

25th Annual Peaceful Holiday Faire promotes socially responsible gift giving

Times: Friday, December 2 4—9 pm
Saturday, December 3 10 am—2 pm
Location: Central United Methodist Church,
3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton
Admission: FREE

The Peace & Justice Network of San Joaquin County will present its 25th annual Peaceful Holiday Faire on Friday and Saturday, December 2 and December 3. This is a warm and friendly holiday event designed to encourage thoughtful holiday gift giving that reflects positive values and that benefits people rather than corporations.



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OCCUPY STOCKTON: LOCAL ACTION FOR JUSTICE

MARGIE BROWN

Witness another beautiful sunset unfolding between 4 and 6 pm, as the Occupy Stockton group waves signs and beats drums at downtown Stockton's DeCarli Square. As the days get darker with the season, we are confident that the international Occupy movement is claiming the coming sunrise of economic justice.

Drinking coffee warmly donated daily by Blackwater Cafe, seniors bring their chairs from the Hotel Stockton across the street. Regulars arrive from Iselton, Tracy and Lodi. A two and a four-year-old are also regulars, and they attack the drum with gusto. Other regulars are the commuters passing us on their way home Monday through Friday. "Get a job!" one shouts daily to the group, as the retired seniors laugh. "It is a long commute to India!", one answers. "You're un-American!" is another daily refrain, and we can't imagine a more American responsibility.

LOCAL ACTIONS

Coming up at the time of this writing is our presence and support of Delta College's Town Hall Against Education Cuts held in mid-November on the Delta Collect campus. On Sunday, November 21 there was a teach-in on how we can best respond to the local foreclosure crisis, followed by our weekly 4-6 PM General Assembly at the Peace and Justice Center. Looking forward, we support the Occupy Black Friday boycott of corporate holiday shopping and invite you to shop locally and to make creative gifts. And plans for a teach-in on veteran and military family financial issues is in the works to be held on December 9, commemorating Pearl

Harbor Day, 2 days removed.

We are a small but dedicated group and, although we are not populating a physical encampment, we are occupying the urgent conversation through our street corner presence, Facebook and Meet-up connections. While DeCarli Square is our home-base, members attend Occupy events in Oakland, Sacramento and San Francisco, and join our voices with other soldiers in the economic wars. We had a significant presence leading up to and including Move Your Money/Bank Transfer Day on November 5. We joined the teacher protests of the core curriculum changes at the recent Stockton Unified School Board Meeting and protested near the IRS Office, joining a national call by the National Nurses Association as they prepared to confront Timothy Geithner at his office the same day they confronted the G20 Summit in Cannes.

STAY IN TOUCH

Look for us at our new website, occupystockton.org. Find us on Facebook and Meet-up. Join us weekdays at DeCarli or Sundays at the Peace Center. If your schedule prohibits attending events with us, then put a grass-roots, home-made sign in the window of your car, home and/or office that simply reads: "We are the 99%." And keep up with the news. Even when the corporately-owned TV media tries to pin the whole Occupy movement on people's simple dislike of a five dollar monthly ATM fee, it is inescapable that the Occupy movement has already drastically shifted the national conversation. For more information, contact himargieb@sbcglobal.net.

Pivotal American moment: forward or back

SEN. BERNIE SANDERS

Here is something we all can agree on: Federal deficits are a serious problem.

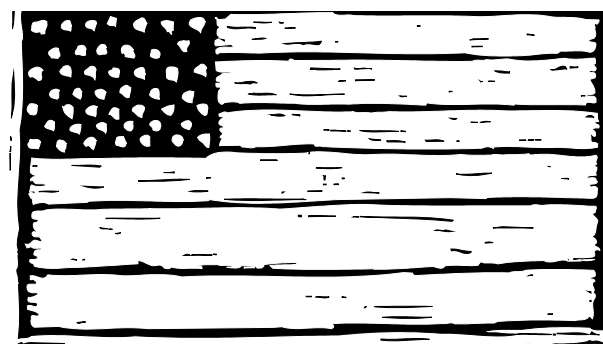
Here is something no one seriously disputes: Today's big deficits were caused mainly by big tax cuts for the wealthy, two unpaid-for wars, a horrible recession caused by Wall Street greed, and an expensive prescription

drug program rigged to favor pharmaceutical companies.

Here is something we should not agree to do: Cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid benefits.

There is surprisingly broad consensus among Americans (except inside the corporate-dominated D.C. beltway) on what to do about deficits. In poll

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Peace & Justice Network
of San Joaquin County
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SAVE THE DATES

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See not what is — but what can be

BRUCE GIUDICI

Presently, the progressive press proclaims revolution with the gusto of a weather forecaster predicting the end of drought after a light rain: a forecast based on a limited sample size. With the onset of winter, we face a time of reflection and a discussion of tactics. Having achieved media celebrity, where does Occupy go? How can the frustrations of millions be turned into effective action? In 2008, people thought voting for a new president would bring “change we can believe in.” Three years later, for a variety of reasons, change has not occurred.

So, we face another election year understanding the limitations of legislative, executive and judicial

action. Our hope still rests on a collective community response, with governmental and judicial action necessary over the long haul. But, as the civil rights movement realized in the 1950's - that change ran through the Federal courts and not the legislatures of southern states - we who demand change must find the path of least resistance. That process is happening now.

The puzzle we confront includes much of what is in this Connections issue: the reasons for public frustration, what responses have worked and what resources we have in our community. With a decentralized approach to problems found in our own backyards, local leaders can by-pass the corrupt systems devised and controlled by big money in our various



electoral districts. Candidates who keep in touch with majorities who have had enough of the corruption will do well; politicians who don't will be punished. Business as usual cannot continue.

So, be it resolved for the year 2012: we as individuals of a democratic community will participate in changes that build, teach and create. At a minimum, we vote. Beyond that, we organize and learn, protest and confront: it will be a year to remember. This holiday season, we have so much for which to be thankful. Be kind when you can and see not what is - but what can be. Happy holidays.

State of affairs

(Ed. note: this letter to the Record is printed here, that it may be printed at all)

Editor,

In what may indeed be my last letter to The Record, after many years and many conjectures I have only this to say. Mankind is a sick and dying species. And a great many of us, not only in this country, but worldwide, have collectively lost the one thing of “true value” we had to offer as a cure: our hearts. A letter writer from Nov.4 implies OWS protesters don't have jobs because of “tattoos, gouged ears, facial piercings and dirty dreadlocks,” as if the appearance of a few constituted the appearance of all. This is the same mentality that raged, “Blacks were inferior,” that “women belonged in the home,” that “the only good Indian was a dead Indian,” that the poor “enjoy their plight,” that each successive immigrant group is somehow paltry as juxtaposed to the previous, or any number of baseless accusations and implications that history has proven conclusively to be erroneous.

This same writer states, “Tea partiers don't defecate in the street, urinate on police

cars or smoke weed at their rallies.” Well-documented evidence shows some Tea partiers carrying firearms to rallies. That certainly doesn't implicate all of them as having done so.

Humans are defiling our environment perhaps beyond the “tipping point,” over-fishing our oceans, embarking on multitudinous wars of empire, engaging in perdurable religious intolerance and aggression, unduly populating and seemingly locked in illimitable pursuits of what has become our “ecumenical religion”...profit, whilst simultaneously embarking on “austerity measures” that will most certainly lead to mass deprivations of such a scale that our linear narrative has scarcely witnessed.

Mark Twain wrote an entry in his autobiography, released 100 years after his death, entitled “The Character of Man.” He states that he, “...was not made for any useful purpose, for the reason that he hasn't served any; that he was most likely not even made intentionally; and that his working himself up out of the oyster bed to his present position was probably matter of surprise

and regret to the Creator. For his history, in all climes, all ages and circumstances, furnishes oceans and continents of proof that of all creatures that were made he is the most detestable. Of the entire brood he is the only one-the solitary one-who possesses malice.” Even a cursory view of humanity's pernicious track record by the most obtuse amongst us authenticates Twain's assertion.

Dave Waldon

P.S. The Record has been delivered to this same address for 47 and 1/2 years. As I'm sure you're aware, I have written innumerable letters over the last 12 years exercising what I consider to be an essential aspect of our First Amendment rights. My concern for our country and its future should be apparent to the Record editorial staff at this juncture. I believe my writing skills speak for themselves. If this letter is to be edited to incomprehensible drivel then I would respectfully ask that it not be printed at all.

The big campaign money game



Let's change the big money game by helping pass AB 1148: California Disclose Act/California Clean Money Campaign. The Supreme Court's Citizen United decision unleashed unlimited, anonymous corporate spending on campaigns. Hidden spending is subverting our democracy!

California DISCLOSE Act will apply to ballot measures and independent expenditures and will:

- Disclose major funders in clear and obvious fashion
- Stop contributors from hiding behind fake names
 - Include disclosure requirements for ballot initiatives and deceptive slate mailers

You can help make this law a reality in California. Come to the meetings to see how you can help make history!!

Meet at the Peace and Justice Center,
231 Bedford Rd in Stockton:
Tuesday November 29, 6:30—8 pm and
Tuesday, Dec 6, 5—6:15 pm, 2011



Contact Your Reps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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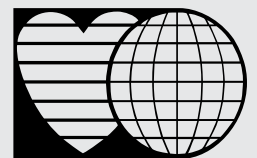
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“The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared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



Is human care too much to ask for? Occupy health care



PHOTO BY CATHY MATHIS

CATHY MATHIS

On October 29, a contingent from Occupy Stockton headed up to the state Capitol to lend support to Occupy Sacramento. The tents had been removed from Cesar Chavez Park and several people arrested earlier in the week, and there was a march planned in protest against the banks and the city council that day. As it turned out, the march incorporated the festivities of the season by featuring participants dressed up as zombies – particularly as zombie bankers. It turned out to be peaceful, successful and fun (notwithstanding the brief confrontation with the police on the steps of the Capitol building before we agreed to disperse), and was repeated again that night, after the Stockton group had left.

Something happened that day, however, that had nothing to do with the official Occupy Sacramento or Occupy Stockton, or any of the separate Occupy groups, that crystallizes for me what this movement is trying to spotlight. It was about 10:30 in the morning. Our group had arrived around 9 o'clock and the park was practically empty at that time, except for a few resident homeless. By 10:30, there were a few pop-up shaded areas, a food table and groups of two or three

milling about. Suddenly, a voice called out, "Help, we need a doctor over here!" I happen to be a licensed physician, so I headed in the direction of the voice.

I arrived at the foot of a large evergreen tree where a homeless woman lay in her sleeping bag, her head resting on a pillow at the base of the trunk. She appeared to be in her sixties, with long gray hair flowing from beneath a knitted hat. She was awake and talking to a younger woman who was kneeling beside her. She had just had a seizure, witnessed by the person who called for help. A young man was also there, telling the young woman not to give the patient a drink of water. He identified himself as a paramedic. The woman identified herself as an emergency room nurse, but agreed not to give the patient a drink. I stood back and observed, and listened.

While we waited for the kind of help you get when you call 911 to arrive, the patient answered questions for the nurse. She has a history of seizures. She had recently seen a doctor who changed her medication to something that she couldn't afford, so she hadn't taken any. About this time, a police car arrived with two uniformed officers. Then came a fire engine and a ladder with sirens blaring. Following them was

an ambulance with a gurney equipped with a hydraulic lift. I backed away, as the situation seemed to be under control.

Here's my point – and I think it would be shared by many of my fellow occupiers: why is this poor woman living under a tree in the park in the first place, and couldn't the money spent on her "rescue" have been better spent in a preventive fashion? I'm guessing that this episode, including ER visit, probably cost in the neighborhood of ten thousand dollars. Who knows? A police car, two police officers, two fire-fighting vehicles, their personnel and an ambulance with two or three people inside...maybe it was only five thousand. For that money, this nice lady could have had an apartment with a bed in it, a heater and a lock on the door for security. She could visit a doctor on a regular basis and have her medications paid for. Someone could deliver her a hot meal or two every day and she could maybe even have a nurse come to check on her from time to time. Is this really too much to ask?



Ten ways the Occupy movement changes everything

SARAH VAN GELDER, DAVID KORTEN AND STEVE PIERSANTI

Before the Occupy Wall Street movement, there was little discussion of the outsized power of Wall Street and the diminishing fortunes of the middle class. The media blackout was especially remarkable given that issues like jobs and corporate influence on elections topped the list of concerns for most Americans. Occupy Wall Street changed that. In fact, it may represent the best hope in years that "we the people" will step up to take on the critical challenges of our time. Here's how the Occupy movement is already changing everything:

1. IT NAMES THE SOURCE OF THE CRISIS.

Political insiders have avoided this simple reality: The problems of the 99% are caused in large part by Wall Street greed, perverse financial incentives, and a corporate takeover of the political system. Now that this is understood, the genie is out of the bottle and it can't be put back in.

2. IT PROVIDES A CLEAR VISION OF THE WORLD WE WANT.

We can create a world that works for everyone, not just the wealthiest 1%. And we, the 99%, are using the spaces opened up by the Occupy movement to conduct a dialogue about the world we want.

3. IT SETS A NEW STANDARD FOR PUBLIC DEBATE.

Those advocating policies and proposals must now demonstrate that their ideas will benefit the 99%. Serving only the 1% will not suffice, nor will claims that the subsidies and policies that benefit the 1% will eventually "trickle down."

4. IT PRESENTS A NEW NARRATIVE.

The solution is not to starve government or impose harsh austerity measures that further harm middle-class and poor people already reeling from a bad economy. Instead, the solution is to free society and government from corporate dominance.



PHOTO BY CATHY MATHIS

A functioning democracy is our best shot at addressing critical social, environmental, and economic crises.

5. IT CREATES A BIG TENT.

We, the 99%, are people of all ages, races, occupations, and political beliefs. We will resist being divided or marginalized. We are learning to work together with respect.

6. IT OFFERS EVERYONE A CHANCE TO CREATE CHANGE.

No one is in charge; no organization or political party calls the shots. Anyone can get involved, offer proposals, support the occupations, and build the movement. Because leadership is everywhere and new supporters keep turning up, there is a flowering of creativity and a resilience that makes the movement nearly impossible to shut down.

7. IT IS A MOVEMENT, NOT A LIST OF DEMANDS.

The call for deep change – not temporary fixes and single-issue reforms – is the movement's sustaining power. The movement is sometimes criticized for failing to issue a list of demands, but doing so could keep it tied to status quo power relationships and policy options. The occupiers and their supporters will not be boxed in.

8. IT COMBINES THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL.

People in cities and towns around the world are setting their own local agendas, tactics, and aims. What they share in common is a critique of corporate power and an identification with the 99%, creating an

extraordinary wave of global solidarity.

9. IT OFFERS AN ETHIC AND PRACTICE OF DEEP DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY.

Slow, patient decision-making in which every voice is heard translates into wisdom, common commitment, and power. Occupy sites are set up as communities in which anyone can discuss grievances, hopes, and dreams, and where all can experiment with living in a space built around mutual support.

10. WE HAVE RECLAIMED OUR POWER.

Instead of looking to politicians and leaders to bring about change, we can see now that the power rests with us. Instead of being victims to the forces upending our lives, we are claiming our sovereign right to remake the world.

Like all human endeavors, Occupy Wall Street and its thousands of variations and spin-offs will be imperfect. There have already been setbacks and divisions, hardships and injury. But as our world faces extraordinary challenges – from climate change to soaring inequality – our best hope is the ordinary people, gathered in imperfect democracies, who are finding ways to fix a broken world.

This article is adapted from the book, *This Changes Everything: Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement*.

Source: YES! Magazine 11/10/11, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/>



How the 1% shapes deficit debate in it's favor



DEAN BAKER

Major news outlets like The Washington Post and National Public Radio constantly bombard us with news pieces on the budget deficit. Invariably these stories focus on the cost of “entitlements,” which most of us know as Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. The story pounded home in these pieces—often explicitly—is that these programs, that primarily

benefit the elderly, are creating the basis for a generational war between the young and the old.

