

STORIES INSIDE

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Christ Clinic cares for uninsured - p. 6

Campus welcomes diversity - p. 7

Companion ministry aids vulnerable - p. 12



Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest

online in color at www.thefigtree.org

Particle research aids clean-up

By Mary Stamp

A researcher recently described how identifying the structure of radioactive particles can determine if the radiation is from the natural background, from old nuclear testing fallout or from production.

Marco Kaltofen, who is doing the study with the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, told a recent gathering of the SHAWL Society of Wellpinit and Hanford Challenge of Seattle that the distinction provides scientific backing that will promote Hanford clean-up efforts, which are often hindered by claims that contamination is just background radiation.

Identifying the source of radioactive contamination is the first step needed to hold the government accountable for what is actually in the environment, he said.

Marco has conducted environmental sampling at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation near Richland, at Los Alamos, in the Gulf of Mexico and at the Midnite and Sherwood Mines and millsites on the Spokane reservation.

In his work with the Boston Chemical Data Corporation to document sources and hazards of



Twy-le Abrahamson applies research to clean-up Spokane Reservation—story on page

chemical waste exposures, Marco locates, collects, analyzes and testifies about physical evidence related to waste.

For his master's degree research at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 2009, he sampled radiological and mixed waste contaminants at Hanford and did microanalysis of radiation in particulate matter.

Marco tested the environment around Hanford—the fish, soil, water, air and workers' homes. He found uranium, plutonium and thorium at elevated levels, but was told that it was background radiation.

Frustrated as an engineer to "do quality measuring and be told it was no big deal," he decided to find how to distinguish natural background radiation from other particles.

He investigated the form radon takes and how it gets into homes and moves in the environment.

"Radioactive dust contains a signature of compounds that indicates its source," Marco said.

He found particles, called monstasite, in thorium at the Midnite Mine and found it in the tank farm and air at Hanford—connecting the chemical makeup of particles at the

Continued on page 4

Peace Corps volunteers continue commitment to community service

Peace Corps returnees have shared their life-changing and world-shrinking experiences through displays of cultural artifacts from countries where they served as part of seven months of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the program's founding.

They value this "inexpensive government program that sends goodwill ambassadors around the globe with an annual budget that is less than the cost of a single fighter jet," said Kay Dixon, a local returnee.

Part of the role of Peace Corps volunteers is to expand the volunteer's awareness and bring that

experiential knowledge home, said Ira Amstader of Express Employment Professionals, president of the local Returned Volunteers Group.

"So much of what we do here has impact on the rest of the world powerfully, often with many unintended consequences—good and bad. Our circumstance of birth brings us untold opportunity and treasure. Most of the world does not live as we do, and there is much to be learned as we strive for a more balanced world and healthy planet," he said.

Returnees want opportunities to speak at congregations, faith

groups, nonprofits and community groups to share insights from their experiences in other cultures.

"I learned that if I build a bridge of friendship and understanding between my community and the world, it facilitates peace," said Vickie Scott-Woodley, who went to Jamaica in 1993 when she was 54.

"People wonder why we left the wealth of America to live with them in poverty," she said. "I went to say Americans care."

Kay went in 1962, a year after the Peace Corps was established, inspired by former President John Kennedy, saying:

- "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

- "To whom much is given, much is expected."

She had never been on a plane when she flew to Colombia after graduating in liberal arts at Juniata College, a Church of the Brethren school in Huntingdon, Pa.

"The Peace Corps was modeled after the Brethren Volunteer Service, except it was not an alternate

Continued on page 8

Fig Tree focuses on March events, drops auction

Benefit meals crucial to sustaining media ventures

The Fig Tree hopes its Benefit Breakfast and Benefit Lunch in March will draw enough people and funds to sustain its work through the year.

The annual "Deepening Our Roots" Benefit Breakfast will be held from 7:15 to 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 16, in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

The new Benefit Lunch from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Highland Park United Methodist Church, 611 S. Garfield, will serve boxed lunches from Christ Kitchen.

"We decided to add a lunch so more people could participate," said editor Mary Stamp. "We decided not to hold a fall auction, because it was too staff intensive. So it's vital that we meet our fund-raising goals at these two events."

"We need more table hosts to invite guests to fill 30 tables at the breakfast and 15 tables at the lunch," she said.

While The Fig Tree newspaper, website, directory and education events are primarily sustained by advertisers, sponsors and bulk orders, these fund raisers are crucial for building the donor base in these economic times.

The newspaper and website cover stories of people making a difference to break through divisions, build understanding, promote unity and encourage action. The Directory of Community Resources, published with Community Colleges of Spokane HeadStart/ECEAP, connects faith and nonprofit communities in the Inland Northwest.

As more published media are moving to online options only, The Fig Tree in print and online continues to be a viable, authentic alternative for news as it focuses on positive efforts in the region to ensure quality of life locally to globally, said Mary.

To host a table or RSVP, call 535-4112 or 535-1813 before March 11 or email info@thefigtree.org.

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World Council of Churches chooses assembly theme

"God of life, lead us to justice and peace" will be the theme for the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to be convened in October 2013 at Busan, South Korea. The WCC Central Committee set it on Feb. 22 after several days of discussion. A WCC Assembly "theme" provides a focus for theological reflection, worship and meditation surrounding the assembly and for programmatic activities before, during and after the event.

The theme of the 9th Assembly in 2006 at Porto Alegre, Brazil, "God, in your grace, transform the world" and the theme for the 10th Assembly are phrased as prayers.

Central Committee members sought to combine emphases of justice, peace and life with unity.

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC, asserted that "seeking justice and peace is a call to unity - and may be clearly interpreted as such."

Carmencita Karagdag from the Philippine Independent Church reminded the Central Committee that neither the word "justice" nor "peace" has appeared in any "theme" of the previous nine WCC assemblies since the council was founded in 1948.

In the end, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace" was adopted by consensus in its English-language formulation. Official translations into other languages, including Korean, will be coordinated by the WCC in the coming days and weeks.

"We are addressing the whole world," said Metropolitan Mor Eustathius Matta Roham in regard to the theme. A member of both the Central Committee and the Assembly Planning Committee, he represents the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, located near the other end of the Asian landmass from South Korea.

"This will be read in many different places, by Christians and non-Christians. We must be sure that the theme will be clearly stated in all languages," he said.

Relief agency decries cuts to agriculture, food aid

Church World Service recently voiced concern over proposed budget cuts under deliberation in the House of Representatives that "threaten to eviscerate" U.S. funding for humanitarian and poverty-focused global assistance. Those cuts would be the deepest to the international affairs budget since the end of World War II.

The proposed cuts include a 41 percent cut to Development Assistance, which includes funding for bi-lateral U.S. agriculture, food security assistance and other programs for children and adults struggling to overcome poverty.

In the midst of a looming global food crisis, the cuts would eliminate U.S. funding for the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a multilateral mechanism to address the under-funding of country and regional agriculture and food security strategic investment plans already being developed by countries. According to CWS executive John McCullough, the cuts would "be a devastating blow for millions of children and adults struggling to overcome hunger and poverty and to recover and rebuild from crises around the world.

WCC recognizes water as human right

The WCC Central Committee has welcomed recognition of safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2010 and the UN Human Rights Council in October 2010.

The WCC urges member churches to continue advocacy affirming the right to water as the right to life. Since the WCC's 9th Assembly in Brazil, efforts to promote the human right to water and sanitation have been made through the Ecumenical Water Network, a WCC-based international network of churches and Christian organizations, promoting preservation, responsible management and the equitable distribution of water.

"As churches we are called to serve and be examples in the way we use and share water," the WCC statement declares.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

InterFaith Advocacy Day set for March 17

InterFaith Advocacy Day begins at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, March 17, at the United Churches in Olympia, 110 11th Ave. SE, with prayers led by Christians, Muslims, Native Americans, Jews and Buddhists.

Following morning workshops dealing with the state budget, housing and homelessness, focused on the theme, "Faith Communities for the Common Good,"

participants will walk to the State Capitol, where they will join in a rally for 15 minutes on the Capitol steps and then will proceed to the Columbia Room, where they will hear from legislative leaders, including Senator Lisa Brown of Spokane.

Participants will meet with legislators until 3 p.m.

"The purpose is to educate and engage people with issues that are

priorities of the faith communities," said Alice Woldt, director of the Washington Association of Churches, which is organizing the day. "Because of the diminishing tax revenues and continuing budget cuts, it is important for the moral voice of the faith community to be heard during this session of the legislature."

For information, call 206-625-9790 or email wac@thewac.org.

Called to Care event marks Earth Hour Day

The Faith and Environment Network's annual Called to Care event will take place on Earth Hour Day, beginning at 4:30 p.m., Saturday, March 26, at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12th Ave.

