

connections



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May 2006

SAVE THE DATES

**APRIL 21-23
HIGH SCHOOL
ART SHOW 20**

**APRIL 30
EARTH DAY 1&10**

**MAY 4
MOTHER'S DAY
CRAFT FAIR 20**

**TUESDAYS MOVIES AT
THE P&J CENTER.. 18**

IN THIS ISSUE

**IRAN WAR:
UNTHINKABLE!..... 3**

**CHERNOBYL:
20 YEARS LATER 4**

**IMMIGRATION ACTION
..... 5**

**BLOGS: SOME SMART
VOICES 6**

**HEALTH IS THE ISSUE
..... 8&9**

FORESTS IN PERIL.. 12

Sunday, April 30, 11 am-5 pm

Earth Day Fest 2006: Living with the Earth

Join us on April 30 for Earth Day (see schedule page 11). tal groups, you will find many new faces hosting booths this year.

Start the day with a bike ride, shop for some earth-friendly gifts, taste some delightful vegetarian food, and get ready for great entertainment—all for the earth. Stockton's 18th annual Earth Day is a free and festive family event you won't want to miss.

Set in beautiful Victory Park, this Earth Day Festival will be bigger and better than ever (see pages 10-11). In addition to numerous projects to make our community more livable by local environmen-



A hybrid bus from RTD and other energy efficient vehicles, new solar items, how to keep our planet alive and healthy, and much more...all in all a fun way to learn.

The Eday bike ride starts and ends at the north side of Victory Park (starting time 11:30). Music kicks off just before noon. UOP students will walk from campus starting at 1:30 pm. The musical sounds of Sammy-award winning Bucho finish the day at 3:30.

¡Bucho! to headline Earth Day



Bucho will perform on the Earth Day stage in Victory Park at 3:30 (see performance schedule page 11). Presented by ASUOP, Bucho bridges the gap between old school soul and horn bands of the past with the youth twist of Hip-Hop energy.

A strong musical collective that originated in Sacramento, Bucho has rocked crowds throughout the Western

United States for the past four years. Their tight neo-soul sound provides an urban blend of funk, r&b and hip-hop.

Bucho has garnered a trophy case full of accolades and awards, most recently the SAMMIE (Sacramento Area Music Award) Hall of Fame. They were chosen by Sac Magazine as Sacramento's most intellectual dance band.

Join the campaign to restore the Delta

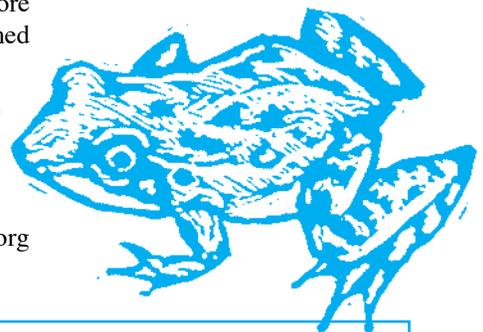
Approximately 40 residents and activists in Stockton came together for a community meeting to kick off a broad coalition-led campaign to restore the California Delta, an ailing 738,000 acre area east of the San Francisco Bay Area. Participants at the Thursday meeting included environmentalists, members of the agricultural community, representatives of faith

communities, boaters, anglers, teachers, and community political figures. Their campaign will likely be based upon successful models such as the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Mono Lake Committee and the Save the American River Association, bringing attention to the need for a healthy Delta. "We're excited to see this effort take shape. It's the first time such a

diverse group of people who live in the Delta have come together in a campaign to protect and restore their natural heritage," explained PCL's Matt Vander Sluis.

ACTION: To find out how to get involved in please contact Matt Vander Sluis (916) 313-4515 mvander@pcl.org. Get your www.RestoreTheDelta.org bumper sticker today!

Source: *The PCL Insider: News From The Capitol*, 4/4/06 www.pcl.org



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The more you look, the more you see

Bruce Giudici

It is a time of convergence. We find before us the stark choice of two paths — as clear as mountain air after a spring rain. The choice is simple and difficult: simple, because we all know what must be done, and difficult, because to succeed we must make sacrifices.

Simply put, we as a global people must share more and treat the earth with more respect. In a world where millions upon millions make less than \$1 a day, we must embrace a global minimum wage and a global ceiling on wealth and income. Check out the recent street demonstrations. The debate over immigrant rights, after all, is an argument over international wage levels—if undocumented workers earned more in their native lands, there would be no immigrant "problem." Workers are fighting over the crumbs dropping from the table of the super-rich who are

controlling where jobs are being created to maximize profits (which are at record levels, by the way).

And now for the difficult part: to put more money above the line into salaries, less must flow to the bottom line: more profits must be shared with the workers. The rich will have to sacrifice their dividends and capital gains (known as unearned income, for some reason)—for the sake of international peace and common decency. And is this so difficult after all? When an American making over \$10 million receives a \$500,000 Bush tax cut this year, that money could otherwise be spent on saving the lives of 100,000 children with a \$5 immunization. Tax money spent, economy stimulated, end of story. Moving the funds into increased salaries would likewise stimulate the economy.

As Earth Day approaches, another communal problem fills the

air: global warming. Here again the choice is simple and difficult. We must simply adopt a global ceiling on uses of resources—in this case, fossil fuels—or else within 100 years we will flood the global coasts where most of our populations live. We must adopt simpler eating habits, so that our agriculture can supply calories to hungry people most efficiently—meaning eating less meat and more grains, conserving farmlands and wild habitats. We must know the life cycle of the products we buy—meaning we must reduce, reuse and recycle everything.

The difficult part is that we have to change some ingrained habits most of us hold almost religiously. Giving fuel efficiency primacy, driving less, eating less meat, recycling, buying items with less packaging, conserving water—in other words, leaving the world in better shape for the next generation to carry on. The

Bruce Giudici



latest news on Mars is that it has no atmosphere — so I guess we're stuck here for awhile.

Every news story points to these sustainable solutions: yet we postpone the inevitable. The magic of the marketplace won't save us here—the markets are driven by lowest dollar cost. Income distribution and environmental values are ignored. It is time for us to save our peoples and our world. So—take part in a labor demonstration in international solidarity for all us workers. Come to the Earth Days in your communities—Angels Camp April 23, Stockton April 30 and anywhere else and learn some new habits. And protest the wars, in which we workers die and are maimed, so that the rich are able to maintain control over our world. This has gotten out of hand. Get mad, get smart, get active.

In my opinion, it is better to invite workers to join our fight regardless race or nationality. If you are only inviting "La raza" to unite, you are cutting your numbers and your chances of winning battles at the borderline or in the fight for better education or healthcare. If you are inviting "La puebla" (the people), you may invite the exploiters to infiltrate our ranks - for example the oil companies and the generals who make war in Iraq.

If our ranks are open to workers (who produce all wealth), we become an invincible anti-racist force. Imagine our ranks swelling on Saturday if we had black workers from the healthcare industry or transit or Muslim farm workers from Lodi and the S.J. Valley, white workers from construction and representatives from the oil workers in Iraq or Iran.

We all join the Latin workers in our fight against the racist immigration laws that attack all workers, each and every one of us.

Harold Bell

they use, in constant pain tests, where they deprive the dogs of pain relief while they test the pathology of pain and drug addiction. If you are pro-life check out www.lifeissues.org Find out about March of Dimes, and their contradiction about "saving babies". Try giving to proven caring and un-contradictory humane organizations- go to: www.humaneseal.org or write to me for more sources.

S.E. Mears / Cruelty-Free Consumers, ryke40@ainet.com

Las Luchas Obreras no tienen fronteras (the worker's fight has no borders)

Editor,

It sounds better in Spanish but the sentiments are the same. The anti-racist march in Stockton on Saturday the 25th of March was impressive and inspiring. I felt as if I was marching with brothers and sisters and we were very strong. Before I left home to go to the march I hastily made political signs out of a yard sign;

I used both sides and I carried it high. The other side of the sign read "obreras unidas jamas seran vencido" ("the workers united will never be defeated").

The people around me were reading the signs and making the chants loudly—however, there was unity and conflict about the signs. I felt extremely proud on a couple of occasions when we passed by restaurant workers and garden workers standing on the side of the march and the marchers almost automatically broke into a spirited "Las luchas obreras no tienen fronteras." The workers on the sideline thrust their fists into the air and joined the chant. We were comrades; we were getting the message out (No on HR4437).

There was a disagreement on the second chant: my friends and I were chanting "Obreras unidas jamas seran vencidos." Our friends behind us would chant "La puebla unida jamas seran vencido" ("The people united will never be defeated") or they would chant "La raza unida jamas seran vencido."

Feedback

Support humane product testing

Would you knowingly give your money to a charity or company that would purposely: Break dogs backs, sew kittens eyes shut, poison rabbit's eyes/skin? How about forced isolation of newborn chimpanzees? Testing of this kind and many more are done by many "charities" and companies, even when the need is longer there, or was never there! Many charities on an ever-growing list are opting for humane methods of testing: culture analysis, control group studies, simulations. The ones that choose cheaper, animal methods are hoping you'll never seek out the barbaric, nightmarish reality of these "tests" done behind the guise of "research". Many companies like Proctor/Gamble, Lever, and Johnson & Johnson use family images with babies to imply that "they care" about you and your family, even showing dogs in their ads. Why don't they show the "other" dogs

Connections

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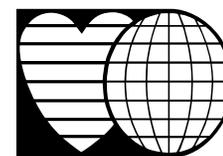
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"The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared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

Stop the war on Iran

Once again, Bush is using out-right lies about "weapons of mass destruction" to justify an attack as part of a long-term strategy to establish U.S. control over the oil-rich Middle East. He lied in order to lead the U.S. into a war with Iraq that has cost the lives of more than 100,000 Iraqi people. Now he's using the same lies to demonize the people of Iran and justify a war that may be much more destructive.

The time to act is now. President Bush, with the support of politicians from both parties, is already preparing for an attack on hundreds of sites in Iran, most of them located near major population centers. These strikes will kill tens of thousands if Iranian civilians. Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Seymour Hersh, who broke the story last year of US

plans for an attack on Iran, and who has a decades-long record of investigative journalism, including exposes of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam and the U.S. torture chambers of Abu Ghraib, wrote in the April 17 New Yorker:

"The Bush Administration, while publicly advocating diplomacy in order to stop Iran from pursuing a nuclear weapon, has increased clandestine activities inside Iran and intensified planning for a possible major air attack. Current and former American military and intelligence officials said that Air Force planning groups are drawing up lists of targets, and teams of American combat troops have been ordered into Iran, under cover, to collect targeting data and to establish contact with

anti-government ethnic-minority groups."

This article and similar articles in the Associated Press, Agence France Press, Washington Post (reprinted at the StopWarOnIran blog) and other major media outlets, attest to the very real threat of an imminent attack on Iran. Furthermore, there is evidence that the Pentagon is preparing for a possible nuclear strike against Iran. U.S. Navy aircraft, operating from carriers in the Arabian Sea, are flying simulated nuclear attack missions in preparation for such a strike. According to Hersh, "One of the military's initial option plans, as presented to the White House by the Pentagon this winter, calls for the use of a bunker-buster tactical nuclear weapon, such as the B61-11, against underground nuclear sites."

After all of Washington's talk about weapons of mass destruction, it is the Pentagon that possesses the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons and is threatening to use them against civilian targets. Whether these threats are real or are just a tool of psychological warfare to intimidate and destabilize the Iranian government, it is clear that the real international danger is from Washington, not Tehran.

A global movement against a global empire

In the few weeks since StopWarOnIran was launched, nearly a quarter of a million petitions have been sent from all over the globe voicing growing opposition to the war. We've printed tens of thousands of leaflets and placards for distribution at protests, speak outs, and educational forums. Much more needs to be done in the next few weeks to alert the world to the growing danger of a new war.

ACTION: Contact the new anti-war group by calling the Peace & Justice Center at 467-4455. Locally, we can make our voices heard. And keep informed—check out the StopWarOnIran blog for news updates.

Source: StopWarOnIran.org release 4/11/06 www.StopWarOnIran.org 39 W. 14th St. #206 NY NY 10011 212.633.6646

Why bombing Iran is wrong

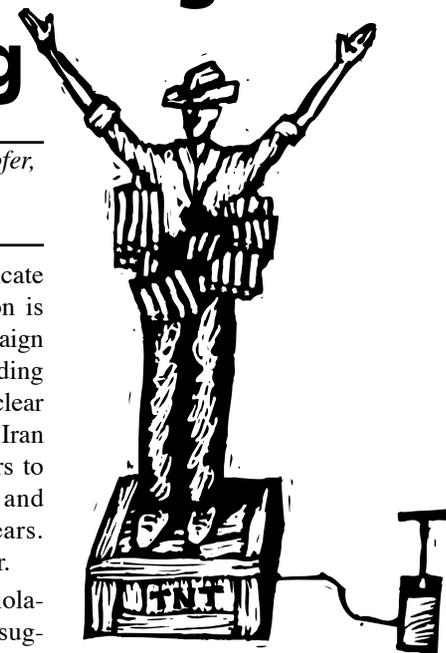
Patricia Kushlis, Cheryl Rofer,
Patricia Lee Sharpe,
and Linda Durham

Credible news reports indicate that the Bush administration is planning for a bombing campaign against Iran, possibly including nuclear strikes. However, nuclear weapons experts believe that Iran will need at least three years to develop nuclear weapons and more likely five to ten years. There is no imminent danger.

