

connections

PRICELESS

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SAVE THE DATES

SUN, FEB 28
PJN ANNUAL MEETING

SUN, MARCH 21
PEACE MARCH (TBA)

SUN, APRIL 18
EARTH DAY FESTIVAL IN
VICTORY PARK, STOCKTON

SUN, MAY 2
EARTH DAY IN UTICA PARK,
ANGELS CAMP

Top 10 reasons nukes won't save climate

Michael Marriotte

Despite the nuclear industry's lavishly-funded propaganda, which claims that nuclear power is at least a partial solution to the climate crisis, there are plenty of reasons why nuclear power cannot, should not, and ultimately will not be part of a climate solution.

Anyone seriously concerned about climate change needs to understand that not only would nuclear power not be helpful at addressing the climate crisis, it would be counterproductive.

Cutting to the chase, here are the top 10 reasons nuclear power can't and won't save the climate:

10. Takes too many
9. Too little infrastructure
8. Too little safety
7. Too much waste
6. Too much carbon
5. Too much emissions
4. Not suited for warming climates
3. Too slow
2. Renewables and efficiency are faster, cheaper, safer and cleaner
1. Too expensive

10. Takes Too Many.

50 million Elvis fans couldn't be wrong, nor can the unanimous conclusions of studies by entities like MIT and the Commission on Energy Policy, which agree that it would take 1500–2,000 new nuclear reactors or more by mid-century, 300–400 in the U.S. alone, to make any kind of meaningful reduction in carbon emissions.

Globally, that's about one new reactor per week from now til mid-century. For the U.S. alone, that would be nearly a reactor a month. Can't be done.

First, let's look at the U.S. There are no reactors currently under construction. At best (for the industry), some utility might get a license by 2012. Then add another 6-8-10 years for construction. So we're already that far behind

schedule, which means a reactor would have to be built every 2–3 weeks in the U.S. from about 2018–2020 until mid-century. Not likely.

Even then, the first 100 or so reactors would only replace the existing 104 reactors which will be retiring between 2020 and 2050, and which will virtually all be retired by then. Net carbon reductions=0.

The same holds true internationally. There is no chance 1500 or more new reactors will or can be built by mid-century, and the first 440 would only go to replacing the power from the existing 440. Why can't they be built so fast? Because right now, there is little global infrastructure to support building new reactors.

9. Too Little Infrastructure.

In fact, the current global capability is 8 reactors per year—which is far more than are actually being built. Only Japan Steel Works can forge the enormous reactor pressure vessels needed.

So, let's see, 8 reactors per year times 40 years equals 320 reactors. We'll even add in a few Russian and a couple dozen Chinese reactors. Not even close to a meaningful reduction in carbon.

Sure, more large-scale forging facilities could be built over the coming decades, but who's going to put up that kind of money—these factories are nearly as expensive as a reactor itself—without firm commitments for purchases for more than a handful of reactors? So far, those don't exist.

The infrastructure that is lacking extends far beyond the ability to forge reactor pressure vessels. There is also a shortage of skilled operators, welders, machinists and others necessary to actually build and run a reactor.

8. Too Little Safety.

The reactors being proposed for the U.S. right now, as well as for the rest of the world, are

Don't Miss It—Feb 28th!

Come to the PJN Annual Meeting



We cordially invite all of our friends, old and new, to the PJN Annual Meeting, Sunday, February 28, starting at 4 pm at the Peace and Justice Center at 231 Bedford Road, just behind the flower shop on the Miracle Mile.

The Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin County has been providing a voice for the San Joaquin County progressive community for more than 20 years. We help bring you *Connections*, the Peaceful Holiday Fair, Stockton's Earth Day Festival, film and lecture series, television programs, and other events. We are currently working to start up a community access radio station for the Stockton area.

Peace and justice means peace in the world, nation, city and community—demonstrated through support of social and legal justice, humans rights and dignity, access to quality health care and education, a clean and sustainable environment, protecting the rights of our plant and animal neighbors, and improvement of the quality of all life—every single day.

The Annual Meeting will include a potluck dinner, so bring a salad, soup, main course or dessert...or just bring yourself—there will plenty of great food for all.

We look forward to sharing what we have been up to the last year and what we plan for 2010. We also want hear about your plans and how we can better serve the progressive community going forward with a common goal of providing information, education, and action for the good of our friends and neighbors.

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

—Christie Kelly, PJN Board Chair

merely slight modifications to the same type of nuclear reactors that operate now across the world.

You've heard about "inherently safe" or "Generation IV" reactor designs? Not a single reactor being seriously proposed anywhere in the world even claims to be an "inherently safe" design—not that any such thing exists anyway. Nor are "Generation IV" designs even within a decade of commercial deployment.

The reality is that reactor design—at least for those planned by nuclear utilities—has progressed remarkably little since the 1960s. The basic concept—Pressurized Water Reactor or Boiling Water Reactor—is the same, and so is the same reliance on too many

valves, pumps, and other types of plumbing that can break. But unlike in your home, where you may lose a sink or toilet, when the plumbing in a nuclear reactor breaks, you can lose your entire state.

7. Too Much Waste.

No country in the world yet has a permanent solution for radioactive waste (Sweden only has a proposal, which is being fought by environmentalists who think—rightly—that it is just plain stupid to dump waste where it can leak into the North Sea).

President Obama has essentially ended the proposed Yucca Mountain radioactive waste dump

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Time to use the tools we have

Bruce Giudici

Careening, slipping, stumbling: it's what leaders do today. Eager to please whomever will ensure re-election, leadership sells itself—often. With the Supreme Court decision—ensured by Bush appointees—to give unfettered voice to corporations, our body politic is to become fatally addicted to the demon drug of money. Voters are frustrated, yet believe there is no opposition to turn to. Look at the teabagger movement—spasms of concern, presented badly, on a racist and regressive menu. Still, a strong distrust of the powerful is shared

among many in this country. How can we turn unprecedented frustration into constructive action? The effort needs fresh thinking.

Even with accelerated media concentration, strategies to bypass traditional mainstream outlets are well-developed: witness the election of President Obama. Today, we have information unimaginable a decade ago, as well as the tools to organize in large numbers. For its part, the Peace & Justice Network stands ready to facilitate education... and we invite you to attend our annual meeting on February 28 to chart the course. After all,

we have a generation and a half raised to worship markets and distrust government: today's 30 year-old was born when Reagan was first elected. That's a lot of indoctrination to overcome.

As the story goes in Hollywood, the small rebel force finds the chink in Goliath's armor—and miraculously emerges victorious. In these films, extraordinary efforts are made by the resistance—sacrifices above and beyond the day-to-day. This isn't the type of work that expects a paycheck; success is the only reward. Going forward, we must make real sacrifices; we must find allies and work together. In times of great

Bruce Giudici, editor



stress and distress, as the climate changes—as we become more militarized—as we slip further into debt—as we reward the rich, while punishing the poor—we must keep our eye on the prize of environmental sustainability, peaceful co-existence, and economic egalitarianism. As we all know, to harvest peace—we must sow justice. Spring is coming...let's live for something.



Feedback

World needs more like Art Raab

Dear Friends,

The memorial service for Art Raab was very moving. A leader of the Muslim community spoke from the audience regarding Art's witness against nuclear proliferation at Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab and his unwavering support for the rights of all religions

to worship. Representatives from various religious denominations spoke, and the program overall exemplified Art's life: "to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). A woman representing the United Farm workers spoke and Art's favorite hymns were sung beautifully by the church choir. The biblical offerings, the prayers and remembrances all spoke to Art and his depth of social conviction.

Reid Cerney and Art Raab were the conscience of Lodi. Ann Cerney and Art's daughter Mary and others will continue the Sunday Peace Vigil at City Hall. Hopefully more will join us as more than ever we need a world without war.

As Art's sign said, "Anything war can do, Peace can do better!"

We need to come to the realization that we need peace and peacemakers, the world does not have to come to an end, but we must have truth, justice and equality. Underdeveloped countries of the third world can not survive by being exploited and coerced. We can not control them militarily, bombing and torture is not peacemaking. It requires cooperation.

*Ellen Lyons
Lodi, CA*

Donate to SJ mural, get a free Downtowner ad

Editor,

I am raising the remaining funds needed (\$800) to pay expenses for the San Joaquin Street Mural. The Downtown Stockton Alliance will give an ad in the Downtowner to anyone who contributes \$50 to the mural. Please let me know if this is something you would like to do. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Joy Neas, San Joaquin Street Mural Project Coordinator
frankneas@mindspring.com*

Connections

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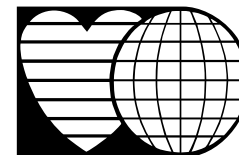
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"The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared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

April 18th
EarthDay
Victory Park

Farmers Market Family Fun Bike Ride

Transportation Provided Live Entertainment

Educational Opportunities University of the Pacific Parking

Be a Breath of Fresh AIR in
YOUR Community
www.livegreensanjoaquin.org

Facing up to climate change: Part II

No Impact Man

The story started in 2006, when Colin Beavan, along with his wife and baby girl, spent a year trying to live a no-impact lifestyle in the middle of New York City (on the 9th floor no less). That meant “no trash, no toxins in the water, no elevators, no subways, no products in packaging, no air-conditioning, no television, no toilet paper...”

Their trials and tribulations, and insights, are captured in a book and movie, both entitled *No Impact Man*.

The No Impact Project is an amazing story that has exploded into a wealth of resources including the book and film, a blog, school curricula, the No Impact Experiment (see article at right), and a community of people searching for happier, more eco-friendly lives.

I won't give away the story's details (since I've just started the book) but the bottom line is that we can live happier lives by making lifestyle changes that are good for ourselves, our relationships, and the earth.

Spend some time on the No Impact Project website and explore the ideas, tips, and discussions (for example, under Colin's How-To's there is a tip on how to “Negotiate a marital eco-fight”), and all the other valuable resources. Go to <http://noimpactproject.org/>.

Colin Beavan's top 10 eco-lifestyle changes (abridged):

- 1. Stop eating beef.** Worldwide, beef production contributes more to climate change than the entire transportation sector. Plus, a diet with no/less beef is better for you.
- 2. Give up bottled water.** The production of plastic water bottles, together with the privatization of our drinking water, is an environmental and social catastrophe. Bottled water costs more per gallon than gasoline.
- 3. Observe an eco-sabbath.** For one day or even hour a week, don't buy anything, don't use any machines, don't answer your phone...don't use any resources. For this period, give yourself and the planet a break. Keep your regular eco-sabbath for a month.
- 4. Tithe a fixed percentage of your income.** Currently, many of our health and welfare services are tied to consumer spending which, in turn, depends on resource use. But the idea of buying stuff to help people is crazy, especially when you consider that our consumption is harming the habitat that we depend on for our health, happiness and security. If you want to help, don't go shopping. Just help.
- 5. Get there under your own steam.** Commit to getting around by bike or foot a certain number of days a month. Not only does this mean using fewer fossil fuels and

creating less greenhouse gasses, it means you'll get good, healthy exercise.

6. Commit to not wasting. Wasting resources costs the planet and your wallet. Don't overheat or overcool your home. Let your clothes hang dry instead of using the dryer. Take half the trips but stay twice as long. Repair instead of rebuy.

7. Build a community. Play charades. Have dinners with friends. Sing together. Let's relearn to joke and play in ways that cost nothing to our pocketbooks or planet.

8. Take your principles to work. The old adage “the cost of doing business” can no longer hold true. We must care about the world at work as much as we do at home. A company CEO can make a gigantic difference through their business, and so can the rest of us.

9. Dedicate a day's worth of TV viewing to eco-service each week. The average American watches four and a half hours of TV a day. Take one day off each week and join with others to improve our planet. Voluntary eco-service is a great way to find community who support your values.

10. Believe with all your heart that how you live your life makes a difference to all of us. We are all interconnected. We make a difference to each other on many levels. Let's act as though it is so.



Join me in a one-week carbon cleanse April 18

This month I'd like to invite everyone to join me in the No Impact Experiment, which begins on April 18. People from all over the world will participate in this one-week “carbon cleanse” to “test whether the modern conveniences you take for granted are actually making you happier or just eating away at your time and money.”

Register for the No Impact Experiment at <http://noimpactproject.org/experiment/>. There you can read the FAQs, download the how-to manual (don't print it), and decide whether to take the challenge. Let's do it together!

—Laurie

Here's Lennon, who took a two-week bike trip this summer and found that low-carbon travel makes him happier and healthier.



Nukes won't save climate (cont. from page 1)

in Nevada, which would basically be a sieve allowing radiation to escape for millions of years. Indeed, by the end of the Yucca Mountain project, even Bush's Department of Energy had to admit that the steel casks that would hold the waste would provide 99+% of the protection to the public—Yucca Mountain itself would provide virtually no protection. In that case, we could just pile up the steel casks on the White House lawn, no problem.

If we actually embarked on the kind of nuclear construction program needed to address climate change, 3–400 new reactors in the US and 1500–2000 worldwide, we'd need to come up with a new Yucca Mountain every five years or so. Since we can't find even one, odds are we won't come up with one every five years.

The nuclear industry's apparent answer to the waste problem is reprocessing, an expensive, dirty and dangerous technology that failed miserably in the U.S. in the 1960s, at West Valley, NY. The bill to clean up the mess from that experiment 40 years ago is now estimated at \$10 billion.

