

# connections

PRICELESS

Volume XXIX, Number 2

Published by the Peace & Justice Network since 1986

March 2011

## SAVE THE DATES

**FEBRUARY 27**  
**PJN ANNUAL POTLUCK / MEETING (P 1)**

**APRIL 9**  
**ANTI- WAR DEMO, SF**

**APRIL 10**  
**EARTH DAY FESTIVAL**  
**VICTORY PARK, STOCKTON**

**TUE, MAR 8 & SAT, MAR 19**  
**RADIO 89.5 MEETS (P 19)**

## Ten lessons from Tunisia and Cairo

*Mas'ood Cajee*

The Tunisians & Egyptians, in shaking off long-standing dictators, have inspired the downtrodden and hopeless well beyond their borders. Even the Chinese government has moved to block TV & internet discussion of events in Cairo by their citizens. The marchers in Tunis and Cairo have even inspired Russian protestors. We can learn a lot from their experiences. Here are some of the lessons:

1. Courage trumps tyranny. It just needs to be nurtured and kindled. Moreover, courage is contagious.
2. An authoritarian police state is no match for nonviolent people power. An uprising grounded in the prayers of the oppressed is a tremendous thing. Ordinary people can change their own situation.
3. Expect no support from the "international community." In fact, at best, expect ambivalence and a steady supply of tear gas canisters and rubber bullets.
4. Change can occur without strapping explosives to torsos or vehicles, without bombs or bullets.
5. Change isn't easy or free. The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of martyrs, as Thomas Jefferson

once said.

6. Once fear of the tyrant and his minions is removed from the hearts of the people, the game is up.

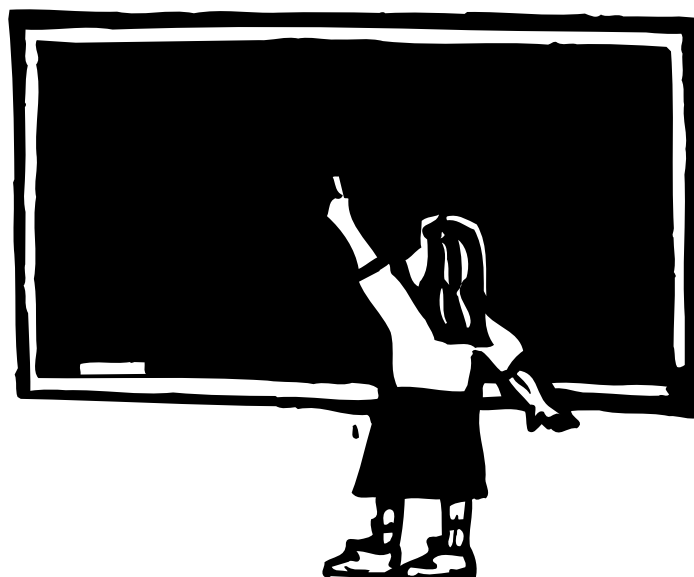
7. Once the tipping point comes, once the paradigm shift occurs, things change rapidly and suddenly. The mighty will fall quickly. The tiger, you will find out, was made of paper after all.

8. You don't have to wait for a Great Leader. You don't have to wait for the Messiah. You don't have to wait for "Salaheddin." You just need good grassroots organizing and will. Mosques and churches help. Communication tools like satellite TV, smart phones, and social media also help.

9. Cruel, callous regimes don't last forever. Regimes that limit freedoms and crush dreams certainly cannot last.

10. Tyrants are not immune from revolt. Revolts are not immune from tyranny either. The gains of change must be defended against chaos, anarchy, and other bad happenings.

*Mas'ood Cajee is a dentist in Manteca, California, who also holds a Master of Public Health degree.*

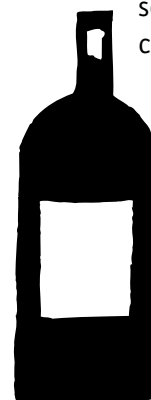


## PJN Annual Meeting / Potluck

**Sunday, February 27, 2011**

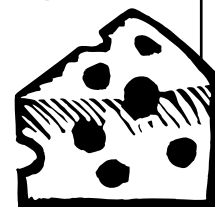
Come to the annual Peace & Justice Network Meeting and Potluck. It's an opportunity to see old friends, meeting

some of the most interesting people in the county, and share your ideas on directions and actions for 2011. All are welcome.



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

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



Nonprofit Org. U.S.  
Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 488  
Stockton, CA

Peace & Justice Network  
of San Joaquin County  
P.O. Box 4123  
Stockton, CA 95204  
209/467-4455

## Come enjoy the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Stockton Earth Day Festival

**Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011**  
**11am - 4pm - Victory Park**  
**Free Admission**



Fun Exhibitors & Demos • Delicious Food  
Live Entertainment • Fun Learning Activities  
Family Fun Bike Ride Registration at 10:30 am

**Think Global. Act Local.**  
[www.LiveGreenSanJoaquin.org](http://www.LiveGreenSanJoaquin.org)

# Ain't it a pretty world

Bruce Giudici

It can pretty much be summarized by saying—anything passed by the House of Representatives for the next 2 years should never, ever become law. The extremes are such, that any House action is taken solely for the benefit of the 2012 election. The best we can hope for is: no new laws and lots of new regulations and progressive foreign policy initiatives coming from the administration.

The chances of this happening, however, look less promising with every speech Obama makes to the US Chamber of Commerce or other profit-uber-alles group he believes he has to kow-tow to, in order to get some precious jobs between now and the next election.

It would be nice to believe that there still is some humane heart beating within the re-election campaign that is today's Obama, but it sure looks like the 1996 version of Clinton—who threw welfare kids out the window without regard to the long-term consequences on millions of disadvantaged, passed a crime bill

that locked up half of the African American male population, and gave the telecommunications industry everything it wanted in consolidating accelerated media wealth and power. Sure, Clinton got re-elected, but at the cost of progressive democratic principles—moving the center farther right in the process.

Democrats need a fighter who will stand for what is right, rather than for what it takes to win the next election. And Obama is not a fighter. Obama counsels patience—to an America that sides with progressives on many issues: health care, torture, stopping the wars, environmental protection, and fair taxation. Justice delayed has been—and always will be—justice denied: ask anyone along the Louisiana coast, solitary-confined Bradley Manning, or the country of Egypt. In foreign policy, the lie has become most pronounced. How long must the United States continue to re-play the same Atchison-Rusk-Kissinger-Schultz-Baker-Powell-Clinton charade—the one where a virtuous United States loves everyone

world-wide, is unbelievably and selflessly generous to the poor of the world, and yet always is blamed first when those ungrateful urchins have something go wrong in their country? (this is where our red-state bretheren counsel to "love it or leave it, go home to Cuba," or some such tripe that sidesteps real discussion of our country's international relationships).

The fact is, the United States does nothing unless it benefits American interests—read profits—and will support any thug, dictator or democracy that can deliver the goods most efficiently and directly. Any honest reading of world history will bear this out. The only folks not clued into to this farce is, by design, the American people. Believing the government (and fawning media) line makes us as a people feel better about ourselves, and makes the government's job at extracting resources much easier.

But, to focus on the real world, we need look at Tunisia, Egypt, the Sudan, and coming attractions Yemen, Jordan and Pakistan. Or El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras. Or perhaps the

Bruce Giudici, editor



Phillipines, Indonesia and East Timor. Or how about Haiti. In these poverty-wracked nations, millions go to bed hungry, with no clean water to drink, air to breathe, life to live. While we spend tens of thousands on Super Bowl tickets, they are tortured in prisons our tax dollars built, breathing tear gas Made in America.

Reality is for grown-ups; America, babied for decades by a government dependent on its manufactured consent, must now grow up, take responsibility for the world we have created and pay the bills. Like everywhere else—climate, all levels of government, individually, and now morally—we are in debt. It will be a sobering moment for many, who have been living in a rose-tinted world, denying that which needs fixing. But you can't fix what you can't—or won't—see. Finally, now's the time. Or there will be hell to pay.

## Peace Fresno: New strategy for peace



*the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union, and Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence both*

advocate this strategy.

Camille Russell

The message of the [Fresno] Peace Community remains the same, but our strategy is changing. In 2011, the focus will be Congressional lobbying, letter writing, and education/research.

Congress has the power to fund or defund war. This year, we will undertake a structured approach to watch the legislative process and interact with our local U.S. Representatives. Because members of the House of Representatives stand for election every two years, they are closer to and more easily influenced by constituents than the President or our senators. David Swanson, author of *War Is a Lie and Daybreak: Undoing*

Judy Hess, an experienced, successful peace lobbyist from San Diego and a Peace Fresno member, has volunteered to co-chair the Peace Community Political Action Committee with Peace Fresno Secretary Ken Hudson. In 2006, Hess founded the San Diego Metro Chapter of Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) and led it until moving to Fresno. She continues to be active in PDA.

On January 26, Hess started the Yosemite Gateway Chapter of PDA. One need not be a registered Democrat to join. PDA is a national organization with a comprehensive progressive agenda and many resources. Peace Fresno has agreed to partner with PDA on the antiwar component of its work.

Key components of the PDA lobbying program are:

- \* scheduled meetings with Congressional members in their local offices or in Washington, D.C.;

- \* monthly brown bag lunches outside local Congressional offices to publicize messages to the community;

- \* community responses to action alerts—phone calls or e-mails to elected officials;

Usually, each event or action is focused on pending legislation.

Steve Sacks, who is frequently published on the Fresno Bee's op-ed page, will lead a letter writing team. This group will try to establish a systematic presence in the Fresno Bee with letters and Valley Voices articles as well as weighing in frequently with our legislators.

Stay informed about upcoming events and meetings. Sign up for e-mail from Peace Fresno (www.

peacefresno.org) and Progressive Democrats of America (www.pdamerica.org) at their Web sites. For more information, contact Ken Hudson at kenhudson2@gmail.com, Judy Hess at judyhess@gmail.com or Steve Sacks at johnsonsacks@comcast.net.

Our message remains: End the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the drone attacks in Pakistan. Bring the troops home.

**ACTION:** Will anyone in San Joaquin County pick up the torch? Come to the PJN Annual meeting Feb 27 to discuss.

*Camille Russell is a retired teacher, president of Peace Fresno and a member of the Fresno County Democratic Central Committee. Contact her at 559-276-2592 or camille.russell@att.net.*

*Source: Community Alliance, "The Voice of the Progressive Community since 1996." 2/11 <www.fresnoalliance.com>*

## Connections

Editor: Bruce Giudici, 786-3109; bgiudici@caltel.com

Layout: Laurie Litman

Proofreader: Debbie Cousyn

Ad Rep: Karen DeGroot, 943-0840

Distribution Coordinators: Dean and Marcia Savage, 209-339-1599

Distribution Site: Green's Nutrition, 1906 Pacific Ave, Stockton

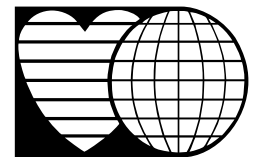
Distributors: Suzy Arnett, Rosemary Atkinson, Antoinette Celle, Jerry Croskrey, Clarence Edwards, Daniel Fong, Catherine Mathis, John Morearty, Heather Ryan, Dean and Marcia Savage, Julie Vaughn, Susan von Sostren, Stan Thomas, Patrick Wall, Jim Walsh, Bill Witz

Community Calendar: vacant

Deadline: 7th of each month (except Aug & Dec)

Circulation: 6,000

CONNECTIONS is a monthly publication of the Peace & Justice Network of San Joaquin County. The views expressed in CONNECTIONS are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Network. News, articles, letters and calendar items should be sent to the Peace & Justice Network, P.O. Box 4123, Stockton, CA 95204. The editor reserves the right of final decision on copy. Call (209) 467-4455 for more information. PJN is on the internet: <http://www.pjnsjc.org>



### Peace & Justice Network Board of Directors

Co-Chairs: Christie Kelley  
Vice-Chairperson: Elena J. Kelly  
Treasurer: Bruce Giudici  
Secretary: Gary Barrington  
Members-at-large:

Daniel Fong, Paula LeVeck, John Morearty, Sammy Nunez, Larry Pippin, James Walsh

Organizational members: Hispanics for Political Action, Single Payer San Joaquin, United Nations Foundation, Fathers and Families of San Joaquin

*"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."*

# Who has the right to steal the future?

Raffi Cavoukian

Are we tweeting while Earth burns? Is climate collapse our new collective Titanic? How do we best describe the survival struggle of seven billion in a way that connects with the public and with decision makers?

The science on global warming is clear and compelling. Earth is in serious climate crisis. That's why many writers have recently upgraded climate change to climate collapse, climate catastrophe, the long emergency. To convey the climate threat fully, we need a new Story.

In a well known Greek myth, the very rich King Midas, who loves gold above all else, is granted his singular wish that everything he touches turn into gold. The gift becomes a curse when his golden touch kills plants, food, and even his daughter, who is turned into a statue. Bereft and repentant, forsaking greed, the king begs for deliverance. His curse is lifted by a wash in the river. All he holds truly precious is restored.

The modern version of the story is about a gold rush called globalization, a monetized world order that commodifies everything and poisons all that it touches: air, water, soil, whales, indigenous cultures, mothers' milk and babies, now born with a body burden of toxic chemicals. Money as symbolic reward for goods and services, when elevated above all else, becomes a curse. The symbol turns tyrant and casts a plague on the living. We're currently in the atonement chapter of the tragedy, praying we have time to write a happier ending.

## Planet Blue

*"Planet Earth, creation, the world in which civilization developed, the world with climate patterns that we know and stable shorelines, is in imminent peril."*  
—James Hansen (2009)

*There is no historical precedent, however, for what we must do if we are to endure."*  
—David Orr, (2009)

For over two decades, there's been a failure to effectively communicate the climate change crisis. Despite the best efforts of climate scientists and

environmentalists to describe the dangers of inaction to policy makers and the general public, political response has been slow, most people have not sensed the seriousness of the issue and the rate of CO2 emissions, rather than falling, has accelerated.

Experts are using escalating phrases to describe climate change. James Hansen: "the coming climate catastrophe," "our last chance to save humanity"; Gustav Speth: "system failure," "looking into the abyss." Lester Brown writes: "The signs that our civilization is in trouble are multiplying." These are not doomsayers; they're telling the truth of this pivotal chapter of the modern saga as they see it.

I propose a new lens and lexicon for conveying climate change as the greatest threat on Earth, a tragedy of epic proportions, especially for the world's young.

Here are the main elements of the new story. The lens is Earth and Child—Child friendly means Earth friendly. The lexicon is a whole brain "linking language" of systems, not fragments. The frame is climate change as The Crisis, the compound threat to the human future. The story aligns present with future, connecting climate change to kids, health and behavior so families get that it's about them and their future. Just as the loss of King Midas's daughter melted his gold-worn heart, children may yet move humanity to bathe in a new river. The story's protagonist is the Child, our conscience.

The moral of the new story is undeniable: We must not love money more than children. While there is time, societies must reorder priorities toward supporting life systems—what matters most—not maximizing monetary wealth, or else succumb to the Midas craze and kill what we love. The choice is clear: Gaia's gift of life, or the Midas curse.

