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Want to donate to Ploughshares Calgary? If you haven't yet made your 2024 donation, please consider doing so soon!

Email [office@ploughshares.ca](mailto:office@ploughshares.ca) for more information on how to donate.



# May 2024 Newsletter

Ploughshares Calgary Society Presents:

## GOVERNING THROUGH THE GROUND: WHAT HARVESTING AND GARDENING TEACH US ABOUT LIVING TOGETHER

Join us for an educational meeting featuring  
Dr. Daniel Voith



JOIN US ON ZOOM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8TH

7:00PM MDT

Contact Us:





## INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

May 1st is International Workers' Day, a date set aside since the late 19th century in memory of the labour movement and unionizing that successfully normalized the 8-hour workday as a right for workers. Mary Harris Jones, who was better known as Mother Jones, celebrated her birthday on May 1.

Born in Cork, Ireland, in 1837, she immigrated with her family to Canada at the age of ten, fleeing the potato famine. Mary was a student at the Toronto Normal School, which was tuition-free at the time. She worked as a teacher in Toronto and Michigan, later moving to Memphis where she married George E. Jones, a union organizer. Tragically, her husband, along with her four young children, all died of a yellow fever epidemic in Memphis in 1867, an illness that struck poor and working class people the hardest as wealthier families had the means to flee the city.

Subsequently, she found new purpose in life through creating a role for herself as Mother Jones, promoting unions, coordinating strikes, and advocating for an end to child labour. She became known as “the grandmother of all agitators,” because of the years and decades she dedicated to community organising.

Courageous and bold, she was unafraid of guns or jail terms, spoke truth to power, and used her own unique style of storytelling and drama to fire up support. Perhaps her most famous pithy saying was, “Mourn the dead, and fight like hell for the living.” Her autobiography is available from UPenn’s digital library [here](#).





## PEACE CARAVAN

Members of Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF)-Canada and the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) are organizing a Peace Caravan to Ottawa. Symbolically, the Caravan will start on Mothers' Day, a day which was first conceived as a day to promote justice and peace. People will convene in Ottawa to join World Beyond War and other groups in efforts to shut down North America's largest weapons bazaar, CANSEC, from May 29 - 30.

There will be events in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Peterborough, Halifax, Amherst, Fredericton, Quebec City, Montreal and, of course, Ottawa. Part of the aim of the Caravan is to connect people, movements and issues- with one slogan being : "Demilitarize, Decarbonize, Decolonize".

### **RAIROS Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage**

Support of these four Calls:

- 1.**Enduring and Sustained Ceasefire.
- 2.**Immediate flow of life saving food, water, aid, fuel and humanitarian assistance.
- 3.**Release of all hostages – both the Israeli hostages held by Hamas – and the Palestinian hostages held in the Israeli prison system.
- 4.**End of occupation so a just-peace can begin.

To learn more about the Caravan & their schedule, click [here](#).



## MOTHER'S DAY PROCLAMATION

### A Brief History Of Mothers Day

- Mother's Day actually began as a women's movement to better the lives of Americans.
- The creation of a national Mother's Day is primarily attributed to three women: Ann Reeves Jarvis, Julia Ward Howe, and Ann's daughter, Anna M. Jarvis.
- Ann Reeves Jarvis was a lifelong activist who, in the mid-1800s, organized "Mothers' Day Work Clubs" in West Virginia to combat unsanitary living conditions. During the Civil War, Ann Reeves Jarvis had also organized women's brigades, encouraging women to help without regard for which side their men had chosen. After the war, she proposed a Mothers' Friendship Day to promote peace between former Union and Confederate families.
- Julia Ward Howe was a famous poet and reformer. Around 1870, Julia Ward Howe called for a "Mother's Day for Peace" dedicated to the celebration of peace and the eradication of war. As expressed in what is called her "Mother's Day Proclamation" from 1870, Howe felt that mothers should gather to prevent the cruelty of war and the waste of life since mothers of mankind alone bear and know the cost.
- Anna Jarvis wished to memorialize her mother's life and started campaigning for a national day to honour all mothers.
- In May of 1907, Anna memorialized her mother's lifelong activism with a memorial service held at the Methodist Church in Grafton, West Virginia, where Anna's mother had taught. The following year, on May 10, a Mother's Day service was held at that same church to acknowledge all mothers. Thus was born the idea that the second Sunday in May, be set aside to honour every mother, whether living or deceased.





