

connections

PRICELESS

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February 2010

SAVE THE DATE

**FEB 28
PJN GENERAL MEETING/
POTLUCK**

**APR 18
EARTH DAY**

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Support your local newspapers

[Editor's note: We live in dangerous times, when we must understand what is happening in our world. Monthly, Connections attempts to provide a piece of the puzzle, adding context and a human connection to the issues barely covered in the mainstream media. Many times in the past, we have vocally wished that our local daily press, the Record, could do more in-depth coverage of critical issues. This wish, however, didn't stop me from writing the following letter to the Record in support of their need to increase fees. And, in a rare response, Mike Klocke shares our view of a bigger picture, in which the voices of the grassroots could be silenced by a voice not ours. In this, we agree: we live in dangerous times.]

Letter to the Record editor,

While I have complained often and loudly about the quality and quantity of coverage given by the Record to various issues over the past 20 years, I cannot imagine Stockton being without a daily newspaper. This will be the result, if enough people don't come to the support of their local paper in a time of economic hardship. To those who complain that \$3 a month extra to access the on-line paper is too much, I ask: what is the price of a competitive free press? If we refuse to pay nominal sums to keep our local press alive, the news we receive will devolve into what we now see: sensational entertainment supplanting local news we can act upon. What other daily paper would cover Stockton

Unified's troubles, the Stockton General Plan, or what happens at Stockton City Council meetings?

Newspapers serve a vital function in our democracy. For all its flaws, the Record is important to this community, for its local news and ability to broadcast information not necessarily flattering to the rich and powerful. The dollar cost of the Record may increase in the future; operating expenses don't go down just because advertising income falls. If we want quality to improve, we subscribers have to make up the difference. And while the Internet gives the false impression that information is free, it is not. The true cost is shown in the bias of the provider and how much they are willing to invest in order to mislead the public. Let's keep daily local coverage alive.

Bruce Giudici

and a personal response...

Bruce,

These are difficult times for newspapers. Some of our problems were self-inflicted by business decisions made over the years. Some of them are economy-related. It's not a popular time to be increasing prices. But I want to thank you for your thoughtful and poignant letter. It's probably the only one we've received that recognizes that there's a bigger and more fundamental issue involved with the local media surviving. Thanks for taking the time to write.

Mike Klocke, Record editor

Save the date

An invitation to our annual potluck



Dear friends,

Greetings in the New Year from your friends at the Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin County. For the past 20 years, we have been providing a voice for the San Joaquin County progressive community through our support of television programs, our monthly newspaper "Connections", the Peaceful Holiday Fair, Stockton's Earth Day Festival, multiple film series, lecture series, and numerous other events. Now, we are in the process of the starting up a community access radio station for the Stockton area. To us, peace and justice means peace in the world, nation, city and community—demonstrated through support of social and legal justice, humans rights and dignity, access to quality health care and education, a clean and sustainable environment, protecting the rights of our plant and animal neighbors and improvement of the quality of all life— every single day.

We cordially invite our friends, old and new, to the PJN's annual general meeting, Sunday, February 28, starting at 4 pm at the Peace and Justice Center at 231 Bedford Road, just behind the flower shop on the Miracle Mile. We will have a potluck dinner, so bring a salad, soup, main course or dessert... or just bring yourself—there will plenty of great food for all. We look forward to updating you and your group on what we have been up to the last year and what we plan for the new year. More importantly, we want hear about your year and future plans and how we can better serve the progressive community going forward with a common goal of providing information, education and action for the good of our friends and neighbors.

We look forward with great pleasure to greeting our old friends and meeting our new ones. See you on the 28th.

Sincerely,
Christie Kelly, PJN Board Chair

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A nation of individuals facing common problems

Bruce Giudici

Ever wonder why progressives never seem to get anywhere? Why issues of poverty and abuse, environmental degradation and exploitation continue to plague us—while all seem to decry our inability to get anything done?

We are a nation of individuals—we are constantly told that we succeed or fail on our own. We are exposed to these messages non-stop, 24-7 though media, religion, work and our everyday personal interactions. And individualism is fine, so far as freedom of expression goes. But now, when we desperately need to cooperate, our rugged individualism will destroy our country—and the idealistic dreams on which it was founded.

There is a reason the rich and privileged who run our corporations are against health care reform, stimulus packages, work against climate change (or for the environment in general), unions and taxation. Conservatives hate these things because they represent group responses to problems individuals face every day. By working together, we can solve our common problems. But, by working together, we will certainly

be taking some power—economic and political—from those who benefit from our feeble attempts at solving problems individually. And the rich and privileged enjoy the power they now have.

The rich and privileged control the media—increasingly consolidated by the day, making it easier to broadcast anti-communitarian messages that insist that we solve our problems on our own, marginalizing any challenges to true economic power. Sure, efforts to treat the symptoms of our inequality are encouraged—give to the local food bank, homeless shelter or youth center. Keeping these band-aids alive is vital, of course, on purely humanitarian grounds. But, if this is the only outlet for us to solve problems as a community, it keeps us from focusing on addressing the causes of hunger, homelessness, youth violence, lack of education, environmental degradation and the rest of the progressive wish list. In all your life, you will never see real resources devoted to attacking the root causes of our common problems. We have to do this ourselves.

The rich and privileged control our politics—with gerrymandered districts that guarantee re-election

for any incumbent and with a court ruling that gives First Amendment free speech protection to the use of money in electoral campaigns. This double whammy, as well as rules set up by installed politicians (such as the 2/3 majority rule needed in the legislature to pass a California state budget or the 60% super-majority needed in the US Senate to pass any law), keeps the rich and privileged in political power.

They control our education—supporting prisons over schools, keeping taxes low while forcing tuition increases and class cutbacks for public universities and colleges.

They control our food system, with Monsanto, Cargill, Tyson and a few others providing 80% of what we eat.

And they control our economy—pouring billions into an unnecessary war machine that outspends the rest of the world combined tenfold. Ever notice that the US response to any international crisis is military? The fact is becoming increasingly obvious that only in military products, does the United States retain an economic comparative advantage to the rest of the world. This explains why it is in this country's interest to focus on

Bruce Giudici, editor



military solutions to every conflict, the last gasp of a failing empire.

Of course, the welfare of US citizens is not critical to the success of the rich and privileged; capital (read: wealth) is portable—to China, India or the Cayman Islands, while labor (read: workers) is not. So long as there are cheaper workers and lower environmental standards elsewhere, profits can be made. So, why do the rich and privileged stay based here and not move overseas altogether? They stay for the pledge of the US government to protect "American interests" (read: the rich and privileged) with its military might. They know that Iraq oilfields and Afghan oil pipelines will be defended; that shipping lanes will be protected; that, regardless of the violations of human rights, the US will protect the rights of the rich and privileged.

As we Americans swim in this tank of media and distraction, we seldom take the time to notice the wizard behind the curtain—we are consumed by the day-to-day difficulties of just getting by. Our media focuses on stories both trivial and unactionable. So, when we are constantly told we cannot join to solve common problems, this becomes our belief. Does a lie repeated become the truth? Can you fight city hall? Where is that hundredth monkey anyway?

In this coming year, look for ways to cooperate with others—and to learn of what is working in other communities. And realize that what leaders we have, have been promoted due to their obedience to this system—one that generally marginalizes group action and discourages true reform.

The Peace & Justice Network is working on re-inventing how we get information out to a new leadership that will focus on the needs of the many. Our annual meeting is February 28, from 4-7 pm at the Peace Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton.

Don't mourn; organize.

Connections

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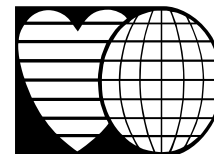
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"The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared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

Giving in times of crisis

When a tragedy like the Haiti earthquake occurs, all of us want to help. But how can you know that your money will go where you want it to? Charity Navigator, <http://www.charitynavigator.org/>, has crucial information to help. Here are their suggestions:

Give to an established charity—Find a charity with a proven track record of success with dealing with the type of disaster and in the region in which the disaster occurred. Be sure to get proof that the group has 501 (c) (3) status.

Designate your investment—You may want to tell the charity exactly how to use

your investment to ensure that your donation will be used as you intended.

Avoid telemarketers—Ask the fundraiser to send you written information about the charity, and then send money directly to the organization in the mail or through their website to ensure that 100% of your gift goes to them and not the for-profit fundraiser.

Research and follow up—Take the time to find a charity you can trust and follow up in a few months to find out (a) how your donation was put to use and (b) if the organization needs additional support to complete the recovery effort.

Give Online—The speed of online giving provides instant



gratification to donors and offers charities immediate access to much needed funds.

Charity Navigator rates major charities and provides information on their programs, finances, missions, and much more. Use this online tool to choose charities committed to the goals you support.

—tips from Charity Navigator, <http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=310>

Facing up to climate change: Part I

Doing nothing is not an option

Laurie Litman

It is the final, greatest challenge facing the human race.

Is that statement overly melodramatic? Unfortunately no. The largely invisible threat of climate change is so potentially devastating that it's a toss-up whether the human race will survive, or at least civilization as we know it.

We're talking about the glaciers that provide drinking water to 1/4 of the world's population disappearing; ecosystems, including the ocean, collapsing; ocean currents that distribute heat throughout the globe shifting.

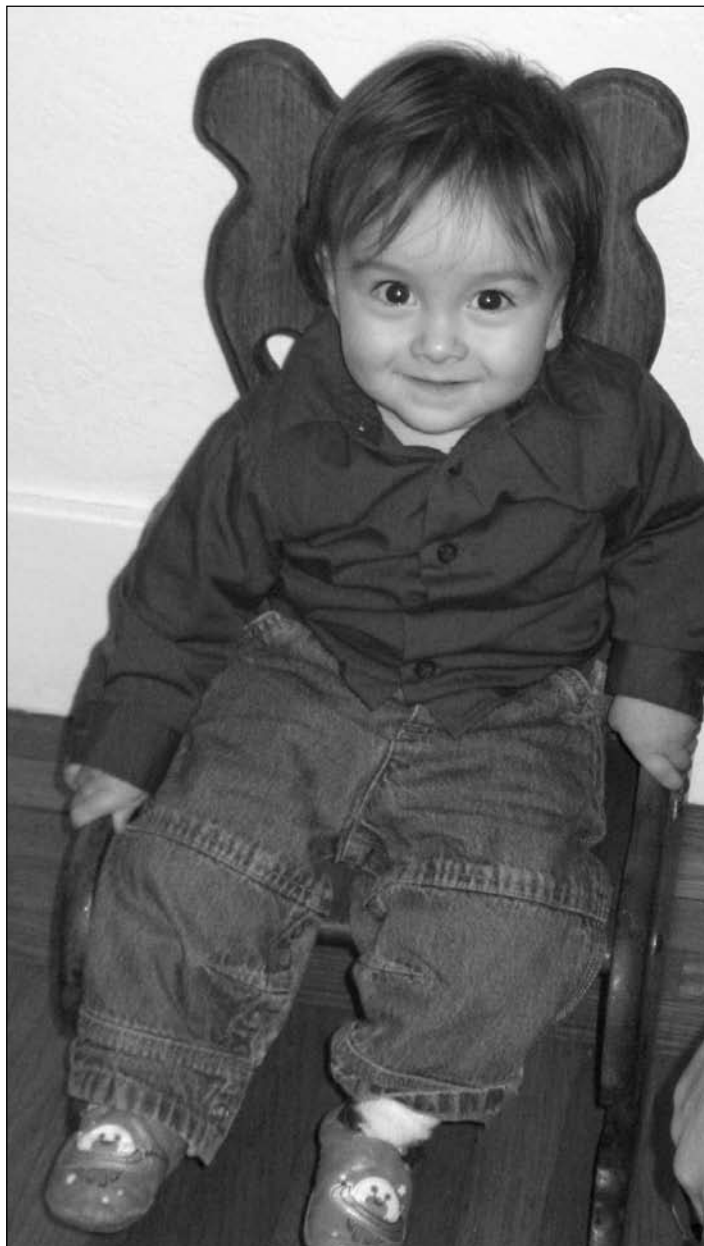
And these changes will not happen in some abstract distant future. Very soon we may reach the tipping points that send climate change out of control and make it unstoppable. Climate scientists predict we have 5 years, if that, to turn this around.

Can we do it? There are no guarantees and the trends aren't encouraging. But giving up isn't an option if you care about a future for any of the earth's inhabitants.

It's easy to be confused and overwhelmed, stick your head in the sand and hope for a miracle. The climate change issue is complex and terrifying and these are reasonable responses. But we don't have time to dither.

So, how can we respond to an impending catastrophe like this? The governments of the world don't seem to be up to the task. The Copenhagen Summit was not only a disaster, very few people in the U.S. even knew about it, much less understood what was at stake. The media isn't going to help. They are still cravenly reporting this issue as a he said/she said story. The current administration isn't doing much more than the last, playing games with emission numbers and protecting the status quo.

Only we, along with millions of other people throughout the world, can lead the way to find real solutions to climate change. And it's happening. Below the radar, outside of government, there is a vibrant and growing movement. Join in. If we want a future for our children and grandchildren we will have to do it ourselves.



This is my reason for doing something about climate change. What is yours?

Two organizations that get it

350.org

350 ppm is the maximum level of CO₂ in the atmosphere before severe changes occur to the climate and ecosystems on earth. We are currently at about 390 ppm and on a path to reach over 700 ppm by the end of the century, levels that could spell extinction to many species on earth, including humans. 350.org strives to reduce CO₂ in the atmosphere to the scientifically defensible level of 350 rather than arbitrary goals favored by business and our government.

10:10

10:10 is a campaign that started in the UK and has been extremely successful in signing up individuals, businesses, schools, and even members of parliament to commit to cutting their energy consumption 10% in 2010 (10:10, get it?). The first 10 or 20 percent reduction is the easy part—the low-hanging fruit—so let's start there. Sign up at <http://www.1010uk.org/> where there are lots of suggestions on how to cut your emissions (checklist page 4).

