

POWERFUL IDEAS,  
PRACTICAL ACTIONS

# yes!

FALL 2011

5 Steps to Redefine Making a Living

+

Poet W.S. Merwin  
on Doing  
the Impossible

Less Work,  
More Living:  
The Upside of  
Downshifting

Van Jones: Want  
Jobs? Reclaim  
the Dream

## New Livelihoods

HOW WE'RE BUILDING  
THE DO-IT-OURSELVES ECONOMY

**THEY SAID NO  
TO CORPORATE JOBS**

Jed Lazar  
takes his soup company  
to the streets



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## Jobs: What Will it Take?

Michael Jannenga is a sheet metal worker who's often out of work, and his unemployment benefits will soon expire. Gene Bullock, a retiree, and his wife have remortgaged their house to keep their son, an unemployed computer engineer, and daughter, a divorced mother of two, from homelessness. May Sperder works in the cafeteria of a public elementary school, and she sometimes slips extra food to the teachers whose hours have been cut and who just aren't getting by.

I met these three in Poulsbo, Wash., at an American Dream House Party—one of more than 1,500 organized in July to begin building the agenda for the new American Dream movement. Attendees shared stories of economic insecurity—stories that have largely disappeared from the headlines.

We focus this issue of YES! on jobs because we believe joblessness is still a crisis, and that there are solutions. But solutions won't be found in the Republican austerity budgets, nor in the Democrats' endless compromises. Instead of offering large corporations and the super-rich huge tax breaks while slashing services and investments in public goods, we believe there are alternatives that are far more likely to rebuild the economy.

Here's how we see it. The middle-class way of life is in trouble. In part, that's because transnational corporations and Wall Street banks have extracted for themselves the wealth of our nation and our communities while sending jobs elsewhere. In part it's because of protracted wars. And in part, it's because our consumer economy is exhausting the Earth's ability to supply us with cheap energy and to sustain life. It's these factors—not generous pensions or Social Security, unions, or taxes—that explain why 25 million Americans are un- or under-employed, and why the usual monetary responses aren't helping.

If we want a real recovery, we need to rebuild our battered local and regional economies, reclaim our national wealth, and create ways of life that can thrive in today's era of limits. We are not going back to a time of suburban McMansions, endless supplies of consumer goods, and cheap energy. So we need locally rooted businesses that can meet our needs without depleting the Earth's capacity to sustain life.

The job market isn't coming back to what it was, either. Many people know that and are creating hybrid livelihoods by growing food, making and fixing things themselves, and starting small businesses. They work less—out of choice or necessity—but they are making up for it by sharing and exchanging with neighbors, and creating micro-economies that help fill the gaps between paying work.

Focusing on local economies doesn't mean turning our back on government. Policies friendly to families and to local economies could redirect our tax dollars from corporate giveaways and bloated military budgets to infrastructure repair, clean energy development, and education. These would create sustainable jobs in our communities, doing things that are sorely needed.

These are not the priorities of the corporate interests who have so much sway in Washington, D.C. So it will take people's movements, like Rebuild the Dream, to get government operating on our behalf.

The house meeting I attended boosted people's spirits, and not just because of the hot dogs and potato salad. After feeling rolled over by powerful corporations and compliant politicians, people were excited to be taking a stand together for a just and green economy.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sarah van Gelder". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

**Sarah van Gelder**  
Executive Editor



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# New Livelihoods



PHOTO BY KRISTIN GLADNEY

## THE MISSION OF YES!

is to support you in building a just and sustainable world. In each issue we focus on a different theme through these lenses:

### NEW VISIONS

Solving today's big problems will take more than a quick fix. These authors offer clarity about the roots of our problems and visions of a better way.

### WORLD & COMMUNITY

New models that foster justice and real prosperity, and sustain the Earth's living systems. How can we bring these models to life and put them to work?

### THE POWER OF ONE

Stories of people who find their courage, open their hearts, and discover what it means to be human in today's world.

### BREAKING OPEN

Humor, storytelling, and the arts—taking you into unexpected spaces where business-as-usual breaks open into new possibilities.

**I7** GUIDE TO THE THEME SECTION

**42**

**I8**

### Who's Building the Do-It-Ourselves Economy?

Corporations aren't hiring (at least not at home). And Washington is gridlocked. Here's how we take charge of our own livelihoods.

*By Sarah van Gelder and Doug Pibel*

22 :: Lies, Damned Lies, and Economics. *By Doug Pibel*

**26**

### Best Job in the Neighborhood—and They Own It

Solar power, a laundry, a newspaper and a greenhouse—Cleveland worker co-ops bring living-wage jobs to the Rust Belt.

*By Susan Arterian Chang*

**28**

### A Knock at the Door? Green Jobs Calling

The citizens of two cities are finding the customers, finances, and skills to put together green jobs.

*By Madeline Ostrander*

**32**

### Work Less, Live More

Share the work, reduce your eco-footprint, and reclaim your time.

*By Juliet Schor*

**38**

### Elders a (Labor) Force for Social Change

Boomers will bring experience and savvy to encore careers with purpose. *By Marc Freedman*

**29**

### Painting the Town Prosperous

Artists revitalize urban neighborhoods and build community.

*By James Trimarco*

**36**

### 5 Steps to Redefine Making a Living

Life out of balance? Ask yourself this ...

48



PHOTO BY MARTA EVRY

48

### Want Jobs? Reclaim the Dream

Van Jones is leading a national mobilization to rebuild the middle class—through decent work, fair taxes, and opportunities for all.

*An interview with Van Jones, by Sarah van Gelder*

42

### 7 Smart Solutions

Free Geek computers, Citizen Space, Fab Labs, Freelancers Union are among innovations that support local jobs.

46

### State Banks Bring the Money Home

Big banks freeze out small business, but North Dakota's state bank supports local jobs. The idea is catching on. *By Stacy Mitchell*

39

### Graduates Get a Crash Course in Sharing

New graduates improvise when expected careers don't pan out.

*By Malcolm Harris*



Susan Seubert photographed Jed Lazar making deliveries of his organic soups in Portland neighborhoods. *Page 24*

### DIY Jobs

- 20 :: Meat Plant Goes Veggie
- 21 :: Living Wages Plus Benefits
- 24 :: Pedaling Soup—Sustainably
- 32 :: Urban Farmers for Hire
- 41 :: Re-fashioning Clothing

## OTHER FEATURES

I2

### Poet Laureate W.S. Merwin on Doing the Impossible

W.S. Merwin accepted an appointment as U.S. poet laureate so he could offer just one simple warning.

*Interview by Sarah van Gelder*

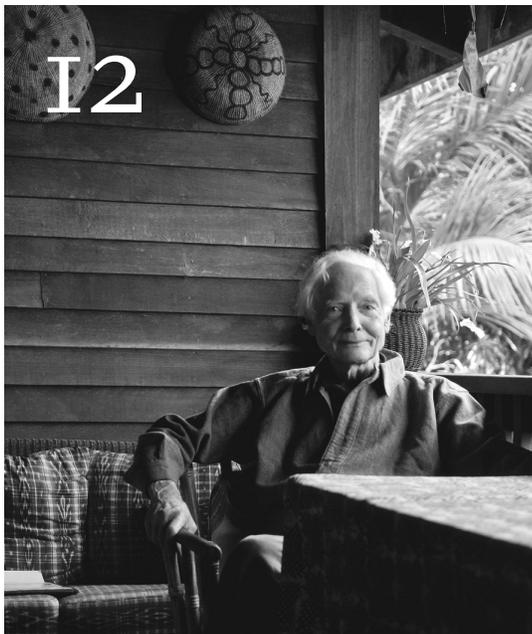


PHOTO BY TONY NOVAK-CLIFFORD

54

### Standing on the Side of Peace

How one man's story changed everything I thought I knew about the Israel-Palestine conflict.

*By Jen Marlowe*

- 1 FROM THE EDITOR
- 4 READERS FORUM
- 6 SIGNS OF LIFE :: *Saving Sacred Ground, New Climate Research, Coal-Free Campuses*
- 10 PEOPLE WE LOVE
- 11 COMMENTARY :: *Nellis Kennedy-Howard on how to stop the expansion of tar sands extraction*
- 16 THE PAGE THAT COUNTS
- 52 FROM THE PUBLISHER :: *The New Dream Job*
- 58 YES! BUT HOW? :: *Wear cotton with a conscience*
- 61 IN REVIEW :: *Transforming Terror, All-Age Music*



PHOTO BY GIOVANNI SAVINO, MAGNETICPIC.COM

New York City, 2011

“THE WEALTH OF THIS NATION IS CREATED BY ALL OF US TOGETHER.  
WE WILL RISE OR FALL AS A COMMUNITY. TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD AN ECONOMY  
THAT REWARDS AND CARES FOR ALL OF US.”

Deepak Bhargava, *executive director of Center for Community Change and  
a leading voice in the Rebuild the Dream Movement*

## READERS FORUM

**Tell us.** Send your response to an article or an issue theme, or send us your own story. Write to 284 Madrona Way NE, Suite 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 or to [editors@yesmagazine.org](mailto:editors@yesmagazine.org). Or comment online at [yesmagazine.org](http://yesmagazine.org)



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saying that we ought to just let anybody use whatever narcotic drug they feel like using, and spread it around? This is what I see as the effect of your direction. My personal motto is: "The Lesson Is Emotional Restraint." This TV generation is doing just the opposite.

JAMES R. STEWART JR.  
*Londonderry, N.H.*

### The Night I Forgave My Daughter's Killer

I am so sorry that you lost your daughter. I am so grateful that God, through this horror, let the world see an example of real Love. I am stunned and speechless at your grace in the face of such great loss. I hope the world is listening.

CJ PALMER  
*Chehalis, Wash.*

### Prison Reform Neglected

Prisons play a huge part in our governmental budgets and the lives of an extensive number of people, yet reform and the alternatives are mostly neglected, so I was especially pleased to receive this edition of YES!

I am so grateful for the accounts inside the walls, the value of education, the scandal that is our prison-industrial complex, and the hope provided by the shift to restorative justice.

YES! Magazine is one of the magazines I read cover to

cover. It is a beacon of hope and inspiration as we work for sustainable and humane change in our troubled nation amid the vagaries of empire and indifference.

TOM EWELL  
*Clinton, Wash.*

### People Need a Chance

How inspirational. The "solution" is such a "win-win" proposition, no wonder more government agencies and people in general are not familiar with it. The Brotha who had done 15 years for murder is a prime example, showing that people can change. All most people need is a chance and someone to believe in them so they may believe in themselves. I enjoyed reading this article very much, so much that I am subscribing to your publication.

Thank you YES! You're beautiful.

SISTAGIRL

### A Mother's Loss

As the parent of a young man who died while incarcerated for probation violation related to drug charges, I know that the prison system is NOT the way to handle the drug addiction problem.

I bless you for shedding light on this dark and difficult subject.

CLAIRE M. PERKINS  
*Mesa, Ariz.*

### Justice for Native Americans

Michelle Alexander's article was wonderful and encouraging. However, I missed seeing any reference in her article to the difficulties of the "justice" system as it relates to Native Americans. We are only about 3 percent of the population, but we are still here, and we are profoundly affected by the "locking people up problem" she explores. I hope future contributors to YES! Magazine will look beyond the black and Latino minorities and remember that Native people are still with us and suffering.

MARSHA TRAXLER

### Justice as a Commodity

Kudos to YES! Magazine for the current issue on "Beyond Prisons"!

The American justice system is treated as a commodity, with the criminals on Wall

Street getting away with real crimes, while the poor and minorities languish in prisons for nonviolent and minor offenses. Another issue is the increasing privatization seen in the prison system, especially in California.

Thank you for putting together this issue. We will buy more copies at a newsstand to distribute.

J. GLENN & BARBARA EVANS  
*Seattle, Wash.*

You can also buy YES! at a discount at [yesmagazine.org/store](http://yesmagazine.org/store). Thanks! —Eds.

### Don't Legalize

I hear your concern for prisoners of color. However, what I see in the ghettos of Lawrence, Mass., where I serve a church as organist, is a culture of drug use, which is radically destructive to that whole urban area. Are you

## Activism's Prophetic Voice

In response to the sweet and powerful letters between Madhu Prakash and Wendell Berry, I admire both the boldness of Madhu's invitation and Berry's humble refusal.

Maybe we don't need a superhero, but as Gandhi knew, we need a dramatic politics. Where is this kind of bold activism today?

Mr. Berry, Madhu, and YES! say the countermovement is already happening, and of course I agree. Yet the movement that needs to be countered continues to grow precipitously. I believe we need to hold not just hope, but also a realistic assessment that on many indicators, things continue to get worse in ways

that will frustrate the countermovement and make life hard or impossible for people and places worldwide.

We need to get noticed—to opt into the mainstream with inspired proposals for radical common sense ideas like Madhu's \$5 billion for local food. I'm certain that the Farm Bill Berry and [Wes] Jackson are advocating speaks of this common radical sense.

But Madhu's vision—your dream—I read as something more: It is for prophesy, the prophetic voice, creative political strategy. It inspires me to boldly propose what might otherwise remain unthought and unheard of.

