

connections

PRICELESS

Volume XXIX, Number 3

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April 2011

SAVE THE DATES

APRIL 9
ANTI-WAR DEMO, SF

APRIL 10
EARTH DAY FESTIVAL
VICTORY PARK, STOCKTON

APRIL 17
CALAVERAS EARTH DAY
UTICA PARK, ANGELS CAMP

TUE, APR 12
RADIO 89.5 MEETS (P 19)

April 10 – Victory Park

Earth Day time - renew your commitment

Business as usual is not sustainable
- come to the Earth Day Festival and
find out what is.

Bruce Giudici

The first Earth Day was celebrated in April 1970, at the confluence of both increasingly evident environmental degradation and a mobilized, idealistic movement of young people protesting the Vietnam War. In the subsequent decade, the resultant environmental movement supported the passage of our foundational environmental laws: the Clean Air, Clean Water, Endangered Species and Superfund Acts. Despite repeated attempts to weaken these laws, they endure because the American people overwhelmingly agree with their underlying premise: that the Earth deserves protection, for us and all other living things.

On April 10, Stockton will celebrate its 23rd annual Earth Day Festival, once again in Victory Park - and once again, with new booths, issues, entertainment, food, energy and the continuing belief that the Earth deserves protection.

This past year has seen several grievous assaults on our common heritage. We witnessed the BP oil blowout disaster that will effect the Gulf of Mexico for decades to come. And we currently are seeing meltdowns at no fewer than three nuclear power plants in Japan, contaminating northeastern Japan for centuries to come. Extreme weather that brings floods to Pakistan, drought to Russia and icefield melting in the Arctic will annually repeat, with only the venues changing. Our fragile Earth remains in need of protection: Earth Day is a place for you to discover new ways to pitch in.

Even if you have been to every Earth Day event, you will take away something new from this second Sunday in April - a new idea, fresh insight or a refresher on what you once knew. Concerns persist, because environmental issues are ultimately economic and financial. A sustainable Earth requires some foregoing of profit - it is always cheaper, in the short run, to pollute and pocket the savings. The cost is borne by the rest of us - the tragedy of the commons. We must choose the world in which we want live.

In a time of bare-knuckled hard choices faced by our elected officials, we must stand up and fight in defense of our common environment - clean air and water; open space for us and other living things; and sustainably harvested forests, fisheries and soils. Business as usual is not sustainable - come to the Earth Day Festival and find out what is.

Come enjoy the 23rd Annual
Stockton Earth Day Festival
Sunday, April 10th, 2011
11am - 4pm - Victory Park
Free Admission

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To question is the answer

Bruce Giudici

The suffering we now experience is not inevitable. Many of the burdens we bear are choices made by people in power. Some of this power is beyond our reach - the inherited wealth of the few may be taxed a bit, but never to the extent that the rich are even challenged. A lot of our individual power, however, can be focused in our limited democratic system to start meaningful change. In a time of blatant class attacks on public servants - teachers, social workers and others who work for our benefit - we as a people must recognize that the power of the wealthy few has gone too far. It is beginning in Wisconsin, but will soon ripple to Ohio, Indiana, Florida and beyond - the remaking of America in the model of the Bible Belt south. "Right-to-work" is a start, then the questioning of pensions/Social Security, women's choice, military as religion, on down the list.

The time we spend now is critical; we risk returning to an era before we discovered, fought for and won the power of our community - before FDR. Unions were formed to counter the enormous power of employers - with wages 30 years stagnant, who would say unions are obsolete? Today, universal health care is needed to counter the strength of insurance giants, drug companies and the medical gravy train; who would say our health care system works well? For the long haul, a democratically elected government must control the military; looking at our economy, who would say it's not the reverse? Society needs balance, to ensure a chance of fairness, to keep the law of the street, jungle, and sweatshop at bay. You may be asked to step forward.

United we stand and all that. Never more true. Through the past 30 years, we have seen the constant degrading of our basic connections to each other - our

unions have been attacked, our media sold and consolidated, many of our children left only a military work option, our incomes and job opportunities degraded so that we now fight over crumbs - and this, in the richest country on earth. Our connection to workers overseas becomes more valid as we discover a common adversary; a global wealth that has become so entrenched and oblivious to the needs of its workers, that we find ourselves more aligned to those in Egypt and Libya than to hedge fund managers and bankers and politicians who toil in the US of A.

Hopefully, there are now signs of cooperative action on a few fronts: still, the strongest are the demonstrations that spontaneously erupt with greater frequency. Word of withdrawals from banks with ties to Republican politicians in Wisconsin is even more promising. "Economic transparency" is a new by-word - protest by boycotting the bad, patronizing the good. In isolation,

Bruce Giudici, editor



the connection of consumption with political action is lost - but in publicized, persistent cooperation, the point can be powerfully made.

Out of crisis, opportunity. Hmm. Even the mendacity of our corporate press cannot hide the way things are. The "safe" nuclear power plants, US support for "democracy" in the Middle East, a "respect" for human rights, intolerance for "torture," "support" for workers organizing rights, "progressive" taxation - the whole tamale should be in quotation marks. The turning of America may be starting - to question is the answer. Happy Earth Day!



do, you will need to set your resolve against an onslaught of venom and threats from many in the pro-RKBA crowd. But, you can do it!

Best wishes,
Mike Barkley

Egypt a leading edge

Editor,

They're putting flowers in gun barrels in the Philippines too. The story in Egypt has hardly begun. Democracy also means democratizing industrial and financial institutions. Like what we Americans have yet to do in our country - before we can really call ourselves a Democracy. Unless, of course, we like what we have got. Maybe the time has come for the whole world's revolution, NOW.

Lee Christensen

Feedback

Why I'm running for Congress

Editor,

For 2 decades or so I've felt the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution should be repealed since one effect of it has been to increase the number of shootings of Americans. On January 8 in Tucson we witnessed another such massacre. Dorwan Stoddard moved to shield with his body his wife and childhood sweetheart and was killed. Chief Judge John Roll of the U.S. District Court for Arizona moved to shield with his body Congressional Staffer Ron Barber and was killed. Intern Daniel Hernandez moved towards the shooting rather than away from it and rendered assistance to Congresswoman Giffords until paramedics arrived. Patricia Maisch grabbed the gunman's other magazine and kept him from getting it to reload. Altogether 19 were shot, and six of those died including 9-year old Christina-Taylor Green, who, considering her interests and intelligence, might have grown up to become President one day.

Enough is enough. If those people can perform those acts of heroism, and if nobody in Congress has the guts to do

anything about the easy access to firearms that was behind this massacre (yes, I've asked them), the least I can do is run for Congress and start the process on repealing the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (RKBA). The goal would be to begin reducing the huge number of guns in this country, counted by some as being as high as 280,000,000 or higher, or about one for every person. I began collecting at <http://www.mjbarkl.com/run.htm> links to articles and lead blog comments advocating repeal of the Second Amendment.

I learned some things: 1) there are many more people calling for repeal than I thought; 2) it's not enough to repeal the Second Amendment but the underlying right and all state RKBA rights must be repealed as well, and, what makes it more urgent; 3) the U.S. Supreme Court in the Heller v. District of Columbia Decision in 2008 and the McDonald v. Chicago Decision in 2010 have effectively kicked the constitutionality prop out from under all gun control in this country - the only thing allowing it to continue is some gratuitous language in both cases by Justice

Scalia, with no legal basis other than his personal endorsement for regulating firearms and who gets access to them. However bad that sounds, it's worse than that. Unless the Court's 5-4 decision somehow becomes 4-5 or better, the only way to move forward on reducing the volume of guns or halting the proliferation of high capacity or more powerful guns is through a Constitutional Amendment. I propose one on the web page I list above, along with the rest of my platform.

Of course, what is one guy? Not enough. If you are 25 or older, 7 years a citizen, and a resident of the state you run in, then you can run as well.

If you are reading this newspaper, then maybe you should run. One thing we all learned last November is that if a "faction" runs enough candidates, some of them are going to Congress. I'd be delighted to see all of you there regardless of whether or not I win. How about it? One thing I need to point out is that the pro-RKBA crowd can be quite vicious - for instance, one angry gun dealer blew up the Federal Building in Oklahoma City. If you run, and I hope you

Connections

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"The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared responsibly for the well-being of all her inhabitants and all future generations."

Spinning like a top

Laurie Litman

While the nuclear industry spokespeople spin and spin, horrifying events are unfolding in Fukushima, Japan. At this point (Friday, March 18), we don't know how it will eventually play out, or how widespread the damage will be. Will the entire 6-unit facility melt down - spewing their radiation into our atmospheric commons - or will there only be a partial meltdown with lesser damage?

Already we know that some of the workers have sustained fatal doses of radiation, milk and spinach around Fukushima are no longer safe to eat, and the EPA reports the radiation level in Sacramento rose slightly today. By the time you read this, we will know more. However, the full cost in money, environmental destruction, and lives cut short will not be known for years to come.

The spin doctors will tell you this is such an unlikely accident that we shouldn't consider it: "who could have foreseen such an unheard of series of events?" And then they assure us that this could never happen again, nuclear power is safe: "look at how seldom accidents happen." And nuclear power is necessary: "if we are to tackle climate change, nuclear must be part of the mix." The final thrust is the implied, "what's the matter, are you a wimp?"

But make no mistake, catastrophic failure is a FEATURE of nuclear energy. We've had three big warnings: Three-Mile Island, Chernobyl, and now Fukushima (and who knows how many smaller ones). These catastrophes may be few and far between, but when they occur they are devastating to say the least. Miles of land uninhabitable, unknown numbers of people stricken with cancer, billions and trillions of dollars lost.

Dangerous levels of radiation from Fukushima may or may not reach us on the west coast... we don't know yet. But closer to home, we've got San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station located right on the ocean and Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant sitting on an earthquake fault. And even the spinners say: "we can't plan for a 9.0 earthquake."

The only reason the nuclear industry can even consider running their dangerous plants, can keep feeding us lies, is that we, the public, pick up the bill on every aspect of the industry. They get

the profit; we give subsidies and swallow the risk. The epitome of corporate welfare, the industry gets direct subsidies, loan guarantees, special tax breaks, government insurance (the government promise to assume the huge potential liability if anything goes wrong), and state-based corporate assistance.

If the nuclear industry paid the full cost of their energy, it would be absolutely prohibitive. There would be no nuclear industry.

So, can we address climate change without nuclear power? Of course we can. In fact, nuclear will do little to solve the problem, as we covered in a previous Connections (Top 10 reasons nukes won't save the climate, Connections 2010, <http://www.nirs.org>).

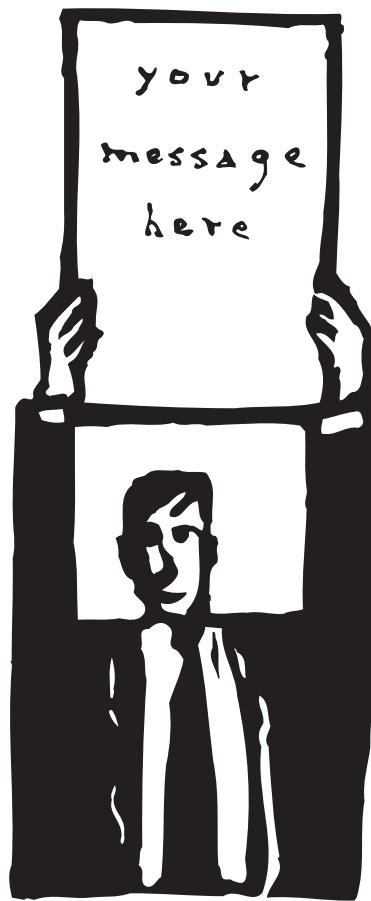
Simply redefining nuclear energy as "clean energy" does nothing to help the climate or the planet.

Recently, the World Wildlife Fund released a report showing how we can achieve all our energy globally from renewable sources by 2050 (http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/climate_carbon_energy/energy_solutions/renewable_energy/sustainable_energy_report/). It can be done. We know how to do it.

So why are we even discussing something so insanely dangerous and expensive as nuclear power? We all know why: money and politics. At this time, President Obama remains cozily in bed with the nuclear spinners. Even the unfolding horrors at Fukushima fail to shake his bizarre faith in nuclear power.

But the reason is actually sleazier than that. Exelon Corporation, which is based in Illinois, produces about a quarter of the country's nuclear power. This company and its executives were huge donors to Barak Obama's presidential campaign. That is why, in the midst of potentially the worst nuclear disaster in history, the President has come out repeatedly to assure us that nuclear is still a critical part of our future. As Gregg Levine says in this extremely informative video, "When Barak Obama says nuclear power is important to our future, what he means is nuclear power is important to HIS future." (<http://my.firedoglake.com/gregglevine/2011/03/18/the-party-line-march-18-2011/>)

But we have power too. This is the best time ever to put a silver stake in the heart of the



nuclear industry. Demand that our California plants be shut down and properly decommissioned, or at least until all of the safety issues are resolved (in other words, permanently). Remove all public money from the nuclear chain and demand full responsibility and accountability from the industry. And talk to others about the dangers of nuclear power. The spinners can only function when people are uninformed. They lose when faced with the truth.

For the best information on Fukushima and other nuclear-related issues I recommend:

NIRS (Nuclear Information and Resource Service) <http://www.nirs.org/>

Union of Concerned Scientists <http://www.ucsusa.org/>

Firedoglake (best on all issues) <http://firedoglake.com>

Al Jazeera (watch the live stream reporting to see how news broadcasting should be done) http://english.aljazeera.net/watch_now/

Nuclear power = corporate welfare

Jon Walker

While there is rarely a large sector in our economy that doesn't tend to get some form of corporate welfare, nuclear power is unique in that it benefits from almost every scheme ever designed by the government to directly or indirectly subsidize an industry. Nuclear power receives direct subsidies, loan guarantees, special tax breaks, government insurance, the government promise to assume the huge potential liability if anything goes wrong, and state-based corporate assistance.

From a 2008 CBO study on Nuclear Power's Role in Generating Electricity: If just a few nuclear plants qualified for the incentives, the most substantial one—the production tax credit—would lead to sizable reductions in those plants' corporate income tax liability during the first several years of operation. Nuclear projects eligible for federal loan guarantees, which cover up to 80 percent of construction costs, would benefit from reductions in financing costs. The preferential tax treatment of decommissioning funds—funds that utilities are required to set aside to cover the cost of safely shutting down and securing a nuclear plant at the end of its useful life—would provide far less financial incentive because the discounted present value of the cost of decommissioning is small[...]

