

connections

PRICELESS

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March 2008

SAVE THE DATES

JANUARY 27
PJN ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 20
EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

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Livermore Lab

Public hearings on the future of Nuclear Weapons Complex

The Dept. of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration has released its draft plan to revitalize the nuclear weapons complex at 8 locations across the country, including Livermore Lab. The DOE calls the plan "Complex Transformation" (formerly known as "Complex 2030"). We call it "Bombplex."

The draft plan is in the form of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The most important thing to know is that the plan is fundamentally about the future of the U.S. nuclear weapons research and production complex. Do you want to see a revitalized weapons complex with added capabilities to research, develop, test and produce new and militarily modified nuclear bombs? Or, do you want to see the U.S. fully comply with its legal obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to negotiate „in good faith% the elimination of nuclear weapons? Should the U.S. contribute to global nuclear danger, or play a leadership role in achieving nonproliferation and disarmament? The choice is ours.

Don't be silent at this critical juncture. Your voice is needed now. Make the hearings a public referendum on nuclear weapons. At the hearings, you can speak on the changes you want to see at

Come speak truth to power. Choose the peace issues that are most meaningful to you. There will also be a 90-day period for written public comments. In California, the public hearings are:

Tues, March 18, 2008
Tracy, California
Holiday Inn Express, 3751 N. Tracy Blvd.
One session only: 6 p.m.~10 p.m.

Wed, March 19, 2008—5th anniversary of U.S. attack on Iraq.
Livermore, California
Robert Livermore Community Center, 4444 East Avenue
2 sessions: 11 a.m.~3 p.m. and 6 p.m. ~10 p.m.

Comments may be submitted by mail to:
Mr. Theodore Wyka, Complex Transformation SPEIS Document Manager,
Office of Transformation, NA-10.1, U.S. Dept of Energy/NNSA
1000 Independence Avenue, SW. Washington, D.C. 20585
Or by fax: (703) 931-9222 (request confirmation of receipt)

Or e-mail: ComplexTransformation@nnsa.doe.gov (request confirmation of receipt)

Livermore Lab, or on U.S. nuclear weapons policy writ large. You can speak out to stop polluting nuclear weapons activities at the Livermore Lab main site and its Site 300 in Tracy. You can tell the government to stop new nuclear weapons, like the Reliable Replacement Warhead, which the DOE is still pushing for with \$40 million in its fiscal year 2009 budget request. Or, you can speak about the need for a

new U.S. national security policy and the necessity of achieving global nuclear disarmament. You may also wish to point to the U.S. hypocrisy in planning to produce new weapons of nuclear mass destruction on the 5th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Source: *TriValley Cares* release 2/12/08
www.wslfweb.org; www.trivalleycares.org; www.peaceactionwest.org

Stop the bombplex, nuclear weapons and war

We've found the Weapons of Mass Destruction. They're next door, in Livermore.

Five years ago, the U.S. attacked Iraq based on flimsy allegations of non-existent WMDs. Now, the Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration has released new plans to modernize and „revitalize% the U.S. nuclear weapons research and production complex at 8 locations across the country, including the Bay Area,s Livermore Lab. The DOE calls the plan, „Complex Transformation.%

We call it „Bombplex.% Western States Legal Foundation, Tri-Valley CAREs, Peace Action West, United for Peace and Justice and allied organizations are calling on all anti-nuclear, anti-war, environmental, and peace and justice activists to turn the „Bombplex% public hearings into a national public referendum on the future of nuclear weapons.

Here is where you come in. We are holding three organizing / mobilizing / planning meetings in different parts of the Bay Area and calling on key activists and organizations to participate. Our goal is to take action together to MOBILIZE a large and powerful turnout at upcoming public hearings in Tracy (March 18) and Livermore (March 19) on the 5th anniversary of the Iraq war).

Planning meeting numbers 1 & 2 were in Berkeley and Livermore respectively, as Connections went to press. Planning meeting number 3 will be held Tuesday, February 26, 7 PM to 9 PM, at Western States Legal Foundation, 655 13th Street, Suite 201, Oakland, CA. To RSVP or obtain details, call Jackie at (510) 839-5877.

Elements for each organizing meeting will include:

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Inspiration for the future, worry for the present

Bruce Giudici

The presidential campaign now under way inspires and gives hope to Americans and the rest of the world. Never has there been—or will there ever be—another president such as we now suffer. Despite record low approval ratings and multiple policies run amok, Mr. Bush has religiously adhered to his charted course—toward an imperial presidency answerable to no one but himself. Lame duck status is not a concern when loyal Senate Republicans and calculating Democrats collude

to aid and abet illegal wiretapping and torture, in addition to the legal (but repellent) practices of obscene military spending and record low taxes on the wealthy, leaving only a grotesque debt to be paid by somebody else we hope never to meet (p 10).

So, we have much to be concerned about for these next 11 months: privacy and wiretapping (p 3), torture continuing in our name (p 9), a long-term commitment to Iraq that will live beyond this president (p 7), and many other issues. Every

month brings a new worry, each day a teachable moment for those still unable to see where we are headed.

For the Peace and Justice Network, we will be here—and with a Center to still call our own. At the last moment—and in reaction to our holiday plea—we have found a group with which to share space (p 20). What had been a worrisome time for us has now passed, our future now only limited by our hopes and imaginations. Thanks for all your support. As we tread through this

*Bruce Giudici,
editor*



year of spirituality, healing and peace, our eyes must remain on the prize of a just and sustainable peace for all our futures. For the inspiring words of a future president to be made real, we have to survive the next 334 days. Stay alert and active. Happy St. Patrick's Day.

2008 Earth Day Festival

Sponsors, exhibitors and volunteers needed

It is almost time for the annual Earth Day Festival. Planning has begun for San Joaquin County's 20th Earth Day Festival, Sunday, April 20, 11 am to 5 pm at Victory Park, behind Haggin Museum in Stockton. Coordinated by City of Stockton Solid Waste Division and Stormwater Management Program, the Peace and Justice Network, University of the Pacific and San Joaquin County Public Works-Stormwater Management, the Festival continues to draw a larger and more diverse crowd each year and provides an enjoyable way for the community to learn more about protecting our environment.

Companies and organizations are encouraged to participate as a sponsor. Sponsor donations will be put to good use supporting this non-profit event. Sponsors will be part of promotional efforts and will be recognized for their Go Green environmental concern to help educate the residents of Stockton and San Joaquin County about protecting our water, air and land.

All schools, organizations and individuals doing environmental activities or projects are encouraged to share with the local community at this year's Festival as a exhibitor. Whether you have educational information to share, crafts or food to sell as a vendor or school projects to demonstrate, please join the thousands who will gather on this special day.

Organizers are also always looking for volunteers. Volunteers are the backbone of this event. If you, a group of friends, your school or organization would like to lend a hand setting up and taking down on Festival day, distributing event posters, staffing the information booth or assisting with the bike ride/parade, call (209) 946-2083.

For more information on how to be a sponsor, exhibitor or vendor, please call (209) 937-8389 or email stocktonearthday@gmail.com.

Raising awareness of Hmong suffering

Maly Bounselat

Living in fear day after day.

Pushed to the side like a peace of trash.

Wanting to return home, but scared of what fate may lie ahead.

The Hmong people of Laos live their lives like this everyday.

As I sit in my chair staring, listening to the speakers, I am overrun by emotions. I feel hatred towards the government that shuns their own people for having different thoughts. I feel sad, in disbelief that so many young lives are being killed and little is being done to help.

During the Vietnam War, the United States recruited 40,000 Hmong to fight against communism in Laos. About one-third of the Hmong fled the country, while others went to the jungles of Laos to hide.

To see that thirty years after the war has ended, people are still hiding makes me very worried. A government is supposed to protect the people and represent them, not

oppress them.

From the rally I attended, I saw that the Hmong of America have not forgotten the land they once called home. Rather than making only their lives safe, the Hmong community wants to help those that still suffer in Laos. Although Hmong communities are doing all they can to help the people in the jungles, what is the United States government doing to help?

I understand that the U.S. has other issues at hand to deal with, but at least it could raise the awareness of how bad the conditions in Laos are for the Hmong that still remain. Not only do the Hmong veterans of the war need to be informed, but especially the youth.

The image that I will never ever forget from the rally is a picture of a dead woman's body with bruises on her face and a slashed stomach. Only a few feet away from her lay a fetus, her unborn child.

Take action to help in some way, or just be aware that the lives we live are safer than those of the Hmong children in the jungles of Laos.

Connections

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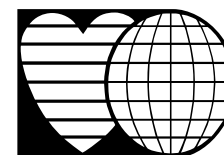
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committed to the vision of a
world in which the equality
of all persons is achieved,
basic needs are met, conflict
is resolved nonviolently, and
the earth's resources are shared
responsibly for the well-being
of all her inhabitants and all
future generations."*

The end of privacy as we know it

Elliot Cohen

Amid the controversy brewing in the Senate over Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) reform, the Bush administration appears to have changed its strategy and is devising a bold new plan that would strip away FISA protections in favor of a system of wholesale government monitoring of every American's Internet activities. Now the National Director of Intelligence is predicting a disastrous cyber-terrorist attack on the U.S. if this scheme isn't instituted.

It is no secret that the Bush administration has already been spying on the e-mail, voice-over-IP, and other Internet exchanges between American citizens since as early as and possibly earlier than September 11, 2001. The National Security Agency has set up shop in the hubs of major telecom corporations, notably AT&T, installing equipment that makes copies of the contents of all Internet traffic, routing it to a government database and then using natural language parsing technology to sift through and analyze the data using undisclosed search criteria. It has done this without judicial oversight and obviously without the consent of the millions of Americans under surveillance. Given any rational interpretation of the Fourth Amendment, its mass spying operation is illegal and unconstitutional.

But now the administration wants to make these illegal activities legal. And why is that? According to National Director of Intelligence Mike McConnell, who is now drafting the proposal, an attack on a single U.S. bank by the 9/11 terrorists would have had a far more serious impact on the U.S. economy than the destruction of the Twin Towers. "My prediction is that we're going to screw around with this until something horrendous happens," said McConnell. So the way to prevent this from happening, he claims, is to give the government the power to spy at will on the content of all e-mails, file transfers and Web searches.

McConnell's prediction of something "horrendous"

happening unless we grant government this authority has a tone similar to that of the fear-mongering call to arms against terrorism that President Bush sounded before taking us to war in Iraq. Now, Americans are about to be asked to surrender their Fourth Amendment rights because of a vague and unsupported prediction of the dangers and costs of cyber-terrorism.

The analogy with the campaign to frighten us into war with Iraq gets even stronger when it becomes evident that along with the establishing of American forces in Iraq, the cyber-security McConnell is calling for was, all along, part of the strategic plan, devised by Dick Cheney and several other present and former high-level Bush administration officials, to establish America as the world's supreme superpower. This plan, known as the Project for the New American Century, unequivocally recognized "an imperative" for government to not only secure the Internet against cyber-attacks but also to control and use it offensively against its adversaries. The Project for the New American Century also maintained that "the process of transformation" it envisioned (which included the militarization and control of the Internet) was "likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event -- like a new Pearl Harbor." All that appears to be lacking to make the analogy complete is the "horrendous" cyber-attack -- the chilling analog of the 9/11 attacks -- that McConnell now predicts.

