

# 28TH ANNUAL EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

April 24, Victory Park, Stockton

With every passing year, our fragile planet moves closer to the edge of catastrophic environmental change. And every day, we learn more and more how to change course to a more sustainable future.

Through the past 28 years, Stockton's annual Earth Day Festival has taken a local lead on showing how individual and collective efforts can make a difference. A true community event, free to the public and solely staffed by around 100 volunteers, for this special day, we can: enjoy a meat-free menu, dining on great all-vegetarian food; take part in interactive school activities; learn from informative agency and non-profit booths; and dance to great local entertainment.

Earth Day is a day to celebrate, appreciate, and learn about the only planet we have. We hope that you will come and take part in San Joaquin County's premier environmental event. And tell a friend.



- Earth Day Festival stage schedule
- 11:00 - 11:20 - Taiko Drummers
  - 11:20 - 12:15 - Brubeck Institute Jazz Quartet
  - 12:15 - 12:20 - Earth Day Poets
  - 12:20 - 1:15 - Pete Madsen (Americana & Blues guitar virtuoso)
  - 1:15 - 1:20 - Announcements
  - 1:20 - 2:15 - Covelo (Local jam rock with Erin Odessa)
  - 2:15 - 2:35 - Teacher Awards
  - 2:35 - 2:55 - One Unit (one.Charter VAPA ensemble)
  - 2:55 - 3:00 - Announcements
  - 3:00 - 4:00 - Darien Fields Band (Stockton native and Nashville resident)
  - 4:00 - 4:30 - Drum Circle

## Teacher grants from Earth Day Festival

The following teachers were each granted \$250 to carry out the ecoprojects below:

Teacher Name	School	District	# of Students	Grade
Lorena Sanchez	South West Park Elementary	TracyUSD	90	3rd grade
Ecology club will learn about recycling and create media to share with community				
Sandra Starr	Tokay High School	Lodi USD	30	High school
Go-Green and x-STEM clubs will build 15 K'NEX renewable energy models and share them with the community at the NorCal Science & Tech Festival				
John Curley	French Camp	Manteca USD	600	all students at school
Resurrect unused school garden with a raised bed for each class at the school, learning about composting and plant growth and water usage				
Tammy Voss	one.Charter TLC Elementary	SJCOE	15-20	1st – 3rd grades
Students study pollution, then raise salmon and take a field trip to the Moklumne river hatchery to release the fish				
Wanda Pardini and Diana Chavez	Don Riggio	Lincoln USD	48	kindergarteners
Day in the Delta for three classes, exploring the Calaveras and learning about the animals and health of our waterways.				



### SAVE THE DATES

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## Editors Letter

BRUCE GIUDICI

Where I work, it's open enrollment time - a time when our health insurance broker breaks the always-bad-news that, well, health insurance premiums are going up again. Never down, always up - this time an unbelievable 39%. It doesn't help that our agency is based in two rural counties that are ill-served by major insurance corporations anyway - nor that our agency has few employees (around 100), which lessens our bargaining power. And yet, when a \$3,500 deductible plan for a family costs \$1,950 a month (at \$11.25/hour, more than the minimum wage - just for a poor health insurance plan), you have to wonder why on earth we have this system.

Well, it starts with the insurance company itself - which sent out a 55 page proposal outlining just how many ways they planned to rip us off - tables on drug plans, copays and deductibles - always less for us, more for them. Once the plan is inked (and it is assured that there will be no competitive bids in our area - and if there were, there is little incentive for us to change insurance carriers, due to the god-awful hassle of our employees checking to see if their existing clinics, hospitals, doctors, meds, and labs would be included in a new network), then the big swindle is on: after paying the huge monthly premium, employees can barely afford to use the services because of the huge deductible.

And, when they do visit the doctor, inevitably there will be either an argument whether this or that service is covered or there will be an error in the billing that will take months of phone calls to

resolve. Redundant and unnecessary tests will be ordered, which the provider will claim are standard and will cost the patient only a small co-pay - leaving unsaid that the bulk of the cost will be paid by the insurer, who will recover those costs and more the next time open enrollment rolls around.

Hospitals, doctors, nurses, medical suppliers, drug companies - all are paid inflated amounts because there is nothing to keep costs from rising (when was the last time you saw a hospital that didn't look like a palace?). Of course, not a single person in the system believes they are overpaid - but can they say that they could make anything close to their US income in any other country in the world for providing basic health care?

Aside from the basic provision of care, there is the pure waste in coming up with the billing proposals, that must be generated by highly paid staff on the insurer's side and evaluated by highly paid staff on the employer's side. Once the proposal is accepted, then there are the hours wasted in every company's personnel department signing up, changing and terminating employee's coverage. After that, there are the hours wasted in every payroll department, deducting the employee's portion, matching it to the employer's portion and adjusting for any changes that happen with an employee's coverage (add a baby, drop a spouse) - always a month or two late. If the employee has a family leave or disability, the employer has to set up a billing mechanism to get the employee's part of the premium to pass on to the insurer. The waste is enormous - when you consider this is being done

# When health insurance isn't health care

in every business, everywhere in a country of over 300 million people.

So, when someone says the rest of the world does just fine with a single payer system, I can't imagine why we do what we do in this country. People love their Medicare - which is more than I can say for their Blue Cross, Anthem and the rest. All I know is when premiums go up 39%, some people are going to drop coverage or be unable to pay for medical services when they need them. When that happens, there is a certainty that someone will be less healthy and a possibility that someone will die. If you generalize this over the entire nation, it is certain that people will die because of this affordability problem. And yet it is treated like it is something we can live with. Perhaps it is because the people making the decisions on health care will never have to decide whether to go to the doctor (paying against their high deductible) or pay rent or buy food. They will go to their doctor when they want to, regardless of the cost - because they are, how do you say...rich.

Our collective hope lies with the people leading the charge on a single-payer system in our community, our state and even running for president - and you. And while there are many important issues this election year, not all have a life-or-death pricetag. This is one. Enough is enough - time for some real change. Happy spring!

# Two phone calls for Peace in Palestine

There are two anti-BDS (Boycott Divestment and Sanctions) bills recently introduced in the California Assembly that seek to shield the Israeli government from the effects of BDS by restricting our freedom of speech and political protest. They must be stopped.

State Assemblymember Travis Allen thinks it's California's job to shield the Israeli government from critics by penalizing anyone who engages in 'politically motivated' boycotts as a nonviolent means to influence Israel to end its occupation and human rights abuses. Under two bills he has introduced, the state could not invest in entities that comply with foreign boycotts against Israel (AB 1551), and could not contract with entities that engage in 'discriminatory' boycotts (AB 1552). Although AB 1552 does not explicitly refer to Israel, Allen's press releases make clear that it is a companion bill to 1551 and their goals are the same.

Assemblymember Allen ignores that boycotts and other economic measures based on support for social justice are by nature 'politically motivated,' and have been recognized by the Supreme Court as political speech that 'occupies the highest rung of the hierarchy of First Amendment values.' See *NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware*, 458 U.S. 886 (1982). Regardless of one's views on Israel and Palestine, it would be blatantly unconstitutional for California to punish political speech by withholding the potential benefit of financial relationships with the state due to the speakers' viewpoints. See *Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois*, 497 US 62 (1990).

Boycotts aimed at securing civil and human rights are a venerable part of American history, beginning with the Boston Tea Party and through the Montgomery bus boycott against segregation, grape boycotts in support of farm labor rights, boycotts

of companies enabling South African apartheid, and current divestment campaigns against fossil fuel and private prison companies. The boycotts imposed by AB 1551 and 1552, however, not only do not seek to secure social justice, they aim to use the heavy hand of the state to unconstitutionally punish and silence those who do. Contrary to longstanding U.S. foreign policy AB 1551 includes as a prohibited target of boycott or divestment measures 'Israeli-controlled territories' - that is, the Palestinian territory under Israeli occupation for almost half a century. Successive U.S. administrations have reiterated that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegitimate and a serious 'obstacle to peace.'

In 2015, the State Department declared that the U.S. government 'has never defended or supported Israeli settlements or activity associated with them, and, by extension does not pursue policies or activities

that would legitimize them.' Neither should California. Who would be blacklisted? A growing number of businesses, major church denominations, charitable foundations, university student governments, unions, and socially responsible investors have all heeded the grassroots call to boycott or take other economic measures against companies and institutions complicit in Israel's human rights abuses. In addition, a number of multinational corporations under fire for such complicity have ended their business operations in the occupied Palestinian territories or in Israel altogether. All could be blacklisted by California under AB 1551 and/or AB 1552.

This would foreclose valuable investment opportunities for state pension funds, and would prohibit essential contractual relationships with, for example, large corporations, churches that run public charitable programs, and

contractors who employ workers represented by unions that have voted for divestment. California can do better. Similar legislation passed or pending in other states will likely be found constitutionally wanting. But California has the opportunity to lead the way in blocking the true agenda of such bills, which is to enforce uncritical support of Israeli policies. The Legislature must uphold precious constitutional liberties while acting in the best interests of the people of California and their democratic institutions.

*Action: Please call your local State Senator and Assemblyperson and ask them not to co-sponsor or vote for AB1551 and 1552. In Stockton, call Assembly Member Susan Eggman: (209) 948-7479 and Senator Cathleen Galgiani: (209) 948-7930.*



## CONNECTIONS

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# 100% renewable energy: what we can do in 10 years

The collective weight of these challenges and opportunities suggests that a truly all-renewable economy may be very different from the American economy we know today.

RICHARD HEINBERG

If our transition to renewable energy is successful, we will achieve savings in the ongoing energy expenditures needed for economic production. We will be rewarded with a quality of life that is acceptable—and, perhaps, preferable to our current one (even though, for most Americans, material consumption will be scaled back from its current unsustainable level). We will have a much more stable climate than would otherwise be the case. And we will see greatly reduced health and environmental impacts from energy production activities.

But the transition will entail costs—not just money and regulation, but also changes in our behavior and expectations. It will probably take at least three or four decades, and will fundamentally change the way we live.

Nobody knows how to accomplish the transition in detail, because this has never been done before. Most previous energy transitions were driven by opportunity, not policy. And they were usually additive, with new energy resources piling onto old ones (we still use firewood, even though we've added coal, hydro, oil, natural gas, and nuclear to the mix).

Since the renewable energy revolution will require trading our currently dominant energy sources (fossil fuels) for alternative ones (mostly wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, and biomass) that have different characteristics, there are likely to be some hefty challenges along the way.

Therefore, it makes sense to start with the low-hanging fruit and with a plan in place, then revise our plan frequently as we gain practical experience. Several organizations have already formulated plans for transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy. David Fridley, staff scientist of the energy analysis program at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and I have been working for the past few months to analyze and assess those plans and have a book in the works titled *Our Renewable Future*. Here's a very short summary, tailored mostly to the United States, of what we've found.

## LEVEL ONE: THE EASY STUFF

Nearly everyone agrees that the easiest way to kick-start the transition would be to replace coal with solar and wind power for electricity generation. That would require building lots of panels and turbines while regulating coal out of existence. Distributed generation and storage (rooftop solar panels with home- or business-scale battery packs) will help. Replacing natural gas will be harder, because gas-fired "peaking" plants are often used to buffer the intermittency of industrial-scale wind and solar inputs to the grid (see Level Two).

Electricity accounts for less than a quarter of all final energy used in the United States. What about the rest of the energy we depend on? Since solar and wind produce electricity, it makes sense to electrify as much of our energy usage as we can. For example, we could heat and cool most buildings with electric air-source heat pumps, replacing

natural gas- or oil-fueled furnaces. We could also begin switching out all our gas cooking stoves for electric stoves.

Transportation represents a large swath of energy consumption, and personal automobiles account for most of that. We could reduce oil consumption substantially if we all drove electric cars (replacing 250 million gasoline-fueled automobiles will take time and money, but will eventually result in energy and financial savings). Promoting walking, bicycling, and public transit will take much less time and investment.

Buildings will require substantial retrofitting for energy efficiency (this will again take time and investment, but will offer still more opportunities for savings). Building codes should be strengthened to require net-zero-energy or near-net-zero-energy performance for new construction. More energy-efficient appliances will also help.

The food system is a big energy consumer, with fossil fuels used in the manufacture of fertilizers, food processing, and transportation. We could reduce a lot of that fuel consumption by increasing the market share of organic local foods. While we're at it, we could begin sequestering enormous amounts of atmospheric carbon in topsoil by promoting farming practices that build soil rather than deplete it—as is being done, for example, in the Marin Carbon Project

<http://www.marincarbonproject.org/>.

If we got a good start in all these areas, we could achieve at least a 40 percent reduction in carbon emissions in 10 to 20 years.

## LEVEL TWO: THE HARDER STUFF

Solar and wind technologies have a drawback: They provide energy intermittently. When they become dominant in our overall energy mix, we will have to accommodate that intermittency in various ways. We'll need substantial amounts of grid-level energy storage as well as a major grid overhaul to get the electricity sector close to 100 percent renewables (replacing natural gas in electricity generation). We'll also need to start timing our energy usage to coincide with the availability of sunlight and wind energy. That in itself will present both technological and behavioral hurdles.

After we switch to electric cars, the rest of the transport sector will require longer-term and sometimes more expensive substitutions. We could reduce our need for cars (which require a lot of energy for their manufacture and decommissioning) by increasing the density of our cities and

suburbs and reorienting them to public transit, bicycling, and walking. We could electrify all motorized human transport by building more electrified public transit and intercity passenger rail lines. Heavy trucks could run on fuel cells, but it would be better to minimize trucking by expanding freight rail. Transport by ship could employ sails to increase fuel efficiency (this is already being done on a tiny scale by the MS Beluga Skysails, a commercial container cargo ship partially powered by a 1,700-square-foot, computer-controlled kite), but relocation or deglobalization of manufacturing would be a necessary co-strategy to reduce the need for shipping.

Much of the manufacturing sector already runs on electricity, but there are exceptions—and some of these will offer significant challenges. Many raw materials for manufacturing processes either are fossil fuels (feedstocks for plastics and other petrochemical-based materials) or require fossil fuels for mining or transformation (e.g., most metals). Considerable effort will be needed to replace fossil-fuel-based industrial materials and to recycle non-renewable materials more completely, significantly reducing the need for mining.

If we did all these things, while also building far, far more solar panels and wind turbines, we could achieve roughly an 80 percent reduction in emissions compared to our current level.

## LEVEL THREE: THE REALLY HARD STUFF

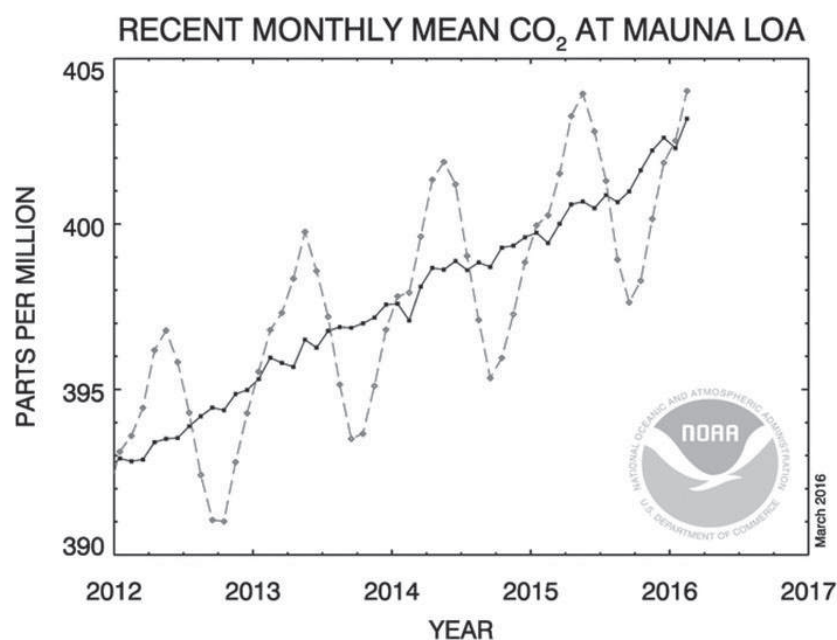
Doing away with the last 20 percent of our current fossil-fuel consumption is going to take still more time, research, and investment—as well as much more behavioral adaptation.

Just one example: We currently use enormous amounts of concrete for all kinds of construction. The crucial ingredient in concrete is cement. Cement-making requires high heat, which could theoretically be supplied by sunlight, electricity, or hydrogen—but that will entail a nearly complete redesign of the process.

While with Level One we began a shift in food systems by promoting local organic food, driving carbon emissions down further will require finishing that job by making all food production organic, and requiring all agriculture to build topsoil rather than deplete it. Eliminating all fossil fuels in food systems will also entail a substantial redesign of those systems to minimize processing, packaging, and transport.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## Carbon dioxide levels 'exploded' in 2015, highest seen since end of the Ice Age



It was the fourth year in a row that CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations grew by more than 2 parts per million. "Carbon dioxide levels are increasing faster than they have in hundreds of thousands of years," a lead scientist at NOAA said. Some of the spike in CO<sub>2</sub> levels can be attributed to last year's monster El Niño event and the rest the scientists chalk up high levels of fossil fuel emissions. CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the air, which contribute to climate change and extreme weather events, have increased more than 40 percent since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

Source: *Climate Nexus* 3/11/16  
<http://ecowatch.com>



# 100% renewable energy: what we can do in 10 years

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The communications sector—which uses mining and high-heat processes for the production of phones, computers, servers, wires, photo-optic cables, cell towers, and more—presents some really knotty problems. The only good long-term solution in this sector is to make devices that are built last a very long time and then to repair them and fully recycle and remanufacture them when absolutely needed. The Internet could be maintained via the kinds of low-tech, asynchronous networks now being pioneered in poor nations, using relatively little power. An example might be the AirJaldi networks in India, which provide Internet access to about 20,000 remote users in six states, using mostly solar power.

Back in the transport sector: We've already made shipping more efficient with sails, but doing away with petroleum altogether will require costly substitutes (fuel cells or biofuels). One way or another, global trade will have to shrink.

