

# FORsooth

## Institute offers millions an acclaimed monk's message

by George Morrison  
FORsooth editor

On a cold day in late 1941 a scholar from New York stepped off a train in Kentucky to seek acceptance in the Cistercian order of Roman Catholicism.

Thomas Merton, who later wrote that his life until that time had included considerable periods of cynicism and worldly pleasures, began a residency at the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani in Nelson County, which ended with Merton's tragic death 27 years later at age 53.

Merton's connections with the state, however, did not end with his accidental electrocution in 1968 while attending a conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

People sometimes known as Merton pilgrims come to Gethsemani and to Thomas Merton Square, the intersection of Fourth Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard in downtown Louisville, where the Trappist monk had a pivotal vision in 1958 that spurred him to become an outspoken advocate for social justice and interreligious understanding.

Many who come or study Merton from afar find help in understanding contemplation, a central focus of his life, through the Merton Institute for Contemplative Living, founded in 2006 out of the Thomas Merton Foundation.

The institute, headquartered in part of a former Catholic elementary school on Payne Street in Louisville, holds retreats, uses the Internet and produces booklets

which describe in simple terms what contemplative living means in an industrialized society where many report feeling cut off from spirituality.

"We define contemplative living as living in true relationship with yourself, God, others and nature, free of the *illusion of separateness* — and that's a phrase coming out of Merton that's very critical to his approach to self-knowledge and self-understanding," institute executive director Robert G. Toth said during a break in his duties inside the Clifton Center, a cultural and community center formerly Saint Frances of Rome School.

"So we define it in the context of four relationships," Toth said while seated beneath a sculpture and a quilt on Merton themes and photographs by and of the monk. "Those four relationships are really the core of any human activity. We're either in relationship with ourselves, God, others or nature...."

"I defy you to come up with some activity that doesn't involve one or more of those relationships. So the concept of contemplative living is, the more deeply we understand those relationships — the more truly we live those relationships — the better everything is going to be, the better... we feel about ourselves, the better our relationship with God, the better our personal relationships with others, but also relationships among others."

The Merton Institute holds retreats at Bethany Spring, a retreat center a mile



— photo by Eddie Davis

**Merton Institute for Contemplative Living staff members, from left, assistant director Vanessa Hurst, director of development Sister Judy Morris and executive director Robert G. Toth frame a bust of Trappist monk Thomas Merton made by Gloria Shrader and a quilt by Penny Sisto reflecting issues discussed at one of the retreats the institute organizes to explore contemplative living.**

south of Gethsemani, and helps small group dialogue at gatherings around the world by distributing an eight-volume series called

*Bridges to Contemplative Living*. The booklets contain writings by Merton and

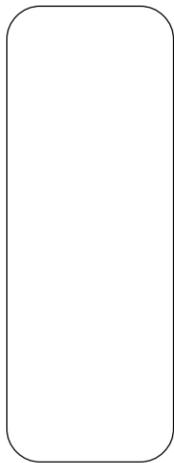
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## Single payer called crucial

by Ike M. Thacker IV  
and Eustace Durrett

A single-payer health-care system in the U.S. is a moral imperative and would be eminently affordable — *saving* money in the long run, one of its leading congressional advocates said in New Albany May 30.

U.S. Rep. John Conyers, D-Michigan, the lead sponsor of H.R. 676, which would create a single-payer, government-funded system for the nation, spoke during a seminar held at Indiana University Southeast called "Making Health Care Happen."

The next speaker, Physicians for a National Health Plan former president Dr. Claudia Fegan, a Chicago internist, called single payer essential to the U.S. maintaining its position as a preeminent power in this era of rising challenges from such nations as China and India.

Conyers went on to talk about "number 44" — President Barack Obama — saying that Obama, uniquely among presidents, has asked for those who elected him to keep advising him. However, he lamented that H.R. 676 "somehow" gets left out of the debate.

Nonetheless, it is a contest that Conyers believes we can win. He noted that three days after Dr. King was shot, on April 7, 1968, he introduced a bill for a national Martin Luther King Day. The *people* — schools, unions, Stevie Wonder's song, etc. — made it a reality, he said.

Conyers ended his speech with the ringing cry that, "Now is the time." President Obama, he said, on tapes featured by Amy Goodman of Democracy Now!, made a truly brilliant pro- H.R. 676 speech in the Illinois state legislature. But, "he ain't saying it now," because of the power structure.

Dr. Fegan began with the story of a 60-year-old woman in this country who is going to have to wait an incredible five years to get her needed new hip; and followed this with a story of another U.S. woman who lost her job and thus her



— photo by Eddie Davis

**Marchers in Louisville May 28 back creating a government-financed, fully accessible national health insurance system.**

insurance, after which her previous surgeon wouldn't even return her phone calls.

A pamphlet handed out by Kentuckians for Single Payer Health, one of the seminar's organizers, pointed out the well-known fact that some 47 million (or more) Americans are uninsured, and the less well-known one that another 25 million are *underinsured*: they often postpone or go without needed care because of financial barriers.

Dr. Fegan expanded on these tragic statistics convincingly. We in the U.S., she said, pay \$8,000 per person for health care each year, for a total of more than \$2.5 trillion, more per capita than any other country in the world; yet the World Health Organization ranks the quality of our health care only 37<sup>th</sup>. A pamphlet from Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan, another seminar organizer, put it this way: "In this country we pay more and get less for each healthcare dollar than anywhere else in the world."

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# Capital and governments promote unsustainable practices

by Alex Bradshaw

If the global private sector doesn't destroy the planet and bring the human race to extinction, then perhaps those who govern nations will.

Everywhere I turn, I see so-called sustainable products, or so-called sustainability itself being practiced and preached. This comes at a time when leading scientists internationally tell us that we have no choice, that dramatic change *must* come to reduce global warming, euphemistically called "climate change." So, this eco-friendliness is a good thing, right? Is the fact that western consumers are getting on board vis-à-vis "going green" and having a small carbon "footprint" more than just fodder?

There is a solemn, almost unequivocal reality that we must face: we cannot purchase our way out of what could be *the* crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and possibly the most devastating plague the human race has ever faced. Doubtful it is that the status quo can continue, if only green-washed. The uncomfortable reality is that the dramatic change we must make, perhaps, is to stop a great deal of our consumption, not replace it with another variant. Western "leaders" from Reagan to Obama seem candidly self-destructive, proclaiming that we cannot compromise, and shouldn't apologize for our way of life.

Can a global economic system that seeks exponential profit margins ever be sustainable? As long as profit margins, or what Karl Marx called "surplus value" (I hear the kids are reading him again), must be part of our daily diet, we cannot "Save the Planet!" or "Go Green," especially if that economic system has a mantra like "Grow or Die." The ideologues proclaim, empirically, that economic growth is a good thing; no other idea can be tolerated. Perhaps this banality should be questioned.

It is quite easy to get lost in the scenery of sky-scrapers, highways, and power lines under the spell of I-Phones,

Tweets, MP3's, and forget about the precious extractions it requires to create and make such things function.

We often do not think about the precious resources used to manufacture our MACs and flat-screen televisions, so as long as we drive hybrids and use recyclable bags at anti-union pseudo-progressive grocery store chains (see Whole Foods). These goods pacify us as we nihilistically, over a cocktail or prescription drug, watch our own finite ecosystem be destroyed at an accelerated pace by demagogues who speak of "sustainability."

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the crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ...

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While on the subject of demagogues and systems that may very well put an end to human existence, nuclear war seems to be a good place to start.

While corporations, or private tyrannies, hierarchically make decisions without considering the interests of employees or stockholders, elected and unelected regimes internationally are equally unaccountable.

Take the U.S. Recently John Pilger, a U.K. journalist and documentary filmmaker, said in an interview June 6 on DemocracyNow.org that the American people are way ahead of their government according to every poll, a trend he says has occurred since James Madison referred to us as meddling. He made me chuckle when he implied that we are even, perhaps, "left-wing."

But here, the left/right paradigm needn't apply; this is human decency. As long as there is war, there is the looming possibility of thermonuclear war, which would probably bring about human extinction.

When these governments become a superpower, or what Antonio Gramsci

called hegemony, they tend to follow the mantra of our vitriolic system that chases exponential profit at the expense of everything: grow or die. In other words, international states become empires. They seek new land, for political control and to extract precious resources. When international players make the wretched mistake of assuming that they can be independent of these empires, the consequences are detrimental: the country's infrastructure is destroyed, and thousands, sometimes millions, die when the empire comes to claim what is theirs (see Iraq).

the critical nature of the current situation. The nations that we have colonized and invaded in the middle-east are now amalgamated and referred to as AfPak (never a good thing when an empire amalgamates your country with another). Unmanned drone attacks since Obama took office have claimed the lives of "well over 700," *wsws.org*, the World Socialist Web Site, reported June 25.

