



The Order of the Earth

News, Views and Musings About Our Planet

February 2009

Vol. 9 No. 2 Issue 83: To press 1/23/09

\$1.00

Introducing a New Column: Mother Earth Speaks



"The Treasure Within" artwork by Mary Southard, CSJ

Courtesy of www.ministryofhearts.org. Image available in both cards and prints.

A Message From Mother Earth

Through Douglas Joshua Davis Chagrin Falls, Ohio

Lie flat on the ground and feel what I am all about! So many of you think you know me in an intellectual way, by reading about me or discussing me; but, what you don't know is how I feel. And if you lie still on the ground you will come to know me. There is to be no talking, no thinking, just lying and listening and hearing me — and feeling what I have to say!

Wake up! Wake up humans to the life within me and to the love I have for you despite what you do to me. What you do to me you do to yourselves. Wake up to who I am and honor me and celebrate me. Life is alive! I am alive! I am sacred; all life is sacred.

There are beings of life and light within the plants, the rocks, who wish to communicate with you, if you are ready. Most of all, they desire to be recognized and respected. Yes, they are real. Your eyes may not see them but your heart will. You can do everything with your heart.

When you feel my being and touch my soul, when you listen to the message of the wind as it blows through the trees and when you hear with your heart my pulse, you will know me. You will then, yourself, beat with a different tone, a higher state of vibration, and you

will shine with a new light. What is the order of the Earth? It is Balance and Love. When all beings and systems are in balance, so am I. When love and respect exists for me and between the humans, I am in very good order!"

Douglas Joshua Davis is a clairvoyant and spiritual medium who lives in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. He has been receiving messages for many years. He also communicates with and grows beautiful plants of all kinds. His "home-grown" business is called Sacred Earth Plants & Seeds. To contact Douglas go to greenearthdd@aol.com.

[Ed.: We would be delighted to share your experiences after you make time to lie down on Mother Earth and feel the life beneath you and all around you. Send to ionaconnor@pa.net.]

BEYOND THE POINT OF NO RETURN

It's too late to stop climate change — so what do we do now?

By Ross Gelbspan
www.theheatisonline.org

As the pace of global warming kicks into overdrive, the hollow optimism of climate activists, along with the desperate responses of some of the world's most prominent climate scientists, are preventing us from focusing on the survival requirements of the human enterprise.

The environmental establishment continues to peddle the notion that we can solve the climate problem. We can't.

We have failed to meet nature's deadline. In the next few years, this world will experience progressively more ominous and destabilizing changes. These will happen either incrementally — or in sudden, abrupt jumps.

Under either scenario, it seems inevitable that we will soon be confronted by water shortages, crop failures, increasing damages from extreme weather events, collapsing infrastructures and, potentially, breakdowns in the democratic process itself.

Start with the climate activists, who are telling us only a partial truth.

Virtually all of the national and grassroots climate groups are pushing hard to reduce carbon emissions. The most aggressive are working to change America's entire energy structure from one based on coal and oil to a new energy future based on non-carbon technologies — as they should.

A coalition of groups, including 350.org and 1Sky, have lobbied the new Administration to re-engage the U.S. with the international climate negotiations. The Campus Climate Challenge is planning a new and more energetic clean energy campaign. Focus The Nation continues to exhort colleges and universities around the country to green their campuses. The large Washington-based environmental groups are pressing to improve climate and energy bills that are moving through Congress — even though the bills are clearly inadequate to the challenge before us.

The truth is that, even assuming the wildest possible success of these initiatives — that humanity decided tomorrow to replace its coal and oil burning energy sources with non-carbon sources — it would still be too late to avert major climate disruptions. Despite this reality, the activists are still focusing on the causes — and not on the consequences — of the crisis.

All these initiatives address only one part of the coming reality. They recall the kind of frenzied scrambling that is characteristic of trauma victims — a frantic focus on other issues, any other issues — that allows people to avoid the central take-home message of the trauma: in this case, the overwhelming power of inflamed nature.

Within the last two years, a number of leading scientists — including Rajendra Pachauri, head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), British ecologist James Lovelock, and NASA scientist James Hansen — have all declared that humanity is about to pass or already has passed a "tipping point" in terms of global warming. The IPCC, which reflects the findings of more than 2,000 scientists from over 100 countries, recently stated that it is "very unlikely" that we will avoid the coming era of "dangerous climate change."

In fact, we may already be witnessing the early stages of runaway climate change in the melting of the Arctic, the increase in storm intensity, the accelerating extinctions of species, the ominous, large-scale releases of methane and the prolonged nature of recurring droughts.

Moreover, some scientists now fear that the warming is taking on its own momentum — driven by internal feedbacks that are independent of the human-generated carbon layer in the atmosphere.

Consider these examples:

- Despite growing public awareness of global warming, the world's carbon emissions are rising three times faster than they did in the 1990s. As a result, many scientists tell us that the official, government-sanctioned forecasts of coming changes are understating the threats facing the world.

- The International Energy Agency recently found that the costs of avoiding dangerous climate change may be three times higher than those estimated by the IPCC in 2007.
- Scientists recently discovered a plume of methane rising from the perforated ocean seabed near Siberia into the atmosphere. Methane traps about 20 times more heat, molecule for molecule, than CO₂. But because ocean-bed methane normally dissolves before it escapes into the air, the discovery has a number of scientists wondering whether it signals the beginnings of runaway climate change.

- A rise of 2 degrees C. (3.8 degrees F.) over pre-industrial temperatures is now virtually inevitable, according to the IPCC, as the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide is approaching the destabilizing level of 450 parts per million. That rise will bring drought, hunger, disease and flooding to millions of people around the world. In fact, a number of scientists believe that forecast is far too rosy. John Schellnhuber, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, said recently that only a return to pre-industrial levels of CO₂ — about 280 parts per million — would be enough to guarantee a safe future for the planet.

- Scientists predict a steady rise in temperatures beginning in about two years — with at least half the years between 2009 and 2019 surpassing the average global temperature in 1998, to date, the hottest year on record.

(Continued on Page 7)

Who Owns Mineral Rights?

A "Primer" on Sub-surface Rights

By John Stoneman
Northwest Pennsylvania Correspondent

I'd like to explain some simple truths about Mineral Rights in the state of Pennsylvania that some, or most, people don't understand. I live in the northwest section of the state, so some of my comments might reflect somewhat of a regional slant.

I don't have the time or space to go into great detail on the subject of Mineral Rights in our state; I may paraphrase quite a bit so please bear with me. My intent is to make this a very simple to understand overview of the state of Mineral Rights ownership, values and taxation.

Some people think if you buy a piece of land that you own the surface land and the minerals (or in one case discussed below, the space below the land!); this is not the case.

Way back, somewhere along the line, there was a "severance" of the actual land from the minerals or resources below the land. Even today there are disputes and lawsuits trying to determine whether the original law limits "Mineral Rights" to "commonly harvestable"



Photo by John Stoneman

Mineral Extraction in the Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania.

minerals or "anything below the surface."

What we might consider common harvestable minerals or resources would be the more common oil, natural gas, iron, coal, gold, silver, salt and the like. What some people want to include might be water, sand, rock, gravel and yes, even space! More on the "space below the land" below.

How did this "severance" of land from the sub-surface resources come to be? Back in the day when the land was one with

the minerals below them, some people only wanted the surface space and others only wanted to harvest the below-ground valuables. Sometimes both "wants" could co-exist. At that time, only one person paid tax on this combination, the land owner.

Proponents of separating them at the time, spoke of the benefits to all of us in the state of "two different sources of tax" on the same piece of land. Whereas, "they" could tax the land as real estate

(Continued on Page 10)

THE ORDER OF THE EARTH NEWS
HCR 83 BOX 881
SHADE GAP, PENNSYLVANIA 17255



Endgame by Derrick Jensen

Hailed as the "Philosopher Poet" of the ecological movement, Derrick Jensen passionately explains how our industrial civilization, and the persistent and widespread violence it requires, cannot last. He weaves history, philosophy, psychology, environmentalism, economics and literature into an intricate pattern of truth and resistance. The 2006 Press Action Award called Jensen's two-volume *Endgame* "the best work of nonfiction in 2006. *Endgame* is the most important book of the decade and could stand as the must-read book of our lifetimes."

Resources for the civilized have always been more important than the lives of those in the colonies. A German colonial officer in South West Africa was more honest than many: "A right of the natives, which could only be realized at the expense of the development of the white race, does not exist. The idea is absurd that Bantus, Sudan-negroes and Hottentots in Africa have the right to live and die as they please, even when by this uncounted people among the civilized peoples of Europe were forced to remain tied to a miserable proletarian existence instead of being able, by the full use of the productive capacities of our colonial possessions to rise to a richer level of existence themselves and also to help construct the whole body of human and national welfare."

Following quickly on the heels of the second premise is the third, that *this way of living — industrial civilization — is based on, requires, and would collapse very quickly without persistent and widespread exploitation and degradation.* This includes exploitation and degradation of the natural world — for what is unsustainable except a fancy word for exploitation and degradation of natural communities? — and it includes exploitation and degradation of those who do not want us to take their resources (or, to another way of thinking, to kill and sell their nonhuman neighbors). It also includes harming those humans and non-humans who will come later and who will inherit a pauperized world.

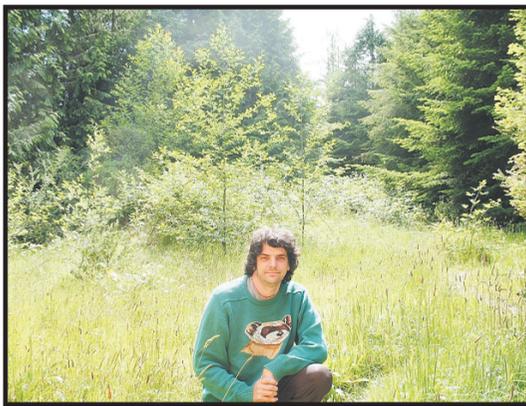
A few months ago I received an email from an activist who wrote, "I've been inspired by Bucky Fuller's vision for years. He says that we have enough of everything to give everyone on the planet a standard of living no one has known so far. But it will require taking all of our resources and technology off of weaponry and fully devoting

them to 'livingry.' In other words, we can make it happen, but there's no room for greed in the equation. His whole thing was "a world that works for everyone with no one left out."

Leaving aside the standard conceit that the civilized have higher standards of living than traditional hunter-gatherers (if you measure by some standards, such as the number of automobiles, yes; if you measure by others, such as leisure time, sustainability, social equality and food security — meaning no one goes hungry — hunter-gatherers win hands down), Fuller's is a powerful — and powerfully dangerous — fantasy and an odd statement coming from someone living on land taken by violence from its original inhabitants and using the sorts of technologies — for example, industrial forestry, mining, smelting — that violently shape the world to industrial ends. Just because Fuller designed groovy buildings like geodesic domes (the one at Expo 67 in Montreal was way cool!) did not mean that violence was not done to the land — and to people — both there and elsewhere.

Where, precisely, did Fuller believe these resources came from and how did he believe he would get them without using force against both the "resources" themselves and against the humans who live in close proximity to them?

I enjoy railing against the absurdity of the U.S. military budget as much as the next sane person. I often marvel at the extraordinary amounts of money that are spent seemingly for no other purpose than to kill people, and dream of what good could be accomplished if those who serve life had the same



easy access to cash as those who serve death. Corporate Senators and Representatives are fond of complaining, for example, that it's too expensive to save species driven to the brink of extinction by the actions of the industrial economy, and that the corporations these men (and token women) represent must be allowed to continue their actions unimpeded.

An industry front group calling itself the "Grassroots ESA Coalition" (a subgroup of the similarly deceptively named industry front group "National Wilderness Institute") has stated that total costs for "the ten species covered by the most expensive endangered species recovery plans are: Atlantic Green Turtle \$88,236,000; Loggerhead Turtle \$85,947,000; Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard \$70,252,000; Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle \$63,600,000; Colorado Squawfish \$57,770,000; Humpback Chub \$57,770,000; Bonytail Chub \$57,770,000; Razorback Sucker \$57,770,000; Black-Capped Vireo \$53,538,000; Swamp Pink \$29,026,000."

I'm not sure I trust their research or, for that matter, their intelligence because even when trying to show how expensive implementation of the Endangered Species Act is, they left off more pricey efforts. Costs for projects aimed toward recovering salmon in the Northwest (or rather, projects

aimed at providing the illusion of recovery while allowing business to continue as usual) were \$119 million just in 1995. Not including land acquisition, annual expenditures for recovery efforts for all endangered species went from \$43 million in 1989 to \$312 million in 1995.

Recently, the federal government made big news

when it granted more than \$16 million to twenty-five states to promote the conservation of such varied species as marbled murrelets, salmon, bull trout, aplomado falcons, Karner blue butterflies, Florida scrub jays and the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

This may all seem like a lot of money but in fiscal year 2001 the federal government spent more than \$5.7 billion on the physical impossibility called the Ballistic Missile Defense System (a.k.a. Strategic Defense Initiative, a.k.a. Star Wars and most especially a.k.a. a black hole into which money disappears, to conveniently reappear on the ledgers of favored corporations).

It spent \$3.9 billion on new F-22 fighters, \$3 billion on new C-17 Transport aircraft, \$1.7 billion on new V-22 Osprey aircraft (which seem capable so far only of killing their own crews), \$4 billion as a partial payment on a new aircraft carrier, \$3 billion as a partial payment on a new submarine.

Even prior to the events of September 11, the military received nearly one billion dollars per day during fiscal year 2001. Just in the last seven years, the military spent more than \$100 million on airline tickets it did not use. The tickets were fully refundable but the military never bothered to ask for a refund.

The United States government spends \$44 billion per year on spying. I used to often fantasize about using all that money used for harm — real money, not the crumbs tossed in the direction of wildlife — to help salmon, spotted owls, Carson wandering skipper butterflies (listed as endangered only after having been reduced to a few individuals), Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits (of whom only fifty remain in the wild), Mississippi gopher frogs (of whom only one hundred members remain, breeding in one pond), Tumbling Creek cavesnails (down to forty individuals) and so many others. But the truth is that this will never happen. The reason that my fantasies are nothing more than fantasies and the reason that the same is true for Buckminster Fuller's more well-known fantasies, is that the money must be spent on weaponry and not on livingry.

To believe the U.S. military does not serve an absolutely vital purpose is to have failed to pay any attention to the path of civilization for the past six thousand years. The importation of resources into cities has always required force and always will.

And that's why Fuller's fantasy is dangerous — as is my own, when I forget it is a fantasy — because it pretends that resource extraction can be accomplished without force and exploitation, thus diverting attention toward the outrageous and obscene military budgets and away from the social and technological processes that require them. If you need — or perceive yourself as needing — gold, wood, food, fur, land or oil that resides in someone else's community and if this other community does not want to hand these resources over to you — and why on God's green earth should they? — how are you going to get them? We have seen this process too many times to not know the answer.

Printed with the author's permission.

From the Editor



Dear Friends,
"The Order of the Earth" has two new volunteers, Karen Banks (a cultural anthropologist who wrote our film review on page 11 and helped me proofread) and Alyssa Balles (a high school senior who will write a children's book review next month and help with compiling information for our Web site). These two angels showed up just when things were getting busier and busier and we all sat down (along with Alyssa's mother) to chat about how we might work as a team. Although we have had dozens and dozens of distance helpers, we haven't really had any serious volunteers on the home front.

I want to thank to all those who pitched in at the last minute with donations to help us pay last month's publishing bill so we could forge ahead this month without getting behind.

It is my pleasure to thank our longest-term subscriber, Dave Minnis of Buckeystown, Maryland, who just renewed for the NINTH time!!! Thank you, Dave!

For the Earth,

Iona

After reading *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (a book about the bleakest end-times scenario imaginable with little life left on Earth and a man and his young son walking through lifeless and threatening lands avoiding starving cannibals) I made this vow: The boy is my boy, too; I will keep working on his behalf.

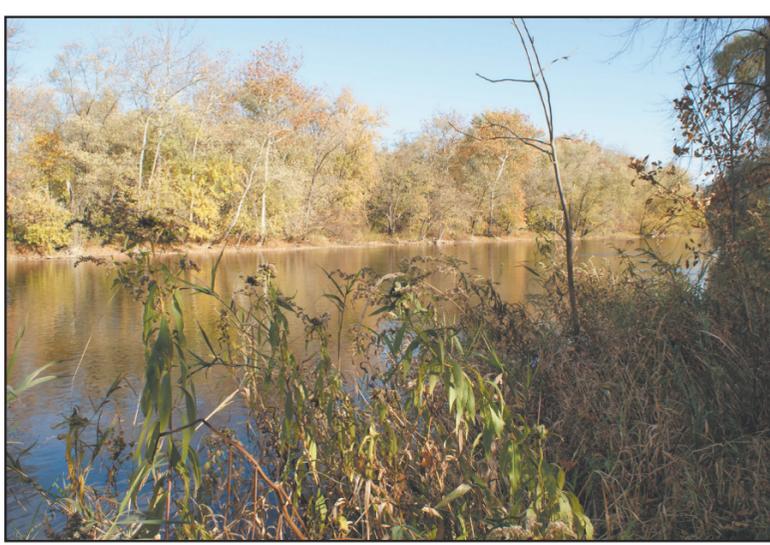


Photo by Terry Darling

5,000 Years of Empire: Ready for a Change? Message from the Hopi Elders

To my fellow swimmers:

There is a river flowing now very fast.

It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid.

They will try to hold onto the shore.

They are being torn apart and will suffer greatly.

Know that the river has its destination.

We must let go of the shore, push off into the river, keep our heads above water.

At this time in our history, we are to take nothing personally, least of all ourselves, for the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey come to a halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over.

Gather yourselves. Banish the word struggle from your attitude and vocabulary.

All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration.

We are the ones we've been waiting for.

ADVERTISE WITH US

Full page color = \$350; Half page color = \$200; Quarter page color = \$100

Eighth page color = \$50; One-sixteenth color (large business card) = \$25

SEND CAMERA-READY JPG to ionaconner@pa.net

Contact Iona at 814-259-3680.

Black and white rates 15% lower.

Pre-pay for 10 months and we'll give you 2 months free.

DEADLINE = 10th OF EACH PRIOR MONTH

BULK ORDERS TO SELL AT EVENTS

25 copies = \$20; 50 copies = \$35; 100 copies = \$65

200 copies = \$125; 300 copies = \$175 Thank You!

The Order of the Earth News, Views and Musings

Our Goal: To create a hugely successful newspaper that will report the story of people around the world working to protect their land bases, strengthen local communities and achieve 90% greenhouse gas reductions by 2030.

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

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

Publisher/Editor: Iona Conner

Publishing Partners: Kim Stenley, Christine Macabee, Arikia Millikan

Layout/Design: Katherine Lukaszewicz, Arikia Millikan, Kim Stenley; Jennifer Michalak

Printing: The Herald-Mail Co., Hagerstown MD, a family-owned business using 40% recycled paper and soy-based inks.

Subscriptions: \$25 for 12 issues

Tax-Deductible Contributions: *The Order of the Earth News* is a project of the 501(c)(3) Grassroots Coalition. Tax-deductible contributions may be made to Grassroots Coalition with "OE" on the memo line.

