

Handful of Salt

Volume XXXVI, Number 2

May-June 2012



Director's Report Shar Lichty

Marriage Equality matters in Spokane. This was apparent at City Hall on Monday April 16, as I witnessed 300 individuals show up and nearly 100 testify on both sides of the issue. During this meeting, I heard some of the most hateful, ignorant, homophobic statements, lots of scripture and many passionate, heartfelt stories from loving, committed same-sex couples on why they want to marry. After 5 hours of testimony and despite 5 council members stating their support for marriage equality, the resolution was tabled indefinitely. This was a result of 4 council members deciding the issue was not important city business.

On February 13, 2012, marriage equality was signed into law, but the struggle is not yet over. Within hours of the Governor signing the bill, opposition filed a referendum challenging the law. This means the people will have the opportunity to Approve Ref 74 on the ballot in November and make history. When we win this struggle in November, Washington will become the first state in the nation to grant

same sex couples their constitutional right to marriage at the ballot.

I have been working with many local leaders and the campaign, Washington United for Marriage, to increase public awareness, voter turnout and support for marriage equality, including weekly meetings with Jon Snyder regarding the resolution and how to strengthen our efforts here in Spokane. We are currently collecting signatures in support with a goal to match the opposition signature for signature for a statewide total of 120,577 by June 6. I have postcards in the office or go to <http://washingtonunitedformarriage.org/> and sign the pledge to Approve Ref 74. We are also phone banking three nights a week and taking pledges over the phone. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me at slichty@pjals.org.

Congratulations to Liz and Billy on the birth of their second son, **Duncan Poseidon Curry**, on March 18th. While Liz is on maternity leave, Shar is running the show, and Rusty is editing this edition of your newsletter.

I value my community and all of the families within it. Marriage equality will strengthen our community and all families. As those of us in the LGBTQ and allied community continue our work to keep the marriage equality

law in place, I hope you will join our efforts in whatever way you are able. This can be as simple as voting to Approve Ref 74 in November or talking to your friends and family about why marriage equality matters to you. Let's make history together!

Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane

Affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation

35 W. Main, Ste 120M, Spokane, WA 99201 • 509-838-7870 • www.pjals.org

The Handful of Salt is published six times a year by the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane. Its name comes from Mohandas Gandhi's salt tax protest in India, a successful, nonviolent, grassroots action that created significant social change against overwhelming resource advantages.

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Contact PJALS: 509-838-7870, www.pjals.org, pjals@pjals.org

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Contact Shar or Liz at 838-7870 to share your time and talents.

The Bearing Public Sculpture Project Fundraiser

at The Glover Mansion with silent auction
\$5 suggested entry fee:

Wednesday, May 2nd, 6-8 p.m.

thebearingproject.com/ or
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Contact: Ed Renouard
509.994.4427 | ed@ed-renouard.com

Wish List

- **Donate your gently used (and not so old) monitor or desktop computer** for use by our fantastic interns and volunteers.
- **Copy Paper for fliers, etc.:** case for \$48
- **Printer Ink:** \$45
- **Office Angel** to help keep our supplies and materials organized and tidy: Priceless!
- **Volunteers** for our Spring Soiree/Auction on Thursday May 31st: Incalculable!

PJALS Spring Soiree/Auction, Thursday May 31st 5:30pm

St. John's Cathedral, 127 East 12th Avenue, Spokane

Auctioneer: Rick EichstaedtLive entertainment, No Stress Check-out

See a list of auction items and purchase tickets (early bird rate thru 5/17) at pjals.org/2012auction

Be a Handful Contributor! We welcome your articles, subject to editing for space and appropriateness of content. Contact slichty@pjals.org

Rusty Nelson on Peace and War

A confusing event in Sanford, Florida is squarely in the faces of us who care about justice, human rights, individual liberties, discrimination and neighborhood security. And every factor pushing the killing of Trayvon Martin to the front of American consciousness is offensive. After George Zimmerman was finally charged, observers weighed in with a variety of comments about how well this has all turned out. Most expressed surprise that this privileged, self-appointed vigilante, is charged with 2nd degree murder instead of manslaughter, and many confessed being more comfortable with a lesser charge.