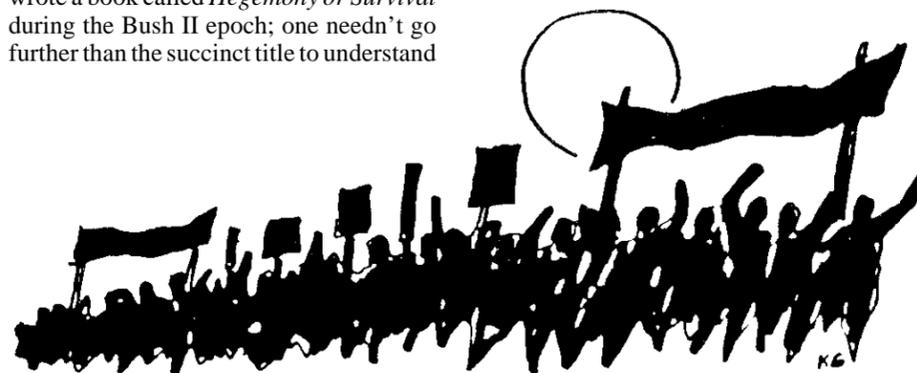
The terrorizing of smaller nations will only lead to more hatred of empire, and it is no doubt that eventually nuclear weapons will find their way into so-called "wrong" hands (as if there were anyone worthy to possess this kind of weaponry). Once nuclear war starts, it is hard to say where or when it will stop.

Do we care about the planet and the survival of our species, or will we play the nihilistic spectator, watching the world end on our flat-screen computer monitor? I argue "Yes" to the former, and like our president claims to have in his hollow rhetoric, I have "Hope." One can only be optimistic in these interesting times.

*The writer, of Louisville, is an anarchist and a member of the Industrial Workers of the World. He is studying at Spalding University for a master's degree in occupational therapy. He maintains a blog at comradshaw.wordpress.com.*

A recent example illustrates the ominous consequences of war. Take the recent Russian/U.S. nuclear agreement, which is supposed to be about the two most powerful nuclear states (numerically) reducing their arms. A New York Times article July 7 illustrates why the U.S. really agreed to this: journalists Clifford J. Levy and Peter Baker wrote that the agreement allows "the United States to send thousands of flights of troops and weapons to Afghanistan through Russian airspace each year."

Linguist and dissident Noam Chomsky wrote a book called *Hegemony or Survival* during the Bush II epoch; one needn't go further than the succinct title to understand



## Music legend gave much to entertain, help world

by Gracie Lewis

Michael Joseph Jackson (August 29, 1958 — June 25, 2009) was not only the "King of Pop" but he was a great *humanitarian*. I was devastated when I heard of his death because he contributed so much to music and our culture.

He was a singer-songwriter, record producer, musical arranger, dancer, choreographer, actor, author, financier and philanthropist. At the time of his death he was preparing for "This Is It," a series of 50 concerts that would have been held in London.

Jackson did much to *keep hope alive*. He contributed over \$300 million dollars to 39 charities. The Millennium-Issue of the "Guinness Book of Records" names Michael Jackson as one of the most generous Pop Strars on the planet! He contributed to: the American Cancer Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Childhelp USA, Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation, End Hunger Network, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Jane Goodall Institute, Make a Wish Foundation, Minority AIDS project, NAACP, Prince's Trust, Ronald McDonald House, Starlight Children's Foundation, T.J. Martell Foundation, United Negro

College Fund and United Negro College Fund Ladders of Hope.

On December 13, 1984, Michael contributed \$1.5 million to the Michael Jackson Burn Center for Children at the Brotman Hospital that treated him when he was burned producing a Pepsi commercial.

Jackson contributed the proceeds from the sale of "Man in the Mirror" to Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times — a camp for children who suffer from cancer. He often traveled to Africa visiting hospitals, orphanages, schools, churches and institutions for mentally handicapped children. In the political arena, he performed for the Democratic National Committee at the Apollo Theater in Harlem helping to raise \$3 million toward voter registration.

The Bible says (1 Peter 4:10-11) "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." (NIV) Michael Jackson never stopped responding to God's call on his life — the ministry of *giving*.

*The writer, of Louisville, is an activist for racial and economic justice and a clean environment.*

### An "oil import" peace activists can fully support

The Louisville Committee for Peace in the Middle East has fair trade, organic, cold pressed, extra virgin olive oil, a product of the West Bank, Palestine, for sale. The cost is \$18.00 for 750ml bottle. The oil is imported through the non-profit company Import Peace. Profits from the sale of the company's oil go to a hospital in Gaza and to buy olive trees for planting in the West Bank. Last year \$11,000 was sent back to Palestine. To purchase, please call Polly Johnson at (502) 473-8435.

### FOR's Mission Statement

The Fellowship of Reconciliation seeks to replace violence, war, racism and economic injustice with nonviolence, peace and justice. We are an interfaith organization committed to active nonviolence as a transforming way of life and as a means of radical change. We educate, train, build coalitions, and engage in nonviolent and compassionate actions locally, nationally, and globally.



Founded 1915

FORsooth is published by the Louisville chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Send submissions for news stories or commentaries to George Morrison, editor, c/o 2236 Kaelin Ave., Louisville, KY 40205, e-mail: <klm86@att.net>.

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#### 94 Years on Peace Frontiers

Since 1915, the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States has led campaigns to obtain legal rights for conscientious objectors, win civil rights for all Americans, end the Vietnam War, oppose U.S. intervention in the Third World, and reverse the superpowers' arms race. An interfaith pacifist organization, the FOR has members from many religious and ethnic traditions. It is part of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, with affiliates in 40 countries.

In the development of its program FOR depends upon persons who seek to apply these principles to every area of life. If you are not already a member, we invite you to join us in this endeavor. Membership consists of signing the Statement of Purpose, indicating that you agree with FOR goals.

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# Echoes from the moon: a case for peaceful exploration

by Marc A. Wessels

On July 20, 1969 at 20:17:40 UTC Apollo 11 touched down at the Sea of Tranquility on the lunar surface 238,857 miles from Earth. American astronauts, civilian mission commander Neil Armstrong and Lunar Module pilot, U.S. Air Force Colonel Buzz Aldrin exited the Lunar Excursion Module (LEM) named "Eagle" becoming the first humans to set foot on another planet. While their fellow astronaut, U.S. Air Force Lt. Colonel Michael Collins, orbited overhead in the Command Module, (CM) Columbia, the two astronauts completed a number of planned extravehicular activities (EVAs) while on the surface.

Armstrong and Aldrin collected lunar samples, deployed several scientific experiments and examined and photographed the lunar surface. Two and one-half hours later, the EVA was completed and all of the scientific activities had been accomplished including the successful deployment of all instruments. About 22 kilograms of lunar samples were collected and secured within the LEM, and the astronauts lifted off the surface of the Moon to rejoin Collins aboard the CM for their return journey to Earth.

The lunar explorers' treasure trove included 50 rocks, some samples of the fine grained lunar "soil," and two core tubes that included material from up to 13 centimeters below the surface of the Moon. Significantly, upon the return of Apollo 11 to Earth, these samples showed no traces of water and proved that there was no evidence for living organisms at any time in the Moon's history. This finding was an important scientific discovery, with implications not only for geology, but also for philosophy and theology.

According to what lunar samples the Apollo 11 and other subsequent Apollo mission crews (Apollo 12, 14, 15, 16, 17) brought back to Earth there was now solid evidence to recognize and celebrate the uniqueness of life on planet Earth. Whatever one's personal philosophical or theological beliefs, the Apollo 11 mission provided evidential proof of the uniqueness of life - in all its forms - on our home planet, Earth.

Forty years later, the significance of the Apollo missions lies not only in the knowledge gained through what was brought back from the Moon, but also what was left behind on the lunar surface by the crew. During their time on the Moon, the crew had also done two significant acts - traditional in the history of epic exploration.

Astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin had planted an American flag in the lunar soil and also unveiled a specially designed plaque affixed to the leg of the lunar lander bearing a map of the Earth and the signatures of the Apollo crew and the president of the United States of America at the time, Richard M. Nixon.

The plaque has an inscription which reads: HERE MEN FROM THE PLANET EARTH FIRST SET FOOT UPON THE MOON JULY 1969 A.D. WE CAME IN PEACE FOR ALL MANKIND.

Apollo 11 was the first of seven missions to the Moon's surface. All but one, the infamous Apollo 13 mission, successfully completed their lunar landings and EVA activities. Twelve Americans walked on the surface of the Moon; scientific experiments were successfully completed in geology, including the collection of lunar samples, and stereoscopic and panoramic photography.

The cost of the Viet Nam War resulted in the drastic reduction of committed resources to the Apollo Mission program resulting in the cancellation of three other lunar landing missions. The Apollo 18 through Apollo 20 missions were scrubbed and the last American to walk on the surface of the Moon was U.S. Navy Captain Eugene A. Cernan, the commander of Apollo 17 on December 14, 1972. Cernan noted at that historic moment, "as we leave the Moon at Taurus-Littrow, we leave as we came and, God willing, as we shall return, with peace and hope for all mankind."

During the last four decades no other human has flown beyond over 400 miles from Earth. The Soviet/Russian space station MIR ("Peace") was launched in 1986 and orbited Earth with an apogee, or maximum distance from Earth, of 398 miles. In 2001 MIR was abandoned by its crew and deliberately de-orbited, breaking apart and disintegrating during a fiery atmospheric re-entry over the South Pacific Ocean.

