



PASI NEWS

Newsletter of Peace Action of Staten Island, www.peacesi.org 718-989-2881

Calendar:

- THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 6:30-9 PM, NEXT GENERATION ACTIVISM. Panel Discussion. Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 312 Fillmore St. (at Clinton Ave.)
- PASI will be tabling at BACK TO THE BEACH July 11-12. Midland Beach. Volunteers needed! Call 718-989-2881 or email pasi.contact@gmail.com.
- SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 11 AM, Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration: 70 years after the Bomb. Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 312 Fillmore St. (at Clinton Ave.)
- SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24. SAVE THE DATE for PASI's MAKE FOOD NOT WAR awards dinner.

Inside:

Contact Gillibrand	2
Contact Donovan	2
Mobarakai on Ebola	3
Selma	4
Underground RR	5
Summer Membership Drive	6



Next Generation Activism: A Panel Discussion Plus: Shutting Down Indian Point Nuclear Plant

Peace Action of Staten Island Meeting

Thursday, June 11, 6:30 pm Unitarian Fellowship Hall
312 Fillmore Street (at Clinton Ave), Staten Island

The toolkit of organizing has been turned on its head in the last few years. Politics and lobbying has been infused with larger and larger sums of big corporate financing. Our problems of income equality, immigration reform, and endless wars have dug in deep. On Election Day, we can measure the ranks of the disaffected and unengaged. Meanwhile, we see the streets filled with new voices determined to make change in the Black Lives Matter movement.

What does this all mean for the next generation of activism? How will organizations like Peace Action and other social justice organizations face the challenges ahead?

Come hear a panel of young activists discuss the challenges that face them on Thursday, June 11th at 6:30 pm at the next meeting of Peace Action of Staten Island, to be held at the Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 312 Fillmore Street, on Staten Island.

Panelists:

Dulce Chuva, Resource Coordinator, El Centro del Inmigrante

Nafan Doole, Staten Island Immigrants Council, Communities United for Respect & Trust, EyeOpeners Youth Against Violence

Ilya Geller, Peace Action of Staten Island, Sandy recovery volunteer, community activist

Rev. Karen Jackson, Minister for Social Justice at Project Hospitality

Ghanim Khalil, Iraq Veterans Against the War

Katie Robbins, Executive Director of the NY Metro Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Plan

Krystal Sanchez, Staten Islanders Against Racism and Police Brutality (SIARPB)

Dave Tiribi, member, Young Democrats of Richmond County

Moderator: **Michael Santangelo**, Peace Action of Staten Island

In addition, **Carl Lundgren, Chair of Update on Shutting Down Indian Point**, will give an update on the movement to close the Indian Point Nuclear Power Facility. In the NYC Council, there is a resolution (0694-2015) calling on the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission not to relicense Indian Point 2 and Indian Point 3, so that those reactors will cease operations. It also calls on New York State to work with affected workers, local officials, and environmental groups to develop and implement a socially, economically, and environmentally just transition plan to address the needs of displaced employees and affected local communities.

This program is open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

Doors open at 6:15 pm. The program will start promptly at 6:45 pm.

Dear Senator Gillibrand....Support Diplomacy, NOT War, with Iran!



On or near June 30th, a deal between the P5+1 countries (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, plus Germany) and Iran is expected that will assure the world that Iran will not develop nuclear weapons and help ease tensions in the Middle East. That is, if the U.S. Senate does not de-rail the agreement. **Please contact Senator Gillibrand's office via letter or by phone 202-224-4451 to ask her to support diplomacy with Iran.** A personal letter from a constituent is the best way to contact her. But a call is excellent too. Below is a sample letter you could use as the basis of your own letter or for what you say in your call to her office. *(Photo: Gillibrand's official House photo)*

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
478 Russell, Washington, DC 20510
Tel. (202) 224-4451 / Fax (202) 228-0282

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

I am writing to urge you to make a public statement in support of a final Iran nuclear deal. As one of your constituents and a member of Peace Action, I am in support of an Iran deal because failing to secure an agreement could lead to war. I urge you to vote for approval of the Iran deal and block any vote of disapproval. The U.S. diplomatic team has achieved great progress in creating a robust framework for a final agreement that will cut the number of Iran's centrifuges by two-thirds, reduce the amount of low enriched uranium from 10,000 kg to 300 kg, and give IAEA inspectors access to nuclear facilities and the entire supply chain. The Senate vote on the Iran nuclear deal will be an historic vote. A decade from now, we will be living with the legacy of that vote, just as today we are living with the terrible consequences of Senators' votes on the Iraq War Resolution on October 11, 2002 in support of war. The American people deserve the security that an Iran deal would provide. The alternatives are tragic and unacceptable.

