

connections

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From the editor

Post-election news: reality time

Bruce Giudici

The national nightmare is over. The 12 long years of bizarre self-serving law-making initiated in the House of Representatives has finally ended with the Democrats re-claiming control of Congress. While the early crackpot plans of the House generally died with a Clinton veto, they became law throughout the Bush presidency.

No longer. While Democratic initiatives will go nowhere in the face of Bush vetoes, at least no new bills will become law that further erode our rights, enrich the wealthy, or kill more innocents. The six-year national bleeding has been stopped. And now the work begins.

First and foremost, let's find out what happened—how our democracy was hijacked by slim majorities in both houses of Congress to enact laws altogether cruel, unethical, immoral, and unconstitutional. Yes, we demand investigations: into war profiteering, approval of torture, vote trading for the Medicare D program, WMD lies, the outing of Valerie Plame...the whole sordid story.

And if impeachment results, so be it. Evil-doers are only emboldened when they are not held accountable for their acts.

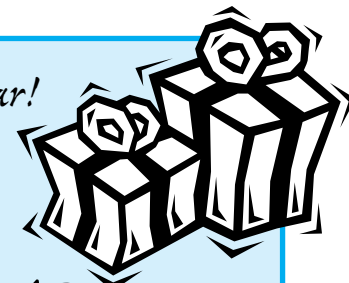
When Reagan wasn't impeached for the Iran-Contra scandal, the criminality threshold was lessened—and our democracy was diminished. If the Bush people aren't held accountable, the lesson will be learned by future leaders.

We will find out in the next few months what Bush couldn't release before the election—suppressed bad news that was too “political” for the election. As we go to press, news abounds. Bechtel pulls out of Iraq, after getting \$2.3 billion and losing 52 employee lives. Most of the \$21 billion in reconstruction money was spent on security, with no more money to come. Under a \$2.4 billion non-competitive bid contract, a Halliburton subsidiary charged \$25,000 per month for each of as many as 1,800 fuel trucks that spent weeks sitting idle on the Iraqi border. The Republican auditor in Iraq who exposed poor work done by Haliburton and Parsons—and who discovered the lack of weapons tracking by the US military—was fired in one of the few bills Congress passed last session. The running total of this “6-month” war sold to the American public at \$50 billion is projected to exceed \$2 trillion (that's 2,000 billion—more

(continued next page)

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Avoid buying gifts that are:

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Reality time *(continued from page 1)*

than 40 times the original Bush estimate). And we can't afford universal health care.

On a Federal website, the Bush administration posted a guide to building an atom bomb in Arabic at the urging of House Republicans (reason: to show Iraq nuclear intentions—never mind the documents were dated before the 1991 Gulf War, and captured in the two years thereafter). This comes after funding for de-commissioning Russian nuclear weapons has been cut. Nuclear proliferation, job one?

On the torture front, Bush won't allow a suspected terrorist who spent years in a secret CIA prison to speak to an attorney, because he could reveal the agency's closely guarded interrogation techniques. Such "trade secrets," while permissible for KFC's 11 herbs and spices, might spell war crimes if ever exposed. Anyway, I thought those techniques had a deterrent effect. And now Bush cites oil as a reason to stay in Iraq—quite a change from Rumsfeld's November 2002 pre-war statement "it (the war) has

nothing to do with oil, literally nothing to do with oil."

We now know that a series of secret U.S. war games in 1999—in 1999—showed that an invasion and post-war administration of Iraq would require 400,000 troops, nearly three times the number there now—and that even then, the country still had a chance of dissolving into chaos. Some of the conclusions are similar to what actually occurred after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003:

- A change in regimes does not guarantee stability,...a number of factors, including aggressive neighbors, fragmentation along religious and/or ethnic lines, and chaos created by rival forces bidding for power could adversely affect regional stability.
- Even when civil order is restored and borders are secured, the replacement regime could be problematic—especially if perceived as weak, a puppet, or out-of-step with prevailing regional governments.
- Iran's anti-Americanism could

be enflamed by a U.S.-led intervention in Iraq...The influx of U.S. and other western forces into Iraq would exacerbate worries in Tehran, as would the installation of a pro-western government in Baghdad.

- The debate on post-Saddam Iraq also reveals the paucity of information about the potential and capabilities of the external Iraqi opposition groups. The lack of intelligence concerning their roles hampers U.S. policy development.
- Also, some participants believe that no Arab government will welcome the kind of lengthy U.S. presence that would be required to install and sustain a democratic government.
- A long-term, large-scale military intervention may be at odds with many coalition partners.

So, as the mainstream allows the regime to repeat "we were all fooled" which is all too accurate... the Bush regime fooled enough of the American people to land us here.

As to the Medicare D program, next year the program is expected

Bruce Giudici



to cost almost \$50 billion—about 20 percent of overall American drug spending. Companies have raised prices on many top-selling medicines by 6 percent or more this year, double the overall inflation rate. Savings of as much as \$190 billion over the next 10 years could be realized if the government negotiated directly with the drug companies, savings that could help shrink the "doughnut hole," the gap in Part D coverage that forces many beneficiaries to pay about \$3,000 a year for drugs.

More will surely filter out in coming months. Pay attention—the bleeding has been slowed. An active democracy demands an active citizenry. It's time to step up and find your voice. We now have a Hopeful New Year for the first time in a decade. Enjoy the holidays.

Thank you...deeply

Thanks to you, our supporters, the Peace & Justice Network donations for 2006 more than doubled from the year before. Amazing! When we opened the Peace & Justice Center, we hoped that donors would see its value, especially in times so precarious and ripe for change. Every time we asked for support, you responded with generosity and kind words. Our appreciation is deeply felt.

This was the first full year of operating the Peace & Justice Center—a year of art events, films and meetings, celebrations and good times with good friends. Connections has new voices, we had a great event celebrating our 20 year anniversary, and we continue into 2007. Thank you for making it all possible.



ACLU: Next steps

For the past five years, our nation has been held hostage by the politics of fear—with too many of our leaders caving into the notion that we must sacrifice our civil liberties in the name of the war on terror. But this election day, voters helped restore our system of checks and balances, and rejected the fear-mongering.

However, the election results won't matter much if all it produces is a Congress without the courage to demand answers, expose wrongdoing, restore justice, and end abuses.

After five long years of profound abuses of power by the White House and Congress' failure to hold the president accountable, the new Congress should immediately:

- Demand a thorough investigation into the NSA's warrantless eavesdropping; stop funding this illegal program and start investigating it instead.
- Restore respect for human rights and undo the damage done by both the Bush administration's despicable practices and the recently passed Military Commissions Act. We must close Guantánamo and begin

immediately to push for the restoration of due process and the writ of habeas corpus, a cornerstone of our Constitution and our legal heritage.

- Expose massive invasions of our personal privacy and the monitoring and suppression of those who dare to disagree with government policies. We need to end unfettered government access to our private financial, health care, and other records.
- End government intrusion into the most personal and private aspects of our lives. It is time to fight for marriage equality, put the brakes on the federal government's relentless assault on reproductive freedom, and stop the funneling of billions of tax dollars to religious institutions that are free to discriminate.

It's up to each of us to see our work through and end the abuses and the utter absence of accountability that have been the hallmarks of our government over the last five years. Please help restore our lost liberties today.

Source: ACLU action alert, 11/9/06
<http://action.aclu.org>

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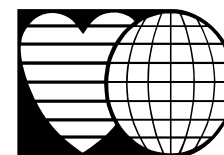
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"The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared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

South Stockton voting: a pollworker's view

Apocrypha

Prepared by a two and a half hour training session two weeks before, we eagerly arrived by 6 am at our polling place. Another team for another precinct was already setting up their half of a very small hall. As we prepped the machines, people began arriving before 7 am, anxious to vote. They had to; some would not get back from work in time to vote.

As we tried to start up, we found the machines were not cooperating. Two out of six came on, but wouldn't open the program. Frantic calls sent a "techie" on his way to three sites. He arrived at ours to find the key cards had been programmed for the wrong precinct.

Then the paper jammed. We had no backup machine for either precinct; same problem occurred at all three sites.

By 8:40 am he was programming, one at a time. The first person had to "vote twice"—the first machine failed. The second try did record the vote. At last, we were a "go" after 9 am more than two hours late (in Indiana they added two hours to the voting day for the same reason).

By now it's discovered that the cards have to be "re-created" each time, and there are difficulties at first, so that one poll worker inserts a card for each voter. Slowly but surely, the team tries to synchronize duties. One person insists on being "In-Charge" of the only sign-in roster, a problem since In-Charge is "bossing" other workers, while having difficulty even finding registered voters' names. In-Charge appears frustrated, then begins sending voters over to the other precinct—or to get a provisional ballot—unless the team leader comes and finds the name. And In-Charge begins demanding ID.

Meantime, people wait patiently, except for those who can come back later. Some are offered sample ballots to use, including several people who regularly vote at this site, but whose names are not on the list. People ask, "Will they really count my vote?" We show them a special envelope: they tear sample pages, vote, seal inside, and we promise to guard

their vote in special bags. Others say, "Forget that—I'll wait for the machine."

People later come in, especially after work, anxiously carrying absentee ballots—"I never had time...will my vote count?" And newly moved neighbors, with too little time to "drive back home," get help with provisional or absentee as needed—until 8 pm.

An issue of ID

During the afternoon and evening when the "In-Charge" worker is "on," the "ID issue" continues, sometimes nicely, but often in the form of an abrupt loud demand. She examines driver's licenses very closely, making people nervous and embarrassed. After finally locating the name (usually with owner's help), she then allows them to sign in.

Two women with a small child nervously approach the table. Before anyone else can greet or explain, a loud demand for ID startles, then annoys the young woman. She replies, "I'm a citizen, I'm in that book. I vote here always." She is screeched at: "You don't show me your ID, no vote." There is no intervention by the team leader, so two other workers begin to speak softly in Spanish to the older woman. The younger woman says, "I'll just help my mother vote." She receives a torrent ending in, "You ain't goin' nowhere near the voting machines."

The entire roomful of people goes deathly silent. The woman leads her mother and scared little girl out. The team leader goes over and announces that they've gone. Shocked silence. One worker volunteers to follow and invite them in Spanish to return. The "In-Charge" person interrupts loudly: "She in my business."

Team leader tells both workers to keep quiet. The first worker tells the team leader about the trouble there will be if they can't vote, to which she is answered loudly, "Then you go get them."

Several minutes later they come back in, are immediately told (in slightly nicer tones) to come and sign in. Another worker has located their names—on the mother's sample ballot. The machine worker graciously escorts them to

a machine; two men waiting had motioned for them to go first, in kind support. Three votes saved—not to mention dignity restored. This precinct is normally friendly, courteous and patient. Neighbors, of several ethnic roots, know each other over generations.

The ID demands continue to shock. After another challenge question, the team leader announces loudly, "She's been asking everyone all day,—as if that is justification. And it's not really true, since some people have been more harshly treated, others treated with "Sugar Daddy" charm and given no ID request. It seems like a review of a Freedom Riders black and white film. Clueless to history, we're bound to repeat.

Meanwhile the rest of the team tries to bring back a normal atmosphere for a precinct voting room, but it's tricky when all are being entertained at high volume by a prancing poll worker waving bags of candy—proclaiming she's here today to "find me a sugar daddy." She's been asking men voters if they're married. Joined by team leader in raucous conversations—hilarious if they were part of an adult comedy routine, or in a backyard picnic. Ethnically sensitive to cultural niceties, they weren't.

All this happens while the other precinct team sits apparently aghast, while our team is embarrassed and tries to carry on in turns, especially when the register sits without "In-Charge," who continues making trips to the car or "helps" the machine helper. The outside log was missing for about half an hour until another poll worker went and got it from a car, so it could be updated by us.

At 8 pm we closed, and we again turned people away. One woman said, "If they can't do any better after last year, I'm through voting—it's all a joke. They don't want my vote anyway."

The evening ended with all machines correctly emptied and signed off properly, and materials conducted properly to our team leader's car for delivery to the Registrar's office.

Next time, anybody for a banana leaf and stylus?

Apocrypha worked a south Stockton polling place November 7.



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

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

KPFA (94.1 FM) provides the best coverage around for many issues. You can listen on the internet at <http://www.kpfa.org>

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

<http://www.firedoglake.blogspot.com>

<http://www.wampum.wabanaki.net>

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Truth Out: <http://www.truthout.org/>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We're on the web too!

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

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>

The next steps in Iraq

The midterm elections this week were, more than anything else, a referendum on the failed U.S. war and military occupation of Iraq. The people of this country have spoken. The voters in this country are saying they will not sacrifice the lives of their loved ones for a failed war in Iraq. The results of this congressional election will force a change in U.S. policy in Iraq. But what kind of change?

The president today accepted the resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. But changing the Secretary of Defense will not change the administration's policy. The stated policy remains: "victory in Iraq." The problem is not the people in office, the problem is the policy. At a press briefing Wednesday afternoon, President Bush acknowledged the need to "adjust" U.S. implementation of his policy in Iraq, and then added he still believes the U.S. can still

"win" a military victory in Iraq. The president has not accepted that his policies have made the U.S. part of the problem, rather than part of the solution in Iraq.

The U.S. still has 150,000 military troops in Iraq. The violence is escalating and spreading throughout the region. The president is planning to ask Congress next February, according to press reports, to approve another "emergency" supplemental appropriation of \$160 billion in funding for the U.S. war and military occupation.

