

Healthcare Battle: 'WE WON'T LET OUR PEOPLE DIE'



Protests have erupted across the country, including this one in Philadelphia, where disabled people in wheelchairs came to denounce the dismantling of Medicaid contained in the Senate healthcare bill. See page 3, 11, and 12. PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

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FIGHTING
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FIGHT FOR
US ALL
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Stop the murder and torture of immigrants

EDITORIAL

Ten people are dead after dozens, including children, were locked by smugglers inside a sweltering tractor trailer and discovered at a San Antonio, Texas Walmart. More than 30 people suffered serious injuries, including brain damage. This horrific event testifies to how desperate people are to find work and the imminent danger immigrants face in doing so. The smugglers have been arrested. But why is this human rights nightmare happening?

Why in Rio Bravo, Texas is the former police chief claiming that the city manager told him to shoot the children of undocumented immigrants crossing the border to make it easier to send the parents back?

Why in Willard, Ohio is Jesús López, father of U.S. citizens, being deported after living here for 16 years? Never charged with a crime, he has a valid work permit and a job. "These are the darkest times I've ever seen when the brightest and best are taken from their homes and sent away," said his attorney.

This is not about Democrats or Republicans. It is about an immoral economic system that increasingly cannot provide jobs or a decent life for any worker, and then blames the immigrant for the system's failure. Trump and the Republicans are playing to the fears of native-born workers in an economy where technology is replacing labor, but the Democrats have not been any



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

better.

Claiming he was only targeting "criminals," President Obama (dubbed the Deporter in Chief) expelled more undocumented immigrants than any other president—until President Trump. Arrests have increased 38% as Trump scapegoats the undocumented as "criminals." Many of those arrested are detained in abysmal conditions, fed bad food and even forced to drink poisoned water. Some have died of illnesses while waiting for the courts to process their cases.

Undocumented workers toil under dangerous conditions, threatened by employers with the

terror of ICE raids if they try to join unions or refuse to be treated as less than human. Dividing undocumented and native-born workers along color, religious and ethnic lines, our rulers create fear and hatred of the "other" while profiting from their common labor. In reality, these workers, like all of us, have to work for our families' survival, and increasingly the jobs are not there. Together we are at the mercy of an economic system that is turning to fascist terror to keep all workers in line.

In response, a new Sanctuary movement is rising. Workers, churches, individuals, cities

and states are refusing to follow unconstitutional, immoral and unjust laws. This harkens back to the days of slavery when Northern cities refused to return escaped slaves following passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

The sanctuary movement is part of the broader movement standing up to the police state the ruling class is creating. It challenges laws that criminalize survival. It is uniting those who must fight for the necessities of life.

Uniting around our common interests as a class, we can challenge a system of laws that lets a tiny class of billionaires control who is "legal," who eats, who gets healthcare or housing. Opposing the attacks on our undocumented brothers and sisters is a necessary step in defense of the entire working class fighting for its survival and for a society that values every single life.

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

An economic system that doesn't feed, clothe and house its people must be and will be overturned and replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people. To that end, this paper is a tribune of those struggling to create such a new economic system. It is a vehicle to bring the movement together, to create a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it.

Labor-replacing electronic technology is permanently eliminating jobs and destroying the foundation of the capitalist system. The people's needs can only be met by building a cooperative society where the socially necessary means of production are owned by society, not by the corporations.

We welcome articles and artwork from those who are engaged in the struggle to build a new society that is of, by and for the people. We rely on readers and contributors to fund and distribute this paper.

The *People's Tribune*, formerly published by the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, is now an independent newspaper with an editorial board based in Chicago.

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE EDITORIAL POLICY: Articles that are unsigned, such as the cover story and editorials, reflect the views of the editorial board. Bylined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

Deadlines for articles and art: The deadline for articles, photographs and other art is the first of each month for the issue that comes out at the beginning of the following month. For example, the deadline for the June issue is May 1. Articles should be as short as possible, and no longer than 500 words. We reserve the right to edit articles to conform to space limitations.

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— The Editors

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Healthcare battle: 'We won't let our people die'

COVER STORY

As we go to press, Congress is still arguing over healthcare. The bottom line is that we, the people, need healthcare for all, no exceptions. At a minimum we need a single-payer system. But none of the recent Republican bills are acceptable, and the Democrats refuse to unite behind a single-payer bill.

Protests have erupted across the country, including many on Capitol Hill, where disabled people in wheelchairs and on respirators came to denounce the dismantling of Medicaid contained in the Senate bill. One group of protesters chanted, "We won't let our people die!"

"I can't bring myself to call the bill a health care bill at all. It is a death bill. It robs from the poor to give to those who already have luxuries beyond our imagination," said Rev. Jennifer Butler. "It is time to stop calling God by other names when you really want to call God 'capitalism,'" said Rev. Traci Blackmon. "This [government] should be where we come for help. Yet, we are coming, crying out on behalf of the people to stop some of the most egregious legislation that we have seen in a long time."

Why the assault on people's healthcare and the ongoing

efforts to restructure healthcare? Technology is eliminating jobs permanently and driving down wages for those still working. This means fewer and fewer people can afford to buy things, so it's getting harder and harder for the corporations to make a profit by selling things. So they are trying desperately to boost their profits by cutting the cost of doing business, and by diverting public money to the corporations and the rich.

For the corporations as a whole, like the auto companies, healthcare is a cost of doing business, and the US spends nearly twice as much on healthcare as any other country. For the \$3 trillion healthcare industry, healthcare is a source of profit. The corporations don't want to provide healthcare for workers they can't employ, and the healthcare industry wants to keep its profits up. The rich folk are fighting among themselves over how to sort out their own competing interests. But there are few in Congress who are speaking for the people.

There is no doubt that real healthcare reform is needed. Even with the Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare) and its Medicaid expansion, there are still millions without healthcare, and rural hospitals are closing. But nearly all the healthcare "fixes" put forward by the corporate parties (Democrats and



In Philadelphia, and across the country, disabled people in wheelchairs are denouncing the dismantling of Medicaid contained in the Senate healthcare bill. We need healthcare for all, no exceptions.

PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

Republicans) so far revolve around continuing to use government funds to subsidize the privately owned healthcare industry, giving huge tax breaks to the pharmaceutical and health insurance companies and the rich, and cutting back on care. The most recent Senate bill would dismantle Medicaid as we know it. People will die, and the stage will be set to take away anyone's healthcare.

Thousands of people are

going on the offensive for healthcare for all. We need a system that guarantees actual healthcare for every single person, regardless of ability to pay. Single-payer is a first step, and any single-payer system created must eliminate the private health insurers and create one government-run insurance system. It's worth noting that Rep. John Conyers' single-payer bill, HR 676, would do this by improving Medicare and extending it to everyone. Conyers

has introduced HR 676 in every Congress since 2003, and it now has over 100 co-sponsors, more than ever before.

Eventually the people need to take over the whole healthcare system, so that even the hospitals and drug companies, the medical supply companies, etc., are publicly owned. Either we are going to protect the property rights of the wealthy, or we are going to do what is right for the people, but it can't be both.

Whose government: The corporations' or We the People's?

From the editors

Every issue that confronts the people today—such as water, healthcare, homelessness, the environment—poses the question: Will the corporations continue to take over society or will society take over these corporations?

This question is fought out today in the struggle over whether government will serve the corporations or the people.

