



Network News

WISCONSIN NETWORK for PEACE and JUSTICE

SPRING 2025

<https://www.wnpj.org>

How are we continuing our peace and justice work in the face of rapid changes in our country? How do we resist violence and injustice, build stronger communities, and support healing in these times?

WNPJ member organizations share their thoughts in this issue.

Spring Assembly: The State of the Network

By Dena Eakles

Assembly: A group of people gathered together for one purpose.

By now many of you have participated in or perhaps watched some or all of WNPJ's Spring Assembly. For the people who attended and those still watching, the conviction and efforts of individuals and organizations were spotlighted. They were heartfelt, informative and a balm for the weary in these interesting times. And the purpose? To uplift the very real possibility of peace and justice.

We witnessed the unique and significant ways that members and non-members alike bring to the struggle. Since 1991, WNPJ has been a focal point of activism throughout the state. Some of us are nearing the end of that journey. Some are just beginning.

Regardless, when we gather with intention, the passion we bring towards peace and justice nourishes all of us with hope. Ideas will come and go. Strategies will succeed or fail. But it is our love that guides us forward.

The gratitude expressed throughout the week was powerful. It reminded us of the need we have to be together, even if by zoom, to listen to one another, and to not exist in isolation. It challenged the notion of the rugged individual as we celebrated the circle and challenged top-down thinking.

We live in this magnificent state and region, gifted in so many ways, and we are all a part of that, not separate. The Network, too, is a gift. It is unique. It is a living entity that requires our attention. No one person can do all the work, but collectively we are unstoppable.

These are times that require the totality of our being and demand our greatest strengths.

Collectively, we bring a wealth of wisdom and conviction to this moment. Never underestimate the power that each of us holds, or our ability to be unified. This time can be daunting, but as we recognize and respect one another we can and will emerge as victors.

Let peace prevail.

In light of the success of the Spring Assembly, the WNPJ Board is considering monthly zooms highlighting member groups and allies' activities. If this interests you, contact dena.eakles@gmail.com. We are also hoping to see more people on our very active and committed Board. If you or someone you know has this interest, please contact info@wnpj.org.

For recordings of the Assembly sessions, see: <https://www.wnpj.org/post/2025-spring-assembly>

Wisconsin Right to Boycott
LOBBY DAY AND RALLY
 Tuesday, April 23, 9am • Wisconsin State Capitol
<https://www.peaceactionwi.org>

MAYDAY 2025
DAY WITHOUT IMMIGRANTS & WORKERS
THURSDAY, MAY 1
9:30 AM
MILWAUKEE
 Gather for mass march at the
 Voces Milwaukee Office at
 733 W. Mitchell St
 at 9:30am
 March to the
 Federal Courthouse
 517 E Wisconsin Ave

Continuing the work in changing times

At the Linda and Gene Farley Center for Peace, Justice and Sustainability, we believe that the work of peace and justice is deeply embedded in the land we steward and the communities we nurture. As our country faces rapid social, environmental, and political shifts, our commitment to fostering nonviolence, equity, and healing remains steadfast. We resist violence and injustice by strengthening connections, promoting sustainability, and creating spaces where healing can take root.

RESISTING INJUSTICE: SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

One way we resist systemic injustice is through sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty. Supporting small-scale farmers—particularly immigrants and marginalized growers—helps create food systems that empower rather than exploit. The Farley Center Collaborative Farm Program provides land, resources, and mentorship to farmers who face barriers in traditional agricultural settings.

Our Farley Center Bee Incubator is another way we resist environmental harm while strengthening local networks, contributing to environmental justice and biodiversity conservation.



Char DeVos

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES: CONNECTION

In times of uncertainty and division, community becomes our greatest source of resilience. At the Farley Center, we build bridges through workshops, educational programs, and gatherings that encourage dialogue across differences. A farm tour, a social justice event, or an art exhibition creates space where people can connect, learn, and take action together.

The Natural Path Sanctuary, our green cemetery, offers a form of community-building rooted in the cycles of life and death. By providing a space for natural burials, we support families in finding peace and healing. The Sanctuary invites reflection on our shared humanity and our connection to the earth.

HEALING THROUGH LAND, LABOR, AND LEGACY

Healing comes in many forms—through the soil, relationships, and honoring those who came before us. At the Farley Center, we recognize that justice work is also about tending to wounds, personal and collective. We honor the legacy of Linda and Gene Farley by continuing their vision of a world where people and the planet are cared for with dignity and respect.

We remain committed to justice, sustainability, and peace. Our work is rooted in action, but also in hope—by caring for the land and each other, we can cultivate a future that is more just, compassionate, and sustainable. Caroline/Shedd Farley • <https://www.farleycenter.org>
<https://www.naturalpathsanctuary.org>

Milwaukee Council passes Back from the Brink Resolution

Milwaukee's Common Council unanimously approved a Back from the Brink resolution on April 2, calling on the federal government to support some common sense policies aimed at reducing the risk of nuclear war.