France's reprocessing facility

on the Normandy coast releases so much radiation into the Atlantic that most neighboring countries have asked France to end its reprocessing program. About 10 years ago, the Normandy beaches were closed during the summer season because of high radiation levels along the coast—Greenpeace measured levels in the water at some 17 million times above background.

6. Too Much Carbon.

The nuclear industry loves to tell you that nuclear power is carbon-free. Well, except when it's not. And it isn't.

It's true that nuclear reactors themselves emit only small amounts of carbon (although the carbon they do emit is radioactive). But the nuclear fuel chain necessary to supply the reactors with fuel is not nearly so carbon-friendly. In fact, the mining, milling, processing, enrichment, and fuel fabrication of uranium, not to mention the construction of enormous reactors made of concrete, steel, and the millions of gallons of gasoline involved, leaves a fairly significant carbon footprint.

(continued on page 4)

Nukes won't save climate *(continued from page 3)*

Exactly how large that footprint is remains a matter of debate. Probably the best study done on the issue concludes that while nuclear power is indeed a low-carbon energy source, its carbon footprint is about three times the size of wind power, and much higher than the low-hanging fruit of energy efficiency.

5. Too Much Emissions.

The nuclear industry likes to talk about "emissions-free" nuclear power. Wrong! Ding! Not Even Close! In fact, every nuclear reactor—and every nuclear facility of any kind—emits radioactive elements into our air and water on a daily basis, even when everything goes right.

When things go wrong, the emissions go up, as they have with radioactive tritium leaks at numerous reactors over the last several years, or as they did, for example, at the Pilgrim reactor in the 1970s, which the Massachusetts Department of Public Health concluded caused cancers among the local population.

For the past several decades, the National Academy of Sciences has done studies trying to determine exactly how dangerous exposure to radiation is. In 2006 they concluded that there is no safe level of radiation exposure.

4. Not Suited for Warming Climates.

Reactors require large amounts of water for cooling. Reactors situated on rivers or lakes may not be able to obtain sufficient cold water to allow adequate cooling.

During the European heat wave of 2005, which killed thousands of people, most French reactors—those using rivers as their water source—were forced to close at the exact time their electricity was most needed to power air conditioning and electric fans.

As far back as 1988, the Byron reactors in Illinois were forced to close because of high water temperatures. Last year, Browns Ferry-1 in Alabama had to close for similar reasons.

As climate change heats our water, nuclear power stations will close more and more frequently. In addition, more water fights among jurisdictions can be expected in coming years. The two largest users of water in the U.S. are agriculture and electricity production; nuclear uses more water per megawatt of power produced than any other

electricity source.

Meanwhile, reactors situated on oceans may find themselves under water, as climate change accelerates sea level rise.

3. Too Slow.

Climate scientists agree that we have a short time—maybe 10 years or so—to take real steps to reduce our carbon emissions. That means taking the most effective, lowest-cost measures as soon as possible.

Yet, as noted above, at most there would be a small handful of new reactors in the U.S. within 10 years, and it's just as likely there will be none. Even the industry's Nuclear Energy Institute predicts only about 4 new reactors in the US by 2020. Neither scenario does anything for climate change.

In contrast, energy efficiency measures can be implemented very quickly; average-sized wind farms take only a year or two to build compared to 10 years or so for reactors; solar photovoltaics can be installed as fast as the panels can be manufactured.

Nuclear power is merely masquerading as a climate solution; it has no real potential to mitigate our climate problem in the time frame needed.

2. Renewables and Efficiency are Faster, Cheaper, Cleaner and Safer.

Energy efficiency is the low-hanging fruit. The US is half as efficient as the European Union, which is half as efficient as Japan. We have a long way to go. Fortunately, most energy innovation is on the efficiency side, and it's making an impact.

Electricity demand has fallen in the last two years. Why? Federal and state energy efficiency programs, increased energy efficiency of appliances, and increased awareness that electricity use can be cut without sacrificing comfort or convenience.

In short, energy efficiency programs are beginning to work. And what that means for a massively-large new reactor proposed for Maryland is that, if built, it likely won't have a market for its expensive electricity.

And that's before renewables enter the equation. 20–30 years ago, renewables were expensive, intermittent, and reliant on government handouts. Now,

they are reliable, cheaper than nuclear power, and being installed increasingly across the globe.

In 2008, for example, 27,000 Megawatts of new wind power was installed worldwide, or the equivalent of about 27 large nuclear reactors.

Nuclear's new installation in 2008? A big fat Zero. By the way, 8,000 of those wind Megawatts were installed in the US, meaning that the US has now surpassed Germany as the nation with the most wind power.

The Department of the Interior issued a report that said offshore wind potential, just off the mid- and north-Atlantic coast of the US, could supply 25% of the entire electricity needs of the US. A Department of Energy report said wind power in South Dakota alone could supply 100% of our needs. You quickly get an idea of the potential of wind power.

How about solar power? The former chief of the TVA says we could power the entire US on just 7% of the available above-ground potential of solar photovoltaics. Above-ground means rooftops and parking lots. Think of how much space is used by parking lots, and how much of it could have solar panels above—keeping cars cool and generating electricity (and, by the way, a great source of power for plug-in vehicles). The US Navy generates 750KW of electricity from solar photovoltaics on just part of a San Diego parking lot.

But solar power is not limited to photovoltaics. Solar thermal power provides "baseload" power for electricity generation. Spain is building 4300 Megawatts—about 4 large nuclear reactors worth—of solar thermal electricity.

It's expensive—about \$5,200/kw installed. Well, that would be expensive for wind or natural gas. It's actually about \$2,000/kw cheaper than new nuclear....

Which leads us into the foremost of the top 10 reasons nuclear can't save climate...

1. Too Expensive.

Nuclear power is now so expensive that if we tried to use it as a climate mitigation strategy, we would blow through our resources and be left with no options whatsoever.

Even back in early 2007, when banks would give money for a mortgage to anyone who

could walk through the door, the large investment banks said they would not loan money for new nuclear reactors unless taxpayers guaranteed the loans.

Congress and the Bush administration, of course, bought into that. In the 2005 Energy Policy Act they approved the concept of taxpayer loan guarantees for new reactors. In December 2007, after environmentalists succeeded in knocking down the \$50 billion loan guarantee request to \$18.5 billion, Congress funded the program.

But \$18.5 billion doesn't buy what it used to—at least when it comes to nuclear reactors. New reactor costs are in the realm of \$7,000–\$7,500/kw, or about \$2,000 more per kilowatt than it costs to build new solar thermal plants; 2–3 times the cost of new wind power, and about 7 times the cost of energy efficiency measures. A recent study found that the U.S. would save \$1.9 to \$4 TRILLION over the lifetime of the plants by using renewables and efficiency over building 100 new reactors. That's serious money.

The Future.

What we need is electricity when we need it. How we get that electricity—well, none of our appliances cares in the least.

The future, and it is moving here faster than many realize, is smaller-scale generation—distributed generation—with smart grids that help regulate electricity use and switch back and forth between solar and wind, depending on which is providing power at any given time (and nearly always either solar or wind is producing power). Wotj a little natural gas for the rare times that both are down. Add to those resources like geothermal in some areas, and further on, electricity produced by more exotic fuels, such as algae.

Venice, Italy is building such a plant now that will ultimately provide half their region's electrical needs. In northern Germany you'll see that just about every small city has about 5–9 windmills. Combine that with solar photovoltaics, and these towns are just about self-sufficient in electricity.

The only areas that need extra power are the large cities. That's where larger wind farms and solar thermal power comes in. That's true in Germany, and what is most striking about Germany—which is the most solar-powered nation on Earth—is that its solar potential

If reducing carbon emissions is our goal, then we need to keep nuclear power out of the climate bill.

is the same as that of Alaska. Germany has among the lowest solar resources on the planet, and yet it receives a greater portion of its electricity from solar than any other country.

The US could do far, far better. Some will argue that solar power in Germany is heavily subsidized, and that has been true. On the other hand, Germany was trying to jumpstart an industry, and has done so successfully, while the nuclear industry already has existed for more than 50 years, and still can't bring its costs down to a manageable level.

And the potential for wind power and solar power, not to mention energy efficiency, in the US is so great, that every dollar we spend on nuclear power is counterproductive at reducing carbon emissions. That's because the emissions reductions are so much greater with renewable and efficiency that the dollar spent on nukes is wasted. It gets us nowhere.

The choice is not nuclear vs coal. Fortunately, our choices are much better than that. We don't want or need coal and its carbon emissions and mountain top removal. Likewise, we don't need nuclear meltdowns or radioactive waste, or to live in fear of terrorists targeting nuclear power plants. We just need electricity. And that we can provide.

If reducing carbon emissions is our goal—and it should be—then we need to keep nuclear power out of the climate bill.

These are only the top 10 reasons to shun nuclear power; we didn't even get into many other issues like nuclear proliferation, security from terrorist attack, the health effects to miners and environmental destruction caused by uranium mining, and so forth.

Michael Marriotte is Executive Director of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) at <http://www.nirs.org>.

—abridged from NIRS paper at <http://www.nirs.org/climate/background/top10reasonsnukeswontsaveclimate.pdf>

Health care spending skyrockets...again

Grace Huang

In 2009, health care spending grew by 5.7 percent, now reaching \$2.5 trillion. It is the largest increase since the federal government began tracking these figures in 1960, according to a report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Health care costs also made up 17.3 percent of the US's gross domestic product (GDP), which was 1.1 percent higher than in 2008. CMS's 2009-2019 projections indicate that health expenditures will continue to grow "increasingly faster," at an annual rate of 6.1 percent—1.7 percentage points faster than annual GDP growth—and climb to \$4.5 trillion. Without the passage of a health care reform bill, currently stalled in the House, public spending will comprise more than 50 percent of all national health expenditures by 2012.

The costs grew at a rate of 8.7 percent in 2009, higher than the 3 percent increase in private spending, which has a slower growth rate due to the economic downturn. CMS projected that public spending will continue to increase at a higher rate than private spending over the next nine years.

Per capita health care spending was \$8,046 in 2009, and is expected to increase to \$13,387 by 2019.

According to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the US spent about \$7,290 per person in 2007, by far the highest amount for any of the developed countries observed. Switzerland came in second at \$4,417 per person. Canada spent \$3,895, while the UK, which spent the average amount for developed countries in the OECD data, spent \$2,986.

The report might galvanize efforts to pass health care reform legislation, which have been floundering lately. The Obama administration faces tough opposition in the House and the Senate, and the president

announced in his State of the Union address that jobs would be his main priority. Polls also show that a majority of Americans disapprove of the way health care reform has been handled.

On Thursday at a Democratic Party fundraising event, President Obama said that health care reform was the "single best way" to reduce the deficit, a fact that he added has raised no argument.

"Nobody can dispute the fact that if we don't tackle surging health care costs, then we can't control our budget," he said.

The report lists prices and utilization (both the volume and intensity of services) as the two primary drivers of growth in overall health care spending, with smaller effects from population growth and the age-sex mix.

The two main areas of federal spending are Medicare and Medicaid. Last year, Medicare costs rose by 8.9 percent as more baby boomers reached the age to qualify for its benefits. Though the growth will slow in 2010 due to mandated reductions in physician payments, Medicare will continue to grow as more individuals become eligible for it.

Meanwhile, the rise in Medicaid spending, the largest since 2002, was "largely a result of rising unemployment." CMS expects the costs of both to increase continuously as eligibility rises and the economic downturn continues, and predicts an annual increase of 7.1 percent in federal spending from 2009 to 2019.

The growth of private health insurance spending was slower, at 3.3 percent, while out-of-pocket payments grew by 2.1 percent. The annual growth prediction for private spending was 5.2 percent. The report cited "private insurance enrollment that is expected to have declined 1.2 percent" and increasing unemployment as factors in this decline, which occurred despite the federal subsidies granted by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (AARA) of 2009.

Spending on actual health services and supplies, including

hospital care, physician and clinical services, prescription drugs and other medical products, increased by 5.7 percent in 2009. Annual growth rates from 2009 to 2019 are projected at 6.1 percent.

The CMS report states that no "estimated impacts of any health care reform proposals" are included as a factor in its projections.

At the same fundraiser on Thursday, President Obama said "we should take our time" in passing a final health care bill so that he could hear ideas from the Republicans, sit down with both parties and health care experts and move forward on a vote.

However, he added, the key is to "not let the moment slip away."

Republicans have largely opposed the health care bill, with some, like House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio), calling it a "government takeover" of health care that will raise costs. They have also argued that the Democrats have not invited them to help draft the legislation.

Since Republican Sen. Scott Brown won the Massachusetts Senate race, Democrats are divided over what to do about the health care bill, as the Republicans now have enough members to filibuster and block the vote. Additionally, many prefer to focus on stressing job growth.

If the bill doesn't pass through Congress, President Obama warned that lawmakers in both parties would have to explain to their voters why plans for more efficient health care and cheaper health insurance fell apart.

"There will be elections coming up," he said, referring to Congressional elections in November. "Then the American people can make a judgment as to whether this Congress has done the right thing for them or not."

Grace Huang is an intern at Truthout.

*Source: truthout | Report 1/7/10
www.truthout.org*

A search for victims

Stanley G. Thomas

45,000 uninsured Americans (the equivalent of fifteen 9/11s) die prematurely every year because they lack access to health care. San Joaquin's County's "share" is 75 deaths every year.