While political partnerships have developed in the area of space development in Europe and between the United States and Russia to create the International Space Station (ISS), the ISS is primarily a research laboratory floating a mere few hundred miles above Earth. Humans, having seemingly been content nowadays to stay closer to home. It seems that the words of the great Russian pioneer of space travel, Konstantin Eduardovich Tsiolkovskii (1857 - 1935) have been ignored.

Tsiolkovskii wrote, "The Earth is the Cradle of the Mind — but one cannot eternally live in a cradle."

Yet, it appears that Americans are content "in the cradle," once again spending their resources on foreign entanglements; placing their dollars on the altar of war rather than the peaceful human exploration of deep space. It was estimated that the next time that a NASA crewed mission would land on the Moon would be in 2019 with the Orion 15 mission. In May of this year, President Obama's administration ordered a top-level review of the U.S. human spaceflight program that has been focused on returning astronauts to the moon by 2020. It remains to be seen whether or not human spaceflight will be a high priority for the American people.

With the recent launches of spacecraft by the Indian and Chinese governments it appears that Americans may be left behind. Both of these emerging space powers seem to have grasped the vision of leaving the cradle of Earth for the benefit of those on the planet and for the future of the human species. Rising above the poverty and crushing demands of their populations, these two countries are considering the potential of space exploration within the context of their nations' need for economic development and growth.

China plans a manned lunar mission by 2024 that will include a walk on the moon's surface. According to China's Xinhua News Agency such lunar exploration would allow China to "struggle for a



Art by David Warmenhoven courtesy Marc Wessels

men's feet on the planet. But if the former Indian president and rocket scientist Abdul Kalam is correct, the Chinese or Americans may not be the next to have their astronauts touch the surface of the Moon. Kalam noted that the ISRO lunar probe landing "will kindle a dream in children," a dream that he believes will lead to his own vision of seeing an Indian on the moon in 15 years.

Forty years after the Eagle landed on the Moon, there are still many arguments about the importance of such continued activities. As in the 1960s, there are voices

society that no longer moves forward does not merely stagnate; it begins to die."

Our society and the societies of the world will, in time, not only stagnate but die if we do not move forward into the sea of space. We need to begin today to plan for our planet's fiery demise. Leaving the planet for the Moon and other planets beyond is not merely an escapist ideology but a practical, realistic philosophy for the immediate and long-term survival of the human species. On this 40th anniversary of Apollo 11, we need to reconsider the purpose of spaceflight for peace on Earth and beyond.

As one of the dozen astronauts to have walked on the Moon, Apollo 14 Lunar Module pilot U.S. Navy Captain Edgar D. Mitchell has thought deeply about our predicament. In 1996, I had the privilege of hearing and meeting Mitchell when he visited Louisville to discuss his book, *The Way of the Explorer: An Apollo Astronaut's Journey Through the Material and Mystical Worlds*. His words succinctly summarize the wisdom for peacefully pursuing space exploration and moving forward into the sea of space.

Mitchell notes that, "Eventually we must leave Earth—at least a certain number of our progeny must as our sun approaches the end of its solar life cycle. But just as terrestrial explorers have always led the way for settlers, this will also happen extraterrestrially. Earth is our cradle, not our final destiny."

*The writer, of Louisville, is the founder of the Space Exploration Archive, a non-profit organization committed to the peaceful exploration of outer space for the benefit of all on Earth. SEA collects, preserves and interprets art, artifacts, books, ephemera and other space related relics. More information is at [spacearchive@insightbb.com](mailto:spacearchive@insightbb.com).*

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*Tsiolkovskii wrote, "The Earth is the Cradle of the Mind — but one cannot eternally live in a cradle."*

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more important place in the world space science field and raise our deep space exploration technology to a higher standard." Lunar exploration would have an "immeasurable usefulness to raising national prestige and inspiring the nationalistic spirit."

At a time when the world is concerned about global warming, the dwindling supply of natural resources and the growth of the human population's impact upon natural resources, the Chinese believe that the Moon probably holds the key to humanity's future subsistence and development. And they are not alone.

India also understands the significance of spaceflight and has plans of its own for lunar exploration. In November 2008 the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully landed a lunar probe on the moon's surface. India joined the select league of space-faring nations like the United States and Russia and Japan, which have placed objects on the surface of the Moon. To date, only America has placed

of opposition against such expenditures. As a social activist concerned about the universal right to work and health care, the need to rebuild American business and cities, as an environmental advocate and as a peacemaker, I understand their argument. However, the amount of tax dollars going to our national space program is very small. Funding for space programs in America -- manned and unmanned, low and deep space — should be increased and its benefits better understood by its citizens.

Back in 1969, anthropologist Margaret Mead considered the argument this way: "Many people are shrinking from the future and from participation in the movement toward a new, expanded reality. And, like homesick travelers abroad, they are focusing their anxieties on home. The reasons are not far to seek. We are at a turning point in human history.... We could turn our attention to the problems that going to the moon certainly will not solve.... But I think this would be fatal to our future.... A



# Greedy corporations usually fail – the ethical succeed

I am getting tired of the anti-business bias that you permit Ira Grupper to put in the paper. I understand that he was a union organizer. So was Dave Beck. We should not generalize. My first job in business was in 1935.

He uses the term “greedy business” as a general description of business. In these many years I have observed that greedy corporations usually fail. The ethical succeed because we all want to do business with them.

We must be citizens of the world. “Buy America” campaigns do not serve the cause of world peace.

I have been a member of the FOR for some 50 years. Peace is good for business.

Peace,  
Lee B. Thomas Jr.

## FORsooth editor George Morrison comments:

I have had tremendous respect for Lee Thomas since I first heard him speak a few



## Letters to FORsooth

years ago at a Hiroshima Day observance about his pacifism, which became firm after he arrived in that city just two weeks after the atomic bombing. He said at the observance: “We must do away with the occasion of war.”

Since 1945, he has steadfastly refused to design or sell products for companies making weapons of war.

Lee’s views on business’ relationship to peace outlined in his letter are as welcome in these pages as any other peace and justice interpretation.

I also have great respect for Ira Grupper, who left the relative security of the urban northeast in the mid-1960s to work in the Deep South for the nonviolent civil rights struggle, following in the path of the three civil rights workers and so many others who had been killed.

I sincerely hope Lee’s and Ira’s differing views over business can be seen as an honest disagreement and a cause for all of us to think deeply and discern truths about economics and peace.

## Morrison gave Ira Grupper the chance to comment on Lee Thomas’ letter, which Ira does below:

Dave Beck was president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters from 1952-1957. In 1959 he was convicted of income tax evasion and falsifying union tax forms, and served time in jail. Mr. Beck wasn’t the first, and won’t be the last, union official to have had a hand in the till.

Truth be told, Beck spent his last years as a *businessman*— check it out.

Mr. Thomas writes: “I have observed that greedy corporations usually fail. The ethical succeed because we all want to do business with them.” I hereby challenge Mr. Thomas to a public debate, perhaps sponsored by FOR, on ethical and unethical labor and business.

Among points I will raise: The issuance of (knowingly benefiting from) insurance policies during the slavery era by ACE USA, Aetna Life Insurance, New York Life, Penn Mutual Life, Providence Washington Insurance, and others.

How George Bush (the Younger’s) grandfather, a U.S. senator, helped Hitler’s rise to power; the relationship of National City Bank and Chase National Bank to Hitler’s *Reichbank*; the relationship of the former Big Three automakers, and GE, Kodak and Shell Oil, to Nazi Germany; and charges “philanthropist” Bill Gates stole DOS and defrauded Apple.

Mr. Thomas is right: “Peace is good for business.” But so is corruption, theft, war and genocide.

# Darfur crisis requires errors in June story be corrected

Thanks to the FORsooth staff for the generously long article (June FORsooth) on the talk Bob Brousseau and I gave on 5/21 (at the Third Thursday Lunch). It’s over twice as long as what the Courier Journal is allowing us to do in a sort of guest op-ed piece on Darfur.

I just wanted to point out a few things the article mistakenly reported — or misunderstood — either Bob or I as having said.

In paragraph six, we are described as having “asked for calls to Senators and Representatives for stronger sanctions.”

But in addition to this we also called for more pressure on the U.S. State Depart-

ment to put enough diplomatic pressure on China, Russia and Sudan’s other allies to end the genocide by attrition in Darfur.

In the seventh paragraph, the article reads: “Sudan, which has fought in civil wars against Darfur rebel groups from 1955 to 1972 and 1983 to 2005 (since which genocide has continued).”

The Sudanese Government fought a civil war with South Sudan during those years. The conflict in Darfur is widely reported as having started in February 2003.

In the ninth paragraph, the article says that Sudanese President Bashir was charged with genocide by the ICC last year. He was

charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity by the ICC on March 4 of this year. Only one of the three judges involved thought the genocide charge warranted, based on evidence available to them at the time. But as of now the ICC has not charged Bashir with genocide.

In the next-to-last paragraph, the article reports that Bob “said a vote is scheduled in 2011 to allow Darfur residents to decide on independence.” But this vote is actually to be held by South Sudan at this time....

We know this conflict can be very difficult to keep straight! However, we want to do our utmost to present the issues

as factually correct as possible. Again, thank you for affording us this venue and know that we appreciate your efforts.