Iran has admitted to past violations, but current evidence suggests that Iran is in compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. An attack with conventional weapons would attract few or no allies and result in diminished non-military power for the US. First use of nuclear weapons, by the only country to have used them before, would put the US in major breach of longstanding international norms. America would become a pariah, a rogue nation, condemned and isolated by all.

Such strikes would be impractical as well as wrong. Military strategists have suggested that the US could avoid counterattacks from a strike on Iran's retaliatory capacity were launched simultaneously. Others believe that popular support for the Islamic Republic would crumble under such stress. They are mistaken.

Iran is not Iraq. It is more populous and intensely nationalistic. Despite strong political differences among Iranians, bombing Iran would generate a unifying patriotic response. The Ahmadinejad regime would be strengthened, and consequences for US policy throughout the Muslim world would be severe. Even crippled by air strikes, Iran could worsen the situation in Iraq and launch terrorist attacks on Israel by mobilizing Hezbollah and others. Unilateral US attacks on Iran might also cause turmoil in Middle Eastern oil fields, especially in Saudi Arabia, whose wells are located in heavily Shiite regions, and would enrage Shiite communities in Pakistan,



Afghanistan, Lebanon and elsewhere. Demagogues would preach that the long expected US-led crusade had begun. The US would not be safer.

There is a better way to create a safe world. Iran, the modern seat of an ancient civilization, wishes to be respected in a world where leadership seems open mostly to nuclear powers. Iran must understand that bluster and threat won't lead to a place at the table. The US must also understand that bluster and threat won't stop nuclear proliferation.

Multi-party negotiations with Iran are already under way, but the US should expand its Iraq-centered consultations into broader bilateral and regional security talks. Dealing wisely and patiently with the Iran situation will go far to restore the moral and intellectual leadership of US. Through cooperation, not fear, America can achieve a safer, more stable world and a more lasting peace.

Patricia Kushlis is an international affairs specialist in Europe, Asia, the US, politics, public diplomacy and national security; Cheryl Rofer a chemist; international environmental projects, nuclear and strategic issues and Patricia Lee Sharpe a communications specialist with 22 years in the U.S. foreign service in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Source: http://whirledview.typepad.com/whirledview/2006/04/dont_bomb_iran_.html



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Pres. George W. Bush, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington DC 20500. 202-456-1414

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. Dennis Cardoza (R-District 18) 445 West Weber Ave. Suite 240, Stockton, CA 95203. 209-946-0361, 503 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-6131.

Rep. Richard Pombo (R-District 11), 2321 W March Lane, Ste 205, Stockton, CA 95207. 209-951-3091; 1519 Longworth Bldg, Washington, DC 20515. 202-225-1947, rpombo@mail.house.gov

Rep. John Doolittle (R-District 4), 2130 Professional Dr, Ste 190, Roseville, CA 95661. 916-786-5560; 1524 Longworth Bldg, Washington, CA 20515. 202-225-2511

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, 2201 C St, NW Washington, DC 20520

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

State Sen. Michael Machado (D-District 5), 31 E Channel St, Room 440, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7930; State Capitol, Rm 4035, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-445-2407

Assemblyperson Barbara Matthews (D-District 17), 31 E Channel St, Room 306, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7479; State Capitol Room 5135, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-319-2017



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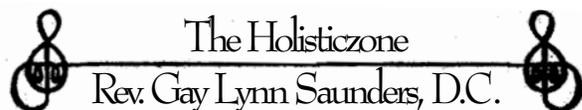
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20 years later

Chernobyl health impacts

On April 26, 1986, at 1:23 a.m., reactor number 4 at the Chernobyl Atomic energy Station exploded. Subsequent investigations revealed that tests that were being conducted on the operating and backup systems were mismanaged. The plant was immediately shut down. Nonetheless, a large amount of radioactive steam was released into the atmosphere during the explosion. The highest amount of radioactive fallout was registered in the vicinity immediately surrounding Chernobyl.

The atomic energy station and the nearby town of Prypiat are located in northern Ukraine, 90 kilometers north of Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, a city with a population of 2.8 million. At the time, the prevailing winds were directed north to northwest, so that Belarus received the most widespread deposit of radioactive fallout. With subsequent shifts in the direction of the wind, as well as rainfall, northern regions of Ukraine, as well as the southern border of European Russia received radioactive fallout. Soviet authorities neither officially acknowledge the explosion, nor warned their citizens until May 2, 1986.

Here's what followed:

- Excessive levels of radiation were recorded in northern Scandinavia, Wales, Ireland, Northern Italy, Greece, and coastal Alaska in the first weeks after the explosion.
- As a result of prevailing winds and rains, heaviest radioactive fallout occurred on southern and central Belarus, and northern Ukraine.
- In Ukraine, over 4.5 million hectares (11 million acres) were contaminated, some of the most productive agricultural land in the world.
- Total amount of radiation released as a result of the explosion at Chernobyl was originally reported as 50 million curies by Soviet authorities. During the past decade, subsequent research in Europe and North America and new calculations have resulted in revised estimates of up to 260 million curies.
- To date, approximately 400,000 residents have been permanently evacuated from contaminated regions; 116,000 of these were evacuated shortly after the explosion.
- 600,000 soldiers, firemen, and clean-up workers (men and women) were sent to the disaster site during the radiation emergency in the months after the explosion.
- Liquidators (cleanup workers) live in Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan, and more than 350,000 liquidators live in Ukraine.
- During the past decade, approximately 40,000 clean up workers have died, mostly men in their 30s and 40s (US death toll in Vietnam after 12 years of involvement was approximately 50,000).
- A permanent 30 kilometer "dead zone" was established around the power station where human habitation is forbidden.
- 1.2 million people continue to live on lands contaminated by "low-level" radiation, outside the 30 kilometer zone; approximately 1,800 villages are affected.
- Gradual seepage of radiation into the water table, especially the Dnipro River and its tributaries, threatens water supplies for millions of people in coming decades.
- Total number of evacuees and cleanup workers (those exposed to the most intense levels of radiation) was close to three-quarters of a million people.
- Shortly after the explosion, thousands of children and adults in Ukraine and Belarus were stricken with acute radiation sickness; symptoms included vomiting, hair loss, and severe rashes. This contradicts original official public estimates of 100 people.
- The World Health Organization reported that thyroid cancer among children living near Chernobyl rose to levels 80 times higher than normal.
- Experts from the University of Hiroshima analyzed data on



newborns and 20,000 stillborn fetuses in Belarus; researchers concluded that birth defects have nearly doubled since 1986.

- More than 10,000 Ukrainian children have been to Cuba for treatment of leukemia and other illnesses.
- Overall, cancer illnesses among children in Ukraine have tripled since 1986.
- Children of Chernobyl liquidators born after the 1986 disaster have a rate of chromosome damage seven times higher than their siblings born prior to the nuclear accident.
- The UN Office on Population reported that in 1994, the only two nations in Europe that had negative population growth were the Ukraine and Belarus. The report attributed this decline in part to increased infant mortality and adverse health conditions stemming from the Chernobyl disaster. Infant mortality in Ukraine stands at twice the European average (14 per 1,000 live births).
- Chernobyl has fueled a massive infertility crisis in Ukraine, according the *Boston Globe* of January 26, 1996.
- According to radiation health experts working for the National Academy of Sciences, most cancers that result from radiation exposure do not develop until 10-20 years after exposure. The highest incidence of cancer is expected to occur over the next 5-10 years and therefore no accurate assessment of Chernobyl's overall impact can be made until this period has expired.

Source: Fact sheet by Alex Kuzma, Children of Chernobyl* Relief Fund, 12/05 www.childrenofchernobyl.org and Nuclear Monitor 641, Jan 27, 2006

Senate immigration reform—pathway to where?

The Senate is now debating immigration reform—reviewing legislation to address the reality that an estimated 12 million people are now living in this country without valid immigration documents. FCNL has expressed support for the 271-page bill proposed by Sen. Arlen Specter (PA) and approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee as a moderate alternative to a more punitive “enforcement only” bill offered initially by Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN). The Specter bill offers the best possibility for real immigration reform in this congressional session.

The Specter bill includes elements that we at FCNL believe are essential to comprehensive immigration reform:

- It regularizes the guest worker program, provides some security against abuse of these workers, and creates a path to citizenship for people who come to work here.
- It provides a reasonable solution to the fact that millions of immigrants are already living and working in the United States without proper documentation. While this is not an amnesty program, it allows people who have lived in this country for many years, paid taxes, and become essential to the U.S. economy a path to citizenship over a period of time. At the end of a waiting period, people who violated civil immigration laws would have to pay a \$2,000 fine, repay any back taxes that they owe, clear background checks, and learn English and civics before being eligible for citizenship.

This legislation is as important for what it does not contain as for what it contains. For example, current law treats illegal entry into the country as a “civil violation”—a minor infraction of the law that does not necessarily justify immediate arrest and detention. The House-passed bill, H.R. 4437, treated these violations as serious crimes—felonies. The Specter bill does not make that change. It also does not criminalize individuals and groups who

offer humanitarian assistance to people without appropriate documentation as the House bill would do.

But this bill is a compromise, so it contains some items that FCNL does not favor, and a few provisions that ought to be removed before final passage. As the amendment process continues, FCNL will look for and support amendments to address these issues:

- Treating immigrants like criminals. The Specter bill rejects the idea (which appears in the House bill, H.R.4437) that violations of immigration laws should be treated as felonies. But the Senate version retains a substantial apparatus to enforce immigration laws as if they were criminal laws. For instance
 - The bill would load the National Crime Information Center, a criminal database, with information about millions of civil immigration law violators. (Section 231)
 - The bill would, in effect, require local law enforcement agencies to arrest and detain people who have not committed a crime beyond violating immigration laws. (Section 231) Local law enforcement agencies argue this legislation would make it more difficult to get cooperation from their communities to protect public safety.
 - The bill requires that anyone (other than Mexican nationals) caught trying to enter the U.S. without appropriate documentation shall be detained until removed from the country, or a final decision regarding their admission is reached. (Section 131)
 - The bill authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to “construct or acquire” 20 detention facilities, with capacity for 10,000 individuals who might be detained pending removal. As part of this process, the head of the Department of Homeland Security announced recently that the U.S. plans to open “family-focused detention”

facilities in May 2006. Closed military base facilities are to be considered for these detention facilities.

- Invading everyone’s privacy. New employees are already required to establish their right to work in the U.S. by presenting valid identification papers such as a birth certificate, an original Social Security card, and a license or similar document. The Specter bill takes this requirement a step further. It authorizes the creation of a national database that includes all of the information necessary to verify a potential employee’s eligibility for employment in the U.S. It would require employers to seek pre-approval of all potential employees through this database. If the electronic system is unable to confirm eligibility, the employer is required to dismiss the person and to cooperate with the Department of Homeland Security by sharing all available information on that person. Employers would face heavy fines for non-compliance.

This database comes with a lot of baggage, including the massive workload involved in maintaining such a vast database and verifying names that cannot be found on the first attempt, the potential for both error and abuse, and the high likelihood of bureaucratic problems even for people who meet all legal requirements for employment. Sen. Kennedy (MA) has offered an amendment (SA 3219) to address some of the privacy concerns in this section.

We remain optimistic that Congress will retain the fairest elements of the Specter bill, and will reject some of its most disturbing provisions. As you communicate with your senators about this bill, encourage them to initiate or support amendments that will fill in some of the pot-holes in the bill and create a workable system for welcoming and integrating immigrants into the U.S.

Source: Friends Committee on National Legislation release 4/4/06, FCNL, 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002-5795 <http://www.fcnl.org> (800) 630-1330



Pombo's immigration law

As reported in the Central Valley Business Times, the draconian immigration House bill HR 4437 passed 239 to 182 when it came up for a final vote in December. There were 36 Democrats who joined 203 Republicans to vote yes. Seventeen Republicans, 164 Democrats and one independent voted against the measure. The bill was opposed by most members of Congress from the Central Valley, with only Richard Pombo from Tracy voting in favor.