Health care is a basic human right and not a commodity. Has our unjust, market-based, private for-profit health insurance industry killed one of your loved ones or a good friend? The Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin County and its free (but priceless) monthly community newspaper, Connections, wants to learn who you are and to hear your story.

I, Stanley Thomas, am a long-time advocate for Single-Payer health care in California—formerly SB 840 (Kuehl), currently SB 810 (Leno).

When I submit my coupon it will look something like this:

Stanley G. Thomas, 209/464-

3233. The deceased, "Teyl," died April 2004 of a cancerous abdominal tumor. Teyl was my next-door neighbor.

...and the rest of Teyl's story

Teyl worked as a lighting and sound technician for rock concerts. He had an accident that left him living on his (meager) disability. He developed a painful abdominal medical problem for which he went to St. Joseph's Hospital for help. They were more interested in getting this semi-indigent person out of their hair than they were in giving him the medical care he needed. Because of the significant amount of fluid they were extracting from his abdomen, they originally misdiagnosed him with cirrhosis of the liver (Teyl did not drink). They eventually dumped Teyl off on a hospital in San Francisco where he died.

Uninsured Die Project

Please cut out this coupon and mail it to:

Peace and Justice Network
Uninsured Die Project
P.O. Box 4123
Stockton, CA 95204

Name _____

Phone No. _____

Deceased's Name _____

Date of Death _____

Cause of Death _____

Relationship _____

Additional Information (Optional):

Blue Cross massive rate hike and single payer

Jason Leopold

The Obama administration is demanding that California's largest for-profit health insurer, Anthem Blue Cross, justify a planned 39 percent rate increase for some of its 800,000 customers even though the firm's parent company saw its profits soar last year.

"These extraordinary increases are up to 15 times faster than inflation and threaten to make health care unaffordable for hundreds of thousands of Californians, many of whom are already struggling to make ends meet in a difficult economy," wrote Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in a letter she faxed Monday to Anthem Blue Cross President Leslie Margolin. "Your company's strong financial position makes these rate increases even more difficult to understand. As you know, your parent company, WellPoint Incorporated, has seen its profits soar, earning \$2.7 billion in the last quarter of 2009 alone."

Sebelius added: "I believe Anthem Blue Cross has a responsibility to provide a detailed justification for these rate increases to the public. Additionally, you should make public information on the percent of your individual market premiums that is used for medical care versus the percent that is used for administrative costs.

"Policy holders in the individual market deserve to know if their premium increases would be invested in better medical care or insurance company overhead costs like salaries, profits, and advertising. I am aware that the State of California is investigating this matter, and urge Anthem Blue Cross to cooperate fully. In the meantime, I will be closely monitoring the situation."

WellPoint's profit for all of 2009 was \$4.7 billion, nearly twice as much as the company earned the year before. Since 2004, the company has generated \$16.7 billion in profits. The corporation's top five executives received more than \$20 million in compensation in 2008.

In a statement, Anthem Blue Cross said:

Anthem Blue Cross in California has received the letter from Secretary Sebelius. We will reply to her promptly. It is important to note that individual medical insurance premiums do not reflect an individual member's personal claims experience. Therefore, as medical costs increase across our member population, premium increases to the entire membership pool result. Unfortunately, in the weak economy many people who do not have health conditions are foregoing buying insurance. This leaves fewer people, often with significantly greater medical needs, in the insured pool. We regret the impact this has on our members. It highlights, why we need sustainable health care reform to manage the steadily rising costs of hospitals, drugs and doctors. As such, it is important to go back to the beginning and get health care reform done right. At the same time, we are engaging with a broad range of key stakeholders across California to discuss the state's individual insurance market and share ideas on how we can collectively partner on meaningful change.

Last week, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Anthem Blue Cross started "telling many of its approximately 800,000 customers who buy individual coverage—people not covered by group rates—that its prices will go up March 1 and may be adjusted 'more frequently' than its typical yearly increases."

The company declined to disclose how many of its customers will be affected by the rate increase.

California Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner, responded to the *Los Angeles Times* report by announcing that he would hire an "outside actuary" to determine if the rate hikes were excessive and if Anthem Blue Cross was spending 70 cents of every dollar on premium medical care as required by state law. "If we find that their rates are excessive, I will use the full power of my office to bring these rates down," Poizner said.

Poizner, a Republican gubernatorial candidate, called on Anthem Blue Cross to suspend the rate hikes until May 1, pending the

results of the independent review. "At my direction, the Department is retaining an independent actuary to analyze Anthem's proposed rate increases," Poizner said in a letter he sent Monday to Angela F. Braly, president and chief executive of Anthem's parent company, WellPoint, Inc., and Larry C. Glasscock, WellPoint's chairman.

"As a public benefit and to ensure that policyholders are not forced into financial hardship as a result of Anthem's proposed rate increases," he added. "I am asking that Anthem agree to postpone those rate increases until the Department's independent actuary completes his review." Poizner asked Braly and Glasscock to respond to his request by February 15. A spokesperson for WellPoint was unavailable for immediate comment.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that unlike home and automobile insurers, "California insurers can legally raise rates for policyholders as much as and whenever they want. Regulators technically oversee the increases, but they have no power to control rates."

The *Chronicle* added: The most recent effort to require state regulators to approve health insurance rate increases, a bill by Assemblyman Dave Jones, D-Sacramento, failed to pass the Assembly Health Committee in April.

In an interview on Sunday with CBS News anchor Katie Couric, President Obama said the rate increase underscores the urgency of passing a health care reform bill. "That's a portrait of the future if we don't do something now," Obama said. "It's going to keep on beating down families, small businesses, large businesses; it's going to be a huge drain on the economy."

But the bill in its current form, which Obama described as "pretty centrist" during an appearance two weeks ago at the House Republican Conference in Baltimore, does not include a government-run plan to compete with private insurers such as Anthem Blue Cross.

Single-payer legislation*

Recognizing the shortfall in

the national plan, the California Senate two weeks ago passed a measure along party lines to create a \$200 billion state-run, single-payer health care system.

The legislation, which was sent to the state Assembly for consideration, calls for the creation of the California Health System, which would be financed by using a combination of state and federal funds that California already earmarks for health care along with a payroll tax, the amount of which would be decided later.

The Medicare-for-all system would be extended to all California residents and individuals would have the opportunity to purchase private insurance to cover specific types of services not included in the government-run plan.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), closely mirrors what Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) had envisioned when he introduced an amendment last summer that would have allowed individual states to create a single-payer system.

Kucinich's amendment, however, was quietly stripped from the House version of a health care bill on orders from the White House after the legislation was unveiled last winter. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said he will veto the bill if it reaches his desk, just as he has done with two other similar single-payer initiatives.

Schwarzenegger's spokeswoman, Rachel Arrezola, claims budget cuts and the state's \$20 billion deficit are the primary reasons the governor intends to veto the bill. "Any elected official who thinks it's a good idea to strap the state with tens of billions of dollars from a government-run health care system is clearly not in touch with what voters need and deserve," Arrezola said. But Leno noted that the plan "creates no new spending, and in fact, studies show that the state would save \$8 billion in the first year under this single-payer health care plan."

National Nurses United (NNU), the nation's largest union representing registered nurses, blasted the rate increase while urging lawmakers to support the Leno's legislation.

"Anthem's disgraceful behavior may be particularly offensive, but it is not out of character for an industry that engages systemically in price gouging and denial of care," said NNU co-president Deborah Burger, a registered nurse. "Condemnation is well deserved, but not enough. We need stronger medicine to cure what ails our healthcare system by removing the ability of insurance companies to indiscriminately price people out of access to care, and routinely deny claims they don't want to pay.

"The best way to achieve that goal would be expanding Medicare to cover everyone, which would retain our private delivery system, more effectively control healthcare costs, guarantee choice and access to care for everyone, and put patients, their families, and their doctors in charge of their care, not insurance bureaucrats."

NNU noted that its own independent research found that Anthem Blue Cross was one of six major California insurance companies that denied more than one-fifth of all insurance claims.

"For the first nine months of 2009, Anthem's denial rate was 27 percent," NNU said in a statement Tuesday. "One such patient is Kim Kutcher of Dana Point, California. In 2008, six days before Kutcher was scheduled to have special back surgery, Anthem Blue Cross denied authorization for the procedure as 'investigational' even though the lumbar artificial disc she was to receive had FDA approval. At the time of denial, which she calls 'insurance hell,' Kutcher had 'already gone through pre-op testing, donated a unit of blood, had appointments with four physicians.' Kutcher paid \$60,000 out of pocket for the operation and is still fighting Blue Cross."

Jason Leopold is the Deputy Managing Editor at Truthout. He is the author of the *Los Angeles Times* bestseller, *News Junkie*, a memoir. Visit www.newsjunkiebook.com <http://processmediainc.com/press/mini_sites/news_junkie/> for a preview.

Source: *truthout* Report 2/8/10 www.truthout.org

Iran: sanctions the wrong move

The news this week from Iran should persuade Congress to rethink recent legislation that would mandate a gasoline embargo of that country. Blocking Iran's gasoline imports, which it depends on to meet 40% of its needs, would impose hardship on ordinary Iranians and lend credence to the claim that the United States is hostile to the people of Iran.

These sanctions also make no sense when a persistent Iranian reform movement struggles now to win popular support and when Iran's government is debating whether to reform and whether to engage with the United States. In this debate, alleged U.S. hostility is the best argument of Iran's hardliners against both reform and engagement.

Yet, we at FCNL are not optimistic that Congress will make the right move. This month, House and Senate negotiators will discuss how to bring the gasoline embargo legislation to a final vote in both

chambers. Not a single senator was willing to publically oppose the legislation when it came to the Senate floor. Urge your senators to state publically that they now see that sanctions are a mistake.

The Obama administration, the U.S. business community, many U.S. allies, and many knowledgeable experts on Iran agree that imposing U.S. gasoline sanctions on Iran would be a mistake, would be ineffective, and would alienate our allies.

Earlier this week President Obama announced that the United States is working for new, multilateral sanctions on Iran that would not harm the Iranian people but that would focus on groups involved in Iran's nuclear program and on violators of human rights. He also announced narrowly focused U.S. sanctions on the leadership of the Revolutionary Guard.

No new sanctions would be the smart U.S. strategy. Focused

multilateral sanctions are nonetheless far preferable to the indiscriminate, punitive measure that Congress is preparing to send to the president.

Equally important, Congress and the administration need to speak out to make clear that the path to a negotiated agreement with Iran on its nuclear program, as well as U.S.-Iranian cooperation on Iraq, Afghanistan, and other issues, remains open. Engagement through diplomacy takes time and patience.

ACTION: Urge your senators to state publicly that they now see petroleum sanctions as a mistake and would rather support narrow, United Nations sanctions focused on the revolutionary guard and individuals accused of violating human rights. And ask three friends to do the same.

Source: FCNL action alert, 2/12/10. Friends Committee on National Legislation, 245 2nd St NE Washington, DC 20002 800-630-1330

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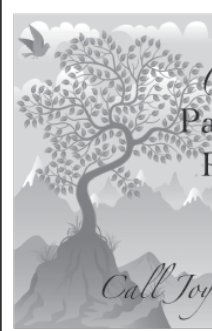
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AFGHANISTAN: MORE TROOPS WON'T BRING MORE PEACE

President Obama Is Sending 30,000
More U.S. Troops to Afghanistan

Demand an Exit Strategy

Congress should insist on a
new U.S. policy in Afghanistan

The exit strategy should:

- Begin a withdrawal of U.S. troops;
- Halt offensive operations against the Taliban and focus on political reconciliation among all Afghan groups;
- Engage Afghanistan's neighbors, including Iran and Pakistan, to promote reconciliation and regional security;
- Channel U.S. development aid through Afghan and multilateral organizations.

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—Gen. Barry McCaffrey

Friends Committee on National Legislation



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Constitutional amendment to overturn campaign finance ruling



Kyle Berlin

Two lawmakers introduced a bill this week aimed at adding an amendment to the US Constitution, which would allow Congress and the states to regulate political expenditures by corporations.

The amendment bill is in response to a recent landmark Supreme Court ruling, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which struck down several longstanding prohibitions on corporate political contributions, saying legislative measures to control such spending infringed upon corporate First Amendment free speech rights.

"The ruling reached by the Roberts' Court overturned decades of legal precedent by allowing

corporations unfettered spending in our political campaigns," said Rep. Donna Edwards (D-Maryland), who, along with Rep. John Conyers (D-Michigan), introduced the amendment into the House Judiciary Committee. "Another law will not rectify this disastrous decision. A constitutional amendment is necessary to undo what this court has done."

The text of the first section of the amendment reads: "The sovereign right of the people to govern being essential to a free democracy, Congress and the States may regulate the expenditure of funds for political speech by any corporation, limited liability company, or other corporate entity."

At a Senate Rules Committee hearing Tuesday, Sen. John Kerry (D-Massachusetts) said, "I think we need a constitutional amendment to make it clear once and for all that corporations do not have the same free speech rights as individuals." Sen. Arlen Specter (D-Pennsylvania) has also thrown his weight behind the proposal.

The amendment is being supported by a number of nonprofit organizations dedicated to preserving voting and free speech rights, in an effort to mobilize popular support.

