

connections

PRICELESS

Volume XXIX, Number 4

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May 2011

SAVE THE DATES

**MAY 1ST
STEELHEAD FESTIVAL (P1)**

**MAY 28
FOODBANK BIKE RIDE (P18)**

**TUE, MAY 10
RADIO 89.5 MEETS (P 19)**

**THUR, APRIL 28
CONNECTIONS REDESIGN
COMMITTEE MEETS (P19)**

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Single payer health care questions...answered

Editor's note: SB 810 is the the California single payer tax law currently moving through the Legislature - vetoed by past governors. Governor Brown may sign, given the right support - and answers to the following questions.

AFFORDABILITY

How does SB 810 provide coverage to all Californians without increasing spending?

By correcting the current health care finance system which currently spends nearly 50% of each health care dollar on administrative and clinical waste, excess drug prices and fraud. SB 810 streamlines administration, uses state purchasing power to negotiate discounts on the price of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, creates an agency to perform health planning and support the delivery of high quality care and establishes an Inspector General for Health Care with strong investigative tools to uncover fraud.

Why is there no new spending?

There is more than enough money now being spent on health care to finance benefit rich universal health coverage. We spend over \$6,000 per capita, or more than twice the amount spent in other countries that insure everyone. By correcting health care mis-spending, SB 810 is able to direct money into health care and make the health system very efficient.

How does SB 810 control spending growth?

The foundation for controlling spending growth is the streamlined administration made possible by having a single insurer, use of purchasing power to lower prices, provision of universal health coverage so everyone gets preventive care, and consolidated budgetary authority with statutory spending limits. SB 810 does all of this and adds an array of other fiscal tools including capital health investment management, a health payment board to establish provider reimbursement, and a referral policy for specialty care. If necessary, SB 810 gives authority

The health care crisis affects all of us. Last year, 2 million Americans went bankrupt because of medical bills and most of those had health insurance.

to impose limits on provider and manufacturer reimbursement, to increase premiums, delay the introduction of new benefits and delay capital investments.

Can we afford this reform at a time of budget deficits?

Budget deficits are caused in part by our dysfunctional health finance system and health care mis-spending. We can't afford NOT to do this and SB 810 would be a major step toward deficit reduction and a balanced budget. The Lewin Group forecasts that a single insurer model would save the state \$44 billion dollars in the first ten years.

Will people pay more?

Most would pay less for health care and insurance than they do now. And, once one's health insurance premium is paid, there are no other costs, no co-pays, no deductibles.

INSURANCE

How many Californians have no health insurance?

About 5 million Californians have no insurance at any time during the year, with an additional 2 million lacking insurance for part of the year. 1.2 million without insurance are children. A disproportionate number of those without insurance are people of

color and those with low income.

Who doesn't have health insurance?

More than 80% of Californians without health insurance are in families where there is at least one person working. A disproportionate number are from the black and Hispanic community, and over 20% of children have no health insurance. Many are low-wage workers, but many are also solidly middle class.

I have insurance, so why should I want to change a system that is working for me?

The health care crisis affects all of us. Last year, 2 million Americans went bankrupt because of medical bills and most of those had health insurance. Each year it is estimated that as many as 500,000 people die from preventable medical errors and infections and the misapplication of technology. The Institute of Medicine, the government health advisor, says we are suffering from an "epidemic of sub-standard care". The price of health insurance is rising many times faster than wages, as much as 59% over the last 5 years. Employment is adversely affected because employers avoid hiring full time

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May 1st

Stockton Steelhead Festival



Friends of the Lower Calaveras River, Mayor Ann Johnston and the City Council invite you on May 1, 2011 to the first annual Stockton Steelhead Festival, an exciting day of art, music, food and more to raise awareness for efforts to conserve and restore the Calaveras River and threatened steelhead trout.

From 11 am to 4 pm, you will enjoy live music and local cuisine, browse a variety of fine arts and crafts - including art demos, and take a fly-fishing lesson from regional experts. Join in on fun activities for the whole family: dine at local, slow-cooked food booths -- including cooking demonstrations; learn more about wildlife and environment at education stations and participate in free children's arts, crafts, and games.

This is all happening at Tuxedo Court on the corner of Miracle Mile. Admission is free, with free parking available on the Miracle Mile and in the surrounding neighborhoods. Sponsors include Mayor Ann Johnston, Councilmember Diana Lowery, Friends of the Lower Calaveras River, University of the Pacific, Miracle Mile Improvement District, University Neighborhood Renaissance Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Defenders of Wildlife, Cort Company, Sierra Club, Delta Fly Fishers, and US Army Corps of Engineers. Don't miss something that promises to become a permanent feature of the Stockton scene for years to come. For more information, contact Jeremy Terhune at 922-8215.

Staying active, fighting back

Bruce Giudici

Do bad economic times make people want to take action? Empty storefronts, families foreclosed on, teachers not teaching, carpenters not building...does this inspire or depress action? Do we feel empowered or beaten? How we answer will determine our future.

As the world turns, convincing evidence of "how the way things are stinks" abounds. Our reaction to that evidence is where the money is - and always has been. We have come to the point where the very well-off are convinced that they don't need the rest of us to survive handsomely. It may be,

with the advent of new middle-class billions in China and India - and the cheapness of the goods they produce, that we American citizens are no longer needed as a market.

Corporations can make money without us - and so they have. Wages in this country have not increased in the last 30 years, while those in less-developed countries have. When inflation is taken into account, even with two-earner families, our workers wages inch closer to those in less-developed countries every year. And, with the new Republican House, we are now told that our economy can no longer afford

the environmental laws that once distinguished our country as a leader to a cleaner and more sustainable world. Lower wages, looser environmental laws, a widening gap between rich and poor - global capital is moving every country into Third World status - including the United States. And, like the frog in the slowly boiling pot of water, we are getting used to it.

As draining as this process has been, however, the situation is becoming more acutely painful to more people - and they are taking action. In labor and anti-war marches, recall elections and record attendances to environmental events (yay Earth Day Festival XXIII), people are taking the time to stop, look and listen. This must continue.

The facts in this paper speak for themselves -

Bruce Giudici,
editor



they just aren't the facts you see reported in a media geared more toward bread and circuses. The news isn't pretty. And there are some things you have no control over: we don't cover those things in Connections. Much of the radical-right-posturing bills that are being passed in the House of Representatives will never become law - but, when elections get tight, things move right. Stay informed. Pretty much every article in this paper covers something on which you can take action - writing a letter, contacting your representative, joining a local organization or staying up-to-date on an issue until it hits the fan...which it will.

Ignorance isn't bliss and nothing is gained being afraid of the dark. Some serious stuff is up ahead, folks...and we're all in this together. Let's spring into it.



Vital communication

Luis Gonzalez

There is no doubt that today, media has such an important role in our society. We now have access to internet, television, radio, and books. But that doesn't mean it is easier to sort through information that is given to us. With each medium, there are numberless amounts of information you have to sort through. And as we pay our rents and mortgages, making sure our kids are clothed, we have food on the table, and are able to commute to work, it seems like we have little time to see what is going on around us. The little time we do have to collect information - either from the T.V., radio, or internet - is usually spent watching the ones who have the most influence and money.

For example, take a moment and look around you. Unless you're reading this in the wilderness, you should notice something. Seemingly helping us along with our lives, helping us choose how we should live it. It is advertising. Do you see shop signs? Do you see billboards? Do you see packaging? Maybe magazines? Even when you go on the internet, it's there. It

has become a detrimental part of our society and a very much prized one. Coca-Cola spent at least \$2.6 billion in 2006 on advertising and marketing their products worldwide. \$2.6 Billion! Exxon Mobil has decided to spend \$100 million each day, every day on advertising until 2015. Chevron has taken a million dollar advertising campaign to convince you that they actually care about the environment with their "We Agree" campaign. Obviously, vying for your attention is very profitable. It works too - with millions to billions of dollars rung up as profits. With very well-paid designers, writers, and marketers, these corporations make sure their message convinces and convinces well. How many people, small businesses, non-profits, have the same ability? There are very few.

The same goes for many areas. Very many mainstream news outlets feature stories about celebrities - not because it is important, but because it gets more viewers. And viewers mean more advertisements. And they pick and choose their stories based on how many viewers they will lose or

receive. Or how many clicks they will get on their sites. These people are aware of how we think, and want us to continue to think in their favor - simply because it is the most profitable.

But the good thing is, we have more and more choices as we come to realize the manipulation of mainstream media. We create and look for alternative radio, T.V. programs, and news outlets. We are talking in our homes, in our communities, and online about the state of our nation and our world. There are more people doing something about it, as seen in recent African and Middle Eastern revolutions. We are seeing it in Wisconsin, and we are even seeing it here. And as more people grow hungry for more information and action,



communication between our world and communities - free from influence of corporate dollars - has been increasingly important to sustain.

I believe in sustaining and continuing the access of information that Connections provides, about our communities and about our world. For 25 years, Connections has been supporter by many writing contributors, editors, and designers - to provide information that would never see daylight in our area. And I'm asking for your help in re-making Connections, to continue to be your alternative community paper. Contribute an article, distribute Connections in your communities, or come to a Connections meeting! We are taking insights and ideas to evolve Connections into a more efficient information outlet for our community. These meetings are every last Thursday of the month at 7pm at the Peace & Justice Center 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. be a part of sustaining and continuing this vital paper!

Connections

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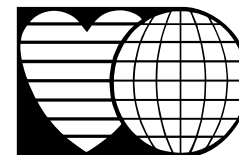
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Single payer questions/answers

continued from page 1

employees to avoid having to pay for expensive insurance for them. US products are becoming less competitive in global markets because of high employer health care costs. Emergency Rooms aren't available when you need them because they're filled with uninsured Californians who have no where else to get care. We all have a big stake in fixing the health care crisis.

Why is it better to pay into a publicly administered health care system than to pay a private health insurance premium?

You get a lot more health care from your contributions to a publicly financed system than from a private health insurance premium. When you pay a premium to an insurance company a large portion of it, 20% to 30%, goes to administration, shareholder dividends, executive reimbursement, marketing and to pay for additional administrative costs borne by doctors and hospitals. Only 70% to 80% is spent on health care. When you contribute to a state health fund, much more money goes to provide health care. It is a more efficient use of limited health care resources.

Does SB 810 (Leno) cover undocumented immigrants?

Yes. It costs California less to insure undocumented immigrants than to exclude them. People without health insurance don't get preventive care and, consequently, use expensive emergency rooms and hospital care when they get sick. It is estimated that if every Californian got preventive care we could save \$3.4 billion dollars a year. Most undocumented Californians are employed in essential jobs and our immigrants pay \$80,000 more in taxes and fees over a lifetime than they will receive in local, state and federal benefits in their lifetimes. And it's good public health policy to insure the entire population. It helps control epidemics or outbreaks that could expose everyone to disease.

ACCESS

What about waiting lists in Canada?

Canada spends about 1/3 as much as we do per capita on health care and uses waiting lists to manage limited resources. California spends more than enough to avoid waiting lists, although we will have to plan our resource use carefully.

Does this reform ration health care?

Under SB 810 (Leno), care will be affordable for every Californian, and health system planning will be done by a public, representative Health Policy Board. Care will only be "rationed" in the sense that the care you get will be based on the sound medical judgement of your doctor. All health care systems now ration care and consider it to be sensible health care planning. The question is on what basis is care rationed and who makes the decisions? Today, insurance and pharmaceutical companies and HMOs ration care and medications to those who can afford them.

SOCIALIZED MEDICINE

Is this socialized medicine?

This is definitely not socialized medicine, where the government owns all the health care facilities and trains and employs the health care workforce. This is a private health care system that is publicly administered and financed.

Is this government-run health care?

No. A publicly administered finance system will put medical decision making back in the hands of medical professionals and their patients, unlike today when doctors have to get permission to order a test or a treatment from an insurance administrator with little or no medical training.

SB 810 has provisions to protect the health care system from some of the problems that governments face. Strong conflict of interest rules, prohibitions on partisan activity and connections to for profit insurance and pharmaceutical companies have been incorporated. Health system officers are protected from special interests and the entire health care system is exempted from oversight by other government agencies that



might slow things down and make bureaucracies unresponsive.

What makes a government program unpopular is inadequate funding, complex eligibility rules, means testing, periodic eligibility lapses, poor provider participation, low provider reimbursement and the stigma of being "on welfare." A publicly administered consolidated insurance system will not have these problems.

Won't the Commissioner be a "czar" with too much power?

No. The Commissioner is elected. This provides a measure of accountability and the leadership system has checks and balances. The Commissioner is the chief administrative officer. A physician is the Chief Medical Officer. The Consumer Advocate represents consumer interests. All meetings are open. All documents, except privacy-protected documents, are public. All system officers may be impeached for malfeasance of office.

BENEFITS

Is a full pharmaceutical benefit without a co-pay affordable?

Yes. By using the state's purchasing power for 35 million Californians, it can win large discounts on the costs of pharmaceuticals. Californians will then be paying what the Europeans, Scandinavians, Australians and Canadians pay for the same pharmaceuticals and, at those prices, pharmaceuticals are affordable.

Will drug discounts adversely affect pharmaceutical companies?

No. There are 10 million Californians who now have no

prescription drug benefits but who will have them under SB 810 (Leno). This expansion of the market offsets losses from lower prices.

