

# connections

PRICELESS

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## SAVE THE DATES

**SAT, JUNE 5  
WALDOFEST, STOCKTON  
(P 20)**

**SAT, JUNE 12  
89.5 RADIO MEETING  
P&J CENTER, STOCKTON  
(P1)**

## Update on 89.5 Valley Community Radio

*Bruce Giudici*

So it has begun. On May 15, a group of 12 radioheads gathered to discuss the future of the Peace & Justice's new FM station: 89.5, Valley Community Radio.

After introductions, the current status of the project was presented. Todd Ulrich of Common Frequency said PJN has three years to get on the air; a start-up matching grant is pending for about half the equipment costs (the other \$25,000 needs to be raised). The transmitter agreement needs to be nailed down, with the location pretty

much set on a mountain above Corral Hollow Road near Tracy. Ulrich said this location ensures the strongest signal in the Tracy area, with some coverage into Stockton. To enhance that signal will require power boosters called translators, to come later. For now, getting on the air is the priority.

The group discussed how the radio group would operate as a committee of the Peace & Justice Network, which is the non-profit permittee for the station. The mission statement of the Network will guide the decision-making of the station leaders, as it moves into programming.

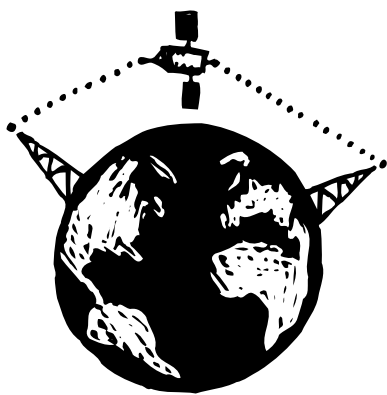
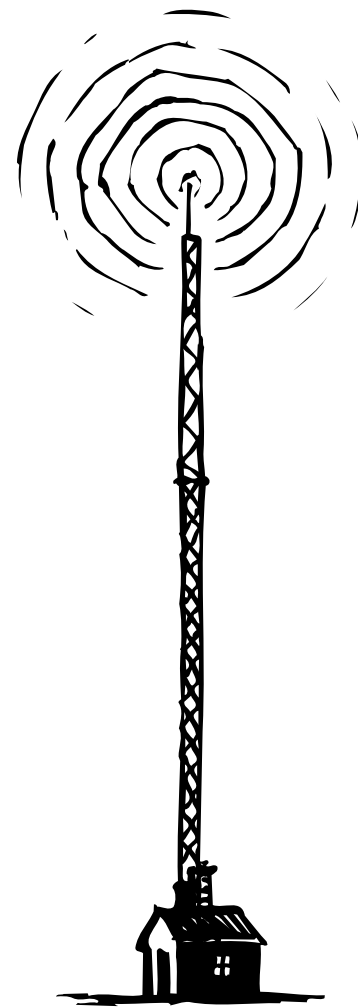
Brad Johnson, who has experience in operating a low-power station in Salida, provided expertise on where and how such programming is acquired—costs and logistics. Tony Kaiser pledged the support of the community music scene, as the station can be seen as an opportunity for locals to showcase their talent. Reuben Joe Mesta spoke for many youth

who will find working the station educational and an exciting outlet for reporting on their future. Yours truly, editor of Connections, sees much synergy between what we do for the newspaper and a radio station—to attract an audience in either venue helps build the other.

Discussion on different models to follow, on developing a business plan and budget, to raising funds, then buying equipment, setting up the studio—a lot was squeezed into the scheduled two-hour session.

Much remains to be done, but the inaugural meeting started us on the right foot. 89.5, Valley Community Radio is an idea whose time has come.

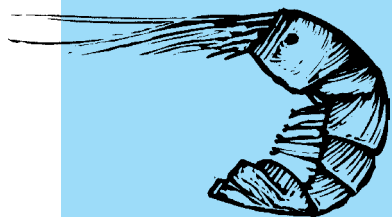
**ACTION:** It will never be too late to jump in and take part in creating this new and exciting venture. Our next meeting will be held on Saturday, June 12, from 9–11 am, at the Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, in Stockton.



**Stockton, May 1, International Workers Day**—About 2,000 people marched three miles for immigrant rights, from McKinley Park in South Stockton to a rally at Eden Park in Central Stockton. Many families took part, with no uniformed clergy in evidence, nor organized labor, with the exception of one Teamsters union shirt. The Stockton Record and Fox News covered the event. One chant was heard over and over: "Obama! Escucha! Estamos en la lucha!" ("Obama, listen up. We are in the fight.")

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# Oil blowout latest symptom that eco-crisis is here

Bruce Giudici

Why is it, when a corporation does unspeakable harm, killing a dozen people and millions of other living things, while destroying habitats and ways of life, they never face a death penalty. If an individual were found guilty of such mayhem, public outcry would demand retribution. Must be in the water...

And so the story continues: in an attempt to show it is doing something to fight the oil blowout, BP has decided (with our government's blessing) to use dispersants at the gusher hole—a PR move to limit what the public sees—in line with the disclosure ban on videos until 3 weeks after the event. Dutifully, the media presents the oil company as a responsible corporate citizen, doing all it can, 24-7, to recover from this horrendous (yet predictable) "accident"—overlooking that, at the end of the day, BP will go to all lengths to avoid paying

any damages beyond what is publically acceptable. And, when all is said and done, people will buy BP products again, producing the billions in profits BP will then use to avoid paying for the next accident. How do we know this? Check out Exxon.

In so many ways, we are being disappointed by the persistent lies that have become so flagrant, the liars are fearless that any amount of media coverage will make any difference. Congress holds their hearings—and the bankers, coal and oil companies show up to blame someone else. After years of demanding—and getting—their markets free of regulation, these corporations now blame the government for a lack of oversight. In typical corporate fashion, the upside belongs to the shareholder, the downside to the taxpayer, public or any other sucker that doesn't own the system. And in typical mainstream media fashion, they repeat the company's press release and an opponent's rebuttal—end of story.

How can one show appropriate outrage? Wasn't Obama supposed to be too smart to allow this to happen? Or are we all supposed to become cynics, believing that we are only told lies, that only money holds value, and that only children and the mentally infirm think otherwise?

In this lifetime, we cannot afford to be cynical. Every year, as every debt we owe grows, we dig deeper—making any needed correction more severe with each passing year. Financial debts are the easiest to fix—we only need change the way we re-distribute what we have... changing tax rates only requires realistically facing the inevitable. But we still have to fix them. Yet environmental debts are much more dangerous—since failure endangers the only habitable world we currently have (Mars won't be available for a while—no atmosphere). The fact that polls say offshore oil drilling is still acceptable shows how degraded American standards have become.

Bruce Giudici, editor



Imagine the poll on nuclear power after Three Mile Island—we still haven't seen a new nuclear plant built since 1977.

The time to develop alternative energy is now. The oil blowout is the latest warning, a symptom of our disease. Others include Iraq & Afghanistan military incursions overseas; pollution, sprawl and asthma at home. American's penchant to only do something in reaction to a crisis relies on the media to notify the public of the crisis. And, while our environmental mess is a slow-motion crisis, the accumulated disasters must be recognized and reacted to as if another Pearl Harbor or 9/11 has occurred. Because, to the future sustainability of our planet, the crisis is upon us.



## Feedback

### Peace, justice and tax policy

"Justice in the cupboard;" Guns and butter; He who pays the piper calls the tune; Once I built a railroad, now its done... Buddy can you spare a dime - No, I'm on the same train two cars back..." Quotes that run through my mind, as I contemplate our current situation.

Economic famine clarifies the cost of war and the abundance of injustice. Center stage is the issue, undebated since the 1960's, of tax policy. Slogans abound: from "Tax and spend liberals," to "Read my lips, no new taxes." A "tea party" energized by health care proposals and passage, adapts the old revolutionary cry to "No taxation without representation." Governments locally and at State levels seek to continue services in an adaptation of the line from "The Rime of the

Ancient Mariner." Taxes, Taxes, everywhere, and all the boards did shrink..."

The roots of peace and justice must be a coherent tax policy; a debate to form a consensus on that policy is long overdue. Every taxing authority needs to open this debate as rapidly as possible. Peace and justice should ask for open disclosure of all revenues, including fees, in an effort to adopt a policy detailing where we ought to go. Budget priorities established without marking who pays and how much for overall government services promote injustice. Is it our philosophy that wealth (substituting for mobility) obligates? If so, how do we define the wealth that we tax?

One of the arguments for the passage of California's Proposition 13 related to the rise in value of property. Much new wealth was created and middle

class people suddenly became the wealthy who were obligated. Now that property values have dropped drastically—the revenue governments depended on—tax policy must consider a redefinition of wealth that current economic realities have thrust upon us.

One tool available to California residents is the California State Board of Equalization. Established by constitutional amendment in 1879, it is the only elected tax appeal board in the nation. Originally designed to ensure fairness of property taxes of multi-county owners (railroad, etc), it now administers sales and excise taxes and hears appeals of all state tax decisions. It might of itself stir the debate so badly needed to establish a just future.

Mark L Stebbins

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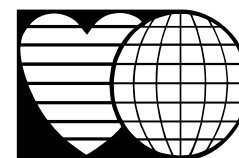
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# 10:10 Diary—May is Bike Month and other happy accomplishments

Laurie Litman

My goal of cutting carbon emissions by 10% in 2010 got much easier this month. The nice weather, along with encouragement from May is Bike Month, have made a big difference in my efforts.

As noted earlier in the series, cutting emissions has turned out to be more difficult than I expected. It's very easy to make excuses and continue on as before, "oops, forgot my grocery bag, oh well" "in a hurry, have to take the car" "too cold, turn on the heater"...

This process of trying to change your lifestyle is also extremely insightful; you learn a lot about yourself.

So this month I finally feel there's been some real breakthroughs. Two things in particular:

- 1) I'm no longer wracked with guilt when I choose the status quo (more carbon-intensive) path
- 2) However, I automatically consider all the alternatives before doing so.

For example, in the middle of my No Impact Week I had the opportunity to meet with some old friends in Ashland. It was a dilemma. They live in Port Townsend so we seldom see



Can you do your next trip by train? Or ride a bicycle, walk, or share a ride?

them and Ashland is only 6 hours away instead of 14 but could I justify a frivolous road trip? The answer: yes—being with friends is important for a good quality of life, still a top priority for me. Was there another way to go? We looked into trains and buses, considered our need to bring bicycles, and decided that a car trip was the most efficient and appropriate way to do this trip. We had a lovely, guilt-free time.

This story may be trivial and mundane but it illustrates a new phase in my quest for a low impact lifestyle—it's becoming easier and second nature.

Just this month we've almost stopped using the clothes dryer entirely. Instead we have a drying rack (overcoming the old excuse that we didn't have a place to hang clothes outside).

May is Bike Month and, with the help of a little gentle competition among friends, I am striving to put miles on my bike. So each time I need to go to the PO or store or even to a concert in Winters, I try to figure out if I really need the car. And occasionally I do, but most of the time the bike or a walk will take me there.

Little things, but just this month I am noticing some major changes. I looked up my PG&E bill history and found that, sure enough, the bills this year are increasingly smaller than the same months last year. I'm feeling better physically than I have in years, have lost weight and just learned my blood pressure is down. The walks and bike rides are changing my perspective and priorities. I've had to slow down and that has been extremely satisfying. Again, nothing unexpected—it's practically cliché—but it's nice to reach this new state of being.

Plus it's free and helps the earth. Amazing.

## BP oil disaster—what's going on?

BP is treating their oil spill as a PR problem while the Obama Administration covers for them and tries to downplay the crisis. Nobody is saying how much oil is spilling into the Gulf of Mexico, although some estimates suggest millions of gallons have already leaked. We don't know how to stop it or what the eventual damage will be. And there is no end in sight.

So how can you stay informed about this horrendous disaster? I recommend Firedoglake's coverage at <http://firedoglake.com/bp-oil-disaster>.

The blog Firedoglake has a stable of extremely knowledgeable writers and contributors who are

often far ahead of the traditional media in their reporting. Some articles can be very deep, but all are written with respect for readers and are relatively easy to understand. And you can ask questions—it's a blog.

This oil spill clearly illustrates the dangers of continuing our mindless lemming march. It highlights the connections among our reliance on fossil fuels, the power of large corporations to avoid regulations and accountability, the weakness of our current government and its willingness to sacrifice our planet to moneyed interests, and the extreme fragility of the ecosystems and economy we depend upon.

Once again, we are reminded that this is one planet, we are all interconnected, and we cannot continue along this path of reliance on fossil fuels and rogue corporations.

Some things you can do:

- Get your news from reputable blogs, not the traditional media.
- Stop the current "climate" bill that protects the very corporations that are destroying our earth.
- Vote out of office those who represent corporations rather than their constituents (this will take a while—don't give up).
- Do your best to decrease your personal use of fossil fuels.
- Become vocal on these issues.

## A bill for dirty power

Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT) have now released their long-stalled "climate" bill. We put "climate" in quotes because addressing the climate crisis seems like an afterthought in this bill, which provides enormous taxpayer bailouts to the dirtiest energy companies in the world.

- \$54 billion in new taxpayer loans for new nuclear reactor construction, plus tens of billions in new tax breaks for nuclear utilities.
- Speeding up the nuclear reactor licensing process, even though the independent Bipartisan Policy Center found the industry to blame for the pace of licensing.
- Billions for the oxymoron of

"clean" coal.

- Despite the calamitous BP oil spill, continued support for offshore oil drilling.
- Removal of EPA authority to regulate carbon emissions.
- And carbon reduction goals so modest (just 17% reduction from 2005 levels by 2020) that we can easily exceed them without this dirty energy bailout.

