

connections

Volume XXIII, Number 8

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October 2005

SAVE THE DATE

PEACE CENTER GRAND OPENING 1

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P&J Center

A home of our own

For over 20 years, people who believe a better world is possible have supported the activities of the Peace and Justice Network—through festivals, rallies and marches, films and speakers, environmental events, commemorations of non-violence, and media endeavors, including the newspaper you now hold in your hands.

Through those 20 years we have dreamed of having a community center—a place to gather, share, and learn. Now that dream has become a reality with a soon-to-be community landmark: the Peace & Justice Center at 231 Bedford Place in Stockton.

The Center, which will open its doors on Saturday, September 24

at 9am, will be a creative and useful space for all, with books and wi-fi computer connections, art on the walls and world-wide media on wide screens, a free cup of fair trade coffee (donations gratefully accepted), and stimulating conversations. Cozy and comfortable, the Center will provide a viewing space for artistic and political films (*see the schedule on page 19*), a listening area for local and not-so-local speakers, a staging point for rallies, and much more.

Thank you for your help in making this space a reality. Together, we will build a better community.

Don't miss the Grand Opening on September 24.

Peace & Justice Center wish list

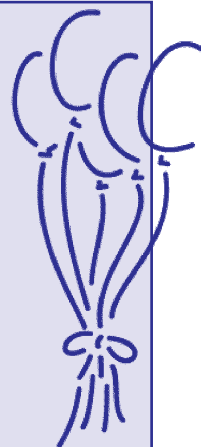
The Peace & Justice Center is almost finished—don't miss the party on Sept 24. If you can donate any of the following, it would be very much appreciated—call 951-5669.

- 5-7 love seats/couches in good condition.
- 5-7 comfortable chairs in good condition.
- numerous small tables.
- Book shelves.
- 3 small computer desks.
- 1 large desk.
- 4 desk chairs.
- 20 folding chairs.
- 10 folding tables.
- Numerous large pillows

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Grand Opening! Peace & Justice Center



Saturday, September 24
9am–3pm

231 Bedford Place (off the Miracle Mile)

On September 24th there will be huge peace actions throughout the world. In Stockton we will be joining those actions by celebrating our new community peace center and by broadcasting the events in other areas.

Join us for food and fun from 9 am (when events begin in Washington DC) until 3 pm. Tour the new Peace & Justice Center and bring your ideas and energy for the new space. Call 209 457-4455 for more information.

Mr. Bush, why...

Christie Kelley

We need to ask...

What happened? And we also need to be ready for the answers and ready to act on what is best for the majority of people.

Shock, sadness, disbelief and anger grips most Americans as we watch, listen and read about the daily struggles of thousands of people in the Gulf coast region. Concern for family, friends and strangers cloud our day-to-day lives, for the moment. How long can the human psyche struggle like this? Until we send monetary aid, until life's small pressures creep back into our day-to-day lives?

Will the Gulf coast become a 'side-burner' and then a 'back-burner' concern of those of us that live out of the region?

The effects of Katrina will be felt for years to come. We must learn from this experience and make the necessary changes in our national priorities and environmental policies.

The questions a shocked America is asking its President:

1) Why did it take George Bush five days to get to New Orleans?

President Bush was on holiday
(continued page 5)

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Just how blind, America?

Bruce Giudici

Just how blind, America, are you determined to be? At what point does this incompetent idiot masquerading as president become intolerable?

Must it be when his administration has directly injured or killed a family member of yours (ie, Cindy Sheehan)? Or when you have seen your city drowned beneath the lies of budget cuts, the security of Mr. Bush's post 9-11 Halliburtonized government or the waters of Lake Ponchatrain? Or when the \$10 billion in Medicare cuts, throwing poor seniors off the rolls in Tennessee, pays for the estate tax giveaway that will further lurch this country towards debt and bankruptcy? The trade deficit (record), the federal deficit (record), the two biggest catastrophes in US history (9-11 and Katrina) and the two most inept responses —our little prince's list is endless. And to those who would excuse the im-

becile: either you have an account in the Caymans somewhere, or are gripped by fear, religion or insanity. Only a deluded Limbaugh ditto-head would laugh at a President Kerry competently dealing with the current situation. Brothers and sisters, you gotta admit—this country is in deep trouble.

And yet, Bush will sell us calm. "We are looking forward, not back" (where Clinton had budget surpluses, Gore won Florida, Sadaam had no WMD's, and nasty Katrina sunk a city). "We are winning this war. I am confident." And the media will prepare you for the next Bush gambit—and hope you will take the bait—one-more-time. And we will ask, just how blind, America, are you determined to be?

The time has come to wake up and realize that we are being led by self-serving anti-government oilmen who at one time considered themselves lucky to have one term to loot the Federal Treasury. With

a second term, the Court is waiting to be stacked, the media waiting to be given one efficient, corporate, white and mind-numbing voice, and the permanent Republican regime is but one election away.

The time has come for a true opposition to face the money. Some Democrats have spoken eloquently (Kucinich (page 3), Lee, Conyers, Jackson Jr, and now Feingold, to name a few). Some Republicans too. But most politicians are beholden to the same dollars that have kept our kleptocracy running for the haves, and drowning the have-nots. Gerrymandered into their secure districts, most are in no mood to take leadership on anything other than the pork barrel spending that lands in their own district. This must stop.

The time has come for us to lead —Cindy Sheehan-like—and stop the killing, looting, corruption, lies, arrogance, inequity, racism, classism and intolerance we have



Bruce Giudici

witnessed for the past 5 years. And we can start close to home.

The Peace and Justice Network is opening a Center at 231 Bedford Place (at Pacific Ave) in Stockton. We invite you to the opening on September 24, from 9 am to 3 pm (we will watch the huge demonstrations in Washington DC and San Francisco) and during office hours thereafter.

We believe that now is the time to stand up for what is right and fair and just in this country. With a gathering place, we can now more effectively and creatively form a unique San Joaquin peace movement. Join us...and thanks to all of you who donated in response to our most recent appeal. Through collective action, we can and will make a difference.

Feedback

Community to community

Editor,

Mendocino is a small rural community in Northern California, far away from the flood waters inundating Louisiana and Mississippi. Yet we are doing what we can to help.

Our local Veterans for Peace (VfP) group has set up a kitchen and camp near Covington LA, supported entirely by contributions from the Mendocino community. They have named their spot Camp Casey in honor of Casey Sheehan, a soldier killed in Iraq. Here's how the chapter president, Patrick Tate, describes what they are doing:

This is a community which has been hit hard by Katrina. The white half of the community has been getting help, with little going to the poor and black community (MRE's). We have no cell phone service here and are dependent entirely on our internet access through the (VfP) bus satellite system.

It is apparent that we have a mountain to move here, but the community is beginning to pull together with us. We have taken

over their park with their help and are helping each other out. People have brought out rakes and other tools to clean up and make our own space "People's Park". The sense of community is astounding, everyone comes looking for a handout and we tell them we want them to pull together with us and they are doing it.

The federal government under Bush has shown its unwillingness or inability to aid the flood victims in a timely manner, and what aid it does give out is racially biased, according to Pat's letter. This has to be a people to people effort. Bush has made it abundantly clear that he has no heart for those suffering.

I plan to ask our Fort Bragg City Council to officially adopt the town of Covington, LA, and raise money for community groups such as VfP who wish to go there and help out. If every city and town in the US which is not affected by Katrina would adopt a community in the flooded area, we would be able to help in a neighbor-to-neighbor way. We would also show the world that America has not yet lost its soul entirely.

Carol Wolman

<http://www.opednews.com> 9/1/05

Response to Cindy Sheehan

Editor,

Cindy Sheehan has demanded an answer from the President to a simple question, "What is the noble cause my son died for in Iraq?" The President, it seems, is too busy vacationing at his ranch, pedaling around with Lance Armstrong, or speaking to carefully selected, blindly obedient crowds to give Cindy the answer. As a public servant, he should be required to answer a tax-paying American citizen who has lost one of life's most precious gifts in the service of his country. When Mr. Bush said, "Bring it on," he did not envision this.

Well, Cindy, since our "fearless" leader's yellow streak is getting even more pronounced, you may never get an answer from him, but I have one for you. It goes like this. Your son died, or shall we say, was sacrificed, as part of a long-planned incursion into the Middle East, a Pax-Americana scheme hatched in the mid-1990s by Neo-Conservatives now employed in the Bush Administration. You've heard their names: Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Perle and others. The Plan: to militarily invade and occupy a large Middle-Eastern

country vital to U.S. business and economic interest while providing a strategic launching pad to crush any interference. Protection for Saudi Arabia and Israel were added bonuses. The target: Iraq. Long before the horrors of 9/11 were absconded and manipulated by the Bush Administration, Saddam Hussein and company were being placed in the cross hairs.

Your Casey perished so U.S. oil companies and military defense contractors could tap into the second largest proven oil reserve in the world. Your little boy stopped breathing to pave the way for 14 permanent U.S. military installations in Iraq, which the Pentagon estimates will need 40,000 American troops to man by the year 2010. A part of you, Cindy, carried by you, nurtured by you. A fragment that grew into a man. That man, that boy, your son, will now live only in your dreams, your memories, your photographs. His time on Earth cut short by the avarice and callousness of those he served with courage and honor. His future blackened so that we, as Americans, can continue our insatiable appetite for the black gold that fuels the stuff dreams are made of.

(continued next page)

Connections

Editor: Bruce Giudici, 786-3109; bgiudici@caltel.com
Associate Editor—war & peace: John Morearty
Associate Editor—politics: Gary Barrington
Associate Editor—environment: vacant
Layout: Laurie Litman
Proofreader: Debbie Cousyn
Ad Rep: Beth Luna, 931-4543
Distribution Coordinator: Doris Haskell, 477-5166
Distribution Site: The Woodshed, 630 N. Grant, 462-8834
Distributors: Rosemary Atkinson, Reid Cerney, Fred & Christy Dillemath, Eric Parfrey, Art Raab, John Whittock, and many others
Community Calendar: David Best, panoramaman@earthlink.net, 368-2378
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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."

Hurricane Katrina catastrophe only a warning

Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich (D-OH) gave the following speech today on the House floor during a special session to provide relief money for the victims of Hurricane Katrina:

This amount of money is only a fraction of what is needed and everyone here knows it. Let it go forward quickly with heart-felt thanks to those who are helping to save lives with necessary food, water, shelter, medical care and security. Congress must also demand accountability with the appropriations. Because until there are basic changes in the direction of this government, this tragedy will multiply to apocalyptic proportions.

The Administration yesterday said that no one anticipated the breach of the levees. Did the Administration not see or care about the 2001 FEMA warning about the risk of a devastating hurricane hitting the people of New Orleans? Did it not know or care that civil and army engineers were warning for years about the consequences of failure to strengthen the flood control system? Was it aware or did it care that the very same Administration which decries the plight of the people today, cut from the budget tens of millions needed for Gulf-area flood control projects?

Countless lives have been lost throughout the South with a cost of hundreds of billions in ruined homes, businesses, and the destruction of an entire physical and social

Feedback (cont. from page 2)

Casey's body was shipped home in a flag draped coffin, hidden from photographers, not because of terrorism or weapons of mass destruction or imminent threats or Saddam Hussein or democracy in Iraq, but so that the United States could exercise hegemonic domination over a region of the world vital to the fat cats sitting in the leather chairs. They and their loved ones are oblivious to the sacrifice your son made, impervious to the hurt you are feeling now. As a father of two young adults, I can only imagine the pain you are feeling. I'm sorry, Cindy.

Dave Waldon

Isn't it time we provided physical and economic security for our own people? And isn't it time we stopped the oil companies from profiting from this tragedy?

infrastructure.

The President said an hour ago that the Gulf Coast looks like it has been obliterated by a weapon. It has. Indifference is a weapon of mass destruction.

Government: a crisis of legitimacy

Our indifferent government is in a crisis of legitimacy. If it continues to ignore its basic responsibility for the health and welfare of the American people, will there ever be enough money to clean up after their indifference?

As our government continues to squander human and monetary resources of this country on the war, people are beginning to ask, "Isn't it time we began to take care of our own people here at home? Isn't it time we rescued our own citizens? Isn't it time we fed our own people? Isn't it time we sheltered our own people? Isn't it time we provided physical and economic security for our own people? And isn't it time we stopped the oil companies from profiting from this tragedy?"

We have plenty of work to do here at home. It is time for America to come home and take care of its own people who are drowning in the streets, suffocating in attics, dying from exposure to the elements, oppressed by poverty and illness, wracked with despair and hunger and thirst.

The time is now

The time is NOW to bring back to the United States the 78,000 National Guard troops currently deployed overseas into the Gulf Coast region.

The time is NOW to bring back to the US the equipment which will

be needed for search and rescue, for clean up and reclamation.

The time is NOW for federal resources, including closed Army bases, to be used for temporary shelter for those who have been displaced by the hurricane.

The time is NOW to plan massive public works, with jobs going to the people of the Gulf Coast states, to build new levees, new roads, bridges, libraries, schools, colleges and universities and to rebuild all public institutions, including hospitals. Medicare ought to be extended to everyone, so every person can get the physical and mental health care they might need as a result of the disaster.

The time is NOW for the federal government to take seriously the research of scientists who have warned for years about the dangers of changes in the global climate, and to prepare other regions of the country for other possible weather disasters until we change our disastrous energy policies.

The time is NOW for changes in our energy policy, to end the domination of oil and fossil fuel and to invest heavily in alternative energy, including wind and solar, geothermal and biofuels.

As bad as this catastrophe will prove to be, it is in fact only a warning. Our government must change its direction, it must become involved in making America a better place to live, a place where all may survive and thrive. It must get off the path of war and seek the path of peace, peace with the natural environment, peace with other nations, peace with a just economic system.

Source: Floor Statement of Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich, 9/2/05

What can I do for people in the Gulf?

The people of the region most in need are those who have suffered the most. They are not homeowners with insurance, many had minimum wage jobs or were dependant on welfare. They have no savings or retirement funds to fall back on. Most had little-to-nothing before the storm; they now have less.

There are many, many ways to help. You can provide direct assistance by contributing funds, by providing housing and/or goods. We recommend you choose carefully where you send your donations. Avoid the large mainstream organizations with their high-paid executives. Try to make sure your donations go to those most in need...not Trent Lott.