Taking the 10:10 challenge

This year I committed to cutting my personal energy consumption by 10%. I quickly learned it isn't as easy as it seems. It requires lifestyle changes and constant vigilance.

I found I need to retrain myself in many ways. For example, even when I have reusable grocery bags in the car, I often forget to take them into the store. I go to the post office every day—a round trip of 3 miles—but usually drive my car because I “don't have the time.” I have to remind myself that a 3-mile walk or bike ride is healthy for me as well as the earth.

The 10% goal helps keep me on track. I wear a 10:10 tag around my neck as a statement and reminder of my commitment. I talk about it with others—this is too important to remain silent. In order to make a real difference, everyone must make lifestyle changes.

My family has developed a list of steps we can take, some of which we've talked about doing for years but haven't followed through on. This is what we've done/are doing (not in any order):

1. Changed all the lights to fluorescent (we had been doing this one light bulb at a time as they burned out but finally made it a priority and did them all).
2. Walk/ride bikes to the PO and other local errands
3. Carry a small expandable bag in my purse at all times (in addition to the ones in the car) and have learned to say, “No, I don't need a bag”
4. Bought cloth napkins to use instead of paper
5. Dry our clothes on a rack whenever possible
6. Turned down the heat 2 degrees this year
7. Buy locally grown food as often as possible—go to the farmers market (by bike), joined a CSA (community-supported agriculture, where you buy directly from the farmer), shop at the food coop.
8. Plugged up holes in our floors
9. Turned down the water heater temperature
10. Took a vacation by bicycle
11. Consider taking the train whenever we go to the Bay Area or other destinations

On the list, but still needs to be done:

1. Replace our old windows with dual-pane ones
2. Insulate the floor
3. Do a complete energy audit using SMUD on-line tools
4. Check our energy usage with a Kill-o-Watt device
5. Caulk to seal heating register boots
6. Put appliances on a timer (the refrigerator can be set to automatically shut off at night and turn on early in the morning; as long as the door remains closed the refrigerator will stay cold. An added benefit: this may cut down on late-night snacking).
7. Put devices on power strips and shut them off at night to avoid phantom energy loss.

Changing your lifestyle in this way has lots of rewards. You help the earth, get healthier through eating well and walking/bicycling, work with others to achieve a common goal, and give the next generation a chance to grow up.

I invite you to join me in this challenge: cut 10% of your energy consumption in 2010.

We will continue this discussion in Connections each month this year. There's a lot to talk about. We'll look at ways to cut energy use, first at the individual level, but also at institutional, national, and global levels. We'll discuss accomplishments, difficulties, products, ideas, and other issues. I hope you will join in to offer your own suggestions and experiences. See you next month on page 3!

—L. Litman

Did you know?

10 startling climate facts from 2009

1 The current level of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere—about 390 parts per million—is higher today than at any time in measurable history, at least in the last 2.1 million years. Previous peaks of CO₂ over the past 800,000 years were never more than 300 ppm, and the concentration is rising by around 2 ppm each year.

2 The World Meteorological Organization reported that 2000-2009 was the hottest decade on record with 8 of the hottest 10 years.

3 2009 was one of the 5 hottest years since 1850 and the U.K.'s Meteorological Office predicts that, with a moderate El Niño, 2010 will likely break the record.

4 The National Snow and Ice Data Center reported that while a bit more summer Arctic sea ice appeared in 2009 than the record breaking lows of the last two years, it was still well below normal levels. Given that the Arctic ice cover remains perilously thin, it is vulnerable to further melting, posing an ever increasing threat to Arctic wildlife including polar bears.

5 The Arctic summer could be ice-free by mid-century, not at the end of the century as previously expected, according to a study by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

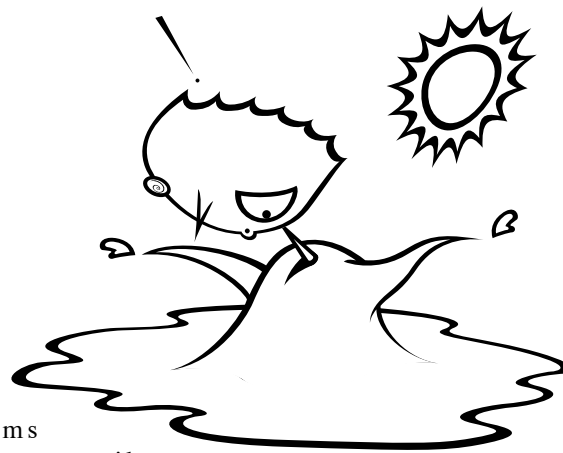
6 Recent observations published in the highly respected *Nature Geosciences* indicate that the East Antarctica ice sheet has been shrinking. This surprised researchers, who expected that only the West Antarctic ice sheet would shrink in the near future because the East Antarctic ice sheet is colder and more stable.

7 The U.S. Global Change Research Program reported that, "Climate changes are already observed in the United States and "are projected to grow." These include "increases in heavy downpours, rising temperature and sea level, rapidly retreating glaciers, thawing permafrost, lengthening ice-free seasons in the ocean and on lakes and rivers, earlier snowmelt, and alterations in river flows."

8 According to a report by the US Geological Survey, slight changes in the climate may trigger abrupt threats to

ecosystems that are not easily reversible or adaptable, such as insect outbreaks, wildfire, and forest dieback. "More vulnerable ecosystems, such as those that already face stressors other than climate change, will almost certainly reach their threshold for abrupt change sooner." An example of such an abrupt threat is the outbreak of spruce bark beetles throughout the western U.S. caused by increased winter temperatures that allow more beetles to survive.

9 The EPA, USGS and NOAA issued a joint report warning that most mid-Atlantic coastal wetlands from New York to North Carolina will be lost with a sea level rise of 1 meter or more.



10 If we do not reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the end of the century, some of the main fruit and nut tree crops currently grown in California may no longer be economically viable, as there will be a lack of the winter chilling they require. And, according to a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, U.S. production of corn, soybeans and cotton could decrease as much as 82%.

ACTION: Urge your Senators to support a strong climate and energy bill.

Source: *Environmental Defense Action Fund alert, 1/12/10 www.edf.org*

10:10 10 point checklist

1 Fly less, holiday more

Swap plane for train, holiday nearer to home and take fewer but longer trips—same tanning time, dramatically less climate change emissions.

2 Save 10% on heating

Turn down your thermostat and more sweaters all round. Then insulate your ceiling and walls. Use your bill to see whether you cut 10% in 2010.

3 Save 10% on electricity

Save big cash by changing lightbulbs, replacing old fridges and freezers and always turning stuff off. Use your bill as above.

4 Drive less

Leave your car at home one day a week. Walk, cycle or take public transport. Share your ride to work with a colleague or two.

5 Eat better

Local, in-season fruit and veg produce the least emissions—and the less processed the better. Have one meat-free day per week (but don't replace with just-as-bad cheese).

6 Buy good stuff

Less stuff made = less emissions = less climate damage. So buy high-quality things that last, repair broken stuff rather than chucking, buy and sell second-hand and borrow your neighbour's mower.

7 Dump less

Avoid excess packaging and buying pointless stuff that goes straight in the bin, recycle everything possible and compost your food waste.

8 Don't waste food...

The average family throws away lots of food every month. So don't buy or cook more than you need and eat up those tasty leftovers.

9 ... or water

Your tap water uses lots of energy—and then heating it in your home uses loads more—so take showers rather than baths, be careful when watering plants and only run full dishwashers and washing machines.

10 Feel happier

It's Dec 2010... you're healthier for walking and cycling, you've made new friends from swapping stuff and car-pooling, you've saved a big chunk of cash... and you know that you're part of the global effort to prevent catastrophic climate change.

—adapted from checklist at http://www.1010uk.org/people/how_can_we

Feedback

Prop 8 regulating religion

Editor:

I doubt that the supporters of Proposition 8 (the same sex marriage ban), are aware of the precedent set by the passage of this State constitutional amendment. By inserting religious principles of marriage into our constitution, the proponents of Prop 8 have effectively regulated religion. The State has always regulated partnerships between two people who decide to join forces and economic resources to live together, buy property and function as a partnership. The gender makeup and sexual practices of these partners are

of no concern to the State as long as other laws are not violated. The proponents of Prop 8 have decided that their beliefs should trump my beliefs and the activities of my religion. The Unitarian Universalists believe that two people who love each other should be able to form this type of partnership regardless of gender or sexual preferences. Now religions have been regulated to not honor these types of partnerships.

What grounds will you have to stand on when the State has decided that your religion cannot discriminate against gays or atheists in your employment practices? What if the State decides that you cannot discriminate by who can become priests or nuns? What if the State decides your non-profit status should be pulled because your church is involved in partisan politics? I

believe the State should stay out of individuals religious beliefs, but I also believe the biggest threat to the individuals religious freedoms are not government but large, wealthy, powerful religious organizations.

Jim Walsh

Reward offered to stop cruelty

Regardless of all the issues we face globally, the ones that affect us most directly and daily are those issues in our own community. Though many would not agree with my analysis, I think my hometown is great: Modesto. But here's the sad part: the seedy underbelly of crime that exists in my town, and many, many other towns around this region. One of the most horrific and cruel acts that go on everyday around this

region is animal fighting: dog fighting, cockfighting and other barbaric acts forcing animals to fight to the death. And it is not just wrong because it is illegal gambling and inhumane. It also ruins neighborhoods, drives out the good citizens, lowers the value of property and destroys families. We must stand up and do something about this, or they win. Michael Vick's arrest did one good thing: it shed light on this evil practice. Take back your neighborhoods from these criminals. Contact humanesociety.org/animalfighting or call: 202/452-1100. Humane Society of the United States is offering a reward for \$ 5,000 for the arrest/conviction of these criminals. Your identity is protected.

*S E Mears, Modesto,
Cruelty Free Consumers*

What was really decided in Copenhagen?

Brian Tokar

Detailed accounts from participants in the recent Copenhagen climate summit are still coming in, but a few things are already quite clear, even as countries step up the blame game in response to the summit's disappointing conclusion.

First, the 2-1/2 pages of diplomatic blather that the participating countries ultimately consented to "take note" of are completely self-contradictory and commit no one to any specific actions to address the global climate crisis. There isn't even a plan for moving UN-level negotiations forward.

Friends of the Earth correctly described it as a "sham agreement," British columnist George Monbiot called it an exercise in "saving face," and former neoliberal shock doctor-turned-environmentalist Jeffrey Sachs termed it a farce. Long-time UN observer Martin Khor has pointed out that for a UN body to "take note" of a document means that not only was it not formally adopted, but it was not even "welcomed," a common UN practice.

Second, the global divide between rich and poor has never been clearer, and those countries where people are already experiencing droughts, floods and the melting of glaciers that provide a vital source of freshwater expect to find themselves in increasingly desperate straits as the full effects of climate disruptions begin to emerge. Not to mention the small island nations that face near-certain annihilation as melting ice sheets bring rising seas, along with infiltrations of seawater into their scarce fresh water supplies.

Especially despicable was the

changing role of the governments of the rapidly developing "BASIC" countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), who claim to speak for the poor—in their own countries and around the world—when it is convenient, but mainly seek to protect the expanding riches of their own well-entrenched elites.

Third, even the meager and contradictory progress of the past 17 years of global climate talks is now at risk, as is the flawed but relatively open and inclusive UN process. After the 2007 climate summit in Bali, Indonesia, the Bush administration tried to initiate an alternate track of negotiations on climate policy that involved only a select handful of the more compliant countries. That strategy failed, partly because its figurehead was George Bush. Now that the Obama administration has adopted essentially the same approach, with the full collaboration of the "BASICS," the utterly substanceless "Copenhagen Accord" can be seen as this coercive strategy's first diplomatic success.

As I wrote just as the Copenhagen meeting was getting underway, (see "Repackaging Copenhagen," <http://www.counterpunch.org/tokar12042009.html>) the US had planned for some months to attempt to replace the quaint notion of a comprehensive global climate agreement with a patchwork of informal, individual country commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and undertake other appropriate measures. If the Copenhagen document means anything at all, it establishes that process as a new global norm for implementing climate policy. Nothing is binding and everything is voluntary, only to be "assessed" informally after another five years

have passed. (Pages 4 and 5 of the "accord" actually consist of a pair of high school-caliber charts where countries are free to simply write in their voluntary emissions targets and other mitigation actions, nominally by the end of January.)

The document was hammered out in a back room, WTO-style. It hedges all the important issues and appends loopholes and contradictions to every substantive point it pretends to make. While discussions will nominally continue under the two UN negotiating tracks established two years ago in Bali, the "accord" provides a justification for leading countries in the process (which Bill McKibben has termed the "league of superpolluters," plus a few wannabes) to continue subverting and undermining those discussions in the name of a more efficient and streamlined process to continue business as usual for the benefit of the world's elites.

Could it have been worse?

As some have pointed out, it could have been worse. A useless non-agreement may be better than a coercive agreement that entrenches insufficient targets and destructive policy measures, such as expanding carbon markets. But the potential loss of an accountable UN process could prove to be an even worse outcome than that. The US, of course, has always tried to undermine the United Nations when it couldn't overtly control it, but replacing the processes established under the 1992 UN climate convention with a cash-for-compliance, anything-goes circus that more closely mirrors the World Trade Organization's discredited mechanisms doesn't bode at all well for the future.

So now the struggle returns to the national and local levels, where people may be best able to create examples of just and effective ways to address the climate crisis.

Did anything positive happen in Copenhagen?

For climate justice activists around the world, Copenhagen may have been a long-sought Seattle moment. It was a unique opportunity for activists and NGO representatives from around the world to gather, forge personal ties and begin raising the global profile of an essential climate-justice agenda. Independent journalists, most notably Amy Goodman's "Democracy Now" team, helped amplify the voices best able to explain how climate disruptions are no longer an abstract scientific issue, but one that is already impacting the lives of those least able to cope. Even the mainstream US press featured some notable stories of people around the world who are struggling to live with the effects of climate chaos.