They must have spent all their outrage on the deplorable inaction of the police and the existence of Florida's "stand your ground" law, the ground-breaking 2005 ordinance which blesses extreme violence by the armed and paranoid. Having learned to conserve my outrage against "justice in Florida," I am still angry. Having seen discrimination by the face of law and order in Spokane affect my black children and grandchildren, I hope there are still urgent voices of dissent.

Florida, home for three years of my childhood, richly deserves rogue branding in matters of simple justice, but one must sympathize with those Floridians who struggle each day to improve the environment for minorities, the poor, and the underserved. My grudge with the Sunshine State is primarily fueled by capital punishment (I consider Juan Melendez and Sonny Jacobs, both unjustly condemned to death and incarcerated for years, to be friends of mine. And Sonny's partner, Jesse Tafero and my first death-row friend, Willie Darden, were each tortured to death by Florida after sham convictions on false murder charges.), but Florida has no corner on uncharged murders of people of color, even in the 21st Century.

In March, an off-duty police detective in Chicago was charged with misdemeanor aggravated assault after shooting a black man in the hand. Asked why he shot, the cop, who may have been under the influence, told the victim he thought his cell phone was a gun. The bullet didn't stop there, but went into the head of a young black woman. She's dead, but the officer, described as "Latino but looks white" faces no charges in her death. Since then, Amy Goodman wrote of a black veteran in New York whose medic alert was accidentally set off, sending a police response crashing into his apartment. Police who tasered and shot him to death said they thought the 68-year-old had a weapon, but the video camera mounted on the taser says he was standing empty-handed in his boxer shorts. The camera also recorded the swearing and racial epithets of the 'good guys' with guns.

It is a positive thing that Trayvon's parents are not calling for George Zimmerman's head on a pike. It is good that the Sanford police chief resigned; that people with status stood with the victim's family; that the special prosecutor, a black woman, acted decisively in charging Zimmerman with 2nd Degree Murder; that 'stand your ground' statutes all over the country are under a microscope; that Zimmerman has counsel who is widely trusted and respected. But, please don't mistake any of this for justice.

Justice is more elusive. In Sanford or Spokane. In Washington, D.C., Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Colombia and Afghanistan. It's widely abused, ignored or misidentified, even by those of us who wear its name. That's why the Center for Justice cautiously hopes to provide "the experience of justice," rather than claims to establish justice for all, like the hyperbolic Pledge of Allegiance. Justice will not be sought in the Martin case, because it's too difficult and would not please anyone who has not been able to avoid taking sides. Justice

(Continued on page 4)

demands too much of all of us in this case, and we have no practice in sorting out centuries of feelings about “the other,” whether it be one minority or another, a different socio-economic perspective, and what frightens us or makes us feel secure. The likelihood of capital charges in a Florida case like this, except that the shooter is black, can be justly invoked in a casual conversation, but it cannot be introduced in a fair trial. And this trial, no matter how fair, will not restore the Martin family. It will not reconcile the haves and have-nots, the black, Latino, and white Floridians, prosecutors and defenders, or the NRA and the anti-gun lobby.

Some people claim President Obama tainted the case by saying that if he had a son, he would look like Trayvon. That is not a perjorative statement, and it was made before charges were brought. In fact, I believe it is important because oppressed minorities in this country can finally hear such a thing from their president. It’s a new experience of justice.

I don’t like over-charging defendants. But unlike some media observers, I feel evidence supports the charge, although I would never seek an aggravated murder charge in an executing state. Apparently, the important thing to Trayvon’s family was to have an arrest. The important thing to me is to deprive armed xenophobes of immunity for violently acting upon fears and/or fantasies.

Cases like this will remind Spokane of Otto Zehm for a long time, but let us remember that toxic attitudes among police officers often originate with those whom they are supposed to serve, protect and defend. People like you are needed to bring a compassion for diversity and an appreciation of nonviolence into our communities. We have lots of work to do before we make a dent in America’s, or Spokane’s, fear of difference and love of violence.