DAVID GREENWOOD  
Thunder Bay, Ontario

## Fall 2011 Issue 59

# yes!

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PEACE & JUSTICE PLANET NEW ECONOMY PEOPLE POWER HAPPINESS

### To Save Our Cities, Put Children First

*What's the universal design principle that can make our cities great? Kid-friendliness, says architect Jason McLennan.*

### Climate Regulations a Job Killer? Quit Crying Wolf

*Over and over, the regulations that the Chamber of Commerce says will be catastrophic have become the basic safeguards we take for granted.*

### The Courage to Stop Pretending: Tim DeChristopher Sentenced

*Can going to jail be a happier choice than turning a blind eye to climate injustice?*

### Arrivederci, Water Profiteers

*Why 96 percent of Italian voters rejected their government's push for water privatization.*

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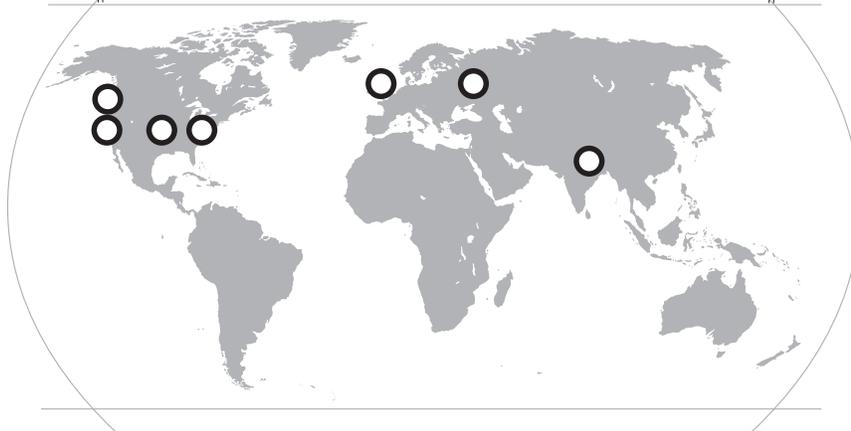
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# Signs of Life

SMALL STORIES ABOUT BIG CHANGE



## ENVIRONMENT

### Occupation Saves Sacred Site

👍 The day before construction began on the site of a Native American burial ground, members of several local tribes came to Glen Cove, Calif., and built a ceremonial fire.

That was on April 14 of this year. For 97 days, they camped on the land to protect it and prayed to their ancestors that the Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD) would change its plans to build a parking lot and bathrooms on the site. On July 21, the 98th day of the vigil, the protesters were victorious. The GVRD and the City of Vallejo established a cultural easement agreement with two Native American tribes, granting them a say in the park's development.

During their occupation of Glen Cove, the protesters invoked federal legislation that allows indigenous people access to places of worship. Their efforts stalled construction and pressured the GVRD to negotiate with tribes that had proven connections to the land. Under the new agreement, the GVRD won't build bathrooms, and the parking lot will be moved to an area of the site that doesn't contain human remains.



DIGNIDAD REBELDE PHOTO

Protesters held off bulldozers and protected a burial site sacred to Native Americans through a peaceful 97-day occupation of "Sogorea Te" in Glen Cove, Calif.

More than 3,500 years ago, Glen Cove, also known as "Sogorea Te," was a 15-acre trading hub and spiritual center for the Bay Area's tribes. It was also home to a burial ground, or "shellmound." Burials no longer take place there, but it continues to be a sacred site for traditional Native American ceremonies. Of an estimated 425 shellmounds in the Bay Area, only three remain that are not covered by roads, shopping malls, or other types of development.

"It's time to put a halt to desecrating these sacred sites," said Wounded Knee DeOcampo, a Miwok elder and one of the leaders of the Committee to Protect Glen Cove, the group affiliated with the protesters.

DeOcampo says non-native people supported the committee during the protests with boxes of produce from local farms, restaurant fare, water, and prayers. In May, attorneys from the National Lawyers Guild came to the encampment to

offer legal advice.

More than a week before the settlement, committee leader Corrina Gould of the Chochenyo/Karkin Ohlone Nation awaited the outcome of a closed-session meeting between the Vallejo City Council and representatives of the tribes.

"I feel like it's my responsibility to ensure protection of this site," she said in a telephone call from City Hall.

That responsibility did not end with the establishment of

# “IT’S ABSOLUTELY POSSIBLE TO HAVE AN OPEN, DEMOCRATIC, INCLUSIVE SOCIETY, AND AT THE SAME TIME HAVE SECURITY MEASURES AND NOT BE NAIVE.”

Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, on his grieving country's determination to maintain an open society following July's terror attack.



the cultural easement.

In a press release following the agreement, Gould stated that although the cultural easement is an important victory, the tribes are still concerned about the lack of specific language that would prevent grading on the western portion of the site.

While the committee's work to protect Sogorea Te is not yet done, its occupation of the site is over. At press time, an ending ceremony for the protesters' encampment was scheduled for July 30, 2011. —Lily Hicks

## CLIMATE

### Extreme Weather Events Research

Is there a link between recent extreme weather events and climate change? An international group of climate scientists has set out to answer this question. They've formed a coalition, Attribution of Climate-Related Events (ACE), to investigate the connection between global warming and the increasing incidence and severity of tornadoes, hurricanes, droughts, and floods.

In 2010, extreme heat waves caused massive wildfires in Russia, while heavy monsoon rains brought severe floods in Pakistan. The global average temperature was one of the highest since records began in 1880, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Previously, scientists have said that an increase in extreme weather events like these would be consistent with global

warming but were hesitant to make a direct link between specific events and climate change because of the natural variability of weather.

The ACE coalition asserts that it is now possible to prove that greenhouse gases, resulting in observable increase in atmospheric moisture, are causing extreme weather events. In October 2011, a subset of ACE participants will publish a paper on this topic at the World Climate Research Program Open Science Conference in Denver.

ACE involves collaboration among scientists from some of the world's most eminent institutions in weather and climate research, including NOAA, the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), and the Met Office Hadley Centre in the U.K.

Dr. Kevin Trenberth, who heads the Climate Analysis Section at NCAR and hosted the initial meeting of ACE, argues that the evidence of a link between climate change and individual weather events is unequivocal. Communicating via email, Trenberth stated that the major issues to focus on are the changes in rainfall, flooding, drought, heat waves, and other extremes like tornadoes.

“All weather and climate events are affected by climate change because the environment in which they form is different,” wrote Trenberth. “The failure to realize this means that the cost of climate change is greatly underestimated.”

He said the group hopes to develop techniques and approaches for researching weather that can be used almost immediately, providing better

information to the public and decision-makers. —Sarah Kuck

#### ALSO ...

**Many Americans** are unaware that there is a consensus among U.S. scientists, 97 percent of whom agree that climate change is happening, according to a report published in May by George Mason University and the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication. It found that 40 percent of those polled agreed with the statement “There is a lot of disagreement among scientists about whether or not global warming is happening.”

### Students Push Coal Off Campus

👍 When you think about the typical college campus, a

towering coal plant belching pollutants like mercury and fly ash is probably not the first thing that comes to mind. At more than 60 colleges and universities across the country, though, that's just what you'll find. Virginia Tech's coal plant burns more than 43,000 tons of coal each year, for example, and students often wake to find ash coating their windows.

But college students across the United States are asking their schools to clean up their act. More than 30 campuses have teamed up with the Sierra Club's “Beyond Coal” campaign to move their schools toward 100 percent clean energy solutions. Already, 16 student groups have gotten commitments from their schools to become coal-free. According to coal campaign coordinator



PHOTO BY MARK TUSK

👍 There were two steps forward for equality this summer. In July, happy couples celebrated New York nuptials when the state's law allowing same-sex marriage went into effect. In June, the United Nations passed a resolution supporting the rights of the world's gay, lesbian, and transgender people. The United States voted in favor of the resolution.



PHOTO BY SHANNON KRINGEN

Honor the Treaties is art as a guerilla protest that the public can join at [honorthetreaties.org](http://honorthetreaties.org). Documentary photographer Aaron Huey and graphic artists Shepard Fairey and Ernesto Yerena meld their work in striking posters that are appearing on billboards, walls, and subway tunnels—visual reminders of the U.S. history of breaking treaties. Huey spent six years documenting life on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, one of the most impoverished places in the nation.

*YesMagazine.org/treaties* 📷

Kim Teplitzky, several more campuses look poised to join the ranks when the academic year begins in the fall.

Five-plus years of student organizing paid off in 2010, when Cornell University announced plans to become coal-free as early as this year. The school has already reduced coal usage by 80 percent. At Ball State University in Indiana, a switch from coal to geothermal power will soon completely eliminate the school's reliance on coal, cutting its carbon footprint in half and saving \$2 million in the process.

Other schools have been more resistant to pressure from student activist groups. University of Iowa students have been working for the better part of a decade to move the school off coal. Graham Jordison, who now works for the Sierra Club as Iowa's campus organizer, got

involved as a student when he realized the school's on-campus plant was dumping coal ash near the banks of the Des Moines River. Though Jordison cites small victories—such as getting schools to purchase renewable energy credits and increase energy efficiency—the fight is far from over. “It’s not an easy path,” he admits, “but on each campus we’ve made progress.”  
—Jen Horton

### FOOD

#### From Farm to Corner Store

👍 Fresh, local farm produce may soon be available at the last place you'd expect to find it: your local convenience store.

In Washington state, the health department and

Thurston County are using a \$10,000 stimulus grant to put healthier foods on the shelves of convenience stores. Their first step was to label healthier products more clearly. But their second, more innovative idea was to bring produce from local farms to the Lucky 7 Food Store, a convenience store close to Olympia's low-income housing.

Two organic farms signed on to the project. Today, cilantro, spinach, chard, and snap peas keep cool in Lucky 7's refrigerator. From 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. every Wednesday, fresh produce such as zucchini, strawberries, and beets are for sale at a stall in the store's parking lot.

“Organic food has been thought of as a luxury item,” said Jennifer Belknap, co-owner of Rising River, one of the participating farms. Belknap hopes to change that idea by reducing

the prices of the food she sells at the Lucky 7. The other participating farmer, Ann Vandeman of Olympia's Left Foot Organics, sells all her produce in packages priced at \$2.25 to offer Lucky 7 shoppers a bargain.

While the local-farm-to-convenience-store arrangement is rare, governments and community organizations across the country are working to bring healthy foods to convenience stores in low-income neighborhoods. The Healthy Corner Stores Network (HCSN) is a nonprofit that helps people improve convenience stores in their communities.

Laurel MacMillan, co-convenor of HCSN, says collaboration between community organizations and convenience stores is working with what you already have. “Getting a grocery store in a food desert is ideal,” she said, “but improving the quality of food in stores that are already there has a more immediate effect.”—Lily Hicks

### HEALTH

#### Workers Get Paid Sick Days

👍 This summer, Connecticut became the first state in the country to pass legislation requiring employers to offer paid sick days to their workers.

The law requires businesses that don't already offer paid sick leave to grant employees one hour leave for every 40 worked, up to five days leave per year.

**“IF WE JUST SCRAPPED OUR SYSTEM AND ADOPTED ANY OTHER WEALTHY COUNTRY’S SYSTEM, AT A MINIMUM WE WOULD HAVE A TRILLION DOLLARS MORE A YEAR FOR PAY RAISES, FOR INVESTMENT IN NEW TECHNOLOGY, TO CREATE NEW JOBS, OR WHATEVER.”**

*Former President Bill Clinton, comparing the United States, which spends 17.2 percent of gross domestic product on health care each year, to Germany and France, which spend 10 percent and are considered to have the most effective health care systems in the world.*

It applies to businesses in the service industry with 50 or more employees, and will benefit as many as 400,000 workers who receive an hourly wage. Gov. Dan Malloy signed the bill into law in July.

Campaigns for local paid sick day laws are gaining support across the country. Currently Washington, D.C., and San Francisco are the only U.S. cities mandating paid sick leave. But others, including Seattle, Miami, Denver, and New York City, are looking to pass similar legislation. Advocates are fighting to reinstate paid local sick day laws in Wisconsin, where Gov. Scott Walker nullified an existing paid sick day law, and in Philadelphia, where Mayor Michael Nutter vetoed a paid sick day bill.

Nearly 40 percent of all U.S. private sector workers get no paid sick days, according to a recent survey published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The United States is unique among industrialized nations: 135 others already have laws in place mandating paid sick days.

In July, hundreds of people gathered in Washington, D.C., for the National Summit on Paid Sick Days and Paid Family Leave. Delegates held a day of action to lobby legislators to support the Healthy Families Act, which would set a national standard for the United States.

—Rebecca Leisher

#### **ALSO ...**

**The first universal** health care system in the United States was signed into law in Vermont in May. The Patient Protection and

Affordable Care Act is the first step toward offering publicly financed health care for all of Vermont’s 625,000 residents. Activists in other states, including California, are pushing for similar health care reform bills.

## **ECONOMY**

### **From Swords to Cities**

 In June, mayors of 150 of the largest cities in the United States made a suggestion to the president: Instead of spending billions on war, spend the money on making life better at home. The U.S. Conference of Mayors wants to see war dollars used to rebuild infrastructure, create jobs, and develop a new economy based on renewable energy.

Speaking at the 79th annual meeting of the Conference of Mayors, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the group’s president, said, “We can’t be building roads and bridges in Baghdad and Kandahar and not Baltimore and Kansas City.”

Two days after Mayor Villaraigosa’s speech, on June 22, President Obama announced his plan to withdraw 33,000 troops from Afghanistan by 2012. The mayors responded with a press release saying, “Drawing down troop levels is step one. Increasing employment levels is step two. We need to use the billions of dollars we are currently spending in Afghanistan to rebuild our domestic economy.”

Forty-one states and the

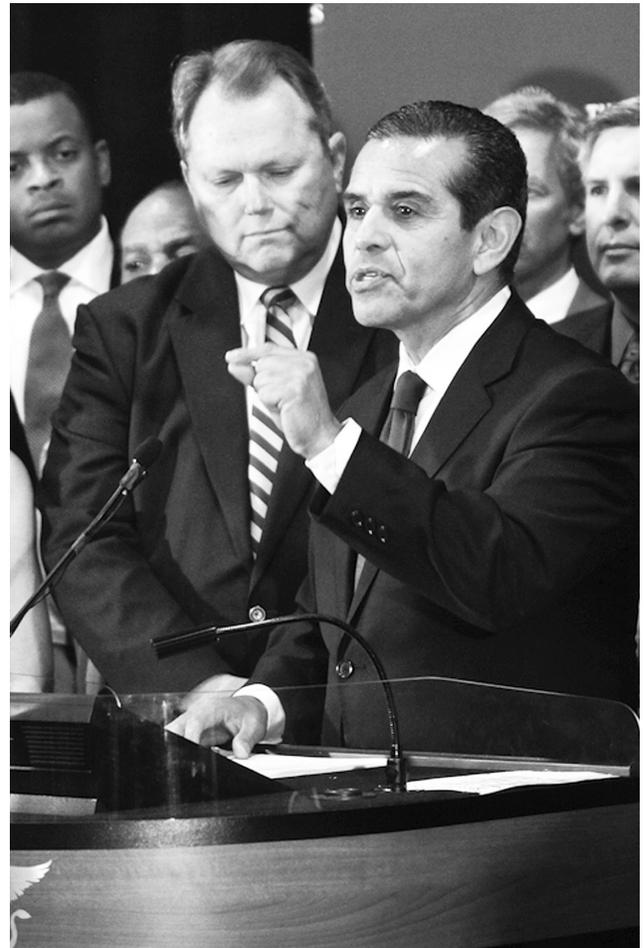


PHOTO BY DAVID STARKOPF

At the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in June, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa delivered a statement to President Obama that money for wars could be better spent at home.

