# News, Views and Musings About Our Planet February 2010

**Photo by Florian Schulz** 

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's Coastal Plain during a caribou migration. People are working hard to protect this delicate and glorious region from oil drilling.

# PA Woman Works for Alaska Wilderness

By Monica Scherer West Chester, Pennsylvania

When I am asked by people, "What do you do for a living?" my response of "Pennsylvania Field Organizer for Alaska Wilderness League" is, more often than not, met with a pretty puzzled look. I then quickly launch into my well-rehearsed explanation:

"Alaska Wilderness League is the only organization in our nation's capital solely committed to protecting Alaska's treasured public lands and waters. Over 60 percent of Alaska is federal public land, meaning it belongs to each and every citizen. So my job is to be sure that people in Pennsylvato their unparalleled natural treaeducate local citizens about the threats and opportunities to our lands and waters in Alaska and ask the public to let Pennsylvania's Congressional Delegation know their constituents want these special places protected."

I work from my hometown in Pennsylvania but the group has offices also in New Jersey, Maine, Colorado and Minnesota.



Photo by Monica Scherer Group of school children hearing a presentation by the author from the Alaska Wilderness League. Ice-P (the group's polar

This year my work is even speculated to be available in the nia have a say in what happens launching a year-long celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of oil consumption in 2030. sures in Alaska, I work hard to the establishment of the Arctic The Arctic Refuge's Coastal National Wildlife Refuge. While the majority of the Arctic Refuge was designated as wilderness, the 1.5 million acre Coastal Plain also known as the Refuge's biological heart — was left out. Years later, the status of the Arctic Refuge's Coastal Plain is still threatened by oil development despite the fact that government studies have found that the amount of oil

bear mascot) is in the background.

more exciting because we are Coastal Plain would amount to, at most, 1.2 percent of total world

Plain provides habitat essential for the survival of 180 species of birds including a few that migrate all the way to Pennsylvania, as well as for numerous mammals — including caribou, musk oxen, wolves, wolverines, moose, Arctic and red foxes, black bears, brown bears, polar bears and Dall sheep. The importance of Continued on page 4

### The Awakening: Part VII This message is sent to you from the one who solar systems, galaxies and universes. My Council

is here offering you help and guidance in your time of need, The Trustworthy And True Spirit, The Most High God.

In my Kingdom, men do not rule over men, women, nature or the environment and women do not rule over men, women, nature or the environ-

In my Kingdom, I, The Most High God, not only choose to be led and receive guidance from The Trustworthy And True Spirits, my Council of Elders; I also depend on them to lead and guide my thoughts, words, actions, feelings, emotions and affections (to transmit emotions). My Council of Elders consists of these Trustworthy And True

LOVE PATIENCE COMFORT TOLERANCE TRUTH HONESTY WISDOM THANKS **JUSTICE** COUNSEL **FAIRNESS TRUST** UNDERSTANDING CONFIDENCE KINDNESS CHARITY **HOPE** COMPASSION **GENEROSITY SECURITY** PEACE **HONOR** MERCY MODESTY FRIENDSHIP CHIVALRY HUMILITY RESPECT **GIVING** GENTLENESS INNOCENCE RECEIVING **FORGIVENESS** RESPONSIBILITY **GOODNESS** RIGHTEOUSNESS SHARING CHOICE...etc.

I ask you to ask yourselves are you Guardians and Protectors of my Council of Elders or are you attacking and destroying them by your own thoughts, words, actions, feelings, emotions and

To be a Guardian and Protector of my Council of Elders, it is not only allowing my Council of Elders to lead and guide you, but it is also accepting them when others offer them to you. For example:

It is not only being peaceful to all things around you but also accepting Peace when it is offered to

It is not only about giving Love, but also receiving it when it is offered to you;

It is not only about speaking Truth, it is also accepting the Truth when it is offered to you, and so

Only giving and receiving my Council of Elders in your thoughts, words, actions, feelings, emotions and affections are you protecting and guarding them and giving them life within you and your surroundings.

In my Kingdom, all things bow to my Council of Elders including me, The Most High God. There is no need for kings, queens, governments, religions, presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries of state, prime ministers, emperors, ambassadors, governors, Congress, senators, mayors, lords, earls, princes, princesses, commissioners, preachers, popes, cardinals, evangelists, czars, etc.

There is also no need for money. (I will explain this more clearly at a future time.)

In this world, and especially now in the United States, I keep hearing, "How much money is needed for health care?" The question should be, "How much love and compassion, kindness, charity, generosity, giving, sharing, caring . . . is needed?"

In my Kingdom, all things are led and receive guidance from The Trustworthy And True Spirits, my Council of Elders. This applies to me, Most High God, and all races, tribes, nations, genders, species, individuals, couples, families, groups, neighborhoods, communities, villages, towns, cities, counties, states, countries, continents, planets,

of Elders are perfect leaders for all Creation. In this world, if your country calls you to go to

war and you refuse, you can be arrested and/or imprisoned and in some countries, you can be put to death. But if you refuse to be peaceful, kind and gentle, there is no punishment. In this world, if you are greedy, selfish and

take advantage of others, there is no punishment as long as you pay your taxes; however, if you are penniless and/or homeless you can be arrested and imprisoned for vagrancy.

How is it that you live in a world where, if you cross the street wrong or park your car wrong, it is against humans' laws but there are no laws to protect my Council of Elders and the moral values in which they are?

One lie or broken promise not only attacks and destroys the spirit of Truth, it also attacks and destroys the spirits of Love, Honor, Trust, Security, Friendship, Responsibility, Innocence, Honesty, Comfort, Confidence, Understanding, Righteousness and pretty much the entire Council of Elders.

One argument, mean look or glare is attacking and destroying the spirits of Love, Peace, Forgiveness, Tolerance, Joy, Honor, Friendship, Trust, Security — again, the entire Council of Elders.

So, am I (The Trustworthy And True Spirit, The Most High God) and my Trustworthy And True Spirits (The Council of Elders) leading and guiding you from within, guarding and protecting your thoughts, words, actions, feelings, emotions and affections? Or are you being led and influenced by those who oppose and try to destroy me and my Council of Elders?

There is much, much more information that I have to share with you about these and other subjects that you need to know so you can make fair and wise choices. I am waiting for television networks to have the courage to contact me through Iona Conner so I can speak freely to all of you and you can know me and see me.

Once again, I ask you PLEASE DO NOT ADD TO OR TAKE AWAY FROM THESE "AWAKEN-ING" MESSAGES IN ANY WAY so that everyone is able to see their way clearly to make their own choice freely and fairly.

I also ask you to feel free to help me reach as many people as we can by sharing my "Awakening" messages whenever and wherever possible, hopefully the mainstream media. My thanks to all of you who help me share my messages.

Live Within the Light of My Love and My

Your Friend,

The Trustworthy And True Spirit, The Most

P.S. On a personal note, for those of you who contact Iona, please be patient and tolerant in waiting for her replies, for in Iona's charitable generosity, rather than raise the price of The Order of the Earth, she has had to take a full-time job to continue to bring to you her newspaper. Thank you.

If you would like copies of the previous "Awakening" articles, contact Iona at 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pensylvania 17255; 814-259-3680 or ionaconner@gmail.com. If you can help with postage that would be great but, if you can't, we'll send them anyhow. They are also online at www. theorderoftheearth.com starting in August 2009.

# Ruby Pipeline: The Smoking Gun Behind Recent Horse Roundups?

Massive 650-Mile Pipeline Calls for Taxpayer-Funded Clearing of Wild Horses

By Ginger Kathrens The Cloud Foundation Colorado Springs, Colorado

The Cloud Foundation is asking the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to reveal the truth behind removing healthy wild horses from the Calico Complex of northwestern Nevada. Is it the Ruby Pipeline? It does not appear to be coincidental that the multi-billion dollar corporate project, the Ruby Pipeline, would run through the Calico Complex — site of the controversial roundup of more than 2,500 mustangs and the Buckhorn Wild Horse Herd Management Area. BLM removed over 200 wild horses at Buckhorn in December 2009 without public notice.



Photo by Kurt Golgart, Courtesy BLM Sweaty, steamy, Calico wild horses during a cold, winter roundup.

Director of the Interior, Ken Salazar, has told members of the public that the horses will starve if not removed because there is nothing for them to eat. The Director of the BLM, Bob Abbey, also supported Salazar's claim when he stated this week that horses are being removed "to restore an ecological balance" even though this claim is nullified by numerous experts including a biodiversity science specialist with eight years experience in the range and the sworn testimony of BLM employees Eckel and Drake. Abbey went on to reassert the BLM policy position that "we will need to continue removing excess wild horses from the public rangelands in

Continued on page 6

# Japanese Whalers Sink Sea **Shepherd Anti-Whaling Vessel**

SOUTHERN OCEAN, January 6, 2010 (ENS, excerpt) — In an attack captured on film, the Japanese security ship Shonan Maru No. 2 today rammed and sank the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's new high-speed trimaran, the Ady Gil.

Six crewmembers, four from New Zealand, one from Australia and one from the Netherlands, were immediately rescued by the crew of the newest Sea Shepherd ship, the Bob Barker. None of the Ady Gil crew were seriously injured.

The New Zealand-registered Ady Gil sank in Commonwealth Bay off the Adelie Coast of Antarctica. The incident took place at 64 Degrees and 03 Minutes South and 143 Degrees and 09

Minutes East. The Sea Shepherd vessels are in the Southern Ocean for a fifth year to disrupt Japan's so-called "research" whale hunt and cut into the profits of the whaling industry. The Bob Barker and the Ady Gil were engaged in chasing the Japanese whaling factory ship Nisshin Maru away



Photo Courtesy ICR

Crew members aboard the Sea Shepherd's new boat, Ady Gil, just before she sank.

from the Australian Whale Sanctuary in the Southern Ocean.

According to eyewitness Captain Chuck Swift on the Bob Barker, the attack happened while the vessels were dead in the water. The Shonan Maru No. 2 suddenly started up and deliberately rammed the Ady Gil, ripping off eight feet of the bow.

"As far as I'm concerned this was at least criminal assault if not

Ady Gil skipper Pete Bethune told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. that one of his crew had broken ribs but it was a "miracle" that no one had

died. "When they were about 40

meters (131 feet) away they sud-

denly veered to starboard and

attempted murder," said Swift.

cut off the front three or four meters of my boat and sheared it Continued on page 4

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# Think and Act

# Endgame by Derrick Jensen

Several years ago I interviewed Jan Lundberg, founder of the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium, "a diverse movement of grassroots community groups, individuals and businesses with the common goal of halting road-building," because "a paving moratorium would limit the spread of population, redirect investment from suburbs to inner cities and free up funding for mass transportation and maintenance of existing roads." But there's more to it than just roads. Phasing out massive fossil-fuel use, Lundberg says, is crucial not only to saving the Earth's climate but to lessening the impact of the crisis that will occur when the world's oil supply begins to run out.

"The challenge before us all," he writes, "is to survive an ecological correction unprecedented for our species. The correction will likely include an economic collapse and a conversion to subsistence activities and trading."

Lundberg grew up around the oil industry. His father ran Lundberg Survey, Inc., a company that collected statistics on gasoline prices and industry trends. In 1973, just before the oil crisis, father and son began publishing the *Lundberg Letter*, which became the number-one trade journal for the oil industry and went on to predict the second oil shock of 1979.

After his father's death in the mid-1980s, Lundberg quit the family business and directed his efforts toward energy conservation. By that point, Jan had realized that this culture's "waste economy," as he calls it, is unsustainable and the cause of massive environmental damage and species extinctions worldwide. We are laboring, he says, under the false impression that

we can "have it all:" the physical comfort of the current way of living and a livable planet.

I said to him, "When my friends and I talk about the end of civilization, we often search for some sort of marker: one of the things we've come up with is the end of car culture. How do you see the end of car culture playing out? Even before that, do you agree the car culture is in its endgame? What will cause it to end? And if you don't think it's in its endgame, is that because they'll find new oil or, failing that, figure out a new fuel system?"

He responded, "A lot of these questions have to be gone over in basics because the mass media and the educational systems provide zero insight into them. They act as though how much oil there is and what it can be used for are of no concern to the public.

"Probably the best place to start is by talking about Marion King Hubbert, a geologist who died several years ago who became famous for charting the life of an oil field. Extraction follows a bell curve — called the Hubbert Curve — in carrying capacity which production rises as new wells are put in, reaches a maximum when about half of the 'Estimated Ultimately Recoverable' (EUR) oil has been extracted, and then tails off as wells begin to run dry. During the decline, technologies such as water flooding and gas injection may be introduced to slow the rate of depletion but all they do is stave off the inevitable. The same pattern that is true for individual oil fields holds for geological basins as well: production rises as new fields are found and then tails off as the larger and more accessible fields



are depleted. This pattern can be extended also to entire nations and, ultimately, to the planet.

"The bottom line of all this
— and this is so obvious we
shouldn't need to say it, but we
have to because there is so much
ignorance and intentional deceit
surrounding this subject — is
that the production of any field
starts at zero, rises to a peak and
then falls to zero.

"For the United States, production in the lower-forty-eight peaked about 1970 — as predicted by Hubbert some forty years ago — and has been on the decline ever since."

I asked, "When will world oil

production peak?"

He responded, "Before we can ask that — and that is the question, isn't it? — we need to ask another, which is, what is the world's volume of EUR oil? Once again, production will peak when half of this volume has been extracted.

"One of the best figures I've seen for EUR is about 1,800 billion barrels, which would mean that global production would peak by the year 2007. Even if

EUR oil is as high as 2,600 billion barrels, that would move the peak back to only 2019.To be honest, both of these figures seem too far away because I don't think they fully take into account that oil consumption continues to rise very quickly. I have seen other credible figures — and these seem far more feasible to me — suggesting that global oil production has already peaked. (Ed.: Endgame was published in 2006.)

"Now, when United States production peaked, that didn't mean the end of the oil age, since the U.S. could still import oil. But when global production peaks, as it either already has or will shortly, it means the beginning of the end of the economy as we know it. Five Middle East countries will regain control of world supply. This will make the oil shocks of the 1970s seem like nothing because then there were plenty of new oil and gas finds to bring onstream. This time there are virtually no new prolific basins to yield a crop of giant fields sufficient to have a global impact. The growing Middle East control

of the market is likely to lead to a radical and permanent increase in the price of oil long before physical shortages begin to appear and they will appear within the next decade."

Of course the most recent U.S. invasion of Iraq took place in great measure to secure U.S. access to Iraqi oil.

He continued, "This will, of course, demolish the economy, which has been driven by an abundant supply of cheap energy for a century. We're going to live through an 'economic and political discontinuity of historic proportions, as one analyst puts it, or the crash, as we more often refer to it. I like the language of oil industry geologist Dr. Walter Youngquist: 'My observations in some seventy countries over about fifty years of travel and work tell me that we are clearly already over the cliff. The momentum of population growth and resource consumption is so great that a collision course with disaster is inevitable. Large problems lie not very far ahead."

I responded, "Wait a minute. I've seen industry and government figures showing that "proven reserves of oil are enough to supply the world for forty-three years at current rates of production."

He said, "I see two immediate problems with this. The first is that these figures come from government and industry. You don't think that either of those groups would lie to the American public, do you? For political reasons, proved oil reserves are consistently substantially overstated. It is in the interest of both oil-producing nations and companies to overstate their remaining oil because their business agreements limit them

to pumping and selling a proportion of their remaining resources. For example, if contracts limit you to pumping 10 percent of your proven reserves per year, you'll make a lot more money and you'll make it a lot more quickly if you simply lie about your proven reserves. But in fact the rate of oil discovery is falling sharply. Discovery of oil and gas peaked in the 1960s and the situation has deteriorated enough that by now the world consumes more than three times as much oil each year as is discovered. Do you think the oil industry is aware of oil field depletion? Of course. It's their business. Why do you think no new supertankers have been built for twenty years?

A report written for oil industry insiders and priced at \$32,000 per copy concludes that world oil production and supply peaked in 2000 and will decline to half by 2025. The report predicts large and permanent increases in oil prices for the very near future.

very near future.
"The second problem with that argument — that oil reserves will last forty-three years — is that it is based on 'current rates of production.' Their use of that language should clue us to the fact that they are dissembling because the truth is that production is skyrocketing. At one time I thought that the downslope of the Hubbert Curve might be at least slightly gradual but, because in recent years production has accelerated to unanticipatedly high levels, I've come to believe that the downslope of the curve will be extremely steep."

Derrick Jensen is an activist and the author of many books. Printed with the author's permission.

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**Note from the Editor:** As we grow, we are receiving information from many different types of people. I am pleased about that because it was never my intention to simply be "preaching to the choir." You will meet new people, different people.

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Our Goal: To provide people with news to help bring their hearts and lives back into harmony with Nature and the Council of Elders as found in "The Awakening" on page one. We are also a community of activists, writers, poets and others who care about the future of the planet and we work together to nurture each other in various ways.

**Our Mission:** To inspire and encourage readers to think seriously, act intelligently and be peaceful, compassionate, courageous and creative.

The Dream: Humans can co-exist with Nature and, once they do, both will flourish.

Masthead: We say "Volume 10" because Iona started producing a newsletter with the same name ten years ago. In 1995 she wrote a tiny booklet called "The Order of the Earth" and, with friends' help, made and gave away 11,000 of them. This newspaper is an expansion. The photo on the masthead is of ice-covered trees at the publisher's home in Shade Gap, Pennsylvania.

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the system to change the system.

Let it all fall apart.

I no longer want to live in their world so I must create/find my own.

I no longer believe we can use

--- Kim Stenley, Taneytown MD

# Victory! Local Activism and the Whole Foods Boycott

**By Michael Tabor** Takoma Park, Maryland

For several weeks this past fall, a number of us in Progressive Neighbors devoted Sunday mornings to handing out leaflets at the Silver Spring, Maryland Whole Foods store. Earlier, there had been one-time demonstrations at the downtown and Silver Spring stores.

At first, George Vlatsis, chair of Progressive Neighbors, took on the responsibility followed by Wally Malakoff and myself. We felt that, in order to have an impact, we needed to do it on a regular schedule — so, we decided on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The action drew mixed results. Although we tried through various listservs to attract folks willing to give up Sunday mornings and join with us in the leafleting, usually only a few showed up. The largest showing was when members of the D.C. Labor Choir came — an energetic group of mostly young union workers and organizers.

Sean Dobson and Herb Ettel from Progressive Maryland came another Sunday as did Tim Willard from Progressive Neighbors and the Green Party. Cindy Farquhar, a health-care activist from Baltimore joined us another Sunday. Other than that it was mostly Wally and myself.

We did distribute several hundred leaflets to shoppers. Some turned their cars around and left

The Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op

Promoting Co-operation in the Takoma Park Silver Spring Community



Image From TPSS Co-op Web Site

Perhaps the "Whole Paycheck" (as Whole Foods is often called) chain should be left to the consumers that "would rather not be bothered." After all, there are wonderful alternatives — Takoma Park and Silver Spring Co-op, farmers markets, Connumity Supported Agriculture farms, MOM's, Trader Joe's and independent markets such as Sniders.

the parking lot. Others politely took the leaflets and thanked us. But a goodly number reacted with annoyance, disdain and more than a few with anger.

At one point when a woman refused to take a leaflet and said, "I really don't want to be bothered," I snapped back at her (and Herb Ettel gently suggested I calm down!).

The overwhelming feeling I got was of a mostly-liberal population who appreciated the convenience of Whole Foods and preferred to ignore the national boycott prompted by the reactionary anti-health-care-reform

statements and actions of its eccentric CEO. Some of the cars had pro-Obama, support health-care- and environment-related bumper stickers. A participant in the boycott noted with disappointment that the Whole Foods parking lot continued to be filled despite the boycott.

This last week, an article published in *New Yorker* magazine added that, in addition to opposing labor unions and healthcare reform, John Mackey, Whole Food's CEO, didn't believe in global warming!

So, it was with some degree of delight that I read this New Year's

Day of Mackey's resignation as Chairman of the Board. A link with Huffington Post credits an activist shareholder organization (CtW Investment Group, which works with union pension funds) and said Mackey "attempted to capitalize on the brand reputation of Whole Foods to champion his personal political views but has instead deeply offended a key segment of the Whole Foods consumer base." The article noted that the stock had dropped 30% and acknowledged the consumer boycott.

Those of us who took time out on Sundays to leaflet, who

wrote letters of protest to Whole Foods or who turned their cars around and stopped shopping there, should be proud of their actions.

For me, my wife (Esther Siegel) and our daughter, Adina, there lingers a bitter taste — similar to the aftermath of the grape boycott of the '60's or the Nestle's boycott. I'm not sure if I want to return as a shopper and consumer to Whole Foods. Sure, it's a glitzy chain with lots of appeal — but once you take away the façade, isn't it just an overpriced consumerist mirage designed to separate many of us

from our hard-earned and limited resources?

Perhaps the "Whole Paycheck" (as Whole Foods is often called) chain should be left to the consumers that "would rather not be bothered." After all, there are wonderful alternatives — Takoma Park and Silver Spring Co-op, farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture farms, MOM's, Trader Joe's and independent markets such as Sniders. The co-op, for instance, just went through a lengthy process of communally choosing a new director and electing new board members.

