

Peaceways

CENTRAL KENTUCKY COUNCIL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

March 2020

A social justice champion

by Margaret Gabriel



Father John Rausch and Pax

I called John Rausch on a recent Saturday morning. The day before I had gotten some telephone numbers from him and asked him if he could tell me a little bit about the gifts of Sister Alice Retzner, a friend of his who had worked for many years in Beattyville and Campton, Kentucky, before retiring in 2018. Sister Alice had died earlier in the week and I was asked to gather some thoughts about her service from others who work in eastern Kentucky.

After he gave me some insight about Sister Alice, we chatted for a while and I invited him to see the production of *Assassins* I was stage managing for my director-son and performer-husband. A rumination about the Stephen Sondheim musical would take up far more space than I have here, but earlier in the week I had finally (after weeks of thought) realized that the core of the play centers on social justice. “What does a man do when at last he realizes that his suffering is caused not by the cruelty of fate, but by the injustice of his fellow human beings?” (As the script quotes Emma Goldman.)

John was intrigued by the subject matter of the play and was delighted to hear that my husband, Jim, son Gabe, and I were working on the play together. He looked at his schedule, saw that he was available to see the Sunday matinee and said he would be there and would bring several friends.

We chatted for a few more minutes, then parted so I could make a pre-scheduled phone call and he could finish writing the sermon he was giving later in the day and on Sunday morning.

“Love you,” we said to each other as we often did when we signed off.

A little over 24 hours later, I received a call telling me that John had died on Sunday morning.

I’ve had a bend toward social justice for as long as I can remember, but it was John, a Glenmary priest who lived and worked in Appalachia for 53 years, who introduced me to Catholic social teaching. “In its purest form, social doctrine has always tried to find an equilibrium between respect for human liberty, including the right to private property and subsidiarity and concern for the whole society, including the weakest and poorest.”

While I pulled this quote from Wikipedia, I feel certain that John would not say “including the weakest and poorest,” but ESPECIALLY the weakest and poorest.

Although John opened eyes (mine and many, many others) to systemic problems in the nation and the world, his real gift was enabling people to identify things they could do to advance solutions. Solutions were often discussed around John’s dinner table. He delighted in cooking for friends (and his cooking skills were epic) and bringing them together in the house he shared with a black cat he adopted and named Pax (Latin for peace, of course). The vibrant little house was well off a two-lane road in Powell County.

John’s mission and ministry was never far from my thoughts during technical and dress rehearsal week for *Assassins*, the play I described to him only hours before he died.

One thing a good stage manager does is make the cast feel enabled to give its best performance. The cast of *Assassins* had

earlier noted that they would need to have water bottles backstage. In order to reduce our consumption of single-use plastic, I bought each member of the company a re-usable cup and brought a jug of water that they could use and re-use throughout the week. A small expenditure at the Dollar Tree in my neighborhood probably kept 30 plastic bottles out of the landfill. A little thing, compared to protesting mountain-top removal and promoting the need for drinkable water in Appalachian counties — both of which John did for many years — but it was something. John often said that a lot of little things add up to big things.

I’m sure those cups made him smile.

I’m not sure how to end this reflection. I’ll really miss my friend who taught me so much. I have many memories of him and stories about him, but the one I’ll cherish the most is the time he unexpectedly filled in at my parish for Sunday Masses. John’s homilies were always challenging (too challenging for some people) and I wish I could remember his message that Saturday night. But it was several years ago and well, you know.

I do remember, that for some reason, I had put beef burgundy in the oven before church so I was able to host him for dinner. He, my husband Jim, and I shared a good dinner, a bottle of wine (I’m sure), some challenging discussion and a lot of laughing.

The fellowship and friendship I had so often shared at his table was reciprocated. What an honor.

Gun Violence In America as of 2-28-20

2020 (year to date)

Killed	2,362
Suicide	3,894
Wounded	4,109

2019 (annual)

Killed	15,208
Wounded	29,501

Source: www.gunviolencearchive.org

In the Kentucky General Assembly

On its website, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (kftc.org/bill-tracker) has compiled information about the bills it supports and those it opposes. They include descriptions of the bills, the names of the legislators who filed them and any other pertinent information.

A few bills that are also of interest to CKCPJ are listed here, with an invitation to examine the full list on the KFTC website.

Death Penalty: House Bill 237 would prohibit application of the death penalty if the accused has a diagnosis of serious mental illness. KFTC's platform supports the abolition of the death penalty. House Bill 237 has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. The Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty is also lobbying in support of this bill.

