

Peaceways

CENTRAL KENTUCKY COUNCIL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

September 2019

Gun Violence: *Can I make a difference? How?*

by Margaret Gabriel

A standing feature on page one of *Peaceways* is the box you see in the lower left corner of this page: the number of people who have been killed or injured as a result of gun violence in the United States to date and the number from last year. The number does not include people who have died of suicide using a gun, but at various times has included the deaths of Lexington's Trinity Gay, the students at Marshall County High School and Heath High School in Paducah, and shoppers at a Louisville Kroger. This month's number includes the 22 people who were killed on Aug. 3 in El Paso, Texas and the 10 killed a few hours later in Dayton, Ohio.

It's hard to imagine the number of people — friends, loved ones, community members — who are affected by the deaths of the 9,779 people included in the gunviolencearchive.com report for Aug. 29, 2019. And how have the lives changed for the 17,581 people who have been injured? How many

of those injuries were critical? How many of those people now require 'round-the-clock care? How many involve brain trauma that will change the life of the injured person forever?

Several years ago we began including the statistics from gunviolencearchive.com in every issue of *Peaceways*, and asked readers to include them in the agenda of any and all meetings they attend.

This month, we would like to ask readers to also send the statistics to elected officials with a plea to take the legislative action needed to end the easy access to guns that makes mass shootings not only possible, but common.

The Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence provides legal assistance to promote gun control and oppose firearm ownership. The group's website (giffordslawcenter.org) includes information about the gun laws in each state. The website reports that among the deficits in its gun laws Kentucky does not:

- Require a background check prior to the sale or transfer of a firearm by an unlicensed person;
- Prohibit the transfer or possession of assault weapons, 50 caliber rifles or large capacity ammunition magazines;
- Impose a waiting period on firearm purchases.

In 2017, Kentucky had the 16th highest gun death rate among the states. Kentucky also supplied crime guns to other states at the eighth

highest rate among the states. Kentucky exported crime guns at more than twice the national rate and more than twice the rate at which it imported crime guns from other states.

For a complete description of the holes in Kentucky's gun laws, which score an F (and are pretty darn scary), see the state section of Giffords Law Center website.

Clearly, making changes in Kentucky laws can have an impact on the national statistics concerning gun violence.

Please, please, please contact Gov. Matt Bevin and members of the Kentucky General Assembly and ask them to take whatever action is needed to put an end to the tragedies of mass shootings. And while you're at your keyboard, contact Sen. Mitch McConnell, Sen. Rand Paul and Rep. Andy Barr, and ask them to address the issue on a national level.

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Margaret Gabriel is the editor of Peaceways. Although she is aware that writing letters seems inadequate, it is less inadequate than doing nothing.

Gun Violence In America as of 8-29-19 (excluding suicide)

2019 (year to date)

Killed	9,779
Wounded	19,581

2018 (annual)

Killed	13,321
Wounded	25,734

Source: www.gunviolencearchive.org

*Afflict the
comfortable;
give comfort
to the afflicted.*

A President, A Prime Minister, A Perspective

by H.D. Uriel Smith

President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu deserve each other. Each fears so much for his own political security that he endangers his country's security. Each increases the spread between the richest and the poorest in his country. Each is splitting his own country into radical extremes, hoping that this will hide his own extremism. And, each is downgrading the educational possibilities in his own country.

President Trump came to Kentucky to support Gov. Matt Bevin in his fight with Kentucky's teachers. Kentucky's teachers are badly paid, and Bevin aims to place their livelihood in even greater jeopardy. In parallel, for his own political needs, Netanyahu made Naphtali Bennett the Israeli Minister of Education. Israel used to maintain high educational standards. Bennett's policies so eroded these standards that Israel now has the lowest standards among all advanced societies with low teacher pay, the absence of requirements for teacher hiring, and an alarming number of graduates who cannot function in a modern society.