Today, science and technology are creating the potential for unlimited abundance of food, healthcare, housing and water, and at the same time forcing millions into poverty wage jobs, or permanent unemployment. We, the people are demanding—in so many words—that we have the abundance of housing, healthcare, education, and even water, whether we have money to pay or not. With

nowhere to turn, we are demanding that the government intervene on our behalf. This means nationalization, putting under government control key aspects of the economy necessary for our survival, and distributing the abundance to us at affordable costs.

The billionaire ruling class, the owners of the giant corporations that produce and own the wherewithal of life, is also making demands on the government. As technology eliminates jobs it is steadily reducing the corporations' ability to sell things. The corporations need government funds and action to preserve their profits, wealth and property. Obamacare (the ACA), for example, represents nationalization for the corporations, because it funnels public money to the healthcare industry. The privatization of public water is nationalization for the corporations.

The list goes on.

For our part, we are demanding that water be kept public, clean and affordable; that government house the skyrocketing homeless population; that the hungry be fed; and that everyone have healthcare. We are calling for government to stop the corporations from destroying the environment, and more.

We know the government is in the hands of the corporations, but we must demand that the government be our government if we the people are going to survive. Either we have a government that represents us or we die. Winning the fight over who the government serves will set the stage for taking the next step toward building a new society without corporations that is truly of, by and for the people.

What is the People's Tribune?

The *People's Tribune* is a paper of and for those of us in this country who find ourselves in a battle for humanity's survival against a corporate class that cares nothing for the people.

Whether you are fighting for water, healthcare, education, homes, against police killings or other battles, the pages of the paper are open for you to share your visions and experiences in this fight.

The *People's Tribune* helps build the movement for a cooperative society where everyone can live peaceful, productive lives and where the people themselves make the decisions on how to run society.

Find out more about us at peopletribune.org or call 800-691-6888. Order bundles of papers to share. Subscribe! See form on page 2.

Letter from resident of a Santa Ana homeless center

Editor's note: In January, 2017, the People's Tribune published an article by Igmarr Rodas about a homeless transitional center where residents were denied services like food for not wearing badges. A resident responds.

SANTA ANA, CA —

Mr. Rodas,

While your pieces about the OC Courtyard are rather true, and made me laugh when you compared the badge system to Hitler (because I made that same joke before), there's more to the Courtyard than unlicensed security and discriminating badges.

The Courtyard is known to fire staff members for inappropriate misconduct, except for those that suck up to supervisors and directors. We have staff members who deny residents things as simple as water or blankets and claim

they don't have any when they do. When a resident doesn't sleep in their bed or inside the Courtyard for just one day without reason, they get their belongings packed up and their bed taken away.

Now, don't get me wrong. I think the concept of the Courtyard is a grand one, being a place for homeless people to stay in without being on the streets. It was a great place for people to be at temporarily while they get themselves back on their feet.

The first and biggest problem with the Courtyard is staff. They're untrained, inexperienced, and lack the proper skills to even be working at a homeless shelter. They act like they're superior to everyone simply because they're the employees or they're not homeless. I've heard a cou-

ple of them call us "coccoo" or "crazy." That still Baffles me because at one time they were in our shoes; they were homeless, some not fully living on their own even today.

I'm not grouping every staff member together, because I know that there are good ones working at the Courtyard. Some are compassionate and tend to help out the residents as much as they can.

I just hope that in the future the Courtyard becomes a much better place for the homeless community of Santa Ana. I'd like to see staff members trained, maybe take a few classes. I look forward to reading more exposés of yours about the Courtyard.

Sincerely,
OC Courtyard Resident



Homeless people residing at the Courtyard Transitional Center in Santa Ana, CA have been denied services like food for not having a badge.
PHOTO/IGMARR RODAS

Uptown Tent City: We have the right to shelter ourselves



This Chicago panhandler has been struck by cars three times.

PHOTO/KATHY POWERS

By Mark Saulys

CHICAGO, IL — Uptown Tent City has been, in one form or another, under the viaducts of Lake Shore Drive for some years before I came there to live (February before this past year) after I and seven others were evicted from our encampment three miles to the south on Lake Shore Drive.

Tents are a relatively recent phenomenon under the viaducts, tolerated about three years ago after much fighting with the city for the right to shield oneself from the weather with that minimal protection. Sometimes the homeless encampment residents fought for that right alone, sometimes advocates fought for them, other times residents fought together with the advocates.

I've been able to gather from

oral histories of old time and long time residents of the encampment, that life under the viaducts, before the basic, minimum protection of tents was allowed to residents, was, of course, very brutal. The residents slept on sheets of cardboard on the concrete sidewalk under blankets and bedrolls. Malicious, intolerant, and hateful bigoted passersby would routinely throw bottles and rocks at residents or pour water upon them on cold nights.

In one memorable snowstorm, in which the high winds blew snow horizontally through the viaducts, a group of several dozen men huddled in a circle on sheets of cardboard under their bedrolls. They constructed walls of snow on either side of them to brace against the wind and kept a pair of barbecue grills burning to provide whatever heat could

be had. The old-timer encampment resident who narrated the story to me told of waking up the next morning and finding the man next to him dead. There are other stories of deaths and amputations under the viaducts in the time before tents.

The first tents under the viaducts were bought by the residents about three years ago with money made panhandling on the off ramps from the Drive that lead to the viaducts. The first round of tents was promptly seized and confiscated by the police and authorities as tents, the city's legal experts maintain, are illegal in Chicago.

The residents then went back to the off ramps and collected money for a second round of tents—that was also immediately seized and confiscated.

The third round didn't get confiscated. The residents took their tents and assumed a nomadic lifestyle camping in a group in a different location in Lincoln Park every night or every few nights to evade the police. The group was diverse, black, white, straight and gay, and became an adoptive family to one another.

About this time, a major protest against the city's policies was affected with a hundred or so tents placed in front of Uptown's Weiss Memorial Hospital. The protest was organized by a group called Humble Hearts and involved all of the encampment's residents.

The city backed down and, thereafter, allowed tents under

the viaducts of Lake Shore Drive at night but required they be taken down and packed up and away by 8 am. This was helpful but didn't give the full benefit of an encampment over a shelter, the elimination of the need to carry

all one's possessions with them, and thus still caused encampment residents to be pre-occupied with basic survival. It didn't allow them to progress out from homelessness.

A Friendly Tent City

By Nancy West

ANAHEIM, CA — When trying to help the homeless with basic needs it is common to encounter the NIMBY crowd. "Not In My Back Yard" they say or NIMBY for short. Well, now there is a NIMBY-friendly solution for the homeless called Alfresco Gardens.

While Alfresco Gardens is still in the concept phase its goal takes on a different approach. It's designed to improve neighborhoods and the community in general while also helping the homeless without drawing negative attention to them. We are trying to give the homeless a better place to camp than in the parks, riverbed, railroad tracks, flood channels, alleys, schools, etc.

The solution we are creating is a low-cost outdoor living community. The outside of the facility will not look like a campground and the inside will provide basic human needs for occupants. The grounds include tent spaces, bathrooms, showers, laundry facility, and storage space. There is an area for those who want to attend religious services/outreach, food donation/delivery, etc. We also identified many potential locations around Orange County.

Alfresco Gardens accepts those who are 'service resistant' which makes us very different. It's common for shelters to refuse entry to those with dogs, those who are intoxicated, and those who try to enter after "curfew". This is what is wrong with shelters and why they are not at capacity. At Alfresco Gardens we are trying to find ways to help the community by lowering the cost of living to end homelessness. These are the people we want to get out of the riverbed, rail road tracks, flood channels, alleys, schools, parks, etc.

