

connections

PRICELESS

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SAVE THE DATES

**OCT 1
MAYOR'S DEBATE 18**

**OCT 3
ESPINO SUMMIT.....20**

**NOV 4
ELECTION DAY VOTE!**

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City Council candidates show progressive vision

Bruce Giudici

Candidates for Stockton City Council shared their views at the Campaign for Common Ground candidates night, held September 15 in downtown Stockton. While all candidates were invited, Kathy Miller (District 2), Chris Eley (District 4), Dale Fritchen and Mark Stebbins (District 6) took the time to answer important questions about the future of Stockton and its role in county development.

When the requisite questions about land use were asked, all of this group expressed support for "smart growth," a process where in-fill and slower planning trumps sprawl. Each supported varying ways to accomplish it, with Fritchen (D6) saying appropriate zoning rules would help, and Stebbins (D6) responding that zoning rules were outmoded and subject to developer "juice." Fritchen (D6) spoke from experience, living in Weston Ranch which started as a mixed-use development that became purely residential, overwhelming city services, schools and other infrastructure. He called this "dumb growth," and stated that future developer fees could and should be used to help defray the costs of development, including subsidizing mass transit in the city. Miller (D2) said that, while in support of some space



Kathy Miller, District 2



Chris Eley, District 4



*Dale Fritchen,
District 6*



*Mark Stebbins,
District 6*

between Lodi and Stockton, an ag separator between the two cities need not be legislated nor purchased, if the recent General Plan settlement results in slower and more deliberate growth as envisioned. Eley (D4) spoke in favor of conservation easements to help keep land in agriculture, rather than either suburban sprawl or larger ranchettes.

Crime was also on the minds of the candidates, with Fritchen (D6) saying that nothing else will succeed if crime remains rampant. Eley (D4) advocated effective programs for drug crimes and an expanded jail facility as leverage, to hold offenders until treatment becomes available. He also drew a line between how to deal with gang-related graffiti (10% of the total that needs to be addressed one way) and the rest (which needs to be addressed more as a nuisance).

On the foreclosure crisis, Fritchen (D6) stated that, while

largely a national problem, the city can at least help keep neighborhoods from looking blighted. Stebbins (D6) spoke of using funds from a city bond issue to purchase houses to be rented out to those in need or sale to Habitat for Humanity, of negotiating loan modifications and using code enforcement to improve housing. He also discussed the difference between a vision of housing and the concept of a home where we all live, and that not only low-income housing belonged downtown.

On downtown development, Miller (D2) pointed out the little things businesses have done to make the waterfront and downtown attractive. Her experience with the Downtown Alliance showed, in her familiarity with the Port of Stockton operation, how it chooses its commissioners and its importance in providing good jobs, her criticism of how the arena has been scheduled and

some other interesting ideas (water taxis taking people from north Stockton to downtown). Eley (D4) spoke in favor of the new marina (so long as it brought in short-term visitors, not long-term boat storage) and of more residential development around the waterfront, when the housing crisis eases. Smaller projects in a time of tight City budgets were on his mind, such as a boat house for a rowing club downtown.

No candidate wanted the City to take over PG&E's electric utility service, although Miller (D2) pointed out possible positives of being able to attract new businesses with the lure of lower utility rates, as does the Port of Stockton. All candidates agreed that the City should be running its own water system. Stebbins (D6) was not in favor of the City using delta water for drinking, rather promoting a dual water supply system—one for consumption,

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Elections matter

Bruce Giudici

This is the most important election. Every four years, you hear this—because it's true. Our future is accelerating toward us, in just about every facet of our lives. The list is familiar to Connections readers: global warming and oil dependence, excess military action and a disinvestment in education and infrastructure, a dysfunctional immigration policy and debt at unconscionable levels for government, business and individuals. Due to decisions made decades ago to go for immediate profit, we have taken every shortcut available in order to stave off the inevitable decrease in personal consumption. We import from labor- and environment-cheap markets to our own detriment.

In economic terms, labor and environmental costs iterate to a global equilibrium. In other words, absent an agreed-upon, government-imposed floor for labor and environmental costs, the global economy will level off to something looking like Mexico. So, our future is now upon us. Deep in a hole of our own making, we need a plan of extraction. Without that plan, with another failed election, we dig ourselves deeper, hastening a lower standard of living for most of us. Result: corporate profits win, you lose.

Eight years ago, we were at an important financial turning point—a discussion of the Social Security "lockbox" comes to mind. In so many ways, the result

of the 2000 election has landed us in a place none of us dreamed possible at that time—deeper in debt at all levels. 2008 is another fork in the road. Listen to what the candidates say on the issues; ignore the distractions. The next two months will determine what sort of world your kids will inherit. Tell a friend.

And now for something completely different: getting propositioned again. The daunting list of 2008 initiatives spans every political topic imaginable—it's really pretty interesting. We generally get a clue of which way to vote by who writes the "for" and "against" arguments—but it's not that simple this year. Our coverage of these issues is on page 3, along with Connections'

Bruce Giudici, editor



accompanying analysis. In general, the precautionary principle should hold—unless there is an urgent need, a no vote generally works. What would count as urgent? Environmental props 1a, 7 and 10, humane treatment props 2 and 5 and anti-corruption prop 11. Any other bond issues can wait until we can manage the debt already incurred—and the others fix what ain't broke.

Feedback

End of one road, beginning of another

Editor,

Barack Obama is the catalyst of change that this country desperately needs. His grasp of the problems and complexities facing our nation is well thought out and encouraging. More importantly, what he lacks in experience is more than compensated by his energy and vision; a vision certainly not shared by his opponent, who attacks the corruption of his own party and President, seemingly oblivious that he himself is intricately tied to the problem.

As America waits at a crossroads of our future and watches for this historic vote, others long dead, their spirits restless, wandering across the void of time and space, are watching too. In a packed Georgia church, flies buzzin', kids fussin', with the Preacher man invoking hell and damnation, a beacon of truth, of political salvation, reaches back through time and into the segregated pews of yesteryear.

On a hot, dusty cotton field in Mississippi, hundreds of dark-skinned heads are looking up, the song of labor interrupted, the crack of the overseer's whip rippling in the distance. Hope, this day, is in the air. Sliding into

second base, the immortal Jackie Robinson hears a name broadcast from sixty years in the future, and he smiles. The great scholar W.E.B. DuBois sits in the shade of a giant elm within The Veil. Holding his dying son, he senses a presence stirring in the leaves. Harriet Tubman (who was ever a greater soldier of freedom?) pauses on the underground railroad. A message is a'comin' up the line. Langston Hughes, strong voice of the Harlem Renaissance, stops the tappity-tap of his typewriter. The keys continue on their own. They spell the name

On a slave ship bound for the "land of the free and the home of the brave," packed in feces and filth, the agonized moans, the rattling of chains goes silent. The rolling seas whisper of better days. On a cold, windy Chicago street, 14 year old Emmitt Till pauses and listens. Tears fill his young eyes. There's justice on the horizon. On a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks stands her ground. The time, at long last, has come. A vision, America's

day of reckoning, propels Jesse Owens to the finish line, defeating Aryan supremacy and Nazism in one glorious moment. Fighting lynching and injustice, Ida Tarbell peers over her pen and paper and down the blackened tunnel to see the light, shining at the other end.

And on a D.C. podium, his voice heard by the world, a brave man of peace stops momentarily and scans the sky. His arms reach up and that message of hope envelopes him. The Promised Land can indeed become a reality. There is a time and a place when the words of the founding fathers will mean more than dated scrawl on parchment paper. Where lofty ideals are transformed from political rhetoric into tangible assets and the shackles of the old guard are finally cast aside. When Martin Luther King Jr. is led by the hand of God and the soul of America, to silently take his place along side Barack Obama, the next President of the United States.

Dave Waldon

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Connections

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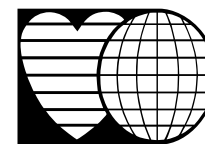
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"The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared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

City Council

(continued from page 1)

the other for landscaping.

In closing, candidates were asked what they would do first if elected. Miller (D2): to increase communication with constituents; Eley (D4): to get a handle on long-term budget solutions; Fritchen (D6): to ensure that city employees are polite and helpful; Stebbins (D6): to let people know that the council is prepared to listen to them and their concerns. The discussion was civil, interesting and gave a very positive impression of the direction the City Council is heading as we go to the polls.

Reid & Ann Cerney: lives dedicated to peace

John Morearty

Editor's Note: As we prepared to go to press, Reid Cerney died on the afternoon of Friday, September 12. This article was prepared before his passing. Many of us cherished Reid's persistent pursuit of peace in our community. His memory and work continues in those who knew him.

It's ten in the morning, on the tidy west side of Lodi. Reid welcomes me, goes slowly back to his chair. "I can manage a few blocks with my walker. I'm eighty; it's just in the last few years it's occurred to me that the term Old Age might apply to me!" Ann strides in, bright-eyed.

"Ann, what keeps you going?"

"I've always had a very strong work ethic. I feel incredibly privileged to have the meaningful work I do, advocating for the elderly and disabled, suing the government and insurance companies. The U.S. appellate brief I wrote last night was to secure disability rights for a poor woman in her forties with frequent seizures. It's quiet at night downtown. I'm seventy-four, but sometimes you have to pull an all-nighter."

Reid and Ann have been pillars of the progressive movement in Lodi since 1965. "We came to this very conservative community after spending four years training social workers and teaching in Colombia and Ecuador. We'd gotten a taste there of what it means for the U.S. military to occupy the world; the commander had a mansion in the middle of town.

"We came back radicalized. We couldn't separate our religious beliefs, our consciences, from the injustices that were going on. In Lodi we found people with a sense of humanity, of caring for the future, protecting the earth for all people, equal opportunity. We jumped into the farm worker movement, took part in the first grape boycott at Safeway here, May 19, 1969. There were no Latino people living on the west side of Lodi, and our place was a



Reid and Anne

kind of safe house; farmworkers and organizers would crash here. The police came around at night—they'd heard there were Mexicans in the house! There was a big potluck in Hale Park, Teatro Campesino put on a performance, we marched with Cesar Chavez from Thornton to Lodi."

"When the farmworkers finally got their first big contract, with Schenley, we turned our attention to Vietnam. There were federal investigators everywhere. In July 1970, we began a vigil every Saturday for four years, in front of the Lodi post office. And then of course we marched. Dan Battilana built a wooden cage, like the "tiger cages" the U.S. kept Vietnamese prisoners in, and his wife Joyce would ride in the cage. She was our cheerleader, all theater and a wonderful soprano. We put on a peace play at the Unitarian Church in Stockton; we went to a Lodi church at Christmas and were physically attacked by a mob inside the church.

"We registered Democrats door to door, and that eventually changed politics in Lodi. And we worked with the Lodi council of churches to establish a drug-free coffeehouse for young people, with a paid director, excellent live music. There was that whole young consciousness, the draft made a huge difference. We helped kids do conscientious objector statements.

"About 1980 came Reagan, the nuclear freeze and anti-nuclear work. We brought a citizens' proposal to the Lodi City Council to declare Lodi a nuclear-free zone. Joyce Battilana made a beautiful banner, "Nuclear Free from Sea to Shining Sea"; Dr. Paula LeVeck made a presentation. One council member moved that our proposal be adopted; it died for lack of a second. But we went to the council once a month for ten years."

Ann helped found Lodi Ecology Action, which eventually established curbside recycling in Lodi. She also sued developers three times over land use issues. "The developers own most of the city councils and so on, and we haven't stopped them; it's only lack of water and fouling of the air that will keep the Central Valley from turning into Los Angeles. But we've slowed them down, negotiated concessions from Lowes and others setting aside land permanently for farming, and money for the deteriorating parts of town. And the massive Wal-Mart may not happen. I went to practically every Lodi Planning Commission and county Planning Commission meeting for ten years."

Reid, meanwhile, continues working against the death penalty, and the wars. "We marched in Stockton against the first Gulf War, and created a weekly peace vigil in Lodi. Two months before

(continued page 15)



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

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

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

Democracy Now! on KPFA, 94.1 FM at 9am, on KVMR, 89.5 at 7pm or on the web at: <http://www.democracynow.org>

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

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

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

We're on the web too!

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

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>

Holding Democrats—and Obama—accountable

Chris Hedges

Barack Obama's health care plan coddles the corporations that profit from the misery and illnesses of tens of millions of Americans. The plan is naive, at best, and probably disingenuous when it insists that we can coax these corporations, which are listed on the stock exchange and exist to maximize profit, to transform themselves into social service agencies that will provide adequate health care for all Americans. I wish we lived in such a rosy world. I know, and I suspect Obama knows, that we do not.

"Obama offers a false hope," said Dr. John Geyman, the former chair of family medicine at the University of Washington and author of "Do Not Resuscitate: Why the Health Insurance Industry Is Dying, and How We Must Replace It." "We cannot build on or tweak the present system. Different states have tried this. The problem is the private insurance industry itself. It is not as efficient as a publicly financed system. It fragments risk pools, skimming off the healthier part of the population and leaving the rest uninsured or underinsured. Its administrative and overhead costs are five to eight times higher than public financing through Medicare. It cares more about its shareholders than its enrollees or patients. A family of four now pays about \$12,000 a year just in premiums, which have gone up by 87 percent from 2000 to 2006. The insurance industry is pricing itself out of the market for an ever larger part of the population. The industry resists regulation. It is unsustainable by present trends."