Net metering: House Bill 323 would make some amendments to various provisions of the anti-solar energy net metering law that passed in 2019. It would also provide more time before the full provisions of the 2019 law are implemented. HB 323 would slow down some of the damage impacting the solar energy industry in the state. It has been assigned to the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee.

Restoration of voter rights: House Bill 6 would amend the

Kentucky Constitution to restore voting rights to those who have a felony conviction once their sentences are completed. The bill sends the amendment to Kentucky voters for ratification. This bill is a clean version of the Voting Rights bill with no exclusions based on the kinds of felonies. Everyone gets the right to vote after they've completed prison time, probation and/or parole. To learn more about the movement to restore voting rights in Kentucky as well as KFTC's work on this issue, and to connect with Kentuckians taking action, contact Dave Newton at dave@kftc.org.

Minimum wage: House Bill 39 and Senate Bill 13 would raise the state minimum wage to \$8.20 per hour in 2020 with annual increases until it reaches \$15 in 2027. It also raises the minimum wage for tipped employees to \$2.13 and incrementally until it reaches \$4.90 in 2023. It includes language permitting local governments to establish minimum wage ordinances in excess of the state minimum wage.

Tax reform: House Bill 416 is a broad-ranging tax reform bill that would require corporations and the wealthy to pay their fair share of Kentucky's taxes. Such reforms make it possible for Kentucky's budget to provide for the goods and services that all our state's communities depend on.

The Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice

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Peaceways is published 10 times a year by the Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice, 1588 Leestown Rd., Ste. 130-138, Lexington KY 40511. The next issue of *Peaceways* will appear in April 2020. Deadline for calendar items is March 10. Contact (859) 488-1448 or email peacewayseditor@gmail.com.

PFLAG Central Kentucky is seeking new members and volunteers to continue its mission of education, support and advocacy for LGBTQ individuals and their families. Are you part of the LGBTQ+ community, a friend or family member or ally? Come to its meetings and experience the supportive community that is PFLAG.

The group loves new members, and is always looking for people to volunteer in various ways. Volunteers help at Pride events, assist with social media/website, develop programs, and anything else they are able to add. Call (859) 338-4393 or email info@pflagcentralkentucky.org.

Calendar for Peace & Justice

The council seeks to promote dialogue as a path to peace and justice. Consequently, we announce events that we do not necessarily endorse.

Mon., Mar. 2

CKCPJ peace action committee, 5:30 p.m. Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington. Discussion of non-violence training and other peace-related activity.

Thurs., Mar. 5

One World Film Festival "Shelter." 7 p.m., Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main St., Lexington. The 2018 Israeli film is a subtle thriller set in Germany that involves two women who are thrown together for two weeks. The relationship they develop blends trust and mistrust, honesty and deceit, loyalty and betrayal. The film is in English, Hebrew, German and Arabic and includes subtitles. Free.

Sat., Mar. 7

One World Film Festival "Rachel Carson" 10 a.m., Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main St., Lexington. When Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" was published in 1962, the book became a phenomenon. Despite vigorous attacks from the chemical industry, it inspired President John F. Kennedy to launch the first-ever investigation into the public health effects of pesticides, which resulted in laws governing the regulation of these deadly agents. Drawn from Carson's writings, letters and recent scholarship, this film illuminates both the public and private life of the woman who launched the modern environmental movement and revolutionized how we understand our relationship with the natural world. Free.

Tues., Mar. 10

CKCPJ health care action committee, 5:30 p.m. Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington.

Tues., Mar. 10

PFLAG Central Kentucky, 6:30-8:30 p.m., St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Dr., Lexington. The meeting will feature the film "Lead with Love," that shows how parents can respond most effectively when their child comes out. The film and discussion will be followed by a confidential support group meeting. All are welcome: LGBTQ youth and adults, family members, friends, allies, and those who wish to learn more about the issues.

Tues.-Sun., March 10-15

Catholic Committee of Appalachia, Cherokee Spirituality: *Walking Our Spiritual Paths.* An introduction to the spirituality of Cherokee People. Arrive for a gathering at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, depart after churches services on Sunday morning. Contact Mary Herr, (828) 497-9498. Partial scholarships available.

Thurs., Mar. 12

One World Film Festival "The Public," 7 p.m., Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main St., Lexington. "The Public" tells the story of an unusually bitter Arctic blast that made its way to downtown Cincinnati and the front doors of the public library where the action of the film takes place. Some homeless patrons turn the library into a shelter for the night by staging an "Occupy" sit in. What begins as an act of civil disobedience becomes a stand-off with police and a rush-to-judgment media constantly speculating about what's really happening. The story tackles some of our nation's most challenging issues: homelessness and mental illness and sets the drama inside one of the last bastions of democracy-in-action: your public library. Free.