Masterhead: We say "Volume 8" because Iona started producing a newsletter with the same name seven years ago. In 1995 Iona wrote a tiny booklet called "The Order of the Earth" and, with friends helping, made and gave away 11,000 of them. This is an expansion of the concept. The photo is an iced over tree on our land.

Contact Us: HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania; 814-259-3680, ionaconner@pa.net, www.theorderoftheearth.com.

DEADLINE FOR ALL SUBMISSIONS: 10TH OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH

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

FAIR USE NOTICE: This newspaper contains copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner, although we do try. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance understanding of environmental, political, human rights, economic, democracy, scientific, and social justice issues, etc. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U. S. C. Section 107, the material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes. For more information, go to www.law.cornell.edu.uscode/17/107.shtml. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this newspaper for purposes of your own that go beyond "fair use," you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

I no longer believe we can use the system to change the system. Let it all fall apart. I no longer want to live in their world so I must create/find my own.

--- Kim Stenley

Natural Gas Drilling Endangers Water Supplies

By **Abrahm Lustgarten**
ProPublica
Part II of a Series

November 19, 2008 — News that water in Sublette County was contaminated was especially shocking because the area is so rural that until a few years ago cattle were still run down Main Street in Pinedale, the nearest town to the gas field. The county is roughly the size of the state of Connecticut but has fewer people than many New York City blocks. With so little industry, there was little besides drilling that people could blame for the contamination.

“When you just look at the data . . . the aerial extent of the benzene contamination, you just say . . . ‘This is huge,’” says Oberley, who is charged with water study in the area. “You’ve got benzene in a usable aquifer and nobody is able to verbalize well, using factual information, how the benzene got there.”

Other signs of contamination were also worrying residents. Independent tests in several private drinking wells adjacent to the anticline drilling showed fluoride — which is listed in Halliburton’s hydraulic fracturing patent applications and can cause bone damage at high levels — at almost three times the EPA’s maximum limit.

“We need the gas now more than ever,” says Fred Sanchez, whose water well is among those with high levels of fluoride. But gazing off his deck at the prized trout waters of the New Fork River, he wonders whether drilling has gone too far. “You just can’t helter-skelter go drilling just because you have the right to do it. It’s not morally right to do it. There should be some checks and balances.”

Further east, in the town of Clark, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) found benzene in a residential well after an underground well casing cracked. In Pavilion, another small town, a series of drinking water wells began running with dark, smelly water, a

problem a state official speculated might be linked to drilling nearby.

“There is no direct evidence that the gas drilling has impacted it,” says Mark Thiesse, a groundwater supervisor for the Wyoming DEQ. “But it sure makes you wonder. It just seems pretty circumstantial that it’s happening.”

On federal land, which is where most of the Sublette County wells are located, the BLM governs leasing and permitting for gas development, with secondary oversight from the state and only advisory input from the EPA. When the contaminated water results were first reported, both the BLM and the state downplayed their significance.

The EPA’s regional office in Denver sharply disagreed. But because it has only an advisory role in the federal review process and hydraulic fracturing is exempted from the Safe Drinking Water Act, there was little the EPA could do. It rebuked the BLM in a strongly-worded letter and gave the development plans in Sublette County a rare “unsatisfactory” rating. It also recommended that the project be stopped until further scientific study could be done.

The BLM, backed by a powerful business lobby, ignored that recommendation. Why do a study if you can’t prove something is wrong, industry argued.

Drilling operators said the benzene came from leaky equipment on the trucks that haul water and waste to and from the drill sites — and in one or two cases, EPA scientists say that was likely. One theory put forth by the BLM blamed the benzene contamination on malicious environmentalists “hostile to gas production,” an accusation the agency later said it had no evidence of.

Thiesse, the DEQ supervisor, recounted a meeting where the debate dwindled down to semantics: “I called it contamination and somebody said is it really contamination? What if it’s naturally occurring?”



Credit: Abrahm Lustgarten/ProPublica

Leaky equipment on trucks was one reason put forth by drilling operators for benzene contamination. See last month’s “OE” for complete explanation on fracturing and water contamination.

The industry insisted, as it has for years, that hydraulic fracturing itself had never contaminated a well, pointing to an anecdotal survey done a decade ago by the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission, a coalition of state regulatory bodies and, again, to the 2004 study by the EPA.

“You have intervening rock in between the area that you are fracturing and the areas that provide water supplies. The notion that fractures are going to migrate up to those shallow formations — there is just no evidence of that happening,” says Ken Wonstolen, an attorney representing the Colorado Oil and Gas Association who has worked with the petroleum industry for two decades. “I think fracturing has been given a clean bill of health.”

A flurry of mail from industry representatives to the BLM said the sort of study the EPA wanted would needlessly slow production. “BLM’s restrictions on drilling in the Intermountain west have seriously reduced the supply of natural gas reaching consumers,” wrote the American Gas Association.



Credit: Abrahm Lustgarten/ProPublica

Sublette County, Wyoming.

Washington leaned down on Pinedale, too. The message, according to Chuck Otto, field manager for the BLM: Make this happen by November. The 4,400 new wells were approved in September without any deadline for cleaning up the contamination or further research. State regulators told ProPublica that hydraulic fracturing was not even considered as a possible cause.

“The BLM looks at it more as a business-driven process,” Otto

said. “It’s not like I have Vice President Cheney calling me up and saying you need to get this done. But there definitely is that unspoken pressure . . . mostly from the companies, to develop their resources as they’d like to see fit . . . to get things done and get them done pretty fast.”

To Be Continued:

A Compromised Study

Speak Out Against Oil and Gas Drilling

New Rule To Clarify and Expand Regs for Drilling in National Forest

Comments Due 2/ 27

By **Ryan Talbott**
Allegheny Defense Project

The Forest Service intends to engage in rule-making that will “clarify and expand policy” for regulating private oil and gas drilling on the Allegheny National Forest.

The announcement comes at a time when the Forest Service is defending itself in four lawsuits related to oil and gas drilling in the Allegheny. According to the Allegheny Defense Project, a plaintiff in one of the lawsuits, the proposed rule-making is a sign that the Forest Service acknowledges that it can and must regulate private oil and gas drilling on the national forest.

“The Forest Service has a mandatory duty to protect the surface resources of the Allegheny National Forest,” said Ryan Talbott, forest watch coordinator for the Allegheny Defense Project (ADP). “The fact that the Forest Service does not own the mineral rights underlying most of the Allegheny does not relieve it of that duty. The Forest Service has always had the authority to regulate and now it must take this opportunity to impose mandatory obligations on the oil and gas industry to protect and restore the Allegheny.”

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which oversees the Forest Service, public input and comment will help inform the USDA’s consideration of how best to proceed with long-term uses and management of areas where pri-

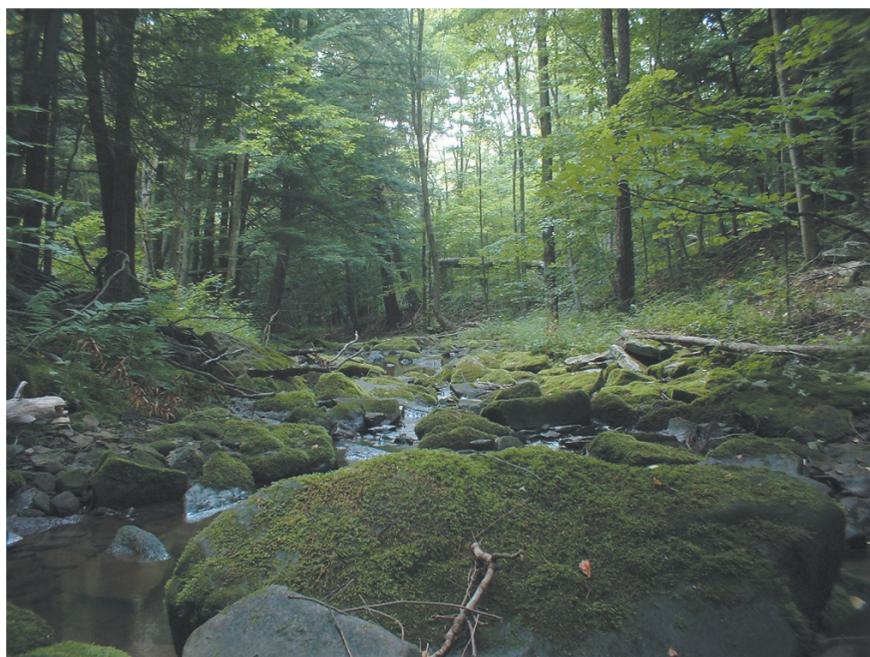


Photo by Kirk Johnson

Allegheny National Forest (ANF) as it should look (notice, no oil wells or roads). Kirk Johnson is the director of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness at 814-723-0620 or info@pawild.org. Go to www.pawild.org. to read A Citizens’ Wilderness Proposal for ANF.

ivate individuals or parties own the minerals under national forest land.

“Any new regulations must be designed and intended to protect the surface, air, water, wildlife and recreation resources of Pennsylvania’s only national forest from permanent impairment caused by oil and gas drilling,” said Bill Belitskus, ADP’s board president. “The Forest Service must require that oil and gas companies coordinate their drilling proposals in a way that reduces their footprint on the Allegheny. Requiring companies to coordinate their road construction could easily reduce the

number of oil and gas roads being constructed”

ADP also claims that stronger federal regulations could prevent future oil spills such as the one that occurred in August 2008 when two individuals sabotaged multiple oil storage tanks, spilling 46,000 gallons of oil into the surrounding forest and streams.

“The Forest Service must not allow oil storage tanks to be located so close to wetlands and streams,” said Cathy Pedler, an ADP board member. “The Forest Service must also require that companies consider directional drilling from existing well sites. There is no reason to construct new

roads and well sites when companies can drill directional wells from areas that have already been impacted.”

Written comments can be sent to: Forest Service, USDA, Attn: Director, Minerals and Geology Management, Mail Stop 1126, Washington, D.C. 20250-1126. Comments can be emailed to 36cfr251@fs.fed.us or faxed to (703) 605-1575. You can also submit comments using the Federal e-Rulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. **Comments must be received by February 27.**

Contact Ryan Talbott 814-221-1408.

Email from Kirk Johnson

As far as the oil drilling, I would say don’t get your hopes up too much in terms of eliminating all of the drilling, and prepare for the ‘long haul.’ While we as American citizens own the surface of the 513,200+ acres of the ANF, more than 90 percent of the subsurface properties (oil, gas, minerals) are owned by private individuals and companies. They are permitted by law to access their properties for development.

The good news is, we can work to make purchases from willing sellers of those properties for areas of particular importance, such as beneath our proposed wilderness areas. Though very expensive it has happened before and it can happen again. Also, oil and gas are finite resources, so there will eventually have to come a day where drilling is no longer very feasible anywhere in the forest simply because there is little to no product left in the ground. But, even 100 years from now I would expect to see a handful of active oil wells in the ANF here and there.

DEP Probes Blast in Gas-Drilling Region



Butch Comegys / Staff Photographer, *The Times-Tribune*

Shawn Fiorentino surveys the effects of an explosion at his mother's house in Dimock, Pennsylvania, where gas drilling is running out of control. An explosion blew apart the 8-foot-wide cement slab covering a water well January 1 in the heart of the Susquehanna County region where a natural gas operator is exploring for gas in the Marcellus Shale.

By Laura Legere
The Times-Tribune, Scranton PA

DIMOCK TOWNSHIP, Pennsylvania, January 3 — An explosion blew apart the 8-foot-wide cement slab covering a water well Thursday night in the heart of the Susquehanna County region where a natural gas operator is exploring for gas in the Marcellus Shale.

Local emergency crews and representatives of Cabot Oil and Gas, the firm exploring in the township, responded to Norma Fiorentino's house on Route 2024 at about 6 p.m. on New Year's Day to find the cement slab split open above a gaping manhole in her front yard.

The explosion's cause has not been determined, county emergency management coordinator Charlene Moser said. She said she suspects that a concentration of something flammable spontaneously combusted when the water well pump in the manhole turned on.

Neither the Springville Volunteer Fire Company nor Cabot's gas response crew detected the presence of natural gas when they tested the site on Thursday, according to Ms. Moser and Cabot spokesman Kenneth Komoroski. Mr. Komoros-

ki said Cabot workers also checked nearby gas wells and pipelines and found no indication of any gas leaks.

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) plans to send an inspector to the site early next week to test the quality of water in Mrs. Fiorentino's well and attempt to capture any gas present, department spokesman Mark Carmon said. If inspectors find gas, they will send it to an out-of-state lab that can determine whether the gas originated from a shallow source or a deeper geological formation like the mile-deep Marcellus Shale.

Mrs. Fiorentino's son, Shawn, noticed the remnants of the blast when he was insulating pipes under his mother's home on Thursday evening. No one was home at the time of the explosion but neighbors reported hearing a loud boom and thinking it was a normal part of the gas well development in the region.

"We don't pay any attention (to loud noises) anymore because the oil companies are always blowing something off," Mrs. Fiorentino, 65, said at her home on Friday. The manhole above the well in her front yard had been covered over by hay bales. A round plastic table top that

had been used to cap the entrance to the manhole had been tossed across the lawn and was broken in half in the snow.

Shawn Fiorentino said something had been blowing that make-shift cap off for weeks and just last week he had been in the manhole with an open flame, soldering pipes.

"This is a disaster," he said as he stepped over caution tape and lifted aside hay bales to reveal the hole in the earth.

Mrs. Fiorentino stayed at a relative's house on Thursday night even though emergency crews told her it was safe to sleep at home. A recent widow who lives off Social Security, she does not have homeowner's insurance and said it will be difficult to pay to fix the well cover if DEP cannot determine what caused the damage. She suspects the nearby gas exploration is to blame.

"We're all poor people around here. We thought this was going to be great for us," she said, referring to the extensive gas development that has been concentrated in her town. "But we didn't expect explosions." Copyright 2009 *The Times-Tribune*, Scranton, PA.

Reprinted with permission.



Butch Comegys / Staff Photographer, *The Times-Tribune*

Norma Fiorentino and her son Shawn Fiorentino. The explosion occurred on New Year's night. No one was injured.

Fighting Greedy Defense Lobbyists

Our Schools vs. Their Worthless Weaponry

By Conn Hallinan
Foreign Policy in Focus

Over the next several months there will be a battle for hearts and minds but not in Iraq or Afghanistan. The war will be here at home, waged mostly in the halls of Congress, where grim lobbyists for one of the top 15 economies in the world are digging in to preserve their stake in the massive U.S. military budget. With the country in deep recession and resources dwindling for the new administration's programs on health care, education, and the environment, the outcome of this battle may well end up defining the next four years.

But coming to grips with the issue, as one military analyst noted, is likely to resemble the worst of World War I trench warfare. "It will be like the British Army at the Somme," Winslow Wheeler of the Center for Defense Information (CDI) told the *Boston Globe*, "you will just get mowed down by the defense industry."

Up Against the Industry

For starters, there are 185,000 corporations behind those meta-

phorical machine guns, and a few are formidable indeed: Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Alliant Techsystems, United Technologies, Textron, Teledyne, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman and Texas Instruments, just to name a few.

The World Policy Institute found that dozens of high Bush administration officials were former arms company executives, consultants or shareholders, and that this network of influence reaches deep into Congress. The combination of lobbying and PAC money that pours into election coffers every two years gives the arms industry enormous influence over the actions of the executive and legislative branches.

The reason is simple: the money at stake is staggering, although nailing down exactly what this country spends on the military is extremely difficult. "Figures on defense spending are notoriously unreliable," defense expert Chalmers Johnson points out. "All numbers released by the Pentagon should be regarded as suspect."

While the "official" 2009 U.S. military budget is \$516 billion, that figure bears little resemblance to what this country actually spends. According to CDI, if one pulls together all the various threads that make up the defense spending tapestry — including

Home Security, secret "black budget" items, military-related programs outside of the Defense Department, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and such outlays as veterans' benefits — the figure is around \$862 billion for the current fiscal year. Johnson says spending is closer to \$1.1 trillion.

Even these figures are misleading, since they do not project future costs. According to Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, when the economic and social costs of the Iraq War are finally added up — including decades of treatment for veterans disabled by traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress disorder — the final bill could reach \$5 trillion.

Cuts in the Offing?

Given the current economic crisis, even the defense establishment recognizes that some cuts are inevitable. A recent study by a Pentagon advisory group, the Defense Business Board, says that current defense spending is "not sustainable" and recommends scaling back or eliminating some big-ticket weapon systems.

Canceling Lockheed Martin's F-22 stealth fighter and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the Virginia Class submarine, the V-22 Osprey, the Zumwalt Class destroyer and Boeing and Raytheon's missile defense system, combined with

some judicious reductions in other budget items, would save \$55 billion annually, according to FPIF's Unified Security Budget.

The problem with U.S. military spending isn't just expensive weapons but the underlying philosophy that the use of force is a valid policy tool. And on that question, the incoming Obama Administration has yet to break from the past.

While Obama has pledged to stress diplomacy over warfare, he has also promised to "maintain the most powerful military on the planet" and to increase the armed forces by some 90,000 soldiers. According to the Congressional Budget Office, that will cost at least \$50 billion over five years.

The most disturbing initiative, however, is a recent push to "reshape" the armed forces. A recent Defense Department directive elevates "IW" (irregular warfare) to a level "as strategically important as traditional warfare," arguing that for the "foreseeable future, winning the Long War against violent extremists will be the central objective of U.S. policy."

This concept is no different than the "hearts and minds" counterinsurgency strategy that failed so disastrously in Southeast Asia two generations ago. The directive assumes that military disasters result from impatience

and poor tactics. If you're willing to fight a "Long War," don't kick in too many doors, lunch with the locals and hand out lots of candy to the kids, you win.

Occupational Hazards

But the key to understanding why the U.S. and NATO are losing in Afghanistan and Iraq is the word "occupation."

Writing almost a century ago, T.E. Lawrence laid out what he called the algebra of occupation: "Rebellion must have an unsailable base . . . it must have a sophisticated alien enemy, in the form of a disciplined army of occupation too small to dominate the whole area. It must have a friendly population . . . sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy. Granted mobility, security . . . time and doctrine . . . victory will rest with the insurgents, for the algebraical [sic] factors are in the end decisive."

Lawrence was writing about the British occupation of Iraq, but he might as well have been channeling the future. His conclusion should give the Obama administration pause about its plans for a "surge" of troops into Afghanistan: "Against them [the algebraic factors], perfections of means and spirit struggle quite in vain."

History is replete with exam-
(Continued on page 6)

5 Ways to Usher in New Green Age

By Kevin Danaher and Alisa Gravitz
AlterNet.org

To pass on to our grandchildren healthy, thriving communities, instead of a desperate world, we need to accelerate the transition to the green economy: one that works for people and planet, social and economic justice, community and environmental health.

Here are five steps we need to take now, to ensure our planet, and our species, is around to see the fruits of our labor.

First, we need to change the story. How do we recruit more people to the triple-bottom-line economic model (integrating social justice, environmental restoration and financial sustainability) that is steadily replacing the outdated profit-maximizing economic model?