Earth Hour Day was initiated by the World Wildlife Fund in 2007 in Sydney, Australia, when 2.2 million people and more than 2,000 businesses turned off lights

for an hour as a stand against climate change.

In 2010, Spokane's Faith and Environment Network, which engages people of faith in caring for creation, joined people in 128 countries and territories.

This year's event, which includes a supper, will feature a panel of artists and naturalists discussing mindfulness of the environment.

There will also be a presentation on the Dark-Sky movement to preserve the nighttime environment and the heritage of dark skies through environmentally responsible outdoor lighting;

After music, readings and meditations from various faith traditions, the cathedral lights will be turned off at 8:30 p.m. in observation of Earth Hour.

For information, call 607-7115.

PJALS sponsors conference and movies

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) is hosting the Peace and Economic Justice Action Conference Friday and Saturday, March 18 and 19, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr.

There will be a reception and performances from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., Friday. The Saturday event from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., will feature Derrick Crowe with Rethink

Afghanistan, a Spokane Veterans for Peace panel on "Honor Veterans by Listening to Veterans," three education-for-action workshops and a performance by the Community Choir.

PJALS is also helping sponsor a showing of "Rethink Afghanistan," a full-length documentary on issues of the war—military escalation, destabilizing a nuclear-armed Pakistan, staggering costs, civilian casualties, assumption of

liberating women and why there can be no victory. It will be at 6:30 p.m., Friday, March 11, at the Spokane Community College Lair, 1810 N. Greene.

A premier of the movie on the life, music and legacy of 1960s singer-songwriter Phil Ochs will be shown at 2 p.m., Sunday, March 13, at the Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague.

For information, call 838-7870 or visit www.peacejustice.org.

Institute hosts conference on hate studies

The Second International Conference on Hate Studies, organized by Gonzaga University's Institute for Hate Studies, will be held from Wednesday to Saturday, April 6 to 9, at Northern Quest Resort and Casino in Airway Heights.

Representatives of academic, law enforcement, media, education, government, nonprofits, human rights, faith, ethnic, community, research and activist

organizations from Scotland, Canada, Taiwan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Germany, Iran and Israel will join local leaders to explore "Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding the Nature of Hate."

They will discuss religion, racism, nativism, anti-semitism, political violence, history, terrorism, immigration, crime, prisons, media, curricula, compassion and

effective community strategies.

Among the featured speakers is Izzeldin Abuelaish, professor in global health at the University of Toronto and author of *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey*. He will speak at the 5:30 p.m., Friday conference dinner.

For information, call 313-3665, email hatestudies@gonzaga.edu or visit guweb2.gonzaga.edu/againstthat/conference2011.htm.

Gandhi's grandson speaks in North Idaho

Arun Gandhi, the grandson of Mohandas Gandhi, a nonviolent Indian political and spiritual leader, will speak at a 6:30 p.m. banquet on Monday, April 11, at the annual benefit banquet for the Human Rights Education Institute (HREI). It will be held at the

Best Western Coeur d'Alene Inn at 506 W. Apple Ave.

Arun grew up in Africa, was frequently beaten by both white and black youth because of his color, and was sent to live with his grandfather in India.

He will speak on "Lessons

Learned from My Grandfather."

The banquet and a 5:30 p.m. reception are organized by the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations.

For information, call 208-765-3932 or visit www.idahohumanrights.org.

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Methodists host cultural competency training

The Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Methodist Church is offering a "Differences Make a Difference" ecumenical cultural-competency workshop in Spokane for lay and clergy from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday, March 22, at Audubon Park United Methodist Church, 3908 N. Driscoll.

Participants will learn about their own acculturation and apply it to their ministry settings, said Lyda Barr of the United Methodist conference office in Seattle. The training fulfills the cultural competency training requirements for Pacific Northwest United Methodist clergy. It is being offered in partnership with the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Northwest Synods and the United Methodist conference. For information, call 800-755-7710, ext. 302, or email lyda@pnwumc.org.

Interfaith Council schedules annual assembly

Spokane Interfaith Council Annual Assembly and Potluck will be held at 5 p.m., Sunday, March 13, at the Center for Spiritual Living, 33rd and Regal. The gathering will include music by SpiritVoice from Unity Church and drumming by Spokane Interfaith Council Board members. Business will review Interfaith Council events of the past year, appoint board members and discuss new directions for the coming year. For information, call 534-1011.

Forum covers housing challenges, solutions

"Homelessness and Low Income Housing: Challenges and Solutions" is the theme Steve Cervantes of Northeast Washington Housing Solutions and Mike Harrington, an advocate for the homeless, will address at 11:45, Wednesday, March 16, at the Spokane City Forum at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

Their work to increase safe and affordable housing and to build relationships with vulnerable people give a face and personal voice to the challenges and solutions around housing. For information, call 777-1555.

Naturalist describes birds of the Northwest

Wildlife photographer and naturalist Paul Bannick will give a presentation on "Birds of the Northwest" at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 22, at the Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague. He will highlight birds in the Columbia Highlands of northeastern Washington in this multimedia presentation presented by Conservation Northwest with Friends of Turnbull Wildlife Refuge, Inland Northwest Land Trust, Palouse Audubon, Spokane Audubon, The Lands Council, and Upper Columbia River Group-Sierra Club. For information, visit conservationnw.org/birds.

Earth Day planning is underway

Organizers for Earth Day Spokane, which will be held on Saturday, April 23, are planning for the event to be on Main Street between Browne and Division.

A team of organizations and individuals are discussing activities, including earth-friendly community booths, "green" activities for children of all ages, local food vendors, live music, art and more, said Jessica Anundson, one of the organizers.

Planning meetings are scheduled at 4 p.m., Wednesdays, at Sun People Dry Goods, 32 W. Second Ave., Suite 200. Organizers are recruiting vendors, volunteers, participants and performers.

For information, call 847-9603 or visit <http://www.earthday-spokane.org>.

White Swan churches cooperate ecumenically to respond to the loss of homes to fire and wind

Churches in White Swan are already helping the community recover from a fire and wind-storm that burned 14 homes, left 50 homes with roof damage from wind knocking down trees and limbs, reported the Rev. Derel Olson, pastor of the Wilbur Memorial United Methodist Church there.

While the community, tribal officials, and disaster relief workers assess needs and decide how to coordinate recovery efforts, Derel's church, St. Mary's Catholic and the Yakama Christian Mission of the Disciples of Christ are cooperating to collect donations and feed volunteers.

They have received donations from across the Northwest.

"While response is heart-warming, piles and

piles of clothing and household items create a secondary 'emergency' that must be dealt with," Derel said.

He said the immediate need is for money for emergency and long-term repair of roofs and for temporary housing. There are also increased heating and light bills for the church food bank—now open four hours a day six days a week, instead of the usual three hours on Saturday mornings.

They are requesting cleaning supplies, baby items like diapers and food, but no clothing.

Before work teams come, there is need to identify if there are any toxic materials in the houses, he said.

For information, call 509-895-3370 or email derel.olson@gmail.com.

Three Cups of Tea author speaks at GU

Greg Mortenson, international educator, humanitarian and author of The New York Times' best-seller *Three Cups of Tea*, is Gonzaga University's 2011 Presidential Speaker. He will lecture on "Promoting Peace Through Education" at 7 p.m., Monday March 28, at McCarthy Athletic Center.

His dedication to educating girls to empower communities resonates with Gonzaga's mission, said Angela Ruff, director of continuing education. He has established or supports 171 schools in rural, often volatile regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. These schools educate more than 68,000 children, including 54,000 girls, in places where few educational

opportunities previously existed.

Greg's personal experiences led him to pursue social justice in Central Asia. In 1993, he went to climb K2 in Pakistan, the second-highest mountain after Mount Everest, to honor his sister's memory.

On his way down the mountain, he experienced fatigue and delusions. He recovered from the climb in the village of Korphe. While there, he was stunned that children used sticks as pencils and sand as paper. He vowed to help them build a school.

Greg is now co-founder and director of the nonprofit Central Asia Institute (CAI) and founder of the education charity Pennies for Peace. With the CAI, he has partnered with tribal leaders in remote areas of Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan to build schools.

In 2009, he published a second book, *Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace Through Education in Afghanistan and Pakistan*.

For information, visit www.gonzaga.edu/mortenson, call 313-3572 or email ruff@gonzaga.edu.

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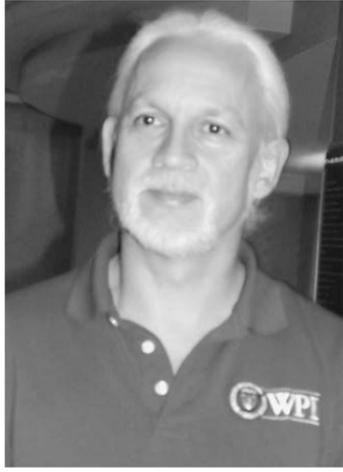
Research now gives scientific way to determine source of radiation

Continued from page 1
two sites.

