

December 28, 1993

Dear Friends at Monroe Community Hospital,

Because it is impossible to talk individually with each of you at the same time I would like to share this letter with you all.

Although I've worked closely with each of you in providing health care to a lot of people, I have the feeling that many of you do not know what I've been involved in after working hours for the past ten years. It has been social and political organizing in a variety of areas, most recently as the co-Chair of the Rochester Committee on Latin America, coordinator of the Central American Caucus, board Member of the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency and Regional Council on Affordable Health Care. These volunteer, extra-curricular activities have led into subjects that have become so vital to me that I feel – especially now that I've turned 60 – the need to devote full-time to them.

Therefore, although I have loved working at MCH for nine years – thoroughly enjoying the challenging and courageous residents of this great old place, all its programs in care, teaching and research, and its wonderful, dedicated staff – I feel I must resign from MCH and the University of Rochester on July 1, 1994. This will allow six months to recruit a replacement.

What I will be doing may sound odd and even, because it's all volunteer time, perhaps risky to many of you. But it actually follows, step-wise, work of the last ten years.

1. to edit a new, national newsletter for the US-Central America Solidarity Movement – that's hundreds of small organizations coast to coast which have tried to improve US policy toward that region and to help their communities and refugees forced to leave their countries by war and repression;
2. to plan a national conference for all the organizations that make up that movement, based on one we planned and staffed in 1992;
3. to start a support organization - nationally – for the development of a broad, progressive movement (not a third political party but a network of progressive organizations – civil rights, labor, women's, environmental, peace and justice groups ) which can try to influence both major parties toward more humanitarian policies, both domestic and international;
4. to continue local organizing efforts in the activities mentioned above;
5. to study and write about related issues – and about certain political, economic and theological aspects of them.

If you want to know why such a drastic career change, here's a brief explanation (and I'd love to share thoughts and then keep in touch with any of you about any part of this): A concern for the health of people seems to lead naturally into a

worry about the ill health of this society. I “majored” in college in domestic and international affairs. I worked in a series of jobs from inner city, federally-funded health centers to rural health planning and now health care for the most complex population – frail older persons. One cannot help becoming aware of the connections between poor health and increasing poverty, joblessness, inadequate public education, housing, transportation, etc. One cannot help wondering why this occurs in the richest nation in the world, why the gap in the US between the haves and have-nots is wider now than at any time in the past 48 years, and also why we continue to force dependency on much of the Third World such as Latin America as well as our inner cities. What is really going on in this country? Why have we let our government stray so far from what our founding fathers said this nation is supposed to stand for, particularly equality of opportunity.

In seeking answers I’ve begun to explore a wide variety of opinions, old and new, about what we should be doing on this earth. The gap between those answers and what is actually happening is even wider. I’ve also been reviewing what tactics (what knowledge, what organization, what ways of non-violent resistance if needed) – what has worked in the past whenever it’s become clear that our country needs to be set back on track. In the past such citizen efforts have made the country stronger again by reminding us of our heritage and basic responsibilities.

It may be impossible to influence such major forces, but I feel I have to help gather together those who agree we must try.

On the other hand, I am going to miss being part of MCH. Monroe Community Hospital is a tremendous resource for this region. It is an example to everyone of how top notch, caring programs should be provided. The potential to do even more is exciting. Most of all, I’ll miss being part of it and seeing all of you throughout these beautiful old buildings.

Good luck. You are doing an incredible amount of good for a lot of people who need it.

Sincerely,

Peter Mott