Trump cannot understand this article's criticism because he has a narcissistic personality. He is incapable of placing himself in another person's shoes. This mental disability makes him perceive chaos where normal people perceive other people thinking independently, communicating with each other. He thus cannot differentiate any self-produced ideational chaos from any other chaos. Since his own ideas are the only ones he recognizes, all others are null and void. Thus his own ideas are "the greatest," greater than nothing. He is more comfortable with dictators than with democrats, since he believes dictators think like him, following their own decisions without paying attention to other people's chaotic views. Other leaders thus run rings around him. In June 2016 Dan P. McAdams wrote an article in *The Atlantic*, "The Mind of Donald Trump," explaining this narcissism. Many columnists have repeated this warning, but we still pay little attention to this.

Netanyahu can understand this article's criticism, but he is now so insecure that he has made his re-election depend

completely upon Trump's support. But, Trump is unreliable. Thus Netanyahu also has become unreliable.

Israel has special security needs. In order to understand them we should go back to Thucydides' Peloponnesian War, 5, 84-5.113. It states that Melos was an island originally siding with Sparta. Melos tried to become neutral, and argued in Athens for that neutrality. Instead the Athenians attacked it, killed all its male adults, and sold the rest of the Melians into slavery. Israel cannot allow itself a similar weakness.

Anybody supporting BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) against Israel either thinks that a Melian argument is sufficient, or he thinks that national and religious beliefs are dangerous and need to be suppressed. BDS supporters either know hardly anything about the genocides of the First and Second World Wars, including the Holocaust, or they oppose the survival of the Israeli nation. Such a person produces his own international dangers. Nobody in the Israeli Knesset is foolish enough to accept such dangers. The far left-wingers among the American Democrats foolishly do support BDS.

When Israel originally allowed the two congresswomen supporting BDS into its country, it showed itself strong enough to withstand the BDS movement. Trump instead demanded that Netanyahu support his personal war with the congresswomen. So, notwithstanding his other pro-Israel decrees, Trump has shown that he does not care about Israel's security. And since Netanyahu jumped to obey Trump, Netanyahu showed his own political insecurity.

The problems between the Israelis and Palestinians will be reduced within thirty years once the two communities have to work together to ensure that they have enough drinking water. By then Trump and Netanyahu will be history.

In the mean time we should oppose both BDS and Netanyahu.

H.D. Uriel Smith is rabbi emeritus for Ohavay Zion Synagogue and a member of the CKCPJ steering committee.

The Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice

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Peaceways is published 10 times a year by the Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice, 1588 Leestown Rd., Ste. 130-138, Lexington KY 40511. The next issue of *Peaceways* will appear in October. Deadline for calendar items is Sept. 10. Contact (859) 488-1448 or email peacewayseditor@gmail.com.

Calendar for Peace & Justice

The council seeks to promote dialogue as a path to peace and justice. Consequently, we announce events that we do not necessarily endorse.

Mon., Sept. 9

CKCPJ steering committee meeting, 5 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington. Discussion will include planning for the upcoming committee meetings, proposals for new initiatives, and continuing action.

Tues., Sept. 10

PFLAG Central Kentucky, 6:30-8:30 p.m., St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Dr., Lexington. There are gains as well as various kinds of losses when someone acknowledges their gender identity or sexual orientation. This topic will be addressed by our panel of LGBTQ individuals and parents.

Fri.-Sun. Sept. 13-15

Lyric Theatre and Cultural Arts Center, 300 E. Third St., 7 p.m. (Sept. 13-14, 3 p.m., Sept. 15). Message Theater production of the Pulitzer Prize winning "The Piano Lesson" by August Wilson. Set in 1936 Pittsburgh during the aftermath of the Great Depression, "The Piano Lesson" follows the lives of the Charles family in the Doaker Charles household and an heirloom, the family piano, which is decorated with designs carved by an enslaved ancestor. The play focuses on the arguments between a brother and a sister who have different ideas on what to do with the piano.