Apparently, the Bush administration had hoped to continue its mass surveillance program in secret, but as many as 40 civil suits were filed against AT&T and other telecoms, threatening to blow the government's illegal spying activities wide open. Unable to have these cases dismissed in appellate court by once again playing the national security card, the administration drafted and tried to push through Congress a version of the FISA Amendments Act of 2007 that gave retroactive immunity to telecom corporations for their assistance in helping the government spy en mass

on Americans without a court warrant. The administration's plan was to use Congress' passage of this provision of immunity to nullify any cause of civil action against the telecoms, thereby pre-empting the exposure of the administration's own illegal activities.

Two versions of the FISA bill emerged, one from the Senate Intelligence Committee drafted largely by Cheney himself, which contained the immunity provision, and another from the Senate Judiciary Committee that did not contain the provision. Although Senate Majority leader Harry Reid inauspiciously chose the former to bring to the Senate floor, the bill was surrounded by much controversy. There had been well organized grassroots pressure to stop it from passing, and the House had already passed a version that did not include the retroactive immunity provision. Thus, in the face of a filibuster threat by Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), Reid postponed the discussion until the January 2008 session.

Now Reid has tried to put off the FISA Amendments Act once again by asking Republicans to extend, for one more month, the Protect America Act of 2007, an interim FISA reform act that is due to sunset in February. However, Cheney has urged Congress to pass his version of the FISA Amendments Act now. "We can always revisit a law that's on the books. That's part of the job of the elected branches of government," Cheney said. "But there is no sound reason to pass critical legislation—and slap an expiration date on it."

Cheney's point about the possibility of later revisiting the FISA Amendments Act after it becomes law may foreshadow replacing it in the coming months with a law based on McConnell's plan, which is due to emerge in February. This would mark a gradual descent into divesting Americans entirely of their Fourth Amendment right to privacy -- first by blocking their ability to sue the telecoms for violating their privacy and then by giving the government the same legal protection. After all, the FISA Amendments Act still requires

the government to get warrants for spying on American citizens even if it does not afford adequate judicial oversight in enforcing this mandate. McConnell's proposal, on the other hand, would make no bones about spying on Americans without warrants, thereby contradicting any meaningful FISA reform.

President Bush has already made clear he would veto any FISA bill that did not give retroactive immunity to the telecoms. However, if McConnell's soon to be unveiled spy-at-will plan is turned into law, a separate law giving retroactive immunity to the telecoms would be unnecessary. All Bush and Cheney would need to do to protect themselves from criminal liability would be to make the new spy-at-will law retroactive in effect from the inception of the illegal NSA surveillance program. This would also be sufficient to deflate the civil suits filed against the telecoms because the past illegal spying activities that these companies conducted on behalf of the government would then become "legal." Indeed, the Bush administration has already done this sort of legal retro-dating and nullifying of civil rights and gotten it through Congress. For example, the Military Commissions Act of 2006 conveniently gave Bush the power to decide whether someone -- including himself -- is guilty of torture, irrespective of the Geneva Conventions, and it made this authority retroactive to Nov. 26, 1997.

Whatever the final disposition of FISA in the coming weeks or months, the administration is now bracing to take a much more aggressive posture that would seek abridgement of civil liberties in its usual fashion: by fear-mongering and warnings that our homeland will be attacked by terrorists (this time of the menacing hacker variety) unless we the people surrender our Fourth Amendment right to privacy and give government the authority to inspect even our most personal and intimate messages.

It would be a mistake to underestimate the resolve of the Bush administration. But it would be a bigger mistake for Americans not to stand united against this

familiar pattern of government scare tactics and manipulation. There are grave dangers to the survival of democracy posed by allowing any present or future government unfettered access to all of our private electronic communications. These dangers must be carefully weighed against the dubious and unproven benefits that granting such an awesome power to government might have on fending off cyber-attacks.

*Elliot D. Cohen, Ph.D., is a media ethicist and critic. His most recent book is *The Last Days of Democracy: How Big Media and Power-Hungry Government Are Turning America Into a Dictatorship*. He is a first-prize winner of the 2007 Project Censored Award.*

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SOS (Save Old Stockton)

Joy Neas

The S.O.S. (Save Old Stockton) steering committee has agreed to contact various interested parties to respond to the Request for Proposal (RFP) issued by the Stockton Redevelopment Department on January 17, 2008 to reuse the Earle, Terry and La Verta Hotels in downtown Stockton.

The City of Stockton had previously sought to demolish seven hotels and the Chargin Building to provide a total of 130 parking spaces on paved

surface lots. Four of the hotels, the St. Leo, Main, Commercial, and Land are currently slated for demolition. Save Old Stockton, the Downtown Alliance, the Stockton Cultural Heritage Board, and many civic-minded individuals have encouraged the City of Stockton to preserve and reuse the hotels for housing, commercial, entertainment, and arts uses.

The Redevelopment Department RFP for reusing the hotels is the first step in revitalizing Stockton's downtown central core. Downtown

Stockton has a large labor force that will benefit from the reuse of these hotels for a variety of uses. „We are encouraged that the City of Stockton has taken a positive step forward to preserve our architectural history in offering these three neglected buildings for reuse as market-rate housing,“ said S.O.S. committee member Bob Hong.

Interested parties should contact Paul Blumberg of the Stockton Redevelopment Department at 209-937-8624.

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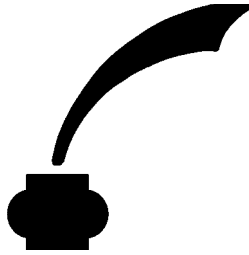
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Health reform goes down in Sacramento

The Governor's health reform bill (ABx1), supported by Democratic Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez was defeated and withdrawn after a long hearing in the Senate Health Committee. This bill would have mandated insurance coverage for all Californians and essentially forced each of us to buy costly private health insurance through existing insurance companies.

Chaired by Senator Sheila Kuehl, author of SB840—the single payer initiative, the lengthy hearing dissected the problems with the insurance mandate bill and gave opponents as well as supporters a chance to comment.

After the bills' defeat, Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata issued the following press release, which is edited here to fit the available space:

"Since November 2006, we have worked together to improve our broken health care system. I introduced AB48 in December 2006, later yielding to the Speakers' bill in recognition of our mutual commitment to 'get something done'. A lot of progress ensued. Many interests became engaged. Regrettably, I cannot support ABx1.

In the light of the state's \$14.5 billion budget shortfall, we have the fiduciary responsibility to approve a health care coverage plan that is both self financing and fiscally sound and a moral responsibility to protect from harm those who already have health care coverage.

The plan proposed would grow faster than the revenues chosen to pay for it. If the underlying assumptions are wrong even by small margins, the potential shortfall could devastate a state budget already teetering on insolvency.

The LAO (Legislative Analyst Office) analysis shows that under the most optimistic scenario, at the second year of implementation, spending outpaces revenues by \$354 million with a growing annual deficit thereafter.

The LAO notes that the Governor's 2008-09 budget runs

counter to (his own) proposal. He would cut MediCal and the Healthy Families program by over \$1.1 billion.

Other challenges in the budget proposal that contravene the reform initiative include:

The Governor's budget will re-institute the quarterly status reporting for MediCal children thus reducing expenditures by \$83 million. This affects 150,000 children.

Adult dental services are eliminated to save \$115 million.

Aside from the opposing directions of the ABx1 proposal versus the Governor's budget, other problems identified with the health reform bill include:

Uncertainties regarding an increase in federal funds.

How many employers would transfer their employees into the state pool?

The number of uninsured who would seek coverage.

Long term health cost inflation.

Enforcement of the individual mandate.

The possible „gaming% of the system by employers to avoid health care costs.

The amount of discretion the Director of Finance would have over the implementation of the bill.

No legislature would knowingly put itself in such an untenable position. It is irresponsible and clearly biased toward the executive. The unusual legislation/initiative you have proposed effectively means that health care reform will be decided by whichever clever television advertising is most convincing.

(End of press release.)

The press release also mentioned some positives about the ABx1, including:

Higher tobacco taxes.

Transparency in the way data is used to improve quality and control costs;

Leveraging federal funds to maintain and increase MediCal reimbursement rates to hospitals;

Requiring insurance companies to spend a minimum of 85% of premiums on health care benefits;

Prohibiting incentives to deny coverage;

Outlawing bonuses to staff based on how many claims that are reduced or denied; and

Taking insured patients out of billing battles between hospitals and health insurance companies.

The reforms proposed under ABx1 were an improvement over the current hodge-podge of coverage we are suffering from now. The big issues of permanent and adequate funding, as well as controlling costs, remained essentially unaddressed. Insurance companies would have remained in the drivers' seat, controlling the costs and breadth of benefits allowed under all the 600 different health policies issued in California.

The only proposal this author believes will basically and permanently „fix% the health care system in California (and the nation) is single payer. This system has everyone contributing and everyone benefiting—plus it is cheaper than what we have now.

On the federal level, look up HR 676 to see how a Medicare For All plan would work. Unfortunately, at this time, all the major presidential candidates are ignoring single payer and focusing on an insurance mandate system like the one just defeated in California.

Action: Call or write your candidate and fill them in on your views of the needed reforms for health care.

Mythbusting Canada health care

Sara Robinson

I'm both a health-care-card-carrying Canadian resident and an uninsured American citizen who regularly sees doctors on both sides of the border. As such, I'm in a unique position to address the pros and cons of both systems first-hand. Here's ten common myths Americans routinely tell each other about Canadian health care, and the reality behind them.

1. Canada's health care system is "socialized medicine."

False. In socialized medical systems, the doctors work directly for the state. In Canada (and many other countries with universal care), doctors run their own private practices, just like they do in the US, dealing with a single insurer.

2. Doctors are hurt financially by single-payer health care.

True and False. Doctors in Canada do make less than their US counterparts. But they also have lower overhead, and usually much better working conditions.

3. Wait times in Canada are horrendous.

True and False again—it depends on which province you live in, and what's wrong with you. Canada's health care system runs on federal guidelines that ensure uniform standards of care, but each territory and province administers its own program. Some provinces don't plan their facilities well enough; in those, you can have waits. Some do better.

4. You have to wait forever to get a family doctor.

False for the vast majority of Canadians, but True for a few. Again, it all depends on where you live.

5. You don't get to choose your own doctor.

Scurrilously False. Canadians pick their own doctors, just like Americans do. And not only that: since it all pays the same,

poor Canadians have exactly the same access to the country's top specialists that rich ones do.

6. Canada's care plan only covers the basics. You're still on your own for any extras, including prescription drugs. And you still have to pay for it.

True—but not as big an issue as you might think. The province does charge a small monthly premium (ours is \$108/month for a family of four) for the basic coverage. However, most people never even have to write that check: almost all employers pick up the tab for their employees' premiums as part of the standard benefits package; and the province covers it for people on public assistance or disability.

7. Canadian drugs are not the same.

More preposterous bogosity. They are exactly the same drugs, made by the same pharmaceutical companies, often in the same factories. The Canadian drug distribution system, however, has much tighter oversight; and pharmacies and pharmacists are more closely regulated.

