abolition of Abolition.” Carroll says unless Obama immediately changes direction, “Nuclear weapons will instead become a normalized and permanent part of the twenty-first century American arsenal, and therefore of the arsenals of many other nations; nuclear weapons, that is, will have become an essential element of the human future—as long as that future lasts.”<sup>11</sup>

The late civil rights veteran Vincent Harding admonished at Obama’s 2009 inauguration that Obama could not be expected to carry out his progressive positions without extreme public pressure. If we take this seriously, what must we do? For the 99% to be a force, we must see the linkages between efforts and recognize that we are struggling against a global system. Intondi reminds us “...now, just like in the 1960s, activists need to fight on multiple fronts.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1-12</sup> Visit [www.peacecouncil.net/pnl](http://www.peacecouncil.net/pnl) for citations.

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### Calling all peace loving artists.

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fundraiser at the beautiful  
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Marcellus on September 27, 2015. Your name and place  
of business will be prominently displayed alongside the  
item. Please contact Ann Tiffany (478-4571) or Jerry  
Lotierzo (243-9823). We need your help!



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# Home Is Where the Hurt Is

## Join the Housing Revolution

Nick Holzthum

What connects displacement of racial minorities by gentrification, community integration for people with disabilities, aging in place, harmful toxins in building materials, and wasteful energy usage? The answer is that all of these social issues are squarely focused on the most private of environments: the home.

The home poses a unique challenge in the pursuit of sustainability since it is at the intersection of many societal, economic, and environmental challenges, affecting millions of people in the US. Yet it remains a largely private sphere, closed off from the influences of social movements and public discourse.

When most discuss sustainability, they refer to ecological well-being. But in order for society to be sustainable, we must also consider social and economic well-being. One subset of the social and economic well-being of our society which concerns me greatly is access to housing for people with disabilities.

I realized that finding suitable housing that adequately meets my needs is virtually impossible in Syracuse because almost no available housing is wheelchair accessible. Just drive or walk down your street and you will notice that there are steps on nearly all of the homes in your neighborhood.

But lack of accessibility only starts with a home's entrance. According to a Harvard study, less than 20% of home units constructed after the year 2000 have extra-wide doorways and doors for wheelchair users to navigate through the house, and lever style handles on doors and faucets. While this is an improvement in that more accessible homes are being built, we still have a long way to go until we see an adequate amount of homes ready for people with disabilities.

A lack of readily accessible housing

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*Nick is the founder of the blog and company All-Equal Inc. He practices Zen Buddhism and is a massive U2 fan. Learn about crucial renovations to make your home accessible at [www.allequalinc.com](http://www.allequalinc.com).*



*A typically inaccessible house in Syracuse. Photo: Maureen Frances Curtin*

prematurely forces the elderly and many people with disabilities into nursing homes if they can not afford to make costly renovations all at once. Many people who become disabled through injury end up in nursing homes for months to years, which costs taxpayers significantly more than if the individual was living in the community—not because they need medical interventions that can only be provided in the facility, but because they cannot afford to make appropriate renovations to their current home or to move into an accessible home. If the person is poor and lacks resources, she may need to wait up to 4-10 years in Syracuse to secure accessible Section 8 housing, a government housing subsidy program that provides rental assistance for low income individuals and families. Only a select group of landlords accept Section 8. In New York City, the waiting list for accessible Section 8 housing is 8-10 years. The waiting list is so long because only 5% of federally subsidized apartment

units have to be made wheelchair accessible. Compounding the lack of rigorous accessible housing standards is that many people who need Section 8 have some form of disability. Disability creates poverty and poverty creates disability (this is referred to as the “disability poverty trap”).

A worker at Arise, the center for independent living in Syracuse, the department responsible for transitioning clients with disabilities from nursing homes into the community, once commented to me that one of their main stumbling blocks is finding readily-accessible homes. I know many people with disabilities who were stuck in nursing homes and the stories of abuse are nothing short of horrific. One friend of mine from New Hampshire, who has severe cerebral palsy and cannot communicate orally, was stuck in a nursing home with no way to communicate

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# A Conversation with Opal Tometi, Co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Movement

**Aly Wane:** Could you tell us who you are and what led you to activism?

Opal Tometi: I'm the daughter of Nigerian immigrants. I was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. We had a pretty tightly-knit Nigerian immigrant community in Phoenix. The Nigerian community looked out for one another. One thing that really shaped me was the fact that my folks were undocumented throughout my childhood and up until my middle school/high school years. They didn't tell us for a long time. There was a period of time when we had to go to court a couple of different times because my parents were trying to adjust their immigration status. There was a chance of them being deported; however, they were able to eventually win their case. This created a sense of curiosity in me, but also a sense of fear. I started asking myself, "why would my parents be deported? Why would my family be torn apart?" Thank goodness, it didn't happen to my family, but a couple of years later it happened to one of my best friends. There was no recourse for her and her family. I got to see firsthand what the immigration system does to people like us.