Sat., Sept. 28

Christian-Muslim dialog, 10 a.m.-12 noon, Masjid (Mosque) Bilal ibn Rabah, 1545 Russell Cave Road, Lexington, Rev. Leah D. Schade, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship at Lexington Theological Seminary, will examine mainline Protestant Christian ministers handling of the "hot topics" of Islamophobia and interfaith relations in their preaching. In what ways did the 2016 presidential election affect preachers and their congregations when it comes to discussing other faiths? Rev. Dr. Schade will share insights from a survey of clergy about controversial justice issues in preaching.

Tues., Oct. 1

CKCPJ Peace Action committee, 5:30 p.m. Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington. Discussion of non-violence training and other peace-related activity.

Tues., Oct. 8

CKCPJ Single-payer health care committee, 5:30 p.m. Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington.

Sat., Oct. 12

Pride Run 5K, 9 a.m., The Club at Spindletop Hall, 3414 Ironworks Pike, Lexington. Includes a 3.1-mile chip-timed race, a one-mile fun walk, entertainment, local vendors and an optional color-splash run station. Presented by the FCPS LGBTQ Advisory Committee in partnership with Lexington Fairness.

Mon., Oct. 21

CKCPJ steering committee meeting, 5 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington. Discussion will include planning for the upcoming committee meetings, proposals for new initiatives, and continuing action.

Mon.-Wed., Oct. 21-23

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Appalachia. The pilgrimage will begin in Stanton, Ky., and travel throughout Eastern Kentucky with overnight accommodations at Mt. Tabor, Martin, Ky. The cost of \$300 includes overnights, transportation and program expenses. Partial scholarships available and no one is denied participation because of cost. To register, contact Fr. John S. Rausch, jsrausch@bellsouth.net; (606) 663-0823. Participation is limited to 12.

Fri-Sun., Oct. 25-27

PFLAG 2019 National Convention, Kansas City, Missouri. The registration fee for the convention is \$275, \$350 for non-members. The two-day event will include learning, relationship building, and honoring those who are making the PFLAG difference in the community. Register and/or become a member at the PFLAG website.

Sat., Oct. 26

Christian-Muslim dialog, 10 a.m.-12 noon. See the October issue of *Peaceways* for the location. Jamil Farooqui will be the speaker. For 20 years, a group of primarily Christians and Muslims have convened monthly to seek mutual understanding and respect for their respective faith paths. People of all faith groups, and those with a secular bent of mind, are welcome to participate. This Christian-Muslim Dialogue meets to discuss historical, political and cultural issues that have shaped the current context and contributed to the views we hold today.

Tues., Nov. 5

Election Day, 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. To identify your polling place and to see a sample ballot, go to vrsws.sos.ky.gov. The site will ask for your name and the last four digits of your Social Security number and will take you to a page where you will see your polling place and your legislative districts.

Monday, October 7

Voter Registration Deadline

October 7 is the deadline for the November 5 gubernatorial election. In order to vote in the upcoming elections, registration must be filed by this date. If you know someone who is not registered, or has recently moved (and young people move all the time!) encourage updating registration. Tell him or her that every vote counts! Also, if you know someone formerly registered who intends to vote for the first time in a while, have them call the Fayette County Clerk at (859) 255-8683 to make sure they haven't been purged from the voter rolls. Don't be on the sidelines for this important election.

We don't need to just "do something," we need to do something effective

By Jim Trammel

As a late-breaking essay in this issue is the recent gunplay that has scarred our nation for the 250th time this year, I should find a suitable book on the subject – but the publishing industry can't possibly keep up with the pace of events, so I'll use my 500 words to recap some self-evident truths:

We can't just "do something." We have to do something that will be effective.

Two separate 2019 studies published by Boston University suggest that the more effective way to decrease homicide rates is to tighten down on who is eligible to buy guns, rather than outlawing certain firearms or features. There are fewer gun-related deaths where it's harder for high-risk individuals to buy guns.