8. Publicly-funded programs will inevitably lead to rationed health care, particularly for the elderly.

False. One of the things that constantly amazes me here is how well-cared-for the elderly and disabled you see on the streets here are.

9. People won't be responsible for their own health if they're not being forced to pay for the consequences.

False. The philosophical basis of America's privatized health care system might best be characterized as medical Calvinism. The bottom line: When it comes to getting people to make healthy choices, appealing to their sense of the common good seems to work at least as well as Calvinist moralizing.

10. This all sounds great—but the taxes to cover it are just unaffordable. And besides, isn't the system in bad financial shape? *March '08 Connections 5*

False. On one hand, our annual Canadian tax bite runs about 10% higher than our U.S. taxes did.



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Getting out of Iraq—when?

Sam Stein

Sen. Jim Webb thinks legal action against the Bush administration may be needed if the president pursues a long-term military presence in Iraq without Congress' approval. "I'm not convinced we don't need to have a lawsuit ready," Webb told the Huffington Post. "This is a classic separation of powers issue. I started to talk to people about this today."

In recent days the administration has seemingly backed away from attempting to secure extended military-to-military relationship with the Iraqi government to replace a current U.N. Mandate. Webb and others -- most notably Rep. Rosa DeLauro and Sen. Hillary Clinton -- have pushed legislation that would restrict federal money for any such agreement unless it came in the form of a congressional treaty. And while a victory on that front seems within grasp, the possibility still exists, Webb warned, for the administration to ultimately circumvent congressional input.

"They are characterizing this as within the authority of the Executive Branch. They will wait to August when everyone is at the conventions, and leave it on our doorstep," said the Virginia Democrat. "If the Senate hasn't acted by then, they are going to announce an agreement between the Executive Branch and Iraq."

The issue of a long-term military presence in Iraq reemerged on the political landscape today

after Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he may suspend the reduction of U.S. troops from the country depending on security considerations. "A brief period of consolidation and evaluation probably does make sense," Gates told reporters during a short stop at this U.S. base in southern Baghdad. Earlier proclamations from Gates suggested that the U.S. would not pursue a policy of extended military presence and that conditions in Iraq would improve enough during the second half of 2008 to permit troop withdrawals.

Asked to respond to Gates' remarks, Webb cautioned that, before working off of one person's assessment, the Senate would best be served to get the input of generals on the ground. He also agreed that the statement fit into the greater context of the Bush administration and its congressional allies pushing to make America's presence in the region permanent.

"I think they are doing everything they can," said Webb. "And I don't think there is any secret to the fact that Sen. Mitch McConnell and John McCain and most of the people in the Republic Party are comfortable with the fact that we will be in Iraq for the next 50 years."

The issue of permanency has been a focal point of the Democratic presidential campaign. On the campaign trail, Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-NY, asked her challenger, Sen. Barack Obama,

D-IL, to co-sponsor her bill that would prevent the president from entering into such a pact without approval from Congress. On Monday, the two candidates weighed in on the topic with each offering critical statements of Gates' proclamation.

"I strongly disagree with the Administration's plans to 'pause' the long overdue removal of our combat brigades from Iraq," said Obama. "We cannot wage war without end in Iraq while ignoring mounting costs to our troops and their families, our security and our economy... Instead of false promises and a faulty strategy, the American people need a rapid and responsible removal of our combat brigades that relieves the burden on our military."

Added Clinton: "This means that we will have as many troops in Iraq in the summer of 2008 as we had at the beginning of 2007. I continue to call on the President to end the war he started, to take responsibly for bringing our young men and women home... The whole idea behind this so-called surge was to give the Iraqi government the space and time to make the tough decisions that only they can make for themselves and the future of their country."

Sam Stein is a Political Reporter at the Huffington Post, based in Washington, D.C.

Source: *Huffington Post* 2/12/08
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com>



Contact Your Reps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Recession brings chance for change

Mark Weisbrot

As the economy shifts into reverse gear and the Congress and President work out the details of a proposed fiscal stimulus, some are asking whether it will be enough to keep the economy out of a recession. The answer is very likely no.

The timing, length, and depth of a recession depends on many variables and is therefore difficult to predict. But there are certain things that we already know. First, we are witnessing the bursting of an unprecedented bubble in house prices. Nationally, a loss of wealth of about \$8 trillion would be necessary just to bring these prices back to their normal long-term trend. Even conservative estimates of the effect of such a drop imply a decline in consumer spending of \$400 billion, or about 3 percent of GDP. Some economists think it would be much more than that, because of the expansion in recent years of consumers borrowing against the (previously rising) value of their homes.

We also have the first official GDP growth numbers for the last quarter, which shows the economy at a near standstill with just 0.6 percent annualized growth. Consumer spending, which accounts for about 70 percent of the economy, has been holding up; but this cannot last as the price of homes that people have been borrowing against continues to fall.

The size of the proposed stimulus, which is about \$150 billion, is just not large enough to compensate for the kind of spending declines that we can expect. Near the peak of the housing bubble in 2005, homeowners were cashing out about \$780 billion in home equity at an annual rate. Although not all of this was used for consumption, a lot of it was; this "ATM machine" has now run out of cash.

It is worth looking at the total fiscal stimulus provided by the federal government when the last huge asset bubble -- in the stock market -- burst. The federal budget

went from a surplus of 2.4 percent of GDP in 2000, to a deficit of 3.5 percent of GDP in 2003. This is about 6 times the size of the proposed stimulus package, although the federal government will automatically provide at least some more stimulus than the current package, as tax revenues fall and some social spending rises.

Based on the experience of the last three recessions, the Center for Economic and Policy Research has estimated that the next recession could increase unemployment by 3.2 to 5.8 million people, and poverty by 4.7 to 10.4 million, with at least 4.2 million also losing health insurance. The range depends on whether it is a mild-to-moderate recession like the last two (2001 and 1990-91) or more severe as in 1980-82.

Given the magnitude of the risks and economic pain that our economy is facing, it is imperative to demand measures that will soften the blow --

especially for the most vulnerable, including the elderly, unemployed, and poor. The package that passes Congress, despite some positive additions by the Senate, will be especially inadequate in this regard.

Out of the Great Depression came the New Deal, which included Social Security, the legal right to organize unions, unemployment compensation and other reforms that transformed the United States into a more just society while setting the stage for the post-World-War II boom. Over the last 30 years, the country has become vastly more unequal and economic performance has also deteriorated with the ascendancy of the right.

We are not facing a depression, but the hard times ahead will highlight the need for structural changes such as universal health care and labor

law reform. These and other major reforms -- including a bigger and "green" fiscal stimulus that would reduce carbon emissions -- should be pushed to the top of the political agenda.

Mark Weisbrot <<http://www.cepr.net/content/view/81/81/>> is Co-Director and co-founder of the Center for Economic and Policy Research <<http://www.cepr.net>>. He is also president of Just Foreign Policy <www.justforiegnpolicy.org>.

Source: AlterNet 2/6/08 <http://www.alternet.org>

Take action: House must stop wiretapping

The Senate has capitulated to President Bush by passing a dangerous and unconstitutional FISA bill that allows warrantless government eavesdropping on Americans and grants immunity to giant phone companies that handed consumer data over to the government without a warrant.

"Though many questions still remain unanswered about years of domestic spying, the Senate has effectively sealed the vault by handing over immunity to the phone companies," said Caroline Fredrickson, Director of the Washington Legislative Office. "The over forty legitimate lawsuits currently pending against them may end before they've begun. It's a fact that Americans had their rights violated and now, by closing the courtroom door, they may be left with no recourse."

Stopping the awful Senate bill -- which the House can do -- is vital to protecting your constitutional right to make a phone call, send an email or search the Internet without the government monitoring your activity.

ACTION: Your representative in the House needs to hear from you. Whether you have called already or this is your first time, a quick phone call today will send a clear message that Americans don't want the House to send an unconstitutional bill with telecom immunity to the President.

Observing injustice of military commission hearings at Gitmo

The United States government has announced its intention to prosecute and seek the death penalty for six detainees held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, despite a flawed military commissions system there that has yet to try a single case.

This legally and ethically flawed system was tested last week during hearings in the cases of Canadian national Omar Ahmed Khadr and Yemeni national Salim Ahmed

Hamden. ACLU attorney Hina Shamsi was on hand to monitor the proceedings and reported on some disturbing themes.

If prosecutors have their way, Omar Ahmed Khadr, who was 15 when he was captured, will be the first juvenile offender to be charged with war crimes in recent history. Recognition of the special needs of child offenders in the context of armed conflict is part of federal law. In 2002, the United States ratified a United Nations' convention that recognizes children caught up as participants in armed conflict should be rehabilitated and provided assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.

Khadr's detention and treatment has been to the contrary. In U.S. custody, he was denied access to a lawyer for more than two years and, his lawyers say, he was severely abused while at Guantánamo. His lawyers allege that he was shackled in painful positions, threatened with rape, and used as a "human mop" to clean up his own urine during one interrogation session. Unlike every other legal system, including federal, state and military courts, the military commissions do not require the judge to take into account the needs of alleged child offenders.

In the Hamdan case, the government argued that defense lawyers could not have access to former CIA prisoners held in a secret part of the prison camp, even though these witnesses could have evidence that exonerates Hamdan. The witnesses were part of a CIA program that included "enhanced interrogation techniques" such as waterboarding, and the government takes the position that access to them must be limited as a matter of highest national security.

Throughout, issues of secrecy and coercion permeated the hearings. Given the military commissions proceedings to date in Guantánamo, it is unlikely that

any detainee will receive a full and fair trial.

*Source: ACLU Online release 2/14/08
<http://action.aclu.org> American Civil Liberties Union, 125 Broad St, 18th Floor, NY, NY 10004-2400*

Bush visa plan guts worker protections

Once again, the Bush Administration is attempting to strip away the few protections afforded to workers who harvest our nation's crops.

Early February, the U.S. Department of Labor announced what it calls the "most significant overhaul of the nation's agricultural guest worker program in two decades." That sounds good, but look a little closer and you will discover that instead of fixing the problem, this so-called reform is nothing more than a gutting of existing protections for both domestic and foreign workers.

The proposed plan to the H2-A/guest worker program is simply unacceptable. This so-called "overhaul" of the nation's agricultural guest worker program will result in lower wages and worsen conditions for farm workers that are already unacceptable. DOL's proposal includes an easing of the standards farmers must follow to show they have tried to hire domestic workers first. It also hurts those workers coming in under the H2-A program by lowering wages and undermining labor protections that already exist for U.S. workers.

The key to real solution to this dilemma is the UFW-backed AgJOBS. This bill will provide a stable and reliable agricultural workforce. AgJOBS has the support of growers, workers and a bipartisan majority in Congress.

In the coming days, we plan on raising public awareness about how the federal administrative changes are being forced upon us, instead of a legislative solution. We intend on engaging elected officials and community organizations across the nation to stop these changes from being enacted.

ACTION: Please contact the U.S. Department of Labor today. Tell them instead of gutting the current guest worker program, they should be enforcing the regulations that are currently on the books to protect farm workers.