Now it's up to Congress to demand that the president change course in Iraq. The goal should be to end the U.S. war and military occupation in Iraq. That goal will have to be embraced by both parties to be successful. Congress and the president need to accept the reality that no possible outcome will be a victory for anyone in Iraq. The best that can

be done now will be to limit the damage, reduce the lethality of the conflict, and prevent a failed state by removing one of the biggest problems there, i.e. the U.S. military presence.

The mid-term elections will send new leadership to Congress. But neither the Democrats working alone nor the Republicans working alone will be able to force a change in U.S. policy toward Iraq. Bipartisan cooperation will be essential to exercise congressional power sufficient to check the misguided executive branch.

Congress needs to develop a strategy to withdraw U.S. military forces and to end the U.S. military occupation. Withdrawal of U.S. military forces is a necessary, prior condition for ending the



war, but it is not a sufficient condition. Members of Congress from both parties have spoken out against the current U.S. strategy in Iraq. To be successful, any new congressional initiative will have to be a bipartisan effort for a U.S. policy that:

1. Sets a date certain for U.S. military withdrawal;
2. Brings the armed Iraqi nationalist resistance to the negotiating table;
3. Simultaneously starts up a regional process—including

Syria and Iran—to support and stabilize Iraq; and

4. Provides U.S. underwriting for Iraqi-led reconstruction.

At a minimum, members of Congress from both parties should condition any additional funding for the Iraq war on this four-point plan for an expeditious U.S. military withdrawal.

Source: FCNL update 11/8/06, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002 <http://www.fcnl.org> (800) 630-1330

Veterans protest reserve call-ups for Iraq war

Stacy Bannerman

The Pentagon revealed in September that it may change the policy limiting National Guard deployments in order to send more weekend warriors to Iraq after the elections. While most of the media and the American public slept through the news, the family members of more than 400,000 National Guard and Reservists did not. Some of them have spent the past six weeks collecting thousands of signatures on petitions protesting the Pentagon's plans and demanding an end to the "backdoor draft," cited in the document as "troop extensions, stop-loss orders, [and] involuntary recalls."

The petitions will be delivered to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on Thursday, just seventy-two hours after all four versions of the Military Times published an editorial calling for his removal. The contingent, which includes Iraq War veterans, retired National Guard and Reserve soldiers, military families, and citizen supporters, is led by Military Families Speak Out (MFSO), a national organization

of more than 3,000 military families opposed to the war in Iraq, with members in all 50 states and at military installations around the world. Hundreds of MFSO members have had sons and daughters, husbands and wives forced to stay in the military, and in Iraq, long after their contract expired.

Shortly after the invasion of Iraq, the Defense Department issued a "stop loss" order that has since compelled more than 70,000 of the country's volunteer armed forces to remain in service beyond their contractually agreed-upon term. The stop-loss measure prevents soldiers from collecting the sign-on bonuses and extra compensation that is offered to new recruits or soldiers that

choose to renew their contracts.

"Thank God for stop-loss orders," said Vice President Dick Cheney in an October interview with Rush Limbaugh. Haeley, the wife of a New York National Guardsman, feels differently: "My husband, Luke, is currently serving in Iraq under stop-loss orders. He was supposed to be able to leave the military in December of this year, [but he] was put on stop-loss orders and his enlistment was involuntarily extended for 30 years. He left for Iraq a little over a month ago. He will now miss out on the first year of his first child's life. I don't agree with the use of the National Guard in this way. I also don't like that the military is involuntarily extending the contracts of the troops—it is underhanded and desperate, and

they should take into account that people do not want to serve in this war as a sign of just how mishandled it's been."

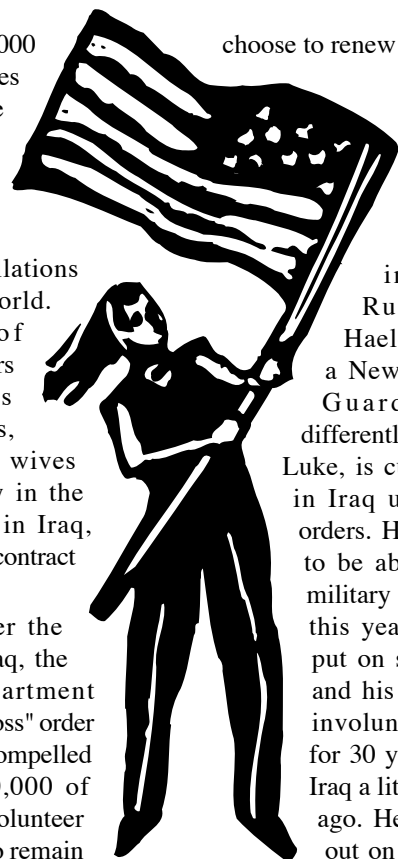
In the past four months, 7,500 soldiers have had their tours extended in Iraq, including members of the 172nd Stryker Brigade in Iraq, some of whom were forced to get back on a plane after having already returned home from a year-long deployment. In August, the Marines announced a call-back of their Individual Ready Reserve force, which was intended for use only in times of national emergency. But stop-losses and extensions are proving insufficient to meet the constant demand for troops in an increasingly violent Iraq, and "most US Army units are right now not ready for combat," according to NBC Nightly News (September 22, 2006).

In order for the Army to carry out its plan to maintain troop levels of 120,000 in Iraq through 2010, the Pentagon will have to lift the restraints on Guard deployments, which now limit Guard combat tours to two out of every five years. Almost 300,000

Guard soldiers - 60 percent of the force - have hit their threshold for overseas combat, but National Guard Lieutenant General Steven Blum expects his soldiers to get the call again. The Pentagon has postponed announcing the likelihood of additional mobilizations and accelerated call-ups for Reservists until after the November elections because it's such a politically explosive issue. For the military families and veterans who will be at the Pentagon this Thursday seeking to stop the stop-loss and prevent the Pentagon from redeploying Reservists months, if not years, before the current policy allows, it's a matter of life and death.

Stacy Bannerman is the author of *When the War Came Home: The Inside Story of Reservists and the Families They Leave Behind* (Continuum Publishing, 2006). She is a member of Military Families Speak Out <<http://www.mfso.org>>. Her husband served one year in Iraq with the Washington Army National Guard 81st Brigade.

Source: *truthout* Report 11/7/06 <http://www.truthout.org/index.htm>



In the trenches

Sally Galiste

In the final countdown to Election Day, candidates vying for local, regional, state, and national seats ratcheted up their campaigns into full frenzied vigor. Between mailers, phone banks, door knocking, lawn/street corner signs, radio and TV spots, no homo sapien in the Valley (registered voter or not) could escape from the deluge of mud slinging or political pleas lobbed in every direction—enough to overwhelm even the most thoughtful voter. But it didn't, voters persevered, and that's what counts.

In the 11th Congressional District race between incumbent Rep. Richard Pombo and Democratic candidate Jerry McNerney, the campaign became not just national, but worldwide news-worthy. For two hours on Saturday, October 28th, as I was out door-to-door canvassing in north Stockton for McNerney, a journalist from the *London Independent* accompanied me on my rounds. What a delightful chap. Andrew lives in L.A. as the newspaper's foreign correspondent on Stateside news.

Curious about campaigning in England, I asked about comparisons. He responded that some things are similar but other factors are different. For instance, candidates across the Atlantic are allowed, legally, only three weeks in which to campaign prior to Election Day, which means they must be organized, armed and ready to roll out their winning strategies right from the get-go. Plus, candidates for office are allowed equal access to media (newspapers/radio/tv) in which to state their intentions, goals and stances on issues. Rather than dumping thousands of dollars into media ads, the wannabe candidates are able to utilize contributions in more constructive ways. Political dollars aren't as likely to determine the winners and losers for official seats.

Clinton comes to town

Former President Bill Clinton literally flew in and flew back out of Stockton in the closing days of election countdown, wowing an expectant crowd of supporters

gathered in the drizzling rain. Before Clinton's jet touched down at the Stockton Airport on the eve of November 1st, Democratic candidates John Garamendi, Debra Bowen, and Cruz Bustamante plus Art Torres provided rousing speeches—inspiring chants of "time for a change." Clinton and McNerney brought the crowd to their feet as they walked on stage (o.k., the crowd was already on their feet...) to smiles, cheers and eager ears.

Then came Clinton's turn. Here are a few comments posted by McNerney website bloggers about Clinton: "I have not heard a politician, current or ex-president or another human being put so compellingly the reason we need change and the difference between the current administration and where our country needs to be." (Jim Ware)

"President Clinton hit the nail on the head last night when he talked about the very small group of very wealthy monied interests that are really running this country. If we want to take our country back, we will need to elect Jerry McNerney and as many other progressives that are willing to run, over the next twenty years." (Steven Tabin) "What an inspiring night. You could feel it in the air... the momentum is with Jerry." (Dianne England) "Clinton was really funny... I loved his comments about Republican economics, 'They tried to fight arithmetic, but arithmetic won.' ...The crowd was loud and proud, and pretty damp. But as John Garamendi said as he was working the crowd, 'Even the rain couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of this group.'"

Election Day

Such a glorious day for Americans. This is what democracy is all about. When the citizens of this country don't like where our government is taking us, we change course. And change we did. From local elections to state battles to Congressional seats, the overriding sentiment was change. Change from the quagmire of Iraq, change from unscrupulous ethics in Congress, change in terroristic defense and preparedness—the

A progressive agenda

Dean Baker

The Democrats have scored an important electoral gain for the first time in 14 years. It is now incumbent on progressives to ensure that this victory is not squandered. In addition to maintaining pressure for a hasty withdrawal from Iraq, there is a long list of economic items that we should be pushing the Democrats to support. At the top of the list must be the demand to carry through on one of the Democrats' key campaign promises: reforming the Medicare prescription drug benefit. The solution here is simple: allow Medicare to negotiate prices directly with the pharmaceutical industry and offer its own prescription drug plan. If Medicare could negotiate the same price for prescription drugs as the Veterans Administration or the Canadian government, it would be possible to eliminate the \$2,850 "doughnut hole" gap in coverage. We could also save taxpayers tens of billions of dollars every year from the cost of this benefit.

winds of change are blowing strong through America. All the effort put into campaigning, informing, persuading, organizing, volunteering, networking—the total grassroots movement (including a huge boost from environmental groups)—paid off. Democrats overwhelmingly seized control of the House of Representatives, while the Senate just squeaked out Democratic control with the help of Independent seats. San Franciscan Nancy Pelosi is poised to become the new Speaker of the House.

Locally, Measure K was renewed to continue pumping needed dollars for road improvements and transportation projects, while Measure L will fund (to the tune of \$114 million in bonds) improvements at middle and high schools in Lodi Unified School District.

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The Republicans have fought against reforming the benefit, claiming that there would be no savings from having Medicare negotiate directly with the industry because the insurers already pay such low prices. The Republicans differ on this point, with their financial backers in the pharmaceutical industry. A representative from PhRMA, the industry lobbying group, was quoted recently in the New York Times complaining that it would not be fair to allow Medicare to negotiate prices with the industry, because the government has too much market power. The spokesperson went on to say, "the government doesn't negotiate prices - it dictates prices." The drug industry is right on this one and the Republicans are wrong. There would be huge price savings if Medicare were allowed to offer its own drug plan, which is why the public should demand that Congress reform the benefit.

Universal health

This is only the beginning. It is time that the Democrats start to move forward on President Clinton's 1992 campaign promise to provide universal health care coverage. A simple way to increase coverage would be to allow everyone (both individuals and employers) to buy into Medicare. This would allow everyone in the country to take advantage of Medicare's low administrative costs and its market power in keeping down the prices charged by health care providers.

Opening up Medicare is a simple, but important, first step. It is also one that provides little cause for objection. If premiums are set at the cost of coverage, then this step requires no additional taxpayer dollars. It also is entirely optional—the people who are happy with their current insurance have the option to keep it. Opening up Medicare to everyone is simply giving people an additional option that they did not previously have. What's wrong with giving people a choice? Over time, we could look to create a system of subsidies for low and moderate income families that will allow everyone in the country to be included in the Medicare system, but the immediate task is

to get the basic structure in place. Opening Medicare to the entire population will be a big step down that path.

There is also a larger agenda of items that could make a huge difference in the lives of millions of working families. This includes a higher minimum wage, increased support for child care, access to paid time off (sick leave or vacation days), and promoting flexible work schedules. There have been many useful initiatives in these areas that may have some chance of advancing in a Democrat-controlled Congress.

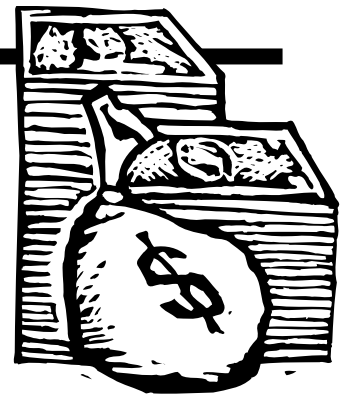
There is also the fallout from the imminent crash of the housing bubble that the Democrats must be prepared to address. There is not going to be an easy answer here—the crash of the housing bubble will cause considerable pain—but it will be important to have a plan in place to boost employment and get the economy back on its feet. At least part of this plan should be a set of tax credits to promote conservation and low cost alternative energy (e.g. increased home insulation and installing solar paneling). In the downturn following the crash of the housing bubble, such tax credits would both help to re-employ dislocated construction workers and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil.

