

connections

PRICELESS

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SAVE THE DATES

FEBRUARY 27
**PJN ANNUAL POTLUCK/
MEETING (P 20)**

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ANTI- WAR DEMO, SF (P 20)

APRIL 10
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The Race to Save Civilization

Lester Brown

If we look at early civilizations that declined and collapsed, such as those of the Sumerians and Mayans—more often than not it was a shortage of food that brought them down....

Three major threats to global food production

Let's consider three threats to our food supply: falling water tables, melting ice sheets, and melting mountain glaciers. Water tables are now falling in countries that contain half the world's people, including the big three grain producers: China, India, and the United States. Water tables are falling because of overpumping, mostly from irrigation. Seventy percent of all the water we use in the world is for irrigation. What we are doing is inflating food production in the short run by overpumping aquifers. But once the aquifers are depleted, then pumping is necessarily reduced to the rate of recharge. So in effect we're creating food bubbles in at least 15, maybe 20 countries in the world, including the two big ones, China and India. A World Bank study indicates that 175 million people in India and 130 million in China are being fed with grain produced by overpumping. Another food bubble is Saudi Arabia, which has been pumping from a fossil aquifer and has been self-sufficient in wheat production for 20 years. That aquifer is now largely depleted. Fossil aquifers do not recharge. Saudi Arabia's wheat production has dropped 70 percent in the last three years and will probably be at zero by the year after next.... Yemen is not far behind.

The second environmental threat to food security is melting ice sheets. If the Greenland ice sheet were to melt entirely—and that would not happen overnight—it would raise sea level some 23 feet. If the west Antarctic ice sheet, which has started to break

up, breaks up entirely, that will raise sea level another 15 feet. The latest projections are of a rise of up to six feet during this century. But even a three-foot rise in sea level would put half the rice land in Bangladesh underwater. A three-foot rise would cover much of the Mekong Delta, which produces half the rice in Vietnam, which is the world's number two rice exporter. There are another 19 rice-growing river deltas that would be affected in varying degrees by just a one-meter rise in sea level....

The third threat is melting mountain glaciers in the Himalayas and on the Tibetan Plateau. It is the ice melt from those glaciers that sustains the major rivers of Asia during the dry season: the Indus, Ganges, Mekong, Yangtze, Yellow, and many smaller rivers. This ice melt sustains the flow of these rivers and the irrigation dependent on them. So what happens to those mountain glaciers in Asia is going to affect food prices for everyone in the world. ...

Why demand for grain is increasing

Now consider the demand side of the food equation. Population growth is at 80 million more people a year. That means that tonight there were 216,000 people at the dinner table who were not there last night, and tomorrow night there'll be an additional 216,000 people at the dinner table....

Second, large populations moving up the food chain is a

relatively recent development in human history and evolution. It's only since World War II that livestock products—beef, eggs, milk, pork, and poultry—have begun to be produced largely with grain. Moving up the food chain takes more grain.

The third factor in increasing demand for food is the capacity we now have to convert grain into oil, i.e., ethanol. Last year we harvested 415 million tons of grain in this country. One-hundred-and-six million tons of that harvest went to ethanol distilleries. ...

These three factors all generate an additional demand for grain. That's why we saw a few years ago a tripling of world grain prices, while grain prices right now are about 50 percent above the historical level. They've not gone back, nor do I expect they will. So food is the weak link in the system. We see this not only with grain prices but also with the number of hungry people in the world, which declined until about the turn of this century and for the last decade has been increasing. That's exactly what happened with the Sumerians and the Mayans. The number of hungry people began to increase.

This is a trend that deserves far more attention than we're giving it. With rising food prices and more hungry people, the number of failing states is increasing, typically by another two or three countries a year. How many failing states before we have a failing global civilization? We don't know.

A viable strategy

In response to this situation, we've devised Plan B, now described in a new edition *Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*. Let's consider two components of Plan B (and there are more in the book):

1. Cut Carbon Emissions 80 percent by 2020

We need to make this cut not by 2050, which is what politicians like to talk about, but by 2020. We didn't ask what would be politically feasible. We asked how much and how fast we need to cut carbon emissions if we want to save the Greenland ice sheet. Because if we can't save the Greenland ice sheet, we are in trouble. And it is still doable. For example, if we just went to the most efficient lighting technologies available now, worldwide—in most cases that's compact fluorescent bulbs, in some situations like streetlights it's LEDs, light-emitting diodes—we can close 705 of the 2,500 coal-fired power plants in the world from electricity savings, just completing the transition that's already under way, of shifting to the most economically available lighting technologies on the market today.

2. Restore the Earth's Natural Systems

Forests, grasslands, fisheries, soils, and so forth all need to be restored. It's entirely doable. We worked out a budget. Restoration of natural systems, soil conservation, reforestation, eradication of poverty—which is one of the major components—

(continued page 3)

Saving civilization is not a spectator sport. We all have a stake in the future, but we all have to get involved.

Leaks set the truth free

Bruce Giudici

Ignorance cannot win. Drowning in a sea of information, readers rely on the objectivity of the mainstream media whose "equal time" mindset distorts any allegiance to factual reporting. This results in the continual questioning of solid facts: evolution, climate change, weapons of mass destruction, Republican deficits and indictments, American allies corrupt and complicit. The list is familiar—and consistently questioned by those with the loudest megaphone, to the point that the lie repeated becomes fact. Until now: in the field of foreign affairs, to the rescue comes Wikileaks.

While only around 2,000 Wikileaks documents out of 250,000 have been released, those we know of have documented that which our government protests never existed. The shock in

international government circles is that of the emperor discovered unclothed.

Now, we have a glimpse of facts upon which our leaders make decisions. This glimpse shows, in some cases, that governments lie, cheat, steal, and kill for political gain. No real surprise—it's just that, now, it's hard to find enough "balance" to confuse the public. Detailed confirmations of what we already suspected can be used to discourage foreign adventures that destroy, disempower, and kill. When you've had your fill, contact your representatives or write a letter.

The release of the foreign Wiki-cables also raises strong suspicions that domestic decisions are made in the same ethical cauldron. When bank documents are released later this year, we can force government to take the lead in doing the right thing: to create

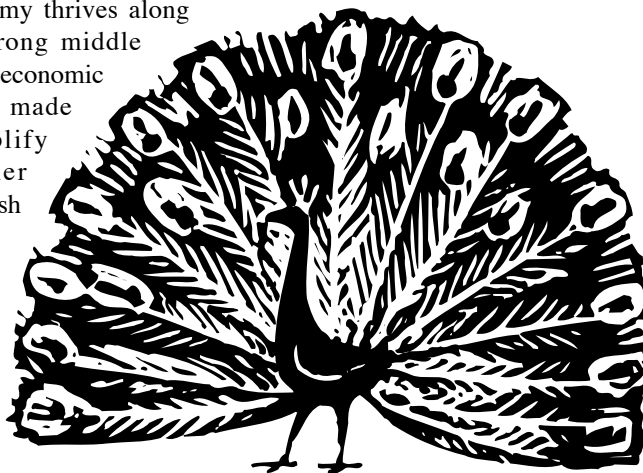
a level playing field in the area of financial services, as well as in elections, health care, education, environmental justice and the like. Again, raise your voice.

And finally, the coming months will call into question that which we value: public service budgets will be created. As we witness the needless argument over what important service to cut, remember that: we live in the time of greatest income and wealth inequality in the past 90 years and that our economy thrives along with a strong middle class. The economic decisions made now amplify the former and diminish the latter: decisions that will further m o v e

Bruce Giudici, editor



this country in the wrong direction. Let us hope that we awaken from this slumber—and that ignorance not be allowed to win.



Feedback

Tax and spin

Editor,

The acrid haze that hangs over much of the United States is not due to your neighbor burning shingles off Grandpa's old privy. Nor can it be explained by the accumulating particles of industrial activity that once defined a vigorous yet now disintegrating manufacturing sector. Somewhere, at an undisclosed location, Edward and David Koch, former House Speaker Dick Armey, and various other millionaire and billionaire "grass roots" organizers of the Tea Party movement are conducting a bonfire. What are they burning? Why, those "Obama is a Socialist" signs, of course.

For months, using vituperative propaganda through media conduits such as Fox News and AM radio's seemingly endless cadre of fact averse, obstreperous, incendiary "mouth merchants", they have completed their mission of media manipulation and evidently convinced a majority of Americans that making rich people even richer will somehow lead to gold for all "hard working, patriotic Americans." Despite

the fact that the nation has lost over three million manufacturing jobs during the Bush years, the counter-productive tax cuts in place during this time seems not to be of concern. Nor is the fact that the furtherance of what was agreed at one time to be "temporary" tax cuts will add \$900 billion to that "crushing debt" we simply couldn't pass on to our children and grandchildren. Four trillion dollars in revenue will be lost in the next decade alone should the cuts become permanent, which, in essence, they already have.

The recipients of this largess, many whose malfeasance in the financial community led to our recession, will now pocket additional millions after receiving tax payer bailouts from successive administrations. "Love America First" Republicans bartered the lives of millions of fellow Americans on unemployment with the "Capitulator-in Chief" now currently basking in bipartisan glow, demanding that the \$12.5 billion in benefits for those not working be repaid whilst saying nothing of the current tax bill's \$900 billion price tag

to the country. Manufacturing magnates will continue to scour the globe for cheap land and labor, further eroding America's manufacturing base. Free trade and NAFTA, abetted by both Clinton and Bush 43 with no signs of future abatement, are a few of the culprits along with simple, old fashioned avarice. Some folks may be pleased to know that companies such as Exxon-Mobil, with a "meager" \$19 billion in profits last year, after write-offs and deductions, will pay NO federal income taxes and receive a \$134 million rebate check to boot.

Meanwhile, the Military Industrial Complex President Eisenhower warned of will see a 7% rise in funds allotted, with the US now comprising 46.5 % of the WORLD'S military spending. Wealth is more concentrated in the upper 2% than at any time since 1928. Anyone out there remember what happened next? And the estate tax will remain at 35% so the projected annual 6,600 club-hopping, Rodeo Drive shopping, globe trotting, frequently-rehabbing elite, will have an additional \$1.5 million

in their rapacious little hands next year. But geez, they "work" so much harder than the rest of us.

And five black-robed vigilantes posing as Supreme Court justices with a preponderance towards decrying "judicial activism" and then enacting Democracy-annihilating decisions such as "Citizens v. United" will have completed our descent into a two-tiered, Fascist state. Business and government are now one in the same entity. Assuming I live long enough, I may indeed be "fortunate" to meet some of you in the inevitable soup lines and food handouts that are already overwhelmed and proliferating across a country that has lost all sense of priorities. I may end up starving. But I won't be starving and stupid! As I stated earlier, it's "safe" to burn the "Obama is a Socialist" signs. The man has been...co-opted. I would, in the interest of prudence, hang onto to your "Keep Your Damn Hands off MY Medicare" placards, as well as those making like claims to Social Security. You may need them, sooner than you think.

Dave Waldon, 12/27/10

Connections

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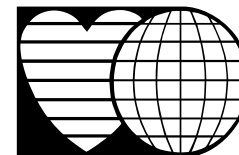
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future generations."

How to talk to a climate skeptic

Laurie Litman

It's beyond frustrating that, while the imminent consequences from climate change require everyone on earth to be engaged in solutions, there are still millions of people not only in denial but actively fighting any meaningful changes.

Many of these are sadly uninformed, taken in by well-financed campaigns by corporations that profit from avoiding action on climate change.

The facts are clear: climate change is already occurring and humankind's future will be highly impacted by these changes.

For those who are honestly confused, it may be useful to discuss the issues. To help you with this, there is an excellent series of articles that provides well thought-out scientific responses to all of the most common arguments of the

climate change skeptics.

This series, by Coby Beck, runs in *Grist* at <http://www.grist.org/article/series/skeptics/>. It is beautifully organized in four sections: Stages of Denial, Scientific Topics, Types of Argument, and Levels of Sophistication. Within each of these are more sections and the articles that rebut each argument. My favorites are the four categories within Levels of Sophistication: Silly, Naive, Specious, and Scientific.

Here is a response to the objection that "Natural emissions dwarf human emissions" (note that there are links to many of the concepts in the article online):

Answer: It's true that natural fluxes in the carbon cycle are much larger than anthropogenic emissions. But for roughly the last 10,000 years, until the industrial revolution, every gigatonne of

carbon going into the atmosphere was balanced by one coming out.

What humans have done is alter one side of this cycle. We put approximately 6 gigatonnes of carbon into the air but, unlike nature, we are not taking any out.

Thankfully, nature is compensating in part for our emissions, because only about half the CO₂ we emit stays in the air. Nevertheless, since we began burning fossil fuels in earnest over 150 years ago, the atmospheric concentration that was relatively stable for the previous several thousand years has now risen by over 35%.

So whatever the total amounts going in and out "naturally," humans have clearly upset the balance and significantly altered an important part of the climate system.

www.grist.org/article/series/skeptics/

The Race to Save Civilization *(continued from page 1)*

and stabilization of population all together budget out at about \$200 billion of additional expenditures a year. That's quite a bit. But we're spending \$1.2 trillion (six times that) now for military expenditures. We need to redefine security. We think the threats to our future are military. The real threats to our future security and political stability are climate change, falling water tables, and rising food prices.

Can we move fast enough?

