

connections

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August/September 2005

SB840 The California Health Insurance Reliability Act

Affordable health insurance for all

SB 840 (Kuehl), the California Health Insurance Reliability Act, (CHIRA), would provide fiscally sound, affordable health insurance coverage to all Californians, provide every Californian the right to choose his or her own physician and control health cost inflation.

Reliable Coverage: Eligibility is based on residency, instead of on employment or income. Under CHIRA, all residents are covered. No California resident will ever again lose his or her health insurance because of unaffordable insurance premiums, or because he or she changes or loses a job, or goes to or graduates from college or has a pre-existing medical condition.

Affordable: The plan involves no new spending on health care. The system will be paid for by federal, state and county monies already being spent on health care and by affordable insurance premiums that replace all premiums, deductibles, out-of-pocket payments and co-pays now paid by employers and consumers.

Efficient: CHIRA eliminates waste by consolidating the functions of many insurance companies into one comprehensive insurance plan, saving the state and consumers billions of dollars each year. Currently it's estimated that half of every dollar spent on health care is squandered on clinical and administrative waste, insurance company profits, and overpriced pharmaceuticals. CHIRA is based on a model that has been estimated to save California about \$20 billion through reduced administrative

(continued page 5)

The most important letter: yours

In support of universal health care

The Honorable _____
State Capitol, Room _____
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for SB 840 (Kuehl)

Dear Senator/Assemblymember _____:

I am writing to express my support for SB 840, the California Health Insurance Reliability Act, which will cover every Californian with comprehensive health insurance and give them the ability to choose their own physician. This model is estimated to save \$8 billion, in the first year alone, in statewide healthcare spending, and will save money for families, businesses, individuals and local governments.

Over 6.5 million Californians, or more than 20% of the state's population, went without insurance in 2003. That's one in every five Californians. As health insurance costs skyrocket at double digit rates every year, employers are now reducing coverage and dropping benefits altogether. The increase in high-risk "catastrophic" health plans, with unaffordable deductibles and co-payments, have completely failed to stem the rise in costs. Instead, half of all bankruptcies in the United States are now related to medical costs and 3/4 of those bankrupted families had health insurance at the time they became ill or injured. The simple truth is that average Californians can no longer rely on their health insurance when they become ill or injured.

The United States spends twice as much per person as every other industrialized country on health care, yet we are the only industrialized nation where people go bankrupt because of medical costs. We have fewer physicians per capita than many other industrialized countries, and fewer hospital visits. Most importantly, our health care system ranks at the bottom of industrialized nations, according to the World Health Organization. All that money hasn't bought us better health care, so where is it going?

A recent Boston University study found that our current system wastes nearly 50% of all health spending on clinical and administrative waste. It is estimated that, by streamlining the administrative functions of thousands of different insurance companies, California could shift \$20 billion in the first year from administration into direct health care. Also, by consolidating California's purchasing power for pharmaceuticals, California could shift an additional \$5.3 billion into direct health care. Finally, by providing preventative and primary care to everyone California could actually save an additional \$3.4 billion in the first year.

CHIRA will affordably cover every Californian with a high quality of care and comprehensive benefits. Every Californian will be covered by an insurance plan that provides medical, dental, vision and prescription drug coverage, including hospitalization, emergency room care and transportation, laboratory work, skilled nursing care, mental health care, drug addiction rehabilitation and chiropractic care.

Californians want access to this kind of high-quality, affordable health care. Most importantly, they want a health care system that they can rely on. CHIRA gives every Californian reliable health insurance along with freedom of choice. Please take a stand in support of real health reform.

I strongly support SB 840 (Kuehl) and respectfully urge you to do the same.

Sincerely,

SAVE THE DATE

NONVIOLENCE TRAINING FOR YOU...
..... 3

HIROSHIMA/NAGASAKI RALLY...20

IN THIS ISSUE

SUPREME COURT TO CHANGE BIG TIME .. 7

LOBBYING—BIG BUCKS..... 8

ESTATE TAX CUT? ..10

FOOD STAMPS CUT ...
..... 11

9-11 WHITEWASH? ...
..... 15

PAPAL HALL OF FAME .
..... 17

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A sucker born—hey, that's my wallet

Just so you don't miss the important stuff, like at a carnival, keep your eye on the pea. There is such a choice of issues to be distracted by: the Karl Rove CIA affair or the Endangered Species gutting by our own Mr. Pombo; the daily car bombing that kills at least 2 dozen or the nomination of a cute white guy from Indiana who will do his best to not answer how he will overturn legal abortion in this country; the 108 degree heat that signals once again how badly global warming needs more study or the coming recess appointment of the only man Qualified by Bush for the United Nations; the social

security scam or the real medicare crisis; India in our nuclear embrace or North Korea continuing on life support providing the rationale for our ABM treaty busting Star Wars boondoggle; Africa left holding the bag at the G-8 summit (let's see who honors their aid pledges?...answer: None!) or an avian flu pandemic of which we are blissfully unaware (ducks beware); an endless war that will result (regretfully, all will claim) in a draft of ever more disadvantaged kids or that feeling that you're lucky even to have a job, sucker. It's all out there—but I think the real issue is...the money. At the end of all this, the happy carnival

barker will vamoose with all our cash, leaving us with the bag. Ask any African what they are able to do with too much debt. Beg or starve, the IMF way. Yet, Africa has natural resources—if only they can wrench them from the corporate bosses. They must find a way. And so must we.

I read recently of the US society diagnosed with the Norwegian syndrome (where the captive begins to sympathize and affiliate with the captor, i.e. Patty "Tania" Hearst). The more we are forced into ever more impossible conditions, the more we feel comfortable with our situation. Getting pretty cozy



Bruce Giudici

for some, I guess—and that would explain Kansas. But for the rest of us, as friend Wilbur Hubbell would say, things will have to get pretty bad before they get any better. Well, Wilbur...here we are.

Feedback

Downing St memo not news

Editor,

Given all the hoo-ha about the "smoking gun" of the "Downing Street Memo" of July 23, 2002, it's sad how ignorant the American public is of the neo-conservative "Project for a New American Century (PNAC)" and its goals.

The Project for a New American Century was created in the early '90s by William Kristol and Gary Schmitt. Its website says: "The Project for the New American Century is a non-profit, educational organization whose goal is to promote American global leadership." PNAC is a group of hard-liners, mostly not from military backgrounds. Its founding members included Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, John Bolton, and Richard Perle.

In 1992, PNAC issued a proposed "National Security Strategy." It caused a furor at the time when it was leaked to major papers. Its chief tenets were that: 1. Pre-emptive war will be acceptable in dealing with enemies; 2. Nuclear weapons can be used offensively in support of political and economic ends; and 3. International treaties and international opinion will be ignored whenever they are not seen to be in alignment with U.S. goals.

On January 26, 1998, PNAC wrote a "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq," insisting that he remove Saddam Hussein from power.

Meanwhile, in Taliban-governed

Afghanistan, al-Qaida (completely independent of Iraq) was orchestrating deadly attacks on the U.S.: World Trade Center in '93, Riyadh and Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, USS Cole, Seattle Space Needle and L.A. International (foiled), and blowing up a dozen American airliners over the Pacific (foiled). And finally, the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and either the Capitol or the White House on September 11, 2001.

Osama bin Laden also inspired attacks by other fanatical Islamic extremists against Western interests across the whole Islamic world from Morocco in the West to Indonesia in the East: Casablanca, Istanbul, Bali, and more. Iraq had no connection whatsoever with any of these.

In 2001, President George W. Bush bought PNAC's pitch. The afternoon of 9/11, Paul Wolfowitz pressed Bush to attack Iraq in retaliation for the WTC tragedy. The following weekend at Camp David, Bush agreed to do it - just as soon as Afghanistan was subdued.

On Sept. 20, 2001, during a Blair visit to the U.S., George told Tony that Afghanistan would be attacked within the next few weeks. Then it was Iraq's turn. "Are you with me, Tony?" Blair agreed. On September 20, 2001!

The Bush-Blair exchange of 9/20/01 is on the record. That's the original "smoking gun." The Downing Street Memo is not.

Stanley G. Thomas

An open letter on government and faith

Editor,

For the past month, the Muslim community in Lodi, and throughout San Joaquin County, has been shaken by internal and external forces, driven by fear and chauvinism.

A father and son are accused by the government of acts related to terrorism without sharing the alleged evidence with their attorney. Their arrest triggers governmental intrusion into their place of worship and questions the patriotism of an entire religious community. An imam is arrested more for expressing his views than for alleged violations of immigration law. A community of believers is split more by external political forces than by internal differences over the spiritual direction of the mosque congregation.

There was a time when the five freedoms enumerated in the First Amendment—religion, speech, press, assembly, petition—were considered as inviolable and extended to us all. Now, as a result of fear, what I had learned in school as the foundation of the "Bill of Rights" has been reduced to a relic of the past. The rights we learned about are no longer available to us all, regardless of the situation.

Today, should I write or speak words that some consider objectionable, I am subject to arrest without knowledge of all the evidence against me. At the same time, if others write or speak words that

I may find objectionable, because those folks may be considered supportive of official governmental positions, they are free to condemn and threaten me.

If I am suspected on some type of anti-government activity, and am Muslim, my entire religious community is called into question. If I participate in blatantly anti-government protests and am Christian, no one even knows, or cares, what denomination I subscribe to.

If I am an imam in Lodi, any words I may have said during the outpouring of hatred on all sides shortly after September 11, 2001, are grounds for arrest, but if I am Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson, I am free to spew venom and intolerance for others, calling for their elimination without trepidation.

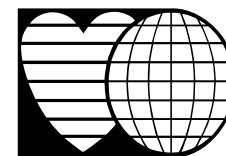
I have no idea whether or not the government charges against these gentlemen from Lodi have any merit, but I do know that until they are convicted in an open court of law with all the rights and privileges we should all expect, they are innocent. And regardless of the outcome of those legal proceedings, I know that my greatest fear concerning national security is for the government that purports to act in my name to deprive me, and you, of our basic rights.

Bill Mendelson, President
Interfaith Council of Stockton

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."

Nonviolence training: from violence to wholeness

John Morearty

The first time I experienced non-violence training, there were police dogs. It was 1982, and a group of us were preparing to blockade Lawrence Livermore Lab (it turned out to be an enormous blockade, with some 1,500 arrested). We went to San Francisco for a day, to be trained in nonviolent tactics. At one point we split into two groups, and my group was sitting in a driveway, arms linked, when suddenly around the corner of the house came the others-half of them pretending to be police, holding imaginary leashes around the necks of the rest-who were raving police dogs, barking in our faces. My heart almost stopped.

The nonviolence workshop which four of us from Stockton went through recently in Oakland was different. It lifted my heart. Nonviolence was treated not as a tactic, but as a way of life. The premises of the training came from the spiritual tradition of St. Francis of Assisi in the 1200s, and we heard the famous story of the wolf of Gubbio. It seems that a huge wolf was terrorizing the town of Gubbio, attacking and eating the citizens. Whenever they ventured outside the walls, they went armed as if for war. Francis said, "I will go see the wolf." He went out unarmed with one companion, and when the wolf came rushing up, Francis commanded him to stop. With the wolf lying at his feet, Francis chided the wolf for eating the citizens. But he added, "I understand it is because you are so hungry. If you will agree to stop harming the people of Gubbio, I will ask them to feed you every day of your life." The wolf wagged his tail and whined like a puppy, the citizens fed him to the end of his days, and it is said that even the dogs of the town would not bark at him. The story lives on in Gubbio, which in the 1970s declared itself a nuclear-free zone, and has been a leader in various recent peace efforts.

Our workshop leaders, an ex-Navy officer and his wife, were as gentle as the smiling wolf. In an intense all-day workshop they taught us eight Gandhian principles of nonviolence:

All life is one.

We each have a piece of the truth and the un-truth.

Human beings are always more

than the evil they commit.

The means must be consistent with the ends.

We are called to celebrate both our differences and our fundamental unity with others.

We reaffirm our unity with others when we transform "us" versus "them" thinking and acting.

Our oneness calls us to desire and work for the well-being of all.

The nonviolent journey is a process of becoming increasingly free from fear.

We went through exercises, of course. The one that made me cry was the "Circle of Truth." We chose as an issue the Death Penalty, and each of us played all four roles in turn: the condemned prisoner, the jailer, the opponent of the death penalty, and the family member of the victim. When I finally played the family member I imagined that it was one of my sons who had been murdered, and I was devastated; for the first time, I let myself imagine what it's like to lose a loved one to violence. It put my continuing opposition to the death penalty into its full human context.

We practiced resolving a real conflict in our everyday lives, with another workshop participant playing The Adversary-the messy housemate, the hot-tempered ally. We tried to practice the four steps of nonviolent conflict resolution:

Center and ground ourselves,

Articulate our truth-to ourselves and to the person we are in conflict with,

Receive the truth of the other person, and

Agree, don't assume.

We learned to embody nonviolent conflict resolution with our two hands-the right hand held up in a stop gesture, the left hand held out in invitation.

We practiced creating a nonviolent community, and defending it nonviolently. Using the video "We were Warriors" (which we'd seen this spring in the Peace and Justice Network video series), we studied an historical example of nonviolent action for social change-the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins of 1960. We analyzed the elements of success-strategy, planning, training, discipline, organization, a manageable objective, allowing the opponent to save face.

And of course we laughed together, ate home-made bread and

lasagna, and organic plums and apricots from Ken and Cindy's garden.

Our team from Stockton consisted of Paula LeVeck, Linda Whittock, Adrian Nickols and myself. We actually spent three days in Oakland-Friday in the workshop, then Saturday and Sunday in a second one learning to facilitate the workshop we'd just been through. We worked our tails off, and floated home from Oakland a few inches above the freeway.

ACTION: This fall, the team will be leading two nonviolence workshops in Stockton-one with

the Peace and Justice Network, the other at the Catholic Cathedral of the Annunciation. To register, or to arrange a workshop for another organization, contact Linda Whittock, 465-4043. For workshops in the Bay Area, contact Pace e Bene at pbc@paceebene.org, (510) 268-8765.