The largest incentives available under EPAct are a production tax credit and a loan guarantee program. The tax credit provides up to \$18 in tax relief per megawatt hour of electricity produced at qualifying power plants during the first eight years of operation. (For comparison, the average wholesale price of electricity in 2005 was about \$50 per megawatt, on average.) These loan guarantees are massive subsidies for investors, which turn a bad investment into a "good one" by socializing almost all of the likely losses. The maximum coverage available under the loan guarantee program—a guarantee on debt covering 80 percent of a plant's construction costs, which implies that investors' equity would cover the remaining 20 percent—would most likely reduce the levelized cost of new nuclear capacity by about 10 percent.[...]

The loan guarantee program

could encourage investors to choose relatively risky projects over more certain alternatives because they would be responsible for only about 20 percent of a project's costs but would receive 100 percent of the returns that exceeded costs.

And to make these guarantees to protect the investors, Congress has put the taxpayers at a "very high" risk of losing money. According to a 2003 CBO analysis of a nuclear loan program:

CBO considers the risk of default on such a loan guarantee to be very high—well above 50 percent. The key factor accounting for this risk is that we expect that the plant would be uneconomic to operate because of its high construction costs, relative to other electricity generation sources. In addition, this project would have significant technical risk because it would be the first of a new generation of nuclear plants, as well as project delay and interruption risk due to licensing and regulatory proceedings.

Liability caps

While nuclear accidents are rare, as we see in Japan, the potential damage from an accident could be enormous. However, Congress has made it so power companies can sleep easy knowing that above a certain cost the government will cover their damages for them. From the 2008 CBO report:

In practice, Price-Anderson subsidizes utilities by reducing their cost of carrying liability insurance. Instead of purchasing full coverage, operators of nuclear power plants are required to obtain coverage only up to the liability limit, which is currently set at about \$10 billion per accident. The value of the subsidy is the difference between the premium for full coverage and the premium for \$10 billion in coverage.

Beyond this, the government has taken ownership of all nuclear waste from the private companies, which in theory are a liability that can cause problems for thousands of years.

State level corporate welfare

In addition to the federal government, many states also provide corporate welfare for

(continued on page 4)



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The Republican shakedown

Robert Reich

The truth is if the super-rich paid their fair share of taxes, government wouldn't be broke.

You can't fight something with nothing. But as long as Democrats refuse to talk about the almost unprecedented buildup of income, wealth, and power at the top - and the refusal of the super-rich to pay their fair share of the nation's bills - Republicans will convince people it's all about government and unions.

Republicans claim to have a mandate from voters for the showdowns and shutdowns they're launching. Governors say they're not against unions but voters have told them to cut costs, and unions are in the way. House Republicans say they're not seeking a government shutdown but standing on principle. "Republicans' goal is to cut spending and reduce the size of government," says House leader John Boehner, "not to shut it down." But if a shutdown is necessary to achieve the goal, so be it.

The Republican message is bloated government is responsible for the lousy economy that most people continue to experience. Cut the bloat and jobs and wages will return.

Nothing could be further from the truth, but for some reason Obama and the Democrats aren't responding with the truth. Their response is: We agree but you're going too far. Government employees should give up some more wages and benefits but don't take away their bargaining rights. Private-sector unionized workers should make more concessions but don't bust the unions. Non-defense discretionary spending should be cut but don't cut so much.

In the face of showdowns and shutdowns, the "you're right but you're going too far" response doesn't hack it. If Republicans are correct on principle, they're more likely to be seen as taking a strong principled stand than as going "too far." If they're basically correct that the problem is too much government spending why not go

as far as possible to cut the bloat?

The truth that Obama and Democrats must tell is government spending has absolutely nothing to do with high unemployment, declining wages, falling home prices, and all the other horrors that continue to haunt most Americans.

Indeed, too little spending will prolong the horrors for years more because there's not enough demand in the economy without it.

The truth is that while the proximate cause of America's economic plunge was Wall Street's excesses leading up to the crash of 2008, its underlying cause - and the reason the economy continues to be lousy for most Americans - is so much income and wealth have been going to the very top that the vast majority no longer has the purchasing power to lift the economy out of its doldrums. American's aren't buying cars (they bought 17 million new cars in 2005, just 12 million last year). They're not buying homes (7.5 million in 2005, 4.6 million last year). They're not going to the malls (high-end retailers are down but Wal-Mart's sales are booming).

Only the richest 5 percent of Americans are back in the stores because their stock portfolios have soared. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has

doubled from its crisis low. Wall Street pay is up to record levels. Total compensation and benefits at the 25 major Wall St firms had been \$130 billion in 2007, before the crash; now it's close to \$140 billion.

But a strong recovery can't be built on the purchases of the richest 5 percent.

The truth is if the super-rich paid their fair share of taxes, government

wouldn't be broke. If Governor Scott Walker hadn't handed out tax breaks to corporations and the well-off, Wisconsin wouldn't be in a budget crisis. If Washington hadn't extended the Bush tax cuts for the rich, eviscerated the estate tax, and created loopholes for private-equity and hedge-fund managers, the federal budget wouldn't look nearly as bad.

And if America had higher marginal tax rates and more tax brackets at the top - for those raking in \$1 million, \$5 million, \$15 million a year - the budget would look even better. We wouldn't be firing teachers or slashing Medicaid or hurting the most vulnerable members of our society. We wouldn't be in a tizzy over Social Security. We'd slow the rise in healthcare costs but we wouldn't cut Medicare. We'd cut defense spending and lop off subsidies to giant agribusinesses but we wouldn't view the government as our national nemesis.

The final truth is as income and wealth have risen to the top, so has political power. The reason all of this is proving so difficult to get across is the super-rich, such as the Koch brothers, have been using their billions to corrupt politics, hoodwink the public, and enlarge and entrench their outsized fortunes. They're bankrolling Republicans who are mounting showdowns and threatening shutdowns, and who want the public to believe government spending is the problem.

They are behind the Republican shakedown. These are the truths that Democrats must start telling, and soon. Otherwise the Republican shakedown may well succeed.

near economically viable. To make it an "investment" that private companies are willing to undertake requires huge government handouts and legislation privatizing the profits while socializing the losses. Not surprisingly an industry so depending on corporate welfare is such a large political donor to the politicians who provide and can increase the direct/indirect subsidies.

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(continued from page 3)

nuclear power: In several of those states, additional incentives that could further reduce the cost of nuclear power are under consideration. Those provisions include allowing higher rates of return for nuclear power than for other technologies, allowing utilities to recover some construction costs before

plants begin operations, and tax incentives.

Lemon socialism

The high investment costs, the long building time, the length of time it takes to see a return on investment, the price uncertainty of electricity and the very large potential liability simply don't make nuclear power anywhere

SB 810 Single-payer health care: a cure to Stockton's budget woes

Stanley G. Thomas

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." – MLK

California's politically-powerful, poorly-regulated, private for-profit health insurance industry is taking the California public, taxpayers, and tax-supported public institutions - cities, counties, and school districts - to the cleaners. The current health care "system" kills people, bankrupts families, and raids the public treasuries with impunity. In California, SB 810 (Leno) "The California Universal Health Care Act" would heal California's sick health care system. SB 810 is single-payer health care (publicly-financed, privately-delivered), affordable and universal. Tragically, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed SB 810's predecessor bill, SB 840 (Kuehl), in 2007 and 2008. The Republican legislators in the California legislature prevented that vitally important piece of legislation from passing with a veto-proof margin.

The US has the worst health care system of the world's

funded through closely-regulated, non-profit health insurers. For-profit corporations are excluded from their systems.

Our broken health care system is ranked #37 in overall health performance by the World Health Organization, and #54 in fairness. In every other developed country, preventive medicine and health care outcomes (and a key indicator - infant mortality) are dramatically better than ours. Our infant mortality is worse than Cuba's. Their per capita costs are significantly lower than ours.

Our system leaves 12 million Californians without health insurance and causes more than 450 uninsured Californians to die every month because they did not have access to health care (nationally, this totals to fifteen 9/11 disasters every year). It bankrupts 7,000 California families every month. These statistics are not abstractions. Some of these deaths and bankruptcies are taking place here in Stockton, right under our very noses.

The financial damage to cities, counties, and school districts is very painful to Harry and Louise Taxpayer. More appalling is the human cost. The Mad-



industrialized democracies for two basic reasons: (1) we have an irrational, unjust and immoral employer-based system (absolutely unique among developed countries), and (2) we (uniquely) channel the funding through politically-powerful, poorly-regulated, private for-profit corporations. Funding is done more efficiently, significantly more cheaply, and universally in every other developed nation. Their systems are either publicly-funded (as proposed in SB 810) or

As-Hell-Doctors Tour came to Stockton last fall. Rose Roach, executive director of CSEA's River-Delta field office, was one of the speakers. She told the story of one of her members who simply could not afford to insure both of her sons. She chose one. Within days, the other [uninsured] son was severely injured in a car crash. The poor woman will be bankrupted. Rose's question: When did it become acceptable for people in our society to be forced to make "Sophie's Choice?"

Comparative Healthcare Statistics

Country	Life Expectancy	Infant mortality rate	Physicians per 1000 people	Nurses per 1000 people	Per capita expenditure on health (USD)	Healthcare costs as a percent of GDP	% of government revenue spent on health	% of health costs paid by government
Australia	81.4	4.2	2.8	9.7	3,137	8.7	17.7	67.7
Canada	80.7	5.0	2.2	9.0	3,895	10.1	16.7	69.8
France	81.0	4.0	3.4	7.7	3,601	11.0	14.2	79.0
Germany	79.8	3.8	3.5	9.9	3,588	10.4	17.6	76.9
Japan	82.6	2.6	2.1	9.4	2,581	8.1	16.8	81.3
Norway	90.0	3.0	3.8	16.2	5,910	9.0	17.9	83.6
Sweden	81.0	2.5	3.6	10.8	3,323	9.2	13.6	81.7
UK	79.1	4.8	2.5	10.0	2,992	8.4	15.8	81.7
US	78.1	6.7	2.4	10.6	7,920	16.0	18.5	45.4

Direct comparisons of health statistics across nations are complex. The Commonwealth Fund, in its annual survey, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall", compares the performance of the health care systems in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada and the U.S. Its 2007 study found that, although the U.S. system is the most expensive, it consistently underperforms compared to the other countries. A major difference between the U.S. and the other countries in the study is that the U.S. is the only country without universal health care. The OECD also collects comparative statistics, and has published brief country profiles.

License to steal

Under our current employer-based system, health insurance corporations have a legal license to loot tax-exempt, tax-supported public institutions - cities, county governments, and school districts - nationwide. All of these public institutions are employers. In our employer-based system they purchase health insurance for their employees from private for-profit corporations. These corporations are accountable only to the bottom line, to increasing stockholder wealth, exorbitant executive compensation, and Wall St. Premium costs have skyrocketed. Health insurers have been raising premiums at more than three times the rate of inflation for decades. They are not accountable to taxpayers or to the people they insure; there are no regulations to stop them.

The City of Stockton and Stockton Unified School District are excellent examples of this unacceptable situation. This past year, the City of Stockton was trying to close a \$23 million budget deficit, but the city's health insurance bill for its employees was more than \$32 million. Eleven percent of its budget was going straight into the pockets of the health insurance industry. For SUSD that percentage was

13%. Scores of police officers in crime-ridden Stockton have been discharged. City services have taken a serious hit. SUSD discharged 230 badly-needed teachers for a saving of \$9 million. In the meantime, that 13% of their budget for health insurance represented \$39 million.

SB 810 (Leno) Single-Payer Health Care

SB 810 (Leno) "The California Universal Health Care Act" would heal California's sick health care system. SB 810 is single-payer health care (publicly-funded, privately-delivered). The fundamental principle underlying SB 810 is "Spend the Common Wealth (taxes) for the Common Good (publicly-funded, privately-delivered, affordable and universal health care)". That principle, widely applied, provides for public schools, infrastructure (roads, bridges, dams and levees), public libraries and parks, and police and fire protection for all.

If SB 810 passed the California legislature with a veto-proof margin, California, the world's eighth largest economy, would have the potential to match the overall health performance of France (#1). Medical insurance-related deaths and bankruptcies

would drop to zero, health care availability would be universal, and infant mortality would improve significantly. Costs per person would drop significantly to levels akin to all other developed countries. Statewide, the budget crisis of many cities, counties, and school districts would be eased.

Stocktonians are almost universally uninformed about SB 810. Naturally. In four year's time, The Record has never written one word about single-payer legislation in Sacramento. That situation must change. Republican legislators have been voting in lockstep with the Republican caucus against single-payer health care, to the detriment of their constituent taxpayers, cities, county governments and school districts. Stocktonians are too uninformed to hold them accountable. That situation must change.

Hopefully, readers of Connections can become better informed, organize, and help make that happen.

Action: 1) Go on-line to www.CaliforniaOneCare.org and view the YouTube video "Health Care for All - California." 2) Call your State representatives, including Governor Brown.

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Bradley Manning hypocrisy continues

Kevin Zeese

"We can, and we must, work." Reports that Bradley Manning is being held nude every night at the Quantico Brig, then forced to stand naked in the hallway while he waits for his clothes, shows the inconsistency of the treatment of Manning with basic American values of due process, fair trial and human dignity.

Here is how his lawyer David Coombs describes his treatment: "The Brig has stripped PFC Manning of all of his clothing for the past three nights, and they intend to continue this practice indefinitely. Each night, Brig guards force PFC Manning to relinquish all of his clothing. He then lies in a cold jail cell naked until the following morning, when he is required to endure the humiliation of standing naked at attention for the morning roll call. According to Marine spokesperson, First Lieutenant Brian Villiard, the decision to strip him naked every night is for PFC Manning's own protection.

Villiard stated that it would be "inappropriate" to explain what prompted these actions "because to discuss the details would be a violation of PFC Manning's privacy."

Manning, who has not been convicted of anything, has been held in virtual solitary confinement for ten months. David House who has visited him since September described him as "emotionally exhausted" and "catatonic." The Constitution declares a right to bail, yet Manning who is not a risk of flight is denied bail. Americans are required to be provided due process of law and a trial before a jury of their peers before being punished. There is no provision in the Constitution allowing punishment before trial yet Manning is being punished.