## MOTHER'S DAY PROCLAMATION

The original Mothers' Day Proclamation, Julia Ward Howe, 1870:

“Arise, all women who have hearts, whether our baptism be that of water or of tears! Say firmly: We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We, women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.

From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says: Disarm, Disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice. Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence vindicate possession. As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of council.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them then solemnly take council with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after his own kind the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God.

In the name of womanhood and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women, without limit of nationality, may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient, and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.”

**May all humanity work to fulfill the dream of all mothers for peace, in their families, communities and our world. Wishing all those who mother a joyful, peace-filled day on May 12**



## PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY LIBRARY

Dr. Arthur Clark, Professor Emeritus and U of C's Faculty of Medicine, and longtime Ploughshares' friend, has made another significant contribution of books to our library. The titles of these new books, available to borrow, are as follows:

### **The ABCs of Human Survival: A Paradigm for Global Citizenship**

(Arthur Clark, 2010), useful in part because of opening chapters on very basic concepts. This book is also available as a [PDF](#).

**Arsenals of Folly: The Making of the Nuclear Arms Race** (Richard Rhodes, 2007)

**The Domsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner** (Daniel Ellsberg, 2017)

**The Greatest Evil Is War** (Chris Hedges, 2022), Dr. Clark's synopsis of which can be found in this newsletter

**Hiroshima** (A New Edition with a Final Chapter Written Forty Years After the Explosion, John Hersey, 1946, 1984)

**My Journey at the Nuclear Brink** (William J. Perry, 2015)

**Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing Between Democracy and Doom\*** (Summary Edition, Elaine Scarry, 2014)

**Without the Bomb: The Politics of Nuclear Nonproliferation** (Mitchell Reiss, 1988)

Thanks to Dr. Clark's generosity, we will have multiple copies of these books, as well as additional copies of Rivera Sun's book "The Dandelion Insurrection Study Guide." If you are interested in using one of these books with your book club, or are interested in participating in a book discussion with others this coming fall, please contact the office.





**‘THE GREATEST EVIL IS WAR’  
SYNOPSIS & REVIEW BY DR. ARTHUR CLARK**

**The Greatest Evil Is War by Chris Hedges, 2022**

Chris Hedges was a war correspondent for two decades in Central America, the Middle East, Africa, and the Balkans. He does not mince words. His book is a punch in the face to the warfare system and a wake-up call for us.

In the opening chapter, Hedges writes, “I was beaten by Iraqi and Saudi secret police. I was taken prisoner by the Contras in Nicaragua, who radioed back to their base in Honduras to see if they should kill me, and again in Basra after the first Gulf War in Iraq, never knowing if I would be executed, under constant guard and often without food, drinking out of mud puddles.”

In Chapter III, “Worthy and Unworthy Victims,” he explains, “Rulers divide the world into worthy and unworthy victims, those we are allowed to pity, such as Ukrainians enduring the hell of modern warfare, and those whose suffering is minimized, dismissed, or ignored. The terror we and our allies carry out against Iraqi, Palestinian, Syrian, Libyan, Somali, and Yemeni civilians is part of the regrettable cost of war. We, echoing the empty promises from Moscow, claim we do not target civilians. Rulers always paint their militaries as humane, there to serve and protect. Collateral damage happens, but it is regrettable.”

In a chapter entitled “Permanent War,” he writes, “Permanent war, which has defined the United States since World War II, extinguishes liberal, democratic movements. It cheapens culture into nationalist cant. It degrades and corrupts education and the media and wrecks the economy. The liberal, democratic forces, tasked with maintaining an open economy, become impotent.

“It was a decline into permanent war, not Islam, that killed the liberal, democratic movements in the Arab world, ones that held great promise in the early part of the twentieth century in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iran. It is a state of permanent war that is finishing off the liberal traditions in Israel and the United States.”