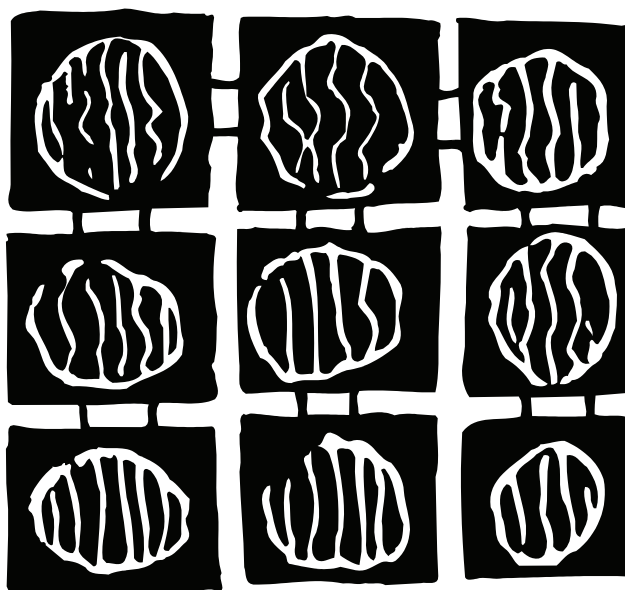
There is no good drop-in substitute for aviation fuels; we may have to write off aviation as anything but a specialty transport mode. Planes running on hydrogen or biofuels are an expensive possibility, as are dirigibles filled with (non-renewable) helium, any of which could help us maintain vestiges of air travel. Paving and repairing roads without oil-based asphalt is possible, but will require an almost complete redesign of processes and equipment.

Great attention will have to be given to the interdependent linkages and supply chains connecting various sectors (communications, mining, and transport knit together most of what we do in industrial societies). Some links in supply chains will be hard to substitute, and chains can be brittle: A problem with even one link can imperil the entire chain.

The good news is that if we do all these things, we can get beyond zero carbon emissions; that is, with sequestration of carbon in soils and forests, we could actually reduce atmospheric carbon with each passing year.

## DOING OUR LEVEL BEST

This plan features “levels”; the more obvious word choice would have been “stages.” The latter implies a sequence—starting with Stage One, ending with Stage Three—yet accomplishing the energy transition quickly will require



accelerating research and development to address many Level Two and Three issues at the same time we're moving rapidly forward on Level One tasks. For planning purposes, it's useful to know what can be done relatively quickly and cheaply, and what will take long, expensive, sustained effort.

How much energy will be available to us at the end of the transition? It's hard to say, as there are many variables, including rates of investment and the capabilities of renewable energy technology without fossil fuels to back them up and to power their manufacture, at least in the early stages. This “how much” question reflects the understandable concern to maintain current levels of comfort and convenience as we switch energy sources. But in this regard, it is good to keep ecological footprint analysis in mind.

According to the Global Footprint Network's Living Planet Report 2014, the amount of productive land and sea available to each person on Earth in order to live in a way that's ecologically sustainable is 1.7 global hectares. The current per capita ecological footprint in the United States is 6.8 global hectares. Asking whether renewable energy could enable Americans to maintain their current lifestyle is therefore equivalent to asking whether renewable energy can keep us living unsustainably. The clear answer is: only

temporarily, if at all. So why bother trying? We should aim for a sustainable level of energy and material consumption, which on average is significantly lower than at present.

One way or another, the energy transition will represent an enormous societal shift. During past shifts, there were winners and losers. In the current instance, if we don't pay great attention to equity issues, it is entirely possible that only the rich will have access to renewable energy, and therefore, ultimately, to any substantial amounts of energy at all.

The collective weight of these challenges and opportunities suggests that a truly all-renewable economy may be very different from the American economy we know today. The renewable economy will likely be slower and more local; it will probably be a conserver economy rather than a consumer economy. It will also likely feature far less economic inequality. Economic growth may reverse itself as per capita consumption shrinks; if we are to avert a financial crash and perhaps a revolution as well, we may need a different economic organizing principle. In her recent book on climate change, *This Changes Everything*, Naomi Klein asks whether capitalism can be preserved in the era of climate change. While it probably can (capitalism needs profit more than growth), that may not be a good idea because, in the absence of overall growth, profits for some will have to come at a cost to everyone else.

This short article only addresses the energy transition in the United States; other nations will face different challenges and opportunities.

Poor nations will have to find ways to provide all their energy from renewable sources while advancing in terms of the U.N. Human Development Index. Nations especially vulnerable to sea level rise may have other immediate priorities to deal with. And nations with low populations but very large solar or wind resources may find themselves in an advantageous position if they are able to obtain foreign investment capital without too many strings attached.

The most important thing to understand about the energy transition is that it's not optional. Delay would be fatal. It's time to make a plan—however sketchy, however challenging—and run with it, revising it as we go.

Source: *Yes! Magazine* 2/28/16 <http://www.yesmagazine.org>

# The new truth about free trade

ROBERT REICH

I used to believe in trade agreements. That was before the wages of most Americans stagnated and a relative few at the top captured just about all the economic gains. The old-style trade agreements of the 1960s and 1970s increased worldwide demand for products made by American workers, and thereby helped push up American wages.

The new-style agreements increase worldwide demand for products made by American corporations all over the world, enhancing corporate and financial profits but keeping American wages down. The fact is, recent trade deals are less about trade and more about global investment. Big American corporations no longer make many products in the United

States for export abroad. Most of what they sell abroad they make abroad. The biggest things they “export” are ideas, designs, franchises, brands, engineering solutions, instructions, and software, coming from a relatively small group of managers, designers, and researchers in the U.S. The Apple iPhone is assembled in China from components made in Japan, Singapore, and a half-dozen other locales. The only things coming from the U.S. are designs and instructions from a handful of engineers and managers in California. Apple even stows most of its profits outside the U.S. so it doesn't have to pay American taxes on them. Recent “trade” deals have been wins for big corporations and Wall Street, along with their executives and major shareholders, because they

get better direct access to foreign markets and billions of consumers. They also get better protection for their intellectual property—patents, trademarks, and copyrights—and for their overseas factories, equipment, and financial assets. That's why big corporations and Wall Street are so enthusiastic about the Trans Pacific Partnership—the giant deal among countries responsible for 40 percent of the global economy. That deal would give giant corporations even more patent protection overseas. And it would allow them to challenge any nation's health, safety, and environmental laws that stand in the way of their profits—including our own.

But recent trade deals haven't been wins for most Americans. By making it easier for American

corporations to make things abroad, the deals have reduced the bargaining power of American workers to get better wages here. The Trans Pacific Trade Partnership's investor protections will make it safer for firms to relocate abroad—the Cato Institute describes such protections as “lowering the risk premium” on offshoring—thereby further reducing corporate incentives to make and do things in the United States, using and upgrading the skills of Americans.

Proponents say giant deals like the TPP are good for the growth of the United States economy. But that argument begs the question of whose growth they're talking about. Almost all the growth goes to the richest 1 percent. The rest of us can buy some products cheaper than before, but most of

those gains would be offset by wage losses.

In theory, the winners could fully compensate the losers and still come out ahead. But the winners don't compensate the losers. For example, it's ironic that the Administration is teaming up with congressional Republicans to enact the TPP, when congressional Republicans have done just about everything they can to keep down the wages of most Americans. They've refused to raise the minimum wage (whose inflation-adjusted value is now almost 25 percent lower than it was in 1968), expand unemployment benefits, invest in job training, enlarge the Earned Income Tax Credit, improve the nation's infrastructure, or expand access to public higher education. They've embraced budget austerity

that has slowed job and wage growth. And they've continued to push “trickle-down” economics—keeping tax rates low for America's richest, protecting their tax loopholes, and fighting off any attempt to raise taxes on wealthy inheritances to their level before 2000.

I've seen first-hand how effective Wall Street and big corporations are at wielding influence—using lobbyists, campaign donations, and subtle promises of future jobs to get the global deals they want. Global deals like the Trans Pacific Partnership will boost the profits of Wall Street and big corporations, and make the richest 1 percent even richer. But they'll contribute to the steady shrinkage of the American middle class.

Source: *Robert Reich's Blog* 3/15/16 <http://robertreich.org>





# Fracking in California: questions and concerns



California is threatened with an impending fracking boom. But what *is* fracking, really? And what risks does it pose to the Golden State? Why do we believe fracking is simply too risky to our water, air, wildlife and climate?

## 1. WHAT IS FRACKING?

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is a method of oil and gas production that involves blasting huge amounts of water, mixed with sand and toxic chemicals, under high pressure deep into the earth. Fracking breaks up rock formations to allow oil and gas extraction. But it can also pollute local air and water and endanger wildlife and human health.

## 2. WHERE IS FRACKING BEING DONE IN CALIFORNIA?

Fracking has been documented in 10 California counties – Colusa, Glenn, Kern, Los Angeles, Monterey, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, Sutter, Kings and Ventura. Oil companies have also fracked offshore wells hundreds of times in the ocean near California's coast, from Seal Beach to the Santa Barbara Channel. In Kern County, California's major oil-producing county, 50 percent to 60 percent of new oil wells are fracked, according to estimates by Halliburton. And fracking may have been done elsewhere in California, since state officials haven't monitored or tracked the practice until recently. Oil companies are increasingly interested in using fracking and other dangerously extreme fossil fuel extraction methods in the Monterey Shale. This geological formation under the San Joaquin and the Los Angeles basins may hold a large amount of extraordinarily dirty, carbon intensive oil.

## 3. HOW DOES FRACKING CONTAMINATE OUR WATER?

Fracking routinely employs numerous toxic chemicals, including methanol, benzene, naphthalene and trimethylbenzene. About 25 percent of fracking chemicals could cause cancer, according to scientists with the Endocrine Disruption Exchange. Evidence is mounting throughout the country that these chemicals are making their way into aquifers and drinking water. Water quality can also be threatened by methane contamination tied to drilling and the fracturing of rock formations. This problem has been highlighted by footage of people in fracked areas setting fire to methane-laced water from kitchen faucets. Fracking can also expose people to harm from lead, arsenic and radioactivity that are brought back to the surface with fracking flowback fluid. Fracking requires an enormous amount of water, and because fracking waste water contains dangerous toxins it generally cannot be cleaned and reused for other purposes. Especially during a historic drought, we cannot afford to permanently remove massive quantities of this precious resource from our state's water supply.

## 4. HOW DOES FRACKING POLLUTE OUR AIR?

Fracking can release dangerous petroleum hydrocarbons, including benzene, toluene and xylene. It can increase levels of ground-level ozone, a key risk factor for respiratory illness. The pollutants in fracking water can also enter our air when that water is dumped into waste pits and then evaporates. Air pollution caused by fracking may contribute to health problems in people living near natural-gas drilling sites,

according to a study by researchers with the Colorado School of Public Health.

## 5. HOW DOES FRACKING WORSEN CLIMATE CHANGE?

Fracking and similar techniques often release large amounts of methane, a /highly/ potent greenhouse gas that's at least 86 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. Fracking also allows access to huge fossil fuel deposits that were once beyond the reach of drilling. In California, oil companies are increasingly interested in using fracking on the Monterey Shale, a geological formation under the San Joaquin and the Los Angeles basins that may hold a large amount of dirty, carbon-intensive oil. Moreover, much of California's oil is dirty, heavy crude. The California Air Resources Board scores many of the state's oil fields as approximately as carbon intensive as oil from the infamous Alberta tar sands. As California strives to lead the fight to avoid a climate change catastrophe, why should we facilitate the release of carbon in billions of barrels of carbon-intensive oil now safely sequestered in our shale formations? *We shouldn't.*

## 6. HOW DOES FRACKING THREATEN WILDLIFE?

Endangered species like the California condor, San Joaquin kit fox and blunt-nosed leopard lizard live in places where fracking is likely to expand. These animals can be harmed and killed in many ways by fracking and the industrial development that accompanies it.

## 7. DON'T STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS PROTECT OUR WILDLIFE — AND US — FROM FRACKING?

Fracking is very poorly regulated at the federal level. In 2005 Congress exempted most types of fracking from the federal Safe Water Drinking Act, severely limiting protections for water quality. In April 2012 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized new Clean Air Act rules called "New Source Performance Standards" that will limit air pollutants from fracked gas wells. However, the rules don't cover oil wells, don't set limits on methane release — and won't take effect until 2015. As a result, regulating fracking falls largely to the states. And California officials aren't doing much to protect the state's millions of residents. State oil regulators didn't even track where and how often fracking was happening until they were forced to do so by public pressure. In September 2013 California Gov. Jerry Brown signed SB 4, a weak fracking law that a *Los Angeles Times* editorial called "so watered down as to be useless." The law requires the Department of Conservation's Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources to establish regulations beginning in January 2015. DOGGR has proposed weak, industry-friendly regulations that will do little to protect public health or the environment from fracking. DOGGR is also required to conduct a scientific study of the effects of fracking and other extreme fossil-fuel extraction techniques by January 2015, as well as to develop an environmental impact statement by July 2015. Think it's irresponsible to draft regulations without knowing the potential threats of the activity that you're regulating? We do too. The bottom line: Fracking is

an inherently dangerous practice, and the only way to protect ourselves is to /halt use of this toxic technique/. That's why we're asking the governor to ban fracking in California.

## 8. BUT HASN'T FRACKING BEEN DONE IN CALIFORNIA FOR MANY YEARS?

Yes — but today's fracking techniques are new and pose new dangers. Technological changes have facilitated an explosion of drilling in areas where, even a decade ago, companies couldn't recover oil and gas profitably. Directional drilling, for example, is a new technique that has greatly expanded access to rock formations. Companies also employ high fluid volumes to fill horizontal "well bores" that sometimes extend for miles.

And oil and gas producers are using new chemical concoctions collectively called "slick water" that allow injection fluid to flow rapidly enough to generate the high pressure needed to break apart rock. Furthermore, if oil exploitation begins on a large scale in California, it will most likely happen through a combination of fracking and acidization. Acidization, another dangerously extreme fossil fuel extraction technique, is similar to fracking but employs hydrofluoric or hydrochloric acid to dissolve rock in order to release oil and gas. Acidization pollutes our air, and acid is a hazardous substance that can leak and cause deadly accidents. As fracking methods have changed and fracking has expanded, so has the threat to public health and the environment.

## 9. HOW CAN I FIGHT FRACKING IN CALIFORNIA?

Tell Governor Brown to ban fracking, tell Congress to *stop the fracking frenzy* and join our campaign today.

Source: Center for Biological Diversity <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org>

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# Mission accomplished? 19,000 Iraqi civilians killed in less than two years

PETER VAN BUREN

Iraq is now an ungoverned, failed state, a killing field on the scale of genocide. At least 18,802 civilians were killed and 36,245 wounded in Iraq over the last 22 months, according to the UN's /Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq/. Another 3,206,736 Iraqis are internally displaced, including more than one million children. The study emphasizes that these are conservative estimates. The UN also is careful to note that the number of civilians killed by secondary

effects of the violence, such as lack of access to food, water or medical care, is unknown. In many areas of Iraq schools are closed and basic infrastructure is not functioning.

All that is in addition to the more than one million people already killed during the American occupation period. These horrors are directly caused by the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and subsequent occupation. In addition to unleashing near-total chaos in the nation, the U.S. invasion led directly to the rise of Islamic State, which found the consuming violence fertile soil for

growth. ISIS went on to see a new role to emerge, protector of the Sunni population, which was being slaughtered and impoverished by the Shiite majority empowered by the Americans and Iran.

"Armed violence continues to take an obscene toll on Iraqi civilians and their communities," remarked the UN high commissioner for human rights. "The so-called 'Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant' continues to commit systematic and widespread violence and abuses of international human rights law and humanitarian law. These acts may, in some instances, amount to war

crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide."

ISIS is targeting non-Sunni ethnic and religious communities, "systematically persecuting" them, subjecting them to violent repression and crimes, the UN notes. Women and children are particularly affected by these atrocities. Women face extreme sexual violence and even sexual slavery. Children are being forcibly recruited as fighters.

In addition to ISIS violence, the UN notes that civilians have been killed and kidnapped, and that civilian infrastructure has

been destroyed by pro-government forces, militias and tribal fighters. Moreover, civilians are being killed by U.S. airstrikes.

Adding to the depth of horror in Iraq, many Iraqi refugees have sought asylum in the West, but have been largely unwelcome. In a time of heightened Islamophobia, some European countries and many right-wing American politicians – including more than half of the U.S. governors – have made it clear they do not want to accept Muslim refugees.

PETER VAN BUREN SPENT A YEAR IN IRAQ AS A

STATE DEPARTMENT FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER SERVING AS TEAM LEADER FOR TWO PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS (PRTS). NOW IN WASHINGTON, HE WRITES ABOUT IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST AT HIS BLOG, WE MEANT WELL. HIS NEW BOOK IS WE MEANT WELL: HOW I HELPED LOSE THE BATTLE FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE (THE AMERICAN EMPIRE PROJECT, METROPOLITAN BOOKS).

Source: *We Meant Well* 1/26/16  
<http://wemeantwell.com/>

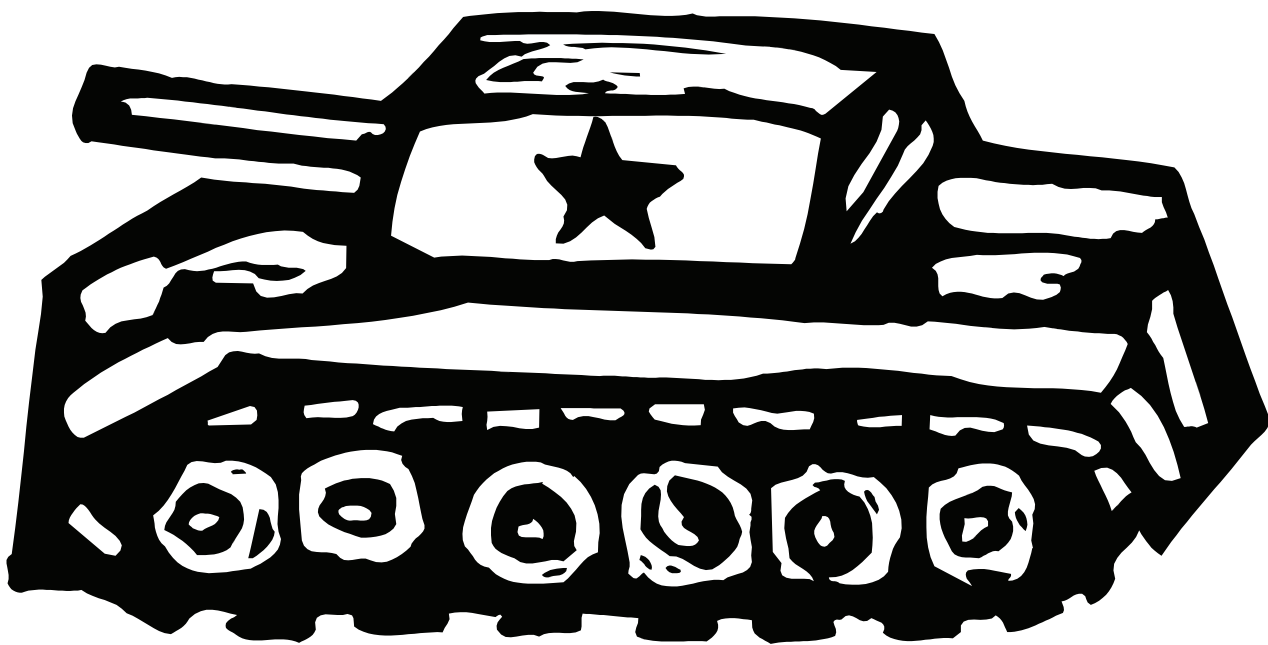
## Purveyors of global violence, US continues to lead world arms trade

LAUREN MCCAULEY

The U.S. weapons industry continues to lead the world as the greatest supplier of major arms and munitions, according to an authoritative analysis, fueling the global violence and turmoil that has soared to unprecedented levels in recent years. The report, put forth by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on Monday, found that the U.S. continues to dominate the global arms trade, driving 33 percent of total exports between 2011 and 2015.

