



Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice

Network News

December 2020

It's Time to Build Unity!

by **Tim Cordon**, WNPJ Board President

Dear Partners in Peace and Justice: We at the Network are very excited about the projects we have taken on our growing connections around the state. Now with your help, we will continue to expand these connections, reach more organizations and build a network that represents all of us and brings us closer to the world we dream of.

We see this coming era as one of building unity and solidarity across our various causes. The dire state of our society, the way that our issues interconnect, and the fact that hundreds of groups are operating in isolated silos, led us to launch the Building Unity project. We believe that "Unity" is our best hope for leveraging the power we need to effect real change. As a statewide network committed to these principles for almost 30 years, we believe that WNPJ has an important role to play in shifting the direction of Wisconsin by building a movement that leaves nobody out.

Yes, things in our world have gotten extremely hard. Our very survival is at stake. We need deep organization and we need to promote leadership that is responsive to the challenges

Peacemaker of the Year:

Vincent Kavaloski
January 15, 1946-
September 10, 2020

Vince changed our lives and strengthened our work as he committed his teaching, writing,

speaking and research to peace and nonviolence. Even now, several months after his death in September, his words still guide us toward a global community.



Article on page 7

that we face. We must defund violence and the militarization of our world, meet human needs, end voter suppression, gerrymandering, the forces of big money in government, and stop the destruction of our natural world. We must address the structural racism that that is taking so many lives. We can no longer ignore the fact -- We have become extremely dysfunctional - a planet that is on the brink of social, economic, and ecological collapse. We are failing so many of our siblings and the next generations.

Knowing that the stakes are so high and that the outcomes of this election year have

never been more important, we gave our “everything” this year to turning out the vote.

BUILDING UNITY HITS THE ROAD

Board member and co-founder of the Building Unity project, Charlie Uphoff, purchased a 34-foot RV (the “Votemobile”) so that we could take our pro-democracy, voter engagement efforts on the road. As we entered 2020, we began preparing for a statewide pro-voting tour that we hoped would include voter engagement work, potlucks, and family-friendly activities in over 70 different communities throughout Wisconsin.



We launched the “Building Unity Tour” on the weekend of March 7th and 8th (International Women’s Day) with tour-stops at the Ho-Chunk House of Wellness and in the communities of Reedsburg, Baraboo, and Sauk City. Then, almost overnight, the coronavirus pandemic brought the tour to a screeching halt. In the weeks that followed we went from trying to postpone the spring elections to re-inventing the Building Unity Tour using virtual formats and our videography team. Our mission remained consistent - build unity, strengthen our statewide movement, and turn

out the vote.

With the volunteer help of Madison activist-artist Richard Jones, we covered the Votemobile with colorful banners and an interactive mural, and began moving it around the state as we hosted safely-distanced, outdoor gatherings and rallies as well as virtual gatherings. As we were just beginning to build unity in Milwaukee, George Floyd was killed and the Black Lives Matter movement took off like never before. We responded by turning one side of the Votemobile into a “Black Lives Matter” billboard that we continued to move around the state. In July and August, we took an extended tour around the state, connecting with new and old friends and urging all to get ready, get organized and make sure that we all turn out the vote.

Obviously, these efforts were well placed, but also obvious is the fact that our work is far from over. The task of keeping our grassroots movement work going is now more challenging than ever and we are going to need to pull together and get extremely creative and resourceful.

So, here is the bottom line:

We need **your** help, and we need it now.

We are mobilizing volunteers that have access to a phone and/or a computer. Please, write to our volunteer coordinator at office@wnpj.org if you can help with any of these priorities:

- **Create a powerful 2020 WNPJ Fall Assembly.** At the very least, plan on being with us via Zoom (phone or other device) **on Dec. 5th between 5:30 - 7:30** or any portion that you can attend. This event is an important part of our statewide call to action. Your help

will be greatly appreciated!

- **Help us work with non-partisan groups to turn out the vote in Georgia.** This will be a run-off for the last seats in the US Senate.

- **Defend Democracy by demanding “Fair Voting Districts!”** People should pick their leaders, not the other way around. Based on the 2020 Census, Wisconsin will be redrawing our voting districts. This time they need to be drawn in nonpartisan ways.

- **Build one statewide Rapid Response Phone Network** - ready to promote Non-violence, Justice, Democracy, and Sustainable Action! We know that more hard things are coming. We, as a united people’s movement, need to be able to respond quickly and efficiently. We need to organize and make it easier and less overwhelming for people to take united actions of support and solidarity.

