

# Handful of Salt

Volume XXXVIII, Number 2

June-July-August 2014

## Year of Youth!

*PJALS members like you supported youth as leaders for justice in three ways this year!*

**Our Young Activist Leaders Program** offers passionate youth leaders ways to strengthen their own youth-led groups. More on page 4. *Congrats to the graduating YALPistas of 2014!*

**We cultivate new community organizers** via practicum placements from the EWU School of Social Work. Check out Dom's & Jeremiah's reflections on pages 4-5.

**Teaching as the first-ever EWU Activist in Residence**, PJALS' Liz Moore reached over 140 students with nonviolence & social justice. Pics on page 6.



It has been very refreshing to connect with other young activists from different back-

grounds and experiences with different goals and aspirations. YALP has proven to me to be a very open, comfortable environment to ask the questions we've hesitated to ask before, to stretch the limits of our everyday thinking and to appreciate others for our own unique qualities and skills. The commitment to participate in YALP is well-tailored to the demanding life of a young adult, making the resources and tools gained well worth the effort.

*Amy Cowin,  
Chair of Spokane  
Chapter of Washington  
Young Emerging Labor  
Leaders (WA YELL)*



The Young Activist Leadership Program has been instrumental in teaching me how to organize, mobilize, and facilitate for a number of causes, including teaching me how to efficiently manage my own grassroots movement. YALP has

brought my activism to a higher level of effectiveness, motivating and giving me the tools necessary to organize the pursuit of issues I'm so passionate about.

*Justin "Vitamin J" Pimsanguan,  
Don't Shoot*

## 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](http://www.pjals.org)

### **The Handful of Salt**

is published quarterly 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.

**Steering Committee:** David Brookbank (vice-chair), Louise Chadez, Cly Evans, Jessica Jahn, Darlene McCarty (Secretary), Suzy Vennard (chair), Taylor Weech, Deb Svoboda

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**Contact PJALS:** 509-838-7870, [www.pjals.org](http://www.pjals.org), [pjals@pjals.org](mailto:pjals@pjals.org)

### **Volunteers Make It Happen**

**Contact Shar at 838-7870 or [slichty@pjals.org](mailto:slichty@pjals.org) to share your time and talents.**

#### **Volunteer Openings!**

##### **Bookkeeping Assistant**

##### **Bookkeeper**

##### **Treasurer**

##### **CPA**

We're seeking new members of our financial team! We need volunteers to work with and eventually replace our current interim Treasurer and bookkeeper, Mike Nuess. Duties include tracking income and expenses in Quickbooks, issuing checks to vendors, semi-monthly payroll, reconciling bank statements, filing various reports and information with the state, completing annual IRS reporting, and reporting monthly to the PJALS Steering Committee.

#### **Become a Handful Contributor.**

We welcome your articles, subject to editing for space and appropriateness of content.

Contact [slichty@pjals.org](mailto:slichty@pjals.org)

#### **Volunteer Coordinator**

Anticipates volunteer needs for monthly events as well as two major yearly events and schedules accordingly. Recruits volunteers via email/telephone; tracks volunteer hours in database. Must possess excellent verbal and written communication skills & have knowledge of Word/Excel and Google Docs; knowledge of Salesforce preferred. Approx. 20 hours a month. Training provided! Reports to the Director and Organizer.

#### **Office Manager**

Anticipates office supply needs, orders supplies, and tracks inventory for regular meetings, events, office functioning, & mailings. Sales merchandise ordering & inventory. Keeps offices & break room organized & tidy; weekly trash/recycling duties. Assist with answering of phones & meeting room reservation. Must have knowledge of Word/Excel and Google Docs. Approx. 20 hours a month. Training provided! Reports to the Director and Organizer.



*Rusty Nelson on  
Peace and War*

## **Write, Tinker, Abolish**

By the time I wrote my first editorial about the death penalty, Nancy had produced several articles, including a commentary in the Spokesman Review, but Washington had not yet killed Dodd and Campbell. Lethal injection was catching on, but Nevada had resumed executions with a firing squad, Florida electrocuted a man whose crime would have been self-defense if he had not been gay, and Washington was dusting off its gallows. If I had been better organized and more careful, I could compile a book from our experiences, observations and opinions on state killings. And I have a lot more to say. More than I'll try to cram into this space.

To paraphrase Einstein, everything's changed about executions in the U.S. but the way we think about them. Two recent developments should affect the way Americans think about capital punishment, but thinking doesn't change easily.

