SUMMER ISSUES OF THE MOSAIC WILL ONLY FEATURE ARTICLES OF THE LEALTAD-SUZUKI CENTER ISSUE AREAS

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LSC Issue Areas research current events and policies, locally, nationally and internationally

Economic Justice
(By Grace Zhu ’16)

Greece had a deadline on Tuesday, June 30th, to repay a £1.1 billion loan to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The European Commission (EC) said it made a last-minute proposal of reforms on Monday, June 29th. If Athens accepts the deal, it will free up cash to repay £1.1 billion loan. Talks between Greece and its creditors broke down the week of June 22nd, leading to Greek banks having to shut the last week of June. A referendum took place in Greece on July 5th over whether the country should accept the creditor’s proposals.

Sysco’s $3.5 billion bid to buy US Foods is off after U.S. District Court Judge Amit Mehta granted the FTC's request to put the brakes on the deal, citing concerns over how it would affect the restaurant business and consumers. Critics of the merger had expressed concerns that the deal would make it easier for the combined companies to charge higher prices to restaurants, which could pass those costs along to consumers in the form of higher menu prices.

U.S. unemployment fell to 5.3%, its lowest level since April 2008, according to the latest government data released on July 2nd. The U.S. added 223,000 jobs in June. However, there are also concerns about the labor force participation rate, which measures how many Americans are employed or looking for work. It hit a 37-year low in June. That means a lot of people aren’t working or have given up trying to look for work. Still, June’s job strength is the beginning of an important summer for the economy. The U.S. is the growth engine for the world this year as many other nations slow down.

Religion & Spirituality
(By Elida Zaldivar ’18)

Pakistan suspends death penalty during Ramadan. On June 17th, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif temporarily suspended the use of the death penalty during the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which began, Friday, June 19th the government said. Sharif ordered a pause to observe the sanctity of the holy month, according to a statement released by the Interior Minister’s office Thursday evening, June 18th.

Minnesotans embrace Pope Francis’ statement on climate change. On June 18th, the call by Pope Francis for the world’s leaders and people to dedicate themselves to curbing climate change was greeted with enthusiasm in Minnesota. In the pope's encyclical, or teaching document, he called for people to reduce waste, switch to cleaner forms of energy, and redefine progress and development. That struck a chord with Minnesota Catholics who celebrated the pope's message on, June 18th at St. Thomas More Catholic Community in St. Paul.

A Women’s Group Challenges Gender Identity of God and Uses both “He” and “She” pronouns. On June 15th, a women’s group in England encouraged people to think about God in a broader sense, as an all-knowing being without gender. The Church of England group, Women and the Church or WATCH, has recently campaigned, and succeeded, in ordaining female bishops. With two female bishops recently ordained, they have noticed an issue with referring to God exclusively with male pronouns, saying that God is greater than male or female.
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Racial/Ethnic/National Identities
(By Elida Zaldivar ‘18)

On June 18, Dylann Storm Roof confessed to killing nine people at a historic black church in Charleston because he hoped it would start a “race war.” The 21-year-old from Lexington, South Carolina, was taken into custody in Shelby, North Carolina, on June 17th. Roof was charged on June 19th with nine counts of murder. If convicted, he faces the death penalty.

June 30th, a woman who was arrested for removing the Confederate flag from the front of the South Carolina Statehouse said that she would “absolutely” do it again because the banner is a symbol of white supremacy, hatred, and racial terror. Bree Newsome and James Tyson, who were both jailed for the stunt, spoke to CBSN five days after Newsome defied officers’ orders and scaled a 30-foot steel flagpole to take down the flag.

On June 17th, the Dominican Republic began what is euphemistically being called a “social cleansing.” In this process of state housekeeping, the government planned to deport over 100,000 Dominicans of Haitian descent in an effort to tidy their immigration rolls. The criteria for this deportation ranges from targeting those with Haitian-sounding names and dark skin to picking out women who look like prostitutes and considering those to be among the number.

Gender & Sexuality
(By Shaonan Xi ‘18)

Two days after the United States Supreme Court affirmed same-sex marriage as a right, well-timed pride parades on Sunday, June 28th in the country’s twin hubs of gay activism, New York City and San Francisco, promised a sort of social catharsis — a bicoastal toast to the nation’s rapid shift on gay rights and an extended curtain call for the movement that drove it. “All 50 states!” the New York crowd roared at one point. It was no longer a plea, but a celebration.

The Haidian District People’s Court in Beijing ruled that homosexuality is not an illness, and the Xinyupiaoxiang Clinic must reimburse 31-year-old Xiaozhen (a pseudonym) for “conversion therapy” totaling RMB 3,500 (US$563). Homosexual conversion therapy is a process that uses hypnosis and electric shock therapy to “re-train” the sexual impulses of gay men to be heterosexual.

An undocumented transgender activist was escorted out of the White House Wednesday night, June 24th after she called on the president to release LGBTQ immigrants in detention centers. LGBTQ immigrant detainees are uniquely vulnerable to abuse, including sexual assault, while in custody. In prison settings, non-heterosexual prison inmates report sexual assault at higher rates than heterosexual inmates. A finding by the Bureau of Justice Statistics also found that almost 40 percent of transgender inmates in prisons are sexually assaulted.