If the House bill were to become the law of the land, it would become a felony to sneak into the country illegally and employers would have to confirm the authenticity of employees' Social Security numbers against a national database of legitimate numbers. If they didn't, they would face fines of \$25,000 for every violation. The bill also requires every illegal alien who is caught to

be held in jail until deported. None could be released pending a court date. In addition, a tall fence, costing an estimated \$2.2 billion and stretching nearly 700 miles, would be built along the U.S.-Mexico border in California and Arizona. Anyone found to be assisting undocumented people could face felony charges.

Local California House members who voted in favor of the bill were John Doolittle, Dan Lungren and Richard Pombo. Those who voted against it were Dennis Cardoza and Doris Matsui. For more information on the House bill, go to: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d109:h.r.4437>:

Source: Central Valley Business Times, 3/27/06



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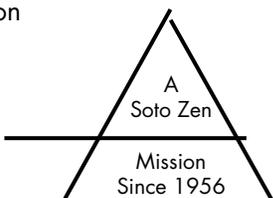
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Speaking of blogs

Evolving into direct action

Laurie Litman

If you want your news hot and sharp, the blogosphere is the place to go. Breaking news is posted on a number of blogs accompanied by insightful and knowledgeable comments and analysis from readers.

But beyond the day-to-day information, a new and exciting phenomenon has been emerging in the last few months. A number of the larger progressive blogs have begun to organize direct actions.

During the Alito hearings, the mainstream democrats gave up the nomination as a “done deal.” Not so the blogs. The call went out to people to start calling their legislators and things started to happen. Kerry took a stand to organize a filibuster and other wavering senators joined him. Not enough, that’s true, but at least there was some resistance to this disgraceful nomination. What would have happened if the opposition had started earlier?

Since that time the progressive blogs have gotten louder and more aggressive. This is a very good thing. When the *Washington Post* hired a right-wing blogger, it was the readers of progressive blogs who went out and found numerous instances of plagiarism by this racist wingnut. As Joe Lieberman continues to provide democratic cover for George Bush, bloggers set up an avenue to send money to his challenger, Ned Lamont. People from one of the blogs pitched in to order more than 1000 rubber stamps that said “Rubber Stamp Republican Congress” which are being delivered to various members of Congress (most recently Arlen Specter) and were part of a televised bit of theater on the House floor.

And now, a “Roots” project has been started to encourage people from every state to lobby their representatives. Right now, the effort is working to stop Bush from attacking Iran. We all hope and pray this is successful. (You are welcome to join this project. Give me a call for more informa-

tion). And while we’re talking about it, please call your senators today to insist that military force against Iran be taken off the table. For more information, go to the blogs below.

Some of the best

FDL

<http://www.firedoglake.com>

MyDD

<http://www.mydd.com>

TalkLeft

<http://www.talkleft.com>

Eschaton

<http://www.atrios.blogspot.com>

DailyKos

<http://www.dailykos.com>

Hullabaloo

<http://digbysblog.blogspot.com>

The Next Hurrah

<http://thenexthurrah.typepad.com>

Speaking the lingo

You may feel a little out of it to begin with; as with any group, the blogosphere has its own language. Here are a few acronyms to help get you started.

EPU—Evil Parallel Universe

IANAL—I am not a lawyer

IMO—In my opinion

IMHO—In my humble opinion

LOL—Laughing out loud

OT—Off topic

OTOH—On the other hand

ROFL—Rolling on the floor laughing

ROFLMAO—Rolling on the floor laughing my ass off

WATB—Whiny ass titty baby

Lawn signs, peace pins, mugs, and T-shirts



NEW!!! Beautiful PJN mugs.

“War is NOT the answer” lawn signs come from the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). We are requesting a \$5 donation to cover costs

(sorry, we can’t ship lawn signs). We also have elegant pins made of pewter in the shape of the peace symbol for \$10. Also, handsome PJN T-shirts in many colors, and more. Come by the P&J

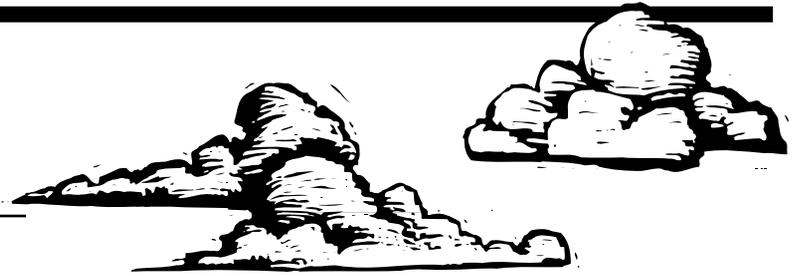
Center to see these items, plus buttons and bumperstickers galore, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton CA 95204. Call 467-4455.





Sawznhammers

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



A Catalog of Hope: Plan B 2.0: Rescuing a Planet under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble

By Lester Brown, W.W. Norton Company, 2006

reviewed by John Morearty

This is an amazing book, but you can skip the first half - unless you want to lacerate your heart with more bad news. The coming decline of oil, food and fuel competing for land, emerging water shortages, rising temperatures and rising seas, natural systems under stress, our socially divided world, environmental refugees - if you're conscious, you already know this grim stuff. I barely made it to page 120.

But then, relief! For many years Lester Brown and his World Watch Institute have been publishing State of the World, an inventory of windmills and solar panels installed, fisheries protected, children fed, immunized and educated and so on. Now the second half of his new book Plan B 2.0 brings it all together in an inspiring catalog of hope.

Imagine brainstorming with your friends how to build a sane and decent life for everyone on planet earth. You'd gather with coffee and cookies, maybe wine and cheese, big sheets of paper, magic markers, and you'd start writing: basic education for all, stabilize population, better health for all, curb HIV, end corporate farm subsidies. Okay, another page: protect and restore forests, conserve and rebuild soils, stabilize water tables, regenerate fisheries, protect plant and animal diversity, produce protein more efficiently, move lower on the food chain. Still more: hybrid cars running on wind-electricity, solar electric, geothermal, cut carbon emissions fast. One more sheet of paper: Redesign urban transport, farms in the city, reduce urban water use, make cities livable for everyone including the poor.

Tape those sheets to the wall, take a break. Then open Plan B and discover that all these wise things are already being

done in one part of the world or another! Smallpox is gone, the U.S. Alaskan salmon fishery is by agreement sustainable, South Korea and Ireland are reforesting, the Danes are marketing windmills ten times more efficient than those of a few years ago, Americans are snapping up hybrid cars and waiting for the models to come on the market which can be plugged into the wall at night and be recharged on wind-generated electricity, light rail is rolling, Cuba is a leader in solar development, Dutch engineers are advising Asia, Africa and Latin America how to design cities for bicycles, and in Curitiba, Brazil slum dwellers (and everybody else) ride buses for free to public libraries which are everywhere, and for every bag of trash which the poor pick up and hand in they receive a bag of food. There are even community gardens in Stockton, California, and a Habitat for Humanity store with recycled building materials.

The new world is all around us, in bits and pieces.

Resume your brainstorming session, face the tough questions. How can we build a new economy that fosters all these good things, instead of the bad stuff we're churning out? Again, Lester Brown points out transformations underway or being seriously proposed: impose taxes on pollution and carbon emissions instead of people's labor, shift subsidies from oil and nuclear to clean sustainable energy, give tax breaks for super-efficient cars, require eco-labeling so consumers can vote with their wallets, foster new industries and new jobs, with opportunities for investors and workers alike.

How much would it cost to save the planet, and care for the poorest among us? Brown constructs a poverty eradication budget - \$68 billion annually,

world wide. And an earth restoration budget—\$93 billion annually, worldwide. That's a total of \$161 billion a year. Yes, it's a lot of money. It is also one third of the United States annual military budget, one sixth of the whole world's annual military budget. The money is there.

But surely such a massive reallocation of resources would take a long time? Brown recounts the history of how the U.S. economy was transformed after Pearl Harbor. Even during the Great Depression of the 1930s, U.S. auto makers sold 3.1 million civilian cars a year. But Roosevelt persuaded the Congress to forbid the manufacture of civilian cars in 1942, and the entire immense productive capacity of the U.S. turned to tanks, planes, warships and merchant ships, and munitions?. The Japanese, said Churchill, had awakened a sleeping giant. How was it possible? The political will was there; the people supported the transformation.

For a moment, let your imagination run. Imagine the U.S. economy turned to the production of efficient hybrid cars, windmills, solar electric panels, clean buses, light rail and high speed trains, the building of bicycle paths. Imagine ten million unemployed Americans getting jobs insulating every building in the country, producing and installing energy-efficient windows and appliances.

Imagine appealing to the idealism of young Americans to join a national service corps or a world peace corps, to learn peaceful conflict resolution under the umbrella of a new Department of Peace, complementing the Defense (it used to be called the War) Department. Congressman Dennis Kucinich has been proposing a Department of Peace for years. Rush Limbaugh recently ridiculed the idea; maybe Dennis has something? Confucius said, if you want to change the world, appeal to the best in people.

But appealing to self-interest is necessary too. Climate change is finally getting widespread attention; as the Scripps Oceanographic Institute predicted years ago, California faces long-

term danger of spring floods and summer drought. Homeowners on the Atlantic Coast can no longer buy storm insurance, and two of the biggest insurance companies in the world, Swiss Re and Munich Re, are calling for urgent action against global warming. Ted Turner bought 3,569 copies of Plan B 2.0 to give to world leaders, corporate CEOs and members of Congress.

It's high time to get to work, building a new world. In the slogan of the immense World Social Forums of the past several years,

Another world is possible.

It's up to all of us. We are the sleeping giant.

On Thursday afternoons from April 20 through May 25, John Morearty will be reading aloud from Lester Brown's book, and the work of other sages—Colin Fletcher, Joanna Macy, Martin Luther King—at the Peace and Justice Center. Reading begins at 3:30 sharp, open discussion ends at 5 PM. The theme is, "Time, Compassion and Hope." Admission free, donations to the Center gratefully accepted. Info 464-3326.



Pack of dogs kill savage crocodile

Sometimes nature is cruel but there is also a beauty in that cruelty. The crocodile, one of the ultimate predators, can even fall victim to the kind of implemented 'team work' strategy which is possible due to the pack mentality and social structure of canines. The mauling was still taking place as the picture above was being taken. The photographer deserves a medal for his bravery.



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Massachusetts health reform: false promises

It's a stirring scene. The Governor, legislative leaders and leaders of Health Care For All standing in the State House Rotunda declaring victory in the fight for universal health coverage. Unfortunately, this week's tableau merely repeats one from 20 years ago when Governor Dukakis was celebrating passage of his universal healthcare bill. That plan imploded within two years, and today about 250,000 more people are uninsured in Massachusetts than the day it was signed. Unfortunately, Massachusetts' new health reform legislation looks set to repeat that disaster.

The new bill

The new bill includes three key provisions meant to expand coverage. First, it would modestly expand Medicaid eligibility. Second, it would offer subsidies for the purchase of private coverage to low-income individuals and families, though the size of the subsidies has yet to be determined. Finally, those making more than three times the poverty income (about \$30,000 for a single person) would have to buy their own coverage or pay a fine.

To help make coverage more affordable, a new state agency will connect people with the private insurance plans that sell the coverage, and allow people to use pre-tax dollars to purchase coverage (a tax break that mostly helps affluent tax payers who are in high tax brackets). This new agency is also supposed to help design affordable plans.

Businesses that employ more than 10 people and fail to provide health insurance will be assessed a fee (not more than \$295) to help subsidize care. Additionally, hospitals won a rate hike assuring them better payments from state programs, and several provisions were included that are meant to attract additional Federal funding to help pay for the Medicaid expansion.



The problem

First, the politicians assumed that only about 500,000 people in Massachusetts are uninsured. The Census Bureau says that 748,000 are uninsured.

Second, the linchpin of the plan is the false assumption that uninsured people will be able to find affordable health plans. A typical group policy in Massachusetts costs about \$4500 annually for an individual and more than \$11,000 for family coverage. A wealthy uninsured person could afford that—but few of the uninsured are wealthy. The legislation promises that the uninsured will be offered comprehensive, affordable private health plans. But the only way to get cheaper plans is to strip down the coverage—boost copayments, deductibles, uncovered services etc. Hence, the requirement that most of the uninsured purchase coverage will either require them to pay money they don't have, or buy nearly worthless stripped down policies that represent coverage in name only.

Third, the legislation will do nothing to contain the skyrocketing costs of care in Massachusetts—already the highest in the world. Indeed, it gives new infusions of cash to hospitals and private insurers.

Alternatives

The legislation offers empty promises and ignores real—and popular—solutions. A single payer universal coverage plan could cut costs by streamlining health care paperwork, making health care affordable. Massachusetts Blue Cross spends only 86% of premiums paying for care. It spends the rest - more than \$700 million last year—on

billing, marketing and other administrative costs. That's ten times as much overhead per enrollee as Canada's national health insurance program. Overall, Massachusetts residents will spend \$13.3 billion on health care bureaucracy this year—nearly one third of our total health bill. If we cut bureaucracy to Canada's levels we could save \$9.4 billion annually, enough to cover all of the 748,000 uninsured in Massachusetts and to improve coverage for the rest of us. Study after study—by the Congressional Budget Office, the General Accounting Office and even the Massachusetts Medical Society—have confirmed that single payer is the only route to affordable universal coverage.