Urgently, we need to create a world fit for children, with social and economic systems that constitute a culture of respect for them and for their planetary habitat. A livable future for children and future generations depends on a stunning paradigm shift that stabilizes climate by reducing suffering and increasing joy.

Nobody can guarantee a future. But who has the right to steal it?

## Ticking

*"Please, be bold. Be courageous. Be positive. Act and demand action."*  
—James Hoggan (2009)

As Gaia's children, we're in a jam.

Industrial activity of 250 years threatens the evolution of billions. The relentless commerce of just decades has assaulted planetary life supports and left our fractured commons in peril. Planetary physicians say the patient is ill, the prognosis is not good. In this time of downward and upward spirals, the wane of empire amidst the rise of something new, the heavily-armed global disorder makes things much worse in the short term, while a green revolution grows in the cracks, praying for time.

The climate alarm's been ringing for a long time. Since 1979, scores of scientists, environmentalists and diplomats have tried their best to wake people up to the issue. NASA climate scientist James Hansen outlined the "greenhouse effect" causing the planet's warming in 1988. The following year, David Suzuki referred to global warming as "a matter of survival." Maurice Strong, who organized the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio warned: "Frankly, we may get to the point where the only way of saving the world will be for industrial civilization to collapse."

From Rio's Agenda 21 Report and Earth Charter declaration, to the 1993 Union of Concerned Scientists' Warning to Humanity and beyond, we've had a long parade of warnings for twenty years. Yet we've lost ground. Recent books forecast a range of dire scenarios related to warming. None are anything to look forward to.

Lester Brown urges a worldwide green house gas reduction of 80 percent by 2020 in a comprehensive plan with an annual global budget for doing so. According to James Hansen, among the world's leading climate scientists, delays on CO2 cuts will impose a heavy burden on our ability to meet climate adversity, let alone stay civil.

There's still hope. If a child moved King Midas's heart, the Child can move ours.

If our species could be granted



one wish, what would that be? Wouldn't it be to lift the Midas curse and restore what we have lost?

\* \* \*

It's essential to connect the climate threat to the present state of the world. Without global warming, the state of humanity on our ravaged planet would still be perilous. Humanity lives in profound inequity and hardship: A billion thirsty, another billion impoverished, yet more and more billionaires. Banks receive bailout billions, while families lose their life savings. Destitute children survive in refugee camps, favelas and barrios, while, in some affluent countries, children are sexually violated at pandemic levels, and large numbers are homeless. Synchronous failures threaten our life support in a long list of crises, including mass species extinction, desertification, deforestation, freshwater shortages, marine life depletion, coral reef die-off, nuclear weapons, war mongering and, not least, rogue and state terror. The fossil fuel gorging of wealthy as well as developing nations comes at a huge cost to their own citizens and to the world. Repeatedly, monetary concerns override wisdom at incalculable expense.

Any child can see how dumb this worldwide system is, how unjust and how suicidal it is. The globalized gold rush, despite its supposed benefits, is a disaster. "Business as usual" has failed its children. With global warming, the breadth of that failure becomes clearer.

## Paradigm shift

This article by Raffi, the well-known children's singer, is long, but please take the time to read it in its entirety. In it, he asks how we can save our world from climate tragedy and concludes that it will require a new paradigm that puts children and the future before money.

If you do not understand the seriousness of the climate crisis, please read some of the books suggested on page 5. If you already understand, it is imperative to act now so that future generations can inherit a livable planet. Talk to others, write your representatives, call the president, change your lifestyle, there is so much we each can do.

The iMatter March is coming up on Mothers Day, as Raffi mentions in this article. In Sacramento, the Mayor is helping to organize the iMatter March. I hope that Stockton will participate too. Who will take the lead? Student environmental groups, teachers, the local school board? Go to <http://imattermarch.org/> to learn more.

—Laurie Litman

Climate change is not one among many issues, it is THE crisis, the greatest threat on Earth.

It represents the cumulative damage done, the aggregate calamity for which there is no partial remedy. It can best be addressed with changes to systems, beginning with belief systems that are learned very early. The root cause of global warming and future loss is found in the belief systems that drive predatory commerce, relentless advertising and rampant consumption.

To change societal priorities and cut harmful emissions for good, change personal belief systems. Start young.

(continued next page)

## Earth and Child

Coming to grips with future loss, we must link Earth and Child, self-interest with group survival and child health to global health. Earth and child, mother and young. Earth harm becomes child harm and, seen the other way, child friendly means Earth friendly. In sustainability strategies, we can't overlook the Child.

*"This revolution has to transform the way we think ... we can't accept the greed, the denial, the short term thinking and the pollution."*  
—Alec Loorz, 16

*"I am fighting for my future. Losing my future is not like losing an election or a few points on the stock market... You grownups say you love us. But I challenge you, please, make your actions reflect your words."*  
—Severn Cullis-Suzuki, age 12 (Rio, 1992)

In Rio, young Severn's voice scolded the UN Conference on Environment and Development delegates, saying she'd come 5,000 miles "to tell you adults you must change your ways." Had world leaders heeded her message, we'd not be facing climate chaos 18 years later. (Severn is now 30, the mother of a baby boy.)

In 2006, a 12-year-old California boy, Alec Loorz, founded Kids vs. Global Warming, met with political leaders and gave talks in high schools reaching 100,000 kids. Now 16, he wants everyone to "live as if the future matters." But in the global economy business is not conducted "as if the future matters." Short-termism runs economic and political cycles, counter to Alec's wisdom.

Children have the strongest moral claim on climate action. It's their future at stake. The Earth and Child lens is key. To grow Earth stewards, steward the children. This is where the restoration must focus—strategically and morally—with children. Not only do kids get sustainability, they have the most to lose or gain.

No belief system is as important as a child's need to believe in the love of family and community. This is what our societies must quickly learn and not forget.

In the midnight hour of history, how are we to stabilize climate? By caring. By loving our children enough to demand and co-create nothing less than a whole systems'

shift to the caring societies that would make our world "fit for children" and, thus, for all.

In our new story, we need to live in a synergy of systems aligned in purpose and toward an overall systems' goal. Aligning present with future is a critical connection we need to make in all our institutions to support the enormous creative intelligence of our species' developing geniuses, the children.

No faith tradition condones degrading Earth's life supports, destroying indigenous cultures and wantonly exploiting children.

The antidote for climate change is systems' change. That's the new story message: about societies coming of age, coming to their senses and moving heaven and Earth for their children. It's about growing a generation of Earth stewards on every continent devoted to reclaiming the stolen future.

### Communion

*"Could this not be the single thought that steers us through the dangerous passage—a world that honours all its children?"* —Peter M. Senge, Senior Lecturer, MIT

With humanity's survival at stake, we have to learn to live as if the future matters. That's why "Educating for Sustainability" is gaining ground. Early on, students can learn connective, mind-expanding words such as biomimicry, ecoliteracy, consilient, multidisciplinary, systemic, fiduciary, feedback loops, synergy, holistic, and more.

I propose a moratorium on "the environment." (It's a cold term for our living spaces and the community of nature in which we are kin.) The same goes for the word "warrior," which progressives use as they "do battle" for social justice or an end to war.

I propose we get excited about systems' change and a new lexicon for engaging it. Let's quiet the habitual brain and grow new neurons for an epic survival adventure. Systems' change is good news!

**Right to a Future.** Climate collapse begs a new human right. I propose that "The Right to a Future" be added to the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Indeed, the right to a future can be for systems' change: humanity's survival depends on

children's well-being and their desire to live.

**Systems' Goal.** Civilization is a broken system that can't be fixed. Urgently, we need to build a new civilization that is the antithesis of empire—an "Earth community," as David Kurten puts it—one whose systems' goal is sustainability and a level playing field for all children.

**Communion.** As Thomas Berry said, we are not a collection of objects, we are a "communion of subjects." Can you imagine commerce in a spirit of communion? What economic rules would best further that intention?

**Bionomy.** This means "management of the biosphere" (from economy's origin, "oikonomia," management of the household), or, stewarding the planet. Bionomy embraces what ecological economists advocate: including full cost pricing and accounting, tax shifts, carbon tax, eco-subsidies and a well-being Index.

**iMatter.** Alec Loorz plans a global iMatter campaign for our future, featuring a multi-national kids' march on Mother's Day 2011.

**Child Honoring.** This is my term for an all-encompassing framework for simultaneously restoring communities and ecosystems. It is a positive vision with a unifying central organizing principle for creating peacemaking cultures.

### Conscience

With all it portends, the specter of catastrophic climate change may offer our best and last chance to work toward a unity of purpose, a massive green revolution worldwide. And children hold the key to both the messaging of this profound transition and for inspiring an emotional tipping point for action.

With systems' change, we can embrace the rules of a new paradigm: to affirm the young, support the organic, favor the local, align present with future and design with Earth and Child in mind.

\*\*\*

By whose authority, by what legal precedent, by what spiritual claim, by what moral right can business activities so foul the living Earth so as to foreclose the

future? Ray Anderson of Interface, the world's largest floor coverings company, rightly says that he's never heard "the business case for unsustainability."

Business leaders: Corporations owe the children of the world a makeover. Children need you to curb the abusive powers corporations legally hold. For the desecration of Creation is wrong, regardless of legality. Act now on the moral impulse of your fiduciary duty to the young. You have no higher duty.

Ask not how the market can serve you—ask how you and an ethical market can serve to rewrite this critical chapter in human history.

With great haste, strive to enact laws that set corporate ingenuity free to serve humanity as 100 percent shareholders of the commons and to serve the shared dream of all families to provide a bright future for their children.

Like King Midas, the corporate elite has a chance at redemption—by forsaking greed and embracing life.

### We Rise Again

*"We rise again in the faces of our children / We rise again in the voices of our song."*  
—The Rankin family, from the song "Rise Again"

*"If a thing must be done, it can be!"*  
—Eleanor Roosevelt

As long as sustainability remains remote from people's everyday consciousness, this "seven generations" ethic will wither. But seen in the faces of children and heard in their voices, it can inspire us now as never before.

Governments and CEOs must act, but people aren't waiting. The transition town network inspires all manner of folks to engage the power of community with local sustainability strategies. Organic farmers, slow food proponents, green entrepreneurs and low-carbon advocates abound. Local living economies, municipal eco-bylaws and innovative grassroots initiatives are blossoming everywhere. But neither fast enough nor with enough impact, yet.

Embracing systems' change is not about economic hardship or personal sacrifice; it's about making the systemic changes that will greatly improve quality of life for us, our neighbors and our

nations' children. It's something to get excited about.

\*\*\*

The loss of his daughter gave King Midas an immediate conversion experience, but our species has not yet conceived of global warning in such tragic terms. Remembering Midas, we just might. Litigate, legislate, liberate. March, write, act.

At the Kyoto Global Forum in 1993, I heard Mikhail Gorbachev say that the 20th century was "a century of warning," and that the 21st would be "either the century of total crisis or the century of human recovery." His idea of glasnost and perestroika—openness and restructuring—unraveled the mighty Soviet Union. Can these words help us now?

Fast forward to the digital age. Consider the Internet's enormous reach and convening power. What if social media gave the global disorder a "glasnost and perestroika shakedown," just as unimaginable as the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall? What if the abusive, globalized money system unravels by the power of individuals connected and flexing their tech muscle to collectively demand "the right to a future"?

What if this is the tipping point—when humanity bathes in a new river?

We're in THE moral moment. We either breakdown or breakthrough to something completely new—a chance to reverse the Midas curse, thoroughly detoxify our world and cool this planet down. With the Earth and Child lens, we can redesign societies to be systems smart: just and sustainable, for the greatest good.

Schools, religious organizations, media, NGOs and policy makers need to share the new story and heed its moral imperative. A strong grassroots campaign, inspired by youth and in support of their future, can be a vital asset to building a critical mass.

For Severn and her baby, for Alec—for your own children and grandchildren—and for those to come, let's embrace systems' change. With utmost compassion let us steer a course away from icebergs and toward a welcoming shore.

Source: Truth Out, <http://www.truth-out.org/the-right-a-future-urgent-need-a-new-lens-and-lexicon-conveying-climate-collapse67262>

## Raffi References

(from preceding article)

Ray Anderson, *Mid-Course Correction* (1999), *Confessions Of A Radical Industrialist* (2009)

Mark Anielski, *The Economics of Happiness* (2007)

Lester Brown, *Plan B 4.0* (2009), *World On The Edge* (2011)

Cavoukian, Olfman, Ed., *Child Honouring* (2006)

Gwynne Dyer, *Climate Wars* (2008)

Riane Eisler, *The Real Wealth of Nations* (2007)

Duane Elgin, *The Living Universe* (2009)

Thomas Friedman, *Hot, Flat and Crowded* (2008)

Daniel Goleman, *Ecological Intelligence* (2009)

James Hansen, *Storms of My Grandchildren* (2009)

Hazel Henderson, *Ethical Markets* (2007)

James Hoggan, *Climate Cover-Up* (2009)

Elizabeth Kolbert, *Field Notes From a Catastrophe* (2006)

Mark Lynas, *Six Degrees* (2008)

David Korten, *The Great Turning* (2006), *Agenda for a New Economy* (2010)

Bill McKibben, *Eaarth* (2009)

Alanna Mitchell, *Sea Sick* (2009)

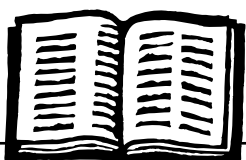
George Monbiot, *Heat* (2009)

David Orr, *Down to the Wire* (2009)

Gustav Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World* (2008)

Andrew Weaver, *Keeping Our Cool* (2008)

Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience* (1998), *The Creation* (2007)



# War: \$1 trillion

Ruth Flower

Here's what I was hoping the president would say in his State of the Union speech: "I've got the answer. We need to spend less money, we need to invest in our infrastructure, our economy, education and jobs. So we need to look very carefully at what this nation needs and what it doesn't need."

The president's own deficit commission concluded that military spending must be on the table when our elected leaders look at what this nation really needs.

But the president barely mentioned the commission's recommendations on cutting back military spending. He could have remarked on the reports coming from moderate to conservative bipartisan groups that are calling for military spending cuts in the range of \$970 billion to \$1.1 trillion over the next ten years. He could have quoted former Secretary of State Colin Powell, or fiscal conservatives like Sen. Coburn and Rep. Cantor, or even David Stockman—Ronald Reagan's budget guru from decades ago. All agree that military spending cannot be given a pass in this season.

There are no mysteries about the military spending that we don't need. You don't have to be a liberal or a pacifist to ask why our country is maintaining so many bases and so many troops in Europe, while we bring the members of the National Guard from home to fight in wars overseas. It's reasonable to wonder why the U.S. military budget is more than two and a half times the size of all of the nation's potential adversaries' budgets combined. It makes sense to ask why taxpayers continue to pay military contractors for weapons that don't work, with cost-overruns far beyond their advertised price, under "cost-plus" contracts, with no audits. Taxpayers do want to know why the Pentagon has never been subject to the kind of federal audits that every other major cabinet agency has to go through.

It makes sense to ask how many nuclear weapons this nation actually needs. The U.S. has nearly

2,000 deployed strategic warheads—when senior Air Force strategic planners say that a few hundred would be sufficient to achieve real deterrence. Because of the global danger these weapons pose, many (including FCNL) would argue that zero is a better number—but certainly this nation doesn't need more than it has right now.