So, while Alfresco Gardens is in concept phase you can still give us a visit. Stop by AlfrescoGardens.org, give it a read, sign up for updates, and give input.

I am a homeowner and I also know what it's like to be homeless. This is my opportunity to help with the homeless issue in my community (and beyond).

'I've never met so many people homeless for first time'

By Keith McHenry

SANTA CRUZ, CA — In the 37 years I have been sharing meals with the hungry, I have never met so many people who reported becoming homeless for the first time during a single month.

A woman sitting on the sidewalk with a sign that said: "VIRGIN panhandler, this is my first day" secured to the sidewalk with blue tape and a small frying pan. She smiled and started to talk. She lost her apartment the day before. She suffered from inju-

ries she sustained in a car accident and could only take work in spurts.

Our neighbor said her boss's friend had spent last night sleeping outside Verve Coffee on Pacific Avenue. It was her first night on the streets. I told her about the shelter. Sadly it is full.

A man who came to eat at Food Not Bombs. I asked him about his little white dog, Buddy Boy. He told me he slept outside for the first time. He had been a mechanic maintaining the AT&T fleet but became disabled.

A week later another person shared that he had just become homeless. He had been an engineer at a company producing LED lights. They had to lay off half their engineers. His unemployment ran out and he could no longer afford his rent.

I met another engineer that day. It was also his first week living outside. "Where is the safest place to sleep? I slept under a stairway by the parking garage last night but it didn't seem safe." At 60 he didn't think he would get another job in his field soon.

Santa Cruz is not the only American city experiencing a surge in people becoming homeless. Los Angeles homeless numbers jumped 23% in a year according to the 2017 annual survey conducted by The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti told reporters "It's impossible to wrap your head around the numbers..."

Keith McHenry, co-founder of Food Not Bombs, has been feeding the hungry for over 35 years, and has done jail time for this "crime."



In Santa Cruz, CA, home to the sprawling UC Santa Cruz campus overlooking Monterey Bay, even engineers are sleeping in the streets today. People sleep wherever they can, only to be driven out by police. PHOTO/ALEX DAROCY

Homeless on a boat: 'People are waking up'

By Robert Allan Tigro Jr

Most people don't know this about me. I been technically homeless for over 10 years now... Before that I spent years trying to keep a place or moving from place to place... most of my life...

I live on a boat... the boats and the water have been there for me... I don't even think about it anymore... I don't think I'd ever go back to living in a house... I just don't think it would ever feel normal again. The boat has become part of me as I can feel the weather change from inside the boat... I can feel the boat move when other boats are close.

I have adapted... It was something I dreamed of as a kid but never imagined I'd actually do it... It's not an easy life but it is peaceful and fruitful and I love it...

I hope that all of you out there, homeless or not, come to find that you belong... We are all on this rock floating through space together and we have enough resources that none of us should really ever need or want for anything...

There are a greedy few who make it hard for the rest of us but people are waking up to that and it won't be long now... the change is here... I hope you're ready.



Marchers at a recent "Defend Our Housing, Right to Exist and Oppose Trump's Wall!" action in San Francisco that brought together homeless movement leaders from around California and the West. PHOTO/PAULA LOMAZZI

Homelessness indicts a heartless system

From the Editors

Homelessness is a social calamity that is spreading like wildfire in the U.S. In places like Los Angeles and Oakland, CA, it has increased nearly 25% in the past year. Large swathes of cities are home to tent encampments and areas where "cardboard condos" or RV's fill the streets.

This is a symptom of a sick system, one that can't and won't take care of its people. According to a recent count, 23% of the homeless have jobs, 41% of homeless families have at least one member who works, and student homelessness is rising: one in five community college students in L.A. are homeless.

Under heartless corporate rule, those who can't afford a roof over their heads are attacked by police and lawmakers, and acts of survival are considered crimes. People seek refuge and band together for safety and community along rivers, in ravines and down alleys, till the next raid or roust. At the same time, neighborhoods and cities are relentlessly gentrified with skyrocketing rents, as international capital uses real estate investment as a cash cow.

This is an indictment of a for-profit-only economic system that will not provide or do anything that doesn't make a killing for the billionaire class. We, the people, are demanding housing for all as a priority and a right, and the end to this form of human suffering. On these pages are stories of the homeless movement pointing the way forward.



a nest
of newspapers
in a niche
*
to lay
the head

— poem and photo by Sarah Menefee

Alabama Gulf Coast: 7 years after the BP oil disaster Government corruption sacrifices peoples' lives

By Kimberly McCuiston, co-founder, Alabama Coast United

GULF COAST, AL — Tourist season is here again and business on the Alabama Gulf Coast is booming. It's been seven years since we were up to our ankles in oil here and everyone thinks everything is just dandy. But Alabama has secrets no Health or Political official wants to talk about. All along the Gulf Coast the people have seen a quantum uptick in chronic illness including: childhood cancers, breast cancers linked to environmental exposure, neurological disorders, respiratory illnesses, blindness, chronic skin disorders, and endocrine and thyroid illnesses.

We are way past the acute phase of the initial illness yet still no acknowledgement of what's

happened here. Others and I have been screaming our lungs out all these years that this was not going to end well. We were the canaries in the coalmine.

Here's the break down of the BP Settlement. Alabama was granted \$1 billion to be paid out over 18 years. It was not a good settlement, so Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange sold out and took \$659 million up front. Essentially the one time windfall was squandered as soon as it was received last year. Four hundred million was spent on the state's debt, \$120 million to highway projects in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, and \$120 million to shore up Alabama's Medicaid program for the next 2 years (Alabama chose not to expand Medicaid under the ACA) which 71% of all children in the state depend on.

Additionally, the state spent

\$1.6 million in BP funds on a renovation of an abandoned beachfront governor's mansion that has not seen a governor walk through its doors since Hurricane Ivan damaged it in 2004. This is one of three governor's homes Alabama provides.

Sixty million of National Resource Damage Assessment funds were blown on a hotel convention center, despite a court battle and massive public outcry. BP donated money to the Baldwin and Mobile Family Clinics before the settlement, but those sliding-scale fee clinics were never properly staffed by the State with Occupational or Environmental Health Professionals that could have recognized and treated those with chemical induced illness. We are fortunate to see a Nurse Practitioner when we go to the ER.

We have three glimmers

of hope to give attention to our plight:

1: Film Director Mark Manning's documentary, "The Rising," will be released late summer. It will bring back national attention to our health crisis on the Gulf Coast.

2: The Down's Law Firm has taken up our cause under the "Back End Litigation Option" to get healthcare for the chronically and terminally ill. After the trial or settlement they can get good medical care elsewhere. Those who've passed on will have something for their families.

3: In August, 2018, Alabamians will go to the polls in a Special Election to vote for a new governor. Governor Bentley, in office during the BP spill and settlement fight, resigned amid scandal. If our electoral efforts bear fruit, we will have a governor



Chronic skin disorders are common seven years after exposure to toxins in the gulf following the BP oil disaster.

PHOTO/LORI BORSAGE

that will respond to the needs of the people suffering.

I want the world to know what happened here. It's not fine or dandy.



Members of Headwaters Defense in Fayette County, WV, gather to protest near Danny Webb's frack waste well.

PHOTO/T. PAIGE DALPORTO

Fighting for a sustainable future in West Virginia

Editor's note: The People's Tribune interviewed Sandra Kay about the fight for a sustainable future in West Virginia.