And single payer is popular. The Massachusetts Nurses Association supports it along with dozens of other labor, seniors and consumer groups; so do 62% of Massachusetts physicians according to a recent survey. National polls find that almost two-thirds of Americans favor a tax-funded plan like Medicare that would cover all Americans. But single payer national health insurance threatens the multi-million dollar paychecks of insurance executives, and the outrageous profits of drug companies and medical entrepreneurs. It's time for politicians to stand up to the insurance and drug industries and pass health reform that can work.

Source: Statement by Steffie Woolhandler and David Himmelstein, primary care physicians at Cambridge Hospital and Associate and members of Physicians for a National Health Program, an organization of 14,000 physicians that support universal access to health care, headquartered in Chicago. www.pnhp.org 4/6/05

Disastrous Medicare drug law takes effect

Robert Hayes

Picture this movie: It's 2003 in the wealthiest nation in the world and millions of Americans are suffering needlessly and dying prematurely because they cannot afford medicine. Employers have hiked up the cost of their retiree drug coverage and pharmaceutical companies have continued to drive up the prices of life-saving prescription drugs.

Congress and the president know they must act or risk being run out of office. There is near-universal support to add prescription drug coverage to the nation's treasured Medicare program.

So, two of the nation's most powerful economic interests, the drug and insurance industries, are invited up to Capitol Hill to collude with leaders of Congress to develop a prescription drug benefit—one that serves their interests. Taxpayers, senior citizens, people with disabilities: be damned. We have friends to pay back.

Working with \$700 billion in taxpayer funds, the congressional leadership—all Republicans except then-Louisiana Sen. John Breaux (now a covert, but highly-paid lawyer for the drug lobby) and Montana Sen. Max Baucus—hides behind closed doors and gets to work.

With no public oversight and with the press milling outside locked doors, the congressional junta drafts legislation locked arm in arm with the puppeteers that control the federal government. In a back room,

they design a drug "benefit" that allows the pharmaceutical companies to further inflate the price of medications and reap billions of dollars in windfall profits. They promise tens of billions more in profits to health insurers to deliver this coverage.

But there is a human cost—this \$700 billion package is leaving millions of older and disabled Americans worse off and millions more of them still without drug coverage. The administration spin machine is hard at work to pretend that this tawdry story is not the reality facing the American people today.

Here's the reality: 16 million Americans with Medicare—men and women age 65 and older and people with severe, long-term disabilities—still have no drug coverage. Just 7 million Americans who were uninsured before the drug program was launched are newly insured. Six million of the poorest and frailest Americans who lost Medicaid coverage on January 1 now have inferior, less-reliable drug coverage. And the anger and dissatisfaction of people who are enrolled in drug plans increases each day as they discover how inadequate and unreliable the benefit is.

Coverage gaps, excessive out-of-pocket costs and routine denials of coverage for needed drugs are commonplace. Even enrollment in a private drug plan frequently leaves older Americans going without the medicines they need. In this springtime of national discontent, the nation's

prescription drug program resembles the rebuilding of New Orleans and the war in Iraq. They each serve as a human tragedy, an administrative fiasco and a predictable consequence of politicians willing to squander the national treasury so long as it goes into the pockets of their mercenary supporters.

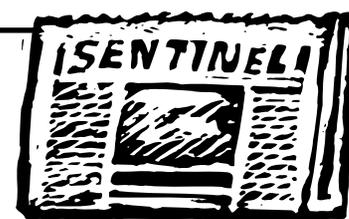
For the past 40 years Medicare has been a national treasure. It has done what it promised when signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the summer of 1965. Medicare, a humane, reliable and efficient (yes, a government-run single payer) health care system, allows Americans to live longer, more productive and better lives. Had the drug benefit been administered directly by Medicare, doctors, rather than profiteering insurers, would decide what drugs are needed, and Medicare would use its substantial purchasing power to bring U.S. drug prices in line with the rest of the world. (Americans, on average, pay double the price of other developed countries for the same medicine.) It's time to turn this plan around—now.

Robert M. Hayes, an attorney, is president of the Medicare Rights Center, the nation's largest independent source of information and assistance on health care rights and benefits for older and disabled men and women.

Source: TomPaine.com 4/6/06 article at http://www.tompaine.com/articles/2006/04/07/d_for_disaster.php



Six million of the poorest and frailest Americans who lost Medicaid coverage on January 1 now have inferior, less-reliable drug coverage.



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.

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

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Black Voices for Peace: <http://www.bvfp.org/>

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

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

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

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

Tom Paine.common sense — <http://www.tompaine.com/>

Global Alliance Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space — <http://www.space4peace.org>

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

Angry Arab News Service—<http://www.angryarab.blogspot.com/>

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

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>

18th Annual Earth Day Festival

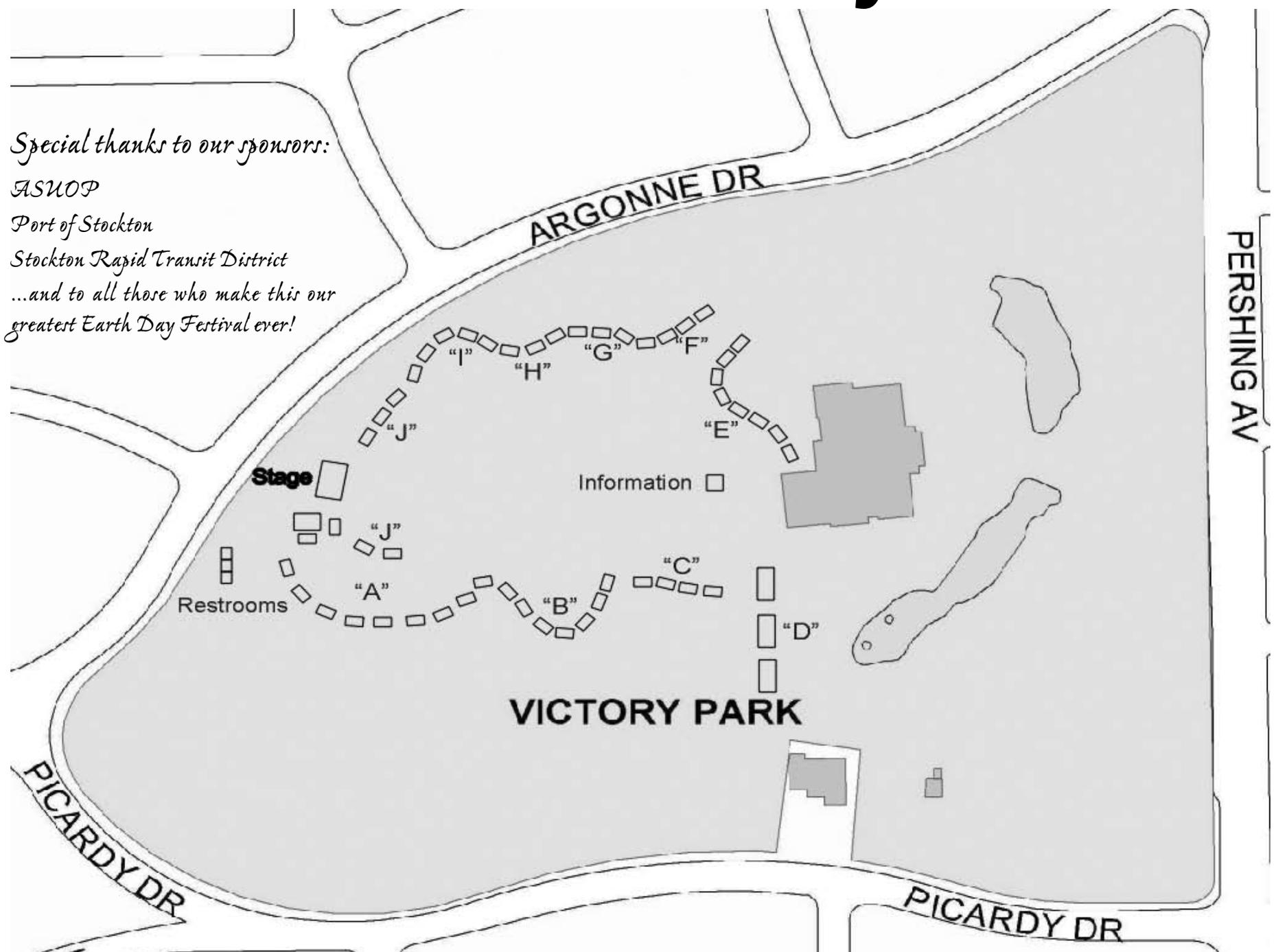
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GV Production (papermaking)
City of Stockton Police Dept./Lost and Found (located close to the stage)

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Pete McCloskey for Congress
Steve Thomas for Congress

Section "B"

ONE Achievement
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Delta Vista Academy
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Middle College High School
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Trinity Lutheran Pre-school

Van Buren School Reading Club
River of Words
Family Resource and Referral

Section "C"

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AAA—Auto Club

Section "E"

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Mountain Lion Foundation
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League of Women Voters
Mediation Center of SJ County
PFLAG
ACLU
Delta Sierra Club—Mother Lode Chapter
San Joaquin Audubon Society
San Joaquin County League of Conservation Voters
Campaign for Common Ground

Section "F"

Stockton Sailing Club
Calaveras River Watershed Stewardship Group
San Joaquin Co. Public Works (Stormwater)
City of Stockton Stormwater Management Program
Deltakeeper
Stockton Urban Waterways Advisory Committee
Stockton East Water Dist.

Section "G"

Heifer International
San Joaquin Farm Bureau

Section "H"

PG&E
ACE train
Cartridges for Kids

San Joaquin Co Rapid Transit District (with bus)
Sierra On-site shredding

Section "I"

By Women's Hands
Fine Egyptian Arts
Kulture Krash
Life Untamed
Triggerfish and Pongo Designs
Cora's Creations (crafts)
Kellogg Garden Products
Comssol computer recycling

Section "J" (food)

Snak Shax
Capitol Concessions
Delroys
Java J'z coffee

Entertainment

- 11:00 am: Taiko Drums
- 11:20 am: Mariachi Juvenil
- 11:30 am: Welcome Family Bike Ride Cyclists
- 12:00 pm: River of Words Poetry & Art Contest winners
- 12:15 pm: Garden Gnomes
- 1:15 pm: Delta College Monday Night Big Band Jazz
- 2:15 pm: Delta Sunset Belly Dance Troupe
- 2:30 pm: U-2 and beyond
- 3:15 pm: Endangered species mask parade
- 3:30 pm: Great Battery Round-up Winner announced
- 3:30 pm: Bucho
- 5:00 pm: Closing drum circle



History, culture and environment of the Delta

Wednesday, April 26th
6:30 p.m.
Chavez Central Library
605 N. El Dorado, Stockton

Jeff Hart, who with his wife Toni give Eco Tours of the Delta, will present a computer illustrated slide lecture about the environmental and cultural history of The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. He will discuss early Spanish and pioneer history, the effect of the gold rush era on the Delta, early settlement, farming, reclamation, plant and animal life, water issues, current resource and environmental problems, modern agricultural concerns and various proposals for improving the region.

Jeff and Toni Hart have a combination of degrees in biology and environmental and natural resource sciences and have worked in horticulture, forestry, consulting and research. Their business, Hart Restoration, emphasizes an ecological approach to restoration and has several related businesses including Hartland nursery and Farms. The nursery specializes in growing plants native to Northern California's Central Valley and that thrive in this climatic zone. They use these plants extensively in their restoration projects. You're invited to attend a fascinating and informative evening learning about the Delta!

Eco symposium looks hot

Sat, April 29th, 8:30 am
-8:30 pm

SMUD District
Customer Service
Building, 6301 S
St, Sacramento

Join the state's leading decision makers in charting out policies that will lead California towards a sustainable future. The Planning and Conservation League is thrilled to announce the following speakers for the Planning and Conservation League's 2006 Environmental Legislative Symposium, A Climate of Change:

Pete McCloskey, a former U.S. Congressman and the Republican challenger to Congressman Richard Pombo, will speak in the morning. Also speaking will be Assembly Member Fran Pavley, former State Attorney General John Van de Kamp, Paul Dolan, Democratic candidates

for Governor Phil Angelides and Steve Wesley, keynote speaker Michel Gelobter, Larry J. Schweiger, and State Attorney General Bill Lockyer. And that's just the beginning.

