

Veterans for Peace and SPC activists gather on the steps of City Hall on Monday, November 11 for a Reclaim Armistice Day vigil. Photo: Carol Baum

STAND FOR PEACE ON ARMISTICE DAY

Ron VanNorstrand

Over a hundred years ago the world celebrated peace as a universal principal. In 1918 the First World War had just ended, and nations mourning their dead collectively called for an end to all wars. Accordingly, Armistice Day was conceived as "a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated." Nations determined that the best way to remember soldiers killed and injured in war was to honor the end of the so-called War to End All Wars, rather than glorify the war and the military in general, which would only lead to further wars. However, following World War II and in the midst of the Cold War, Congress decided that in the US, November 11th would be renamed Veterans Day. Armistice Day was flipped from a day to celebrate the end of war into a day for displays of militarism, the true beneficiaries of this mutation being military contractors and weapons manufactures.

Ron VanNorstrand is a member of SPC, the Beyond War & Militarism committee and the local chapter of Veterans for Peace.

On November 11th the local chapter of *Veterans for Peace* (VFP) and *Beyond War and Militarism* (BWAM), a joint committee of the Syracuse Peace Council and CNY Solidarity Coalition, once again combined their efforts to reclaim Armistice Day as a day to celebrate peace, not war. More than thirty community members including veterans gathered on the steps of Syracuse City Hall for a vigil. Mayor Walsh was also invited to join us. He was not able to be there; however, he did issue a proclamation declaring November 11, 2019 to be Armistice Day for Peace in the City of Syracuse.* We should all thank Mayor Walsh for his inspiring proclamation and leadership.

At the Armistice Day event, we acknowledged that we stood on the land of the Onondaga Nation and thanked the Nation for teaching us how we may live peacefully with each other and in communion with Mother Earth. We heard a participant read the famous poem "In Flanders Field," written by John McCrae, one of the more than 15 million people who lost their lives in

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SPC Statement of purpose

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

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STREET HEAT SCHEDULE

Since April, our on-the-streets presence has been twice a week in various locations in the Syracuse area. November through March we'll be out only once a month, at the main entrance of **Hancock Air Base** (home of the 174th Attack Wing of reaper drones, 6000 E. Molloy Rd., DeWitt) **on the first Tuesday of the month from 4:15-5pm**. Please join us—bring a sign or use one of ours. Contact Ann Tiffany or Ed Kinane, 315-478-4571.



The community choir always draws a crowd when it performs at Plowshares! Photo: SPC Archives

3 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Plowshares is coming right up on December 7-8! We need all hands on deck to ensure our largest event of the year goes smoothly. Take a volunteer shift for a couple of hours: support is needed with set-up on Friday, Dec. 6, clean-up on Sunday, Dec. 8, or staffing one of our many tables during the weekend.

Gather petition signatures. Petitions are a vital way to make your voice heard by your representatives, at all levels of government. We have several active petition campaigns, including Nuclear Free World's *Back from the Brink* campaign, Justice for Palestine's *No Way to Treat a Child* campaign, and A Better Future for Onondaga Lake's campaign (subscribers see enclosed petition). Getting petition signatures can be as simple as circulating a petition among your family and friends, or you can petition during outreach tabling (see below).

Outreach tabling. During the winter months, opportunities for outreach tabling do not present themselves as frequently. If you have ideas for locations or events to table at and/or would like to table for SPC, please let us know.

If interested, contact michaela@peacecouncil.net or call the SPC office.

PLOWSHARES CRAFTSFAIR & PEACE FESTIVAL

PRES. TRUMP IS COMING TO PLOWSHARES!

Ok, so maybe that is false news, but now that you are reading this, it is time to remind you that Plowshares will be here very soon, actually Saturday and Sunday the 7th and 8th of December. This year will be the 49th annual Plowshares Peace and Crafts Festival. There will be over 100 artisans from the greater Central New York area, as well as yummy food from the Mission Restaurant in downtown Syracuse, and free entertainment all day long. Plowshares is a weekend of extreme good humanship and meeting with friends old and new. It is also a place to buy all your Chanukah, Kwanzaa and Christmas needs, made by hand, by real humans and without the need for batteries. Please come and join us: Sat. 10-5, Sun 10:30-4:30. We will do everything possible to assure you a fine time

Interested in helping make Plowshares the wonderful event you know and love? Contact michaela@peacecouncil.net or call the office (315) 472-5478.

- Lanny Freshman

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NUCLEAR FREE WORLD

The Nuclear Free World committee is working to get more endorsements for "Back from the Brink," an international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons initiated by Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Union of Concerned Scientists. We are collecting petitions and doing presentations to local community groups to build grassroots support to enlist the mayor and common council to sign a municipal resolution endorsing "Back from the Brink" as communities around the country have done. The resolution was unanimously passed at the June 2019 meeting of the US Conference of Mayors. If you know of an organization that might endorse the resolution and would be interested in a presentation, contact drswords@gmail.com or margrit.diehl@gmail.com. To learn more about Back from the Brink visit www.preventnuclearwar.org.

On March 28, 2020 Dr. Ira Helfand, co-founder and past president of Physicians for Social Responsibility, will be the keynote speaker at SPC's annual dinner. He is on a state-wide tour from March 28 to April 1. Dr. Helfand led the session on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear war at the UN in Geneva that resulted in the successful negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017.

- Margrit Diehl



Richelle Brown, Lindsay Speer, Alma Lowry, and Marianna Kaufman at the People's Forum on Onondaga Lake in October. Photo: Andra Leimanis.

A BETTER FUTURE FOR ONONDAGA LAKE

A Better Future for Onondaga Lake, a working group of SPC, NOON, and CNY Solidarity Coalition activists, has grown out of the need to address the lack of accountability and transparency in Onondaga County's push for a swimming beach on Onondaga Lake. The group held a true Public Forum on October 2. Panelists with significant knowledge of the industrial contaminants present at the bottom of this superfund site spoke openly regarding the lake's history, the current lack of adequate testing, the high levels of mercury accumulating in those consuming fish from the lake, the potential dangers of cumulative exposure to industrial pollutants not addressed in recent claims of a swimmable beach, and the unacceptable risk of a plan that hastily discounts the health and opinions of Syracuse's urban residents. A Better Future for Onondaga Lake works in solidarity with voices of the Onondaga Nation and is looking for additional volunteers and organizers. Subscribers, please see the enclosed petition, and sign and share with neighbors and friends. Call your county legislator and request a stop to the feasibility study for all the reasons above. Read more at <https://tinyurl.com/y5xab53j>. Contact marianna.kaufman@gmail.com to volunteer or with questions.

