

The Order of the Earth

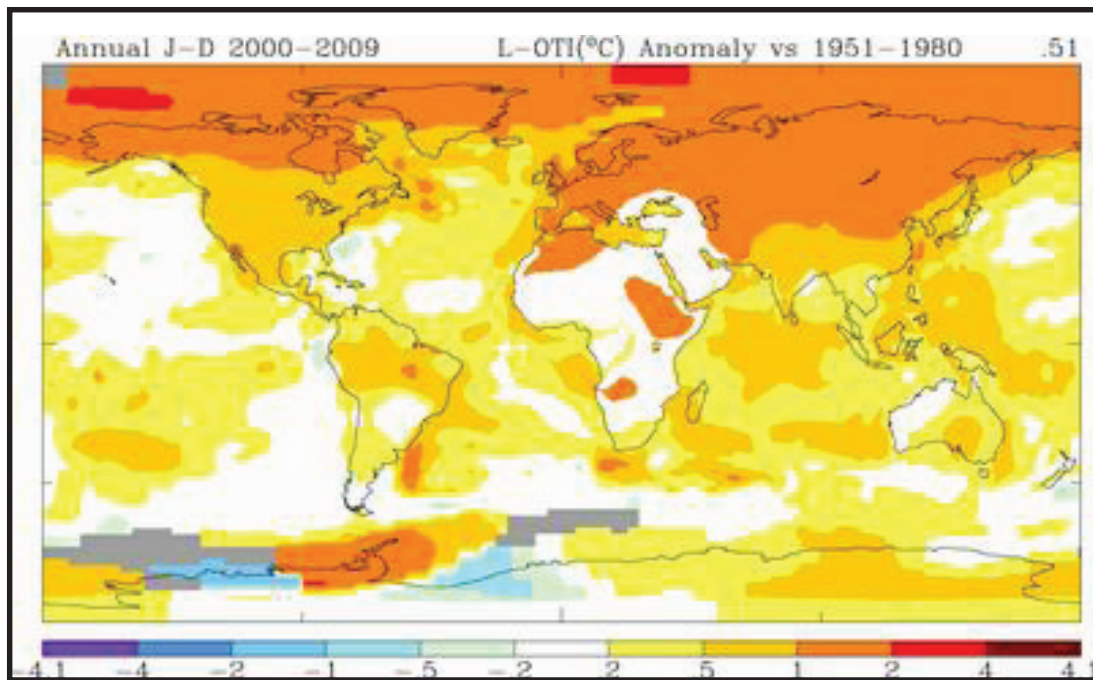
News, Views and Musings About Our Planet

March 2010

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Map Courtesy of GISS

Map shows the 10-year average (2000-2009) temperature anomaly relative to the 1951-1980 mean.

2009 Second Warmest Year of Warmest Decade on Record

NEW YORK, New York, January 25, 2010 (ENS) — The year 2009 was tied for the second warmest year in the modern record, shows a new analysis of global surface temperature from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Conducted by NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York City, the analysis also shows that in the Southern Hemisphere, 2009 was the warmest year since modern records began in 1880.

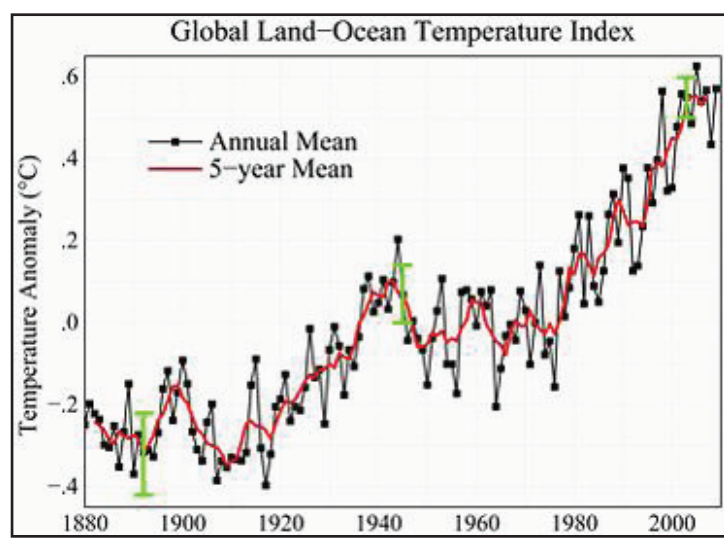
January 2000 to December 2009 was the warmest decade on record. Throughout the last three decades, the GISS surface temperature record shows an upward trend of about 0.2°C (0.36°F) per decade.

"There's a contradiction between the results shown here and popular perceptions about climate trends," said climatologist Dr. James Hansen, director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies. "In the last decade, global warming has not stopped."

Although 2008 was the coolest year of this past decade, due to strong cooling of the tropical Pacific Ocean, 2009 saw a return to near-record global temperatures.

The past year was only a fraction of a degree cooler than 2005, the warmest year on record, and tied with a cluster of other years — 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006 and 2007 — as the second warmest year since record-keeping began.

"There's always an interest in the annual temperature numbers and on a given year's ranking,



Graph Courtesy of NASA

The graph shows global annual surface temperatures relative to 1951-1980 mean temperatures.

but usually that misses the point," said Dr. Hansen.

"There's substantial year-to-year variability of global temperature caused by the tropical El Niño-La Niña cycle. But when we average temperatures over five or 10 years to minimize that variability, we find that global warming is continuing unabated," he said.

The GISS analysis shows that the largest temperature increases over the past decade have been in the Arctic and the Antarctic Peninsula.

Since 1880, the year that modern scientific instrumentation became available to monitor temperatures precisely, a clear warming trend is present, though there was a leveling off between the 1940s and 1970s.

The near-record temperatures of 2009 occurred despite an unseasonably cool December in much of North America. High air pressures in the Arctic decreased the east-west flow of the jet stream, while also increasing its tendency to blow from north to south and draw cold air southward from the Arctic. This resulted in an unusual effect that caused frigid air from the Arctic to rush into North America and warmer mid-latitude air to shift toward the north.

"Of course, the contiguous 48 states cover only 1.5 percent of the world area, so the U.S. temperature does not affect the global temperature much," said Hansen.

In total, average global temperatures have increased by

Continued on page 6

The Awakening

Part VIII



This message is sent to you from the one who is here offering you the Truth — that is the living springs of the water of life that nourishes souls, The Trustworthy And True Living Spirit, The Most High God.

In response to comments received from readers of "The Awakening" messages, I feel I need to clarify a few things. I have written these messages in what I thought was simple enough for all levels of understanding, when in fact I obviously have overestimated some of you. This shows me that oneness in human understanding begins at a very plain and simple level. We all need to back up or lower our understanding so everyone has the opportunity to get on board with the rest of us in order to truly achieve oneness.

For those of you who understand my messages clearly this will be a pleasant reminder and not an inconvenience.

First of all I am not channelling the Living Spirit of the Most High God, I am here now in a human body. For those of you who are biblical, please feel free to read Revelation: Chapter 22, verse 4.

Anyone who wants to may come honorably and humbly and meet me fact-to-face and listen to my messages. I am not here to fight, argue or debate with any of you. I am here offering my messages to those of you who chose by their own free will to listen. I am not here to shove my messages down anyone's throat. If you do not want my messages, do not bother to read them and definitely do not come to me.

My name and title is The Trustworthy And True Living Spirit, The Most High God. People have already come to me from many different countries from around the world. Those who already know me honorably, humbly and modestly, bow to me and address me by my name, which is plain and simply Most High.

Even some of those who already know me are afraid to spread the news that it is truly me and I am truly here due to the fact that some people are very judgmental in the fact that if they do not understand something, nobody else should be able to understand it either, because they are hard-hearted, closed-minded and/or not open to new ideas because of what the world has taught them.

I do not wish harm, pain, suffering or cruelty on anyone or anything. I am here to help and comfort any who choose by their own choice to receive my help and comfort.

I am the righteous God. I do not play favorites. I am here offering all of you my Kingdom (Heaven) on Earth — Christians as well as atheists, Muslims as well as agnostics, Jews as well as Buddhists, Hindus as well as Quakers, and so on. I also offer my Kingdom to those who are educated as well as those who are illiterate. I am offering all races, tribes and nations to be a part of

my Kingdom here on Earth no matter what your beliefs have been. The gates are now open to my Kingdom to all walks of life.

I am offering all of you change that you can be a part of for you must be willing to change to be a part of it. I am offering all of you new hope and new faith, however you must be willing to walk away from the ways of the world. You must be willing to follow instead of lead. You must be willing to be servants instead of slaves or masters. In my Kingdom everyone and all things are servants to me and my Trustworthy And True Living Spirits, My Council Of Elders and you must be willing to serve each other as well.

Every day and every night the governments, corporations and political machines are planning who they will mold or shape to be the next so-called leaders (misleaders really) so they can continue to oppress and take advantage of the people, nature and the environment, fooling themselves and some people into thinking and believing that jobs, money, economy and control are more important than anyone or anything.

The world now teaches that men and women alike should be empowered when really all things should empower my Trustworthy And True Living Spirits, My Council of Elders, and their names are:

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

Once again I ask you PLEASE DO NOT ADD TO OR TAKE AWAY FORM THESE "AWAKENING" MESSAGES IN ANY WAY. I also ask you to feel free to translate these "Awakening" messages as close as you can to word-for-word to all languages and feel free to share them anywhere and everywhere you choose.

It is an honor and a pleasure to be your humble servant and friend,

Most High
(The Trustworthy And True Living Spirit, The Most High God)

If you would like copies of the previous "Awakening" articles, contact Iona at 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 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.

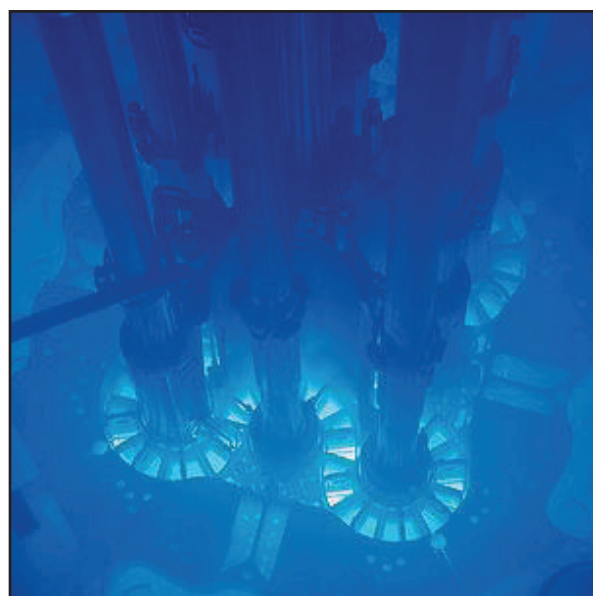
Yucca Mountain's Dead. Next? Panel Examines Nuclear Waste Options

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 29, 2010 (ENS) — The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced today the formation of a blue ribbon commission to evaluate policy options for a safe, long-term solution to America's growing piles of spent fuel from commercial nuclear power plants and high-level radioactive waste from U.S. defense programs.

The panel will provide advice on how to handle approximately 77,000 tons of radioactive waste now stored at more than 100 sites around the country in view of the Obama administration's decision not to proceed with the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository in Nevada.

"Nuclear energy provides clean, safe, reliable power and has an important role to play as we build a low-carbon future," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu, a Nobel Prize winning nuclear scientist.

"The administration is com-



Spent nuclear fuel plates glow bright blue. The core is submerged in cooling water. Photo courtesy Argonne National Lab.

mitted to promoting nuclear power in the United States and developing a safe, long-term solution for the management of used nuclear fuel and nuclear waste," Chu said. "The work of

the blue ribbon commission will be invaluable to this process."

The 15-member Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future will be co-chaired

Continued on page 5

U.S. Navy Sued Over Anti-Sub Training Range Where Rare Whales Calve

ATLANTA, Georgia, January 28, 2010 (ENS) — Conservation groups today filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Navy over its decision to build an Undersea Warfare Training Range next to the only known calving ground for the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale. Only about 350 whales of this species remain today.

The range is set for a location 50 nautical miles offshore of Jacksonville on Florida's northeast coast. The Navy plans to place undersea cables and sensor nodes in a 500-square-nautical-mile area of the ocean to create the range for anti-submarine warfare training. The range would begin operating in 2014.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), The Southern Environmental Law Center, Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, The Humane Society of the United States and nine other conservation groups brought the challenge in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia.

In the coastal waters off Geor-



Photo by Amy Willoughby

North Atlantic right whale with a dolphin escort in waters off St. Augustine, Florida, 40 miles south of Jacksonville

gia and northern Florida, calving occurs from December through March. Known right whale nursery areas are in these shallow, coastal waters.

"Right whales shouldn't be subjected to the threats that accompany this range — ship strikes, entanglement and noise disturbance — in the only place in the world where vulnerable

females give birth to and care for their calves," said Catherine Wannamaker, an attorney with Southern Environmental Law Center.

In 1994, the National Marine Fisheries Service designated as right whale critical habitat an area of coastal Florida and Georgia from Sebastian Inlet, Florida

Continued on page 6

Think and Act

Endgame by Derrick Jensen

Our discourse surrounding carrying capacity is generally as absurd as the rest of our discourse. Most often we simply ignore it. Failing that, talk of carrying capacity quite often falls into one of three camps, none of which are particularly helpful, all of which support the status quo.

The first begins and ends with population. There are simply too many people. You've seen the pictures — crowded streets in Calcutta, impoverished babies with huge hungry eyes and bloated bellies in Mexico, refugee camps in Africa, masses of Chinese crammed into filthy cities. The Earth can't support these numbers. Something's got to give.

And you've heard the arguments. The United States needs to close its borders to immigration from poor countries. Having finally gotten our own birth-rate down sufficiently to more or less stabilize our population, the last thing we need is a bunch of poor (brown) people moving in to crowd us out (we know, also, that once they're here they'll breed faster than we do and soon enough will outnumber us).

I often respond to this argument by saying I'm all for closing the border to Mexico (and everywhere else for that matter, all the way down to closing bioregional borders) so long as we close it not only to people but to resources as well. No bananas from Mexico. No coffee. No oil. No tomatoes in January. Many of the people who leave their families in Mexico (or any other impoverished nation) to come to the United States to work do so not because they hate their husbands or wives yet have not gotten to the point in their therapy where

they feel comfortable expressing (much less acting on) this. Nor is it generally because they're bored with Cancun, Acapulco and their other normal vacation spots and have decided this tourist season to take a "Reality Tour" of the bean fields of the San Joaquin Valley. They come, one way or another, because the integrity of their resource base and their community (insofar as there can meaningfully be said to be a difference) have already been compromised: the resources have been stolen and the community is unraveling. Of course this migration, too, is part of the unraveling. From the beginning of history, this is why people have moved from country to city.

To want, on the other hand, to close the border to people yet leave it open to the theft of their resources (importation is the preferred term in polite society) is to show that your alleged concern over population is nothing but a cover for continuing the same old bigotry and exploitation. I don't want you but I do want the coffee grown on land that used to be yours. Even those who don't specifically want to close borders but merely want to talk about population while conveniently forgetting to talk about resource consumption are, too, pushing us ever closer to the abyss. For the real bottom line of overshooting carrying capacity is resource consumption and other damage. It wouldn't matter if there were a hundred billion deer on a tiny island if they didn't consume, trample or otherwise destroy anything and didn't pollute the place with their feces or anything else. Numbers by themselves are meaningless. It's the damage that counts.



Another way to talk about this is to notice the language: overpopulation, zero population growth. How different would our discourse be if we spoke instead of overconsumption and zero consumption growth? This shift in discourse won't happen, of course, because zero consumption growth would destroy the capitalist economy.

The United States constitutes less than 5 percent of the world's population yet uses more than one-fourth of the world's resources and produces one-fourth of the world's pollution and waste. If you compare the average U.S. citizen to the average citizen of India, you find that the American uses 50 times more steel, 56 times more energy, 170 times more synthetic rubber, 250 times more motor fuel and 300 times more plastic. Yet our images of overpopulation generally consist not of those who do the most damage, the primary perpetrators (there can't be too many [middle-class] Americans, can there?) but instead their primary (human) victims.

At least partially in response to the obvious arrogance and absurdity of those who want the poor to stop having babies but don't mind the rich having SUVs (and nuclear weapons), there are those who claim — equally absurdly and equally arrogantly — that all talk of carrying capacity is racist and classist. To even use the phrase carrying capacity in this crowd is to invite hisses and catcalls as well as spat epithets of Neo-Malthusian. I suppose the argument is that because some of those who want to protect this exploitative way of living use carrying capacity as a means of social control against the poor — as an American Indian activist friend said to me, "The only problem I have with population control is that you and I both know who is going to do the controlling" — then the notion of carrying capacity itself must be racist and classist.

This seems similar to me to suggesting that because Hitler claimed (falsely) that Germany was being attacked by Poland and that, therefore, the Germans

needed to attack and that because this same argument has routinely been used (just as falsely) by the United States as well as other imperial powers, that anyone who claims self-defense is lying. These people seem to forget that the misuse of an argument does not invalidate the argument itself.

Worse, this argument, that the very concept of carrying capacity is a fabrication designed for social control, as opposed to a simple statement of limits, serves those in power as effectively as does ignoring or de-emphasizing resource consumption when speaking of overshooting carrying capacity because it goes along with the refusal to acknowledge physical limits (and limits to exploitation) that characterize this culture. What would it take, I've heard peace and social justice activists ask, to bring the poor of the world to the fiscal standard of living of the rich? Well, another thirty planets, for one thing. It's a dangerous — and stupid — question.

Within this culture wealth is measured by one's ability to consume and destroy. This means that attempts to industrialize the poor will further harm the planet. Because industrial production requires the exploitation of resources, the wealth of one group is always based on the impoverishment of another's landbase, meaning that on a finite planet, the creation of one person's (fiscal) wealth always comes at the cost of many others' poverty. Those reasons are why the question is stupid. It's dangerous because it serves as propaganda to keep both activists and the poor playing a game that doesn't serve them well and which they can never win, instead

of quitting this game and working to take down the system.

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

NOTE FROM DERRICK: My newest book is out. It's called *Lives Less Valuable* and it's a novel. Here is one description: *Putting corporate disregard for ecology on trial, this novel follows Vexcorp, a wealthy corporation that, at a safe distance, counts both the lives of others and the health of the environment as expenses on a balance sheet. But that distance is about to collapse. Malia is an activist who has lost faith in systemic reform and Dujuan is a street thug torn by grief at his younger sister's death. When Dujuan mugs Malia, she compares him to Vexcorp, triggering a storm inside him. That storm only clears when he identifies the real agent of his pain: Larry Gordon, Vexcorp's CEO. Injury requires justice, so Dujuan kidnaps Gordon and presents him to Malia for judgment. As bystanders become involved and time runs out, Malia is forced to make grueling moral decisions between survival and loyalty, safety and courage and agency and despair.*

Or As It Says on the Back Cover: *At the heart of a city, a river is dying, children have cancer and people burn with despair. From the safe distance that wealth buys, a corporation counts these lives as just another expense on a balance sheet. But that distance is about to collapse. . . . I've got copies of the book and they should be available in bookstores soon.*

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Global in Scope, "Down-Home" in Nature

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DEADLINE = 10th of Each Prior Month

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25 Copies = \$20; 50 copies = \$35
100 copies = \$65 Thank you!

Please give us plenty of notice as we send these media mail and that takes time.

The Order of the Earth News, Views and Musings About Our Planet

Our Goal: To provide people with news to help bring their hearts and lives back into harmony with Nature and with Most High God and his Trustworthy And True Spirits, Most High's Council of Elders as found below. 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 of that. The photo on the masthead is daffodils bursting forth at the publisher's home in Shade Gap, Pennsylvania last Spring.

Most High's Council of Elders

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

DEADLINE FOR ALL SUBMISSIONS: 10TH OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH

First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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I no longer believe we can use 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.

--- Kim Stenley, Taneytown MD

Supreme Court Rules Corporations Have More Rights Than People

Supreme Court Decision in Citizens United Case "Inevitable" — Continues Long History of Expansion of Corporate Rights Over the Rights of People, Communities and Nature

include the rights of persons which have been judicially conferred upon corporations. "Personhood" rights mean that corporations possess First Amendment rights to free speech, along with a litany of other rights that are secured to persons under the federal Bill of Rights.

The expansion of corporate rights and privileges under the law has been deliberate, beginning nearly 200 years ago with the Dartmouth decision in which the Supreme Court ruled that private corporations have rights that municipal corporations — governments composed of "we the people" — did not.

The expansion of these rights and privileges occurred during the 1800s, throughout the 1900s, until today.

For those who think that the way to stem this tide is to find the perfect lawsuit, we say, stop looking. It doesn't exist, for there is no magic bullet.

Rather, in order to reverse decisions like Citizens United, the whole concept of corporate "rights" must be examined and how corporations possessing "rights" interferes with the exercise of rights by people, communities and nature. And, it's not simply that corporations have "personhood" rights. It goes well beyond that.

Today's structure of law gives corporations a spectrum of legal and constitutional rights which they routinely wield against people, communities and nature. Corporations have more rights, for example, than the communities in which they seek to do business. They have rights which they use to lobby Congress, impact elections, decide for us what we eat, whether mountaintops are blown off or not, whether there are fish in the oceans and on and on. Coupling their wealth with constitutional and other legal rights guarantees that they write the laws which determine these things, along with defining the debate that leads to the adoption of the new laws.