TUTU IN A TEMPEST

Did you see that coming? Gonzaga University is taking heat for honoring Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Having more than one serious knee-jerk reaction to this controversy, I have to chime in.

It seems some conservative supporters of the local Jesuit university are upset, not about Tutu speaking on campus, but about his having the honor of delivering the commencement address and receiving an honorary degree.

One could say Tutu is being honored, but face it, this may be the 514th greatest honor ever for the diminutive icon and Nobel Peace laureate. It’s obvious, to anyone who pays attention, that Gonzaga and its graduates are the ones being honored by what could be one of Tutu’s last speaking engagements on this continent. And most of us who were on his side in the long struggle against Apartheid in South Africa are only resentful that we won’t be able to get within hailing distance of one of the great heroes of our time.

Critics of this “honor” point out that Tutu, an Anglican archbishop, has worked in opposition to certain matters of Roman Catholic doctrine. I’m reminded of a great man of even smaller stature whom many of us heard speak at Gonzaga years ago. The man was not only a Catholic archbishop, but a cardinal, as well. Dom Helder Camera of Brazil was every bit as controversial with Gonzaga donors, because his calling as a churchman had identified him with liberation theology and socialism. He may be best remembered for his statement, “When I feed the hungry, I am called a saint. When I ask why they are poor, I am called a Communist.”

Interestingly, this flap coincides with Vatican sanctions against one of my favorite Catholic organizations, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. The Dis-Tutu crowd in Spokane must feel

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TUTU from page 4 like they have friends in high places, as the top nuns in the U.S. are under attack for taking social justice positions that line up better with Archbishop Tutu (and Jesus, from my biased perspective) than with the Pope.

If you hate the idea of Tutu getting to Gonzaga's bully pulpit, count your blessings. There are plenty of Catholics you would like even less, some of whom I've heard at G.U. And if you're real nice and generous to the school, maybe you can get Rick Santorum for next year.

- RN

WHOM WOULD YOU BOMB?

Now, we seem to have a choice. We two potential enemies in the Middle East. Libya was a distraction just to remind us that all Islamist evil does not reside in Iraq and Afghanistan, but here are Iran and Syria just begging for IT.

Plainly, President George W. Bush had no choice after 9-11. He had to invade Afghanistan because something violent had to happen to someone after the sinister attacks on U.S. soil, even if the targets were symbolic and the horrible casualties were collateral damage. He couldn't attack Saudi Arabia, the source of the funding for the U.S. attacks. The Saudis are our best customers for conventional and high tech weapons, and they own a growing chunk of our infrastructure and institutional wealth. He couldn't attack Pakistan, or even accuse it of harboring Osama bin Laden, because Pakistan has nukes and has been looking for an excuse to use them. And there was still some processing of lies and rumors to be done before he could attack Iraq.

Now, we can blow Syria away and call it a humanitarian action. We've never liked Syria, anyway, but always considered it the

responsibility of Israel, which really hates Syria. And there's Iran, whom Israel hates but also fears. Americans are almost worn down enough to attack Iran, having heard so much conflicting information about nuclear aspirations that we don't care what the truth is.

Israel has been able to call U.S. shots in the Middle East for a long time. 90% of the U.S. government is ready to obey any whim of Netanyahu, who remains militant on Iran and strangely silent on Syria.

So, what are we waiting for? The U.N.? Hardly. The U.N. has been frustrated by China and Russia's tolerance for Syrian mayhem, and by U.S. vetoes of every effort to sanction Israel's bellicosity.

The painful truth is that we have tried serious diplomacy with neither Syria nor Iran. Secretary Clinton has actually shown some real chops for diplomacy over the past couple of years, but to become a senator from New York, she had to take the pledge to favor Israel in every case. That remains a problem.