FAYETTE COUNTY, WV — The New River is among the oldest rivers on the continent of North America. It is terribly imperiled, like many of our waterways, by corporate extraction industries. Fracking, mountaintop removal and strip mining are part of the problem but so are deadly carcinogens like PCBs, which are buried in the area. These are the dangers that the Headwaters Defense addresses. Formed in 2015, Headwaters Defense is made up of concerned citizens from West Virginia who understand their health and safety and that of their neighbors is being jeopardized daily.

The Peoples Tribune spoke with Sandra Kay, a lifelong resident of Fayette County. She told us of the group's efforts to resolve the problems. They fought for and got a fracking ban in Fayette County only to have it overturned by U.S. District Circuit Court in Charleston. One citizen meeting after another was held. They organized trips to the statehouse in Charleston. Their legislators ignored them. They hoped that the EPA would address their concerns. Sandra said they felt ignored and the problems were getting worse.

They organized for a party/demo near one of the most egregious sites, a fracking waste injection well owned by a certain Danny Webb where contaminated frack wastewater was pumped into the ground. The Headwaters Group was peaceful, prayerful and protesting singing hymns when shots rang out. Unbelievably, Webb was firing on them. A video of the incident can be seen on line. One of the two wells Webb operated on the property was eventually shut down. Webb and other frackers continue to operate in other locations with dangerous consequences to the water.

Sandra explained how water is the heart of everything in Fayette County. Tourism has been a major part of the economy since underground coal mining is disappearing. But even there, Kay indicates there are problems. One of the whitewater rafting companies (ACE), operating along the New River, owns property on a superfund site. PCBs which are known cancer-causing substances were buried in the area over 20 years ago. This was done under EPA regulation at the time. It was supposed to be monitored.

The company running the popular water resort and rafting operations is very upset with anyone even bringing up the hidden danger of PCBs leaking. But as anyone can see, those toxins are leaking into the ground and water. Floods like a recent one in Minden, WV, caused a visible flow of oily PCBs to spread across peo-

ple's yards and foundations. It's pretty hard to hide these facts from the public but those facts run counter to the sparkling clean image the water resort is selling. Minden already has catastrophic cancer rates and is a candidate for disaster status. The families of the county are suffering.

Headwaters Defense represents the brave people who are standing up. The hills and waterways of this ancient place are beautiful and sacred to the people. Desecration is pursued in the name of profit. The Trump EPA promises a worsening of the situation. Sandra understands the relation that all water protectors have from Standing Rock to Flint to Minden and is strongly in favor of uniting and networking in our common struggle for a clean and sustainable future.

Send your stories to the People's Tribune: info@peopletribune.org.

Activists infuriated at Bloomberg-backed coal film

Editor's note: Below we print excerpts from a news release we received.

"From the Ashes," a new documentary funded by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is drawing bitter opposition from environmentalists, mountaintop removal opponents, Appalachian community activists, and coal miners.

The film presents the history and future of the U.S. coal industry, interviewing coal mining families, leaders of Big Green environmental groups, and other experts.

Environmental activists object to the way the film purports to be concerned about coal miners and mining communities, while exploiting their plight to advance an undisclosed agenda of boosting the fracked gas industry, which because of massive methane emissions, water contamination, and other problems, is every bit as damaging to the environment and public health as coal.

Bloomberg and his allies have been vociferous in their support for expanding natural gas and fracking as a "bridge fuel" to more sustainable energy. But fracked gas extraction and infrastructure will enrich elite investors at the expense of the environment.

The film interviews Carl Pope, the longtime former executive director of the Sierra Club, who publicly supported billionaire oil investor T. Boone Pickens' plan to reduce foreign oil dependence by developing U.S. domestic reserves, particularly fracked gas. During Pope's tenure, the Sierra Club accepted millions in donations from the natural gas industry to support

its "Beyond Coal" campaign. Later, Sierra reversed its position on natural gas, turned down further funding from the industry, and launched a "Beyond Gas" campaign.

Activists in the fights against mountaintop removal and expansion of fracking are calling out the film, Michael Bloomberg, and Carl Pope. Some excerpts from those statements follow below.

Statement of Chuck Nelson, a retired United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) coal miner:

"After watching this film, I was infuriated. The Sierra Club did not end mountaintop removal. Bloomberg's money for Sierra's efforts to end coal has led to the current fracking boom and natural gas pipelines destroying what's left of Appalachia. 'Beyond Coal' represents the money in the Sierra Club from the natural gas industry, from Chesapeake to Bloomberg. It has done nothing good for the people living here."

Statement of Maria Gunnoe, an Appalachian activist who won the prestigious Goldman Prize for opposing mountaintop removal in her community:

"I have fought the impacts of the coal in industry in Boone County, West Virginia all my adult life. I was born and raised here. Mike Bloomberg and Carl Pope couldn't handle living like we do for a day, and they wouldn't know coal if they tripped over it. While he was executive director of the Sierra Club, Carl Pope accepted \$26 million from Chesapeake



Activists fighting mountaintop removal (where coal companies blow up mountains, severely damaging the land, air, water, and health of the people in nearby communities where cancer rates are rising), are calling out the Bloomberg-backed coal film.

PHOTO/MARIA GUNNOE, COURTESY OF SOUTHWINGS.ORG

Energy to kill one fossil fuel, coal, to benefit natural gas fracking and pipelines. Then, Mike Bloomberg gave Sierra Club \$80 million to shut down coal-fired power plants, with no consideration for how it left the coal miners and the people of Appalachia. There was no plan for them in Beyond Coal. Don't let them fool you. These organizations owe Appalachia, too; they are morally responsible for its demise. Exploiting already exploited people for money is wrong.

"These elitist organizations are selling

off the coal communities of Appalachia for their own salaries and for profit.

"The family in your film are my neighbors. You used them for 'From the Ashes,' which is nothing more than a vanity piece for elitists in New York City or San Francisco who think they know what's best for us hillbillies. Well I have news for all of them, you can't own hillbillies."

For more information, contact Josh Fox at joshfoxwow@gmail.com.

Either the public controls the water or the corporations control the water

From the Editors

New reports project that 36% of US households will be unable to afford water in five years. Corporations and hedge funds are moving in to seize the public's water in order to make a killing in profit. Prices for the average household can only rise.

Already in Detroit, as a result of the corporate drive to privatize the water, thousands of low-income families have had their water shut off for inability to pay. When asked what it is like without running water, one woman said, 'you live like an animal.'

It gets worse. A groundbreaking study released by Detroit's Henry Ford Health System's Global Health Initiative found (to the dismay of the City of Detroit) that patients from blocks with water shut-offs were nearly 150% more likely to get water-based illnesses, from skin and soft-tissue infections to GI infections. In Flint, people have died from poisoned water (see page 8), and in West Virginia, cancer is rising as a result of the coal industry spewing pollutants into the ground and water. The list of endangered cities and states is endless. A powerful movement for clean water and a safe environment is growing nation-wide as a result.

Our demands are: No one should be denied water! No one should have to drink poisoned water! No one should be allowed to profit from water! Either the public controls the water or the corporations control the water.

Send your stories to the People's Tribune: info@peopletribune.org.