Being in Arizona, I quickly got involved in the larger immigrants' rights movement. I kept hearing stories about people coming across the desert. I saw people with blisters on their feet. I saw people dying in the desert, so I volunteered with a number of different organizations, groups like No More Deaths, bringing water bottles to the desert for people who were crossing. I also volunteered with the ACLU as a legal observer while the Minutemen were at the US-Mexico border along with hundreds of US vigilantes who were watching and terrorizing people as they tried to cross. By the time I was done with my college undergrad at the University of Arizona, I was really feeling disillusioned. When SB1070 [anti-immigrant racial profiling legislation] hit in Arizona, at first I was incredulous. I had a sense that this was going to go down in history. I also had a sense that we needed to organize a new movement, that what we were doing was insufficient, and that we were not getting at the root causes of



Opal Tometi speaks on President Obama's Executive Actions on Immigration in November 2014. Source: myclickurban.com

the anti-immigration movement. For me it was a period when I realized the need to really dig in deep around issues like forced migration, White supremacy, and the criminalization of migration. I ended up meeting the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) around the time SB1070 was passed. I found my voice in BAJI. In other organizations, I was the Black person doing communications for immigrants' rights organizations. I was basically helping other people share their voices. However, I wasn't able to include my own story and the stories of my community. But with BAJI I felt at home. I started to work with the group, and fortunately 6-9 months later they had an opening and they decided to bring me on staff. At first I was a Black Immigration Network (BIN) coordinator fighting other copycat SB1070 bills across the nation (Florida, Georgia, Alabama, etc.). I did a lot of work with Black communities in the South to explain how these laws were connected to other anti-people of color laws.

**AW:** What struck me about the Black Lives Matter movement is the power and simplicity of those three words. In hindsight, the statement is obvious, but there is something revolutionary about that claim. How did you, Patrisse Cullors and Alicia Garza come up with the term?

**OT:** It emerged because many of us who were part of Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity (BOLD), and frankly any Black person who was watching the Zimmerman trial, were watching with bated breath. When Zimmermann was acquitted

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*Opal is the Executive Director of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration and a co-founder of Black Lives Matter. Aly is an undocumented activist and a member of the PNL Editorial Committee.*



for the murder of Trayvon Martin, I think all of us were just so disturbed. We were very disillusioned. But we were part of BOLD, a national network of Black organizing directors and lead organizers who were training together. We knew that we needed to be in touch with everybody. Alicia Garza wrote a note on Facebook, saying how disappointed she was, how she loved our people, how our lives matter, and then she ended it with “Black Lives Matter.” Patrisse hashtagged it. Alicia put in a conference call to BOLD. We got on the call and she shared those words, and that really resonated with me. I knew that those three words were an umbrella that all of us could really work with. BLM was about the love for Trayvon Martin and other men and women who had been murdered by police. But this was also a way for us to call attention to what people weren’t wanting to name. We’re living in a so-called “post racial” society, but the reality is that Black people are still being acutely affected by all forms of state violence. It was really important to name race because for far too long, Black people were being erased in multi-racial movements. Black people had been invisibilized from so much of the discourse and so much of the political sphere. And at the same time that it was sort of unearthing some of the deep contradictions within our society, it was also a love note to our people. It was an internal dialogue that we were having with Black people. This was both an internal affirmation of who we are, but also an external demand on our society. At the time, my brother was 14 years old and when I heard the [Zimmermann] verdict, I was thinking of him. I knew he was going to see this news, and that he and his generation would know that this thing had happened on our watch. For me this was very personal. I was literally thinking about him and all of the young Black people I knew.