There is a much larger list of items that should be addressed, including a new dollar and trade policy and re-orienting the focus of the Federal Reserve Board toward maintaining high rates of employment, but fixing the drug benefit and opening up Medicare should be a good start. These are simple policies that will make a large difference in the lives of tens of millions of people. The Democrats should be prepared to embrace them. If the Republicans manage to obstruct progress, there is another election in two years.

Dean Baker is the co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)—<http://www.cepr.net/>. He is the author of *The Conservative Nanny State: How the Wealthy Use the Government to Stay Rich and Get Richer* (www.conservativenannystate.org).

Source: *truthout* | Perspective 11/8/06 <http://www.truthout.org>

Economics: Iraq war to cost over \$2 trillion



Linda Bilmes and
Joseph E. Stiglitz

Two scholars, one a Nobel Prize winner, revisit their estimate of the true cost of the Iraq war—and find that \$2 trillion was too low. They consider not only the current and future budgetary costs, but the economic impact of lives lost, jobs interrupted and oil prices driven higher by political uncertainty in the Middle East.

In January, we estimated that the true cost of the Iraq war could reach \$2 trillion, a figure that seemed shockingly high. But since that time, the cost of the war—in both blood and money—has risen even faster than our projections anticipated. More than 2,500 American troops have died and close to 20,000 have been wounded since Operation Iraqi Freedom began. And the \$2 trillion number—the sum of the current and future budgetary costs along with the economic impact of lives lost, jobs interrupted and oil prices driven higher by political uncertainty in the Middle East—now seems low....

Veterans

A major contributor to this long-term cost is the medical care and disability benefits provided to veterans. More than one million U.S. troops have now served in Iraq. And once they leave, each is entitled to a long list of benefits for the remainder of his or her life. Veterans can apply for compensation for any disabling injury or disease (physical or mental) that occurred on active duty or any existing condition that was made worse by military service. Benefits are based on the extent of the disability, ranging from 10 to 100 percent. And, because some medical problems do not become apparent right away, claims are likely to be filed for years after the war is over.

There are 2.6 million veterans currently receiving disability pay, including a sobering 40 percent of the soldiers who served during the four-week-long Gulf War in 1991. Accrued liabilities for U.S. federal employees' and veterans' benefits now total \$4.5 trillion. Indeed, our debt for veterans' health and disability payments has risen by \$228 billion in the past year alone.

These numbers are unlikely to fall. More than half of the troops in Iraq have served two or three tours of duty under grueling conditions. Moreover, depleted uranium, used in armor-piercing artillery shells because it is hard, heavy and cheap, was implicated in many of the medical claims by soldiers from the first Gulf War. And the same radioactive material was used in the toppling of Saddam Hussein.

Note, too, that improvements in body armor mean that an unusually high number of soldiers are surviving major injuries, but ending up disabled. About 20 percent of survivors have suffered major head or spinal injuries, 18 percent incurred serious wounds and an additional 6 percent are amputees. The estimated 7,000 veterans with severe brain, spinal, amputation and other serious injuries will require a lifetime of round-the-clock care.

Government medical facilities are currently overwhelmed by the needs of soldiers injured in Iraq. Some 144,000 of them sought care from the VA in the first quarter of 2006—23 percent more than the Bush administration had estimated for the entire year! Similarly, the government projected that 18,000 returning soldiers would seek treatment for post traumatic stress disorder in 2006—but the VA treated 20,638 Iraqi war veterans for PTSD in the first quarter alone. All told, in the past year, the VA has added 250,000 new beneficiaries and still has a backlog of more than 400,000 pending claims.

Rebuilding the post-Iraq military

Another big future obligation is the cost to "reset" the military—that is, to restore U.S. forces to their strength and preparedness prior to Iraq. This will require a major capital investment to replace military equipment depleted or destroyed by the war. The capital cost is in addition to the operating costs for repairs, ammunition, spare parts and fuel. For example, the United States now has 37,000 light military trucks in Iraq accumulating mileage at up to six times the peacetime rate. And while there may be no good time to replace the weapons, vehicles, medical equipment and the like

With Iraq, America had a choice of whether and when to attack. If there ever was a "project" that should have been subject to careful scrutiny from all perspectives—including the economics—this was it.

that will be used up, it's clear the bill will come due at a particularly bad time—that is, in the decades during which Americans will be wrestling with the question of how to pay for the pensions and medical care of retired baby boomers.

Budgetary cost of the war

Congress has already appropriated approximately \$430 billion for military operations, reconstruction and related programs in Iraq and Afghanistan. And these cash outlays have been rising as the war has progressed. In fiscal year 2003, the average monthly cost of operations was \$4.4 billion, while today operations are running about \$10 billion a month.

Of the million troops who have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, some 400,000 are reservists or members of the National Guard—which adds an additional layer of costs. Reservists are expensive to activate because the military needs to start paying them full-time salaries (instead of paying for one weekend a month). By contrast, regular forces receive full-time salary in war or peace. Most reservists are older and have families, so they are paid additional compensation while on active duty. Moreover, if they are killed, their dependents are entitled to compensation and benefits including housing, education loans and job training.

The escalating costs also reflect the vast sums that the Defense Department has been spending to recruit soldiers. In the past two years, the armed forces have nearly doubled the number of recruiters, increased bonuses to as much as \$40,000 for new enlistees, and paid special bonuses and other benefits worth as much as \$150,000 for members of the Special Forces who re-enlist. The Defense Department

has also relied on contractors to support the war effort, which has proved to be a very expensive way to keep the troop count down. In many contracts, security costs represent 25 to 30 percent of the total outlay. The Pentagon has managed some savings—such as no longer needing to police the "no-fly" zone that protected the Kurds before Saddam was ousted. But on balance, the Defense Department has increased spending by several billion dollars annually for war-related expenses that are over and above the sums going directly to combat operations.

While economists don't generally include interest on extra budget deficits as a cost of the war—interest payments can be viewed as transfer payments to creditors—the budgetary reality is very different, and thus interest costs are worth considering here. With rising interest rates (themselves partly due to the war, as central banks around the world work to combat the inflation brought on by high oil prices), these costs are soaring. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that interest payments on the money borrowed to finance the Iraq war will total \$264 billion to \$308 billion.

We have used the CBO's two scenarios for expected troop deployment to make a reasonable projection of the likely underlying costs of operations, and then adjusted these numbers to an accrual basis in order to reflect future costs outlined above. Looking purely at direct costs to taxpayers, we estimate that the total cost of the Iraq war will be in the \$1 billion to \$1.4 billion range under the CBO's core assumption that the U.S. maintains a small presence in Iraq through 2016. Even under a more optimistic

scenario—that all U.S. troops are home by 2010, the budgetary cost of the Iraq operation will reach nearly \$1 trillion.

Economic costs of the war

Economic costs differ from budgetary costs in three ways. First, some costs are borne by individuals and families or by non-federal-government agencies, and thus do not show up in federal accounts. Second, the prices paid by the government do not reflect the market value of the services purchased. Third, economic costs do not include interest payments (which from an economic perspective can be viewed as transfer payments), but do include long-run impacts on the growth of the economy. Here, we have focused only on a few of these additional costs: the loss of productive capacity of the young Americans killed or seriously wounded in Iraq, the loss of civilian wages that would have been earned by those called back to duty in the Reserves, and the macroeconomic effects that reduce output.

Military fatalities, casualties and the Reserves wage differential

Although it is problematic to translate the value of a life into monetary terms, economists and private insurance firms commonly determine the "value of a statistical life" (VSL) by inferring how much workers demand to perform hazardous jobs (think mining or firefighting) or how much consumers are willing to pay to reduce risk (think mammograms or smoke alarms). In non-military areas, such as safety and environmental regulation, the federal government values the life

(continued next page)

of a young adult male at around \$6.5 million.

One could argue that the true cost of death and disability for an all-volunteer army is already reflected in military pay premiums for hazardous duty. But we think this greatly underestimates the real cost. First, recruits, many of whom are too young to buy a beer legally, have little information about the likelihood of being killed or injured, or how much they will come to value their own safety later in their lives. Second, many of the soldiers in Iraq are not really volunteers. The majority serving there are either reservists or Guard members who never expected to go to war, or regular army personnel ordered by the Pentagon to serve far beyond their scheduled length of deployment.

Hence, we would argue that very little of the true cost of the deaths of American soldiers is reflected in the budget. Using a VSL estimate of \$6.5 million, the economic cost of the American soldiers and contractors who have already lost their lives adds up to \$16.9 billion. (We have not included the cost of the estimated 40,000 to 100,000 Iraqis killed in the conflict.)

By the same reasoning, the budgetary expenditures also underestimate the true economic costs to the soldiers wounded because the outlays do not include adequate compensation for what tort law calls pain and suffering, or additional health care expenditures by the soldiers' families and non-federal-government agencies. We believe veterans, and their families, receiving full disability payments bear costs equal to those who die in combat, and therefore we should assign each case a non-budgetary cost of \$6.5 million (the value of a statistical life). We assign a modest 20 percent of that figure to those who are wounded less seriously.

There is also an economic cost in the difference between civilian and military wages for reservists. This difference is a cost borne by the economy and shows up as lower productivity. In their study of the economic costs of the war published by the AEI/Brookings Joint Center in 2005, Scott Wallsten and Katrina Kosec calculated that the "opportunity cost" of using Reserve troops at current levels is \$3.9 billion to date.

Note, moreover, that a disproportionate number of these

reservists work in critical "first-responder" jobs back home—as fire-fighters, police and emergency medical personnel. Nearly half the police forces in the United States now have some of their ranks deployed in Iraq, and the average length of Guard mobilization is 480 days. It is difficult to measure the cost of this deployment in purely economic terms because there is a large unquantifiable "insurance" value of having trained first responders available for domestic emergencies. Consider, for example, the losses associated with Hurricane Katrina that might have been avoided if the 7,000 Louisiana and Mississippi Guardsmen in Iraq had been home to help.

Macroeconomic war effects

As large as the direct costs are, the indirect impact on total economic output may be several times larger. Consider just two sources of macroeconomic cost.

Oil prices: The price of oil is significantly higher today than it was before the war in Iraq. But to even begin to assign a macroeconomic cost to this, we need to know what the price would have been if there had been no war. Commodity futures markets provide some insight. Before the war, they were implicitly forecasting that oil prices would remain in the range that they had been - \$20 to \$30 a barrel - in spite of other, more predictable factors affecting prices, such as strong economic growth in China and India. Today, by contrast, the oil futures markets predict prices will be in the mid-\$60-per-barrel range during 2006 and 2007, and fall no earlier than the year 2008.

One explanation is that the instability in the Middle East brought about by the Iraq war has increased the risk of investing in the region. But because costs of extraction are so much lower in the Middle East, high oil prices have not stimulated a commensurate supply response elsewhere. If political stability is restored, the reasoning goes, prices will fall and investments in high-cost liquid fuels elsewhere in the world - think heavy oil in Venezuela or tar sands in Canada - will prove to be losing ventures.

We believe, accordingly, that the best estimate of the impact of Iraq on oil prices is a large proportion of the \$45-a-barrel increase since

the war began. Nonetheless, we offer a conservative calculation based on the assumption that only a small fraction of that amount — \$5 to \$10—is due to Iraq. Given U.S. imports of roughly five billion barrels a year, a \$10-per-barrel increase translates into an extra expenditure of approximately \$50 billion. Americans are poorer by that amount. If merely a \$5 price increase persists for five years, this generates a conservative estimate of \$125 billion in costs. More plausibly, if we base our estimates on a \$10 price increase, and assume (as futures markets believe) it extends for at least six years, the cost is \$300 billion.

Most macroanalyses assume that one must reckon with more than just these direct supply-side effects if the economy is prone to operating below full capacity. The increase in oil prices means Americans have that much less to spend on other goods—including goods made in the United States. This in turn leads to a reduction in aggregate demand, and the reduction leads to lower economic output. Standard macroeconomic models suggest an "oil multiplier" of around 1.5 (achieved over two years). Thus, assuming that the economy remains below its potential, our cost estimate rises to \$450 billion.

Budget reallocation: The macroeconomic costs associated with the increased expenditure on the war are more difficult to estimate. If we were not spending the money on Iraq, would we be spending it on something else? Would we have had the same deficit, but just more tax cuts? Would the Federal Reserve have stopped raising interest rates sooner if it wasn't worried about the inflationary effects of higher oil prices - and thereby made recession in 2006 less likely?

Here, we offer a very conservative estimate of these macroeconomic effects using an "expenditure-switching" model. Spending money to hire, say, Nepalese workers in Iraq provides little indirect stimulation to the American economy - far less than would have been provided if the money had been spent on investments in schools or roads (or, for that matter, on houses and cars) in the United States. In estimates presented last January, we put the cost of budgetary impacts (including expenditure

switching and the impact on future productivity) at \$450 billion.