***One thing that you can do right away, is to renew your commitment to our movement and this network that is so essential to bringing Wisconsin together!** Renew your membership today and, please, do so as generously as you are able. If you are a part of a group, consider joining as an individual as well. If you are an individual member, please ask your group to join or renew their membership.

With hopes of connecting with you at our Fall Assembly on December 5th and in the exciting months ahead—stay well and safe!



Interfaith Peace Working Group Joins WNPJ!

by **Jerry Folk**, Interfaith Peace Working Group and WNPJ Board Member

The Interfaith Peace Working Group (IPWG) is a new Member Organization of the WNPJ. The IPWG is made up of members of various faith communities and communities of conscience who believe in the sanctity of life and are committed to the struggle for a more just, sustainable, and nonviolent society. The particular mission of IPWG is twofold. First, we work to increase the knowledge and promote the practice of Gandhian nonviolence in the struggle for social, political, and environmental justice. Secondly, we work to demilitarize US society by advocating reductions in the US military budget and the demilitarization of local police departments and by educating faith communities and the general public about the severely adverse effects of many military projects on the environment.

We believe nonviolence is essential in the struggle for a just peace and that demilitarization is fundamental to every social and environmental issue in our society, because the nation will never find adequate resources to address any of the critical justice and environmental crises threatening us and our planet as long as 55-60 % of its discretionary funds are used for military purposes. We advocate that all reductions in military spending be used to address these crises. Second, we also believe demilitarization

is critical because the Military-industrial complex is the power on which all systems in our society ultimately depend to maintain and enforce the unjust *status quo*.

The IPWG publishes a quarterly online newsletter and maintains a webpage with information related to its mission. If you are interested in the work of the IPWG, we invite you to visit our website at www.interfaithpeacewg.org. If you want to receive the IPWG newsletter and IPWG's occasional alerts, scroll to the end of the website where there is a link that enables you to subscribe. We also invite you to join us in our work to promote nonviolence and demilitarization by signing up as a member and making a membership donation of not less than \$10.00 annually.

+++++

Building Rural Urban Solidarity to Transcend Our Tough Times

by **John E. Peck**: Executive Director of Family Farm Defenders and WNPJ board member

With a historic and contentious election cycle now in our rearview mirror, it is more important than ever to focus our sights on the future and how we can address the so-called rural urban divide. The politics of resentment are certainly genuine and worth understanding – a challenge that UW-Madison Political Science Prof. Katherine Cramer tackled in her book by the same name. But why many rural folks care little for urban elites is not easily

explained by the dominant two party system, nor does it fall along the conventional left/right spectrum. The “populist” sentiments of people in the Driftless Region, the North Woods, or the Fox Valley are often just as firmly espoused by people in larger cities like La Crosse, Milwaukee, and Green Bay.



Amazon Workers On Strike – May Day 2020

That is because rural and urban communities across WI actually have many more mutual interests than contrived differences. Relatives and friends of Jacob Pero on the Bad River Reservation, of Tony Robinson from Madison's East Side, or of Jacob Blake in Kenosha's Wilson Neighborhood have all been forced to confront and challenge the deadly consequences of systemic racism and police brutality in our state. The rural family in Kewaunee County whose well water is poisoned with factory farm manure runoff has a lot in common with an urban family in Milwaukee County who's city water is also toxic due to decades of lead contamination.

Lack of internet can be just as frustrating and disempowering for a family trying to access social services or navigate virtual education no matter where one lives. Rural and urban folks are just as interested in and supportive of basic needs like universal healthcare, public utilities, affordable housing, public schools, reliable postal delivery, public libraries,

community centers, public parks, to name but a few - and when stingy elected officials and greedy corporate executives collude to starve/sabotage and outsource/privatize such, people are bound to resist this latest enclosure of our collective commons.

In these trying moments, it is worth reflecting upon some of the inspirational episodes of grassroots solidarity that permeate the people's history of our state. When Joshua Glover was kidnapped by "slave catchers" in Racine back in 1854 and then taken in chains to the Milwaukee County Jail by federal marshals under the Fugitive Slave Act, who knew that hundreds of angry abolitionist immigrant farmers would promptly march on the city from surrounding counties, batter down the jail door, and then hide Glover for days on their homesteads until he could secretly board a Lake Michigan steamer bound for freedom in Canada? The Wisconsin Underground Railroad would save many others fleeing bondage in the years leading up to the Civil War - for more on this saga, check out the book, *Finding Freedom* by Ruby West Jackson and Walter T. McDonald.