District of Columbia are projecting budget shortfalls for 2012 totaling \$102.9 billion. According to the National Priorities Project, those shortfalls could be wiped out by the amount spent on the war in Afghanistan, which was \$122 billion in 2011.

The statement is the first on U.S. foreign policy the

Conference of Mayors has made since the Vietnam War. It’s unclear what action the mayors will take next, but they met in Los Angeles July 22 to 24 to discuss the federal debt ceiling and the budget crisis in cities.

—Oliver Lazenby

## People We Love



**WILMA SUBRA**  
*Environmental Science*

Wilma Subra, an EPA scientist studying environmental toxins, thought the EPA's research summaries were so misleading and difficult to interpret that they amounted to withholding information from affected communities. She couldn't stand it.

So in 1981, she started an environmental consulting firm that does research and analysis for people concerned about toxins in their local environment. Subra has since worked with upwards of 600 communities across the world, handles 30 cases at a time, and does most of her work for free.

After Hurricane Katrina and then the BP oil spill hit the Gulf Coast, Subra became a spokesperson for devastated communities. Her clients include fishermen hired for cleanup who became sick from crude oil and dispersants.

A soft-spoken 68-year-old grandmother, Subra has a steely dedication to environmental justice. She has received a MacArthur Fellowship and, more recently, the Global Exchange Human Rights Award.



**VON TSCHARNER FLEMING**  
*Supporting Farmers*

Farmer, filmmaker, and organizer Severine von Tscharnier Fleming was a college student who thought films on food and agriculture focused more on problems than solutions. She set out to make a documentary about young farmers who embodied hope for the future, and in the process became one herself.

As von Tscharnier Fleming and her film crew traveled around the country to make *The Greenhorns*, they began organizing a national community of young farmers. Von Tscharnier Fleming co-founded the National Young Farmers Coalition to promote progressive farming policy, and founded the Greenhorns organization to connect people new to farming through events (37 last year) and a website that offers networking and advice.

Between conference calls, von Tscharnier Fleming continues to work with young farmers—on 100 acres in New York's Hudson Valley.

[YesMagazine.org/greenhorns](http://YesMagazine.org/greenhorns) 🎬  
Trailer for *The Greenhorns*



**HILTON KELLEY**  
*Local Hero*

Hilton Kelley didn't know much about the oil refineries in Port Arthur, Texas, when he grew up there—just that the air often smelled foul. His neighborhood was low-income but thriving when he left at 19 to join the Navy. He returned 20 years later to find illness, poverty, and pollution—all of which he traced back to the refineries. "I wondered why no one was doing anything," he said. "Then I looked at the man in the mirror and said, 'What the hell are you doing about it?'"

Kelley created the Community In-power Development Association (CIDA) to empower residents to assert their environmental rights. He pushed the refineries to decrease pollution, hire local workers, and stop expansion. CIDA's landmark case against the Motiva refinery won a \$3.5 million settlement for community economic development, job training, and medical visits for residents. Kelley won the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2011 and is now training the next generation of activists.



**JR**  
*Art for Humanity*

When "JR" found a camera in the Paris Métro at age 15, he started taking photographs of his friends painting graffiti on city walls. At 17, he was pasting those photos up around town as his own kind of statement.

When one of his photos appeared in the background of news footage about urban rioting, JR realized the potential impact of his art. He took portraits of young people from the housing projects, made them into giant posters, and pasted them up around Paris to counter media stereotypes of menacing youth.

JR's photos now have global reach. His portraits of Israelis and Palestinians divided by the separation barrier reveal the common humanity of people on both sides of a violent conflict. His latest project, "Women are Heroes," emphasizes the dignity of women living in impoverished, war-stricken areas.

"They asked me, 'Please. Make our story travel with you,'" JR said when he accepted an award at the TED 2011 conference. "So I did."

[YesMagazine.org/inside-out](http://YesMagazine.org/inside-out) 🎬  
From Paris to Palestine

COMMENTARY :: *Nellis Kennedy-Howard*

## PREVENT A TAR SANDS DISASTER

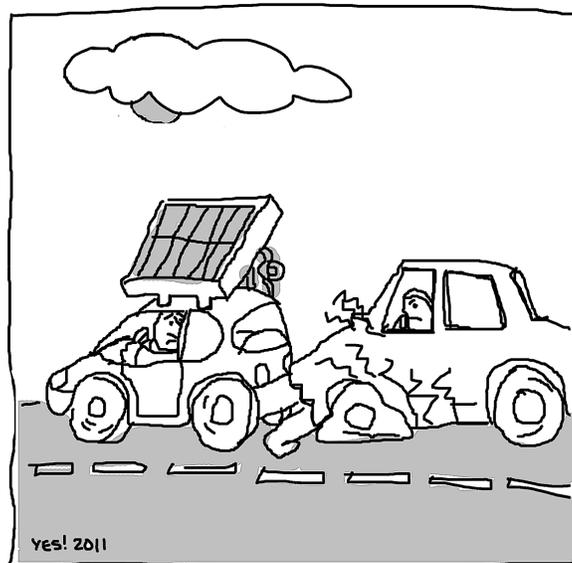
What does it mean to live in an energy sacrifice zone? For many First Nations of Canada, it means that the land and water your families have lived on for generations is no longer safe. Nearly every major oil company in the world is participating in making the homelands of indigenous peoples unsafe by investing in the Athabaskan tar sands.

In what is called by the Environmental Defense Fund the “world’s most destructive project,” an area the size of Florida is slated for various forms of mining. Locked up in sand, clay, and bitumen, tar sands oil is one of the hardest to mine and refine and is also one of the dirtiest: extracting it creates three times more greenhouse gases than conventional oil. Mining the tar sands means not only deforestation but also the creation of massive lagoons filled with toxic wastewater. These ponds are leaking 11 million liters of toxic water each day and by 2012 are expected to leak 72 million liters a day.

The project’s carbon footprint is global. Mining the tar sands requires special equipment that is manufactured in Korea, shipped across the ocean, and barged through Portland, Ore., up the Columbia and Snake Rivers through the Nez Perce reservation and on to Idaho. The current plan is to haul it on massive trucks to northern Alberta. American highways have never seen trucks of this size, and the haul will require major modifications to roadways along the way.

Oil giant TransCanada hopes to expand the project even further by building a pipeline that will pump dirty oil from northern Alberta, across the headwaters of major rivers, and down to the Gulf of Mexico where special refineries exist to handle the lower-grade oil. The pipeline, named Keystone XL, will actually raise gas prices in the states it crosses because the refined oil will have to be shipped back up from the Gulf. This rise will be the equivalent of a “\$4-billion-a-year tax on oil we already get from Canada, with all the money going from American wallets and pocketbooks to oil companies,” said Jeremy Symons of the National Wildlife Federation, in testimony before the House Energy Commerce Committee.

The tar sands are a financial and environmental disaster. Keystone XL’s environmental impact statement has received massive criticism from affected tribes,



*“I’ll have a sunnier disposition if you have a rainy day fund.”*

CHRISTOPHER MATTHIAS

*“Should have added the cloud insurance to my policy.”*

GREG HOLMAN



[YesMagazine.org/cartoon](http://YesMagazine.org/cartoon) for more reader captions

environmental groups, and the Environmental Protection Agency itself. Symons called the pipeline “the next Deepwater Horizon disaster in the making,” according to *The New York Times*.

Environmental engineer John Stansbury has taken a closer look at TransCanada’s safety claims that, at most, 11 serious spills are likely to occur over 50 years. Stansbury’s research shows that the number is closer to 91 spills. Making matters worse, the proposal is being fast-tracked by Congress and requires President Obama to approve or deny the project by November of this year.

Celebrities and environmental leaders, such as actor Danny Glover and activist Bill McKibben, are now calling on you to help stop the destruction. A national demonstration of civil disobedience is taking place at the White House August 20 through September 3. Hundreds have committed to attend and risk arrest because the issue is so important and the voices of concerned citizens must be heard. Participants are asked to be as peaceful as possible and are required to attend a one-day training before partaking in the action. For more information, go to [tarsandsaction.org](http://tarsandsaction.org). 

**Nellis Kennedy-Howard** of the Navajo Nation is national campaign associate for the nonprofit Honor the Earth. [honorearth.org](http://honorearth.org)

### Sarah van Gelder

Drive past the white fence, across from the barn, there's an unmarked gravel road. Pull in, park, and then walk downhill through a palm forest. Pass the enormous compost pile where the humus from palm fronds and other debris will help regenerate the soil of this former pineapple plantation. Then call out! W.S. Merwin will appear and show you the way. Those were, more or less, the directions YES! board member Puanani Burgess and I used to find the simple home on Maui of the 17th poet laureate of the United States. If we had arrived some years earlier, we would have found eroded soil and few trees. Instead, as we sat on the porch overlooking a rainforest planted and tended by Merwin, it was as though the birds whose songs filled the air had always been there. Perhaps they had. They just needed a poet to reclaim the ruined landscape. As we left later that evening, Merwin gave each of us a signed copy of *The Shadow of Sirius*, the book of poems that earned him his second Pulitzer Prize in 2009—just one of many awards he's won for his poetry and prose.

# It may be impossible, but somebody has to try.



## AN INTERVIEW WITH POET LAUREATE W.S. MERWIN

**Sarah van Gelder:** Your place here is so peaceful and clearly makes a wonderful place for writing. Why did you accept the appointment as United States poet laureate?

**W.S. Merwin:** They gave me two months to think about it, and I thought I would like to say, once, something that I don't think is said enough:

I think that as a species we're in a very dangerous place. I'm not optimistic about it at all. I think it's because of

an attitude we've got which is deeply ingrained, which is that we have some right to treat all the rest of life just the way it suits us and throw it away when it doesn't profit us at all. I don't think that's realistic. I don't think that's true.

I think that the thing that distinguishes the human species is the imagination—the ability to imagine people suffering in Darfur, and the whales dying in the Pacific, and the little girl getting a prize in China for playing a piece of Mozart. These don't

touch on us immediately, this afternoon, but they do.

I thought I'd like to get a chance to say that. I'd like to say it once, and then be quiet about it.

**van Gelder:** If you met President Obama, what would you like to say to him?

**Merwin:** I did have a chance. He asked me about the laureateship, and I said what I just told you about the »



W.S. Merwin, at his home on a former pineapple plantation in Maui, Hawai'i.

PHOTO BY TONY NOVAK-CLIFFORD

» imagination and life as a whole. He said, “I’ll go along with everything you say.” That’s what he says privately.

**van Gelder:** But as we’re having these conversations, we continue to soak the atmosphere with carbon and acidify the oceans, and this is moving so rapidly, and we don’t seem to be able to work this out among ourselves.

**Merwin:** I think it’s important to think about those things in large terms—globally and all of that. But it’s also important to try to deal with them right in your own life.

This house—we’ve had solar electricity from the very beginning and our own water supply. I think it’s important to do those things. Ecologist

done and why. He said, “If those are your convictions then you must have the courage of your convictions.” I thought that was pretty good.

I said, “I don’t think I can end the violence in the world, but somebody has to try. If nobody tries, it’s never going to end.”

**Puanani Burgess:** That’s your great epitaph. “Somebody has to try.”

**Merwin:** All the things that really matter to us are impossible, you know. They say translation is impossible; sure it is. We do it because it’s necessary, not because it’s possible.

Writing poetry is impossible. I don’t know how to write a poem. A poem—there has to be part of it that is not my

hours to making money ... if that’s the central thing in your life, it changes your value system completely. You certainly can see that. It makes you very selfish. You want to have it instead of somebody else having it. We’ve always had that side of us too.

**van Gelder:** How did you come to live like this, immersed in the Hawaiian landscape?

**Merwin:** I came here in the ’60s, and I thought it was wonderful and beautiful, but it wasn’t real to me. I came back in the ’70s, and I hung out here longer, met people, and got more and more interested in the place itself.

I love it more all the time. I take my tea leaves down first thing in the

## WHAT’S THE POINT OF TALKING ABOUT IT AND NOT DOING ANYTHING IN YOUR OWN LIFE ABOUT IT?

friends would come out and say, “You really have solar electricity?” What’s the point of talking about it and not doing anything in your own life about it?

**van Gelder:** What does it matter what one person does?

**Merwin:** When I was 18, I refused to obey orders in the Navy. When I got in, having enlisted when I was 17, I was training to be a pilot, and I realized that I didn’t believe in organized violence. I just hated the whole idea. I didn’t want to be trained to be a killer.

I got more and more upset about it and finally refused to obey orders. I asked to be put in the brig. I spent about seven months in the psychoward. They were trying to scare me.

My father came; he was a chaplain in the Army. He’d come back—the war was over by then—and he came up to talk to me. We never got along very well. He’d been very severe and difficult as a father. I told him what I’d

own will; it comes from somewhere that I don’t know. There is so much that comes out of what we don’t know and what we don’t have any control over. I think that one of the only things we can learn as we get older is a certain humility.

**Burgess:** So the alternative that you offer people in your poetry and in your life makes people think again about what is possible if you try.

**van Gelder:** One thing that struck me in reading your work was that, several decades ago, you were identifying the fragility of the human species and the damage we’re doing to the planet. More people are coming to realize that now, but quite late.

**Merwin:** I think it’s natural—literally, in every sense—to love being in the world around us.

When you get into the world of pure economics, where everybody’s supposed to be devoting their waking

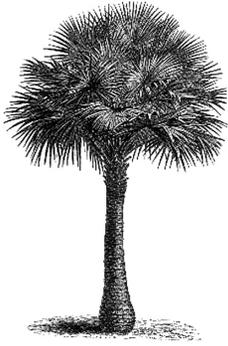
morning, as it’s getting daylight, to some little tree that I planted, and I walk back 10 minutes later, and I’m just happy.