More than ever before, people are coming to understand that the only meaningful solution to the climate crisis is to "leave the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole, and the tar sands in the land," following the slogan raised by campaigners against oil drilling in Ecuador's endangered Yasuni National Park.

It was also a pivotal moment for the ALBA countries of Latin America—most notably Bolivia, Nicaragua and Venezuela—which continued to the very end to stand up to intimidation from the US and other powerful countries, and refused to buckle under last-minute pressure to approve the vapid and destructive "Copenhagen Accord" as an agreement of the assembled nations. This is in stark contrast to the role of the European Union, which once stood for a strong worldwide agreement on greenhouse gas emissions, but has now fallen in line with the disruptive strategies of the US.

Another positive result is that there was no new bone thrown to the world's financial elites, who were banking on a Copenhagen agreement to help inflate their artificial market in tradable carbon allowances. Carbon prices in Europe have begun to decline, which may help prevent the enshrinement of carbon markets (so-called "cap and trade") as the primary instrument of climate policy in the United States.

So now the struggle returns to the national and local levels, where people may be best able to create examples of just and effective ways to address the climate crisis. There is no shortage of positive, forward-looking approaches to reducing excess consumption and furthering the development of alternative energy sources, especially ones that can be democratically controlled by communities and not corporations.

But the power of positive examples is far from sufficient to address the crucial problem of time. A few years ago, climate experts shocked the world by saying we had less than 10 years to reverse course and do something to prevent irreversible tipping points in the global climate system. The disastrous outcome of the Copenhagen conference makes it harder than ever to feel confident that it isn't too late.

Brian Tokar is the director of the Institute for Social Ecology, author of "The Green Alternative" and "Earth for Sale" and works with Climate SOS and the Mobilization for Climate Justice (<http://climatesos.org/> <<http://www.climatesos.org/>>, <http://actforclimatejustice.org/> <<http://www.actforclimatejustice.org/>>).

Source: *truthout* | Op-Ed 12/29/09 www.truthout.org

A few years ago, experts shocked the world by saying we had less than 10 years to prevent irreversible tipping points in the global climate system. The disastrous outcome of the Copenhagen conference makes it harder than ever to feel confident that it isn't too late.

Top Censored Stories of 2008 and 2009



1. US Congress sells out to Wall Street

Sources: *Truthout*, 10/2/08; *Capitol Eye*, 2/10/09; *Rolling Stone*, 3/10/09

Federal lawmakers responsible for overseeing the US economy have received millions of dollars from Wall Street firms. Since 2001, eight of the most troubled firms have donated \$64.2 million to congressional candidates, presidential candidates and the Republican and Democratic parties. As senators, Barack Obama and John McCain received a combined total of \$3.1 million. The donors include investment bankers Bear Stearns, Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, insurer American International Group, and mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

2. US schools are more segregated today than in the 1950s

Source: *The Civil Rights Project, UCLA*, January 2009

Schools in the United States are more segregated today than they have been in more than four decades. Millions of non-white students are locked into "dropout factory" high schools, where huge percentages do not graduate, and few are well prepared for college or a future in the US economy.

3. Toxic waste behind Somali pirates

Sources: *Al Jazeera English*, 10/11/08; *Huffington Post*, 1/4/09; *WardheerNews*, 1/8/09

The international community has come out in force to condemn and declare war on the Somali fishermen pirates, while discreetly protecting the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fleets from around the world that have been poaching

and dumping toxic waste in Somali waters since the fall of the Somali government 18 years ago.



4. Nuclear waste pools in North Carolina

Source: *CounterPunch*, 8/9/08

One of the most lethal patches of ground in North America is located in the backwoods of North Carolina, where Shearon Harris nuclear plant is housed and owned by Progress Energy. The plant contains the largest radioactive waste storage pools in the country.

5. Europe blocks US toxic products

Sources: *Scientific American*, 9/30/08; *Environmental Defense Fund*, 9/30/08; *Democracy Now!* 2/24/09

US deregulation of toxic substances, such as lead in lipsticks, mercury in electronics, and phthalates (endocrine disruptors) in baby toys, may not only pose disastrous consequences to our health, but also to our economic and political status in the world. International markets are moving toward a European model of insisting on environmental and consumer safety. Hundreds of companies located in the US produce or import hundreds of chemicals designated as dangerous by the European Union.

6. Lobbyists buy Congress

Source: *Open Secrets.org*

According to a study by The Center for Responsive Politics, special interests paid Washington lobbyists \$3.2 billion in 2008, more than any other year on record. This was a 13.7 percent increase from 2007 (which broke the record by 7.7 percent over 2006).

7. Obama's military appointments have corrupt past

Sources: *ConsortiumNews.com*, 11/13/08; *Global Research*, 2/13/09; *Democracy Now!* 1/7/09; *The Hill*, 11/24/08

Obama's retention of Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense makes Gates the first appointment from an outgoing administration of opposing party to be kept in the position. Gates served on

the board of directors of Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), which reported \$7.5 billion earnings in 2005. SAIC is involved in everything from intelligence gathering to Iraq reconstruction for the Pentagon.

8. Bailed out banks and America's wealthiest cheat IRS out of billions

Sources: *Bloomberg*, 12/16/08; *The Huffington Post*, 2/23/09

A 2008 study done by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that eighty-three of the top publicly held US companies have operations in tax havens like the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, and the Virgin Islands. Fourteen of these companies, including AIG, Bank of America, and Citigroup, received money from the government bailout. The GAO also reported that activities of Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) are directly connected to tax avoidance.

9. US arms used for war crimes in Gaza

Sources: *Consortium News*, 1/18/09; *Flashpoint Radio (KPFA) Gaza Special*, 1/09; *Human Rights Watch*, 3/25/09; *Guardian/UK*, 2/23/09; *Inter Press Service*, 1/8/09;

International Middle East Media Center News, 1/8/09; *Foreign Policy Journal*, 1/09

Israel's repeated firing of US-made white phosphorus shells over densely populated areas of Gaza during its recent military campaign was indiscriminate and is evidence of war crimes, Human Rights Watch said in a report released March 25, 2009.

10. Ecuador declares foreign debt illegitimate

Sources: *Alternet*, 11/26/08; *Utube*, Fall 2008; *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 12/15/08

In November 2008, Ecuador became the first country to undertake an examination of the legitimacy and structure of its foreign debt. An independent debt audit commissioned by the government of Ecuador documented hundreds of

allegations of irregularity, illegality, and illegitimacy in contracts of debt to predatory international lenders. The loans, according to the report, violated Ecuador's domestic laws, US Securities and Exchange Commission regulations, and general principles of international law

11. Private corporations profit from the occupation of Palestine

Sources: *WhoProfits.org*; *Palestine News Network*, 8/26/08; *Workers World Newspaper*, 2/9/09; *Global Research*, 2/11/09; *CommonDreams.org*, 2/24/09

Israeli and international corporations are directly involved in the occupation of Palestine. Along with various political, religious and national interests, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights is fueled by corporate interests. These occupying companies and corporations lead real estate deals, develop the Israeli colonies and infrastructure, and contribute to the construction and operation of an ethnic separation system, including checkpoints, walls and roads. They also design and supply equipment and tools used in the control and repression of the civilian population under occupation.

12. Mysterious death of Mike Connell, Karl Rove's election thief

Sources: *The Raw Story*, 9/29/08; *The Brad Blog*, 12/22/08; *Democracy Now!* 12/22/08;

Karl Rove's chief IT consultant, Mike Connell, who was facing subpoena in connection with 2004 Presidential election fraud in Ohio, mysteriously died in a private plane crash in 2008. Connell was allegedly the central figure in a longstanding plot to electronically flip votes to Republicans.



13. Katrina's hidden race war

Sources: *The Nation*, 12/17/08; *The Nation*, 12/18/08; *Democracy Now!* 12/19/08

A shocking report in *The Nation* magazine exposes how white vigilante groups patrolled the streets of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, shooting at least eleven African American men.

14. Congress invested in defense contracts

Source: *Opensecrets*, 4/3/08

The nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics has calculated that more than 151 members of Congress have up to \$195 million invested in major defense contractors that are earning profits from the US military occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

15. World Bank's carbon trade fiasco

Source: *Upside Down World*, 2/11/09

In the name of environmental protection, the World Bank is brokering carbon emission trading arrangements that destroy indigenous farmlands around the world.

16. US repression of Haiti continues

Sources: *Haiti Liberté*, 9/4/08; *Upside Down World*, 6/25/08; *Upside Down World*, 8/4/08

The US government plans to expropriate and demolish the homes of hundreds of Haitians in the shantytown of Cité Soleil to expand the occupying UN force's military base. The US government contractor DynCorp, a quasi-official arm of the Pentagon and the CIA, is responsible for the base expansion.

17. The ICC facilitates US covert war in Sudan

Sources: *Inter Press Service*, 3/9/09; *Dissidentvoice.org*, *Black Star News*, and *San Francisco Bay View*, 3/6/09; *Michelcollon.info*, 4/1/09

The United States promoted the International Criminal Court's

(ICC) indictment of Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir for war crimes in Darfur, in order to justify continuing Western exploitation and military interventions in the resource-rich region.

18. Ecuador's constitutional rights of nature

Source: *Upside Down World*, 9/25/08

In September 2008 Ecuador became the first country in the world to declare constitutional rights to nature, thus codifying a new system of environmental protection.

19. Bank bailout recipients spent \$ to defeat labor

Source: *Huffington Post*, 1/27/09

On October 17, 2008, three days after Bank of America Corporation received \$25 billion in federal bailout funds, they hosted a conference call to organize opposition to the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). Participants, including AIG, were urged to persuade their clients to send "large contributions" to groups working against the EFCA, as well as to vulnerable Senate Republicans who could be used to help block the passage of the pro labor bill that would make it easier for employees to organize into unions.

20. Secret control of the presidential debates

Sources: *Open Debates*, 9/18/08; *Democracy Now!* 10/2/08

The Obama and McCain campaigns jointly negotiated a detailed secret contract dictating the terms of the 2008 debates. This included who got to participate, what topics were to be raised, and the structure of the debate formats.

21. Recession causes states to cut welfare

Sources: *Mother Jones*, 1/15/09; *Associated Press*, 3/26/09

Many states are in the midst of an aggressive action to push thousands of eligible mothers off Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), traditionally known as welfare. Families are being denied aid so that savings can be redirected in state budgets.

22. Obama's Trilateral Commission team

Source: *August Review.com*, 1/30/09

Barack Obama appointed 11 members of the Trilateral Commission to top-level and key positions in his administration within his first 10 days in office.

23. Activists slam World Water Forum as a corporate-driven fraud

Sources: *AlterNet*, 3/17/09; *AlterNet*, 3/18/09; *Democracy Now!* 3/23/09; *KPFA*, "Sunday Sedition," 3/29/09

Water rights activists blasted the World Water Forum, held in Turkey in late March of 2009, as a corporate trade show promoting privatization of water.

24. Dollar glut finances US military expansion

Source: *Global Research*, 3/29/09

The worldwide surplus of dollars is forcing foreign central banks to bear the costs of America's expanding military empire.

25. Fast track oil exploitation in western Amazon

Sources: *PloS One*, 8/08; *The Guardian*, 8/13/08

The western Amazon, home to the most biodiverse and intact rainforest on Earth, may soon be covered with oil rigs and pipelines. Vast swaths of the region are to be opened for oil and gas exploration, putting some of the planet's most pristine and biodiverse forests at risk, conservationists have warned.

The Top Censored Stories of 2008-09, edited by Peter Phillips and Mickey Huff in cooperation with students and faculty at Sonoma State University and numerous other colleges and universities, features the 25 most important censored news stories of 2008-09 as selected by Project Censored. The annual yearbook from Project Censored at Sonoma State University is available in bookstores nationwide from Seven Stories Press or can be ordered on-line in both English and Spanish at www.projectcensored.org. Project Censored was the winner of the 2008 PEN Oakland Censorship Award.

Cost of War updates: \$136 billion more...before the surge

National Priorities Project

Congress has appropriated an additional \$136.8 billion for wars in Iraq (\$64.5 billion) and Afghanistan (\$72.3 billion) for the 2010 fiscal year.

Bills that included war-related funding were the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 2892, passed 12/28/09); the Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R. 3288, passed 12/16/09); and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act (H.R. 3326, passed 12/19/09).

These new appropriations bring total war-related spending for Iraq to \$747.3 billion and for Afghanistan to \$299 billion, with total war costs of \$1.05 trillion.

These current year appropriations do not include funds to support the "surge" of 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan proposed by the Obama administration on December 1, 2009. Conservative estimates suggest that it will cost approximately \$30 billion to fund this surge. Supplemental appropriations for this funding are expected later this year.

Since 2001, the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and related activities have been funded through emergency supplemental appropriations. In a clear departure from this practice, the Obama administration integrated the FY2010 war funding into the core budget appropriations process. While this process purportedly allows for greater scrutiny and control over the allocation of tax dollars relative to the emergency supplemental funding process, it has, ironically, also become more difficult to ascertain the exact spending amounts directed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Past supplemental bills outlined funding almost exclusively for war costs whereas departmental appropriations combine these war costs with all other departmental funds for the entire fiscal year.

NPP will continue to follow

Iraq and Afghanistan war funding including any supplemental bills to support the Afghanistan surge that has already begun as well as any other additional war costs.