Milwaukee Mural of Joshua Glover's Rescue & Escape

When seven people were killed in Milwaukee

in May 1886 by National Guard troops as part of the nationwide eight hour day struggle (now known as the Bayview Massacre), popular support for labor rights quickly spread across the state – leading to more strikes in the mills in Oshkosh, in copper mines and lumberjack camps in the North Woods, as well as in factories in Madison. Many UW-Madison students and faculty openly supported such labor struggles, leading to an elite backlash and a crude effort to fire one outspoken professor, Richard Ely. Fortunately, the UW Board of Regents rejected this idea and instead issued the now famous 1894 statement enshrined on Bascom Hall: *"Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the great state University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found."*

The 1930s Great Depression and Dust Bowl offered further solidarity opportunities across the state. The acclaimed conservationist, Aldo Leopold, organized desperate farmers and unemployed workers to restore eroded watersheds and reforest denuded landscapes across the Driftless Region – and the legacy of this effort is evident in places like Coon Valley today. Under the New Deal, farmers and consumers formed hundreds of cooperatives as an alternative to corporations, providing goods and services to their members at cost (with no profit motive). Wisconsin today remains a national epicenter for successful cooperative development. In 1933 when WI dairy farmers went on strike to demand a fair (parity) price for their milk, they were supported by urban allies who helped intercept clandestine milk shipments that were then dumped along the railroad tracks.

Fast forward to the 1960s – and, once again, Wisconsinites from all walks of life worked together to demand racial justice. John Kinsman, an organic dairy pioneer near Lime Ridge and founder of Family Farm Defenders, started Project Self Help and Awareness to foster inter-racial exchanges between rural farm kids in WI and their counterparts in MS – and these relationships flourished over decades, leading directly to 2006 when WI farmers joined post-Katrina recovery efforts, including the delivery of 12 donated tractors and other implements to their colleagues with the MS Association of Co-ops.

When Obreros Unidos organized a migrant farmworker march from Wautoma to Madison in 1966 they found much support in small towns along the way – the same was true when Father Groppi organized a “Welfare Mothers” march from Milwaukee to Madison in 1969. In the 1980s when native folks were under attack by racist hate groups for exercising their treaty rights, a diverse statewide coalition emerged to bear witness at the boat landings and engage in constructive dialogue and popular education to shift broader public opinion. For more on these cases of unity in struggle, read Patrick Jones’ book, *Selma of the North*, and Rick Whaley/Walt Bresette’s book, *Walleye Warriors*.

This solidarity history nourished the founding of the WI Network for Peace and Justice (WNPJ) back in 1991 on the eve of the Gulf War. Many folks across the state had already been challenging the military industrial complex (a dire term coined by Pres. Eisenhower) for decades, and continue to do so up to today with ongoing resistance to the Pentagon’s decision to base F-35 fighter jets out of the Truax Air Base. Just look at this short list of workshop topics from various

WNPJ gatherings over two decades ago: “Race Relations and the KKK in Rock County,” “Fair Trade Not Free Trade,” “The Urban Holocaust,” “Saving the Family Farm,” “Fighting the Ladysmith Mine,” “Converting to an Economy with a Conscience,” “Men and Women – Learning to Get Along,” “Countering the Militia Movement,” “Campaign Finance Reform,” “The Power of Co-ops” - sound vaguely familiar?



Solidarity Cows on Parade During the 2011 Pull Together Farmer Labor Tractorcade in Madison, WI

Without the mutual respect and solidarity connection built through this earlier activism, we would have never experienced the historic Capitol Occupation and statewide “Cheddar Uprising” of 2011, which culminated in the state’s largest protest ever on Sat. March 12th – when 150,000+ people gathered to greet the Pull Together Farmer Labor Tractorcade in support of collective bargaining rights and against austerity budget cutbacks. Similarly, we would not have witnessed so many family farmers and other allies heeding the call of Voces de la Frontera in 2017 to say “No Hate in the Dairy State” and publicly oppose ICE in its effort to detain, abuse, and deport undocumented farm/food workers that have become such a vibrant and integral part of our society.