Boston University researcher Michael Siegel suggests that a combination of three efforts would drive down homicide rates: (1) background checks, (2) laws prohibiting gun purchase by those with violent felonies or misdemeanors on their records, and (3) "red flag" laws to deal with people who are established risks to others or themselves. (Closely related: "may-issue" laws, which give police departments a say in who acquires guns.)

The move to ban assault weapons, called for by many gun-control advocates including most of the Democratic Presidential nominee hopefuls, is not among these three measures cited by Siegel, because he does not see a statistical link that banning assault weapons would reduce gun violence.

The two most common elements among Democratic proposals is an assault weapons ban (similar to the one Joe Biden wrote in 1994 which sunset in 2004), and universal background checks, on which there is some bipartisan agreement (in advance of a detailed plan being worked out).

The most extensive plan for gun control, put forth in May by candidate

Cory ("Obama 2.0") Booker, would require all gun owners to obtain a license from the federal government. Candidates Pete Buttigieg, Julián Castro, Beto O'Rourke and Elizabeth Warren plan to include this feature in their announced plans. Universal background checks would close the family-member and gun-show loopholes through which checks are not required for these sales.

Last February, the House passed a measure that would mandate background checks and would close the gun-show and gift-giving loopholes. President Trump has waffled on whether he supports effective background checks. The concept awaits Senate action.

The push to federally license guns splits the Democratic camp. Booker, Buttigieg, Warren and Andrew Yang support the concept; Biden and Kirsten Gillebrand do not.

Some of the candidates have signed on to a "red flag" law, which would allow relatives, officers, or others close to a dangerous situation to report a person with the aim of confiscating their weapons.

Gun buy-backs are an intriguing idea for reducing the excessive number of guns in the U.S. O'Rourke and Bernie Sanders support a mandatory buyback program; Biden favors a voluntary buyback program.

It's important to note that no Democrat wants to go door-to-door collecting legally purchased firearms, a scare point often raised by the right.

I once gave my wife the editor a mug inscribed "Somebody should do something." For this writer's part, that sentiment applies to the gun-control issue today – but the something we do has to be effective, not just a window-dressing feel-good response to the tragic news that has now struck



Margaret Gehring

home 255 times this year alone. And whatever solution applies should also address the overlooked fact that two-thirds of the gun deaths in the United States are suicides.

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Book reviewer Jim Trammel, no big fan of going armed, nevertheless fears the day he sees the mushroom cloud

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Lace up, come out, be proud!

Join together for Lexington's Inaugural Pride Run 5K, set for 9 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 12 at The Club at Spindletop Hall.

Run, walk, skip or stroll in this 3.1-mile chip timed race on the scenic Legacy Trail. The race will feature overall and age group awards; commemorative medals and T-shirts (while supplies last); a 1-mile fun walk; entertainment at the finish line including a DJ, food/drinks, local vendors, sponsors and local non-profit tents/tables handing out swag & resources; and even a color-splash/run station (optional)!

This event is presented by the FCPS LGBTQ Advisory Committee in partnership with Lexington Fairness. Event proceeds to help support LGBTQ students, families and allies by providing much needed resources, programming, GSA development & maintenance, activities and student/teacher/administrative training throughout local K-12 public schools.

Submissions to Peaceways

Articles submitted to *Peaceways* should show an awareness of and sensitivity to the CKCPJ's mission and concerns.

Feature articles should be no longer than 500 words, unless you are willing to have the piece cut to fit one page of *Peaceways* text. Pieces will be edited for clarity.

Please include references in the text for all quotations, statistics, and unusual facts. End-notes or footnotes are not used.

Please query submissions to peacewayseditor@gmail.com before writing a feature article intended solely for *Peaceways*.

For all submissions, the author's name, address, and phone number should appear on the body of the submitted text.

If you submit material that has been published or which you are also submitting to other publishers, be sure to indicate this. Also include information about your relationship to any organization or issue mentioned in the article for inclusion in a biographical reference at the end of the story.

Submissions should be made in Word format *via* email. Book reviews are usually solicited by the editor, but we welcome inquiries from potential reviewers.