Source: www.nationalpriorities.org release, 1/11/10
NPP, 243 King St, Ste 109, Northampton, MA, MA 01060



Contact Your Reps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Abandoning labor check-off: Obama's political suicide

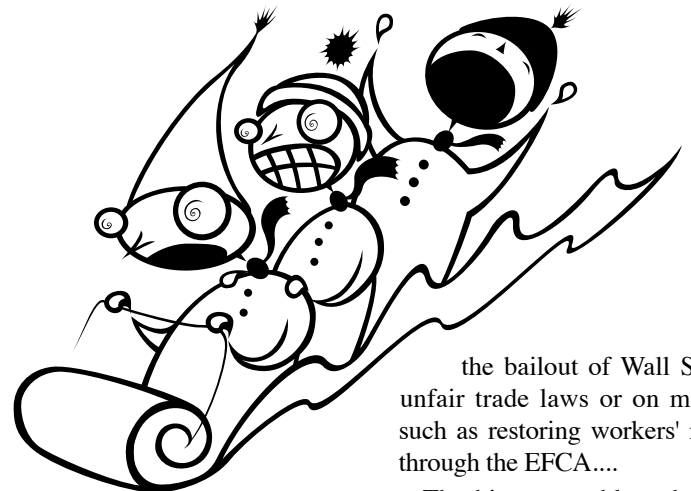
Mike Elk

Whatever happened to the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA)? Is it dead? I remember sitting in a meeting last May with Senate staff who said that after Al Franken was sworn in, EFCA would be an eight-week fight and then a vote in the Senate. It has been nearly eight months and there still has been no vote, not even in committee.

What happened? Why does the bill now appear to be all but forgotten despite the massive effort of the labor movement, the blogosphere and progressive allies to push it against incredible odds?

All that effort seems to have gone to waste because the Obama administration has hardly lifted a finger on behalf of the 30,000 workers who are fired every year for trying to join a union. Obama has never given a national address on the need to reform labor regulations as he has on education reform, financial reform, infrastructure improvement, small business assistance, or a variety of other subjects....The last time Obama mentioned the EFCA as part of prepared remarks was nearly four months ago at a Labor Day picnic in Ohio in front of 20,000 union members. Then, he only dedicated a measly two sentences on EFCA. It seemed he only did it because not mentioning the EFCA in front of 20,000 union members could get ugly.

In fact, some labor officials have speculated the administration probably only mentioned EFCA to keep labor from attacking the administration over a weak health care reform bill. As Sam Stein recently quoted one labor official on health care reform: "So union leadership is being squeezed



from the bottom by members who don't want a shitty bill and from the top by Rahm holding the [Employee Free Choice Act] over their heads."

Obama has considered this issue too political risky, despite the fact labor law reform would expand the base by making more people members of unions, whose members voted 60-40 for Obama. For this reason, the Chamber of Commerce made it clear that defeating the EFCA was more important to them than defeating climate change and health care reform put together. They will launch a massive campaign, spending millions of dollars campaigning against it in the hopes of keeping a few conservative Democrats on board....

This brings us to our current situation. The President's approval ratings are dropping dramatically as a result of the economic mess we are in, the making of which is not his fault. This administration has treaded tepidly in denouncing conservative ideology and advocating for an economy based on the needs of working people and not fat cat CEOs. They have failed to advocate passionately for workers' issues, whether against

the bailout of Wall Street, unfair trade laws or on matters such as restoring workers' rights through the EFCA....

The biggest problem that the Democratic Party faces now, after going along with the Wall Street bailout, is that they are seen as a party of special interests. A recent Wall Street Journal poll showed that more Americans have a more favorable view of the Tea Party Movement than both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Obama could make the Democratic Party the workers' party once again. By advocating forcefully for workers' rights and against the unlimited ability of big corporations to push their workers around, Obama could win back over the mass of people disaffected with the Democratic Party. We might very well lose this fight, but over the long run, we will have won the war to bring the working class over to our side.

ACTION: Urge your President, Senators and Representative to support the Employee Free Choice Act.

Mike Elk works for the Campaign for America's Future. Previously, he worked as a union organizer for the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers, and as a staffer on the Obama-Biden campaign.

Source: truthout! Op-Ed 1/6/10 www.truthout.org

**By advocating forcefully for workers' rights
and against the unlimited ability of big
corporation to push their workers around,
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disaffected with the Democratic Party.**

A nuclear weapon free world: the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

The United States stopped testing nuclear weapons in 1992, when Congress passed the nuclear testing moratorium. Within a few years, all of the declared nuclear powers had agreed to stop testing nuclear weapons and signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The United States used its influence to lead the world.

The CTBT provides for a worldwide ban on all nuclear test explosions, establishes a global system to enforce the ban, and sets up an international structure to investigate and punish countries that violate the ban.

The international monitoring system established under this treaty has been operating for more than a decade and has successfully detected nuclear test explosions in three countries.

Yet the full test ban treaty has not come into force because the United States and eight other countries have failed to ratify the CTBT. Since the treaty was first negotiated in the mid-1990s, a few new countries have joined the nuclear club; India, Pakistan, and North Korea tested nuclear weapons.

As part of his efforts to work for a world free of nuclear weapons, President Barack Obama announced on Palm Sunday in Prague this year that he will seek Senate ratification of the CTBT.

The CTBT, and nuclear disarmament in general, are a major pillar of the Obama administration's foreign policy. One critical next step in this work for a world free of nuclear weapons is Senate ratification of the test ban treaty. You can help by working with FCNL in the next year to persuade your senators to support ratification of this treaty.

Ironically, it was a U.S. president in the 1950s, Dwight Eisenhower, who first called for a ban on nuclear weapons testing. In the 1960s, the United States agreed to a partial testing ban. In 1996, this country became the first to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Sadly, the Senate rejected the treaty, 48-51, in 1999. Under the U.S. Constitution, international

treaties require the support of two-thirds of the Senate, or 67 votes. Because President George W. Bush was not convinced that international treaties such as the CTBT would make the United States safer, he never asked for a vote on the treaty during his eight years in office.

Now President Obama is preparing to ask the Senate to ratify the CTBT and has to find those 67 votes. He needs the help of concerned people across the United States. Fortunately, support for ratification of the CTBT has grown substantially since that 1999 vote, and, for the first time in decades, leading opinion makers in both political parties argue that the United States should ratify this treaty.

Four former chairs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, and many of the largest faith groups in the United States have called for Senate ratification of the test ban treaty. These individuals and groups support ratification of the CTBT because they understand that nuclear weapons pose a threat today.

The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which the United States signed in 1968, commits this country to work to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world and ultimately eliminate them. As of 1992, all five nuclear weapons states had ratified the NPT. Other nations, however, have continued to build these terrible bombs. Since 1968, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea have all developed nuclear weapons.

While these nations already have nuclear weapons, the test ban treaty can help deter other nations from acquiring them. As U.S. intelligence agencies have documented, a Pakistani scientist who had worked on his country's nuclear weapons program was the source of nuclear weapons technology that was transferred to several other countries. The CTBT could prevent this spreading technology from being developed into nuclear weapons.

Effective monitoring

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the group established under the test ban treaty to monitor suspected nuclear weapons tests, provides a transparent international process beyond the control of any individual nation state that can objectively report on violations of this treaty.

By 2009, the CTBTO had established nearly 300 international monitoring stations around the globe that use seismic, infrasound, hydroacoustic, and radionuclide technology to watch for nuclear test explosions. This global infrastructure supplements the U.S.'s own intelligence and monitoring systems and has the added advantage of establishing monitoring systems in countries such as Iran where the United States cannot operate today.

Critics of this system argue that the CTBT can't really monitor most significant nuclear test explosions. Yet both recent North

Korean nuclear test explosions, in October 2006 and May 2009, were detected by more than a dozen international seismic stations.

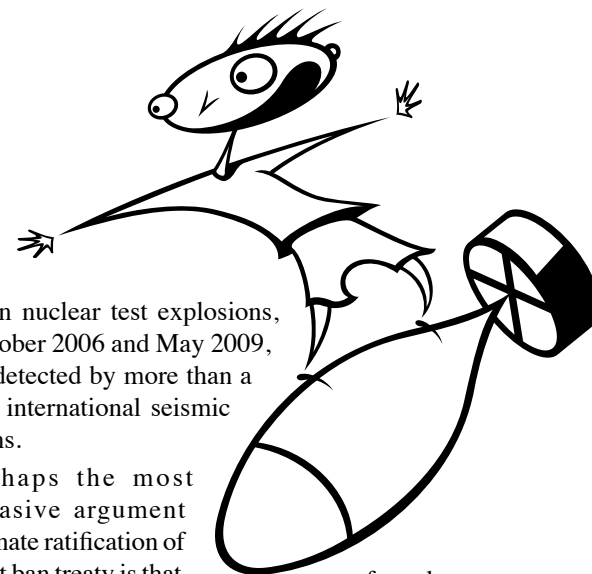
Perhaps the most persuasive argument for Senate ratification of the test ban treaty is that, without ratification in the near future, the world community will be unable to prevent existing nuclear powers from developing new nuclear weapons and starting a new nuclear arms race. Without positive efforts to prevent the existing nuclear weapons powers from perfecting their weapons and developing new ones, the global community will have more difficulty persuading other countries that nuclear weapons are not in their interest.

The U.S. Senate faces a critical test in the next two years. Do senators want to do everything they can to prevent a new generation

of nuclear weapons powers from emerging in the world today and to get the United States back on the road toward nuclear disarmament, or do they want the United States to do nothing and wait for a new nuclear arms race to start in the next decade?

Your senators will be asked to answer this question sometime in 2010 when President Obama asks the Senate to ratify the CTBT. Please work with FCNL to make sure your senators vote for ratification.

Source: FCNL Washington Newsletter 12/09. FCNL, 245 Second St NE, Washington, DC 20002 800-630-1330 <http://www.fcnl.org/>



Say "rules," not "regulation"

Susan Strong

Right now the ball is still up in the air on two issues vital to our future as a nation: financial system reform and energy reform. Some congressional action has already occurred on each of these, but the battles are not over yet. That's why it's so important that we get our metaphors right, as we go into the home stretch.

Maybe you've noticed the sports metaphors I'm using? These are the frames we should all be choosing now, for both issues.

Every human activity has rules, implicit or explicit. The biggest de facto lie of supply side economics has been saying that markets or foreign trade can be "free." There's no such thing. Even a village market high in the Andes has unwritten rules of order and

fairness, and trade agreements are nothing but a set of rules about how business will be conducted.

Moreover our planet's biosphere has iron rules. We are all going to pay very big penalties if we keep on breaking them.

Conservatives always scream about how "regulation" will harm business and our economy. In reality, that's just them demanding the right to play the economic game with no rules. Or to play the game with secret, arcane, or unstated rules that favor them cheating, stealing, being criminally negligent of public safety, and lying to the public about it.

This is exactly why we need good government; we need an honest referee. (Yes, I know our government is compromised right now—publicly funded elections at every level should be the next big "rules" fight.)

The first step right now is to talk about playing by the rules again, the rules that keep us safe and help us get fair and square, win-win outcomes for every American.

Susan C. Strong is Founder/ Executive Director of The Metaphor Project, <http://metaphorproject.org/>

**... in reality, they are demanding
... rules that favor cheating,
stealing, criminal negligence of
public safety, and lying...**

History of a Haitian holocaust

Greg Palast

1. Bless the President for having rescue teams in the air almost immediately. That was President Olafur Grimsson of Iceland. On Wednesday, the AP reported that the President of the United States promised, "The initial contingent of 2,000 Marines could be deployed to the quake-ravaged country within the next few days." "In a few days," Mr. Obama?

2. There's no such thing as a 'natural' disaster. 200,000 Haitians have been slaughtered by slum housing and IMF "austerity" plans.

3. China deployed rescuers with sniffer dogs within 48 hours. China, Mr. President. China: 8,000 miles distant. Miami: 700 miles close. US bases in Puerto Rico: right there.

4. Obama's Defense Secretary Robert Gates said, "I don't know how this government could have responded faster or more comprehensively than it has." We know Gates doesn't know.

5. From my own work in the field, I know that FEMA has access to ready-to-go potable water, generators, mobile medical equipment and more for hurricane relief on the Gulf Coast. It's all still there. Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré, who served as the task force commander for emergency response after Hurricane Katrina, told the Christian Science Monitor, "I thought we had learned that from Katrina, take food and water and start evacuating people." Maybe we learned but, apparently, Gates and the Defense Department missed school that day.

6. Send in the Marines. That's America's response. That's what we're good at. The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson finally showed up after three days. With what? It was dramatically deployed, without any emergency relief supplies. It has sidewinder missiles and 19 helicopters.

7. But don't worry, the International Search and Rescue Team, fully equipped and self-sufficient for up

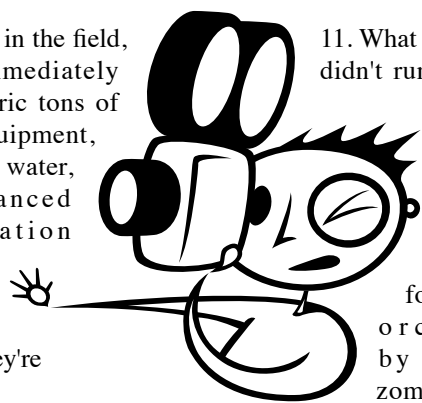
to seven days in the field, deployed immediately with ten metric tons of tools and equipment, three tons of water, tents, advanced communication equipment and water purifying capability. They're from Iceland.

8. Gates wouldn't send in food and water because, he said, there was no "structure ... to provide security." For Gates, appointed by Bush and allowed to hang around by Obama, it's security first. That was his lesson from Hurricane Katrina. Blackwater before drinking water.

9. Previous US presidents have acted far more swiftly in getting troops on the ground on that island. Haiti is the right half of the island of Hispaniola. The Dominican Republic the left. In 1965, when Dominicans demanded the return of Juan Bosch, their elected President, deposed by a junta, Lyndon Johnson reacted to this crisis rapidly, landing 45,000 US Marines on the beaches to prevent the return of the elected president.

10. How did Haiti end up so economically weakened, with infrastructure, from hospitals to water systems, busted or non-existent—there are two fire stations in the entire nation—and infrastructure so frail that the nation was simply waiting for "nature" to finish it off?

Don't blame Mother Nature for all this death and destruction. That dishonor goes to Papa Doc and Baby Doc, the Duvalier dictatorship, which looted the nation for 28 years. Papa and his Baby put an estimated 80% of world aid into their own pockets—with the complicity of the US government happy to have the Duvaliers and their voodoo militia, Tonton Macoutes, as allies in the Cold War. (The war was easily won: the Duvaliers' death squads murdered as many as 60,000 opponents of the regime.)