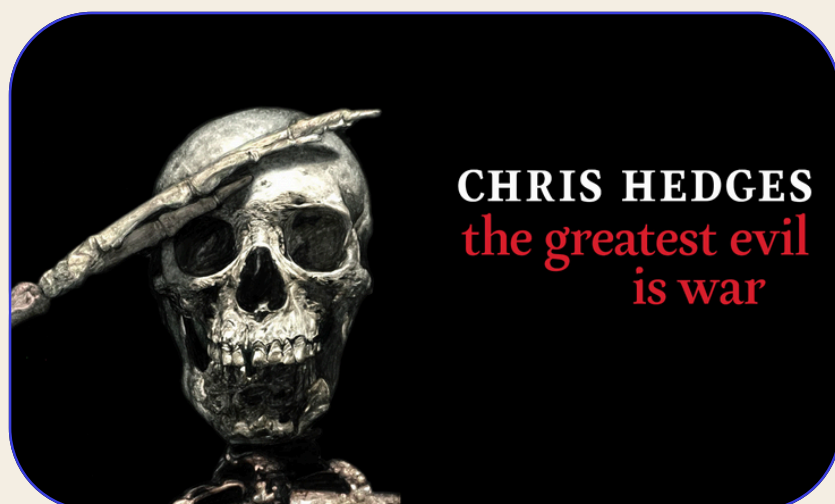


## ‘THE GREATEST EVIL IS WAR’ SYNOPSIS & REVIEW BY DR. ARTHUR CLARK

In “The Pimps of War” (Chapter IV), we read “The same cabal of warmongering pundits, foreign policy specialists, and government officials, year after year, debacle after debacle, smugly dodge responsibility for the military fiascos they orchestrate. They are pimps of war, puppets of the Pentagon, a state within a state, and the defense contractors who lavishly fund their think tanks – Project for the New American Century, American Enterprise Institute, Foreign Policy Initiative, Institute for the Study of War, Atlantic Council, and Brookings Institution. Like some mutant strain of an antibiotic-resistant bacteria, they cannot be vanquished. It does not matter how wrong they are, how absurd their theories, how many times they lie or denigrate other cultures and societies as uncivilized or how many murderous military interventions go bad. They are immovable props, the parasitic mandarins of power that are vomited up in the dying days of any empire, including ours, leaping from one self-defeating catastrophe to the next.”

This short synopsis and excerpts can scarcely begin to convey the life-or-death importance of this book. Reading one chapter, or even a few paragraphs from each chapter, would be enlightening. “If we don’t end war, war will end us,” H.G. Wells observed. Read the book by Chris Hedges and see if you agree.

With thanks to Dr. Clark for his donation of a copy of Chris Hedges’ book to the Ploughshares Library, where it will be available to borrow during office hours.







**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Some Basics about Nuclear Weapons**

- There are about 12,500 nuclear weapons on the planet (as of mid 2023) Most of these are owned by the USA (5,224) and Russia (5,889.) France, China and
- Britain has had nuclear weapons since 1968. More recently, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea have also acquired nuclear weapons.
- More than 2,000 warheads are on “high alert” that is, their weapons could be launched in between 15 to 30 minutes.
- Nuclear warheads today are roughly 10 to 150 times larger than the Hiroshima bomb.



**VOLUNTEER WITH US!**

**Would you like to become a bit more involved with Ploughshares Calgary?**

We are always looking for volunteers to share their ideas and thoughts, energy and creativity, to strengthen our work and our community.

**YOU ARE WELCOME!**

If you are interested, and would like to connect, please email us at the office.





## UPCOMING PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY EVENTS

- On Wednesday, May 8th, **Ploughshares Calgary Society** will host **Governing Through The Ground: What Harvesting And Gardening Teach Us About Living Together** featuring **Dr. Daniel Voth**. Join Dr. Daniel Voth (Métis) from the University of Calgary for a discussion of the ways Indigenous peoples have and continue to use relationships with the land, water, and non-human animals to shape how we live with each other, and with those who are different from us. The talk will explore recent case study research on gardening as a key component of Indigenous community transformation, the effort to return Bison or Buffalo to the land, and the laws that emerge from relational hunting practices. The talk will conclude with a discussion of what this means for us as individuals and our society. This event takes place on Zoom starting at 7:00pm. Please register for free on our Eventbrite page or by emailing our office at: [office@ploughsharescalgary.ca](mailto:office@ploughsharescalgary.ca).
- On Wednesday, June 12th, **Ploughshares Calgary Society** will be hosting their **Annual General Meeting**. More information to come soon.