Please let me know your views on this matter at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
[Your name and address]

Welcome our new Congressman to Capitol Hill:

Tell Him: Vote NO on Fast Track for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)!



The TPP is a massive trade deal that has been negotiated in secret by the U.S. and 11 other countries. It makes it easier to offshore manufacturing and service industry jobs. TPP is specifically designed to guarantee and protect future profits for multinational corporations. It lets corporations sue a country over any law, like raising the minimum wage or protecting the public health, if it affects profits. TPP also would make "Buy America" laws illegal.

New York's 11th Congressional District finally has representation again, and we need to let Congressman Daniel Donovan know where we stand on the Trans-Pacific Partnership. **The number to call is (202) 225-3371.** When a staff member answers, deliver a message that's something like this: **"I'm a constituent and I've had enough of bad trade deals negotiated in secret like the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Congress needs to read the deal and not to vote to Fast Track it before even knowing what's in it. I urge you to vote no on Fast Track authority for the TPP."** *(Photo: Staten Island Advance/Hilton Flores)*

Dr. Neville Mobarakai on Ebola



Thanks to Peace Action member Georgiana Johnson, Peace Action of Staten Island was able to bring the well-known infectious disease specialist Dr. Neville Mobarakai of Staten Island University Hospital to speak to at our meeting on Saturday, May 9th. The presence of a large ex-pat West African community in Staten Island (for example, an estimated 10,000 Liberians live here) connects our community to the suffering caused by the huge Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia over the last year. Former President of the Staten Island Liberian Community Association (SILCA), Oretha Bestman-Yates, also attended the meeting and spoke about her trip to Liberia in March to distribute aid to survivors.

As early as 1967, scientists discovered the Marburg virus, which is similar to Ebola, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which appeared in humans due to the handling of monkey tissue. Outbreaks of Ebola occurred also, but they were limited in scope, with 50 to 300 cases and a 50% survival rate. No outbreaks occurred in West Africa until December 2013 when a small child in Guinea got sick and infected the rest of his family. At first, doctors thought the disease was caused by the Lassa virus, which is fairly common in West African and similar to Ebola, but not as deadly. Between March and June 2014, Ebola cases increased from 90 to 200 or more and spread to Sierra Leone and then to Liberia, often as the result of traditional burial practices. Thereafter, cases doubled every 4 to 5 weeks and the seriousness of the epidemic became apparent. In July 2014, a case appeared in Nigeria, the result of one sick man traveling in an airplane which caused 20 infections, resulting in 8 deaths. There were also sporadic cases in Mali and Senegal. By July and August, the World Health Organization realized they were up against an outbreak that was unprecedented in scale.

On September 20, 2014, Thomas Eric Duncan landed at Dulles/Fort Worth International Airport in Dallas after visiting Liberia where he had contracted Ebola. Mr. Duncan eventually died of Ebola on October 8, but his case set in motion a near hysteria in the United States. The U.S. ended up spending \$1.4B to assist in stopping the epidemic in West Africa.

The reality is that Ebola is not that easy to catch and its spread can be contained. In order to catch Ebola, you need to be in close human contact. Ebola can also be caught by eating bush meat from monkeys or other primates that been infected by fruit bat hosts. Once it is contracted, it is deadly. Of the 26,000 reported cases world-wide, there have been 12,000 to 13,000 reported deaths. As of May 9th, Liberia has had no new cases. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, most districts are Ebola free. (The week of May 24th, there were 12 confirmed cases.)

An Ebola vaccine has been developed that takes the “brain” of the Ebola virus and places it in the “body” of another virus. So far the results of clinical trials amongst health care workers taking this vaccine look good.

Dr. Mobarakai said the risk of infectious disease has gone up exponentially because of global travel. The world’s health care systems are absolutely unequipped to deal with a world-wide epidemic. They do a fairly good job of surveillance but have a long way to go in coordinating a response. Our most urgent world health needs continue to be to combating world hunger and simple diseases.

Ms. Bestman of SILCA passed around photos of the Ebola survivors she met on her trip to Liberia in March. With the loss of their families and their continued health issues, the Ebola crisis is not over for the survivors. Indeed, it will not be over for West Africa until the health care systems recover and build for the future.

(Photo: Dr. Neville Mobarakai. PASI News Photo)

Staten Island Selma March: Remarks by Rev. Dr. George McClain on March 21, 2015



50 years ago I had just graduated from theological seminary. I was working in the South to support students reaching across the historic walls of racial separation.