11. What Papa and Baby didn't run off with, the IMF finished off through its "austerity" plans. An austerity plan is a form of voodoo orchestrated by economists zomby-fied by an irrational belief that cutting government services will somehow help a nation prosper.

12. In 1991, five years after the murderous Baby fled, Haitians elected a priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who resisted the IMF's austerity diktats. Within months, the military, to the applause of Papa George HW Bush, deposed him. History repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce. The farce was George W. Bush. In 2004, after the priest Aristide was re-elected President, he was kidnapped and removed again, to the applause of Baby Bush.

13. Haiti was once a wealthy nation, the wealthiest in the hemisphere, worth more, wrote Voltaire in the 18th century, than that rocky, cold colony known as New England. Haiti's wealth was in black gold: slaves. But then the slaves rebelled—and have been paying for it ever since. From 1825 to 1947, France forced Haiti to pay an annual fee to reimburse the profits lost by French slaveholders caused by their slaves' successful uprising. Rather than enslave individual Haitians, France thought it more efficient to simply enslave the entire nation.

14. Secretary Gates tells us, "There are just some certain facts of life that affect how quickly you can do some of these things." The Navy's hospital boat will be there in, oh, a week or so. Heckuva job, Brownie!

Urgently recommended reading: *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, the history of the successful slave uprising in Hispaniola by the brilliant CLR James.

Source: *The Huffington Post*, 1/17/10

Proposed amnesty serves to whitewash Honduran coup

The international community should offer no support for planned amnesty for the perpetrators of the Honduran coup, Mark Weisbrot, Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, said today. Noting that both ousted President Manuel Zelaya and coup leaders previously agreed on a deal to resolve the crisis that did not include amnesty for crimes, Weisbrot cautioned that current efforts to grant amnesty to the coup leaders would be merely an attempt to "whitewash the coup."

"The international community should remember that this is a regime that not only dealt a deadly blow to Honduran democracy through a military coup, it has also attempted to turn back time to a dark period of bloody dictatorships, death squads, disappearances, tortures, and murders," Weisbrot said. "Only international pressure will stop these abuses."

The Honduran congress is expected to vote early next week to approve amnesty for the perpetrators of the June 28 coup d'état that ousted President Manuel Zelaya—who is still recognized as the legitimate president by the international community—and then imposed a dictatorship. Early January, the Attorney General, Luis Rubi, stated that armed forces head General Romeo Vásquez Velásquez and other military chiefs had violated Honduras' constitution by forcibly deporting Zelaya, but stopped short of charging them for removing Zelaya from power or for other crimes including the killing of unarmed demonstrators and other serious human rights violations.

In reaction to the Attorney General's charges against the military leaders, President Zelaya issued a statement saying that Rubi is supporting the "impunity of the military by accusing them of lesser crimes and abuse of authority, and not for serious crimes they have committed: treason, murder, human rights violations, torture," and that "it is clear what is being done are preparatory acts for the impunity of the military and to

avoid punishment for the material and intellectual authors of the military coup."

Since seizing power, the dictatorship has committed an array of human rights abuses including killings, beatings of demonstrators, detentions of hundreds of people, and attacks on media outlets. International human rights groups including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and press freedom groups such as the Committee to Protect Journalists and Reporters Without Borders have documented and condemned these human rights crimes since the dictatorship seized power.

This violence continues to the present. As recently as January 6, the Garifuna radio station Faluma Bimetu was burned down in an arson attack. Reporters Without Borders stated that the station "has often been threatened because of its opposition to last June's coup d'état and to real estate projects in the region." On December 28, independent journalist César Silva was kidnapped, interrogated, beaten, and threatened with death before being dumped in a deserted lot the next day; he has since left Honduras. The week before, Edwin Renán Fajardo Argueta, a member of Artists in Resistance [to the coup] was found strangled to death in his apartment; Fajardo had reported receiving death threats just days before. The attackers removed computers in both the Fajardo murder and the Faluma Bimetu arson.

The October 30 accord agreed to by Zelaya and Micheletti, which was intended to lead to the creation of a unity government and resolution to the crisis, notably did not include an amnesty deal.

"The Honduran regime is hoping to receive amnesty for its crimes, even as it continues to murder resistance activists," Weisbrot said. "To allow this would be a green light for more killings."

Source: *The Center for Economic and Policy Research* release 1/9/10

Education crisis protects wealthy

Peter Phillips

Public education is becoming less public—and students know it. Last November, UC Berkeley students protested the 32% increase in tuition imposed by the UC regents in a time of severe state deficits. The Board of Regents claimed that they had no choice. Students will now have to pay over \$10,000 in tuition annually for a public university education that was free only a few decades ago.

The corporate media spins the tuition protests as if we are all suffering during the recession. For example, the San Diego Union Tribune November 20 wrote, "These students need a course in Reality 101. And the reality is that there is virtually no segment of American society that is not straining with the economic recession. With UC facing a \$535 million budget gap due to state cuts, the regents have to confront reality and make tough choices. So should students."

Yet, the reality is something quite different. Our current budget crisis in California and the rest of the country has been artificially created by cutting taxes on the wealthiest people and corporations. The corporate elites in the US, the top 1% who own close to half the wealth, are the beneficiaries of massive tax cuts over the past few decades—while at the same time working people are paying more through increased sales and use taxes and higher public college tuition.

The wealthy hide their money abroad. Rachel Keeler with Dollars & Sense reports that over the years, trillions of dollars in both corporate profits and personal wealth have migrated offshore in search of rock-bottom tax rates and the comfort of no questions asked. Offshore banks now harbor an estimated \$11.5 trillion in individual wealth alone, and were a significant contributing factor to the international economic downturn in 2008.

According to the California Budget Project, tax cuts enacted in California, since 1993, cost the state \$11.3 billion dollars annually.

Had the state continued taxing corporations and the wealthy at rates equal to those 15 years ago there would not be a budget crisis in California. Even though a budget deficit was evident last year, California income tax laws were changed in February of 2009 to provide corporations with even greater tax savings—equal to over \$2 billion per year. California is similar to the rest of the country where the wealthy and corporate elites enjoy economic protection through increased costs to working people.

Higher education has been cut in 28 states in the 2009-10 school year and further, even more drastic cuts, are likely in the years ahead. California State University (CSU) system is planning to reduce enrollments by 40,000 students in the fall of 2010. The CSU Trustees have imposed steep tuition hikes and forced faculty and staff to take non-paid furlough days equal to 10% of salaries.

The students who are protesting tuition increases know they are being ripped off. They know that we are bailing out the rich with hundreds of billions of dollars for Wall Street and massive budget cuts for the rest of us. The corporate media doesn't explain to over-taxed working families how they are paying more while the rich sock it away.

The current economic crisis is a shock and awe process designed to undermine low-cost higher education, force labor concessions from working people and protect the wealthy. We need higher taxes on the corporations and the top 1%, combined with free public college education and tax breaks for working families. And, we must have a media that tells us the truth about inequality and wealth. A true economic stimulus increases spending from the bottom up not the top down.

Peter Phillips is a professor of sociology at Sonoma State University, President of Media Freedom Foundation, and recent past director of Project Censored.

As California, so goes the nation

Michael Winship

A number of years ago, when I would travel to California on business...I would explore the aisles looking for the odd new products that had started in California, stuff I figured might soon migrate East. Like those big cardboard shades people prop up against the front windows of their parked cars to keep the interior from getting overheated. One of many brilliant California inventions descended from a long line of greats: the Hula Hoop and Frisbee, the Popsicle and the Zamboni ice-cleaning machine. Today, I continue to watch out for California innovations and keep an eye on the store shelves when I'm there. The state remains a harbinger of things to come. These days, though, what California's exporting is more disturbing....

This week, term-limited Terminator Arnold Schwarzenegger delivered his last State of the State address as governor of California, and the prospects he outlined were not pleasing.

Despite his calls for an overhaul of the tax system and a proposed constitutional amendment to reverse the amounts of money California spends on education and its penal system, the state still has a \$20 billion deficit with which to deal, and as Michael Rothfeld of the Los Angeles Times noted, "Legislators have already begun sensing that as a lame duck [Schwarzenegger] is easy prey and openly disregard some of his wishes. Members of his staff have already been quitting, and replacements are hard to come by."

Sadly, this time what California has gotten hold of ahead of the rest of the country is total political dysfunction. In part it's spurred by the requirement that anything having to do with taxes or the budget has to be passed by a two-thirds majority in both houses of the state legislature. But it has been exacerbated by increased polarization and backbiting.

As *Washington Post* columnist and blogger Ezra Klein—a Californian—wrote last Sunday, "The state let its political dysfunctions go unaddressed.

Most assumed that the legislature's bickering would be cast aside in the face of an emergency. But the intransigence of California's legislators has not softened despite the spiraling unemployment, massive deficits and absence of buoyant growth on the horizon. Quite the opposite, in fact. The minority party spied opportunity in fiscal collapse. If the majority failed to govern the state, then the voters would turn on them, or so the theory went.

"That raises a troubling question: What happens when one of the two major parties does not see a political upside in solving problems and has the power to keep those problems from being solved?"

We've seen the answer in the first year of the current Congress, and if early prognostications for the midterm elections are remotely accurate, it's only going to get worse. Klein writes, "Congress has been virtually incapable of doing anything difficult because the minority party will either block it or run against it, or both. And make no mistake: Congress will need to do hard things, and soon...."

"No one who watched the health-care bill wind its way through the legislative process believes Congress is ready for the much harder and more controversial cost-cutting that will be necessary



in the future.... The lesson of California is that a political system too dysfunctional to avert crisis is also too dysfunctional to respond to it."

Once again, it's time to climb to the battlements for comprehensive campaign finance reform, as money is fueling much of the lunatic partisan rancor that has us at impasse. What's more, this idea of a Supermajority in the Senate—the abuse of the rule that 60 votes are necessary to end debate or nothing gets done, a notion that's not in the Constitution (it calls for simple majority rule, except in limited cases such as an impeachment trial, expulsion of a member, treaty ratification or overriding a presidential veto)—has to go. Otherwise, nothing gets done.

Michael Winship is senior writer of the weekly public affairs program Bill Moyers Journal, which airs Friday nights on PBS.

Source: truthout | Op-Ed 1/9/10. www.truthout.org

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Food shorts

Monsanto tightens control over nation's food supply

An Associated Press (AP) investigation has detailed practices by seed giant Monsanto that allow it to control access to its seeds and stifle competition. For example, Monsanto licensing agreements bar independent biotechnology companies from breeding plants that include both genes from Monsanto and genes from any of its rivals. Since 95 percent of the soybeans and 80 percent of the corn grown in the United States are Monsanto products, these agreements hobble the improvement of competitors' products and put Monsanto in a position to dominate the U.S. grain supply, which could pave the way for increases in food prices. The Department of Justice is investigating Monsanto for anticompetitive practices (see our November FEED story on this topic).

Farmers growing engineered corn break federal rules

About 25 percent of farmers who grow corn that is genetically engineered (GE) to kill insect pests aren't complying with federal requirements, according to a new report from the Center for Science in the Public Interest. GE corn contains a gene obtained from a bacterium (*Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt), and this gene leads to production of insecticides within the plant. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires companies that sell Bt crops to set up a system under which farmers must plant refuges (areas planted with non-Bt corn) to prevent pests from developing resistance to Bt. However, neither the EPA nor the companies are ensuring compliance with refuge rules. If insect pests develop resistance, Bt insecticides will no longer be effective and farmers who are now using Bt crops will turn to synthetic insecticides that are harmful to the environment and people. Organic farmers, who are allowed to use Bt insecticides on crops as a natural means of pest control, would also lose a valuable tool.

"Refuges are crucial to preventing insect pests from

developing resistance to Bt. The EPA must do whatever it takes—levy fines against companies or suspend their sales of Bt-corn seed—to force the companies to ensure farmers' compliance with refuge requirements." ~

Jane Rissler, Senior Scientist/Deputy Director, Food & Environment

Agency blocked from collecting CAFO pollution data

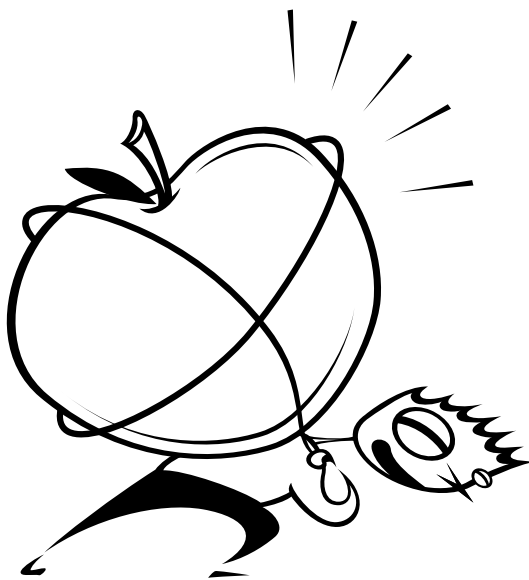
In a setback for environmental and sustainable farming advocates, Congress blocked the EPA from collecting data on global warming pollution emissions from the nation's largest CAFOs in 2010.

States ban practices that support CAFOs

Several states recently banned specific practices that are common in CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations), taking small steps to level the playing field for more sustainable farms.

Second recall issued for Salmonella-tainted ground beef

For the second time in a year, one company has recalled thousands



of pounds of ground beef that were contaminated by antibiotic-resistant Salmonella bacteria. Fresno-based Beef Packers, Inc. recalled 826,000 pounds of beef last summer after people in 11 states grew ill and now is recalling 23,000 pounds linked to a new outbreak. The Salmonella contaminating the beef was resistant to multiple antibiotics, including cephalosporins, which are very valuable in human medicine.

"The recalls are wake-up calls that we need new federal food safety legislation to ensure the safety of meat products and to address the problem of antibiotic-resistant bacteria at its source—the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture." ~ Margaret Mellon, Director, Food & Environment Program

Source: FEED—Food and Environment Electronic Digest from the Union of Concerned Scientists, January 2010, www.ucsusa.org. For more info on these issues, visit www.ucsusa.org.