\$2 Trillion and counting

The total costs of the war, including the budgetary, social and macroeconomic costs, are likely to exceed \$2 trillion. As large as these costs are, an equally large set of costs have been omitted. We have not included the costs borne by other countries, either directly (as a result of military expenditures) or indirectly (as a result of the increase in the price of oil.) Then there are the intangible costs - the cost of our reduced capability to respond to national security threats elsewhere in the world, and the cost of rising anti-American sentiment in Europe and the Middle East. Americans have long taken pride in fighting for human rights. But our credentials have been badly tarnished by the Iraq war, leading to a sharp decline in America's "soft power." On issues from trade negotiations to global warming to the international criminal justice system, this decline will have a continuing impact on the United States' ability to have its point of view prevail.

Last thoughts

In responding to cost-based criticisms of the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Bush Administration argues that one

does not go to war on the basis of calculations by bean counters. After all, Franklin Roosevelt did not wait to respond to Pearl Harbor until his budget analysts could assay the costs and benefits. But, with Iraq, America had a choice of whether and when to attack. If there ever was a "project" that should have been subject to careful scrutiny from all perspectives—including the economics—this was it.

Just as going to war was a matter of choice, staying in Iraq is also a matter of choice. There may be costs associated with leaving. But there will be costs associated with staying. Every day we stay in Iraq we accrue costs that will be reflected in budget outlays, lost productivity and individual pain and suffering for decades to come. We need to ask: are they outweighed by the benefits?

Linda Bilmes teaches public finance at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Joseph Stiglitz, a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors and chief economist at the World Bank, teaches at Columbia University. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics in 2001.

Source: The Milken Institute Review 11/3/06 <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article15499.htm>

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Livermore bio-warfare research to get eco-review

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a ruling today holding an Energy Department environmental study inadequate and thereby halting Energy's impending plans to operate the first advanced biowarfare agent research facility inside a US nuclear weapons lab. This decision follows three years of litigation and public outcry against the planned operation of the dangerous facility.

The Biosafety Level-3 facility was designed to conduct aerosol experiments and genetic modifications using lethal pathogens such as live anthrax, plague, botulism and Q fever. The Energy Department had omitted any study of security risks and terrorist threats to the facility on the basis that such an analysis was not required under the National Environmental Policy Act. The Ninth Circuit Court upheld plaintiffs' contention that the Energy Dept. acted illegally in omitting that analysis.

Two plaintiff organizations, the Livermore Lab watchdog group, Tri-Valley CAREs, and Los Alamos Lab watchdog group, Nuclear Watch of New Mexico, along with individually-named community members, demanded that the Energy Dept. conduct a thorough study of the project's potential environmental impacts—including potential terrorist threats.

In the decision handed down October 16, the Ninth Circuit remanded the environmental

review back to the Department of Energy for further analysis on terrorist risks, and possibly a full environmental impact statement, before the facility can operate. "We are thrilled that the Court sent the Department of Energy back to the drawing board on this ill-conceived plan," said Marylia Kelley, the Executive Director of Tri-Valley CAREs, who lives down the street from Livermore Lab. "I feel safer today because of the court's decision. This is a huge victory for the residents of the Bay Area." Kelley continued, "In the event of a terrorist attack on this laboratory where bioagents become airborne, hundreds or thousands of people could have been exposed to deadly pathogens."

"This decision marks a turning point for Department of Energy decision-making and sets a precedent for Energy Department facilities across the nation, ensuring that they cannot open without a stringent environmental review," said Tri-Valley CAREs' Staff Attorney Loulena Miles. "Now the agency cannot merely cry National Security and avoid hard questions concerning environmental impacts and terrorist risks."

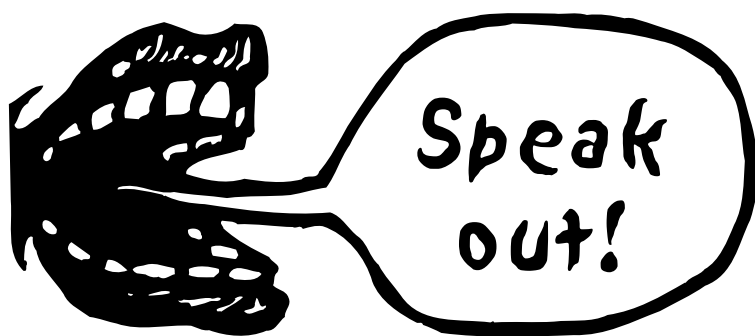
The original lawsuit challenged both the Livermore Lab's plans to operate the BSL-3 facility without proper environmental study as well as a sister proposal for Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico to open a similar biolab, also without thorough environmental review. Jay Coghlan, Executive Director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, believes this decision is likely to have wide-ranging impacts as well. "This decision in California is excellent. The question is how it might apply

to Energy Department activities across the country. For instance, the Department is expanding the Los Alamos nuclear weapons programs, but failed to consider potential terrorism. New environmental review of the Los Alamos biolab is expected soon. DOE is about to begin review of the nation-wide nuclear weapons complex. Because the post-9/11 consequences to the public can be so very serious, potential terrorism effects should be considered in each case. We are very pleased that our litigation is leading in that direction," said Coghlan.

After plaintiffs filed suit in 2003, the Energy Dept. withdrew its approval for the Los Alamos biolab and, therefore, litigation went forward only on the Livermore proposal. Neither of the advanced biowarfare agent research facilities that were the subject of the original litigation have opened. The Dept. of Energy is presently conducting further analysis of the environmental risks of the Los Alamos biolab proposal. If either of these advanced biowarfare agent research facilities would have been allowed to open, it would be the first time an advanced biowarfare agent research lab would have operated inside a US nuclear weapons lab. "Opening this lab would have sent a signal to the world that it is acceptable to study advanced biowarfare agent research inside classified nuclear weapons labs," argued Loulena Miles. "A handful of committed individuals have kept advanced biowarfare agent research out of the hands of US nuclear weapons labs so far, but we still have a lot of work to do."

Source Tri-Valley CAREs 10/16/06 release, 2582 Old First St, Livermore, CA 94551 (925) 443-7148





Bush appointee vetoes endangered species science

Department of Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary Julie MacDonald and other Interior Department officials repeatedly distorted scientific findings to prevent the protection of plants and animals under the Endangered Species Act.

Echoing a call from the Union of Concerned Scientists to restore scientific integrity to the Interior Department, conservation groups throughout the West are calling on Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne to determine which other species may have been denied protection by MacDonald's actions, reconsider the decisions made with her interference, and ask for MacDonald's immediate resignation.

While the Endangered Species Act requires that decisions be made solely on the basis of the best available science, MacDonald—an engineer with no biological training—reversed numerous scientific findings without any biological justification, and in some cases she directly changed the documents herself.

“The wisdom of the Endangered Species Act is to provide protection for endangered wildlife and plants based on biological need and to buffer them from political whims,” said Nicole Rosmarino, conservation director of Forest Guardians. “Secretary Kempthorne has a duty to ensure agency biologists are not bullied and the best available science is upheld.”

Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act confirm that internal findings produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the Gunnison sage-grouse, Gunnison's prairie dog, white-tailed prairie dog, roundtail chub, Mexican garter snake and a Mariana Islands plant should be considered for endangered species protection, but in each case, MacDonald or another high level official ordered the biologists to reverse their findings. For several of these species, MacDonald personally changed the findings to reverse their conclusions (documents available upon request).

**Endangered plants and wildlife
have a tough enough time
without politicians manipulating
the science.**

—Erin Robertson, biologist, Center for Native Ecosystems

“It is a travesty that a high level political appointee with no training in biology is rewriting the conclusions of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientists to deny protection to some of the most imperiled species in the nation,” said Noah Greenwald, conservation biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity. “The Bush administration has an unwritten policy to systematically deny wildlife protection, dooming them to extinction.”

A 2005 survey of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientists conducted by the Union of Concerned Scientists and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility exposed pervasive political interference in scientific decision-making at the agency. More than 300 agency scientists responded that they knew of cases where political appointees at the Department of Interior had interfered with scientific determinations, and 84 scientists reported having been directed to inappropriately exclude or alter technical information in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientific documents.

“Endangered plants and wildlife have a tough enough time without politicians manipulating the science,” said Erin Robertson, staff biologist with Center for

Native Ecosystems. “It's time for Secretary Kempthorne to dismiss Julie MacDonald and fix her illegal decisions.”

The Bush administration has listed fewer species under the Endangered Species Act than any other administration since the law was enacted in 1973, to date listing only 56 species compared to 512 under the Clinton administration and 234 under Bush senior's administration. The Bush administration has listed so few species in part because it has denied species protection at record rates. Of all the endangered species listing decisions made under the Bush administration, 47 percent were denied protection as compared to only 13 percent during the last five years of the Clinton administration. Meanwhile, nearly 300 species languish on the candidate list without protection.

“The Endangered Species Act is incredibly effective at saving species from extinction but can only work if imperiled species are actually provided the protections of the Act by being listed as threatened or endangered,” said Mark Salvo, Director of the Sagebrush Sea Campaign.

Source: Center for Biological Diversity 11/1/06 release, <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org>

December 12

Attend local nuke hearings

The administration has proposed a plan to build a new nuclear weapons facility. This facility would have the capacity to build 125 to 200 plutonium “triggers” or pits for nuclear weapons annually. Plutonium pits are an essential component of modern nuclear warheads. The new plutonium pit production facility is a key element of what the administration is calling Complex 2030, a comprehensive plan to update, reorganize, and rebuild the nuclear weapons complex.

This is a step in the wrong direction. The U.S. government has a moral and legal obligation to eliminate its nuclear weapons, yet this proposal would indefinitely sustain our ability to build new nuclear weapons. It has taken years to create and strengthen the international nuclear nonproliferation regime. The Complex 2030 proposal continues this administration's pattern of undermining these international nonproliferation structures and agreements. At a time when the U.S. government is demanding other countries adhere to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, the U.S. government is not meeting its own obligations to pursue nuclear disarmament “in good faith.”

FCNL estimates that Complex 2030 could cost \$5 to \$10 billion. This is the wrong spending priority; these funds should not be spent creating the most destructive weapons know to humanity.

The administration claims that Complex 2030 is needed to reduce the U.S. nuclear arsenal. However, the United States government has

the capability to decommission its nuclear warheads without the construction of a new facility that actually enables greater warhead production. FCNL agrees with the ostensible goal of stockpile reduction, but not the reality of a nuclear complex that increases production capabilities.

DoE representative, Thomas D'Agostino, has even implied that it is the DoE's goal to increase nuclear weapons capabilities to reach Cold War levels. While the United States government is pressing Iran and North Korea to abandon their nuclear weapons programs, it is planning to build up its own nuclear arsenal. This is an untenable and morally wrong policy of “do as I say, and not as I do.” As Representative Ed Markey (MA) said, “America cannot preach nuclear temperance from a barstool.”

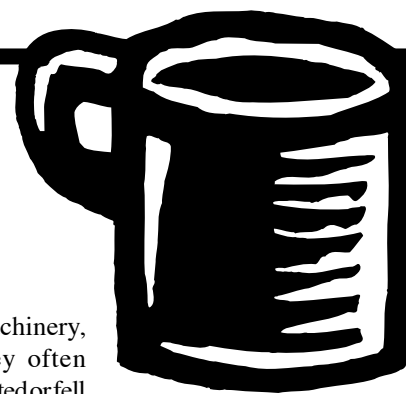
ACTION: Now is your opportunity to speak out against this proposal at local public meetings in your area. The Energy Department is holding public meetings on Complex 2030 to solicit public comment on this first step toward site selection for the weapons plant and its future environmental impact on the community where it's built. Hearings will be held in Livermore at the Robert Livermore Community Center, 4444 East Avenue. December 12, 2006, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., and in Tracy the Tracy Community Center, 950 East Street. December 12, 2006, 6 p.m.–10 p.m. Be there.

Source: FCNL release 11/7/06, 245 Second Street NE, Washington, DC 20002 800-630-1330 <http://www.fcnl.org>

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Wake up and smell the coffee



Harry J. Mersmann, Ph.D.

Maybe your partner started the brewing while you were sleeping. There you are lying in bed. Soon consciousness and the wafts of deep, dark aromas arrive simultaneously and then, there it is waiting for you: a good, hot, steaming, fresh cup of joe... There ain't much in this world that is finer.

Saddled up with a piece of pie or just by itself on a cool morning, steam rising to greet you with that unmistakable aroma, the body almost instinctively goes "Ahhhhhh". It is an acquired taste, an adult taste, a refined taste. True coffee connoisseurs rival aficionados of wine in their descriptive imagery of "bright", "bold", "flowery", and "imposing".

The growth of the behemoth Starbucks is an indication of how important the brown elixir has become in our collective lives, and I'm sure many of you have wild tales about your experiences with the the demon cup, while those of you who never touch the stuff are suitably bored by now. However the point of this missive is not to share my personal history with coffee (that is at least a two triple latte conversation), but instead to get you to think a bit about where coffee comes from and how it

is produced. I should also note that much of the information I am sharing here comes from the book, *Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things* by Ryan and Durning.

Coffee is the world's second largest legal export commodity (after oil) and is mostly produced in less developed and developing countries. It is a labor intensive and land intensive crop. It takes about 100 beans to produce a single cup of coffee, about 1/60th of the entire production of a coffee tree for an entire year. To put it another way, if you drink 2 cups per day over an entire year you will consume 34 gallons of coffee made from 18 pounds of beans. It will take 12 coffee trees an entire year to produce enough coffee to meet this modest two cup a day habit.