Phil Nippert  
Kentucky Interfaith Taskforce  
on Darfur

**Editor’s note:** I apologize for the inadequate research into the background of the Darfur situation that resulted in the errors in the story I wrote in the June FORsooth. I thank Phil Nippert for pausing from his very important work to bring the errors to my attention. — George Morrison

# An acclaimed monk’s message *(continued from page 1)*

other spiritual writers edited by institute staff members and published by Ave Maria Press in Notre Dame, Ind.

“We estimate that currently (the series) is being used by about 2,500 groups... around the world,” Toth said.

The dialogues reach from the halls of power to the places where the least powerful are warehoused — members of the U.S. House of Representatives and their staff use the series in dialogues, as do prison inmates, many church denominations and colleges and universities, Toth said.

Bethany Spring director Jonathan Montaldo said the center, situated on rolling, wooded land, has a lake and houses and cottages for one to three people each.

“It’s like really going to your grandfather’s house. It really feels very intimate, very homey,” he said.

Three-day retreats scheduled for September through November are to include Mass at the abbey, sessions on contemplative living and free time for solitude or hiking, said a pamphlet on Bethany Spring, which also said that private retreats are available.

The pamphlet summed up a central Merton tenet by saying: “our every day life is our spiritual life.”

On that theme, Toth noted that Merton “says we don’t have a separate spiritual

life,” describing Merton’s moment of awareness at Fourth and Muhammad Ali (then called Walnut Street) as “one of his most brilliant expressions of that dynamic.”

Sister Judy Morris, the institute’s director of development, said the third relationship in the institute’s definition — that of “others” — includes far more than just those in your immediate surroundings.

“A contemplative defines ‘others’ as everybody out there, not just my neighbors. My neighborhood is the world,” she said.

Toth said the institute was formed three years ago by reconfiguring the Thomas Merton Foundation, which was created in 1995 to preserve Merton’s archives and to extend his influence. The change to the name Merton Institute for Contemplative Living came about to more accurately convey the institute’s focus on living contemplatively, he explained.

Toth took the institute’s director position in 1998 after working in education and health care administration and making yearly retreats to Gethsemani from his home in Cleveland.

Sister Morris said Kentucky is “fertile soil for the Merton Institute” because of Merton’s more than a quarter-century of living here and because so many focus on the state to study Merton’s beliefs and activism.

“He was ahead of his time,” she said. “He very clearly, I think, linked contemplation with our role to be people of peace and justice. The two are intertwined.... He handed on to us a model of how we can be contemplative and speak out in areas of peace and justice with authenticity.”

The institute makes liberal use of the Internet. Assistant director Vanessa Hurst said she sends daily e-mails containing a paragraph from Merton’s writings chosen by institute staff to 7,400 recipients in 35 nations.

The technology also played a role in the institute’s creation. Toth said a public relations firm hired to help with the transition from the Merton Foundation did focus groups and commissioned an on-line survey asking: “Do you feel the need to live more contemplatively?,” which drew about 500 responses.

“Ninety-seven percent of the people said ‘Yes,’” Toth said. “The survey asked: ‘What does contemplative living mean to you?’ Overwhelmingly the answers were along the lines of, ‘To live a less busy life, to meditate more, to pray more, to live a quieter life.’ So we knew where people were coming from. And we knew where Merton was coming from. So our challenge was to help people understand what

contemplative living was from Merton’s perspective, because his perspective brings with it a centuries-old monastic contemplative tradition.”

Toth described the retreat sessions as respectful listening during post-reading dialogues.

“It doesn’t require someone to have a deep understanding or knowledge of theology or spirituality,” he said. “You simply read the selections.... Then the group dialogues and learns from the experience of others.”

“It never becomes a debate,” he added. “Everyone has a chance to present their own experience, their own perspective without anyone commenting on it.”

One remark at the close of a session by a woman who had served in a religious order, then left the order to raise a family, was telling about its value, Toth believes.

“After the end of the session, she said ‘I was in a convent all those years. I was married all those years and I’ve never thought... about what God means ‘til tonight.’”

*The Merton Institute for Contemplative Living is on the Internet at [www.mertoninstitute.org](http://www.mertoninstitute.org) and can be contacted at 800-886-7275. The local number in Louisville is 899-1991.*

# Single payer called crucial *(continued from page 1)*

The result, said Dr. Fegan, is that the poorest 20 per cent of the population in Canada gets better health care than anyone but the rich in the U.S. We spend plenty on health care, but “allow too many who are not involved in providing health care, to profit from it,” she said.

Dr. Fegan went on to argue that Americans do not “choose” in any meaningful sense not to have health insurance, although

it may appear so because, e.g., they reject ridiculous premiums that would be deducted from already-very-small paychecks.

“It is time we made health care a right and not a privilege,” she said, adding: “The insurance industry should stop practicing medicine without a license,” denying care to millions at will. Like Conyers, she said that we the people must demand “a seat at the table” by letting Congress hear our

voices. She urged people to visit their representative at his or her home office.

Fegan ended her presentation with the simple but powerful declarative statement that there is no reason not to guarantee health care to all, except (the non-reason that) it would cut into the profits of the health-insurance and pharmaceutical industries.

In a very enlightening question-and-answer session that followed, Dr. Fegan

made explicit what had been sometimes only implicit in the previous hour or so: we can do this, she said: first came the civil rights movement, then the end of the Vietnam War; now we can effect a truly radical transformation of our nation’s health care system, make it a true system for the first time and create single payer.

*(continued on page 5)*

# Buy America or bye, America? 3 labor activists' views

Your columnist has ignited a firestorm! In the June *Labor Paeans* we criticized the United Auto Workers, the United Steelworkers and others for organizing the "Keep it Made in America" national bus tour, which recently stopped in Louisville. We compared it to organized labor's old "Buy American" campaign, a protectionist schematic that did nothing to show international working class solidarity, and did not keep companies from moving out of the U.S.

We received correspondence from three union officials: from the president of UAW Local 862 at the two Ford manufacturing plants here in Louisville, who has a different view than your columnist; a second, from a USW (Steelworkers) official, who thought we were really out of touch with reality. A third, from the head of the Kentucky State AFL-CIO, agrees with yours truly. There was a fourth response, from an immigrant rights activist, which is also on the side of the angels (oh, I'm such an angel).

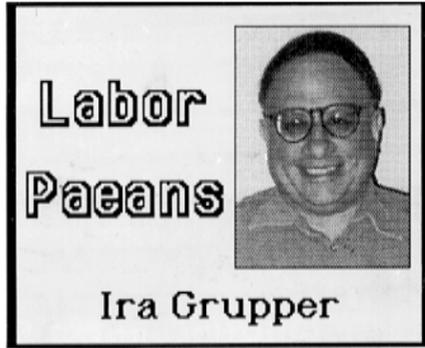
The part of your scribe's remarks that aroused all the heartburn is this: "What is 'American?'" Look under the hood of a Ford and you'll find parts from all over the world. Look at all the 'foreign' cars now being produced in the U.S. Should they not be purchased? How can you tell if a Toyota is made in the U.S. or elsewhere? Toyota is not Japanese, or American. It is multinational, part of a multi-national corporation, and the working class needs to fashion a multi-national, as opposed to a narrow-national, response.

"Make no mistake about it. Your columnist is very troubled by all the U.S. manufacturing jobs that have moved out of the country, including his own, leaving millions of U.S. workers unemployed. Yes, let's support a return of U.S. manufacturing. But let's not support a plan that feeds a narrow protectionist view that is doing the working class a disservice by pushing this campaign."

We reprint below, verbatim, all four responses. The first response comes from Rocky Comito, the president of Local 862, UAW, which represents workers at Ford's Louisville Assembly Plant and Kentucky Truck Plant:

"Ira, If you look at the Auto industry, the 'Keep it Made in America' is reaching out to have a equal playing field with the foreign manufacturers. This is what we have always asked for. There are many reasons for this that ALL Americans should be for and now more than ever should understand the reasoning behind it. The profits of American company vehicles go to America. Is it a coincidence that all the towns, cities, states and America (are) in a budget crunch? Where has our tax base gone?"

"Why is it protectionism when America wants to limit things but not others? Example: Japan imports 8,000 Ford & 2,000 GMs and exports to America two million Toyotas and two million Hondas. The cost of the American vehicle in Japan



is almost double the price in America! Is that fair? Is that protectionism? Japan "allows" only 6 percent of their car market to be made of non-Japanese manufactured vehicles. It's not only Japan, South Korea imported 9,000 U.S. cars but sold 800,000 cars in America. How about if these countries are only allowed to sell the same number of cars in the U.S. as they import into their countries? Oh yea, that's protectionism! But, wouldn't that be fair?"

"On American workers, (which contribute to the American taxes), in general, the Big 3 support more than twice as many U.S. jobs as the foreign automakers. More

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*"What happened to the American Dream? Why bring America down, when we should be bringing everyone else up to America's standards?" — Rocky Comito, president, Local 862, UAW.*

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than 80 percent of the Big 3 vehicles sold here last year were made here, while only 50 percent of the foreign vehicles sold here were made here. The Big 3 car makers use more than twice the "domestic content" than foreign automakers (use). Even a Ford assembled in Mexico contains more U.S. and Canadian parts than a Hyundai assembled in Alabama or a BMW assembled in South Carolina. So the Big 3 sell half of the vehicles bought in the U.S. each year, but they purchase approximately three-fourths of the parts made here. Another item to look at: Research & Development. Eighty cents of every dollar at Ford, GM & Chrysler gets spent in the U.S., probably the opposite at Toyota, and likely (worse) for the smaller foreign manufacturers. One in 10 of America's engineers and scientists involved in corporate R & D were employed by automakers and suppliers. One last issue, lets talk about health care. It's expensive to the U.S. automakers because the U.S. doesn't have a health care system as many of the foreign countries do, which pays for, or at least subsidizes their health care. If America had a health care system that was as affordable for employers and workers as the rest of the industrialized world, more than 80 percent of Detroit's North American losses in 2007 would have

been wiped out, (\$2 billion by Ford & \$3.1 billion by GM last year).

"The 'Keep it Made in America' is for the benefit of all Americans. Every day, more and more jobs are being lost to lower wages, no benefits, poor working conditions and very few health and safety requirements. What happened to the American Dream? Why bring America down, when we should be bringing everyone else up to America's standards? Buy American — the job you save may be your own!!" (Note: Rocky sent, separately, a CNN piece, "Ford, Chrysler and GM's contributions after 9/11," but we do not have space to reprint. I.G.).

The second response comes from my old friend and staunch union sister, Gail Helinger:

"Greetings, Ira. We talked about this article at the single-payer health care seminar and I want to reiterate the thing that made me the most irate about your spiel and that is this charge of protectionism! That is the same bull... that multinational corporations and big business leveled at organized labor when they were trying to bulldoze NAFTA through during the Clinton administration!!! Those jerks

actually fooled lawmakers and the president into believing that the unions were against it because we did not want workers in Mexico, for example, to enjoy the same standards of living as their U.S. counterparts. Now, go ask the thousands in the maquiladoras if NAFTA made their dreams come true. If most Americans bought products they knew were made in America and resisted paying a few cents less to get the made-in-China specials at Wal-Mart, our economy might not be so far in the tank and could become stronger than China's. People, there are only two main powers in your possession: your voice (vote) and your money (especially where you choose to spend it!).

"Love and Peace & Solidarity, Gail Helinger, recording secretary of USW 1693 and vice-president of Derby City CLUW."

The third response comes from Bill Londrigan, president of the Kentucky State AFL-CIO, who owes me a lunch and would rather hide out than reciprocate.

"Ira: I thoroughly enjoyed your column and find no issue with your position on the 'Buy America' effort. I think, like you, that the horse is out of the barn on that one. The only response for labor HAS to be global. Best wishes and good luck in Philly — Mississippi that is. Bill" (note: refer-

ence is to your columnist's recent trip to Philadelphia, Miss. to commemorate the murders of three civil rights workers in 1964—I.G.).

The final response comes from immigrant rights activist Stephen Bartlett:

"If a 'Keep It Made in America' campaign was done for the right reasons, I might have more sympathy for it. But I can't help thinking this will not be effective, nor is it appealing to the highest values of organized labor.

"First, it would be difficult to assert with a straight face that the corporations that produce automobiles, like most of globalization's mega-corporations, still have any loyalty to the nation, state or city where they are presumably located. They will outsource just as fast as any transnational corporation owned by shareholders in Japan, Germany or Brazil; they will extort labor concessions just as fast as any corporation anywhere.

"Second, to lessen the impact of job losses and lowered wages for U.S.-based workers, we need a more comprehensive approach that would tip the power equation in favor of workers everywhere, over the capitalists who currently call the shots. We need a dramatic New Deal that would put employment and livable wages above the well being of corrupt banks, Wall Street hedgers or derivatives gurus. We need to re-impose taxes on the wealthy five percent of the populace, and encourage high labor and environmental standards across the world. We cannot swallow the fairy tale that so-called "patriotic" consumerism can turn the tide. If we want to shift the power equation, we need to empower workers, all workers, whether migrant, landless, hammered, displaced, thrown away, repressed, across all borders: do away with transnational trade agreements falsely dubbed "free trade," abolish the WTO, defend the rights of migrants and impoverished everywhere, not just within the borders of the U.S. Our government, (along with) the corporations who so greatly influence our government, has imperial reach: only a globalized internationalist labor strategy can turn that tide.

"Ciao, Stephen Bartlett, member of KITLAC (Kentuckiana Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America & the Caribbean)."

We who support the basic fairness and humanity of a unionized workforce must know, when we look under the hood of a Toyota or a Ford, the percentage of parts that are *made by union labor*, and what is *assembled by union labor*, wherever it is made.... And so, as the sun begins to set on the American Empire and U.S. manufacturing, replaced, for example, by Big Pharma's push into selling to the Third World, we bid a fond adieu to the befouling American corporate stream, and a hearty welcome to international capital's cesspool runoff.

Contact Ira Grupper at [irag@iglou.com](mailto:irag@iglou.com).

## Single payer called crucial

(continued from page 4)

As for "rationing," one of the favorite arguments of opponents of single payer, Dr. Fegan declared that we ration *now*, but based on ability to pay rather than need. She said that President Obama is "a wonderful man," but still a politician; and there are *three* health-care-industry lobbyists for every member of Congress.

Dr. Fegan then briefly in response to a question categorized the systems of countries that do have national health care plans. First, she said there those (with what is sometimes called "socialized medicine," which is really just like our Veterans' Administration program) like England where the doctors etc. are employees of the government. Second, there are those who have essentially our "Medicare," but greatly improved and for everybody.

These single-payer systems, of which Canada is an example, are *not* socialized medicine: doctors, hospitals and dentists charge for their services as in the U.S.; the difference is that there is only a *single payer*, the government. This is what H.R.

676 would do. And third, there are multi-payer systems like Germany, where more than one fund does the paying, but some of them "help" others (the ones with lots of elderly subscribers, for example).

We really need to choose one of the first two types urgently, said Dr. Fegan, because in this country people are keeping jobs they despise, just to keep their health insurance.

Dr. Robert Stone, a professor of emergency medicine at Indiana University and director of Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan, called for: "Medicare Part E — for Everybody."

The single biggest argument both for and against a single payer plan, said Dr. Stone, is the same thing: the fact that it is "the system best able to provide service and minimize cost."

It's just that costs for some equal profits for a few others, he explained, and these others will most definitely fight change.

Dr. Stone persuasively argued that the whole system of incentives is totally backward under the current system: for-

profit insurance companies' whole reason for existence is to *not* take care of people, he said, explaining that these companies get their money from insurance premiums and in effect "lose" every penny they have to pay for subscribers' health care.

The highlight of Dr. Stone's Q & A session was his discussion of the "long wait times" in Canada. All the evidence of this is anecdotal, he said, and reflects the fact that they literally have nothing else — premiums, doctor bills, etc. — to complain about.

On Canadian heart surgeries, Dr. Stone said, the wait (based on a random sample of 8,000 cases) was only 17 days; for urgent or "emergent" care, he added, it was only 48 hours.

*Ike M. Thacker IV and Eustace Durrett, both of Louisville, are advocates for political, economic and social democracy. Durrett focuses especially on transportation issues and Thacker on housing.*



# As poverty rises, ways to fight it discussed

by Gracie Lewis

With two million Americans having lost their jobs since the "stimulus package" went into effect and Michigan's unemployment rate soaring to 15 percent, about 500 people came to Spalding University in Louisville July 16-19 for the National Conference to End Poverty.

They met to discuss ways we can address the problems confronting millions of poor people in this country who have very little, or even nothing, to lose. Organizers were Women in Transition, the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, and the Social Welfare Action Alliance.

In December 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The dispossessed of this nation — the poor, both white and Negro live in a cruel and unjust society. They must organize a revolution against that injustice.... There are millions of poor people in this country who have very little, or even nothing, to lose. If they can be helped to take action together, they will do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life."

His statement is still relevant today! We have lost more than two million jobs since the "stimulus package" was passed. In Michigan, the unemployment level has reached 15 percent. Many jobless are teenagers who have given up looking because they must compete with older Americans. There has been an increase in foreclosures and a loss of health care benefits. Speakers at the conference pointed out that the Louisville Urban League has been holding workshops to help those facing foreclosures (Call 502-566-3362).

We must mobilize to insure that the poor are not left out of the stimulus package passed by Congress. We have spent over a trillion dollars to bail out Wall Street while those of us who are poor cannot even earn an adequate wage. We have trillions of dollars to give our banks, but we continually face foreclosures. Whole families are out on the street and into shelters.

As workers are losing jobs, so goes medical care. The high cost of health care has disproportionately affected African Americans. One in every five African Americans lacks health insurance. At the conference, we joined the movement to support H.R. 676, single payer nonprofit national health insurance. The single-payer economic stimulus would create 2.6 million jobs, increase business and public revenues to the tune of \$317 billion, would provide additional employee compensation up to \$100 billion and new tax revenue up to \$44 billion.

Conference speakers dialogued and decided it was time to do grassroots organizing to provide a people's agenda and meet the needs of the increasing numbers of poor among us. We plan to provide transparency in each state. We have to remain vigilant to change this dismal picture and get what was promised in the stimulus package.

Workshops, which were buzzing with experience and vision on changing our world, were on topics including: the rights to health care, a living wage, education, housing, utilities, and water; youth in the movement; the media; arts and culture; immigration; religion and faith communities; social work; and human services.

Conference participants concluded that we can make a difference because the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25) stated that we have a right to food, housing, education, health care, and a living wage. The United States, along with countries throughout the world, signed this document in 1948.

Currently, we are spending about 50 percent of our federal budget on military spending. We must fight to change this to  
*(continued on page 7)*



For What Noble Cause?

author, speaker and peace activist

## Cindy Sheehan

September 7-12, 2009

Public lecture and book signing

Chao Auditorium, University of Louisville,  
Ekstrom Library

(park in Speed Museum Ramp)

Tuesday, September 8, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Cindy will be making a number of appearances throughout the Louisville area including a major public talk, a press conference, and media interviews. Watch the calendar at [www.louisvillepeace.org](http://www.louisvillepeace.org) for details as they are planned or call Harold Trainer (502) 387-9490 or Nancy Jakubiak (502) 939-3698

Sponsors include: Louisville Peace Action Community, Viet Nam Veterans Against The War, Iraq Veterans Against The War, Louisville, Kentucky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America and the Caribbean, Louisville Committee for Peace in the Middle East, The University of Louisville's Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research, Louisville Fellowship of Reconciliation, Ray's Monkey House Cafe

## The Israeli/Palestinian Conflict is an AMERICAN Issue

*Call upon the U.S. to be a friend to both Israelis and Palestinians*

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Every Friday: 12 Noon – 1:00 PM

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Louisville Committee for Israeli/Palestinian States (502.451.5658) [www.louisvillepeace.org/twostates.html](http://www.louisvillepeace.org/twostates.html)

Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)/Louisville Chapter (502.458.8056) [www.louisville-for.org](http://www.louisville-for.org)

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)/Kentucky Chapter (502.893.9828) [www.adckentucky.com](http://www.adckentucky.com)

## AUNG SAN SUU KYI ON TRIAL

Closing arguments were heard yesterday (7-24-09) in the trial of Nobel Peace laureate and pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, marking a transition into a crucial phase of her court case. For twenty years now she has waged a nonviolent struggle against Myanmar's military junta.

The court's verdict could come at any time according to a report from Amnesty International. If convicted, Suu Kyi could spend as many as 5 years in Myanmar's notorious Insein Prison which has been called the "darkest hell-hole in Burma."

Critics have condemned the regime's trumped-up charges against Suu Kyi as a flimsy pretext for keeping her in prison and out of the country's 2010 elections.

Meanwhile outside the courtroom, Myanmar authorities have been cracking down on other democracy activists. At least 50 opposition party members were arrested on Sunday by the military regime as they peacefully observed the anniversary of the death of Myanmar independence hero Gen. Aung San, her father who was assassinated.

Amnesty plans to be ready to bring the full force of its millions-strong global network of activists to bear on the military regime if it refuses to release Aung San Suu Kyi. (As head of the National League for Democracy in 1990, Suu Kyi won the election by an 82 percent landslide. Since that time she has been held under virtual house arrest. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.)

## STOP Gun Violence

Who does not cringe every day as the morning news tells of even more tragic deaths due to gun violence. Many efforts have sprung up through the years to outlaw guns or to place restrictions on gun sales. But today gun violence claims the lives of some 80 individuals *daily* in the United States and 1,000 lives around the world. The Brady Campaign reports that more Americans were killed with guns in our communities between 1979 and 1997 than were killed in battle in all wars since 1775. Some 30,000 Americans die every year from gun violence.

Last September an interfaith suburban group in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania decided to focus on the issue. They attended the *Gun Violence and Gospel Values* colloquium held for three days at Stony Point, New York, sponsored by the Presbyterian Church as called for by the 2008 General Assembly. In worship, plenary presentations, and workshops, participants explored how gospel values can transform society's acceptance of gun violence and lead to building a culture of peace. Conversations focused on creating worship resources, identifying and creating educational resources — especially for children, and advocacy efforts.



The Bryn Mawr **Task Force to STOP Gun Violence** became more active. They sponsored a one-day event in which participants learned, prayed, and took action. Prior to the event, a month-long children's art show allowed children to offer solutions to the gun violence problem. Activities at the event included an interfaith service and workshops on writing effective opinion pieces and cartooning current events. Attendees were given an opportunity to contact their legislators, and sample letters were provided. This event was followed up by holding a prayer vigil and lighting luminaries every Sunday night to demonstrate visually how many shooting deaths occurred in the Philadelphia area during the past year.

Materials used at the **STOP Gun Violence** event are available at [www.stopgunviolence.net](http://www.stopgunviolence.net). Anyone interested in holding a similar event is encouraged to contact: [prayer.education.action@gmail.com](mailto:prayer.education.action@gmail.com) Efforts are having some results in Pennsylvania. House Bill 1845 passed both houses **unanimously**, stiffening the penalties for both shooting at police officers and for committing crimes with guns obtained in straw purchases.

In Louisville for many years, the effort to stop gun violence has been spearheaded by the Rev. Louis Coleman. He has pursued gun buy-back programs and has sponsored nightly marches through certain difficult areas where drugs and guns are a problem. Since his death last year no one has come forward to continue this aspect of his work.

Now another idea has come forth from **Hiro Tanamachi**, long-time Louisville resident who studied theology at the Baptist Seminary. For some time he has been struggling with the issue of gun violence and his determination to do something about it. He has finally perfected his document "**A Proposal on Gun Violence.**" The introduction and background information are well presented, carefully documented and very persuasive in leading to his proposal to form a movement with the title **People Against Guns (PAG)** whose sole goal would be to create a safer Louisville, and eventually a safer America by voluntary renouncement of the right to own firearms. For those who are interested in learning more about this effort, please call Hiro at 452-6879.

## GREAT NEWS! U.S. WILL PAY ITS U.N. DEBT

A message from Timothy E. Wirth of the "Better World Campaign" states that the President signed legislation on June 24, 2009 to enact the FY2009 emergency supplemental appropriations bill. It includes sufficient funds to pay off all debt the U.S. owes the United Nations, going back to 1999.

He explains further, "As you may know, when Ted Turner announced his intention to give a billion dollars to create the United Nations Foundation almost 12 years ago, he did so because the United States was about a billion dollars behind in its payments to the UN.

The UN Foundation and its sister organization, the Better World Campaign, worked to build support for the original Congressional agreement, which in exchange for certain UN reforms, led to the U.S. paying over \$800 million in debt to the UN. It was a great accomplishment."

So now with passage of the FY09 supplemental spending bill, **debt to the UN accumulated since 1999 has been paid!**

# Motives for US space ventures as varied as astronauts

Space is, well, nothing.

Actually, Dictionary.com includes 75 definitions of the word, but the purest way I see to define "space" is, as I alluded to above, the absence of matter.

One of Dictionary.com's is: "The unlimited or incalculably great three-dimensional realm or expanse in which all material objects are located and all events occur."

So, space is, well, everything.

Mind blowing, isn't it? Or, to quote another of those definitions (this time "Space" as a verb), "To stupefy or disorient from or as if from a drug. Often used with *out*."

Critics of our spending billions to explore - and militarize - space may contend that *we* have become disoriented as if from a drug. Or, perhaps, a whole cocktail of drugs, including nationalism, greed and paranoia.

Some of us in the peace movement would respond, "hold the countdown. It's not that simple."

Militarizing any realm, space or this planet, is wrong, self-destructive and wasteful of resources needed to lift disadvantaged people to decent lives.

Militarism is why there is intermittent starvation in many parts of the Third World - agriculture is impeded by combat. It is why tens of millions of Americans can't get the health care they need.

And so whereas I concur with the pro-



peace views of Marc Wessels, a theologian and space exploration advocate whose words lead this section inspired by the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 lunar landing, I also agree with Marc that the space program has been multi-dimensional and, overall, good.

It drew its early impetus and funding from Cold War nationalism, but also then as now has relied on — and fostered — a vision of peace and unity.

Look at the wide array of world views of those who have ventured beyond this world. Mercury astronaut Scott Carpenter toured the nation in the 1980s speaking for space-based weapons. Meanwhile, Apollo 14 moon walker Edgar Mitchell talks of one-world peace activism.

He is a supporter of the Campaign for the Establishment of a *United Nations Parliamentary Assembly* - an assembly the online encyclopedia Wikipedia described as a first step toward a "world parliament."

Unfortunately, Mitchell's claims that UFOs have visited Earth, and specifically that the 1947 Roswell incident was such a visit, hurt the credibility of his world government activism.

Another astronaut's fairly progressive stance — this one not tainted by such daffiness — was Mercury pilot Gordon Cooper's pro-environment advocacy, which was inspired by Cooper's seeing Earth in its natural state from orbit.

On the conservative side, there is Harrison "Jack" Schmidt, the Apollo 17 geologist who four years after his three moon walks in 1972 was elected to the U.S. Senate. A staunch *laissez-faire* Republican, he also was a lover of literature who named several craters around the Apollo 17 landing site after favorite characters from novels.

So space exploration's purpose and tone, like the people who have flown on missions, varies. In the early 1960s, overcoming groundless fears of Soviet superiority in the skies fueled strong public support for the program. President Eisenhower, who had the space race dumped in his lap in the second term of a presidency he wanted to be remembered for peace and prosperity, correctly tried to paint the launch of Sputnik in 1957 as nothing to worry about.

He was lanced for his casual attitude

about the Soviet achievement when asked about it at a press conference, but, in fact, intelligence at the time showed that a Moscow-guided satellite posed no threat.

But you know the arms race — one solution after another in search of a problem.

The meaning behind space exploration perhaps began to change in December 1968 when we saw breathtaking, ethereal pictures of the Earth rising over a moon being orbited by Apollo 8 on a dramatic Christmas mission highlighted by the three crew members reading parts of Genesis.

"You saved 1968," one person wrote to the crew, noting that assassinations, riots and the capture of the ship *Pueblo's* naval crew by North Korea would have been all that characterized that year had it not been for the first trip ever away from Earth's environs.

Earth looked delightfully, playfully blue and white marbled, and soon its Apollo pictures were on environmental and peace posters. The fragility of Earth and its finite nature in such a vast universe were understood as never before.

You can't look at pictures of the planet from 240,000 miles away without being overcome by a flash of realization of the need to take care of it much better than we are doing.

The only boundaries are ecological, not these imaginary lines we fight over.

So here's to an Earth program. May the next planet we reach be a peaceful, clean, well-fed one we already call home.

Contact George Morrison at [klm86@att.net](mailto:klm86@att.net).

## CALENDAR – OUT OF TOWN

Aug 8-18 **CONGRESSIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT TO ISRAEL/PALESTINE.** David and Polly Johnson (long-time FOR members in Louisville) will join this educational travel program by which Americans concerned for a just peace in Israel and Palestine can help their Congressional representatives and/or their foreign policy aides become more informed regarding the situation in Israel and Palestine. They will meet with government officials, American Consulate staff, non-governmental professionals, educators, business executives, religious leaders, and people in all walks of life. They will travel in Israel and within the West Bank and Gaza. For more information about the project, visit [www.middleeastawareness.org](http://www.middleeastawareness.org).

Oct 3-10 **KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE WEEK.** International week of protest to stop the militarization of space. Modern warfare, including the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan and attacks on Pakistan, uses Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and GPS-guided bombs. Directed by space satellites, and remotely controlled far from the battlefield, these weapons are responsible for massive civilian casualties. Children today are being trained through video games to be the remote killers of tomorrow. It is time to preserve space for peace and to end war. Sponsored by Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. For more information, visit [www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org).

## Poverty rises

(continued from page 6)

meet the needs of the 36.5 million poor people in this country. The number of those living in poverty in the United States is equal to the combined populations of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho and Alaska.

Most of the people who live in poverty have jobs. Nearly two out of three families with incomes below the poverty line include one or more workers. For children, the poverty rate for whites is 10 percent, 28

percent for Latino children, 27 percent for Native American children.

The keynote speaker for the closing dinner was Bill Quigley of the Center for Constitutional Rights. He was right on target with all that had been discussed during the conference, saying that if Congress can bail out Wall Street and Global Capitalism, "Why not a Living Wage for all workers? It would be cheaper."

At the end of the night we all felt blessed and encouraged to *fight on*.

# Calendar for peacemakers

July 31-Aug 2 (Fri-Sun) **KENTUCKY SOCIAL FORUM.** A thousand people from across the state will join together in Berea to share, reflect, dance, play, network, vision and strategize with the theme that "Another Ky is Possible." Register now! Do a workshop, too! For more info call Angelyn 649-7833 or visit [www.kentuckysocialforum.org](http://www.kentuckysocialforum.org).

Aug 2 (Sun) **SUSTAINABLE LOCAL PUBLIC POLICY.** Every Sunday at 2 PM at the Legal Aid Society, 416 W. Muhammad Ali. Become a part of this grassroots movement bringing principles of sustainability into local public policy. For details, contact: [j@bikecourier.org](mailto:j@bikecourier.org).

Aug 2 (Sun) **VIGIL FOR PEACE** every first Sunday evening, remembering all those suffering from conflicts in the Middle East. Bring a sign. 7-8 PM, Bardstown Road at Douglass Blvd. Sponsored by LPAC (Louisville Peace Action Community). For more information, call Judy Munro-Leighton at 456-6914.

Aug 3 (Mon) **SUSTAINABLE LOCAL PUBLIC POLICY.** Every Monday at 6 PM at the Center for Neighborhoods, 610 South Fourth Street, #701. Become a part of this grassroots movement bringing principles of sustainability into local public policy. For details, contact: [j@bikecourier.org](mailto:j@bikecourier.org).

Aug 3 (Mon) **THE HIROSHIMA BOMBING AFTERMATH: A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT.** Exhibit runs through August 21, 2009. Interfaith Art Gallery, Christ Church Cathedral, 425 South Second Street. Sponsored by Interfaith Paths to Peace. For more information, call (502) 214-7322 or visit <http://paths2peace.org>.

Aug 4 (Tues) **HIROSHIMA SURVIVORS: A LIVE ONLINE CONVERSATION.** In commemoration of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Join us for a live online conversation with A-bomb survivors in Hiroshima. 7 PM, Louisville Free Public Library, Fourth and York Streets. Sponsored by Interfaith Paths to Peace. For more information, call (502) 214-7322 or visit <http://paths2peace.org>.

Aug 5 (Wed) **THE LOUISVILLE SUSTAINABILITY FORUM.** Meets the first Wednesday of each month. The forum's purpose is to hold and promote the intention of sustainability for Louisville; establish and nourish relationships that strengthen community and create change; and create a space for discussion that inspires, motivates and deepens our ability to catalyze social change. Special meeting time: 5:30 PM to 7 PM. Join us to hear guest presenter Nate Pederson of EarthSave Louisville speak of the global benefits of adopting a vegetarian diet. Passionist Earth & Spirit Center, The Barn at 1924 Newburg Road.

Aug 6 (Thurs) **READING OF SELECTIONS FROM JOHN HERSEY'S BOOK, HIROSHIMA.** In commemoration of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. 11 AM to 1 PM. Thomas Merton Square (corner of Fourth and Muhammad Ali). Sponsored by Interfaith Paths to Peace. For more information, call (502) 214-7322 or visit <http://paths2peace.org>.

Aug 8 (Sat) **PEAK OIL.** Every 2nd Saturday, Main Library, 4th & York, Mezzanine, Boardroom. 9:00 AM. Call George Perkins, 425-6645.

Aug 8 (Sat) **PEACE EDUCATION YARD SALE.** Sponsored by Central Presbyterian Church, all proceeds to directly benefit Peace Education Program. Estate items! Furniture! Treasures galore! Indoors, no sweat! 318 W. Kentucky Street. For more information, call 589-6583.

Aug 9 (Sun) **READING OF MERTON'S "ORIGINAL CHILD BOMB."** In commemoration of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Join us for the tolling of the cathedral bell and public reading. Noon, Garden at Christ Church Cathedral, 425 South Second Street. Sponsored by Interfaith Paths to Peace. For more information, call (502) 214-7322 or visit <http://paths2peace.org>.

Aug 9 (Sun) **"AIM HIGHER"** focusing on military counter-recruitment. Every 2nd Sunday at 7:00 PM, 2236 Kaelin Avenue at the FOR office. This group welcomes invitations to speak about conscientious objection, military recruitment, and the possibility for high school students to "opt out" of having their names given to recruiters. Call Chris Harmer, 893-2334. [colonel221@yahoo.com](mailto:colonel221@yahoo.com).

Aug 9 (Sun) **TRADITIONAL JAPANESE LANTERN FLOATING CEREMONY.** In commemoration of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. 8 PM, Cherokee Lake (corner of Lexington Road and Grinstead Drive). Sponsored by Interfaith Paths to Peace. For more information, call (502) 214-7322 or visit <http://paths2peace.org>.

Aug 12 (Wed) **KITLAC (Ky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America and the Caribbean).** Every second Wednesday at the Presbyterian Seminary. 7:30 pm. Call David Horvath, 479-9262, or Pat Geier, 456-6586.

Aug 13 (Thu) **THE FDR/LINCOLN LEGACY CLUB.** Meets the second Thursday of the month, for those interested in learning about fair trade and the American system of economics of Hamilton and Clay. 6:30 PM, 1838 Frankfort Ave. For more information, contact John Miller at [papajohn15@bellsouth.net](mailto:papajohn15@bellsouth.net).

Aug 13 (Thurs) **APPAP (American Palestine Public Affairs Forum).** Every second Thursday. A documentary film exploring the situation in Middle East will be presented. 7:30 PM, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, 1044 Alta Vista Road, Nelson Hall, Room 118. For more information, call Bashar Masri, 773-1836.

Aug 16 (Sun) **LOUISVILLE COMMITTEE FOR ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN STATES.** Every third Sunday. First Unitarian Church, 4th & York Streets, 3:00 PM. Call Beverley Marmion, 451-5658.