The media focus both contributes to and follows the Washington policy debate. At the moment, we have the Congressional “supercommittee” scheming to produce a deficit reduction plan that will almost certainly involve large cuts to all three programs. There is a commonly repeated view in Washington policy circles, based on no evidence whatsoever, that there will be a disaster if the supercommittee comes up empty handed. This means that members of the committee are feeling great pressure from the 1 percent to produce a package with big cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

It is truly impressive how the Washington elite have managed to make these modest protections for the country's

working population (the 99 percent) into the greatest problem facing the country. The obsession with cutting these programs is occurring at a time when we have more than 25 million people unemployed, underemployed or who have given up looking for work altogether. One might think that Congress would convene a supercommittee to get people back to work rather than figuring out a way to undermine programs that people need, but it's the 1 percent that pay for elections, not the 25 million workers suffering from their greed and incompetence.

Since almost no one can be immune to the hysteria that the media have created around the cost of these programs, it is worth putting it in some context. Starting with Social Security, the latest projections from the Congressional Budget Office show that the program can pay all benefits through the year 2038 with no changes whatsoever.

Even if we never did anything, the program would be able to pay more than 80 percent of scheduled benefits well into the next century. Since the value of benefits is projected to rise through time, 80 percent of the projected benefit in 2040 is considerably higher than the average benefit received by retirees today. Therefore, the often repeated comment that there will be nothing there for our children or grandchildren is a telltale sign of ignorance or dishonesty.

The cost of making the program fully solvent for its 75-year planning horizon is projected at 0.58 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). By comparison, the increase in annual spending on the military as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is 1.7 percent of GDP, almost three times as much. The upward redistribution from the rest of us to the 1 percent over the last three decades was 6 percent of GDP or more than ten times as much as this shortfall. But it is only the shortfall in Social Security that the media want us to see as a crisis.

HEALTH CARE NEEDS FIXING

The health care programs, Medicare and Medicaid, pose more of a problem, but this is because the US health care system is dysfunctional. We pay more than twice as much per person as do people in other wealthy countries with little, if anything, to show in the form of better outcomes. (We rank near the bottom of wealthy countries in life expectancy.)

If we had the same per person health care costs as people in Germany, Canada, or any other wealthy country we would be looking at long-term budget surpluses, not deficits. But

controlling costs involves reducing the income and profits of the 1 percent. It means reducing payments to insurers, drug companies, medical equipment manufacturers and highly paid medical specialists.

Rather than control costs, the folks in Washington would rather make people pay even more for health care. This is why we see proposals like raising the age for Medicare eligibility to 67 or turning the program into a voucher system. Both plans are likely to protect the income of the health care industry, while making it even more difficult for current or retired workers to cover their health care costs.

The public should realize that “generational warfare” is an agenda that was deliberately designed by the 1 percent to distract the rest of us from the class war that they have been successfully waging over the last three decades. Rather than have a public debate on the policies that have redistributed so much income upward, the 1 percent want to pit children against their parents and grandparents, forcing them to fight over crumbs.

In this context, the only victory that the supercommittee can hand to the 99 percent is a blank sheet of paper. People will have enough things to worry about this Thanksgiving without adding a Congressional plan to slash their Social Security and Medicare.

DEAN BAKER IS A MACROECONOMIST AND CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH <[HTTP://WWW.CEPR.NET/](http://www.cepr.net/)> IN WASHINGTON, DC.

Source: *Truthout News Analysis 11/7/11*, www.truthout.org

Iraq by the numbers

ELI CLIFTON

The Obama administration's announcement of a withdrawal of all US forces from Iraq by the end of the year offers the possibility of a definitive conclusion for the US military's involvement in Iraq. But while the return of all US service men and women by Christmas is a cause for celebration, the costs of the war are only beginning to be fully understood. The “cakewalk” to Baghdad, as George W. Bush adviser Kenneth Adelman infamously wrote in February, 2002, has been anything but. The Iraq War, and the faulty premise that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction, has had a staggering humanitarian and economic cost.

Here are some relevant numbers:

- 8 years, 260 days since Secretary of State Colin Powell presented evidence of Saddam Hussein's biological weapons program
- 8 years, 215 days since the March 20, 2003 invasion of Iraq
- 8 years, 175 days since President George W. Bush's “Mission Accomplished” speech on the USS Abraham Lincoln
- 4,479 US military fatalities
- 30,182 US military injuries
- 468 contractor fatalities
- 103,142—112,708 documented civilian deaths
- 2.8 million internally displaced Iraqis
- \$806 billion in federal funding for the Iraq War
- \$3—\$5 trillion in total economic cost to the United States of the Iraq war according to economist Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Blimes
- \$60 billion in US expenditures lost to waste and fraud in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001
- 0 weapons of mass destruction found in Iraq

Source: *ThinkProgress 10/22/11*, <http://thinkprogress.org/security>

Wall Street transaction tax would raise \$350 billion

RYAN GRIM

A minuscule tax on financial transactions proposed by congressional Democrats would raise more than \$350 billion over the next nine years, according to an analysis by the Joint Tax Committee, a nonpartisan congressional scorekeeping panel.

The analysis was sent Monday to the offices of Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), the lawmakers who proposed the tax, and provided to The Huffington Post.

The Wall Street Trading and Speculators Tax Act would impose a tax of 0.03 percent on financial transactions, meaning that

longterm investors would barely notice it, but traders who move rapidly in and out of positions would feel its sting and, the authors hope, reduce the volume of their speculation in response.

The European Union is pressing forward with a financial transaction tax, though it is encountering some resistance from the United Kingdom, the financial center of Europe. In order to be effective, the tax would need to be implemented in most major industrial countries where trading is done.

Some believe that the global nature of the Occupy Wall Street movement will boost the chances of the transaction tax being signed

into law. While the movement has been criticized for lacking specific demands, protesters have voiced their support for a “meaningful” tax being placed on Wall Street trading.

Specific solutions to economic inequality are not in short supply. What's been missing for years has been the political will to implement them. “Occupy Wall Street has just reminded a large majority of the American people that our economy was destroyed by gambling on Wall Street. And that the people who destroyed our economy have been amply rewarded and not prosecuted,” DeFazio told HuffPost.

The tax would raise \$352 billion between January



2013 and December 2021. It faces stiff opposition from congressional Republicans, nearly all of whom have taken a pledge not to support new taxes, as well as ambivalence from some Democrats who rely on Wall Street cash to fund their campaigns.

Source: *Huffington Post 11/7/11* <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/07>



Immoral war against the poor: an Occupy Wall Street theme

FRANCES FOX PIVEN

We've been at war for decades now—not just in Afghanistan or Iraq, but right here at home. Domestically, it's been a war against the poor, but if you hadn't noticed, that's not surprising. You wouldn't often have found the casualty figures from this particular conflict in your local newspaper or on the nightly TV news. Devastating as it's been, the war against the poor has gone largely unnoticed—until now.

By making Wall Street its symbolic target, and branding itself as a movement of the 99%, OWS has redirected public attention to the issue of extreme inequality, which it has recast as, essentially, a moral problem. Only a short time ago, the “morals” issue in politics meant the propriety of sexual preferences, reproductive behavior, or the personal behavior of presidents. Economic policy, including tax cuts for the rich, subsidies and government protection for insurance and pharmaceutical companies, and financial deregulation, was shrouded in clouds of propaganda or simply considered too complex for ordinary Americans to grasp.

Now, in what seems like no time at all, the fog has lifted and the topic on the table everywhere seems to be the morality of contemporary financial capitalism. The protestors have accomplished this mainly through the symbolic power of their actions: by naming Wall Street, the heartland of financial capitalism, as the enemy, and by welcoming the homeless and the down-and-out to their occupation sites. And of course, the slogan “We are the 99%” reiterated the message that almost all of us are suffering from the reckless profiteering of a tiny handful. (In fact, they aren't far off: the increase in income of the top 1% over the past three decades about equals the losses of the bottom 80%.)

BEING POOR BY THE NUMBERS

The movement's moral call is reminiscent of earlier historical moments when popular uprisings invoked ideas of a “moral economy” to justify demands for bread or grain or wages—for, that is, a measure of economic justice.

A moral economy for our own time would certainly take on the unbridled accumulation of wealth at the expense of the majority (and the planet).

It would also single out for special condemnation the creation of an ever-larger stratum of people we call “the poor” who struggle to survive in the shadow of the overconsumption and waste of that top 1%.

Some facts: early in 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 14.3% of the population, or 47 million people—one in six Americans—were living below the official poverty threshold, currently set at \$22,400 annually for a family of four. Some 19 million people are living in what is called extreme poverty, which means that their household income falls in the bottom half of those considered to be below the poverty line. More than a third of those extremely poor people are children. Indeed, more than half of all children younger than six living with a single mother are poor. Extrapolating from this data, Emily Monea and Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution estimate that further sharp increases in both poverty and child poverty rates lie in our American future.

Some experts dispute these numbers on the grounds that they neither take account of the assistance that the poor still receive, mainly through the food stamp program, nor of regional variations in the cost of living. In fact, bad as they are, the official numbers don't tell the full story. The situation of the poor is actually considerably worse. The official poverty line is calculated as simply three times the minimal food budget first introduced in 1959, and then adjusted for inflation in food costs. In other words, the American poverty threshold takes no account of the cost of housing or fuel or transportation or health-care costs, all of which are rising more rapidly than the cost of basic foods. So the poverty measure grossly understates the real cost of subsistence.

Moreover, in 2006, interest payments on consumer debt had already put more than four million people, not officially



in poverty, below the line, making them “debt poor.”

Similarly, if childcare costs, estimated at \$5,750 a year in 2006, were deducted from gross income, many more people would be counted as officially poor.

Nor are these catastrophic levels of poverty merely a temporary response to rising unemployment rates or reductions in take-home pay resulting from the great economic meltdown of 2008. The numbers tell the story and it's clear enough: poverty was on the rise before the Great Recession hit. Between 2001 and 2007, poverty actually increased for the first time on record during an economic recovery. It rose from 11.7% in 2001 to 12.5% in 2007. Poverty rates for single mothers in 2007 were 49% higher in the U.S. than in 15 other high-income countries. Similarly, black employment rates and income were declining /before /the recession struck.

In part, all of this was the inevitable fallout from a decades-long business mobilization to reduce labor costs by weakening unions and changing public policies that protected workers and those same unions. As a result, National Labor Board decisions became far less favorable to both workers and unions, workplace regulations were not enforced, and the minimum wage lagged far behind inflation.

Inevitably, the overall impact of the campaign to reduce labor's share of national earnings meant that a growing number of Americans couldn't earn even a poverty-level livelihood—and even that's not the whole of it. The poor and the programs that assisted them were the objects of a full-bore campaign directed specifically at them.

CAMPAINING AGAINST THE POOR

This attack began even while the Black Freedom Movement of the 1960s was in full throttle. It was already evident in the failed 1964 presidential campaign of Republican Barry Goldwater, as well as in the recurrent campaigns of sometime Democrat and segregationist governor of Alabama George Wallace. Richard Nixon's presidential bid in 1968 picked up on the theme.

As many commentators have pointed out, his triumphant campaign strategy tapped into the rising racial animosities not only of white southerners, but of a white working class in the north that suddenly found itself locked in competition with newly urbanized African-Americans for jobs, public services, and housing, as well as in campaigns for school desegregation. The racial theme quickly melded into political propaganda targeting the poor and contemporary poor-relief programs. Indeed, in American politics “poverty,” along

with “welfare,” “unwed mothers,” and “crime,” became code words for blacks.

In the process, resurgent Republicans tried to defeat Democrats at the polls by associating them with blacks and with liberal policies meant to alleviate poverty. One result was the infamous “war on drugs” that largely ignored major traffickers in favor of the lowest level offenders in inner-city communities. Along with that came a massive program of prison building and incarceration, as well as the wholesale “reform” of the main means-tested cash assistance program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children. This politically driven attack on the poor proved just the opening drama in a decades-long campaign launched by business and the organized right against workers.

This was not only war against the poor, but the very “class war” that Republicans now use to brand just about any action they don't like. In fact, class war was the overarching goal of the campaign, something that would soon enough become apparent in policies that led to a massive redistribution of the burden of taxation, the cannibalization of government services through privatization, wage cuts and enfeebled unions, and the deregulation of business, banks, and financial institutions.

The poor—and blacks—were an endlessly useful rhetorical foil, a propagandistic distraction used to win elections and make bigger gains. Still, the rhetoric was important. A host of new think tanks, political organizations, and lobbyists in Washington D.C. promoted the message that the country's problems were caused by the poor whose shiftlessness, criminal inclinations, and sexual promiscuity were being indulged by a too-generous welfare system.

Genuine suffering followed quickly enough, along with big cuts in the means-tested programs that helped the poor. The staging of the cuts was itself enwreathed in clouds of propaganda, but cumulatively they frayed the safety net that protected both the poor and workers, especially low-wage ones, which meant women and minorities. When Ronald Reagan entered the Oval Office in 1980, the path had been smoothed for huge cuts in programs for poor people, and by the 1990s the Democrats, looking for electoral strategies that would raise campaign dollars from big business and put them back in power, took up the banner. It was Bill Clinton, after all, who campaigned on the slogan “end welfare as we know it.”

A MOVEMENT FOR A MORAL ECONOMY

The war against the poor at the federal level was soon matched in state capitols where organizations like the American Federation for Children, the American Legislative Exchange Council, the Institute for Liberty, and the State Policy Network went to work. Their lobbying agenda was ambitious, including the large-scale privatization of public services, business tax cuts, the rollback of environmental regulations and consumer protections, crippling public sector unions, and measures (like requiring photo identification) that would restrict the access students and the poor had to the ballot. But the poor were their main public target and again, there were real life consequences—welfare cutbacks, particularly in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, and a law-and-order campaign that resulted in the massive incarceration of black men.

The Great Recession sharply worsened these trends. The Economic Policy Institute reports that the typical working-age household, which had already seen a decline of roughly \$2,300 in income between 2000 and 2006, lost another \$2,700 between 2007 and 2009. And when “recovery” arrived, however uncertainly, it was mainly in low-wage industries, which accounted for nearly half of what growth there was. Manufacturing continued to contract, while the labor market lost 6.1% of payroll employment. New investment, when it occurred at all, was more likely to be in machinery than in

Why income inequality suddenly matters

DAVID SIROTA

A few weeks ago, as the Occupy Wall Street protests were first spreading, something amazing happened: For 10 whole seconds, the local reporter on my TV screen actually talked about the realities of the recession. He even uttered the phrase “economic inequality.”

My guess is that you’ve seen something similar on your local affiliate—and that’s no minor event. When even the most local of television journalists are compelled to acknowledge this crushing emergency in a country whose media aggressively promotes American Dream, it means the Occupy protesters have scored a monumental victory. You can almost imagine a Wall Street

CEO turning to an aide and muttering a slightly altered riff off LBJ: “If we’ve lost Ron Burgundy, we’ve lost Middle America.”

In response to this stunning turn of events, conservative politicians are retreating to non sequiturs. They seem to think that if they shout the phrase “class warfare” enough, the nation will go back to not caring about the divide between the rich and poor.

But something has changed.

For most of the post-World War II era, we tolerated relatively high inequality because we envisioned it as a necessary side effect of an exceptional economy that (supposedly) guaranteed opportunities for advancement. As The Wall Street Journal put it,

we believed that “it is OK to have ever-greater differences between rich and poor ... as long as (our) children have a good chance of grasping the brass ring.”

However, the last three decades have invalidated our standing hypothesis. After the conservatives’ successful assault on the New Deal, America has lived a different reality—one perfectly summarized by a new Federal Reserve study revealing that today’s increasing inequality accompanies comparatively low social mobility.

“U.S. family income mobility has decreased over the 1969-2006 time span, and especially since the 1980s,” notes the Fed paper, adding that “a family’s position at (the) end of (the) 2000s was ... more correlated with its start position than was the case 20

years earlier.”