"This movement is an attempt to have the First Amendment restored to its proper purpose," said John Bonifaz, the legal director of Voter Action, one of the organizations behind the initiative. "And that is to

protect people, not corporations."

Bonifaz said that Voter Action and its partners, which have created a web site to push the proposal, are seeking bipartisan support. Republican support would be necessary to make it through the two-thirds vote in Congress and the vote of three-quarters of state legislatures that would be required for the amendment to pass.

"We believe that this is an issue that reaches across party lines, and across political persuasions," Bonifaz said. However, he admitted that the amendment has not been publicly supported by any Republican, though he stressed that the initiative was still in "the early stages."

The announcement comes amid a flurry of legislation designed to

counter the effects of the ruling, which might also allow foreign corporations that are incorporated in the US to spend money on political advertising.

In his State of the Union speech, President Obama took aim at the ruling, which he said "reversed a century of law that I believe will open the floodgates for special interests—including foreign corporations—to spend without limit in our elections."

"I don't think American elections should be bankrolled by America's most powerful interests, or worse, by foreign entities," Obama said. "They should be decided by the American people, and I'd urge Democrats and Republicans to pass a bill that helps correct some of these problems."

Democrats argued that the ruling would allow US subsidiaries of foreign companies and foreign companies incorporated in the US to contribute unlimited amounts of money on political expenditures like advertisements.

Some Republicans, though, have indicated their opposition to further restricting the rights of corporations gained in the ruling, and argued that the ruling does not change US laws that prohibit foreign corporations from contributing directly to political campaigns.

In a speech on the Senate floor, Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) said that President Obama was "completely wrong" in his assessment of the ruling. "Foreign

corporations were prohibited from participating in US elections before the *Citizens United* decision, and they still are," McConnell said.

Both sides agree that much of the conflict stems from the Supreme Court's decision to treat corporations like individuals.

"We've got to make it clear that corporations are not people, and don't have the same free speech rights," Bonifaz said. "Corporations were never intended to be protected by the framers."

Kyle Berlin is an intern for Truthout.

Source: *truthout* | Report 2/4/09 www.truthout.org

10 ways to limit the corporate decision

Fran Korten

The recent Supreme Court decision to allow unlimited corporate spending in politics just may be the straw that breaks the plutocracy's back.

Pro-democracy groups, business leaders, and elected representatives are proposing mechanisms to prevent or counter the millions of dollars that corporations can now draw from their treasuries to push for government action favorable to their bottom line. The outrage ignited by the Court's ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* extends to President Obama, who has promised that repairing the damage will be a priority for his administration.

But what can be done to limit or reverse the effect of the Court's decision? Here are 10 ideas:

1. Amend the U.S. Constitution to declare that corporations are not persons and do not have the rights of human beings. Since the First Amendment case for corporate spending as a free speech right rests on corporations being considered "persons," the proposed amendment would strike at the core of the ruling's justification. The push for the 28th Amendment is coming from

the grassroots, where a prairie fire is catching on from groups such as Public Citizen, Voter Action, and the Campaign to Legalize Democracy.

2. Require shareholders to approve political spending by their corporations. Public Citizen and the Brennan Center for Justice are among the groups advocating this measure, and some members of Congress appear interested. Britain has required such shareholder approval since 2000.

3. Pass the Fair Elections Now Act, which provides federal financing for Congressional elections. This measure has the backing of organizations representing millions of Americans, including Moveon.org, the NAACP, the Service Employees International Union, and the League of Young Voters. Interestingly, the heads of a number of major corporations have also signed on, including those of Ben & Jerry's, Hasbro, Crate & Barrel, and the former head of Delta Airlines.

4. Give qualified candidates equal amounts of free broadcast air time for political messages. This would limit the advantages of paid advertisements in reaching the public through television where

most political spending goes.

5. Ban political advertising by corporations that receive government money, hire lobbyists, or collect most of their revenue abroad. A fear that many observers have noted is that the Court's ruling will allow foreign corporations to influence U.S. elections. According to *The New York Times*, Sen. Charles Schumer (D-New York) and Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Maryland) are exploring this option.

6. Impose a 500 percent excise tax on corporate contributions to political committees and on corporate expenditures on political advocacy campaigns. Representative Alan Grayson (D-Florida) proposes this, calling it "The Business Should Mind Its Own Business Act."

7. Prohibit companies from trading their stock on national exchanges if they make political contributions and expenditures. Another one from Grayson, which he calls "The Public Company Responsibility Act."

8. Require publicly traded companies to disclose in SEC filings money used for the purpose of influencing public opinion, rather than for promoting their products. Grayson calls this "The

Corporate Propaganda Sunshine Act."

9. Require the corporate CEO to appear as sponsor of commercials that his or her company pays for, another possibility from the Schumer-Van Hollen team, according to *The New York Times*.

10. Publicize the reform options, inform the public of who is making contributions to whom, and activate the citizenry. If we are to safeguard our democracy, media must inform and citizens must act.

The measures listed above—and others that seek to reverse the dominance of money in our political system—will not be easy. But grassroots anger at this latest win for corporate power is running high. History shows that when the public is sufficiently aroused, actions that once seemed impossible can, in hindsight, seem inevitable.

Fran Korten wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. Fran is publisher of YES! Magazine.

Source: *Yes! Magazine* 1/25/10 www.yesmagazine.org

Supreme court hands off control of our democracy

Greg Palast

In *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the Supreme Court ruled that corporations should be treated the same as "natural persons", i.e. humans. Well, in that case, expect the Supreme Court to next rule that Wal-Mart can run for President.

The ruling, which junks federal laws that now bar corporations from stuffing campaign coffers, will not, as progressives fear, cause an avalanche of corporate cash into politics. Sadly, that's already happened: we have been snowed under by tens of millions of dollars given through corporate PACs and "bundling" of individual contributions from corporate pay-rollers.

The Court's decision is far, far more dangerous to U.S. democracy. Think: Manchurian candidates.

I'm losing sleep over the millions—or billions—of dollars that could flood into our elections from ARAMCO, the Saudi Oil corporation's U.S. unit; or from the maker of "New Order" fashions, the Chinese People's Liberation Army. Or from Bin Laden Construction corporation. Or Bin Laden Destruction Corporation.

Right now, corporations can give loads of loot through PACs. While this money stinks (Barack Obama took none of it), anyone can go through a PAC's federal disclosure filing and see the name of every individual who put money into it. And every contributor must be a citizen of the USA.

But under today's Supreme Court ruling that corporations can support candidates without limit, there is nothing that stops, say, a Delaware-incorporated handmaiden of the Burmese junta from picking a Congressman or two with a cache of loot masked by a corporate alias.

Candidate Barack Obama was one sharp speaker, but he would not have been heard, and certainly would not have won, without the astonishing outpouring of donations from two million Americans. It was an unprecedented uprising-by-PayPal, overwhelming the old fat-cat sources of funding.

Well, kiss that small-donor

revolution goodbye. Under the Court's new rules, progressive list serves won't stand a chance against the resources of new "citizens" such as CNOOC, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation. Maybe UBS (United Bank of Switzerland), which faces U.S. criminal prosecution and a billion-dollar fine for fraud, might be tempted to invest in a few Senate seats. As would XYZ Corporation, whose owners remain hidden by "street names."

The danger of foreign loot loading into U.S. campaigns, not much noted in the media chat about the *Citizens* case, was the first concern raised by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who asked about opening the door to "mega-corporations" owned by foreign governments. Olson offered Ginsburg a fudge, that Congress might be able to prohibit foreign corporations from making donations, though Olson made clear he thought any such restriction a bad idea.

Tara Malloy, attorney with the Campaign Legal Center of Washington D.C. says corporations will now have more rights than people. Only United States citizens may donate or influence campaigns, but a foreign government can, veiled behind a corporate treasury, dump money into ballot battles.

Malloy also noted that under the law today, human-people, as opposed to corporate-people, may only give \$2,300 to a presidential campaign. But hedge fund billionaires, for example, who typically operate through dozens of corporate vessels, may now give unlimited sums through each of these "unnatural" creatures.

And once the Taliban incorporates in Delaware, they could ante up for the best democracy money can buy.

In July, the Chinese government, in preparation for President Obama's visit, held diplomatic discussions in which they skirted issues of human rights and Tibet. Notably, the Chinese, who hold a \$2 trillion mortgage on our Treasury, raised concerns about the cost of Obama's health care reform bill. Would our nervous Chinese landlords have an interest

in buying the White House for an opponent of government spending such as Gov. Palin? Ya betcha!

The potential for foreign infiltration of what remains of our democracy is an adjunct of the fact that the source and control money from corporate treasuries (unlike registered PACs), is necessarily hidden. Who the heck are the real stockholders? Or as Butch asked Sundance, "Who are these guys?" We'll never know.

Hidden money funding, whether foreign or domestic, is the new venom that the Court has injected into the system by its expansive decision in *Citizens United*.

We've been there. The 1994 election brought Newt Gingrich to power in a GOP takeover of the Congress funded by a very strange source.

Congressional investigators found that in crucial swing races, Democrats had fallen victim to a flood of last-minute attack ads funded by a group called, "Coalition for Our Children's Future." The \$25 million that paid for those ads came, not from concerned parents, but from a corporation called "Triad Inc."

Evidence suggests Triad Inc. was the front for the ultra-right-wing billionaire Koch Brothers and their private petroleum company, Koch Industries. Had the corporate connection been proven, the Kochs and their corporation could have faced indictment under federal election law. As of today, such money-poisoned politicking has become legit.

So it's not just un-Americans we need to fear but the Polluter-Americans, Pharma-Americans, Bank-Americans and Hedge-Americans that could manipulate campaigns while hidden behind corporate veils. And if so, our future elections, while nominally a contest between Republicans and Democrats, may in fact come down to a three-way battle between China, Saudi Arabia and Goldman Sachs.

Greg Palast is the author of The Best Democracy Money Can Buy.

Source: *AlterNet* 1/22/10 <http://www.alternet.org>



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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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Obama: teacher effectiveness?

Stephen Sawchuk

Almost since the day the No Child Left Behind Act became law eight years ago, teacher-quality advocates have complained about the insufficiency of its rules for staffing classrooms with “highly qualified” teachers. Formal qualifications, they pointed out, don’t necessarily make for effective, engaging teachers.

But the focus began to shift when President Barack Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which, in the course of pouring historic levels of new aid into education, also addressed the complex and politically fraught issue of teacher effectiveness.

The result has been a new federal emphasis on teachers’ on-the-job performance as a basis of gauging their capacity, rather the strength of “inputs” such as credentials, subject-matter knowledge, and the route into the profession.

“I think the focus on teacher effectiveness is really huge, and is as big as or bigger than the focus on common standards” in the administration’s push for reform, said Cynthia Brown, the director of education policy at the Center for American Progress, a think tank in Washington founded by John Podesta, former Clinton chief of staff.

Among other things, the economic-stimulus legislation and subsequent guidance from the U.S. Department of Education:

- Requires states to take steps to ensure that highly effective teachers are equitably distributed among schools;
- Requires states to report about the features of local teacher-evaluation systems, as well as the number and percentage of teachers scoring at each performance level on the evaluations;
- Requires districts to report school-level pay expenditures, in what experts view as a precursor to changes in the Title I program to account for differences in teacher pay between wealthier and poorer schools;
- Put \$200 million in one-time funding into the Teacher Incentive Fund, a federal grant program that seeds performance-based systems of teacher and principal compensation; and
- Invested \$100 million in

additional teacher-quality-partnership grants to support better teacher training, including “residency” models that incorporate yearlong student-teaching.

Putting pieces together

The full shape of the Obama administration’s agenda on effective teaching became clear only after the U.S. Department of Education released the guidelines for the stimulus program’s \$4 billion in Race to the Top competitive grants, which will provide grants to states for education improvements.

In what many observers viewed as drawing a line with teachers’ unions, the administration required states applying for Race to the Top grants to incorporate student achievement data into teacher evaluations. In fact, the competition disqualified states that put up barriers between student and teacher data. Unions had lobbied for such barriers in several states.

The debate is far from over. The idea of using student test scores from exams that have widely been

seen as inferior continues to worry many teachers, union leaders, and researchers.

But while the 3.4 million-member National Education Association harbors concerns about the competition’s focus on test scores, its president, Dennis Van Roekel, praises the Obama administration for addressing the teaching profession holistically, from preparation through induction, evaluation, and practice. And it has done so with a mind to collaboration between unions and administrators, he added.

“We can’t just piecemeal this—we have to look at this whole system,” Mr. Van Roekel said. “At the federal level, there is more attention paid to the whole thing than ever before.”

“And it’s about collaboration and not imposing things on teachers,” he said. “If you can’t develop [teacher-effectiveness policies] with management, employees, and the school board, it won’t work.”

Source: *Education Week* January 2010
<http://www.edweek.org>

CA budget cuts hit needy: time to raise taxes

A new report by the California Budget Project, a nonpartisan public policy research group, shows an increased demand for public services even as Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed deep cuts to health and human services programs to help close the current budget gap.

The report, *Proposed Budget Cuts Come at a Time of Growing Need*, shows that as Californians face the toughest job market in decades, more are turning to programs such as Medi-Cal, CalWORKS, Healthy Families, Food Stamps, and WIC to help make ends meet.

“The fact that a rising number of Californians are seeking assistance underscores the need for a balanced approach to addressing the state’s budget gap that combines prudent spending reductions, additional revenues, and continued federal aid,” said Jean Ross, executive director of the CBP.