NOTE: "Pace e Bene!" is Italian for "Peace and good!" It was the greeting which Francis and Clare of Assisi used with each other and with all they met. Workshop participants learned to say it with gusto, and an Italian flourish of the hands.



The Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin County

Presents

From Violence to Wholeness

The "From Violence to Wholeness" process uses a variety of learning styles, including small and large group discussions, interactive exercises and presentations on the practice of active nonviolence.

From Violence to Wholeness Process Team:

Paula LeVeck, Adrian Nichols, John Morearty and Linda Whittock

Goals:

- Deepen your understanding of nonviolent peacemaking for personal and social transformation.
- Learn tools and develop skills to practice nonviolent peacemaking in your everyday life.

When: Saturday, September 17th, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 18th, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

Where: The Peace and Justice Center,
Bedford Place off Pacific Ave. (Miracle Mile)

Cost: \$10 (includes a light continental breakfast and Saturday lunch)

Limited scholarships available upon request.

Registration Deadline: September 12, 2005

Space is limited to 12 persons and will be based on order of registration received.
For more information contact Linda Whittock at 465-4043 or thecottagers@earthlink.net

Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please make check payable to Peace and Justice Network
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"War is the blackest villainy of which human nature is capable."

—Erasmus

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High costs keep women from health care

A new national survey of women on their health finds that a substantial percentage of women cannot afford to go to the doctor or get prescriptions filled. Although a majority of women are in good health and satisfied with their health care, many have health problems and do not get adequate levels of preventive care. For those who are sick, poor, or uninsured, the challenges are magnified. The Kaiser Family Foundation report, *Women and Health Care: A National Profile*, is based on a national survey of 2,766 women age 18 and older.

As health care costs grow, more than one-quarter of non-elderly women (27%) and two-thirds of uninsured women (67%) report they delayed or went without care they believed they needed in the past year because they could not afford it, compared to 24% and 59% respectively in 2001. Among women with private coverage, nearly one in five (17%) delayed or went without care. In addition, 20% of women ages 18 and older say they did not fill a prescription in the past year because of the cost.

"The growth in health care costs has become a central women's health issue," said Alina Salganicoff, Vice President and Director of Women's Health Policy at the Kaiser Family Foundation. "A sizable share of women are falling through the cracks, either because they don't have insurance or even with insurance can't afford to pay for medical care or prescription drugs."

Fewer than half of all women say they have talked to a health care professional in the past three years about smoking (33%), alcohol use (20%), and calcium intake (43%), while just over half have talked about diet, exercise, and nutrition (55%). Among women of reproductive age (18-44), fewer than one in three (31%) say that they have talked with their doctor about their sexual history and specific issues, such as STDs (28%) and HIV/AIDS (31%) in the past three years.

Mammography rates reported by women ages 40 to 64 have not im-



proved, falling slightly from 73% in 2001 to 69% in 2004. Only 40% of uninsured women over 40 had a mammogram in the past year, compared to three-quarters of women with private coverage (74%) or Medicare (73%).

Pap testing rates reported among women ages 18 to 64 also fell from 81% in 2001 to 76%. Only 38% of women 50 and older say they have had a colon cancer screening test in the past two years and 37% of women 45 and older say they received a test for osteoporosis in the past two years.

Additional key findings:

Prescription drug costs

- Women (56%) are more likely than men (42%) to use a prescription medicine on a regular basis, and are also more likely to report difficulties affording their medications.
- 41% of uninsured women say they did not fill a prescription due to costs, as do one in six women (17%) with private coverage and nearly one in five women with Medicaid (19%).
- One in seven (14%) women also report that they skipped or took smaller doses of their medicines in the past year to make them last longer.

Chronic health conditions and mental health

- Nearly four in 10 women (38%), have a chronic condition, such as diabetes, asthma or hypertension that requires ongoing medical at-

tention, compared to 30% of men.

- One in four women (23%) reported they have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety, over twice the rate for men (11%).

Access and quality of care among women in fair or poor health

- Over one-third (37%) of women in fair or poor health say that they delayed or went without medical care in the past year due to costs, and one-third (34%) did not fill a prescription because they couldn't afford it.
- Nearly one-third (31%) of women in fair/poor health report concerns about the quality of care they received in the past year, compared to 18% of women in better health.

Women as caregivers and family decision makers

- One in 10 women (12%) care for a sick or aging relative. Among this group, forty percent are low-income, 46% have a chronic health condition of their own, and 29% provide more than 40 hours of care per week. One in five (20%) non-elderly caregivers are uninsured.
- * Eight in 10 mothers/guardians say they have lead responsibility for choosing their children's doctors (79%), taking them to appointments (84%), and ensuring they receive follow-up care (78%).

Source: The Kaiser Family Foundation news release 7/7/05. KFF is a non-profit, private operating foundation dedicated to providing information and analysis on health care issues and is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries. <http://www.kff.org/newsroom/index.cfm>

Drug industry pays most to corrupt government

In the past seven years, drug makers have spent a staggering \$800 million to influence public policy, the biggest lobbying operation in the nation, according to the Center for Public Integrity. The industry's lobbying expenses are just a small fraction of its massive profits (industry leader Pfizer made \$50.9 billion in 2004), but its money has bought considerable influence in fighting off measures that would contain skyrocketing drug prices.

In 2003, the year President Bush and Congress passed the Medicare drug law, pharmaceutical companies spent \$128 million to ensure Medicare was prohibited from negotiating lower drug prices, a provision that was included in the law. A study by Boston University predicted that over 8 years, the industry would realize \$139 billion

in new profits thanks to the law. Drug makers have also defeated repeated Congressional attempts to legalize drug imports, this despite the fact that a significant majority of Americans supports the idea.

"When it comes to drug prices, money talks," said George J. Kourpias, president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. "Public opinion contradicts what's actually been done on Capitol Hill and clearly the drug industry has a stranglehold on Congress and the White House."

The study found the drug lobby contributed \$87 million to political campaigns, 69% of which went to Republicans. President Bush was the industry's top recipient with \$1.5 million. Aside from the millions spent, the drug lobby also secures influence by employing many former govern-



ment employees, including about 70 former House and Senate Members. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association (PhRMA) hired former Congressman Billy Tauzin, a chief architect of the 2003 Medicare law, as its president. To find out more, visit the Center for Public Integrity at www.publicintegrity.org.

Source: Alliance for Retired Americans Friday alert, 7/8/05

Affordable health insurance for all *(continued from page 1)*

costs in the first year alone.

Under CHIRA, California will use its huge purchasing power to buy prescription drugs and durable medical equipment in bulk. CHIRA is the sole health reform that enables California to use its full purchasing power to negotiate the deepest savings. It has been estimated that this model of systemwide bulk purchasing could save California \$5.2 billion in the first year.

Most importantly, CHIRA will make our health care system more reliable and secure by stabilizing the growth in health spending; linking spending increases to state GDP and population growth, employment rates and other relevant demographic indicators. CHIRA will combine needed cost controls with medical standards that use the best available medical science, and place an emphasis on preventative and primary care to improve California's overall health in a way that also saves billions of dollars.

High Quality: Under CHIRA, consumers have total freedom to choose their personal primary care provider. Health care providers and facilities will receive fair

reimbursement for all covered services they provide.

CHIRA utilizes proven financial incentives that support the delivery of high quality care, including bonuses for providers working in rural or under-served areas. The plan invests in needed health care infrastructure such as electronic claims and reimbursement systems and statewide medical databases that improve health care quality.

Benefits: Coverage includes all care prescribed by a patient's health care provider that meets accepted standards of care and practice.

Specifically, coverage includes hospital, medical, surgical, and mental health; dental and vision care; prescription drugs and medical equipment, such as hearing aids; emergency care including ambulance; skilled nursing care after hospitalization; substance abuse recovery programs; health education and translation services, including services for those with hearing and vision impairments; transportation needed to access covered services; diagnostic testing; and hospice care.

CHIRA offers California a broad and clear vision for a remodeled

health care system that will provide high quality, affordable and reliable health care for all residents. I urge you to support the California Health Insurance Reliability Act of 2005.

For more information contact Sara Rogers at (916) 445-1353 or Judy Spelman at (916) 322-1680.

Lewin Report: Universal Health Care Study Shows Savings

Health care advocates made headlines earlier this year with findings of a new report confirming that California can create a fiscally sound state insurance plan that covers every Californian with a solid, comprehensive health plan, reduces costs and controls health cost inflation.

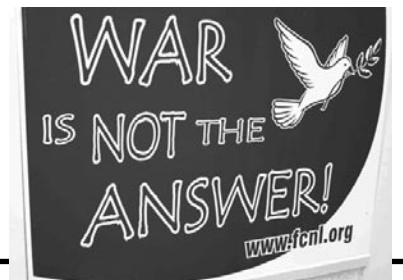
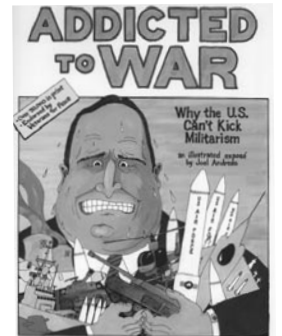
Conducted by The Lewin Group, an independent firm with 18 years of experience in healthcare cost analysis, the report finds that a universal program will reduce total health spending in California by \$8 billion in the first year, alone. The full report, released by Health Care for All California, is available at <http://www.healthcareforall.org/lewin.pdf>.

Lawn signs, peace pins, mugs, and a comic book



NEW!!! Beautiful cobalt blue mugs engraved with peace cranes on one side and Margaret Mead's famous quote on the other. \$10.

"War is NOT the answer" lawn signs come from the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). We are requesting a \$5 donation to cover costs (sorry, we can't ship lawn signs). We also have elegant pins made of pewter in the shape of the peace symbol for \$10. *Addicted to War: Why the U.S. Can't Kick Militarism* is a great resource for students and adults. Filled with little-known historical facts. \$3 a copy, call 467-4455 and arrange to pick up. Or postage and handling included, \$6. Send check to Peace and Justice Network, PO Box 4123, Stockton CA 95204. Call 467-4455.



The Lewin report shows that all California residents can have affordable health insurance; and that, on average, individuals, families, businesses and the state of California, all of whom are now burdened with rising insurance costs, will save money. Some highlights include:

SAVINGS OVERALL: The Lewin report model would achieve universal coverage while actually reducing total health spending for California by about \$8 billion in the first year alone. Savings would be realized in two ways:

1. The Act would replace the current system of multiple public and private insurers with a single, reliable insurance plan. This saves about \$20 billion in administrative costs.

2. California would buy prescription drugs and durable medical equipment (e.g., wheelchairs) in bulk and save about \$5.2 billion.

SAVINGS FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: In addition, state and local governments would save about \$900 million, in the first year, in spending for health benefits provided to state and local government workers and retirees.

Aggregate savings to state and local governments

from 2006 to 2015 would be about \$43.8 billion.

SAVINGS FOR BUSINESSES: Employers who currently offer health benefits would realize average savings of 16% compared to the current system.

SAVINGS FOR FAMILIES: Average family spending for health care is estimated to decline to about \$2,448 per family under the Act in 2006, which is an average savings of about \$340 per family. Families with under \$150,000 in annual income would, on average, see savings ranging between \$600 and \$3,000 per family under the program in 2006.

COST CONTROLS: By 2015, health spending in California under the Act would be about \$68.9 billion less than currently projected. Total savings over the 2006 through 2015 period would be \$343.6 billion. Savings to state and local governments over this ten-year period would be about \$43.8 billion.

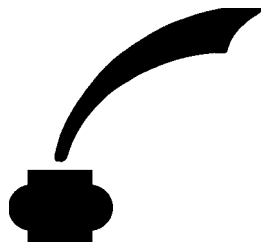
Source: <http://www.healthcareforall.org/7/18/05>

Grants Writer

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Contact Your Representatives

Pres. George W. Bush, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington DC 20500. 202-456-1414

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. Dennis Cardoza (R-District 18) 445 West Weber Ave. Suite 240, Stockton, CA 95203. 209-946-0361, 503 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-6131.

Rep. Richard Pombo (R-District 11), 2321 W March Lane, Ste 205, Stockton, CA 95207. 209-951-3091; 1519 Longworth Bldg, Washington, DC 20515. 202-225-1947, rpombo@mail.house.gov

Rep. John Doolittle (R-District 4), 2130 Professional Dr, Ste 190, Roseville, CA 95661. 916-786-5560; 1524 Longworth Bldg, Washington, CA 20515. 202-225-2511

Secretary of State Colin Powell, 2201 C St, NW Washington, DC 20520

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-445-2841

State Sen. Michael Machado (D-District 5), 31 E Channel St, Room 440, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7930; State Capitol, Rm 4035, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-445-2407

Assemblyperson Barbara Matthews (D-District 17), 31 E Channel St, Room 306, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7479; State Capitol Room 5135, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-319-2017

Add a little enlightenment

Ted Simon

I am a Londoner, and always will be, even though I haven't lived there for ages. I wish I could have been there on that tragic day. What I have been able to gather of the way people behaved makes me proud to belong to that city. I am particularly moved by Mayor Ken Livingstone's words. There was none of that bombastic terminator-talk of "resolve" and "prevailing" and "hounding people to the ends of the earth" and "bringing the perpetrators to justice." He quite rightly took all that for granted, but there was no lack of passion.

He said: "Watch next week as we bury our dead and mourn them but see also on this same day new people coming to this city to make it their home and calling themselves Londoners and doing it because of the freedom to be themselves." And talking about the bombers, he said:

"They think London is an abomination because people of all creeds can live side by side, intermarrying, working together . . . We represent the future of humanity. They want to hold us back in the past."

Among the things I love about London is the fact that I can be

walking down a street, listening to people talking to each other behind me, and not have the slightest idea whether if I turned around I would see people who were black, or white, or yellow or brown. Of all the cities I have seen, with the possible exception of some cities in Brazil, London is the most successful at assimilating all kinds and colours of people. After travelling around the world again, quite recently, I found myself mourning the obvious and increasing loss of diversity, but that is spilt milk now. Livingstone is probably right about the future of humanity.