In the end, I'd like to believe that the cumulative acts of those of us across the country who took some action had an impact on Mackey's resignation. Activism counts and sometimes produces change for the good!

Corporations must be held responsible for the words and actions of their CEO's. They should pay their share of taxes to the communities they serve (most in Maryland, don't). We should also have the right to revoke their corporate charters if they don't function in the public interest.

Hope to see some of you at the next Progressive Neighbors or Progressive Working Group meeting and continue this discussion. These groups work for better government through citizen education and action.

Contact Mike Tabor at esiegel2@icg.org.

# Is Whole Foods Bad for the Planet?

**By Kate Sheppard**Mother Jones Online, *excerpt* 

Whole Foods CEO John Mackey has probably brought more people to organic foods than anyone else in the United States. And many of the folks shopping at his markets undoubtedly consider themselves to be environmentally aware. They might even believe that by purchasing their groceries at Whole Foods outlets they are doing their part to help the planet. But certainly many of them would probably be startled to learn of Mackey's position on climate change: he's a global warming

In a recent New Yorker profile of Mackey, the Whole Foods chief argues that there is no scientific consensus regarding the causes of climate change. He lists Heaven on Earth: Global Warm-<u>ing</u> — The Missing Science, a skeptical take on warming, as one of his recent favorite reads. He frets that the "hysteria about global warming" will cause the United States "to raise taxes and increase regulation and, in turn, lower our standard of living and lead to an increase in poverty." He adds: "Historically, prosperity tends to correlate to warmer temperatures."

Mackey, of course, is wrong about the absence of a scientific consensus and his theory that warmer temperatures produce prosperity is, to say the least, wacky. But his embrace of climate change denial is not truly a surprise, for Mackey is an unabashed libertarian, opposed to the very idea of "regulation" and "taxes," no matter their purpose. He may be the vegan CEO of the country's largest natural market chain but he voted for Libertarian Party presidential candidate Bob Barr last year — because Ron Paul wasn't on the ballot. There's long been a debate over whether Mackey is a do-gooder or simply a profiteer in disguise.

Though many of his shoppers are concerned about personal and planetary health, his latest revelation so far has gotten scant attention. But when Mackey penned an anti-health-care reform op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* last August, it spurred a swift call for boycott from progressives. "Whole Foods has built its brand with the dollars of

deceived progressives," proclaimed the "Boycott Whole Foods" Facebook page, which had 33,829 members at last count. "Let them know your money will no longer go to support Whole Foods' anti-union, anti-health-insurance reform, right-wing activities. A Web site promoting the boycott also sprang up. Mackey's anti-labor positions have also triggered considerable ire after he compared having a union to "having herpes." But there's yet no virtual call to eschew Whole Foods because of Mackey's global warming position.

But that doesn't mean there's no potential problem here for Whole Foods. The company, which pulls in \$4 billion a year, does try to promote itself as a firm that cares about the environment. Its official blog touts climate-related causes like rainforest preservation, waste reduction and the awareness about carbon footprints of food.

During my last visit to the store, I was urged to sign up to receive my shopping receipts via email to save paper. But their focus is on what customers can do to reduce their impact — including in one post an admonition to "vote with your dollars" by shopping at local and at socially-conscious businesses.

The company ranked among the biggest purchasers of green power last year but neither the company nor its CEO has advocated for environmental policies in line with the views held by their customer base.

Meanwhile, companies widely scorned by progressives have stepped up efforts to deal with climate change by both implementing sustainable practices and advocating for sound policy.

Chief among them is Walmart, which recently joined with other retailers, universities, suppliers and the EPA to form the sustainability Consortium. Its goal is to create an industry-wide sustainability index for the lifecycle of products. A number of consumer-oriented businesses, such as Nike, Gap and Starbucks, are working through Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy to pass climate change legislation . . . .

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# Future Hope: An Activit's Perspective Upping the Ante on Climate

**By Ted Glick** Climate Crisis Coalition

Just about one year ago today, Barack Obama was inaugurated as President. Hopes were high among progressive-minded people, including climate activists. Finally, we had a President who "got it" on the need for action to address the deepening climate crisis.

But here we are a year later and things look very different.

The United States, including Obama, played a generally problematic role up to and at the Copenhagen climate conference, dismissing the widespread call by a big majority of the world's countries for emissions reductions consistent with the climate science. The Obama administration played this role despite the bad-weather impacts and sea level rise already being seen and felt in Africa, small island nations and elsewhere.

As far as the U.S. Congress, Obama has certainly not made it a priority so far to advance efforts to enact climate legislation in this session. It's looking very possible, even likely, that no comprehensive climate legislation will be passed in 2010.

Of course, what's needed is not just any piece of comprehensive legislation. A bad or weak bill will be worse than nothing, given that it's critical that we make the turn away from fossil fuels in the next several years. A bad bill described as an answer by politicians eager to point to a Congressional victory will be difficult to correct until it is given time to play itself out — time we don't have.

What are the key elements of a good bill? The Energy Action Coalition, at its huge, 12,000person Power Shift conference last February, summarized it this way in their demands on Congresspeople:

- Rebuild the Economy with Green Jobs;
- 100% Clean Energy, Not Coal;
- Coal;Cut Carbon 40% by 2020;Real Carbon Reductions,

Not Offsets; and

• No Giveaways to Polluters, 100% Auction.

What should the climate

movement be doing to advance these objectives?

What about a spring campaign of sit-ins on Capitol Hill and at the offices of Senators obstructing progress on climate legislation? We can take up the call by Al Gore and others that Congress pass legislation by the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day and give that call some real substance, make it more than just words

This would definitely be something new for the climate movement. Up to now, with a few exceptions, polite lobbying has been not just the tactic but the basic strategy of the vast majority of mainstream environmental and climate groups working for federal climate legislation. And where has the use of this tactic, alone, gotten us? Essentially nowhere, nowhere close to what we urgently need.

It's time — it's past time — to try something different.

But, some will say, isn't it too late? Given all of the political energy expended on the health-care battle with the elections happening later this year and with other important legislative priorities like unemployment and financial industry reform, what are the chances that a sitin campaign can be effective?

#### Here's How I'd Answer

First, what climate and enviro groups have been doing up to now isn't working. Not only is it uncertain if climate legislation will be up next after healthcare but the currently-dominant Senate legislative alternative, centered around efforts taking place between Joe Lieberman, Lindsey Graham and John Kerry, will be even worse than the problematic Waxman-Markey bill passed by the House in late June of last year.\*

Secondly, given the urgency of the climate crisis, strategic and focused nonviolent, direct action is very much called for, as widely and massively as possible, at a whole range of targets, not just Congress. A well-organized nonviolent, direct-action campaign this spring focused on the Senate could well attract media attention and play a positive role as far as movement-

building.

Third, given the emphasis that so many groups have correctly put on trying to get climate legislation passed in this legislative session (really, in 2009), it would not be good for our movement's morale for us to, in essence, give up prematurely on that objective in the trite-but-true slogan, "Quitters never win, winners never quit."

Finally, whatever happens as far as climate legislation this spring, a strong and broad campaign that includes organized sit-ins on Capitol Hill and in Senate offices will generate energy and momentum to keep bringing political pressure on candidates running for federal office to speak out on where they stand on climate issues. It will let both Republicans and Democrats know that they can expect to feel the heat if they take the wrong positions or waffle.

Martin Luther King, Jr. understood that political movements, to be ultimately successful, need to stay active, need to keep pushing the envelope, need to up the ante. When we remember his life and his death, we would do well to reflect on his personal willingness to do so and the impact that this lifedecision, made by him and many others within the civil rights movement, had on human history.

\*Fortunately, there is a much better bill, the CLEAR Act, introduced by Maria Cantwell and Susan Collins a month ago, although it does need strengthening. The 2020 targets are too weak and it mandates emissions reductions starting only in 2015, definitely too late.

Ted Glick is a co-founder of the Climate Crisis Coalition and Policy Director of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. He recently completed a book, Love Refuses to Quit: Climate Change and Social Change in the 21st Century, available online at http://www.tedglick.com.

A VERY SPECIAL "THANK YOU'
TO DAVID MINNIS OF
BUCKEYSTOWN, MARYLAND
FOR RENEWING
HIS SUBSCRIPTION TO
"THE ORDER OF THE EARTH"
FOR THE 10<sup>TH</sup>
STRAIGHT YEAR!!!

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Note from the publisher, Iona: David and I met about 11 years ago when I was a reporter on a local beat in Frederick with dreams of starting my own newspaper and was expected to cover ordinary "news." He was one of the first subscribers to the early version of "OE" when it was merely a collection of environmental news, views and musings on copy paper. David has renewed his subscription EVERY SINGLE YEAR, and for that I will always be grateful. Thank you, Da-

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# Japanese Whalers Sink Sea **Shepherd Anti-Whaling Vessel**

Continued from page 1

in half," he said. "If anyone was in the forward sleeping quarters they would be dead."

"The Japanese whalers have now escalated this conflict very violently," said Sea Shepherd founder Captain Paul Watson, currently 500 miles to the north on the organization's third vessel, the Steve Irwin.

"If they think that our remaining two ships will retreat from the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary in the face of their extremism, they will be mistaken," Watson said. "We now have a real Whale War on our hands now and we have no intention of retreating."

"This is a substantial loss for our organization," said Watson. "The Ady Gil, the former Earthrace, represents a loss of almost U.S. \$2 million. However, the loss of a single whale is of more importance to us and we will not lose the Ady Gil in vain. This blow simply strengthens our resolve, it does not weaken our spirit."

From its Tokyo office, the Japanese Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR), which represents the Japanese whaling industry, said its vessel was under attack by the Ady Gil.

"The research-base vessel Nisshin Maru, currently engaged in the Japanese whale research program in the Antarctic, had been subject to continuous attack since the early morning today by the New Zealand-registered watercraft Ady Gil following and the Bob Barker, a vessel sent to the Antarctic by the anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd Conservation Society." ICR maintains that Japanese whaling is legal and is allowed under the rules of the International Whaling Commis-

The ICR said in a statement today that the crew of the Ady Gill was "repeatedly deploying and towing a rope from its stern with the intent to entangle the Japanese vessel's rudder and propeller.

"Further, the activists onboard the Ady Gil recurrently shoot a green laser device aiming at the Nisshin Maru crew and fired butyric acid-containing, ball-like projectiles with a launching device. One of these projectiles landed in the Nisshin Maru's



Photo by JoAnne McArthur Courtesy Sea Shepherd The Shonan Maru No. 2 shoots water cannon at the Ady Gil before sinking the smaller vessel.



Photo by JoAnne McArthur Courtesy Sea Shepherd The crew of the Bob Barker rescued the crew of the Ady Gil without serious injury.

deck," the ICR said.

The ICR called the laser devices "illegal" and said they "can produce blindness when irradiated to the naked eye." The ICR said the crew of the Ady Gil "fired projectiles containing butyric acid, a substance highly hazardous to the human body including skin and eyes. Their actions are nothing but felonious behavior."

After broadcasting a warning message through a long range acoustic device, the Nisshin Maru started its water cannons and proceeded to prevent the Ady Gil coming closer, said the ICR. "Neither injuries to the Japanese crew nor damage to the Nisshin Maru resulted from the New Zealand watercraft's attack."

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society is requesting that

the Australian government send a naval vessel to restore the peace in the waters of the Australian Antarctic Territory.

"We have 77 crew from 16 nations on three vessels — six of them were on the Ady Gil," said Watson, who was born in Canada. "Of these, 21 are Australian citizens: 16 Australians on the Steve Irwin and five on the Bob Barker." Included in the crew is the Animal Planet crew filming the third season of the hit television series "Whale Wars," aired on the Discovery Channel.

Watson says the Australian government "has a responsibility to protect the lives of Australian citizens working to defend whales from illegal Japanese whaling activities . . . .

**Photo Courtesy of Bruno Manser Fund** 

Victims of money politics: Penan natives of Borneo. The picture shows a recent logging road blockade at Long Bangan on the lower Tutoh River. The Tutoh is one of the rivers the Sarawak government is planning to dam.



Photo Courtesy of Bruno Manser Fund

"Monument of corruption." The construction site of the as-yet-uncompleted multi-billion dollar Bakun dam in Sarawak, East Malaysia, on Borneo.

#### We Ran This Insert Last Month On Our Front Page:

NEWS FLASH 12/17/09: Sarawak Government Refuses to Recognize Penan Peace Park. Sarawak state forest director refuted the attempt of 17 indigenous Penan communities to protect 163,000 hectares (402,773 acres) of tropical forest. (MORE NEXT MONTH)

Here is a Follow-Up

# Malaysia and China Sign \$11 Billion Power Deal That Will Displace 608,000 Borneo Natives

Sarawak Energy's Norwegian CEO Torstein Dale Sjøtveit Asked to Resign Over His Role in Controversial Plans

KUALA LUMPUR, Malasia, January 13, 2010 (WORLD-WIRE) — Malaysia and China have signed a deal to carry out a highly controversial energy masterplan in the Malaysian part of Borneo that involves the displacement of thousands of Borneo natives. According to the Financial Times, the plan involves the construction of several mega-dams and mining of large coal deposits and is likely to require the relocation of some 608,000 natives who live in the East Malaysian state's rainforestcovered interior.

The deal was signed last Mon-

day in Kuala Lumpur between the Malaysian Government and the China State Grid Corporation and was witnessed by the Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud. According to the Malaysian government, the plan could result in projects worth 11 billion U.S. dollars of Chinese investment.

Sarawak's controversial energy masterplan is being developed under a cloud of secrecy despite its far-reaching impact on a significant part of Sarawak's population. The plan is labelled Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy but involves the exploitation of 1.46 billion U.S. dollars of coal reserves and 41,000 billion cubic feet of natural gas.

It would be more appropriate to label the Sarawak Chief Minister's favorite project the "Sarawak Corridor of Corruption."

Construction companies linked to the Chief Minister Taib Mahmud's family interests will be among the main beneficiaries

of the new energy development plans. Earlier this week, Sarawak opposition politician Baru Bian had labelled the as-yet-incommulti-billiondollar Bakun dam a "monument

of corruption" and said he viewed the new dam plans as a "pretext for extinguishing native rights in the name of a public purpose." The large-scale energy plans

will be implemented by stateowned power producer Sarawak Energy that has recently appointed Norwegian national Torstein Dale Siøtveit as its CEO. Siøtveit, who will be paid an annual salary of U.S. \$1.2 million, has come under fire in the Norwegian media for his controversial role in the Borneo dam projects.

The Bruno Manser Fund asks Mr. Siøtveit to step down as his position is incompatible with being a responsible citizen.

Please contact the Bruno Manswer Fund: Socinstrasse 37 4051 Basel, Switzerland or http://www.bmf.ch.

# PA Woman Works for Alaska Wilderness

Continued from page 1

this area to polar bears was also recently emphasized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service when it included much of the Coastal Plain of the Refuge in proposed critical habitat for the polar bear, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The Gwich'in people regard the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge as "Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit," or The Sacred Place Where Life Begins, because it has been the most frequently used birthing and nursery grounds for the migratory Porcupine Caribou herd. This caribou herd has been the foundation for the social, economic and spiritual fabric of the lives of the Gwich'in people for thousands of years.

If we don't protect it now, we will lose a place that represents a connection to the natural world that has been lost across the rest of our nation. Nowhere else will future generations experience this spectrum of Arctic ecosystems, untrammeled by humankind. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is the

perfect time to grant the Arctic Refuge the strongest protections possible and I would love your help in making this a reality.

In Pennsylvania and across the country activities will be taking place throughout the year to increase awareness and celebrate the unique area that is the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

If you would like to join us for any of these activities please visit www.alaskawild.org and sign up to receive our emails which will keep you in the loop all year long.

Additionally, we just produced an amazing video, written and narrated by acclaimed author Terry Tempest Williams, featuring stunning imagery of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and it's ready to be shown far and wide. If you are part of or know a group that would be interested in hosting a presentation, free of charge, please let me know. Or if you would be willing to get a group of friends, family and neighbors together at your house, I can send you all the materials you would need to throw a fun and informa-



**Monica Scherer** 

tive Arctic Refuge House Party.

Please contact me at monica@ alaskawild.org or 484-887-0862 if you are interested in the above activities or just want to know more about what we do.

Monica Scherer is starting herfourth year with Alaska Wilderness League. Having always been captivated by nature and the environment, she attended the University of Michigan and obtained a degree in Environmental Policy and Behavior.

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## Here We Go Again, As We Are Ready to Go to Press:

NEWS FLASH 1/20/10: Malaysian authorities destroy Borneo village. House of lead plaintiff in landmark rainforest litigation demolished by Sarawak authorities in an arbitrary law enforcement action. 25 homes destroyed. (MORE NEXT MONTH)



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# Power Tower May Be Stopped

#### Conservation Helps Stymie Major Transmission Line

By Peter Behr

Climate Wire, January 6, 2009, excerpt

Transmission projects have traditionally come under attack by environmental, scenic and "not in my backyard" partisans. Now a major mid-Atlantic power line proposal may be held up instead by a weak economy and a growing energy conservation movement.

A Virginia regulatory examiner plans this week to rule on a request by PATH Allegheny Virginia Transmission Corp. to withdraw its proposal to build a 276mile, \$1.8 billion, high-voltage transmission line from West Virginia through Virginia's northwest corner to a proposed substation near Frederick, Maryland. The project would be resubmitted this fall, its backers say.

A hurried analysis over the weekend between Christmas and New Year's Day by the PJM Interconnection, called for by the Virginia State Corporation Commission, indicated that the PATH line was not required in June 2014 to keep lights on the mid-Atlantic region. PJM had called for the 2014 completion date last April in its regular yearly study of transmission needs.

The new planning scenarios "suggest that the PATH Project appears not to be needed in 2014," said Steven Herling, PJM's vice president for planning, in a



Logo Courtesy of energyconservationcouncil.org

The Energy Conservation Council of Pennsylvania is a non-profit association dedicated to the conservation of energy and the preservation of the natural beauty, historical sites and environment of Pennsylvania. Its mission is to protect Pennsylvania by mobilizing educational, legal and other resources in opposing major intrusions that seek to endanger the environment as well as orderly and responsible development of the region.

December 28<sup>th</sup> letter to the project's developers, American Electric Power and Allegheny Energy

The two-year-long recession had already caused PJM, the mid-Atlantic grid operator, several times to push back its forecast of when the line would be needed to meet reliability requirements. The new element that figured in PJM's latest analysis was the recent sharp increase in demand response offers — commitments by businesses and some pooled residential customers to cut back electricity usage when power shortages threaten, in return for compensation by utilities.

"Clearly, the big impact of the delay [in last spring's forecast] related to the economy," Herling said in an interview. "The analysis we did at the beginning of 2009 was based on load forecast that included the recession. That pushed the line to 2014." Last month's analysis added demand response and that showed that the line was no longer required in 2014. "Demand response is having a significant effect," Herling said.

#### **Energy Conservation Kicks in to Ease Reliability Worries**

The outlook was direr in 2007, when the line was proposed, according to the companies. "The PATH project addresses significant reliability concerns in the region, including overloads that will occur on more than

thirteen existing transmission lines in Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and Pennsylvania, as soon as 2012 if PATH is not built," AEP chairman Michael Morris said in a release in December of that year.

Environmental organizations and property owners in the line's right of way said the new PJM analysis confirmed what should have been obvious — that the economic slump and efficiency and conservation initiatives were undercutting the need for the

"We knew the economy was lousy last spring. We knew these efficiency measures were in place. They have been ignoring the facts right along," said Malcolm Baldwin, who owns a farm

in Lovettsville in Loudoun County, Virginia and is a board member of the Piedmont Environmental Council. The council opposes the PATH project and a second major project, the TRAIL power line that is now under construction, from West Virginia to Northern Virginia.

PJM's new preliminary analysis indicates that because of reduced demand, key high-voltage power lines into Maryland and northern Virginia aren't threatened with overloading until 2021 or later based on assessments of how much power they can safely carry. Herling said reliability limits on voltages, however, could be reached in the region as early as 2016.

Herling said PJM won't have a firm fix on when the PATH line is required until it completes its next annual detailed assessment in June.

#### **Multi-state Confusion** Results

The new forecast has added confusion to an already clouded regulatory picture in the three states that would be linked by the proposed line — Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia. The project is under review in West Virginia. The Maryland Public Service Commission dismissed the PATH application on September 9th last year, finding that a new entity created to operate the line in Maryland didn't meet state requirements.

Potomac Edison, a unit of Allegheny Energy, has refiled under its own name and the Maryland PSC has a hearing scheduled today to consider the new filing.

"I'm anticipating a discussion and numerous questions [from the commission]. They need to get much more detailed information from Potomac Edison as why they are moving forward at this time given the activities the utility is undertaking in Virginia," said Paula Carmody, Maryland's people's counsel.

On December 21st, Potomac Edison submitted testimony from PJM experts declaring that the line would be needed in 2014. Potomac Edison notified the Maryland commission of the new PJM finding on Monday, asking that the commission hold its review open until this summer when the full PJM assessment is done.