The most important letter—yours

Deputy Secretary, United States Department of Labor Howard M. Radzely

U.S. Department of Labor, Frances Perkins Building, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210

AgJOBS is the only solution that growers and farm worker organizations agree on that will resolve our nation's immigration and labor issues in the fields. The plan you proposed on February 9th to change the H2-A program is unacceptable. At first glance, the so-called "overhaul" of this nation's agricultural guest worker program will result in lower wages and worsen conditions for farm workers that are already unacceptable. The proposed changes include an easing of the standards farmers must follow to show they have tried to hire domestic workers first. The proposed reforms also hurt those workers coming in under the H2-A program by lowering wages, not to mention undermining existing labor protections for U.S. workers.

Source: UFW website 2/13/08 <http://www.ufwaction.org/campaign/>

One Bush left behind

Greg Palast

Here's your question, class: In his State of the Union, the President asked Congress for \$300 million for poor kids in the inner city. As there are, officially, 15 million children in America living in poverty, how much is that per child? Correct! \$20.

Here's your second question. The President also demanded that Congress extend his tax cuts. The cost: \$4.3 trillion over ten years. The big recipients are millionaires. And the number of millionaires happens, not coincidentally, to equal the number of poor kids, roughly 15 million of them. OK class: what is the cost of the tax cut per millionaire? That's right, Richie, \$287,000 apiece.

Mr. Bush said, „In neighborhoods across our country, there are boys and girls with dreams. And a decent education is their only hope of achieving them.‰

So how much educational dreaming will \$20 buy?

-George Bush, s alma mater, Phillips Andover Academy, tells us their annual tuition is \$37,200. The \$20 „Pell Grant for Kids,‰ as the White House calls it, will buy a poor kid about 35 minutes of this educational dream. So they, ll have to wake up quickly.

-\$20 won't cover the cost of the final book in the Harry Potter series.

If you can't buy a book nor pay tuition with a sawbuck, what exactly can a poor kid buy with \$20 in urban America? The Palast Investigative Team donned baseball caps and big pants and discovered we could obtain what

local citizens call a „rock‰ of crack cocaine. For \$20, we were guaranteed we could fulfill any kid, s dream for at least 15 minutes.

Now we could see the incontrovertible logic in what appeared to be quixotic ravings by the President about free trade with Colombia, Pell Grant for Kids and the surge in Iraq. In Iraq, General Petraeus tells us we must continue to feed in troops for another ten years. There is no way the military can recruit these freedom fighters unless our lower income youth are high, hooked and desperate. Don't say, „Crack vials,‰ they, re, „Democracy Rocks, !

The plan would have been clearer if Mr. Bush had kept in his speech the line from his original draft which read, „I have ordered 30,000 additional troops to Iraq this year—and I am proud to say my military-age kids are not among them.‰

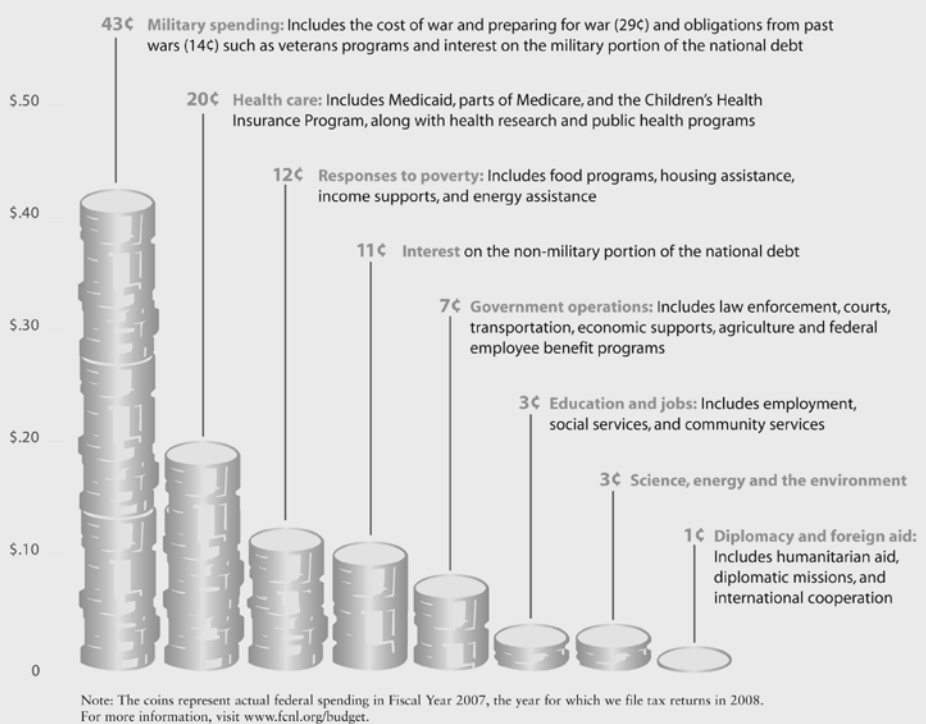
Of course, there, s an effective alternative to Mr. Bush, s plan—which won't cost a penny more. Simply turn it upside down. Let, s give each millionaire in America a \$20 bill, and every poor child \$287,000.

And, there, s an added benefit to this alternative. Had we turned Mr. Bush and his plan upside down, he could have spoken to Congress from his heart.

Greg Palast is the author of the NY Times best-sellers, Armed Madhouse and The Best Democracy Money Can Buy. View Palast's investigative reports for BBC Television on our YouTube Channel.

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The President's budget—a summary

Budget cuts steady

The administration released its fiscal year 2009 \$3 trillion budget request on Monday, February 5. Domestic programs intended for needy communities and families suffer the biggest cuts under the President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2009, including Low-income Home Energy Assistance, Community Development Block Grants, Housing Vouchers, and Child Care Assistance. Discretionary Grants to state and local governments would also be cut by 10 percent. Overall, the budget proposal for fiscal year 2009 cuts discretionary domestic programs not related to security by \$2.4 billion.

War spending way up

Meanwhile, the President's fiscal year 2009 budget proposes

an additional \$70 billion in war-related spending, on top of the \$102.4 billion the Administration continues to pursue for fiscal year 2008. The amount requested for fiscal year 2009 is merely a placeholder for the first few months of next fiscal year, vastly underestimating what would be required to continue the war in Iraq at the current level of involvement. The administration plans to seek additional funding for fiscal year 2009 in the Spring. The Iraq war has thus far cost \$522 billion.

In addition to proposed war funding, the non-war military budget will increase by nearly 5% over that of fiscal year 2008 under this proposal, reaching \$541 billion in fiscal year 2009. This includes funding for nuclear weapons under the Department of Energy budget.

Tax cuts for wealthy made permanent

The budget request makes permanent the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003, the benefits of which will accrue to the wealthy. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the wealthiest 1 percent would receive 31 percent of the windfall over the next 10 years, the top 20 percent would receive 74 percent, and those in the lowest 60 percent of households would receive only 12 percent.

Deficits up

The combination of increases in military spending and tax cuts will contribute to deficits of \$407 billion in 2009, and \$410 billion in fiscal year 2008.

Source: National priorities project, <http://nationalpriorities.org/node/6121>

Local residents demand access to local college

The Cathedral of the Annunciation's Community Organizing Ministry Team held a public meeting on local higher education on January 30. The group is part of the Social Justice Ministry Committee at the Cathedral, working as part of People and Congregations Together (PACT) using the PICO model of community organizing. The public meeting focused on launching an effort to strengthen local opportunities for higher education. The event, held in the Cathedral of the Annunciation Gym, drew approximately 160 residents interested in this issue.

The goal of this effort is to develop a plan to ensure that as Stockton grows, students are able to receive bachelors and masters degrees without having to move out of the area or commute. As part of this focus, the committee will work with the University of the Pacific to ensure that the Community Involvement Program (CIP) functions as intended. Working with the committee on this part of the effort are a number of CIP alumni—including one of the first students of CIP, Tommie Muhammad.

The Community Involvement Program has long been a valued educational opportunity since its inception in 1969. CIP's intent is to provide a college opportunity to those potential students in the Stockton community who are defined as disadvantaged and part of an under-represented group, who would be first

generation college students in need of financial aide, as well as demonstrate an awareness of the importance of volunteer community service and social issues.

While the University of the Pacific plays a vital role, it cannot fulfill all of the education needs of the community. Local families struggle with many pressures on their households. Rising gas, food, housing, and healthcare costs are straining budgets. Long commutes to work are stressing family relationships. Sending one child to college has become very challenging. Sending more than one child to college has become virtually impossible. Families want local solutions. The cost of a college education could be substantially reduced by a student living at home, attending Delta College for two years, and attending a local public college or university that is within 10-15 minutes from home.

Participants at the January 30th event included Council members Susan Eggman and Rebecca Nabors, Supervisor Steve Gutierrez, and John Carvana and Dr. Elizabeth Griego from UOP. In addition, several other representatives from UOP were also in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Jerry Ruiz and included background information on the issue and a number of testimonies from local residents. One of these testimonies was a statement prepared by NASA Astronaut and UOP Regent Jose

Hernandez that was read by Angel Picon. In his statement, Jose said:

The Community Involvement Program has since its inception provided much needed assistance to aspiring students who would not otherwise be able to realize their educational goals. In a time when our graduation rates are at an all time low and yet the demand for a high skilled workforce continues to increase, existence of programs such as CIP become even more critical. In my work as a Pacific Regent, I can assure you the University of the Pacific embraces the opportunity to work ever more closely with our community and enhance this wonderful program that is instrumental in building a well educated local workforce. As you know Pacific is my alma mater and I am a proud product of the Community Involvement Program. Without such a program, the opportunity for me to go to

this wonderful learning institution would not have been possible. I am sure a lot of you here tonight share similar stories. It is for these reasons that we must all work together and inform our youth of this wonderful opportunity. I know the CIP program has been great in identifying 'diamonds in the rough' and that the Pacific educational process results in polished stars that greatly benefits our community. I'm excited about tonight's meeting as I know it will result in an enhanced Community Involvement Program we can all continue to be proud of.

All of the invited guests expressed that they will work with the community to strengthen local higher education. Councilmember Eggman agreed to help convene a collaborative group to explore what options there might be to make a four year degree a reality for more local residents.

PACT is a federation of 24

congregations and community organizations in San Joaquin County. PACT's membership includes 19,000 residents and reflects the great ethnic diversity of our county. PACT is affiliated with the PICO California Project and the PICO National Network. Nationally, PICO is working in 150 cities in 17 states. Our mission is to train leaders to be able to work on issues that are important to their families.

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Move away from ethanol and biofuel subsidies

Americans now understand that climate-destabilizing greenhouse gases are a major threat to our survival. Unfortunately, large corporations have convinced Congress to ignore real solutions to the crisis (like significant advances in fuel-efficiency), while providing billions of dollars per year in subsidies to big-agribusiness for agrofuels.

More than a hundred U.S. based and international organizations, including the Organic Consumers Association, are calling for a moratorium on the more than \$8 billion of annual government subsidies paid to large corporations producing agrofuels from industrial-scale genetically engineered crops. Family farmers currently receive only a small portion of annual funds allocated to agrofuels. While billions of dollars in subsidies for corn, soy and palm oil-based agrofuels, certainly result in higher profits for corporate giants such as Archer Daniels Midland, Cargill, and Monsanto, their overall contribution to reducing reliance on foreign oil and greenhouse gases is negligible (see facts below).