I love seeing the individual trees. That one and that one and that one are all Hawaiian. The others, you know, that’s from New Guinea, and that’s from the Everglades. They’re all from all over the place. They get along together.

**Burgess:** This feels very much like Hawai’i, you know. This and that all living together and figuring it out as they grow. What do you call this place?

**Merwin:** Peahi ... It’s part of the district of Peahi. But Peahi Kahawai is our stream, which has been dry for 100 years thanks to Henry Perrine Baldwin, who cut off the water and drove the Hawaiians out. So the Hawaiians haven’t lived here for 100 years because of that.

A bunch of guys bought the whole valley in the ’20s and ’30s and decided



### *The Laughing Thrush*

O nameless joy of the morning

tumbling upward note by note out of the night  
and the hush of the dark valley  
and out of whatever has not been there

song unquestioning and unbounded  
yes this is the place and the one time  
in the whole of before and after  
with all of memory waking into it

and the lost visages that hover  
around the edge of sleep  
constant and clear  
and the words that lately have fallen silent  
to surface among the phrases of some future  
if there is a future

here is where they all sing the first daylight  
whether or not there is anyone listening

—W.S. Merwin

“The Laughing Thrush,” From *The Shadow of Sirius*, copyright 2009 by W.S. Merwin, published by Copper Canyon Press, coppercanyonpress.org

they were going to make a pineapple plantation, and they plowed the whole valley vertically.

I wanted to have a native rainforest here. It was like planting things on the dirt road to begin with, it’s been so damaged. Paula and I planted about

300 Koa trees [*a highly valued native Hawaiian species*—Eds.] Very few of them survived, and the ones that did got killed off by weevils, which weren’t there back in the old days.

**van Gelder:** And the water that used to

be in your creek? What was it diverted for?

**Merwin:** The big cane fields in the middle of the island. They had an incredibly sophisticated system of tunnels and ditches all along this coast. They stole every drop of water they possibly could.

The fight over the water—of all the Kahawai between here and Hana—is still going on. They’re still stealing water. They’ll have to be forced to stop—like on Oahu where there was the same old fight, with the developers on one side and the Hawaiians on the other.

**Burgess:** Can I ask you what you want to happen to this place?

**Merwin:** Well, we made a conservancy. We’ll put a conservation easement on it to prevent any development. It’s to save the land and a Hawaiian grave down at the bottom here. I want to save that link with [old] Hawai’i, however tenuous it is. And save the trees.

I’ve planted over 800 species of palms—many of them are rare and endangered. There’s one they say we saved here in this garden. It was technically extinct when we got the seeds, and the tree the seeds came from has never flowered again and probably won’t. I’ve grown enough of them to send to nurseries, so it’s back in circulation again.

We’re losing a species every eight or 10 seconds. That’s something you can’t put back. Nobody can put that back. So if we care about it, we’ve got to care a lot. It’s very important.

I would like to have this place saved as much as possible, just because of what it is and what it can reassure people of. It can be a place that people can come and think, “Oh yeah, the world is really here, still.”

That’s what I want. 📍

[YesMagazine.org/merwin](http://YesMagazine.org/merwin) 📍

At home with Poet Laureate W.S. Merwin

Percentage of Americans who, when surveyed, considered “climate change” to be real: **74**

Percentage who considered “global warming” to be real: **68**

Percentage of Republicans who considered “climate change” to be real: **60**

Percentage of Republicans who considered “global warming” to be real: **44**<sup>1</sup>

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Approximate number of feet the seabed off Japan’s coast moved sideways in the March 11, 2011 earthquake: **65**<sup>2</sup>

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Dollars that 93 multinational corporations spent on lobbying for the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004, a year-long “tax holiday”: **282.7 million**

Dollars that the corporations saved on taxes as a result of the legislation: **62.5 billion**<sup>3</sup>

---

Population of Pakistan: **187,340,000**<sup>4</sup>

Number of psychiatrists in Pakistan in 2007: **250**<sup>5</sup>

Population of the state of New York: **19,378,000**<sup>6</sup>

Number of psychiatrists in New York: **3,440**<sup>7</sup>

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Percentage of Americans who think college is affordable for most people today: **22**

Percentage of American college presidents who think college is affordable for most people today: **42**<sup>8</sup>

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Length, in miles, of the planned sub-Saharan “Great Green Wall” of trees, intended to reduce soil erosion: **4,831**

Width, in miles: **9.3**

Number of countries the Great Green Wall will cross: **11**<sup>9</sup>

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Percentage of American private sector jobs that required at least moderate physical activity in 1960: **48**

Percentage of American private sector jobs that require at least moderate physical activity today: **20**

Estimated increase, in pounds, in the weight of the average American male, due to a more sedentary work life: **28**<sup>10</sup>

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Percentage of McDonald’s job applicants hired as a result of the company’s National Hiring Day in April 2011: **6.2**<sup>11</sup>

Percentage of applicants accepted to Harvard for the class of 2015: **6.2**<sup>12</sup>

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Approximate number of different types of fungi growing in the Pacific Northwest: **5,000**

In 2009, number of search and rescue missions for lost mushroom pickers in Oregon: **18**

In 2010: **30+**<sup>13</sup>

**Complete citations at [yesmagazine.org/ptc](http://yesmagazine.org/ptc)**

**1.** University of Michigan News Service, March 8, 2011. **2.** Jonathan Amos, BBC News, May 19, 2011. **3.** Social Science Research Network, April 8, 2009. **4.** Central Intelligence Agency, May 26, 2011. **5.** Khabir Ahmad, *The Lancet*, September 2007. **6.** U.S. Census Bureau, 2010. **7.** Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011. **8.** Pew Research Center, May 15, 2011. **9.** Integrated Regional Information Networks, April 8, 2011. **10.** Public Library of Science, May 25, 2011. **11.** CBSChicago.com, April 28, 2011. **12.** Justin C. Worland, *The Harvard Crimson*, March 31, 2011. **13.** Smithsonian.com, January 27, 2011.

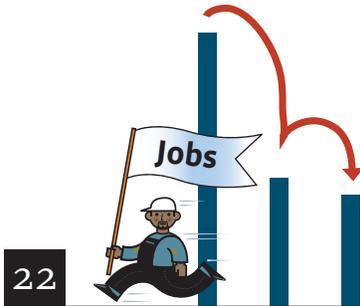
# New *live*lihoods

The jobs crisis has slipped off the political radar, but to ordinary Americans, jobs and the economy are top issues. How can we build strong local economies that sustain us in an era of ecological limits? What can we do to support each other in challenging times, and how can we rebuild the American Dream?



18

**Who's Building the New Economy?**  
Local entrepreneurs, DIYers, community organizers, and movement builders.



22

**Lies, Damned Lies, and Economics.**  
Who benefits from a growing economy? Don't tax breaks create jobs?



26

**The Best Jobs.** Steady work is great. It's even better when you're doing good. Better yet when you own your job.



29

**Urban Artists & Revitalization.**  
Starving artists bring prosperity to a neighborhood? How does that work?



32

**Work Less. Live More.** Share the jobs. Lower your eco-footprint. Reclaim your time. What's not to like?



36

**How Much Job Do You Need?**  
What if the answer is "less"?



38

**Starting Over.** Boomers discover ways to apply their skills and life experience to purposeful second careers.



42

**7 Smart Solutions.** How to get small businesses off the ground with training, technology, work space, and community building.



48

**Van Jones: Rebuild the Dream.** A new movement to defend opportunity and justice, and deepen patriotism.

# Who's Building the Do-it-Ourselfes Economy?



**WE CAN DO IT!**  
Corbyn Hightower and her family are redefining what it means to make a living.

PHOTO BY LANE HARTWELL FOR YES! MAGAZINE

## Sarah van Gelder and Doug Pibel

Corbyn Hightower was doing everything right. She worked long hours selling natural skin care products, flying between cities to meet customers, staying in posh hotels. She pulled down a salary that provided her family of five with a comfortable home in a planned community, a Honda SUV, health insurance, and regular shopping trips for the best natural foods, clothes, shoes, and toys.

Then the recession hit. Her commissions dried up, and the layoff soon followed. Life for Corbyn, her stay-at-home husband, and three children changed quickly.

First the family moved to a low-rent house down the street from a homeless shelter. They dropped cable TV, Wi-Fi, gym membership, and most of the shopping. Giving up health insurance was the most difficult step—it seemed to Corbyn that she was failing to provide for her young daughters. Giving up the car was nearly as difficult.

As our economy goes through tectonic shifts, this sort of adaptation is becoming the new normal. Security for our families will increasingly depend on rebuilding our local and regional economies and on our own adaptability and skills at working together. At the same time, we need government to work on behalf of struggling families and to make the investments that create jobs now and opportunities for coming generations. That will require popular movements of ordinary people, willing to push back against powerful moneyed interests.

### Where Are the Jobs?

How did we get to an economy in which millions are struggling?

Officially, the “Great Recession” ended in the second quarter of 2009. For some people, the recovery is well under way. Corporate profits are at or above pre-recession levels, and the CEOs of the 200 biggest corporations averaged over \$10 million in compensation in 2010—a 23 percent increase over 2009.

But for most Americans, there’s no recovery, and some are confronting homelessness and hunger. Twenty-five million are unemployed,

under-employed, or have given up looking for work. Forty-five percent of unemployed people have been without a job for more than 27 weeks, the highest percentage since the Bureau of Labor Statistics started keeping track in 1948. There’s a growing army of “99ers,” people who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks and have exhausted all unemployment benefits.

Fifty-three percent of Americans say jobs and the economy are the most important issues facing the country; just 7 percent say the deficit is the most important. Yet budget cuts and austerity have replaced job creation in the national dialogue.

American workers have become expendable to many of the corporations that run the economy; NAFTA and other trade laws opened the floodgates of outsourcing to low-wage countries. Many of the jobs that can’t be outsourced are being eliminated, or hours, pay, and benefits are being cut.

As corporations amass greater power, wealth, and influence, they successfully lobby for tax breaks and federal subsidies and set the national policy agenda. As long as the giveaways continue, along with massive military spending, governments have to cut education, public services, and infrastructure investments—and the jobs that go with these public benefits.

### Real Solutions

Leaders in both parties tell us growth is what’s needed, but the evidence suggests growth alone won’t help most Americans. GDP has grown steadily

and is now back to pre-recession levels. But since the official end of the recession, virtually all of the new income—92 percent as of the first quarter of 2011—has gone to corporate profits, according to a May report by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. *None* of the increased GDP has gone to boost wages and salaries.

More importantly, since World War II, growth has been built on cheap energy—particularly petroleum—and low-cost dumping of the effluents of a wasteful global economy. Now the easy-to-pump oil is nearly used up, and the cost of extracting petroleum is rising. At the same time, we’ve used up the Earth’s capacity to absorb climate-changing gases and other forms of pollution. Changes in the delicate balance of atmospheric gases are already disrupting the climate, and extreme weather events are happening with increasing frequency. Growth has failed to yield prosperity, and the planet cannot bear more of it.

So how do we create an economy that provides dignified livelihoods to all who are willing to work, without undermining the natural systems we, and our children, rely on?

A real solution requires a vision that is both humble in terms of the material wealth we can expect and ambitious about the fairness, mutual support, and quality of life we can build.

Here is a three-part plan for building real prosperity in an age of limits:

### 1. Local Economies, Local Ecosystems

The corporate economy has failed to offer economic security to most Americans and has undermined the environment and the living standards of people around the world. Strong local and regional economies are the way to a sustainable and resilient recovery. Small businesses actually create more jobs and innovation than big corporations. And entrepreneurs with long-term stakes in their local environment and economy have both the means and >>

» the motivation to protect them. There are many simple ways individuals and communities can support the transition to local economies.

**Buy local.** By buying goods and services locally and regionally, we keep money circulating in the Main Street economy, where new jobs are most likely to be created. Shop at a big box store, and the money goes to corporate headquarters almost immediately. Buy local food and your money stays home. We can also generate energy locally. Farmers are earning extra income by installing windmills. In Cleveland, a university and the city government are contracting to buy the electricity generated by solar panels a worker-owned co-op installs on their buildings (see page 26). Investment in weatherization immediately creates local jobs while reducing energy payments that leave the community. State and local governments, too, can strengthen their economies, and ultimately their tax bases, by buying as locally as possible. Substitute local for “imported,” and you create local jobs built on the solid foundation of local demand.

**Bank local, too.** Capital is the lifeblood of enterprise. When banks are located in the community, they come to know local businesses and what sorts of loans are likely to work. When banks hold the loans, rather than sell them, they have an incentive to make wise loans. Credit unions, community-rooted banks, and state banks (see page 46) invest in the local economy, instead of siphoning off our bank deposits to use for global speculation.

**Start with strengths.** Under the old economic development strategy, communities compete with each other for jobs by offering corporations ever greater tax breaks and concessions on health and safety regulations and union rights. This race-to-the-bottom strategy may yield occasional wins, but it’s a long-term loser. A more successful strategy is to build economies from the grassroots up, starting with existing assets. For some communities, their primary asset might be a vibrant



PHOTO BY RACHEL SWENIE

#### FORMER MEAT PLANT GOES VEGGIE

Alex Poltorak prepares a hydroponic food-growing system for the rooftop of “The Plant.” A former meatpacking facility in Chicago, The Plant is being deconstructed and transformed into a net-zero-energy vertical farm. Its roof is the site of Poltorak’s first gig; his business, Urban Canopy, turns city roofs into farms. Poltorak wants to shorten the distance food travels “from farm to fork,” he says, “in addition to utilizing idle rooftops, creating local jobs to manage these rooftop farms, and providing more sustainably grown produce for local communities.” —Lily Hicks

local arts scene (see page 29). For others, it’s a natural resource, like forests or farmland. Or it might be a hospital, university, high-tech enterprise, or other “anchor institution” that isn’t going away (see page 26).

Start by finding ways to turn these assets into sustainable livelihoods. An

unused building could provide a place for start-up farmers to try vertical farming, for example. Then look for ways to link these core enterprises to local customers, vendors, a skilled labor pool, and so on.