- Marianna Kaufman

BWAM'S ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SPEAKER SERIES

The Beyond War and Militarism Committee (BWaM) continues our Alternative Education series at ArtRage Gallery. At our October 21 program we heard from Greta Zarro, Organizing Director of World Beyond War (WBW). She presented "Highlights from Limerick". Yes, Limerick, Ireland, where WBW organizers from around the world gathered on October 6-7 for the No War 2019 International Conference. Her presentation included guidance concerning the decisive question, "How Do We De-Militarize?" There were also reports from local activists who attended the conference.

In November, together with Veterans for Peace Chapter 51, we focused our attention on our Reclaim Armistice Day campaign. On November 11, we called upon veterans and community members to gather at the steps of Syracuse City Hall. We invited Mayor Walsh to join us. He was not able to be there; however, he did issue a proclamation declaring November 11, 2019 to be Armistice Day for Peace in the City of Syracuse. At 11:00 the bells of our city rang out in remembrance of the joy and celebration of peace.

As a joint committee of SPC and the CNY Solidarity Coalition, BWaM continues to provide reports during Coalition meetings, emphasizing the connections between resources taken from us by the War Budget and how those funds could be used at home.

- Ron VanNorstrand



Two Veterans for Peace members were arrested for an action in March at Shannon airport, protesting Ireland's complicity with war crimes by allowing US military planes to refuel at Shannon. Photo: Ron VanNorstrand

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CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING

THE BEST KEPT OPEN SECRET IN ONONDAGA COUNTY

Oceanna Fair and Kadashea Smith

In Onondaga County, approximately 600 children a year test positive for lead poisoning, a preventable yet serious illness. Of that 600, 85% of those children live in the City of Syracuse in the 13204 and 13205 zip codes. Lead is toxic to everyone! The most vulnerable candidates for health issues resulting from lead poisoning are children under the age of six. Lead is a neurotoxin that can prevent the absorption of calcium to form strong bones and teeth. It can affect the development of a child's brain and motor skills. Even in small amounts, lead poisoning can have devastating lifelong physical and developmental effects on children under the age of six. Some children show no signs of being ill, while others may have symptoms that vary. Some of the effects of lead poisoning can include but are not limited to headaches, behavioral problems, trouble concentrating, loss of appetite, weight loss, nausea, vomiting, constipation, fatigue, muscle and joint weakness, seizures and even death.

You may wonder how children come into contact with such a toxic substance. Lead can be found in several places. The most common place is in their own homes. Children can get lead poisoning through lead-based paint. Lead-based paint was commonly used in homes built before 1978. 72% of the Syracuse housing stock was built prior to that time. Lead can also be found in soil, dust, water that flows through lead pipes and some pottery.

Lead is absorbed into the body through inhalation or ingestion. Children may eat paint chips containing lead, which taste sweet. They may place objects in their mouths such as toys that have come into contact with contaminated dust or soil. Chipping paint in the home causes the dust in the home that can be inhaled.

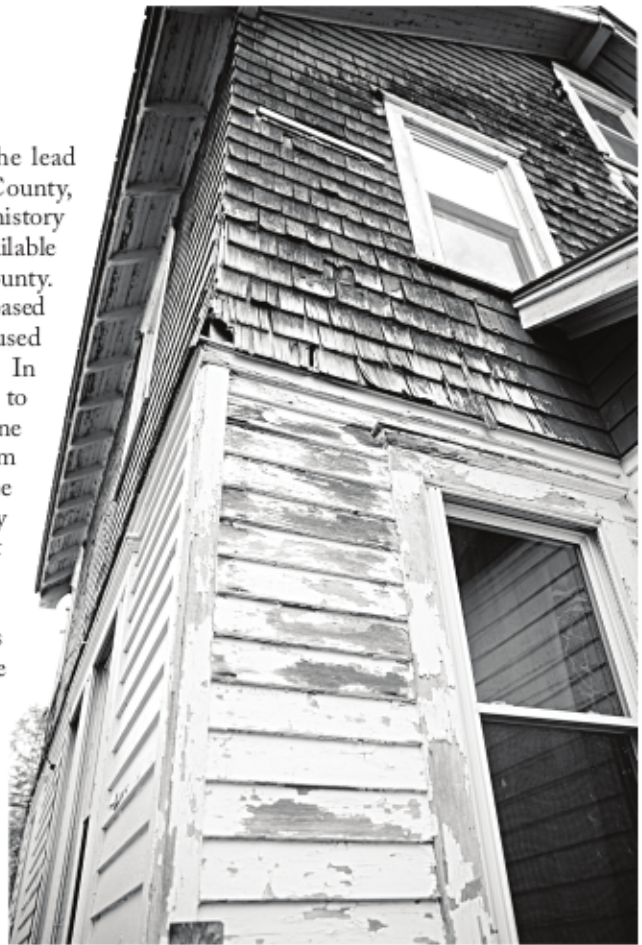
Oceanna Fair, a founding member of Families for Lead Freedom Now, is a retired LPN who owns a home in the City of Syracuse. Kadashea Smith is a residential manager with an associate's degree in health services and is a homeowner in the City of Syracuse.

To understand the lead problem in Onondaga County, we must understand the history of lead in America and available housing in Onondaga County. In the early 1900s lead-based paint was commonly used in homes and schools. In 1922 lead was added to gasoline to raise the octane level, making premium gas for high-performance engines. There was plenty of scientific evidence at the time that lead was dangerous and should not be used. Industries rejected this claim and the government allowed it.

In 1970, President Nixon signed the Clean Air Act of 1970, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was formed. These efforts resulted in the Lead-based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act of 1971, restricting the lead content in paint used in housing built with federal dollars. However, it wasn't until 1976 that the Consumer Product Safety Commission effectively banned lead paint. Lead continued to be added to gasoline until 1990 when amendments to the Clean Air Act halted the practice.

In the City of Syracuse, 72% of the housing market was built prior to 1960 when lead-based paint was primarily used. In addition, 92% of the housing was built prior to 1980. As a rule, any house built before 1978 needs to be assumed to have lead contamination. With these types of numbers most children in the City of Syracuse live in homes that contain lead.

How do we keep our children safe? Prevention is key! Parents need to be educated on lead poisoning and what to look for when renting or buying a home. This includes education on rights and



The surroundings of Oceanna's home are all lead contaminated due to the chipping of the exterior paint of the house. Photo: Jessica Ruiz

responsibilities of home owners, renters, and landlords to the risk that lead poses and their responsibilities to remediate or abate it. Homeowners and contractors doing the work need to have proper training and certifications as directed by the EPA. In a home if a child tests positive for lead poisoning, interim prevention measures need to be put in place to prevent further harm until remediation or abatement is completed.