Governor Jay Inslee declared he would sign no death warrants, drawing gratitude from abolitionists and those who agree that our execution process is flawed. He also elicited outrage from people like my state representative, Joe Schmick, who is offended that Inslee would unilaterally deprive him and other state citizens, especially survivors of murder victims, of their right to kill anyone convicted of killing someone they care about. Schmick, unopposed for reelection, again, in the 9th District, previously revealed to me that

he supports capital punishment, based upon self-righteousness, a small file of faulty information and a presumption that executions are constitutional and only carried out in the interest of justice.

Much of the country was shaken by the recent Oklahoma execution that resulted in the death, by heart attack, of Clayton Lockett, who suffered over 40 minutes before the procedure was called off...too late to save him for a tidier death, later. Yes, I was shaken, too, but not because I found his punishment cruel and unusual. The cruelest thing about executions in this country has nothing to do with the efficiency of the killing agent or actual physical pain. It's the waiting, the anticipation, constant reminders that the state is going to kill you on a particular day in a particular way, then hope there may be a stay, a retrial, clemency...but only at the last minute...and then facing death, again, a day, month or year later. It's telling a loved one goodbye, again, especially if she or he has fought for your life for six to 25 years, on issues of importance to everyone but the prosecutor who decided you must die and the people of your state, who will continue to be fearful, ignorant and angry whether you are given a cyanide tablet with your ice cream or drawn and quartered.

In the wake of the ghastly Oklahoma exhibition, more people are talking about capital punishment as a problem instead of a solution, but some of the conversations are as disturbing as secret ingredients and sources for killer drugs, some of which are banned for euthanizing dogs. Pundits, governors, legislators, and crackpots are suggesting remedies for uncertain death by perhaps-lethal injection. Back to the electric chair, the gas chamber, the gallows, the firing squad, the guillotine. All were considered more humane

*(Continued on page 10)*



## Young Activist Leaders 2014 Graduation

Tuesday June 10, 6pm-8pm  
35 W. Main, Lobby

*All welcome! Hear from YALPistas,  
bring potential YALPistas for next  
year!*

### Dom Felix: “Impossible to Leave”



I have truly enjoyed my time as a PJALS Intern. I cannot imagine having done my practicum anywhere else. When other students in my cohort share their experience at their

practicum sites I am surprised by stories where students feel as though their work doesn't matter. I hear about endless intakes, "Name and date of birth please." I have never felt like my work at PJALS didn't matter. Often I felt like I was not the most qualified person for the job, but by working on campaigns that really matter to me I think I was able to be effective.

When I started in the fall the Spokane Police Accountability and Reform Coalition was working feverishly to empower the Office of Police Ombudsman. Sadly a new contract was approved that left Proposition 1 voters wanting more. On a more positive note Spokane has a much better Internal Affairs process in place now. Body cameras that should make excessive force complaints easier to verify have been approved. Some goals were not met, but the system is better now than it was before. I learned that changing policy requires a long attention span.



*Sevan is pictured left with fellow  
YALPista Carver*

YALP has given me many tools and ability to connect with other social justice advocates. The tools I've learned I have taken back to young people I work with at Odyssey Youth Center. This has included planning successful events, running meetings that don't suck and addressing racism with young people. All of these have increased my confidence and allowed me to practice new skills in a safe place, and that's YALP.

***Sevan Bussell, Health and Wellness  
Coordinator, Odyssey Youth Center***

The Criminal Justice Commission released its sixty page report with recommendations many of which the Smart Justice campaign helped to write. Now the work of getting recommendations moved into actual practice has begun. It is a daunting task.

I have enjoyed every minute of the Young Activist Leaders Program (YALP). I learned a skill set that I was unaware even existed. PJALS helps the community by teaching young leaders the skills to be effective organizers.

Trying to figure out how to disengage will be the hardest part of my internship. How do I pick and choose what to still be a part of? In reality how much time will I have after I work my 40 hours a week this summer? I now know why past interns are still a part of PJALS. It is impossible to leave.

## Jeremiah Manes: “Creating the Culture We Want to See”

As a social work student at Eastern Washington University, I joined PJALS to gain the field experience that supplements classroom learning. With elementary awareness of privilege, oppression and social injustice, but without knowledge of the activist skill-set used to counter this oppression, I came to PJALS to develop these skills.

My time here was spent on our Palestine-Israel Human Rights Committee, Young Activist Leaders Program, and planning and promoting community events such as our annual Action Conference, Soiree fundraiser and Palestine Film Festival. These experiences offered valuable opportunities for my future social work path, wherever that may be.