Submission deadline is the 10th of each month. *Peaceways* is published monthly except January.

**Support CKCPJ by linking
your Kroger Plus card
to #16439 at
krogercommunityrewards.com**

MONTHLY MEETINGS

CKCPJ Steering Committee Meetings, third Monday, 5 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave. More info: (859) 488-1448 or peaceandjusticeky@gmail.com. All are welcome.

Interfaith Prayer Vigil for Peace, every Thursday, 5:30 - 6 p.m. at Triangle Park (corner of Broadway and Main Street) in downtown Lexington. Contact Richard Mitchell, (859) 327-6277.

Migrant Network Coalition, first Monday, noon - 1:15 p.m., GLOBAL LEX, 1306 Versailles Road, Lexington. Contact Lindsay Mattingly, lmatingly@lexpublib.org, (859) 231-5514.

PFLAG Central Kentucky, second Tuesday, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. LGBTQ individuals of all ages, family members, friends and allies are welcome. St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Dr., Lexington. Visit info@pflagcentralky.org or (859) 338-4393. Speakers followed by confidential support group meeting.

Bluegrass Fairness of Central Kentucky, second Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Lexington Public Central Library, 140 E. Main St., Lexington. Contact Craig Cammack, chair, (859) 951-8565 or info@lexfair.org.

Wednesday Night GLSO "Heart to Heart" discussion group, 7 p.m., Pride Center, 389 Waller Ave., Lexington. GLSO operates Kentucky's only Pride Center, where they have quietly provided services to the GLBTQQA community for decades. More info, Pride Center hours. and other links at www.glsso.org.

Humanist Forum of Central Kentucky, first Thursday, 7 p.m., Great Hall of the Unitarian Universalist Church, 3564 Clays Mill Rd., Lexington. The Forum is a Chapter of the American Humanist Association. Meetings are open to people of all beliefs willing to express their opinions in a civil manner. Child care is provided. Contact President Staci Maney, staci@olliegee.com or (859) 797-2662.

Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, third Thursday, 7 p.m., Episcopal Diocese Mission House at Fourth St. and MLK Blvd, Lexington. Contact Beth Howard, (859) 276-0563.

NAMI Lexington Support Groups, every Sunday, 2:30 - 4 p.m. Participation Station, 869 Sparta Ct., Lexington. Call (859) 272-7891 or visit www.namilex.org.

Christian-Muslim Dialogue Program, fourth Saturday, 10 a.m. - noon. All are welcome. Locations vary, call (859) 277-5126. The Christian-Muslim dialogue promotes understanding and mutual respect between Christians and Muslims. By exploring moral, cultural and political factors shaping the current context, the program promotes personal and collective responsibility to build a more just and peaceful world.

Dance Jam, every Tuesday, 5:30 - 7 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave. Move to the extent you are able. Sponsored by Motion Matters, \$7 per session to cover space rental. Contact Pamela, info@motionmatters.org, (859) 351-3142.

Movies with Spirit, second Friday of every month. Unitarian Universalist Church, 3564 Clays Mill Road, Lexington. Potluck at 6 p.m., film at 7.

National Action Network, third Thursday each month, 7 - 8:30 p.m. at the Central Library, Lexington.

Showing Up for Racial Justice, second Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Wild Fig Coffee and Books, 726 N. Limestone, Lexington.

To include a regular meeting of your organization in this space, contact Margaret Gabriel, peacewayseditor@gmail.com.

Young offenders should not face execution

by T. Kerby Neill

In August of 2017, Fayette County Circuit Judge Ernesto Scorsone conducted a hearing concerning the range of punishments that a young man charged in a murder might face at trial. After hearing recent research findings and noting that “there are currently 30 states in which a defendant under the age of twenty-one at the time of their offense would not be executed,” he determined that “the death penalty would be a disproportionate punishment for crimes committed by individuals under 21 years of age” and therefore “Kentucky’s death penalty statute is unconstitutional insofar as it permits capital punishment for offenders under twenty-one (21) at the time of their offense.” The ruling does not mean that young offenders should not face serious consequences, just not execution.