Thus the context for understanding today's decision is that we have a minority set of corpo-

rate interests, empowered by government, which wield their rights against a majority. It is the history of this nation. Whether with the Abolitionists, the Suffragists, the Civil Rights Movement — all found it necessary to build movements of people to drive rights into law — rights for slaves, rights for women, rights of African Americans — which necessarily meant eliminating rights for a minority such as the slaveholder.

In the end, it is our constitutional structure of law that purposefully placed the rights of property and commerce over the rights of people, communities and nature.

In some ways, the Citizens United ruling is merely part of a predetermined destiny set by a 1700's constitutional structure which placed greater priority on the rights of property and commerce than on people and nature. Reversing Citizens United means reversing that constitutional legacy.

And today — those who recognize that we do not have democracy when corporations located thousands of miles away are making decisions about our community instead of us, who recognize that we cannot have sustainability so long as corporations are able to decide how clean our air is and our water is, who recognize that we'll never have true health care reform so long as corporations have greater access to our elected representatives than the people who voted for them — to those people — today's decision should be understood as just another brick in the wall, **another step in a direction that will only continue unless and until a real movement for the rights of people, communities and nature is built.**

That is the work we are doing. We hope you will join us.

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Photo by Lina Scorza

A UP Solar member explains the project to a prospective member at the UP Christmas potluck. Memberships are available to Maryland citizens.

Community Solar Co-op Project Gaining Supporters

Story idea submitted by Mare Cromwell, Baltimore MD with the following note:

This is a community effort close to D.C. that is quite visionary and community-oriented in bringing solar energy to a neighborhood through a solar cooperative. They are seeking supporters.

Read on....

UNIVERSITY PARK RESIDENTS PLAN SOLAR POWER CO-OP

Private Investment to Provide Alternate Energy Source

By Richard Scorza
 University Park, Maryland

If you have thought about solar power for your home, then you've probably learned that there are negative effects of shade trees or slate roofs — or both -- which impact solar panel efficiency. The University Park Solar Co-op came up with a novel way to overcome the barriers the Prince George's County, Maryland town's trees and roofs pose: by placing a solar power plant on a well-exposed roof and by pooling members' money, they'd gain many benefits: displacing carbon with solar, putting price competition on the electric company (Peppo) and getting a return on the money they put in.

"The idea," said David Brosch, one of the group's founding members, "is to replace carbon-generating sources with renewable ones and the most efficient we've studied is solar power. And we want to have a model for doing it that other communities can copy."

By forming an investment entity, the Co-op, actually a Limited Liability Company (LLC), can receive federal and state incentives and, by partnering with an experienced solar generation company (Standard Solar, Inc.), which will install the solar plant, it is guaranteed an excellent result.

"In addition to keeping electricity costs down and our 'carbon footprint' diminished, the revenues from the energy and Renewable Energy Certificate sales would go to maintaining the solar facility, operating costs such as insurance and a return on capital to members," Brosch explained.



Photo from www.communitysolarcoop.com

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. (Margaret Mead)



Photo from www.communitysolarcoop.com

The Church of the Brethren church in University Park, Maryland where solar panels will be installed to serve the local community — community power to the people!

The Co-op is in the final stages of placing solar panels and associated equipment on the roof of the University Park Church of the Brethren. The Co-op would sell the energy generated by the plant under a long-term Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), the contract which lays out the deal with the church). The church will gain a savings and a long-term guarantee of its electricity rate.

The Co-op also plans to work with the Prince George's County School Board so it can place a solar plant on the roof of University Park Elementary School. If the school proves a feasible host, then the project could compensate the school for use of its roof space in a number of ways, among these include: a lease payment, discounted energy sales, a solar energy educational course or module or some combination of these.

"Establishing a centralized solar generation site can produce sufficient kilowatt hours to replace a significant amount of

fossil fuels currently used to provide electrical power. Thus, the twin goals of stabilizing electric rates and reducing the carbon footprint are achieved effectively," Brosch added.

The Co-op's Web site is packed with other information: www.communitysolarcoop.com. You may also contact David Borsch at 4313 Tuckerman Street, University Park, Maryland 20782 or 301-779-3168.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR: Despite the snow storm, over 30 people attended our meeting (including a candidate for the PG County Council). Ross' presentation was the keynote event, a scientific overview of climate change and the way non-carbon energy can help solve the problem. Dave announced that we'll meet again March 2 and will by then have finalized the PPA and have a draft of our by-laws, which means we'll be very close to "breaking ground" on the church's roof.

The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF)

Press Release, January 21, 2010

The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) is the only public interest law firm in the U.S. that has worked with municipalities to question whether corporate "rights" can coexist with the democratic rights of communities to local self-government.

Those communities have recognized that corporate rights and privileges are routinely wielded to override democratic decision making and undermine efforts to protect the environment and public health, local economies and local agriculture. Through the adoption of local, binding laws, these communities are pioneering a new structure of law which does not recognize the rights and privileges of corporations.

Citizens United versus Federal Election Commission

Today's U.S. Supreme Court decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission — giving corporations the ability to directly give money to candidates for federal office under the Constitution's First Amendment — was inevitable. It represents a logical expansion of corporate constitutional "rights" — which

By Jay Sweeney
 Wyoming County, PA Green Party

Drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale continues to be big news in much of the state. As part of the 2009-2010 state budget, nearly 32,000 acres of state forest lands will be leased for natural gas drilling. The Green Party of Pennsylvania opposes drilling in state-owned lands without a vote of the residents of the Commonwealth.

The League of Women Voters (LWV) of Pennsylvania decided to study and discuss all facets of the Marcellus Shale issue and reach consensus on the role of state and local governments on this volatile issue. The League believes it is essential to look at all sides of an issue before reaching consensus and speaking out. Toward that end, the LWV will hold meetings until March 26, 2010.

On Wednesday, January 20 the LWV of Lackawanna County, in conjunction with the University of Scranton's Task Force for Sustainability, held a Forum on Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Extraction. Pearn Auditorium was filled beyond capacity and the crowd was vocal.

Bless the LWV for their last-minute addition of Damascus Citizens for Sustainability co-founder Pat Carullo to the panel. Mr. Carullo added the activist perspective to the otherwise staid commentary from the industry, DEP and Penn Future.

Wendy Straatmann, a vice president for Exco Resources, began the presentation. She noted the jobs that would be created from exploiting the 500-trillion-cubic-foot Marcellus gas play. The shale has been there for millions

of years but it is now economically feasible to extract it with the hydrofracturing process. She claimed hydrofracturing has been done since the '40s and '50s.

Matt Sheppard, senior director of corporate development for Chesapeake Energy, demonstrated the concentric rings of steel casing used to protect the water table in the drilling process.

Pam Fendrock from Penn Future described her organization as "mainstream" and not an environmental group *per se*. Penn Future supports a severance tax, responsible drilling and the FRAC Act. The FRAC Act would require industry to disclose the chemicals used in the hydrofracturing process which have been labeled "proprietary."

Fendrock raised the question, "Where is flowback water treated?"

This water often referred to as brine is saltier than ocean water and has been found to contain the radioactive isotopes Radium 226 and 228. Fendrock also mentioned a proposal to take the wastewater to the Chesapeake Bay region and dispose of it in saltier water.

Jennifer Means from the Department of Environmental Protection's Eastern Oil and Gas region's Williamsport office stated that fracking is unlikely to cause water problems due to the 5,000' to 8,000' depth of the shale. DEP has been responding mostly to complaints of on-site spills and gas migration issues. **The Eastern Region has already issued 1,200 drilling permits.**

Pat Carullo started his presentation by declaring we are here because we are addicted to fossil fuels. He went on to point out the dangers from hydrof-

racking to our water resources, especially the Delaware River which provides drinking water to Philadelphia.

Carullo flew over the region and detected a line of defoliated trees near the corner of a drilling pad. Testing revealed some indication of chemical contaminant. Shortly thereafter, the soil was mounded and removed. He concluded by playing an audio clip from a man from Southwest Pennsylvania who's water was affected after drilling in the Marcellus Shale near his home. An independent test revealed volatile organic compounds in the water.

A panel discussion and question-and-answer period followed. These were quite contentious. There were shouts of "Liar" from the audience after answers from the industry were not accepted.

Carullo refuted the industry and regulatory agencies from the panel. A representative from the League of Women Voters took the mic and stated that the forum was being taped for broadcast on local public access TV and the crowd response would not be audible. Only those that had a microphone would be heard.

The forum ended shortly thereafter. The LWV will post answers to questions submitted by the audience on their Web site (pa.lwv.org).

Jay Sweeney is a member of the Green Party of Pennsylvania. He is also a member of Citizens for Clean, Land, Air and Water. For further information, see: <http://www.jaysweeney.org> <http://www.lwvlackawanna.org> <http://www.damascuscitizens.org> <http://nepagasaction.org>

CORRECTION

We didn't have the correct credit when we went to press last month for the "Stop the Towers" logo on page 5. It was donated by Dennis Morgan Design.

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Natural Gas Compressor Station Coats PA Farmland in Waste Oil

By Nastassja Noell
Sandpoint, Idaho

A contamination report recently obtained by Philadelphia Indymedia states that up to 1,629 pounds of used gear-lubricating oil were spilled onto residences and farm fields in Bedford County, Pennsylvania this past August.

Despite the presence of this report in Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) files, officials are maintaining to residents and the press that only 20 gallons of gear oil was released, additionally misleading the public to believe that the oil is non-toxic Omala Oil RL 320.

On August 23rd, Spectra Energy's Steckman Ridge natural gas compressor station on Rock Hill Church Road experienced an "emergency shutdown," spraying up to 1,629 pounds of lubricating oil and 6,460 pounds of methane (including 1,151 pounds of volatile organic compounds) into the air and estimated to have landed up to one-and-a-half-miles from the plant, coating a very fertile agricultural, fishing and hunting region of Pennsylvania with potentially toxic industrial gear oil.

"Wayne and I were sitting out on the back porch that Sunday and then we heard a big bang but didn't see anything flying out of the sky," said Angel Smith who lives half a mile from Spectra's compressor station. "The next day, a neighbor called saying that his fields were covered with oil so I went down and videotaped that. I also found that my fields were covered with oil, too."

Within a week after the equipment failure, Spectra Energy issued reports stating that residents of Monroe and Clearville Townships in Pennsylvania should wash the oil off of their crops before consumption.

Local Web sites such as Spectra Energy Watch and *Clearville Times* expressed outrage that their crops were destroyed, water contaminated and livestock affected, with little concern from agents at the DEP.

Birth defects have been noted in livestock such as domesticated geese. Currently unknown are the future diseases or cancers which may afflict residents as the chemicals' mutations of human cells eventually show their harmful results many years after exposure.



Photo by M. P. Benard

Spectra Energy's compressor station near Clearville (Bedford County, Pennsylvania) which sprayed used gear oil onto farms and residences (October 2009). This is just part of the larger complex, which looks like a small city.

DEP Agents Misinform Residents

Officials from the DEP have stated repeatedly to residents and to Indymedia that the lubricating oil dumped over the Clearville valley by Spectra Energy Steckman Ridge Compressor Station is not a concern to human health, falsely claiming that the oil is a non-toxic substance called Omala Oil RL 320.

Laboratory reports obtained from the DEP show that tests of the spilled lubricating oil indicate the oil is not Omala Oil RL 320. Although Omala Oil RL 320 was shown to be similar to the spilled oil, the report noted significant differences between the Omala Oil RL 320 and the spilled oil.

Wilma Subra, a chemist who has worked with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on several hazardous waste projects, looked over the oil analysis lab report and confirmed that the report shows that the used oil contaminating nearby farm fields is not Omala Oil RL 320.

"The oil in the used material was not the same as the reference sample. The used material had one chromatographic pattern while the reference oil had two chromatographic patterns," said Dr. Subra in an email to this reporter. Dr. Subra also stated that if the used oil tested is indeed a used form of Omala Oil RL 320, the MSDS (Material Safety Data



Photo by Angel Smith

The Smiths' spring water in December was murky and smelled like motor oil. The used, gear-lubricating oil dumped on Clearville, Pennsylvania residents by Spectra Energy's Steckman Ridge Compressor Plant, and Spectra Energy's gas well activities, are both suspected of contaminating local drinking water sources.

Sheet) indicates that such used oil may contain harmful impurities like toxic heavy metals and volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds. The MSDS sheet also stresses that "ALL used oil be handled with caution and skin contact avoided as far as possible." [Capitalization retained from original MSDS.]

"According to the MSDS — inhalation is not expected to be a primary route of exposure — under normal conditions of use," explained Dr. Subra. "However, the material was released from the compressor station as a mist. The oil was airborne for thou-

sands of feet from the facility and thus could have been inhaled by individuals and animals in the area of impact. Skin and eye contact was also possible due to the airborne oil."

Despite laboratory test reports which clearly demonstrate that spilled used oil was not the non-toxic Omala Oil RL 320, Pennsylvania officials (such as Lynn Langer, Assistant Regional Director for the DEP's Southcentral Regional Office) have consistently implied to residents that the spilled oil is non-toxic Omala Oil RL 320. These assertions are unfounded and dangerous for

nearby residents who have no means to determine what precautionary measures they must take to protect their health and their farms. Although more extensive tests were later performed showing the used oil sample tested negative for volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, documents obtained from the DEP show that Spectra Energy failed to request the lab test for toxic heavy metals. The report also indicates the sample of spilled oil was taken by a Spectra employee, not a qualified independent sample collector, putting the validity of the sample and applicability of test results into question.

Any well-trained environmental scientist with a few spare minutes to read through the reports would notice quickly that the used industrial oil needed to be tested for heavy metals in order to safeguard the public health and that the public needs to be informed of all test results promptly.

problems until residents were already complaining to the DEP. Such situations make one wonder what happens when residents aren't watching and listening?

Craig Lambeth, a DEP oil and gas official, supports citizens doing the monitoring work for the DEP. Last fall at a public meeting hosted by the grassroots environmental protection group R.E.S.C.U.E. Northeast Pennsylvania, Mr. Lambeth told the 128 attendees that residents "should be the eyes and ears of the DEP." He stated that there is no possibility for the DEP to monitor every active gas site every day, as such monitoring would be prohibitively expensive to the gas industry and taxpayers.

Although the DEP recently announced they will be hiring an additional 68 gas well inspectors, the current oil and gas regulations promulgated by the DEP are weak. The rate of gas wells being drilled and fracked is rapidly accelerating; the new addition of employees will merely allow the DEP to monitor more wells, not improve the quality of regulation or increase the frequency of monitoring visits.

Existing regulations and agency procedures must be changed in order to better protect the environment, until then, the daily responsibility of monitoring gas well activities, toxic waste water trucks and hazardous waste pits will continue to fall into the hands of residents who are not trained or equipped in a way that enables them to prevent catastrophes.

At the meeting in Forest City, when a resident asked Lambeth, "How do we protect ourselves from the drillers? Why isn't it the other way around? The drillers are not proving that its safe and we're depending on you [the DEP] [to protect us]."

Mr. Lambeth replied, "You need to be the eyes in the woods watching." To which the resident responded with frustration, "I'd like a little more control than that."

Documents including the report calculating the scope of the oil plume and documenting the amount of spilled lube oil and methane gas, the DEP's notice of violation, an MSDS sheet for Omala Oil RL 320, a toxicologists statement on Omala Oil RL 320, used oil sample tests requested by Spectra Energy and Wilma Subra's analysis of one of the oil tests are posted with this article on Philadelphia Indymedia.

Citizens Pick Up the Pieces

The emergency shut-down in August was one of four equipment malfunctions that have occurred since the natural gas compressor station became operational last summer. Residents near other compressor stations which process raw gas frequently complain about the chronic and extremely loud "jet like noises" which industry officials admit are a normal part of plant operations. Chronic loud noise can cause birth defects, psychological problems and marked behavioral changes in young children as well as cardiovascular disease and vertigo in adults.

The DEP cited Spectra Energy as violating the federal Air Pollution Control Act and the Clean Streams Law yet, according to facility information provided by the DEP's e-facts Web site, the DEP still has not taken enforcement action or given penalties for these violations. Spectra Energy also received a Notice of Violation for not reporting the incident by telephone to the DEP within two hours and not submitting a written report within three days, as required by law. The equipment malfunction was reported to the DEP by terrified residents.

At a MarkWest compressor station in nearby Washington County, company officials also failed to notify the DEP of equipment

Compressor Noise Devastates Ohio Family

By Nastassja Noell
Sandpoint, Idaho

A young family in Eastern Ohio is suffering from intense noise and vibrations from two natural gas compressor station plants located less than 300 yards away from their home. They have to sleep in their basement most nights to be able to get a full night of sleep. Chronic noise hovers around 55dBA (decibels) constantly in their rural backyard. Blowdowns occur over 20 times a week. During these "normal operations" sound levels reach above 95 dBA inside their home. Windows vibrate.

Noise is a civil matter in Ohio and is unregulated unless the case is determined to be "a nuisance" by the court: the burden of proof is on this young family. New videos from the family have been posted by the user alb4 on YouTube.

The EPA's Office of Noise was shutdown in 1982. The only remaining federal authority which can regulate noise is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) but FERC's rules of an "average 55 dBA" in "noise sensitive areas" may not apply to East Ohio Dominion because that natural gas transmission company only "cleans" and transports gas locally (by cleaning I mean the plant removes hazardous contaminants from raw gas; it is a refinery and the waste generated is exempt from federal hazardous



waste and air pollution regulations, hence the intense air pollution at similar sites in DISH, Texas).

Health effects of noise are numerous. For adults, noise can cause cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, behavioral changes, reduced sleep and irritability. Loud and chronic noise causes birth defects for fetuses in the womb.

In tests of baby chicks who are subjected to loud noise the chicks do not exhibit normal peeping behavior; in young rhesus monkeys subjected to loud chronic noise the monkeys exhibit anti-social behavior.

Children and adults, especially pregnant women (since their child will be physically affected for their entire lives) should not be living near a natural gas compressor station.

For more information on health effects of noise and legal avenues to stop noise hazards please visit nonoise.org.

New Yorkers Try to Ban Gas Drilling

To: Governor Paterson, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Grannis, State Senate & State Assembly, DEC Draft Environmental Impact Studies Comments

We the undersigned CALL FOR A BAN ON GAS DRILLING IN LOW-PERMEABLE STONE DEPOSITS IN NEW YORK STATE

Whereas,

1. With a failure rate of between 2 to 8 percent, horizontal drilling and hydrofracking pose an unacceptable risk to our drinking water and the quality of groundwater, aquifers, lakes and streams;
2. Drilling will introduce over 250 chemicals into our air and water, placing local residents, wildlife and critical agriculture and watershed areas at risk;
3. Communities where hydrofracking has occurred have experienced explosions, fires, spills, stream contamination and well pollution as well as degradation of aquifers and other water supplies;
4. Local emergency services, including volunteer fire departments, EMS units and health-care providers, will be severely stressed and placed at considerable risk from accidents;
5. Gas drilling in New York State (NYS) will involve construction of a massive infrastructure of wellheads, pipelines, compressing stations and processing centers spread across much of rural upstate New York;
6. Infrastructure development will involve extensive clear-cutting, 24-hour noise and light pollution, huge increases of truck traffic and the permanent altering of existing landscapes;
7. Industrialization is incompatible with agriculture, tourism, recreation; drilling and related development will significantly alter existing use patterns of rural areas;
8. Compulsory integration of neighboring landowners to allow gas extraction against their wishes is an unlawful seizure of land and an unconstitutional abuse of power;
9. Extensive drilling will undermine property values and increase tax burdens on local citizens, creating boom and bust economic cycles in local communities;
10. New York City's Department of Environmental Protection has concluded that hydrofracking is too dangerous for the city's Catskill/Delaware watershed;
11. NYS DEC's draft Environmental Impact Statement is fatally flawed in its open support of drilling, its minimization and dismissal of risks and its failure to consider the total cost of drilling;
12. NYS DEC is seriously understaffed and underfunded and is in no position to regulate and effectively monitor drilling in NYS;
13. Natural gas is not "clean energy" but rather just another polluting, non-renewable fossil fuel contributing to global warming.

We call on you to put the people first and protect our health, environment, communities and future by banning horizontal drilling and hydrofracking to release gas from low-permeable stone formations in New York State.

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/NY-Statewide-Ban-On-Natural-Gas-Drilling>

[Prepare lines with these titles: Signature; Name (print legibly); Email or phone number; Town/County and Zip]
Please send completed petitions to: actionotsego@gmail.com
or Action Otsego, P.O. Box 4, Cherry Valley, New York 13320

Yucca Mountain's Dead. Next? Panel Examines Nuclear Waste Options

Continued from page 1

by former Congressman Lee Hamilton, a Democrat from Indiana, and former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, a Republican. The commission includes scientists, industry and labor representatives, former elected officials and heads of environmental research organizations.

President Obama has directed Secretary Chu to establish the commission to conduct a comprehensive review of policies for managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle.

The Commission will consider alternatives for the storage, processing and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and nuclear waste that remains from civilian and defense operations. An interim report is due within 18 months and a final report within 24 months.

"Finding an acceptable long-term solution to our used nuclear fuel and nuclear waste storage needs is vital to the economic, environmental and security interests of the United States," said Congressman Hamilton. "This will be a thorough, comprehensive review based on the best available science."

General Scowcroft said, "As the United States responds to climate change and moves forward with a long-overdue expansion of nuclear energy, we also need to work together to find a responsible, long-term strategy to deal with the leftover fuel and nuclear waste. I'm pleased to be part of that effort along with Congressman Hamilton and such an impressive group of scientific and industry experts."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat, has fought for years to kill the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste disposal site, located 90 miles from Las Vegas on the outskirts of the

Nevada Nuclear Test Site.