Testing inert, safe samples, he found two to four radioactive particles in half an ounce of dust. He isolated the hot uranium, plutonium or thorium dust particles. Under an electron microscope, he could see if the particles were melted from a nuclear detonation, crystallized as in natural background radiation or processed in weapons manufacture.

Another step was to look at the health effects of natural radiation and of global fallout from small potent particles. While exposure to five picocuries of radioactivity in a billion particles is considered acceptable, he said, if a single particle breathed in lodged in the lungs it could cause damage.

"Near the Midnite Mine, overall radiation might not be much different than background, but



Marco Kaltofen

presence of one very radioactive tiny particle can create health damage," said Marco.

He tested homes around the uranium mines and Hanford, and collected data for two years, creat-

ing a methodology other scientists could repeat to quantify health risks in a way that would lead to regulating dusts and cleanup, because dusts are stirred in the cleanup process.

"Uranium miners can be eligible for health care if they can fingerprint the specific source of contamination as being from fallout, natural, processing or montasite," he said.

Marco's research provides the science to show cause and effect, but even with that evidence it's hard for the U.S. government, which underwrote nuclear development, to take responsibility. The nuclear industry does not allow anecdotal evidence, which much previous evidence was considered to be. For information, call 508-651-1661, email kaltofen@wpi.edu or visit www.labs.pro.

Hanford Challenge keeps people informed

Tom Carpenter, director of Hanford Challenge, said when Hanford was started in World War II to build the first atomic weapon, it needed uranium mines, such as the Midnite Mine. Uranium was irradiated in nuclear reactors to separate plutonium, leaving massive amounts of waste.

"Each gram of plutonium left a ton of solid and liquid waste, some of which was dumped onto giant underground tanks, and often directly onto the soil at Hanford, and it has seeped into the Columbia River," he said. "A third of those tanks have leaked an estimated one million gallons of radioactive waste into the soil, which is contaminating the groundwater." Plutonium production ended in 1989 after 70 metric tons of plutonium and 65,000 nuclear weapons had been made, he said.

"Now we wonder what to do with the weapons," said Tom. "Hanford Challenge seeks to remediate the largest toxic mess in the U.S. and maybe in the world. We're a small organization, but influential—advocating, litigating and trying to influence outcomes. We approach it as the disaster it is, seeking new technologies and new strategies to clean up the waste at Hanford and the Midnite Mine."

Tom said it's not acceptable to accept the toxins just because "we are all going to die sometime of something." For information, call 206-292-2850 x 22 or visit www.hanfordchallenge.org.

SHAWL Society continues to educate and advocate to clean up uranium mines

Twa-le Abrahamson of SHAWL (Sovereignty, Health, Air, Water and Land) said Marco Kaltofen's information is critical because there's talk of producing more nuclear energy to reduce global warming and because nuclear waste cleanup is stuck in a blame game.

"We need the contaminants cleaned up without worrying about who is responsible. There is no work being done now, because no one wants to take responsibility," she said.

In December, Twa-le, who does the Inner Tribal Beat show on KYRS (92.3 FM) radio from 2 to 4 p.m., Tuesdays, was hired by the Spokane Tribe as air quality coordinator. Along with doing radon testing and mitigation in the school and homes, she will address air quality issues when Super Fund remediation of uranium mines and mill sites on the reservation begins in two years. There will be construction to cap the mine and build a water treatment plant.

"Our tribe wants to be hired to help with the remediation, but we also need to monitor workers' health," she said. "Our goal is to protect the next generation as they work at the site."

Twa-le reviewed the Spokane Tribe's experience with uranium mining on the reservation in sites that are still contaminated. The tribe is among other tribes targeted for uranium mining—in the Southwest, Black Hills and Alaska.

"There were promises of jobs and royalties made to the Spokane Tribe with development of the

Midnite Mine in 1953," she said.

The Sherwood Mine and Mill Site operated from 1978 to 1984, when there were regulations and funds to assure reclamation of the land. Even though the land was reclaimed, its 1,200 workers were not informed of the detrimental impact of radiation and toxins associated with uranium mining, Twa-le said.

The Midnite Mine and the Dawn Mill Site, which was 25 miles away, closed in 1981. The mine became a Superfund Site in 2000. There are difficulties with reclamation because the mining operations left open pits that penetrate the aquifer, creating perpetual seepage of contaminated water into two lakes that flow into Blue Creek and the Spokane River.

The mine yielded 2.9 million tons of high-grade uranium ore and left 35 million tons of waste.

The estimated cleanup cost is \$280 million, Twa-le said.

Ore and yellow cake—concentrated uranium powder—were transported by truck from the Midnite Mine through tribal communities to the Dawn Mill Site. Safety measures were lax. Mining and milling provided work and income on the reservation.

"If workers' badges showed their exposure exceeded the maximum, they often traded badges," she said.

Her mother, Deb Abrahamson, who founded the SHAWL Society, said other indigenous communities around the world have also been exposed to toxins.

Yucca Mountain, once consid-

ered for a nuclear waste repository, is on indigenous lands, she said.

Eighteen indigenous, minority and racial communities—African American, Hispanic, Puerto Rican and Native American—are affected by the nuclear mining, processing and waste cycle.

"Now there are efforts to rebury the waste on our lands," Deborah said.

The Dawn Mill was reopened in the 1990s to treat sludge from the Midnite Mine water treatment plant, because tailings in unlined ponds had been leaking pollutants into ground and surface water, and the soil.

People in New Jersey offered to help pay for cleanup there if they could transport their contaminated soil to the nearby Midnite Mine.

In the early 2000s, Deb said SHAWL challenged efforts to bring waste to the site from areas that needed to be cleaned up on the East Coast.

"We knew the lining was leaking," she said. "We were able to stop the efforts to bring waste."

SHAWL has spent years educating people on the effects of uranium mining and the need for cleanup because of damage to the health of miners and families, economic degradation and environmental damage.

Twa-le said many people have had several family members die of lung and other cancers, and kidney failure.

In addition, many suffer from respiratory problems and chromosomal damage from exposure through ingestion—eating and drinking—skin contact and in-

haling radioactive particles and heavy metals in cultural and spiritual ceremonies of the sweat lodge and burning sage.

"There have been no measurements of exposure to contaminants through water, soil, air, subsistence foods, former workers, forestry workers, hunting and dust around the mine.

"Dust does not stay on the site," she said. "When the price of uranium dropped, piles of ore were left there."

Bob Brisbois, a Spokane tribal member, said his parents, grandparents and cousins all died of cancer. He wants exposure limited and health care funded. Family and friends have tended to be silent, he said, absorbing the costs of health care by holding auctions, yard sales and dances to collect money to pay medical bills.

The 2,600 residents on this reservation suffer high health impacts from radiation and heavy metal contaminant exposure, said Deb, calling for a baseline study of the health impacts.

Risk of exposure is high because the subsistence lifestyle and the cultural/spiritual practices include hunting, fishing, gathering roots and berries, logging, sweat-lodge and medicinal plant use.

Deb added that there is also concern that, while cleanup may bring economic development, when it stirs up dust, people inhale the particles, bringing a second wave of exposure to toxic effects to another generation.

"We have witnessed the loss of our older generation. Without knowing the cause and effect we cannot level justice," she said. "We need to share information and continue to educate the public to help them connect the dots. We need to be informed so we can make wise decisions for the future."

Deb and Twa-le are available to speak to groups to educate them about the Spokane Tribe's experience.

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Spiritual aspect of yoga integrates with and respects different faiths

Through her own life struggles, Mary-Ann McDougall's interest in yoga as a physical exercise led to her learning of the spiritual side of yoga and into following a path to become Swami Radhananda.

Now she is president of the Yasodhara Ashram, a yoga retreat and study center in Kootenay Bay, in southeastern British Columbia, where she helps people find tools to deal with their struggles.

She said she had little spiritual development after Sunday school and hearing her grandmother read the Bible every day when she was growing up in Princeton, B.C.

She married, lived with her husband in a commune on the British Columbia coast, and then traveled with him to Cambridge, England, for his doctoral studies—where their son was born in 1970—to Mexico for his anthropology fieldwork, and back to Cambridge where their daughter was born. Then they settled in Lethbridge, where he was offered a job.

She started a day care center, was in a women's consciousness-raising group and was a jogger when she started yoga. Having studied teaching at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, she taught grade school in several small communities.

A friend who had gone to the ashram—a "spiritual home"—invited her to go, too.