The Milwaukee effort was endorsed by a coalition of 18 peace, justice, environmental, religious and community organizations which have worked since last summer to lay the groundwork for passing the resolution. All five organizations who were part of the core organizing group are WNPJ members.

Alder Marina Dimitrijevic is the main sponsor. The resolution now goes to Mayor Cavalier Johnson, whose office has told the organizers he will sign it.

More than 80 state and local governments, including the Milwaukee County Board and the Madison Common Council, have joined the movement, along with long lists of organizations, elected officials, civic leaders and

experts numbering in the hundreds.

The resolution calls on U.S. leaders to: Actively pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals; Renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first; End the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. President to launch a nuclear attack; Take U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and Cancel the plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons.

Lead organizers were: Peace Action-Wisconsin, Milwaukee Veterans for Peace, Physicians for Social Responsibility-Wisconsin, United Nations Association of Greater Milwaukee, and 350MKE.

Endorsing were: Marquette University Center for Peacemaking, Sierra Club-Great Waters Group, Milwaukee Friends Meeting, Greater Milwaukee Green Party, Zao MKE Church (United Methodist), Milwaukee Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition, Catholics for Peace and Justice, Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition, WI Coalition to Normalize Relations with Cuba, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom-Milwaukee, Interfaith Peace Working Group, Building Unity, Our Wisconsin Revolution.

Why family farmers and other folks should support a strong public US Postal Service

By John E. Peck, executive director,
Family Farm Defenders

Since 1775 when Benjamin Franklin became the very first Postmaster General, the USPS has faithfully fulfilled the many lofty goals that are now inscribed outside the entrance of the U.S. Postal Museum in Washington DC: “Bond of the Scattered Family; Enlarger of the Common Life; Carrier of News and Knowledge; Instrument of Trade and Commerce.”

Affordable universal reliable communication is not something many people can take for granted. In fact, the USPS was such a great American idea (like our national park system) that it has since been replicated across the globe.

ACCELERATED ATTACK UNDER TRUMP

Under the pretense that the USPS is “bankrupt,” though, President Trump and other neoliberal free marketeers are hellbent to impose an austerity program and ultimately privatize this vital public service. During Trump’s last stint in the White House, USPS was forced to shutter half of its mail processing centers, leading to longer delivery times, and 10% of the nation’s post offices, mostly in rural towns, were put on the auction block.

Despite such, the USPS continues to have some of the highest public approval ratings of any federal government agency. After all, who can you trust to make sure you get your seed orders or drug prescriptions in a timely fashion?

How did this quite preventable (and orchestrated) mugging of the USPS come about? Well, one needs to go back a few decades when the government first opened the door for corporate competitors to undermine the viability of the USPS.

USPS DELIVERS FOR AMAZON, TOO

At just 73 cents to deliver a first class letter, USPS rates remain among the lowest in the industrialized world. Given the surge in more profitable package delivery, accelerated by the pandemic, private outfits like Fedex and Amazon are now mooching off the USPS’ amazing efficiency to ferry their own stuff (saving themselves up to 75% in the process).

Contrary to some naysayers, the USPS does not get a dime from U.S. taxpayers—it provides a valuable service at cost to consumers. So attacks on the USPS claiming its “horribly wasteful” are just flat out wrong.

The USPS is also hamstrung from taking advantage of other ways to expand its services that many people, especially rural folks, desperately need. For example, the USPS still offers money orders, but many other countries’ postal systems offer a much wider range of popular financial services such as checking and savings accounts, even low interest loans.

BANK AT THE POST OFFICE

One recent study found that the USPS could earn an extra \$8–9 billion per year just by providing basic banking options to the millions of Americans who now subsist on the fringes of the financial system. It is no surprise that Wells Fargo is drooling over the possible demise of USPS (as revealed in a recently leaked internal memo), since they hardly want any other option for those now subject to their predatory lending practices.

Now is the time to speak up and insure the proud iconic eagle of the USPS is not replaced by some anemic vulture version. Family Farm Defenders is among dozens of organizations that have joined the Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service.

And just like many family farmers rely upon cooperatives for their collective bargaining against agribusiness, postal workers also deserve to have their labor rights respected as fully unionized federal employees.

Please contact elected officials to insure the future of USPS as a vital public good, and next time you’re at the post office thank the workers for their essential service.

As the unofficial motto of USPS carriers goes: “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.” Neither should DOGE or the other bean counters in the current Trump administration.