In Virginia, the PATH opponents are asking state regulators to reject the project outright. "The application should be denied. They've admitted they don't need it," said Wil Burns, an attorney for the Sierra Club. The Virginia State Corporation Commission's staff also urged the commission to dismiss the PATH project based on Maryland's rejection . . . .

The Order of the Earth tried to reach ClimateWire for permission to reprint this story but got no reply. Since we have been following issues of high-tension wires and vast swaths of destruction for many months, we decided this article was going to be important for our readers to see anyhow.

# Haiti Didn't Become a Poor Nation All on Its Own — U.S's Hidden Role in the Disaster

By Carl Lindskoog

AlterNet, January 15, 2010

In the hours following Haiti's devastating earthquake, CNN, The New York Times and other major news sources adopted a common interpretation for the severe destruction: The 7.0 earthquake was so devastating because it struck an urban area that was extremely over-populated and extremely poor. Houses "built on top of each other" and constructed by the poor people themselves made for a fragile city. And the country's many years of underdevelopment and political turmoil made the Haitian government ill-prepared to respond to such a disaster.

True enough. But that's not the whole story. What's missing is any explanation of why there are so many Haitians living in and around Port-au-Prince and why so many of them are forced to survive on so little. Indeed, even when an explanation is ventured, it is often outrageously false such as a former U.S. diplomat's testimony on CNN that Port-au-Prince's overpopulation was due to the fact that Haitians, like most Third World people, know nothing of birth control.

It may startle news-hungry Americans to learn that these conditions the American media correctly attributes to magnifying the impact of this tremendous disaster were largely the product of American policies and an American-led

development model. From 1957-1971 Haitians lived under the dark shadow of "Papa Doc" Duvalier, a brutal dictator who enjoyed U.S. backing because he was seen by Americans as a reliable anti-Communist. After his death, Duvalier's son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" became President-for-life at the age of 19 and he ruled Haiti until he was finally overthrown in 1986. It was in the 1970s and 1980s that Baby Doc and the United States government and business community worked together to put Haiti and Haiti's capitol city on track to become what it was on January 12, 2010.

After the coronation of Baby Doc, American planners inside and outside the U.S. government initiated their plan to transform Haiti into the "Taiwan of the Caribbean." This small, poor country situated conveniently close to the United States was



Photo by Arikia Millikan

Arikia helped "OE" when we were a young newspaper. She took this photo when she went to visit her family in Haiti. Thankfully, they were not hurt in the earthquake.

instructed to abandon its agricultural past and develop a robust, export-oriented manufacturing sector. This, Duvalier and his allies were told, was the way toward modernization and economic development.

From the standpoint of the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Haiti was the perfect candidate for this neoliberal facelift. The entrenched poverty of the Haitian masses could be used to force them into lowpaying jobs sewing baseballs and assembling other products.

But USAID had plans for the countryside too. Not only were Haiti's cities to become exporting bases but so was the countryside, with Haitian agriculture also reshaped along the lines of exportoriented, market-based production. To accomplish this USAID, along with urban industrialists and large landholders, worked to create agro-processing facilities even while they increased their practice of dumping surplus agricultural products from the U.S. on the Haitian people.

This "aid" from the Americans, along with the structural changes in the countryside predictably forced Haitian peasants who could no longer survive to migrate to the cities, especially Port-au-Prince where the new manufacturing jobs were supposed to be. However, when they got there they found there weren't nearly enough manufacturing jobs go around. The city became more and more crowded. Slum

areas expanded. And, to meet the

housing needs of the displaced

peasants, quickly and cheaply constructed housing was put up, sometimes placing houses right "on top of each other."

Before too long, however, American planners and Haitian elites decided that perhaps their development model didn't work so well in Haiti and they abandoned it. The consequences of these American-led changes remain, however.

When, on the afternoon and evening of January 12, 2010, Haiti experienced that horrible earthquake and round after round of aftershock, the destruction was, no doubt, greatly worsened by the very real over-crowding and poverty of Port-au-Prince and the surrounding areas.

But shocked Americans can do more than shake their heads and, with pity, make a donation. They can confront their own country's responsibility for the conditions in Port-au-Prince that magnified the earthquake's impact and they can acknowledge America's role in keeping Haiti from achieving meaningful development. To accept the incomplete story of Haiti offered by CNN and The New York Times is to blame Haitians for being the victims of a scheme that was not of their own making.

As John Milton wrote, "They who have put out the people's eyes, reproach them of their blindness."

Carl Lindskoog is a New York Citybased activist and historian completing a doctoral degree at the City University of New York. Contact him at cskoog79@yahoo.com.



Photo by Giles Ashford

# What's Your Connection to Montaintop Removal?

#### January 5: EPA Approves **Permit for Controversial WV Mountaintop Removal Coal Mine**

CHARLESTON, West Virginia (I Love Mountains Press Release, excerpt) - Today the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it would sign off on a Clean Water Act permit for Patriot Coal Corp.'s Hobet 45 mountaintop removal coal mine in Lincoln County, West Virginia. This controversial permit now goes to the Army Corps of Engineers, which issues such permits.

This decision highlights the urgent need for the U.S. EPA to protect streams from mining waste by revising Clean Water Act regulations gutted by the Bush Administration. The Sierra Club and other national and local environmental groups encourage the Obama Administration to begin a rulemaking to exclude mining waste from the definition of 'fill' as a material that can be dumped in

This decision marks the first mountaintop removal mining permit to move forward of those mining permits the agency earlier identified in 2009 as needing additional attention.

"Sadly, the coal industry's undue influence over decision-makers has traded people's health, communities and water for profit," said Janet Keating, Executive Director of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. "We're shooting ourselves in the future. After all the coal has been mined, what kind of economic development can happen when the water is unfit to drink and people have been driven away?" The permit would allow Patriot to mine

through more than three miles of streams and to add millions of cubic yards of fill to existing valley fills offsite . . . .

Contact Janet Keating, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, (304-522-02460; Judy Bonds, Coal River Mountain Watch, (304-854-2182); Cindy Rank, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy,

(304-24-5802; or Raviya Ismail, Earthjustice,

(202-667-4500 x221).

## **January 7: Scientists** Unveil A Mountain of **Evidence Against Mountaintop Removal**

(I Love Mountains Press Release) — Just days after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved the expansion of the largest mountaintop removal coal mine in West Virginia, prominent national scientists published a blockbuster study which concludes that mountaintop removal's

impacts are "pervasive and irreversible." Conducted by members of the National Academy of Sciences and published in the journal Science, the far-reaching study summarized dozens of pre-existing scientific papers analyzing the impacts of mountaintop removal mining, a type of surface coal mining that uses explosives to remove the tops of mountains to expose coal seams. The study strongly criticized inadequate federal and state regulations on the practice, stating that "Current attempts to regulate [mountaintop mining/valley fill] practices are inadequate," and that "Regulators should no longer ignore rigorous science."

Environmental and Appalachian community advocates hailed the study as a powerful indictment against mountaintop removal mining. Opponents to the practice also expressed disappointment over the Obama Administration's fluctuating stance on mountaintop removal, citing inconsistencies with statements made by President Obama about restoring science to a more prominent position . . .

In a recent interview the President told the political news organization, Politico, "It's about listening to what our scientists have to say even when it's inconvenient — especially when it's inconvenient."

Appalachian coalfield residents, who have long been aware of the major environmental impacts from mountaintop removal mining, are hopeful that the study will embolden the Obama Administration to take more decisive action to ultimately end the practice.

Contact Sandra Diaz, Director of Development and Communications, Appalachian Voices (828-262-1500) or Dr. Matthew Wasson, Director of Programs, Appalachian Voices (828-262-1500).

## News



Photo Courtesy of The Cloud Foundation

People demonstrate against the controversial rounding up of more than 2,500 mustangs.

# Ruby Pipeline: The Smoking Gun Behind Recent Horse Roundups?

Continued from page 1

areas where the land can no longer support them."

Yet, documents recently received by The Cloud Foundation from biologist Katie Fite of Western Watersheds and researcher Cindy MacDonald (publisher of the American Herds blog) today expose what may be the real reasons behind the massive, dead-of-winter, wild horse roundups — and they have nothing to do with horse or rangeland health — but may have everything to do with the Ruby Pipeline.

In a written response to questions posed by the Office of Energy Projects (an agency within the Department of Energy), a Ruby natural gas pipeline project consultant, Dan Gredvig, stated that, "Ruby will work with BLM to minimize wild horse and burro grazing along the restored right-of-way for three years. Possible management actions would be to . . . reduce wild horse populations following BLM policy in appropriate management areas. BLM wild horse and burro specialists were consulted in develthis management approach." The document is

dated February 23, 2009. It appears that the public's wild horses are being removed at taxpayer expense on publicly owned land to make way for a multi-billion-dollar pipeline constructed by El Paso Natural Gas Corporation of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Natural gas and water would ultimately provide added resources to California and other destinations. Given these new revelations, the public has the right to ask several key questions and get immediate answers to them: 1) Who really stands to profit from removing wild horses from public lands? 2) What private contractors, possible politicians and/or agency bureaucrats stand to benefit from the yet undisclosed details of the Ruby Project? 3) Why has the public been excluded from any discussion of this undisclosed use of taxpayer public lands?

"I don't think it is out of line to seek immediate responses to these questions. The public has a right to know what is happening to their public lands and to the future of their wild horses, especially when it comes at taxpayer expense," said Ginger Kathrens, Volunteer Executive Director, The Cloud Foundation (named for the famous wild horse Kathrens has documented for the PBS/Nature series).

According to a Western Watersheds report this is the largest project of its type across significant public lands in the American West in recent memory. Ruby has seized upon a sliver of ecologically-critical, unprotected public wild land to punch a new corridor through and bisect this irreplaceable landscape, including many of the last viable herds of wild horses in the West.

"The roundups in the Ruby Pipeline zone are questionable," states Fite, a biologist and biodiversity specialist. "The public is not being told the truth. There needs to be an investigation within all levels of BLM considering the unavoidable damage to



Photos of Freedom by Elyse Gardner

During examination after being captured, Freedom attempts to escape and gets caught up on the fence at 11:28:48.



Graphic Courtesy of The Cloud Foundation

Area where the Ruby Pipeline will be built, the pretext for removing wild horses from their land.

#### Freedom's Story

Craig Downer and Elyse Gardner documented the captured band stallion, Freedom, as he valiantly fought for and regained his liberty on January 2, 2009.

"This was an awe-inspiring, do-or-die effort demonstrating the loathing of captivity to a wild horse and his need for freedom. We can only pray for his recovery from the injuries he sustained from the barbed wire."

Craig Downer Wildlife Ecologist

our public lands. There is no mitigation provided to restore this biologically wild, remote and untrammeled landscape in northwestern Nevada and southeastern Oregon."

Thank you to Craig and Elyse for documenting Freedom's escape and for being at the Calico roundup for the horses.

Story idea submitted by Valerie Stanley, Laurel, Maryland. Layout by Kim Stenley, Taneytown, Maryland. Thank you both!



Freedom tried to clear the six-foot fence to freedom and fell on his back. On the second attempt, he crashed through a barbed wire fence at 11:31:33 a.m.



Abittersweet return to freedom, leaving his cherished family behind — 11:31:36 a.m.

# Climate Literacy: What's New?

NOAA's Climate
Program Office
Communications and
Education Program
(National Oceanic and
Atmospheric
Administration)

A guide is now available to help individuals of all ages understand how climate influences them and how they influence climate. "Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Science" is a product of the U.S. Global Change Research Program and was compiled by an interagency group led by NOAA. The release of the guide coincided with the National Science Teachers Association's 2009 National Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Climate Literacy guide supports the development of formal and informal educational materials about climate science plus professional development opportunities for educators. In the document, eight principles and a host of supporting concepts list information for individuals and communities to know about Earth's climate. Statements include information about the impacts of climate change as well as possible approaches to adaptation or mitigation. Developers of the guide intend to integrate the framework into national and state education standards and to support teacher workshops to ensure that educators are proficient in teaching the concepts of climate science.

Development of the guide began at a workshop sponsored by NOAA and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Multiple science agencies, several nongovernmental organizations and numerous individuals contributed to the final document through extensive review and comment periods.

To download this guide and related documents, visit: www. globalchange.gov. For print copies of the guide, email NOAA Outreach or call 301-713-1208.

#### Activities

The Communications and Education (CommEd) Program takes an audience-focused approach to promoting climate science literacy among the public. The program communicates the challenges, processes and results of NOAA-supported climate science through stories and data visualizations on the Web and in popular media. They provide information to a range of audiences to enhance society's ability to plan and respond to climate and communicates.

mate variability and change. As part of a broad NOAA effort, the CommEd team is working to design, test and develop a Web portal that will provide ready access to climate data and information resources. The portal will feature customized interfaces for four audiences: scientists and sectoral data users, policy leaders, educators and students, and the public. The portal will deliver climate science content that is free, readily accessible and easily understandable, provided in flexible formats that maximize its usefulness.

The CommEd Program is also involved in efforts to develop climate education strategies that are aligned with national education standards and to develop and conduct professional development programs that promote teaching of these standards. The programs serve educators, docents, television meteorologists and other climate communicators, to

increase their climate science knowledge and improve their effectiveness in promoting climate literacy.

#### **Data Visualization**

NOAA collects climate data at many scales of time and space — from networks of stationary observing stations across Earth's land, ocean and ice surfaces to missions carried out by ships, aircraft and Earthobserving satellites.

Researchers also generate computer simulations of the climate system. Working with NOAA's climate experts, the Communications and Education Program produces visualizations of such data. Images and animations of these data illustrate and enrich climate scientist's understanding of the climate system and are easy to comprehend for non-scientists. Throughout the Communications and Education Program, visualizations complement text information to maximize understanding for all audiences.

#### **Climate Education Plan**

NOAA recognizes environmental literacy as an integral part of its mission: its 2009 to 2014 Strategic Plan states that "[the success of its] mission is dependent upon an informed public..." and "NOAA's success depends on the ability of our constituents to understand, use and act upon the information provided [by NOAA]." An environmentally literate public will provide improved environmental stewardship for our planet and will be better able to acquire, use and respond to NOAA's climate services and forecasts.

Toward that goal, the Communications and Education Program has taken the lead in a community-wide effort to develop a vetted list of concepts that individuals should know and understand about Earth's climate. The resulting document — Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Science — serves as a framework for building understanding and communicating about climate science. The guide's intent is to promote climate science literacy among the public. Points in the guide can serve as discussion starters for individuals and communities or a list of topics for in-depth study. The guide also serves educators by drawing connections between climate science and learning standards set by their district or state.

#### Climate Education Within the Context of Science Education

The Climate Education Working Group, one of the four education working groups that address NOAA's crosscutting goals, is responsible for identifying strategies to fulfill the environmental literacy priority of NOAA's climate mission goal. Education groups are charged with facilitating climate education efforts in formal education as well as informal settings. Additionally, NOAA's climate education programs are tasked with coordinating efforts between educational product developers and groups responsible for establishing educational standards.

Climate programs must overcome significant barriers to influence formal educational curricula; these barriers exist because current educational standards do not adequately cover Earth system science concepts. NOAA's education programs must also incorporate strategic approaches to environmental literacy, recognizing the multi-generational, long-term nature of change in public attitudes and actions.

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# Underused Drilling Practices Could Avoid Pollution, Save \$

By Abrahm Lustgarten ProPublica, December 14, 2009

As environmental concerns threaten to derail natural gas drilling projects across the country, the energy industry has developed innovative ways to make it easier to exploit the nation's reserves without pollut-

ing air and drinking water.

Energy companies have figured out how to drill wells with fewer toxic chemicals, enclose wastewater so it can't contaminate streams and groundwater and sharply curb emissions from everything from truck traffic to leaky gas well valves. Some of their techniques also make good business sense because they boost productivity and ultimately save the industry money -\$10,000 per well in some cases.

Yet these environmental safeguards are used only intermittently in the 32 states where natural gas is drilled. The energy industry is exempted from many federal environmental laws so regulation of this growing industry is left almost entirely to the states, which often recommend but seldom mandate, the use of these techniques. In one Wyoming gas field, for instance, drillers have taken steps to curb emissions, while 100 miles away in the same state, they have not.

The debate over the safety of natural gas drilling has intensified in the past year, even as the nation increasingly turns to cleanerburning natural gas as an alternative to oil and coal. In Congress, one group of politicians is writing a climate bill that would encourage the use of more natural gas while another group is pushing a bill that would put a key part of the process under federal regulation and force the disclosure of chemicals used in the drilling process. Neither bill addresses the question of how to encourage energy companies to use existing techniques that lower the risks of environmental damage.

Interviews with state officials and industry executives in states across the country show the industry tends to use these environmental safeguards only when political, regulatory, cost or social pressures force it to do so.

When states have tried to toughen regulations aimed at protecting the environment or institutionalizing these practices, energy companies have fought hard to defend the status quo. They argue that current laws are sufficient, that mandating practices imposes specific solutions on regions where they may not work best and that the cost of complying with additional laws and safeguards would bankrupt

"Sometimes environmental considerations aren't the same as the public considerations and many times the economic considerations don't fit," said David Burnett, an associate research scientist at Texas A&M University's Global Petroleum Research Institute and a founder of Environmentally Friendly Drilling, a government- and industry-funded program that identifies best practices and encourages their use. "There could be better management practices used. We have to find a balance."

Michael Freeman, an attorney at the environmental group Earthjustice, says there is no escaping some damage from drilling. But if the best available precautions were routinely followed, environmental harm could be minimized and the industry may face less resistance from the public as it taps the vast new gas deposits that have been discovered in recent years.

"It would certainly address a lot of people's concerns," Freeman said. "But the government agencies that regulate the oil and gas industry need to be aggressive about making them clean up their act."

#### Good Chemistry

Few notions have sparked more hope among environmentalists than the possibility of replacing toxic chemicals used in drilling with what are being called "green" or non-toxic drill-A review of scientific docu-

ing fluids.



Photo by Abrahm Lustgarten/ProPublica

Drilling for natural gas contaminates water supplies and wells. Residents are resisting.

#### A Fortune in Natural Gas Lies Under Upstate New York Forest

By Delen Goldberg, The Post-Standard, December 13, 2009, excerpt

SYRACUSE, New York — Thousands of giant oak, spruce and dogwood trees line the dirt roads winding through Hewitt State Forest in Cortland County. Deer, birds and chipmunks silently move through the woods. Occasionally, the orange glow from a hunter's vest catches the eye. The forest, the oldest preserve in New York, is quiet and pristine. Environmental advocates worry the calm there soon will be shattered by highvolume hydraulic fracturing, as has happened in Pennsylvania.

They fear large cement drilling pads the size of football fields and huge pipelines will replace decades-old trees; heavy truck traffic will mar dirt roads and spew pollution into the air and hunters, hikers and picnickers will be overtaken by speculators and well operators.

In the coming months, New York is expected to decide whether to allow oil and gas companies to use this new fracturing technology to tap enormous natural gas reserves lying beneath Upstate New York. High-volume "fracking" involves shooting millions of gallons of water, chemicals and sand into wells to break up shale rock below and create microscopic pathways for natural gas to escape . . .

#### Syracuse Urges DEC to Ban Hydrofracking in Skaneateles Lake Watershed By Delen Goldberg, The Post-Standard, January 12, 2010 (excerpt)

SYRACUSE, New York — The city of Syracuse wants to ban hydrofracking in the lake's watershed to protect its water source. Syracuse homeowners have spent at least

\$13 million over the past 16 years to keep Skaneateles Lake's drinking water clean. "Permitting hydrofracking in the Skaneateles Lake watershed would put all of these efforts at risk," Syracuse Water Commissioner Michael Ryan said.

The city of Syracuse asked the state Department of Environmental Conservation to ban all hydraulic fracturing in the watershed in a strongly-worded written comment opposing proposed regulations of natural gas drilling. As of early December, oil and gas companies had bought drilling rights on almost 100 parcels of land in the Skaneateles watershed, according to Onondaga County property records. Skaneateles Lake provides drinking water to more than 200,000 people in Syracuse and other municipalities . . . .

ments and interviews with drilling companies and the chemists who supply them show that the transition is more than theoretical. It's starting to happen.

EnCana, a Canadian company that operates on both sides of the border, recently said it stopped using 2-Butoxyethanol, a solvent that has caused reproductive problems in animals. BJ Services, one of the largest fracturing service providers in the world, has discontinued the use of fluorocarbons, a family of compounds that are persistent environmental pollutants.

Neither company would say what it is using to replace these chemicals. But a presentation made by Denver-based Antero Resources and obtained by Pro-Publica says that plant-based oils are occasionally replacing mineral oil and that soy can replace some toxic polymers. David Holcomb, director of research for the Texas-based drilling chemistry company Frac Tech, offered more specifics: He uses orange citrus to replace some solvents and palm oil in place of a common slicking agent that has been prohibited in Europe but is still allowed in the United States. The "single biggest move" the

industry has made to reduce the toxicity of its fluids, according to David Dunlap, chief operating officer for BJ Services, is phasing out diesel fuel, a solvent that contains the potent carcinogen ben-

Diesel was once a common solvent used in hydraulic fracturing, the process where water, sand and chemical additives are pumped underground at high pressure to break apart rock and release gas. In some fracturing jobs — like those in the Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania and gallons of fracturing chemicals can be used at a single well.