Fifty to a hundred years ago, most coffee was grown in forests or plantations which sported a number of indigenous plants. Coffee was in large part a piece of a larger ecosystem. Not so today.

In order to maximize yield, farmers in most coffee growing areas of the world chopped down the forests in order to plant newer high yield coffee trees in direct sunlight. This change increased their harvests, but led to high levels of erosion and the loss of rich nutrients provided by other plants and trees. Without the benefit of

such flora, those twelve coffee trees now require almost a pound of fertilizer each to keep growing in the harsh sun.

The loss of native plant species also decimated the insect and bird populations. For most of the history of the planet, coffee farms had a wide variety of birds who lived in the canopies of the taller fruit and hardwood trees; not only native species like toucans and parrots, but also migratory North American birds like warblers, tanagers, orioles, and thrushes. Removing the native plants led to a devastating ecosystem shift. Biologists estimate that there are only 5 percent as many bird species in the new sunny coffee fields as there were in the traditional shaded coffee plantations they replaced.

The loss of birds and beneficial insects led to the need for increased use of pesticides, as crop threatening pests proliferated with the loss of their natural predators. Many of the chemicals were absorbed by nearby plants and animals or by the workers spraying the trees a number of times per year. And who are these workers? Most are poor peasants toiling under hot sun in a landscape devoid of cooling shade, making less than a dollar a day picking the coffee berries that will eventually become our morning ritual (I say "our" because the United States is the number one importer of coffee worldwide.). Because of the low prices paid by the conventional market, many of the farmers are forced to clear cut even more land in hope of growing more coffee and the vicious cycle continues.

How did we get to this point? In the middle part of this century, the United States and other developed countries gave out massive loans to the developing countries. In time, the loans came due even though development had not necessarily taken place (for example, loans were provided to buy US tractors to modernize agriculture, but because poor farmers could not afford the fuel or repairs on the

machinery, they often rusted or fell into disrepair.

Even though the machinery was of no use, the bills still had to be paid).

Today many of the world's poorest countries use one third of their national budgets to pay off foreign debt. Now, what is the best way to pay off debt? To grow so called "cash crops" like coffee, which will bring higher profits.

Around the world, farmers in the poorest countries are urged or forced to grow sugar, tobacco, beef and coffee for export to the developed world instead of growing food for the people of the poorer nations. Not only do these cash crops lead to hunger, they also encourage rain forest destruction or the planting of high yield plants, as in the case of coffee, which further devastate the environment in order to meet their debt payments.

What then must we do? Well first, in the jargon of the late dear Abby, we need to wake up and smell the coffee. As knowledge is power, we need to awaken to the reality of our consumption patterns in general and of coffee in particular. When we become aware of the ecological and human costs of traditional coffee production, it seems imperative that we find a different way, a better way.

The alternative

There is an alternative to the conventional coffee trade: instead of exploiting farmers and workers and creating a system where they in turn exploit the environment, we could instead pay the farmers of small coffee plantations a decent price for their beans and even more if they were to farm in sustainable and organic ways. This premise of Fair Trade supports small farmers by guaranteeing them prices higher than the world market price. In addition, if the world market price should happen to fall, farmers in the program are guaranteed a

minimum price of \$1.26 per pound (In 2001 for example the world market

price fell to 48 cents, but the

farmers in the program still made a fair wage at \$1.26.) If the prices should rise, farmers are still paid at least 5 cents over the world market prices. Thus farmers are given a fair wage that they can depend on regardless of market fluctuations.

Fair trade is not only a boon for the farmers, it also helps the environment. By providing a fair and living wage to small farmers, the desire to cut down forests or rely on fertilizer and pesticides is reduced. At least 85% of the Fair Trade coffee available in this country is organic and/or shade coffee, grown in the shade of the larger fruit and hardwood trees that populated coffee plantations 50 or more years ago. With the shade trees come the birds and beneficial insects, thus reducing the need for fertilizers and pesticides. Farmers are also paid another 15 cents per pound for coffee which is grown organically to further encourage them to do the right thing for their local communities and the world.

Fair trade coffee is available at a number of local venues including Trader Joe's and the Bookstore at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton and can be identified by the Fair Trade Certified mark on the front of the bag or can. Fair Trade coffee costs more than what we normally buy in the big cans at the grocery store, but no more than Starbucks (which also carries one line of Fair Trade Coffee).

You can also encourage your local coffee house, church, and workplace to stock Fair Trade coffee. It's a simple step that can really make a big difference. Brew up a little social change every morning. Go ahead: Wake up and smell the coffee...Wake up and smell the equality.

Harry J. Mersmann, Ph.D. is a sociologist at San Joaquin Delta College. He can be reached at hmersmann@deltacollege.edu

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Pombo-less House committee changes everything

Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA), Chairman of the House Resources Committee who had relentlessly sought to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's coastal plain to oil and gas leasing, lost to Jerry McNerney (D-CA). West Virginia's Rep. Nick Rahall—in line to take the House Resources Committee gavel after the Democratic takeover of the House—vowed to work to protect environmental laws and curb "royalty relief" for offshore petroleum drilling. If selected as the next committee chairman, Rahall said he would focus on protecting "right-to-know" laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act that have been under attack by Republicans in recent years, as well as act on controversial outer continental shelf oil and gas royalty relief payments from the Interior Department.

In the 110th Congress, Democratic control of the House Resources Committee could be more noteworthy not for the legislation they attempt to pass, but the bills they do not try to pass. Issues pushed by the committee's current Chairman, Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA), such as oil drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), revisions to the Endangered Species Act (E.S.A.), waivers to the National Environmental Policy Act, and a focus on private property rights, could disappear overnight when Democrats take control in January 2007.

Much of the Democrats' energy is likely to go to oversight of the Bush Administration's public lands and natural resources agencies and policies. Possible issues include the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) offshore oil and gas royalty relief program, BLM's push for increased energy development in the interior West, the National Park Service's maintenance backlog, the Forest Service firefighting budget, and reports of a senior Interior official challenging scientists' recommendations on Endangered Species Act listings.

Democratic control of the House will also bring a new set

of leaders to the subcommittees with direct oversight of agencies such as the National Park Service, Forest Service and Bureau of Reclamation that have dismayed environmentalists over the years.

For instance, Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR), who pushed legislation to increase salvage logging on national forests through the House, will likely be replaced by Rep. Tom Udall (D-NM), the panel's Ranking Member, who attempted and failed to amend the salvage bill to retain protection of National Environmental Policy Act procedures for burned forests.

Oil industry to pay

The oil industry faces heightened scrutiny in the Democratic Congress and efforts to erase several tax breaks. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has vowed fast action to try and roll back energy tax incentives and other subsidies contained in the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

A Democratic takeover of the House after 12 years of minority status will translate into significant changes at the Energy and Commerce Committee, as the likely Chairman, Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), could use his gavel to launch a series of investigations into everything from the 2001 White House energy meetings to the chronic delays at the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. Rep. Dingell will replace current Chair Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), who played a pivotal role in the 2005 Energy Policy Act, as well as the committee's investigations into climate scientists' data and research backgrounds.

It generally takes about 10 years between major energy bills for lawmakers to make the case for new energy legislation to reflect changing national needs and market structures. But given volatile gas pump prices and the rising costs of home heating fuels, lobbyists say lawmakers could find themselves dealing with energy issues next year regardless of the power balance in the House and Senate.

Climate change and science

The House Science Committee is poised for new leadership in the next Congress following the retirement of Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) at the end of the 109th session. Climate change will be the major issue for the Science Committee in the next Congress, said Joanne Carney, director of the Center for Science, Technology and Congress at the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

And in recent months, Boehlert and Ranking Member Bart Gordon (D-TN) have closely tracked recent reports that officials at the National Aeronautics and Space Association and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have censored federal climate scientists. The committee leaders are working with the agencies to revise their media policies. Gordon is the Democrats' likely choice to take the Science Committee gavel. According to a draft memo, Democrats would look to refocus the U.S. Global Change Research Program around potential regional and economic effects of climate change, and work to encourage the development and adoption of efficient and renewable energy technology.

Democratic victories in the House and Senate appear likely to boost efforts to strengthen U.S. global warming policy, though it is far from certain whether the next Congress and President Bush will work together over the coming two years to enact a first-ever federal law to cap greenhouse gas emissions.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) said the Democrats' success in the midterm elections improves prospects for action on a broad climate change measure that deals with multiple industrial sectors, not just power plants. At least a half dozen climate bills are expected when the 110th Congress convenes in January.

Source: Policy News from ESA's Public Affairs Office: Special Issue: Elections 2006, 11/8/06 www.esa.org



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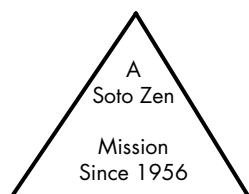
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Bush names Exxon chief to chart America's energy future

Even for an administration dedicated to putting industry lobbyists in charge of the very agencies they have devoted their careers to undermining (coal and oil lobbyist J. Stephen Griles as Deputy Secretary of the Interior is one of dozens of examples), President Bush has recently outdone himself. He has named Lee Raymond, the retired chief of ExxonMobil, to head a key study to help America chart a cleaner course for our energy needs. Raymond currently chairs the National Petroleum Council (NPC), one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington.

Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman says the study will address the supply and demand of oil as well as assess the potential contribution of conservation, efficiency, alternative energy sources, and technology advances" and determine "the potential long term impact of alternative energies that are plentiful, affordable, reliable and transportable."

Energy Department Under Secretary David Garman, added that the NPC is "well qualified to provide a balanced and informed perspective on strategies and action affecting the energy future for both the U.S. and for every country on earth."

Environmentalists are outraged about the appointment of Lee Raymond. During his long tenure at ExxonMobil, the company spent \$19 million on front groups designed to discredit the science on global warming. It also resisted funding clean energy alternatives and lobbied aggressively to drill

in the Arctic Refuge.

In a Wall Street Journal article on June 14, 2005, Mr. Raymond said, "it's yet to be shown how much of this [global warming] is really related to the activities of man."

ExxonMobil is considered a rogue company even among its peers. It vocally opposes U.S. energy independence and presses for deeper reliance on oil producing nations such as Saudi Arabia, where the company has sunk heavy investments. Critics argue that Mr. Raymond's legacy is to deny that oil dependence is a problem.

ExxonMobil is the only major oil giant calling renewable energy an "uneconomical" investment. Known for abruptly shutting off the microphone at shareholder's meetings when opposition is voiced, Mr. Raymond has the reputation of an impatient, authoritarian leader who shows no qualms about publicly belittling those who disagree with him.

The Exxpose Exxon coalition, a collaborative effort of many of the nation's largest environmental and public advocacy organizations representing millions of Americans, called on Secretary Bodman "to remove the Global Oil and Gas Study from the purview of Raymond and the NPC."

"This issue is too vital to be handed over to a company and an industry that have demonstrated again and again that they will maximize profits at the expense of our national security, the environment, and U.S. consumers," they argued. The coalition recommended the study be given to an independent body such as the National Academy of Sciences.

"Putting Lee Raymond in charge of solving U.S. energy problems is like putting Jack Abramoff in

charge of solving corruption," said Shawnee Hoover, campaign director for the Exxpose Exxon Coalition.

Source: BushGreenwatch 11/2/06
<http://www.bushgreenwatch.org>

Make the pie higher

—by W

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Vulcanize society!

Make the pie higher!

I am the Decider!

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from George W. Bush. These
have been arranged, only
for aesthetic purposes, by
Washington Post writer,
Richard Thompson.



Food or fuel: the ethanol choice

"Now that the year's grain harvest is safely in the bin, it is time to take stock and look ahead," writes Lester Brown, President of the Earth Policy Institute.

This year's harvest of 1,967 million tons is falling short of the estimated consumption by 73 million tons. This shortfall of nearly 4 percent is one of the largest on record. In six of the last seven years world grain production has fallen short of use, drawing world grain carryover stocks down to 57 days of consumption, the lowest level in 34 years. The last time they were this low wheat and rice prices doubled.

The growth in world grain consumption since 2000 averaged roughly 31 million tons per year. Of this, close to 24 million tons were consumed as food or feed. The annual growth in grain used to produce ethanol for cars in the United States alone averaged nearly 7 million tons per year, climbing to a high of 14 million tons in 2006.

The amount of grain used to produce fuel is exploding. Investment in crop-based fuel production, once dependent on government subsidies, is now driven by the price of oil. With the current price of ethanol double its cost of production, the conversion

of agricultural commodities into automobile fuel has become hugely profitable, leading to a jump in groundbreakings for new ethanol distilleries. Between October 25, 2005, and October 24, 2006, construction started on an astounding 54 new ethanol distilleries in the United States. With a typical construction period of 14 months, virtually all of them will be producing by the end of 2007. Together these plants, with 4 billion gallons of annual production capacity, will consume 39 million tons of grain per year, nearly all of it corn.

Wheat and corn prices have climbed by a third or more over the past several months. Corn and wheat futures are both trading at 10-year highs. With corn stocks at the lowest level on record and demand soaring, corn prices appear headed for historic highs. Wheat and rice prices will likely follow corn prices upward.

Corn importers like Japan, Egypt, and Mexico are worried that a likely reduction in U.S. corn exports, which are 70 percent of the world total, will disrupt their livestock and poultry industries. In some importing countries, corn is the staple food. In the United States, most corn is consumed indirectly. The milk, eggs, cheese,

chicken, ham, beef, ice cream, and yogurt in the typical refrigerator are all produced with corn. In effect, the refrigerator is filled with corn. And the price of every item is affected by the price of corn.

