



HOPE poster by ??????????

April 2017
Volume 30 Number 4

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Must make art

by Carmine Leighton cartoonist, illustrator, creator, resistor

In my early twenties, I moved around a lot. I carried my favorite pieces of art around with me; that helped to familiarize whatever new space I inhabited. I often hung art on the walls before I unpacked anything else. Art has provided me security in transitions, and comfort in new and strange places. Since the election in January, we are transitioning into a new and strange place together as Americans. Though many have felt the effects of marginalization before Trump became president, every person in this country embarks on new territory in our current political climate. No matter the spectrum of beliefs regarding the legitimacy and appropriateness of the president as a leader for this country, a change and an awakening has come.

Some of the more radical responses to the political changes have come through creative expression. In January, I attended the Women's March in Augusta. I was most excited by the imagery. Thousands of people held signs with clever, thoughtful, and vulnerable statements and images on them. Some people designed clothing with statements on them, others wore no clothing at all as a statement. Everyone used their body and their creativity that day as a cry, a demand, and a resolution. The sheer mass of individuals attending marches all over the world exemplified our collective resistance to the status quo, and resistance to the regression of our country. That day, art allowed us to illuminate what is most precious and intimate, and expose some insecurities and ugly truths. This is a particularly poignant, inspiring, and painful time for artists. When there is change in the world, artists absorb, channel, and express it. Artists are touched by the world in deep ways, and turn to our canvasses or media, baring and pouring our pain, grief, and joy onto the page, canvas, potter's wheel, the stage. We make art because we must; one of my artist friends says "it keeps me sane."

"Art" and "artist" can be lofty and nebulous terms that suggest quiet galleries and museums. The terms suggest studios with tall easels, people all painting a nude model while quietly judging their own charcoal drawing against someone else's. Art and artist are abstract concepts synonymous with special lighting, roped off and rigged with alarms, high society, inaccessible. Many people are hesitant to try "art," because that word is intimidating. In my mind, everyone possesses potential to create something that reflects their perspective of the world. Often people will say things such as, "oh I did a little watercolor back in high school" or "I used to take photographs years ago." When I ask them why they don't do it now, they blush and say "oh, I couldn't, I'm no good."

Art and creation do not require that you are good. In fact, making art actually requires you to be quite bad. Creation is messy, unrefined, emerging from the deepest and most unconscious parts of yourself. Often we deny ourselves these moments. We are overwhelmed by our duties, succumbing to the illusion that art is just a hobby, and one reserved for those who are skilled. Adults are not afforded time to engage in creativity. Children, however, have a refreshing connection to creativity. They draw, play, dance, and sing without concern for the value of its existence. It simply feels good to create, expel energy, and engage in the world in a tactile way.

This year, I am helping to organize the HOPE festival in conjunction with the Peace and Justice Center. I am honored to co-organize the interactive art component of the festival with my fellow artist, Andrea Simoneau. The HOPE festival will be a space to engage with a community of resistance-minded folks, and a place to engage in some creative acts of revolution. We plan to host a variety of art activities. I encourage you to attend, participate, and abandon that fear and anxiety of being good enough to create something. Your interpretation of the world is valuable, and it is needed right now. In our nation of dwindling support for art programs in schools, we are telling the next generation, and ourselves, that art and self-expression are not valuable enough to be a part of our education and growth. We need people to create as a way of resisting the regime. Make art in your homes and with your kids, without concern for its extrinsic value in the world. It is important because it just is. Get messy, expose your ugly truths, and express what is most precious to you. See you at the festival!

Good news for the Pentagon: Bad news for human needs

by Larry Danzinger

That’s the sorry prediction if the Trump regime’s budget proposal for 2017-2018 is passed by Congress. With a proposed increase in military spending of about \$54 billion, coupled with a corresponding reduction in spending in other parts of the federal budget, almost everyone except for military contractors will suffer. Cuts will come for public education, the EPA, foreign aid, science, and poverty programs. Is this what the public wants? Certainly not. About five years ago, an extensive series of “penny polls” were conducted throughout the state with 3,500 Mainers participating. People were give ten pennies, representing their federal income taxes, and asked to put them in jars representing different parts of the federal budget.

While about half of the federal budget (some figures are as high as sixty percent) from individual income taxes goes to the Pentagon, penny poll participants allocated between 5-6% of their pennies for defense and another 12% for veterans’ benefits. These numbers are far, far lower than what our “representatives” actually spend. Instead, most Mainers wanted their tax monies to go for education (20%), health care (18%), environment (10%), and other human needs. Another Penny Poll, along with a handout regarding “where your tax money really goes,” is planned at the University of Maine campus in Orono on the tax filing day, April 18.