I found that PJALS is unique among social work practicum settings in that it inspires the development of both skills and knowledge. I learned skills in community organizing by promoting events; I learned knowledge of current issues by attending these events. PJALS programs and events are experiences that one can equally contribute to and benefit from. Doing this “good work” as I heard it coined, the mundane tasks such as planning events, writing PSA’s, or phone banking, became exciting (or at least satisfying) when



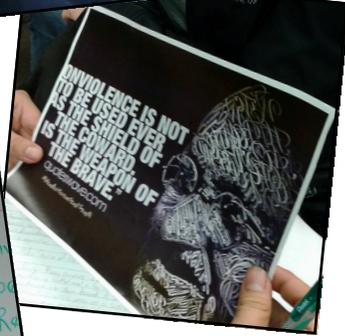
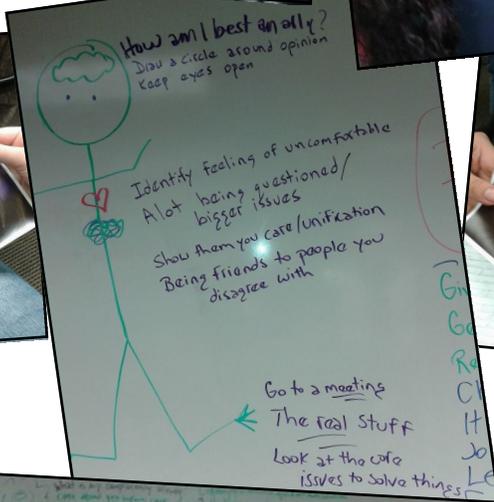
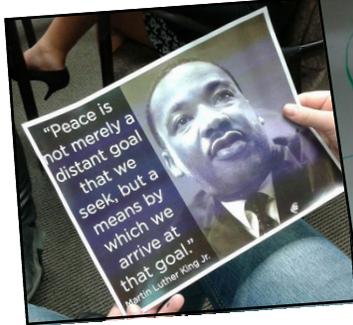
*Jeremiah and YALP alum Molly Fitzpatrick carry the PJALS banner at the May 1 march for Immigration Reform. PJALS Organizer Shar Lichty and member Mark Hamlin offered a Peacekeeper training for MEChA de EWU members who organized the event.*

seen as beneficial to a population you care about.

Involvement with PJALS and it’s members can inspire young people to create the culture they want to see, rather than being consumers of the culture they critique. Thanks to all the PJALS folks who added to the richness of these experiences by taking time to share their knowledge and passions with me! I will be spending this next year teaching English abroad but I hope that, in typical PJALS intern fashion, I will stay connected in your lives and your work for some time to come.



# Activist in Residence: PJALS reaching EWU students on campus



Participants who completed all 4 Activist in Residence workshops received certificates in Social Justice Leadership.

Over 200 students learned about PJALS, social justice campaigns, being allies to each other, nonviolence, and more through workshops & class presentations by PJALS director Liz Moore.

## Truth in Recruitment: a letter from Veterans for Peace member George Taylor

Dear concerned citizens,

**Truth in Recruiting** is a nationwide educational program sponsored by Veterans for Peace, Society of Friends, the War Resistance League and many other national groups. It is an informational vehicle designed to present a more accurate and truthful presentation about enlistment into all branches of the armed forces: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine. This program seeks to expose the information that most official recruiters for the armed services keep quietly to themselves: Information like the extreme suicide and sexual assault rates in the military; or that 40 percent of recruits who enlist in the military today will not complete their full term of service.

The Veterans for Peace, chapter 35 in Spokane, has also created its own Truth in Recruiting program. It maintains that students in the public school system, as well as their parents and teachers, deserve the right to be presented with all of the accurate and truthful information

about armed forces enlistment in order to make the most informed choices regarding their future.

As caring and capable citizens, students are better-placed in life when they have the most accurate and truthful information available. We believe that having all the information before you decide benefits everybody, including the military.

In Spokane, our chapter of Veterans for Peace has developed a presentation for classes and student tabling areas; appropriately called "Truth in Recruitment." This program, much like the other programs across this country, is designed to offer alternative views, real world experiences and

conversations with real veterans of the armed forces to those who are considering an enlistment or career in the United States Military. We offer information on the plethora of possibilities for community service beyond those offered by military recruiters on high school campuses in and around the Spokane and Spokane Valley public school systems.