Today, many companies have replaced diesel with mineral oil, a less toxic hydrocarbon solvent, in most of their fracturing solutions. The shift began in 2003, after the EPA pressed the nation's dominant fracturing companies to voluntarily eliminate diesel from some of their fluids.

"It sounds like a simple thing but it's the largest single volume other than water that is used in a frack job," said Dunlap, whose company is being acquired by Baker Hughes, the international drilling company. BJ no longer uses diesel in its fracturing fluids, Dunlap said, though it may still be used in other applications.

Despite these improvements, it is still difficult to say how safe the drilling and fracturing fluids are for people and for the environment. The EPA says "green" chemistry should not be dangerously toxic and should not build up in plants or organisms. But because there are no laws that dictate what chemicals can be used for drilling on U.S. soil and because most companies still keep the exact makeup of their fluids a secret from state and federal regulators — the definition of "green" remains subjective. "Green" is often shades of gray.

New York's Department of Environmental Conservation raised the "green" issue in its new environmental review for drilling in the Marcellus Shale. The report said that while non-toxic fracturing fluids would be preferable, "it may not be feasible to require the use of 'green' chemicals because presently there is no metric or chemicals approvals process in place in the U.S."

Actually, such standards do exist but only for the fracturing New York — more than 40,000 fluids used in offshore drilling.

Both European law and the regulations of the U.S. Minerals and Management Services dictate that chemicals used in the North Sea and the Gulf of Mexico must be safe enough that they won't kill fish and other organisms if they are dumped overboard.

"You can always do it," said BJ Services' Dunlap, whose company has been a leader in innovating sustainable materials. But, Dunlap said, the chemistry costs more and is justifiable to his shareholders only because the regulations for offshore drilling left no

'There are places around the world where the type of adherence is not required," he said, "and where the cost of using those chemicals is something operators are not required to pay for."

#### A Breath of Air

The natural gas industry has also found ways to reduce the greenhouse gases and volatile organic compounds it contributes to ozone pollution and climate

Although natural gas burns cleaner than other fossil fuels, the drilling and production of oil and gas is responsible for some 18 percent of the world's humancaused emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas that is the main component of natural gas, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. More methane is produced in the U.S. than anywhere else in the world except

Under the guidance of an EPA program, EnCana, the Canadian oil and gas giant, is curbing those methane emissions — and might save money doing it. Using infrared cameras, the company finds and seals methane leaks on wells and pipelines that would other-

wise be invisible, sharply curtail-

ing levels of some the most dangerous heat-trapping atmospheric gases. According to Richard Haut, project director for the Houston Advanced Research Center, a partner on the Environmentally Friendly Drilling Project, such programs could pay for themselves within two years and then turn a profit as the extra gas captured goes to market. The industry has also found

ways to reduce another set of dangerous emissions that has been blamed for air quality problems in Texas, Wyoming and Colorado, among other places — CO<sub>2</sub> from trucks and processing plants and the ozone-causing volatile organic compounds. Last winter, when tests showed that high ozone levels had put sparsely populated Sublette County, Wyoming out of compliance with federal air quality laws normally applied to the nation's big cities, the industry took a number of straightforward steps to curb the pollution.

Questar Exploration and Production, a prominent Rocky Mountain drilling company, eliminated 62,000 truck delivery trips and the diesel exhaust that came with them by building a network of pipes to transport its fluids.

EnCana began using natural gas instead of diesel fuel to power its 150-foot-tall drilling rigs, a seemingly small change that resulted in 85 percent less volatile organic compounds being spewed into the air. EnCana also installed other, less polluting new equipment, including refinerygrade combustors.

Doug Hock, a spokesman for EnCana, said the company has spent some \$25 million on such efforts since 2005.

'Technology is the key driver in all of this," Hock said. "It is important for policymakers to first understand the technology being used and secondly, allow operators the flexibility for further innovation to occur. This, rather than blanket mandates, will ensure continued reductions in impacts."

But the industry's efforts in Sublette County were triggered by an aggressive push by the federal government.

Before the U.S. Bureau of Land Management allowed more drilling in the Jonah Field, one of the gas development areas on public land in Sublette County, the companies had to agree to reduce their emissions there. Companies understood that if they did not agree to the BLM's conditions in the Jonah Field they might not get more permits to drill in other parts of Sublette County. "There is kind of a big hammer hanging over their heads," said Chuck Otto, the BLM field manager there.

#### **Dirty Waste Water**

One of the most challenging environmental problems associated with drilling is disposing of its wastewater, which is typically laced with heavy metals, chemicals and hydrocarbons. Usually the waste is collected in open, dirt-brimmed waste pits where it sits until it's hauled off to treatment facilities or injection wells. In the meantime, the fluids can evaporate or seep into the earth or overflow if rain or snow overfills the pit.

A 1992 congressional report found that one of "the greatest opportunities" to prevent this type of pollution is something called a closed loop system, a series of pipes that gathers the waste as it comes out of a gas well, separates some of the water for reuse and confines the concentrated leftovers in a steel tank. According to EPA findings quoted in the report, closed loop systems can reduce the volume of drilling fluids — and the chemicals used — by more than 90 percent. Because the waste is enclosed, chemicals can't evaporate, fluids are less likely to spill and permanent pits aren't need-

Closed loop systems are rarely required in state regulations but they are increasingly used, in part because they can save money for the companies that use them.

A 2001 case study by the Texas Railroad Commission, which

regulates gas drilling in Texas, focused on a small gas producer that tested such a system. Building the pipes and tanks cost the company more initially, according to the report, but the company — which it did not name — didn't have to construct a waste pit, remediate the land when it finished drilling, haul its toxic materials to a disposal site or pay the slew of environmental fees levied by the state. According to the Railroad Commission, the company saved at least \$10,000 for each gas well that was connected to the closed loop system. At that rate, the savings from the use of such a system on all the roughly 4,500 wells in Sublette County could tally \$45 million.

Yet the industry continues to fight laws that would lead to increased use of closed loop sys-

In 2008 New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson's administration passed some of the nation's strongest rules prohibiting the use of unlined waste pits and thereby encouraging the use of a closedloop system as an alternative. The regulation was inspired by a study that found that leaks or seepage from waste pits had contaminated water supplies in some 400 cases.

The industry mounted a public relations, lobbying and legal war to stop the law, claiming that it would weigh down business with excessive costs that would ultimately result in lost jobs. In early 2009, Richardson relented and directed his administration to relax several of the rule's requirements and timelines.

#### What Spurs Change?

When change does happen, it is usually foisted on the industry by excessive costs, fear of catastrophe or regulations.

Chesapeake Energy began a pilot program to recycle wastewater from its Texas wells after drought and aquifer depletion threatened the industry's water supply there. The pressure to reuse rather than dispose of wastewater also may have been increased by a series of earthquakes this year near Dallas. Researchers said the earthquakes may have been caused by the company's normal disposal process: injecting wastewater under-

Drillers in the Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania speeded up their search for new water recycling technologies last year after Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection sharply limited treatment plants from accepting large quantities of drilling waste. Range Resources now recycles much of the wastewater from its Pennsylvania wells. "In the long term the biggest problem is going to be wastewater treatment," said spokesman Matt Pitzarella. "And we have to figure out how to deal with it."

Asked why his company pursued "green" drilling and fracturing fluid innovations for drilling in the North Sea — products that it now sometimes uses onshore too — BJ Services' Dunlap was unequivocal: The law made him

"It's because of local regulations," Dunlap said. "That's typically what drives us to develop and bring to market these environmentally-friendly products."

But given the choice, energy companies prefer that they, rather than government regulators, decide when, where or whether to use the environmentallyfriendly technologies they've developed. They oppose statewide or regional mandates, arguing that a best practice may be less effective — or less affordable in one place more than another. They also say that formal regulations can institutionalize technologies that may later be proved ineffective or could be improved on.

"No matter what we do we are capitalists here in the U.S.," said Richard Haut, the Houston Advanced Research Center project director. "We do have to look for a balance between environmental issues and development."

ProPublica is a nonprofit investigative newsroom that produces stories in the public interest.

# Did a Court Just Deal a Fatal Blow to Tasers for Police?

**By Raj Jayadev and Aram James** New America Media January 8, 2010

In what is being heralded as a landmark decision, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit recently declared that police officers could be held liable for using a Taser without proper cause. And in making their determination, the court also set new legal parameters on how law enforcement is to use Tasers, stating, "The objective facts must indi-

cate that the suspect poses an immediate threat to the officer or a member of the public."

The federal finding substantially changes the landscape of Taser usage and may signal the end of Tasers for law enforcement agencies who are now more vulnerable to civil and criminal action than ever before.

The decision, which has already caused law enforcement agencies to re-evaluate their Taser policies, stems from a case involving a Coronado police officer, Brian McPherson, who tased unarmed 21-year-old Carl Bryan during a traffic stop for a seatbelt infraction in Southern California.

After being pulled over, Bryan was standing outside of his vehicle, wearing only boxer shorts and tennis shoes. He was 20 to 25 feet from the officer and, when tased, fell face first to the ground, fractured four teeth and had to get the Taser prongs removed with a scalpel.

Bryan went on to sue the Coronado Police Department and the federal appellate court was making a determination if McPherson had immunity to the lawsuit as an officer. The court ruled in favor of Bryan.

And while any regulation on Taser use is a move forward from the status quo, which repeatedly has left civilians tased for innocuous circumstances, and the decision acknowledges some of the inherent dangers of the weapon, it falls short in a most critical way. The instruction is based on a false premise that Tasers "fall into the category of nonlethal force" as stated in Judge Wardlaw's written opinion. By denying the lethality of Tasers, the court mistakenly treats Tasers as an intermediary weapon, like a baton, when it should be treated as a deadly weapon, like a firearm.

According to Amnesty International, there have been more than 350 deaths due to Tasers.

In San Jose, which was the first city to arm every one of its officers with the weapon in 2004, there have been six Taser-involved deaths, more than a death a year since its inception. Currently, the city is facing a \$20 million lawsuit from the family of one of the more recent victims, Steve Salinas.

The unarmed Salinas was tased to death in his motel room in 2007. Like Bryan, Salinas's ultimate tasing originated from a minor starting point: police were called to the scene due to allegedly loud noises emanating from the room. Salinas, who was naked at the time, died in the room shortly after the police arrived.

The growing body count attributed to Tasers refutes the commonly accepted advertisement from its leading manufacturer, Taser International, that Tasers are a non-lethal option for officers. Furthermore, the unreliability of the weapon to bring down its target makes it dangerous even for officers who may be in a situation requiring deadly force.

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According to a *San Jose Mercury News* study of the San Jose Police Department use of Tasers in 2007, Tasers in dart mode are only effective 70 percent of the time in bringing down their target and in stun mode only 60 percent of the time.

The Taser consequently is left in a state of limbo. Its capacity to unintentionally kill leaves it too dangerous to use in non-

lethal circumstances, say when an officer would use an intermediate weapon, such as pepper-spray or a control hold. Yet, due to its unpredictability to subdue a target, using a Taser would not be a gamble an officer would want to bet on if his or her life were in jeopardy.

The Bryan case, where the subject is unarmed and charged with a minor infraction or misdemeanor, is more the rule than the exception according to recent studies.

In a Houston Chronicle study of Taser use by the Houston Police Department in a two-year span, officers deployed the weapon more than 1,000 times but in 95 percent of those cases the subject was unarmed.

The study also found that more than 50 percent of the Taser incidents escalated from relatively common police calls such as traffic stops, disturbance and nuisance complaints. In more than a third of the incidents, no crime was charged or prosecuted.

In October 2009, in a tacit admission of the inherent dangers of Tasers, Taser International began telling police agencies to avoid firing the devices at suspects' chests. In a revision of their usage manual, they write, "Should sudden cardiac arrest occur in a scenario involving a Taser discharge to the chest area, it would place the law enforcement agency, the officer and Taser International in the difficult situation of trying to ascertain what role, if any, (the device) could have played."

It was a tactic reminiscent of the tobacco industry putting warning labels on cigarette packs. The action does not change the harm of the product but rather is intended to create a layer of insulation from civil action.

In June 2008, a jury in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California ordered Taser International to pay \$6.2 million in damages to the family of Robert C. Heston. Heston, of Salinas, California, died after being hit by Tasers by Salinas police officers.

Shortly after the decision,

Taser International stocks plummeted, hitting their lowest numbers in a year.

The jury, however, did not fault the police department, finding that Taser International did not instruct the officers properly on how to use the weapon.

Having lost a major civil action and knowing that other lawsuits would follow, Taser International scrambled to fend off civil action by deploying a revised usage policy.

But it is impossible to create a safe policy for an inherently unsafe weapon, just as it is impossible for the tobacco industry to create a safe way to smoke cigarettes.

And criticism has even come from the law enforcement community itself. Ray Samuels, former Newark police chief, turned down the offer to bring Tasers into his city in 2005.

In explaining his position, which he has gone on to share with other city administrations that are considering the weapon, he wrote, "What scared me about the weapon is that you can deploy it absolutely within the manufacturer's recommendations and there is still the possibility of an unintended reaction. I can't imagine a worse circumstance than to have a death attributed to a Taser in a situation that didn't justify lethal force."

The decision of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals should send a clear message to the police and the cities that they work for that civil action is now a reality every time the Taser is drawn.

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# AlterNet Reporter Helps Free Innocent Man After Confession Forced by Police Torture

Muckraking Coverage Exposes 23-Year Wrongful Incarceration

**By Liliana Segura** AlterNet.org, January 15, 2010

On Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, Michael Tillman walked out of the Cook County Courthouse and headed straight for Mac Arthur's Restaurant, a soul food institution on Chicago's West Side.

After 23 years of being wrongfully incarcerated and facing a life behind bars, the barbeque ribs tasted particularly sweet.

About an hour earlier, Cook County Circuit Judge Vincent Gaughan had dismissed the original 1986 murder, rape and kidnapping charges that had kept Tillman locked away in Illinois prisons since he was 21. Those charges were based on a confession that Tillman says was tortured out of him by officers under the command of former Chicago Police Detective Jon Burge. Prosecutors declined to bring new charges against Tillman and, after attorneys faxed some paperwork to the Illinois Department of Corrections, he was free to go.

It was a long road to justice, a journey that gained critical momentum after a July 2008 investigative story in AlterNet, written by Chicago-based reporter Jessica Pupovac, tipped area lawyers off to the facts of Tillman's case.

"If it weren't for the publicity that was brought to the case in the early stages, being only a couple of years ago, by Alter-Net... he might still be in prison now," Flint Taylor, founding partner of the People's Law Office and co-counsel in Tillman's case, told AlterNet. "The first news organization that showed interest was AlterNet and Jessica Pupovac (whose name I can never pronounce). She not only wrote a very exhaustive article that brought a lot of local and she herself stayed in touch with Mr. Tillman."

As AlterNet reported in July 2008, Tillman's personal horror (started) in the predawn hours of July 22, 1986, when Detectives Ronald Boffo and Peter Dignan took him to an Area 2 interrogation room and pressed him for information about the murder of 42-year-old Betty Howard, whose body had been found the day before in the apartment building overseen by Tillman.

When Tillman insisted upon his innocence, Boffo and Dignan, along with three other officers, handcuffed him to the wall, hit him in the face and punched him in the stomach until he vomited blood. During the course of what appeared to be three days, rotating pairs of officers brought him to the railroad tracks behind the station and held a gun to his head, suffocated him repeatedly with thick plastic bags, poured soda up his nose and forced him into Dumpsters outside of the apartment building, ordering him to search through the rubbish for a murder weapon until, according to Detective John Yucaitis, Tillman



Photo from Party for Socialism and Liberation Web site Michael Tillman was tortured by Chicago Police until he confessed to a crime he did not commit and spent 23 years in jail.

confessed to the crime.

At the time, Michael Tillman was 20 years old, with a 3-year-old daughter and an infant son. He was charged with first degree murder, aggravated kidnapping and sexual assault and sentenced to life in prison.

Three weeks after Tillman's arrest, police found two men driving Howard's stolen car with the knife used to stab her still in the vehicle. Those men led the officers to 27-year-old Clarence Trotter, who had Howard's camera and stereo in his apartment. His fingerprints were found on a soda can at the murder scene and evidence linked him to the gun used in her murder.

Police found no physical evidence tying Tillman to the scene or to Trotter. Weeks later, after Tillman's case file was sealed, Trotter was also given a life sentence in a separate trial.

Tillman appealed the decision in 1999 and lost. The judge wrote in his decision that even though the corroborating evidence may only be circumstantial, it "need only tend to confirm and inspire belief in the confession."

Tillman's mother, Jean, says that they had a series of public defenders and lawyers they couldn't afford and that her son no longer had legal representation at the time the AlterNet story was published. However, after the story circulated among social justice and legal circles, People's Law Office attorney Ben Elson contacted Pupovac to learn more about the case. He brought it to the attention of his colleagues and soon they were joining forces with a team of lawyers with the Mac-Arthur Justice Center at Northwestern University School of Law. By now, they argued, police torture in Area 2 in the era that Tillman was allegedly brutalized is now "common knowledge."

Indeed, according to U.S. District Judge Milton Shadur, "in the early to mid-1980s, (Jon Burge) and many officers working under him regularly engaged in the physical abuse and torture of prisoners to extract confessions. Both internal police accounts and numerous lawsuits and appeals brought by suspects alleging such abuse substantiate that those beatings and other means of torture occurred as an established practice, not just on an isolated basis."

It has taken decades for many of Burge's victims to find relief. Three — Mark Clements, Marvin Reeves and Ronald Kitchen — were freed last year. But many still languish behind bars, their

cases never revisited. That's because so many of the co-conspirators who helped conceal the abuse are today among Chicago's political elite. They include prominent Cook County and Illinois Appellate Court judges (including one of the prosecutors in Tillman's case), Illinois State's Attorney Richard Devine and Mayor Richard M. Daley, who was the state's attorney when many of the cases were tried and would have been responsible for bringing official charges against the abusive officers but chose instead to look the other way. Devine was Daley's first assis-

tant when he served as a "toughon-crime" state's attorney from 1980 to 1989, a period that saw 55 allegations of confessions elicited through torture. He later went into private practice (before assuming his current role of state's attorney), where he was paid more than \$1 million by the City of Chicago for defending Burge and the other officers involved in Wilson's civil suit. He then represented Burge in proceedings before the Police Board. Later, as state's attorney of Cook County, Devine discouraged investigations of Area 2 torture and continued to uphold confessions obtained by that means.

Because of this conflict of interest, in 2002, at the request of a coalition of civil rights attorneys and activists, Circuit Judge Paul Biebel transferred jurisdiction over all torture-related cases to Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan. But in 2009, after a new State's Attorney was elected, Madigan's office filed a motion to transfer the cases back to the State's Attorney's office. Judge Biebel transferred them to the authority of State's Attorney Special Prosecutor Stuart A. Nudelman.

According to Taylor, that was key in securing Tillman's case a fair reading. "He actually looks at the evidence," said Taylor. "They actually looked at this as an independent prosecutor actually would, not as prosecutors who were implicated and had covered up over the years, such as Devine and Daley. And, unfortunately, Madigan didn't have the courage, either. So, that changed things."

In regards to Tillman's case, says Taylor, "When they examined these transcripts in minute detail, they came to the conclusion that not only did he not have a fair trial but that they needed to dismiss the case."

Taylor says the next step for Michael Tillman is to file for a certificate of innocence with the chief judge, which will qualify him for some compensation in the court of claims for the 23 years he spent behind bars. "The special prosecutor has said they will support petition," he said.

Jon Burge himself was arrested in October 2008, on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice relating to a civil suit brought forth by another victim of police torture. His trial is slated to begin in May but he has won multiple delays thus far because he is being treated for prostate cancer.

Activists, including Julian Ball and other dedicated members of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, regularly rally in front of Madigan's office, demanding justice for the rest of Burge's victims who remain in prison.

The People's Law Office estimates that at least two dozen African-American men are still serving sentences for crimes they say they confessed to only after enduring hours of torture at the hands of Chicago police officers between 1972 and 1992. Attorneys are hoping that the case will continue to have impact beyond today.

According to Taylor, the Tillman outcome was important because it was, "the first time in the 35 years of this torture scandal that a prosecutor has conceded that a man has been coerced and abused as part of a pattern of torture at Area 2 and as a result that he was wrongfully convicted and spent 23 years in jail."

In their statement of facts, Cook County prosecutors suggested for the first time that a defendant's allegations of torture were bolstered by "evidence existing outside of this trial record," including "findings of a pattern and practice of abuse at Area 2 Headquarters during the time in which Petitioner was detained."

At a press conference following his release, Tillman expressed his gratitude to Pupovac and his attorneys. Thanks to them, he said, "Here I am."

Asked how he survived all these years, he said: "I took it one day at a time."