Meanwhile, the volume of the weapons sent to conflict areas from the United States has increased 27 percent compared to the period between 2006 and 2010, with an overall rise in the arms trade of 14 percent worldwide.

"As regional conflicts and tensions continue to mount, the [U.S.] remains the leading global arms supplier by a



significant margin," said Dr. Aude Fleurant, director of the SIPRI Arms and Military Expenditure Programme.

According to SIPRI, the U.S. has sold or donated major arms to at least 96 states in the past five years, which the report notes is a "significantly higher number of export destinations than any other supplier." What's more, another SIPRI analysis from December revealed that U.S.-based arms manufacturers are profiting heavily from these sales, reaping 54 percent of total global revenue.

Topping the list of those on the receiving end of these deals are a number of the United States' Middle East allies. Saudi Arabia received 9.1 percent of the country's total exports between 2011 and 2015, while United Arab Emirates and Turkey received 9.1 percent and 6.6 percent respectively.

Saudi Arabia, which is leading a U.S.-backed assault on Yemen, increased its imports 275 percent since the previous 5-year period, becoming the world's second top global importer after India. The Gulf state is the United Kingdom's top arms recipient, as well.

The report notes that the military assault on Yemen "was facilitated by high levels of arms imports" from western nations, despite growing concerns that the Saudi-led coalition

has perpetrated a number of war crimes and contributed to high levels of civilian casualties.

"Although concerns have been raised in arms-supplying states over Saudi air attacks in Yemen," the report states, "Saudi Arabia is expected to continue to receive large numbers of major arms from those states in the next five years. Arms on order include 150 combat aircraft and thousands of air-to-surface missiles and anti-tank missiles from the [U.S.], 14 combat aircraft from the UK and an undisclosed but large number of armoured vehicles from Canada with turrets from Belgium."

The United States also continues to fortify Iraq with increased munitions, despite evidence that those weapons often end up in enemy's hands. "Although the Islamic State captured or destroyed many weapons of the Iraqi armed forces in 2014," SIPRI notes, "the flow of weapons to Iraq that started in 2003 continued in 2015." According to the analysis, imports to Iraq grew 83 percent between 2006-10 and 2011-15.

Source: *Common Dreams* 2/22/16 <http://www.commondreams.org/>



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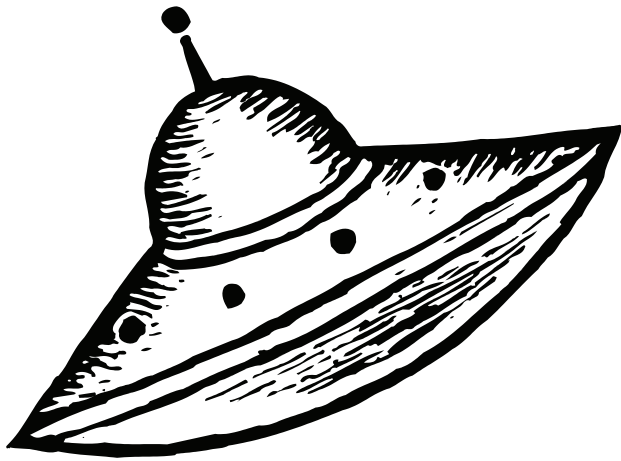
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# Is the media an accomplice in drone murders?



EMRAN FEROZ

The victims of drone strikes are nameless and invisible, despite the fact that most of them are civilians. The Pentagon announced this week that more than 150 al-Shabab fighters have been killed by a U.S. drone strike in Somalia. The Pentagon spokesmen repeatedly talked about "fighters" and "terrorists" which "posed an imminent threat to the U.S." But as usual, he offered no proof of his claims.

This kind of language has become normalized when it comes to the U.S. drone war, which is not just taking place in Somalia, but also in countries like Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq. What is significant regarding the regular attacks in these countries is the media coverage. In fact, it practically does not exist. The many victims of drone strikes are nameless and invisible. And if they appear in any media reports, all of them are completely dehumanized and described as "terrorists," "suspected militants" or any other similar euphemism.

This was also the case after the latest strike in Somalia, a country the U.S. is officially not at war with. Shortly after the Pentagon's announcement, many news outlets adopted the U.S. government's version of the incident. The New York Times, for example, wrote about the killing of "150 fighters who were assembled for what American officials believe was a graduation ceremony."

"Militants" was also the term the Washington Post used to describe all the victims. It is necessary to point out that many other well-known media outlets from all over the world did the very same thing. As usual, there was a huge lack of any critical scrutinizing. Instead, media once again became a mouthpiece of the U.S. government by quoting its military officials and spreading their one-sided views constantly.

Since 2001, the United States has been killing people with weaponized drones, most times not knowing the identity of the victims. As of today, at least 6,000 people have been killed by these drone strikes. According to the London-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism, only 4 percent of drone victims in Pakistan were identified as al-Qaida members. But vastly more than 2,000 people have been killed there by drones during the last years.

## AFGHANISTAN #1

Another country which is suffering heavily under drone strikes is Afghanistan, the most drone bombed country in the world. Between 2001 and 2013, 1,670 drone strikes took place in the country. It was in the city of Kandahar, the Taliban's former stronghold, where the first strike by a weaponized drone took place in October 2001. The target, Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, was not killed on this day, but many other unknown people have been in the years since.

One of these people was Sadiq Rahim Jan, a 21-year-old food vendor from Paktia, eastern Afghanistan. He was murdered by a drone strike in July 2012. A few days later, media outlets in Kabul described him as a "Taliban commander." The family members of Aisha Rashid have also been killed by a drone strike. The Afghan girl was four years old when a missile hit the pick-up of her family in Kunar,

also in the east of the country. Fourteen passengers, including Aisha's parents, were murdered. Only she survived – barely – with a ragged face. Initially, all the victims were described as "militants" by Afghan government officials and local media outlets.

Tariq Aziz, from North Waziristan shared a similar destiny. The 16-year-old anti-drone activist was killed by a drone strike in November 2011, together with his 12-year-old cousin Waheed. Unlike the case of Malala Yousafzai, the young Pashtun girl which was nearly killed by a member of the Pakistani Taliban and received a Nobel Peace Prize, Tariq's case is widely unknown.

In all the mentioned cases, as well as many other, significant media coverage was nonexistent – or it described the victims as terrorists, extremists, militants, al-Qaida members, and so on. This is happening on a daily basis and there are also reasons why it is happening.

In the case of Sadiq, for example, his family became outraged after they noticed that local media outlets described their son and brother as a "Taliban commander." On that day, the young Afghan was the only person who has been killed in the area. He never had any connection with any insurgent group, not to mention being a commander of them. One of the media outlets which spread these news was Radio Azadi, an Afghan branch of the US government's external broadcast services. It should be more than obvious that the main aim of such a media platform is not spreading objective information.

## TOLO TV

Another example for this behaviour is Tolo TV, Afghanistan's leading mainstream television channel. Last year, the channel's news website reported that in July 2015 drone strikes in the eastern province of Nangarhar killed "nearly 250 Taliban and Daesh [Islamic State] insurgents." The main source for this "reporting" was the National Directorate of Security (NDS), the Afghan intelligence service, which was built by the U.S. in the first days of the NATO invasion.

Tolo TV was created in 2004 by Saad Mohseni, an Afghan businessman who is being called an "Afghan Rupert Murdoch" and is considered one of the most powerful men in Afghanistan. The channel's creation was mainly funded by the notorious United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which is widely known as one of the most important foreign policy tools of the White House.

In general, one can assume that many media outlets in Afghanistan were not created to support journalism and press freedom but to install media institutions who can be useful to represent particular interests. This is also the case in other countries which suffer from drone strikes.

Noor Behram, an investigative journalist from Northern Waziristan, is known for taking pictures of the drone murder scenes and spreading the victims' faces. After Behram talked with journalists from Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, he experienced that for them, a beard, long hair and a turban or a pakol, a traditional Afghan cap, is enough to describe male drone victims as "terrorists." But nearly every man in this area looks like that. According to this logic, everyone, even myself when I am staying there, must be a terrorist. Besides, Behram's results fit into Washington's practice that all military-aged males in a strike zone are considered as "militants."

The U.S. and its allies needed propaganda organs to construct and justify their war on a medial level. Despite the question if this is moral or not, one should agree that it is also very logical because every war is based on propaganda – it was always like that and probably will never change. But what remains is the question why so many people still believe such a biased media coverage and its constructed narrative of a good war which is only hitting the bad guys.

Source: teleSUR 3/14/16 <http://www.telesurto.net>



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# 15 statistics that tell the story of gun violence this year

JENNIFER MASCIA

There were the six children, their mother and her boyfriend in Houston, Texas. The nine worshippers in a church in Charleston, South Carolina. The 53-year-old father who tried to stop three men ransacking a metalworker's minivan in Brooklyn. The 28-year-old mother of two in Indianapolis whose new husband shot her in the face 13 times. The two young reporters shot to death during a live news broadcast in Moneta, Virginia. And the thousands just like them whose deaths did not make the front page.

While many victims' names may quickly disappear from the public eye, their stories live on in the statistics that help us to understand the scale of gun violence in the United States. Below is a compilation of numbers that added up to a significant year in gun debate in 2015.

1) As of December 23, a total of 12,942 people had been killed in the United States in 2015 in a gun homicide, unintentional shooting, or murder/suicide.

According to the Gun Violence Archive (GVA), a nonprofit website that scours more than 1,200 sources to track gun deaths and injuries in the United States, there have been more than 50,000 incidents of gun violence in 2015. The numbers include everything from homicides and multiple-victim gang assaults to incidents of self-defense and accidental shootings. The organization's records show that more than 12,000 people have been killed with guns this year, but what its numbers do not record — due to government reporting practices — is a massive hole in the data: the nearly 20,000 Americans who end their lives with a gun each year. Nor does its already high injury tally capture the full extent of the victims who continue life with debilitating wounds and crushing medical bills. When the federal statistics for 2015 are released two years from now, the government's models will show tens of thousands more gun-related injuries.

2) Terrorism dominates headlines and budget lines while a more lethal scourge persists at home.

In his remarks following the mass shooting at Umpqua Community College on October 1, President Obama said he knew his outrage over the country's unrelenting gun violence would be interpreted by critics as "politicizing" the issue. Fine, he said, and asked news organizations to check the facts: "Tally up the number of Americans who've been killed through terrorist attacks over the last decade and the number of Americans who've been killed by gun violence, and post those side-by-side." Several did, and Obama's point was made: Amid the government's massive, justifiable effort to squelch terror threats, comparatively little has been done to address a problem that has claimed exponentially more U.S. lives. According to an October poll, 40 percent of Americans say they know someone who was fatally shot or committed suicide with a gun.

3) Mass shootings — as measured by four or more people shot, regardless of total fatalities — have taken place in nearly 100 metro areas over the past 12 months.

According to the Mass Shooting Tracker, a crowdsourced database of shootings in which four or more people are injured or killed, all but one major American city has had a mass shooting since 2013, with Austin, Texas as the lone exception. This year alone, nearly 100 metro areas have experienced mass shootings. The Tracker counts domestic homicides in its tally, as well as sprays of gunfire that wound several people at once — but often aren't counted among the San Bernardinos or Umpquas because the victims survived. Two such incidents occurred on on Father's Day this year, when 10 people were

shot at a block party in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and 12 people were shot at a child's birthday party in Detroit, Michigan. "This is not the time to be fearful," said Detroit Police Chief James Craig. "These are urban terrorists who do nothing positive for our neighborhoods."

4) The vast majority of the nation's gun violence does not look like Umpqua or Charleston or San Bernardino.

Though mass shootings demand nonstop coverage, it's the shootings taking place in parking lots, bars, schools, bedrooms, and street corners across America that are responsible for most gun injuries and deaths. Vox's German Lopez highlighted the disparity in a smart December article.

5) Black men are disproportionately affected by gun violence.

A November ProPublica article noted that half of American gun death victims are men of color in "poor, segregated neighborhoods that have little political clout." Timothy Heaphy, a former U.S. attorney in Virginia, says this is precisely why they don't capture the public's attention. "I don't think we care about African-American lives as much as we care about white lives," he said.

6) At a rate of more than twice a day, someone under 18 has been shot and killed.

A remarkable 75 percent of children killed with guns this year have been under the age of 12. Since the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, three years ago, an American child under 12 has died by intentional and accidental gunfire every other day, according to analysis by NBC News. And those children are far more likely to die from guns held by family members and acquaintances than strangers, according to an NBC News analysis of FBI data.

On August 18, 9-year-old Jamyla Bolden was killed by a bullet fired into her Ferguson, Missouri, home as she did her homework on her bed. "Usually when we hear the gunshots, she's the first one who yells 'Mom, they're shooting!'" her mother told KMOV.com, a local news station. "I noticed Jamyla wasn't saying anything. That's the main thing I remember: her not moving."

7) Unsecured guns have turned dozens of toddlers into killers — and many more into victims.

Kids younger than three have gotten ahold of guns and shot someone at least 59 times this year, a disturbing trend first reported by Christopher Ingraham at the /Washington Post/ in October. Most often, these toddlers injure or kill themselves, but more than a dozen have shot other people, sometimes fatally. Gun violence prevention advocates say that gun storage requirements and the adoption of smart guns that only fire for their owners could reduce these deaths, but the gun lobby vehemently opposes such mandates. In November, after the /Post's/ report, 20 Democrats in the U.S. Senate asked the Government Accountability Office to issue a report on the safe storage of guns in American homes.

8) Guns are now ending as many American lives as cars.

The comparative mortality rates — also first flagged by the /Post's/ Christopher Ingraham — come from CDC figures released earlier this month. They reflect a larger story: While motor vehicles have been getting progressively safer, guns have killed people at a consistent clip over the past 15 years. Unpacking the numbers further reveals that firearm fatalities are holding steady while suicides by firearm have climbed

along with the number of guns in circulation. Some theorize that medical advances are saving shooting victims who formerly would have died of their injuries.

9) A gun in a troubled home continues to raise the risk of death.

This enduring statistic from a decade-old California Attorney General report emphasizes just how dangerous it is to introduce firearms into a turbulent relationship. In no state is that more pronounced than in South Carolina, which ranks first in the rate of women killed by men — a rate that is more than twice the national average. After several frustrated starts, South Carolina finally passed legislation this year limiting firearms access for domestic abusers — along with Alabama, Delaware, Maine, Oregon, and Vermont. But 17 states still do not have their own equivalent of a federal law banning criminal domestic misdemeanants from possessing guns, according to the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

In one of those states, Georgia, Vanessa Soyer was gunned down in front of her 13-year-old son in their Lawrenceville apartment on November 16. A mother of four, the Harlem-bred Soyer, 47, authored a book about domestic violence. Her husband of 15 years, from whom she was in the process of separating, was arrested for the murder. "Nobody would've ever thought that the words from the pages of her books would become her reality," her GoFundMe page reads.

10) Gun sales in 2015 continued at a blistering pace.

The same day Robert Lewis Dear opened fire at a Planned Parenthood in Colorado Springs, Colorado, killing three and wounding nine, the FBI reported five percent more NICS checks than Black Friday last year, setting an all-time single-day record. If each of those checks resulted in a gun sale, it would mean Americans bought enough new firearms to arm every active duty Marine.

11) Eight percent of gun owners own a stockpile of 10 or more weapons.

In an online survey of 3,000 people, Harvard's Injury Control Research Center found that 22 percent of Americans professed to own guns — and 25 percent of those gun owners own five or more guns. The Center's director, Dr. David Hemenway, told The Trace in October that guns in fewer hands might actually lower rates of gun suicide and accidental shootings. But the fact that these gun owners feel they must compile an arsenal raises another set of questions. "Who are these people and why do they have so, so many guns?" Hemenway asked. "And are they really responsible?"

12) Tens of thousands more stolen guns entered the illegal market — many a result of theft.

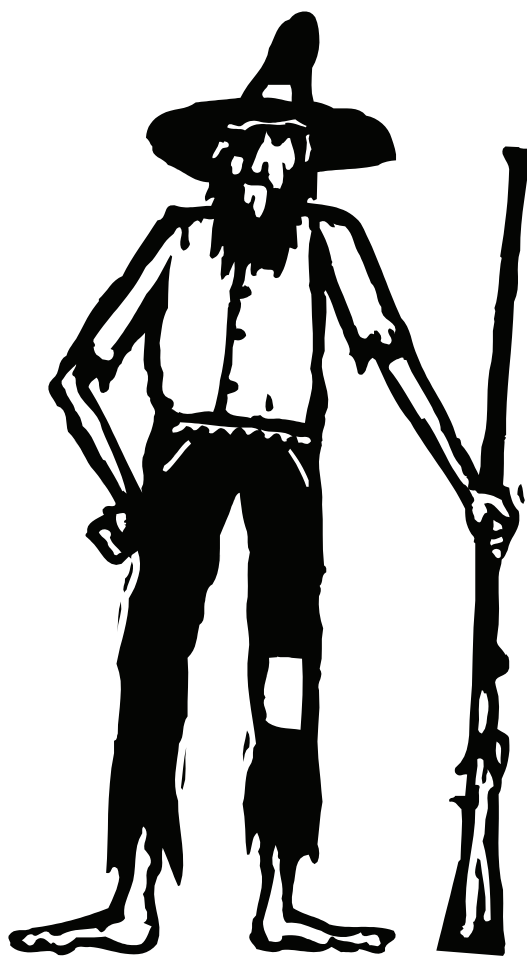
The advisories echoed from sheriffs in Jacksonville, Florida; St. Louis, Missouri; and Lafayette, Louisiana: Lock up your guns. More than 400 firearms were stolen from cars in Duval County, Florida, this year — and 60 percent of those were from unlocked cars. In St. Louis, reports of gun theft were up 70 percent in August, and cars and trucks were targeted far more than homes. A gun stolen out of a car in Lafayette was used to wound a police officer last year, and in Pinellas County, Florida, a gun stolen from an unlocked car was used to kill another officer. Stolen guns, which are increasingly showing up at crime scenes, were called "the engine of violence in Chicago" by police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi in August.