As the ancient proverb goes, in crisis there is opportunity – and the synergistic combination of the structural failures revealed by this global pandemic on top of renewed protests against racial injustice offers all of us another chance to draw upon the solidarity strength of our common humanity. We need not fall victim to the weary “divide and rule” tactics of those who claim to have power over the rest of us.



No Hate in the Dairy State Rally – WI State Capitol

Whether you are supporting racial justice efforts to hold police accountable and shift more public funds to vital social services; whether you are pushing to end gerrymandering and resist voter suppression efforts leading up this election and beyond; whether you are preparing to join future protests against extreme fossil fuel extraction schemes and taking other actions in support of climate justice; whether you are supporting food sovereignty efforts to reclaim food as a basic human right and not leave it in the hands of the hunger industrial complex – there is a welcome home for you in this growing solidarity movement. And if you choose to join us, you will also find many old and new friends and allies along this better path towards a brighter world.

The statewide Building Unity campaign of WNPJ is one great avenue to get involved in this work. For more info visit: www.wnpj.org

WNPJ names Vincent Kavaloski Peacemaker of the Year

by **Mary Kay Baum** WNPJ board secretary

Professor Kavaloski spent 25 years of his life-long teaching career at Edgewood College in Madison. His award-winning courses included topics like the History and



Philosophy of Nonviolence, Living the Good Life, the United Nations, the Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King.

But let us remember that his words were directly informed by his own history of nonviolent actions. He was part of a peace delegation to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. There he smuggled out a record of the unjust trial of the imprisoned president of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, ultimately resulting in the prisoner’s freedom.

For several summers in the mid-1980s, Vince, his wife Jane H Kavaloski and their children taught for UNESCO in Poland where they witnessed the nonviolent resistance of the Poles living under Martial Law and the secretly thriving Solidarity Movement. Later, with his wife Jane, he also taught and studied nonviolence in Denmark and the former Czechoslovakia.

In the early 1990s, Vince and Jane led an interfaith delegation to the Middle East to meet with groups committed to nonviolence and reconciliation.

Moved by the mounting environmental crisis, Vincent and Jane led study tours to Central America on the interdependence of the coral reefs and rainforests, and their importance in planetary survival.

Vincent promoted an understanding of the connection between peace and justice issues at home and abroad. Jane and Vince were deeply appreciated as co – directors of the “Ecumenical Partnership for Peace and Justice” for the Wisconsin Council of Churches.



Their home for 37 years was in the uplands of rural Wisconsin. There Jane, Vince and children lived in an intentional eco-community

devoted to peace and harmony, which became an organizational member of WNPJ.

They organized “Grassroots Citizens for Peace” and that became a platform for organizing peace oriented workshops, study series, book groups and vigils. Jane and Vince also facilitated this group becoming an organization member of WNPJ.

Annually Vincent was a speaker at the “Lanterns for Peace” event, held in commemoration of the bombings of the Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These events started with a cross generational potluck while hopeful designs were added to the lanterns, and music, poetry and children's

stories were shared. At dusk, 90-100 hand-colored paper lanterns, linked loosely together were pulled slowly out into Twin Valley Lake by a silent canoe. As the darkness deepened, the long arc of glowing lights illuminated the night, symbolizing hope for a world of peace, free of nuclear weapons.

Stephen Braunginn told us how he first met Vince. Stephen, as an African American who had been active in civil rights, was isolated in rural Richland County. He was surprised to hear there was a local course on Gandhi and Martin Luther King. You guessed who was teaching it!

And beyond that, Vince and Jane were already involved in John Kinsman’s summer exchange program called “Project Self-Help and Awareness”. African American youth from Mississippi spent time on farms in Wisconsin and Wisconsin farm youth went south shifting their worldview. It was in open defiance of Jim Crow segregation and widespread racist hatred that this kind of empowering rural merger even happened. Stephen called Vince necessary to these transformative moments.

Vincent was deeply committed to youth in his family and abroad. He supported his students and their interests in human rights and justice through the Amnesty International Club and the United Nations Club. For more than twenty years, Vince took hundreds of high school and college students to the U.N. in New York City. In 2013 the Dane County Chapter of the United Nations honored Vincent with their Global Citizen Award.

Vince was a founding member of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, a state-wide higher education consortium dedicated to peace education and

activism. He was a board member of the American Friends Service Committee. Always a lover of dialogue, Vincent initiated a Socratic Café and co-facilitated “Understanding One Another,” a diverse group convened for respectful listening.