This clash between motorists and people over the food supply is occurring when 854 million of the world's people are chronically hungry and malnourished. The U.N. goal of reducing by half the proportion of people suffering from hunger by 2015 is now failing as the number who are hungry edges upward, and it could collapse completely in the face of the food-for-cars onslaught.

The attempt to solve one problem - growing U.S. dependence on imported oil - is creating another far more serious problem. Fortunately this can be avoided. The 3 percent of U.S. automotive fuel supplies now coming from ethanol could be achieved, several times over and at a fraction of the cost, by raising automobile fuel-efficiency standards by 20 percent.

On the food-versus-fuel issue, the world desperately needs leadership. As the world's leading grain producer and exporter, and the largest producer of ethanol, the U.S. is in the driver's seat.

Source: Earth Policy Institute release 11/6/06 <http://www.earthpolicy.org>

Air America on ad blacklist?

An internal memo from ABC Radio Networks to its affiliates reveals scores of powerful sponsors have a standing order that their commercials never be placed on syndicated Air America programming that airs on ABC affiliates. The October 25 memo was provided to FAIR by the Peter B. Collins Show, a syndicated radio show originating on the West Coast.

Headlined "Air America Blackout" and addressed "Dear Traffic Director"—referring to the radio station staffer who coordinates programming and advertising—the memo gives the following order to affiliates: Please be advised that Hewlett Packard has purchased schedules with ABC Radio Networks between October 30th and December 24th, 2006. Please make sure you blackout this advertiser on your

station, as they do not wish it to air on any Air America affiliate.

The directive then advises ABC Radio Network affiliates to take note of a list of other sponsors who do not want their programming to run during Air America programming. The list of all advertisers requesting that NONE of their commercials air within Air America programming, totaling 90 advertisers, includes some of largest and most well-known corporations advertising in the U.S.: Wal-Mart, GE, Exxon Mobil, Microsoft, Bank of America, Fed-Ex, Visa, Allstate, McDonald's, Sony and Johnson & Johnson. The U.S. Postal Service and the U.S. Navy are also listed as advertisers who don't want their commercials to air on Air America. The ABC memo is evidence of the potentially censorious effect that advertisers' political preferences

can have on the range of views presented in the media. When Al Gore proposed launching a progressive TV network, a Fox News executive told Advertising Age (10/13/03): "The problem with being associated as liberal is that they wouldn't be going in a direction that advertisers are really interested in.... If you go out and say that you are a liberal network, you are cutting your potential audience, and certainly your potential advertising pool, right off the bat." (See Extra!, 11-12/03.)

FAIR's call to the ABC contact person listed on the memo, to ask if similar "blackout" lists exist for other shows, including conservative-leaning programs, has not been returned.

Source: FAIR release 10/31/06 <http://www.fair.org>



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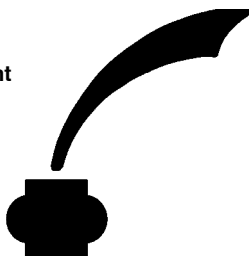
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Sen. Dianne Feinstein, One Post Street, Ste 2450, San Francisco, CA 94104. 415-249-0707; 331 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510. 202-224-3841, senator@feinstein.senate.gov

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

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

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

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, 2201 C St, NW Washington, DC 20520

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

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

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

Book review

Bush in state of denial

State Of Denial: Bush at War, Part III by Bob Woodward. Simon & Schuster, 2006, 560 pages.

reviewed by Dianne Runion

Bob Woodward's *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* is enough to make you weep—not only at the Bush administration's clueless absence of strategy, but also at the mass of mind-numbing detail Woodward piles up.

The poor reader whimpers, "Must I shovel through all this?" Even key players in this sad saga start to blur. All but the most savvy reader has to put the book down occasionally, come back to it later and say to him or herself, "Remind me again, please. What year are you talking about, and who is Doug Feith" or Jalal Talabani or 50 other government individuals? Yet by the end of the text on page 491 and before the 69 pages of sources and index, the famous Watergate reporter's shotgun barrage of information scores his points.

Woodward endured some sharp criticism for having been too Bush-friendly in Parts 1 and 2, "Bush at War" (2002) and "Plan of Attack" (2004). Yet one has to admire him for examining data critically enough to see the government differently four years later. Nevertheless, he does one thing few reporters would or should get by with: He quotes conversations and thoughts he could not possibly have heard and few could accurately remember. He may be following the spirit of careful reportage, but it's less than the letter.

Stand back from the picture Woodward paints in almost pointillistic detail, however, and the broad canvas leaps into focus. Here are a few of the book's stronger points, carefully supported by high-level government officials, almost always quoted by name:

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's micro-managing enraged the military. Peers deride his petty and authoritative nature. His yellow post-it notes, dubbed "yellow perils," paralyzed his staff with detail work. Woodward reports that Rumsfeld's "self-importance and arrogance infected everything." He insisted on the chain of command and yet denied directly to Woodward that he was a military commander. Often at loggerheads with then

Secretary of State Colin Powell, Rumsfeld fought with Powell over who would be in charge: State or Defense. Three-star general Brent Scowcroft saw Rumsfeld as "enigmatic, obstructionist and devious." Yet Rumsfeld's lawyer friend and part of what Woodward calls the kitchen cabinet said Rumsfeld has the "rubber glove syndrome—a tendency not to leave his fingerprints on anything." But even Laura Bush worried that Rumsfeld's overbearing style and tendency to dominate were hurting the president.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Vice President Cheney come in for less criticism, though Woodward demonstrates how Cheney put the kibosh on the best experts for post-war planning, calling opposition to his ideas a "cabal." Anyone from the Clinton administration was automatically disqualified from service.

One of the book's surprises is the powerful and mostly invisible influence former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has had on the Bush administration. Woodward claims Kissinger is one of the few people outside of the Bush family who has frequent and regular access to the president.

Woodward's carefully-researched and most damning testimony falls on the president himself and his Iraq policies. Senator Chuck Hegel challenged Bush—who Woodward reports is convinced he's guided by God—to get more input from beyond his select inner circle. In one magazine interview Hegel said, "The White House is completely disconnected from reality." Woodward describes Bush's inner circle as a group of "uninformed sycophants." Distrust of partisan experts, major buck-passing and the aura of the presidency shutting out bad news has resulted in no one single plan for post-war Iraq. Congressman John Murtha, a former Marine Corps D.I. who also visited Iraq four times, called the war there "flawed policy wrapped in illusion." Woodward says, "Murtha's was a voice from deep inside the soul and conscience of the American military."

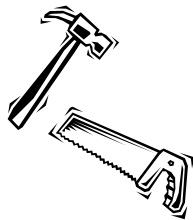
By 2005, Woodward says it was well known the administration had no strategy for Iraq. By February 2006, the administration was in crisis mode. Woodward points out that in three years, 30,000 Iraqis died. At that rate—200 a week—and given that Iraq is 15 times smaller than the U.S., it's the equivalent of a 9/11 attack every week. Rumsfeld dismissed the notion this could have a huge effect on Iraqi morale.

By the spring of 2006, Woodward says outgoing White House Chief of Staff Andy Card knew that although he did not personally agree, two negative aspects have defined this Bush presidency: incompetence and arrogance. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell told the president in May that if you don't have a government that can connect government, police and military, you're not building up forces, you're building militias. It proved prophetic.

By May 2006, attacks in Iraq exceeded 3,500 a month with little net gain in electricity generation since pre-Operation Iraqi Freedom. Furthermore, secret intelligence documents confirmed the newer explosives were four times as lethal as the old Improvised Explosive Devices. And still the administration maintained in a naïve lumping together of 9/11, al Qaeda, bin Laden and Afghanistan that we did not start this war; we were attacked.

Woodward concludes by saying the Bush strategy is a litany of optimism: "Support the troops." "Don't cut and run." "Don't surrender to terrorists." Woodward's sometimes eye-glazing details add up to showing this administration's arrogance, incompetence, bureaucratic muddle and absence of strategy. Woodward says, "With all Bush's upbeat talk and optimism, he had not told the American public the truth about what Iraq had become."

On November 8, the day after a historic mid-term election, a majority of the American public has discerned the central truth about Iraq. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the Republicans' well-deserved "thumpin," Donald Rumsfeld is gone, and the Bush administration can no longer rest easy in a state of denial.



Sawznhammers

"Saw": a tool for analysis, taking things apart; a proverb, often trite
 "Hammer": a tool for synthesis, putting things together; to pound away

Freeing ourselves from the war monster

John Morearty

It appears I live in a world at peace. No tanks rumble down Acacia Street. My neighbor drives a Humvee but she uses it to sell real estate; she wears a nice suit and never waves an AK-47. At night I hear no explosions-only dogs, train horns, and a soft bird calling. At dawn outside my door there are no soldiers.

Yet I'm haunted by war. War in Iraq, war on Iran impending, schemers in Washington planning Full Spectrum Global Dominance and war from space, laser death. In the autumn nights drawing in, I'm obsessed by explosions, screams, bleeding flesh and dying oceans.

Now, I personally have plenty of food, and filtered water to drink. The mortgage is paid, Ria and I have good health and great insurance, and our garden is lovely; she just planted pansies, and the young Japanese maple is turning the softest coral and orange. Our children and grandchildren are struggling and thriving. I have reason to hope, time to dream dreams and see visions.

But I don't. What is this cloud inside me? Am I bewitched by some grim warlock of my own making, locked into nightmares of war and disaster by the monster within?

Is that monster snarling-or grinning? I choose to smile in his face, and dredge up these words of yearning:

Another world is possible. In that new world, soldiers will come home from the wars, wounded in body and mind, and be welcomed into "veterans' villages," like Tracy Gold Star Mother Nadia McCaffrey is working to create. They'll walk in the country, grow gardens, make tables and pots and windmills and solar greenhouses, talk and sing together, and heal each other.

War orphans will gather in villages too, with loving adults to

teach and care for them, and they'll live in community with the orphans of their onetime "enemies"—Israelis and Palestinians, Sunni and Shia and Kurds, Catholic and Protestant Irish, Tamils and Buddhists from Sri Lanka, North American white kids with black and brown, fundamentalists and agnostics. They'll learn each others' languages and games, sing each others' songs.

Eighteen year olds from around the globe will gather in ring-shaped Guardian Sites (as Joanna Macy calls them), to study and be trained for the Earth Corps. They'll learn to garden organically, plant trees, build bicycle paths, weatherize buildings, work with solar and wind and biomass energy. They'll go out into the neighborhood and show local kids how to clean up polluted streams and beaches. But one kind of pollution they will not touch—the old nuclear power or bomb plant which hunkers (guarded by them) in the middle of each of their Rings, entombed in concrete which is repaired and re-poured every fifty years, for the quarter million years or so that it remains radioactive. In classes on the history/herstory of war and peace, they will learn how close to The Edge their ancestors came (that's us), and how the worldwide movement of the Great Turning arrived just in time.

The government in Washington will have a thriving Department of Peace, next to the Martin Luther King/Cesar Chavez Memorial. Global Conflict Resolution studies will thrive there, and people will be trained in skills which were developed in the old days to mediate disputes between neighbors, divorcing couples, and landlords and tenants. Trainees will eat lunch in the beautiful Mothers' Garden, maybe sitting on the big Dorothy Day log; the sign next to it says, "before you criticize the speck in your neighbor's eye, check out the log in your own."

In that new world, mothers will no longer fear they cannot feed their children, or keep them warm and safe, or take them to a free neighborhood clinic when they're sick, or send them to a good school, so they can grow and flourish and develop their powers. Fathers will not fear, when they go to work to bring home the bacon (or the salmon, or the tofu), that their care for their sons and daughters will all be in vain, erased in a thermonuclear flash. Freedom from war, freedom from fear.

In that new world, grandmas and grandpas will sit in warm south windows in the winter, knitting or playing their flutes and dulcimers, telling stories to the little ones about the scary times before the Turning, the Bad Old Days of greedy lies and war. And they'll tell the story of the Great Awakening—how people finally realized they were all Earthlings, and decided to open their hearts, use their heads and get along.

"We used to sing a song in those days," they will tell the children, "and it was sometimes hard to believe it would come true, but we sang it anyway. It went like this:

Last night I had the strangest dream I never dreamed before,

I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war.

I dreamed I saw a mighty room, filled with women and men,

and the paper they were signing said, they'd never fight again.

And when the paper was all signed, and a million copies made,

they all joined hands and circled round, and grateful prayers were prayed.

And the people in the streets below were dancing round and round,

and swords and guns and uniforms lay scattered on the ground.

Last night I had the strangest dream I never dreamed before,

I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war.