Join 200 organizations across the country that already have signed a statement opposing this bill and tell your Senators to oppose the Kerry-Lieberman "climate" bill and to work on finding real solutions to the climate crisis.

—Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS), <http://www.nirs.org/>



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

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

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

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

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

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## Book Review

# Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet

Heather Rogers

In his new book, *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*, Bill McKibben portrays the dire environmental conditions that a generation ago seemed like abstract predictions of what our grandchildren might endure. In much of his previous work the environmental journalist and activist aimed to wake people up to the existence of climate change before it was too late. His 1989 *The End of Nature* was the first book to clearly chart for a general audience the human causes of and potential disasters wrought by global warming.

In marked contrast, *Eaarth* accepts that climate change and its grave hardships are underway, serving as a manual of sorts to help guide us through a world irrevocably altered. We now inhabit a planet so dramatically remade through climate change it warrants a new name: *Eaarth*. “The world hasn’t ended, but the world as we know it has,” he writes.

*Eaarth* is at once mature, angry and inspiring. In the opening chapters McKibben maps our new planet—one with prolonged droughts, more intense storms and floods, acidifying oceans, expanding tropical zones, and rising sea levels. He then dedicates the second half of the book to how we might try “to manage our descent.” It might sound grim, but by exploring this reality McKibben quits the self-delusion that keeps so many of us hallucinating that technological fixes and economic expansion (i.e. consuming and wasting) can remedy the problem.

A life on a tough new planet, McKibben tells us, must be less complex—slower, smaller, more stable—one of “maintenance” instead of mind-blowing growth. He looks back at US colonial history and the earliest days after the American Revolution to explain that we chose federal over state (and local) power to

accomplish the grand National Project, as he calls it. That project was one of westward expansion (including constructing the railways and highways), reaching the moon, overcoming the Soviet Union—in other words building the physical and political infrastructure needed to create the largest economy in human history.

But now, McKibben argues, there is no room left to grow, so we must “back off.” The undoing of complexity—that which makes workers in China lose their jobs thanks to bad mortgage bets in Nevada, and creates floods in Bangladesh due to CO2 emissions from American drivers—allows us to be more agile in the face of turmoil. It gets us off the too-big-to-fail disaster track. McKibben gives considerable ink to the role of the state as serving the people and the importance of people acting as citizens—and not just shoppers—in this globally warmed world.

The book’s last chapter offers compelling details of a new way of life, explaining that we can solve our problems now. In his rendition, technologies and practices that rely on decentralized social organization are exciting; solutions to a polluted atmosphere and transmuted ecosystems can be elegant and creative, addressing what is deeply human about us, even amid the ruin.

We will be able to feed ourselves more reliably by growing three dozen different crops in one field as opposed to a monoculture of corn or soy, he explains. We will be able to power our lives by using dispersed sources of heat and light generation, all of which currently exist—solar water heaters, photovoltaic panels, wind turbines, biomass plants that burn organic matter, and more.

Then there’s the social component of the switch to the local. While at times he can romanticize such a shift, McKibben also gets it that a

tight-knit localized community can be stifling, even “dull.” We need access to a wide range of ideas and cultures, which McKibben says the Internet can be key in delivering. “It’s as if it came along just in time, a deus ex machina to make our next evolution bearable.” And, like local food and dispersed energy generation, the Internet is decentralized, which means not only will our ecosystems and economies be diverse, McKibben posits, so will our culture and politics.

The activism the author has engaged in for the past several years with students from Vermont’s Middlebury College, where he teaches, embody this new kind of politics. 350.org, the group’s latest effort, is a decentralized Web-based campaign to communicate that 350 parts per million of CO2 in the atmosphere is the most the world as we’ve known it can handle. (We’re currently well past that at almost 390 ppm.)

350.org’s ongoing campaign doesn’t require participants to trek to Washington DC for a mass rally. Instead McKibben and his six collaborators simply ask people to use the number 350 in any way they see fit and take a photo that can be posted on the group’s website. This strategy of meeting people where they’re at was wildly successful, with citizens from over 180 countries participating in one of the most widespread global actions in history.

*Eaarth* is a visionary book; while it’s not always rooted in the practicalities of making change it’s truly rooted in the real. And it bravely stakes out “the architecture for the world that comes next, the dispersed and localized societies that can survive the damage we can no longer prevent.”

<http://firedoglake.com/2010/05/08/fdl-book-salon-welcomes-bill-mckibben-eaarth-making-a-life-on-a-tough-new-planet/>

# Afghan escalation funding

David Swanson

Isn't it time to call what Congress will soon vote on by its right name: war escalation funding?

Early in 2009, President Barack Obama escalated the war in Afghanistan with 21,000 "combat" troops, 13,000 "support" troops, and at least 5,000 mercenaries, without any serious debate in Congress or the corporate media.

The President sent the first 17,000 troops prior to developing any plan for Afghanistan, leaving the impression that escalation was, somehow, an end in itself. Certainly it didn't accomplish anything else, a conclusion evident in downbeat reports on the Afghan war situation issued this month by both the Government Accountability Office and the Pentagon.

So it seemed like progress for our representative government when, last fall, the media began to engage in a debate over whether further escalation in Afghanistan made sense. Granted, this was largely a public debate between the commander-in-chief and his generals (who should probably have been punished with removal from office for insubordinate behavior), but members of Congress at least popped up in cameo roles.

In September, 57 members of Congress sent a letter to the president opposing an escalation of the war. In October, Congresswoman Barbara Lee introduced a bill to prohibit the funding of any further escalation. In December, various groups of Congress members sent letters to the president and to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi opposing an escalation and asking for a chance to vote on it. Even as Congress voted overwhelmingly for a massive war and military budget in December, some representatives did speak out against further escalation and the funding needed for it.

While all sides in this debate agreed that such escalation funding would need to be voted on sometime in the first half of 2010, everyone knew something else as well: the President would go ahead and escalate in Afghanistan even without funding in place—the money all being borrowed anyway—and that, once many or all of the new troops were there,

he would get less resistance from Congress which would be voting on something that had already happened.

The corporate media went along with this bait-and-switch strategy, polling and reporting on the escalation debate in Washington until the president fell in line behind his generals (give or take 10,000 or so extra troops). The coming vote was then relabeled as a simple matter of "war funding." This was convenient, since Americans are far more likely to oppose escalating already unpopular wars than just keeping them going—and would be likely to oppose such funding even more strongly if the financial tradeoffs involved were made clear. However, a new poll shows a majority of Americans do not believe this war is worth fighting at all.

Nonetheless, as in a tale foretold, Congress is expected to vote later this month on \$33 billion in further "war funding" to pay for sending 30,000 troops (plus "support" troops, etc.) to Afghanistan—most of whom are already there or soon will be. In addition, an extra \$2 billion is being requested for aid and "civilian" reparations in Afghanistan (much of which may actually go to the Afghan military and police), \$2.5 billion for the same in our almost forgotten war in Iraq, and another \$2 billion for aid to (or is it a further military presence in?) Haiti.

This upcoming vote provides the opportunity that our representatives were asking for half a year ago. They can now vote the president's escalation up or down in the only way that could possibly be enforced, by voting its funding up or down. Blocking the funding in the House of Representatives would mean turning those troops around and bringing them home—and unlike the procedure for passing a bill, there would be no need for any action by the Senate or the president.

## \$33 billion?

So, how much money are we talking about exactly? Well not enough, evidently, for the teabagging enemies of reckless government spending to take notice. Clearly not enough for the labor movement or any other advocates of spending on jobs or

healthcare or education or green energy to disturb their slumbers. Yet it's still a sizeable number by a certain reckoning.

After all, 33 billion miles could take you to the sun 226 times. And \$33 billion could radically alter any non-military program in existence. There's a bill in the Senate, for instance, that would prevent schools from laying off teachers in all 50 states for a mere \$23 billion. Another \$9.6 billion would quadruple the Department of Energy's budget for renewable energy. Now, what to do with that extra \$0.4 billion?

And remember what this \$33 billion actually involves: adding more troops, support troops, and private contractors, whose work, in turn, will mean ongoing higher costs to maintain the Afghan occupation, construct new bases there, fuel the machines of war, and provide the weaponry. Keep in mind as well that various other costs associated with the president's most recent "surge" are hidden in the budgets of the CIA, the Department of State, and other parts of the government. Looking just at the military, however, this is \$33 billion to be added to an unfathomable pile of waste. According to the Congressional Budget Office, Congress has already approved \$345 billion for war in Afghanistan, not to mention \$708 billion in Iraq.

According to the National Priorities Project, for that same money we could have renewable energy in 1,083,271,391 homes for a year (or every home in the country for more than 10 years), or pay 17,188,969 elementary school teachers for a year. There may be 2.6 million elementary and middle school teachers in our country now. Assuming we could use 3 million teachers, we could hire them all for five years and employ that extra \$13 billion or so to give them bonuses. "Honor our brave teachers" anyone?

Even these calculations, however, are misleading. As economists Linda Bilmes and Joseph Stiglitz demonstrated in *The Three Trillion Dollar War*, their book on the cost of the Iraq war alone, adding in debt payments on moneys borrowed to fight that war, long-term care for veterans wounded in it, the war's impact on energy

prices, and other macroeconomic impacts, the current tax bill for the Iraq War must be at least tripled and probably quadrupled or more to arrive at its real long-term cost. (Similarly, the cost in lives must be multiplied by all those lives that could have been saved through other, better uses of the same funding.) The same obviously applies to the Afghan War.

The fact is that military spending is destroying the U.S. economy. An excellent report from the National Priorities Project, "Security Spending Primer," provides a summary of research that supports these well-documented facts:

- Investing public dollars in the military produces fewer jobs than cutting taxes.
- Cutting taxes produces fewer jobs than investing public dollars in any of these areas: healthcare, education, mass transit, or construction for home weatherization and infrastructural repair.
- Investing public dollars in mass transit or education produces more than twice as many jobs as investing in the military.
- Investing public dollars in education produces better paying jobs than investing in the military or cutting taxes.
- Investing public dollars in any of these areas—healthcare, education, mass transit, construction for home weatherization and infrastructural repair—has a larger economic impact than investing in the military or cutting taxes.

Too broad a view? Then consider just the present proposed \$33 billion escalation funding for the Afghan War. For that sum, we could have 20 green energy jobs paying \$50,000 per year here in the United States for every soldier sent to Afghanistan; a job, that is, for each of those former soldiers and 19 other Americans.

We're spending on average \$400 per gallon to transport gas over extended and difficult supply lines into Afghanistan where the U.S. military uses 27 million gallons a month. We're spending hundreds of millions of dollars to bribe various small nations to be part of a "coalition" there. We're spending at least that much to bribe Afghans to join our side, an effort that has so far recruited only 646 Taliban guerrillas, many of whom seem to have taken the money and run back to the other side. Does all this

sound like a wise investment—or the kind of work Wall Street would do?

## Excuses, excuses

A strong case can be made that the war in Afghanistan is illegal, immoral, against the public will, counterproductive on its own terms, and an economic catastrophe. The present path of escalation there appears militarily hopeless. The most recent Pentagon assessment once again indicates that the Taliban's strength is growing; according to polling, 94% of the inhabitants of Kandahar, the area where the next U.S. offensive is to take place this summer, want peace negotiations, not war. A U.S. plan to seek local consent for the coming assault has been scrapped.

Many members of Congress will still tell you that our goal in Afghanistan is to "win" or to "keep us safe" or "get bin Laden." But those who opposed the escalation last year, and the 65 members of the House of Representatives who voted to end the war entirely on March 10, seem to be offering remarkably insubstantial excuses for refusing to commit to a no-vote on the \$33 billion in escalation funding....

Antiwar advocates for peace and justice are not taking all of this lying down. Cities are passing resolutions opposing any more war funding. People are holding vigils and sit-ins at local congressional offices. Congressional phones are ringing, newspaper editors are receiving letters, and an online whip list—a list of where every House member stands—is being constantly updated. In the end, though, the fundamental question is how many people will outgrow their partisan loyalties, of either variety, and tell their representative that they will vote for someone else if he or she votes for more war.

An extreme step? Well, what do you call wasting \$33 billion on a hopeless, immoral, illegal war that a majority of Americans oppose, and denying those same dollars to job creation or any other decent purpose?

*David Swanson is the author of Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union and blogs at his website, War Is a Crime.*

Source: [www.TomDispatch.com](http://www.TomDispatch.com) 5/11/10

# Framing the immigrant question

Roger Werner

When immigrants come to this country, some gain citizenship while others maintain resident alien status their entire lives. Many maintain close cultural and social ties to their native country. Something else that has always been consistent throughout US history is a nasty national chauvinism. Americans by birth, and even many who are naturalized, become overly nationalistic in their views and see everything non-American in a negative hue, including any non-citizen resident alien, alien on a student or travel visa, or an alien on a temporary work visa. That this attitude would apply to any illegal alien goes without saying.

The point where national chauvinism merges with racism is hard to define with clarity because the change is very subtle. Today for example, the cry over 'the alien invasion' primarily focuses on people with brown skin who have historically been viewed as non-white. Rhetorically, it fails to ask how much of the vitriolic expression over immigration is due to the fact that the immigrants aren't white and would the same people be making the same objections if say the immigrants were from Germany or Ireland. My sense is that we wouldn't see as much of an outcry and this then leads directly back to the issue of racism vs immigration.