The judge’s decision was grounded in a thriving body of research that includes a capacity to visually record brain activity while varying the tasks and emotional stress to which subjects are exposed. Hard data also shows that myelination, the coating of neurons that improves mental efficiency, is still underway in young adults. The prefrontal cortex, the last area to undergo myelination, is critical to the exercise of judgment and emotional control. Younger adults remain highly vulnerable to peer pressure and while they can perform reasoning tasks as well as adults in their mid and upper twenties, under stress (fear, anger, threat) the brains of 20 year-olds function more like those of 16- and 17-year-olds.

Developing brains are also more amenable to rehabilitation. A number of states and re-entry programs concentrate significant rehabilitative resources on young offenders with striking success.

In 2005, earlier data from developmental and brain research led the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Roper v. Simmons*, to outlaw the death penalty for youth

under age 18. As a psychologist and member of a committee that helped rewrite Kentucky’s juvenile statutes in 1978, I have followed developing brain research closely. I remember the first time I told my wife that men did not reach neurological maturity until about 25 and women several years earlier. She marveled at how we waste money researching the obvious. Statisticians who track auto accidents and recommend higher insurance rates for males under 25 might roll their eyes as well.

While we grant many adult functions to youth at 18, we restrict the sale of alcohol below age 21. At least 320 localities prohibit tobacco sales under age 21, including five states. Because mental maturity can be further encumbered in youth who experience early and chronic adversity, many youth are clearly not prepared for adult responsibility at age 18. Accordingly, a majority of states authorize extension of foster care until age 21. (Kentucky offers transitional living support up to age 21).

While in the Navy, I saw young servicemen on shore leave who were far from home, drinking, and vulnerable to conflicts with locals or other servicemen. I thanked God they weren’t carrying firearms. In

my psychology career, I’ve evaluated or counseled a dozen young people charged with homicide — almost all male. Tragic shootings were not planned. They were impulsive reactions to situations usually entered foolishly. Few youth had prior felony convictions that would have made it illegal to carry a firearm. Typically, they were not in touch with their positive potential, long stymied by circumstances. They are seriously sobered and chastened as they face shattered hopes, trial and prison. Where restorative justice is in practice, they are usually remorseful.

The government appealed Judge Scorsone’s decision to the Kentucky Supreme Court where oral arguments will be heard Sept. 19. I fervently hope the Kentucky Supreme Court finds the wisdom to attend to both the science and the serious potential for changing young lives. I hope they place Kentucky among the majority of states that does not execute these young adults.

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Kerby is a community activist and a member of the CKCPJ steering committee. This piece appeared in the Aug. 25 issue of the [Lexington] Herald-Leader.

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KFTC Voters’ Guide

From the website of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth:

“This is an important election year for Kentuckians. All of Kentucky’s statewide constitution offices are up for election in 2019 – Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Auditor, Commissioner of Agriculture, and Treasurer.

“We believe our votes are key and can make a difference in the elections and issues we care about. We are dedicated to developing a democracy where everyone – regardless of income, race, sexuality, political position or gender – has an equal voice. Where leaders listen and respond to community needs.

“This Voter Guide site is just one of many outreach tools Kentuckians For The Commonwealth uses to further develop active and informed participation in our elections in an effort to build a Healthy democracy in Kentucky – one where ordinary Kentuckians have a say in and benefit from decisions affecting our lives.

“Working together, we are building the Kentucky we envision. Right now we have an opportunity to grow a healthy democracy – starting with making informed choices when we go to the polls.”

The KFTC Voter’s Guide can be found at govoteky.com.



The Central Kentucky Council
for Peace and Justice
1588 Leestown Rd., Ste. 130-138
Lexington KY 40511

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*Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.*

~ Helen Keller

Stranded in Atlanta

by Father John S. Rausch

Another one of Murphy's Laws: All flights from home go smoothly; returning flights always screw up.