**Use wasted resources.** Instead of demolishing and landfilling obsolete



SCC PHOTO

## REAL-LIFE BENEFITS FOR WOMEN

Ana Sanchez has worked with Southwest Creations Collaborative in Albuquerque, N.M., for the past 12 years. The business offers living-wage jobs to immigrant women who do handwork, contract sewing, packing, and labeling. “Since we run a ‘communal shop,’ women who take side jobs that they find on their own or that SCC passes up because they are too small can use all of the organization’s machinery,” says Program Director Jessica Aranda. SCC provides on-site child care for working mothers; GED, English as a Second Language, computer literacy, and citizenship classes; and reproductive and preventive health care programs. Moms even get paid time off to visit with their children’s teachers and set academic and behavioral goals. [southwestcreations.com](http://southwestcreations.com) —*Laura Paskus*

buildings, local entrepreneurs are creating jobs by disassembling them and selling components. Other common wastes: used clothes and books and repairable appliances. Unharvested fruit trees. Church kitchens that sit empty most of the week but could be health department certified for food processing start-ups. Methane from landfills, which could heat homes instead of the climate. Front yards that could be farmed. Each wasted resource could be transformed into a job.

**Do it cooperatively.** Well-paid workers are a community asset, and even more so when they own their workplaces. Cooperative work arrangements are available not just to well-educated entrepreneurs. Home health care workers, house cleaners, grocery store clerks, and laundry workers have all become worker-owners of successful cooperatives. These workers tend

to spend their paychecks, and with a steady family income they are more able to contribute to the well-being of their community. And, since they share in the profits of their enterprise, they develop a nest egg they can use for buying a home, educating their children, and helping relatives through difficult times.

**Allow communities to control their resources.** Community-controlled forests are more likely to be sustainably managed than corporate-controlled ones; sustainable agriculture is more labor-intensive but less polluting. Sustainable and fair practices create jobs that last while boosting local resilience.

**Keep ownership human.** When owners are workers, customers, or the community at large, an enterprise can operate in accordance with multiple values, such as human well-being, the good of future generations, and

ecological health. Corporate owners are constrained by law to put profits first.

## 2. Redefining Middle-Class

Building the local and regional economy will create real prosperity and keep the benefits circulating among ordinary people. But we are approaching the end of an era of cheap energy and seemingly limitless growth. To live within our means, we’ll need to produce and consume less stuff. That may mean less paid work available, at least in some sectors of the economy, so it makes sense to share those jobs and work fewer hours (see page 32).

Many Americans work too much and are starved for downtime. A shorter workweek could benefit them while opening new jobs for the unemployed. Productivity increases when workers aren’t overstretched. Profits now going to the wealthiest could be distributed to workers so they could afford to work fewer hours and have more time for the rest of life.

Working less also means we have more time to do things for ourselves.

After Corby Hightower lost her corporate position, her husband started working at a low-wage job. The family saves money by fixing things that break and making things themselves. Corby is refurbishing an old dollhouse with her preschoolers. They spend hours together on this creative project.

Community exchanges transform the Hightowers’ experience from a lonely and scary adventure into a way of life Corby has come to appreciate. She shares the harvest from her pear, apple, and orange trees with her neighbors and gives some fruit to a nearby homeless shelter. Her neighbors share with her their apricots, lemons, peaches, plums, blackberries, and cherries.

Learning new DIY skills and building relationships with friends and neighbors builds greater self-reliance and offers opportunities to develop multiple facets of ourselves.

And frequent exchanges among neighbors help reweave a community >>

» fabric that has been badly frayed by overstressed lives. Once you get the tools to repair your bicycle, you can fix other people's bikes or teach them how. When you're canning jam, it's easy to make some extra for gifts and exchanges.

All this means we can live with less money, so we can afford to spend less time at a job, which also becomes less central as a source of identity. And these rich networks and practical skills enhance our resilience as we face an uncertain future.

### 3. A Movement to Rebuild the Dream

We are still a wealthy country. We could use our tax dollars to put Americans to work replacing obsolete energy, water, transportation, and waste systems with infrastructure that can serve us in the resource-constrained times ahead.

We could invest in universal health coverage, which offers people the security to risk launching new businesses and helps make shorter workweeks more feasible. We could fully fund education and job training.

We could save money by cutting the bloated military budget, oversized prison populations, and the drug war. And we'd have the money if everyone—including the wealthiest Americans and large corporations—paid taxes at the rates they paid during the Clinton administration.

To get these sorts of changes, we need the American government to work for all of us, not just for corporations.

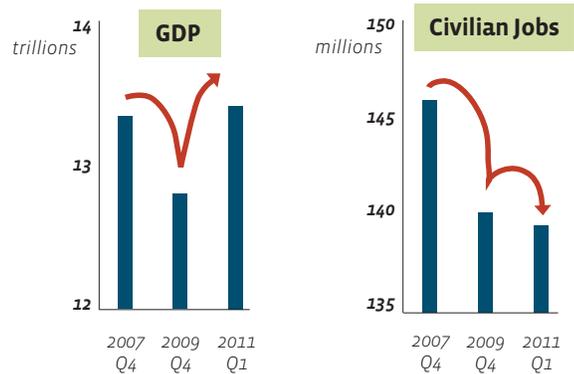
Powerful moneyed interests won't willingly give back the power that has allowed them to acquire most of America's wealth. We need strong people's movements to get government to work for ordinary Americans. That's the way American workers won the 8-hour day, women secured the right to vote, and African Americans ended segregation.

Enlightened politicians may cooperate with these movements, but few will lead them. We the people—through unions, community associations,



### Myth No. 1: Economic growth produces jobs.

*Fact: GDP has grown for seven consecutive quarters since the official end of the recession; no job growth in the same period.*

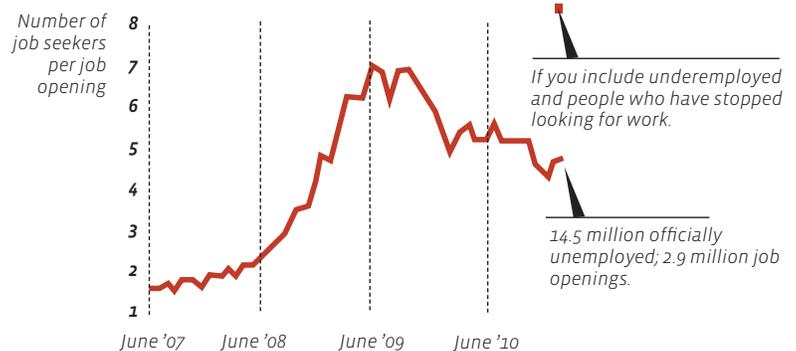


SOURCE: CENTER FOR LABOR MARKET STUDIES, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS



### Myth No. 2: There are plenty of traditional jobs if you just look for them.

*Fact: In May 2011, there were 4.7 unemployed people for every 1 job opening. That number has not gone below 4.3 in 29 months. From 2001 through 2008, it never went above 3.*



SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS



### Myth No. 3: If we cut taxes on big corporations and the wealthy, they'll use the extra cash to create jobs.

*Fact: Corporations are sitting on a record pile of cash—more than \$80 billion. So are big banks, with \$1.6 trillion in excess reserves that they're not lending (before 2008, excess reserves had never been higher than \$3 billion). That's been the case for more than a year. But the unemployment rate is unchanged.*

SOURCE: PAUL KRUGMAN, NYT; RESEARCH.STLOUISFED.ORG

YES! MAGAZINE GRAPHICS, 2011



PHOTO BY LANE HARTWELL FOR YES! MAGAZINE

Corbyn Hightower and her husband, Larry, created a way of life that combines frugality, creativity, community exchange, and enough paid work to make ends meet.

advocacy groups, and local political groups—will have to set our own agenda and insist that government respond. The Movement to Rebuild the American Dream (see page 48), which is bringing together groups ranging from MoveOn.org to AFSCME, offers a promising path toward that end.

### The Do-It-Ourselves Economy

Corbyn's family has not had it easy since they slipped into poverty. They sold their SUV to cover rent and other necessities, and Corbyn blogs about the challenges of biking in the rain and in the blistering heat of the Sacramento area. But she also celebrates getting in shape, saving money, and the discoveries she and her children make when they travel at a slower

pace.

Her 12-year-old tells Corbyn she loves her life. Who wouldn't want chickens in the backyard, long bike rides with the family, and picking apples to take to the homeless shelter?

Corbyn has come to appreciate special moments: "Yesterday we feasted on the first truly awesome strawberries of this spring, red all the way through, without the slightly-too-tart tang of previous early-season pints. We tried to savor them, to make them last, to appreciate each strawberry for how it's slightly different from the rest. The way the sparkling flavor and the seeds make it taste almost carbonated. ...

"I think we have to reinvent 'poor.' Most everyone in my life is enduring new poverty. ... It's an unfamiliar

and scary leap. ... And if it turns out that some of these changes feel good, well, then it's a win-win. The Great Recession is a watershed time for my generation, possibly the era that will live on to define us."

Many of us have stories like Corbyn's from our family histories or maybe from right now—stories of hard work, stubborn resilience, and neighbors helping neighbors. Stories of people waking up each day doing what had to be done for the children.

Our descendants need those qualities from us—not acquiescence to powerful interests or passive acceptance of a no-longer-tenable status quo. Our descendants need us to be as radical and as tenacious as our ancestors were. ●



Left, Green City Growers started up in Summer 2011.  
Right, Ohio Cooperative Solar began turning a profit  
within the first five months of operation.

# Best Job in the Neighborhood —and They Own It

**WORKER CO-OPS EXPANDING DESPITE RUST-BELT ECONOMY**



## Susan Arterian Chang

“I can tell you before Evergreen, we felt like there was nothing left for us,” says Tim Nolen. He and his fellow Evergreen Cooperative worker-owners live in Cleveland’s Greater University Circle community, where the unemployment rate exceeds 25 percent and the median household income is less than \$18,500. “Evergreen grabbed ahold of us and said, ‘Let us help you out.’ It is a great feeling when you have given up hope and someone gives you that hand and says, ‘You don’t have to feel worthless. Here, let’s give you a sense of self-worth.’”

In the heart of an inner city ravaged and abandoned by the global economy, the Evergreen Cooperative has emerged as one of the country’s most promising models of locally based wealth-building. Evergreen grew out of the Greater University Circle Initiative, an unusual collaboration spearheaded by the Cleveland Foundation and including the City of Cleveland, the Ohio Employee Ownership Center, and local institutions (principally Case Western Reserve University, the Cleveland Clinic, and University Hospitals).

In December 2006, Ted Howard,

co-founder of The Democracy Collaborative, outlined for civic leaders the catalytic role that the spending of “captive” anchor institutions like hospitals and universities could play in community wealth generation in Cleveland. He talked at length with local civic leaders about how an anchor-institution-based, worker-cooperative business model might be the engine for the sustainable job creation and wealth-building that had thus far been elusive in Greater University Circle. Democracy Collaborative researchers determined that Case Western Reserve, the Cleveland Clinic, and University Hospitals alone spent more than \$3 billion a year on goods and services—but they spent it almost entirely outside the community.

Howard and his fellow strategists began sketching out a compelling framework for what was to become the Evergreen Cooperatives. The business model involved supplying the needs of the anchor institutions to create steady revenue for a network of worker-owned, local businesses that would be built to be the greenest in their sectors. “Sustainability in the broadest sense can only be created if you can stick capital where it won’t get up and leave,” Howard explains. “You can think of Evergreen as an anchor institution designed to capture the capital flows of other anchors and circulate them locally.”

### **The First Evergreen Cooperatives**

Evergreen’s first two cooperative businesses—the Evergreen Cooperative Laundry and Ohio Cooperative Solar (OCS)—were launched in October 2009. A not-for-profit community newspaper, *The Neighborhood Voice*, was established to communicate the Evergreen vision. A fourth project, Green City Growers, started up operations in the summer of 2011.

Housed in a Certified Silver LEED building, Evergreen Laundry was engineered to consume far less energy and water than its competitors. Although the laundry is not yet operating at capacity, new clients are signing up every month and its first two

customers, both nursing homes, have turned out to be the co-op’s de facto marketing arm. “They say, ‘If you need a reference, just have them call us,’” says Nolen, who was the laundry’s first worker-owner to earn a linen management certificate. “These guys want us to succeed. This is what it can do for you to have the community and businesses in it looking out for you.”

Meanwhile, OCS worker-owners have been busy installing solar panels on the rooftops of Case Western Reserve, the Cleveland Clinic, and University Hospitals. OCS retains ownership of the solar panels, services them for the host institutions, and sells them the electricity the panels generate. The co-op does home weatherization and began turning a profit within the first five months of operation. At the end of the 2011 fiscal year, \$7,300 in profits were transferred into each OCS worker-owner’s capital account—on top of the living wage each earned during the year.

Green City Growers—a 4.1-acre, year-round hydroponic greenhouse and packing facility that utilizes the latest water- and energy-saving technologies—will soon be producing 5 million heads of lettuce and 300,000 pounds of herbs annually. It expects to harvest its first crop in the spring of 2012 and will employ between 30 and 40 workers year-round. Produce will be sold to the local food-service industry, local grocers, and Greater University Circle anchor institutions, allowing purchasers to reduce their food-related carbon footprints substantially and to purchase produce with a longer shelf life.

### **Nurturing the Evergreen Vision**

Evergreen recently established an umbrella organization, the Evergreen Cooperative Corporation (ECC), to be the keeper of the cooperative vision. A central financing mechanism, the Evergreen Cooperative Development Fund, will operate under the ECC to attract capital for expansion of existing co-ops and funding new ones. A portion of each co-op’s profits will be paid into this fund.

To shield the community and the cooperatives from speculators, the Evergreen Land Trust has also been established under the ECC to acquire land for existing and future Evergreen Co-ops, starting with the land under the laundry and greenhouse. The Land Trust will lease land for a 99-year term to cooperative businesses, protecting the Evergreen enterprise as a whole from individual co-op failure or attempts by a co-op to break away and become a separate corporation.

### **Benefits for Worker-Owners and the Community**

Many Evergreen worker-owners were formerly unemployed long-term, have prison records, or have struggled with substance abuse. “We are given a second chance here to get back into society,” says Loretta Bey, OCS’s office and inventory manager.