<https://www.familyfarmers.org>



Service Employees International Union organizer Bryan Pfeifer, left, and John Peck at a rally to support the USPS

ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIENDS, ALLIES
AND ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS TO
join WNPJ!

FORM ON
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Madison VFP continues to present an alternative voice to war and the warmakers

Every month, Madison Veterans for Peace has a social hour at a local diner, a book discussion evening, and a business meeting. Veterans, whether official VFP members or not, or nonveteran supporters of VFP’s mission, are welcome at any of these gatherings. Contact Brad for details at geyerb@yahoo.com.

We also coordinate film showings with Madison World Beyond War and other groups who may cosponsor and help organize and provide discussion leaders. What we call the “Madison Anti-War Film Series” is held at the Central Library and the Bartell Theater.

Our partner, World Beyond War Madison is also working to show films at Madison College and in the University of Wisconsin campus area. One of our goals being to reach out beyond the choir.

FARMERS’ MARKET OUTREACH

With Spring, comes the Farmers Market table on the Capitol Square each Saturday. Learn of upcoming opportunities to support the cause of peace and justice. Come



Paul McMahon photo

A past Memorial Mile installation

hang out and chat with us as we plant the seeds about the true costs of war. Around 20,000 people attend the market on the biggest Saturdays of the year.

On Saturday, May 24, the chapter will be installing the Memorial Mile, thousands of simulated tombstones, along Atwood Avenue in Olbrich Park, to bring attention to the human cost of war.

Originally developed to raise consciousness—and opposition—to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, currently it stands as a visual statement of the insanity of the past—and currently ongoing—wars. We need volunteers to help set it up May 24 and take it down June 1. Email jhfour@gmail.com if you can help. Stop by and chat with volunteers at the table by the tennis

courts during the week the Mile is up. Or volunteer to sit at the table.

MEMORIAL DAY AT MASONIC CENTER

For our annual Memorial Day event, May 26, we will hold our annual Memorial Day Peace Rally at a different, larger location—the Masonic Center on Wisconsin Avenue. John Nichols will be the keynote speaker at the event, which starts at 1pm.

VFP also provides scholarships to local students. We are involved in standing up to war crimes and war profiteering. We get out in the streets regularly and raise our voices. Join us. Let us know how we can join you. Solidarity.

Madison VFP: <https://www.madisonvfp.org>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/madisonvfp>

Just Dane

REENTRY SIMULATION

OPEN TO ALL IN THE COMMUNITY TO ATTEND

Experience first-hand the challenges of life after incarceration. This experience will inspire empathy and drive meaningful change.

You can be a part of building a more supportive community.

Thursday, April 24 • 5:30–8:30pm

Madison College Goodman South Campus

2429 Perry Street, Madison, WI 53713

FREE, but you must be registered to attend:

<https://justdane.org>



Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice was founded in 1991 as a coalition of activist groups and citizens of conscience within Wisconsin, with a mission to connect, engage and strengthen member groups and serve as a catalyst for community organizing and education. WNPJ is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit.

Network News is published twice a year to inform and educate readers about issues of importance.

Editor/Production: Norm Littlejohn

WNPJ Board members: Tynnetta Jackson, Erika Bach, Vicki Berenson, Mary Kay Baum, Judy Miner, John Peck, Dena Eakles, Debra Gillispie, Muhammad Shahzad Hussain and Christine Olson

Sign up for our weekly online bulletin of events!

<https://www.wnpj.org>

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

Vote — but don't stop at that!

By Molly Carmichael, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign Communications Director

Over the last several weeks, the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign and Fair Maps Coalition worked to get 50,000 postcards out the door ahead of the April 1 Spring Election. Volunteers across the state got together with their friends, family, and neighbors to encourage their fellow Wisconsinites to make their voices heard.



The dedication of volunteers never fails to inspire me. It can be so easy to feel powerless these days, but we must resist those urges. Taking local or state action in the community while enjoying food and conversation, is a great way to recharge.

“MONEY DOESN'T TALK, IT SWEARS” — BOB DYLAN

Getting out the vote is never a small feat, but it's felt more daunting this year as out-of-state billionaires dumped money in our state Supreme Court election—an election that will determine outcomes for issues like reproductive rights, labor rights, and our environment. WDC tracks money in state elections on our public database and has been doing so since 1995. We also advocate for money in politics reform and other reforms, like fair voting maps, that will make our democracy truly representative.

Our message to Wisconsin voters in these times has been: you are more powerful than you know. Think about it, billionaires who can't vote in Wisconsin are dropping money into our state because it's that impor-

tant of a race. The richest man in the world couldn't vote here on April 1, but Wisconsin voters could! Money can do a whole lot—which is why we need to fix this broken system. But money can't register to vote and cast a ballot.