Meanwhile, everyone in this country needs to know that how our taxes are actually allocated is not where we want them to go. Because of actions already set in motion by the Trump regime, some people of conscience have decided to refuse to pay part or all of their income tax money in 2017. FMI about tax refusal and the April 18 Penny Poll, contact Larry Dansinger, larryd@myfairpoint.net (207) 262-3706.



Voter Identification Bills introduced in Maine legislature

by Amy Hughes

The “voter ID bill” LD 121 was introduced in the Maine Legislature in late January and was referred to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. The bill would require citizens turning up to vote to provide government issued photo ID or ID from a Maine college. On March 3rd it received 6 votes for and 6 votes against, split in committee along partisan lines despite vigorous opposition by those testifying before the vote. Next comes debate in the House and Senate.

Supporters of the bill claim it is meant to ensure the integrity of Maine’s elections. However, the type of fraud it is meant to catch, voter impersonation, has never been a problem. According to testimony from the Department of the Secretary of State, there are no documented cases of voter impersonation in Maine. Opponents of the bill argue that it would complicate the process for disenfranchised voters such as the elderly, disabled, and homeless. For transgender people, obtaining a voter ID that reflects their gender identity can be a long, complicated process and is denied to many. Considering there is no language in this bill that spells out how discrepancies in identification will be handled, it leaves the door open for unfair discrimination based on appearance. This policy comes with high risks. A 2014 Government Accountability Office study found that voter participation fell between 2% and 3% in states implementing voter ID laws between the 2008 and 2012 elections. This could result in 20,000 fewer Mainers voting in our next presidential election... a tragic result of a law to address a virtually nonexistent problem.



Carbon fee & dividends: a climate change solution gaining support

With laser-like intensity the Bangor-area chapter of Citizens’ Climate Lobby has focused on a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend as a practical, feasible tool to turn the tide on climate change. Nationally, CCL seeks to empower ordinary people to lobby Congress for passage of a bill that could appeal to both sides of the aisle. This non-regulatory, market-driven approach has made news with the announcement by prominent conservatives with the Climate Leadership Council of a proposal similar in many ways to CCL’s.

CF&D would tax carbon at its source, and the tax would gradually increase. As a result, petroleum prices would rise and renewable energy would become more competitive, facilitating an accelerated transition from fossil fuels to green fuels. The carbon fees collected would be returned to every household as dividends. Economists project that lower-income families would come out ahead (i.e., the amount they receive in dividends would exceed the increase they paid out for fuel) since they have a smaller carbon footprint than the wealthy. The Bangor chapter of CCL meets every third Saturday from 9-10:30 a.m. at Husson University, next to Gracie Theater in Room 109, led by Connie Potvin and Lyndy Rohman. We have written letters to our representatives and met with their staff. Now we are trying to secure CF&D endorsements from local organizations and businesses. FMI: contact Christina Diebold at cpdiebold@gmail.com, 941-1670.

Notices

Divest the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL)

Groups across the state who have been standing in solidarity with First Nations in opposition to the DAPL and the threat to indigenous rights are working to coordinate actions on a statewide level by calling on individuals and organizations to pull their money from banks that continue to fund DAPL, and to plan other actions. If you would like to participate, please contact the P&J Center to be put in touch with the organizers.

Maine-Wabanaki REACH Ally Workshops

The REACH Ally Workshops grew out of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendation to build alliances between native and non-native peoples. Workshops include a brief history of U.S. government relationships with Native people, awareness of white privilege, and ally responsibilities. To register or see a list of shorter programs and workshops, go to the events page at mainewabanakireach.org. Upcoming workshops include: Saturday April 1 in Trescott; Saturday April 29 in Brewer (co-sponsored by the P&J Center); and Saturday May 6 in Auburn. All workshops run from 9:30 - 4. FMI: Barbara@mainewabanakireach.org or call Barbara Kates at 951-4874.

No "Shock and Awe" Budget!

The Trump budget proposes to increase the bloated military budget while gutting 18 programs that serve human needs. Join with members of the P&J Center Education Committee on Tuesdays from 11 - 12 in the coming weeks as we educate ourselves about the impact of cuts to low income housing, heating assistance, environmental protection and more. We invite you to help us plan to protest these skewed priorities as we prepare to pay our taxes and members of congress debate how to spend them.

Earth Day Festival in Pickering Square, downtown Bangor, April 22 from 12 - 2 p.m.