But who could not be struck by the contrast between what happened in London and what happened at the G8 summit in Scotland.

The wealthy powers promised 20 billion dollars to Africa. That would be a lot of money in my bank account, but for Africa it is a pathetically miserly amount. It is less than one tenth of one per cent of the annual income of the donor countries. And yet it should be blindingly obvious that if there were not millions of destitute and ignorant people to be recruited by bin Laden and his like, bombers would be hard to come by. It shows that our leaders have no concept of

the world's underlying problems or, if they do, they are too cowardly to explain it to their electorates.

Not that I think money alone is the answer to Africa's problems. Unless it is accompanied by a tremendous amount of personal and enlightened effort, it will be mostly wasted. At best it will save lives, but then we are in the Bishop McMahon Paradox. How can you not save lives, even though you know that you are simply compounding the problem by increasing the numbers flocking to the slums. For most people in the West population growth is an abstraction. But when you visit the same third world cities, as I have done after a 28 year lapse and see the monstrous growth, you cannot fail to see trouble ahead.

In the long term - and I hope that's where we are still headed - we need to be educated in the realities of the world we live in. Our children need to learn more than just how to hold a job. They must learn to be critical, independent thinkers with a world view, able to understand the adjustments that will have to be made in the near future, and to hold their elected officials' feet to the fire.

In other words, what the world needs now is...a little enlightenment. Where will it come from?

London bombings: war is not the answer

On July 7, the people of London experienced what the people of Bagdad and many other Iraqi cities have been experiencing almost daily for more than a year: a brutal, violent attack on innocent civilians. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the people of London, as we continue to pray for the peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Sudan, and elsewhere who daily face the continuing violence, horror, fear, and disruption of war and terror.

Yet, more war is not the answer to the London bombings. After more than three years of the U.S.-led "war on terror" and two years of war in Iraq, the world is no safer, and in many respects it has become even more dangerous because of these wars to make the world safe from terror.

The attacks in London, the undiminished violence in Iraq, and the intensified fighting in Afghanistan reveal how U.S. war policies have

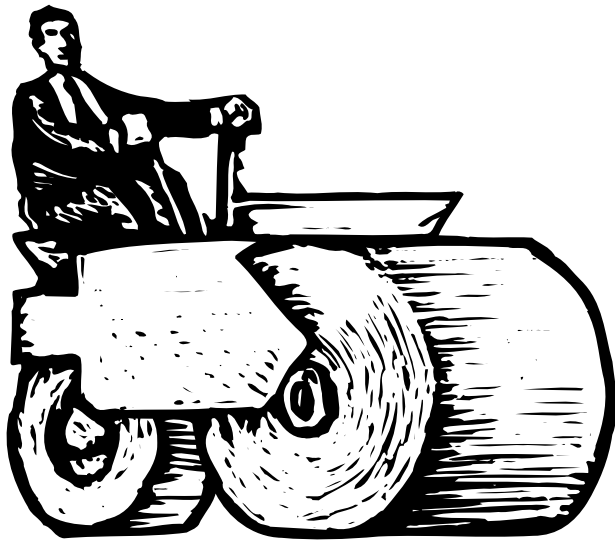
fueled more violence and suffering. Exacting an "eye for an eye" will only make everyone blind with hatred. Violence and suffering will only escalate and intensify from retaliation policies—especially in a world armed with nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

We call upon the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom to take the first, courageous steps to end the cycle of violence by exercising uncommon restraint in their response to the London bombings. Let the moral depravity of the attacks stand alone for the peoples of the world to condemn and unite against. Do not compound the moral outrage of the mass killings in London with further U.S.-UK military attacks that will put at risk still more innocent civilians and fuel further hatred. Those responsible must be held accountable under the rule of law.

We call upon President Bush and Congress to change course now to address the root causes of violent extremism and war, to pursue alternatives to war such as those suggested in the Smart Security legislation introduced by Representative Lynn Woolsey (CA), and to take political steps to reduce the level of violence in Iraq such as declaring that it is U.S. policy to remove all U.S. troops and military bases from Iraqi soil.

ACTION: Members of Congress need to hear that responding to these attacks in London with new violence is not the answer. Contact the local offices of your members of Congress, let them know that you will support them if they have the courage to search for new approaches that can break the spiral of violence.

Source: Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002-5795 fcnl@fcnl.org
* www.fcnl.org (800)630-1330



Stealth Supreme Roberts will overturn Roe

George W. Bush announced the nomination of John G. Roberts to replace Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court.

"Once again, George Bush has chosen partisan politics and pay-backs over uniting the country," said National Organization for Women (NOW) President Kim Gandy. "Roberts' background shows a political ideology that is inconsistent with the independence we have a right to expect from the Supreme Court. He does not have a commitment to the basic values of fairness and equality, and our hard-won rights will be in jeopardy if he is confirmed."

"NOW will fight Roberts' confirmation through a nationwide grassroots lobbying campaign. Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman on the Supreme Court, leaves us a legacy as a centrist and independent jurist who upheld the rights of women. We don't need someone with an extremist political agenda, tied to special interests, who will tarnish that legacy," said Gandy.

As O'Connor's replacement, Roberts could cast the deciding vote on countless matters of individual rights where O'Connor had been a key vote, often in a 5 to 4 split — issues like abortion and birth control, affirmative action, privacy rights, disability rights, Title IX equal educational opportunity, family and medical leave, health care, environmental protection and dozens of other crucial issues for decades to come. For young women, Roberts' votes

could determine their access to birth control and abortion for their entire reproductive lifetimes.

Among our many concerns, Roberts actively opposes *Roe v. Wade* and wrote several amicus briefs while a Deputy Solicitor General. In one case where *Roe* was not even at issue, his brief offered gratuitously "Roe was wrongly decided and should be overruled." He also wrote a brief in a case NOW brought against Operation Rescue* in an effort to stop violent blockades at abortion clinics. His brief and oral argument supported Operation Rescue, and argued that the blockades were merely an expression of opposition to abortion.

"Sandra Day O'Connor broke barriers as the first woman on the Supreme Court, where she cast decisive votes to preserve and expand rights for women and to eliminate sex discrimination," Gandy said. "George Bush could have chosen a moderate conservative who would be a voice of reason on the Court. Instead he chose, characteristically, to pick a fight. We intend to give him one."

* Note: At the Supreme Court level, that case was called *Bray v. Alexandria Women's Health Clinic*; it was *NOW v. Operation Rescue* at the trial and appellate levels. The Court's failure to protect women and clinics from these attacks helped us pass the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act the following year.

Source: NOW release 7/19/05

Short facts on the land we call home

- The United States is 49th in the world in literacy (*NY Times*, 12/12/04).
- The United States ranked 28th out of 40 countries in mathematical literacy (*NYT*, 12/12/04).
- Twenty percent of Americans think the sun orbits the earth. Seventeen percent believe the earth revolves around the sun once a day (*The Week*, 1/7/05).
- "The International Adult Literacy Survey...found that Americans with less than nine years of education 'score worse than virtually all of the other countries'" (Jeremy Rifkin's book *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*, p.78).
- American businesses spend \$30 billion a year on remedial training (*NYT*, Dec. 12, 2004).
- "The European Union leads the U.S. in...the number of science and engineering graduates; public research and development (R&D) expenditures; and new capital raised" (*The European Dream*, p.70).
- "Europe surpassed the United States in the mid-1990s as the largest producer of scientific literature" (*The European Dream*, p.70).
- Congress cut funds to the National Science Foundation. The agency will issue 1,000 fewer research grants this year (*NYT*, Dec. 21, 2004).
- Foreign applications to U.S. grad schools declined 28 percent last year. Foreign student enrollment on all levels fell for the first time in three decades, but increased greatly in Europe and China. Last year Chinese grad-school graduates in the U.S. dropped 56 percent, Indians 51 percent, South Koreans 28 percent (*NYT*, Dec. 21, 2004).
- The World Health Organization "ranked the countries of the world in terms of overall health performance, and the U.S. [was]...37th." In the fairness of health care, we're 54th. "The irony is that the United States spends more per capita for health care than any other nation in the world" (*The European Dream*, pp.79-80).
- "The U.S. and South Africa are the only two developed countries in the world that do not provide health care for all their citizens" (*The European Dream*, p.80).
- Lack of health insurance coverage causes 18,000 unnecessary American deaths a year. (*NYT*, 1/12/05)
- "U.S. childhood poverty now ranks 22nd, or second to last, among the developed nations. Only Mexico scores lower" (*The European Dream*, p.81).
- Twelve million American families—more than 10 percent of all U.S. households—"continue to struggle, and not always successfully, to feed themselves." Families that "had members who actually went hungry at some point last year" numbered 3.9 million (*NYT*, 11/22/04).
- The United States is 41st in the world in infant mortality. Cuba scores higher (*NYT*, 1/12/05).
- Women are 70 percent more likely to die in childbirth in America than in Europe (*NYT*, 1/12/05).
- The leading cause of death of pregnant women in this country is murder (*CNN*, 12/14/04).
- "Of the 20 most developed countries in the world, the U.S. was last in the growth rate of total compensation to its workforce in the 1980s.... In the 1990s, the U.S. average compensation growth rate grew only slightly, at an annual rate of about 0.1 percent" (*The European Dream*, p.39). Yet Americans work longer hours per year than any other industrialized country, and get less vacation time.
- "Sixty-one of the 140 biggest companies on the Global Fortune 500 rankings are European, while only 50 are U.S. companies" (*The European Dream*, p.66). "In a recent survey of the world's 50 best companies, conducted by Global Finance, all but one were European" (*The European Dream*, p.69).
- The United States has lost 1.3 million jobs to China in the last decade (*CNN*, 1/12/05).
- U.S. employers eliminated 1 million jobs in 2004 (*The Week*, 1/14/05).
- Three million six hundred thousand Americans ran out of unemployment insurance last year; 1.8 million—one in five—unemployed workers are jobless for more than

six months (*NYT*, 1/9/05).

• Japan, China, Taiwan, and South Korea hold 40 percent of our government debt. "By helping keep mortgage rates from rising, China has come to play an enormous and little-noticed role in sustaining the American housing boom" (*NYT*, 12/4/04).

• Sometime in the next 10 years Brazil will probably pass the U.S. as the world's largest agricultural producer. Brazil is now the world's largest exporter of chickens, orange juice, sugar, coffee, and tobacco. Last year, Brazil passed the U.S. as the world's largest beef producer. As a result, while we bear record trade deficits, Brazil boasts a \$30 billion trade surplus (*NYT*, 12/12/04).

• As of last June, the U.S. imported more food than it exported (*NYT*, 12/12/04).

• Bush: 62,027,582 votes. Kerry: 59,026,003 votes. Number of eligible voters who didn't show up: 79,279,000 (*NYT*, 12/26/04). That's more than a third. Way more. If more than a third of Iraqis don't show for their election, no country in the world will think that election legitimate.

• "Americans are now spending more money on gambling than on movies, videos, DVDs, music, and books combined" (*The European Dream*, p.28).

• "Nearly one out of four Americans [believe] that using violence to get what they want is acceptable" (*The European Dream*, p.32).

• Forty-three percent of Americans think torture is sometimes justified, according to a PEW Poll (Associated Press, Aug. 19, 2004).

• "Nearly 900,000 children were abused or neglected in 2002, the last year for which such data are available" (*USA Today*, 12/21/04).

• "The International Association of Chiefs of Police said that cuts by the [Bush] administration in federal aid to local police agencies have left the nation more vulnerable than ever" (*USA Today*, Nov. 17, 2004).

Source: *Austin Chronicle*, 2/3/05. www.citypages.com/databank/26/1264/article12985.asp

Lobbying: one dollar, one vote

Special interests and the lobbyists they employ have reported spending, since 1998, a total of almost \$13 billion to influence Congress, the White House and more than 200 federal agencies. They've hired a couple thousand former government officials to influence federal policy on everything from abortion and adoption to taxation and welfare. And they've filed most of the thousands of pages of disclosure forms with the Senate Office of Public Records and the House Clerk's Office, spending \$2.4 billion in 2003, the most recent year for which complete data exist. That figure will almost certainly go up to more than \$3 billion in 2004.

Special interests routinely spend far more on lobbying each election cycle than they do contributing to politicians and political parties. In the 2002 election cycle, the most recent for which complete data exists, the Federal Election Commission reported that \$1.6 billion was raised. In that same time period, lobbyists received in payment \$4 billion to press their case before the government. In 2000, the last presidential election for which complete data exist, those numbers were \$2.3 billion for elections compared to \$3.5 billion for lobbying.

Yet the resources devoted to tracking Washington's political mercenaries and the billions they are paid to influence the decisions of members of Congress and executive branch officials is minimal. The Senate Office of Public Records employs 11 people, and the equivalent House office employs fewer than 35. By contrast, the FEC, which has authority to enforce campaign finance laws, has 391 employees and an annual budget of \$52 million.

That may explain why one in five of the companies lobbying the federal government have failed to file one or more disclosure forms required by law. In all, there are 14,000 missing lobbying documents that should have been filed with Congress since 1998, including documents disclosing the activities of 49 of the top 50 lobbying firms.

Those are some of the findings of a study by the Center for Public Integrity, which examined all of the lobby disclosure forms filed with the Senate Office of Public Records since 1998. As part of the study, Center researchers have created

an online, searchable database of every registered, federal lobbyist in America, allowing users to find detailed data on lobbyists and their clients. The database provides aggregated information over multiple years for industries, issues or agencies lobbied and access to detailed information from individual lobbying records. It takes information difficult to access from sources such as the Senate Office of Public Records and makes it user friendly and easily accessible by company, lobbying firm or issue.

Influence pipeline

Because of their ability to influence lawmakers and legislation, lobbyists have been dubbed "the Fourth Branch" of government. But while they wield enormous influence in the capital, lobbyists receive little attention from the press and far less public scrutiny.

A search of the Nexis database shows that in 2004, news organizations wrote ten times more stories on campaign finance issues than on federal lobbying, even though the money spent on federal lobbying is routinely twice the amount given to federal candidates and committees in campaign contributions.