Mistreatment of Mexicans in the US has a very long and sordid history, dating back to at least

the mid-1840s. I've researched the issue as part of work I am doing for a biography and the language and lore of the matter is ugly. As an example: in the first California State Constitution, the state was bilingual. When the state established the second constitution, one of the big issues was discontinuance of bilingualism and the loud complaint regarding Mexicans and bilingualism. The argument went something like this: Mexicans aren't Americans, so we shouldn't have to accept their language as equal to English. The big problem with this was that the 'Mexicans' were Americans. Most were born in California with some of the older folks born before statehood. California was a Mexican province and Spanish was the native language. Of course, bilingualism was eliminated and honestly, Latinos have been treated as second class citizens in California ever since.

There has always been something of an illegal immigration problem along the southern border dating back to World War II. As difficult as the immigration issue had become by the 1980s, it was largely resolved by amnesty programs and a road to citizenship or at least legal status developed by the Reagan administration. It's fair to ask what changed; what factors so altered the social and economic landscape that a steady stream of illegals as late as 1992, becoming a torrent by 1996 and a veritable flood by 2000? Asked another way, why would people



(not all of them are ignorant fruit pickers) risk a long and dangerous journey to come to a place where they know they are unwanted, a place where they will be illegal and hence not subject to the protections offered to legal workers?

## Enter NAFTA

The change that affected immigration happened in 1993 and we began to see an increase in undocumented workers by 1995. The change was NAFTA. The biggest employment sector in Mexico has always been

agriculture. NAFTA largely destroyed the Mexican agricultural sector. Mexican businesses were unable to compete against American agribusiness largely because American companies are heavily subsidized by our government (direct crop subsidies, subsidized water, and leasing of land at many times below fair market value). NAFTA has been a boon to large corporations in Canada, the US, and Mexico but it has severely damaged the labor markets in all three nations with Mexico being hit the hardest.

Today, a male head of household in Mexico has several extremely unpleasant choices.

1. He can remain in Mexico and rely on a pittance of assistance from government while he seeks any job that will pay enough money to keep his family in beans, rice and masa flour.

2. When this man can't find employment or can't make enough money to feed his family even when working two or three jobs, he can resign himself to his impossible situation and then watch

his family slowly starve to death or die of disease for lack of any health care.

3. Alternatively, he can literally risk his life and come north to a job that he knows will pay no benefits, that he will have no rights whatsoever because he's illegal, and he will make just enough money to live in a small flat with perhaps a half dozen men he doesn't know so he can send the majority of his pay home so his family can eat.

4. He can apply for a work visa and hope it will be approved, knowing that it takes years to process an application, with most being denied.

If you, or anyone who complains about illegal immigration, were faced with the exact same suite of circumstances as our hypothetical Mexican worker, we would all take option 3 and come north illegally. In fact, this man has no other viable alternative. Now we can sit back and smugly state that this poor person's problems aren't ours and that we have enough problems of our own to worry about. But, by and large, the extreme circumstance Mexican workers find themselves in is our problem, because we helped create it with NAFTA.

*(continued next page)*



# Kagan in context: shafting progressive values

Norman Solomon

If President Obama has his way, Elena Kagan will replace John Paul Stevens—and the Supreme Court will move rightward. The nomination is very disturbing, especially because it's part of a pattern. The White House is in the grip of conventional "centrist" wisdom. Grim results stretch from Afghanistan to the Gulf of Mexico to communities across the USA.

"It turns out, by the way, that oil rigs today generally don't cause spills," President Obama said in support of offshore oil drilling, less than three weeks before the April 20 blowout in the Gulf. "They are technologically very advanced."

On numerous policy fronts, such conformity to a "centrist" baseline has smothered hopes for moving this country in a progressive direction. Now, the president has taken a step that jeopardizes civil liberties and other basic constitutional principles.

"During the course of her Senate confirmation hearings as Solicitor General, Kagan explicitly endorsed the Bush administration's bogus category of 'enemy combatant,' whose implementation has been a war crime in its own right,"

University of Illinois law Professor Francis Boyle noted last month. "Now, in her current job as U.S. Solicitor General, Kagan is quarterbacking the continuation of the Bush administration's illegal and unconstitutional positions in U.S. federal court litigation around the country, including in the U.S. Supreme Court."

Boyle added: "Kagan has said 'I love the Federalist Society.' This is a right-wing group; almost all of the Bush administration lawyers responsible for its war and torture memos are members of the Federalist Society."

The departing Justice Stevens was a defender of civil liberties. Unless the Senate refuses to approve Kagan for the Supreme Court, the nation's top court is very likely to become more hostile to civil liberties and less inclined to put limits on presidential power.

Here is yet another clear indication that progressives must mobilize to challenge the White House on matters of principle. Otherwise, history will judge us harshly—and it should.

For more than 15 months, evidence has mounted that President Obama routinely combines progressive rhetoric

with contrary actions. As one bad decision after another has emanated from the Oval Office, some progressives have favored denial—even though, if the name "Bush" or "McCain" had been attached to the same presidential policies, the same progressives would have been screaming bloody murder.

But enabling bad policies, with silent acquiescence or anemic dissent, encourages more of them. At this point, progressive groups and individuals who pretend that Obama's policies merely need a few tweaks, or just suffer from a few anomalous deficiencies, are whistling past a political graveyard.

At the same time, with less than six months to go before Election Day, there are very real prospects of a big Republican victory that could shift majority control of Congress. Progressives have a huge stake in averting a GOP takeover on Capitol Hill.

The corporate-military "centrism" of the Obama administration has demoralized and demobilized the Democratic Party's largely progressive base—the same base that swept Nancy Pelosi into the House speaker's

office and then Barack Obama into the White House. National polls now show Democrats to be much less enthusiastic about voting in November than their Republican counterparts.

The conventional political wisdom (about as accurate as the claim that "oil rigs today generally don't cause spills") is that when a Democratic president moves rightward, his party gains strength against Republicans. But Democrats reaped the whirlwind of that pseudo-logic in 1994—after President Clinton shafted much of the Democratic base by pushing through the corporate NAFTA trade pact against the wishes of labor, environmental and human rights constituencies. That's how Newt Gingrich and other right-wing zealots got to run Congress starting in January 1995.

For progressives, giving the Obama administration one benefit of the doubt after another has not prevented matters from getting worse:

- At the moment, US troop levels are nearing 100,000 in Afghanistan.

- Massive quantities of oil are belching into the Gulf of Mexico.

- The White House has signaled de facto acceptance of a high unemployment rate for several more years, while offering weak GOP-lite countermeasures like tax breaks for businesses.

- Nuclear power subsidies are getting powerful support from both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, while meaningful action against global warming is nowhere in sight.

- The Justice Department continues to backtrack on civil liberties.

And, now, if the president's nomination of Kagan is successful, the result will move the Supreme Court to the right. Progressives should fight the Kagan nomination.

*Norman Solomon is co-chair of the national Healthcare NOT Warfare campaign, launched by Progressive Democrats of America. He is the author of a dozen books including "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death." For more information, go to: [www.normansolomon.com](http://www.normansolomon.com) <<http://www.normansolomon.com>>.*

*Source: [truthout.org](http://www.truthout.org) Op-Ed 5/10/10*

## Immigration *(continued from previous page)*

### As for possible solutions....

All the talk about closing the southern border is plain stupid. The border is almost 2,000 miles long, crossing every imaginable type of climate and terrain, most of it inhospitable. If the natural terrain and climate aren't serving as deterrent, there's not much we can do to improve on a waterless desert.

But what we can do is: 1. Repeal NAFTA immediately, and 2. Create laws that absolutely crucify any businesses that employ undocumented workers. A business that hires illegals gets a fine the first time, an even larger fine the second time, and the third time? The business is placed under a court appointed receiver and sold with the money going to the government as a fine. The only way to curtail immigration is to take down the help wanted sign

and keep American businesses from rapaciously taking advantage of Mexican businesses. We can't have it both ways.

But and this is a very HUGE but...we will still have to deal with some 14 million undocumented workers: deporting them is ridiculous, so what to do with them must be solved. And even more critically, who precisely will take over the jobs currently occupied by the undocumented? You know any white people who might be willing to spend 11 hours in the San Joaquin Valley in July for oh say \$35 to \$50/day picking fruit and vegetables? Are you willing to see the cost of domestically grown fruit and vegetables quadruple in cost because the only way Americans are going to pick fruit is if they get paid minimum wage with overtime.

As I have tried to show, the

immigration issue isn't one that can be culled down to a neat slogan. Slogans sound nice but they are basically worthless as policy. Times change and so do cultural and societal norms. Few would support any sort of Latino exclusion policies. And since we really have no viable Latino immigration policy, people from Latino nations come to the US because they know they can find work...traditionally, like all immigrants before them, they are willing to work cheaply and do jobs most Americans would rather not do. I think it is inaccurate to suggest that Latinos are taking American jobs; yes, they do take some jobs but most of the work they do has never involved whites on a large scale. So, what we need to ask ourselves: who will do their work they do if they leave?


Would the people complaining

about immigrants taking jobs will jump at the chance to pick cotton? Or asparagus? Or peaches? Or grapes? Backbreaking, very tough work, at piece rate (you get paid by what you pick, not by the hour—perfectly legal in agribusiness)? I doubt if most Americans would be willing to take these jobs filled by immigrants—jobs that are critical to our overall economy.

The people stamping their feet, upset about immigration, have in my view no clear understanding what they are complaining about. The recent Arizona law is perhaps the stupidest state law passed in the past 20 years. But it was passed because the slim white majority in Arizona is freaked by the idea that in 5 to 10 years, they will no longer be a majority. That would be as bad or worse as having a black man sitting in the Oval Office.

So make no mistake, the

present fuss over immigration has meritorious aspects to it—we do need to establish a rational immigration policy, one that acknowledges that American corporations have wrecked the Mexican agricultural economy and that has consequences. We need to establish a viable work permit program for Latinos, create a workable amnesty program for the 14 million people we can't viably deport (too many people), and repeal NAFTA. If we're not willing to entertain such policies, we aren't going to solve the immigration problem with get tough laws dealing with immigrants. Anyone desperate enough to cross the Sonoran Desert in summer isn't going to have the slightest problem facing anything we might do. I'm just looking at this matter realistically and I have no particular love for Latinos. They are just people.



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# Palestinian-Israeli teenager: "War just brings more war"

*John Morearty*

Ismail Kharoub is a skinny kid who looks at you steadily, waits for you to speak. We're sitting in my garden.

"I'm 18, a Palestinian citizen of Israel. My family has lived in Jaffa, on the Mediterranean, for eleven generations—about three hundred years. My grandparents were land workers; my father worked in construction and now he's an air conditioning installer. My mother brings gourmet meals to people that are having a hard time. My grandfather is a great storyteller, if you come to Jaffa you will like him. We live in a mixed neighborhood, my parents are very close friends with one Jewish couple. He is a literature professor. They come and watch soccer games at our place, my mom teaches them Arabic, they give us free ceramic lessons. They enjoy the stories that my parents have to tell, because they come from places that are only Jewish—they never heard our stories. My mother cooks for them. She makes great hummus!

"From age 11, I worked at all kinds of jobs to help support my family—truck mechanic, web designer, computer engineer. I went to a Palestinian school, and then an expensive Jewish school, to get a good education. We were twelve Palestinians in a school of 1,200; other kids called us terrorists, teachers made fun of our accent. So I learned good Hebrew.

"I was one of the top in my high school, and my younger sister is the most genius person I've ever met in my life, and we have all these gifts from God or whatever mystic forces are guiding us, but this doesn't mean that we have to sit back and let things come to us. In our family, the most important thing is hard work.

"For a year I lived as part of a commune—a co-op, Sadaka Reut, both Jews and Palestinians—that worked against injustice in our own society. We went to Sderote, the border city between Israel and the Gaza Strip, that was constantly being rocketed by the Hamas. We had some workshops



*Ismail Kharoub (r) spoke in Stockton on April 16, along with Ofra Yeshua-Lyth (l), an Israeli Jewish journalist who has worked as a correspondent in Germany and the U.S. Their subject matter was, "The Effects of Militarization on Israeli Society." They talked with a total of about 600 people at Delta College, Edison High School, Cesar Chavez High School, and Central United Methodist Church.*

*Their two-week speaking tour of Central California was sponsored by Israel's New Profile Movement and the Resource Center for Nonviolence (RCNV) in Santa Cruz. Ismail and Ofra can be reached through Scott Kennedy at RCNV: kenncruz@pacbell.net.*

with the children there, because a lot of people usually say that our kind of groups are biased, and demonize Israel in the eyes of people. But our group didn't do anything like that. What we did is fight injustice. We worked with Sudanian refugees that came to Israel and would be expelled—a couple of them were murdered, actually. The police used to take them away and throw them into Egypt, where they were treated like animals. Everybody is a human being, and needs to be treated equally and fairly.

"When the Israeli attack on Gaza began in December 2008, I was worried. I was very close to one girl cousin there; we played together as little kids. She was a student at the University Khan Yunis in Gaza. We used to videochat a lot.

"Three days after the attack started, we got to talk on Skype. She told me the situation was not good at all, many of her family were homeless or injured, and I started panicking a little bit. Although I had two Jewish friends from school who were killed in the Army in Lebanon and Gaza,

this was the first time some of my family members were being attacked.

"After ten minutes she said something was going on outside, I heard noises, and she said 'I have to go now!' The connection was lost, neither of us got to say goodbye.

"Three days later we got a phone call from her mom. She told us that during the ten minutes we were talking, the IDF (Israeli Defense Force) had bombed the university, and my cousin, her sister and brother were all killed. Fourteen hundred Palestinians were killed in the attack on Gaza, and 12 Israelis, half of them soldiers."