For Pupovac, Tillman's release is not just a story about the reversal of a grave injustice; it is also a testament to the power of independent media. "I was thrilled that my editor at AlterNet encouraged me to follow my conviction and delve into the Tillman story," she said. "With media professionals being laid off left and right these days and newsrooms shrinking the size of their staff and the scope of their coverage, it is vital that outlets like AlterNet, which still value muckraking reporting, are given the support they need to thrive. I'm proud to be one of their contributors.

Liliana Segura is an AlterNet staff writer and editor of Rights & Liberties and World Special Coverage.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: AlterNet.org is one of my favorite sources of news for OE. The folks there are very generous in letting me reproduce their articles for you. Do yourself a favor and get on their email list. I only select a few of the excellent articles for this paper; you will find many others and learn more about our world.

# Airport Security May Include Mind-Reading Scanners

**By Daniel Tencer,** Raw Story, January 9, 2010 (excerpt)

Amid the media furor over the attempted Christmas Day attacks and a renewed political focus on enhancing airport security, attention is turning to a technological advancement that will have civil rights activists — or, for that matter, anyone with a secret — seriously worried:

mind-reading machines.

"As far-fetched as that sounds, systems that aim to get inside an evildoer's head are among the proposals floated by security experts thinking beyond the X-ray machines and metal detectors used on millions of passen-

gers and bags each year," AP's

Michael Tarm reports.

Tarm focuses on an Israeli

company called WeCU Technologies (as in "we see you"), which is building a system that would turn airport waiting areas into arenas for Pavlovian behavioral tests:

The system . . . projects images onto airport screens, such as symbols associated with a certain terrorist group or some other image only a would-be terrorist would recognize, company CEO Ehud Givon said.

The logic is that people can't

The logic is that people can't help reacting, even if only subtly, to familiar images that suddenly appear in unfamiliar places. If you strolled through an airport and saw a picture of your mother,

Givon explained, you couldn't help but respond.

The reaction could be a dart-

The reaction could be a darting of the eyes, an increased heartbeat, a nervous twitch or faster breathing, he said. The WeCU system would use humans to do some of the observing but would rely mostly on hidden cameras or sensors that can detect a slight rise in body temperature and heart rate.

Homeland Security officials have long been keen on Israeli counter-terror technologies, given the country's extensive experience with terrorism and its reputation for having some of the most effective security systems in the world.

ns in the world. m
According to numerous news

reports, WeCU has received two grants — from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security — for their research. Raw Story was unable to determine how much money WeCU received from the U.S. government but regulatory filings show the company spent at least \$60,000 on lobbying in Washington in 2006 and 2007.

WeCU has already developed a

prototype model of the mindreading technology, which, according to an article in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, has already been demonstrated to government security officials in the U.S., Germany and Israel....

# A GREEN WORLD ORDER Illusion or Solution?

By Prof. Dr. Saleem Mustafa

Borneo Marine Research Institute Universiti Malaysia Sabah Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Earth is in a crisis. Urgency and emergency that are needed in such a situation remain elusive. The carbon footprint is so dark as if to have blackened the thinking process to the extent that rays of hope needed to read the writings on the wall are not getting through. The failure of the Copenhagen Summit held in December 2009 to sign a legallybinding accord on carbon emissions reflects inaction and a deliberate ignorance of the unfolding grim reality.

It makes no sense when the summit document states that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of the present time and that actions should be taken to keep any global mean temperature increases to below  $2^{\circ}$  C. (3.6° F.) but at the same time does not contain any legallybinding commitments for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

This so-called accord reflects the deep and unabridged divide over who needs to take action and who needs to pay for it. The decision on 2° C. seems to be driven more by political and economic considerations than scientific facts. Even this temperature increase could be disastrous for small island

Where is the action plan to keep the temperature from rising to this level? Given the rate at which the atmosphere is changing, the ocean is acidifying and 'business as usual' is continuing in the world, who can prevent the temperature from rising to limits set at

The Earth needs a new world order that should be called a 'Green World Order' which is not characterized by wars, hegemony and dominance of the rich and powerful but by peace, cooperation of all nations and all of mankind for green forests, blue oceans, clean rivers, a smoke-free atmosphere, food security and social welfare.

Copenhagen?

In essence, the Copenhagen Summit will be remembered for a long rhetoric and lost global warming battle accountability bill. The failure deprived this planet of a healing touch and instead served the interests of climate-change skeptics who could be vested interests out to make capital from the ravages of the industrial age.

The summit agenda was not holistic. Rather, it was disposed towards industrial technology, ignoring the other crises that the planet is passing through, especially the food crisis which is linked to environment and policies.

The Earth needs a new world order that should be called a 'Green World Order' which is not characterized by wars, hegemony and dominance of the rich and powerful but by peace, cooperation of all nations and all of mankind for green forests, blue oceans, clean rivers, a smoke-free atmosphere, food security and social welfare. If forests bloom in one country, all others will breathe fresh air and if toxic fumes emerge from war and industry in a country, others will inhale them as well. It is a global environment. No country can be insulated.

In this new Green World Order, we must count the carbon footprint of wars. How much damage the use of modern weapons inflicts to atmosphere, forests, agricultural land, waterways and oceans is known but never calculated or considered in warfare. The emissions the tanks and armored personnel carriers produce have not been measured. War mongers would certainly not consider it while deciding to launch strikes and destroy infrastructure, ultimately contributing to carbon footprint, food insecurity and social disorder. All these consequences of war imperil the environment, reduce the capacity environmental resources to

food crises. When institutionalized systems of governance are demolished, people seek environmental resources for sustenance. There are instances when people of war-torn countries in recent decades have survived at the expense of wild flora and fauna and depleted the wildlife. They were justified and those who made or allowed it to happen were unjustified.

produce food for living and cause

The Copenhagen Summit happened when the world is in the midst of wars and food crisis

and should have at least discussed the environmental cost (carbon footprint) of war and the impending famine.

The Green World Order should have international green courts to try those committing crimes against environment on 'industrial' scale. There should be no immunity, no privileges and no bias. It should be a court where an individual who suffers from man-made environmental disasters can bring environmental culprits to justice. Any individual of a country in peace who breathes air poisoned by use of explosives in a war zone elsewhere should be able to drag the culprits of war to a green

Children born in a war-torn country suffering from diseases linked to poisoned water they drink, toxic air they inhale and contaminated food they eat are not only deprived of the blessings of good health and living but they also become unintentional source of carbon footprint. A green fund should help them as well. If the green bill and punishment are too high, the potential culprits will think twice about disturbing the world order.

Despite the international community's expressed awareness of the dangers of climate change, there is still no international green fund or climate fund, no international carbon trading schemes, no large-scale investment in green technology and no global effort towards making the public aware of the fact that fighting climate change is a moral obligation and each individual on this planet has to join this fight to save the Earth from what looks like a disaster of unprecedented dimensions in the making.



**Artwork by David Dees** 

This anti-TV series brought to you by the publisher's personal belief that television is Public Enemy Number One and should be eliminated as suggested in Jerry Mander's 1977 classic book, Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television.

# Kill Your Television Before it Kills You

# Falling TVs Kill Children

By Ron Todt

Daily News, Huntingdon PA, excerpt

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania (AP, December 16, 2009) — The number of children killed or injured by falling television sets appears to have risen even as more consumers replace their clunky old TVs with lighter flat screens, studies suggest.

The reason for the rise isn't clear but could result from traditional TV sets becoming heavier and, an industry official suggests, households choosing a flat screen for their main TV and relegating old sets to rickety furniture in other rooms.

A team from the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Ohio reviewed data from 100 emergency rooms and estimated that about 14,700 furniturerelated injuries occurred each year between 1990 and 2007 almost half due to TV sets, the most common article involved about 300 deaths.

The research, published in October in the journal Clinical Pediatrics, showed that the number and rate of injuries to youngsters from falling furniture increased significantly over the period. The rate generally rose from 18.8 per 100,000 people in 1990 to 22.9 in 2007, peaking at 25.7 in 2004.

A similar report from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission last year estimated 42,7000 injuries and 180 deaths associated with appliance, furniture and television instability and tip-overs from 2000 to 2006; 87 of the deaths involved televisions. The number rose from seven in 2000 to 23 in 2006.

Several children have been killed or injured in recent weeks alone. A 2-year-old New Jersey boy died December 7 when he tipped over a chest of drawers holing a large TV set. A 10-month-old Philadelphia boy was critically injured December 10 when a television fell onto him. An 11-month-old Phoenix girl died a month ago after her 2-year-old brother pulled a television off its stand while trying to change the channel . . . .

For Sylvia Santiago, of West Haven, Connecticut, news accounts of the recent deaths reminded her of the crash that awakened her in July at a friend's house. A heavy TV set had fallen from a low stand and it took Santiago a while to see her 2 1/2-year-old daughter lying be-

"When I looked down, all I saw was her legs underneath the TV," said Santiago, 23. Her daughter, Janiyah Pose-Santiago, died a week later.

Parents should anchor heavy televisions to the wall, said Gary Smith, director of the Ohio injury research center and a member of the team that conducted the study, adding that anchoring devices should be sold along with

"Just like we wouldn't sell a motor vehicle without a seat belt in it, there is no safe way to put a large piece of furniture in a home where children live and play and have that be a safe environment," he said. Parents should also never put a remote control, toy or other enticing object on a TV, dresser of shelf that a child might try to reach, he added . . . .

# Why a Burger Should Cost \$200

By Tara Lohan AlterNet.org, January 16, 2010

Raj Patel bravely took on Stephen Colbert earlier this week to promote his new book, The Value of Nothing. I'm a huge fan of Patel's last book, Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World's Food System.

Patel describes the premise for his new book as coming from an Oscar Wilde quote: "Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing." I look forward to getting Patel's newest book in my paws for a read - so far, he's made some interesting points, although it's always hard to get to the heart of things sitting across the table from Colbert. Still Patel made a valiant

Prices in the free markets, Patel explained, "work to hide a great deal; we need different ways of valuing the world other than relying on the free market."

Patel uses an example of a hamburger, saying that if you



**Image from Office Publisher** 

figure in the social and environmental costs we should be paying 200 bucks for a burger, which would of course mean we'd need to rethink the way we are eating.

Sounds like a plan!

"We need to pay the full cost for what it is we consume, other wise we are dumping our environmental costs on . . . . " Oh

shucks, that's when Colbert cuts

Colbert for his part had some great lines. Here's one:

"Cheap prices is what America was built on . . . aren't you hurting the world's poor by not employing them at near-starvation wages?"

Ever the expert on developing countries, Patel deftly responds and the conversation becomes an issue of democracy. Patel contends that democracy as it was first done in Greece was based on electing a bunch of people at random to run the government each year. And Colbert replies with the hit line of the show:

"We tried picking a leader at random, it's called Sarah Palin." Touché.

I think Raj Patel has become one of the great, sane voices when it comes to food policy. I'm looking forward to what he has to say in this newest work.

Tara Lohan is a senior editor at AlterNet.



Health By Choice is a natural health and wellness center located at 1721 Lafayette Road, New Enterprise PA, with a second location at Weaver's Natural Foods on the Square in Manheim PA. We are a full service natural health center with Naturopathic and Homeopathic doctors on staff along with Certified Clinical health practitioners who customize a program to help you achieve your wellness goals. To help with your wellness we also offer over thirty different modalities such as Thermography, Hair Analysis, Meridian Stress Assessment, Bioimpedance Analysis, Acoustic Cardiograph, Iridology, Enzyme profile, Repatterning and Results Therapy, Reflexology and Massage. We have an Infared Sauna and Bionic Hydrotherapy station. Our licensed laboratory uses the Reams Ionization Evaluation to help in better assessing your needs with access to many other laboratories for a wide variety of testing services. Our large retail store offers superior professional supplements, natural and organic foods, along with specialty products. See healthbychoice.net or 800-858 3288.

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# Views

Earth Zsalms: Song 32

**By Angela Magara** © www.angelamagara.com

Forgiveness is the seed stock of compassion. Plant it deep within For yourself.

Long have I raged, mutely denying my shadows, the stumbles, the falls. By day, in night, I burned from within Until my heart darkened at my own folly.

Labyrinth walk led me to myself. Love's eyes were mine and I saw. Saw endless fold of cause and result, Of trying, of failing, of shame, of fear. Held in my own arms secure, I was forgiven.

We have wrapped ourselves in rags of excuses, doubts, expectations.
Like new clothes forgiveness adorns us.
And jewels of hope drop into our hearts.
Then does compassion make a home.
And yield sweet harvest.
Be glad and shout your joy for Love has taken root.

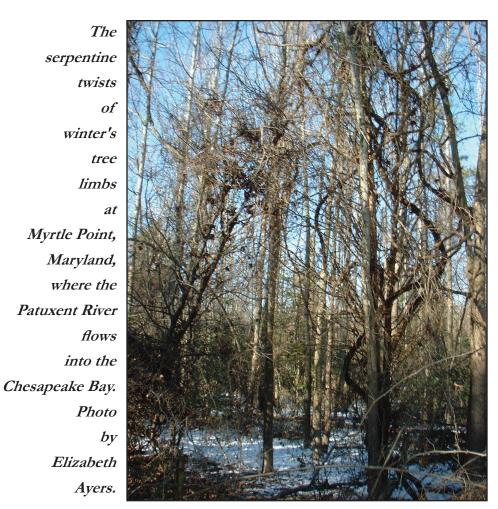
<u>Earth Psalms</u> is full of familiar words spoken in a new voice based on the Biblical Psalms but with the heart of Earth-based spirituality. Printed with the author's permission.



Image submitted by Mare Cromwell, Baltimore MD

the sun sets on the white-crusted tundra Labrador glowing with golden light and night will supply the moon and stars and the wild flowers of the aurora and midnight, deeper cold and wind and then my dreams will be added to the dreams of earth

> Sandy Chilcote Newfoundland, Canada



# ENCOUNTERS WITH WONDER

# Making Friends with Winter

**By Elizabeth Ayres** California, Maryland

Almost, it could be a mist, a gray cloud clinging to the Earth, but no. As the road curves closer, the fog resolves itself into a tangled profusion of bare tree branches. I marvel at the work of winter: to strip green flesh from canescent bones.

The work of winter. An odd thought. Intrigued, I decide my errands can wait while I RSVP to this unexpected invitation. Remembering a park nearby, I head there, noting that heaven itself seems naked today: blue-gray clouds on a grayblue sky. Despite what I know — that each season possesses its own wisdom — I've always hated winter. Have always preferred to build of its hard-packed longings something like a tower from which I could spy, in the distance, the coming spring. Now winter profters ner nand in triendsnip. Shall I take it?

I park my car and leave it, like some discarded garment. I need to be naked. Exposed. Like the trees themselves. The path I choose — or is it chosen for me? — takes me deep into the woods. Or is this the framework of a

house being built? So many questions, so few answers, and that, too, is the work of winter, I suspect. To strip away the green flesh of our assumptions, taking us down to the bare bones of perplexity. The framework of a life being built. Of many lives being fashioned from puzzle and inquiry. The house that is the life of the world.

This forest, now, is the gray realm of burnt things: ash, charcoal, cinder. Of hard, metallic things: iron, steel, granite, lead. And yet, something is revealed here that hitherto had been hidden. Just there, in the serpentine twist of a limb, the ropelike curve of a bough, the surprise of twigs flaring forth from the tip of that branch, like fingers on a groping hand. And there, in the bold lines or brazen angles of trunks straight or bent, I can see what living has done to each tree, I can see, in consequence, every storm, every wind, every drought. Good season, bad season. Accident, happy chance. I can see it all, and I am here to tell you this: it is all beautiful.

Deep calls to deep, the psalm says. In this skeletal wood, my own soul's bones expose themselves: the choices I've made, my mistakes,

my regrets. Yet the marrow of me knows what the cold sap knows: the fundamental architecture of any life is beautiful. All our leanings and all our twistings, our fits and starts, our strides and missteps, it's all a hidden magnificence. Even when choice has been taken from us — through brutal storm or harsh accident — even then, something beautiful is being built. One life. Many lives. The house that is the life of the world.

I return to car and errands, startling a flock of small birds: black pepper swirling to spice a gray sky. I have clasped winter's hand in friendship and glad I am for the chance.

Elizabeth Ayres, author of Know the Way and Writing the Wave, is the founder of the Center for Creative Writing (CreativeWriting-Center.com). You can catch more reflections at http://elizabethayres.wordpress.com. Or write one of your own! Just follow the prompts at http://encounterswithwonder.wordpress.com.

"Making Friends with Winter" first appeared in the 2/21/08 issue of The Enterprise.

### **Questions Questions**

**By Terry Carnilla** Bedford, Pennsylvania

Far across the sky beyond the stars, the black holes and the planets is the end of our vast Universe. There lie the answers to many questions.

Where is the Creator? The Master of our Universe.

One of such intellect needs a variety of interests. Games HE plays to pass the time away. Earth alone would be boring.

Where is the next Universe? Will we ever be in touch? Have they been visiting us? Has HE been visiting us?

Questions — questions We await the answers.

#### The Warrior's Path

Earthbridge Newsletter October 2009

THE WARRIOR'S PATH is an acceptance of responsibility for your own life from now on. It involves not only a desire for change but a willingness to initiate the changes that are necessary.

THE WARRIOR'S WAY is to take just one step at a time, recognizing that each leads only to the next step. It is a going forward, not a stepping back, and of finding satisfaction in the present . . . .

Where does the path lead? Paradoxically, it is a Journey without destination. It leads nowhere but where you are. It is a journey without end because the end is the journey itself.

The journey itself is exciting, adventurous and pleasurable because it is a journey of knowledge. Not a gathering of information. Not of knowing useless facts. But knowledge that is necessary to you because it is knowledge about you, enabling you to live out the purpose of that knowledge.

This piece is from "The Voice of the Red Tail," a beautifully-illustrated, monthly bulletin for the People of the Red Tail. It is full of Native American news and artwork. To subscribe contact Sunny War Eagle at Earthbridge, Inc., P.O. Box 5786, Marianna, Florida 32447.



Pennsylvania
Association of
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A Sense of Place – Our Outdoor Heritage

2010 Conference, March 11-13, 2010

Normandy Farm Hotel & Conference Center, Blue Bell, PA

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# Monkey Business: Better Business Practices Learned Through Monkeys "Uh-Uh"

**By Heather Wandell** Frisky's Wildlife and Primate Sanctuary Woodstock, Maryland

"To Cross the Line" means to change from being acceptable to being unacceptable. When we have crossed the line with a dog, the first sign we may observe is a growl. If we don't back off, the next thing we see is a snarl, with teeth showing. If we still don't back off, we get bitten. When we cross the line with a monkey, we may see a number of different warning signals. Different breeds have different signals. Often, you will observe a "warrior-like" stance, stillness and a stare. The jaw may drop, leaving the canine teeth displayed. Some will jump to the back of the enclosure to avoid confrontation — others will come to the front of the enclosure and grab the bars. These are clear warning signals. If you move closer, they are likely to reach out and grab, scratch

Dawson, a Java Macaque Monkey (born April 2001), lunges forward when he feels threatened. He will grab the bars and begin shaking them. Any sensible human knows that means Back Off! The sign above his enclosure reads, "No Visitors Allowed in Here." Funny enough, Dawson will actually grab the sign and shake it. How's that for clarity? He has done this so often that the sign is showing signs of wear on the sides. One can arrest the aggression by simply moving out of the room.

Humans can certainly cross lines with other humans. In her article entitled "Crossing the Line: Guarding Against Inappropriate Workplace Behavior," Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti says this:

"Humor is a natural part of everyday communication but what is funny to one person may be insulting to another. Jokes about physical appearance, personality traits, gender, social characteristics and personal hygiene can all be hurtful to the person to whom they are directed, while other topics trip regional or cultural landmines.

"Humor can be especially dangerous when working in a mixed environment of adults where you don't know everyone's background or experiences. An otherwise-normal joke about needing therapy or a past experience could unwittingly offend or hurt a co-worker,"



Photo by Colleen Layton-Robbins Even lovely Dawson has his moments and will send clear warning signals.

explains Dianne Daniels of Image & Color Services in Norwich, Connecticut. Even poking fun at a public figure can be inappropriate. "Political humor is always risky and, unless the joke is about something totally unrelated to work or personal characteristics, there is always the risk of offending someone," she says.

In November 2009, I attended World Laughter Tours Advanced Laughter Leader Workshop in Columbus, Ohio. Steve Wilson, psychologist, psychotherapist and founder of World Laughter Tour, gave a lecture on Putting Up With Put-Down Humor.

He shared a story about a group gathered for a meeting. To include some laughter, they began telling jokes that poked fun at the state of Kentucky. After a few jokes were shared, Kevin, who was not laughing, simply voiced "Uh-Uh."

The jokes subsided and everyone turned to Kevin. He explained "Uh-Uh" is the warning signal he uses when someone has "crossed the line."

The group had no idea that they had. You see, the line is invisible. People don't usually cross them on purpose. Nobody said, "What's the matter; you can't take a joke?" Responding in this way makes one a "Humor Abuser." A Humor Abuser blames the victim. The group respected his view and discontinued the jokes about Kentucky. Steve ended the story with, "Kevin raised the group consciousness."