The NAACP, which has been outraged by the response of the government to this disaster, has launched a Disaster Relief Fund to raise monies that will be used to: 1) provide immediate assistance to the worst affected victims, 2) mobilize resources to feed, cloth and shelter displaced victims, and 3) ensure the equitable distribution of money and resources from government and other relief agencies. They state up-front that no more than 10% will go to administration. You can donate through yahoo: <http://store.yahoo.com/naacp-donate1/> Send checks to the NAACP payable to: NAACP Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund, 4805 Mt. Hope Dr, Baltimore, MD 21215 naacp.org/disaster/contribute.php

National coordination of low-income-targeted relief ACORN www.acorn.org Baton Rouge office: (225) 930-6385.

A list of grassroots organizations can be found at www.kpfa.org



Calling PJN volunteers!

PJN has some events coming up. If you are able to do any of the jobs below, please call Linda Whittock, 465-4043 or email thecottagers@earthlink.net. A BIG thank you ahead of time! And of course, we want you to join us at these wonderful events!

September 17 & 18: "From Violence to Wholeness": Nonviolence Training Weekend. Needed: A person to set out/clean up breakfast/snacks • 3 dozen bagels & cream cheese • Fruit • Juice • 3 dozen cookies

October 17: "An Evening with Dr. Margee Ensign: Rwanda and Reconciliation" at P&J Center, 7-8:30 p.m. Needed: A person to set out/clean up refreshments • 4 dozen cookies • Soda and/or juice

October 24: "Chavez, Venezuela and The New Latin America": Film and Discussion at P&J Center, 7-8:30 p.m. Needed: A person to set out/clean up refreshments • 4 dozen cookies • Soda and/or juice

December 2 -3: 19th Annual Peaceful Holiday Faire. Needed: Pots of soup/beans for lunch on both days (total of 6 pots) • Homemade cookies • Persons to manage the Peace and Justice table (2 hr intervals) • Persons to help with set up and take down • Person/s to supervise the kitchen and clean up either/both days • Persons to sell lunch items (high school students are ideal)

January 24: 2nd Annual John McCutcheon Folk Concert, at Central Methodist Sanctuary, 7- 9:00 p.m. Needed: Ticket takers at door

New Orleans drowning: foretold & avoidable

Will Bunch

New Orleans had long known it was highly vulnerable to flooding and a direct hit from a hurricane. In fact, the federal government has been working with state and local officials in the region since the late 1960s on major hurricane and flood relief efforts. When flooding from a massive rainstorm in May 1995 killed six people, Congress authorized the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project, or SELA.

Over the next 10 years, the Army Corps of Engineers, tasked with carrying out SELA, spent \$430 million on shoring up levees and building pumping stations, with \$50 million in local aid. But at least \$250 million in crucial projects remained, even as hurricane activity in the Atlantic Basin increased dramatically and the levees surrounding New Orleans continued to subside.

War & tax cuts slow levee funding

Yet after 2003, the flow of federal dollars toward SELA dropped to a trickle. The Corps never tried to hide the fact that the spending pressures of the war in Iraq, as well as homeland security—coming at the same time as federal tax cuts—was the reason for the strain. At least nine articles in the *Times-Picayune* from 2004 and 2005 specifically cite the cost of Iraq as a reason for the lack of hurricane- and flood-control dollars.

Newhouse News Service, in an article posted late Tuesday night at The Times-Picayune Web site, reported: “No one can say they didn’t see it coming. ... Now in the wake of one of the worst storms ever, serious questions are being asked about the lack of preparation.”

In early 2004, as the cost of the conflict in Iraq soared, President Bush proposed spending less than 20 percent of what the Corps said was needed for Lake Pontchartrain, according to a Feb. 16, 2004, article, in *New Orleans CityBusiness*.

On June 8, 2004, Walter Maestri, emergency management chief for Jefferson Parish, Louisiana; told the *Times-Picayune*: “It appears that the money has been moved in the president’s budget to handle homeland security and the war in



Iraq, and I suppose that’s the price we pay. Nobody locally is happy that the levees can’t be finished, and we are doing everything we can to make the case that this is a security issue for us.”

Also that June, with the 2004 hurricane season starting, the Corps’ project manager Al Naomi went before a local agency, the East Jefferson Levee Authority, and essentially begged for \$2 million for urgent work that Washington was now unable to pay for. From the June 18, 2004 *Times-Picayune*:

“The system is in great shape, but the levees are sinking. Everything is sinking, and if we don’t get the money fast enough to raise them, then we can’t stay ahead of the settlement,” he said. “The problem that we have isn’t that the levee is low, but that the federal funds have dried up so that we can’t raise them.”

The panel authorized that money, and on July 1, 2004, it had to pony up another \$250,000 when it learned that stretches of the levee in Metairie had sunk by four feet. The agency had to pay for the work with higher property taxes. The levee board noted in October 2004 that the feds were also now not paying for a hoped-for \$15 million project to better shore up the banks of Lake Pontchartrain.

The 2004 hurricane season was the worst in decades. In spite of that, the federal government came back this spring with the steepest reduction in hurricane and flood-control funding for New Orleans in history. Because of the proposed cuts, the Corps office there imposed a hiring freeze. Officials said that money targeted for the SELA project—\$10.4 million, down from \$36.5 million—was not enough to start any new jobs.

There was, at the same time, a growing recognition that more research was needed to see what New Orleans must do to protect itself from a Category 4 or 5 hurricane. But once again, the money was not there. As the *Times-Picayune*

reported last Sept. 22:

“That second study would take about four years to complete and would cost about \$4 million, said project manager Al Naomi. About \$300,000 in federal money was proposed for the 2005 fiscal-year budget, and the state had agreed to match that amount. But the cost of the Iraq war forced the Bush administration to order the New Orleans district office not to begin any new studies, and the 2005 budget no longer includes the needed money, he said.”

The Senate was seeking to restore some of the SELA funding cuts for 2006. But now it’s too late.

One project that a contractor had been racing to finish this summer: a bridge and levee job right at the 17th Street Canal, site of the main breach on Monday.

The Newhouse News Service article published Tuesday night observed, “The Louisiana congressional delegation urged Congress earlier this year to dedicate a stream of federal money to Louisiana’s coast, only to be opposed by the White House. ... In its budget, the Bush administration proposed a significant reduction in funding for southeast Louisiana’s chief hurricane protection project. Bush proposed \$10.4 million, a sixth of what local officials say they need.”

Local officials are now saying, the article reported, that had Washington heeded their warnings about the dire need for hurricane protection, including building up levees and repairing barrier islands, “the damage might not have been nearly as bad as it turned out to be.”

Will Bunch (letters@editorandpublisher.com) is senior writer at the Philadelphia Daily News. Editor & Publisher 8/31/05 <http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1001051313>

Halliburton cashes in on disaster

The *Houston Chronicle* reported today that the Navy has asked Halliburton to repair naval facilities damaged by Hurricane Katrina. So now we not only have a disaster of our own to compare with Iraq, but it looks like the same well-connected network of “crony contractors” will be profiting from the aftermath. The repair work was assigned to Halliburton’s KBR subsidiary under an existing contract, in this case a \$500 contract awarded to KBR in 2001, and renewed in 2004. The repairs will take place in Louisiana and Mississippi. KBR has not been asked to repair the levees.

Recall that Joe Allbaugh, the former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), registered as a lobbyist for KBR in March. Under Allbaugh’s leadership, FEMA was placed in the Department of Homeland Security, and its priorities were shifted from natural disasters to working on the Global War on Terror. As Eric Holdeman pointed out in Tuesday’s Post, the move eventually led to this year’s announcement that FEMA is to “officially” lose the disaster preparedness function that it has had since its creation. “The move is a death blow to an agency that was already on life support.”

Allbaugh is also a long-time close associate of Bush, as well as Mississippi governor Haley Barbour. He managed the Bush/Cheney 2000 campaign and before that was governor Bush’s chief of staff in Texas. Perhaps these connections explain why, when it comes to new contracting opportunities, Allbaugh seems to always know which way the wind is blowing.

After the invasion of Iraq, for instance, Allbaugh helped form New Bridge Strategies with Lanny Rogers (also a close friend of Barbour), which described itself as “a unique company that was created specifically with the aim of assisting clients to evaluate and take advantage of business opportunities in the Middle East following the conclusion of the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Its activities will seek to expedite the creation of free and fair markets and new economic growth in Iraq, consistent with the policies of the Bush Administration.”

While it has taken longer than anticipated, the climate for those new “business opportunities” in Iraq is still being shaped by the U.S., as economic “reforms” get inserted into the draft constitution that would help the “private sector” find new opportunities to effectively pilfer that country’s riches. (This looting story has gotten much less attention from the press than the pictures from New Orleans. Who knows, maybe we’ll soon be told that Halliburton “found” the oil in Iraq, too.)

Meanwhile, for the vast majority of the Iraqi people, the reconstruction project (once touted by administration officials as well as Thomas Friedman as a Middle East Marshall Plan) has been a total disaster. Kind of like what the people in the Superdome have experienced this week -- no water or electricity, anarchy in the streets and the smell of death everywhere.

So we can’t be surprised if & when we witness another, second wave of looting by a network of crony contractors whose connections run deep in an administration responsible for dismantling our ability: to prevent this disaster, to alleviate the suffering and chaos and damage after, and to possibly prevent global warming from bringing worse disasters in the future.

Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/charlie-cray/disaster-means-more-money_b_6692.html 9/31/05

(continued from page 1)

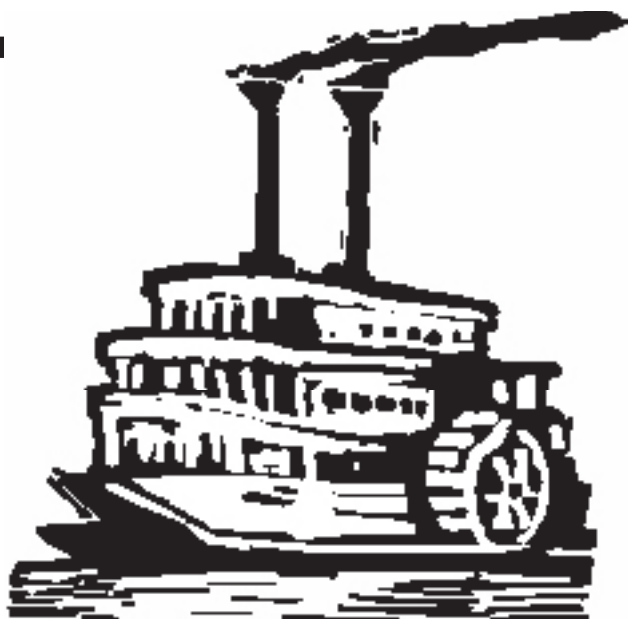
in Texas when Katrina struck. He did not cancel Monday's prearranged political fundraising tour of California and Arizona. On Tuesday he surveyed the hurricane damage—but only from the flight deck of Air Force One, prompting criticism that he was too detached from the suffering on the ground. He didn't give a speech until Tuesday afternoon—36 hours after the storm first hit—and didn't embark on a tour of the region until Friday. Key advisers have come under fire for similar levels of detachment. As the full magnitude of the disaster unfolded, Secretary of State Rice was seen buying shoes in New York and Dick Cheney remained on holiday.

2) Why was the world's only superpower so slow in rescuing its own people?

It will probably take months, even years, to answer that question. Consider these factors: 1) The federal government's disaster relief agency, FEMA, has lost considerable clout because the priority at the Department of Homeland Security has been counter-terrorism; 2) the homeland security director, Michael Chertoff, has no experience in disaster relief; 3) because of FEMA's low profile, almost no contingency measures were taken before Katrina struck; 4) the under-resourced local Army Corps of Engineers appeared completely unprepared to conduct emergency operations after the levees were breached; 5) nobody appears to have considered the communications problems inherent in loss of phone and cell-phone service.

3) Why did the Bush Administration cut funding for flood control and emergency management?

Disaster prevention experts have been studying New Orleans for years and urging upgrades to its levees and other preventive measures. The Army Corps of Engineers was supposed to carry out some of this work last year, but its funding was cut. It seems the Bush administration considered the risk of malicious human attack and the risk of the ravages of nature, and found itself incapable of holding both ideas in its head. This question is likely to be the subject of official investigations. Local and former federal officials are in little doubt that the budgetary priorities of Iraq, tax cuts and the "war on terror" are to blame. (see page 4)



4) Why did it take so long to send adequate National Guard forces to keep law and order?

The National Guard is under pressure in every US state because of the strains of deployment in Iraq. More than one-third of Louisiana's 10,000 guardsmen are either in Iraq or Afghanistan. No mass deployment of guardsmen from other states is being contemplated because they are all needed in Iraq too. At first, only 3,000 guardsmen were sent to New Orleans, but that was increased to about 10,000 as looting and gun violence became widespread.

5) How can the US take Iraq, a country of 25 million people, in three weeks but fail to rescue 25,000 of its own citizens from a sports arena in a big American city?

America's obsession with maintaining its pre-eminent position as the world's largest superpower means it is incapable of responding swiftly and effectively to a humanitarian crisis. While it has the firepower for fighting wars, it does not have the leadership and skills to combat natural disaster.

6) Why was aid refused from countries such as Cuba, a mere 90 miles away with vast experience in rescue and recovery from tropical storms?

Cuba was willing, on the first Friday, to send via air 100 health specialists in the early morning hours to help in areas of New Orleans where medical attention was needed. Each doctor would take a backpack with medication and the diagnostic equipment required for such emergencies and could be divided into groups of two

and would stay there as long as they were needed. Cuba would be willing to send another 500 specialists on Saturday, and then a third group of 500 specialists with the same equipment on Sunday. He stated that this would represent 26.4 tons of medications and the personnel necessary to provide medical attention. Cuban medical personnel had extensive international experience and basic language skills.

Castro criticized the rejection of Cuban aid and stated experts had even said that a worse hurricane could hit again before this hurricane season is over.

Castro stressed that at times like this it was not right to be thinking about politics. He stated that Cuba was only offering the aid for the benefit of the American people who were suffering right now. Castro commented on how governments should forget about differences and cooperate in times of need and that Cuba has medical equipment available in case the US needed it.

7) How does wetlands management affect the situation?