We face a health crisis. The Democratic and Republican parties, awash in campaign contributions from the beasts they should be slaying on our behalf, have no interest in addressing it. A report in the journal *Health Affairs* estimates that, if the system is left unchanged, one of every five dollars spent by Americans in 2017 will go to health coverage. Half of all bankruptcies in America are because families are unable to pay

their medical bills. There are some 46 million Americans without coverage and tens of millions more with inadequate policies that severely limit what kinds of procedures and treatments they can receive.

"There are at least 25 million Americans who are underinsured," said Dr. Geyman. "Whatever coverage they have does not come close to covering the actual cost of a major illness or accident."

Obama, like John McCain, did not support HR 676, the Federal single-payer legislation. The corporations that run our for-profit health care industry, which would be shut down if the bill was enacted, have vigorously fought it through campaign contributions and armies of lobbyists. A study by Harvard Medical School found that national health insurance would save the country \$350 billion a year. But Medicare does not make campaign contributions. The private health care industries do. They have lavished money on Obama. He received \$708,000 from medical and insurance interests between 2001 and 2006, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. And Michelle Obama is a vice president for community and external affairs at the University of Chicago Hospitals, a position that paid her \$316,962 annually.

"The private health insurance companies and the pharmaceutical industry completely and totally oppose national health insurance," said Dr. Stephanie Woolhandler, one of the founders of Physicians for a National Health Program. "The private health insurance companies would go out of business. The pharmaceutical companies are afraid that a national health program will, as in Canada, be able to negotiate lower drug prices. Canadians pay 40 percent less for their drugs. We see this on a smaller scale in the United States, where the Department of Defense is able to negotiate pharmaceutical prices that are 40 percent lower."

Expanded oversight?

Sen. Obama argues that we

can improve the system by expanding government oversight. The government, he says, should require doctors and hospitals to prove they provide quality care. His plan links payment with reported quality. This would mean that health care providers would have to hire even larger staffs to collect and report this data to the government. There would be a \$10-billion federal investment in health care information technology over five years under the Obama plan, in essence turning record keeping from paper to electronic data.

Obama's plan, said Dr. Don McCanne, who writes on health care issues, would actually make health plans "more expensive, which compounds the problem."

Obama says he would require insurance companies to use more income from premiums for patient care.

"There isn't an enforcement mechanism," Geyman said bluntly. "Most states have been unable to control rates or set a cap on rates."

Obama's plan would also not cover all Americans. Unlike in Canada, citizens would not be enrolled in a plan automatically. Americans would have to go looking for one they could afford. And if they could not find one they would remain uninsured. Dr. Woolhandler, who is also a professor at Harvard Medical School, estimates that "tens of millions" of Americans would remain uninsured under Obama's plan. These numbers would swell as employers, who provide plans for 59 percent of those who are employed, continue to reduce coverage.

"The only way everyone will get insurance is with national health insurance," she said from Boston in a phone interview. "There is nothing in the Obama plan that will change the bitter reality that working-class families face when their breadwinner gets sick. People with catastrophic illnesses usually lose their jobs and lose their insurance. They often cannot afford the high premiums for the insurance they

can get when they are unable to work. Most families that file for bankruptcy because of medical costs had insurance before they got sick. They either lost the insurance because they lost their jobs or faced gaps in coverage that meant they could not afford medical care."

The problem is profit

Obama has borrowed John Kerry's idea to have the government absorb certain severe costs, although again the details are not spelled out. Insurers, he says, would no longer be able to discriminate based on preexisting conditions. All children would have health coverage. He would, he says, expand Medicare and Medicare-like coverage to protect the very young and the elderly. This is laudable, if he can make it happen. But the fundamental problem is a health industry run for profit. Our health system costs nearly twice as much as national programs in countries such as Switzerland. The overhead for traditional Medicare is 3 percent, and the overhead for the investment-owned companies is 26.5 percent. A staggering 31 percent of our health care expenditures is spent on administrative costs. Look what we get in return.

We on the left, those who should be out there fighting for universal health care and total and immediate withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, sit like lap dogs on the short leashes of our Democratic (read corporate) masters. We yap now and then, but we have forgotten how to snarl and bite. We have been domesticated. And until we punish the two main parties the way big corporations do, by withdrawing support and funding when our issues are ignored, we will remain irrelevant and impotent. I detest Bill O'Reilly, but he is right on one thing—we liberals are a spineless lot.

Labor unions don't negotiate with corporations on the basis of good will. They negotiate carrying the threat of a strike. What power do we have as long as

we cave on every issue we stand for, from opposition to the death penalty to battling back against the military-industrial complex?

It is not about liking or not liking Obama. It is not about race or class or gender. It is not about growing up poor or a member of the working class. There is no shortage of greasy politicians who, once in power, sold out their own. Look at Bill Clinton. It is about fighting back. It is about confronting a system that belittles us, what we stand for and what is best for the majority of Americans. We need to throw our support behind alternative candidates who champion what we care about, whether Cynthia McKinney or Ralph Nader. Bob Barr's health care plan, like John McCain's, is even worse than Obama's tepid proposal. We need to begin to actively and militantly defy the corporate state, and this means stepping outside of the two-party system. Universal health insurance is one issue. There are others. Nothing we care about will change until we do.

The Democrats, who promise to end the war in Iraq, create jobs and provide universal health care, ignore these promises once election cycles are over. And we never make them pay. They gave us NAFTA, the destruction of welfare and increased military spending, and we gave them our vote. This is the party that took back Congress in 2006 on an anti-war platform and then increased troop levels and funding for the Iraq war. This is a party that talks about the crushing weight of debt carried by Americans and then refuses to cap predatory interest rates as high as 30 percent imposed by credit card companies. This is a party that promises to protect our constitutional rights and then passes the FISA bill to protect the telecommunications companies. The list goes on. These politicians, including Obama, must begin to feel heat. They must learn that there is a cost to be paid for working on behalf of corporations and disempowering citizens.

Source: *Truthdig* 9/2/08 <<http://www.truthdig.com/>>.

League of Women Voters recommends:

YES ON 1A—Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act

This \$9.95 billion bond act would partially fund a high-speed train project between Los Angeles/Anaheim and San Francisco, and possible extensions to Sacramento and to San Diego, at a total project cost of \$45 billion, including the additional segments. Federal grants and public-private partnerships would be needed to fund at least half of each segment. Proposition 1A would provide a transportation option that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and lessens the need to expand highways and airports. This revised proposition addresses concerns about cost and financial uncertainties by requiring a new business plan, peer review, and other accountability provisions, and it allows bond funds to be used for the other segments if there is no negative impact on the first phase.

YES ON 3—Children's Hospital Bond Act

Proposition 3 authorizes \$980 million in bonds to fund children's hospitals. These regional centers provide specialized care for children with serious illnesses or injuries without regard to a family's ability to pay. They treat the majority of California's low-income children. Eighty percent of the proceeds would go to eight nonprofit children's hospitals and 20 percent to University of California children's hospitals. Prop 3 will address escalating construction costs and improve health care access for children who are indigent, uninsured, underinsured or eligible for government health programs.

NO ON 4—Waiting Period and Parental Notification before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy

Prop 4 requires a physician to notify the parent of a pregnant minor before performing an abortion. Mandatory notification laws may sound good but, in the real world, they put the

health and safety of teens in danger. A frightened, pregnant teen who can't go to her parents may choose an unsafe, illegal abortion, or even contemplate suicide, instead of seeking the counseling and safe medical care she needs. Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers' lives, but good family communication can't be imposed by government. California voters have rejected this proposal twice, but proponents have put it on the ballot again, adding more unreasonable provisions.

YES ON 5—Nonviolent Drug Offenses. Sentencing, Parole and Rehabilitation

Proposition 5 would require the state to expand treatment and rehabilitation for nonviolent drug offenders and parolees, and reduce the criminal consequences of nonviolent offenses. Additional costs of treatment would be offset by reductions in prison and parole operating costs, as well as in the need for capital outlay for prison facilities. The League's study of juvenile justice affirmed the need to give funding priority to prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation.

NO ON 6—Police and Law Enforcement Funding. Criminal Penalties and Laws (Runner Initiative)

This measure requires that nearly \$1 billion annually in state general funds be used for designated local law enforcement and probation programs. This will mean an increase of \$500 million a year for these programs and for operating prison and parole systems, and a \$500 million capital outlay for prison facilities. The League opposes the further restriction on the ongoing use of general funds. Harmful policy changes in this initiative include prosecuting more 14-year-olds as adults and giving counties less flexibility in the use of drug and mental health funds for juveniles.

NO ON 7—Renewable Energy Generation

Proposition 7 requires all utilities, including government-owned utilities, to generate 50 percent of their power from renewable energy by 2025. While the League supports a renewable energy target, we feel this is too optimistic to be achieved, and well beyond the targets for implementing the landmark greenhouse-gas emissions reduction law, AB 32. Moreover, Prop 7 is poorly drafted. Experts say it will not achieve its stated goals and will actually disrupt the development of renewable power. It may force small renewable energy companies out of California's market and cause higher energy bills..

NO ON 8—Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry

This proposed limitation of marriage as only between a man and a woman infringes on the equal rights that should be available to all people. The California Supreme Court has concluded that there is a "fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship." The League opposed Proposition 22 in 2000 and continues to oppose such limits on the basic civil rights that should be guaranteed to all Californians.

NO ON 9—Criminal Justice System. Victims' Rights. Parole

Proposition 9 would expand the legal rights of crime victims in various ways and could undo many of the rights of prisoners and parolees to due process and speedy parole revocation hearings. This initiative asks voters to support victims' rights that are already protected under state law and is unnecessary.

NO ON 10—Alternative Fuel Vehicles and Renewable Energy. Bonds

This measure would authorize the sale of \$5 billion in general obligation bonds to provide rebates

to purchasers of certain high fuel economy and alternative fuel vehicles, and to fund grants and other incentives for technology development. The League favors the use of bonds to finance capital expenditures or the purchase of property for public purposes. The purposes of this bond are not an appropriate use for state-issued, bond-generated revenues.

YES ON 11—Redistricting Reform: California Voters FIRST Act

It is an inherent conflict of interest for legislators to draw their own districts to guarantee their reelection. Proposition 11 removes from the legislature the power to redraw district boundaries for the State Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization after each census. Instead, it provides for the appointment

of a 14-member independent citizens commission to perform this process, establishes clear criteria for how the boundaries shall be drawn, and requires an open and transparent process with due notice, public hearings, and no communications outside of the hearings. This measure will hold politicians accountable and help stop the gridlock in Sacramento that keeps pressing issues from being addressed.

Because League positions do not cover the issues in Proposition 2, Standards for Confining Farm Animals, and Proposition 12, Veterans' Bond Act of 2008, the LWVC is taking no stand on these measures.

Source: League of Women Voters of California, 1107 Ninth St, Suite 300 Sacramento CA 95814 916-442-7215 <http://lwvc.org>



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Digital TV: a corporate media giveaway

Bruce Dixon

Digital TV means four to ten times as many channels for each and every broadcaster with no obligations to the public. The FCC quietly awarded broadcasters this colossal gift of public property worth \$70-\$80 billion during the Clinton administration back in 1996. In the 12 years since, under Democratic and Republican presidents alike, corporate broadcasters and their stooges at the FCC have diligently peddled the cover stories that digital TV is all about the advent of high definition television, and that the only nagging questions are how and whether enough converter boxes will be available for consumers who can't or won't buy brand new TVs. In a final act of brazen misdirection to conceal this grand theft digital, FCC Commissioners are scheduled to tour dozens of cities between now and February 18, 2009, doing a lot of talking, but not much listening.

All most of us know about the transition to digital TV are two things. The first thing we know is that some people will need converter boxes on their old TVs to receive the new digital broadcasts. The second thing we know is that digital broadcast technology will enable high definition TV. As far as corporate broadcasters and the FCC are concerned, that's all we need to know, and those are the boundaries of legitimate public discourse.

What the FCC and broadcasters are actively concealing from the public is that digital broadcasting technology enables thousands of new digital TV channels on the public broadcast spectrum, all of which broadcasters have allocated to themselves without the inconvenient public scrutiny issuing thousands of new station licenses might have attracted. Thus minorities and women, local entrepreneurs, colleges and universities, community, civic and labor organizations and local governments who otherwise might acquire a portion of the new digital TV channels and used

them to broadcast local news, arts, information and public service in hundreds of U.S. markets have been frozen out of the chance to serve the public over the public's airwaves without even the bother of public explanation or debate.

Utterly captured by the private broadcasters it is supposed to police and regulate, the FCC has been tasked with selling this piece of grand theft digital as a public service, and farmed out the job to the notorious PR firm of Ketchum Communications.

According to PR Watch, Ketchum Communications are past masters of corporate disinformation, responsible for a string of suspect activities including:

- * Drafting ads for tobacco firms denying the links between smoking and disease, and promoting the myth that low-tar cigarettes are somehow less deadly;

- * Co-ordinating PR for the KOOL Jazz Festival, intended to pretty up the name of Big Tobacco;

- * Running fake business-funded science organizations touting the "safety" of pesticides, hormones and food additives;

- * Spying on, smearing and facilitating the firing of pro-environmental FDA scientists;

- * Recommending, as early as the nineties, the labeling of environmentalists as "terrorists", and the suing of investigative journalists, and conducting a 30 city PR blitz against an EPA report on the health;

- * Covertly hiring TV host and syndicated columnist Armstrong Williams to discredit public education and skill for the administration's No Child Left Behind Act, and manufacturing dozens of fake video news releases which were distributed to hundreds of TV stations where they were broadcast as news.