And it makes sense to ask why the U.S. continues to send troops to a war that no one wants and that, according to military leaders, cannot be won with troops. In order to fund the wars, we cut our support of diplomatic and development programs that have great potential to avert future wars before they start. As a nation, we spend so much on the wars that we don't have enough to care for the wounded veterans that the wars produce, or to provide jobs to the veterans when they return home.

There's not much mystery about what this nation actually needs, either. We need jobs. We need infrastructure repair—we need to replace those 40 to 60 year-old pipes that keep bursting in major cities around the country and washing cars and businesses away. We need to keep our classrooms open, all the way through the college years, because more of us will need college and other specialized training in the future. The president talked about all of this—and we all know it. But what he missed was the opportunity to say how we can make these investments and still bring down the deficit.

The president had a unique opportunity in this time of deep and scary deficits and mountains of debt. In this time when there is bi-partisan agreement on this one issue—military spending, this was the time to say, "OK, I've got the answer. Let's look at what this nation really needs and put our dollars where they need to be."

In the coming year, we need to work to persuade the president and Congress that getting a handle on military spending is an opportunity worth seizing.

Source: FCNL Staff Blog 1/27/11  
<<http://fcnl.wordpress.com>>



## Place an ad in Connections!

Business card size (3.75 x 2) .....	\$35
3.75 x 4.....	\$65
3.75 x 6.....	\$96
1/2 page.....	\$220
Full page.....	\$425

Discounts for longer terms and nonprofits available. Send camera-ready copy to: [bjjudici@caltel.com](mailto:bjjudici@caltel.com) or PJN, P.O. Box 4123, Stockton 95204

## Unity of Stockton

### Rental Space for Events



#### Sanctuary:

Services  
Memorials  
Weddings  
Concerts

#### Carlin Center:

Meetings/Workshops  
Receptions  
Baby Showers  
Parties

[office@unityofstockton.com](mailto:office@unityofstockton.com) – [www.unityofstockton.com](http://www.unityofstockton.com)

48 W. Poplar Street, Stockton, CA 95202 – (209) 466-5569

## Fermena + Fermena Plus = probiotic + prebiotic

A nutrient rich OG supplement made from whole grains, beans, veg, fruit, herbs. GMO-free  
80% OF Americans carry 6-25 lbs undigested waste in their colon

**Enjoy better digestion, energy, stamina, deeper sleep**

DISTRIBUTORSHIPS AVAILABLE

Contact Gordon Kobayashi, Valley Springs ([gkaba@caltel.com](mailto:gkaba@caltel.com))

[www.gkaba.diamondtreeonline.com](http://www.gkaba.diamondtreeonline.com)

## Coming to a coffee shop near you!

**89.5 FM  
KYNJ,  
your community  
radio station**



We are networking.

Third Saturdays at 9-11 am we will meet at Blackwater Cafe on Yosemite Street in Stockton. On second Tuesdays, 7 pm, we will meet at the Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton

This is a time to come and talk with us, find out what we were are up and how you can help.

Do you have a favorite spot? Let us know—send an email to [89.5fkmynj@gmail.com](mailto:89.5fkmynj@gmail.com) Give us the name and location of your favorite coffee shop between Stockton and Livermore. We want to include you!

# Obama: disaster for workers

Robert Reich

"We can, and we must, work together," the President told the U.S. Chamber of Commerce earlier this month. "Whatever differences we may have, I know that all of us share a deep, abiding belief in this country, a belief in our people, a belief in the principles that have made America's economy the envy of the world."

Really? I've been watching (and occasionally trying to deal with) the Chamber for years, and all I know is it has a deep, abiding belief in cutting taxes on the wealthy, eroding regulations that constrain Wall Street, cutting back on rules that promote worker health and safety, getting rid of the minimum wage, repealing the new health-care law, fighting unions, cutting back Medicare and Social Security, reducing or eliminating corporate taxes, and, in general, taking the nation back to the days before the New Deal.

So what, exactly, is the deal Obama is pitching to the Chamber?

He said his administration will "help lay the foundation for you to grow and innovate," by eliminating "barriers that make it harder for you to compete—from the tax code to the regulatory system," and by completing more trade deals.

In return, the President said he wants businesses to hire more Americans. "Many of your own economists and salespeople are now forecasting a healthy increase in demand. So I want to encourage you to get in the game," he said. "And as you hire, you know that more Americans working means more sales, greater demand and higher profits for your companies. We can create a virtuous cycle."

Virtuous cycle? American businesses are doing quite nicely as it is. Their profits are soaring. And one reason they're doing so well is they're holding down costs, especially payrolls. So why would they ever agree to add more workers now?

From the standpoint of the nation as a whole, more Americans working may mean even higher profits overall. But publicly-traded companies aren't in the business of spending money to help other companies. To the contrary, they're

**There's no secret to creating lots of jobs by reducing the median wage, slashing benefits, compromising health and safety at the workplace, and, effectively, reducing the standard of living of millions of Americans. We've been doing it for years.**

competing with one another to show high quarterly earnings in order to boost their share prices. They'll "get in the game" and begin to hire large numbers of Americans only when it helps their own bottom lines.

And when will that be? Not long ago, I debated a conservative economist who argued American workers had priced themselves out of the global labor market and would therefore have to settle for lower real wages and benefits before they'd be hired back in large numbers. By his logic, many health and safety regulations would also have to be compromised or abandoned, since they also make American workers more expensive.

If this is the tacit bargain the President is offering business, it's not a good deal for American workers.

There's no secret to creating lots of jobs by reducing the median wage, slashing benefits, compromising health and safety at the workplace, and, effectively, reducing the standard of living of millions of Americans. We've been doing it for years.

And it doesn't lead to a "virtuous cycle." It leads to the kind of economy we've had for years—including, right now, the most anemic recovery from a deep trough since the mid-1930s. Indeed, when the debt bubble popped in 2008, we discovered how many Americans no longer

had the ability to buy enough to keep the economy going. In this and other ways, 2008 bore an uncomfortable resemblance to 1929.

The alternative is to create lots of jobs with high disposable incomes.

In the short term, this means expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit wage subsidy right up through the middle class, and cutting income and payroll taxes for everyone earning less than \$80,000 a year—making up the lost revenues by raising the ceiling on Social Security payroll taxes and hiking marginal taxes on the rich.

In the longer term, this means investing in a world-class education for all the nation's kids, including college or high-quality technical education beyond high school. Here again, we'd have to rely on the top 1 percent (who now take home more than 20 percent of all income) to foot the bill.

Might the CEOs and top executives who comprise the U.S. Chamber of Commerce go along with this? After all, they profess to be patriotic. As the President said, they "share a deep, abiding belief in this country, a belief in our people, a belief in the principles that have made America's economy the envy of the world."

I don't mean to sound cynical but I doubt it.

Source: RobertReich.org 2/8/11

# Class war: game on

Sen. Bernie Sanders

There is a war going on in this country and I am not referring to the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan. I am referring to the war waged by the wealthiest people in America on the disappearing and shrinking middle class of our country. The nation's billionaires are on the warpath. They want more, more, more. Their greed has no end and they are apparently unconcerned for the future of this country if it gets in the way of their accumulation of power and wealth.

On the floor of the Senate, we discuss a lot of things. But one thing we fail to talk about is who is winning in this economy and who is losing, and what that means for parents struggling to survive while working longer hours with lower wages, and worrying about whether their children will have the same kind of standard of living they have.

Right now, the top 1 percent controls more than 23 percent of all income earned in America. The top 1 percent controls more than the bottom 50 percent. It's not only that the rich are getting richer. The very, very rich are getting richer. In the last 25 years, we have seen 80 percent of all new income going to the top 1 percent.

On top of all this, while the millionaires get richer and there are more and more billionaires, as a result of the Citizens United decision, what we are beginning to see in elections is unbelievable—a group of billionaires getting together and deciding where they are going to spend their money. Billionaires are going to flood states with all kinds of negative, dishonest ads in an effort to defeat people defending the middle class and to elect people who will stand up for right-wing billionaires.

The Republicans' goal—and to their credit, they have been pretty honest about it—is to bring this country back to where we were in the 1920s. All of the progressive legislation that started with FDR is on the chopping block. Despite the great successes of Social Security over the last 75 years, despite

the fact that Social Security today has a \$2.6 trillion surplus, they are targeting Social Security. They are targeting Medicare. In Arizona today, people on Medicaid who need transplants are no longer able to get them—that is a real death panel.

Right now, according to a number of studies, we are losing about \$100 billion every year because corporate America and the very wealthy are stashing their money in tax havens like the Cayman Islands and Bermuda. We should be aware that in 2009, ExxonMobil made \$19 billion in profits and not only did the company not pay anything in taxes, it got a \$106 million refund from the IRS. We should also be aware that since 1997, we have almost tripled funding for the military. So if we are serious about reducing the deficit, those are things we need to look at—not at Social Security, not programs everyday Americans need.

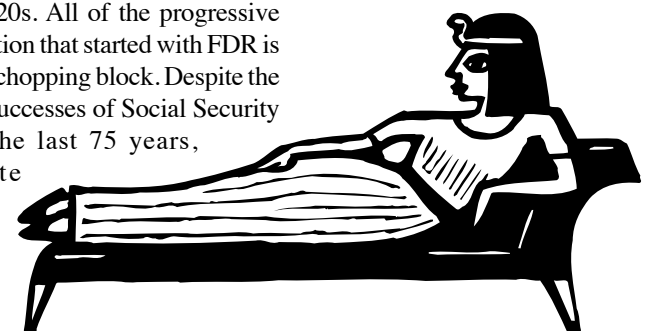
Our job now is to rally Americans to put pressure on a handful of Republicans—to tell them, go into your hearts, talk to your constituents and tell me if it is appropriate to hold hostage the future of this country for an agenda that benefits only the very rich.

If we act, we can win this fight. It is crucial that we do, because if we don't—if they roll over us now—there is no stopping them. It is time we organize.

Your help is wanted.

*Note: This article is part of In These Times' February 2011 issue cover story, "Help Wanted." For the rest of the story, read: "Lead or Be Left Behind," by David Moberg; "5 Things Progressives Should Do—and Not Do," by Barbara Ehrenreich; "Beyond Barack Obama," by Richard Flacks.*

Source: In These Times 1/26/11 [http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/6839/organizing\\_help\\_wanted/](http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/6839/organizing_help_wanted/)



# Frightening American roadmap

Rep. Jan Schakowsky

If part of you clings to that vision of an America where opportunity for all is possible or if you believe that it's time to take the somewhat tarnished American Dream out of cold storage, then be prepared to be deeply disappointed—frightened even—by Republican Representative Paul Ryan's vision of the future. Ryan is the newly crowned Chairman of the House Budget Committee who was given control over how the House of Representatives allocates funding. His Republican colleagues voted in January to give him unilateral, unprecedented authority to set spending limits for everything from defense to education.

I served with Rep. Ryan on the 18 member Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, and learned firsthand from the personally congenial Ryan just how dark his vision of America's future is for all but the super-rich.

There is no disagreement over

the fact that our economy is still a mess, and though the signs of recovery are hopeful, too many friends and family members are out of work, losing their homes to foreclosure, and feeling insecure about the future.

Many people are mad about finding themselves in such uncomfortable circumstances, and who can blame them? They didn't make the mess, after all. They didn't spend our country into record deficits. They didn't start two wars on borrowed money, and they didn't decide to give huge tax cuts to the already hugely rich. They aren't Wall Street tycoons who gambled billions of dollars on bets that caused the near collapse of our economy. And they aren't Wall Street tycoons who are still raking in the unimaginably massive paychecks and bonuses, after being bailed out by the taxpayers.

To see where Ryan is going, look at the document he calls "A

Roadmap for America's Future." In it was his simple plan for health care reform: destroy Medicare as we know it by giving seniors a fixed dollar voucher and sending them off to find an insurance company that will cover them. That's after raising the age of Medicare eligibility. He also revives the discredited idea of privatizing Social Security and raising the retirement age. Good luck, Grandma!

He enthusiastically joined every Republican to vote to repeal the health care bill, despite the independent, non-partisan Congressional Budget Office declaring that repeal adds \$230 Billion more to the deficit. "The CBO is entitled to its opinion," declared Speaker John Boehner. Dismissing the CBO is equivalent to throwing the umpire out of the baseball game and replacing him with your team's coach. But that's just exactly what the new Republican rules allow—if they disagree with the CBO, they simply throw out the call.

Ryan and the Republicans have announced their plans to slash the budget by reducing all non-defense discretionary spending back to 2008 levels—at best. At worst, many Republicans want to go back to 2006 levels—Bush's last budget. The Washington Post calculated that 2008 spending levels mean a 16% cut for the FBI, 13% for national parks, and more than a \$1,000 cut in college Pell Grants from the current \$5,500 maximum grants. My state of Illinois, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, could see a \$1.3 billion cut in federal support, forcing state and local government to lay off teachers and police and firefighters.

There are big winners in Paul Ryan's "Roadmap" and you can guess who they are. He would cut taxes for the wealthy, completely eliminate the corporate income tax, and create a value added tax. According to the Tax Policy Center, his plan would raise taxes for the bottom 95 percent of American wage earners and cut taxes for the top five percent. The top 0.1 percent would see an average tax cut of \$1.7 million—every year.

In case you haven't noticed, the same big winners have been

## Dear Poor People, Thank you for going without heat so we can buy another week of war

Jon Walker

It is important to put budget issues in perspective, so I have a simple request that President Obama, the top members of his administration, and his allies in Congress send a hand written version of this letter to constituents:

Dear low-income American,

*I know times are tough. I know many of you saw your savings and home values hurt by Wall Street recklessness. I also know that, with official unemployment above 9 percent, it is tough to find a job, and many have been forced to choose part-time employment that lacks benefits. But as a result of extending the Bush tax cuts for millionaires, the budget deficit has grown.*

*So, despite your problems, you are going to be "asked" to sacrifice. Your president is planning to cut \$2.6 billion from Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps people afford keeping their homes warm during the winter, despite the fact that due to the economic downturn the number of poor people needing help has increased significantly.*

*As a result of your going without heat next winter, we will be able to afford almost one whole week of fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which cost about \$468 million a day. Although when you add in the many hidden costs like increased long-term veteran's health care due to the conflicts, your sacrifice is probably only really going to cover maybe half a week.*

*I hope you understand that when we had to choose between providing basic necessities to our citizens or fighting about five more days in Iraq and Afghanistan because of [insert newest justification here], we clearly just had to choose the wars over you.*

Sincerely,  
Democrats in Washington

Source: Firedoglake, 2/15/2011

## Contact Your Reps



Pres. Barack H. Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington DC 20500. 202-456-1414; [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

stuffing themselves with cash for the last two decades while the rest of America has been barely holding its own. The top 1 percent of Americans control 34 percent of the wealth while the bottom 90 percent (almost everyone—get it?) control 29 percent. There is greater income inequality in the United States than in any other industrialized country. Yes, the debt is a problem that must be dealt with. To me, however, the disappearing middle class is even worse—bad for our economy and really bad for our democracy.