Why is Manning being treated this way? Manning is now being punished for allegedly disclosing the flaws of U.S. foreign policy in order to mend them. Ordered "to round up and hand over Iraqi civilians" to the government the United States put in power, Manning saw they "were then torturing them with electrical drills and other implements." He examined what 15 Iraqi prisoners who were being tortured had done and found they were accused of printing "anti-Iraqi literature." In

fact, the literature was merely a scholarly critique of corruption in the government that asked "Where did the money go?" He brought his concerns to the chain of command and was told to "shut up" and find more detainees. Evidently, Manning realized he "was actively involved in something that I was completely against."

According to the unverified chat logs with the informant Adrian Lamo, Manning said that he hoped the publication of the documents and videos would spur "worldwide discussion, debates, and reform." He went on to say, "I want people to see the truth - regardless of who they are - because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public." He had already learned that the command structure would not listen, so Manning went beyond them to the people who are supposed to control the military in our democratic republic. He wanted Americans to know the truth.

The WikiLeaks documents that Manning allegedly released did help spur dramatic change by providing much-needed information about abusive security-state governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain among others. It is disgraceful that America - which constantly proclaims itself as supporting democracy around the world - is now punishing Manning without trial for allegedly providing information that did so much for democracy and ending security state regimes around the world.

Manning now faces charges that include the potential of capital punishment. He was charged with 22 additional counts for his alleged role in a massive leak of classified information to WikiLeaks, including a charge of "aiding the enemy" that can result in the death penalty. This charge is particularly disturbing as Glenn Greenwald points out: "This prosecution theory would convert acts of whistle-blowing into a hanging offense."

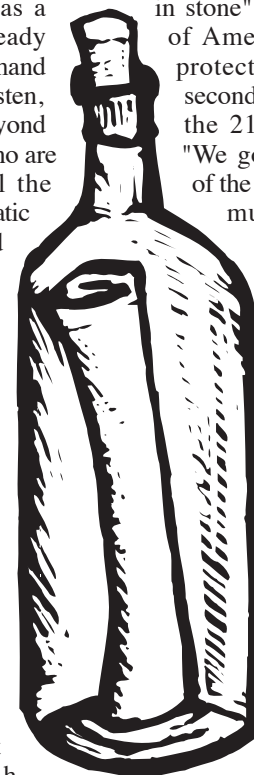
This is particularly ironic since the former constitutional law professor who is now the U.S. president, said in 2008 when he was running for office "Government whistleblowers are part of a healthy democracy and must be protected from reprisal." Further, as Secretary of State Clinton reminded us during a speech on Internet freedom, when President Obama spoke in China, "he spoke about how access to information helps citizens hold their own governments accountable..."

Indeed, Hillary Clinton is lecturing the world on the importance of freedom of speech and press in the Internet age saying these are "values etched in stone" that "every generation of Americans has worked to protect." Last month, in her second speech on freedom in the 21st Century she stated "We govern with the consent of the people, and that consent must be informed to be meaningful." She applauded people around the world who used the Internet to "expose public corruption" and criticized countries that attempt to restrict the free flow of information. She proclaimed "Governments have to choose to live up to their commitments to protect free expression, assembly, and association."

The president and secretary of state should apply the standards they tell the rest of the world to live up to, to the United States and in particular to Bradley Manning. If they did, not only would he be released on bail but the charges against him would be dropped and he would be proclaimed a hero for living up to the greatest ideals of patriotic Americans, generations of whom have worked to create a more perfect union.

Kevin Zeese serves on the steering committee of the Bradley Manning Support Network <<http://www.bradleymanning.org/>>.

Source: my.firedoglake.com release 3/7/11. <http://my.firedoglake.com/kevinzeese/2011/03/07/bradley-manning-is-punished-for-seeking-a-more-perfect-union/>



War costs, one child at a time

Kathy Kelly

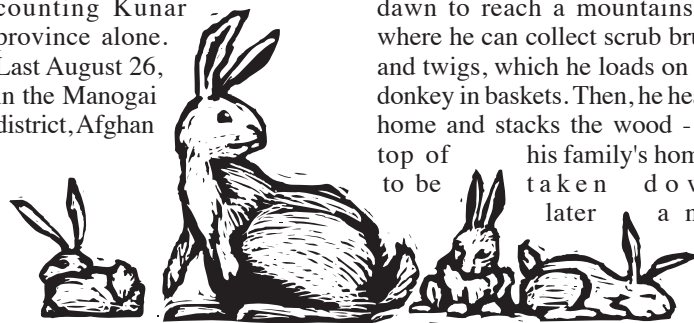
Recent polls suggest that while a majority of US people disapprove of the war in Afghanistan, many on grounds of its horrible economic cost, only 3 percent took the war into account when voting in the 2010 midterm elections. The issue of the economy weighed heavily on voters, but the war and its cost, though clear to them and clearly related to the economy in their thinking, was a far less pressing concern.

US people, if they do read or hear of it, may be shocked at the apparent unconcern of the crews of two US helicopter gunships, which attacked and killed nine children on a mountainside in Afghanistan's Kumar province, shooting them "one after another" this past Tuesday, March 1. ("The helicopters hovered over us, scanned us and we saw a green flash from the helicopters. Then they flew back high up, and in a second round they hovered over us and started shooting." (The New York Times March 2, 2011)).

Four of the boys were seven

years old, three were eight, one was nine and the oldest was twelve. "The children were gathering wood under a tree in the mountains near a village in the district," said Noorullah Noori, a member of the local development council in Manogai district. "I myself was involved in the burial," Noori said. "Yesterday we buried them." (The Associated Press, March 2, 2011) General Petraeus has acknowledged, and apologized for, the tragedy.

He has had many tragedies to apologize for just counting Kunar province alone. Last August 26, in the Manogai district, Afghan



authorities accused international forces of killing six children during an air assault on Taliban positions.

Provincial police chief Khalilullah Ziayee said a group of children were collecting scrap metal on the mountain when NATO aircraft dropped bombs to disperse Taliban fighters attacking a nearby base. "In the bombardment six children, aged six to 12, were killed," the police commander said. "Another child was injured."

In the Bamiyan province of Afghanistan, Zekirullah, a young Afghan friend of mine, age 15, rises at 2 am several mornings each week and rides his donkey for six hours through the pre-dawn to reach a mountainside where he can collect scrub brush and twigs, which he loads on the donkey in baskets. Then, he heads home and stacks the wood - on top of his family's home - to be taken down later and

burned for heat. They don't have electrical appliances to heat the home, and even if they did, the villagers only get electricity for two hours a day, generally between 1 am - 3 am. Families rely on their children to collect fuel for heat during the harsh winters and for cooking year round. Young laborers, wanting to help their families survive, mean no harm to the United States. They're not surging at us anywhere: they're not insurgents. They're not doing anything to threaten us. They are children, and children anywhere are like children everywhere: they're children like our own.

Sadly, more and more of us in America are getting used to the idea of child poverty - and even child labor - as our own economy sinks further under the burden of our latest nine years of war, of two billion dollars per week we spend creating poverty abroad that we can then emulate at home. Things are getting bad here, but in Afghanistan, children are bombed. Their bodies are casually dismembered and strewn by machines already lost in the horizon as the limbs settle. They lie in pools of blood until family members realize, one by one, that their children are not late in returning home, but, in fact, never will.

In October and again in December of 2010, our small delegation of Voices for Creative Nonviolence activists met with a large family living in a wretched refugee camp. They had



PHOTO CREDIT: BARRE STADTNER

Stockton demonstrates for peace, Thursdays, Yokuts & Pacific (p19)

fled their homes in the San Gin district of the Helmand Province after a drone attack killed a mother there and her five children. The woman's husband showed us photos of his children's bloodied corpses. His niece, Juma Gul, age nine, had survived the attack. She and I huddled next to each other inside a hut made of mud on a chilly December morning. Juma Gul's father stooped in front of us and gently unzipped her jacket, showing me that his daughter's arm had been amputated by shrapnel when the US missile hit their home in San Gin.

Next to Juma Gul was her brother, whose leg had been mangled in the attack. He apparently has no access to adequate medical care and experiences constant pain. The pilot of the attacking drone, perhaps controlling it from as far away as Creech Air Force Base here in the United States, knows nothing of this family or of the pain that he or she helped inflict.

Nor do the commanders, the people who set up the base, the people who pay for it with their taxes and the people who persist in electing candidates intent on indefinitely prolonging the war.

But, sometimes, the war is like it was this past Tuesday, March 1. Sometimes, the issue is right in front of us - as it was to those helicopter crews - it's up close so there can be no mistake as to what we are doing. According to the election polls, we see the cost of war, dimly, but, as with the helicopter crews, it doesn't affect - or prevent - our decisions. Afterward, we deplore the tragedy; we make a pretense of acknowledging the cost of war, but it is incalculable. We can't hope to count it. We actually, finally, have to stop making people like the nine children who died on March 1 pay it.

Source: Source: truthout | Report 3/4/11 www.truthout.com

Contact Your Reps



Pres. Barack H. Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington DC 20500. 202-456-1414; www.whitehouse.gov

Sen. Barbara Boxer, 1700 Montgomery St, Ste 240, San Francisco, CA 94111. 415-403-0100; 112 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510. 202-224-3553, senator@boxer.senate.gov

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, One Post Street, Ste 2450, San Francisco, CA 94104. 415-249-0707; 331 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510. 202-224-3841, senator@feinstein.senate.gov

Rep. Jerry McNerney (D-11th District) 2222 Grand Canal Blvd #7, Stockton, CA 95207. 209-476-8552. Fax 209-476-8587. 312 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington DC 20515; info@jerrymcnerney.org, 925-833-0643, http://www.JerryMcNerney.org

Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-District 18) 137 E. Weber Ave, Stockton, CA 95203. 209-946-0361, 503 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-6131.

Rep. Dan Lungren (R-District 3), 2262 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515. 202-225-5716. Local office: 2334 Gold Meadow Way, Ste 220, Gold River, CA 95670. 916-859-9906.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, 2201 C St, NW Washington, DC 20520

Gov. Jerry Brown, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-445-2841

State Sen. Lois Wolk (District 5), 31 E Channel St, Room 440, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7930; State Capitol, Rm 4032, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-651-4005

Assemblyperson Kathleen Galgiani (District 17), 31 E. Channel St., Rm. 306, Stockton CA 95202, 209-948-7479

Thank you Connections distributors!

My husband Deane and I have been Connections' Distribution Coordinators for not quite a year. It has been fun and interesting, with a few minor glitches. We have been so impressed with the dedication of our volunteers, who work tirelessly to make sure they get their copies (all 6,000 !) delivered in the Stockton area and into Lodi, Manteca and

Stanislaus Co.

We can't thank enough Suzy Arnett, Jerry Croskrey, Clarence Edwards, Susan Von Sosten, Jim Walsh, Daniel Fong, Antoinette Celle, John Morearty, Rosemary Atkinson, Julie Vaughn, Stan Thomas, Heather Ryan, Catherine Matthis and Patrick Wall. There is always room for more names on this roster. If you'd like to be part of this great group of people, please call me, 209-339-1599.

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Public pensions 101

Dean Baker

With the recent spate of attacks on climate science and evolution, it should not be a surprise that traditional defined-benefit pensions in the public sector are now also under attack. There are powerful political actors in this country who are anxious to build a bridge back to the 19th century, taking us to a time where working people enjoyed few protections and could not count on sharing in the gains of economic growth.

The effort to weaken or destroy public-sector unions and take away their pensions is the latest battle in this larger war. As usual, the right

has been busy making things up to push its agenda, confident that the media will not expose untrue claims.

At the center of the right's story is the view that governments are somehow being reckless or irresponsible when they provide guaranteed pensions for their workers. They tell us that these guaranteed benefits will bankrupt state and local governments, imposing impossible burdens on future taxpayers.

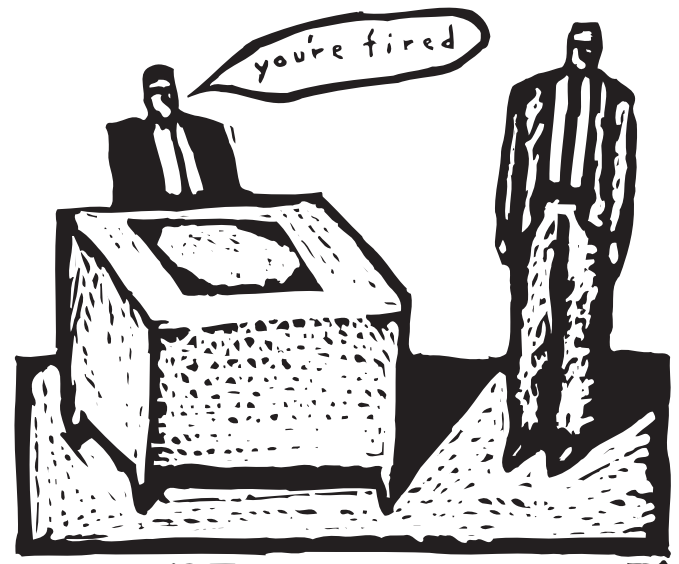
This story can be easily shown to be untrue. While the right has been scaring the public with talk of a trillion dollars in unfunded liability

in state pensions, this sum can also be expressed as about 0.2 percent of state income over the time frame in which the liabilities will have to be paid.

In other words, if states raise 20 cents in taxes or cut 20 cents in other spending for every 100 dollars of future income, they will be able to meet their current pension obligations. This is not a trivial sum, but it doesn't seem likely to bankrupt our youth either.

Furthermore, the vast majority of this shortfall was due to the plunge in the stock market that followed the collapse of the housing bubble. Overly generous pensions were not the problem. The problem here were the greedy Wall Street types who profited from the housing bubble and the incompetent economists who did not see it. Of course, the market has recovered much of its losses, so future years' pension reports are likely to show that most of the shortfall has already been eliminated.

But it is important to understand the basic logic of defined-benefit



pensions, since many are trying to eliminate them altogether. Defined-benefit pensions are in effect a form of insurance. They guarantee workers a level of retirement income based on the years that they work.

This guarantee of future income is more valuable to workers than getting the same amount of money in salary since it would be very expensive for

workers to buy the same insurance from the financial industry. From the standpoint of the government, the insurance is virtually costless.

State and local governments will survive into the indefinite future. If the stock market is down any given year or set of years, there is little

consequence for a government offering a pension fund. Of course, a down market would be devastating for an individual worker if it happens at the point where she retires.

This simple logic means that governments can give workers something that is of great value - a guaranteed retirement income - at very little cost. (Research shows that even after adding in pensions, health care, and other benefits, public-sector workers are paid slightly less than their private-sector counterparts, adjusting for education and experience.) This means that because governments offer defined-benefit pensions they can either attract better workers at the same pay, or the same quality workers at lower pay, than if they did not offer pensions. This is as basic as economics gets.