Will lower drug prices hurt the ability of pharmaceutical companies to do research?

No. Pharmaceutical companies don't use profits to pay for research, so even if their profits were to drop from lower drug prices, it won't affect research.

How will the plan help seniors who already have health coverage through Medicare?

Under SB 810 (Leno), seniors get benefits that Medicare doesn't cover, such as full prescription drug coverage and dental coverage. For at least the first two years there will be no co payments or deductibles for ANY services. Seniors will spend less than they do now for health care.

All health care systems now ration care and consider it to be sensible health care planning...Today, insurance and pharmaceutical companies and HMOs ration care and medications to those who can afford them.

Will anyone lose benefits they now have?

The intent is that no one should lose any benefit they now have.

Who decides what the medical benefits will be?

The Chief Medical Officer and other physicians recommend the benefits they think are appropriate. The Commissioner and the Health Policy Board vote on whether to accept their recommendation.

Will Kaiser still exist under SB 810?

Kaiser will provide health services just as it does today but it will no longer sell insurance policies. All licensed, accredited providers will still exist and may be chosen by patients through the system. VI. Quality

Will SB 810 (Leno) stifle innovation?

SB 810 will stimulate innovation in several ways. SB

810 will expand health markets, by freeing up private dollars that now pay for care for the uninsured and by creating a well-funded state budget for R and D. Partnerships for Health will provide health care grants to communities for innovative programs. Pharmaceutical companies will have the incentive to redirect the 40% of their research budget now spent on "copy cat" drugs and instead invest it in much needed research on treatments for diseases such as multiple sclerosis and breast cancer.

How will your system decrease medical errors?

By eliminating many of the causes of errors such as understaffing, lack of readily accessible medical information, and lack of coordination of medical services. Your primary care provider will be responsible for coordinating the care you need.

How will SB 810 address the nursing shortage?

No one can solve the nursing shortage overnight. A well-managed single insurer system would, however, have funds to invest in nursing education, the shortage of which is the heart of the problem.

Can the Commissioner close a hospital over the objections of the community?

No. A hospital would only be closed if providers and patients choose not to use it or if the hospital fails to be accredited under California law. The Commissioner can hold back funds if a hospital fails to meet quality of care standards.

Source: Health Care for All—California, <http://www.healthcareforall.org/learn-more/frequently-asked-questions-about-single-payer-health-care>. (888) 442-4255



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Roll back the Reagan tax cuts

Thom Hartmann

With or without a government shutdown, Republicans have already won the debate on our nation's budget. Why? Because the corporate media is on their side.

MAKE THE WEALTHY PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE.

A budget shouldn't just focus on spending cuts directed at the poor and middle-class - it should also include revenue raisers like closing corporate loopholes and asking millionaires and billionaires to cough up a few extra bucks a year. Let's cut some wasteful spending, but let's also raise a few taxes. But this common sense narrative has been lost inside the main stream corporate media - where there's only one question that's being asked today, and that is "how much spending needs to be cut?"

Not, "why aren't some of the most profitable corporations in the history of the world skating by paying zero taxes?"

Not, "why are the wealthiest Americans enjoying historically low tax rates during a historically high budget deficit?"

Did you know that corporate taxes used to account for roughly 30% of revenue collected by the government - and today that number is only 7%?

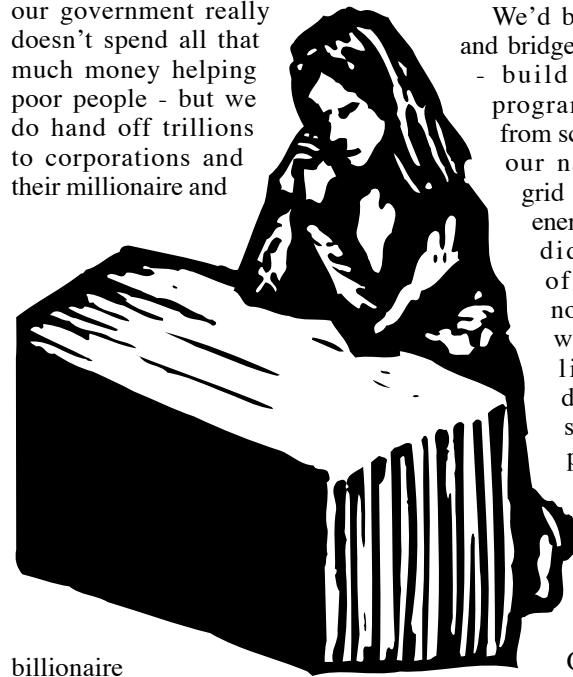
Probably not, because the corporate media, which would prefer not to pay its taxes and only wants us to focus on just how much Republicans and Democrats can cut out of the budget?

SO WHY IS THE MEDIA IGNORING THESE CALLS?

It's simple - corporate owned media outlets won't call for tax hikes on corporations, and rich TV personalities won't call for tax hikes on the rich. The topic of tax hikes just doesn't exist in our now-consolidated media. Which is really a shame because the Republicans who seem to have already won the debate have a bad idea - a really, really, bad idea.

Let's take their road - let's cut all the programs for poor people in America - let's throw every middle-class family under the bus - let's tell poor and sick Americans who rely on the government for health care assistance to, "walk it off." Let's do all these things that Republicans want to do - and we'd still have a massive budget

deficit. Why? Because our government really doesn't spend all that much money helping poor people - but we do hand off trillions to corporations and their millionaire and



billionaire CEOs for buying everything from bombs to fighter jets to Chertof Porno Scanners for our airports.

So if we let the Republicans win this budget fight, as the corporate media seems more than willing to let happen, then a few years from now

we'll be asking these same questions about what to do with the soaring budget deficit - and at the same time wondering why the middle-class seems to have completely disappeared.

The solutions to our budget problems are simple - you wouldn't believe how simple they are. I can tell you the solution using only 6 words - roll back the Reagan tax cuts. Heck - roll back the Bush tax cuts, go back to Clinton levels where the wealthiest Americans paid an extra 3% - just 3% - three measly percentage points, and we'd take a huge chunk out of our deficit, just like that.

Remember how the Clinton budget passed without a single Republican vote in the House and gave us not only a balanced budget but a surplus? And if we rolled back the Reagan tax cuts, and made billionaires pay at least 74%, like they did for more than half of the 20th century, when our nation prospered and the middle class grew - then we'd have a budget surplus.

A budget surplus? Can you imagine how different life in America would be with a budget surplus?! We'd be paying down our debt year-to-year. And we'd be able to use that extra cash to do things that our nation hasn't done in generations since Reagan

started "starving the beast."

We'd build new roads and bridges - new schools - build new science programs like NASA from scratch - renovate our national energy grid - invest in clean energy like Denmark did where 19% of their energy now comes from windmills - or like Germany did by putting solar panels on people's roofs - and now after 10 years solar power is generating more electricity in Germany - the second cloudiest country in Europe behind the UK - making more power than 8 nuclear power plants. This is what America could be doing today - putting people to work - rebuilding the middle-class - and reclaiming the top spot in the world economy.

We need to change the debate in America today.

Unlike the Republican budget proposal passed a few months back that's nearly 200 pages of draconian cuts (after all, we know Republicans hate bills more than a few pages), mine is just 1 page - in fact - it's just 1 sentence. It simply says one thing - Restore the top income tax rate of 74% - as it was the year before Ronald Reagan took office in 1980 and we had no debt crisis. If we can get this bill passed, or even just get it debated, we can fix America's problems today.

So call your congressman and tell him to vote for the simple solution, the right solution, and roll back the Reagan tax cuts.

Thom Hartmann (thom at thomhartmann.com) is a Project Censored Award-winning New York Times best-selling author, and host of a nationally syndicated daily progressive talk program The Thom Hartmann Show. www.thomhartmann.com <http://www.thomhartmann.com/>

Source: Common Dreams 4/8/11. http://www.commondreams.org

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Dear *Connections* Reader

It's springtime! *Connections* and your Peace and Justice Network are in a growth spurt. Good thing!

People love the paper. New writers and advertisers are joining us. Delta students now snap up six hundred copies a month, thanks to a faculty member who stacks them around campus. A doctor and a retired beekeeper now distribute two thousand in Manteca. Folks understand that Facebook isn't enough; *Connections* helps us reason and empathize our way forward. We offer factual analysis, suggestion for action and hopeful local stories pointing toward global community.

Our volunteer staff is blossoming with four new board members, ages fourteen to eighty. A young, professional, Luis Gonzalez, now does layout for *Connections*, which Laurie Litman did faithfully for twenty-five years. (Watch for our New Look on July 20.)

We're reaching out like never before. We partner with the new Teen Impact Center, and Puentes urban farm project. The Record publishes strong letters from *Connections* editor Bruce Giudici and our other writers. A dozen University of the Pacific students—and their children, and their professor, a former Army man—join our weekly peace demonstration on Pacific Avenue.

Of course we continue with glorious Earth Day, which our group pioneered in Stockton in the 80's. And now we're building a community radio station! Imagine how powerful "Stone Soup Radio" will be, with the many voices, news and discussion programs, and various homegrown musics of this valley!

In this year 2011, people from Egypt to Wisconsin and Stockton are pitching in and speaking out for peace, fairness, and our flowering, fragile earth. Your local Peace and Justice Network is doing our part.

WE NEED YOU TO DO YOUR PART!
We need **YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT NOW!**

We need every dime, every fifty and every hundred dollars.

And you need *Connections* and our other community work, to survive these challenging times with perspective and good cheer. Together we will thrive. Years from now we'll look back and say, my gosh, what we accomplished!

Thank you for your extravagant generosity.

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How much are you paying in taxes for war this year?



Robert Greenwald

While millions of Americans are out of work or struggling to pay their bills, our government is spending billions of dollars a week on a war we don't support in Afghanistan. At no time is this more apparent than on April 18, Tax Day.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once famously said, "Taxes are what we pay for civilized society." But unfortunately, they're also what we pay when our elected officials make huge, expensive mistakes, and in this case, use lots of expensive weapons to kill people. According to our friends at the National Priorities Project, 27.4 percent of our income taxes will go to pay for the Afghanistan War and other military spending. Already the taxpayer is on the hook for \$107.3 billion just for this year, and just for the hugely expensive Afghanistan War. Those billions of dollars are supposed to help us build up our community and lay the groundwork for a brighter future for our children but, instead, they're being used to fight a war the American people don't support.

President Obama likes to talk about "winning the future" these days, but the U.S. is in a losing situation in Afghanistan. We're bleeding wealth and lives at an unacceptable rate, and things are only expected to get worse this year as fighting season resumes in the spring. Meanwhile, the Pentagon and their political allies want the

president to ignore the clear will of the American people, who want troops out within a year. The military reportedly is pushing

the president to pull out only an "insignificant" number of troops, despite the fact that it will cost us \$1 million per troop to keep forces in Afghanistan this year. Bleeding that many resources on a war that's not making us safer all the way until 2014 is losing, regardless of

resources meant to be spent on war and putting them to use rebuilding our battered communities. Winning the future would mean unhooking our country from a decadelong war and being more free to pursue objectives that are actually in our national interest, instead of going

Taxes are what we pay when our elected officials make huge, expensive mistakes

what General Petraeus' spin shop tells us. We're losing the future in Afghanistan.

So what would "winning the future" look like in Afghanistan?

At bare minimum, winning the future would mean recapturing the

with the inertia of a 10-year-long mistake. In short, winning the future means getting our troops out of Afghanistan.

Many of us wrote checks to the IRS, and we've done it at a time when, frankly, we don't have a lot of money to spare. That's



We need fair elections now

The system we currently use to elect our lawmakers is broken. Corporate lobbyists direct millions of dollars to elect the candidates they want running the country - more often than not, that's whoever will do the most favors for their corporate bosses. No wonder so many lawmakers today seem more interested in Wall Street's profits than Main Street's progress. Passage of the Fair Elections Now Act would change this dynamic.

The Fair Elections Now Act (H.R. 1404, S. 750) would fight corruption by enabling candidates for Congress to run viable campaigns based on small-dollar donations from real people, matched by public funds, so they could avoid taking cash from corporate

lobbyists, CEOs and other special interests. Instead of spending time asking for money from lobbyists and corporate special interest groups, candidates for elected office would be able to focus their attention on voters in the communities they represent. In the wake of the unlimited corporate spending allowed by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in "Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission," the Fair Elections Now Act is a particularly essential reform.

ACTION:

Contact your Representative.

Source: Public Citizen release <http://www.citizen.org/>

ACTION:

why it's important that we take a good, hard look at where our dollars are going and make sure our elected officials hear from us when they make bad decisions that waste scarce resources. Please take a minute to use the new Afghanistan War Tax Calculator <<http://rethinkafghanistan.com>> to find out how much you paid in taxes for war, and use our tool to forward it on to your member of Congress. It's time Congress got the message that we want this wasteful war stopped, now.

If you're tired of this war that's not worth the costs, join Rethink Afghanistan on Facebook <<http://facebook.com/RethinkAfghanistan>> and Twitter <<http://twitter.com/AfghanistanDocu>>, and find others in your hometown who oppose this war at your local Rethink the Afghanistan War Meetup. <<http://meetup.com/RethinktheAfghanistanWar>>

Source: Brave New Foundation release 4/7/11 <http://www.bravenewfoundation.org/>

Link between war and big finance

Kevin Zeese

Veterans For Peace has joined in endorsing "Sounds of Resistance," a concert and protest against Wall Street banks that draws the connections between militarism, Wall Street, the wealth divide and the downward spiral of the wealth of most Americans. The event, on April 15 at 11:00 a.m. in New York City's Union Square Park, is part of a democratic awakening that more and more Americans are joining.