We're beginning to move in the right direction but we've got to move faster. When I see how much we have to do and how little time in which to do it, I go back and read the economic history of World War II. One month after the surprise attack by the Japanese on the U.S. Pacific Fleet, President Roosevelt laid out U.S. arms production goals. He said, "We're going to produce 45,000 tanks, 60,000 planes, at least a few thousands ships." We were still in the Depression mode economy at the time, and people could not grasp this, but what he and his colleagues realized was that at that time the single largest concentration of industrial power in the world was in the U.S. automobile industry, because

even during the Depression we'd been making 2 million or 3 million cars a year. He called in the leaders of the automobile industry and said, "Because you represent such a large share of our industrial capacity, we're going to rely heavily on you to help us reach these goals." They said, "Mr. President, we'll do everything we can, but it's going to be a stretch, producing cars and all these arms too." He said: "You don't understand. We're going to ban the sale of cars in the United States." And that's exactly what we did, and we exceeded every one of those goals.

We're now in a race between tipping points—between natural tipping points and political tipping points. ...

Saving civilization is not a spectator sport. We all have a stake in the future. Most of us have children. Many of us have grandchildren. We all have a stake in the future, but we all have to get involved. Many of us are already involved, but if you're not, pick an issue that's important to you. Is it stabilizing world population? Work with some of the groups that are working on that. Is it closing coal-fired power plants? There's a campaign under way and they could use your help to close

existing plants. Or what about developing a world-class recycling program in your community? Save enormous amounts of energy. We forget how much energy we save having good recycling plants.

So my challenge to you is a very simple one. It is to get involved in these issues. This is not something that may happen at some distant point in the future. These are things that are already happening. We are now on a path that's headed toward economic decline and collapse. The question is, can we move off that path? Can we restructure the world energy economy quickly enough to stabilize climate, for example? These are our challenges.

Lester Brown is founder of the Worldwatch Institute and founder and president of the Earth Policy Institute and considered "one of the great pioneer environmentalists." He is the author or co-author of more than 50 books on global environmental issues, most recently Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization, **which can be downloaded free at http://www.earth-policy.org/images/uploads/book_files/pb4book.pdf**.

Article abridged by John Morearty. Whole article in the September-October issue of Tikkun, <http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/september2010brown>

10:10* Diary: Final Entry

Laurie Litman

This is the last entry in my 10:10 diary. Our family committed to cutting 10% of our carbon emissions in 2010 and we've just finished the preliminary calculations (more in-depth analysis is to be done). How did we do? Using the nice usage graphs at PG&E and SMUD, plus odometer readings, here are the bottom-line results:

Electricity: down 29%

Gas: down 14%

Car miles: down 14%

We reached our 10% and more! Plus, no plane trips this year and over 1,100 bicycle miles for me and 8,955 bicycle miles for husband Dale (up from 7,800 last year).

What did we learn and where do we go from here?

This was the easy year. The low-hanging fruit year. We switched most lightbulbs to fluorescent, turned off lights, hung up clothes to dry instead of using the dryer, switched to double paned windows, and generally became more aware of our energy use. We also had our first crop from the community garden plot (thousands of cherry tomatoes!), bought more from the farmers market and less from out of the area, took time out to walk and bicycle places, and generally lived a more local, more healthy lifestyle.

Now, in 2011, we're going to cut another 10%. It's a tougher challenge this time and the data from this year can help inform our actions. We'll try to put all electrical items on power strips and turn them off when not in use; leave the car at home more often—not easy; and sometime this year we'll give up our old refrigerator for a super energy efficient one. Note that we're working on efficiency; we haven't had to sacrifice or give up comfort in any way.

And then there is the larger picture. Individual lifestyle changes are necessary, but not sufficient to solve the climate crisis. We need to change the way our governments and institutions do business, at all levels from local to global. Changes in procurement. Changes to a more local food system. Changes from an automobile-based transportation system. Think about the energy consumption for war: the plane trips, environmental destruction—uncomprehensible waste in every way.

Organizing is key. Someone has to do it and that will be a major focus for me in 2011. In Sacramento we recently started a grassroots group, 350 Sacramento, that will work at the local level to promote a low-carbon lifestyle and help build a global climate movement.

Who will take up a similar project in Stockton?



The world that Lennon and his friends inherit depends on the choices we make each day. It is critical that we take the necessary actions to minimize climate change—in our daily lives and in the larger institutional changes we demand from politicians and institutional/corporate leaders.

*Campaign to cut 10% of carbon in 2010— see <http://www.1010global.org/>



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Greentips

Phantom energy loss and clothing tips

Looking for some reputable information on going green? The Union of Concerned Scientists provides *Greentips* on dozens of topics ranging from home improvements to food choices to green schools. Go to <http://www.ucsusa.org/publications/greentips/> for the latest greentip, then scroll through the archives for more.

Here are two sets of greentips:

Are Energy Vampires in Your Home?

When you walk through your home at night with the lights off, chances are your path will still be lit by the eerie glow of “standby” lights and digital displays on various appliances and electronic devices. Because these devices are ready to operate or receive signals at all times, they act like vampires silently sucking away energy even when they are turned “off.”

This wasted energy, known as standby or phantom energy loss, represents a relatively small but growing percentage of an individual home’s electricity use (about five percent), but taken across all U.S. households, adds up to an estimated 65 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity each year. This extra electricity costs consumers more than \$5.8 billion annually and sends more than 87 billion pounds of heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year.

Some of the biggest energy wasters in most homes are the adapters that come with rechargeable battery-powered cordless phones, cell phones, digital cameras and music players, power tools, and other electronic devices. Most draw power whenever they’re plugged into an outlet, regardless of whether the device battery is fully charged—or even connected. Other culprits include appliances or electronic equipment with standby capability (such as televisions and computer monitors), a remote control, and/or a digital clock display (such as microwaves, DVD players, and stereo systems).

Here are a few easy ways to help you enjoy your electronics without

wasting energy:

Unplug it—Unplugging devices when they are not being used eliminates any potential energy loss. To save the time and hassle of unplugging all the components of a computer or home entertainment system, you could plug them into a power strip or surge suppressor that can be turned off with a single switch (surge suppressors still protect against power spikes when plugged in, even if switched off). Unfortunately, some devices such as battery backup systems and computer network servers must be left on at all times to ensure proper functioning.

Check the label—When buying an appliance or electronic device, choose the model that uses the least standby power. Energy Star-labeled models are a good choice because they use less energy for both regular and standby operation. If standby power is not included on a given product label, check the U.S. Department of Energy’s online database of manufacturer-supplied information (see Related Links).

Keep it simple—Avoid buying products that include “bells and whistles” you don’t need. Some of these extra features might waste energy.

A Greener Set of Threads

While the clothing we buy represents a relatively small portion of our personal environmental impact, there is a \$3 billion (and growing) market worldwide for green apparel. This month, we offer some guidance to help sort through the options to ensure your clothes are as green as possible—even if you wear only black.

Natural fibers such as cotton, linen, wool, hemp, and silk are typically grown using a lot of water, fertilizer, and pesticide. Choose clothes made from fibers that meet U.S. Department of Agriculture organic standards for crop and livestock production, which can reduce the water and air pollution associated with these fabrics (see the Related Resources for information on this and other

fabric certification programs).

Cellulosic fibers including bamboo, lyocell/Tencel, and rayon are made from reconstituted plant and wood pulp. While the production process can be chemical- and energy-intensive, lyocell production minimizes toxic emissions by reusing solvent. Choosing clothes made from organic crops or sustainably managed forests can also help reduce these fabrics’ impact.

Reclaimed/recycled fibers can be a good option as they are made from materials that would typically end up in landfills: plastic bottles and tofu manufacturing waste (from soybeans), for example, can be made into fleece and “vegetable cashmere.” In addition, it takes about 70 percent less energy to make recycled polyester fiber than virgin fiber.

Synthetic fibers like acrylic, nylon, and polyester are derived from nonrenewable petroleum, and the manufacturing process can consume a lot of water and energy while generating global warming pollution. Avoid these fabrics when possible; if you need a material like fleece, choose one made from reclaimed/recycled fibers.

Dyes and coatings can generate pollution in their production and application. Choosing botanically dyed or “color-grown” fabrics are a cleaner alternative to chemical dyes.

Regardless of the fabric, choose well-made items that fit well and will survive years of wear (and changing fashion trends). And if your tastes or size change, don’t throw your clothes away—textile waste comprises about 5 percent of U.S. solid waste each year. Give them to someone who can use them, sell them through a consignment shop, or use them for sewing projects or as rags. You can also keep clothes out of the waste stream by buying like-new garments from secondhand stores.

Source: *Greentips*, UCS, <http://www.ucsusa.org/publications/greentips/>

15 good things to celebrate in a bad year

Medea Benjamin

This year was marked by turmoil at home and abroad, including a deepening financial crisis that continues to leave millions jobless and homeless, as well as ongoing and expanding wars. But despite the setbacks and disappointments, here is a list of victories to be thankful for, starting with three inspirational women.

1. On November 13, Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. In 1990 her party, the National League for Democracy, won the elections but the military junta refused to let them take power. Instead, Suu Kyi was kept under house arrest for almost 15 of the last 21 years. Her release brings great joy and hope to millions of people in Burma and supporters of democracy worldwide.

2. Dilma Rousseff was elected president of Brazil and takes power on January 1. Dubbed by the media "the most powerful woman in the world," Rousseff was tortured and jailed for three years for opposing Brazil's military dictatorship. She later became Chief of Staff for the popular outgoing president and former metalworker, Lula da Silva, whose policies of growth with equity have helped pull millions of Brazilians out of poverty. While some worry about Rousseff's commitment to the environment (she was also Lula's Energy Minister), the fact that a progressive woman from the Labor Party will rule a powerhouse like Brazil is cause for celebration.

3. Elizabeth Warren became "consumer czar." After the financial

meltdown in 2008, Warren was appointed Chairwoman of the five-member Congressional Oversight Panel created to investigate the banking bailout and oversee TARP. She won tremendous public support by sharply criticizing the banks and calling for greater transparency and accountability. Warren advocated for a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to protect borrowers from abuses in mortgages, credit cards and other consumer loans. On September 17 President Obama named her special adviser to oversee the development of this new bureau.

4. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Chinese literary critic and professor Liu Xiaobo. Liu, a critic of China's one party state, was sentenced to 11 years in prison for drafting a petition calling for free speech and open elections. The Chinese government usually escapes rebuke for its oppressive practices because the country is such an economic superpower. However, according to Amnesty International, some 500,000 Chinese prisoners are in detention without charge or trial. Harassment, surveillance, house arrest, and imprisonment of human rights defenders are on the rise, as is Internet and media censorship, and repression continues for Falun Gong practitioners and minority groups, including Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongolians. The Nobel Prize for Liu Xiaobo has helped expose China's dirty secrets.

5. Speaking of exposing secrets, WikiLeaks has sent shock waves around the world by exposing the inner machinations of U.S. foreign policy. After a decade of illegal wars, lack of accountability, government secrecy and embedded journalists, WikiLeaks has given the public a much-needed look at the way the U.S. government continues—under President Obama—to cajole, bribe and strong arm other nations into supporting U.S. policies. We look forward to more revelations in 2011 and we hope more people will step forward to defend WikiLeaks and suspected whistleblower Bradley Manning!

6. Don't Ask Don't Tell was repealed. The LGBT community has been fighting to repeal Don't Ask Don't Tell since it was first introduced as a compromise

measure by President Clinton in 1993. In an historic Senate vote on December 18 the policy was repealed and then signed by President Obama on December 22. While some find it hard to celebrate the ability of more people to now fight in U.S. wars, let's remember that this victory will help the gay community win upcoming, more important struggles for marriage rights and equality in the workplace.

7. U.S. troop levels in Iraq declined dramatically. While President Obama has presided over a disastrous surge of troops in Afghanistan, he does seem to be holding to his promise of ending the U.S. military presence in Iraq. The number of U.S. troops has declined from some 144,000 in January 2009 to roughly 50,000 today. The remaining troops are supposed to leave the country by the end of 2011, and many worry they will be replaced by private contractors. The U.S. invasion of Iraq, based on lies and resulting in the death and displacement of millions of Iraqis, is one of the most shameful episodes in our history. The sooner it ends, the better.

8. The health care bill passed. No, it was not a single payer bill and it didn't even have a public option, disappointing many of its original supporters. But the bill does extend health coverage to over 30 million Americans who would have otherwise been uninsured; it stops private insurance companies from rejecting people for preexisting conditions; and it allows children to remain covered by their parents' insurance until the age of 26. Taken as a whole, it represents a progressive shift in U.S. social policy, which is why it is being so viciously attacked by the right. And from the left, the fight for a single payer system, especially on the state level, is far from over!

9. The Senate ratified the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the U.S. and Russia. The New START provides modest reductions in the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons, and includes monitoring and verification procedures. Unfortunately, to get Republican support the U.S. commitment to disarmament is countered by a new

commitment to spend \$180 billion over 10 years to "modernize" U.S. weapons and delivery systems. But not passing the treaty would have been disastrous. The new treaty will undoubtedly improve U.S.-Russia relations and will hopefully move us closer to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

10. In a little-noticed automobile obituary, the last Hummer rolled off the production line on May 24—a casualty of higher gas prices, the economic crunch and a shift in consumer preferences. The cool cars of today are no longer monstrous gas guzzlers but hybrid and electric cars. There are 28 hybrid models already on the market today. At least 12 plug-in electric cars are planned for 2011, kicking off a wave of new green vehicles.

And a few extras for good cheer:

11. At the White House Tribal Nations Conference on December 15, President Obama announced that the United States would support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The statement is significant because the United States was one of only four countries that voted against the declaration when the UN General Assembly adopted it in 2007, and the last of those four to have reversed its former opposition.

12. In a policy reversal after the BP oil disaster, the Obama administration announced that it will not allow offshore oil drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico or off the Atlantic coast for at least

seven more years. Meanwhile, offshore wind power is taking off from Maine to Georgia.