Government support for agrofuels in the U.S. costs taxpayers roughly \$2 per gallon in subsidies at the gas pump. These misguided funding priorities have

taken tens of billions of dollars of funding away from essential greenhouse gas reduction policies, such as energy conservation, solar and wind power, fuel-efficiency technologies, and mass transit. While the OCA supports the production of biofuels from recycled waste (such as used vegetable oil, manure or sewage) and biomass sustainably grown and harvested for the benefit of local communities, the current focus is a recipe for disaster. Learn more and sign the Agrofuel Moratorium Petition today: http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_9980.cfm

Quotes of the week

"Farmers are seeing little of the huge profits ethanol refiners like Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) are banking... ADM will earn an estimated \$1.3 billion from ethanol alone in the 2007 fiscal year."

>From New York Times article: "How ADM makes a killing on ethanol"

"The United States, in a misguided effort to reduce its oil insecurity by converting grain into fuel for cars, is generating global food insecurity on a scale never seen before."

Economist Lester Brown speaking to the Des Moines Register 1/25/2008

Agro-fuel facts

* Increasing fuel efficiency by just 3% would reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil more than all of the agrofuels combined.

* The amount of grain it takes to fill an average gas tank with ethanol would be enough to feed a person for a year (source: Foreign Affairs)

* If the United States stopped growing food and converted its entire grain harvest into ethanol, it would satisfy less than 16 percent of its automotive needs. (source: Earth Policy Institute)

* The majority of U.S. biofuels are produced from pesticide intensive genetically engineered crops (soy, corn).

* Monocultures of soy and sugar cane in Latin America and palm oil in Indonesia and Malaysia have led to massive deforestation and the loss of invaluable biodiversity.

* Current methods of industrial-scale biofuel production worsen global warming by increasing deforestation and degradation of peatlands and soils, while also creating more nitrous oxide emissions from fertilizer use.

Source: *Organic Bytes #127 Health, Justice and Sustainability News, 1/31/08* <http://www.organicconsumers.org> *Organic Consumers Association, 6771 South Silver Hill Dr, Finland, MN 55603*

Two dazzling books

Reviewed by John Morearty

Animal Vegetable Miracle, by novelist Barbara Kingsolver (with husband and daughter).

A year eating close to the land in Virginia— huge garden, farmers market, no vittles trucked from California. Asparagus rising, floods of tomatoes and zucchini, harvesting chickens amid many feathers, illuminating essays on genetically modified and petroleum-based agriculture. There's a cameo second honeymoon to great Slow Food in Italy, and yummy recipes. Nine year old Lily's egg business (to buy a horse) is magical.

Lyrical storyteller and subtle analyst, Carroll won the 1996 National Book Award for his memoir *An American Requiem: God, My Father and the War that Came Between Us*. Then he published *Constantine's Sword*, a massive history of Christian anti-Semitism. And now this.

As a boy, the author slid in his socks on the marble floors of the Pentagon, where his father was a three-star Air Force general and an ally of Robert McNamara. Interviews with McNamara and other old warriors illumine this sober thick book, a dramatic history and analysis of "the militarization of American society" which has swept our country down the river since World War Two, toward Nuclear Niagara.

No hero has halted the

momentum, though massive popular nonviolence has given it pause-Solidarity in Poland, the nuclear Freeze movement and the American resistance to U.S. attacks on Nicaragua and El Salvador in the eighties. I'm reading this magnificent work for the second time, slowly, wondering how the story will end.

House of War is required reading for anyone who wants to understand that George W. Bush's "Unending War" did not begin in 2001. It began in 1945 with the Hiroshima/Nagasaki bombs meant as a threat of obliteration for Uncle Joe Stalin, or maybe in 1947 with "Engine" Charlie Wilson's "Permanent War Economy," or maybe in 1950-51 with the counter-invasion of North Korea by MacArthur. That endless chain of wars is devouring our

Oppose USDA's proposed "Naturally Raised" label

Help prevent USDA from creating a label that will mislead consumers and undermine the work of sustainable livestock producers.

"Naturally raised" to most consumers conjures up the image of pastures and peacefully grazing animals. According to USDA's new proposal, though, livestock producers could label their meat USDA-verified "naturally raised" without any responsibility to animal welfare or environmental stewardship and without the animals ever stepping foot on grass. Producers would only have to certify that their livestock were never given antibiotics, hormones, or animal byproducts.

A little background

In November of 2006, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of USDA scheduled listening sessions for a possible new labeling claim termed "naturally raised" which would apply exclusively to livestock production methods. This announcement occurred almost simultaneously with the Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) announcement declaring its intention to seek unofficial public comment on the potential revision of the voluntary "natural" label claim, which proscribes guidelines for the processing of meat products bearing the "natural" label. The sudden instigation of these labeling claim activities came as a surprise to many members of both the sustainable agriculture community, as we had previously been working in concert with AMS on completing label claim standards for grassfed, free range/pasture raised, antibiotics, and hormones. Since then, the grassfed rule has been finalized, but the others are still pending.

A year later, in November 2007, AMS published a Notice and Request for Comments on the proposed voluntary standard for a "naturally raised" label. The proposed standard would require all livestock intended to bear the "naturally raised" label to have been raised "entirely

without growth promotants, antibiotics, and have never been fed mammalian or avian byproducts."

Talking points for your comments

* The proposed "naturally raised" standard fails to address many of the high standards consumers expect from sustainable livestock production, including animal welfare, access to pasture, and conservation and environmental requirements. Quite simply, the "naturally raised" label as proposed would not mean what consumers would think it implies and should be abandoned.

* The "naturally raised" label claim would completely defeat a very important purpose of providing the label in the first place -- to provide clear and reliable signals to consumers who want to make informed, environmentally-friendly, and healthy choices about their food purchases. If the USDA's draft proposal for a vague label claim proceeds, consumers will no longer have an accurate picture of what they purchase, and eventually consumer confidence in all USDA label will be undermined.

* Clear, accurate, and complete labeling information could be achieved more simply and precisely through labels (previously proposed and rejected by the USDA) stating "no supplemental hormones added" and "no antibiotics used." Feeding of animal byproducts could be addressed with a "no animal byproducts fed" label. USDA should move immediately to issue these clear and unambiguous label claims rather than issuing a misleading and vague naturally raised label claim.

* The implementation of a "naturally raised" claim would further mislead consumers who are already uncertain and skeptical about the meaning of the "natural" label claim currently overseen by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The "natural" claim refers to processing of meat whereas the

"naturally raised" claim refers to the production of livestock. The implementation of two distinct claims, both using the term "natural" yet addressing completely distinct issues and administered by two separate agencies, will create confusion for consumers and farmers alike. The integrity of the original "naturally raised" claims that took decades for sustainable livestock produces to create, and upon which increasing numbers of consumers rely, will be seriously jeopardized.

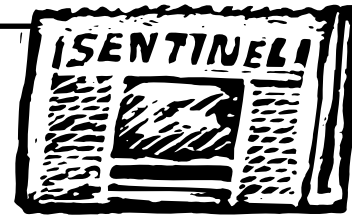
ACTION: Send your comments to the USDA by March 3. It's easy to do:

Letters: Send written comments by January 28th to Naturally Raised Marketing Claim, Room 2607-S, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250-0254 or via fax to 202-720-1112.

E-mail: To submit electronic comments by March 3, visit <http://regulations.gov> and type "naturally raised" in the "Comment or Submission" field. Select the "send a claim or submission" tab under the naturally raised claim title.

Important: All Comments Must Reference "Docket No. LS-07-16" by writing at the top of the letter or email "Re: Docket No. LS-07-16." Be sure to include your name, address, and if appropriate, affiliation(s) and/or interest(s) in the issue.

Source: 2007-2008 National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture.



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>

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

Think Progress <http://thinkprogress.com>

Talking Points Memo <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com>

TPM Muckraker <http://www.tpmuckraker.com/>

Froomkin's White House Briefing <http://washingtonpost.com>

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Hullabaloo <http://digbysblog.blogspot.com>

Media Matters <http://mediamatters.org/>

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Common Dreams: <http://www.commondreams.org/>

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

Raw Story <http://www.rawstory.com>

Open Left <http://www.openleft.com/>

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

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

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>

Year of peace brings four spring festivals

Zing Nafzinger

Under the banner of „Year of Spirituality, Healing, and Peace“, spiritual, holistic healing, and peace groups all around Stockton are inspiring each other with their plans for more spectacular events to occur during 2008.

Alongside the Peace and Justice Network,s Earth Day festival at Victory Park on Sunday, April 20, will be a Peace Party at DeCarli Plaza on Saturday, April 19, underwritten by the Way of Christ Community, with bands singing messages of peace and promoting the United Nations, Earth Charter. This will be one day for Stockton to celebrate living a Culture of Peace, one day to celebrate living Environmental Peace.

Holistic Festivals are being planned around the city. Unity Center, at Poplar and Commerce, has their Arts, Crafts, and Pastry Festival scheduled

for Saturday, May 3, with holistic healer participation and a Maypole dance. New School Aikido, on Thornton Road, is planning a

Spring Festival for Saturday, May 10, with holistic healer participation.

A coalition of spiritual, healing, and peace groups is networking to promote the idea of an annual Holistic Peace Festival at Weber Point for the

end of June. This festival is envisioned as a one-day event with three components. First, in the morning, personal/spiritual healing and peace, and speeches by spiritual leaders, with meditations and Tai Chi demonstrations, are planned. In the early afternoon, the interpersonal, or social, aspects of healing and peace will be explored, considering access to quality health care, environmental responsibilities, freedom from want and fear. In the late afternoon, the focus will be on national and global issues of healing and peace, the dismantling of economic and military imperialism and war, and indigenous rights. A closing evening concert will celebrate the movements and enlightenment

that are already in bloom on a global scale.

If you feel moved to join the group interested in steering the Holistic Peace Festival into reality, please contact James Walsh, (209) 981-0544.

Around the world, „Hubs of Higher Consciousness“ are emerging--centers for co-creating a new world, a sustainable, earth-friendly, people-friendly

world. Now is your opportunity to join with others of like mind--not to oppose anything, but to proactively stand for spirituality, healing, and peace. Envision Stockton being a hub of higher consciousness.

If your group or organization would like to plan an event to celebrate spirituality, healing, and peace in your neighborhood, please let Zing Nafzinger know, as she is keeping track of all the events inspired by Stockton,s 2008 Proclamation. Contact Zing at (209) 423-8322, i.m.zing@comcast.net.

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Hold torturers accountable: CIA admits waterboarding

CIA Director Michael Hayden,s admission that the CIA used waterboarding should prompt an immediate criminal investigation by the Department of Justice, Human Rights Watch said early February. Although use of waterboarding has been widely reported in the press, this is the first time that the CIA has openly acknowledged employing the practice.

During a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing today, General Hayden stated that the CIA had waterboarded three al Qaeda suspects—Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, Abu Zubaydah, and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed—while holding them in secret custody in 2002 and 2003. Waterboarding, a torture technique in which a prisoner is made to believe he is drowning, violates both the

federal anti-torture statute and the War Crimes Act.