Sat., Mar. 14

One World Film Festival *Poms* 10 a.m. Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main St., Lexington. "Poms" is an uplifting comedy about Martha (played by Diane Keaton), a woman who moves into a retirement community and starts a cheerleading squad with her fellow residents, Sheryl (Jacki Weaver), Olive (Pam Grier) and Alice (Rhea Perlman), proving that it's never too late to follow your dreams.

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Lexington loses anti-violence advocate

CKCPJ offers condolences to the family and loved ones of Anita Franklin, an activist against gun violence, who died on February 24.

After her son was killed in 2014, Anita worked to reduce gun violence not only in Lexington, but throughout Kentucky. Initially not a public person, Anita became an increasingly powerful public speaker and inspired many.

The community has lost a tireless advocate and she will be sorely missed.

Mon., Mar. 16

CKCPJ steering committee meeting, 5 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington. Discussion will include planning for the upcoming committee meetings, proposals for new initiatives, and continuing action.

Sat., Mar. 28

Christian-Muslim dialog, 10 a.m.-noon. Hunter Presbyterian Church, 109 Rosemont Garden, Lexington. Tom Eblen, an independent journalist, writer and photographer based in Lexington. Tom was a columnist for the *Lexington Herald-Leader* from 2008-2019.

Mon., Apr. 27

BUILD, Nehemiah Action, Heritage Hall, 7 p.m., 430 Vine Street, Lexington. The goal of the Nehemiah Action is to gather 2,250 people from throughout Lexington to ask Lexington city leaders to take specific actions to resolve issues of concern in Lexington. If you are interested in attending, leave a message at (859) 608-2946.

Tues., May 19

Election Day, 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. To identify your polling place and to see a sample ballot, go to vrsws.sos.ky.gov. The site will ask for your name and the last four digits of your Social Security number and will take you to a page where you will see your polling place and your legislative districts.

*Afflict the comfortable;
give comfort to the afflicted.*

Cherokee Spirituality Experience, March 10-15

For 25 years, Father John Rausch hosted a five-day workshop that introduced participants to the spirituality of the Cherokee people.

Following John's death on Feb. 9, co-host Mary Herr asked Sister of St. Francis Robbie Pentecost to fill in for Father John.

Sister Robbie has attended the workshop in the past and two years ago filled in for Father John when he was recovering from a broken back.

Father John and Sister Robbie collaborated on many projects during their years of friendship, including the "Pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Appalachia." The pilgrimages led groups of clergy, seminarians, journalists, and politicians through areas of central Appalachia and introduced them to both the people and the issues of the region.

The upcoming experience is titled "Walking Our Spiritual Paths: An Introduction to the Spirituality of the Cherokee People" and will be held in Cherokee, North Carolina. Mary has invited Native American presenters to illustrate the legends, ceremonies, history, culture and food of the Cherokee people. Presentations will

slowly reveal the depth of Cherokee spirituality and offer participants a background to reflect on their own expression of spiritual growth.

The times of prayer and theological reflection will integrate the learning with the participant's own life experiences. The workshop will include discussion of traditional Cherokee religion and beliefs, the history of the Trail of Tears, integration of Christian worship with Native American symbols, and a visit to the Cherokee mother town of Kituwah.

At the conclusion of the five days, participants will have insight into the difference between Christian spirituality and Native American spirituality.

The workshop is scheduled for March 10-15, with arrival on Tuesday afternoon and departure on Sunday after church services.

The cost, which includes lodging, program fees and some meals, is \$400 (double occupancy) and \$600 (single occupancy). Scholarships are available.

To register or for more information, contact Mary Herr, (828) 497-9498 maryherr2017@gmail.com.

Seedleaf, a group that works to nourish the community by growing, cooking, sharing and recycling food in Lexington, is holding a community gardener training series at the Plantory, 501 W. Sixth St., every Wednesday from March 4 through April 29, 6-8 p.m.

The Community Gardener Training Series presents information on the local resources available to garden in community, wherever you may live. Workshops will give participants skills with which to share and store their harvests. The series is for individuals new to the possibilities of gardening and useful for seasoned gardeners who wish to build upon previously learned skills. Participation is free to the public but capacity is 30 participants and are required to attend the majority of workshops. Register at www.seedleaf.org/upcoming-events.