Ghosts

You keep burying it
Deeper
Encased in flimsy
Coffins
Away from the people
That you love
But the earth rebukes you
And your demons
Come out to haunt us instead
Seeping through our soil
Water
Air

Poisoning us
The ghosts of your greed
Are making us sick
But they won't be stopped
Until you are
And we won't be silenced
We will haunt you, too
But we won't wait
Until we're buried

— Meghann Long
Lochgelly, WV
Headwaters Defense

Atlantic City victory in water fight

A victory was won in Atlantic City when a coalition went into the neighborhoods, and gathered signatures on a citizen's initiative, which resulted in the city council passing an ordinance in July to ensure public participation in any sale of their water utility. The winning slogan was 'Our Water, Our Voice.'

Residents became aware of the necessity of this fight after the passage of a state takeover law. "It was one more way for the corporate sector to gain control over Atlantic City," said Lena Smith of Food and Water Watch. The brother of a powerful state Democrat associated with the initiator of the law

was a lobbyist for NJ American Water, a private water company.

"We have seen how takeover laws in places like Detroit and Flint have been exploited by private water companies... and pose a serious threat to local democracy," Lena said. "[By] organizing an entire city to resist the governor's plan, we have built people power to protect public water and local sovereignty!"

Editor's note: Information for this story is from an article by Lena Smith on the Food and Water Watch FB page.

Trouble in the water: Flint and the untold story of a compromised immune system

By Joyce Ellis-McNeal



Joyce Ellis-McNeal

Editor's note: What follows are excerpts from a longer statement by Joyce Ellis-McNeal about the tragic death of her son as a result of the poisoning of Flint. Joyce also discusses her proposal for a Community Water Advisory Board that gives the people power over what happens to the water.

FLINT, MI — Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immune-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. Joseph, a father of three, a son, HIV/AIDS and Bipolar patient, last but not least, was a victim of drinking, bathing, cooking, and swimming in contaminated water in Flint.

At that time, we were unaware that his body has been poisoned by contaminated water and his immune system no longer could support him. He would complain that something was in the water where he was washing and bathing; we moved him in thinking it was mental. The rashes and itching were causing sores and his flesh to peel away. I remembered watching him using band aids, to tape his flesh back on his face. He had a home care doctor who made a statement: "I have been a doctor in Iraq over twenty years, and have never seen a case like Joseph. These rashes and bacteria eating away the flesh was not the results of STD or HIV. Joseph had taken a shower, and my husband noticed his flesh had begun to fall off him. We must not neglect this community.

Facts: AIDS/HIV - infection rates in Genesee County in the black community are affected disproportionately, a national challenge that some experts blame on poverty and lack of education. Black women are still among the highest-risk groups in the state. In Genesee County, they make up 63 percent of all female cases, according to 2010 data from the Michigan Department of Community Health. Two-thirds of Genesee County residents diagnosed with HIV or AIDS live in Flint... More funding must be in place to support these victims who have a very high compromised immune systems. ALL LIVES MATTER.

Proposal: Anti-Privatization of Municipalities Drinking Water.

We must use the City of Flint, Michigan as the model in advocating anti-privatization of human access to clean drinking water.

Anti-privatization (Wikipedia): Anti-privatization of the Flint Water Sources call for forms of local and global integrations that better provide democratic representation, advancement of human rights, fair trade and sustainable development.

Recommendations:

- Overall changes to state Civil Service rules that would make it easier to discipline state employees for negligent actions.
- Partnership alliance with strong Water Rights Activist groups in the decision making process of water source and treatment.
- Establishment of Water Funding Account... The Water revenue can no longer be used to balance the budget.
- Community Water Advisor Board—selected members within the community.
- MEDICAID for all residents.
- Once high level of lead or bacteria and the destruction of pipes infrastructure is found, the city should be declared a DISASTER.

Joyce Ellis-McNeal is a candidate for the 8th Ward City Council for Flint, Michigan. Visit joycemcneal.com.

'I Won't Be Bullied!' State files lawsuit against Flint, the city it poisoned

From People's Tribune
correspondent in Flint

FLINT, MI — In a spectacular show of gall with no moral compass, Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has filed a lawsuit against the city it poisoned! The suit was filed because the City Council refused to sign on to a 30-year water agreement with the Great Lakes Water Authority (aka Detroit Water source). This is yet another betrayal of this beleaguered city.

This is the same MDEQ that did everything from declaring the poisoned water was safe, refusing to ensure proper corrosion control for the Flint River water, cherry picking lead tests, to calling EPA staff member, Miguel Del Toro, (whose memo



helped sound the alarm about the lead), a "rogue employee."

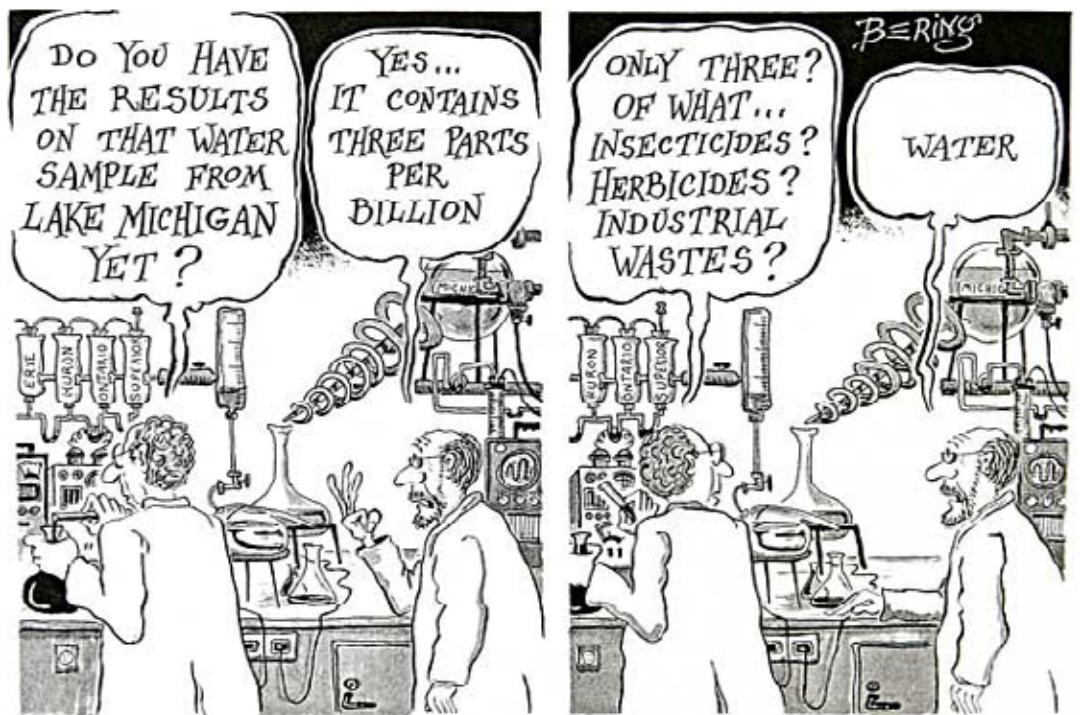
City Council members want more time and information on the contract and are skeptical of such a long-term commitment. They are in the process of filing a countersuit. One Councilperson declared, "I will not be bullied!!"

In December of 2015, a Flint Water Advisory Task Force charged with investigating the Flint debacle concluded that the "primary responsibility for what happened in Flint rests with the Michigan Department

of Environmental Quality." And now they want to sue Flint????

With bottled water distribution centers scheduled to close September 1, when will the nightmare end?