The increase in such thefts has sparked a debate about





# Who put the NRA in charge of our national security?



MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

In the decades since the 1968 deaths of Senator Kennedy and Dr. King more than 164,000 children have died from gun violence in America—three times more than all the American soldiers killed in action in the Vietnam War and every external conflict since. Mass shootings have become the new normal. Since the beginning of this year we've had on average more than one a day. After a new mass shooting makes headlines our national discussion of gun violence feels and sounds like a broken record stuck on one horrifying song that never ends. The President expresses his outrage that these tragedies continue to happen and calls on the public to push Congress and state legislatures to do the right thing. Members of Congress release proposals without a clear timetable for a vote or a path to passage. Public support for gun safety measures swells. The gun lobby pushes back, accusing those who seek reform of politicizing tragedy while continuing their relentless work to loosen restrictions on the deadly weapons that continue the carnage. Broken families and communities struggle to pick up the pieces after the media leaves town. With too few exceptions nothing gets done and nothing seems to change and every day Americans not living in the immediately affected communities grow numb to the tragedy and continue their normal lives until the next mass shooting inevitably occurs and the cycle repeats itself.

These horrible mass shootings that destroy and shake up so many lives with ever-increasing frequency tell only part of the tragic cost of gun violence that pervades our cities and towns every single day across our nation. Violence romps through our children's playgrounds, terrifies them in their schools and child care centers, follows them down the street, and shoots through their bedroom windows. Data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control earlier this year show there was a death by a gun every 16 minutes and a child or teen was killed or injured by a gun every 30 minutes in 2013. More than 2,400 children and teens died from guns, enough to fill 122 classrooms of 20 children. Why in God's name are we so reticent to stand up to the pro-gun lobby when American children are 18 times more likely to die by a gun than children in 25 other high income nations? Are we so spiritually dead that the killing of children has become

routine and unimportant? Where is the faith community?

While mass shootings grab fleeting public and policymaker attention we too often ignore the relentless everyday trauma of gun violence that snuffs out the lives of more American children and teens every four days than the 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School. How can we remain numb to the day in and day out cries of children and others robbed of their childhoods, robbed of their lives, or scarred for life by guns and bullets we have the power but not the decency, courage, and will to stop? Dr. King warned us that America may go to hell if we didn't deal with the violence of poverty in his last Sunday sermon. /I am sure he would say we were going to go to hell as well today if we don't stop the violence of guns that is ravaging our families and communities and terrifying our children. We must act to save our country's soul.

## LESSONS

Lessons from America's public health history points us to what we can do now to stop the carnage. The public health approach to problem solving has been credited with a range of achievements, including adding 25 years to the life expectancy of people in the United States in the 20th century. One of the greatest victories of this approach has been a massive decline in automobile deaths. Few today can imagine getting in a car without an airbag, a seat belt, or a proper child safety seat. These safety devices and the laws we follow while on the road were not always in place—and American roadways were not always as safe as they are today. It took a concentrated effort by researchers, policymakers, and the public to identify and address the root causes of the epidemic of motor vehicle deaths before the 1960s.

Research efforts led to the creation of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and a revolution in vehicle safety, better designed roads, and increased enforcement of laws to get drunk drivers off the roads. According to Dr. Mark Rosenberg, president and CEO of the Task Force for Global Health and former director of the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, "What we did in the '60s, redesigning the car, redesigning the roadway, redesigning the drivers, was a result of scientific research, and as a result we have saved, between the '60s and the beginning of this century, 325,000 lives." Dr. Rosenberg and many other public health professionals believe the same approach can help end today's epidemic of gun violence which is ravaging and terrorizing our nation.

Recent gun violence prevention research should help point the way forward. A recent study found that a Connecticut law that expanded background checks to all handgun purchases helped achieve a 40 percent reduction in gun homicides during the first 10 years following the law's enactment. Another study reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association /Internal Medicine* found states with background checks on private as well as online gun sales had 16 percent lower gun fatality rates. Polling consistently shows a vast majority of Americans, including a large majority of gun owners, support expanding background checks to cover all gun sales—yet Congress has not yet demonstrated its capacity to act on such a simple, life-saving measure. As a result guns can be purchased without background checks from unlicensed private sellers and over the internet with no checks at all. The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence reports some progress in states on expanding background checks but federal law changes are needed to ensure people cannot just traffic guns from states with weaker laws to those with stronger ones. Eighteen states and D.C. have extended background check requirements beyond federal law. It's way past time for citizens to retire members of Congress and state legislators who put gun manufacturer profits ahead of child, family, and human safety.

## RESEARCH

Some say that background checks alone will not prevent every gun tragedy and they won't, but they are a critically

important step forward. We need more research on laws, other policies, and technologies that might save more lives. Proposals to require background checks for ammunition sales, impose a tax on ammunition, require liability insurance for guns, and smart gun technologies all merit immediate attention. Sadly, the National Rifle Association, other members of the gun lobby, and their cowardly allies in Congress and in many state legislatures have barred the CDC from conducting research and sharing the truth about the impact of gun violence on our nation's public health since the mid-1990's and imposed similar restrictions on the National Institutes of Health in 2011 due to fears that research might show concrete ways to reduce its deadly impacts. Just this week physicians' organizations including Doctors for America, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Student Association, and others delivered a petition to Congress from more than 2,000 doctors in all 50 states and the District of Columbia urging Congress to remove these barriers and provide funding for such research. Even former Representative Jay Dickey, who took the lead in banning CDC research on gun violence, has expressed his regrets in the wake of recent mass killings.

## ...AND THE NRA

Why is the NRA afraid of the truth? Is it because they fear the research may show concrete ways to reduce the impact of guns which sapped 33,169 lives in America in 2013 and injured 83,075 yet remain the only unregulated consumer product? It makes no sense to regulate toy guns which kill not a single person and let real guns which should only be in the hands of the military kill tens of thousands annually. We should protect human beings rather than guns. Might not the truth make us all safer? We should retire the NRA as the director of our public health research.

If we truly want to end the cycle of death and violence from guns that pervades our daily lives, we must stop being numb and doing nothing in the face of tragedy. And we should stop normalizing growing gun violence including assault weapons by selling them over the counter as if they were toasters or fishing poles. We must not be placated or deterred by angry words and hand-wringing and proposals that die with a whimper in Congress and in some state legislatures and local governing bodies. All of us—Democrats, Republicans, and independents, gun owners and non-gun owners—must stand up and demand every day that our leaders treat gun violence in America as the public health epidemic that it is and take the steps necessary to save the lives of thousands of our children, families, and all those victimized by relentless, preventable gun violence. Polling consistently shows that the gun lobby does not speak for America, American gun owners, or even a majority of NRA members. Until we shake off our sense of hopelessness and apathy in the face of persistent tragedy and bullying by the pro-gun lobby in our communities, Congress and state legislatures will continue to do their bidding, putting their political lives ahead of the lives of our children and families and citizens who they are sworn to represent. It's way past time to combine "thoughts and prayers" with *action* and vote out those who place protecting guns higher than protecting babies and children and mothers and fathers. It's way past time for the American people to retire the NRA as our head of national security and public health and assure the safety of our children and families everywhere in America. Only then can we reclaim our nation's soul and affirm our commitment to the sanctity of life for all.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund whose *Leave No Child Behind* mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org). Mrs. Edelman's *Child Watch* Column also appears each week on The Huffington Post.

Source: *Children's Defense Fund* 12/4/15 <http://www.childrensdefense.org>



# 15 statistics that tell the story of gun violence this year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

personal responsibility and gun ownership. The town of Orange, Connecticut, went so far as to charge a resident with misdemeanor reckless endangerment after he reported his loaded .38-caliber revolver stolen from his unlocked truck. Pro-gun advocates argue that stadiums and schools should be removed from gun-free zone designations, so people can carry their guns with them instead of leaving them in their cars. The bottom line, Jacksonville Sheriff Mike Williams said in November, is "be a responsible gun owner, take care of your weapon, lock it up."

13) American cities continue to seize illegal guns at an astounding rate.

The Chicago Police Department announced earlier this month that it confiscated 6,521 illegal guns in 2015, which it said works out to one gun every 90 minutes. But Newsweek analyzed the department's own figures and concluded that it's been more successful than advertised. "With 335 days so far this year and 6,521 guns removed, that is about 19 guns a day, or about one every 74 minutes," Polly Mosendz wrote. (In July, Adam Sege conducted a similar audit for The Trace, and determined Chicago Police were removing a gun off the streets every 75 minutes.)

Officers in Little Rock, Arkansas, took 118 guns off the

street as of November 2015. Baltimore, Maryland, police estimate that they've seized nearly 3,500 illegal guns in the last 12 months.

14) Tyshawn Lee was the second 9-year-old boy murdered in Chicago in the last 15 months.

The gunshot wounds to his temples had to be sealed with wax. He wore a white tuxedo, red bow tie, white gloves, and red, size 5 gator-skin shoes, and his 25-year-old mother wore a white dress and a red hat to match. Tyshawn Lee was the second 9-year-old boy to be targeted and killed by gangs within the last 15 months in Chicago, and he was lured from a swing set in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood and murdered in an alley because his father allegedly belonged to a gang that may have been involved in the murder of the brother of one of the suspects. Peter Nickeas, the overnight crime reporter at the *Chicago Tribune*, detailed the days after the boy's death – during which a battle-hardened city found it still had the capacity for shock.

15) The 114th Congress is still hesitant to engage with the gun issue.

At a hearing on the third anniversary of the Sandy Hook shooting, California Representative Mike Thompson,

chairman of the House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, noted that Congress has held more than two dozen moments of silence since the massacre – but has not approved any gun safety bills. In March, Thompson, a Democrat, and Representative Peter King of New York, a Republican, introduced a bipartisan bill that would implement background checks on private gun sales. Since then it's been bouncing from one House subcommittee to another.

This was also the year that saw a backlash against politicians who offer "thought and prayers" after mass shootings but no legislative action. Left-leaning reporters noticed that the same lawmakers who only offered empty platitudes were highly rated by the NRA. On the evening of the San Bernardino shooting, Igor Volsky, a contributing editor at ThinkProgress, began Twitter-shaming them. One by one, he replied to three dozen Republican legislators' "thoughts and prayers" tweets with the amount they'd been given by the NRA – a total of \$12.5 million.

THE TRACE IS AN INDEPENDENT, NONPROFIT NEWS ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO EXPANDING COVERAGE OF GUNS IN THE UNITED STATES. WE BELIEVE THAT OUR COUNTRY'S EPIDEMIC RATES OF FIREARM-RELATED VIOLENCE ARE COUPLED WITH A SECOND PROBLEM: A SHORTAGE OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE ISSUE AT LARGE.

Source: The Trace 1/18/16 <http://www.thetrace.org/>

## Money and the 2016 US Presidential elections: the \$10 billion contest

As the United States election cycle began to ramp up last summer, for example, the New York Times/NBC News poll showed no less than 84 percent of U.S. voters – Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike – shared the common view that there was simply "too much money" flooding into U.S. elections today. While 85 percent of those in the poll further indicated that either major changes or a "complete rebuild" of the U.S. election system was needed to take money out of politics.

Forget minor tweaking reforms of campaign financing. The people of the U.S. now believe the entire process is rigged in favor of rich contributors and corporations who fill to overflowing the campaign coffers of their chosen politicians.

A related major concern expressed by those polled was that those billionaires writing the checks for candidates were "hiding behind the curtain" as never before. The electoral system itself was becoming increasingly opaque. Seventy-five percent of those polled thus demanded full disclosure of just who was providing all the money.

The current election cycle is just now getting underway with the primary season and nominating of candidates, so total spending won't be known for at least mid-2017 at the earliest. But there are signs appearing in numerous places that this election year will break all records for money flowing from the billionaires, their banks, and their corporations to their "hat in hand" candidates, as they regularly stumble over themselves and trek one after the other attending private meetings with the Koch Brothers, the Sheldon Adelsons, the Paul Singers, Goldman Sachs and other bankers – and all the rest of the billionaire class who write checks for tens of millions of dollars at a single sitting – to fund whichever candidate bends his knee and bows his head the most in committing to their favorite economic interest or pet political cause. And bend and bow they do.

### MARCO RUBIO

For example, there's the Republican presidential candidate, Marco Rubio, who led the attack on Argentina

in the U.S. Congress to pressure that country's Kirchner government to concede to the blackmail by U.S. vulture funds led by multi-billionaire, hedge fund magnate, Paul Singer. A financial supporter of the expansion of Israeli settlements in the west bank of Palestine, Singer is an ardent advocate that "Israel can do no wrong." As Singer's boy in the U.S. Senate, Rubio consistently takes a hard line on every Israel debate and vote, effectively representing Singer's views and interests. Not surprisingly, for that Rubio has been repaid well. Singer is Rubio's second biggest campaign contributor, second only to Florida real estate billionaire, Norman Braman. Multi-billionaires, both have already contributed more than US\$11 million in 2015 to Rubio's campaign. Software billionaire, Larry Ellison, the world's fifth richest person, worth \$47 billion, has also already contributed millions to Rubio. All three no doubt appreciate Rubio's pledge to eliminate all taxes on capital gains and dividends, which would mean \$1 trillion tax free to them and their billionaire friends. Rubio's election campaign committee and his "Conservative Solutions" super PAC have accumulated more than \$60 million in 2015. Bush money is reportedly moving to Rubio recently as well.

### TED CRUZ

Then there's candidate Cruz. His billionaires include ultra-right wing, hedge fund owner Robert Mercer, who contributes to restoration of the death penalty, advocates return to the gold standard, funds pro-life and anti-gay causes, and collects machine-guns for a hobby; Toby Neugebauer, the billionaire Houston investment banker; and Farris and Staci Wilks, extreme bible-thumpers, who view the U.S. from a prism of the biblical old testament, and whose family has made their billions by fracking and poisoning land in the U.S. from Texas to Montana. All have all written checks to the Cruz campaign for more than \$10 million each thus far, and contribute heavily to Cruz's super PAC, "Keeping the Promise," and his campaign committee, together worth at latest estimate more than \$100 million. Cruz repeatedly pilgrimages to their respective billionaire compounds and

retreats, that is, when he's not getting loans from the big Investment bank, Goldman Sachs, where his wife worked as a managing director, and from which Cruz has been given low interest loans.

### JEB BUSH

Jeb Bush got most of his money from his personal and family investment sources, from his super PAC, "Right to Rise," to which wealthy friends have already contributed \$118 million in "outside money," from his election committee with a pot of more than \$40 million more so far, from his 50+ per year public speeches for which he is paid an average of \$40,000 each, and unknown amounts from his multi-billionaire Bush dynasty family. Another big billionaire contributor, writing a \$10 million check recently, was the notorious Hank Greenberg, former Chairman of the American Insurance Group that the government and U.S. taxpayer bailed out to the tune of \$180 billion in the 2008 crisis.

### HILLARY CLINTON

Hillary Clinton's money comes from all the above sources and then some. For example, there's hedge fund billionaire, George Soros, who contributed \$8.5 million just last year. And the media billionaires, Haim and Cheryl Saban, who have directly already contributed millions; and reportedly may have contributed an estimated \$10-\$25 million more indirectly from their own personal foundation to the Clinton's foundation: a favorite way the rich contribute to each other. Both Hillary and Bill have also had multi-million dollar royalty book contracts, Hillary's latest worth \$5 million. She is also the biggest recipient of contributions from professional Lobbyists among all the candidates. Her campaign committee has amassed \$115 million as of January 2016 and her super PAC, "Priorities USA," more than \$40 million.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





# Money and the 2016 US Presidential elections

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The Clintons, however, have especially farmed the speech circuit for big money ever since Bill left office. That's how former presidents and other big-name, high visibility politicians who have performed well for the rich are "paid off" in the U.S. when they leave office. Corruption is "post-hoc" in the U.S. system, a more sophisticated arrangement than crude graft or theft while in office practiced in other countries. Bill Clinton has earned more than \$100 million in speeches alone since 2001. Hillary and Bill have earned another \$25 million just since her announcement to run. And then there are Hillary's "closed door talks," off-the record, unrecorded, Q&A sessions of an hour or so, which Hillary has held with scores of financial institutions, banks, and big companies since announcing her candidacy.

Her speeches and talks average \$225,000 to \$275,000, according to her "schedule A" campaign finance statement that is public record. When challenged by Sanders why she has been accepting fees of \$275,000 from scores of bankers and big corporations, including a recent 3 speech \$675,000 fee from Goldman Sachs, her reply was "I don't know, that's just what they offered". Yeah, out of the pure generosity of their banker hearts, expecting nothing in return no doubt.

The Clintons have given more than 50 speeches each in 2014 alone, according to public records. Adding it up, it's more than \$25 million in speeches and "talks" in 2014 alone. Their 2014 income was \$28 million and net worth \$110 million. At least \$28 million, and likely far more will eventually be reported for 2015 later this summer. Even more for 2016.

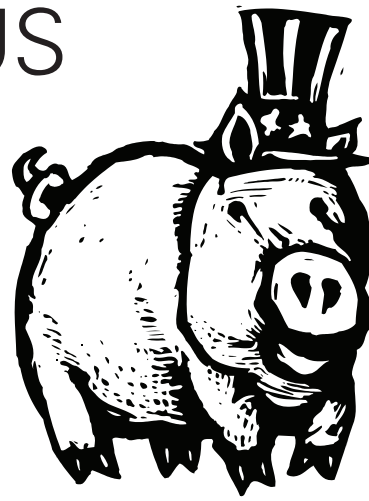
## TRUMP AND SANDERS

Trump claims his net worth is more than \$10 billion, and receives \$3 million per show just as host of the TV show, "Celebrity Apprentice," providing ample cash for his campaign, that is, so far. His long list of investments generate millions more in cash every year.

Sanders relies on small donors, has no super PAC or outside money, while his campaign committee reportedly has accumulated \$95 million. He owns no business and his net worth is reportedly \$330,000.

## ESTIMATING THE TOTALS

A proxy of just how much money is involved this year is perhaps estimated by how much in total was spent on the 2014 midterm Congressional elections, where no presidential candidate was running. No less than \$3.77 billion was spent that year. And that was what was only official reported to the



Federal Election Commission for donors contributing more than \$200 – excluding as well all spending on state and local government races and excluding what is called "dark" money from nonprofit organizations – called 501(c)(4) shell groups-like Karl Rove's notorious "Crossroads GPS," which has reportedly raised \$330 million in recent years. Spending by 501s is directed at attacking a candidate's opponents instead of contributing to the favorite candidate via PACs, super PACs, campaign committees, party committees, and the like. But it is campaign spending on behalf of candidates, nonetheless. Super-PACs and 501s are projected to spend more than a \$US billion each in the current year.