„General Hayden,s acknowledgment that the CIA subjected three detainees to waterboarding is an explicit admission of criminal activity,“ said Joanne Mariner, terrorism and counterterrorism director at Human Rights Watch. „Those who authorized these crimes have to be held accountable.“

Waterboarding has been prosecuted by US courts as torture since the Spanish-American War. After World War II, US military commissions prosecuted and severely punished enemy soldiers for subjecting American prisoners to waterboarding.

„General Hayden,s testimony gives the lie to all of the administration,s past protestations that the CIA has not employed

torture,“ Mariner said. „Waterboarding is torture, and torture is a crime.“

In January, the Department of Justice launched a formal investigation into the CIA,s destruction of tapes showing the interrogations of Abu Zubaydah and Nashiri—two of the detainees who were subject to waterboarding. But as Attorney General Michael Mukasey told the Senate Judiciary committee on January 31, the investigation is not currently focused on the legality of the interrogations themselves.

„Either the scope of the current investigation should be expanded, or a new investigation launched,“ Mariner said. „Those who engaged in and approved waterboarding should no longer be given a free pass.“

Source: Human rights watch release 2/5/08 <http://hrw.org>

Bush keeps war cost under wraps

Maya Schenwar

President Bush's 2009 federal budget does not declare how much funding the administration expects to need for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan next year. The omission appears to break a law that requires the inclusion of the year's total war funds in the annual budget plan.

The administration's budget includes an "emergency allowance" of \$70 billion, but states that more money will be requested once the war's "specific needs" are determined.

Starting with just a partial sum may leave the door open for the largest war price tag yet, according to Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell, who said at a press conference last week that the \$70 billion would "handle much of the first quarter of '09." A year of such "quarters" would total \$280 billion—almost two times the president's original war request for 2008. Defense Secretary Robert Gates named a smaller price—\$170 billion—when pressed during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Wednesday, though he quickly qualified the estimate, saying, "I have no confidence in that figure."

Even \$170 billion would be the highest initial "global war on terror" (GWOT) budget yet; Bush's annual request last February weighed in at \$145 billion. The latest addition would bring the war's total cost so far to about \$1 trillion.

Not providing a full-year war budget estimate is technically illegal, according to a provision in the 2007 Defense Authorization Act, although there's no mechanism for enforcing that law. Congress enacted the provision on the recommendation of the Iraq Study Group, which emphasized that funding GWOT through so-called "emergency" requests "reduces transparency and avoids the necessary reexamination of commitments, investment priorities and trade-offs."

Bush's present flaunting of the legislation lets him off the hook on explaining the enormous cost of war to the American people, according to Anita Dancs, research director of the National Priorities

Project.

"There has been a lot of public outrage over how much has been spent on the war, and if the administration put a more realistic amount in the budget, it would reinforce that anger," Dancs said. "This way they can say they did account for the wars, but anyone knows that since the administration has signaled its intent to remain in Iraq and Afghanistan indefinitely that \$70 billion is nowhere near enough. The administration doesn't yet want to draw attention to the true amount it needs for war next year."

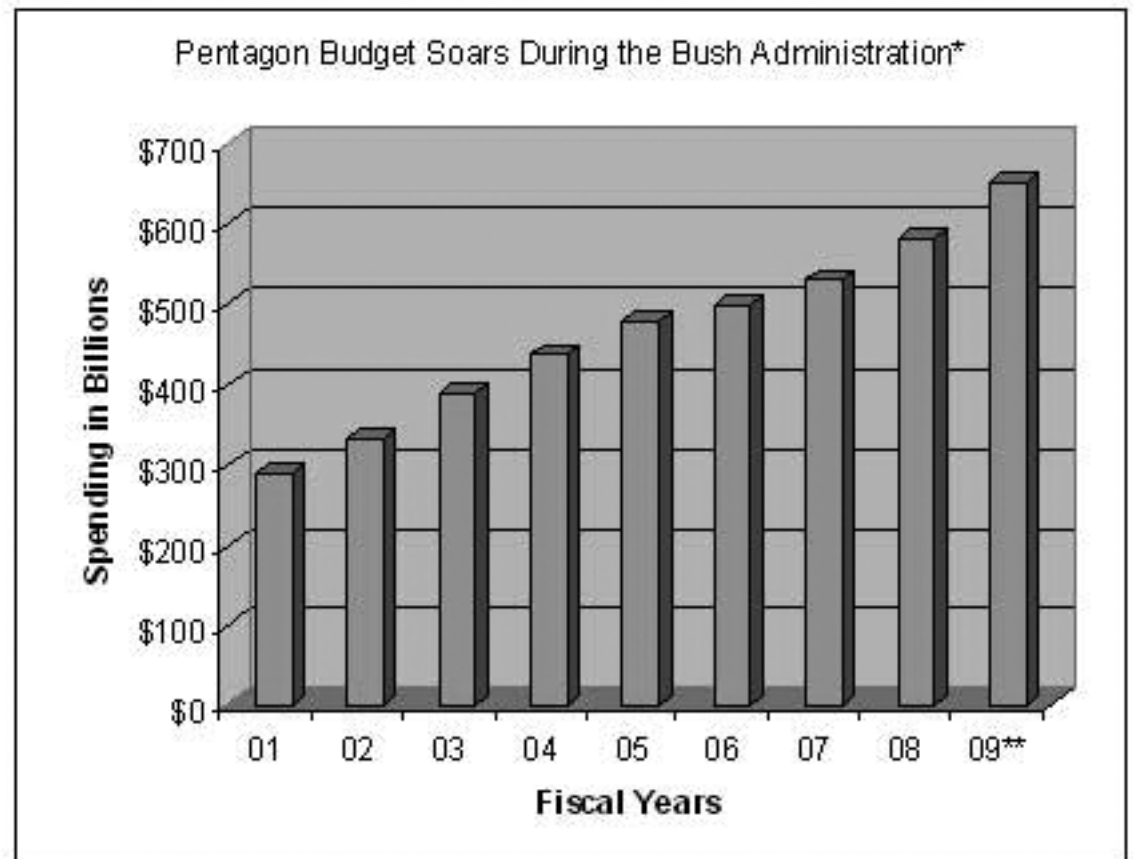
What's more, in its projections for fiscal year 2010 and beyond, the administration has projected zero dollars for the wars. Based on these "projections" and only a thin slice of the funding necessary to continue status quo operations in Iraq, the administration has argued that its 2009 plan will set the government on track to balance the federal budget by 2012.

Withholding Iraq/Afghanistan war funds from the budget estimate not only makes a balanced budget seem possible, it also prevents a clear view of how war spending affects the federal deficit, according to Craig Jennings, federal fiscal policy analyst at OMB Watch, a nonprofit government-watchdog organization. This year's budget slashes funds for health care, education and housing programs in the interest of "balancing the budget," while billions of dollars in war funds, not yet formally requested, are exempt from scrutiny.

Jennings pointed to how the omission of war costs from the annual budget has distorted thinking on the federal deficit in past years.

"In 2006, the administration spent \$120 billion on war," Jennings said. "Almost half of the budget deficit was because of war funding, but we never had this conversation nationally, because it wasn't included in the budget. When you have supplemental funding, it looks like free money. It makes it seem like there are no consequences to spending it."

That illusion of debtlessness not only drains federal coffers; it also inhibits us from seeing what's at stake when military operations



keep growing, according to Dancs.

Bush's 2009 plan cuts discretionary domestic funding by \$2.4 billion. That number may seem like a blip on the radar compared to the colossal level of defense spending in this budget—more than the military spending of all other countries combined. Yet, cutting \$2.4 billion means drastically reducing subsidized housing vouchers, federal support for renewable energy initiatives, foster care funding, community development grants and a host of other programs geared toward low- and middle-income families.

With the \$170 billion that Gates suggested might be requested for war next year, those programs could be funded 71 times over. But without that war money lined up alongside domestic programs in the budget, Dancs says, Americans can't see the disparity.

The exclusion of war funding from the president's budget also impacts defense policy more directly: it means Congress has less time to consider the war requests when they are released, according to Steven Kosiak, vice president of budget studies at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. By the

time the administration asks for supplemental war funding, it is billed as an "emergency" necessary to keep troops safe, and Congress is under pressure to approve it quickly.

Such is not the case for nonmilitary security-related spending, which is never termed an "emergency." According to the Task Force on a Unified Security Budget for the United States <hotlink: <http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/4175>>, almost 90 percent of security funds are spent solely on military force-related activities—and that's before war appropriations are added in. Only 10 percent goes to nonviolent preventative measures such as diplomacy, foreign assistance, arms nonproliferation efforts, homeland security and contributions to international organizations.

Can Americans expect priorities to shift before the 2009 budget is solidified? It depends what happens before Congress tackles that budget: Part of Bush's 2008 war request still has not been approved.

"The administration will be pushing Congress any day now for the remainder of the funding," Dancs said, pointing to late spring as a time frame.

With a new funding vote on the horizon, some Democrats hope to provoke a change in Iraq policy. Over the last several war spending votes, a growing number of Congress members have been pushing to include a timetable—or at least a tentative goal date—for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. However, despite a rising level of public opposition to the war, as demonstrated by Democratic victories across the board in the 2006 Congressional election, Bush's requests for "no strings attached" money have won out every time. Congress has yet to begin reversing Bush's course on Iraq. According to Kosiak, it won't happen until the Bush administration leaves office.

"My guess at this point is that nothing will be enacted that has any restrictions on it," Kosiak said. "There's not going to be a deal struck with this president on war funding. It looks like that prospect will be up to the next administration."

Maya Schenwar <mailto:maya@truthout.org> is an assistant editor and reporter for Truthout.

Source: *truthout* | Report 2/8/08 <http://www.truthout.org/>

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Top ten: Green your wardrobe

Buying clothes can consume a big chunk of your budget—especially if you have kids and teenagers. New clothes also take their toll on the planet, given how much water, pesticides and energy required to produce cotton, polyester and other fabrics (NOTE: 10% of all agricultural chemicals and 25% of insecticides in the U.S. are used to grow cotton. It takes almost 1/3 of a pound of chemicals (pesticides and fertilizers) to grow enough cotton for just one t-shirt.) Meanwhile, "out of style" clothes can end up in the trash even though they still have a lot of life left in them. So, how can you green your wardrobe? First, make clothes last longer.

1. Buy gender-neutral clothes. Young children especially are usually willing to share shorts, t-shirts and sweatshirts, or wear hand-me-downs.

2. Clean less frequently. Washing, drying and dry cleaning your clothes can wear fabric out and fade colors while using excessive amounts of water, and energy. Don't wash clothes unless they're actually dirty; hang on a line or on hangers to dry.

3. Hold a swap meet. You may be tired of your clothes, but your neighbor, work colleague, or girlfriend might love them.

Invite a group of friends over who are about the same size (or in a couple of close size ranges). Ask each to bring three to five items they're ready to rotate out of their wardrobe for something different. Each person could leave with at least five new designs that they've swapped for their own old clothes.

4. Donate before you dispose. Dress for Success <<http://www.dressforsuccess.com/>> provides women looking for greater economic independence with business attire to wear to job interviews. One World Running <<http://www.boulder-running.com/>> ships donated running shoes, soccer gear and baseball equipment to athletes in developing countries. Salvation Army <<http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/>> will pick up clothes right from your door.