Americans are recognizing the link between the military-industrial complex and the Wall Street oligarchs' connection that goes back to the beginning of the modern U.S. empire. Banks have always profited from war because the debt created by banks results in ongoing war profit for big finance; and because wars have been used to open countries to U.S. corporate and banking interests. Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan wrote: "the large banking interests were deeply interested in the world war because of the wide opportunities for large profits."



Demonstrating for peace along Pacific Avenue by Delta College, every Thursday 5 PM.

FROM WWI...

Many historians now recognize that a hidden history for U.S. entry into World War I was to protect U.S. investors. U.S. commercial interests had invested

heavily in European allies before the war: "By 1915, American neutrality was being criticized as bankers and merchants began to loan money and offer credits to the warring parties, although the Central Powers received far less. Between 1915 and April 1917, the Allies received 85 times the amount loaned to Germany." The total dollars loaned to all Allied borrowers during this period was \$2,581,300,000. The bankers saw that if Germany won, their loans to European allies would not be repaid. The leading U.S. banker of the era, J.P. Morgan and his associates did everything they could to push the United States into the war on the side of England and France. Morgan said: "We agreed that we should do all that was lawfully in our power to help the Allies win the war as soon as possible." President Woodrow Wilson, who campaigned saying he would keep the United States out of war, seems to have entered the war to protect U.S. banks' investments in Europe.

The most decorated Marine in history, Smedley Butler, described fighting for U.S. banks in many of the wars he fought in. He said: "I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time 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 helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to col-

lect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested. Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents."

TO TODAY

In "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man", John Perkins describes how World Bank and IMF loans are used to generate profits for U.S. business and saddle countries with huge debts that allow the United States to control them. It is not surprising that former civilian military leaders like Robert McNamara and Paul Wolfowitz went on to head the World Bank. These nations' debt to international banks ensures they are controlled by the United States, which pressures them into joining the "coalition of the willing" that helped invade Iraq allowing U.S. military bases on their land. If countries refuse to "honor" their debts, the CIA or Department of Defense enforces U.S. political will through coups or military action.

Tarak Kauff, Veteran For Peace activist and organizer, stated, "There are trillions for wars and

occupations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and now Libya, billions yearly to support Israel's occupation and oppression of Palestine, again trillions in bailouts to make those at the top of the economic food chain even more powerful, but relative pennies for our children's education, adequate health care, infrastructure, housing and other necessities of Americans. Yet big corporate banks are thriving and, like Bank of America, pay no taxes. But you do, and I do, and working people all

across this country pay taxes. I ask, what are we paying for and into whose pockets is it going? The wealth of this country is disappearing down the tubes into the stuffed pockets of the financial/military/industrial oligarchs. Americans are being bled dry while people of the world are literally bleeding and dying from U.S.-made weapons and warfare. Do we not see the connection?"

More and more people are indeed seeing the connection between corporate banksterism and militarism; they are seeing how uncontrolled spending on war is resulting in austerity at home. In a recent interview, Cornel West brought the issues of the wealth divide, Wall Street and militarism together. Prof. West also spoke about Obama, calling him "a cagey neoliberal at home and a liberal neoconservative abroad" who expanded the wars and military while re-enforcing the existing Wall Street-dominated power structure at home, a president who has abandoned the poor and working class and is becoming "a pawn of big finance and a puppet of big business."

Kevin Zeese is executive director of Voters For Peace <<http://www.votersforpeace.us/>> and serves on the steering committees of *WikiLeaksIsDemocracy.org* and the *Bradley Manning Support Network* <<http://www.bradleymanning.org>>.

Source: *War Is A Crime.org* 4/10/11 via www.truthout.org

Contact Your Reps



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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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



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Budget Baloney

Why social security isn't a problem

Robert Reich

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, a Republican presidential hopeful, says in order to "save" Social Security the retirement age should be raised. The media are congratulating him for his putative "courage." Deficit hawks are proclaiming Social Security one of the big entitlements that has to be cut in order to reduce the budget deficit. This is all baloney.

In a former life I was a trustee of the Social Security trust fund. So let me set the record straight.

Social Security isn't responsible for the federal deficit. Just the opposite. Until last year Social Security took in more payroll taxes than it paid out in benefits. It lent the surpluses to the rest of the government.

Now that Social Security has started to pay out more than it takes in, Social Security can simply collect what the rest of the government owes it. This will keep it fully solvent for the next 26 years.

But why should there even be a problem 26 years from now? Back in 1983, Alan Greenspan's Social Security commission was supposed to have fixed the system for good - by gradually increasing payroll taxes and raising the retirement age. (Early boomers

like me can start collecting full benefits at age 66; late boomers born after 1960 will have to wait until they're 67.)

Greenspan's commission must have failed to predict something. But what? It fairly accurately predicted how quickly the boomers would age. It had

a pretty good idea of how fast the US economy would grow. While it underestimated how many immigrants would be coming into the United States, that's no problem. To the contrary, most new immigrants are young and their payroll-tax contributions will far exceed what they draw from Social Security for decades.

So what did Greenspan's commission fail to see coming? Inequality.

Remember, the Social Security payroll tax applies only to earnings up to a certain ceiling. (That ceiling is now \$106,800.) The ceiling rises every year according to a formula roughly matching inflation.

Back in 1983, the ceiling was set so the Social Security payroll tax would hit 90 percent of all wages covered by Social Security. That 90 percent figure was built into the Greenspan Commission's fixes. The Commission assumed that, as the ceiling rose with inflation, the Social Security

payroll tax would continue to hit 90 percent of total income.

Today, though, the Social Security payroll tax hits only about 84 percent of total income.

It went from 90 percent to 84 percent because a larger and larger portion of total income has gone to the top. In 1983, the richest 1 percent of Americans got 11.6 percent of total income. Today the top 1 percent takes in more than 20 percent.

If we want to go back to 90 percent, the ceiling on income subject to the Social Security tax would need to be raised to \$180,000.

Presto. Social Security's long-term (beyond 26 years from now) problem would be solved.

So there's no reason even to consider reducing Social Security benefits or raising the age of eligibility. The logical response to the increasing concentration of income at the top is simply to raise the ceiling.

Not incidentally, several months ago the White House considered proposing that the ceiling be lifted to \$180,000. Somehow, though, that proposal didn't make it into the President's budget.

Source: Robert Reich's Blog 2/16/11
<http://robertreich.org>

Who makes more, private or public workers?

Mickey McGuire

In the past several months, a controversy has arisen over whether public-sector workers are paid more for the same job than private-sector workers. Economists have studied this issue for decades and have generally found that total compensation is comparable for the same job.

Two studies have been published over the past year about public-private compensation. One was completed at Queens University and looked at Census data. Another was authored by two professors at the University of Wisconsin and looked at Bureau of Labor Statistics data. The question: are state and local employees over-compensated?

If you compare the average of all public and private employees,

it turns out that public employees, on average, are more highly compensated. In Wisconsin it's 22 percent higher!

But this apples and oranges style comparison is highly inaccurate and misleading. In Wisconsin, 60 percent of government employees have a college degree versus 20 percent in the public sector. Twenty-seven percent of government employees have a postgraduate degree, compared to 7.7 percent of private employees. Nationally, the public to private college degree comparison is 48 to 22 percent.

When comparisons take these differences into account, the results change.

Referring just to wages, the University of Wisconsin authors write: "Holding education and

other characteristics the same, typical state workers earn an average of 11 percent less than comparable private-sector workers."

The Queens University study looked only at salaries in the Census data. They found that public workers with a college degree were paid less than their private counterparts, but that public non-college graduate workers were paid more than private-sector workers without a degree.

One difference between public- and private-sector employees is the relative mix of earnings and fringe benefits in their compensation packages. Wages make up 71 percent of private-worker compensation, *continued on next page*

Equal Pay Day: women still paid less than men

James Parks

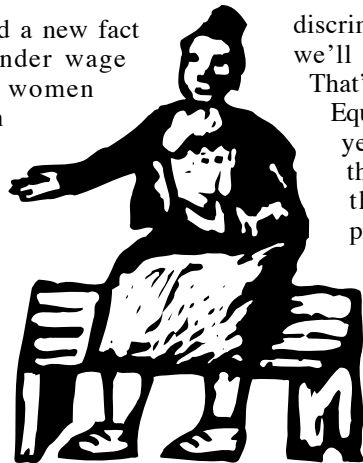
April 12 was Equal Pay Day—the date that symbolizes how far into 2011 women must work to earn what men earned in 2010. Nearly 50 years after enactment of the Equal Pay Act, working women in the United States are paid an average of 80 cents for every dollar paid to men. The pay gap is even larger for women of color, with black women earning about 70 cents, and Latinas about 60 cents, of every dollar paid to all men.

U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis said in a statement marking Equal Pay Day:

When women start at a disadvantage, they stay at a disadvantage. Every time a woman starts a new job or tries to negotiate for a pay raise, she is starting from a lower base salary. So, the pay gap grows wider and wider over time. The Labor Department reports the pay gap for the average, full-time working woman means she gets \$150 less in her weekly paycheck. If she works all year, that's \$8,000 less at the end of the year and about \$380,000 over a lifetime.

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)

yesterday released a new fact sheet on the gender wage gap that shows women have lower median earnings than men in 107 out of 111 occupations, regardless of levels of education.



According to the fact sheet, in the lowest paid 10 occupations, nearly two-thirds of workers are women, while in the highest paid 10 occupations some two-thirds of workers are men. Women's median earnings are lower than men in the 10 most common occupations, in the 10 highest paid occupations, and in the 10 lowest paid occupations. Check out the fact sheet "The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation" here.

Lisa Maatz, director of public policy and government relations for the American Association of University Women (AAUW), says:

Pay discrimination is alive and well and undermining the economic security of American families, and when one woman is

discriminated against, we'll all be affected. That's why we mark Equal Pay Day every year—to educate the public about this pernicious problem and show women they will not be alone in confronting it.

AAUW also has released a guide to the gender gap including a state-by-state analysis of women's pay compared with that of men. Click here to read the guide, entitled "The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap."

Solis sums up the need for equal pay this way:

Equal pay is not just a women's issue. It's not just a family issue. It's a recovery issue. I am committed to finding commonsense solutions to closing the pay gap once and for all so that our nation will be a more fair and equitable place for everyone.

Source: AFL-CIO website 4/12/11 <http://blog.aflcio.org/2011/04/12/equal-pay-day-women-still-paid-less-than-men/>

Bradley Manning

Quantico blocks visits by UN, Amnesty, and Rep. Kucinich

Michael Whitney

According to Manning's attorney, Kucinich, Amnesty, and UN have been trying to get clearance for "official visits" to Manning at the Quantico Marine brig. An "official visit" is different from an "authorized visit" in that an "authorized visit"—one made by family or friends and approved by the brig and Manning—is subject to full surveillance by the brig. An official visit would be one conducted by those officials on government business, and would not be subject to monitoring by the brig. So essentially, the government and

the brig are saying you can come visit Manning, but we're going to watch and record every thing you say, and those recordings could be used as evidence against Manning at his trial.

Manning's attorney stated that Kucinich, Amnesty, and the UN are not allowed to have an official visit "because none of these individuals are conducting 'official government business.'" This is, of course, ludicrous. Rep. Kucinich is a sitting Member of Congress with a seat on the Oversight Committee, and he submitted official notices to the Department of Defense that he wanted to inspect the conditions

of Manning's confinement. Additionally, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has opened an investigation into Manning's detention and would be visiting in his official capacity.

What is the government afraid that Manning will say to these officials when the Brig isn't able to record his every move? If Manning's torture is "meeting our basic standards," as President Obama says, what is there to hide?

Source: [firedoglake 4/7/11 http://firedoglake.com/2011/04/07/quantico-blocks-official-visits-by-un-amnesty-and-rep-kucinich-to-bradley-manning/](http://firedoglake.com/2011/04/07/quantico-blocks-official-visits-by-un-amnesty-and-rep-kucinich-to-bradley-manning/)

Robin Hood in reverse

Bill Quigely

The rich have been getting richer and the poor and the middle class have been getting poorer in the US recently. Here are seven examples that show how the US is going through "Robin Hood in Reverse:"

1) Between 1948 and 1979, the richest 10 percent of families in the US claimed 33 percent of average income growth. Between 2000 and 2007, the richest 10 percent claimed a full 100 percent of average income growth in the US, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

2) Business taxes were cut from 46 to 34 percent 25 years ago, according to ProPublica. But today, 115 of the big 500 companies listed on Standard and Poor's stock index paid federal and other taxes of less than 20 percent over the last five years, according to David Leonhardt of The New York Times.

3) General Electric's tax rate for last year was seven percent, according to ProPublica.

4) The top five percent of US households claim 63 percent of the entire country's wealth. The bottom 80 percent hold just 13 percent of the

growth, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

5) Last year, John Paulson, a hedge fund manager "earned" \$4.9 billion, according to The New York Times. Ten years ago, it took 25 such managers to collectively earn that much. Last year, the top 25 hedge fund managers

pocketed (a much better word) a total of \$22 billion. It would take over 440,000 people each earning \$50,000 a year to match that amount.