Considering his zeal for propping up the super rich, I wasn't surprised when the Washington Post revealed that Budget Chairman Paul Ryan "has taken \$1.4 million from banks, hedge funds, investment

houses and other financial services companies." It's a two-way street between Ryan and his Wall Street pals—but the shrinking middle class, the poor, and others who benefit from bedrock American support programs including seniors and those with disabilities just keep hitting road blocks.

The Republicans led by Ryan are determined to keep serving only their wealthy constituency and push the rest of America down a dangerous road that threatens what has long been a consensus vision of our country as the land of opportunity for all.

Source: Huffington Post 1/30/11 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rep-jan-schakowsky/via-Reader-Supported-News> (<http://readersupportednews.org>)



**Joanie McCulloch M.T.**  
**Massage Therapy**

Myofascial Release • Chronic Pain Relief •  
 Fibromyalgia Pain Relief • Swedish Massage •  
 Deep Tissue Massage • Acupressure • Reflexology  
**GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE**

1955 Lucile Ave, Suite B  
 Stockton CA 95209

**298-0393**

**1st time only:  
 \$70 for 2 hours  
 (1st hour devoted to  
 myofascial release)**

**Operating a Successful Business  
 in a Down Economy!**

Free and confidential business consulting  
 Affordable training (no charge for many workshops)  
 Call the SBDC to see how we can assist you

56 S. Lincoln Street • Stockton, CA 95203  
 209-954-5089  
 www.sbdc.deltacollege.org



**LAW OFFICES OF  
 ANN M. CERNEY  
 SHELLIE LOTT  
 LANGLEY KREUZE**

Attorneys at Law  
 45 Hunter Square Plaza, Stockton  
 104 N. School St. #205, Lodi  
 948-9384 or 369-1333

- Personal Injury
- Social Security
- Wills
- Probate
- Trusts
- General Practice

Se Habla Espanol • Thai • Vietnamese



**Roger K.Lang, D.D.S., Inc.**

3031 W. March Lane, Suite 318E  
 (Go north on I-5, exit March Lane, go west to  
 "The Fountain" and turn right)

**(209) 956-0601**

Fax: (209) 952-8845  
 Email: info@drlangdds.com  
 Web: www.drlangdds.com

"Together, we will walk the pathway to health and wholeness."

**Publications**

Technical Writing & Editing / Graphic Design / Web Sites

**InfoWright**

PO Box 162644  
 Sacramento 95816  
 916.444-5118  
 llitman@pacbell.net



# GOP's new abortion agenda

Nick Baumann

Late last month, Mother Jones reported that language in a controversial GOP-backed bill would have limited the definition of rape for the purposes of abortion law. After a New York Times editorial, multiple follow-up articles, a Twitter and blogging activism campaign, and a Daily Show mention, the bill's backers caved, and promised to pull the language from the bill. But the proposed law (the "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act," sponsored by New Jersey GOPer Chris Smith) is still chock full of other provisions that supporters of abortion rights loathe. And abortion rights advocates fear that those measures, unlike the apparently defunct rape language, stand a chance of actually passing the Democrat-controlled Senate.

So far, the part of the bill that has received the most attention is the section highlighted in the Mother Jones article early February. But for abortion rights advocates, the problem is that the rape provision isn't the only problem. At the law's heart is a permanent, government-wide extension of the Hyde Amendment, which prevents the use of federal funds to pay for abortions via Medicaid. Currently, pro- and anti-abortion rights forces have to battle every year over which areas of the federal budget are subject to Hyde-like restrictions. This would end that

fight, for good—and represent a significant win for opponents of abortion rights.

Another part of the law is a sweeping attack on tax benefits and deductions that affect abortion. It would, for example, forbid self-employed people from deducting abortion costs as medical expenses and would outlaw the use of funds from tax-exempt Health Savings Accounts to pay for abortions. In effect, this would raise the taxes of nearly anyone who had an abortion or purchased insurance that covered abortion. "Going after the tax subsidies that affect abortion" would represent a "substantial victory for the pro-life movement in America," Timothy Jost, an opponent of abortion rights and an expert on health law at Washington and Lee University, told Mother Jones last year.

Ultimately, opponents of abortion rights may face a choice. The current bill is a great "message" bill—ideologically rigid and ambitious. That makes sense—it was written when Republicans were out of power, when it had absolutely no chance of passing in a Nancy-Pelosi-led House. Anti-abortion rights groups like the Susan B. Anthony List have been furiously raising money off of it. Some of that money will almost certainly be spent to target Democrats—including some who oppose abortion rights—next cycle.

If the anti-abortion forces' main goal is to raise funds and beat Democrats, they'll do just fine continuing what they're doing. But if they want to actually pass legislation, they could force Senate Democrats to make some tough choices—and take some tough votes—by stripping the tax provisions from the bill. If they press forward with a version of the bill that includes just the government-wide, permanent extension of the Hyde amendment, they might actually get something done. Would Senate Democrats really be able to muster the votes to filibuster a bill that codified Hyde?

Abortion rights supporters fear that the current version of the Smith bill could easily pass the Republican-controlled House of Representatives—even if the rape language was reinstated. Abortion rights opponents basically have one way to get the bill past that point: attaching it to "must-pass" legislation. This could include the planned repeal of one of health care reform's tax provisions (which has bipartisan support), a bill raising the federal debt ceiling, or a "continuing resolution" extending the funding of the government. Abortion rights supporters think that's just what their opponents will try to do.

Source: Mother Jones 2/9/11 <http://motherjones.com>

# ACLU hosts breakfast

On Wednesday February 9, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Northern California hosted a community breakfast at the California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) office in downtown Stockton. A number of community based organizations and advocates were present to attend, including the Stockton chapter of the NAACP, Fathers & Families of San Joaquin County and Planned Parenthood.

Participants exchanged information about their current projects and social justice work and learned the various ways in which the ACLU could support

their efforts. In particular, the ACLU extended supportive services, such as assisting with Public Records Act requests to acquire governmental information to assist with their projects.

This initiative is part of the ACLU Community Network campaign that attempts to connect community organizations with the resources of the ACLU on issues of mutual interest. In our community this includes advocacy on behalf of immigrant groups, efforts to promote school equity, and criminal justice reform. It was an incredible opportunity for participants to not only hear about

other's efforts in our community, but also to connect with each other and much needed resources that are available to support their work.

The ACLU also invited participants to attend their annual Conference & Lobby Day scheduled for March 19 -21 in Sacramento and unveiled their myACLU campaign wherein they provide grants of up to \$100 for members who are able to recruit 10 additional ACLU members under the program. For additional information on these campaigns you can contact Daniel Galindo at [dgalindo@aclunc.org](mailto:dgalindo@aclunc.org).

# Public-sector squeeze

Max Fraad-Wolff and Richard D. Wolff

A national campaign is now fully launched to make local, public-sector employees pick up a major share of the costs of the economic crisis.

Years of rising spending and falling revenue have carved a path of destruction through federal, state and local budgets. Deficits and debts have mounted, eroding taxpayer support for government spending in general and for public employees particularly. In response to deep economic pains in middle-class communities, major efforts are under way, from California to Maine, to balance budgets through major cuts in services, wages, benefits and employment.

Federal, state and local governments are staggering from reduced tax revenues because of unemployment, reduced production, lower investment and the housing collapse. Washington borrowed huge sums from foreign investors, domestic big business and the rich. These funds went to bail out select businesses and to help (partially and temporarily) broken state and local government budgets. Because Democrats and Republicans agreed last December to not increase income, estate and capital gains taxes, broken state and local budgets face declining federal support. This is driving governors, mayors and state legislatures to raise taxes and/or to slash payrolls and programs. Of course, some cutting and tax increases are required. The real social decisions involve what to cut, how much, for whom and whose taxes to increase.

The pressure is on to shift the heavy costs of economic crisis onto the middle- and low-income communities already stung by unemployment, foreclosures, reduced job benefits and rising job insecurity. The campaign to make the middle- and lower-income Americans pay now focuses on public employees—especially their numbers, incomes and benefits. Battles loom over which state and local job holders get fired, whose pensions/benefits will be reduced and which public services will stop being available.

Politicians will keep silent on the key alternative to deep

cuts—precisely because it would otherwise be on most citizens' agendas. That alternative would be to raise the tax share paid by leading firms and the wealthiest 5-10 percent of citizens. In most cases, this means returning to the levels of taxation in the 1980s. Whatever may be needed in the way of reasonable rationalizations and savings in government budget outlays, we will not exit the continuing economic crisis by massive reductions in public service provision and employment. Those only further depress the economic conditions and well-being of middle- and lower-income communities. This would be a more and more cruel version of the track we have been on for decades. Sadly, this approach is neither new nor likely to work.

## Pay

The facts don't support the attacks on public employees. Last year, total state and local employment declined by 407,000 jobs. There are about 20 million state and local workers in America today: 14.3 million local and 5.2 million state employees. Until the last decade, the numbers of public employees grew steadily as did the US population. Unemployment levels in our communities would have been much higher had those workers not found public jobs. State and local government would have provided far fewer and/or poorer public services had state and local employment not grown. Of course, there are stories of waste and corruption. Nonetheless, we all need and benefit from many state and local services.

Over the last decade, state and local employment did not grow very rapidly. As the US economy moved toward crisis, state and local governments did not notably expand their payrolls. Their economics did not spin out of control as did our financial industry and other parts of the private sector. Some states and localities even trimmed their tax rates. Assumptions were made about a lasting housing and equity market boom. These proved false. In many cases, the pain emerges slowly as properties are reappraised, sales tax revenues fail to rise amid record unemployment and huge numbers of citizens do

without health care coverage.

Some now paint public employees as "fat cats." In 2009 (the latest available data), the average state employee earned \$23.67 per hour or \$49,240 per year. The average local government employee earned \$21.68 per hour or \$45,090 per year. These are averages. There are considerable differences among individual public employee earnings depending on her/his location, age and job type. There are huge ranges in pay by locality and union membership as well.

By comparison, the national average earning per hour for all employed Americans in December of 2009 was \$22.38 or \$44,760 for a 2,000 hour year. In other words, state and local government employees earned about the national average in 2009 and 2010. State and local government employees' earnings were close to the national averages in most occupations. Labeling all public employees "fat cats" is an attempt to make mostly middle-class earners and all social service consumers pay for what the economic crisis did to state and local budgets.

## Unions

Another part of the campaign against state and local workers is aimed at their unions. But here, too, the facts offer a more honest picture. State and local government employees are more unionized than private-sector workers. Approximately 12.3 percent (or 14.7 million people) of the total US labor force is represented by unions. That includes a 612,000 member decline in 2010. About 36 percent of public-sector workers were unionized in 2010 as compared to 6.9 percent of private-sector workers. Local public employees (teachers, police and fire personnel, and others closest to the communities they serve) were the most unionized. The majority of state and local public employees are not unionized, just like the vast majority of private-sector workers. Portraying public employees or their unions as the

primary problem is not supported by the facts.

In conclusion, consider exactly who public employees are. Equal Opportunity Employment Committee data from 2007 suggest that 18 percent of full-time, state employees are African-American, while that number for local employees is 19 percent. Public employment has reduced African-American unemployment, reaping social benefits for everyone. Because African-Americans have a higher than average union membership, attacking state and local union jobs targets them especially. Veterans are also significantly overrepresented in public sector employment, at both the state and local level. In 2009, nearly 13 percent of all employed veterans worked for state and local government. Also, public sector employees tend to stay at jobs longer and tend to be older than private-sector workers. Our at-risk state and local workers are disproportionately likely to be of color, in unions, older and veterans.

Most importantly, state and local employees provide vital services to all. Our education, transport, protection, courts and civic participation rely on public-

sector workers. Over 85 percent of Americans are educated in public institutions, from first grade through university. Our police, fire, courts, social workers and clerks keep all of us and our property secure. Our roads, bridges, tunnels, ports, trains, buses and security are public-sector work. Our diversity and our veterans are well represented among our public-sector workers. Cutting the public sector will worsen the economic crisis while deepening many social problems. No discussion about real and serious budget adjustments should proceed from ignorance about what public-sector workers do, who they are and what they are paid. No society moves wisely without acknowledging and factoring the real lives at stake and the real effects of budget decisions.

*Max Fraad Wolff teaches economics in the New School University Graduate Program in International Affairs. Richard D. Wolff is Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst is the author of Capitalism Hits the Fan: The Global Economic Meltdown and What to Do about It, [www.rdwolff.com](http://www.rdwolff.com).*

*Source: [truthout News Analysis 1/31/11](http://www.truthout.org) <http://www.truthout.org>*



## Feedback

### New economic system needed

Editor,

We read with interest the article by Richard D. Wolff, "2011: calling time on capitalism" in the February issue of Connections. We concur with the analysis of capitalism put forward. We believe that capitalism can never be reformed to meet the needs of the working class. This brings to mind the question, what system would serve our needs? We believe an egalitarian system is needed. The revolutions in Russia and China brought

socialism. We believe there are no communist countries in the world today. Unfortunately, wage differentials, nationalism and abuses of power led Russia and China back to capitalism. Today, China and Russia, as well as the United States, are imperialist nations competing for world domination.

The struggle to build a system based on equality will take a strong amount of principle, sacrifice and discipline. We have nothing to lose but our chains and a world to win.

*Harold Bell and another dedicated Thursday marcher*

# Debts should be honored—but not to workers

Dean Baker

This seems to be the lesson that our nation's leaders are trying to pound home to us. According to The New York Times, members of Congress are secretly running around in closets and back alleys working up a law allowing states to declare bankruptcy.

According to the article, a main goal of state bankruptcy is to allow states to default on their pension obligations. This means that states will be able to tell workers, including those already retired, that they are out of luck. Teachers, highway patrol officers, and other government employees, some of whom worked decades for the government, will be told that their contracts no longer mean anything. They will not get the pensions that they were expecting.

Depending on the specific circumstances, they may find their pensions cut back 20 percent, 30 percent, perhaps even 50 percent. There would be no guarantees if a state goes into bankruptcy.

There has been a concerted effort to bash public-sector employees by either highlighting the few instances where pensions actually are exorbitant, or just making things up. Untruths about Goldman Sachs, General Electric, or any other major company rarely appear in the media and are usually quickly corrected when they do. However, exaggerations or outright fabrication are a standard practice for those who report on state and local budgets when it comes to public employees.

The public has been bombarded with stories of public employees retiring with six-figure pensions while still in their early 50s. There may be some instances of such inflated pensions, but that is far from the typical story. If we look to New York State, the hotbed of bloated public budgets, we find that the state's main retirement system pays an average pension of \$18,300 a year <<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/pension/snapshot.htm>>. For many workers, this is their whole retirement income since they were not covered by Social Security.

This is the general story of public pensions. Public-sector workers are often better situated than their

The picture here is very simple: the rules get changed whenever it is necessary to make sure that money flows upward from ordinary workers to the rich. In 21st century America, upward redistribution seems to be the guiding principle.

private-sector counterparts, in that they even have pensions. But study after study shows that these workers paid for their pensions with lower wages than their private-sector counterparts. It is tragic that so many private-sector workers cannot count on a secure retirement, but it won't help them to make workers in the public sector equally insecure.

And, there is the matter of paying debts. State governments are legally obligated to pay retirees the pensions they worked for just like any other debt. It is fascinating to see the interest by many pro-business conservative types in defaulting on this debt.

Many of these same people have been determined to argue that homeowners who are underwater in their mortgages should pay their debts. They certainly have not been offering them any assistance in staying in their homes.