Yet the disclosure forms that lobbyists file show far more directly than contribution records what special interests seek in Washington. The reports can reveal that a company is trying to get federal grants and contracts, or a state is attempting to secure federal funding for a highway. They include information on who is fighting for which slice of the nation's \$2.5 trillion annual federal budget, or for or against any of the rules in the 50 titles and tens of thousands of pages of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Federal election law bars corporations, labor unions, non-profits and other organizations from directly contributing to federal elections. These same groups can and do hire lobbyists and pay them directly from their budgets.

Altria Group Inc., the parent company of cigarette manufacturer Philip Morris USA, devoted \$125 million since 1998 to its lobbying operations. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a non-profit organization that represents businesses, spent \$193 million of its money on lobbyists - more than any other single entity. Even the Prison Fellowship Ministries,

a religious organization founded in 1976 by Watergate figure Chuck Colson—who pled guilty to obstruction of justice in the Watergate scandal—to minister to inmates, ex-convicts and their families, has spent \$1,575,577 on lobbying federal officials.

While all three organizations would be barred from contributing to an election regulated by the FEC, they can spend unlimited amounts of money hiring Washington insiders (if they can afford them) to push their agendas.

Rules made to be broken

Under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, the federal law that regulates the influence industry, a lobbyist must disclose his clients, the issues they have hired him to lobby on, the government entities he is trying to influence on their behalf and the amount of money they pay him. If the lobbyist is a former government official, for a limited period of time he must disclose his old government position.

Yet many lobbyists fail to file necessary disclosure forms. Others file their disclosures well beyond the deadlines established by law. Almost one in five lobbying disclosure forms filed were at least three months late. Similarly, more than 3,000 of those filings were submitted at least six months late, while more than 1,700 of them were late by at least one year.

In 1994, the General Accounting Office (now called the Government Accountability Office) estimated that one in four lobbyists don't bother to register. Following passage of the Lobbying Disclosure Act, lobbyist registrations increased significantly from the prior year—in part because of the law's broader requirements for who must file—but there are still those who do not bother to file.

The offices that track lobbyist disclosure, the Legislative Resource Center of the House of Representatives and the Senate Office of Public Records, lack adequate staff to monitor the forms submitted to the House and Senate. Neither office has staff dedicated to ensuring compliance with the law.

In 1993, the chairman of the FEC wrote the House Judiciary Subcommittee to ask that his agency be put in charge of all lobbying disclosure. "All these functional activities are requirements of reg-



ulating campaign finance and we already have developed the type of staff expertise, procedures, physical plant and information technology necessary," FEC Chairman Scott Thomas wrote in addressing pending legislation. Two years later, when the Lobbying Disclosure Act was enacted, Congress decided to keep lobbying disclosure within its purview.

Over the years there have been various calls for lobbying reform, including everything from a bill that would increase the time that federal workers would have to wait before lobbying their old bosses to a provision that would make it illegal to send "fraudulent" lobbying communications to Congress.

Yet lobbyists who often oppose one another in the rough and tumble of backroom legislative battles have by and large united against more regulations over their industry. And for the 535 members of Congress and the 30,000 people who serve on their staffs, lobbying is often a lucrative career option. Some 240 former members of Congress and agency heads were registered lobbyists, according to the Center's analysis. In all, more than 2,200 people registered as lobbyists in Washington during the period covered used to work for the federal government in some capacity.

On the rare occasions when Congress has tried to rein in those who go from the government's payroll to working for private interests, its efforts have been narrowly focused.

"The real problem here is one of appearance—the appearance of a revolving door between government service and private-sector enrichment," Sen. Robert Dole remarked when the Senate debated the Lobby Disclosure Act in 1995. Dole referred to one type of federal official: those who worked for the U.S. Trade Representative's office, which negotiates trade agreements with foreign governments.

In its first investigative report, released in December 1990, the Center for Public Integrity documented that 47 percent of those officials went on to lobby for foreign interests after leaving government service.

Dole called for a lifetime ban on lobbying for foreign governments by the nation's top trade officials. "Service as a high Government official is a privilege, not a right," he said. "This amendment may discourage some individuals from accepting the U.S.T.R. job, but in my view, this is a small price to pay when the confidence of the American people is at stake."

After graciously accepting his defeat in the 1996 Presidential election, Dole bowed out of politics and went on to a lucrative career working for Washington lobby firms. The former Senate majority leader is now a registered lobbyist who has represented the government of Indonesia.

Source: The Center for Public Integrity, 910 17th Street, NW, 7th Floor, Washington, DC 20006 A. Tel. (202) 466-1300

Cardoza opposes CAFTA— now for Pombo

Dear constituent:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). I appreciate hearing your views on this important issue.

The Bush Administration signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in May 2004. If ratified by Congress, it would reduce tariffs between the United States and six Central American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. Supporters say the agreement would create more jobs by boosting trade opportunities for American products. Opponents say it would hurt the United States, because Central American nations do not have to comply with strict en-

vironmental and labor laws, giving them an unfair advantage.

You will be pleased to know that I strongly oppose CAFTA. While I recognize that free trade has the potential to expand markets for U.S. goods and services, I believe free trade without enforceable protections will result in the loss of more American jobs to lower-paid foreign workers. NAFTA and other trade liberalization pacts—touted as market-opening agreements—have instead encouraged companies to export millions of American jobs overseas.

If we do not first guarantee fair trade, we do not have free trade. Too often, the Central Valley has witnessed the downside of trade agreements that allow subsidized foreign imports to overwhelm

domestic products, particularly in the agriculture sector, the source of jobs for thousands of Central Valley residents. A vote on CAFTA may occur during a Congressional session after the November 2004 elections. Please be assured that I will keep your views in mind as debate on this important issue continues.

Thank you for taking the time to inform me of your views. If I may be of any further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Dennis Cardoza
Member of Congress

ACTION: Contact undecided Rep. Richard Pombo.

Let Wal-Mart hear from exploited children

Connecticut just fined Wal-Mart for child labor law violations. And in January, Wal-Mart agreed to pay \$134,540 after being cited for additional child labor violations in Connecticut, Arkansas and New Hampshire. In response, this summer the AFL-CIO is starting a campaign to tell Wal-Mart this is not acceptable by initiating a boycott of back-to-school supplies. Families are being asked to help their children write letters by Aug. 1 to Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott telling him why their families won't buy school supplies from Wal-Mart this year. Here are some unpleasant facts about Wal-Mart they can use as they write their letters:

- Wal-Mart has racked up huge fines for child labor law violations. The rich company reportedly makes children younger than 18 work through their meal breaks, work very late and even work during school hours. Several states have found Wal-Mart workers younger than 18 operating dangerous equipment, such as chain saws, and working in dangerous areas like trash compactors. (The New York Times, 1/13/04; The Associated Press, 2/18/05; The Hartford Courant, 6/18/05)

- Wal-Mart pays poverty-level wages and fails to provide affordable health insurance to more than 600,000 employees. That means Wal-Mart workers and their families have a hard time paying the bills and getting the health care they need. (Wal-Mart annual reports; BusinessWeek, 10/2/03)

- Wal-Mart has a shameful record of paying women less than men—discriminating against moms. Wal-Mart paid full-time male employees \$5,000 more than women on average in 2001. Some 1.6 million women are eligible to join a class-action lawsuit charging Wal-Mart with discrimination. (Richard Drogin, Ph.D., 2/03; Los Angeles Times, 12/30/04)

- Wal-Mart sells products made by young people in other countries who work in horrible conditions over long hours for little money doing dangerous jobs. In Africa, workers who make clothing for Wal-Mart are forced to put in too many hours, are not paid enough to take care of their families and can't even take breaks to use the bathroom. Wal-Mart refused to investigate stories that shoes and jeans from Asia were being made by workers in forced labor camps.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, 11/14/04; China Labor Watch, the National Labor Committee and Clean Clothes Campaign reports)

- Wal-Mart can afford to do better. Wal-Mart—America's largest private employer—brought in \$10 billion in profits last year. CEO Lee Scott landed nearly \$23 million in total compensation last year alone. Wal-Mart has no excuse for its behavior.

ACTION: 1) Help your children write letters (by August 1) telling Scott his company is hurting families, communities and children here and around the world—and that's why your family won't be shopping for back-to-school supplies at Wal-Mart this year. Please send the letters to: Lee Scott, CEO, C/O Wal-Mart Campaign, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006

2) Learn more about how Wal-Mart affects your community, go to: <http://www.walmartcostsyoudo.com>

3) Tell your friends about the many reasons not to do back-to-school shopping at Wal-Mart.

Source: Working Families e-Activist Network, AFL-CIO alert 7/12/05



Mainstream press = truth? Get alternatives & decide.

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.

KPFA (94.1 FM) provides extraordinary coverage of issues. There are short news reports most hours and longer news programs at 3 and 6 pm. You can listen on the internet at <http://www.kpfa.org>

Listen to **Democracy Now!** on KPFA, 94.1 FM at 9am, on KVMR, 89.5 at 7pm or on the web at: <http://www.democracynow.org>

Common Dreams News Center: <http://www.commondreams.org/>
Truth Out: <http://www.truthout.org/>

AlterNet.org: <http://www.alternet.org/>

Hightower Radio — <http://www.webactive.com/hightower/>

Free Press <http://freepress.net>

<http://www.reclaimthemedias.org>

Media Tank, <http://www.mediatank.org>

Counter Punch <http://www.counterpunch.org>

MediaChannel: <http://www.mediachannel.org/>

Independent Media Center: <http://www.indymedia.org>

Black Voices for Peace: <http://www.bvfp.org/>

B-Tselem—<http://www.btselem.org>

A Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP): www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org

Other places for news and information

The Nation—<http://www.thenation.com/>

Mother Jones—<http://www.motherjones.com/>

In These Times — <http://inthesetimes.com/>

The Progressive — <http://www.progressive.org/>

Z Magazine—<http://www.zmag.org/>

Tom Paine.common sense — <http://www.tompaine.com/>

MoveOn.org — <http://www.moveon.org/>

Global Alliance Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space — <http://www.space4peace.org>

The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/>

Angry Arab News Service—<http://www.angryarab.blogspot.com/>

Corporate Watch — <http://www.corpwatch.org/home/PHH.jsp>

Institute for Global Communication — <http://www.igc.org/igc/gateway/index.html>

We're on the web too!

The Peace & Justice Network of San Joaquin County (pjnsjc) website is back with information, calendar, media links, and more. Under construction and growing. Share your ideas on how the website should evolve.

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>

The estate (death) tax explained

Under current law, the estate tax is reduced gradually through 2009, repealed in 2010, and then reinstated in full force in 2011. Few expect things to actually play out that way.

The president and many members of Congress would like to repeal the tax permanently, and many would like to do so before 2010. Repeal would be expensive, however: immediate repeal would reduce revenues by over \$400 billion over the next decade. Even making repeal permanent as of 2010 would cost \$270 billion in the next 10 years. Repeal would also be regressive, would reduce charitable giving by over \$15 billion a year, and would invite significant tax sheltering. It would increase the concentration of wealth, and may increase the political power of a wealthy elite.

Critics of the estate tax counter that it burdens small farms and businesses with confiscatory tax rates, discourages work and thrift, and retaxes money taxed under the income tax. In fact, few small farms and businesses appear to be subject to the estate tax, although many families may undergo costly planning to avoid it. The empirical evidence on saving behavior is ambiguous: The tax may discourage work and saving for people subject to it, but it has the opposite effect on heirs who—expecting smaller bequests—choose to work harder and save more. And while the tax may “double tax” income in some cases, much of the wealth subject to estate tax was earned through untaxed capital gains and so has never been subject to the income tax.

In contrast to repealing the tax, retargeting the estate tax to very wealthy households and lowering its rates would blunt much of the criticism against it while retaining many of its advantages.

How it works

According to federal law, the executor of an estate must file a federal estate tax return within nine months of a person's death if the gross estate exceeds an exempt amount—currently \$1.5 million. The exempt threshold has been phasing

ing down since 2001, when the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act (EGTRRA) enacted a gradual phaseout of the tax. After a scheduled elimination in 2010, the estate tax returns in 2011 with an exemption of \$1 million and a top statutory rate of 55 percent.

The estate tax allows deductions for transfers to a surviving spouse, charitable gifts, debts, funeral expenses, and administrative fees. About 90 percent of married decedents who file estate tax returns avoid the tax entirely, largely because of the unlimited spousal deduction. A unified credit exempts taxes on the first \$1.5 million of taxable transfers in 2005 (including gifts made during life and transfers at death), a figure scheduled to rise to \$3.5 million in 2009. In addition, the valuation of assets can often be discounted through careful tax planning, so the effective exemption far exceeds the statutory amount for many estates (Schmalbeck 2001).

Family-owned farms and closely held businesses receive especially generous treatment under the estate tax. Farmers and small business owners may reduce the value of their real estate using a special formula as long as their heirs maintain its use as a family-owned farm or business and do not sell it to a nonrelative for at least 10 years. Special use valuation can reduce the value of the real property portion of most farms by 40 to 70 percent of its market value. In addition, estates in which farm and business assets make up more than 35 percent of the gross estate may pay their estate tax in installments over 14 years at reduced interest rates. Only interest is due for the first five years. In 2003, the interest rate on the first \$493,800 of estate tax was 2 percent; the interest rate on amounts above that was 45 percent of the interest rate that applies to underpayment of tax (which was 4 percent for the third quarter of 2004).

Source: Tax Policy Center document 3/23/05: a joint venture of the Urban Institute and Brookings Institution <<http://taxpolicycenter.org/home/>>

Bush's true legacy: bankrupting government

What can the Senate leadership possibly be thinking? The Senate is expected to consider eliminating the estate and gift tax later in July, a tax cut that would primarily benefit only the wealthiest few. And, they are considering this when:

- the federal debt is expected to keep growing as far as the eye can see;
- the Medicare trust fund is already facing huge deficits in the years ahead;
- programs that serve the poor and protect the environment are facing budget cuts;
- millions lack access to quality, affordable housing, health care, child care and nutrition; and
- the costs of the ongoing wars are continuing to mount.