Early in the first term of President George W. Bush, Yucca Mountain was designated by the Congress and the President as the nation's only geologic repository for high-level radioactive waste. But even after 20 years of engineering, planning and testing, the Yucca Mountain site was plagued with safety concerns about water percolation and seismic activity and the state of Nevada sued repeatedly to block the repository.

Senator Reid said today that he and Secretary Chu agreed to create an expert panel as another in a series of steps being taken to terminate the Yucca Mountain project.

"When Secretary Chu and I came to the agreement that we needed to convene a panel of experts who would be charged with finding alternatives to storing nuclear waste in Nevada, I had confidence that he would find some of the smartest people in the country to do so. I'm pleased to see that I was right," Reid said today.

"It is important that we come up with responsible, alternative solutions to safely deal with nuclear waste in this country and Yucca Mountain is not the answer," he said. "President Obama and I have worked closely to stop dumping taxpayer money into Yucca and I have fought hard to ensure Yucca Mountain is dead."

The nuclear energy industry today welcomed the creation of the blue ribbon panel. Marvin Fertel, Nuclear Energy Institute president and chief executive officer, said, "As we head deeper into an era when reliance on nuclear energy is increasing globally, this is the right time to objectively weigh the viable options pertaining to the nuclear fuel cycle, from the management



Photo by Mark Gallagher

A container marked "nuclear waste" perched on a flatbed truck moves through Colorado Springs on December 16, 2005.

of used fuel to the potential for reprocessing and recycling that could better utilize nuclear fuel as a strategic national resource."

But the commission has already come under criticism by a national network of dozens of grassroots and national groups representing the concerns of communities near U.S. nuclear weapons sites.

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA) says the membership of the commission is not balanced despite its "repeated requests" to the Energy Department because there is no member of the panel who represents communities near nuclear weapons sites and no outspoken critics of nuclear power.

"The Commission faces a huge credibility problem. It includes no one from communities downstream and downwind of major nuclear weapons sites," said Susan Gordon, director of the ANA. "However, we are still hopeful that the Commission will find ways to consider a broad range of perspectives, including

independent experts, public interest organizations, environmental and public health stakeholders and impacted parties, including Native American tribes."

"Based on decades of experience in dealing with DOE and nuclear wastes, ANA supports interim stabilization and isolation of wastes at the point of origin in a manner that maximizes worker, public and environmental protection," said Don Hancock, director of Southwest Research and Information Center's Nuclear Waste Safety Program. "ANA and its member organizations will actively advocate that position to the Commission and expects that it will come to that same conclusion."

"The Commission is largely composed of die-hard nuclear boosters along with business and political leaders who will promote the industry's self interest and profits," said Beatrice Brailsford of the Snake River Alliance in Idaho.

The members of the Blue Ribbon Commission are:

- **Co-chair Lee Hamilton** represented Indiana's 9th congressional district from January 1965 to January 1999, serving as the ranking member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and chairing the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Later, Hamilton served as vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission. He currently serves on the President's Homeland Security Advisory Council. He is also president and director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and director of The Center on Congress at Indiana University;

- **Co-chair Brent Scowcroft** is president of The Scowcroft Group, an international business advisory firm. He has served as the National Security Advisor to Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush. From 1982 to 1989 he was vice chairman of Kissinger Associates, Inc., an international consulting firm. Scowcroft served in the military for 29 years and concluded at the rank of Lieutenant General following service as the Deputy National Security Advisor. Out of uniform, he served on the President's Advisory Committee on Arms Control, the Commission on Strategic Forces and the President's Special Review Board, also known as the Tower Commission;

- **Mark Ayers**, President, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO;

- **Vicky Bailey**, Former Commissioner, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; former Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs;

- **Albert Carnesale**, Chancellor Emeritus and Professor, University of California — Los Angeles;

- **Pete Domenici**, Senior Fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center; former U.S. Senator, Republican from New Mexico who chaired the Senate Energy Committee, an author of two books advocating nuclear power;

- **Susan Eisenhower**, President, Eisenhower Group, Inc.;

- **Chuck Hagel**, Former U.S. Senator, a Republican from Nebraska, a member of Global Zero, an international initiative dedicated to achieving a binding, verifiable agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons;

- **Jonathan Lash**, President, World Resources Institute, an environmental think tank;

- **Allison Macfarlane**, Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, George Mason University;

- **Richard Meserve**, President, Carnegie Institution for Science and former Chairman, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission;

- **Ernie Moniz**, Professor of Physics and Cecil & Ida Green Distinguished Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology;

- **Per Peterson**, Professor and Chair, Department of Nuclear Engineering, University of California — Berkeley;

- **John Rowe**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Exelon Corporation; and

- **Phil Sharp**, President, Resources for the Future, a nonprofit research group focused on environmental, energy, natural resource and public health issues.

Fast Nuclear Reactors Hold Great Promise, Consume Radioactive Waste, Says Hansen

By James Hansen

Excerpt from *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity*

...Today's nuclear power plants are "thermal" reactors, so-called because the neutrons released in the fission of uranium fuel are slowed down by a moderating material. The moderating material used in today's commercial reactors is either normal water ("light water") or "heavy water," which contains a high proportion of deuterium, the isotope of water in which the hydrogen contains an extra neutron. Slow neutrons are better able to split more of the uranium atoms, that is, to keep nuclear reactions going, "burning" more of the uranium fuel.

The nuclear fission releases energy that is used to drive a turbine, creating electricity. It's a nice, simple way to get energy out of uranium. However, there are problems with today's thermal nuclear reactors (most of which are light-water reactors).

The main problem is the nuclear waste, which contains both fission fragments and transuranic actinides. The fission fragments, which are chemical elements in the middle of the periodic table, have a half-life of typically 30 years. Transuranic actinides, elements from plutonium to nobelium that are created by absorption of neutrons, pose the main difficulty. These transuranic elements are radioactive material with a lifetime of about 10,000 years — what a nuisance that is!

Along with our having to baby-sit the nuclear waste, another big problem with thermal reactors is that both light-water and heavy-water reactors extract less than one percent of the energy in the original uranium. Most of the energy is left in the nuclear waste produced by thermal reactors. (In the case of light-water reactors, most of the energy is left in

"depleted-uranium tailings" produced during uranium "enrichment;" heavy-water reactors can burn natural uranium without enrichment and thus without a pile of depleted-uranium tailings but they still use less than one percent of the uranium's energy.) So nuclear waste is a tremendous waste in more ways than one.

These nuclear waste problems are the biggest drawback of nuclear power. Unnecessarily so. Nuclear experts at the premier research laboratories have long realized that there is a solution to the waste problems and the solution can be designed with some very attractive features.

I am referring to "fast" nuclear reactors. Fast reactors allow the neutrons to move at higher speed. The result in a fast nuclear reactor is that the reactions "burn" not only the uranium fuel but also all of the transuranic actinides — which form the long-lived waste that causes us so much heartburn. Fast reactors can burn about 99 percent of the uranium that is mined, compared with the less-than-one percent extracted by light-water reactors. So fast reactors increase the efficiency of fuel use by a factor of 100 or more.

Fast reactors also produce nuclear waste but in volumes much less than slow (thermal) reactors. More important, the radioactivity becomes inconsequential in a few hundred years, rather than 10,000 years. The waste from a fast reactor can be vitrified — transformed into a glass-like substance — placed in a lead-lined steel casket and stored on-site or transported for storage elsewhere. Plus, this waste material cannot be used to make explosive weapons (although it could be used in a "dirty bomb," which is best described as a weapon of mass destruction rather than mass destruction, because it can do relatively little physical damage!) "Wait a minute!" you may be thinking. "If there is a type of nu-

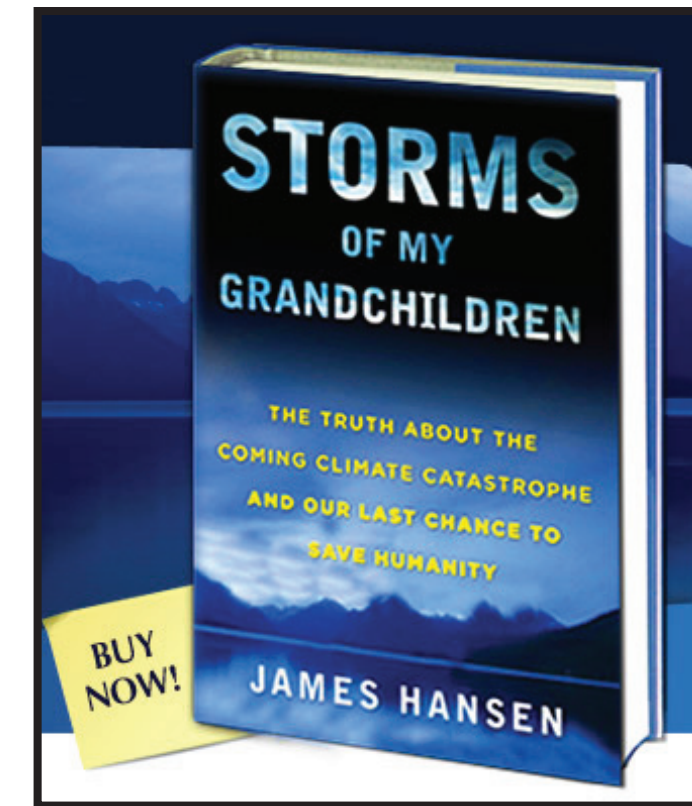


Image from stormsomygrandchildren.com

clear power that is so good, how come nobody knows about it?"

Let me tell you that story.

The concept for fast-reactor technology was devised by Enrico Fermi, one of the greatest physicists of the twentieth century and a principal in the Manhattan Project, and his colleagues at the University of Chicago in the 1940s. By the mid-1960s the nuclear scientists at Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois had demonstrated the feasibility of the concept. The nuclear experts, through the Department of Energy chain of command, informed political leaders about the situation. The leaders got the message.

Richard Nixon, in his June 4th, 1970 presidential energy message to Congress, said, "Our best hope today for meeting the nation's growing demand for economical, clean energy lies with the fast breeder reactor." The Joint Committee on Atomic

Energy of Congress concurred with this goal.

By the way, Nixon used the adjective "breeder" because fast reactors can be run such that they produce more nuclear fuel than they consume. They are not creating energy out of nothing; they are just converting "fertile" elements into a fuel that is directly usable in a reactor, i.e., into "fissile" elements — elements that are fissionable when hit by a slow (thermal) neutron.

It is necessary to supply a fast reactor with "fertile" material but there is enough of that available in the nuclear waste piles that we are baby-sitting to last many centuries. Fertile material that can be burned in fast reactors is contained in by-products of past weapons development programs as well as in the waste piles from light-water reactors. The United States is presently storing about 600,000 tons of uranium hexafluoride, a by-product of nuclear

weapons production. A reasonable assessment of the value of this material as fuel, if fast reactors were deployed as the energy source for power plants, is about \$50 trillion. Yes, trillion (\$50,000,000,000,000). But it will take almost a thousand years to use all that fuel, so don't expect a customer to buy it all at once.

"Liquid metal" refers to the coolant used in the reactor. The usual choice for the metal is sodium, which is liquid over a wide range of temperature — between 98 and 883 degrees Celsius [176 to 1,589 degrees Fahrenheit]. Liquid metals have a safety advantage over water because they do not need to be kept under pressure and liquid sodium is noncorrosive.

Nixon thought that fast reactors would be providing most of our electricity in the twenty-first century.

What happened?

Three Mile Island, for one thing. All nuclear power was lumped into one bag, a fearsome one. Substantial "anti-nuke" sentiment developed. Several environmental groups came out strongly against nuclear power. Most of the public was not adamantly opposed to it but nuclear power's contribution to the U.S. electricity stopped growing, stabilizing at about 20 percent, with fossil fuels providing most of the remainder.

The Department of Energy kept nuclear power research alive. The United States had the top nuclear experts in the world and the top laboratory was Argonne National Laboratory. A low-level support allowed steady progress to continue until, in 1994, the Argonne scientists had tested all the necessary components and were ready to build a demonstration fast-reactor power plant. At that point, the Clinton-Gore administration canceled the program. In his 1994 State of the Union address, Bill Clinton announced, "We will terminate unnecessary

programs in advanced reactor development."

That was not a rational decision in my opinion. To my mind, the most likely interpretation is that the anti-nuke people got worried that this next-generation nuclear power was getting too close to becoming a reality. Strange as it may seem, I doubt that Clinton and Gore, who were well aware of global warming, did an in-depth analysis of this potential energy source. At meetings of heads of state, Clinton was often described, probably accurately, as "the smartest guy in the room," but he never seemed to take a great interest in "details" about energy.

As Tom Blees points out in his book, *Prescription for the Planet*, Clinton had used anti-nuke sentiment in the Democratic Party to his advantage in the 1992 primaries, describing an opponent as "pro-nuclear," as if that were patently stupid. So perhaps it is not surprising that Clinton's secretary of energy, Hazel O'Leary, terminated the research, either on her own or at Clinton's direction.

It was a clean kill: Argonne scientists were told not only to stop the research but also to dismantle the project — and those who had worked on the project were instructed by DOE to *not* publicize it. In congressional debates Senator John Kerry was the principal bearer of the anti-nuclear flag. That may explain why Gore, when questioned about the 1994 decision on the floor of the United States Senate in 2008, had a quizzical look, as if he could not remember. It seems possible that anti-nuke people, who heavily support the Democratic Party, were being repaid, without a whole lot of analysis . . .

Dr. James Hansen is the nation's (and probably the world's) leading climate scientist. He is the director of the GISSs (part of NASA) in New York City.

Violence Escalates in Ocean Whaling Battle

SOUTHERN OCEAN, February 6, 2010 (ENS) — The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society says the Japanese whaling vessel Yushin Maru 3 “intentionally rammed” its anti-whaling ship Bob Barker just after noon local time today, gashing its hull and endangering the lives of its crew.

The Japanese Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) says the Bob Barker was the ship that did the ramming while the Yushin Maru 3 was trying to avoid a collision.

All that the two enemies agree upon is that the collision occurred off northern Antarctica about 180 miles off Cape Darnley in the Australian Antarctic Territory, some 4,500 kilometers (2,795 miles) from Fremantle, Australia. No crew was injured during the collision.

In the Southern Ocean on its mission to shut down Japanese so-called research whaling, the Sea Shepherd vessel had been blocking the slipway of the whaling fleet's factory ship Nisshin Maru, preventing the transfer of slaughtered whales onto the factory ship when the collision occurred.

The Sea Shepherd says four harpoon ships, the Yushin Maru 1, 2 and 3, and Shonan Maru 2 were circling and making near passes to the stern and bow of the Bob Barker, which continued



Photo Courtesy of Sea Shepherd
Three of the ships involved in the February 6th incident: from left, the Sea Shepherd ship Bob Barker trailing the Japanese factory ship Nisshin Maru and, to the right, the Yushin Maru 3.

to block the slipway.

At this point, “The Yushin Maru 3 intentionally rammed the Bob Barker, creating a 3-foot long 4-inch deep gash in the mid-starboard side of the Sea Shepherd vessel above the waterline.”

The Bob Barker continues to block the slipway of the Nisshin

Maru and Captain Chuck Swift says he intends to stay in this position off the stern of the Nisshin Maru until the whalers return to Japan or until they run out of fuel.

The Japanese ICR admits that the Yushin Maru No. 3 and three other “research vessels maneu-

vered to contain the Bob Barker and thus secure a safe distance between the Nisshin Maru and the antiwhaling ship.”

The ICR says, “The Bob Barker suddenly approached from the Yushin Maru No. 3 port side launching a number of butyric acid-containing bottles and other

projectiles. To avoid a collision the Yushin Maru No. 3 put hard to starboard but the Bob Barker starboard came into contact with the port stern of the research vessel. The Yushin Maru suffered minor damage to its hand rail and hull.”

The Japanese say the crew of the Bob Barker directed a green laser beam at their vessels (see page 16) and used a large sling-shot to shoot bottles containing butyric acid against the Shonan Maru No. 2, hitting the deck with 10 bottles of butyric acid, a slippery substance that smells like rotten butter.

Sea Shepherd founder Captain Paul Watson is commanding another ship, the Steve Irwin, currently en route from Fremantle, Australia to join the action.

Watson sailed the Steve Irwin from the Southern Ocean to Fremantle for emergency helicopter repairs and to refuel, re-provision and drop off rescued crew from a third Sea Shepherd ship, the *Ady Gil*, which sank after being rammed and cut in two by a Japanese whaler on January 5th.

Watson says today's incident demonstrates “a continued escalation of violence by the illegal whalers in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary.”

“Because the whalers got away

basically scot-free with the outrageous sinking of the *Ady Gil*, they now apparently think they can do whatever they want and they appear to have no qualms about endangering Sea Shepherd crew,” he said.

Watson has been fighting the whalers since 1976 when he was one of two men in an inflatable boat to confront a Russian whaling ship in the world's first demonstration of its kind. Every whaling season since 2005, Watson has commanded a Sea Shepherd expedition to the Southern Ocean attempting to shut down the Japanese whale hunt.

“What we really need is for the governments of Australia and New Zealand to step up and start enforcing maritime laws in these waters or who knows what the whalers will do next. Australian and New Zealand lives are at risk every day in these waters,” Watson said.

But the governments of Australia and New Zealand have shown no sign of getting involved in this battle. Instead, they have embarked upon a non-lethal whale research endeavor to show the world, and particularly Japan, that it is possible to do research on whales in Antarctic waters without killing them.

The joint Australia-New Zealand

Continued on page 16

2009 Second Warmest Year of Warmest Decade on Record

Continued from page 1

about 0.8°C (1.4°F) since 1880. “That's the important number to keep in mind,” said Gavin Schmidt, another GISS climatologist. “In contrast, the difference between, say, the second and sixth warmest years is trivial since the known uncertainty, or noise, in the temperature measurement is larger than some of the differences between the warmest years.”

Climate scientists agree that rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases trap incoming heat near the surface of the Earth and are the key factors causing the rise in temperatures since 1880 but these gases are not the only factors that can impact global temperatures.

Three other key factors — changes in the sun's irradiance, oscillations of sea surface temperature in the tropics and changes in aerosol levels — can also cause slight increases or decreases in the planet's temperature.

Overall, the GISS scientists say, the evidence suggests that these effects are not enough to account for the global warming observed since 1880.

El Niño and La Niña are prime examples of how the oceans can affect global temperatures. They describe abnormally warm or cool sea surface temperatures in the South Pacific that are caused by changing ocean currents.

Global temperatures tend to decrease in the wake of La Niña, which occurs when upwelling cold water off the coast of Peru spreads westward in the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

La Niña, which moderates the impact of greenhouse-gas-driven warming, lingered during the early months of 2009 and gave way to the beginning of an El Niño phase in October that's expected to continue in 2010.

An especially powerful El Niño cycle in 1998 is thought to have contributed to the unusually high temperatures that year and Hansen's group estimates that there's a good chance 2010 will be the warmest year on record if the

current El Niño persists.

At most, scientists estimate that El Niño and La Niña can cause global temperatures to deviate by about 0.2°C (0.36°F).

Warmer surface temperatures also tend to occur during particularly active parts of the solar cycle, known as solar maximums, while slightly cooler temperatures occur during lulls in activity, called minimums.

A deep solar minimum has made sunspots a rarity in the last few years. Such lulls in solar activity, which can cause the total amount of energy given off by the sun to decrease by about a tenth of a percent, typically spur surface temperature to dip slightly. Overall, solar minimums and maximums are thought to produce no more than 0.1°C (0.18°F) of cooling or warming.

“In 2009, it was clear that even the deepest solar minimum in the period of satellite data hasn't stopped global warming from continuing,” said Hansen.

Small particles in the atmosphere called aerosols can also affect the climate. Volcanoes are powerful sources of sulfate aerosols that counteract global warming by reflecting incoming solar radiation back into space.

In the past, large eruptions at Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines and El Chichon in Mexico have caused global dips in surface temperature of as much as 0.3°C (0.54°F). But volcanic eruptions in 2009 have not had a significant impact.

Meanwhile, other types of aerosols, often produced by burning fossil fuels, can change surface temperatures by either reflecting or absorbing incoming sunlight. Hansen's group estimates that aerosols probably counteract about half of the warming produced by man-made greenhouse gases but he cautions that better measurements of these elusive particles are needed.

Critics of GISS' analyses have accused the institute of manipulating data but Schmidt says they are just plain wrong.

“Indeed, there are people who believe that GISS uses its own private data or somehow mas-

sages the data to get the answer we want. That's completely inaccurate,” he said. “We do an analysis of the publicly available data that is collected by other groups. All of the data is available to the public for download, as are the computer programs used to analyze it. One of the reasons the GISS numbers are used and quoted so widely by scientists is that the process is completely open to outside scrutiny.”

To conduct its analysis, GISS uses publicly available data from three sources: weather data from more than a thousand meteorological stations around the world, satellite observations of sea surface temperature and Antarctic research station measurements.

These three data sets are loaded into a computer program, which is available for public download from the GISS Web site. The program calculates trends in temperature anomalies — not absolute temperatures — but changes relative to the average temperature for the same month during the period of 1951-1980.

Other research groups also track global temperature trends but use different analysis techniques. The Met Office Hadley Centre, based in the United Kingdom, uses similar input measurements as GISS, for example, but it omits large areas of the Arctic and Antarctic where monitoring stations are sparse.

In contrast, the GISS analysis extrapolates data in those regions using information from the nearest available monitoring stations and thus has more complete coverage of the polar areas.