Lead poisoning is a community issue that should involve everyone in the solution. Affected families, homeowners, landlords, health officials, school districts, community leaders, and government officials all need to work together to solve the problem. If everyone brings their expertise and experience to the table, we can eliminate the lead problem in our community. ♻️

Stand for Peace continued from cover

WWI. We learned the distinction between red and white poppies: red poppies commemorate soldiers who die in war while white poppies commemorate all people, including civilians, killed in war. And we heard veterans express that, while we should remember those who are casualties of war, the most appropriate manner to honor them is to work tirelessly to end all current wars and prevent any future wars. At 11:00am on the 11th day of the 11th month, church bells rang out in remembrance and renewal of the idea of the end of war and militarism.

The campaign to Reclaim Armistice Day serves as a guiding light for our combined efforts throughout the year to end the reliance on war and militarism as a means of conflict resolution, to counter the culture of militarism, and to raise awareness and focus action on the fact that it is no longer a question of nonviolence or violence. Rather, the choice is nonviolence or nonexistence.

Given the ongoing horrors of war, it is finally time to remember Julia Ward Howe's words about sons unlearning love and being steeped in violence and killing. Mother's Day was originally an antiwar message. Following the carnage of the American Civil War, the poet, abolitionist, and suffragist Howe penned her Mother's Day Proclamation in 1870 as an appeal to mothers to spare their sons and the sons of others from the depredations of war. The Mother's Day Proclamation was partly a lament for the useless deaths and partly a call to action to stop future wars.

We invite everyone to join us throughout the year to demand peace and justice, at home and abroad. We encourage all readers



#ReclaimArmisticeDay

"A day that celebrates peace, not war, is the best way to honor the sacrifices of veterans."

Image: Veterans for Peace

to offer their thoughts on how to press our government to end reckless military interventions abroad that endanger the entire world; to identify and actively oppose all domestic applications of this militarism, whether it be the dangerous militarization of our borders and municipal police departments or the continual assault upon and colonialization of our Indigenous neighbors. We must counter the culture of violence and militarism impressed upon us by the pernicious military-industrial-corporate-government-education—and all-consuming—complex.

**See copy of Armistice Day Proclamation signed by Mayor Walsh enclosed in this PNL issue (subscribers) or at www.peacecouncil.net/sites/default/files/2019ArmisticeDayProcl-signed.pdf. ☮*

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WHAT'S SALT GOT TO DO WITH IT?

HOW TULLY BRINE MINES HURT OUR WATER, LAND, AND COMMUNITIES

by Joe Heath, Alma Lowry,
Adelaide Rosa, and Hilary-Anne
Coppola

Our community knows Onondaga Lake is the most polluted lake in the US. This is a current reality caused by corporate greed and capitalist values which endanger human health. Lake protectors struggle to hold Honeywell and Onondaga County responsible for necessary toxin remediation and protections in and around the lake. In addition, the local environmental destruction goes beyond the lake and Syracuse.

Besides poisoning the lake, Solvay Process and Allied Chemicals (the industrial predecessors now known as Honeywell) destroyed water systems and land structures in the Tully Valley and north toward Syracuse by brine mining. Brine mines inject water into underground rock salt to bring up a liquid brine solution. Salt mines operated in Tully Valley for almost a century as "wild brining". Wild brining means no effort to track, control, or provide structural support during mining. The international mining industry knew by the early 1900s that wild brining was unsafe and caused sinkholes, ground fissures, and landslides. While controlled brining removes 10-15% of rock salt, in some Tully Valley sites up to 75% of salt formations were dissolved. The empty space under the valley floor is the volume of 35 Carrier Domes.

The catastrophic effects of Tully Valley brining are numerous: sinkholes throughout the valley, hillside fissures, land subsidence, collapses underground, salt intruding into well water, and silt-and-saline mudboils in and along Onondaga Creek. The surface damage allows excess water to enter the groundwater system: Land fractures create channels for surface water to invade aquifers and for previously separated aquifers to mix, which makes the system more unstable.

The authors work in collaboration at the Heath Law Office.



A Tully Valley mudboil. Photo: unknown

In addition, mining records indicate that 40-60% of brine created was lost in the Tully Valley groundwater system. As a result of all these forms of damage, the Tully Valley aquifer is more pressurized. The groundwater pushes to the surface at weak spots in the valley floor four miles downstream from the brine mining area, bringing salt and sediment. These surface eruptions are called the Tully Valley Mudboils (TVMs).

The first written record of a TVM is in an 1899 newspaper article. Since news organizations strive to report new news, this suggests that TVMs did not occur before brining began a decade earlier. There is no written or oral history showing TVMs existed before then, either.

A study by The Chazen Companies, a nationally recognized engineering company, links brine mining to the mudboils. By the 1950s, TVMs reduced Onondaga Creek's water clarity. In the 1990s, shortly after brine mining ended, TVMs became exponentially more active; because brine is no longer removed, additional pressure in the water system is not relieved. Also, since water from precipitation enters the groundwater

and dissolves rock salt, wild brining still occurs. At their worst, TVMs dumped 30 tons of salty sediment into Onondaga Creek daily. The TVMs now release 5 to 15 tons each day.

Onondaga Nation citizens used Onondaga Creek continuously until the effects of brine mining completely destroyed the water quality. When brine mining ended and subsequent increased TVM activity caused drastic environmental degradation, the Onondaga people had to abandon their daily use of the creek. The Onondaga live with the theft of the lake (meaning a separation from sacred ceremony sites as well as a loss of food, medicine, and other natural resources), land, and also their freshwater stream, a major food source on the small area they now occupy. The Nation's leaders are mandated by the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace to be stewards of the lake and protect it and all forms of wildlife for future generations. The actions of companies like Honeywell and government agencies interfere with this stewardship responsibility.

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ACTIVISM THROUGH MUSIC

A CONVERSATION WITH COLLEEN KATTAU

Colleen is a CNY-based bilingual vocalist and performer. Colleen has shared the stage with Holly Near and Pete Seeger. She interprets songs from the nueva canción tradition of artists such as Violeta Parra, Victor Jara, and Silvio Rodriguez. Colleen believes in the transformative power of song to create a more just and beautiful world. She has created six albums and three successful benefit compilations for environmental and peace actions. Colleen is also an organic gardener on a rural land trust.

What role does music play in social justice movements?

Colleen: Music speaks to the heart and soul. It makes us human. We are more free to express our emotion and reason through melody and lyrics. Throughout social movements, music has been at the forefront. Music and lyrics are important because they tell stories that otherwise would not get told. Amazing songs come from the labor, women's rights, and civil rights movements. Music is alternative history and documents the heroes and she-ros.