13. Foreign private security contractors were banned by the governments of Iraq and Afghanistan, and Blackwater founder Eric Prince—hounded by lawsuits and bad press—felt compelled to sell the company and move out of the country.

14. Thanks to California's Proposition 19, also known as the Regulate, Control & Tax Cannabis Act, the debate on failed Marijuana Prohibition has arrived! Despite not passing, 4 million people voted to control and tax marijuana, with endorsements coming from new allies from the SEIU to the NAACP to law enforcement groups.

15. The government-supported student loan program was dramatically restructured, eliminating private banks and thereby ensuring that more money goes directly into the hands of low-income students.

It's an important reminder, as we go into what will be a very difficult new year, that people on all continents continue to struggle for a more peaceful, just, sustainable world. And as long as people keep organizing and mobilizing, there will be victories to celebrate.

Medea Benjamin <mailto:medea@globalexchange.org> is cofounder of Global Exchange <http://www.globalexchange.org> and CODEPINK: Women for Peace.

Source: AlterNet 12/29/10



Bradley Manning: the case against solitary confinement

Lynn Parramore

The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.—Fyodor Dostoevsky

In the earliest days of our Republic, a group of well-meaning Philadelphia Quakers set out to reform the prison system. The idea was to remove convicts from the mayhem and corruption of overcrowded jails to solitary cells where sinners would return to mental and spiritual health through reflection. In the Walnut Street Jail, no windows would distract the prisoners with street life; no conversation would disturb their penitence. Alone with God, they would be rehabilitated.

There was a small problem. Many of the prisoners went insane. The Walnut Street Jail was shut down in 1835.

But the word penitentiary became part of the language, and the idea of placing prisoners in solitary confinement did not die. It seemed so reasonable—so much better than chain gangs or public stocks. New prisons opened to test the theory that solitude might bring salvation to criminals.

Charles Dickens had a keen interest in prison conditions, having witnessed his father's detention in a Victorian debtor's prison. When he heard about the latest American innovation in housing convicts, he came to see for himself. At Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary, the wretches he found in solitary confinement were barely human spectres who picked their flesh raw and stared blankly at walls. His on-the-spot conclusion: Solitary confinement is torture. Dickens wrote:

I believe that very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony which this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years, inflicts upon the sufferers. I hold this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain, to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body; and because its ghastly signs and tokens are not so palpable to the eye and sense of touch as scars upon the flesh; because its wounds are not upon the surface, and it extorts few cries that human ears can hear; therefore I the more

denounce it, as a secret punishment which slumbering humanity is not roused up to stay.

A man who had seen his share of inhumanities, Dickens pronounced solitary confinement to be "rigid, strict, and hopeless; cruel and wrong." That was 1842.

Since then, piles of scientific studies, along with the vivid accounts of victims, have confirmed what was obvious to Dickens. Solitary confinement is worse than smashed bones and torn flesh. When human beings are deprived of social contact for even a few weeks, concentration breaks down, memory fades and disorientation sets in. Eventually, many prisoners experience explosive rages, hallucinations, catatonia, and self-mutilation. Some become irretrievably insane. Far from promoting safety, the most commonly cited justification, solitary confinement often amplifies violent impulses, turning prisoners into ticking time bombs who are far more dangerous to human society upon release than they ever were to begin with.

Human beings need social contact for normal brain function. Solitary confinement is thus a method of inflicting traumatic injury upon the human mind. "It's an awful thing, solitary," wrote former Vietnam prisoner John McCain in *Faith of My Fathers*. "It crushes your spirit and weakens your resistance more effectively than any other form of mistreatment." Among its legion perversities, solitary confinement turns medical doctors into torturers; renders violent criminals more aggressive, and makes prisoners cut off from human society incapable of functioning in it.

In 1890, the United States Supreme Court nearly declared the punishment unconstitutional. It is banned by the Geneva Convention, condemned by the United Nations, and either prohibited or restricted in most civilized countries. And yet today, as Atul Gawandeshowed in his revealing 2009 *New Yorker* article, tens of thousands of Americans are tortured in this fashion every day, out of sight, in the "Supermax" prisons that have popped up like poisoned mushrooms on

the American landscape since the 1980s. Some prisoners are consigned to these Houses of Unholiness for violations—both major and minor—of prison rules. Some for gang activity. Others for trying to escape. Or for violent behavior. Some are placed there because they are mentally ill and there is nowhere else to put them—the equivalent of casting a sufferer of pneumonia onto an Arctic tundra.

Save for the death penalty, solitary confinement is the most extreme sanction allowed by law. Like slavery and every other form of institutionalized inhumanity, it should be banished to the dark annals of American history as an example of what happens when our humanity slumbers.

Instead, it is being used as a method of terror and coercion by the United States government upon a citizen who has not even been convicted of a crime. Bradley Manning, the 22-year-old U.S. Army Private accused of leaking classified documents to WikiLeaks, has been detained in solitary confinement for the last seven months, despite not having been convicted of any crime, having been a model detainee, and having evidenced no signs of violence or even disciplinary misdemeanors. Manning has been kept alone in a cell for 23 hours a day, barred from exercising in that cell, deprived of sleep, and denied even a pillow or sheets for his bed. As Greenwald reports, "the brig's medical personnel now administer regular doses of anti-depressants to Manning to prevent his brain from snapping from the effects of this isolation." A court hearing has not been set.

The message of the U.S. government to its citizens in this activity is clear: blow the whistle and your brain will be mutilated before you even have a trial. But it may be that much to the shame of the U.S. government, our slumbering humanity is awakening. The solitary confinement—the torture, for we must call it that—of Bradley Manning is ironically shining a light on this brutality and tipping us off to the danger of authoritarianism. A United Nations probe is now investigating the Bradley case, and the drumbeat of

More troops not the answer in Afghanistan

Congresswoman Barbara Lee

In response to reports that an additional 1,400 US troops will be deployed to Afghanistan in the coming weeks, I must state that I categorically oppose a further escalation of the US troop presence in Afghanistan.

In 2001, I placed the lone vote against the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force in Afghanistan because I believed that it might pave the way to open-ended war.

Unfortunately, each week brings additional news that my worst fears have been realized.

This action will further entrench the United States Armed Forces in Afghanistan on the false premise of a military-first strategy that has consistently proven itself ineffective and counterproductive.

This latest troop deployment is yet another example of more predictable and misguided recommendations that the situation in Afghanistan demands more time, more lives, and more resources.

Just six months away from the President's pledged start of withdrawal from Afghanistan in July 2011, sending more of our brave men and women in uniform into an impossible situation in Afghanistan is not the answer.

As we enter the 112th Congress, we must make it a top priority to end this war.

That is why I will be reintroducing my legislation to limit funding in Afghanistan to the safe and orderly withdrawal of US troops and military contractors and will further work with my colleagues to hold the President accountable for a significant July reduction in US military presence.

ACTION: Call your representative; urge the support of Representative Lee's bill.

Source: *Huffington Post* 1/6/11 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>

outrage in the blogosphere grows louder every day. Protesters are organizing.

Whatever one thinks of Manning and his involvement in the WikiLeaks release of classified information, there can never be any justification for torture. Such practices weaken the position of the United States government, both abroad and at home. Other countries will think twice before accepting extradition requests to a place where inhumane treatment of prisoners is sanctioned. Our moral standing in the world suffers, while the American citizenry, already suspicious of post-9/11 governmental abuses of power, grows even more alarmed. What kind of legitimacy adheres to a judicial hearing when the accused has been subject to sanity-threatening conditions? Even exposing the accused to duress is a violation of justice and of the U.S. Constitution—which applies to both civilians and soldiers. Trust and faith in American justice will deteriorate as long as such damaging practices continue.

As we spend time and rejoice with our friends and family in the new year—enjoying the social interaction that human beings require—let us pause for a moment to remember the thousands of people being tortured in American prisons, including Bradley Manning, and let us send our own message back to our government: We are Americans. We will not accept the intimidation and coercion of our fellow citizens, even from the Pentagon. Most assuredly, we will not accept torture in our name. Not of the accused. Not of the mentally ill. Not even of convicted criminals. When our civilized society is attacked, no matter what the justification, we will rise up to defend it. The placement of human beings in solitary confinement is not a measure of their depravity. It is a measure of our own.

Lynn Parramore is Editor of *New Deal 2.0*, Media Fellow at the Roosevelt Institute, and Co-founder of *Recessionwire*.

Source: *new deal 2.0* | Op-Ed 12/23/10 <http://www.newdeal20.org/2010/12/23/>

Single payer—it's pretty simple

Don Bechler

Thank you for inviting me to speak about the U.S. healthcare situation. I am most honored. I want to leave you with four ideas:

1. The U.S. does not have a healthcare system.
2. Recent legislation is a step away from a national healthcare system.
3. Organized labor has not campaigned for a national healthcare system.
4. There is a growing movement for a national healthcare system.

First, the U.S. does not have a healthcare system. For 100 years, healthcare has been purchased from over 1200 private insurance companies. Some employers buy private health insurance for their employees. Some unions negotiate to have health insurance benefits purchased by their employer. In the last two decades, healthcare has become the central issue in union negotiations. Union healthcare benefits have lessened in the last 2 decades.

The problem with private insurance companies is that they try to sell only to healthy people who will not use their services and at the same time the private insurance companies try to avoid sick people who need healthcare. That is how insurance companies make money. We do have a few government healthcare programs that provide limited healthcare to older or very poor Americans.

Because the U.S. has no national healthcare system, we suffer. We spend twice as much money as any other nation on earth, yet we have 50 million people without health insurance. Because 50 million people do not have health insurance, 50,000 people a year die unnecessarily. We have a situation where different classes of people receive different classes of care.

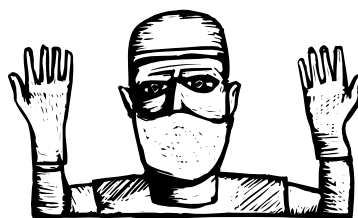
Second, recent legislation passed by President Obama is a step away from winning a national healthcare system. Instead of removing the 1,200 private insurance companies from our lives, the Obama legislation passed in March, 2010 requires people to buy healthcare

insurance from private companies. The private for profit insurance companies played a central role in writing the legislation. As I have said, the problem with private insurance companies, is that they try to avoid the sick and sell only to healthy people. And there is no reason to think they will change their behavior. The primary reason we have not moved towards a national healthcare system is the opposition of the private insurance companies. Involving them in discussions on healthcare is like involving organized crime in a discussion on public safety.

Third, organized labor has not campaigned for a national healthcare system. The U.S. labor movement is handicapped from advocating for working people because it is not independent from the two political parties that defend the interests of the wealthy. U.S. labor places tremendous hope that the Democratic Party and President Obama will improve the situation of working people. But this is false hope. President Obama and the Democratic Party wanted to ban discussions on building a national healthcare system. They fought to make the private insurance companies richer.

I am from San Francisco, California. San Francisco is also the home of Democratic Party leader Nancy Pelosi. She was the speaker of the house of representatives when the healthcare discussions were happening. When we sent a delegation to speak with her about a national healthcare system, she had us arrested by Homeland Security. President Obama has delivered us a mandate to buy private health insurance. This is a step in the wrong direction.

Healthcare should be a human right ó not something that corporations can make money from by avoiding sick people. The Democratic Party and Obama do not believe that healthcare is a human right. Unfortunately, the U.S. labor movement still places hope in the Democratic Party. For us to be successful, it will be necessary for the labor movement to use their organizing capacity to campaign for a national healthcare system instead of organizing for



the Democratic Party.

Lastly, there is a growing movement for a national health insurance system. We often refer to our movement as a movement for single payer healthcare. Single Payer simply means that we advocate for having one payer of medical bills instead of over 1200 different payers of healthcare bills. Everyone would have comprehensive healthcare. Healthcare payments would be paid by the government. In the United States we spend 2.8 trillion dollars a year on healthcare. We know that by removing the private insurance industry from healthcare that we could save 400 billion dollars a year. This is money that could be spent for the public good and not for enriching the wealthy.

The activists in the single payer healthcare movement do not think of themselves as ideologically pro-capitalist or pro-socialist. But what everyone in our movement knows is that market mechanisms to make corporations wealthy take us in the wrong direction. Our healthcare movement is for a healthcare system that provides for the public good. Our movement knows that the privatization of healthcare is not the road to follow.

Everyday, I wake up knowing that I am working with healthcare activists who share the value of building a healthcare system that works for people. We share the values that all human beings should be nurtured and loved. Our healthcare movement is a movement of love, compassion, and hope. Again, I am honored to be here today in the presence of activists who also share the value that human beings should be treated with compassion. Thank you.

Source: From a speech on U.S. Healthcare at an international labor conference held in Algiers, Algeria November 28, 2010, <http://singlepayernow.net/news/>

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Keeping children & families secure in '11

Columbia University's Mailman
School of Public Health

One thing most people seem to agree on, especially in difficult economic times, is that investing in our children makes the most compassionate as well as economic sense for our future as a country. With that in mind, the National Center for Children in Poverty, a think-tank at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, strongly recommends that states prioritize those efforts aimed at keeping children healthy and secure. States should:

1. Sustain their child care subsidy programs for low-income working families, meeting-and if possible exceeding-the matches necessary to receive their full federal allocations from the Child Care and Development Fund. This two-pronged program supports children's healthy development while it also enables their parents' to secure and maintain employment.