Of course, some class mobility still exists. The trouble is that it’s primarily of the downward kind. As the Pew Charitable Trusts reports, roughly a third of those who grew up in the middle class have now fallen below that station in adulthood.

This is why, for all the right-wing mythology about “Eurosociology” snuffing out upward mobility, data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development show that social mobility in uber-capitalist America is actually lower than in most industrialized countries.

This is why almost three-quarters of respondents just told The Hill newspaper’s pollsters that income inequality is a problem.

This is why my local TV

news is suddenly airing pieces on economic inequality between sports, weather and all the “you stay classy” small talk.

And this is why, among all the fights over economic policy, the debate about taxes is the most crucial of all.

As the Fed noted in a separate report, the federal tax code—which remains vaguely progressive—has been the one proven way to “mitigate income inequality.” But with congressional Republicans gradually flattening federal income tax rates and with already-regressive state tax rates in GOP bastions like Texas, Wyoming, Tennessee, South Dakota and Mississippi, the tax system has lately been preserving or exacerbating existing inequality.

The good news is that

if we return to the slightly higher tax rates of the Reagan or Clinton eras—i.e., the rates that existed when the economy was doing better—we can begin fixing things. If, though, we keep tax rates the same or make them even more regressive, we’ll be seeing a whole lot more about economic inequality on our local news as the current crisis inevitably reaches an ugly boiling point.

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Source: *truthdig* 11/11/11, <http://www.truthdig.com/>



Immoral war against the poor

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

new workers, so unemployment levels remain alarmingly high. In other words, the recession accelerated ongoing market trends toward lower-wage and ever more insecure employment.

The recession also prompted further cutbacks in welfare programs. Because cash assistance has become so hard to get, thanks to so-called welfare reform, and fallback state-assistance programs have been crippled, the federal food stamp program has come to carry much of the weight in providing assistance to the poor. Renamed the “Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program,” it was boosted by funds provided in the Recovery Act, and benefits temporarily rose, as did participation. But Congress has repeatedly attempted to slash the program’s funds, and even to divert some of them into farm subsidies, while efforts, not yet successful, have been made to deny food stamps to any family that includes a worker on strike.

The organized right justifies its draconian policies toward the poor with moral arguments. Right-wing think tanks and blogs, for instance, ponder the damaging effect on disabled poor children of becoming “dependent” on government assistance, or they scrutinize government nutritional assistance for poor pregnant women and children in an effort to explain away positive outcomes for infants.

The willful ignorance and cruelty of it all can leave you gasping—and gasp was all we did for decades. This is why we so desperately needed a movement for a new kind of moral economy. Occupy Wall Street, which has already changed the national conversation, may well be its beginning.

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Source: *Tom Dispatch* 11/7/11 www.tomdispatch.com

An economic Bill of Rights



ELLEN BROWN

In his first inaugural address in 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt criticized the sort of near-sighted Wall Street greed that precipitated the Great Depression. He said, “They only know the rules of a generation of self-seekers. They have no vision, and where there is no vision the people perish.” Roosevelt’s own vision reached its sharpest focus in 1944, when he called for a Second Bill of Rights. He said:

“This Republic had its beginning, and grew to its present strength under the protection of certain inalienable political rights...They were our rights to life and liberty.

As our nation has grown in size and stature, however—as our industrial economy expanded—these political rights proved inadequate to assure us equality in the pursuit of happiness.”

He then enumerated the economic rights he thought needed to be added to the Bill of Rights. They included:

The right to a job;

The right to earn enough to pay for food and clothing;

The right of businessmen to be free of unfair competition and domination by monopolies;

The right to a decent home;

The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to enjoy good health;

The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment;

The right to a good education.

Times have changed since the first Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution in 1791. When the country was founded, people could stake out some land, build a house on it, farm it and be self-sufficient. The Great Depression saw people turned out of their homes and living in the streets—a phenomenon we are seeing again today. Few people now own their own homes. Even if you have signed a mortgage, you will be in debt peonage to the bank for 30 years or so before you can claim the home as your own.

Health needs have changed, too. In 1791, foods were natural and nutrient rich, and outdoor exercise was built into the lifestyle. Degenerative diseases such as cancer and heart disease were rare. Today, health insurance for some people can cost as much as rent.

Then there are college loans, which collectively now exceed a trillion dollars, more even than credit card debt. Students are coming out of universities not just without jobs, but carrying a debt of \$20,000 or so on their backs. For medical students and other post-graduate students, it can be \$100,000 or more. Again, that’s as much as a mortgage, with no house to show for it. The justification for incurring these debts was supposed to be that the students would get better jobs when they graduated, but now jobs are scarce.

After World War II, the GI Bill provided returning servicemen with free college tuition, as well as cheap home loans and business loans. It was called “the GI Bill of Rights.” Studies have shown that the GI Bill paid for itself seven times over and is one of the most lucrative investments the government ever made.

The government could do that again—without increasing taxes or the federal debt. It could do it by recovering the power to create money from Wall Street and the financial services industry, which now claim a whopping 40 percent of everything we buy.

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Source: *Truthout News Analysis* 11/11/11, www.truthout.org



Pentagon cuts: good news, but more to do

JIM CASON

First the good news: Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta told the House Armed Services Committee this month that the Pentagon could cut as much as \$450 billion out of its projected budget for the next 10 years. I can't remember a time in recent history when a Pentagon chief has acknowledged that his budget could be cut by hundreds of billions of dollars.

That the Pentagon is acknowledging such cuts would be "manageable" is further evidence of the tough fiscal pressures our country now faces and growing public concern about out-of-control war spending. Of course, as Sen. Tom Carper (DE) has documented, cuts of this magnitude would be possible just by eliminating cost overruns in major weapons systems.

The bad news is that, even with a \$450 billion cut, the Pentagon is just cutting from the budgeted growth in spending over the next ten years, as my colleague Ruth Flower has demonstrated. Congress would need to cut at least \$1 trillion in Pentagon spending—not including spending on the wars—in order to reduce spending from current levels.

DON'T STOP AT \$450 BIL

The challenge now is that Secretary Panetta, the president and many members of Congress are arguing that \$450 billion in cuts might be possible, but not a penny more should be cut. Meanwhile, military contractors are warning of dire consequences to the safety of the nation, to jobs and to national defense if even these cuts take place. Whether these arguments succeed or not depends on how effective we are at lobbying.

The Pentagon contractors have good reason to worry. According to the Project on Government Oversight, since 2003 more than half of all spending on U.S. national security has gone to Department of Defense contractors. As POGO points out, spending on weapons systems has

...you have something more important...

long been dominated by contractors, but now contractors also receive a majority of all dollars spent on personnel.

When critics in your community argue that Pentagon spending can't be cut because of the need to protect individual soldiers, I would encourage you to respond that protecting the soldiers is fine, but protecting runaway spending on contractors is not. It might also be a good idea to ask the soldiers. I know several former soldiers who say that the best way to protect the troops is to develop an alternative U.S. foreign policy that was more focused on cooperation rather than confrontation and preventing wars rather than fighting them.

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

The first step is to continue to focus on efforts to persuade every member of Congress to lobby the supercommittee to cut Pentagon spending by at least \$1 trillion dollars in the next ten years. Our lobbyists are hearing that letters to the editor and visits to the district offices of members of Congress are particularly effective. But we also know that we are going to have to keep up this lobbying throughout the next year.

The latest argument we are hearing here in Washington is that cuts in Pentagon spending will force cuts in jobs in local communities around the country. I don't doubt that, just as the dramatic cuts in federal transfers to local governments has caused layoffs of tens of thousands of state and local workers, cuts in Pentagon spending could cause some layoffs. But as John Feffer and Miriam Pemberton have pointed out, several studies have shown that investing in the military to produce jobs is much less efficient than investing in other sectors.

I would also encourage you to think about how to

start a conversation with someone who you might think would not normally want to lobby to cut Pentagon spending. Here are a couple of ideas:

- One way to start a conversation is to talk about waste, fraud and abuse in Pentagon spending. My colleague Ruth Flower is fond of saying that the Pentagon wastes more in any given year than many cabinet agencies have to spend. In a letter to Secretary Panetta last month, Sen. Tom Carper highlighted \$402 billion in cost overruns in Pentagon weapons systems. That total is up from \$42 billion in 2000 and \$295 billion in 2007. I doubt many local businesses in your community could tolerate that level of cost overrun.

- Ask friends and neighbors about budget cuts in your local community or state. Right now, about one-fifth of all government spending goes to state and local communities. But in almost every scenario federal transfers to the states are likely to face drastic cuts in the next 10 years. The cuts will be a lot more severe if Pentagon spending isn't cut back substantially.

Here at FCNL we don't have all the answers. But what we keep hearing from members of Congress and their staff is that your lobbying, your letters to the editor and your letters to Congress are making a difference. Lockheed and the military contractors may have a lot of money, but you have something more important—you are all constituents of members of Congress. So use your voice, make yourself heard and keep working with us to seize the best opportunity we have had in decades to cut Pentagon spending.

Source: Friends Committee on National Legislation release 10/25/11, FCNL, 245 Second St, NE, Washington, DC 20002 800-630-1330 <http://fcnl.org>

Guantanamo, the most expensive prison on earth.

"It's a slow-motion Berlin Airlift—that's been going on for 10 years."

As lawmakers on Congress' deficit reduction super committee look for places to cut the federal budget ahead of their upcoming deadline, they may want to look at the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The facility is "arguably the most expensive prison on earth," according to a new report from the Miami Herald.

With a budget of \$139 million last year to house just 171 detainees, it costs more than \$800,000 to keep each prisoner for a year—more than 30 times the average cost of a traditional prison. The report is based on a "secret study" conducted by the camp's former deputy commander, a money manager by training, who calls the facility "expensive" and "inefficient":

"It's a slow-motion Berlin Airlift—that's been going on for 10 years," says retired Army Brig. Gen. Greg Zanetti, a West Point graduate who in 2008 was deputy commander at the detention center.

Both its location and

temporary nature drive up costs, says Zanetti. While there, he wrote a secret study that compared the operation to Alcatraz, noting that Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy had closed it in 1963 because it was too expensive.

At Guantanamo, everything comes in by barge or aircraft "from paper clips to bulldozers," Zanetti says, as well as the revolving guard to prison camp staff.

The camp enjoys fairly lavish facilities and services for both guards and prisoners alike, and employs 1,850 troops, linguists, intelligence analysts, federal agents, and contract laborers, many of whom receive combat pay, as if they were stationed in Iraq or Afghanistan. Unlike troops in Iraq or Afghanistan, however, commanders can also bring their families and kids, at extra expense to taxpayers. The Pentagon notes that extra costs are unavoidable dealing with a

remote facility in a foreign country.

Thus, the Obama administration had made attempts to rein in costs of detaining prisoners by urging the closure of the facility. Zanetti's report said that Attorney General Eric Holder and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta wrote a letter to GOP congressional leaders noting that while Guantanamo spends "more than \$800,000 per detainee," "our federal prisons spend a little over \$25,000 per year, per prisoner, and federal courts and prosecutors routinely handle numerous terrorist cases a year well within their operating budgets." Nonetheless, Republicans—who claim to be concerned about the deficit above all else—have refused to even seriously consider shuttering the camp. A current GOP presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, even once said he wanted to "double Guantanamo."

Source: ThinkProgress 11/10/11 <http://thinkprogress.org>





Supercommittee failure for the best

ROBERT BOROSAGE

"I have great respect for each of you individually, but collectively I'm worried you're going to fail the country," former White House chief of staff Erskine Bowles, a co-chairman of President Obama's fiscal commission, sternly told the congressional supercommittee last week. Elite pressure is building on the committee to reach for a "grand bargain" to cut trillions out of the budget deficits over the next 10 years. Last week 100 House members, including 40 Republicans, dispatched a letter urging "a big, grand bargain" with "all options—code for tax hikes—on the table."

In fact, the best service the supercommittee could do for the country is to fail. It is charged with a task that can only weaken an already faltering economy. The committee is like a gang of delinquents armed with grenades set to go off, but struggling to build a really big bomb that could do even greater damage. We'd prefer the grenades get defused, but we truly don't want them to put together the bomb.

Programs for the poor and vulnerable are likely to fare better in event of failure, than in event of a grand bargain.

MISBEGOTTEN MISSION

The supercommittee, the misbegotten offspring of the summer's debt ceiling deal, is charged with reducing the deficit by a minimum of \$1.2 trillion over 10 years by cutting spending or raising taxes. It must report before Thanksgiving and any report must be voted on before Christmas, with no amendments, no filibuster, no extended debate, majority rule. If it fails, then \$1.2 trillion in automatic cuts in discretionary spending, split between domestic and Pentagon budgets, kick in. It provides a choice, as Newt Gingrich put it, between shooting yourself in the head and cutting off your right leg.

This choice is posed as the country is plagued with a faltering recovery, and severe mass unemployment—25 million people in need of full-time work. Having reduced interest rates to near zero, Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke is pleading for action from the Congress to boost the economy. "It would be helpful if we could get assistance from some other parts of the government to work with us to help create more jobs," he said. That would require spending money or cutting taxes—exactly the reverse of the supercommittee's mission.

As Rep Jan Schakowsky put it, the supercommittee is mired in "yesterday's conversation, frankly, the whole issue of the obsession with cuts and debt reduction," when instead the Congress must be focused on jobs.

In fact, the economy already faces a severe hit from the folly of the deficit hawks. Republicans have obstructed every portion of the president's modest job plan. Spending from the Recovery Act is ending. The first of the enforced spending cuts from the deficit deal are kicking in. Extended unemployment insurance is due to expire at the end of the year, as is the payroll tax cut. JP Morgan Chief U.S. Economist Michael Feroli estimates those measures will cut gross domestic product by about 1.7 percent in 2012, virtually driving the U.S. into recession. With companies sitting on \$2 trillion in profits looking for customers, there is no indication the private sector will replace the jobs or demand.

The only agreement that would make any sense coming out of the supercommittee would start with a big jobs agenda. A massive initiative to rebuild America could take advantage of the opportunity offered by near-zero interest rates to renovate our decrepit infrastructure and employ idled construction workers. Direct public service jobs could ensure

that young people graduating from high school or college, or veterans returning from the war, get the discipline and sense of self-worth provided by work, rather than the despair and shame of unemployment. We should be expanding our investment in education from pre-K to affordable college, not slashing it.

And, in a sensible world, the trigger for turning to deficit reduction would not be an arbitrary date like January 2013, but linked to when people are going back to work. When unemployment gets back down to 5 percent or so and the economy is moving, then will be the time for sensible deficit reduction.

THE BENEFITS OF FAILURE

Republicans, of course, are not about to agree to a jobs program as part of any committee recommendations. Given that, the best option, contrary to the clamor of the austerity caucus, is to not agree on anything at all.

With its expedited vote powers, and the elite pressure for action, any agreement by the committee is likely to pass. But an agreement—particularly a "grand bargain" entailing \$3 or 4 trillion in cuts over 10 years—will assault not only the recovery but also the nation's decency. Led by the inescapable Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont.—whose destructive meanderings on health care reform should have led Democrats to lock him in an attic somewhere—committee Democrats recently floated a \$3 trillion deficit-reduction plan, offering cuts in Social Security payments (through a lower inflation adjustment) and in Medicare and Medicaid, in exchange for increases in tax revenues.

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities noted that the deal offered Republicans was about 6 to 1 in spending cuts to tax hikes, and far to the right of even the Senate's bipartisan gang of six proposals. Inevitably, committee Republicans rejected the proposal out of hand, refusing to consider any tax increases or defense cuts, offering a smaller alternative plan of some \$2.2 trillion, featuring deep cuts in Social Security and Medicare and a token figure of \$4 billion in tax cuts.

If this is success, failure looks more attractive. If the Committee fails to agree automatic cuts kick in on the discretionary side of the budget—\$1.2 trillion over ten years, split between the military budget and domestic programs beginning in 2013. In the first year, \$54 billion will be cut from each, or about 9 percent from core budgets.