Ismail sits quietly in the garden.

"It was the first time I experienced death of a relative. I'd lost friends, but not family. It was very hard at first, I didn't know what to think. I'm a Palestinian, and I'm with the Palestinian side, but I'm also a citizen of Israel, and Israel is fighting to defend her citizens, they say.

"But I was mad at everybody.

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**E. Lela Nelson**  
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I was mad about the IDF that sent those helicopters. Okay, if you have war with another army, why hurt civilians? and I know my cousin, she wasn't part of any army: she was nineteen years old, a very attractive girl, very sweet, very smart, very sharp—she was an amazing person. I was mad about Hamas for attacking Israel, and giving it a reason to attack the Gaza Strip. I was mad about everything and everybody.

"I was fed up, I had enough. I had a month or two to be calm and think about what happened, and what's gonna happen next.

"I could easily say that I'm mad at the world, and do what a lot of people who are under the Occupation do. Suicide bombers are fed up with their life and they decide to kill themselves and kill a lot of people and hurt other people because they lost their relative or things like that.

"So what do I do next? Just get along with my life like nothing happened? Or should I be, like I deserve to be, a little pissed about these two societies because both governments are not agreeing, people are dying, we are dying?"

"But being in the business world for a lot of years, I like to see results with my own eyes. And the results of 62 years of war are just people dying. So I decided war is not the solution that I'm looking for. If I want to bring more sadness and more sorrow to other peoples' lives, then I'll choose war. But what I want to do is to end this, so that things like what happened to me would never happen to anybody else.

"What I want to do is take a nonviolent action, and work through my own community to make it a better place, and to make my people aware of the situation, and make sure that they make other people aware of the situation, so that we can fight this in a nonviolent way.

"So I came back to the commune.. My sister and I started a small organization that helps kids that come from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to Israeli hospitals—some of them are hurt by the war, or gang wars.

"But a kid could have only one parent in the hospital. He would have to choose between his mom or his dad, and this is the most horrible decision ever!

**"I want to see peace in the place that I live...but I'm not gonna wait for it to come, I'm gonna work hard to bring it. No offense, but your generation are the ones who created this entire problem, and they left us with finding the solution.**

So they would be depressed, and sometimes the healing process would stop or get worse....

"So my sister and I started going to these hospitals and just have fun with the patients—make them laugh, give them a little joy, some time off from thinking about their situation, having fun. Sitting, playing, watching movies. This is my sister's idea; my sister is a saint, she likes children and she also is active in making our community a better place.

"We also take children who are in the streets of Jaffa. They walk around drug dealers, they see murder—so we give them the opportunity to help other people, and they learn from helping others to help themselves. Somebody from New York heard about the project, so he started an organization called the We Are Family Foundation; they invited my sister to come to New York and present our project, and we got somebody to fund it. We enjoy what we are doing.

"As students, we have less time. She is a politics and international relations major, the top student in this subject in the entire country, but we still talk to the kids that we started with a year and a half ago. They are older now, and we tell them to take care of the younger ones and bring them to the hospital. It's still going on.

"This is what I decided after what happened to my cousin. I decided that war just brings more war, and the only way to fight war is with nonviolence and with

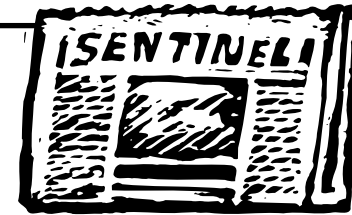
action, and to be aware.

"This October I'm going to be a digital art student. Hopefully after I get my degree in four years, I'm gonna be studying software design.

"Me and my sister were always into things. Something was tickling our body whenever injustice happens around us, so we have to get up and do something. I want to see peace in the place that I live, and if it's not gonna be me then I hope it's gonna be my child who will experience peace when it comes...but I'm not gonna wait for it to come, I'm gonna work hard to bring it. No offense, but your generation are the ones who created this entire problem, and they left us with finding the solution.

"I just want to say that people are easily fooled to choose a side in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. And I just want to say that there's a big picture. Things are very, very, complicated. Like I have a story of a family member who died, and I'm pretty sure that a lot of my friends have stories that their Jewish family members died due to the war.

"I don't think war is the solution, of course. But just listen, and think that there's a big picture, for saying this guy's wrong and blaming everybody else. And blaming is not good. The most important lesson I've ever learned is, "Don't blame. Take responsibility."



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

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

Firedoglake <http://firedoglake.com>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Think Progress <http://thinkprogress.com>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Greens on the props

## Proposition 13: No

### Seismic retrofitting, property tax

Currently, if a property owner would like to seismically upgrade their building, no new taxes are applied after the upgrade...except for unreinforced masonry buildings. In the case of unreinforced masonry buildings, a tax kicks in after 15 years. Prop 13, the Seismic Retrofitting Amendment, proposes a constitutional amendment which would apply the same permanent tax breaks on seismic retrofits for unreinforced masonry structures as for all other types.

There are questions about this proposition that would take extensive research to answer. Since un-reinforced masonry buildings are extremely dangerous in an earthquake, is a tax break which expires after 15 years really significantly less of an incentive to retrofit than if the tax break didn't have a time limit? Could Prop 13 mainly be a tax break for corporate property owners who did their retrofits more than 15 years ago?

We don't know. But we have concerns given that the only listed sponsor of the proposition is the far-right conservative Republican State Senator Roy Ashburn (Ashburn voted against every gay rights measure in the State Senate since taking office only to later admit to being gay after being arrested for a DUI). The lack of even an attempt at "bi-partisan" support makes us suspicious about the true nature of this proposition, even if the actual text of Prop. 13 may not immediately raise any red flags. Furthermore, the absence of any website listing in the official state voters pamphlet is yet another strike against this ballot measure. Prop. 13's language is complex and difficult to understand by most citizens. When we can't understand a proposition's effects and side effects, we should usually vote No.



## Proposition 14: No, no, no

### Elections: Restricts November choices & alters primary election

Proposition 14 is an extremely deceptive measure. Known as the "Top Two Primary," Prop. 14 is sometimes referred to as an "open primary" even though it would actually close off voter choice for the November general election to a mere two candidates. Its advocates claim that it would provide voters with more choices when in reality it would almost certainly kill off all other political parties except for the Democrats and the Republicans. We strongly encourage you to not only vote "No" on Prop. 14, but to also contribute time and/or money to help defeat this measure. For the latest details about how to support the "No on Prop. 14" campaign, please see: [www.cagreens.org/erwg/Prop14](http://www.cagreens.org/erwg/Prop14) and [www.StopTopTwo.org](http://www.StopTopTwo.org)

Proposition 14 would completely change the nature of the primary election. Political parties, including the Greens, would no longer be able to choose their own official nominees for the ballot. Instead, for each partisan office, all of the candidates from all of the parties, plus independents as well, would all run together on the same primary election ballot, and then the top two vote-getters, regardless of their party affiliation, would go on to the November general election.

For the Green Party, as for other small parties, Proposition 14 would be devastating. Our candidates would most likely never again appear on a November general election ballot. We would be "lost in the crowd" in the "megacandidate, free-for-all" primary election. Our capacity to present alternative choices would simply be crushed.

And after several elections where none of our candidates are able to appear on a November general election ballot, a likely outcome is that fewer voters would register as Greens, and we would therefore lose our ballot status, and our existence as a recognized political party will have been extinguished.

An example of what would be in store for California is Washington state's 2008 elections. Washington



implemented a "Top Two" primary just two years ago, and no smaller party or independent candidate for any statewide or congressional race appeared on the November general election ballot...for the first time ever since Washington became a state in 1889.

The extinguishing of voter choices is enough of a reason to defeat Proposition 14, but there are several other negative consequences of this measure for voters to consider. First, by eliminating party primaries, Prop. 14 puts increased pressure on non-incumbents and/or nonfrontrunners within the same party to drop out, lest they "split the vote" of their party's voters. This of course puts more power into the hands of party machines and party insiders, and less into the hands of primary election voters...exactly the opposite of what Prop. 14 proponents want you to believe!

Election costs will likely increase, first because the candidates will need to advertise themselves to more voters for the primary election. In addition, especially when there is no incumbent in the race, for the many districts where a single party is dominant, currently only the primary contest has expensive, heavily contested elections. But with "Top Two," the likelihood for expensive November elections increases, giving well-funded candidates even more of an advantage over what they already enjoy.

Proposition 14 also permits the possibility of November general elections whereby the only two candidates on the ballot could both be from the same party, which would completely eliminate any party choices whatsoever for the voters. Prop. 14 also forbids write-in votes to be counted in the November general election, thereby removing a long-standing

check-and-balance on the November candidates. And finally, under Prop. 14, candidates would no longer be required to disclose their party affiliation on the ballot, opening yet another possible way for candidates to deceive the voters.

If we want to make improvements to our current election system, there are much better alternatives than the illusory choice presented by Prop. 14. For example, we could use Ranked Choice Voting for both party primary elections and for the November general election. That way, voters could rank as many candidates as they wanted, and not worry that voting for what they most believe in could lead to what they most oppose. That would be a system that truly puts more power into the hands of the voter, instead of the hands of the candidates and the deal-making political parties. As many of you know, Ranked Choice Voting will be implemented for non-partisan city offices in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Leandro this November, following the lead of San Francisco, which has now successfully used it for a number of years. Or, we could use proportional representation, as is used in the majority of European and other countries around the world, which would greatly improve political representation in our legislative bodies compared to the antiquated winner-take-all method that this country has now been using for over 220 years, since its founding.

Finally, we also disagree with the philosophic underpinnings of Proposition 14. We disagree with the notion that political parties are inherently bad; that there is something wrong with like-minded people organizing themselves into political parties having candidates of their choice competing in a general election. In fact, we believe it's their political right to do so.

The supporters of this proposition are trying to use the dysfunction of state government as an argument for approving their measure. They say that the problems are due to the current electoral process, which produces few moderates and is responsible for excessive 'partisanship' in Sacramento. The Green Party disagrees with

both of these arguments. We believe that the current system, if anything, produces too many moderates. If diversity of opinion in state government is the goal, proportional representation would be a far superior remedy. As to "partisanship," we believe that the blame falls squarely on the actions and policies of the current Democratic and Republican parties, and not with the general concept of political parties, *per se*.

Those who are truly interested in strengthening democracy would be well-advised to study how proportional representation works in Europe and many other places across the planet, rather than spend time considering the deceptive fantasy presented by the authors of Proposition 14. If you can help support the "No on Prop. 14" campaign, please be sure to see: [www.cagreens.org/erwg/Prop14](http://www.cagreens.org/erwg/Prop14) and/ or [www.StopTopTwo.org](http://www.StopTopTwo.org).

## Proposition 15: Yes, with reservations

### Public funding of elections trial ("Fair Elections")

Prop 15 is the most recent proposal to arrive on the ballot which would open ever so slightly the door to public funding of elections. The good news is that it would provide public money for candidates; the bad news is that the money will be bestowed in a less than equitable way...notably less for "lesser" parties.

That said, the Green Party of Alameda County nonetheless endorses, with reservation, this proposition. Public financing of elections is a bedrock issue for Greens: we literally live and breathe to free our elections from the scourge of corporate money and we believe that this baby step in the right direction is worth supporting. We agree with the League of Women Voters that the "amount of money in politics is outrageous



and corrupts the system” and that “Prop. 15 will get politicians out of the fundraising game so they will focus on California’s priorities. Elections should be won, not bought by special interests.”

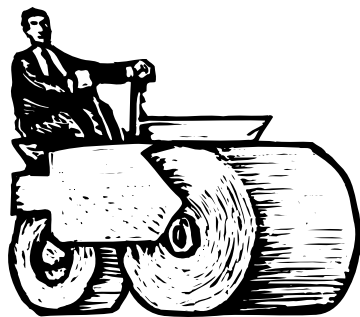
Again, the downside is the second class status of the non-corporate candidates. Continuing to treat minor parties as second-class participants creates a burden that, in turn, relegates us to second-class status. While it is a vicious circle, the practical reality is that we may well manage to qualify for funds that are far in excess of any we are ever able to raise, given our own self-imposed non-corporate donation policy. Also problematic, the twotiered structure will cause a burden if we ever implement proportional representation. PR creates a level electoral playing field, but second-class public financing would then be a significant hurdle to a minor party candidate. Still, in the big picture we must grapple with the fact that this is a “pilot” project and that its success could surely herald mounting momentum toward our goal of public financing of all elections.

The current ballot measure applies only to candidates for Secretary of State. Its claimed purposes are to eliminate the corrupting influences of large campaign donations both for challengers and incumbents. The Fair Elections Fund (FEF) would be financed from \$700 fees paid every two years by lobbyists, lobbying firms, and their employers (although \$25 would go to the General Fund), by qualifying donations obtained by Primary Elections and Independent candidates, and by taxpayer donations. For more: <http://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/propositions/>

### Proposition 16: No, no, no PG&E’s roadblock to local electricity alternatives

Proposition 16 is the misnamed Taxpayers Right to Vote Act.

“The proposed Taxpayers Right to Vote Act illustrates what California’s initiative process has come to. It’s a plaything of powerful interests using deception to line their pockets,” says an L.A. Times article (12/28/09). TURN (The Utility Reform Network) calls Prop 16 “the worst special



kind of special interest ballot initiative, paid for by a single corporation to benefit a single corporation.” The Sierra Club (Bay Chapter) calls it “PG&Es attempt to stifle competition and prevent local governments from adopting clean energy solutions.” Prop 16 “requires two-thirds voter approval before local governments provide electricity service to new customers or establish a community choice electricity program using public funds or bonds.”