Voting is not the only solution. Civic engagement, advocacy, and community building can take many forms. No matter who wins any election, the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign will keep fighting for a fully realized democracy in our beautiful state because WE KNOW, even in the face of struggle, our collective power will prevail. Wisconsin belongs to the people, not the billionaires and those who serve them.

<https://www.wisdc.org>

Jazz for Justice, a fundraiser for Just Dane



May 8 • 6–10pm • Cafe Coda, 1224 Williamson St., Madison
Hanah Jon Taylor, Dee Alexander, more • \$50 • Registration TBA

Join Fair Wisconsin for our Fifth Biannual LGBTQ+ Equality Day at the Wisconsin Capitol!

Equality Day at the Capitol is our biennial grassroots advocacy day, usually held in the spring near the beginning of the state legislative session. We are back for 2025!

Save the date for a full day of connecting and grassroots advocacy with fellow activists from around the state!

Wednesday, May 7, 9am–4pm

Madison Bethel Lutheran Church and the Wisconsin State Capitol

- Meet with state legislators and staff
- Tell your story
- Network and strategize with other equality-minded LGBTQ+ and allied Wisconsinites

• Learn more about current policy issues important to the LGBTQ+ community and what you can do about it!

While this event is totally free to attend, registration is required at [fairwisconsin.com/events](https://www.fairwisconsin.com/events).

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor please check our website: <https://www.fairwisconsin.com>.



Echo Valley Hope Board Statement of Allegiance

The Board of Directors of Echo Valley Hope re-affirms our deepest commitments to all of humanity.

We will not be silent in the face of intolerance and the ignorance of hate. We will champion voices of peace, unity and the well-being of people and the earth.

We will protect our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters and especially the youth who are being victimized.

We will stand for diversity, inclusion and equity for all people and we will fight to maintain historical accuracy. As we share our stories, we will not omit the struggles of Native, Black, Latino, Asian and Muslim people, immigrants, workers, women, those of lesser means and all who have suffered throughout our history. We do this for our collective healing.

We will uphold human rights and the dignity of every person. We will work to build strong communities. We will continue to promote peace within and around us.

We join the voices throughout the world that demand all governments seek peace first and support the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all treaties recognizing the dignity of all people. We join the voices of the world calling for environmental justice and to help those who are being confronted by climatic challenges.

We demand the United States government upholds International Law, seeks peace in the Mid East, recog-

nizes the state of Palestine, refunds UNRWA and stops funding Israel's war.

<https://www.echovalleyhope.org>

CASA KEMNITZ
Jam for Casa Maria
Saturday, May 3 • 7:30–9:30pm

 **The Coffee House**

2717 East Hampshire Street, Milwaukee

Be part of a long-running Coffee House tradition and bring your voice, instrument, a poem or story, or simply come to listen, share, and contribute. Your donations will help Casa Maria, an intentional community, dedicated to following the tradition of the Catholic Worker movement in working for peace and justice.

Casa Maria currently runs four houses. They perform such services as: taking in single mothers and their children who are in need of housing; providing longer-term housing to families and women who need more support; and giving temporary living space for workers, refugees, asylum seekers, and others facing difficulties within the immigration system.

<https://casamariacatholicworker.weebly.com>

Pierce County father–daughter duo rallies support for rural rights

By Tracy Staedter

Sam Bowen and her two children moved in 2013 from Baldwin, Wisconsin, back to her family’s farm in Elmwood. The plan was to recoup from a difficult divorce and start fresh.

But she and her father Ty Fisher soon found themselves confronting an array of problems now facing many rural families across Wisconsin. First came illnesses and drinking water pollution. Then came



Sam Bowen (left) and her father, Ty Fisher, on Fisher Farm in Elmwood, Wisconsin

the smell of burning carcasses, the rumble of dozens of semi-trucks, the crumble of roads, and word that a nearby dairy factory farm intended to quadruple their herd to 6,500 cows. That meant hauling more than 10,000 truckloads of manure each year to spread on some 10,000 acres of land. The dairy factory farm also hoped to construct a refinery to produce factory farm gas.

STANDING UP FOR COMMUNITY

For two people who’d never spoken out about protecting human health or rallied their neighbors around property rights, Sam and Ty have become a formidable team committed to standing up for their rural community.

Support from both political parties is fueling massive expansions of factory farms in Wisconsin. People

spanning the political spectrum are resisting. State lawmakers know little about this resistance, but rural communities are ready for change. “We got enough people together and we got something done,” said Ty, who bought his farm in 1982, when he was just 19 years old.

Those efforts started after Sam’s daughter, just three years old at the time, began having stomach issues and was vomiting daily. A short time later, Sam showed similar issues. Medical treatments didn’t work. Sam and her daughter were eventually diagnosed with cyclic vomiting syndrome, a chronic condition for which there is no known cause. It lasted seven years.