Anyone is welcome to come and speak with us about our work. Contact information can be found on our website [www.spokaneveteransforpeace.org](http://www.spokaneveteransforpeace.org). You are invited to arrange presentations or consult with our campaign director, George Taylor (U.S. Navy veteran) at tel. 509-822-8111 or at [taylorgeorge1974@hotmail.com](mailto:taylorgeorge1974@hotmail.com) at any time. Make an informed decision before you make that life-changing commitment. Truth in Recruitment, Truth in Life.

George Taylor



George Taylor (right) with FOR director Kristin Stoneking and PJALS director Liz Moore at our Action Conference



## Smart Justice Campaign Update: New Law & Justice Council for Spokane

On May 6, the Spokane County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution to create a Law and Justice Council to coordinate a regional criminal justice system. Both the Spokane Regional Criminal Justice Commission's *Blueprint for Reform* and our Smart Justice Campaign recommended creating a Law and Justice Council, so this is a step forward.

Now, the County Commissioners need to hear from you! This is an important time to thank them and share your support for Smart Justice Campaign recommendations going forward.

The success of the Law and Justice Council is going to ride on the make up of the Law and Justice Council, AND on the engagement of the public in informing the Council's work with stories and expertise, and holding our elected officials accountable to make sure that the Council's top priority is implementing smart justice.

**Will you take a minute to contact the Spokane County Board of Commissioners? Please thank them for their leadership in creating the Law and Justice Council, and make the following four recommendations:**

- 1. Add two community member positions on the Law and Justice Council** to increase transparency, and bring a different voice and expertise to the Council, **especially from communities most affected by the criminal justice system** (e.g. people of color, ex-offenders and family members, and others).
- 2. Add both a city and county labor representative to the Council** as there will be enormous considerations in that area.



### 3. Increase Spokane City representatives:

Include a Spokane Municipal Court Judge, City of Spokane Prosecutor, City of Spokane Public Defender, and Spokane Police Department representative in addition to the general seats open to any municipality in the County.

### 4. Recommend the creation of these subcommittees:

Racial Disproportionality; Mental Health; Restorative Justice,

Alternative to Incarceration and Diversion; Technology and Facilities; and Risk/Needs Assessment.

Contact the Spokane County Commissioners at 477-2265 or by email: [tmielke@spokanecounty.org](mailto:tmielke@spokanecounty.org), [shelly@shellyoquinn.com](mailto:shelly@shellyoquinn.com), [afrench@spokanecounty.org](mailto:afrench@spokanecounty.org). If you receive a response, would you share it to [info@smartjusticespokane.org](mailto:info@smartjusticespokane.org)?

The Smart Justice Campaign provided initial input & has continued to advocate for the inclusion of community members on the Council, especially those from impacted communities. With only last minute notice about the Commissioners' vote on the resolution, the Smart Justice Campaign sent a letter to the County Commissioners. Our letter expressed support for the creation of the Law and Justice Council as well as disappointment that there wasn't an opportunity for public testimony. We provided specific recommendations for additional members of the Law and Justice Council and suggestions for subcommittees to implement smart justice.

In addition to the creation of the Law and Justice Council, the County and the City have approved a contract to hire Dr. Jacqueline Van Wormer, with WSU's Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, as Project Manager/Facilitator  
(Continued on page 9)

## US Militarism & the girls of Nigeria

By Liz Moore



More than two hundred girls kidnapped in Nigeria have caught the sympathy of the West. Now, that attention has helped to prompt US military aid as part of the effort to rescue them.

It started as a #BringBackOurGirls call amplified on social media. Then came the names of the girls, which I and others re-posted as a way of making more specific and more powerful our call for their return. And then, wiser people pointed out that listing the girls' names puts them in greater danger in the future and violates their right to decide whether or not to be public about their experience. I had to pause my urge to help to learn whether my actions were actually helpful or harmful.

The world clamor, led by protests by parents in Nigeria, led to some international response. The US government response, of course, was to offer "counter-terrorism assistance" in the forms of Marines and drones.

Let us pause together to see if our offer is actually helpful.

America does love a "save the girls to liberate the girls" narrative. This narrative intermingles imperialism, patriarchy, militarism, and white supremacy quite thoroughly. It brings me back to the day in 2001 when I read an editorial by the well-known feminist Laura Bush explaining how the US invasion of Afghanistan was clearly necessary in order to free the women and girls there.