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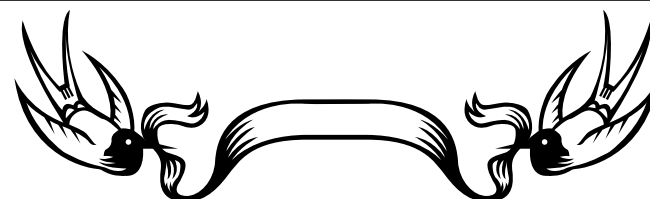
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Pombo finds his Waterloo

a fable shared by Stephen M. Wilson & Lord Dunsany

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

—Isa 14:12-15 (NIV)

Pombo the idolater prayed to Mammon and was miffed when his prayer was not instantly answered. So Pombo, in sincere supplication, prayed to Dream for the overthrow of Mammon, an idol friendly to Dream. This was an affront to the propriety of the pantheon. Dream refused to grant his simple prayer. Addled, Pombo anxiously sent ardent adulations to all the ancient idols. The entire repertoire of the revered icons, old and new alike, snubbed Pombo's supplications. By the time he reached the 11th, he began to fear a conspiracy against him.

In the maelstroms of midwinter, Pombo haunted the streets of Washington D. C. praying to a variety of American idols—from the Lincoln Memorial to The Washington Monument, hoping that that someone, anyone would acknowledge his sincere need. He was often seen pressing his pudgy goateed face against the windows of tourist shops filled with every form of gaudy bauble, from clocks featuring Queen Elizabeth or Princess Diana to copper-painted lead Eiffel Towers, plastic Buffalo Nickels a foot in diameter, and 10 inch resin miniature Abe Lincolns, many of these new gods made in Hong Kong, China, and/or India, in chaste communion, until the cops commanded that he clear out. He cruised thrift shops, flea markets, bazaars, and the occasion patio sale looking for some small forgotten statuette, some calm, cross-legged celestial being chiseled from Concubine Red Granite or Chinese Green

Marble, that he hoped would be honored to be honored by his honest adulation. Inevitably, he would return to his office with sandalwood that he would subsequently set ablaze in a brazier before beseeching, with idle idylls, minute minor idols of his own.

I have no clue as to whether he was aware of the propriety of the icons and found it piously haughty in the face of his fervent frenzy, or if he had become so deliriously daft in his devotion that it had broken him. Whatever his motivation, Pombo the idolater took the Louisville Slugger (he received this as a gift while illegally fundraising during the All Star Game in Michigan), which he kept securely hidden just inside his front door for security, and in a fit of iconoclastic rage went to town on those who he felt were the betrayers of his devotion.

After pummeling his personal pantheon into powder, he left his home and traveled across the Continental US consulting Indians, the Middle East flavor as well as Native Americans—Miwok, Mohawk, Cherokee, and Blackfoot—he even offered a federally unrecognized tribe, the Shinnecocks, a \$250 million casino land grant in return for an agreeable god, but all was futile.

He called to the traditional gods of Greece and Rome, giving special attention to Mercury in hopes that the messenger god would carry his prayers to Mount Olympus.

In South Dakota he bowed futilely before Mount Rushmore.

In Arizona, he venerated a burning bush but got no reply. He turned his back on the scorched earth, leaving it to the environmentalists. He even tried enticing Alaskans with the money that they could make opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration in return for a totem, any totem that would hear his prayers. In his own home state of California, he offered his constituents an historic World War II-era battleship in hopes of some little bit of information that led to a god looking for devotees. When that failed, he tried divination with a fine stein of ale but only got drunk.

In a moment of inspiration, he authored The

Threatened and Endangered Idols Recovery Act, but Congress would hear nothing of it.

He returned home feeling defeated and decreased.

Then, while surfing the World Wide Web, he found a reputable arch-idolater who carved idols out of rare stones, and sent him an email. Following several days of impatiently waiting for a reply from the arch-idolater, he finally received an answer. After admonishing Pombo for destroying his own idols, then arch-idolater explained to him the divine etiquette of deities, and how Pombo had offended, and how no idol in the world would reply to his requests. He told him, though, of one god who would not only grant praise to the otherwise unworthy, but would forgive them of their sin if they but only asked. Then the arch-idolater explained to him of how in the village of World's End, at the furthest end of Dénouement Drive, there was a hole, near a garden-wall that was guarded by luminous beings with flaming swords, that was disguised as a well, but that if he lowered himself over the edge of said "well," and felt about with his feet until they found a ledge, that said ledge was the top of a long flight of winding stairs that led to the edge of the world. He went on to explain that the steps, which were lit by the faint blue gloaming in which the world spins, led directly to this relatively young god who answered prayers, and how, during descent, he would pass Lonely House and under a bridge that led to a place called Waterloo, and how he must avoid



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the gate-opener known as Exu or Pan or Set or Enki or Azazel or ha-satan or the morning star.

Stopping first in Tracy to bid farewell to his family, Pombo began his long journey to World's End.

Fourteen years later, Pombo was strolling down Dénouement Drive; but how he contrived to get there—I will only say he had become an influential insider susceptible to the enticements and temptations of power. And Pombo found everything just as the arch-idolater had described, and he imagined that the gods were laughing at him through the mouth of the arch-idolater as he gripped the edge of the Cewell' feeling around with his feet for the ledge, which after a few moments he found. Pombo descended the steps. There, sure enough, was the gloaming in which the world spins, and the stars shone far off in it faintly; there was before him as he went downstairs but that strange blue waste of gloaming, with its multitude of stars and comets plunging through it on outward journeys and comet returning home. And then he

saw the lights of the bridge that led to Waterloo and beyond. A few moments later he saw the morning star, surrounded by dancing flames in rainbow hues, guarding Waterloo. Pombo was hesitant, but only for a moment, before rushing stealthily past the morning star, who intently watched but did nothing to impede him, and into Waterloo. There he stood a moment.

Pombo spied the god that the others claimed to be of ill-repute, the god that answered the prayers that all of the other gods refused to answer. The god glowed like the corona of a newly exploded sun as he smiled at him and opened his arms in invitation. In his eagerness to fall in worship at feet of any god that would accept his prayers, Pombo began to run. Momentum took over and he overshot his target and plunged off the edge of the World and towards the vastly expanding expanse of self-luminous celestial spheres, where he is still falling today. How apropos that Pombo's last stand was at Waterloo.

I'm Stephen M. Wilson and I endorse this narrative.

Eyes on '08

Hi everybody, it's Joe Palooka time again. The crucial mid-term elections are less than 12 hours away as Joe pounds away on his keyboard. Let's all cross our fingers: it will be cause for a Democratic celebration. Our great nation has been hijacked, kidnapped and Bushwhacked by shameless for-profit Republicans long enough. It's high time to inject a strong dose of sanity, reality and common sense back into the bloodstream of American politics. If indeed the Dems regain one or both houses of Congress, Joe has some recommendations on how to keep it that way and to get the Republicans out of the Oval Office in '08. Here goes.

Foreign policy

The United States must convince the world that we are not the clutching, grasping, imperialistic bully the Neo-Conservative-led Bush Administration has made us into. A thorough and far-reaching investigation into the lies, distortions and half-truths leading up to the Iraq war would be a good place to start. Friends, ex-friends and future friends must be made to realize that corrupt and deceitful behavior will not be tolerated, even by the President. A Democratic Congress must reestablish itself as a body with critical oversight duties regarding the Executive branch. The current House of Representatives has been nothing but a rubber stamp for disastrous Bush policies. Joe read a book a while back called, "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remodeling of World Order," written by a Harvard law professor named Samuel Huntington. Joe's favorite quote was this, "The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas, its values or religion (to which few members of other civilizations were converted) but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact. Non-Westerners never do." Think about that. Joe did.

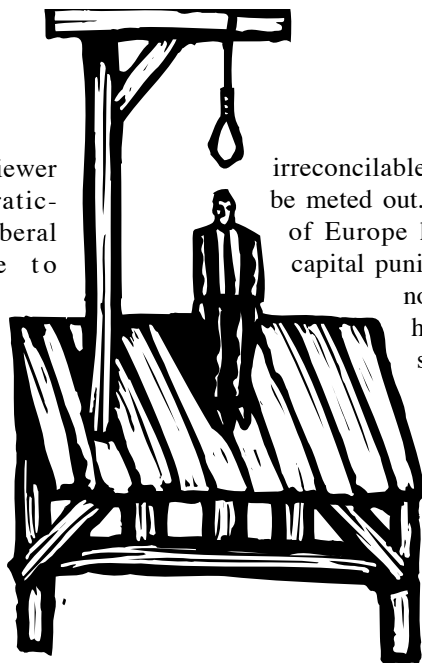
Crime and punishment

Republicans have beaten Democrats to the punch for years with charges that Dems are soft on crime. Fox News has a daily agenda designed to constantly

remind the viewer that Democratic-appointed, liberal judges are to blame for the evils of our society. Although Joe considers most of those accusatory remarks pretty far-fetched, there is a semblance of truth to some of it.

We live in a society where violence is immortalized and glorified: a society steeped in the Western credo of "shoot first and ask questions later." Violence and violent images have seeped profoundly into our books, music, movies, television, video games and sadly, our nightly news reports where accounts of graphic mayhem are routine. First we must, as a society and as Democrats, retreat a few steps from calls that all censorship is negative and re-evaluation just what we, as adults, are permitting our children to see, hear and read. Moderate judges must be put in place; compassionate to the deserving, cold as steel to those who are not.

Second, until we are willing and able to implement some common-sense oversight regarding our media inputs, we must deal with the most heinous of our criminals in a fashion befitting their crimes. Joe's been listening to this subject for a long time. Whether you are talking in the workplace, the home, with your neighbors, at a sporting event, a family reunion or belled up to the bar for an occasional cold one, a large majority of Americans do not want their tax dollars to provide life-sustaining food, medicine, and shelter for the likes of Michael Morales or Charles Manson. Murder with rape, murder of children and murder by torture must be dealt with as if the perpetrators were a cancer on society. They must be removed. Permanently. All efforts, including and not limited to DNA testing should of course be used to determine guilt or innocence. But in those cases where guilt is



irreconcilable, justice must be meted out. Though most of Europe has abolished capital punishment, we're not ready for that here. Europeans seem to be past their "wild west" days. We are not. Democrats cannot continue to ride the fence favoring abortion on one hand

and opposing capital punishment on the other. Until we stop bathing in a daily ritual of blood-soaked culture, we must make sure that those most severely infected by that culture are put to rest. Voters will respond favorably.

Joe's opinions do not necessarily represent the other writers contributing to *Connections*. The capital punishment sentiments expressed here are not something Joe takes lightly. The 1988 Presidential campaign was lost by Michael Dukakis because he hemmed and hawed, stammered and stuttered, then gently replied he'd "of course be angry" if someone raped and murdered his wife." Joe and many Americans felt that his weak response to his debating opponent, Bush the elder, cost him the election. As Joe mentioned earlier, Republicans have successfully exploited that type of weakness for years, culminating in charges of Democrats being soft on the "War on Terror." We must prove to a still half-savage electorate that we are ready to take the most drastic measures possible in cases where our loved ones have been brutalized, whether on the streets of our home towns or in the battle fields afar. Hopefully, the future will see our involvement in those battlefields fewer and far between, and an American society that is no longer intoxicated by violence. Next month, Joe will tackle other issues important to all of us, including religion, immigration and population control. Until then, here's hoping I see ya in a nice quiet watering hole, a cold beer in your hand and a smile on your face.

—Dave Waldon, Joe's alter-ego

All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.

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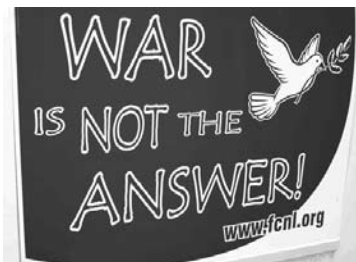
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Freedom Series

Dec. 6—Gay & Lesbian Rights

Becky Beal, Sports Science, COP

January 3—Political Dissent

Larry Knapp, Local Attorney

The SJ County Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and the School of International Studies are proud to sponsor seven monthly programs focusing on significant current issues, which will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm, through May. The series will be held in Wendell Phillips Center, Room 140, on the UOP campus. The format of each meeting will begin with a showing of the relevant DVD, remarks by the Moderator, followed by a discussion. All are invited to attend. Free.

About the moderators

Becky Beal is professor of Sport Sciences and Director of Gender Studies at UOP. She teaches courses in the sociology and philosophy of sport, has served on the editorial board of the Sociology of Sport Journal, and has published on gender relations in sport.

Lawrence M. Knapp has concentrated on personal injury cases since opening his office in 1993. Former president of the SJ County Trial Lawyers Association and currently on the Board for the Consumer Attorneys of California, he is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Consumer Attorneys of California "Outstanding President" Award and the "Presidential Award of Merit". He has lectured and written regarding several areas of civil litigation.

Flyway Festival

Tenth annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival, January 27-29th, 2007. Held right on Mare Island (previously a Naval installation just across the bridge from Vallejo), this festival features wildlife programs, birding tours, exhibits, an art show, and more. Check it out at www.stbayflywayfestival.com.

Health Care For All begins fundraising campaign

Health Care for All San Joaquin, the local grassroots movement which advocates for universal health care, has begun a fundraising campaign. The goal is to raise \$10,000 in order to purchase many copies of the newly produced DVD entitled: The Healthcare Solution: California ONECARE.

The film explains the problem of the current health care system in California and outlines the solution, namely a universal, single payer system supported by existing revenues, payroll and

income taxes.

Health Care for All will use the funds to purchase as many of the DVD's as feasible to be distributed among the various groups and organizations within the County. This would include elected officials, health care institutions, churches, labor groups and others.

If you wish to purchase the DVD for your own use the cost is \$10. Please contact Roger Speed at rshcasj@yahoo.com or Jerry Bailey at cjhcfasj@hotmail.com.