The report examined economic indicators and found that the economic crisis has taken a toll on California, and recovery from the recession is expected to be long and slow. California now has approximately the same number of jobs as it did 10 years ago, when the state was home to 3.6 million fewer working-age individuals. Although California continues to lose jobs, the pace of job loss has slowed in recent months. Yet forecasters project that California’s annual jobless rate will remain above 10 percent through 2012.

Millions of Californians are jobless, and many have had their hours reduced. More than 2.2 million Californians were unemployed in December and the state’s jobless rate was 12.4 percent. In addition, more than 1.5 million Californians were underemployed in December, working part-time “involuntarily” either because their employers reduced their hours or because they could not find full-time work.

Source: *The California Budget Project (CBP) release, 2/2/10* www.cbp.org.

Taxing the rich

Lawrence S. Wittner

Decades ago, right wingers began championing cuts in income taxes for the rich and—when that lowered government revenue—turned around and claimed that government could no longer "afford" to maintain vital public services like education and health care. Unfortunately, in an effort to curry favor with the wealthy and their corporations, many state and national officeholders began to adopt the right wing's tax-cutting model. In New York State, the tax rate for top income earners was reduced from over 15 percent to less than half that amount. On the federal level, it plummeted from 91 percent (in the early 1960s) to 35 percent (today). As a result of such policies—and of rising expenditures on the military—there was a lot less government revenue left for public services, and they were slashed accordingly.

Of course, in these circumstances, there was plenty of money—in fact, more than ever before—in the pockets and vast bank accounts of the wealthy and their corporations. Furthermore, unlike most of the population, the wealthy generally didn't regret the decline of public schools, public hospitals, public law enforcement or public parks. After all, they sent their children to expensive private schools and colleges, utilized private health care, resided in secure, wealthy neighborhoods and vacationed in exclusive hotels and resorts. Why worry about the adequacy of the government's stamp program if the only time they experienced hunger was when the service was slow in their favorite French restaurant?

To help reverse the erosion of public services, unions and other social justice organizations have turned increasingly to a tax-the-rich approach. A good example of this occurred in Oregon on January 26 when voters passed two ballot measures that raised taxes on the wealthiest 3 percent of that state's residents and on the most lucrative businesses in the state.

These ballot measures were developed in the context of a severe state budgetary crisis, which left Oregon on the verge of freezing salaries for public employees, making deep cuts in spending on education, and ending forest protection rules. Taking the offensive, unions, community

groups, and progressive businesses developed a grassroots campaign to pass the two ballot measures, which were designed to safeguard \$1 billion in public services while not raising taxes on the vast majority of the population or, for that matter, on 93% of small business owners. They pointed out that the rich had grown much richer thanks to conservative policies and that the state's minimum tax paid by most corporations stood at only \$10 a year!

Not surprisingly, corporate leaders and their supporters fought back ferociously. A coalition of business organizations spent millions of dollars, donated by the banking industry and wealthy entrepreneurs such as Nike's Phil Knight, to inundate the airwaves with ads proclaiming that a tax raise for the wealthiest individuals and businesses would destroy jobs and the state's economy. Although polls found that the ballot measures were popular, it seemed quite possible that business groups and the wealthy would prevail. For years, the state's voters had rejected propositions for tax increases, and they had not supported raising income taxes since the 1930s.

Nevertheless, in the end, Oregon's voters backed both tax-the-rich ballot propositions by roughly 54 to 46 percent.

Doug Hall, the director of the Economic Analysis and Research Network at the Economic Policy Institute, declared: "The people had an opportunity to weigh the relative merits of draconian budget cuts versus strategic revenue increases, and they have decided to support the revenue increases. I think that sends a powerful message to the rest of the country."

It certainly should. The passage of the Oregon ballot propositions is one more indication that—despite the televised ranting of right-wing demagogues—most people believe that the vast wealth in the hands of individuals and corporations should be drawn upon to promote the public welfare.

Dr. Wittner is professor of history at the State University of New York/Albany. His latest book is "Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement" (Stanford University Press).

Source: *truthout* | Op-Ed 2/1/10 www.truthout.org

Don't call it a "defense" budget

Norman Solomon

This isn't "defense."

The new budget from the White House will push US military spending well above \$2 billion a day.

Foreclosing the future of our country should not be confused with defending it.

"Unless miraculous growth, or miraculous political compromises, creates some unforeseen change over the next decade, there is virtually no room for new domestic initiatives for Mr. Obama or his successors," *The New York Times* reported February 2.

It isn't defense to preclude new domestic initiatives for a country that desperately needs them: for health care, jobs, green technologies, carbon reduction, housing, education, nutrition, mass transit ...

"When a nation becomes obsessed with the guns of war, social programs must inevitably suffer," Martin Luther King Jr. pointed out. "We can talk about guns and butter all we want to, but when the guns are there with all of its emphasis you don't even get good oleo. These are facts of life."

At least Lyndon Johnson had a "war on poverty." For a while anyway, till his war on Vietnam destroyed it.

Since then, waving the white flag at widespread poverty—usually by leaving it unmentioned—has been a political fact of life in Washington.

Oratory can be nice, but budget numbers tell us where an administration is headed. In 2010, this one is marching up a steep military escalator, under the banner of "defense."

Legitimate defense would cost a mere fraction of this budget.

By autumn, the Pentagon is scheduled to have a total of 100,000 uniformed US troops—and a comparable number of private contract employees—in Afghanistan, where the main beneficiaries are the recruiters for Afghan insurgent forces and the profiteers growing even richer under the wing of Karzai-government corruption.

After three decades of frequent carnage and extreme poverty

in Afghanistan, a new influx of lethal violence is arriving via the Defense Department. That's the cosmetically named agency in charge of sending US soldiers to endure and inflict unspeakable horrors.

New waves of veterans will return home to struggle with grievous physical and emotional injuries. Without a fundamental change in the nation's direction, they'll be trying to resume their lives in a society ravaged by budget priorities that treat huge military spending as sacrosanct.

"At \$744 billion, the military budget—including military programs outside the Pentagon, such as the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons management—is a budget of add-ons rather than choices," said Miriam Pemberton at the Institute for Policy Studies. "And it makes the imbalance between spending on military vs. non-military security tools worse."

Of course, the corporate profits for military contractors are humongous.

The Executive Director of the National Priorities Project, Jo Comerford, offered this context: "The Obama administration has handed us the largest Pentagon budget since World War II,

not including the \$160 billion in war funding for Iraq and Afghanistan."

The word "defense" is inherently self-justifying. But it begs the question: Just what is being defended?

For the United States, an epitaph on the horizon says: "We had to destroy our country in order to defend it."

As new sequences of political horrors unfold, maybe it's a bit too easy for writers and readers of the progressive blogosphere to remain within the politics of online denunciation. Cogent analysis and articulated outrage are necessary but insufficient. The unmet challenge is to organize widely, consistently and effectively—against the warfare state—on behalf of humanistic priorities.

In the process, let's be clear. This is not a defense budget. This is a death budget.

Norman Solomon is co-chair of the national Healthcare NOT Warfare campaign and the author of a dozen books. For more information, go to: www.normansolomon.com <<http://www.normansolomon.com>>.

Source: *truthout* | Op-Ed 2/2/10 www.truthout.org

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Energy solutions require cultural change

A global energy crisis looms because of the world's reliance on fossil fuels (coal and oil) for its energy needs. It is a well known and undisputed fact that these supplies are running low.

However most people don't quite fathom the reasons for this crisis and what to do about it. We naively assume that someone somewhere will figure something out. And life will carry on. But this is not to be. Each and everyone of us needs a new understanding of the problem.

All of earth's energy comes from the sun. Plant matter is the only thing that can directly harness the sun's energy. It captures the sunlight through a process called photosynthesis and stores the energy in itself. That energy can then be transferred as light or heat through burning or it can be made into animal tissue through eating.

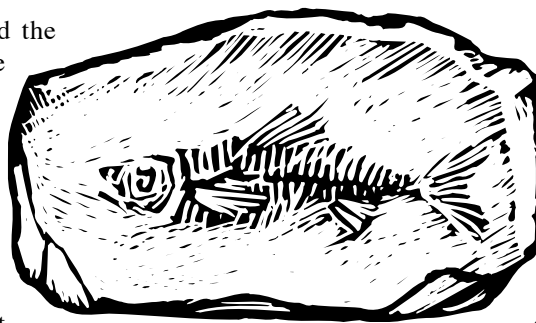
Animal bodies, including humans, are literally created out of sunlight. It is the same energy that has merely been transformed into a plant, and then consumed by the animal.

In order to understand the global energy crisis we need to understand that our energy doesn't come from wood or coal or oil; it comes from the sun.

For most of human history we never used more energy than the sun provided. Sunlight would fall on the ground to be temporarily stored by plants. Humans would use that stored energy by eating the plants, eating animals that ate the plants or by burning the wood. But our total usage never exceeded the amount that was falling on the earth.

Fossil fuels are merely forms of ancient sunlight that have been preserved in the earth for millions of years. The sunlight was absorbed by plant matter which was then compressed at great pressure within the Earth. They are giant storage vats of sunlight energy.

By tapping into these stores of ancient sunlight we were no longer limited by the amount of sunlight



that ordinarily fell on the ground. We could use the trapped ancient sunlight to fuel the growth of the human species.

Before agriculture we had obtained our food by harvesting whatever we could find, always reliant on current sunlight. We also relied on current sunlight in early agriculture, using human or animal labour. But now we can fuel our farms with oil. And we can generate heat from coal rather than wood. Without the need for firewood forests could be razed for farmland. And the farmland was more productive because it was driven by oil.

Food production spiked

exponentially and with it so did the human population. Our economy gradually became more and more intertwined with the use of oil.

As the last reserves of fossil fuels begin to dry up we face a global energy crisis. The current human population and economy can only survive due to the availability of these stores of ancient sunlight. If we had to revert back to relying on current sunlight, there would not be nearly enough for everyone.

This is the predicament we face. At present there is no source of energy that will satisfy the world's demand once fossil fuels are gone. People are hopeful that one will be developed but nobody knows for sure.

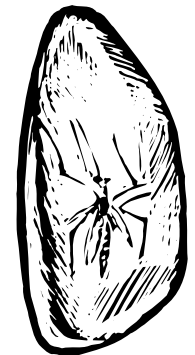
But even if we discovered a method of generating sufficient amounts of energy the problems would not be solved, only delayed. We didn't get into this situation because oil reserves are running out. We got into this situation

because we belong to a culture that is fixated on growing, expanding and controlling the planet and its natural processes.

Running out of energy is an inevitable result for a culture like ours. If we do find a new supply of energy all it will do is provide us with a means to continue with our destructive behavior.

The real issue behind the global energy crisis is the culture. It is the world-view, the mindset we hold about what it is we are doing on earth. An energy crisis is merely a symptom of a hidden problem. The culture is what needs to change.

Source: *Deep Ecology Hub* 2/1/10 www.deep-ecology-hub.com



Local produce sharing comes to Stockton

Eric Firpo

StocktonHarvest.com is a new business in town whose aim is to bring locally grown organic seasonal fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains to your kitchen table.

The ultimate goal is to secure a permanent spot within city limits to sell produce on land where it's grown, and as you read this, we're working to find ground where that's possible. But not only that. The grand plan is to also make jams and to preserve vegetables, sell honey, mill organic grain on demand, sell our edible wares in a store, and perhaps even whip up delectables served in a cafe on site, as well as sell fresh produce. But first we take baby steps. With no tracts of fertile soil in our grip on which to ply the principles of organic horticulture (other than my yard), you might think StocktonHarvest.com would be out of luck. Not so.

There are literally tens of thousands of pounds of fruit grown in front and back yards all

over Stockton, and sadly, much of it either falls to the ground to rot or dies on the vine before it has a chance to work its magic on anyone's taste buds.

That's where we come in. StocktonHarvest.com buys fruit from homeowners who have more on their hands than they can handle. We turn around and deliver that to homes in mid-town Stockton, at a very affordable \$1 per pound. Orders are taken online. The website StocktonHarvest.com has a list of fruits and vegetables that are in stock. Those who want to buy fruit simply send an e-mail to StocktonHarvest@gmail.com.

The advantages of growing, selling, buying and eating locally grown produce are many. StocktonHarvest is able to compete with deep-pocketed grocery stores price-wise (and often beat their prices) because we can cheaply buy excess seasonal fruit from home gardeners who know that without us, they would have no reliable market. We buy

it cheaply, and sell it cheaply to you.

Selling fruit that's grown in Stockton cuts down on air pollution in a big way because transportation costs for us are puny. Once we obtain land on which to grow crops, and sell produce there, transportation costs will actually disappear altogether. The costs for expensive synthetic fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides will also disappear and, while compost and manure cost a little cash, the price is small enough to keep StocktonHarvest competitive with other produce sellers. But one plot alone cannot accomplish the goals StocktonHarvest has set for itself.

That's where you come in. At the moment, we're nearing a transition between harvests. Citrus is coming to its end this year and, because StocktonHarvest was founded in December, that's been our bread and butter so far. We want to expand our reach into



vegetables as well as fruit.