Not offering pensions would be comparable to a company that had beautiful grounds, with a lake and woods, telling workers that they could not use them. Obviously,

workers would value being able to bring their families to swim at the lake and hike through the woods.

When considering different job opportunities, many workers would be willing to forego somewhat higher pay to work at a company that gave them access to such facilities. If there was little cost to the company to make its grounds available, it would just be shooting itself in the foot by closing them to its workers. This is the story with defined-benefit pensions, although the issue is far more important since it involves the retirement security of workers and their families. Most private-sector workers formerly enjoyed defined-benefit pensions, but these pensions in the private sector are now a fast dying relic. Rather than bring about a downward leveling by eliminating defined-benefit pensions for public employees, it makes more sense to take steps to re-establish defined-benefit pensions for all workers.

Defined-benefit pensions did not create this economic crisis. Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, and the other giant banks did. It says a lot about the state of politics that these too-big-to-fail banks seem likely to survive the crisis, while defined-benefit pensions may not.

Dean Baker is a macroeconomist and co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, DC. He previously worked as a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute and an assistant professor at Bucknell University. He is a regular Truthout columnist and a member of Truthout's Board of Advisers.

Source: truthout News Analysis 3/7/11
<http://www.truth-out.org>

Unions now, social security next

April 23

Dave Lindorff

The dramatic and inspiring occupation of the Wisconsin Statehouse in Madison by angry public workers and their supporters over the past few weeks is an exciting preview of what we can expect to see in the halls of Congress before long, as right-wing forces, funded by corporate lobbies and corporate-funded think-tanks push hard for cutbacks in Social Security and Medicare.

The drive to undermine these two critically important social programs is moving into high gear as the 79-million Baby Boomers this year start to reach eligibility, even as their other assets--their homes and their investment portfolios--are still shriveled by the Wall Street heist known as the "fiscal crisis" and Great Recession.

For years, the right has been gravely warning of the supposedly looming "bankruptcy" of Social Security and the even more imminent "bankruptcy" of Medicare, as though these twin disasters for the elderly were an actuarial imperative. In fact, both programs are political creations, whose problems have political causes and political solutions.

Social Security is starting to draw down the huge reserves it had built up, not because of an increase in retirees (the bulge in retirees hasn't hit yet), but because the share of national income that is subject to the Social Security FICA tax has fallen, from 90% back in the 1980s to just 84% now, as the wealthy have appropriated an increasingly large share of the total national income. If more of the income of the rich were slapped with the FICA tax, to bring the total share of income subject to FICA back to 90%, there would be plenty of money to pay promised benefits into the foreseeable future. The same can be said of Medicare. More taxes on the rich would ensure the funding of that program too.

There is no inherent reason why only the first \$106,000 of a person's income should be subject to the FICA tax. It could be the first \$200,000, or the first \$500,000, and if it were the latter, we could be talking about improving benefits for retirees, or lowering the retirement age, not just preserving current levels. Benefits could be better still if investment income were no longer exempted from a FICA tax



(and the Medicare tax).

But here's the big point: Corporate America, and its political lackeys in the Republican and Democratic Parties, know that they are about to confront a dramatically more powerful protagonist in their campaign to kill Social Security and Medicare: the Boomer Retirees.

The so-called Senior Lobby is already enormously powerful. That's why Social Security has so far largely defied concerted efforts by Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush to undermine it, and it's why Republicans and conservative Democrats running for national office always hasten to claim they are not going to threaten Social Security or Medicare, or at least that they won't threaten "current beneficiaries." It's why they call Social Security the "third rail" of American politics: touch it and you die (for those of you unfortunate enough to live where there are no subways, the third rail is the "hot" rail that carries the electricity to power the electric trains).

But a Boomer retiree population will be two times the size of the current retiree population. That means that just in terms of the number of potential voters, it will be two times as powerful. But that's only part of the story. The new generation of retirees are the people who came of political age in the late 1950s during the Civil Rights movement, and the 1960s and -70s during the anti-war movement and the feminist movement. We are veterans of both engaged electoral politics (witness that support our generation gave to the insurgent campaigns of Eugene McCarthy, Robert Kennedy and George McGovern, as well as a host of more successful Congressional campaigns), and of powerful and of successful militant street politics.

What we showed back then in our youth and our formative young-adult years was that when our interests were on the line, as they were with the draft, or when we saw a gross injustice, as was the case with Jim Crow, we knew how to fight politically. I'm not

suggesting that the people born in the decade and a half after World War II are particularly radical, but I am suggesting that when this age cohort gets riled and the right issue or issues sets the spark, we've got the spirit and experience to take that struggle to the streets and the halls of Congress. And both our personal interests and our sense of justice are certainly on the line when it comes to the growing attack on Social Security and Medicare.

My prediction: As the number of Boomers nearing or entering retirement soars, and the number anticipating or signing up for Medicare soars over the next few years, we will see massive national campaigns grow around not just saving these programs but expanding and improving them. With traditional pensions vanishing, and with IRAs and 401(k) plans having been exposed as the shams they are, we are going to see an irresistible demand grow for Social Security benefits to be raised, particularly for poorer retirees, so that all Americans can have a secure old age. And we will see another irresistible political drive to have Medicare not just improved but broadened to cover all Americans, as we Boomers recognize that it makes no sense at all to have a program that only covers the oldest and sickest of Americans, and not the younger and healthier population (our own kids and grandkids!). We will realize that it is in our interest to have all Americans invested fully in supporting a well-funded national Medicare program.

And if we don't get it, we will be ready and willing to do what the public employees of Wisconsin are doing now--or more. Hold on to your seats (and your walkers)! The new Boomer retirees are coming!

Source: *This Can't Be Happening* 3/3/11 <http://www.thiscantbehappening.net/node/493>

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ACTION:

Buy a shirt by March 28; prices \$7 - 12 plus tax. Fill out form, with payment, at the MMID office, 231 Bedford Rd., on the Miracle Mile. 209-948-6453 Stocktonmiraclemile.com

Congress attacks women's rights

After a long and frustrating national debate last year over coverage for women's reproductive health in the health care reform law, a compromise was struck - one that set an additional onerous burden on women, but did not outright eliminate woman's ability to access often critical health services. Now, almost a year after the debate finally ended, members of Congress want to reopen the discussion and go even further toward chipping away at women's health care options.

Sponsored by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), H.R. 3 would punish private employers who provide health care for their workers if their plans cover abortion services. The bill would also prohibit women from using pre-tax flexible spending accounts for reproductive health care.

But that's not all. The bill takes an even more dangerous approach to attacking women's health. For decades, women who require abortion services have been denied federal assistance in paying for these services under the Hyde Amendment. However, there has always been some narrow, common ground: exceptions were made for women who could die from carrying a fetus to term, or who had been the victims of incest or rape.

Smith's bill would change that. H.R. 3 narrows the exception to cover only those women who had been "forcibly" raped and only / minors/ who have been the victim of incest.

This is unacceptable. Rape is, by definition, a forcible and violating act, as is incest -- no matter the way in which it is done or at what age. For Smith to propose such changes reflects a truly horrifying belief that women and girls who are raped with the use of drugs and alcohol or who are statutorily raped (and not through physical violence) "weren't really raped."

Faced with a wave of national outrage and disgust, Smith's office has said the bill would be corrected to eliminate these changes, but as of yet, H.R. 3 still includes this disturbing language about so-called "forcible" rape. And still, the bill carries over 150 co-sponsors.

ACTION:

Urge your Senator to vote NO on H.R. 3, the bill that would further strip away women's access to necessary health care!

Source: *AAUW Action Network alert* 3/1/11. *AAUW, 1111 Sixteenth St. NW, Washington, DC 20036* <http://www.aauw.org>

Where we are, how we got here

James K. Galbraith

Thanks for the opportunity to make these closing remarks. I want to use my time this afternoon to raise a hard question - a question on which the people in this room today, I believe, are divided and I'm sure the people who are watching and listening via the webcast and podcast are also divided. It is a question which has been raised obliquely in some of today's interactions, but not one which has been discussed in full or thoroughly. It seems to me though we will get nowhere unless we recognize where we are, what has actually happened, and what the future most likely holds.

Recovery begins with realism and there is nothing to be gained by kidding ourselves. On the topics that I know most about, the administration is beyond being a disappointment. It's beyond inept, unprepared, weak, and ineffective. Four and again two years ago, the people demanded change. As a candidate, the President promised change. In foreign policy and the core economic policies, he delivered continuity instead. That was true on Afghanistan and it was and is true in economic policy, and especially with respect to the banks. What we got was George W. Bush's policies without Bush's toughness, without his in-your-face refusal to compromise prematurely, without what he himself called his understanding that you do not negotiate with yourself.

It's a measure of where we are, I think, that at a meeting of Americans for Democratic Action, you find me comparing President Obama unfavorably to President Bush.

In economic policy it was said earlier today that we had a lack of narrative. This afternoon Gregory King asked why the people didn't know that the Republican Party has uniformly and massively opposed job programs, state and local assistance, and every legislative measure that might aid and promote economic recovery from the worst crisis and recession of modern times. Why is that they didn't know? Could it have anything to do with the fact that the White House didn't tell them? And why was that?

Looking back

The president deprived himself of any chance to develop a

narrative from the beginning by surrounding himself with holdover appointments from the Bush and even the Clinton administrations: Secretary Geithner, Chairman Bernanke, and, since we're here at Harvard I'll call him by his highest title, President Summers. These men have no commitment to the base, no commitment to the Democratic Party as a whole, no particular commitment to Barack Obama, and none to the broad objective of national economic recovery that can be detected from their actions.

With this team the President also chose to cover up economic crime. Not only has the greatest wave of financial fraud in human history gone largely uninvestigated and unpunished, the government and this administration with its stress tests (which were fakes), with its relaxation of accounting standards which permitted banks to hold toxic assets on their books at far higher prices than any investor would ever pay for them, with its failure to make criminal referrals where these were clearly warranted, with its continuation in office-sometimes in acting capacities-of some of the leading non-regulators of the earlier period, has continued an ongoing active complicity in financial fraud. And the perpetrators, of course, prospered as never before: reporting profits that they would not have been able to report under honest accounting standards, converting tax payer support into bonuses; while at the same time cutting back savagely on loans to businesses and individuals, and ramping up foreclosures, much of that accomplished with forged documents and perjured affidavits.

Could the President and his administration have done something? Yes, they could have. Where was the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation? Why did they choose not to implement the law, the Prompt Corrective Action law, which requires the federal government to take into receivership financial institutions when there is a significant risk of large taxpayer losses to the insurance fund? Where were the FBI and the Department of Justice? Did he do anything? No. Is he doing anything now? No. Why not? The most likely answer is that he did not want to. My understanding in fact is that there was one meeting where this issue was raised, and the President

stated that his economic team had assured him they had the situation under control.

On the larger economic policy front, the White House gave away the game from the beginning. How? First by guessing at the scale of the disaster.

When leading economic advisers (I believe it was, in fact, President Summers) announced that the unemployment rate would peak at 8%, but he gave away the right to assign responsibility to the previous administration when things got worse. This was either elementary bad politics or deliberate self-sabotage. But, it gets worse. The optimistic forecast helped to justify a weak program. A useful sop really. I mean, useful things were done, but not nearly enough to convey the impression of a forceful policy to the broader public. Then once the banks were taken care of and the stock market took off again it seems clear that the team at the White House didn't care anymore.

Again, could they have done differently? Of course. The President could have told the truth, which is that we faced a historic melt down, a collapse of the core financial institutions of our economy, and that we had really no way of knowing how bad economic conditions might get or how long this would endure and that therefore the situation would require a full mobilization: all resources, all hands on deck, major departures of policy, no holding back, and the responsibility for trouble and failure falling plainly on those who would obstruct the course. None of the people he chose to advise him on economic policy was remotely capable of thinking in those terms.

We've learned this morning from Vic Fingerhut and Mike Lux that the administration went down in public esteem when people realized it was working for the banks and not for them. Why did they think this? Why do they go (and here is a quote) from "blaming Bush and Wall Street to blaming Obama and Wall Street"? Because plainly they could see what was in front of their faces. Except for one thing, President Bush never really pretended to be a President for ordinary folks; President Obama did. Bush was who he was; Obama held out, fostered, and promoted vast hopes, mobilizing the American population behind his leadership

on that basis. And he disappointed those hopes-to use a very harsh word, one could say he has betrayed those hopes. How can one therefore blame the voters for acting as they have acted?

Moving forward

What happens next? Let's again not kid ourselves, we have lost a great many seats in the House of Representatives and the House of Representatives isn't coming back into a Democratic majority in the near future. Simply because of the balance of exposures - the larger numbers of Democratic Senators exposed to reelection in the next cycle, the greatest likelihood is that the Senate will also go Republican in two years time. President Obama has set his course. He has surrounded himself with the advisers of his choice and as he moves to replace President Summers we hear in the press, we read, that the priority is, and this is an approximate quote, to "repair the rift with his investors on Wall Street." What does that tell you? It tells me that he does not have President Clinton's fighting and survival instincts. I've not heard one good reason all day to believe that we are going to see from this White House the fight that we want, that he could win if he made in two years, or any reason why we should be backing him now.

The Democratic Party has become too associated with Wall Street. This is a fact. It is a structural problem. It seems to me that we as progressives need to draw the line, we would be better off to have an under-funded, fighting progressive minority party than a party marked by obvious duplicity and constant losses on every policy front as a result of the reversals in our own leadership.

What is at stake in the long-run? Two things, mainly, in my view. First, it seems to me that we as progressives need to make an honorable defense of the great legacies of the New Deal and Great Society-programs and institutions that brought America out of the Great Depression and brought us through the Second World War, brought us to our period of greatest prosperity, and the greatest advances in social justice. Social Security, Medicare, housing finance-the front-line right now is the foreclosure crisis, the crisis, I should say, of foreclosure fraud-the progressive

tax code, anti-poverty policy, public investment, public safety, and human and civil rights. And the environment. We are going to lose these battles-let's get used to it. But we need to make an honorable fight, to state clearly what our principles are and to lay down a record that is trustworthy for the future.