Farm Bureau against climate bill

The largest U.S. farm group will aggressively oppose climate legislation pending in Congress and fight animal rights activists.

American Farm Bureau Federation president Stallman said farmers and ranchers "must aggressively respond to extremists" and "misguided, activist-driven regulation ... The days of their elitist power grabs are over."

Both House and Senate legislation envisions a cap-and-trade system to curb emissions from factories and power plants and to allow the purchase of offsets. Vast amounts of farmland could become carbon-capturing woodlands under cap-and-trade, "eliminating about 130,000 farms and ranches," said Stallman. One federal analysis says 8 percent of crop and pasture land could be turned into trees by 2050 because trees would be more profitable than crops.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com> 1/11/10

Six things to do in '10

Jim Hightower

In my travels, I've heard many cries of despair from you good folks about the timorous Obama presidency. On issue after issue, it's been go-slow and don't-rock-the-corporate boat. "Where's the 'audacity of hope?'" people are asking. "Where's the 'change you can believe in?'"

The answer is that in our country's democracy, audacity and change are where they've always resided: out there with you and me, at the grassroots level. For some reason, the guy who was elected by running from the outside is now trying to govern from the inside—which is where change is taken to die.

The good news is that the American majority is with us on nearly every issue, so the chance for change remains strong -- if we can push it. Now is the time for us to be more aggressive, more demanding, more active than ever. Many of you have asked, "Fine -- but how?" Here are some suggestions:

1. Start by considering **what's reasonable for you**. Few of us can be full-time activists, and the list of issues and problems is long and complex. So, just take one bite, choosing an issue that interests you the most, then start contributing what you can (time, skills, contacts, money, enthusiasm, etc.) to making progress. Every little contribution helps -- it all adds up. As a young Oregon woman said of her half-day-a-week of volunteer door-knocking in a legislative race: "I was only a drop in the bucket, but I was a drop. And without all of us, the bucket would not have filled up."

2. **Inform yourself**. A little effort can quickly connect you to accessible, usable information and insights on any given topic, helping you gain a "citizen's level" of expertise so you can talk to others about it. Read progressive periodicals, tune in to progressive broadcasts, get information from public-interest groups and plug in to good websites and blogs.

Don't know how to go online? Nearly all public libraries not only have computers, but also librarians and volunteers who'll help you find the info you want and teach you how to use the machines. Or, find a youngster (maybe your granddaughter or someone at church) who'll help you. Yes, you can do this!

3. **Democracy belongs to those who show up**. Join with others. Everyone feels better when they're part of a group, a movement, a community (whether real or virtual). In your own town or neighborhood, many others share your progressive outlook and are either already working together or willing to help form a group -- seek them out, maybe at bookstores, book clubs, coffee shops, events, churches, blogs, websites or other meeting places.

4. A community is more than a collection of issues and endless meetings. **Get to know each other** by combining the serious with the social. Remember the Yugoslavian proverb: You can fight the gods and still have fun! So discuss your issues and strategies at potluck suppers, throw an annual festival of politics, establish sessions of beer-mug democracy at local taverns or political coffee talk at the coffee shop, etc.

5. **Become the media**. Create a local newsletter, blog, online bulletin board (or, a real one), an Internet radio broadcast, etc. Just as importantly, enlist high school or community college speech and journalism teachers to help others learn how to do radio and TV interviews and how to get local media to cover your issues. Also, get them to train you and others in public speaking, so you can have your own speakers' bureau to address clubs, churches, schools, etc.

6. **Hold your own "what to do" sessions** in your community. National progressive groups haven't figured out a cohesive strategy for focusing people's anger about the meekness of the Washington's Democratic leaders, so don't wait on them. Instead, have your own discussions about what should be done nationally -- if anything -- and start zapping those ideas to other communities, heads of national groups, progressive media outlets and so forth. Let the ideas/discussion percolate up from a thousand localities! If you're looking for genius, don't look up, look around where you are, and trust you're the wisdom of your own community. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it, "Common sense is genius with its work clothes on."

Jim Hightower is a columnist, national radio commentator, public speaker and author.

Source: truthout.org Op-Ed 12/30/09

Health care "reform" a loser

Seth Sandronsky

Claudia Chaufan, MD, is an Argentine physician and assistant adjunct professor in the Institute for Health and Aging and Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco. She is also vice president of the California Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program. This is a recent email interview with her.

Seth Sandronsky: What is at stake for minority groups in the upcoming reconciliation of the Senate and House version of health-care reform?

Claudia Chaufan: It is a bit hard to talk about what's at stake for "minority groups" generally, but I can certainly tell you what is at stake according to people's income and health status (whatever their ethnicity). The bill will make it a federal crime not to buy a policy—and there are no "public options" to choose among (that would not have been necessarily cheaper anyway), so for the first time in American history you have a legal obligation to buy a private product. So then the question becomes: is this good or bad for us? Will it eliminate financial barriers to medically necessary care and will it control costs so that the country can guarantee health care for all?

What's the case against mandating Americans to buy private health-care insurance?

This private product is likely to be insufficient to eliminate financial barriers to health care, because what it counts as "acceptable" to be sold is very unclear. Policies will be allowed to have high deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses that many, including middle-income Americans, will not be able to afford.

This is likely to affect minorities more, because the rates of disease are generally higher among them (again, one needs to discriminate within these groups, because the very rich will always be better off, whatever their ethnicity).

What about President Obama's case for people being able to keep their health-insurance policies with his approach to health-care reform?

The reason offered by President Obama that this approach is good is

because "it will allow you to keep your plan if you like it." This is a very poor reason.

The fact of the matter is you are very likely to lose your plan as soon as you lose your job, and the price of your plan is very likely to increase, so even if it is there you won't be able to pay for it. And what is worse, even if you don't like your plan, if it is offered by an employer you will have to keep it because it will be illegal for you not to do so, and you won't have other alternatives.

How will the president's reform affect the affordability of health-care insurance?

The presumed lifetime maximum in health care expenses is unclear as well, and at any rate will only be operative for whatever counts as "covered services." Put another way, if your policy does not cover services x, y or z, and you happen to need them because they are otherwise medically necessary, paying for them is likely to bankrupt you, as it has up to now.

There will be a huge increase in public expenditures in health care (i.e., your taxes) going into financing the sale of a very bad product, i.e., private health care policies. This is because in both bills there is almost half a trillion dollars of public money going into subsidizing your buying these policies. This huge transfer of money from our pockets into the for-profit corporate sector is likely to increase the power—economic and political—of private health care interests for years to come, and get in the way of the only approach that can both control costs and guarantee real (not near) universal coverage of medically necessary services, i.e., improved and expanded Medicare for All (Senate Bill 810 in California).

The so-called "improvements" to control costs (e.g., electronic medical records, comparative effectiveness research, menu labels, wellness, etc) are worthless to that effect. They are absolutely unrelated to the policy principle of pooling risk in a single financing pool, which allows systems elsewhere (Canada, UK, etc.) to cut costs through reducing paper-pushing (administrative overhead), bulk purchases and cross-subsidizing.

The good things (e.g., Medicaid expansions) could have been implemented anyway without

the grandiose title of "reform" and without implementing the individual mandate. Of course, the mandate was what industry has wanted all along, because it gives them, by law, millions of new customers (they still complain because they want to get rid of the very minor constraints they might be subject to).

What percent of people's income will health care insurance cost under the current multiple-payer system after its House-Senate reform versus a single-payer system?

With a single-payer system, anywhere from four to eight percent of your paycheck in the form of a health tax (at any rate no more than 10 percent, depending on calculations) total, whether or not you are sick, old or young, etc. What matters is that this amount would be predictable.

With the House and Senate bills, God only knows.... Your taxes will go up to pay for subsidies, public program expansions, and new regulations of industry (we're already paying around 10 percent of our income in public health care, covering the bad customers that industry does not want—very old, very poor or disabled).

To this, you will have to add an unspecified amount for private policies and out-of-pocket costs. To the ordinary American, it does not (or should not) matter what you call the money you spend in health care, whether taxes or out-of-pocket—money is money.

In sum, the current bills will make health care far more expensive than the reasonable alternative (a social insurance system, with no profit allowed for medically necessary services) would.

To make matters worse, they will also constrain your choices. The bills will force you to "choose" from within constrained lists of "preferred providers," euphemisms for constrained choices. What social insurance, including single-payer systems allow for is the sort of choices that really matter: of doctors and medical establishments (like Canada, France, Switzerland, and even Taiwan, have).

Seth Sandronsky lives and writes in Sacramento. Contact him at ssandronsky@yahoo.com.

Source: *truthout* Op-Ed 1/15/10; www.truthout.org

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Media equity key to progressive success

Robert Parry

The U.S. political battle lines for 2010 are already clear. Despite having caused many of the severe problems the country faces, the Republicans and the Right are again in the ascendancy, having shifted the blame for most of the troubles onto President Barack Obama and the Democrats.

But actions by Americans of goodwill could still salvage what looks like a difficult year ahead by recognizing the mistakes made and extracting some lessons learned.

First, it must be acknowledged that in his first year, President Obama repeated many of the early mistakes of President Bill Clinton—by playing it safe on a number of key issues and hoping against hope that the phantom of Republican bipartisanship would materialize.

Like Clinton, Obama gave his Republican predecessors a pass on their foreign-policy crimes and chose a corporate-friendly strategy for dealing with the health-care crisis.

Obama opted to “look forward, not backward” regarding George W. Bush’s policies on torture and aggressive war. Obama proposed but didn’t push for a public option that might have given a real choice to Americans compelled to buy health insurance under the Democratic-passed House and Senate bills.

Obama also treated America’s miscreant big banks with kid gloves; he watered down the stimulus bill to secure a few Republican votes; he took a tepid approach toward global warming; and he expanded one of Bush’s misbegotten wars. Obama even dressed up elements of the Bush Doctrine as “just wars” in his Nobel Peace Prize speech.

Without doubt, Obama could have done better.

He had a legal and moral obligation to undertake serious investigations of Bush-II-era crimes; he could have temporarily nationalized some of the too-big-too-fail banks to deliver a stern message to executives and shareholders; he could have used his bully pulpit to demand a stronger jobs bill; he could have twisted arms for more effective

health-care and environmental policies; he could have worked harder to find a different course for the Afghan War.

Yet, from my perspective of having lived in Washington for more than three decades, I can understand why he made the choices that he made—even as we published articles at Consortiumnews.com warning of the likely negative consequences of his excessive caution.

If Obama had gotten tougher, he would have been mercilessly trashed by the powerful right-wing news media and its me-too mainstream counterparts. The only real Washington political pressure that Obama faces is to “steer to the center,” as Washington Post columnist David Broder advised on Sunday.

Indeed, it is a measure of today’s Washington press corps that its top pundits consider Obama’s mushy decision-making of the past year as too left-wing.

One can only imagine what the reaction would have been if Obama had channeled an inner Franklin Delano Roosevelt and put the ruling class on the defensive. The first African-American president would have been denounced—even more than he has been—as a commie, a Nazi, an America-hater or pretty much any other epithet that might come to mind, including many with racial overtones.

Nevertheless, many on the American Left insist that an FDR-style Obama could have rallied the masses and overwhelmed the entrenched powers-that-be. But that is magic thinking, because the Left lacks a political/media infrastructure that could support any politician in such an endeavor.

Over the past three decades, the Left has done little to build a media/think tank infrastructure that can challenge Washington’s center-right conventional wisdom either Inside-the-Beltway or in the cities and towns of Middle America. The Left has actually reduced its media presence in Washington and has concentrated what little money it does spend on media on West Coast outlets, mostly in San Francisco, three hours behind and 3,000 miles

away from the political front lines of Washington.

The Right’s investments

Meanwhile, the Right has poured billions of dollars into building its own intimidating media infrastructure based largely in Washington and New York, while also reaching out across the country through talk radio, cable television, print outlets and the Internet.

Further tilting the Washington playing field, the Right invests millions of dollars a year in anti-journalism attack groups, such as Accuracy in Media and the Media Research Center, whose job is to identify and destroy honest mainstream reporters who undercut the Right’s propaganda themes.

Still, many on the Left act as if some other political/media reality exists in Washington and around the United States, that Americans are regularly hearing the case for more progressive solutions when the opposite is true. So, rather than undertake the hard work of building media that informs the public about the nation’s problems and supports responsible political solutions, the Left finds it easier to bash Obama for not being that knight in shining armor who would slay all the dragons....

Hard truth

While this difficult reality doesn’t excuse Obama for failing to meet moral and legal obligations—like enforcing laws against torture—nor for letting the health-care debate meander for the entire year and thus delay other priorities, the media imbalance cannot be ignored either.

It may be satisfying for some on the Left to simply denounce Obama and claim that he is no better than Bush—much like Nader backers previously saw no difference between Bush and Gore—but that misses the point that democracy is not a spectator sport. It’s not enough to sit in the stands and boo.

Nor can one expect a reasonable outcome if one team is well equipped with the finest pads and helmets—and the other goes onto the field with little or no protective gear.

While it might have been an interesting experiment if Obama had simply charged into the fray and tried to rally the public to his side for major progressive reforms, there is little reason to believe that he would have succeeded. And there’s a good chance that some on the Left would still have second-guessed him for not following precisely their preferred game plan.

So, at the dawn of the New Year and a new decade, what can be done?

In my view, first and foremost, there must be a major investment in building a media-political infrastructure that fights for truth and sanity inside the Washington Beltway. That means support for honest journalism and for policy groups on topics from national security to the environment to economic reform.

Such an infrastructure would both support political leaders who do the right thing and hold accountable politicians who don’t.

There also must be expansion of independent means for disseminating important information to Americans across

the country, whether through talk radio, cable television, the Internet or print forms. The U.S. mainstream press corps has been too compromised and weakened to be relied upon.