Exempted from the domestic cuts are many of the core social programs the most vulnerable rely on—Social Security, Medicaid, veteran's benefits, Pell grants, food stamps, children's health (CHIP), and child nutrition. Cuts in Medicare payments to providers are limited to a 2 percent cut in payments to providers. The cuts in other programs—public health, education, the environment, renewable energy, disease prevention, health research and more—would be brutal. But the programs for the poor and vulnerable are likely to fare better in event of failure, than in event of a grand bargain.

The Defense Department would similarly face cuts of about 9 percent, which added to the trimming already in Pentagon projections, would cut nearly \$1 trillion from the department's ten-year budget. This leads generals to fulminate about "catastrophic" and "doomsday" measures. "We're talking hundreds of airplanes and thousands of people" warned Air Force Chief of Staff Norton Swartz. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has vowed this "won't happen on my watch."

But coming at the end of two wars, cuts in the military are long overdue. In fact the reductions include savings on the wars that could easily amount to \$700 billion or so over 10 years. And the Pentagon's core budget has doubled since 2001. As the Project for Defense Alternative report noted, the Pentagon would suffer a cut, in inflation-adjusted terms, from \$5.99 trillion over 10 years to \$5.18 trillion. This would return it, in real dollars, all the way back to its fiscal 2007 budget, hardly unilateral disarmament. We would still be spending on the military almost as much as the rest of the world combined.

Once the economy gets going and people get back to

Where Do Our Income Tax Dollars Go?

For each dollar of federal income tax we pay in 2011, the government spends about:



For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. —Matthew 6:21

These coins show how the federal government now spends our income tax dollars. This imbalanced spending has consequences: an unsupportable budget deficit, growing poverty, and a weakening economy, as well as missed opportunities to prevent war and address greenhouse gas pollution. The military budget could easily be trimmed by \$1 trillion over the next ten years. Please tell your members of Congress to spend that money differently. Use FCNL's website, www.fcnl.org, to send your message.

War Is Not the Answer!

More details at www.fcnl.org/11taxchart

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work, any sensible deficit reduction plan would feature cuts in military spending. We face no global military rival. The Pentagon has used the threat posed by small bands of terrorists to justify sustaining cold war weapons, an empire of bases, and interventions into the far corners of the world. This perversely makes us less secure and less solvent.

THE MOTHER OF ALL DEBATES

The failure of the supercommittee is a progressive idea whose time has come. The automatic budget cuts required by failure don't kick in until 2013. That gives the economy a few more months to recover—although without positive action on jobs that won't suffice to qualify as recovery. And of course, the cuts for either domestic or defense spending roll out over years. They are easier to reverse or amend, for better and worse, than structural changes in Social Security. Already, Republicans led by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., are vowing to protect military spending, which would allow Senate Democrats to protect domestic spending.

Failure also sets up the mother of all debates, which the country needs to have. The Bush tax cuts are slated to expire at the end of 2012. The debt ceiling will need to be raised once more. The automatic cuts dictated by the debt ceiling agreement would be about to kick in.

Here, too, we face an ugly choice. Instead of a supercommittee meeting in secret, armed with extraordinary powers to push through an agreement, we'll face the perils of a lame-duck Congress and possibly a lame-duck president. But we will just have had an election in which these issues will be front and center.

Polls show that large majorities of Americans favor protecting Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. They support investment in education. They support hiking taxes on the rich and making Wall Street pay. They want the foreign wars ended and resources used here at home. The United States can't avoid making fundamental choices. Better to make them a year from now, on the basis of the election results, not a secretive committee's hasty pact wired to pass quickly before the public understands the implications. For the supercommittee, a little partisan gridlock is just what the country needs, and failure is the best option.

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Source: Campaign For America's Future 11/7/11, <http://www.ourfuture.org/>



On moving to a credit union



In honor of Bank Transfer Day, the Campaign for Fresh Air & Clean Politics and VotersForPeace.us announced that our Board of Directors has voted unanimously to move our organization's financial accounts from our current bank to a local credit union. We would have loved to be able to say that this was finalized on Saturday when upwards of 650,000 transfers were completed in the nationwide action. It was, however, a bit more complicated than we anticipated, requiring some comparative homework to determine which credit unions offered the best fit for our needs. Alas, Saturday came and went before the task was done.

We have the distinct impression that we are not alone in our concern and delay. So we offer here a brief summary of what we found in our quest for the best suited credit union with links we hope will be helpful to those who would like to stand with the Transfer Day protest by withdrawing their assets from Wall Street banks.

There are myriad credit unions that serve all manner of constituencies and their financial needs ranging from members of a local Humane Society to unions, teachers or government employees. Interest rates vary and offered services differ, so it isn't a simple matter of any credit union will do. You will want to practice due diligence to find the best match for you or your organization.

Credit unions perform the same services as banks, but they are cooperatively owned, and they invest their money back in the community instead of sending it to Wall Street. Transferring our accounts won't solve all of the problems that we have with banks, but there's no reason to let them use our money.

Perhaps the sweetest thing about joining a credit union is by doing so we become eligible to participate in the credit union's administrative and investment policies. That means we can take a proactive role in how our own hard earned money is used. This is a far cry from receiving decrees from aloof Wall Street bankers whose actions show the underlying contempt they hold for their customers.

Action: The 99% movement is just getting under way. There will be more Bank Transfer Days and other ways to bring behemoth Wall Street banks to heel. With a little effort and attention paid to details you will be able to find the credit union that is right for you. Bottom line: Do it. And once it's done, encourage everyone you know to do it too.

Source: VotersForPeace release 11/9/11 www.votersforpeace.org

Health care: a casualty of class warfare

TERRY O'NEILL, NOW PRESIDENT

The deadline for the congressional "super committee" is fast approaching, and soon we will see who and what will be targeted under their deficit-cutting proposal. NOW already knows what the Republican members of the committee have in store for ordinary families. Every one of them voted for the notorious Ryan budget, which would have decimated Medicare and Medicaid and threatened the integrity of Social Security, while actually enhancing tax breaks for big corporations and millionaires.

But it's beyond distressing to see some Democrats knuckling under and now embracing plans that would cause great hardship on retirees—mainly women, particularly women of color, as well as people with severe disabilities and our oldest seniors. The Democrats' proposal would change the cost-of-living allowance (COLA) so that monthly benefits are dramatically reduced, further impoverishing the millions of seniors who depend exclusively on their Social Security check. Medicare would be cut by \$400 billion (on top of the \$500 billion savings adopted in the Affordable Care Act), and Medicaid would be cut by \$75 billion. Funding cuts to both of these critical programs, which primarily benefit women, is a special affront to NOW. There's not much worse than taking from the most vulnerable in society to pay for a deficit caused by a failure to tax millionaires and billionaires and waging two unfunded wars.

We are heartened that many Democrats are with us and will go to the mat to impose fair taxation on millionaires and protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. But we're disappointed by the failure of the Democratic senators on the super committee to come up with a strong plan to generate more revenue; their proposed ratio of spending cuts to revenue increases is a miserable six to one—the most anemic of all deficit reduction plans offered to date. Republican members, meanwhile, are opposing any tax increases—a deeply irresponsible stance given the causes of the deficit and our continuing economic crisis.

Polls show that the vast majority of Democratic, Republican and Independent voters do NOT agree with what super committee members are proposing. And don't think that voters will forget what Congress has done when they go to the polls in 2012. Check the facts out in our action alert <<http://action.now.org>>, and contact members of your congressional delegation—call them now, and call back repeatedly—to let them know you strongly object to these plans.

Source: National Organization for Women release 11/2/11, <http://www.now.org>



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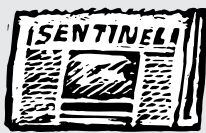


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Mainstream Media = Truth? Check out the Alternatives and Find out for yourself!

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

Firedoglake <http://firedoglake.com>
 Emptywheel <http://emptywheel.firedoglake.com/>
 Calitics <http://www.calitics.com/>
 Eschaton <http://www.eschatonblog.com/>
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 Democracy Now! on KPFA, 94.1 FM and KVMR, 89.5 FM or on the web at <http://www.democracynow.org>

Stop the austerity train wreck

ROBERT REICH

The biggest question right now on Planet Washington is whether the congressional supercommittee will reach an agreement. That's the wrong question. Agreement or not, Washington is on the road to making budget cuts that will slow the economy, increase unemployment, and impose additional hardship on millions of Americans. The real question is how to stop this austerity train wreck, and substitute the following:

First: no cuts before jobs are back—until unemployment is down to 5 percent. Until then, the economy needs a boost, not a cut. Consumers—whose

spending is 70 percent of the economy—don't have the money to boost the economy on their own. Their pay is dropping and they're losing jobs.

Second: Make the boost big enough. 14 million Americans are out of work, and 10 million are working part time who need full-time jobs. The President's proposed jobs program is a start but it's tiny relative to what needs to be done. It would create fewer than 2 million jobs. We need a big jobs program—rebuilding America's crumbling infrastructure, and including a WPA and Civilian Conservation Corps.

Third: To pay for this, raise taxes on the super-rich.

It's only fair. Never before has so much income and wealth been concentrated at the very top, and taxes on the top so low. Go back to the 70 percent marginal tax we had before 1980. And include more tax brackets at the top. It doesn't make sense that any income over \$375,000 is taxed at the same 35 percent, even if it's a billion dollars. And tax all sources of income at the same rate, including capital gains.

Fourth: Cut the budget where the real bloat is. Military spending and corporate welfare. End weapons systems that don't work and stop wars we shouldn't be fighting to begin with, and we save over \$300 billion a year. Cut corporate

welfare—subsidies and special tax breaks going to big agribusiness, big oil, big pharma, and big insurance—and we save another \$100 billion.

Do these four things and restore jobs and prosperity. Fail to do these, and you'll make things much, much worse.

Robert Reich is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley. He has written thirteen books, his latest being, "AFTERSHOCK: The Next Economy and America's Future."

Source: Robert Reich's Blog 11/19/11
<http://robertreich.org/post/1298192712>

Forward or back

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

after poll, strong majorities favor making the wealthiest Americans, who, in many cases, have never had it so good, share the sacrifice and pay a little more in taxes. Increasing taxes on the wealthy is overwhelmingly supported by Democrats and independents. A majority of Republicans and people in the Tea Party movement also support taxing millionaires to help bring down deficits. Even many millionaires say they should be paying higher taxes. At a time when many profitable corporations pay nothing in federal income taxes, there also is widespread support for closing corporate tax loopholes. Taking a hard look at mushrooming defense spending also enjoys widespread support.

For far too long, the Washington agenda has been set by powerful corporate interests and a right wing that do not represent the needs and aspirations of most Americans. For too long, the Democrats have gone along with Republican demands and caved in to these powerful special interests. The American people are frustrated and disgusted. They want Democrats to fight back.

As a Thanksgiving deadline nears for action by the powerful Super Committee on deficit reduction, I hope (but doubt) that Republicans will listen

to the American people and support deficit reduction in a fair and responsible way. I hope (but doubt) that Democrats will not once again capitulate just for the sake of an agreement—but that's been the pattern.

In December—when Democrats controlled the Senate, the House and the White House—Congress and President Obama not only extended Bush-era tax breaks for the wealthy but also gave new breaks to heirs of the super-rich.

In April—with a Democrat in the White House and Democrats still in the majority in the Senate—Republicans threatened to shut down the government and delay the processing of new Social Security benefits for senior citizens unless their demands were met. Democrats went along with \$78 billion in cuts from the president's budget request.

In August, in an outrageous display of unprincipled gamesmanship, Republicans put the United States on the brink of bankruptcy. Instead of invoking clear 14th Amendment powers to honor our nation's debts, the president and most Democrats agreed to a \$2.5 trillion deficit-reduction package. That's how we got to where we are today.

Incredibly, throughout all of these negotiations—in December, in April, in August and again today—the

wealthiest Americans and the country's major corporations have not yet been asked to contribute one penny toward deficit reduction. That is despite huge cuts in life-and-death programs for working families.

The American people have had it. The Occupy Wall Street movement is growing. A virtual popular uprising forced Bank of America to drop an unpopular \$5 monthly debit card fee. On Election Day 2011, in Ohio and many other states the American people said NO to right-wing extremism and corporate greed.

The American people are very clear. They do not want Democrats to reach another 'grand bargain' with representatives of the rich and powerful that eviscerates the most successful and popular social programs in the history of this country. They want Democrats to stand up for the 99 percent, not the 1 percent.

If the president and Democrats on the super committee go along with cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the three pillars of the New Deal and the Great Society, and permanently extend the Bush tax breaks for the wealthiest 2 percent, the American people will shake their heads in disbelief. They will arrive at the reasonably valid conclusion that there are no significant differences between the two parties

controlled by corporate interests.

This is a pivotal moment in American history. The rich and large corporations are doing phenomenally well while the middle class is collapsing and poverty is increasing. Now is the time to answer the question that the Woody Guthrie song poignantly asked, "Which side are you on?" The Democrats must answer boldly that they are on the side of working families and the middle class and that they will fight to protect their interests.

What if the super committee ends in stalemate? Across-the-board, automatic cuts are set to kick in. That so-called sequestration wouldn't start, however, until 2013. That would make 2012 one of the most important election years in modern American history.

If Democrats stand with ordinary Americans and make it clear that they are prepared to take on the wealthy and the powerful, they could win both houses of Congress. They could give Obama a fresh infusion of boldness as he enters a second term in the White House.

Somewhat I recall a few years ago millions of Americans chanting, "Yes, We Can." Now is the time to hear their voices.

Source Reader supported news 11/18/11
<http://readersupportednews.org>



Activist leaders explain how they beat Keystone



ELIZABETH MCGOWAN

Just six months ago, few could have imagined that an inanimate object as ugly as a 36-inch diameter, 1,702-mile oil sands pipeline could revive a dormant and depressed climate movement.

But then handfuls of activists experienced a series of “aha” moments that resuscitated their cause.

First, they connected the dots between the BP oil spill, a do-nothing Congress and the “carbon bomb” that would likely be released if Alberta’s tar sands continue to be mined. They also began pressing President Obama on his promise to wean the country of its oil addiction.

Gradually, something began to click. During the summer, more than 1,250 anti-pipeline protesters were arrested during a two-week sit-in at the White House. Hundreds more dogged Obama wherever he traveled across the country. And last Sunday, 10,000-plus flocked to the nation’s capital to encircle the eight city blocks around the president’s home.

On Thursday afternoon, the newly energized climate activists discovered that the formula they had created had been wildly successful. That’s when State Department officials announced that they will delay TransCanada’s proposed \$7 billion Keystone XL pipeline project while they search for a route that keeps it out of Nebraska’s fragile Sandhills landscape and irreplaceable Ogallala Aquifer. That decision will significantly slow—and maybe even halt—a project that would have pumped 900,000 barrels a day of a type of heavy crude called diluted bitumen from Alberta to refineries along the Gulf Coast. State Department officials estimate an environmental analysis of a reroute through the Cornhusker State won’t be complete until 2013.

As environmentalists reveled in their monumental accomplishment Thursday evening, InsideClimate News interviewed representatives from seven advocacy organizations that contributed to the anti-pipeline endeavor. The news was still so fresh that some were still adapting to an unfamiliar dynamic, in which they emerged the winners.

In separate conversations, they talked about how they had forced the Obama administration to reconsider Nebraska—and how they would use those strategies to continue their opposition to the pipeline. Their lessons? Be relentless, share credit for successes, engage in less bickering and more cooperation, broaden the membership base and always remember to say thank you. On that last note, they graciously lauded the president for following through on his climate vows.

NEW ACTIVISM

Damon Moglen, director of the climate and energy program at Friends of the Earth, said the rise from despair to action required the melding of traditional environmental tactics with an emerging and optimistic force of teenagers and 20- and 30-somethings.