After Bloody Sunday, when marchers like now Congressman John Lewis were mercilessly beaten by law enforcement while crossing the Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, Dr. Martin Luther King gave out a call to clergy of all faiths to come and help with a second March. In the county where Selma is located, 1% of the eligible black voters were registered (as opposed to 60% of the white eligible voters). In the next county over there hadn't been a black voter in the 20th century. I was in a position to respond and took off for Selma. The second march, the Ministers March, failed, but a determined King asked us to stay on, if we could, and that began 18 days in Selma and Montgomery, days which profoundly shaped my life to this day.

Two weeks ago I was blessed to be in Alabama for a week, including the 50th anniversary bridge crossing. I'd like to share several special experiences from that week.

During the Selma voting rights campaign alone, four people lost their lives. Among them: Jimmy Lee Jackson, a local black youth of my age, 26, was shot to death while protecting his mother, who was being beaten by deputized thugs for peacefully marching for the right to vote. In Selma, two weeks ago, I met his sister. That really brings it home. Rev. Jim Reeb, a clergyman from Boston, who answered the same call from Dr. King that I did, was clubbed to death by four Klansmen. Two weeks ago, I chatted with his daughter, only three when her dad was murdered. She talked about what it was like to grow up not able to remember her dad. When I got back home there came a moment when all I could do was visualize what it must have been like for these martyrs and their families. I broke into tears I had repressed for 50 years and they all came out as I cried uncontrollably for an hour. Finally, I was beginning to comprehend the enormous cost at which the right to vote was bought.

A second experience the other week was in a black Selma church where an anniversary mass meeting was held, just like those 50 years ago. Back then, we would gather in an incredibly packed church. Once the only place I could find to sit was on the window sill of a stained glass window. There would be training in how to respond when attacked (fall down, pull up your legs into a fetal position, and cup your hands over your head). There would be soul stirring singing of freedom songs and eloquent preaching. At that mass meeting two weeks ago we heard a thrilling message from another Dr. King, Dr. Denise King, his daughter. Then we were inspired by Dr. Jeremiah Wright, President Obama's pastor in Chicago. Finally, Dr. William Barber challenged us to the core. He's the founder of Moral Mondays in North Carolina, a movement of pushback and non-violent resistance to state-level regression and voter suppression, that is as bad in North Carolina as anywhere in the country. Moral Mondays is a movement that is now gaining steam from state to state. The common theme of these messages was hope and optimism.

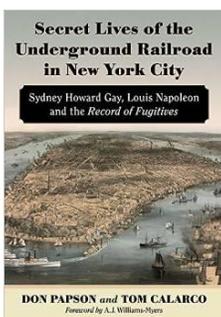
They would all admit in recent decades we've been pushed backward. Mass incarceration is a new form of slavery. School districts have been re-segregated. Recessions further widen the wealth gap between white and black and between the 1% and the rest of us. Voter suppression is a cancer on the loose. No American president in memory has been so vilified, so lied about, so abused, than our first president of color.

But now, Dr. Barber declares, and I agree, there is a new Reconstruction underway, a new burst of energy to create the beloved community which Dr. King held before us. People are fighting back. People who believe in justice are not just agonizing, they're organizing in path breaking ways. The co-founder of "Black Lives Matter," Opal Tometi, was there in person as Exhibit A. Camouflaged racism and classism are being brought to light – including right here and now – by your very presence. And the exposure of evil is always the seedbed of redemptive change.

This brings me to the third experience, one I had right on that Selma bridge we were crossing two weeks ago. Halfway across I was suddenly startled to see a woman carrying her handmade poster with the words in huge letters: “God – Can’t – Breathe.” God can’t breathe, echoing the words our brother Eric Garner uttered a few blocks from here as he was held in that chokehold everyone knows. I had no chance to ask that woman what that meant to her, but I truly believe that when humans suffer, some part of God’s tender heart suffers, too. Which is to say this struggle for justice is not simply of our making, or simply for us. It is God’s struggle. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God heard their cries and sent Moses to lead them to freedom, as remembered profoundly in Jewish Seders. In the events of Holy Week for us Christians, we remember how Jesus threw the extortioners out of the Temple, suffered and died for challenging the tyranny of Rome, but the grave could not hold him and his presence empowers us to this day to seek justice and mercy. To me “God Can’t Breathe” means God is with Eric Garner, God is with all of us who believe something went terribly wrong on that Tompkinsville sidewalk – and, for God’s sake, literally, many things are going wrong on many sidewalks and city streets, in legislatures, schools, and religious institutions, in Wall Street offices and prisons, on web sites and facebook postings and TV channels – you name it – but God is with us as we fight to make them right. So let’s continue the march from Selma to all the Montgomeries and Madisons and Fergusons and Brownsville to the Rykers Islands and Staten Islands.