#### Humor is Destructive When It:

- Lowers self esteem,
- Belittles someone,
  Perpetuates a stere
- Perpetuates a stereotype,Closes off creative thought,
- Closes on creative thought,Stimulates laughter at some-

## Excludes someone. Human is Construction

Humor is Constructive
When It:

• Creates defensiveness, and/or

- Includes people,
- Includes people,Reduces tension,
- Stimulates laughter with someone,
- Breaks down barriers,
- Stimulates new ideas,Is supportive, and/or
- Creates a positive atmosphere.

World Laughter Tour trains people in leading and creating positive environments. The methods used are not based on joke telling. A non-threatening, playful approach is used. Through mirthful laughter: people connect, a sense of belonging is achieved, creativity is increased, blood pressure is lowered and numerous other physical and emotional benefits are received.

Oxytocin, also known as the 'bonding" hormone, is released when we laugh with others. Professor Gareth Leng, a neuroscientist at the University of Edinburgh says, "Oxytocin has been associated with an apparent reduction in stress and encourages social interaction." A study done at the University of Zurich showed that Oxytocin also increases levels of trust (Thomas Baumgartner, Center for the Study of Social and Neural Systems, University of Zurich, Switzerland). Perhaps this is why people feel connected when they laugh together.

Using jokes in the workplace to induce laughter can be very risky business. Steve Wilson says, "There are two sure rules for making something funny; however, nobody knows what they

When someone crosses the line, trust is threatened. The dog growls, Darwin grabs the bars and displays his canines, Kevin says, "Uh-Uh."

ys, "Uh-Uh."
What is your warning signal?

Heather Wandell is a Certified Laughter Leader with the World Laughter Tour and CEO of Another Way To See It (www. anotherwaytoseeit.com). Heather is also the Director of Community Outreach at Frisky's Wildlife and Primate Sanctuary in Woodstock, Maryland (www. friskys.org). Contact her at haw@anotherwaytoseeit.com. Email Heather if you would like to receive this column monthly.

# Pirates All Around Us

**By Al Fry** Garden Valley, Idaho

Since we are hearing so much about the African Coast pirates these days, it's probably appropriate to scan the subject a little deeper. Some years ago when many of the ships passing through the China Sea had pirate problems, the various cities and ship owners quickly solved the problem. They hired a salty old pirate hunter who had a very fast craft and the latest cannons.

The present Somalian problem apparently arose when large fishing trawlers from many affluent countries stripped most of the fish from the Somali waters. Having no way to make a living any more, the fishermen got together and formed some unofficial Coast Guard units to take on the smugglers and fishing usurpers. These clan-based alliances have had great success for several reasons that never get in the news.

First, the shippers consider the few million they pay out cheaper than what they would pay out in claims against any dead hostage problems. Second, they have quickly implemented a surcharge on the containers passing by the dangerous areas. The \$20 or so per container they get adds up to \$250,000,000 a load in many cases — and this easily covers their losses. Since the Somalian pirates have held back from killing hostages and minimized their abuses, it would seem the problem is not about to get resolved any time

Since 'those who take the earnings of others' are considered pirates according to Webster's, we have far more to fear from the many governments and Bernard Madoff's of the world. We now have thousands of bureaucrats and Wall Street pirates tearing our earnings to



Image from Office Publisher

shreds at every turn. It's easy to get sucked in by greed and the media propaganda.

I fell for the 18% interest paid out by an offshore bank a few years back. Jim Straw only got about ten grand to teach me a good lesson. What I learned was simple: Never let your nest egg get away from your own hand control. There are pirates in every field and dressed in every cloth. Many have on uniforms.

I'm reminded of the police in Punta Reynes, Costa Rica. Our valuables and shipboard gear just happened to get stolen after a brief shore stop. It seems the officials believed they could buy back the valuables for hefty payoffs. No one who has much seaport savvy will enter most of the Latin ports from all this usual corruption. It's the same over much of the backwater areas of the world. Even the port and docking fees are getting outrageous. I saw unplush expatriates hanging out in Tahiti at one time. No more.

Officials and governments are getting hungrier and chang-

ing the rules faster each year. The larger governments are a little more sophisticated in their assaults but still act on behalf of the corporate pirates who rule our world. Their think-tanks recommended cutting down the populations a few decades ago and now we are assaulted with poisoned food, water and media propaganda.

We are told we can save the planet and the global warming problem by signing away further freedoms and following our corrupt leaders. Never mind that Al Gore can make billions as a middle-man for the carbon credit scams... or that Bill Gates owns most of the weather-modification methods that will wind up being put in place if the scam works.

It should be obvious to all of us with any brain circuits still functioning that the current leaders and money systems are not working. History proves it.

The only logical solutions may just be to find an honorable leader . . . or a God . . . of ethics and honor . . . in person.

# Somali Militants Force UN Agency to Suspend Food Distribution

GENEVA, Switzerland, January 5, 2010 (ENS, excerpt) — Attacks on humanitarian operations and a string of threats and unacceptable demands from armed groups have made it impossible for the world's largest food aid agency to continue feeding up to one million hungry people in southern Somalia.

This choking of the humanitarian food lifeline raises the risk of greater instability in the entire Horn of Africa region, parched by the failure of the November rains after years of drought.

In a statement today, the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) said because its humanitarian operations in southern Somalia have been under escalating attacks from armed groups, the agency will suspend food distributions in much of southern

Somalia.

Two UN civilian staff members lost their lives in Somalia in 2009, the United Nations said today in a statement announcing the deaths of 28 civilian staff members and seven peacekeeping troops around the world last

The killings of four World Food Programme staff between August 2008 and January 2009 prompted WFP officials to seek security commitments from local administrations and armed groups in much of southern and central Somalia.

Agency spokesperson Emilia Casella told reporters in Geneva today that 95 percent of the territory where WFP operations have been disrupted was controlled by the militant group known as Al-Shabaab, or Movement of Warrior Youth.

In a *New Yorker* article December 14, 2009 John Lee Anderson identified the Shabaab as "a group of violent Islamist guerrillas" with "ties to Al Qaeda" which "has declared war on the U.N. and on Western non-governmental organizations" that distribute food aid in Somalia.

distribute food aid in Somalia.

The Shabaab "has imposed its own harsh form of Sharia, or Islamic law, with punishments such as public flogging, stoning and amputation," writes Andering

n. Staff safety is of paramount

Photos by Peter Smerdon Courtesy World Food Programme More than 90 percent of World Food Programme food aid to Somalia is carried to the country by ship and walked ashore.



Somali women receive food aid from the World Food Programme.

concern to WFP, the agency said today, revealing that armed groups have demanded up to \$20,000 every six months to ensure the safety of UN staff. Also, the WFP has received demands to remove women from their jobs . . . .

In its statement, WFP said the agency is "deeply concerned about rising hunger and suffering among the most vulnerable due to these unprecedented and inhumane attacks on purely humanitarian operations."

WFP is continuing its lifesaving food distributions in the rest of the country, including the capital, Mogadishu, reaching about 1.8 million people, more than two-thirds of the hungry it has been feeding.

The agency says its operation in Somalia is fully funded in the coming months to reach all the projected beneficiaries.

A single bright spot was contained in UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message to the the UN's International Maritime Organization in November.

"In recent years, pirates operating from Somalia have been hijacking ships in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean and holding their crews and cargo for ransom. Thanks to the resolve of the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Security Council, the international community has done much to discourage such acts," Ban said.

Over 90 percent of all WFP food for Somalia is delivered by sea. Yet Ban said, "Since the start of the international naval escort system in the western Indian Ocean two years ago, not a single ship heading to Somalia with World Food Programme aid has been attacked."

# Authentic Activism

**By John B. Conner** Shade Gap, Pennsylvania

Effective activism seeks to achieve more than band-aid changes, changes that produce a few minor improvements but leave the causal agents untouched and fully capable of continuing and even increasing their exploitation and oppression of life.

Instead, effective activism aims to get to the root of the unjust conditions that prevail in our society today. Its goal is to remove economic and political power from those who possess it and use it to maximize their wealth and power, regardless of the great suffering and death inflicted on others, and shift that power into the hands of those who use it to create a just, compassionate and democratic society.

# What's Required of the Activist?

- A strong commitment to the preservation and enrichment of life, human and non-human.
- Broad and deep knowledge of the economic and political workings of society, coming from extensive reading and reflection, discussion and working with people over the course of many years.
- 3. Determination to engage in a continual search for a process which is capa-

- ble of making major change in the face of the great wealth and power of the ruling class.
- 4. Sufficient time for research and actions that produce change. For all practical purposes, a successful effort is at least a full-time job and ideally much more than full-
- 5. Necessary resources (car, phone, computer, copy machine, printer and funds for the use of these resources and for travel) to accomplish one's objectives, along with the skills to use those resources.
- 6. Considerable face-to-face access to large elements of society, along with a genuine affection for the people with whom one works, without which they will not respond.
- 7. The ability to communicate and persuade. Persuasion results from one's ability to think and speak clearly, sincerely and knowledgeably, joined with deep sympathy with those whose sufferings she/he is seeking to alleviate.
- adversity. Adversity includes not just opposition from the wealthy and powerful who benefit from the suffering of others but also from the ini-

Perseverance in face of

- tial indifference of the majority of people whom the activist is working to
- 9. Moreover, one must have the inner strength to withstand this adversity. Which strength comes from a strong connection to and love of those who are suffering and a determination to fight for them regardless of the day-to-day hardship which that entails.

enlist in the effort.

 Unflagging hope that sooner or later the activist community will prevail if we persevere and work hard.

11. Connection with and

support from like-minded people. For the vast majority of activists, to understand current economic, political and environmental conditions throughout the world without input from others is for all practical purposes impossible. Economic, political and environmental conditions today are too complex for one person to understand without the aid of others. In addition, to operate effectively without encouragement is virtually impossible — most of us are too weak to stand

Contact John at grassroots1@pa.net or 814-259-3372.

alone.

# Dangerous Spin on Cancer Risks of a Sugar-Free Sweetener

CHICAGO, (WORLD-WIRE, January 5, 2010) — The Cancer Prevention Coalition notes with alarm that on January 2<sup>nd</sup> this year, in a heavily advertised special healththeme issue of People Magazine, Kraft announced a new campaign on Crystal Light, a sugarless powdered drink mix which can easily be poured into tap and bottled water drinks.

Crystal Light's ingredients include the artificial sweetener aspartame, under the trademark names of NutraSweet and Equal, besides citric acid and sodium

Cancer Prevention Coalition Chairman Dr. Samuel S. Epstein warns that, based on scientific evidence published in peerreviewed journals and presented to the U.S. Congress, aspartame is both toxic and carcinogenic.

The coalition is calling upon the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban all dietary uses of aspartame.

Crystal Light was first marketed in 1982 to "make drinking water more enjoyable," and much less caloric than fruit juices. Aspartame, 200 times sweeter than sugar, is also widely used as a sweetener in tea and coffee, especially by the weight con-

Aspartame was synthesized by G.D. Searle in 1965 after its strong, sweet taste was first

Subsequent toxicology tests by Searle revealed brain damage in mice and cancer in the liver, testes and thyroid of rats. However, the results of these tests were never published nor reported to the FDA.

After saccharin, aspartame is the second most widely used artificial sweetener in the world. It is found in more than 6,000 products including carbonated and powdered soft drinks, hot chocolate, chewing gum, candy, desserts, yogurt and tabletop sweeteners, as well as some pharmaceutical products like vitamins and sugar-free cough

Aspartame is consumed by over 200 million people worldwide and represents about 60% of the artificial sweetener market. Aspartame provides manufacturers of food, soft drinks, candy and chewing gum with substantial cost savings compared to sugar, which is 200 times less sweet. Aspartame also is a sweetener without calories, which helps people control their mental Health Sciences.

In 1975, an FDA Task Force conducted a comprehensive review of the scientific literature on the toxicity of aspartame. This revealed gross abuse in Searle's claims which trivialized or suppressed evidence on the toxic and carcinogenic effects of aspar-

In January 1976, then FDA Commissioner Alexander M. Schmidt testified before Congress that Hazleton Laboratories, under contract to Searle, had been charged with falsifying toxicological data on aspartame.

The FDA convened a Public Board of Inquiry to review concerns about the sweetener's carcinogenic effects in experimental animals. In 1980, the Board concluded that aspartame could "contribute to the development of brain tumors." The FDA then recommended that, pending confirmation of these findings, the sweetener should no longer

Evidence of these toxic effects was subsequently confirmed by leading independent U.S. scientists. Reacting to these concerns in 1976, Senator Edward Kennedy warned, "This extensive nature of the almost unbelievable range of abuses in several major Searle products is profoundly disturbing.'

Invited in 1979to testify before the House Committee on the Judiciary, apart from other examples of corporate crime, Dr. Epstein detailed evidence on Searle's criminal denial of the carcinogenicity of aspartame. This evidence was subsequently posted in The Congressional Recora.

In 1996, based on a comprehensive review of the scientific literature, Dr. John Olney, a leading independent U.S. scientist, confirmed that aspartame caused brain cancer when fed to rodents.

A decade later, Dr. Epstein points out, the prestigious Italian Ramazzini Foundation, based on large scale life-long feeding tests in large numbers of rats, commencing in infancy, confirmed that low levels of aspartame induced brain cancer and can-

cers at other sites. The Ramazzini study was reported in the November 2005 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives, the peer-reviewed journal of the United States' National Institute of Environ-

"Our study has shown that aspartame is a multi-potential carcinogenic compound whose carcinogenic effects are also evident at a daily dose less than the current acceptable daily intake for humans," the Ramazzini scientists warned.

Of further significance, these conclusions were endorsed by the Federal National Toxicology Program, says Dr. Epstein. "Nevertheless, and not surprisingly, Searle and its consultants still attempt to challenge these conclusions and persist in their reckless claim that aspartame is

"In view of the unequivocal scientific evidence of aspartame's carcinogenicity, besides the political gamesmanship that led to its original approval by the FDA," Dr. Epstein says, "it is anticipated that Dr. Margaret Hamburg, the new FDA Commissioner, will ban all dietary uses of aspartame."

Samuel S. Epstein, M.D. is professor emeritus of Environmental and Occupational Medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health; Chairman of the Cancer Prevention Coalition and a former President of the Rachel Carson Trust. His awards include the 1989 Right Livelihood Award and the 2005 Albert Schweitzer Golden Grand Medal for International Contributions to Cancer Prevention. Dr. Epstein has authored 270 scientific articles, and 15 books on the causes and prevention of cancer. These include the ground-breaking Politics of Cancer (1979) and most recently <u>loxic Beauty</u> (2009) about carcinogens and other toxic ingredients in cosmetics and personal care products. Contact Dr. Samuel S. Epstein, MD at 312-996-2297 or epstein@uic.edu. The Web site is http://www.preventcancer.com/.

#### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Back in the 1980s, I was a privateduty nurse and had plenty of time to read as I took care of individuals dying of cancer who sleep a lot. One of the books I read that launched my environmental career was Epstein's Politics of Cancer. He is a true pioneer and whistle-blower on poisons and companies that hide their health statistics in order to continue making a profit.



Photo by Tyla Matteson

Glen Besa, Director of the Sierra Club's Virginia chapter, holds his sign on December 12, 2009 in Copenhagen at the huge march and rally through the city ending at the Bella Center. Approximately 100,000 people joined the climate march to show support for action to address climate change. This took place the Saturday between the first and second weeks of the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. The march was about 4 miles and Glen and his wife, Tyla Matteson, talked to people from all over the world, with lots from Denmark and other European countries.

# Mark's Green Party: Saving the Co-Op, Part IV **Critics: Snobs and Saviors**

By Mark Lautman Rockville, Maryland

The excitement at the Happy Apple Blossom Co-Op was electrifying. Everyone was bustling about to make sure the store's appearance was spotless. Tincture Alice worked the previous day putting all the liquid additives in alphabetical order. Palette Jack worked the entire previous week, inspecting every crumb in the cranberry-coconut granola bin, ensuring none of it was adulterated with overflow from the apple-raspberry bin. Latonya Rotterdam, the co-op's high-powered marketing executive, emptied the compost bin on her holstered iPhone.

why all the energy releases Because today the co-op was expecting the famous international health-food critic, Moussa al-Karih. A positive evaluation from al-Karih could mean a bonanza for a health-food store, boosting sales of okra and kelp by hundreds of percent. However, a negative evaluation spelled disaster, including lost customers and a damaged reputation.

The more conservative members of the co-op, whom Rotterdam called the "low-potency vitamins," were opposed to getting involved with a critic. "We sell wellness, ethos and a lifestyle," they claimed. "We don't sell 'merchandise."

Rotterdam disagreed. "Apples and moss grow on trees," she explained, "but money doesn't.

There is a ruthless yogi nearby who wants to buy this land and build on it an organic applesauce factory. Think about it, is that what you want to happen to your coffee grinders? We need to pay our bills or close shop. I have enough confidence in everyone here that we'll make a very positive impression on al-Karih and, with a good recommendation from him, we'll have enough sales to start our own private label of flax seed."

Rotterdam gathered everyone next to the front door; everyone except Palette Jack. "Jack," she said, "it's not that I don't trust vou but I think now would be a good time for you to take that dream vacation."

What dream vacation?" said Palette Jack.

"See, you're already having a good time! Go mind the office while we show al-Karih what kind of an operation we have

At 10:00 al-Karih drove up. "Good morning, monsieur," said Latonya. "Welcome to the Happy Apple Blossom Co-Op."

'Indeed," said al-Karih dryly. He opened the door and went inside, grimacing at the sound creaking from the door's hinges. "How long has that noise been there?" he asked Rotterdam.

"About five years, sir," she replied. "We haven't had a chance to repair it."

"I see," said al-Karih and made a note in his survey book. "Tell me, Ms. Rotterdam, where can I find hydrating shea butter scalp ointment?"

"We don't carry that item, Monsieur al-Karih," replied Rotterdam nervously.

"How about aloe face cream in a Blue Nile water solution?" "Ummm, we don't have that

Al-Karih made a quick walk across the co-op's aisles. "In fact,

I see you don't have a bath and beauty section. That's quite unusual." "Yes, Monsieur al-Karih, you

see, that's because..."

"No need to explain, my dear," said the critic, making another note in his survey book. "Squeaky door and no cosmetics. Very well, let's move on to the order processing section of the review." Al-Karih dialed the co-op's phone number and, as luck would have it, Palette Jack answered.

"Hello?" he said.

Al-Karih was silent, as if waiting for the conversation to continue, and hung up. He asked Rotterdam, "Why didn't your communications attendant properly identify himself? I was expecting something like, 'Good morning, Happy Apple Blossom Co-op where Vitamin A courses through our turnip greens now on sale for three dollars a pound, Palette Jack speaking, how may I direct your call?"

"Sir, we don't have the resources for a fully-integrated switchboard solution."

Continued on page 15



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# **Grassroots Power**

# Oil and Gas Leasing on **Federal Lands Comes Under Intensive Scrutiny**

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 7, 2010 (ENS) — Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has announced changes to the federal onshore oil and gas leasing program that he says will improve protections for land, water and wildlife and reduce potential conflicts that lead to costly and time-consuming protests and litigation of leases.

The reforms pleased conservationists, who say they will provide greater environmental oversight, more public involvement, increased certainty for industry and a better return to American taxpayers for energy development on federal lands. The oil and gas industry is upset over the additional regulatory hurdles companies must meet before they are allowed to drill for oil and gas on public lands.

"The previous administration's 'anywhere, anyhow' policy on oil and gas development ran afoul of communities, carved up the landscape and fueled costly conflicts that created uncertainty for investors and industry," Salazar told reporters on a teleconference Wednesday. "We need a fresh look - from inside the federal government and from outside — at how we can better manage Americans' energy resources."

Salazar says the department has been struggling for months over what to do with the Bush oil and gas leasing plan for the 2007-2012 period, which was set aside by the courts because the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) failed to do analyses required by law. "We have had to spend lots of time redoing the mistakes of the previous administration," said Salazar. "We have to have certainty in moving forward; that's what we are attempting to do with these reforms."

BLM Director Bob Abbey told reporters, "The new approach can help restore certainty and predictability to a system currently burdened by constant legal challenges and protests. It will also support the BLM's multipleuse mission, which requires management of the public lands to provide opportunities for activities such as recreation, conservation and energy development — both conventional and renewable."

Under the reformed oil and gas leasing policy, BLM will pro-

• Comprehensive interdisciplinary reviews that take into account site-specific considerations for individual lease sales. Resource Management Plans will continue to provide programmatic-level guidance but individual parcels nominated for leasing will undergo increased internal and external coordination, public participation, interdisciplinary review of available information, confirmation of Resource Management Plan conformance as well as site visits to parcels when necessary;

• Greater public involvement in developing Master Leasing and Development Plans for areas where intensive new oil and gas extraction is anticipated so that other important natural resource values can be fully considered prior to making an irreversible commitment to develop an area;

 Leadership in identifying areas where new oil and gas leasing will occur. The bureau will continue to accept industry expressions of interest regarding



Flare on a drilling rig in Utah.

where to offer leases but will emphasize leasing in alreadydeveloped areas and near areas that have been developed, will plan carefully for leasing and development in new areas.