“I think what we’re seeing is a remarkable new 21st century activism movement,” Moglen said. “Younger people are growing up seeing climate change as an overwhelming challenge of the era. This is their fight and they’re animated and impassioned.

“They believed Obama when he told them he would act on climate change. Thursday’s decision gives them a flavor of

winning. It recharges their passion and idealism.”

That insight resonated with Courtney Hight, the 32-year-old co-director of the Energy Action Coalition. Her network of 50 youth-led community-based and national organizations with an environmental and social justice bent is a magnet for college students. About 10,000 of them traveled to the nation’s capital in April to participate in an event called “Power Shift” that asked the president to stand up to Big Oil.

“Just months ago, the Keystone XL project was essentially signed, sealed and delivered,” Hight said. “The fact that we changed that is a tribute to the power of the grassroots movement. This happened because people organized.”

Back in April 2007, Hight was one of the first Obama supporters on the ground in New Hampshire. Later, she coordinated the future president’s youth vote efforts in Florida. After the 2008 election, she worked for more than a year for the Council on Environmental Quality at the White House.

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

By design, the advocacy organizations fought the pipeline plan on different levels while also playing to their individual strengths. Their divide-the-chores-and-conquer approach allowed researchers to delve into nitty-gritty science and safety details, educators to teach via outreach and marchers to put feet on the street.

For instance, Friends of the Earth took the lead on obtaining a damning chain of emails between TransCanada lobbyists and State Department officials. Other organizations hammered on the State Department’s questionable decision to hire the environmental consulting company Cardno Entrix—which lists TransCanada as a major client—to conduct environmental evaluations of Keystone XL.

“Not since the first Earth Day have I seen so much energy directed toward conserving the environment for our children,” Larry Schweiger, president and chief executive officer of the National Wildlife Federation, said in an e-mail. “This is a great moment for the thousands of Americans who have stood up to this project, from town halls to the White House.”

Jane Kleeb, executive director of Bold Nebraska, said she spent a few minutes being a “little bit shocked” by Thursday’s announcement before plotting what her small but mighty coalition will do next. She said State Department officials and Nebraska legislators ultimately found it impossible to ignore pleas from a cross-section of residents that included farmers, ranchers, mothers and grandmothers.

“This is a testimonial to all of the hard work that a lot of people put in,” she said. “I’m an idealist. I want to believe that citizen power actually does work.”

Top on Kleeb’s mind now is whether Nebraska legislators now meeting in a special session will seize this opening to pass a law that would give the state power to protect its property owners and natural resources by regulating oil pipelines. The special session, which began Nov. 1 at Republican Gov. Dave Heineman’s request, is expected to wrap up before Thanksgiving.

SOLIDARITY

Kleeb emphasized that solidarity was the word of the day,

with no boasting that one organization should take sole credit for any victory. She and others tipped their activist hats to the indigenous people of Canada and the United States, whose longtime fight against Keystone XL and other pipelines will perhaps no longer be downplayed or dismissed.

Susan Casey-Lefkowitz, an oil sands specialist who directs the international program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, also gave a shout-out to Obama for renewing his commitment to climate issues after a prolonged silence.

“This Keystone XL decision has shown real leadership by the president,” she said. “He is listening to voices from people from all walks of life. And their message to him is, ‘Please Mr. President take care of our land and water, and fight climate change.’”

“I see this as a victory for the American people who have been asking for a deeper review. The State Department did a very flawed review the first time around. It’s time for them to get it right and realize that alternative routes need to include the alternative of not building the pipeline at all.”

Kate Colarulli, associate director of the Sierra Club’s “Beyond Oil” campaign, said she and others will be hounding the Obama administration to ensure that the rerouting of the pipeline is handled in a thorough, comprehensive, rigorous and transparent process—as a State Department official has vowed will happen.

“It seems the State Department left this up to lower-level bureaucrats” the first time, Colarulli said about the Keystone XL presidential permit application TransCanada submitted in September 2008. “This time around, our hope is that they put some better brains on this, especially now that they know the intense level of scrutiny they will be under. It takes people staying on top of the situation to make sure things don’t get funky again.”

HEAD AND HEART

Author and Middlebury College professor Bill McKibben, viewed by many as the anti-pipeline effort’s great galvanizer, credited NOAA climate scientist Jim Hansen and young activist Tim DeChristopher for guiding him to Keystone XL as the centerpiece of a revitalized climate movement.

Hansen has argued that harvesting Alberta’s tar sands mines will essentially mean “game over” for those trying to rescue the planet from a climate-induced disaster. DeChristopher is serving a two-year prison sentence for a calculated act of civil disobedience. In 2008, he disrupted a Bush administration auction for oil and gas leases in Utah with \$1.8 million in fake bids. Afterward, he encouraged the climate movement to trade its safe “middle path” for a more aggressive stance involving civil disobedience and risking arrest.

“It was Jim helping me understand how much carbon is up there that made the difference,” said McKibben, founder of 350.org. “And Tim reminded us that the point of civil disobedience is to make people aware that an issue is morally urgent and so important that we’re willing to go to jail for it. I have no doubt he would have been arrested at the White House if he hadn’t been in prison himself.”

McKibben, who admitted to being “completely exhausted,” was interviewed while awaiting an evening flight from Chicago to his home in Vermont. He noted that his wife joked recently that he’d spent more time in jail than at home during the last several months. Next week, he’s headed to Vancouver, British Columbia, to address yet more pipeline issues.

Despite his weariness, he doesn’t regret upending his life for the anti-pipeline effort.

“You know, it was kind of a long shot,” McKibben said before boarding his next flight. “But every once in a while long shots go in.”

ELIZABETH MCGOWAN IS THE WASHINGTON DC CORRESPONDENT FOR SOLVECLIMATE NEWS

Source: InsideClimate News 11/11/11, <http://insideclimatenews.org/>



Help prevent the dismantling of sustainable agriculture science

DOUG GURIAN-SHERMAN

I just returned from the annual Tri Societies meeting, a four day event where several thousand soil scientists, crops scientists, and agronomists get together to share their latest work. Why should anyone care about a convocation of science nerds? For one thing, this is science focused on issues like maintaining or improving crop productivity, improving nutrition and food quality, reducing impacts of crops on the environment, responding to climate change and other aspects of science that will be needed to provide an adequate and healthful food supply in coming years, and maintaining our environment.

HOPE AND CAUTION

I was struck by the excellent work being done in all the represented fields—although there continues to be too much focus on industrial agriculture compared to sustainability. The three main science disciplines represented at the meeting represent several key aspects of agriculture.

All of these areas are critical to meet the challenges of agriculture going forward, which brings me to some serious warning flags about the state of agricultural science.

One is the growing dependence of academic agricultural scientists on research money from big ag. Emblematic of this was the exhibit hall itself. As you walked into the hall, you were funneled between several smaller vendors smack into a large display by Monsanto, blocking your path and touting all of the positive things the company is purportedly doing, and will do for agriculture and the planet in the future.

Vendors aside, serious money is pouring from large companies like Monsanto into university coffers. At Berkeley, for example, several huge grants have been awarded over the past decade from Syngenta (then Novartis) and BP to support GE research. Similar grants have followed to other research universities, as well

as ubiquitous individual grants to research scientists. These funds have replaced public funding that has not kept pace with needs in recent years, due to shortsighted public policies. Industry money has long had a place in agricultural research, but the scale of the current money blitz is really impressive.

KEEPING US IN THE DARK

Some in academia welcome these increasing public-private partnerships, but they have a disturbing and chilling side. Some scientists become beholden to their funding sources, and may be less likely to criticize them. A good example of the trepidation of many academic scientists happened in 2009, when 26 entomologists from leading universities wrote a letter to EPA complaining that they could not get access to GE seeds because they are patented.

Scientists must get permission from the GE companies to use their seeds (and the plants they produce) for research, such as determining how well the GE crops grow and their safety. The entomologists, mostly supportive of GE, complained that the companies' restrictions on access to GE seed substantially impeded their work—and consequently our understanding of GE crops.

An industry representative, the American Seed Trade Association has claimed the problem has been resolved. We disagree, because the companies are still in the driver's seat in the absence of needed changes to patent law. ASTA has not revealed its evidence of better access to GE seeds. But if you want anyone to believe you, you have to lay your cards on the table.

Equally troubling, from the perspective of this post, is that all but a few of the scientists requested that EPA not reveal their names. They were concerned about possible repercussions, for example to the funding of their research.

This chilling effect on one of the important ways society gets relatively unbiased information—



through the free workings of science—is unhealthy for our democracy. Public funding of research is an antidote to this kind of influence.

STRIKE TWO

Some may assume that the big threat from too much industry influence on academic science is fraudulent research. But this is not the main concern.

The big problem is the types of research that receive funding—and the types that are excluded or underfunded—which determines what we learn, and don't learn, from science. These decisions are fundamental to determining the direction of technology and how agriculture is practiced.

There is a lot of room to improve different types of agriculture, from organic to industrial, and those that get the bulk of research dollars acquire a big advantage in increases in efficiency, and thereby become more competitive.

For decades, industrial ag has rolled in research money, with an almost exclusive focus on productivity, at the expense of research for sustainable, ecologically sound agriculture.

Big ag companies are not interested in supporting research to improve most ecologically-based farming practices because they do not profit from it. Sustainable ag science focuses on how to grow food—such as using crop rotations and cover crops to reduce pests and improve soil fertility—rather than on products that companies can patent, and that depend on

large capital investments to produce.

So it is all the more important that agroecological research is supported by the public sector, because big ag is not going to do it. Otherwise, agriculture will be pushed inexorably further into the industrial model that, while productive, has caused big environmental and social problems.

TIME IS SHORT

There has been some real progress in recent Farm Bills to add money for organic and sustainable agriculture research and conservation programs—though still too little. This money should be increased, because public ag research pays dividends, and conservation programs protect the environment. They are needed to provide the kind of food that increasing numbers of consumers want.

UCS's Food and Agriculture Program is working to preserve sustainability programs in the coming Farm Bill, under serious threat from penny-wise-and-pound-foolish cuts to research and conservation programs. You can contact your congressperson or senator and tell them not to cut these programs.

DOUG GURIAN-SHERMAN IS A WIDELY-CITED EXPERT ON BIOTECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE. HE HOLDS A PH.D. IN PLANT PATHOLOGY.

Source: *The Equation of the Union of Concerned Scientists* 10/24/11
<http://www.ucsusa.org>

Proposition: labeling of genetically engineered foods

Today, a wide-ranging coalition of consumer, public health and environmental organizations, food companies, and individuals submitted the California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act to the State Attorney General. The initiative requires genetically engineered foods (also known as Genetically Modified Organisms, or GMOs) and foods containing GMO ingredients to be clearly labeled, similar to current labels with other nutritional information.

A genetically engineered food is usually a plant or animal that has had its DNA altered at the molecular level in a lab to include genes that produce foreign compounds from other plants, animals, viruses, or bacteria. This genetic alteration is not found in nature and cannot occur naturally. Californians currently unknowingly are eating many different genetically engineered foods, because these foods are not required to be labeled.

“Genetic engineering adds completely new elements into our food. Because the FDA has failed to require labeling of GMO food, this initiative closes a critical loophole in food labeling law. It will allow Californians to choose what they buy and eat and will allow health professionals to track any potential adverse health impacts of these foods.” says Andy Kimbrell, Director of the Center for Food Safety. “Genetically engineering food can cause unintended consequences and because there have been no long term studies, we are unsure of how GMOs may affect our health.”

Manipulating genes in a lab is imprecise and unpredictable and the results aren't always controllable. Genetically engineering food can create new, unexpected toxicants, increase allergies, lower nutrition, and create other health risks. The two most common genetically engineered traits are the expression of an insecticide in “Bt Corn” and the expression of a compound in “Roundup Ready Soy” which enables high doses of Monsanto's Roundup weed killer to be sprayed while the plant survives. A genetically engineered salmon with genes from an eel that doubles growth rate is likely to be approved for sale soon in the US.

“Californians have a right to know what's in the food we eat and feed our children,” says Robyn O'Brien, author and founder of the Allergy Kids Foundation. “I support labeling genetically engineered foods because allergy-sensitive people can exercise caution with essential information to make informed decisions about what they eat.”

Fifty countries including the European Union and Japan have laws mandating that genetically engineered foods be labeled, but the United States does not have such a requirement. Public opinion polls indicate that over 90 percent of California voters support the labeling of genetically engineered foods.

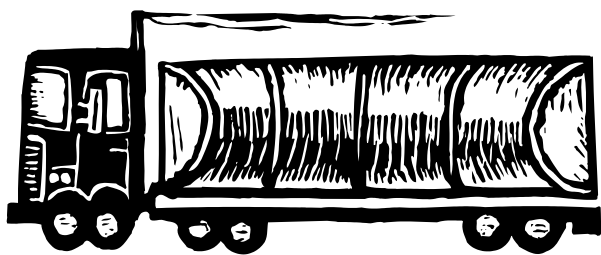
Efforts to enact labeling laws in Congress and the California legislature have been blocked by big food and chemical company lobbyists. This measure will take the issue directly to the people to decide whether genetically engineered foods should be labeled.

The California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act was carefully and specifically written to avoid any unnecessary burden or cost to consumers or producers. California voters are expected to have the chance to vote on the initiative in November 2012.

Source: *Organic Consumers Association* 11/10/11 <http://organicconsumers.org>



Climate Change meeting: future in the balance



ALDEN MEYER

The Kyoto Protocol includes legally-binding emissions reduction commitments for industrialized countries for the five-year period ending in 2012 (the United States, of course, never ratified the Protocol, and so has no such obligations). Negotiations started almost six years ago on what those binding targets should be after 2012, but there are major differences on this issue.

What's at stake is whether the world moves forward with the multilateral, rules-based approach that Kyoto represents, or shifts towards the voluntary, pledge-and review approach embodied in the Copenhagen Accord. My colleague Kelly Rigg, executive director of the Global Campaign for Climate Action (GCCA), outlines several reasons why the end of Kyoto would be a setback for global climate action here. Here's where some of the key countries stand on this issue coming out of Panama:

- Canada, Japan, and Russia have each stated that they won't take on targets in Kyoto's "second commitment period," and have called for replacing Kyoto with a more comprehensive treaty that includes obligations not only for the US, but for major developing countries such as China, India, and Brazil

- The European Union has already legislated deeper reduction targets for the 2013-2020 period, and has said it is willing to stay in Kyoto after 2012, but only if it's a transition to a broader treaty with obligations for all big emitting countries starting no later than 2020.

- The BASIC group of major developing countries (Brazil, China, India, and South Africa) have called Kyoto the "cornerstone" of the climate treaty regime, and see progress on resolving its future as key to success in Durban.

- The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), is also demanding action on Kyoto's second commitment period, but wants negotiation of a parallel treaty with obligations for other major emitting countries as well.

- The United States has made clear it sees the Protocol's "firewall" between commitments for developed and developing countries as a fatal flaw; it would be willing to negotiate a new instrument with legally binding reduction commitments, but only if it's clear from the start that the "bindingness" of such a new regime will be the same for China and other major developing countries as for the US.

The US position was especially infuriating to many of the negotiators I spoke with in Panama, given the world's experience with US on the Kyoto Protocol over the last decade (first, the Clinton administration pushed hard for the treaty to be designed exactly to its liking, but never submitted it to the Senate for ratification; then President Bush declared Kyoto "dead" only months after taking office).

After the failure of the climate bill in the United States Senate last year, these negotiators are quite aware of the near-impossibility of getting 67 Senators to vote to approve any treaty containing meaningful emissions reduction obligations for the US. Many of them see little point in trying to reach agreement with the US on yet another climate deal it can't deliver on back home.

PROSPECTS FOR A DEAL IN DURBAN

Given these sharply divergent positions, there is virtually

no chance that a final agreement on the future of Kyoto will be reached in Durban. But the European Union is holding discussions with developing countries on a possible package deal that would include commitments by the EU and at least some other developed countries to stay in Kyoto after 2012, together with the launch of a process to negotiate a more comprehensive longer-term regime. Also, Australia and Norway tabled a detailed proposal in Panama, outlining how to ramp up mitigation actions by both developed and developing countries, that could represent a way out of the current stalemate.