Evergreen worker-owners have a real day-to-day say in how their companies operate. “They don’t just make decisions without us,” says Bey. “We get to take a vote.” Worker-owners receive free health care, attend monthly open-book financial management discussions, and are offered courses in personal finance and job-related skills training. When workers are paid a share of a co-op’s profits, 20 percent is paid in cash and 80 percent in “capital credits.”

Worker empowerment arises not only from building financial wealth, finding a voice as business managers, and acquiring new work and life skills, but from a sense that they are rebuilding their community. “They get what this is about,” says Howard. “They have lived in these neighborhoods and seen the degradation, and they are beginning to express themselves as leaders of renewal, as working for something that is inspiring hope.”

### **Evergreen’s Economic Impact**

Evergreen envisions incubating up to 10 new, for-profit cooperatives over the medium term with the goal of employing about 500 residents of Greater University Circle. The longer term target is 25 to 50 co-ops employing up to 5,000. >>

» Co-op leaders say it is really too early to quantify Evergreen's impact on the Greater University Circle community, but, says Howard, "the truth is that in the neighborhood where we are creating jobs, literally nothing else is going on." Jim Anderson, CEO of Evergreen Laundry, reports that he senses a palpable surge of pent-up optimism: "We have over 500 applications in our queue, and everyone who walks by the building asks, 'Are you hiring?'"

Medrick Addison, operations manager of Evergreen Laundry, has seen tours of the facility by delegations from all over the country, including the deputy director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and his entourage. "We have to make this work. The eyes of America are upon us," Addison says.

### Not Just a Poor People's Strategy

Communities and cities outside of Cleveland are already latching on to the Evergreen vision. Howard reports that the Democracy Collaborative is working with civic leaders and foundations in Atlanta, in the greater Washington, D.C., metro area, and in the city of Richmond, Calif., to brainstorm anchor-institution-based cooperative strategies that are variations on the Evergreen theme.

Replicating the Evergreen model in the disinvested, low-income neighborhoods of this country, where more than 40 million people live below the poverty line, would have a huge impact, not just on employment levels and the wealth gap, but on civic life. But the Evergreen model is not limited to poor neighborhoods. It can be used anywhere to build the new economy.

"Evergreen is about building your community with the assets you already have in place, leveraging them, doing import substitution, and being mindful of the environmental consequences," says Howard. "All of this is relevant to any community. This is now our work, to prove that it can first be done in Cleveland."

## A Knock at the Door? Green Jobs Calling

New Bedford, a former industrial and whaling town in eastern Massachusetts, hasn't seen much economic prosperity since the early 20th century, the peak of the textile industry. But community leaders hope their town can be the center of a green economy boom, and locals have taken it upon themselves to drum up demand.

Last year, a team of community organizers knocked on 3,000 doors, urging homeowners and small businesses to commit to energy audits and energy-efficiency improvements. Community organizers also founded a minority-owned green company to do the weatherization work and to help locals prepare their homes for efficiency upgrades—for instance, replacing old wiring so they can install insulation. The project is partly financed by a public utility, in response to state energy mandates.

Communities across the country are creating green jobs from the ground up, financed by consumer demand, utility fees, some creative new funding models, and a combination of federal, state, and local money. In Oakland, Calif., an organization called Solar Mosaic is "crowdfunding" solar power. For \$100, anyone can buy a share in one of several planned solar projects, to be installed atop community buildings. "You just cut out Wall Street," says Jakada Imani, executive director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, a partner organization of Solar Mosaic. "You can just go to the people in the community to fund it."

The Ella Baker Center and a coalition of community groups have also successfully pushed the city to investigate whether more green-jobs financing could come from a public fund generated by consumer fees paid to Pacific Gas and Electric. Twenty-two states require energy utilities to maintain similar funds, according to the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The coalition believes that Oakland's share of the fund could help finance the city's greenhouse-gas reduction plan, which aims to slash carbon emissions 36 percent below 2005 levels in the next decade.

Nearly one million Americans worked in resource-efficiency and renewable-energy jobs in 2010, according to the Brookings Institution. But with federal support lagging, it may take some creative state and local financing to spur the clean energy economy, especially in places with high unemployment and little spare cash, like New Bedford. —*Madeline Ostrander*

Sharon Kaiser, a supervisor and worker-owner at Evergreen Laundry, reports that her friends and family are eager to hear about what is happening inside Evergreen. "They want to know what they can do to be part of this," she says. "It is a very positive thing for the community." This expressed longing to participate in Evergreen's model of sustainable wealth-building should not be underestimated. As Howard

describes it, Evergreen is unleashing a powerful force: "the energy of people to become actors in history in their own lifetimes." 📌

This article was adapted by the author from a case study for Capital Institute's *Field Guide for Investing in a Resilient Economy*. [capitalinstitute.org](http://capitalinstitute.org)

[YesMagazine.org/evergreen](http://YesMagazine.org/evergreen) 🌱

The Democracy Collaborative's Ted Howard on why the Evergreen Cooperatives work to transform local economies.

# Painting the Town Prosperous

URBAN ARTISTS REVIVE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS  
AND SHOW US HOW TO SHARE OUR GIFTS



PHOTO BY ALEJANDRO ALVAREZ

Painter James Burns has worked with Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program for nine years. He has been amazed by how powerful the murals have been for community residents. By the time this mural, "Personal Renaissance," was finished, 1,500 people had worked on it.

## James Trimarco

Artists have always been creative about finding ways to get by, and new research shows that their survival strategies actually make a community more stable and self-sufficient.

For example, a report by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania has found that poor Philadelphia neighborhoods with a large number of working artists have lower rates of child truancy and delinquency, as well as higher social cohesion. These neighborhoods are also more likely to revitalize economically and culturally, and their residents are more willing to pitch in during community activities. Other researchers have come to similar

### The Dreams of Many Painters

In Philadelphia, you don't need to step inside a museum or gallery to understand the impact artists have had. Almost anywhere you look, from the city's poorest neighborhoods to its interational airport, you'll find one of the 3,000 vivid murals created by the Mural Arts Program (MAP). Described by Mayor Michael Nutter as "the best mural arts program anywhere in the world," MAP's murals present images from the dreams and everyday lives of Philadelphians on a grand scale.

James Burns has worked with MAP for nine years as a painter and artist. He has been amazed by how powerful the murals have been for community

the street for a year feeling a lot better about themselves in terms of where they're at in life," Burns explains, "I couldn't have anticipated that."

The mural that emerged from those sessions covers one entire side of the clinic building. The cloud-filled sky painted in the upper half of the mural blends with the real skyline behind it, so that the addicts pulling each other out of the gloom and darkness in the mural's lower half seem truly present on the street.

The mural wasn't just a source of inspiration—it also created jobs. The project employed clinic patients on a short-term basis as painters, and the most motivated were hired for longer

## ARTISTS BRING MONEY TO THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS, KNIT THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER, AND INCREASE ITS CAPACITY TO OVERCOME ECONOMIC CHALLENGES.

conclusions about neighborhoods in Chicago and Silicon Valley.

Of course, the arts have always made an economic contribution by creating jobs and circulating money. According to a report by Americans for the Arts, the nonprofit arts sector generated \$166.2 billion in economic activity in 2005 and supported 5.7 million full-time jobs, both in the arts and the industries that support them. But the value of the arts goes beyond the formal economy. Artists—always in need of collaborators, resources, and audiences—are often master negotiators, and the friendships, alliances, and other types of social relationships they create help strengthen their communities.

That's one reason why artists manage to survive even in tough times, and why a vibrant arts scene is one key to rebuilding a thriving local economy.

residents, thousands of whom have been involved in their design and creation.

In 2010, for example, Burns collaborated with the patients of a methadone clinic to create a mural called "Personal Renaissance," about recovery from addiction. Burns involved the patients at every stage of the process. The design was based on raps and poems they created during sessions with spoken word artist Ursula Rucker.

In the early stages of the project, some of the patients were enthusiastic and others indifferent. "I don't think people realized the scale of the project we were working on," Burns says. "Once it became evident, the attitude changed. I saw people grow by leaps and bounds during the time I was there."

Burns worked hard to get the whole community involved: 1,500 people had worked on the mural by the time it was finished. The process was transformative. "To see somebody who's been off

engagements, then rehired when MAP started work on a much larger mural, "How Philly Moves," now installed at the city's airport.

Burns describes this kind of employment as a "waystation," because the Mural Arts Program looks after its workers—who may be prisoners, addicts, or youth who have spent time in juvenile detention—in a way a regular employer might not. Later on, the program helps them find long-term work.

### The Economy of Abundance

In a tough economy, the community-centric nature of the arts allows artists to survive and contribute to creative local enterprise. But some of that contribution happens outside traditional measures of cash flow and job growth.

In New York City, for instance, the unemployment rate among artists in 2009 was 9.5 percent—a full point higher than the city's average. Caroline Woolard, a Brooklyn-based artist, has



OURGOODS PHOTO

During events organized by the network OurGoods, based in New York City, artists learn tips for successful bartering and identify what they need and what they can share.

some ideas about why that is. “Most artists get into this kind of work not thinking about money or even supply and demand,” she says. Instead, they run on what she calls an “economy of abundance,” fueled by their own “unlimited desire to continue producing.”

“I think there is an audience for every work,” Woolard says, “but you need networks of creative people to help them find each other.”

That realization led her, along with four other young artists, to found OurGoods.org, a website that facilitates bartering among creative people. The site offers crafts and services such as singing lessons, writing classes, and hand-tailored dresses, as well as paintings, sculptures, and other artwork.

Louise Ma, another OurGoods co-founder, is currently trading web design for fresh produce grown by young farmers just a few miles up the Hudson River. In the past, she’s translated interviews, designed flyers, and sketched portraits, usually in exchange

for groceries or cooking. Yet she values the network of generous and creative people she’s met and collaborated with even more than the great meals.

OurGoods currently has nearly 400 members scattered in locations around the world; most live in New York.

### The Art of Resilience

Some people believe that artists’ successes come with a cost: Artsy neighborhoods might become more expensive and suffer gentrification. But research findings in Philadelphia suggest that’s not true. Artists actually increase the stability of a neighborhood’s population.

“There is a synergy among artists, local arts organizations, and creative communities where each fosters and sustains the other,” says arts scholar Bill Cleveland, director of the Center for the Study of Art and Community. Artists bring money to their neighborhoods, knit the community together, and increase its capacity to overcome economic challenges.

Artists do this by finding alternative ways to exchange value for materials and spaces they need but often can’t afford. Their contributions range from the lofty and complex—such as helping a neighborhood visualize and find meaning in its history—to simple, tangible products and innovations.

Each of these alternative forms of exchange involves resources artists create and control themselves, not funds that can be cut off by a bank or credit agency. That means local arts have the potential to be surprisingly resilient. And artists’ unique combination of innovation, inspiration, and practicality may be just what communities need to weather the economic, ecological, and political uncertainties that lie ahead. 



**James Trimarco** is a writer and activist based in New York City.

[YesMagazine.org/mural-arts](http://YesMagazine.org/mural-arts)   
How art healed and united Philadelphia communities

4

DIY Jobs

## URBAN FARMERS FOR HIRE

Donna Smith works with Patricia and Andrew Nimelman at their home in Portland, Ore., where they receive monthly installments of plant starts, seeds, and instructions. Working just 30 hours a week, Smith earns a living doing what she likes best—farming. Smith and her business partner, Robyn Streeter, run Your Backyard Farmer, which helps its clients plant, tend, and harvest organic gardens in their yards. Families design a menu of veggies to grow, then sit back and wait for their harvest. Smith and Streeter currently tend or consult with 57 farms and have helped farmers around the world start similar programs. —*Krista Vogel*

# Less Work, More Living

WORKING FEWER HOURS COULD SAVE OUR ECONOMY,  
SAVE OUR SANITY, AND HELP SAVE OUR PLANET.

## Juliet Schor

Millions of Americans have lost control over the basic rhythm of their daily lives. They work too much, eat too quickly, socialize too little, drive and sit in traffic for too many hours, don't get enough sleep, and feel harried too much of the time. It's a way of life that undermines basic sources of wealth and well-being—such as strong family and community ties, a deep sense of meaning, and physical health.

Imagining a world in which jobs take up much less of our time may seem utopian, especially now, when a scarcity mentality dominates the economic conversation. People who are employed often find it difficult to scale back their jobs. Costs of medical care, education, and child care are rising. It may be hard to find new sources of income when U.S. companies have been laying people off at a dizzying rate.

But fewer work hours for people with jobs is a key step toward solving the unemployment crisis—while giving Americans healthier lives. Fewer hours means more jobs are available to people who need them. Living on less pay usually means consuming less, making more of the things one needs at home, and living lighter, whether by design or by accident. >>

PHOTO BY SUSAN SEUBERT



## EARN LESS, SPEND LESS, EMIT AND DEGRADE LESS. THAT'S THE FORMULA. THE MORE TIME A PERSON HAS, THE BETTER HIS OR HER QUALITY OF LIFE, AND THE EASIER IT IS TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY.

» Today, driven both by necessity and the deliberate choice to live simply, more Americans are shifting toward fewer work hours. It's a trend that, if done correctly, could get us out of our current economic crisis and away from unsustainable economic growth.

### Finding Time

Economists today focus solely on growth as a mechanism for job creation. But for much of the industrial age, falling hours have been roughly as important a contributor to employment as market growth.

The grueling schedules of the 19th century undermined health and prevented people from achieving what we now call quality of life. Hours of work in the United States began to decline after about 1870—from about 3,000 a year to 2,342 by 1929. In 1973 annual work hours stood at 1,887 (fewer than 40 hours per week, on average). If hours hadn't fallen, unemployment would have grown even before the 1930s Depression.

Since the 1970s, Americans have been working longer. According to government survey data, the average working person was putting in 180 more hours of work in 2006 than he or she was in 1979. The trends are more pronounced on a household basis. Many more men are working schedules in excess of 50 hours a week. (Thirty percent of male college graduates and 20 percent of all full-time male workers are on schedules that usually exceed 50 hours.)

Not surprisingly, over the last 20 years, a large number of U.S. employees report being overworked. A 2004 study found that 44 percent

of respondents were often or very often overworked, overwhelmed at their jobs, or unable to step back and process what's going on. A third reported being chronically overworked. These overworked employees had much higher stress levels, worse physical health, higher rates of depression, and a reduced ability to take care of themselves than their less-pressured colleagues.