Second, we need to push capital into this triple-bottom-line type of investing — for people and the planet. We have to get away from the short-term perspective of the current investment system which seeks to maximize profits on a quarterly, even daily and sometimes minute-by-minute basis. We have to move from this “short-termism,” which is at the root of the current crisis, to one that takes a long-term view of how current policies will impact our great grandchildren.

We are now seeing a growing competition between a single-bottom line economy that is all about money and a triple-bottom-line economy that balances social equity, environmental restoration, and financial sustainability. Our prediction is that the triple-bottom-line economy is the stronger model and will eventually prevail, but we need to accelerate that transition.

Third, we need to redefine free enterprise from “the freedom of big corporations” to go anywhere and do anything to people and planet, to “the freedom of everyone to



Children deserve our best efforts; they are innocent participants as the world moves forward.

be enterprising.” The current system concentrates wealth and power; we want to have thriving prosperity and empowerment everywhere.

The old political model — of the Republicans, Democrats, Marxist-Leninists and so on — was to create a political party that could somehow gain state power and then change the economy from the national government level downward.

The green economy movement is reversing that entire process, saying, “Get control of the economy at the local level and build up from there so you have a truly empowered democracy from the grassroots up.”

Fourth, we need to design everything with a cradle-to-cradle perspective. Think of the honeybee. Does the honeybee hurt the flower when it makes honey or does it help the flower? Nature operates on a totally

closed loop. In nature there is no waste. People say, “Throw it away.” There is no “away.”

Fifth, we need to spread green measurement of growth. What is the ideology of the cancer cell? Grow, grow, grow. The cells of a metastasizing tumor have no concern for their impact on neighboring cells. What is suburban sprawl? What is the mindset of the traditional property developer? They don't care about their impact on the environment. It is grow, grow, grow: the ideology of the cancer cell.

We need a new way to grow — by growing value and well-being, not the destructive growth of a cancer cell. Health, education, sustainably-grown food, renewable energy technology — that's what you'll see in the green economy “market basket” of goods and services. In the green economy you'll see thrifty, cooperative activity as

economic basics: from planting gardens, to conserving energy to neighborhood tool-lending libraries to holding clothing swaps to giving the gift of your time at the holidays.

We need to favor life values over money values. The world has two systems in conflict: the money cycle and the life cycle. Our species needs to answer this question: Should we have money values dominate the life cycle or should life values rule over the money cycle?

The task before us is nothing less than how to save humanity from itself. Yes, that sounds like a big project, but I. F. Stone used to say, “If you expect an answer to your question during your lifetime, you are not asking a big enough question.”

The masons who laid the foundation layer of European cathedrals that took centuries to build knew they would not see

the final product of their work but they knew they had to do very solid, precise work because of all the weight that was going to come on top of their work. That is the consciousness we need now.

We need to become good ancestors. We need to rediscover our spines and get up on our hind legs and struggle against the obstacles that we confront so we can accelerate the transition to the green economy and not leave a burnt cinder of a planet for our great grandchildren.

Kevin Danaher is a co-founder of Global Exchange and Executive Co-Producer of the Green Festivals. Alisa Gravitz is the Executive Director of Green America (formerly Co-op America) and Executive Co-Producer of the Green Festivals. They are co-editors of The Green Festival Reader: Fresh Ideas from Agents of Change.

Biker Gives Appalachian Towns A Voice in Washington, D.C.

Bike Trip
Protests
Mountaintop Removal
Coal Mining

By Brittney Moore
The Knoxville News
Sentinel



Photo provided by Sam Evans
Law student Sam Evans, left, pictured biking last December with friends, planned a 750-mile bike journey to Washington, D.C. to protest mountaintop removal coal mining. Evans also planned to visit Appalachian families adversely affected by the practice and deliver a record of their testimony to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

University of Tennessee law student Sam Evans, pictured biking last December with friends Rebecca Falls and Phillip Burgess, planned to leave Tennessee January 9 and arrive in Washington, D.C. on the date of Barack Obama's inauguration.

“The bike ride for me is just a way to take the voices of the people who aren't being heard right now and take them to Washington, D.C.,” said Evans, a third-year law student at the University of Tennessee.

Evans won't be alone for the 750-mile trip. Missy Petty of Conservation Fisheries Inc., a nonprofit organization that rescues endangered fish species, will join him for the first half of the trip.

Evans and Petty plan to stay in homes close to coal mining

sites to see for themselves the impact mining has on nearby communities, then gather letters protesting mountaintop removal mining. Evans will hand deliver the letters to the Natural Resources Defense Council, which will give the letters to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“We just want people to be aware of what's going on in their own backyards and want them to care,” Petty said.

According to Evans, a sludge pond similar to the one that broke in Kingston on December 22 rests above an elementary school in West Virginia.

“If it breaks it'll bury the school,” Evans said. “It's just another sludge build waiting to happen, and the people have been trying to address that for years.”

Petty agreed. “There have been people killed in these communities, and they're drinking water that's polluted and because they're poor, no one's hearing their voices,” she said. “Because Sam and I are able to get out and ride our bikes we're going to reach out to, I hope, you know, the nation.”

Evans said he's flown over areas impacted by mountaintop removal mining in West Virginia.

“It's not just hundreds of mountains,” he said. “It's reaching the point to where it's thousands.”

Petty said they've “been getting the word out to a lot of mountaintop removal groups” about their trip. “We know there are ways to mine without destroying the tops of mountains.”



What We Sow

By Terry Darling
Warren, Pennsylvania

*Rain. The soul dries up without it.
Too much and weeds
choke all the best of what
we have sown.*

*Kindness, if I could pick you up,
you, as if my child . . . ever thoughtful,
tickling my aging remembrances
you would become always visible.*

*Yes, only then will I know
my love was a weightless creature,
heavenly shaped, successful.*

 **Find Green Candidates**
www.NewMenu.org
Find Greens running for office near you.
web design provided by
www.DancingTreesWeb.com

Congo Rainforest Logging Close to End

By Glen Barry
Ecological Internet

January 19 — The Democratic Republic of Congo is closer to ending ancient rainforest logging as some 60% of logging contracts on nearly 32 million acres of forest have been canceled. A long-delayed review of 156 logging deals, aimed at stamping out corruption and enforcing minimum legal and environmental standards, found that only 65 were "viable."

On several occasions Ecological Internet's Earth Action Network has hastened this process with timely protest alerts, exposing World Bank forest

corruption and successfully demanding the review and we share with many others in this victory. While it is heartening that the World Bank has facilitated this logging concession review, it is sad that they and so many others still cling to the myth that industrial logging of millions-of-years-old, primeval ecosystems can ever benefit the Earth's climate and biodiversity or local peoples.

The industrial destruction of natural ecosystems must end for our shared survival. Please continue to participate in the Earth Action Network at <http://www.ecoearth.info/shared/alerts>.



First Solar Powered Community in North America

Global Warming is Real
December 29, 2008

A new Canadian neighborhood is North America's first solar-powered community. The community, named the Drake Landing Solar Community (DLSC), is located in the town of Okotoks, Alberta and consists of 52 houses all powered by solar (what else?) energy.

The system that links the community together is ingenious. It stores the summer months' excess energy underground for it to be put to use in the extremely cold winter months that Alberta is notorious for. A total of 800 solar panels located on garage roofs throughout the community generate 1.5 megawatts of thermal power during a typical summer day.

They started testing on June 21 last year, the summer solstice. It was a glorious day and the first results were that the stored en-

ergy captured was exactly as had been calculated. Now the engineers say that in five years' time they'll be able to capture enough summer energy to provide more than 90% of the space heating needs of the homes during the winter months. The houses sold like hot cakes and the last one was occupied in October 2008.

DLSC's underground energy storage system is unique in the world. Dubbed the Borehole Thermal Energy Storage (BTES), the unit links all the newly built, single, detached homes together.

The rest of the building efforts have been as green as possible and the entire community has been awarded gold-certified status under the Built Green Alberta program. That program in turn is modeled on NRCAN's EnerGuide for New Houses Program The best news is of course the low carbon footprint of the people that occupy the houses

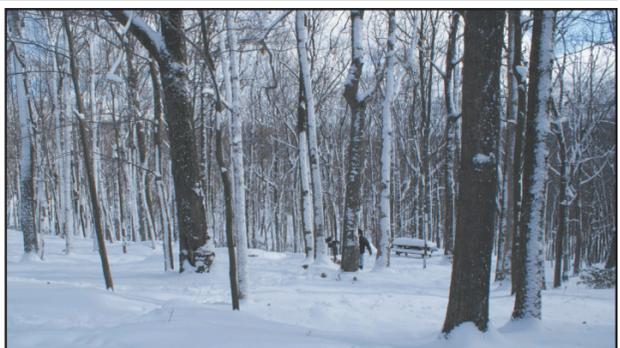


Photo by Terry Darling

Senate Boosts Wilderness Protection in US

By Matthew Daly
Associated Press

WASHINGTON, January 12 (excerpt)— In a rare Sunday session, the Senate advanced legislation that would set aside more than 2 million acres in nine states as wilderness. Majority Democrats assembled more than enough votes to overcome GOP stalling tactics in an early showdown for the new Congress.

Republicans complained that Democrats did not allow amendments on the massive bill, which calls for the largest expansion of wilderness protection in 25 years. But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and other Democrats said the bill —

a holdover from last year — was carefully written and included measures sponsored by both Republicans and Democrats.

By a 66-12 vote . . . lawmakers agreed to clear away procedural hurdles despite partisan wrangling that had threatened pledges by leaders to work cooperatively as the new Obama Administration takes office. Senate approval is expected later this week. Supporters hope the House will follow suit.

"Today is a great day for America's public lands," said the bill's sponsor, Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M. "This big, bipartisan package of bills represents years of work by senators



Photo by Rex Whitfield

Chris Soto of Lighthouse Point, Florida (who wrote the Land Trust article for our December issue) and her husband, Rex Whitfield, were given a tour of the Hobbit House by its builder, Rod Rylander, when they visited Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina during their vacation in 2006.

Hobbit Home Exists in "Real" World

Earthaven is an aspiring ecovillage in a mountain forest setting near Asheville, North Carolina dedicated to caring for people and the Earth by learning, living and demonstrating a holistic, sustainable culture.

Rod Rylander, who built the Hobbit Home above, has degrees in biology and social ecology. Besides growing up on a farm, he has had college courses in agriculture. Much of his knowledge came through experience in growing organic vegetables, raising most small farm animals and being a government agricultural agent in the Philippines and Belize.

<http://www.earthaven.org/>
<http://www.rrylander.com/Rod.htm>

"Earthaven is where the human community is bonding with the Earth in a manner capable of healing the devastation of the past and inspiring a new grandeur for the future.

At Earthaven, even for a brief while, we experience what it is to return to ourselves."

Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*

Students Learn How to Can Their Own Veggies

No idea where this came from

January 15 (excerpt) — Students who might have reached for some store-bought jelly for that after-school peanut butter sandwich can now have a healthier — not to mention cheaper — alternative.

People who know how to can and preserve food will have a leg up if the economy continues to decline, said Shari Steager, a teacher at Northeastern Senior High School in Manchester, Pennsylvania.

Like Ms. Steager, many middle-aged people are whizzes with Ball and Kerr jars and pressure cookers. They can run tomatoes through a Squeeze strainer with the best of them and whip up homemade sauces in no time. They turn green gardens into colorful shelves of glass-encased fruits and vegetables.

But Ms. Steager, who lives on a farm in Lancaster County, is attempting to teach a generation of convenience-food eaters the art and benefits of home canning. And 4-H leaders are seeing a resurgence in the number of people who are starting gardens and preserving the harvest.

Ms. Steager teaches Test Kitchen, a Family and Consumer Science class at Northeastern. For one week the students learn how to make homemade applesauce, apple butter and jam. The week culminates with a taste test pitting their homemade products against commercially-produced counterparts and a test on food safety.

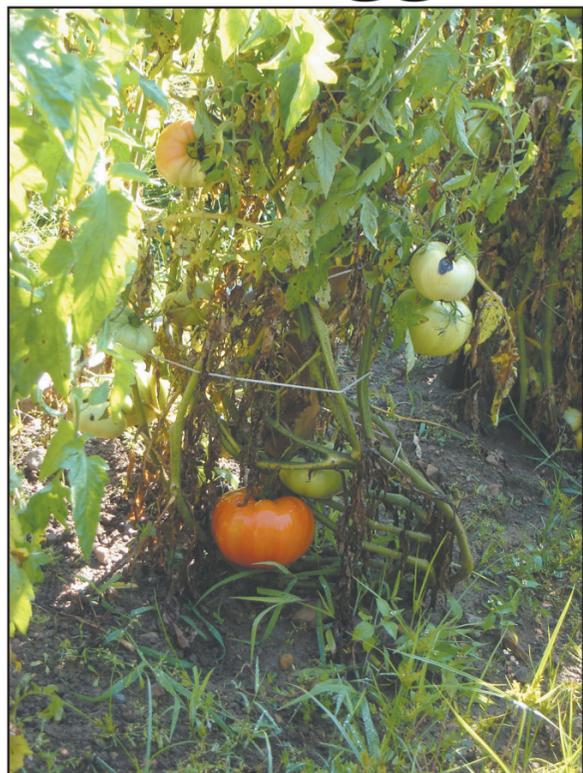


Photo by Iona

Tomato plant from John and Iona Conner's garden last summer.

Ms. Steager believes that home-canned products are less expensive and healthier and that making them isn't as hard as her students probably think

Fighting Defense Lobbyists

(Continued from page 4)

ples of Lawrence's formula too numerous to list. Indeed, the few examples of successful counterinsurgency — the Americans in the Philippines and the British in Malaya — were the result of unique historical factors that that have never transferred well.

The occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has been a financial and diplomatic disaster for the United States, devastated the countries we invaded, and is spreading the war to Pakistan and India.

The recent terrorist assault on Mumbai was very similar to the September bombing of the Islamabad Marriott Hotel, both of them almost certainly "blowback" from the growing involvement of Indian forces in southern and eastern Afghanistan and the Pakistani Army in the northwest frontier and tribal territories.

Won't adding 90,000 troops trained in counterinsurgency warfare create pressure to use those troops in places like the Sudan, Somalia, the Gulf of Guinea, Colombia or any number of regions where U.S. interests collide with local aspirations?

In an article in the most recent *Foreign Affairs*, Defense Secretary Robert Gates lays out his road-

map for a new U.S. military: "What is dubbed the war on terror is . . . a prolonged, worldwide irregular campaign — a struggle between the forces of violent extremism and those of moderation. Direct military force will continue to play a role in the long-term effort against the terrorists and other extremists. But over the long term, the United States cannot kill or capture its way to victory.

Gates' strategy embodies the possibility of both hope and disaster. If the United States chooses to keep the military on its current footing — including adding more troops and focusing on the use of "direct military force" — then future wars and occupations will almost certainly torpedo Obama's plans to deliver a more equal and humane society.

If, however, diplomacy and negotiations take the place of F-16s and Special Forces, then there is yet hope that the world can take a step back and look for alternatives that avoid Lawrence's grim calculations.

Conn Hallinan is a "Foreign Policy in Focus" columnist. This article first appeared at www.fpif.org. Reprinted with permission.

Point of No Return

(Continued from page 1)

Given the unexpected speed with which Antarctica is melting, coupled with the increasing melt rates in the Arctic and Greenland, the rate of sea level rise has doubled — with scientists now raising their prediction of ocean rise by century's end from about three feet to about six feet.

Scientists recently concluded that the growing acidification of the world's oceans may face a "tipping point" in the next 20 years. As the oceans continue to absorb CO₂, the drop in their pH levels will begin to dissolve the shells of ocean organisms and destroy other forms of sea life. Researchers had initially estimated that tipping point might occur around 2060 — but new findings shortened that horizon to another two decades, according to Australian scientists.

Scientists discovered that a recent, unexplained surge of carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere is due to more greenhouse gases escaping from trees, plants and soils — which have traditionally buffered the warming by absorbing the gases. In the lingo of climate scientists, carbon sinks are turning into carbon sources. Because the added warmth is making vegetation less able to absorb our carbon emissions, scientists expect the rate of warming to jump substantially in the coming years.

The intensity of hurricanes around the world has doubled in the last decade. As Greg Holland of the National Center for Atmospheric Research explained, "If you take the last 10 years, we've had twice the number of category-5 hurricanes than any other [10-year period] on record."

In Australia, a new, permanent state of drought in the country's breadbasket has cut crop yields by over 30 percent. The 1-in-100-year drought exemplifies a little-noted impact of climate change. As the atmosphere warms, it tightens the vortex of the winds that swirl around the poles. One result is that the water that traditionally evaporated from the Southern Ocean and rained down over New South Wales is now being pulled back into Antarctica — drying out the southeastern quadrant of Australia and contributing to the buildup of glaciers in the Antarctic — the only area on the planet where glaciers are increasing.

As one prominent climate scientist said recently, "We are seeing impacts today that we did not expect to see until 2085."

The panic among climate scientists is expressing itself in geo-engineering proposals that are half-baked, fantastically futuristic and, in some cases, reckless. Put forth by otherwise sober and respected scientists, the schemes are intended to basically allow us to continue burning coal and oil.

Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen, for example, is proposing to spray aerosols into the upper atmosphere to reduce the amount of sunlight hitting earth. Tom M.L. Wigley, a highly esteemed climate scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), ran scenarios of stratospheric sulfate injection — on the scale of the estimated 10 million tons of sulfur emitted when Mt. Pinatubo erupted in 1991 — through supercomputer models of the climate and reported that Crutzen's idea did, indeed, seem feasible. The scheme was highlighted in a recent op-ed article in *The New York Times* by Ken Caldeira, a climate researcher at the Carnegie Institution.

Unfortunately, the seeding of the atmosphere with sun-reflecting particles would trigger a global drought, according to a study by other researchers. "It is a Band-Aid fix that does not work," said study co-author Kevin Trenberth of NCAR. The eruption of Pinatubo was followed by a significant drop-off of rainfall over land and a record decrease in runoff and freshwater discharge into the ocean, according to a recent study by Trenberth and other scientists.

The noted British ecologist James Lovelock recently proposed the idea of installing deep-water pipes on the ocean floor to pump cold water to the surface

to enhance the ocean's ability to absorb carbon dioxide. Others suggest dumping iron filings into the ocean to increase the growth of algae which, in turn, would absorb more carbon dioxide.

These proposals fail to seriously acknowledge the possibility of unanticipated impacts on ocean dynamics or marine ecosystems or atmospheric conditions. We have no idea what would result from efforts to geo-engineer our way around nature's roadblock.

At a recent conference, Lisa Speer of the Natural Resources Defense Council noted: "These types of proposals are multiplying around the world and there is no structure in place to evaluate if any of them work. People are going after these gigantic projects without any thoughtful, rational process."

What these scientists are offering us are technological expressions of their own supercharged sense of desperation.

To be fair, the reality that faces us all is extremely difficult to deal with — as much from an existential as from a scientific point of view.

Climate change won't kill all of us — but it will dramatically reduce the human population through the warming-driven spread of infectious disease, the collapse of agriculture in traditionally fertile areas and the increasing scarcity of fresh drinking water. (Witness the 1-in-100-year drought in the southeastern US, which has been threatening drinking water supplies in Georgia and other states.)

