

SONOMA COUNTY

peace press

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WAR IS
NOT THE
ANSWER!

Newsletter of the Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County,
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Deadline for Apr/May issue: April 18, 2022

Email articles in MSWord to peacentr@sonic.net

(put PEACE PRESS in all caps on subject line)

Word limit up to 700 words (negotiable).

Shorter pieces welcome about local actions and events.

Authors are encouraged to delineate fact from opinion and wherever possible to substantiate their facts with references.

We welcome poems but limited to approx. 30 lines.

EDITING POLICY

The Editorial Collective selects articles that serve the movement for peace and justice in a positive way. Articles are edited for clarity, syntax, grammar, length and spelling. If needed, authors will be contacted to assist with editing. Submissions must contain author's name, address, phone number, word count and a brief – one or two sentence bio. Decisions about editing fall within these guidelines and are the final judgment of the Peace Press editorial collective.

Articles are the opinion of the author unless otherwise noted.

CALENDAR ITEMS

Events on topics of social justice, environmental, and related items to be placed in the PJC weekly email calendar, can be sent to peacentr@sonic.net
Include CALENDAR (in caps) on subject line.

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Rebel Fagin, Earl Herr, Kathleen Finigan, Cheryl King, Attila Nagy

DESIGN On The Wall Graphics

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To receive the PJC weekly Social Justice e-newsletter, or to schedule an appointment, contact us through our website: PJCsoco.org

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Black History and Women's History

Celebrated in Sonoma County in the Months of February and March

Shekeyna Black

"The human race has one effective weapon, and that is laughter."

– Mark Twain

Forty-six years ago, the United States officially recognized Black History Month.

President Gerald R. Ford's Message on the Observance of Black History Month:

February 10, 1976

In the Bicentennial year of our Independence, we can review with admiration the impressive contributions of black Americans to our national life and culture.

One hundred years ago, to help highlight these achievements, Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History. We are grateful to him today for his initiative, and we are richer for the work of his organization.

Freedom and the recognition of individual rights are what our Revolution was all about. They were ideals that inspired our fight for Independence: ideals that we have been striving to live up to ever since. Yet it took many years before ideals became a reality for black citizens.

The last quarter-century has finally witnessed significant strides in the full integration of black people into every area of national life. In celebrating Black History Month, we can take satisfaction from this recent progress in the realization of the ideals envisioned by our Founding Fathers. But, even more than this, we can seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.

I urge my fellow citizens to join me in tribute to Black History Month and the message of courage and perseverance it brings to all of us. (Source)

In honor of Black History Month, learn more about local organizations such as the Sonoma County Chapter of NAACP and Petaluma Blacks for Community Development. The latter whose "vision is to help make our community free of hate and get rid of those issues that divide us based on color. (Source)

The founding families first gathered in 1978 and, according to their website, "In 1979, the name Petaluma Black for Community Development was chosen as the official name of the group." This renowned local organization was created just a few years after President Ford declared the United States' official observance of Black History Month. The Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County selected PBCD to be the recipients of the Community Organization

Award at our Annual Awards presentation in 2019.

Be sure to support local BIPOC businesses all year: "[Black, Native, POC, and POC-immigrant Owned Restaurants and Businesses in SOCO](#)"

Women's History Month, recognized nationally, had its humble beginnings in Sonoma County when a 'small but mighty' local group envisioned and advocated for formal acknowledgement of the contributions of women to the fabric and history of the Country. Thus the National Women's History Project was created; whereby, the tapestry that weaves its way through the lives of all women is celebrated annually in March. It is to those courageous women that we owe gratitude for the fact that in 1987, "Congress declared March as [National Women's History Month](#) in perpetuity."

According to the National Women's History Alliance website, "The 2022 Women's History theme, 'Providing Healing, Promoting Hope,' is both a tribute to the ceaseless work of caregivers and frontline workers during this ongoing pandemic and also a recogni-

The PJC will be making and distributing a hot soup dinner to houseless folks living on the streets of Santa Rosa, on Monday, February, 28.

tion of the thousands of ways that women of all cultures have provided both healing and hope throughout history."

The PJC will be making and distributing a hot soup dinner to houseless folks living on the streets of Santa Rosa on the last day of February, Monday the 28th. You can [make a donation to this project](#) via the donate tab on our website or by mailing in a check to 467 Sebastopol Ave, Santa Rosa CA 95401. Contact us if you would like to donate a sleeping bag or tent so our team of Volunteers can get them to the people who need them.

The Peace & Justice Center was awarded a COVID-19 Small Business Relief Grant from the State of California and we are using the monies to pay for a new part-time position for six hours per week. The ideal candidate will serve as both Administrative Assistant as well as the DEI Advocate. DEI stands for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. [Here is a good resource to learn more about DEI standards.](#)

Please [contact Executive Director Shekeyna Black](#) for the job description and application requirements via the contact page on our website. 🌱

So.Co. Board to Revise County Living Wage Ordinance

Martin J. Bennett

The Board of Supervisors passed a Living Wage Ordinance in 2015, requiring that the County and large county contractors pay their workers \$15 an hour. The law also mandates that the Board annually consider applying a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Moreover, the Supervisors instructed staff to meet with advocates to develop language for additional provisions approved in principle.

Five years, three fires, and one flood later, the Board will soon complete their deliberations.

By revising the law, the Supervisors can make the County, the largest employer and contractor in the North Bay, a model employer and demonstrate their commitment to addressing structural inequality and systemic racism embedded in the labor market.

Since 1995, more than 120 cities and counties nationwide, including Sebastopol, Sonoma, Petaluma, and 40 others in California, have enacted living wage laws in response to soaring inequality and the vast expansion of low-wage employment. Fundamental to this grassroots movement is the principle that taxpayer funding should not create poverty-wage jobs: every resident deserves a living wage that enables workers to support their families without relying on government assistance.