What can it do for activists and organizers?

Colleen: Music can be reaffirming to the collective vision that organizers share. Music is nuanced and gives us direction toward justice. It creates community through interpretation, which can be playful or contain irony. (Jolie Rickman, a local singer, was so good at that.) It reaffirms and articulates the values and goals for a good and just society. We will always have music. No one can take that away from us. A singer like Victor Jara, a true progressive singer-song writer for Chilean poor, who was tortured and killed during the dictatorship of Pinochet—left us a legacy, and his music lives on for all of us.

How does music inspire people to act?

Colleen: Take the song "We Shall Not Be Moved": [it] affirms that one must act to decry the injustice. It reaffirms our

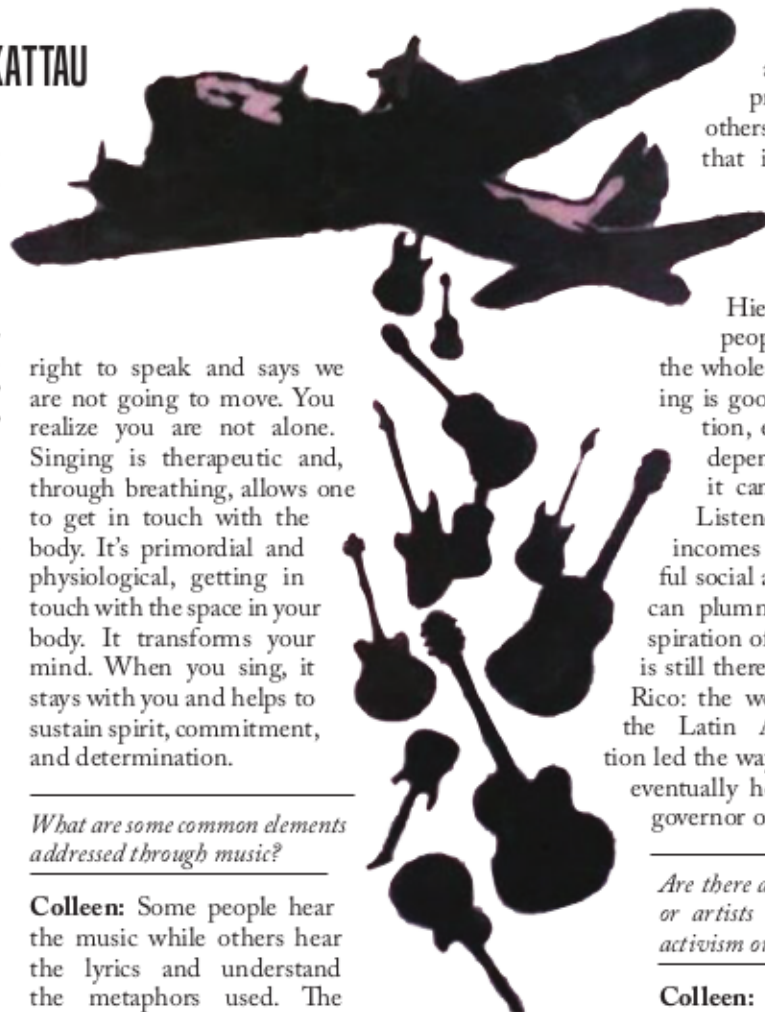


Image: Graffiti attributed to infamous street artist Banksy.

right to speak and says we are not going to move. You realize you are not alone. Singing is therapeutic and, through breathing, allows one to get in touch with the body. It's primordial and physiological, getting in touch with the space in your body. It transforms your mind. When you sing, it stays with you and helps to sustain spirit, commitment, and determination.

What are some common elements addressed through music?

Colleen: Some people hear the music while others hear the lyrics and understand the metaphors used. The music of Mercedes Sousa, the voice of Latin America, uses metaphors and makes social justice real. And activists' music does exactly that—makes experiences and life real. There's a beautiful love song by Violeta Parra used by young people to protest [against the] jail[ing of] victims in Latin America. Songs can be interpreted in a different context. It's all about resonance; some things are not obvious.

In the 60s and 70s, music was significant in social inspiration. Is it true that social media has diminished the role? How would you describe the situation then and now?

Colleen: One must look at where and when music is produced. There are layers to music production. The hierarchy prevents the grasp of all music produced. Sometimes we don't see it. For example, Neil Young sings many protest songs and once wrote that no one is singing about

a particular social problem. But I and others were. It's just that in the hierarchy of musical production, Neil wasn't aware of this.

Hierarchy prevents people from getting the whole picture. Streaming is good for dissemination, especially for independent artists, but it can be devastating. Listeners can listen but incomes of once successful social activist musicians can plummet. But the inspiration of the 60s and 70s is still there. Look at Puerto Rico: the women singing in the Latin American tradition led the way with lyrics that eventually helped topple the governor of Puerto Rico.

Are there any musical groups or artists that inspire your activism or musical style?

Colleen: Definitely! Joni Mitchell—I love her sophistication and musical genius. We don't think about her as a social justice singer, but she was very progressive and wrote about women's experiences. And Carol King, whose music exudes love and was about being real and the strong values we all appreciate. I listen to all sorts of music including jazz, music of struggle, and women artists such as Holly Near and Violeta Parra—so inspirational—and artists singing Nuevo Cancion, a Latin American style. I never had lessons with the guitar and still struggle with it, [but] I was always singing and now I listen to all kinds of music—Johnny Cash, Buffy St. Marie, Patti Smith, and more.

Who are you behind the music?

Colleen: I love to sing. If I feel the music, I can sing it. It must be meaningful to me. It has to be real or I am not able

to interpret the music lyrically or melodically. I can't mimic it. Maybe some musicians can do those things, but I can't.

How would you describe the connections of social activism in music in the past, present, and future?

Colleen: Well, there are different "musics". One is topical music—"in the present moment" music. Charlie King writes topical music like his songs of the Iraq War when George Bush was in office. But there are songs of the past that live in the present and into the future. There are many social movements going on now; songs like "Which Side Are You On?" propel us. Social justice responds to the times and creates an awareness. Music, like art, often precedes ideas. It's visionary; naming and creating more awareness. We see into the future and we express it in our music and art. The future of music is expansive, and there is an explosion of music now. We need a lot of music. But much of folk music now is not political, not moving us to action. Music can celebrate and mourn ideas, like climate change. We sing what is good and what is hard in our lives.

What is the benefit of music over demonstration or protest?

Colleen: It's more interesting! It's participatory. For example, Pete Seeger in the Close the School of the Americas Movement. Pete loved it. He called it the "singiest" movement. We are creatures of variety, and we may just want to dance into the revolution as Emma Goldman said.