If there is no clear path forward on Kyoto in Durban, it would be a blow to hopes for creation of a more comprehensive and ambitious multilateral treaty regime in the years ahead. Continued gridlock on Kyoto could also spur an angry response from a number of developing countries, leading them to block agreement on some or all of the decisions needed to build on last year's Cancun summit, on issues ranging from adaptation to technology cooperation to reducing emissions from deforestation. This in turn would be a setback to the real progress on climate action being made on the ground in a growing number of countries. While nowhere near adequate, this progress represents a ray of hope that needs to be encouraged, not impeded.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ALDEN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED EXPERT ON U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE POLICY. HE ALSO WORKS EXTENSIVELY ON RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ELECTRICITY POLICY AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL.

Source: *The Equation of the Union of Concerned Scientists* 10/18/11 <http://www.ucsusa.org/>

2010 greenhouse gas emissions top worst-case scenario

JEREMY HANCE

Global carbon emissions last year exceeded worst-case scenario predictions from just four years before, according to the US Department of Energy (DOE). A rise of 6 percent (564 million additional tons) over 2009 levels was largely driven by three nations: the US, India, and China. Emissions from burning coal jumped 8 percent overall. The new data, supported by a similar report from International Energy Agency (IEA), makes it even more difficult for nations to make good on a previous pledge to hold back the world from warming over 2 degrees Celsius.

"We are building up a horrible legacy for our children and grandchildren," Granger Morgan, head

of the engineering and public policy at Carnegie Mellon University, told the Associated Press.

According to the DOE's data, China made up nearly a quarter (24.6 percent) of global emissions, while the US comprised 16.4 percent and India 6.2 percent. However, the data only includes carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels and cement, and does not include other major sources of greenhouse gases such as deforestation and land-use changes. If these were included Indonesia would rise from its current position of 15th in global carbon emissions.

Source: *MONGABAY.COM* 11/7/11 <http://www.mongabay.com>

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Save a local marine wilderness

Drakes Estero, the ecological heart of California's stunning Point Reyes National Seashore, has endured many decades of commercial exploitation. Nonetheless, it is the only bay along the entire west coast that could become a wilderness area. In fact, Congress has said it should become a wilderness area.

But if a private commercial oyster operation has its way, the healing will never begin. Exploitation and environmental damage will continue instead.

Here's the backstory: In the 1976 Point Reyes Wilderness Act, Congress included Drakes Estero as potential wilderness and directed the Secretary of the

Interior to eliminate "non-conforming" (commercial) uses there so it could be fully protected.

At that time a private oyster company was one of the non-conforming uses, operating under a 40-year non-renewable permit. The deal was that the permit would expire and the area would receive permanent protection.

Which brings us to today. The new owner of the oyster operation has no desire to honor that agreement. He's trying to change the rules, and has petitioned for an extension.

A promise is a promise—urge the National Park Service to reject the extension and protect this

wild area forever. Don't wait—send your message before November 29th, when the public comment period closes.

The oyster operation has done serious damage to Drakes Estero. An Interior Department analysis reveals damage to harbor seals, resident and migratory bird species, and eelgrass. The destruction of eelgrass is especially troubling, as it's an essential building block of all wildlife in the bay, including endangered steelhead salmon.

In addition, a whopping 3,700 motorboat trips are involved in the oyster operation every year, churning up the water and distributing thousands of

pieces of plastic junk from the operation all over the national seashore's beaches. We want our park wilderness now. Public parks belong to the public, not private companies.

Action: Send a message, before the November 29th comment deadline, urging the Park Service to reject the permit extension proposal and uphold the deal that was struck in 1976.

Source: NRDC's Action Center release 11/9/11 Natural Resources Defense Council, 40 West 20th St, NY, NY 10011 www.nrdc.org/action

Obama's oil plan a disaster

The Obama administration announced plans today to expand offshore oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and offer additional lease sales in the sensitive waters off Alaska. Ramping up offshore drilling raises the risk of disastrous spills, puts wildlife in harm's way and deepens U.S. dependence on the fossil fuels driving the global climate crisis.

"Last year's disaster in the Gulf of Mexico was supposed to be a wake-up call about the dangers of offshore drilling, but it looks like President Obama hit the snooze button and slept right through it," said Miyoko Sakashita, oceans director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "We just can't keep expanding offshore drilling and not expect to have more disastrous spills."

The five-year plan announced today will set the stage for 15 lease sales in six offshore areas, including the Arctic's Beaufort and Chukchi seas and portions of the Gulf of Mexico near areas where development has so far been off-limits.

The plan to lease more parts of the Gulf of Mexico for drilling follows a March 2011 report by the Department of the Interior that found most existing leases are inactive. The report showed that 70 percent of existing federal oil and gas offshore lease acres are inactive, with no production, exploration or

development.

"Gulf of Mexico communities are still reeling from the impacts of last year's oil spill, and now the president wants to put those same communities at risk again," said Sakashita. "The administration's claiming significant steps have been taken to make drilling safer, but in fact there's been no fundamental reform that can keep the Gulf of Mexico or the Arctic safe from the next

spill catastrophe."

The plan proposes to sell leases in Alaska's Beaufort and Chukchi seas, home to all of America's polar bears. A U.S. Geological Survey report concluded that key scientific information is lacking for the development of oil and gas in Arctic offshore waters; effective spill cleanup in this remote area is nonexistent. The Coast Guard's top official, Commandant Robert Papp,

told Congress that the federal government currently has "zero" spill response capability in the Arctic.

"Polar bears are already teetering at the brink of extinction. Policies that worsen climate change and raise the risk of disastrous oil spills in their habitat will push them over the edge," said Sakashita.

Source: Statement from Center for Biological Diversity via Common Dreams 11/8/11 <http://www.commondreams.org>

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Three freedom Memoirs

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF OUR TIMES
BY HOWARD ZINN

The African-American struggle for liberation transformed many who were not black.

Howard Zinn (1922-2010) was a working class Jewish kid from New York who lived with roaches, hung out at the public library, read Dickens, and shot hoops with Communists. He joined the Army Air Corps in 1943, "eager to get into combat against the Nazis. I saw the war as a noble crusade against racial superiority, militarism, fanatic nationalism, expansionism."

He became an eager bombardier. His last mission bombed a few thousand German troops huddled in the French town of Royan, waiting for the war to end. Using the new "jellied gasoline" (napalm), twelve hundred B-17s destroyed the troops and the town. "I was just doing my job."

Zinn married, went to college on the GI Bill, worked

nights, and got a Ph.D. in history from Columbia. In 1956 he went to teach at Spelman, a women's "Negro College" in Atlanta, Georgia—"not because of an urge to do good. I was just looking for a job."

His students changed his life. Hundreds of brave young women marched beyond the walls of Spelman and into the Civil Rights Movement. At the risk of his career, Zinn joined them. "An encounter with police, even one night in jail, is an intense and unique educational experience...I came to see the importance of small-scale actions as preparing the way for larger ones."

After seven years, Spelman sent him packing.

He went on to teach for many years at Boston University. His great book, *A People's History of the United States*, has sold over a million copies; it's the vivid, true, footnoted story of our country, as lived by the underdogs—beginning with Caribbean peoples whom

Columbus enslaved to dig gold, and exterminated.

Zinn's *Personal History* tells marvelous stories of his journey in the people's "Moving train." Look for him drinking cognac in Hanoi with Jesuit poet Daniel Berrigan, and later hiding Berrigan from the FBI.

I once heard this wise and humble man introduced by the shining poet Alice Walker:

"He was my greatest teacher."

REFLECTIONS OVER THE LONG HAUL

BY ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN
Robert McAfee Brown (1920-2001) was a Presbyterian minister and professor, a pacifist who joined the Navy as a chaplain in World War Two. "Only those who cry out for the Jews have the right to sing hymns."

He was invited to teach at Union Theological Seminary, a plum, and soon was offered a full professorship and tenure. It

was a comfortable life.

Then came the Freedom Rides of 1961. He joined a group of white and black clergy, they spent the night in jail in Tallahassee, Florida, and were convicted of a felony, which was never reversed. Like Howard Zinn, Bob Brown became a professor who took chances, and stood with the oppressed.

He took a teaching job at Stanford, joined the Selma marchers and the United Farm Workers movement, and served as a Protestant observer and journalist at the Second Vatican Council. He supported the anti-war students at Stanford, and gave illegal "sanctuary" to Salvadoran refugees from the U.S. wars in Central America. He and his wife Sydney interviewed Fidel Castro, and built deep connections with the Philippines, and with the "liberation theologians" of Latin America.

Brown tells great stories. As a Catholic, I loved his tales of Good Pope John, and the names the press corps gave to the coffee bars in the Vatican—Bar Jonah, Barrabas, Bar Nun, and Bar Mitzvah. Elie Wiesel wrote of him, "As a teacher, he influenced generations. As a friend, he was the best one can dream

of. As a Jew, I saw in him the nobility of what Christianity has to offer."

THE BOOK OF NEGROES
BY LAWRENCE HILL

Sitting in her cozy London room in 1802, former slave Aminata Diallo dipped quill in inkwell and began her memoirs. Her friends and patrons, Englishmen who were pressing Parliament to abolish the slave trade, said they would write her story, "to ensure its authenticity"—but she replied,

"That is precisely why nobody will tell my story but me."

"I seem to have trouble dying," she writes. "There must be a reason why I have lived in all these lands, survived all those water crossings, while others fell from bullets or shut their eyes and simply willed their lives to end. In the earliest days, when I was free and knew nothing other, I used to sneak outside our walled compound, climb straight up the acacia tree while balancing Father Qur'an on my head, sit way out on a branch and wonder how I might one day unlock all the mysteries contained in the book. Feet swinging beneath me, I would put down the

book—the only one I had ever seen in Bayo—and look out at the patchwork of mud walls and thatched coverings. People were always on the move. Women carrying water from the river...

"About me, I have a clutch of abolitionists—big-whiskered, wide-bellied, bald-headed men boycotting sugar but smelling of tobacco and burning candle after candle as they plot deep into the night. The abolitionists say they have brought me to England to help them change the course of history. Well. We shall see about that. But if I have lived this long, it must be for a reason."

Aminata tells of being taught by her jeweler father to read Arabic, and by her mother to "catch babies," midwifery. She tells how slavers kidnapped her in the forest when she was ten, marched her three months to the coast, and forced her into a slave ship. She tells the horrors of the Middle Passage, and of being sold, half-dead, at auction in Carolina. She tells of slaving away for a vicious master on an indigo plantation, and being befriended by an older slave woman. She tells and tells and tells, agonies

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Facing everyday sex abuse

BEHROUZ SABA

Herman Cain has opted for a blanket denial, asserting that the four women who have so far accused him of inappropriate sexual conduct belong to a Democratic Party conspiracy to deprive America of a businessman in the White House.

Plausible deniability runs even thinner at Penn State, where football defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky has pled not guilty to charges of allegedly disgracing his position as an educator to prey on young boys. Joe Paterno, the university's inspirational coach, and president Graham Spanier were fired by the board of trustees—long after the damage was done.

AWAY FROM MEDIA GLARE

Away from the media glare, however, girls, women and boys are quietly and helplessly violated in the privacy of darkened living rooms and bedrooms every single day across America.

The crime scene may be a rural shack or a palatial suburban compound. The crime, however, is depressingly similar, often involving profoundly frustrated men, who try to find in sexual assault a sense of power that they desperately lack.

The frustration is an obvious byproduct of a common mindset that so consistently and loudly celebrates money, power and fame, leaving the majority of people with abiding feelings of inadequacy.

Beyond private homes, a pandemic of sexual abuse also infests educational institutions, places of worship and work. Countless priests, coaches, teachers, policemen, prison guards and bosses routinely harm their victims, often with complete impunity.

The powers of the U.S. Constitution have been used during the past several decades to protect American people of color in schools and workplaces, aboard

buses and at lunch counters. Statutes have also been used to make significant strides toward providing parity and protection for women and those in the lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender community.

Yet the same laws are also respectful of a privacy, which offers the opportunity for sexual assault with children as the primary targets.

Legislating and enforcing private conduct are both difficult and inadvisable. Today an institutional tangle reaches from the federal level down to every neighborhood, involving armies of legislatures, prosecutors, law enforcement authorities, teachers, counselors and physicians who are entrusted with protecting the vulnerable from sexual assault.

Phone lines to report crime and to seek help abound and sex offenders are required to register in the communities where they live. Yet only a small minority of criminals are stopped, let

alone brought to justice.

LIFELONG, FESTERING WOUNDS

Childhood abuse, be it sexual, psychological or physical, leaves lifelong, festering wounds, taking enormous mental and material tolls. The abused fill prisons, psychiatric wards and unemployment lines. They try to numb the pain with alcohol and other drugs, become rudderless and homeless. Most tragically, many become abusers themselves.

The issue is fraught with boundless guilt, shame and pain. It is hardly suitable as a part of a political candidate's platform. Cain is using the media megaphone to deny charges against him, even as he seeks the counsel of an attorney expert in libel laws in an attempt to fend off additional allegations. Yet he says nothing about measures he took during his long career to proactively fight sexual assault and harassment. He is equally silent about all that

he would do as President of the United States to stem the tide of a national catastrophe.

Sandusky, a lifelong veteran of gyms, locker rooms and shower stalls, also cannot point to measures he took to ensure that the strong erotic element present in athletics would not escalate into sexual abuse.

Precisely because sexual assault is rampant, yet embarrassing and uncomfortable to discuss, it moves into the forefront of public attention for a brief, intense interval, only to be forgotten for long periods to come.

Americans, therefore, should look at the issue beyond all the sensationalism, shame and anger associated with it to initiate an ongoing national dialogue that reaches homes, schools, offices and prisons where sex crimes take place.

Victims of sexual abuse should be encouraged to step forward and share their stories because communities provide necessary protective



measures when they do so.

Political leaders should be asked to clarify their position on predatory crimes against boys, girls and women, and pressed to state the steps they would take to keep the topic from slipping back into oblivion. From the seats of the major media to the smallest of classrooms and to the family dinner table, matters that have so long been hushed about with deep emotions should be articulated clearly and rationally.

Sexual assault, despite a common perception, does not come down to "he said, she said." It is an indefensible crime against which all have to speak with one voice.



The T is not silent

From humiliation to the greatest pride

ELENA KELLY

Corazon Aquino once said, "All the world wondered as they witnessed... a people lift themselves from humiliation to the greatest pride." She was talking about the Filipino people who rose up against the tyranny of the Marcos regime and restored democracy to the government of the Philippines.

According to the dictionary, pride has two distinct meanings. It can mean "a high or inordinate opinion of one's own superiority," but it can also mean "expressing self-respect, self-esteem." I believe Mrs. Aquino was referring to the latter, and it is that definition that I am referring to in this article. The Occupy movement is about restoring dignity to those who aren't millionaires, to restoring our government to be of ALL the people, not just the rich and powerful corporations.

Meanwhile a few blocks east in Stockton, others of us are working to restore the pride of marginalized people as well. On October 20, which is recognized as Spirit Day in America, a day to wear purple as a show of support for our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community, the San Joaquin Pride Center opened its doors for business. I was working that day as a volunteer when many folks stopped by and expressed their pride in what we have created in Stockton.

That day was very special to me for many reasons. Most of my life I was not proud of who I was. Growing up I knew I was quite different from other people. I understood early on that most people were completely fine with their gender because it matched their birth sex, and I knew I was not happy at all with my birth sex. I was born a male but all I ever wanted was to be beautiful like the girls. That inner conflict drained my self-respect over the years until there was none left at all.