Predictably, Ketchum's elaborate "public education" campaign on digital TV makes no mention of any obligations broadcasters might have to serve the public over publicly

owned spectrum. It is calculated to confine public input on the DTV transition to those things the public must do in order to passively consume whatever commercial broadcasters decide to give them...

A new Congress and a new administration in and of themselves are absolutely no guarantee that the transformation of public digital broadcast spectrum into the unregulated private property of existing broadcasters who have failed the tests of localism and public service every day for decades, will not be consummated in February 2009. While Republican and Democratic presidential candidates are both well aware of the issues involved in the digital transition, neither seems willing to question this theft of public property.

Barack Obama's chief advisor on telecom affairs, a black attorney who has so far raised the Obama campaign at least \$500,000, presumably from broadcasters and their lawyers, is William Kennard. As the FCC's general counsel from 1993 to 1996, and its chairman from 1996 to 2001, Kennard is arguably one of the fathers of this monstrously crooked deal, and of the disastrous Telecommunications Act of 1996. Upon leaving government at the beginning of the Bush administration, Kennard became managing director of media buyout operations for the bipartisan Carlyle Group. With the Bush administration having moved the ball downfield for broadcasters the last eight years, commercial broadcasters confidently expect their interests to prevail over the public's no matter who runs Congress or the White House... But if citizens come out, speak out and act out in the presence of each other and the FCC's corporate flacks, then maybe—just maybe the Congress, the courts, the FCC and a new administration will have to listen. Whether they want to or not.

*Source: Black Agenda Report 8/28/08
<http://blackagenda.com>*

2008 Elections: Questions for Candidates

Do you want to increase the size of the U.S. military? Probably not. According to a 2008 Gallup poll, neither do most people in the United States. Yet Congress continues to vote for increases in the size of the military. And much of the debate in this presidential election season has centered on military strategies to resolve conflicts: continued fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, bombing Iran, and expanding the "war on terrorism."

You can help change the debate in this election. Challenge candidates for Congress in your area (including incumbents) to answer specific questions about how they will work to eliminate deadly weapons, conserve energy, provide health care to children in our communities, and promote diplomacy to prevent wars. Don't miss this opportunity to speak your mind!

We at FCNL have designed the following questions to help you start this process. We encourage you to engage in open and constructive dialogue with the candidates for the 2008 elections. Put up a "War Is Not the Answer" sign at your home or in your community and write letters to the candidates. Or better yet organize a letter to the candidates from your local meeting, church, or community group. Pencil in a few events where you can meet your candidates face to face—a town hall meeting, a shopping mall meet-and-greet, or an in-home visit with a few potential supporters. Or invite the candidates to come and speak with you. Find out more at www.fcnl.org. Check our website <<http://www.fcnl.org>> for more resources and questions.

Promote talk, not war, with Iran

Congress has failed so far to endorse the type of non-partisan, comprehensive regional policy in the Middle East that is key to ending the war in Iraq and preventing a war with Iran. Do you support the call by former Secretaries of State James Baker, Colin Powell, Henry Kissinger,

Madeleine Albright, and Warren Christopher for the United States to begin a serious diplomatic dialogue with Iran?

FCNL's view: The United States has refused to enter into sustained and direct talks with Iran. Former secretaries of state, the former head of the Israeli intelligence agency Ephraim Halevy, and many others argue that robust diplomatic engagement is the best way to ensure that Iran doesn't develop nuclear weapons. Congress should endorse direct talks with Iran without preconditions to resolve the impasse over Iran's nuclear program.

Time to invest in peace

A huge portion, about 94 percent, of what the United States spends to engage with the rest of the world is allocated to the military. A tiny amount, about 6 percent, is devoted to diplomacy, development, and supporting international institutions that can help solve problems before they turn into deadly conflict. Will you support the United States's paying its full share of U.N. dues and increasing funding for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development?

FCNL's view: The president and members of Congress publicly assert that military force should be the choice of "last resort," that other options should be developed and pursued first. Nonetheless, the federal budget consistently allocates hundreds of billions of dollars for current military spending while providing comparatively minuscule amounts for the development of the tools the United States needs for diplomacy, peaceful responses to crises in other countries, contributions to international organizations, and humanitarian and development assistance.

Ban cluster bombs

Cluster bombs send out smaller "bomblets" that can kill all living creatures within a target area often as large as several football fields. In the past 10 years, the United States used cluster bombs in civilian-populated areas in

Afghanistan, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia. More than half the world's governments—including those of most NATO countries—have agreed on a new treaty banning cluster bombs. But the U.S. government did not take part in this process. Will you support legislation that would ban the use of cluster bombs in civilian-populated areas?

FCNL's view: The basic rules of war (Geneva Conventions and associated protocols) outlaw military attacks targeting civilians. Yet the United States has a pattern and practice of using these weapons in civilian-populated areas and providing them to other countries that use these weapons in civilian areas. The United States should heed the call of the world community and ban the use of cluster bombs.

Ban torture

The U.S. Army has established firm policies—written into the Army Field Manual—that prohibit torture. Yet the Justice Department insists the CIA should be exempt from these Army requirements and should have the right to torture some prisoners. Would you support legislation requiring all U.S. government personnel—including the CIA—to ban torture and abide by the definitions in the U.S. Army Field Manual?

FCNL's view: Torture should be abolished now, with no exceptions. Yet the Justice Department says that painful physical abuse—including head-slapping, simulated drowning, and frigid temperatures—is not cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment and isn't torture. Congress needs to ban all torture and restore the right of people detained by the U.S. government to have a court consider why they are in prison and how they are being treated.

Reduce risk of nuclear weapons

Do you support the call from former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, former Sen. Sam Nunn, and former Defense Secretary William

Do you support beginning a serious diplomatic dialogue with Iran?

Would you support banning torture?

Would you support binding legislation requiring at least 20 percent of electricity from renewable resources by 2020?

Perry for the United States to make a priority of pursuing "a world free of nuclear weapons?"

FCNL's view: The United States has a nuclear arsenal of more than 5,400 weapons, enough to blow up any potential adversary many times over. The United States made a commitment to nuclear disarmament when it signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. But the current administration has tried several times to build new nuclear weapons and has consistently refused to negotiate new international agreements to reduce the number of nuclear weapons.

Climate, energy, and human security

One of the most effective strategies for addressing the energy crisis, bringing down energy costs for struggling workers, and protecting the planet would be for the United States to improve energy efficiency, increase renewable energy production, and provide assistance to other countries to do the same. Would you support binding legislation that would require electric utilities to produce at least 20 percent of their electricity from renewable resources by 2020, mandate a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and provide assistance to help other countries adapt to the challenges of climate change?

FCNL's view: The United States has all the resources, creativity, and know-how needed to improve energy efficiency, increase renewable energy production, and decrease oil consumption. But Congress has so far lacked the political will to enact strong, comprehensive legislation to quickly and deeply reduce U.S. energy consumption.

Investing in children

A bipartisan majority in both chambers of Congress has supported expanding government programs that provide health care for poor children. For \$7 billion, the United States could provide health care through the State Children's Health Insurance Program for an additional 4 million children in the United States who lack health insurance. Would you support this funding?

FCNL's view: In 2006, the State Children's Health Insurance Program provided health insurance to 6.6 million children in the United States. Still, approximately 9 million children remain uninsured. A majority in both houses of Congress has voted to expand this program to cover 4 million additional children, but the president vetoed the expansion of this effective program.

Source: FCNL release, FCNL, 245 Second Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002, 800-630-1330 www.fcnl.org

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Bush Department of Labor: a damage assessment

Rep. George Miller

For millions of Americans there was little cause for celebration this past Labor Day. While workers' wages have fallen, the cost of living has skyrocketed, the unemployment rate has soared, fewer workers have health coverage, and good retirement plans are increasingly scarce.

Nearly a century ago, Congress established the federal Department of Labor to be the advocate and champion for working Americans. Specifically, the department was created to advance three core goals: "to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners of the United States, to improve their working conditions, and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment."

However, under the Bush Presidency, these goals—and the interests of workers—have been under direct assault.

From day one, Bush's Department of Labor has actively worked to undermine workers' rights to organize, to fair pay and decent benefits, and to safe working conditions—rights that are essential to growing and sustaining a strong middle class. U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao and other high-level appointees came to their posts determined to weaken the agency.

Under Chao's leadership, the department has repeatedly torpedoed rules designed to help workers. One of her first actions was supporting the repeal of a rule that would have protected workers against repetitive motion injuries, the leading cause of workplace injuries.

Chao went on to severely weaken the department's Wage and Hour Division—which enforces overtime, minimum wage, and child labor laws. Wage theft has skyrocketed at the hands of this administration: An ongoing U.S. Government Accountability Office investigation has uncovered repeated cases where the agency refused to go after scofflaw employers who admittedly owed their workers back wages.

Chao also consistently refused

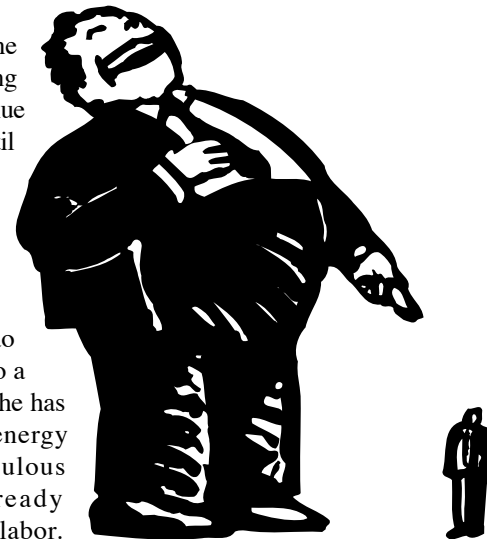
to support increasing the minimum wage, allowing it to erode to its lowest value in fifty years. It wasn't until Democrats took over Congress in 2006 that the minimum wage was finally raised for the first time in ten years.

Time and again, Chao has proven her loyalty to a different constituency. She has expended boundless energy making sure unscrupulous employers have a ready supply of exploitable labor. Just recently the department proposed new regulations that will cut the prevailing wage rates for agricultural guest workers and make it easier for employers to hire cheaper, temporary guest workers from overseas instead of qualified, available American workers.

And while the administration dragged its feet to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina, it moved quickly to slash wages for Gulf Coast workers in the hurricane's aftermath.

After President Bush tapped a mine executive to lead the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration, the agency immediately set about withdrawing vital proposed health and safety rules. By the time a slew of mining accidents hit in 2006, nearly 200 staffers had been cut from the coal mine safety enforcement division alone—a move that helped cripple the agency. When Congress finally acted in the wake of many tragic miner deaths, MSHA acted with little urgency to implement the law. More recently, when the House of Representatives passed additional much-needed mine safety protections, the administration threatened a veto.

It's the same story with Chao's U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Remarkably, the agency has not approved a single new health standard for workers in eight years, aside from one that was ordered by a court. Even in the face of solid scientific evidence documenting workplace dangers, Chao has turned a blind eye to growing health and safety risks.



Take, for example, the department's failure to address hazardous combustible dust. In 2006, the Chemical Safety Board—an independent government agency that investigates industrial chemical accidents—reported that a string of deadly explosions caused by combustible dust are a serious and preventable national problem. Although the CSB urged OSHA to quickly issue a new safety standard, Chao refused—and continued to refuse even after a sugar dust explosion killed 13 workers last February.

The tragic results of the department's fatal failure to act continue to mount—on crane and construction safety, popcorn lung disease, silica, beryllium and more. And in one of its most telling—and insulting—moves to date, the department is now rushing to enact last minute "secret rules" that would make it even harder for health and safety agencies to issue future protections for workers and that would jeopardize workers' retirement savings.

Our nation's workers, battered by unfair global competition, stagnant wages, declining benefits, and poor employer compliance with labor laws, deserve a Department of Labor that lives up to its name, led by individuals who believe in its mission. A Secretary of Labor that actually fights to help and protect hard working Americans—now that would be a reason to celebrate.

Source: *Huffington Post* 9/3/08 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>

Congress: stop Iran blockade

The United States can play a key role in preventing a new war in the Middle East by supporting face-to-face diplomatic negotiations with Iran—a bipartisan strategy endorsed by almost every living former secretary of state, including Henry Kissinger and Colin Powell. Unfortunately, the administration and Congress have chosen to ignore this advice and pursue a strategy that includes public calls for regime change, escalating punitive sanctions, and, according to some accounts, a covert proxy war that is already underway in Iran.

Instead of calling for new sanctions on Iran, Congress should pass legislation that calls for two things:

* Unconditional U.S. diplomatic negotiations with Iran: Face-to-face U.S. diplomatic negotiations with Iran are the key to ending the saber-rattling. A new diplomatic initiative could also help bring the war in Iraq to a close and establish the foundation for peace initiatives between Israel and its neighbors. The United States has never tried this approach.

* Support for the IAEA. This agency won the Nobel Prize for its successful efforts to prevent Iraq from developing new weapons of mass destruction (efforts whose success was proven when the United States failed to find any such weapons in Iraq after the invasion). Now the IAEA leadership is in the middle of a campaign to keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The United States should let the process work.