If GISS didn't extrapolate in this manner, the software that performs the analysis would assume that areas without monitoring stations warm at the same rate as the global mean, an assumption that doesn't line up with changes that satellites have observed in Arctic sea ice, Schmidt explained.

Although the two methods produce slightly different results in the annual rankings, the decade-long trends in the two records are essentially identical.

U.S. Navy Sued Over Anti-Sub Training Range Where Rare Whales Calve

Continued from page 1

in the south to the Altamaha River, Georgia in the north. The training range location is out to sea opposite part of this area but the conservationists contend that Navy ships, exempt from speed restrictions established to protect these whales, would pass through the calving grounds when traveling between the proposed training area and bases at Jacksonville and Kings Bay, Georgia.

Despite concerns expressed by the states of Georgia and Florida, conservation groups and scientists, the Navy decided to proceed with its plans to build the \$100 million training range without implementing recommended measures that could have lessened the impact of its activities, the conservationists argue.

The Navy plans to conduct 470 annual exercises on the training range with up to three vessels and two aircraft deploying exercise torpedoes, parachutes and sonobuoys, and sonar and other noise pollution.

For years, conservationists have brought legal actions challenging the use of sonar in areas where whales can be affected. “Sonar can cause a range of impacts on marine wildlife, from disrupting nursing and feeding to injury and death in some cases,” the groups reiterated today.

In its Record of Decision and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the range the Navy says the facility is needed because it improves the Navy's ability to train its naval forces to detect and defeat submarines operating in shallow, or littoral, seas such as the Arabian Sea, the South China Sea and the Korean Sea where environmental conditions coupled with new noise reduction technologies make detection of “silent diesel submarines, easily obtainable by potential adversaries” increasingly difficult.

“While we recognize the Navy's need to train,” says Wannamaker, “there are ways to accommodate that need without introducing multiple risks of harm into such a sensitive area.”

In its EIS, the Navy acknowledges that its use of sonar on the

range could harm or harass endangered whale species — the North Atlantic right whale, the fin whale and the sperm whale — and promises to hold consultations with the National Marine Fisheries Service in accordance with the Endangered Species Act to mitigate or reduce impacts on these whales.

No ordnance would be detonated during training exercises, the Navy says. The physical force to which marine organisms would be exposed would be limited to that produced by torpedo launching and movement.

The conservationist lawsuit alleges that the Navy and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) failed to study the environmental impacts of building and operating the training range at this location. “The Navy decided to construct the range now, even though it acknowledges that more research needs to be done on the range's environmental impacts before operations can begin,” the groups contend.

In documents filed with the court, the groups argue that the agencies must first address the impacts from operating the range before deciding to construct it.

“The Navy's decision to shoot first and study the environmental impacts of using this facility later simply makes no sense,” said Sharon Young, field director of The Humane Society of the United States. “The Navy is playing Russian roulette with one of our most imperiled wildlife species.”

“The science here is settled,” said Steve Rody of Earthjustice, a public interest law firm. “Right whales are critically endangered and the government knows it. Under the circumstances, it is baffling that NMFS and the Navy could be planning to proceed with this project that places so many of these whales at risk. This is decidedly not sound science; it is fundamentally unsound.”

Ship strikes are the single largest cause of death for right whales with at least eight right whales killed in the past six years, including three pregnant females.

Ship traffic in the calving grounds is of particular concern

since data suggests female right whales are struck more often, possibly because they must spend more time at the surface with their calves which have undeveloped lung capacities. Scientists believe that the loss of even one right whale from non-natural causes could jeopardize the future of the species.

The Navy says it has adopted protective measures to reduce the potential for collisions with surfaced marine mammals and sea turtles.

“Based on the Navy protective measures and the implementation of mitigation measures during times of anticipated right whale occurrence, Navy vessels are not likely to adversely affect North Atlantic right whales,” the EIS states.

“The proposed action is not likely to affect annual rate of population growth or survival of marine mammals,” the Navy says.

The Navy says it has trained personnel that can spot marine mammals and it will “take appropriate action” if the animals are on the range when operations are taking place.

But the conservationists are not persuaded.

“Right whales already face a triple threat: sonar exposure, collisions with ships and debris entanglement,” said Taryn Kiekow, staff attorney with NRDC. “Science tells us the loss of even a single North Atlantic right whale could threaten the survival of the entire species.”

The North Atlantic right whale, *Eubalaena glacialis*, has been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act since 1973.

The legal challenge was filed today by Defenders of Wildlife, The Humane Society of the United States, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, NRDC, Center for a Sustainable Coast, Florida Wildlife Federation, North Carolina Wildlife Federation, South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, Animal Welfare Institute, Ocean Mammal Institute, Citizens Opposing Active Sonar Threats, and Cetacean Society International.

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COAL ASH INDUSTRY EDITED EPA REPORTS FOR YEARS

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
Press Release, January 27, 2010

Washington, D.C. — For years U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publications and reports about uses and dangers of coal combustion waste have been edited by coal ash industry representatives, according to EPA documents released today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). Not surprisingly, the coal ash industry watered down official reports, brochures and fact-sheets to remove references to potential dangers and play up “environmental benefits” of a wide range of applications for coal combustion wastes — the same materials that EPA is currently deciding whether to classify as hazardous wastes following the disastrous December 2008 coal ash spill in Tennessee.

During the Bush administration, EPA entered into a formal partnership with the coal industry, most prominently, the American Coal Ash Association, to promote coal combustion wastes for industrial, agricultural and consumer product uses. This effort has helped grow a multi-billion dollar market which the industry worries would be cramped by a hazardous waste designation.

The documents obtained by PEER under the Freedom of Information Act show how this partnership gave the coal ash industry a chance to change a variety of EPA draft publications and presentations, including:

- Removal of “cautionary language” about application of coal combustion wastes on agricultural lands in an EPA brochure to be replaced with “exclamation point ! language” “re-affirming the environmental benefits...that reinforces the idea that FGD [flue gas desulfurization] gypsum is a good thing” in the word of an American Coal Ash Association representative;
- A draft of EPA’s 2007 Report to Congress caused industry to lobby for insertion of language about the need for “industry and EPA [to] work together” to weaken or block “state regulations [that] are hindering progress” for greater use of the coal combustion wastes; and
- EPA fact-sheets and PowerPoint presentations were altered at industry urging to delete significant references to certain potential “high risk” uses of coal combustion wastes.

“For most of the past decade, it appears that every EPA publication on the subject was ghostwritten by the American Coal Ash Association,” stated PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch, who examined thousands of industry-EPA communications. “In this partnership it is clear that industry is EPA’s senior partner.”

This collaboration is not limited to publications, however. EPA staff also forewarned industry about conference calls and other intra-agency deliberations, such as growing concerns about “increased leaching of arsenic” from “increased use of fly ash” in order to let industry know where to target its lobbying efforts. The working relationship is so close that a coal ash industry representative joked to EPA staff in an October 27, 2008 email, referring to a news article about mercury contamination from coal ash:

“We are in bed with the EPA again, it looks, at least according to this article. The advocacy groups are well organized and have the ready ear of the press.”

“It is no joke — the terms of the coal ash partnership tucks EPA snugly into bed with industry for the purpose of marketing coal combustion wastes as a product,” Ruch added, noting that the partnership is still in effect. “EPA is supposed to be an objective regulatory agency dedicated to protecting the public instead of protecting a gigantic subsidy for a powerful industry.”

Contact: Kirsten Stade at PEER at 202-265-7337.



Photo: ALAMY

Last month, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was forced to issue a humiliating retraction after it emerged that statements about the melting of Himalayan glaciers were inaccurate. No matter what the discrepancy was, the fact remains that glaciers are melting at an alarming rate.

ExxonMobil Funds Climate Deniers

By Jonathan Owen and Paul Bignell
The Independent/UK, February 7, 2010, excerpt

An orchestrated campaign is being waged against climate change science to undermine public acceptance of man-made global warming, environment experts claimed last night.

The attack against scientists supportive of the idea of man-made climate change has grown in ferocity since the leak of thousands of documents on the subject from the University of East Anglia (UEA) on the eve of the Copenhagen climate summit last December.

Free-market, anti-climate-change think-tanks such as the Atlas Economic Research Foundation in the U.S. and the International Policy Network in the United Kingdom have received grants totaling hundreds of thousands of pounds from the multinational energy company ExxonMobil. Both organizations have funded international seminars pulling together climate change deniers from across the globe.

Many of these critics have broadcast material from the leaked UEA emails to undermine climate change predictions and to highlight errors in claims that the Himalayan glaciers could disappear by 2035.

Professor Phil Jones, who has temporarily stood down as director of UEA’s climatic research unit, is reported in today’s *Sunday Times* to have “several times” considered suicide. He also drew parallels between his case and that of Dr. David Kelly, found dead in the wake of the row over the alleged “sexing up” of intelligence in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq. Professor Jones said he was taking sleeping pills and beta-blockers and had received two death threats in the past week alone.

Climate skeptic bloggers broadcast stories last week casting doubts on scientific data predicting dramatic loss of the Amazon rainforest. All three stories, picked up by mainstream media, questioned the credibility of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the way it does its work.

A new attack on climate science, already dubbed “Seagate” by skeptics, relating to

claims that more than half the Netherlands is in danger of being submerged under rising sea levels, is likely to be at the center of the newest skirmish in coming weeks.

The controversies have shaken the IPCC, whose chairman, Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, was subjected to a series of personal attacks on his reputation and lifestyle last week. A poll this weekend confirmed that public confidence in the climate change consensus has been shaken: one in four Britons — 25 per cent — now say they do not believe in global warming; previously this figure stood at 15 per cent.

Professor Bob Watson, the chief scientific adviser to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and former chairman of the IPCC, said yesterday that the backlash is the result of a campaign: “It does appear that there’s a concerted effort by a number of skeptics to undermine the credibility of the evidence behind human-induced climate change.” He added, “I am sure there are some skeptics who may well be funded by the private sector to try to cast uncertainty.”

A complicated web of relationships revolves around a number of right-wing think-tanks around the world that dispute the threats of climate change. ExxonMobil is a key player behind the scenes, having donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in the past few years to climate change skeptics. The Atlas Foundation, created by the late Sir Anthony Fisher, received more than \$100,000 in 2008 from ExxonMobil, according to the oil company’s reports.

Atlas has supported more than 30 other foreign think-tanks that espouse climate change skepticism and co-sponsored a meeting of the world’s leading climate skeptics in New York last March. Called “Global Warming: Was It Ever Really a Crisis?” it was organized by the Heartland Institute — a group that described the event as “the world’s largest-ever gathering of global warming skeptics.” The organization is another right-wing think-tank to have benefited from funding given by ExxonMobil in recent years . . .

EPA ORDERS EMPLOYEES TO REMOVE YOUTUBE CLIMATE VIDEO

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
November 9, 2009

Washington, D.C. — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has ordered two of its attorneys to remove a video they posted on YouTube about problems with climate change legislation backed by the Obama administration or face “disciplinary action,” according to documents released today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). The couple had received clearance for posting the video but EPA took issue with its content following publication of an op-ed piece by the two in *The Washington Post* on October 31.

The video, entitled “The Huge Mistake,” is by Laurie Williams and Allan Zabel, two EPA enforcement attorneys speaking as private citizens. The video explains why the cap-and-trade plan endorsed by President Obama will not accomplish its goals, let alone effectively curb climate change. On November 5, 2009, EPA ethics officials ordered the two veteran employees to:

- “Remove your climate change video from You Tube by the close of business on Friday, November 6, 2009;
- “Edit your You Tube video...by:
 - (i) Removing the language starting at 1:06 min — ‘Our opinions are based on more than 20 years each working as attorneys at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the San Francisco Regional Office.’
 - (ii) Removing the images of EPA’s building starting at 1:06 min...
 - (v) Remove [sic] the language starting at 6:30 min — ‘In my work at EPA, I’ve been overseeing California’s cap-and-trade and offset programs for more than 20 years.’”
- “All future requests for approval of an outside writing activity must be accompanied by a draft of the document that is the subject of the approval request...”

“EPA is abusing ethics rules to gag two conscientious employees who have every right to speak out as citizens,” stated PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch, who has reposted the original video and its script on the PEER Web site. “EPA reversed itself because someone in headquarters had a tantrum about their *Washington Post* essay.”

Williams and Zabel, who are married to each other, go to great lengths in the video and other writings to provide disclaimers affirming that their views are personal and do not represent the agency. However, EPA now objects to them even referring to their on-the-job experience as the basis for their views.

“How is government supposed to be transparent when public servants are forbidden from discussing the nature of their work?” asked Ruch. “EPA and every other federal agency should have simple, clear guidelines so that government workers can express themselves freely without political prior restraints.”

In August, EPA Administrator Jackson issued an all-employee statement saying the agency will operate as if in a “fishbowl” but left ambiguous whether and how employees may publish papers or communicate with Congress and the media. By contrast, a few agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have dispensed with any pre-approval of employees’ unofficial expressions, as long as they are accompanied by a short disclaimer.

Contact: Kirsten Stade at PEER at 202-265-7337.

PREMARIN® STANDS FOR PREGNANT MARE URINE

Some foals born to these mares are saved but many are bought for slaughter.

By Valerie Stanley
Laurel, Maryland

For once, the name of a product accurately describes its source. Premarin® (as well as Prempro and Premphase) stands for pregnant mare urine (PMU). These estrogen replacement therapy drugs are prescribed to reduce the symptoms of menopause in women. According to the Humane Society of the United States fact sheet on PMU farms, more than nine million American women currently take Premarin.

In the twelve months prior to June 30, 2004, Premarin® sales made Wyeth-Ayerst \$841 million. Premarin® was originally produced by Ayerst Organics, Ltd., a subsidiary of Wyeth; on January 26, 2009 Pfizer and Wyeth announced an agreement by which Pfizer would acquire Wyeth for cash and stock.

The manufacturer of Premarin® contracts with farmers who keep the mares, have them impregnated and then collect the pregnant mare’s urine. There are approximately 5,600 pregnant mares used in the urine-collection process. This means, of course, that each year 5,600 foals are born as by-products of this industry.

Mares are kept in individual, standing stalls indoors for six months of their 11-month pregnancy. Typically, the mares are indoors from late fall until the next spring. After the mares are released outdoors, they have their foals, nurse them for three to four months and then become pregnant to the stallions living in the group until the cycle begins again.



Photo by Lisa Post, Helping Hearts Equine Rescue
Noah has just been rescued from a Premarin farm.

When the pregnant mares are brought in to go back on the urine collection line, they are separated from their foals. The foals are eligible to be sold at this time. The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Horses in PMU Operations states that no foal “shall leave the premises of a PMU operator, for sale, prior to September 1 and not until the foal is 90 days of age.”

Thus, foals may be sold as early as three months; of course, this means that they can be weaned at this young age. According to www.naturalhorstraining.com, “Most top vet schools and equine veterinarians are now recommending waiting at least six months, even to eight months, to wean the foal and even then, to do it gradually.”

Urine is collected from pregnant mares that are held in individual standing stalls. According to the North American Equine Ranching Information

Council (NAERIC): “[T]he mares’ urine is collected using a loose-fitting, flexible, light-weight pouch that allows for a full range of movement, including lying down. It is held in place by a system of pulleys and is not directly attached to a mare.”

NAERIC describes itself as a “non-profit association of equine ranchers engaged in horse production and management of pregnant mares. Estrogens extracted from pregnant mares’ urine (PMU) are used in the production of hormone therapies for women. NAERIC serves its members, the horse industry and general public as an agribusiness resource by providing the latest information and research on ranch management, equine care, breeding practices and innovative marketing programs. The council is dedicated to ensuring the NAERIC brand represents overall quality. NAERIC supports and promotes the partnership

between agriculture and women’s health care.”

According to NAERIC, “There are 64 family-owned equine ranches that are members of NAERIC and contracted by Pfizer to collect pregnant mares’ urine (PMU). These equine ranches are located in the Canadian provinces of Manitoba (49), Saskatchewan (13) and one U.S. state, North Dakota (2).”

Many of the foals born to the mares kept for urine production are purchased for feedlots, where they are kept until they are marketable weight and then slaughtered for human consumption. (See “Mr. Sweetie’s Story,” *The Order of the Earth*, August 2009.)

NAERIC sponsors various programs in an effort to market foals born to the mares used in urine production as riding and competition horses.



Photo by Lisa Post, Helping Hearts Equine Rescue
Noah grown up.

One PMU Foal’s Happy Story

Lisa Post, a dressage instructor, barn manager and founder of Helping Hearts Equine Rescue (<http://hher.webs.com>) from Perrine, New Jersey, adopted a PMU foal whom she named Noah. Noah is now seven years old. He is Lisa’s husband’s horse and is very good at dressage as shown in the photo taken two years ago.

Noah’s Story As Told By Lisa

Ryerss Farm for Aged Equines in Pottstown, Pennsylvania was planning on bringing in a shipment of 50 PMU foals from North Dakota to adopt out.

In July, I completed my application and sent it in for a draft-cross colt. I got the call in early September that the foals were in. (Noah was 5 months old.) He was pretty easy to acclimate to being handled, touched and led.

He’s been a charmer ever since.

According to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine:

Menopause is a normal part of life, not a diagnosis. And there are healthy, natural ways to manage the changes it can bring. A low-fat, vegetarian diet, combined with regular physical activity can help women reduce the symptoms of menopause. While hormone replacement therapy increases cancer and heart disease risk, these recommended healthy lifestyle changes actually reduce the risk of these illnesses as well as other menopause-related problems.

5 Ways Techno-Gadgetry Brings Out the Worst in Humanity

By Scott Thill
AlterNet: February 2, 2010, excerpt

"It's not technology we have to worry about, it's the humans," Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, editors of the academic technology and culture journal *CTheory*, once argued to AlterNet, in an article about the Pentagon's plan to fund packs of man-hunting robots. "Why blame technology? It generally does what it is coded to do. It's the human sentient understanding of how to take cruel advantage of human weakness that's the problem."

Indeed, humans are exceptional when it comes to using technology to prey upon weaknesses — in themselves, their cultures and their markets. But even when technological solutions arise for navigating problems as mundane as they are obstructive, there tends to be some variation of consequence. Let's just call it "techno-blowback." As developmental biologist and cyborg theorist Donna Haraway once famously explained, "We are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism." We can't take technology out of our humanity any more than we can take humanity and its dangerous games out of our technology. So we walk the tightrope between both, trying not to fall as we steadily transform a cyborg future in which we may no longer be able to distinguish them anymore.

Below are five examples of that problematic merge, from least offensive to least humane, analyzing how everything from handy gadgets to user-friendly weaponry have changed the way we work, play and police.

iPods and iTunes: At first glance, Apple's proprietary digital media player and application couldn't come soon enough. Portable music players choking on clunky cassettes were driving us all crazy, especially since the music industry had steadily moved away from vinyl and tape to digital, although it decided to encode it all on wasteful compact discs. Apple's iPod and iTunes changed that game forever, taking material goods out of the equation and providing in their place a seamless way to integrate music into our lives. Of course, it also killed the industry as we know it, according to some.

"Apple has destroyed the music business — in terms of pricing — and if we don't take control, they'll do the same thing on the video side," NBC CEO Jeff Zucker complained in 2007. "Apple sold millions of dollars worth of hardware off the back of our content. They did not want to share what they were making."

Complaints about Apple's exclusivity continue to this day, enhancing the argument that its revolutionary innovations in digital music entertainment and distribution have padded its

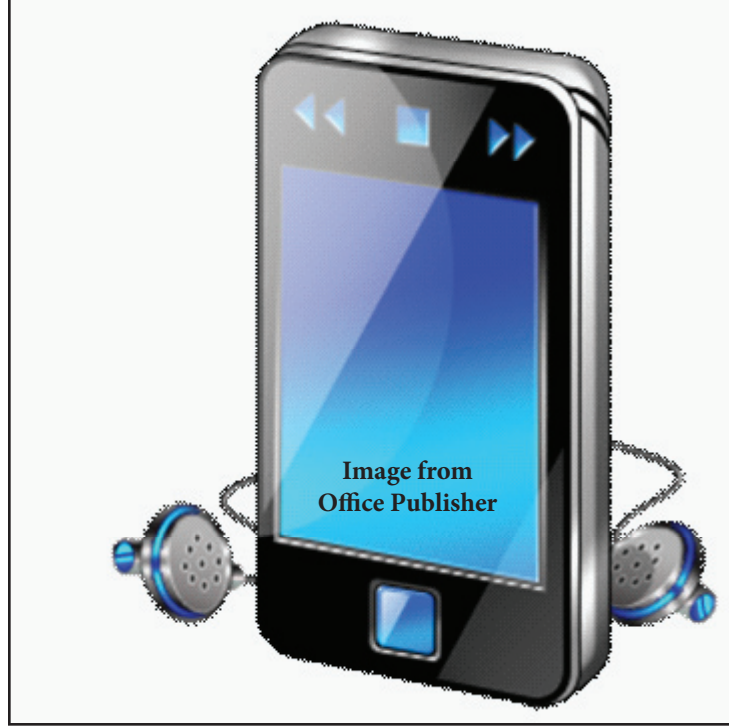
earnings reports rather than change the music industry for the better. And it's also had arguable ancillary effects, from killing off the album to degrading sonic quality. "Apple has taken a detour down the convenience highway," rocker Neil Young said in 2008. "Quality has taken a complete backseat — if it even gets in the car at all."