6) A federal development program intended to help poor communities, the New Market Tax Credit, instead funnels up to ten billion taxpayer dollars to big corporations like JPMorgan Chase & Co, Goldman Sachs and Prudential to build luxury hotels, office buildings and a car museum. Bloomberg Markets Magazine pointed to the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, which was renovated for \$116 million. Prudential got \$15.6 million in tax credit from the US Treasury for helping fund the project because the hotel was in a census zone that included two colleges that housed a lot of lower income students.

7) According to the Financial Times, there are now more people living in poverty in the US than at any time in the last 50 years. Foreclosure filings were nearly four million in 2010, up 23 percent since 2008, according to RealtyTrac.

Bill Quigely is legal director at the Center for Constitutional Rights and a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans. He is a Katrina survivor and has been active in human rights in Haiti for years with the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti.

Source: www.truthout.org/4/7/11

Who makes more, private or public workers?

continued from previous page

compared to 67 percent for public employees. Public workers have relatively more compensation put into fringe benefits.

One reason for the difference may be that 28 percent of public workers are not eligible for Social Security. Their employment-related retirement benefits are all they have.

Making such comparisons, including fringe benefits, can present difficulties. Many employers, for example, cover educational costs for their employees who pursue further training or education. Some offer bonuses, a company car, profit sharing or stock options.

Taking both earnings and fringe benefits into account, the

Wisconsin researchers conclude: "...The compensation of state and local workers is not excessive."

They continue: "State and local employees have lower total compensation than their private-sector counterparts. On average, total compensation is 6.8 percent lower for state employees and 7.4 percent lower for local workers, compared with comparable private sector employees."

The findings of the two studies described here are generally consistent with past attempts to answer the public-private compensation question.

Mickey McGuire, a retired high school social studies teacher, is among a select group of local residents with columns in the Tracy Press.

Ryan turns knife on Medicare & Medicaid

Margaret Flowers

Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, the Republican chairman of the U.S. House Budget Committee, unveiled two proposals this week to the health of our seniors and our most vulnerable populations.

The first proposal, Senate Joint Resolution 10, would amend the Constitution by imposing rigid and arbitrary restraints on federal spending. The second, his fiscal year 2012 federal budget resolution (misleadingly and eerily called "The Path to Prosperity"), would essentially kill the Medicare program and gut Medicaid, among its other nasty effects.

Both proposals should be emphatically rejected.

Ryan clearly has health care on his hit list. He stressed the problem of health care costs during his final testimony to President Obama's bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform last December. He said then that he would borrow pieces of the commission's report for the federal budget, but his latest proposals are in fact much more radical.

The Deficit Commission report stated that if the national health law did not control health care costs, then that ought to trigger more drastic changes in health care spending. Rather than wait for a trigger, Ryan is moving full steam toward the dismantling of our public health programs for the poor and elderly, and the creation of an even more fragmented, privatized and dysfunctional health care landscape than we have now.

SENIORS HIT

Ryan would change Medicare from a guaranteed benefit program to a limited spending program which pushes more seniors into the private market. Similar to the new federal health law, seniors would be given a defined amount of money that they could use to purchase private insurance on an exchange. Such subsidies are expected to grow more slowly than overall health care costs, so that as insurance premiums rise, seniors would be pushed into skimpier plans that would leave them unable to afford needed care and financially vulnerable should they have a serious accident or illness.

The dismantling and privatization of Medicare, which

would be completed by 2022, would actually lead to higher overall health care costs and poorer health for our Medicare population. Health care costs would be higher because of the added private-insurer expenses of profit and inefficient administration. For example, Medicare Advantage plans, run by the insurers, currently cost about 10 times more to administer than the traditional Medicare program.

It is also possible that increased cost-sharing in the form of higher co-pays and deductibles would cause seniors to delay or forgo necessary care leading to greater costs on the back-end for a greater number of and lengthier hospitalizations. (In a darker, bone-chilling moment, one economist recently remarked that delayed care leading to early deaths results in reduced U.S. health spending.)

Further privatization of Medicare will also increase the fragmentation of our health care financing, which will weaken the program's ability to negotiate fair prices for goods and services.

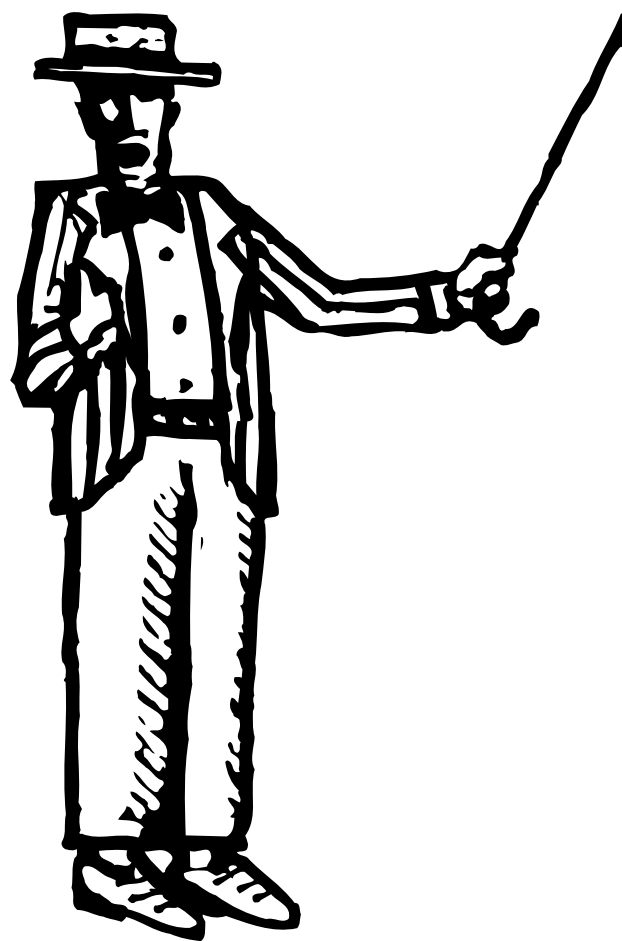
Ryan describes this change as similar to Medicare part D, for which he voted in 2003. This is another scary thought. The result of Medicare part D was greater confusion and obstacles for seniors, a huge new burden on taxpayers, and windfall profits for the pharmaceutical industry.

POOR WHACKED

Regarding Medicaid, Ryan proposes to change the federal portion of the program's funding to block grants. This means that rather than deciding what part of the population qualifies for Medicaid and adjusting the amount of money allocated based on need, as we do now, states will instead receive a defined lump sum to use as they see fit.

This approach is misleadingly marketed as providing states with greater flexibility. However, Ryan also wants to cut Medicaid spending by \$1 trillion over the next 10 years, which will effectively eliminate the Medicaid expansion envisioned under the federal health law and impose even more severe limitations on the number of people and services that will be covered.

In times of growing unemployment and poverty, with more people needing Medicaid, there will be fewer dollars and



no guarantee that people will be able to enroll. This will effectively leave millions of our most vulnerable citizens unable to receive necessary services, leading to increased suffering and deaths.

Ryan seriously suggests that those who qualify for Medicaid should be put into the private insurance market in the mistaken belief that this will provide greater choice and cost efficiency. But this is ludicrous, given the well-known track record of the private insurers.

CORRECT DIAGNOSIS, WRONG PRESCRIPTION

Ryan does get one thing right: he correctly observes that health care costs are intimately tied to our nation's budget problems. Health care expenses are expanding way out of line with our economic growth. And yet for all of this spending, a third of our population is either un-insured or under-insured, the medical bankruptcy rate is high, and our health outcomes are relatively poor.

What Ryan fails to understand is that Medicaid and Medicare are not the cause of our rising costs, but rather are the victims of our broken health care system.

Medicaid and Medicare costs are actually rising more slowly than our private sector costs.

Ryan's plans mirror the austerity measures being pushed in many states across the country and represent an escalation of the worst proposals put forth by the bipartisan Deficit Commission. These growing threats to our social programs require that we step up our defense of the public health infrastructure and make an even louder case for an improved Medicare for all.

As for Ryan's proposal for a constitutional amendment to cap federal spending, one wonders how much of it is driven by political grandstanding.

S.J.Res.10 would limit federal spending to 18 percent of the gross domestic product, something that hasn't occurred since 1966. (It's currently around 24 percent of GDP.) This may sound like a laudable goal until one realizes that during an economic downturn, as we are currently experiencing, there is a much greater need for government spending on programs such as food stamps, unemployment benefits and public health insurance.

A new, arbitrary ceiling on federal outlays could prove disastrous. Noted economist

Joseph Stiglitz makes the case that a temporary increase in investment in public programs is required in a downturn in order to make economic recovery possible.

Rep. Ryan hinted at his true agenda during the final meeting of the Deficit Commission when he said that he liked discretionary caps. Significantly, his constitutional amendment would exempt military expenditures in times of war (a seemingly permanent condition for the U.S. today) from such caps.

A RIGHT TO HEALTH CARE

Section 4 of S.J.Res.10 is also a matter of concern, particularly for single-payer advocates. It states that any bill that raises taxes or imposes a new tax may only pass with a two-thirds majority vote in Congress. Because a national single-payer program would replace current health spending on insurance premiums and out-of-pocket expenses with a new, equitable, and progressive system of taxation to finance universal care, this undemocratic amendment would constitute another obstacle to enacting an improved Medicare for all.

Yet it is precisely single payer that's the solution to our health care and economic crises: an improved and expanded Medicare-like system that covers everyone. This will achieve the goals of a universal, comprehensive health system which controls our health care costs, relieves businesses of the burden of providing health care coverage and provides a framework within which quality of care and health outcomes will improve. My testimony and that of others presented to the Deficit Commission last summer made that argument.

It is imperative that we take a strong stance to end this assault on our health. Speak to your elected officials today. Tell them to reject Ryan's proposals. And tell them you want a real solution to our health care crisis: single-payer national health insurance as embodied in H.R. 676.

Margaret Flowers, M.D., is congressional fellow at Physicians for a National Health Program.

Source: War Is A Crime.org release 4/9/11 <http://warisacrime.org/content/ryan-turns-knife-medicare-medicaid>

Republicans get 2/3 of budget cuts from poor

Robert Greenstein

House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan's budget plan would get about two-thirds of its more than \$4 trillion in budget cuts over 10 years from programs that serve people of limited means, which violates basic principles of fairness and stands a core principle of President Obama's fiscal commission on its head.

The plan of Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson, who co-chaired President Obama's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, established, as a basic principle, that deficit reduction should not increase poverty or inequality or hurt the disadvantaged. The Ryan plan, which the chairman unveiled in a news conference, speech, and Wall Street Journal op-ed today, charts a different course, turning its biggest cannons on these people.

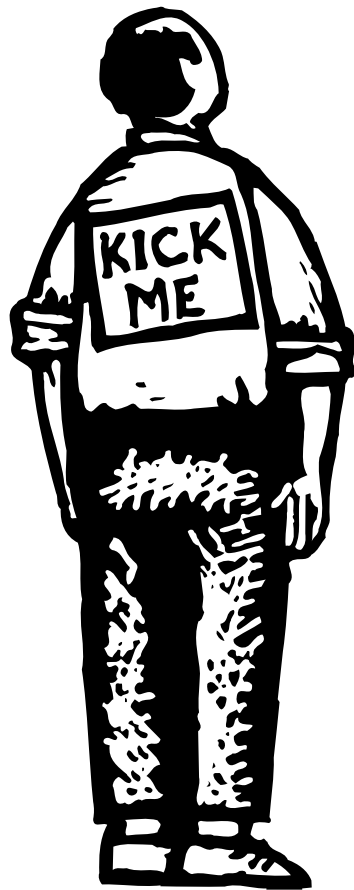
This finding emerges from a Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of the Ryan plan. Table S-4 of the plan shows that it proposes net program cuts of \$4.3 trillion over ten years. The plan shows a \$5.8 trillion cut in outlays from the Congressional Budget Office baseline, but \$446 billion of that is interest savings and another \$1.04 trillion is simply an assumption that the Iraq and Afghanistan wars will phase down on the Obama Administration's timetable. Actual program cuts produce net savings of \$4.322 trillion.

Cuts in low-income programs appear likely to account for at least \$2.9 trillion — or about two-thirds — of this amount. The \$2.9 trillion includes the following three categories of cuts:

\$2.17 TRILLION IN REDUCTIONS FROM MEDICAID AND RELATED HEALTH CARE.

The plan shows Medicaid cuts of \$771 billion, plus savings of \$1.4 trillion from repealing the health reform law's Medicaid expansion and its subsidies to help low- and moderate-income people purchase health insurance.

\$350 BILLION IN CUTS IN MANDATORY PROGRAMS SERVING LOW-INCOME



AMERICANS (OTHER THAN MEDICAID).