How can the United States prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons? The best strategy is to pursue unconditional, face-to-face negotiations. Draconian sanctions and threats would jeopardize that process.

Good news, bad news

Here's the good news: Thanks to your lobbying this summer, key House leaders are reconsidering legislation calling in effect for a blockade of Iran that could provoke a war.

Now the bad news: The legislation, H. Con. Res. 362, has 262 cosponsors, more than half of the House. And FCNL lobbyists have learned that supporters of an all stick, no carrot approach to Iran will be using this bill as a starting point as they continue to push for new sanctions next week.

Timing is everything. Members of Congress returned to Washington on September 8 for a three-week session before heading out again to campaign. It will be difficult to pass any legislation on this compressed timetable, but supporters of new Iran sanctions are going to try

their hardest. Behind the scenes, they are lobbying the House leadership to get some version of their bill through before Congress adjourns at the end of September, perhaps by attaching it to one of the few bills that must pass this month.

You can help prevent a war. How can the United States help prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons? The best strategy would be for this country to pursue unconditional, face-to-face negotiations and work with the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor Iran's nuclear power program. Draconian sanctions, threats of a blockade, and a diplomatic quarantine would jeopardize that process.

ACTION: Ask your representative to vote against any legislation that would discourage the United States from engaging in unconditional, face-to-face diplomatic talks with Iran. In particular, urge your representative to vote against the Iran sanctions legislation, H. Con. Res. 362. This legislation effectively calls for a blockade of Iran and a travel ban on all Iranian officials, including diplomats, which would make all but impossible the negotiations that are key to preventing a war. Blocking all oil imports to Iran would punish the country's people, not their government.

Source: Friends Committee on National Legislation release 9/4/08, FCNL, 245 2nd Street NE Washington, DC 20002 / 800-630-1330. www.fcnl.org



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Rallying for health care



The universal health bill, SB840, is now on the Governor's desk. A rally on the north steps of the Capital drew over 400, with a presentation of 50,000 postcards in support of the bill. Call Governor Schwarzenegger to make this bill law.

Twenty questions: social justice quiz 2008

Bill Quigley

In its 2007 Annual Homeless Report to Congress, HUD reported that nearly one in four people in homeless shelters are children 17 or younger. Bill Quigley's "Social Justice Quiz 2008" challenges us to look through the eyes of those less fortunate and educate ourselves about how liberty, opportunity, income and wealth are distributed in the US and around the world. We in the US who say we believe in social justice must challenge ourselves to look at the world through the eyes of those who have much less than us.

Why? Social justice, as defined by John Rawls, respects basic individual liberty and economic improvement. But social justice also insists that liberty, opportunity, income, wealth and the other social bases of self-respect are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution is to everyone's advantage and any inequalities are arranged so they are open to all. Therefore, we must educate ourselves and others about how liberty, opportunity, income and wealth are actually distributed in our country and in our world. Examining the following can help us realize how much we have to learn about social justice. Sources are in (parentheses).

1. How many deaths are there worldwide each year due to acts of terrorism?

Answer: The US State Department reported there were more than 22,000 deaths from terrorism last year. Over half of those killed or injured were Muslims. (Source: Voice of America, May 2, 2008. "Terrorism Deaths Rose in 2007.")

2. How many deaths are there worldwide each day due to poverty and malnutrition?

A: About 25,000 people die every day of hunger or hunger-related causes, according to the United Nations. Poverty.com—Hunger and World Poverty. Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes—one child every five seconds. (Source: Bread for the World. Hunger Facts: International.)

3. In 1965, CEOs in major companies made 24 times more than the average worker. In 1980, CEOs made 40 times more than the average worker. In 2007, CEOs earned how many times more than the average worker?

A: Today's average CEO from a Fortune 500 company makes 364 times an average worker's pay and over 70 times the pay of a four-star Army general. (Executive Excess 2007, page 7, jointly published by Institute for Policy Studies and United for Fair Economy, August 29, 2007. The 1965 numbers from State of Working America 2004-2005, Economic Policy Institute.)

4. In how many of the more than 3,000 cities and counties in the US can a full-time worker who earns the minimum wage afford to pay rent and utilities on a one-bedroom apartment?

A: In no city or county in the entire USA can a full-time worker who earns minimum wage afford even a one-bedroom rental. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) urges renters not to pay more than 30 percent of their income in rent. HUD also reports the fair market rent for each of the counties and cities in the US. Nationally, in order to rent a two-bedroom apartment, one full-time worker in 2008 must earn \$17.32 per hour. In fact, 81 percent of renters live in cities where the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom rental is not even affordable with two minimum-wage jobs. (Source: Out of Reach 2007-2008, April 7, 2008, National Low-Income Housing Coalition.)

5. In 1968, the minimum wage was \$1.65 per hour. How much would the minimum wage be today if it had kept pace with inflation since 1968?

A: Calculated in real (inflation-adjusted) dollars, the 1968 minimum wage would have been \$9.83 in 2007 dollars. (Andrew Tobias, January 16, 2008.) The federal minimum wage is \$6.55 per hour effective July 24, 2008, and will be \$7.25 per hour effective July 24, 2009.

6. True or false? People in the United States spend nearly twice as much on pet food as the US government spends on aid to help foreign countries.

A: True. The USA spends \$43.4 billion on pet food annually. (Source: American Pet Products Manufacturers Association Inc.) The USA spent \$23.5 billion in official foreign aid in 2006. The US government gave the most of any country in the world in actual dollars. As a percentage of gross national income, the US came in second to last among OECD donor countries and ranked number 20 at 0.18 percent behind Sweden at 1.02 percent and other countries such as Norway, Netherlands, Ireland, United Kingdom, Austria, France, Germany, Spain, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and others. This does not count private donations, which, if included, may move the US up as high as sixth. (The Index of Global Philanthropy 2008, pages 15-19.)

7. How many people in the world live on \$2 a day or less?

A: The World Bank reported in August 2008 that 2.6 billion people consume less than \$2 a day.

8. How many people in the world do not have electricity?

A: Worldwide, 1.6 billion people do not have electricity and 2.5 billion people use wood, charcoal or animal dung for cooking. (United Nations Human Development Report 2007/2008, pages 44-45.)

9. People in the US consume 42 kilograms of meat per person per year. How much meat and grain do people in India and China eat?

A: People in the US lead the world in meat consumption at 42 kg per person per year, compared to 1.6 kg in India and 5.9 kg in China. People in the US consume five times the grain (wheat, rice, rye, barley, etc.) as people in India, three times as much as people in China, and twice as much as people in Europe. ("THE BLAME GAME: Who is behind the world food price crisis," Oakland Institute, July 2008.)

10. How many cars does China have for every 1,000 drivers? India? The US?

A: China has nine cars for every 1,000 drivers. India has 11 cars for every 1,000 drivers. The US has 1,114 cars for every 1,000 drivers. (Iain Carson and Vijay V. Vaitheeswaran, "Zoom: The Global Race to Fuel the Car of the Future" (2007).)

11. How much grain is needed to fill an SUV tank with ethanol?

A: The grain needed to fill an SUV tank with ethanol could feed a hungry person for a year. (Lester Brown, CNN.Money.com, August 16, 2006.)

12. According to The Wall Street Journal, the richest one percent of Americans earns what percent of the nation's adjusted gross income? Five percent? Ten percent? Fifteen percent? Twenty percent?

A: "According to the figures, the richest one percent reported 22 percent of the nation's total adjusted gross income in 2006. That is up from 21.2 percent a year earlier, and it is the highest in the 19 years that the IRS has kept strictly comparable figures. The 1988 level was 15.2 percent. Earlier IRS data show the last year the share of income belonging to the top one percent was at such a high level as it was in 2006 was in 1929, but changes in measuring income make a precise comparison difficult." (Jesse Drucker, "Richest Americans See Their Income Share Grow," Wall Street Journal, July 23, 2008, page A3.)

13. How many people does our government say are homeless in the US on any given day?

A: A total of 754,000 are homeless. About 338,000 homeless people are not in shelters (live on the streets, in cars or in abandoned buildings) and 415,000 are in shelters on any given night. (The 2007 US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Annual Homeless Report to Congress, page iii and 23.) The population of San Francisco is about 739,000.

14. What percentage of people in homeless shelters are children?

A: HUD reports nearly one in four people in homeless shelters are children 17 or younger. (2007 HUD Annual Homeless Report to Congress, page iv)

15. How many veterans are homeless on any given night?

A: Over 100,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. About 18 percent of the adult homeless population are veterans. (2007 HUD Homeless Report, p 32). This is about the same population as Green Bay, Wisconsin.

16. The military budget of the United States in 2008 is the largest in the world at \$623 billion per year. How much larger is the US military budget than that of China, the second-largest in the world?

A: Ten times. China's military budget is \$65 billion. The US military budget is nearly 10 times larger than the second leading military spender. (GlobalSecurity.org)

17. The US military budget is larger than how many of the countries of the rest of the world combined?

A: The US military budget of \$623 billion is larger than the budgets of all the countries in the rest of the world put together. The total global military budget of the rest of the world is \$500 billion. Russia's military budget is \$50 billion, South Korea is \$21 billion, and Iran is \$4.3 billion. (GlobalSecurity.org.)

18. Over the 28-year history of the Berlin Wall, 287 people perished trying to cross it. How many people have died in the last four years trying to cross the border between Arizona and Mexico?

A: At least 1,268 people have died along the border of Arizona and Mexico since 2004. The Arizona Daily Star keeps track of the reported deaths along the state border, and it reports 214 died in 2004; 241 in 2005, 216 in 2006, 237 in 2007, and 116 as of July 31, 2008. These numbers

(continued next page)

McCain's phony earmark ploy

Lindsay Beyerstein

If elected, John McCain pledges to veto any bill with earmarks. McCain touts his opposition to earmarks as a crusade against corruption and waste. However, some observers suspect that McCain's pledge to fight earmarks is just another power grab for the executive branch.

"I got an old ink pen, my friends, and the first pork-barrel-laden earmark, big spending bill that comes across my desk, I will veto it. You will know their names. I will make them famous, and we'll stop this corruption," McCain said at a campaign stop in Washington, D.C., this week.

McCain claims that eliminating earmarks could save the federal government \$100 billion over two years without cutting funding for federal agencies. This claim is dubious at best. If McCain were to make good on his promise, it would effectively be an assault on the power of the legislative branch. "No president likes earmarks because they impinge on the latitude of the executive branch to spend on the things they want to fund," says Scott Lilly, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress who has written extensively on earmarks.

So, just what are these earmarks we hear so much about? It turns

out, even the experts aren't sure. Basically, an earmark is money that's directed for a specific program or project. When McCain rails against earmarks, it's safe to say that he's only objecting to money targeted by Congress, not money set aside by the president or requested by federal agencies that serve under the executive branch.

"It's hard to say how much federal money is spent on earmarks because there is no formal or widely accepted definition," says James Horney, director of federal fiscal policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Horney notes that when the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service tried to estimate the amount of money spent through earmarks, the analysts had to come up with a different definition for each of the 13 appropriations bills they studied.

Even McCain's advisers aren't sure where he got the \$100 billion figure, but the number is probably from the CRS study, which concluded that the federal government spends about \$67 billion dollars a year on earmarks, an unusually high estimate. The number is so high because the study counted virtually every targeted expenditure as an earmark. For example, Horney explains that the CRS study counted "practically all our foreign aid money" as an

earmark because the appropriations bill sets aside different pots of money for different countries. "Aid to Israel is specified in that bill," says Horney. "That's almost certainly not what John McCain is talking about. He doesn't want to cut aid to Israel."

Defense appropriations and foreign aid account for the lion's share of the \$67 billion. Given McCain's pledge not to cut defense spending, it's unclear how he could save \$50 billion a year by eliminating earmarks.

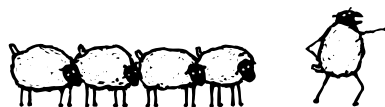
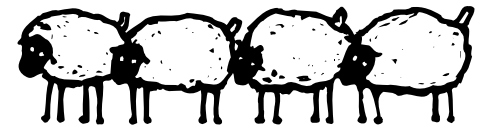
Earmarks are additions to appropriations bills that specify how that money is going to be

spent. Typically, these riders don't authorize new spending. Let's say an appropriations bill sets aside \$500 million for road construction. A member might add an earmark stipulating that \$10 million of that money will be spent on a road in his district. Eliminating the earmark wouldn't save money overall because that \$10 million will go to road projects one way or the other. The only question is who will choose which roads will be built. When the earmark for the infamous Bridge to Nowhere was canceled, Sarah Palin's administration spent that money

on other transportation projects.

If earmarks were abolished, the president and his appointees at federal agencies would decide which roads to build. The argument for taking discretion away from Congress and giving it to the president and federal agencies is that dispassionate experts can make the decision with the good of the whole country in mind, whereas legislators have a vested interest in securing money for their own districts.

Source: AlterNet 9/11/08 <<http://www.alternet.org>>.



do not include deaths along the California or Texas borders. The Border Patrol reported that 400 people died in fiscal 2006-2007, while 453 died in 2004-2005 and 494 died in 2004-2005. (Source: The Associated Press, November 8, 2007.)

19. India is ranked second in the world in gun ownership with four guns per 100 people. China is third with three firearms per 100 people. Which country is first and how widespread is gun ownership?