Molly Ivins answers: One of the main reasons New Orleans is so vulnerable to hurricanes is the gradual disappearance of the wetlands on the Gulf Coast that once stood as a natural buffer between the city and storms coming in from the water. The disappearance of those wetlands does not have the name of a political party or a particular administration attached to it. Many environmentalists will tell you more than a century's interference with the natural flow of the Mississippi is the root cause of the problem, cutting off the movement of alluvial soil to the river's delta.

It is a fact that the Clinton administration set some tough policies on wetlands, and it is a fact that the Bush administration repealed those policies—ordering federal

September 24, Delores Park

Rally in SF to bring them home now

The Modesto Peace Life Center is sponsoring a bus to the September 24 march and rally in San Francisco. The bus will leave Modesto at 9 AM and return about 3 PM, arriving in Modesto about 5 PM. The cost is \$15. For information and reservations call Michael Knapp, 526-9588.

BART to the rally

Take the freeway to the Livermore Valley, and exit at Hopyard Rd. Turn right at end of the ramp, then left at the first light. Go a few blocks, till you see the BART parking lot on your left. Park, buy your round trip ticket to 16th and Mission for just under \$10, and hop on. Trains leave every 20 minutes, the ride takes about 50 minutes.

When you get off, walk up the hill on 16th to Dolores, turn left a few blocks to the park.

The march starts at 11, and goes to a rally at Jefferson Park, Laguna and Turk Streets. It's a two or three mile walk. Ask for directions to the BART to come home.

Bankruptcy law to burden Katrina victims

It hasn't been widely discussed yet, but another disaster will strike the victims of Hurricane Katrina on October 17, 2005. And Bush can't say that he didn't anticipate it. He orchestrated it.

The Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act goes into effect on that day. Interesting that while the bill was passing through the House Judiciary Committee early this year, Democrats attempted to amend the bill to include measures to protect victims of natural disasters such as hurricanes. The amendment to the bill, proposed by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) was voted down without debate, along party lines.

agencies to stop protecting as many as 20 million acres of wetlands. Last year, four environmental groups cooperated on a joint report showing the Bush administration's policies had allowed developers to drain thousands of acres of wetlands.

In fact, there is now a government wide movement away from basing policy on science, expertise and professionalism, and in favor of choices based on ideology. If you're wondering what the ideological position on flood manage-

Reversal needed

As soon as Congress reconvenes, Rep. Conyers' and Rep. Jackson Lee's legislation will be proposed to prevent new bankruptcy provisions from having adverse and unintended consequences for the hundreds of thousands now facing financial catastrophe by providing needed flexibility for victims of natural disasters in bankruptcy proceedings.

ACTION: Contact your representative and urge support on this bill.

Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bob-cesca/new-orleans-disaster-th_b_6633.html 9/2/05

ment might be, look at the pictures of New Orleans—it seems to consist of gutting the programs that do anything.

Questions and comments adapted from: Rupert Cornwell, in Washingtonfor(c)2005Independent News & Media (UK) Ltd.; Molly Ivins, Creators Syndicate, Why New Orleans Is in Deep Water, 9/1/05 www.truthout.org.; Fidel Castro, during a roundtable discussion; Cubavision TV, Havana, in Spanish 2203 GMT 9/2/05

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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 Colin Powell, 2201 C St, NW Washington, DC 20520

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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

How the free market killed New Orleans

Michael Parenti

The free market played a crucial role in the destruction of New Orleans and the death of thousands of its residents. Armed with advanced warning that a momentous (force 5) hurricane was going to hit that city and surrounding areas, what did officials do? They played the free market.

They announced that everyone should evacuate. Everyone was expected to devise their own way out of the disaster area by private means, just as the free market dictates, just like people do when disaster hits free-market Third World countries.

It is a beautiful thing this free market in which every individual pursues his or her own personal interests and thereby effects an optimal outcome for the entire society. This is the way the invisible hand works its wonders.

There would be none of the collectivistic regimented evacuation as occurred in Cuba. When an especially powerful hurricane hit that island last year, the Castro government, abetted by neighborhood citizen committees and local Communist party cadres, evacuated 1.3 million people, more than 10 percent of the country's population, with not a single life lost, a heartening feat that went largely unmentioned in the U.S. press.

On Day One of the disaster caused by Hurricane Katrina, it was already clear that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of American lives had been lost in New Orleans. Many people had "refused" to evacuate, media reporters explained, because they were just plain "stubborn."

It was not until Day Three that the relatively affluent telecasters began to realize that tens of thousands of people had failed to flee because they had nowhere to go and no means of getting there. With hardly any cash at hand or no motor vehicle to call their own, they had to sit tight and hope for the best. In the end, the free market did not work so well for them.

Many of these people were low-income African Americans, along with fewer numbers of poor whites. It should be remembered that most of them had jobs before Katrina's lethal visit. That's what most poor people do in this country: they work, usually quite hard at dimly paying jobs, sometimes more than one job at a time. They are poor not because they're lazy but because they have a hard time surviving on poverty wages

while burdened by high prices, high rents, and regressive taxes.

The free market played a role in other ways. Bush's agenda is to cut government services to the bone and make people rely on the private sector for the things they might need. So he sliced \$71.2 million from the budget of the New Orleans Corps of Engineers, a 44 percent reduction. Plans to fortify New Orleans levees and upgrade the system of pumping out water had to be shelved.

Bush took to the airways and said that no one could have foreseen this disaster. Just another lie tumbling from his lips. All sorts of people had been predicting disaster for New Orleans, pointing to the need to strengthen the levees and the pumps, and fortify the coastlands.

In their campaign to starve out the public sector, the Bushite reactionaries also allowed developers to drain vast areas of wetlands. Again, that old invisible hand of the free market would take care of things. The developers, pursuing their own private profit, would devise outcomes that would benefit us all.

But wetlands served as a natural absorbent and barrier between New Orleans and the storms riding in from across the sea. And for some years now, the wetlands have been disappearing at a frightening pace on the Gulf coast. All this was of no concern to the reactionaries in the White House.

As for the rescue operation, the free-marketeers like to say that relief to the more unfortunate among us should be left to private charity. It was a favorite preaching of President Ronald Reagan that "private charity can do the job." And for the first few days that indeed seemed to be the policy with the disaster caused by Hurricane Katrina.

The federal government was nowhere in sight but the Red Cross went into action. Its message: "Don't send food or blankets; send money." Meanwhile Pat Robertson and the Christian Broadcasting Network—taking a moment off from God's work of pushing John Roberts nomination to the Supreme Court—called for donations and announced "Operation Blessing" which consisted of a highly-publicized but totally inadequate shipment of canned goods and bibles.

By Day Three even the myopic media began to realize the immense

failure of the rescue operation. People were dying because relief had not arrived. The authorities seemed more concerned with the looting than with rescuing people. It was property before people, just like the free marketeers always want.

But questions arose that the free market did not seem capable of answering: Who was in charge of the rescue operation? Why so few helicopters and just a scattering of Coast Guard rescuers? Why did it take helicopters five hours to get six people out of one hospital? When would the rescue operation gather some steam? Where were the feds? The state troopers? The National Guard? Where were the buses and trucks? the shelters and portable toilets? The medical supplies and water?

Where was Homeland Security? What has Homeland Security done with the \$33.8 billions allocated to it in fiscal 2005? Even ABC-TV evening news (September 1, 2005) quoted local officials as saying that "the federal government's response has been a national disgrace."

In a moment of delicious (and perhaps mischievous) irony, offers of foreign aid were tendered by France, Germany and several other nations. Russia offered to send two plane loads of food and other materials for the victims. Predictably, all these proposals were quickly refused by the White House. America the Beautiful and Powerful, America the Supreme Rescuer and World Leader, America the Purveyor of Global Prosperity could not accept foreign aid from others. That would be a most deflating and insulting role reversal. Were the French looking for another punch in the nose?

Besides, to have accepted foreign aid would have been to admit the truth—that the Bushite reactionaries had neither the desire nor the decency to provide for ordinary citizens, not even those in the most extreme straits. Next thing you know, people would start thinking that George W. Bush was really nothing more than a full-time agent of Corporate America.

Michael Parenti's recent books include *Superpatriotism (City Lights)* and *The Assassination of Julius Caesar (New Press)*. His forthcoming *The Culture Struggle (Seven Stories Press)* will be published in the fall. <http://www.michaelparenti.org>.

Source: Znet 9/3/05

John Roberts: uncompassionate conservative

Marjorie Cohn

George W. Bush has nominated John Roberts to be Chief Justice of the United States. Bush lauded Roberts for his "goodwill and decency toward others." Yet Roberts' record reveals a callous disregard for the rights of people very much like the tens of thousands who have died and been rendered homeless by Katrina.

The outpouring of compassion by people all over this country - and indeed, the world - in the wake of Hurricane Katrina stands in stark contrast to Bush's actions both before and after the tragedy. In spite of warnings about the weak levees in New Orleans, Bush cut the Army Corps of Engineers' budget for levee construction by 44 percent. By sending the National Guard to fight in his trumped-up war on Iraq, Bush deprived the people of New Orleans of critical assistance immediately after the hurricane struck. The day after what may be the worst disaster ever to hit the United States, Bush refused to interrupt his golf game to exercise badly needed leadership.

Most of the tragic images flashing across our television screens are of African Americans. They are suffering indescribable hardship as a result of an administration that failed to protect them from the predicted hurricane, and then failed to timely render aid that would have saved thousands of lives.

John Roberts' career has established his credentials as an uncompassionate conservative. He has worked consistently to deny access to the courts to individuals who have suffered harm like those in New Orleans. He has long been an enemy of civil rights - for the poor, for minorities, for women, for the disabled, for workers, and for a clean and safe environment.

Roberts tried to cut back the federal law that allows people to sue the government when they have been deprived of their federal rights. When he worked at the Solicitor General's office in the George Bush I administration, Roberts wrote an amicus brief in which he argued that the state of Virginia should not reimburse hospitals for Medicaid claims at reasonable rates. Roberts said the Medicaid Act did not create any

enforceable rights. Roberts would likely deny relief to people in New Orleans who seek to recover medical costs from a government that failed to protect them.

Roberts viewed legislation to fortify the Fair Housing Act as "government intrusion."

Roberts condemned a Supreme Court decision striking down a Texas law that allowed schools to deny admission to the children of undocumented workers.

Roberts fought for a narrow interpretation of the Voting Rights Act that would have made it much harder for minorities to get elected to public office. He mischaracterized the Act as requiring "a quota system for electoral politics." Robert's characterization of the Voting Rights Act borders on racism.

Roberts contended that Congress could pass a law to prevent all federal courts from ordering busing to achieve school desegregation, a position much more extreme than that adopted by the Reagan administration. Roberts would likely have agreed with his boss William Rehnquist, who argued to his boss Justice Robert Jackson that the racist Plessy v. Ferguson's separate but equal doctrine should be maintained.

Roberts took the position that affirmative action programs are bound to fail because they require recruiting "inadequately prepared candidates," another unfounded and racist stance.

Roberts has referred to the "so-called 'right to privacy'" in the Constitution; he argued that Roe v. Wade was wrongly decided and should be overruled. Roberts' position would consign poor women who could not afford to travel to a state that does allow abortion to coat hangers in back alleys. Roberts would likely vote to uphold state laws that made the sale of contraceptives illegal, which the Court struck down in Griswold v. Connecticut.

Roberts worked to keep women who have suffered gender discrimination out of court. He argued for a narrow interpretation of Title IX that would effectively eviscerate its protections altogether. Roberts wrote an amicus brief in which he argued that a student who was

sexually molested by her high school teacher was not entitled to compensatory damages under Title IX. Fortunately, the Supreme Court held otherwise, saying that the girl would have "no remedy at all" if it had adopted Roberts' position.

Roberts ridiculed the gender pay equity theory of equal pay for comparable work as a "radical redistributive concept." He mocked female Republican members of Congress who supported comparable worth, writing, "Their slogan might as well be 'from each according to his ability, to each according to her gender.'"

Roberts supported a dramatic weakening of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. He maintained that a deaf student who got by in school by lip-reading and using a hearing aid was not entitled under the Act to receive the services of a sign-language interpreter in the classroom.

Roberts defended Toyota for firing a woman with carpal tunnel syndrome.

Roberts argued on behalf of the National Mining Association that West Virginia citizens could not prevent mining companies from extracting coal by blasting the tops off of mountains and depositing the debris in nearby valleys and streams.

Throughout his career, John Roberts has acted without "goodwill and decency toward others." His positions have demonstrated a mean spirit that flies in the face of what we like to think America stands for. The 50-year-old Roberts would have the opportunity to shape the nation's highest court for the next two or three decades. A Roberts Court would threaten the rights of all but the rich and powerful. It is time for the Democrats to utter the "f" word: Filibuster.

Marjorie Cohn is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, executive vice president of the National Lawyers Guild, and the US representative to the executive committee of the American Association of Jurists. She writes a weekly column for truthout.

Source: truthout | Perspective 9/6/05

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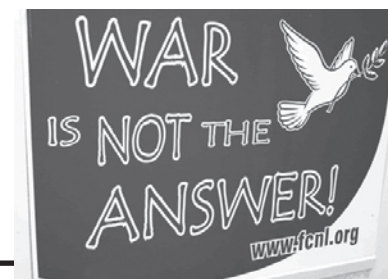
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"So many of the people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them."

—Barbara Bush, Sept 5, 2005

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Low-income working families: facts and figures

The vast majority of low-income parents today are working but still struggling to make ends meet: struggling to find and keep a toehold in a changing labor market, to keep up with their bills, to pay the spiraling costs of essentials like health care and housing, and to raise children with a chance of future success. These families have much in common with other American families as they seek to balance work and family life, yet parents and children in low-income families are more financially vulnerable than those in higher-income families.

Children

One-quarter of America's children live in low-income families with a working parent. In 2001, almost 19 million children lived with parents who worked regularly in families that remained low-income (income below twice the official poverty threshold, or about \$38,000 for a family of four). Of all low-income families with children, 6 in 10 have at least one parent who worked full-time all year, and another 1 in 10 have a parent who worked at least half-time all year.

Wages

Low hourly wages explain why these working families have low incomes. The vast majority of a low-income family's income comes from earnings (89 percent for a low-income family with at least one full-time, full-year worker). Yet, the median hourly wage for the primary worker in these families is about \$9. If these workers see their real wages grow 4 percent per year, it will take 11 years to reach the \$14 average hourly wage for middle-income families (income between two and three times the poverty threshold).