In fact, back in 2005, some of the same crew were busy rewriting the bankruptcy law. They wanted to make it harder for individuals to get out of their debt through bankruptcy. They felt it was so important the people paid their debts to credit card companies and other lenders that they actually applied the law retroactively. People who took out debt under one set of bankruptcy rules suddenly found that Congress had changed the rules after the fact and they would now be subjected to a much harsher set of bankruptcy rules.

Let's see if we can find a pattern here. When families take out a mortgage in the middle of a housing bubble, which may have been misrepresented at the time of sale, the homeowner has an obligation to repay the money to the bank. When people take on credit card debt, they absolutely have an obligation to repay the

bank—even if it means changing the rules after the fact.

However, when the government signs a contract with workers, it doesn't have to pay the workers' pensions if it proves to be inconvenient. Of course, we may also throw in the fact that when the flood of bad mortgage loans issued

by the banks threatened to push them into bankruptcy, the Treasury and the Fed give them trillions of dollars of loans at below market interest rates.

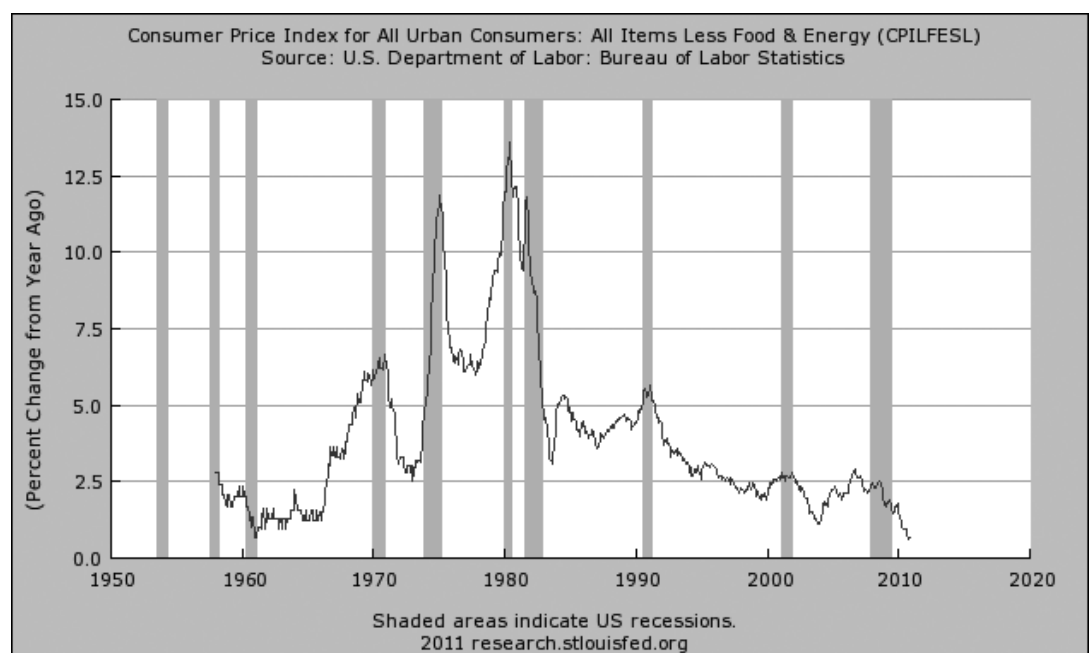
There certainly seems to be a pattern here. The story has nothing to do with preferences for the market or government

intervention. The picture here is very simple: the rules get changed whenever it is necessary to make sure that money flows upward from ordinary workers to the rich. In 21st century America, upward redistribution seems to be the guiding principle.

Dean Baker is a macroeconomist and co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research <<http://www.cepr.net/>> in Washington, DC. He previously worked as a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute and an assistant professor at Bucknell University. He is a regular Truthout columnist and a member of Truthout's Board of Advisers.

Source: *truthout* News Analysis 1/31/11 [www.truthout.org](http://www.truthout.org)

## Lowest. Inflation. Ever.



Kevin Drum

Here's the graph to show any of your friends who think that inflation might be a problem thanks to Fed monetary policy or deficit spending. It shows core inflation (inflation minus food and energy) over the past 50 years, which is a good way of visualizing basic inflationary trends in the economy without getting distracted by normal swings in volatile commodity prices.

Right now, core inflation has been trending down steadily for four years and is as low as it's been since the end of World War II. There's no evidence that food and energy prices are feeding through to core inflation, and no evidence that there's even a trace of broad inflationary pressure in the economy. It's just not there. Employment and growth are our problems, not inflation.

Kevin Drum is a political blogger for Mother Jones.

Source: *Mother Jones* 2/10/11 <http://oascentral.motherjones.com>

# Mess started with Reagan

Terrance Heath

In a sense, it's highly appropriate that the centennial of Reagan's birth falls upon us in the midst of a economic nightmare from which it is uncertain when—or if—the nation will awaken. Though we will be inevitably awash in conservative praise and hagiography of Reagan, his 100th birthday is also an occasion to remember how America's long economic nightmare began.

It's a story told many times, but it bears telling again, and again... Take a look at a chart of almost anything, and you'll notice that right around 1981, things take a sharp turn in the wrong direction—that is, for just about everyone but the wealthiest 1%.

## Debtors all

Conservative policies transformed the United States from the largest creditor nation to the largest debtor nation in just a few years. And it started with Reagan. Anyone who's wringing their hands about America's debt and China's ownership of it has Reagan to thank, as Reagan's former budget director David Stockman recently explained to David Corn. "... The tax cut ballooned from \$500 billion over five years to \$1 trillion after lobbyists added special-interest tax breaks for various industries. And on the spending side, the Reagan administration went hog-wild throwing money at the Pentagon. The inevitable happened: The deficit ballooned.... The new doctrine got a boost when it turned out you didn't have to match tax cuts with spending cuts: The Federal Reserve was able to sell the nation's growing debt to China and others. "It totally anesthetized the political system to the costs of deficit spending," Stockman says. "Therefore the simplistic and reckless idea that the way to stimulate the economy is to cut taxes anytime, anywhere, for any reason, became embedded [in the GOP]. It has become a religion, it has become a catechism. It's become a mindless incantation."

As Paul Krugman wrote in 2009, we weren't always a nation of big debts. "...The S. & L. crisis has been written out of the Reagan hagiography, but the fact is that deregulation in effect gave the industry—whose deposits were federally insured—a license to gamble with taxpayers' money,

at best, or simply to loot it, at worst. By the time the government closed the books on the affair, taxpayers had lost \$130 billion, back when that was a lot of money. But there was also a longer-term effect. Reagan-era legislative changes essentially ended New Deal restrictions on mortgage lending—restrictions that, in particular, limited the ability of families to buy homes without putting a significant amount of money down.... Together with looser lending standards for other kinds of consumer credit, this led to a radical change in American behavior.

Revisiting the Reagan ruins, Robert Borosage explained that Reagan's deregulatory fervor essentially gutted consumer protections. "Deregulation gutted consumer protection, environmental protection, workplace safety and the right to organize under Reagan. It led to many scandals that made his administration one of the most corrupt in history, with a record 138 officials investigated, indicted or convicted. But the biggest change was deregulation of banking, which led to successive financial wildings and crashes that have cost taxpayers literally trillions. The first was the Savings and Loan debacle that followed on Reagan's reforms that empowered banksters to gamble with other people's money, with their losses guaranteed by the federal government."

## Income inequality

Working people's share of the benefits from increased productivity took a sudden turn down, which resulted in intense concentration of wealth at the top... As the *NY Times* stated in 1988, "not every pocketbook statistic, however, reflects so rosily on the (Bush I) Administration's performance. Real wages have slipped since 1980, and now are about 10 percent below the peak of 1972. Thus Mr. Bush's claim that average incomes are at a record high today only reflects the fact that more families have a second earner in the work force.... Nor is there reason to be optimistic that wage stagnation will soon end. Productivity gains, which largely determine wage increases in the long run, have slowed to a crawl in the last two decades and show little sign of revival. Moreover, America's rapidly accumulating

debt to foreigners is sure to become a drag on domestic purchasing power."

Americans in the overall top 1 percent, the 2007 CBO data showed, did quite well in the Reagan era's first quarter-century. Their average incomes, after taking inflation into account, essentially tripled, rising 201 percent. But these top 1 percent stats, the new CBO data help us understand, hardly tell the full story.... Between 1979 and 2005, the bottom half of the top 1 percent saw their average incomes only double, after inflation. These incomes increased 105 percent. The next highest four-tenths of the top 1 percent somewhat raised the income bar. Their average incomes, after inflation, rose 161%.

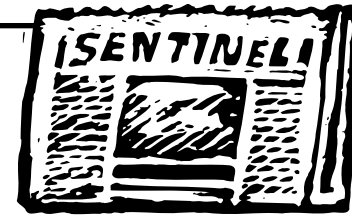
That brings us to the top 0.1 percent of Americans. Their incomes, from 1979 to 2005, rose a staggering 294 percent after taking inflation into account. Not bad at all. But the top 0.01 percent did even better. The 11,000 households in this rarified air took home an average \$35.5 million in 2005, a 384 percent increase over average top 0.01 percent incomes in 1979.

Even now, we are haunted by the narrative he established in his 1981 inaugural address: "government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem." This is the narrative that haunts us to this day; haunts us and hampers us from taking bold action to solve the problems facing America. It hampers us because it frames us as separate from government.

Government in Reagan's narrative became "the government," not "our government." The success of Reagan's narrative, all the way up to the reforms of the Obama administration and the previous Congress, have effectively scaled down our ability to address problems to large in scope to be effectively addressed by state or local governments, let alone by non-government organizations or on an individual basis.

Reagan's genius was to step into a period of uncertainty and focus the fear and anxiety of America on the government as the enemy. What he was really saying was "Whatever happens, you're on your own." His self-appointed heirs are as haunted as the rest of us.

Source: Campaign for America's Future 2/4/11 <http://www.ourfuture.org/>



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

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

Firedoglake <http://firedoglake.com>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Think Progress <http://thinkprogress.com>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## We're on the web too!

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

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>

Photographs for viewing at the  
Henry Paine Gallery, 147 E. Alpine Ave.,  
Mon-Fri., 1-6pm. Stockton

## Henry Paine Camera Repair

*An owner-operated shop. You are welcome  
to come in and ask questions about our work.*

147 E. Alpine, Stockton, 95204  
(209) 942-2821 — open M-F, 1:00-6:00 pm

*Efficient and reliable repair of your camera.*

**FREE ESTIMATES**



## Spiritual Counseling

Past-Life Regression • Tarot Card  
Readings • Crystal Sessions  
• 30 Years Experience

*Call Joyce McCallister for an appointment:  
209.565.1173*



## PACIFIC COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE CENTER

*serving Stockton since 1984*

Yi-Po Anthony Wu, M.D., M.P.H.  
Medical Director, Internal Medicine

Teresa M. Chen, Ph.D.  
Program Coordinator

Dorel Rotar, L.Ac., MTOM  
Brian Chee C. Loh, L.Ac., O.M.D.  
Shu-Chuan Susan Wang, L.Ac., Ph.D., O.M.D.  
*Licensed Acupuncturists, Herbalists*

### **The Best of Eastern and Western Medicine for Health and Healing**

- Internal Medicine • Acupuncture & Moxibustion •  
East & West Herbs •  
Chinese Health Exercises (Tai Chi & Qi Gong)

### **Shop at the Herb Store**

Specializing in Traditional Chinese Herbal Remedies  
wide variety of western herbs & nutritional supplements  
imported teas ☼ vitamins & minerals ☼ health bars  
essential oils ☼ healthcare & educational books ☼  
over-the-counter medications

Store Hours: Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**645 West Harding Way • 464-4800**  
Visit our website @ <http://www.wuway.com>

# Chemicals: it's what's for dinner

A new report by the Food and Drug Administration confirms what the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) has been saying for years: American livestock and poultry producers are using massive amounts of antimicrobial drugs, which include antibacterials, antibiotics and antiparasitics.

The FDA report, which the agency quietly posted on its website early December, found that nearly 29 million pounds of antimicrobials were sold in 2009 for both therapeutic and non-therapeutic use for all farm animal species. That figure is consistent with an estimate in a 2001 UCS report, "Hogging It," which calculated that 25 million pounds of antimicrobials were used in one year in only three sectors—cattle, swine and poultry—for non-therapeutic purposes such as promoting growth and preventing disease in animals forced to live in crowded, unsanitary conditions.

"The FDA findings corroborate

what we concluded nine years ago," said Margaret Mellon, director of the UCS Food and Environment Program. "Antimicrobial use in U.S. animal agriculture is way out of proportion of what is necessary. And that poses dire risks for human health by undermining the effectiveness of these drugs."

UCS estimated that the amount used for farm animals was about eight times more than the three million pounds doctors prescribed that year for human medical purposes. All told, UCS estimated that 70 percent of total antimicrobial drugs used in the United States is devoted to non-therapeutic use in livestock.

"Hogging It" was attacked by the livestock industry, which charged that its estimates were based on flawed methodology. At the time, the U.S. government was not tracking antimicrobial use in U.S. livestock and poultry. In 2008, Congress passed the Animal Drug User Fee Act, which

required the FDA to compile and disseminate data on antimicrobial sales and distribution in food animal agriculture. Last Friday was the agency's inaugural release of that information.

"The Obama administration recognizes we have a problem with agricultural antimicrobials, but it has yet to move forcefully on the issue," Mellon said. "We hope the FDA report will motivate the administration to take concrete steps to protect public health by limiting inappropriate antimicrobial use." For more information, see the FDA report at: <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ForIndustry/UserFees/AnimalDrugUserFeeActADUFA/UCM231851.pdf>

**ACTION:** Contact President Obama—and relay your concerns.

*Source: Union of Concerned Scientists release 12/14/10 UCS, 2 Brattle Square, Cambridge, MA 02138-3780 <http://www.ucsusa.org>*

# Governor: ending ag and open space preservation?

In an effort to tackle the budget deficit, Governor Jerry Brown has proposed cutting California's most effective agricultural and open space land preservation program. Commonly referred to as the Williamson

Act, the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 allows the state's 58 counties to enter into contracts with private property owners in an effort to preserve land for agriculture or open space. According to the Department of Conservation's Division of Land and Resource Protection, nearly 16 million acres, or half of California's farm and ranch land, is under the Williamson Act. These contracts usually require that land owners not develop on their property usually for a ten year period in exchange for a 20-75 percent cut in their property taxes. The state then sets aside

funds to help with each county's loss in property tax revenue. In 2008-09 the state appropriated nearly \$40 million in subvention funds. During the budget crisis, the funds were completely suspended; and now, under Brown's proposed budget, the state would terminate Williamson Act funding in an attempt to tackle a part of the \$25 million deficit.

While touted by many, the Williamson Act has come under fire in the more recent past. The Legislative Analyst Office in the 2004 General Government Analysis noted that "with a \$39.8 million subvention allocation,

the program would cost the state more than \$80 million when the full weight of the lost property tax revenue was taken into consideration." Despite the fiscal issues tied to it, the Williamson Act has been a major player in preservation of California open spaces and its cessation will likely draw serious implications.