Greens favor a local, decentralized economy wherever feasible. Locally generated solar and wind power would reduce the need for large power plants located far away. PG&E would still be the transmitter of electricity over the grid. PG&E is a regulated monopoly, a compromise between private for-profit businesses and a government service. Greens criticize the way for-profit businesses influence the political process. In this case, the California legislature passed a bill in 2002 permitting communities to opt out of reliance on PG&E to generate electricity.

Communities can buy electricity from any supplier, or can generate electricity locally. They can join together (“community choice aggregation,” or CCA) to do so. San Francisco, Marin County, Oakland, Berkeley, and others are in the process of exploring or implementing CCA.

The ballot argument in favor is signed by the president of the California Taxpayers Association and the President of the California Chamber of Commerce. However, despite its title and its ballot argument signers, this is not about taxes. PG&E, the largest for-profit utility in California, paid for the signatures to qualify this initiative for the ballot. They are trying to protect their monopoly over who provides your electricity. The ballot argument against Prop 16 is signed by Jeannine English (California State President of

### Propositions

	13	14	15	16	17
Courage Campaign	Y	N	Y	N	N
CREDO Action			Y	N	N
Am Fed of State, Co, Muni Employees	Y	N	Y		N
CA Democratic Party	Y	N	Y	N	N
CA Federation of Teachers		N		N	N
CA League of Conservation Voters		N	Y	N	
CA Nurses Ass'n	N	N	Y	N	N
Calitics	Y	N	Y	N	N
League of Women Voters				Y	N

AARP), Andy Katz (Chair, Sierra Club California) and Richard Holober

The rebuttal to the argument in favor is signed by Michael Boccadoro (Executive Director of the Agricultural Energy Consumers Association), Lenny Goldberg (Executive Director of the California Tax Reform Association), and Janis R. Hirohama (President of the League of Women Voters of California).

Opponents of Prop 16 are expecting an expensive ad campaign by PG&E, which has already started. Early in April, “Yes on 16/Californians to Protect Our Right to Vote” sent out a mailer picturing solar panels and a field of sunflowers under a blue sky with soft white clouds, as if that were an accurate picture of how PG&E generates electricity.

PG&E wants to retain their near-monopoly. Despite a State mandate for 20 percent renewable power by 2010, PG&E is nowhere near that amount. (For details, see the California Public Utilities Commission website.) For this and other reasons, PG&E is not confident that Californians will voluntarily continue to believe their promises. So Prop 16 is an arrogant, greedy attempt to buy, at the ballot box, an end to the threat to some of PG&E’s profits, in the form of the movement for locally controlled power. For people concerned with the need to move toward sustainable energy generation, and/or seeking local community control of energy policy, opposing Prop 16 is an easy decision. No, No, No.



### Proposition 17: No

#### Mercury insurance’s ploy to raise auto insurance rates

Official Title: Allows auto insurance companies to base their prices in part on a driver’s history of insurance coverage.

This proposition is 99 percent funded by Mercury Insurance because it will increase their profit margin. It takes away hard fought consumer protections won through Proposition 103 and court decisions. The proposition will allow auto insurance companies in California to surcharge drivers, who cancel their insurance and then restart it again. Examples would be military personal during a tour of duty, or anyone not using their car for an extended amount of time, who temporarily cancel their policies. Also, a late payment could cause the same surcharge.

The discounts and rewards for drivers mentioned in ads by proponents of Prop. 17 are allowed now; nothing bars the auto insurance companies giving these discounts. These are false arguments in favor of Prop. 17.

Both the *SF Bay Guardian* and *Chronicle* recommend a No vote on Prop 17. The *Chronicle* published several articles detailing a long history of illegal practices by Mercury Insurance, and describes Prop 17 as a formula “likely to produce, at best, a marginal benefit

to Californians shopping for a new company...and a daunting additional cost for those who are desperate to get coverage.”

One *Bay Guardian* article on Prop 17 and Mercury Insurance, titled, “The malevolence of Mercury Insurance,” includes the views of longtime activist Harvey Rosenfield, of *Consumer Watchdog*, speaking out about Prop. 17: “...The Mercury initiative is even more pernicious than what it was doing before, and here’s why. Under Mercury’s initiative, if you’ve never had prior insurance, you can be surcharged for the first time. It overturns the Prop. 103 provision and legalizes these surcharges. Then they’ve thrown in some other tricks and traps, as you’d expect an insurance company to do on a ballot measure.”

What are those tricks and traps? How have they been able to get away with this for so long? Why did Attorney General Jerry Brown, a candidate for governor, give the measure such a favorable and misleading ballot title and summary? Why has the Democratic Party been so unwilling to challenge them?”

A comprehensive look at Prop 17 and Mercury Insurance can be found in articles on the web published by the *Bay Guardian* on 2/10/10, 3/16/10 and 3/18/10.

We recommend a NO vote on Proposition 17.

Source: Alameda Green party May 2010

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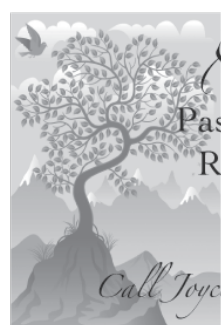
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# Behind the Arizona immigration law: elections

*Greg Palast*

Don't be fooled. The way the media plays the story, it was a wave of racist, anti-immigrant hysteria that moved Arizona Republicans to pass a sick little law, signed last month, requiring every person in the state to carry papers proving they are US citizens. I don't buy it. Anti-Hispanic hysteria has always been as much a part of Arizona as the saguaro cactus and excessive air-conditioning. What's new here is not the politicians' fear of a xenophobic "Teabag" uprising.

What moved GOP Governor Jan Brewer to sign the Soviet-style show-me-your-papers law is the exploding number of "legal" Hispanics, US citizens all, who are daring to vote—and daring to vote Democratic by more than two-to-one. Unless this demographic locomotive is halted, Arizona Republicans know their party will soon be electoral toast. Or, if you like, tortillas.

In 2008, working for "Rolling Stone" with civil rights attorney Bobby Kennedy, our team flew to Arizona to investigate what smelled like an electoral pogrom against Chicano voters... directed by one Jan Brewer. Brewer, then secretary of state, had organized a racially loaded purge of the voter rolls that would have made Katherine Harris blush. Beginning after the 2004 election, under Brewer's command, no fewer than 100,000 voters, overwhelmingly Hispanic, were blocked from registering to vote. In 2005, the first year of the Great Brown-Out, one in three Phoenix residents found their registration applications rejected.

That statistic caught my attention. Voting or registering to vote if you're not a citizen is a felony, a big-time jail-time crime. And arresting such criminal voters is easy: after all, "they give their names and addresses".

So I asked Brewer's office, had she busted a single one of these thousands of allegedly illegal voters? Did she turn over even one name to the feds for prosecution? No, not one. Which raises the question: Were these disenfranchised voters the criminal, non-citizens that Brewer tagged them to be, or just not-quite-white voters given the Jose Crow

treatment, entrapped in document-chase trickery?

The answer was provided by a federal prosecutor who was sent on a crazy hunt all over the Western mesas looking for these illegal voters. "We took over 100 complaints, we investigated for almost two years, I didn't find one prosecutable voter fraud case."

This prosecutor, David Iglesias, is a prosecutor no more. When he refused to fabricate charges of illegal voting among immigrants, his firing was personally ordered by the president of the United States, George W. Bush, under orders from his boss, Karl Rove. Iglesias' jurisdiction was next door, in New Mexico, but he told me that Rove and the Republican chieftains were working nationwide to whip up anti-immigrant hysteria with public busts of illegal voters, "even though there were none".

"They wanted some splashy pre-election indictments," Iglesias told me. The former prosecutor, himself a Republican, paid the price when he stood up to this vicious attack on citizenship. But Secretary of State Brewer followed the Rove plan to a T. The weapon she used to slice the Arizona voter rolls was a 2004 law, known as "Prop 200," which required proof of citizenship to register. It is important to see the Republicans' latest legislative horror show, sanctioning cops to stop residents and prove citizenship, as just one more step in the party's desperate plan to impede Mexican-Americans from marching to the ballot box.

(By the way, no one elected Brewer. Weirdly, Barack Obama placed her in office last year when, for reasons known only to the Devil and Rahm Emanuel, the president appointed Arizona's Democratic Governor Janet Napolitano to his cabinet, which automatically moved Republican Brewer into the Governor's office.)

State Senator Russell Pearce, the Republican sponsor of the latest ID law, gave away his real intent, blocking the vote, when he said, "There is a massive effort under way to register illegal aliens in this country."

How many? Pearce's PR flak told me, "five million". All Democrats, too. Again, I asked

Pearce's office to give me their names and addresses from their phony registration forms. I'd happily make a citizens arrest of each one, on camera. Pearce didn't have five million names. He didn't have five. He didn't have one.

The horde of five million voters who swam the Rio Grande just to vote for Obama was calculated on a Republican website extrapolating from the number of Mexicans in a border town who refused jury service because they were not citizens. Not one, in fact, had registered to vote: they had registered to drive. They had obtained licenses as required by the law.

The illegal voters, "wetback" welfare moms, and alien job thieves are just GOP website dreams, but their mythic PR power helps the party's electoral hacks chop away at voter rolls and civil rights with little more than a whimper from the Democrats. Indeed, one reason, I discovered, that some Democrats are silent is that they are in on the game themselves. In New Mexico, Democratic Party bosses tossed away ballots of Pueblo Indians to cut native influence in party primaries.

But what's wrong with requiring folks to prove they're American if they want to vote and live in America? The answer: because the vast majority of perfectly legal voters and residents who lack ID sufficient for Ms. Brewer and Mr. Pearce are citizens of color, citizens of poverty. According to a study by professor Matt Barreto, of Washington State University, minority citizens are half as likely as whites to have the government ID. The numbers are dreadfully worse when income is factored in. The on-the-ground effect is not to stop non-citizens from entering Arizona, but to harass folks of the wrong color: Democratic blue.

*Greg Palast has investigated the illegal disenfranchisement of voters for BBC Television, and has co-authored the investigative comic book, "Steal Back Your Vote" with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., available in full-color print or for download at [www.StealBackYourVote.com](http://www.StealBackYourVote.com).*

*Source: [truthout.com](http://truthout.com) Report 4/26/10 [www.truthout.com](http://www.truthout.com)*

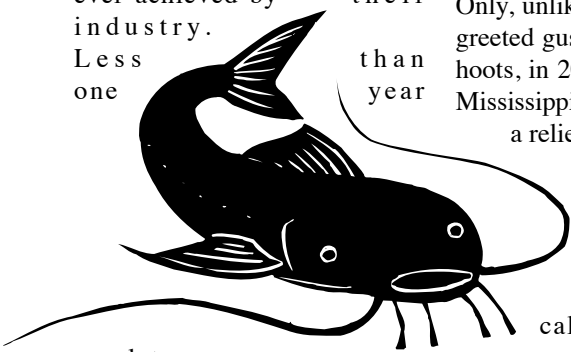
# Pandora's oil well

Jill S. Schneiderman

Technical jargon conceals by confusion. The immense scale of the problem surrounding the sinking of the Transocean drilling rig, Deepwater Horizon, requires that the public stay alert when confronted with slick lingo. So, I'd like to help readers understand from a geologist's viewpoint the sad absurdity of the Gulf of Mexico situation—one that is much more than yet another "oil spill."

In September 2009, British Petroleum (BP) announced their discovery of the giant Tiber oilfield and crowed that drilling a 35,055 foot deep well into the earth's crust under 4,132 feet of water made it one of the deepest wells ever achieved by their industry.

Less than one year



later, BP had to alert the public to an explosion and fire on board the semisubmersible drilling rig—a unit floating above the seafloor that, when flooded, causes the contraption to submerge to a desired depth

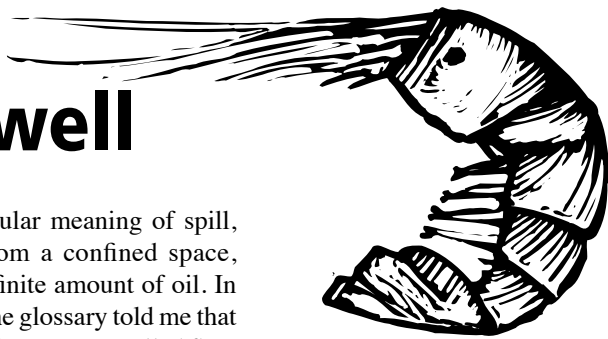
and produce relative stability while drilling for oil and gas in rough waters. The rig was mining oil from the Mississippi Canyon 252 well that BP owns. And on Earth Day 2010, we learned that BP had "activated an extensive oil spill response" and was working with Transocean using remotely-operated vehicles to assess the condition of the Tiber well and the "subsea blowout preventer."

A critical distinction here is between an oil spill and a blowout. I tried to look up the definition of "oil spill" in OilGasGlossary.com and found the following: "Sorry, but we can't found (sic) the definition of 'Oil Spill' in our Oil Gas Glossary." I don't mean to be disingenuous. I really just wanted to have confirmed my instinct that

the vernacular meaning of spill, to flow from a confined space, implies a finite amount of oil. In contrast, the glossary told me that a blowout is an uncontrolled flow of oil, water, or gas from a well bored into the earth. It suggests to me a comparatively unlimited quantity of the black gold. When BP announced their discovery and termed it "giant," they meant to convey that the Tiber oilfield contained somewhere between four billion and six billion barrels of oil; this contrasts with a "huge" oilfield usually considered to contain 250 billion barrels of the stuff. Regardless of whether it's giant or huge, this Gulf of Mexico event is more than a spill.