In Sonoma County in 2021, according to the United Way of California, a self-sufficiency or living wage is \$23 an hour for two parents, each working full-time to support two children and pay for rent, health care, food, childcare, transportation, and taxes.

The most recent US Census data show that between 1980 and 2018, inflation-adjusted wages stagnated or declined for the bottom 60 percent of all workers in the County. For the lowest 20 percent, wages dropped by more than ten percent. Then, between 2000 and 2018, gross annual rents climbed by 25 percent, but renter incomes grew by just 2 percent a year.

Thus, low-wage workers across the County are squeezed and struggling to make ends meet.

They face housing overcrowding, eviction, displacement, and homelessness, compounded by the COVID public health emergency. Disproportionately, low-income, Latinx, and other minorities are the most impacted by economic dislocation and COVID.

Consequently, a broad coalition of every major labor, environmental, and faith-based

organization in the County has called for a complete overhaul of the ordinance to include:

First, the federal and state minimum wage purchasing power has eroded over time because neither Congress nor the state legislature has required an automatic annual COLA. Applying a six-year COLA will boost the living wage to more than \$17 an hour. Sebastopol, which since 2004 has annually approved a COLA, now has set its Living Wage at \$21.57 an hour.

Second, the county ordinance currently affects 1100 workers employed by the County and large county contractors. Proponents urge that the Board expand coverage to include the county fair and airport – potentially doubling the number of workers affected. Nearly all

of these workers – janitorial, landscaping, mental health, park aides, transit, security and homeless services workers – are essential workers who cannot work from home. The majority are workers of color, women, and new immigrants.

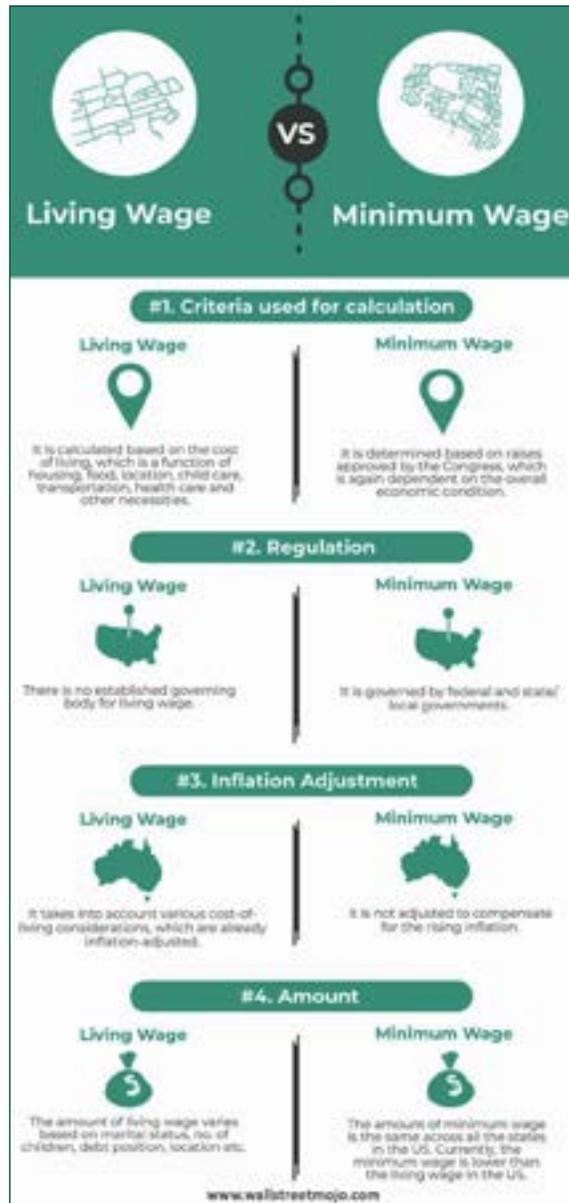
Finally, a completely revised ordinance should include 12 paid sick days annually for covered workers; a more robust worker retention provision for employees of a county contractor whose contract is not renewed; and a responsible bidder provision mandating that large county contractors maintain an excellent record of compliance with federal and state labor, health and safety and environmental laws.

It is also crucial to recognize the effect of our local campaigns on state and national minimum wage policy. After the 2012 strikes by fast-food workers in New York demanding \$15 an hour and a union, living wage campaigns merged into the national “Fight for \$15”. That includes multiple campaigns to raise the wage floor, such as 45 high-cost cities and counties that have approved \$15 (phased-in) minimum wage laws raising wages for all low-wage workers (for example, Sonoma, Petaluma, and Santa Rosa in 2019); a successful 2018 strike by union hotel workers in ten cities against Marriott, the world’s largest hospitality company; and an ongoing campaign to form a union by Amazon workers that started in Bessemer, Alabama in 2020.

The Fight for \$15 has exposed the deplorable conditions of low-wage workers and helped shift public opinion to pressure state legislatures to raise their minimum wage. As a result, beginning with California in 2016, eleven states and the District of Columbia, representing 40 percent of the US workforce, have boosted their minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and most mandate an annual COLA.

According to a recent Pew Research Center poll, 62 percent of Americans favor raising the current \$7.25 an hour federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. President Biden supports the Raise the Wage Act to increase the federal minimum to \$15 by 2025. If the Democrats enlarge their majorities in the Senate and House during the 2022 mid-terms, they will undoubtedly enact a \$15 federal minimum wage.

Martin J. Bennett is Instructor Emeritus of History at Santa Rosa Junior College and a Research and Policy Associate for UNITE HERE Local 2850.