Today, this outreach to rank-and-file Americans is dominated by the Right, which has shown its capacity to rally the Tea Party crowds to support pro-corporate (anti-government) positions that would continue Bush-like policies that have favored the rich and hurt nearly everyone else.

The ugly truth is that until some media symmetry can be restored, politicians—whatever their personal desires to do good—will continue to make concessions to those who wield the power.

Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. His latest book, Neck Deep: The Disastrous Presidency of George W. Bush, was written with two of his sons, Sam and Nat, and can be ordered at neckdeepbook.com.

Source: Consortium News 12/29/09
<http://www.consortiumnews.com>

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“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.



"The Uh-Ohs": a decade of conservative failure

Terrance Heath

"Stuff happens."

— Donald Rumsfeld on the looting of Iraq following the U.S. invasion.

Forget about "the Aughts." Never mind "the Naughts." The decade just passed — and which promises to leave a lingering, bitter aftertaste — deserves a far better, more descriptive name. So for what it's worth, I hereby dub the past ten years "The Uh-Ohs: A Decade of Conservative Failure." It's as good as any of the others I've heard. Perhaps better. Here's why.

Because despite the wisdom of Donald Rumsfeld, "stuff" doesn't just happen. Despite what Joel Achenbach seems to think, the debacle of the last ten years didn't just happen. And, yes, plenty of people did see it coming. Their warnings were ignored. What followed, then, didn't "just happen," but was the consequence of conscious choice. And, despite what Matt Yglesias seems to think, it is important to discuss and determine the causes of the various messes we find ourselves in. (even if we find along the way the fingerprints of some Democrats Who Should Have Known Better™.)

There were plenty of messes. And, like the clean-up crew after a wild, drunken party, we're still uncovering messes, some of which we can smell before we actually see them. It was a decade during which conservatives controlled both Congress and the White House, and could thus enact much of their agenda. Thus, it was a decade of "uh-ohs" — where the term "uh-oh" is an ubiquitous interjection or expression of dismay in the English language, usually said in anticipation of something bad about to happen, with the sly admittance of guilt that one may have caused something bad to happen, or perceiving that something bad has already

happened. From the economy to energy to security, the "Uh-Ohs" abounded.

Uh-Oh! Conservatives turned yesterday's surplus into today's deficit

It's true. Even the Wall Street Journal had to acknowledge that perhaps the biggest legacy of the Bush years is the huge deficit. In other words, the deficit didn't just happen, and it didn't have to happen. It was the predicted outcome of conservative policy decisions. Basically:

* Bush and congressional conservatives came into office with a \$236 billion surplus projected to last years into the future. They turned it into a \$412 billion deficit, in just four years

* Bush used the existing surplus (and the \$5.6 trillion surplus projected over the next ten years) as justification for huge tax cuts for the wealthy

* Even as the costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan spiraled skyward, Bush refused to pay the costs of waging two wars with tax increases or other budgetary offsets.

* As a result, the government ran a deficit, and paid for some of its biggest expenditures with borrowed money.

* Ever "reality-based," in 2007 the Bush administration predicted a \$61 billion surplus by 2012 but presented a 2008 budget that added \$251 billion to the deficit.

Uh-Oh! Conservatives shrunk the economy

Despite what Glenn Beck and the rest of the conservative noise machine say, what happened to the economy didn't just happen in the past year. And it didn't just happen. It was the predictable outcome of conservative politics and policies during their decade of "uh-ohs."

* Bush and congressional conservatives who supported him, presided over the weakest economy in decades. The number

of jobs increased by only about 2% during the Bush years, and the gross domestic product grew at just a 2.1% annual rate.

* It was the worst decade for the stock market, which was down 26% from where it started in 2000.

Uh-oh! It was the worst decade for jobs

Some 7 million jobs were lost (perhaps permanently), 14.5 million were left unemployed, and 6 million out-of-work adults became discouraged and stopped looking for works and are thus not even counted among the unemployed.

* Manufacturing fell to its lowest level in 26 years

* By the end of the decade, the jobless rate reached a 26-year-high

* There were 6.5 job seekers per job opening, by the end of the decade.

* "One in five Americans are unemployed, underemployed or just plain out of work."

* Bush finished his term with the worst track record ever on jobs since the government began keeping records in 1939.

* In fact, there's been zero net job creation since December 1999

* The 10% unemployment rate isn't expected to change in 2010, and probably won't return to pre-recession levels of less than 5% in the next six years.

This is just a beginning; a brief foray into a decade that was — but certainly didn't have to be — filled with more items like those above.

Such a decade, after all, deserves far more than one blog post.

Besides, we haven't yet covered Iraq, Katrina, economic inequality, e.coli... With ten years of conservative failure to cover, there are definitely more "Uh-Ohs" to come.

Source: *The Campaign for America's Future*, 1/8/10 <http://www.ourfuture.org/>



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Decisions, Decisions...



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The T is Not Silent

Shining the light

Elena Kelly

I was 16 years old. It was October 9, 1972 and I was at the Civic Center Park in downtown Denver at my first protest rally. It was sponsored by AIM (American Indian Movement) to protest a holiday to honor Christopher Columbus' invasion of their sacred lands and the murder of their ancestors. The event was highlighted by the pouring of a bucket of pig's blood over the statue of Columbus that was in the park. Less than a month later, AIM took over the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.

I remember the shock that the people of Colorado, and especially my parents, felt over the news reports of the event. How could the Indians do such a thing when it was the Europeans who brought them true civilization? And besides that, we weren't the ones that murdered their ancestors; our ancestors did, so we shouldn't have to make things right with the Indians! And how dare I go support them at such a spectacle?!

I learned a very important principle from Russell Means that year. When there is a wrong that is not being addressed, someone has to shine the light on that wrong, or it will never be righted. The leaders of AIM brought some light to issues that had been swept under the rug for years.

Thirty-seven years later I remembered that principle that I learned on that cold day in Denver. As a transgender woman, I have seen unthinkable acts perpetrated on transgender people. Even here in California where people go to live their lives as they see fit, harming no one, desiring only to live their truth, transgender people are being killed.

According to transgenderdor.org, San Francisco is the most deadly city for transgender people. Ten years ago the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) was born there to remember those who have been murdered simply for realizing that they do not fit into the gender society expects of them, and trying to live honestly the gender they know themselves

to be. Since then there are annual observances in cities all over the world.

On November 22, 2009, between 125 and 150 people came out to attend Stockton's first ever TDOR. These people came to a very solemn and sad event. We remembered Alfred "Ariana" Dibble, who was murdered right here in Stockton solely because he wanted to live as Ariana. Each person attending also read one of the more than 100 names of those who were killed in California in 2009, and then lit a candle to shine a light on that life the world lost needlessly.

To some who do not know or understand transgender people, there is a lot of fear and misunderstanding. I was interviewed at the Memorial by Danielle, a reporter for Channel 3 in Sacramento just before the service began. She asked a question I have never been asked before. She asked, "What do you think is the most dangerous misunderstanding that people have about transgender people?"

I replied, "Many think we are trying to be something we are not. For example, some people believe I am trying to be a woman. But quite the opposite is the truth.

We are trying to live the truth of who we know ourselves to be. I am not trying to be a woman, I AM a woman. I am not trying to deceive anyone about whom and what I am. I was doing that when I allowed people to believe I was a man. I was socialized to live in a male role, and yet all those years I knew I was a woman and was only pretending to be a man for my own self-preservation. But as Anais Nin once said."

the day came when the risk to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." At age 52 the risk I took to live as a woman became less painful than the risk to my life and happiness to continue to live a lie.

The discrimination and murder of transgender people is a wrong, and I must shine a light on it or it will never be righted. That is why I must be out, why I must do the TDOR in my town, and why I must never stop talking about it.

Elena Kelly is a co-chapter leader of Marriage Equality San Joaquin, Vice Chair of the Peace and Justice Network, and Director of the Stockton Transgender Alliance. She can be reached at elena.kelly@comcast.net.

Health care reform & abortion

Jessica Arons

Regrettably, abortion has taken center stage in the health care reform debate. The Stupak Amendment in the House bill is more restrictive than the Senate bill, but both impose unprecedented restrictions on abortion coverage. Specifically:

- * Under current law, federal money cannot be spent on an abortion unless it threatens the woman's life or results from rape or incest. However, there are no restrictions on coverage in private plans.

- * Under the Senate bill, private insurance companies would have to separate private premiums from federal subsidies to ensure no federal money is spent on abortion beyond what is currently allowed.

- * The House bill bars federal subsidies to health plans that include abortion services. Abortion could be offered in a health plan only if the plan accepted no federal subsidies.

The two bills must now be reconciled. Simple changes to the Senate version, such as removal of the two-premium requirement, would prevent new restrictions on abortion coverage. But whether those changes can and will be made remains to be seen.

ACTION: Call your Senator.

Source: RH Reality Check 1/15/10 <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org>



Sawznhammers

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

Long ago, far away, here now

John Morearty

"The world will be saved by beauty," Dostoevsky wrote. Dorothy Day loved that saying. She was an ex-Communist and grassroots journalist who founded the Catholic Worker newspaper and movement, and gave her life to feeding the poor and resisting war and injustice. A supporter once gave her an expensive diamond ring; she wore it for a while and then handed it to a poor woman who admired it. She said, "The poor need beauty too."

In this poor struggling year 2010, we need beauty. Here are three recent jewels - a novel, a true story and a board game.

In Barbara Kingsolver's new novel *Lacuna*, The Boy learns to hold his breath and swim in the warm waters of Yucatan. He finds an underwater cave, a lacuna, swims inside, and we hold our breath as he discovers beauty.

My wife and I read this magnificent historical novel aloud to each other, shivering crying and laughing out loud as The Boy holds his mother's hand across the swaying bridge to visit the brujo, goes to Mexico City (back in 1929), meets Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo and becomes part of their household, and meets Leon Trotsky who took refuge from Stalin's assassins with them. Then Washington, the Great Depression, World War Two....

This is a subtle, many-layered work of fiction, studded with hard chunks of actual New York Times articles and direct quotes from Trotsky and Senator Joe McCarthy. It's a reflective journey among Aztecs and conquistadors, a climb to the tops of Mexican pyramids, a boat ride among the flowering canals of Xochimilco. It's half a dozen radiant love stories of many sorts, and a long encounter with the outrageous and vivid Frida Kahlo. "I tell stories," said Kingsolver in an interview; "I want readers to feel my characters, and to think."

Ria and I read her breathtaking ending driving north out of Sacramento on a crystalline day, enchanted by the white peak of Mount Shasta a 150 miles away.

Like that mountain, Lacuna is astonishing and real.

The mountains of northern Pakistan and Afghanistan are the setting of Greg Mortenson's inspiring life's work, building schools for Muslim girls - since 1994, 138 schools, 50,000 girls. In his first book *Three Cups of Tea* (more than three million copies sold in thirty countries) he tells the wild story of how the work began, getting lost on a glacier after failing to climb K2, the world's second highest mountain. Just last fall he published *Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, not Bombs*, in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We're reading this one aloud too, and it's quite a tale:

Brave tribal leaders weary of fighting Russians and Taliban, eager for peace so they can sit by the river, grow their apricots and educate their children. Arrogant lying bureaucrats in Kabul. Thoughtful American officers like Admiral Mike Mullen, who understand how urgent it is to teach the children, especially the girls. Kirghiz horsemen who ride for six days at the edge of winter on nothing but tea and chewing tobacco, to beg a school for their boys and girls in the remotest corner of Afghanistan, up at 12,000 feet, miles beyond the end of the dirt road - "the last best place."

There's Mortenson's beloved *Dirty Dozen*, a ragged collection of misfits - former gem smugglers, taxi drivers, refugees and Taliban, men of various tribes and three different Islamic sects, united by their passion unto death for the education of Muslim girls. "Educate a boy, you educate an individual; educate a girl, you educate a village."

And of course there are the girls, many now women-lawyers, teachers, health care workers. Like Nasreen, brilliant student, who was forbidden by her mother-in-law and the village elders to accept a scholarship; so she bore three children plus two miscarriages, worked the fields and hauled wood and water for ten years till the village council changed and allowed her to go with her family

to the city to study for an OB-GYN nursing degree. "The lamp in my life refused to be snuffed out," she says; "Allah never let the kerosene of hope run dry. I learned patience."

We heard Greg Mortenson in Sacramento recently, he packed the downtown library. "What do I think of the 30 thousand more troops? Well, Obama did not consult the village elders. There are two rules: consult the elders, educate the girls."

Locally in Woodbridge a couple of schoolteachers, Dave and Lynne Greulich, have created a beautiful educational board game: *LEAVES*, the Earth Operating System game (www.eosgame.com). The board itself is a delicate work of art: from a glowing earth, branches radiate in all directions, waiting for bright green leaves representing correct answers. (If players answer wrong, they disfigure the board with ugly dull red leaves the color of dried blood!) The questions range from "how many tons of carbon emissions are saved by turning up air conditioners one degree?" to "who said, when people realize the power of love, then for the second time human beings will have discovered fire?"

We bought copies of the game for our 12 year old grandchildren, and they love it. It's both cooperative and competitive. Players can ask for help in answering questions, and split the reward. Individuals can get a high score, but if the group as a whole does not amass enough points, they all go "extinct"! Just like *Real Life*.

It's possible to avoid landing on a toxic waste dump, but if a player does land on one and answers his/her question wrong, the player is **EXPELLED FROM THE GAME!** That happened to me, and my grandchildren howled with delight.

The game has won two awards from Dr. Toy, the toy rating group: 100 Best Products, and Best Green Product. We have fun playing it, and it's very pretty to look at.

Beauty will save the world - if we feel for others, think, and work at it.



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US Social Forum 2010

Under the banner "Another World is Possible, Another US is Necessary" the US Social Forum will re-convene in Detroit, MI, June 22-26, 2010. After a successful and lively debut in Atlanta, GA in June of 2007 this promises to be an even more eventful movement-building experience.

The US Social Forum is more than a conference, more than a networking bonanza, more than a reaction to war and repression. The USSF will provide space to build relationships, learn from each other's experiences, share our analysis of the problems our communities face, and bring renewed insight and inspiration. It will help develop leadership and develop consciousness, vision, and strategy needed to realize another world.