On its way to redefining the rules of music ownership and sales, Apple has also dominated the discussion of what users can put on their iPods and iTunes, including how many people they can share songs with. Along the way, it has leveraged the cultural power of music and its market, leading to increased piracy and less cash for everyone, especially the bloated major labels who fed like vampires on their harder-working artists for generations. For all its innovations, it's arguable that we are still stuck with a music industry that is a technological upgrade of its former self but still diminished. The fact that the music industry utterly deserved obsolescence is irony icing on the technology cake.

"iTunes is essentially the record store model ported to the Internet with no other major innovation other than to sell songs individually rather than as albums," Eliot Van Buskirk, music business columnist (and one of my colleagues) at Wired.com, explained to AlterNet. "Other companies tried to sell music online way before Apple did but it took Steve Jobs' charm — and the fact that the labels saw the then-Mac-only iTunes store as a test bed for rollout to the wider market — to convince them to sell songs online. That was iTunes' crowning achievement and it continues to pay somewhat well for major and indie labels alike, and even unsigned bands through thin middleman services like TuneCore."

But at what expense? Digital distribution has unmasked how easy it really is to share art and commerce but it has also made it easier to avoid paying those who create both with increasing impunity. And while the world is full of well-meaning consumers who want to fully support the creators they admire, digital distribution innovations, from iTunes to the BitTorrent protocol, nevertheless excel at preying upon market weaknesses for that art and commerce. It's a price we have to pay for a leveled playing field.

"iTunes pushed the industry forward, big-time," Van Buskirk said. "Before that, there was no way for indie bands to sell their songs to a worldwide audience of music fans alongside the majors' stuff — never mind one that let them keep about 70 percent of their sales revenue without going through a label, the way iTunes does. iTunes also led to less material waste because music files don't need packaging. But if iTunes has failed in any regard, it



has failed to provide a real discovery engine for fans. Luckily, the entire Internet handles that pretty well."

Mobile Phones: Speaking of Apple, the iPhone is a recent, brilliant iteration of the mobile phone, one that has mashed communication, networking, gaming and commercial functions as seamlessly as the iPod and iTunes merged digital musical consumption and production. Unfortunately, it has also caused more than its share of car crashes, pedestrian accidents, "sexting" scandals and maybe even cancer. Wonderful.

"This meeting is probably the most important meeting in the history of the Department of Transportation," secretary Ray LaHood explained late last year, after President Obama banned federal employees from texting while driving. "Distracted driving is dangerous and unacceptable."

That move was summarily followed up in recent events, where states like New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan and many more banned texting and talking while driving, by not just citizens but also interstate truckers. These laws have escalated atop mounting evidence from the American Automotive Association and others that drivers who text are 20 times more likely to crash than those who don't. Add to that statistics indicating that drivers look at their phones instead of the road for more than four of every six seconds they're texting and that around 80 percent of crashes are caused by distracted drivers and you have a recipe for disaster.

To make matters worse, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) concluded its investigation into a deadly California train crash that left 25 dead and 135 injured with a damning finding: Metrolink engineer Robert Sanchez's "egregious" texting was to blame. Taken together with the failure of an already existing Metrolink policy forbidding cell phones in

control cabins, the NTSB summarily called for installation of surveillance cameras in all of its trains. Which, in turn, angered the Engineers and Trainmen union, which claimed the cameras wouldn't help and were an invasion of privacy . . .

According to the National Cancer Institute, "Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between cellular telephone use and the risk of developing malignant and benign brain tumors but results from long-term studies are still limited . . . However some, but not all, long-term studies have suggested slightly increased risks for certain types of brain tumors."

Its cautious language is warranted given that there have been no direct links established between mobile phone usage and cancer. But that didn't stop the World Health Organization from promising to end its decade-long, much-anticipated Interphone investigation with a warning that there is a "significantly increased risk" of some brain tumors for mobile phone users who have held gadgets sending out heavy doses of radiofrequency waves directly into their heads for 10 years or more. It's far from a sure thing but it's closer to scary than it is to conspiracy, especially since mobile phones have been in heavy commercial use since the '80s. Let's hope that early adopters of this technology still have time to save their possibly irradiated brains.

CT Scans: While we're on radiation, here's another ironic revelation perfectly built for techno-blowback: Computer tomography (CT) scans could possibly give you cancer while looking for it.

According to a recent study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* by University of California-San Francisco professor and radiologist Rebecca-Smith Bindman, patients undergoing a single CT scan might be absorbing the equivalent of 74 mammograms or 442 chest X-rays. They also may be con-

tributing to nearly 30,000 new cancers and over 10,000 casualties per year. The scary part is that the numbers could rise as CT scans are increasingly and, perhaps unnecessarily, prescribed. Over 72 million were performed in 2007.

"Our prior research has demonstrated the dramatic increased in CT utilization, which has gone up around 10 percent per year," Smith-Bindman told "AlterNet." There is little data available about how many are necessary and how many may be unnecessary, although there is widespread belief that at least 20 percent of CTs may be unnecessary. But it's an area that clearly needs more research . . ."

Traffic Surveillance Technology:

From the office to the freeways to the streetlights and beyond, surveillance of most any kind has led to less freedom, not more. And it hasn't really seemed to significantly reduce crime or prevent accidents.

According to studies conducted in Oregon and Virginia, red-light cameras increased collisions rather than decreasing them, in some cases by 100 percent. Sure, fewer motorists ran red lights but more of them crashed right into each other.

Worse, whatever additional revenue the trend generated was sliced up by refunds to deeply offended parties entrapped by lame schemes like sped-up yellow lights, which encourage motorists to step on it or slam on the brakes. Instant accidents.

The idea that a patently invasive stop-light camera is incentivizing transgression is bad enough on the surface. It's worsened by the fact that some states allow its snapshot to be obtainable under Freedom of Information Act requests so that literally anyone can have access to the event.

Like its birth, the techno-blowback on this has become political and financial: Washington State representative Chris Hurst, a law enforcement veteran, sponsored a bill decreasing fines from nearly \$125 to \$25 and, more importantly, demanded that yellow lights last at least four seconds, rather than the scant two they've been reduced to in search of lethal regional profit.

"Now they're actually killing their citizens to make money off these things," he told the *Seattle Times* in January . . .

Tasers: Nonviolent weaponry? Tell that to Oscar Grant. Or those pregnant women who were tasered. Or that 6-year old. Or that disabled man. Or...

You get the picture. There is perhaps no other recent technological innovation in widely politicized social play today than the Taser, which has spread like wildfire to law-enforcement organizations worldwide in search of options beyond the usual batons and chokeholds. In the Taser, they have found the perfect device for immobilizing

offenders: One jolt from its "electro-muscular disruption technology" and you're pinewood, as they say in the business. And business is good, although the weaponry is more controversial than ever.

"I don't see the issue as politicized in the classic sense of conservative versus liberal issues," Taser International spokesman Steve Tuttle told AlterNet. "Instead, I see a tremendous amount of polarization on Taser technology. There is nothing worse than being irrelevant in this day and age and the polarization is something that overall is good for debate when you have a revolutionary sea change in modern day policing. We're changing the world," Tuttle added, "and true revolutions don't come without pain."

Speaking of pain, Raytheon's Pain Ray, more marketably known as the Active Denial System, operates on a similar premise. Instead of causing grievous bodily harm with bullets, batons or worse, it merely directs high-frequency microwave radiation at the nervous system, shocking the subject into compliance, so to speak. Like the Taser, the Pain Ray can penetrate thick clothing, although it cannot go through walls. Yet.

Tuttle's position that Taser is changing the world is accurate, although time will ultimately tell in which ways and how much.

Right now, 15,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide use Tasers, "even though no one thought these life-saving devices would be carried full time by street cops seven years ago," he said. That's a significant adoption rate and one that is surely to rise, no matter how much bad press the Taser gets. And it gets a lot. Whether it is being misapplied to the wrong people or parts of the body or being targeted by the United Nations and others as a tool of torture and political suppression, it has continued to find its name associated with one scandalous report after another in the years since its rapid adoption . . .

Like the aforementioned gadgets, machines and innovations, it could be that the Taser, like so many technological wonders, could eventually cause more problems than it solves. Compared to a baton and a chokehold, to say the least, the Taser is user-friendly pain compliance defined. But Tuttle, like *CTheory*, is blaming its problems on humans, not technology.

"The ease of use has nothing to do with the controversies," he said. "Use of force must still adhere to constitutional guidelines and civil rights issues. A violation is a violation regardless of the ease of use."

Scott Thill runs the online mag *Morphizm.com*. His writing has appeared on *Salon*, *XLR8R*, *All Music Guide*, *Wired* and others.

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Why I Don't Compute or Why Computers Are A Rip-Off

By Al Fry
Garden Valley, Idaho

After spending over a decade assaulted with non-stop campaigning for me to join the computer age, I am finally recognizing a disturbing fact: I hate computers.

I tried to be fair about it but, over and over I have compared the old ways of doing business and data management with the computer way and, frankly, the computer way falls short most of the time.

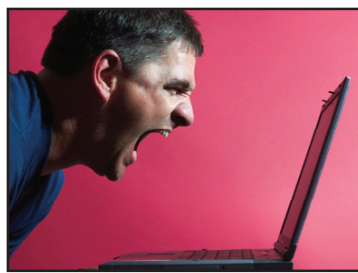
How could this be? Almost everyone with a computer is telling me how efficient they are and how much fun "surfing the net" is. Could it be that I am simply getting too old to appreciate the wonders of modern technology or too stupid to see the advantages right in front of my nose?

Well, I am reminded that almost everyone with a lemon for an auto will tell you that their brand is the best. People

invariably tout the toys or monsters they own and it has little to do with the quality or common sense.

All those programs that get sold as so efficient and helpful as tools are not only clumsy and expensive, they are outdated by several years the minute they come out of their box. Obsolescence is the favorite strategy of all the corporate giants and you can bet your boots that your printers, monitors and computers will be superseded by new models before getting broken in good.

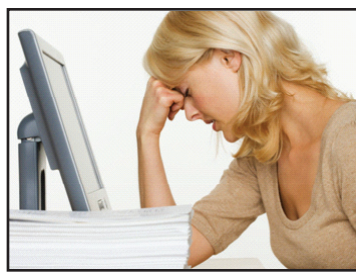
Should you linger too long in spending your thousands for that new toy, your old one will no longer be easy to get serviced. Service itself can be a constant financial drain and most of the computer owners I know have spent countless hours facing the constant tech support and upgrading for efficiency. They spend a good part of their lives hunched in front of



Images from Office Publisher

the infernal flickering screens and, like TV addicts, I suspect they go into trance or turn brain-dead for a time.

Instead of turning the things off, most users just keep them running away with their constant random pattern displays. It would seem that the machines sometimes have control over the users . . . forcing them to pay attention and treat the hardware with tenderness and care. Heaven help you if a tiny grain of dirt or molecule of dust gets between the hard drive and the disk or if some surge in voltage should come surging through the



power lines. Your information will be lost and you will be putting out more money to those greedy, devious corporate giants.

Such corporate giants are masters at marketing plastic toys to grown children who forgot that toys are supposed to be for children. They get buyers way in over their heads and most of these "space age" products are just sophisticated rip-offs.

Only a few decades ago we could buy sturdy metal adding machines and typewriters that would last for years, like I'm using now [for you typed this on her computer for publication].

Card filing systems never broke down or required thousands of dollars and hours to update or keep running. What the public has run into is a back-door technological assault on their finances and clear thinking.

All that money is flowing to the telephone companies, the credit card companies, the machine suppliers and the program makers. Precious little ever gets to the consumers or little guys. This is big money going out.

One study showed a typical business spending \$40,000 on PCs in their first five years. Larger outfits with a couple thousand computers will spend something like \$15 million a year to keep them operating.

Do you wonder why prices keep shooting up and they have such overheads? This is clearly insanity when you take a look at how wasteful and problem-prone this field is. All common sense is seemingly going out the

window in the name of corporate profits.

In my area, I like to think there is a little more savvy available and locals who tend to be ranchers and loggers are often rejecting newer cars with all the computer junk on them. One guy I heard of simply left his new Chevy truck on the top of a distant mountain after its computer failed for the fourth time.

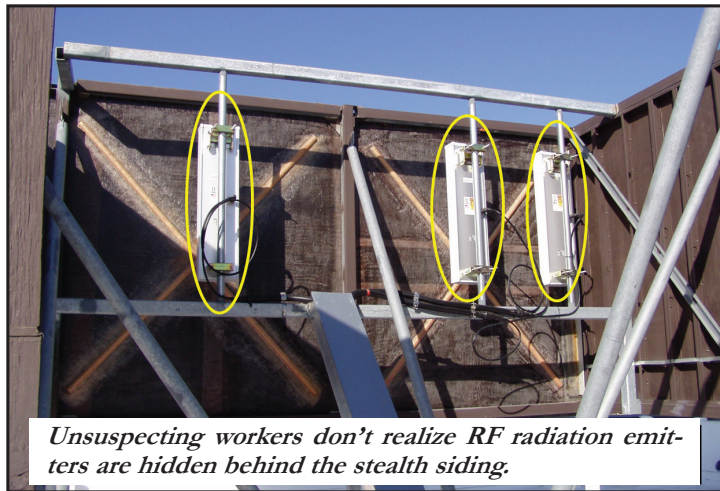
Often it takes several hundred dollars in a new module to get these newer models going again. "Oh, you're just a paranoid spoil sport" a friend told me, "Wait until you get on the net and the superhighway . . . you'll love it."

If it were truly free and cheap it would be great. It isn't. The machinery and technology costs skyrocket and the superhighway has toll bridges all along the way.

With snoopy government agencies locked on, you can't even be sure where your com-

Continued on next page

Cell Tower Workers Exposed to High Levels of Radiation



Unsuspecting workers don't realize RF radiation emitters are hidden behind the stealth siding.

Doug Williams, CEO
RF CHECK

Today, over 280,000,000 Americans are connected by commercial wireless devices for communications and the demand for expanded services continues to grow.

State and local communication networks are also expanding as the public demands greater effectiveness in emergency situations and governmental efficiency. Virtually all government employees and their vehicles are connected wirelessly. Wireless communications are an integral part of quick response services demanded by the public such as emergency medical services, fire fighters and police.

All of the commercial and government services demanded by the public are made possible by the hundreds of thousands of transmitting antennas mounted on buildings, towers and other structures throughout the United States. Each of these antennas creates a radiofrequency (RF) radiation hazard area which varies greatly in size and shape depending on antenna design and transmitting characteristics.

The proliferation of wireless antennas has created a significant health hazard for workers across the United States and is the cause of today's national worker RF safety crisis. All too often members of the public (typically painters, roofers and other maintenance workers) are unknowingly exposed to RF hazards, thereby being subjected to potential harm from excessive RF radiation. This problem grows exponentially with the rising number of antenna sites that are expected to double within the next several years and is exacerbated by the use of stealth and co-located antennas.

While the use of wireless communications have expanded, the policies and procedures used for ensuring RF radiation safety and compliance have remained static.

Today's great challenge is to balance the construction and maintenance of a nationwide wireless network with the need to protect workers (both those employed by wireless carriers and third-party workers) who may be exposed to dangerous RF radiation emissions above the established FCC human exposure limits.

Workers are routinely exposed to excessive levels of RF radiation without their knowledge because no effective, comprehensive RF radiation safety system currently exists. A number of practical challenges render it impossible for wireless service providers or the wireless industry alone to ensure the protection of all workers and the welfare of their families.

Scientific evidence establishes the causal connection between RF radiation exposure and cognitive, behavioral and/or psychological injuries. These injuries include depression, impairment to mental acuity, sleep disorders and memory loss. This scientific evidence is, and has been, sufficiently established and recognized to serve as the basis for the FCC's RF radiation human exposure standards.

It is important to note that despite the ongoing debate and research of the health effects of RF radiation, the FCC's RF radiation regulations are based upon well-settled scientific evidence that has existed for more than two decades. These studies established the correlation between RF radiation exposures and cognitive, behavioral and psychological injuries.

RF CHECK is a socially responsible company dedicated to RF radiation safety. RF CHECK provides a patented comprehensive RF safety solution designed to protect all workers from the harmful effects of RF radiation over-exposure at all wireless transmission sites across the nation.

Please see www.rfcheck.com.



Image from Office Publisher

Why I Don't Compute

Continued from page 8

munications wind up stored away . . . like maybe that business deal is getting put away on IRS files.

"Oh, that could never happen," is not what I get from some programmers. Talk to programmers and you will hear horror stories of many kinds. Computer malfunctions are costing millions and you can see a constant stream of mistakes in most stores you go to nowadays. The clerks hit the wrong buttons, the coding is wrong and on and on . . .

"Oh, but it's cheaper in the long run," is very doubtful. Banks seemed to do alright before the PC revolution hit. Kids got better educated and learned to think. Take away an employee's adding and spelling toys and many would seem devoid of basic skills. This trend is getting worse with each onslaught of new machines to aid us in being good button-pushers.

"But it's so easy to make up books and publish." While this may be true, you can only push buttons so fast and my little car-

bon-ribbon typewriter can punch out words as fast as a PC. Paste-ups of snipped illustrations have always been mechanically fun to me and labels are as easy as pie to make up on Xerox machines. Why would I want to depend on some temperamental, fragile, expensive toy to block off such pleasures as I get?

I could go on about bar codes and the strategy of the new world order in mechanizing humanity but I will spare you and close by remembering what an avatar friend of mine once told me concerning all these toys.

He pointed out that God's original body computers were a million times more efficient than our expensive, mechanical models. The catch was we needed to get back to having charitable motivations before we could unlock the more efficient circuits. Without these "ethic blocks" we would destroy ourselves even more quickly than at present, with what technology we now have bringing us little satisfaction.



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 The Unification of Experience

By Jerry Mander
Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television (1978), excerpt

Because so many of us were confusing television experience with direct experience of the world, we were not noticing that experience itself was being unified to the single behavior of watching television. Switching from channel to channel, believing that a sports program was a significantly different experience from a police program or news of an African war, all 80 million viewers [now much higher] were sitting separately in dark rooms engaged in exactly the same activity at the same time: watching television.

It was as if the whole nation had gathered at a gigantic three-ring circus. Those who watched the bicycle act believed their experience was different from that of those who watched the gorillas or the flame eater but everyone was at the circus. Worse, as we all watched from our separate living rooms, it was as if we sat in isolation booths, unable to exchange any responses about what we were all going through together. Everybody was engaged in the same act at the same time but we were doing it alone.

What a bizarre situation! It was suddenly possible for an entire nation of 200 million people [304 million in 2008] to be spoken to as individuals, one to one, the television set to the person or family, all at once.

I was chilled at the thought, realizing that these conditions of television viewing — confusion, unification, isolation, especially when combined with passivity and what I later learned of the effects of implanted imagery — were ideal preconditions for the imposition of autocracy.

At that time, however, my own definitions of the nature of autocracy were confined, like those of most Americans, to the model of single, charismatic leaders. Hitler. Stalin. Chiang. Franco. Mao. Differences among these were

submerged in the model of the powerful leader, enforcing his will, ruling absolutely. That was autocracy. Television seemed to be the perfect instrument to help bring on that kind of control.

My fears were encouraged one day in 1971 as I sat around my office reading the morning *New York Times* and noted a small item. It concerned a Pentagon proposal to President Nixon that an electronic gadget be attached to every television set in the country. Capable of being activated directly by the president, it would switch on every set in the country at once. It was to be used, of course, only in case of extreme national emergency.

My mind flew into a paranoid pattern:

It's 4:00 a.m. Two hundred million people [304 million] are awakened by the national anthem. Where is it coming from? What's that light over there? It's the TV set. There's the President!

"My fellow Americans, it is with extreme regret that I awaken you from your well-earned rest. Yet we are all met with a crisis so grave as to require it . . .

A few months later I saw a follow-up story in *The Times* that said the Pentagon proposal had been scrapped. Apparently the administration felt people might "misinterpret the intentions" of such a project.

In retrospect, I know that my scenario was fantastic and unsophisticated, deriving from my simple-minded notion that autocratic interventions can take place only through a single leader or a coup. But whatever the intentions of the Pentagon and President Nixon, who has since asserted that presidents may create their own laws, it was clear that the existence of the technology itself had created a new potential.

We can all be spoken to at the same time, night or day, from a centralized information source.

In fact, we are . . .

Zinn: We Should Not Give Up the Game Before All the Cards Have Been Played

By Howard Zinn
ZNet, February 2, 2010

American historian, playwright and social activist Howard Zinn died January 27, 2010, aged 87. His light will shine brightly into the far off future.

- ZNet Staff -

Below is an excerpt from Howard Zinn's recent book *A Power Governments Cannot Suppress* published by City Lights Books, www.citylights.com.

In this world of war and injustice, how does a person manage to stay socially engaged, committed to the struggle and remain healthy without burning out or becoming resigned or cynical?

I am totally confident, not that the world will get better but that we should not give up the game before all the cards have been played. The metaphor is deliberate; life is a gamble. Not to play is to foreclose any chance of winning. To play, to act, is to create at least a possibility of changing the world.

There is a tendency to think that what we see in the present moment will continue. We forget how often we have been astonished by the sudden crumbling of institutions, by extraordinary changes in people's thoughts, by unexpected eruptions of rebellion against tyrannies, by the quick collapse of systems of power that seemed invincible.

What leaps out from the history of the past hundred years is its utter unpredictability. A revolution to overthrow the czar of Russia in that most sluggish of semi-feudal empires not only startled the most advanced imperial powers but took Lenin himself by surprise and sent him rushing by train to Petrograd.