Totals for 2015 from all the above sources – i.e. corporate and special interest PACs, super PACs, leadership PACs, the 30,000 Washington, D.C. lobbyists, the 501s and their "Limited Liability Company" middlemen who raise money from the super-wealthy but can legally keep their names unreported, from House and Senate and political party fund raising committees, and so on – were likely more than \$5 billion, at minimum.

But public records for 2015 totals won't be released by the government until June 30, 2016

For the entire 2015-2016 election, the cumulative totals will no doubt range from \$10 to \$15 billion. But the actual totals will have to wait even longer, until June 30, 2017. But even then will reflect only what is officially reported, as more "dark money" flows into elections in increasingly opaque system that grows progressively "darker" as the mountains of election money provided by billionaires, corporations, and bankers grow ever higher.

JACK RASMUS IS THE AUTHOR OF *OBAMA'S ECONOMY: RECOVERY FOR THE FEW*, 2012, PALGRAVE AND PLUTO PRESS. HIS WEB SITE IS: WWW.KYKLOSPRODUCTIONS.COM. RASMUS BLOGS AT JACKRASMUS.COM.

Source: Truthout.org 3/5/16 <http://www.truth-out.org>

## *Economist: Bernie Sanders' economic plan would boost jobs*

Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders' government spending and tax proposal would increase people's median income by more than \$22,000, create 26 million jobs, and would reduce unemployment levels to 3.8 percent, economics professor Gerald Friedman from University of

Massachusetts Amherst told CNN. The findings were part of a study carried out by Friedman that examined the economic costs and

impacts of the Vermont senator's proposal, which he predicts would stimulate the economy, increasing both productivity and GDP. Friedman likened Sanders' economic proposal to the 1930s New Deal, writing in the report that Sanders would "promote a more just prosperity, broadly-based with a narrowing of economy inequality." Under his proposal, Sanders would increase capital gains on the country's top income

earners by nearly 52 percent, which would then be allocated towards improved infrastructure, higher social security benefits, free college tuition and expanded health care. Meanwhile, Friedman's recent findings also coincide with endorsements from over 170 prominent economists, supporting Bernie Sanders' proposal to break up big banks and bring justice to Wall Street. In efforts to finance these initiatives, Sanders has also vowed to

impose financial transaction taxes on Wall Street as well as tax increases on corporate profits. Friedman's recent findings coincide with endorsements from over 170 prominent economists, supporting Bernie Sanders' proposal to break up big banks and bring justice to Wall Street.

Source: teleSUR 2/9/16 <http://www.telesurto.net>



## Mainstream Media = Truth?

Check out the Alternatives and Find out for yourself!

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

**Firedoglake** <http://firedoglake.com>

**Emptywheel**  
<http://emptywheel.firedoglake.com/>

**Calitics** <http://www.calitics.com/>

**Eschaton** <http://www.eschatonblog.com/>

**Huffington Post**  
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

**Hullabaloo** <http://digbysblog.blogspot.com>

**Daily Kos** <http://www.dailykos.com>

**Talking Points Memo**  
<http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com>

**TPM Muckraker**  
<http://www.tpmuckraker.com/>

**FiveThirtyEight.com**  
<http://www.fivethirtyeight.com/>

**Congress Matters**  
<http://www.congressmatters.com>

**Think Progress** <http://thinkprogress.com>

**Down With Tyranny**  
<http://downwithtyranny.blogspot.com/>

**Crooks and Liars**  
<http://www.crooksandliars.com>

**Media Matters** <http://mediamatters.org/>

**Common Dreams**  
<http://www.commondreams.org/>

**Truth Out** <http://www.truthout.org/>

**Raw Story** <http://www.rawstory.com>

**Open Left** <http://www.openleft.com/>

**AlterNet** <http://www.alternet.org/>

**Independent Media Center**  
<http://www.indymedia.org>

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

**Hightower News**  
<http://www.webactive.com/hightower/>

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

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

**The Guardian**  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/>

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

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

**Democracy Now!** on KPFA, 94.1 FM and KVMR, 89.5 FM or on the web at: <http://www.democracynow.org>

**People's World** <http://www.peoplesworld.org>



## To feed the world, tap into organic's potential: study



ANDREA GERMANOS

A new review of four decades of science has come to this conclusion: organic agriculture has a key role to play in feeding the world.

To analyze the body of research, author John Reganold, Regents Professor of Soil Science and Agroecology at Washington State University, and doctoral candidate Jonathan Wachter compared conventional and organic farming using the metrics of productivity, environmental impact, economic viability, and social well-being.

"Thirty years ago, there were just a couple handfuls of studies comparing organic agriculture with conventional. In the last 15 years, these kinds of studies have skyrocketed," Reganold said.

In terms of productivity, they found that organic yields averaged 10 to 20 percent less than conventional—but that's not always the case. "In severe drought conditions, which are expected to increase with climate change, organic farms have the potential to produce high yields because of the higher water-holding capacity of organically farmed soils," Reganold said.

Furthermore, as food system reform advocates like Food First's Eric Holt Gimenez have said there's already more than enough food being produced for the world—low yields are not the root of hunger.

"If you look at calorie production per capita we're producing more than enough food for 7 billion people now, but we waste 30 to 40 percent of it," Reganold said. "It's not just a matter of producing enough, but making agriculture environmentally friendly and making sure that food gets to those who need it."

On environmental impact, organic agriculture, which now accounts for one percent of global agricultural land, is the winner, as it supports more biodiversity, creates less water pollution and greenhouse gases, and is more energy efficient. On top of that, organically managed soils can hold more carbon and can reduce erosion.

Comparing the two using the economic

metric, organic is the winner again, because consumers are willing to pay more. And while both approaches have drawbacks in terms of the social well-being metric, organic still has the edge because of less exposure to chemicals for communities and farm workers.

Still, Reganold and Wachter write that "no single approach will safely feed the planet. Rather, a blend of organic and other innovative farming systems is needed." But to make that happen, policy changes are needed. Reganold explains in a Union of Concerned Scientists blog post:

"With only 1% of global agricultural land in organic production, organic agriculture can contribute a larger share in feeding the world. Yet, significant barriers to farmers adopting organic agriculture hinder its expansion. Such hurdles include existing policies, the costs of transitioning to organic certification, lack of access to labor and markets, and lack of appropriate infrastructure for storing and transporting food. Governments should focus on creating policies that help develop not just organic but also other innovative and more sustainable farming systems. Specifically, agricultural policies should:

- Offer greater financial incentives for farmers to adopt conservation measures and scientifically sound sustainable, organic, and integrated crop or livestock production practices.
- Expand outreach and technical assistance that will provide farmers with better information about these transformative practices.
- Increase publicly funded research to improve and expand modern sustainable farming.

The new study was published online Wednesday in the journal *Nature Plants*.

Source: Common Dreams 2/4/16 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

## GAO report: Federal agencies failing bees

ANDREA GERMANOS

Echoing charges made by conservation organizations, a new report from the Government Accountability Office finds that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) need to step up their actions in order to protect bees.

The report released to the public on Friday, was based on assessments from October 2014 to February 2016. The report found that the USDA, "which co-chairs the White House Pollinator Health Task Force with EPA, has not worked with its partners on the task force to coordinate a native bee monitoring plan," and that its efforts to promote bee habitat conservation may be thwarted by gaps in research and evaluation.

The EPA, meanwhile, has suffered from challenges in data collection and reporting on bee kill incidents that may be linked to pesticides, while its risk assessment guidance "does not call for EPA to assess the risks that pesticide mixtures may pose to bees."

Among the report's recommendations are "that USDA coordinate with other agencies to develop a plan to monitor wild, native bees, and evaluate gaps in staff expertise in conservation practices, and that EPA identify the most common mixtures of pesticides used on crops."

"Ultimately this report reiterates what we've known for a long time," stated Lori Ann Burd, Environmental Health director at the Center for Biological Diversity, "that the USDA and EPA are failing to do what it takes to protect our rapidly declining bee



populations."

"Despite their importance and evidence of dramatic declines, the USDA has failed to take measures to start protecting [native bees]," she continued. And "[f]or far too long, the EPA has turned a blind eye to the impacts of pesticide mixtures."

In a related development, environmental group Friends of the Earth this week said in a statement: "Recent allegations of the USDA's censorship and suppression of scientific research on pesticides calls into question the agency's ability to co-chair [the White House Pollinator Health Task Force] and develop a meaningful federal strategy that will truly protect bees, birds, monarchs, and other critical pollinators."

Source: Common Dreams 3/11/16 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

## Feds sued over butterfly protections

TIM DEVANEY

The federal government is fending off a lawsuit over monarch butterflies. A group of animal rights activists argues the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) should add the monarch butterfly to the endangered species list.

The Center for Biological Diversity and the Center for Food Safety jointly filed the lawsuit Thursday in federal court, calling on the agency to take steps to protect monarch butterflies from extinction.

"Protecting monarch butterflies under the Endangered Species Act is essential to their survival, and further agency delay is unlawful and irresponsible," said George Kimbrell, senior attorney at the Center for

Food Safety.

The future of the monarch butterfly is "threatened" by a 90 percent population decline over the last two decades, the animals rights activists claim. During this time, monarchs' habitat has declined by more than 165 million acres.

"The butterfly's dramatic decline has been driven in large part by the widespread planting of genetically-engineered crops in the Midwest, where most monarchs are born," the activists wrote.

The Center for Biological Diversity and the Center for Food Safety originally petitioned the Fish and Wildlife Service to designate monarch butterflies as a threatened species in August 2014.

A few months later, the FWS began a review of the monarch butterfly's status, but the agency has yet to issue a decision in the case.

The animal rights activists are asking the U.S. District Court for Arizona to impose a deadline for the FWS to make a decision.

"The threats the monarch is facing are so large in scale that the butterfly needs the effective protection of the Endangered Species Act if we're really serious about saving this amazing migratory wonder for future generations," said Tierra Curry, senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity.

Source: The Hill 3/10/16 <http://thehill.com/>





# The shocking consequences of the world's meat addiction

COLE MELLINO

More than 9 billion animals are slaughtered in the U.S. every year for meat with global demand skyrocketing. Animal agriculture is putting an ever-increasing strain on world resources, particularly global water supplies, according to VICE's two-part episode, *Meathooked* and *End of Water*, which premiered March 4 at 11 p.m. on HBO.

In VICE's fifth episode of season 4, Isobel Yeung traveled to feedlots, farms and slaughterhouses to learn where our meat comes from and to uncover its true costs, and Vikram Gandhi traveled to the Central Valley in California and São Paulo,

Brazil to find out just how severe the global water crisis has become.

In California's Central Valley, farmers are quickly depleting the state's groundwater as the state remains mired in a drought, despite El Niño rains. São Paulo's drought has become so bad that water in at least one of the area's reservoirs is below what engineers consider zero, meaning that they have to pipe the remaining water uphill just to get it to the intake pipes.

"Meat production, globally, is an environmental disaster now," Ken Cook, president of Environmental Working Group, said. "If we try and expand production to reach 9 billion people by

2050, it will be a complete and unthinkable disaster."

"Let's assume the population will reach 9 billion by 2050," Cook said. "There isn't enough land, there isn't enough water, there isn't the capacity for the Earth's atmosphere to absorb all of the CO2 and the methane that would come out of animal agriculture."

The problem is that our focus is on making the meat as cheap as possible, and as they cut those corners, that's where we often have environmental catastrophes."

But there are agricultural innovators hoping to change the way we raise animals for food. Yeung met with Joel Salatin of Polyface Farms in Virginia. Salatin uses a

sustainable system of raising animals called "rotational grazing."

Young also met with Dr. Mark Post, professor of physiology at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, to discuss his work on creating the first synthetic burger. He has grown meat in a lab from stem cells in just seven weeks—"much, much faster" than raising a cow for slaughter, he noted. The first trial cost \$325,000, but he hopes to grow it cheaper and faster soon.

Source: *Ecowatch* 3/4/16 <http://www.ecowatch.com/>

## General Mills to start GMO labeling nationwide as Vermont law looms

LORRAINE CHOW

General Mills has announced it will start labeling products with genetically modified (GMO) ingredients, becoming the second major food company to make the transition following Campbell Soup's decision last month. The news comes as another blow to Big Food following the Senate's rejection of Sen. Pat Roberts' (R-Kan.) Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act (SAFE) Wednesday. The bill, dubbed by opponents as the Denying Americans the Right to Know (DARK) Act, would have prevented states—namely Vermont—from requiring labeling of GMOs and stopped pending state laws that require labeling to go into effect.

Jeff Harmening, head of General Mills' U.S. retail operations, addressed the national GMO debacle in a letter and explained that since his cereal company will be forced to label GMOs in Vermont by July 1—which is when the state's labeling mandate takes effect—it should also extend GMO labeling to products sold across the nation.

He wrote in a letter, posted on the company website: "We need a national solution for GMO labeling: I have been eagerly awaiting a resolution of the GMO labeling debate in Washington and am disappointed that a national solution has still not been reached. As the discussions continue in Washington, one thing is very clear: Vermont state law requires us to start labeling certain grocery store food packages that contain GMO ingredients or face significant fines. We can't label our products for only one state without significantly driving up costs for our consumers and we simply will not do that."

The result: consumers all over the U.S. will soon begin seeing words legislated by the state of Vermont on the labels of many of their favorite General Mills products. The Cheerios maker's announcement was praised by GMO labeling proponents. Scott Faber, the Environmental Working Group's senior vice president of government affairs, said the decision reflects the sentiment of the majority of Americans who want to know if they're eating GMOs.

"Nine out of 10 Americans want the right to know whether their food contains GMOs—just like consumers in 64 other nations," Faber said. "Like General Mills, we hope

Congress will craft a national, mandatory GMO labeling solution and welcome the opportunity to work with industry to find a solution that works for consumers and works for the food industry."

Gary Hirshberg, chairman of the Just Label It campaign and Stonyfield Farm, also praised General Mills for the move: "General Mills has shown real leadership by committing to provide consumers basic information about their food. More than 60,000 consumers thanked Campbells when they announced their commitment to greater transparency, and I am sure consumers will reward General Mills for trusting consumers to make their own choices."

Besides Campbell Soup, a number of major American companies, such as Ben & Jerry's, Chipotle and Whole Foods have either abandoned GMOs or require labeling. Coincidence or not, Campbell has also seen its stock price rise in after making its announcement to ditch GMOs.

According to Green America's GMO Inside, General Mills' food products are "chock full of corn, soy and sugars—ingredients that are almost always genetically modified in the United States," including America's favorite cereal, Cheerios.

Harmening maintains that genetically engineered foods are safe for human consumption, saying in his letter: "All sides of this debate, 20 years of research, and every major health and safety agency in the world agree that GMOs are not a health or safety concern," but adds that "at the same time, we know that some consumers are interested in knowing which products contain GMO ingredients."

The labeling of GMOs has been a contentious food fight in recent years. Food and beverage trade organizations such as the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), which represents more than 300 food and beverage titans, argue that a 50-state patchwork of GMO labeling policies would be prohibitively costly.

However, as *EcoWatch* exclusively reported, despite the GMA slapping numerous lawsuits and spending millions in lobbying against mandatory labels at the state and federal level, an internal document indicates that GMA member companies are preparing a transition to labeling their GMO products, or at least in Vermont.

Source: *Ecowatch* 3/19/16 <http://ecowatch.com>



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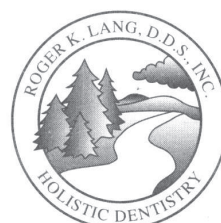
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# Sanders accepts challenge to kill TPP if elected... nothing from Clinton so far

JON QUEALLY

Accepting a challenge and passing it on ahead of primary voting in Ohio and elsewhere on Tuesday, Sen. Bernie Sanders vowed that if elected president he would refuse to present the controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement to Congress and asked his rival Hillary Clinton to join him in that pledge.

As he spoke about trade policy and other key issues to a packed indoor stadium

in Toledo on Friday night, Sanders told the crowd that if voters turn out in the manner they did recently in Michigan, his campaign will continue to surprise pollsters and the establishment media pundits who have continually downplayed the seriousness of his campaign and its supporters.

Invoking the fight over NAFTA, Sanders told the crowd: "They said it was going to create all kinds of jobs in America. I didn't believe that for one second. In 1995 I was

on the picket lines opposition to that. You don't need a PhD to understand that a trade agreement written by corporate America was to force American workers to compete against desperately poor people all over the world. American workers should not have to compete against people making pennies an hour."

Sanders continued by saying that "communities here in the Midwest – in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois – have been decimated" by

companies offshoring jobs in the wake of NAFTA's passage. Trying to replicate his surprise win in Michigan in the industrial Rust Belt states of Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri—all of which hold primaries on Tuesday—Sanders also released a new ad airing across the region touting his opposition to the kind of trade deals he says his rival Clinton has long embraced though Clinton has said she is "not in favor of" what she knows about the TPP, the demand for

both candidates to make an outright pledge to kill the deal if elected was made on Friday afternoon by progressive-leaning advocacy groups Democracy for America (DFA) and the Progressive Congressional Change Committee (PCCC).

"It's not enough to say you oppose the job-killing Trans-Pacific Partnership," said Sroka. "We need a Democratic nominee who is committed to fighting the NAFTA-style trade deals that have destroyed too many

American communities. Secretary Clinton has said she opposes the job-killing TPP, but if she's serious about her opposition she'll make clear right now that she'll fight any effort to pass the current agreement during a lame duck session of Congress and, if elected, will reject any attempt to call slight tweaks to this fundamentally flawed trade agreement an improvement."

Source: Common Dreams 3/12/16  
<http://www.commondreams.org/>

## Tax Day 2015: seven things you should know about taxes

1. You are an investor in our nation and your tax dollars come back to your community

Your taxes fund health care programs, clean drinking water, education, the national weather service, highways and bridges, and national parks, among many other things. Federal dollars flow into your state and then down into your own neighborhood. Across the nation, about 30 percent of state revenues come from the federal government.

2. You pay the federal government's bills

Around 80 percent of all federal tax revenue comes from the paychecks of Americans, through income taxes and payroll taxes. Almost half of all federal revenues come from individual income taxes: taxes you pay on income from work, investments, and more. Income taxes are what the April 15 Tax Day is all about. Additionally, about one third of all federal revenues come from payroll taxes that pay for programs like Social Security and Medicare, and may show up on your paycheck as "FICA." Corporate income taxes make up only about 11 percent of federal revenue, down from a high of almost 40 percent in 1943. That means regular people like you are the primary bill payer for the U.S. government – and that's why the federal budget belongs to you and to all Americans.