Benefits

Low-income working families receive fewer job benefits than middle-income families. Low-income families with at least one full-time worker are much less likely than middle-income families to receive health insurance through an employer (49 versus 77 percent). Almost one in ten of these "high-work" low-income families report postponing needed medical care during a 12-month period for lack of health insurance or money. And, low-income working families are less likely to have paid vacation

or sick leave than higher-income families, making it more difficult to juggle work, family health, and well-being.

Food/housing

Low-income working families face greater food and housing hardships. Over one-quarter of low-income families with a full-time worker experience hardships related to food and housing. Forty percent of moderate-work, low-income families (those without a full-time worker but still working a substantial number of hours) report food and housing hardship.

Child care

Child care can be a large expense for low-income working families in which the mother works. Sixty-nine percent of children under age 5 with low-income working mothers are cared for regularly by someone other than a parent. Thirty-nine percent of these children are in care for at least 35 hours a week. High-work, low-income families that pay for child care spend \$3,135 per year on average, or 12 percent of income.

Young

While the heads of low-income working families are likely to be younger and less educated than those of middle-income families, the large majority is over age 30 and has at least a high school education. Of the heads of high-work, low-income families, 72 percent have at least a high school education and 76 percent are over age 30.

Nonwhite & immigrant

Compared to middle-income working families, low-income working families are disproportionately nonwhite and immigrant, although most are headed by native-born, white, and non-Hispanic adults. High-work, low-income families are less likely than their middle-income counterparts to be headed by a U.S.-born citizen (69 versus 85 percent). And high-work, low-income families are almost three times more likely than middle-income families to have noncitizen heads (27 versus 8 percent).

Health problems

Health problems are more prevalent among low-income working families. Sixteen percent of full-time workers heading low-income

families report fair or poor health, compared with 7 percent of workers in middle-income families. Low-income adults working a moderate amount are even more likely to have health problems, with 25 percent reporting fair or poor health. Health problems may be contributing to their limited hours of work. Low-income families are also more likely than middle-income families to have a child in poor health.

Child problems

On average, children in low-income households fare worse than children in higher-income households on a host of indicators. Low-income children are more likely than higher-income children to live in stressful home environments and with parents reporting symptoms of poor mental health. Among school-age children and adolescents, those living in low-income families are less likely to be highly engaged in school activities and more likely to exhibit high levels of emotional and behavioral problems.

Worse recently

With the job-market downturn, families are working less and have lower incomes. Labor markets have slacked considerably since early 2001. Between 2000 and 2003, the number of people in low-income families with children increased from 30 to 32 percent of the population, and the proportion of all households with a full-time, full-year worker fell from 88 to 85 percent. Single-parent households were hit especially hard; they bore 37 percent of the loss in full-time, full-year employment while receiving only 8 percent of the increase in unemployment insurance benefits.

No welfare

Few low-income working families receive welfare benefits; half receive help with a parent's or child's health insurance. Only 5 percent of all low-income families with a full-time, full-year worker receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits. Fifty-two percent of these families have public health insurance coverage, reflecting a decline in employer-sponsored coverage, the creation of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and many states' decisions to expand Medicaid eligibility.

Source: The Urban Institute release 8/25/05
<<http://www.urban.org/>>

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Native Americans due billions—act now

President Bush repeatedly says, “We ought to trust people with their own money.” We encourage him to expand his thinking to include Native Americans whose land profits are held (and withheld) by the federal government. American Indians were not trusted to manage their own money. Instead, the federal government took charge in 1887 but has made such a horrendous mess of the Indian land trust accounts that the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs found it to be one of the two worst government management scandals in U.S. history.

Senators McCain (AZ) and Dorgan (ND) have introduced the Indian Trust Reform Act of 2005 (S. 1439) to repay as many as 500,000 American Indians whose money “disappeared” while in government accounts. It is morally imperative that this bill be taken seriously by congressional leadership and the White House.

Some background

Native families have been deprived of land and lease revenues for over a century, keeping many in stark poverty generation after generation. Financial audits, congressional and Government Accountability Office reports, and media investigations document that billions of dollars have been mismanaged and misappropriated. The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and the U.S. Court of Appeals both have ruled in favor of

the Individual Indian Money (IIM) account holders during the past decade. The district court judge has held three cabinet officers in contempt of court. At last, Congress is considering paying the debt. FCNL will vigorously support those efforts if the settlements are just. Your help will be crucial if justice is to occur.

Even knowing what we know of the U.S. dismal legacy in Indian affairs, the details of this scandal are still shocking, especially as we learn that abuses continue into the present. Congressional audits as early as 1915 showed mismanaged, lost, and pilfered Indian trust funds. Government agencies such as Interior and Treasury departments also put the money of Indian families into the general funds of the U.S. Frequently, Interior did not bother to collect the land-use money owed to Indian families from corporations or non-natives. Indian land was sold without permission. Even now, hackers can get into Interior computers and the IIM accounts. Since the start of a class action case brought nine years ago by Elouise Cobell to rectify the situation, hundreds of Interior’s boxes of trust records have been lost or destroyed.

Interior officials continue to resist liability and repayment, but many in Congress are practical about “clearing the books” and others are concerned about ethical and legal responsibilities. All agree that reform is needed and some

amount of repayment is required. S. 1439 proposes to take the billions owed from the off-budget Claims Judgment Fund which is used when the federal government makes mistakes and loses cases.

ACTION: Urge your senators to cosponsor S. 1439 and this one-time opportunity to remedy a stark and long-standing financial injustice. If you senators are already cosponsors, thank them and ask them to talk to their colleagues about this bill.

For more information, see FCNL’s web site, http://www.fcnl.org/issues/issue.php?issue_id=112

Coming real soon...

This month, there are expected to be votes on important issues, such as repeal of the estate tax, the USA PATRIOT Act, military authorization and appropriations bills including Iraq, new nuclear weapons, torture. In addition, the Senate may also consider legislation that could cut U.S. dues to the U.N. There may be legislation in the House to block opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration and bills that could cut programs that serve poor and low-income households.

Check the FCNL web site for updates, www.fcnl.org.

Source: FCNL release 8/25/05, Friends Committee on National Legislation, 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002-5795 www.fcnl.org (800)630-1330

Cuts to come

The spending bills are mandated by a budget resolution that passed this spring mandating \$35 billion in entitlement savings over five years, along with \$70 billion in tax cuts over that period. By parliamentary rules, the resolution ensures that both the spending and tax cut packages cannot be filibustered, and thus can pass the Senate with a simple majority of 51 votes. Bills are due out of 16 committees in the House and Senate by Sept. 16.

The impact of the bills will be broad:

* The energy committees to open Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife

Refuge to oil drilling to secure \$2.4 billion in royalties and other payments.

* The Senate Finance Committee to find as much as \$10 billion in savings from Medicaid, cutting anticipated growth by as much as 13 percent at a time when states such as Tennessee and Missouri are throwing tens of thousands of people off their Medicaid rosters.

* The Senate agriculture committee to cut farm price supports by \$2.4 billion through 2010 while cutting an additional \$600 million from food stamps.

* Senate aides to cut \$7 billion from the federal student loan pro-

gram.

* The House and Senate education and labor committees to raise the premiums corporations pay to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. from \$16 to \$31 per worker.

* The tax cut measure must cost \$70 billion, primarily through extending dividends and capital gains tax cuts.

ACTION: Contact your representatives.

Source: The Washington Post, 8/28/05 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/28/AR2005082800730.html>>

US poverty rate up

The Census Bureau reported late August:

- For the first time ever, household incomes failed to increase for 5 straight years.
- Median pretax income, \$44,389, was at its lowest point since 1997, after inflation.
- The median pay of full-time male workers declined more than 2% in 2004, to \$40,800
- The median pay of full-time female workers declined 1% in 2004, to \$31,200
- Economists say technology & global trade appear to be holding down pay for many.
- In 2004, households kept income from falling by working more hours than in 2003.
- The portion of Americans without health insurance was stable at 16%.
- The poverty rate rose last year for working-age people, those ages 18 to 64.
- The portion of people age 65 and older in poverty fell.
- Child poverty was essentially flat.
- Over all, the poverty rate increased to 12.7%, up from 12.5% in 2003.
- Poverty levels dropped in the 1960’s, rose in the 1980’s, and fell in the 1990’s. (Poverty levels reached a low of 11.1% in 1973, from more than 22% in 1960.)

The main theme of the census report seemed to be the lingering weakness in compensation and benefits, even as the ranks of the unemployed have dwindled. Fewer people are getting health insurance from their employers or from policies of family members, while raises have generally trailed inflation.

“It looks like the gains from the recovery haven’t really filtered down,” said Phillip L. Swagel, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative research group in Washington. “The gains have gone to owners of capital and not to workers.”

“The growth in the economy is not going to families,” said Senator Jack Reed, Democrat of Rhode Island. “It’s in stark contrast to what happened during the Clinton administration.”

Source: NY Times 8/31/05

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Dangerous incompetence

Cindy Sheehan

George Bush has been an incompetent failure his entire life. Fortunately for humanity, he was just partying his way through school, running companies into the ground, and being an alcoholic and cocaine abuser for most of that time - and his incompetence was limited to hurting the people who worked for him and his own family. The people in his life who were hurt by his incompetence probably have been able to "get on" with their lives. Now, though, his incompetence affects the world and is responsible for so many deaths and so much destruction. How many of us did not foresee the mess he would make of the world when he was selected the first time? We saw what he had done to Texas. How many of us marveled and were so discouraged and amazed when he was "re-elected" the second time? We saw what he had done to the world. Dangerous incompetence should never be rewarded, let alone be rewarded so handsomely as in George's case.

The Camp Casey movement has been struggling with how best we can help the government-ravaged people of New Orleans and the surrounding areas. We sent a busload of supplies into Covington, La., which is a poor, African-American town across Lake Ponchartrain from New Orleans. I had the privilege of visiting Covington with my friends, Buddy and Annie Spell last July. It was a community filled with love and laughter.

The Bring Them Home Now Tour

bus that went into Covington is the Veterans For Peace Impeachment Tour bus that I rode in and out of Crawford. They took about 10,000 pounds of leftover Camp Casey supplies and we had 2 trucks filled to the brim with leftover water from the camp to Covington. The tour bus also has satellite, so it is the only communications that Covington has with the outside world now (see Community-to-Community letter on page 2).

I think we should finish the tour so we can talk about what an abject failure this administration is. The unnecessary tragedy in New Orleans is directly related to the unnecessary tragedy in Iraq: Unnecessary being the operative word.

Innocent people are dying daily in this world. In the crush of the hurricane story, the fact that 950 people (mostly women and children) were trampled to death in Iraq was buried in the back sections. Those are 950 people who would still be alive if George Bush were not president. 950 people in Iraq and how many thousands in the Gulf States died while the emperor strummed a guitar and knocked a golf ball around? Additionally, eight of our brave and wonderful soldiers have been needlessly killed in Iraq since Monday.

I really believe that George and his band of incompetent and dangerous thugs need to resign. It would be the only honorable and competent thing to do.

Source: *truthout/Perspective* 9/3/05

Iraq war costs exceed Vietnam

A stunning new report from the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) shows that the war in Iraq has so far cost every person in the U.S. \$727, making the Iraq War the most expensive military effort in the last 60 years. Moreover, the costs of the war and the continuing American occupation of Iraq have exceeded those of the Vietnam war during eight years. Operations costs in Iraq are estimated at \$5.6 billion per month in 2005. By comparison, the average cost of U.S. operations in Vietnam over the eight-year war was \$5.1 billion per month, adjusting for inflation.

The IPS report, *The Iraq Quagmire: The Mounting Costs of War and the Case for Bringing Home the Troops*, was written by Phyllis Bennis, Erik Leaver and the IPS Iraq Task Force. Among the report's other findings:

- According to current estimates, the cost of the Iraq War could exceed \$700 billion. In current dollars, the Vietnam War cost U.S. taxpayers \$600 billion.
- Staying in Iraq and Afghanistan at current levels would nearly double the projected federal budget deficit over the next decade.
- Since 2001, the U.S. has deployed

more than 1 million troops to Iraq and Afghanistan.

- Broken down per person in the United States, the cost so far is \$727, making the Iraq War the most expensive military effort in the last 60 years.
- The number of journalists killed reporting the Iraq War (66) has exceeded the number of journalists killed reporting on the Vietnam War (63).
- The U.S. controls 106 military bases across Iraq. Congress has budgeted \$236 million for permanent base construction in FY2005.

The impact at home of the Iraq war is considerable, in the burdens it places on both the families of those serving and on the communities in which those families lives. The IPS report notes the heightened costs of domestic security due to the Iraq war: "Roughly 48,000 members of the National Guard and Reserve are currently serving in Iraq- making up nearly 35 percent of the total U.S. forces there. Their deployment puts a particularly heavy burden on their home communities because many are "first responders," including police officers, firefighters, and emergency

medical personnel. For example, 44 percent of the country's police forces have lost officers to Iraq. In some states, the absence of so many Guard troops has raised concerns about the ability to handle fires and other natural disasters..."

Moreover, the war and occupation of Iraq have drained the U.S. Treasury of money desperately needed for social programs. The IPS report makes the following calculations: "The Administration's FY 2006 budget, which does not include any funding for the Iraq War, takes a hard line with domestic spending-slashing or eliminating more than 150 federal programs. The \$204.4 billion appropriated thus far for the war in Iraq could have purchased any of the following desperately needed services in our country: 46,458,805 uninsured people receiving health care or 3,545,016 elementary school teachers or 27,093,473 Head Start places for children or 1,841,833 affordable housing units or 24,072 new elementary schools or 39,665,748 scholarships for university students or 3,204,265 port container inspectors."

Source: *Direland.com* release 8/31/05 <http://direland.typepad.com/direland/2005/08/iraq_war_costs_.html>

Another way of looking at costs

Factors keeping costs high include:

- Basic running costs of \$6 billion a month—a figure that reflects the Pentagon's unprecedented reliance on expensive private contractors.
- Inducements for recruits and for military personnel serving second and third deployments,
- Extra pay for reservists and members of the National Guard,
- More than \$2 billion a year in additional foreign aid to Jordan, Pakistan, Turkey and others to reward their cooperation in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- The bill for repairing and replacing military hardware of \$20 billion a year,
- Long-term disability and health care costs for returning troops which are likely to run at \$7 billion a year for the next 45 years (based

on 1991 Gulf War figures)

- Extra interest payments on Federal borrowing totaling \$200 billion or more.
- Increased oil prices (from \$30 a barrel just prior to the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 to \$60 a barrel today), which costs us about \$17 billion for each \$5 per barrel increase in the price of oil.