Explosive Charges of Systemic Racism, Brutality in the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office



Kathleen Finigan

Posted January 12, 2022,
published by *Sonoma Valley Sun*

The Dec. 10 issue of *The Nation* features a penetrating article by Tom Gogola, an award-winning journalist and former congressional district staffer here in Sonoma County. The piece, entitled “Systemic Sadism in the Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office,” refers to “3 Seconds in October – the Shooting of Andy Lopez,” a powerful documentary by Petaluma’s Ron Rogers who revealed new details about the tragically unnecessary death of 13-year-old Andy Lopez, who was shot dead by deputy Erick Gelhaus.

The film has screened several times on local PBS stations and is scheduled for its national debut on PBS on January 22.

The documentary also “unflinchingly” digs into the “systemic racism in the SCSO” and “reinforces the view that the force has a problem with equal-opportunity systemic sadism in its ranks,” according to Gogola’s article. Most Sonoma County residents are aware of the “yard counseling” torture forced on jail inmates, the shooting deaths of several individuals such as Jeremiah Chass, a 16-year-old who was experiencing a psychotic break and was killed by deputies who riddled his body with seven shots, and Glenn Swindell, a mentally ill man who was holed up in his attic and killed himself after the Sheriff’s SWAT team lobbed round after round of chemical agents into the attic and then battered through a wall in the house in what was called a “full scale military assault.” Officer Mark Essick was in charge of that operation.

Other notable tragedies in what *The Nation* story refers to as the “post-Lopez parade of savagery and torture” are the horrific cases of a man who was under arrest for a DUI and tasered 23 times in less than 30 minutes and the 2019 head-bashing, taser-ing and carotid hold death of David Ward by Deputy Charlie Blount, all captured in video recordings. Of all these cases Blount is the only officer to face charges; his trial is ongoing now.

This SCSO is also responsible for an excessive number of deaths in custody, now up to 12, the highest number of such deaths in the Bay Area. Among the others, a mentally incompetent suicidal inmate in the jail’s mental health unit was returned to that unit after being hospitalized for swallowing various inedible things such as a cardboard milk container and cellophane. He was given a sandwich, left alone, unobserved and subsequently found to have suffocated himself by stuffing the sandwich down his windpipe.

“He appears to have died after eating a sandwich,” Sheriff’s Office spokesman Sgt. Spencer Crum said. While ignoring the extreme negligence that led to this man’s death, Crum added, “We extend our condolences to his family and friends.” [*note: see sidebar below]

A new federal lawsuit against the Sheriff has just been filed in the October 2020 death of a young female in custody, Amber Marcotte, who was found dead in her cell. According to the coroner’s report, the cause of death was “acute fentanyl intoxication.” At the time, the jail was closed to all visitors because of the Covid pandemic. Therefore, the source of the drug “could only have come from a Sonoma County employee or contractor,” states the lawsuit. The suit goes on to charge that the Sheriff and County were “knowingly providing insufficient security and drug interdiction measures at the jail, thus placing inmates in danger.”

The Sheriff’s Office declared the case to be “without merit.” Attorneys for the family countered by pointing out that incoming inmates “are supposed to be searched thoroughly and comprehensively before they get to their cell. It’s clear to us that there’s a failure somewhere in the obligation to keep drugs out of jail and we’re very disappointed in the county’s flippant response

that ‘it wasn’t us, it was an inmate.’” They also stressed the pressing need for an independent investigation of the case. “You shouldn’t be investigating yourself – that’s the essence of lawlessness.”

It must be noted that Asst. Sheriff Eddie Ingram has been in charge of running the jail since the summer of 2020; prior to that he was responsible for directing internal investigations of matters just like this one. Reports from the Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLERO) fault the inadequacy of the Sheriff’s internal investigations as well as notably deficient jail management.

IOLERO directors have consistently cited the Sheriff’s Office for a culture that celebrates white supremacy and extremism demonstrably seen in the excessive force and harassment meted out to people of color. The most recent report echoes those of the past: The Sheriff’s Office should “consider adopting a policy disavowing white supremacy and extremism and prohibiting employee speech and association that promotes racist or extremist ideology.” For example, Sgt. Spencer Crum, now retired but still employed in that Office as an Extra Help hire, was found to have posted racial slurs on his Facebook page. One was an image of Joe Montana in which the caption read, “Where’s Kaepernick? I need my car washed.” The Sheriff reportedly said that he wouldn’t interfere with Crum’s personal page post.

Over the past 20 years, settlement costs in payouts for the Sheriff’s excessive force and wrongful death cases have added up to a shocking \$20 million. After careful analysis of the past decade, the *Press Democrat* concluded that it was no surprise when in September 2020 the Sheriff’s liability insurance premiums skyrocketed from \$3.2 million a year to \$5.9 million, a 46% hike, the highest rate among all nine counties in the Bay Area. The county paid out \$6.6 million

Explosive Charges...see page 8

A Crossroad for Law Enforcement Accountability in Sonoma County

Susan Lamont

For decades, those within and without the Peace & Justice Center have been working to end the problem of law enforcement violence and to create accountability and community oversight. It has been a constant struggle across the country with less to show for it than we'd like. The national

Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLE-RO). Under the directorship of Jerry Threet, the office was laying a foundation for effective work, though it was severely hampered by serious underfunding and understaffing, aggressive behind-the-scenes pushback from the Sheriff's Office and work to limit its mission by Supervisors David Rabbitt and Shirlee Zane.

When Jerry Threet retired, things took a turn for the worse and all that background effort by the Sheriff and unsupportive supervisors resulted in the appointment of a ringer – one who enters a competition, in this case for a job, under false pretenses. In the case of Karlene Navarro, that meant someone who was applying to benefit an office and the public, while, in fact, intending to limit it. In an interview given before Navarro had begun work, Sheriff Essick expressed his pleasure that she was going to change the direction of IOLE-RO.