I reached out to Alicia and told her that I wanted to build a project, that Black Lives Matter wasn’t just a phrase, but that it needed to be an international movement. I asked her if we could create a set of tools for people to engage in this online and make this an actual political project where we invite people to say what “Black Lives Matter” means to them, how are they going to ensure that Black Lives Matter, figure out how to engage the BOLD community in this. She said “sure, why not?” so I made a few phone calls, emailed back and forth with a couple of people and started to build an online toolbox and invited people like you to participate and submit stories.

Then it died down for a little bit, but the following year, unfortunately, Mike Brown was murdered. Patrisse said “We have to go[to Ferguson].” And so we did. Within 2 weeks Patrisse and Darnell Moore organized 500 people from across the country to converge in Ferguson, and that was Labor Day weekend of last year. Coming out of that, the people who went said essentially: “We know Ferguson is everywhere, so we want to be organizing in our own localities, around our own concerns.” People wanted Black Lives Matter to be a formal network. They wanted an actual political infrastructure to do direct actions, local organizing, public education, rapid response, etc...and that’s how it became a network. Beyond the rallying cry and political project, BLM is also a network of currently 23 active chapters across the country

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## We have to allow ourselves to bring our whole selves into this

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—Opal Tometi

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and two outside of the country (Canada and Ghana).

**AW: One of the things that I love about this movement is that it honors Black pain and Black grief, and that there is an emotional work component to this. Could you share some thoughts about this?**

OT: I actually remember sitting at home and bawling after the Zimmerman verdict, feeling devastated. This is something that we do not shy away from. We believe that our people deserve to be whole and deserve to have their trauma and their pain acknowledged. I’ve been thinking a lot lately about the phrase “hurting people hurt people.” As we’re dealing from trauma from a systems level, we’re manifesting that pain even within our personal relationships. It’s critical that we have time and space to grieve and to address our own pain. And we believe that so much that we said that one of the staff positions that we want is Healing Justice Coordinator. We have to allow ourselves to bring our whole selves into this. I think about the people that I have worked with who are undocumented and who are part of our organizing committees who do not have any recourse: some of them are just fighting depression and having health crises. I’m actually in touch with a group of acupuncturists who are going to work with us across the country and partner with our chapters. At BAJI a couple of weeks ago, we actually had a psychologist come and do a self-care workshop for organizers. This is to acknowledge that we are waging war on a system in a very hard environment where the power dynamics are so great that sometimes it causes additional stressors and trauma for us. 🌱

her needs. However, with the assistance of some advocates, she was liberated and is now pursuing her graduate degree in psychology with the use of an eye tracking device that allows her to communicate and write papers.

I currently live in an apartment that is barely accessible for my wheelchair. It does not have an accessible bathroom. Luckily, I am a part-time wheelchair user—able to walk for short periods—and so am able to utilize my bathroom. However, last fall I had an operation on my knee. This nearly landed me in a nursing facility because I required greater accessibility throughout my home, and the nurses were afraid that my home was dangerous to get around in my condition. I was able to go home, but had to give up showers for a few weeks until I was able to transfer into the shower. Even though my apartment is not fully accessible, it is one of the few in the city that my wheelchair can enter. In fact, to my knowledge, only six apartment complexes in Syracuse have wheelchair-accessible entrances. Three of them cost around \$800 per month, and the other three cost around \$1,400 per month for a one room apartment. Only two are mostly accessible with enough space in all rooms to maneuver a wheelchair without worrying about crashing into furniture or walls, lower light switches, lever door handles, D-shaped drawer pulls, a roll-in shower, and a wall-hung sink to allow adjustability and the ability to roll your legs underneath. Both cost \$1,400 and lack a truly accessible kitchen with a roll-under sink and multi-

height kitchen counters. Going from Section 8 to paying for a \$1,400/mo apartment is a huge leap, and is unreasonable for most people, including myself.

Although I focus on wheelchair access in this article, making a home accessible or universally designed is beneficial for many people with a variety of conditions. For instance, if someone has arthritic hands and has trouble opening door handles, a lever door handle and faucet would be much easier for that person to use. Thermostats, alarms, and lights controlled through smartphone apps are phenomenal for those with visual, hearing, or physical impairments, since the phone is such a malleable and flexible device that can adapt to the user without much trouble. Further, making a home universally designed will not only assist in helping people with disabilities have more viable home options, but it will allow injured or disabled friends and family to visit. Many people who are elderly and disabled experience social isolation because most homes are not friendly to their needs. You can be a part of the solution.