Daily life for Flint residents has barely improved. Bottled water still remains as the primary source for drinking, cooking and bathing. People use their showers at their own risk. Reports of life-threatening illnesses (bacteria infections) are ever present, along with outbreaks of rashes and other health issues while those who contracted lead poisoning, especially children struggle with behavior and educational challenges. The water crisis and its accompanying "democracy" crisis still loom large in this long-suffering city.



The Night

The night had no effect
passing into dusk,
sleep comes abrupt,
detachment
kept from the dreamer.
Weaving without strings
being of light
Co-creating Artist
streaming consciousness,

into outer rings of darkness.
Retaining that glow
a vibrational echo
sounding off the walls
down the streets
through the parks
where no one sleeps.

— Ayat Bryant-Jalal

Atrocities at immigration detention center

Editor's note: Much of the information below is excerpted from What's Going On at Adelanto Detention Center? We Don't Know, And That's a Problem, an article published in Rise Up: Be Heard by Mariah Castañeda. Also included are excerpts from Mariah's video interviews.

By Joseph Peery

The following two paragraphs are statements from Mariah Castañeda:

“On Sunday, June 25, I watched as a group of nearly 50 people, many of them family members of detained immigrants, waited for hours in the sweltering 100-degree heat outside of Adelanto Detention Center, a privately operated federal prison that holds undocumented immigrants in San Bernardino, CA. They had come to Adelanto expecting to see their loved ones. Instead, they were apparently told by prison officials that they wouldn't be allowed to enter the facility due to the presence of a small group of immigrant rights activists—about 15 people—holding a vigil across the street.

“Without reliable access to the facility and the people inside... it's difficult for loved ones, let alone journalists to ascertain the truth. (I was also denied access to the facility during visitation hours last Sunday)... whether it was intentional or not, by citing the presence of activists and media as a reason for not allowing visitors, ICE (Immigration and Customs



Protest against ICE detention center in Michigan. People everywhere are saying no to the immoral attack on immigrants and are standing in their defense. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Enforcement) is pitting family members of detainees against activists and press, essentially transferring responsibility for the canceled or delayed visitations onto immigrant rights activists and journalists.”

Roberto Corona, an activist with Pueblo Sin Fronteras told Mariah in a video interview that, “Prison guards are using pepper spray against hunger strikers; hunger strikers are beaten and placed in solitary confinement; and reports of inmates being given used underwear, sparking hygiene concerns.” Another activist told Mariah that hunger strikes of 300 to 400 people, men and women, at a time go on inside with protests on the outside,

and the facility has responded with lockdowns and communication and visitation interruptions.

Adelanto is owned by GEO Group, the largest for-profit private prison corporation in America. In April, Trump signed a new \$110 million contract with GEO to expand the system of privately owned for-profit immigrant detention centers.

Mother Jones reported that in the last three months, three immigrants have died at the Adelanto Detention Center.

Today it is the immigrant. Tomorrow it will be the rest of us. The time to intervene is now.

We the people, we the human family

From the Editors

Trump's nasty attitude toward immigrants and denial of science compel us all to consider the following facts: 1) Humans migrated out of Africa a couple hundred thousand years ago. 2) Everywhere we went after that, we were immigrants. 3) Archaeological evidence shows that Native Americans have been here for at least 13,000 years. 4) Human beings who developed genetic adaptations in the areas they settled, e.g.; Chinese, Arabs and Vikings, as well as Africans, all found their way here at one time or another.

Conclusion: We are all from Africa. Some of us decided to travel and then developed genetic adaptations to best survive our new environments. Whether we walked across the Bering Strait many millennia ago, got here yesterday on a plane, or sailed here any time in between, we are all the human family of immigrants. Science (archaeology and genetics) has allowed us to understand the true story of the human family. Science applied to societal problems will allow us to finally bring our human family back together again. The recent targeted deportations of those who stand up in defense of Latino immigrants, including an Irish immigrant in Boston, and the unity ceremonies initiated by Native American elders at Standing Rock are perfect examples of our innate yearning for the human family.

Mothers unite and call for an end to police killings in Stockton

By Cathleen Williams

STOCKTON, CA — “No justice, no peace,” the families chanted as they clutched posters and signs. One showed the slender shoulders of James Earl Rivera, Jr., the son of Dionne Smith-Downs, and the wounds, the pierced and torn skin, where he had been shot 18 times in the back by Stockton police on July 22, 2010, the day before his 17th birthday. He was unarmed. Dionne Smith-Downs took the microphone that day, sobbing, declaring, “I want the world to see what they did to my son. I want to show the world what they did to my family, my community, my life.”

Dionne Smith-Downs is a leader of Black Lives Matter in Stockton. On the day before Mother's Day this year, she gathered with other mothers and family members from Los Angeles to the Bay Area on the steps of City Hall. They came to express their grief and anger at the police shootings that had ended the lives of their loved ones. All the deaths were ruled “justifiable”—or sim-



Mothers gather on the steps of Stockton city hall with supporters to protest police killings.

PHOTO/CATHLEEN WILLIAMS

ply unexplained.

As Dionne Smith-Downs says, “A lot of time we get out there with “no justice, no peace,” also to let people know about our loved ones. But I'm not just talking about that. These were people, this is humanity. These people had families, they had kids. They were somebody until you took

their voice.

“Now I know we have officers out here that are abusing and murdering people and covering up. And so, since the day I lost my son, my life has never been the same. No one hears my cry but I still continue to struggle, to fight for justice.

“I see that they treat homeless

people the same way. I don't want to call them homeless. I notice the less fortunate ones are easier for the police to abuse because they know no one is going to be their voices.

Community organizer Motecuzoma Sánchez — “Stockton born and bred,” as he says — notes that this small city ranks second

in California in the number of police killings per capita.

As he pointed out in a recent interview, Stockton has deep, historic, pockets of extreme poverty, unemployment, homelessness, crime, and desperately underfunded services and schools. These are communities that have been segregated and neglected for decade after decade. In fact, the city is built on a history of violence toward the indigenous Miwok and Yokuts people, and later, the Mexican, Filipino, African-American—as well as other ethnicities—and poor white communities. Today, 30,000 children live in poverty in Stockton, but the developers who control the city demonstrate little or no interest in their welfare.

Dionne Smith Downs has no intention of giving up. “For eight years, we have marched, we have demonstrated. We are now facing arrest charges as a result of our protests. This isn't just about my son, or your son. This is about the community, and this about justice. That's what we stand for.”

Emergency: Dead on arrival in Georgia

By Rita Valenti

ATLANTA, GA — Georgia Blue Cross and Blue Shield recently announced it would no longer cover “non-emergency” visits to emergency rooms in the State. Anthem’s BC/BS will determine whether or not ER visits are a reimbursable emergency. Policyholders will undoubtedly hesitate to seek care for fear of bankrupting costs. The result will be more preventable deaths and unnecessary suffering for Georgians.

If the Blues can get away with this policy in Georgia, it will surely be instituted elsewhere. In a state where 79 counties have no OB/GYN care; 66 have no general surgeon; 63 have no pediatrician and 53 counties with no hospital and cascading rural hospitals closures, Georgia healthcare is already dead on arrival.

A visit to the emergency room outside of Georgia’s major metropolitan areas like Atlanta, Columbus, Augusta, Athens, Rome and Savannah may be moot—there are none. The 2015 Georgia Rural Hospital Stabilization Committee reported that “Georgia has virtually no rural hospitals in counties capable of supporting an emergency room without subsidies.”