And so we're looking for home gardeners who will plant vegetables in the upcoming weeks. We now have a limited supply of heirloom seeds and soon will have seedlings that we're willing to give to gardeners who will sell their surplus crop to us. By the time veggies and fruits such as melons come ripe, we're confident StocktonHarvest will not only have land on which we grow our crops, but will have

built a fruit and vegetable stand at which to sell them as well.

Our nation's food supply seems like it's on shaky ground, as factory farms increasingly rely on chemical fertilizers and pesticides and questions about genetically modified agribusiness foods intensify. Be part of the solution. Contact us.

StocktonHarvest.com founder Eric Firpo was certified as a San Joaquin Master Gardener in 2008.

Selling out climate change: EPA's March deadline

With climate action on hold in the Senate, attention is shifting to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is expected to move forward with plans to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act in the near future. The decision follows the EPA endangerment finding made in 2009, which declared that greenhouse gas emissions pose a threat to human health.

In March, EPA is set to roll out federal standards regarding greenhouse gas emissions from automobile tailpipes, a move that would automatically trigger requirements that power plants and other stationary sources install the "best available control technology." The agency also plans to launch a "tailoring rule" designed to shield smaller facilities—those emitting less than 25,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent annually—from the economic impacts of the new standards.

On January 21, Senator Lisa Murkowski introduced a "disapproval" resolution to prevent EPA from moving forward by

retroactively vetoing the endangerment finding. Murkowski believes that emissions regulations would be best handled legislatively, a view she shares with the rest of Congress and the Obama Administration—including EPA. In 2009, EPA leadership urged Congress to act swiftly on climate, stating that the agency would impose regulations if necessary but favored the legislative route as well. But Murkowski has also been adamant about proceeding carefully on the matter and has called EPA's recent work "the centerpiece of a highly coercive strategy" to drive hasty action in Congress.

Murkowski could force a floor vote on her resolution but has thus far remained vague on timing. The measure will need 51 votes to pass, and 35 of the 41 Senate Republicans are already co-sponsors, including Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), who is working on a bipartisan climate bill with Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT). If the rest of the party follows in suit, Murkowski will

need 10 additional votes from across the aisle. The Senator has been in discussions with a number of Democrats, and so far three have signed on as co-sponsors: Agriculture Committee Chair Blanche Lincoln (AR), Senators Ben Nelson (NE), and Mary Landrieu (LA). Lincoln expressed concern over the economic impact of any cap on emissions and said that Congress should instead work to reduce emissions via the energy bill that cleared the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in 2009.

The White House is currently working with Senate leadership to prevent the resolution from passing. But even if the measure clears the Senate, President Obama will have the option to veto it. Some observers therefore suggest that Democrats may see this as a "free vote"—one without ramifications that could still win them points with industry. But fence-sitters who vote "yes" will likely cite their desire to address climate via legislative process, which will put some pressure on them to follow through with an energy and/or climate bill.

Meanwhile, Murkowski, known for being a moderate Republican willing to engage with Democrats in the climate debate, has drawn additional criticism because of her energy industry ties. Last year she received more campaign funding from the electric utility industry than any other member of Congress, and more from the oil and gas industry than all but two lawmakers: Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and David Vitter (R-LA). Observers suggest that Murkowski has been a focus of the industries partly because of her rise in Republican leadership and her position as ranking member on the Energy Committee.

Planning and climate change

Both sides of the climate debate have recently urged the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to address whether greenhouse gas emissions should factor into National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews. NEPA requires environmental impact statements for federal agency projects and policies.

In response to a letter from Republican Senators John Barrasso (R-WY) and James Inhofe (R-OK), CEQ Chair Nancy Sutley restated the Obama Administration's commitment to addressing energy and climate matters through legislative process, and said that NEPA "cannot be used to regulate greenhouse gas emissions." At the same time, though, Sutley said that "NEPA compels Federal agencies to consider environmental effects before undertaking significant actions or policies. CEQ sees no basis for excluding greenhouse gas emissions from that consideration."

Barrasso and Inhofe, two of the Senate's most prominent climate change skeptics, alleged that NEPA has caused unnecessary delay in many important projects, while "providing no meaningful environmental benefits"—a problem they say would only be exacerbated by introducing climate impacts into the mix. To this, Sutley responded by pointing to environmental reviews recently completed for projects funded by the 2009 economic stimulus package, which she said demonstrated "successful wide-scale application of NEPA without slowing economic recovery." In

addition, she said that in many cases, agencies have already chosen to consider the impact of emissions and climate change as part of their environmental statements.

Sutley also responded to a 2008 petition calling for CEQ to expand NEPA to include climate change, indicating that her office plans to issue draft guidance for agencies on the matter. The draft is still under development and would be opened for a public comment period. Since it is still under development, there is currently no timeline in place for the guidance.

Timber!

Timber contract extension (HR 3759): The House passed a measure that would allow the Interior secretary to grant three-year timber contract extensions on Bureau of Land Management. The measure, passed by voice vote, was prompted by the economic toll that the depressed building market has taken on timber companies. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee is currently reviewing the companion bill, S 2791.

Source: ESA Policy News 1/22/10 www.esa.org/pao/policyNews/

Beer: good for bones

Beer is an alcoholic beverage. Obviously too much alcohol makes you drunk which is not too good for your health. Yet beer does have its positive benefits. One, of course, is to reduce stress (at least short term).

A new study suggests that beer is a significant source of dietary silicon, a key ingredient for increasing bone mineral density. Based on the findings of UC Davis researchers, some studies suggest moderate beer consumption may help fight osteoporosis, a disease of the skeletal system characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue. Osteoporosis is a disease of bone that leads to an increased risk of fracture. Osteoporosis is most common in women after menopause, when it is called postmenopausal osteoporosis, but may also develop in men....

Beer is one of the world's oldest and most widely consumed alcoholic beverage. It is produced by the brewing and fermentation of starches, mainly derived from cereal grains; most commonly

malted barley, although wheat, maize (corn), and rice are widely used. Most beer is flavored with hops, which add bitterness and act as a natural preservative, though other flavorings such as herbs or fruit may occasionally be included....

The study also tested 100 commercial beers for silicon content and categorized the data according to beer style and source. The average silicon content of the beers sampled ranged from 6.4 to 56.5 mg/L.

"Beers containing high levels of malted barley and hops are richest in silicon," concludes Dr. Bamforth. "Wheat contains less silicon than barley because it is the husk of the barley that is rich in this element. While most of the silicon remains in the husk during brewing, significant quantities of silicon nonetheless are extracted into wort and much of this survives into beer."

Source: ENN: Environmental News Network—Know Your Environment 2/8/10 www.enn.com

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.



Profiting from Haiti's crisis

Benjamin Dangl

US corporations, private mercenaries, Washington and the International Monetary Fund are using the crisis in Haiti to make a profit, promote unpopular neoliberal policies, and extend military and economic control over the Haitian people.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, with much of the infrastructure and government services destroyed, Haitians have relied on each other for the relief efforts, working together to pull their neighbors, friends and loved ones from the rubble. One report from IPS News in Haiti explained, "In the day following the quake, there was no widespread violence. Guns, knives and theft weren't seen on the streets, lined only with family after family carrying their belongings. They voiced their anger and frustration with sad songs that echoed throughout the night, not their fists."

Bob Moliere, an organizer within the popular political party Fanmi Lavalas was killed in the earthquake. His wife, Marianne Moliere, told IPS News after burying her husband, "There is no life for me because Bob was everything to me. I lost everything. Everything is destroyed," she said. "I'm sleeping in the street now because I'm homeless. But when I get some water, I share with others. Or if someone gives some spaghetti, I share with my family and others."

It is not this type of solidarity that has emerged in the wake of the crisis—and the delayed and muddled response from the international community—that most corporate media in the US have focused on. Instead, echoing the coverage and calls for militarization of New Orleans in the wake of Katrina, major media outlets talk about the looting, and need for security to protect private property.

One request from Erwin Berthold, the owner of Big Star Market in Petionville, Haiti, reflects this concern for profit over people. Berthold told the Washington Post about his supermarket, "We have everything cleaned up inside. We are ready to open. We just need some security. So send in the Marines, okay?"

That militarization is already underway. This week the US is sending thousands of troops and soldiers to the country. The Haitian government has signed over control of its capital airport to the US. Brazil and France have already lodged complaints that US military planes are now being given priority over other flights at the international airport.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez responded to the US troop deployment. "I read that 3,000 soldiers are arriving, Marines armed as if they were going to war. There is not a shortage of guns there, my God. Doctors, medicine, fuel, field hospitals, that's what the United States should send," Chavez said. "They are occupying Haiti undercover." The Venezuelan President pledged to send any necessary amount of gasoline needed to the country to aid with electricity and transport.

A heroic history in Washington's backyard

There is also little mention in the major news outlets' coverage of how the US government and corporations helped impoverish Haiti in the first place, creating the economic poverty that makes disasters like this so extensive. Nor is there mention of the country's heroic struggle against imperialism and slavery. Fidel Castro pointed out in a recent column, "Haiti was the first country in which 400,000 Africans, enslaved and trafficked by Europeans, rose up against 30,000 white slave masters on the sugar and coffee plantations, thus undertaking the first great social revolution in our hemisphere. ... Napoleon's most eminent general was defeated there. Haiti is the net product of colonialism and imperialism, of more than one century of the employment of its human resources in the toughest forms of work, of military interventions and the extraction of its natural resources."

University professor Peter Hallward, writing in the Guardian Unlimited, criticized Washington for its responsibility in creating the suffering it is now pledging to alleviate in Haiti. "Ever since the US invaded and occupied the country in 1915, every serious political attempt to allow Haiti's people to

move (in former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide's phrase) 'from absolute misery to a dignified poverty' has been violently and deliberately blocked by the US government and some of its allies. Aristide's own government (elected by some 75% of the electorate) was the latest victim of such interference, when it was overthrown by an internationally sponsored coup in 2004 that killed several thousand people and left much of the population smoldering in resentment. The UN has subsequently maintained a large and enormously expensive stabilization and pacification force in the country."

Brian Concannon, the director of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti told Hallward of the root causes for the overpopulation of neighborhoods in the city of Port-au-Prince that were hit so hard by the earthquake. "Those people got there because they or their parents were intentionally pushed out of the countryside by aid and trade policies specifically designed to create a large captive and therefore exploitable labor force in the cities; by definition they are people who would not be able to afford to build earthquake resistant houses." Unnatural crises such as this made the earthquake much more devastating.

Disaster capitalism comes to Haiti

As Naomi Klein thoroughly proved in her book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, throughout history, "while people were reeling from natural disasters, wars and economic upheavals, savvy politicians and industry leaders nefariously implemented policies that would never have passed during less muddled times." This push to apply unpopular neoliberal policies began almost immediately after the earthquake in Haiti.

In a talk recorded by Democracy Now!, Klein explained that the disaster in Haiti is created on the one hand by nature, and on the other hand "is worsened by the poverty that our governments have been so complicit in deepening.

Crises/natural disasters are so much worse in countries like Haiti,

because you have soil erosion. The poverty means people are building in very, very precarious ways, so houses just slide down because they are built in places where they shouldn't be built. All of this is interconnected. But we have to be absolutely clear that this tragedy, which is part natural, part unnatural, must, under no circumstances, be used to, one, further indebt Haiti, and, two, to push through unpopular corporatist policies in the interests of our corporations."

Following the disaster in Haiti, Klein pointed out that the Heritage Foundation, "one of the leading advocates of exploiting disasters to push through their unpopular pro-corporate policies," issued a statement on its website after the earthquake hit: "In addition to providing immediate humanitarian assistance, the U.S. response to the tragic earthquake in Haiti earthquake offers opportunities to re-shape Haiti's long-dysfunctional government and economy as well as to improve the public image of the United States in the region."

The mercenary trade group International Peace Operations Association (IPOA) immediately offered their services to provide "security" in Haiti to its member companies, according to Jeremy Scahill. Within hours of the earthquake, Scahill wrote, the IPOA website announced, "In the wake of the tragic events in Haiti, a number of IPOA's member companies are available and prepared to provide a wide variety of critical relief services to the earthquake's victims."

Kathy Robison, a Fortune 500 executive, formerly with Goldman Sachs Companies, wrote of the earthquake disaster in Haiti. "The business leaders I have been meeting with have seen enough disappointment and suffering," she wrote. "What Haiti needs is economic development and the building of a true middle class. ... There is much we are planning as far as creating new and innovative ways of using international aid and government support to promote private investment."

On January 14, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced a \$100 million loan to Haiti to help with relief efforts. However,

Richard Kim at *The Nation* wrote that this loan was added onto \$165 million in debt made up of loans with conditions "including raising prices for electricity, refusing pay increases to all public employees except those making minimum wage and keeping inflation low." This new \$100 million loan has the same conditions. Kim writes, "in the face of this latest tragedy, the IMF is still using crisis and debt as leverage to compel neoliberal reforms."

The last thing Haiti needs at this point is more debt; what it needs is grants. As Kim wrote, according to a report from the Center for International Policy, in 2003 "Haiti spent \$57.4 million to service its debt, while total foreign assistance for education, health care and other services was a mere \$39.21 million."

In the midst of the suffering and anguish following the earthquake, many Haitians came together to console and help each other. Journalist David Wilson, in Haiti during the time of the earthquake, wrote of the singing that followed the disaster. "Several hundred people had gathered to sing, clap, and pray in an intersection here by 9 o'clock last night, a little more than four hours after an earthquake had devastated much of the Haitian capital." A young Haitian American commented to Wilson on the singing, "Haitians are different," he said. "People in other countries wouldn't do this. It's a sense of community."