Beyond this, bold proposals are what we should be advancing now; even when they lose, they have their value. We can talk about job programs; we can talk about an infrastructure bank; we can talk about Juliet Schor's idea of a four-day work week; we can talk about my idea of expanding Social Security and creating an early retirement option so that people who are older and unemployed or anxious to get out of the labor force can leave on comfortable terms, and so create job openings for younger people who, as we've heard today, are facing very long periods of extremely aggravating and frustrating unemployment; we can talk about establishing a systematic program of general revenue sharing to support state and local governments, we can talk about the financial restructuring we so desperately need and that we'll have to have if we are going to have a country which has a viable private credit system and in which large financial power is not constantly dictating the terms of every political debate.

We are not going to get these things, but we should begin to have a clearly defined program so that people know what they are. And then frankly, as was also said earlier today, I think most eloquently by Jeff Madrick, in the long run we need to recognize that the fate of the entire country is at stake. Running a large country isn't easy work and it can't be done indefinitely by incompetents, hacks, and lobbyists. Large countries can and do fail, they have done so in our own time. And the consequences are very grave: drastic declines in services, in living standards, in life expectancies, huge increases in social tension, in repression, and in violence. These are the consequences of following through with crackpot ideas such as those embodied in the Bowles-Simpson deficit reduction commission, as Jeff Madrick again outlined, the notion that we should put arbitrary limits on the scale of government,

(continued on next page)

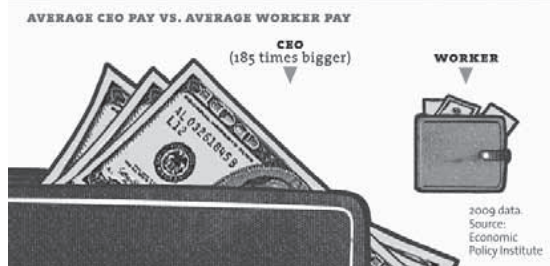
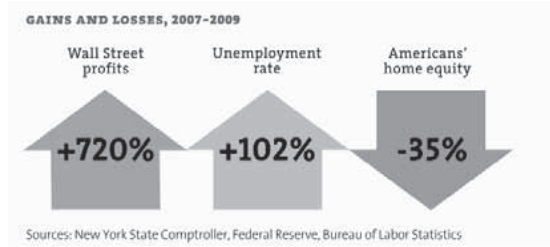
Military: \$1.2 trillion; rest of us: crumbs

Laura Flanders

There's been a joke going around the labor protests. It goes something like this: A union member, a CEO and a Tea Party member are sitting at a table with 12 cookies. The CEO grabs 11, turns to the Tea Partier and says "The Union's out to take your cookie!"

I've been thinking that the joke applies pretty well to another situation. For instance, the military. Our military spending grabs 11 cookies and leaves us all battling over the 12th. Christopher Hellman at TomDispatch added up all the military-related spending in the budget and came to a startling number: for fiscal year 2012, the actual military budget is something like \$1.2 trillion dollars. Trillion with a T. Just to put that in perspective for a second, a million seconds is 12 days. A trillion seconds is 31,688 years.

So after all that cash is gone, what are we left with? Not a whole heck of a lot for the rest of us. "Discretionary" spending is nearly 40% of the budget,



but if Hellman's numbers are accurate, that \$1.2 trillion eats up nearly 90% of discretionary funds, leaving just 10% for the rest of us. (That doesn't include mandatory spending on things like Social Security and Medicare, which are separate.)

To be fair, Tea Partiers have called for military spending cuts, too. Rand Paul, hardly a progressive, pointed out that you could cut all of the non-military

Where We Are

(continued from last page)

or arbitrary limits on the top tax rate affecting the wealthiest Americans.

This isn't a parlor game. The outcome isn't destined to be all right. It will not necessarily end in progress whatever happens. What we do, how we proceed, and how we effectively resist what is plainly about to happen, matters very greatly for the future of our country, of our children, and of every generation to come. We need to lose our fear, our hesitation, and our unwillingness to face the facts. If we thereby lose

some of our hopes, let's remember the dictum of William of Orange that "it is not necessary to hope in order to persevere."

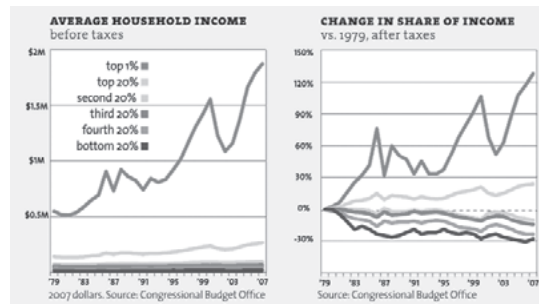
The President should know that, as Lincoln said to the Congress in the dark winter of 1862, he "cannot escape history." And we are heading now into a very dark time, so let's face it with eyes open. And if we must, let's seek leadership that shares our values, fights for our principles, and deserves our trust.

Above are James Galbraith's closing remarks as delivered on the 2010 election results to

the ADA Education Fund on November 20, 2010.

Dean Baker is a macroeconomist and co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research <<http://www.cepr.net/>> in Washington, DC. He previously worked as a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute and an assistant professor at Bucknell University. He is a regular Truthout columnist and a member of Truthout's Board of Advisers.

Source: *truthout* News Analysis 1/31/11 www.truthout.org

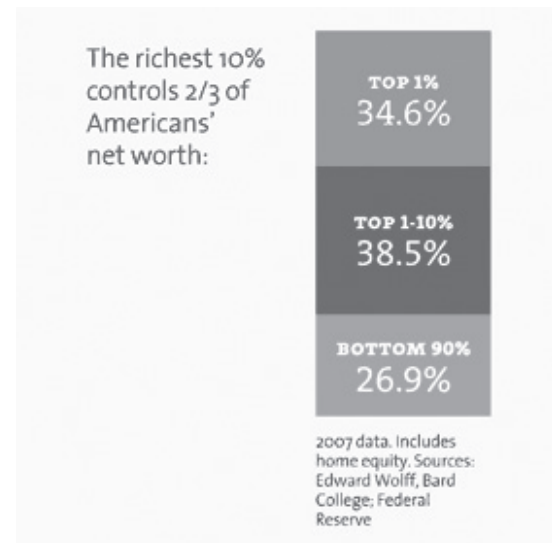


discretionary spending and not balance the budget—and Politifact rated it True.

The point behind the joke still holds, though. Instead of fighting over the last crumbs, maybe it's time to team up and grab some of the cookies back from the people who've been hanging on to far more than their share.

Laura Flanders is the host of GRITtv, Mon-Thursday on Free Speech TV (Dish Network chn. 9315) and streaming at GRITtv.org.

Source: AlterNet 3/6/11



MSM = truth? Check out the alternatives & decide for yourself

If you tap in to some of the alternative media, you will get a very different perspective on events. Especially now, when the mainstream media often acts as a cheerleader for whatever the administration does, it's necessary to go a little further to get your news. An internet connection is helpful.

- Firedoglake <http://firedoglake.com>
- Emptywheel <http://emptywheel.firedoglake.com/>
- Calitics <http://www.calitics.com/>
- Eschaton <http://www.eschatonblog.com/>
- Huffington Post <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>
- Hullabaloo <http://digbysblog.blogspot.com>
- Daily Kos <http://www.dailykos.com>
- Talking Points Memo <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com>
- TPM Muckraker <http://www.tpmuckraker.com/>
- FiveThirtyEight.com <http://www.fivethirtyeight.com/>
- Congress Matters <http://www.congressmatters.com>
- Think Progress <http://thinkprogress.com>
- Down With Tyranny <http://downwithtyranny.blogspot.com/>
- Crooks and Liars <http://www.crooksandliars.com>
- Media Matters <http://mediamatters.org/>
- Common Dreams: <http://www.commondreams.org/>
- Truth Out: <http://www.truthout.org/>
- Raw Story <http://www.rawstory.com>
- Open Left <http://www.openleft.com/>
- AlterNet <http://www.alternet.org/>
- Independent Media Center <http://www.indymedia.org>
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- Mother Jones <http://www.motherjones.com/>
- In These Times <http://inthesetimes.com/>
- The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/>
- Corporate Watch <http://www.corpwatch.org/home/PHH.jsp>
- KPFA (94.1 FM) provides excellent coverage on many issues. You can listen on the internet at <http://www.kpfa.org>
- Democracy Now! on KPFA, 94.1 FM and KVMR, 89.5 FM or on the web at: <http://www.democracynow.org>

We're on the web too!

The Peace & Justice Network of San Joaquin County (pjnsjc) website has information, calendar, media links, and more. Under construction and growing. Share your ideas on how the website should evolve. <http://www.pjnsjc.org>

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1st California "Native Plant Week"



PHOTO CREDIT: JOSHUA STARK

California State Assemblywoman Noreen Evans (D-Napa, right), who introduced the state resolution creating Native Plant Week, and CNPS Executive Director Tara Hansen.

Mike Ross

As California native plant enthusiasts, we're used to celebrating year-round the beauty, diversity, and unique benefits of our native flora. Come the third week of April, however, we're going to ask all Californians to join us...with the encouragement of the California State Assembly and Senate, no less.

Beginning in 2011, the third week of April will be known officially as "California Native Plant Week," according to an Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR 173) passed last August. The first California Native Plant Week (CNPW) will be officially celebrated April 17-23, 2011, although events are expected to encompass both weekends (April 16-24). The CNPS-sponsored resolution attracted bipartisan support from 48 additional Democratic and Republican cosponsors, as well as the approval of horticulturists, conservation organizations, and nurseries from throughout California.

ACR 173 recognizes the vital historical, artistic, and economic contributions that California's native plants have made to our state, and points out that California native plant gardening and landscaping have tremendous positive impacts on our watersheds, on habitat recovery, and on curbing catastrophic wildfires. It recognizes, further, that home landscaping and gardening with native plants can reduce residential water use from 60 to 90% over conventional gardening.

In particular, ACR 173 "encourages community groups, schools, and citizens to undertake appropriate activities to promote native plant conservation and restoration, and to inform their neighbors and communities of the value of native plants in nature and in horticultural settings" during California Native Plant Week.

CNPS will be reaching out far and wide to promote California Native Plant Week. The Chapter Council has created a committee

to plan and organize events and publicity for the week, and encourages all members to contribute their time and effort to make the first year's celebration a resounding success.

Initial plans are being drawn up, and it's hoped that many annual Chapter-sponsored events—such as plant sales and wildflower shows that have historically taken place during April—can be held during CNPW. Public field trips, lectures and school activities will also be encouraged.

The celebration will by no means be limited to CNPS. We will be collaborating with many environmental groups, botanic gardens, water districts, parks, schools, and other organizations to hold activities related to native plants during CNPW. Nurseries and other retailers will be encouraged to hold CNPW sales, and promotional materials touting the wisdom of protecting and gardening with native plants will be produced. Advance publicity will be sought for CNPW itself as well as same-day local media coverage of significant, popular, and attractive events associated with CNPW.

The Society has also created an online calendar that the public can use to find CNPW events in their neighborhoods.

ACTION:

Encourage your local Earth Day celebration to include native plants as a focus. And do some native plant gardening on your own.

Mike Ross is a science writer in San Jose. He has been a member of CNPS since he moved to California during the 1976 drought.



PHOTO CREDIT: JOSHUA STARK

A splendid wildflower display at Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, San Mateo County.

Broun plans climate change, EPA hearings

Blake Aued

U.S. Rep. Paul Broun plans to use his new position as a House subcommittee chairman to investigate climate change and the Environmental Protection Agency, he said mid February. Broun, who became chairman of the Science, Space and Technology Committee's subcommittee on investigation and oversight when Republicans took control of the House last month, said he plans to use hearings to show that manmade climate change is not settled science.

"We're going to get all voices heard about the science of climate," Broun said. "Right now the (Obama) administration turns a blind ear and eye to opposing views." Broun said in 2009 that "the idea of human-induced global climate change is one of the greatest hoaxes perpetrated out of the scientific community." He accused Democrats and



scientists who support the theory of politicizing and suppressing data, but recently said he is keeping an open mind.

"What I see from this administration is utilizing global warming to try to promote a political agenda," Broun said. "I'm a scientist. I'm a physician. I believe we need to look at it on a scientific basis. I don't know for certain, but we need to get the science out to the

public so that all voices can be heard." Broun said he will also hold hearings on an EPA proposal to regulate carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. He said he opposes the regulations, but many environmental and health groups say the gas contributes to rising temperatures and deaths from heat-related and respiratory illness.

Source: Athens Banner-Herald, 2/23/11
<http://onlineathens.com/stories/022311>

New EPA report debunks attacks on Clean Air Act

A scientific report released Tuesday by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency once again establishes the immense public health and economic benefits of the Clean Air Act. The report, titled "The Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act from 1990 to 2020," found that Clean Air Act programs to reduce fine particle and ozone pollution prevented more than 160,000 deaths, 130,000 heart attacks and 1.7 million asthma attacks in 2010 alone; the economic benefits of those programs will reach approximately \$2 trillion by 2020.

"The evidence is in once again - the Clean Air Act saves lives and saves money," said Kassie Siegel, director of the Center for Biological Diversity's Climate Law Institute. "You can add the EPA's latest report to the stack of studies debunking polluters' flimsy arguments that cleaning up our air is bad for the economy. It's more clear than ever that voting to gut the Clean Air Act is voting not only to hurt our health and our environment, but our economy too."

Last week, the Center

released a report detailing why the Clean Air Act needs to be harnessed to its fullest extent to address climate change. The report, titled "The Clean Air Act Works," highlights the Clean Air Act's 40-year track record of achieving comprehensive and cost-effective reductions in air pollution and details additional action the EPA must take to achieve necessary greenhouse gas pollution reductions.

The Act is under intense assault in Congress, which recently voted to strip funding from EPA programs aimed at reducing carbon pollution. The Act's opponents have relied on unsupported arguments that reducing greenhouse gases hurts the economy - arguments that have been repeatedly disproven, including by the detailed new report from the EPA.

"The Clean Air Act is the single-most important pollution law in this nation. We must use it urgently and ambitiously to cut carbon pollution, save lives and protect the air we breathe," said Siegel. For the EPA's report, go to: <http://www.epa.gov/air/sect812/prospective2.html>. For the Center's report, go to: http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/climate_law_institute/global_warming_litigation/clean_air_act/pdfs/CleanAirActReportFeb2011.pdf

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 320,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Ask a Scientist:

How much CO₂ is in the atmosphere and can that level have dramatic effects?

J. Cooper of Austin, TX, asks "I've seen efforts to discount the impact of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions on global warming, which focus on the minute percentage of CO₂ in the atmosphere and state that this small percentage cannot significantly factor into warming. How much CO₂ is in the atmosphere and can such a small component have dramatic effects?" and is answered by Climate Scientist Todd Sanford, Ph.D.