What we have beneath the Gulf of Mexico is a gusher, folks. Only, unlike 1859, when drillers greeted gushers with celebratory hoots, in 2010, BP confronts the Mississippi Canyon blowout with a relief well—that's another well drilled near and into the well that is out of control. BP doesn't use the phrase, but drillers call the continuously spewing wells "wild wells." Forgive me, but it's hard to feel reassured by the company's assertion that they've begun to remedy the subsurface problem—oil escaping with great force from inside the earth to the planet's watery surface—in this manner.

I'm reminded of the Centralia, Pennsylvania, underground coal seam fire that has been burning since 1962. Like other coal seam fires, it may continue to burn underground for decades or even centuries until the fuel source is exhausted. So, too, the polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), banned by Congress in 1979, yet still leaking into the Hudson River three decades later from fractures in rock beneath the General Electric facilities at Hudson Falls and Fort Edward, New York, where the company utilized PCBs in the manufacture of capacitors.

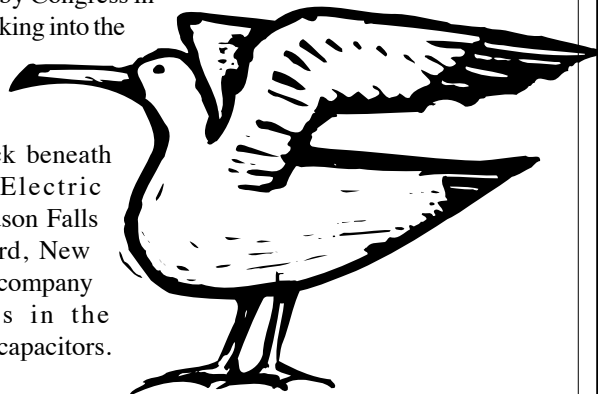


The time and space scales of the Earth dwarf those of us mere humans, yet we tinker with the Earth's resources, manipulate them for our purposes and underplay the risks we take. We scramble at the surface of the Earth to curtail the disastrous upshots of our inane technological "achievements."

When Prometheus stole fire from Mount Olympus and gave it to people living on Earth, he angered Zeus. The king of the Olympians exacted revenge on humans by ordering the creation of Pandora, who would be a vehicle for bringing misery to mortals. According to the myth, Pandora's box (jar)—a present from the Gods—loosed upon Earth all the sorrows and plagues then known to humanity. In 2010, we've opened Pandora's well—Mississippi Canyon 252—spewing oil, sowing suffering and defying control.

Jill S. Schneiderman is professor of earth science at Vassar College and a 2009 recipient of a Contemplative Practice Fellowship from the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. She is editor of and contributor to "For the Rock Record: Geologists on Intelligent Design" (University of California Press, 2009) and "The Earth Around Us: Maintaining a Livable Planet" (Westview Press, 2003). She also blogs for Shambhala Sun and on her own web site <<http://www.earthdharma.org>>.

Source: [truthout.com](http://truthout.com) Op-Ed 5/12/10



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# Wall Street's meltdown and wealth's maldistribution

Sam Pizzigati

Average American households have been riding an economic roller coaster over the last quarter century. The stock market has boomed and collapsed. Housing has boomed and collapsed. The entire economy has boomed and collapsed.

Where has this wild ride left the typical American family? Back to square one. And then back some more. The typical American household, as of mid 2009, held less in real net worth—that's assets minus debts, adjusted for inflation—than the typical U.S. household held back in 1983.

But the even bigger story may be the reason why. New York University economist Edward Wolff tells that story in a new analysis of the Federal Reserve's latest household wealth data research, just published by the Bard College Levy Economics Institute.

Federal Reserve researchers

started collecting household wealth data in 1983, and the latest Fed numbers take us through 2007. Wolff takes us even further—to last July—by crunching more recent housing price and stock market stats.

Wolff's numbers, covering over a year of recession, show "an astounding 36.1 percent" plunge in the household wealth of the median U.S. household since the economy's 2007 peak. The wealth of America's richest 1 percent? That's dropped as well—but only by 11.1 percent.

## Net worth comparison

Since 2007, in short, America's richest 1 percent have done considerably better than average Americans. And that should be no surprise. Households in our richest 1 percent have been doing considerably better than average households ever since the Federal Reserve started keeping score a generation ago.

The key stat: Between 1983 and

2007, the wealth of America's top 1 percent increased well over twice as fast as the wealth of the typical American family.

In effect, suggest Wolff's new numbers, average Americans today aren't hurting because the economy has stopped generating wealth. Average Americans are hurting because the wealth the economy is generating continues to cascade disproportionately to the top.

Between 1983 and 2007, as Wolff notes, the nation's richest 1 percent took in over one-third of the nation's total gain in marketable wealth, over triple the 11.2 percent that went to the bottom 80 percent of the nation's households. And since 2007 the top 1 percent of the nation's households have seen their overall share of the nation's wealth increase from 34.6 to 37.1 percent.

Percentages like these can come across as awfully abstract. Wolff seems to understand that. To help us better grasp the wealth

accumulation dynamic at work in the U.S. economy, Wolff supplies another set of more easily fathomable numbers. He counts millionaires, penta-millionaires (households worth at least \$5 million), and deca-millionaires (households worth at least \$10 million).

\*Between 1983 and 2007, the number of households worth at least \$1 million, as measured in 1995 dollars, tripled, from 2.4 million to just under 7.3 million. Over that same span, the number of households worth over \$5 million jumped by six times and the number worth \$10 million by an even higher seven times.

To truly understand the roller coaster average Americans have been riding, Wolff's analysis makes plain, we need to come to grips with the awesome inequality these numbers reflect. With so little of the nation's wealth flowing into middle class pockets, average Americans have found themselves having to go deeper and deeper

into debt to keep their heads above water.

In 1983, the middle 60 percent of Americans had \$2 of debt for every \$3 of income. By 2007, these middle class Americans had nearly \$5 of debt for every \$3 of income. These rising debt ratios, observes Wolff, left middle class households "vulnerable to income shocks and set the stage for the mortgage crises of 2008 and 2009 and the resulting financial meltdown."

Wolff labels this vulnerability the "middle-class squeeze." His numbers help us feel that squeeze's strain. Maybe more importantly, his analysis helps us see what's doing the squeezing.

*Sam Pizzigati edits Too Much, the online newsletter on excess and inequality published by the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Policy Studies. Too Much appears weekly.*

Source: *Too Much* online newsletter 4/26/10, <http://toomuchonline.org/>

# Are Americans getting our money's worth?

Steven Hill

Most Americans seem to regard April 15—the day income tax returns are due to the Internal Revenue Service—as a recurring tragedy akin to a Biblical plague. Particularly this year, with US government deficits soaring, everyone from the teabaggers to Fox News and Senate Republicans are sounding the alarm about a return to "big government." Recently former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani even stated that President Obama was moving us towards—gasp—European socialism.

Europe frequently plays the punching-bag role during these moments because there is a perception that the poor Europeans are overtaxed serfs. But a closer look reveals this is a myth that prevents Americans from understanding the vast shortcomings of our own system.

A few years ago, an American acquaintance of mine who lives in Sweden told me that, quite by chance, he and his Swedish wife were in New York City and ended up sharing a limousine to

the theater district with a southern US senator and his wife. This senator, a conservative, anti-tax Democrat, asked my acquaintance about Sweden and swaggeringly commented about "all those taxes the Swedes pay." To which this American replied, "The problem with Americans and their taxes is that we get nothing for them." He then went on to tell the senator about the comprehensive level of services and benefits that Swedes receive. "If Americans knew what

Swedes receive for their taxes, we would probably riot," he told the senator. The rest of the ride to the theater district was unsurprisingly quiet.

The fact is, in return for their taxes, Europeans are receiving a generous support system for families and individuals for which Americans must pay exorbitantly, out-of-pocket, if we are to receive it at all. That includes quality health care for every single person, the average cost of which is about half of what Americans pay, even as various studies show that Europeans achieve healthier results.

But that's not all. In return for their taxes, Europeans also are receiving affordable child care, a decent retirement pension, free or inexpensive university education, job retraining, paid sick leave, paid parental leave, ample vacations, affordable housing, senior care, efficient mass transportation and more. In order to receive the same level of benefits as Europeans, most Americans fork out a ton of money in out-of-pocket payments, in addition to our taxes.

For example, while 47 million Americans don't have any health insurance at all, many who do are paying escalating premiums and deductibles.

Indeed, Anthem Blue Cross announced that its premiums will increase by up to 40 percent. But all Europeans receive health care in return for a modest amount deducted from their paychecks.

Friends have told me they are saving nearly a hundred thousand dollars for their children's college education, and most young Americans graduate with tens of thousands of dollars in debt. But European children attend for free

or nearly so (depending on the country). Childcare in the US costs over \$12,000 annually for a family with two children, but in Europe it costs about one-sixth that amount, and the quality is far superior. Millions of Americans are stuffing as much as possible into their IRAs and 401(k)s because Social Security provides only about half the retirement income needed. But the more generous European retirement system provides about 75-85 percent (depending on the country) of retirement income. Either way, you pay.

Americans' private spending on old-age care is nearly three times higher per capita than in Europe because Americans must self-finance a significant share of their own senior care. Americans also tend to pay more in local and state taxes, as well as in property taxes. Americans also pay hidden taxes, such as \$300 billion annually in federal tax breaks to businesses that provide health benefits to their employees.

When you sum up the total balance sheet, it turns out that Americans pay out just as much as Europeans—but we receive a

lot less for our money.

Unfortunately these sorts of complexities are not calculated into simplistic analyses like Forbes' annual Tax Misery Index, and the quality is far superior. Millions of Americans are stuffing as much as possible into their IRAs and 401(k)s because Social Security provides only about half the retirement income needed. But the more generous European retirement system provides about 75-85 percent (depending on the country) of retirement income. Either way, you pay.

In this economically competitive age, increasingly these kinds of services are necessary to ensure healthy, happy and productive families and workers. Europeans have these supports, but most Americans do not unless you pay a ton out-of-pocket. Or unless you are a member of Congress, which of course provides European-level support for its members and their families.

*Steven Hill is Director of the Political Reform Program for the New America Foundation and author of "Europe's Promise: Why the European Way is the Best Hope in an Insecure Age" <http://www.EuropesPromise.org>.*

Source: *truthout* Op-Ed 4/15/10 [www.truthout.com](http://www.truthout.com)

# Fourteen ways a 90% top tax rate fixes our country

Dave Johnson

A return to Eisenhower-era, 90 percent top tax rates helps fix our economy in several ways:

1) It makes it take longer to end up with a fortune. In fact, it makes people build and earn a fortune instead of shooting for quick windfalls. This forces \*long-term thinking and planning, instead of short-term scheming and scamming. If grabbing everything in sight and running doesn't pay off anymore, you have to change your strategy.

2) It gets rid of the quick-buck-scheme business model. Making people take a longer-term approach to building rather than grabbing a fortune will help reattach businesses to communities by reinforcing interdependence between businesses and their surrounding communities. The current Wall Street/private equity business model of looting companies, leaving behind an empty shell, unemployed workers and a surrounding community in devastation will no longer be a viable business strategy.

3) It will lower the executive crime rate. Today, it is possible to run scams that let you pocket huge sums in a single year, and leave behind the mess you make for others to fix. A high top tax rate removes the incentive to lie, cheat and steal, to grab every buck you can as fast as you can. This reduces the temptation to be dishonest.

4) Combined with badly-needed cuts in military spending—we spend more on military than all other countries on earth combined—taxing the wealthy ends budget deficits and starts paying off the massive Reagan/Bush debt. This reduces and ultimately eliminates the share of the budget that goes to pay interest. The United States now has to pay a huge share of its budget just to cover the interest on the borrowing that tax cuts made necessary. Paying off the debt would remove this huge drag on our economy. (Never mind that Alan Greenspan famously called for Bush's tax cuts by saying it was dangerous to pay off our debt—now that same Greenspan says we need to cut benefits to

retired people because our debt is so high.)

5) It will bring in revenue to pay for improvements in infrastructure that then cause the economy grow. Investing in modern transit systems, smart grid, energy efficiency, fast internet, and other improvements lead to a huge payoff of increased prosperity for all of us—especially for those at the top income levels. Infrastructure improvement and maintenance is the "seed corn" of economic growth. We have been eating that seed corn since Reagan's tax cuts.

6) It will bring in revenue for improving our schools, colleges and universities. Not only will this help our competitiveness, but it will improve each of our lives and levels of happiness.

7) It will boost economic growth and rebuild a strong middle class. A consumption-based economy does better when consumers have more to spend. Perhaps not cause and effect, though I suspect so, but after FDR raised top tax rates, the economy grew dramatically. The 90 percent top rate years under FDR, Truman, Eisenhower and the beginning of the Kennedy years were the years when we built the middle class. And remember, after Clinton raised top tax rates only modestly, the economy grew. How's it been doing since Bush's tax cuts for the rich? Is it just a coincidence that the economy booms after tax increases that provide revenue to invest in new seed corn, and that the economy declines as we reduce taxes?

8) It is good for business because increased revenue will enable increasing government spending for the benefit of regular people. This recirculates money into the economy more productively than the current system of putting huge fortunes into a few hands and hoping for a resulting consumption of high-end goods. The wealthy can only spend so much, so more disposable income in the hands of regular people is good for business. Any business owner will tell you they want customers more than they want tax cuts.

