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Landfilling tons of municipal waste: an environmental tragedy

by Harry Sanborn

Tens of thousands of tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) from eastern Maine are now heading to landfills. This mess didn't have to happen.

In 2015, the Municipal Review Committee, the organization responsible for waste disposal for 100+ communities, made plans to leave PERC, Penobscot Energy Recovery Company, for the new Fiberite venture in Hampden. It signed a contract with the Crossroads Landfill in Norridgewock in case the Fiberite plant wasn't ready on time. The MRC said that this "bridge" landfill agreement was needed. To help large cities like Bangor and Brewer take advantage of the landfill contract without driving the added distance to Norridgewock, a waste swap with Old Town's Juniper Ridge permit was incorporated at the last minute. Yet the PERC plant, which reduces waste 90% by volume and generates renewable electricity, is still operating successfully and has the capacity to continue serving the same MRC towns it has served over the past 30 years.

The MRC says the diversion of MSW to Juniper Ridge and Crossroads Landfills is cost effective and better for the environment, but neither statement is true. Landfilling unprocessed MSW has no environmental benefit. The use of these landfills will increase road time for all collection vehicles. Trucks carrying waste from the town of Bar Harbor, for instance, will now travel past PERC and add 128 miles per round trip to dump their unprocessed waste on the ground.

This disaster could have been prevented. In January, PERC and the MRC signed an agreement for PERC to take 62,000 tons of MRC waste on an interim basis until the Fiberite plant is up and running. The agreement, which both parties signed, stated that "it would be in the public interest to preserve scarce landfill disposal capacity by having MSW processed rather than accepted for landfill disposal ..." However, a week before the agreement was to take effect, the MRC backed out. So here we are in 2018 taking a major step backwards in waste management. Fiberite, promised to

be ready on April 1, does not yet have a projected completion date. More than 100,000 tons of municipal waste are going into landfills, and PERC, a successful waste-to-energy facility, is left underutilized. This didn't have to happen. It was a bad choice, and Maine's environment and future generations will pay the price.



Maine Solar Bill LD 1444 fails second veto override vote

by Amy Hughes

In 2017 the Maine Public Utilities Commission introduced a set of rules aimed at dismantling Maine's solar net metering system. Net metering is a billing structure that credits solar energy system owners for the electricity they add to the grid at full retail price. Under the new PUC rule, the credit on electric bills for systems installed after 2017 would gradually decrease over time. That aspect of the rule is being challenged in court, but more extreme aspects of the rule were challenged, without success, by the Maine Legislature during their last session with the introduction of LD 1444, which would have eliminated arbitrary caps on group participation in Maine's community solar program by raising the limit from nine participants to fifty. Additionally, LD 1444 would have reversed the rule that allows utilities to charge fees to solar producers for the electricity they produce and use on-site. It would have prohibited utilities from requiring solar energy users to install a second meter to monitor electricity generation for this purpose. Despite passing in Maine's Senate with overwhelming support, the bill was vetoed by Governor Paul LePage and the House failed to override the veto on two occasions, each time by only two votes.

The failure to override LePage's veto of LD 1444 is certain to result in increased electricity costs for all rate-payers because they will absorb the cost to utilities of installing new meters and implementing new monitoring systems. The new rule disincentivizes initial investment in solar energy systems and the turbulent rule-making process has caused uncertainty

for potential solar energy investors resulting in market disruptions. Rolling back these incentives that have helped Maine's solar industry grow represents a huge step backward in the development of our state's renewable energy industry.



Campaign Nonviolence call to action: 5th Annual End Violence Together Rally & March September 15, 2018

by Mary Ellen Quinn

The 5th Annual End Violence Together Rally & March will be held on September 15, 2018, in West Market Square. The Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine and Pax Christi Maine will lead the planning effort along with many peace, justice, environmental justice organizations, and faith communities from across eastern Maine. Active participation in creative nonviolent resistance is needed now more than ever! The ongoing culture of violence continues to threaten the survival of our planet and its inhabitants. War brings environmental destruction which creates refugees searching for new homelands where tensions of race and poverty arise with increased domestic violence and gun violence, and so on.

The rise of groups focused on addressing single vital issues is important. However, a larger view is emerging which requires a more comprehensive response. People need to wake up to the critical concerns before us. Hearts and minds must be changed to create a culture of peace and nonviolence. Campaign Nonviolence, a movement initiated by Pace e Bene in 2014 with a week of actions culminating in the International Day of Peace, has grown from 230 actions to over 1600 actions across the U.S. and around the world. As we approach the week of Sept. 15-23 momentum is building! This is a pivotal time with U.S. Congressional elections coming this fall. To bear witness to the strength of this people's movement, CNV will hold a national convergence with a march and action in Washington DC on Sept. 21-22. For details see www.CampaignNonviolence.org.

Please join us to share ideas and resources. The time has come for comprehensive change based on creative nonviolence. Planning begins in early June. Everyone can contribute! As the Rev. Dr. King declared over 50 years ago, "the choice is no longer violence or nonviolence; it's nonviolence or non-existence." FMI: Mary Ellen at 223-4992; Amy at 942-9343.



Bangor Pride Week 2018: June 17 - 23

by Hannah Ruhlin

Bangor Pride 2018 is shaping up to be stronger and gayer than ever as it follows the tradition of growing with each passing year. Co-founded in 1992 by Jim Martin, who died this past April of ALS, Bangor Pride has been a part of our community for 16 years. Martin first organized the Pride Parade with two other students as a class project on advocacy in the Social Work program at the University of Maine. Nearly 20 years later, he stood on the Festival stage as an out, gay member of the Maine Legislature. Martin is survived by his husband and son and will be honored at this year's Pride festivities. Bangor Pride has grown in size and attendance and now includes a full week of events leading up to the Saturday, June 23, Parade and Festival. Although our culture has greatly shifted from where we were in 1992, Bangor Pride has returned to its origins in an unwelcome way: protestors. After years of Bangor Pride being attended solely by members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies, members of the Mansion Church, sporting hateful signs, felt that Bangor Pride 2017 was a place they would be welcome. Sadly, we anticipate their presence again this year.

Bangor Pride's theme for 2018 is "Pride Without Borders," prompting thoughts and questions around inclusivity and intersectionality within the LGBTQ+ community. How does immigration status intersect with gender and sexuality? What does it mean to be a member of the LGBTQ+ community during the current administration? How do Trump's policies impact people of color in our community? Our goal for Bangor Pride 2018 is to stand for all marginalized people and tear down walls of hate and harm. Please join us Saturday, June 23, at 10 a.m. for the Parade down Main Street and Festival in West Market and Pickering Squares. FMI: contact Hannah Ruhlin at (207) 242-0709 or hannah@mainehealthequity.org. Go to <https://www.mainehealthequity.org/bangor-pride> for the amazing schedule of events.



Bangor area high school students participate in Social Justice Literature Circles: PJC to participate in panel discussion

by Amy Hughes

Students from Civil Rights Teams, LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, and library book clubs at area high schools have been participating in virtual literature circles this spring. A project funded in part by the Maine Humanities Council has brought students together to discuss five young adult titles dealing with themes such as racism,

mental health, sexual identity, and gender expression. Young adult literature is providing students, teachers, and librarians an abundance of stories and voices that retell diverse experiences, creating a platform for connection, exchange, and empathy with their readers. Each book tells the story of an adolescent going through a challenging experience while navigating high school. For example, in *The Hate You Give* by Angie Thomas, a black student named Starr navigates the sheltered world of private school in the daytime while dealing with police violence in her community when she returns home. In classrooms, participating students have been engaging with the characters and drawing connections to the experiences of classmates. They are working together to brainstorm ideas for resources that could be introduced or expanded upon in their own schools. On June 1st these literature studies will culminate in a community panel discussion that will be broadcast to students at Bangor High, Mount Desert Island, Hermon High, Hampden Academy, and Old Town High School. Representatives from the Peace and Justice Center, Health Equity Alliance, Hardy Girls Healthy Women, and Colby College will join the discussion and draw connections to work being done in the community. Amy Hughes will represent the PJC and focus on community organizing and activism as a tool for addressing root causes of hardships. The Center is grateful to Nancy Watson, Bangor High School Librarian, for inviting us.



In honor, in memory

Many thanks for the following donations in memory and honor of loved ones:

In honor of:

Silas Brogunier, from Michele Brogunier

In memory of:

Susan G Abraham from Carol Abraham

n o t i c e s

**Healing the wounds of Turtle Island July 13-16, 2018
Nibezun, Passadumkeag**

Our prophecies tell us that when the people of the world rise up and begin standing for the protection of life, a great healing will begin. In order for that healing to take root, the people must return to the place where the initial wounding on this land took place and join together with one heart and one mind to heal the wounds that they carry within them, and those carried by Mother Earth. We invite people from all corners of the Earth to join us in this healing ceremony. FMI: <http://sacredinstructions.life/index.php/healing-turtle-island>. To help support this event, go to: <http://spiret.org/land-peace-foundation-donation/>

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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
June 2018*



***** **ATTENTION NEWSLETTER READERS!** *****

The Peace & Justice Center, like many other organizations, is considering making changes to our newsletter format, potentially creating e-news that is based in email and/or on our website. We are finding, in this digital age, that there is a much faster turnaround of news and information, and that the advance time needed to put together a monthly print newsletter leaves us unable to cover issues in as timely a manner as we would like. As we deliberate on this, it would help to know how many of you are actually reading the print version, and whether this is your preferred method of receiving news from us. Please give us feedback **BY JUNE 15**, by calling 942-9343, emailing: info@peacectr.org, or sending a letter to: Peace and Justice Center, 96 Harlow St, Suite 100, Bangor, ME 04401. Your frank input is needed!

calendar

June 2: "Tea for T": A Benefit for MaineTransNet, 3 to 5 p.m., Coespace, 48 Columbia St, Bangor. FMI: info@mainetransnet.org

June 2: "Wear Orange Picnic" for National Gun Violence Awareness Day, 1 to 2 p.m., Fairmount Park, 80 Norway Rd, Bangor. FMI: sukeyolson@gmail.com

June 4: Health Equity Alliance Open House, 5 to 7 p.m., 304 Hancock St, Ste 3B, Bangor. FMI: info@mainehealthequity.org

June 5: End Violence Together initial planning meeting - come help us plan for our September 15 event in Bangor! 3 p.m., P&J Center, 96 Harlow St, Suite 100. FMI: info@peacectr.org

June 5: "The Benefits of Solar" with Greater Bangor Solarize, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Bangor Public Library. FMI: Greaterbangorsolarize.org, 207-659-1054

June 16: "Picnic of Books" event in response to recent possible hate crime in Troy. Storybook reading for kids and adults. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Triplet Park, Unity. FMI: lisleaverton@gmail.com

June 17 - 24: Bangor Pride Week. Activities all week, including Pride Parade and Festival on Saturday, June 23. FMI: <https://www.mainehealthequity.org/bangor-pride>. Or contact Hannah at hannah@mainehealthequity.org

June 30: Solidarity Harvest Benefit Auction, 4:30 to 7 p.m., Food AND Medicine, 20 Ivers St, Brewer. FMI: adam@foodandmedicine.org

July 13 - 16: Healing the Wounds of Turtle Island 2018, Nibezun, Passadumkeag. FMI: <https://www.facebook.com/events/532492523796042/>

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