**ACTION:** Contact your state representative: support open space.

*Source: PCL INSIDER: News from the Capitol 1/28/11 The Planning and Conservation League, 1107 9th Street, Suite 360, Sacramento, CA 95814(916) 444-8726 [www.PCL.org](http://www.PCL.org)*



# New Congress: killing eco-laws

## Clean Air—all bad

\* House members have introduced five bills to limit the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Air Act authority. The most serious threat is a bill Rep. Upton (R-MI), the chair of the powerful Energy and Commerce Committee, released on 2/2. The bill would eliminate the EPA's authority to issue regulations for the purpose of limiting climate change, and repeal previous EPA actions, including its finding that greenhouse gases endanger the public's health and welfare.

\* Three of the other bills also deal with carbon dioxide. On 1/5, Rep. Blackburn (R-TN) offered a bill to permanently eliminate the EPA's authority to limit carbon dioxide emissions (H.R. 97). The bill, which had 113 co-sponsors as of 2/1, would nullify the Supreme Court ruling that the Clean Air Act gives the EPA the authority to regulate carbon dioxide. Also on the first day of the 112th Congress, Rep. Poe (R-TX) introduced a related bill, H.R. 153, which would prohibit the EPA from carrying out any market-based trading program under the Clean Air Act for greenhouse gases. Taking aim at a different EPA action, on 1/6, Rep. Carter (R-TX) introduced a bill, H.J. Res. 9, that would permanently block the EPA from reducing the soot, mercury and toxic pollution that cement plants release into the air.

\* In the Senate, on 1/31 Sen. Rockefeller (D-WV) re-introduced his bill from last year to impose a two-year ban on the EPA's taking any regulatory action regarding carbon dioxide and methane pollution under the Clean Air Act (S. 231). The legislation would retroactively block the first steps that took effect in January to assure that the biggest new power plants and factories are built with available and affordable controls to reduce their carbon pollution. Rep. Capito (R-WV) has introduced a similar bill (H.R. 199) in the House.

\* On 1/31, Sen. Barrasso (R-WY) introduced the most far-reaching legislation yet to block action against carbon dioxide

pollution (S. 228). His bill would block the president, the EPA and every other arm of the federal government from taking any action that has the primary purpose of controlling global warming. The bill would even repeal the modest requirement (imposed by Congress itself in 2008) that big polluters measure and report their carbon emissions each year. Additionally, the bill would preempt many state actions to curb carbon pollution. It would take away California's and other states' historic authority to clean up carbon pollution from cars, and would interfere with joint efforts by the 10 northeastern states to reduce carbon pollution through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

## Energy—nukes and a bad bill

\* In this year's State of the Union address, President Obama announced his energy agenda, including a call for a "Clean Energy Standard." His plan calls for producing 80 percent of the nation's electricity from clean sources by 2035, doubling the number of the Department of Energy's energy innovation hubs to six, and adding more than \$8 billion for new clean energy funding in the fiscal year 2012 budget, roughly a third more than in the president's 2010 budget request. The president's proposal includes nuclear energy, natural gas and "clean coal" in the 80 percent figure, along with renewables.

## Environmental Regulations—wrong

\* On 1/20, Rep. Davis (R-KY) and a number of high-ranking Republicans introduced the "REINS Act" (H.R. 10, the Regulations From the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act), which is designed to make it more difficult to put into effect any new regulations in any policy area. The bill would require all major regulations (i.e., those with an annual economic impact of \$100 million or more) to be approved by both houses of Congress and be signed into law by the president to take effect. This would reverse the century-

# GMOs: Don't let Monsanto win

Unbelievably, in the past 3 weeks, the Obama administration has approved 3 GMO crops. First it was Monsanto's Roundup Ready alfalfa, then Monsanto's GMO sugar beets and just last Friday, as Egypt celebrated its freedom, the Obama U.S. Department of Agriculture gave the go ahead to a GMO variety of industrial corn to be used to produce ethanol.

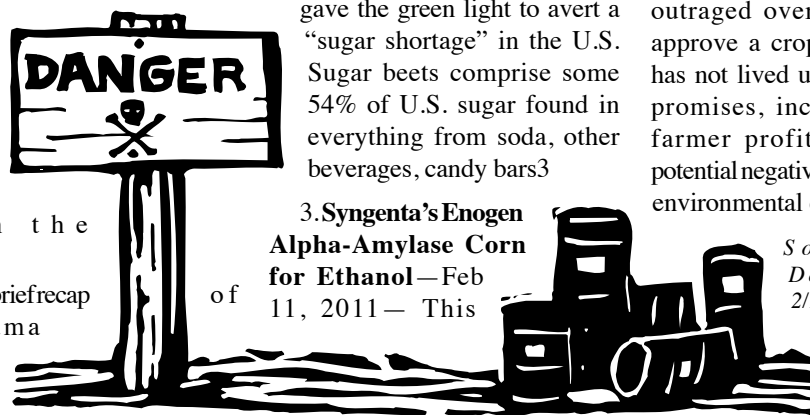
At a time when the Obama administration should be forging ahead to make agriculture more sustainable, encouraging more farmers to convert to organic farming practices, they've decided to double down on an unproven and untested technology over the objections of millions of Americans and a growing chorus of food manufacturers, both organic and conventional, who find these lab engineered food products to be worrisome for a variety of reasons.

Already more than 75,000 American citizens and two dozen farm, food and agricultural organizations have signed a letter to President Obama asking him to retract his recent decisions on GMO alfalfa and sugar beets.

Clearly t h e

President and his staff have not gotten t h e message!

Here's a brief recap of the Obama



administration's appalling cave to Monsanto and the biotech industry in just the last 3 weeks.

1. **Monsanto's Roundup Ready GMO alfalfa**—Jan. 27th, 2011—Over the objections of hundreds of thousands of American citizens, the White House approved this unnecessary crop—despite the fact that 93% of alfalfa hay grown in the U.S. does not use herbicides and that genetic contamination with conventional, non-GMO and organic alfalfa threatens the livelihoods of tens of thousands of family farmers and the food choices of more than 50 million organic consumers.

2. **Monsanto's Roundup Ready GMO sugar beets**—Feb. 4, 2011—Defying a court order to complete a proper Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) the USDA announced that it is granting a "partial" approval of Monsanto's GMO sugar beets, giving farmers and seed dealers the clear signal that final approval is right around the corner. By the time the EIS is expected to be complete, sometime in May, farmers will have already started planting their crop for the next year since the USDA says it

gave the green light to avert a "sugar shortage" in the U.S. Sugar beets comprise some 54% of U.S. sugar found in everything from soda, other beverages, candy bars<sup>3</sup>

3. **Syngenta's Enogen Alpha-Amylase Corn for Ethanol**—Feb 11, 2011— This

new GMO amylase corn product contains an enzyme that allegedly allows an increase in ethanol production with a reduction of natural gas and water usage, thus saving ethanol plants money. While caving to the biotech and ethanol industries, the Obama administration basically ignored the concerns of leading food manufacturers who fear that if this new industrial corn cross-pollinates with or is accidentally mixed with corn used to make food products, it could lead to crumbly corn chips, soggy cereal and a host of other food processing disasters.

Despite being comprised of more than 43 powerful companies such as General Mills, ConAgra Mills, ADM Milling and Quaker Oats, the Obama administration completely dismissed the concerns of the North American Miller's Association, comprised of some of the largest food manufacturers in U.S. in order to favor the biotech and ethanol corporate agenda, both industries with checkered pasts and products of dubious benefit.

**ACTION:** Please take a moment to tell President Obama that you're outraged over his decision to approve a crop technology that has not lived up to its marketing promises, increasingly harms farmer profitability and has potential negative human health and environmental consequences.

Source: Food Democracy Now, 2/15/2011, <http://www.fooddemocracynow.org/>

long trend of Congress delegating regulatory authority to agencies that have technical expertise. The bill, which would pose a significant additional hurdle for environmental regulations, is co-sponsored by powerful committee chairs, including Rep. Upton (R-MI), whose Energy and Commerce Committee would be required to review many rules under the act.

## Gulf Oil Disaster—a positive

\* On 1/11, the President's Commission on the Deepwater Horizon disaster (on which NRDC

President Frances Beinecke served) released its 380-page report, which calls for fundamental reforms in the regulation of offshore oil and gas drilling. Commission co-chairs William Reilly, former administrator of the EPA, and Bob Graham, former senator and governor from Florida, testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee on 1/26. That same day, Rep. Markey (D-MA), the ranking Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee, introduced legislation (H.R. 501) that would codify the commission's

recommendations. The legislation would re-organize the Interior Department to heighten safety and environmental oversight of drilling; remove the \$75 million liability cap for oil companies that are involved in a spill; dedicate 80 percent of the fines collected from the companies involved in last year's spill to Gulf of Mexico restoration efforts; and create a dedicated funding stream for oil spill clean-up research and development.

Source: NRDC—Legislative Watch 2/4/11, *Natural Resources Defense Council*, 40 W. 20th St. NY, NY 10011 <http://www.nrdc.org>

## Wolf Creek Lodge

a cohousing development for active adults  
over 50 years of age,  
soon to be built in Grass Valley.  
Limited number of homes still available

[www.wolfcreeklodge.org](http://www.wolfcreeklodge.org)  
1-800-558 3775



**Glenda Maxwell, C.M.T.**  
Professional Massage Therapy

Myofascial Release - Accupressure  
Trigger Point Therapy- Pre Natal  
Facelift Massage-Spa Treatments

209-329-1137

By Appointment Only

### Stebbins of Stockton

Your Neighborhood Services Dealer

#### Mark Stebbins

General Bldg and Electrical Contractor  
U-Haul Rentals and Real Estate

209 467-4070  
stebbinsmark007  
@comcast.net

1311 South Center Street  
Stockton, CA 95206  
#773245



Balance Physical Therapy & Pilates

### Kathleen Smith Wong, PT, MFA

Physical Therapist  
Pilates Rehabilitation Specialist

2540 Pacific Avenue  
Stockton, California 95204

Tel 209-946-0806  
Fax 209-946-0927



The Holisticzone

Rev. Gay Lynn Saunders, D.C.



by appointment only (209) 607-2669

- ♥ Pain control, Self-discovery & Emotional Balancing incorporating: Craniosacral Therapy, Reiki, B.E.S.T., Alchemical Hypnotherapy
- ♥ Detoxification and Nutritional Balancing incorporating: Supplementation, Individualized Diet & Live Food Principles

## Soaring prices, growing destabilization

# Food, Egypt and Wall Street

Robert Alvarez

The dramatic rise in food prices is fueling a great deal of discontent in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere. It's a deep undercurrent propelling many of the poor, who face prospects of starvation, to resort to the streets and to violence. According to the United Nation's Food Agency (Food and Agriculture Organization—FAO) world food prices are up for the 7th month in a row and are likely to surpass the record high reached in December 2010.

No end is in sight for this destabilizing battle with food price inflation in places like Egypt, where more than half of an average income goes for food. According to the State Department, more than 60 food riots occurred worldwide over the past two years.

In March 2008, a dramatic spike in food prices led thousands of people on the brink of starvation in Egypt to violently riot—sending a seismic shock wave through the Mubarak regime. After the Egyptian military was able to distribute enough wheat to dispel the rioting, efforts to stockpile wheat by the Mubarak government have failed, as food prices continue to hover at record highs.

The media is reporting many reasons for this problem ranging from soaring demand, cuts in food subsidies, droughts, and government mandates to use more grain-based biofuel. But, another significant factor is at play: unfettered speculation by investment banks. As noted in USA Today, in 2008, "the bulls may not be running on Wall Street, but they're charging in the commodities pits."

At issue are the still deregulated commodity markets ushered in by the Clinton administration and the U.S. Congress with the passage of the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000. Before this law, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) served as a cop on the beat, enforcing rules that prevent the distortion or manipulation

No end is in sight for this destabilizing battle with food price inflation in places like Egypt, where more than half of an average income goes for food.

of prices beyond normal supply and demand. But Wall Street banks and companies such as ENRON and British Petroleum were determined to make a lot more money from speculation by exempting energy-derivative contracts and related swaps from government oversight.

For this reason, the 2000 law allows entities that have no stake in whether adequate amounts of food and fuel are available for ordinary people and commodity-dependent businesses to make huge sums of money by gambling with other people's money.

Soon after passage of the 2000 law, "dark" unregulated futures trading markets emerged, most notably the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) in London—created by Wall Street and European investment banks and several oil companies. A key practice involves "over the counter index trading" in which hundreds of billions of dollars of pension, sovereign wealth, and other institutional funds are used to flood "dark" commodity markets to buy and hold futures contracts without an expiration date or oversight. When it's time to make money on a losing bet, these funds are withdrawn, causing commodity price crashes and economic instability.

These transactions don't involve customary "bona fide" commodity traders, such as an airline company hedging on the price of jet fuel by purchasing futures contracts. As prominent hedge fund manager Michael Masters noted before a U.S. Senate panel in 2008, this amounts to "a form of electronic

hoarding and greatly increases the inflationary effect of the market. It literally means starvation for millions of the world's poor."

Some world leaders are willing to speak out against the pernicious role of "dark" commodity markets. Recently, French President Sarkozy warned of further unrest and even war at the Davos forum, unless commodity speculation is reined in—something that Wall Street and Republican lawmakers are bitterly fighting. The Dodd/Frank Financial Reform Law places some restrictions on this practice by the CFTC. In particular, the CFTC is beginning the process of weeding out "non bona fide" investment bank speculators.

True to form, House Republicans are demanding that the CFTC slam on the brakes. They're planning hearings and legislation to hamstring these efforts.

The spontaneous mass uprising of ordinary people in Egypt and the Middle East against their authoritarian regimes has many root causes. One that deserves much greater attention is unfettered speculation by powerful private financial institutions that don't care about world-wide starvation and its impacts. It's distorting global food supplies.

*Robert Alvarez, an Institute for Policy Studies senior scholar, served as senior policy adviser to the Energy Department's secretary from 1993 to 1999.*

*Source: Counterpunch 2/4/11  
<http://www.counterpunch.org/alvarez02042011.html>*

# Egypt revolution: chance for real change

Rabbi Michael Lerner

Jews and Spiritual Progressives of every religious community are rejoicing at the triumph of the democratic uprising in the streets of Cairo and other Egyptian cities and at the resignation of President Mubarak. But we have no illusions that the struggle for democracy has been won. We are fearful that the US and others who seek "stability" rather than "democracy" may accept a new autocratic regime under the leadership of Vice President Omar Suleiman (the US ally who played a significant role in the torture operations in Egypt) or under the leadership of a "soft" military coup in which the Army becomes the primary force in Egypt. Nor would we welcome a government dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, though they have a legitimate role to play in any new government. It remains to be seen if a genuine democratic process takes place, or merely a military and security forces controlled process leading to elections that reflect the desires of the military which might continue to control the media and the security forces.

Here is what we would look for to see if this is really a democratic transformation:

1. The immediate end of the Emergency Laws that have been in effect since 1972 and that have given the state powers that deny fundamental human rights for the Egyptian people.

2. The freeing of all political prisoners

3. A focus on economic justice for the poor (which is the majority of the population). A specific step would be to call for the West to immediately embrace a Global Marshall Plan whose first setting would be the Middle East countries.