While the hope to see a meaningful increase of universally designed homes on the market for sale and rent seems like a distant dream, I believe each of us can contribute by actively pushing for our homes to become more accessible for all. For homeowners, I encourage you to buy universally designed hardware for your home renovations. For apartment renters, I encourage you to push your landlords to install accessible home hardware when they replace something such as a sink or toilet. Don't forget: you might find one day that you need the accessibility you built in because—after all—the disability community is the one marginalized group that anyone can join, at any time. ♡

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# Happy Birthday Medicare!

## The Fight for Healthcare as a Human Right Picks Up

*Ursula Rozum and Jerry Lotierzo*

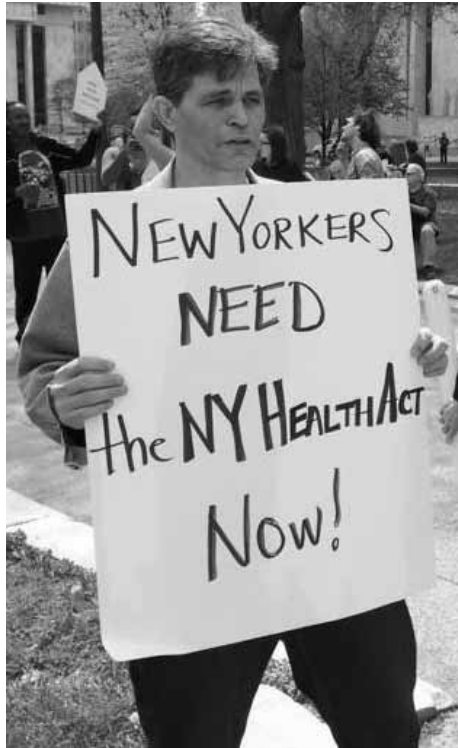
On May 27, the New York State Assembly passed the New York Health Act by a vote of 89 to 47. The New York Health Act would provide every New Yorker with all medically necessary healthcare, including rehabilitative care; mental health care, prescription drugs, and medical supplies; and preventive and public health measures. No more rising premiums, no deductibles, no co-pays, everything covered.

A single-payer system in New York could save taxpayers more than \$45 billion a year, and 98% of us would pay less for healthcare costs because of the savings from eliminating insurance company profits and lowering administrative costs, according to an analysis by University of Massachusetts at Amherst economist Gerald Friedman. The New York Health Act would be funded through a progressive payroll tax paid 80 percent by employers and 20 percent by employees. New York State would seek waivers so that federal funds now received for New Yorkers in Medicare, Medicaid and Child Health Plus would apply to New York Health.

Assembly member Richard Gottfried first introduced the New York Health Act in 1992. The May 2015 Assembly vote was won thanks to decades of advocacy and organizing by healthcare workers. Today, championing the New York Health Act is a statewide coalition, the Campaign for New York. At the helm are healthcare workers, Physicians for a National Health Plan and New York's largest nurses unions, the New York Nurses Association and SEIU 1999. Adding their voice to the struggle for health care rights are over 100 labor, faith and community groups. The next big step in winning universal health care in New York will be building up the political energy to pass New York Health in the NYS Senate.

### Healthcare vs. Red Scare

Fifty years ago, on July 30, 1965, President Johnson signed Medicare into law as



*Syracuse activists rallied for universal healthcare in Albany in May. Photo: Ursula Rozum*

part of his Great Society legislation. The adoption of Medicare came after 20 years of Congressional debate about universal health insurance. In 1945, President Truman called for the creation of a national health insurance fund in a message to Congress. The debate that followed was dominated by the red-baiting of public healthcare as "socialism" by Congressional Republicans and the American Medical Association (AMA). In the most expensive lobbying campaign in US history at the time, the AMA spent \$1.5 million to defeat universal healthcare. One pamphlet read, "Would socialized medicine lead to socialization of other phases of life? Lenin thought so." The AMA and its supporters were very successful in linking national health insurance with rising anti-Communist sentiment. Truman's plan died in a congressional committee.

Advocates reluctantly scaled down their goals. Discouraged, they worked through the 1950s and 1960s toward a

more modest proposal they hoped the country would adopt: hospital insurance for the aged. Enacted for seniors in 1965 and extended to persons with severe disabilities in 1972, Medicare today is very popular, and financially, it's more efficient than private insurance, with administrative overhead at about 2-3%.