9) It protects working people. Exploiting workers

with long hours, low pay or lack of pay increases, lack of worker protections, firing union organizers and schemes that call employees "contractors" will no longer pay off as it does today. The era of extreme union-busting came in at the same time as the tax cuts.

10) It redistributes income and wealth in ways that help all of us. Currently, a few people receive most of the income and own most of everything. A very high top tax rate reduces this concentration of wealth.

11) It fights the political instability that results from concentration of wealth. Great inequality in a society and the resulting loss of opportunity results in political instability that can lead to extreme ideologies, rebellion etc. We are seeing all the signs of a resurgence of these problems today.

12) It will help rebuild our sense of democracy and belief in equality. As we have seen and are seeing, when too much is in the hands of too few, they have too much power and influence and use it to get even more.

13) It will strengthen the government that We, the People have worked hard to build, and strengthen its ability to enforce the laws and regulations that protect all of us and the resources we hold in common. It will increase its ability to provide all of us equally with the benefits of our joint efforts and our economy.

14) Finally, for good measure, increasing top tax rates will cause those affected to work harder to make up the difference. The Ayn Randians claim the very rich are the "producers" and all the rest of us are just parasites and slackers who feed off their "work." So, it will be very good

for our economy to get them working harder by taxing them at 90 percent. You may have heard about those 25 hedge fund managers who brought in an average of \$1 billion each last year—an amount that would have paid for 658,000 teachers—while the rest of the country suffered through a terrible economy. If we had a top tax rate of 90 percent, they would "only" take home \$100 million or so each—in a single year. And we could have 658,000 more teachers. So, it's a win-win.

Taxes are how we all pitch in to enjoy the benefits and protections of modern society. Those benefits and protections are what enable people to become wealthy, and we ask that they give some back so others can prosper as well.

Source: *truthout* | Op-Ed 5/3/10  
[www.truthout.com](http://www.truthout.com)

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## The T is Not Silent

# Shamed into silence

Elena Kelly

I was born in the Salvation Army Home for Unwed Mothers. Have you ever known a person that could say that? I know I was not the only one, but to my knowledge I have never met anyone who could say that. Since it happened in 1955, I was called "illegitimate" by those who looked down on me. Other kids just taunted me saying things like, "Your mother didn't want you so she gave you away." I felt ashamed of myself. In my little country school, my younger sister and I were the only adopted kids. It really sucked.

Have you ever known an effeminate boy? Everyone knows tomboys. Probably some are reading this column right now. But sissy boys don't last too long because they are so despised, so hated by other boys that they soon learn to "man up" or get hurt a lot. I was a sissy boy and was picked on mercilessly. I had my nose broken twice, as well as many bloody noses, black eyes, and loose teeth. I got the wind knocked out of me a lot as boys punched me in the stomach. I felt ashamed that I was a girly boy.

As I grew up, all the while pretending to be a boy, I saw that others were shamed too. There was a girl in school who had learning disabilities. She was called a retard and stupid. There was a girl who became nauseous easily. She became known as "pukey Janet." Kids who were overweight were harassed and teased. I began to see that I was a part of a larger group of "misfit kids."

On May 22, 1930 in Woodmere, New York, a baby boy was born who was also teased for having big ears, a big nose, and huge feet. He was commonly shamed and humiliated. His name was Harvey Milk and he went on to create a world where gay and lesbian citizens could find respect, first for themselves, and then from society. His work on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors,

even though it lasted only eleven months, was highly successful in that he was able to pass the most stringent gay rights law in the nation at that time.

The first reported transgender murder in Stockton occurred on May 22, 2006. Alfred "Ariana" Dibble was walking down Sierra Nevada Street when a monster of a man began to chase her. After a block he caught up with her and beat her until she was unrecognizable. She died from that beating, and yet the police refused to call it a hate crime. One officer was heard to remark that she should have known better than to dress like that in this part of town. No suspects were ever questioned and the case remains unsolved to this day.

On May 22, 2010, I will be celebrating the first Harvey Milk Day in California. I am grateful that he had the courage to stand up against the shame others heaped on him and fight for the right to hold his head up with pride in who he was.

I will also be celebrating the life of Ariana Dibble, and the courage she had to live the truth of who she really was in a society that had no acceptance for a girl who happened to be born in a male body. Her death brought attention and education to thousands of people who knew nothing about being transgender. Neither Harvey Milk nor Ariana Dibble died in vain. Their passing did not extinguish the light of hope. It made that light shine brighter.

On this May 22 I will also be celebrating the one year anniversary of the end of my shame. It will be one year exactly that I have lived in the body that I always knew should have been mine. It will be one year exactly from when I was permanently cured of gender identity disorder. I hope to live out this new life I have been given by making Harvey and Ariana proud.



To that end, a group of Stockton Citizens and I have founded Courage Campaign San Joaquin as an umbrella organization for all social progressives in the Stockton-San Joaquin area. Teachers should not have to feel ashamed that they want a decent wage, immigrants should not have to be ashamed that they want to work to support their families, and American citizens should not have to feel ashamed when they have to go to the ER for medical care because there needs to be universal coverage.

We meet on the third Saturday each month at 8:00 am at the Peace and Justice Center on Bedford Road, just off the Miracle Mile on Pacific Avenue, right behind San Francisco Floral. The meeting is open to all who hold to a progressive agenda, whether it is healthcare, education, equality, immigration, or any other issue that progressive people would support. The meeting lasts just one hour so we can network and find how we can support each other in bringing real and lasting change to this county.

*Rev. Elena Kelly is a co-chapter leader of Marriage Equality San Joaquin, Vice Chair of the Peace and Justice Network, Director of the Stockton Transgender Alliance, and most recently was appointed Deputy Field Organizer for Courage Campaign. She can be reached at [elena.kelly@comcast.net](mailto:elena.kelly@comcast.net)*



## Sawznhammers

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

# The world we need starts with a vision

John Morearty

A new world is wailing to be born, we feel it in our bones. Indeed, the ecosystem manifests it—"All creation groans in labor," one scripture says. We the peoples are the midwives, of course—and it's us who are being born.

What will it take?

Hard work, willingness to pitch in, sacrifice, keep on keeping on.

Also willingness to change, to abandon habits and institutions that were useful in their time, but have turned into monsters; willingness to modify other institutions so they serve us all.

Maybe first of all, it will take the collective wisdom of humankind. That means,

Willingness to speak to friends and adversaries both, and willingness to LISTEN with attention and respect. True dialogue.

Einstein (who was responsible for inventing nuclear Armageddon) said that avoiding global disaster will require "the aroused understanding and insistence of the peoples of the world." He said it would take "a cosmic religion of universal love, and a world parliament of young people."

We're in luck. Technology exists for a world parliament! Teenagers walk the streets with magic at their ears, communicating with San Francisco and LA, Tel Aviv, Dublin, Capetown, Caracas, Kabul and the wilds of San Joaquin County. The machinery of a world parliament is in our hands, literally. Cell phones and laptops are the basic tools of global open source democracy. Everyone's wisdom can be heard.

We the people must speak up, loud and clear!

What world do we need?

As a contribution to the dialogue, here is my list. Humanity is crying out for a world in which...

Every human being is a person, worthy of respect, regardless of any differences whatsoever.

No corporation is a person.

All persons are free to speak and write, to "sing their own songs."

Everyone can safely breathe the air and drink the water.

All have enough healthy food, and they know what's in it.

All have at least modest shelter, compatible with human dignity.

All have health care when and however long they need it, including prevention and health education.

All can live a comfortable (not luxurious) old age, and die with dignity.

Schools have plenty of teachers and counselors, books and supplies.

Children are cared for, when their parents cannot.

Every child has free public education of their choice, with the chance to develop their gifts; free through college, for all those who pass the tests. Iraq did that under Saddam Hussein; why not all? The world is rich, if we share, and children are our basic resource.

Every adult has the opportunity for productive and environmentally sane work, at a living wage, and basic unemployment insurance adequate to live on when there is temporarily no work.

Every person on earth has access to inexpensive and uncensored broadband, the most revolutionary invention since the printing press, so that "open source" democracy can flourish, and humankind can get its mind and act together.

For the same reason, public media, like non-profit radio and television, large and small, are publicly supported by grants proportional to the support they receive from the community.

All except the poor are taxed, at a progressive rate, for the common good. The rich and super-rich are taxed the most; it's only fair, and they benefit from a peaceful and well-ordered society.

No trafficking of human beings. Victimless acts, like drug use and voluntary prostitution, are no longer crimes.

Corporate crimes, for example bank fraud or business ownership which kills workers, are tried and punished in proportion to the harm done to the community: "malefactors of great wealth," as

Theodore Roosevelt called them, are fined and imprisoned.

Elections are publicly financed, once a candidate receives above a certain modest percentage of votes in the primary.

Publicly licensed media like TV and radio, as a condition of their use of the public air waves, must donate a substantial amount of time to such publicly financed candidates. The candidates must appear and make their case in person.

There shall be no "establishment of religion." Persons of all religious affiliations and none have equal rights. Churches which urge their members to vote a certain way or support a certain candidate lose their nonprofit status.

Predatory and parasitic forms of capitalism are abolished. Non-profits, locally owned and worker-owned businesses, local banks, coops and credit unions are encouraged.

Peace Now!

• Five percent of the U.S. war budget goes to fund a Department of Peace, at the cabinet level, where young and old are trained in the arts of nonviolent conflict resolution.

• Another five percent goes as the U.S. contribution to a global peace and environmental corps, where young people of all nations work together for the good of all. They earn a living wage, learn skills, and take pride in contributing to the common good.

• As an example to the world, the remainder of the U.S. war budget is cut in half (for starters). The CIA's Black Operations budget is abolished, as is all spending on "new and improved" nuclear weapons, which is ballooning under Obama.

• The \$450 billion or so saved each year would care for wounded veterans, fund universal health care and put Americans back to work.

There are lots of practical and structural questions, including whether to work within the Democratic party, outside and beyond it, or both? Work inside the system or outside it, and exactly

what "system" do we mean? But the fundamental principle is respect for all persons, which implies nonviolence.

We don't break windows, we break the silence.

What do we the people need? what world do we hunger to create?

"Without vision, the people perish." We share perspectives, experiences and visions.

We should look at living examples, where the new world already exists—like microfinance

coops in Bangladesh, subsidized basic food in Venezuela, more than 20,000 cheap rent-a-bicycles in Paris, women's and girls' education in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, Palestinian-Jewish communes of teenagers in Israel, women's democratic tree-planting in Kenya, "garbage that's not garbage" in Curitiba Brazil, community gardens in Stockton and Milwaukee....

Please add your own, and pass it on. john@morearty.com, 209-464-3326

## Center for Biological Diversity

### Time for a moratorium on offshore oil

As experts once again increased the estimate of the oil spewing from the Gulf of Mexico oil rig disaster to as much as 25,000 barrels, or one million gallons, per day, the oil spill is poised to become perhaps the worst industrial environmental disaster in U.S. history.

Hundreds of species in the Gulf will be harmed by the toxic oil, including endangered sea turtles that are returning to nesting beaches and Atlantic bluefin tuna that gather in the area to breed this time of year. Seabirds, sharks, whales, and other marine mammals are also at risk, while fisheries and other businesses will suffer ill effects for years to come. The Department of the Interior approved the Gulf drilling, and similar operations planned by Shell Oil this summer off the Alaska coast, without any meaningful analysis of, or adequate contingency plans for, a large spill.

In response, Center for Biological Diversity issued the following statement: "The Gulf of Mexico disaster shows with tragic clarity the absurdity of the claims by the oil industry and politicians beholden to it that offshore oil and gas development is safe.

"President Obama should immediately reinstitute a moratorium on new offshore

oil leasing, exploration, and development on all our coasts. He should begin by reversing recent decisions of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to allow drilling this summer in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas off the coast of Alaska.

"Given the difficulties in dealing with a spill in the calm waters of the Gulf, where response equipment and other resources are close at hand, it is the height of irresponsibility to allow Shell to drill for oil in remote areas of the Arctic when no technology exists to clean up an oil spill in icy conditions, and mobilizing an effective response would be virtually impossible.

"The Department of the Interior continues to prioritize the wishes of Big Oil over the safety of workers, wildlife, and the integrity of our ocean ecosystems.

"...the American people were promised that the mismanagement, lax oversight, and environmentally destructive policies of the Minerals Management Service would be a thing of the past. Unfortunately, Secretary Salazar failed to deliver on that promise and the wildlife and people of the Gulf are now paying the price."

Source: ENN: Environmental News Network; www.enn.com

# Come to Peace Camp

*Ken Schroeder*

This summer marks the 28th year that peace-minded folks have gathered in the Sierras for Peace Camp. Come and join us on June 25-27 at Camp Peaceful Pines for stimulating ideas, community and fun for people of all ages. The weekend will offer workshops, hiking, campfire, singing, a talent show, children's activities and delicious meals. Camp follows just after the summer solstice, so these will be the longest days of sunlight in the year. A full moon will be rising on Saturday.

This year's camp will feature an amazing array of presenters:

Storyteller B.Z. Smith from Tuolumne County will share stories on Friday evening at the campfire. On Saturday morning she will lead a workshop titled "Our Stories: The REAL World Wide Web."

Join her for a morning of Storytelling Games, Improv Games—all designed to build skills and confidence, to strengthen community connections. She says, "Come experience how the world

shrinks as we feel our bond across the globe through stories. But most of all, come have fun!" B.Z. has been a part of the storytelling world for over 25 years, having shared tales at festivals and concerts and in schools, colleges and libraries.