5. Recycle. Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe <<http://www.nrc-recycle.org/reuseashoe.aspx>> grinds up and recycles discarded shoe material to build playground mats, basketball courts and running tracks.

6. Buy fewer, but higher-quality clothes. Traditional styles like blazers, jackets and sweaters endure and are worth spending more money on. Buy just a few trendy items per season and

"recycle" them at thrift shops or consignment stores once they're truly passé for you.

7. Shop second-hand. One of my teenage daughter's favorite boutiques is a consignment store where she rarely pays more than \$15 for an outfit.

She never goes shopping there unless she takes something from her closet to trade in: It's her favorite way of recycling.

8. Buy clothes made from organic, low-impact or recycled materials. Organic cotton, hemp, bamboo and recycled fibers are the "green" rage.

9. Read the label. Avoid clothes that need dry cleaning, a process that usually involves perchloroethylene, a toxic chemical linked to various reproductive problems as well as headaches, nausea and dizziness. When given the choice, hand wash over dry cleaning.

10. Make every day casual day. Dressy suits and standard business attire usually require dry cleaning to maintain their crisp, professional look. Encourage a "casual dress code" on the job so employees can dress in wash-and-wear clothing every day, not just "casual Fridays" or during more laid-back summer months.

Source: Big Green Purse 2/6/08 <http://www.biggreenpurse.com>

Top 10 green business trends—really?

This week, GreenBiz.com launched its inaugural report, "State of Green Business 2008" <<http://stateofgreenbusiness.com/>>." In it, you will find a wealth of information on green business trends with a cross-sectoral approach. To start off, here's a list of the "Top Green Business Stories of 2007."

1. Corporate climate commitments—Major companies are making public commitments about their strategies to address climate change in record numbers.

2. Automotive industry finally gets it—Major carmakers are bringing us more fuel-efficient and hybrid vehicles, with plans to launch plug-in hybrids soon.

3. Planes, trains, trucks, and

ships are going green too—Other players in the transportation sector are also implementing eco-efficient tech to reduce their environmental impact.

4. Green marketing/greenwashing—Just as companies are increasingly catering to the "green consumer," mainstream consumers are increasingly skeptical of such claims.

5. Toxic product reduction—Manufacturers and retailers faced a public backlash this year concerning toxic materials in their products. As such, they are making amends to reduce or eliminate them in future production.

6. E-waste—The computing industry got serious this year about energy use and disposal problems associated with technology.

7. Big companies get real about sustainability—More Fortune 500 businesses announced plans to incorporate company-wide initiatives to engender smarter resource use.

8. Green buildings skyrocket—Green buildings become the norm in major urban centers across the nation.

9. Banks pull out of "Dirty Investments"—Shareholder activism pressure large banks to invest in clean energy production instead.

10. "Zero" is where it's at—"Zero-waste," "zero-carbon," and "zero-emissions," are the rallying cries from the new initiatives emerging from the corporate sector.

Source: Triple Pundit 2/4/08 <http://www.triplepundit.com>



Sawznhammers

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

Brave Hearts—a video series

John Morearty

In scary times, real-life stories of courage help us remember who we are, down deep. They remind us what amazing things ordinary people can do, once they get up the gumption.

We certainly live in fearsome times. Fierce old tribal gods are now armed with rockets and hold entire peoples hostage, greed runs amok, the web of life frays and rots, earth is getting hot. There's plenty to be afraid of.

But fear is an evil spell. It freezes us, makes us want to hide in a million addictions and distractions, and—worst of all—makes us easy to manipulate. The Bush government played on our fears after 9/11, and led us into an endless War on Terrorism.

Jesus and the Buddha said again and again, Fear Not. The greatest president of our times, Franklin Roosevelt, the man in the wheel chair, reminded us: The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

That's why the Peace and Justice Network is presenting videos of nonviolent resistance this spring, the same show in two different Stockton churches. The first evening will be two half-hour films from the PBS series "A Force More Powerful: Nonviolence in the 20th Century"—"Gandhi in India: Defying the Crown" followed by "Solidarity in Poland: We've Caught God by the Arm."

The India film shows millions of ordinary people—men and women, old people, youngsters—creating a culture of peaceful self-reliance, by spinning and weaving their own clothes instead of buying imported stuff. It shows tens of thousands of people in 1930 marching thirty days to the sea, to gather up pinches of salt in peaceful defiance of British tax laws. It shows hundreds of people quitting comfortable jobs, to stop serving an oppressive government. The Empire lost its mask of legitimacy; the British eventually quit.

In Poland in 1980, workers at the Lenin shipyard went on strike for the right to form their own union, not controlled by the Communist government. Hotheads wanted to march into town, but remembered that the last time they did that, troops shot them dead. So they occupied the shipyard and sent out word to workers around the country. The government cut the phone lines—too late. After marginal concessions, most of the workers went home. But a few hundred stayed, dug deep into their own spiritual roots (in this case Roman Catholic), and their union, Solidarity, spread nationwide. For a few years the government threw leaders in prison, but the workers stood strong; finally the Communist bosses caved in, an honest election was held, and Solidarity won.

These two films will be shown at in the basement auditorium of Annunciation school, Lincoln/Magnolia, Wednesday Feb. 20, 7-9 PM. We hope to have a local labor leader at the Feb. 20 showing. As with all films in the series, there will be discussion and refreshments.

The second program in the series is one short film: "Nashville 1961 Sit-ins: We were Warriors." An astonishing victory for racial justice, this story shows the planning, discipline, courage and self-sacrifice required for nonviolent struggle; as Gandhi said, "It is not only generals who know how to plan campaigns." It also shows the graciousness of the nonviolent warriors. They did not make their opponents into Bad People; rather, they appealed to their sense of justice, and focussed on changing an unjust system.

"We were Warriors" will be shown at Annunciation school on Wednesday Feb. 27, 7-9 PM, and at Central Methodist Fireside the next evening, Thursday Feb. 28, 7-9 PM. Harold Bell, a native of Nashville, will be part of the discussion team.

The third program is "Hidden in Plain Sight," a documentary on the U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia. The school was recently camouflaged as the "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation," but opponents still call it the School of Assassins. Dozens of its graduates have been implicated in torture and murder in Latin America—for example, the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero, or the four North American churchwomen, or the six Jesuits in El Salvador.

The film tells those grim stories, and the story of the ongoing campaign of civil disobedience at the school; in 2007 the demonstrators numbered 25,000, and the U.S. Congress is coming close to shutting it down. The film features Catholic priest Fr. Roy Bourgeois and peace scholar Noam Chomsky, and is narrated by Martin Sheen. Democracy Now journalist Amy Goodman calls it "required viewing." This film is NOT FOR CHILDREN. It will be shown at Central Methodist Fireside on Thursday March 6, 7-9 PM and at Annunciation School on Wednesday March 12, 7-9 PM. Local residents who have been part of the annual demonstrations will be part of the discussion.

The final program is "The Spirituality of Nonviolence," a talk by one of my heroes, Jesuit priest John Dear. This cheerful young guy tries to "follow the nonviolent Jesus." He spent nine months in federal prison for banging on a nuclear-armed fighter jet with a carpenter's hammer; he was in charge of the chaplains' corps in New York City after 9/11; he was exiled by the Catholic hierarchy ("my church doesn't take me seriously") to a little town in the New Mexico desert. In January 2008 he was sentenced (with several others) in federal court for disturbing the peace—that is, they read the names of U.S. and Iraqi war dead in the lobby of the state building in Santa Fe. John Dear's tape is amusing, serious and inspiring.

Lawn signs, mugs, T-shirts

"War is NOT the answer" lawn signs come from the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). We are requesting a \$5 donation to cover costs (sorry, we can't ship lawn signs). We also have elegant pins made of pewter in the shape of the peace symbol for \$10. Also, handsome PJN T-shirts in many colors, and more. Come by the P&J Center to see these items, plus buttons and bumperstickers galore, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton CA 95204. Call 467-4455.



It will be shown in Central Methodist Fireside Room on Thursday March 13, 7-9 PM, and at Annunciation School on Wednesday March 19, 7-9 PM. Again, all showings are open to everyone without charge; there will be discussion and refreshments. So fear not. Come and take heart!

NOTE: these same videos could be shown in other locations. Contact John Morearty for information, 464-3326, john@morearty.com .

March 14

Banana Slugs are Coming

They call themselves „Airy%, „Dirt%, „Solar% and „Marine%. They are the Banana Slug String Band from Santa Cruz. These lovable zany children,s musicians are familiar visitors to Stockton. Their blend of music, theater, puppetry and most important audience participation is the way to they are able to share the message of taking care of the earth. These wonderful entertainers will perform as a part of Musical Chairs Children,s Concert Series on March 14th at 10:00 am & 7:00 pm. At Scottish Rite Auditorium, 33 West Alpine Ave. Tickets are \$8 in advance; \$10 at the door. For more information



call 209-462-2536 or go to: www.musicalchairsconcerts.org

Peacemaking series

Four outstanding videos on war, peace and nonviolence will be presented, with discussion, at two different Stockton churches during February and March. The free presentations are sponsored by the respective churches and the SJ chapter of Pax Christi peace fellowship.

Central United Methodist Church (3700 Pacific Avenue, across from UOP) will offer a Thursday night series at 7 till 9 PM in the Fireside Room. Annunciation Catholic Cathedral will offer the same four films Wednesday nights in the basement auditorium of the school (Lincoln/Magnolia, northeast kitty-corner from Dameron), also 7-9 PM. Films will start on time.

From the PBS series, "Nashville 1961 Sit-ins: We were Warriors." An astonishing victory for racial justice. Annunciation school, Wednesday Feb. 27, 7-9 PM and Central Methodist Fireside, Thurs. Feb. 28, 7-9 PM.

"Hidden in Plain Sight," a documentary on the U.S. Army School of the Americas and U.S. abuses in Latin America, featuring Fr. Roy Bourgeois and Noam Chomsky, narrated by Martin Sheen. Amy Goodman says "incredible...required viewing." Central Methodist Fireside, Thurs. Mar. 6, 7-9 PM and Annunciation School Wed. Mar. 12, 7-9 PM.

"The Spirituality of Nonviolence," a talk by Jesuit priest and war resister John Dear ("Abolish the Pentagon, abolish the CIA, and feed every starving child in the world....") taped by John Morearty. Central Fireside Room, Thurs. March 13, 7-9 PM, and Annunciation School Wed. Mar. 18, 7-9 PM.

Both video series are free, everyone warmly invited. Discussions moderated by John Morearty and colleagues, free refreshments. Info 464-3326.



You're invited:

HOW THE PEACE MOVEMENT CAN WIN: KEEPING THE WAR IN IRAQ ON THE FRONT BURNER

On March 1st - 10am till 3pm

United Health Workers Union Hall

560 Thomas L Berkley Way (formerly 20th St) between Telegraph Ave & San Pablo Ave
Oakland, CA -- 2 short blocks from the 19th St BART Station

*Resolution Peace will convene a strategy forum with

Leslie Cagan of United For Peace & Justice

and

Tom Hayden

Bringing everyone's ideas to one place and making the most of our numbers is critical to keeping pressure on our legislators to end the war. Our goal for this forum is to bring together representatives from a broad range of Democratic, anti-war, peace and community groups from throughout the greater Bay Area to create a dialogue and to work together on the best strategies for taking advantage of the election season to push effectively for peace.