Do you think music crosses the lines of gender, education, income levels, cultures, etc.?

Colleen: It tries to. Sometimes it succeeds, but there are large generational differences. In our generation there was set known music. Now there are pockets of music. Frames of reference are different. But it is up to us to sing the social justice songs. World music does cross cultures both ways. As for income levels, I am not sure. I am not singing to the wealthy.



Colleen is generous with her voice, performing regularly at community events, demonstrations, festivals and house concerts, often donating her time and collaborating with other musicians (l to r: Mike Brandt, Colleen Kattau, Jaime Yaman. Photo: Kristen Mosher.

What is the role of music in healing when it comes to violence and injustice?

Colleen: It plays a major role in healing the oppressed. All oppressed people have their music. Music brings people together in community. It names the injustice and that makes it effective. Music eases our tension. It is uplifting and poignant and offers an alternative as it inspires us to get on with it.

How would you describe the role of your music in the community?

Colleen: It is important to stay connected to community, to know what the community is and to work in the community. Everyone has skills. I like to sing and I offer it, along with spots of hope. I try. ♪



DON'T MISS COLLEEN KATTAU AND MORE AMAZING MUSIC AND DANCE PERFORMANCES AT PLOWSHARES

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SAT DECEMBER 7TH

10:00 Eli Thomas
11:00 The Smallpipe Society
12:00 Zoe Mullan-Stout
1:00 Syracuse Community Choir
1:45 Colleen Kattau & Dos XX
2:30 The Thrift Store Gypsies
3:15 Salt City Ukulele
4:00 Mark Zane

SUN DECEMBER 8TH

10:30 Eli Thomas
11:30 Savannah Juvannis
12:00 Luckiest Men
1:00 The Hatts Project
2:00 Under the Blue
3:00 No Strings Attached
3:45 Falling Forward

Salt continued from page 7

The damage caused by TVMs is undeniable. Before brine mining, the Tully Valley watershed was a stable stream valley which fed Onondaga Creek. The creek ran clear and supported a healthy population of cool and cold water fish, including trout. Now the water is muddy brown and fish are scarce. The saline and silt regurgitated by TVMs create a layer of quicksand-like sediment over the floodplain habitat near the creek, oversaturate wetlands, and cause tree die-off. Farm land is slowly collapsing into the void created when silt is brought to the surface and enters Onondaga Creek. Downstream, silt clogs parts of the creek in Syracuse, increasing flood risk to the Southside community; yet another infrastructure failing that negatively impacts predominantly Black communities in Syracuse—1,400 Southside homes were forced to have flood insurance. The silt then dumps into Onondaga Lake, and the Inner Harbor must be dredged.

If TVM activity is allowed to continue, the lake may lose depth. Onondaga Lake is historically a deep lake with seasonal turnover of water layers in a dynamic system. If the lake becomes too shallow, its overall temperature will increase; the water layers will stop mixing; eutrophication will overload the water with nutrients; and more algae blooms will occur. Why the county administration wants to invest in a beach on the lakeshore, given the work needed to heal our water and land, defies reason.

There are no easy fixes, and solutions are costly. Proposals include filling fissures and sinkholes, and pumping water from the aquifer before it erupts via mudboils. Some “end-of-pipe”

solutions attempt to keep TVM sediment from the creek, but these have failed. Another complication is a new group of active TVMs within Onondaga Creek. Honeywell (formerly Solvay Process/Allied Chemical) owns much of the land destroyed by brine mining and is responsible for environmental restoration of this area. Unjustly, Honeywell denies the connection between its wildly irresponsible brine mining to the mudboils, land collapses, sinkholes, and damaged ecosystems.

There are many ways to fight locally for environmental justice. Here are only three:

- Follow indigenous leaders. Native land and water protectors have the ecological knowledge and wisdom for best practice environmental conservation and remediation. The greater Syracuse area is fortunate that the Onondaga Nation maintain their sovereignty, and their stewardship efforts deserve support. Check out their website: www.onondaganation.org.
- Join a local action group. A Better Future for Onondaga Lake is resisting the county’s swimming beach proposal. The lake area is currently a closed industrial landfill, and a beach could endanger human health. (See page 4 for more details or contact Marianna Kaufmann: marianna.kaufman@gmail.com.)
- Facilitate education and understanding of these issues. The mudboils affect Syracuse and Onondaga County residents as well as the Onondaga Nation. Check out Gwendolyn Cate’s mudboil feature on the Onondaga Nation YouTube channel. Are you an educator who values introducing students to local issues? Want to host a speaker at your library, historical association, etc.? Joe Heath has a thorough presentation on TVMs. (Contact Heath Law Office.) ♻️



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CUBA SI; BLOQUEO NO!

by Barbara Humphrey

Recently, I traveled to Cuba with the Venceremos Brigade. Here is my story.

Ninety miles from the US border—but since 1959, US citizens cannot travel freely to Cuba. In 1969, a group of Americans formed the Venceremos (“We Shall Overcome”) Brigade (VB), an act of collective solidarity with Cuba’s revolution and right to self-determination and in defiance of US travel bans and economic blockade. The VB has brought thousands of people to Cuba, at times traveling via third countries and once by cattle boat, to fulfill the VB goals of supporting the Cuban people through voluntary labor (in the early years cutting cane with Fidel) and donations of material aid, entering into dialogue and relationship building with the Cuban people, learning from each other to change US’ Cuban policy and build a more just and equitable world.

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the 2019 VB brought the largest and most diverse brigade to Cuba. We came in defiance of newly enacted US travel bans to breathe the free air that is Cuba. Passengers applauded when our plane touched down in Havana; the flight crew saluted as we boarded a bus to the terminal. Upon arrival, I understood that Cuba is a special place—a place that stood up to US empire and is still standing; where revolution is not a single act, but a constant struggle—it was a life changing transformation.

We drove from the airport on roads shared with buses, bicyclists, donkey carts, and pedestrians to the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples camp, constructed to host solidarity delegations such as ours. Upon arrival, we were

oriented to all things big and small—the food, the water, the toilets (no paper in the toilets—fish it out if you forget), 90+ degree bunkhouses, our fellow brigadistas and camp personnel, and especially the Cuban people, showing gratitude for accepting us onto their land.

Days were programmed from sunrise to past sunset with meetings, discussions,

The veterans spoke with pride about their roles in the revolution. They freed their country from a ruthless dictator and US control and restored rule of law. They fought; they killed; they saw comrades die. Yet, they do not suffer from PTSD. Could PTSD, and its sister, moral injury, result from being ashamed of your service, from being on the wrong side of history?

