



August 2023 Newsletter



A message from Nada:

Greetings to all!

Climate, climate, climate! There is no question that human activity, overconsumption of our planet's resources in grotesque proportions, as well as a rapacious and inhumane economic system are all contributing to the climate emergency that we find ourselves in.

We all need to do more to respond to the urgency of the moment. I am so proud of our youth leaders who are very busy preparing for the September 17th March to End Fossil Fuels. I had the opportunity to meet with four student leaders at WESPAC yesterday and here is what we have decided:

We will gather at the information booth at Grand Central Station on Sunday, September 17th with all our signage from 11:45am to noon. At noon, we will head out on the streets towards Columbus Circle where the grand march will begin at 1pm towards the United Nations where representatives from around the world are meeting for the upcoming UN Climate Summit.

Please let us know if you plan to be part of our Westchester contingent. We will be marching with folks from the Westchester Youth Hub, Horace Greeley High School Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America, the Hastings Hub, Sunrise Westchester and the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus.

For those who would like to participate but are not up for the hours of walking and standing, I recommend that another group form at Grand Central at 2pm that day and march directly to the rally site at the United Nations. It will save two hours of walking! Please let me know if you would like to be a point person for this contingent.

If you are planning to participate, student leaders are organizing a youth-centric art build at WESPAC on Friday, September 8th to create various forms of artwork to get our message across. Email me for details.

I hope you enjoy reading the articles below, and we always appreciate your feedback.

A luta continua,

Nada



Youth Demand Climate Action

By Sofia Choudhri

President Biden is not listening to youth. Fossil fuels are burning the planet, with daily wildfires that kill hundreds and harm the health of thousands more. With President Biden approving new fossil fuel permits faster than the Trump administration, he is sacrificing the future of young people like me who will have to deal with the worst consequences of the climate crisis.

On September 17th, we'll take to the streets and stand with frontline communities and thousands of climate activists to demand that President Biden declares a climate emergency. The march will occur just before the United Nations Climate Summit where leaders from major nations will be in NYC. We will force our governmental representatives to end the proliferation of fossil fuels and protect us youth from facing climate catastrophe.

Please join us on September 17th at the historic March to End Fossil Fuels! We deserve a safe and livable future.



Words from Lahaina

My good friend Christy survived the horrors of the recent fire in Lahaina but lost everything. The folks in Lahaina are victims of our climate emergency. Her family has lived in Lahaina for five generations and she is working with the local farm network to help provide wholesome meals to those thousands who remain unhoused: <https://gofund.me/9c535259>



Horror, Survival, and Hope on August 8, 2023

by Christy Shaver

On Tuesday morning, August 8, the electric power went out in Lahaina. The wind was fierce, breaking branches from the trees behind my house. My mother left her nearby apartment and came over to my home. We huddled together watching the storm, as we have always done during rough times.

The wind's fury peaked after lunch, and out of concern, I went outside to see how my neighbors were faring. However, the gusts were still so strong that I nearly lost my footing. Soon after the scent of smoke wafted in. I joked, "Who's having a barbecue in this weather?" But then the realization hit me – another wildfire must have ignited. We had heard about one earlier which had been brought under control, but this must be new.

Lahaina has witnessed its fair share of fires in recent years, so the scent of burning wood was not entirely unfamiliar. Surprisingly, there were no warning sirens or emergency notifications. Conversations with neighbors led us all to decide to remain indoors. Within minutes, though, the sky turned darker. Going outside I was horrified to see that the smoke in the wind was now full of burning embers. Panic surged when I noticed the trees near my home catching fire. Without a second thought, I ran back inside, grabbed my mom, my dog, and our purses, and dashed to my car. I picked up a neighbor as we pulled out. Flames were already engulfing the building next door. As we merged onto Front Street, a narrow two-lane road, traffic was at a standstill, with the dense smoke restricting visibility.

Chaos reigned as people scrambled for safety. Amid the tumult, I noticed water tankers approaching the property where my mom's apartment was. A police car was moving up the left shoulder, actually driving over people's front lawns. Instinctively I swerved over and followed right behind him, and many other cars copied us. We made significant headway. Predicting further congestion ahead, I steered into a large grocery store parking lot.

For a tense 15 minutes, we watched the smoke rise ominously. As we resumed our journey towards the highway, fallen power lines impeded our path. Winding our way northward, we eventually reached an area devoid of downed electric lines and stopped. We actually considered heading back to Lahaina, not truly grasping the gravity of the situation.

Fortunately, our friend who we had picked up earlier, is an employee at the Marriott Hotel. He was able to secure cots for us in the Hospitality Room and some granola bars. The shock of what a close call we had had sank into us.

