
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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This issue of the Peace Chronicle magazine examines the theme: Intimacy. It follows PJSA's vision for peace and justice by examining our personal lives and relationships. My intuition here is that we all find meaning in our connections and that we all suffer from sometimes taking closeness for granted. In earlier days of our work on the magazine we collectively experienced pain and disconnect brought on by the global pandemic of COVID-19. Back then, we thought our theme "Healing" would also be well suited due to its proximity to a divisive election. Flash forward from 2020 to 2024...

What does Intimacy mean or look like? I have had the benefit of working with Gabriel and Emsie for 5 years. Professional intimacy—we have shared our lives with each other—I cherish these people. How do I—as editor—share what is close to me, or make or private encounters public?

The team has been strong where I have been weak. At one point I was prepared to resign, it was clear that I was unable to bring the time and energy to the magazine that I felt was needed; they reassured me that I was doing exactly what they wanted. It is wonderful to be able to be honest and open with the people you work with, even better still, I have great respect and admiration for them as well. I love to learn, and they have taught me so much.

Collectively and individually, we have aspired to different goals with the magazine. While ultimately, we are a magazine of the membership, and driven by contributions and submissions from PJSA, we have great freedom in what we produce. We've succeeded in queering the issue with artwork from Kat Toronto (Miss Meatface) on the cover.

The conversation of justice should include understanding a full range of ways people experience closeness and bond with one another. I have routinely told students that knowing the differences between saliva and sexual lubricants is important even if you do not plan on using them. "Why?" Can you imagine medical professionals or parents benefiting their patients or children... or diserving them with bad or incomplete information? (For the record, and as an aside, saliva is generally not a good lubricant, it dries quickly and is more watery than slippery which does not help against wear and tear. Baby Oil, which has been in headlines following the raid of P. Diddy's home, is also not a good lubricant and may increase the risk of infections, STIs, and pregnancy.)

One of our contributors writes from frustration: "Popular media's presentation of romance tends to focus on how two people become physically intimate. The question of romance is one of how one becomes physically intimate, rather than how two people get to know one another." *Dear Moon, Love Moon: An Anonymous Blog on Love and Intimacy* is an introduction to a journey in love. There are many ways that self-discovery and knowledge of the self are featured in our communities; frustrations, even if not your own, can be very revealing about whose needs are and are not being met.

Gabriel writes *Getting Intimate with the OED* and gives an intimate approach for going to the core of language and meaning. He admits that for him this is a matter of how his brain works, connecting the word intimate to different concepts in peace and justice is like play. How often do we limit our understanding of authors to the superficial? What happens when we remind ourselves of depth, detail, and context. Not just what was said, but who said it, when they said it, and why they said it?

Mica Segal de la Garza provides a poem *Intimacy is...* and reminds the reader that intimacy is many things. Of these we can each reflect on our own lives and experiences. I agree with Mica, it is a gift.

Critical examination of language is especially important during election season. In communities not far from my residence on the traditional homeland of the Lenape (Delaware), Shawnee, Wyandot Miami, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and other Great Lakes tribes (Chippewa, Wea, Piankishaw, and Kaskaskia) there are threats being made in response to lies intentionally told to disparage Haitian immigrants and polarize. We can think deeply on what matters and why it matters. I like the idea of intimate word choice.

The *Peace Chronicle* endeavors to continue in the intimate practices of healing and recognizing the past through deep knowledge of the land. In appreciation to those who have lived, worked, and honored our geographies before us, we recognize the stewardship and resilient spirit that precedes us. Why, in our politics, is there such great disparity between different groups of immigrants? How we reflect on the closeness and disconnection where we live, and work, is revealing. Is distrust and fear what keeps people silent? Again, several authors backed out from contributing to an issue that would leave them too vulnerable.

How many of us are feeling the pinch in our places of employment? Many campuses are battlegrounds for culture wars. Do we have intimate places that offer safe conversations about the threats we experience and observe?

The *Peace Chronicle* team's commitments toward healing are captured in this issue through a thought-provoking documentary review provided by Thomas Hodges. His piece *Seeking Justice Through Moral Injury: A Review of the Documentary Film What I Want You to Know* addresses the intimacy involved in telling other people's stories and how moral injury intersects with justice. The film presents the stories of soldiers who have served in Afghanistan, ultimately, he concludes: "If you watch *What I Want You to Know*, I hope you will recognize the blame is much larger than the individual service members, although many of those individuals likely do feel guilty and blame themselves for a host of actions and inactions on the battlefield. While they recognize their moral injuries as a collective problem, that does not seem to displace the guilt they suffer, perhaps because the public seems to have moved on from caring about the post-9/11 wars, even as the psychological and physical wounds of these wars continue to affect service members."