Despite permitting only the Communist Party, Cuba is a grassroots, people-driven democracy. In their local Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, people develop their agendas, and more than 90% vote in elections. Candidates do not need to belong to the Communist Party, do not campaign, and serve without compensation to fulfill the peoples’ agendas. Fidel, and later Raul, ruled without opposition not as dictators but as the embodiment of the revolution.

My transformative moment came when we discussed US/Cuba bi-lateral relations. After 200 years of US dominance, everything changed in 1959. The US ramped up its “regime change war” via invasion, assassination attempts on Fidel’s life, and the blockade, preventing exports of cash goods and importation of vital necessities.

The US took advantage of a weakened Cuba after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 by imposing harsher economic sanctions and travel bans via the 1992 Cuba Democracy Act and 1996 Libertad Act (aka Helms Burton). White House advisors like John Bolton and Marco Rubio influenced US-Cuban policy, claiming Cuba had weapons of mass destruction and blaming the Cuban government for the country’s hardships. Relations improved under Obama (Cuban Thaw,) but deteriorated significantly under Trump, with new travel restrictions, and, for the first time, enforcing Title III of Helms Burton, giving jurisdiction to US courts to allow Americans who lost



Writing on a building in Cuba that translates to “Another world is possible.”
Photo: VB4Cuba.com

travel, work and play. We worked in the fields and at the camp. We visited with veterans of the revolution; government officials; and health care professionals producing medicinals from botanicals. We met with NGO representatives involved in women’s issues, housing, and race relations. We visited Havana and the Museum of the Revolution on July 26, Cuba’s national holiday commemorating Fidel’s failed attack on the Moncada barracks in 1953 that sparked the successful revolution less than six years later. And we played in the tropical waters of Varadero Beach.

From toileting to field work, bunkhouses to Havana, beans and rice meals to sparkling tropical waters, it is the Cuba experience. It is free people sharing in abundance when times are good and accepting austerity when they aren’t.

Barbara Humphrey is a long time socialist and anti-war activist and one-time Green Party candidate for the Syracuse Board of Education.

continued on page 14

JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE

Building support for the international campaign *No Way to Treat a Child* (co-sponsored by American Friends Service Committee and Defense for Children International—Palestine) has been the focus of Justice for Palestine activities the past six months.

Palestinian children have the right to a safe and just future. The *No Way to Treat a Child* campaign believes the US and Canadian governments must take concrete steps towards this future by holding Israeli authorities accountable for its violations of Palestinian children's rights.

Committee members have been educating the public about HR 2407, a proposed human rights bill in the House, sponsored by Rep. Betty McCollum, and circulating a petition in support of it. The aim is to deliver the petition with over 500 signatures to Rep. Katko on International Children's Day November 20.

Committee members are also meeting with a range of faith groups and other community organizations to share information and ask for support. Thus far, six organizations have signed onto a resolution advocating for HR 2407 and the *No Way to Treat a Child* campaign.

- Julia Ganson

CLOSE THE CAMPS!

SPC joined immigrant rights activists and organizations in solidarity with a national day of action on October 11 calling for an end to the inhumane border camps. A spirited march flowed from the Federal Building downtown to the ICE office on Salina St., chanting "Up, up with liberation! Down, down with deportation!" Speakers addressed the racist nature of current immigration policies, shared a personal testimonial from a local mother detained at the border with her young child, and urged more people to support the work of the Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network (SIRDN). Attend the next SIRDN organizing meeting Monday, December 9, 6:30pm at 2013 E. Genesee St. to get involved.

- Jessica Maxwell



NOON unraveled their banner over I-81 on Indigenous Peoples Day. Photo: Kristin Mosher

INDIGENOUS SOLIDARITY CONTINUES

Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON) organized three actions to mark Indigenous Peoples Day on October 14. The day began with a banner drop over Rt. 81 with a banner reading "Columbus Didn't Discover Anything—Thousands of Native Nations Were Already Here." In the afternoon a diverse mix of about 125 indigenous people and allies joined the White Pine Singers and Dancers for Haudenosaunee Social Dancing at the Inner Harbor, while learning more about culture and history. At the same time, over 30 people participated in a Witness to Injustice exercise at Plymouth Church downtown.

Our annual Thanksgiving Circle of Peace and Hope is set for Thursday, November 28 (Thanksgiving morning) at 10 am at Willow Bay (north end of Onondaga Lake). The gathering is an opportunity to express thanks for the goodness of the Earth and to each other—for our ongoing friendship, working side-by-side in peace and hope for healing, justice, and environmental restoration. See: facebook.com/OnondagaNeighbors for full details and to invite friends.

- Andy Mager

CNY SOLIDARITY: ACTIONS ON IMPEACHMENT

The Central New York Solidarity Coalition supports the House inquiry into whether to impeach President Trump in light of his effort to pressure Ukraine's President to investigate Joe Biden. It focuses in part on encouraging Rep. John Katko, a key Congressperson on this, to support the impeachment inquiry. The group hosts an ongoing series of demonstrations in front of Katko's office at 444 South Warren Street. Its members seek to confront Katko personally with the question of whether he thinks inviting foreign interference in American elections is acceptable. It encourages letters to the editor on impeachment, and has posted a guide on the cnysolidarity.org site to help people do this. The group also wants citizens to encourage our Senators to demand an open and real impeachment trial in the Senate. Furthermore, we have hosted teach-ins and town halls on impeachment. You can sign up for action alerts or check for new events here: cnysolidarity.org. The coalition welcomes your participation in this critical effort to save our democracy.

- Peter McCarthy

continued on page 14

RESTORATIVE CIRCLES

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

by Kanat Bolazar

Criminal “justice” that focuses on prison sentences is a punitive, isolationist, adversarial, and individualistic system. People who take responsibility may be punished more, and those who are innocent may be forced to admit guilt in exchange for a lesser punishment. If someone goes to prison without actually admitting guilt or regret, this may leave all parties involved disempowered. Prisons are criminogenic; time spent in prison increases the likelihood of future criminal activity instead of decreasing it.

Restorative Justice (RJ) aims to restore a community after an action damages the community. RJ is less interested in labels, punishment, and winning the blame game. But that doesn't mean people are automatically forgiven. RJ requires that everyone take responsibility for their actions and unintended consequences. RJ empowers the people and communities affected through direct engagement in the process, so that the dignity of each individual and the collective trust in community are restored.

As mentioned in the article on RJ in the previous issue of the *PNL*, Syracuse as well as many other cities use RJ circles as a voluntary and alternative first step to the US criminal justice system in city schools and the community. In RJ circles, people talk one at a time, going around in the circle for as many rounds as needed. This is often done by passing a “talking piece” so that only one person talks at a time.