At her first public meeting, Navarro announced that the Community Advisory Council (CAC), the community's link to IOLE-RO charged with reviewing law enforcement policy, engaging with the public for input and making recommendations for improvement, would no longer be doing any of that work. Sheriff Essick and Supervisors Rabbitt and Zane had made clear that they wanted no public involvement and no recommendations for change and Navarro's was the hand that

tried to make that a reality. This role of the CAC was preserved thanks to consistent activism from the public and Threet's appointees to the CAC.

Additionally, at each public meeting, Navarro whined about what a mess she had been left by Threet and heaped criticism on both the members of the CAC and the public. After several such meetings, the members of the CAC called her on it and demanded that she stop shaming everyone. She also whined (it is the only appropriate word) that she didn't have enough money and staff to do the work. She was correct, but she gave no such benefit of the doubt to Threet, only to herself. Threet had asked for more money and staff and had been denied. The "ringer" got what she asked for and still she complained and made excuses for consistently late work.

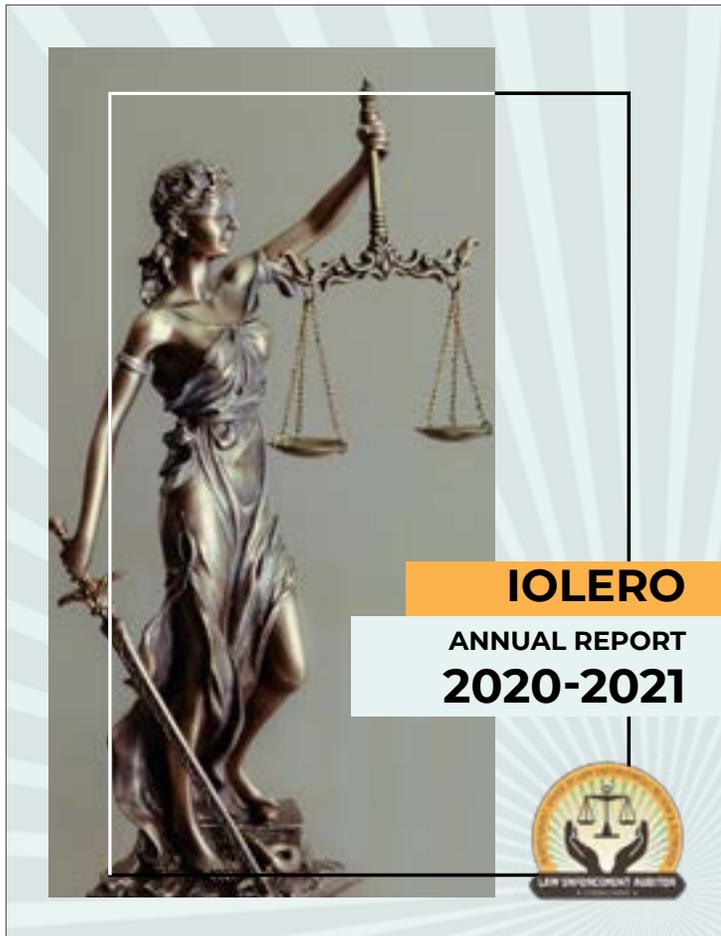
In the meantime, Navarro terminated the original members of the CAC and appointed her own more acquiescent members. All institutional memory was lost except among those of us who had consistently attended meetings.

More money and staffing would come her way with the passage of Measure P, which was created by Jerry Threet, members of the terminated CAC and activists – the very people she had shamed.

Up until this time, the public had been very active participants in CAC meetings. Besides having three minutes to speak on all items on the agenda, it was possible to raise one's hand and ask questions or make comments. And the public helped direct which areas of law enforcement policy were studied. Now, Navarro cut public comment to one period at the beginning of the meeting before anything had even been discussed. Again, it took persistent activism to claw back those opportunities to speak.

But for Navarro, the directorship of IOLE-RO was only a step toward her desired goal of being appointed a judge. She began looking by the time she was one year into her three-year contract. After two-and-a-half years, she finally got her wish and was gone in a matter of days. (By the way, you can vote against her in this June's primary.)

A Crossroads...see page 8



The Annual Report of IOLE-RO has been released. It's worth a read. You can find it here.

publicity, around the killings of, primarily, Black men, but others as well, and the increase in activism that grew out of it, has created opportunities for some progress. But Power is always pushing back and rushes into any lull in order to undermine that progress.

We're in such a lull right now in Sonoma County.

Through much persistence, we managed to force the creation of the Independent Law

Are Americans Aware of Which (supposedly) Sovereign Nations ‘Our’ US Military is Now Bombing?

Barry Barnett

The short answer: Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, and Libya.

Bombing seems to have stopped in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Probably unbeknownst to most Americans, the Empire and its allies and lackeys have been engaged in bombing, killing and maiming people in other countries on a daily basis. Over 326,000 bombs and missiles have rained down since 9/11, that all-too-convenient pretext for initiating the catchy-sounding War of Terror – whoops, War on Terror. That’s an average of 45 a day for 20 years; until recently, 20 a day on Afghanistan alone.

Trump loosened restrictions put in place by the president I call Barack Obomber – the latter, though, king of the drone strikes, the surprise! – sudden death appearing from nowhere, but quieting Americans, mostly unaware of any wars, with no boots on the ground. The former allowed his generals greater latitude in numbers of air strikes, drones, special forces operations, and midnight raids on Afghan homes. Consequently, the number and percentage of civilian casualties skyrocketed.

But there are boots on the ground. AFRI-COM (US Africa Command) is that portion of the world carved up by the US military. There are 54 nations in Africa – and AFRI-COM is in 53 of that continent’s countries.

Since 2008, American troops have seen combat in 13 African countries and conducted more than 1500 air attacks, commando raids, and other ground missions in Libya and Somalia alone, the two countries of greatest interest to the US military. These are also the two African nations where the US stands accused of killing civilians, but failing to take responsibility for their deaths.

US military has conducted 776 airstrikes in Libya since, with NATO, supporting rebels’ brutal murder of long-term leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 (guilty of the last straw - planning a pan-African currency, obviating the US dollar).