That started her journey to finding what was missing in her life. Renewed by her experience at the ashram, she invited her husband to go several times, but they grew apart and separated when their children were young.

As Mary-Ann went to retreats and programs, the healing she found drew her to be a disciple of Swami Sivananda Radha.

Learning about inquiry "turned me around," Swami Radnananda said in a recent interview at the Radha Yoga Center in Spokane. She was in town for a tour related to her memoirs, *Carried by a Promise: A Life Transformed through Yoga*, which was published in January.

The book shares her journaling about her spiritual development as a disciple of Swami Radha.

"When I first came to the ashram, I wanted my family, community and world to become more like the ashram—more accepting, open and whole," she said.

She said she gained self-confidence and the ability to accept herself and others. She learned to live in simplicity and be more "present" in whatever she did—dishes, cleaning, teaching, shopping or being at the ashram.



Swami Radhananda

"Yoga is more than physical exercise. It is control of the mind, starting with control of the breath, speech and service—putting the body to use for good purpose," Swami Radhananda said.

Her guru or teacher, Swami Radha, had studied ancient traditions under a guru in India, Swami Sivananda, and reflected on what would work in the modern West before she founded the ashram in 1963. In 1989, she founded the Radha Yoga Center in Spokane.

"She took the essence without the culture," said Swami Radhananda who often visited Spokane, where Swami Radha spent her last years.

Mary-Ann opened Radha House in Lethbridge, where she shared what she was learning. Others have opened other Radha centers in Canada, the United States and England.

When her children finished school, Mary-Ann moved in 1990 to the ashram. Swami Radha prepared her to become president in 1993. In 1994, she was initiated into sanyas—the Hindu tradition of "renunciation of desires" to become a swami. Swami Radha, who moved to Spokane in 1993, died in 1995.

"I chose her spiritual name, 'Radha,' which means 'cosmic love.' I seek to embody it, knowing that love means making myself available. 'Ananda' means

bliss or peace," she explained.

"While there is overlap of yoga and Hinduism, yoga can be used by any faith tradition," she said. "The essence is the same."

Faith Hayflich, who attends Congregation Emanu-El and teaches at Spokane's Radna Yoga Center, also participated in the interview with Swami Radhananda's sister, Swami Lalitananda.

Faith, who first went to the Yasodhara Ashram in 1984, moved with her husband from California to Spokane in 2000.

She said yoga helps her understand her Jewish faith, just as many Christians also use yoga.

Yoga does not change people from their own faith but adds purpose to their living, said Swami Radhananda.

"While many think spiritual life is calming, it requires effort," she said. "Through yoga postures, the body is 'busy' allowing someone to focus on controlling the mind. Yoga can help people solve life patterns and be released from being stuck in the mud, unable to move, carrying huge burdens.

At the ashram, people do not

"We ask questions to help people explore their lives and concerns, their likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses," said Swami Radhananda.

She encourages people to write diaries, so they can reflect on what they have learned and bring it into their spiritual lives.

Faith said Spokane's center offers the same kinds of yoga as the ashram. The hatha yoga they offer invites people to reflect on the symbolism of the poses—what it means to stand still in "mountain pose" or what it means to fly when they are in "eagle pose."

Poses and questions allow people to open, stretch and release their muscles, minds and spirits, said Swami Lalitananda.

Swami Radhananda said karma yoga helps move people into selfless service, aware that "every part of our lives is sacred."

For information, call 838-3575 or email radhayoga@comcast.net.

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Christ Clinic and Christ Kitchen turn around the culture of poverty

With the number of uninsured and underinsured people growing, Christ Clinic's expansion two years ago into a new 4,300-square-foot building allows it to serve more people. The clinic is at 914 W. Carlisle beside Christ Kitchen at 2410 N. Monroe.

Started 20 years ago at Westminster Presbyterian Church in West Central Spokane, the clinic has increased from 200 patient visits a month in its former space to 500 a month and a patient load of 4,000.

Four physicians founded it because they knew rising health care costs drove more people to use emergency rooms because they had no primary health care providers.

Christ Kitchen, which grew out of Christ Clinic in 1998, now provides jobs and job training for about 25 women. They package soups and mixes, run a cafe and cater meals. Jan Martinez started it when she was a volunteer psychotherapist at the clinic.

Kristine Ruggles began as executive director of Christ Clinic and Christ Kitchen in June, bringing skills from a career in banking and finance in Seattle. Having married late, she left her career to move in 1994 to a smaller city, Spokane, to raise their children.

Growing up Presbyterian in Pittsburgh, she wandered from church in her teens, returned in her late 20s and now attends Life Center.

In 2003, after earning a degree in organizational management at Whitworth University, Kristine decided to work in nonprofits. She volunteered and then worked at the Red Cross, and then at Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery from 2005 until she came to Christ Clinic.

She knew about the clinic and kitchen when she attended First Presbyterian Church, where she met Jan.

Now 9 volunteer doctors rotate half-day shifts once a month or once a week. The clinic's full-time nurse practitioner, Danielle Riggs, has been there 11 years, and physicians' assistant, Larry Carpenter, retired from the military and began last March. An office manager-receptionist and a billing specialist also work full time.

The clinic has a lab for blood work, partners with the PAML lab for diagnostics, and works with the Medication Assistance Program to assist patients with their prescription medications. It has six exam rooms and a procedure room for biopsies, casting and internal exams.

Christ Clinic also works with Health for All, a program that



Kristine Ruggles believes faith plays a major role.

helps uninsured people and advocates for changes in the health care system. These are changes Christ Clinic seeks to model.

"Practitioners form relationships with each patient. The patients see the same person each time," Kristine said.

It can charge patients based on a sliding scale fee based on need. When patients find jobs with benefits, the clinic celebrates and sends them on.

It is able to do business in that way because of the community's generosity and the in-kind donations of volunteer doctors, nurses, student interns and a physical therapist. Funders also include Providence Health and Services and private foundations.

"Because we're a faith-based organization coming alongside people with Christ's love," she said, "we do not rely on government funding."

A few years ago, they gained funding for a psychiatric nurse practitioner and added a volunteer counselor. That nurse practitioner and the physicians' assistant interface to heal the whole person, Kristine said.

"We believe the spiritual, mental and physical interrelate. We provide traditional medical care, and also pray for patients, unlike other primary care givers," Kristine said. "It's hard to find this level of primary care that heals the body and heals the soul. You can't separate the two."

Just inside the clinic door in the reception room, there is a shelf of Bibles in different languages—Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Spanish and more.

"Staff start the day with a prayer that we will be in service to the people who come," she said.

"The practitioners also pray with patients if the patients want to pray. Practitioners respect those who do not want to pray."

In the kitchen, Jan holds a weekly Bible study for women living in poverty, bringing isolated women into community, helping them understand about God and Christ, and helping them become self-sufficient.

When Jan first offered a Bible study for women at the clinic no one came, so she decided they might come if they were paid to help create a product. She started this "social entrepreneurship" program with packaging bean soup. Women came Thursday mornings for a Bible study and stayed to help with packaging.

"Previously anyone who came was paid, but as the ministry has grown, we have a limited number of spaces," she said.

Recently they added four spaces, so 29 women now help Thursday mornings on a regular basis. At busy times, up to 80 volunteers join them. They now make gourmet dried food baskets, package various signature products, run the cafe and do local catering and delivery.

The staff of six includes a cook, office manager and catering manager. Jan is director as a volunteer ministry.

"As the kitchen sells more products and does more catering, there will be more consistent long-term work," Kristine said. "This is more than short-term job training."

The women who come consistently find stability. One is working to bring her six children together after losing them because of meth. She also works at Transitions and has recently remarried.

"Some move from living on the street and eating out of garbage bins to having a roof over their heads and money to meet living costs," Kristine said.

The clinic not only keeps people alive and healthy, but also gives them hope. The kitchen also dispenses hope.

"Hope is critical, especially when someone lacks fundamental resources, and the security of a home, food and community. Few would feel comfortable going to a church, where many gather to find hope," Kristine said. "Here, women, even those who did not have loving homes, learn they are not alone and God loves them."

"We hope people we serve know we all are fallible and may fall back, but we are part of community that comes alongside us no matter what," she said.

As a teacher and mentor, Jan walks alongside these women to release them from isolation, guilt and self-blame.

"What happens here is about Jesus. We think we have control, but we need to trust that God will

prevail. My hope is in Christ," said Kristine, who has learned about culture of poverty from women at the kitchen.

"It's amazing how poverty and abuse can become generational," she said, believing that offering community and health care in nice facilities helps people believe they deserve better.

"It's easy to judge someone experiencing domestic violence and it's hard to imagine what it is to overcome insecurity and seek love to feel part of something," Kristine said.