The USSF sends a message to other people's movements around the world: that there is an active movement in the US opposing US policies at home and abroad. We must declare what we want our world to look like and begin planning the path to get there. A global movement is rising. The USSF is our opportunity to demonstrate to the world that Another World is Possible!

People world-wide know that another world is needed. The Social Forum movement believes that is possible. At the US Social Forum, people from all over the country gather to think about what kind of world is needed and how we can get there.

The US Social Forum is a very special kind of gathering, one that has never taken place in this country up to now. It isn't a conference with an agenda and a program of events; it's a gathering whose participants produce our own agenda and our own programs.

The mere process of planning, thinking, talking and preliminary organizing moves people forward. The moment you think of an idea, you are already participating in the Social Forum. This year's USSF will take place in downtown Detroit at Cobo Hall and Hart

Plaza, as well as at the Wayne County Community College District Downtown Campus and Wayne State University.

Local representatives attend 2007 US Social Forum

In the summer of 2007 Stockton/San Joaquin Co. was represented by Ruben Joe Mesta and Katie Hill of Youth Matters who attended the US Social Forum in Atlanta, GA. Their trip was hastily prepared when 2 local youth representatives were offered matching funds by representatives of Youth In Focus, a group that coordinated the trip. This year, the event will re-convene from June 22-26 in Detroit, Michigan. I would like to propose that we form a steering committee with a purpose to send a delegation of youth and young adults to represent our area and our needs. I suggest we start with the local ESPINO Youth group, WOW, and 1st UU Youth group and seek youth interested in attending this event. I suggest we organize some issues-workshops on the following subjects to prepare them for the trip:

- * Prison reform/alternatives to incarceration (specific to the Central Valley's Prison Alley)

- * Education reform/new pedagogy/charter schools

- * Youth organizing movements in California

The above issues are constantly and thoroughly addressed by our local ESPINO youth organizing group. In October they hosted a summit at SJ Delta College where 400 youth attended workshops on these issues and convened a final panel discussion, where education experts and criminal justice professionals also addressed these issues from a youth perspective.

But we should not ignore these other pressing and timely issues our next generation must deal



with:

- * Health care and single payer systems

- * Sustainable energy use/ green technologies/ climate change

- * Urban development/inner-city rebuilding

- * Water wars and sustainable water usage/ watershed restoration and returning to an ecology balance (specific to Central Valley interests)

- * Economics and the neo-liberal agenda

- * Endless wars (War on Terror) and the military industrial complex

- * Collective bargaining/ workplace rights and union organizing

All of these issues will be thoroughly examined and alternatives to the status quo and ingrained paradigms will be explored. Any local group or individual with expertise in the above subjects, who would like to present a workshop or present information, please contact Jim Walsh at (209) 981-0544

Anyone interested in sitting on a steering committee to organize and fund such a trip for a delegation from Stockton/San Joaquin, please contact me by e-mail at jwprod1956@clearwire.net or call 981-0544. For more information on the US Social Forum see: <http://www.ussf2007.org/en/vision> or <http://www.ussf2010.org>

Grammy-nominated children's music stars
Greg & Steve
coming to Stockton!

Shows...
Wed, Feb 3, 10 am
Thurs, Feb 4, 10 am
Fri, Feb 5, 10 am & 1 pm
Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave

Tickets:
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Call 209-462-2536
<http://www.musicalchairsconcerts.org>

Plans for community center

Meditating For Health, a holistic healing nonprofit, has launched its new website at www.MeditatingForHealth.com.

Meditating For Health wants to purchase 2108 Country Club Boulevard, a 3,139 square foot residence between I-5 and Pershing. It envisions a large gathering room, an arts and crafts room, an office, gift shop, reading room, kitchen and dining room, and four meeting, healing, and meditation rooms. The grounds will contain organic vegetable beds and a worm farm.

The center's programs will include gardening, reiki healing, meditation classes and spaces, children's services and activities,

support groups, arts and crafts, a neighborhood visiting service, and space for meditative "hibernation". People who want to learn and practice new skills can work with the monthly newsletter, in paper and email, the gift shop, the cooperative kitchen, or the organic vegetable beds.

In order for the nonprofit's offer to be presented to the bank which holds the mortgage, it must raise \$35,000. A raffle will be held; details are available on the website. Volunteers will be called upon for every aspect of the center's work.

The project coordinator is Zing Nafzinger, and you can reach her at (209) 423-8322, i.m.zing@comcast.net.

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

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

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February Calendar

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

Jan 5 - 29

Local art teachers show. M-F 10-5, Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Jan 13 - Feb 7

Are You Being Served?, Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15 - \$25. 473-2424.

Jan 21 - Feb 17

New Faculty Art Show: Gary Carlos sculpture, Kirstyn Russell photography, Ruth Santee color & design. T 11am - 4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am - 1pm. SJ Delta College, LH Horton Jr Gallery, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 954-5507.

Mon, Jan 25

Health care politics in the US, with Michael Dukakis. 5 - 6:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP campus. Free. 946-2385.

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

Tues, Jan 26

New Pacific Trio featuring Ann Miller violin, Nina Flyer (Grammy-nominated) cellist, Sonia Leong pianist. 7:30 pm. Recital Hall, UOP campus. \$7 general, \$5 senior, UOP students free.

Mon, Feb 1

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

Feb 2 - 25

Annual student art show. M-F 10-5, Reception Fri 2/12, awards 6 pm. Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Wed, Feb 3

Black History Month lecture by CNN's "Black in America" correspondent Soledad O'Brien. 7 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP campus. Free.

Feb 3 - Feb 5

Grammy-nominated children's musicians Greg & Steve will perform in Stockton right after the Grammy awards. Join them. Central United Methodist Church. \$9/\$12. 209-462-2536 (see ad p. 18 for details).

Feb 4 - May 2

79th Annual McKee Student Art contest and exhibition. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. Hundreds of art works by SJ County students from K-12. Wed-Sun 1:30 - 5 pm. 1st and 3rd Thurs 1:30 - 9 pm. \$5 adult 18 & older, student/senior/youth age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10/first Saturday free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

Thurs, Feb 4

Jazz series with Patrick Langham quartet at the Haggin - the music of Nancy Wilson. Refreshments 6:30, show 7 pm. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave. Free with regular admission: \$5 adult, student/senior/youth age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10 free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

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

Fri, Feb 5

Tidewater Souper Supper Fundraiser, 5:30 pm. soup/bread/wine/dessert, auction 6:30 pm. Scottish Rite Center, 33 W. Alpine. \$40. 463-4033.

Sat, Feb 13

Stockton Symphony Valentine Pops "Broadway Romance" concert, with songs from Phantom, West Side Story and Man of La Mancha. 6 pm. SJ Delta College Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave. 951-0196. \$20-55.

Celtic Family Festival with games, music, dance, poetry. 1:30 - 4 pm. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave. \$5 adult, student/senior/youth 10-17 \$2.50. under 10 free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

Sun, Feb 14

Amelia Piano Trio, featuring Anthea Kreston violin, Jason Duckles cello, and Rieko Aizawa piano, playing Debussy, Bernstein and Chopin. 2:30 pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP campus. \$25. 946-0540 or www.chambermusicfriends.org

Mon, Feb 15

Susan B. Anthony Women of Achievement Awards Banquet, sponsored by the SJ Co Commission on the Status of Women. Stockton Golf and Country Club, 3800 Country Club Bl. 6 pm. Reservations only, by Jan 31. \$45. 463-6957.

Sun, Feb 28

Peace & Justice Network annual potluck and meeting. Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 4 - 7 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

SAVE THE DATE:

Sat March 20

Major peace demonstration in San Francisco (also L.A., Washington D.C.)

First Mondays

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

Fourth Mondays

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

Second Tuesdays

Single Payer San Joaquin meeting, 6:30 pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. cjbhcfasj@hotmail.com

Thursdays

Stand up for peace and justice! Cheerful demonstration along Pacific Avenue, edge of Delta north of bus stop at Yokuts. 4-5:15 pm. Free parking at Sherwood Mall. Signs provided, or bring your own. Info: John, 464-3326.

Fridays

Downtown Stockton Certified Farmers' Market, Main Street in front of the Fox Theatre, Stockton. 9 am - 2 pm. Free. 464-5246.

Saturdays

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

Amelia Piano Trio presents Valentine's Day chamber music

A romantic Valentine's Day program is promised by the Amelia Piano Trio in its Stockton debut on February 14 at the Faye Spanos Concert Hall at UOP at 2:30 pm. Presented by Friends of Chamber Music (FOCM).

The Amelia has appeared to critical acclaim in major music halls throughout North America. Musicians Anthea Kreston on violin, Jason Duckles on cello, and Rieko Aizawa on piano are all award-winning soloists.

In their Stockton debut, the trio will play Claude Debussy's Trio in G Major; an unexpected trio from composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein; and one of the very few chamber works by Frederic Chopin, his Trio in G Minor (Op. 8).

Non-subscription tickets at \$25 will be available in the lobby. Students admitted free, as are children ages five and above. For a brochure or more information about the artists or the FOCM series, call 209-946-0540 or visit www.chambermusicfriends.org.



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

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

Firedoglake <http://firedoglake.com>

Daily Kos <http://www.dailykos.com>

Emptywheel <http://emptywheel.firedoglake.com/>

Calitics <http://www.calitics.com/>

Eschaton <http://www.eschatonblog.com/>

Huffington Post <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

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

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

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

FiveThirtyEight.com <http://www.fivethirtyeight.com/>

Congress Matters <http://www.congressmatters.com>

Think Progress <http://thinkprogress.com>

Down With Tyranny <http://downwithtyranny.blogspot.com/>

Crooks and Liars <http://www.crooksandliars.com>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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/>

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

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

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

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

We're on the web too!

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

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>

And the Survey Says!

Connections & YOU

Thank you so much once again for supporting us in more ways than one. As 2009 drew to a close we sent out our Winter Fundraising Letter and Survey. About 100 readers responded by mail, and some deciphered the Survey Monkey and responded electronically. The results are in, here are the results.

We are evenly represented by both women (55%) and men (45%). Respondents were predominately 51-70 years old (53%). 77% receive *Connections* by mail and contribute. Thank you again! 50% of you share your copy and overall the layout and graphics are acceptable and fine they way they are. You provided some suggestions including asking that the graphics be gentler and less 'radical rag' looking to adding political cartoons or local art. 80% are satisfied with the content and

98% would be satisfied to ok but not happy if *Connections* become an every 2 month paper.

Your support for *Connections* was very gratifying. We have connected with 10 paper route volunteers. This is a huge help, we can always use more because this is one of the most labor intensive activities of *Connections*. Hopefully we have several new contributors for articles; we look forward to working with individuals and organizations to use *Connections* as a forum to educate the Valley community and to present upcoming events.

We will continue to review the comments made and the survey results will add to ongoing discussion of where *Connections* is headed in 2010.

—C. Kelley, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Board

Thank you!

Your generous donations for 2009 can be broken down in the following categories. Each and every penny is appreciated, all that we do relies on the financial support and volunteer hours provide by you.

\$5.00—\$30.00	52 donors
\$35.00—\$55.00	70 donors
\$60.00- \$90.00	32 donors
\$100.00—\$400.00	39 donors
\$1,000.00—\$2,000.00	2 donors

\$35.00 has been our recommended donation to support the ongoing publication of *Connections*. We are grateful to those able to give more and are truly appreciative of those who gave what you could. We can not do it without you!



Peace banners bloom

Architects of Peace

Huge black and white banners around town announce "Architects of Peace": Dalai Lama coming to Delta! Bono to Pacific! Nelson Mandela will be in the halls of Edison High, Mother Teresa at Stagg, micro-finance organizer Mohammed Yunnus at Franklin, African planter of trees and womanpower Wangari Maathai at Lincoln High, and Cesar Chavez at (of course) Cesar Chavez.

Not in person, of course. But large poster-size photos of these and hundreds of other Nobel Peace Prize winners will adorn the seven sites from February to May. Each site will feature dozens of photos (along with bios and personal statements), which will rotate sites every few weeks. Mingled

among them will be photos of thirty local PeaceBuilders chosen in a city-wide nominating process, including six associates of the Peace and Justice Network: Christie Kelley, Paula LeVeck, John Morearty, Chanda Chinn, and two whose TV shows the Network sponsors, Sammy Nunez and Dean Margee Ensign.

The schools will also receive suggestions for curriculum and community service projects, based on and inspired by the lives of the peacemakers, embodying themes of forgiveness and tolerance. The project is "a vision of hope for our young people, in words, images and peacemaking activities," according to Rima Barkett, who chairs a committee composed of

local businesspeople, educators and elected officials who have been working enthusiastically since late last summer.

The photos are the work of Michael Collopy, whose Architects of Peace Foundation also has exhibits at Stanford, University of Santa Clara and Marquette University. "We try to inspire individual transformation through the life example of the world's peacemakers, including in this case thirty remarkable people from right here. We want to help educate the youth of Stockton about social change and world peace."

For more information visit www.architectsofpeace.org, or call Rima Barkett at 209-939-9025.

Become a PEACE PAL!

Please consider giving to PJN month by month. It will give us stable, predictable funding to continue providing our services. It's easy for you and cost-effective for us. Our website online donation is recommended for ease and convenience. Your monthly donation can be automatically withdrawn from your bank account.

Monthly Giving Enrollment Form

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Yes, I accept your invitation to become a charter member of Peace Pals.

Here is my monthly pledge contribution of:

- \$10 \$15 \$20 \$25 \$(Other)_____

I prefer to donate by one of the following methods:

- U.S. mail; please send me envelopes
 Online donation through PJN website: www.pjnsjc.org (click on donation button)
 Automatic Bank Transfer
 I've enclosed a check for my first contribution. Arrangements will be made by me with my bank for future pledges.

Mail checks to: Peace and Justice Network, P.O. Box 4123, Stockton CA 95204

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