It troubles me that many have made of Dr. King and Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement an outdated, unrealistic, tame, romanticized, comfortable course of events, devoid of courage, cunning strategy, and incredible discipline – and irrelevant for today. Nothing could be further from the truth. These women and men were non-violent fighters who confronted naked evil eye-to-eye with the powerful moral weapons of non-violent resistance. Daily they risked their lives. Let us honor them by being as determined as they were, doing the demanding, energy-sapping, nitty-gritty, disciplined, sacrificial, single-minded, often thankless work of justice. Let us take the tools we have, our votes, our voices, our feet, our perseverance, our prayers, our faith, hope and love to transform the unjust power structures. Let us redirect the history of our nation, our world, our planet in the image of love and justice. And yes, even transform the unjust power structures of the Borough of Staten Island. If the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, built to honor a Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, can be transformed into a worldwide symbol of the struggle for human rights, then even Tompkinsville Park, Staten Island, can become a symbol of a new criminal justice system. We’re on our way. As Martin Luther King loved to say, “the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends at the elbow of justice.” Let’s keep marching!

(Photo: PASI News photo of r Marge Garvin and Rev. George McClain, both veterans of the 1965 Selma March conferring.)



Secret Lives of the Underground Railroad in New York

On Friday evening, May 22, 2015, the Sandy Ground Historical Society presented a program at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island introducing a new book, *Secret Lives of the Underground Railroad in New York City: Sydney Howard Gay, Louis Napoleon and the Record of Fugitives*, by Don Papson and Tom Calarco. The authors follow the trail of human connections found in a record kept by one-time Staten Islander Sydney Howard Gay of men, women and children who sought their freedom from slavery and made their way to New York City. Gay was the resident New York City editor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard and an active member of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Many individuals were part of the network called the Underground Railroad, including Louis Napoleon, a freedman who found a home in Staten Island’s Sandy Ground after the Civil War. In the lecture, Mr. Papson described Sydney Howard Gay’s connection to Staten Island abolitionists Rev. James Parkman (Unitarian minister to the Church of the Redeemer, now called the Unitarian Church of Staten Island), Francis George Shaw, and George William Curtis. Sylvia Moody D’Alessandro invited everyone to **visit the Sandy Ground Historical Society Museum 1538 Woodrow Road, Woodrow; 718-317-5796, Tuesday-Sunday, 1-4 p.m., to learn more. Admission is free.**

Peace Action of Staten Island

P.O. Box 201
St. George Station
Staten Island, NY 10301
PHONE: (718) 989-2881

www.peacesi.org
pasi.contact@gmail.com

PASI BOARD 2015-16

Chair – Eileen Bardel
Co-Chair – Richard Greve
Secretary – Pat Berg
Treasurer – Delfina Vannucci
At-Large: Janice Bocchicchio,
Lloyd Berg, Dennis Dell'Angelo,
Ilya Jalal, David Jones, Sally
Jones, John Lawrence, David
Poleshuck, Michael Santangelo

Membership Coordinator:
Sylvia Zaage

Thank You for Joining or Renewing Your PASI Membership.

If you aren't a member yet or still need to renew, it's easy.

Membership form

We have a sliding scale membership. No member turned away.
Donations are tax-deductible.

Name _____
Street _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Contribution

___ \$26 (regular) ___ \$40 (family)
___ \$10 (senior, student, fixed)
___ Other _____

I can help with

___ Actions
___ Lobbying
___ Membership
___ Speakers Bureau
___ Fundraising
___ Communication/Publicity

*Make check out to PASI and
mail to address at left.*

***Pssst... You can save a stamp
by joining online at***

www.peacesi.org

Peace Action of Staten Island
P.O. Box 201
St. George Station
Staten Island, NY 10301

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Staten Island NY
Permit # 218

Current Addressee Or

Next Generation Activism:

A Panel Discussion

Plus:

**Shutting Down Indian
Point Nuclear Plant**

Meeting

Thursday, June 11,
6:30 pm

Unitarian Fellowship Hall
312 Fillmore Street (at
Clinton Ave), Staten Island

PASI's SUMMER 2015 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE IS HERE!



*Every summer, we ask our members to RENEW their
membership in Peace Action of Staten Island invite all of
our friends to JOIN.*

Why join Peace Action? Peace Action of Staten Island is your peace and justice group on Staten Island that will help you raise your voice to call for peaceful resolution to conflict at the local, state, national, and international level.

Help create a culture of peace and justice on Staten Island for now and the future! Fill out the enclosed membership form & return it today.