The House already passed this unwise and unfair legislation in April (H.R. 8). Your voice is needed now to make sure the Senate does not make the same mistake.

Background

This is no time for Congress to be considering more tax cuts for the wealthiest. Why?

- The congressional Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the cost of repealing the estate and gift tax would be \$290 billion between 2006 and 2015. However, the cost of repeal would increase sharply after 2012. From 2012 to 2021, the cost would be almost \$1 trillion when additional interest on the national debt is factored in, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP).
- Repealing the estate tax would benefit only a very small number of very wealthy heirs—less than two percent. Today, estates valued at less than \$1.5 million are not taxed at all (\$3 million for a couple), and, by 2009, only the value of estates exceeding \$3.5 million will be taxed (\$7 million for a couple) according to CBPP.
- If the 2009 exemption level (\$3.5 million for individuals and \$7.0 million for couples) were made permanent, by 2011, only an estimated 8,500 estates would be subject to the tax, affecting the estates of only 0.3 percent of the number of people who are expected to die that year, according to the Urban Institute-Brookings Institution Tax Policy



Center and CBPP. This exemption level is sufficient to exclude almost all small businesses and farms from any estate tax.

- The Congressional Budget Office estimates the federal debt will grow by \$1 trillion over the next 10 years under current policies. Add the anticipated costs of additional tax cut extensions, correcting the alternative minimum tax, and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the debt will grow \$4.1 trillion by 2015, according to the CBPP.
- The Medicare Health Insurance trust fund paid out more than it received in tax revenues beginning in 2004, according to the Social Security Administration Trustees. Expenditures are expected to exceed revenues at an accelerating rate of growth as far as the eye can see unless Congress intervenes to raise revenues, cut benefits, or control costs. The Social Security trust fund faces a similar future about 15 years from now.
- In the recently enacted congressional budget resolution for fiscal year 2006 (FY06), Congress directed key authorizing committees to cut mandatory spending by \$35 billion over the next five years. Food stamps and Medicaid, the health care program for the poor and elderly, are being threatened with cuts, despite the fact that millions of eligible poor still go hungry and lack quality, affordable health care.
- The FY06 budget resolution also calls for cutting funding for domestic discretionary programs

in FY06 by \$13 billion below last year's levels (adjusted for inflation) and by a total of \$158 billion between FY06 and FY10. According to the CBPP, pending FY06 appropriations bills would cut programs such as education for low-income children, community service block grants, low-income home energy assistance, job training, child care block grants, and state grants to enforce the Clean Air and Clean Water acts.

• Meanwhile, the U.S. has already spent more than \$300 billion waging the “war on terror,” the war in Iraq, and associated reconstruction and security measures. Congress has spent this money while at the same time cutting taxes deeply. Under even the most optimistic scenario, the future cost of the ongoing wars is likely to exceed another \$150 billion to \$200 billion, according to a House Budget Committee Democratic Staff study.

Fairness and compassion?

Where are fairness and compassion for the poor and most vulnerable in this? Where is the fiscal prudence? When will Congress stop deferring our country's debts to future generations?

We at FCNL are concerned about the unprecedented disparity in income and wealth between the rich and the poor today. We believe that the wealthiest, those who have prospered the most from living in our society, have the greatest re-

(continued next page)

Food stamps keep kids alive

The FY 2006 Congressional Budget Resolution instructs the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to design policies to cut \$3 billion in five-year spending from programs under their jurisdiction by September 16, 2005. In addition, the House bill to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program (H.R. 240) would allow five state food stamp block grants and give the executive branch extraordinary authority to change Food Stamp Program rules.

ACTION: The Food Stamp Program is vital to millions of vulnerable people in communities across the country. Help us to protect this important safety net by urging Congress to keep any cuts to the Food Stamp Program as close to zero as possible, by sending a letter to your Senators and Representative. Some ideas are found below:

Senator/representative:

I am writing to encourage you to do everything in your power to protect the nutrition assistance programs under your committee's jurisdiction from actions in the budget reconciliation process that would add to the already millions of needy people who are hungry or food insecure.

I understand that the Committee on Agriculture faces the challenge of reducing mandatory spending by \$3 billion and that difficult choices must be made. Nevertheless, according to the most recent federal government measurement of food insecurity and hunger, 36.3 million people in our nation, including 13.3 million children, live in households that experience food insecurity. That represents 11.2 percent of all U.S.

(continued from page 10)

responsibility to contribute to the common good through a progressive tax structure. We also believe that Congress has a responsibility to assure that there is sufficient revenue to address pressing human needs and to meet social and environmental challenges at home and abroad.

The estate and gift tax advances each of these values. It is fair, and it provides much needed revenue. The value of most estates is well below the taxable threshold, and the vast majority of the tax is paid

households. These numbers have been increasing nationwide, and attempts to cut back the nutrition safety net for these families will make the situation worse. Food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens cannot replace lost food stamp benefits.

Therefore, I strongly encourage you and your colleagues to be mindful of the impact of nutrition cuts on the most vulnerable people in our communities and to keep any reductions in such assistance as close to zero as possible. Food stamp cuts will disproportionately harm low-income people, those who can least afford to bear this additional burden.

The Food Stamp Program is our nation's best defense against the hunger that can make it so difficult for children to thrive and learn and families to achieve self-sufficiency. While more than 36 million people are hungry or at risk of hunger, fewer than 26 million participate in the Food Stamp Program. Further, more than 95 percent of food stamp benefits go to households with incomes below the poverty line; many of the remaining beneficiaries are near-poor elderly or disabled persons.

As you know, the Food Stamp Program has already been subject to major cuts in deficit reduction

by a relatively few very wealthy estates.

This is no time for more tax cuts for the wealthiest. Repealing this tax would reflect poor stewardship of the public trust and the common good.

ACTION: Please contact your senators. Urge them to oppose repealing the estate and gift tax or any so-called "compromise" that would dramatically reduce estate and gift taxes for the wealthiest. Repealing this tax would be unwise and unfair, further shifting

contexts in the 1996 reconciliation and welfare reform legislation. As estimated by the Congressional Budget Office, almost \$28 billion was cut from the Food Stamp Program over six years — more than any other program, and whole categories of persons were denied eligibility or had access to the program reduced. Most of these billions of dollars in cuts continue to affect needy people. Only about one-third of these cuts have been restored.

Too many people are hungry; too many hungry people are not getting food stamps; too many people cannot afford to lose even one cent of food stamp benefits; the average benefit amounts to just one dollar per person per meal. I strongly encourage you and your colleagues to do all you can to protect this important nutrition program.

Sincerely,

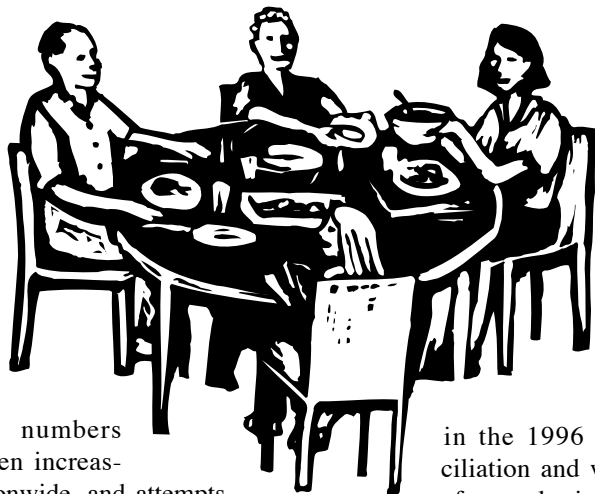
National Groups signing this letter include: America's Second Harvest-The Nation's Food Bank Network, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and Food Research and Action Center.

Source: Food Research and Action Center action alert 7/7/05 <http://www.frac.org>

the tax burden from the wealthiest to working families.

FCNL makes it easy to contact your senators by allowing you to send a message directly from their web site. Be sure to personalize the sample letter to include your own views. You may also wish to describe how this tax cut would affect you and your community.

Source: FCNL legislative action message 7/12/05, Friends Committee on National Legislation, 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002-5795 www.fcnl.org (800)630-1330



Honest voting: open up the software

For those who have been following the revelations about the status of voting systems in this country, here's an action you can take to help convert California to use open-source software for voting equipment.

As you may know, our balloting and tabulation equipment currently uses proprietary software. This means that no one can examine the source code to see how it actually works, or to see if there are hidden programs that could change the election outcome.

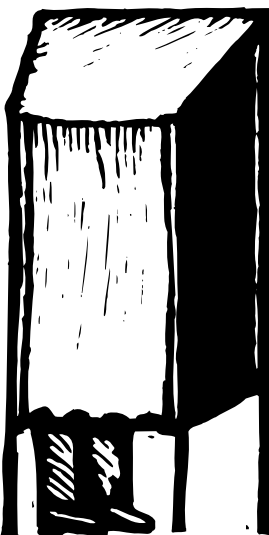
Open-source software, as the name implies, is not owned by anyone and is therefore available for public inspection. There is a growing demand for election departments to use open-source software.

ACTION: You can help by sending a letter to Secretary McPherson asking him to take action on the issue of open-source code for voting equipment. A sample letter follows.

Mr. Bruce McPherson
California Secretary of State
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Secretary McPherson:

I would like to express to you my support for using open-source software for counting votes in California elections. Like many other citizens I am disturbed by the revelation that all of our votes are counted by proprietary software whose source code cannot be inspected. Even if the Elections Division has complete faith in a proprietary software vendor's code, the lack of transparency will never garner



I believe that open-source software will help instill voter confidence in the election process. On June 16th, citizens from around the state testified before the Voting Systems and Procedures Panel to voice their concerns that 100% of the votes are counted using proprietary software. Many people spoke in favor of using open-source software for voting systems.

One organization that has been doing good work in this area is the Open Voting Consortium (www.openvoting.org). Their efforts have earned the support of various political leaders, county registrars, and election reform advocacy groups. They propose to work with the University of California to develop open and transparent voting systems for California, starting with open-source central county canvassing systems.

I'm aware that, as State Senator, you supported ACR 242. That resolution requested the Secretary of State to investigate and evaluate the use of open-source software. Now that you are the Secretary of State, I urge you to act upon the sentiments of ACR 242. And, specifically, I ask you to meet with the Open Voting Consortium and UC representatives to discuss their project.

Sincerely,

(Note that there's reference to ACR 242 in this letter. This was a Resolution from the state Legislature. Here's the legislative analyst's write-up:

ACR 242, Goldberg. Ballot tally software. This measure would request the Secretary of State to investigate and evaluate the use of open-source software in all voting machines in California and report his or her findings and recommendations to the Legislature by January 1, 2006. The measure would state that the Legislature is committed to exploring and reviewing all available programs and features, including open-source software, that may enhance the security of election results and increase voter confidence in the integrity of the voting process.)

Source: Green Party of California Update 7/1/05 <http://www.cagreens.org>

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A community garden

Beth Luna

When Rev. Bob Hailey said, "We are stewards of the land. I'd like to see good use made of this acre and a half surrounding the church," he started something.

The word spread to Adrian Nickols, Chris Kovach, Karen De Groot, Ray Ledesma, Rosemary Atkinson and others. The thought of a community garden evolved. But how could they make this happen?

Ray had observed city gardens develop in the Bay Area. Depending on the leadership, some were slow to get started and others almost fell into place. He sees this garden as an educational medium. A large portion of the space will be set out in plots where each person would sign up for the amount of space he or she could take care of.

In preparation for this, Ray has planted a model garden. He has lettered signs designating crop rows. There is a barrel filled with grass and weeds, labeled COMPOST. Just walking through this garden is an educational trip because, since we are no longer exclusively a farming community, there are many who haven't the least idea of how to grow plants.

One might say that these plots and the instruction that Ray plans to give will be the back bone of the community garden. In addition, there will be larger planted areas. Part of the plan will be a section especially to supply the church members. They gave their land



Adrian Nichols at the community garden.

that this might take place. A further planting includes space for helping to supply places like the Emergency Food Bank. It takes time and loving the land to reclaim it.

At this time, partly because of the heat, volunteers are not showing up to help. All the land has been disked. A farmer has donated aged manure. This has been spread as far as it would go. This land has been fallow for many years. It has become a dumping ground. Now it will take time and patience to reclaim it. There are 7 long rows, mostly of tomatoes and peppers. The PVC irrigation pipe is lying there, waiting for the man-power to lay it. Although this garden has promise, the first crop may be a winter garden with plants such as broccoli and spinach.

First, there was the dream-wish

that Rev. Hailey expressed. Added to that, came an expanding dream of the leaders of the project. Now, step by step it takes form.

As Rosemary Atkinson sees it, she says: "This garden is looking great. Seven long rows are planted. Some hardy souls have been out there watering in the heat. Ray's demonstration garden is a miracle to behold. Just a few short weeks ago it was a junk pile. Already it is becoming a beauty spot. It is now called: Rosemarie Lane Community Garden."

To back her words, she has been out there with a hoe. Adrian and Ray are doing their part and as it takes form, others will follow. A dream is taking form.

ACTION: For more information, call 467-4455.



Unloading aged manure for the community garden.

Big oil, big agriculture trap

Chris Kovach

The price of a gallon of gasoline at the pump on July 1, 2005 was \$2.41 a gallon and the price for a gallon of milk at Food for Less on Wilson Way was \$2.88. These goods are what economists have termed "price parities." When one rises the other one rises with it and visa versa. The price of food over the last 30 years in the United States has been increasingly fixed to the price of oil. Large monoculture agriculture (what has been termed the green revolution) can produce a single crop at a very low cost, but the cost of distribution from a single point to a global market significantly affects the price of food.

With cheap Saudi Crude oil, trillions in domestic oil subsidies, CIA coups to install friendly regimes (like Saddam Hussein's) and military aid to keep them in power, as well as direct military intervention in the Middle East, between 1950 and 2000 the real price of a gallon of gasoline actually dropped for US consumers. The cheap oil advantage has led to larger and larger farms with wider distribution networks. Smaller farms and local markets have been wiped out. In effect, the American diet is tremendously oil dependant.