This is an interesting question because it highlights how a bit of truth - in this case, that the percentage of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere is small - can be distorted to seem to support something inaccurate. The truth is that the CO₂ currently in our atmosphere is already having dramatic effects on Earth's climate.

The amount of our planet's atmosphere that is made up of CO₂ is small compared to other gases such as nitrogen and oxygen, so scientists like me don't track it in terms of percentages. Instead, we use a measurement called "ppm" or "parts per million." Current CO₂ levels are around 391 ppm. This means that for every million molecules in the atmosphere, 391 of them are CO₂. (If you wanted to convert that to percentages, it would be 0.0391 percent.)

So yes, that is a small percentage. But that's looking at CO₂ in relation to the atmosphere as a whole, which is massive. That 391 ppm is equal to around 3 trillion tons of CO₂ in the air. And that "small" component can still have a big impact.

One way to measure the factors that influence Earth's climate, or "climate drivers," is by measuring each driver's "radiative forcing" (RF). Basically, RF measures the balance between incoming solar radiation and outgoing heat radiation from Earth. In a stable climate these are balanced. When the drivers change, this balance is disturbed and the climate responds by either warming or cooling. In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) summarized all climate drivers - such as CO₂ and other heat-trapping gases - and their RF values.

CO₂

with an RF value of +1.7 W/m² (watts per square meter) was found to be the driver having the greatest impact on the climate. The positive value indicates that CO₂ is trapping heat in the atmosphere and leading to an overall warming. Other heat-trapping gases are much more potent than CO₂, but the amount of CO₂ we've added far outweighs the others leading to a larger RF value and a bigger effect on climate.

And we're definitely adding CO₂ to the atmosphere at a rapid pace. Antarctic ice core records vividly illustrate that atmospheric CO₂ levels today are higher than levels recorded over the past 800,000 years. These levels have risen by nearly 40 percent since the Industrial Revolution, with half of that rise occurring only in the last three decades.

In addition, CO₂ remains in the atmosphere longer than the other major heat-trapping gases emitted as a result of human activities. Research has shown that even if we cut all of our emissions today, 1,000 years from now around 40 percent of the CO₂ we've added will still be in the atmosphere - leading to warming from CO₂ that will be with us for a very, very long time. This literally means that the heat-trapping emissions we release today from our cars and power plants are setting the climate our children and grandchildren and many generations after them will inherit. CO₂'s long life in the atmosphere, and the nearly irreversible effect on climate it brings, provides the clearest possible rationale for reducing our CO₂ emissions without delay.

Todd Sanford is a climate scientist in the Climate & Energy Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists. Prior to joining UCS, he worked at NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory. While there he carried out atmospheric measurements on aerosols and worked on climate system modeling with a special interest in the interaction of atmospheric lifetimes of various climate drivers to the timescales of their associated climate effects. He holds a doctorate degree in physical chemistry from University of Colorado at Boulder.



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The T is Not Silent

Existence is Beautiful

Elena Kelly

A few weeks ago my girl friend and I were walking home from a wonderful Symphonic Band concert at UOP. It was a beautiful afternoon in Stockton, and we walked by a yellow wall on which a graffiti artist, with deep blue spray paint, had scrawled these words – Existence is Beautiful. I didn't notice the misspelling at first but my girl friend pointed it out, and we laughed about it all the way home. But as we walked I began to wonder if it might have been done on purpose. Existence, if it were a real word, could mean "the state of exiting" and beautiful could mean "full of beatings." I wondered if the artist might have meant to say "leaving things behind results in getting a beating!"

If my musings were even close to what the tagger had in mind, the message was in direct opposition to what "Existence is Beautiful" would mean. On the one hand it could mean that being a living, breathing human being is an amazing and fabulous thing. On the other hand it could mean that change sucks, or that a beating awaits you when you come out.

As a transwoman, I was terrified that if anyone found out my big secret (that I knew I was a girl) I would be subjected to harassment, ridicule, and violence. After all, that's exactly what I experienced as a child before I wised up to the ways of the world and decided to do all in my power to ensure that no one would ever again think I was "a sissy boy." That's what kept me in the closet for nearly fifty years. I feared that if I "exited" my role as a boy, I would receive a brutal beating, or worse,

in return.

The largest survey ever done of transgender people was released the first week of February this year. It revealed that 41% of the 6,500+ transgender people surveyed said they had attempted suicide at least once. Compare that with 1.4% for the general population of the United States. I can relate to that statistic. I tried twice to end my life, and both times I was found without vital signs. But I received medical intervention that saved my life. At the time I became even more depressed because I wasn't able to die peacefully and end the charade that was my life.

Today I wish I could go back and find those people who fought for my life when I was unable to. I would thank them profusely for being there and caring about this kid who had given up on her life. They are heroes to me. They didn't see me as human garbage, but rather as a human being with the potential to make a positive contribution to humanity. I owe them a huge debt of gratitude which today compels me to be active in politics, to be truthful about who I am regardless of the consequences, and to help everyone I possibly can to find their path to a happy and meaningful life.

The path from "existence is beautiful" to "existence is beautiful" is rarely easy. Fear of the unknown is the major obstacle. The calls and emails I receive from clients of the Stockton Transgender Alliance are uniformly from transgender people who are terrified of the implications of being a transgender person. It is that fear

that takes many from the closet of being afraid to come out, to the closet of having transitioned and moving away to live where no one knows they ever transitioned. That closet is often called "stealth" in the transgender community.

My experience of transitioning from man to woman very publicly here in Stockton was nothing like I had feared. No one in this city has ever threatened, ridiculed, or harmed me in any way since transitioning in 2008. Instead there has been a huge outpouring of compassion, love, and compliments on my courage. The number of my friends has grown exponentially as the weeks and months have passed. Existence is truly beautiful for me.

I'm not one who typically appreciates graffiti, but I am grateful I saw that sign the other day (which has since had the spelling corrected) because I see my calling a little clearer now. It's the fear of change that keeps us all from accepting new opportunities that come our way, and nowhere is that more poignant than in the transgender community. I cannot go into the stealth closet. Those who saved me back then, and those who love and support me now are what make my existence so very beautiful!

Rev. Elena Kelly is a political activist and minister in the Central Valley, and the Director of the Stockton Transgender Alliance. She can be reached at elena.kelly@comcast.net.

Arts commission mini-grants

A second round of mini-grants, grants for arts projects costing \$1,000 or less, has been announced by the Stockton Arts Commission. The deadline for Round 2, which has a total of \$5,000 available for grants to Stockton area artists and arts groups, is Friday, April 1 at 5 pm.

"We had more artists apply for the first round after our deadline," said Grants Committee Chair Kathy Hart. "We want to open up a second round of these easy-to

apply-for small grants." Details for the mini-grants are available on the Commission's website, www.stocktongov.com/arts. These grants are not part of the Commission's regular grants cycle and therefore are considered outside those specific rules and regulations. Grant applications must be received by the April 1 deadline at 605 N. El Dorado St., Stockton 95202.

The first round of grants was given in \$1,000 increments to

David Schmidt of the San Joaquin International Film Society; Theresa Velasquez, a ballroom dance instructor, who plans an event downtown this summer; fabric artist Peig Fairbrook, who is making a wall hanging for the Women's Center of San Joaquin County; Danny Ah Tye of Tidewater Art Center and Gallery, which will use the money for a special show; and Kristin Rinaker of Jagged Lines of Imagination.

Meet the New Start, same as the old finish

John LaForge

Last May, the Obama administration promised \$80 billion to the nuclear weapons establishment for "modernizing" the arsenal. Three large H-bomb laboratories will share about \$10 billion annually to "upgrade" US warheads and they will get equal sums for the next ten years.

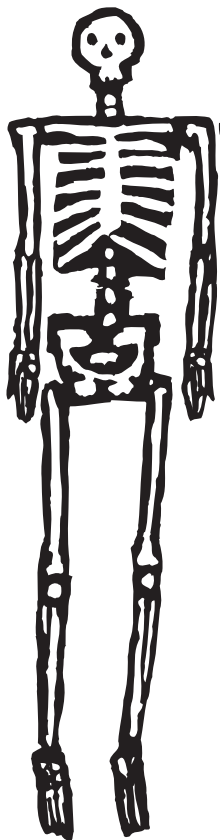
The funds are for a new \$4.5 billion "Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement" complex at Los Alamos, New Mexico; a new \$3.5 billion "Uranium Processing Facility" at the Y-12 lab in Tennessee; and a couple billion more for a replacement "Kansas City Plant" in Missouri that will make nonnuclear parts for the warheads. With the buildup, the US will be able to quadruple its current warhead production capacity from 20 to 80 per year, according to Nuclear Watch New Mexico.

This squandering of public money is part of the backstory to the New Start Treaty, lauded as a warhead reduction agreement with Russia. The new treaty obligates each side to reduce the number of its city-busting or "strategic" nuclear warheads from 2,200 to 1,550. The Senate extorted the "modernization" funding from Obama in exchange for ratification of the treaty.

New Start does pledge the elimination of 30 land-based missiles, 34 heavy bombers and 56 submarine-based missile tubes. On the Navy's 14 giant Trident submarines (each is two football fields long), there will be 20 inter-continental ballistic missiles - down from 24 - but each missile can still carry eight warheads. This amounts to 2,240 weapons, well over the New Start Treaty's supposed limit.

Warheads in fine print

The numbers fakery is possible because of the new treaty's counting system, which nullifies a lot of the supposed reductions. According to The Wall Street Journal's Jonathan Weisman, "Quirks in the treaty's counting rules mean that under one scenario, the US could meet new obligations by mothballing just 100 warheads." Russia need



remove only 190.

The treaty will count the actual number of warheads on land-based rockets (Minuteman III missiles) and on sea-based missiles, but "it will count each heavy bomber as a single warhead, even though they can carry far more," according to The New York Times. The bizarre sleight-of-hand means that the new treaty counts 1,650 warheads, when there are actually 2,100.

According to Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists, "A US air base with 22 nuclear tasked B-52 bombers will only count as 22

weapons even though there may be hundreds of weapons on the base." The counting rule will "hide" about 450 US and 860 Russian warheads, or 1,310 altogether. The fraud means that the US and Russia can deploy more city busters under the new treaty than would have been allowed by the 2002 Moscow Treaty.

As if increased H-bomb production and hidden warheads weren't cynical enough, the US has about 3,000 nuclear weapons in storage, Russia about 1,000, and they can be brought to the firing line any time.

Source: *truthout News Analysis 3/3/11*
<http://www.truthout.org>

Keeping the earth in mind

Recycle - 7 practices

- * Reuse those plastic bags! Take them to grocery store recycle bins when done.
- * Reuse junk mail as scratch paper or bedding for pets.
- * Reuse ice cream containers to store frozen foods, as a container for toys or crayons.
- * Choose products that come in recyclable containers
- * Books: Remove hard covers and recycle just the pages. Paperbacks can be tossed in with other paper.
- * Cut off the metal ends of cans containing powdered cleansers, such as Comet, and put them in with other household metals. Recycle the tubes as you would any other cardboard.
- * Donate your magazines to hospitals, doctor/dentist office or other waiting room.

Save energy - 7 hints

- * Switch to cold when doing your laundry. 85 - 90% of the energy used to wash your clothes is used to heat the water. By turning the dial to cold on your washing machine, you help the environment, save energy, and save money
- * On sunny days, open south facing drapes and let the sun in, a natural source of heat. If you have large windows that don't receive direct sun, keep the drapes closed.
- * Install low-flow showerheads and faucets.
- * Always wash a full load in your dishwasher and air-dry your dishes on the "energy saver" setting.
- * Turn off the lights when you leave the room
- * Unplug appliances where possible to avoid "phantom" energy use.
- * Use compact fluorescent lamps. You can lower your lighting bill by converting to energy-efficient low-wattage compact fluorescent lighting and fixtures.

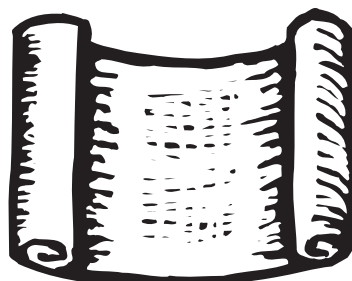
Save water - 8 changes

- * Use a low flow shower head
- * Turn off water while soaping hands or brushing teeth
- * Use a broom, not a hose to clean driveway/walkway
- * Take a five minute shower
- * Never pour water down the drain when it can be used to water plants or for cleaning
- * Avoid flushing toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissue, insects and similar waste in trash.
- * Water lawn early or late in day - avoid full sun & evaporation
- * Check sprinkler system often for leaks or waste

Connections: turning a page

Bruce Giudici

This is the first (of many, we hope) Connections put together graphically by Luis Gonzalez. Coming to us with a great UOP education and work background in graphic design, we are honored to have him join the Connections team at this (as ever) critical time for alternative media. His interests lay in more effectively presenting our educational information through all media available to us - and in this spirit, we will be convening a Connections Redesign team to discuss how



we can reach a broader audience. Stay tuned.

Consequently, that means that Connections newspaper founder Laurie Litman will no longer be our layout person. For 147 papers that I have edited, we have worked side by side, dealing with peace and justice issues since 1996 (Laurie served as editor and layout person from 1986-1992; Marj Fries from 1992 - 1995). Throughout its history, Connections has built a foundation and reputation for consistent, responsible journalism in a world in which obfuscation and mendacity has become part and parcel of our media environment. Without Laurie, there would be no Connections newspaper, period. So, if you have a chance, please consider thanking her at llitman@pacbell.net, through a letter to the editor here, or in other publications.

Moving forward, Laurie will

work on climate change and other environmental issues from her Sacramento home, while helping us in our challenge to make alternative media more useful and actionable. The tasks will change, but the work remains. For myself, I thank Laurie deeply - for her service to this paper and to her community.

March 31

Connections: ideas wanted

Join us to share your ideas and be involved in the making of a new chapter of Connections. Redesign Committee, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

Republicans: full speed in reverse

A bit like the Republican party, they are white, seemingly indestructible and bad for the environment. But after an absence of four years, foam plastic coffee cups have made a comeback in the basement coffee shop of the United States Congress building after Republicans began reversing a series of in-house green initiatives undertaken by Democrats. The about-turn was announced by a press aide to John Boehner, the speaker of the House of Representatives, who tweeted on Monday morning: "The new majority - plasticware is back".