Transgender people in my generation were mostly just like me, closeted from society and forced to live a lie in order to survive. When I was in a group of people I constantly watched men to see how they sat, how they stood, the gestures they used when talking, and even how they drove cars and watched sports. I copied their behaviors with precision and adopted their speech patterns in order to ensure that my feminine inclinations might never show through my façade. To me, it would have been worse than death to be seen as a girly man.

In the last few years there have been many young LGBT people in the news because they committed suicide as a result of bullying. Kids can be very cruel to each other but so can

adults! I believe that suicide is the fault of society, not weak moral character of the victim. If we as a society could welcome diversity, if we could stop trying to build up ourselves to feel superior to others, and genuinely accept people for who they are, supporting each other in being true to ourselves, the suicide rate would drop significantly.

Stockton has had only one documented murder of a transgender woman. But what of the suicides? Transgender people often commit suicide as a way of preventing anyone from knowing the shame, the humiliation they feel because their gender does not match their birth sex. Occasionally we will read a news article about a "man wearing women's clothing" found dead of an apparent suicide. What if society fully accepted men wearing women's clothing, just as society has no problem with women wearing men's clothes? We just don't hear of a "woman wearing men's clothing" found dead from suicide, do we?

My point is this; pride isn't something we can cultivate in a vacuum. We need the support of others to find self-esteem and self-respect. In the first couple of weeks of the San Joaquin Pride Center's operation, several transgender people have come out of hiding and are learning that there are many in Stockton who support them, who accept them, and who want them to live the truth of who they are. That is the best part of being a Pride Center volunteer for me.

To paraphrase President Aquino, "All of San Joaquin County wondered as they witnessed... a people lift themselves from humiliation to the greatest pride." People who have strong self-respect, and who support others are a precious gift to any community. To support us or get involved with the San Joaquin Pride Center please contact us at (209) 466-7572.

REV. SR. ELENA KELLY, OSH IS A MINISTER TO THE PEOPLE OF STOCKTON AND THE CENTRAL VALLEY, AND IS THE CHAPLAIN AND TREASURER OF SAN JOAQUIN PRIDE CENTER. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT ELENA.KELLY@COMCAST.NET.

Help protect students from bullying

Early November, AAUW released a brand new report about sexual harassment in grades seven through twelve, *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School*. The many disturbing stories and statistics our researchers gathered add up to one fact: sexual harassment is part of everyday life in middle schools and high schools across America.

You can do your part, right now, to help change this: Ask your senators to promote the Safe Schools Improvement Act (S. 509)!

The Safe Schools Improvement Act would significantly strengthen schools' ability and responsibility to combat sexual harassment and bullying. It would require schools to have comprehensive anti-harassment and bullying policies and promote prevention strategies. The bill would also tell schools to maintain and report data regarding incidents of bullying and harassment.

The best and fastest way for this critical bill to become law is as an amendment to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA is the law that sets some of the educational and disciplinary standards by which middle and high schools which receive federal funding—and right now, its anti-harassment and bullying rules are woefully inadequate. So if you, your friends, or children were bullied or harassed, you can stand up and say "Enough is enough."

Action: Tell your senators to support the Safe Schools Improvement Act (S.506) as an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization.

Source: AAUW Action Network 11/9/11 www.aauw.org



Pride Center opens December 9th...to close one month later?

NICHOLAS HATTEN

When I first started researching opening a local LGBT center I was shocked to discover that San Joaquin County is the only urban area in Northern California without a center to serve its community. Even more shocking were the testimonials of discrimination, harassment and in some cases of indifference by our local law enforcement. Far too many of these tales shared involved our youth. In one story, a recent high school graduate shared how the culmination of loneliness and family abandonment resulted in a friend committing suicide. Despite the progress made

towards acceptance of the LGBT community, like the recent repeal of the discriminatory Don't Ask/Don't Tell law, we still have a way to go. Due to the generosity of a small yet wonderful collective our doors will open but unless our entire community stands up and unites against this war on equality, we won't be able to stay open for long.

The mission of the newly created San Joaquin Pride Center is to serve the diverse LGBTQQIA community in San Joaquin County and the surrounding areas by creating a safe and welcoming space, by providing resources that enrich body, mind and spirit, and by educating the public in tolerance and respect

for all people within the LGBTQQIA community. Executing this mission starts on December 9th when we open our doors to the public.

For too long the fight for peace and justice within the Central Valley's LGBT community has been a quiet one. Political polling shows that support for the basic right to marry the person you love is only supported by 30% of the public. 30 Percent. Without a central place for the LGBT to gather, educate and organize, we have allowed complacency to rule the day and people feel as if it's okay to deny another human being basic and fundamental rights. Opening our Center forces our community to confront and discuss equality.

On day one, the San Joaquin Pride Center will be able to provide legal referral services to those individuals who have been discriminated against. We will advocate on behalf of the disenfranchised and educate our local government on the importance of tolerance by engaging in discussion and offering sensitivity training. Nationally, 36.5% of our LGBT youth grades 9-12 have attempted suicide; so on day one we will offer counseling services and referrals for those that need it. In addition, peer groups, fun activities like athletic activities, movie parties, an employment clinic and more will be offered to all age groups—transgender, gay,

straight or otherwise.

The structure is in place, and the organization founded—created and supported by determined and skilled community leaders like Martina Virrey, Chris Osborne, Elena Kelly, Uneke Chanel, Rob Greenlee, Matt Craig, Lynne Green, Councilmember Susan Eggman, Big Monkey Group's Shawn Crary and Ron Stein. All that is missing is you. Please consider joining our fight for equality by making a financial contribution. We don't qualify for government support. Historically, corporations and local businesses do not give to LGBT causes in San Joaquin. We must rely on the generosity of individuals such

as you.

Our desire for peace and justice is mutual. Please don't let this article's headline become reality.

NICHOLAS HATTEN IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN JOAQUIN PRIDE CENTER

Donations, payable to San Joaquin Pride Center, can be mailed to 109 N. Sutter St. Stockton CA. Please add "connect" to your check memo. For more information, visit sanjoaquinpridecenter.weebly.com or call (209) 466-(SJCPC) 7572.



Navigating

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

Seeds and spirits in south Stockton



JOHN MOREARTY

I feel extremely fortunate to serve on the board of Puentes, the local nonprofit that is building a community farm down in Boggs Tract, near the Port of Stockton. We're partnering with families in the neighborhood (mostly Hispanic) and elsewhere. They hunger for a nice patch of land to grow organic food for themselves, and they are eager to bring in cash—selling organic produce, at a farmers market or to restaurants. Children of nearby Washington elementary school will also be partners. The families and the children are already learning gardening techniques from certified master gardeners—and they will learn how to be entrepreneurs.

It's a really good idea. Individuals and groups all over S.J. County think so, and have been supporting the Farm.

Over this past year, the Port of Stockton leased us five acres of clean land—long-term—for zero dollars. Eagle Scout troop 170, Nathan Michael and Ron Heinzen put up 300 feet of recycled chain-link fencing. Baylor Services leveled and graded the soil, Cal Water installed meters and gave \$1,000. Landscape architect Jeff Gamboni continues to support the design plan. With a mountain of free redwood from San Joaquin Lumber, volunteers toiled away building dozens of raised beds, 20 by 20 feet, and filled them with compost donated by the Forward Landfill. J.R. Simplot gave a heap of hand tools.

Money came from the Unitarian Church, Spanos Corporation, Bank of Agriculture and Commerce, and Food4Less. Health Plan of San Joaquin gave \$25,000, so the families can grow healthy food.

But it's a big undertaking. Even though none of the Puentes board or the garden workers have been paid a dime, we realized that more money was urgently needed—for laying irrigation lines, for permaculture chicken and fish hoop houses, for fruit trees, electricity, insurance....

So on Sunday November 13, we held a gala fundraiser—not in some banquet hall, but right there on the farm itself. We hand-delivered invitations to "Seeds and Spirits," stapled to packets of (untreated) vegetable seeds donated by Ray Baglietto. Seventy-six paying guests (plus staff and neighborhood families) turned out, and it was amazing. The autumn sun was bright. Volunteers had laid a pathway of bark mulch, edged with 2x4s, plus a big patch of bark for the banquet itself, in the middle of two dozen raised beds. One family's bed was already mounded in rows with little seed packets on sticks, and a black hose leading in.

In the center stood a long buffet table with gleaming stainless trays—fresh soft rolls, sculptured balls of butter,

mushroom spinach frittata, oven-browned potatoes, bacon and sausage. Leaning against green fronds was a great silver tray with foothills of huge blackberries and strawberries, rising up a brie and cheddar mountain topped with huge wedges of creamy blue cheese. Beyond the crest, a tray of bread pudding with pears and almonds.

To the south, yet another table—elegant glass urns with red juice, purple juice, and water with lemon slices and mint leaves a-floating. Thermoses of premium Blackwater Café coffee. Four cases of wine donated by Stone Garden Winery, Michael David Winery and others. Real glasses with proper stems. Standing by were young men and women in maroon uniforms, hand-stitched in gold with their names and "Bon Appetit."

It was bon appetit for sure! The University of Pacific food service produced this grand feast at their own expense, and trucked it to our Community Farm in South Stockton. On either side of the buffet table were long sit-down tables (with table-cloths, of course), lent to us by Apsara, the Cambodian family association. At the north end of it all, an American flag, and a little stage with three Pacific students, playing jazz.

Who could believe it?

As Puentes secretary, I gave a little welcoming speech. I thanked people for pouring their life energy and treasure into the Farm, and then I poured a "libation."

"It's an ancient custom," I told the assemblage, "at the beginning of the feast to pour a little of the wine on the earth—in gratitude, in recognition that bounty abounds, and to complete the cycle of life." I opened a bottle of nice red, and poured it out on the bark mulch in a circle all around me. "Stop! save some for me!" someone cried. "Hey," I replied, "there's plenty."

Three key members of the project said a few words. Board member Dr. Sacha Joseph-Mathews, assistant professor of marketing at University of Pacific, thanked especially Bon Appetit and its general manager, Sia Mohsenzadegan, who stood by beaming throughout the feast as his staff performed as he had trained them to do.

Patricia Miller-Battiste, chair of the Farm's Community Advisory Committee, expressed warm gratitude to the throng of volunteers who have put in long hours evenings and weekends, pulling weeds, toting and hauling, kneeling in the dirt building raised beds, digging ditches. "This farm is bringing the community together."

Young Jeremy Terhune, Puentes' executive director, held up the Farm's vision before our eyes. "I grew up in Stockton, studied philosophy and organic gardening at Chico State. After two terms in the Peace Corps in Panama, I came back home fired up to create this community farm. Yes, it's necessary to feed the hungry—but how much better to teach and empower the hungry to feed themselves! And with real, healthy, fresh organic food. This farm will do that, and more—it will teach the families the skills of running a business. And, it's already creating bonds of community, as you can see today.

"It's our intention to hand this Farm over to the families, by the end of five years if not before, as Puentes moves on using this Boggs Tract Farm as a model to help create community farms around this city and county, and beyond.

"We called this event today, Seeds and Spirits. We are here today in a seedbed, and our spirits are strong."

Interested? Contact Jeremy Terhune, 209-922-8215; Patricia Miller-Battiste, 209-598-3647; or to volunteer, Susan Mora Loyko, 209-943-1575. Donations to Puentes are tax-deductible: 4555 Pershing Avenue #33-373, Stockton CA 95207



Local Move-on event displays solidarity

MARIO D'ANGELI

Thanks to all who came, saw and participated in the pro-democracy event on the the Delta College grassy green, November 17. Individuals from organized labor, Move-on, the Peace & Justice Network, local schools, clinics and businesses took part in a demonstration of local solidarity and participative democracy. Thanks to all who could come to our subsequent dinner discussion, from which came some of the following:

MAJOR ITEMS

Jim Saum proposed the formation of a 99% political party which could become a force within the Democratic Party or, if worse comes to worst, can replace the Democratic Party. All who are interested in this project contact: jsaum@mneilengineering.com

Dave Becker filled us in on the Puentes garden project — led by Jeremy Terhune — which promotes the development of community gardens all over the county to make healthy organic food locally grown and inexpensive for all of us. Some have already adapted this idea to our own little plots of land around our homes and it is spreading fast. For more direct info and if you want to participate, contact

Dave Becker at dovlotus@yahoo.com or 925-963-5255.

We need to extend and expand Occupy Stockton and Occupy — all over America. So why don't we invite others in other local organizations to join us on one or two days per month to promote their most important goal? Taken together, our individual goals constitute the national crisis of our time: unemployment; the income/wealth gap; lack of quality education and health care; profit from war and incarceration; disempowered labor unions; minority discrimination and more. Consider joining this solidarity movement.

And finally, with winter weather approaching, we should think of extending our public presence into the malls. Sherwood Mall in Stockton has always been friendly and accommodating. They provide a table and chairs in one of their large hallways as long as we are gentle and polite. (And we all are.) Saturdays from 10 to 5 and Sundays from 1 to 5. Interested? contact: ROLABAL@aol.com

Three Memoirs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

and joys, scribbling away in London near her end.

Aminata tells us stories we have known in outline but never heard thus told, tells us so we know this woman across two hundred years. We know her intelligence, her humor, her tough resilience, her longing to go home to Bayo once again, her determination to be free. And, we know her grace with this language of ours.

Yes, Aminata Diallo is a fiction—and she is as passionately real as Anna Karenina, or the twin daughter in Arundhati Roy's God of Small Things, or Joan of Arc.

Her Book of Negroes

was created by journalist, novelist, essayist and historian Lawrence Hill, the African-Canadian son of African-Canadians, and published in 2007 by HarperCollins. It was a number one bestseller in Canada, and won the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book. Hill's list of Further Reading runs to five pages.

Our copy was handed to me this summer by our brilliant niece Lynn Kelly de Groot, a health care consultant in New Brunswick. As we left that lovely place she said, "I think you'll like this! I stayed up till three in the morning reading it."

The struggle still transforms us.



From Russia with Love: Soviet poster art



The Tidewater Art Gallery will be presenting, *From Russia with Love*, a new educational exhibition from November through December. The exhibition will feature vintage posters from Russia and the Ukraine. Local photographer Steve Pereira will reprint these posters onto canvas for the show, which come from his private collection and date between the 1970s-1980s. Issues discussed on each poster highlight social concerns ranging from the children's health and welfare, drug abuse, the environment, and world peace, among others.

"They were given to me from a longtime friend, Steve Allen from Stockton who now resides in Moscow" said Pereira. "I thought the graphic artwork was truly amazing and a great opportunity for the public

to see the quality of art and subjects that were universally significant in this world."

"As cold war enemies," said Pereira "I think it's important to note how these posters show how we both had common concerns."

The exhibition will be open for free to the public on the 1st and 2nd floors at the San Joaquin County Administration Building, 44 North San Joaquin Street from November through December 2011.

From November through December, additional Tidewater artists' work can also be view and purchased at the Gallery's Holiday Store at 260 Lincoln Center next to FINA.

For further information about the upcoming exhibits, call 209-986-0979 or contact our website at www.tidewaterartgallery.org

A starlight night: holiday events

On December 3, a series of free family-oriented holiday events will take place throughout the day, beginning at Lincoln Center and progressing down Pacific Avenue, the Miracle Mile, and concluding with evening events in downtown Stockton. The overall theme, A Starlight Night, is to encourage the entire community to participate in the festivities and with displays of white lights.

Events begin at Lincoln Center at 8 am with a canned food drive to benefit the Emergency Food Bank, visits with Santa from noon to 4:00 p.m., and carriage rides between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. The Peace and Justice Network sponsors its 25th annual Peaceful Holiday Fair between 10 am and 2 pm at Central United Methodist Church and the Miracle Mile will have live performances and entertainment, including the Stagg High School Choir and Hand Bell Choir, beginning at 4 pm, and tree

lighting and a visit by Santa at Tuxedo Court at 5 pm.