Those problems will be dramatically intensified by a surge of environmental refugees whose crops are destroyed by weather extremes or whose freshwater sources have dried up or whose homelands are going under from rising sea levels.

In March, 2007, the U.S. Army War College sponsored a conference on the security implications of climate change. "Climate change is a national security issue," retired General Gordon R. Sullivan, chairman of the Military Advisory Board and former Army chief of staff, said in releasing a report that grew out of the conference. "[C]limate instability will lead to instability in geopolitics and impact American military operations around the world."

One frequently overlooked potential casualty of accelerating climate change may be our tradition of democracy (corrupted as it already is). When governments have been confronted by breakdowns, they have frequently resorted to totalitarian measures to keep order in the face of chaos. It is not hard to imagine a state of emergency morphing into a much longer state of siege, especially since heat-trapping carbon dioxide stays in the atmosphere for about 100 years.

Add the escalating squeeze on our oil supplies, which could intensify our meanest instincts, and you have the ingredients for a long period of repression and conflict.

Ominously, this plays into the scenario, thoughtfully explored by Naomi Klein, that the community of multi-national corporations will seize on the coming catastrophes to elbow aside governments as agents of rescue and reconstruction — but only for communities that can afford to pay. This dark vision implies the increasing insulation of the world's wealthy minority from the rest of humanity — buying protection for their fortified

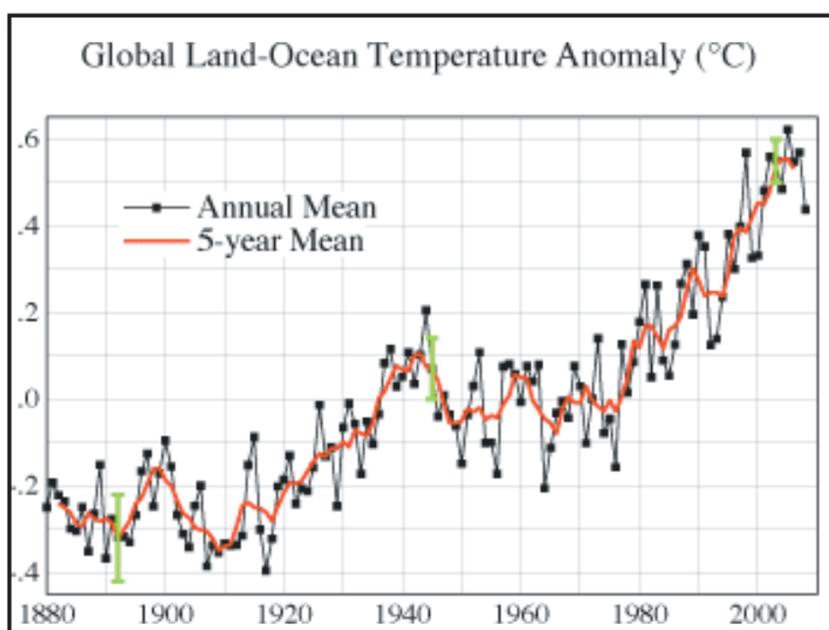


Photo by Paul Gitlin

Ross Gelbspan, author of *The Heat is On* and *Boiling Point*.

communities from the Halliburtons, Bechtels and Blackwaters of the world while the majority of the poor are left to scramble for survival among the ruins.

The only antidote to that kind of future is a revitalization of government — an elevation of public mission above private interest and an end to the free-market fundamentalism that has blinded much of the American public with its mindless belief in the divine power of markets. In short, it requires a revival of a system of participatory democracy that reflects our collective values far more accurately than the corporate state into which we have slid.

Unfortunately, we seem to be living in an age of historical amnesia. One wonders whether our institutional memory still recalls the impulses that gave rise to our constitution — or whether we have substituted a belief in efficiency, economic rationalization and profit maximization for our traditional pursuit of a finely calibrated balance between individual liberties and social justice.

From a more personal viewpoint, an acknowledgement of the reality of escalating climate change plays havoc with one's sense of future. It is almost as though a lone ocean voyager were suddenly to lose sight of the North Star. It deprives one of an inner sense of navigation. To live without at least an open-ended sense of future (even if it's not an optimistic one) is to open one's self to a morass of conflicting impulses — from the anticipated thrill of a reckless plunge into hedonism to a profoundly demoralizing sense of hopelessness and a feeling that a lifelong guiding sense of purpose has suddenly evaporated.

This slow-motion collapse of the planet leaves us with the bitterest kind of awakening. For parents of young children, it provokes the most intimate kind of despair. For people whose happiness derives from a fulfilling sense of achievement in their work, this realization feels like a sudden, violent mugging. For those who feel a debt to all those past generations who worked so hard to create this civilization we have enjoyed, it feels like the ultimate trashing of history and tradition. For anyone anywhere who truly absorbs this reality and all that it implies, this realization leads into the deepest center of grief.

There needs to be another kind of thinking that centers neither on the profoundly dishonest denial promoted by the coal and oil industries, nor the misleading optimism of the environmental movement, nor the fatalistic

indifference of the majority of people who just don't want to know.

There needs to be a vision that accommodates both the truth of the coming cataclysm and the profoundly human need for a sense of future.

That vision needs to be framed by the truly global nature of the problem. It starts with the recognition that this historical era of nationalism has become a stubborn, increasingly toxic impediment to our collective future. We all need to begin to think of ourselves — now — as citizens of one profoundly distressed planet.

I think that understanding involves a recognition that a clean environment is about far more than endangered species, toxic substances and the "dead zones" that keep spreading off our shorelines. A clean environment is a basic human right. And without it, all the other human rights for which we have worked so hard will end up as grotesque caricatures of some of our deepest aspirations.

Fortuitously, the timing of the climate crisis does coincide with other worldwide trends. Like it or not, the economy is becoming globalized. The globalization of communications now makes it possible for anyone to communicate with anyone else anywhere else in the world. And, since it is no respecter of national boundaries, the global climate makes us one.

At the same time, the coming changes clearly suggest that, to the extent possible, we should be eating locally and regionally grown food — to minimize the CO₂ generated by factory farming and long-distance food transport. We should also be preparing to take our energy from a decentralized system using whichever non-carbon energy technologies are best suited to their natural surroundings — solar in sunny areas, offshore wave and tidal power in coastal areas, wind farms in the world's wind corridors and geothermal almost everywhere. (It may even be feasible to maintain a low-level, coal-fired grid of about 15 percent of current capacity, as a back-up for days the wind doesn't blow or the sun doesn't shine.) But it's critical to stop thinking in terms of centralized energy systems and to begin thinking in terms of localized, decentralized technologies.

At the level of social organization, the coming changes imply the need to conduct something like 80 percent of our governance at the local grassroots level through some sort of consensual democratic process — with the remaining 20 percent conducted by representatives at the global level.

For some years, I have been promoting a policy bundle of three specific strategies as one model for jump-starting a global transition to clean energy. Those policies, which are spelled out in my book *Boiling Point* and on my Web site www.theheatisonline.org, include:

- Redirecting more than \$250 billion in subsidies in industrial countries away from coal and oil and putting them behind carbon-free technologies; (would these figures still be adequate, several years later?)

- Creating a fund of about \$300 billion a year for a decade, to transfer clean energy to poor countries; and

- Adopting within the Kyoto framework a mandatory progressive fossil fuel efficiency standard that would go up by five percent a year until the 80 percent global reduction is attained.

The initial impulse behind these strategies was to craft a policy bundle to stabilize the climate — and at the same time create millions of jobs, especially in developing countries. Initially, I, along with the other people who helped formulate them, envisioned these solutions as a way to undermine the economic desperation that gives rise to so much anti-U.S. sentiment. They would, we hoped, turn impoverished and dependent countries into trading partners. They would raise living standards abroad without compromising ours. They would jump the renewable energy industry into a central driving engine of growth for the global economy and, ultimately, yield a far more equitable, more secure and more prosperous world.

Unfortunately, given all the apathy, indifference and antagonism to taking real action, nature has now relegated that earlier vision to the rear-view mirror.

But this kind of global public works plan, if initiated in the near-term, could still provide a platform to bring the people of the world together around a common global project that transcends traditional alliances and national antagonisms — even in today's profoundly fractured, degraded and combative world. Along the way, it could also provide decentralized stand-alone energy sources for disconnected social communities in a post-crash world.

The key to our survival as a civil species during an era of profound natural upheaval lies in an enhanced sense of community. If we maintain the fiction that we can thrive as isolated individuals, we will find ourselves at the same emotional dead-end as the current crop of survivalists: an existence marked by defensiveness, mistrust, suspicion and fear.

As nature washes away our resources, overwhelms our infrastructures and splinters our political alignments, our survival will depend increasingly on our willingness to join together as a global community. As the former Argentine climate negotiator, Raul Estrada-Oyuela, said: "We are all adrift in the same boat — and there's no way half the boat is going to sink."

To keep ourselves afloat, we need to change the economic and political structures that determine how we behave. In this case, we need to elevate the ethic of cooperation over the deeply ingrained reflex of competition. We need to elevate our biological similarities over our geographical differences. We need, in the face of this oncoming onslaught, to reorganize our social structures to reflect our most humane collective aspirations.

There is no body of expertise — no authoritative answers — for this one. We are crossing a threshold into uncharted territory. And since there is no precedent to guide us, we are left with only our own hearts to consult, whatever courage we can muster, our instinctive dedication to a human future — and the intellectual integrity to look reality in the eye.

Ross Gelbspan, a retired 30 year journalist, is author of *The Heat is On* (1997) and *Boiling Point* (2004). He maintains the website: www.heatisonline.org.

Reprinted with permission.



Photo by Terry Darling

Conewango Creek, home of Reg's muskrat neighbors. Reg often watches muskrats feed along the creek bank from his kitchen window.

Muskrat Rights

The term "neighbors" can include more than humans.

By Reg Darling
Warren, Pennsylvania

We've lived at the edge of the first bench above the flood plain for twenty-five years. The Conewango Creek would be called a river in most parts of the country. Muskrat sightings were common from the beginning. I don't remember exactly when I first noticed the trail in the snow leading from the creek bank to our composter but I do recall taking note of the tracks and tail marks and being watchful thereafter to see what our visitor was up to.

A few days later I saw a muskrat swim — with the peculiar, fluid grace of his kind — to the low spot on the bank where the trail began. He hurried across the open space of the narrow creekside flat where I have a fire pit and an archery range, then paused, looking nervous and furtive, before climbing the steep slope up to our yard and the composter.

He paused again, reached between the composter's wooden slats to grab a section of grapefruit skin, dashed hurriedly back down the trail and plunged into the creek gripping the bright citrus treasure in his teeth. I was delighted.

I began leaving offerings down on the flat to spare him the nervous, risky journey to our yard: orange and grapefruit skins, scraps of lettuce and an occasional carrot. He continued to take the orange and grapefruit skins home with him but carried the greens and carrots to the shelter of one of the plastic lawn chairs by the fire pit where he could feast relatively sheltered from the gaze of hawks and owls. I responded by making one of the chairs a feeding station and stood often at our kitchen window with binoculars to watch our new-found friend eagerly supplement his vitamin-sparse winter diet.

How did the muskrat discover our composter in the first place? Chased there by a predator scare? A waft of citrus scent carried to the creek by the evening thermal? Or some adventurous urge to journey beyond the safety of the creek? The latter, admittedly anthropomorphic, possibility appeals to me. While it's important not to get so far into such projections of human qualities into non-human realities that they begin to masquerade as fact, it's equally important to recognize they provide openings for affection not unlike those that enable our affections for fellow human beings. Drawn into closer observation of the small details of muskrat behavior, the hand-like

deftness of their front paws, their cat-like grooming, the contrast between their nervousness on land and their confident ease in the water, I quickly realized that I'd been observing more than one, perhaps several, individuals. I looked upon them with growing affection, with friendship.

When a trapper set muskrat traps on my property, less than thirty yards from my house without my permission, I angrily ripped the traps out and hurled them far into the creek. I never saw the trapper but if I had he would probably have been treated to a frightening display of my dark side.

I've always had problems with trapping. Killing for money, rather than meat, is ethically troubling for reasons I hope I can safely assume are fairly obvious. That first step back away from the simple raw need of sustenance toward commerce is loaded with spiritual and moral risk. Sustenance has intrinsic limits integral with its pragmatic purpose as well as a tradition of reverence and ceremony dating far back into the Pleistocene and perhaps beyond. Natural sustenance nurtures awareness of the web of symbiosis which sustains us and the constant, poignant exchange of death for life which defines the courage required by consciousness. How does one connect to such awareness through the price of furs? Trapping seemed like nothing but another variation on the cruel edge of commerce gnawing on our Earth's beleaguered wildness.

To be fair, I must admit that such awareness has been lost for many hunters and I don't just mean the redneck rabble who, as one fellow put it when I tried to speak to him about the meaning(s) of deer hunting, "just like to shoot the bastards."

Many hunters who might be easily and superficially described as serious and sophisticated have simply substituted a record book entry for dollars and thus effectively reduced the hunt to a simulation of commerce in their pursuit of trophies and scores. Still, even among those groups, the animals themselves command at least a vestigial reverence rooted in the hunter's direct, often harsh, encounters with wild land and the beauty, courage and resourcefulness of their prey.

My misgivings about trapping readily coalesced around these particular muskrats who became nearly as sympathetically individual as my cats. The thought of one of them struggling and dying in the jaws of a trap was not a vehicle for philosophical speculation or abstract ethical con-

cern. It was not something that could be readily swept away by an explanation of game management theory and practice. These animals were my friends or, if that's too much of an anthropomorphic stretch, they were at least my neighbors.

When I saw a trapper working the far side of the creek, a queasy dread arose in my heart and gut. I longed for a way to protect the muskrats, my muskrats.

I am a hunter. I have hunted all my life. My generation is the first in my family to learn to hunt outside the realm of need and sustenance. I am well aware that my muskrat friends could be killed and eaten any day by a coyote, fox, eagle, owl or mink. I know that they live in a world of hazard, as indeed do we all, despite human skill in candy coating the hard, sharp, wild edge of nature. I have killed and eaten deer I knew and liked as individuals. My view of the world is hardly Bambi-esque but I don't see animals as abstractions, objects or automatons.

In my writing, I feel as uncomfortable referring to a specific animal with the grammatically correct "it" as I do with some of the gender biases built into the English language. I sometimes indulge in both because I am unwilling to make my writing a constant vehicle of protest against linguistic injustices that anyone who can read and understand my work can surely see through.

I see animals as individuals — each with an element of uniqueness, consciousness and personal history. Evaluating the nature and magnitude of that individuality in relation to my own is well beyond my limited knowledge and meager wisdom but a failure to respect its visible glimmers would be a failure to respect both myself and the web of earthly connection (quite literally, the common ground) that roots our species and all others to the Earth. The compassionate respect we owe our fellow creatures is inseparable from the respect we owe our own uniquely human capacity for compassion. The ability to see our fellow creatures as abstract units in a mechanistic world may well be the hole through which evil leaks into humanity, the true original sin.

My misgivings about trapping and affection for my muskrats made it fairly easy to see the trapper across the creek as an abstract personification of the cruel edge of human greed, even while recognizing the irony of my failure to compassionately recognize his individuality and

sentience. There was nothing in my world to put those feelings to test, nothing to reveal the presence of simplistic bias cleverly disguised as well-considered opinion.

Years passed. I fed the muskrats in the winter, watched them through binoculars from the kitchen window and felt a small flush of anxious anger on the rare occasion when I saw a trapper checking his trap line on the far side of the creek.

Last winter, my wife and I were invited to a Christmas party. As the evening wore on, small groups coalesced around several disparate topics of conversation and, as is typical, I ended up in a group talking about hunting, fishing, woods and wildlife. The subject of coyotes came up. Partly to spare myself the discomfort of listening to the predator-phobic tales of wanton coyote killing that are sadly too common among hunters, I spoke up and said, "I like them."

Another man echoed my sentiments with smiling enthusiasm. "Yeah, I like them too."

"I encountered one that I got to know once — I followed his tracks for years and learned a lot from him," I said.

Darin's eyes lit up. "They're fascinating. When I started trying to trap them, it took me three years to get the first one."

He was a trapper. But I liked Darin. He's one of those people who radiate a fundamental, heartfelt gentleness and a bright, free energy that tells you that you needn't worry about petty prejudices or foolish ego issues.

Darin spoke about coyotes with enthusiasm, affection and reverence. I told him about a coyote I had observed both directly and by following his distinctive tracks in winter. I had come to see him first as an intelligent, conscious being and later as a friend and teacher. Emboldened by Darin's smiling nods, I spoke of my puzzled distaste for the predator phobia displayed by so many of my fellow hunters. He shared his own coyote stories which, although they came from his pursuit of them, were not tales of deadly success and manly triumph but of wonder, beauty and respect.

I think of myself, with an uncomfortably-admitted touch of intellectual vanity, as open-minded. But it's rare anyone alters a strongly felt aspect of my thinking. I tend to experience more fine tuning than change in the challenges of conversation edging politely, or even heatedly, over into debate. Books have changed my thinking far more than conversations. But I left the

party with my head buzzing from a little too much wine and my thoughts about trapping in the midst of a transformation.

Killing entangled in money remains an uncomfortable issue for me and I have some developing thoughts about the ethos of blood commerce. But it's not really the fur trade that I intended to write about.

A couple of weeks ago a man was checking a trap line across the creek behind my house and I saw him in a different light.

Yesterday, I saw one of my muskrats swimming along the bank. I felt a brief flicker of worry for him, not unlike what I felt for my cats when I first heard about a recall of tainted cat food. Such feelings aren't simply neurotic, although they can certainly get that way if not kept in balance by joy, hope, distraction and a little hard-nosed realism. They are part of the bedrock of our humanity. Such feelings are the same that motivate those who loathe hunting, who see it as a cruel barbarism driven by sick egos and stunted hearts. In some cases they're right but, of course, golf, automobiles, home decorating, coin collecting, sex, beer and careers can also be driven by sick egos and stunted hearts.

Callousness is one of passion's perennial hazards. The killing of wild animals for food is natural and, when done with reverence and compassion, can be as clean an expression of primal divinity as giving a seed, making love or giving birth, despite the fierce poignancy of its climactic moments.

I still worry about my muskrats in odd, poignant moments of creekside watching but I think of the trapper as a force of nature in the same category as the raptors, coyotes and minks, as one of the millennial hazards of a muskrat's wild life. If a trapper catches one of my aquatic friends, I hope he's a good trapper with wildness, love and wonder in his heart.

I've met one of the local minks. He had bright eyes that met mine briefly before he vanished. He may eat a muskrat but he also shares the hazard of traps.

I love the geese who raise their young on the creek, yet I also ate two of them last winter and have two more in my freezer. The marriage of love and sustenance is as complex and subtle as the marriage of minds and bodies. The silencers on my bowstring are made of fur. The quiet they bring to the loosing of an arrow helps me bring food to my family.

Love is large.
Life is short.



Of Tents and Dugouts

By Al Fry
Garden Valley, Idaho

As we slide deeper into economic disaster (the media still won't call it a depression), it's probably fitting that we take a look at how some folks are surviving at the bottom rungs of society . . . free of the usual technological treasures and taxable trophy properties.