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Whole campus climate frames university's inclusion and diversity

Larry Burnley challenges faculty, administration, staff and students to live into Whitworth University's mission to incorporate diversity, inclusion and intercultural relations as part of its comprehensive higher-education program.

"Engaging difference requires the presence of difference," he said of his effort to recruit and retain students and faculty of color. In January 2010, he joined the faculty as assistant professor of history and assistant vice president for intercultural relations.

To create a welcoming campus environment, he is asking about practices and assumptions to understand how people of color, women and ethnic groups experience the climate on campus.

"What opportunities are there to engage across differences? Will the experience prepare students to live and work in a diverse world?" he asks.

Larry finds that many white students have had limited encounters with blacks, Native Americans or Hispanics, he said. Media often shape their concerns, fears, understandings and stereotypes.

"Those attitudes affect how people engage or don't engage. We cannot easily address difference in a homogeneous environment," Larry said. "We need diverse racial and ethnic composition on campus. We need curriculum and all aspects of our institutional life to reflect our mission."

Every other year Whitworth's Jan term includes a experience of racism and prejudice across America for about 20 students. Study abroad for semester- or year-long immersion in other cultures may invite students to think critically about U.S. issues of race, gender and difference, he said.

While such efforts give attention to inclusion and justice, Larry's presence comes from the administration's commitment to develop an overall plan.

He also wants students to know how history—and how it's often interpreted—created the present climate and ideas of difference. He seeks to help them see how these influences affect their lives and connect with the Gospel, so they learn to live in justice and equality during and after college.

His guidance grows from his own journey in both conservative and progressive churches and institutions. He sees Whitworth as embracing the right and the left.

"Too often progressive churches think conservative churches don't have a clue, and conservative churches think progressive churches fall short. Both have value, both fall short and both



Larry Burnley raises challenges to build sustainable diversity.

bring something," he said, calling for conversations among Christians to embody and demonstrate reconciliation.

Since earning a master of divinity at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, he has sought to relate racial and ethnic organizations, groups and people to bring about reconciliation. His road to seminary reflects his discovery of the need for racial and ethnic reconciliation.

Baptized in an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in his hometown, Cleveland, and now attending Bethel AME Church in Spokane, he spent most of his life in the United Methodist Church.

During studies in Afro-American culture and history at the University of Cincinnati, he found history could be interpreted from more cultural and racial perspectives than white male. Learning some churches condoned enslaving African Americans, he left the church, but "did not leave God."

For a while, Larry associated exclusively with black communities, but found God showing him that avoiding others was not what God has in mind for his life.

"God desires reconciled and diverse communities," he said, valuing that there is a place for people of similar ethnic backgrounds to gather and share common experiences.

His insight came one day when he returned to Cincinnati by bus. Larry was next in line for a taxi. Three white men were also there. When the taxi stopped and he opened the door to climb in, an older man told him to get out and let the white students in. One of the young men said, however, "If he's not going, we're not going."

"It rocked my world. They stood with me. I had placed white people in one box and God challenged me to rethink my conclusion," Larry said.

In 1979, he became a probation officer and then served 18 months

in the Air Force.

His faith journey led him to read holy books of Islam, Yoruba (a Nigerian indigenous religion) and Hinduism, attending services and seeing people engaged in the faiths and experiencing God's presence. Then, on a bus from San Antonio, Tex., to Keesler AFB in Mississippi, he began reading Proverbs and the Gospels.

"I saw principles of other faiths in Christianity—monotheism, justice, righteousness, fairness, cleanliness, love emphasis on community over individualism," said Larry, who then felt empowered to ask questions about Christian faith, rather than think he had to believe "imposed interpretations."

"I was transformed and saw God's incredible love as Christ challenged his community's assumptions about powerful people," Larry said. "I saw his radical inclusion of those who were excluded."

He became involved at the Air Force chapel, and, in Japan, with a Pentecostal community near the base. "On fire for Jesus," he felt a call to ministry, but resisted it.

In 1983, he resumed work in Cleveland as a probation officer, but found "God had other things in mind for me," as he became involved in Fifth Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and submitted to his call to ministry.

He started night school at Ashland Theological Seminary in Cleveland, and then studied at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Ind., from 1986 to 1990. While there, he was student associate and youth minister

at two Disciples churches—one white and the other black—that shared a building.

Seminary studies on African-American history and African influence on the early church led him to doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn). He worked two years in campus ministry and two directing an intercultural center at Penn.

After six years in Philadelphia, he became executive for racial and ethnic relations with the cooperative Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ in Cleveland from 1996 to 2005. Taking young people from different racial and ethnic groups around the world for mission immersion experiences,

he experienced diversity in the body of Christ and beyond.

"Through telling stories, we learned how much we have in common, how we misinterpret others and how others see us," Larry said.

While finishing his dissertation, he moved to Grantham, Pa., as associate dean and advisor on multicultural affairs at Messiah College, a Brethren Christian college. His dissertation on the role of African Americans in founding Disciples of Christ schools is a book, *The Cost of Unity: African American Agency and Education in the Christian Church, 1865 to 1914*.

For information, call 777-4215 or email lburnley@whitworth.edu.

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Local Peace Corps returnees celebrate 50 years of outreach to world

Continued from page 1
to military service," said Kay, who grew up Presbyterian and now attends St. Augustine Catholic Church in Spokane.

In the midst of civil rights and peace movements, which began in the 1960s, the Peace Corps was an adventure in public service. She passed on a commitment to serve to her daughters.

"The world seemed big then. With the Peace Corps, I saw another part of the world, and the world grew smaller," she said. "It's a people-to-people program. Since I went, the world has been my neighborhood."

For Ira, his Peace Corps experience began years of public service in Africa. He said it's where many who work in diplomacy, government programs, the United Nations, aid agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) "cut their teeth." Working in a developing country can be challenging, requiring a sense of human and resiliency skills.

"The Peace Corps experience helps you find these in yourself," he said.

During her term, Kay met her husband, Kevin, who was also in the Peace Corps in Colombia. Vickie met her husband, Delroy (Barry) Woodley, in Jamaica. Ira went to Zaire in 1981 when he was 27, and years later met his wife, Susan, on a plane.

Along with working beside people in developing countries, volunteers make friends with other volunteers and find they have an instant bond with other returnees they meet. Part of their role continues after their two-year term with the expectation that they will tell about the country and culture where they served.

The Inland Northwest is home to 115 of the United States' 200,000 returnees. Many are in the Inland Northwest Peace Corps Association (INPCA). Since 1961, Washington has had the third most Peace Corps volunteers, after California and New York.

Experiences of Kay, Vickie and Ira give a glimpse into the Peace Corps, whose volunteers make a difference through education programs, community development, youth work, environmental



Ira Amstadter wanted to see animals, repair the world.



Kay Dixon passes commitment to serve to next generations.

awareness, health education, business development, agricultural production, fishing projects, HIV/AIDS initiatives and food security. They serve two-year terms, so their efforts will be sustainable after they leave.

Kay worked in urban community development and public

health, distributing CARE food products and teaching people to use products, like powdered milk, so they wouldn't sell them on the black market or feed them to their chickens.

Vickie, who lived in Spokane since she was two, wanted to go into the Peace Corps in its early

years, but she married, raised her two daughters and worked in business before going from 1994 to 1997. Inspired by former President Jimmy Carter's mother, Lillian, who went when she was in her 80s, Vickie decided she could go later.

When she went, a woman in her 80s was on her fourth term and a man in his 70s was on his third. Many older volunteers are assigned to Montego Bay, Jamaica where they are close if there are health needs.

Vickie worked two years as a business consultant to develop micro-enterprise in Jamaica, using her experience in business and finance. She extended two years to serve at a street kids' center.

Since returning, she has worked through AmeriCorps a year with Habitat for Humanity and a year with the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane.

"Life is about what you do to give back," she said.

Ira went to Zaire to teach at a veterinary school in a diamond-mining area. He learned to be flexible, because people signed up

for the school, but really wanted to mine. With no students, he was reassigned to a remote area in the Masisi mountains of eastern Zaire to work with herdspeople.

Kay said that after they served in the Peace Corps, her husband, Kevin, worked five years in Saudi Arabia, so their four children would "experience the world as their neighborhood and appreciate the freedom and opportunities available to Americans." Two daughters went into the Peace Corps—to Nicaragua and Niger—and all have been involved with social services and travel.

They settled on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. For several years, Kevin was a property manager and Kay, an instructional designer for software development companies. Last year, they relocated to Spokane to be near a daughter. Kevin volunteers at their grandchildren's school. Kay volunteers with Encore, a post Peace Corps service volunteer program.