3. Where did your 2014 income taxes go?

Want a personalized tax receipt based on taxes you paid for 2014, including how much you paid for programs like SNAP (food stamps), nuclear weapons or renewable energy? Visit our tax receipt. You can also see the average tax receipt for taxpayers in your own state.

4. We don't all pay taxes equally. Not even close.

In theory the tax code is progressive, meaning those who make more money pay higher tax rates – yet in practice that's not always the case. As Warren Buffett made famous, billionaires sometimes pay lower rates than middle-class workers. And some corporations, like Bank of America and Citigroup, have gotten away with paying zero federal income taxes, even when they make billions in profit. And that's because the tax code is chock-full of tax breaks.

5. Our tax code is full of special tax breaks – tilted heavily in favor of the rich.

Ten of the largest tax breaks that together totaled more than \$750 billion in tax savings in 2013 overwhelmingly

benefited the top 1 percent of households, with 17 percent of the benefits going to those top earners. That's in part because tax deductions – one important type of tax break – are far more likely to benefit the wealthy than middle- and low-income folks, because deductions only offer savings to taxpayers who itemize deductions on their tax return. Only 16 percent of households making between \$25,000 and \$30,000 itemize tax deductions, while nearly 100 percent of those making over \$200,000 do.

6. But, some tax breaks go straight to working families.

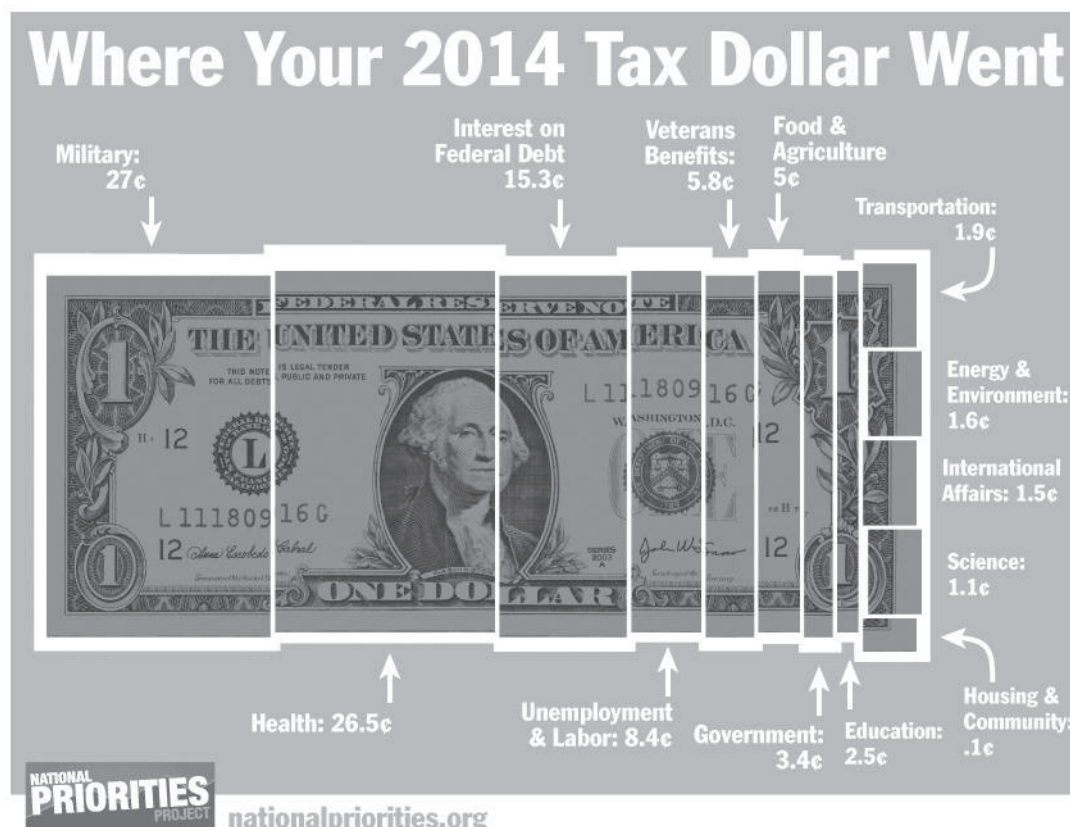
Most tax credits are "nonrefundable", meaning it is possible for them to reduce your taxes down to zero, but they can't also result in the Treasury sending you a check on top of that. But a couple of tax credits are "refundable," meaning after your taxes have been reduced to zero, you still may get a check. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child

Tax Credit (CTC) are refundable, and are widely seen as effective anti-poverty measures, helping to combat inequality. While such measures alone won't eradicate inequality, they're important – and widely supported – tools in the fight against inequality.

7. Tax breaks as designed are often inefficient.

Lawmakers often use the tax code to achieve goals like promoting manufacturing or reducing the cost of health care. But the tax code isn't always effective at achieving these kinds of goals. For instance, Washington devotes billions in spending to financial aid for college students, while a variety of tax breaks do the same thing. But while Pell grants and other direct aid are largely effective at reaching low-income students, tax breaks are far more likely to reach wealthy families who may be less in need of aid.

Source: National Priorities Project 3/16/16 <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/>







# In Latin America and beyond, another world is still possible

FIONUALA CREGAN

For those who witnessed the collapse of Argentina in 2001 with millions of citizens taking to the streets to reject neoliberal policies, the recent presidential victory of right wing business tycoon Mauricio Macri may seem incomprehensible. And he has not disappointed. In his first two months in power over 27,000 civil servants have been fired, duties on mining exports removed, state subsidies on essential services lifted, negotiations with 'vulture funds' on billion dollar debt repayment resumed and all this justified by a complicit corporate controlled media. In anticipation of the dissent that will follow, special power has been given to police to repress demonstrations after a ten minute warning.

Simultaneously in Venezuela, Chavez's successor Nicolas Maduro is facing the first ever opposition controlled parliament in over a decade, in Brazil, President Dilma Rousseff is struggling against a parliamentary impeachment process while in Ecuador indigenous and workers movements have staged mass protests against President Correa.

What is happening to the continent that once captured the imagination of citizen's movements globally, ousting neoliberal governments en masse and embodying the potential and hope of the World Social Forum's slogan "Another World is Possible"?

## RESURGENT BEGINNINGS

In 2005 newly elected leftist governments in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Ecuador and Venezuela spectacularly rejected George W. Bush's imperial world view and, in particular, his Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). This was an unprecedented, head-on challenge to US government intervention in the region. These governments began to strengthen regional cooperation and trade and at the national level, raising duty on primary material exports, re-nationalising key industries, and using these funds to develop social programs which lifted hundreds of thousands of people out of extreme poverty. In Argentina there were major conquests in the area of human rights - marriage equality, transgender rights, pensions for women working at home and the trial and imprisonment for many of those responsible for human rights violations during the 1976-1983 dictatorship.

What they did not do, however, was create major, lasting structural change - i.e. changing the rules that create poverty and inequality in the first place. The nature of the Latin American economy has essentially stayed the same. Since colonial times the continent has been an exporter of primary materials and this remains true today. In fact, during the past decade the production of monocultures for export such as soy has actually increased, creating mass environmental destruction and evictions of small-holder farmers from their lands. There was little investment in diversifying production or in substantial improvements to health and education. Instead, social programs were created to increase consumption, making more families dependent on the financial system.

The critical thing to remember is that the existence of these social programs depended, in turn, on commodity prices. In 2013, the global price of soy reached a high of \$600/ton but one year later fell to \$350/ton while oil prices toppled from \$100 a barrel to between \$28-50. As this commodity bubble continues to burst today, many of the 'achievements' of the past decade are being eroded by rising inflation, wage stagnation and financial uncertainty, and in the case of Argentina, this has enabled the right wing take centre stage with multi-million dollar media campaigns and the promise of "change." We now know that what will follow will be more of the same, without the safety net for those living in poverty.

## STARTING FROM THE BOTTOM

Like all national governments all over the world, even these more progressive South American governments, have



for decades remained subservient to the rules of the global capitalist system which requires them to serve first and foremost the special interests of private corporations and international institutions like the World Bank and the IMF (who in turn serve the corporate interests from the Western countries that control these institutions). This system has emptied politics of all moral and ethical sentiment. It has quite simply transformed the meaning of life in to wealth creation and governments everywhere from Argentina to India, from Greece to the United States, have simply become facilitators for increasing GDP.

What then of the social movements across South America that played a key role in developing neoliberal counter narratives and brought these progressive governments to power in the early 2000s? Many have been weakened by internal divisions as they navigated new political and governmental terrain. In Argentina, for example, many social movements chose to work with the government, receiving substantial state funding for social housing and other projects. This in turn lead to a loss of a autonomy and weakened political discourse - as mass deforestation for mono-cultivation of soy and contamination of water sources from oil and mining projects advanced, they remained silent.

But many others have continued to question the state and centralized systems of power and, thanks to the social policies of progressive governments there are more and more young people in particular who have had access to education opportunities and alternative political narratives. A program called "connecting equality" in Argentina distributed over four million laptops to secondary schools while a Digital Inclusion program enabled access to internet across the Brazils' favelas (not that hardware or technology are silver bullets). Today information flows through thousands of Facebook and WhatsApp groups enabling dialogue and challenging the mainstream media and official government narrative.

For over three decades power has been centralized in a global financial system and logic of economic growth that is leading us towards certain collapse and planetary destruction. Recent experiences in South America have proven that even so-called socialist governments are unable to escape from the straightjacket of neoliberal logic.

For the Zapatistas it has always been clear: "We think, fundamentally, that the future story of Latin America, not only of Mexico but for all of Latin America, will be constructed from the bottom - that the rest of what's happening, in any case, are steps."

## CONNECTING THE DOTS

Each and every day behind the façade of corporate media and politicians, people are taking steps. Social movements in South America from Indigenous communities who have recovered land to worker controlled factories to cooperatively owned business of all types are starting to see that that change does not come through the ballot box;

rather, it lies in reclaiming and redistributing power. Fueled by a decade of social progress and strengthened political conscience, the steps of an emerging Latin American body politic are firmer, clearer and more dignified.

Historian Tony Judt described the time from 1989 onwards as being "consumed by locusts" and stated that "The thrall in which an ideology holds a people is best measured by their collective inability to imagine alternatives." The past decade of 'progressive' governments with continued poverty and inequality in South America has actually helped cultivate a rising movement, showing us where the locusts are being bred, freeing our imaginations and helping us connect the dots between the global neoliberal system. Both existing and emerging social movements will continue to inspire, teach and increasingly walk together to challenge the mantra of economic growth, globalized trade terror and amputation of natural resources. The limitations of the Pink Tide and the increasing callousness of the global power elites are fanning the flames of imagination and giving birth to visions of a post-capitalist horizon.

FIONUALA CREGAN IS BASED IN ARGENTINA AND CURRENTLY WORKS AS SOUTH AMERICAN CHACO PROGRAM OFFICER WITH THE CHURCH WORLD SERVICE ON A PROGRAM FOCUSED ON THE RECOVERY OF ANCESTRAL TERRITORIES BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE REGION.

Source: Common Dreams 3/11/16 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

## Contact Your Reps

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**Representative Tom McClintock (R-District 4)**, 8700 Auburn-Folsom Road, Suite 100, Granite Bay, CA 95746, 916, 786-5560, fax 916-786-6364; 434 Cannon HOB, Washington, DC, 20515, Fax 202-225-5444, Fax 202-225-544; Twitter @RepMcClintock

**Representative Jeff Denham (R-District 10)**, 4701 Sisk Road, Suite 202, Modesto, CA 95356, 209-579-5458, Fax 209-579-5028. 1730 Longworth HOB, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-4540. Twitter @RepJeffDunham

**Governor Jerry Brown**, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-445-2841

**State Sen. Cathleen Galgiani (District 5)**, 31 E Channel St, Room 440, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7930; State Capitol, Rm 4082, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-651-4005

**Assemblyperson Susan Talamantes Eggman (District 5)**, 31 E. Channel St., Rm. 306, Stockton CA 95202, 209-948-7479



# Say their names: rehumanizing lynch victims



AMY KATE BAILEY

The noose holds immense cultural power today because of our nation's sad history of racial violence and terror. Few Americans, however, are aware of the extent of lynching. Mob violence proceeded at such a pace in the southern states that in the five decades between the fall of Radical Reconstruction and the onset of the Great Depression, one black man, woman, or child was killed every week. Take a moment to let that sink in. One mob murder a week, for fifty years, and most of us have only the vaguest notion about the history of American lynching. This is not taught in our high school classrooms, making the connections between historical racial violence and contemporary victimization of black people easier to discredit.

The true contours of the United States' history of mob violence are shocking: that lynching occurred as often as it did, and that the identities of those who suffered at the hands of lynch mobs have been lost to history. Today's Black Lives Matter activists rightly insist that it is important to remember by name people who have been killed by police and vigilantes. Treyvon Martin. Rakia Boyd. Eric Garner. Tamir Rice. Freddie Gray. Oscar Grant. If the United States is ever to approach racial healing and reconciliation, we must also remember the names and lives of those who have been killed throughout our nation's history. Garfield Burley. Jim Torney. S. S. Mincey. James Clark. Metta Hicks. James and Harrison Gillespie.

My colleague, Stewart E. Tolnay, and I launched a project several years ago intent on memorializing southern

lynch victims. We began with a list of 2,805 documented lynch victims that he had compiled in the early 1990s with E.M. Beck at the University of Georgia. This initial list was created through archival work with historical southern newspapers. We set out to collect information on who these people were, and where they fit in within their communities. Our team, which included more than a dozen talented and inspiring undergraduate students, searched the historic census records for people from the Beck-Tolnay inventory. We found close to 1,000 of them, and have made our research notes and all archival documents we gathered publicly available (see the note, below). These include census records, newspaper reports, World War I draft registration cards, and information from death registries.

Some of the people in our inventory were accused of horrific crimes, and others for minor transgressions of the racial code of white supremacy. Regardless of what they were accused of, and whether or not they were guilty, these Americans were denied the basic civil liberties that should be available to us all: due process of law, trial by a jury of our peers, equal protection from the state. They were captured by a group of vigilantes and executed, sometimes with shocking brutality and an unimaginable level of suffering. The federal government failed repeatedly to pass anti-lynching legislation, leaving prosecution for these killings up to the discretion of local and state law enforcement.

To be clear, the vicious practice of lynching was not uniquely southern, however, nor were blacks the only targets. Lynching has affected every corner of the United States since the earliest settlers arrived. California alone witnessed more than 350 lynchings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans joining blacks and 'ethnic' whites as the most likely victims. Victimization varied around the country, because different groups of people lived in different regions, and the nature of intergroup economic and political competition varied as well. People who belonged to marginalized groups, or possessed some sort of outsider status within their local community, seemed to be at greatest risk of being targeted.

Regardless of what these people may or may not have done, they all had lives, communities, family, and friends. They had hopes and dreams, fears and sorrows, just like you and I. Just like Laquan McDonald. Like Antonio Zambrano-Montes. Like Michael Brown. Like Tanisha Anderson. I hope that our efforts will contribute to a national conversation about connections between historical and contemporary racial violence. I hope that considering who these people were, their lives, and the circumstances surrounding their deaths can help us understand the race-based structural inequality

that still plagues our nation. I hope that this work reinstates some of the humanity that was stolen from these people when their lives were taken with such brutality. I hope that it helps to salve the psychic wounds of the tens of thousands of their surviving descendants today. As George Santayna cautions, unless we can learn from our past, we are doomed to repeat it.

More information on the dataset I built with Stew Tolnay, as well as links to case files and instructions for holding a memorial reading of the names of lynch victims is available here: <http://lynching.csde.washington.edu/#/home>.

AMY KATE BAILEY IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO.

## Suggested Reading

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# Senate Republicans: do your job

ELIZABETH WARREN

There's a vacancy on the most important court in America, and the message from Senate Republicans is crystal clear: forget the Constitution. In fact, their response to one of the most solemn and consequential tasks that our government performs is to pretend that the Supreme Court vacancy—and President Obama himself—do not exist.

But this isn't a new problem, and it's not isolated to one Supreme Court seat. For seven years, Republican senators have bowed to extremists who reject President Obama's legitimacy and abuse the Senate rules in an all-out effort to cripple the Administration and paralyze the federal courts.

In 2013, only one year into

the President's second term, Republican leaders flatly rejected the President's authority to confirm any judges to fill any of three open seats on the second-highest court in the country. Democrats had to change the filibuster rules to move nominees forward. Once Republicans took over the Senate in 2015, judicial confirmations nearly ground to a halt.

The same is true for non-judicial nominees. Republicans have held up the President's nominees to run the Department of Labor and the Environmental Protection Agency, largely on the suspicion that those highly-qualified individuals might actually help those agencies do their work. Republicans have held up nominees to the National Labor Relations Board and the Consumer Financial Protection

Bureau. Republicans regularly hold up the confirmation of dozens of ambassadors, undermining our national security and our relationships with other nations.

Last year, Republicans blocked confirmation of the Attorney General, the highest law enforcement official in the country, for 166 days. That's longer than it took the Senate to consider the prior seven Attorneys General combined.

The message from Senate Republicans couldn't be clearer: no matter how much it damages the nation, no matter how much it undermines our courts, no matter how much it cripples our government or lays waste to our Constitution, they will not acknowledge the legitimacy of our democratically-elected President.

For too long, Senate

Republicans have wanted it both ways. They want to nullify the Obama Presidency while claiming that they can govern responsibly. That game is over. Extremist candidates motivated by bigotry and resentment are on the verge of winning the Republican Party's nomination for President, and Republican Senators must now make a decision.

Because here's the deal: extremists might not like it, but Barack Obama won the Presidency in 2008 by nine million votes and won re-election in 2012 by five million votes. There were no recounts or hanging chads, no stuffing the ballot box or tampering with voting machines, no intervention from the Supreme Court. President Obama was elected the legitimate President

seven years ago, and he is the legitimate President right now.

So if it's true that some Republican Senators are finally ready to stand up to the extremism that denies the legitimacy of this President and of the Constitution, I say to them: do your job. Vote on a Supreme Court nominee. Vote on District Court judges and Circuit Court judges. Vote on ambassadors. Vote on agency leaders and counterterrorism officials.