In a snapshot, he impossible dream for the Middle East is this: The U.S. mediates non-aggression pacts between Israel and Iran and Israel and Syria. This would be done after a treaty establishing a Palestinian state, facilitated by a U.S. promise to cut aid to Israel by 50% for each month of negotiations. Israel would have to confess it has a nuclear arsenal and make concessions to preclude development of Iranian nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Syria would be required to legalize opposition parties and share power with all segments of society, and reduce military forces in exchange for secure borders and trade. The U.S. would have to demand of each country that their peace groups be represented in plans and negotiations.

It's pie in the sky, but it's every bit as likely as any people gaining peace or security or justice from the same old violence.

- RN

2012 Legislative Update

By Amanda Hunt, Intern

The 2012 legislative session was a whirlwind of good, bad, and even ugly. Our legislators had, once again, the difficult task of reducing Washington's budget due to revenue shortfall. There was much disagreement on cutting of programs, which ultimately lead to another special session. Toward the end of the regular session, Republican Senator Joesph Zarelli and three road-kill Democrats pushed through an all cuts budget that would have been devastating to struggling families and vulnerable populations in our state. Luckily, the house did not approve of these cuts, and we went right into special session. That budget would have eliminated disability lifeline, working connections childcare, food assistance for low-income families, etc. It would have also made more severe cuts to Higher Education, k-12, and basic health.

During the budget debates, I had the opportunity to go to the Washington Community Action Networks lobby day. We went to advocate for the closing of the many tax loopholes and show support for the Affordable Care Act. EWU student Jaydra Cope bravely testified in favor of this new bill, and it has now been signed into law. Immediately following senator Zarelli's actions in the Senate, I was one of 10 people from Spokane who carpoled to Olympia with Washington Community Action Network to tell Zarelli to "Stop playing politics with people's lives." WACAN organized a sit-in at his office, an act of disobedience for which I volunteered. This action received a ton of me-

dia coverage to show him and his colleagues that the residents of Washington weren't going to take his immoral practices or more cuts to lifeline programs for struggling families and individuals.

The special session consisted of back and forth debates, with Republicans refusing to negotiate. They went into a second special session after midnight on the last day, but our legislators finally took a bipartisan approach and settled on a budget between six and seven in the morning.

The budget they decided upon preserved the social safety net programs, and they voted to lower tax deductions for large, out-of-state banks. Although we have a lot more loopholes to close, this is an example of how contacting your legislators really can make a difference. With everything from letters, emails, and capitol visits to lobbying, we all had a say in preserving vital social welfare programs in our state.

I am extremely proud of the legislators who fought hard to save these programs and everyone who took the time and effort to contact them.



Alyssa is stunned by Rep. Parker's listening style

Peace & Economic Justice Action Conference 2012

by Taylor Malone, PJALS Young Activist Leader

It can be difficult for activists to remain confident and optimistic about the impact we have on our community. Changes come so slowly and with so much opposition that, at times, I feel like Sisyphus, always pushing but never quite making it. One of the most inspiring ways I've found to relieve these pessimistic feelings of defeat is to surround myself with others who believe just as passionately in improving our world, and the 2012 Peace and Economic Justice Action Conference provided just such an occasion.

Such a diverse group of participants came this year, allowing all of us to share our stories and learn from each other. Attendees came from organizations large and small, from different ages, races, and genders, and from a variety of countries, but all dedicated to the betterment of society and themselves.

This gathering from many backgrounds and perspectives for discussion is perhaps the most essential function of the Conference. So many events bring people into the same space but fail to bridge communication gaps. Throughout the day, as a host and participant, I saw complete strangers strike up discussions about matters important to them. Friendships were formed, ideas were shared, and our fellowship of vibrant, compassionate activists became stronger.

When I find myself being negative or doubting the effectiveness of my work, I try to recall the sense of community that colored the Conference. Changing society is hard, but it isn't impossible. With so many of us doing what is right, how can we do anything but succeed?

Free Bradley Manning

As we go to press, supporters of Bradley Manning are preparing to demonstrate, while the U.S. government moves toward harsh punishment for this alleged whistleblower who has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Charged with giving graphic evidence of U.S. war crimes to Wiki-Leaks, Manning was to be in court on April 24.