In the Peace Corps, she saw that churches may not always "do the right thing." It was hard for her,

Continued on next page

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Peace Corp cultural art exhibit runs March, April

The fourth Peace Corps cultural exhibit as part of First Friday Art Walks is in March and April on Asia and the Pacific at Express Employment Professionals, 331 W. Main.

There will be a Peace Corps birthday party from 5 to 8 p.m., Friday, March 4, in recognition of

March 1 as the founding date.

Over eight months, two-month-long exhibits have presented artifacts from four regions where Inland Northwest Peace Corps volunteers have served. They have covered cultures in Africa, Europe and the Middle East, South America and the Caribbean,

and Asia and the Pacific.

The local chapter has a speakers bureau of volunteers who have served all over the world and are available to speak at churches, schools, or service clubs.

For information on the speakers bureau, email Debbie Kutsal at deborah.kutsal@comcast.net.

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Continued from previous page because she "was raised in faith and believes it's important to have faith, moral, spiritual and ethical values." Sometimes the volunteers could do something.

After the CARE had given her community a machine to make bricks, a priest controlled its use. Her team needed the priest's support to work in the community, so they went to the bishop. With his support, they invited their Catholic Peace Corps friends and the priest to tea to discuss use of the machine. The tea was successful, and the team was able to use the machine, as well as work in the barrio with the priest's support.

Kay and Kevin have been back twice. In 1974, they volunteered with Partners for America to organize a basketball coaches exchange program. In 2007, the President of Colombia invited all Peace Corps volunteers who had served from 1961 until 1980s, when volunteers were removed because of local violence. In 2007, the president showed that the government had restored peace and last year the Peace Corps re-established programs there teaching English.

Until Vickie went to Jamaica from 1993 to 1997, all she knew was Spokane and her work in business management.

She first studied psychology, then business management, but graduated from Washington State University in 1967 with a degree in communication.

As she started her Peace Corps terms, she planned management training with flip charts and Powerpoint. In teaching small merchants, such as grocery-store owners, shoemakers and dress-makers, she soon found that her main lesson was for them to keep their personal money in their right pockets and their business money in their left pockets.

"They were hard working," she said. "For them, survival meant working independently in business. I worked with NGOs lending to small business startups, helping the businesses develop management plans, setting aside income to repay loans and do marketing."

Vickie, who has attended Unity Church at 29th and Bernard for 30 years, said she was placed in Montego Bay because there was a Unity church there. Most Jamaicans are Seventh-Day Adventist or Pentecostal.

"My beliefs led me to be in-



Vickie Scott-Woodley served later in life.

involved in civil rights, to oppose the Vietnam War, to help transition people from jail, and to promote interracial relations in Spokane," she said.

As a member of INPCA, she continues to give back, helping with KSPS phone banks, Second Harvest, a church shoe project, a Niger bike project, World Relief refugees and Habitat for Humanity.

"We never stop needing to serve. We never run out of things to do," said Vickie, now a grandmother and great grandmother.

Ira, who graduated in 1976 from the University of Illinois in animal science/animal behavior, had trained elephants for three years at a zoo near Chicago.

His interest in the Peace Corps was sparked by reading *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* by Trappist monk Thomas Merton, one of the Peace Corps mission developers with President John Kennedy and Sargent Shriver. Ira said Hubert Humphrey first proposed the idea.

Ira was also motivated by the Jewish teaching, "tikkun olan," a responsibility "to repair the world."

"I wanted to go to Africa to see where elephants walked. Somehow the wildlife shows I was raised on left out the people part. I found warm and wonderful—though impoverished materially—people with incredible spirit."

Working with an isolated cattle cooperative, he pulled many

calves and wormed many cattle, while promoting sustainable pasture usage.

After the Peace Corps, Ira lived in Africa five years, including a year in Rwanda administering food aid with USAID. He was also a field representative for Africa with a cooperative organization.

In 1994, he moved to Spokane becoming a franchise of Express Employment Professionals, which matches companies with people they need.

Like other returnees, he is involved in the community—with Rotary 21, Leadership Spokane, World Relief, the Inland Northwest Peace Corps Association and Temple Beth Shalom.

"People do many wonderful things in Africa," he said. "When children's parents die, they are not orphans, because children in a village are everyone's children."

He closed with a thought from Thomas Merton: "If you are at peace there are at least some people at peace in the world."

For information, visit inpca.net or www.peacecorps.gov, or call Ira at 701-0226, Vickie at 535-6070 or Kay at 868-0302.

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Who will speak? Who will lift voices of hope? Plenty of people will!

Who will speak?

Who will speak about the Holocaust now that Eva Lassman has died? That question arose during her memorial service. Eva was committed to social justice and was willing to speak to educate people not only about her experiences as a Holocaust survivor but also so future generations would not allow such an atrocity to happen again. In doing that, she was a voice of hope.

At each time of loss of a community member or leader in the global community who speaks truth to power, we wonder what we will do without that leader.

Eva was an educator, so her expectation was that those she told would learn and pass the stories and truths along.

Who will speak? Who will lift voices of hope?

In fact, many people will speak, many people want to educate others to warn upcoming generations about where greed, hate, selfishness lead human society. There are plenty of voices who want to promote greed, divisions and selfishness. Much coverage is given to voices of people who want to cut deeply into the general welfare of society. They are spreading fear so we'll accept their words and move towards

extending recession or even a collapse that will win them political points and power. Those voices have been repeated enough that there seem to be no other issues than debt reduction.

Who will speak? Plenty of people will speak and are speaking.

Jerri Shepard is writing a book that will preserve Eva's words and wisdom, gathering information from people in the community about how Eva and her message had impact on their lives.

The Institute for Hate Studies will also carry on her legacy through its international conference in April and its ongoing work. More than 60 people will be speaking, sharing insights on ways to recognize and combat hate.

This issue is full of events at which many people will be speaking.

This edition of The Fig Tree uplifts voices of many people speaking about their passions to improve life and relationships, and to increase justice and peace.

Larry Burnley is strengthening diversity for students' lives at Whitworth University and after. Peace Corps returnees continue to hope and work for better international relationships, committing themselves to

lives of service. Marco Kaltofen found voice in scientific research that he hopes will change the arguments that impede cleanup of nuclear waste at Hanford and at the uranium mines and mill sites on the Spokane Reservation. Twa-le and Deb Abrahamson continue to give voice to concerns for the health of their Spokane Tribal community—and other indigenous communities around the United States and world—because of living near toxic waste.

Those are just some of the voices in this issue, voices amid many over our 28 years: voices of compassion, voices of challenge, voices alerting us to information and wisdom often overlooked in other media.

We also watch as voices are lifted for freedom and justice in North Africa and the Middle East—people stepping out on streets and staying until dictators leave. These are voices of hope, along with the voices of folks in Wisconsin and across the nation, saying no to cronyism, corruption and comfort of the few at the expense of the many.

As we approach our annual Benefit Breakfast and new Benefit Lunch, we hope you will value the voices lifting up hope

that we bring to you in our effort to provide credible communication.

It's free, but it's not. There are costs to write, edit, do layouts, sell ads, print, mail, hold events and more. We have no government funds, but advertisers relying on them are cutting back, so we need your donations to make it possible.

March 16 and 18 are times to celebrate what we do, remind donors of the value of our voice and ask for gifts. Perhaps they don't fit your schedule, *but* we hope you will still take time to donate to support The Fig Tree.

Where else will you consistently find these voices?

Where else will you find people speaking on the issues you care about—breaking out of the either-or quagmire that prevents people from acting to reconcile, revitalize and restore our lives and communities?

Where else will you be encouraged to keep acting on your values, knowing you are not alone?

Who will speak? We do, and through our media, many people speak, share, reflect and educate each other.

**Mary Stamp
Editor**

A quote of President John Kennedy in the article about Peace Corps returnees set me to thinking about a different time and different attitude.

"To whom much is given, much is expected."

In the dialectics of talking points, making the most urgent issue that eliminating the national debt, we forget that quote.

With proposals on the state or national level, it seems that everything is on the cutting block except subsidies and loopholes for those to whom much is *already* given.

It seems that everyone is to sacrifice at the altar of the debt crisis, except those to whom much has been given—those largely responsible for creating the debts and profiting from the debts.

It seems that there is to be no redistribution of wealth—one task of the government—except trickling or pouring upward to those to whom much has been given.

What if during Lent those to whom much has been given gave up their tax advantages *freely*.

Those to whom much has been given shudder at regulations, so let's see them give freely—in gratitude for the much they have been given:

How about creating jobs without need to pass government regulations that might encourage them in that direction? They don't need more breaks to do it.

How about protecting the environment without regulations—doing it freely out of gratitude for all their blessings from using

the resources of the earth that are God's gifts to everyone.

