

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

### “And don’t call *me* a racist!” \*

A couple of years ago, Marian University, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin sponsored what were called “affinity dinners.” Every month a different group met for an ethnic dinner and discussion:

- African American
- Asian Pacific Islanders
- Hispanic
- European
- Native American
- Everyone

Attendance was phenomenal. All wondered where the others came from knowing that the Fond du Lac population is still 94% White. Attendance at the last dinner which was a potluck for everyone who had come earlier, dropped significantly. Why was the attendance so low for this dinner? Was it because it was a potluck or were other factors at work?

I found what may be a partial answer when I read Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? by Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D. This book is as relevant today as it was in 1999 when it was first published and when the epilog was written in 2003. As a former professor of psychology and education, and now President of Spelman College, she is well qualified to explain the development of racial identity, not only for Blacks, but other persons of color as well. She can also help White people discover the White privilege that is theirs.

“People are commonly defined as other on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic state, age and physical or mental ability. Each of these categories has a form of oppression associated with it: racism, sexism, religious oppression/anti-Semitism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, and ableism, respectively. In each case,

*Continued on page 2*

\* Title of a book by Ella Mazel, Argonaut Press, 1998

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**Inside**

**The New Jim Crow.....p 3**  
**Insights by Some JPEC**  
**Members of articles read...p 3**  
**Anti-Racism Efforts.....p 6**  
**A Letter from Johnnie**  
**Boston..... p 7**  
**What’s Wrong With**  
**This Picture.....p 8**  
**New Acquisitions.....p 9**  
**The Greening of**  
**JustPeace.....p 9**

there is a group considered dominant (systematically advantaged by the society because of group membership) and a group considered subordinate or targeted (systemically disadvantaged)... It is our targeted identities that hold our attention and the dominant identities that so often go unexamined.” (p. 22)



People of color “should not be discouraged from sitting together because they need safe spaces to retreat to and regroup in the process of dealing with the daily stress of campus racism...often being overlooked as a lab partner in sciences courses, the irritation of being continually asked by curious classmates about Black hairstyles, the discomfort of being singled out by a professor to give the ‘Black perspective’ in class discussion, the pain of racist graffiti scrawled on dormitory room doors, the insult of racist jokes circu-

lated through campus email or the injury inflicted by racial epithets (and sometimes beer bottles) hurled from passing cars.” (pp. 77-8)

Whiteness is the unexamined norm. (See Ellen Swan’s summary on p. 4.) Whites pay little attention to the significance of their racial identity and often perceive themselves as color-blind, completely free of prejudice, unaware of their own assumptions about other racial groups....think of racism as prejudiced behaviors of individual rather than as an institutional system of advantage benefiting Whites in subtle as well as blatant ways.

There is no such thing as a “pure” race...race is a social construction that has little biological meaning. (p. 168) “Ancestry, rather than appearance became the important criterion. In both legal and social practice, anyone with any known African ancestry no matter how far back in the family lineage, was considered Black, while only those without any trace of known African ancestry were called Whites. Known as the ‘one-drop rule’, this practice solidified the boundary between Black and White. This does not apply to any other group.” Is an

American with a small fraction Polish ancestry classified as a Pole? (p.171)

We need to break the silence of racism where we can. This makes people uncomfortable. Suppose I say something stupid? “As a society we pay a price for our silence. Unchallenged personal, cultural and institutional racism results in the loss of human potential, lowered productivity, and a rising tide of fear and violence in our society. Individually, racism stifles our own growth and development. It clouds our vision and distorts our perceptions. It alienates us not only from others but also from ourselves and our own experiences.” (p. 200) The author presents compelling evidence that open and honest talk about our racial identities, whatever they may be, is essential to promoting understanding across racial and ethnic divides.

“Everyone pays a price for racism. Racism harms White people as well as people of color, particularly in terms of the rising tide of fear and violence that exists when people don’t know how to cross racial boundaries... Each of us has the power to make a difference

*Continued on page 6*

## THE NEW JIM CROW

Although I am aware of racism, I have to admit that The New Jim Crow, by Michelle Alexander, pretty much knocked my socks off. Yes, I know Blacks are imprisoned at much greater rates than Whites and that the prison term for crack cocaine use (choice of Blacks) and cocaine powder use (choice of Whites) are totally out of balance. While drug use and sales among Whites and Blacks are the same, the prison rates for black men are more than 13 times that of white men. Racial profiling is an issue here. What I did not realize was that when Blacks experience incarceration, the consequences of their being a felon is systematic discrimination in access to housing, employment, education, voting, jury service and even food.