Through sporadic cell service, the crushing truth gradually started emerging the next day. Many people did not survive, and many more are still missing. More than 2,000 structures were burned, including five homes belonging to our family. Yet, we drew solace from the fact that we were all

unharmd.

Lahaina holds a special place in my heart, with our family roots extending over five decades. The devastation is heart-wrenching. When we lost our homes without a moment's preparation, we literally lost every possession we owned: our clothes, computers, furniture, books, family pictures, and family heirlooms including my grandmother's jewelry. My mother also lost her car.

The magnitude of the loss is almost immeasurable. However, following the horrendous fire, I sought refuge in the comfort of my daily yoga and meditation practice and realized that even such profound tragedies carry an underlying meaning. I have managed to rekindle a connection with my inner essence and the boundless cosmic rhythm. Bolstered by a supportive and loving global community, I stand resilient, deeply rooted in spirituality, and rejuvenated with a newfound hope and purpose.

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NY Caring Majority



Wednesday, September 6, 2023 12:00 PM - 12:45 PM ET

ZOOM

RSVP [here](#)

The New York Caring Majority is a statewide campaign of older and disabled people, home care workers, family caregivers, and advocates fighting for a world where care is at the center, where all of us have the healthcare and home care we need, where and when we need it, and where we show we value care work by praising it and by providing care workers family-sustaining wages and benefits.

Join us for an orientation to learn how you can be part of the movement for home care justice in New York. RSVP for zoom link. Call will include closed captions, Spanish interpretation, and recordings after the fact. For other accessibility questions or requests, please e-mail julia@domesticemployers.org

More information on Caring Majority can be found [here](#)

Concerned Families of Westchester (CFOW)



Concerned Families of Westchester is a peace & justice group organized in the wake of the 9/11/2001 events. We are based in the Rivertowns, from Yonkers up to Tarrytown. Each Saturday we have a vigil/demo in Hastings. We also have a weekly newsletter (<https://cfow.blogspot.com/>) and a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/705894016129650>), and we meet frequently via Zoom. This month our vigils focused on the shipment of cluster bombs to Ukraine, the need for single-payer health coverage, commemorating the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and celebrating the good news that Gov. Hochul had signed legislation banning the dumping of radioactive water into the Hudson at Indian Point. Another of our monthly activities is a weekly "Say Their Names" vigil in Yonkers, reading out the names of unarmed civilians who have been killed by police (picture below). Please join our vigil any Saturday at noon in Hastings to demand peace & justice! And for more information email fbrodhead@aol.com.

Humanitarian Catastrophe Unfolding in Artsakh by Nancy Kricorian



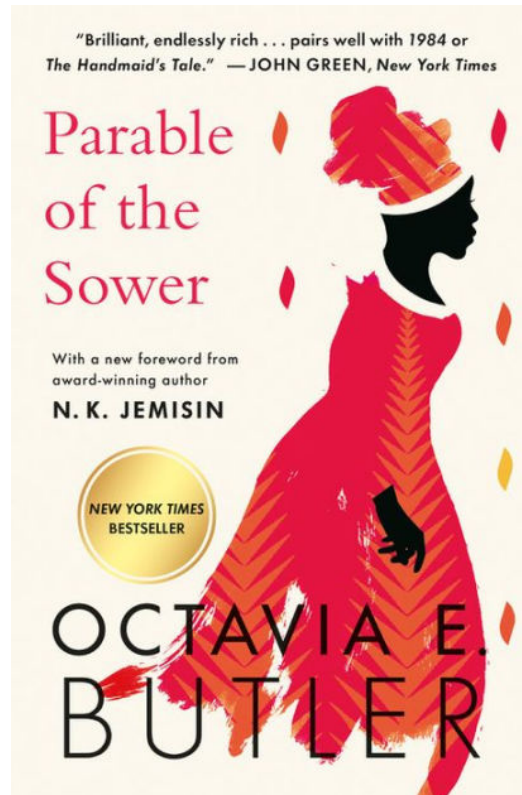
Predawn breadline in Stepanakert, August 2023

WESPAC friend Nancy Kricorian shares with us the terrible humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in

Parable of the Sower

by Ainsley, WESPAC Intern

With the devastating fires and hurricanes and other climate events of late and the upcoming climate march, *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler is an ever-pertinent image of climate disaster in the United States. Written three decades ago, Butler's fictional novel takes place beginning in 2024 and follows narrator Lauren Olamina who portrays the environmental, political, and economic disaster of her United States. While painting a dismal picture of what is to come with apathetic political leadership and ignorance of the progression of climate change, she also cultivates a new vision for how vital communities are and community building is to build resilience and sustain life. If you have not yet heard of or read this book, I highly recommend it— particularly for this moment that we find ourselves in today.



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