When the Democrats held the house, the former speaker Nancy Pelosi put the cafeterias at the centre of a plan to hugely reduce the carbon footprint of Congress. The ancient power plant in Washington DC a few blocks from the Capitol building, which provides heating and cooling for Congress and the supreme court, was converted from coal to natural gas. Compact fluorescent lighting and energy-efficient vending

machines were introduced. In the cafeterias, polystyrene packaging was replaced with trays and utensils made of biodegradable corn starch. Four separate stations were installed for recycling and sorting. A healthier menu was also introduced in 2008, offering cage-free eggs and antibiotic-free beef. Items deemed compostable waste, such as coffee cups, were sent to a pulper in a lower basement, which squeezed out all the liquid before dispatching the material by truck to a commercial composting site in the suburbs of Washington DC. There, the waste was mixed with soil, which eventually returned to Capitol Hill to be used as fertiliser on the grounds. Hundreds of tonnes of waste was saved from landfills yearly, Democrats said.

But the new green cafeteria was not universally popular - even when Democrats were in charge. Diners complained the cutlery would bend or break on the point of contact with solid food. Once Republicans were back in charge of the house, with their suspicion

of environmental protection, the days of compostable coffee cups were numbered. Dan Lungren, chair of the house administration committee, said the \$475,000 per year programme was too expensive and not even green. "After a thorough review of the house's composting operations, I have concluded that it is neither cost effective nor energy efficient to continue the programme," he said in a statement on his website.

Next on the Republican agenda of environmental retro moves? Lightbulbs. House Republicans introduced a bill last week to repeal the government's decision to phase out the old energy-inefficient bulbs, which was due to start in 2012.

Source: *The Guardian* 2/28/11 <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Wisconsin and beyond

George Lakoff

The Wisconsin protests are about much more than budgets and unions. As I observed in *What Conservatives Really Want*, the conservative story about budget deficits is a ruse to turn the country conservative in every area. Karl Rove and Shep Smith have made it clear on Fox: If the Wisconsin plan to kill the public employees' unions succeeds, then there will be little union money in the future to support democratic candidates. Conservatives will be effectively unopposed in raising campaign funding in most elections, including the presidential elections. This will mean a thoroughly conservative America in every issue area.

The media — and the Democrats — need to do a much better job on a sneaky conservative media strategy. The clearest example occurred in the NY Times. David Brooks, in his Feb. 21, 2011 column wrote: "Private sector unions push against the interests of shareholders and management; public sector unions push against the interests of taxpayers." I turned on CNN that day and heard Anderson Cooper introduce the Wisconsin protest story as a battle between taxpayers and unions. These are massive distortions, but they are what conservatives want the public to believe.

The real issue is whether conservatives will get what they really want: the ability to turn the country conservative on every issue, legally and permanently. Eliminating the public sector unions could achieve that. Collective bargaining rights are the immediate issue, but they are symbolic of the real issue at stake. That is the story the media should be telling — and that Democrats everywhere in America should be shouting out loud.

What is standing in the way of having the real story told? It is the frame of collective bargaining itself, which only points to the parties that are doing the bargaining and what they are bargaining over.

The real point of collective bargaining is the idea of fairness inherent in democracy. Without unions, large corporations have an unfair advantage in hiring individual workers: workers have to take what is offered. Unions help to even the playing field, enabling workers to have a fair chance against wealthy, powerful large organizations — whether

corporations or governments.

But public employees' unions, in bargaining with governments, are raising deeper issues in which wealthy corporations and individuals play a huge role. The public employees' unions are aware that the top one percent of Americans have more financial assets than the bottom 95 percent — a staggering disproportion of wealth. The wealthy have, to a large extent, amassed that wealth through indirect contributions to them by governments — governments build roads corporations use, fund schools that train their workers, subsidize their energy costs, subsidize their access to resources, promote trade for them, and on and on.

Meanwhile, over the past three decades, while corporations and their investors have grown immensely richer on the public largesse, the middle class workers have had no substantive wage increases, leaving them poorer and poorer. Those immensely wealthy corporations and individuals have, through political contributions, managed to rig our politics so that they pay back only an inadequate amount into the system that has enabled them to become wealthy.

The real targets of the public employees' unions are the wealthy free riders who, in a fair political economy, would be giving back more to the nation, and to the states and communities they function in.

That is the obvious half of what the Wisconsin protests are about. The other half concerns the rights of ordinary people in a democracy — rights conservatives want to deny, whether gay rights, women's rights, immigrant rights, retirement rights, or the right to the best health a nation can provide to all its citizens. Unions, through their political contributions, support the basic freedoms, protections, and resources we all require to have a decent life and live in a civilized society. If those unions are destroyed, American life will become unrecognizable in a remarkably short time.

Democracy as we know it — not just budgets and unions — is at stake in the Wisconsin protests.

If the Democrats are not talking out loud about these deeper issues, then they are, by their reticence and silence, helping conservatives destroy unions, & defund the Democratic party.

Source: <http://georgelakoff.com/2/25/11>

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The Peace and Justice Network is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational corporation. Contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Navigating

In Irish, "muircheartaigh" means "navigator"—one who searches out the way

Movies for the Heart

John Morearty

In straggulous times, hearts hunger for beauty. (Dark chocolate helps too.) Here are some beautiful films Ria and I have nourished ourselves with lately. All except the first are available on Netflix.

WINTER'S BONE.

Nominated for Best Picture this year. Gorgeously photographed in the Missouri Ozarks, gritty and gripping. A clear-eyed young woman tenaciously raises her little brother amidst a culture of meth-cookers. Jennifer Lawrence and the aging Robert de Niro are heart-stopping. PG13 for violence.

BELLA.

Grief and love in New York City. A pregnant, unmarried waitress and an introspective cook with a tragic past find solace in each other. Winding story, wondrous revelations.

THEN SHE FOUND ME.

Colin Firth (of historic King's Speech) loves and clashes with magical Helen Hunt; Bette Midler is the irresistible Jewish matchmaker. Sweet and funny. At the end we smiled and scratched our heads: Who found whom?

THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY.

Which one? Norwegian director Hans Petter Moland travels from lush Mekong Delta through turbulent New York City to the wide dry plains of Texas. The son of a Vietnamese woman and an American soldier becomes a boatperson, seeking his father. The butterfly dance of the Chinese girlfriend is mythic, Nick Nolte tore my heart. An understated, tender tale.

BELA FLECK: THROW DOWN YOUR HEART.

The gifted American banjo virtuoso takes his instrument to East and West Africa, playing with wonderful local musicians in village and city. Unforgettable people, places, music. The title is from the spot on the East African shore where slaves enchained by Arab slave traders said goodbye to home forever. Watch this again and again, with the speakers turned up.

SABAH: A LOVE STORY.

Loves and travails of a big Syrian Muslim family in Toronto. Sabah, the "Water-for-Chocolate" forty-ish daughter, falls for a charming and non-Muslim carpenter guy. Twists and turns, villains and changes of heart, and belly dancing like you've never seen it. As spinster Sabah, ArsinËe Khanjian grabs our heart.

EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED.

A young American Jewish nerd undertakes a pilgrimage to the Ukraine, to find the people who helped his family escape the Nazis. With a rascally local translator and the grumpy grandfather, they go bumping through the countryside. As in Shakespeare, wacky comedy softens us up for deep-heart recognition scenes. If you guess the ending of this one, you get the Agatha Christie prize.

THE STATION AGENT.

A quirky gem. Taciturn young dwarf ("What's your name?" "Finn.") inherits a picturesque abandoned train station in rural New Jersey. His solitude is pounced upon by a struggling young artist mother, a sweet-cakes librarian, a chubby eager black girl, and Joe the irrepressible Cuban hotdog vendor. Adventures ensue. Look for the librarian's glasses.

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT.

Widower president Michael Douglas falls in love with environmental lobbyist Annette Bening. Martin Sheen is his right hand man; premonitions of West Wing. Funny, sweet, political gumption.

MY NAME IS KHAN.

Tender saga of Muslim/Hindu love in San Francisco, and American fear of Muslims. A clear-minded man with Asperger syndrome is determined see the President and tell him: "My name is Khan. I am not a terrorist." With two of the great stars of Bombay films, versatile Shahrukh Khan and beautiful Kajol, this film is "Bollywood" emerged to the world.



Then, two true stories of brave women who held fast to truth.

SOPHIE SCHOLL: THE LAST DAYS.

When I was a student in Munich in 1958, I never knew why the University streetcar stop was called "GeschwisterSchollPlatz." Now I understand. Sophie Scholl and her brother Hans were leaders of The White Rose, an underground anti-Nazi student group. They were caught distributing leaflets, and tried for treason. This recent German film draws on the transcripts of Sophie's interrogation and trial, and other documents recently come to light. Fasten your seat belt.


THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC.

Black and white silent film, 1928. Netflix says, "Considered director Carl Theodor Dreyer's finest achievement and one of the greatest movies of all time, this stunning emotional drama recounts the events surrounding Joan of Arc's 1431 heresy trial, burning at the stake and subsequent martyrdom. The film's original version, thought to have been lost to fire, was miraculously found in perfect condition in 1981. Maria Falconetti turns in a haunting performance as the young French saint." Joan remained faithful to her inner Voices.

LA STRADA (THE ROAD).

Fellini's great masterpiece, Classic black and white, with none of the fashionable flash of his later work, La Strada inspired generations of film makers. Simple seaside girl Gelsomina (Giulietta Massina) is sold by her desperately poor mother to Zampano (Anthony Quinn), a rude crude travelling circus strongman. This mythic film is one of the world's great love stories. I was humming Her Song for days- "You and you alone, you and you alone...."

Other wonderful films come to the Tower and Crest Theaters in Sacramento. While you're there, enjoy delicious food at the Tower Cafe next door, or Magpie (closed Sundays) at 14th and R Street.



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BROKER



Come & See On the walkway to University Center
Wed., April 13th from 10am - 4pm

PEACE PANEL PROJECT
Art & Graphics of War & Peace ONE DAY AT UOP

A LOT OF YOUR TAXES MAKE WAR
58% Federal spending in fiscal year 2011 goes to the MILITARY

war is not just.
"We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. A true revolution of values will...lay the way of setting differences."

How much of YOUR TIME AND MONEY MAKES PEACE?

JOIN US AT THE VIGIL AND SEE A FEW OF THE PANELS ON YOKUTS & PACIFIC THURS the 14th 4-5pm

Do you know how many wars we've been in since Vietnam?

What are the real reasons we are not at peace?

Come and See The Peace Panel Project On the walkway to University Center Wed., April 13th from 10am - 4pm

The Peace Panel Project started in the spring of '08 as an attempt to communicate with the local citizenry on issues that seemed important and under discussed and under reported. It is 12 - 15 exhibits 2' x 4' with statements and graphics. Most people know Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, but how many can quote from his "Beyond Vietnam" speech? Some have called his "Beyond Vietnam" speech, "by far, the most important speech of the 20th century, not even a close second". Other panels promote: Beyond War; awareness of military spending; number of wars we have been in since Vietnam; the description of a year's military spending - a stack of 1000 dollar bills 55 miles high; the Chico Peace and Justice Center; Democracy Now; The Central Asia Institute (Greg Mortenson). With matching white easels the Peace Panel Project has promoted discussions, and interested viewers at The Pathway to Peace, The World Peace March, Pastors for Peace, the Pancakes for Peace, and occasionally on a random Sunday afternoon in Chico's downtown City Plaza. The Peace Panel Project is a registered donor to Pennies for Peace.

April 13-14: Peace Panel Project in Stockton

The Peace Panel Project (PPP) is coming to Stockton! As part of our Valley Tour 2011, the PPP will be on display on the walkway leading to University Center at UOP, Wed., April 13th from 10am to 4:30pm. Check it out; have lunch on Campus that day; encourage your peace activism; tell a friend. The following day, join us. Thursday the 14th I'll have some of the panels up at the Stockton Peace Vigil at Yokuts and Pacific from 4-5pm.

The Peace Panel Project, started in 2008, is 16 - 2' x 4' panels that take turns on 12 matching white easels. The PPP poses questions not typically addressed on the evening news. Do you, for example, know how many major military combat operations (wars) we have been in since Vietnam? (87) Do you know what percentage of discretionary Federal spending is for military? (for FY 2010 58%) What did Dr. Martin Luther King say about it?

The PPP has been well received at the World Peace March, Pastors for Peace, the University of Nevada, the Cal State UC Peace Institute, and at the Chico Peace Vigil. It's goal is to encourage more people to become more active for peace.

For more info, contact Charles Withuhn at cswithuhn@yahoo.com.

April 23: Spring flea market to benefit AIDS WALK San Joaquin

Check out our 2nd Annual Spring Flea Market in the Woodbridge Visitors Center parking lot on Saturday, April 23rd from 8 am to 2 pm. Over 100 vendors will be "spring cleaning" and selling their wares. You'll find an enormous variety of collectibles,... arts, crafts, comic books, belt buckles, jewelry, and more. You'll see a huge selection of clothing, shoes, fine furniture, and tools...you name it, we'll have it. We will also have live music, food and free chair massages from Carrington College. Join us for this one-of-a-kind shopping experience and help us raise money for AIDS WALK San Joaquin. Get some cash for your treasures and reserve your space now for only \$20. For more info, call the Woodbridge Visitors Center at 365-8139 or visit <http://www.woodbridgewines.com>.

Oak Grove Nature Center springtime happenings

Astronomy in the park

The Oak Grove Nature Center presents "Astronomy in the Park" on Saturday, April 9th from 7:00 - 10:00 pm, hosted by the Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS). Starting at 7:00 pm, join us inside the Nature Center for astronomy themed activities and crafts. SAS volunteers will provide telescopes for stargazing from 7:30 - 10:00 pm out in the park.

"Wildflower Weekend"

The Oak Grove Nature Center will be celebrating California Native Plant Week with a "Wildflower Weekend" on Sat., April 16th & Sun., April 17th from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Come out and enjoy wildflower displays, walks through the native plant garden, and learn more about our native flora.

Bug-Fest

The Oak Grove Nature Center's 3rd annual "BugFest" will take place on Saturday, April 30th from 10 am - 4 pm. Join us for a full day of buggy fun! Activities will include live insect displays, an arthropod petting zoo, creepy-crawler cuisine, bug-themed crafts, kids' games, insect races, fly-tying demos and more.

All these fun and informative events are free and open to the public. Oak Grove Regional Park entrance fee of \$5 is required per vehicle. For more info on these events and more, call (209) 953-8814 or visit www.mgzoo.com.