Even by this simple yardstick, if the American military presence in the region lasts another five years, the total outlay for the war could stretch to more than \$1.3 trillion, or \$11,300 for every household in the United States.

Source: *New York Times* opinion pages 8/20/05. Written by Linda Bilmes, an assistant secretary at the Department of Commerce from 1999 to 2001, teaching budgeting and public finance at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.



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Bush to escalate Iraq war?

Norman Solomon

The Bush administration may ratchet up the Iraq war.

That might seem unlikely, even farfetched. After all, the president is facing an upsurge of domestic opposition to the war. Under such circumstances, why would he escalate it?

A big ongoing factor is that George W. Bush and his top aides seem to believe in red-white-and-blue violence with a fervor akin to religiosity. For them, the Pentagon's capacity to destroy is some kind of sacrament. And even if more troops aren't readily available for duty in Iraq, huge supplies of aircraft and missiles are available to step up the killing from the air.

Back in the USA, while the growth of antiwar sentiment is apparent, much of the criticism—especially what's spotlighted in news media—is based on distress that American casualties are continuing without any semblance of victory. In effect, many commentators see the problem as a grievous failure to kill enough of the bad guys in Iraq and sufficiently intimidate the rest.

(Bypassing the euphemisms preferred by many liberal pundits, George Will wrote in a Washington Post column on April 7, 2004, that "every door American troops crash through, every civilian bystander shot—there will be many—will

make matters worse, for a while. Nevertheless, the first task of the occupation remains the first task of government: to establish a monopoly on violence.")

A lot of what sounds like opposition to the war is more like opposition to losing the war. Consider how Philadelphia Inquirer columnist Trudy Rubin concluded a piece on Sunday that disparaged Bush and his war policies. The column included eloquent, heart-rending words from the mother of a Marine Corps Reserve member who died in Iraq early this year. And yet, the last quote from her was: "Tell us what it is going to take to win, Mr. Bush." In a tag line, the columnist described it as a question "we all need an answer to."

But some questions are based on assumptions that should be rejected—and "What is it going to take to win?" is one of them. In Iraq, the US occupation force can't "win." More importantly, it has no legitimate right to try.

While leveling harsh criticisms at the White House, many analysts fault Bush for the absence of victory on the horizon. A plaintive theme has become familiar: The president deceived us before the invasion and has made a botch of the war since then, so leadership that will turn this war around is now desperately needed and long overdue.

Some on Capitol Hill, like Democrat Joseph Biden and

Republican John McCain in the Senate, want more US troops sent to Iraq. Others have different messages. "We should start figuring out how we get out of there," Chuck Hagel said on Sunday. He lamented: "By any standard, when you analyze two and a half years in Iraq ... we're not winning." But a tactical departure motivated by alarm that "we're not winning" is likely to be very slow and very bloody.

In the Democratic Party's weekly radio address over the weekend, former senator Max Cleland said that "it's time for a strategy to win in Iraq or a strategy to get out."

Cleland's statement may have been focus-group tested, but it amounts to another permutation of what Martin Luther King Jr. called "the madness of militarism." All the talk about the urgent need for a strategy to win in Iraq amounts to approval for more US leadership in mass slaughter. And the United States government does not need a "strategy" to get out of Iraq any more than a killer needs a strategy to stop killing.

"It is time to stand back and look at where we are going," independent journalist I.F. Stone wrote. "And to take a good look at ourselves. A first observation is that we can easily overestimate our national conscience. A major part of the protest against the war springs simply from the fact that we are losing it." Those words appeared in mid-February 1968. American combat troops remained in Vietnam for another five years.

It matters why people are critical of the US war effort in Iraq. If the main objections stem from disappointment that American forces are not winning, then the war makers in Washington retain the possibility of creating the illusion that they may yet find ways to make the war right.

Criticism of the war because it isn't being won leaves the door open for the Bush administration to sell the claim that—with enough resolve and better military tactics—the war can be vindicated. It's time to close that door.

Norman Solomon is the author of the new book War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death. For information, go to: WarMadeEasy.com

Source: *truthout* | *Perspective* 8/22/05



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Other places for news and information

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

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

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

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

The Progressive — <http://www.progressive.org/>

Z Magazine—<http://www.zmag.org/>

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

MoveOn.org — <http://www.moveon.org/>

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>

Institute for Global Communication — <http://www.igc.org/igc/gateway/index.html>

We're on the web too!

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

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>

August is 3rd deadliest month for US forces

U.S. forces in Iraq suffered at least 74 combat deaths in August, more than in any month since November and the third-highest total for any month of the war, according to Pentagon figures.

It was also the highest monthly death toll outside major combat operations. The only months with heavier combat losses were April 2004 (126 killed) and November 2004 (125 killed), when U.S. forces launched full-scale assaults in the western town of Fallujah.

The American casualties in August included 14 Marines killed on Aug. 3 by a land mine blast in Anbar province in western Iraq. Roadside bombs are the biggest killers of U.S. forces, military figures show.

The United States now has about 138,000 troops in Iraq. U.S. officials say they probably will increase that temporarily to about 160,000 to provide extra security for a constitutional referendum in October and a Dec. 15 parliamentary election.

Source: *The Associated Press* 9/1/05

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Water demand boiling over

Perennial warnings about “the California water shortage” may be more compelling given a new study released by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). The study finds soaring population growth in the state’s hottest regions will lead to an enormous jump in future demand.

By analyzing the state’s per capita water usage, then factoring in its projected population growth, the report comes up with some striking numbers: If the rate of urban water use continues at recent levels, California will face a 40 percent increase in demand by the year 2030. That’s because 14 million more people (the state’s predicted population increase between 2000 and 2030) will be tapping into the water supply at an average rate of 232 gallons of water per person per day.

Where growth is occurring also weighs heavily on demand. Half of all new residents in California are expected to live in the state’s three inland valleys, where the harsher climate and larger number of single-family homes result in significantly greater water use for landscaping. Indeed, landscape irrigation accounts for over half of residential use in the inland valleys — compared to one-third or less in coastal areas. “New plumbing codes and water-efficient appliances greatly help to curb indoor



water use in new homes,” says the report’s author, PPIC research fellow Ellen Hanak. “In growing regions like the Inland Empire, San Joaquin Valley, and Sacramento Metro, where the summers are long, hot, and dry, the pressure is likely to come from outdoor use.”

But despite the demographic forecast, the report finds great potential for meeting future water needs through conservation, recycling, and other sources. Keys to success are better long-term water planning and streamlining the process for screening and approving new housing development. Indeed, the analysis, *Water for Growth: California’s New Frontier*, finds

that “show me the water” laws passed in 2001 — which require new housing developments to demonstrate sufficient long-term water supplies — are being enforced effectively and warns that simply rejecting growth could lead to housing shortages. “The challenge is to screen well without unreasonably slowing development,” says Hanak. Although the state plays an important role, planning for adequate water supply lies primarily in the hands of city and county water agencies — and is most affected by local land-use decisions.

Source: Public Policy Institute of California release 7/27/05 www.ppic.org

Stop poisoning your lawn

In April 2005, the National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns publicly called on Home Depot and Lowe’s Home Improvement to start selling a full range of natural, non-toxic lawn and garden products. They also asked the companies to train their staff to be knowledgeable about natural lawn care, to provide do-it-yourself natural lawn materials, to reconsider the sale of “weed and feed,” and to work with the Coalition to make it all happen. By June 2005, the Coalition had heard back from the companies. Both essentially said they already carry natural lawn products and that product mix per store depends on demand. Our information tells us that neither company does any market research to determine demand but instead determines demand solely upon sales. Our response?

We understand that the company

stocks the shelves depending on demand, but we also understand that the demand level is artificially skewed. The natural product(s) are completely eclipsed by the vast amount of toxic products, and customers are often referred to toxic products because staff do not adequately understand or know how to explain natural lawn and garden care.

Given the inaction of these companies, the Coalition is asking customers to speak up for natural lawn and garden care products and information. Because Home Depot is the largest seller of lawn and garden products and according to our information carries the least amount of natural products, we have initially targeted Home Depot for this action.

ACTION: Write a letter to Home

Depot asking them to 1) Carry a full range of natural, non-toxic lawn and garden products; 2) Train staff to be knowledgeable about non-toxic alternatives; and 3) Reconsider the sale of “weed and feed” — a particularly toxic product. Deliver it to the Customer Service desk at your neighborhood Home Depot.

To learn more about the National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns, please click here <http://www.defenders.org/wildlife/birds/pesticides.html>.

To learn how to have a pesticide free lawn, please click here <http://www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns/resources/index.htm>

Source: National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns release 8/30/05 <http://www.defenders.org/wildlife/birds/pesticides.html>.



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Administration announces weak new mileage standards

Amidst rising oil and gas prices, the Bush Administration announced in late August its new Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for light trucks. Environmentalists say the proposed rule changes will do nothing to help American motorists at the pump, nor will they reduce America's dependence on imported oil.

The new standards appear to raise the current light truck standard of 22.2 miles per gallon (mpg) in model year 2007 to a fleet-wide standard of 24 mpg by model year 2011.

However, the new standards actually exempt vehicles weighing from 8,500 to 10,000 pounds—such as the Hummer H2, Ford Excursion, and some models of the Chevy Suburban—all vehicles that achieve very poor mileage due to their size.

Environmentalists argue that the Bush Administration should make use of the latest in automotive technology and establish a more

stringent fleet-wide average standard. Ironically, General Motors is already producing a vehicle in China that achieves 43 miles per gallon.

“Instead of harnessing America's technological know-how to require light trucks and autos to meet a 40-mile per gallon (mpg) average standard,” said Anna Aurilio, US PIRG <<http://www.pirg.org/>> legislative director, “the Administration has proposed a pathetically weak increase in light truck miles per gallon standards and has given automakers an opportunity to game the system by increasing the size of their SUVs and other light trucks.”

According to the Sierra Club <<http://www.sierraclub.org/>>, a 40-mpg standard would save the average driver \$2,200 in fuel savings over the lifetime of a vehicle. The distribution of light trucks into six size-based categories was supported by the big three US automakers, General Motors, Ford

Motor Co., and DaimlerChrysler AG.

Department of Transportation Secretary Norman T. Mineta boasts that, “This is a plan that will save gas and result in less pain at the pump for motorists without sacrificing safety.”

But Dan Becker, director of the Sierra Club's Global Warming Program, says the new standards will do nothing to help consumers save money at the gas pump, reduce oil dependence or curb global warming. “At a time when Americans are paying record prices for gas, the Bush administration has sided with its cronies in the auto industry and rejected real solutions,” said Becker.

“Unfortunately, the proposed gains in fuel economy are likely to be eliminated as a result of the radical overhaul of the current structure,” the Sierra Club said in a statement released yesterday.

Source: *BushGreenwatch* release 8/24/05 <http://www.bushgreenwatch.org/mt_archives/000291.php>

FDA breaks pledge on emergency contraception

On August 26, FDA Commissioner Dr. Lester Crawford announced that the FDA is indefinitely deferring an application for over-the-counter sales of emergency contraception (EC) and opening a 60-day public comment period on the application.

EC is a concentrated form of the same hormones in daily birth control pills that prevents unintended pregnancy when taken within 120 hours after unprotected sex or contraceptive failure. Improving access to EC is particularly important for survivors of sexual assault, the majority of whom do not receive information about EC in the emergency room. The sooner emergency contraception is administered after unprotected intercourse, the better it works, making timely access critically important. Studies show that women do not rely on emergency contraception as a regular method of birth control.

AAUW supports the right of every woman to safe, accessible and comprehensive reproductive health services. AAUW encourages efforts to increase education and access to emergency contraception for all women, and believes emergency contraception should be available without a prescription. Greater awareness of and improved access to emergency contraception would help reduce the rates of unintended pregnancy and abortion in this country. Most major medical and health care organizations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Society for Adolescent

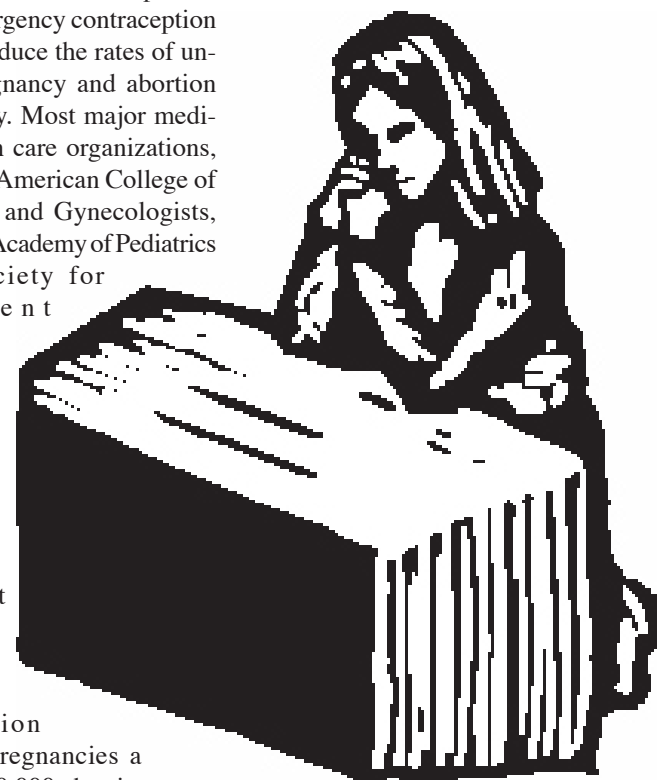
Medicine support making emergency contraception available without a prescription. Experts estimate that wider access to EC could prevent up to 1.7 million unintended pregnancies a year—and 800,000 abortions.

The FDA first approved EC as a prescription contraceptive in 1997. The application for nonprescription sales of the drug has been delayed several times since December 2003, when an FDA panel voted 23-4 to recommend making it available over-the-counter. However, the FDA rejected that recommendation.

Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and Patty Murray (D-WA) announced in April that they would block a full Senate vote on the nomination of Lester Crawford to be FDA Commissioner until the FDA made a decision on the application on EC. Senators Clinton and Murray lifted their holds once they were assured that the FDA would make a decision on the application by Sept. 1. Crawford was subsequently confirmed. This most recent delay makes it appear that the FDA is putting politics over science.