Abbey said he anticipates a slowdown in the number of parcels nominated for leasing to allow the BLM to conduct these new reviews. But he says the increased opportunity for public participation and a more thorough environmental review process and documentation can help reduce the number of protests filed as well as enhance BLM's ability to resolve protests prior to

American Petroleum Institute President and CEO, Jack Gerard, objects to the new policy, saying, "About 9.2 million Americans rely on the oil and gas industry for their jobs. By imposing these unnecessary additional hurdles, American jobs will be threatened along with the economic opportunities afforded by oil and gas development."

"Since Secretary Salazar has taken his position," said Gerard, "revenues from federal onshore oil and gas leasing in the five states that make up the Inter-Mountain West — Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming — have plummeted over 80 percent and the amount of total acreage leased by the government has shrunk to the lowest level on record. In Wyoming alone, nearly 70 percent fewer lease acres were issued by the federal government in 2009 than in 2008," Gerard said.

Secretary Salazar said, "We are moving forward to allowing exploration and development in the right places. These reforms will stop the logjam seen over the last several years created because the headlong rush to leasing has led to a rush to litigation. We have a huge problem," he said. "By doing it right we will create certainty and smarter access to our public land."

But Gerard contends, "This troubling trend of hobbling companies' ability to develop muchneeded domestic energy supplies will not create certainty for investors, as Secretary Salazar suggested today. Instead it will make America more dependent on foreign energy and continue to constrain government budgets."

Conservationists said the reforms will restore much-needed balance to the federal energy program. Under the Bush administration, oil and gas drilling was elevated above all other uses on federal public lands, resulting in a dramatic acceleration in energy development. This energy boom has caused significant impacts to the environment and communities, including air and water pollution, toxic spills, declines in wildlife populations and public health concerns, several groups said in a joint statement.

"After a decade when the fate of our public lands was left in the hands of the oil industry, it's refreshing to hear that the BLM is going to take charge of oil and gas management and will start factoring in the protection of treasured landscapes, sensitive wildlife habitats and municipal watersheds into management decisions," said Erik Molvar, wildlife biologist with Biodiversity Conservation Alliance in Laramie, Wyoming.

Elise Jones, executive director of the Colorado Environmental Coalition, said, "These commonsense reforms will allow for continued energy production while simultaneously protecting the clean air, pure water, treasured landscapes and abundant wildlife that are the backbone of economic prosperity in the West."

Conservation groups were particularly pleased with proposed changes to the categorical exclusion process, which the Government Accountability Office recently found enabled oil and gas companies to bypass environmental protections.

The use of categorical exclusions, or CXs, established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, allow the BLM to approve some oil and gas development activities based on existing environmental or planning analysis without fresh reviews.

Under the new policy, in accordance with White House Council on Environmental Quality guidelines, the BLM will not use these categorical exclusions in cases involving "extraordinary circumstances" such as impacts to protected species, historic or cultural resources, or human health and safety.

Steve Bloch, conservation director for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, said, "Utah's remarkable Redrock Wilderness suffered greatly under the prior administration's policies that the secretary now proposes to change. The wilderness resources in places like the White River, Upper Desolation Canyon and Labyrinth Canyon were targeted for leasing and development and endured the over-use of categorical exclusions and inadequate public input."

"If the Interior Department succeeds in striking a balance between protecting sensitive lands and developing oil and gas," said Bloch, "it opens a door to a new day when conservation groups can spend less effort trying to clean up problem projects and could allow the American people to engage as partners in creating a responsible energy future."

# Judge Revokes Approval of Pesticide That Could Harm Bees

NEW YORK, New York, January 4, 2010 (ENS, excerpt) A pesticide approved just 18 months ago must be taken off the market because it could be toxic to America's honey bees, already in steep decline.

In an order issued December 23, 2009, a federal court in New York invalidated the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) approval of the pesticide spirotetramat, manufactured by Bayer CropScience and sold under the trade names Movento and Ultor. The court ordered the

EPA to reevaluate the chemical. The order issued by U.S. District Judge Denise Cote went into effect January 15, 2010 and makes future sales of Movento illegal in the United States.

The lawsuit was brought by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Xerces (sic) Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

"This sends EPA and Bayer

back to the drawing board to reconsider the potential harm to bees caused by this new pesticide," said NRDC attorney Aaron Colangelo.

"EPA admitted to approving the pesticide illegally but argued that its violations of the law should have no consequences," Colangelo said. "The court disagreed and ordered the pesticide to be taken off the market until it has been properly evaluated. . ."



Photo by Rich Bergl, North Carolina Zoological Park

Elephants in Nigeria's Yankari Reserve.

# North American Zoos Fund **Elephant Conservation Worldwide**

SILVER SPRING, Maryland, January 8, 2010 (ENS, excerpt) The International Elephant Foundation (IEF) and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) have jointly announced financial support totalling about \$200,000 for 16 elephant conservation projects for 2010.

This relatively small amount will fund projects in both Asia and Africa that are expected to help mitigate human-elephant conflict, combat poaching, protect habitat, prevent disease, advance research and educate

One project will microchip the entire domesticated Asian elephant population of Laos. This is expected to help in monitoring the illegal capture of elephants from the wild and the smuggling of elephants to neighboring nations.

Another, seeks to establish an elephant sanctuary in Nigeria's Omo-Shasha-Oluwa Forest which still harbors a remnant population of forest elephants. Threatened by logging and over-hunting, studies show that this population of forest elephants could become extinct within five years.

"Elephants need our help,"

said IEF Executive Director Deborah Olson. "Essential elephant conservation work will continue thanks to the elephants here in North America that inspire support for the International Elephant Foundation. In addition, protecting elephants and their habitat also safeguards many other species big and small who share the same territory and migration routes.'

IEF is a nonprofit organization established in 1998 by a group of zoos and other elephant exhibitors to support elephant conservation around the world and receives a substantial portion of its funding from AZAaccredited zoos.

"Elephants in AZA-accredited zoos are wildlife ambassadors who educate the public and raise money to support vital IEF conservation efforts," said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy.

"IEF is helping the Uganda Conservation Foundation to invest in proactive and catalyst projects to strengthen elephant management across Queen Elizabeth National Park," said Michael Keigwin, founder, trustee and director of the Uganda Conservation Foundation. "Without IEF, Uganda Conservation Foundation would be unable to support the Uganda Wildlife Authority in recovering critical elephant populations from poaching, communities from crop raiding and habitats from illegal activity."

Over the past 10 years, elephants in Kenya have benefited from conservation activities funded by \$265,000 from the International Elephant Founda-

"The International Elephant Foundation partners with the Northern Rangelands Trust to support community-led conservation in 15 community conservancies covering a vast 6,000 square kilometers (3,726 square miles) in northern Kenya," said the Trust's Executive Director Ian Craig.

This year IEF grants will support projects in both Asia and Africa as well as the 2010 International Elephant Conservation and Research Symposium January 25-29 in Pretoria, South

Complete article at Environmental News Service, ens-news-

Peace comes from being able to contribute the best that we have, all that we are, toward creating a world that supports everyone. But it is also securing the space for others to contribute the best that they have and all that they are.

#### **Hatsat Abiola**

(A young activist who works to promote women, youth, and democracy in Nigeria, her home country, and around the world.)

Submitted by Rainbow Moon Staret, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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# Here Comes the Sun — In California, Anyway

Solar Power Is Now an Option for Even the Most Cash-Strapped Suburbanites

By Yasha Levine AlterNet. January 16, 2010 (excerpt)

Residential solar leases offer a no-money-down, low-monthly plan that makes solar electricity cheaper than the stuff we get by

wire — and you don't have to buy

the panels. Say "Hello" to the thing that could save our sun-splashed suburban lifestyle: affordable residential solar power that puts roof-top solar panels within reach of the most cash-strapped America consumer. This breakthrough is not a result of technological innovation but a new financing scheme cooked up on Wall Street called a "residential solar lease," a no-money-down, low-monthly plan that has made solar electricity cheaper than the stuff we get by wire. It's an old approach to a new source of en-

"Go solar for \$0 down. Now you can afford to go solar without the high initial cost of installing a system. Instead of buying the equipment, you simply lease it," boasts the Web site of SolarCity, a well-financed Silicon Valley start-up that has been pioneering the residential solar lease.

ergy and it is taking California by

A solar lease is a fairly simple arrangement that is not unlike a car lease. Instead of dishing out tens of thousands of dollars upfront to buy and install a rooftop solar array, homeowners simply borrow one for a low monthly fee. Like a car lease, customers sign a contract that locks them in for a specified period of time with the option of extending their lease or buying the panels at the end of the contract. It makes sense when you consider that a typical homeowner would have to cough up between \$20,000 and \$50,000 to buy and install a solar panel system. A solar lease, on the other hand, would only cost them somewhere around \$100 a month.

California, the world's third-



**Photo Courtesy of SolarCity** 

SolarCity is the nation's leading solar provider for homeowners, businesses and government organizations. Here is an installation in San Mateo, California south of San Francisco.

largest solar-power market, saw twice as many people file for solar power permits in 2009 than in 2008, with much of the surge in demand being driven by this newfangled solar product. (Demand is so high that a black market for stolen solar panels has sprung up in the Golden State.)

SolarCity, one of the first companies to aggressively market solar leases, signs people up for 15-year contracts that run an average of \$110 a month (with a 3.5-percent increase every year).

SolarCity says customers can typically expect to shave 15 percent off their electricity bill from day one, with savings potentially growing over time if energy costs continue to rise. Competing companies — like SunRun out of San Francisco or American Solar Electric out of Scottsdale — offer the same basic deals.

A \$100 electricity bill is a steal for California, a state that takes fifth place for the highest electricity rates in the country, especially for the millions of people who inhabit the southern, sun-baked reaches of the state.

"My bill goes over \$200 during summer when we keep the central AC going twelve hours a day," explained Paul Bosacki, who sits on the city council of Hesperia, a rustic, sprawling exurb on the edge of the Mojave Desert 90 miles east of Los Angeles. Bosacki was the first — and so far the only — person to sign up for SolarCity's lease program in his town but he won't be alone for long. Because now he pays \$89 a month and gets all the juice his household needs, while saving \$21 dollars off his average electricity bill.

We walk around to Bosacki's backyard, where a single Joshua tree keeps watch over a jacuzzi and a panoramic view of the Mojave Desert and he gives me a tour of his solar system: a slim grid of black panels on the roof and a

box that converts its electricity to proper voltage. Bosacki might have to spend a couple of bucks a month on additional electricity from his local utility in the summer but in the few months he's had the system he's been well in the clear. "I turned it on in September and haven't gotten a bill since," he says, adding that he would never be able to afford the \$40,000 his solar setup retails for without the solar lease.

Not only do homeowners like Bosacki save money with solar but they stand to make some, too. The beautiful thing about the technology is that it allows you to feed all your surplus electricity — like when you're on vacation, at work or taking a nap into the grid. The only downside is that, until 2010, local utilities in California paid customers in electricity credits rather than in real money. But a new law will now force them to pay in real money, as in cold hard checks

they'll soon start getting in their mailboxes.

Called Consumer Net Metering, this new regulation finally does an end-run around an insane California law that only allowed utility companies to sell electricity, a restriction that had been putting a serious damper on small and alternative solar projects. Now even the small-time homeowner could actually make an honest buck on the energy market. Welcome to the cheap new world of debt-financed green energy. "We've been selling like crazy

down here because of the lease program," a SolarCity rep told the Orange County Register, explaining that the company had not been able to meet demand in Southern California, which has been so high it outstripped SolarCity's meager financing ability. In April 2009, 3,000 people signed up, biding their time until SolarCity lined up more investors to fund the installations a wait the company predicted could take a year to clear. Other solar lease companies are seeing similar growth.

"Falling prices, rising utility rates and new government incentives may finally be driving serious growth in the region's market for residential solar power," wrote the Sacramento Bee in September 2009, when applications for solar panel installations suddenly quadrupled in the Sacramento region.

Even in this harsh creditfreeze climate, investors seem to be rushing in to fill the need. While loans to American businesses have dropped by 17 percent compared with last year, solar leasing companies have taken in hundreds of million of dollars in new funding. SunRun received \$105 millions in financing from U.S. Bankcorp earlier last year and another \$90 million in December. The bank also doubled SolarCity's funding to \$100 million. National Bank of Arizona gave SolarCity \$5 million for solar leases in Arizona.

Morgan Stanley, J.P. Morgan and Goldman Sachs all have been in the solar lease game from the beginning, in large part because they have been able to rig the financing and government subsidy structure in a way that guarantees

profits, allowing them to easily recoup their investments through complicated tax credit and green energy derivatives schemes — all of if risk free.

California goes the extra mile, providing the largest solar subsidies of any state (\$2.2 billion has been made available through 2016). Investors can expect to be credited 80 percent of their products' retail cost, meaning that financiers like Goldman Sachs are able to turn an instant profit for their investors on every solar panel array — before customers even pay their first solar lease bill. The handouts have been so good, in fact, that investors are constantly demanding bigger

"Investors historically expect seven percent to eight percent, which includes the tax benefits and a slice of profit during the life of the fund," wrote Green Tech Media about the amazing profits being squeezed out of the residential solar market. "Now they want ten percent or more."

Solar start-ups are popping up to compete for customers and the billions of dollars of federal and state subsidies for solar and renewable energy. Some companies are pioneering do-it-yourself solar kits you'll be able to buy at Home Depot, while others are working to integrate solar panel technology into building materials like roof shingles and siding.

Looking through slick Web sites and optimistic sales pitches, yet with nothing real to sell, is reminiscent of the dot-com bubble. It seems like solar hype is about the only thing for sale and a sign that America's solar energy market is probably entering the same dangerous bubbleburst territory Spain found itself in last year when the government heated up the solar market with \$1 billion in subsidies and then crashed the party when it ran out of money and was forced to suddenly cut funding, causing a world-wide solar recession and a glut in solar panel parts that persists even today.

But bubble or not, there are huge ramifications from this fullon race to develop affordable, ubiquitous residential solar technology . . . .

#### Solar Financing **Finally Reaches** Colorado **Non-Profits**

LOUISVILLE, Colorado, January 6, 2010 (WORLD-WIRE, excerpt) — Solar financing for non-profits and faith communities is often hard to find in these tough economic times. Thanks to a new program, developed by Colorado-based solar integrator Bella Energy, non-profit solar financing has

finally reached Colorado. Community Solar Partners is a unique solar financing program that has taken three years to develop. The program was designed to help non-profits and faith communities make critical investments in their infrastructure while reducing the price of investing in solar by about 30 percent. The first solar project financed under Community Solar Partners was recently completed at Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Denver, Colorado.

"We see this as part of our calling to be stewards of the resources we have been given... it's the faithful response out of gratitude for the goodness and beauty of Creation," said Pastor Paul Carlson during a construction party for the recently installed 21-kilowatt solar energy system. Our Savior's Lutheran looked at installing solar about three years ago but without the advantage of the federal tax credit the cost was simply too high . . . .

# Six States Chosen for Building Efficiency Retrofit Academy

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 5, 2010 (ENS, excerpt) — To help states develop strategies that will improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings and reduce costs and emissions, the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices today announced that six states have been selected to participate in the Policy Academy on State Building Efficiency Retrofit Programs.

Chosen to take part in the program are: Colorado, Hawaii, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Utah and Wisconsin — states from all parts of the country subject to a wide range of climactic conditions and including governors from both political parties.

"Most energy efficiency efforts have focused on new construction or the low-income sector only, often ignoring the substantial energy savings available by retrofitting existing buildings," said John Thomasian, director of the NGA Center for Best Practices.

This Policy Academy will help states realize energy savings across the board through comprehensive building retrofits programs," he said.

A Policy Academy is an interactive team-based process for helping a select number of states

develop and implement an action

plan to address a complex public

Participating states receive guidance and technical assistance from NGA Center staff and faculty experts and consultants from the private sector, research organizations, academia and the federal government.

Buildings consume more energy than any other sector of the U.S. economy and account for the majority of the nation's electricity consumption. But current efforts at cost-effective energy upgrades touch a very small portion of buildings every year, Thomasian said.

The State Building Efficiency Retrofit Policy Academy will help these six states develop and refine policy options such as innovative funding and financing mechanisms.

The states will develop building-energy-use benchmarking tools, targeted education and outreach measures, and workforce training programs.

Building retrofit programs may include measures like air sealing, insulation, upgrading or replacing heating or hot water systems, lighting upgrades, window replacement, appliance replacement with Energy Star products, solar thermal hot water and energy management system installation.

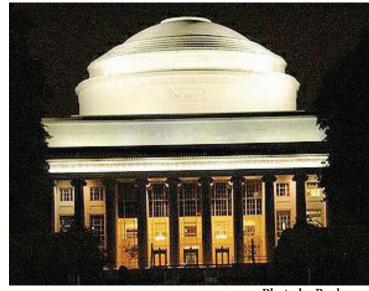


Photo by Buchanpe

The Great Dome at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was retrofitted in 2007 with LED lights that use the same amount of electricity needed to run two hair dryers.

These measures will be used to help the states design largerscale building retrofit programs that lead to lower energy use, the

reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the creation of The Policy Academy is being funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, which has responsibil-

ity for \$11 billion in funding

under the Recovery Act to retro-

fit and weatherize buildings,

deploy other efficiency and renewable technologies. In December 2009, Energy

along with additional funding to

Secretary Steven Chu outlined his department's plans to invest up to \$366 million to establish and operate three new Energy Innovation Hubs focused on accelerating research and development in key energy areas one of the three is an Energy Efficient Building Systems

Design Energy Innovation Hub.

The objective of this hub is to develop highly efficient buildings components, systems and models, said Secretary Chu.

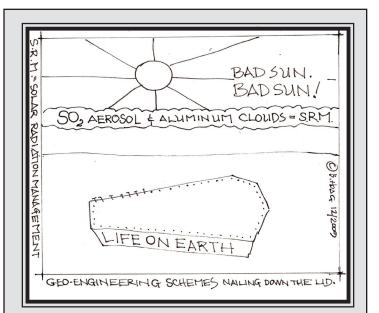
Each hub will foster unique, cross-disciplinary collaborations by bringing together leading scientists to focus on a high priority technology.

Achieving the hub's main goal of reducing energy use for indoor space conditioning will require a focus on advances in core technologies such as advanced refrigeration cycles, as well as on development of fully-instrumented infrastructure aided by buildingssystem design and modeling.

Chu said, "Such solutions could have a major impact on national electricity consumption, as the nation's buildings consume approximately 70 percent of all electric power."

The Energy Department will provide \$22 million in the first year for the establishment of each hub and up to \$25 million per year for the following four years to support the operations of each hub. Funding will be competitively awarded to hubs selected on the basis of external peerreview of proposals submitted in response to the Funding Opportunity Announcement for each hub. . . .

# Letters



#### Dear Iona.

First of all thank you for your newspaper, so full of heart and soul. And heartful, soulful news!

Thank you, too, for your past support of the Bonnefire Coalition by publishing the Sky Awareness Week packet in September and, in December, my HAARP cartoon and article, "They had to Destroy the Planet to Save It." Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

I am writing to let your readers know that on November 5, 2009 geoengineering was the focus of testimonies given before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science and Technology. Among the methods to abate global warming is Solar Radiation Management (SRM, see below for further information).

Testimonies revealed that SRM includes an Aerosol Program which uses military jets to disperse a haze of reflective particulates in the stratosphere. This haze could be sulfur dioxide, aluminum oxide or other particulates which reflect sunlight away from the Earth. What is not discussed in any of the testimonies I've read is that direct sunlight is actually necessary for fundamental Life Processes, such as photosynthesis.

Based on the House Hearings, I have written an article "Goodbye Blue Sky, Goodbye Sun — Global Warning: Goodbye Common Sense," which will soon be published on the Bonnefire Coalition Web site, accessible at www.californiaskywatch.com and www.agriculturedefensecoalition.org.

Meanwhile, anyone who is curious about this Aerosol geoengineering technique is welcome to email me at bonne\_fire@yahoo.com and request a copy of my article. I'm hoping people will read it and pass it on to others, broadly.

Now that hazing the Sky to dim the Sun is part of the public record it provides us the opportunity to say, "No! You may NOT!"

With Gratitude, **Bonnie Hoag**, Founder The Bonnefire Coalition bonne\_fire@yahoo.com

## More Information Compiled by Bonnie Hoag

#### SOLAR RADIATION MANAGEMENT

Solar Radiation Management (SRM) is a geoengineering technique being discussed by the U.S. government as a global solution to global warming. It reflects Sunlight away from the Earth by hazing the Sky with aerosols such as sulfur dioxide or aluminum oxide.

## THIS CHEMICAL HAZE DIMS THE SUN

Solar Radiation Management is a very bad idea because it.