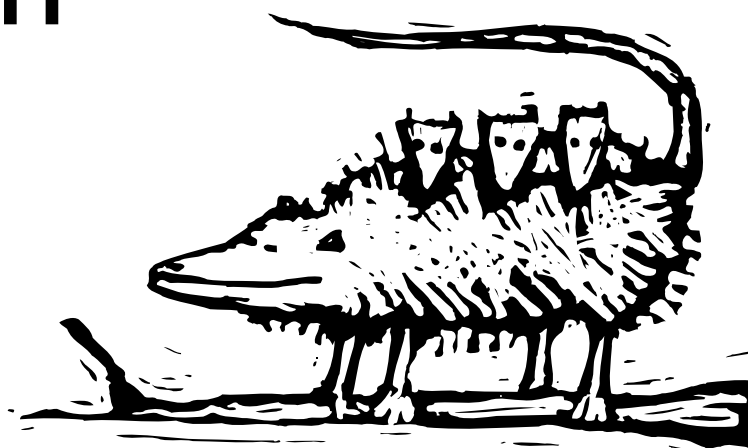
2. Keep co-payments for child care subsidies below 10 percent of family income, making child care not only more affordable, but also allowing parents more money for other necessities — and further stimulating the economy.

3. Continue to fund pre-kindergarten programs. Studies have shown that pre-kindergarten is an effective way to set a child on an early course for future success in school and throughout life.

4. Support school-based health centers and recognize them as participating providers of health care services for Medicaid and CHIP. School-based health centers improve access to much-needed health and mental health services, particularly among hard-to-reach populations.

5. Create incentives to support public and private volunteering partnerships for mentoring and after-school programs to keep kids in healthy environments for social and emotional development.

6. Keep remedial and bridge programs from high schools to community colleges to help



more young adults continue their education.

7. Sustain unemployment benefits for families in need. With the national unemployment rate hovering near 10% for more than 18 months and long-term unemployment at the highest level on record, UI benefits (funded by a state-set employer tax) provide a crucial lifeline to unemployed workers and their families. Research shows that unemployment benefits are quickly spent and provide a strong boost to the economy. For each dollar invested in the program \$1.60 or more is added to Gross Domestic Product over the course of a year through multiple rounds of spending.

8. Ensure that their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (food stamps) reach families in need by running effective outreach programs, simplifying administrative procedures, and liberalizing program eligibility requirements. Because the federal government funds food stamp benefits, states can accomplish a lot for the poor at a modest cost to state coffers.

9. Ensure that immigrant families are protected by the social safety net. Children with immigrant parents are the fastest-growing segment of the child population in the United States, but comparatively few of these families participate in important public benefit programs, such as State Child Health Insurance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and housing assistance. States must strengthen their outreach to

immigrant communities to inform them of these programs and help potentially eligible families apply for them.

10. Maintain and expand access to health care for low-income children and families through publically financed health insurance programs including Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and health insurance premium subsidy programs for low wage workers and small businesses. Health insurance enables timely access to preventive and other care necessary for healthy development and health maintenance. Good health is fundamental for school readiness, school achievement and participation in the labor force.

11. Maintain support for programs that work to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen families' ability to nurture children. At a time when families may be especially fragile, it is even more important to make sure they have the supports they need to keep children safe.

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is dedicated to promoting the economic security, health and well-being of America's low-income families and children. Part of Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, NCCP uses research to inform policy and practice with the goal of ensuring positive outcomes for the next generation.

Source: National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) Health News 12/28/10, <http://www.healthnewsdigest.com/>

End violence on college campus

Corrie Martin

With more women and minorities attending college and earning degrees, it is fair and timely to reconsider exactly how supportive, safe and welcoming our college campuses are today. Not long ago, women and minorities had to struggle for the very right to all levels of education, especially post-secondary or higher education. With the doors to academe seemingly wide open (or pried open by civil rights and federal education legislation), what remains to impede the success of women and minorities in their chosen fields of study and as members of the campus community?

A people's history of University of the Pacific has yet to be written, but one might start the narrative with the heady historical fact that Pacific ushered in a new era for the young state of California when, in 1871, just 20 years after its founding, it became the state's first institution of higher education to admit women. (Somehow, we will have to explain how it is that we took the next 138 years before appointing our first woman president.)

Following the trend of majority enrollments by women on campuses across the country, 55% of Pacific's undergraduates are women, and they have a graduation rate of 70% (compared to Pacific's male students who graduate at a 64% rate).

To the extent that enrollments, persistence and graduation rates indicate, Pacific seems to be on the right track in creating a campus culture that supports the academic and personal success of its women students. On the other hand, we clearly have work to do: only 39% of full and part-time faculty are women and only 20% are people of color.

Harrassment

And, like all institutions, a college campus reflects, is subject to, and embodies the underlying social structures of unequal power and privilege, and the even darker sides of these structures: violence, exploitation, victimization. Two recent events that occurred at prominent universities vividly illustrate the reality that college campuses are not exempt from our society's underlying misogyny:

"My name is Jack, I'm a necrophiliac, I ___ dead women!"

"No means yes; yes means anal!"

So chanted male pledges to Yale University's Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity one dark night a few months ago as they marched past a residence hall for first-year women. This same fraternity, and a second, reportedly also verbally harassed the Yale campus Women's Center in previous incidents.

Just a few weeks before, in another state, at another prominent university with a storied history, 19-year old freshman Lizzie Seeberg committed suicide less than two weeks after filing a complaint with her university that she had been molested by a Notre Dame football player during a terrifying encounter in his room. Ten days after her report, college officials, campus police and law enforcement still had done nothing. The accused player had not even been interviewed. There are accusations of Seeberg being harassed and intimidated to keep silent by another football player and perhaps a fellow student.

These two closely succeeding incidents illustrate the double-threat women face on campus today. The first is a good example of our national "rape culture" as it is sometimes named, in which violence against women is validated or even

normalized, in so many subtle and (in this case) not so-subtle ways.

The second the alleged sexual assault of Lizzie Seeberg by another student and her suicide in the face of apparent institutional indifference to the crime is an example of the prevalence of such violence and the terrible impact both of the violence itself, and of widespread failures in responding to, punishing, and preventing such violence, especially when the perpetrator is a college athlete.

In the October 2007 final report, "The Campus Sexual Assault Study," prepared by Christopher P. Krebs, PhD et al. for the National Institution of Justice, the authors conclude that "Sexual assault is clearly an issue in need of attention by the campus community given its high prevalence" The report continues, "One out of five undergraduate women experience an attempted or completed sexual assault during their college years, with: the majority of sexual assaults occurring when women are incapacitated due to their use of substances, primarily alcohol; [and] the large majority of victims of sexual assault being victimized by men they know and trust, rather than strangers."

Time to guarantee women's rights

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would ensure women and men equal status under the law and would explicitly include and protect everyone, regardless of sex. After being ratified by 35 states, the ERA fell short of national ratification by just three states in 1982. Since then, constitutional equality for women has been introduced in every session of Congress. Women must be put into the Constitution to finally provide assurance that rights will not be denied or abridged by the government on the basis of sex — or the sexist opinions of Supreme Court justices.

Throughout the history of this country, women have faced systematic and purposeful discrimination. Women were

We can take our culture back and create one in which sexual violence and exploitation is not only intolerable, but unthinkable.

I still reel at the statistic, though I have seen it quoted and reaffirmed in countless studies, that "one out of every five women will experience an attempted or completed sexual assault during their college years." One out of five. One out of five of our sisters, daughters, friends, our students. And as the Campus Sexual Assault Study confirmed (another well-documented fact), the vast majority of these crimes are committed by men who assault women who know them, even trust them. Until we as a collective society of men and women decide together to put an end to rape culture and the sexual violence, harassment and exploitation it encourages, ignores, and sometimes even rewards, our college campuses will never be truly safe places. That means

all of us men who believe they would personally never rape, women who believe it could never happen to them must speak out against all forms of homophobia, racism and sexism. We can take our culture back and create one in which sexual violence and exploitation is not only intolerable, but unthinkable.

Corrie Martin is director of the Pacific Women's Resource Center. Contact her at cmartin1@pacific.edu

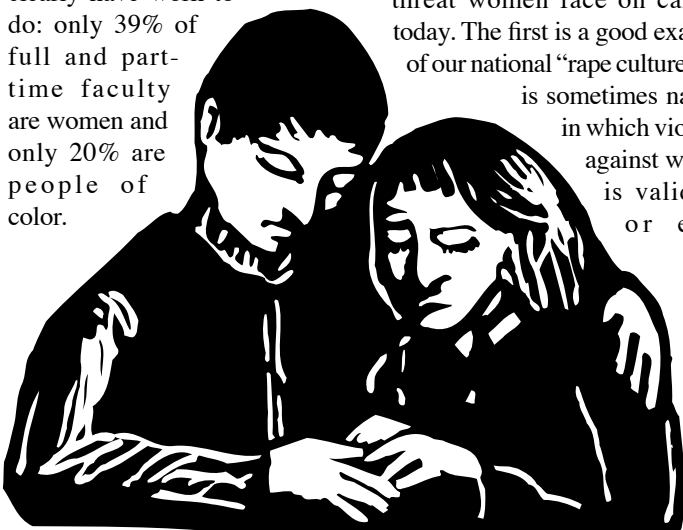
Sources: Michael Kimmel 10/20/10 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-kimmel/men-and-women-at-yale_b_765683.html; and The Campus Sexual Assault Study (December 2007). <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nijgrants/221153.pdf>. Christopher P. Krebs, Ph.D., Christine H. Lindquist, Ph.D., Tara D. Warner, M.A., Bonnie S. Fisher, Ph.D. Sandra L. Martin, Ph.D.

The problem...

In a recent interview, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia erroneously stated that women are not protected under the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. Right now, five justices have the power to pick and choose when women should be considered full citizens. And that's not right. We won't stand for sexists like Scalia interpreting women's rights as unprotected in the U.S. Constitution. We need to add an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution that will guarantee women and men equal status under the law.

ACTION: Tell your representative to support an ERA today.

Source: NOW National Action Center release 1/6/11 www.now.org



Debunking false claims: health reform, jobs, & deficit

Paul N. Van de Water

Proponents of repealing the health reform law (the Affordable Care Act) argue that the law will increase deficits—contrary to the Congressional Budget Office’s finding that it will reduce deficits by \$143 billion over 2010-2019 and by about \$1.3 trillion over the following decade—and that it will “kill jobs.” Independent evidence provides no support for either argument.

Moreover, House Republican leaders’ charges that CBO’s cost estimate is “rigged” by biased assumptions CBO was forced to use are demonstrably false. At a time when the nation faces serious long-term fiscal challenges, the notion of congressional leaders rejecting CBO estimates they find politically inconvenient and promoting their own partisan estimates instead has far-reaching, and disturbing, implications. Claims that the health reform law relies on budgetary gimmicks to reduce deficits are false.

* Claim: The law uses a gimmick to make it appear fiscally responsible: its biggest spending increases don’t take effect for four years, so CBO’s cost estimate

for the first decade (2010-2019) includes ten years of revenue increases but only six years of significant spending. The unstated implication of this charge is that in subsequent decades, when ten years of revenue increases are accompanied by ten years of spending increases, the law will greatly increase deficits.

Fact: There is no gimmick here, and this charge is groundless. CBO estimates that the law will reduce deficits not only over the 2010-2019 decade, but in the second decade and subsequent decades. In fact, the law will reduce deficits by more in subsequent decades than in the first decade, because its most important cost-saving measures are phased in and produce larger savings over time.

* Claim: CBO’s cost estimate double-counts the Medicare savings and additional Social Security payroll tax collections that the law will generate, because these savings and revenues could not both help pay for health reform and improve Medicare’s and Social Security’s finances.

Fact: This, too, is a canard. In estimating the law’s impact on the deficit, CBO counted the Medicare savings and Social

Security revenues only once. The financial status of the Medicare or Social Security trust funds is a different matter, distinct from CBO’s estimate of the impact of the legislation on the budget deficit. The skilled CBO experts did not double count, as anyone familiar with budget estimates knows.

* Claim: CBO’s cost estimate is misleading because it doesn’t include \$115 billion in additional discretionary spending that Congress must provide to implement health reform.

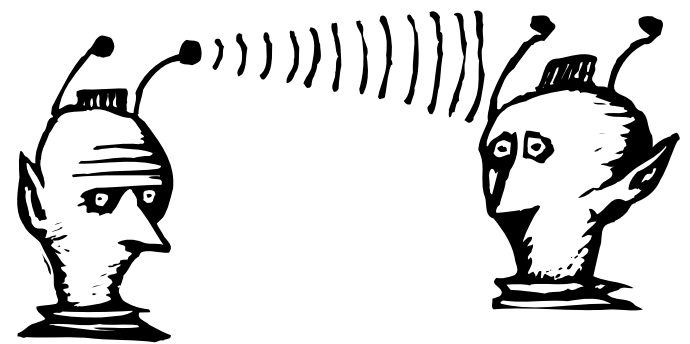
Fact: The health reform law contains authorizations for a variety of grant and other programs, and CBO has estimated that if future Congresses chose to fully fund these authorizations—which Congress is under no requirement to do—the total expenditures involved would amount to \$115 billion over ten years. But the large bulk of this amount is neither required nor necessary to implement the health reform law, and much of it doesn’t even reflect new expenditures. As CBO has stated, more than \$86 billion is “for activities that were already being carried out under prior law or that were previously authorized.” CBO has noted that the law’s actual implementation costs—that is, the cost that federal agencies will incur to administer the law—will be roughly \$10-20 billion over the first decade.

* Claim: CBO’s cost estimate inappropriately includes savings from the new CLASS long-term care insurance program.

Fact: Congressional leaders deliberately crafted the health reform bill so that it would be fully paid for without relying on savings from CLASS Act premiums. The CBO estimate clearly shows that if one excludes the net revenues of \$70 billion from CLASS Act premiums, health reform still reduces the deficit by \$73 billion over the first ten years.