My flight from Lexington, Kentucky, connected in Atlanta and flew to Gainesville, Florida, without a hitch. I officiated at my Saturday wedding in Gainesville and awoke Sunday morning to blue skies, facing a skip to Atlanta and a jump to Lexington. Home, guaranteed, by mid-afternoon.

My first flight even landed fifteen minutes early in Atlanta, and my connecting gate was just a stroll away. Then I noticed the screen projected a 21-minute delay for the Lexington flight. How precise airports get. Oops! Add another 10 minutes.

"Okay, we're overbooked, so I need two volunteers to take a later flight and I'll give you a \$200 coupon. The next Lexington flight is only two hours later in the next concourse. Okay, \$300. I'm serious, \$400."

A young couple with a baby jumped at the \$800 coupons, smiling that they could afford to fly again.

"Okay, let's board."

Poor cousins like me were last to board. I schlepped my bag onto the plane and found an empty bin before squeezing into my assigned window seat.

"This is the captain from the flight deck. We've developed a little problem. This plane seems to have lost three 'static stabilizers.' The maintenance crew thinks it's an easy fix and you can see them addressing the problem on the main wing at the right side of the plane."

A modest pause.

"This is the captain again. This type of maintenance calls for new static stabilizers that are coming by another plane, so I think we'll deplane and you can use the airport's real bathrooms and spend your money at the bar. We'll call you back when we're ready."

Deplaned and legs stretched. After

a while: "This is the gate agent, and as you can see from the monitor, we need a new plane, and this entire flight that was scheduled for departure at 12:59 p.m. today has now been rescheduled for 7 a.m. tomorrow. For those who want to fly stand-by, there are still four more flights to Lexington today, ahh, but they're all overbooked, so when you hear the gate agent offering \$200 for volunteers to deplane, that's for real seat holders, not any of you 78 stand-bys from this flight."

I was number 18 in stand-by, so I took a voucher for a night at the Courtyard Marriott motel, and was horizontal by 9 p.m.

Up by 3:30 and at the gate in plenty of time for the 7 a.m. flight — that was DELAYED AGAIN for an hour and fifteen minutes, in classic Murphy style!

I really try to make lemonade in situations like this. I had numerous conversations with folks and shared humor in the calamity. I joked with a guy that the couple taking the money while we thought our plane would land only slightly late, would probably arrive before us. And, we'd have lost the premium — it happened that way, totally true!

Realistically, I always feel for the moms dealing with small kids in these situations.

How do they keep them occupied and not wear out? Saints! They deserve a medal.

Tragically, I also think about refugees struggling for a decent life. I travel by air, they travel by foot. Mothers with little ones face privation, violence, and death to help their children to a fuller life. To me, the whole experience of being stranded in Atlanta is a metaphor about Poor Cousins of the world — and I don't mean us middle class who are "inconvenienced" once in a while, I mean the real Poor Cousins who are bumped, denied premiums, and suffer delays as a matter of course. They don't get vouchers, or enough people to vouch for them. They stay stranded with no hope of an early morning flight.

Aloft, the sky beams blue, cotton-fluffy clouds flow by, and verdant earth breathes life below. There's no solidarity without pain, no reflection without pause. For that, it's worth being stranded in Atlanta.



John is a Glenmary priest who lives in Stanton, Ky. He is an activist, economist and a great host and chef.

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Follow CKCPJ on Facebook

Engagement on the CKCPJ Facebook page held steady through the early summer months. Posts by a variety of people focused on local, national and international issues.

Items from the Washington Post and other national publications routinely appear on the CKCPJ Facebook page, so you can expect varied and enlightening posts. Check them out and be sure to share.

"Liking" the page will enable you

to receive everything that is posted.

Recent posts include a story about a Louisville rally following the shootings in El Paso and Dayton; a protest by Japanese-American internment camp survivors; the fires burning in the Amazon rain forest; climate change; arms negotiation; the cost to taxpayers as a result of trade wars; and the internment of immigrant children.