Fees: \$70/\$80; \$15 Students; Breakfast \$6.50, lunch \$8, dinner \$17. Walk-in registration begins at 7:30 am. Financial assistance and group rates available. (916) 313-4522 or at gperez@pcl.org.

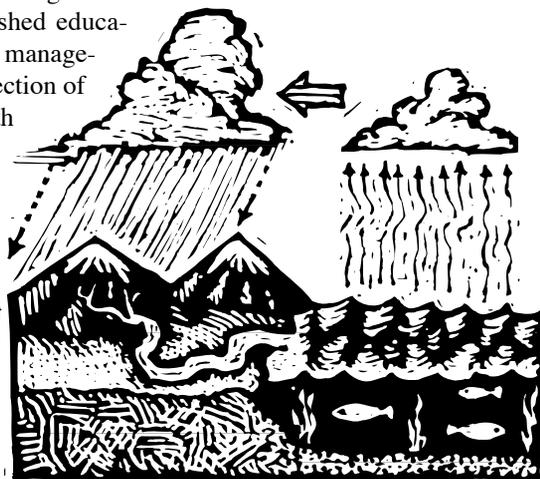


Watershed Awareness Festival: join the fun

The 2nd Annual Watershed Awareness Festival will be Saturday June 3rd in Sutter Creek at the Minnie Provis Park and Community Center. This year's all-day community event is located closer to the watershed's more dense population and adjacent to a living laboratory (Sutter Creek). The event planning committee is looking for interested people that can help with the event both planning the event and support during the event. This is a great community event. We should all do what we can to support this celebration and help it grow over the years. We are looking for ad-

ditional exhibitors from governmental agencies, not-for-profit groups, or similar entities that have a mission or goals that relate to watershed education, watershed management, and protection of watershed health and as we know, watersheds include just about anything that happens on land or water. For info on how to get involved, contact Terry

Strange, Watershed Coordinator, Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Council, (209) 257-1851 ext 105.



World's forests continue to shrink

"A healthy planet needs healthy forests. Thriving forests regulate the water cycle and stabilize soils. Forests also help moderate climate by soaking up and storing carbon dioxide. In addition to these ecosystem services, forests provide habitat for diverse flora and fauna, offer cultural, spiritual, and recreational opportunities, and provide a variety of food, medicines, and wood," says Elizabeth Mygatt of Earth Policy Institute. (See <http://www.earthpolicy.org/Indicators/Forest/2006.htm>.)

Nearly 4 billion hectares of forest cover the earth's surface, roughly 30 percent of its total land area. Though extensive, the world's forests have shrunk by some 40 percent since agriculture began 11,000 years ago. Three quarters of this loss occurred in the last two centuries as land was cleared to make way for farms and to meet demand for wood.

Over the last five years, the world suffered a net loss of some 37 million hectares (91 million acres) of forest, according to data from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. This number reflects the felling of 64.4 million hectares of trees and the planting or natural regeneration of 27.8 million hectares of new forest. Each year the world loses some 7.3 million hectares of forest, an area the size of Panama. Due to extensive reforestation, this net forest shrinkage has slowed slightly from the 8.9 million hectares lost annually in the 1990s. While this is encouraging, it obscures the sobering fact that gross deforestation has not declined significantly since 2000.

Forest degradation is also cause for concern. Of the world's

1.4 billion hectares of remaining primary forest—natural forest that shows no sign of human impact—6 million hectares are lost or degraded each year. We are losing not only forest area but some of our best forest stands.

Africa loses the most

Africa lost 64 million hectares of forest between 1990 and 2005, the greatest decline of any continent. Fuelwood gathering drives much of this forest depletion. Timber exports also play a role, with 80 percent of the Congo Basin's timber production being exported, mainly to China and the European Union.

South America has sustained the second greatest forest loss since 1990—59 million hectares—and deforestation has accelerated somewhat over the last five years, from 3.8 million hectares a year in the 1990s to 4.3 million hectares annually since 2000. This recent acceleration reflects Brazil's reported net loss of 16 million hectares between 2000 and 2005—three fourths of the regional total. If Amazonian deforestation continues unchecked, the world's largest rainforest will be cut down to 60 percent of its current size by 2050.

Asia lost a net 8 million hectares in the 1990s, but gained a net 5 million hectares between 2000 and 2005. This reversal is due to a massive reforestation effort in China, which reported planting 20 million hectares of trees between 2000 and 2005, with more than a third of this area in plantations. This growth rate, more than double that of the previous decade, is largely a result of China's logging ban, a policy enacted after widespread deforestation in the upper reaches

of the Yangtze River valley left the countryside vulnerable to severe floods in 1998.

Unfortunately, China's tree cutting ban has simply driven deforestation elsewhere, as China continues to be the world's largest wood importer and processor. South and Southeast Asia lost over 14 million hectares of forest in the last five years. Indonesia's natural forests, losing 2 million hectares a year, have suffered some of the heaviest cutting and could disappear within 10 years as they give way to timber and oil-palm plantations.

Apart from China, most of the gains in forest area are in industrial countries, while developing countries bear the brunt of deforestation. Forest area in North America has been stable at roughly 675 million hectares for the past 15 years, with deforestation in Mexico largely offsetting new plantings and reforestation in the United States. Central America has lost over 5 million hectares since 1990, and Europe has gained 12 million hectares. Industrial countries may be leading the way in conserving their own forests, but their demand for wood drives much of the deforestation elsewhere on the globe.

Forests are cleared to grow food and energy crops, graze cattle, and meet demand for wood products. The global wood harvest totaled 3.4 billion cubic meters in 2004, up from 2.3 billion cubic meters in 1961. Fifty-two percent of this is used as fuel, though this varies regionally. Fuelwood accounts for 89 percent of Africa's wood harvest, where it is often the only accessible and affordable source of energy for heating and cooking, but only 17 percent in North and Central America, where other energy sources are more readily available.

Much of the world's wood is harvested illegally. Illegal logging accounts for more than half of timber production in Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, and Cameroon. In addition to devastating forest ecosystems, illegal logging robs forest dwellers of their livelihoods, fuels social turmoil, and deprives timber-producing countries of up to \$15 billion of



revenue each year.

Forest plantations—planted stands that often consist of single-age monocultures—can alleviate logging pressure on natural forest areas. Worldwide, plantations account for less than 5 percent of global forest area but produce roughly 35 percent of the annual wood harvest. Growth in plantation area has accelerated, increasing by 2.8 million hectares a year since 2000. By 2020, plantation production is projected to meet 44 percent of global wood demand. Close to half of the world's productive plantations are located in China, Russia, and the United States. Still, plantations cannot offer the same biodiversity and vitality that a natural forest can. Plantation development is most advantageous on lands that are already clear of trees, as a way to offset future deforestation and decrease pressure on natural stands to supply forest products.

Solutions to deforestation

Reducing consumption of virgin wood products is integral to protecting the world's remaining natural forests. This entails curbing the world's appetite for timber, paper, and other wood products and decreasing wood burning for fuel by developing energy alternatives. In addition, stepping up recycling efforts will temper the need to fell more trees.

Certification emerged more than a decade ago as a way to identify forests that are managed and logged responsibly. Sustainable forestry depends on shifting from clearcutting to selective cutting of mature trees while maintaining the social and economic benefits enjoyed by forest inhabitants and other stakeholders. As of early 2006, the Forest Stewardship Council, the world's most rigorous accreditation organization, had certified some 68 million hectares in 66 countries as sustainable. Certification has expanded considerably in the past five years, although certified wood products still constitute only a small fraction of the global market.

For consumers, demanding certified wood products spur responsible forest management and help curb illegal logging. If governments, as policymakers and forest product consumers themselves, were to take a stronger leadership role in forest management oversight and enforcement, this would also encourage sustainable forestry practices. Protecting the world's remaining natural forests, cultivating new forest stands, and reducing consumption of forest resources are all critical steps toward preserving the indispensable services that forests provide. It is in our best interest to keep forests flourishing.

Source: Earth Policy Institute release 4/5/06 <http://www.earthpolicy.org>

Much of the world's wood is harvested illegally. Illegal logging accounts for more than half of timber production in Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, and Cameroon.

Iraq bases to stay

Dave Waldon

I recently read an interesting article from the Fort Dodge, Iowa, newspaper "The Messenger." The article, entitled, "Elaborate U.S. bases raise questions about stay in Iraq," was dated March 21, 2006. If the story was in the *Stockton Record*, I missed it.

The writer reveals four massive military bases in Iraq. Millions upon millions of cubic feet of concrete have been poured. One base has an Olympic-size swimming pool. Some have fast food outlets such as KFC and Burger King. Another base has a Harley-Davidson dealership, along with Ford and Chevy lots. These bases are equipped to accommodate thousands upon thousands of troops and civilians. Pool tables, plasma TVs and the requisite banks of vending machines adorn the facilities.

Is anyone naive enough to believe the United States is building these bases to leave to the Iraqis? Has the US Government "invested" hundreds of billions

of dollars in a far-off land just to make life better for Iraqi citizens? The aforementioned bases seem to have no trouble in obtaining clean drinking water, adequate electricity, reliable sanitation, safe medical facilities and functional security.

Make no mistake about it. The Bush administration will have many thousands of troops in Iraq for years to come. They will religiously protect our investment and staunchly guard the oil infrastructure they came to control in the first place. The President and his lackeys in Congress don't really worship God; they worship the Almighty dollar.



Bush gift to Big Oil

Just weeks after President Bush pledged to combat America's "addiction to oil," the administration announced new fuel economy (CAFE) standards for light trucks that amount to "Deck chair rearranging, only worse," in the words of Steven Nadel, executive director of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE).

Mr. Bush has called for a 75 percent reduction in Middle East oil imports by 2025--a reduction of 5 million barrels per day. But the new federal standard, calling for an increase of 1.8 miles per gallon in light trucks between 2007 and 2011, would achieve roughly one-seventh of that amount, according to ACEEE, which has called for an increase of at least double that amount, plus further improvements after 2011.

This week's new rule, says ACEEE, could also cause even this nominal new light truck fuel economy to be undermined by allowing unlimited sales of larger, lower-mileage trucks. Automakers will still be allowed to sell large numbers of full-size pickups and SUVs without offsetting them with sales of more fuel-efficient trucks, as was required under the previous CAFE standards. Thus the new regulations could actually yield an even lower average fuel economy for trucks than the previous CAFE standards. "Under this new system," said Nadel, "the MPG gains are not assured for a manufacturer's truck fleet. A shift in the vehicle mix can cause oil savings to evaporate."

The new rule does require for the first time that the largest SUVs be brought under the CAFE system. However, large "Class 2B trucks"—vehicles which comprise some 80 percent of all pickups and SUVs weighing from 8,500 to 10,000 pounds--still are exempt from any fuel-saving requirements.

Source: *BushGreenwatch* release 3/30/06 *BushGreenwatch*, 1717 Massachusetts Ave NW #600, Washington, DC 20036 (202) 783-7400 www.bushgreenwatch.org, a Friends of the Earth project



Oil royalty rip-off

"Under the current environment, we don't need royalty relief." *Michael Coney, lawyer for Shell Oil NYT, 3/27/2005*

Even as they wallow in record oil prices, the oil companies' top executives are trying to swindle the federal taxpayer for billions more in handouts. The companies' latest gambit is to squirm out of paying royalties for the privilege of drilling for oil and gas in publicly owned offshore waters. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the companies' latest efforts could add as much as \$80 billion over the next 25 years to the oil barons' enormous profits.

The seeds of the current royalty rip-off were planted in 1995 when Congress passed the Outer Continental Shelf Deep Water Royalty Relief Act (DWRRA). Proponents of the bill championed the legislation as an encouragement for oil companies to drill in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico at a time of record low oil and natural gas prices. The bill provided a royalty "holiday" on lease contracts signed between 1996 and 2000 for oil and gas extracted from the Gulf of Mexico.

To make sure taxpayers weren't forced to take it on the chin forever, the 1995 law capped the royalty "holiday" based on volumes of oil and gas extracted and depths at which the fuels were drilled. It limited royalty relief to a set volume of production from a lease: 17.5 million barrels from depths of 200 to 400 meters, 52.5 million barrels from depths of 400-800 meters, and 87.5 million barrels from depths greater than 800 meters. In addition, the law tied the royalty holiday to market prices: when a certain price threshold is reached (approximately \$34 a barrel currently), the royalty holiday ends—at least in theory. These stipulations were suppose to apply to all leases signed between 1996 and 2000.

Inexplicably, lease contracts signed in 1998 and 1999 failed to include stipulated price thresh-

olds. Naturally, the oil barons are primed to prey on this bureaucratic blunder and bilk the public out of billions in payments that are rightfully due to the Treasury. The GAO estimates that taxpayers could lose out on \$20 billion over the next five years, as a result of the 1998 and 1999 lease loophole and a 2003 legal victory by oil companies who'd challenged the methodology by which royalty relief was calculated.