A: The US is first in gun ownership worldwide with 90 guns for every 100 citizens. (Laura MacInnis, "US most armed country with 90 guns per 100 people." Reuters, August 28, 2007.)

20. What country leads the world in the incarceration of its citizens?

A: The US jails 751 inmates per 100,000 people, the highest rate in the world. Russia is second with 627 per 100,000. England's rate is 151, Germany's is 88 and Japan's is 63. The US has 2.3 million people behind bars, more than any country in the world. (Adam Liptak, "Inmate Count in US Dwarfs Other Nations" New York Times, April 23, 2008.)

Bill Quigley is a human rights lawyer and law professor at Loyola University New Orleans. quigley77@gmail.com

Source: www.truthout.org truthout/Perspective 9/12/08

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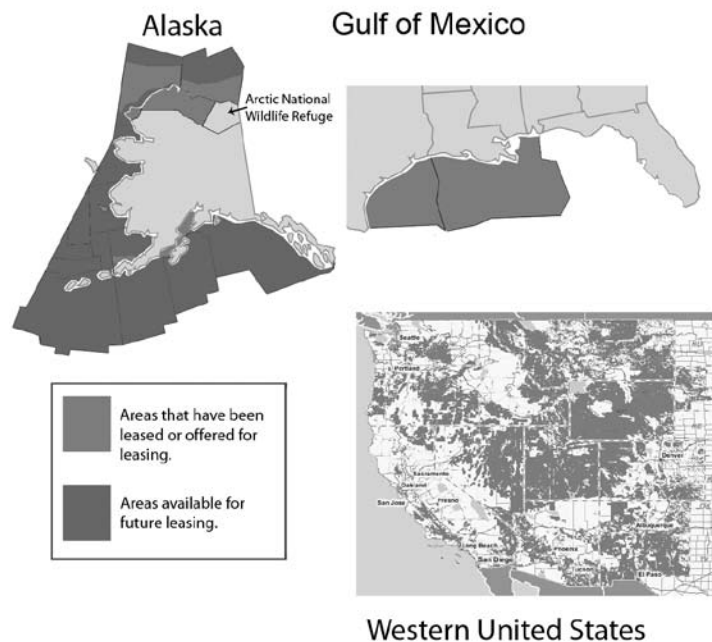
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BIG OIL CAN'T GET ENOUGH



Maps are based on 2008 data from the Interior Department's Minerals Management Service and 2004 EWG analysis of BLM land and minerals records.

Did you know that oil companies are already sitting on 68 million acres of leases that they aren't even drilling?

Big Oil and its allies would like you to think that more drilling will ease your pain at the pump, but that's not the truth. The bottom line is this: More oil drilling will not lower gas prices or create energy independence—it will only make the world's richest oil companies richer.

Check out our map showing how much of our country Big Oil already has. Average Americans are being squeezed by high energy prices, and the oil companies are taking advantage to push their long-term drilling agenda. They have been spreading a map full of lies though the Internet.

Source: Sierra Club release 8/28/08, 85 Second St., San Francisco, CA 94105

Brazilian Amazon...timber!

Satellite imagery released earlier this week provided further evidence that deforestation in Brazil's Amazon region accelerated dramatically this year.

Between August 2007 and July 2008, 8,147 square kilometers of the Brazilian Amazon were cleared, according to the country's National Institute for Space Research (INPE). This is an area more than twice the size of the U.S. state of Rhode Island.

The expanse of deforested land is about 69 percent greater than last year, when 4,820 square kilometers were removed. "We're not content," Brazilian Environment Minister Carlos Minc told The Associated Press. "Deforestation has to fall more and the conditions for sustainable development have to improve."

Last year's deforestation numbers, however, were the lowest since recording began in the 1970s. The amount of forest cleared this year, while still substantial, is also less than previous years.

As world leaders debate a new international agreement on climate change, preservation of

the vast Amazon forest, which stores large amounts of carbon, has been identified as a necessary step to avoid accelerated warming. The Brazilian government has taken additional steps in recent months to curb illegal logging, but a growing global market for beef and soybeans encourages the deforestation.

The diverse Amazon forest contains one in ten of the world's known species and enough vegetation to absorb an estimated 10 percent of atmospheric carbon dioxide, not including oceanic carbon sinks. Since the 1970s, about 20 percent of the Amazon forest has been cut, leaving mainly open fields with little diversity in its place.

Illegal deforestation reached its peak this year between August 2007 and April, when satellite images observed about 84 percent of the year's deforestation.

Landowners often cut deeper into the forest to make room for cattle ranches and soybean farms. Both products are experiencing a boom in demand, as Brazilian beef surges in global popularity and soybean prices rise due to

global meat consumption and biofuels production.

During the year's hike in illegal activities, the government responded with a variety of new policies. Landowners must provide environmental permits to prove they are not illegally clearing land in order to receive public or private bank loans. Illegal loggers also risk fines and the possibility of being cut off from the domestic and international timber trades.

Industry groups also say they are taking steps to encourage sustainable development. The Brazilian Vegetable Oils Industry Association, a soy industry group, has agreed to ban until July 2009 the purchase of soybeans produced on forestlands cleared after 2006. The government is negotiating similar agreements for saw mills, slaughterhouses, and steel mills that operate in the Brazilian Amazon, according to Mongabay.com.

ACTION: Consider cutting back on your own beef consumption, reducing demand that is pushing deforestation.

Source: Worldwatch Institute release 9/5/08 <http://www.worldwatch.org/>

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On global warming: stop talking, start doing

Stanley Thomas

Global Warming is wreaking havoc on planet Earth, its people, and its creatures. By the thousands—by the tens of thousands in Europe in 2003—Grandpas and Grandmas die prematurely due to killer heat waves. Multi-year droughts in one part of the world result in hunger in another part of the globe. Wildfires and hurricanes are both more frequent and more violent than ever before. Comfortable homes in long-settled communities and filled with irreplaceable mementoes and memories are reduced to ashes or splintered lumber in a matter of minutes. Jobs disappear in the twinkling of an eye. A lifetime of savings for college, retirement, medical emergencies, or a rainy day is hijacked by a pitiless Mother Nature gone berserk. Single climate-caused disasters are creating penniless refugees by the millions.

The lookouts on the castle's ramparts are shouting warnings about the seriousness and the closeness of the threat. But the King in the castle ignores the threat and disparages the lookouts as "Chicken Littles." The milling crowds in the courtyard—smug and proud of their ignorance—gossip ad nauseum about the threat and continue business as usual, doing nothing.

James Hansen (Congressional hearing, 5/23/98) saw the threat from very far off. Hansen asserted then (20 years ago) that there was a 99% certainty that global warming was real and that it was anthropogenic (caused by humans burning fossil fuels). He rang the fire bell—to no avail. Al Gore temporarily woke up the populace to the threat [An Inconvenient Truth]. Bill McKibben wrote with alarm about the chasm between the imminence and severity of the threat [The End of Nature, p. xv]. Jared Diamond wrote authoritatively and persuasively about the threat to the very survival of the Kingdom [Collapse, Chapters 2 and 5]. And Diamond was echoed by Walter "The-most-trusted-man-in-America" Cronkite [Univ. of Pacific, Fall 2006].

Global Warming and Climate Change are wreaking havoc on planet Earth. But, hark, on the far horizon can be seen seven

knights in shining armor—Robert Socolow, Stephen Pacala, UCS, Greg Nickels, T. Boone Pickens, and Allen and Burt Wright—on white horses riding to the rescue.

We can tame global warming:

Within our lifetimes, America has taken on three daunting challenges; and succeeded superbly in all three.

(1) We responded to the wake-up call of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Under the bold leadership of Pres. Roosevelt and his wartime cabinet, we mobilized the whole nation overnight and achieved unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany in only 3-1/2 years. And unconditional surrender of Imperial Japan only three months after that. Throughout, the sense of urgency was pervasive.

(2) President Roosevelt responded to Albert Einstein's wake-up call that the Germans had split the atom and were well-started toward creating an atomic bomb of unimaginable power. The Army's Manhattan Project, under the bold leadership of Brig. Gen. Leslie Groves and the brilliant physicist Robert Oppenheimer, mobilized the nation's most brilliant physicists, mathematicians, and engineers, and beat the Nazis to the punch. We were thus able to end WW-II and avoid an inconceivably bloody invasion of the Japanese homeland. Throughout, the sense of urgency was pervasive.

(3) We responded to the wake-up call of Sputnik, Yuri Gagarin's orbit of Earth, and the Soviet Union's astonishing lead in space. Under the bold leadership of Pres. Kennedy and the fledgling NASA organization, our whole nation was mobilized. Within a decade, America landed men on the moon and returned them safely to Earth. Throughout, the sense of urgency was pervasive.

In each of these three instances, several absolutely indispensable elements were solidly in place. There was a clear-eyed and profound understanding of both the threat and the stakes by both the leaders and the American people. The sense of urgency was pervasive. There was a bold vision, a broad-based embrace of a clearly-defined goal, highly

competent, visionary leadership, and strong organizations already in place which were particularly well-suited to the new tasks at hand.

Hope

In stunning contrast to the leadership of President Roosevelt in the 1940s, the response of the global warming-denying, hostile-to-science, scientist-censoring, in-bed-with-Big-Oil Bush administration to the palpable presence of Global Warming, Climate Change, and the wake-up call of Hurricane Katrina has failed at every single point. President Bush has betrayed the American people. He has, in fact, put the very civilization of our global village in the greatest danger, according to Pulitzer prize-winning Jared Diamond (Collapse, chapters 2 & 5). But VP candidate Senator Biden said in recent days. "We don't have to accept the condition we can't bear. We can change it."

America's grassroots is alive and well. The nation's politicians who are nearest to the hearts of the American people are its mayors—the grassroots. The nation's mayors can mobilize the American people as if their lives depended upon it. In league with the scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, industrialists, environmental community, and an informed press, the nation's mayors can mobilize their constituents to solve the carbon and climate problems for the next half century.

Professors Robert Socolow and Stephen Pacala of Princeton University have published studies that strongly suggest that we can eliminate the use of coal and oil by the year 2050. Their "wedges" are based primarily on conservation, increased efficiency of buildings and equipment, alternative energy (solar, wind, biofuels, nuclear, and others), reforestation, and carbon sequestration. Socolow and Pacala contend that "Humanity already possesses the fundamental scientific, technical, and industrial know-how to solve the carbon and climate problems for the next half century" [Gore, p.280] We only lack the will.

The Union of Concerned Scientists and other scientific organizations have fleshed out

Socolow and Pacala's studies with a concrete goal: Reduce CO2 emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 [Catalyst, Fall 2007] California's governor Arnold Schwarzenegger adopted that goal when he signed AB32. Presidential candidate Barack Obama has endorsed that goal as well.

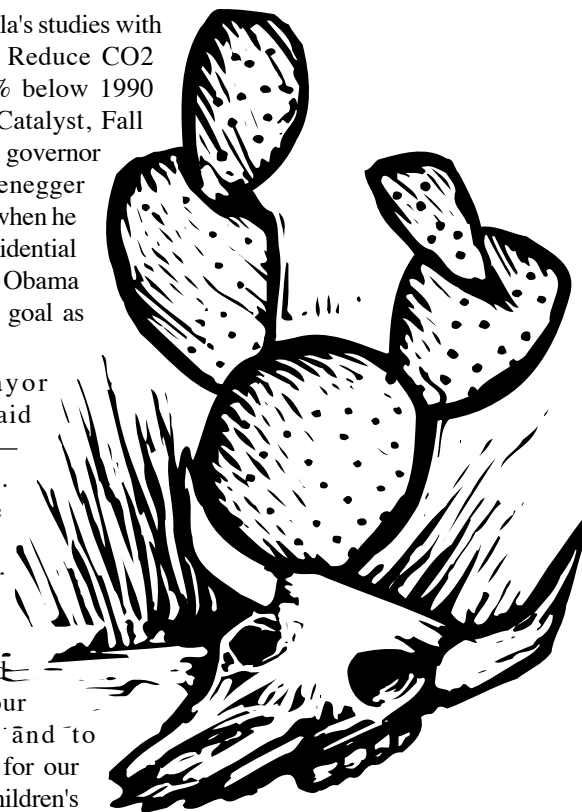
Seattle's mayor Greg Nickels laid the foundation—through the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement—for a nationwide, grassroots effort to save the threatened civilization of our global village and to secure the future for our children and our children's children.

Well-known entrepreneur T. Boone Pickens has evolved from "An Oil Man" into "An Energy Man." [www.PickensPlan.com] Pickens has pointed out that America is blessed with a "wind corridor" from Texas to North Dakota. And the nation is blessed with a "solar corridor" from Texas to California. He has already mounted a massive effort to install hundreds of highly efficient wind turbines in Texas. We can achieve independence from foreign oil in only ten years.

Billionaire entrepreneur Gary Comer, climate scientist Wally Broecker, and theoretician Klaus Lackner conceived of a device to scrub excess CO2 out of the atmosphere. Engineer Allen Wright and his older brother Burt,

a natural-born mechanic, made an earth-shattering breakthrough and invented a practical device to do exactly that (Broecker and Kunzig, Fixing Climate).

There has been a lot of aimless, superficial, not-very-serious talk recently about the global warming issue. In that respect, some of the more vocal organizations are also "All hat and no cattle." IBM has an interesting new ad series launched late last fall. The punchline is STOP TALKING, START DOING. NASA's James E. Hansen, one of the world's top climatologists tells the nation that we are racing toward a "tipping point." We are running out of time. America's grassroots is long overdue to STOP TALKING, START DOING.



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Why McCain and the GOP are so afraid of discussing the economy?

Frances Moore Lappe

For too long, Democrats have been derided as economically clueless tax-and-spenders. No wonder Americans so often vote against their own common interests. We should know better. And now we do.

Alan S. Blinder, in the New York Times, drew recently from Unequal Democracy, a new book by Princeton political science professor Larry M. Bartels. His takeaway could be a game-changer:

Over the last six decades, whether rich or poor, everyone has done better with Democrats in the White House.

And that is just the nondivisive, universal note that Barack Obama needs to hit and keep hitting, in response to the Republican

National Convention, and in debates and in the press. So let's tell our

McCain-leaning friends and family about this—and also encourage the Obama campaign to make sure this message gets heard. Among the most striking points:

* From 1948 to 2007, the average annual growth of real gross national product was 1.64 percent per capita under Republican presidents versus 2.78 percent under Democrats. Put another way, real per capita GNP grew 69.5 percent faster under the Democrats.

* Blinder notes that this 1.14-point difference over eight years would yield 9.33 percent more income per person—and

that's a lot more than most of us could expect from a tax cut.

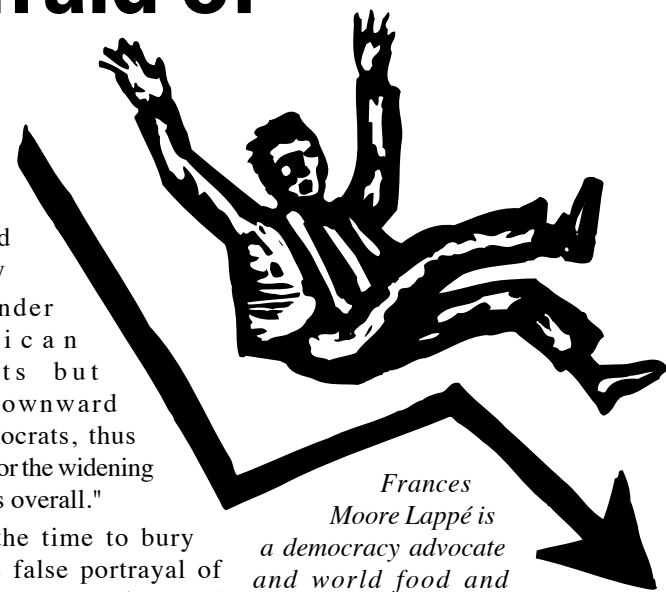
* The best-off families (the 95th percentile) fared almost as well under Republican as under Democratic presidents (1.90 percent growth per year, versus 2.12 percent).

* Families at the 20th percentile (the poorest) did significantly better under Democrats than under Republicans. (2.64 percent versus 0.43 percent). Consider this: Eight years of a 0.43 percent annual rate of growth increases a family's income by 3.5 percent, but eight years at 2.64 percent raises it by 23.2 percent!

* Income inequality in the United States has been rising for about three decades, especially in recent years. Over the entire 60-year period, writes Blinder,

"income inequality trended substantially upward under Republican presidents but slightly downward under Democrats, thus accounting for the widening income gaps overall."

Now is the time to bury forever the false portrayal of the Democrats' economic record and replace it with these hopeful facts.



Frances Moore Lappé is a democracy advocate and world food and hunger expert who has authored or co-authored 16 books.

Source: Huffington Post 9/5/08 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>

What McCain's VP choice tells us

Jim Hightower

John McCain might love America, in the abstract, but he clearly has little regard for us Americans, in the here and now.

That's the message that he sent with his choice of Sarah Palin to be Vice President of the United States. Sure, the VP job itself doesn't require much heavy lifting, but it's the job-to-come that makes one's nominee a momentous selection, since 300 million people might suddenly find this person sitting in the biggest office in America. Being 72 years of age and having a history of health problems, McCain had a special responsibility to choose the best to be a heartbeat away from the presidency. He flubbed it.

This is not about Palin and her readiness for prime-time speechmaking. It's about McCain's fitness to be president. The decision on a running mate is the most telling one that a presidential candidate makes, and McCain made his impetuously, almost flippantly.

He wanted his senate buddy, Joe Lieberman, to run with him, but he was denied that choice by the angry right wing of his party.

So, at the last minute, he seemed to say, what the hell, how about that lady governor in Alaska? He had not even met Palin until this year. He knew no details about her and had not been considering her at all seriously. Then, at loggerheads with the Republican right and with his nominating convention looming, McCain had to rush her through a cursory background check only 24 hours before he had his first face-to-face meeting with her, which was the same day he hastily offered the vice-presidency. The vice-presidency!

McCain would have given more thought to picking out another house for himself than he did in picking Sarah Palin. Such recklessness reveals a stunning lack of judgment and shows what little respect he has for the American public. His responsibility was not just to find a political running mate who appeals to the Republican base, but someone who is capable of stepping into the Oval Office as President of the United States.

Source: Jim Hightower commentary 9/8/08 <http://jimhightower.com/sites/jimhightower.civicactions.net/files/33_16_mnc.mp3>

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First steps in a journey of a thousand miles

Adrian Nickols

Leaders representing eight community agencies, including representatives from University of the Pacific (UOP), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Fishery Foundation, the San Joaquin County Farm Bureau, Stockton Unified School District (SUSD) and Defenders of Wildlife (DOW) took their first steps together on September 4th as a Steering Committee dedicated to the stewardship of the Lower Calaveras River.

After a warm welcome from hostess Kari Burr, the group began its first exploratory session. The mission: to build a shared vision and to position the group as a vehicle of change in our community. After sharing unique visions—and discussing the many different ideas on what a restored

river should look like—the group agreed that the current version of the river is very different from what was envisioned. After much discussion the committee agreed that the most important challenges facing our “River without a Voice” are:

1. The impact of degraded water quality and water flow on the aquatic and riparian habitat;

2. Obtaining/sustaining ongoing funding for the group to do our work;

3. A lack of equal investment by all stakeholders, due to awareness of needs, awareness of current water uses, and a lack of public awareness and education; and

4. Water use choices—specifically, reconfiguring salmon impediments like the Bellota-Weir dam.

Over the next few weeks,

committee members agreed to get in contact with community members and constituents and get feedback on these problems. The goal will be to reconvene and use this feedback to refine our list into one issue that is specific, immediate, tangible, and winnable. As the great Lao Tzu once said, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.” Thanks to the dedication of the Friends of the Lower Calaveras River Steering Committee, our River without a Voice is one step closer to speaking out all on her own!

ACTION: To take part or for more information, contact Jeremy Terhune, Defenders of Wildlife San Joaquin Valley Representative, 4555 Pershing Avenue #33-373 Stockton, CA 95207 209-922-8215 JTerhune@defenders.org www.defenders.org

Reid and Anne Cerney *(continued from page 3)*

George W. Bush invaded Iraq we resumed our vigil; we now stand for peace every Sunday from noon to one in front of Lodi City Hall. That continues to this day."

Reid and Ann have been leaders in Democratic party politics. "Our neighbors vote very differently than we do," he says, "but they seem to have decided we're okay. I recently got a letter from the woman across the street; she said we've been an inspiration to them these 44 years."

I ask how they became peace and justice people. "My grandparents were Wobblies," Ann says, "labor organizers in Butte, Montana. My dad was an electrical engineer who grew walnuts in Contra Costa County. They read all this radical Catholic stuff."

Reid grew up in Pacific Grove, graduated from Santa Clara University in 1952 "a very strong anti-Communist," and became a licensed clinical social worker. Ann taught primary school, their families introduced them—"it was an arranged marriage"—and in 1960 they ventured on a life-changing experience. In that

era of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, these two "very very Catholic" idealists signed up with the Association for International Development. They spent nine months training with young Quakers and Catholics in inner-city Paterson, New Jersey, under teachers like Dorothy Day and Fathers Daniel and Phillip Berrigan.

"It was profound, two conservative California kids surrounded by all this East Coast Catholic radical thinking. Christianity is still our inner core—faith hope and charity, blessed are the poor, blessed are the peacemakers, do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

I ask if they have advice for the young. "Not exactly advice," says Ann, "but a warning. I'd like to say to these bright young women coming out of law school, Look, girlie, you could be in a burkha tomorrow! This world is still run by greedy men."

Reid answers the same question. "I don't impose myself by offering advice, without an invitation. I've

loved being a counselor, I wouldn't have done anything else. I help people understand and express themselves, and listen to each other. I might ask, not 'how do you feel about that?', but 'how do you decide to feel about that?'"

Do they have hope? "My legal work will go on," says Ann, "I've trained four young attorneys. I'm afraid Obama might not get elected, racism still runs so deep. But if he is elected he'll do a good job as president—we will make him!"

Reid says, "I'm encouraged by how much I hear about Green. I hope for a world of peace, when we finally give up war and the institutions associated with it, and become civilized."

Ann Cerney is an attorney in Stockton, and a board member of California Rural Legal Assistance. Reid Cerney served on the board of the Peace and Justice Network for 11 years, and wrote a column for Connections signed "Reid Cerney, political pundit." He reported inside info from the Vatican, and the breakfast table conversations of George and Laura Bush.

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The whiners' recession

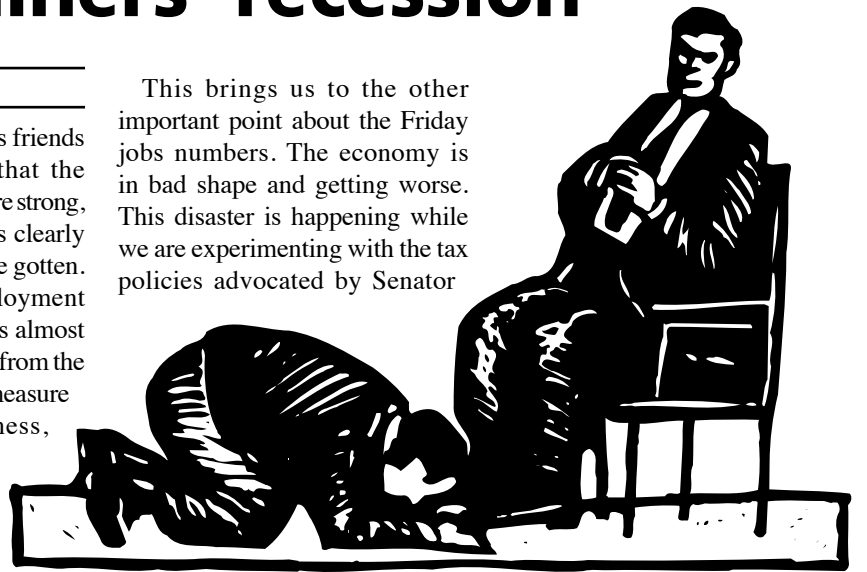
Dean Baker

Senator McCain and his friends no doubt still believe that the economy's fundamentals are strong, but Friday's jobs numbers clearly show how bad things have gotten. The 6.1 percent unemployment rate reported for August is almost as high as the worst levels from the last recession. A broader measure of labor market weakness, that includes people who can only find part-time work or who have given up looking for jobs, is higher than at any point in the last recession.

When the labor market weakens, workers have less bargaining power with their employers. As a result, wages are trailing more than 2 percentage points behind inflation over the last year. Wages are virtually the entire income for most workers. If the purchasing power of their wages falls by 2 percent, this is the equivalent of a 2 percentage point increase in their tax rate.

This is worth thinking about. Most workers in the country have just seen the equivalent of a 2 percentage point increase in their tax rate, and it has gotten almost no attention. By contrast, Senator McCain is claiming that the economy will collapse if we increase the tax rate by 3.6 percentage points for people who can't remember how many homes they own. It is easy to understand how a typical family experiences real hardship when their wages don't keep up with the price of food, gas, and heating oil. It's a bit harder to understand how the folks who can't keep track of their homes will suffer by restoring tax rates to the Clinton-era levels.

This brings us to the other important point about the Friday jobs numbers. The economy is in bad shape and getting worse. This disaster is happening while we are experimenting with the tax policies advocated by Senator



McCain. We have an economy that is now shedding jobs at the rate of almost 100,000 a month. There is no prospect of turnaround in sight. We could have half a million fewer jobs by the time the next president is sworn into office than we do today.

This is the Bush-McCain economy. Senator McCain may have forgotten, but President Bush already tried his economic policies and the results are not good. We have just been through a business cycle in which the wage of the typical worker and the typical working family fell. This is the first time that has ever happened.

As bad as the situation is, it will surely get worse as the recession deepens. Wages and incomes will fall further behind inflation as the unemployment rate continues to rise. By contrast, the Clinton-era tax rates were associated with the most prosperous period since the early seventies. As I have written many times, Clinton's policies do not deserve all the credit for the prosperity of the late 90s, and President Bush's policies do not deserve all the blame for the economy's poor performance in

the current decade.

However, it strains credulity to argue that the Clinton-era tax rates are a recipe for stagnation, while the Bush-McCain tax cuts for the rich are the road to prosperity. When he pushes his tax cuts as a remedy for the economy's ills, Senator McCain is effectively imitating Groucho Marx's famous line: "what are you going to believe, me or your lying eyes?" At this point, McCain should be embarrassed to even say that tax cuts for the rich help the economy. Tax cuts for the rich help the rich, they don't help the economy. It's that simple.

This economic catastrophe was many years in the making. There is no painless way to recover from the collapse of the housing bubble and the correction from an over-valued dollar. We do know that Senator McCain's plan to keep giving the rich more money is not a road to prosperity because that is exactly what we have been doing.

We can't know exactly how Senator Obama will address the economy's problems if he takes office in January in part because we don't know exactly where the economy will be. However, a plan that focuses on supporting ordinary workers and promoting clean technologies, is likely to produce much better results than policies that are focused on redistributing even more income to the wealthy.

Dean Baker is the co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research <http://www.cepr.net/> (CEPR).

Source: *truthout* Perspective 9/8/09 www.truthout.org

It strains credulity to argue that the Clinton-era tax rates are a recipe for stagnation, while the Bush-McCain tax cuts for the rich are the road to prosperity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

An old warrior's vision: follow the Constitution, serve the people

John Morearty

"Blackwater concentration camps exist already, of course," said Robert Bowman (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Air Force, retired), speaking to seventy-five people at University of the Pacific on September 8. "The camps are in northern Idaho, Oklahoma, on unused military bases in the South. Local people know, they told me about them during my 'Patriots Take Back America' speaking tour these past three months. Built by Halliburton, the camps are ready to imprison 'dissidents'-folks like us-if Bush and Cheney attack Iran and declare martial law in this country.

"That attack could still happen, because these guys are desperate not to be voted out of power and indicted for war crimes. But the attack is less likely than a year ago. Opposition is growing, even inside the military itself. Admiral Fallon and various generals have been fired because they opposed it, but there are still true patriots who haven't been rooted out, among higher officers as well as ordinary soldiers. I spend a lot of time talking to military people, encouraging them to refuse an illegal order to attack Iran. Instead, I say, keep your oath to defend the Constitution—not the president!—against all enemies foreign and domestic.

"If the order comes down to round up patriots like us, I doubt that the military will obey, certainly not the National Guard. They'll have to send Blackwater mercenaries (who are unconstitutional, by the way). But I picture soldiers stepping forward and forming a circle around us-with their guns pointed outward."

Bob Bowman has always considered himself a patriot. As a gung-ho hotshot, he flew interceptors. He commanded four nuclear-armed squadrons over Korea, but promised himself he would never order the bombs released, even if the U.S. were destroyed by Soviet atomic weapons.

"I believed in deterrence," he told the audience, "but if deterrence

failed I could see no point in incinerating a hundred million Russians. It was immoral."

He flew 101 fighter combat missions in Vietnam, got a Ph.D. from Caltech in aeronautics and nuclear engineering, and was in charge of all Star Wars programs under Presidents Ford and Carter. He retired and took a lucrative aerospace job. But when President Reagan proposed weapons in space, Bowman balked. "We'd studied that exhaustively, and concluded it was suicidal. Reconnaissance satellites yes, laser battle stations no." He wrote a book *Star Wars: Defense or Death Star?*, and began speaking out. His bosses said, "you can exercise your free speech—or you can work for us." Bowman quit, and gave "about five thousand" speeches against Star Wars; he has been on the stump for peace and justice ever since. At UOP, he spoke as the newly elected President, giving the State of the Nation address in 2009:

A state of the union address

"I didn't get here tonight by taking corporate millions. I didn't get here by selling myself to the oil companies, the pharmaceutical companies, the insurance companies To be quite honest, I'm not sure how I got here! But here I am, and as long as I am President of the United States, this government will serve the needs of the people, not the greeds of the wealthy elite."

The basic problem, he said, is "the domination of our government by a handful of billionaires and multinational corporations. This is the very definition of fascism. I ask Congress to quickly pass a Constitutional amendment which says, 'Corporations and other fictitious entities are not "persons" under this Constitution and shall have none of the rights and privileges thereof.' "

The media must be freed from corporate domination: "I am ordering the Federal Communications Commission to immediately reinstate the fairness doctrine and the ban on multiple ownership. It's time for a return

to family-owned newspapers and radio and television stations. The monopoly media conglomerates must sell off their assets immediately. (Sorry, Mister Murdoch.) The public airwaves are once again going to belong to the people and serve the public interest. The key to ending fascism is to separate big money and political power."

The electoral process must also be reformed. "I ask Congress and the States to return to paper ballots and institute full public financing of elections, proportional representation, preference voting (sometimes called Instant Runoff Voting), abolition of burdensome petition requirements on independents and third parties, and (so working people can actually vote) making election day a federal holiday. Many of these changes are designed to empower third parties. There is nothing democratic about a two-party system when both parties are owned at the highest level by the same powerful interests."

Bowman challenges the official story of 9/11. "I'm an old interceptor pilot, and hijacked airliners do not fly around for an hour and forty minutes without being intercepted ... unless our air defense system was sabotaged. Indestructible black boxes (orange, actually) do not evaporate in the same fire from which an unharmed passport floats to the street below. Steel skyscrapers do not collapse at free-fall speed because of a kerosene [jet fuel] fire. Steel buildings do not collapse at all because of a kerosene fire - never have, and never will. And Building Seven wasn't even struck by an aircraft. The truth about 9/11 is that after seven years we still don't know the truth about 9/11 ... and we should. Never again must we allow this nation to be stampeded into war under false pretenses.

"I have three degrees in nuclear engineering, and theoretically, nuclear power plants can be made very safe. But there is no safe way to get rid of the radioactive waste, and until there is, there can be no new nuclear power plants. Instead, bold programs in solar

and wind energy with subsidies and tax breaks to make them not only competitive, but superior in the marketplace....

"No more Iraqs or Afghanistans. No more Kosovos. No more El Salvadors. These are not isolated incidents of stupidity. They are part of a long, bloody history of foreign policy being conducted for the financial interests of the wealthy few.... It endangers our national security. It mortgages our future. It sacrifices our children. And it will never happen again!

"I have ordered an immediate recall of our forces all around the world. Think of it. After 63 years, the occupation of Germany and Japan has finally come to an end. With the exception of small Marine detachments guarding our embassies, all our military will be home within three months, and all overseas bases will be returned to the host countries. This one change in military mission - eliminating the mission of protecting the global financial interests of multinational corporations - will allow us to reduce the defense budget by 80% ... and have more security....

"I see an America in which every family can be supported by one wage-earner with one job paying

a living wage. It is an America in which health care is provided to all as a right through a single-payer national health program. (As a conservative, I believe that the only fiscally-responsible way to provide universal health care is to eliminate the profit, overhead, red tape, and interference between doctor and patient of the insurance companies by kicking them out of health care altogether.)

Bowman looked at his audience.

"It matters not if my presidency is real or fanciful. My part is done. It is finished. The rest is in your hands. The future and the vision and the dream itself depend on you. May God sustain you in your struggles and bless America through your actions. We the people CAN win. We the people MUST win. We the people WILL win. Thank you, and good night."

Robert Bowman has terminal cancer from Agent Orange. His website is www.ThePatriots.us. His full UOP talk (four times the length of these excerpts) is on the Connections website, www.pjnsjc.org. For videotapes of the talk, call Vince Kotecki, 209-546-1876.

John & Cindy: 8 houses

1. The largest home is a creekside ranch near Sedona, Ariz., spread over more than six acres. Records from Yavapai County Assessor's Office show it includes three houses and is worth about \$1.1-million. CNN reported that McCain said there are six houses on the property. The owner is listed as the Cindy Hensley McCain Family Trust.

2. and 3. In nearby Phoenix, Cindy McCain owns two combined condo units worth about \$1.7-million.

4. In Arlington, Va., the McCains live in a three-bedroom high-rise condo worth \$847,800, property records show.

5. They also own a condo in La Jolla, Calif., that's worth more

than \$1-million. The building overlooks a park and the Pacific Ocean.

6. Wild River Rental LLC, the company controlled by Cindy McCain, is listed as the owner of a Phoenix condo worth more than half a million dollars.

7. and 8. Dream Catcher Family LLC, a domestic corporation formed by the McCain family, owns two condos in a beachfront complex in Coronado, Calif. Tax records show one is valued at \$2.7-million.

Source: PolitiFact.com 9/7/08 release, <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements> PolitiFact is a project of the St. Petersburg Times and Congressional Quarterly to help you find the truth in the presidential campaign.

Mayoral Candidates Johnston and Lee Debate

Delta College's "Pipeline" political science club and the Associated Student Body Government (ASBG) will sponsor a mayoral debate between local businesswoman and former city councilmember, Ann Johnston, and Stockton Unified teacher and current city councilmember, Clem Lee.

The two candidates will face-off on Wednesday, October 1, 7:00—8:30 p.m. at Atherton Auditorium. This event will be one of several Stockton mayoral debates leading up to the Nov. 4 general election.

Delta College Superintendent/President, Dr. Raul Rodriguez, will act as moderator. Five panelists, selected from Delta's students and staff, will ask the candidates a series of questions. The panelists are: Catherine Mooney, Director of Admissions and Records; Dr. Wesley Swanson, Instructor of History; Jeffrey Hislop, Instructor of Administration of Justice; David Burr, Associated Student Body Government; Megan McCoy, Delta College student and Pipeline club member.

Themes for the debate will include: Crime; Economic Development; Environmental Concerns; Programs and Services for Seniors and Youth; Stockton's General Plan; Stockton's Budget.

Audience members will have the opportunity to submit written questions for the candidates.

"This is your opportunity to compare and contrast the positions of both candidates during this critical period in Stockton's history," says Jeanne-Marie Velickovic, advisor to Delta's



Pipeline political science club. "Pipeline and ASBG are proud to present this forum to the people of Stockton."

For more information, contact Jeanne-Marie Velickovic, advisor, Pipeline Club at: (209) 954-5238, jvelickovic@deltacollege.edu.

Delta Board, Andal, propositions debated

The Pipeline club will co-sponsor a number of events at Delta College during this busy political season. A candidate forum with Dean Andal, the Republican candidate for the 11th Congressional District, takes place on Oct. 21 at the West Forum, 4:00—5:30 p.m.

Candidates for Delta's Board of Trustees will present their views to the public on October 23, 6:30—8:30 p.m. at Atherton Auditorium. Pipeline will also invite the League of Women Voters to give a "Pro and Con" presentation on propositions in October. Of course, these events are free to the public!

For more information, please contact Jeanne-Marie Velickovic, advisor, Pipeline Club at: (209) 954-5238, jvelickovic@deltacollege.edu.

Non-Profit Information Day

The community is invited to attend the University of the Pacific's Make a Difference: 2008 Non-Profit Information Day. Stop by between 11:30am and 3:00pm to get information from more than 40 non-profit agencies and find out how you can become a community volunteer!

This free event will be held at the new University Center on the University of the Pacific campus. Contact (209) 946-2361 or visit <http://www.pacificalumni.org/nonprofitinfoday> for more information.

Oct 7—Nov 1

Alan Short Center Students Exhibit at Tidewater Gallery

In recognition of National Disabilities Month and Arts Month in October, downtown Stockton's Tidewater Gallery is hosting the unique artwork created by the students of the Alan Short Center, an art-based day program serving adults with developmental disabilities on the University Park campus. The exhibit, featuring a variety of art mediums, will open Tuesday, October 7, and continue through Saturday, November 1.

A "Meet-the-Artists" wine and hors d'oeuvres reception will be hosted Friday, October 10, from 5-8 p.m., in conjunction with the

monthly downtown Art Walk.

Artwork created by these special students is truly unique. Offered in this exhibit will be two-dimensional framed artwork, painted and tiled furniture, glass works, ceramic pieces, silk scarves, hand painted canvas bags, and jewelry. The Alan Short Center program encourages each individual to gain necessary skills to enhance their quality of life and gain independence at home and in the community. The visual and performing arts serve a vital role in meeting self-expression and creative needs. In addition to

being fun, the arts are excellent teaching tools that encourage hard work, social integration and language development.

The Tidewater Art Center & Gallery is an artists' collaborative located directly across the street from the county Courthouse at 223 E. Weber Avenue, is open Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. For further information about the Gallery, artists, exhibits, upcoming art classes or special events, please visit the website at www.tidewaterartgallery.com.

Spirit of the Dance

On Saturday, October 4, 2008, at 6 pm in the Warren Atherton Auditorium on Delta College campus, a unique performance of local talent will be on display. Spirit of the Dance combines music, dance, and spoken words in a dramatic and extravagant one night production that proudly exhibits the rich cultural variety and traditions of our community.

This production results from a collaboration of P.L.A.Y., Stockton's foremost Multi-Cultural Arts Organization and the San Joaquin Delta College Cultural Awareness Program. Mr. Robert Rojas, Event Organizer, said, "Please join us on this historic journey into this wonderfully rich cultural tapestry we call P.L.A.Y., Peace Love And You. Our wonderful cast of cultural performing artists will satisfy your desire to better know your neighbors of many lands. Our dancers and musicians, along with representatives of their communities, would be pleased to meet you at our reception in Danner Hall immediately following the production. I would be happy to personally introduce you to any of our cast."

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and talk with talented and upcoming artists who otherwise you might never come in contact with. Join us and make your life richer. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.playmulticultural.com/> or call 298-8591.