In 1978, when the book *Eating Oil* was published by Maurice B. Green, the average American consumed food with ten times the energy put into it than the energy (calories) taken out of it. Since 1978, not only has our diet become even more oil dependant, but the developed world trend to dump large subsidized petro-agriculture products onto the less developed world has further displaced small farmers and localized diets. Mega-farms abroad have also displaced small farmers in the US. In some cases (i.e. iceberg lettuce imported



from the UK), there are 127 calories of energy put into production and distribution per 1 calorie to US consumer.

Grocery stores like Safeway purchase food from all over the globe and have a high calorie input to output ratio.

Food systems in the United States account for 17% of fossil fuel consumption. Food systems in California consume 2.7 billion gallons of gasoline and diesel a year. With so much uncertainty that exists in the global oil market, it is hard to understand why we haven't prepared for the potential fall-out should oil supplies dry up. California is one of the fastest growing states in the nation, growing at a rate of 1.5% a year. California population is projected to grow from 35 million to 54 million by 2025. Of the 8 million arable acres in California, developers purchase 122,000 acres a year. Poor soil management practices by agriculturalist's use of petrochemical fertilizers and chemical herbicides have degraded ag land so profusely that our county has the second worst air quality in the nation. Dust bowl conditions can be created when the bacteria and fungi in the top soil die due to using chemicals and fertilizers; this is a large factor resulting in our poor air quality.

ACTION: What can we do:

1) Grow your own. The UC San Joaquin County Agriculture Extension office is starting a master gardeners program. Maximize your back yard and front yard food production. Contact Mick at the San Joaquin County Ag extension offices (209) 468-2085 for further details.

2) Grow in a community. Stockton community garden commission is looking for volunteers. We can use unused lands in the City and County to grow crops for ourselves and the needy. If you are interested in joining our volunteer efforts or starting a community garden in your neighborhood please contact Adrian Nichols at (209) 931-6733.

3) Join a coop. The Sacramento Natural Foods Coop opened a Target-sized food coop in Elk Grove at 857 Bond Rd, Elk Grove. The grand opening was June 15th. Support local organic agriculture when in the area. With our local collective consumer power and networking, we can start a natural food coop in Stockton. Stay vigilant, take initiative and stay in touch with each other; the opportunity will come.

4) Support the Stockton farmers market which only sells food produced in San Joaquin County.

5) Learn about California edible plants, such as miners lettuce, egg corns, berries, California wild grapes, and more.

5) Don't be a food hoarder, include others, and give back what you take from the earth. Always keep the earth first and don't repeat the mistakes of past generations. Think about the your food source. And keep it local.



Exposing Exxon

For years, one company has led the charge to deny the existence of global warming and fund \$15 million in junk science to cloud the policy debate.

One company has refused to invest serious funds in clean energy technologies, despite raking in record profits at the expense of the American consumer.

One company has persisted in pushing to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, when all other companies have pulled out of the pro-drilling coalition.

One company failed to pay all of the punitive damages awarded to fishermen and others injured by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

It's ExxonMobil. Exposing and changing ExxonMobil's irresponsible and deceptive behavior is the mission of "Exxpose Exxon," a new campaign sponsored by a coalition of America's largest

public interest and environmental groups. The campaign launched mid July with over 50 events outside ExxonMobil service stations around the country as well as online at www.ExxposeExxon.com.

ExxposeExxon.com sheds light on the environmental track record of the world's largest and most profitable oil company, ExxonMobil. "For years, ExxonMobil has intentionally put its own profits above a clean environment and the health of America's families. As a result, we are asking all Americans to not buy ExxonMobil's gas or products, invest in the company, or work for ExxonMobil." stated the ExxposeExxon.com campaign coalition in a letter sent today to Lee Raymond, ExxonMobil's CEO.

ACTION: Consider joining the campaign—and tell a friend. Consumer power is real power.

Source: Union of Concerned Scientists alert 7/12/05 action@ucsusa.org

New law makes recycling TV's easy

Getting rid of a used TV or computer monitor has become much easier, due to the Electronic Waste Recycling Act that took effect January 1. On that date, California retailers began tacking \$6 to \$10 onto the price of every new television or computer sold, depending on screen size. That money—\$15 million in the first quarter—has been streaming into a state fund that pays recyclers 48 cents a pound for safely dismantling and disposing of CRTs. That often adds up to more than \$13 for a monitor and \$24 for a TV. The result: CRT recyclers no longer charge to accept your monitors. In Sacramento, Appliance Distribution of Sacramento, now accepts monitors, TVs and other electronic devices at its North B Street facility at no charge. The

Western Placer Waste Management Authority in Roseville recently scrapped its \$12 fee on monitors and a \$25 fee on larger TVs; now drop-offs are free. Sacramento County has 14 recycling spots, three more than a year ago, for the cathode ray tubes, or CRTs.

"It's like the bottle (recycling) system," said Mark Murray, executive director of the Californians Against Waste Foundation and an enthusiastic supporter of the law. "The collectors are now getting reimbursed for their costs."

ACTION: Ask your local recycler where in San Joaquin County you can recycle your old tubes.

Source: Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News, 7/7/05 Sacramento Bee

Calling all groups—get listed!

The Planning and Conservation League Foundation is presently updating its Central Valley Grassroots Guide for publication this fall. If you are part of a conservation, environmental, environmental justice, sustainable agriculture, sustainable economy, park building, social justice, or related community organization in San Joaquin County, please contact the PCL Foundation so that we can include your organization's most current information in the guide. Please contact Raul Lievanos at 916-313-4520, or by email at Rlievanos@pcl.org

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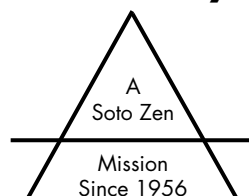
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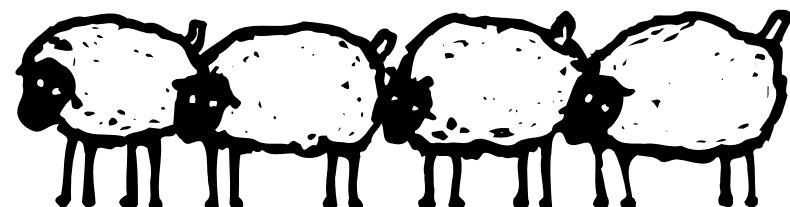
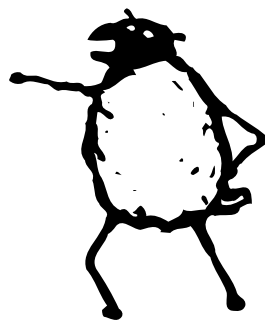


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British memo #2: Iraq exit strategy

Options for Future UK Force Posture in Iraq

Paper by Secretary of State
SECRET - UK EYES ONLY

1. ISSUE

We will need to reach decisions later this year on likely future UK force structure and disposition in Iraq into 2006. This paper sets out some of the key contextual considerations; identifies areas of uncertainty; sets out what we know of US planning and possible expectations on the UK contribution; and assesses the potential impact on UK decision making.

2. Decisions on coalition, and within that, UK force levels will be governed by four factors, all of which are subject to a greater or lesser degree of uncertainty:

- Internal Iraqi pressure for further force posture changes.
- Successful progress in the potential process and extension/renewal of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546.
- The continued development of the capability of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).
- The security situation.

3. None of this, however, undermines the Multinational Force Iraq (MNF-I) broad security strategy of:

- a) Working with the Iraqis to contain and restrain the insurgency.
- b) Assisting and encouraging the development of Iraqi security forces and structures which can progressively assume responsibility

for all aspects of security including dealing with the insurgency, and thereby:

- c) Enable MNF-I force reductions and eventual withdrawal.

4. US POSITION

US political military thinking is still evolving. But there is a strong US military desire for significant force reductions to bring relief to overall US commitment levels. Emerging US plans assume that 14 out of 18 provinces could be handed over to Iraqi control by early 2006, allowing a reduction in overall MNF-I from 176,000 down to 66,000.

There is, however, a debate between the Pentagon/Centcom who favour a relatively bold reduction in force numbers, and MNF-I whose approach is more cautious.

The next MNF-I review of campaign progress due in late June may help clarify thinking and provide an agreed framework for the way ahead.

5. (Technical details)

6. UK Policy Considerations

The current ministerially endorsed policy position is that the UK should not:

- a) Agree to any changes to the UK area of responsibility.
- b) Agree to any specific deployments outside Multinational Division South East.
- c) Agree to any specific increases in the roughly 8,500 UK service personnel currently deployed in Iraq.

7. Looking further ahead, we have a clear UK military aspiration to hand over to Iraqi control in Al Muthanna and Maysan provinces in October 2005 and in the other two Multinational Division South East provinces, Dhi Qar and Basra in April 2006.

This in turn should lead to a reduction in the total level of UK commitment in Iraq to around 3,000 personnel, ie small scale, by mid 2006.

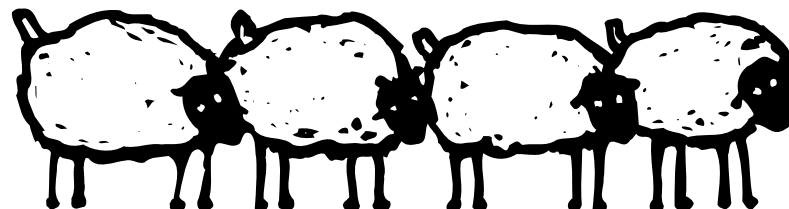
This should lead to an estimated halving in the costs which fall to the reserve, around £1 billion per annum currently. Though it is not clear exactly when this reduction might manifest itself, it would not be before around the end of 2006.

8. None of this however, represents a ministerially endorsed plan. There is a good deal more military analysis to do which is under way. We will need to consider handling of other MND SE allies. The Japanese reconstruction battalion will for example be reluctant to stay in Al Muthanna if force protection is solely provided by the Iraqis. The Australian position, which is highly influenced by the Japanese presence, may also be uncertain.

NOTE: I will bring further and more specific proposals to DOP-I for the future UK force posture in Iraq, including handover to Iraqi control and subsequent UK military drawdown.

John Reid.

Source: The DailyMail UK 7/10/05; \truthout <<http://www.truthout.org/index.htm>>



9/11 White House Whitewash?

The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortion
by David Ray Griffin,
Olive Branch Press, 2005
www.interlinkbooks.com

review by John Morearty

I tried to read the 9/11 Commission Report—too much for me. Too long, too complex, and I don't know enough about the massive research that's been done on that horrible event, which has been used as the all-justifying excuse for America's bloodthirsty foreign policy these past four years.

But David Ray Griffin knows enough. He's a trained scholar (Professor Emeritus at Claremont School of Theology), he's written 25 books, and he's waded through mounds of material about 9/11—both the official stories (there are three of them), and the counter-researchers who have presented evidence that the Bush administration either was part of the plot, or allowed the plot to proceed because it gave the administration, as they said, "opportunities."

Here are a few highlights, as Griffin summarizes them.

Things that don't fit

The Commission ignored reports that at least six of the "hijackers" are still alive. It ignored the fact that flight manifests have never been produced to show the nineteen were on the planes; it ignored reports that supposed Flight 77 pilot Mani Hanjour did not have the piloting skills to perform the complex maneuvers required to crash into the Pentagon.

The Commission ignored that fire has never before brought down steel-frame high rise buildings, that the fires were not very big, hot, or long-lasting, and that the wrong tower fell first. They ignored Mayor Rudy Giuliani's statement to Peter Jennings that he was told to get out of the towers, they were going to collapse. Who told him? The Commission's theory of the collapse denied the towers' most important feature, 47 massive steel columns at their core. They ignored completely the collapse of Building 7, which was never hit by a plane. They failed to discuss the fact that the collapses of all three buildings exemplified ten standard

features of controlled demolitions. They failed to mention that Bush's brother Marvin and his cousin Wirt Walker III were principals in the company that handled security for the World Trade Center; Walker was CEO from 1999 till 2002. And they failed to discuss the quick removal of the wrecked steel beams and columns (shipped to China and Korea), although this removal of evidence from a crime scene would normally be a federal crime.

The Commission failed to discuss the fact that the facade of the Pentagon's west wing did not collapse for half an hour after allegedly being hit by a Boeing 757 going several hundred miles per hour; that the entrance hole was big enough only for the nose of a 757; that the wreckage of a Boeing airliner was visible neither outside nor inside the Pentagon; and that the government, besides not releasing videos proving it was a Boeing airliner, had the security camera video from a nearby gas station confiscated.

The Commission dealt only superficially with the question, why did President Bush and the Secret Service show such lack of fear during the first hour?

The Commission's Report omitted any discussion of the advance warnings reportedly received by Attorney General Ashcroft, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, and several Pentagon officials. It failed to mention various FBI agents, who said they knew the date and targets of the attacks long in advance. And it denied that the notorious stock market manipulation (betting on the fall of American and United stock prices) was based on insider trading, by simply begging the question.

The Commission ignored evidence that Osama bin Laden had spent time shortly before 9/11 in an American hospital in the Middle East, where he was visited by an FBI agent; evidence that Osama had not really been disowned by his family and by the Saudi royal family; and evidence that the effort to capture him in Afghanistan was a charade.

It ignored evidence that some 300 Saudis left the U.S. in the days after the attacks, and that Bush's personal friend Ambassador Prince Bandar was heavily involved in arranging the Saudi flights.

It ignored accusations, by FBI agents Robert Wright and Colleen

Rowley and FBI translator Sibel Edmonds, of high-level FBI obstructionism and sabotage. It ignored evidence of involvement in the attacks by Pakistani intelligence.

If the Bush administration was part of the plot, what was their motivation? The Commission's report ignores the statement by the Project for a New American Century (including Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, John Bolton and Richard Perle) that "a new Pearl Harbor" would be helpful for transforming the U.S. military. The Commission ignores the fact that Rumsfeld, General Richard Myers and General Ralph Eberhart, who were in charge of the air defense of America on 9/11, were enthusiastic promoters of the US Space Command, for which Rumsfeld obtained increased funding on the basis of the 9/11 attacks. It ignores evidence that the war in Afghanistan was about gas, oil, and increased military presence in Central Asia. It ignores the fact that Rumsfeld wrote a memo saying he wanted to attack Iraq whether it was involved in 9/11 or not.