Editor's note: *When we see "free event," we should remember that somewhere, there is a cost being paid in either volunteer time, space donation or governmental support coming from our tax dollars. As these important services become threatened, please support them. Thanks.*

March 27: Acclaimed Calder Quartet in concert

Friends of Chamber Music will bring the adventuresome Calder Quartet to Stockton March 27 in a Sunday afternoon concert of music by Mozart, Beethoven and Janacek at University of the Pacific. The award-winning ensemble, described as simply "superb" by The New York Times, will be heard at 2:30 p.m. on campus in the Faye Spanos Concert Hall (Pacific Avenue at Dave Brubeck Way).

"Those who think classical music is archaic clearly do not follow exciting ensembles like the Calder," said Friends President Dwane Milnes. This quartet "continues to expand its array of projects by performing traditional repertoire while at the same time partnering across genres with

innovative modern composers and emerging musicians," he said. As a result, he noted, the Calder was awarded the 2009 ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award. The musicians are Benjamin Jacobson and Andres Bulbrook on violins, Jonathan Moerschel on viola, and Eric Byers on cello.

In Stockton they will play string quartets by Mozart and Beethoven, ending with the four-movement String Quartet No. 2 ("Intimate Letters") by Leos Janacek, one of the most important Czech composers, along with Antonín Dvořák.

Non-subscription tickets at \$25 are sold in the lobby. Students of any age are admitted free.

After the concert, the audience is invited to meet the musicians at a reception in the rehearsal room behind the concert hall. Members of the Calder Quartet met at the University of Southern California and studied at Juilliard School of Music, where they received the Artist Diploma in Chamber Music Studies as the Juilliard Graduate Resident String Quartet. Just this season they made their Carnegie Hall debut in New York City.

FOCM concerts are presented in cooperation with Pacific and its Conservatory of Music. For a brochure or more information about the FOCM series, call 209-946-0540 or visit www.chambermusicfriends.org.

May 14: Join AIDS WALK San Joaquin's Heart & Sole event

With 300 new cases of HIV infection occurring in San Joaquin County in the last year, it is more important than ever that the AIDS WALK of San Joaquin hosts its 17th annual AIDS Walk, the "Heart & Sole" event of the year, on Saturday, May 14, at San Joaquin Delta College. Early registration on our website, www.ajsj.org or at www.active.com, is encouraged with check-in at 8am. The walk begins at 10am.

The AIDS Walk is an opportunity for friends and family members to commemorate the lives of loved ones who have died of AIDS. Community members and businesses are also encouraged to show their support for AIDS awareness in San Joaquin County. We are currently recruiting individual

walkers, teams and team captains, as well as corporate sponsorship of the event. In addition to the walk, there will be food, raffle, and other prizes.

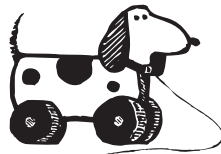
AIDS WALK of San Joaquin was founded 1993. Its Board of Directors was comprised of both individuals from the community as well as various HIV/AIDS organizations in the county. The goal of this event is to raise awareness and support to those whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS. It is also about remembering those who have lost their battle with this disease.

Proceeds from this event are donated to HIV/AIDS agencies in San Joaquin County, including, but not limited to, San Joaquin County Public Health Community Services, Community Medical

Centers, Inc., San Joaquin General Hospital Infectious Disease Clinic and San Joaquin AIDS Foundation. The donations distributed from AIDS WALK San Joaquin are used to provide aid to HIV/AIDS clients with food and transportation vouchers, help with basic living needs and assist with burial funds. AWSJ also collaborates with these sister agencies to raise public awareness about the epidemic with annual events such as World AIDS Day in December and National Condom Week in February.

Again, early registration is encouraged, check-in is at 8am, and the walk begins at 10am. For additional information, please contact AIDS WALK at (209) 608-WALK (9255) or register online at www.ajsj.org.

April Calendar



Editor's note: if your event isn't listed, let us know. Send all copy to: bgudici@caltel.com by the 7th of every month.

Feb 24—March 25

Tracey Snelling art show - sculpture, photography, painting. Tu 11am - 4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am-1pm. SJ Delta College, LH Horton Jr Gallery, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 954-5507.

Feb 26—Apr 3

80th Annual McKee Student Art contest and exhibition. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. Hundreds of art works by SJ County students from K-12. Wed-Sun 1:30—5 pm. 1st and 3rd Thurs 1:30—9 pm. \$5 adult 18 & older, student/senior/youth age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10/first Saturday free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

Wed—Sun

Mar 9—Apr 3

Stop the world, I want to get off, an Anthony Newley musical. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15-\$25. 473-2424.

Downtown Tidewater art center hours change

Effective immediately, the Downtown Tidewater Art Center and Gallery's new business hours are from 11 am to 3 pm. The Tidewater's will continue to be open daily, Monday thru Friday. The Gallery will be closed during weekends. Voted Best Art Gallery in the Record's Best of San Joaquin for 8 years in a row, the Tidewater Gallery provides the community with new themed shows once a month featuring the work of local and regional artists.

In March 2011, Don Hall returns for his 4th Show with the Tidewater Art Gallery entitled, "Monumental Portrait Drawings". The exhibition opens March 1 and runs through the 31st. The Gallery is an artists' collaborative located directly across the street from the county Courthouse at 223 E. Weber Avenue. For more information about the artists, exhibits, upcoming art classes or special events, call the gallery at (209) 463-4033, email tidewatergallery@att.net or at www.tidewaterartgallery.org.

Talking It Through

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

Peace & Justice Network sponsors two half-hour shows:

"Let's Talk" hosted by Margee Ensign features speakers at University of the Pacific and elsewhere documentaries of important community meetings and events. Mondays 6 pm

"Talking It Through" hosted by Sammy Nunez features live discussions of important community issues, especially with young people. Mondays at 6:30 pm.

Both shows are produced by Peace and Justice volunteer Vince Kotecki on SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26.

For up to the minute listings of current shows, see our website: www.pjnsjc.org, click on Talking It Through.

Mar 18—Mar 27

Hairspray musical, presented by St. Mary's Theatre Dept. Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. Hutchins Street Square, 125 S Hutchins St, Lodi \$10 - \$15. 957-3340, x 250.

Mar 1—Apr 5

Valley Impressions: historic block prints and watercolors by William S. Rice. 8:30 am—4:30 pm, M-F. Jeannette Powell Art Center, Reynolds Gallery, UOP. Free.

Tue, Mar 22

SJ Delta College Community Band concert, 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5110. Thu, Mar 3

Take Back the Night, 6 pm, DeRosa Center Lawn; 6:30 pm march begins; rally 7 pm McCaffrey Center, UOP. 932-2815.

Patricia Shands clarinet, Ann Miller & Igo Veligan violin resident artists concert, 7:30 pm. Recital Hall, UOP. General \$8, Seniors \$5, UOP students free.

Wed, Mar 23

Shakespeare Behind Bars film, 7 pm.

Janet Leigh Theater, UOP. Free.

SJ Delta College Spring Festival of Bands, 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5110.

Thu, Mar 24

SJ Delta College presents the Jazz Ensemble Concert, 7:30 pm. Tillie Lewis Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8. 954-5110.

Thu—Sun

Mar 24—27

Pacific Opera Theater presents The Three Penny Opera. 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. Long Theatre, UOP. \$17.

Sun, Mar 27

Calder Quartet Chamber Music concert, 2:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP. General \$25, students free. 467-0224. (p 18)

Mon, Mar 28

Delta Sierra Club meeting, 7 pm. Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7 pm program with social time following. All welcome.

Thu, Mar 31

Brubeck Festival presents Trio M with Myra Melford piano, Mark Dresser bass, and Matt Wilson drums. 7:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP.

Fri, Apr 1

Brubeck Festival presents the Capital Jazz Project with Chad Lefkowitz-Brown. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP.

Sun, Apr 3

Brubeck Festival presents documentary "In His Own Sweet Way." Clint Eastwood on Dave Brubeck, followed by the Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet. 2:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP.

Thu, Apr 7

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

Stockton Symphony with Chu-Fang

Huang piano performing Glinka, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky. 8 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5110.

Sat, Apr 9

Stockton Symphony with Chu-Fang Huang piano performing Glinka, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky. 6 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5110.

Sun, April 10

Earth Day Festival, 11 am—5 pm. Victory Park, Stockton. Always a great celebration. Earlier this year—save the date.

Tue, Apr 12

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 7 - 9 pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

Sun, Apr 17

Calaveras Earth Day celebration, 11 am - 5 pm. Utica Park, Angels Camp. Great music and booths.

Foothills Brass Quintet concert, 2:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP. General \$25, students free. 467-0224.

First Mondays

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm, Towers Building, 509 W Weber Ave, Stockton. ccgmemb@gmail.com

Fourth Mondays

Delta Sierra Club meeting, 7 pm. Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7 pm program with social time following. All welcome.

Second Tuesdays

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 7—9 pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

Second Thursdays

Single Payer San Joaquin meeting, 6:30 pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. bailey_hcasj@sbcglobal.net

Third Saturdays

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 9—11 am, Blackwater Cafe. 467-4455.

Fourth Saturdays

Greater Lodi Area Democrats

(GLAD) breakfast meeting, 8:30 am, Dee Dee's Family Dining, 1170 S. Cherokee Ln, Lodi. 209-663-3717

Mondays

Jazz at the Blackwater 8:30—11 pm. Mike Rocha, Rick Russell, Giulio Cetto, Michael Klooster and more. Acacia & Yosemite, Stockton.

Thursdays

Cairo, Madison, Stockton! Peace and justice demonstration along Pacific, just north of Delta bus stop. 5 pm. Signs provided, or bring your own. Parking in Sherwood lot across the street. Info: Patrick Wall, 954-5438.

Dinner and a show, 6:30—9:30. Blackwater Cafe, Acacia & Yosemite, Stockton.

Saturdays

Crosstown Freeway Farmers Market, under the freeway between El Dorado & San Joaquin, Stockton. 7—11, or when sold out. 943-1830

Volunteers needed to distribute Connections to well-established routes. About two hours per month. Easy and fun! Call Dean or Marcia Savage, 209-339-1599.

May 8

iMatter march West Steps, State Capitol, Sacramento, 8 am

iMatter March will happen across the United States and in locations worldwide. We will issue a global wake up call so loud, so passionate and so provocative that we will be impossible to ignore. We are standing with our parents and other visionaries to lead the way to a new future: where oceans, the atmosphere, people's health and livelihood matters as much as immediate corporate profits, political power and convenience. We are living as if the future matters and we hope that you will do the same. Join us. More info at <http://www.imattermarch.org>.

Sierra GrEEEn Days 2011!

(ENERGY, ECOLOGY, ECONOMY)

**Saturday and Sunday
April 30th and May 1st
At Ironstone, in Murphys**

Want to have a booth? Give a presentation? Attend a steady stream of presentations with practical and inspiring information for sustainable living?

Save the Dates!

**Maypole on Saturday, 1PM. World Spirit Celebration Sunday
1:30PM.**

Lots of local music, story tellers, Welly Nellies, drumming, art and fun! Good food too! FREE to attend. Go to www.sierragreendays.com for details and updates.

April 4

March in solidarity with embattled workers

4 - 6 PM

CESAR CHAVEZ LIBRARY
605 N. EL DORADO STREET, STOCKTON
WALKING ACROSS MLK SQUARE TO:
CITY HALL STEPS
425 N. EL DORADO STREET, STOCKTON

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, where he had gone to stand with sanitation workers demanding their dream: The right to bargain collectively for a voice at work and a better life.

Today, that same demand is electrifying people across America. It's the demand of all people—black, white, Latino and Asian American: The right to join together for our common dreams. Join April 4, 2011 as we stand in solidarity with working people in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and dozens of other states where well-funded, right-wing corporate politicians are trying to take away the rights Dr. King gave his life for.

It's time to show we are part of a movement. The working families of San Joaquin County stand in solidarity with all working families across the country to support middle class working family values. We oppose the recent attacks on public employees such as teachers, nurses, firefighters, school workers and other public employees providing necessary services.

Action: Come and walk with us. Bring a gently used pair of work shoes (which will be donated to St. Mary's following event) to show we stand in solidarity with workers and march with them. We also believe that legislators should stand with us and walk the walk with us.

Event sponsored by the San Joaquin Calaveras Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO and North Valley Labor Federation, AFL-CIO and Community Partners. For info, contact Marcie Bayne, Executive Director, North Valley Labor Federation (209) 304-0504.

connections

Would you like Connections delivered to your home? It's FREE!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Mail to: Peace & Justice Network, Box 4123,
Stockton, CA 95204 (209) 467-4455

Peace & Justice Network does not sell or donate our mailing list. Connections is supported by donations and advertisers.

Earth Day Celebration

Growing Your Own

Utica Park, Angels Camp
Sunday April 17, 11am-6pm



Music, Food, Information Booths & Fun

Clan Dyken
plus Local Bands

Sponsored By: Blue Mountain Coalition For Youth & Families
And The Calaveras Green Party

For More Info. 209-293-4379

Campaign for common ground

San Joaquin County General Plan update Community workshops scheduled

The first two community workshops on the General Plan Update Alternatives Report have been scheduled for the East Stockton/Delta area and the French Camp/South Stockton area. In the coming weeks the remaining 12 community workshops will be scheduled during April and May for other areas throughout the County. We will announce the remaining workshop dates and locations soon. You can also check the project website for updates.

East Stockton/Delta Area

Tue, March 29, 2011, 7 pm. Public Health Department, Multi-Purpose Room. 1601 East Hazelton Ave., Stockton, CA 95205.

French Camp/South Stockton Area

Thu, March 31, 2011, 7 pm. Robert J. Cabral Agricultural Center. 2101 East Earhart Ave., Stockton, CA 95206.

The purpose of the workshops is to gather input on a preferred growth alternative that will be used to shape the future of San Joaquin County. We urge everyone to come out and participate in the process to help determine how the County should grow.

- Where should new development occur?
- How should your community change or not change?
- Which areas of the County should be preserved?

• Which features of the alternatives do you like/dislike?

We want you to be involved so the General Plan Update reflects the collective vision of San Joaquin County residents. Hope to see you at the workshops!

Have you downloaded your copy of the General Plan Update Alternatives Report yet? Get your copy today!

For more information on the General Plan Update, please contact: Ray Hoo, Senior Planner, Community Development Department, (209) 468-3164, rhoo@sjgov.org

Source: Campaign for Common Ground release 3/18/11