The budget documents that Chairman Ryan issued today show that he is proposing \$715 billion in cuts in mandatory programs other than Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, but do not specify how much will be cut from various programs (although they imply that cuts in the food stamp program will be large). In this analysis, we make the conservative assumption that savings from low-income mandatory programs (other than Medicaid) would be proportionate to their share of spending in this category. Thus, we derive the \$350 billion figure from the fact that about half of mandatory spending other than for Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security goes for programs for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. This likely substantially understates the cuts that the plan would make in low-income programs. The Ryan documents show that \$380 billion in cuts would come from

programs in the income security portion of the budget (function 600), and the overwhelming bulk of the mandatory spending in that category goes for low-income programs. The documents also show \$126 billion in mandatory cuts in the education, training, employment, and social services portion of

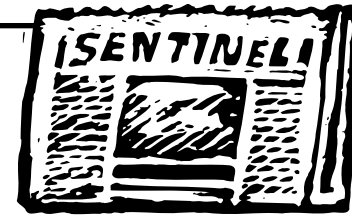
the budget (function 500), which, based on the discussion in those documents, would likely come mainly from cuts in the mandatory portion of the Pell Grant program for low-income students.

\$400 BILLION IN CUTS IN LOW-INCOME DISCRETIONARY PROGRAMS.

The Ryan budget documents show that he is proposing \$1.6 trillion in cuts in non-security discretionary programs, but again do not provide details about the size of cuts to specific programs. (The documents do identify some major low-income program areas, including Pell Grants and low-income housing, as prime targets for cuts.) Here, too, we make the conservative assumption that low-income programs in this category would bear a proportionate share of the cuts. Thus, we derive the \$400 billion figure from the fact that about a quarter of non-security discretionary spending goes for programs for low- and moderate-income individuals and families.

Our numerical assumptions are conservative in another way as well. That's because, when faced with the choice of which specific programs to cut, policymakers are unlikely to cut much from a number of non-/low-income programs in these budget categories that are popular, such as veterans' disability compensation and the FBI. That means that other programs — including low-income programs — would have to be cut by more than their proportionate share.

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities release 4/5/11 <http://www.cbpp.org/files/4-5-11bud2.pdf>



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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We're on the web too!

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

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Puentes urban farm sprouting

John Morearty

By the time you read this, the Puentes urban farm/community garden in Boggs Tract should be fenced and ready for planting. In mid-April twenty neighborhood volunteers, along with a troop of Eagle Scouts and their professional engineer scoutmaster, began building a chain link fence around the farm, just behind Boggs Tract Community Center. Three acres were donated by the Port of Stockton, two more acres are waiting.

Days earlier, interviews were held with the first five families

who applied for farm plots, to grow healthy food for their families. That same day was spring cleanup at Puentes' demonstration garden, just inside the gates of San Joaquin County fairgrounds.

It's been quite a spring for Puentes. In cold windy February the Boggs Tract ground was blessed by a neighborhood crowd, plus the mayor, Councilmember Susan Eggman, and ministers of various faiths. The Black Wolf Gourd Society danced and drummed.

Building permits have been happily resolved. New volunteers

keep joining the Puentes team: Pacific professors, a landscape architect, engineers, master gardeners, worker bees. Puentes found an eagle's nest office high above the Empire Theater, from whence CEO Jeremy Terhune and Community Action Committee chair Patricia Miller-Battiste coordinate hands-in-the-dirt work.

To observe the lively neighborhood action, take Crosstown Freeway to the Fresno Avenue end, and go straight ahead a few blocks to Ventura Avenue. To volunteer, contact Susan Mora Loyko, 943-1575.

How to save California's forests

California's forests can't take the assault anymore

Clearcutting; herbicide spraying; global warming; hotter, faster fires; lax logging rules; greedy timber executives; complacent bureaucrats: all have hammered the forests into submission. The woodlands desperately need help in recovering. To begin to restore the forests' vigor, Forests Forever has rolled out the most extensive forestry-reform effort in its 22-year history: the California Statewide Sustainable Forests and Watersheds Campaign.

The challenge now is to get the word out. We need your help convincing California Gov. Jerry Brown and state legislators of the dire need for change.

Talking points:

GIVE THE DOC A CHANCE

Without new forestry management, California's forests will continue to suffer. At present the lead agency charged with overseeing logging is the California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). But CDF's chief role is firefighting, not resource management. We propose legislation to put in charge the agency whose profile most closely fits the job responsibilities, the state's Department of Conservation (DOC). Timber harvesting falls directly within DOC's jurisdictional mandate. The agency provides services and information that promote environmental health, economic vitality, informed land-use decisions, and sound management of the state's natural resources.

ONLINE ACCESS TO THPS

Forests Forever advocates publishing all Timber Harvest Plan (THP) documents online

as one of the quickest and most affordable ways to advance public participation in California's resource management decisions.

FILING FEES FOR THPS

The state Board of Forestry (BOF) should institute a reasonable THP filing fee based on the acreage of the cut. The cost, now underwritten by the taxpayer, would be borne by the landowner or timber owner filing the THP. The fees would be deposited into a THP Review and Enforcement Fund.

STRENGTHENING THE WATER CODE

Logging is 'the leading source of impairment to water quality in the North Coast of California,' according to the U.S. EPA. Yet the state's water code inadequately addresses the need for logging operations to protect vulnerable watersheds. Forests Forever proposes strengthening key definitions in the state's water quality control laws to bolster regulators' authority to safeguard watersheds.

CLARIFYING LEGISLATIVE INTENT

Currently California's Forest Practice Act (FPA) in essence designates timber production as the primary purpose of the state's forests. The act fails to accord equal weight to ecosystem preservation. Forests Forever proposes legislation tailored to expressly mandate and not merely consider ecosystem protection.

BETTER REGULATE STEEP-SLOPE LOGGING

Intensive logging on steep slopes exacerbates erosion, siltation, landslides, debris torrents, and floods. Forest Forever proposes amending the Forest Practice Rules and installing stricter guidelines for logging on slopes of 15 degrees

or greater.

LET COUNTIES WRITE RULES

Counties need more freedom to write their own timber harvesting rules. Currently if the BOF rejects county-proposed logging rules' as it has done consistently for many years' the county is faced with the extra burdens of time and expense in overcoming such a decision, if it can succeed at all. We propose shifting the burden to the BOF to show convincingly that the proposed county rules are inconsistent with the FPA, or not needed by the county.

BAN CLEARCUTTING

As Forests Forever has long argued, clearcutting is the most ecologically devastating logging method. Yet current state law permits the clearcutting of forest patches up to 40 acres each. Such cuts now scar vast stretches of California. Forests Forever has written legislation that would prohibit clearcutting, except in strictly limited circumstances such as the harvest of fiber plantations and Christmas trees, or the creation of needed fire breaks.

ACTION:

1) Write or call Gov. Jerry Brown and urge him to use his fullest influence and authority to remake California forest practices. Ask him to adopt the reform measures being advocated by Forests Forever and its allies. Gov. Jerry Brown; c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173; Sacramento, CA 95814; (510) 628-0202 <http://gov.ca.gov/m_contact.php> 2) Also contact your state senator and assembly member <<http://www.legislature.ca.gov>> and ask her or him to sign on to Forests Forever's reform effort.

Source: Forests Forever release 4111
Forests Forever, 1029 K St. #47,
Sacramento CA 95814 415.974.3636
<http://www.forestsforever.org>

Our lives under eco threat: fighting back to win

Naomi Klein & Bill McKibben

Not for forty years has there been such a stretch of bad news for environmentalists in Washington. Last month in the House, the newly empowered GOP majority voted down a resolution stating simply that global warming was real: they've apparently decided to go with their own versions of physics and chemistry.

This week in the Senate, the biggest environmental groups were reduced to a noble, bare-knuckles fight merely to keep the body from gutting the Clean Air Act, the proudest achievement of the green movement. The outcome is still unclear; even several prominent Democrats are trying to keep the EPA from regulating greenhouse gases.

And at the White House? The president who boasted that his election marked the moment when 'the oceans begin to recede' instead introduced an energy plan heavy on precisely the carbon fuels driving global warming. He focused on 'energy independence,' a theme underscored by his decision to open 750 million tons of Wyoming coal to new mining leases. That's the equivalent of

running 3,000 new power plants for a year.

UP AGAINST BIG OIL

The modern environmental movement was born on Earth Day 1970, in an unprecedented burst of mass organizing--by some estimates 20 million Americans, a tenth of the population, took to the streets. It was a young movement, at a time when large numbers of people were serious about not just cleaning the air but stopping wars and ending official discrimination. That popular base inspired--or, more likely, cowed--Washington: the next four years saw the passage of virtually all the environmental legislation that still forms the core of green law.

It also saw the birth or rebirth of many of the organizations we think of when we think of environmentalism. Powered by that initial burst of mass support, they were able to make real headway in DC, and so they concentrated on important and professional tasks: patient lobbying of subcommittees, careful report-writing. And they

kept making substantial gains: Superfund toxic cleanups, acid-rain control.

But in recent years two things have happened. One, that battery wound up on the first Earth Day has finally wound down: congressmen, it turns out, can tell the difference between an aging membership list and a vibrant political movement. As the DC political bible Politico put it last month: "green groups are being forced to play defense in a world where D.C. pols aren't scared of them."

Second, the key issue has changed. Forget acid rain and Superfund; these were important but relatively easy fights that didn't directly confront anyone's business model. You could clean up acid rain by putting a filter on your power plant. But global warming is different--you'd have to shut down that power plant, and replace it with a windmill or a solar panel.

And so the full power of the fossil fuel industry--the most profitable business in the planet's history--has been brought to bear on the fight, and they play hard and dirty. The Koch Brothers spend huge sums to underwrite the network of global warming skeptics; the US Chamber of Commerce emerged as the biggest campaign funder of them all, shuttling 94% of its donations to

climate deniers. This kind of clout carried the day: the biggest dream of DC Washington groups was the so-called 'cap-and-trade' bill, behind which they mustered every insider technique they'd spent the last four decades perfecting. But in the end they didn't come close: Harry Reid refused to even schedule a floor vote, knowing that he was far short of the votes needed to pass the bill. The White House stayed on the sidelines.

To us, the lesson is pretty clear. Since we're never going to have as much money as the fossil fuel industry, we need to rebuild the kind of mass movement that marked 1970: bodies, passion, and creativity are the currencies we can compete in. It's not impossible. Working with next to no money, the fledgling campaign at 350.org managed over the last three years to coordinate 15,000 rallies in 189 countries--every nation on earth save North Korea. It's been active in every US state and Congressional district. And this week, it combined forces with another important American grass roots climate campaign, 1Sky, for extra reach.

1Sky was founded in the same spirit, and at the same time, as 350.org, and has worked to develop leaders around the country and help build a base of hundreds of allies. Together, we'll be smarter, bolder, faster, and more creative than we were before.

This new and expanded 350.org will mobilize on a large scale--circle Sept. 24 on your calendar for a worldwide day of bike-based action. But it's also going aggressively after the backroom money, with a far-reaching new campaign that tackles the US Chamber of Commerce for its climate stance.

This youth-based campaign is linking up with labor, with faith communities, with frontline communities who have the most experience trying to shut down dirty power plants in their backyards. Most of all it's actually out in the streets, organizing new blood. The idea is not to supplant the Washington green groups, but instead to give the whole movement new clout--enough clout to withstand the crushing power of oil money. And enough energy to let us get off defense and back on the attack.

We don't know if we'll win in the end: the science of climate change grows darker by the day, and the window for effective action is swiftly closing. But any chance requires people power replacing corporate power. In the year of Tunisia and Egypt and Wisconsin, it's worth a try.

Naomi Klein and Bill McKibben are board members of 350.org.

Source: *Altenet.org* article 4/8/11. <http://www.altenet.org/environment/150552/>

\$ for electric mowers New funding for popular lawn mower trade-in program

New funding and a simplified, regional voucher request process will make clean, electric lawn mowers available to more Valley residents through the Clean, Green Yard Machine program beginning Monday, April 11. "This is our most popular consumer program, and one that pays off in big clean-air dividends for everyone in the Valley," said Seyed Sadredin, the District's executive director and air pollution control officer. "We're very pleased to be able to offer this program again this year, and to more residents than ever." Local funding for this program was authorized by the District's Governing Board in combination with a state grant for residents of the San Joaquin Valley. The lawn mower trade-in program replaces old, polluting, gas-powered mowers with clean, electric Neuton mowers for just \$50 (14" cutting blade) or \$100 (19" cutting blade), including shipping, with the trade-in of an older, gas-powered mower.

Vouchers MUST be requested by phone in advance beginning April 11 and will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted. Limit one per household or three per business. Program participants must be residents of the San Joaquin Valley air basin: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley air basin portion of Kern counties. After receiving a voucher, the applicant must turn in a working, gas-powered mower at an authorized recycler in their county (a list of recyclers is available at www.valleyair.org). Then, they can phone Neuton at a toll-free number and order their new, cordless, electric lawn mower, which will be delivered to their door. Trading in a gas-powered mower for an electric mower is one way to reduce personal emissions and clean up the Valley's air. Emissions from using a gas-powered mower for one hour are equivalent to driving 40 late-model cars for the same length of time.

For complete details about the program, visit www.valleyair.org or call and 209-557-6485 (residents in Merced, Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties).

Source: *Valley Air District, 1990 E. Gettysburg / Fresno, CA 93726 559.230.5853*

Reviving the River of Skulls

Jeremy Terhune

A river flows through the neighborhoods of Stockton in central California - although in places it looks to be no more than an irrigation ditch. Yet it remains a vitally important waterway for residents, wildlife and farmers alike. The Lower Calaveras River, or translated to English, the River of Skulls, is fed by primarily by rainfall, but provides habitat for Chinook salmon and threatened steelhead.