If these elements of the "relief" efforts continue in this exploitative vein, it is this community that will likely be crushed even further by disaster capitalism and imperialism.

While international leaders and institutions are speaking about how many soldiers and dollars they are committing to Haiti, it is important to note that what Haiti needs is doctors not soldiers, grants not loans, a stronger public sector rather than a wholesale privatization, and critical solidarity with grassroots organizations and people to support the self-determination of the country.

"We don't need soldiers," Patrick Elie, the former Defense Minister under the Aristide government

(continued next page)

Shunning Howard Zinn's history

William Blum

Progressive activists and writers continually bemoan the fact that the news they generate and the opinions they express are consistently ignored by the mainstream media, and thus kept from the masses of the American people.

This disregard of progressive thought is tantamount to a definition of the mainstream media. It doesn't have to be a conspiracy; it's a matter of who owns the mainstream media and the type of journalists they hire—men and women who would like to keep their jobs; so it's more insidious than a conspiracy, it's what's built into the system, it's how the system works.

The disregard of the progressive world is of course not total; at times some of that world makes too good copy to ignore, and, on rare occasions, progressive ideas, when they threaten to become very popular, have to be countered.

So it was with Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. Here's Barry Gewen an editor at the *New York Times Book Review*, June 5, 2005 writing of Zinn's book and others like it:

"There was a unifying vision, but it was simplistic. Since the victims and losers were good, it followed that the winners were bad. From the point of view of downtrodden blacks, America was racist; from the point of view of oppressed workers, it was exploitative; from the point of view of conquered Hispanics and Indians, it was imperialistic. There was much to condemn in

Profiting from Haiti's crisis

(continued from page 14)

told Al Jazeera. "There is no war here." In addition to critiquing the presence of the soldiers, he commented on the US-control of the main airport. "The choice of what lands and what doesn't land, the priorities of the flight[s], should be determined by the Haitians. Otherwise, it's a takeover and what might happen is that the needs of Haitians are not taken into account, but only the ways a foreign country defines the need of Haiti, or tries

"The chief problem in historical honesty is not outright lying. It is omission or de-emphasis of important data. The definition of 'important', of course, depends on one's values."

-- Howard Zinn

American history, little or nothing to praise. ...

"Whereas the Europeans who arrived in the New World were genocidal predators, the Indians who were already there believed in sharing and hospitality (never mind the profound cultural differences that existed among them), and raped Africa was a continent overflowing with kindness and communalism (never mind the profound cultural differences that existed there)."

One has to wonder whether Mr. Gewen thought that all the victims of the Holocaust were saintly and without profound cultural differences.

Prominent American historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. once said of Zinn: "I know he regards me as a dangerous reactionary. And I don't take him very seriously. He's a polemicist, not a historian."

In the obituaries that followed Zinn's recent death, this particular defamation was picked up around the world, from the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the leading American wire services to the *New Zealand Herald* and *Korea Times*.

Regarding reactionaries and polemicists, it is worth noting

to push its own agenda."

For more information and suggestions on acting in solidarity with the Haitian people, read this article.

Benjamin Dangl is the author of The Price of Fire: Resource Wars and Social Movements in Bolivia and is the editor of TowardFreedom.com

Source: *Toward Freedom* 1/19/10 <http://towardfreedom.com>

that Mr. Schlesinger, as a top advisor to President John F. Kennedy, played a key role in the overthrow of Cheddi Jagan, the democratically-elected progressive prime minister of British Guiana (now Guyana).

In 1990, at a conference in New York City, Schlesinger publicly apologized to Jagan, saying: "I felt badly about my role thirty years ago. I think a great injustice was done to Cheddi Jagan." [The Nation, June 4, 1990, pp.763-4]

This is to Schlesinger's credit, although the fact that Jagan was present at the conference may have awakened his conscience after 30 years. Like virtually all the American historians of the period who were granted attention and respect by the mainstream media, Schlesinger was a cold warrior.


Those like Zinn who questioned the basic suppositions of the Cold War abroad, and capitalism at home, were regarded as polemicists.

One of my favorite Howard Zinn quotes: "The chief problem in historical honesty is not outright lying. It is omission or de-emphasis of important data. The definition of 'important', of course, depends on one's values." [See *Failure to Quit: Reflections of an Optimistic Historian*, (1993)]

A People's History and his other writings can be seen as an attempt to make up for the omissions and under-emphases of America's dark side in American history books and media.

William Blum is the author of 'Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II'. For more of Blum's commentaries and other books, go to <http://killinghope.org>

Source: *Consortium News* 2/7/10 www.consortiumnews.com



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The T is Not Silent

The state of transgender 2009

Elena Kelly

This last year was the most incredible, unbelievable, and fantastic year of my life. I started the year hoping to be able to take the first of several steps toward becoming the woman I know I was born to be. Instead, my transition was physically complete in August, a miracle by any measure since that part of the transition process typically takes at least two years. Mine started and ended in a mere five months.

It was not so wonderful for the transgender community in general. There were highs and lows, to be sure. The worst news was that worldwide we saw a 300% increase in the number of transgender people being murdered compared to 2008. Some were executed by their governments; others were shot, stabbed, beaten and/or strangled to death. All died just because they sought to live the truth of who they are.

Some other notable events of 2008:

In March, President Obama rescinded a Health and Human Services resolution (created by George W. Bush in December, 2008) that would permit healthcare providers to discriminate against treating transgender people if they had a moral or religious belief that being transgender is wrong.

April saw the first ever prosecution and conviction of a transgender murderer under a Hate Crimes law when Allen Andrade was convicted in Greeley, Colorado for the savage murder of Angie Zapata, an 18 year old transgender woman.

Also in April, a New York transgender woman who was using the women's restroom was dragged out by a restaurant employee because she "looked too masculine." She and her entire party were ejected from the restaurant after being humiliated. The court ordered the restaurant to add gender identity to the corporate non-discrimination statement and to state that all employees and patrons have the right to use the restroom that

is consistent with their gender identity. The restaurant was also ordered to pay the woman \$35,000 in damages.

In June, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2009 (ENDA), that prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, was introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives. As of this writing it is in the process of being reviewed by the House Education and Labor committee.

Also in June, Syracuse, New York was where that state's first conviction under their Hate Crimes law occurred. It was the case of the murder of 22 year old transwoman Lateisha Green.

In October, President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard Act. This Act provides increased funding to state and local authorities to prosecute a wide range of hate crimes—ones motivated by race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. It also authorizes the federal government to prosecute these crimes when states fail to do so.

In November, Stockton held its first ever Transgender Day of Remembrance. One hundred twenty five people attended a Memorial Service where the transgender dead were remembered and honored. The supporters marched down Pacific Avenue in a silent candlelight procession, and then celebrated those individuals and organizations that are working to end the violence against transgender people.

The ten local sponsoring organizations of the Day of Remembrance were the Stockton Transgender Alliance, Central United Methodist Church, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Valley Ministries Metropolitan Community Church, Marriage Equality USA-San Joaquin Chapter, Central Valley Stonewall Democratic Club, Greater Lodi Area Democratic Club, The Stockton Chapter of the ACLU of Northern California, Democratic Central Committee

of San Joaquin, and the publisher of this newspaper, the Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin.

The Day of Remembrance resulted in a flood of calls and emails as San Joaquin residents contacted the Stockton Transgender Alliance seeking information and support for themselves, their family members and/or acquaintances.

For some of us 2009 was a wonderful year. But we still have a lot of work to do to eliminate the fear and prejudice that causes us to be discriminated against and murdered in increasing numbers each year. All people must be free to live their lives in peace and safety. The basic human right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness must apply equally to all people.

And on January 2, 2010 President Obama appointed Amanda Simpson to the position of Senior Technical Advisor to the Department of Commerce. Ms. Simpson is the first transgender appointee of the Obama administration. In a press release, Ms. Simpson was quoted as saying,

"I'm truly honored to have received this appointment and am eager and excited about this opportunity that is before me. And at the same time, as one of the first transgender presidential appointees to the federal government, I hope that I will soon be one of hundreds, and that this appointment opens future opportunities for many others."

Rachel Maddow, on MSNBC, summed it up nicely by saying, "Best of luck to Amanda Simpson in overseeing the whole export of U.S. weapons technology thing. And good luck to the religious right in arguing that a person with three decades of vital, pertinent experience and degrees in physics, engineering, and business isn't qualified to do this job."

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



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Art Raab: faithful peacemaker

"Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God."
—Micah

John Morearty

Art Raab was my teacher in the peace movement—though I didn't usually know it. Last October, he left a message. "Please call me."

In Lodi, his daughter Mary answered. "My dad's in the hospital, his kidneys are failing. But I know he wanted to tell you he can't deliver his *Connections* paper route this month, he's hoping that's okay."

Just like Art Raab—apologizing because kidney failure got in the way of his work for peace and justice.

So on a sunny day I delivered his papers, and went to visit. He lay in his hospital bed, clear-eyed. "How are you, Art?"

"Well, I'm okay. Not high, not low. I'm okay. But I'm pretty sure I won't be able to deliver my papers any more."

I told him I'd enjoyed doing his route, he suggested the Lodi Democratic Club might help. We reminisced about the thirty years we worked together in the peace movement, and I thanked him for all he'd done.

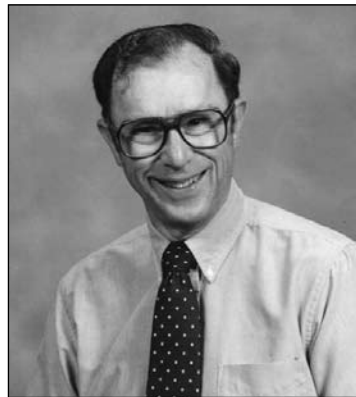
"Well, Art, I don't want to tire you out. Is there anything I can do for you?"

He looked at me.

"You're doing it."

Art declined dialysis; "I don't want my country to have to pay to keep me barely alive." He died on November 20. A memorial service was held in January at his long-time church in Lodi, United Congregational Christian, and the place was full, including seven clergy. "Art served in the Navy during World War Two," said the pastor, "and he never stopped working for peace. We had an American flag here in our sanctuary and somebody moved it to the back of the church; then somebody else moved it to the front again. Art came to see me:

"I cannot worship in this church while there is a U.S. flag right up there in front. My country does not come first, God comes first." But the flag stayed in front, Art kept coming to church—and every



year he invited us to join him at Livermore Lab, to protest the sinful building of nuclear weapons."

Until 2009, whenever I myself was at the Livermore demonstrations, I'd feel a tap on the shoulder—and there was Art, smiling in the dawn.

He wed his Fran just after the war, and came to Lodi in 1957. They had Paul, Mary and Barbara, and thirteen grandchildren. "He was a wonderful grandfather," Mary told me, "he would take them to the Exploratorium in San Francisco and explain things to them."

He loved to teach. He taught at Lodi High School from 1957 till 1990—geography, world history, U.S. history and government, economics. "I was a student there," said Mary, "and he was an excellent teacher—very hard, he made sure they knew the material, and knew what was going on in the world. When students tried to get close to me so they could get a better grade, he was extra hard on them. After his death we got messages from people all over the country, 'Oh Mr. Raab, he was a marvelous teacher.'"

Art told a friend "I'd really like to meet Cesar Chavez," and he marched with the United Farm Workers in Lodi—tough turf. In the eighties he joined Christians for Socialism, which is where I first met him. "I think democratic socialism, like the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, fits with the gospel of Jesus," he said.

Along with 50 others, we protested Congressman Norman Shumway's support for the illegal U.S. Contra war on Nicaragua. A dozen of us were arrested sitting in his office on Robinhood, and one afternoon Art and I took a turn. Jack Sieglock, the office manager, performed a citizen's arrest on

us and called the cops. Art said quietly, "Jack, you were a student in my class. We're waiting here to speak with the Congressman. We are 'peaceably assembling for the redress of grievances,' as the First Amendment says. Our grievance is an illegal war and murdered peasants. Is this what you learned in my class?"

"My dad never raised his voice," his daughter said; "or just a little, when he was really frustrated. He demonstrated peacefully, peacefully got his message across." Until shortly before he died he attended the Sunday peace demonstrations in downtown Lodi, carrying a sign that said "Anything war can do, peace can do better."

He was active in the Lodi Democratic Club, active with the regional peace and justice board of his church. In 1998 he helped found the Breakthrough Project, when someone burned a cross on the lawn of Tokay High School. The project continues, with an annual Martin Luther King celebration, events on the poor east side of Lodi, and an essay contest; it was recently renamed the Art Raab Memorial Scholarship. Breakthrough is "now leaving an empty chair at our meetings."

When hate crimes occur, Breakthrough helps the victims and does counseling. Recently when the government came down on Muslims in Lodi, Art's church held a learning session on Islam. Mary says, "a whole bunch of people came, and we also went to the Muslim house of worship. He never compromised his efforts, didn't bow down and do things just because that was what everybody else did; he stuck with what he believed in."

At the memorial service Taj Khan, a Lodi Muslim elder, rose and told that story. "Art Raab stood by our side; he was a great human being."

In the service, the congregation sang what the program called Two of Art's Favorite Hymns. One was "We Shall Overcome." The other goes, "Here I am Lord, is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night, I will go, Lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart."