Restorative Circles

The “Restorative Circles” (RC) approach is a community-oriented process for addressing conflict between people which reveals underlying unmet needs and concerns that triggered the conflict in order to restore community. It was created by Dominic Barter in the shantytowns of Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1990s.

Kanat Bolazar hails from Turkey, is on the Peace Newsletter Editorial Committee, lives at The Bread & Roses Collective House, Inc., and teaches Salsa dancing. Reach him at (315) 471-2636.

Unlike RJ circles, RC tries to verify comprehension, does not require specific communication styles (such as not making any “you ...” statements), and facilitators (called hosts) never exercise authority over the participants.

Circles

RCs have three sets of meetings:

- Pre-Circles: Host meets with each affected person invited to the circle to briefly introduce RC to everyone and to understand the act and its effects.
- Circle: All parties and the host meet for mutual understanding, to take responsibility for their actions, agree on reconciliatory actions, and schedule post-circle(s) to evaluate progress and closure.
- Post-Circles: Evaluate completion of agreed-upon reconciliation actions, see if they produced the desired effects, and ascertain other needs that may have arisen.

During the circle, an RC host asks very specifically worded meta-questions; they are not there to rephrase and pass judgment. All content and solution ideas come from the group.

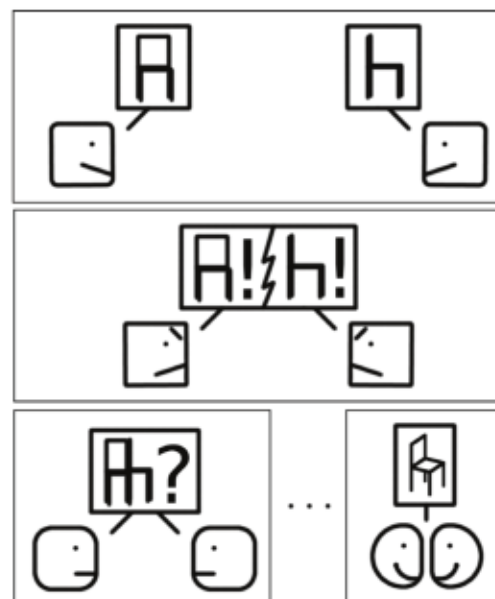
The RC host uses three questions to check for “reflective listening”:

1. What did you hear him/her/them say?
2. Is that it?
3. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Reflective listening encourages empathy, while discouraging and ideally reducing misunderstanding, defensiveness, trying to win, and reactionary attacks.

The three goals of RC circles are achieved by specific questions:

- Mutual Understanding: What would you like known, and by whom, about how you are right now in relation to the event and its consequences?
- Taking Responsibility: What would you like known, and by whom, about what you were looking for at the moment you chose to act?



Conflicting perspectives, with non-violent communication, may help us reconstruct a multi-dimensional reality. Needs that appear conflicting might be satisfied creatively. Image: Kanat Bolazar.

- Action Agreements: What would you like to see happen next? (What would you like to offer? What would you like to request?)

These carefully worded questions work for any affected party and acknowledge that people's emotional experience may change during the circle.

A big restorative circle may involve many community members and outside parties, take a few hours, have action agreements that will take months of work by many people, with a post-circle scheduled for next year. A small restorative circle may take 15 minutes between two parties and a host, with a three-minute action item for one party and a post-circle that convenes in 20 minutes.

Coming Soon!

RC is currently practiced in Rochester and many other places around the world, but not in Syracuse. The Bread & Roses Collective House, Inc. has been evaluating this approach and plans to have an RC training session in Syracuse in January 2020. This will likely take the form of a three-hour theory session and a three-hour practice session, on the same day or on two consecutive days. If you are interested in such a training session, please contact the author now. ☮

business resources to Cuban nationalization in 1959 to sue non-US companies benefitting from the use of those resources, such as suing foreign cruise lines for docking in the port of Havana. A recent report to the UN General Assembly claimed the US economic blockade has caused US\$138 billion in losses to Cuba since 1960, but that “the US will get no political concession from the Cuban government. They have failed for six decades and they will continue to fail.” The revolution lives on.

I learned that the 60-year US blockade wreaking havoc on Cuba is based upon this big lie: because Cuba is a communist/socialist dictatorship, it is evil; must cease to exist and must become a capitalist democracy. This is the truth: Cuba is a grassroots socialist democracy. Cuba is only evil if guaranteed housing, work, education and free universal healthcare are evil. The 1959 revolution lives in the hearts and minds of the Cuban people, and I believe they would fight to the death to oppose US-led regime change.

What an incredible time to be in Cuba—the 60th anniversary of the revolution and two months after the new travel bans and economic sanctions. We lived the scarcities imposed by the blockade, but not as severe as the scarcities being lived by the Cuban people. Housing is in desperate need of repair, but there are no funds for reconstruction. The electric grid is primarily powered by oil because Cuba lacks the resources to convert to renewable solar and wind energy.

Cuba’s response to US efforts for “a peaceful transition to representative democracy and a market economy” (aka regime change) is survival. While US politicians continue to promote the “big lie,” the American and Cuban people keep the door open to the truths that counter that falsehood. It is the responsibility of the truth seers to become truth-tellers.

The 26 of July Movement and its 1959 revolution live beyond the deaths of its leaders in the Cuban people. They ask the US for dignity and respect, but not at the cost of political and economic control. It is now my passion to spread these truths and to grow my passion in others to do everything you can to expose the big lie and oppose the blockade: join Cuba solidarity groups, read *History Will Absolve Me* by Fidel Castro, join the 51st VB and travel to Cuba, open yourself to truth and truth-telling. ☮

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ACTIVIST APPRECIATION: ELINOR CRAMER

Elinor made a decision a few years ago that learning about the history, values and culture of the people of the Onondaga Nation and other Haudenosaunee peoples was something she wanted and needed to do. She joined NOON’s Steering Committee and began to ask questions, read background information, and volunteered for several things right away—she even took minutes at her first NOON meeting! She quickly became involved with helping to organize our Indigenous People’s Day Speakout and Celebration; which was not an easy thing to do.

Elinor has a ‘can do’ attitude, smiles easily and is not afraid to jump in and help wherever she sees a need. She was instrumental this fall in bringing the Witness to Injustice/KAIROS Blanket Exercise to the Plymouth Church Community where she was a member. Because of her efforts and steady advocacy there, we were able to help 30 more people, including the Mayor of Syracuse, learn about the Doctrine of Discovery, the boarding schools and the attempted genocide of Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island.