Then one day in 2020, a friend suggested that Sam test her well water for nitrates. These chemicals are found in fertilizers, manure, and septic tanks that can seep through soils and porous “karst” bedrock, like that in Pierce County, and contaminate water. High concentrations of nitrates are known to cause nausea and vomiting, “blue baby” syndrome, and cancer. When Sam had her family’s well water tested, the results showed nitrate levels at 12.9 parts per million (ppm). Anything over 10 ppm is considered unsafe.

She switched her family to bottled water and ordered a reverse osmosis system for the house. “We immediately started feeling better,” says Sam.

Sam’s nitrate research revealed that living between two large factory dairies, each with more than 1,500 cows, was increasing their risk. And when Sam found out that one of the operations had intentions of expanding to 6,500 cows that would generate 88 million gallons of liquid manure per year, she said, “I knew I had to do something.”

IT WASN’T ALWAYS LIKE THIS

Ty built Fisher Farms from the ground up. He started out milking cows but switched to raising beef cattle about 12 years ago. He knows his fellow farmers and always tried to be a good neighbor. When one developed prostate cancer a few years ago, Ty pitched in to help haul grain for five days straight — no questions asked; no payment taken.

“That’s what neighbors do,” he said.

Gradually, the farms around him got bigger. The semi-truck traffic to haul feed or liquid manure began to increase. Some of the drivers were reckless. Road damage

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Father-daughter duo

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and manure spills were not uncommon, Ty said. One of the operations, Fetzner Farms, started running an incinerator to burn the carcasses of dead cows. The smell was horrendous. For Ty, these actions show a certain disregard for others living nearby.

“I’m a religious guy, and there are ten rules in life, and one of them is: Don’t do unto your neighbors what you wouldn’t want done unto yourself,” he said.

The worst part, he said, is seeing state and federal taxes used to fund the growth of large dairy factory farms. The presence of those operations create road damage and lower property values.

“I’m sick and tired of taking my tax dollars and sending them in to ruin my community,” Ty said.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

After Sam found out about the intended expansion of the nearby factory farm, Ridge Breeze Dairy, she started doing research, talking with neighbors, and posting questions to different Facebook pages. Some people responded to her posts with criticisms, accusing her of being anti-farmer and calling her a tree hugger.



Others agreed to join her efforts. They connected with Bill Hogseth of GrassRoots of Western Wisconsin (GROWW), who offered assistance and workshops to get organized.

“I did every single training possible to learn how to organize and lead,” said Sam.

The group started a petition asking Pierce County to put a moratorium on factory farm expansions. They got 2,000 signatures and a committee hearing from the county board. Remarkably, three of the five committee members voted yes. Sam and Ty felt as though they were building momentum.

The next morning, something strange happened. Huge semi-truck tankers filled with liquid manure from Ridge Breeze Dairy’s farm started hauling manure to nearby fields for spreading. Normally the trucks use a county road designed to support their weight. But on this day, the day after the moratorium passed, the trucks used the narrow, partially gravel backroad on which Sam and Ty lived. The trucks ran for 13 hours straight, their tires grinding into the pavement and gravel.

“I couldn’t make it out of my driveway. My house sounded like an airport. It reeked,” said Sam. She called the chair of the Rock Elm council and complained. The

town fined the factory farm \$10,000 for the damage.

At the next Pierce County committee meeting, originally scheduled to discuss details of the moratorium, one of the “yes” votes reversed to “no.” The moratorium was dead.

SHOWING UP

Losing the moratorium was a real blow. But they’d had setbacks before. From the very beginning, Sam and Ty weren’t sure they’d be able to do anything at all. Sometimes, Sam would hit a wall and need to take a break, so Ty would take up the slack, he said. Other times, he would need a break and Sam would jump in. “We would go back and forth,” Ty said.

By early 2024, Ridge Breeze Dairy had applied for the necessary permit from the Department of Natural Resources to expand. A public hearing, to be conducted exclusively over Zoom, was scheduled for July. Sam and Ty worked with volunteers from GROWW and People Protecting Pierce to get the word out. They also rented the auditorium at Elmwood High School, so that folks without internet could attend. About 150 people showed up in person, with another 300 registering online. More

than 30 people provided oral comments over four hours. All of those who testified spoke in opposition to the expansion, except for one paid lobbyist, who spoke in favor.

Sam said she had way too much coffee that day and couldn’t stand still. After each person spoke, the room erupted in applause. For Sam, it was one of the highlights of her life. “I was just like, I can’t believe that we pulled this off,” she said.