ACTION: Ask Senators Feinstein and Boxer to pressure FDA Commissioner Lester Crawford to stop stalling and make EC available over-the-counter.

Source: *AAUW Action Network* alert 8/31/05 www.aauw.org and *Planned Parenthood Mar Monte Sacramento Region*.



Solar bill needs support

The Million Solar Roofs bill (SB1) is one vote away from becoming a reality. SB1 is the largest solar energy legislation ever introduced in the U.S. and is a key component of meeting the Governor's goal of dramatically reducing the state's global warming emissions. The bill will help achieve 3,000 megawatts of solar power for California by 2018 (the equivalent of roughly 25 peaking power plants), enough to prevent the release of 50 million tons of global warming emissions. SB1 makes good economic sense. Investing \$2.5 billion in customer-owned solar power over ten years will save ratepayers more than \$10 billion in avoided electricity generation costs over the 20-year life of the solar panels.

The bill:

- * Creates a multi-year program of consumer financial incentives, which would save homeowners and businesses thousands of dollars on the cost of installation, and

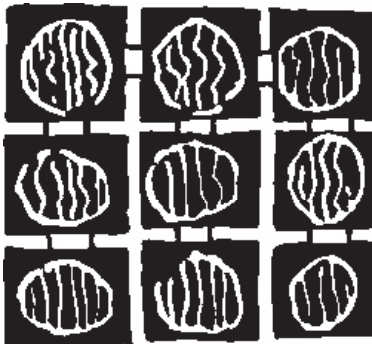
- * Allows homeowners and businesses to get credit from their electric utility for the excess power produced by their solar panels, shortening the payback period of their solar investments.

ACTION: Contact your state Assembly Member today and ask for a YES vote on this important renewable energy bill. Some talking points:

By aggressively growing the demand for solar power over the next ten years, the cost of this power will diminish, ultimately allowing for the phase out of government subsidies altogether.

A recent poll by the Public Policy Institute of California showed that 76 percent of Californians endorse the state's efforts to provide incentives for the use of solar energy in homes and businesses.

This clean energy resource can help reduce air pollution, increase energy independence, fight global warming, and create thousands of new jobs—all the while being



responsible to the ratepayers of California.

Solar power also generates at least four times as many jobs as conventional resources. In fact, a recent study by scholars at UC Berkeley predicts that passage of SB1 would create 18,000 jobs per year by 2017. Given the growing global market for clean energy, this technology has the potential to become the next “Silicon Valley” of California, bringing tens of thousands of jobs to the state.

Source: *Union of Concerned Scientists* action alert 8/29/05 www.ucsusa.org

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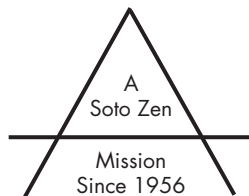
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Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I urge you to sign Senate Bill 370, authored by Senator Debra Bowen. This bill would mandate that voter-verified paper audit trails be used to verify the accuracy of computerized vote counts and has received strong, bipartisan support in both houses of the Legislature.

California has required routine and public verification of software vote counts since 1965, shortly after punch card voting and computerized vote tabulation were introduced. This procedure is performed by local election officials who first select a subset of paper ballots at random, tally those ballots by hand in a public and open process, and then compare the hand-counted vote totals to the software-counted vote totals (Election Code Section 15360). It is expressly stated in California statute that the purpose of the manual count is to "verify the accuracy of the automated count" (Election Code Section 336.5).

This manual count is the one and only procedure performed in California's voting process that gives the public any assurance that the software used to count votes has not been compromised. The manual count offers the only window into the computerized vote counting process, providing members of the public with the opportunity to observe for themselves that the software used to count ballots is accurate and reliable.

This law has served California voters well for most of the past four decades by ensuring that software glitches, human error, or attempted vote fraud do not result in erroneous vote totals. The manual count law provides a form of transparency in our voting process which is crucial given that the software used to count ballots is proprietary and not open to public inspection.

However, over the past five years, the manual count law has been undermined with the introduction of paperless, electronic voting ma-

chines. Counties using electronic voting machines do not have an independent audit trail they can use to verify the accuracy of their software vote counts. Instead, and in violation of the manual count law, these jurisdictions have printed out images of electronic ballots after voters have voted and polls have closed. If an electronic ballot was not properly recorded or stored in the first place, these printouts will not detect this error, since they originate from the same data source to which they are being compared. This procedure also means that election officials are wholly relying on their vendor's proprietary software to record and count votes.

Fortunately, last year California's legislature unanimously passed SB 1438, which became law with your signature and requires that all electronic voting machines produce a voter-verified paper audit trail of every electronic ballot cast. The purpose for this paper record is two-fold: to give an individual voter confidence that his or her own ballot was properly recorded; and to give election officials a meaningful audit trail they can use to publicly verify the accuracy of software vote counts and satisfy the manual count law.

SB 370 would clarify in California statute that the voter-verified paper audit trail is the record to be used to perform the one percent manual count. We strongly urge you to sign this bill. The voter-verified paper audit trail must be used to perform the one percent manual tally. Otherwise, the voter-verified paper audit trail is practically meaningless, and the one percent manual tally is totally meaningless. If the paper audit trail that the voter verified is not used to verify the overall election results, then it will be possible for the paper record to reflect one set of votes while the electronic record reflects a different set of votes without ever being detected.

We realize that Secretary of State Bruce McPherson has taken an "oppose" position on this bill, which is unfortunate. One concern he has raised is that the voter-verified paper audit trail cannot be verified at present by sight-impaired voters. This matter has already been considered

and settled by the Department of Justice and in federal court, where disability rights activists sued to prohibit the paper trail altogether and lost their case against the Secretary of State in 2004.

Please do not let perfection be the enemy of the good; the fact is sight-impaired voters do have the opportunity right now to confirm their ballots cast on touchscreens and vendors are continuously developing their voting technology. It serves the interests of all voters to ensure that elections officials are required to conduct a meaningful audit of election results.

The only other opposition to SB 370 has come from the county registrars' association due to cost and time constraints. California should not forfeit the only form of public verification of software vote counts due to such concerns. It is the responsibility of California elections officials to ensure that vote counts are publicly audited. Administrative concerns, while valid, must come second. Elections are designed to provide the public with a meaningful opportunity to express their views on candidates and measures. If we lose public verification of election results, one can anticipate that many Californians will lose their incentive to vote altogether. Already we see signs that confidence in California's voting systems is eroding; an October 2004 Field Poll found that more than a third of California's voters were not confident about the integrity of electronic voting machines.

More than two dozen states have followed California's lead and enacted a voter-verified paper audit trail requirement. Half of those states have also enacted laws that require the voter-verified paper audit trails to be used to audit the accuracy of overall election results. Your signature on SB 370 will ensure that California voters can have confidence in the accuracy and integrity of software vote counts.

Sincerely,

Your name

Source: California Voter Foundation letter 9/1/05, <http://www.calvoter.org>

**This bill would mandate that voter-verified paper
audit trails be used to verify the accuracy of
computerized vote counts**



Sawznhammers

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

Light on the Road

John Morearty

The inner harbor of Victoria, British Columbia, is a place of delight. Ria and I hung out there on a long summer evening, while little harbor taxis took lovers for tours, and whale watching boats promised "at least one whale." On the two-level promenade hundreds strolled with ice cream cones, sipped coffee, listened to street musicians singing country music and Dylan, or gawked down from the railings at the talkative guy high on his unicycle, juggling flaming torches for "loonies" and "twonies." At curbside, sturdy men (and one purple-and-green mohawked woman) on bicycle rickshaws slapped their thighs, promising power rides. Horse-drawn carriages clip-clopped by.

Off to the south stretched the vast lawn of the B.C. Parliament building. At its front corner by the boulevard stood the Cenotaph, a tall monument to Canada's war dead. A dozen of the living gathered there, for the weekly peace vigil. (Canada has soldiers in Iraq.) We held signs and banners for passing cars: "Make Peace Now," "War Kills Kids," and "Honor the Dead with Peace."

Some stared—"what's this, on a peaceful holiday evening?" Many smiled and waved, or gave peace signs. One man walked up and told us fiercely that we were insane. Two well-dressed older men from Florida thanked us for being there. A Japanese man posed his little son and daughter for a photo in front of our signs. He bowed as they left: "Thank you, I honor your long persistence."

In the canyons of downtown Portland on Hiroshima Eve, a couple hundred people gathered after work in a tree-shaded plaza. The Aurora Women's Chorus sang like rainbow angels. The head of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility gave her perspective on the urgent need to end nuclear madness. The emcee encouraged us all to take chalk and stencils, and decorate the sidewalks of Portland with human figures, reminiscent of the shadows left on the sidewalks of Hiroshima by the incinerated. A



Japanese woman who survived the war and came to the U.S. 20 years ago told us that 1,500 Japanese paid their own way to the conference in New York this year on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They came to urge the abolition of nuclear weapons, but the U.S. insisted that the conference discuss nothing but Iran. "We must all act," she ended, "otherwise we may all become shadows."

In a Catholic church in Portland, the priest began the Sunday sermon by saying, "Sixty years ago yesterday, our country dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, killing 80,000 people. Both General Eisenhower and General MacArthur were opposed to the use of the bomb. Would anyone like add anything?" For fifteen minutes, the congregation did.

In quiet Weaverville, California, I related these stories to the coffee-house/bookstore owner. Explaining how we'd been steered to the peace actions by progressive activists we'd stayed with in Victoria and Portland, I said "We builders of the new world are everywhere." "Yes," he replied, "and there are more of us than it looks like. A lot of people see what's wrong, but they don't know how to take action."

Cindy Sheehan and her fellow witnesses took action in a ditch in Crawford, Texas, waiting for civility and common decency. While George Bush grinned and bicycled, twenty of us brought candles to Lorraine Baldwin's living room in old Lincoln Village. We chatted while Lorraine set out more candles, cut squares of aluminum foil to protect our hands from hot wax, and offered us little papers. Mine held a quote from Cindy—"That not another mother's child be lost."

"They asked us to just be silent

for 45 minutes," Lorraine said, and put on a CD of classical music. A Mozart chorus, Debussy piano, drifting violins, a pure soprano; nobody talked. For a very long time I stared at my candle flame and its reflections in the foil, remembering what I read recently in the philosopher and paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin:

"Two things we know for certain about human beings, from our earliest origins: they gathered in groups, and they sat around the fire." We know this from ancient bones, of course. We twenty sat around our fires, mourning recent bones. When my candle burned to a puddle, a neighbor helped me light another.

Finally Lorraine offered us coffee and chocolate cake. Four year old Max Merseman-Jones told me, "I liked your song about the deer and the antelope play," so I sang him a bit of Home on the Range. The last stanza is not often sung, but I love it:

How often at night when the heavens are bright

With the light of the glittering stars,

I stand there amazed and I ask as I gaze,

Does their glory exceed that of ours?

A few days later I stood all alone with a red white and blue sign, "U.S. Out of Iraq!", at the edge of Victory Park along Pershing Avenue. It was about six in the evening. The support was overwhelming—maybe forty or fifty thumbs up and peace signs, half a dozen negatives. One of those was a young man who called out, "Not until we achieve our goal."

An admirable sentiment, if the goal be a good one.

Gandhi said, "in the midst of darkness, light persists." Everywhere.

"Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job."

—George W. Bush to Michael Brown, head of FEMA, Sept 2, 2005



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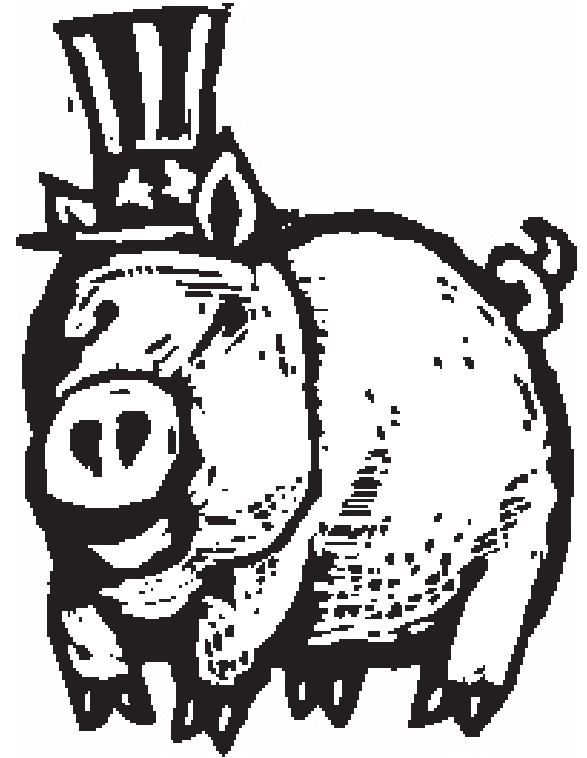
Cutting the budget made easy

As U.S. House and Senate negotiators begin working out details of the nation's nuclear weapons and nuclear energy spending plan for the coming year, Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment) and Western States Legal Foundation have endorsed a report identifying nearly two billion dollars in programs that should be cut by conferees to enhance national security and protect the environment.

"Top Ten Department of Energy Radioactive Pork Projects in the 2006 Budget report identifies seven nuclear weapons and three nuclear energy projects that waste taxpayers' money and escalate, not ameliorate, the nuclear dangers we face," explained Marylia Kelley, Executive Director of Tri-Valley CAREs and author of the pork report's chapter on the National Ignition Facility, which is one of the top ten recommended cuts.

The DOE proposals targeted for elimination include:

- Life Extension Program (\$348 million), which seeks to extend indefinitely the lifetimes of weapons in the existing Cold War-sized nuclear arsenal and to improve their military capabilities.
- Reliable Replacement Warhead (\$9.4 million), which duplicates work performed under the Stockpile Stewardship Program and could encourage the development of new nuclear weapons designs.
- Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (\$8.5 million), which will be ineffective for many military targets, cause substantial radioactive fallout, and undermine U.S. nonproliferation goals.
- Modern Pit Facility (\$7.7 million), an unnecessary new, multi-billion dollar factory to manufacture plutonium triggers, an activity that has produced massive contamination in the past.
- Enhanced Nuclear Testing Readiness (\$25 million), a provocative plan to prepare the Nevada Test Site to resume full-scale underground nuclear explosions on 18 months notice.
- National Ignition Facility (\$142 million), the multi-billion dollar Livermore Lab weapons design project, which has been plagued by cost overruns and technical problems.