Thinking about dynamic problem solving and modern-day challenges are also brought to light in two interviews. *The Message Lasts: An Interview with Paula Saunders and Dave Brick of The Freedom Affair and Hip-hop with Akil*; the music and community that saved his life both showcase how life and art intersect with music. The artists are forward thinking in their passions, and I think we all can benefit from increased understanding of the playlists to revolution. How does music continue help drive activism and peace narratives? As educators I believe we have many rich resources for expanding our work. The artists have graciously shared their stories with us, they have placed us squarely at the personal and political.

Through Leading Social Change, Inc., Brooke Moreland explores the intimacy of research in *Exploring the Intimacy of Research: Unveiling the Impact of Transformational Leadership on Low-Income College Students*. It is all about empowerment, and a need for strategies that impact students' lives. We all should continue to ask questions about which student populations we are reaching and who we need different approaches for.

While sharing stories at a friend's birthday party I had the chance to ask Carolyn Bennett questions. The questions lead to the piece, *Open Book Intimacy*. Sharing the experiences of life in a home with a mother who was a sex-worker, "my mother and I had a knock system for when she had a client over, so I knew to stay in my room so as to not make them "uncomfortable". Sex was never a taboo topic but love and intimacy were a sign of weakness that others would just use against you eventually."

Carolyn's story is not one she shares to document struggle and hardship, though we grow when we learn and understand the pain and struggles of others. But to celebrate her triumph in breaking the cycles. Success stories bring me tremendous joy, and it was fantastic to have a chance to find out what being an open book could mean. For me being "open" has always been a defense mechanism, a tool to mask and hide things I am afraid to share—to fake "not afraid of anything." For Carolyn it was clear: nothing to hide.

Caleb Robinson's *Experiential Inertia: the Decline in Community-Oriented Activities*, explores different strategies for developing and pulling people into relationships. For Caleb adult behaviors are a continuation of habits and strategic choices cultivated since childhood. The piece is motivated by basic human needs, the utility of social capital, and the changing climates for social interactions. Where the author makes points about unconventional approaches, I feel challenged, I don't really know what is normal at this point. There are many salient observations, I do think I sometimes forget the ways isolation contributes to radicalization. The word "demonize" is never used, but the piece challenges me to keep from adding obstacles to the development of relationships in the places I live and work, which the demonization of others can do. There is a nostalgia here; I miss the days when it wasn't so hard to make new friendships.

Emma Lovejoy, in *Spending Time With The Past: Intimacy in Historical Research*, helps us to think about how we experience closeness with the individuals we study. More specifically, how we become "confidant[s] to [our] subject[s], to whom their stories, desires, even private

thoughts” are shared through the distance of time and space; “a false intimacy, ultimately a parasocial relationship between unrelated parties.” They answer the question, of course we become close to, and even care about “strangers who could not have conceived of us in their lifetimes.” Concluding, in part, “whoever our subject might be, it is the motivation for and the result of the work. It reminds us to be faithful storytellers, even when we wish the story had been different.”

Earlier this year I stayed awake just to listen to breathing. I was deeply afraid, more scared than I think I have ever been in my life. If the breathing stopped, I wanted to be able to respond immediately, though it was not clear that I could do anything. It strikes me funny now, that I was trying to cover up my powerlessness by careful monitoring, because it was impossible. I hope others do not have to experience this reality; I failed, I fell asleep, but it was ok, we were able to go to the hospital in the morning.

A dozen years ago I brought my brother to the emergency room for one of the 18 trips in the last 6 months of his life. He had excruciating pain and the hours went by without any relief. That night I learned that you cannot have an ambulance deliver a patient from one ER to another ER, and brought him to another hospital for treatment on my own.

Physical and mental health have dramatic impacts on our capacities and relationships. Sometimes we do not take advantage of our chances to say things while we still can. The intimacy I would like to add to the issue is straight from the heart. These are trying times in many ways; in the US and Canada (and around the world) there are holidays that bring families and friends together but also exacerbate many feelings of disconnect and distance. In the US there is an election that will have division and polarization at a fever pitch. ... whatever the struggle, or reason. If there is someone you’ve been thinking of reaching out to or calling, if you miss them or have become disconnected, do it! I think you’ll be glad you did, and they will too.