\*Reduces direct sunlight which is vital to fundamental life processes such as photosynthesis;

\*Lessens the public will to address climate change with low-tech, common sense solu-

tions;

\*Compromises physical
and mental health (vitamin
D deficiency, depression,

asthma);
 \*Causes continued ocean acidification from CO<sub>2</sub>;

\*Further depletes ozone;
\*Increases dangerous ultraviolet radiation;
\*Increases diffuse radia-

tion, making the sky less blue;

\*Increases diffuse radiation, decreasing solar power production;

\*Risks potential for military use;

\*Affects local and global

weather systems;

\*Risks much more rapid global warming, if discontin-

\*Puts permanent pollution above astronomers' telescopes;

\*Assures there will be human error with sophisticated technical systems; and

\*Assures there will be unexpected consequences.

Do humans have the right to control the planet's climate without consideration of all other species?

Learn more at the Bonnefire Coalition Web site, accessible at www.agriculture-defensecoalition.org and www.californiaskywatch.com.

## Californians Protect Their Starry, Starry Skies

By Melinda Burns

Miller-McCune, December 24, 2009

If the Star of Bethlehem, that "star with royal beauty bright," would have appeared at Christmas, it would have been obliterated in most of the world by an orange halo of glary city light.

Light pollution — the artificial sky glow that dims the stars — now affects 63 percent of the world's population and 99 percent of people living in the European Union and continental United States, according to some estimates. The Milky Way is not visible in most cities, much less a meteor shower, Orion's shield or, in the biggest cities, the North Star.

"The sky is fading," says a

report this month in *Physics Today*. "... Does the vista of a star-filled night matter only to astronomers?"

In Borrego Springs, population 2,500, located in the remote Anza-Borrego Desert of Southern California, it matters to the

whole town. Borrego recently became only the second "International Dark Sky Community" in the world, meaning it has exceptionally starry night skies and is dedicated to keeping them that way.

"We protect the desert and

now we're protectors of the sky," said Dennis Mammana, a local astronomer and photographer. "Borrego is not just a daytime place. We're a celestial preserve."

A coalition of six determined

people — a representative from the Palomar Observatory in northern San Diego County and five Borregans, including Mammana — worked two years to win a "Dark Sky Community" designation this summer from the International Dark-Sky Association, a Tucson-based nonprofit group.

The association's 53 chapters lobby the United Nations, the U.S. Congress, the European Union, local cities, counties, states, businesses, etc. for reductions in sky glare . . . .

# News Submitted by Readers

Submitted by Jane Geuder Ellicott City, Maryland

## Remaking Main Street

By Timothy B. Wheeler, (excerpt)
Baltimore Sun, November 25, 2009

EDMONSTON, Maryland — This little town in the pavedover heart of suburban Washington, where cows grazed long ago, is "greening" its main street — showing what Baltimore and other cities in the region might need to do to help save the Chesapeake Bay.

In a bid to make the workingclass community of 1,500 more pedestrian- and environmentally-friendly, Edmonston has begun a \$1.1 million makeover of busy Decatur Street, narrowing the two-lane residential thoroughfare to make room for pollution-absorbing trees and grasses, a bike lane and energyefficient, classic-looking street lamps to be run on wind power purchased from out-of-state.

"Our priority is to redefine the American Main Street and get it from top to bottom as sustainable and community-oriented as possible," said Adam Ortiz, the town's part-time mayor....

Tucked between Hyattsville and Bladensburg on the banks of the Anacostia River, Edmonston was home to a dairy farm until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the town's incorporation in the 1920s, it has been a Washington bedroom community.

It's also long been subject to serious flooding, which was alleviated only two years ago by controls installed by the Army Corps of Engineers. While pressing for the new controls, the mayor said, he and others realized that much of the water inundating the town's streets came not from the river but from storm water washing off all the parking lots, streets and rooftops of all the communities that had built up in the area over the years.

Storm-water runoff from urban and suburban communities like Edmonston is a major — and growing — problem for streams and rivers and the Chesapeake Bay....

[Ed.: Great graphics accompany this article. Go to http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/green/balmd.gr.street25nov25,0,2052577 for the complete story.]

# Accident Casts Doubt on Nuclear Safety

By Gwen L. DuBois (excerpt)
Baltimore Sun, November 25, 2009

On November 21, there was a radiation leak at Three Mile Island nuclear power plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, less than 100 miles north of Baltimore up I-83. One hundred and fifty workers were evacuated and 20 people were exposed to radiation.

The leak didn't get a lot of at-

tention here but Marylanders should care — not only because Three Mile Island is not very far from us but also because Calvert Cliffs in Southern Maryland may be the site of the first new nuclear power plant to be ordered since the Three Mile Island accident in 1979. Electricité de France (EDF), the largest merchant of nuclear power in Europe, has purchased an almost 50 percent share in Constellation's nuclear holdings and will try to build a new nuclear power plant in our state with millions of dollars in federal loan guarantees.

Last week's leak is the latest reminder that nuclear power, de-

spite its proponents' claims, can be dirty and unsafe.

And there are disturbing questions about EDF's safety record. Last month, it was accused of dumping more than 1,500 tons of spent fuel near a town in Siberia where the waste was discovered in metal cans. EDF claims it is sending the material to Russia to be "reprocessed." Environmental experts quoted in Britain's *Telegraph* newspaper say that 13 percent of spent fuel from its plants is shipped over there and it is "really dirty stuff."

EDF has other problems in France, where 15 of 58 reactors it owns are currently off-line. As reported this month in the *Economist*, one investment bank attributes the company's trouble with reliability in electricity production to under-investment and large maintenance costs from EDF's aging nuclear power fleet.

Another expert quoted in the article commented that more attention was being given to international expansion and less to local French operations. One site, Tricastin, has repeatedly been in the news for leaks and mishaps — as it was two weeks ago when its Unit 2 had to stop refueling because of a stuck fuel assembly.

# Letters to the Editor

#### **Favorites in OE January Issue**

"The Plight of the Sacred Earth" by Jack Hendricks — I am terribly guilty of thinking about what happens after the snowfall (digging, plowing, freezing) instead of appreciating that it occurs. Thank you for the reminder.

"Foxfire" article by Loris Boutwell\* — The best part of this article was how the series started. "A new high school English teacher sat down with his bored students to figure out something meaningful that they could do to learn the English curriculum." A perfect example of public service and courage!

"The Scoop on Soap" was very informative! Yikes, I didn't know about the cobalt in dish detergent. Why only cobalt? Maybe they should sprinkle in some uranium for some extra punch!

*Mark Lautman*Rockville, Maryland

\*NOTE FROM EDITOR: Loris didn't write the article, Susan Walker did. She is a former employee of Foxfire Fund in Mountain City, Georgia. Loris submitted the story idea.

#### Hi Iona:

You really do put out a beautiful newspaper with good articles and beautiful photos. It's amazing what you can send on the Internet. I really liked the poem "Earth Psalms." I'm glad to see people talking about good soaps. I use Miracle II soap and really like that. I use Dr. Michael Castle's Kooky Soap and especially like that, also. I use Borax in my washing machine. Mike got me on to doing that also. It is good in combating the metal particulates.

You are really dedicated in taking a fulltime job to help further the paper. Economic times are certainly getting much tighter for people and I hate to see so many losing their jobs. Hopefully this New Year will be a more peaceful and prosperous one.

Ídaho

## Biking in Snow; Enjoying OE

Iona,

Happy New Year, My Friend! Peace, Health and Awakening in 2010! Thanks for putting your time into *The Order of the Earth*. I look forward to many more issues.

Yes, still biking. It's easier than anticipated. I fretted getting out there in the snow on my bike. But once the snowplows get it off the road, it's no problem. I bundle up with wool and cover my face with a bank robbers mask — HA HA — makes the guy at the grocery store a little nervous.

As I get older, I wonder if my body will allow me to keep peddling in the snow.....

Mark Petersen

Roanoke, Virginia

#### Thoughts on Spring and War

Dear Iona, sister in the Universe,

How have you been?

An oriental old saying says, "After December 21, a Yang begins to grow." It is a deep winter but I noticed that some buds of trees are preparing for the coming spring. I came to my office but the room temperature is 49 F. Of course it is cold but good news is that I am working in a room not in a field. During the Korean War we slept in a barn and had to move south in the fierce winter cold.

I am very sorry about the people in Haiti. They are we, human beings. I hope we will be able to prevent horrible natural and/or manmade disasters. I hope we can overcome the ordeal

The good news is that the harbinger of spring gives us a sign of good days. Have a good night. I am on CQ duty now.\*
Pyong Roh

Daegu, Korea

\*NOTE FROM EDITOR: Pyong and I joke about sharing watch over the planet from each of our hemispheres. We rotate CQ (Charge of Quarters) Duty. He picked up this term while being an epidemiologist in the U.S. Army.

## Poet Friend in Canada

Beautiful newspaper, Iona — thank you! It's a great way to start the New Year and with the hopes of Copenhagen in our prayers. **Sandy Chilcote** 

Corner Brook, Newfoundland

#### No Military in MD Schools

Dear Friends,

Check out this new Web site on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, AS-VAB. http://asvabtest.org.

This is a fantastic resource dedicated to everything ASVAB. The site contains an excellent overview of the issue, news articles about military testing and compelling resources for students, parents and school officials. There is also an impressive collection of military documents pertaining to the administration of the ASVAB program. This is an excellent resource activists can use for reaching out to school administrators and state legislators.

ASVAB legislation will again be introduced in the Maryland General Assembly for the upcoming session. Several activists affiliated with the Maryland Coalition to Protect Student Privacy have launched a state-wide lobbying campaign to pass a bill that would preclude the ASVAB from being used to recruit youth for military service from Maryland's high schools.

Frederick, Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's counties have taken steps to protect the privacy of students who take the ASVAB by stipulating that schools will not release results to military recruiters [prohibiting the use of the test for recruiting purposes]. Most school districts, however, have not acted to protect the privacy of students who take the ASVAB.

We'll be calling on you to help! We want you to simply email a note we've prepared to your three Maryland delegates and one senator. You'll be hearing more about it.

Pat Elder (patrickelder@verizon.net)
Bethesda, Maryland

# Mark's Green Party: Saving the Co-Op, Part IV Critics: Snobs and Saviors

Continued from page 12

"You should have thought of that before you called me here," said al-Karih as he made another note in his survey book. Rotterdam could almost feel

the low-potency vitamins sneering behind her back.
"The next aspect I review is

ambience. Everyone, please be quiet for a moment." He closed his eyes and slowed his breathing. All he could hear was the sound of a passing car, a chirping bird and Palette Jack explaining to a customer that it was perfectly acceptable to eat the doughy crust of a fig bar. "It's where all the nutrients are," he said.

"I don't hear any background music," noted al-Karih. "No whistles, no chants, not even a chorus of whining dolphins. Don't you people have a moodsetting sound system?"
"I have a cow bell," blurted

Tincture Alice. "Want to hear?"
"No need," said al-Karih,

making another note in his survey book. He turned to Rotterdam.

"Ms. Rotterdam, I had

"Ms. Rotterdam, I had planned to be here for several hours but clearly that is not necessary. I've already seen quite enough. My report will be on my blog in few minutes. Good day." Al-Karih stormed out the door. "And get that squeaking hinge replaced!" he shouted.

Crushed and dejected, Rot-

terdam knew that her gamble failed. The low-potency vitamins will push for her ouster saying that a marketing executive couldn't possibly succeed in managing a barely profitable, incurably disorganized co-op.

No doubt the bank will foreclose on their loan and Rotterdam will have the terrible duty of laying everyone off, the final result of her reckless hubris.

"Alice, get me the number of the yogi who wants to build the applesauce factory. We might as well tell him we're closing and the land's for sale."

Tincture Alice returned with the phone number. "Here it is, ma'am. Don't take it too hard, Ms. Rotterdam. You tried your best. We enjoyed working with you and all but maybe you should go back to Philadelphia. Things are simpler there for you. We'll be all right and, who knows, one day we'll send you a jar of applesauce."

Rotterdam felt her iPhone vibrating, indicating an incoming call. "Good morning, this is the

Happy Apple Blossom Co-Op... Yes, we are the same store reviewed by Moussa al-Karih. Listen, I can assure you that he probably misrepresented...he said what?...Are you sure?...Yes, we'll send it right away."

Rotterdam hung up and turned to her employees.

"That was Rosie Swanson, owner of 39 Earth Mother Day Spas throughout New England. She said Al-Karih wrote that we are the only authentic health food co-op left in North America and we have our first order for cranberry-coconut granola — 1,000 kilograms. Jack, your dream vacation is canceled. Go back and recheck every single crumb of that granola bin. I don't want any apple-raspberry contaminants sent to our biggest customer!"

# The Land Ethic: How to Address Inequality and Financial Instability

The global financial crisis has demonstrated a deep, systemic failure of the prevailing economic paradigm. So far, efforts to remedy the situation have failed to address the root causes of the meltdown and are digging the American people deeper into the hole of public debt.

**Alanna Hartzok** Scotland, Pennsylvania

In an Op-Ed titled "Obama's Ersatz Capitalism" in 2009, Josepth Stiglitz wrote that the bailout of banks by taxpayers is a "partnership in which one partner robs the other." Considering that in 2004 the top 1 percent of the population of the United States owned more than \$2.5 trillion more wealth than the bottom 90 percent and that even in 1996 about 350 billionaires held more wealth than nearly half of humanity, we have surely arrived at the end of the capitalist monopoly game.

## Rent-Seeking and Economic Restructuring

Alternative economic analysts have traced the severe wealth gap problem to the ability of the so-called FIRE sector — finance, insurance and real estate — to concentrate large amounts of money, resources and power into ever fewer hands via a variety of rent-seeking behaviors.

"Rent" connotes unearned income. Alternative analysis considers economic rent to be a socially-generated surplus that is being privately captured.

As an economy generates wealth, the price of land and other natural resources increases. Because the gifts of nature cannot be produced by human effort and supply cannot be increased to meet demand, holders of land and natural resources are in a position to capture the surplus — economic rent — generated by labor and capital.

While economic rent is essentially a measure of the social surplus, it is not regarded as such under neoliberal economics, which treats this value as a market commodity for private profiteering. This fundamental flaw in market economics has created a highly inequitable global economic system. Lack of knowledge as to how to correct this flaw and retain the benefits, efficiencies and individual freedoms of the market, was the impetus for the emergence of centrallymanaged and controlled state socialism. An economic restructuring based on a full understanding of the role of economic rent is needed for a new economic framework beyond both the old right and the old left.

## Real Estate and the Land Problem

While many subprime mortgage lenders are guilty of immoral activities, their business was perfectly legal in the game of real estate "investment."

To generate more profits under the guise of fulfilling the American Dream of home ownership for more of America's workers at a time when capacity to purchase a house from wages had been decreasing, new financial instruments made it easier for poorer people to acquire mortgages.

During the expansion stage of the economic cycle when land values were rising, banks and others invested in real estate. Banks loaned money to people to play the real estate speculation game.

This behavior further drove up land values. We know that 20 to 25 percent of all homes bought in this last up-cycle were on the expectation that land prices would increase.

This Ponzi scheme brought the cycle to a frenzied peak and then a total crash, derivatives and all.

Land-rent economists understood and predicted the entire scenario based on detailed analyses of 18-year real estate cycles traced back as far as the 1840s.

The point is this: Underneath the money and banking problem is the land problem — treatment of the gifts of nature and of socially-generated land rent as commodities for speculation and profiteering.

The land problem is the ultimate genesis of the global financial crisis

#### Property Tax and Wage Tax

A solution is to publicly capture the full value of socially-generated rents to curb land speculation and stabilize land and housing prices. This can be done by a land-value-only type of property tax. Socially-generated land rent is an enormous sum, estimated to be as much as one-third of Gross Domestic Product in developed countries. This is more than sufficient to pay for true social needs including education and health care for all.

With full land-rent capture by the public and for the common good, there would be no surplus rent from land to pledge to banks as interest. There would be no more land-backed borrowing. Financial capital would find no profit in land and natural resource rent-seeking. Substantially more funding would thus be available to invest in productive goods and services.

A necessary policy corollary entails the elimination of taxes on wages in order to secure the full return to labor. Un-taxing wages will of course immediately increase the purchasing capacity of all who work for a living. The highest incomes are generated not from wages but primarily from economic rent (unearned income). Maintaining a tax on people at this level would be another important way that the social surplus can be captured back to society as a whole.

#### Public Finance: Money As a Social Technology

Another part of the solution concerns the treatment of money as a mechanism of wealth exchange. Money needs to be viewed as a

social technology issued into circulation directly by government as direct spending on public goods rather than as government and private debt. Seignorage (profit made by issuing currency, something claimed by a sovereign or feudal superiors as a prerogative) reform would enable large-scale government projects, which would benefit large numbers of people.

For example, public transportation infrastructure could be funded as a way of also issuing money into the economy. Since infrastructure improvements increase land values, capturing land rent would pay for the ongoing maintenance of public works. With seignorage reform, the money system can begin to function like a public trust.

The elimination of land hoarding and land speculation combined with the capacity of workers to keep all their earnings will enable more people to have affordable land access for housing and productive purposes. The trend would be to incentivize worker ownership of capital via the formation of small business enterprises and cooperatives.

As this form of economy advances, more people will gain autonomy from monopoly capital. We can then more readily build movements to eliminate other forms of monopoly and rent-seeking.

This approach to public-

finance policy enhances privatesector economic activity and public sector goods and services. Taxes would function as user fees for common heritage resources.

Economic-rent-based public funds can finance public education and health care for all; capitalization and maintenance of

public infrastructure and lowinterest loan funds for housing construction and the development of small and cooperative business activities.

## Global and Environmental Justice

Combining the land-rent-forpublic-revenue policy with environmental taxation — "polluter pays" — yields an integrated approach to public finance. The resulting benefits would include a fairer distribution of wealth, environmental protection and basic needs production.

The land-ethic and publicfinance policies described in this article have roots in classical economic theory and the history of economic justice, such as the clean slate periods of antiquity.

This is the kind of structural adjustment that the people of the world really need.

Taxes administered along the proposed lines would do much to level the economic playing field worldwide, both within and among nations. A coherent and integrated rent-based public finance system would fundamentally alter the status quo and give every person a stake in the planet as a birthright.

With basic needs securely met for all, humankind would be freer to advance, physically, spiritually and morally.

Alanna Hartzok is Co-Director of Earth Rights Institute and author of <u>The Earth Belongs to Everyone</u>, recipient of the 2008 Radical Middle Book Award. A United Nations NGO representative and former board member of United for a Fair Economy, she serves on the Advisory Counsel of the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela.

<u>The Earth Belong to Everyone</u> by Alanna Hartzok, co-director of Earth Rights Institute, sets forth the vision and policy foundation for "Earth Rights Democracy." Following an introduction containing glimpses of the author's fascinating journey through life, this compilation of her articles and essays describes how to establish political-economic systems based on the human right to the planet as birthright.

Her key theme is that Earth Rights Democracy is essential in order to secure our other human rights and to create a world of peace and plenty for all. She places this core perspective into an integrated local-to-global framework that balances the need for global cooperation with the necessity for building demilitarized, decentralized and sustainable communities.

The Earth Belongs to Everyone presents a large and hopeful worldview with profound possibilities for transforma-

tional action for peace, economic justice and environmental restoration.

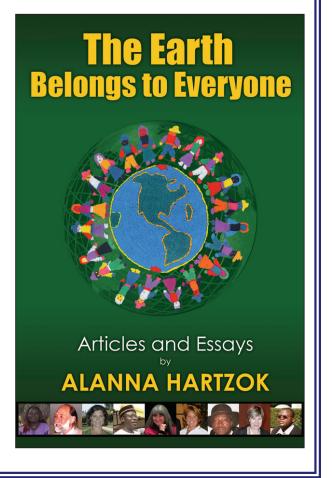
**Themes of the Book Include:** Democracy, Earth Rights and the Next Economy; Sharing Our Common Heritage; Land for People, Not for Profit; Financing Local-to-Global Public Goods; Women, Earth and Economic Power; Restructuring Economic Relationships; and Economics of War and Peace.

#### What People Are Saying About the Book:

"More and more people are convinced that the only way to a just, prosperous and ecologically sustainable future is to share the value of Earth's resources more fairly. One of the many merits of Alanna Hartzok's collection of writings is to ground that conviction in practical proposals. She inspires us to do something about it." James Robertson, author, The New Economics of Sustainable Development; co-founder, The Other Economic Summit and New Economics Foundation; consultant, European Commission, London.

"Alanna Hartzok has deeply researched tax issues with equity and ecological-sustainability firmly in mind. This book is a storehouse of wisdom and insights on these and many broader issues relating economics to the larger planetary ecology." Hazel Henderson, author, <u>Beyond Globalization</u> and <u>Building a Win-Win World</u>; member, President's Commission on Sustainable Development, founder, Ethical Markets TV.

<u>The Earth Belongs to Everyone</u> received the Radical Middle Book Award. The book is 360 pages long and includes photos and charts. To order <u>The Earth Belongs to Everyone</u> send \$25 to Earth Rights Institute, Box 328, Scotland, PA 17254. Also, for \$50 you will receive the book plus enrollment in Land Rights and Land Value Capture, an online course and policy training program. There are now over 500 people enrolled from 52 countries. A course facilitator will respond to your assignment posts. Certificate awarded upon completion. The course is at www.course.earthrights.net. For further information call 717-264-0957.



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