- Tritium Production (\$87.5 million), to produce additional quantities of the radioactive gas used to boost weapons' yields even though the current inventory is sufficient for more than a decade.
- Plutonium Fuel Fabrication (\$338 million), designed to manufacture nuclear reactor fuel from plutonium, ignoring implications for the environment, health, proliferation and homeland security.
- Yucca Mountain (\$651 million), the much-delayed radioactive waste dump for which the Environmental Protection Agency just issued controversial health protection standards.
- Nuclear Energy Revival (\$191 million), subsidies underwriting expansion of the nuclear power industry, transportation of its radioactive wastes, and extraction of plutonium from used fuel rods.

The analysis supports cuts made by the House of Representatives in the Life Extension Program, Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, Modern Pit Facility, Test Readiness, and Plutonium Fuel Fabrication as well as the Senate's elimination of construction money for the National Ignition Facility and cuts in Yucca Mountain funding.

"Tri-Valley CAREs has long advocated the termination of new nuclear weapons development world-wide and has consistently opposed the tools that allow U.S. nuclear weapons designers to con-

tinue this deadly pursuit, such as the National Ignition Facility here at Livermore Lab," said Kelley. "New plans at the NIF include experiments using plutonium, highly enriched uranium and lithium hydride, which will expand its nuclear weapons design capabilities. The NIF construction funding should be cancelled, saving \$142 million in 2006 - and \$30 billion over the coming years," Kelley stated.

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director of the Western States Legal Foundation, asked: "How can the Bush Administration threaten military action against Iran while at the same time modernizing its own nuclear warheads and delivery systems and more thoroughly integrating nuclear weapons into its global warfighting plans?"

Cabasso concluded, "A national debate on the future role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security policy is desperately needed and long overdue. The ANA 'Radioactive Pork' report can provide impetus for such a debate. I welcome the report and its conclusions."

The ANA Radioactive Pork report is available online at: <http://ananuclear.org/2005porkreport.pdf>

ACTION: Contact your representative.

Source: Tri-Valley CAREs, 2582 Old First St, Livermore, CA 94551 (925) 443-7148

An Evening with Dean Margee Ensign: Rwanda and Reconciliation

Dr. Margee Ensign, dean of the School of International Studies at University of the Pacific and frequent traveler to Rwanda, will examine briefly the historical context for the genocide in Rwanda, and how the country is progressing and rebuilding in four areas: reconciliation through gacaca, education for tolerance, governance and the role of women. There will be a Q and A session to follow her presentation.

When: Monday, October 17, 2005, 7:00 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.

Where: Peace and Justice Center, 231 Bedford Place off the Miracle Mile, (Pacific Avenue) and behind SF Floral.

Cost: Free

Everyone is invited. Light refreshments will be served.

"Chavez, Venezuela and the New Latin America" Film Presentation and Discussion

This film affords a rare opportunity to glimpse through the blockade of information imposed by the United States and into a country rich with hope, dreams, and...oil. In February 2004, Aleida Guevara (guess whose daughter?) conducted an extended, exclusive interview with Hugo Chavez, president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, exploring Venezuela's explosive revolutionary terrain post-April 2002—when Chavez survived a coup attempt instigated by the United States. This film features a dramatic interview with Jorge Garcia Carneiro, newly appointed head of the Venezuelan Armed Forces, and vox-pops with Venezuelans involved in the country's many social programs.

A representative from the San Francisco ANSWR group and recent traveler to Venezuela will facilitate the discussion following the film showing.

When: Monday, October 24, 2005, 7:00 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.

Where: Peace and Justice Center, 231 Bedford Place off the Miracle Mile, (Pacific Avenue) and behind SF Floral.

Who Should Attend: All interested folks, including and especially local youth!

Free. Light Refreshments will be served.

Estate tax to be repealed?

Astounding as it may seem, with sky-high deficits, the war in Iraq and, most important, the snowballing catastrophe in New Orleans and the Gulf states wrought by Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. Senate's first planned order of business when it returns on Sept. 6 is a repeal of the estate tax.

The estate tax, cunningly and misleadingly called the "death tax" by Republicans, affects fewer than 2% of Americans, i.e. the very wealthiest. Yet repeal of it would cost our treasury up to \$100 billion a year, which means higher deficits, cuts in social services, and/or higher taxes for you.

Many Senators are pushing for this because they have been extensively lobbied by heirs to the Wal-Mart and Campbell soup fortunes among other super-wealthy Americans. These families have spent tens of millions of dollars to kill the tax over the past five years.

ACTION: Contact Senators Feinstein and Boxer to send a clear message: No repeal of the estate tax and no compromises. Let the wealthiest American families help pay for the priorities and burdens that the rest of us must shoulder; they can afford it.

Source: Public Citizen release 9/1/05 publiccitizen@democracyinaction.org

Bush has way with press

The following conference took place shortly after the president's August vacation in Crawford, Texas. For the first time in his presidency he seemed eager to get back to Washington where he did not have to face the daily throngs of anti-war protesters encamped adjacent to his rancheria. Media reporters and journalists descended upon Crawford in droves. The anti-war movement found a new leader in the person of Cindy Sheehan, the gold star mother whose son was killed in Iraq in April 2004. Until now there has been only scattered protests throughout the land. I might point out that a Lodi peace group has held weekly Sunday peace vigils at Lodi city hall since January 17, 2003, two months prior to President Bush's preemptive war on Iraq.

The Congress abdicated its responsibility to adhere to the constitutional "declaration of war" mandate. In violation of its constitutional role, the Congress (both houses) voted to surrender war-making authority to the President. Unfortunately, when Bush went to war on March 19, 2003, very few voices cried out in protest. Just another day of infamy.

The media, as a whole, dutifully allied itself with Washington's foreign policy in general and the indefensible war on Iraq, in particular. There are notable exceptions in the persons

of Molly Ivins, Ariana Huffington, Robert Scheer, Seymore Hersch, Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, as well as yours truly. So, it comes down to dedicated individuals with a consistent anti-war message. Cindy Sheehan is such an individual.

Washington was in late August doldrums. Congress was out to lunch, so to speak. Scott McClellan, White House Press Secretary, convened members of the Washington Press Corps. Excerpts follow:

Reporter: (soft ball Sam): Mr. President, did the Cindy Sheehan travesty distract you from a restful, well deserved vacation at your Crawford ranch?

President: Not for one little minute. We live in a democracy with many freedoms including freedom to speak your mind. Now if "mom" Sheehan has an ax to grind, who am I to object when our leading commentators such as Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, and Cal Thomas have exposed Mrs. Sheehan as a publicity seeker among other unfavorable mentions.

Reporter: Mr. President, have you ever harbored any regrets about the war, its execution, mission and outcome?

President: No regrets. No second thoughts. No one goes to war until all other means have failed. The war option was exercised only as a last resort.

Reporter: Mr. President, does it concern you that some critics fault you for going to war without a planned exit strategy?

President: What concerns me is these critics are the same ones who criticized George Herbert Walker Bush (41) for liberating Kuwait in 1991. I consider them to be professional fault finders who would be out of work if they were required to exercise fair and objective analysis of the events that took place before and after Desert Storm.

Reporter: Mr. President, what do you say to those who cite the fact that not one son or daughter of a Senator or member of Congress is serving in the military, your two daughters included?

President: I can't speak for the others but my girls have interrupted graduate school to spend their time visiting wounded military personnel in Veterans Hospitals and the Walter Reed Medical Center. You see, other than being in uniform, there are many ways to serve in the national interest. The Bush girls don't go about drawing attention to their good works. They serve quietly on a daily basis.

Reporter: Mr. President, what's your response to the Downing Street Memo which claims that your administration had decided by July 2002 to invade Iraq? As the Downing Street Memo states and I quote, "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy." It appears then that the decision to invade Iraq had nothing to do with any sort of real threat to us or the Mid-East region.

President: I challenge the authenticity of the memo as does Prime Minister Blair. What is not challenged is the fact Sadaam Hussein is a ruthless dictator who held Iraq in bondage for thirty years. He killed thousands of Kurds with germ warfare, and tortured, murdered, and raped thousands and thousands of his own Iraqi people. He's gone now and Iraq has been liberated and will soon have a constitutional government in place. Time for one more question.

Reporter: Mr. President, in light of what we know about the Karl Rove connection with the outing of Valerie Plame, will he be leaving your administration or just take a trip to the woodshed?

President: The story you refer to has taken more twists and turns than a Texas tornado. I stand by Karl Rove. He's an honest and decent man. Thank you all for being here.

Reid Cerney political pundit

That's gulf, not golf

The White House this afternoon reported that the President's planned trip to the Gulf Coast has been cancelled due to a misunderstanding.

The President's Press Secretary told reporters at a press briefing that there had been a mistake. "The President fully planned on touring the area on Friday. He was enthusiastic about touring the Gulf Coast but apparently he thought it was the Golf Coast. He planned on getting in a few rounds before the weekend."

Asked by reporters how a mistake like this could happen, McClellan went through the timeline. "On Tuesday, after presenting John McCain with a birthday cake, the President was informed about events in the South. It was suggested that he tour the area. When told it was the Gulf Coast he seemed very enthusiastic. But today, after learning that the area was flooded, and was populated by groups of angry black people, the President asked how he could golf in such conditions. It was then that it was obvious a mistake had been made."

Helen Thomas, White House reporter for the UPI, asked if the President had anything to say to the people stranded on their rooftops. "Yeah, get out of there. Take a vacation. Go to the Caribbean for while."

The President, having cut short his vacation to return to the White House, had decided to return to Crawford. "Looks like I'm not needed here", the president is reported to have said before departing for Air Force One.

Source: internet buzz

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Tuesday Film Nights

7pm at P&J Center, 231 Bedford Road Stockton

September 27, 7:00 pm Yes Men

This comedic documentary follows the Yes Men, a small group of prankster activists, as they gain world-wide notoriety for impersonating the World Trade Organization around the world. The film begins when two members of The Yes Men, Andy and Mike, set up a website that mimics the World Trade Organization's—and it's mistaken for the real thing. They soon find themselves invited to important functions as WTO representatives. Andy and Mike don thrift-store suits and set out to shock unwitting audiences with darkly comic satire that highlights the worst aspects of global free trade.

October 4, 7:00 pm Duck Soup

To rescue the small country of Freedonia from bankruptcy, Mrs. Teasdale agrees to donate \$20 million if Rufus T. Firefly is appointed its new president. Firefly is a cynical, sarcastic dictator who refuses to play politics by the book. Firefly attempts to win the hand of Mrs. Teasdale, as does Ambassador Trentino of the neighboring country Sylvania. When the two leaders cannot resolve their dispute, war between the countries is declared, and Mrs. Teasdale's house comes under attack. Who will save the day?

October 11, 7:00 pm Embedded

A film of Tim Robbins' play about the Iraq war and the journalists who cover it. Robbins writes: "In May of 2003 I decided to focus my frustration and anger...to try to tell the story of our reckless neo-conservative administration's march to war, of the unmitigated failure of our press, some who acted more like courtesans than journalists, and also of the tragedy that results when young men and women are asked to engage violently with strangers in a hostile land."

October 18, 7:00 pm Hotel Rwanda

Amid the holocaust of internecine tribal fighting in Rwanda that sees the savage butchering of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, one ordinary man (Oscar nominee Don Cheadle) musters the courage to save more than 1,000 helpless refugees by sheltering them in the hotel he manages.

October 25, 7:00 pm Berkeley in the Sixties

The 1960s come to life in this gripping film that captures the birth of the Free Speech Movement, civil rights marches, anti-Vietnam War protests, the counterculture, the women's movement and the rise of the Black Panthers. Dramatic archival footage is interwoven with present-day interviews and songs from the Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Joan Baez, The Band and the Jefferson Airplane.

October 31, 7:00 pm Ghost Stories #2

Journey to some of the most haunted places on Earth to relive the harrowing experiences of those who had the grave misfortune of encountering restless spirits. Not all ghosts are bad. Some, such as the Native American ghosts explored in this documentary, are good-natured and just want to play. But others, such as the malevolent specter who still roams the gray halls of an old prison, have more sinister plans.

Death by Public Relations

Jules Siegel

A Review of: *War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death* by Norman Solomon.

In "War Made Easy" Norman Solomon demolishes the myth of an independent American press zealously guarding sacred values of free expression. Although strictly focusing on the shameless history of media cheerleading for the principal post-World War II American wars, invasions and interventions, he calls into question by implication the idea of the press as some kind of institutional counterforce to government and corporate power.

The utter idiocy of many of the examples he has compiled in this impeccably documented historical review will be familiar to readers who follow the news on the Internet. They achieve fresh impact because of the way Solomon has organized and analyzed them. Each chapter is devoted to a single warhawk strategy ("America Is a Fair and Noble Superpower," "Opposing the War Means Siding with the Enemy," "Our Soldiers Are Heroes, Theirs Are Inhuman") illustrated with historical examples for the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Kosovo, both Iraq wars, and other miscellaneous conflicts in which the media were almost universally enthusiastic accomplices.

War reporting kills

"War Made Easy" should really be subtitled "War reporting doesn't just suck, it kills." It makes you feel like demanding a special war crimes tribunal for corporate media executives and owners who joined the roll-up to Shock and Awe as non-uniformed psywar ops. To be sure, this would raise the issue of whether or not following orders might suffice for the defense of obedient slaves such as Mary McGrory and Richard Cohen who performed above and beyond the call of duty.

"He persuaded me," she gushed the morning after Powell spoke at the United Nations. "The cumulative effect was stunning." In the same Washington Post edition Richard Cohen wrote, "The evidence he presented to the United

Nations—some of it circumstantial, some of it absolutely bone-chilling in its detail - had to prove to anyone that Iraq not only hasn't accounted for its weapons of mass destruction but without a doubt still retains them. Only a fool—or possibly a Frenchman—could conclude otherwise."

Solomon demonstrates how this kind of peppy pre-war warm-up degenerates into drooling and heavy breathing once the killing begins. As if observing a heavy metal computer game, the pornographers of death concentrate on the exquisite craftsmanship and visual design of the murder machines, and the magnificence of the fiery explosions they produce.

"When the Gulf War's massive bombardment began," he writes, "a CNN correspondent remarked on the 'sweet beautiful sight' of bombers leaving runways in Saudi Arabia. CBS correspondent Jim Stewart told viewers about 'two days of almost picture-perfect assaults.'"