In Somalia, the long-running air campaign has carried out over 220 attacks since 2007, not counting ground operations.



Photo shows fragments of US bombs at site of Yemen funeral massacre. Photo, The Intercept.

COVID-19 has paused or reduced some deployments around the globe, but the number of troops in Somalia has hovered between 650 and 800 since 2019.

Biden, who never met a war he didn’t love, promised to eschew bombing upon inauguration. But just over a month later, he authorized a bombing campaign against facilities in Eastern Syria used by Iranian militia, in retaliation for rocket attacks against US troops in Iraq, who are considered the “occupation” there; the Iraqi government has rejected having American troops in its country, an order the US is defying – even after Trump assassinated Iranian top General Qasem Soleimani, Iraqi Deputy Commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, and eight others by drone bombing at Baghdad International Airport on 1/3/20. This act, risking war with Iran, was immediately condemned as violating international law by Agnes Callamard, UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings.

According to Medea Benjamin, the US military published monthly Airpower Summaries from Jan. 2004 to Feb. 2020, listing the number of bombs and missiles dropped on Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. In yet another executive order by Trump and continued by Biden – including such fiascos as immigration reform (“reform”) and withdrawal from the Obama-brokered Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) – this reporting was quashed, and the censorship has stood.

However, we do know how many bombs have been dropped by our so-called allies

on Yemen in 2020 and 2021: 7,622 and 310 (for Jan. 2021), for a total of 65,534 since 2009 on that world’s worst humanitarian disaster. (Is Gaza #2?)

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism reported in Feb. 2020, and Airwars continued with publishing Dec. 16, 2021, over 500 airstrikes by US Forces including CIA and US allies in Yemen since 2009. Since the Yemeni Civil War began on 9/16/14, the UN reports 377,000 deaths (223,000 from indirect causes), including 8672 civilians by coalition airstrikes, 3,154,572 displaced, and by Oct. 2018, 84,701+ children died from starvation, and 2556 people succumbed to an April 2017-Oct. 2018 cholera outbreak.

Notably, Trump vetoed a rare bipartisan agreement to end US support for the Saudi-led crucifixion of that poor country.

Pres. Biden promised to end US support, but as of this writing, nothing has been done.

Sources: Trump and Biden’s secret bombing wars: One thing that hasn’t changed, Medea Benjamin, Nicholas JS Davies, Salon 3/5/21; Qasem Soleimani: US strike on Iran general was unlawful, UN expert says, [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-56888888) 7/9/20; The US Brags About Health Aid to Africa While Bombing Some of its Most Vulnerable Nations, Nick Turse, The Intercept 5/22/20. 🍷

Barry Barnett is a political and environmental writer and activist, health professional, and musician. You can follow him on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/barnett123), and [Patreon](https://www.patreon.com/barnett123) with nearly 100 articles, satire/humor, poetry, and political fantasy stories, all free of charge to read. Feedback welcome at barrymuse123@gmail.com. Be well.

STUDENT SPEECHES GIVEN AT THE SONOMA COUNTY 41ST ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION ONLINE EVENT, JAN. 16

Students were given the theme chosen for the event to reference in their speeches, which for this year was a quote from Dr. King: “*Out of the Mountain of Dispair, a Stone of Hope.*”

Life is Like a Mountain

Ricardo Bolanos, 11th grade, Maria Carrillo High School

Life is like a mountain. Mountains come in many different shapes and forms, with multiple sharp edges, and with mostly rugged paths. You can look at these mountains with excitement or sometimes even dread. Just think of the thrill of starting your journey at the bottom of the mountain. The excitement of a new adventure carries you through but as you go up the pain begins to settle in your legs. It may not have been as easy as you may have imagined. You may fall and get hurt but when you reach the top you feel like you’ve made it to the finish line. You feel the passion in your heart yet you don’t realize you still got the way down to go.

The adventure down is a new and distinct experience with different challenges and triumphs. Within this mountain of life we also take small souvenirs. Similar to the ones you get at the airport on the way home from a trip and similar to the shells you take from the beach to remember your experience. We collect those stones as memories of what we’ve been through and we do the same throughout this mountain of life. But there are giants through this mountain as well. The story of Martin Luther King Jr. reminds me of the story of David and Goliath. No matter how small or young David may have been, he made a difference. No matter how much people doubted him, he made a difference. He grabbed that stone from his pocket and looked that giant in the eyes. The giant stared back and laughed yet David grabbed his stone and flung it and by doing so he

defeated the giant who had terrorized many.

Like David, Martin Luther King Jr. looked into the eyes of the giant of hate, the giant of discrimination, the giant of racism, and he swung the stone of hope, the stone of love, the stone of unity and struck the giant on the forehead. David knew who stood by his side. He knew that the God of creation supported his every step. Just like how Martin Luther King Jr. knew that the future generations of American people stood by his side. He knew that he was flinging his stone with the purpose of giving every individual an opportunity to live their dreams in this country.

We too can be Davids. Just like David and Martin Luther King Jr, we too can take down the giants stepping in front of our society, community, or in our personal lives. No matter how small you may feel. No matter how old or how young. No matter if you are in high school or not. Reach into your pocket today and take out that stone of hope within you. No matter how intimidating that giant might seem.

Let’s learn to be courageous like Dr. King and use our stones of love, hope, and unity to defeat any giant we may encounter on our path. If a small stone of trust, love, and unity defeated the giant that faced David and Dr. King, our stones can also make an amazing impact on our world too. Let us fling our stones of hope together into the forehead of the giant that may be standing in our way today. United we are stronger so let us all swing our stones together. 🌟

A Stone of Hope

Olivia Lindley, 11th grade, Maria Carrillo High School

Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope. Martin Luther King Jr said this on August 28, 1963, during his famous I Have a Dream speech.