How about avoiding the scheming on the markets without need for the hassle in Congress over more regulations of the financial systems?

Let's see it. It's time.

We *expect* people in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, nonprofits, churches, faiths, non-governmental organizations and aid agencies, to whom little is given, to do much with their little. Imagine what could be done with much from those to whom much is given.

Those in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, nonprofits, churches, faiths, NGOs and aid agencies consistently report of how their lives have been transformed by their

experiences. Why would those to whom much has been given not want to experience the great transformation that generosity of one's life and means allot.

I'd rather not be a nag, at least in my more sane moments, but frequent variations on, "The people have voted, and they want us to do something about [insert today's talking point]" are irritating.

Watching someone on the evening news confuse the fact that he has been elected with the idea that voters last November endorsed every opinion that wanders across his brain leads me to conclude that the speaker hasn't done his homework on the subject he was asked about.

I'm tempted to misuse Macbeth's state-

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

At a recent theological discussion group, I shared about how many churches in Yakima work together to make our homeless ministry happen. It isn't just churches, but individuals in the community who want to help. One person commented, "What is happening at the homeless shelter may be more the authentic church than what happens in the sanctuary on Sunday morning." This person may be right.

Worship is important, but is not the focus of what we are to be. We are the church when we help at a homeless shelter, food bank, school book exchange, or help disabled people with their checkbooks.

For too long, we have thought of church only in terms of the worship hour on Sunday morning. Actually, we are most the church when we live our faith during the week. When we talk to the checkout person at the grocery store, we are doing ministry. When we talk with a person about the challenges of life, we are doing ministry.

Where do you engage people—at the store, the YMCA, the theatre? At your place of ministry, how do you engage and treat the person, how do you listen and respond? Jesus is already present in the world. We as Christians are there to make that presence known. Jesus is already present when we sit down with the homeless. Jesus is already present standing in line at the food bank. This is what is means to be missional—engaging people in the midst of life with a Christian heart and mind.

**The Rev. David Helseth
Englewood Christian - Yakima**

For most pastors and church folks, Sundays are a work day. The idea that it could be Sabbath seems like a bit of a cruel joke.

Still, although rest is part of Sabbath, it's not all that Sabbath is about. The second half of the commandment to observe the sabbath day—to keep it holy—is just as important.

Sundays, at their worst, are one thing to do after another. Instead of there being a flow to the day, there is a regimen. Worship begins and ends at a certain time without exception. The sermon can't be too short or too long.

Because everyone is there, worship is followed by meetings and the afternoon is too frequently filled with a whole series of tasks.

Keeping the Sabbath holy means that the focus of the day is not on the things that get done but the holiness of the day. It's when our focus on the tasks and busyness of life shifts to the side and we reintroduce our self to God as, at the same time, God reintroduces God's self to us; God's spirit to us; God's child to us.

We have those quiet conversations with God. We have raucous laughter with God. We sing with God. We debate with God. We mourn with God. We rejoice with God. We're angry with God. We're ashamed with God. We play with God, and, once more, we're freed by God. Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

**The Rev. Mike Denton
Pacific Northwest United Church of**

Earth Ministry invites participation in a Lenten Fast from Carbon

With Lent a season in the Christian tradition for fasting, prayer and medication, a time to open one's life to God's will, Earth Ministry in Seattle is providing resources—with information geared to different denominations—for "Caring for Creation: A Prayer and Action Guide for a Lenten Fast from Carbon."

During Lent this year, Earth Ministry and Washington Interfaith Power & Light invite people of faith to "fast from carbon" to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide they put into the atmosphere.

They offer five reasons for the fast from carbon:

- Carbon dioxide put into the environment as greenhouse gases is changing the climate of God's creation, planet Earth. Scientists no longer debate the basic facts of climate change.
- The sources of these greenhouse gases are largely produced by human beings and society.
- The largest component of greenhouse gases is carbon dioxide, which comes from the burning of fossil fuels from generating electricity and from transportation.
- The impact of increasing greenhouse gasses will be devastating for the planet, people—especially the vulnerable—and plants and animals. Time is critical.
- God created the Earth, declared it to be good and expects people to care for creation and maintain its goodness for future generations.

Earth Ministry offers seven reflections—for Ash Wednesday and six Sundays of Lent—to help Christians consider the amount of carbon dioxide they generate and commit to reduce that amount.

It is providing information on global warming in the state, their impact and opportunities to address them. It offers statements by faith communities, scriptures and prayers, actions for individuals and suggestions for congregations.

This resource can be used as a weekly bulletin insert, as a follow-up to a showing a video, as a focusing prayer for parish meetings or as a discussion starter around climate change issues.

Resources include statements by national Episcopal, Presbyterian, Orthodox, United Church of Christ, United Methodist, Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches.

Suggested actions include changing light bulbs, reusing items, educating others, planting trees, turning down the water heater and thermostat, putting out bird food, driving less, obeying speed limits, walking, buying and eating locally produced food, doing an energy audit at church, going meat-free for a day, using less hot water, saying no to Styrofoam, watching a movie on faithful environmentalism, reducing waste, using a clothesline, using a power strip, turning off computers and TVs, checking environmental stewardship resources, contacting an elected official and committing to use the carbon

Rotary grant provides two new computers

Spokane's Rotary 21 chapter recently awarded The Fig Tree a \$3,016 Civic Affairs grants to purchase two computers for its office. One will be used to set up a network to facilitate updating databases and sharing documents.

It will put office computers on the same system, and mean there is need to upgrade some software programs.

Rotary 21, which celebrates its 100th anniversary in the summer, was the 21st Rotary founded in the nation and the fourth in the Northwest. It seeks to advance service, understanding, goodwill and peace locally and internationally through its 340 business and civic leaders.

The Civic Affairs Committee, which reviewed and approved The Fig Tree's request, is one of several committees that allocate funds. It distributes funds for youth, disabled and critical community needs.

It has recently funded a fountain in Riverfront Park, the Children's Safety Fire House, Immunization Saturdays, a Daybreak van, restoration of Boy Scout and Campfire camps, and Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery.

"Having the computers will save time by making it possible to operate from a common database that incorporates all changes

everyone makes, which is critical in directory updating and The Fig Tree circulation," said editor Mary Stamp.

"It also provides enough computers, so volunteers and interns

can assist on a more consistent basis and we can help train more journalism interns at local universities in our solutions-oriented approach to journalism," she said.

For information, call 535-4112.