4. The creation of a democratic transition group representing all the different opposition factions as well as the Army and Mubarak's party, but the Army and the old regime having only a few representatives rather than dominating the process.

5. Immediate opening of the Egyptian television and other media to a wide variety of perspectives representing all the different factions in the Uprising including, but not dominated by, the Islamic forces or the Army.

We are well aware that the Iranian revolution, at first a popular uprising, was taken over by extremist mullahs and turned into an oppressive dictatorship of the mullahs even as the forms of democracy and election of a president gave the pretense of democracy. We do not want that to happen in Egypt, which is one reason we have called upon the US, Israel and the Western countries to embrace the democratic forces rather than hope for "stability" through military control. Only an unequivocal and massive set of political moves by the US and Israel, including an end to the Occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza, would convey to the Egyptian people that the US and Israel had really gotten the message that supporting Mubarak's repressive regime was a mistake and that they truly respect the masses of the Arab world and wish to be partners with them rather than seek to dominate them.

All this is a major religious and spiritual celebration. Though the right-wing government of Israel and the Jewish establishment in the U.S. have called on the US to support "stability" rather than democracy, the vast majority of Jews in the US and around the world have celebrated the Egyptian uprising, and while feeling concerned that it not be taken over by anti-Israel elements who might seek a war with Israel, we recognize the Biblical legacy of the need to overthrow the Pharaohs of Egypt and "let the people go." Western religions including Islam retain the story of the Israelite freedom struggle retold in the Bible. Jews celebrate that liberation every Sabbath and on Passover. That ancient story has predisposed many in these Western spiritual traditions to favor every liberation struggle in the contemporary world. We will

not be fooled by a new Pharaoh to replace the old Pharaoh, whether the new Pharaoh is Suleiman or the army or an Islamic dictatorship.

But none of these concerns will overshadow our current rejoicing at the overthrow of Mubarak. This joyous moment reminds us once again of Tikkun's main lesson: do not be realistic. Never allow the people with power in the economy, politics or the media to tell you that fundamental change is "unrealistic" and that you must settle for minor reforms while keeping the fundamental problems untouched.

Remember that this kind of advice was in place in Egypt four weeks ago, and that ordinary people, not big shots, just little guys like us, changed history. Indeed, this is the moment to

reaffirm our commitment to A New Bottom Line in both our personal and economic/political and social lives of love, kindness, generosity, ethical and ecological sensitivity and awe and wonder at the grandeur and mystery of the universe (or universes)—as embodied in the Spiritual Covenant with America. Remind the pessimists, cynics, skeptics and "realists" in your life of the following basic truth that they could have learned from the Bible, from the 60s, from the huge

advances made by the civil rights, women's and glbtq movements, and now from Tunisia and Egypt: you never know what is possible until you engage in sustained struggle for what is ethically desirable and environmentally necessary.

Source: Tikkun magazine's editor Rabbi Michael Lerner and the Network of Spiritual Progressives statement 2/10/11. Tikkun Magazine, 2342 Shattuck Ave. #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704 (510)-644-1200 www.tikkun.org



## 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.



## Tiger's Den Kid School

Strengths Based Education

Exceptional Baby Care

Infants & Toddlers

1:6 Teacher/Child Ratio

Preschool

Home Environment

K-8 Professional Tutoring

Extended Care

Free meals provided-pesticide & trans fat free, locally grown

Cloth Diaper Service Available



209-467-0171

tigersdenschool@gmail.com

## IS IT TIME TO DO YOUR ESTATE PLAN?

- ◆ Revocable Living Trusts
- ◆ Durable Power of Attorney
- ◆ Will

If you want to get started please contact me:

**Christopher K. Eley, Attorney at Law**  
A Professional Corporation

343 E. Main Street, Suite 710  
Stockton, CA 95202

Email: eleylaw@gmail.com Phone: 209-466-8511

## The T is Not Silent

# Believe in us

Elena Kelly

The first time I dressed publicly as a woman, Rosa caught me trying to slip back into my house after midnight. It had been one week since I discovered that I was transgender, and I had been invited to a party of transgender women in Sacramento. I left my house looking perfectly male with a bag that contained everything I needed. My plan was to stop at exit 493 at Walnut Grove, where I would pull under the freeway. In my completely darkened car, I transformed my male body into the woman I knew myself to be. I was terrified that someone might stop "to help," so my transformation took less than ten minutes. I had practiced at home.

The party was pure magic. I met and socialized with over thirty transgender women, some of whom had been "out" for years. Others, like me, were just beginning to understand who we are and what it means to be transgender. Most of the girls at the party never go out in public, and never allow their spouses to know. In short, most are in the closet about their femininity, and this one night each month is their night to live their dream. They tell their partners they are going to play poker with the boys. For some, the secret desires of their hearts have been hidden from public for years.

Never in my life had I felt more alive than that night at the party. I learned that some transgender people live their truth openly all the time and I decided that I would be one of those, whatever it took. I stayed and helped clean up and didn't get back home to Stockton until well after midnight. I hadn't bothered to change back into male clothing because it felt so good to be dressed properly for the first time in public. There was no way I could have known that my next door neighbor, who was off work recuperating from a broken ankle from a fall, would decide to go for a walk in the middle of the night to try to alleviate her pain. We met at the foot of the stairs that led to our apartments. I was too mortified to say anything so I rushed into my

apartment, locked the door, and burst into tears.

Less than a week later I decided it was time for me to go public in Stockton. The Port City Roller Girls were doing an exhibition at the County Fair and I decided to go see them since I knew many of the girls on the team. I wore my PCRG tank top, jean shorts, and too much makeup for the extreme heat of the Central Valley summer. But everything went well and I had a great time, staying until the fair closed. The parking lot had few lights, and I wandered around for about an hour trying to find my car. I was heckled by some young men who were sitting on the hood of their pickup truck drinking beer. I called my son and stayed on the phone with him until I finally found my car. He made me promise never to go into a darkened parking lot again unless he was with me.

Both of these incidents happened three years ago, and within one week of each other. They mark the first steps I took as a transgender woman foraying out into the world for the first time. It was a period of time wherein I was learning to believe in myself. I was allowing the woman inside me to live freely, without stuffing her into the recesses of my being, without pretending she didn't exist. She emerged, much like a prisoner who had lived in solitary confinement for fifty years, and was suddenly set free in society. She was shy and fearful, but determined never to go back into that prison. She is a survivor.

Very few people ever question their gender identity. The majority of those who do begin to express it at around age four or five. Soon they are taught that what they are feeling is wrong. They are forced to play with toys they don't like, to wear clothes they despise, to wear their hair in a way that feels wrong to them. A child cannot be made to be transgender and a transgender child cannot be made cisgender. But that doesn't stop their family, teachers, schoolmates, and total strangers from trying. It's usually better for "tom boys" than for "girly boys." Western culture accepts girls in being boyish, but

it demands that feminine boys be forced to be tough, often to the destruction of the child's self-esteem. That's my experience, and the experience of hundreds of other transwomen I know.

Why is maleness acceptable for both genders and femaleness acceptable only for girls? Who made that rule? Children develop confidence and healthy self-esteem when they are loved unconditionally. We give girls Barbie dolls and boys guns, but it's so much better to support them in choosing their own favorite toys. In so doing we encourage them to live honestly, and to express their feelings in a safe and supportive context. But what happens when they go to school? Won't gender variant children be harassed and bullied at school? Yes they will—unless the parents and school staff refuse to allow it. Kids need adults that will work to build their confidence. If their parents and the school staff will not do it, then who will?

It took me fifty years to finally believe in myself but it didn't happen overnight. Meeting my neighbor Rosa on the stairs that night was the beginning. I spoke with her the next day and she accepted me completely. I am one of the lucky ones. Too many transgender people face ridicule and rejection by their families, friends and neighbors. Many homeless youth are kids who are gay, lesbian or transgender. They are homeless because they weren't accepted by those who should have been there for them.

Being LGBT is not a disease that needs to be cured. It is a natural and beautiful part of the diverse human tapestry that our Creator infused throughout creation. If we can believe in our children at all, we must especially believe in our most vulnerable ones. I want to be a Rosa to all who come into my life. My dear reader, do you?

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

CHAKRAS PHOTOS ♦ AURA Pictures

209-933-3333

New Consciousness GALLERY & learning exchange

"Something else in Mind"

Crystals ♦ Stones ♦ Wiccan ♦ Earth's Art

Various Workshops offered to enlighten and enrich your life check our website for details: [www.somethingelseinmind.com](http://www.somethingelseinmind.com)

1604 E. Harding Way ♦ Stockton, CA

SPIRITUAL Crafts ♦ EVENTS

Meditation ♦ Divine Openings

TAI CHI ♦ REIKI CLASSES ♦ Kung Fu

Membership includes a subscription to *Audubon Magazine & Hoot Owl*.

Make checks payable to ... National Audubon Society.

Send to: Audubon

PO Box 7755, Stockton, CA 95207

\_\_\_ \$35 Individual \_\_\_ \$38 Family \_\_\_ \$20 Student \_\_\_ \$21 Senior

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Questions about Audubon? Call Dave Wagner 943-6997.

[www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org](http://www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org)

Join our  
LOCAL

# Audubon

# Navigating

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

## Two peace plans

John Morearty

### Plan one: Pennies for Peace

I laughed in disgust when I read that Defense Secretary Gates warned of a "Pentagon Fiscal Crisis" unless the Congress gives the Masters of War (as Bob Dylan called them) a bunch more billions. Oh, poor general babies! I took a nap, and woke up with this quirky notion for a peace campaign:

What if millions of us would each send a Pentagon a penny, along with our two cents worth of advice? Laugh them to shame.

Friends liked the idea, so I wrote the Pentagon a letter, taped a shiny penny in the lower left corner so it wouldn't interfere with the automatic canceling machine, weighed it (under an ounce, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"—Benjamin Franklin), stuck it in an envelope with an American flag return address, a Mother Teresa stamp, and an earth-photo sticker on back, took it to the mailbox, kissed it and dropped it in.

Here's the letter:

Dear Pentagonists:

Here is a patriotic penny, to help with your "budget crisis," shamelessly announced in my local newspaper yesterday. (This penny is in addition to your huge slice of my federal income taxes, which I faithfully pay.) And here's two cents worth of patriotic advice: Hold a bake sale! or a car wash, a tank wash, a bomber wash, a warhead wash....

Or seriously, close the fancy golf courses for top brass; sell some limousines; cut the salaries of generals and admirals to the wages of people who do productive work in this society: teachers, typists, carpenters, plumbers, nurses, firemen and policemen, field laborers....

Or even, CUT THE DEFENSE BUDGET BY 80%, CLOSE ALL OUR BASES WORLDWIDE, AND BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW. (Maybe leave small detachments of Marines, to guard our embassies.)

Follow the example of the great General Smedley Butler, who said, "I spent most of my active

military service as a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism."

I hope you can find honorable and useful work. There's a lot to be done, to pull this world together for our grandchildren (of whom I have ten).

Sincerely,

John Morearty, retired carpenter

Alas, the letter came back! Mother Teresa's smile is cancelled with the image of a heart and a Valentine box of chocolates. The street address is scratched out with a pen (I googled for that address, can Google not know where the Pentagon is?), and over "Arlington" there is a printed yellow sticker that says,

RETURN TO SENDER  
INSUFFICIENT ADDRESS  
UNABLE TO FORWARD

There are also a bunch of numbers and the word NIXIE.

So what next? Send letter and pennies to Congressmen Jerry McNerney and Dennis Cardoza, to help them see their way clear on the Pentagon's crisis? Join a lobbying campaign on McNerney and Cardoza, like the Fresno plan described elsewhere in this issue of Connections?

Or maybe,

### Plan two: the Tunisia-Egypt plan

We the People take to the streets in our nonviolent millions, insisting on Peace Now.

More and more people are getting sick of these wars. In our weekly peace demonstration along Pacific Avenue at Delta (Thursdays, 4 PM), more and more people are waving and honking in response to our signs: Afghanistan=Vietnam, School \$\$\$ not War \$\$\$, Peace Now, Green Jobs, Honk for Peace. As one wag among us says, you know you're winning when the honking gets annoying. So, READY, AIM, LAUNCH CELL PHONES....




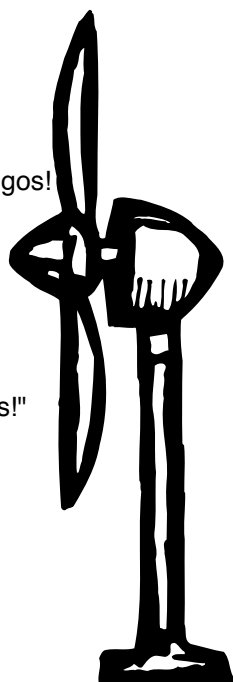
## 55 words for Tucson

Shake a soft Speare

O, the slingos and lingos of outrageous jingos!  
"Target our opponents' districts,  
terminate their villages  
with extreme prejudice,  
Render them like lard in a tub.  
Crush their wetback DREAMS,  
Smash their socialist Obamacare schemes!"

No. Reload our bows  
with flower-tipped arrows,  
like Kama the Hindu god of love.  
Speak sweet reason.  
'Tis truly season.

— John Morearty



Emulating Jesus Christ's  
Radical Acceptance of All People

Come Celebrate With the  
Episcopal Church of St. Anne  
1020 W. Lincoln Road  
Stockton, CA 95207  
(209) 473-2313

Sunday Mass, 8 & 10 a.m.  
(Childcare provided at 10 a.m.)  
Tuesday 6:30 a.m. Mass  
Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Youth Group  
Thursday 6 p.m. Healing Mass

Decisions, Decisions...



Is your home ready for *your* retirement?

- \* Organizing & Clutter Control
- \* Homekeeping
- \* Care for the Pack Rat

MaryAnne & Jeanne (209) 948-5365  
Simplify@HowToClean.com  
MA Sibert & Co., est. 1973



TORI L. DAVIS, L.C.S.W.

Licensed Clinical Social Worker, License #18235

Psychotherapy/Consultation/Trainings

7510 Shoreline Drive, Suite A7  
Stockton, CA 95219  
(209) 477-8482



LELA NELSON REALTY  
2222 Pacific Avenue • Stockton, CA 95204

(209) 467-1200  
(209) 942-5673 Fax  
(209) 466-6243 Res.  
E-Mail: LelaNelson@aol.com  
Website: www.lanelson.com

E. Lela Nelson  
BROKER



## Don Hall at the Tidewater

The Tidewater Art Gallery's March show features the works of well-known Turlock artist Don Hall. The exhibition opens March 8th and runs through April 1st. The Gallery is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. There will be a special reception to meet the artist, which is open to the public and free of charge, on March 11th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Hall's recent art features monumental portrait drawings. His super realistic drawings are large scale portraits of faces representing people varying in age from one to over eighty. Known for working in a variety of art mediums—the Artist's past Tidewater exhibits have included drawings, as well as ceramic sculpture and pottery.

The Tidewater Art Gallery has been voted Best Art Gallery in the Record's Best of San Joaquin for 8 years in a row. The artist cooperative provides the community with new themed shows once a month featuring the work of local and regional artists. The Gallery is located directly across the street from



the county Courthouse at 223 E. Weber Avenue. Gallery hours are Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. For further information about the artists, exhibits, upcoming

art classes or special events, call the gallery at (209) 463-4033, email [tidewatergallery@att.net](mailto:tidewatergallery@att.net) or at [www.tidewaterartgallery.org](http://www.tidewaterartgallery.org).