"The challenge will be to draft an antiwar formula that unites the peace forces and progressive Democrats rather than one that depresses vast numbers of antiwar voters." -- Tom Hayden

Can we draft such a formula? Can we put it into action?

Space is very limited and we can only accommodate 1 or 2 reps from each group. Each Resolution Peace network member organization will be asked to donate \$25 to help defray travel and accommodation expenses. Attendees not from network groups will be asked to donate on a sliding scale of \$10-100. Of course, if you love the work we're doing and your group can afford more, we would be happy to accept donations of any size and no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

RSVP is mandatory

*Resolution Peace is a network of organizations working together to urge elected representatives to support legislation with the following three goals:

- Prompt and complete withdrawal from Iraq
 - No attack on Iran without Congressional authorization
- Provide for the health and mental health care needs of troops, veterans and their families.

If you are interested in representing your organization by attending, please contact Ellis at EllisG237@aol.com or call 925.831.8355

If you think of other peace organizations that should participate, please contact Vicki at info@WellstoneClub.org or call 510.733.0996.

Please make checks payable to WRDC PEACE CONFERENCE
Mail to: WRDC - PO Box 65
Berkeley CA 94701-0065

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February Calendar

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

Jan 7—Feb 2

Paintings by Jorge Elizalde. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Jan 9—Feb 2

Wait Until Dark mystery, Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rose Marie Lane, Stockton \$12—\$22. 473-2424.

Feb 4—Mar 1

Artistas del Valle. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Feb 3—Mar 9

Port of Stockton: Diamond of the Delta at the Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. W-Sun 1:30—5 pm. \$5 adult, \$2.50 youth. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

Mon, Jan 21

11th annual Snow Storm features truckloads of snow at Weber Point Event Center, 221 N Center St, Stockton. 1—4 pm. Admission: a gently used coat or canned food item 298-8591

Tue, Jan 22

Candlelight prayer vigil for peace, Annunciation Cathedral, Lincoln/Rose in Stockton. We pray to become people of peace, so wars will end. All are welcome. 7 PM sharp. Info: Ria deGroot, 462-3340.

Fri, Jan 25

Black Country Play blues and gospel, Valley Brew Banquet Room, 157 W Adams, Stockton \$10 adult, \$5 students 470-5554

Sun, Jan 27

Peace and Justice Network Annual meeting/potluck, a time to scheme and

plan with great people. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 4—7 pm.

Mon, Jan 28

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

Fri, Feb 1

BookWorms class sponsored by the Stockton Institute for Continued Learning, Holt 123, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 10 am. Free. 952-7909

Thu, Fri 7

Stockton Symphony featuring Julie Albers, cello, Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton 8 pm. 951-0196

Fri, Feb 8

Tidewater Gallery Souper Supper Fundraiser, Scottish Rite Temple, 33 W Alpine, Stockton. 5:30 pm. \$35/person. 463-4033

Sat, Feb 9

Stockton Art League Milton Tuit reception, 4-7. Elsie May Goodwin Gallery, 1902 Pacific Ave, Stockton. free. 466-6604. Gallery hours Tue-Fri 11-5, Sat 10-4.

Mining for Freedom: Black History meets the California Gold Rush, Chavez Central Library, 605 N El Dorado St, Stockton. 2 pm, Free. 937-8221

Stockton Symphony featuring Julie Albers, cello, Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton 6 pm. 951-0196

Thu, Feb 14

Videos "Gandhi in India: Defying the Crown" and "Solidarity in Poland: We've Caught God by the Arm." Central U. Methodist, 3700 Pacific Ave., 7 PM. Free, discussion,

refreshments. Info 464-3326. (see page ...)

Fri, Feb 15

Susan B. Anthony Women of Achievement Awards Banquet honoring Susan Mora Loyko, among others. Grace Covell Hall, UOP, Stockton. 5:30—9 pm. \$40. 463-6957.

Wed, Feb 20

Same videos as Feb 14, Annunciation school, Lincoln/Magnolia, 7 PM. Info 464-3326. (see page ...)

Mon, Feb. 25

Delta-Sierra Club meeting, topic: Sierra Club and Population, 7 pm, Central United Methodist Church, Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton, 7pm program with social time following. All Welcome.

Mondays

Groovenators w/Shad Harris west coast blues, Chivita's Bar & Grill, 445 W Weber Ave, Stockton. 7—11 pm. \$3 cover.

Thursdays

Peace demonstrations continue, 4 till 5:30 pm rain or shine, grassy edge of Delta campus along Pacific Avenue, north of light and bus stop at Yokuts, across from Sherwood. Free mall parking. Signs provided, or bring your own. Info Carol Holman, 478-3733.

Infinite Harmony & Reiki Healing Network. Come and receive a Reiki mini session to heal Body, Mind and Spirit. Spiritual Truth Center, 4545 Georgetown Pl, Stockton, 95207. 7:30-9 pm. \$10 donation. 983-9633

Fridays

Downtown farmers market, Hunter Square & E Main, Stockton. 9 am—2 pm. 464-5246

First Sundays

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

First Thursdays

Experimental & improv music, 8 pm Blackwater Cafe, 914 N Yosemite, Stockton. \$3. 943-6938.

Third Thursdays

Hispanics for Political Action—HPA meets 6 pm at 2080 E 4th St, Stockton. Info, call Louis Gonzales 464-9205

Fourth Tuesdays

Family Movie Night, Chavez Central Library, 605 N El Dorado, Stockton. 6 pm Free. 937-7778

Fourth Saturdays

Greater Lodi Area Democrats (GLAD) meets 8:30 a.m., Dee Dee's Restaurant, 1170 S. Cherokee Ln, Lodi. All welcome, including recovering Republicans. 339-1599. No meetings in November and December.

Delta Sierra Group General Meetings

Central United Methodist Church, Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Avenue

**7 pm program with social time following
Non-members especially welcome**

Mon, Feb 25, 7 pm—Sierra Club and Population

Is there a connection between human population and climate change? What is the policy of the Sierra Club regarding the growing population? Currently there are over 1.3 million persons who are members of this environmental group; the Mother Lode Chapter that includes Delta-Sierra Group has over 20,000 members.

Founded in 1892 our mission has four objectives:

1. To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the planet.
2. To practice and promote the responsible use of the planet's ecosystems and resources.
3. To educate and enlist humanity to protect and to restore the quality of the natural and human environment.
4. To use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

Human population increased from 1.6 billion in 1900 to 6 billion in 2000. Lately there has been avoidance by national leaders of discussion concerning the future of humanity and the environment of which humans are just one small but very influential part. Here in the Central Valley, loss of open space, traffic congestion, air quality and water issues seem to be a way of life. From economists we learn of the "birth dearth" experienced by several European countries and Japan. Does that indicate there is no longer a concern about human population growth? Politicians seem paralyzed to discuss the topic let alone to form meaningful policies. Where does the Sierra Club stand on this issue? Join Nan Ballot on February 25 to learn more.

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

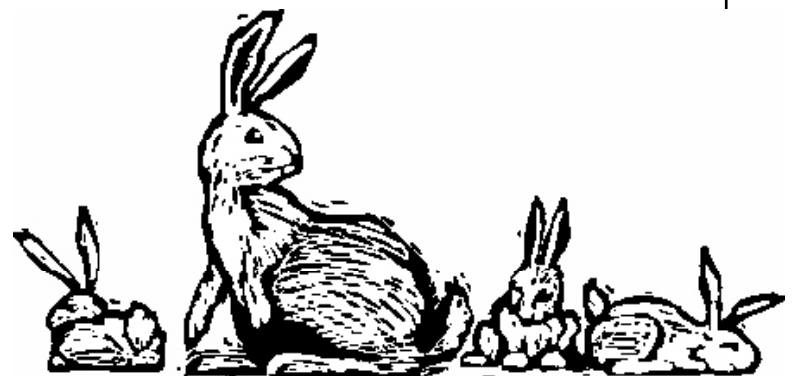
SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26

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.



Peace Work is Happening

We're still here
Christie Kelley

It feels like one of those store fronts that advertises: GOING OUT OF BUSINESS SALE/ EVERYTHING MUST GO! And six months later they are still there.

Well, the wolf is gone from the front door, we are still at 231 Bedford Road and we plan to be here for a while.

During last minute conversations with our landlords, who were not happy to see us leave (not only because it complicated their lives but because they support our work), it was suggested that the Peace and Justice Center talk to the Miracle Mile Improvement District. The MMID was looking for an office that they could afford. We met with Emily Ballus and after discussing terms, opinions on office mates and how we viewed sharing space, we realized that this was going to be easy. So...the Peace and Justice Center is upstairs for business purposes and has access to the downstairs for all our gatherings and meetings. The MMID will be downstairs daily, 9-5 for their work—improving the Miracle Mile, a cool place to be. The financial burden has been eased, we have made new friends and are off and running.

In addition to finding a roommate, the Peace and Justice Network has also found a University of the Pacific intern. Sachi T will be working with Christie Kelley for the remainder of the school year, researching and writing grants for the Network. Sachi is also excited about developing resources and a curriculum on Counter-Recruitment that can be used in area high schools. There are many alternatives to enlisting in the armed services and unfortunately, many of our local youth are not exposed to these choices. We hope to have a program in place by next year.

The Peace and Justice Network Board cannot thank you all enough for your wonderful support, the donations and words of encouragement that mean so much to all of us. Throughout the whole ordeal of recognizing that we could not support the Center on our own, deciding to give it up, planning for the placement of the phone, computer, the furniture and the leftover popcorn—through out it all, many of us maintained a sense of hope that somehow we could make it. We knew that if we could find the right support, we could sustain a Center for the San Joaquin community. Well, we are here and now we are ready to get back to our business of education and community growth.

Check out the calendar in Connections and participate in the many activities, come to us with your ideas and we will provide you with a space to meet, educate, and grow community!

We depend on you—it is the community that makes this work...and you can help!

Volunteer

- * Talk to your neighbors about your beliefs
- * Peace and Justice Center Coordinator/computer skills needed
- * Become an Associate Editor for Connections
- * Write for Connections: articles, poetry, cartoons, analysis, review a movie or a book related to peace, justice and the environment
- * Write about what your organization is doing in this area
- * Find out what activities are currently in process and join in
- * Deliver Connections- we will give you a route
- * Set up educational forums
- * Support our WebMaster
- * Meet with the Board of Directors, monthly
- * Come to a Peace and Justice Forum, following each monthly Board Meeting

IF you are interested in doing something—call and leave a message at 467-3150

Your Financial Support is also needed:

- * MAKE A MONTHLY PLEDGE
 - o Pay by check, automatic bank transfer OR online at www.pjnsjc.org
- * Advertise in Connections: \$25.00—\$425.00 ads are available
- * Become a PEACE PAL—see the ad in this paper
- * Help pay our bills
 - o Rent \$800.00 month
 - o PGE \$80.00 month
 - o Phone/Computer ____ month

connections

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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

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