Not content with this \$20 billion, Kerr-McGee last week filed a lawsuit challenging the price thresholds for lease contracts filed in 1996, 1997, and 2000. If this legal raid is successful, GAO estimates that the oil and gas industry could cheat taxpayers out of an addition \$60 billion in royalties over the next 25 years—for a grand total of \$80 billion.

Fortunately for the taxpaying public, it appears the oil barons may have gone one step too far this time. Several congressional committees, including the House Resources and Government Reform Committees and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, have launched investigations. While these committees investigate whether the public's resources will be plundered by oil barons, bills have been introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate to eliminate royalty relief when prices are high. Stopping the royalty rip-off shouldn't really be difficult, except for those members of Congress whose campaign war chests are filled by the oil barons. Congress should end this rip-off and force oil companies to pay their fair share.

ACTION: Support House Resource Committee Chair Pombo in making sure big oil pays their fair share.

Source: *The Chopping Block*, 4/4/06, a production of the Green Scissors Campaign and led by Friends of the Earth, Taxpayers for Common Sense and U.S. Public Interest Research Group. <http://www.greenscissors.org/>

Exxon CEO raked In \$190,000 a day Over \$686 million from 1993-2005

Average Americans are struggling to keep up with persistently high gas prices, now approaching \$3 a gallon. Testifying before Congress last November, Exxon CEO Lee Raymond blamed the problem on "global supply and demand" and assured the public that "we're all in this together." Last year, Raymond made due with "a total compensation package" of just \$69.7 million or \$190,915 a day, including weekends. After his haul in 2005, Raymond has decided to retire. It seems that, for Raymond, not working is even more lucrative than working: Exxon is giving Lee Raymond one of the most generous retirement packages in history, nearly \$400 million, including pension, stock options and other perks, such as a \$1 million consulting deal, two years of home security, personal security, a car and driver, and use of a corporate jet for professional purposes. Exxon is now facing several "shareholder resolutions this year that criticize the company's level of executive pay and seek to rein it in."

Source: *ThinkProgress.org* release 4/14/06

"My sincere view is that the commitment of our forces to this fight was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions—or bury the results."

—Retired Lt. Gen. Greg Newbold



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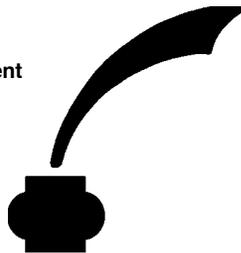
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Venezuela has top oil reserves in the world

Greg Palast

If you thought high oil prices were just a blip think again. In an exclusive interview with Greg Palast for BBC Newsnight the Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has ruled out any return to the era of cheap oil. The colourful Venezuelan leader hosts the OPEC meeting on June 1 in Caracas and he will ask OPEC to set \$50 a barrel—the average price last year—as the long term level. During the 1990s the price of oil had hovered around the \$20 mark falling as low as \$10 a barrel in early 1999.

Chavez told Newsnight "we're trying to find an equilibrium. The price of oil could remain at the low level of \$50. That's a fair price it's not a high price". Hugo Chavez will have added clout at this OPEC meeting. US Department of Energy analyses seen by Newsnight show that at \$50 a barrel Venezuela—not Saudi Arabia—will have the biggest oil reserves in OPEC. Venezuela has vast deposits of extra heavy oil in the Orinoco. Traditionally these have not been counted because at \$20 a barrel they were too expensive to exploit—but at \$50 a barrel melting them into liquid petroleum becomes extremely profitable.

The US DoE report shows that at today's prices Venezuela's oil reserves are bigger than those of the entire Middle East including Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, Iran and Iraq. The US DoE also identifies Canada as another future oil superpower. Venezuela's deposits alone could extend the oil age for another 100 years.

The US DoE estimates that Chavez controls 1.3 trillion barrels of oil - more than the entire declared oil reserves of the rest of the planet. Hugo Chavez told Newsnight's Greg Palast that "Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world. In the future Venezuela won't have any more oil - but that's in the 22nd century. Venezuela has oil for 200 years." Chavez will ask the OPEC meeting in June to formally accept

US Department of Energy analyses seen by Newsnight show that at \$50 a barrel Venezuela—not Saudi Arabia—will have the biggest oil reserves in OPEC.

that Venezuela's reserves are now bigger than Saudi Arabia's.

Chavez's increased muscle will not go down well in Washington. In 2002 the Bush administration welcomed an attempted coup against Chavez. He told Newsnight that the Americans had organised it in an attempt to get hold of Venezuela's oil. Ironically by invading Iraq George Bush has boosted oil prices and effectively transferred billions of dollars from American consumers to Chavez. Up to \$200 million a day—half of it from the US—is flooding into Caracas. Chavez is spending this on building infrastructure and increasing the minimum wage and improving health and education in the poor ranchos which surround the cities. As a result even his opponents accept that Chavez is extremely popular and will easily win the next Presidential election in December.

Chavez is also spending billions in the rest of Latin America—exchanging contracts for oil tankers and infrastructure projects and buying up loans in Argentina and Brazil. He has made cheap oil deals with Ecuador and the Caribbean. He has also spent some of the dollars which have come in from the US supporting Fidel Castro in Cuba. In return Cuba has supplied the thousands of doctors and teachers who are transforming conditions in the barrios of Caracas. Washington accuses Chavez of buying influence in Latin America.

Chavez has not invaded any foreign countries. He does not have secret prisons at home or

abroad. Chavez has repeatedly won democratic elections and the opposition operates freely although some members have been charged with accepting illegal foreign donations. Nonetheless George Bush's administration repeatedly targets Chavez on human rights and finances his opponents.

Earlier this year US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld compared Chavez to Hitler—because he was elected democratically—and last year the influential American evangelist Pat Robertson called for his assassination. Robertson later apologized and said that he did not "necessarily" have to be killed so long as he was kidnapped by American special forces. Chavez told Newsnight that he was still concerned that George Bush had not learnt the lessons of Iraq and would order an invasion to try to secure Venezuela's oil. "I pray this will not happen because US soldiers will bite the dust and so will we, Venezuelans". He warned that any such attempt would lead to a prolonged guerilla war and an end to oil production. "The US people should know there will be no oil for anyone". Chavez does not accept Tony Blair's criticism of him for lining up with Fidel Castro. He told Newsnight "if someone is sleeping together it is Bush and Blair. They share the same bed."

Source: Greg Palast reporting for BBC Newsnight TV, 4/3/06 View Palast's investigative reports for Harper's Magazine and BBC Television's Newsnight at <http://www.GregPalast.com>

Mission indeed accomplished

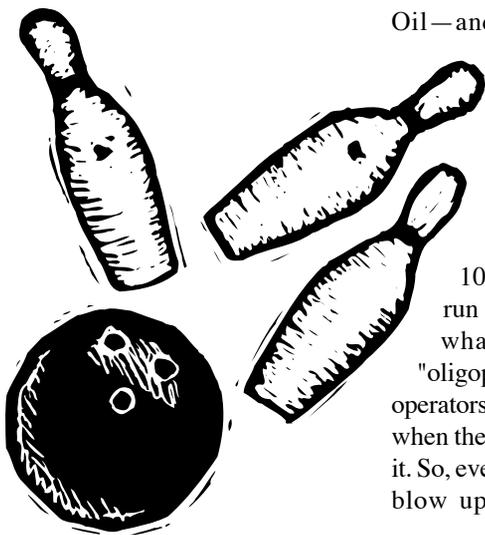
Greg Palast

Get off it. All the carping, belly-aching and complaining about George Bush's incompetence in Iraq, from both the Left and now the Right, is just dead wrong. On the third anniversary of the tanks rolling over Iraq's border, most of the 59 million Homer Simpsons who voted for Bush are beginning to doubt if his mission was accomplished.

But don't kid yourself -- Bush and his co-conspirator, Dick Cheney, accomplished exactly what they set out to do. In case you've forgotten what their real mission was, let me remind you of White House spokesman Ari Fleisher's original announcement, three years ago, launching of what he called,

"Operation Iraqi Liberation."

O.I.L. How droll of them, how cute. Then, Karl Rove made the giggling boys in the White House change it to "OIF"—Operation Iraqi Freedom. But the 101st Airborne wasn't sent to Basra to get its hands on Iraq's OIF. "It's about oil," Robert Ebel told me. Who is Ebel? Formerly the CIA's top oil analyst, he was sent by the Pentagon, about a month before the invasion, to a secret confab in London with Saddam's former oil minister to finalize the plans for "liberating" Iraq's oil industry. In London, Bush's emissary Ebel also instructed Ibrahim Bahr al-Ulum, the man the Pentagon would choose as post-OIF oil minister for Iraq, on the correct method of disposing Iraq's crude.



The five largest oil companies pulled in \$113 billion in profit in 2005—compared to a piddly \$34 billion in 2002 before Operation Iraqi Liberation. In other words, it's been a good war for Big Oil.

And what did the USA want Iraq to do with Iraq's oil? The answer can be found in a 323-page plan for Iraq's oil secretly drafted by the State Department. Our team got a hold of a copy; how, doesn't matter. The key thing is what's inside this thick Bush diktat: a directive to Iraqis to maintain a state oil company that will "enhance its relationship with OPEC."

Enhance its relationship with OPEC??? How strange: the government of the United States ordering Iraq to support the very OPEC oil cartel which is strangling our nation with outrageously high prices for crude. Specifically, the system ordered up by the Bush cabal would keep a lid on Iraq's oil production—limiting Iraq's oil pumping to the tight quota set by Saudi Arabia and the OPEC cartel.

There you have it. Yes, Bush went in for the oil—not to get MORE of Iraq's oil, but to prevent Iraq producing TOO MUCH of it.

You must keep in mind who paid for George's ranch and Dick's bunker: Big Oil. And Big Oil—and their buck-buddies, the Saudis—don't make money from pumping more oil, but from pumping less of it. The lower the supply, the higher the price. It's Economics 101. The oil industry is run by a cartel, OPEC, and what economists call an "oligopoly"—a tiny handful of operators who make more money when there's less oil, not more of it. So, every time the "insurgents" blow up a pipeline in Basra,

every time Mad Mahmoud in Tehran threatens to cut supply, the price of oil leaps. And Dick and George just love it.

Dick and George didn't want more oil from Iraq, they wanted less. I know some of you, no matter what I write, insist that our President and his Veep are on the hunt for more crude so you can cheaply fill your family Hummer; that somehow, these two oil-patch babies are concerned that the price of gas in the USA is bumping up to \$3 a gallon.

No so, gentle souls. Three bucks a gallon in the States (and a quid a litre in Britain) means colossal profits for Big Oil, and that makes Dick's ticker go pitty-pat with joy. The top oily-gopolists, the five largest oil companies, pulled in \$113 billion in profit in 2005—compared to a piddly \$34 billion in 2002 before Operation Iraqi Liberation. In other words, it's been a good war for Big Oil.

As per Plan Bush, Bahr Al-Ulum became Iraq's occupation oil minister; the conquered nation "enhanced its relationship with OPEC;" and the price of oil, from Clinton peace-time to Bush war-time, shot up 317%.

In other words, on the third anniversary of invasion, we can say the attack and occupation is, indeed, a Mission Accomplished. However, it wasn't America's mission, nor the Iraqis'. It was an Mission Accomplished for OPEC and Big Oil.

The Guardian, 3/20/06. On June 6, Penguin Dutton will release Greg Palast's new book, *Armed Madhouse: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Class War*. www.GregPalast.com.



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The politics of righteousness and George W Bush

Jim Anderson

I know a lot of progressive people who are continually amazed and disgusted by the current state of political affairs. The oil and gas junta that has hijacked the executive office seems to become more dishonest, belligerent, and incompetent with each passing day. And the people that support this cabal—the Religious Right, the corporate executives, and the pro-gun groups—seem to do so regardless of how bad things get. In fact, millions of Americans seem to be completely unfazed by the fact that we were led into a war with lies, that the deficit is skyrocketing out of this world, or that 5 million more people are living in poverty in 2005 than in the last year of the previous administration. To those who still proudly display GW bumper stickers on their vehicles, this president can apparently do no wrong.

But that should not really come as such a surprise, for one need only look at those segments of the electorate that stand behind this criminal enterprise. On one side of the triangle that makes up Bush's loyal constituency are the Ken Lays, Jack Abramoffs, and Halliburton execs, who couldn't care less about bankrupting the government as long as they make a buck on it. On the other leg of the triangle are the gun worshipers who, bunkered down deep in their compounds, see only that which falls into the crosshairs of their scopes. Lastly, rounding-out the base of the triangle are the Jerry Falwells and James Dobsons of the world who see the world in terms of black and white, good versus evil.