As this is written (2008), hundreds of thousands of Americans are homeless and in the streets of tent cities . . . and the agonies have just begun. Since we have been schooled and fooled into buying our little mansions on credit to keep up with the Joneses, perhaps we should go back to square one and take a look at how some of our furry friends survive out of the system.

Locally, both the Bears and the Racoons head underground when the weather turns bad. The coons come out now and then to scrounge but basically they call their home comfy little hide-out burrows beneath boulders or outcroppings. They have no money systems to contend with so they just do what comes naturally.

It's a lot more difficult for us humans of course. If we fail to pay tribute to our rulers and systems, we can get put away to keep us from upsetting the herd. Now and then though we get a few mavericks who manage to buck the system in unusual ways.

Let's mention a few. One long-time outlaw to conformity is living in a dugout along the Salmon River some miles south of Salmon, Idaho.



Photo by Kevin Clark/Idaho Statesman
Dugout Dick lives in one of several caves he has made along the Salmon River. A free spirit, living life on its own terms.

'Dugout Dick' squatted on a flat piece of state land years ago and he became such a popular figure that he has been left alone by the authorities.

By digging a number of small hillside dugout apartments he appealed to enough drop-outs to bring in a little survival income. While his mercenary side has raised the rent from \$.50 a day to \$1.00, I notice little decline in renters.

I might add that another maverick in the same area has spent several years wandering up and down the back roads in a gypsy wagon. 'Bear' spends much of the year going on grassy knoll to grassy knoll to

satisfy the requirements of his horses and chickens . . . the chickens being in a coop under the wagon.

During the Great Depression of the 30s, there were thousands wandering around the nation and many of them spent time in dugouts and tents.

If you're ever in the Death Valley Monument area you can stop by Shoshone and take a look at a whole series of roomy dugouts carved out of a nearby sandstone cliff area.

Other examples scatter our whole globe. Since bureaucratic red tape has increased a hundred-fold it has become very difficult to do any major dugouts

legally.

I managed to get one done in my village by simply hiring a backhoe to dig me a ten by 15-foot 'root cellar' . . . which I might add is really a nice place to spend time in at any time of year. I used reinforced timber with tin roofing against the dirt walls . . . and timbers and a foot of dirt on top.

For those who wish to build up to code, there are many designs that can pull the draft temperature from the slab. If your library is of little help, I suggest *Environmental Building News* at 802-257-7300 or Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems at 512-928-4786.

TENTS have long been popular emergency shelters and a current example is the huge tent city that sprang up just beyond the Las Vegas casinos. This mode of living might be new to those who got caught in the snares of the bankers but quite a few drop-outs in western Oregon and those attending the annual Rainbow Gatherings have always looked on the lifestyle as superior to full-time in the city.

It is a hard life for most however and I currently have a friend down in the Sun Belt who must pitch his tent in the densest thickets or undesirable spots to remain hidden from all the illegals pouring across the border.

During the milder times of year another friend dredges for gold up the river a few miles from my cabin. He moves his tent as needed and I meet up with him at a local hot springs pool where he thaws out and relaxes.

This is hard work without much reward but he feels it's better than being cooped up in some city depending on shelters and handouts.

During the last Great Depression there were thousands on the road and most gold-rich areas had their share of part-time miners. Those with similar leanings might contact the International Journal of Mining.

These directions of thought are just to point out there are a few alternatives to remaining in depressing shelters and cities.

Perhaps later we can get into the art of using cars and RVs to escape in . . .

The Examined Life: On Death

By Marion Stuenkel
Madison, Wisconsin

Walking through a snow and icebound landscape this evening — enjoying the sound of snow crunching under my boots, the cold hovering just beyond my layered warmth, the strength of my sturdy old legs plowing through drifts — I realized that it would be a terrible thing for the planet if I could live forever as I wanted to do tonight.

How awful it would be for the earth if an immortality pill were discovered. Think of the stuff I'd use. If my three score and counting are a burden to the earth, immortal me would be catastrophic. My death does not appear such a loss viewed resource-wise. I am not morbid. I certainly covet time to watch my grandchildren grow to adulthood. I know I'll be missed but, as I walked amongst tree shadows in star and moonlight, I really felt, not just knew, that death is a part of life.

My mom really didn't like cemeteries. Some of it was because her mom died when she was four, her great grandma soon after, her only brother a few short years later, followed by a stepmom. But what she verbalized was that our life substances enrich the soil and that there was something wrong with imprisoning those nutrients in caskets row upon row. Mom had seen the burial platforms the Sioux erect on the Great Plains. She thought that a good way to go. Death, for this farm girl was about the gift of nutrients to the soil so new life could be sustained.

Of course, when my Mom died I couldn't find my way to do what she wanted. Her cremated remains, gathered in a wooden box, are next to my father's beside the grave of her mother, brother and grandparents in a country cemetery overlooking the farm of her youth. I would have scattered her and dad's ashes but it wasn't allowed. Mom's urn was wood, at least on the outside. So many modern urns and caskets are not biodegradable and there are regulations forcing chemical embalming if one wants an open-casket funeral.

A little more than a year ago my friend Katie in Albuquerque was able to honor her mom's request to be buried

in an old pine box with a simple cotton shroud available. This is because a woman name D. Genter makes handcrafted, solid wood coffins in Deadwood, New Mexico (www.theoldpinebox.com). Katie's Mom (who reminded her daughters of Annie Oakley) is buried in a big city cemetery but I learned from Ms. Genter that there are green cemeteries (www.greenburials.org).

Socrates wrote, ". . . The unexamined life is not worth living . . ."

Years ago I saw the Carmo Church in Salvador, Brazil. In the catacombs I was moved, almost shocked, and then humbled, by the bones spilling out, heaped up, stacked and crumbling in the mortuary. The dry, dusty beige remains brought mortality to me starkly. The year before that trip I sat by my mother's bed telling her I loved her when she breathed her last and the light in her eyes went away. The first moment of loss was also uplifting. The minutes in the catacombs were raw, not about souls winging, but their earthly remains, missed opportunities and finality.

I touched the treasure chest containing the bones (relics) of St. Therese of Liseaux. I love her saying, "I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth."

I say, "I want to spend my remaining time on earth doing good for the earth and life upon it." I don't want life on earth to die an untimely death long before the sun goes out. While still above ground, I'm not going to use levels of technology that will make the planet uninhabitable. Not owning a car is not enough. I mustn't fly again. It's not just the fuel but also all the infrastructure support and an untenable mindset. I will eat and drink only locally grown foods. I will fast from electricity as much each day as possible.

Each day I'm going to think about what resources I can conserve rather than waste. I realize the earth couldn't stand my living forever but the way I've been living can it stand me living at all? I must become sustainable.

Marion Stuenkel is a Kyoto-compliant, anti-nuclear activist modeling simple living for her grandchildren, practicing intentional income-reduction-war-tax-resistance, and eating local food.



THE GRAVE TREE

By Barbara Knox, Sand Sandy Spring, Maryland

She wanted to become a tree gradually, have tree roots absorb her composting body. So they buried her like a fish in a hill of corn, a seedling oak to mark her grave. Her neighbors explained, "She didn't want proper burial. Wanted to be compost. Wasn't from around here," They bought cemetery plots.

She had imagined her seedlings foresting hills, leaves filtering hawk-patrolled skies, freshwater mussels restored to the creek. She had planted warmer climate trees. They said, "World warming? I like warm winters. Summers I turn the AC colder.

The future?

Heat suffocates once lush valleys. Parching winds strip her oak. Skeleton tree roots cease probing for water. "Our deepest wells are going dry. Never did that before," they say.

OR
It thunders like great buildings collapsing; a deafening bolt streaks down her oak. Sap boils, exploding branches, exposing white wood. Forced to the forest floor, its roots claw the air. They say, "Worst storm in memory. But always had crazy weather here."

OR
When her hills are timbered, her tree is spared as a grave marker. "You should respect the dead," they agree. Another flood plunges down clear-cut slopes, mud rivers surge, pick up brush and boulders. The lone tree is battered then buried alive. "Folks need places to live." They build a new development.

OR
Bulldozers gouge a road. Whining chain saws tag after. Chickadee scolds as the saw cuts through her tree, harvesting lumber. "It was just an old woman's dream." They are paid for the sale. The money blows green in the hot, dry wind.

Barbara Knox is a retired psychologist who draws inspiration for much of her writing from her farm near Shade Gap, Pennsylvania. She has reclaimed its 1850 house and is an enthusiastic organic gardener. An environmental activist and amateur naturalist, she has begun to restore her 150-acre farm to native forests, wetlands and meadows. Her book of poems, "the limberlost" was published last year and is available for \$10.00. Send check payable to Barbara Knox, 17305 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, Maryland 20860.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR FIRST

11 NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS

WE WILL SEND YOU A FREE BOOKLET CALLED "FORGET THE GAS PUMPS — MAKE YOUR OWN FUEL," PUBLISHED IN 1979 DURING THE FUEL CRISIS. YOU WILL ENJOY READING AND IMAGINING BETTER WAYS.

Nobody Owns Mineral Rights

(Continued from page 1) and the valuable "Mineral Rights," or sub-surface resources, could be taxed as another separate, valuable, "property."

Mineral Rights owners today like to call what they own "property." And often during arguments between environmentalists wanting to properly regulate oil and gas drilling, the Mineral Rights "owners" (and I use that term loosely) insist "they are trying to take our property away from us."

They, the Mineral Rights owners, often speak of their below surface resources as "property," much like they also own the surface "covering their property."

But here is the problem with that. Up until a few years ago, the Mineral Rights or sub-surface resources were taxed, like property was. It was assessed by the county tax entities, as a "real property" and both the surface owners and the Mineral Rights owners paid tax on their share of property.

Fair is fair! In most states this is called a "severance tax." Mineral Rights were sold and taxed just like any other piece of (surface) land. When Mineral Rights owners did not pay their property tax on their property, these rights were often taken by the county and re-sold at a tax sale.

Then, some oil and gas producers decided that paying taxes on "dormant" Mineral Rights in the state of Pennsylvania was somehow "unfair." "They," a group of oil and gas producers backed by POGAM (Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Association), claimed that the minerals below the surface ONLY had or have value when somebody harvests and sells them.

The lawsuit that put an end to taxation of Mineral Rights in Pennsylvania was a 2002 Supreme Court (PA) ruling involving Independent Oil and Gas Co. v. Fayette County that found counties lack the authority to assess oil and natural gas.

So today only the surface owners pay a "property tax" and the Mineral Rights or sub-surface owners pay no tax on their "sometimes valuable" resources. And last year when oil and gas made their incredible meteoric rise in value, the Mineral Rights were much more valuable than the surface rights.

Pennsylvania lost out on

hundreds of millions, or perhaps billions, of tax dollars at a time our state needed the money the worst! And all while oil and gas producers in this state were making what some describe as "obscene profits."

Pennsylvania is the only one of the bigger oil- and gas-producing states that does not have a "severance tax" on mineral or subsurface rights.

So, what if you are a Mineral Rights owner and somebody else besides you wants them? Can one person take another's Mineral Rights against their will?

In northwest Pennsylvania, in the Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania's only national forest, and the most-drilled national forest in our land, there is a conflict involving environmentalist who want to make sure that drilling is done in a way that is consistent with reasonable laws and in a way that would protect the environment.

Some would like the federal government, which owns the land, to "take the Mineral Rights" using "eminent domain" from the oil and gas producers to protect Pennsylvania's only national forest. Even though as of today it is the most densely-drilled forest in the nation, there are still parts that are worth saving!

Will they use "eminent domain" to save our public lands? . . . NO!

The Mineral Rights owners, in this case oil and gas producers (POGAM members), insist "they own the Mineral Rights" and they can do what they want with them. They do sometimes "tease" that "if you want to buy them, we want a million dollars an acre." Funny when just a few years ago (2002) they told the Supreme Court that Mineral Rights were actually valueless unless the resources were harvested and sold.

The environmentalists don't want to drill for oil and gas! Some feel (as I do) that the government should use "eminent domain" laws to protect Pennsylvania's only National Forest from total devastation!

But now we have a peculiar twist to the whole "Mineral Rights" and "eminent domain" situation. An ironic twist at that!

Just a few miles south of the Allegheny National Forest in south-central Pennsylvania, in Bedford County, we have a current case of a group of 10



Photo by John Stoneman

Mineral extraction in a residential neighborhood.

landowners who DO own their Mineral Rights under their surface land.

Last year, Houston-based Spectra Energy Corp. and New Jersey Resources of Wall, N.J., formed a joint venture to build the Steckman Ridge gas field, claiming it would help supply gas to the heavily-populated Northeast and mid-Atlantic states. Last June, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the companies' application to build and operate the field in a process that the landowners say was far too complicated for an average citizen and virtually shut them out.

What it did was TAKE the private citizens' Mineral Rights from them against their wills, using "eminent domain." The group actually doesn't want the surface or the minerals, but rather the "space" under the land! To use as a "gas storage field!"

A federal judge has not decided on a compensation amount but during early negotiations the 10 Steckman Ridge landowners received a top offer of \$400 an acre from the group that wants to build the storage field (Spectra Energy Corp. and New Jersey Resources).

So the bottom line is that "we," as private citizens, "have" to pay tax on our property but commercial interests can own what they consider "property" and even insist it's the "dominant ownership" over the land owner and yet, in the state of Pennsylvania, they pay no prop-



Photo by John Stoneman

Is this really true?

erty or severance tax on their highly-profitable property.

And further, we as a group of citizens or the government who represents us and our interests, including our only National Forest in Pennsylvania, can't "take" the Mineral Rights under public lands using "eminent domain." But at the same time, the oil and gas producers (backed by POGAM) CAN take private citizens Mineral Rights using "eminent domain."

And do they offer up the same "one million dollars per acre" that an oil producer in the ANF region claims the minerals are worth?

Nope!

They are willing to reimburse the Mineral Rights (and land!) owners a measly \$400 per acre (and THAT was their "top offer!")

Will Pennsylvania get its act

together and correct this injustice in the near future? We are losing millions and millions of dollars of county tax revenue when we need it badly and while the oil and gas producers are enjoying record profits!

John Stoneman is an outdoor photographer, outdoor writer, hiking guide and a self-employed luthier living in Bradford, PA. (Ed.: A luthier builds stringed instruments.) He is a hiker, camper, mountain-biker, backpacker, long-distance swimmer, surfer, water-skier, scuba diver, naturalist, canoeist, kayaker, sailor, tracker, wildlife photographer, caver, climber, rappeller and a former sports-car-rally driver, sports-car off-road racer, off-road motorcycle racer, bicycle racer, professional musician and a freelance writer.

An Invitation from the Grassroots Coalition

Dear Friends,

How can Church and College Social Justice Groups (CSJG) work effectively to create a society governed by Christian values and principles, focusing especially on economic and environmental justice? What course of action is both possible for church members in their busy lives and capable of leading, step by step, to a just, compassionate and democratic society?

Corporations are the most powerful element in society today. They play the major role in shaping economic and environmental conditions. In addition, to a large extent they shape the policies and programs of governments.

The CSJGs therefore will do well to focus their efforts primarily on church members and college students gaining economic power, relying on their major strength, the power of the purse.

This they can do in the following ways:

- The CSJGs impart to participants information about what Catholic Social Teaching says about how our society should operate.
- The major elements of the mainstream media are owned by a few large corporations and therefore are reluctant to provide valid information about current economic and environmental conditions when such information clashes, as is often the case, with the interests of those corporations. The CSJGs seek out accurate information about these economic and environmental conditions and supply that

information to participants.

- The Grassroots Coalition works with the CSJGs to identify local and national providers of products and services which operate in harmony with their Christian principles and values. One useful source of information is the National Green Pages produced by Green America.
- The Coalition works with the CSJGs to contact those providers and inform them that the CSJGs will promote their businesses as long as they, the providers, continue to operate in a moral manner.
- They obtain from the providers information regarding the manner and extent to which they operate in accordance with Christian values and principles. They go to great lengths to verify this information and periodically check to ascertain its accuracy.
- The CSJGs use every means at their disposal to persuade church members, college students and others to utilize the information regarding these goods and services.
- The utilization of this information gives the participants power to bring the companies to embrace the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching more completely.
- The greater the number of participants, the greater will be their ability to effect change. The CSJG in each church or college, working with the participants in that church or college, will therefore seek the involvement of as many nearby churches and colleges as possible as

well as non-church people — friends, relatives, neighbors, business associates, civic associations, environmental organizations, etc.

- Some of the companies are retailers only. Participants will be encouraged to purchase directly from these retailers.
- Other companies are wholesalers. The CSJGs and the Coalition will work together to create a vehicle whereby the participants purchase the products of these wholesalers through that vehicle and pay a fair retail price. The difference between the wholesale price and the retail price will be used to start up democratically-run, worker-owned cooperatives that operate according to Christian principles. Some of these cooperatives will engage in manufacturing, some in selling and some in providing services.
- Useful information and guidance in regard to the startup and operation of worker-owned cooperatives is available from the Ohio Employee Ownership Center at Kent State University, from the Website of the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation (MCC) in Spain and from existing worker-owned cooperatives. Visits to each of these is encouraged.
- The MCC is a worker-owned cooperative started in 1956 by a Spanish priest. Lessons of Mondragon's Employee-owned Network by Karen Thomas: "Growing from one small employee-owned business in 1956 with five

workers, today the complex includes firms engaged in automotive components, domestic appliances, machine tools, industrial components, engineering, construction and retail distribution, with a workforce of 42,000 worldwide and over \$6.3 billion in annual sales. MCC members each hold one member share in the corporation they own, have direct authority for governance of their employing firm on a one-person, one-vote basis and elect representatives to a Cooperative Congress that has final authority at the corporate level of the MCC on policies governing all the member firms and their associated organizations. Employment and wealth creation for the community as a whole is their primary corporate mission. They are not successful because of their business drive or their ideas about sharing ownership but because they link both ideas. The Mondragon experience demonstrates that democratically-governed businesses are high-performance businesses, that capitalism combined with community responsibility creates real prosperity for a region and that successful economic development is all about grassroots efforts that involve interlinked, locally based research, education and financial partnerships." Another source of information about Mondragon and similar efforts is "From Mondragon to America:

Experiments in Community Economic Development" by Father Gregory MacLeod, Canada's leading authority in the field of sustainable community economic development.

- Some of these cooperatives will be started from scratch and others from existing companies that are going out of business, where the workers choose to stay in business by reshaping the company as a worker-owned cooperative. Such job creation is an integral part of this effort in view of the fact that over one-third of the American workforce is either unemployed or underemployed (insufficient income to obtain the basic necessities of life), and that number is steadily growing, primarily as a result of corporate activities such as outsourcing jobs to the Third World, weakening Organized Labor, enacting legislation that transfers wealth from the lower 90% of the population to the upper one percent and by automation that discards workers with no regard for their welfare.

For a Better World,
John Conner

For more information, contact:

Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice
HCR 83 Box 881
Shade Gap PA 17255
814-259-3372
grassroots1@pa.net.