Jane and Vince were also active with the Interfaith Peace Working Group (IPWG), made up of members of various faith communities and communities of conscience who are committed to the struggle for peace, justice, and care of creation. IPWG's mission is to increase the understanding of nonviolence in faith communities and communities of conscience. They advocate for significant reductions in U.S. military spending and for those funds to be used to address urgent human and environmental needs.

The “good life,” Vince reflected in response to Plato’s and Socrates’ writings, “is a decent life respectful of justice, honesty, and friendship.” “Death” he mused, “is like departing a wonderful feast. One departs filled with gratitude and joy for the gifts of beauty, love, and life. The feast of love comes to an end, friends depart, and music fades away. We take our leave at last with overflowing hearts and stride out alone into the night.”

It is clear that Vince and his commitments remain more necessary than ever with us today.

There are some few precious things that
Death cannot destroy
Lies cannot corrupt
Violence cannot defeat
Suffering cannot overwhelm
Money cannot buy

There are,
and always have been,
and always will be,
some few precious things.

What are some of these precious things?
The mighty winds of love,
The hunger for justice,
The sustaining warmth of simple
kindness,
The ineffable joy of peace,
The thirst for understanding.

There are these few precious things,
hidden amidst the horror and
delusions and suffering of the world.

Never let anyone,
no matter how powerful,
convince you otherwise
and thereby dump you into
the desert of nihilism and despair.

Because living deeply shows
there really are these few redeeming
things that
Death cannot destroy
Lies cannot corrupt,
Violence cannot defeat
Suffering cannot overwhelm
Money cannot buy.

There are some few precious things —
love, justice, kindness, peace,
understanding

And they save our souls
in the infinite waters of
divine love.

Vincent Kavaloski, Sept 2020

Please join us on **Saturday, December 5th**, for the **2020 WNPJ Annual Fall Assembly**

A Celebration of Gratitude and Recognition



Register to get Zoom links at wnpj.org/2020-fall-assembly - **Registration is free to all!**

Tentative schedule:

- **5:30pm** - most of the business portions of the assembly.
- **6:10 Program of gratitude and recognition**, in which we will honor the late Vince Kavaloski, the *2020 WNPJ Peacemaker of the Year*, and others who have made a huge difference this year.
- **6:30 - Representatives of member organizations** will report on their efforts and how we as a network can best support them. If your group would like to present during this period, your brief report would be so appreciated!
- **7:00– Community discussion** about the Network, our movement, our priorities for the year ahead, and the election of our 2021 Board of Directors.

Members and friends will be free to socialize after the formal program.

Contact office@wnpj.org to

- Let us know you wish to share your work at the Assembly;
- Suggest people in advance for our Board of Directors so we can better represent all the people of Wisconsin.

Current WNPJ Board:

Tim Cordon - Chair
Mary Kay Baum - Secretary
Charles Uphoff - Treasurer
John Peck
Jerry Folk

Volunteer Administrative

Team:

Vicki Berenson
Judy Miner

Update Your Membership!

You can renew online or donate at wnpj.org/Donate-Join*
or mail in this form.

WNPJ Membership Form		
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Update my information
Type of Membership (annual):		
<input type="checkbox"/> \$35 - Individual \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$52 - Sustaining (\$1/wk)	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$45 - Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$365 - A-dollar-a-day-for peace	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10 - Fixed Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 0 - Waived fee if you can't pay	
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor (any amount)		
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 - Organization without paid staff	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75 - Organization with paid staff	
Name (or Org contact person) _____		
Organization (if any) _____		
Address _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please send my next newsletter by email <input type="checkbox"/> Send me email News & Alerts		
E-Mail _____		
Please make checks payable to WNPJ PO Box 727 Madison, WI 53701		
- or pay online at wnpj.org/Donate-Join .		

Your contributions are essential to keep us going!

+++++

***Sign up for email News & Alerts or find out how to become a
monthly sustainer at wnpj.org/Donate-Join**

IT'S TIME!
Come to the 2020
WNPJ

Fall Assembly!
December 5, 5:30 pm
Details inside

Renew your
Membership
(or Join!)

Sign up for email News,
Events and Action Alerts
at wnpj.org/donate-join



Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, Inc.
PO Box 727
Madison, WI 53701-0727