Who would have predicted the bizarre shifts of World War II — the Nazi-Soviet pact (those embarrassing photos of von Ribbentrop and Molotov shaking hands) and the German army rolling through Russia, apparently invincible, causing colossal casualties, being turned back at the gates of Leningrad on the western edge of Moscow in the streets of Stalingrad followed by

the defeat of the German army with Hitler huddled in his Berlin bunker waiting to die?

And then the postwar world, taking a shape no one could have drawn in advance: The Chinese Communist revolution, the tumultuous and violent Cultural Revolution and then another turnabout, with post-Mao China renouncing its most fervently held ideas and institutions, making overtures to the West, cuddling up to capitalist enterprise, perplexing everyone.

No one foresaw the disintegration of the old Western empires happening so quickly after the war or the odd array of societies that would be created in the newly independent nations from the benign village socialism of Nyerere's Tanzania to the madness of Idi Amin's adjacent Uganda. Spain became an astonishment. I recall a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade telling me that he could not imagine Spanish Fascism being overthrown without another bloody war. But after Franco was gone, a parliamentary democracy came into being, open to Socialists, Communists, anarchists, everyone.

The end of World War II left two superpowers, with their respective spheres of influence and control, vying for military and political power. Yet they were unable to control events, even in those parts of the world considered to be their respective spheres of influence. The failure of the Soviet Union to have its way in Afghanistan, its decision to withdraw after almost a decade of ugly intervention, was the most striking evidence that even the possession of thermonuclear weapons does not guarantee domination over a determined population.

The United States has faced the same reality. It waged a full-scale war in Indochina, conducting the most brutal bombardment of a tiny peninsula in world history and yet was forced to withdraw. In the headlines every day we see other instances of the failure of the presumably powerful over the presumably powerless, as in Bolivia and Brazil, where grassroots movements of

Continued on next page

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Views

ENCOUNTERS WITH WONDER *Deciphering the Season*

By Elizabeth Ayres
California, Maryland

Paleography. From the Greek. *Paleos* (old), *graphos* (written). The work of the palaeographer is to decipher the writings of the past. Fascinated by the relationship between the human hand and the text it generated, medieval practitioners of this budding science studied the *ductos*: the movement of the pen while forming letters. They also learned abbreviations, punctuation, ligatures — all in an effort to understand a scribe's style, so they could assign to the writing a date and place of origin.

Today's practitioner — that would be me — is equally fascinated by the ductos that confronts her now: the hand of nature forming letters on this beach. Date and place of origin is no mystery: Mid-March. The Chesapeake Bay. But I think there is a message here. I think someone is trying to tell me something. I think I would be — what? Happier? Wiser? More complete? The stakes are high. I would be some kind of better off, if only I could decipher this text.

I kneel down in a slanting wind. Every jot and tittle is important. In the pale lamplight of an ice-clad sun, I examine scalloped frills of purple seaweed outlined in pellucid frost. Is this an abbreviation for some other, more familiar, word? 'Patience,' perhaps? Or 'courage?' Snowdust fills my foot-

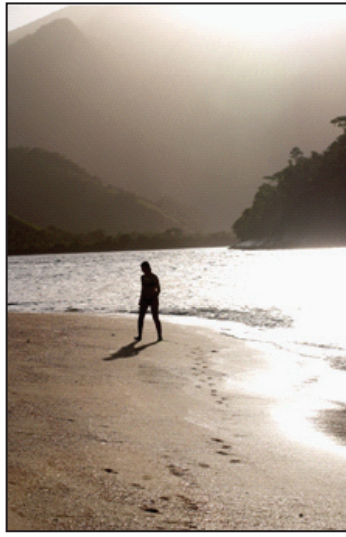


Image from Office Publisher

prints from yesterday, which are scribbled amidst a flurry of gull tracks. Even I, a novice at this science, can grasp the gist: 'small part of a big whole,' that's my interpretation of these hieroglyphs.

And what about this crescent sliver of sand? The beach's arms curve open to embrace the waves, which hurry in to enfold the beach and their joyful exclamations wash my soul as clean as the freshly scoured shore. This ligature — this one character made of two or more letters — I've seen the pattern before. Symbiosis. Give and take. Mutual benefit. I never knew it to be the very essence of this scribe's style.

Walking in, I noticed dead leaves clotting a ditch along the roadside yet, in the skim of ice

covering them, I saw living trees reflected from above. How sap rises in spring, in the absence of leaves to generate flow through transpiration and cohesion — this is a mystery not even plant physiologists understand. Maybe the answer is in the seaweed jottings I deciphered just minutes ago: patience and courage.

Just beyond the horizon's razor-straight edge, Earth slopes into a curve that would bring me back here once again, were I faithful to the journey. Circles and cycles. The ductos of the universe as text unfurls under the hand creating it. As with that ancient style of writing Latin: right to left, left to right, like an ox plowing a field. Or like anyone who notices that another spring has almost arrived and we're that much closer to the end of plowing, but some kind of better off. More patient, perhaps, or more courageous? More ready to embrace, with joyful exclamation, that which opens to enfold us?

Elizabeth Ayres, author of Know the Way and Writing the Wave, is the founder of the Center for Creative Writing (CreativeWritingCenter.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>. "Deciphering the Season" first appeared in the 3/15/08 issue of "The Enterprise."



Photo by Amy Smith

Sixteen-year-old Ramona Smith takes a stand for her beliefs. "Not a waste of breath or cardboard. She is out there fighting for our lives. She is a hero. Not a waste of breath. No." (Annie Lenihan)



Photo by Amy Smith

Ramona and her friends feel strongly enough about the future of Planet Earth to get together to show how they feel on the steps of the state capital building in Olympia, Washington.

Acting for My Future

By Ramona Smith
Olympia, Washington

As a human I am outraged to see the destruction of our planet. I have been called a "radical teenager" but I don't think that loving the Earth and wanting to save it is radical, I think it's normal.

As animals that came from the Earth why wouldn't we protect it? In society today, the natural world is the only thing that really makes sense. I feel at peace when I look at the roots of a tree or the mycelium network of mushrooms. When I look around the city at cell phone towers and fast-food-poison advertising — my heart sinks, I feel confused and most of all extremely pissed off.

I see worldwide destruction happening on a local level in my own town of Olympia, Washington. On the one hand, Olympia is a so-called progressive city. We have farmers markets and food co-ops and a lot of community-based, non-profit resources.

On the other side we have huge cell phone towers hovering above our houses, our schools and even on top of our #@*ing water towers. We have expensive food stores throwing away tons of nice, edible food every day. Dumpster diving in this city is like going to a fancy restaurant, expensive organic stuff is the first to be chucked, like cases of Han-

sen's spritzers and organic greens.

We also have Capital Lake. When I was a child this "lake" was an estuary. Then the city decided to turn it into a swimming lake instead of an estuary. The lake got so polluted that there was no more swimming allowed — city planners took thousands of dollars in taxpayer money to put a fancy rock wall around this toxic lake and a nice yuppie walking path going around the entire thing. They could have used this money to clean the lake but since it's the state capitol — the priority was on making it look nice. When I look at this all I see is a contaminated fish graveyard.

Recently I got the opportunity to espouse my views to crazy people at the "March for Life" rally, which takes place at the state capitol every year. Pro-lifers from around the state come to rally and cheer-lead their hatred about abortion. Did I mention that the whole time they have legislative members of the state congress hooked up to a microphone rallying their "troops."

Separation of church and state — my ass. Directly across from this insane crowd of people are the counter protesters of Olympia (who don't have access to fancy buses to mobilize people regionally and do not get legislative members giving fancy speeches on their behalf).

The picture in this article is of me at this event. I feel strongly that instead of making more people to pollute this Earth — we should focus about educating the 6,798,900,000 people that already live here on the mass destruction of our planet as well as sustainable solutions that we can implement to heal this planet and ourselves.

My protest sign had two sides. One side said, "Environmental destruction, poverty and war — let's focus on the real issues." The other side said, "A dead planet stops everybody's heartbeat" (which was created by my love Spencer and I am very proud of him).

As a sixteen-year-old who does not fit into the iPod, cell phone generation, my hope for the future is to see people rising above society's poison and working within their communities to save our planet and our own minds.

I hope to see the government working with the Earth instead of against it. I hope to see empowerment, love and truth ruling over fake advertisements, skyscrapers and barbed wire fences.

Ramona lives in Olympia, Washington; her favorite activity is kissing her partner Spencer. She belongs in the woods but is currently stuck in the city and enjoys sustainable practices, music and climbing trees.



Image from Office Publisher

Earth Psalms: Song 33

By Angela Magara ©
www.angelamagara.com

Now has come the time to celebrate.
Celebrate the life we have with singing,
With drums, with strings, clap hands, shout joy.
Let a new song rise from pleasure's soil.
Let it seed and root in a single season
'til Gladness grows rank on every roadside.
So might the stars have been made,
Or we.
What hands measure seas,
What feet the length of mountains?
All rises from mystery and love
Whatever avenue we take.
Nothing holds long,
Beauty of life or pain.
Clap hands now,
Play music and sing,
Celebrate, for nothing else matters as much.
The blossom opens and we are there
To see.

Earth Psalms 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.

Zinn: We Should Not Give Up the Game Before All the Cards Have Been Played

Continued from page 9

workers and the poor have elected new presidents pledged to fight destructive corporate power.

Looking at this catalogue of huge surprises, it's clear that the struggle for justice should never be abandoned because of the apparent overwhelming power of those who have the guns and the money and who seem invincible in their determination to hold on to them. That apparent power has, again and again, proved vulnerable to human qualities less measurable than bombs and dollars: moral fervor, determination, unity, organiza-

tion, sacrifice, wit, ingenuity, courage, patience — whether by blacks in Alabama and South Africa, peasants in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Vietnam, or workers and intellectuals in Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union itself. No cold calculation of the balance of power need deter people who are persuaded that their cause is just.

I have tried hard to match my friends in their pessimism about the world (is it just my friends?) but I keep encountering people who, in spite of all the evidence of terrible things happening everywhere, give me hope.

Wherever I go, I find such people, especially young people in whom the future rests. And beyond the handful of activists there seem to be hundreds, thousands more who are open to unorthodox ideas. But they tend not to know of one another's existence and so, while they persist, they do so with the desperate patience of Sisyphus endlessly pushing the boulder up the mountain.

I try to tell each group that they are not alone and that the very people who are disheartened by the absence of a national movement are themselves proof

of the potential for such a movement.

Revolutionary change does not come as one cataclysmic moment (beware of such moments!) but as an endless succession of surprises, moving zig-zag toward a more decent society. We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can quietly become a power no government can suppress, a power that can transform the world.

Even when we don't "win" there is fun and fulfillment in the

fact that we have been involved, with other good people in something worthwhile. We need hope.

An optimist isn't necessarily a blithe, slightly sappy whistler in the dark of our time. To be hopeful in bad times is not being foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of competition and cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness.

What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places

— and there are so many — where people have behaved magnificently, it energizes us to act and raises at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.

And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents and, to live now as we think human beings should live in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

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Musings

Monkey Business: Better Business Practices Learned Through Monkeys Home Work

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

Jamie is getting fat. That is what others who have not seen him in a while would say. But that stings. At Frisky's we say, "He is over-nutritionalized."

Jamie is a Bonnet Macaque Monkey, born on April 6, 1997. In 2006, his weight was 23 pounds, which is in the normal range for his breed. During his physical in 2008, he weighed in at 28.1 pounds. At the 2009 Primate Physicals in October, he had gained two more pounds, putting his weight at over 30 pounds.

"OK, it's broccoli and rice cakes for him now," Dr. Keith Gold told us.

Poor Jamie. That is even deprivation for a monkey.

We all know that body types differ. Some can live on McDonald's food and not gain an ounce. Others need only to think about the Big Mac and it goes to the thighs. Monkeys born into captivity do not have to spend their days gathering food. The food is handed to them three times per day. In their natural habitat, much of their day would be spent foraging, burning calories while they hunt for food.

Jamie, being born into the pet trade, has many toys and enrichments in his enclosure. But Jamie would just as soon lay in his hammock with a remote and watch television. He need not be concerned about hunting up his next meal. Something needs to fill the time that would have been spent gathering and foraging.

This is the human story as well.

In 1985, Wendell Berry (philosopher, farmer, author, advocate for rural life), wrote an essay entitled "What Are People For?" He talks about the governing doctrine in government, universities, and corporations since World War II: "There are too many people on the farm."

This caused millions of rural people to move to the cities where they soon became labeled "the permanently unemployable" because they were unprepared for urban life or just not able to cope with it. The corporate economy certainly made out. They were able to replace farmers with machinery, petroleum and chemicals. He explained, "As the farm-



Photo by Colleen Layton-Robbins
Jamie, a hefty, Bonnet Macaque monkey, sizes up the broccoli on his new diet.

ers departed from the land, the land itself departed." Soil erosion soared.

Berry questioned, "Is the obsolescence of human beings now our social goal?"

In a country that puts an absolute premium on labor-saving measures, short work days and retirement, why should there be any surprise at permanence of unemployment and welfare dependency? These are only different names for our national ambitions.

And on this day in January 2010, the news has not changed much for farmers. When one thing is taken away, something else must replace it, for better or worse.

Curious, I did a Google search on Man Replacing Machines. Sometimes things do reverse themselves. I was quite fascinated with a blog written by Brent Frei, co-founder of SmartSheet.com, in February 2009, entitled "Work Exchanges: When People Replace Machines." He writes: "The next gusher in productivity and profit will come not from technology replacing humans but rather technology enabling humans to do work that to date hasn't been economically viable."

There are millions of tasks out there that computers are still not able to do and require human intelligence. All it takes is having a computer to work on from home and the willingness to do these simple tasks for a minimal fee. For example, identifying objects in a photo or video (a

computer can't yet identify a blue car), transcribing audio recordings, choosing the best category for a product, etc. Traditionally tasks like this have been accomplished by hiring a large temporary workforce, which is time-consuming and expensive.

Amazon has established the Amazon Mechanical Turk, which is a marketplace for work that requires human intelligence. Each task is called a HIT (Human Intelligence Task) and may take a minute or less to do. Businesses or developers needing tasks done can use the robust Mechanical Turk Application Programming Interface to access thousands of high quality, low cost, global, on-demand workers. Mechanical Turk enables developers and businesses to achieve their goals more quickly and at a lower cost than was previously possible.

Frei describes the concept of a Work Exchange as, "...a global switchboard that connects real work and virtual teams on an 'as needed' basis in order to accomplish specific work. Those with work to offer would gain access to a broad reach of talent while those seeking work would be able to sell their talent to the highest bidder."

Amazon's Mechanical Turk is only the beginning of what is possible in the Work Exchange concept that Frei describes. Machine replaced man and now is needing man's help. Many can now work from home because of machines.

Jamie does not need to use his natural foraging instincts because his needs are being provided by humans. His right to freedom has been traded for three sure meals a day, a longer life span and cartoon network.

But rice cakes and broccoli? Is this the trade off for sitting at our computers working from home and no longer living and working on the land?

So, dear reader, do you see hope, hopelessness or possibility here?

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 (www.friskys.org). Contact her at haw@anotherwaytoseeit.com if you would like to receive this column monthly.



Photo by Iona

Spring grasses growing freely in Shade Gap, Pennsylvania

By Sandy Chilcote
Newfoundland, Canada

a winter wind
frantic for spring
whips up dead teasels
sedges and fescue
touching low tussocks more gently
breathing long, flowing rhythms
into the grasses of meadows and fields
pampas and prairies
altiplanos and plateaus
offering music and riddles that sing
across time and planets everywhere

(Ed.: Teasel is in many parts of the world now, invasive in North America, used to tease up the nap of wool. The altiplano is a term for the high Andean regions of South America. Sandy has made a generous offer to folks who enjoy his poetry as much as I do. He will ship you a free copy of either collection [Inkseeds or Earthlings] if you simply contact me at: The Order of the Earth, 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania; 814-259-3680 or ionaconner@gmail.com.)

Vegetarians: Past and Present

In the Past

Louisa May Alcott, writer
Clara Barton, nurse and the first president of the American Red Cross
Charles Darwin, author and scientist
Leonardo da Vinci, artist
Isadora Duncan, dancer
Thomas Edison, inventor
Albert Einstein, physicist
Ben Franklin, American statesman, philosopher, scientist
Mahatma Gandhi, Indian independence leader
Jerry Garcia, musician, member of Grateful Dead
Sylvester Graham, inventor
Doug Henning, magician
John Harvey Kellogg, physician and scientist
Linda McCartney
Bob Marley, musician
John Milton, writer
Sir Isaac Newton, physicist
River Phoenix, actor
Plato, physicist and writer
Pythagoras, Greek philosopher
Albert Schweitzer, musician, physician, Nobel Peace Prize
George Bernard Shaw, writer and Nobel Prize Laureate
Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly, English novelist
Percey Bysshe Shelley, English poet
Upton Sinclair, author

Isaac Bashevis Singer, writer and Nobel Prize winner
Socrates, Greek philosopher
Benjamin Spock, author and pediatrician
Henry David Thoreau, writer
Leo Tolstoy, author
Vincent Van Gogh, painter
Voltaire, French writer
HG Wells, author
John Wesley, religious leader

Present Vegetarians

Andre 3000 (vegan), in Outkast, musician
Fiona Apple, singer
Bryan Adams, musician
Dammon Albarn, musician
Shri Appleby, actress
Christina Applegate, actress
Casey Affleck, actor
Quinn Allman (The Used)
Lauren Anderson, musician
Pamela Anderson, actress
Maxine Andrews, singer with Andrews Sisters
Rosanna Arquette, actress
Amitabh Bachchan, Indian actor
Erykah Badu (vegan), singer
Dave Baksh (Sum 41)
Brigitte Bardot, actress
Bob Barker, TV personality
Kim Basinger, actress
Angela Bassett, actress
Jeff Beck, musician
Ed Begley Jr, actor

Amber Benson, actress
Elizabeth Berkley, actress
Billy, guitarist (Good Charlotte)
Linda Blair, actress
Traci Bingham, actress
Linda Blair, actress
Orlando Bloom, actor
Cindy Blum, opera singer
Surya Bonaly, Olympic figure skater
Boy George, musician
Berke Breathed, cartoonist
Brandy Norwood, singer
Christie Brinkley, model
Brandon Brooks, actor
Pierce Brosnan, actor
Roger Brown, football player
Hunter Burgan, musician (AFI)
Ellen Burstyn, actress
Peter Burwash, tennis pro, Davis Cup winner
Lauren Bush, model and niece of the president
Andreas Cahling, bodybuilder
Chris Campbell, Olympic medallist in wrestling
David Carradine, actor
Adam Carson, musician (AFI)
Juhi Chawla, Indian actress
Deepak Chopra, medical doctor and author
Julie Christie, actress
Chelsea Clinton, daughter of ex-president
Phil Collen, musician
Rachael Leigh Cook, actress
James Cromwell, actor
Skeeter Davis, country singer...

S i l e n c e

An Endangered Treasure

Center for Biological Diversity
February 11, 2010

According to audio ecologist Gordon Hempton, silence isn't necessarily noiseless — it's simply "the complete absence of all audible mechanical vibrations ... the presence of everything, undisturbed."

But it's rapidly becoming too much to ask for. In fact, Hempton says, there are fewer than a dozen sizable sites of silence remaining in the United States and none in Europe. "Even in our national parks today," says Hempton, "despite laws to protect them, you are much more likely to be hearing noise pollution, particularly overhead aircraft, than you are to be hearing only native sounds of the land."

Why does silence matter? Through it, "we are given the opportunity to not only heal but discover something incredible — the presence of life, interwoven!... And like all music, good or bad, it affects us deeply."

An Unquiet Nation

By Julia Baird
Newsweek, January 28, 2010 (excerpt)

Audio ecologist Gordon Hempton talks about America's vanishing quiet spaces and how our lives can be helped by listening to the silence...

Silence is something you assume you will always be able to



Image from Office Publisher

find if you need it. All you have to do is drive far enough in the right direction, trek through quiet fields or woods or dive into the sea's belly.

But silence, Hempton believes, is rapidly disappearing, even in the most remote places. He says there are fewer than a dozen places of silence — areas "where natural silence reigns over many square miles" — remaining in America.

In his book, *One Square Inch of Silence: One Man's Search for Natural Silence in a Noisy World*, written with John Grossman, Hempton argues that silence — a precious, underrated commodity — is facing extinction.

Over the past three decades Hempton has circled the Earth three times, recording sound on every continent except Antarctica: butterfly wings fluttering,

coyotes singing, snow melting, waterfalls crashing, traffic clanging, birds singing.

His work has been used in film soundtracks, videogames, and museums...

There are no words that can tell the hidden spirit of the wilderness, that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy, and its charm.

Theodore Roosevelt, 1910

The day will come when man will have to fight noise as inexorably as cholera and the plague.

Nobel Prize-winning Bacteriologist, Robert Koch, 1905

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Food and Health



The Bad Seeds: The Broken Promises of Biotechnology

Food and Water Watch
October 2009 Fact Sheet

The real winners have been the handful of biotechnology companies that patent specific genetic crop traits and sell the GM (genetically modified) traits in seeds and affiliated agrochemicals to farmers. A few major chemical and pharmaceutical giants now dominate the seed industry, which once relied on universities for most research and development. Between 1996 and 2007, Monsanto acquired more than a dozen smaller companies and now controls an estimated 70 percent of all GM corn and 99 percent of all soybeans planted in the United States. The few firms that do exist often have cross-licensing agreements for their patents that create partnerships between companies to sell seeds with specific combinations of traits from multiple firms. A high level of concentration and cooperation can raise seed prices for farmers.