Over the years, however, citizens who lived along the river's banks have watched its condition deteriorate as litter and other pollutants gradually fouled the water. The Lower Calaveras had started to look more like the river of death.

But between 2007 and 2008, that began to change. Concerned citizens and Defenders band together to help revive the river,



forming a dedicated group of river keepers known as the Friends of the Lower Calaveras River (FLCR). Since then, FLCR has grown to more than 550 members and is supported by 11 local agencies and organizations.

In just two years, the group gained such widespread support for its efforts that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded FLCR, along with fellow conservation group River Partners, a \$40,000 grant to restore three acres of native grasses to the river's battered shores.

Several times a year, FLCR also organizes clean-ups, where Stockton residents have plucked countless pounds of trash, including plastic bags, tires and more, out of the river.

In addition, FLCR and local wildlife experts sponsor informal, educational forays along the river's banks to connect residents to the diversity of life supported by the Calaveras' waters. The Riverwalk project has proven to be one of FLCR's most successful outreach programs. With time, more and more people no longer see just a ditch and trickle, but instead, a vibrant river of life.

To help out, contact Jeremy Terhune, Defenders of Wildlife San Joaquin Representative at (209) 922-8215 or jterhune@defenders.org.

Source: *Defenders of Wildlife release 4/1/11 1130 Defenders, 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036 1-800-385-9712* <http://www.defenders.org>

California tax questions answered

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How much do Californians pay in state and local taxes?

Measured as a share of family income, California's lowest-income families pay the most in taxes. The poorest fifth of the state's non-elderly families, with an average income of \$13,200, spent 11.1 percent of their income on state taxes. In comparison, the wealthiest 1 percent, with an average income of \$2.2 million, spent 7.8 percent of their income on state taxes.

The share of income California's families spend on state and local taxes is a function of the state's relatively progressive personal income tax and regressive sales and excise taxes. Higher-income families pay a larger share of their income in income taxes. Lower-income families pay a greater share of their income in sales and property taxes. Families also indirectly pay a portion of the taxes imposed on business through higher prices and reduced corporate earnings. Higher-income families pay a greater share of the corporate income tax, whereas lower-income families pay a greater share of the sales and excise taxes paid by businesses.

Who pays income taxes in California?

A single mother with one child will have no 2009 state income tax liability unless she earns at least \$27,625. A family of four with two children will have no 2009 state income tax liability unless their income is at least \$36,325.2 California's tax thresholds – the income level at which an individual or family begins to pay income taxes – were lowered by changes made as part of the February 2009 budget agreement. The reduction in the size of the dependent tax credit – the tax credit claimed by families with children or other dependents – was cut from \$309 to \$98, which significantly lowers the income level at which families with children begin to pay income taxes. In 2009, for example, a family of four with two children began to pay income taxes when their income reached \$36,325. In 2008, in contrast, a family of four did not begin to owe income taxes until their income reached \$51,335.

How much does the "average" California household earn?

California's 2008 median household income, the income

at which half of all households earned more and half earned less, was \$57,014.5 The median income for all California personal income taxpayers was \$35,646 in 2007, the most recent year for which data are available. The 2007 median income of taxpayers filing joint returns was \$68,797.

Who pays the corporate income tax in California?

Small businesses pay a very small share of the corporate income tax. While 709,937 corporations filed tax returns, the 2.0 percent with taxable incomes of \$1 million or more paid 87.2 percent of the 2007 corporate income tax. The most costly corporate tax credit is the Research and Development (R&D) Credit. In 2007, 2,020 corporations claimed \$1.1 billion in R&D credits, an average of \$544,202 per firm.8 Overall, relatively few corporations claim the state's various tax credits. In 2007, fewer than 1.1 percent of the state's corporations claimed any of the state's tax credits.

How does the growth in corporate income compare to that for individuals?

A number of recent research reports have documented the rise in corporate profits and decline in the share of national income accounted for by wages and salaries. While comparable data are not available for California, the data that are available show that the recent growth in corporate profits reported for California tax purposes far exceeds that of income reported by individual taxpayers. Between 2001 and 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, the total adjusted gross income of California's personal income taxpayers increased by 27.8 percent. In contrast, the net profits reported by corporations for California tax purposes increased more than fivefold, rising by 411.6 percent.

How do California's tax collections compare to those of other states?

California is a moderate tax state. In 2008-09, California ranked 21st among the 50 states with respect to state taxes as a percentage of personal income. The state also ranked 19th with respect to total "own source" revenues – the broadest measure of state and local revenues – raised by state and local governments in 2006-07, the most recent year

for which data are available. California ranks relatively high with respect to personal and corporate income tax collections. The state ranks relatively low with respect to state sales, property, vehicle fuel, and alcoholic beverage taxes.

How have California's tax policies changed over time?

Over the past two decades, the cost of funding state services has shifted from corporate to personal income taxpayers. The Department of Finance estimates that personal income tax receipts will provide 53.2 percent of General Fund revenues in 2009-10, up from 35.4 percent in 1980-81. Corporate tax receipts are expected to provide 10.7 percent of General Fund revenues in 2009-10, down from 14.6 percent in 1980-81. New, increased, and expanded corporate tax breaks and the 1996 corporate tax rate reduction are responsible for the decline in the share of state revenues provided by the corporate income tax. Additional corporate tax cuts were included in the September 2008 and February 2009 budget agreements that will result in a loss of nearly \$2 billion per year when fully implemented.

Who doesn't pay taxes in California?

In 2007, the most recent year for which data are available, 647,547 taxpayers reported incomes of \$200,000 or more. However, 2,044 of these taxpayers paid no California personal income tax.10 How did they do it? The tax breaks claimed most often by "no tax" taxpayers include enterprise zone tax credits, miscellaneous deductions, and mortgage deductions. The number of high-income "no tax" returns more than tripled between 1997 and 2007, rising from 579 to 2,044.

Source: California Budget Project (CBP) release. The California Budget Project (CBP) was founded in 1994 to provide Californians with a source of timely, objective, and accessible expertise on state fiscal and economic policy issues. The CBP engages in independent fiscal and policy analysis and public education with the goal of improving public policies affecting the economic and social well-being of low- and middle-income Californians. General operating support for the CBP is provided by foundation grants, individual donations, and subscriptions. Please visit the CBP's website at www.cbpp.org

California's budget

Is fiscal chaos coming?

Citing an ever-changing list of demands from Republican lawmakers, Governor Brown called off negotiations to obtain Republican votes to hold a June special election to ask voters to approve a five year extension to tax increases agreed to in 2009 to help balance the state's budget. California is facing a \$26 billion budget deficit, which is exacerbated by the expiration of temporary tax increases, the loss of federal stimulus funds, the slow pace of the economic recovery, as well as the failure to deal with past budget deficits.

So far, no "plan B" has emerged, and there are really no good options. Local school districts and community colleges are bracing for additional layoffs. California has already laid off 27,000 public school teachers. The governor's proposal to realign services to the local level, including responsibility for managing people convicted of low-level felonies, is contingent on the passage of the tax extensions.

Earlier Governor Brown had pledged to propose an "all cuts" budget if voters rejected the tax extensions. Last week, Governor Brown signed bills that reduced state spending by \$11 billion by making deep cuts to health and human services programs and higher education. With Democrats' expressing both relief and shame for having passed these cuts, it is unlikely that Democrats will be willing to cut deeper.

Senate Minority Leader Bob Dutton (R-San Bernardino) obtained an opinion from the Legislative Counsel (the Legislature's legal advisor) that the Legislature, under certain conditions, could place the tax increase extensions on the ballot by a majority vote of the Legislature. Dutton claimed that Republicans were being used to provide Democrats with political cover for increasing taxes. Senate President Pro Tem Darrel Steinberg (D-Sacramento) had suggested that possibility, but doing so would invite legal challenges and proponents would cry foul and claim that passage of Proposition 25 last November to allow for majority vote budgets was a backhanded way of approving tax increases by a majority vote. Both Steinberg

and Assembly Speaker John Perez (D-Los Angeles) have said they will not attempt to bypass Republicans to put the tax extensions on the ballot.

Governor Brown could continue negotiations with Republicans in order to extend the tax extensions by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature. That would require obtaining at least four Republican votes and would require the governor to renege on his campaign promise to have all tax increases approved by voters. The governor is also said to be considering a November ballot initiative that would bypass the Legislature but would require an expensive signature-gathering campaign. It is widely believed that this would be a harder sell to voters, as the temporary tax increases will have expired and would be considered tax increases rather than tax extensions. The California Federation of Teachers released new polling data showing bipartisan support for raising the state's personal income tax rate by 1 percent on the top 1 percent of incomes and may go to the ballot.

With uncertainty about the state's tax revenues, attention has shifted to the State Controller's cash-flow projections. Prior to the passage of the spending cuts, the Controller had indicated that the state had enough cash to pay its bills through July. The spending cuts will buy the state some additional time before having to issue IOU's and deferrals.

Partial list of key components of budget package signed by Governor Brown:

SPENDING CUTS (\$12.5 BILLION)

Health and Human Services Programs (\$6 billion cut, not including child care) & Medi-Cal (California's version of Medicaid)

- Limits office visits to seven per year unless a physician certifies that additional visits are medically necessary.
- Imposes co-payments from \$3 per prescription to \$100 per day for hospital stays with a maximum of \$200 per stay.
- Eliminates Adult Day Health Care and seeks a federal waiver to create a smaller state program costing \$85 million.
- Reduces payments to Medi-Cal

providers by 10 percent.

- Eliminates coverage of over-the-counter cold products.

Healthy Families (Health Insurance for children in families with incomes up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level)

- Raises premiums for children in families with incomes between 151 percent and 250 percent of federal poverty level.
- Imposes copayments of \$50 for emergency room visits and \$100 per day for hospitalization.
- Reduces state support for vision coverage by \$3 million.

Community Challenge Grants

- Eliminates \$20 million funding for program that aims to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies.

CalWORKS (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)

- Retroactively reduces cash assistance from five years to four years. (Approximately 115,000 families with 234,000 children will lose benefits).
- Reduces grants by 8 percent. (The maximum grant for a family of three in a high cost area would be reduced from \$694 to \$638 per month.)
- Reduces funding for welfare-to-work services by \$427 million.
- Cuts funding for case-management services to 12,000 teen parents by \$45 million.
- Reduces funding for Cal WORKS substance abuse and mental health services by \$5 million.

In-Home Supportive Services

- Eliminates all services for recipients who lack a doctor's certification that IHSS is necessary to prevent out-of-home-care.
- Assumes \$121 million in savings to due to "expected approval" of federal funding under the new federal Community First Choice Option.
- Reduces enrollment estimates for savings of \$82 million.
- Adopts additional savings of \$128.4 million based on "proposals to be determined."

Supplemental Security Income/ State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) Program

- Reduces the maximum monthly grants for individuals from \$845 to \$830. Approximately 8,500 seniors and people with disabilities would lose their SSI/SSP grant as a result of reducing the state's share of grants to the minimum allowed by federal law.

Child Care and Development (funding for child care and preschool providers)

- Cuts funding per slot by 15 percent for state preschool and all child care programs except CalWORKS Stages 1 and 2.
- Eliminates child care for 11- and 12-year olds except for those needing care during nontraditional hours and those who are disabled, at risk of abuse or homeless.
- Reduces the income eligibility limit from 75 percent of the State Median Income to 70 percent.
- Adopts a 10 percent across-the-board increase to the fees that families pay for child care.
- Reduces the Standards Reimbursement to child care providers by 10 percent.

HIGHER EDUCATION (\$1.4 BILLION CUT)

Community Colleges

- Reduces funding by \$400 million and increases student fees from \$26 to \$36 per unit.

University of California and California State University

- Reduces funding for \$500 million each and requires each system to minimize fee and enrollment impacts and to report to the Legislature whether they have fulfilled enrollment targets.

Redevelopment Agencies (\$1.7 billion cut)

- Eliminates funding for redevelopment agencies.

General Government (\$700 million cut)

- Reduces state worker pay by 10 percent for bargaining units with expired contracts.
- Makes an unallocated reduction to state operations of \$250 million.

STILL ON THE TABLE REVENUE SOLUTIONS (\$12 BILLION)

- Extend tax increases (\$11.2 billion)



- Extend sales tax increase (\$4.5 billion, dedicated to local governments to fund realigned programs).
- Extend Vehicle License Fee Increase (\$1.4 billion, dedicated to local governments to fund realigned programs).
- Extend personal income tax surcharge which expired 12/31/2010 (\$3.3 billion, includes 2010-2011 and 2011-2012).
- Extend reduction in the dependent tax credit which expired 12/31/2010 (\$2.0 billion, includes 2010-2011 and 2011-2012).
- Repeal business tax breaks (\$2.3 billion)
- Eliminate tax break for corporations which allows them Mandatory Single Sales Factor.
- Eliminate tax deductions for enterprise zones.
- Various other revenue solutions (\$500 million)
- Proposition 98 impact of Revenue Solutions (-\$2 billion)

VARIOUS OTHER SOLUTIONS (\$3.2 BILLION)

- Borrowing from Special Funds, Disability Fund Loan for Unemployment Insurance Interest Payments, other solutions.