But there are recent signs that a culture shift toward shorter hours has begun. In 1996, when I first surveyed on this issue, 19 percent of the adult population reported having made a voluntary lifestyle change during the previous five years that entailed earning less money. In a 2004 survey by the Center for a New American Dream, 48 percent did.

The stagnant economy, difficult as it is, represents an opportunity for expanding the norm of part-time work. In the first year of the recession, many businesses avoided layoffs by reducing hours through furloughs, unpaid vacations, four-day workweeks, and flex-time. By mid-2009, one study of large firms found that 20 percent had reduced hours to forestall job cuts. Unfortunately, a lack of institutional support for short hours policies reversed many of those programs, as economist Dean Baker argued in a recent paper. Baker hypothesizes that businesses would provide an additional 1 to 2 million jobs a year if workers could collect unemployment insurance when they are on short schedules.

One thing we do know is that people who voluntarily start working less are generally pleased. In the

New Dream survey, 23 percent said they were not only happier, but they didn't miss the money. Sixty percent reported being happier, but missed the money to varying degrees. Only 10 percent regretted the change. And I've also found downshifters who began with a job loss or an involuntary reduction in pay or hours, but came to prefer having a wealth of time.

### The Wealth We Make Ourselves

Earn less, spend less, emit and degrade less. That's the formula. The more time a person has, the better his or her quality of life, and the easier it is to live sustainably. A study by David Rosnick and Mark Weisbrot of the Center for Economic and Policy Research estimated that if the United States were to shift to the working patterns of Western European countries, where workers spend on average 255 fewer hours per year at their jobs, energy consumption would decline about 20 percent. New research I have conducted with Kyle Knight and Gene Rosa of Washington State University, looking at all industrialized countries over the last 50 years, finds that nations with shorter working hours have considerably smaller ecological and carbon footprints.

There's also a small but growing body of studies that examine these questions at the household scale. A French study found that, after controlling for income, households with longer working hours increased their spending on housing (buying larger homes with more appliances), transport (longer hours reduced the use of public transportation), and hotels and restaurants. A recent Swedish study

found that when households reduce their working hours by 1 percent, their greenhouse gas emissions go down by 0.8 percent. One explanation is that when households spend more time earning money, they compensate in part by purchasing more goods and services, and buying them at later stages of processing (e.g., more prepared foods). People who have more time at home and less at work can engage in slower, less resource-intensive activities. They can hang their clothing on the line, rather than use an electric dryer. More important, they can switch to less energy-inten-

People are returning to lost arts practiced by earlier generations—woodworking, quilting, brewing beer, and canning and preserving. They are also hunting, fishing, and sewing. People engage in these activities because they enjoy them and they yield better-quality products or products that are not easily available. Producing artisanal jams, sauces, and smoked meats, or handmade sweaters, quilts, and clothing makes these pricey items affordable.

Self-provisioning is also getting popular in housing. For example, the movement toward straw-bale homes

at producing. With this specialization, self-provisioning becomes a pathway to incubating a set of small businesses that will flourish as the sustainable economy takes off.

A large-scale switch to less work and more production and self-provisioning at home will require some collective solutions. We need systems that provide basic security to all individuals and families—from childhood through old age. Access to basic needs such as education and health care must be widely affordable.

But it's possible for many people to

## DOING-IT-YOURSELF, OR SELF-PROVISIONING, IS NOW ON THE RISE, BOTH BECAUSE OF A CULTURE SHIFT AND BECAUSE IN HARD TIMES, PEOPLE HAVE MORE TIME AND LESS MONEY.

sive but more time-consuming modes of transport (mass transit or carpool versus private auto, train versus airplane). They can garden and cook at home. They can meet more of their basic needs by making, fixing, doing, and providing things themselves.

Doing-it-yourself, or self-provisioning, is now on the rise, both because of a culture shift and because in hard times people have more time and less money.

In April 2009, according to a national survey, one in five Americans said they were making plans to plant a garden that year. After the recession hit, service-oriented businesses such as salons, pet groomers, and nannies experienced a decline in business as people began doing these things for themselves. An annual expo called Maker Faire that started in California has been attracting growing numbers of do-it-yourselfers and inventors. It's spreading to new locations around the country, and attendance has reportedly quadrupled since 2006.

has taken off in the Southwest. Straw-bale construction has become prevalent enough that some localities have introduced code for it, and there are even banks that lend for these structures. People are also experimenting with the use of compressed earth bricks, poured earth, "papercrete" (which uses recycled paper and a small amount of concrete), and a variety of other materials. New Englanders have revived the colonial-era tradition of community barn-raising, only now they're coming together to build yurts.

As failed housing markets around the country stagnate, one can expect more real estate refugees to construct their own debt-free shelter with recycled, low-cost, or no-cost materials.

Self-provisioning is also a spur to entrepreneurial activity. Most people who practice it don't self-provide everything. They find some productive activities they prefer, are more skilled at, or can do more easily. They trade or sell what they're best

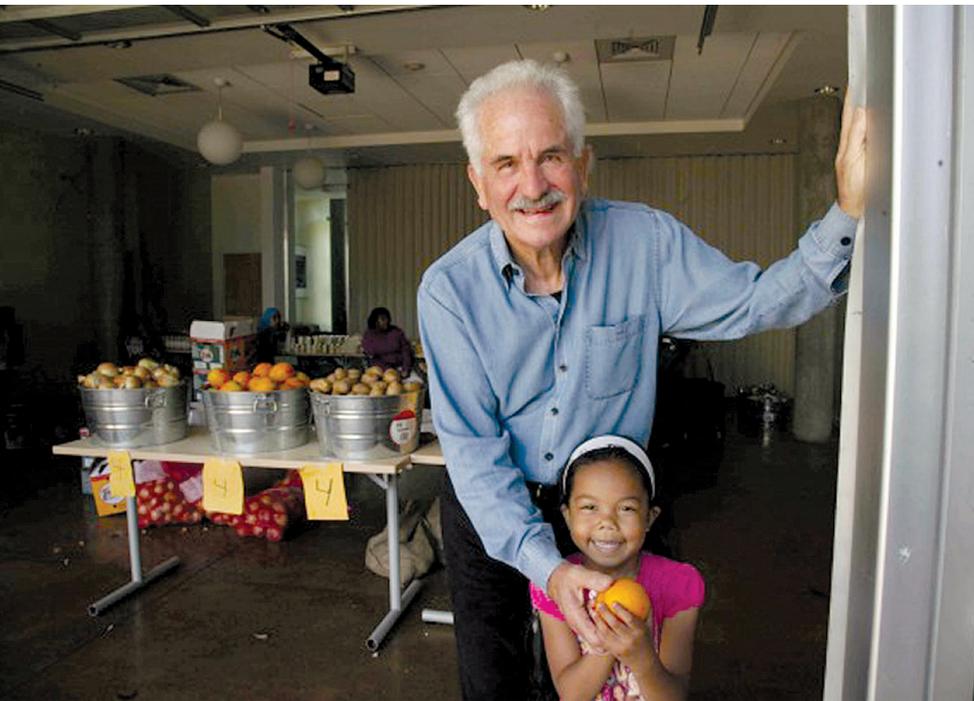
take small steps—right now—toward fewer job hours and more self-sufficiency. There are challenges, to be sure, but for many, the switch from paper-pushing to gardening has been welcome. Self-providers value their newfound skills, love the chance to be creative, and are getting satisfaction and security from constructing a more self-reliant lifestyle. The ability to work for oneself is highly valued. They are nourished by connection with the earth. Perhaps most important, they are rewarded by the opportunity to live without endangering others and the planet. 📍



**Juliet Schor** is professor of sociology at Boston College and the author of the national bestseller *The Overspent American*. This article is adapted from *True Wealth* by Juliet Schor. Reprinted by arrangement with Penguin Books, a member of Penguin Group (USA), Inc. Copyright (c) Juliet Schor, 2011.

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How to take back your time—and share it, too.



FARM TO FAMILY PHOTO

Gary Maxworthy

# STARTING OVER

## ELDERS A (LABOR) FORCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Marc Freedman

**W**e're a nation that will soon have more older people than young ones, and much of the popular media portrays this as a disaster story that goes something like this: Tens of millions of people, the single biggest group in society and a mighty political force, are about to dominate the scene. Overnight at age 60, they will become the elderly, pass out of the "working-age population," become incompetent and incontinent, bankrupt the health care system, and vote for hefty increases in public spending on their retirement at the expense of everyone else.

We've stretched the average life span from 47 years in 1900 to

nearly 80 today. But our imagination about the shape of those longer lives has lagged behind. Until not long ago, the 50s and 60s meant retirement, grandparenthood, senior discounts, and early-bird specials. Today there is a growing group of what I call "neither-nors." Neither young nor old, neither ready to be retired nor able to afford it.

With big thinking, there is a chance to tap the talents and experience of the "baby boom" generation to solve long-standing social problems, from health care to homelessness, education to the environment. There is a chance to turn an older population into a new workforce for social change.

Some people, like Gary Maxworthy, are leading the way. As an idealistic young man, Maxworthy wanted to heed JFK's call to service, but he already had a family to support. Instead of joining the Peace Corps, he launched a career in the food-distribution business, where he worked for more than 30 years.

As Maxworthy approached 60, his wife's passing sent him into a period of soul-searching. He thought a lot about his old Peace Corps dream and the prospect of returning to it. In the end, he chose a more manageable domestic option, VISTA, part of the AmeriCorps national service program.

VISTA placed Maxworthy at the San Francisco Food Bank, where he discovered that—like food banks throughout the state of California—it was primarily giving out canned and processed food. It was all they could reliably deliver without food spoiling.

Maxworthy knew that California farmers were discarding tons of blemished but wholesome fruits and vegetables that were not up to supermarket standards. He launched Farm to Family, a program that in 2010 distributed more than 100 million pounds of fresh food to needy families in California.

Without question Maxworthy would have done a lot of good as a 22-year-old Peace Corps volunteer. But would he have been able to do something comparable to developing a system to distribute 100 million pounds of food to hungry people every year?

Never before have so many people, like Maxworthy, had so much life experience and the time and the capacity to do something significant with it. That's the gift of longevity, the great potential payoff from all the progress we've made in extending lives.

But we won't collect this experience dividend if we don't move to recognize a new stage of life and create the kind of support people need to transition from the end of midlife to the beginning of their encore years. We need innovation.

How about inventing a gap year for grown-ups, a time when they could take a break, volunteer at home or abroad, or try a new career direction? A gap year—perhaps financed by a new tax-exempt savings vehicle we could call the Individual Purpose Account—could be a source of renewal for those embarking on a new career chapter.

What about midlife fellowships for those seeking roles that combine purpose with a paycheck? And why stop there: Let's rethink our entire education system. Why cram so much learning into our teens and early 20s when we may want to move in a whole new direction in our 50s, 60s, and 70s?

By capitalizing on the unique assets of this vast population, we can make something extraordinary out of what so many think of as the leftover years. The right public policies could even provide new chances for social mobility. Today's boomers are the first wave passing into this new period, which will soon be occupied by their longer-living children and grandchildren. In crafting our society to respond, we'll open up options for younger people, who could then make life decisions with the expectation of more than one bite of the apple.

We all have a stake in this project. It's our chance to turn the purported paradox of longevity—good for individuals, terrible for society—into a vast payoff for all generations, today and tomorrow. ♻️

**Marc Freedman** is founder and CEO of Civic Ventures (encore.org). This article is adapted and excerpted from his book *The Big Shift: Navigating the New Stage Beyond Midlife* (PublicAffairs, 2011).

# STARTING OUT

## GRADUATES GET CRASH COURSE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH OTHER



Rebecca Rosenfelt in Paris

### Malcolm Harris

Not so long ago, the expectation was that a college degree placed graduates on the first rungs of a stable career ladder. But high unemployment has left many young Americans unable to even find the ladder. Recent graduates are going into debt to take extended unpaid internships, often after going deeply in debt to get their degree. Or they're balancing unstable contract work with spells of unemployment, taking McJobs with no prospects, or moving into Mom's basement.

But some young people are finding or inventing ways to make a living and maybe even make a difference. >>



» In 2009, three years out of college and a year into the recession, Wesleyan graduate Rebecca Rosenfelt started her own company, Inhabit, a service for apartment and house vacation rentals. Like the collaborative consumption enterprise of car

talented friends were unemployed and available to pitch in.” Self-employed people like Rosenfelt make some trade-offs: Being your own boss means no one times your lunch, but the emails never stop coming.

The same desire for independence

one is taking root. Friends warned her before she left of criminals lurking in every abandoned house and dark alleyway. Instead she found streets buzzing with activity, young people running shops and cafes in storefronts where rent was cheap, and laid-off workers planting gardens in empty lots and starting sustainable communities. The deconstruction of Detroit created opportunities along with the destruction. The disruption of an economic crisis can allow a city—or a generation—to step back and reassess values. Johnson writes, “Within our lifetimes, many of us will have to find new ways to get our needs met, and a new meaning of what ‘the good life’ really is. Those who have stayed in Detroit are pioneers. It’s like what happens to a forest after a great fire. At first glance, it looks like everything is dead. But, if you look closer you’ll find that the rich soil is fertile and ready for planting.

## WHETHER LIVING OUT OF A BACKPACK AS A NOMAD FREELANCER, OR STARTING A COOPERATIVE, YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FINDING WAYS TO SURVIVE INDEPENDENT OF CORPORATE JOBS.

sharing, Inhabit’s Internet site connects existing resources—in this case, homes—with people who want to rent them, sometimes for less than the price of a hotel. From wine-makers in Sonoma to wine-drinkers in Paris, 100 people rent out their properties. Inhabit works, not just in spite of the economic downturn, but partly because of it.

It turns out that the non-traditional work life appeals to Rosenfelt more than the well-trod corporate path. “I’ve always had a bit of an entrepreneurial streak, and I wanted to try my hand at making my own way in the world, when the cost would be low,” she said. “The bad economic climate meant that not only was there less stigma in not having a regular job, but many

cropped up repeatedly in the essays from 20-somethings I assembled for *Share or Die*. I asked for stories of young people finding new and productive ways of surviving the recession, and a common narrative emerged from the submissions. There’s more than enough fear and pain to go around, but ventures in the “real world” aren’t fueled just by anxiety. Whether living out of a backpack as a nomad freelancer, or starting a cooperative, young people are finding ways to survive independent of corporate jobs. Sharing resources, skills, and social energy is especially important to making this work.