Michelle Alexander warns in the preface that “this book is not for everyone” and for people who care deeply about racial justice, but who, for any number of reasons, do not yet appreciate the magnitude of the crisis faced by communities of color as a result of mass incarcerations.”

## INSIGHTS BY SOME JPEC MEMBERS OF ARTICLES READ

**Sandy Putman’s** articles cover racism as well as restorative justice and incarceration.

So, I am a problem. Initially I took offense, but I see that I had not thought about white privilege on a deeper level. Being unaware of the issues that people of color face, can keep me at a safe distance. How easy it is to stand away and not be aware. Until I read this article, I’d not even see this as a problem. White privilege, I didn’t even know I had the disease.

[If your racism is unconscious you are a problem.] (Reflections of a recovering racist by Nancy Schreck, OSF)



There has, for a time, been the casual observation that “they all look alike.” This can apply to any group that I stand back from and do not get to know. I, too, have been an invisible woman, but not at the level that women of color experience this phenomenon. Does it



happen to men? In this society men still seem to have the advantage of a level of “importance.” But women of color, as the author points out are more apt to be invisible.

(From “Single-Minded: On Being the Invisible Woman” by Helena Andrews - posted Jan. 7: 2011)



Until reading this article I had not thought about the particular concerns for interracial families or the individuals in these situations, though from a distance I know of two such families. Recently on the new TV series, “Harry’s Law” a relationship between two young adults, a black man and a white woman, began to develop. I can see how this can raise consciousness. This article and the TV program have been eye-openers for me.

*Continued on page 4*



“Does TV have a blind spot when it comes to featuring interracial families or biracial characters?” Veronica Rollin, age 17, a biracial high school student, writes about the absence of TV families that look like hers.

(Tolerance.org: For teens  
I DON'T EXIST!: TV's Multi-Racial Blind Spot, May 12, 2004)



- The principles of restorative justice show value for both the victim and the offender and offer some hope for reconciliation, restitution, awareness, and resolution.
- Policies which stress toughness on crime have increased the prison population dramatically and affect the "communities of color in a disproportionate way."

- Beyond the time spent in incarceration the lives of offenders are further impacted by restrictions placed on them such as where they can live. This in turn may mean that they cannot be near loved ones and added to this is the difficulty of finding employment. These issues can contribute to a high recidivism rate.

*(What will Happen To Me by Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, a portion of the book by the same title, points out some of the difficulties of children whose parents are incarcerated. The children do not always live near the incarcerated parent and even when they do, visitation is often difficult and infrequent. This can make the "reunification adjustment" difficult. Additionally, the absence of the parent can be confusing. System within a System by Christina Warner )*

### Ellen Swan

"As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see ... white privilege, which puts me at an advantage."

Ms. McIntosh writes that white privilege is unacknowledged, and much of the

oppressiveness that results is unconscious. It is the system of white privilege that puts light-skinned people into a position of power that we often don't realize. She cites examples such as:

- Our national heritage or "civilization" - are we shown that people of color made it what it is?
- I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
- I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial. (Personal note: how would the recent Tea Party demonstrations in Washington, DC, have been reported if the majority of Tea Party demonstrators had been of color?)
- I can choose blemish cover or bandages in flesh color and have them more or less match my skin.

Bottom line: We can't end white privilege until and unless we commit to creating a level playing field. That will happen when we leave behind the power that is

*Continued on page 5*

No white American, including those who can insist that opportunities exist for persons of every race, would change places with even the most successful black American.

*Andrew Hacker, 1992, "And Don't Call Me a Racist!" selected and arranged by Ella Mazel*

inherent in being light-skinned, rather than try to "raise up" people of color.

*(White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh, associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women.)*

### Judy Mugerauer

Critics of our current system see it as a system of social control, a war on the marginalized, a caste system.

Reviewing the data showed our criminal justice system to be racist. Martin Luther King, Jr., said we as a nation must undergo a radical evolution of our values. While we are entitled to safety, we need to change this racist system. However, it will take a "major social movement to dismantle this new caste system" according to one critic, Michelle Alexander.

*(Fourteen Examples of Systemic Racism in the U.S. Criminal Justice System by William Quigley)*



High incarceration rates tear apart the social fabric of the area and help cause crime rather than prevent it.