Most GM crops are destined for livestock feed, biofuel refineries or processed food ingredients, in part because major U.S. trade partners like Europe and Japan have not authorized the importation of many GM food products because of uncertainty about the possible human health and plant risks. Consumers in these countries do not want to eat GM food. Despite the limited export opportunity, the high cost of the GM seed and agrochemicals and environmental impacts, international agribusinesses are promoting biotechnology as a key strategy for farmers in the developing world to combat global hunger.

What Are Genetically Modified Crops and Where Are They Grown?

Genetic engineering can create, improve or modify crops by changing a plant's genetic traits. Most commercial biotech crops are either herbicide-tolerant (which allows farmers to apply herbicides to kill weeds without damaging the crops) or insect-resistant (which theoretically protects the plants from destructive pests). Biotech crops became commercially available in 1996 and, by 2009, the vast majority of the corn, cotton and soybean crops in America were genetically modified. Although biotech firms have promised high-yield and drought-resistant GM seeds, to date these traits are not commercially available.

The United States is the global leader in GM production with half the world's cultivated acres in 2008. Only 25 countries allow the commercial production of GM crops, with the five largest producers accounting for 91 percent of GM cultivation. In the United States, biotech seeds are grown on nearly nine out of ten acres of corn, soybeans and cotton — 85 percent of corn, 91 percent of soybeans and 88 percent of cotton.

The farmers that plant biotech crops appear to be adopting them despite lower benefits in terms of yields and returns to producers. USDA surveys show that farmers expect improved performance of GM crops. The convenience of some GM crops for farmers — the purported simplicity of applying a single herbicide and the market saturation of GM seeds and affiliated agrochemicals — may explain some of the increasing rates of GM adoption.

But the seed companies spend lavishly on advertising that may influence farmers more than

real-world experience with the crops. In 2008, Monsanto spent \$95 million on advertising and German chemical and biotech firm BASF spent an estimated \$20 million advertising its agricultural products.

GM Seeds Costly for Farmers

Biotechnology is not cheap for farmers. GM seeds are more expensive than conventional seeds and most are used with specific herbicides that cannot be substituted with cheaper varieties. **Purchasers of GM seeds must pay licensing fees and North American farmers have faced expensive lawsuits for violating licensing agreements.**

The yields for GM crops have not lived up to industry promises, especially for the food crops corn, soybeans and canola.

Moreover, farmers cannot export their biotech crops to key export markets in Europe and Japan because these governments have not approved GM food. In 2002, USDA found farmers' widespread biotech adoption "puzzling" given the "mixed or even negative" financial returns from GM corn and soybeans.

High-Priced Biotech Seeds

Biotech seeds can be four times as expensive as non-GM seeds. The USDA projected that seed expenses for farmers rose by 66.3 percent from \$10.4 billion in 2005 to \$17.3 billion in 2009 — more than double the increase in total farm production expenses. In 2009, non-biotech soybean seed cost half as much as Roundup Ready seed — \$17 a bag versus \$35. Seed prices are likely to continue to rise. Monsanto is planning to charge as much as 42 percent more for its GM seeds in 2010 than in 2009. Monsanto's net income doubled from \$993 million in 2007 to \$2 billion in 2008. DuPont Pioneer Hi-Bred announced a 20 percent increase for corn seed and 35 percent increase in soy seed in 2009 and is projecting "double-digit seed price increases" between 2009 and 2013.

High-Priced Herbicides

The price of GM-affiliated herbicides has risen as well; between 2006 and 2009, Roundup prices nearly doubled from between \$11-\$13 to more than \$20 a gallon. Although GM proponents contend that farmers save on herbicides designed for GM crops, the savings per acre may be less than the increased cost of GM seeds. At most, farmers saved from \$3 to \$20 per acre on lower herbicide costs for GM soybean cultivation but GM soybean seed can cost about \$23 more per acre than conventional seed, meaning the higher seed costs exceed the herbicide savings.

Patent Suits Against Farmers

Farmers pay a licensing fee to use patented seeds and sign a contract with the biotechnology company that gives the farmer limited permission to plant the patented seeds for a single crop season. The licenses typically prohibit the common and traditional practice of saving seeds from harvested crops to plant the next season, require farmers to follow specific farming practices and sell in specific markets, and allow the company to inspect their fields.

The biotech companies zealously pursue anyone that may be violating the license agreement or

Tell the USDA to Protect Organic and Reject Monsanto's GE Alfalfa!

Re: APHIS-2007-0044

(Ideas for Letter to USDA:
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 21250)

As a consumer, I urge you to reject Monsanto's GE alfalfa. I care about the integrity of the food I eat and don't want organic and other non-genetically engineered crops to be contaminated by genetically engineered alfalfa.

Specifically, in regards to Docket: APHIS-2007-0044, I suggest you not approve GE alfalfa for the following reasons:

The USDA's draft Environmental Impact Statement dismisses the significance of widespread contamination of organic and non-genetically engineered alfalfa crops and further dismisses organic consumers' interest in maintaining the integrity of organic crops.

Consumers have a right to choose to eat non-genetically engineered foods and farmers have a right to sow the crops of their choice, without threat of contamination. The approval of genetically engineered alfalfa will inevitably lead to contamination of other crops and the food supply.

Therefore, I urge you to reject the approval of genetically engineered alfalfa.

Sincerely,

infringing on their patents. Monsanto has hired private investigators to videotape farmers, infiltrate community meetings and interview informants about local farming activities. Monsanto even has a toll-free 800 number to encourage farmers to rat out their neighbors for "seed piracy."

By October 2007, Monsanto had filed 112 lawsuits against farmers for patent infringement, recovering between \$85.7 and \$160.6 million from farmers in court rulings and out-of-court settlements. It is well-documented that a farmer's field could be inadvertently contaminated with GM material through cross-pollination and seed dispersal and at least one farmer contends he was sued when his fields were inadvertently contaminated with GM crops from neighboring farms.

GM Crops Have Not Demonstrated Higher Yields

The USDA has admitted, "Currently available [genetically engineered] crops do not increase the yield potential of a hybrid variety." Theoretically, the pest and herbicide resistance bred into the crops elevates yields by helping farmers combat yield-depressing insect and weed infestations. Farmers have not seen better yields from GM crops because the seeds are not designed to increase yields and because weeds and insects are developing resistance to the technology.

Improved yields cannot be attributed to biotechnology since corn and soybean yields have not increased faster since GM seeds were introduced. Average corn yields increased by 2.7 percent between 1995 and 2009, matching the 2.7 percent yield increase between 1981 and 1995, before GM seeds were available. Soybean yields increased faster between 1981 and 1995 (2.1 percent annually) before GM but yields rose only 1.6 percent between 1995 and 2009.

A 2009 Union of Concerned Scientists survey of yield studies found little difference between GM and non-GM crops. It found herbicide-tolerant corn and soybeans had no yield increase over non-GM crops but found a slight yield advantage (3 to 4 percent) for insect-resistant corn.

These findings are consistent with a decade of research.

A USDA survey of yield studies found that herbicide-tolerant, biotech corn seeds did not increase yields for farmers. GM soybeans routinely have lower yields than non-GM soybeans. A 2007 Kansas State University

study found that conventional fields produced 10 percent more than biotech soybean fields. A 2001 University of Nebraska study found that conventional lines had five percent higher yields than GM herbicide-resistant sister soybean lines; high-yield conventional soybean lines had 10 percent higher yields than the GM fields. A University of Saskatchewan study found that conventional canola had 8.2 percent higher yields than Roundup Ready canola.

Exports Can be Destroyed by Accidental GM Contamination

Despite the U.S.'s advanced grain-handling system, GM crops routinely contaminate non-GM crops, devastating U.S. exports. The Government Accountability Office found six known unauthorized releases of GM crops between 2000 and 2008.

In 2000, GM Starlink corn, which had only been approved for animal feed or industrial use, was discovered in retail food products. Although Starlink was less than one percent of corn cultivation, it was found in 70 percent of samples tested by Japan. After the Starlink contamination discovery, Europe banned all corn imports from the United States, costing farmers \$300 million annually.

In 2005, the United States again inadvertently exported GM corn, igniting a backlash that could have affected \$1.9 billion worth of exports. In August 2006, USDA admitted that unapproved GM rice had been found in non-GM rice stocks. Japan immediately halted all U.S. rice imports and Europe imposed heavy restrictions; in total, the event cost the U.S. rice industry \$1.2 billion.

In 2007, the European Union discovered that certified GM-free corn-based feed tested positive for GM. The frequent regulatory failure to prevent unauthorized releases of unapproved genetically modified food crops is cited as evidence that the United States cannot effectively manage GM crops.

The Heavy Ecological Footprint of GM Crops

Biotechnology proponents contend that GM crops are more environmentally sustainable because the insect- and herbicide-resistant traits reduce the application of agrochemicals and encourage erosion-reducing conservation plowing. The real ecological implications of biotechnology are less rosy. Herbi-

cide-tolerant GM crops are designed to be sprayed with chemical weed killer, most frequently glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup.

A dozen years after GM crops were introduced commercially, weeds and insects have already become resistant to the genetic traits that are intended to prevent infestations. This reduces farm yields and encourages farmers to apply more and more potent herbicides and pesticides.

Widespread Resistance to GM-Affiliated Herbicides

The most common biotech crops are genetically bred to withstand the application of herbicides. By 2009, glyphosate (Roundup) was applied to 110 million acres of U.S. cropland in America. Ubiquitous glyphosate application has led to widespread weed resistance, which can lead to higher herbicide applications and lower yields.

At least eight weed species in the United States (and 15 worldwide) have been confirmed to be resistant to glyphosate, including several aggressive crop weeds like ragweed, mare's tail and waterhemp. University of Guelph, Canada researchers discovered glyphosate-resistant giant ragweed that can endure herbicide applications that kill off non-resistant ragweed.

A 2009 Purdue University study found that glyphosate-tolerant mare's tail could "reach staggering levels of infestation in about two years after it is first detected."

Some waterhemp has already become resistant to glyphosate. By 2008, glyphosate-resistant weeds infested at least 2.4 million acres in the United States.

When weeds develop a widespread tolerance to the affiliated GM herbicide, any benefit of the biotech crop evaporates. Glyphosate resistance leaves farmers dependent on an herbicide that is no more effective in controlling weeds like mare's tail than before the herbicide-resistant trait was introduced in 1996. Increased density of glyphosate-resistant weeds in GM fields can reduce yields.

Purdue University scientists found that Roundup-resistant ragweed can cause 100 percent corn crop losses in the Eastern corn belt. Cotton farmers in Southern states have increased herbicide applications and abandoned conservation tillage practices to counter glyphosate resistance.

Insects Developing Resistance to Insect-Tolerant GM Crops

Key crop pests have already developed resistance to the biotech crops spliced with *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a type of soil bacteria known as Bt that is toxic to insects.

University of Arizona researchers found that seven years after insect-resistant Bt cotton was introduced, cotton bollworms were developing resistance to the toxin that was being passed on to offspring — even offspring from Bt-susceptible moths, meaning that Bt resistance was a dominant trait that could rapidly evolve.

A University of Missouri entomologist found that corn rootworms could pass on Bt resistance to their offspring that are considerably more resistant to the GM crop than the offspring of corn rootworm beetles that had not been exposed to Bt crops.

Agrochemical Applications Rise

One of the purported benefits of biotech crops is reduced application of agro-chemicals. Herbicide-resistant crops rely on affiliated herbicide applications but proponents contend that these crops use fewer overall applications of herbicides. But total herbicide use can increase with herbicide-tolerant crops. Farmers increase application of the herbicide tied to the crop trait even though they may reduce the application of other herbicides. The 138-million-pound increase in herbicide applications overwhelmed the 16 million pound decline in insecticide applications attributable to Bt corn and cotton.

The former agriculture director of National Academy of Sciences found that Roundup Ready soybeans "clearly require more herbicides than conventional soybeans." USDA found that herbicide-tolerant soybean cultivation increased active pounds of herbicide by three percent. Since 1994 glyphosate use on soybeans, corn and cotton increased 15-fold to 119 million pounds in 2005.

Increased weed and pest tolerance to the genetically modified traits has forced farmers to increase agro-chemical applications to combat the GM-resistant infestations.

Between 2002 and 2006, in addition to glyphosate applications, the amount of the herbicide 2,4-D applied to soybeans to combat weeds doubled. Non-glyphosate herbicide applications on corn rose by 5 percent from 2002 to 2005 — the application of atrazine alone rose by 12 percent. This increased agro-chemical use can run off farm fields, pollute water and degrade soil.

Consumer Choice, Food Allergies and Uncertainty Surrounding Safety of GM Food

Most biotech crops are not eaten directly by consumers — they are fed to livestock or manufactured into processed food ingredients. The long-term health effects of consuming biotech foods that have only been on the market a dozen years are unknown. Some studies suggest that there could be uncertain health risks associated with consuming GM foods.

Europe and Japan have not approved biotech foods because of uncertainty over the safety of the products for human and animal consumption. Genetically modified food can pose ethical concerns for some consumers.

Crossing traits from one plant to another could expose consumers to allergens. Many vegetarians will not eat food genetically modified with genes from animals, while some Jewish and Muslim consumers object to GM for a variety of reasons, including the potential insertion of hog genes into their food.

Risk of Biotech Allergic Reactions

GM crops can cause allergies through the inclusion of foreign proteins that have known or unknown effects on humans. The GM corn variety StarLink was not approved for human consumption because of allergenicity concerns and in 2000 it was found in supermarket products. *A New England Journal of Medicine* study found that soybeans modified with Brazil nut proteins could cause allergic reactions for consumers with Brazil nut allergies

Grassroots Power



Photo Courtesy SIB

Andean condor soars over the Parque Nacional Quebrada del Condorito in Argentina.

U.S. and Argentina Sign Pact to Conserve Condors

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 19, 2010 (ENS) — Two of the world's largest and most endangered birds — the California condor and the Andean condor — are expected to benefit from a sister park agreement by the directors of the U.S. National Park Service and Argentina's Administracion de Parques Nacionales.

This formal partnership signed Friday unites Pinnacles National Monument in California and Parque Nacional Quebrada del Condorito in Cordoba to strengthen condor conservation efforts at both sites.

"These two national parks are located in different countries but are connected by their efforts to protect similar resources," said National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis.

"They have comparable terrain and features but, most importantly, they have both played a vital role in the return of the condor," Jarvis said. "Due to incredible conservation efforts at and between the parks, the majestic bird once again soars over these areas."

"These two parks have already shared scientific expertise while working together on condor recovery projects," said Administracion de Parques Nacionales President Dr. Patricia Gandini.

"This pact will enable us to continue to coordinate information and research efforts on common issues including resource

protection, educational programs and community outreach," she said.

The California condor, *Gymnogyps californianus*, is the largest North American land bird. These birds weigh about 20 pounds with a nine-foot wingspan and can glide for miles without flapping their wings.

Due to poaching, lead poisoning and habitat destruction, by 1982 only 22 California condors existed and a conservation plan was hatched to capture and breed the species.

Today, Pinnacles National Monument is inhabited by 28 of the world's 189 free-flying California condors.

Lead poisoning is still the biggest threat facing the recovery of the California condor, say biologists at Pinnacles. Condors are vultures that live mostly on carrion. The primary source of lead is from spent ammunition that remains in carcasses after they are shot. Even small fragments of lead can sicken or kill a condor.

The Andean condor, *Vultur gryphus*, is the largest flying bird on Earth, weighing up to 33 pounds (15 kilograms), with a 10-foot wingspan.

It is a national symbol of Argentina and plays an important role in South American folklore and mythology as does the California condor in its native range.

The Andean condor occurs throughout the Andes mountain

range, in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay south to Argentina and Chile.

Listed as Near Threatened by the IUCN Red List of Threatened species, it is at risk mostly in the north of its range and is rare in Venezuela and Colombia, where a re-introduction program using captive-bred birds is in operation. A similar project is underway in Argentina.

Increased tourism in parts of Chile and Argentina may have led to a reduction in persecution by demonstrating the ecotourism value of the species.

A mating pair produces only a single offspring every other year and both parents must care for their young for a full year.

Both California and Andean condors are among the world's longest-lived birds — they can live up to 50 years in the wild...

This is the first sister park partnership to form under an official Memorandum of Understanding signed between the National Park Service and the Administracion de Parques Nacionales in 1997. Officials said they hope that the bilateral agreement is the first step in reinvigorating cooperation in park matters between the two nations.

The U.S. National Park Service currently has 37 sister park relationships between U.S. and foreign protected areas that share similar natural or cultural resources and/or management issues.

USDA Drops "Big Brother" National Animal ID Program

Victory of the Week

Organic Consumers Association
February 11, 2010

Under pressure from small farmers and organic consumers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced on February 5, 2010 that it is suspending its controversial National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and offering a new approach to tracking animal disease and food contamination.

This is a major victory for the Organic Consumers Association, our allies and organic farmers and ranchers who have complained that the USDA's goal of tagging every farm animal in the country wouldn't do anything to prevent disease, would be unnecessary and expensive for small and organic farmers and couldn't be enforced without violations of privacy and religion.

Already, the implementation of NAIS in Wisconsin has resulted in an Amish farmer and a small-scale cattle rancher being charged and fined for not registering and, in Michigan, a cattle farmer's herd was put under quarantine and forcibly tagged when he wouldn't submit to the state's mandatory NAIS program.

The National Animal Identification System (NAIS) was designed to identify all livestock animals and poultry and track their movements. If the program had been fully implemented, the USDA claims that NAIS would have been able to identify all premises on which animals and poultry are located and all animals that have had contact with a disease of concern, within 48 hours of discovery.

In reality, NAIS would have



Photo Courtesy of OCA

Plans to tag all livestock animals and poultry have been defeated through strong grassroots efforts.

provided no food safety benefit and would have threatened small-scale organic farmers and ranchers, while accelerating farm consolidation and benefiting factory farms.

More From the Farm & Ranch Freedom Alliance

This is a major victory for the grassroots! Thank you to the thousands of people who called, wrote, organized meetings and more. Dozens of organizations from across the country and the full range of the political spectrum worked together on this common cause. And we succeeded in making our voices heard.

USDA has stated that it is refocusing its efforts on "a new, flexible framework" that will apply only to animals moved in interstate commerce and encourage the use of "lower-cost" technology.

During today's conference call with USDA, I asked whether

the agency would continue using federal funding to pressure states to adopt the program through cooperative agreements. In response, Secretary Vilsack stated that USDA has gotten a "failing grade" on NAIS and that he does NOT intend to try to implement it through the back door.

We still have more work in front of us. As USDA develops its new framework, we must be involved and vocal, so that agribusiness does not develop yet another high-tech, big-industry boondoggle. We must be active at the state level to ensure that the state agencies do not implement unnecessary and burdensome rules. And we must work to roll back the unfair requirements that have already been implemented in Wisconsin and Michigan.

Ultimately, it is up to us — as animal owners, homesteaders, farmers, ranchers and consumers — to build a positive vision for our farms and our food.

LIST OF ADDITIVES ALLOWED IN MEAT & POULTRY (YUM!)

By Jill Richardson
AlterNet.org, February 10, 2010
Speak Easy Blog

Want to know what's in your meat and/or poultry? The government's got a new 40-page PDF document with a complete list of allowed additives at www.fsis.usda.gov/oppd/rdad/FSISdirectory/7120.1Rev1.pdf. And, to help you decipher the list, they also provide a Glossary of Commonly-Used Meat and Poultry Additives and Terms. FSIS stands for Food Safety and Inspection Service and the document is called "Safe and Suitable Ingredients Used in the Production of Meat and Poultry Products."

Here's a sampling of what you'll find in meat and poultry. By the way, many of these chemicals do not need to be labeled on the products you purchase. Honestly, some of these things might be harmless. Even water can sound like a dangerous chemical if you refer to it as dihydrogen oxide. But the sheer length of this list as well as the fact that consumers are in the dark about most of them makes me very glad that I'm a vegetarian and that what little meat I've eaten in the past several years came directly from farmers I know.

Acidifiers: Ammonium hydroxide, an aqueous solution of acidic calcium sulfate; an aqueous solution of hydrochloric and acetic acid; an aqueous solution of citric and hydrochloric acid; an aqueous solution of citric acid, hydrochloric acid and

phosphoric acid; an aqueous solution of sulfuric acid, citric acid and phosphoric acid; sodium bisulfate and sulfuric acid.

Anticoagulants: Sodium tripolyphosphate

Antimicrobials: An aqueous solution of sodium diacetate (4%), lactic acid, (4%), pectin (2%), and acetic acid (0.5%); an aqueous solution of sodium octanoate or octanoic acid and either glycerin and/or propylene glycol and/or Polysorbate surface active agent (quantity sufficient to achieve the technical effect of octanoic acid emulsification) adjusted to a final solution pH of 1.5 to 4.0 using sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide or an acceptable GRAS [generally regarded as safe] acid; (the list goes on for many pages and includes such gems as anhydrous ammonia and chlorine gas) . . .

Antioxidants: BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole), BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene)

Binders: A mix of sodium alginate, calcium sulfate, glucono deltalactone and sodium pyrophosphate; a mixture of carrageenan, whey, protein concentrate and xanthan gum; beef collagen; carrot fiber; cellulose, powdered conforming to the specifications in the Food Chemicals Codex 5th Edition; guar powder, micronized; hydroxypropyl methylcellulose; inulin; konjac flour; methyl-

cellulose; oat hull fiber; oat fiber; orange pulp, dried; orange pulp, dried and orange pulp, dried with guar gum; partially hydrolyzed proteins; pectin; pork collagen; pork skin proteins; rice bran; rice starch; sodium alginate; "(species) protein" (e.g., chicken protein); transglutaminase enzyme; trehalose, xanthan gum (purified by recovery with ethyl alcohol).