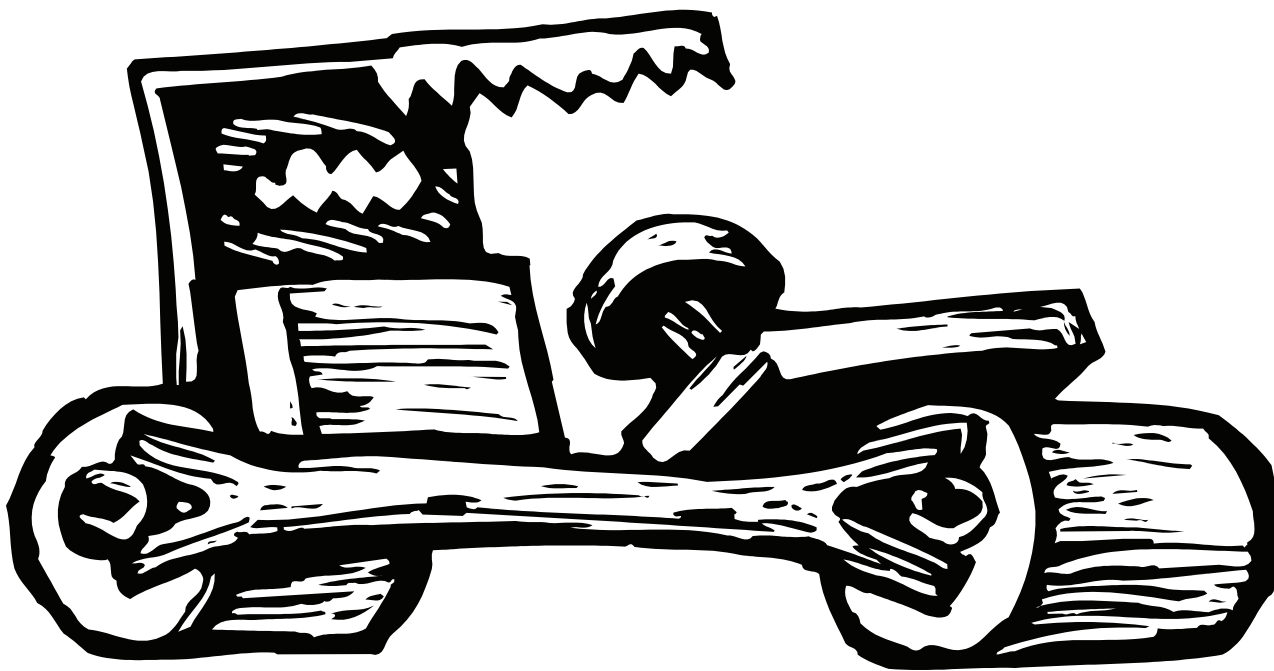
If Senate Republicans want to stop extremism in their party, they can start by showing the American people that they respect the President and the Constitution enough to do their job in the United States Senate.

Source: Reader Supported News 3/11/16  
<http://readersupportednews.org/>





# Blowing the biggest political story of the last fifty years



NEAL GABLER

Ah, the crescendo of complaint! The Republican establishment and the mainstream media, working hand in hand in their unprecedented, non-stop assault on the “short-fingered vulgarian” named Donald Trump, would have you believe that Trump augurs the destruction of the Republican Party. Former Reagan speechwriter and now *Wall Street Journal* / CBS pundit Peggy Noonan expressed the general sentiment of both camps when she said on Super Tuesday that “we’re seeing a great political party shatter before our eyes.”

But here is what no one in the GOP establishment wants you to know, and no one in the media wants to admit: Donald Trump isn’t the destruction of the Republican Party; he is the fulfillment of everything the party has been saying and doing for decades. He is just saying it louder and more plainly than his predecessors and intra-party rivals.

The media have been acting as if the Trump debacle were the biggest political story to come down the pike in some time. But the real story – one the popularity of Trump’s candidacy has revealed and inarguably the biggest political story of the last 50 years – is the decades-long transformation of Republicanism from a business-centered, small town, white Protestant set of beliefs into quite possibly America’s primary institutional force of bigotry, intellectual dishonesty, ignorance, warmongering, intractability and cruelty against the vulnerable and powerless.

It is a story you didn’t read, hear or see in the mainstream media, only in lefty journals like *The Nation* and *Rolling Stone*, on websites like People for the American Way, and in columns like Paul Krugman’s. And it wasn’t exactly because the MSM in its myopia missed the story. It was because they chose not to tell it – to pretend it wasn’t happening. They are still pretending.

It is hardly a surprise that the GOP establishment and their enablers in the media are acting as if Trump, the Republican frontrunner, is a break from the party’s supposedly genteel past. Like Captain Renault in *Casablanca*, who was “shocked, shocked,” to find gambling in Rick’s establishment, the GOP solons profess to be “shocked, shocked” by Trump’s demagogic racism and nativism. Their protestations remind me of an old gambit of comedian Milton Berle. When the audience was applauding him, he would shush them demonstratively with one hand while encouraging them gently with the other.

Neither is it a surprise that the conservative media have been doing the same thing – decrying Trump while giving us Trump Lite. Indeed, even less blatant partisans who ought to know better, like every “thinking man’s” favorite conservative David Brooks, deliver the same hypocrisy.

No, Brooks isn’t too keen on Trump (or Cruz for that matter), but he is very keen on some mythological Republican

Party that exudes decency. On the *PBS NewsHour* last week he said with great earnestness, “For almost a century-and-a-half, the Republican Party has stood for a certain free market version of America – an America that’s about openness, that’s about markets and opportunity, and a definition of what this country is.”

## RONALD REAGAN’S RACIALLY TINGED STUMP SPEECHES

Free markets? That’s what he thinks defines America? Let me rephrase what I said earlier: Trump hasn’t just fulfilled the Republican Party’s purpose; he has exposed it. And he also has exposed the media’s indifference to what the party has become.

Obviously, I am not saying that the transmogrification of the Republican Party happened surreptitiously. It happened in plain sight, and it was extensively chronicled – but not by the MSM. The sainted Reagan blew his party’s cover when to kick off his general election campaign in 1980 he spoke at the Neshoba County Fair, just outside Philadelphia, Mississippi, where three civil rights workers had been brutally murdered in 1964. He wasn’t there to demonstrate his sympathy to the civil rights movement, but to demonstrate his sympathy to those who opposed it. This was an ugly moment, and it didn’t go entirely unnoticed in the media. In fact, David Brooks would later be moved to defend the speech, which invoked the not-so-subtle buzz words “states’ rights,” and to act as if Reagan had been slandered by those who called him out on it.

Even if it were true that the media are not referees, not taking sides against extremism is just another way of taking sides by legitimizing extremism and making it the new normal, which it now is... Objectivity is a rationalization.

But if some in the media did call out Reagan on his disgusting curtsy to George Wallace voters, the press seemed to lose its nerve once Reagan became president and the Republican Party lurched not just rightward, but extremistward. Do you remember these headlines: “Republicans Oppose Civil Rights”; “Republicans Work to Defeat Expansion of Health Insurance”; “Republicans Torpedo Extension of Unemployment Benefits”;

“Republicans Demonize Homosexuals and Deny Them Rights”; “Republicans Call Climate Change a Hoax and Refuse to Stop Greenhouse Gases”? No, you don’t remember, because no MSM paper printed them and no MSM network broadcast them. Instead, the media behaved as if extremism were business as usual.

I don’t think the media would deny their indifference. They would say they don’t take sides. They’re neutral. They just report. Partisanship is for Fox News and MSNBC.

Of course, this is utter nonsense. Accurate reporting *means* taking sides when one side is spouting falsehoods. I am still waiting for the media to correct the GOP pronouncements

“To take on extremism would reveal not only the Republicans’ deficiencies, both of its elected officials and its rank and file, but the deficiencies of the entire American political system.”

that Obamacare has cost us jobs and sent health care costs skyrocketing – both of which are screamingly false. I am not holding my breath.

But even if it were true that the media are not referees, not taking sides against extremism is just another way of taking sides by legitimizing extremism and making it the new normal, which it now is – so long, apparently, as you don’t shout it. In any case, objectivity is a rationalization. We know the media are afraid of a right-wing backlash. We know that they protect themselves by insisting that our two major parties are equidistant from the political center – more nonsense. And we know that every story is framed by its political consequences, not its human ones. We see that every day.

But if you really want to know why the media skipped the story about Republican extremism all these years, you have to look to the force of extremism itself and the way it reconfigures the political spectrum, basically disorienting us. In Europe, fringe parties on the right and left get savaged by the press all the time. If we had them here, no doubt the same thing would happen, press objectivity notwithstanding. The difference between Europe and America is that our right-wing extremists happen to control one of our two major parties and theirs don’t. To take on extremism would reveal not only the Republicans’ deficiencies, both of its elected officials and its rank and file, but the deficiencies of the entire American political system. That takes a courage very, very few people (OK, nobody) in the MSM have.

And yet we now know that the media can be assertive if they want to be, that they can take sides, and even correct the record if they choose. We know because that is precisely what they are doing against Trump, but only because they see Trump as an outlier from the GOP establishment – a disruptive, fringe force. Trump has a right to feel blindsided by the double standard to which he is being subjected. Cruz may be even more of an outlier from the American mainstream than Trump, and yet the media don’t seem anywhere near as lathered about him.

But back to the big story: Something happened in American politics over the last 25 or 30 years to release our demons and remove our shame. The media didn’t want to look. Now Trump has come along to reap what the conservatives had sown, and stir up those demons, and the media are suddenly in high dudgeon. Where were they when America needed them?

NEAL GABLER IS AN AUTHOR OF FIVE BOOKS AND THE RECIPIENT OF TWO *LA TIMES* BOOK PRIZES, *TIME MAGAZINE*’S NON-FICTION BOOK OF THE YEAR, *USA TODAY*’S BIOGRAPHY OF THE YEAR AND OTHER AWARDS. HE IS ALSO A SENIOR FELLOW AT THE LEAR CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF ENTERTAINMENT AND SOCIETY AND IS CURRENTLY WRITING A BIOGRAPHY OF SEN. EDWARD KENNEDY.

Source: *BillMoyers.com* 3/12/16 <http://billmoyers.com/>

**Sunday, April 24****28th annual Stockton Earth Day Festival celebrates**

Stockton's Earth Day Festival has a long history of helping people recognize the importance of caring for our earth and natural resources. Through educational programs and other activities, the all-volunteer Earth Day Festival committee has helped share this vision with thousands of people each year. The festival has grown over the years but it remains true to its mission of education, conservation and recycling. We are grateful for the volunteers, sponsors, schools and community organizations that help make this a remarkable annual event. Festival filled with fun and free activities!

This is the premiere environmental event in all of San Joaquin County, and as always, the focus of the day long festival is to educate you about taking care of our natural resources – the earth, air and water. With global warming, conservation and other environmental issues taking a spotlight in the world these days, we expect a crowd hungry and eager to learn how to take care of their environment. It is a fun day for families, and best of all, admission is free.

The Festival will have dozens of informative, interactive booths, displays and exhibits, plus there will be plenty of great food and exotic crafts. Local area schools will be teaching you how to take better care of our earth with a variety of hands-on activities, and environmental organizations will educate you about the important issues that impact you and how you can make a difference. Community agencies will help you live a healthier, more positive life, and green businesses will assist you in making changes to your home and workplace. Over 100 vendors will border the oak trees and cross the grass field at Victory Park, making this Earth Day Festival the biggest ever. Close to 10,000 people attend this event annually.

Join the hundreds of cyclists who will bike around the neighborhood as part of the Family Fun Bike Ride and Parade. Costumed children, adults and bikes are encouraged, so wear your wildest environmental look. Or participate as a drummer in the Drum Circle that traditionally closes the Festival on a percussive high note. Make it your annual renewal of your commitment to make a global difference. See you there.

Contact us: 2016 Earth Day Festival, PO Box 4123, Stockton, CA 95204 209-483-5199  
stocktonearthday@gmail.com. On the web:  
<http://www.livegreensanjoaquin.co>

**"Not One More:" an Art Against Violence exhibit**

Plants and Flowers Building @ San Joaquin County Fairgrounds, 1658 S Airport Way, Stockton

March 1- March 31, 2016 on every day except for Tuesday from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Closed Tuesdays! Free admission.

Panel on Art Activism: Thursday, March 31, 6 pm - 8 pm

"Not One More" is a free art exhibit, sponsored in part by a grant from the Stockton Arts Commission, during the month of March at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds Plants and Flowers Building. The exhibit explores how violence tears us apart and how we can change a culture of violence.

The show includes original paintings, drawings, pottery, sculptures, photographs, video, garden art, and fabric art by local artists of all ages and cultures. In creating their pieces, the artists looked at how violence impacts all of us, and ways to change our culture of violence to one of communication, tolerance and a celebration of diversity. Special features of the exhibit include artwork done by Cleveland Elementary School students in the aftermath of Stockton's 1989 Cleveland Elementary School playground shooting that left five young children dead and thirty wounded. Another unique piece is a DVD commentary on the the shooting, the first schoolyard massacre in modern America, along with interview clips of teachers who were there. Pottery by juvenile inmates at the Johanna Boss High School is on display, as are domestic violence victims' fabric art T-shirts from the Women's Center's "Clothesline Project."

This exhibit seeks to initiate conversations on violence that lead to action. Artists will provide pieces that explore and comment on:

How violence tears us apart – internally, in families and in other groups, and in our community.

How we change a culture of violence to one of communication and tolerance.

Also, Draw It Out's traveling exhibit of Wish Flags will be on display.

For more info, contact: [drawitoutstockton@gmail.com](mailto:drawitoutstockton@gmail.com) or call 209-910-3461

**Delta-Sierra Group programs**

Monday, March 28, 2016 at 7:00pm

Chasing Ice

Fireside Room at Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, across from the UOP Tower.

All Evening Programs are free and open to the public.

The award winning film, Chasing Ice, is the story of James Balog's mission to change the tide of history by gathering undeniable evidence of our changing planet. On a tricky assignment for National Geographic, Balog began deploying revolutionary time-lapse cameras across the brutal Arctic to capture a multi-year record of the world's changing glaciers. His hauntingly beautiful videos compress years into seconds and capture ancient mountains of ice in motion as they disappear at a breathtaking rate.

**Monday, April 25, 2016 at 7:00pm**

The Student Stewards of the Lower Calaveras River Fireside Room at Central United Methodist Church  
3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton, across from the UOP tower  
All Evening Programs are free and open to the public.

Join us as students from the fifth, sixth, and this year seventh grades at Kohl School, present an overview of their work on the banks of the Calaveras River. They are privileged that the river is located right by the school. This gives them opportunities to go onto the levee to study the important ecosystems, learn about Stockton, and raise awareness about the Calaveras River. They use the levee to connect and learn about nature and consider it a natural extended classroom.

They will be presenting their findings this evening.

For more info, call 209-670-4470

**Support community radio**

Stone Soup Stockton Community Radio needs you! Stone Soup Radio has been producing local shows and airing a wide variety of music on line for over a year. We have a strong group of folks working to get this community radio station established on the radio dial. We have our construction permit and need to get a transmitter placed on a tower.

This costs money! If we raise \$5,000.00 by September we can purchase the equipment and be on your radio dial - 92.1 KPJS-LP.

Send your tax deductible donation to Peace & Justice, P.O. Box 4321, Stockton, CA 95204, attention STONE SOUP!

**Check us out**

Facebook: Stone Soup - Stockton Community Radio

Website: [stocktoncommunityradio.com](http://stocktoncommunityradio.com)

Listen on your computer or phone: <http://tunein.com/station/?StationId=222350>

**Come join us**

Stone Soup-Stockton Community Radio meetings are Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at the Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd. Stockton, Ca. For more information: [vbernsd@gmail.com](mailto:vbernsd@gmail.com)

**Webmaster needed**

We are in need of a Web Master. The website uses Wordpress and it is fairly easy to learn. "No experience necessary" does apply! You must be a member of the Peace & Justice Network and attend 9 or less Board meetings per year. All General Meetings are open to everyone whether you are a PJN member or not. Meetings are held at the John Morearty Peace Center, 231 Bedford Rd., off Pacific Ave's Miracle Mile. Meetings are the 1st Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m. Check the current Connections Newspaper available on line at <http://pjsnc.org>.







# APR / MAY 2016 CALENDAR

Editor’s note: if your event isn’t listed, let us know. Send all copy to: [bgiudici@caltel.com](mailto:bgiudici@caltel.com) by the 10th of every month.

**MAR 1 - 31**  
"Not One More" An Art Against Violence Exhibit explores how violence tears us apart and how we can change a culture of violence. Plants and Flowers Building @ San Joaquin County Fairgrounds, 1658 S Airport Way, Stockton. Panel on Art Activism: Thursday, March 31, 6 pm - 8 pm Everyday 10 am - 2 pm, closed Tues. Free and open to the public. Free. 209-460-0780. (p 18)

**MAR 17 - MAY 8**  
85th annual Robert T. McKee Student Art Contest and Exhibition. The Haggin Museum is proud to feature the work of student artists from kindergarten through grade 12. All schools in San Joaquin County—public, private, charter and homeschools—receive invitations to submit their work. Every year we receive on average 1,000 pieces of art chosen by teachers as the best of their class. Sat-Sun 12-5 p.m, Wed-Fri 1:30-5 p.m, 1st & 3rd Thur, 1:30-9 p.m. Adult \$8, youth \$5, under 10 free with adult. Haggin Museum, Victory Park, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, CA (209) 940-6300

**MAR 23 - APR 13**  
Sustainability Art Show Exhibit and Performance, 6:30 -8:30 pm, Reynolds Gallery, 1071 W Mendocino Ave, Stockton. Guest artist Teri Frame will have on display one of her videos and and relics of her March 23 performance on exhibit in the Reynolds Gallery

**THUR, MAR 24**  
Patrick Langham Quintet at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID.

Live Music at Mile Wine Company with Unit 7, 7 - 10:30 pm. 2113 Pacific Ave Stockton. Free. 465-9463

**FRI, MAR 25**  
Jazz jam at Whirlow’s, 7 pm, Whirlow’s Tossed & Grilled, 1926 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Enjoy a live jazz jam session every Friday at Whirlow’s on Stockton’s historic Miracle Mile! Bring your instruments and join the jam! Hosted by Philip Bailey. Free cover. 466-2823

Live Music at Mile Wine Company with Odyssey Trio, 7 - 10:30 pm. 2113 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 465-9463

**SAT, MAR 26**  
Todd Morgan & the Emblems at Whirlow’s, 7 pm, Whirlow’s

Tossed & Grilled, 1926 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Free cover. 466-2823

Live Music at Mile Wine Company with Bleu Boheme, 7 - 10:30 pm. 2113 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 465-9463

**MON, MAR 28**  
Delta Sierra Club meeting film: Chasing Ice, 7 pm. Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. All welcome. 209-670-4442. (p 18)

Brian Kendrick Big Band at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID.