ACCOUNTABILITY

On February 20, 2025, the DNR approved Ridge Breeze Dairy’s expansion. However, local communities may challenge the permit. In the meantime, the nearby town of Maiden Rock passed a livestock ordinance to hold factory farms accountable for road damage and other issues. Other towns are moving to do the same, as strong bi-partisan coalitions band together to resist factory farm and farm gas expansion. Sam and Ty are resolved to push forward. They’ve developed deep friendships and believe that the work they’re doing is for the greater good.

“So many people in this community are scared,” said Sam. “It’s been hard, but this was meant to happen to help people have a voice. I’m proud of that.”

To learn more about factory farms and factory farm gas and how to join people like Sam and Ty, who are working for responsible agriculture in Wisconsin, see the resources linked in Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network at <https://www.sustainruralwisconsin.org/>.

We are all relatives

By Scott Fulton

Allow me to start by introducing myself in the Ojibwe language, in the way I have been taught:

Aaniin indinawemaaganidog—Greetings my relatives!

Scott Fulton indizhinkaaz—I am called Scott Fulton.

Gaawiin nindoodoodemisii—I do not have a clan. This also signifies I have no ancestors who are indigenous to Turtle Island or what we call North America.

Wisconsin nindoonjibaa—I am from Wisconsin, which is named from the word *Meskonsing*, meaning “river running through a red place” in the language of the Miami Nation.

Gaa-niiyogamaag nindaa—I live in the place of four lakes, which the Ho-Chunk call *Teejop* (also meaning “four lakes”), and which we call the Madison area.

This form of introduction starts with an acknowledgement that we are all relatives. As Friends, of course, we have come to see that there is that of the Light in all human beings, and that we are all, in this way, relatives to each other. However, our Indigenous relatives ask us to acknowledge, as well, our deep kinship with all the living beings around us—the animals, the plants, the invisible microbes, and even the rocks and soil, the air and the waters.

This introduction also, importantly, includes where I am from, where I now live. Before our colonial settler ancestors arrived in this place, it had been for many millennia a beloved and sacred home for the Ho-Chunk people. The places where all of you now live were also ancestral homes for various indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

It is important that we acknowledge this fact because of the tragic and violent history of forced displacement and assimilation of all the indigenous peoples here, which opened these places for our ancestors and for us to live in and to own. It is a sad history in which our Quaker forebears played an important and, I hope we can acknowledge, largely misguided role.

We acknowledge this history not so that we can feel guilty and ashamed of what our own ancestors did, but so that we may learn its important lessons. One of those lessons is that when we believe that our own ways and beliefs are fundamentally superior to those of others, and that others must adopt our ways and beliefs to be saved, we miss the opportunity to learn from the wisdom they possess.

We are now in a time of fearful crisis both in our human societies and in the community of all the living beings with whom we share the Earth. It is becoming more and more obvious that our own ways and beliefs

are, at the very least deeply, deeply flawed. Those who lived on this land before us are still here, and they are speaking to us today, ever more strongly and clearly. We acknowledge that it is now time for us to listen to them and to take their message to heart—that we are all deeply related, human and other-than-human beings alike, that all our relatives are worthy of equal respect, and that we all share a sacred responsibility for reciprocal love and care for each other.

Miigwech bizindawiyeg!—Thank you all for listening to me!

POSTSCRIPT

I was asked to present a personal land acknowledgement to the spring Northern Midwest regional gathering of Quakers (Northern Yearly Meeting). The writing of this was very much an experience of something happening through me by the action of the Spirit. I hope that others find this as useful as it has been for me.

For years, I have felt a strong leading to learn as much as possible about the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (North America) and to share those learnings with others. This leading arose from a recently increased awareness about the historic and ongoing systemic racism and exploitation of people, which certainly affects Native Americans, and from a long involvement with conservation, ecological restoration and stewardship, and nature education. The indigenous cultures are based on a worldview of respectful relationships with a vast community of other beings to whom we have a reciprocal responsibility for love and care—very different from a worldview of nature and land as resources to be owned and exploited by individuals. This millennia-old indigenous worldview is highly integrated into their values, languages, and cultures, which are still alive and speaking to us today.

Scott Fulton is a member of the Madison Friends Meeting—Quakers

<https://www.Madisonfriends.org>

CHOOSE DEMOCRACY

Choose Democracy was recently co-founded by Quaker activist and trainer Daniel Hunter to help people fight the current administrative coup. They offer resources and advice to help us find our paths to resist, remain grounded, and thrive during these critical times.

In one email update, Daniel shares “Something every single person fighting authoritarians told us: Protect your psychology. Let your heart stay soft. Their aim is to wear you down.” Learn more at <https://choosedemocracy.us/>.