Art Raab held us in his heart.



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University Neighborhood Renaissance Committee in Stockton

Emily Ballus

The University Neighborhood Renaissance Committee had our first meeting last Thursday, January 28. Interestingly, there were more people running the meeting than in attendance.

The boundaries of the University Neighborhood are Harding Way to the south and the Calaveras River to the north, Pershing to the west and California Street to the east. I would like to encourage anyone who is interested in improving this area of Stockton to attend our monthly meetings. The city is looking very closely at our successes to warrant spreading this project throughout Stockton. That is why it is critical that residents get involved (even those that do not live in the affected neighborhood). If we can show measurable improvement, every neighborhood in Stockton will benefit.

I am serving as the program/facilities chair to increase activities and connections in the area. My focus is art related, but the goals of my committee will be based on the interests of committee members which I have yet to recruit.



Help save the Tuxedo Park post office

"Silence never won rights. They are not handed down from above; they are forced by pressures from below." ~Roger Baldwin

As you may have heard, the US Postal Service plans to close stations nationally and one of those on the closure short list is our own Tuxedo Park Station on the Miracle Mile. To tell the Post Office how we feel, a rally and petition signing event was held at the Tuxedo Park Station on February 6. Well attended, we still need to hear more voices to keep this local station alive.

A walkable city is good for

University Neighborhood Renaissance Committee Meetings

All meetings are generally 6:00 pm to 8:00pm on the fourth Thursday of each month unless otherwise noted.

February 25

UOP Library Community Room
Corner of Dave Brubeck Way and Stagg Way.
Close, well lighted parking available on Dave Brubeck Way adjacent to the Library.

March 25

St Joseph's Hospital, Class Rooms 1 & 2
1800 N. California St, Stockton
Class rooms are located in the "old building" and can be accessed by stairway leading to the area or by entering the front of the old building and taking an elevator to the basement. Parking available in parking garage adjacent NE corner of campus and in the neighborhood.

April 22

First Baptist Church Parlor Room
3535 N El Dorado St, Stockton
Cross Streets: Between E Stadium Dr and E Knoles Way
Close, well lighted parking available on E. Stadium adjacent to the area.

May 27

COS City Hall 3rd floor conference room
425 N. El Dorado, Stockton
Parking is available around the perimeter of City Hall. The conference room can be accessed by elevator to the 3rd floor. There is a handicapped entrance in the basement of City Hall.

June 24

Miracle Mile Improvement District Offices
231 Bedford Rd., Stockton

local business, it helps the environment, and it preserves an area's identity. Our area is one of the best in town for walking to work, dining, shopping, the market, entertainment, and our post office, which has been here for over 50 years.

The replacement post office for post office box renters is West Lane, a 6.9 mile round trip.

Over 225 businesses on the Miracle Mile alone use the post office, and over 2000 households in the University Neighborhood are within walking distance.

Out of the 38,000 post office

retail centers nationwide, the Post Office plans to cut less than 250 stations. There is room for debate on which stations will be closed.

The lease at Tuxedo Station doesn't expire until 2015.

Our Tuxedo Station Post Office is an important fixture in our neighborhood. Let's save this station today.

ACTION: If you haven't already, sign the petition at www.stocktonmiraclemile.com. And keep in touch with Emily and the Miracle Mile Improvement District (209) 948-MILE (6453).

Sierra Green: health, homes and community

Sierra Green is a three-day event from **March 19–21** to be held at the Ironstone Vineyards in Murphys. It is sponsored by the Health and Wellness and CSEBA (Central Sierra Ecological Building Association) seed groups of Focus (Foothill Collaborative for Sustainability).

The three days highlight the diversity of goods and services in our central Sierra Nevada region focused on sustainable health care, eating and growing green, building and buying green. Come join the fun with music, speakers, booths, free demonstrations, kid's activities, raffle prizes, a dinner and more! To register: foothillsustainability.org or call Tamara Mitchell, FoCUS executive director at (209) 694-8399.

Friday, March 19: Green Health: An Educational and Experiential Health and Wellness Symposium – "It Isn't Either/or" – The Synergy of Both: Bridging Holistic Health Care and Western Medicine

1-5pm: Health and Wellness. Stimulating panels and opportunities to meet local practitioners. Topics include: Holistic View of Wellness, and Natural Approaches to Nourishments – Nature, Nutrition and Soul.

5:30-7:30 pm: Sierra Green Days Kick-Off Reception.

Saturday, March 20 and Sunday March 21: 10am-4pm both days: **Green Health, Home and Lifestyle.** The Central Sierra Ecological Building Association (CSEBA) will feature businesses and services that include healthy green design, building and products, energy efficiency, solar energy, gardening and more.

Saturday only: 6 pm: **Fundraising Dinner** to support the Sierra Green movement—Local and seasonal menu with presenters and a keynote speaker on local and regional transitions to the new energy economy.

Sunday, March 21: 10am-4pm: **Green Community: A Day of Celebration: The Soul and Spirit of Community** An all day Spring Equinox event of rebirth and renewal, including a community circle, tree planting, seed planting, theatre, art, music, kid activities and World Spirit Celebration with representatives from major world spiritual traditions. The focus is on bringing together diverse community groups and individuals to celebrate our common ground, literally, the Earth. Local musicians include Still Bill.

Red Shoes and Salsa with the New Dance Company

New Dance Company presents *RED SHOES & SALSA*, a fundraiser for upcoming dance festival VALLEYDANCE 2010. *Red Shoes & Salsa* will be held Saturday, March 27th, 6:00–12:00 pm at the Ambler's Club, 2000 N Amblers Lane, Stockton. Enjoy a Mexican dinner buffet, raffle, dancing to the sounds of Franco Brothers, an authentic salsa band, and featuring a salsa dance contest. For more information and tickets go to www.NewDanceCompany.com. To purchase by phone, call 800-595-4849. Tickets: \$25.00.

Nature nights at Oak Grove

On Friday, March 19, from 7:00–8:00 pm, the Oak Grove Nature Center will host a presentation by Judith Lamare, president of Friends of the Swainson's Hawk. Friends of the Swainson's Hawk is a grassroots, volunteer organization "dedicated to seeing the Central Valley's population of Swainson's hawks flourish for all generations to come." Learn what's currently being done to help protect California's Swainson's hawks and the habitat they depend on. This program is free and open to the public. Oak Grove Regional Park entrance fee is \$5 per vehicle. Please call (209) 953-8814 for more information.

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March 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.

Feb 2—25

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

Feb 4—May 2

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

Mon, Feb 22

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.

Wed, Feb 24

Invisible Children screening: rough cut (see p 20). West Forum, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7 pm. Free admission. bsantosdeltaic@gmail.com

Thu, Feb 25

University Neighborhood Renaissance Committee meeting, UOP Library Community Room, corner of Dave Brubeck Way and Stagg Way, Stockton. 6-8 pm.

Feb 25—Mar 25

Figures: Monologue/Dialogue: Sariah Ha paintings & Yuji Hiratsuka printmaking. T 11am—4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am—1pm. Reception: 2/25, 5-7 pm. SJ Delta College, LH Horton Jr Gallery, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 954-5507.

Feb 25—Mar 7

Les Miserables, presented by St Mary's High School Theatre. Tille Lewis

Theatre, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Thurs 7 pm, Fri/Sat 8 pm, Sat & Sun 2 pm. \$15 adult, \$10 student, children & seniors. 957-3340 ext 250.

Sun, Feb 28

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

Mar 1

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

Thurs, Mar 4

Jazz series with Patrick Langham quartet at the Haggin—the music of George Benson, featuring Steve Holman. Refreshments 6:30, show 7 pm. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. Free with regular admission: \$5 adult 18 & older, student/senior/youth age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10 free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

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

Mar 10—Apr 2

HATS! The Musical, Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15—\$25. 473-2424.

Mar 11 & Mar 13

Stockton Symphony Fate & Triumph Concert featuring cellist David Requiro playing Turok, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky. Thur 8 pm. Sat 6 pm. SJ Delta College Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 951-0196. \$20-55.

Mar 12—21

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Studio Theatre, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Thur, Fri, Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. \$10-\$12 954-5110.

Tue, Mar 16

SJDC Community Band Concert, Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7:30 pm. \$5-\$8 954-5110.

Wed, Mar 17

SJDC Spring Festival of Bands, Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7:30 pm. \$5-\$8 954-5110.

Thu, Mar 18

Delta College Spring Choral Concert, Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave. 7:30 pm. \$5-\$8 954-5110.

Mar 19—21

Sierra Green wellness conference (see p 18). Ironstone Vineyards, Murphys. (209) 694-8399

Fri, Mar 19

Nature Nights at the Oak Grove Nature Center: the Swainson's Hawk presented by Judith Lamare. 7-8 pm, program free, parking \$5. Oak Grove Park, 4520 W Eight Mile Rd. 953-8814 (p. 18).

Sat, Mar 20

An evening of Polynesian entertainment, celebrating the Spring Ho'ike with Na Hoku Mae Kanoelani. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$15 advance/\$20 door. 547-1794.

Sat, Mar 27

Red Shoes and Salsa with the New Dance Company. (See p. 18.)

First Mondays

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

Fourth Mondays

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

Second Tuesdays

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

Thursdays

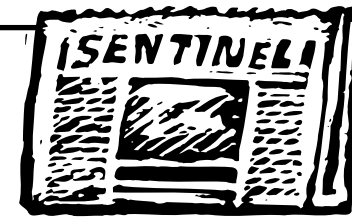
Peace demonstrations continue, 4-5:30 pm, edge of Delta campus along Pacific Avenue just north of bus stop/light at Yokuts. Free parking at Sherwood Mall. Signs provided, or bring your own! Info John Morearty, 464-3326

Fridays

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

Saturdays

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



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.tpmmuckraker.com/>

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

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

Think Progress <http://thinkprogress.com>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We're on the web too!

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

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>

Talking It Through

Talking It Through is now two half-hour shows.

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

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

SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

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

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

Peace is Happening

The Invisible Children Club Presents

INVISIBLE CHILDREN SCREENING Invisible Children: Rough Cut



FEBRUARY 24TH, 2010 AT 7:00PM
WEST FORUM AT DELTA COLLEGE
FREE ADMISSION
IC MERCH FOR SALE

E-mail bsantosdeltaic@gmail.com for more info or questions



Uganda's invisible kids: help to make a difference

Invisible Children is a nonprofit organization that started in 2003 when three young film makers traveled to Africa in search of a story. What they discovered was an unseen war, a tragedy that disgusted and inspired them, a tragedy where children are both the weapons and the victims.

In Northern Uganda, rebel leader, Joseph Kony has been abducting children and forcing them to fight as child soldiers for over two decades now. His war is illogical and devastating, and has been the cause of terror in Northern Uganda, as well as surrounding countries, for over 20 years.

When they returned home, they created the documentary

Invisible Children will be coming to Delta College February 24. With them will be Jacob, a young man who was abducted when he was 12.

"Invisible Children: Rough Cut," a film that exposes this tragedy. This film has now been seen by millions of people worldwide. Since then, Invisible Children has grown into a social, political, and global movement using the transformative power of story to change lives.

Twice a year, Invisible Children puts on a national tour, in which representatives from the organization travel throughout the US and put on screenings of the

newest Invisible Children media. This spring, Invisible Children is having the people of Uganda tour the US with them, so that they can share their own personal stories of the war.

The representatives will be coming to Delta College on February 24, 2010. With them will be Jacob, a young man from Uganda who was abducted when he was 12 and knows firsthand the atrocities this war has caused.

Progressive coalition forming in Stockton

I am Rev. Elena Kelly, Director of the Stockton Transgender Alliance. I will be attending the Courage Academy workshop in Sacramento, and I would like to invite you to come as well. I am going because I believe we need to pull together here in Stockton – to create a coalition of progressive organizations that can work together to bring true and lasting change. We were able to bring ten wonderful organizations together to create Stockton's first ever Transgender Day of Remembrance in November. Imagine what we could do if we continued to work together for equality and progressive values! This is not just about marriage equality, but the whole progressive spectrum. Check out the information below, sign up and come with me. If you want to contribute financially, you can do that. But I am looking for people who are committed to making the world a better place, and who are passionate enough to get started right here in Stockton!

Courage Academy is a one-day community organizing and leadership development workshop to expand the movement for Equality. During the workshop,

participants will become Neighborhood Equality Team Organizers (NETOs) as they hone the skill of story-telling as a way to motivate others to action, craft a clear team mission and a structure by which there is shared responsibility and commitment, and design a strategy to achieve team goals. NETOs will also learn the story of the Equality Program's CA Progressive Movement Building Campaign 2010, including important state-wide goals and actions that Neighborhood Equality Teams will engage in with the purpose of building the understanding and resources to help turn out the progressive CA voter for the mid-term elections in November. All in the name of EQUALITY.

Seven Courage Academy workshops will be led by Deputy Field Organizers covering 27 counties of CA from February 27 - March 13, 2010. The Sacramento Academy will be on February 28, 2010.

For more information and to sign up: <http://www.couragecampaign.org/courageacademy>

Elena can be reached at elena.kelly@comcast.net or at (209) 649-0396.

Become a PEACE PAL!

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

Monthly Giving Enrollment Form

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

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

Here is my monthly pledge contribution of:

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

I prefer to donate by one of the following methods:

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

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

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