Now, after thirteen years of occupation and war, Afghan women and their

children are still among the most at risk in the world. That's just one measure of the failure to deliver on the narrative as promised.

Nigeria has an inspiring and long tradition of everyday people acting together to accomplish extraordinary things. Nigerian-American writer Jumoke Balogun says loud & clear that America coming to save Nigerians is neither wanted nor needed, addressing Americans calling for our government to take action: **"Your emphasis on U.S. action does more harm to the people you are supposedly trying to help and it only expands and sustains U.S. military might."**

Instead, she writes, **"learn more about the amazing activists and journalists...who have risked arrests and their lives as they challenge the Nigerian government to do better for its people within the democratic process. If you must tweet, tweet to support and embolden them, don't direct your calls to action to the United States government who seeks to only embolden American militarism. Don't join the American government and military in co-opting this movement started and sustained by Nigerians."**

I'll post more of her important piece with a link to the full content in our blog.

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*(Smart Justice, continued from page 8)*

for the Law and Justice Council. Dr. Van Wormer will be able to use her experience and connections from around the country to share proven tools and programs with the Law and Justice Council as they develop the structure to implement criminal justice reforms.

**Save the Date:** The Smart Justice Campaign **"Social & Action Gathering"** will be on Tuesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> in the evening at the Global Credit Union.

*Write, Tinker Abolish, cont from page 3*

than whatever was used before, or at least, to appear more humane, but each became, in practice, an engine of severe, psychological torture. On top of that, we who have followed the serial murders of executing states since the reinstatement, know of numerous grisly executions, horrified witnesses, and embarrassed execution teams.

Support for capital punishment is as scant today as in 1972 when the US Supreme Court found death penalty statutes unconstitutional because they were capricious and racially discriminatory. Like Inslee's moratorium, the decision was good, up to a point. Within a decade, however, states were finding ways to discriminate, racially and otherwise, with their new death statutes because the justices had failed to rule that every execution violates the 8th Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. When Chief Justice Warren Burger retired, about that time, he commented that capital punishment is certainly cruel but hardly unusual. It was high time for him to retire because executions by constitutional governments, anywhere on Earth, had become extremely unusual during his judicial career.

I heard, from a well-placed source, that death row prisoners in Walla Walla believe their death sentences will be carried out quickly after Inslee leaves office because death advocates will be more impatient than ever to see them die. Hopeful we were moving closer to abolition, I was startled to learn their perspective, until I realized that's what happened when the national moratorium ended.

In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court,



without the just-retired Justice William O. Douglas, accepted new death penalty laws from Florida, Georgia and Texas. Ultimately, a majority of states, including Washington in 1981, wrote new statutes accepted by the Court, and the carnage began in earnest.

Americans had not been much interested in punishing fellow citizens by death until the moratorium. Three persons were legally executed in the U.S. between 1966 and 1978. After reinstatement, several states proceeded to, almost gleefully, carry out death sentences enthusiastically sought by local prosecutors. By the time Washington got in on the action, our first execution would have barely made a ripple but for two reasons: The state obeyed the demands of Wes Dodd that he go to the head of the line and be executed right away; and we had the first legal hanging in the U.S. in 30 years. It was great theatre, if not Smart Justice. The penitentiary protected itself from protesters with heavy fencing, and abolitionists were glad to be contained apart from the hysterical, drunk and threatening crowd who came to celebrate the hanging. A media circus plastered Washington's warts on tv screens and newspapers all over the world, and many of us felt like many Oklahomans must feel about the butchering of Clay Lockett.

After watching governments and individuals massage death statutes to gain some semblance of justice, compassion and constitutionality, Justice Harry Blackmon decided it was all futile and declared, "I will no longer tinker with the machinery of death." Now, the tinkerers are in a frenzy, trying to find a way to restore the brutal snuffing out of

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*It's time to get your tickets to our  
Soiree and Benefit Auction!  
[www.pjals.org/2014auction](http://www.pjals.org/2014auction)*

## *PJALS Soiree and Benefit Auction*

**Friday June 6, 2014**

5:30 pm-9:30pm. Doors open at 5pm.

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

Enjoy a fun evening with friends, family, and like-minded folks as we celebrate our work together!

**Tickets \$20 at [www.pjals.org/2014auction](http://www.pjals.org/2014auction)**

### **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](http://www.pjals.org) and click "Contribute" in upper right corner.

Other membership options:

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Essential/Vintage members \$60/year

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Living Lightly (low income) \$20/year

Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_