### Storytelling and Organizing

On several occasions in recent US history, healthcare advocates have seen political energy rise for passage of universal healthcare. Each little bit of progress has been hard fought. The Affordable Care Act has made insurance easier to obtain but, according to local health care worker Lanika Mabrey, "the system is still very complicated and the costs of healthcare still prevent people from accessing the care they need." Mabrey was one of 200 New Yorkers to testify at the 2014 NYS Assembly Health Committee hearings on the New York Health Act. She shared her story of avoiding treatment despite having insurance due to costs and as a result, developing a kidney disease. Other testimony included stories of New Yorkers with insurance who are bankrupted by their deductibles; doctors who spend hours on the phone negotiating with insurance companies; and medical students who "signed up for medical school, not business school."

Universal healthcare organizing is on a historical upswing. Activists in multiple states are pushing forward "healthcare as a human right" campaigns, including Maryland, Vermont, Maine, California and New York. Healthcare workers are leading the legislative charge, but they need all of us to participate in organizing that puts forward the human costs of the health care crisis front and center in the discussion, much like was achieved during the Assembly's Health Care hearings. You can join the fight for health care for all New Yorkers by visiting the Campaign for New York Health website ([www.nyhcampaing.org](http://www.nyhcampaing.org)) to share your story and to get involved with making passage of the New York Health Act inevitable.

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*Ursula and Jerry are activists with the campaign to pass universal healthcare in NYS.*



Leon Fleisher



Cheryl Strayed



Charles Blow



Ross Douthat



Naomi Klein



Dacher Keltner



Don Garber



Mary Roach



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#### Leon Fleisher

*AN EVENING WITH LEON FLEISHER*

September 29, 2015, 7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel

#### Cheryl Strayed

*A WILD LIFE*

October 7, 2015, 7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel

#### Charles Blow and Ross Douthat

*SOCIAL INEQUALITY: THE HOW, WHY AND WHAT TO DO?*

October 13, 2015, 7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel

#### Naomi Klein

*THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING: CAPITALISM VS. THE CLIMATE*

November 3, 2015, 7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel

#### Dacher Keltner

*SURVIVAL OF THE KINDEST:*

*TOWARD A COMPASSIONATE SOCIETY*

March 8, 2016, 7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel

#### Don Garber

*AN EVENING WITH DON GARBER*

March 22, 2016, 7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel

#### Mary Roach

*GULP: ADVENTURES ON THE ALIMENTARY CANAL*

March 29, 2016, 7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel

#### Sarah Koenig and Julie Snyder

*BINGE-WORTHY JOURNALISM:*

*BACKSTAGE WITH THE CREATORS OF 'SERIAL'*

April 12, 2016, 7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel



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# A Day Without Care

Sarah Jaffe

“A hundred years ago [Benjamin] Franklin said that six hours a day was enough for anyone to work and if he was right then, two hours a day ought to be enough now.”

Lucy Parsons spoke those words in 1886, shortly before the execution of her husband, Albert. The two had been leaders in the eight-hour-day movement in Chicago, which culminated in a general strike, a rally, and the throwing of a bomb into the crowd in Haymarket Square.

Women like Lucy Parsons were at the heart of the struggle for the shorter work week, an integral part of the labor movement until the end of the Depression, which saw the forty-hour week enshrined in law after the defeat of Hugo Black’s thirty-hour-week bill. As Kathi Weeks writes in “Hours for What We Will: Work, Family and the Movement for Shorter Hours” in *Feminist Studies* 35, after World War II, the demand for shorter hours was increasingly associated with women workers, and was mostly sidelined as the forty-hour week became an institution.

“Not only wages — I am thinking here of the ‘female wage’ and the ‘family wage’ — but hours, too, were constructed historically with reference to the family,” Weeks notes. The eight-hour day and five-day week presumed that the worker was a man supported by a woman in the home, and it shaped expectations that his work was important and should be decently paid, while women’s work was not really work at all (even though, as Weeks notes, the gender division of labor was supported by some paid domestic work, done largely by women of color). The postwar labor movement focused on overtime pay and wages, leaving the women’s issue of shorter hours mostly forgotten.

So we see workers striking for more hours as well as better pay, rather than demanding that they be paid a living wage for those few hours. The eight-hour movement, it should be remembered, demanded eight hours’ work for ten hours’ pay; a lessening of working time without a corresponding decrease in wages.

