

## Who's on your list of heroes?

Mary Ann McGivern | Jul. 9, 2012 NCR Today

A couple of decades ago, a peace group held a contest. They called for lists of 25 people who made significant contributions to society and about whom you would teach to very young children.

Alas, most of the lists were made up of dead white American men, mostly presidents and soldiers. There's nothing wrong with this class except that it leaves out women, people of color, workers and the living.

It's hard to write a list that models inclusivity for young children. I've made several over the years. Try it. I look forward to reading your submissions. The prize is the accolades of other readers.

I was reminded of the list because I considered writing about some unsung heroes of July Fourth. For example: the Mennonite men who served hard prison time during World War I; Ammon Hennesy, the Catholic Worker who specialized in nonviolent direct action; the union activist Mother Jones.

We all have heroes who are famous like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Dorothy Day. And we have significant role models like our parents. The nuns taught me about saints when I was small and I still revere the Therasas, Bernadette, Stephen, Thomas -- and Mary and Ann, of course.

But I was in my 30s when I learned who Emma Goldman was. We deported her back to Russia, and I don't know if I'd tell young children her life. But she sure should be an Independence Day icon.

Celebrate the Declaration of Independence this month by honoring your icons of freedom.

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