Incarcerated individuals face less earning capacity, and suffer from medical and

psychological problems. Their children are more likely to end up in prison.

In New Orleans, taxpayers foot the bill in daily prison costs and the failure to address the root problems of poverty, joblessness, homelessness and lack of housing and health care.

The question now is chaos or community. Do we build more prisons (chaos) or do we choose to help and invest in ways that help the poor (community).

*(IT'S CRIMINAL! The Consequences of Mass Incarceration without Social Justice by Alex Mikulich, Ph.D. Just South Quarterly Loyola University New Orleans.)*

### Ruth Battaglia, CSA

Ed Kinane adapts the familiar Alcoholics Anonymous introduction to the "more cunning disease" of racism. *(Hi, my name is Ed. I'm a racist—Part I and Part II by Ed Kinane.)* Most of us, he claims, have been conditioned by a society permeated with racism. "Many of us eagerly – obliviously – float along the mainstream that invalidates the lives of people of color. Their labor, their living conditions, their needs and their pain, their gifts and their rights are systematically negated, rendered invisible, rendered mute."

This kind of racism is not confrontational but it is often more damaging than overt words or actions. It is a function of the immense dis-



parity of wealth that manifests itself in just one of many statistics that verify this reality; far more black babies die from preventable illness in their first year than whites.

Kinane offers another example, that of linking the often used term "Islamic terrorism" to violence aimed at whites. The violence of being invaded, assassinated by drone missiles, or becoming "collateral damage" at the command of the U.S. government does not get tagged as "terrorism." Past and current military ventures demonstrate that racism pervades U.S. foreign policy. Being anti-racist, Kinane asserts, is more than shunning ethnic slurs and wincing at the N-

*Continued on page 8*

## Anti-Racism Efforts



The United States was founded on racism and has prospered for 200 years, accepting racism as the norm for economic success. Religious congregations/institutions born in the United States swim in the waters of systemic racism.

To become anti-racist, its members frequently seek help from organizations that specialize in anti-racist training. They learn to use the lens of anti-racism to look at all aspects of their structures, policies, and practices. They learn to engage in social analysis, reflect on their own experiences and media events, and they admit to their racist transgressions that discount and exclude people of color.

Through confessional recognition of their inherited white privilege, their members begin to understand their power over people of color and that racism destroys both whites and peo-

ple of color while anti-racism enriches life for all.

They begin to restructure their policies, share power with people of color, and value the richness of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and interests. Becoming an anti-racist congregation/institution does not happen in a weekend or a year.

It is the work of a lifetime in which its members engage in a relentless pursuit of truth and justice as members of God's human family.

Mary Kremer, OP, Associate Professor of Education, Dominican University and member of ARTT (Anti Racist Training Team) for the Dominicans of Sinsinawa .

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*In settings where Whites dominate, being white is not noteworthy. It is like the tick of familiar clock, part of the easily turned-out background noise.*

Harold Dalton , 1995

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## Coordinator's Corner / continued from page 2

and collectively we can create a more just and peaceful society.” (p. 237)

Many find it hard to believe that racism still exists. The National Research Council, an institution chartered by Congress for the sole purpose of providing research to inform public policy; offers data and authoritative analysis on the state of race relations in the U.S. The document called [America Becoming: Racial Trends and their Consequences](#) .

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You will find several other articles on racism and imprisonment in this issue of *JustPeace*, as well as the February 14, 2011 letter from Johnnie Baston who was murdered by the State of Ohio March 10, 2011; more examples of “What’s wrong with this Picture?” and new materials in our Lending Library.

*Stella Storch, OP*

Bryan Massingale states, in *Racial Justice* in the Catholic Church:  
“... a church and theology in (unconscious) complicity with white privilege and entitlement is not and cannot be a carrier of a ‘catholic’ and truly universal faith.”

## A Letter From Johnnie Baston, executed March 10, 2011, by the people of Ohio

Editors Note: Justice, Peace and Ecology members take turns writing to death row inmates in the month of their execution. Here is a response received.

Hey! I wanted to respond to your letter of concern and say that I appreciate your support and grief for myself and others facing such a form of punishment.

I am not sure exactly how much of my situation you know about so I'll briefly update you. The bad: The Clemency Board voted 9-0 against me - expected that. Sited I wasn't remorseful; I'm not completely honest as their deciding factors... Now we will plea for mercy from Gov. Kasich - who fully supports the death penalty. My continuing to deny being the killer and only admitting to my part in the robbery doesn't help the situation either.