Thank you Elinor for your humor, hard work and steady commitment to making our world a better place.

- Cindy Squillace



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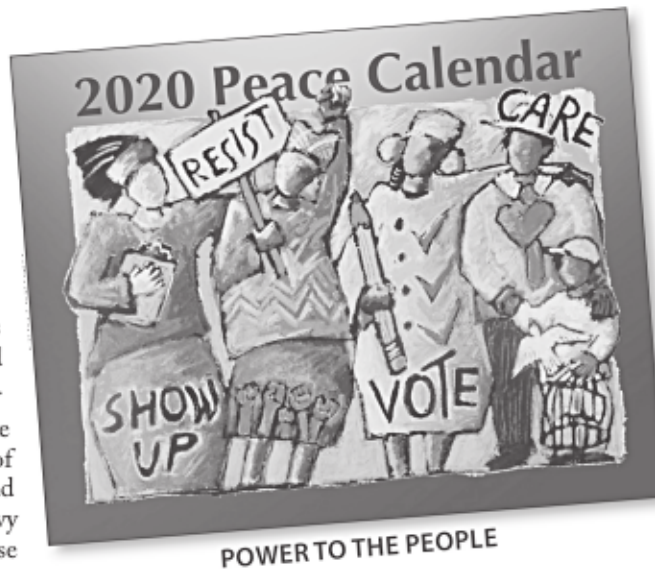
SYRACUSE CULTURAL WORKERS 2020 PEACE CALENDAR

by Carl Mellor

The Peace Calendar published by the Syracuse Cultural Workers (SCW) is a dynamic work. Each year, SCW's Calendar Committee begins the planning process without a preset format. Over several months, discussion and debate by committee members leads to a new calendar that fuses art and narrative, bridges history and current-day struggles, and celebrates community in many forms.

The 2020 calendar's May page references the Port Chicago Strike of 1944, in which sailors refused to load munitions at a Richmond, CA navy yard. They took that action in response to unsafe working conditions: massive explosions on July 17, 1944 killed 320 sailors, most of them Black Americans. The page merges text and Dave Homer's powerful illustration. August, meanwhile, features a Tucson Migrant Memorial Quilt which commemorates migrants who died trying to cross the border between Mexico and the US. This particular quilt incorporates names of the dead, colorful depiction of desert terrain, and images of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a pivotal figure in Mexican culture. Artists, activists, and quiltmakers made this and other quilts using clothing abandoned by migrants just before the final leg of their journey.

Culture and activism merge again in "Water Protectors," seen on the April page. A photo taken in Minneapolis depicts activists Sergio and Maryanne Quiroz standing by a large mural which portrays their daughter and discusses the importance of water for all people. The mural sprang from collaboration between Good Space Murals, MN350 (a climate-justice group),




and the Indigenous Roots Cultural Center. The Quiroz family is active at the center, which supports a robust youth group. "Gather Together," Jen Bloomer's mixed-media illustration for December, celebrates the wonder of a holiday-time meal for family and friends or as a bridge to people we don't know well. It's an intimate scene around a dinner table.

Finally, "Sacred Circles, Sacred Cycles" emphasizes a sense of the sacred in everyday life. There's a photo of James Blunt's stone installation on an English beach; he works with stones

and other found objects. The image, on the January page, also pays homage to Marie Summerwood, an herbalist, deeply spiritual person, and long-time member of the Calendar Committee. She died during January, 2019.

The 2020 calendar is available for sale during Plowshares weekend, at the Cultural Workers' storefront at 400 Lodi St. and by calling 800-949-5139, ext. 8. ☮

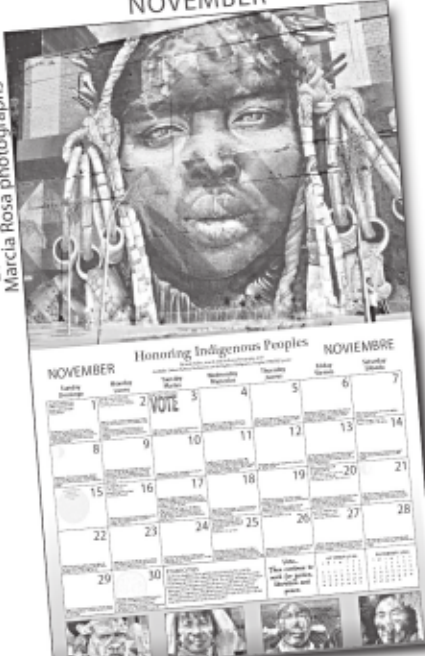
Carl Mellor is a freelance writer who often writes about the visual arts.



2020 is a critical year for change... The Peace Calendar provides the daily inspiration to oust the Trump regime as we both celebrate and struggle together.

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NOVEMBER



HONORING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Eduardo Kobra, murals
Marcia Rosa photographs

BUZZARDS*by Melinda Wheeler*

Your mother dreamed
 you
 before you
 were you;
 she dreamed
 you while
 watching
 the buzzards
 spread their wings
 and land
 near dead
 carcasses
 and garbage;
 she dreamed you
 while gliding
 over the border
 in the dark.

Here,
 on the other
 side,
 she takes you
 to school
 every morning,
 in her rusty car;
 you learn
 to be
 an American.

Your classroom
 is a haze of
 noise and smells,
 as the teacher
 checks homework
 her eyes, serious;
 a boy
 behind you
 snickers.

Suddenly a buzzard
 is trying to take you,

trying to
 tear at you
 with its
 talons;
 you
 bare your
 teeth,
 ready to rip
 and cut.

In the next second,
 you are a little boy
 again; crying,
 getting smaller and smaller,
 walking down the hall,
 on your way
 to the principal's
 office.

TREAT THE EARTH

Lyrics by Colleen Kattau *We drill it we fill it we spill it and
 kill it and we treat the earth like dirt.*

And in the heat a fire builds another bomb to beat the heat ain't
 that neat, now I'm a nuclear power too just like you. Monkey
 see, monkeys don't do that. As far as I can see, humanity ain't
 where it's at when...

Roll over, play dead I'm building a powerplant in your
 flowerbed. I control I said with another warhead. And it might
 be getting worse.

*A woman in the 50s looks out into Nevada skies, struck by the
 strange beauty of a mushroom cloud and this strong woman did not
 raise a dead child, and raised another*

Not whole

Our own private playground, not an unspoiled spot of ground
 to be found—our own silent spring. Is there any way to turn it
 all around. Is there any way to do anything?

When...

Turn it all around

*Melinda Wheeler is a retired teacher who worked with many Latin American
 students in her career. This poem is dedicated to them.*

Colleen is a CNY-based bilingual vocalist and performer.