Planned and coordinated by Power In Community Alliances (PICA), Transportation for All, Faith Linking in Action, and Food and Medicine, this event is designed to be a fun festival bringing together families from all different neighborhoods in Bangor and beyond. Located at the bus hub, it will highlight the Community Connector Bus as a mode of transit vital to making our city greener, less congested, and more accessible. The Earth Day Festival will include seed-planting, story-reading, chalk-art, face-painting, zumba-dancing and bubble-blowing along with food donated by Moe's Original BBQ, Bagel Central, and Darling's Ice Cream. Organizations offering activities include: University of Maine Museum of Art, Penobscot Theatre Company, and Boys and Girls Club. If you would like to offer an activity or volunteer to help, call Katherine at 945-5827. Come and bring children, grandchildren, and friends.

PEACE & JUSTICE CENTER *Newsletter*

is published 10 times a year by the **Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine**. The deadline for articles and calendar items is the 15th of the preceding month.

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Printing: Print Bangor, www.printbangor.com

Distribution: Kevin Holmes

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Mission Statement

...to support as well as link individuals and groups concerned with peace, social justice, and environmental issues. Center services promote cooperation, expand awareness, explore connections, and encourage community involvement in working toward a peaceful and just society. The Center also develops programs in response to those community concerns not being adequately addressed by existing social change organizations.

To support the work of the P&J Center of Eastern Maine, my check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

The Center is a non-profit membership organization registered in the state of Maine, but donations are not tax-exempt. To make a tax-exempt donation, make your check payable to ROSC and write "P&J" in the memo line. You can make a donation online at www.peacectr.org. Donations made online are automatically paid through ROSC and are tax deductible.

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Newsletter
April 2017



Peace & Justice Center Film Series - Fridays at 6:30 p.m.

Friday, April 21: DOWN TO EARTH CLIMATE JUSTICE STORIES

[www.downtoearthstories.org/]

In this uplifting, thought-provoking film, 13 Maine people of diverse ages, cultures, and gender identities passionately share their experiences and wisdom addressing climate injustices. Some challenge institutions and their own communities to say “no” to fossil fuels expansion. Some embrace their ancestors’ and present-day struggles for land and water sovereignty. Some are creating a model for fossil-fuel free living. Where do they find courage, hope and support to continue to work on the global climate change crisis? What can we learn from them and incorporate into our own lives?

Community Calendar

March 2017

March 31: Annual Islamic Awareness Week Keynote, 6 p.m., Donald P. Corbett Bldg, U Maine. FMI: ICMOweb@hotmail.com, or www.islamiccenterofmaine.org.

April, 2017

April 1: Protest at Bath Iron Works destroyer christening, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Washington St, Bath. FMI: globalnet@mindspring.com.

April 4 & 11: Human Face of Climate Change film series, 6 p.m., Fogler Library classroom, U Maine. FMI: cynthia.isenhour@maine.edu.

April 4 & every Tuesday: Support & Action Gathering, 11 a.m. to 12 noon, P&J Center.

April 8: Legislative Breakfast, 8 – 10 a.m., Food AND Medicine, 20 Ivers St, Brewer. FMI: 989-5860, adam@foodandmedicine.org.

April 8: 23rd Annual HOPE Festival, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Recreation & Fitness Center, U Maine. FMI: info@peacectr.org, 942-9343.

April 15: Trump Tax Day Protest, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., West Market Square, Bangor. FMI: corlew@gmail.com

April 19: Maine Fair Trade Campaign Annual Meeting & Dinner, 5:30 p.m., Plumbers & Pipefitters Union Hall, Augusta. FMI: info@mainefairtrade.org

April 21: Film - “Changing Hearts, Inspiring Action,” 6:30 p.m., P&J Center.

April 22: Earth Day Celebration, 12 noon – 2 p.m., Pickering Square, Bangor. FMI: katherinekates5@gmail.com.

April 22: U Maine Marches for Science, 12 noon, Fogler Library, U Maine. FMI: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1200368080078035/>

April 28: Film - “Paris is Burning,” 8 p.m., P&J Center. Sponsored by Bangor High School Women’s Interest Group. FMI: oliviabaldacci@gmail.com.

April 29: People’s Climate Mobilization: Justice, Jobs, & the Climate in Maine, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Augusta. FMI: jordanlang0429@gmail.com.

April 29: Wabanaki REACH Ally Training, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Food AND Medicine, Brewer. Space limited, registration required. FMI: barbara@mainewabanakireach.org, 951-4874.

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