**WED, MAR 30**  
89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 5:30 - 7 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

San Joaquin Delta College Women’s History Month: Say What? Speak NOW Lecture: a multi-faceted group of communication experts will discuss methods on enhancing self-confidence, vocal delivery, and effective language choices featuring Professors Kathleen Bruce (Speech Coach), Adriana Brogger (RTV), and Amanda King (KWIN Morning Show), with Performing Artist Donna Marie. 12:30 - 1:30 pm. Tillie Lewis Theater @ San Joaquin Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free and open to the public. 954-5110.

**THUR-SUN MAR 31 - APR 3**  
Pacific Opera Theatre presents La Vie Parisienne, a humorous and popular opera in four acts is a depiction of life in Paris during the mid-1800s. 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. General \$19, students/seniors \$10

**THUR, MAR 31**  
Patrick Langham Quintet at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID.

Live Music at Mile Wine Company with Frankie & Annette, 7 - 10:30 pm. 2113 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 465-9463

Mike, Bobby & Friends open rock jam at Whirlow’s, 6:30 - 8:30 pm, Whirlow’s Tossed & Grilled, 1926 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Free cover. 466-2823

**FRI, APR 1**

Lodi First Friday Art Hop, 6 - 8:30 pm. Thomas Theatre at Hutchins Street Square 125 S. Hutchins St, Lodi. View art, meet the artists, sample wines and hors d’oeuvres. Enjoy an evening out in Downtown Lodi. Free. 333-5511.

**SAT, APR 2**  
Celebrate Stockton: Stockton is Magnificent, 11 am - 3 pm, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Join thousands of proud Stocktonians in celebrating our city! Celebrate all the positive aspects of our city, learn about organizations and services, witness the talent of local performers, authors and artists, see agriculture up close, award local heroes, experience the history and diversity of our community, join recreational groups and sports teams, and enjoy the company of other proud Stocktonians in a beautiful setting. Free. Denise@StocktonMagnificent.com

Holi Festival, 11:30 am - 3 pm. Don & Karen DeRosa University Center, Lawns, 901 Presidents Dr, Stockton. Holi is a spring festival, also known as the festival of colors or the festival of Sharing Love. It is an ancient Hindu religious festival celebrated on the day after the full moon in the Hindu month of Phalguna (early March). It celebrates spring, commemorates various events in Hindu mythology and is time of disregarding social norms and indulging in general merrymaking. Come out to the DeRosa University Center Lawn for the celebration with color chalk, food, music, and more!

San Joaquin Bike Coalition Long Slow Distance Ride, 9 am - 12 pm. McNabb Street North side of Bear Creek High School, Stockton. Our Long, Slow, Distance ride on the first Saturday of each month is back! We will have a 10 mile and 30 mile option. All riders are welcome for our LSD ride! This is an easy to moderate ride, usually with options in length. Free. 483-5199. matt-beckwith@mac.com

**MON, APR 4**  
Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm. Family Resource & Referral Center, 509 W. Weber Ave., Stockton.

**THUR, APR 7**  
National Poetry Month: Juan Felipe Herrera, U.S. Poet Laureate, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. Warren Atherton Auditorium @ San Joaquin Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton.

Simon Rowe Latin Project at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID.

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, John Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

**FRI, APR 8**  
Primavera Mexicana at Hutchins Street Square, Mexican Folklore regional dance (commonly known as Folklorico) along with its history and legends, ss a tradition of the Mexican Culture that is exciting and fun! Performed by Folklorico Calli. 7 - 9 pm. Hutchins Street Square 125 S. Hutchins St, Lodi. Adult \$10, under 13 \$5. 333-5550.

**WED, APR 13**  
UOP Concert Band. 7:30pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8 general, \$5 senior, Students free with ID.

**THUR, APR 14**  
Brubeck Institute Jazz Quartet w/Dave O’Higgins at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID

**FRI-SUN APR 15-17**  
Stockton Cambodian Temple New Year Celebration, Wat Dhammararam Buddhist Temple, 3732 Carpenter Rd, Stockton. Every year this event draws thousands of people for delicious food, music, dancing, and celebration of the Cambodian New Year. Free and open to the public! 938-1555

**SAT, APR 16**  
Pacific Western Concert Band Festival, Faye Spanos Concert Hall @ University of the Pacific, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Over the course the festival, participating bands will perform, be clinied by the festival’s adjudicators, and learn about different fields of music present for study at the Conservatory. The event ends with a concert by the Symphonic Wind Ensemble at 6:00pm attended by the visiting bands and open to the community. General \$10, \$5 senior, faculty& staff, students free. 946-2415.

**SUN, APR 17**  
Annual Sikh Parade & Festival, 10 am - 4 pm. Sikh Temple of Stockton, 1930 S Grant St, Stockton. The parade is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. Sunday at the Sikh Temple, located at 1930 Sikh Temple St., formerly known as South Grant Street. long the way, Sikhs will share

a message of world peace, freedom of religion and equality for all, regardless of ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, and volunteers will hand out food and drinks to those in attendance. 937-0136

Friends of Chamber Music presents Ensemble Schumann, 2:30 - 4:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall @ University of the Pacific, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 946-0540

**WED, APR 20**  
Pacific Jazz Ensemble, 7:30 pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. In their final concert of spring 2016, the Pacific Jazz Ensemble will perform with guest artist Lewis Nash. Regarded as a master of his craft, Nash has performed with leading jazz artists such as Sonny Rollins, Milt Jackson, Tommy Flanagan, and more. General \$10, seniors \$5, students free.

**APR 21 - MAY 13**  
Delta Center for the Arts LH Horton Jr Gallery presents 17th Annual Student Art Exhibition. SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. T 11am 4pm, W Th 11am 6:30pm, F 11am 1pm. Free and open to the public. 209-954-5507

**THUR, APR 21**  
Brubeck Institute Jazz Quartet w/Lewis Nash at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID

**FRI-SAT APR 22-23**  
Delta College Dance Performance: The Keeper of Aging Souls, directed by Valerie Gnasounou-Bynoe. 8 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. The baobab tree in the African culture is the centre of the village: births, rites of passage, weddings, deaths, and ceremonies are celebrated in front of this majestic tree. The tree becomes the witness of our life from birth to death. It attests to our physiological transformation, our evolving aspirations, our journey and our relationships with one another in the spectrum of life. It then becomes the keeper of aging souls. Adult \$12, student/senior \$10.

**SAT, APR 23**  
The STOCKMARKET, 10 am - 4 pm. Downtown Stockton, 630 E Weber Ave, Stockton. An indoor/outdoor curated marketplace featuring the Central Valley’s best makers, vintage, music, and street food. Free admission. 323-4389.

Community Shred Event, 9 - 11 am. Bay Commercial Bank, 22 W. Yokuts Ave, Stockton. FREE public shred event. Everyone can bring up to 5 paper grocery bags worth of papers. 373-4300.

UOP Symphony Orchestra presents Enigma Variations, Beethoven, Sibelius, Debussy and Tchaikovsky. 7:30 - 9:30 pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8 general, \$5 senior, Students free with ID. 946-2417.

Sun, Apr 24  
Earth Day Festival San Joaquin County, 10 am - 4 pm, Victory Park, 1001 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. The theme, Care for our Climate will be the focus of the event. The Festival will have an array of informative, interactive booths, demos, displays and exhibits. Local area schools will be teaching how to better take care of our Earth with a variety of hands-on activities, and environmental organizations will provide education about the important issues and how we can make a difference. Over 100 vendors will border the oak trees and cross the grass field at Victory Park, including purveyors of some great food. Come join us for yoga in the park, local music and entertainment, delicious, healthy food and fun learning activities and exhibits like Passport Earth. It’s a fun day for kids and families, and admission is free. 209-483-5199.

Mon, Apr 25  
Delta Sierra Club meeting: The Student Stewards of the Lower Calaveras River, 7 pm. Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. All welcome. 209-670-4442. (p 18) Brian Kendrick Big Band at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID.

Tues, Apr 26  
Pacific Arts Woodwind Quintet, 7:30 pm, Morris Chapel, 620 Chapel Ln, Stockton. General \$10, seniors \$5, students free.

Thur - Sun  
Apr 28 - May 15  
Funny Money. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton. This hilarious farce comes from Ray Cooney, the author of SCT’s 2014 smash hit It Runs in the Family, and never has this master of farce been frenetically funnier! \$15 - \$25. 473-2424. [www.sctlivetheatre.com](http://www.sctlivetheatre.com)

Thur, Apr 28  
Patrick Langham Quintet at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID.

Sat-Sun, Apr 30 - May 1  
Stockton Symphony presents "Pops IV: The Music of Michael Jackson" A seven-piece band



## Getting change wrong

BILL MCKIBBEN

In the mounting, panicky attempts of elites to derail the Sanders candidacy, one strand dominates. You find it woven through every sage piece from the old-school pundits of the /Times/ and the hip insider websites like Vox. Yes, they say, he's saying some useful things. But he can't really make them happen. He's talking "puppies and rainbows." Real "reform is hard." The /Times/ editors, in their endorsement of Hillary Clinton, managed a matchless condescension: His ideas about breaking up the banks or guaranteeing health care for everyone, they intoned, "have earned him support among alienated middle-class voters and young people. But his plans for achieving them aren't realistic." Wait 'til you're older and richer like us, and then you'll understand how change happens.

In fact, these pundits couldn't be more wrong about where change comes from. And neither could Hillary Clinton. Here's how she put it a few months ago, backstage at a tense and fascinating little confrontation with Black Lives Matter activists: "I don't believe you change hearts. I believe you change laws, you change allocation of resources, you change the way systems operate."

That sounds sensible, grown-up, wise. It's what Washington pundits always say -- they said it over and over again when we launched, say, the fight to stop the Keystone pipeline. But in fact it's completely backwards.

Change comes /precisely/ when you do change hearts -- and once that change has come, then the laws and the "allocation of resources," and the "way systems operate" follow pretty easily.

Look, for instance, at gay marriage, which I'm pretty sure that President Obama will be holding up as one of the accomplishments that happened on his watch. And it did, but not much thanks to him. It came from a big, impassioned movement that cleverly changed the zeitgeist: that introduced Americans to their gay neighbors, that won a few court cases and then used that progress to show that the world wouldn't fall apart with gay marriage, that argued in a series of referendum votes for the new right. By the time that Obama (and Clinton) came on board (a decade or two after Sanders), the battle was mostly won. There was mopping up to do, but the change had come, and it had come from changing hearts.

Or look further back in American history. LBJ's the favorite example for this "effectiveness" argument, and indeed he was the legislator that twisted the final arms to get landmark civil rights legislation in place. But it was only because people had spent a generation building a movement that he had an opening. The hard, desperate part was changing the zeitgeist, which involved changing enough hearts. The Voting Rights Act didn't propel the civil rights movement; it was the other way round.

By this token, Bernie Sanders has already changed the world more than Hillary Clinton, despite all her vaunted years of experience. She manages process, but he moves the argument. Because of him there's

a reasonable chance now that the TPP trade agreement will fail (he's already moved one of its authors, Hillary, into opposition). He's made it necessary to take inequality seriously -- he's the next stage, after Occupy, in moving the issue to the center of the stage, and the longer he lasts and the better he does the more attention it will get.

No, none of his plans will pass Congress intact. (Nor hers -- see, for instance, her badly mismanaged effort at health care reform in the first Clinton administration). As the Prussian chief of staff once remarked, "no plan survives contact with the enemy." Instead, what survives is momentum, trajectory. Movement. If Sanders can keep building a movement, then he has a far better chance of changing history than she does. Hillary promises constantly that "I'll be there every day, fighting for you." Bernie's slogan is #NotMeUs. There's all the difference in the world.

Now, you could argue that a manager is better suited to the presidency. We've had one the last eight years, and he's done a good job of cleaning up after the mess he inherited; the country, by and large, has been well run. So if you think that there's already enough momentum around issues like inequality and climate change, then it makes sense to elect another manager president. Washington pundits like the world pretty much as it is; it's working pretty well for them.

But younger people and poorer people may not see the world the same way. They may sense an urgent need for change. I mean, we've just broken the planet's temperature record two years in a row. If you think that we need a leader who will push to change the way we see the world then it makes perfect sense to imagine Bernie as the realistic candidate, the one who will get things done.

My guess is that the establishment pundits actually understand that, and I think they fear it a little. The polls in Iowa showed that rich people were backing Hillary while poorer people -- who can't endure much more of the status quo -- came out for Bernie. That should make you think.

Source: Reader Supported News 2/9/16  
<http://readersupportednews.org/>

**Calaveras**

**Earth Day Celebration**

**New Beginnings**

**Free Event**

**Live Music**

**Clan Dyken & Local Bands**

Art, Booths, Food, and Fun

**Utica Park, Angels Camp**

**Sunday, April 24, 2016, 11-6**

More info: 293-4379 [fringe54@volcano.net](mailto:fringe54@volcano.net) or 795-6536

## CALENDAR

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

joins the Symphony in a top-notch revue, covering 40 years of MJ in music and dance from Jackson 5 to Thriller and beyond. Picnic 6 pm, concert 8 pm. Spanos Center @ University of the Pacific, 301 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$25-\$66 209-951-0196.

### Sun, May 1

2016 Delta Century, The Stockton Bicycle Club invites you to the 38th Delta Century. 6 am - 5 pm. Jessie's Grove Winery, 1973 West Turner Rd, Lodi. Jessie's Grove Winery, the oldest in San Joaquin County, once again will host the event that benefits local charities. Flat quarter (26 miles), metric (62 miles), and full (100 miles) century loops cover scenic vineyard, farm, and Delta roads with rewarding rest stops along the way. 772-3775 [deltacentury@comcast.net](mailto:deltacentury@comcast.net)

Lodi Street Faire, 8 am - 4 pm. Downtown Lodi, 35 S School St, Lodi. Over 500 vendors and thousands of shoppers will converge on Downtown Lodi to enjoy the Lodi Street Faire to sell and purchase antiques, arts & crafts and commercial items. 367-7840.

Pacific Choral Ensembles Concert, 2:30 pm, Morris Chapel, 620 Chapel Ln, Stockton. \$10, seniors \$5, students free.

El Concilio's Cinco de Mayo Family Festival, 10 am - 6 pm. Weber Point Center in Downtown Stockton, 221 N. Center St, Stockton. Featuring Food, Arts & Crafts, Mariachi, Ballet Folklórico, Live Bands and much More! 644-2627

### MON, MAY 2

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm. Family Resource & Referral Center, 509 W. Weber Ave., Stockton.

### THUR, MAY 5

Simon Rowe Latin Project at Take 5 Jazz, 7 pm, Valley Brewing Company, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 student with ID.

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, John Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

### FRI-SUN MAY 6 - 15

Delta College Drama presents "The House of Blue Leaves", directed by Ashlee Temple. 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. Tillie Lewis Theatre, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$10/\$12. 209-954-5209

### Sat, May 7

San Joaquin Bike Coalition's

The Best Ride Ever Ride, 6 am - 3 pm. Lange Twins Winery 1525 E Jahant Rd, Acampo. OEnjoy a 30 mile, 100km, or 100 mile ride through the beautiful Lodi wine region and Sierra Foothills!

### Sun, May 8

85th Annual Mother's Day Strawberry Breakfast, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm. Regents Dining Room @ UOP, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Join us for warm scones, eggs & fresh, home-made strawberry jam! Honor your mother as we raise funds to make tutoring available to learners in our community. Proceeds from this fundraiser goes to support CCI's tutoring program that serves Stockton students and youth. Adult \$14, student/child \$12. 946-2444.

### Tues, May 10

SJDC Choral Finale Concert, 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Adult \$8, student/senior \$5, under 13 free.

### Wed, May 11

SJDC Jazz Bands, 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Adult \$8, student/senior \$5, under 13 free.

### Fri, May 13

Stockton Chorale presents "The Road Home" 7:30 - 9 pm.. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Adult \$20, \$25 door, students/children free.

Sat, May 14

Stockton Chorale presents "The Road Home" 4 - 5:30 pm.. St. John's Episcopal Church, 1055 S Lower Sacramento Rd, Lodi. Adult \$20, \$25 door, students/children free.

### Tues, May 17

Stockton Concert Band, 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Adult \$8, student/senior \$5, under 13 free.

### Sat, May 21

The STOCKMARKET, 10 am - 4 pm. Downtown Stockton, 630 E Weber Ave, Stockton. An indoor/outdoor curated marketplace featuring the Central Valley's best makers, vintage, music, and street food. Free admission. 323-4389.

2016 Stockton Summer Jazz Festival Series featuring Marion Meadows and Friends, 12 pm - 7:30 pm. McLeod Lake Park in Downtown Stockton, Corner of Fremont & Center, Stockton. Each Festival has a headliner and will feature other live bands. The Festival also features a wide variety of vendors selling local foods and crafts. Marion Meadows is an Ameri-

can saxophonist, composer, and contemporary jazz recording artist. Genl admission for each concert: \$25 online (Open Lawn Seating, Bring Your Own Lawn Chair); \$35 at the gate. 408-515-4420

### First Mondays

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm, Towers Building, 509 W Weber Ave, Stockton. [cogmemb@gmail.com](mailto:cogmemb@gmail.com)

### First Fridays

Lodi First Friday Art Hop, 6 - 8:30 pm. Thomas Theatre at Hutchins Street Square, 125 S. Hutchins St, Lodi. View art, meet the artists, sample wines and hors d'oeuvres. Enjoy an evening out in Downtown Lodi. Free. 333-5511.

### Fourth Mondays

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

### Wednesdays

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 7 - 9 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

### Thursdays

Peace demonstration, 5-6 pm, edge of Delta campus on Pacific, across from Macy's. Free parking at mall. Weekly since 2003. We have signs, or bring your own. We get LOTS of honks! Info 464-3326. Take Five Jazz club, 7 - 9 pm, Valley Brew

### Fridays

Jazz jam at Whirlow's, 7 pm, Whirlow's Tossed & Grilled, 1926 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Enjoy a live jazz jam session every Friday at Whirlow's on Stockton's historic Miracle Mile! Bring your instruments and join the jam! Hosted by Philip Bailey. Free cover. 466-2823

Live Music at Mile Wine Company, 7 - 10:30 pm. 2113 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 465-9463

### Saturdays

Crosstown Freeway Farmers Market, under the freeway between El Dorado & San Joaquin, Stockton. 7 - 11, or when sold out. 943-1830

Live Music at Mile Wine Company, 7 - 10:30 pm. 2113 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 465-9463

A big thanks to our long-serving distributors!!