Workshop topics will include:

- How to start your own community garden
- How to preserve food with water bath canning
- How to build a compost bin
- Vermicompost
- How to select and plant trees for the garden
- How to use a harvest of herbs for gift-giving and your spice cabinet
- Tea-making
- Techniques for soil preservation
- No-till gardening



Walking Our Spiritual Path will include a daily theological reflection.

CKCPJ on Facebook

By "Liking" the CKCPJ Facebook page, you will receive posts by a variety of people focused on local, national and international issues.

Items from local and national publications and websites routinely appear on the CKCPJ Facebook page, so you can expect varied and enlightening posts. Check them out and be sure to share.

Recent posts include a sojo.net reflection about the presence of support across varying religious groups; a wuky.org post about SB 70, which grants religious and ethical exemptions for health care workers. The post describes SB 70 as "vague and scary;" a request from readers to call senators to support SB 154, the bill that will end executions of persons diagnosed with serious mental illness; support for Medicare for All in Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada; and kentucky.com's commentary about Gov. Andy Beshear signing a bill that requires Kentucky school police to carry guns.

Submissions to *Peaceways*

Articles submitted to *Peaceways* should show an awareness of and sensitivity to the CKCPJ's mission and concerns.

Feature articles should be no longer than 500 words, unless you are willing to have the piece cut to fit one page of *Peaceways* text. Pieces will be edited for clarity.

Please include references in the text for all quotations, statistics, and unusual facts. End-notes or footnotes are not used.

Please query submissions to peacewayseditor@gmail.com before writing a feature article intended solely for *Peaceways*.

For all submissions, the author's name, address, and phone number should appear on the body of the submitted text.

If you submit material that has been published or that you are also submitting to other publishers, be sure to indicate this.

Also include information about your relationship to any organization or issue mentioned in the article, for inclusion in a biographical reference at the end of the story.

Submissions should be made in Word format *via* email. Book reviews are usually solicited by the editor, but we welcome inquiries from potential reviewers.

Submission deadline is the 10th of each month. *Peaceways* is published monthly except January.

Support CKCPJ by linking
your Kroger Plus card
to #16439 at
krogercommunityrewards.com.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

CKCPJ Steering Committee Meetings, third Monday, 5 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave. More info: (859) 488-1448 or peaceandjusticeky@gmail.com. All are welcome.

Interfaith Prayer Vigil for Peace, every Thursday, 5:30 - 6 p.m. at Triangle Park (corner of Broadway and Main Street) in downtown Lexington. Contact Richard Mitchell, (859) 327-6277.

Migrant Network Coalition, first Monday, noon - 1:15 p.m., GLOBAL LEX, 1306 Versailles Road, Lexington. Contact Lindsay Mattingly, lmatingly@lexpublib.org, (859) 231-5514.

PFLAG Central Kentucky, second Tuesday, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. LGBTQ individuals of all ages, family members, friends and allies are welcome. St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Dr., Lexington. Visit info@pflagcentralky.org or (859) 338-4393. Speakers followed by confidential support group meeting.

Bluegrass Fairness of Central Kentucky, second Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Lexington Public Central Library, 140 E. Main St., Lexington. Contact Craig Cammack, chair, (859) 951-8565 or info@lexfair.org.

Wednesday Night GLSO "Heart to Heart" discussion group, 7 p.m., Pride Center, 389 Waller Ave., Lexington. GLSO operates Kentucky's only Pride Center, where they have quietly provided services to the GLBTQQA community for decades. More info, Pride Center hours, and other links at www.glsso.org.

Humanist Forum of Central Kentucky, first Thursday, 7 p.m., Great Hall of the Unitarian Universalist Church, 3564 Clays Mill Rd., Lexington. The Forum is a Chapter of the American Humanist Association. Meetings are open to people of all beliefs willing to express their opinions in a civil manner. Child care is provided. Contact President Staci Maney, staci@olliegee.com or (859) 797-2662.

Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, third Thursday, 7 p.m., Episcopal Diocese Mission House at Fourth St. and MLK Blvd, Lexington. Contact Beth Howard, (859) 276-0563.

NAMI Lexington Support Groups, every Sunday, 2:30 - 4 p.m. Participation Station, 869 Sparta Ct., Lexington. Call (859) 272-7891 or visit www.namilex.org.

Christian-Muslim Dialogue Program, fourth Saturday, 10 a.m. - noon. All are welcome. Locations vary, call (859) 277-5126. The Christian-Muslim dialogue promotes understanding and mutual respect between Christians and Muslims. By exploring moral, cultural and political factors shaping the current context, the program promotes personal and collective responsibility to build a more just and peaceful world.