Georgia’s Commissioner of Insurance, Ralph Hudgens, predictably approved this policy. The department Hudgens heads is notorious for being an arm of the insurance corporations since the state allows for industries that the commissioner regulates to make campaign contributions. Hudgens is not only the recipient of the industry’s vast campaign contributions, perks and gifts but also their mouthpiece.

Using an anecdote comparing someone with breast cancer to a

person trying to buy car insurance after having a wreck, Hudgens said: “Well, I just had a wreck, it was my fault and I want the insurance company to pay to repair my car. And that’s the exact same thing on pre-existing [health] insurance.”

He makes crystal clear that healthcare under capitalism is a commodity just like an automobile: a ‘product’ to be bought, not a necessity to be distributed. There is no façade of democracy here in Georgia.

All this is occurring within the context of “repealing and replacing” the Affordable Care Act. The ACA, a two-edge sword that, on the one hand, curbed some of the most toxic practices of the insurance industry like exclusions for pre-existing conditions, moderated premium costs for some, ended caps on coverage and allowed for young people to stay on their parents’ insurance until age 26, but, on the other hand, primarily was constructed to stabilize the private insurance market through huge government subsidies to corporate health insurers.

The ACA’s most significant benefit, Medicaid expansion, is the central target of the “repeal” machinations on Capitol Hill. But the snowball rolling down this fetid hill is not just about ending the expansion, but withdrawing nearly all federal funds and oversight of any Medicaid program.

Georgia and nine other Southern state governments refused to expand Medicaid. Working and poor people in the South have no choice, but while acting to defend and call for Medicaid expansion, they must necessarily go on the offensive for improved Medicare for all, a step in the direction toward a national public health service based on peoples’ need, not the insurance marketplace.



Protestors in Atlanta, Georgia earlier this summer oppose proposed cuts in Medicaid and demand healthcare for all. PHOTO/JOHN E. RAMSPOTT



Disabled people were arrested after protesting the Senate healthcare bill outside Sen. Mitch McConnell’s office on Capitol Hill. The bill would dismantle Medicaid as we know it. PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

Congress aims to destroy Medicaid, and Medicare will be next

By Retirees for Single Payer Health Care

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has one purpose—to make the “safety net” profitable by privatizing it. It’s not working.

The purpose of the American Health Care Act that the House of Representatives passed in May is to destroy the safety net. In June, the Senate introduced a rewrite of that bill and called it the Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017. Both bills are essentially the same with some new tweaks in the Senate version. The Senate is looking for 50 votes in order

to pass its version. Then the Senate version will go back to the House of Representatives to approve the tweaks that the Senate made.

All of this will have to be accomplished before October 1, 2017, when the new budget takes effect. Then the whole process starts over. Yet there is a significant opposition to both the ACA and the American Health Care Act/Better Care Reconciliation Act in the House and a small opposition growing in the Senate. They are the 115 cosponsors of H.R. 676 in the House and at least two Senators who publicly support “Medicare For All.” While

Sanders supports the strategy of the Democratic leadership in the Senate, he also supports some type of “single payer” in the long run. Warren openly supports “Medicare For All” in opposition to the Democratic leadership in the Senate. All of these members of Congress must be supported in the 2018 elections.

Between now and then we must lobby the other members of the House to support H.R.676—Expanded and Improved Medicare For All, by becoming co-sponsors, and lobby the members of the Senate to introduce H.R.676 as a companion bill in the Senate.



Healthcare protest in Philadelphia, where disabled people in wheelchairs denounced the dismantling of Medicaid contained in the Senate healthcare bill. PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

How I got screwed out of my Medicaid



By Susan Sawsan Cain

MEMPHIS, TN — This [attack on our healthcare] isn't anything new under Trump. I was screwed out of my Medicaid under Obama. First, the state of Tennessee

decided I earned too much money (on Social Security disability!) to qualify for the state paying my premiums. So they sent me a notice one day saying my payments would be deducted from my Social Security check, AND, since the decision was retroactive, they deducted 6 months' premiums all at once from my next check... I could have dropped Medicaid and been spared the expense (which is what the state actually wanted from folks like me), but Medicaid covered what my Medicare did not cover. Two years after that, the state decided I earned too much money to even qualify for Medicaid, so I was left with only shitty Medicare that "covers" \$50 of the cost

of a \$200 battery for the exterior speech processor used with my Cochlear Implant.

The federal government cuts aid to states for Medicaid, and states start cutting people from Medicaid. To qualify for it now, one has to be dirt poor and not even able to "live" paycheck-to-paycheck... like well over 20% below poverty level. And one has to be several percentage points lower than that to qualify for the state to cover the monthly premium, or else it's deducted from whatever government assistance the person is receiving. Thus, a LOT of poor people can't really afford that monthly premium, so they drop Medicaid, which will really screw them if they have

even a minor illness and have to see a doctor.

Now, the Feds are attacking Medicare in the same way. Just this month, I received a letter from the state telling me they were no longer going to pay my Medicare premiums—I "earn" too much money, once again from Social Security LMAO [Laughing My Ass Off]!...

I go into all this detail not to whine about my situation, but to fully explain to people not on Medicaid, Medicare, or government assistance how brutally the poor, elderly, and disabled are being attacked by the ruling class. People need communities that will serve their needs, not a tyrannical corporate-state that

would be ecstatic if poor people just died and relieved the wealthy of this "huge burden." The public is almost clueless about class war. Those affected by it the worst are invisible as is their dire economic status. These are people who'd be happy to be able to "live" paycheck-to-paycheck. These are people who are becoming the homeless in huge numbers, or dying because their healthcare is shit, or putting their kids to bed hungry every damn night.

Nobody really gives a damn about these people... Fuck the government. Fuck the state. Fuck the ruling class.

THE WAY IT IS

J.W. told me tonight that Mitch the Chipewa died two nights ago.

"Over-exposure and drink. 39 years old." "And he had a bad ticker," said Gyzmo's

friend, coming into the Bar mainly to whisper some stash of a deal into J.W.'s ear.

The Tenderloin Times says 108 or 109 died homeless this year, but we know many

more simply could no longer bear the excellent San Francisco food fare. They preferred

choice cuts of wrist or night dives where you'd never hear the bodies hit the water, or just

wasting away till they were nothing but filthy cardboard itself that the garbage men

slap together and fling into the ass of their truck, never knowing they've just liberated

even the dead from an American concentration camp, all things being equal in human beings now.

— Jack Hirschman

Government must guarantee healthcare as a human right

By Joyce Mills

Americans are mad as hell about the inability of either the Democratic or Republican parties to pass healthcare legislation that will guarantee real, live healthcare! "Civil War Has Broken Out Inside the Democratic Party," says one headline after Democrats scuttled a recent proposal for Single-Payer in California. When supporters enacted a meme of the California Bear being stabbed in the back, Democratic Assemblyman Rendon accused supporters of the bill with threatening his life. Meanwhile, at nationwide town-hall meetings, Republican candidates faced angry constituents afraid of GOP proposals to "repeal and replace" the Affordable Care Act (ACA). According to the Congressional Budget Office, current Federal GOP proposals will mean 22 to 23 million of us will lose our health coverage by 2026.

As labor-replacing technology destroys benefited union jobs, lack of comprehensive and affordable healthcare has become a key pathway to dispossession in this country. This is not about a scarcity of resources or the relative weaknesses of national or state bills. It's about politicians bought and paid for by corporate America, about their power to make money. They want government out of the business of providing healthcare altogether. For them, healthcare is a tool for investment and profit making, a tool to restructure the American tax system and reorganize the relationship of the federal to state



A rally demanding Medicare for All in Los Angeles in February 2017.