And therein lies the problem. A large chunk of our political landscape has been framed by the language of religious hucksters who, convinced of their own righteousness, have no capacity for tolerance or compromise. In the eyes of those on the Religious Right, the Left represents the forces of darkness while conservatism is the choice of those convinced that their political disposition mirrors that of the Almighty. This is a very ominous and dangerous development because it means that there can be no loyal political opposition in today's marketplace of

ideas—the elect make no bargains with the devil. It is this tendency, the practice of demonizing those who disagree with you, that has not only permeated our entire public discourse, but has created a political and social environment where the most blatant offenses of this administration become excused, ignored, or otherwise covered-up because dissent is the most visible hallmark of the heretic.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this development is not that it is new and, therefore, hard to come to terms with, but that it is a recurring theme in our history and we don't seem to learn from it. In fact, the current practice of infusing politics with reactionary right-wing religion was expertly described by the historian Richard Hofstadter over forty years ago. In *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* he noted the tendency of right-wingers to, “secularize a religiously derived view of the world, to deal with political issues in Christian imagery, and to color them with the dark symbology of a certain side of Christian tradition.” If today's discourse was infused with the imagery of peaceful Quakers, things might not be so bad. Unfortunately, the public debate has been co-opted by Bible Belters, Red Staters, and consumers of Tim LaHaye books who believe that if you are not on their side then you are among the ranks of the unrighteous. The president and those around him never miss an opportunity to pander to this sentiment. As he declared shortly after the attacks on 9/11—either you're with him or against him.

Progressives should also never underestimate the steadfastness and conviction of those who embrace this worldview. Getting those on the Right to listen to someone other than a reactionary demagogue is highly unlikely. As long as Sean Hannity and James Dobson have access to a microphone the chance that Bush's base will turn against him is pretty slim.

It is also important to remember, looking back historically, that most of the dictators that surfaced in the twenties and thirties used similar methods to mobilize the

faithful in their communities. In virtually every European state headed by a right-wing dictator, one of the most effective organizing principles was to demonize those on the Left. Not only Hitler, but Mussolini, Tiso, Horthy, and others constantly railed against democrats, socialists, communists and blamed the Left for everything from economic problems, to corrupting social mores, to destroying the very fabric of society. By the late 1930's, no fewer than seventeen European states embraced some form of reactionary authoritarianism and the heads of most of those states—whether fascist, clerical fascist, National Socialist, or establishment dictatorship—remained very popular (that is, until the war started to turn in favor of the Allies). And this occurred in states whose populations identified themselves as Christian by margins of 9 to 1, or better!

This is not to suggest that all Christians are fascists or that George Bush is next in the lineage of Adolf Hitler—to do so would trivialize the crimes of the Nazis and grossly exaggerate the personal defects of our president. However, it should be noted that, not only in Germany but in all the Axis states, reactionary leaders constantly tried to pass themselves off as the moral and spiritual saviors of people whose values were under assault in the midst of a culture war waged by the atheistic Left. Hitler, it has been said, was sanctioned by much of the clergy because he waged a war on decadent art, dirty literature, and godlessness. (In a similar vein, one probably won't find books on pacifism and dissent at your local Christian bookstore but you may very well find reactionary tomes on the evils of liberalism by such saintly authors as Michael Savage and Sean Hannity.)

Moreover, many high-ranking officials—clerics as well as politicians—demonized the Jews among them for similar reasons. In Germany, Austria, Hungary, and other countries, Jews were vilified for being purveyors of atheistic communism. Scholars may debate the extent to which the anti-Semitism of the time was political or religious but there is

no denying the fact that countless numbers of Christians all over Europe blamed Jews for everything that was wrong with the world. And the opportunistic and cynical leaders who pandered to that segment of the faithful never missed an opportunity to inflame and incite.

Unfortunately, no one knows when this Elmer Gantry-like political circus will end. It may take another disastrous war or some other unseen tragedy to bring people to their senses. Let's hope not. There are, however, emerging signs that discontent with the failed policies of this administration is on the rise among those not commonly associated with “Bush's Base.” But progressives should not just sit back and hope this current wave of reaction implodes on its own accord—the self-proclaimed righteous among us are too convinced of their calling to let their leader go down without a fight. It's going to take a groundswell of grassroots activ-

ism to take this country off the path to theocracy and back on the road to democracy.

I once read an article about President Clinton being completely confounded by the rigidness and uncompromising nature of the Republican opposition he faced on a certain issue. He supposedly made a comment that went something like “we're essentially Eisenhower republicans here, why won't they deal with us?” What he, and many Americans, fail to understand is that the word compromise does not exist in the lexicon of today's Republicans. For them, there is no such thing as the “loyal opposition”, only those who are with them, and those who are against them. And if one opposes the elect, then one opposes God. Until the Left accepts the fact that this is the type of mentality their dealing with, they're going to continue to be confused and amazed when it comes to dealing with the phenomenon of George W. Bush.

Time for clean elections

In an historic vote in January, the State Assembly passed the California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act (Assembly Bill 583). The Assembly vote put California one big step closer to making public financing of election campaigns a reality, joining a growing number of states that have rejected the special-interest funded elections that currently distort our democracy.

ACTION: AB 583 is now in the Senate. Please call Senator Don Perata, President pro Tem of the State Senate, and urge him to support AB 583. The Senate Elections Committee will hear the bill on April 19, and we expect stiff opposition. Your call to Senator Perata is vital to securing his support, and his support is vital to passing the bill through the committee and the Senate. You can call him at either his district office (510) 286-1333 or capitol office (916) 651-4009.

Here are some points you may wish to make:

- Clean Money makes elections about ideas, not money.
- Clean Money is already working in Maine and Arizona, where more women and minorities have been elected to office.
- Clean Money programs are not expensive—it's only \$5.50 per Californian to root out the inefficiency and corruption created by our current special interest dominated system.
- Clean Money has won Democratic and Republican converts in the states and cities where it exists, because elected officials can get back to the business of policy-making and serving their constituents, instead of dialing for dollars every day.

Source: Common Cause release 4/4/06 www.commoncause.org/ca If you are interested in volunteering, contact ca-info@commoncause.org to get plugged in.

Fighting corruption matters

Big oil vs. you

Are you still getting squeezed at the pumps every time you buy gas? Are you or your relatives paying skyrocketing bills to heat your homes this winter? Does all this seem like just a bad coincidence when oil companies are raking in record profits? In fact, some of the largest corporate profits in U.S. history?

Well it's not a coincidence.

Although Congress did not pass an energy bill until the summer of 2005, oil and gas companies got a huge headstart when, after contributing more than \$1.8 million to George Bush's 2000 presidential campaign, they were invited to sit on Vice-President Cheney's "Energy Task Force," whose report provided the blueprint for the energy bill. You were not represented on this super secret task force, however, as neither citizen advocacy groups nor environmental organizations were invited to join.

The purchase of private access to lawmakers didn't end there. In one blatant example, House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Tex.), who played a major role in forcing through Big Oil's energy bill, held an energy company golf fundraiser for his Leadership PAC at the fashionable Homestead resort in June of 2002—at the very moment energy legislation was being formulated in the House. The timing of this fundraiser was so suspect that the House ethics committee felt compelled to admonish DeLay, for what it called the "appearance" that donors were being provided with special access regarding pending legislation.

All told, the oil and gas industry gave members of Congress more than \$55 million in campaign contributions from 2001 through October 31, 2005 (Center for Responsive Politics). Not surprisingly, the energy bill passed by Congress in 2005 did virtually nothing to address the fundamental problems plaguing America's energy policies. But it did lavish Big Oil and their colleagues in the gas industry with a whopping \$6 billion in subsidies. That's a return of \$110 in federal

subsidies—meaning your tax dollars—for every dollar spent on campaign contributions during that period.

The stated purpose of many of the subsidies was to provide "incentives" to the industry. Apparently the record profits the companies were enjoying—ExxonMobil posted a record \$9.9 billion profit in just the third quarter of 2005—were not incentive enough. (According to reports filed with federal regulators, the five largest oil companies made a staggering \$257.79 billion in pure profit from 2001 through the third quarter of 2005.)

To make matters even worse, the 2005 energy bill also provided a grab bag of regulatory rollbacks for Big Oil, thereby weakening protections under the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Environmental Policy Act—all of which provide further corporate profits at a potentially grave public cost.

And when Americans began to feel the pinch of high gas prices in the fall of 2005, amid charges of price gouging and reports of the astronomical oil company profits, was Congress willing to impose a windfall profits tax on the industry? No. And when the industry executives were asked if they would donate the \$6 billion in government subsidies they were just given to help low-income families pay for heating oil that winter, were they willing to share any of their fantastic wealth? Once again, the answer was no.

However, Congress was willing to allow the oil company executives to testify in hearings last fall without being put under oath. This turned out to be mighty convenient for the execs, since they all responded, upon direct questioning, that they had not been involved in any way in Cheney's Energy Task Force. Yet only two days later the *Washington Post* published a leaked White House document showing that many of their companies had, in fact, participated in the secret meetings.

The drug industry vs. you

Right now millions of seniors are overwhelmed as they wade through a flood of information to figure out the prescription drug benefit that was approved by the Republican-led Congress in 2003. In a recent poll almost two thirds say they do not understand the drug benefit, which forces them to choose between up to 40 different plans that provide very different coverage. Why did Congress make this process so confusing? And why did the bill, among other things:

- Make seniors responsible for 100% of their prescription drug costs between \$2,251 and \$5,100,
- Put private companies in charge of administering the program,
- Forbid the federal government from negotiating for much lower prices with drug makers, and
- Prevent the importation of much cheaper drugs from Canada?

If you answered "to make U.S. drug makers and insurance companies richer," you would be correct.

In 2003 alone, corporate special interests, including HMOs and pharmaceutical companies, dished out \$141 million for a veritable army of 952 lobbyists—close to twice as many lobbyists as there are members of Congress—to make sure that the bill was written for the benefit of large insurance and drug companies, as opposed to the health needs of American citizens. Worse still, nearly half of these lobbyists were former employees of the federal government, including 30 former members of Congress, and at least 11 top staffers who left the Bush administration to lobby for the drug industry and HMOs in 2003.

ACTION: Become a Citizen Watchdog and join our Clean Up Washington campaign. Go to <http://action.citizen.org/signUp.jsp?key=769&t=CleanUpWashington2col.dwt> for more info.

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

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Tuesday Film Night

6:30 pm, PJN Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton

April 25

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

When idealistic junior senator Jefferson Smith (James Stewart) arrives in Washington, he's full of plans and dazzled by his surroundings—qualities he retains even in the face of widespread corruption on the part of his colleagues.

May 2

A Day Without A Mexican

One morning, California wakes up to find that one-third of its population—the Hispanic third—has disappeared. A strange pink fog envelops the state, and communication outside its boundaries is completely cut off. The economic, political and social implications of this disaster threaten California's way of life, and for a group of disparate people (all white, except for one Latina), the cracks in their private lives are forced wide open.

May 9

Blackboard Jungle

Inner-city high school teacher Richard Dadier (Glenn Ford) struggles to maintain his idealism in this gritty drama set in the 1950s. The students drink, smoke, steal and cause mayhem, and two of Dadier's delinquents (Sidney Poitier and Vic Morrow) duke it out to be crowned leader of their classroom turf. This film was the first major motion picture with a rock 'n' roll soundtrack, which includes "Rock Around the Clock." Anne Francis costars.

May 16

Tsotsi (African)

After shooting a woman and driving off in her car, a ruthless Johannesburg thug known only as Tsotsi (Presley Chweneyagae) is surprised to discover that he isn't alone, kept company by a crying infant in the backseat. Unable to leave the little nipper behind, he grudgingly takes the child home and through his efforts to care for the tyke, Tsotsi slowly rediscovers his compassion, self-respect and capacity to love.

May 23

March of the Penguins

Award-winning photographer Luc Jacquet takes documentary film to new heights—and depths—with his first feature film, a stunning insider's look at the life of the emperor penguin. The product of more than a year of filming in the brutal Antarctic ice, this official Sundance selection presents never-before-captured footage of the penguins' underwater life and explores their steadfast quest for monogamous mates.

May 30

A Strong Clear Vision—Maya Lin

In this Academy Award-winning documentary, filmmaker Freida Lee Mock captures the genius of Maya Lin, a visionary architect vaulted to fame at age 20 after her pared-down, modern and controversial design was chosen to memorialize the Vietnam War in Washington, D.C. The film also describes other memorials Maya Lin has created, such as the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Ala.

Coming in June:

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, Harold & Maude, The Courtship of Eddie's Father, Il Postino

Join AIDSWalk— the heart & sole event of the year

AIDSWalk of San Joaquin is hosting its 12th annual walk, "The Heart and Sole" event of the year on Saturday, May 13, at Oak Park in Stockton beginning at 10:00 am.