* Claim: CBO’s cost estimate for health reform is misleading because it doesn’t include the cost of the “doctor fix,” or fixing the sustainable growth rate (SGR) payment formula for physicians.

Fact: The cost of fixing the SGR formula is entirely unrelated to health reform, as can easily be proved—all of the cost of fixing



the SGR formula would remain if health reform were repealed. None of that cost can be attributed to health reform.

House Republican leaders’ attacks on CBO are unprecedented and inaccurate.

* When CBO estimated this week that the House Republican proposal to repeal the Affordable Care Act would increase the deficit by roughly \$145 billion over 2012-2019 and by about \$230 billion through 2021, House Speaker Boehner described the estimate as merely CBO’s “opinion” and implied that Democrats had forced CBO to produce misleading figures, saying that “CBO can only provide a score based on the assumptions that were given to them.”

* In fact, over several decades, the House and Senate Budget Committees, along with presidential administrations of both parties, have developed procedures that CBO uses to prepare cost estimates. In estimating the cost of health reform or its repeal, as with any estimate, CBO uses these longstanding, bipartisan procedures—not assumptions specified by the sponsor of the legislation. Thus, Speaker Boehner’s charge is flatly incorrect.

* Up until now, congressional leaders of both parties have acknowledged CBO’s professionalism and recognized its critical role as a neutral arbiter in budget matters. They have accepted CBO’s cost estimates, even when those estimates have proved inconvenient for their side. This wholesale attack on, and rejection of, a CBO estimate for a major piece of legislation by the leadership of the House or Senate is unprecedented.

Claims that health reform will destroy jobs by harming the economy are sharply at odds with the findings of leading non-

partisan experts.

* House Republicans have charged that the bill will destroy jobs by adding greatly to businesses’ costs. In fact, health reform is unlikely to raise most businesses’ health insurance premiums. CBO estimates that it will reduce premiums for employers with more than 50 workers—who account for 70 percent of the total insurance market—by up to 3 percent by 2016. For small employers, the estimated change in premiums ranges from an increase of 1 percent to a reduction of 2 percent.

* Similarly, Moody’s Analytics says that the Affordable Care Act’s “net long-run impact on the economy will be minor” and that any disincentives from higher Medicare payroll taxes “will hardly make a difference.” Moody’s also points out that “there is the potential for the new law to reduce job lock,’ when workers stay in a particular job because they are afraid of losing their insurance. . . . If the bill works as planned, Americans will be more able to switch jobs and open new businesses.” The result would be a more productive economy.

* The health reform law may also have other positive impacts on the economy. Expanding health coverage improves health outcomes by helping people obtain preventive and other health services and improving continuity of care. CBO has suggested that this could enhance the nation’s economic productivity.

* While health reform will “reduce the amount of labor used in the economy by a small amount,” according to CBO, this will happen because some workers who now work mainly to obtain health insurance will decide to work somewhat less, not because employers

Source: <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/7/11>

Stop care denials at religious hospitals

The ACLU has asked the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to investigate potential denials and delays of emergency abortion care at religiously-affiliated hospitals in violation of federal law, specifically the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act and the Conditions of Participation of Medicare and Medicaid.

The request followed the decision by St. Joseph’s Hospital in Phoenix to continue providing life-saving abortions when necessary despite pressure from the Catholic Diocese of Phoenix to discontinue the practice. The Bishop of Phoenix stripped the hospital of his endorsement when St. Joseph’s correctly defended its decision to provide a life-saving abortion to a young mother of four in need of emergency care last year and asserted that it would continue to provide life-saving services.

A 2008 article in the *American Journal of Public Health* highlighted a worrying pattern of religiously-affiliated hospitals denying emergency reproductive care to patients. The article cites instances in which miscarrying women were forced to travel to another facility after religiously-affiliated hospitals refused to terminate their pregnancies, and a woman who was denied care until the moment her fetus’ heartbeat stopped, placing her in grave peril.

Action: Tell Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius to stop religiously-affiliated hospitals from putting women’s lives at risk.

Source: ACLU Online release 1/7/11, American Civil Liberties Union, 125 Broad St, 18th Floor, NY, NY 10004-2400 ACLUOnline@aclu.org

2011: jobs vs. the deficit

Dimitri B. Papadimitriou

The roadmaps showing the way out of our 1.4 trillion dollar federal deficit almost always begin at the same starting points. During 2010, it became taken-for-granted that today's record-setting red ink is a result of unrestrained government spending—especially stimulus spending. And the idea that the economic upturn in jobs and growth will begin with deficit reduction has become widely perceived as 'common sense'.

The December release of the federal debt panel's Simpson-Bowles report crystallized a mass re-set of priorities, with politicians and pundits freely equating solutions to 'the deficit crisis' with economic recovery. While conservatives and liberals reacted differently to the report's specifics, the assumption that immediate deficit reduction would be healthy and virtuous was largely accepted. The president has also pledged to follow this path.

The media, meanwhile, geared up with a national debt counseling forum. November ended with three out of four of the lead columns in the Washington Post providing advice on the subject. US News and World Report called on the president to get busy and "name a deficit Czar". Deficit reduction? There's an app for that. A prominent New York Times feature titled "You Fix the Budget" included an interactive iPhone/iPad application that urged readers to "Make your own plan and share it online". Jobs and growth have inspired no such apps thus far.

Are congressional free-spending ways really the problem? Counter-intuitive though it may seem, the strongest evidence indicates that the deficit is tied to many political expenditures that are mandated and locked in place, and not to any 'spending spree'.

Consider the sharp increase in expenditures for SNAP (the old "food stamps" program), or for unemployment benefits. While the guidelines to qualify for these benefits have stayed roughly the same, payments have ballooned—in the case of SNAP, 72 percent from 2007 to 2009, as detailed in a report from The Levy Economics Institute of Bard College. The federal government did not choose

to increase this spending. And the financial threshold for receiving benefits was not lowered. But many more families slid out of the middle class and into the safety net. As the economy tanked, the recession itself automatically triggered increased federal outlays, which in turn fed the deficit.

In other words, the system is performing as we originally intended, and hoped, that it would. Like a truck engine suddenly expected to haul a much heavier load, the federal budget is burning more gas—and by doing so, is able to continue uphill, carrying individuals, families, and businesses out of financial disaster.

If calls to drastically reduce the deficit succeed, and federal spending is radically turned down now, the result will be comparable to cutting the engine's fuel supply. The roll back downhill will be swift, horrific, and potentially out of control.

For a glimpse of how deficit slashing could play out, take a look at Portugal. Already, there are signs that recent austerity measures will actually increase its government's fiscal deficit, a consequence of falling tax revenue and rising social needs as a result of increased unemployment. Portugal's central government lost ground in the first nine months of this year as its deficit rose by about \$280 million, even as actions to restrain it were set in motion. The pursuit of yet more deflationary spending cuts and tax increases could continue the vicious cycle.

Crisis-related spending, whether oriented toward businesses or households, has been trashed as costly. But shouldn't it be obvious that business and household income and spending help the private sector, which needs to thrive for the economic growth we need?

Liberal think-tanks are not alone in their view that running deficits is a logical and necessary response to a severe recession. Even David M. Walker, former CEO of the Peter G. Petersen Foundation, an anti-deficit think tank dedicated to austerity, has joined Lawrence Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute in acknowledging that the United States must address "jobs

now and deficits later"; Mishel and Walker have called for two years of elevated deficits.

And the public does not disagree, despite the Tea Party street-theater shows. In this autumn's CBS News Poll, 54 per cent saw the Economy/ Jobs as the nation's most important problem, compared to 3 per cent for the Budget Deficit/National Debt; the CNN/ Opinion Research Corp figures were almost the same. Fox News and Bloomberg polls also showed that concerns about the economy and jobs considerably—by about 20 per cent—trumped the deficit and spending.

Gestures to counteract deficits with measures such as the pay-freeze on federal salaries, or with anti-earmark legislation, are purely symbolic at best and, in the case of salaries, counterproductive.

Similarly, calls for the deficit to be pegged to no more than 21 percent of Gross Domestic Product, as in the Simpson-Bowles report, or 20 percent, as suggested by Representative Mike Pence (R-Indiana), make no sense, and provoke one simple and as yet unanswered question: Why?

We are indeed in a crisis. But the crisis is jobs, and the solution is to grow the economy. Deficit reductions would have a negative impact on both. The deficit hawks who demand chicken feed-sized cuts have yet to provide data—let alone logical arguments—that show how these cuts could lead to job creation and growth.

The deficit should not be treated as the main problem when it is, in reality, only the product of a poorly functioning economy. There are many good reasons that a reasonable deficit reduction plan should be early on the agenda when the US economy is once again strong. But the austerity measures being floated today range from meaningless to ludicrously dangerous. There is no reason that this so-called crisis needs to be acted on while the economy is weak. In deficit reduction—as in navigating turns in the road—timing is everything.

Dimitri B. Papadimitriou is President of The Levy Economics Institute of Bard College. http://www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/ppb_114.pdf

Source: New Geography Report, 12/29/10, www.newgeography.com



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>

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>

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

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>

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Community farm breakthrough



PUENTES board member dreams of the Community Farm.

After almost two years of team-building and paperwork, PUENTES is about to start digging its first organic Community Farm for underserved families in South Stockton.

1. An enthusiastic and ethnically diverse team of fifteen local people, with lifetimes of community gardening experience among them, has come together to manage the project.

2. The Port of Stockton has donated almost three acres in Boggs Tract on a five year renewable contract, with an option on additional acres.

3. Local businesses and churches have given almost \$5,000.

4. The IRS finally shuffled papers, and approved PUENTES' nonprofit status. (Congressman Dennis Cardoza's office gave them a nudge.)

5. Health Plan of San Joaquin has granted \$25,000 to the garden project for the year 2011. They saw what a powerful thing it will be for disadvantaged families to work together growing their own healthy food.

6. A team of five Pacific MBA students from the Eberhardt School of Business collaborated with PUENTES to produce an award-winning business plan for the garden to become self-sustaining, so it does not depend on continued outside funding.

7. A local engineer, accountant, architect and attorney are volunteering their services.

8. A professional graphic designer in the Bay Area is donating the website design.

PUENTES (the Spanish acronym means "Promoters United for National Education in Sustainable Technologies") has big dreams. The Boggs Tract Community Farm is meant to be the first of many in San Joaquin County. And other sustainable technologies await.

For more information, or to help expand PUENTES' work, contact CEO Jeremy Terhune at 922-8215, Board Member Rosemary Atkinson at 478-4380, or Community Advisory Committee Chairperson Patricia Miller-Battiste at 598-3647.

Community garden gets organized

On a rainy Thursday evening, 25 residents of Boggs Tract came out to the first meeting of their new community farm. PUENTES executive director Jeremy Terhune laid out the vision, garden committee member Eleazar Caballero translated. Garden coordinator Patricia Miller-Battiste told the crowd, "Our basic principle is that you yourselves know best what you need, to provide healthy food for your families. We're just here to provide the framework. Garden membership will cost \$20 a year, for a 20' x 20' plot. At the end of five years, we intend to turn this garden completely over to you. We want to turn our attention to creating other gardens in Stockton and the county."

Someone asked, "What's to keep neighborhood kids from trashing the garden?"

"This will be your garden," Patricia said, "and we hope your young people will be involved in creating it. They will care for their own."

Someone else asked, "How will you involve Washington Elementary School, just down the street?"

"Committee member Dr. Dale Sanders, right here, has developed a curriculum for teaching young people how to create sustainable gardens. He will be working with students, parents and teachers at the school."

APUENTES board member said, "Right now the garden is a big patch of mud. But it exists in your hearts and imaginations. Let it grow and flourish!"

A Blessing of the Land ceremony will be held at the garden on Saturday, February 19 at noon. The garden is on Ventura Street, between Sonora and Hazelton Streets. All are welcome.

Enviro news

Several pieces of legislation with environmental implications were passed during the surprisingly productive "lame duck" session that marked the end of the 111th Congress. Despite progress on some environmental issues, Congress adjourned without passing most of the spending bills for the fiscal year that began on 10/1/10, instead passing another "continuing resolution" that maintains spending at previous levels until 3/4/11. As a result, the new Congress will turn almost immediately to spending debates, which may include attempts to block regulations through provisions on spending bills. The 112th Congress convened on 1/5.

Energy

The legislation that President Obama signed on 12/17/10 that extends the Bush-era tax cuts (H.R. 4853) also extends several tax provisions related to energy. The bill extends for one year a program designed to encourage the development of renewable energy by allowing renewable energy companies to receive grants in lieu of tax credits, which is critical for companies without tax liability. The bill also extends the ability of transit users to use before-tax dollars for commuting up to \$240 per month, the same as the tax provisions for parking at work. Without the extension, tax benefits for driving and parking would have been double those for transit commuters.

In addition, the bill extends a couple of tax incentives that are harmful to the environment, which led NRDC to oppose the bill. One incentive, the Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit for ethanol producers — who already benefit from government requirements to blend ethanol and gasoline — is extended at its current rate of 45 cents per gallon. The good news is that the subsidy is extended for only one year, and a bipartisan bloc emerged that opposes future extensions. The second incentive is the 50 cents per gallon tax credit for liquid coal transportation fuels. While a fuel qualifying for the credit has to come from a facility that captures and disposes 75 percent of the carbon dioxide pollution emitted during the production process, the carbon

pollution from using the fuel is still higher than conventional fuels. NRDC opposes incentives that would help ramp up a liquid coal industry.