RESERVE (-\$1.1 BILLION)

Sources: Friends Committee on California Legislation newsletter, 03/11 & 4/11 <http://www.fclca.org/PDFs/currentnews2011.pdf> and the Budget Conference Committee Report of the California Budget Project FCLCA

A truly great republican

Elena Kelly

My dad had a massive stroke on February 28, 2010 which ultimately brought about his death on March 7th at the age of 81 years. He was the only child of homesteader parents who came to the Colorado prairie in 1911. He was born just after electricity came to the farm at a price of \$11.00, which was a lot of money in the 1920s. His dad, Grover Cleveland Adkins was grateful not to have to pump water by hand any more.

Dad was named Ivan Olis Adkins by his mother, a normal school graduate from Iowa who came to Colorado to teach in a one-room school house on the prairie. All his life people tried to give him the nickname of Ivan the Terrible, but the name wouldn't stick because he was such a nice guy. Ivan the Great is what he was.

On the homestead, my father

grew up hitching a mule to the moldboard plow and working all day turning sod to get to the rich soil that lay underneath. He used a team of horses to pull the drill that planted wheat, as well as the combine that harvested it in the summer. It was a full day just to take the wagon to town and back, just twenty-three miles from the farm. There was a small town about halfway to town named Gary. There was a General Store in Gary where he loved to stop and get some shade in the summer and to warm up beside the pot belly stove in the winter.

My grandfather Grover had an unusually high mechanical aptitude, so he never had to hire a mechanic when the farm machinery broke down. My dad had that aptitude as well and by the time he graduated from high school in 1947, he was well known for being able to fix cars, trucks and tractors. He used

that skill in the Army, repairing ambulances during the Korean War.

When his Army hitch was almost finished, he was transferred to Camp Polk, Louisiana where he met mom. They married in 1952, and dad moved his new bride to his little house on the prairie, a thousand miles from her family and friends, and over a mile from their nearest neighbors.

A lifelong Republican and NRA member, my dad served three terms on the school board and never missed voting in an election. He was active in the local 4-H chapter, International Flying Farmers (he was the proud pilot of a Cessna 210 airplane), the Lions Club, and was a faithful member of the church that his own father built at no cost to the small local congregation. His charity went far beyond the organizations he supported. He once joked that the best way to

get rid of a pesky person is to loan them money. "You'll never see them again!"

My dad loved the earth above all. He started each day by walking out into the field that was just south side of our house, where he would kneel down, scoop up some soil in his hand, and examine it as a doctor does an X-ray. He squeezed it, crumbled it through his fingers, smelled it, and rubbed it into his hands. It was this ritual he used, in conjunction with the Old Farmer's Almanac, to determine when to plow, when to plant, when to fertilize, and so on. His connection to the earth was as much a part of him as his own legs. The earth delighted his heart.

I learned to drive and to work a full day from him. I learned the value of working hard and always giving my best effort to every job. He taught me plumbing, carpentry, auto and diesel mechanics, how to work with animals, and even electrical wiring, a skill that put food on my own family's table for years. By the age of seven, he trusted me to drive the tractor all alone as I worked the soil, and I had both morning and evening chores that consisted of carrying five gallon buckets of water to the horses, feeding pigs, cattle, and chickens, and milking the cow.

My grandfather died when I was just three years old, and it devastated my dad, who idolized his father. He was a devoted son to his widowed mother, going to her house every Sunday after church, and never failing to check in on her every time he went to town for parts, groceries, or for any other reason. He loved his family unconditionally.

Just a year before his death, my dad and I talked honestly about how he felt when, at age eleven, I ran away from home, and did so again at age twelve and at thirteen. He said he felt like such a failure as a father. He couldn't figure out why I wanted to leave home so desperately. He said he secretly hoped it was because my mother had become a violent alcoholic, and that it was not due to his own perceived failings.

I told him that it had nothing to do with his fathering skills because he was the best dad any kid could have. The "problem" was that I was trying to find my birth mother, and I was trying to find her because I was convinced



that she could explain to everyone why I always felt that I was a girl. He had no idea what he was up against when he and my mother adopted me, and I couldn't tell him all those years because I knew it would have hurt him deeply to know his only son was really his daughter.

On that day in the spring of 2010, we both cried and hugged and my dad was able to accept that his love for me likely saved my life many times over. It was that same day that he told me, "You will always be my son, but now I understand why you have to live the rest of your life as a woman. And I'll always love you."

That was my dad, I miss him terribly, and he was a truly great Republican.

Rev. Elena Kelly is a lifelong Democrat and minister in the Central Valley, and is the Director of the Stockton Transgender Alliance. She can be reached at elena.kelly@comcast.net.

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Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

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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
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- 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.

Navigating

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

Solidarity in the Square

John Morearty

The little round stickers on our shirts said "We are One. California Labor." We were more than two hundred, in the sunny park by City Hall, the auditorium, Chavez library and Martin Luther King's statue this April 4. It was the anniversary of King's 1968 assassination in Memphis, a day when all over America, working people gathered to celebrate our solidarity.

A few weeks earlier, when the trumpet for Workers' Unity Day was sounded by Richard Trumka, crusty head of the AFL-CIO, I felt, Yes! Enough tax cuts for the obscenely rich, bailouts for banker billionaires, trillions for Halliburton and Lockheed, oily words from BP and Chevron. Enough already, basta ya!

In Martin Luther King plaza, organizer Marcie Bayne of the North Valley Labor Federation spoke into her mike. "The city told us, No Amplified Sound. Now, we have some off-duty police here, who are part of this rally. But if uniformed cops haul me off, will you bail me out?"

"YES!"

Reverend Dennis Moore of the Interfaith Council preached us a little sermon. "When you walk the walk with a cracked pot, it leaks water along the path, and flowers spring up. We crackpots are watering the flowers."

Big Joe Coy of the machinists union boomed out, "Brothers and sisters, we are the ones who do the work. This land is our land—if we can keep it."

Professor Mario D'Angeli of MoveOn.org greeted us. "All across America today, working

people are calling out for justice and liberty. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has never been ratified by our government. We need to sign on to it, and stand by it."

"Solidarity is our word," I told the crowd. "King was practicing solidarity with the Memphis garbage workers union when he was shot. Solidarity was the union of Polish shipyard workers who overthrew Communism. Millions of workers and jobless in Egypt and Tunisia were in solidarity this winter, so were the hundred thousand plus in Madison who occupied the state capitol building and filled the square for weeks, defying Republicans who are greedy to break our unions."

"We here in this park are in solidarity. Some of us are union members, some not, but we are all workers and retired workers. We have given our bodies and brains for our wages, health care, vacations and pensions, and now our rights are under attack by pious Republicans and mealy-mouthed Democrats. Those hypocrites kiss the hands of the super-rich, and then they tell us, Gosh, we're so sorry, but there just isn't any money."

Standing there in the park, the two hundred of us sang "Solidarity forever." (It goes to the tune of "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord...")

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run

There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun

Yet what force on Earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one?



But the union makes us strong. Solidarity forever, (3x)...for the union makes us strong!

It is we who plowed the prairies, built the cities where they trade,

Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid,

Now we stand outcast and starving 'mid the wonders we have made,

But the union makes us strong! Solidarity forever....

It is we that wash the dishes, scrub the floors and chase the dirt,

Feed the kids and send 'em off to school and then we go to work,

Where we work for half the wages for a boss that likes to flirt—

But the union makes us strong. Solidarity forever....

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,

But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn,

We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn—

That the union makes us strong! Solidarity forever, ...for the union makes us strong!

Still singing we marched around King Plaza, our line stretching almost two blocks, waving our signs: "I AM working America... We stand with Wisconsin workers... Las luchas obreras no tienen fronteras/The workers' struggles have no borders."

Then Marcie Bayne pointed. "Up the steps!" And still we sang! Across Fremont to Stockton City Hall, up the steps singing, through the big echoing hallway singing loud, out the south door singing, and back to King's statue.

Solidarity forever, solidarity for-e-ever, for the union makes us strong.

As a friend and I got in our car, two nicely dressed women office workers smiled. "We were upstairs, we heard you singing."

Oh, Yes. We will sing till they all hear us. Till we hear ourselves, and know our strength.



PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MOREARTY

Two hundred workers march around Martin Luther King Plaza April 4, before marching through city hall singing "Solidarity forever."



PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MOREARTY

The statue of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. says "Union Yes" and "stop the war on workers" to a 200-person rally in downtown Stockton on April 4, 2011—the anniversary of his 1968 assassination in Memphis Tennessee, while supporting a strike by sanitation workers.

Coming to a coffee shop near you!

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



We are networking.

On second Tuesdays, 7pm, 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 89.5fmkynj@gmail.com Give us the name and location of your favorite coffee shop between Stockton and Livermore. We want to include you!

Origami emotion

Hope is
folding paper cranes
even when your hands get cramped
and your eyes tired,
working past blisters and
paper cuts,
simply because something in you
insists on
opening its wings.

— Elizabeth Barrette

May 28: Bike and raise \$ for Emergency Food Bank



The third annual Mayor's Hike and Bike event is set for Saturday, May 28, 8:30 am, starting and finishing at the University of Pacific's DeRosa University Center, 901 Presidents Drive, Stockton. This "adventure event" is designed to get Stocktonians up and moving - whether it is walking/hiking or biking! The event offers three bicycling courses - two of them along the Calaveras Bike Path: the bike trail "westerly route" is 9.3 miles out to Buckley Cove park on the Stockton Deep Water Channel, the other "easterly route" is 7.6 miles in length. The walking route offers walkers (and, bicyclists, too, if they desire) a pleasant, shaded route south through Stockton's mid-town historical housing district, to the Stockton Ports Baseball Park, a round-trip of 4.3 miles. Bicyclists can link all three routes together to get a "round-trip bike route" of a total of 21.3 miles.



New this year, a "Bike Rodeo" will begin at 9 AM, offered for youngsters ages 1 to 9, on tricycles, bikes with training wheels and other novice riders. The rodeo will offer a host of fun activities - obstacle course, contests and safety lessons for new bikers. Parents/guardians are urged to bring their budding riders for a fun morning of activity. A "Get Fit, Stockton" Health and Fitness Fair will greet walkers and bikers when they return to the University of Pacific campus. A full barbecue lunch will be served to all participants as part of the day's activities. Entrance fee for the Hike and Bike is \$30 or pledges of \$40+, or \$10 for the Kids Bike Rodeo (by the early registration deadline of May 18th); all participants receive a Hike and Bike t-shirt and the barbecue family lunch at the end of the morning! For more information, go to the event web site: www.stocktonhikeandbike.org, or call the EFB, 209.464.7369.

Help build food bank nutrition center

The Emergency Food Bank is now 20 weeks into the most vital expansion project in our 42 year history. In recent years, the EFB's weekly client count has more than doubled. Our dated food pantry and two small warehouses cannot meet the needs of the community - particularly in this stagnant economy with almost 20% of our citizens out of work.

The building project, using local contractor Diede Construction, WMB Architects and the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity to finish the interior of the building, broke ground in May. Habitat for

Humanity volunteers are poised to finish the Nutrition Center's interior starting in December. At project's end, a modernized food pantry will allow the EFB to serve over 450 families and seniors each day.

The new 3,000 sq. ft. Nutrition Education Center and admin center is under construction on the west side of our two-acre property, allowing a rapid expansion of nutrition classes targeted to families with kids - teaching the wisdom of good nutrition and family meals. It will also feature a 1,400 sq. ft. demo/

Tidewater Gallery

Ning Hou: Art with intention

Tidewater Art Center & Gallery welcomes nationally acclaimed artist, Ning Hou and his "Tribute to John Nagle". Among the many presented art works will be a special mixed-media piece honoring John Nagle, Tidewater's past Artistic Director. Original art works and pieces from John's personal collection will also be on display and available for purchase. This unique exhibit opens on April 5th and continues through April 29th. The public is invited to meet the artist at a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception on Friday, April 8th, from 5-8 p.m. Ning Hou was a founding artist of the original Hodgepodge Art Gallery- the predecessor to the Tidewater in 2000.

Richard Yip: Beauty controlled by taste

In May, the Tidewater Art Gallery features a retrospective of the work of Stockton artist Richard Yip. The collection represents the 1940s-1980s years when he was exploring watercolor and acrylic polymer paints. The artist's ability to perfect feathery wet washes with crisply enhanced deft ink drawing became his trademark.

Richard Yip was experimental; explored new media, new surfaces for painting, and a variety of devices for creating visual effects. Yip pointed out "I do not adhere to the 'center of interest' viewpoint, but prefer to keep the whole painting very much alive and moving and growing with multi-points of emphasis, interrelated and rhythmical." His goal was to capture the spirit of whatever he was painting, be it a landscape, a seascape, or his personal emotions in abstract form.

The Yip Retrospective opens May 3rd and runs through June 3rd. The Gallery is open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. There will be a reception to meet the family of the artist, which is open to the public and free of charge, May 13th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Voted Best Art Gallery in the Record's Best of San Joaquin for 8 years in a row, the Tidewater Art Gallery is an artist cooperative providing 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. For further information about the artists, exhibits, upcoming art classes or special events, call the gallery at (209) 463-4033, email tidewatergallery@att.net or at www.tidewaterartgallery.org.