Smell rotten fish? Check out the book yourself, it costs 18 bucks. Or check out the library.

The charade continues. On June 23, it was officially announced that skyscrapers will now be built to new standards, to avoid Twin Towers type collapse.

Meanwhile, all through May and June this year, the White House has refused to discuss the infamous Downing Street memo, in which Tony Blair's government says that Bush's people told them eight months beforehand that the U.S. was determined to attack Iraq, and that "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action," says the memo.

Representative John Conyers presented the White House with more than half a million signatures demanding an explanation; none so far. Impeachment is being proposed. Where do Pombo and Cardoza stand?

I see hope in the fact that, in order to pursue their bloodthirsty policies, the Bush government has to lie to the people—because they know we are mostly good at heart. So be willing to face the truth—and pass it on!



Stop PATRIOT act now

Congress is rushing to vote on a bill next week to make the Patriot Act permanent, without including meaningful reforms to prevent the abuse of its expanded secret search and surveillance powers. The bill to be considered next week will make permanent the parts of the Patriot Act that Congress initially intended to expire. For example, it would make permanent the most unwise and intrusive provisions of the Patriot Act, such as those that give the government access to your medical, library, financial and other personal records, without any requirement that the federal government demonstrate that there are any facts connecting records about you to a foreign terrorist. Unless we can defeat this reauthorization or modify it, the chances for meaningful reforms to the Patriot Act this year will be slim. Or none.

In the days just after the 9/11 attacks, Congress was reluctant to deny the Bush administration any of the new surveillance and investigative powers it demanded.

But now, four years later, it is clear we need to apply the test suggested by the 9/11 Commission to those provisions of the Patriot Act that are set to expire. First, has the administration proved that they actually and significantly increase our security? Second, if so, do they contain safeguards to protect our liberties and prevent abuse?

The 16 expiring provisions of the Patriot Act were not properly vetted the first time, and included unwarranted expansions of federal power, yet some in Congress are poised to make them permanent with no real corrections. If they succeed, extreme provisions like Section 215—which gives the FBI broad access to your personal records without individual suspicion, probable cause or any meaningful ability to challenge the secret court order that allows this access—will forever be a fixture of our laws.

ACTION: Contact your representative today.

Source: ACLU Action Network release 7/13/05 <action@dcaclu.org>

Has the administration
proved that the Patriot Act
actually and significantly
increases our security? If so,
does it contain safeguards
to protect our liberties and
prevent abuse?

There never was a good war,
or a bad peace.

—Benjamin Franklin



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Dave Waldon

From the chaotic madness known as Coney Island, where hot dogs and chili intermingle so wonderfully, to the equally chaotic shores of Southern California, where “there are more stars than in heaven.” From the Caribbean “entrepot” known as Florida, land of oranges, boat people and hanging chads, to the lush, rain soaked landscapes of Washington State, home of the Space Needle.

From the pristine environment of Alaska, where polar bears and caribou and harp seals must now outrun the looming shadow of encroaching humanity, to the beautiful Hawaiian Islands, where the relentless onslaught of capitalism has already tarnished this jewel of the Pacific. In all these places and all points in between, we call this land, this America, this US of A, our home.

We are young. We are old. Many of us are at the crossroads, desperately opposing Father Time in a losing effort to maintain our youth. We have fought many battles to preserve and protect, to strengthen and solidify, and to abolish injustice and inhumanity toward both our fellow countrymen and those who live in other lands.

In that First World War, the “war to end all wars,” it was one of us who led the charge to create a safe and secure Europe. Then, when the heavy hand of tyranny shattered the tranquility and lives of our fellow Americans on a day that will live in infamy, it was then that perhaps our greatest member rose up on polio-ravaged legs and marched our nation and our people to victory and ultimate supremacy on the stage of world affairs.

When the Great Depression, brought on by the recklessness, inhumanity and cupidity of our adversaries threatened to derail and destroy our proud people, it was our leader who held his ground, declaring, “we have nothing to fear but fear itself.” From these dark days emerged the National Relief Act, the Work Programs Act, Social Security, Welfare and unemployment insurance; the very lifelines by which many survived then and continue to survive to this day.

African Americans, enraged, enlightened and determined to end 100 years of Jim Crow in-

flicted injustices turned to one of us and became part of the Great Society, a noble and far reaching attempt to rectify decades of evil and negligence. The great labor reforms of the 1930s and beyond were bouyed by our support. When our country was threatened by the nuclear might of the USSR from an island a scant 90 miles from our coast, it was one of us, a bona fide war hero, that stood unflinching, thereby averting a possible Armageddon.

It is we who draft legislation providing for our veterans, the sick, and the homeless. The burdens of clean air, pure water, fair taxes, endangered species protection, equitable wages, firearm legislations, and consumer safety are laid primarily upon our shoulders. We are an integral part of this country, dedicated to the preservation of our great land.

We have fought in all wars. The blood of our members has spilled in Belgium, in Vietnam, in Iwo Jima, in Korea and in a hell hole called Iraq. We are tired of having our patriotism challenged, our opinions attacked and our motives questioned. Being anti-war does not imply cowardice or unwillingness to fight. It means that we desire to find a solution, if possible, other than killing people. No one should

be eager to go to war, and certainly not those who do no fighting. What sane person is not anti-war?

Yes, our group has seen hard times when our message was lost in the nationalistic, propaganda driven fog of our opponents. But the fog eventually clears and the common man and woman who depend on us for their potection will soon see the light. That light, however dim, is still burning. We refuse to surrender.

We will continue to fight corporate tyranny and political injustice. We will fight for the rights of women and minorities. We will treat gays not as enemies, but as fellow Americans who deserve the same rights we all expect and enjoy. We are open minded to discussion and compromise but we refuse to be badgered by heavy handed, short-sighted rhetoric. And we will continue to speak out against an illegal, immoral and unnecessary war which bestows dishonor upon our country, death and destruction to tens of thousands, and unconscionable wealth for the men who implemented the war from the safety of their taxpayer funded “fox holes.” We are angry. We are resolute. We are Americans. We are liberal, we are moderate, we are conservative. We are Democrats.



Papal Hall of Fame

According to my Vatican correspondent, Guido Sarducci, it was a big disappointment for Pope Benedict (Benny) and other Vatican officials when they got word that Pope John Paul was placed on a waiting list for entrance into the Papal Hall of Fame. A local Monsignor, who possesses the unique gift of spiritual telepathy, received a communication from on high and passed the word along on a need-to-know basis. Unfortunately, the Papal Hall of Fame story was leaked to the press. Guido speculates that it was leaked by Monsignor Peccadillo. He has been passed over for ecclesiastical promotion, for many years.

Everyone thought the venerable John Paul was a shoo-in on a fast track to celestial glory. No Pope covered more terrain traveling to more continents, reaching out to more people than John Paul. He had accumulated a surplus of more than 10,000 frequent flyer miles. He never saw a Boeing B seven he didn't want to board. Three times he won the coveted Italian Aire "traveler of the year" award. While tooling about in foreign capitals as well as in Rome, John Paul would extend his blessings to the populace from the famous, aptly named Popemobile. Great throngs of men, women and children would congregate to receive his blessings and messages to keep the faith. I e-mailed my Vatican news source, the above mentioned Guido, for an update on the current status of the Vatican's efforts to pave the way for John Paul's membership in the Papal Hall of Fame. His reply follows:

Guido: You probably know that John Paul had the second longest papal reign since they began keeping records. He even beat out Pope Pius the twelfth who was no slouch with two decades of minding the ecclesiastical store, so to speak.

Like a true shepherd, John Paul liked being out doors tending his flock. He spent as much time outside the Vatican walls as he did within. My insider friend, Peccadillo, said that some of the Pope's trips away from the Vatican were motivated by his need for a change of cuisine. It has been rumored that the long-time Vatican cook, Mama Mia, never prepared a papal meal that wasn't drenched with garlic sauce and hot spices. I'm going to tell you something else about the Pope that only a few

of us knew about. Of course, once again, my source was Monsignor Peccadillo who has made a career out of being the Vatican sleuth.

Every once in awhile, on a warm sunny day, John Paul would excuse himself from the ever-present Cardinal Ratzinger with a make up story about needing to work on an encyclical in his private study which was off limits to everyone. He would repair to his quarters, exchange his robes for a cleric's black cassock and hat and sneak out a side door to make his way to an outdoor cafe. His favorite pastime was relaxing in the sun while sipping a capuchino and munching on canoles.

When I inquired about the Papal Hall of Fame, Guido allowed that the main requisite for membership was the "miracles" requirement. It must be authenticated that John Paul performed two miracles that could have no scientific explanation. Right now, a lot of people are searching everywhere for credible evidence of at least one miracle, for starters. John Paul had the habit of kneeling and kissing the ground of each country he visited. In spite of his frailty, Parkinson's and other physical ailments he always managed to rise on his own volition. I asked Guido if that might qualify as a borderline miracle.

Guido: Rising from kneeling without the aid of a cleric was defined as "miracle light," which falls short of the strict miracle requirement.

When I questioned Guido about the current Pope's (Benedict 16) early on effort to position John Paul on the Hall of Fame fast track, he replied with the following e-mail:

"According to the Hall of Fame guidelines there has to be a five year waiting period during which time the candidate is declared "Venerable." This is like a piece of cake since most of the cardinals always referred to John Paul as the venerable J.P. After "Venerable," the second step is being declared "Blessed." He shouldn't have any problem with "Blessed." During his 27 years as Pope, John Paul spent more time giving blessings than hiding Mama Meals meals under the table. What's left is the "miracle" find and that's a work in progress.

I thanked Guido for his Papal Hall of Fame update. In closing, I e-mailed the following dialogue between St. Peter and Pope John Paul 2.

Pope John Paul gets to heaven. St. Peter says, "Frankly, you're lucky to be here." Pope John Paul says, "Why? What did I do wrong on earth?" St. Peter says, "God was very angry with your stance on women becoming priests." Pope John Paul says, "He's mad about THAT?" St. Peter says, "She's furious."

*Reid Cerney
Vatican observer*

Mediation Center

Wanted: a few good teachers

The Mediation Center of San Joaquin County is currently looking for individuals who like public speaking, giving presentations, and enjoy working with youth. Volunteers are needed to give Introduction to Stress and Anger Management and Shoplifter Education Program workshops to first time juvenile offenders. This is part of the Community Accountability Prevention Services Program (CAPS), a program created and funded by the San Joaquin County Probation Department. The Mediation Center will train all volunteers for presentations and supply all materials. Volunteers will start as assistants, with the intent of becoming the primary presenter per workshop. Volunteer position can possibly turn into part-time employment. For information on upcoming trainings contact Francine at the Mediation Center at 474-8794.

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Young Sounds of San Joaquin comes to Delta College

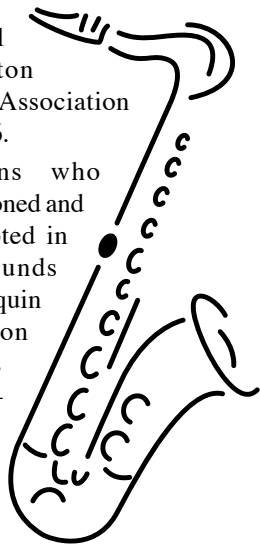
Young Sounds of San Joaquin (YSSJ) is an audition only group of outstanding high school musicians from San Joaquin County. Kids College is proud to announce that this group will be coming to Delta College as part of our fall program. Brian Kendrick, a Delta College music instructor, will be the musical director of this talented group. YSSJ is a standard big band format including: 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 2 alto saxophones, 2 tenor saxophones, piano, guitar, bass and drums. The band performs several concerts each year including the Brubeck Festival, The Asparagus Festival and the Delta College Jazz Series. Students receive tutelage from professional musicians and the Brubeck Institute Fellows. YSSJ has performed concerts with many notable musicians including Christian McBride and Dan Brubeck.

Interested high school, advanced musicians are encouraged to attend the mandatory audition to be held on Thursday, Sept 8, 3:30-6:30 pm, in HOLT 113 at San Joaquin Delta College. For questions or additional information regarding the YSSJ,

please call the Stockton Musicians Association at 464-4016.

Musicians who have auditioned and been accepted in Young Sounds of San Joaquin will meet on Thursdays from 3:30-6:30 pm for 12 sessions. The registration fee for this workshop is \$125. Registration will be accepted for those musicians who audition and are accepted into the YSSJ on September 8.

For further information about Kids College for children and teens please call 954-5015, or visit the web: <http://kids.deltacolleg.edu>. Information regarding the Adult Community Education Program can be found at communityed.deltacollege.edu or by calling 954-5013.



Muslim exchange students looking for caring homes

Christina Salerno

The U.S. State Department has enlisted the help of more than 500 high school exchange students from Muslim countries to break stereotypes, debunk prejudices and bridge cultural gaps.

Established after the Sept. 11 attacks, the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program brings over students from countries such as Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

They experience American culture by living with an American family, attending high school and participating in community activities.

But the search for host families has been difficult. For the 2005-06 school year, three students will live in the San Joaquin Valley, and two still need host families; they are scheduled to arrive Aug. 13.

Last year, Laurel Jacobsen tried

unsuccessfully to find a sponsor in the San Joaquin Valley for two exchange students—one from Egypt and the other from the Philippines.

Jacobsen and her husband, Randy McFarland, ended up hosting the students at their home in Selma, outside of Fresno.

‘We couldn’t find homes for these Muslim kids,’ McFarland said. ‘We learned a tremendous amount, just from them being themselves.’

McFarland said programs like this are important, particularly at a time when there is so much distrust and misunderstanding between the two cultures.

The students in need of placement are Muhammad Gery Adlan, 17, from Indonesia, and Abdulaziz Aassaf, 16, from Saudi Arabia. Both are fluent in English.

Gery plays violin and badminton and aspires to become a diplomat, program organizers said. Abdulaziz plays several sports and particularly

likes soccer.