Dance Jam, every Tuesday, 5:30 - 7 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave. Move to the extent you are able. Sponsored by Motion Matters, \$7 per session to cover space rental. Contact Pamela, info@motionmatters.org, (859) 351-3142.

Movies with Spirit, second Friday of every month. Unitarian Universalist Church, 3564 Clays Mill Road, Lexington. Potluck at 6 p.m., film at 7.

National Action Network, third Thursday each month, 7 - 8:30 p.m. at the Central Library, Lexington.

Showing Up for Racial Justice, second Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Wild Fig Coffee and Books, 726 N. Limestone, Lexington.

To include a regular meeting of your organization in this space, contact Margaret Gabriel, peacewayseditor@gmail.com.

PEACEWAYS



The Central Kentucky Council
for Peace and Justice
1588 Leestown Rd., Ste. 130-138
Lexington KY 40511

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Put Justice in the game.

~ Father John Rausch

Book review

Flying cars? Where? When?

The Future Is Faster Than You Think: How Converging Technologies Are Transforming Business, Industries, and Our Lives. By Peter H. Diamandis and Steven Kotler. Published Jan. 18, 2020, Simon & Shuster, New York. 384 pages.

Reviewed by Jim Trammel

Many of us are being Luddite-smug about the coming changes to everything that the future will bring. “It’s the 21st century, so where are the flying cars?” we sneer. Our authors tell us confidently that technologies are converging such that the flying cars will emerge before the end of this decade.

Twenty-five companies, led by the Uber ride-sharing people, have sunk a billion dollars into the project by mid-2019. Uber’s goal is to make private car ownership economically unfeasible, which will change everything about transportation, and in fact civilization.

Problems with fuel will be solved by electric energy. (Most of the technologies in this future time will depend on good batteries — if I were choosing a future target for invest, I would seek out the battery makers.) Weight problems will be solved by materials science yielding stronger, lighter parts, printed by 3-D printers (which are already here producing).

The safety question is addressed by multiple engines, like the four on current drones, which will minimize the danger helicopters now face when their single engine fails or their one main prop breaks.

And, yes, Uber is already working on the ancillary problems a fleet of flying cars would encounter — developing charging stations for them all, and air traffic control systems so they aren’t Jetson-ing all over the sky at every random altitude.

Developments are accelerating at this pace because different sets of technology are converging to boost one another’s impact exponentially. Artificial intelligence, virtual reality, 3-D printing, battery and material improvements, biomedical progress, and a handful of other advances are boosting each other forward in time.

Adding to the dis-equilibrium, some developments are going to cancel others, the way advancing CD and streaming technologies helped Netflix eat up Blockbuster.

We are traveling forward so fast that we will experience 20,000 years’ worth of technological change over just the next century. “Essentially, we’re going from the birth of agriculture to the birth of the Internet, twice,” the authors predict and expect us to be intrigued rather than scared.

It’s all so mind-spinning that comprehension boggles after a very few pages, so rather than attempt to summarize it, here’s one factoid to give you the general thrust. “In 2023, the average \$1,000 laptop will have the same computing power as a human brain. Twenty-five years after that, that same laptop will have the computing power of all the human brains currently on Earth.”

Remember the Apollo 13 astronauts who flew toward the moon with less computing power available than exists in your smartphone today. Everything electronic is getting more powerful and less expensive all the time, accelerating this hurtle into the future even further.

I love this speculative stuff and could do 10,000 words, but trying to stay with the social concerns of *Peaceways* readers, let’s just mention that solar and wind power together are predicted to hasten the decline of the coal industry even faster than the freefall coal is already in. The planet is bathed in much more solar energy that we could use if we harness it correctly, and wind plays an important supplementary role (since often the wind is blowing if the sun isn’t shining). Storage technology is likewise advancing to bridge the gaps where there is neither wind nor sun.

As a marketer and advertising person in my day job, I cringe to note that social media will make advertising more invasive and more closely personalized for about 12 more years — but then artificial intelligence shoulders in and will kill mass advertising completely, as Big Computer will know enough about your personalized likes and preferences to give you what you want before you see the pitch. I’m strangely not bothered by this; I find it convenient. We’re going to see ads anyway, they might as well match up.

This is the third book in this series; I’m heading out for the previous two.

Reviewer Jim Trammel barely knows how to switch his cable TV over to Netflix, but he’s game.