PHOTO/MOLLY ADAMS

governments.

For us it's about the power to save lives. It's about the over 73 million Americans on Medicaid and over 45 million still uninsured. It's about skyrocketing health costs of corporate healthcare, over \$3 trillion, being borne by an increasingly impoverished working class—employed and unemployed alike. "The truth about these dysfunctional, downscale communities is that they deserve to die," a National Review article about poor whites drawn to Trump screamed a year ago. Whether you are left or right, rural or urban, regardless of color, ethnicity, gender, or age, either we hold our government accountable to secure healthcare as a basic human right or it will continue to reflect the power of those who see us all as people who could do the nation a favor by dying.

The immediate attack is on

those of us already on Medicaid or on those of us without documents to work, the undeserving "poor." But healthcare restructuring is for the millions who are going to need Medicare and Medicaid in the future. In California, for example, Medicaid pays 65 percent of the state's \$90 billion Medi-Cal program, which already pays for health coverage to one-third of California's population.

Neither party can guarantee the future health of speculative capital and at the same time give the American people the healthcare they deserve. Even single-payer proposals that leave a vast delivery system of pharmaceutical companies, device manufacturers, hospitals and doctors to the dictates of a private property system, has no place in the production of healthcare today. Build the fight for healthcare as a basic need and a human right. Your life depends on it.

'It's time that we start working together'

By Rev. Edward Pinkney



BENTON HARBOR, MI — We had a tremendous protest this morning! We started at the Berrien County Courthouse. We talked about the corruption within the courthouse and the growing number of young community members who are in jail. The most important thing is that the lady with the scales of justice no longer exists in Berrien County. We had to do something.

I also wanted a welcome back home party right in front of the courthouse so they would know I was home. And we wanted to send a message that the reason we fight is for the people who don't have the courage to fight for themselves or their children. It's crucial that we start standing up for what's right. It doesn't make a difference what color you are— black, white, brown, red, yellow, green, pink, blue and all others. It doesn't make a difference. It's time that we come together and take a stand.

We also went to Whirlpool Corporation's headquarters in Benton Harbor, MI. Recently there was a massive fire—and one of Whirlpool's appliances burned down a whole section of a building in London. Seventy-nine poor people were killed. We have to hold Whirlpool accountable for their actions. If you were inside a house or a building and there was a fire that you caused, most likely you would get arrested if something like that should happen.

So we want the world to know that we are standing up against the corporations, we are standing up against this criminal justice system, and we are standing up against the people who are willing to do anything to oppress the poor people.

Anytime you have a government that refuses to feed, clothe, and house its people, it's time for a change. It's time that we move to a whole different level. It's time that we start working together and forming some kind of unity. We need to stand together, stand against the enemy, and know who the enemy is. Once you know who the enemy is you can defeat them. So on that note, I am going to say power, power to the people!

Demonstrating for justice in Berrien County

Jenise Blue, formerly of Benton Harbor, MI, attended a demonstration led by Rev. Edward Pinkney outside the Berrien County Courthouse July 11. She told the People's Tribune that her son and daughter had both had negative experiences with the police and courts in Berrien County. "So that's why we are standing here against the Berrien County Courthouse, because they're not understanding, and even the lawyers were not understanding to help us professionally the way they should or even show us the way around this. And it was just because you don't know the law; they don't care, Black or not, it carries you under," she said.

PHOTO/PEOPLETRIBUNE.ORG

Welcome home Rev. Pinkney

After 30 months of his life stolen by imprisonment for his leadership in the community's fight against Whirlpool's takeover of their town, Rev. Edward Pinkney is home in Benton Harbor! Also, the Michigan Supreme Court's recent request for oral argument in Pinkney's case is good news. This is the closest he has gotten to the possibility of justice.

— People's Tribune

Georgia: Children have died in state care

By Grady Smith

DECATUR, GA — My child, now six years old, revealed to his Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) that he was being physically and sexually abused with strong supporting evidence. The LPC reported to Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and the Sheriff's Department of Newton County, GA that he was in imminent danger and needed to be removed immediately from harms way.

It is my belief that because of bias toward me (regarding a dispute with my ex-wife and that I had fired my attorney who is prominent in Newton County), it seemed I could not get help in that county for my child. Even when my son endured more documented injuries to his body by the perpetrator after the recommendation to remove him, the LPC,

DFCS failed to act.

My son had to be taken to an emergency room which led to the 8/19/2015 emergency hearing based on child abuse and molestation. Still he was not removed. We believe that the county may feel it will be clear that they failed him if they remove him now. So instead, the authorities are hiding the facts of what really happened so they are not held accountable for their failure to protect my child. His life is still in danger and according to the LPC he could end up dead if not removed. Hundreds of children have died in Georgia's DFCS system and in most cases DFCS was not held accountable.

It's bad when racism and bias are a part of any case but more so when a child is involved. Certain witnesses seemed to change their story after Newton County connected with them and

one who had counseled my child and was there to testify on his behalf somehow was kept off the witness stand until convinced to stay silent. But the documents had already been notarized.

Because of the way the police reports were done in Newton County, we had to go outside of the county just to get the police report recorded correctly. DFCS in the other county said the same evidence denied in Newton County was clearly child abuse and met Georgia's requirement for child abuse. But Newton County DFCS said it did not. I have the documents. That county also became silent when Newton County contacted them and stopped giving me the documents concerning my son's case. Please help me save my son. Contact gradysmith@gmail.com.

Hometown heroes

By Leslie Willis

CHICAGO, IL — Smack in the middle of August its time for the Bud Billiken Parade! This back-to-school tradition goes back to 1929 and is the largest African American parade. This year's theme is "Honoring our Hometown Heroes."

How can we judge who is a hometown hero? By examining the neighborhoods most in need of heroes. Ten communities have poverty rates of at least 40 percent, and most of these neighborhoods have at least 20 percent extreme poverty (homelessness). Statistics say that the homicide rate in Chicago in the five poorest neighborhoods is 11 times higher than in the richest neighborhoods.

Behind poverty statistics are hunger, sickness and death. For example, in Englewood where the annual per capita income is \$12,250, residents die prematurely from diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and infant mortality runs 2.5 times higher. Services for distressed neighborhoods are almost non-existent. In the winter you can see homeless women with children camping in police station parking lots.

Neighborhoods are this way because the jobs have evaporated

in the computer age. But getting the kind of education to compete for the ever-shrinking job market is next to impossible. Schools are crumbling and crippled from a lack of funding, and many are closed or sold off to property developers.

On top of all this, we witness the police murdering innocents, without any punishment. Is it any wonder that violence is a problem!

Still people emerge every-day to struggle for peace and justice. These hometown heroes are everywhere. In Englewood, there is Tamar Manasseh and all the other members of MASK (Mothers Against Senseless Killings) and Pastor Dwayne Grant and his street ministry. In Humboldt Park there is Arielle Maldonado and the crew of the Healing Corner. There is Maria Pike from "Illinois Mothers Against Hand Gun Violence" and Eric Russell from "Tree of Life Justice League of Illinois." And there are many more who deserve recognition for their efforts.

These heroes share a common vision—they want prosperity and well being for all. Unlike the politicians and the corporations who have allowed whole communities to be destroyed, these hometown heroes have a deep love for the people of Chicago.