The AIDS walk is an opportunity for friends and family members to commemorate the lives of loved ones who have died of AIDS. Community members and businesses are also encouraged to show their support for AIDS awareness in San Joaquin County. We are currently recruiting individual walkers, teams and team captains, as well as corporate sponsorship of the event. In addition to the walk, there will be entertainment, food and prizes.

AIDSWalk of San Joaquin was founded 1993. The goal is to raise awareness and support to those whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS. It is also about remembering those who have lost their battle with this disease.

Proceeds from this event are donated to HIV/AIDS agencies in San Joaquin County. The donations distributed from AIDSWalk San Joaquin are used to provide aid to HIV/AIDS clients with food and transportation vouchers, help with basic living needs and assist with burial funds. AWSJ also collaborates with these sister agencies to raise public awareness about the epidemic with other annual events such as World AIDS Day in December and National Condom Week in February.

Early registration is encouraged, check-in is at 9:00 a.m. and the walk begins at 10:00 a.m. For more info, call (209) 608-WALK (9255). You can also register online at www.sanjoaquinidsfoundation.org and click on Fundraising Opportunities.

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Celebration**
Utica Park Angels Camp
SUN. APRIL 23 11-6
Clan Dyken
John Covert
Jack & Billie Shields
Keith Evans

Sponsored By: **Calaveras County Green Party**
Mountain Coalition For Youth
Sustenance Books
Mountain Ranch Realty
For More Info: 209-745-6536, 754-5575 or 293-4374

New board of Health Care for All SJ

We are most pleased to announce: Roger Speed is now the Chair of HCA-SJ; Jerry Bailey will co-chair; Carolyn Pometta will continue as Treasurer/Membership Chair, and Paula LeVeck (with back-up from Donna Shane and Cynie Downs) will serve as Secretary. If you haven't officially joined HCA, please consider doing this as the issues surrounding health care coverage for all of California continue to be an on-going crisis and issue for all of us. Don't forget our meetings every second Thursday, from 6–8 pm at the Peace and Justice Center, 231 Bedford Place, off the Miracle Mile.

Delta College presents student art exhibition

Delta Center for the Arts and the LH Horton Jr Gallery presents the 7th Annual Juried Student Exhibition & Art Awards Competition, April 27 through May 25, 2006. The opening reception is planned for Thursday, April 27th from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. All events are free and open to the public.

The Gallery is currently open Mondays by appointment, Tuesdays from 11 am to 4 pm, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 11 am to 6:30 pm and Fridays from 11 am to 1 pm with special extended hours on Saturday, April 29th, from 11 am to 3 pm. Info: 954-5507 <http://finearts.deltacollege.edu/gallery>

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May Calendar

Thru Apr 29

Harold Farley ceramicist and Tina Moore oils and pastels. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Thurs, Apr 20

Readings with open discussion: John Morearty will read aloud from Colin Fletcher, Joanna Macy, Lester Brown, Martin Luther King and others. Freewheeling discussion to follow. Peace and Justice Center, six consecutive Thursdays, 3:30 sharp till 5. 464-3326. See page 7.

Fri-Sun, Apr 21-23

Stockton Area high school art show, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Fri 6 - 8, awards at 7 pm. Sat/Sun 12 - 5 pm. 467-4455

Sun, Apr 23

Calaveras County Earth Day Celebration, Utica Park, Angels Camp. 11 am-5 pm. Great food, bands, booths, and more. Free admission. Be there!

UOP Symphonic Wind Ensemble concert, 2:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP. 946-2116

Wed, Apr 26

"A Forgotten Resistance: The Mosque of Paris", a 26 minute documentary film about the role of French Muslims in aiding Jewish children and the Resistance during World War II, followed by a discussion with Holocaust survivor Annette Herskovits. 7:30pm. Pacific Theater, UOP. Free. 298-1442.

History, Culture and Environment of the Delta talk sponsored by the League of Women Voters. 6:30 pm Chavez Central Library, 605 N. El Dorado, Stockton. See page 11.

Thurs, Apr 27

Readings with open discussion: John

Morearty will read aloud; 3:30 sharp till 5. 464-3326. See pages 7 & 20.

Apr 27-May 25

Juried Student Exhibitions and Arts Awards Competition, Delta College LH Horton Gallery Tue 11-4, Wed/Thu 11-6:30, F 11-1 954-5507

Fri, Apr 28

Pacific Jazz Ensemble, 7:30 pm, Spanos Concert Hall, 946-2116

Sat, Apr 29

Eco Symposium with leaders and shakers. Sponsored by Planning and Conservation League. See page 11.

Sun, Apr 30

18th annual Earth Day Festival, Victory Park, Stockton. 11 am-5 pm. Great food, bands, booths, and more. Free admission. Be there! See pages 1 & 10.

UOP Symphony Orchestra playing Britten, Strauss and Sibelius. 2:30 pm, Spanos Concert Hall, 946-2116

Thur, May 4

Readings with open discussion: John Morearty will read aloud; 3:30 sharp till 5. 464-3326. See pages 7 & 20.

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

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 7 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

Fri, May 5

Mother's Day Craft Show at the Center. Jewelry, handmade items and more. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. All welcome. 467-4455. See page 20.

May 5-14

Delta College musical Urinetown. 8:00 pm. Delta College Tillie Lewis Theatre. \$12-14. 954-5110.

Sat, May 6

Freedom from War meeting, 1 - 4:30 pm, 200 W 14th St, Davis Info: www.freedomfromwar.org 530-758-2362. See page 20.

Sun, May 7

UOP University Chorus, Pacific Singers and Oriana 2:30 pm Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP. 946-2116.

Thur, May 11

Health Care for All San Joaquin group meeting, 6-8 pm. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Second Thursdays.

Readings with open discussion: John Morearty will read aloud; 3:30 sharp till 5. 464-3326. See pages 7 & 20.

Sat, May 13

AIDS Walk. See page 18.

Sun, May 14

San Joaquin Vegans monthly potluck, 5:30, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. \$2 with food, \$9 without food. Info: Alovato@sbcglobal.net Second Sundays

Mon, May 15

Knitting with Peig. See page 20.

Wed, May 17

San Joaquin Delta College Big Band Jazz concert. 7:30 pm. SJ Delta College Tillie Lewis Theatre. \$5-7.50. 954-5110.

Thur, May 18

San Joaquin Delta College Symphonic Band concert. 7:30 pm. SJ Delta College Atherton Auditorium. \$5-7.50. 954-5110.

Readings with open discussion: John Morearty will read aloud; 3:30 sharp till 5. 464-3326. See pages 7 & 20.

May 19-28

Stockton Civic Theatre presents Kiss Me, Kate, musical of Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew. Thurs 7:30 pm, Fri/Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. 2312 Rose Marie Lane, Stockton. \$20/\$18/\$15/\$8. 473-2424.

Weekly

Tuesdays

Stockton City Council Meeting, every Tuesday at City Hall, 5:30 pm. <http://www.stocktongov.com/clerk/pages/CouncilAgenda.htm>

Tai Chi, 6-8 pm, Northeast Community Center, 2885 E Harding Way.

First & Third Fridays

Poetry, 8:30-10:30 pm Latte Lounge, 235 E Miner Ave. 466-6224.

Saturdays

Birding Field Trips with S.J. Audubon Society. sanjoquinaudubon.org

Tai Chi Chuan at the Confucius Church on Lafayette St., 8:30 am-11: am. (209) 952-8582.

A new way to donate to PJN

Fundraising has recently become very serious business at the Peace & Justice Network. In order to continue to maintain the new P&J Center, we must raise more money than ever before.

So you will be happy to know that there is a new way to donate to PJN—our website is now part of our fundraising efforts.

On our home page (www.pjnsjc.org) is a button "Donate Now" that will take you to a secure server maintained by Network for Good, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2001 by Time Warner Foundation and AOL, Cisco, and Yahoo. From there you can "view full

report" and read information about PJN.

Use a credit card to make a one-time donation or set up recurring donations to become a sustaining member—we are looking for monthly sustainers. After donating, you will receive an email receipt for your taxes.

Go to <http://www.pjnsjc.org> and see how easy it is to support peace and justice in SJ County.

Classified

HELP WANTED Coordinator and organizer for The Rosemarie Lane Community Garden. Needs to have some knowledge of gardening. The work includes assigning individual garden plots. Vital that this position be filled.

DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE

Action Fund is looking for an experienced campaign professional to help run an independent expenditure issue campaign in the 11th Congressional District in California [Richard Pombo's district]. The ideal candidate will have field and communications experience and some management experience.

Position available immediately through November 20, 2006. Competitive salary along with a chance to work on a great campaign with a strong team. Contact Kevin Keefe at kkeefe@urban-dare.com for more information.

Support Concerned Citizens

Several people have asked how to make contributions to CCCoS to support our CEQA legal battle. Tax deductible checks should be made payable to "The League Fund," indicating on the memo line "CEQA Lawsuit" or "CCCoS Lawsuit." Non tax-deductible checks should be made out to "CCCoS" or "Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton." Both tax and non tax deductible checks should be mailed to: CCCoS, P.O. Box 4548, Stockton, CA 95204

Sundays

Tai Chi, 2:30-4, Northeast Community Center, 2885 E. Harding Way & Golden Gate.

Monthly

Second Mon

PFLAG meeting 209-870-3339.

Second Tues

Audubon Society, 7:30 pm, St. Paul's Church, 2220 W Alpine, Stockton.

Second Thurs

Health Care for All, 6 pm at the P&J Center, 231 Bedford.

Third Thur

Hispanics for Political Action meeting, 6:30-8:30 pm. Cancun Restaurant, Weber St, Stockton

Talking It Through

Talking It Through is now two half-hour shows.

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

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

SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26

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UOP Theater Film Schedule

Films at Pacific Theatre

Cost: \$5 to general public; \$3 to faculty, staff and alumni; Free to UOP students

May 4,5,6 @ 8pm
Monster

May 6 @ 10 pm
Dazed and Confused

It's All Happening At the P&J Center

Antiwar working group forms—come join!

On April 9, activists met to discuss forming a new group to organize opposition to war.

The meeting started with the documentary "Voices of Patriots: Why Are We In Iraq?" where participants heard career military professionals address key issues surrounding U.S. war policy in Iraq. Discussion followed with the film's producers Valerie Mih and Don Richards.

While this film focused on only one aspect of the losses in Iraq, the filmmakers pointed out that it was created to reach the hearts of people who are more concerned with American losses—and would appeal to a broader audience. This DVD is

now available for purchase at the Peace and Justice Center for \$10 each. For more information on this film, visit www.voicesof-patriots.com.

David Dionisi then introduced "Freedom from War," an organization that is working on all conflict issues. It is sponsoring an organizing event on May 6 in Davis (see calendar and <http://www.freedomfromwar.org/whatweoffer.htm>).

Various mission statements were discussed, with the general theme of bringing antiwar awareness to the San Joaquin valley, to bring an end to the war in Iraq, to prevent future wars, and to support a world free from war.

Activities would include educational programs and counter recruiting efforts. Any big peace action later this summer will require getting more people involved.

The next meeting date and time was set for Thurs. April 20, at 7:00 pm, at the Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton.

New voices are needed for this process to continue—get in on the ground floor. Contact Jim Walsh jwprod1956@clearwire.net for more information. We are all invited to the Freedom from War meeting Sat. May 6th from 1 to 4:30 p.m. at 200 W 14th Street in Davis.

Peace & Justice Center High School Art Show



featuring students from
Stockton & Lincoln Unified School Districts

231 Bedford Road, Miracle Mile, Stockton
Friday, Saturday, Sunday - April 21-23, 2006

Friday, April 21 6:00 - 8:00 pm
Saturday & Sunday, April 22-23 12:00 - 5:00 pm

Judges provided by The Stockton Art League
For further information, contact Peace & Justice Center
(209) 467-4455 or email: pjcsjc@sbcglobal.net

You can help!

The Peace & Justice Center is a great asset to our community. You can help keep the Center going in a number of ways.

- Send a generous donation now.
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- Rent the Center for your meetings or other events.
- Bring friends and participate in Center activities.

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Knitting with Peig

Peig Fairbrook will teach a knitting workshop at the P&J Center beginning Monday, May 15th, at 3:30 pm. Classes will be 1.5 hours in length for 6 weeks. The entire workshop is \$50 per person. Mothers and daughters might wish to join together for this fun class! Or fathers and sons. A minimum of 6 people is required.

Please call the Peace & Justice Center at 467-4455 for information and registration. To view Peig's work, visit her website at <http://www.peig.net>.

Reading/discussion with John

Readings with open discussion: John Morearty will read aloud from Colin Fletcher, Joanna Macy, Lester Brown, Martin Luther King and others. Freewheeling discussion to follow. Peace and Justice Center, six consecutive Thursdays starting April 20. 3:30 sharp till 5. 464-3326.

MOTHER'S DAY JEWELRY/ART/RAFT GIFT SHOW



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Call 209-467-4455 for details