In her study of hospital nursing, *Catheters, Slurs, and Pickup Lines*, Lisa Ruchti points out that women have historically been idealized as “naturally (i.e., biologically) more domestic, submissive, pious, and pure than men,” and that nursing and teaching were held out to them as careers that allowed them to exercise their natural talents. Dana Goldstein has written about how the romanticization of women’s natural goodness was used to mask the real reason that women teachers were sought when the US public school system was founded: they’d work for lower wages.

It is a surprise to see Walmart workers striking at all; Moreton notes that the way the company played up its “values” made women hesitant to complain about their employer. Paula England, Nancy Folbre and Carrie Leana point out in *For Love And Money* that workers who identify with their company’s mission earn less. This is even more obvious in the caring professions,



Image: [knowyourrightsny.org](http://knowyourrightsny.org)

where workers are directly responsible for the well-being and health or education of others.

“The notion that care work should be provided for love rather than money has often served to legitimize gender inequality,” argue England, Folbre, and Leana. Women are the ones expected to do the caring—raising children, helping elderly parents, and perhaps supporting both at the same time. Work norms have been shaped by this belief, pushing women into jobs that uphold gender stereotypes. Ruchti found that conventional definitions of femininity tend to obscure the fact that care *is* work by defining it as an intrinsic characteristic of women.

This romanticized view of care workers deflects attention from the low wages and long hours that caregivers work, and serves to justify those low wages.

Child care and adult care providers are written off as “baby-sitters” and “companions” who don’t need wage protections; a report from the National Domestic Workers Alliance in 2012 detailed rampant abuses of live-in nannies and domestic workers, yet California governor Jerry Brown vetoed a Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights. These workers are on the low end of the spectrum when it comes to pay and respect, even among other care workers. K-12 teachers and nurses are professionals who make professional salaries, need specialized education, and often have union contracts. Child care and adult care providers, by contrast, have more in common with the rest of the low-wage workforce. They often work part-time and not year-round, have fewer protections, and are more likely to be immigrants and people of color.

Ruchti notes that researchers have found discrimination within nursing and care work against women of color, who are seen as

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*Sarah is the former labor editor at Alternet and has written about the economy, organizing, and social movements for the Nation, Dissent, the American Prospect, Truthout, and Jacobin, among others.*

continued on next page

## Day Without Care / from previous page

less professional and even more “naturally” caring than their white coworkers.

The strike is labor’s weapon of last resort: the ultimate refusal of work, the shutdown of production. But what does it mean to strike when “production” isn’t the production of widgets, cars, or even food, but care for children, the ill or disabled, or the elderly?

The strikes in 2012 by workers at Walmart and fast-food establishments weren’t intended to shut down operations; they were intended to shake up the bosses, establish solidarity, and build power among the workers. Longtime organizer Stephen Lerner and law student striker Emilie Joly, in separate interviews, both stressed the value of the strike as a *freedom from work*, creating time for busy workers to organize, rally, and speak to the press. It’s not just about shutting down production, in other words, but about laying claim to one’s own time.

In the rest of the capitalist workforce, workers are encouraged to be selfish, to push for their own advancement. Facebook

COO Sheryl Sandberg has written a whole book telling women to demand more as individuals. But when care workers take collective action to demand better working conditions, they are shamed as selfish. “You should be taking care of the community!” pundits and politicians scold. “How dare you want better for yourself?”

Weeks warns of the dangers of sanctifying “women’s work” and the assumptions about women’s natural place and biological tendencies that comes with it, but what the Chicago teachers did, what nurses and home care aides do, is make their work *visible*. By stepping away from it, even briefly, they dissociate themselves from it and remind us that it is not work done simply out of love. Which brings us back to the beginning: to the need for a rekindled movement for shorter hours, a movement that will challenge our fixed ideas about what is work and who should



do it, about the organization of domestic, reproductive, and care work.

In Weeks’ words, “The demand would be for more time not only to inhabit the spaces where we now find a life outside of waged work but also to create spaces in which to constitute new subjectivities, new work and nonwork ethics, and new practices of care and sociality.”

*This article originally appeared in Jacobin. Read the full version at [www.jacobinmag.com/2013/04/a-day-without-care](http://www.jacobinmag.com/2013/04/a-day-without-care).*



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educational materials. We've had a table featuring Move to Amend and one with anti-racism literature. The Palestine-Israel Committee, Veterans for Peace and a table supporting the SAFE Parole Act (which would create a fair parole process in NYS) and others are planned. To help out contact Brian at the SPC office. —*Brian Escobar*

## Local Participation in the US Social Forum

In late June, fifteen Syracuse activists participated in the third US Social Forum in Philadelphia, PA to unite movements for social justice in building another world. Primarily representing SPC and Bread & Roses Collective, Syracuse participants included longtime local activists and newcomers alike, with connections to the Workers Center, ArtRage, THE General Body, ACTS, Green Party, AGREE, Public Citizen, Bitternut Collective, and more.