The good: The victim's family (the Mah family) devout Catholics do not want me to be executed. Didn't at my trial nearly 17 years ago and still don't today. Even the trial prosecutors stood with the Mah family—one even spoke at my clemency hearing on behalf of the Mah families wishes that I not be executed.

Unfortunately, with my help with church functions (artistic abilities), my volunteer work at the local boys and girls club, my lack of an adult criminal record, my good behavior while in prison - attempts to get my

GED (failed a couple of times), my community service work and I've been in the honor unit because I did not have the conduct reports that would otherwise bar me nor the fact of physical and mental abuse from my birth parents - none of this was considered by the clemency board and Gov. Kasich could ignore those very same facts. Even though the death penalty is (supposed) to be for the worst of the worst. This means – not to diminish what I have done, but being considered the worst of the worst means that even in the general population prison, I'd be a serious threat to even the worst prisoners and to prison staff and that death is the safest option.

Anyways, I appreciate what you and the Congregation of St. Agnes does and continue to do. I would like to ask you to pray for me - for strength. For my children Jordan and Asziah (Asia). For God to comfort and protect them. My family, to continue to love each other. Also to bless the Mah family for walking in forgiveness. Thank you again for your prayers and support against capital punishment.

I read in the paper that 10 of Ohio's bishops are speaking out against the death penalty. After Court Justice Paul

Pfeifer - who helped write the state's original death penalty law spoke out against Ohio's death penalty. Justice Pfeifer also mentioned that not all cases would have deserved the death penalty (before he spoke out to end the death penalty). I would have had a good chance with former Gov. Strickland who always had reservations about Ohio's death penalty equality and who often went against his clemency board's recommendations.

Are you familiar with the names of Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr of Cincinnati or Columbus bishop Frederick Campbell? I haven't heard anything with them. It would've been a blessing having them use my case as a platform for their call to end Ohio's death penalty. Who would deny hearing how the victim's family wants the convicted killer to get life without parole instead of death and keep the state from constantly trying to paint us as the worst of the worst.

I'm sorry for rambling so close to my execution date. I'm constantly trying to find some inner peace with it.

Keep praying that God will make His way into every heart.

In fellowship,  
Johnnie Baston

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

- The U.S. has well over 250 million guns in private hands (N.R.A.), more than any other country. In one year, guns killed 17 in Finland, 35 in Australia, 39 in England and Wales, 60 in Spain, 194 in Germany, 200 in Canada, and 9,484 in the U.S. (*Brady Campaign*)

- The flyover of four military jets before the Super Bowl cost taxpayers \$450,000. The fuel alone for this trip cost \$109,000. (*Daily Mail Reporter*)

- Over a 15 month period, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), a for profit prison company, spent \$4.4 million lobbying the Immigrant and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Department of Homeland Security, both houses of Congress and other government bodies. Five of CCA's most lucrative contracts with ICE have no end date. And as a result, ICE is devoting less funding to immigration policies that meet basic human rights standards. Meanwhile, CCA owners who refer to detained immigrants as "product," are set up to reap huge profits. The federal government is spending \$60.50 per inmate per day at the detention center. The more immigrants locked up indefinitely the bigger the profit for CCA. (*Witness for Peace*)

- Since 2000, the U.S. military budget has increased by 80%, and this does not include the funding of the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. Only eight Americans died worldwide in terrorist attacks last year. A minimum of 29 Americans died from being struck by lightning. The estimated spending by Afghans on bribes last year was \$2,500,000,000. This is equivalent to 1/4 of the country's GDP. The average bribe is \$158.

- The U.S. wastes 40% of the food it produces. That's enough to fill the Rose Bowl every day. The average household throws out an average of 15 to 25% of food a day, which amounts to 475.5 pounds per person. An average family of four currently tosses out \$590 per year, just in meat, fruits, veggies and grain products. The Department of Agriculture in 1997 estimated that two years before, 96.4 billion pounds of the 356 billion pounds of edible food in the U.S. was never eaten. Fresh produce, milk, grain products and sweeteners made up 2/3 of the waste. Recovering just 5% of the food that is wasted could feed 4 million people a day. Recovering 25% would feed 20 million people. It costs the U.S. about \$1 billion to dispose of this food. It takes 350 million barrels

Insights / continued from page 5

word. It is seeing the deeper underlying reality of deeply ingrained attitudes toward people of color manifested in the unequal distribution of power and opportunity in our society. Racism and poverty go hand-in-hand.