Aug 17 (Mon) **DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF FORsooth. Contact George Morrison, editor, at 454-2752, or [klm86@att.net](mailto:klm86@att.net).**

**Note: Please email new or updated calendar listings to [calendar.peace@gmail.com](mailto:calendar.peace@gmail.com), or call Nikki at 451-3402.**

Aug 19 (Wed) **THE LOUISVILLE HOUSING CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN:** Report release and public forum. An estimated ten families face foreclosure in the Louisville area every day, and nearly 9% of all children in the Jefferson County Public School system were homeless at some time during the last school year. The Metropolitan Housing Coalition is releasing an in-depth look at how our children are being affected by the growing crisis in affordable housing. 12 PM, Presbyterian Community Center, 731 South Hancock Street. For more information, call 584-6858 or visit [www.metropolitanhousing.org](http://www.metropolitanhousing.org).

Aug 20-30 (Thurs-Sun) **KENTUCKY STATE FAIR.** Volunteers are needed to work the Fairness Campaign Booth. If you can help, please reply by calling 893-0788 or go to [www.fairness.org](http://www.fairness.org).

Aug 20 (Thurs) **KENTUCKY SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE.** Every third Thursday, 5:30 PM. Main Library, 4th & York Streets, Mezzanine Board Room. Call Kay Tillow, 636-1551.

Aug 24 (Mon) **F.O.R. STEERING COMMITTEE.** Presbyterian Seminary, 1044 Alta Vista Road. Meets every fourth Monday. Visitors encouraged. Call Dennis Bricking, 298-0590, or Phil Schervish, 558-7175.

Aug 27 (Thurs) **FORsooth LABELING** at Beverley Marmion's, 6:30 pm. We need you for one hour! Please stop by and socialize while your fingers do the work. Bouquets to those who do this important work every month! Call 451-5658.

Aug 30 (Sun) **PEACECASTERS FALL SESSIONS.** Empowering youth to explore messages of peace and cooperation through digital media. Sessions will meet every other Sunday from 1:30 to 4:30 PM. There is no cost, but space is strictly limited so register early! Open to ages 11-16. For more information or to register, contact Mark Steiner at the Center for Interfaith Relations at 583-3100, ext. 24 or visit [www.interfaithrelations.org](http://www.interfaithrelations.org).

Sept 8 (Tues) **CINDY SHEEHAN: LECTURE AND BOOK SIGNING.** Author, speaker and peace activist Cindy Sheehan will present a public lecture at the Chao Auditorium, University of Louisville, Ekstrom Library. 6:30-8PM. Cindy will be making a number of additional appearances throughout the Louisville area this week including a press conference and media interviews. Watch the calendar at [www.louisvillepeace.org](http://www.louisvillepeace.org) for details or call Harold Trainer (502) 387-9490 or Nancy Jakubiak (502) 939-3698 for more information.

Sept 13 (Sun) **LOUISVILLE AIDS WALK.** A 5K run/walk to raise awareness and funds for local HIV/AIDS Service Organizations. Thanks to the generosity of corporate sponsors and the hard work of volunteers, 100% of the proceeds benefit local AIDS organizations. For more information or to register, visit [www.louisvilleaidswalk.org](http://www.louisvilleaidswalk.org).

Oct 1 (Thurs) **ACLU 2009 BILL OF RIGHTS DINNER.** Mark your calendar and save the date! To be held at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Louisville. Keynote speaker will be Morris Dees, co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center. For more information, visit [www.aclu-ky.org](http://www.aclu-ky.org) or call (502) 581-1181.

Oct 2-4 (Fri-Sun) **ST. JAMES COURT ART SHOW.** Bringing more than 700 artists from around the country. 10 AM to 6 PM on Friday and Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM on Sunday at St. James Court in Old Louisville. For more information, visit [www.stjamescourttartshow.com](http://www.stjamescourttartshow.com).

Oct 8 (Thurs) **EMPTY BOWLS SOUP SUPPER AND AUCTION.** To benefit the Individual and Family Assistance Program of Highlands Community Ministries. 5 PM, Frazier Hall, Bellarmine University. For more information, contact Linda Bowles at (502) 451-7535 or [lcbowles@bluegrass.net](mailto:lcbowles@bluegrass.net).

Oct 9-10 (Fri-Sat) **BELKNAP FALL FESTIVAL.** Featuring juried arts & crafts, food, music, family fun, educational exhibits, and the Deer Park Environmental Village. Douglass Loop at Dundee, Harvard, Yale and Wibben. From 6-10 PM on Friday and 10 AM to 7 PM Saturday. For more information, contact Linda Bowles at (502) 451-7535 or [lcbowles@bluegrass.net](mailto:lcbowles@bluegrass.net).

## Regular Meeting Times for Area Organizations

ADDICTION RECOVERY ADVOCATES OF KENTUCKIANA – 2nd Thursday (585-3375)

AIDS INTERFAITH MINISTRIES (AIM) OF KENTUCKIANA, INC. – 1st Tuesday (574-6085 or 574-6086)

AMERICA 2000 DEMOCRATIC CLUB – 4th Tuesday (459-0616)

AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE – 3rd Thursday, every other month at noon (608-7517)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – 1st Saturday (637-8951)

APPAP (American Palestine Public Affairs Forum) – 2nd Thursday (895-8155)

BREAD FOR THE WORLD – Last Monday (239-4317)

CAPA (Citizens Against Police Abuse) – 2nd Thursday (778-8130)

CART (Coalition for the Advancement of Regional Transportation) – 3rd Wednesday, 1578 Bardstown Road (895-5172)

CLOUT [Citizens of Louisville Organized and Working Together] – (583-1267)

COMMITTEE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST – 2nd Monday (456-6586)

COMMON CAUSE – 1st Tuesday, every other month (454-7797)

COMMUNIST PARTY USA – First Sunday at 5:00 PM (384-3875)

COMMUNITY FARM ALLIANCE OF JEFFERSON COUNTY – 2nd Tuesday (775-4041)

CONVERSATION CAFE – Wednesday evenings (560-0085)

COUNTER RECRUITMENT, "Aim Higher" – Second Sunday (893-2334)

EARTH SAVE LOUISVILLE – 2nd Saturday (299-9520) [www.LouisvilleEarthSave.org](http://www.LouisvilleEarthSave.org)

FAIRNESS CAMPAIGN – Quarterly community dialogues and volunteer opportunities (893-0788)

FDR/Lincoln Legacy Club – 1st Thursday, [papajohn15@bellsouth.net](mailto:papajohn15@bellsouth.net)

FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION – 4th Monday (558-7175 or 895-8516)

FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF LOUISVILLE – 2nd Tuesday (893-8436)

GREATER LOUISVILLE SIERRA CLUB – 3rd Tuesday (897-3335)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays (637-6265)

INTERFAITH PATHS TO PEACE – 1st Tuesday (214-7322)

IRFI (Islamic Research Foundation International, Inc.) – Sundays at 6:00 PM (502-423-1988)

JOBS WITH JUSTICE KENTUCKY (582-5454)

JURISDICTIONARY CLUB OF LOUISVILLE – Know the law and how to use it (500-8161)

JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER – 3rd Saturday (562-6737)

KFTC [KENTUCKIANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH] – 2nd Monday (589-3188)

KY ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST & POLITICAL REPRESSION – 3rd Monday (778-8130)

KY COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY – Last Tuesday (541-9998)

KITLAC (KY INTERFAITH TASKFORCE ON LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN) – 2nd Wednesday (479-9262)

KY RAINBOW/PUSH COALITION – (245-2272)

LOUISVILLE COMMITTEE FOR ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN STATES – 3rd Sunday (451-5658)

LOUISVILLE PEAK OIL GROUP – 2nd Saturday (425-6645)

LPAC (LOUISVILLE PEACE ACTION COMMUNITY) – (558-9124)

LOUISVILLE WOMEN CHURCH – Meditation 1st & 3rd Sundays (473-8435)

LOUISVILLE YOUTH GROUP – Friday nights (893-0788), [www.louisvilleyouthgroup.org](http://www.louisvilleyouthgroup.org)

METRO SWEEP FOR ACCESS – 3rd Tuesday (895-0866 or 899-9261)

METROPOLITAN HOUSING COALITION – 4th Wednesday (584-6858)

MIGHTY KINDNESS – [mightykindness@gmail.com](mailto:mightykindness@gmail.com) (235-0711)

MUHAMMAD ALI INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, at UL (852-6372)

NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) – 3rd Monday (776-7608)

NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) – 2nd Monday (245-5287)

PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS (P-FLAG) – 3rd Sunday (329-0229)

PEACE & COMPASSION BUDDHA CIRCLE/CML – (451-2193, [brozier@bellsouth.net](mailto:brozier@bellsouth.net))

RCRC [Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice] – (866-606-0988)

RESULTS (a hunger lobby) – 2nd Saturday (451-4907)

911 TRUTH LOUISVILLE (502-609-6020)

US DEPARTMENT OF PEACE CAMPAIGN OF KY – 3rd Sunday (472-1772)

YOUNG DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS – every Friday at 2:30 PM (712-2338)

*Note: If your group would like to be added to this list or if information needs to be updated, please let us know by calling 458-8056.*