But what does it mean?

There are many different interpretations of this quote; I will be presenting mine and here it is: I believe that this quote means to look past the dim present and to look forward to the hopeful and bright future.

The stone of hope being the people who want change, as the only way to get to that hopeful and bright future is to change the present. And every interpretation needs evidence so let’s start at the beginning, shall we?

America, it was founded on the people. It was founded on the belief that the people have what it takes to govern themselves. The governed, before the government “We the People of the United States” – those are the first lines of our own Constitution. And the

government needs ways to know what its people want to change, as peoples wants are always changing. That is why we have the Amendments, to change.

In the first Amendment it gives the people a way to tell the government what they want to change, expressed through the freedom of assembly and the freedom of expression. The way that people are able to present that change to the government is through social movements.

Social movements such as the #Metoo movement, the BLM movement and the minimum wage strike. But these aren’t new things; social movements have been around for a very long time. In the 1920s we had the women’s suffrage movement and in the 1960s we had the civil rights movements, led by Martin Luther King Jr. These movements saw what America lacked. They saw the injustice, the sexism, the poverty, and racism, and they stood up to change it. That is how they were able to generate change – by standing together with their fellow people to generate change in the government.

A Stone of Hope...see page 7

A Stone of Hope... from page 6

The Me-too movement was originally started in 2006, but it only gained popularity 11 years later in 2017, when a popular actress tweeted about her own sexual harassment experiences. Within the first 24 hours there was over 4.7 million uses of the hashtag. That is over 3,000 tweets per minute of people standing up to talk about their own sexual harassment experiences, and that number only grew as time went on and it gained popularity.

The Black Lives Matter Movement was created in 2013, and in 2020 alone there were estimated between 15 to 26 million people protesting on American streets, all shouting words of change – to change the government, to change society, and to change the people.

The minimum wage strike affected a lot of people, from workers to CEOs of companies. And that was able to generate change. They were able to change the previous \$7.25 minimum wage that has stood since 2009, to \$15 an hour by 2025.

Martin Luther King Jr. was able to see that. He was able to see that people joined together were able to generate change. That is the mountain of despair. The mountain of despair being society, be-

ing the present. The stone of hope being the people, who want the change, who can generate the change by joining together and standing up to create that change. Martin Luther King Jr was able to create that, and it was expressed through the 15th Amendment, which reads: The rights of the citizens of the United State to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

The chance for change is endless. You must remember that people always have a chance for change.

Even though the present day may seem grim, it may seem like we don't have the ability to change, that the world is always going to stand still like this. You always have to remember that the only way to present the change is by banding together. The Stone of Hope is the people who want change, who are brave enough to stand up for it. Remember whenever you watch the news or hear the terrible realities of today, you have to remember to stand up with each other.

And remember that Out of the Mountain of Despair...

A Stone of Hope. 🌿

Fly Like a Bird

Priscila Magallan, 11th grade, Elsie Allen High School

"**H**ope. Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without words and never stops at all." – Emily Dickinson

Hope is the power of being able to take a negative situation and convert it into something positive. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope." Yet despair is something that has always existed in society. Racism, negative stereotypes, inequality, Covid-19, the invasion of the capitol building, climate change, wildfires, poverty, global hunger, and violence are all problems that unfortunately face most of us today. We know these issues continue to exist, but they never seem to change for the better. Why? Why is it we cannot change our mountains of despair? That is what I have continually asked myself about my own personal life. Why am I unable to rid myself of my own hopelessness?

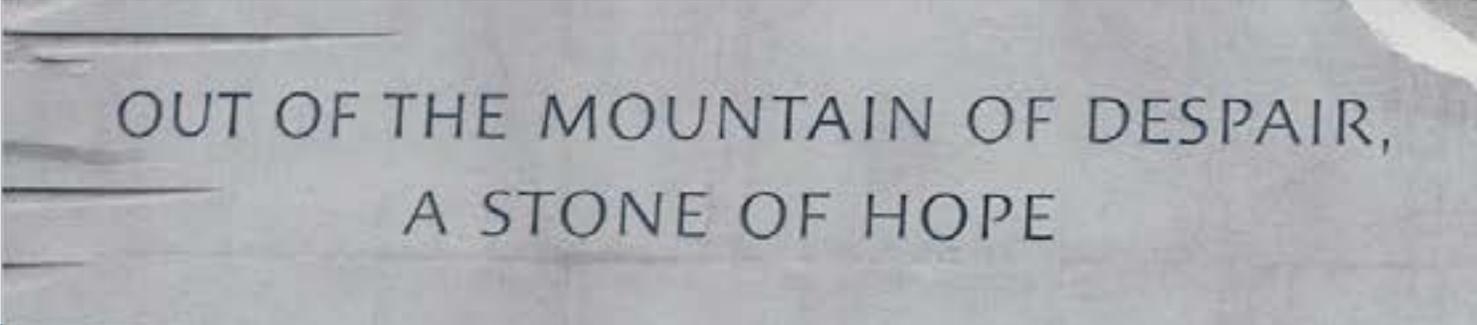
For many long years I suffered from severe depression and anxiety. My small hills of pain became mountains due to my father's domestic violence upon my mom which led to her hospitalization. His verbally abusive and sexist language to both my mom, my sister and myself led to our emotional scars long carried, and the financial issues that plagued us all threatened our existence for most of my life. These mountainous problems circulated in my head for years leading to my own cutting and suffering, therapy and medication. For all my life, I blamed myself for these circumstances even though I had

no control over them as a young child. All of those days and nights blaming myself kept me stuck in a continual, dark hole of dread. Even after these threats were no longer a reality in my world, I still found I could not move on from this past. I was stuck in my past's trauma and could not find the missing piece of myself that held my ambition to allow me the ability to prosper in this new and safer environment. I was stranded on top of my mountain of despair.