Los Angeles Times reporter Jacques Leslie was invited onto a helicopter to watch a B-52 strike in Vietnam. "Suddenly gray clouds took shape on the ground in front of us and billowed to a height of a thousand feet or more," Leslie later wrote in a memoir. "I was surprised to feel so little: no horror, no pain, just marvel at the dubious wonders of technology. Had men been killed beneath the smoke? Did they mean

anything to me? I knew I should be appalled, but I felt only numbness: it was like watching people die on television."

Skepticism only emerges when it is clear that a given war is not going well, Solomon observes. Otherwise, the media mostly report the war the way the government tells it. They become, in effect, merely another psychological warfare asset. The authorities not only employ public relations firms to assist them, but also discuss the information management strategies in public sessions at think tanks and academic institutions.

"War Made Easy" is a definitive historical text that belongs in every serious library as an indispensable record of the real relationships among government authorities and media outlets. The book should be required reading for journalists and journalism students. It will dispel many illusions about the true reach of freedom of the press and replace them with a much more appropriate and healthier professional cynicism.

Perhaps if Gary Webb had somehow been made aware of all this before writing "Dark Alliance," he might not have committed suicide in the sodden ashes of his ruined career, because he would have known in advance what he was really up against.

Source: http://www.cafecancun.com/books/war_made_easy/8/25/05

Talking It Through

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Sept/Oct Calendar

Fri, Sept 9

Resident Artist Series. UPO Conservatory of Music. Spanos Concert Hall on the UOP campus. „Music Beyond Performance“ 7:30PM

Thu, Sept 15, Sat, Sept 17

Stockton Symphony A Feast for the Ears, featuring Norman Krieger performing Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2, Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Thu 8 pm, Sat 6 pm. Tickets from \$15-\$42, students half off most seats. 951-0196

Sept 17-18

From Violence to Wholeness. Non-violent training sponsored by PJN. \$10 P&J Center, 231 Bedford. Registration required. 467-4455.

Sat, Sept 17

California Coastal Clean-up day - your chance to literally help the environment. Call Susan Mora Loyko at 937-8791 for various locations.

Wine on the Waterfront, Wine and food tasting fund raiser for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Waterfront Warehouse. 445 W. Weber Ave. 6-9pm. \$40 in advance, \$45 at the door. 471-7644

Sat, Sept 24

Peace Center Grand Opening (see page 1), 9am to 3 pm, 231 Bedford Pl, Stockton. 467-4455

Massive anti-war rally, 11 pm, Delores Park, San Francisco (see page 5 for bus information)

Family Literacy Day in the Park, University Park, CSU Stanislaus Stockton Campus, Magnolia and California St, Stockton. 546-8245

Tues, Sept 27

Film Night "Yes Men" 7pm PJN Center (see page 18)

Fri, Sept 30

Jimmy Limbaugh and His Society

Orchestra, a big band extravaganza. Hutchins Street Square, 125 S. Hutchins St, Lodi. 8pm. Tickets 333-5550.

Sun, Oct 2

San Joaquin Regatta, 3-mile rowing race on main channel from downtown Stockton to Louis Park. 6am - 2 pm. Free to observers. 941-0304

Tues, Oct 4

Film Night "Duck Soup" 7pm PJN Center (see page 18)

Thu, Oct 6 through Nov 3

Peace & Justice Network Board meeting, 7 pm. 231 Bedford Place, Stockton. All welcome. 467-4455

Horton Gallery presents Nancy Boy: group invitation. Tue 11-4, Wed/Thu 11-6:30, Fri 11-1. Free.

Speech night, Speakers from news stations and local businesses. Atherton Theater, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton 7-9:30 pm. Free. 954-5295

Tues, Oct 11

Film Night "Embedded" 7pm PJN Center (see page 18)

Oct 14 - 23

SJ Delta College presents Shakespeare's Twelfth Night Thu-Sat 8pm, Sun 2pm. Tillie Lewis Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave. \$12 adult, \$10 senior/student/child. 954-5110

Mon, Oct 17

An Evening with Margee Ensign: Rwanda and Reconciliation, 7pm, PJN Center (see page 16).

Tues, Oct 18

Film Night "Hotel Rwanda" 7pm PJN Center (see page 18)

Mon, Oct 24

"Chavez, Venezuela and the New Latin America" film presentation and discussion. 7pm at PJN Center. (see page 16).

Tues, Oct 25

Film Night "Berkeley in the Sixties" 7pm PJN Center (see page 18)

Tues, Oct 31

Film Night "Ghost Stories #2" 7pm PJN Center (see page 18)

Weekly

Tuesdays

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

TaiChi, 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. www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

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

Sundays

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

Monthly

Second Mon

PFLAG meeting, 7-9 pm, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 209-870-3339.

Second Tues

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

Third Thur

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

Meet Morrie Turner

Morrie Turner, creator of "Wee Pals" comic strip, will be at the Lodi Public Library on Saturday, October 22, 2005 at 11:00 a.m. to illustrate and discuss his "Wee Pals" cartoon characters. This event, titled "Honoring Morrie Turner and 'Wee Pals'—Celebrating Diversity and Nurturing Unity," is directed to children and sponsored by The Breakthrough Project, Friends of the Lodi Public Library, and The American Association of University Women, Lodi Branch.

"Wee Pals" comic strip was syndicated in 1964 and published in major newspapers across the country. Morrie features children

of different races and nationalities playing, disagreeing, and still remaining friends. A selection of his works will be displayed in the foyer of the Lodi Library from October 16 through October 31. Free copies from this selection will be available for schools to display.

Morrie Turner was born in 1923 in Oakland, California, and served has worked for 40 plus years, promoting diversity, understanding, and unity among people of all races and nationalities. He has always loved drawing and has used his talent to bring to this country one of the first "integrated" comic strips.

For information, 209-368-6871

Elizabeth Hill to speak

The League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County will present Elizabeth Hill, Legislative Analyst, at its meeting on Tuesday, September 13th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Chavez Central Library in downtown Stockton. Refreshments and information about the League will be available from 6:00 p.m. The program is free as a community service of the League. As the analyst for the State of California on budget matters, her nonpartisan analytical perspective will be informative and incisive. Please attend.

It's all happening at the P&J Center

The Peace and Justice Center (231 Bedford, Stockton) will be open starting September 24. The Center will be opened Tuesday through Friday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm for general use. We will be expanding the hours as the Center grows and will add classes and other activities during the open hours.

The center will have computers with Internet access, printers, and a fax machine for public use on a donation only basis, and plenty of areas to meet and relax with fresh coffee and tea available all the time. Other times the Center will be available for meetings and other events. Contact the PJC to schedule your event.

Friday nights and Sunday afternoons the Center will sponsor an ongoing series of cultural/educational events including art shows, readings, guest speakers and special films. Suggestions from for events are more than welcome.

Tuesday night will be Film Night (see page 18); the Center will be showing a wide range of thought-provoking films on a regular basis. Admission, as always is free; donations are appreciated.

For Information, to submit ideas for the Center, to schedule an event, or to volunteer call 209 467-4455.

Center Calendar for September-October

September 24: 9:00 am-3:00 pm—Peace Solidarity. Join us at the Center for a day supporting peace actions around the world. The Center will be broadcasting audio and video of worldwide peace actions scheduled through out the day.

September 27: Film Night "Yes Men", 7:00 pm

October 4: Peace and Justice Center Meeting, 6:00 pm

October 4: Film Night "Duck Soup", 7:00 pm

October 11: Film Night "Embedded", 7:00 pm

October 12: Meeting, Philosophy of Tao in the Digital Age, 7 pm

October 17: "An Evening With Margee Ensign: Rwanda and Reconciliation", 7:00 pm (see page 16)

October 18: Film Night "Hotel Rwanda", 7:00 pm

October 19: Meeting The PJC Book Club, 7:00 pm

October 21: Poetry Readings, 7:00 pm

October 24: Special Film "Chavez, Venezuela, The New Latin America", 7:00 pm (see page 16)

October 25: Film Night "Berkeley in the Sixties", 7:00 pm

October 28: Art Show "Day of the Dead", 7:00 pm

October 31: Film Night "Ghost Stories #2", 7:00 pm



US declares war...on the UN

Phyllis Bennis

The Bush administration has declared war on the world. The 450 changes that Washington is demanding to the action agenda that will culminate at the September 2005 United Nations summit don't represent U.N. reform. They are a clear onslaught against any move that could strengthen the United Nations or international law.

The upcoming summit was supposed to focus on strengthening and reforming the U.N. and address issues of aid and development, with a particular emphasis on implementing the U.N.'s five-year-old Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Most assumed this would be a forum for dialogue and debate, involving civil society activists from around the world challenging governments from the impoverished South and the wealthy North and the United Nations to create a viable global campaign against poverty and for internationalism.

But now, there's a different and even greater challenge. This is a declaration of U.S. unilateralism, uncompromising and ascendant. The United States has issued an open threat to the 190 other U.N. member states, the social movements and peoples of the entire world, and the United Nations itself. And it will take a quick and unofficially collaborative effort between all three of those elements to challenge the Bush administration juggernaut.

Millenium goals—to reduce poverty

The General Assembly's package of proposed reforms, emerging after nine months of negotiations ahead of the summit, begins with new commitments to implement the Millennium Development Goals—established in 2000 as a set of international commitments aimed at reducing poverty by 2015. They were always insufficient, yet as weak as they are, they have yet to be implemented. The 2005 Millennium Plus Five summit intended to shore up the unmet commitments to those goals. In his reform proposals of March 2005, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan called on governments north and south to see the implementation of the MDGs as a minimum requirement. Without at least that minimal level of poverty alleviation, he said, conflicts within and between states could spiral so far out of control that even a strengthened and reformed United Nations of the future would not be able to control the threats to international peace and security.

When John Bolton, Bush's hotly contested but newly appointed ambassador to the United Nations announced the U.S. proposed response, it was easy to assume this was just John Bolton running amok. After all, Bolton, a longtime U.N.-basher, has said: "There is no United Nations." He has written in *The Wall Street Journal* that the United States has no legal obliga-

tion to abide by international treaties, even when they are signed and ratified. So it was no surprise when Bolton showed up three weeks before the summit, demanding a package of 450 changes in the document that had been painstakingly negotiated for almost a year.

Extremists in charge

But, in fact, this isn't about Bolton. This Bush administration's position was vetted and approved in what the U.S. Mission to the U.N. bragged was a "thorough interagency process"—meaning the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon and many more agencies all signed off. This is a clear statement of official U.S. policy—not the wish list of some marginalized extremist faction of neocon ideologues who will soon be reined in by the realists in charge. This time the extremist faction is in charge.

The U.S. proposal package is designed to force the world to accept as its own the U.S. strategy of abandoning impoverished nations and peoples, rejecting international law, privileging ruthless market forces over any attempted regulation, sidelining the role of international institutions except for the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, and weakening, perhaps fatally, the United Nations itself.

It begins by systematically deleting every one of the 35 specific references to the Millennium Development Goals. Every reference to concrete obligations for implementation of commitments is deleted. Setting a target figure of just 0.7 percent of GNP for wealthy countries to spend on aid? Deleted. Increasing aid for agriculture and trade opportunities in poor countries? Deleted. Helping the poorest countries, especially those in Africa, to deal with the impact of climate change? Deleted.

The proposal puts at great risk treaties to which the United States is already a party, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The U.N. Summit draft referred to the NPT's "three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy." That means that states without nukes would agree never to build or obtain them, but in return they would be guaranteed the right to produce nuclear energy for peaceful use. In return recognized nuclear weapons states—the United States, Britain, France, China and



Russia—would commit, in Article VI of the NPT, to move toward "nuclear disarmament with the objective of eliminating all such weapons." The proposed U.S. changes deleted all references to the three pillars and to Article VI.

The U.S. deleted the statement that: "The use of force should be considered as an instrument of last resort." That's also not surprising given the Bush administration's "invade first, choose your justifications later" mode of crisis resolution.

Throughout the document, the United States demands changes that redefine and narrow what should be universal and binding rights and obligations. In the clearest reference to Iraq and Palestine, Washington narrowed the definition of the "right of self-determination of peoples" to eliminate those who "remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation."

Much of the U.S. effort aims to undermine the power of the U.N. in favor of absolute national sovereignty. On migration, for instance, the original language focused on enhancing international cooperation, linking migrant worker issues and development, and the human rights of migrants. The U.S. wants to scrap it all, replacing it with "the sovereign right of states to formulate and enforce national migration policies," with international cooperation only to facilitate national laws. Human rights were deleted altogether.

US, not UN, authority

In the document's section on strengthening the United Nations, the U.S. deleted all mention of enhancing the U.N.'s authority, focusing instead only on U.N. efficiency. Regarding the General Assembly the most democratic organ of the U.N. system—the United States deleted references to the Assembly's centrality, its role in codifying international law, and, ultimately its authority, relegating it to a toothless talking shop. It even deleted reference to the Assembly's

role in Washington's own pet project-management oversight of the U.N. secretariat—leaving the U.S.-dominated and undemocratic Security Council, along with the U.S. itself (in the person of a State Department official recently appointed head of management in Kofi Annan's office) to play watchdog.

The Bush administration has given the United Nations what it believes to be a stark choice: adopt the U.S. changes and acquiesce to becoming an adjunct of Washington and a tool of empire, or reject the changes and be consigned to insignificance.

UN can win

But the United Nations could choose a third option. It should not be forgotten that the U.N. itself has some practice in dealing with U.S. threats. President George W. Bush gave the U.N. these same two choices once before—in September 2002, when he threatened the global body with "irrelevance" if the U.N. did not embrace his call for war in Iraq. On that occasion, the United Nations made the third choice—the choice to grow a backbone, to reclaim its charter, and to join with people and governments around the world who were mobilized to say no to war. It was the beginning of eight months of triumph, in which governments and peoples and the U.N. stood together to defy the U.S. drive toward war and empire, and in doing so created what the *New York Times* called "the second super-power."

This time, as before, the United States has threatened and declared war on the United Nations and the world. As before, it's time for that three-part superpower to rise again, to defend the U.N., and to say no to empire.

Phyllis Bennis, a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, is the author of the forthcoming Challenging Empire: How People, Governments, and the U.N. Defy U.S. Power (Interlink Publishing, Northampton MA, October 2005)

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