Envision the people who are unemployed, those who are most affected by budget cuts in social services – just make sure that most of the faces you see have color in them. Then you have glimpsed the breadth and depth of racism as it continues today.

What can privileged whites do? Be mindful that recovery from racism is a lifetime task. Read and relate. Look at life and history from the point of view of people of color. Live simply.

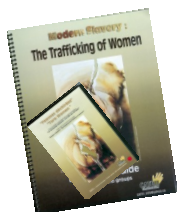
### What's Wrong /continued

of oil per year to dispose of the wasted food. (*American Wasteland: How America Throws Away Nearly Half of its Food (and What We Can Do About it)* by Jonathan Bloom. As quoted in *The Sparrow Sings*, Don & Roberta Timmerman)

- Since 2001, the U.S. dropped 31 million pounds of bombs on Afghanistan. Between 14,643 and 34,240 civilians have been killed. Over 235,000 Afghan civilians are in Internally Displaced Person camps. (*The Catholic Radical*, April/May 2011)

## NEW ACQUISITIONS

To borrow these or any other materials from the JPE Lending Library. Contact Susan Ledesma at [sledesma@csasisters.org](mailto:sledesma@csasisters.org). There is no charge.



*Modern Slavery: The Trafficking of Women*, is a booklet used as a discussion

guide for schools and groups to accompany the play "Torn Women."

"Torn Women" is a 20-minute play in DVD format in which girls act out what it is like to be trafficked for sexual exploitation.

a film about plastic bags evolves into a wholesale investigation into plastic and its effect on our waterways, oceans, and even our own bodies. Berrier does so in a humorous way.



*Humanity Ascending*, The Documentary Series - Part 1, is a 40-minute DVD by

Quantum Productions. In it Barbara Marx Hubbard posits that if we are able to integrate newly emergent scientific, social, and spiritual capacities, we could transform ourselves to move beyond our current global crises to a magnificent future equal to our new potential.



*Sustainable World Sourcebook*, is the essential guidebook for the concerned citizen

compiled by the Sustainable World Coalition and published on 2010. It offers viable solutions and resources for action to the critical issues of the world.



*Bag It, Is Your Life Too Plastic?* This 80-minute DVD from Reel

Thing Films features Jeb Berrier who embarks on a global tour to unravel the complexities of our plastic world. What starts as



*Visions of a Universal Humanity*, second movie in the *Humanity Ascending* documentary series, is an 80-minute

DVD, where futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard brings together some of the finest minds revealing a positive future for humanity, filled with infinite possibilities.

## The Greening of *JustPeace*

Thank you to so many of you who have already responded on how you would like to receive *JustPeace* (JP).

There is still time to:

- Return the card from the March issue of *JustPeace*
- Email [sledesma@csasisters.org](mailto:sledesma@csasisters.org)
- Call Susan at (920) 907-2316
- Fax her at (920) 921-8177 and tell I prefer to receive JP:

\_\_\_\_\_ Online. My email address is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Mailed to my address.

\_\_\_\_\_ I no longer prefer to receive *JustPeace*.

In a recent NBC News–*Wall Street Journal* Poll, 35% identified themselves as "conservative;" 24% as "liberal." They were asked how the government should tackle the growing national debt.

Here's what they said:

- Tax millionaires: 81%
- Eliminate Bush Tax Cuts: 68%
- Cut oil / gas tax breaks: 74%
- Support public union collective bargaining: 77%

(From Weekly Re:Cap, 3/4/11)



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## Just Around the **CORNER**

### June

- 4 UN Day of Innocent Child Victims of Aggression
- 6 Marian Wright Edelman b 1939
- 12 Medgar Evers killed in Jackson, MS, 1963  
Pentecost Sunday
- 19 Most Holy Trinity Sunday
- 20 World Refugee Day (UN)
- 21 Flag Day
- 29 Ss. Peter and Paul

### July

- 1 Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
- 2 Immaculate heart of Mary
- 4 Independence Day
- 11 World Population Day
- 14 Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha
- 20 Women's Rights Convention aided  
anti slavery course, 1849

### August

- 6 Transfiguration of the Lord  
Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, 1945
- 15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 18 19th amendment granted women the right  
to vote, 1920
- 23 International Day for Remembrance of the  
Slave Trade and its Abolition (UN)
- 26 Anniversary, Women's Vote USA Equality  
Day
- 28 Anniversary, Civil Rights March in  
Washington, 1963
- 29 Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist