

connections

PRICELESS

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SAVE THE DATES

**TUESDAYS
BRITISH FILMS20**

**NOV 30-DEC 1
PEACEFUL HOLIDAY FAIR**

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Stockton water in our hands

Bill Loyko

The headlines read "Power to the People." After six years, many pancake breakfasts, fundraising letters, appearances before the City Council, Public Records Act requests for reams of documents, we, the Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton (CCCoS), the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County (LWVSJC) and the Sierra Club, ended our legal battle against the City of Stockton thus bringing an end to the privatization of our water utility.

While this victory will return the operation of the water utility back into public hands, this was really a triumph for process. For a better understanding, let's go back to the beginning. From the onset, former Mayor Gary Podesto was determined to privatize the City's water utility at any cost—to the point that he circumvented CEQA (the California Environmental Quality Act) environmental guidelines. By law, every project, whether public or private, must comply with CEQA which is the only protection that citizens have to safeguard the environment; that was the nexus for CCCoS, LWVSJC and the Sierra Club.

As incredulous as it sounds, the former City Council and former City management believed that the environment would not be affected by a \$600 million, 20-year contract, with a \$150 million worth of construction (32 assorted projects) and a major



shift in operational procedures. In the end, the original ruling by Judge Robert McNatt was upheld by Judge Elizabeth Humphreys. Their ruling forced the City to rescind the resolution that approved the contract, thus ending privatization in Stockton.

Disregard for CEQA was the tip of the iceberg. OMI Thames Water Stockton was hired to safeguard our water, wastewater and stormwater utilities. What the CCCoS discovered was a total disregard and disrespect for the long-term investment that the citizens of Stockton had made in their water utilities. Lack of preventative maintenance, failure to comply with contract requirements, inaccurate reporting and a "run to fail" attitude put our utility in disarray as evident in the settlement the City made with OMI Thames Water Stockton.

While all the litigants in this lawsuit celebrate our victory, we're all aware of the efforts that lie before us. It is going to entail more than changing the

logo on the workers' shirts to return the water, wastewater and stormwater utilities back to public operation. Community-wide support is imperative to a successful transition. The CCCoS has established a dialogue with City officials regarding this transition. Thereafter, operations of the municipal utility must be monitored.

All residents of the City of Stockton are grateful to the former City utility employees who stayed focused on providing the best service available, given the resources with which they had to work. Without their dedication to serve the citizens of Stockton, our utility would be in much worse shape than it is today.

Lastly, much appreciation is extended to the residents, community groups and individuals who have continued to give their support (time, talent and treasure) in this long effort to protect our environment and restore transparency to our democratic process.

Voting machines decertified

*Debra Bowen,
CA Secretary of State*

After two months of unprecedented analysis of California's voting systems and related security procedures, Secretary of State Debra Bowen today announced some of those systems can continue operating in 2008 in California while others are too flawed to be widely used.

Each of the systems that went through the top-to-bottom review has been legally decertified, and then each of them has been recertified with the addition of a number of conditions. The primary reason for taking this step is for clarity, ensuring that everything associated with a particular system is in one single recertification document that is easy for the public, elections officials, and others to follow and understand.

The Diebold, Hart InterCivic and Sequoia direct recording electronic (DRE) systems were all decertified. The Diebold and Sequoia DRE systems were recertified solely for the purposes of conducting early voting and to allow counties to have one DRE machine in each polling place on Election Day for the purpose of complying with disability access requirements of the Help America

(continued page 3)

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Solidarity

Bruce Giudici

It's that time of year again—open enrollment for health care. In an annual rite of passage, those lucky enough to have health care benefits at work get to choose between a barely good health care package and food. An example: the monthly cost to a Kaiser family has increased from about \$950 to above \$1,200—while the amount a typical employer can pitch in is about \$600. Increased annual costs of 10% over the past 5 years have outpaced what employers have to offer, and

workers lose. A recent news report underlined the point that, while the prices measured as "inflation" are rising slowly, the costs most people pay (housing, health care, gas, basic foods) are going up much faster.

For the rich, the increase in these basic costs are a minor annoyance, easily covered by Bush tax cuts, leaving enough left over to pay for politicians returning the favor. For the rest of us, these increases hurt and move us backward toward third world status. It's already happening in health care: while

the US is number one in health costs (paying over twice the European average), it's 40th in life expectancy, with over 25% of the population obese.

Simply changing a President can help, but won't fix, this problem. A concept of solidarity is needed, brought home to our representatives and in the way we look at the world. Those of us with the median income (about \$60,000) and below need to find common ground. Rather than giving more financial support to the multi-millionaire set, we need

Bruce Giudici,
editor



to help each other. Affordable housing, universal health care, alternative energy and locally produced foods—taking what we now spend, more wisely. There are some interesting articles in this issue of *Connections*. Take action, change someone's mind.

Feedback

Sensible healthcare

Universal healthcare is a phrase that evokes fear, misunderstanding and even anger in some. The only button hotter is "Single Payer." OH NO! Not government run healthcare—no choice, more bureaucracy, and long waits for treatment.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Myth No 1: It is government-run health care. Reality: The government's only role is to collect and disburse payments according to prevailing cost for service or capitation. "Single Payer" provides tremendous savings for the providers in reduced paperwork and bookkeeping. Imagine if the doctor or other provider had only one form and one entity to deal with.

Myth No. 2: Your choices will be limited. (Do I hear any HMO members out there?) Reality: I'm sure some of you live in rarefied air where you have choices. Most of us must go where our individual

plans deign to permit, while "Single Payer" allows you to visit any provider who is licensed and regulated by the state with only your physician's recommendation, not a referral from a faceless paper pusher.

Myth No 3: More bureaucracy is guaranteed. Reality: There is no federal, state or local minion who could even dream of creating the amount of red tape, lost payments, or general havoc as exists now between HMO's, insurance companies or COBRA administrators.

Myth No 4: Long waits will become the norm. Reality: Oh, you mean like the 3 months I (an insured person) waited to see a specialist only to be referred to another specialist another 2 months down the road? But as it turned out, I need a highly specialized surgeon not covered by my plan. Here I am a year and a half later, hoping to age into Medicare before I am irrevocably crippled.

Question: But how do we pay for it? Answer: Pool all federal, state and local insurance programs (Medicare, Medicaid, etc.),

charge employers and employees each a reasonable percentage of individual wages (less than the current premiums), and cover everyone. Remember: we are already paying for the uninsured. But the savings in sending runny noses and sprained ankles to the doctor's office or urgent care clinic—rather than the emergency room—will save billions. Hospitals and their staffs and patients will thrive. The ever-present spectre of hospital closure will vanish.

Simple. That's right. It is the simplest and least expensive solution.

The savings in administrative costs will allow hospital and healthcare providers to hire more doctors, nurses and EMTs and purchase better equipment.

Too good to be true? No. Oh, maybe the insurance companies will whine and moan about how they will all go under but we know better. They are making so much money on all their other products that this won't even make a ripple in their bottom line.

Alicia Hollingsworth

Dems need to get a plan

Last week I was invited to a luncheon for Barbara Boxer, one of the most progressive Senators... and our representative.

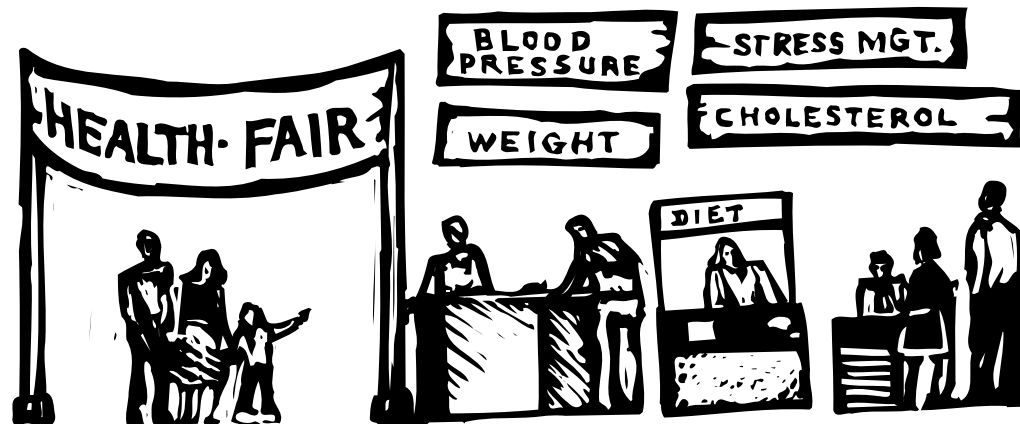
I was extremely disappointed when Boxer gave a casual reply to a question about the Democrats' strategy to prevent a war on Iran. After first saying we don't have the troops for another war, she acknowledged that Bush might attack Iran anyway, and left it as just another bad thing Bush might do. No plan, no real concern.

My confidence in the Democrats continues to diminish as they cave on one thing after another. They took impeachment off the table before even taking control of Congress, removed a provision to require Bush to get authorization before a strike on Iran, gave the Administration all they wanted and more for wiretapping citizens, and are complicit in allowing the war in Iraq to continue. Although Boxer kept talking about how the Dems were holding the administration accountable, there has been no accountability at all. Is it cowardice, ignorance, or what?

My cynical belief is that the Democratic strategy is to let Bush to keep messing up. They are willing to let people continue to die in Iraq and our Constitution to be shredded at home just to make the Democratic party look good for the next election.

It's time, once again, to remind our representatives—even the good ones—that they have a job to do. I just don't know if they have the integrity for it.

Laurie Litman



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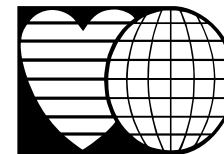
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Voting machines *(continued from page 1)*

Vote Act (HAVA). Furthermore, these DRE systems will be required to comply with increased security and post-election auditing procedures.

The Diebold, Hart InterCivic and Sequoia optical scan systems were all decertified and recertified, and will be required to adopt increased security and post-election auditing procedures.

"The systems we use to cast and tally votes in this state are the most fundamental tools of our democracy," said Secretary Bowen, the state's chief elections officer. "My decisions have a bias towards voting systems that score the highest with two very important measuring sticks: transparency and auditability. Applying proper auditing procedures to optical scan systems that are easier for voters to see and understand gives us the ability to begin rebuilding the voter confidence in the systems we use to conduct elections."

"I'm mindful of the impact these decisions will have on voters, on county local elections officials, poll workers, voting system vendors and on others in California and across the nation," continued Bowen. "However, it's important to remember that in last November's election, at least two-thirds, and probably closer to 75%, of the 8.9 million voters who cast ballots did so using a paper absentee ballot or a paper optical scan ballot."

Secretary Bowen's decisions on voting system certifications follow her thorough review of detailed academic findings by teams of nationally respected computer experts, as well as extensive input from voters, voting system vendors, and national, state and local elections experts.

Conditions

The independent University of California expert reports for the top-to-bottom review detailed a number of security vulnerabilities in all of the voting systems they tested. Some of those problems can be mitigated if appropriate security and auditing procedures are in place in all 58 counties.

As part of her decertification and recertification orders, Bowen announced new statewide

conditions that will enhance the security and reliability of the voting systems that were recertified tonight for use in 2008 and beyond including:

- Re-flashing or re-installing the firmware or software in all voting system components;

- Removing, blocking or disabling access to unneeded ports on the machines;

- Hardening the servers to improve security;

- Following vendor recommended or required security protocols;

- Banning all modem or wireless connections, regardless of their purpose, in order to prevent connection to an unauthorized computer or network or to the Internet—all of which would present significant additional security risks;

- Adding security seal and chain-of-custody provisions, some of which already exist;

- Requiring a 100% manual count of all ballots cast on the Sequoia and Diebold DRE machines; and

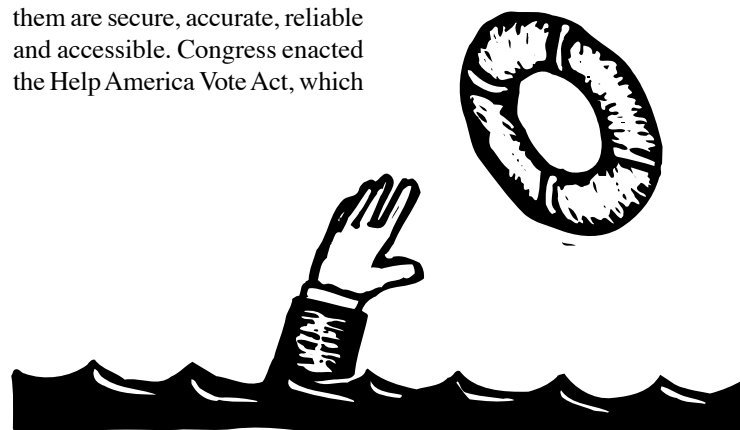
- Adopting escalation procedures to require more manual auditing in cases where the results of a particular race are within a certain margin. The specific details of the escalation procedures will be developed by the Secretary of State after consultation with the election jurisdictions.

"Democracy, by definition, is about free and fair elections," said Secretary Bowen. "As the state's chief election officer, I take my responsibilities very seriously. In many ways, I think voters and counties are the victims of a federal certification process that hasn't done an adequate job of ensuring that the systems made available to them are secure, accurate, reliable and accessible. Congress enacted the Help America Vote Act, which

pushed many counties into buying electronic systems that—as we've seen for some time and we saw again in the independent UC review—were not properly reviewed or tested to ensure that they protected the integrity of the vote. That's what my decisions are about—protecting the integrity of the vote."

Eight voting systems were initially subject to the top-to-bottom review when it was announced in March because they were certified for use and in operation in one or more California counties. Three systems were submitted by vendors and fully examined in the top-to-bottom review over the past two months. In four other cases, vendors opted not to submit their systems to the top-to-bottom review because they do not intend to have any county use those systems in California elections after January 1, 2008. In the eighth case, which affects only Los Angeles County, the vendor declined to submit its system in time for the top-to-bottom review even though that system will be used in 2008.

California law requires the Secretary of State to periodically review voting systems "to determine if they are defective, obsolete or otherwise unacceptable" and withdraw the approval previously granted for all or part of a voting system if it is subsequently found to be unacceptable. The law states that any such withdrawal can only affect elections that are held six months or more after the date of the decision. The next statewide election for California's 15.7 million registered voters will be the presidential primary on February 5, 2008.



End the secrecy of electronic voting

Assemblyman Paul Krekorian

On Nov. 4, 2008, millions of Californians will go to their polling places to cast their votes using electronic voting machines.

By the end of that evening, we will know who will take office as our next president. What we will not know that night—what we may never know with certainty—is whether our votes were in fact properly counted by those electronic voting machines....

Although the public has an absolute right to observe every aspect of the process of counting paper ballots, the public is completely deprived of that right with regard to electronic voting. We have no opportunity to determine whether electronic voting machines are properly programmed to record and count our votes—merely because the corporate vendors of these machines insist on keeping their programming "source code" a trade secret. Americans cannot have confidence in the integrity of our elections process if we cannot know how, or whether, our votes are being counted.

The solution is to remove the shroud of secrecy over the operation of voting systems that serves no purpose other than to protect the commercial self-interests of their manufacturers. That is why I've authored AB 852, the Secure, Accurate, Fair Elections (SAFE) Act of 2007.

Simply stated, the SAFE Act would require public disclosure of the computer source code that runs our state's voting machines. If a manufacturer refuses to disclose a voting system's source code for public scrutiny, that system would not be certified for use in California elections—period.

This important reform will ensure that voting rights advocates, computer scientists, the media and any member of the public with an interest in technology and democracy could analyze the source code and identify any potential errors or security risks.

The risks presented by the current certification process are not hypothetical. Secretary of State Debra Bowen has launched a



laudable "top-to-bottom" review of voting systems in California, and that review has already produced troubling results.

For example, the review found that some voting machines in Los Angeles County contained software that was different than the software that the manufacturer had delivered to the secretary of state for review and analysis.

The operation of our voting systems must be open and accessible to scrutiny so that the veracity of these essential implements of our democracy is always beyond reproach.

ACTION: Contact your Assembly and Senate representatives, encouraging support or co-sponsorship.

*Source: Contra Costa Times 8/5/07
www.contracostatimes.com/via
Californians Aware www.calaware.org*

Sec of State
Debra Bowen's
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Two trillion on health care props up ailing economy

Joshua Holland

For the first four years after the dot-com bust in 2001, a weak economy in most sectors was masked by an explosion in real estate sales, rocketing home values and a surge of consumer spending as people taking advantage of super-low interest rates and easy credit grabbed chunks of equity out of their newly high-priced digs and went shopping.

In the summer of 2005, the New York Times reported that the real estate biz - "everything from land surveyors to general contractors to loan officers" - had added 700,000 jobs to the American economy during the previous four years, while the rest of the work force had lost 400,000 jobs over the same period. Technically the economy was in "recovery," when in fact most of it remained soft.

A few economists sounded a warning about having all our eggs in one economic basket. People like Yale's Robert Shiller and Dean Baker at the Center for Economic Policy and Research pointed out that home values weren't syncing up with the fundamentals of the market, and that we were headed for an adjustment" - either a real estate crash leading to a recession or, in the best case scenario, a "soft landing."

But while there were some voices of caution, other economists told us that everything was going gangbusters. This was the New Economy in action: American manufacturing may have been gutted during the previous few decades, but the service sector is

With \$600 billion per year picked up by the government, our healthcare system, while a rip-off by any reasonable measure, is becoming a fabulously expensive jobs program.

where more "value" is added anyway—where the big profits are—and Americans would be just fine selling each other houses, insurance and the occasional cheeseburger until the Next Big Thing came along.

It was a hot debate, but something else was going on at the same time that got less attention: There was the emergence of what could be called the healthcare economy. As Michael Mandel wrote in *Businessweek* last September, "Without [the health sector], the nation's labor market would be in a deep coma." Between 2001 and 2006, 1.7 million new jobs were added in the healthcare sector. Meanwhile, the rest of the private sector added exactly zero new jobs (net) during that period. (The conventional wisdom is that the economy needs to add about 150,000 jobs per month to keep up with the growth of the working-age population.)

If current trends continue, 30 percent to 40 percent of all new jobs created in the United States over the next 25 years will be in the healthcare business. Mandel argued that this trend is partly responsible for the United States' low overall unemployment rate. "Take away healthcare hiring in the U.S.," he wrote, "and quicker than you can say cardiac bypass, the U.S. unemployment rate would be 1 to 2 percentage points higher."

One could argue that this is precisely how a vibrant economy should work. A dynamic industry

takes off and compensates for weaknesses in other sectors. When it cools, another field will explode, perhaps one we can't even conceive of today.

What's more, healthcare jobs have increased at the same time as we've shed millions of relatively high-paying manufacturing jobs. Wages in the health sector vary widely, but the average is slightly higher than the average income in the private sector as a whole. Healthcare is labor-intensive, so a lot of the more than \$2 trillion we'll spend this year in the United States will end up in healthcare workers' pockets. It's also an industry in which offshoring and outsourcing are uncommon; you might be able to schedule your colonoscopy with a guy at a call center in Mumbai, but ultimately your butt has to be in the same country as the personnel who do it.

Three problems

So, is a healthcare economy a bad thing?

It is, and for three reasons in particular. The most obvious is that these jobs are coming at a cost that the United States can't continue to pay without facing severe consequences (especially as the baby boomers get into their Golden Years). According to government data (PDF), healthcare costs exploded between 2000 and 2005—increasing by a whopping 47 percent. Over a longer period, from 1995 to 2005, per capita healthcare spending increased by 77 percent. That's slowed a bit, but not by much; total costs are projected to reach \$2.25 trillion dollars this year, up 14 percent just since 2005.

That kind of growth outpaces the overall growth in the economy by a mile - the share of America's total economic output being sucked into healthcare has increased from just under 14 percent in 2000 to over 16 percent this year, and is expected to equal one fifth of the total economy in 10 years.

Those costs put the squeeze on millions of American families. A study by the Commonwealth fund found that families' out-of-pocket expenses (and premium copayments) rose in direct proportion to overall healthcare spending. With wages stagnating, that's leading to real pain; almost half of those declaring bankruptcy in 2001 cited healthcare costs as a "major contributor." An ABC News/USA Today Poll found that one in four Americans questioned said that their family had had a problem paying for medical care during the past year, up 7 percentage points over the past nine years.

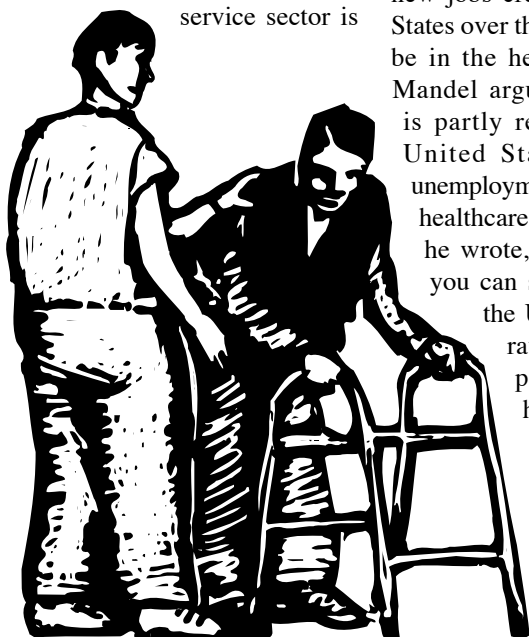
It may also have an indirect impact on wages, which have remained stagnant for most of the working population since 2001. Right-wing economists like Greg Mankiw, the former chairman of Bush's Council of Economic Advisors, who infamously suggested that assembling cheeseburgers at a Stuckies should count as a manufacturing job, argue that looking at wages isn't an honest measure of how workers are doing, because their overall compensation—including medical and other benefits—has risen faster than inflation, while wages haven't. Allan Hubbard, another Bush economic advisor, told the *Wall Street Journal*

that "employers are spending more money on healthcare, and that's robbing people of wage increases." The claim is controversial—corporate profits and executive pay have both increased at the same time, and fewer than half of all American workers get coverage from their employer - but it is a simple fact that the gap between the cash working Americans are pocketing and the money their employers pay for an hour of their time has been growing. According to a study by the Kaiser Foundation (PDF), workers' pay rose by 18 percent between 2000 and 2006—not quite keeping up with the 20 percent total inflation—but employers' healthcare premiums rose by almost 90 percent.

That last number gets to the heart of the second problem, one that Big Business is becoming increasingly aware of: Those costs are much higher than in other countries and, unlike every other advanced economy in the world, much of the burden is born by U.S. companies instead of being spread across society through a progressive tax system. That puts them at a distinct disadvantage in terms of labor costs, and encourages U.S. firms to offshore and outsource as many jobs as possible. So while the healthcare industry is adding jobs, the spiraling costs create a powerful incentive for other sectors to shed them.

Lastly, and most importantly, we're talking about investing an enormous chunk of our national income into a healthcare system that offers the lowest imaginable value for the dollar. In 2004, we spent \$6,102 per American on healthcare. Not only did that figure lead the world, it did so by a huge margin—No. 2, Switzerland, came in at just over \$4,000 per person, two grand less than the United States. For that money, we rank between 15th to 37th out of 153 countries studied by the American Society of Integrative Medicine in every single measure of health outcomes. The authors note that "almost every major study of America's healthcare system has concluded that we could hardly do worse in terms of how much

(continued next page)



Children win big with SCHIP bills

Early August, before their summer recess, the House and Senate passed strong SCHIP bills that offer hope to millions of uninsured children. The House bill would cover 5 million uninsured children; the Senate bill would reach 4 million children. While much work remains, including the House and Senate resolving their differences and the President signing legislation, this victory for children shows that people, organized and powerful, can change the fundamental priorities of our nation.

The House and Senate passed SCHIP bills in the face of stiff opposition from tobacco companies and the health insurance industry, and the threat of Presidential veto. The bills have won strong support from senior groups led by the AARP, child health experts, the medical community, faith communities and both Republican and Democratic Governors.

This deep bi-partisan grassroots inter-generational support has been decisive in this fight. Let's



keep up the momentum to get the job done for our children before SCHIP ends on September 30. When Members of Congress are home this month, make sure they hear a strong message that they must put the needs of children above the pressures of special interests. Our network will be working with groups representing seniors, children, labor and the faith community to see that the final legislation negotiated by

the House and Senate includes full funding to reach all five million uninsured low-income children, and that the President ultimately signs legislation to cover America's uninsured children. For more information, contact PICO at 877-367-5235 or www.coverallchildren.org

Source: PICO National Network release 8/3/07 PICO, 171 Santa Rosa Avenue, Oakland, California 94610 www.piconetwork.org

Sick health care *(continued from page 4)*

well-being is yielded for the resources currently expended." We're paying for a Ferrari, and we're driving a Pinto.

There are many reasons these costs are so bloated, and some are subject to fierce debate. But what is arguably the biggest problem is also one of the least discussed: The fact that the whole system is set up with perverse and essentially self-defeating incentives. America's healthcare economy is actually a sickness economy, where all the emphasis is on treating people once they've gotten sick, instead of keeping people healthy in the first place. It is reactive rather than proactive, despite a large body of research that proves the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Studies show that a dollar spent on preventive health will save up to four dollars by the fourth year that the data are tracked. But while public

health experts preach prevention, only about one percent—a penny on the American healthcare dollar—goes to actual prevention programs (depending on how you add it up, that figure may be as high as ten percent, which is still far below what other advanced countries spend on prevention).

And we're also paying a steep penalty—all of us—for our system's lack of universality. Studies show that people without coverage often put off medical care until the symptoms are so bad that they end up in an emergency room, where they ran up about \$65 billion in charges in 2005. According to a study by the advocacy group FamiliesUSA, they pay a bit more than a third of the costs out-of-pocket, the government picks up a third of the remainder and the rest is paid by people with health coverage through higher premiums. According to the FamiliesUSA

study, that adds up to almost \$1,000 per fully insured family.

That's where we are: With \$600 billion per year picked up by the government, our healthcare system, while a rip-off by any reasonable measure, is becoming a fabulously expensive jobs program. The idea of the government shelling out big bucks to stimulate growth in the number of decent jobs is passe among policy makers, but we do it year in and year out in the healthcare economy. There are other sectors that, with proper government encouragement, could use that kind of stimulus—things like renewable energy, rail and public infrastructure.

We need a healthcare system that's about caring for people's health, not a healthcare economy that is more effective at making an uncertain economy look strong than it is at keeping us well.

Source: www.alternet.org 7/28/07



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

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>



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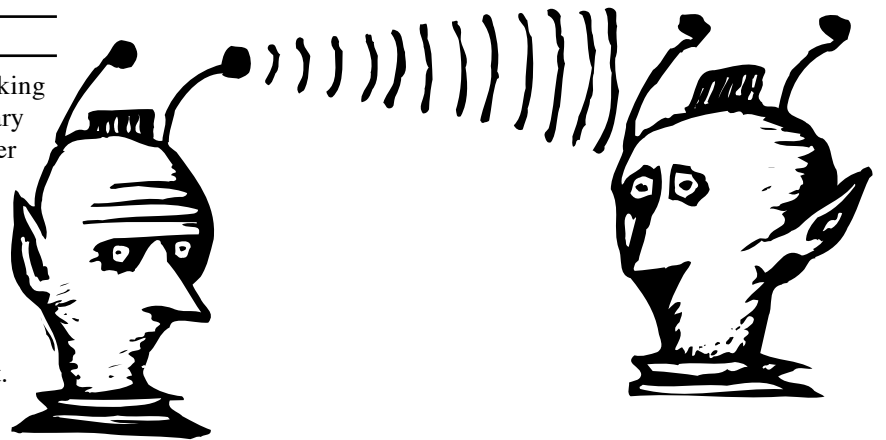
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Creating radio for the people

Amy Goodman

Rupert Murdoch is looking like the cat that ate the canary with his successful takeover of Dow Jones & Co. and its flagship newspaper, The Wall Street Journal. Media conglomerates like Murdoch's News Corp. are among the most powerful corporations on the planet. His papers beat the drums for war while distracting with gossip and glitz.



Yet people are finding innovative ways to fight back, to demand independent, community-based media. One such effort that you can join is the movement to create new, full-power, noncommercial FM radio stations in the U.S.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. The Federal Communications Commission will open a one-week window, Oct. 12-19, during which nonprofit community groups in the U.S. can file applications.

Think for a moment what a powerful, noncommercial radio station could do in your community. As the late George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School for Communication, said, we need a media not run by "corporations that have nothing to tell and everything to sell, that are raising our children today."

Community radio is the antidote to that small circle of pundits featured on all the networks, who know so little about so much, explaining the world to us and getting it so wrong. On community radio, you can hear your neighbors, you can hear people from your community: the silenced majority, silenced by the corporate media.

Pacifica Radio, the network where I got my start, is the oldest public broadcasting network in the United States, founded in 1949 by conscientious objectors like Lew Hill. He created the concept of "listener-sponsored" radio -- the radical concept that quality programming could be put out over the air that would be so different and so valuable to the audience that the listeners would give money to keep it going, and they have, all over the country.

After Pacifica station KPFT went on the air in Houston in 1970, its transmitter was blown up, twice; it is the only U.S. radio station to have suffered such crimes. The transmitter was destroyed by the Ku Klux Klan. Why? Because the station allowed people to speak for themselves, and that challenges stereotypes and caricatures, which fuel hate groups like the KKK.

Pacifica Radio is now part of a national coalition, RadioForPeople.org, that is helping groups file for their own radio licenses. You can check out the availability of a license by entering your ZIP code at the website getradio.org.

Independent community radio provided critical coverage of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. While Cumulus Media was banning the Dixie Chicks for daring to speak out against war, Clear Channel radio stations were sponsoring prowar rallies around the country. Roxanne (Walker) Cordonier, the South Carolina Broadcasters Association's 2002 radio personality of the year, was fired by Clear Channel-owned station WMYI-FM in Greenville, S.C.

"I was fired for being antiwar," she told me. "I was told to shut

up. People who retained their employment had the presence of mind to keep quiet." She sued, and Clear Channel settled with her just before trial (for a sum said to be about a year's salary). Four years later, she is back on the air, now buying airtime on a locally owned station. "People forget," she says, "these are the public airwaves, and the public is not getting access to them."

From coast to coast, from Alaska to Hawaii to Florida to Maine, people are organizing to reclaim a small portion of the public airwaves. The October FCC application window for full-power, noncommercial FM licenses is an opportunity to make a meaningful, long-term contribution to your local media landscape—to help give a voice to the voiceless, to carry on the fine tradition of Pacifica Radio, to create a beacon for truth under which people can discuss the most important issues of the day: war and peace, life and death. Check out getradio.org. Start your own community radio station, and wipe that smile off Rupert Murdoch's face.

Amy Goodman is the host of the nationally syndicated radio news program, Democracy Now!

Community radio is the antidote to that small circle of pundits featured on all the networks, who know so little about so much, explaining the world to us and getting it so wrong.

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Beyond disaster in Iraq

Chris Hedges

The war in Iraq is about to get worse—much worse. The Democrats' decision to let the war run its course, while they frantically wash their hands of responsibility, means that it will sputter and stagger forward until the mission collapses. This will be sudden. The security of the Green Zone, our imperial city, will be increasingly breached. Command and control will disintegrate. And we will back out of Iraq humiliated and defeated. But this will not be the end of the conflict. It will, in fact, signal a phase of the war far deadlier and more dangerous to American interests.

Iraq no longer exists as a unified country. The experiment that was Iraq, the cobbling together of disparate and antagonistic patches of the Ottoman Empire by the victorious powers in the wake of World War I, belongs to the history books. It will never come back. The Kurds have set up a de facto state in the north, the Shiites control most of the south and the center of the country is a battleground. There are two million Iraqis who have fled their homes and are internally displaced. Another two million have left the country, most to Syria and Jordan, which now has the largest number of refugees per capita of any country on Earth. An Oxfam report estimates that one in three Iraqis are in need of emergency aid, but the chaos and violence is so widespread that assistance is impossible. Iraq is in a state of anarchy. The American occupation forces are one more source of terror tossed into the cauldron of suicide bombings, mercenary armies, militias, massive explosions, ambushes, kidnappings and mass executions. But wait until we leave.

It was not supposed to turn out like this. Remember all those visions of a democratic Iraq, visions peddled by the White House and fatuous pundits like Thomas Friedman and the gravel-voiced morons who pollute our airwaves on CNN and Fox News? They assured us that the war would be a cakewalk. We would be greeted as liberators. Democracy would seep out over the borders of Iraq to usher in a new Middle

East. Now, struggling to salvage their own credibility, they blame the debacle on poor planning and mismanagement.

There are probably about 10,000 Arabists in the United States—people who have lived for prolonged periods in the Middle East and speak Arabic. At the inception of the war you could not have rounded up more than about a dozen who thought this was a good idea. And I include all the Arabists in the State Department, the Pentagon and the intelligence community. Anyone who had spent significant time in Iraq knew this would not work. The war was not doomed because Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz did not do sufficient planning for the occupation. The war was doomed, period. It never had a chance. And even a cursory knowledge of Iraqi history and politics made this apparent.

This is not to deny the stupidity of the occupation. The disbanding of the Iraqi army; the ham-fisted attempt to install the crook and, it now turns out, Iranian spy Ahmed Chalabi in power; the firing of all Baathist public officials, including university professors, primary school teachers, nurses and doctors; the failure to secure Baghdad and the vast weapons depots from looters; allowing heavily armed American units to blast their way through densely populated neighborhoods, giving the insurgency its most potent recruiting tool—all ensured a swift descent into chaos. But Iraq would not have held together even if we had been spared the gross incompetence of the Bush administration. Saddam Hussein, like the more benign dictator Josip Broz Tito in the former Yugoslavia, understood that the glue that held the country together was the secret police.

Oil & water

Iraq, however, is different from Yugoslavia. Iraq has oil—lots of it. It also has water in a part of the world that is running out of water. And the dismemberment of Iraq will unleash a mad scramble for dwindling resources that will include the involvement of neighboring states. The Kurds,

like the Shiites and the Sunnis, know that if they do not get their hands on water resources and oil they cannot survive. But Turkey, Syria and Iran have no intention of allowing the Kurds to create a viable enclave. A functioning Kurdistan in northern Iraq means rebellion by the repressed Kurdish minorities in these countries. The Kurds, orphans of the 20th century who have been repeatedly sold out by every ally they ever had, including the United States, will be crushed. The possibility that Iraq will become a Shiite state, run by clerics allied with Iran, terrifies the Arab world. Turkey, as well as Saudi Arabia, the United States and Israel, would most likely keep the conflict going by arming Sunni militias. This anarchy could end with foreign forces, including Iran and Turkey, carving up the battered carcass of Iraq. No matter what happens, many, many Iraqis are going to die. And it is our fault.

Hit Iran?

The neoconservatives—and the liberal interventionists, who still serve as the neocons' useful idiots when it comes to Iran—have learned nothing. They talk about hitting Iran and maybe even Pakistan with airstrikes. Strikes on Iran would ensure a regional conflict. Such an action has the potential of drawing Israel into war—especially if Iran retaliates for any airstrikes by hitting Israel, as I would expect Tehran to do. There are still many in the U.S. who cling to the doctrine of pre-emptive war, a doctrine that the post-World War II Nuremberg laws define as a criminal "war of aggression."

The occupation of Iraq, along with the Afghanistan occupation, has only furthered the spread of failed states and increased authoritarianism, savage violence, instability and anarchy. It has swelled the ranks of our real enemies—the Islamic terrorists—and opened up voids of lawlessness where they can operate and plot against us. It has scuttled the art of diplomacy. It has left us an outlaw state intent on creating more outlaw states. It has empowered Iran, as well as Russia and China, which sit on the sidelines gleefully watching our self-immolation.

1994: Cheney warns of Iraq quagmire

Transcript, American Enterprise Institute interview 1994:

Q: Do you think the U.S., or U.N. forces, should have moved into Baghdad?

Cheney: No.

Q: Why not?

Cheney: Because if we'd gone to Baghdad we would have been all alone. There wouldn't have been anybody else with us. There would have been a U.S. occupation of Iraq. None of the Arab forces that were willing to fight with us in Kuwait were willing to invade Iraq.

Once you got to Iraq and took it over, took down Saddam Hussein's government, then what are you going to put in its place? That's a very volatile part of the world, and if you take down the central government of Iraq, you could very easily end up seeing pieces of Iraq fly off: part of it, the Syrians would like to have to the west, part of it—eastern Iraq—the

Iranians would like to claim, they fought over it for eight years. In the north you've got the Kurds, and if the Kurds spin loose and join with the Kurds in Turkey, then you threaten the territorial integrity of Turkey.

It's a quagmire if you go that far and try to take over Iraq.

The other thing was casualties. Everyone was impressed with the fact we were able to do our job with as few casualties as we had. But for the 146 Americans killed in action, and for their families—it wasn't a cheap war. And the question for the president, in terms of whether or not we went on to Baghdad, took additional casualties in an effort to get Saddam Hussein, was how many additional dead Americans is Saddam worth?

Our judgment was, not very many, and I think we got it right.

Source: Editor & Publisher 8/13/07 http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003624798>



This is what George W. Bush and all those "reluctant hawks" who supported him have bequeathed us.

What is terrifying is not that the architects and numerous apologists of the Iraq war have learned nothing, but that they may not yet be finished.

Chris Hedges, the former Middle East bureau chief for *The New York Times*, spent seven years in

the Middle East. He was part of the paper's team of reporters who won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for coverage of global terrorism. He is the author of *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. His latest book is *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*.

Source: Truthdig 8/6/07 www.truthdig.com/report/item/20070806_beyond_disaster/> via truthout.com

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Next step—stop the raids, build community

David Bacon

In Worthington, Iowa, a federal prosecutor gets a grand jury indictment against Braulio Pereyra-Gabino, union vice president at the local Swift meatpacking plant. He's accused of not turning his undocumented members in to Homeland Security. In Arizona, Governor Janet Napolitano signs a draconian immigration enforcement bill, criminalizing work for those without papers and ordering state agents to enforce the prohibition with a vengeance. Since Congress wouldn't pass the recent Senate bill with the same sanctions, she says Arizona has no choice.

The Senate's failure is used as well in Prince William County, Virginia, to justify a local ordinance ordering all public officials to check immigration papers, even teachers, nurses and librarians. They're forbidden to help anyone lacking them. Meanwhile, immigration agents continue detaining and deporting people by the hundreds in workplace and community raids around the country.

Some DC supporters of the recent Senate bill are still floundering about what to do in the wake of its failure. Outside the Beltway, though, the immediate need is obvious. Organize and fight back.

Outside Washington a movement capable of doing that is growing. You can see it, not just in the million people who marched in Los Angeles twice in one day. Last May Day in tiny Bridgeton, New Jersey, and Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, unions and progressive activists walked alongside immigrant mothers wheeling children in strollers, fighting down the fear that deportation might separate their families.

Everywhere in this country, immigrant communities are growing, defying the raids intended to terrorize them - organizing and speaking out. This movement is a powerful response to Congress's inability to pass a pro-immigrant reform bill. It can and will resist and stop the raids, but its potential power is far greater. Like the civil

rights movement four decades ago, the political upsurge in immigrant communities makes a profound demand—not simply for visas, but for freedom and equality.

It questions our values.

Will local communities share political power with newcomers? Will workers be able to organize to turn low-paying labor into real jobs? Will children go to school knowing their teachers value their ability to speak two or three languages as a mark of intelligence, not inferiority?

Those who fear change are right about one thing. Once we answer these questions, we will not be the same country.

Social change requires a social movement. Rights are only extended in the United States when people demand it. Congress will pass laws guaranteeing rights for immigrants as it did for workers in 1934, or African-Americans in 1966 - when it has no choice but to recognize that movement's strength.

In the South of the 1960s, courageous civil rights activists stopped lynchings and defied bombings, while registering people to vote and going to jail to overturn unjust Jim Crow laws. They won allies, from unions to students to artists, who helped give the civil rights movement its radical, transformative character. They led our country out of McCarthyism.

Today the movement for immigrant rights and equality confronts choices in strategy and alliances that recall those of the civil rights era. As SNCC and CORE had to move past the accommodations of Booker T. Washington, the immigrant rights movement has to move past the failed strategy of the last three years.

Washington lobbyists have treated local communities as troops to back up conservative Beltway legislation. They've promoted a strategic alliance with corporations, whose main interest was converting the flow of migrants into a regulated source of cheap labor, and with an administration using raids to pressure immigrant communities

and bust unions. DC strategists tried to appease the right by agreeing to anti-immigrant provisions that robbed their bill of the support of those communities they claimed it was supposed to benefit.

Start from a human perspective

Pointing in a different direction, many community-based coalitions and grassroots groups outside the Beltway have made proposals that start from a human and labor rights perspective. They would give the undocumented real residence rights, as the Immigration Reform and Control Act did in 1986. New migrants would be able to live as normal community members, rather than as exploited guest workers. A demilitarized Mexican border would look like the one with Canada. Immigrants would regain due process rights, which after eight years of George Bush, everyone else needs too. Work would be decriminalized and labor rights enforced for all workers, immigrants included. Families could reunite in the US without waiting years. US policy would stop reinforcing poverty abroad as an inducement for corporate investment, especially in those countries sending migrants here.

The mainstream press amplifies the voices of a small anti-immigrant minority, and a conservative Congress kowtows to them. But most polls show that immigrants and non-immigrants alike believe in basic fairness and equality, and are willing to consider these and similar ideas. The problem is that without a powerful movement they remain just that—ideas.

Building that movement in communities, churches and unions requires a change in alliances as well as in the program. Its natural allies include African-Americans, whose experience of racism and economic desperation is similar to that of immigrants. Unions are already important allies, and most opposed the Senate bill. Immigrant workers are already more active in union drives than most sections of the workforce.

(continued next page)

Congress: Stop denying emergency contraception

Emergency contraception (EC), also known as the morning-after pill (brand name Plan B), is a safe, effective, FDA-approved pharmaceutical. EC is simply a high dose of hormonal birth control pills which can be used to prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse. While EC is sold without prescription for women ages 18 and older in all 50 states, U.S. servicewomen are not guaranteed access to the drug on military bases in our country and abroad, including fields of combat.

In 2002, the Department of Defense initially added EC to its Basic Care Formulary, a list of over 200 medications required to be stocked at all military treatment facilities. Sadly, emergency contraception was quietly removed from the list weeks later, a result of ideological pressure from the Bush administration. Now, it is at the discretion of each health facility to decide whether or not to stock

EC, and military women have no guarantee of universal access.

Servicewomen deserve quality health care, including access to EC. In 2003, a survey financed by the Defense Department found that almost a third of all servicewomen reported being the victim of rape or attempted rape during their time in the Armed Services. Most women serving our country rely exclusively on military facilities for all their health care needs and restricting or denying access to emergency contraception is not only unhealthy and irresponsible but completely unjust.

With over 350,000 women serving in our nation's armed services, it is reprehensible that this administration will not allow them complete access to emergency contraception. Last year nearly 3,000 military women reported sexual assault while on active duty. Part of the recommended regimen for treating survivors of assault is to inform them about and offer them emergency contraception,

yet it is only sporadically available to servicewomen at their base pharmacies and medical facilities in the U.S. and overseas.

Action: The Compassionate Care for Servicewomen Act (S.1800/H.R.2064), sponsored by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) and Representative Michael Michaud (D-Maine), requires full access to emergency contraception for servicewomen at all U.S. military health care facilities around the world.

Ask your members of Congress to co-sponsor the Compassionate Care for Servicewomen Act which will require that all military health care facilities stock emergency contraception. Tell them to support this health care version of "body armor" which will protect the reproductive health and human rights of women serving our country in the armed forces.

Source: NOW action alert, 8/10/07

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Stop raids *(continued from page 8)*

Displaced and unemployed workers can also be allies of immigrants, instead of competitors in the job market. Today many are manipulated by the anti-immigrant hysteria of right-wing talk show hosts like Lou Dobbs, because Washington lobbyists won't antagonize their corporate sponsors by criticizing the free market agenda. Yet hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers are victims of the same free trade agreements that cause migration. NAFTA and CAFTA create poverty in Mexico and Central America to benefit corporate investors. That poverty drives people to migrate north. Opposing the offshoring of jobs goes hand in hand with defending the rights of the migrants produced by free trade.

The DC strategy pitted immigrants against unemployed workers through guest worker schemes, raids and criminalizing work. Coalition building brings

people together in an anti-corporate alliance based not in Washington, where lobbyists dominate the agenda, but in communities with a different set of interests.

Rights for immigrants at work and in neighborhoods can be paired with the right to jobs and federal employment programs. Since 2004, Houston Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee has proposed this kind of tradeoff—real legal status for 12 million undocumented people, together with federal support for job creation and training in Black and Chicano communities with high unemployment. She's rejected guest worker programs as a corporate giveaway hurting both immigrants, who are denied normal rights, and low-wage workers forced into competition with them. Some unions, like UNITE HERE Local 2 in San Francisco, are building alliances by demanding that employers hire more African-Americans, while defending the rights of immigrants

already in the workforce.

Similarly, workers in unions—immigrants included—need labor law reform and enforcement. Many May Day marchers demanded not just legal immigration status, but the right to organize to raise their poverty-level wages. Immigrant janitors sitting in the streets of Houston, hotel housekeepers enforcing living wage laws in Emeryville, California, and meatpacking workers organizing against company terror tactics at Smithfield Foods in Tarheel, North Carolina are as much a part of the immigrant rights movement as those marching for visas.

A coalition that can fight for these demands has its roots in immigrant rights groups, local unions, church congregations and college campuses. The Essential Worker Immigration Coalition, representing Wal-Mart, Marriott and other corporate giants, will not fight for these demands. Nor will the right-wing Manhattan Institute.

But many national organizations will. The AFL-CIO and most unions in the Change to Win Federation will support these demands. So will the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, the Mexican American Political Association and the American Friends Service Committee.

National groups can provide resources, but to build a movement on the ground, we might study the experience of the young activists in the South in the 1960s, and the radicals in the industrial workplaces of the 1930s. Could students be organized to go to Hazelton, Tucson and Prince William County, to provide support for communities challenging raids and local anti-immigrant laws? Could civil disobedience be as important to their tactics as it was to those who sat in at lunch counters or organized illegal unions at the Ford Rouge plant?

Immigrant communities don't

need another bad Congressional compromise. They need a freedom agenda. It can be a program like the Freedom Charter of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement—a vision to fight for. It can be a bill in Congress, like Sheila Jackson Lee's, forcing politicians to consider an alternative to guest workers and more raids. And it can be a mobilizer, drawing people to picket lines in front of the ICE detention centers holding their family members.

There people can sing new Spanish or Arabic words to the old anti-slavery anthem: "Let my people go."

David Bacon <http://dbacon.igc.org/> is a California photojournalist who documents labor, migration and globalization. His book *Communities Without Borders* was just published by Cornell University/ILR Press.

Source: *truthout* Report, 8/1/07 www.truthout.org

State of the Union—what Bush cannot say

*David M. Walker, Comptroller
General of the United States*

At the start of the 21st century, our country faces a range of sustainability challenges: fiscal, health care, energy, education, the environment, Iraq, aging infrastructure, and immigration policy, to name a few. These challenges are complex and of critical importance....

Unfortunately, our government's track record in adapting to new conditions and meeting new challenges isn't very good. Much of the federal government remains overly bureaucratic, myopic, narrowly focused, and based on the past. There's a tendency to cling to outmoded organizational structures and strategies....

Efficient and effective government matters. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita brought that point home in a painful way. The damage these storms inflicted on the Gulf Coast put all levels of government to the test. While a few agencies, like the Coast Guard, did a great job, many agencies, particularly the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), fell far short of expectations. Public confidence in the ability of government to meet basic needs was severely shaken—and understandably so. If our government can't handle known threats like natural disasters, it's only fair to wonder what other public services may be at risk.

Money

Transforming government and aligning it with modern needs is even more urgent because of our nation's large and growing fiscal imbalance. Simply stated, America is on a path toward an explosion of debt. And that indebtedness threatens our country's, our children's, and our grandchildren's futures. With the looming retirement of the baby boomers, spiraling health care costs, plummeting savings rates, and increasing reliance on foreign lenders, we face unprecedented fiscal risks.

Long-range simulations from my agency are chilling. If we continue as we have, policy makers will eventually have to raise taxes dramatically and

or slash government services the American people depend on and take for granted. Just pick a program—student loans, the interstate highway system, national parks, federal law enforcement, and even our armed forces....

Importantly, our nation's financial problems are undermining our flexibility to address a range of emerging challenges. For example, America's population is aging. Tens of millions of baby boomers, and I'm one of them, are on the brink of retirement. Many of these retirees will live far longer than their parents and grandparents. The problem is that in the coming decades, there simply aren't going to be enough full-time workers to promote strong economic growth or to sustain existing entitlement programs. Like most industrialized nations, the United States will have fewer full-time workers paying taxes and contributing to federal social insurance programs. At the same time, growing numbers of retirees will be claiming their Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid benefits.

Another ominous trend: American companies are cutting back the retirement benefits they're offering to workers. This means all of us are going to have to plan better, save more, invest more wisely, and resist the temptation to spend those funds before we retire.

Globalization

Beyond fiscal imbalances, the United States confronts a range of other challenges. Globalization is at the top of that list. Markets, technologies, and businesses in various countries and in various parts of the world are increasingly linked, and communication across continents and oceans is now instantaneous. This new reality was made clear by the recent drop in stock markets around the world.

Clearly, U.S. consumers have reaped many benefits from globalization. From clothing to computers, you and I can buy a range of foreign-made goods that are cheaper than ever. But there's a catch. In many cases, lower prices

Simply stated, America is on a path toward an explosion of debt. And that indebtedness threatens our country's, our children's, and our grandchildren's futures.

have been accompanied by losses in U.S. jobs. Globalization is also having an impact in areas like the environment and public health. The truth is that air and water pollution don't stop at the border. And with today's international air travel, infectious diseases can spread from one continent to another literally overnight.

With the end of the Cold War, we face new security threats, including transnational terrorist networks and rogue nations armed with weapons of mass destruction. September 11 brought this reality home in a painful way. Stronger multinational partnerships will be essential to counter these diverse and diffuse threats.

Challenges also come from technology. In the past 100 years, but especially the last 25 years, spectacular advances in technology have transformed everything from how we do business to how we communicate, to how we treat and cure diseases. Our society has moved from the industrial age to the knowledge age, where specialized knowledge and skills are two keys to success. Unfortunately, the United States—which gave the world Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison—now lags behind many other developed nations on high school math and science test scores.

In many respects, our quality of life has never been better. We're living longer, we're better educated, and we're more likely to own our own homes. But as many of you already know from your own families, we also face a range of quality-of-life concerns. These include poor public schools, gridlocked city streets, inadequate health care coverage, and the stresses of

caring for aging parents and possibly our own children at the same time.

We also face a range of serious challenges when it comes to health care, education, energy, the environment, foreign policy, immigration, infrastructure, Iraq, and other issues. Current U.S. policy in all these key areas is on an unsustainable path over the long term. Tough choices must be made, and the sooner the better.

Our very prosperity is placing greater demands on our physical infrastructure. Billions of dollars will be needed to modernize everything from highways and airports to water and sewage systems. The recent bridge collapse in Minneapolis was a sobering wake-up call. The demands for such new investment will increasingly compete with other national priorities.

To preserve its ability to address these and other emerging trends, America needs to return to fiscal discipline and focus on the future. At both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue and on both sides of the political aisle, we need leaders who will face these facts, speak the truth, partner for progress, and make tough choices. We also need leadership from our state capitols and city halls and from businesses, colleges and universities, charities, think tanks, the military, and the media. So far, there have been too few calls for fundamental change and shared sacrifice.

A way forward

Obviously, a return to fiscal discipline is essential. We need to impose meaningful budget controls on both the tax and the spending sides of the ledger.

Members of Congress also need more explicit information on the long-term costs of spending and tax bills—before they vote on them. For example, the Medicare prescription drug bill came with an \$8 trillion price tag. But that fact wasn't disclosed until after the bill had been passed and signed into law.

But if our government is to successfully address the range of challenges I mentioned earlier, government transformation is also essential. Every federal agency and every federal program is going to have to rethink its missions and operations....

American families regularly clean out their closets and attics. Surplus items are either sold at yard sales or given to charity. Unfortunately, when it comes to federal programs and policies, our government has never undertaken an equivalent spring cleaning.

We need nothing less than a top-to-bottom review of federal programs, policies, and operations. Congress and the President need to decide which of these activities remain priorities, which should be overhauled, and which have simply outlived their usefulness.

Entitlement reform is especially urgent. Unless we reform Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, these programs will eventually crowd out all other federal spending. Otherwise, by 2040 our government could be doing little more than sending out Social Security checks and paying interest on our massive national debt....

The American people need to become more informed and involved when it comes to the problems facing our country. They also need to become more

(continued next page)

Bush's Iraq oil law

It's embarrassing that George W keepstrying to deceive the American public about developments in Iraq, but it's shameful that the media establishment blithely goes along, parroting Bush's deceit.

Take Bush's high-pressure push to ram a new oil law through the Iraqi Parliament. The official line is that this is a healing measure that would provide for a fair distribution of oil profits among Iraq's Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds. The oil law is touted by the Bushites as key to unifying these factions, and its passage is the number one non-military benchmark that the White House has set to measure Iraqi "progress."

Major media outlets in our country have swallowed Bush's line whole, frequently and unquestioningly reporting that, for some reason, those quarrelsome Iraqis can't even agree on something as basic as sharing oil revenues. There have been several impatient editorials, demanding that Baghdad get on with it.

If our media barons were to have a sudden attack of journalistic curiosity, however, they might peer a bit deeper into the oil law. Then they'd learn that the glitch is not about sharing profits, but about a cynical power grab by multinational oil giants. Eager to seize control of Iraq's massive petroleum reserves, Big Oil got the Bushites to write a provision

into the proposed law that would open two-thirds of that nation's oil fields to ownership by foreign corporations.

In short, the law would force Iraq to surrender sovereignty over its most valuable economic resource - and that's why it is not passing. The people there have enough trouble without losing control of their oil, and there is vehement public opposition to Big Oil's law.

So when you see stories about Bush, Cheney and others imploring Iraq's Parliament to pass this law - remember, They're not promoting national reconciliation, they're promoting a shameful oil scam.

Source: *Hightower Lowdown* 8/7/07; <http://www.hightowerlowdown.org>

State of the Union *(continued from page 11)*

vocal in demanding change. ...The good news is younger Americans turned out in large numbers for November's midterm election. From Iraq to immigration, from ethical lapses to fiscal irresponsibility, the public's dissatisfaction with the status quo was abundantly clear. But looking toward 2008, it's essential that the public and the press hold candidates of both parties accountable for their position on our large and growing fiscal challenge.

Transforming government won't happen overnight. Success depends on sustained leadership that transcends the efforts of a single person or a single administration. Public officials will also need to partner with other federal agencies, businesses, universities, and nonprofit groups, both domestically and internationally. The bottom line: We can succeed with enlightened and sustained leadership. And unlike with global warming, we can solve our fiscal challenge on our own. Our future in this area is in our hands if we have the courage to act.

Other countries

Other countries with similar challenges have already acted. The two best examples are Australia and New Zealand. Like

the United States, they have aging populations. Unlike the United States, these two countries have stepped up to the plate and dealt with some of their serious long-term challenges. Among other steps, they've reformed their overburdened public pension and health care systems. The efforts by policy makers in Australia and New Zealand show it's politically possible to make difficult decisions that require short-term pain in the interest of long-term gain.

America is a great nation, probably the greatest in history. But if we want to keep America great, we have to recognize reality and make needed changes. There are striking similarities between America's current situation and that of another great power from the past: Rome. The Roman Empire lasted 1,000 years, but only about half that time as a republic. The Roman Republic fell for many reasons, but three reasons are worth remembering: declining moral values and political civility at home, an overconfident and overextended military in foreign lands, and fiscal irresponsibility by the central government. Sound familiar? In my view, it's time to learn from history and take steps to ensure the American Republic is the first to stand the test of time....

What's needed now is leadership.

The kind of leadership that leads to meaningful and lasting change has to be bipartisan and broad-based. Character also counts. We need men and women with courage, integrity, and creativity. Leaders who can partner for progress and are committed to truly and properly discharging their stewardship responsibilities. But leadership can't just come from Capitol Hill or the White House. Leadership also needs to come from Main Street.

It's time for the three most powerful words in our Constitution—"We the people"—to come alive. As I said earlier, the American people are going to have to become better informed and involved as we head toward the 2008 elections. And the next President, whoever he or she may be, and whichever party he or she represents, should be prepared to use the bully pulpit of the Oval Office to push needed reforms. If these things happen, we have a real chance to turn things around and better position ourselves for the future.

Source: *From the presentation: Transforming Government to Meet the Demands of the 21st Century, The Federal Midwest Human Resources Council and the Chicago Federal Executive Board, Chicago, IL August 7, 2007 United States Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7149, Washington, D.C. 20548 www.gao.gov/lghome.htm*



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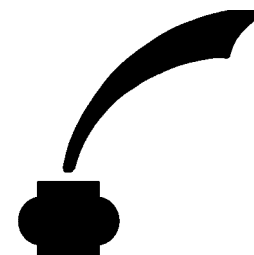
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Sustainability report

Now that's organic

As reported previously, the USDA is proposing to add 38 (non-organic) ingredients to the National List of allowable ingredients in products labeled as "USDA Organic" (products that are at least 95% organic). The OCA has been petitioning the USDA to remove some of the more problematic proposed ingredients, such as factory farmed animal intestines, mercury-laden fish oils, and nonorganic hops. On the hops issue, the USDA was heavily lobbied by the beer giant Anheuser-Busch, who claimed that organic hops are not commercially available and has been advertising its "Wild Hops Lager" as "the perfect organic experience" using conventional hops grown with chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. Thanks in part to a USDA petition signed by over 20,000 Organic Bytes readers like you, Anheuser-Busch has announced it will now start using 100% organic hops for its organic beer line.

Consumer tip—buy local and in season

More and more consumers are beginning to understand the incredible environmental and economic benefits of buying local. Industrial agriculture and long distance food transportation and processing now generate up to 25% of all climate destabilizing greenhouse gases. Farmers Markets across the country are reporting record attendance and sales. Massive amounts of CO2 are produced when the average, often highly processed and wastefully packaged store-bought food item travels 1500-2500 miles from farm to fork. You know you're doing the planet and our climate a favor when purchasing items grown by farmers in your area. This week's tip is a reminder to consumers that buying foods in season can be as important as buying locally. A bag of tomatoes grown locally may have less of an energy impact than those shipped up from Chile. But grow those tomatoes out of season in a heated greenhouse and its energy impact can exceed the imported option. Of course, the moral of the story

isn't to buy your tomatoes from Chile in the winter time, but rather to look for foods that are growing locally in season or were grown and canned/dried/preserved locally. Learn more: http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6358.cfm

New sweetener—good or bad?

The beverage and food industries have sought the "perfect sweetener" for decades. It's no secret that standard table sugar (sucrose) and its even worse cousin, high-fructose corn syrup, rots teeth, leads to obesity, and is a major contributor to diabetes. So chemical companies have concocted an armada of synthetic sugar alternatives such as saccharin and aspartame that have been linked to everything from cancer to neurological disorders. Now Coca-Cola and Cargill have announced they have "developed" the perfect natural sweetener. The sweetener is stevia, a zero calorie plant-based sweetener that has been used for hundreds of years. In Japan, 40% of the sweeteners consumed are from stevia, so it can't really be called a "new" sweetener. But here in the U.S., likely due to lobbying of the FDA by synthetic sweetener producers, stevia has been hidden in the shadows by strange labeling requirements that keep the average consumer from even understanding what stevia can be used for. Coca-Cola and Cargill plan to bring a patented version of stevia to the mainstream as the perfect natural sweetener by removing some of the bitter aftertaste. Is this good news or bad news? What's your opinion? Share your thoughts in OCA's web forum. It's easy and quick to sign up and join the online organic community: <http://organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php>

Enviro toxins kill 13 million kids per year

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released the most extensive research to date on the impacts of environmental toxins on children's health. The report indicates that over 30% of



childhood diseases can be linked to exposure to environmental toxins. According to WHO researchers, 13 million deaths could be prevented annually by improving the environment. The vulnerability of children is increased in degraded and poor environments. The report states that due to environment-related diseases, one in five children in the poorest parts of the world will not live longer than their fifth birthday. The Organic Consumers Association's "Appetite for a Change" campaign is focused on implementing policies and practices that can one day provide a safe environment for our children. Learn more: <http://www.organicconsumers.org/afc.cfm>

Q & A: Corporate buyouts of organic companies

Reader: I do like the spider web of natural food acquisitions you've compiled, and in fact it is very enlightening (see Issue #114 <http://www.organicconsumers.org/bytes/ob114.cfm>). Yet it's not complete. Stonyfield is owned by Dannon, Ben & Jerry's is Unilever, Green & Blacks Organic Chocolate is Cadbury... Nestle has a small stake in Divine Chocolate, and there's more.

OCA: As noted in that Organic Bytes piece, the charts we highlighted in that issue were specifically for the Top 25 organic sellers. They were not designed to cover all companies. For a more thorough list of "who owns what" in the organics world go here: <http://www.organicconsumers.org/Corp/mergers.cfm>

Source: *ORGANIC BYTES #115, Health, Justice and Sustainability News Tidbits with an Edge!* 8/10/07 Organic Consumers Association, 6771 South Silver Hill Dr, Finland, MN 55603 <http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm>

Fight warming, clean the air

As we head into the final days of this legislative session, the Planning and Conservation League will be highlighting several key bills which will undoubtedly require a bit of heavy lifting. Here are two worthy of support.

SB 375: Fighting global warming through smart growth

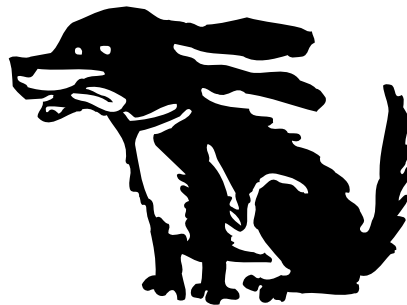
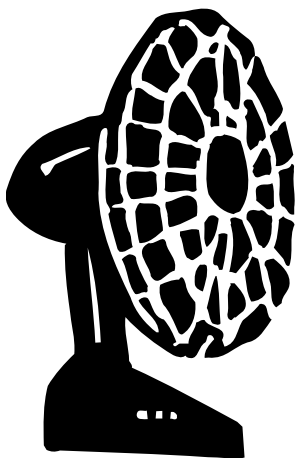
In the global warming debate we often hear a call for new technological fixes like low carbon fuels, advanced solar energy production, and hydrogen fuel cells. To these wonders of modern science we raise an emphatic, resounding “YES! AND...”

To comply with AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, California has to cut its annual greenhouse gas emissions back to 1990 levels by 2020. That means we're going to have to use all the tools we have available. In addition to new technologies, there's a way we can fight global warming right now, without waiting for any life-cycle analyses or cost-effectiveness studies. It's called Smart Growth.

In fact, the California Climate Action Team, established by the Schwarzenegger Administration, has identified smart land use policy and better transportation as one of the largest potential sources of greenhouse gas emission reductions.

SB 375 (Steinberg) would help make that smart growth possibility a reality. This legislation provides incentives for better planning to promote more compact development, greater transportation and housing choices, and the conservation of important farmland and habitat. By encouraging better development patterns, which result in fewer vehicle miles traveled per household, SB 375 would reduce fossil fuel consumption, and thus reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. The result would be better planned communities that improve our quality of life and decrease our impact on the environment.

SB 375 is facing incredibly tough opposition from the builders and developers that want to continue with business as usual, i.e. more sprawl, longer



commutes, and in increase in greenhouse gas pollution. Senator Steinberg needs all of our support to fight off their barrage of vitriol. Stay tuned for more!

SB 719: Cleaning up the San Joaquin Valley Air Board

The San Joaquin Valley is one of the most polluted regions in the United States, often beating out the Los Angeles air basin for the nation's worst air quality. In the Valley, more than 1,200 premature deaths occur each year due to particulate matter pollution. One out of five children and one out of eight adults living in the San Joaquin Valley suffer from asthma. And high levels of exposure to harmful ozone and particulate matter are estimated to cost Valley residents \$3.2 billion annually in health costs from heart and lung disease.

The San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District is responsible for addressing this public health crisis, thereby improving not only the health of the Valley's economy, but more importantly, the health of the Valley's children and communities. Unfortunately, progress on improving air quality in the region has been egregiously slow, largely due to inaction on the part of the Air District's governing board.

SB 719 (Machado) seeks to address this institutional paralysis by reforming the Air District's governing board. The bill would expand representation on the board from urban and rural areas, as well as from the public health sector, growing the Board's membership from eleven to fifteen members.

The Central Valley Air Quality

Coalition (CVAQ), of which PCL is an active member, has been educating Valley residents about the health threats posed by air pollution and advocating that the Valley's Air Board be more representative of the region's population and more responsive to its pressing health needs.

A large majority of San Joaquin Valley residents agree that something must be done. According to a Public Policy Institute of California poll taken just last month, seven in ten San Joaquin Valley residents believe that air pollution is a serious health threat to themselves and their families. Seven in ten would also favor more robust air pollution regulations on commercial and industrial activities and half of Valley residents would favor stricter air pollution standards on agriculture and farm activities—even if it made it more costly for businesses to operate. And giving a decisive nod to the reform proposals contained in SB 719, eight in ten Valley residents favor the inclusion of health and environmental professionals on the Valley Air Board. That's an unbelievable demonstration of community support.

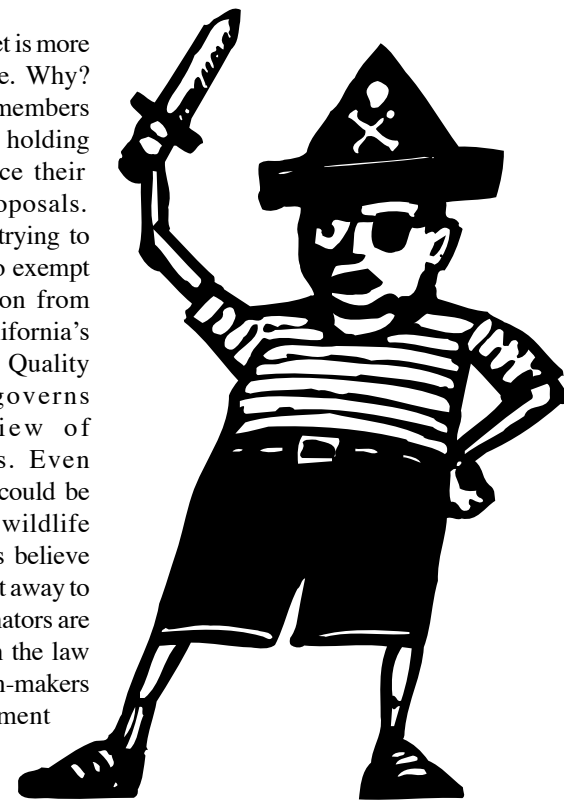
SB 719 is a step forward for the San Joaquin Valley's 3.7 million residents and for the Air District. As one of the poorest but most rapidly growing regions in nation, the Valley struggles daily with the need to balance economic opportunity with the protection of public health. By expanding community representation and enhancing the scientific capacity of the District Board, SB 719 will help ensure this balance is achieved.

Source: PCL Insider: News from the Capitol 8/9/07, www.pcl.org

Pass the state budget, keep enviro protections

California's state budget is more than one month overdue. Why? In part, because some members of the State Senate are holding it hostage to try to force their anti-environmental proposals. Senate Republicans are trying to use the budget process to exempt global warming pollution from consideration under California's bedrock Environmental Quality Act—the law that governs environmental review of development projects. Even though global warming could be catastrophic for some wildlife and 81% of Californians believe steps should be taken right away to counter its effects, 14 Senators are demanding a loophole in the law that would allow decision-makers to ignore how development projects will impact global warming. At the same time, Senate Republicans want to slash funding for enhancing state parks and public transit, protecting our coasts and reducing global warming and diesel pollution.

Fortunately, Senate Democrats have stood firm against these short-sighted, anti-conservation demands. But, every day the budget stalemate continues, pressure grows on state lawmakers and the Governor to reach an agreement.



ACTION: A budget deal could be reached any day, so please send a message right away urging your State Senator and Governor Schwarzenegger to pass a state budget that protects our environment and helps reduce global warming pollution.

Source: Defenders of Wildlife Wildlife alert 8/13/07 Defenders of Wildlife, 1130 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

Coastal cleanup starts in Stockton

Mark your calendar and grab your flip flops! Coastweeks, a three week celebration of our coast and waterways, is taking place September 15 through October 7. Coastweeks kicks off with the California Coastal Cleanup Day, a massive volunteer effort with 50,000 Californians working to clean up our environment. There are nearly 200 events throughout the state.

In Stockton, September 15 marks Inland Coastal Cleanup Day. Coming at the end of summer, Coastal Cleanup Day is a great way for families, students, service groups, and neighbors to join together, take care of our fragile Delta environment, show community support for our natural resources, and have fun!

For information on how to help, contact Fran at fran.abbott@ci.stockton.ca.us, call 937-8791, or look on the web at www.stocktongov.com/mud/index.cfm. Or check out an online calendar of events to find an event in other areas.

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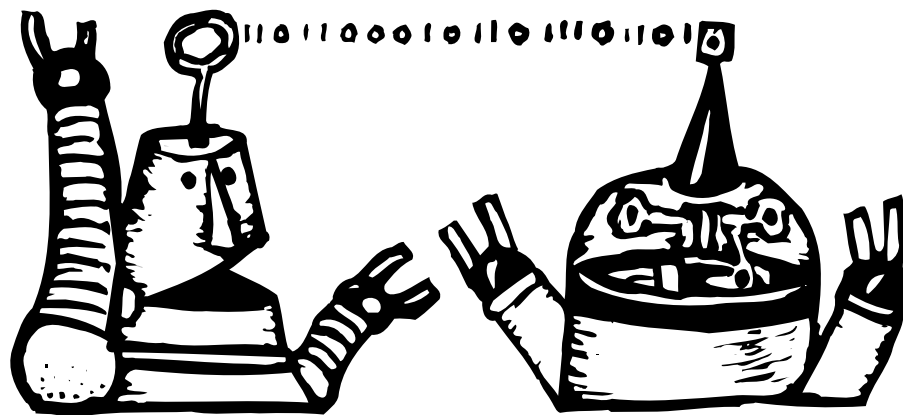
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Restore constitutional rights, stop the Police Americans Act

The so-called "Protect Americans Act," which we are calling the "Police Americans Act," allows for massive, untargeted collection of international communications without court order or meaningful oversight by either Congress or the courts. It contains virtually no protections for the U.S. end of the phone call or email, leaving decisions about the collection, mining and use of Americans' private communications up to this administration.

The "Police Americans Act" allows the Attorney General (AG) to issue program warrants for international calls without court review. This new program grants the AG—not a court or independent body—the authority to issue year-long program warrants for surveillance of people reasonably believed to be outside of the United States. The secret intelligence court that has been overseeing such activities for the last thirty years is cut out of the process, leaving the executive branch unchecked.

The "Police Americans Act" has no protections for American phone calls and emails that are caught up in the dragnet. The new program only requires that the surveillance be targeted at people overseas. While this will allow collection of foreign-to-foreign

calls, it also allows the government to pick up all international communications where one party is in the United States, so long as no one particular person in the U.S. is being "targeted." The law is silent on how to treat these American phone calls and emails—leaving the administration to decide how to collect, store, datamine and use Americans' private communications.

The "Police Americans Act" provides only a phony court review of secret procedures. The AG is directed to submit to the intelligence court the procedures by which this new program will operate. However, the report to the court only need detail how the program is directed at people reasonably believed to be overseas—it does not require the AG to explain how it treats Americans' calls or emails when they are intercepted. The court will have no information about how extensive the breach of American privacy is, nor the authority to remedy it.

The "Police Americans Act" requires only meaningless reporting to Congress. The new law requires the AG to report to the Intelligence and Judiciary Committees twice a year. But those reports will only contain information about activity in violation of the AG's own

secret guidelines about targeting foreigners over seas. Again, this ignores the impact that vast international collections will have on U.S. persons. The AG does not have to report on how many Americans' calls it has tapped, incidentally picked up or how many Americans have become targets, even though the AG will now be allowed to rummage through all calls and emails coming into and out of the U.S.

The "Police Americans Act" has a sunset that may be of little value. The ACLU will continue to work with Congress over the next six months to insert real protections into FISA for Americans who are going to be swept up in these new dragnets. However, the sunset will fall in the middle of the politically charged primary season, where it may be even harder to rein in intelligence activities already in progress than it is to resist expansion of those authorities in the first place. Changes should be made immediately.

ACTION: Contact your Senators (Feinstein voted for the new law) and Representative; to continue, this law must be re-authorized at year end.

Source: ACLU release, 8/11/07 www.aclu.org/safefree/nsaspying/

The so-called "Protect Americans Act" allows for massive, untargeted collection of international communications without court order or meaningful oversight by either Congress or the courts.

No center, no centrists

George Lakoff

"Centrism" is the creation of an inaccurate, self-serving metaphor, and it is time to bury it.

There is no left-to-right linear spectrum in the American political life. There are two systems of values and modes of thought - call them progressive and conservative (or nurturant and strict, as I have). There are total progressives, who use a progressive mode of thought on all issues. And total conservatives. And there are lots of folks who are what I've called "biconceptuals": progressive on certain issue areas and conservative on others. But they don't form a linear scale. They are all over the place: progressive on domestic policy, conservative on foreign policy; conservative on economic policy, progressive on foreign policy and social issues; conservative on religion, but progressive on social issues and foreign policy, and on and on. No linear scale. No single set of values defining a "center." Indeed, many such folks are not moderate in their views; they can be quite passionate about both their progressive and conservative views.

Barack Obama has it right: Get rid of the very idea of the right and the left and the center. American ideas are fundamentally progressive ideas - the ideas on which this country was founded and which carry forth that spirit. Progressives care about people and the earth, and act with responsibility and strength on that care.

The progressive view of government is simple. Progressive government has two aspects: protection and empowerment. Protection is far more than the military, police and fire departments. It includes consumer protection, worker protection, environmental protection, public health, food and drug safety; Social Security and other safety nets. It also includes protection from the government itself, and hence a balance of powers, openness, fundamental rights and so on.

Empowerments include roads and bridges; public education; government-developed communications like the internet and satellite communications

systems; the banking system; the SEC and institutions that make a stock market possible, and the court system, mostly about contracts and corporate law. Progressive government makes business possible. No one makes any money in this country without progressive empowerment by government. A progressive foreign policy is not based solely, or even mainly, on the state—about the "national interest" defined as our military strength and GDP. Progressive foreign policy focuses on individual people's interests as well as national interests: on poverty, disease, refugees, education, women's and children's issues, public health and so on.

These are simply American values. The progressive movement is a patriotic American movement. People who call themselves "centrists" share progressive views on important issue areas, but have conservative views on other major issue areas. The areas vary from person to person. There is no single moral perspective, no single set of agreed-upon issues.

The very idea that there is a "center" marginalizes progressives and sees them as extremists, when they simply share fundamental American values. The term "center" suggests there is a "mainstream" where most people are and that there is a single set of views held by that mainstream. That is false.

The fallacy matters in terms of Democratic electoral strategy. The Democratic base consists of people who are mostly or totally progressive, just as the Republican base consists of people who are mostly or totally conservative. How does the Democratic Party as a whole, and Democratic candidates in particular, speak to those who are biconceptual?

I am a cognitive scientist, and I believe that people's brains play a significant role in elections. From the perspective of brain science, the answer is a no-brainer. (Sorry, I couldn't resist!) You speak to biconceptuals the same way you speak to your base: you discuss progressive values, and if you are talking to folks with both progressive and conservative values, you mainly talk about the

issues where they share progressive values. What that does is evoke and strengthen the progressive values already there in the minds of biconceptuals.

And, of course, you don't negate or argue against the other on their framing turf - remember "Don't Think of an Elephant!"

That was the winning strategy of Sherrod Brown in Ohio. Brown is a thoroughgoing progressive who never moved one inch to the right. He talked about the issues where he agreed with his Ohio audiences—and legitimately spoke for them.

Think about Barack Obama going to Rick Warren's megachurch and getting a standing ovation from evangelicals because he talked about the places where he agreed with them, he activated his values in them (values they already had), he came across as a man of principle, and he didn't get in their face about where he disagreed.

The losing strategy is to move to the right, to assume with Republicans that American values are mainly conservative and that the Democratic Party has to move away from its base and adopt conservative values. When you do that, you help activate conservative values in people's brains (thus helping the other side), you offend your base (thus hurting yourself), and you give the impression that you are expressing no consistent set of values, which is true. Why should the American people trust somebody who does not have clear values, and who may be trying to deceive them about the values he and his party's base hold? They shouldn't and won't....

It is important to stand up to Democratic leaders who cling to the idea that there is a unitary mainstream center, that they are it, and that progressives are extremists and deserve to be marginalized.

George Lakoff <<http://www.linguistics.berkeley.edu/lingdept/Current/people/facpages/lakoffg.html>> is Professor of Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley.

Source: [truthout.org/docs/8/15/07](http://www.truthout.org/docs/8/15/07)

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It's five o'clock somewhere

Hi everybody, it's time for Joe Palooka, Connections' resident bar stool philosopher and international renowned malcontent, to unleash another barrage of wit and wisdom aimed at you, our valued readers. Okay, maybe Joe isn't exactly a household word muttered by misanthropes the world over, but lying seems to be in fashion nowadays.

Current Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez seems to have no problem with telling a lie now and then. His recent testimony before a Senate Judiciary Committee is typical of the response of Bush Administration officials caught red-handed and forked-tongued. Don't cop to nothing. Of course, when the Head Dude, the Supremo Commando, the Chief of all Chiefs, the unmitigated Leader of the Free World, the one, the only honest to God Decider lies more than a Persian rug dealer, it makes it easier to stretch the truth just a bit. Survey says: Gonzalez gotta go.

Well, come on everybody take a trip with me—way down the Mississippi down in New Orleans. Ah, New Orleans, with its rich and colorful history is, sadly, no longer the same. From Bush and Brownie on down, the Feds' response to the catastrophic events of Hurricane Katrina have been well documented. You don't need Joe to tell you what a pitiful, lousy, funky piece of gumbo the taxpayers of New Orleans got for their money. Now we find out that over 100,000 trailers and mobile homes provided to Katrina survivors contain unsafe levels of formaldehyde. Joe has it on good authority that Vice President Cheney soaks his pampered carcass in a tub of the stuff every night. This could account for his waxen pallor and the permanent sneer seemingly etched upon his face. Anyway, the formaldehyde found in the trailers is linked to breathing difficulties, burning eyes and throats and possibly cancer. The folks in Minneapolis, victimized by a collapsing bridge, must feel all warm and fuzzy inside when they hear the President tell them that they'll get all the help they'll need. Of course, the ethnic make up in Minnesota is a bit lighter than that of Louisiana.

Joe read a recent column by Thomas Sowell in the Stockton Record and was faced with a dilemma: what to do with the paper. Convinced such tripe could not remain in the house in its current form, Joe proceeded to swat a few blow flies and then lined the bottom of his cats' litter box. Such childishness did nothing for Joe's body, but was good for his "Sowell." In any event, Mr. Sowell was (again) reminding us of all the good things going on in Iraq. Like, hey man, things are gettin' down in Baghdad. Yeah, about six feet down. While Pentagon mouthpieces, Bush flunkies and the Crawford Creeper himself continue to point to the effectiveness of the surge in reducing US military deaths, the good news ends there. Iraqi civilian deaths are steadily mounting, electricity is a day-to-day crap shoot and water is a scarce and threatened commodity. The fountain of faith the President drinks from is nearly dry in Baghdad.

News out of NASA—the National Association of Space Alcoholics—stunned the world recently. Astronauts going up in the Space Shuttle may be draining a few brewskies or slamming a few cocktails before lift off. Oh, my gosh. Joe's application to NASA was denied, despite a firm resume of being blasted into space from numerous barstools over the years. Perhaps given the recent revelations involving our nation's space sots, Joe's inclusion may yet become a reality. Dozing off at his typewriter, Joe began to dream.

As two intrepid intergalactic gin-swillers circle the Earth, an urgent message is sent from the Happy Hour Three, our orbiting space craft.

Astro: "Uh, Houston, we got a problem."

Houston: "That's a Roger. What can we do for you?"

Astro: "We're out of beer."

Houston: "Y'all know the rules about drinkin'."

Astro: "We're drier than a popcorn fart up here."

Houston: "Sounds like a personal problem."

Astro: "Stand by Houston—Cosmo just found somethin'. It's

a stowaway, Houston. Looks like an old dude."

Houston: "Astowaway? Confirm that, Astro."

Astro: "That's what it is all right. What'll we do with him?"

Houston: "Toss him out if he ain't got a ticket. This ain't no friggin Space Mountain."

Astro: "That's a Roger, Houston. Hold on... Cosmo found somethin' else."

Houston: "Another stowaway? Confirm, Astro."

Astro: "By God! Old boy's got an ice chest with him! Gotta go, Houston. Over and out."

Hours pass as a frantic nation waits and pleading voices wait for a verbal response from the Happy Hour. Then a strange voice does answer:

"Uh, that's a big 10-4, Houston. Everything's ship-shape up here."

Houston: "Who the hell is this?"

"This is Joe @Rocket Man' Palooka speaking. We got enough brew for the whole crew, so tuck yourselves into bed and leave this space flyin' to me."

And that, my friends, is the true story of how Joe Palooka became the first stowaway to be accepted at NASA.

Now that you've been thoroughly entertained by that life-affirming story, it's time to put thinking caps on your pointed little heads and play the Joe quiz:

1. What President said this: "We Americans have no commission from God to police the world."

- a. Benjamin Harrison
- b. George W. Bush
- c. James Monroe
- d. Theodore Roosevelt

2. In Fantasy Pictures' upcoming film, "Humpty Dumpty," who will play the lead role?

- a. Karl Rove
- b. Alberto Gonzalez
- c. David Petraeus
- d. All of the above

(continued next page)



Sawznhammers

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

Gumption

Never doubt that a small number of determined people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

— Margaret Mead

One hot July evening, six of us (no spring chickens) sat in the garden eating pizza, drinking iced homegrown mint tea, and plotting to end The War-by reading in public.

"Cardoza has voted for the war from the beginning, McNerney is shilly-shallying."

"We'll need some signs. *Cardoza Stop The Carnage. McNerney Why Do You Think We Elected You? Build Bridges Not Bombs. To Hell With Halliburton*, stuff like that."

"Yeah, and a sign that says *join us!*"

"I'll draft a leaflet with their voting records on the war, phone numbers and so on. We'll say, *contact your representatives. bring all the troops home now!*"

"I'll look up their campaign contributors."

"I'll get lists of names from the internet, of Americans and Iraqis

killed in the war, so we can read them out loud. We'll start with local soldiers killed."

"It will take all week."

"So, we can do two weeks."

"I don't know how to pronounce Arabic names!"

"We'll find someone to coach us."

"I don't want to just read names, I want to say, Joe Smith, murdered for the oil companies; Ali Muhammad, murdered for the oil companies."

"What if the cops hassle us?"

"They probably won't, they've actually been pretty cooperative with our demonstrations these last couple years. A lot of them know the war is nuts, plus they believe in peaceful free speech. I'll go see them and fill out permits or whatever."

"What about counter-demonstrators?"

"They're a test of our nonviolence. If we want a peaceful world we can't go slugging people!"

"Is there any more pizza?"

Sober critics will ask, What good can such a piddling action

possibly do? Six oldsters waving signs and reading names?

In the first place, it will do the six of us good, to know we're standing up and acting like citizens, not spectators; that we are exercising our first amendment rights "peacefully to assemble, and petition for the redress of grievances." It will stiffen our spines for struggles yet to come, and give us stories to tell the young.

In the second place, there are already eight of us (two couldn't make the meeting), we plan to invite many friends, and passersby may join on the spot.

In the third place, actions like these have been happening all over the country. In some places the Occupation Project has been actually going into congressional offices and reading the names until police come to arrest them-and then they get the publicity of a trial. In Santa Fe, Jesuit priest John Dear and others are awaiting trial, but the government keeps postponing, because the "criminals" have subpoenaed U.S. Senator Pete Domenici, a strong supporter of the war. The senator apparently does not wish to appear in court



with a bunch of peacemakers.

Fourth and finally, these actions are part of a massive American upsurge of disgust over this rotten war. By being visibly out there on Weber Avenue and Grand Canal Drive, we embolden those who already detest the war to take actions of their own.

"Determined people change the world," wrote the great anthropologist Margaret Mead. Right here in Stockton, we just saw it happen.

We the People finally took back Stockton's water system from a multinational corporation, which had bamboozled a compliant city council (under Mayor Gary Podesto) to ram through a six hundred million dollar contract, before the citizens could vote on it. A little group of utterly determined people, spearheaded by Sylvia Kothe, Dale Stocking and Bill Loyko, battled for years, pledging their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. Thousands of us joined in the struggle, with pancake breakfasts and Chinese banquets, and we actually Beat City Hall.

Another little group of determined people are waging the local battle for SB 840, universal single payer health care in California. Jerry Bailey and Roger Speed, former director of S.J. County Health Care, are forever spreading the word to labor unions, church congregations and gatherings in community centers. Carol Bailey and Woody Alspaugh were roused by Stockton police for leafleting in support of SB 840 outside Michael Moore's wonderful movie *Sicko!* But the local and Northern Cal American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reminded the city of its obligation to respect freedom of speech under California law, and Bailey and Alspaugh went back, joined by my wife Ria de Groot and our 14 year old grandson Spencer. All over the state bands of

activists are doing the same, led by the California Nurses Association. They're battling Big Bucks: Blue Cross has pledged \$2 million this year to defeat single payer SB 840, the American Assn. of Retired Persons (AARP) \$1.5 million. Bizarrely, AARP has pledged half a million in SJ and Sacramento counties alone. Old folks don't need affordable, comprehensive health care?

So people of gumption are standing up.

The Stockton Eight are up against the crazed Bush/Cheney junta, Halliburton, Rockwell and the war profiteers; the Iraq war (occupation, really) costs \$2 billion a week, buys destruction and private jets, and makes young Arabs hate us. The other side of the \$2 billion coin would be:

Put millions of Americans to work rebuilding bridges and levees, weatherizing buildings to cut energy consumption, teaching kids, caring for veterans and the sick, even paying reparations to Iraq. You fill in the list....

The Stockton Eight will be reading the names of the war dead, picketing Dennis Cardoza's office in the old Stockton Hotel on Weber Street, from 11 to 1 Monday through Friday, August 27 to 31. We'll be doing the same at Jerry McNerney's office, 2222 Grand Canal Blvd. (across from Java Aroma, near the old Hilton) from 11 to 1, Tuesday through Friday, September 4 to 7.

Please join us. Call your congressmen! They're in the blue pages of the phone book, and in this newspaper. End the war, bring all the troops home now, change the world.

John Morearty has been a peace provocateur since the Vietnam War. He can be reached at 209-464-3326, or john@morearty.com.

Joe Palooka (continued from page 16)

3. Who sang the Motown hit "War?"

- a. Wilson Pickett
- b. Edwin Starr
- c. Colin Powell and the Smoking Guns
- d. Condoleeza Rice and the Mushroom Clouds

4. Who holds the record for the longest home run hit in a major league game?

- a. Babe Ruth
- b. Hank Aaron
- c. Barry Bonds
- d. Mickey Mantle

5. What was the name of the Space capsule in which John Glenn orbited the Earth in 1962?

- a. Tea-Totaler One
- b. Temperance Six
- c. High and Dry Five
- d. Friendship Seven

(Answers: 1a; 2d; 3c; 4d and 5d.)

Well, here's where we wrap up our monthly foray into the demented yet brilliant mind of Joe Palooka. Joe hopes no one at NASA is butt-hurt, or anyone who justifiably admires them. Those who venture into space are truly a courageous group of men

and women. Who wouldn't need a drink once in a while, given the intense life-or-death nature of their business? As for Bush Administration officials and their supporters ... Joe couldn't care less about offending them. The very nature of this Presidency and its continuing arrogance is offensive to those of us who yearn for peace, honesty, equality, integrity and for the compassion that was promised yet never delivered. Can the democrats win in 08? Millions of lives are riding on the outcome. Perhaps it's not too early to pray. Until we meet again, may your beer stay cold, your hearts warm and your lives full of beauty. This is Joe Palooka (aka Dave Waldon) signing off.

—Joe Palooka

Film review

Real dirt worth seeing

The Real Dirt on Farmer John will turn every idea you ever had about what it means to be an American farmer, or an American dreamer, on its head. Meet Farmer John, the incredible human being whose inspirational story of revolutionizing his family farm and redeeming his own life has won accolades and awards at film festivals around the world.

Director Taggart Siegel made the film in a most unusual way: shooting farmer John Peterson over 25-years of their evolving friendship, and using multiple media, from 8 mm home movies to modern video—allowing him to

capture his alternately humorous, heartbreaking and spirited life with raw drama and intimacy.

With the death of his father during the late 60s, a teenaged John takes over the traditional family farm, slowly turning it into an experiment of art and agriculture, making it a haven for hippies, radicals and artists. The Real Dirt on Farmer John charts the end of this idealistic era as the farm debt crisis of the 80,s brings about the tragic collapse of the farm.

As the intricate weave of rural America unravels, vicious local rumors turn John into a

scapegoat, condemning him as a Satan-worshipping drug-dealer. Threatened with murder, his home burned to the ground, John forsakes his farm and wanders through Mexico, where he is transformed by the soulfulness and pageantry of this ancient land. Mysteriously, his quest leads him back to his hostile homeland.

Defying all odds, he gradually transforms his land into a revolutionary farming community, a cultural mecca, where people work and flourish providing fresh vegetables and herbs to thousands of people every week.

The Peterson family farm has



become Angelic Organics, one of the largest Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms in the U.S., a beacon of today's booming organic farming movement.

Interested in setting up a local screening? Contact www.angelicorganics.com.

Source: <http://www.farmerjohnmovie.com/>

Stockton, 2008 City of Spirituality, Healing, & Peace?

Zing Nafzinger

A proposal for action:

There is, at this point in time, an opportunity like no other. Humankind is on the verge of total transformation, and Stockton is making its mark, playing its part, in this transformation.

Stockton aids this transformation by encouraging groups which espouse shifting consciousness through creative expression, environmental and community

planning and design, “practicing what is preached”, democracy, city revitalization, responsible citizenship, and communication networking. Stockton encourages its populace of many different backgrounds to work consciously together to make the city a better place for all.

We propose that Stockton continue its forward path in this regard by declaring 2008 a “Year of Spirituality, Healing, and Peace”.

We invite the people of Stockton to continue to envision and courageously co-create a healed world, a world of peace, by focusing on our city. Healing flows from life and love. There are three streams of activity in Stockton which could be the city's 2008 focus as it continues its progression toward total transformation.

First, spirituality. Stockton has a well-developed interfaith network which consciously works for interfaith understanding and cooperation in undertaking projects which benefit the city as a whole.

Second, healing. Stockton has a developing holistic network which consciously works for integrated healthcare serving the body, mind, and spirit of its people.

Third, peace. Stockton has a well-developed peace and justice network which consciously works to educate citizens on issues of societal change, to benefit our city and our transforming world.

Stockton participates in national networking in these three areas as

well. 2008 could be a year of taking a stand in these larger networks of spirituality, healing, and peace, to say, “Look how we are standing as a beacon of what is possible when people work together for the benefit of all.”

Imagine all groups and organizations in Stockton using 2008 to focus on how they are celebrating diversity and cooperation in terms of spirituality, healing, and peace. Think of how Stockton's creativity, its life and love, could flow to bring even more healing and harmony to this city.

Change is a healthy thing for living beings. We co-create our city every day by the choices we make, the ones we aren't afraid to face and move through. We co-create when we look after each other and help each other and live with each other and love one another. Co-creating peace means co-creating the mindset necessary for peace, the willingness to BE peace, living our ideals in what we think, say,

and do.

Imagine Stockton as a city in which every group and organization fosters healing by celebrating diversity and cooperation in terms of spirituality, healing, and peace. Imagine every religious group as a Stockton Center for Spirituality, Healing, and Peace. Imagine every medical facility as a Stockton Center for Spirituality, Healing, and Peace. Imagine every nonprofit as a Stockton Center for Spirituality, Healing, and Peace—every educational institution, every city department.

Stockton has an opportunity, at this point in time, to stand for still another step toward humankind's transformation, by consciously supporting its populace in promoting spirituality, healing, and peace in 2008. Together, we can continue to evolve what the United Nations calls a “Culture of Peace”.

Interested in making this happen? Contact Zing Nafzinger at conzinger@comcast.net.

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September 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.]

July 3 - Sept 1

Wish you were here: paintings from the road. Tu-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5 Knowlton Gallery, 115 S School St #14, Lodi. 368-5123

Aug 6 - Sept 1

Arturo Vera seven year photo retrospective. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Sept 4 - 29

Open Studio Tour Artists' work on display including Henry Paine photography. M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Aug 21 - Sept 13

Delta College faculty art show. T 11-4, W-Th 11-6:30, F 11-1. LH Horton Jr Gallery, Shima Center, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 954-5507

Wed, Aug 22

Concert in the Park: In The Mood 6 - 8 pm. Victory Park, Pershing & Argonne, Stockton. Free. 937-8099

Sat, Aug 25

Reggae on the Delta featuring Pan Excstasy, 3-10 pm, Breadfruit Tree restaurant, 8095 Rio Blanco road, on the delta. \$20. 952-7361

Mon - Fri, Aug 27-31

Reading the names of U.S. and Iraqi war dead, outside Dennis Cardoza's office, in the Old Stockton Hotel on Weber. 11 - 1. Info 464-3326

Tue, Aug 28

Candlelight vigil for peace, Annunciation Cathedral, N. Lincoln/Rose St. in Stockton, 7 PM sharp. "We pray to become people of peace, so that wars will end." All are welcome; bring a candle, bring a friend. 462-3340.

Fri, Aug 31

Downtown Stockton Music in the Square featuring Second String Quintet 6 - 10 pm. DeCarli Waterfront Square, Weber & El Dorado, Stockton. Free. 464-5246

Fri-Sun, Aug 31 - Sept 2

26th annual Labor Day Pow-wow, Weber Point Events Center, Stockton. Fri 6 - 10 pm; Sat 12 - 10 pm; Sun 12 - 6 pm. Native American food, jewelry, arts & crafts. Free admission, no pets. 808-8321.

Sun, Sept 2

San Joaquin Vegans monthly potluck, 5:30, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. \$2 with food, \$9 without food. Menu theme: Appetizers and Desserts. Tableware

and beverages provided. Please bring enough food for 8. All are welcome. RSVP to sjvegans@hotmail.com First Sundays.

Tue - Fri, Sept 4-7

Reading the names of U.S. and Iraqi war dead, outside Jerry McNerney's office, 2222 W. Grand Canal Blvd, across from Java Aroma. 11 - 1. Info 464-3326

Sept 5 - 30

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas produced by Stockton Civic Theatre. 7:30 pm Thu; 8 pm Fri/Sat; 2:30 pm Sun. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rose Marie Ln, Stockton \$22 adult, \$18 senior, \$15 student, \$12 age 12 and under. Adult w/age under 18. 473-2424.

Thu, Sept 6

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

Fri, Sept 7

First Friday Art Hop, 6-8:30 pm, Hutchins Street Square, 25 S Hutchins St, Lodi. Art, belly dancing, wine tasting. Free admission. 333-5511.

Sat, Sept 8

Bob Duden watercolors, 4 - 7 pm. Elsie May Goodwin Gallery, 1902 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 466-6604.

Wine on the Waterfront fundraiser for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, with food, wine tasting, jazz. 5 - 8 pm. Waterfront Warehouse, 445 W Weber Ave, Stockton. \$45 advance, \$50 door. 464-7644.

Thu, Sept 13

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

Thu, Sept 13 & 15

Stockton Symphony with Andrew Von Oeyen pianist. Th 8 pm, Sat 6 pm. Warren Atherton Auditorium, San Joaquin Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave., Stockton \$16 - 48. 951-0196

Fri, Sept 21

Drinking Liberally - Promoting Democracy One Pint at a Time. An informal inclusive progressive social group - bring democratic discourse to your local democratic space. Stockton Grand Hotel, 2323 Grand Canal Blvd, Stockton. Free to attend, support event host. 7 pm. 351-3397.

Tue, Sept. 25

Candlelight vigil for peace, Annunciation Cathedral, N. Lincoln/Rose St. in Stockton, 7 PM sharp. "We pray to become people of peace, so that wars will end." All are welcome; bring a candle, bring a friend. 462-3340.

Tues, Aug 14-Sept 18

British festival, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton 467-4455 (see page 20)

First Sundays

Vegan potluck, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 5:30 pm \$2 donation bringing food, \$9 without. Info: sjvegans@hotmail.com.

Third Thursdays

Hispanics for Political Action - HPA meets 6 pm at 2080 E 4th St, Stockton. Info, call Louis Gonzales 464-9205



Talking It Through

Talking It Through is now two half-hour shows.

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Fall 2007

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Blades of Glory — Fri. & Sat., Aug. 31, Sept 1

Zodiac — Fri. & Sat., Sept 7, 8

Tom Jones (Classic) — Thurs., Sept 13

300 — Fri. & Sat., Sept 14, 15

Duck Season (Spanish) — Thurs., Sept 20

Reign Over Me — Fri. & Sat., Sept 21, 22

Amen. (French) — Thurs., Sept 27

Days of Glory — Fri. & Sat., Sept 28, 29

Get Real — Wed., Oct 10

Once — Thurs., Fri., & Sat., Oct 11, 12, 13

Waitress — Thurs., Fri., & Sat., Oct 18, 19, 20

Throne of Blood (Japanese) — Thurs., Oct 25

The Descent — Fri., Oct 26

Rocky Horror Picture Show — Fri., Oct 26 (11:00pm)

Metropolis (Japanese anime) — Sat., Oct 27

Smoke Signals (Native American) — Thurs., Nov 1

Breach — Fri., & Sat., Nov 2, 3

Pirates of the Caribbean - At World's End — Fri. & Sat., Nov 9, 10

Painted Fire (South Korea) — Thurs., Nov 15

Knocked Up — Fri. & Sat., Nov 16, 17

Starter for 10 — Fri., & Sat., Nov 30, Dec 1

Shakespeare Behind Bars (Documentary) — Thurs., Dec 6

Tokyo Godfathers (Japanese Anime) — Fri. & Sat., Dec 7, 8

Spider-Man 3 — Fri. & Sat., Dec 14, 15

Show Time: 8:00pm

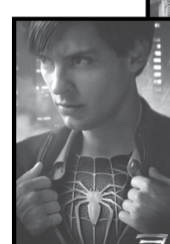
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Phone: (209) 946-2025

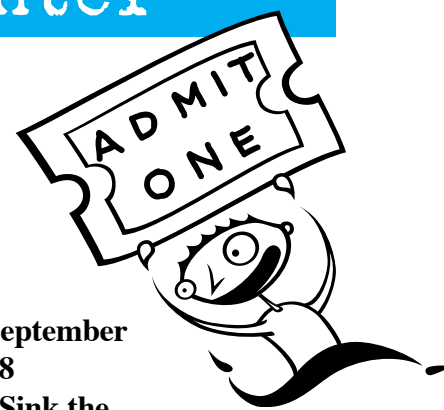
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ASuop Film Series



Open letter for youth and peace

"If we do not teach our children peace, someone else will teach them violence."

—Coleman McCarthy, author of I'd Rather Teach Peace

For many years, Peace and Justice activists have lamented the lack of youth within our ranks. As the progressive community ages it becomes absolutely imperative that we reach out and draw young people into our movements.

At the same time, programs for youth development and empowerment have failed to keep pace with the needs of our young population. In their place have grown programs designed more to demonize youth within the crime and punishment model.

A proposal is being drafted to create and implement a new learning environment, using the Peace and Justice Center as a hub. The Center would be used as an administrative office and a class/presentation room on weekdays to build programs for youth, allowing them to develop a sense of themselves and build connections with broader Peace and Justice issues. If you are interested in hearing more and perhaps giving some input and feedback, you are cordially invited to a presentation and discussion on this proposal.

The Seeds of Fire proposal will be presented at the Peace and Justice Center 231 Bedford Rd. Thursday August 23rd, 5:15 p.m. sharp. If you cannot attend, there will other times and ways to share your ideas. For more information, contact Jim Walsh at 209-981-0544.

British Film Festival

Tuesdays @ 6:30 pm, Peace & Justice Center
231 Bedford Road; 467-4455; \$2.00 admission

August 21 "The Magic Christian" (1970)

What would you be willing to do for money? Find out as Peter Sellers and his adopted son (played by Ringo Starr) plumb the depths of degradation to see what people will do as long as the price is right. 110 minutes.

August 28 "Naked" (1993)

Johnny is a homeless man that talks like a cross between The Book of Revelation and Hamlet. This stark social commentary on the darker side of London life is not for the faint of heart. Rated R for violence and sexual content.

September 4 "The Man Who Fell to Earth" (1976)

One year before the arrival of "Star Wars", this amazingly thoughtful science fiction film arrived with David Bowie as an alien trying to fit in with our odd species. More cerebral than "whiz-bang", it is a rare gem for people who like their films smart. 120 minutes.

September 11 "Nicholas and Alexandra" (1971)

This epic drama depicts the fall of Czarist Russia and the rise of Lenin in this much overlooked film. Unjustly ignored by the Oscars, it boasts a stunning cast (including Laurence Olivier) as well as a rich tapestry of Russian history. 155 minutes.

September 18 "Sink the Bismarck!" (1960)

The Bismarck was the most powerful battleship ever built by the German navy. This true story of the relentless struggle for sea dominance between Britain and Germany in WWII is perhaps the greatest of all British war films. Black and white. 97 minutes.

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