Free Mini Seminars

Winter Health with Dr. Yi-Po Anthony Wu & Associates

Purpose: To emphasize healthy lifestyle, especially for the holiday season

For whom: Our patients and friends in the community

Where: PCMC Seminar Room, Suite 9A, 645 West Harding Way, Stockton, CA 95204

When: Two consecutive Wednesday afternoons in December 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Reservations: Seating is limited. Please call in advance to reserve seating. (209) 464-4800.

SCHEDULE

12/06/06 Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and Stress

- Relaxation and exercise
- Meditation, yoga
- Demonstration

Presenters: Dorel Rotar, L.Ac.

Teresa M. Chen, Ph.D.

Yi-Po Anthony Wu, M.D., M.P.H.

12/13/06 Healthy Holiday Diet

- Tips for Diabetes care during the holidays
- Weight control
- Cholesterol control
- Cooking demonstration

Presenters: Teresa M. Chen, Ph.D.

Melissa Cheney, Hill Physicians Health Educator

Yi-Po Anthony Wu, M.D., M.P.H.

December Calendar

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

Nov 6 - Dec 2

Gay Lynn Saunders jeweler. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033.

Dec 4 - Dec 30

Holiday show with a variety of artists. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber, Stockton. 463-4033.

Nov 16 - Dec 14

Sculpture by Randy Polumbo & Andy Vogt: Dimensioning Nowhere - working with found & crafted objects and recycled materials. Tu 11-4, W-Th 11-6:30, Fri 11-1. DCA/Horton Gallery, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5507.

Nov 24 - Dec 17

Stockton Civic Theatre presents A Year with Frog & Toad. Thurs 7:30 pm, Fri/Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. 2312 Rose Marie Lane, Stockton. \$22 adult, \$18 senior, \$15 student, \$8 children 12 and under. 473-2424.

Fri, Nov 17

UOP Jazz Ensemble concert. 7:30 pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP.

Sat, Nov 18

Stockton Symphony with William Bennett, oboe, 6 pm Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$15-44. 951-0196.

Sun, Nov 19

Two Bye Four Double Reed Quartet featuring Don Nelson, Chrishna Martinez, Becky Secor and Joan Burg. 3-4 pm. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing, Stockton. \$5 adult, \$2.50 seniors & students. 940-6332.

Tue, Nov 21

Hospice Tree of Lights ceremony, 6 pm. SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton.

Scott Joplin's Opera "Treemonisha" presented by master storyteller Diane Ferlatte. 6 pm. Cesar Chavez Cental Library, 605 N. El Dorado St, Stockton. 937-8221.

Thur, Nov 23

Run and Walk against Hunger benefits the Emergency Food Bank. 8:30 pm start at the Stockton Ports Baseball Park, Lincoln & Fremont St. \$20 before 11/15, \$25 after. 464-7369.

Tue, Nov 28

Candlelight prayer vigil for peace and against the death penalty, Annunciation Cathedral, Lincoln/Rose. 7 pm. Bring a candle. All welcome! Sponsored by Pax Christi. 462-3340, 462-8114.

Fri-Sun, Dec 1-9

Under Milkwood by Dylan Thomas. Fri/Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. DeMarcus Brown Studio Theatre, UOP, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$12 general, \$8 students, \$5 seniors. 946-2867.

Fri, Dec 1

Peaceful Holiday Fair, 4 - 9 pm, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific, Stockton. 467-4455. (see page 1).

Pacific Singers concert. Christmas at the Cathedral. Mozart and Finzi, 7:30 pm, Cathedral of the Annunciation.

Sat, Dec 2

Peaceful Holiday Fair, 10 am - 3 pm, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific, Stockton. 467-4455. (see page 1).

Sat-Sun, Dec 2-3

Festival of Trees. 10 am - 4 pm. SJC Historical Museum, 11793 N Mickle Grove Rd, Lodi. \$8 adult, \$1 children under 8. 953-3460.

Fri-Sun, Dec 1-10

A Christmas Carol. 12/1, 12/5 & 12/7 10 am; 12/2 6 pm, 12/8 7:30 pm; 12/3, 12/9-10 2:30 pm. Lewis Theatre, Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave. \$10/\$7.50. 954-5110.

Sun, Dec 3

Lodi Community Band concert with Tapestry, 2 pm. Hutchins St Square, Lodi. Free. 333-6782.

Tue, Dec 5

UOP Symphonic Wind Ensemble & University Concert Band. 7:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP.

Thur - Fri, Dec 7-8

Delta College Art Club Holiday Art Sale, Th 5:30-9 pm; Fri 8:30 am-1 pm. 138 Shima, Delta College, 5151 Pacific, Stockton. 954-5508.

Thur, Dec 7

Peace & Justice Center meeting, P&J Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6 pm. All welcome. 467-4455.

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, P&J Center, 231 Bedford Rd. 7 pm. All welcome. 467-4455.

El Concilio Tamale Christmas Fundraiser Dinner for food baskets and toys for 2,000 families. 5 - 10 pm. 525 N Center, Stockton. \$10. 820-5900.

Fri, Dec 8

Christmas Home tour benefit for SJ AIDS Foundation, 5-9 pm. Stockton. \$20 advance, \$25 time of event. Locations: 476-8533 or www.sanjoaquinidsfoundation.org.

Sun, Dec 10

San Joaquin Vegans monthly potluck, 5:30, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. \$2 with food, \$9 without food. Menu theme: Appetizers and Desserts. Tableware and beverages provided. Please bring enough food for 8. All are welcome. RSVP to sjvegans@hotmail.com Second Sundays.

Stockton Symphony Holiday Treasures. 3 pm, Atherton Auditorium, Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave. 954-5110.

Tue, Dec 12

SJDC Symphonic and Concert Bands, with guests Lodi High Concert Band and Wind Ensemble, 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$12 adult, \$10 students/seniors. 954-5110.

Wed, Dec 13

SJDC Concert Choir and Delta Singers. 7:30 pm. St Johns Episcopal Church, 316 N El Dorado. \$7.50 adult, \$5 students/seniors. 466-6916.

Thur, Dec 14

Health Care for All San Joaquin group meeting, 6-8 pm. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Second Thursdays.

Thur-Sun, Dec 14-22

Dickens' A Christmas Carol, 7:30 pm. Edison High School Speech-Arts Auditorium, 1425 S Center St, Stockton. \$4/\$3/\$2. 481-3851.

Thur-Fri, Dec 14-15

SJDC Improvisational Theatre. 7 pm, Studio Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5110

Pacific Theater 2006 Fall Film Schedule

Nov. 16, 17, 18—Superman Returns

Nov. 30—Untold Scandal (Foreign, South Korea)

Dec. 1, 2—X-Men 3

Dec. 7, 8, 9—Talladega Nights

Dec. 14, 15, 16—Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men's Chest

Dec. 15—TBA (Tiger Nights Late Movie, 10:00pm)

Showtime: 8:00pm unless noted; doors open 7:30

Pacific Students: FREE

Pacific Staff / Faculty / Alumni: \$3

General Admission: \$5

Call (209) 946-2025 for show recording

Pacific Theatre, UOP, 3601 Pacific Ave., Stockton

Arts Commission needs artists

The Stockton Arts Commission is issuing a Call for Artists to teach classes in an after school program that provides school tutoring and enrichment programs. Proposals are being accepted for art, dance, drama, music and literary instruction for grades K-7. Afternoon classes will meet twice a week, for 1-1/2 hours each day, for eight weeks beginning in January. Salary is \$40 per hour, plus a materials allowance. Instructors must have prior experience with this age group and meet City of Stockton application requirements. The after-school program is a collaboration between the Stockton Unified School District, City of Stockton Parks and Recreation Department, and the Stockton Arts Commission. Interested artists should send class proposals and a resume by Friday, December 1 to: Stockton Arts Commission, 6 E. Lindsay Street, Stockton, CA 95202 or stknarts@ci.stockton.ca.us. Background screening will be required. For information, contact the Stockton Arts Commission at (209) 937-7488 or stknarts@ci.stockton.ca.us.

Fri-Sat, Dec 15-16

Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker presented by the Capitol Ballet Company, Fri 7:30 pm, Sat 2 pm. Delta College Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave. \$15/\$20. 954-5510.

Thur, Jan 5

Peace & Justice Center meeting, P&J Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6 pm. All welcome. 467-4455.

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, P&J Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 7 pm. All welcome. 467-4455.

Sun, Jan 8

San Joaquin Vegans monthly potluck, 5:30, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. \$2 with food, \$9 without food. Tableware and beverages provided. Please bring enough food for 8. All are welcome. RSVP to sjvegans@hotmail.com Second Sundays.

Mon-Fri, Jan 9-13

Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman, 9 am, 11 am and 1 pm, Long Theatre UOP, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$3. 946-2116.

Sat, Jan 13

New Dance Company Crab Feed fundraiser, 6-9 pm. Proceeds benefit Valley Dance 2007, a free dance festival at Weber Pt. Waterloo Gun & Bocci Club, 4343 N Ashley Lane, Stockton. 373-0884.

SJCOE Honor Band and Choir concert, 9 am, Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave. 954-5110.

Sun, Jan 21

Peace & Justice Network Annual Meeting and Potluck, 3 - 7 pm. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Come welcome in the new year with old and new friends. Food, discussion, merriment. All welcome. 467-4455.

Second Sundays

Vegan potluck, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 5:30 pm \$2 donation bringing food, \$9 without. sjvegans@hotmail.com.

Third Mondays

Hispanics for Political Action - HEPA meets 6 pm at Archie's Café, 334 S. Hwy. 99. (near Arch Road) For info, call Louis Gonzales 464-9205.

Talking It Through

Talking It Through is now two half-hour shows.

The Real Show hosted by Margee Ensign is on Monday at 6pm

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

SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

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

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

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

It's All Happening At the P&J Center (& elsewhere)

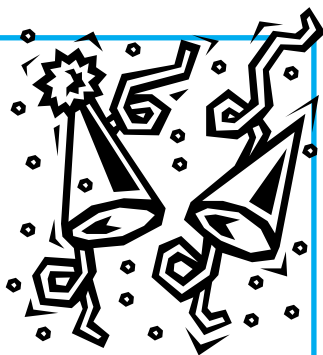
Sunday, Jan 21

It's Annual Meeting time again!

3 - 7 pm at the P&J Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton

Join us for the P&J Annual Potluck and Meeting

This celebration will greet a new year where our voice on peace issues is increasingly credible and important. Along with the great food, good company and wonderful venue, this gathering will help focus the Network on its work in the 2007 year. Leaders will be elected, issues discussed, strategies laid out. Please come and enjoy this annual gathering—it's always a great time! Call 209-467-4455 for more information. All are welcome!



Visit Wall of Hope display in Modesto

The power of nonviolence

Dan Onorato

From now through December 16, a timely peace exhibit—a “Wall of Hope: A History of Nonviolence”—will be on display in the East Campus library at Modesto Junior College.

The Wall of Hope is an attempt to counter the prevailing climate of violence, darkness, and despair. The large exhibit, 8 feet high and 40 feet long, is graphically stunning. Its large and small photos spotlight nonviolent activists in action.

Along with the pictures, memorable quotations evoke reflection. Some disturb in their truth, some touch the heart, some inspire. At the center of the display are stories of people and organizations from all over the world that have dedicated their lives to the nonviolent pursuit of social justice, peace, and a sustainable environment.

On display are familiar icons of nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., César Chávez, and Desmond Tutu. The visitor will be reminded that nonviolence helped free India from British oppression, advanced the cause of civil rights in the



U.S., brought economic justice to farm laborers in California and the Southwest, and ended Apartheid in South Africa. Stories of lesser known heroes, such as Ghaffar Khan, Dorothy Day, Thich Nhat Hanh, Roy Bourgeois, Mordecai Vanunu, Wangari Maathai, and Kathy Kelly, are also told.

Non-violence in action today—in Columbia, Israel-Palestine, Iran, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and in the U.S. to close the School of the Americas, to end the war in Iraq, to ban nuclear weapons, and put poverty on the list of national priorities—gives hope for tomorrow.

The Wall of Hope was created to remind us that there is an alternative to violence. In all sorts of difficult situations, despite great odds and many setbacks, nonviolent pioneers have demonstrated there is another way into tomorrow. Their conviction and example have sown seeds of hope. It's up to us to help those seeds germinate.

The Wall can be seen during regular library hours: M-Th: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.; F: 8 to 5; S: 9-5.

If the experience moves you, please tell others about the exhibit. For more info, call 526-5436 or onoratod@mjc.edu.

connections

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

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

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

Looking for a project?

Creative people are needed for the P&J Center Committee to help develop a plan to keep our Center viable. This great community resource is still precarious because of the great amount of time, money, and organizational effort necessary to keep it going. New ideas and energy will help ensure we have a Center in the future. For information, call Maria at 467-4455.

French Films at 6:30

November 28: “Pickpocket”; directed by Robert Bresson, 1959.

December 5: “Les Quatre Cents Coups” (The 400 Blows); directed by François Truffaut, 1959.

December 12: “Hiroshima Mon Amour” (Hiroshima My Love); directed by Alain Resnais, 1959.

December 19: “Y aura-t-il de la Neige à Noël?” (Will It Snow for Christmas?); directed by Sandrine Veysset, 1996.

Volunteers always needed

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