—Vicki Berenson, member of Madison Friends Meeting (<https://www.madisonfriends.org>)

Baraboo Reads — *The Sum of Us*

In these days of political uncertainty, divisiveness, and shifting realities, the book discussion this February of Heather McGee's book, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, was a much-needed exercise in building and strengthening community through education, conversation, and connections.



Thirty-five community participants spent five evenings together discussing the costs of racism, led by Dr. Rainey Briggs. Every participant received a free copy of the book, and was nourished each evening with a delicious dinner provided by local, and inority-owned businesses.

SOME QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS:

“I feel like my beliefs were strengthened! [Dr. Rainey Briggs] was very insightful and there was so much information on hope and how we can change, so it empowered me to do more and strengthened my opinions/beliefs.”

“I have learned so much from this book and feel like I have so much more compassion and understanding of people different than me.”

“I feel more motivated to have conversations with others. I felt like I didn't agree with others in discussion, so being in this group has made me more confident in having these kinds of conversations.”

“I was completely surprised by all the impacts of racism that have affected both people of color and white people throughout history-my mind was opened ... it is much better to know than not.”

“I plan to continue this work by building bridges, learning about other cultures and issues they face, supporting marginalized groups and speaking out about injustices.”

Baraboo Reads was planned by the Baraboo Acts Coalition (<https://www.Barabooactscoalition.org>), the Carnegie Schadde Memorial Public Library, and the Baraboo Area Literacy Council. Thank you Dr. Rainey Briggs for leading the discussion, and a special thank you to Sara Jesse, Sara Roltgen, Joan Wheeler, Shannon Cowan, Beth VanCurine, Emily Reno, and Marcy Huffaker for all of the planning.



Thank you to Las Milpas, Green Vine, Jose's Mexican Restaurant, Mama Mia's, and Lightning New Rider for providing the meals.

This event was sponsored by Wisconsin Humanities, the Village Booksmith, and the Community Foundation of South Central Wisconsin. (Funded in part by a grant from Wisconsin Humanities, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.)

Democratic Socialists of America, Madison Chapter

It was amazing to get a jump start on a spring full of solidarity and see so many of you at the 2025 Madison Area DSA Chapter Convention on March 15! It was an incredible day of discussion and deliberation, and we made several decisions that will shape our chapter's direction for the next year, including the election of our next Executive Committee. Thank you everyone who came and brought your helping hands, exciting ideas, or hundreds of oranges! Read on for more about what was discussed, and what comes next for the proposals that passed – and the ones that didn't.

The war on workers is ramping up every day, and we know that the only thing that beats fascism is an organized working class. Everyone has an important role to play in the socialist movement, whether it's organizing in your workplace or neighborhood, or building a vibrant socialist culture where everyone is welcome. Now is a great time to get involved, to join DSA or recommit to paying dues, or come out to an event and bring a few friends. There are lots of ways to get involved in the weeks ahead, and we hope to see you soon!

<https://www.Madison-DSA.org>

Help us end youth homelessness!

The goal of Urban Triage's Unhoused Youth Initiative is to find and connect with individuals who are experiencing homelessness, establish meaningful relationships with them, and provide them with essential support. Once we receive permission from the City of Madison and the Youth Action Board, we will offer critical assistance, including transportation, hot meals, assessments, direct referrals, and resource access. Additionally, we have partnerships with landlords and property managers to provide permanent housing options.

OUR UNHOUSED YOUTH INITIATIVE INCLUDES:

Scattered Transitional Housing Units: Urban Triage supports unhoused youth or youth experiencing imminent housing insecurities. Through our partnerships and relationships with landlords, we will lease three to four apartment units in our name to shelter them. These units will be available to youth who need housing but require additional support to sustain housing. We understand that housing is just one aspect of their needs, so we also provide wraparound support and intensive case management to help them succeed.

Rapid Rehousing: Urban Triage collaborates with landlords and property management companies to provide housing to young people who are prepared for permanent housing but require additional support. We cover a portion of their rent, and they benefit from comprehensive support and other services.

Youth Drop-In Center: Our youth drop-in center is home to the Supporting Healthy Youth after-school programs we offer in partnership with the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) and Public Health of Madison and Dane County (PHMDC). Our center provides a wide range of services to support the needs of young people, including resume assistance, job placement support, trauma recovery, case management, and essential needs such as food and immediate needs. At Urban Triage, we are committed to serving those who are most vulnerable and filling gaps in services. We strive to create a comfortable, accepting, and stigma-free environment that values the humanity of all who come through our doors.

Emerging Adults: Our Emerging Adults Initiative is a collaborative effort with Dane County to run a six-bedroom transitional housing facility situated on the north side of Madison. The house will offer shared accommodation to young adults between 18 and 21 and comprehensive case management and wrap-around services for up to two years.