In downtown Stockton, the Downtown Alliance will host a window decorating contest and feature carolers. The Mayor's annual holiday tree lighting ceremony will take place at Weber Point Event Center at 6 pm, with musical entertainment by the award winning Cesar Chavez High School Honors Choir. The annual Marina West Yacht Club Delta Reflections Lighted Boat Parade is at 6:15 pm and can be enjoyed from the downtown Stockton waterfront and at the Stockton Arena at the club level.

San Joaquin RTD will feature complimentary event trolley and bus service on Pacific Avenue, from Hammer Lane to Downtown, between 10 am and 9 pm.

For additional event information, please visit the City of Stockton web site, www.stocktongov.com, or call (209) 937-8827.

Symphony adds second holiday concert

On the heels of an immensely popular Stockton Pops season opener, the Symphony brings Broadway to town once again when it presents its Holiday Pops concert on Sunday, December 11, 2011. The first concert begins at 2:30 p.m. at the Atherton Auditorium on the San Joaquin Delta College campus in Stockton. After three consecutive years of sellouts, a second performance has been added on Sunday at 7:30 p.m.

This festive event features outstanding Broadway performer Doug LaBrecque who was featured in Oscar Hammerstein's 100th Birthday Celebration on Broadway and has toured nationally with *Les Misérables*. Joining LaBrecque and the Symphony are the Stockton Chorale and the Stockton Youth Chorale. Guests can count on spirited sing-alongs, including a grand finale of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah," and Santa's cameo appearance.

Purchase tickets online at www.stocktonsymphony.org or call the Symphony office at (209) 951-0196 to order tickets in advance. Tickets begin at \$22; tickets for children and students with an ID are half price.

Nomination packets for Anthony awards ready

The San Joaquin County Commission on the Status of Women created the Susan B. Anthony Women of Achievement Awards to honor women who have excelled in their chosen category, and have, through their dedication, talent and untiring efforts, raised the status of humankind in San Joaquin County.

Nomination Packets are now ready and may be acquired by calling Beverly Fitch McCarthy at 463-6957. Nominees must reside within

San Joaquin County, or be employed full time within the county.

The 37th Annual Banquet will be held on Wednesday, February 15 at the Stockton Golf and Country Club at 6 p.m. Beverly Fitch McCarthy, event chair, will serve as mistress-of-ceremonies. Reservations at \$45 per person or \$360 per table of eight are due by January 27 and February 8th respectively, and may be mailed to the SJCCSW, Post

Office Box 4443, Stockton, 95204. Your canceled check is your receipt. Tickets will be held at the reservation desk the evening of the event. No tickets will be sold at the door. Tables for past recipients are available by request. For reservation information you may call Beverly Blum at 477-5970



Talking It Through

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

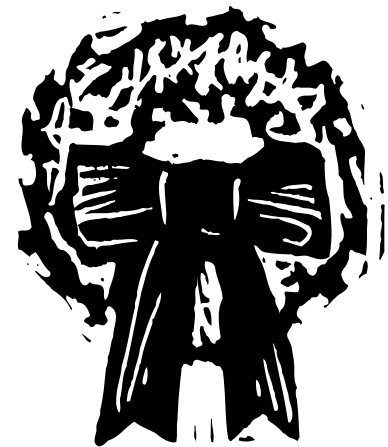
Peace & Justice Network Sponsors two Half-Hour Shows:

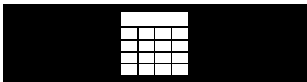
"Lets Talk" documentaries of important community meetings and events. **Mondays, 6pm.**

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

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

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





DEC/JAN CALENDAR

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

OCT 15—JAN 22

The Allure of Water: On Location with the Plein-Air Painters of America. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. More than 100 new paintings from across the country. Wed-Sun 1:30—5 pm. \$5 adult 18—64, student/senior/youth age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10 free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

NOV 17—DEC 14

Photography 2011: Portraiture—a national exhibition featuring 15 artists and 30 photos. Tu 11am—4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am—1pm. SJ Delta College, LH Horton Jr Gallery, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 954-5507.

NOV 18—DEC 31

From Russia with Love, featuring vintage Russian and Ukrainian posters from the 70's—80's reprinted on canvas by Steve Periera. (p 18) Free exhibit on the 1st and 2nd floors of the San Joaquin County Administration Building, 44 N San Joaquin St, Stockton.

WED-SUN

NOV 18—DEC 11

Hairspray. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Thur Dec 1 & 8. 7:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15—\$25. 473-2424. www.sctlivetheatre.com

THU, NOV 24

7th Annual Run and Walk Against Hunger, sponsored and benefitting the Emergency Food Bank. Start at Ports Ballpark and Stockton Arena 8 am kids, 8:30 5K and 10K run, with an untimed 5K walk. Scenic, flat and fun. Join 4,000 runners and walkers in helping feed our community. 464-7369. www.runagainsthunger.org

MON, NOV 28

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

THU, DEC 1

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

El Concilio's Annual Tamale Dinner, 5—8 pm, Stockton Civic Auditorium, 525 N Center St, Stockton. Live entertainment, music, Santa, raffle, beverages and dessert. All proceeds go towards holiday food baskets given in December. \$10 a plate.

Take out available 11 am—2 pm. To order go to <http://www.estockton.com/elconcilio-tamales/>

FRI, DEC 2

25th annual Peaceful Holiday Gift Fair, featuring peace gifts (see p 1). 4—9 pm. Entertainment, refreshments and a good cause. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free admission. 462-3489.

Ring in the Holidays with the Stockton Chorale, presenting a varied program of holiday favorites, with guest the Belocity Handvell Choir. 7:30 pm. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$20 adult, \$5 student. 951-6494.

SAT, DEC 3

25th annual Peaceful Holiday Gift Fair, featuring peace gifts (see p 1). 10am-2pm. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free admission. 462-3489.

Ring in the Holidays with the Stockton Chorale (see Dec 2), St John's Episcopal Church, 1055 S Lower Sacramento St, Lodi.

Lighted Boat Parade, 5—7 pm, Weber Point at the Downtown Waterfront. Don't miss this annual celebration of decorated boats and yachts, led by the Port of Stockton fireboat. Free admission.

SAT-SUN, DEC 2-3, 9-10, 16-17

ZooLights at Micke Grove Zoo. 6-8:30 pm. Wagon rides, games, crafts, music and refreshments. Bring canned food, get one free child admission/ family. Micke Grove Park, 11793 N Micke Grove Rd, Lodi. \$6 general, \$4 kids 2—10, under 3 free. All funds raised benefit youth education. 331-2138.

SAT-SUN, DEC 3-4

19th annual Festival of Trees, with over 70 uniquely decorated trees, kids activities, entertainment and more. 10 am—4 pm. SJ County Historical Museum, 11793 N Micke Grove Rd, Lodi. \$8 general, \$1 kids 2—10, under 2 free. All funds raised benefit youth education. 331-2005. www.sanjoaquinhistory.org

TUE, DEC 6

Russian Christmas Music, presented by the SJ Delta College Symphonic Band, Concert Band and Wind Ensembles, 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. General \$8, student/senior \$5. 954-5110.

DEC 7—11

Animal Farm, Wed 1 pm, Thu 10 am, Fri 7:30 pm, Sat 2 and 7:30 pm, Sun 2 pm. Tillie Lewis Theatre, SJ Delta College, \$10. 954-5110.

WED, DEC 7

Delta College String Ensemble Concert, 7 pm, Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, \$8. 954-5110.

SAT, DEC 10

Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus Holiday show, 2 pm. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. (p 18) \$10. 1-800-838-3006.

SUN, DEC 11

Stockton Symphony Holiday Pops, 2:30 and 7:30 pm, Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 954-5110.

MON, DEC 12

Delta College Guitar Studio Concert, 7:30 pm, Tillie Lewis Theatre, SJ Delta College, \$5. 954-5110.

TUE, DEC 13

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

WED, DEC 14

Delta College Guitar Studio Concert, 7:30 pm, Tillie Lewis Theatre, SJ Delta College, \$5. 954-5110.

THU, DEC 15

SJDC Monday Night Jazz Band, 7:30 pm, Tillie Lewis Theatre, SJ Delta College, \$8. 954-5110. Guitarist Ben Barron presents an evening of Spanish and Brazilian music at the Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. 7 pm. Complementary wine and snacks at 6:30. \$5 adult 18 & older, student/senior/youth age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10 free. 940-6315

SAT, DEC 17

The Nutcracker performed by the Capitol Ballet Company with guest dancers from the Stockton Ballet School. 2 pm. Sugar Plum reception 4 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8—\$18. 954-5110. www.capitolballet.com

WED-SUN

JAN 11—FEB 4

Dearly Beloved. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Thur Dec 1 & 8. 7:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15—\$25. 473-2424. www.sctlivetheatre.com

FIRST MONDAYS

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

FOURTH MONDAYS

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

SECOND TUESDAYS

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

SECOND THURSDAYS

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

THIRD THURSDAYS

Central Valley Wellstone Progressive Democratic Club, 6 pm, Perko's Cafe, 1703 E. Yosemite Ave., Manteca, Info: Rose Roach, 209-474-8496

FOURTH SATURDAYS

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

LAST FRIDAYS

Critical Mass Bike Ride. 7 PM, School for Adults, 1525 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. sjbike.weebly.com

MONDAYS

Jazz at the Blackwater 9—11:30 pm. Mike Rocha, Rick Russell, Giulio Cetto, Michael Klooster and more. Acacia & Yosemite, Stockton. 943-6938.

WEDNESDAYS

San Joaquin Bicycle Coalition Night Ride, 7 PM, leaving from parking lot behind Espresso Coffeehouse, 1825 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. sjbike.weebly.com

THURSDAYS

Peace demonstration, 5-6 PM, edge of Delta campus across from Elephant Bar. Park at Sherwood Mall. Signs provided, or bring your own! Info: Patrick Wall, 954-5438.

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

SATURDAYS

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

sold out. 943-1830

SUNDAYS

Occupy Stockton meetings, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO DISTRIBUTE CONNECTIONS TO WELL-ESTABLISHED ROUTES. ABOUT TWO HOURS PER MONTH. EASY AND FUN! CALL DEAN OR MARCIA SAVAGE, 209-339-1599.



Gay chorus to give Stockton a holiday concert



The merry men of the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus will be performing in the sanctuary of Central United Methodist Church at 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 10. They will be presenting a jolly and nostalgic holiday show that will make you smile, chuckle, and maybe even jingle.

This will be the second Christmas season that the people of Central United Methodist Church will be hosting the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus in concert in their sanctuary. It is assured that the men of the chorus will help get you into the mood of the holiday season.

The Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus was founded in 1984 as a singing group that aimed to foster a sense of community and provide support for gays and lesbians in the Sacramento area. Over the past 25 years through musical performances and outreach programs, the chorus has grown to become an integral part of the Sacramento arts community as well as a voice for the LGBTQ community. Artistic Director Paul Jones creates a professional showcase for the vocal talents of the 40 plus members of the Chorus.

Tickets are \$10 and are available through Brown Paper Tickets.com or at their office at 1.800.838.3006. They are also available at the church office at 3700 Pacific Avenue in Stockton or at the door.

Christmas 2011— new traditions

As the holidays approach, the giant Asian factories are kicking into high gear to provide Americans with monstrous piles of cheaply produced goods—merchandise that has been produced at the expense of American labor. This year will be different. This year Americans will give the gift of genuine concern for other Americans. There is no longer an excuse that, at gift giving time, that nothing can be found that is produced by American hands. Yes there is!

It's time to think outside the box, people. Who says a gift needs to fit in a shirt box, wrapped in Chinese produced wrapping paper?

Everyone gets their hair cut. How about gift certificates from your local American hair salon or barber?

Gym membership? It's appropriate for all ages who are thinking about some health improvement.

Who wouldn't appreciate getting their car detailed? Small, American owned detail shops and car washes would love to sell you a gift certificate or a book of gift certificates.

There are a ton of owner-run restaurants—all offering gift certificates. And, if your intended isn't the fancy eatery sort, what about a half dozen breakfasts at the local breakfast joint. Remember, this is about supporting your home town Americans with their financial lives on the line to keep their doors open.

How many people couldn't use an oil change for their car, truck or motorcycle, done at a shop run by the American working guy?

Thinking about a heartfelt gift for mom? Mom would LOVE the services of a local cleaning lady for a day.

My computer could use a tune-up, and I KNOW I can find some young guy who is struggling to get his repair business up and running.

If you were looking for something more personal, local crafts people spin their own wool and knit them into scarves. They make jewelry, and pottery and beautiful wooden boxes.

Plan your holiday outings at local, owner operated restaurants and leave your server a nice tip. And, how about going out to see a play or ballet at your hometown theatre.

Musicians need love too, so find a venue showcasing local bands.

You see, Christmas is no longer about buying tons of stuff we don't need. Christmas is now about caring about people, encouraging community members to keep plugging away to follow their dreams. And, when we care about our neighbors, we care about our communities, and the benefits come back to us in ways we couldn't imagine.



The Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin County
P.O. Box 4123
Stockton CA 95204

Dear Friend of Peace & Justice,

We find ourselves in momentous times.

Health care, housing, climate change, fiscal solvency, military conflict - all are reaching critical decisions. Elections are coming, with big money rubbing their hands to set records buying and manipulating information. The Occupy movement is drawing attention to issues that concern us all: income disparity, free speech, and military action abroad and in our own streets. The Peace and Justice Network is poised to continue educating on these and other issues. Will you help make that possible with a contribution of \$35 or whatever you can?

Our actions for peace and justice are consistent, reliable and powerful:

- * our newly re-designed Connections newspaper, which celebrated its 25th year of publication this past August, with an influence far beyond its monthly circulation of 9,000;
- * our Earth Day Festival, which turned 23 last year, attracting over 100 informational booths, outstanding local performers, and veggie food, while winning a merit award/grant for being an effective grassroots event;
- * our upcoming 25th annual Peaceful Holiday Fair, which is a chance to share, to shop for gifts consistent with a vision of a more peaceful world, and to give thanks for the gifts we have;
- * our Talking It Through cable TV program, which provides coverage of important local events;
- * our Stone Soup Radio project, which this month begins to test-broadcast on the web and will be testing transmission signal strengths; and
- * our weekly Thursday peace vigil, which reminds drivers that they aren't alone in opposing war.

In all this work, we are energized to see more and more supporting our message.

At this critical time for our community, state and nation, people are **looking for ways to understand what is happening**. Your Peace and Justice Network **provides ways for people to understand** - through print, tv, radio (soon) and outreach events. And cheaply too - we get a lot done with a budget of around \$40,000, all coming from our local community. It is hard to imagine a time when your contribution could make such an important difference.

At the end of a tumultuous hopeful year, we at the Peace and Justice Network thank you sincerely for your past support. Please, help keep us financially strong into the future! Thank you, we need each other.

“We find ourselves in momentous times”—and we find each other.

Wishing you peace and prosperity in the coming year,

Sincerely,

Bruce Giudici
Treasurer, Peace & Justice Network
Editor, Connections

CONNECTIONS

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Stockton, CA 95204 (209) 467—4455

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

Earth Day Grant Winners 2011–2012

Dawn Edwards, Wicklund Elementary,
Mountain House, 4th Grade

Students learn why, what and where to recycle paper, plastics, hazardous waste, and the impact our decisions have on the eco-system. Purchase stacking recycling bins and educational materials

Jeannine Huffman, New Energy Academy,
SJCOE Venture Charter School, 9th–12th Grade

Students will create models of solar homes that utilize renewable energy and learn how renewable energy use reduces their carbon footprint.

Laurel Taylor, Kimball High School, Tracy, 9th–12th Grade

Take students to Yosemite to learn about the geological process that had a part in the creation of the splendor of Yosemite and its ecosystem

Elizabeth Coffey, Fremont Elementary
School, Stockton Unified, 2nd Grade

Working together a class of 7th and 8th and a class of 4th and 5th graders graders with learning and behavioral disabilities will restore existing planters and create new planters for the hallways of the school.

СОХРАНИМ ЗЕМЛИ НЕПОВТОРИМОСТЬ