A number of other expiring incentives for renewable energy were not included in the final tax package, including one that enabled companies to establish, re-equip and expand factories in the United States to manufacture advanced energy technologies. Such incentives were included in a tax bill Senate Finance Committee Chair Baucus (D-MT) was unable to get through the Senate earlier in the year. Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chair Bingaman (D-NM) has promised hearings in early 2011 on how to encourage renewable and energy efficiency projects.

Nuclear Weapons

On 12/22/10, the Senate approved the New START Treaty by a vote of 71-26, with 13 Republicans joining all Democrats to provide the two-thirds majority the Constitution requires for treaty ratification. The treaty between the United States and Russia, which would be in effect for 10 years, would limit each side to 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads on intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers. Although the decreases are modest, the treaty would strengthen verification and build confidence between the two countries, and future reductions could follow. The United States has been unable to inspect Russia's nuclear arsenal since the original START Treaty expired a year ago; New START would allow on-site inspections and data exchanges, and require regular notifications related to strategic offensive arms.

Senators approved four amendments to the resolution for ratification, recognizing the Obama administration's commitment to move ahead with the development of missile defense systems, to address tactical nuclear weapons in the next round of negotiations with Russia, and to modernize the nation's nuclear weapons arsenal as well as the complex that supports it. These amendments do not alter the text of the treaty.

Transportation

On 12/16/10 and 12/21/10, the Senate and House passed the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (H.R. 5809). The bill authorizes \$500 million for grants to localities to modernize diesel trucks and buses over the next five years. This year's bill follows on the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2005, which authorized up to \$200 million per year, for five years, to help accelerate the cleanup of today's dirty diesel engines. Over the course of the last five years, Congress appropriated roughly a half billion dollars in funds for the program, including a one-time \$300 million infusion in the 2009 stimulus bill. By encouraging state and local matches for the program's federal funding, every dollar spent creates at least three dollars of investment. Over the past five years, thousands of communities have used these funds to retire, replace, retrofit or repower the oldest, dirtiest diesel vehicles. In 2008 alone, the program took 50,000 tons of pollution out of the air and, as a side benefit, helped communities save more than 3.2 million gallons of fuel.

Water

On 12/21/10 and 12/22/10, the Senate and House passed S. 3481, co-sponsored by Sen. Cardin (D-MD) and Sen. Inhofe (R-OK), which requires federal agencies to pay fees imposed by localities to cover the cost of treating and managing polluted stormwater runoff. This legislation, which amends the Clean Water Act, clears up ambiguity as to whether the federal government is required to pay such fees. Some federal entities claimed that such fees were taxes that the federal government is not obligated to pay to states or municipalities. This bill makes it clear that these fees are a "reasonable service charge," which the federal government is required to pay, and not a tax, so that federal facilities will pay their share to protect surface waters from stormwater pollution, as do all other facilities in such communities.

Wildlife

Montana Sens. Baucus and Tester introduced legislation (S. 3864) that would exempt gray



Xylitol— great news

Roger Lang

wolves in Idaho and Montana from protections under the Endangered Species Act. This legislation would have set a dangerous precedent for Congress to remove endangered species protections from individual species. The senators were not able to get the legislation voted on in the waning hours of the 111th Congress, partly because Congress did not take up the spending bill that would have served as a vehicle for the legislation.

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a nonprofit environmental organization with a mission to protect the planet's wildlife and wild places and ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things.

Source: NRDC—Legislative Watch 1/6/11 Natural Resources Defense Council, 40 West 20th St, NY, NY 10011 <http://www.nrdc.org> ; www.nrdcaction.org

There is some very exciting news on tooth decay or "cavities." A 10-year study by the American Dental Association has revealed that the two bacteria that cause tooth decay or "cavities" are contagious: we are not born with them. The study also shows that a natural sugar called xylitol, made from birch bark and corn cob, stops the metabolism of those two bad bacteria and does not bother the good bacteria in our mouths. This is a miracle, because if we use this sugar in new mouthwash and toothpastes over the course of 3 years, either those bad bacteria go down in number or they leave the mouth. The potential for new "cavities" goes way down or stops. Astounding—and the paste and mouth wash taste good. Products with xylitol are now available in health food stores, with distribution to expand with increased demand. Ask your dentist.



Contact Your Reps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The T is Not Silent

Letting go

Elena Kelly

My dad has been in an assisted living facility in Colorado for almost two years. I have flown to Colorado from California four times to visit him, and each time I was faced with the worsening of his Alzheimer's disease. This visit was by far the hardest. For fully two-thirds of our time together he was not there. He was seeing and/or hearing something that had nothing to do with me or anything else in his room. Wherever he was, it was peaceful, and more real than this world.

Sometimes I find it hard to let go. Seeing my dad reminded me that life has a way of making us let go of expectations, of roles that people have played in our lives, of the very people we love the most. And because of his mental state, I chose to let go of my need to look feminine while I visited with him, choosing rather to be the boy he had raised, the only way he could relate to me. It was a role I had perfected over the almost fifty years until my transition. I did it for him, but I also did it for me.

Two years ago when he was admitted to assisted living I

met with the Administrator, a 30-something woman who was kind and understanding, but who was convinced that my father would be very upset to see me as a woman, and at that time he, too, had expressed those same feelings to me. I had to let go of the new life I found if I was ever going to see him alive again. So I asked her to please inform the staff to contact me if he ever once indicated to them that he wanted to see me. I wanted them all to know that I loved him and I wanted to see him if he could ever accept me enough to let me visit.

That was two years ago. This trip, after dinner with my dad, three nurses took me aside. They told me they had been informed of the "special circumstances" surrounding my visits with my dad. They all agreed that what I was doing was courageous and admirable, and they were impressed that I was so kind and loving toward my dad. These nurses were reaching out to a transgender woman with love and kindness, supporting me in doing what I had to do. Then each one gave me a hug and I was floored.

I hope I will have the chance

to go to Colorado and see my dad again before he passes on to his next life. But if I don't, he has taught me a vital lesson on the power of letting go. His disease forced me to do something I would never have done (dress as a boy), and in the process, many others were educated about transgender issues, found a place of compassion, and were able to express their feelings to me in such a beautiful way.

Letting go is necessary in life, and when I accept that, I will likely find something beautiful waiting for me on the other side. That's how it was with my dad this trip. And that's how it was when I let go of pretending to be man and embraced my femininity. There is something good, really good, coming at me that I can't see just yet. May I always be grateful for the good that I can't see until I allow myself to let go. By God's grace, may we all.

Elena Kelly is an activist minister for the Central Valley LGBT community and Director of the Stockton Transgender Alliance. She can be reached at elena.kelly@comcast.net

14th amendment under attack

The day before members of Congress recited the Constitution on the House floor and affirmed their commitment to defend and uphold it, an unconstitutional bill designed to subvert the citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment was introduced.

The bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Steve King (R-IA), attempts to rewrite the citizenship clause to restrict citizenship to only three categories of people: children of U.S. citizens or nationals, children of permanent residents and children of non-citizens in active-duty military service. The proposed legislation violates the constitutional guarantee that all people born in the U.S. and under its jurisdiction are U.S. citizens entitled to equal protection under the law. Further, it would violate long-established Supreme Court precedent. In addition, this radical

proposal would deny citizenship to large segments of U.S. society including U.S.-born children to parents with lawful status such as refugees, foreign investors, scientists, engineers, artists, athletes, scholars and graduate students.

Since its creation, the Constitution has guaranteed U.S. citizenship to every child born in the U.S., with very limited exceptions. Constitutional citizenship represents America's commitment to equality, fairness and justice under the law. Adopted in the aftermath of the Civil War, the 14th Amendment negated one of the Supreme Court's most infamous rulings, the Dred Scott decision of 1857, which held that neither freed slaves nor their descendants could ever become citizens. The Amendment, which guaranteed the constitutional

rights of citizenship for all who were born in this country was enacted in response to laws passed by the former Confederate States that prevented African Americans from entering professions, owning or leasing land, accessing public accommodations, serving on juries and voting.

In 1898, the U.S. Supreme Court addressed the guarantee of the 14th Amendment and affirmed the fundamental principle that children born on American soil are U.S. citizens without regard to their parents' status. This principle has been the settled law of the land for more than a century.

ACTION: Ask your representative to reject attacks on the 14th Amendment.

Source: ACLU Online release 1/7/11, American Civil Liberties Union, 125 Broad St, 18th Floor, NY, NY 10004-2400 ACLUOnline@aclu.org

2011: calling time on capitalism

Richard D. Wolff

Recent decades have seen a massive redistribution of wealth, imposing the cost of successive crises on the poorest. Enough!

The end of 2010 brought renewed Washington rhetoric, media hype and academic me-too declarations about the US economy "recovering". We've heard them before since the crisis hit in 2007. They always proved wrong.

But recovery noises are useful for some. Republicans claim that government should do less since recovery is underway (of course, for them, government action is always counterproductive). Likewise, Republicans and many centrist Democrats claim that income redistribution policies are no longer needed because recovery means growth, which means everyone gets a bigger piece of an expanding economic pie. Recovery hype also helps the Obama administration to claim that its policies succeeded.

Yet, this is more fantasy than reality. After all, the nearly 20% of the US labour force that became unemployed or underemployed in 2009 remains so as we enter 2011. No recovery there. Worse still, a quarter of those who found work since the crisis began only got temp jobs without benefits. Second, foreclosure actions by banks—including those who got most of the government's bailouts—continue to eject millions from their homes. No recovery there, either (except for the bigger banks).

Third, consider why the Federal Reserve decided last month to create another \$600bn of new money, and why Congress and the president agreed in December on an additional fiscal stimulus (extending Bush's tax cuts, reducing social security withholding for 2011, etc). They took those steps because all the previous bailouts, monetary easing, tax cuts and government fiscal stimulus expenditures had failed to end this crisis. Those immune to hype recognise that more of the same policies that failed before might do so again.

More importantly, the recovery noise distracts from a more basic failure of our economic

system: its fundamental instability. Recurring "downturns"—which neither private nor government actions have ever managed to prevent—impose massive costs on society. They plunge millions of effective, productive workers into unemployment and resulting personal, family and community disasters. Governments tap the collective purses of their nations chiefly to rescue just those private capitalists who were major contributors to the crisis and whose wealth insulates them from the crisis' worst effects.

Then, governments turn on their people to impose austerities (cutbacks in social programmes, social security, etc) needed to restore government budgets busted by that rescue's huge costs. Like someone convicted of murdering his parents who demands leniency as an orphan, corporate America demands conservative government and austerity on the grounds of excessive budget deficits. Mainstream media and politicians take those corporate demands seriously, reminding us who controls whom.

The last half-century suggests a very different analysis of the crisis and a correspondingly different response for 2011. Since the early 1970s, workers' wage increases came to an end, their benefits and job security shrank and government supports for average people came under conservative attack. These increasing burdens were justified as absolutely necessary to enable more investment and, therefore, greater economic growth. A bigger economic pie would then provide more for everyone including workers.

Who gains, who loses

While workers' conditions deteriorated, capitalist surpluses and profits soared and stock markets boomed. Income and wealth were redistributed from poor and middle to the rich. But the promised results never materialised: neither more investment, nor greater economic growth. Growth actually slowed and then the whole system imploded into a catastrophic crisis.

Today's recovery noises accompany government actions that will repeat in 2011 more of the bailouts, monetary easing and

fiscal stimuli that have proved insufficient since 2007. None of those actions dare to question, let alone address, how capitalism redistributed income and wealth in the decades leading to the crisis or how that redistribution contributed to the crisis.

The recovery being planned and hyped aims at a return to the US economy before it crashed. However, that capitalism was like a train hurtling toward the stone wall of crisis. To return to a pre-crisis capitalism risks resuming our places on a similar train heading for a similar crash.

Republican and Democratic politicians alike dare not link this crisis to an economic system that has never stopped producing those "downturns" that regularly cost so many millions of jobs, wasted resources, lost outputs and injured lives. For them, the economic system is beyond questioning. They bow before the unspoken

taboo: never criticise the system upon which your careers depend.

Thus, this crisis and its burdens will continue until capitalists see sufficiently attractive opportunities for profit to resume investing and hiring people in the US as well as elsewhere. The freedoms of US capitalists to gain immense government supports as needed, and yet to invest only when, where and how they can maximise their private profits are paramount: the first obligations of government. The freedoms from want and insecurity for the US people remain a distant second priority—until mass political action changes that.

In good times, as in bad, capitalism is a system that places a small minority of people with one set of goals (profits, disproportionately high incomes, dominant political power, etc) in the positions to receive and distribute enormous wealth. Those people include the

boards of directors that gather the net revenues of business into their hands and decide, together with the major shareholders in those businesses, how to distribute that wealth. Not surprisingly, they use it to achieve their goals and to make sure government secures their positions.

No Keynesian monetary or fiscal policies address, let alone change, how that system works and who uses its wealth to what ends. No reforms or regulations passed or even proposed under Obama would do that either. To avoid the instability of capitalism and its huge social costs requires changing the system. That remains the basic issue for a new year and a new generation. Will they break today's version of a dangerous old taboo: never question the existing system?

Source: Article first appeared in *The Guardian* <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>> via *truthout Op-Ed 1/11/11*, www.truthout.org

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BROKER



Our outrage

Rabbi Michael Lerner

When right-wingers create a climate of hate against liberal government, and then individuals act on that hate as they did in blowing up a Federal Building in Oklahoma City and now this premeditated murder of several people (we are still praying for the survival of Congresswoman Giffords) in hate-filled Arizona (where she had been attacked viciously but not physically for her support of health care reform), the state whose racism has made it famous around the world for profiling Mexican immigrants, there is no call to investigate and protect ourselves from these right-wing hate mongers. Similarly, when Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by right wing Jews, the right-wing ultra-nationalist community in Israel's West Bank settlers never faced any serious investigation of their role in creating the hateful climate that helped produce the murderer.