Cal Fresh: the new name for food stamps

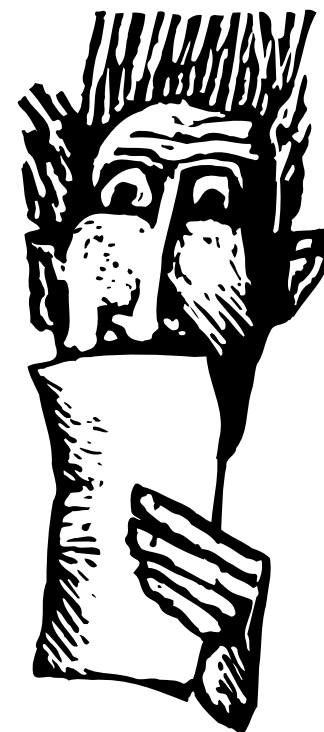
"Cal Fresh" is the most recent name from the State of California to represent the familiar Food Stamp program. Known as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) throughout the U.S. and more familiar to many as food stamps, the state renamed the program in October 2010 as "Cal Fresh" to denote

accessibility, simplicity, freshness and empowerment. The Cal Fresh program is a federally funded nutrition assistance program enabling eligible applicants to access to food stamp benefits. These benefits are available to help supplement food budgets when resources to procure food items are limited.

In 2008, San Joaquin County was ranked one of the lowest of the 58 counties in food stamp accessibility. More recently with outreach efforts made by the Food Bank to increase access, San Joaquin County has somewhat improved, ranking San Joaquin number 20 out of the 58 counties.

In an attempt to increase access to the Cal Fresh benefits and reduce the growing number of hunger and food-insecurity in San Joaquin County, the Emergency Food Bank, with recommendations from the Hunger Task Force, hired a Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator to reach families, individuals, and seniors with information

and application assistance. For more information on the Cal Fresh Program, please contact the Emergency Food Bank at (209) 464-7369



May 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.

Apr 5 – 29

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.

Apr 23

Stockton is Magnificent rally, 10am-2pm. Non-profit booths, entertainment, and fun. Pacific Ave and Castle St, Stockton. 948-6453.

Apr 24 – June 19

Pastels USA art show - 25th Annual International Open Exhibition sponsored by the Pastel Society of the West Coast. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. Hundreds of art works by SJ County students from K-12. Wed-Sun 1:30 - 5 pm. 1st and 3rd Thurs 1:30 - 9 pm. \$5 adult 18 & older, student/senior/youth age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10/first Saturday free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

Mon, Apr 25

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

Thu, Apr 28

Connections Redesign Committee meeting, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 7pm. All welcome. 467-4455

Fri, Apr 29

Pacific Opera Theater presents The Three Penny Opera. 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. Long Theatre, UOP. \$17.

Sat, Apr 30

BugFest! at Oak Grove Nature Center, 10 am - 4 pm. Oak Grove Regional Park, 4520 W Eight Mile Rd, Stockton. \$5 parking. 953-8814.

Sun, May 1

80th annual Strawberry Breakfast, 8 am - 12 pm. Benefits the Center for Community Involvement (Anderson Y center). Tickets at 265 Knoles Way, \$10 adults, kids \$8. 946-2444.

17th annual Cinco de Mayo celebration, 10 am - 6 pm. Parade, food, culture and fun. Weber Point Center, 221 N Center St, Stockton. \$2, 10 years and older. 644-2600.

May 3 - June 3

Ning Hou presents Art with Intention. Reception May 3, 5-8 pm. M-F 10-5. Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Wed-Sun

May 4 - 29

The Odd Couple. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15 - \$25. 473-2424. www.sctlivetheatre.com

Thu, May 5

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

Tue, May 10

89.5 Valley Community Radio networking meeting, 7 - 9 pm, Blackwater Cafe, Yosemite Ave, Stockton. 467-4455.

Wed, May 11

SJ Delta College Jazz Ensembles in concert, 7:30 pm. Tillie Lewis Theatre, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8.

May 15 – 22

Delta Drama presents "Ordinary People." Studio Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$12. Th,F, Sat 8 p. Sun 2 pm.

Sat, May 14

17th Annual AIDS Walk, check-in at

8 am, walk at 10 am. Early registration at www.awsj.org. SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 608-9255.

Sun, May 15

Bella Venti Trio featuring Erin Finklestein playing French and Brazilian music for reeds, 3 pm. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. \$5, \$2.50 ages 10 - 17, under 10 free. 940-6315.

Mon, May 16

SJ Delta College String Ensemble Spring Concert, 7:30pm. Tillie Lewis Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$5. 954-5110.

Tue, May 17

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

Wed, May 18

Delta Band and Concerto Night, 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8. 954-5110.

SJ Delta College Spring Festival of Choirs, 7:30pm. Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8. 954-5110.

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, 10 am-12 pm, 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

Cairo, Madison, Stockton! Peace and justice demonstration along Pacific, just north of Delta bus stop. 5 pm. Signs provided, or bring your own. Parking in Sherwood lot across the street. 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.

May 8

iMatter march West Steps, State Capitol, Sacramento, 8 am

iMatter March will happen across the United States and in locations worldwide. We will issue a global wake up call so loud, so passionate and so provocative that we will be impossible to ignore. We are standing with our parents and other visionaries to lead the way to a new future: where oceans, the atmosphere, people's health and livelihood matters as much as immediate corporate profits, political power and convenience. We are living as if the future matters and we hope that you will do the same. Join us. More info at <http://www.imattermarch.org>.

April 29

Fab Four join the Stockton Symphony

Original members of the Broadway sensation Beatlemania appear live at the 22nd annual Pops & Picnic concert entitled "Classical Mystery Tour: A Tribute to the Beatles with the Stockton Symphony." The event occurs on Friday, April 29, at the Alex G. Spanos Center at the University of the Pacific, with doors opening at 5:45pm and the concert beginning at 8pm. Audience members, in casual dress or even costumed "Fab Four" style, can "Come Together" for a night filled with favorite Beatles tunes ... plus catered food, premium wines, a variety of beers, full service bar, a raffle, and a silent auction. Concert tickets range from \$22 to \$60 in the balcony with a boxed supper option for \$10. Main floor table seating is \$80 per person with a buffet dinner option for \$30. Students may purchase tickets for as little as \$11 with a student ID. Call the Symphony office at (209) 951-0196 or visit www.stocktonsymphony.org for more information on the program and seating and food options.

Guests will enjoy timeless Beatles classics such as "Yesterday," "Yellow Submarine," "Hey Jude," "Eleanor Rigby," "All You Need Is Love," and "Imagine," and toes will tap to selections such as "Got to Get You into My Life," "A Hard Day's Night," "I Saw Her Standing There," and "Come Together." This show has sold out with many other orchestras across the country, so prompt reservations are advised. For further information about the Stockton Symphony, including future performances, guest artists, or how to volunteer, please visit www.stocktonsymphony.org.

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, click on Talking It Through.

Sierra GrEEEn Days 2011!

(ENERGY, ECOLOGY, ECONOMY)

**Saturday and Sunday
April 30th and May 1st
At Ironstone, in Murphys**

Want to have a booth? Give a presentation? Attend a steady stream of presentations with practical and inspiring information for sustainable living?

Save the Dates!

**Maypole on Saturday, 1PM. World Spirit Celebration Sunday
1:30PM.**

Lots of local music, story tellers, Welly Nellies, drumming, art and fun! Good food too! FREE to attend. Go to www.sierragreendays.com for details and updates.

May 2

State of Our Rivers Symposium

The health, management and conservation of the four rivers that provide water to San Joaquin County residents will be the topic of a public meeting on May 2, 2011. Conservation organizations, government agencies, policymakers, public-interest groups, the media and concerned citizens are invited to attend the symposium free of charge.

WHAT: Friends of the Lower Calaveras River is hosting a "State of Our Rivers" symposium in partnership with a coalition of non-profit organizations and government agencies. The event will provide an opportunity for concerned citizens, policymakers and the media to learn more about what's happening to San Joaquin County's four rivers: the San Joaquin, Calaveras, Mokelumne and Stanislaus.

WHERE: San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) Regional Building, 555 East Weber Avenue, Stockton CA, 95202. Parking for the event is available. Garage located at 330 E Channel St. (\$2 per hour fee). The event is free and open to the public.

WHEN: May 2, 2011: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

WHO: University of the Pacific, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sierra Club, San Joaquin Council of Governments, Cort Company, the University Neighborhood Renaissance Program, Friends of the Calaveras River, Defenders of Wildlife, San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District, San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition.

Friends of the Lower Calaveras River was formed in 2007 by some 30 concerned citizens, who were disturbed by the deteriorating conditions on the Calaveras. Today, FLCR boasts more than 550 members and 11 partners from local conservation organizations, county and federal agencies. FLCR's mission is to advocate for the sustainable management of the resources and conditions of the Lower Calaveras River. Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With more than 1 million members and activists, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come. For more information, visit www.defenders.org.

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Students start Artist Existence Project at Franklin High

Joel Munoz

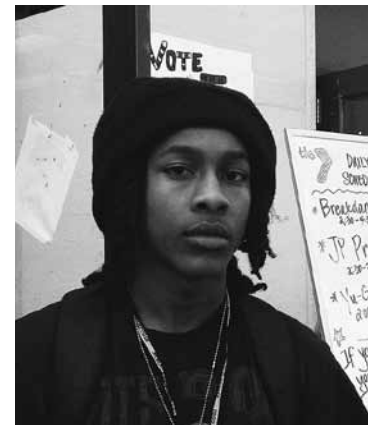
Over the past couple of weeks I've had the privilege to work with a few Franklin students in creating, planning and starting a new program on site called The Artist Existence Project. This program was created to allow students to express creativity through the arts, focusing on the area of Air-Brush Art. The idea was created the day I met a student by the name of Tekhano Day.

As Tekhano walked up to the sign-in table, I noticed he had a drawing on his binder. As we talked about art and graffiti I began to realize that Tekhano had a similar perspective on art as do I. We shared ideas and photos of some of our previous art works; I asked him if he'd ever worked with an air-brush. He said he would be interested in learning and was open to setting aside time to practice.

Since this art form is new to most students, we decided that there were probably more students who may be interested. As the week went on, I met other students who liked the idea. I introduced them to Tekhano and immediately saw that this program was already getting off to a good start. A few students and I, along with Tekhano, began to

meet everyday to discuss how to start the program. What surprised me was their strong desire to get the program started. They immediately started the process by naming the program "The Artist Existence Project." They talked about how the type of art that they loved, graffiti, was looked down upon and really wasn't perceived as art. They hoped that through this program, other students who felt that their artwork wasn't totally accepted would be able to create works which they knew were artistic. Although graffiti is totally different from Air-brush art, it has a similar style which the students love. Tekhano and the other students put the word out by designing flyers and placing them around the school and the Artist Existence Project held its first formal meeting.

This is where I would like to highlight Tekhano Day. As we started working with the Air-brush, he found it hard to achieve the results that he wanted but he kept practicing. A new student expressed an interest in trying it out and Tekhano noticed this. Before I could ask the student if she thought she was ready to try, Tekhano already had placed the Air-brush in her hand and was coaching her on how to use it. It was this type of leadership that caught my attention. Tekhano



has been a huge part in getting this program started. He has a desire to see other students being encouraged in their creativity. It is students like Tekhano who keep others coming and interested in being a part of the group, learning and becoming more confident in their gifts. It has been an honor working alongside this sophomore and I'm glad he will be around for another two years. I'm excited to see the direction this program will take. I'm glad Tekhano has been a crucial part in this movement.

Joel Munoz is a youth worker at Franklin High School After School Program, The Y. From The Hive newsletter 4/4/11

Silver Lake Family Camp needs you

In 2009, the City of Stockton, which had operated Silver Lake Family Camp in Amador County for its citizens for 90+ years, elected not to open camp, due to budget restraints. The Silver Lake Campers Association, itself some 50 years old, had always acted as a sort of "auxiliary" to the City in providing little extras at the camp to make it nicer and more comfortable. With the 2009 announcement, a small group of ardent supporters in the Campers Association, stepped up, wrote a business plan, contracted with the city, rolled up its sleeves, and jumped in to "save" the camp. With a wing and a prayer and incredible volunteerism and sheer faith, we went forward along a massive learning curve and are now entering our third

season of going it alone. We rely, still, on much volunteerism, and work very close to the margins.

The Silver Lake Campers Association needs you...to help save the camp. Those of you who attended the annual dinner realize that costs are up for the campers association to run this camp. We are dependent upon volunteers to save personnel costs, and we look to this year as a do-or-die year. We need volunteers! We are seeking a naturalist who can lead organized hikes in the area of our camp, and who knows at least a little about the flora and fauna. We need a program director who will help to organize and post lodge activities and work on campfires and skits with children. We need a person to "man" the camp store

for 5 or 6 hours each day. Can you refer anyone to us for any of these needs?

There are many smaller tasks to be done. If you can offer skills or talents and would like to be involved, please call Sharon at (209) 478-8968. There are some salary monies for some positions. If you would like to come to planning meetings, you are welcome--same phone call. New perspectives welcome! We are not an exclusive board of high-level planners--we are a small group of ordinary people just like yourself who are desperately trying to keep Silver Lake Family Camp a viable recreation opportunity for everyday citizens, where family experiences abound that are not available at Disneyland.