Urban Triage is known for developing and

implementing programs that serve vulnerable individuals and address service gaps. Over the past year, we have successfully provided housing services to 3,082 individuals and placed more than 225 individuals and families in permanent housing.

With over four years of experience supporting tenants and landlords, we are well-positioned to effectively and efficiently support vulnerable youth. Our established partnerships with landlords and other agencies will ensure the success of our Unhoused Youth Initiative.

<https://www.urbantrriage.org>

Voces de la Frontera

Driver licenses for all

In May 2005, under a rushed and undemocratic process, the U.S. Congress passed the REAL ID Act, requiring all states to check immigration status before issuing a driver's licenses or state ID, and to only issue driver's licenses to persons who are US citizens or have legal status.

Despite community efforts led by Voces de la Frontera to block implementation, the state of Wisconsin passed a state law in March 2006 entitled Act 126, which took effect on April 1, 2007, in anticipation of the REAL ID Act. Under Act 126, undocumented immigrants and people who do not have a social security number can no longer renew or obtain a driver's license or state identification. Since then, the struggle to restore state driver licenses and state IDs for immigrants has been an ongoing struggle in Wisconsin and nationally.

A lack of access to driver's licenses is not limited to undocumented individuals, however. Low-income US citizens, especially people of color, have also been affected by stringent laws that limit access to affordable driver's education and penalize those who do not have the funds to pay their traffic and parking tickets. In 2016, 60% of license suspensions were due to unpaid fines rather than infractions related to unsafe driving.

These harsh practices have disproportionately criminalized Black, Brown and low income working class drivers, fueling mass incarceration, voter disenfranchisement, and creating barriers for people to access healthcare, school and other vital services that require an ID.

Throughout his first four year term as Governor of Wisconsin, Governor Tony Evers has championed

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Poor People's Campaign Wisconsin

Join us to build the Third Reconstruction

Drawing on the transformational history of the First Reconstruction following the Civil War and the Second Reconstruction of the civil rights struggles of the 20th century, the Third Reconstruction is a revival of our constitutional commitment to establish justice, provide for the general welfare, end decades of austerity, and confirm that policies that center the 140 million poor and low-income people in the country are also good economic policies that can heal and transform the nation.

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, Repairers of the Breach and the Kairos Center have been a part of building a movement towards a Third Reconstruction for years. On May 20, the co-chairs of the Poor People's Campaign, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, joined Representatives Pramila Jayapal and Barbara Lee as they announced a non-partisan congressional resolution to support this movement, entitled: Third Reconstruction: Fully Addressing Poverty and Low Wages From the Bottom Up.

This historic effort comes as a response to years of movement-building and emerges from the pain and organizing power of the 140 million. It reflects an omnibus vision to restructure our society from the bottom up, recognizing that in order to build a true Third Reconstruction we must simultaneously deal with the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation and the denial of health care, militarism and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism that blames the poor instead of the systems that cause poverty.

It is one part of a broader movement to realize a Third Reconstruction, which we are building across the country in the Poor People's Campaign's 45 state

coordinating committees and network of more than 250 labor and organizational partners and hundreds of faith partners, and dozens of national faith bodies.

<https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/committee/wisconsin>

Driver licenses for all

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the restoration of driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants. Governor Evers included restoring driver licenses and IDs to immigrants twice in his two-year state budget proposals. But the gerrymandered, Republican-led State Legislature has blocked Evers's efforts to restore driver licenses for immigrants, voting it out of the state budget or opposing stand-alone legislation.

Winning drivers licenses for all would not just benefit immigrants, but all Wisconsinites. The Wisconsin Budget Project, an initiative of Kids Forward, noted in their Widen the Roads report the benefits of providing driver licenses to undocumented individuals, such as lower insurance costs for all drivers, greater access to gainful employment, and safer roads overall.

We continue to work with Governor Evers and pressuring the Wisconsin State Legislature to pass legislation restoring access to driver's licenses for all regardless of immigration status, and ending the practice of suspending licenses solely due to inability to pay fines.

To achieve this goal will require a year-round bottom up organizing effort to lobby our state legislators, continued participation in the electoral arena to support candidates that support access to driver licenses, and building alliances with others to challenge discriminatory policies that undermine public safety.

After decades of organizing, there is broad community support for restoring driver licenses for immigrants that cuts across party lines. We will fight until we win, to restore driver licenses for all with strong privacy protections that guarantees information won't be shared with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

<https://vdlf.org/>

Join Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice!

Suggested dues: \$35 Individual • \$52 Sustaining • \$45 Family • \$10 Fixed Income

\$50 Organization without paid staff • \$75 Organization with paid staff • Benefactor: any amount

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Join or renew online at <https://www.wnpj.org/membership>, or send checks payable to **WNPJ, PO Box 727, Madison, WI 53701. Thanks!**