Why does what Hillary Clinton once quite accurately described as "the vast right-wing conspiracy" get a free pass when its rhetoric can easily be seen to contribute to the climate of hate from which the actions of this "lone gunman" can be easily understood to have

emerged? Isn't it time for us to demand that our government investigate the violence-generating discourse of the racist and the haters? Why, when the House of Representatives was in the hands of Democrats, did they not have any committee or subcommittee at work holding public hearings to explore what kind of legislation might help protect us citizens and our liberal and progressive representatives from the kind of violence that exploded in Arizona earlier today? Because if there is no such larger exploration of how to stop the haters and to uncover the full dimensions of those who are committed to destroying, one way or the other, the non-military functions of our government, then ordinary people are going to be more afraid to participate in the democratic process or come to any public events—and that is a decisive step toward allowing fascism to triumph in this country. So don't think of this action as a mere "irrational event," because it fits very well with the agenda of those who want to give the country back 100% to the corporate powers and their Republican agents in Congress while scaring those who might wish to participate in helping build any kind of progressive alternative.

And don't underplay the anti-Semitic elements either. When Jews are targeted, it's rarely "by chance." Right-wing haters particularly hate Jews, since Jews were the most consistent non-African American constituency for the Democratic Party, in 2010 voting 70% for Democrats. If the rest of the country voted like Jews we'd have a liberal Democratic Congress. And this is not lost on the right-wingers. Just listen to the tapes of Nixon and you see how extreme the hatred of Jews is revealed to be by the "moderate" Nixon, and now we have the more extreme elements of the Right coming to power. Jews are, in the minds of these haters, the same as liberals or progressives—maybe even the worst of them. And then, the sexism of the right manifests dramatically in attempting to kill a woman—the perfect symbol of uppity feminists who dare to take power away from the male chauvinists who thought that "their" country was about white male Christian power. You won't hear the media dealing with these dimensions of the reality—but they are central.

Source: *Tikkun* / Network of Spiritual Progressives, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704 510-644-1200 www.tikkun.org

Congress, stand up for net neutrality

Late last month, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) passed a new rule clarifying the FCC's legal authority to enforce network neutrality principles. Network neutrality, also known as "net neutrality," principles protect free speech online by prohibiting the owner of a network from prioritizing some types of content on the Internet while slowing down others.

First, the good news: the new rule prohibits wired broadband owners—usually telecom companies like Comcast and Verizon that provide cable and DSL service to homes and offices—from discriminating against information by throttling, slowing or otherwise tampering with the transfer of any data on the wired Internet.

Now, the bad news, and it's pretty bad: the rule is on shaky

legal footing and it doesn't apply to wireless Internet—the kind you access on your cell phone. The legal question is particularly frustrating. After the D.C. Circuit rejected the FCC's last efforts to establish open internet rules—largely because of questions over FCC authority—the ACLU and many other groups argued that broadband providers offer a telecommunications service and should therefore be regulated like telephone companies. Such a change would provide robust protections. Sadly, the FCC bowed to industry pressure and refused to adopt this change.

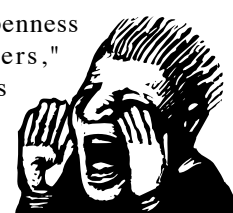
"By creating two sets of regulations—one for the wired Internet and one for wireless broadband—and failing to ground them in the strongest legal protections available, the FCC has failed to protect free speech and

Internet openness for all users," said Chris Calabrese, ACLU Legislative Counsel.

"The ACLU will continue to fight for full network neutrality protections. Internet openness is key to protecting our First Amendment rights." Now that the FCC has voted, this issue is in Congress's hands.

ACTION: Tell your members of Congress we need strong net neutrality protections for the entire Internet, not just the wired one.

Source: *ACLU Online release 1/7/11, American Civil Liberties Union, 125 Broad St, 18th Floor, NY, NY 10004-2400 ACLUOnline@aclu.org*



Navigating

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

Facing the crisis

John Morearty

On December 16, 131 Afghan war protesters, including combat veteran and former New York Times war correspondent Chris Hedges, were arrested for chaining themselves to the White house fence. Hedges said, "Hope means, doing something."

I considered chaining myself. Then while wrapping Christmas yoyos and flashlights for grandchildren, I cut little strips of paper, glued up a red and green chain, and hung it on my oak swivel chair. I'm chained to my desk.

Friend Roger phoned on his lunch break.

"John, what can I do? Things are really serious! War, global warming, water crisis, mass starvation. The Mayan calendar is ending, yellow billboards trumpeting Judgment Day.... My wife and I want to take personal action. But what?"

The crisis can be analyzed on many levels, but in our attitudes we face two root problems: addiction to comfort, and tribalism.

Thanks to immense industrial ingenuity, millions of human beings are too comfortable—seduced by Mega-Corporate Pleasures, as Aldous Huxley predicted in *Brave New World*. Why march for health care, peace and jobs when we can munch Genetically Modified Corn chips (with avocado dip grown by dirt-poor Mexicans) and watch the Stupor Bowl? Munch don't march. Sit on duff, devour stuff—and devour the earth. Soon only the super-rich will have refuges to run to—for a while.

A second obstacle is our persistent tribal thinking and behavior. Us versus them. For a million years our ancestors identified with the tribe, the extended family group. We were The People, we killed strangers. Nonviolence was the counsel of fools.

Tribalism continues to thrive, as nationalism—"We are Americans, to hell with the rest." But humans have become one tribe. Brilliant

technologies of communication, transportation and destruction have changed the objective situation, and human beings—indeed the species of earth—are all in the same fragile boat. Suicide bombers and victims stroll side by side. Nuclear bombs and other demonic devices spread like viruses, and as Martin Luther King said, 'either we will learn to live together as brothers and sisters, or we will perish together as fools.'

The challenge now is, Will we recognize our global kinship? Will we think globally—and ACT LOCALLY?

Here are local actions for sanity and cooperation:

* Boycott Big Banks, put your money into local banks and credit unions.

* Boycott huge chain stores, buy from local merchants. Main street, not Wall Street.

* Invest in rehabbing housing for poor people, support South Stockton STAND. Info: Fred Sheil, 937-7625

* Support (that means with time, energy, money) the nonprofit PUENTES community farm project, which is creating self-sustaining organic gardens so the underserved can grow healthy food for their families. The first garden is in Boggs Tract, there will be many others. Info: Rosemary Atkinson, 478-4380, or Patricia Miller-Battiste, 598-3647.

* Support KYNJ community radio, the new FM station being built by the Peace and Justice Network. Info: Christie Kelley, 943-0539, Tony Kiser, 471-5671, or Laura Fedick, siksixseven@yahoo.com

* Support Fathers and Families of San Joaquin, which trains young men and women to live responsibly, and work for the good of all. Info: Sammy Nunez, 298-1173

* Support BiLingual Weekly, Connections newspaper and the Peace and Justice Network, free peoples' alternative information.

* Save two dates:

Saturday, April 9, huge Peace and Justice Rally in San Francisco, and

Sunday, April 10, Earth Day in Victory Park.

* Stand against the War System. Demonstrate for peace every Thursday, 4-5 PM, Delta College lawn by Pacific Avenue north of bus stop. Info: Patrick Wall, 954-5438.

* Walk, ride your bike, take the bus or train.

* Wear a peace button.

* Like my wife, keep your bumper pristine, but put a Kleenex box in your back window with a sticker, "Peace begins when the hungry are fed."

* Write to elected officials.

* Visit elected officials.

* Picket elected officials.

* Elect persons of integrity.

* If need be, chain self to fence. Choose fence wisely.

* (Add your own)

Above all, Don't Panic! Ignore Mayan astrologers. The Mayans destroyed their ecology and practiced human sacrifice, is that wisdom? As for Judgment Day, hot-eyed Christians have been predicting The End since the beginning—Sinners go to Hell, hallelujah!

But Rabbi Jesus said, "We know not the day nor the hour. Give what you've got—and fear not."

Someone asked Francis of Assisi, "If an angel appeared and said you have fifteen minutes to live, what would you do?" Francis replied, "I hope I would keep on doing whatever I was doing."

In this time of the Great Turning we do transformational work of many kinds, not knowing whether we are midwives of a new era—or simply hospice workers. But notice that both callings require the same qualities.

Don't panic, the Force is with us. Indeed, the Force is within our very molecules, which have survived for thirteen billion years, from the Big Bang to this most amazing day of roses in the fog



Join us for the 3 E's: environment, exemptions and elections

The Planning and Conservation League Symposium is at the end of the month and boy do we have an awesome line up! We'll be tackling some of California's biggest environmental topics like the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and teaching participants how to improve their professional skill set.

CEQA 201: A Look at 2009/2010 and Rollback Preventions

In 2009, we saw some proposals receive environmental exemptions from CEQA, our Golden State's most powerful environmental law. With the City of Industry's stadium exempted from review, others were lining up in 2010 to get the same exemption. But alas, legislators and leaders in the non-profit sector successfully defended against more exemptions. This panel will provide an overview of the 2009/2010 Legislative Session, CEQA exemption requests, trends from the Capitol, and preventions of future rollbacks.

• Jan Chatten-Brown, Chatten-Brown and Carstens LLP

• Assemblymember Mike Feuer, California Legislature

• Pete Price, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly John A. Perez

How To... Position Yourself to Run for Office

Ever wonder if you have what it takes to enter the world of politics? Discover the skill sets that also help get candidates elected from listening skills, to coalition building, and odd-couple alliances. Discover when to start thinking about running, how to begin a campaign, what your platform is, and how to advance it publicly. Participants will learn how to set the stage for a successful political run at the local or regional level, understand the ins and outs of political life, and get the low down on timing.

• Supervisor Steve Wilensky, Calaveras County

The Symposium is Saturday, January 29, 2011 at the Sheraton in downtown Sacramento. Register now! Since space is limited we cannot guarantee space for walk-in registrations, please register in advance. If this isn't possible, if space is available same day registrants will have a \$10 charge added to the registration fee.

Source: *The Planning and Conservation League PCL Insider: News from the Capitol 1/7/11 PCL, 1107 9th Street, Suite 360, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 444-8726 www.pcl.org*



and laughing babies. The world will be saved by beauty. As the poet Dante wrote, in the last line of his *Divine Comedy*, the Force is "Love, which moves the sun and the other stars."

John Steinbeck's magnificent *Grapes of Wrath* tells the epic of the Joad family. They come to understand that "the family" includes total strangers on the road. Tribal no more. On the last page young Rose of Sharon,

whose baby has died, nurses a starving man in a barn. In the Spanish Civil War against the fascists, in 1938, a soldier-poet dreamt of "the futures when there will be no strangers."

John Morearty emails items of interest, like the Chris Hedges piece. Join his list at john@morearty.com. He will NOT give your email address to others, and you can un-subscribe with a click.

PJN supporters give donations: time, energy and money

Christie Kelley

Thank you donors, one and all: we appreciate your financial support. During the year 2010 you supported us with \$16,600 as well as many hours of volunteer service.

This year we saw an increase in the number of volunteers at Earth Day and at the Faire. San Joaquin Delta College and UOP students were much more visible and their enthusiasm and energy were greatly appreciated. We hope to see more of them throughout the coming year.

The Radio committee, now known as Stone Soup Radio, has ebbed and flowed. It is now building in strength, numbers and passion. Local musicians, small business owners, radio buffs and dedicated community members are meeting twice a month. They

are hammering out the mission and vision of the station, setting up fundraising tactics, developing job descriptions and setting up meetings with people like to you to assure that this community radio station is on the air in 24 months! Look out, because here we come; be ready to support this new enterprise.

Here is a sample of the kind notes that have come through our post office box; they warm our hearts and keep the fire going and provide you with a fresh, honest look at the news both local and global:

* To keep the lights on. Merry Xmas

* Dear PJN, I do appreciate your *Connections*, especially Richard Trumka's speech on organized labor and immigration. If we had a labor movement or 30 or 40,000,000 instead of 12 or

13,000,000 organized workers, we could tell the bosses and bankers to shove it!! Sincerely, N.R.

* Dear People, Thank you for the good work you do. Wish I could donate to the radio station but I am a senior with limited income. (A radio station) is an excellent idea and will go a long way to inform the public, much like Pacifica Radio does. I listened to their network in New York City in the late 1960s and 70s and found their network in Dallas, Texas or Houston in the 1980s. Looking forward to future posting of its progress. Sincerely L.G.

* Keep up the good work, you keep me informed and educated!

* I read *Connections* because it is thought provoking as well as informative. M.M.

* Best wishes as you continue your good work in 2011. C.R.

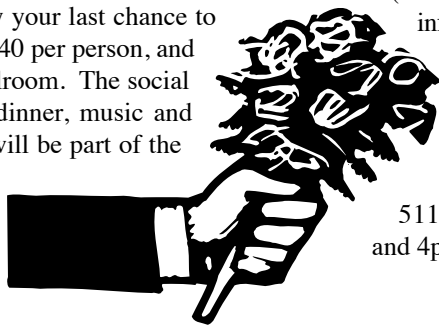
Stockton Arts Commission offers mini-grants up to \$1,000

The Stockton Arts Commission has a special offering of mini-grants to the city's artists and arts group by application, available on the Commission's website, www.stocktongov.com/arts. "We didn't give away as much money as the Commission allocated this year," explained its Endowment Committee Chair Kathy Hart. "We have some funds left over and would like to see that our city's arts groups have a chance to use it." She said the small grants won't impact a group's ability to qualify during the Commission's regular granting cycle, which begins with mandatory workshops in early February.