Sleeper Anti-War Film Raises Disturbing Questions

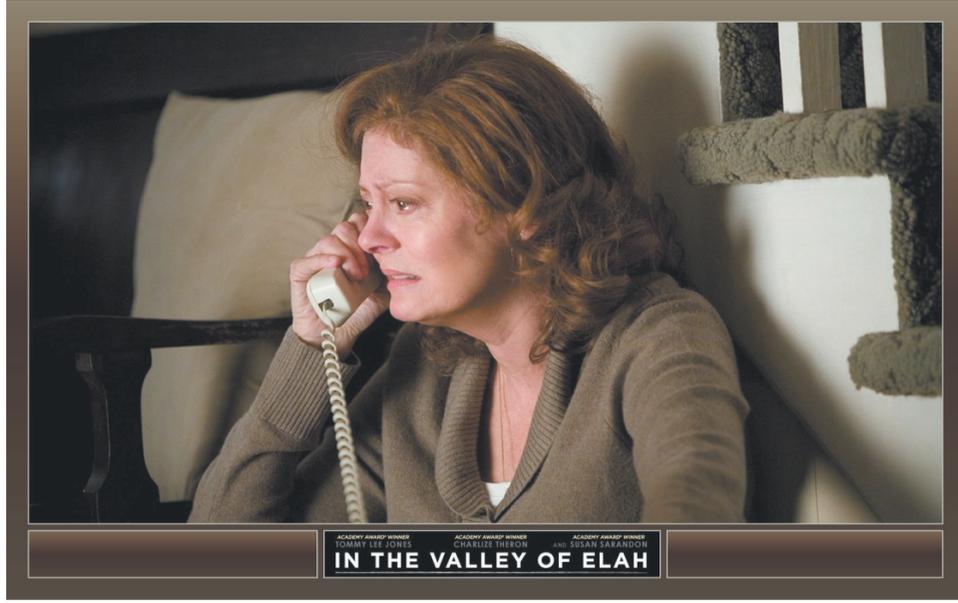
In the Valley of Elah: A Family Nightmare

By Karen Bankes
Orbisonia, Pennsylvania

"In the Valley of Elah," a 2007 movie directed by Paul Haggis, was less than successful by box office standards because it earned less than seven million dollars. However, Tommy Lee Jones' starring role was nominated for an Oscar in the best male actor category and the film won rave reviews from critics. It is an anti-war movie in the genre of "The Deer Hunter" but, unlike the earlier film, was released while the war with which it deals is still being waged and the country is once again torn in its support of "the cause." This fact alone could account for the film's rather cool reception from U.S. movie-goers.

The film also shines a light on parts of the Iraq War that the U.S. public would rather not think about: abuse of prisoners and how extremely traumatized and damaged many of our young soldiers are — another factor in its less-than-stellar performance in theaters.

The film, inspired by a 2004 Playboy article titled "Death and Dishonor" by journalist Mark Boal, is based on true events Boal investigated while researching post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Iraq veterans. Tommy Lee Jones plays Hank



Deerfield, a retired war veteran with 20 years of military service, who is investigating the disappearance of the younger of his two sons (a recently returned Iraq War vet) from a military base. One of the main plot lines is an above-average police-procedural mystery as Deerfield, whose oldest son had already died fighting in Iraq, becomes involved with both the military investigation of the disappearance and a local police investigation spurred by an unrelenting police officer, played by Charlize Theron, who is determined to discover the truth.

The deeper into the disappearance they dig, the more dis-

turbing their discoveries — and the more difficulty Deerfield has processing the information he learns about his son. Only an actor of Jones' caliber could so successfully portray the pain of a man questioning his own beliefs and finding them empty.

In the course of the investigations, several intertwining subplots convey the anti-war message and raise disturbing questions on many levels. One issue concerns the nature of patriotism. Is true patriotism raising our sons to wage war at our nation's request, no questions asked, as Hank Deerfield did? Having lost one son to the Iraq War, he not only encouraged his younger son to

enlist but refused the boy's plea to "get me out of here" made during a phone call from Iraq early in his tour of duty. Among the most memorable scenes in the movie is Deerfield's wife (played by Susan Sarandon) in a brief but powerful appearance, crying into the phone, "You couldn't leave me one; you couldn't leave me just one of my boys!" I am sure that this lament echoes those of many, many mothers around the globe and throughout history as their sons and daughters fall on the bloody fields of war.

Another issue concerns the often invisible costs of war, the transformations our young soldiers undergo as they learn to

dehumanize "the enemy" and, in turn, become dehumanized themselves. The true nature of such transformations and the PTSD that feeds them is clearly shown as the mystery of the young soldier's disappearance is solved.

Part of the crime investigation involves recovering photos that Deerfield's missing son had taken with his cell phone while serving in Iraq; many of these recovered pictures show atrocities committed by U.S. troops against both Iraqi captives and Iraqi civilians. In a series of captivating scenes, the men who had served with and returned home with the missing soldier, many of whom were portrayed by actual Iraq War vets, reveal what really happened.

There is little more that I can say about this film without "spoiling" the plot for those of you who decide to view it. Regardless of your stance on the Iraq War, the movie is worth seeing simply for the performances given by Tommy Lee Jones, Charlize Theron and Susan Sarandon.

"In the Valley of Elah" is currently playing on HBO and is available on DVD.

Karen Bankes is a 59-year-old anthropologist who lives in her native Huntingdon County in Central Pennsylvania and teaches as an adjunct professor periodically in the state university system. Her main interests are environmental sustainability, rural poverty in the U.S.,

Land of Curiosities: Old-Time Children's Odyssey

Adventures in Yellowstone 1871-1872

Review by Alisha Newsome
Toms River, New Jersey (11 years old)

First off, I thought this book by Deanna Neil was overall extremely entertaining and to prove that it is, it won the gold Moonbeam award for their first best book and a silver Moonbeam award for best pre-teen fiction (Intermediate/Middle grades). It won yet another award — a silver Benjamin Franklin Award for best first book.

The outstanding author, Deanna Neil, was selected as one out of eight "2008 Heroes for the Year" in the *Time Magazine for Kids*.

Two children (an adventurous boy named James and an animal-loving girl named Alice, his sister) go on an adventure to Yellowstone National Park and when they get there they discover some hidden secrets and realize the importance of taking care of the Earth.

The EcoSeekers are "an independent publishing house and eco-enterprise that connects kids (and adults) with nature and environmentalism through our original stories, products and community."

This is what it's about:

"In 1872, fictional kid characters create a group called The Eco-Seekers to protect the environment. The EcoSeekers evolve over time to include kids and adults supporters, real and fictional, throughout the world who seek to protect the environment." (Web site)

What I really love in this story is the boy, James. You can tell as you read on that he really opens up his mind to all of Earth's problems. At first, while he's still learning, he breaks off a piece of an interesting piece of a bee-hive-like structure when he learns from his friend, Tom, that it had taken thousands of years for that tiny piece to develop. James had been eager to sell it but he was sorry he didn't think of the value to the structure of the piece.

I think what Deanna is trying to say is, what you think is not such a big deal, even just a tiny part of it soon it would be gone and there would be no magnificent structure for anyone else to see, just because of all of

those people's greed.

The young people tore off pieces of a shirt to make wristbands for themselves and unite in a pledge to protect what they loved.

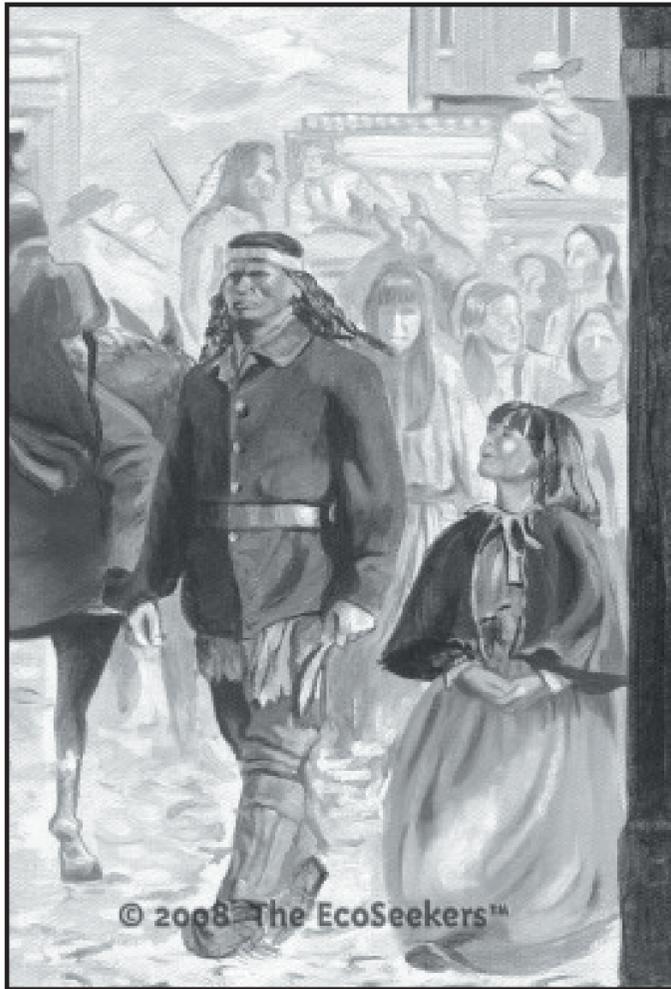


Illustration by David Erickson

Alice seeks safety with an Indian to avoid being pelted with snowballs by her brother. "Alice was walking along with them as if she were part of the tribe."

Here is James's pledge:

"I swear that I will protect you, my friends and my family, from danger. I swear that I will do whatever I can to make things better for people through my actions. I will never make the mistake of wronging someone weaker than me ever again."

Then James's sister, Alice, and his friend, Tom, made their pledges.

"James felt that this moment was the beginning of something important, something meaningful. He knew this pledge meant they were seeking something beyond themselves, a higher code of conduct that would impact their lives and maybe even the lives of others. He was no longer that lonesome tumbleweed drifting out alone. His best friend and his sister were there with him, and he even felt like all the trees around him and all the animals were there with him, too. He felt connected to something greater."

A word from Deanna Neil: "Our stories and characters seek to inspire kids (and adults) to become part of the EcoSeekers community — a network of loosely affiliated individuals who have taken The Pledge and made a personal commitment to help the environment. Through The EcoSeekers market place, kids and adults are further connected to our stories, while being introduced to eco-friendly products and other ways to be responsible consumers."

Here is the Environmental Commitment from the Web site: "We are committed to finding practical, eco-responsible solutions to fulfill our mission. All books are printed on at least 30%-50% post-consumer, chlorine- and acid-free, recycled paper using vegetable-based ink."

The EcoSeekers Book Collection consists of historical fiction adventure stories about public lands and defining events and themes in the history of environmentalism, as told through the experiences of courageous, young fictional characters. We think of our characters as historical guides, providing kids (and adults) with a framework to better understand and appreciate nature and environmentalism — but in a fun way.

Each book includes a 'real history' section with facts and photos. The second book in the series will be released on Earth Day 2009, April 22.

Lights-Out Contest Winner Marion Stuenkel, Madison WI Free One-Half-Year Subscription

The Question Was: What can you do in the dark (or semi-dark, i.e. not using lights) to prevent mountains in West Virginia from being blown up for coal?

Her Answer Was: Think, talk on the phone, talk to company, get dressed (is this why my mom always wanted me to lay out my clothes for the next day?), perform most bodily functions.

Earth Hour: Call for Climate Action Lights Out Around the World March 28

Poznan, Poland (December 10 Climate Summit) — Dozens of events around the world today marked the launch of the campaign for Earth Hour 2009, a global climate event for which 74 cities in 62 countries have already committed to switch off their lights at 8:30 p.m. on March 28.

Earth Hour aims to have more than one billion people in 1,000 cities turn off lights for one hour in a graphic demonstration of support for determined international action on climate change.

Earth Hour is intended to bring together a diverse group of community, municipal, corporate and nongovernmental organizations to heighten awareness about climate change and to inspire consumers and businesses to take practical actions to reduce their own carbon footprints. Cities around the world will join together in literally turning off the lights for one hour to offer leadership and symbolize their commitment to finding climate change solutions. Lights will be turned off at iconic buildings and national landmarks from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Local businesses and restaurants will also be asked to turn off their lights.



Photo by Iona

Mike Goss of Weatherization, Inc. (a non-profit) gets the back door ready for a whole-house tightness test. He spent a couple of hours taking measurements of the house and windows and evaluating appliances.

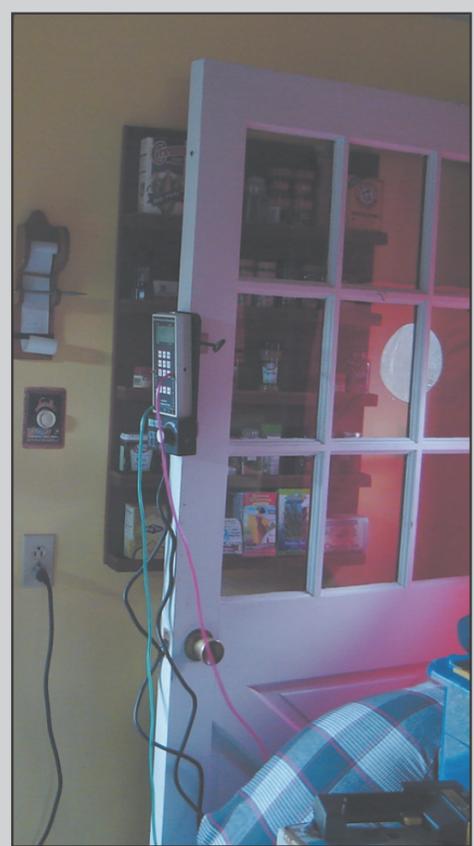


Photo by Iona

The back door is wired for the suction test. The gauge on the left will measure how much seepage there is in the house. Before doing this test, Mike hooked up both our refrigerator and little freezer in the garage for an hour. They were fine. If they had turned out to be energy-guzzlers, we would have gotten free new appliances.

Weatherization Team Goes to Work at 'OE' Home

By Iona
Shade Gap, Pennsylvania

Our low income qualified us for free weatherization services so here are a few pictures of what some of the early work looked like.

Embarrassingly enough, despite all our efforts, our home ranked as a high-energy user.

The fact that all of our inexpensive efforts at energy efficiency (very low heat, lights off, no dryer, no air conditioner, etc.) still put us in the "high energy use" category, meant that we were put at the top of the list for free work. Otherwise, there would have been about a year's wait.

Mike Goss of the non-profit Weatherization, Inc. here in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania was the first to come and do an evaluation. The photos and captions "show and tell" what he did during his all-morning visit.

I just called Mike to see what would happen next. We are going to get more insulation in our attic as well as two vents; both downstairs doors will be weather-stripped and swept (I forgot to ask what that is and hope it doesn't mean they noticed the dust); they will replace three thermostats with newer models that have an "Off" selection rather than just "Low" and they will replace the basement heater which goes on and off sporadically with no rhyme or reason and which we cannot shut off. The thermostat must be broken.

Even though we don't own a dryer (and never will) I never got around to plugging up the exit hole for the vent, so they will take care of that. An amazing amount of cold air was coming in there.

Once the work is done, they will perform another blower test to see if there's a difference. We surely hope there will be!



Photo by Iona

Mike is packing up the equipment after having the fan pull air through the house. His reading indicated that there weren't too many leaks. The entire inspection, including paperwork, took about three hours. He was to review our needs with his supervisor. The box on the counter contained (among other things) compact fluorescent light bulbs, which he would have given us if we didn't already have them.



Photo by Iona

As of press time, we had had a furnace cleaning/check-up by Tim Snyder, of Eichelberger Heating and Air Conditioning. A-OK! When asked whether it made sense to rely on space heaters in our offices while leaving the furnace turned off during the day so we don't heat the whole house, he replied that electric heat is 100% efficient whatever form it comes in.

Using Energy to Save Energy

By Matthew L. Wald
The New York Times

MARRIOTTSTVILLE, Maryland, December 30 (excerpt) — In the basement of Phyllis Fick's ordinary-looking suburban house, Tim Kenny of C&O Conservation, a nonprofit weatherization company, found black streaks of dirt on the yellow fiberglass insulation, evidence of air infiltration from the window beneath, a sure sign of an energy leak.

Nearby on the basement ceiling, a drain-pipe from the bathroom above had spider webs around it, another bad sign. Spiders build near air currents to draw insects to their webs, Mr. Kenny, C&O's manager, said, and the current probably ran from the basement to the attic, taking heated air with it.

But the "Aha!" moment for the C&O team belonged to Brian Kinzer, who put a ladder on the front porch and pulled down the vinyl covering of the underside of the roof overhang. Instead of plywood, he was staring at the bright metal of a heating duct that curved up to the second-floor bedroom of Mrs. Fick's 18-year-old daughter. The duct had been unprotected from the outdoor temperature since the house was built about 30 years ago.

"Look at this!" Mr. Kinzer said in triumph.

Call it CSI: Thermal Police — energy experts armed with mostly low-tech tools but strong sleuthing skills, finding flaws that let the air inside a house go through a full exchange with the outdoors twice an hour, instead of once every two or three hours.

Correct those flaws, and heating and cooling costs are typically cut by 20 percent to 30 percent, a saving of more than \$1,000 annually in some households. In addition, carbon dioxide emissions and the strain on the national electric and gas systems are reduced

Mandatory Energy Audits

By Dawn Killough
Green Building Elements.com

Governor Ted Kulongoski of Oregon is proposing a program that would require all buildings sold in the state to be tested and rated for energy efficiency. The plan would take effect in 2011 for houses and 2012 for commercial buildings.

"With escalating energy prices, a homeowner or small business person has a right to know the energy performance of a home or building they invest in," reads the bill provided by the governor's office. This quote points out the positive aspects of such a program. It would provide incentives for new buildings to be built more efficiently, as they would qualify for special funding programs and would be more attractive to potential buyers.

There are some problems with the plan, however.

Older homes and buildings, which abound in Portland, would be rated lower than buildings built with new technologies and materials. The good news is, many of these homes and buildings could be updated with windows and additional insulation and would have greatly improved efficiency numbers. This puts an additional burden on the seller, possibly, unless the buyer was willing to look past the less efficient building and purchase it for its historical character or some other reason



Monsanto Menace

Destruction of Seed Cleaners Threatens Human Access to Seeds

By Linn Cohen-Cole
www.opednews.com, Part I

I have been reporting on the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's raids on Mennonite dairy farmers, on the recent Ohio Department of Agriculture SWAT team raid on an organic co-op, on the USDA's terrible weapon against all farmers with animals (NAIS, the National Animal Identification System) — trying to give an idea of the destructive forces being used intentionally against non-corporate farming.

But unless one sees what is happening to seeds themselves, one misses the scope of things.

Life itself depends on seeds.

Multinational biotech corporations such as Monsanto have been genetically engineering (GE) them, promoting GE-seeds as producing better yields, helping the starving of the world, using less pesticide and as a boon to small farmers.

Independent studies already show crop failures and a link between GE-crops and organ damage and various diseases. It's clear they are designed to require petroleum-based pesticides and the use of pesticides has gone up with their use.

But even if the GE-seeds were wonderful and all that was promised, the real problem with them is the patents they come with. The biotech companies are monopolizing seeds themselves, actually privatizing the DNA of life.

They sell the GE-seeds at many times the price of normal seeds. In India, where Bt-cotton (*Ed.: genetically engineered*) farmers have been committing suicide in huge numbers because of debt, Monsanto sells Bt-cotton seed at 1000% higher than normal seeds.