Manning has been imprisoned for almost two years, about half of that in reprehensible conditions before he was charged with a crime. Now, a court martial looms in spite of the fact that he was declared guilty by the commander-in-chief, precluding any hint of presumption of innocence.

The Bradley Manning support network asks that you contact Attorney General Eric Holder, who called in March for a "profound national commitment to ensuring an open government," and ask how he can support the abuse of PFC Manning for allegedly telling the truth. Whistle-blowers, as Obama's campaign pledge states, are vital to a vibrant democracy. We must ask Holder how he can claim to support an open government while persecuting so brutally those who reveal the truth.

DOJ switchboard-202.514.2000

AG Public Comment Line: 202.353.1555

Email for AG or DOJ: askDOJ@usdoj.gov

And now, the Secretary of Defense is upset with the LA Times for printing evidence of U.S. troops' disrespect for the bodies of people they killed in Afghanistan.

Spokane Veterans for Peace invites you to join in demanding that our leaders quit hiding the truth about war. Only when truth prevails will our country quit rushing to violence as the default solution to conflict. And, find us on Facebook.



NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE AND THE TIGER'S NATURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

BY SEAN CHABOT AND MAJID SHARIFI

A new consensus has emerged about how to promote freedom and democracy in the Middle East. Instead of supporting authoritarian regimes, experts across the political spectrum now agree that nonviolent resistance by people in the region is the ideal method for achieving liberation. But what purpose does such nonviolent resistance serve? And who actually benefits from it?

Gandhi raised these questions over a century ago. In his book *Hind Swaraj*, he gave the following response to Indian nationalists suggesting that India will be free when it kicks out the British and takes over the current system of government: “[You] want English rule without the Englishman. You want the tiger’s nature, but not the tiger; that is to say, you would make India English. . . . This is not the Swaraj [self-rule] that I want.” He warned that replacing foreign with domestic elites would not lead to genuine freedom and democracy for oppressed Indians. If Indian nationalists did not confront the imperial logic in themselves as well as their colonizers, they would just substitute Indian for British tyranny. They would get rid of the tiger, but not the tiger’s nature.

According to Gandhi, the imperial logic of modern civilization undermined the Indian capacity for self-rule. Guided by the urge to rationalize, it infected India’s political, economic, cultural, and spiritual life. Liberal democracy institutionalized and legitimized government domination of civil society. Capitalism normalized exploitation of workers and banished morality from the production process. Individualism and consumerism equated fulfilling selfish desires with human happiness. And instrumental reason destroyed indigenous knowledge and prevented

experiments with truth. What concerned Gandhi most was that Indian people had internalized this imperial logic, and that Indian elites tended to ignore the plight of the most oppressed in society.

For Gandhi, nonviolent resistance was only one means for achieving Indian self-rule. He favored the constructive program, which highlighted communal unity, removal of untouchability, control over addictions, economic independence, emancipatory education, gender equality, labor unions, and grassroots organizing. Indians were not ready for nonviolent resistance campaigns until they had gained a sense of autonomy through constructive work. “For my handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme,” he wrote, “will be like a paralyzed hand attempting to lift a spoon.” The main aim was to transform the imperial logic into ways of life based on dignity, self-reliance, and well being for all.

We argue that most courageous activists in the Middle East are falling into the imperial trap identified by Gandhi. Like others, we admired people on the frontlines of Iran’s Green Movement in 2009, Tunisia’s revolution in 2010, and Egypt’s revolution in 2011. But we now realize that participants in these movements are targeting the tiger instead of the tiger’s nature. Their purpose is to elect reformists and to gain the same freedom and democracy that people in the West claim to enjoy. Yet even when they successfully take over their governments, the most oppressed people in society continue to suffer.

We conclude with two important lessons. First, nonviolent resistance can either serve or subvert the imperial logic, either produce another tyranny or confront the oppression deeply rooted in each of us. Second, we should focus primarily on whether activists confront

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TIGER'S NATURE, continued from page 8
the tiger or the tiger's nature, not on whether we should classify their methods as nonviolent or violent. The main force inhibiting lasting transformation of self and society—and preventing genuine freedom and democracy—is the imperial logic, *not* the people's choice of tactics and strategies. If people do not attack the imperial logic itself, they are bound to repeat rather than make history.