Calendar of Events

- Mar 4**
 - **First Friday Spokane Valley Art Tour**, various locations, 5 to 8:30 p.m., 869-1572
 - **First Friday Spokane Art Tour**, various locations downtown, 5 to 9 p.m., 456-0580
- Mar 4-6**
 - **"Cut, Drop, Craft & Quilt" retreat**, Lutherhaven Camp, 3258 W. Lutherhaven Rd., Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, 1-866-729-8372
- Mar 5**
 - **Girl's Festival (Hina Masuri)**, Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry, 1 to 3 p.m., www.spokanejacl.org
- Mar 8**
 - **Fat Tuesday Jazz Mass**, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 316 E. 24th Ave., 7 p.m., 747-6677
 - **"Why Care for Creation? An Apologia for Earthkeeping,"** Steven Bouma-Prediger, Hope College Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-3275
 - **Hospice of Spokane Caregiver Class**, Alderwood Manor, 3600 E. Hartson, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 456-0438
- Mar 9**
 - **Hispanic Business Professional Association**, Agave Bistro, 830 W. Sprague Ave., 11:30 a.m., mikeg@kxly.com
 - **"The Conscience of Mankind: The History and Future of Human Rights,"** Paul Lauren, human rights expert, Spokane Community College President's Speaker Series, The Lair, 1810 N. Greene St., 7 p.m., 533-7042
- Mar 10**
 - **"Gulf Coast Blues: Oil in Their Veins,"** Marc Gauthier, a Spokane chef-scientist-filmmaker, Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth, 7 p.m. 777-4401
- Mar 13**
 - **Kosher Dinner**, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m., 747-3304
 - **Spokane Choral Artists "Sacred Space, Sacred Songs,"** Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12th Ave., 4 to 6 p.m., spokanechoralartists@gmail.com
 - **Spokane Interfaith Council Assembly**, Center for Spiritual Living, 33rd and Regal, 534-1011
- Mar 16**
 - **Fig Tree "Deepening Our Roots" Benefit Breakfast**, Catado Hall, Gonzaga University, 7:15 to 8:30 a.m., 535-4112
 - **Spokane City Forum**, "Homelessness and Low Income Housing in Spokane: Challenges and Solutions," First Presbyterian Church, 11:45 to 1 p.m., 318 S. Cedar St., 777-1555
- Mar 17**
 - **Interfaith Advocacy Day**, United Churches of Olympia, 110 11th Ave., Olympia, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., www.thewac.org/ifad2011/
 - **Prayer Event of Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals**, Valley Assembly of God, 15618 E. Broadway, 7 p.m., 487-7429
- Mar 17 & 31**
 - **Whitworth University Great Decisions lectures**, 7:30 p.m., Weyerhaeuser Hall Theater, 300 W. Hawthorne Rd., 777-3270
- Mar 18**
 - **Fig Tree "Deepening Our Roots" Benefit Lunch**, Highland Park United Methodist Church, 611 S. Garfield, 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., 535-4112
- Mar 18-20**
 - **"A Walk through Psalm 139,"** women's retreat, Lutherhaven Camp, 3258 W. Lutherhaven Rd., Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, 208-667-3459
 - **"Do Not Fear, I Am With You,"** Catholic Youth Celebration, Gonzaga Prep High School, 1224 E. Euclid Ave., spokanecyc11@gmail.com
- Mar 19**
 - **Rockwood Celebrates the Arts** exhibit, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Rockwood South, 2903 E. 25th Ave., 536-6650
 - **Christian Writers' Conference**, Opportunity Presbyterian, 202 N. Pines Rd., 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., jancline@ymail.com
 - **"Companioning the Dying: A Paradigm for Spiritual Direction,"** Sister Rose Mary Dougherty, SSND, senior in spiritual guidance at Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda, Md., College Hall 101, Gonzaga University, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., 483-6495
- Mar 21**
 - **Green Business Networking Lunch**, Spokane Convention Center, 11:30 a.m., 209-2861
- Mar 22**
 - **"Differences Make a Difference,"** Audubon Park United Methodist, 3908 N. Driscoll, 800-755-7710
- Mar 26**
 - **Called to Care: Earth Hour Day**, Faith and Environment Network, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave, 220-6532
 - **Mighty Marimbas of Peace**, Unity Church, 2900 S. Bernard, 7 p.m. 838-6518
- Mar 28**
 - **"Promoting Peace through Education,"** Gonzaga Presidential Lecture, featuring Greg Mortenson, author of "Three Cups of Tea," McCarthy Athletic Center, 7 to 8:30 p.m., 313-3572
- April 6**
 - **Fig Tree distribution**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m., 535-1813
- April 7**
 - **Fig Tree Board**, Emmanuel Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1 p.m., 535-1813
- Weds**
 - **Earth Day 2011 Planning** for Saturday, April 23, Sun People Dry Goods, 32 W. 2nd, 847-9603, visit earthdayspokane.org

Interplayers will perform 'Race' in March, April

The play, "Race," by David Mamet, will be performed March 31 to April 16 by Interplayers Theatre, at 174. S. Howard.

The Interplayers website describes the play as a "deliberately provocative debate on racial politics as a law firm argues whether to take a racially sensitive case."

The current production, running through March 12, is "Privilege," a comedy about the privileged lives of two Upper East Side New York teens whose lives are changed when their father is accused of insider trading.

"The Miracle Worker," about teacher Annie Sullivan, who reached a deaf, blind mute child, Helen Keller, runs May 5 to 21. Patty Duke, who won an Academy Award for playing Helen, will direct the performance.

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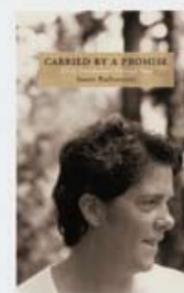
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Mental health ministry integral to churches

From 24 years of promoting a companionship ministry with the Mental Health Chaplaincy, the Rev. Craig Rennebohm is training pastoral counselors, faith groups and mental health workers to respond to people suffering from mental illness, substance abuse, trauma, aging and children's mental health issues.

"Mental health ministry is integral for a healthy congregation's life," he said. "We all are fragile and vulnerable, needing tenderness and understanding. As we learn to care for each other, we are healthier individuals, families and congregations. Equipping neighbors to be neighbors is a way to discover what is necessary for healing, peace and well-being in the world," he said.

Craig is organizing several Faith Group Mental Health Training Cooperatives through Pathways to Promise, a national, interfaith, mental health organization.

He offered sessions in December in Spokane to help clergy discern their role in mental health healing, recovery and wellness.

Craig said trauma affects veterans, abuse victims, immigrants, people with dementia and people suffering from destructive forces of history and society—slavery, racism, inequality and sexism.

"We need a companion ministry with those who suffer, so we can learn their real stories, unvarnished by media or social-political myths. Then people are informed about struggles of our brothers and sisters. We need contact with 'the least' to be aware of the trauma poor and homeless people face," he said.

Visiting the Balkans after conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia, he saw the need for mental health resources to help restore peaceable life together.

"We need to build our capacity to deal with trauma and foster peace," he said. "If we address unspoken issues for traumatized, oppressed people, we can overcome injustice. By knowing people, we can develop realistic, effective programs and public policies."

Craig often walks on Third Ave. in Seattle with people on the street, pushed aside by the economy run by people who work at the banking skyscrapers. He said executives, who have "robbed people of homes and undermined the economy," make decisions on top floors with no idea of the suffering those decisions cause for people on the streets below.

"We need mutual responsibility to ameliorate extremes of wealth and poverty. We need to value caring for and sharing with each other," he said.

After studies at Carlton Col-



The Rev. Craig Rennebohm

lege and Chicago Theological Seminary, Craig was minister to the community at a United Church of Christ church in a low-income Lowell, Mass., neighborhood.

In 1975, he came to Pilgrim United Church of Christ, a dying Seattle congregation with 18 at worship. They sold the parsonage to provide two years of salary. He helped the church focus on mission to the neighborhood of seniors, low-income families, single mothers, heroin dealers and group homes. As the neighborhood and church drew higher-income families, he challenged them to be welcoming.

Pilgrim developed a day drop-in center for homeless people, an emergency shelter, a meals program and a clothing bank. It became a base for service groups. Sunday mornings became a time when 150 to 200 came to celebrate the diverse community.

"By doing mission, the congregation grew," said Craig who equipped laity for outreach, developing training for people to be colleagues in ministry.

In 1987, he earned a doctor of ministry at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley in pastoral care with people suffering mental illness. In clinical pastoral education at the psychiatric unit of the county hospital, he saw people who came in confused, delusional, bipolar, hallucinating, schizophrenic or depressed recover as medications helped rebalance the brain's biochemistry. He found faith had an impact, too.

"When people lose the capacity to hope, think and imagine, the brain becomes stuck in negative feelings and thoughts," he said. "It shuts down its capacity to pray, study scripture and converse."

"The key to reaching them is to be a companion in a relationship of support, healing and recovery in a congregation," Craig said. "Mental health includes how neighborhoods create a fabric of care."

In 1987, he started the Mental Health Chaplaincy at the Church Council of Greater Seattle to 1) do outreach on the streets with homeless, mentally ill and marginalized

people; 2) follow people from the hospital or the street to stable housing; 3) train congregations to welcome and support people released from hospitals and 4) improve mental health policies.

Prospect United Church of Christ (UCC), where he is associate pastor, and Plymouth Congregational UCC provide companionship and housing. Four volunteer companions live with people released from the hospital at Plymouth's House of Healing. Residents live there four to six months to regain strength before moving to permanent housing Plymouth offers.

Prospect has an ecumenical outreach that serves lunch to 250 neighbors. Volunteer companions greet people in line, eat with them, listen to their stories, encourage them and offer resources.

"Companions walk side-by-side as neighbors with people on the margins—from greeting strangers to creating housing and services," he said.

"We begin with people where they are—in a doorway, under a bridge, at a meal or in a shelter," Craig said. "We proceed as neighbors, not professionals with expertise. We treat people with respect, putting aside power and meeting as human beings—as they are and as we are—as two people on life journeys," he said. "In companionship, we are companions, walking together with God in inexplicable moments and remarkable ways," he said.

For information, call 206-329-0337 or 838-4409 or email we-renne@comcast.net.

Programs teach 'companion' ministry

Spokane's Mental Health Training Cooperative plans a two-hour community lunch conversation, "Mental Health 101," at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, March 10, at the Spokane County Sheriff's Office, 1211 W. Gardner.

The program for clergy, congregational leaders, family, persons in recovery, providers and the community will learn how to address mental health needs in caring neighborhoods.

The Rev. Craig Rennebohm, of the Mental Health Chaplaincy in Seattle, will lead a workshop on "Building a Mental Health Ministry" at 9 a.m., Friday, March 11 at All Saints Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce. The session is on developing teams of lay "guides" for individuals and families facing mental health issues.

He will lead "Companionship Training" at 9 a.m., Saturday, March 26, at Central United Methodist, 518 W. Third, dealing with creating safe spaces for sharing life journeys and building circles of friends.

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