My mental struggles continued into high school. I poured myself into my academics and extracurricular programs not realizing there was soon to be a stone of hope to lighten my distress. A summer trip gave that missing piece of ambition and offered me a glimpse of a different perspective of life. This past summer of 2021, I went on a camping trip to Lassen National Park as part of a program for high school students called Summer Search. One evening out in the wilderness, our group's counselor asked each of us to go on a thirty minute solo walk. The task was to bring back something we found in nature that would represent who we wanted to be in the future.

At first I did not know what to bring back. It was hard to even contemplate my future when essentially I did not even know who I wanted to be, but when I began walking alone in the peaceful, quiet of nature with no distractions, I finally had the chance to think clearly about my true self. I started to think about the wounds in my life and if I would ever actually recover from them. In this silence I realized I had never faced my trauma. I had never actually had a

Fly Like a Bird...see page 8



OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR,
A STONE OF HOPE

Fly Like a Bird... from page 7

quiet moment to think about what the issues were that continually weighed me down. Walking with these thoughts near an area called Lower Twin Lake, I was confronted with three white feathers laying near a tree in a grassy area, each pointing in a different direction, as if each was signaling a pathway for me. These three white feathers were intended solely for me. Not only did I realize who I wanted to be in the future, but they also helped me find that stone of hope that would lift me to conquering my mountain of despair. I picked up the three feathers of hope and reunited with the group. When I was asked to share what I found, I explained this: "We human beings always see birds as these majestic creatures that soar through the sky, but we never really stop to think about the struggles they go through every single day. Tough storms, foraging for food, destruction of their habitat, and evading predators are all different battles that birds confront. Within these battles, they lose feathers yet most of the time they still continue to fly, moving forward with their lives.

As I held these three feathers in my hand, I thought, "When I am older, I want to be just like a bird." I want to fly no matter how many feathers I lose. I just want to fly! And from that most unex-

pected moment, I now see my life as just like a bird's. I want to be able to lose my feathers just like these powerful creatures and release all of those tough, painful times that were once so much a part of me that I thought I could never let them go. I now know I can finally move on from my past and create my future.

Just like Martin Luther King Jr. stated to his Spelman College audience in 1960, "If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward." Like King and his words, I have been able to move forward in order to find that day's stone of hope.

Moving forward in light of distress is something King would want for each and everyone of us. To have hope even in our darkest hour allows us to find our feathers in order to improve our quality of life. This may not be easy, but it is important to realize there is a stone of hope in all of our mountains of despair. So when Martin Luther King Jr. said, "With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope," I can personally attest that even with the dejection in our lives, we are all capable of one day finding our own feathers that have been under our wings all along. 🌿

Explosive Charges... from page 3

in settlements in 2019 alone.

In October 2021, candidate for Sheriff Eddie Engram attempted to gloss over the facts by denying that the Sheriff's Office stands out for its excessive force, malfeasance and the resultant insurance increases that followed. "I don't think there's a systemic issue in the Sheriff's office," he said." Engram acknowledged that the liability insurance premiums had spiked but tried to dismiss it on the false premise that "that's not something that's specific to the County, that's something that's industry-wide when you talk about public safety." Engram has been endorsed for Sheriff both by Mark Es-sick and the Deputy Sheriff's Association.

Attorney Izaak Schwaiger, who has successfully handled many cases against law enforcement, has long pointed out the serious deficiencies in the Sheriff's Office. "I've sued a lot of police departments," Schwaiger said. "(Here) they not only refuse to admit liability, they refuse to do anything at all to change. There's this machismo that dominates their assessment of risk." He adds that the Sheriff's "recklessness" drains sorely needed funds away from any number of beneficial efforts such as intervention programs for youth and mobile support teams for mental health calls. "If you have bad actors – and this Sheriff's department is a bad actor – you want to see affirmative, proactive efforts to get better," he said. "We have the exact opposite thing happening with this department." 🌿

A Crossroad... from page 4

Activists knew of her ambitions and of a rejection midway through her contract and asked the supervisors to begin the search for a new director, as it takes at least half a year to fill such a position. They refused to act and then all feigned surprise when they were left in the lurch with no director.

This takes us to the present moment. The Board of Supervisors has appointed attorney Garrick Byers as the interim-Director of IOLERO. Apparently, he has been working for IOLERO since September 2021. Who knew? IOLERO isn't the most transparent organization supposedly devoted to transparency. We can read his formal bio, but what we really know about him is that he was hired by Navarro and undoubtedly has been given the Navarro slant on everything. Byers says that he probably won't apply to be the Director, but that's not firm. It's the job of the public to let him know what we expect of him.

Now the job of finding a new Director begins. The job announcement is expected in February. The CAC passed a resolution stating that they want the public to have an active role in the process. The supervisors have said they will include the public, but we don't yet know in what capacity. Let your supervisor (or all of them) know that we refuse to be snookered again. To find yours (district boundaries have recently changed) go to [Board of Supervisors District Lookup](#). We want a director who takes

the principles of NACOLE (National Association of Community Oversight of Law Enforcement) seriously. For an excellent summary, please check out [community oversight paves the road to police accountability](#)

And what did I mean when I said we are in a lull? All the problems with IOLERO under the leadership of Navarro have led many people to turn away from this work. Many have given up, not wanting to keep banging their heads against the wall erected by those in government who side with or refuse to cross the Sheriff. This is hard and often unrewarding work. Ask those who have been doing it since the 1990's! But we need voices. The CAC meets via Zoom the first Monday of the month at 6:00. The next meeting is February 7th. You can find more at [Community Advisory Council Calendar](#)

We can't continue to be pushed backwards. The body count of those killed by officers continues to rise on the streets and the number of people who die in our jail is unconscionable. The Board of Supervisors, the members of the CAC and the new director of IOLERO, whomever that may be, need to know that you are concerned and that you care.