## Winter recipes

### Gumbo z' Herbes

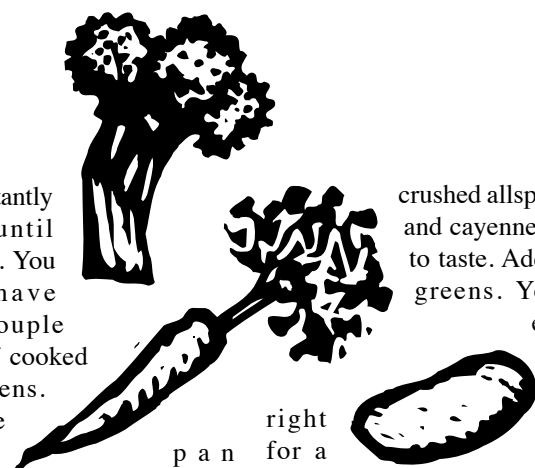
Like me, you are all well stocked with greens. I think after a winter of meat eating, our bodies crave them. Not coincidentally, we are approaching a fasting season and all this got me thinking of what to do with the bevy of greenery. This is a perfectly delicious, simple and even vegan recipe. I could never hope to replicate the version made by Leah Chase in New Orleans, but this is awfully good.

Start by washing your greens, drying them well and removing the tough ribs. Put all the leafy parts into a hot pan with nothing else. Keep adding more. I used the chard, spinach, turnip greens, arugula and parsley. You can also add mustard greens, dandelion, collard greens—really anything. The more the better. Let them

cook, constantly stirring until almost dry. You should have only a couple of cups of cooked down greens.

Remove from the pan and chop them finely. (Most recipes have you boil everything, which makes it dull gray and slimy.)

Now make a roux. Slowly cook together 1/2 cup oil and 1/2 cup flour in a pot until nutty brown. Add 1 chopped onion, 2 celery ribs and a green bell pepper. Cook right in the roux until they get soft and lightly browned. Add about 6 cups of water and simmer about 10 minutes with a bay leaf, some



crushed allspice, salt and cayenne pepper to taste. Add in the greens. You can

either eat this now fresh right for a bright flavor or let it cook, which is more traditional, until everything is mushy and thick. Add more water if necessary. Serve over rice. Be sure to have some Preservation Hall Dixieland playing in the background.

*From Ken Albala, History Professor at the University of the Pacific, author of many food books including The Lost Art of Real Cooking.*

## Middle east expert/writer comes to Stockton

Professor and human rights activist Mazin Qumsiyeh's widely acclaimed first book on Palestine, *Sharing the Land of Canaan: Human Rights and the Israeli-Palestinian Struggle* established him as the leading chronicler of the history and current issues of the land of his birth. Mazin's new book, *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A History of Hope and Empowerment*, was launched at the Bethlehem Peace Center on February 10. He's now on a tour of France, England, and the USA. And coming to Stockton. For more information: <http://qumsiyeh.org/aboutqumsiyeh/>

Thursday, March 31, at 7 pm at the Fireside Room at Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave., Stockton (across from University of the Pacific).

## Stockton Chorale: A New Beginning; From the Renaissance to the 20th century

The Stockton Chorale will be performing choral masterpieces that span five centuries of music. The concert performance will be held at 7:30 pm on Friday, March 18 at Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton and repeated at 3:00 pm on Sunday, March 20, 2011 at St John's Episcopal Church, 1055 S. Lower Sacramento Road, Lodi.

From the playful madrigals and partsongs of the Renaissance period to 20th century works by Benjamin Britten and others, the concert is sure to delight diverse tastes. Major works include the Baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi's Magnificat, probably his best known choral work and a favorite of audiences, and choruses from Felix Mendelssohn's Elijah and Franz Joseph Haydn's Creation. Single concert tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for students. Tickets are general admission; for more info, call 951-6494.

The Stockton Chorale, founded in 1951, is a nearly 100 member community chorus. The conductor is Dr. Magen Solomon —leading the Chorale in her first season with us—a new beginning.

## Astronomy in the park

The Oak Grove Nature Center is excited to welcome back Astronomy in the Park on Saturday, March 12th from 6:00—9:00 pm, hosted by the Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS). Starting at 6:00 pm, join us inside the Nature Center for astronomy-themed activities and crafts. SAS volunteers will provide telescopes for stargazing from 7—9 pm out in the park. Activities are free and open to people of all ages. Oak Grove Regional Park entrance fee of \$5 is required per vehicle. Visit [www.mgzoo.com](http://www.mgzoo.com) or call 953-8814 for information on upcoming events at the Nature Center.

## EdZOOcational Programs at Micke Grove Zoo

The EdZOOcation staff at Micke Grove Zoo is launching new educational programming for children in grades Pre-K through 6th. Whether you and your students visit the Zoo or we come to your classroom, Micke Grove Zoo offers a variety of engaging, interactive programs for school groups and teachers. Our offerings include guided zoo tours, live animal encounters, and fun, informative talks. Have an amazing educational adventure! Register your class or group today! For more information call: 209-331-2138 or visit our website at [www.mgzoo.com](http://www.mgzoo.com)

Connections may contain copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance understanding of environmental, political, human rights, economic, democracy, scientific, and social justice issues, etc. We believe this constitutes a 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material in this paper is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes.

# 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.*

## Jan 20—Feb 6

Stop the world, I want to get off, an Anthony Newley musical. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15—\$25. 473-2424.

## Feb 26—Apr 3

80th 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

## Tue, Feb 22

Real talk discussion: Christian, Black and Gay—Removing the Taboo in the Black Community. 7:30 pm, Multicultural Center, UOP. 946-7707

## Wed, Feb 23

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

Bob Dylan and the Blues: a Lecture by author Michael Gray. 7 pm, Janet Leigh Theatre, UOP. Free.

## Thu, Feb 24

Higher Learning film and discussion, 8 pm. Janet Leigh Theatre, UOP. General \$5, UOP staff \$3, UOP students free. 946-7707.

## Fri, Feb 25

Pacific Jazz Ensemble concert, 7:30—9:30 pm. Faye Spanos

Concert Hall, UOP. \$8, senior \$5, UOP students free.

## Sat, Feb 26

Black History Month Keynote Speaker Hill Harper, 8 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP. Free.

## Sun, Feb 27

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

Pacific Choral Ensembles concert, 2:30—4:30 pm. Morris Chapel, UOP. General \$8, Seniors \$5, Students with ID free.

Student recital series: Tyler Combs, 7:30—8:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP, Free.

## Mon, Feb 28

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.

## Mar 1—Apr 5

Valley Impressions: historic block prints and watercolors by William S. Rice. 8:30 am—4:30 pm, M-F. Jeannette Powell Art Center, Reynolds Gallery, UOP. Free.

## Tue, Mar 1

Water Wars: the Delta's Water Quality at Risk panel discussion. 5 pm. Grace Covell Hall, UOP. Free. Info: costberg@pacific.edu

## Thu, Mar 3

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

## Sat, Mar 5

SJ Delta College presents the Jeff Hamilton Trio, 8 pm. Tillie Lewis

Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$10. 954-5110.

## Mon, Mar 7

SJ Delta College presents the Jazz Ensemble Concert, 7:30 pm. Tillie Lewis Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8. 954-5110.

## Tue, Mar 8

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

## Wed, Mar 9

Recycling Exposition VII, 7 am—4 pm. Hilton Stockton, 2323 Grand Canal Blvd, Stockton. Day-long expo for businesses and individuals. \$30 includes lunch. 547-2770.

## Thu, Mar 10

Stockton Symphony with Viviana Guzman flute, 8 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5110.

## Fri, Mar 11

San Joaquin County Demo Party's Jefferson-Jackson Awards Dinner, 6 pm. Italian Athletic Club, 3541 N Cherryland Ave, Stockton. Top State Dems invited. \$35/\$40. 456-2185.

## Mar 11—12

Kaluo'kahina & California Skies, 7:30 pm. Clever Planetarium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8. 954-5110.

## Mar 11—20

Delta Drama presents "Pastorale." Studio Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Th,F, Sat 8 pm. Sun 2 pm

## Sat, Mar 12

Astronomy in the Park, 6—9 pm. Oak Grove Regional Park, 4520 W Eight Mile Rd, Stockton. \$5 parking. 953-8814.

Stockton Symphony with Viviana Guzman flute, 6 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5110.

## Mon, Mar 14

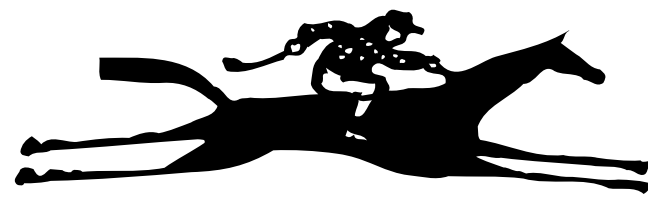
Sabine Klein pianist, 7:30 pm. Recital Hall, UOP. General \$8, Seniors \$5, UOP students free.

## Fri, Mar 18

Stockton Chorale Concert, 7:30 pm. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton (page 18). \$20 adult, \$5 student. 951-6494.

## Sat, Mar 19

Ho'ike 2011/Na Hoku Mai Kanoelani dance, 5 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$15. 954-5110.



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

## Sun, April 10

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

## First Mondays

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

## Fourth Mondays

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

## Second Tuesdays

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

## Second Thursdays

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

## Third Saturdays

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

## Fourth Saturdays

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

## Mondays

Jazz at the Blackwater 8:30—11 pm. Mike Rocha, Rick Russell, Giulio Cetto, Michael Klooster and more. Acacia & Yosemite, Stockton.

## Thursdays

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

Dinner and a show, 6:30—9:30. Blackwater Cafe, Acacia & Yosemite, Stockton.

## Saturdays

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

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

## Talking It Through

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

Peace & Justice Network sponsors two half-hour shows:

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

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

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

For up to the minute listings of current shows, see our website: [www.pjnsj.org](http://www.pjnsj.org), click on Talking It Through.



*Invites You, Your Family and Friends for a Fundraising Pizza Party at*

## Joe's Pomodoro Pizza Café

5654 N. Pershing Ave

Stockton CA, 95207

Phone: 209 477-2900

Day: Saturday

Date: March 5, 2011

Time: 5:30 PM

*Present this flyer and*

*Joe's Pomodoro Pizza Café will donate*

# 20%

*of the cost back to our organization.*

## Testimonial



### Support local radio

My name is Tony Kiser, I am a member of the Stockton community, a father of three and I have worked for a local community bank for 26 years now. I am also a musician these days.

Twenty five years ago or so, I found KUOP on the radio dial. Until then I had been very limited in what kind of music I had listened to. This station opened up a whole new world to me. By exposing me to music from all the cultures of the world, not only did I grow to be more accepting of other cultures, I have since embraced the world with open arms.

Then KUOP changed its format, it was a great loss in the diversity of music here in Stockton and surrounding areas. An ever-expanding search for new foods and music has given me much exposure to people from all over the world, right here in the Central Valley and Bay Area. I see the real potential a community station has to offer, by seeing what these types of stations do for other communities.

I am excited to see that our community has a chance to bring into reality our very own community station. Knowing what community radio has done for me as a human—I have pledged my support in the form of time and money. I will give as much time and energy as I can and then some!

I also have pledged \$1,000 this first year, as much as I can for the years following, as well as pledging any money I am able to make with my musical abilities towards the station for this year. That's how much I believe in the potential of this community station.

I have come to a self realization. It's my job to make my community and the rest of the world a better place! How about you? Please support this cause.

*From the Heart,*

*Tony Kiser, predidjital@gmail.com*

## connections

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## Campaign for Common Ground

### How will the county develop?

*Eric Parfrey*

Campaign for Common Ground (CCG) is a local smart growth, anti-sprawl organization that has now been around in San Joaquin County for about 8 years. The group has been most active in Stockton, opposing sprawl growth patterns that have been historically embedded in the City's plans until recently. CCG is composed of activists, retired people, and just plain folks who are interested in city affairs and want to make a difference.

CCG meets once each month on the first Monday of every month, at 7 p.m.—usually downtown at the Family Resource and Referral Center 509 W. Weber Ave., Stockton (downstairs in the office building next to the Warehouse). Check our Web site for the latest agenda ([www.campaignforcommonground.org](http://www.campaignforcommonground.org)). We invite new and interested people to our general membership meetings, which often include presentations by invited guests followed by general discussion. We guarantee you will not be bored.

CCG is at the cutting edge of debate about how Stockton and San Joaquin County can—and will—respond to the “new normal” in this area, following three years of economic depression and soul searching about where we need to go for the next generation.

#### Where we've been...

Back in 2004, CCG sponsored a citizens initiative that appeared on the November ballot in Stockton,

that sought to draw an urban limit line around the city and would have required a public vote to sprawl further into the adjacent farmlands. The measure (Measure Q) received a majority of votes but was nullified by a “poison pill” sham initiative (written by a local developer's attorney) that called for an agricultural conservation program that was never enacted.

When the City Council under previous Mayor Ed Chavez tried to ram through a grotesque sprawl-driven plan in 2006 that would have more than doubled the population in the city, CCG responded with a “Citizens Alternative General Plan.” The CCG alternative land use plan would have accommodated future projected growth with infill development and without sacrificing thousands of acres of prime farmland on the periphery of the city to low-density subdivisions.

The alternative plan was presented to the then-City Council and was promptly dismissed. When the growth-on-steroids 2035 Stockton General Plan was adopted in December, 2007, the Sierra Club consequently sued the City.

To make a long story short, then-Attorney General Jerry Brown contacted the City and made it be known that the State of California would intervene if the City did not reconsider. An historic legal Settlement Agreement was consequently agreed to by the parties, where the City agreed to meet certain infill development growth goals and to adopt a Climate Action Plan to reduce the City's projected increase in greenhouse gases.

In November, 2008, Ann Johnston, the former chair of

CCG, was elected mayor of the city, and a new progressive majority was ushered into the Council. However, by this time, the national housing bubble had burst, residential growth had collapsed in the Central Valley and Stockton, and the City was immediately facing a dire financial shortfall which continues up to today.

#### ...isn't where we're going

Stockton and San Joaquin County should not expect that we will go back and experience the same “go-go” high-growth economic construction boom as we saw in the early and mid-2000 decade period. In all likelihood, the Bay Area commuters streaming over the hill to snatch up cheap housing will not be coming back any time soon. We cannot plan our economy on this old mode of thinking.

This doesn't mean we will have to look forward to years of economic stagnation. It does mean, however, that we will have to re-evaluate our financial and growth projections and downsize our expectations based on the “new normal.” We are optimistic that Stockton and other communities in the Central Valley may be uniquely positioned to accept this new reality, since we never really strayed far from our economic roots—which remains agriculture, export trade through the Port of Stockton, warehousing, and local unique businesses.

Please join Campaign for Common Ground as we struggle with these issues and guide our way to the “new normal.”

*Eric Parfrey is the chair of Campaign for Common Ground. He can be reached at [parfrey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:parfrey@sbcglobal.net)*