And the seeds come with a contract that must be signed, preventing farmers from collecting seeds off their own land at the end of the season — an historic rupture of humankind's free access to natural growth. For it is important to notice that the biotech multinationals are not just claiming a patent on their process of altering the seeds but claim to own growth itself.

As astounding a move as that is on human resources of survival, they are doing more. They are actively, aggressively and thoroughly removing access to normal "open pollinated" seeds, the ones we have known since the beginning of time, that farmers have collected and saved and shared among each other.

In the Midwest, where Monsanto sells GE-corn and GE-soy and now owns most of the market, it also bought up the "normal seed" companies so farmers no longer have places to go for normal corn or soy. And though GE-corn cross-pollinates over miles and miles with normal corn so maintaining organic corn is nearly impossible now, if a GE-crop is found on a farmer's land, Monsanto sues. It's a rare farmer who can stand up to them, even if the farmer has done nothing wrong.

Having bought up the normal seed companies, having locked farmers in the Midwest (only an example, it is true worldwide) into patent contracts that remove their right to collect seeds anymore, having set loose a biotechnology that contaminates normal seeds of farmers who do not buy into the patented seeds, having made plain it will sue if even a volunteer plant comes up, Monsanto is now working to eliminate the last man standing between humans and corporate privatized seeds — the seed cleaner.

The farmer has three choices — to buy normal seed (now almost gone), to buy GE-seeds at huge cost (and going up) or to collect their own seeds and use them the next season.

If a farmer has even 10 acres, collecting and cleaning those seeds is a huge task. If (s) he has 1,000 it would be an impossible task without the seed cleaner whose equipment can separate out seed in just a few hours and whose costs are one-third that of buying normal seed.

Thus, the move to eliminate seed cleaners. The seed cleaner is the man who makes sustainable agriculture possible.

So, Monsanto (*Ed.: owned by Dupont*) is picking off seed cleaners now across the Midwest, in Missouri, in Indiana and now in Illi-

nois where they are going after Steve Hixon.

Shortly after someone broke into Mr. Hixon's office and he found his account book on his truck seat where he would never have left it, every one of his remotely-located and very-scattered customers had three men (described as goons with "no necks") arrive at each farm. Mr. Hixon and state police who were called in, believe a GPS tracking device may have been put on Mr. Hixon's equipment.

All of his customers are being sued and are being intensely pressured to settle, with the men coming back again and again and with daily calls and letters. It appears they are being given a choice between being sued or settling out of court or testifying against him that he encouraged them to clean GE-seeds.

The first words out of the judge's mouth when Moe Parr, a seed cleaner in Indiana was sued, were, "It's an honor to have a fine company like Monsanto in my courtroom."

In addition to the personal attacks on seed cleaners, Monsanto is getting laws put into place that themselves are overwhelming and destructive of seed cleaners and all those who save normal seeds.

If Monsanto can eliminate seed cleaners, they will have accomplished a TOTAL monopoly in the Midwest, the bread basket of the world, and they would control world food, feed and now bio-fuel prices at will. They would, as well, have broken the fragile dam that seed cleaners and seed bankers now provide against the insanely-fast, and just plain insane, oncoming tide of genetic engineering.

And Monsanto is working closely with the FDA in redefining seeds as a potential health hazard, subject to bioterrorism and, under that rubric, to create rules for importation (controlling access) rules for registering acceptable facilities (setting up corporate standards for the storage of seeds, threatening small farmers), rules for taking police control of the seeds (allowing for raids on farmers) and rules for a level of record keeping almost impossible for small farmers and ordinary people to achieve. "These new rules will allow FDA to better identify potentially dangerous foods, as well as respond more quickly to new threats and to handle food-borne illness outbreaks more efficiently."

Using the bioterrorism Act and the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN), the FDA now has a focus which includes:

- Prevention (federal and state surveillance sampling programs to monitor food supply),
- Preparedness (strengthen lab capability),
- Response (surge capacity to handle terrorist attacks or national food emergencies),
- Recovery (support recalls, seizures and disposal of contaminated foods or feed) . . .

Linn Cohen-Cole says, "I'm a mother and grandmother. There is no way I can leave my family or anyone else's children, things as they are now. Reprinted with permission.

To be Continued . . .

Reasons To Go Vegetarian

By Bruce Friedrich
AlterNet.org

Gone are the days when vegetarians were served up a plate of iceberg lettuce and a dull-as-dishwater baked potato. With the growing variety of vegetarian faux-meats like bacon and sausages and an ever-expanding variety of vegetarian cookbooks and restaurants, vegetarianism has taken the world by storm.

With World Vegetarian Week in May, without further ado, here are the Top 10 reasons to give vegetarian eating a try, starting now!

1. Helping Animals Also Helps the Global Poor: While there is ample and justified moral indignation about the diversion of 100 million tons of grain for biofuels, more than seven times as much (760 million tons) is fed to farmed animals so that people can eat meat. Is the diversion of crops to our cars a moral issue? Yes, but it's about one-eighth the issue that meat-eating is. Care about global poverty? Try vegetarianism.

2. Eating Meat Supports Cruelty to Animals: The green pastures and idyllic barnyard scenes of years past are now distant memories. On today's factory farms, animals are crammed by the thousands into filthy windowless sheds, wire cages, gestation crates and other confinement systems. These animals will never raise families, root in the soil, build nests or do anything else that is natural and important to them. They won't even get to feel the warmth of the sun on their backs or breathe fresh air until the day they are loaded onto trucks bound for slaughter.

3. Eating Meat Is Bad for the Environment: A recent United Nations report entitled "Livestock's Long Shadow" concludes that eating meat is "one of the . . . most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global." In just one example, eating meat causes almost 40 percent more greenhouse-gas emissions than all the cars, trucks, and planes in the world combined. The report concludes that the meat industry "should be a major policy focus when dealing with problems of land degradation, climate change and air pollution, water shortage and water pollution and loss of biodiversity."

4. Avoid Bird Flu: The World Health Organization says that if the avian flu virus mutates, it could be caught simply by eating under-cooked chicken flesh or eggs, eating food prepared on the same cutting board as infected meat or eggs or even touching eggshells contaminated with the disease. Other problems with factory farming — from foot-and-mouth to SARS — can be avoided with a general shift to a vegetarian diet.

5. If You Wouldn't Eat a Dog, You Should Not Eat a Chicken: Several recent studies have shown that chickens are bright animals who are able to solve complex problems, demonstrate self-control and worry about the future. Chickens are smarter than cats and dogs and even do some things that have not yet been seen in mammals other than primates. Dr. Chris Evans, who studies animal behavior and communication at Macquarie University in Australia, says, "As a trick at conferences, I sometimes list these attributes, without mentioning chickens and people think I'm talking about monkeys."

6. Heart Disease — Our Number One Killer: Healthy vegetarian diets support a lifetime of good health and provide protection against numerous diseases, including the United States' three biggest killers: heart disease, cancer and strokes. Drs. Dean Ornish and Caldwell Esselstyn — two doctors with 100 percent success in preventing and reversing heart disease — have used a vegan diet to accomplish it, as chronicled most recently in Dr. Esselstyn's *Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease*, which documents his 100 percent success rate for unclogging people's arteries and reversing heart disease.

7. Cancer — Our Number Two Killer: Dr. T. Colin Campbell is one of the world's foremost epidemiological scientists and the director of what *The New York Times* called "the most comprehensive large study ever undertaken of the relationship between diet and the risk of developing disease." Dr. Campbell's best-selling book, *The China Study*, is a must-read for anyone who is concerned about cancer. To summarize it, Dr. Campbell states, "No chemical carcinogen is nearly so important in causing human cancer as animal protein."

8. Fitting Into That Itty-Bitty Bikini: Vegetarianism is also the ultimate weight-loss diet, since vegetarians are one-third as likely to be obese as meat-eaters are and vegans are about one-tenth as likely to be obese. Of course, there are overweight vegans, just as there are skinny meat-eaters. But on average, vegans are 10 to 20 percent lighter than meat-eaters. A vegetarian diet is the only diet that has passed peer review and taken weight off and kept it off.

9. Global Peace: Leo Tolstoy claimed that "vegetarianism is the taproot of humanitarianism." His point? For people who wish to sow the seeds of peace, we should be eating as peaceful a diet as possible. Eating meat supports killing animals, for no reason other than humans' acquired taste for animals' flesh.

Great humanitarians from Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi to Thich Nhat Hanh have argued that a vegetarian diet is the only diet for people who want to make the world a kinder place.

10. The Joy of Veggies: As the growing range of vegetarian cookbooks and restaurants shows, vegetarian foods rock. People report that when they adopt a vegetarian diet, their range of foods explodes from a center-of-the-plate meat item to a range of grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables that they didn't even know existed.

Sir Paul McCartney sums it all up, "If anyone wants to save the planet, all they have to do is just stop eating meat. That's the single most important thing you could do. It's staggering when you think about it. Vegetarianism takes care of so many things in one shot: ecology, famine, cruelty."

So are you ready to give it a try? Check out VegCooking.com for recipes and meal plans and to take the World Vegetarian Week 7-Day Pledge.

Reprinted with permission.

Valerie Stanley will be back next month.

HELP US EARN
EXTRA DOLLARS
BY USING



SEARCH ENGINE
DESIGNATE GRASSROOTS
COALITION FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL
AND ECONOMIC
JUSTICE AS THE RECIPIENT.

"THE ORDER OF THE EARTH" WILL
GET THE \$\$\$\$\$\$ EARNED
COLLECTIVELY BY
OUR FRIENDS WHO DO THIS.

SIGN UP AT:
WWW.GOODSEARCH.COM

"The Order" is for sale in Pennsylvania at:

- Alternative Choices Green Castle
- Appleby's Drug Store Mount Union
- Dott's Store, Dott
- Gap Mini-Mart Shade Gap
- Thee Store, Shade Gap
- Miller's Diner Mill Creek
- Neelyton Post Office
- Sandy Ridge Market Orbisonia
- Webster's Bookstore State College

And in New York at:

- 60 Main Coffee Shop New Patz
- Magnolia's Cafe Patterson

And in Maryland at:

- Green Earth Goods Clarksburg

Two Approaches to Saving Trees

Direct Action: A Cracking Sound

By Cathy Pedler
Erie, Pennsylvania

"Usually there is a cracking sound," said the boy whose middle-school class had decided to focus on the controversy of timbering Millcreek Township's Scott Park and Zuck Park. He said this in response to a township supervisor who was expressing his opinion that many of the trees in the park were dangerous and may fall on people. "You can just move out of the way if they start to fall," the boy explained.

The regional foresters for the county and the northwestern region of Pennsylvania were also present at the "town hall meeting" the students had organized as part of their Earth Force science project. The foresters had been directed by their agencies to encourage "sustainable" forestry in urban areas, including in parks.

Although the responsible maintenance of trees in public areas by arborists is a desirable thing, often extending the life of a mature tree for years, this particular initiative by regional forestry agencies involved the taking of mature, healthy trees to pay for park maintenance.

Zuck Park

Zuck Park was to be the first victim of the "sustainable" forestry plan. Zuck is a small park tucked in the armpit of two roads (or alternatively, Zuck Park is the remnant of a beautiful mature woods that, with the exception of this small parcel, has been tortured into houses, lawns and parking lots). It has a playground and a pavilion.

It had large, magnificent red oak and cherry trees. At the time, my friend Lucas McConnell and I were leading the Erie County Environmental Coalition (ECEC). Lucas turned the threat to the park into an opportunity. He decided to create a new model for park maintenance and protection by preparing an alternative to the timber bids, pulling together a tree service company, a horse logger and community activists who would donate services to remove only those trees or tree limbs which were dead or dying in or near the park's playground and pavilion.

The regional foresters, acting under the direction of their agencies, did not support our alternative plan. The park was timbered. Many of the purported goals of the sale were not met. The public areas were not made safer — the trees close to the public areas were not pruned or otherwise maintained.

I went to Zuck Park when the loggers were taking the trees. I just happened to get there when a huge cherry tree, the largest in the park, was being felled. After the chainsaw buzzed through its base, I heard the cracking sound the boy described in the "town hall meeting."

I felt the deep, ground-shaking thud when the cherry tree hit the earth.

Scott Park

After we lost at Zuck Park, the action at Scott Park took a different spin. Still seeing opportunity in crisis, we created the ECEC Direct Action Crew. Every Saturday, Lucas inspired volunteers from the Presque Isle Audubon Society, the Boy Scouts, kids from juvenile diversion programs, dog walkers, biology classes, college students from service learning programs and friends and family to clean-up the park and hand-pull invasive honey-

suckle plants from the undergrowth.

The strategy at Scott Park was to promote an alternative timber plan if needed, but to also be on the ground, in the park, building a network of people who would become connected to the place and willing to maintain and protect it.

Our friend Emily Vaughn created a logo and we made t-shirts for all the volunteers. The media attention from the controversial timbering at Zuck Park and the growing interest in protecting Scott Park by many sectors of the community helped to postpone the execution of the timber plan for Scott Park.

Scott Park is an amazing place. It is the only National Historic Register District (for pre-European sites) in Pennsylvania. People have lived with the land that is now Scott Park for 8,000 years. It is also home to a federally-recognized wetland. A 400-year-old stand of hardwoods covers a portion of the park overlooking Presque Isle Bay. Great-Horned Owls nest there. Bald Eagles visiting from their home at nearby Presque Isle rest from fishing in the bay on the giant trees of the bluff. Many varieties of edible and medicinal plants grow in the park. People picnic there, ride bikes, play baseball, meditate, bird-watch and connect with a landscape which must, once again, dominate this part of our earth.

For 8,000 years a portion of Scott Park has been allowed to exist, not without interaction from humans, but without that relationship being defined by the term "resource." I've been able to share the park with friends like Reg (see page 8) and Terry (see page 5) Darling and Walt Atwood, who live in Warren, Pennsylvania near the Allegheny National Forest (ANF).

Reg declared on a recent visit to Scott Park that he had never seen a woodland stand in the ANF comparable to what still exists in Scott Park. (This is not surprising given the criminal rape of the land that is now the ANF.)

For a very brief moment (considering the scale of time humans have been part of its landscape) there is a reprieve for Scott Park.

Cathy Pedler is the coordinator of the Erie, PA-based Gaia Defense League.

Logos drawn by graphic artist Emily Vaughn, who lives in Northwest Pennsylvania. The Erie County Environmental Coalition had t-shirts made for all the volunteers who worked to save the woods using her artwork. Success was due to teamwork.



Photo by Terry Darling

Scott Park where local activists worked together to save the trees from "sustainable" logging.



Photo by Cathy Pedler

Old, old beech at Zuck Park marked for death.

Woodman, Spare That Tree!

Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth, it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now!
My heart-strings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild-bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.
Old tree! the storms still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot:
While I've a hand to save,
Thy axe shall harm it not.

From Woodman, Spare That Tree! by George Pope Morris

Showing Up at Public Meetings

Ideas for Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Comments for the Ag/Forestry Subcommittee of PA's Carbon Advisory Group
January 8, 2009

By Iona Conner
Shade Gap, Pennsylvania

Strategy Name: AFW-1. Agriculture — Production of Energy and Materials
1.1: Use straw or other grass pellets instead of wood from public land to heat schools
1.5: Increase incentives to deconstruct existing buildings and reuse valuable building materials; make the sale of such materials attractive by developing mechanisms for the government to have rights of first refusal when such buildings or

materials go up for sale to ensure potential buyers for this labor-intensive work.

AFW-3. Agriculture — Crop Production
3.1 All streams should have 300-foot buffers on each side. There is absolutely nothing more precious than water and to allow streams and rivers to be degraded by development and farming is criminal. New Jersey passed a law mandating 300-foot buffers on BOTH sides of Class A streams. So why aren't ALL streams as valuable? They would be if we protected them! Remove forest roads to restore natural water flow and protect streams. This reduces maintenance costs.

AFW-4. Agriculture—Land-Use Change
4.2: Stop all oil and gas drilling on public lands.

AFW-6. Forestry — Production of Energy and Materials
Forests are highly-ordered arrangements of living organisms living in, on and near all of the ecological stages of trees in such a highly-ordered fashion that it assures high-quality survival for all members. Managing forests out of the ignorance of tree biology is a worldwide problem e.g., the components that get addressed in

managing the Allegheny National Forest are limited to a single stand or group of trees under one or more ownerships. Such things as fungi diversity are not addressed. All trees of a forest that are not connected by woody root grafts are connected by fungi connections.

Anything besides a group of trees is not considered in the cutting out of the wood of the once-fertile forest. Fungi are the base of the food web and the wood (cellulose mostly) is the substrate for the base of the food web. These concepts must be taught — and taught well — to all people who work in forests.

The whole state educational system must be overhauled to provide this type of fundamental knowledge to people who have the potential to permanently destroy our forests, either by allowing the forests to be logged (read: state forestry officials) or by loggers themselves (this needs to be included in certification programs).

I believe that protecting forest ecosystems is the most important thing anyone can do to counteract climate change, bar none.

Mitigation

In Los Angeles, California, Sempervirens Fund, named for the species it protects, Sequoia sempervirens (redwoods), recently sold its first greenhouse gas emissions reductions for preserving the 425-acre Lompico Headwaters forest. The local utility, Pacific Gas & Electric, bought 14,000 metric tons of emissions reductions for their ClimateSmart program. "This is the first carbon sale that does not involve logging; we are strictly about preservation," said Laura McLendon, land conservation manager for the fund. "We don't want to see these trees cut down again; we want to see them return to old-growth status. Some of these are baby trees, only 80 to 100 years old. They have a lot of growing to do!"

Protected forests have a clear role in cleaning the air of carbon dioxide, a process called carbon sequestration. Trees and vegetation remove CO₂ during photosynthesis and store carbon in leaves, branches, bark, roots and soils. The car-

(Continued on next page)

Letters to the Editor

Hi Iona,
I just wanted to tell you that I loved January's paper!
When I read Reg Darling's "Rattlesnakes & Hope" story, I really related to it.

Where I live, a summer doesn't go by unless I've heard a story of someone taking a shovel to a black snake, fearing it will harm them (if only they took the time to know). And, for me, it's not always snakes that I find are harmed.

To this day, I still hear conversations of drowning kittens to get rid of the unwanted litter when that used to be something that people did when I was little. And, the presence of an owl, for many, is considered bad luck; if only I could count the times I still hear "if an owl comes hooting around here, I hope someone shoots it."

This past year, when I couldn't contain my tongue after hearing (yes, my ears are always open) a woman tell another woman about the bat that got into her house. This woman told the other woman that she knocked the bat to the ground, scooped it into a paper bag and, while it struggled to get out, she stepped on the bag several times to kill it. "Oh, I just hate bats," she told the woman.

I told her, "You didn't have to do that. Why didn't you just open all the windows," which only got me a cocky reply of "I wasn't talking to you" and rolled eyes. I wanted to also tell her that it is just a learned behavior that makes her fear bats.

This fall, I was never so angry and saddened when someone told me that they have a neighbor who had caught two skunks that came onto their porch (on separate days) in a trap and later took both living skunks down to the river in a sack and drowned them. I have no idea what was so hard about calling the game commission to take the animals safely to the forest to let them go.