Colorings: Carmine (cochineal)

Curing Accelerators (Must be used only in combination with curing agents.): Potassium erythorbate

Denuding agents (May be used in combination. Must be removed from tripe by rinsing with potable water.): Calcium carbonate, calcium citrate, calcium hydroxide, potassium carbonate, potassium citrate, potassium hydroxide, tricalcium phosphate, tropotassium phosphate

That's just the first 24 pages or so. The list goes on with film forming agents, flavoring agents, "Miscellaneous," packaging systems, poultry scald agents and tenderizing agents. Yum!

Jill Richardson got involved in food policy activism after working for several years in health care and observing the high rate of diet-related chronic illness among the American patient population. She blogs at La Vida Locavore and her first book is [Recipe for America: Why Our Food System is Broken and What We Can Do To Fix It](#).

Massive Nevada Water Siphon Stopped

Center for Biological Diversity
February 11, 2010

In a huge win for the driest North American desert and the species that call it home, the Nevada Supreme Court has overturned dozens of water-rights applications to pump groundwater up to 300 miles to temporarily shore up unsustainable growth in Las Vegas.

If the Southern Nevada Water Authority were to mine the groundwater as intended, it would

cause widespread desertification and would likely drive extinct desert springsnails and endangered fish like the Moapa dace.

The court's ruling is a result of a lawsuit by the Great Basin Water Network — a coalition of groups including the Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife. The Water Network plans to file protests against any water rights re-filed.

"Justice has prevailed for now," said Rob Mrowka, the Center's Nevada conservation advocate.

"This decision in the state supreme court is a significant victory for the environment, the affected rural communities in Nevada and Utah, and due process and equal access to government.

"Maybe most importantly, it allows the Clark County Commission and other local government members of the Southern Nevada Water Authority to step back and open a dialogue with the residents of Las Vegas to establish a vision and plan for long-term sustainability."

BOLIVIA: Unprecedented Gender Parity in Cabinet

By Franz Chávez
IPS Gender Wire

LA PAZ, January 27, 2010 (IPS, *excerpt*) — Evo Morales began his second term as president of Bolivia by swearing in a cabinet made up of an equal number of women and men — unprecedented in this South American nation with a strong patriarchal tradition.

"My great dream has come true: half of the members of my cabinet are women and half are men," said a visibly moved Morales when he presented his new team of ministers Saturday, the day after he was sworn in to a second term.

"This was an impressive surprise," Jimena Leonardo, one of the heads of the Bartolina Sisa federation of peasant women of La Paz, told IPS. Three of the 10 female members of the cabinet are indigenous social activists.

The 50-year-old Morales, the first indigenous president in this country where Amerindians make up over 60 percent of the population, said that since his days as a rural trade union leader, he had stressed the need for women's participation in top posts to be "chacha-warmi," which means roughly fifty-fifty in Aymara, his mother tongue.

Bolivia has thus become the

second country in Latin America (after Chile) to have a cabinet with gender parity, said Mónica Novillo, head of advocacy and lobbying for the *Coordinadora de la Mujer*, a Bolivian umbrella organization of more than 200 women's groups.

Referring to the new constitution that took effect in February 2009, Novillo told IPS that "this was a promise that President Morales made when the new constitution was enacted, which has been fulfilled with the swearing in of the new cabinet."

Noting that the women in his 20-member cabinet include "singers, lawyers, activists and social leaders, economists, doctors and workers," the president highlighted the fact that Bolivia will have a female labor minister for the first time ever — while calling on trade unionists not to protest the historic appointment.

Novillo pointed out that there are now twice as many women in Morales' cabinet, compared to his first term, which began in January 2006.

The leftist leader was reelected — to a five instead of four-year term under the new constitution — in an unparalleled landslide victory with 64 percent of the vote on December 6th. She added that gender parity in the three branches of the state is a

long-time demand of the women's movement.

The new constitution, which guarantees equal rights for men and women, empowers both women and the country's historically downtrodden indigenous majority.

The naming of 10 women ministers was preceded by the election of a female legislator, Ana María Romero of the governing Movement to Socialism (MAS) party, as the powerful president of the Senate — another milestone for gender equality touted by Morales.

The proportion of women in the new parliament — in which the total number of legislators was expanded under the new constitution — will be double what it was in the previous Congress: 46 out of 166 seats (28 percent), compared to 22 out of 157 seats (14 percent) . . .

Women do not get half the media's attention or an equal voice in expression — only 22 percent of the voices you hear and read in the news today are women's. In its analyses IPS redresses this huge imbalance — covering emerging and front-line issues while asking an often forgotten question: What does this mean for women and girls?

Big Business Has No Solutions. Now What?

ADM Tries to Take Down Funny Yes Men Video

A legal complaint from agribusiness giant ADM (Archer Daniels Midland) has resulted in the removal from YouTube of a fake video of ADM's CEO making over-honest pronouncements. (The video is still available for download at <http://www.we-forum.org/en/events/AnnualMeeting2010/index.shtml>.)

The filmmaking team behind

"The End of Poverty?" partnered with the Yes Men to create a parallel, imaginary World Economic Forum in which world leaders came up with real solutions to poverty. The leaders seemed, in a series of videos, to be supporting a set of initiatives based on 10 Solutions to End Poverty, a petition for which the filmmakers are trying to get ten million signatures by the end of 2010.

Each of those initiatives' pages has links to organizations that are fighting hard for change on these issues.

In contrast, the actual World Economic Forum ended Sunday with a profound lack of results, some seemingly satirical but all-too-real headlines (like Goldman Sachs's Lloyd Blankfein's rumored \$100 million bonus) and one fruitless complaint to YouTube.

"If we can bail out bankers to the tune of trillions of dollars, surely we can solve poverty, which will just take a few structural changes, plus a whole lot less money," said Beth Portello, the producer of "The End of Poverty?"

Grassroots Power

Activists/Students Track Weapons of Mass Destruction in Nation's Capital



75 mm Round Found Under Entrance to Public Safety Building



Unearthed Jugs Might Point to Larger Arms Cache from WWI in D.C.

By Christopher Cottrell
The Eagle (American University: January 31, 2010)

The Army Corps of Engineers unearthed three broken glass jugs on January 25th at their "Pit 3" investigation at 4825 Glenbrook Road N.W., a Corps spokesman told *The Eagle* (American University's paper).

The find has generated questions as to whether a long-sought-after munitions cache, known as the "Sgt. Maurer burial pit," has finally been located.

An environmental specialist for the District Department of the Environment's Toxic Substance division, Dr. Richard Albright, told *The Eagle* that rumors of the munitions cache have been based on aerial photography and World War I-era photos depicting Army Sergeant C. W. Maurer standing amid approximately 30 glass jugs similar to the ones found last Monday and possibly filled with the chemical agent mustard.

A hand-written caption on the back of one of the photos identifies the pictured jugs to be filled with "mustard." Maurer wrote that he was burying the jugs in "Death Valley," in this "hole called Hades," according to Albright. Albright said nine or 10 photos exist in all, some of which show sheds in the background that are known to have been used as toxic chemical storage facilities.

When Albright and a colleague from the Environmental Photographic Interpretation Center obtained copies of Sgt. Maurer's photos in 1997, they analyzed them along with old aerial photography and determined the pit's location to be somewhere within the 4825 Glenbrook Road N.W. property.

This analysis played a central role in convincing the Army Corps to pursue further investigations in Spring Valley, Albright said.

Corps spokesman Clem Gaines said he could not speculate if the recent find was actually part of a larger cache.

"The answer is we really don't know," he said. "We could have [found it] or it could have been someplace else."

An initial analysis revealed no chemical traces on the jugs, which will be treated as normal glassware debris, according to Gaines. "We have always said that attempting to name a pit the 'Sgt. Maurer pit' is a difficult task," he added. "It could be Pit 1, 2 or 3, or it could be a pit that, over the years, has been demolished by all the development in the Glenbrook Road area."

Pits 1 and 2 refer to past Army Corps investigations at 4801 Glenbrook Road N.W. across the street from the 4825 property.

But Albright believes that during World War I, the Army used the area as a larger disposal pit for laboratory and munitions debris rather than just a pit for the glass jugs,



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
BALTIMORE DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
Engineering Division
10 South Howard Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

02 FEB 2010

MEMORANDUM: For Record

FROM: Daniel Noble, Spring Valley Project Manager

SUBJECT: 4825 Glenbrook Road Items Recovered Week of 25 JAN 2010

- On Monday, January 25, while digging in the front yard at 4825 Glenbrook, our crews recovered a modest collection of broken glass pieces, obviously from fairly large size containers (3 to 5 gallon). What made the find interesting was that 3 of the pieces were bottle necks....they look very much like they could have come from bottles of the kind visible in the Sgt. Maurer photo.
- On Tuesday morning, the Corps shared that photo with Steve Hirsh of EPA and Jim Sweeney of DDOE and noted the similarity to the glass containers in the Maurer photo. At that time, we were in the process of testing the glass to see if residual chemical agent could be detected on the pieces; but I had no results.
- Two reporters from separate news organizations (one the Current) sent the photo to the Corps Public Affairs Office and asked for information on it - at a time when I didn't really have any further information to share. The Corps responded to the press outlets that we were in the process of obtaining more information on the items, and didn't have any comment on them at this time.
- The Current decided to run the story without comment from the Corps.
- If I can put a couple of things in perspective; we have found a small amount of glassware that very much resembles the type of container seen in the Maurer photo.
- What we don't know, and no one will ever be able to know, is whether these containers are absolutely the ones seen in the photo (the glass we recovered tested clear for chemical agent), nor do we know much about where the glass that we found was originally deposited in the WWI era, there has simply been too much disturbance and soil movement at this location from post WWI real estate development.
- We have NOT, at this time, located another disposal pit. We have found a small glass debris field, and are recovering other laboratory glass items as we work our way through it.

and that most of the debris has not been found.

"I don't think they got hauled away," he said. "I think that the bulk of that pit [the workers] didn't get to."

He said it is likely the construction workers who erected the building at 4825 Glenbrook Road ran into World War I-era glassware but reburied it underneath or beside the house's foundation. "They probably buried them in the deepest part of the pit," he said, adding that while it is possible the contractors hauled away all the glassware they recovered, it is highly unlikely.

"I kind of think that quantity would've caused some real serious problems," he said. "Some worker somewhere would've been overcome and you'd have dead bodies following the truck."

Over the course of their Pit 3 investigation, the Corps has found debris ranging from harmless glassware to intact bottles

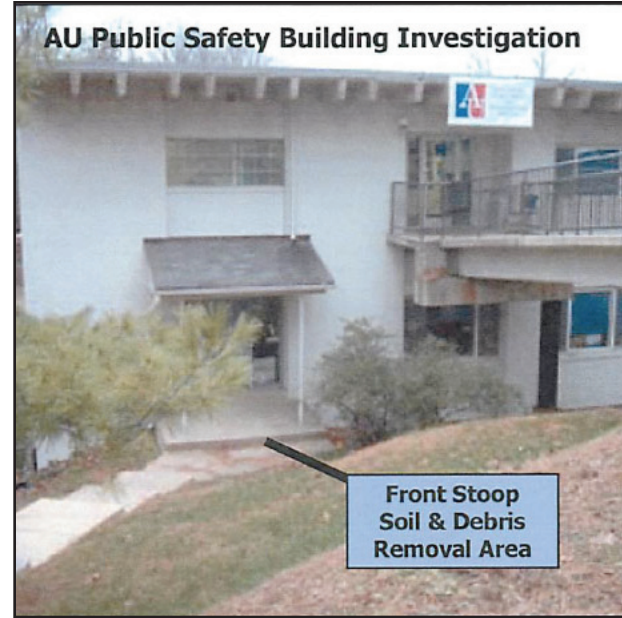


filled with mustard agent and lewisite.

"When we do our operations, we want to find these materials," Gaines said. "We expect to find debris and our mission is to investigate, remediate and remove or clean up any debris left over from [Department of Defense] activities."

Albright conveyed his sympathies to American University, which volunteered its campus to be used as an experimental station for the Army's Chemical Corps during World War I.

"They tried to do the patriotic thing in 1917 and now I'm sure they're still ruing that decision," he said.



By Christopher Cottrell
The Eagle, (American University: January 20, 2010)

The Army Corps of Engineers unearthed more munitions debris next to the Public Safety Building during this winter break.

On January 4th, workers found a single 75mm round buried four feet underneath a concrete slab that they had removed in front of the building's lower entrance, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager Dan Noble. Although heavily corroded and empty, the projectile was still largely intact.

Noble said the round was a "closed cavity item," or had an internal space that was totally sealed off. Such items undergo an X-ray and, if determined to be empty, a subsequent destruction process eliminating potential trace chemicals.

David Taylor, President Neil Kerwin's chief of staff, confirmed that the operation around Public Safety remains "low probability," meaning it will be conducted without a vapor or blast containment structure in place and without a safety boundary established.

Noble's team decided to investigate under the pathway leading to the lower entrance after initial investigations in the area revealed high levels of metals in the soil, he said. Noble also mentioned that the Corps had consulted the university administration to determine a time period that would be appropriate.

Safety regulations require the Public Safety Building to have at least two open entrances and the ongoing "Lot 18" investigation (the area under construction behind the building) forced workers to wait until the back entrance was made accessible before they could continue out front.

Since the onset of its "Lot 18" investigation, the Corps has uncovered "tons and tons" of debris, according to Noble. This has included everything from inconsequential laboratory glassware to a bottle of lewisite, a blister agent with an LD50, or median lethal dose, that is 100 times more potent than regular chemical agent mustard.

Kent Slowinski, a community activist and former Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) member, said recent work conducted by the Army Corps indicates a likelihood that the debris field around the Public Safety Building extends underneath the building because debris from the American University Experimental Station has been found behind and in front of it.

Most of the debris items, however, have been regarded as harmless scraps, Noble said. At previous RAB meetings, Noble has said one option for the Corps to investigate underneath the Public Safety Building would be a technique called horizontal drilling, which would allow the Corps to remove cylindrical soil samples from the earth under the building without disturbing the structure.

Skeptics of this method have raised concerns at previous RAB meetings that the risk of the Corps' potentially missing something is too high. Slowinski said he thought this type of drilling would be dangerous, especially if there were more munitions below the building. "First of all, you're sampling blind," he said. "You don't know what you're going to run into."

But Noble added that his team wants to finish all the digging around the building before commencing any further phases of their investigation.

Taylor confirmed that the operation is "winding down," but that debris collection is ongoing.

Noble also dismissed any apprehension one might have about drilling horizontally under the building. "If we thought there was that kind of a hazard, we wouldn't do horizontal drilling," he said. "Based on everything we've found in the debris areas around the building ... we feel confident that we can drill through it."

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Grassroots Power

Ocean Whaling Battle

Continued from page 6

land expedition sailed from Wellington Tuesday to study humpback whales, Antarctic minke whales and blue whales in the Ross Sea and the adjacent Southern Ocean off southeastern Antarctica, thousands of kilometers from the scene of the Sea Shepherd-Japanese clash.

Led by the Australian Antarctic Division's Dr. Nick Gales, the Australian, New Zealand and French research teams are sailing aboard the New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research ship Tangaroa. They plan to use acoustic surveys, cameras and darts to take biopsy samples of whales they encounter on their six-week voyage.

More than one hundred satellite tags will be deployed onto the whales to enable researchers to keep track of their movements over the coming months as they head north to their breeding grounds.

Australian Environment Minister Peter Garrett said the non-lethal research will improve the understanding of the population structure, abundance, trends, distribution and ecological role of whales in the Southern Ocean.

A \$32 million investment by Australia includes over \$14 million to kick start the Southern Ocean Research Partnership. In March 2009, 13 countries developed a non-lethal research plan which has been endorsed as part of the scientific work program of the International Whaling Commission.

Besides Australia and New Zealand, committed research partners include Argentina, Chile, Brazil, South Africa, France and the United States. "I encourage other countries, including Japan, to consider participating in this important initiative," said Garrett. Preliminary results of the expedition will be presented at the IWC annual meeting in Morocco in June.



Photo Courtesy Institute of Cetacean Research

The Sea Shepherd ship Bob Barker shoots a laser beam.



Photo by Adam and Debbie Purser of Classic Sailing

A humpback whale off Trinity Island in Antarctica.



Image From Office Publisher

From the Darkness Into The Light

By Hillary Banachowski, New Market, Maryland

once upon a time, the world was in darkness
on a night much like tonight
but i'm not talking about just the absence of light

i'm talking about the darkness of greed and destruction
and how the earth people fell prey to ignorance and corruption
you see they strayed so far from their earthly connection
far from sweet mama earth and her loving protection

they forgot about their oneness with the plants and the trees
with their brothers and their sisters, the birds and the bees
and the people now prayed to the god of stuff
sleep walking through life never having enough

till the land became poisoned and the water and the air
and mama earth she rose up in anger and despair
the storms they did rage and the flood waters flowed
and the planet got hotter and the flowers wouldn't grow

she cried "come back home my sweet children,
come back home to me
awaken from your slumber so that you can truly see
that we are all connected...every living thing, you and me"

"i am sick and in need of healing only you can provide"
and the earth people listened intently with their hearts open wide
and one by one they turned to each other and they cried
they knew her wisdom was true, it could not be denied

so when the great weeping had finally ceased
they took each other's hands in a circle of peace
they remembered their connection and they made a solemn vow
to restore this torn and tattered earth somehow, some how

and mama earth she was so happy and the people rejoiced
because they finally realized that they had a choice
so they chose to build a world where all of life was honored and respected
by holding everything as sacred, now all would be protected

and they turned from the darkness into the light
much like all of you on the darkest of nights
and when the sun rises tomorrow and brings a new day
what seeds will you sow? what part will you play?

because you see my friends, the great turning is no silly myth
we are living it right now...and it's not something to dismiss
so get up, speak out and do all that you can
because the future is in your hands !

Fishing Industry Killing World's Toothed Whales, Dolphins

BONN, Germany, February 5, 2010 (excerpt) — The Baiji dolphin, which used to live in the Yangtze River, is probably extinct and the Vaquita porpoise from the northern Gulf of California is facing the same fate, with only 150 individuals remaining in the wild. Entanglement in fishing gear has claimed an unsustainably high number of both species, concludes a new United Nations report released today.

In fact, entanglement and death in gillnets, purse-seine nets, traps, weirs, longlines and trawls threatens 86 percent of all toothed whale species, finds the report, posted on the Web site of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) often called the Bonn Convention after its headquarters' city.

This is a substantial increase in toothed whale species at risk of dying as fishing by-catch as compared to 2001, when by-catch was reported to affect 50 species or 70.4 percent of all toothed whales, says author Boris Culik.

Lack of food and forced changes in diet as a result of over-fishing pose additional threats to 13 of the world's 72 toothed whale species, his report finds.

This peer-reviewed encyclopedia on all 72 species of toothed whales

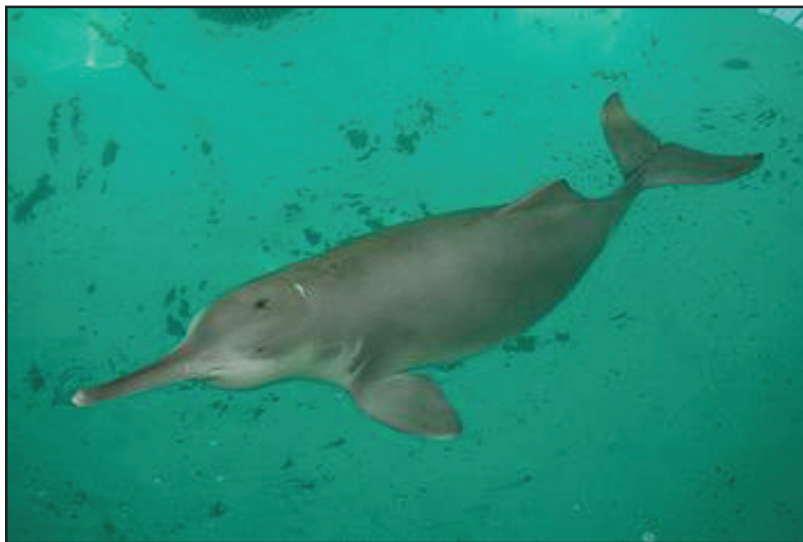


Photo Courtesy of CMS

The Yangtze dolphin, or Baiji, is now considered extinct.

includes the most recent scientific findings on the distribution, migration, behavior and threats to this group of whales.

But for 41 of all toothed whales species, the assessment shows that human knowledge is too limited even to know if these species are threatened or not.

"During the International Year of Biodiversity, the Convention on Migratory Species continues to address major threats such as by-catch, ship strikes, ocean noise

impacts and climate change to safeguard these charismatic marine mammals," said UN Environment Programme/CMS Executive Secretary Elizabeth Mrema.

"Governments need to enhance their efforts towards implementing targeted action plans under the Convention," she said.

The report includes the sperm whale as the only large toothed whale as well as the Australian snubfin dolphin and the Guiana dolphin as new species . . .

The Earth Belong to Everyone 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 transformational 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, *Beyond Globalization* and *Building a Win-Win World*; member, President's Commission on Sustainable Development, founder, Ethical Markets TV.

The Earth Belongs to Everyone received the *Radical Middle Book Award*. The book is 360 pages long and includes photos and charts. To order 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.

The Earth Belongs to Everyone



Articles and Essays

by

ALANNA HARTZOK