## EVENTS

- In March, non-violence activist, educator and author **Rivera Sun** presented to us an excellent talk entitled, "**People Power Peace: How Civil Society Stops War.**" If you are interested in going deeper into this topic, and learning more about the history and techniques of nonviolent strategies to prevent, halt or avert wars, **Rivera** is leading an upcoming **6-week online course starting May 6**. Scholarships are available for those in need. Details can be found [here](#). Rivera Sun is the founding editor of Nonviolence News, an excellent online news service reporting on how nonviolence is actively shaping our world. It can be found online [here](#).
- On Sunday, May 26th, **Nisa Homes** will be hosting a **Motherhood as Resistance Brunch**. At a time in which we're seeing incredible bravery as men, women, youth, and children stand up against injustice worldwide, this Mother's Day we want to honour the courageous women from conflict zones who not only nurture and protect their families but also play pivotal roles in their communities' struggles for peace and justice. Explore their stories, the challenges they face, and the profound strength they display every day. A luxurious brunch spread will be provided along with swag bags for all attendees! This brunch is open to women and girls ages 12+. This event starts at 12:00pm at Valley Ridge Golf Club (11618 Valley Ridge Park NW). Tickets are available on [eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca).



**GOOD NEWS**

- A couple of determined cyclists have come to Calgary as part of their ambitious project to help the environment. They know first-hand what it's like when wildfires hit and they're now taking steps to protect the planet. Solene Soton and Kevin Firmin passed through Calgary on their bicycles as part of an effort that's seeing them cover a lot of ground this spring and summer. They are cycling across Canada to raise funds for reforestation after last year's wildfires. The couple, who come from France, witnessed the widespread devastation caused by the wildfires around Kelowna, B.C. during the summer of 2023. Soton and Firmin are now hoping to help with their reforestation ride, a project called "The Green Bikes." The couple is hoping their ride will raise enough money to plant 10,000 trees. (Global News Calgary, April 29th, 2024).
- Some hardworking volunteers are busy with a special spring cleanup project around Calgary. Members of the Calgary Metal Detecting Club (CMDc) have begun their annual warm-weather sweep of parks and playgrounds throughout Calgary. CMDc members, equipped with metal detectors, began going through the city's outdoor recreation areas on April 1. They've already found dozens of potentially hazardous items in park and playground spaces covered in gravel, grass and other vegetation. Those finds include lighters, nails and shards of sharp metal. CMDc members began the annual cleanups in 2015, removing hazards every time they go out with metal detectors. CMDc members will continue making the rounds of Calgary's outdoor recreation areas until the end of September, knowing that they're preventing injuries. (Global News Calgary, April 30th, 2024).



Photo credits: CMDc 2022





**GOOD NEWS**

- A talented Calgary artist has come up with a colourful new way for people to connect with the city’s heritage. Jackie Ramsay has been busy creating paintings of 100 historic houses she’s come across in the Crescent Heights neighbourhood. Ramsay spotted the houses while out walking with her dog near their home in the area. “When I’d be waiting for the dog to either sniff or do whatever, I’d look up,” Ramsay said. “I just started to notice how beautiful some of these homes were.” That prompted her to start doing her paintings of the 100 houses. Most of the houses featured in the collection are around 100 years old. Ramsay is showcasing her paintings in an exhibit called ‘100 Storeys’. The free exhibit runs from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 4 at the CHCA hall in northwest Calgary. It’s part of the ‘A Heritage Celebration’ event that the CHCA is hosting that day. (Global News Calgary, May 1st, 2024).
- A remote outcrop in Scotland is covered with garden gnomes but nobody knows exactly how they got there. The gnomes beam their mischief from the rock of Swallow Craig which sits just off Inchcolm Island in the Firth of Forth. The gnomes first appeared there in 2010, with some people speculating they were left by a local fisherman. But one local legend muses the gnomes escaped from a local garden centre attempting to flee up the Forth under the cover of night. The population is always growing and the isle has since been dubbed Inch Gnome Island. (Good News Network, April 29th, 2024).



Photo credits: Good News Network