We need your voice. We need you.

If you're on Facebook, you can keep on top of things by following the Police Brutality Coalition of Sonoma County. 🌿

'Speaking of Palestine' on KBBF Radio 89.1FM

Rebel Fagin

A wise man once said, "The truth shall set you free", to which another wise man added, "yeah, but first it's gonna piss you off some." When it comes to issues involving Palestine/Israel, the truth will piss you off. You rarely hear the complete story in the United States. Censorship in the US generally takes the form of silence. When Israelis die, we get names, tears, and personal stories. When Palestinians die, we get numbers, if that. Loaded language is used to make Israel's actions look good and Palestine's sinister. There are few outlets people can turn to in order to gain a different point of view. One of these outlets is Speaking of Palestine, a locally produced radio show that reports on events in Palestine/Israel from a perspective rarely heard in American corporate media. It airs every Monday from 4 - 5 on listener sponsored KBBF, 89.1 fm, which presents two new shows a month and two encore shows a month. You can hear previous shows by typing speakingofpalestine.com in your address bar then hitting the go button when the next page comes up.

Speaking of Palestine is in its fourth year. It has presented such speakers as: Dr. Gabor Mate, Colonel Ann Wright, Ziad Abbas Shamrouch (Director of the Middle East Children's Alliance - MECA), Jonathan Kut-

tab of FOSNA, retired broadcaster Jeffery Blankfort, Professor Stephen Zunes and others. Representatives of Defense of Children International (Palestine), the Center for Jewish Nonviolence, Jewish Voice for Peace, the META Peace Team and many American and Palestinian activists working in the occupied territories have been interviewed.

'Speaking of Palestine' has reported on invasions of Gaza, BDS, Break the Blockade, Blanksy Hotel, the hidden regional history, the repression of student activists on US campuses, linkage between the struggle in Palestine and other people living under occupation, elections in Israel, the Palestinian Authority, myths about Palestine/Israel and more.

What happens in Palestine/Israel is echoed in the subjugation felt in the United States by poor people and people of color. Skunk gas, Long-range Acoustic Devices (LARDS), kettling and other 'crowd control' techniques were first tested on Palestinians before being used on Americans in Fergu-

son, Milwaukee, Portland, and Santa Rosa. Understanding what happens in Palestine/Israel is critical to understanding US imperialism overseas and US oppression at home. Forces of repression see Israel as the beacon for the security state, a model for others to emulate. This is why US law enforcement officers often accept trips to Israel to learn new techniques for squashing poor people at

*What can you do with this information?
For starters, call Congress. HR2590 by Congresswoman Betty McCollum, calls for the US to cease paying for the military abduction, imprisonment and trial of Palestinian children by Israel.*

home. This is but one reason why shows like Speaking of Palestine are important.

What can you do with this information? For starters we have HR2590. This bill by Congresswoman Betty McCollum, calls for the US to cease paying for the military abduction, imprisonment and trial of Palestinian children by Israel. It is a modest request. There are 32 cosponsors. We have two Representatives in Sonoma County. Representative Huffman is a cosponsor of this bill. Representative Thompson is not. You can write his office at 2300 County Dr. Suite A100, Santa Rosa, CA 95403 or better, schedule a visit on weekdays from 9 - 5:30 (Covid restrictions apply), and request that he become a cosigner. Use real mail as emails are too easy to delete. This is one easy action you can take with the knowledge you gain from Speaking of Palestine,

This is a local show put together by four Sonoma County justice activists. It only airs because of the generosity of KBBF. The idea is that by presenting the Palestinian perspective to an otherwise one-sided, pro-Israel, US corporate point of view, people can educate themselves and take action so that the suffering of the Palestinians might end a little sooner. Thanks to the postings of justice activists, Speaking of Palestine is reaching an international audience. Check out Speaking of Palestine, Mondays from 4 - 5 on listener sponsored **KBBF, 89.1 fm**. Tell your friends and let freedom ring. 🕊



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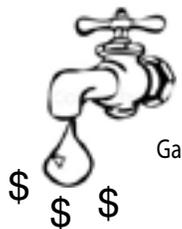


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our concerns come first
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thoughts of art come slow
must be authentic
must have played the hermit monk
danced before kings
crawled on our bellies
why so late to the party
unwilling to expose
so sorry when nothing comes

once I stood at the same window
a rainy day on this street
fifty years earlier
today's rain brings me there again
I am still that girl

he found a toy from his childhood
in his ex-wife's attic
he relives being Hopalong Cassidy

the cat licks my socks
quietly rubs my feet
then licks his tail

grandson will ride many miles for an X-box
his father will ride with him
a good father who has no idea
how much this new baby
will be his job

jealous again of her flowering quince
but her bright orange lilies
must keep her awake at night

by Gail King

Gail has lived in Monte Rio for close to 50 years and has been involved in small press publishing of poetry about as long. Her book Hello Life is available at Russian River Books and Letters in Guerneville.

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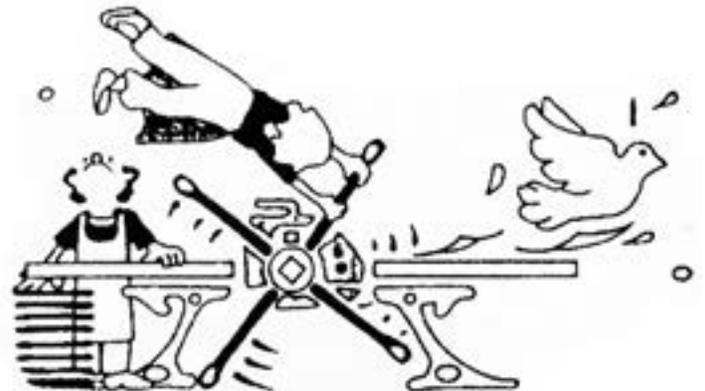
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