Juried Exhibition at the Haggin

The Stockton Art League's Juried Exhibition returns to The Haggin Museum for its 55th year, where an even more diverse and eclectic mix of works than previous years will be on display and for sale from Sept. 14-Nov 9. Originally open to only Northern California artists, entries for this year's competition were accepted from across the country. Juror for Acceptance Gil Dellinger selected 102 entries for display from a pool of 355 entries. The accepted entries, representing nine states, include watercolors, acrylics, oil paintings, pastels, sculpture, assemblage, collage, mixed media and graphics. Entries in each medium will be presented with cash awards totaling more than \$5,000 by Juror of Awards Ray Roberts, a nationally-known artist from Northern California. For more information, call (209) 940-6300 or visit www.hagginmuseum.org

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October Calendar

Editor's note: if your event isn't listed, let us know. Send all copy to: bgiudici@caltel.com by the 7th of every month.

Sept 2—Oct 4

Abstracts by Lucas Cromwell. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. Reception July 11, 5-8 pm. 463-4033

Sept 3—28

The Big Bang musical comedy, Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rose Marie Lane, \$12—\$23. 473-2424.

Sept 8—Oct 29

Expressions in Paint—Steven Labadessa & Brandon C Smith, Tu 11-4, Wed, Thu 11-6:30, Fri 11-1 Delta LH Horton Gallery, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Opening 10/2, 5-7 pm. Free admission. 954-5507

Sept 14—Nov 9

55th Juried Exhibition. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. Wed-Sun 1:30—5 pm. 1st and 3rd Thurs 1:30—9 pm. \$5 adult 18 & older, student/senior/youth age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10 free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org (see p 18)

Oct 7—Nov 1

Alan Short Center students exhibit. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. Reception Oct 10, 5-8 pm. 463-4033 (see p 18)

Thur, Sept 25

Congressional debate -, 7—8:30 pm, sponsored by Pipeline club. SJ Delta College Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5238

Sat, Sept 20

START! San Joaquin Heart Walk, Banner Island Ballpark, 404 W Fremont, Stockton. 9 am. 477-2683.

Stockton Beautiful presents "Stockton is Coming Up Roses!", a wine and food event on Bristol Ave, 6-9 pm, 925 Bristol Ave, Stockton. 478-3808.

Mon, Sept 22

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

Tue, Sept 23

Candlelight prayer vigil for peace, Annunciation Cathedral, Lincoln/Rose in Stockton, 7 PM sharp. All are welcome, candles provided. Info Ria deGroot, 462-3340.

Sat, Sept 27

Discover the Bounty of San Joaquin County, presented by singing duo the Bad Goods. 1 pm. Chavez Central Library, 605 N El Dorado St, Stockton. Free admission. 937-8221.

Wed, Oct 1

Stockton Mayoral debate—Ann Johnston & Clem Lee, 7—8:30 pm, sponsored by Pipeline club. Delta College Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific. 954-5238 (see p 18)

Thu, Oct 2

Peace and Justice Network monthly meeting, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6 pm Board, 7 pm program. All welcome.

Fri, Oct 3

ESPIÑO youth organizing summit, 8:30 am—8 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton Info: Jim Walsh (209) 981-0544 or jwprod1956@clearwire.net. (see p 20)

Spirit of the Dance multi-cultural dance festival, presented by PLAY and SJDC Cultural Awareness Program. 6—8 pm. Atherton Auditorium, Delta College, 5151 Pacific, Stockton. Donations. Tickets: 298-8591. (see p 18)

Multicultural Health Day, sponsored by the Community Partnership for Families, 10 am—2 pm. 7908 N West Lane, Stockton

Tue, Oct 7

SJ Delta College Festival of Bands, 7:30 pm, Atherton Auditorium, Delta College, 5151 Pacific, Stockton. \$5 student/senior, \$8 general. 954-5110.

Wed, Oct 8

Non-Profit Information Day, 11:30 am—3 pm, University Center, UOP, 3601 Pacific. 946-2361 (see p 18)

Oct 16 & Oct 18

Stockton Symphony featuring Tai Marray violin: Musorgsky/Rimsky-Korsakov, Hayden, Ravel and Bartok. Thur 8 pm, Sat 6 pm. Atherton Auditorium, Delta College, 5151 Pacific. \$20—\$50. 951-0196

Wed, Oct 22

SJ Delta College Festival of Bands,

7:30 pm, Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific, Stockton. \$5 student/senior, \$8 general. 954-5110.

Thursdays

Peace demonstrations continue, 5-6:30 PM, grassy edge of Delta campus along Pacific, north of stoplight/bus stop at Yokuts. Free Sherwood Mall parking. Signs provided, or bring your own. Info John Morearty 464-3326.

Fridays

Downtown farmers market, Hunter Square & E Main, Stockton. 9 am—2 pm. 464-5246

First Sundays

Vegan potluck, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 5:30 pm \$2

donation bringing food, \$9 without. Info: sjvegans@hotmail.com.

First Thursdays

Experimental & improv music, 8 pm Blackwater Cafe, 914 N Yosemite, Stockton. \$3. 943-6938.

Third Thursdays

Hispanics for Political Action—HPA meets 6 pm at Cancun Restaurant, Stockton. Louis Gonzales 464-9205

Fourth Saturdays

Greater Lodi Area Democrats (GLAD) meets 8:30 a.m., Dee Dee's Restaurant, 1170 S Cherokee, Lodi. All welcome, including recovering Republicans. 339-1599.

Beware the referendum

Campaign for Common Ground

We Smart Growth people thought we had won a victory when the city settled with the Sierra Club and Attorney General, Jerry Brown. But wait. The developers are not rolling over and playing dead. Spanos and Company are trying to qualify a referendum to force a public vote on the settlement. They have money power; we have people power. In addition, the City of Stockton is moving ahead and asking the Local Agency Formation Commission

(LAFCO) to approve a huge growth boundary (the Sphere of Influence) for the new City General Plan.

LAFCO has the final say on approving a growth boundary that will allow all the villages in the Stockton General Plan to be annexed into the City of Stockton—just one more step toward houses being built from here to Lodi and down to Lathrop and Manteca, even out toward Linden.

ACTION: When you go to the store and see signature gatherers at a table asking people to sign

the referendum petition, go over to talk with the signature gatherer. Ask them to explain the referendum petition and why they are collecting signatures. After they give you the reason, tell them you support the settlement agreement and that you will not sign the referendum and that you will tell your friends not to sign. Then e-mail the Campaign for Common Ground (campaign@campaignforcommonground.org) and let us know what arguments they are using to get people to sign the referendum. We need to know this information!

Neighborhood renaissance program

Emily Ballus, Miracle Mile Improvement District

The Miracle Mile is in the first ever neighborhood to take part in the Neighborhood Renaissance Pilot Program. The City of Stockton has selected our area out of 37 neighborhoods to launch the program and we need you to participate to make our voices heard. Our area is called the University Neighborhood and we are in the Civic Center Service District. The University Neighborhood boundaries are roughly from Pershing to just east of California (or to El Dorado north of Alpine) and from Harding Way to the Calaveras River (including all the Pacific Campus north of the Calaveras).

The purpose of the Neighborhood Renaissance Program (NRP) is to build strong neighborhoods by developing community leadership and working collaboratively with residents to deliver city services and neighborhood priorities. The goal of NRP is for all residents to enjoy a high quality of life, safe from crime, with clean streets, access to parks, libraries and services, and active participation in City government.

Here's your chance to work with the City—face-to-face, up close and personal—on what you believe is important to our specific area. The City is looking to our neighborhood for direction on how we want the City to provide us services. So please help make

a difference. Work with your neighbors and the City of Stockton to develop a plan to improve our neighborhood (merchants are encouraged to participate, too!). Be a part of this citizens-guided program to make a better, stronger, positive Stockton, starting right here, right now, in and with our community. And please pass the message on

ACTION: Please join in the Neighborhood Renaissance Program Meeting, a City of Stockton initiative. The last meeting was held 9/4/08, 6 pm at the Wendell Phillips Center on the Pacific Campus. For information on the next meeting, call 937-8840.

Talking It Through

Talking It Through is now two half-hour shows.

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

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

SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

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

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

Studio volunteers wanted! All ages...we'll train. Call 467-4455.

Save the Date: Oct 3

"No Child Left Behind Bars" event at Delta

The ESPINO Youth Organizing Summit, "No Child Left Behind Bars," is happening Friday, October 3rd at San Joaquin Delta College. The Central Valley of California is ripe for youth organizing and has great potential to build and mobilize on behalf of youth social justice. The purpose of the summit is to help build a stronger multicultural youth movement in the Central Valley. The goals of the summit are:

* To discover the power that young people have when working together

* Create a space for youth to strategize

* Explore new ways of looking at issues involving youth justice and education

* Teach and reflect on the skills and theories of organizing, use of action research, how to use media, artistic expression and popular education as tools for youth organizing

* Present tools and resources to help build networks and identify current ongoing efforts

* Link grass-roots struggle to changing current systems and policies

The event will begin with featured plenary speakers Nina Moreno of the Children's Defense Fund (who will present "America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline") and Derrel Myers (who will speak on the "Power of Building Communities"). The summit will then breakout into three interactive workshop sessions with six different subjects within three themes. The first will tackle the issues surrounding education equity. The second breakout session will deal with issues of incarceration, and youth prisons. The final breakouts will focus on avenues for making social change, including: journalism, lawmaking, community activism, digital media production and distribution and spoken word artistic expression with the overriding theme of building communities. The event will culminate with a culture jam of music, spoken word, comedy and dance hosted by Tama Brisbane of With Our Words. WOW (as they are often referred to) has recently returned from the Brave New Voices spoken word event in Washington D.C., where seven Stockton youth competed with

450 spoken word artists in a nation wide poetry slam.

Some confirmed presenters are Phyllis Taub Greenleaf, author of I'd Rather be Learning, How Standard Testing is Leaving Learning Behind; Samuel Nunez, who will present the program El Joven Noble y Cara y Carazon, The Noble Young Man & Face and Heart, and Tama Brisbane and WOW Performance Collective, With Our Words. A workshop will also focus on voter registration and state initiatives on the upcoming ballot that will negatively impact

youth, including the Runner Initiative, Proposition 6.

Sponsored by the California Fund for Youth Organizing (CFYO) of the Tides Foundation with partners ESPINO, Youth in Focus, Fathers and Families of San Joaquin, Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin, Migrant Education of the San Joaquin County Office of Education, Associated Student Body Government of San Joaquin Delta College, the Puente Club and MEChA also of San Joaquin Delta College.



For information on participating with this exciting event send e-mail to jwprod1956@clearwire.net or call Jim Walsh, Summit Coordinator (209) 981-0544. Or Sammy Nunez samuelnunez@msn.com (209) 444-5511.

About ESPINO

History

Escuelas Si! Pintas No! Youth Organizing for Equal Justice and Education (ESPINO) is a Central Valley-wide coalition that includes partners of the Central Valley Partnership (CVP). ESPINO's foundation grew out of the CVP's Education Committee and originated in spring of 2003. Escuelas Si! Pintas No! addresses the schools-to-jails pipeline that many under-represented youth face in the Central Valley and promotes access to education, as well as alternatives to incarceration.

Vision

ESPINO's vision is to create progressive and positive systemic change in an effort to create equal justice and education in the Central Valley.

Mission

ESPINO's mission is to enhance and support a Central Valley-wide Youth Organizing Movement, which promotes community health, while strengthening and mobilizing the human and collective potential of under-represented communities of the Central Valley.

The summit

Keep in mind, the summit intends to bring together youth

from throughout the Central Valley in order to learn from one another and to strategize for social change. It is our hope that the summit will inspire campaign(s) in the Central Valley that will address the issues of Youth Justice, Education Equity, and Youth Organizing. The summit will be multicultural and most of all fun. Although there is an intergenerational bent and adults can participate by actively listening, the summit is intended for youth who are organizers or may have the potential to be organizers and want to learn more about organizing.

This summit will be followed up by the State-wide convening of the four California regions funded by the CFYO. ESPINO will be joined by SoCal 4 Youth of Los Angeles, Youth Action Network in San Diego, and Organize da Bay in the Bay Area on November 14th - 17th in Los Angeles in an attempt to calcify the State youth movement into an interconnected lobby forum to develop a Youth Bill Of Rights platform and strategize for future actions and campaigns. For a brief history of the youth movement in California go to: http://www.fcyo.org/attachments/Papers_no5.pdf. You can also find updated and expanded information on ESPINO at: <http://www.espinocoalition.net>.

Participating Groups:

Phyllis Taub Greenleaf: <http://www.idratherbelearning.com/>

Books Not Bars: <http://www.ellabakercenter.org/page.php?pageid=2>

The Burns Institute: <https://secure.lenos.com/lenos/burnsinstitute/bihome/>

Children's Defense Fund, California: <http://www.cdfca.org/>

Fathers and Families of San Joaquin: <http://www.pjnsjc.org/youthpage.php> I will send more information on programs by this org.

Youth In Focus <http://www.youthinfocus.net/>

California Prison Moritorium Project: <http://www.calipmp.org/aboutus>

Madera Youth Leaders <http://maderacoalition.wetpaint.com/page/Madera+Youth+Leaders?t=anon>

Local Alternative Press:
Bilingual Weekly: <http://www.bilingualweekly.com/>

CV Drum: <http://thecvdrum.info/>

Connections: <http://www.pjnsjc.org/connections.php>

With Our Words, Slam Poetry <http://www.withourwords.org/ALL%20CITY%20POETRY%20SLAM.htm>

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