Sean Chabot is associate professor of sociology at Eastern Washington University, and Majid Sharifi is assistant professor of government at EWU.

Palestine-Israel Human Rights Committee

By Regina Steele, Intern

emma's revolution came to the Spokane region once more on April 21st. Pat Humphries and Sandy O performed at the Unitarian Universalist Church in a benefit concert for the MAIA Project to provide Palestinian children with clean, safe drinking water. Because of this and other events along with the many generous donations from members like you, PJALS has raised \$4,000, meeting our goal of providing clean water for the children of Atfal Khan Younis kindergarten in Gaza.

The Palestine and Israel Human Rights Committee has been very busy, and recently



successfully pulled off a “Freeze mob.” On April 14th, the freeze mob went into inaction in the center of the downtown (1%) mall, getting the attention the committee was seeking! Participants stood their ground in a frozen position for five minutes, illustrating the dilemma of millions of Palestinians, frozen for nearly fifty years by military occupation. This statue-like pose raised shoppers' concerns, making them wonder what was going on until we provided information that has been systematically withheld from Americans who do not see alternative media.

This was a fun action with about twenty participants united in the cause to end the occupation. For over fifty years, US tax dollars have funded Israel's military domination of Palestinians and their land.

There have never been more opportunities for peacemakers and human rights advocates in the Spokane area.

You'll miss many of them.

We miss many of them, in spite of our networks and staff.

But, please don't miss any precious opportunities to inject tolerance, nonviolence, and compassion into everyday situations or global conflicts.

PJALS doesn't have all the answers, but we have resources and over 35 years of experience in asking better questions.

Saving the world is your job, but PJALS is here to help.

Death Penalty Panel: Educating the Community

Monday March 5th, PJALS' Inland Northwest Death Penalty Abolition Group (INDPAG) hosted a panel/Q&A discussion at Liberty Park United Methodist Church that addressed many reasons why Washington needs to abolish the death penalty. The panel was moderated by Sara Schmidt from Amnesty International and included five local panelists: Nancy Nelson, longtime abolitionist and member of PJALS, Cly Evans, corrections officer, Victoria Thorpe whose sister is currently on death row in California, Reverend Deb Conklin, host pastor and former deputy prosecutor, and Reverend Liv Larson Andrews from Salem Lutheran Church.

The panelists gave their personal testimonies about why it's time that we put an end to this horrific act of violence. Liv spoke from her perspective as a faith leader and talked about forgiveness and love for all people. Deb reflected on her experience as deputy prosecutor and what she saw inside the system.

The most compelling testimony came from Victoria Thorpe with an emotional description of what it's like to be a family member of someone on death row and the struggles and injustices her sister has encountered. Her story had a strong impact on all in the room. Hearing Victoria's story in its entirety for the first time, I was once again reminded that we all have something to learn from one another. I learned about compassion and human dignity through her eyes and it's not something I will ever forget.

Nancy answered many audience questions throughout the evening, and it was clear that people are interested in gaining knowledge and facts on the issue. Several wrote information in their notebooks. It was encouraging to see unfamiliar faces supporting

our efforts and wishing to become more involved in the abolition movement. Around 40 people attended this event and participated in writing postcards to their district legislators, urging them to abolish. Some had their pictures taken with a sign that said, "I support Safe and Just Alternatives to the Death Penalty" that will go on the campaign's website.

Having been a part of INDPAG for 7 months now, I was proud of how quickly this panel came together. It was great to convene as a community and have an open and honest dialogue about the history of the death penalty and the many reasons why we need to abolish it. If there were people in attendance who were on the fence about this issue, they wouldn't have been able to walk away without having their values seriously challenged. Thought-provoking and highly informational, our panel provided a sense of hope for those that are motivated to change our current laws and system.