Spots in the program are highly competitive. The winners receive scholarships, including a monthly \$120 stipend.

Nancy Howard, co-president of the Modesto chapter of American Field Service, said the YES students are harder to place than others from abroad, because of cultural bias or a misunderstanding of Muslims.

The students need a place to pray and have certain dietary restrictions, such as no pork, Howard said.

‘It isn’t a problem if the family is open to the opportunity,’ Howard said. ‘People come to realize they have the same hopes and dreams as everyone else.’

For more information on the program, contact Jacobsen at 559-896-3369.

Bee staff writer Christina Salerno can be reached at 578-2330. Reprinted with permission from the Bee.

Embedded: a new film

Mira Ptacin

We can always maintain hope and gain relief when stars take their resources to rock the political boat. Take Tim Robbins. Robbins, who is unapologetically outspoken about his political views, has just released an ardent film that speaks to progressives. And this film could reach far beyond. “Embedded/Live” is a sharp-witted, straight-from-the-headlines mockery covering everything from the devious neo-conservative administration that conjured up the reason for war with Iraq to the brave soldiers and military families actually sacrificing their lives for the war. The film was a 2003 stage production shot before a live audience during Embedded’s Off-Broadway theatre stint. It’s a ridiculous(ly) honest satire of the invasion of “Gommorah,” an oil-rich rogue state ruled by the “Butcher of Babylon.” Robbins describes it as a dramatization of our reckless administration’s march to war and the manipulation

of our press—who acted more like a conveyor belt for the Pentagon’s words. The film poignantly sympathizes with military families as they live their lives according to the war and casts a cynical shadow on the heedless neo-cons who are stuck in the quagmire of war.

I recently asked Robbins if he felt like he was preaching to the choir, but he wasn’t too concerned. “Taking back our country is all done first on a local level. You start locally with your friends and word gets out.” Robbins is right—somebody has to preach to the choir or it might nod off. And someone has to listen to the choir, too.

Robbins believes Embedded is a good tune to sing. “Fewer and fewer people trust the media and they’re ready to take matters into their own hands when [information] is not shoved in their face. ‘Embedded’ does just that. You have to be an active participant—you have to be involved in your country’s life. You have to create community. People

can actively participate in that kind of democracy. Hopefully word of mouth will propel this—truth is not going to be on a platter in front of you.

“In regards to the war, it’s pretty obvious what side the media is on and it’s pretty obvious that they’re easily manipulated. People see that and they want other sources of information. There’s other delivery sources of entertainment as well and that’s what I’m hoping will happen with ‘Embedded.’ They will realize that stuff doesn’t have to be shoved down their throat. The bad news is that we’re not going to make it easy on you.”

So next time you’re standing around the fax or emailing at work, recommend this film. As Robbins said, “once you get people talking you’re doing something.”

The “Embedded/Live” DVD is available from Netflix at <http://www.netflix.com/Default>.

Source: truthout.org 6/10/05 Mira Ptacin can be reached at miraptacin@yahoo.com.

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August/September Calendar

Sept 15

AFSC alumni bash

Fri, June 17- July 29

Fabulous Film Fridays, films based on children's books. Cesar Chavez Central Library, 605 N. El Dorado St. 3:30pm. Free. 937-8221

Wed, July 27

Concert in the Park: Valley Concert Band. Victory Park, Pershing and Argonne. 6-8pm. Free. 937-8206

July 28 - 31, Aug 4 - 7

Stockton Civic Theater presents South Pacific. Atherton Theater, Delta College, 5151 Pacific. 473-2424.

Sat, July 30

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Tour, Electra Rd and Hwy 49, Amador County. 8:30 am. Free. (see p 19)

Sat-Sun, July 30-31

Bon Odori and Cultural Bazaar presented by the Stockton Buddhist Temple, 2820 Shimizu Drive, Stockton. Entertainment, arts, crafts, farmers market, plant sale, food. 11 am - 10 pm. 466-6701

Wed, Aug 3

Concert in the Park: Let's Dance. Grupe Park, Cumberland Place, Stockton. 6-8pm. Free. 937-8206

Sat, Aug 6

Hiroshima 60th anniversary rally and march to Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, 5 pm, William Payne Park, 5800 Patterson Pass Rd, Livermore. (see p 20) 925-443-7148

Tue, Aug 9

Nagasaki 60th anniversary. Non-violent direct action, William Payne Park, 5800 Patterson Pass Rd, Livermore. 8 am (see p 20) 925-443-7148

Wed, Aug 10

Concert in the Park: The Centurions. Oak Park, Alpine at Sutter St, Stockton. 6-8pm. Free. 937-8206

Sat, Aug 13

Dave Lippman, the world's only singing CIA agent, featuring "George Shrub." 7:30pm, Juliana's Kitchen, 14th & G, Sacramento. \$10-20, benefit for Jewish Voice for Peace & Middle East Children's Alliance. (916) 427-7539.

Wed, Aug 17

Concert in the Park: Trucco Polka Band. P.E Weston Park, Ishi Goto @ EWS Woods Blvd, Stockton. 6-8pm. Free. 937-8206

Mon, Aug 22

Elkhorn Slough trip led by Kasey Foley and Rich and Tory Petersen. Meet at Toot Sweets at 6:30 am to carpool. For more info, (209) 473-3904 or kaseyfoley@sbcglobal.net.

Sat, Aug 27

Strut Your Mutt Pet Fair and Dog Day Afternoon, sponsored by Stockton Animal Shelter Friends. Pledged walk-a-thon, booths, entertainment, food and a swim with your pooch, 9 am - 4 pm. Free admission. Victory Park, Pershing and Argonne, Stockton. 956-3647

Thur, Sept 1

Peace & Justice Network meeting, First Unitarian Church, 2737 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7-9 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

Sat, Sept 3

Patricia Lloyd, Grammy Award winner, at Atherton Auditorium, Delta College. Proceeds go to student scholarships.

Thu, Sept 15

AFSC alumni bash, great food, music, people. St. Mary's Cathedral, St Francis Hall, 1111 Gough St., San Francisco \$50. 415-565-0201 (see p 19)

Sat & Sun, Sept 17 & 18

From Violence to Wholeness. Nonviolent training sponsored by PJN. \$10. P&J Center. Registration required (see page 3 for registration form and details).

Weekly

Tuesdays

Stockton City Council Meeting, every Tuesday at City Hall, 5:30 pm. <http://www.stocktongov.com/clerk/pages/CouncilAgenda.htm>

TaiChi, 6-8 pm, Northeast Community Center, 2885 E Harding Way.

First & Third Fridays

Poetry, 8:30-10:30 pm Latte Lounge, 235 E Miner Ave. 466-6224.

Saturdays

Birding Field Trips with S.J. Audubon Society. www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Tai Chi Chuan at the Confucius Church on Lafayette St., 8:30 am-11:am. (209) 952-8582.

Sundays

TaiChi, 2:30-4, Northeast Community Center, 2885 E. Harding Way & Golden Gate.

Monthly

Second Mon

PFLAG meeting, 7-9 pm, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 209-870-3339.

Second Tues

Audubon Society, 7:30 pm, St. Paul's Church, 2220 W Alpine, Stockton.

Third Thur

Hispanics for Political Action meeting, 6:30-8:30 pm. Cancun Restaurant, Weber St, Stockton.

July 30

Upper Moke River Watershed Tour

The Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Council is sponsoring a watershed tour on the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed scheduled for Saturday, July 30th from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. The tour is free to the public and will begin at the parking area on Electra Road accessed on the north east side of the Highway 49 Bridge over the Mokelumne River. Participants will carpool to the various sites from the Electra Road access.

The purpose of the activity is to enhance public education and outreach regarding the Mokelumne River and its unique physical, geological, biological, and historical resources and to discuss river management and stewardship activities on the river.

Scheduled site visits include recreational facilities at Electra, Middle Bar, and Highway 26 Bridge, lunch at a private fishing and wildlife preserve on the South Fork, stream gauge station on the Middle Fork Highway 26 Bridge, and hydroelectric facilities at the PG&E Tiger Creek facilities. Bottled water and lunch in the form of sandwich items will be provided. Participants should dress appropriately for weather conditions.

For more information regarding the activity or to reserve one of the limited spaces, please contact Terry Strange, Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Coordinator at (209) 257-1543 ext 105.

Help wanted: Peace and Justice Network coordinator. Contract position to recruit/organize volunteer staff, coordinate activities at new Peace Center, and raise funds. Part-time—salary and hours negotiable. Send resume by 8/15/05 to: PJN, P.O. Box 4123, Stockton, CA 95204 or email bgiudici@caltel.com.

Talking It Through

Talking It Through is now two half-hour shows.

The Real Reality Show is hosted by Margee Ensign every Monday evening at 6pm

Talking It Through is hosted by Adrian Nichols and Sammy Nunez every Monday evening at 6:30pm

SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

Sponsored by the Peace & Justice Network, InterFaith Council of San Joaquin County, Pacific Complementary Medicine Center

Check the TV page of Wednesday's Record for latest info.

**Studio volunteers wanted! All ages...we'll train.
Call 467-4455.**

*Volunteers
always needed*

Peace & Justice Network is working on a variety of exciting projects and events. We need your help. Call 467-4455 for information or to volunteer.

On the 60th anniversary of Hiroshima...

ACT to abolish nuclear weapons and war

PROTEST new, earth-penetrating nuclear weapons at Livermore Lab

CELEBRATE your vision of a just and nuclear-free world

Rally and march to the Livermore Nuclear weapons Lab WHEN: Saturday, August 6 at 5 PM

WHERE: William Payne Park, 5800 Patterson Pass Rd., Livermore, CA. (Directions Below)

Why Livermore? Why Now?

The Bay Area's Livermore Lab acts as the "brain" of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. Currently Livermore Lab scientists are developing new and modified nuclear weapons, spurring the U.S. to spend billions of dollars upgrading the U.S. arsenal. The U.S. spends roughly one and a half times more on nuclear weapons activities than during the cold war (adjusted for inflation).

Developing nuclear weapons in the Bay Area puts communities at risk. The Dept. of Energy describes the 50-mile radius surrounding Livermore Lab as the affected population. This includes over 7 million people from San

Francisco, to Silicon Valley to Stockton. Plutonium work continues to expand in Livermore, despite a shutdown of the plutonium facility in January 2005 - due to safety violations. The Dept. of Energy has given the green light to double the plutonium limit at Livermore Lab to 3,080 pounds, enough for 300 nuclear bombs.

On August 6, join with us in Livermore to say "yes" to peace and health and "no" to nukes and war.

The Seeds of Change theme reminds us that our actions now are laying the foundation for the peace of the future. Like a pyramid built through generations of labor, our movement is planting the seeds that will one day abolish nuclear weapons and heal global wounds caused by the nuclear legacy. Join with us to plant Seeds of Change and enjoy music, children's activities, and a candlelight march to the gates of the Lab. Bring an item to share at the picnic (potluck) dinner. On the 60th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of the Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we will gather at Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab. Hiroshima, Nagasaki NEVER AGAIN!!!

Sunflowers

Design a sunflower to "plant" at the gates of Livermore Lab. Be creative-use wrapping paper, or other decorative paper to design your flower. Bring your sunflowers with you to the rally; if you cannot attend the rally at the Livermore nuclear weapons lab on Aug. 6, you can participate by sending a sunflower that you make. For full instructions: www.wagingpeace.org/sunflower.

Nonviolent direct action

There will be nonviolent direct action on Tuesday, August 9. Meet at 8 AM at William Payne Park, 5800 Patterson Pass Rd. Take I-580, exit on Vasco Rd; go South 2 miles. August 9 is the anniversary of the Nagasaki bombing. This action is to honor all the victims of nuclear weapons-from mining to designing to testing to use.

Music, theater and other events

Leading up to the August 6, Seeds of Change: No Nukes! No Wars! rally and march to the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, we have organized events with music, theater and poetry. Creating and celebrating our culture of resistance strengthens our movement for peace. The struggle continues, our passion grows. Events include CD release parties with live music, a theater show "Oh My Goddess" and a nonviolence training. For a full list of upcoming events: <http://www.trivalleycares.org/calendar>.

Getting there

Directions to William Payne Park: I-580, exit on Vasco Rd go South; Patterson Pass Rd. will be on your Right. Turn Right, the Park is on your Right.

A complete list of busses and carpools will be posted to the trivalleycares.org website in mid-July.

For more info, contact Tara (925) 443-7148

Aug 6 & 9 National Days of Action

August 6 and 9, 2005 mark the 60th anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States. Join with people at four central U.S. nuclear weapons sites in major actions calling for an end to the development and production of nuclear warheads. Activities will recognize the devastation caused by nuclear weapons and memorialize the many victims of bomb production at every step - from uranium mining to design, to production, to testing and use. Join the global majority to say NO! to militarism, war and oppression, and YES! to nonviolence, justice and a more secure world for all. Here's a list of nationwide actions: <http://www.besafenet.com/nuclear.htm>

Aug 9, we are calling for candlelight vigils to be held at City Halls in communities across the country. In addition, we encourage people to organize readings, lantern lighting ceremonies, shadow projects and more. For more information: <http://www.abolitionnow.org/augustactions.html>



Peace & Justice Center wish list

Remodeling is now underway on the new Peace & Justice Center at 231 Bedford Place, off Pacific Ave. There will be ongoing work parties so consider donating some time--call 951-5669. If you can donate any of the following, it would be very much appreciated.

- 1,375 sq ft of floor coverings (tile, wood and carpet)
- 1,300 sq ft of wall coverings (paint, fabric, etc.),
- 1 double door
- 2 single doors
- small sink
- Bunn 2 pot coffee machine
- small refrigerator
- display case/counter
- 45 folding chairs
- 10 6' folding tables
- 8 large (6'x4') dry erase white boards
- Misc. furniture (couches, small tables, chairs)
- Large conference table
- 6 conference table chairs
- Large screen TV
- Video cassette player
- Surround Sound equipment
- overhead projector
- slide projector
- large projector screen
- video projector
- 6 ceiling fans

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 to anyone. Connections is supported by donations and advertisers.