The first Forum since 2010, it employed a "polycentric" model with simultaneous gatherings in Pennsylvania, California, Mississippi and Mexico. Racism, poverty and the criminal justice system were at the forefront through daily plenaries, while workshops and strategy-building sessions covered a wide variety of topics. Local participants have returned to Syracuse with renewed inspiration to build a better Syracuse. Stay tuned for possible follow-up events and the World Social Forum coming to Montreal in August 2016! —*Richard Vallejo*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 70 Years Since the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima

2015 marks 70 years since the tragic nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945 by the US. SPC is gearing up for the annual Hiroshima Day Dramatic Procession for a Nuclear Free World. We look hopefully toward a future with no threat of nuclear disaster, whether from weapons or power plants.

This year's procession steps off at noon from Clinton Square (note new location!) on **Thursday, August 6**. Participants are asked to arrive at **11:30** to find your place in the procession. A short gathering at the Everson plaza (the Procession's endpoint) will follow. To help with promoting the event

or developing new props, contact Ursula.

In the lead up to the Procession, SPC's Nuclear Free World Committee screened *The War You Don't See*, which investigates the media's role in war.

## Birthday Dinner with Poet Remi Kanazi – October 3

"There is more truth, and perhaps finally more news, in Remi Kanazi's poems than the pages of your daily newspaper or the sterile reports flashed across your screens." —Chris Hedges

Please mark your calendars for the Peace Council Birthday Dinner on **Saturday, October 3**. To celebrate our 79th, we welcome Palestinian-American poet/spoken word artist Remi Kanazi. Remi is the author of *Poetic Injustice: Writings on Resistance and Palestine* and the editor of *Poets for Palestine*. His political commentary has been featured by news outlets throughout the world, including Salon, Al Jazeera English, and BBC Radio. He is a Lannan Residency Fellow and an Advisory Committee member for the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. Remi will be performing his poetry.

The SPC Birthday Dinner is an important annual event for us to celebrate the peace movement and our collective work. Help with outreach and menu planning by contacting Ursula or Amelia.

## Summer Solidarity Vigils for Gaza

July 8 marks one year since the Israeli assault on Gaza, Operation Protective Edge, claimed the lives of over 2,000 Palestinians, including almost 500 children. The CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel committee is organizing solidarity vigils beginning on July 17 to speak out against US complicity in the massacre and to raise awareness about the continuing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Roughly 100,000 Palestinian residents of Gaza are still left homeless, a crisis which is aggravated by the Israeli economic blockade of Gaza. Join us in the streets **Fridays from July 17 to August 21, 4-5 pm** at the corner of East Genesee St. and Erie Blvd. (opposite the fire department in Dewitt). To help with sign making and outreach, please contact Ursula. We

will also be screening the film *Some of my Best Friends are Zionists* on **Wednesday July 29 at 7pm** at ArtRage Gallery. The subjects of the film are American Jews who take an independent line on Israel and the Middle East.

## RECOGNITIONS

### Activist Appreciation: Jack Manno

Jack Manno has been an SPC activist for over 40 years. During that time Jack has made his living hawking produce on Westcott Street, writing books, coordinating the Great Lakes Research Consortium and now as a professor of Environmental Studies at SUNY ESF. A longtime cultural worker, poet and community builder, Jack fuses his deep humanism with scientific expertise.

Believing that our indigenous neighbors can help us find a path toward a sustainable future, Jack has worked as an informal environmental advisor to the Onondaga Nation Council of Chiefs for years. He is an active member of NOON and was a key organizer in the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign. Jack's latest book, *Ending the Fossil Fuel Era*, co-edited with two colleagues, offers inspiration and information to help us move to a renewable energy future. His laughter, gentle spirit and fierce commitment to justice make him a joy to work with and someone who the Syracuse Peace Council is proud to claim as a member. —*Andy Mager*



Jack Manno in a safety boat during the trial run for the Two Row Wampum paddle down the Hudson River, August 2012. Photo: Karin Wolf