- Alyssa Henderson



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DJALS Spring Soiree/Auction

St. John's Cathedral, 127 East 12th, Thursday May 31st 5:30pm

Auctioneer: Rick Eichstaedt
Live entertainment, No Stress Check-out

See a list of auction items and purchase tickets (early bird rates thru 5/17) at
pjals.org/2012auction

Please support PJALS!

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane depends upon gifts and dues from members to continue to work for peace and justice, locally and globally. We welcome anyone who favors free exchange of ideas and nonviolent action to war or to inaction and ignorance. PJALS, 35 W Main, Suite 120M, Spokane, WA 99201.

You determine your own level of support and participation. Members also determine issues and projects that get the most attention and effort. PJALS is a 501©3 nonprofit corporation.

Call 838-7870 to discuss the by-the-month options, or visit www.pjals.org and click "Contribute" in upper right corner.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone/email _____

Other membership options:

Essential/Vintage members \$60/year

Retro members \$40/year

Precious Scholars \$20/year

DEATH PENALTY NOTES

INDPAG, the Inland NW Death Penalty Abolition Group, has been energized by Developments in other western states, as well as the Safe and Just Alternatives Campaign in Washington. California activists are mounting a serious attack upon the ridiculous situation of a bankrupt state housing the country's largest death row as constructive social services continue to be sacrificed. Oregon's governor has shut down a low-profile death chamber without facing political blowback.

Shar Lichty has been named to the working committee of the Washington campaign. She is one of several INDPAG members available to speak to local groups on various death penalty topics. You are encouraged to contact PJALS about an INDPAG speaker for your school, church, civic, or discussion group. Or, suggest to us a group or institution to receive a summer mailing with more information about INDPAG speakers.

We are delighted that Whitworth students consulted with INDPAG about their film and discussion May 2nd. Many recent films focus upon state killing, and you'll hear more about our use movies to increase the buzz about our state's investment in executions.

Most political campaigns this year are about economics, and INDPAG hopes the cost of capital punishment will come up often in state and local elections.

April 22 was the anniversary of the 1987 Supreme Court decision in *McCleskey v. Kemp*. The Court denied relief to Warren McCleskey, an African American, sentenced to death for the murder of a white Atlanta Police Officer. McCleskey claimed his sentence was due to the death penalty's innate racial bias, that but for the race of his victim, he would have received a long prison sentence instead. McCleskey backed his claim with statistical evidence, which in other contexts the Court had taken as proof of discrimination. Fearing "too much justice," the Court declined to recognize McCleskey's proof. It opined that relief to McCleskey might topple the death penalty, if not the whole criminal justice system with all its disparities. **We mark this anniversary to remind ourselves that addressing racial bias in capital punishment is still unfinished business.** There is no federal remedy for racially skewed death sentencing, and only Kentucky and North Carolina have passed state legislation to address the problem. - NCADP

PJALS and support organizations,

I am definitely in support of your movement to end the death penalty. What does taking a life prove...that we are as savage as the original killer or his/her associate? It may be cool to drive a stake into the heart of a vampire, but that is fantasy and has nothing to do with the reality of death. Killing a person requires years of trials and appeals, feeding on the public purse and enriching the blood lust of "eye-for-an-eye" people.

There is need to take the murderer out of circulation for the protection of the public and future victims, but there is no need for vicarious enjoyment the public may get from the execution. Executions are killings by design, and there is a great parallel between that and the original death caused by the perpetrator.

We must stop being the executioner. Taking the murderer out of circulation by way of "life without parole" is a much better service to the public and much less costly. In addition, it provides a much clearer level of public conscience and a more sincere admission that we are what we claim to be, human beings. Punishment without execution must begin a new path to trials for murder. Assuming we are the great judge in this matter is assuming we are the only method of judgment available. Allowing that our own conscience be free of judgment is a freeing and wonderful touch on the beauty of life. Taking a life is no way to bring about the redemption for the loss of a life.

What really does execution prove? What deliverance does it provide? It is a much more favorable position to protect a life, while protecting many lives, than to take one, thereby becoming more animal than human.

End executions now.

L. Breer--Yakima