Sara’s comments on the first draft:

REPORTING AND WRITING

I’d like to get to know Jeff Stack more. He seems really interesting, yet I don’t understand his motivation yet from this story. I know you’ve had a hard time getting him to open up, but that will be key in writing a story that makes him come alive. Why would such a person live a life like his? He could surely be making more money, maybe have a family (does he?), but it seems he dedicates himself to these very unpopular causes 24/7. Put more emphasis on that. Tell more about his personal life.

I really like the scenes you have showing him promoting his unpopular causes. I would consider condensing them into a montage that shows how little traction he gets at a number of different events. Why does he do this day after day?

You told me in our meeting: “His humility should not be taken for a lack of conviction.” Explore that more. Why is he so committed? Why does he take this tone?

FOCUS

Story needs a FOCUS and a theme. I suggest this theme is that he is a social Don Quixote, fighting for unpopular causes. This is a path you’re already going down, but make it even more clear. Talk about how unusual this is in this day and age when everyone is so self-focused and wants to win at all costs.

We need more sources - more people who’ve known him a long time, talking about his motivation and actions. People whom he has helped or influenced. Who would consider him a mentor? Anyone? Does he have kids, was he ever married?

DATA

Story needs more DATA. Talk about the war, the death penalty, and the Catholic Worker Movement. Talk to a national source with the Catholic Worker Movement.

**Reporter byline**: Hudson Kyle

**Reporter contact info**: (210) 844-1295, hudsonkyle11@gmail.com

**Assigned word count: 500-600 vs. ACW**: ~650

**Print Hed (give at least 3): A fight for peace**

**Print Dek: Jeff Stack’s advocacy stems from his faith**

**Web Hed (give 1)**:

**Web Dek:**

**Story Links:** <http://midmofor.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.catholicworker.org/>

<http://www.madpmo.org/>

**Suggested Tweet**: Jeff Stack lives a life for peace and justice for all, regardless of race, nationality or gender.

**Suggested Facebook post**: Jeff Stack’s advocacy for nonviolence and for the poor are both inspired by

**Suggested Web Excerpt**: Jeff Stack, the regional coordinator for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, is inspired by faith in his work for nonviolence and advocacy for the poor. Stack is a member of the Catholic Worker Movement, a radical sect of the church that takes literally the Bible’s teachings to feed the hungry and care for the homeless.

**Two versions of a lede**:

1.

The pacifist’s cause is a lonely one.

\_\_\_\_

2.

Try something else here!

**Body of the story**:

He stands at the front of the mid-sized lecture hall. Ten people occupy a room built for 75. His drooping eyes scan the room as he sips water from a mason jar mostly stripped of its label.

He looks back at his notes and resumes his lecture. His topic is the ongoing U.S. drone war, and his audience is the Young Americans for Liberty.

As he flips through a pile of typed, highlighted and tabbed notes, he lists and describes recent atrocities committed by the U.S. military, each of which he punctuates with a simple refrain:

“That’s strange.”

**A life for peace**

Jeff Stack is the mid-Missouri coordinator for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which is a national nonprofit that advocates for causes of non-violence, ranging from opposition to the death penalty, to a less heavy-handed approach to U.S. foreign affairs.

Stack helps coordinate with other activist groups in the area to organize vigils to protest executions and marches downtown to advocate for a less strong-armed U.S. military.

“We’re only limited by our creativity,” he says, on the organization’s varied efforts.

When riffing on his opposition to the U.S. government and military, Stack is careful not to lump in servicemen and women.

“War is the enemy,” he says. “Greed is the enemy. The Cheneys, Bushes and Obamas are the enemy. The men and women in uniform are not our enemy.”

**Faith-driven initiative**

Stack grew up the oldest of six children. He was raised Catholic, where? how old is he? attending weekly services and going through confirmation. Eventually, though, Stack’s beliefs splintered with those of his parents.

“As I grew up, I found some of the church’s teachings to be sexist and discriminatory,” he says. “I really had trouble with that.”

After falling away from the church because of these teachings, Stack discovered the Catholic Worker Movement, a radical sect of Catholic tradition that takes literally Jesus’ instructions to feed the hungry and care for the homeless. Some people see this group as so radical that it’s “socialist,” “anarchist” or “communist.” Make sure to do research on the group itself and its history. Mention some of the interesting and noteworthy stuff.

Talk more about Stack’s transition to this cause, also other spiritual influences (you mentioned American Indians or something?)

Steve Jacobs, who helped found St. Francis House and the Catholic Worker Community in Columbia, describes Stack’s old room at the communal house as “basically, a big closet,” where donations to St. Francis House were stored. How long did Stack live there? Can you go there and see it for yourself?

The house’s nightly visitors were equally unpredictable. St. Francis House opened its doors to the homeless of Columbia, regardless of their state.

“It was a little like an old Wild West saloon,” Jacobs says. “You never knew who was going to come through that door.”

Even though Stack moved out of St. Francis House in the 1980s, Jacobs says he’s still a peripheral presence. That was a long time ago... Jacobs has known him all this time?

“He’s always around in some sense,” Jacob says. “Sometimes he’ll volunteer to come in and make breakfast for the guys. He really has a heart for the homeless.”

**A practiced patience**

Stack sits behind a table covered in pamphlets and brochures. Where? Did you observe this? Some of them offer information on the military draft. Others explain what it means to be a conscientious objector. Once a month, he sits through the school’s lunch hours, offering a counter-perspective to what military recruiters bring.

His table stands across from Rock Bridge High School’s main office. Hundreds of students sit along the sides of the hall -- eating, chatting, laughing.

Stack sits straight-backed, his mouth stuck in its default half-smile.

Occasionally, a student will slow his walk in front of the table to glance at the literature. Anytime this happens, Stack greets them warmly.

“Hi, how are you today?”

Usually, they speed up as he says this, occasionally offering a “Fine, thanks,” over their shoulder.

As they turn the corner and disappear into the mass of their peers, Stack says, “You’re welcome to some information. If not, have a great day.”

Still, his back is straight, and his mouth holds steady in its contented smile.

**Sidebar or Info Box if needed**:

**Sources**:

Jeff Stack, (573) 449-4585

Steve Jacobs, (573) 875-4913

yet to get in touch w/: Who are these folks?

Colleen Iben (319) 365-2690

Bernie Prokop (same number as Iben)

Bob James (573) 397-2829

**Documents as Sources**:

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cp10st.pdf>

**Media Support**:

on homelessness:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/us/since-recession-more-young-americans-are-homeless.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0&gwh=B22BCB0A7876C93080D3760C26F0D8B8>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/02/opinion/sunday/young-and-homeless.html?gwh=9BD976C12E3D77ECBF01818AD46A6FC2>

on the death penalty:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/video/thefold/the-governor-and-mother-poised-to-close-marylands-death-row/2013/02/13/b5511dee-7624-11e2-95e4-6148e45d7adb_video.html>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/death-penalty-repeal-bill-heads-to-house-floor-in-maryland/2013/03/08/b137bdc8-8824-11e2-999e-5f8e0410cb9d_story.html>