Also on Saturday morning, artist and teacher Linda Knoll will lead us in a workshop, "Outdoor Sketching and Observational Drawing." Linda says, "First we'll create a simple sketchbook, then using a variety of mediums, we'll look at the nature around camp and record details in words and pictures. I'll include instruction on sketching techniques, light & shadow, and observing details." Campers with all levels of drawing experience are encouraged to participate and learn. Linda is also the author and illustrator of the new children's book, "Over in the Valley."

On Sunday morning, Karlha Arias of the Tuolumne River Trust will lead the workshop "Know Your River, Love Your River." She will engage us in a discussion of why we need to protect the river

and how to be involved. Karlha is River Parkway Project Manager for the organization, which has offices in Modesto, Sonora and San Francisco. The group's vision is to seek a healthy river that is teeming with fish and wildlife, is safe for drinking, fishing and swimming and is held in trust for our children and grandchildren.

Modesto artist Jim Christiansen will also be at camp to capture the weekend in sketches. Jim is very active in Stanislaus County organizing events and creating and displaying art.

Deborah Roberts returns to cook up some wonderful food in the dining hall.

At the 6,200-foot elevation in the Stanislaus National Forest near the Clark Fork of the Stanislaus River, Camp Peaceful Pines is located about 25 miles above Pinecrest off Hwy. 108. Surrounded by tall peaks, the camp is set in the forest and has a creek running through it. Sunrise Rock, with views of the river valley, is a short hike from camp.

The camp features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents and a cabin for those with special needs. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work. Families and individuals are welcome.

The \$70 fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Young people are \$50. Early registration, before June 6th, entitles registrants to a \$10.00 per person discount. Partial scholarships and day-rates are also available. Registration forms are available at [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org), where they can be printed and mailed. The first ten families or individuals to register will get a cool peace bumper sticker.

Campers are welcome to arrive any time after 2:00 p.m. on Friday. The camp opens with supper on Friday and closes at noon on Sunday. Directions and other information will be mailed to participants before camp. Information: Ken Schroeder in Modesto, 209-526-2303.

# Area high school students recognized

*Liza Sysay*

On Saturday May 8th, 2010 the YMCA High School Afterschool Program hosted a year end awards ceremony and dance for participating students from Chavez, Edison, and Franklin High Schools at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds. It was a private event; only students who received an invitation were able to attend. The night included a dinner, professional photography, award presentations, a variety of performances, a cultural fashion show, and was followed by a dance. The invited students had done an assortment of amazing community service projects: volunteering, showing leadership, and becoming great role models to their peers. This was a special event to recognize them for showing improvement and being committed throughout the school year. It was very nice to see the youth and staff from each site enjoying the night together. I am glad that we were able to provide such a positive and fun event to these deserving students.

The following Monday a

student, Anayeli Morales (11th grade), wrote a letter showing her gratitude: "The dance was wonderful! Everything was really nice and decorated very nice. It made all of us participants feel very appreciated. I like how people were able to be recognized for their hard work... The night was great and I greatly appreciate all the work that was put into the event and I'm very grateful for having a wonderful person like Liza to be there to lead us and be there to support us."

Today's youth are desperate for meaning. I believe they need more encouragement and recognition for their accomplishments to help them stay focused. I am proud to be a part of a team that offers guidance in giving teens a chance to step out of their comfort zone and help them become young leaders. We have an amazing committee of staff who are passionate about helping our youth succeed and I'm excited to see the progress within the years to come.

*Liza Sysay is the YMCA Program Coordinator at Franklin High School.*

## Lawn signs, mugs, T-shirts

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



## Golf tourney benefits Hospice

The 4th Annual Jailhouse Scramble: "18 Holes for Hope Together We Can Change the World" will benefit Hospice of San Joaquin and Rotary Scholarship Programs presented by Lathrop Sunrise Rotary and San Joaquin County Correctional Officer's Association. Join us at the Old River Golf Course at 18007 MacArthur Dr, Tracy for a day of fun, great food, prizes, and golf where proceeds benefit Hospice of San Joaquin and Rotary Scholarship Programs. Great Hole In One Prizes include a Polaris RZR4, sponsored by Delta Power Sports, Lathrop and \$ 10,000 Cash Prize Sponsored by Old River Golf Course, Tracy. Breakfast and Registration starts at 7:00 a.m. Tee-Off Scramble at 8:00 a.m., Lunch at 12:30 p.m. Lunch by Texas Roadhouse includes Ribs & Pulled Pork, Salad & Dessert. \$100.00 green fee per person (includes cart), early registration \$ 5.00 discount per player by June 1, \$25 Non-Player Food Drink Tickets 740-9007 Download Registration form at [www.hospicesj.org](http://www.hospicesj.org); please make checks payable to Lathrop Sunrise Rotary 1947 Eugenia Ave, Ripon, CA 95366

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# June 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.*

## May 4 - June 4

Mixed media, charcoal, and paint representational expressionist art show by Ra. M-F 10-5. Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave., Stockton. 463-4033

## May 5 - 30

Barefoot in the Park, Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15 - \$25. 473-2424.

## May 20 - Aug 15

California Impressionism: selections from the Irvine Museum. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. Wed-Sun 1:30 - 5 pm. 1st and 3rd Thurs 1:30 - 9 pm. \$5 adult 18 & older, student/senior/youth \$2.50. Under 10/first Sat free. 940-6316 info@hagginmuseum.org

## Sat, May 22

Astronomy in the Park, Oak Grove Nature Center, telescopes available between 8 & 10 pm. Oak Grove Regional Park, 4520 Eight Mile Rd, Stockton. \$5 parking. 953-8814.

The All Girls Boys Choir at The Plea for Peace Center, 8 pm. 630 E Weber Ave, Stockton. \$6. 981-2311.

## Sun, May 23

Plea for Primer Carshow at The Plea for Peace Center, 11 am. Pre-'65 cars with a Rockabilly concert. 630 E Weber Ave. \$10. 981-2311.

## Mon, May 24

Fighting the Quiet at The Plea for Peace Center, 6 pm. 630 E Weber Ave, Stockton. \$8. 981-2311.

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.

## Tue, May 25

Indie Rock Show with Look Mexico at The Plea for Peace Center, 7 pm. 630 E Weber Ave. \$5. 981-2311.

## Wed, May 26

Punk Rock Hump Day at The Plea for Peace Center, 7 pm. 630 E Weber Ave, Stockton. \$5. 981-2311.

## Thursday, May 27

Practical Lessons for Citizenship and Survival, Topic: Budgets, financial statements and payroll. 7-8:30 pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton (see p. 2 for details).

## Sat, May 29

Mayor's Hike & Bike benefiting the Emergency Food Bank & Catholic Charities starts at Stockton Ballpark and goes either 8.7 miles through UOP or 18.7 to Buckley Cove. Registration 6:45 - 8:45 am. Get Fit Stockton fitness fair at Stockton Ballpark. 464-7369

## Sun, May 30

Metal Showcase with Symbolik at The Plea for Peace Center, 6 pm. 630 E Weber Ave. \$5. 981-2311.

## Fri, June 4

Stormy California at The Plea for Peace Center, 8 pm. 630 E Weber Ave, Stockton. \$8. 981-2311.

## Sat, June 5

3rd annual WaldoFest music festival benefiting the Holt SJ Wildlife Conservancy (see p 20). 12 - 6 pm, 3536 Rainier Ave, Stockton. \$25, kids free.

## Mon, June 7

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

## Thur, June 10

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

## Fri, June 11

Rock the Night Away at The Plea for Peace Center, 8 pm. Treephort, the Atom Age, Likewise and guest. 630 E Weber Ave, Stockton. \$8. 981-2311.

## Sat, June 12

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting (see p 1), 9 - 11 am, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

## Sat, June 19

Courage Campaign Progressive Coalition meeting, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd. 8:00 am. Free. Contact Elena, 649-0396

Astronomy in the Park, Oak Grove Nature Center, telescopes available between 8 & 10 pm. Oak Grove Regional Park, 4520 W Eight Mile Rd, Stockton. \$5 park fee per vehicle. 953-8814.

## First Mondays

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

## Fourth Mondays

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

## Second Thursdays

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

## Thursdays

Speak out! Demonstrate for peace. Pacific Avenue north of Delta stoplight, every Thursday 5-6 PM. Signs provided, or bring your own. Free parking at Sherwood Mall. Info John 464-3326 or Ria 462-3340.

## Fridays

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

## Third Saturdays

Courage Campaign Progressive Coalition meetings, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd. 8:00 am. Free. Contact Elena, 649-0396

## Saturdays

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

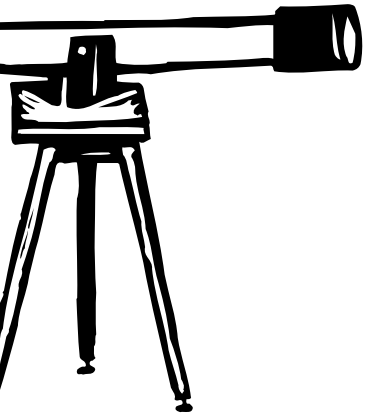
## Astronomy in the Park

The Oak Grove Nature Center presents

### Astronomy in the

Park on Saturday, June 19th from 7:30-10:30 pm, hosted by the Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS). At 7:30 pm, join us inside the Nature Center for a special presentation, topic still to be announced. SAS volunteers will provide telescopes for stargazing from 8:30-10:30 pm. Activities are free and open to people of all ages.

Park entrance fee of \$5 is required



per vehicle.

Visit [www.mgzoo.com](http://www.mgzoo.com) for information on upcoming Oak Grove Nature Center events.

## Kids college for summer fun

Kids College will offer 100 individual academic and enrichment workshops for children and teens at Delta College on the Stockton campus. The workshops are designed to get students excited about learning, develop new skills or hobbies, and explore possible careers.

New workshops will provide hands-on science learning opportunities: "Fun with Physics", "Leap into Space" (Planetarium), "Beginning Robotics", and "Science Theatre." Creative learners can develop their talents "Drawing on Art", "Paper Mache", "Intermediate Drawing", "Creative Writing by YOU", "Jazz Studies", "Harp for Kids", "Mime... Just the Moves", and "Be a Star Theatre: "Princess and the Pea." Kids College provides an inside look into careers in Science, Engineering, Culinary Arts, Fashion, Legal, and Finance.

For information about Kids College, summer workshops, schedule, and registration, visit <http://kids.deltacollege.edu>. Registration runs from May 24-July 24. Class sizes are small (typically 10-12 students) and may fill quickly, so prompt registration is encouraged. Contact Beverley Dierking, Kids College Coordinator, at 209-954-5015 for more information.

## connections

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## 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.pjnsj.org](http://www.pjnsj.org), click on Talking It Through.

# Peace is Happening

The Waldo Holt San Joaquin Wildlife Conservancy Presents:



the 3RD ANNUAL

# WALDO \* MUSIC \* FEST

3536 RAINIER AVE., STOCKTON  
ON THE BANKS of the CALAVERAS RIVER

JUNE 5, 2010

NOON 'til 6 PM

SILENT AUCTION

★  
MUSIC

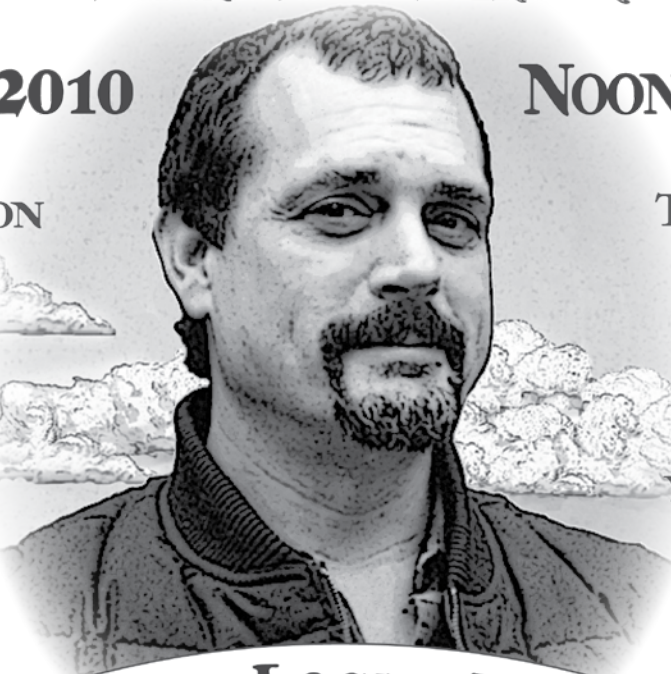
★  
FOOD, ART

★  
MORE!

TICKETS \$25

★  
KIDS FREE!

★  
BRING  
YOUR LAWN  
CHAIRS!



## FEATURING LOCAL FAVORITES

DAVE HALFORD

★  
SNAP JACKSON  
and the KNOCK ON WOOD PLAYERS

★  
WATER BROS.

★  
DIRK HAMILTON



for more information, visit:  
[www.waldoconservancy.org](http://www.waldoconservancy.org)



Proceeds benefit the  
Waldo Holt San Joaquin Wildlife Conservancy  
- dedicated to preserving riparian habitat  
in San Joaquin County -

The Waldo Holt San Joaquin Wildlife Conservancy will hold its 3rd annual music festival Saturday, June 5, from noon-6 pm at 3536 Rainier Avenue, across from the Stockton Country Club. Enjoy your favorite musicians, meet your friends, bid in the auction, have some great food and help save our wildlife. Musicians Dirk Hamilton, Dave Halford, Water Bros. and Snap Jackson & The Knock on Wood Players will perform! Tickets are \$25 and kids are free! See you at Waldofest!