The short application is due on Monday, January 31, at 5 p.m. Grants up to \$1,000 will be made this spring. Any Stockton area arts project is eligible for a grant. "We think these would be especially helpful to a group or artist who already has a project in progress and needs just a little extra money to make it work perfectly," Hart said. Details are available on the Commission's website.

Last chance crab feed

United Cerebral Palsy is holding the 2nd Annual Last Chance' Crab Feed on Friday, March 25, 2011. Possibly your last chance to enjoy a crab feed this season. Tickets are \$40 per person, and the event is being held at the Stockton Ballroom. The social hour will begin at 6:00pm, followed by dinner, music and dancing. Raffle and Silent Auction items will be part of the festivities. Please reserve your tickets by March 18, 2011. 956-0290



Stockton Symphony Valentine pops concert

Charm your Valentine as the Stockton Symphony presents its Valentine Pops concert, "Embraceable You: An Evening of Gershwin and Cole Porter." Conducted by Music Director Peter Jaffe on Saturday, February 12th, 2011 at 6pm at San Joaquin Delta College's Atherton Auditorium. Soprano Laurie Williamson and baritone Leon Williams come together to create an extraordinary vocal pair. Tickets range from \$22 to \$55 and can be purchased in advance by calling the Stockton Symphony's office at (209) 951-0196. For more information, visit www.stocktonsymphony.org or call or visit the Atherton Auditorium box office at (209) 954-5110 from 11am-3pm and 4pm-6pm.

Tidewater Gallery presents

HOMWORKS III

A Group Show by Local Art Teachers

January 4-28, 2011



Reception: Friday, Jan. 14, 2011 5-8 p.m.

Tidewater gallery local art teachers display

High school art teachers from the Stockton area will exhibit their artwork at the Downtown Tidewater Art Center and Gallery. *Homeworks III: A Group Show by Local Art Teachers* that runs through Friday, January 28, 2011.

Artist/educators displaying in the 2011 exhibit include: Cyndi Esenwein, Luz Lua-Foster, Thai Neang, Susan Bradley, Chao Vang, Tom Hermansen, Rhonda Gibson, Paul Pellegrini, Georgia Baxter, Kellie Rilla, Richard Walsh and Valrie Jensen. These educators work as artists outside the classroom in a full range of media including paintings, drawings, mixed media and sculpture. Individual teachers participating in the exhibition vary from year to year, reflecting the transformations taking place within the schools.

The Gallery is an artists' collaborative located directly across the street from the county Courthouse at 223 E. Weber Avenue. Gallery hours are Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. For further information about the gallery, artists, exhibits, upcoming art classes or special events, call the gallery at (209) 463-4033, email tidewatergallery@att.net or at www.tidewaterartgallery.org.

Souper supper event

Save the date! The 10th Annual "Souper Supper" will take place on Friday, February 18th, 2011 at the Scottish Rite Center, 33 E. Alpine Ave., Stockton, Ca.-5:30 to 9 pm. This event features hand-crafted souvenir pottery bowls and a menu of 8 gourmet soups, breads, wines and desserts. Those attending can also purchase original art and "Getaway" Auction Items. Call (209) 463-4033 or email tidewatergallery@att.net for reservations. Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door/\$275 for a pre-reserved table of 8.

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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.

Through Jan 29

San Joaquin Potters Guild Ceramic and Glass Art. Tue-Fri 11-5, Sat 10-4. Goodwin Gallery, 1902 Pacific Ave., Stockton 466-6604 www.sanjoaquinpottersguild.org

Jan 20—Feb 11

Faculty Connections art show—sculpture, photography, painting. Tu 11am—4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am—1pm. Reception: 1/22, 5-7 pm. SJ Delta College, LH Horton Jr Gallery, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 954-5507.

Jan 20—Feb 6

Run for Your Wife, a British farce. Thu 7:30pm, Fri-Sat 8pm, Sun 2:30pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15—\$25. 473-2424.

Sun, Jan 30

UOP Resident artist series Burr Phillips bass-baritone, Margaret Perry piano, 7:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP, \$8 general, \$5 seniors, students free.

Mon, Jan 31

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

Thu, Feb 3

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

Sat, Feb 5

UOP Resident artist series Patricia Shands clarinet, Igor Veligan violin, Natsuki Fukusawa piano, 7:30 pm.

Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP, \$8 general, \$5 seniors, students free.

Central Valley Symphony concert—45th anniversary. 7:30 pm. 125 S. Hutchins Street Square, Lodi. Info: 333-5550.

Sun, Feb 6

Symphonic Wind Ensemble, with UC Berkeley Wind Ensemble, 2:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP, Free admission.

Tue, Feb 8

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

Wed, Feb 9

Real talk discussion: LGBT in Black America. 6-8 pm, Multicultural Center, UOP. 946-7707

Wed, Feb 16

Real talk discussion: Brawn and Body—The Black Male. 6-8 pm, Multicultural Center, UOP. 946-7707

Sat, Feb 19

89.5 Valley Community Radio networking meeting, 9—11 am, Blackwater Cafe, Yosemite Ave, Stockton. 467-4455.

Sun, Feb 27

Peace & Justice Annual potluck and gathering. 4—7:30 pm. Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Come to discuss, plan and eat! All welcome. 467-4455.

Sun, April 10

Earth Day Festival, 11 am—5 pm. Victory Park, Stockton. Always a great celebration. Earlier this year—save the date.

First Mondays

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm, Towers Building,

509 W Weber Ave., Stockton. cgmemb@gmail.com

Fourth Mondays

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

Second Tuesdays

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

Second Thursdays

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

Third Saturdays

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 9—11 am, Blackwater Cafe. 467-4455.

Fourth Saturdays

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

Thursdays

Demonstrate for peace! 4-5 pm. Delta College lawn, along Pacific north of bus stop. Free parking in mall lot. Signs provided, or bring your own. Info: Patrick Wall, 954-5438

Saturdays

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

Volunteers needed to distribute Connections to well-established routes. About two hours per month. Easy and fun! Call Dean or Marcia Savage, 209-339-1599.



Wolf Creek Lodge

Senior Cohousing in Grass Valley, California

Just this past fall, construction began on Wolf Creek Lodge, a cohousing community for active adults located in the Sierra's historic gold rush country.

Designed by green award-winning local architect Charles Durrett, Wolf Creek Lodge will be situated atop a beautiful wooded plot of land in Grass Valley that slopes down to free-flowing Wolf Creek. The creek and one-third of the acreage will remain undeveloped, and the Lodge will be green built and energy efficient. The site is within easy walking distance to shops and services and close to historic downtown Grass Valley, with its gold rush character, art galleries, restaurants, and theater and music venues.

Cohousing provides a dynamic balance between personal privacy and living in community. Members live in privately owned, self-sufficient units and share large common facilities. It is an ideal way to foster healthy and vibrant aging where independence is maintained and support is built in. Senior cohousing is the innovative answer to today's environmental and social challenges.

We welcome new members and offer an informational gathering on the third Saturday of each month. Our next meeting will be on February 19 from 4:30 to 5:45 with an informal dinner afterwards. Please visit us at <http://www.wolfcreeklodge.org> and learn more about cohousing and our community.

9th annual pub night tickets on sale

Take your family out for an evening of authentic English food. The Episcopal Church of St. Anne presents its 9th Annual Pub Night from 6:00 to 8:30pm, for two nights, Friday February 18th and Saturday February 19th. "After ten years, Pub Night at St. Anne's is becoming a tradition," said Jeff Ryan, coordinator of Pub Night at St. Anne's. "Each year we convert the sanctuary into a traditional English pub complete with live sing-along music, darts, pub food and beer."

The menu includes a choice of bangers and mash, fish and chips, plowman's lunch (vegetarian option) and shepherd's pie. Heaping dessert options and beer brewed by St. Anne's Brewers Guild served in a souvenir pint glass are also included. The event is St. Anne's largest fundraiser and the money raised is used to support the ongoing costs of the church as well as contributions back to the community. Past beneficiaries have included the Women's Center of San Joaquin County and the Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin.

Tickets cost \$30 for adults and children under 12 are half price. Tickets will be available at the door or can be purchased in advance at the Episcopal Church of St. Anne, located at 1020 West Lincoln Road. Call 209.473.2313 for more details. Advanced ticket purchases are strongly encouraged as this event has sold out in years past. For questions and information contact Erin Rausch at 209.401.0178.

Talking It Through

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

Peace & Justice Network sponsors two half-hour shows:

"Let's Talk" hosted by Margee Ensign features speakers at University of the Pacific and elsewhere documentaries of important community meetings and events. Mondays 6 pm

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

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

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



Minutes from last year's Annual Meeting

PJN annual potluck and meeting

On February 28, 2010 we met talked, ate and discussed 2009 and created goals for 2010. Now it is time to gather again, review the year and set our sights on 2011. Time flies when you are involved, caring and working for a better world.

Before you come, review the discussion reports from last year related to Healthcare, the Media, Peace, Human Rights, Economic/Workers Rights, and Climate Change. How has the Stockton/San Joaquin county progressive community done, and what lies ahead for the coming year?

Healthcare

o Continue to work on adopting a Federal and State bill for single payer option.

o Educate a wider range of people by tabling, calling and talking to Assembly members and Legislators, particularly Berryhill and Gagliani. Educate and disseminate information regarding pharmaceuticals on line compared to traditional method of buying drugs.

o Involve other organizations and include them in events related to single payer option.

o Save the county hospital

Media

o In developing the radio station, use FreePress.org to help. Find a technical staff, manager, programmers, and raise \$45,000 for equipment. Jim Walsh volunteered to form a committee to work on the developing radio station.

o Local community newspapers are financially distressed. Support the local media. Members are encouraged to write letters to the editor, respond to community politics, and subscribe to local papers: The Record, La Voz etc.

o Develop a more efficient communication system to disseminate event information.

Peace

o The definition of peace includes the individual, the group, communities-locally, nationally and internationally

o No War billboards should be placed throughout the area; we need to fundraise to accomplish this.

o Involve more students in peace-work. Develop a group of presenters to speak in Jr. High, High school and colleges. Work with and support the anti-gang Peace Keepers. Deliver Connections to the high school libraries. Work with Sophan Sorn to develop a SJ Peace Film Festival. (Paula LeVeck volunteered to work on this). Jim Walsh will work with youth to develop a Youth Matter Video for YouTube.

o Members are interested in an update on the Department of Peace

Human Rights

o Human rights include life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; everyone should have these rights including healthcare, employment and/or financial support

o This broad discussion included the current form for dispersement of government funds, the unsigned ban on landmines and cluster bombs, and the "tea party" vs. the "coffee grinders", how to maintain your enthusiasm in spite of the world living on \$2.00 a day, clean water, U.S. global dominance, the accumulation of wealth and an anti-death penalty.

PJN Annual Meeting / Potluck

Sunday, February 27, 2011

Location: PJN Center 431 Bedford Road, off the Miracle Mile in Stockton.

Bring a dish to share, enjoy a good meal with great company. We will start at 4:00 p.m. and wrap up the gathering with a Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m.



Economics/Workers Rights

o Promote green bike trails in the city

o Unions have done much to change workers lives, over time there have been many changes, competition with production in other countries and corrupt union policies. All these issues need to be addressed.

o Downtown development needs to continue.

o The city council has been unresponsive to the citizen concerns regarding housing for working people.

o City funding practices need to be reevaluated. Public safety received 75% of the city budget.

This includes pay and retirement benefits.

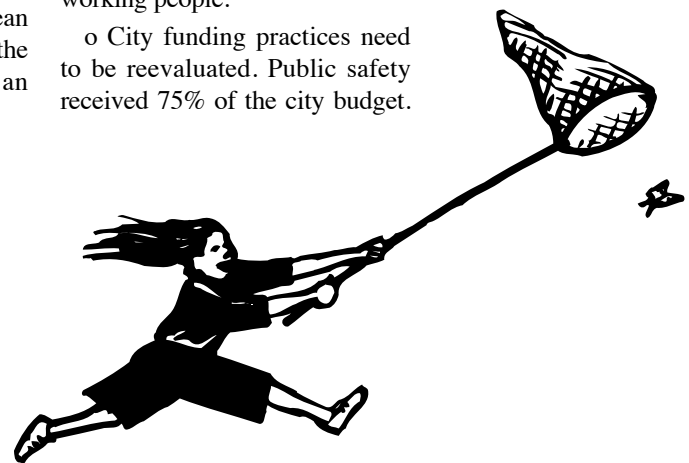
Climate Change

o Eat local, drive less; consider your energy use in all aspects of your life.

o Participate in the local garden project

o Participate in Restore the Delta and the restoration of the Calaveras River.

o Be aware of the facts regarding the peripheral canal and speak out.



connections

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

Save the date

Bring the troops home now: march and rally

April 9th, 2011; San Francisco; time and place TBA

* Bring U.S. Troops Now: Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan! End the sanctions and stop the threats of war against the people of Iran, North Korea and Yemen. No to war and plunder of the people of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa! End U.S. Aid to Israel! End U.S. Support to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine and the Siege of Gaza!

* Trillions for jobs, education, social services, an end to all foreclosures, quality single-payer healthcare for all, a massive conversion to sustainable and planet-saving energy systems and public transportation and reparations to the victims of U.S. terror at home and abroad.

* End FBI raids on antiwar, social justice, and international solidarity activists, an end to the racist persecution and prosecutions

that ravage Muslim communities, an end to police terror in Black and Latino communities, full rights and legality for immigrants and an end to all efforts to repress and punish Wikileaks and its contributors and founders.

* immediate end to torture, rendition, secret trials, drone bombings and death squads.

International Action Center, c/o Solidarity Center, 55 W 17th St Suite 5C, NY, NY 10011 212-633-6646 www.iacenter.org