I know that this summer, many people will immediately reach for the 30% larger can of bee pesticide killer and hose down a buzzing family and their wearisomely-built house before calling a local bee keeper, who would probably take the bees free of charge.

I totally understand Reg Darling's frustration when it comes to creatures that are sometimes not understood.

And like him, I have hope for a changed tomorrow.

Lisa Scherer
Marianna, Pennsylvania

Iona,
As for your question, "What is the right way to live," I have an answer: Strip down to very simple clothes and start walking north until you and your mate are all alone, create a shelter, live to not exceed the limits of your surroundings and what is provided for you in terms of food and the number of children you produce and be content to die with no more accumulated

wealth than that which you were born with.

The problem is that we can't do it.

We are part of a "culture" that is so all-consuming that living right is really not possible; because we exist in this culture — even if we want with all our heart and soul to change it to be more sensitive and "sustainable," we are actively participating in the "wrong way to live." As well intended as we may be, our principled little stands, which we pick and choose mostly out of convenience (we still use synthetics, man-made power and in varying degrees enjoy the conveniences of our technocratic world), we are in no way slowing, much less preventing, the apocalyptic train wreck that our culture is, by its very nature, bringing upon the world.

I suggest reading the Ringing Cedars Series (www.ringingcedars.com) for a really compelling paradigm shift (I am on book 7 of 9). If you want to really take a logical exploration of who and what we are in relation to the planet and the universe and how we have been at war with the natural order since the dawn of the agricultural revolution, check out the fiction book *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn (probably available at your local used book store. see page 22 of the November *The Idaho Observer*).

Between the two, we can see that "priestly" forces have been working relentlessly for millennia to marginalize humans' innate capacity as co-creators with God (or whatever you want to call the architect of the universe) and, in the process, have set us on a path to continue expanding our populations by increasing the food supply until we wipe ourselves out.

There is, I think, a way to be Man, maintain our legitimate place as the most advanced critter atop Creation and live in balance with the natural order, but it will take a huge shift in consciousness and will require a complete reinvention of ourselves and how we perceive priorities, the world around us and community constructs.

Good luck and congrats on more people coming onboard. I truly think that our mission is to attract people to thinking and living differently, rejecting the model we have been born into in hopes that when our current system ultimately and inevitably fails, a new and more sustainable model will arise from the ashes.

No matter what,
Don Harkins, Editor
The Idaho Observer

Dear Iona in the Universe,
I read The Economist this morning (January 3). There was a special report on the sea. It is very terrible to see that sea water has been acidified. And many species of marine life have been and will be disappearing.
Plastics floating in the ocean

are very dangerous. Many parts of the ocean surface are covered by ugly, used plastics.

Of course the temperature of the sea has been getting higher and higher. In the East sea of Korea, many species of tropical fish appeared. We have many signs and signals of danger of this planet but human beings do not pay attention until it is too late. Prevention is much better than sorry, I think.

You are the commander holding a banner to encourage people to fight this lonely war to save this planet. We have to fight until the last minute. You remind me of the soldiers of Waterloo. We have to hold the ground until we prevent the catastrophe of the planet. Now is the time for us to get united. A small candle can light up the whole house in the dark.

I am on guard duty for you.

Pyong Roh,
Daegu, Korea

Hi Iona,
I enjoyed your review of *World Made by Hand*. I don't even own a TV and I'm perfectly happy not watching it. I know there are subliminals coming out of it . . . and what I object to the most (for myself) is the news . . . it is so slanted and we are never given the whole story . . . in fact, I don't care to watch or hear any news because it's designed to keep people in fear and victim consciousness.

I'd rather know the truth (like what's in your paper) and what is going on within me.

Douglas Joshua Davis
Chagrin Fall, Ohio

Dear Iona,
Many thanks for printing the poem "a Labrador dance of" and also the caribou picture.

The caribou are becoming smaller because hunters kill the larger ones. They are trying to raise some larger ones separately here and introduce them into the herd. I hope they are successful.

The large herds around the Athabasca River in Alberta have had their migration and foraging lands harmed by the huge diggings in the tar sands for "oil" and the consequent pollution and lowering of the water levels in the river itself. Of course, human populations have also suffered, seeing higher cancer rates and other illnesses.

Sandy Chilcote
Newfoundland, Canada

Hi, Iona!
I enjoyed the article about Outdoor Babies. My daughter Cailyn is doing very well and just had her first birthday. This past summer we took her hiking with us in a backpack. She smiled and laughed the entire time so she seems to have a love for the outdoors already!

Scott Mahon, Erie Colorado

Bumper sticker seen in Huntingdon, PA. Photo by Iona



CLASSIFIEDS

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The Order of the Earth News needs help. We are growing and the costs are rising. There are many things people can do to shore up the creation of this newspaper.

Markets: We are trying to find places like alternative book stores or coffee shops to sell our paper which are sympathetic and won't take a huge cut from our new \$1 price. If you have an old copy, of OE, take it along to show them. Please get contact person's name and phone number so we can call them, then call Iona at 814-259-3680.

Permissions-Getter: Just a few minutes of your time is required to help us get permission to reprint articles and keep us out of trouble.

News Evaluator to help us decide what's common knowledge so we don't waste our precious space and can then focus on the unusual, the wonderful and the obscure.

Sell "OE" at Events: We are offering packages of newspapers below cost. You can either buy them and sell them to make a profit for yourself or your organization or you can just consider the money spent as a donation to the cause of Earth Protection and Education and give them away to others. Our goal has always been to get this type of news "on the streets."

REPORTS

In Harm's Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development. Released last year by Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility. Just one copy, very slightly marked. \$6 payable to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap PA 17255.

The Stolen Forests: A ten-page exposé of horrendous illegal logging practices and a sleuth who risks his life to uncover the truth about valuable, vanishing trees worldwide. Reprint from *The New Yorker* article reads like fiction. \$8 payable to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap PA 17255.

Harnessing the Wheel: A fascinating mix of intermediate technology vehicles has evolved to fit the transportation needs of Southeast Asians. Perhaps we can learn from them. 18-pages of fabulous bike ideas from around the world. \$10 to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap PA 17255.

PLACE YOUR OWN AD \$.25 PER WORD

REPORTS Continued

Wild on Wheels: Vintage Pedal Power Report featuring "12 Ways in Which My Bike is Better Than Your Car" (see bottom left). \$10 payable to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap PA 17255.

Earth Report on Cheap and Free Electricity: 28 pages of unique ideas for utilizing energy from the sun, air, wind and water. A great collection of clippings from the past. Why were these ideas ignored? \$10 payable to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap PA 17255.

Energy Answers - Heat Your Home and Save a Fortune: Vintage articles in a unique collection of ideas that have been squelched. 32 pages of fun and curiosity for the technically-minded. \$10 payable to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap PA 17255.

Energy Saved, Dollars Earned: Real-world examples of how energy efficiency can benefit Maryland consumers. Published by Maryland PIRG Foundation. \$5 payable to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap PA 17255.

Target Atmospheric CO₂: Where Should Humanity Aim? Dr. James Hansen's recent 18-page report shedding light on new, extremely low goals for carbon dioxide reduction. Very technical. Color charts. \$12 payable to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap PA 17255.

FOR SALE

The Great Silent Grandmother Gathering book by Sharon Mehdi. Like new. Value \$10.95. Now \$8 includes shipping. Send check to: The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap, PA 17255.

Leather-bound, gold-edged, beautiful copy of Thomas Paine's Common Sense and Rights of Man. \$15 includes shipping. Send check to: The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap, PA 17255.

The Day After Tomorrow DVD: Shown only twice. What if global heating were to cause another ice age? \$10 payable to The Order of the Earth, HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255.

Watching and Testifying at Public Meetings

(Continued from page 14)

bon sink provided by forests, grasslands, croplands and wetlands offsets 12.5% of annual greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. From this fact opportunities have arisen for land trusts that protect forests to address climate change through mitigation.

The Pacific Forest Trust in San Francisco is going gang-busters at promoting carbon sequestration in working forests in California, as well as at regional and national levels . . .

It took many years and a multi-state effort to get the Forest Protocols, which dictate how forests can be used to offset greenhouse gas emissions, established and into the regulatory economy. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted the nation's first standards for forest-generated carbon dioxide emissions reductions. A state framework is required to do this kind of work.

"CARB's ruling today means that our leaders have recognized the power of forests in our fight against climate change," said founder, Laurie Wayburn. Once the path was laid out, Pacific Forest Trust was able to lock up its first sale through the Van Eck Forest Project in a 2,200-acre redwood forest. Over 500,000 metric tons of CO₂ emissions over the next 100 years will be eliminated due to verifiable, sustainable forestry practices. In addition to



helping cool the climate, the Van Eck Forest Project helps protect wildlife habitat, safeguard clean water supplies and restore biodiversity and old-growth qualities.

Pacific Forest Trust's first sale of emissions reductions was for 60,000 tons through Natsource Asset Management, an emissions and renewable energy asset manager. Revenue from this sale will help finance ongoing stewardship activities while preventing "business-as-usual" logging practices.

"There is an increasing recognition of the power that land conservation and stewardship can bring to solving the cli-

mate crisis," said Wayburn. "We like to give them [landowners] six-figure checks on an ongoing basis as additional carbon continues to be stored. Demand from buyers continues to grow and money is increasingly available in these new carbon markets."

Wayburn explained how it works in the long run: "When a ton of emissions reductions is traded, the benefits to the atmosphere need to be permanent as they are considered equivalent to never emitting that ton of emissions in the first place. A minimum of 100 years' removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere is required in the global market. Permanent easements are the best solution for ensuring those long-term benefits."

AFW-5. Forestry — Production of Energy and Materials:

Learn what can be burned without destroying our forests. Trees are essential to combating climate change and any program that does not do everything — EVERYTHING — in its power to prevent trees from being destroyed does not deserve to be called a Climate Change Advisory Committee. Think "sun," "wind," (especially on farms) and, most important of all "conservation" (everywhere).

Increase mass transit. Stop building or widening roads. Look at how much money is going into expanding the PA Turnpike and how many hundreds of thousands of trees were killed just so more cars could drive faster. Criminal. And what about all the fossil fuels that were used to cut the trees, bulldoze the land, haul the trees away, etc.?

The dividends of activism can pay out over several lifetimes.



The Idaho Observer is a monthly, 24-page newspaper founded in 1997 to publish news from the perspective that the only legitimate functions of government are to protect freedom and provide justice.

\$25/year, samples \$3
www.idaho-observer.com
PO Box 457, Spirit Lake, ID 83869 (208)255-2307

An Atypical Holiday Letter

By Barbara Erakko Taylor
Hannibal, Missouri

Happy New Year!
Well, a little better late than never — so here we are at January 2nd. The photo is Sedona. I'm with Maryland friends; we have ended up in South Carolina, Arizona, Maryland and Missouri. Beginning last year, we decided to get together annually and this year, it was the fabulous Sedona in September (a tad hot!). We did yoga on mesa tops watching the sun come up, hiked around vortexes, met wonderful people and "felt the magic." Luckily one of us lives here — so we can all go back.

I just got back from driving to Maryland for Christmas which was a journey into the Solstice. On Solstice Eve, I got caught (by my own stupidity) in the Allegheny Mountains when the dew point dropped and the whole range became black ice. The clouds were so thick I could only see two passing lines in front of me and only those because of the embedded reflectors. I couldn't see any exit ramps or signs. As I was swallowed up in this utter dark aloneness, I told myself that, really, this was amazing. I was really in the Solstice. I don't think I would have ever found an exit ramp if a car had not overturned (the roll bar was fine — I think everyone must have been okay) and all the emergency equipment lit up the area. That car must have slid while trying to exit. I slid all the way down the ramp and a mile later slid into a hotel parking lot. Going into the lit hotel never felt so wonderful. The next morning, the sky was blue and puffy little clouds floated over a crystal-line world.

I always carry a down sleeping bag in the winter — and this was the closest I've ever gotten to using it. So I would have been safe (if miserable!) no matter what. I remember going up and up into the mountains on a two-lane road, having been dumped onto it by my GPS and

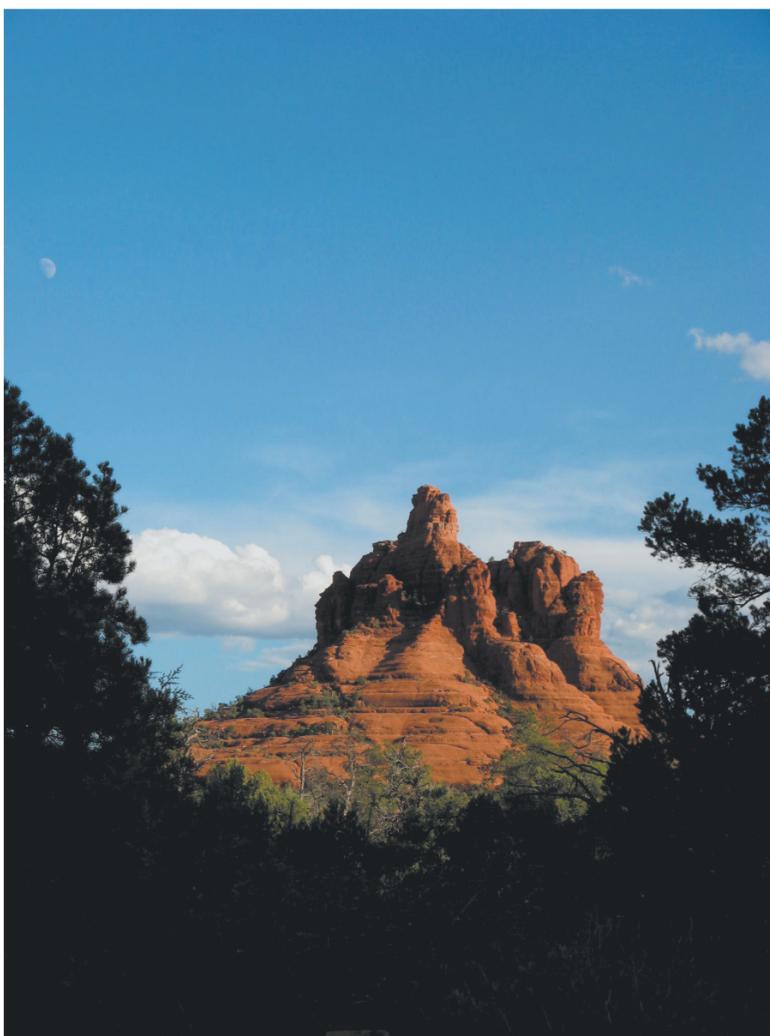


Photo by Barbara Erakko Taylor

Sedona in September at Sundown.

feeling really uncomfortable to be on such a small dark empty road. Then I saw a house here, and there, with its Christmas lights. And I hollered out, "I THANK you for putting out Christmas Lights! I will

NEVER say anything bad about Christmas Lights again." I'm not sure I ever had — but rarely put out any myself. However, on this night, in this dark, their twinkled life made me feel like I wasn't utterly alone.

To make matters more unusual, I was listening to Eckhart Tolle's book on tape, *The New Earth*. While I can't quote chapter and verse, it was about how the ego tells itself stories. So here I was, in this utter darkness, realizing that how I remembered this experience would either create more cellular fear in my body, or I could create something else.

I had a similar experience a decade ago — driving on ice in the night in the Colorado mountains. I felt sheer overwhelming terror. I remember finally getting help, sobbing "I don't DO ice! I'm from MARYLAND." These kind people rescued and helped me. But I told myself how awful it had been; how scared I had been — that's the way I told the story to myself and others. I remembered the terror.

But this time, I was alone with Eckhart — his soft voice deconstructing the world we live in — who was telling me I make the story and I can tell myself any story, any way — I can enlarge it. I felt the utter darkness of the Solstice, I felt the lights, I felt the brilliant blue-sky light. The actual facts of what happened became intertwined with the mystery of darkness, of Solstice, of dawn — and the fearful experience went into my body much more gently, with more awe — and laughter.

So maybe that's enough to say about this Christmas. Blessings to each of us this coming year!

When we make peace concretely by helping others and energetically through our prayers — there will be peace on Mother Earth. WORLD WEAR JEWELRY — necklaces, bracelets, kits for kids. One bead for every country. Made by American women in fragile circumstances. PEACE PLANET: LIGHT FOR OUR WORLD — one page, one country, one inclusive prayer for peace, in a hand-held, spiral-bound, full-color book.

www.PeaceAndPrayerGifts.com

THE NEW GreenLine Catalog is here!

For the most comprehensive offering of earth-cooling, green products for the office and home call 800-641-1117 to receive our free, full-color products catalog. Or, you can e-mail your request to info@greenlinepaper.com.



www.greenlinepaper.com



GoGreenGals.com invites you to embrace your purchasing power through new ways of living, shopping and giving. The Green Movement has everything you desire with ease and efficiency while assuring you that each purchase made through the Go Green Gals Directory is from a business that has been screened according to our guidelines of socially responsible and ecologically sound business practices.



Law Offices

Winston Law & Mediation

Wynde Juliet Winston, Esquire

wjw@winstonlaw.net

179 East Main Street Westminister, Maryland 21157

Westminister: 410-871-2121 Fax: 410-751-9214 Frederick: 301-668-5757

Anastasia Editor's Notes

by Dr. Leonid Sharashkin

How many times have I heard personal examples of this instant recognition: people who have been searching for years or decades for meaningful answers to questions on the purpose of life, on Man's place in Nature, have finally found them in this book! . . .

But should it be surprising that the image of a way of life founded on the ideals of love, beauty and non-violence, as presented by Anastasia, would resonate so strongly with our inner self? After all, does not every one of us want to live in a free society of kind and happy people, in a world without wars, crime or oppression? In a world where not a single tear need run down a child's cheek and where families live in love and prosperity?

Do we not want to live without monstrous industries destroying and polluting both Nature and Man? Do we not want to enjoy creative labor for the benefit of both our families and our communities, instead of suffering through boring jobs merely to enrich faceless corporations? Do we not want a society based on mutual help and co-operation rather than competition? . . .

More and more people in Russia and throughout the world draw their inspiration from the Ringing Cedars, acquire "the courage to dream" and create an image of radiant reality for themselves and their children and then get down to work in this direction . . .



[Ed.: Pretend you are reading this book.]

You hold in your hands a flower which will unfold its petals to reveal a most remarkable masterpiece, unique in all of Russian's literature, and possibly the world's as well. Indeed, its significance goes far beyond literature. This book possesses a tremendous, unprecedented potential to change life on our whole planet for the better.

Inspired by the Ringing Cedars, thousands of people are now planting trees, changing their lifestyles and in search for a mortgage-free existence and spiritual re-connection with Earth, are relocating to new eco-villages which have sprouted all over Russia and beyond . . .

Even though Anastasia's aspiration to the light can be felt intuitively, nevertheless, we must make sense of everything ourselves and work out the details . . .

I love this book so much that I decided it would be the only book I would sell through our newspaper. Our price is \$14.95 plus \$3.05 book-rate shipping so please send a check for \$18 payable to The Order of the Earth and write "Anastasia" on the memo line. Mail it to HCR 83 Box 881, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255. If you love the first one as much as I did, you may order the rest of them directly from RingingCedars.com or 800-365-6367.

- Iona -