Milicent Johnson wrote about visiting Detroit, a city where the old paradigm has clearly failed, but a new

Detroit’s ground is fertile and being seeded.”

If any generation is equipped for recession, it’s this one. Educated to be flexible and creative, unemployed young graduates are like samurai without masters. Their passion and energy isn’t about saving capitalism from crisis but about finding a place for themselves in a world that won’t stay still or slow down. America’s Generation Y is faced with a great challenge, but if what I’ve seen is any indication, we’re up to the task. 

**Malcolm Harris** is a Brooklyn-based writer who focuses on higher education and generational politics. He is a contributing editor to *Shareable.net*, managing editor of *The New Inquiry* website, and editor of *Share or Die* ([shareable.net/share-or-die](http://shareable.net/share-or-die)).

# 7 Smart Solutions for *diy* Jobs

One alternative to looking for a job is to make your own. Here are seven ways communities are offering tools, training, and bright ideas to get workers started.



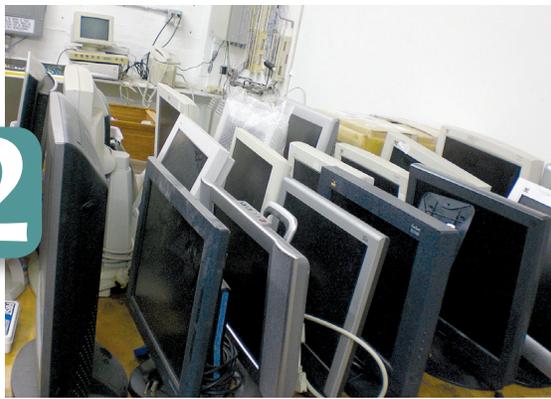
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## Hot Bread Kitchen in Queens, N.Y.

*A training program and kitchen incubator that helps people from low-income communities get started in the food business.*

PHOTO BY KRISTIN GLADNEY

# 2



**Free Geek in Portland, Ore.**  
*Rebuilt computers in exchange for labor.*

## I. Recipe for a Start-up

While food businesses have traditionally gotten started in personal kitchens, most states now require any food sold commercially to be prepared in a kitchen monitored by a health inspector. That requirement is too costly for many would-be entrepreneurs. People who want to start a food business in Cambridge, Mass., can rent professional kitchen space on an hourly basis from CropCircle, a nonprofit “kitchen incubator” that provides technical assistance and access to equipment like convection ovens and blast freezers. Starting a food business through CropCircle, or one of the other kitchen incubators that have opened around the country, helps keep costs manageable, and entrepreneurs can quickly scale up production when they’re ready.

CropCircle members can take a food safety class that prepares them for the state certification they’ll need to go out on their own. Operations Manager Darnell Adams cites the logistical challenges confronting food entrepreneurs, and says there’s room in the market for more kitchen incubators and the help they provide.

Some kitchen incubators focus on a specific population, such as immigrants or organic food producers, but Adams says CropCircle is “here for anyone who has an idea that is viable,” which is why a day on the job might have her sampling kimchi, carob peppermint cookies, or baba ghanoush. —*Colleen Shaddox*

## 2. Free Computers

Computers are vital for almost any business, but not everyone can afford to buy one. Free Geek in Portland, Ore., can help. Volunteers donate 24 hours of their time to deconstruct and rebuild donated computers in exchange

for one of their own. Free Geek’s build program guides them through the process of constructing five computers, so they can take home the sixth. A grants program allows nonprofits to apply for computer donations.

Free Geek also offers computer classes, tech support, and a thrift store that sells desktop computers and peripherals at a fraction of retail prices. This keeps computer equipment out of the landfill, working for the local economy, and connecting people to jobs, work, and the world.

For those not living near Portland, Free Geek has numerous affiliates across the country. These affiliates must follow guidelines that include: disposing of equipment in ethical and environmentally responsible ways, using free and open-source software when possible, providing affordable or free tech training, using democratic and transparent governing policies, and being a nonprofit business. —*Krista Vogel*

## 3. Quality Child Care

Working parents with young children need quality, affordable child care, while many parents staying at home with their children need a way to earn a living. Nicole Richardson got assistance from an organization that addresses both these needs.

Richardson came from a big family and always wanted to run a child care business. But realizing that dream required her to navigate complex regulations and make renovations to her home, where the business would be based. She turned to All Our Kin (AOK), a nonprofit in New Haven, Conn. All Our Kin prepared her for certification as a child development associate, helped her apply for her license, and provided technical assistance, including one-on-one mentorship from a master teacher. AOK clients get boxes of free materials that range from smoke detectors to art supplies, and Richardson even got a low-interest loan to fence her yard. »

**Citizen Space in San Francisco, Calif.**

*A ready-made office with technology, atmosphere, and instant colleagues.*

5

» “I don’t feel like I’m babysitting kids,” she says. “I feel like I’m an educator.” Today she is certified as an Early Head Start provider and employs an assistant to help care for five infants and toddlers.

AOK opened in reaction to welfare reform, which pushed mothers into low-paying jobs that didn’t cover the cost of child care. Founders Jessica Sager and Janna Wagner began training women to provide outstanding child care in their homes. They expanded AOK’s work when many existing child care providers in Connecticut started going under. They believed that with good training and support these businesses could be sustainable and extend high quality care to neighborhoods where it was scarce. Their strategy worked: The number of providers is actually increasing in New Haven.

With the right skills, child care can be a great career, according to Richardson. “If you have the love for the kids, I recommend it,” she says. —C.S.

## 4. Ignite! Local Business

Training and mutual support go a long way in making small enterprises viable. That’s no secret to the graduates of Urban FIRE (Financial Intelligence, Responsible Entrepreneurship), a nonprofit in Oakland, Calif., that provides an affordable “crash course” for would-be entrepreneurs in the inner city.

The resulting new businesses are launched every year at the Ignite! New Business Expo, a showcase to encourage community support.

Teamwork extends beyond the classroom for Urban FIRE graduates. The founder of Our Cuban Kitchen in Oakland, for example, buys the restaurant’s desserts and marketing services from fellow graduates. It’s just the sort of collaboration that Urban FIRE founder Boku Kodama envisions as the basis of a local economy. “What Ignite!



PHOTO BY SCOTT BEALE / LAUGHING SQUID

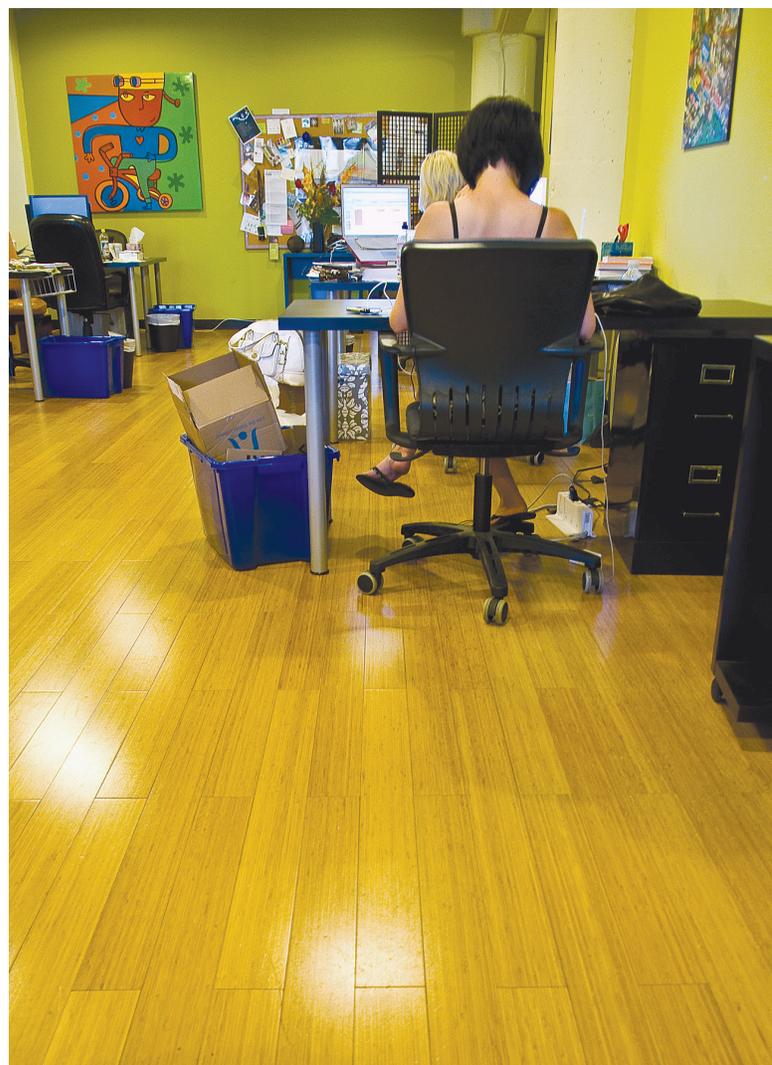


PHOTO BY JOSH HALLETT

and Urban FIRE attempt to do is create intra-dependent villages within their communities so that they can be more self-sustainable without relying on so-called social service programs,” he says. —*Lily Hicks*

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## 5. Instant Office

Independent workers may need a ready-made office for just a few hours, or all day, every day, and that’s just what’s provided by Citizen Space in San Francisco, Calif. Freelancers can pay a small fee to drop in occasionally, or a monthly membership for dedicated desk space, 24/7 building access, conference rooms, and office amenities. But this is more than just an office. It’s one of the growing number of coworking spaces that has sprouted throughout Europe and North America in the past five years as collaborative alternatives to working from home.

Citizen Space gives members access to a computer clinic on efficient use of technology—vital to independents whose computers serve as business hubs. It’s just one of the classes and events offered to promote good business practices and encourage social interaction. The networking opportunities are endless, and the atmosphere—somewhere between an office and a coffee shop—proves that people don’t need to work for the same company to be colleagues. —*Krista Vogel*

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## 6. Factory at Your Fingertips

What would you make if you could run a factory from your laptop? It’s a real option, at least if you live near a Fab Lab. Developed at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Fab Labs are a suite of industrial fabrication tools controlled by a personal computer.

The first Fab Lab outside MIT, at Lorain County Community College in Elyria, Ohio, has allowed entrepreneurs to start microbusinesses producing everything from knitting tools to circuit boards. Fab Labs currently support small businesses in scattered sites around the United States and even more so in the developing world.

Some of these products may find their way back to the States. A wireless network that helped Afghan farmers keep track of their sheep was repurposed in Kenya as a way to provide Internet access. Now people in Detroit are talking about adopting the system to provide low-cost wireless service. —*C.S.*

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## 7. Organizing Freelancers

Offering your services on a temporary basis is one way to find work at a time when employers are reluctant to create permanent jobs. Contract workers make up 30 percent of the American workforce, and their numbers are increasing. The Freelancers Union offers “solidarity, benefits, community, and a political voice” to these consultants, independent contractors, temps, part-timers, and contingent employees. The 156,000-member organization is not actually a union in that it offers no collective bargaining. But it advocates for the rights of independent workers, and provides support in the form of group benefits such as 401K plans, health insurance (in certain states), disability insurance, and member discounts.

Increasingly, universities and colleges employ part-time, contingent, and adjunct instructors, who are sometimes paid less than the cleaning staff, and work without benefits or job security. The American Federation of Teachers is a trade union that now includes workers throughout education, health care, and public service, as well as adjunct professors. The American Association of University Professors and the New Faculty Majority are not unions but do fight for adjunct rights.

The United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers (UE) of America describes itself as a member-run, independent union. UE has a growing membership that includes a range of occupations and represents approximately 35,000 workers in more than 140 autonomous locals around the country.

Whether these and other newer professional unions grow to have the political and economic clout of the Teamsters or SEIU remains to be seen. But in the age of social networking there are new avenues for organizing from the ground up.—*Larry Buhl*

# How State Banks Bring the Money Home

ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING FINANCIAL STRATEGIES FOR JOB CREATION



PHOTO BY ELLIS GRAFTON

## Stacy Mitchell

One of the most significant, but least noticed, consequences of the rapid and dramatic consolidation of the banking industry over the last decade is how much it has hindered the U.S. economy's ability to create jobs.

To begin to understand this, take a look at each end of the banking spectrum. On one end are the nation's 6,900 small, locally owned, community banks. These institutions control \$1.4 trillion in assets. That's 11 percent of all bank assets. They currently have \$257 billion in loans to small businesses and farms on their books.

On the other end, four giant banks—JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Citibank, and Wells Fargo—now command \$5.4 trillion in assets, or 40 percent of the total. Given that they are nearly four times as large as all local banks combined, one might expect that they would have made four times the small-business loans, or about \$1 trillion. In fact, these banks have a mere \$85 billion in small-business and farm loans on their balance sheets.

Why do giant banks make so few small-business loans? Automation is the short answer. The only way these sprawling institutions can function efficiently is by taking a mass production approach to lending: Plug credit score, income, and appraisal into the computer—out comes the loan. That's why the mortgage business was supposed to be so safe. The economic meltdown of 2007 shows that it's actually very risky.

Small-business loans are not so easily mechanized. Each is a custom job, requiring human judgment to evaluate the risk associated with a particular entrepreneur, a particular business plan, and a particular market. Community banks excel at this. Their lending decisions are made locally, informed by face-to-face relationships with borrowers and an intimate understanding of their hometown economies. Big banks, whose decision-making is long-distance and dictated more by computer

models than judgment, are pretty bad at it. So they don't make many small-business loans.

It's no wonder, then, that unemployment has been so persistent. Our financial system is top-heavy with big banks that are scaled to meet the needs of large multinational corporations. The Commerce Department estimates that U.S.-based multinationals have eliminated 3 million American jobs over the last decade. Meanwhile, small businesses, historically responsible for about two-thirds of new jobs, have found it harder and harder to obtain credit.

In short, we have a financial system that is mismatched to the economic needs of American communities. This mismatch will become more acute as we attempt to transition to a carbon-efficient economy, which, by its very nature, will be the domain of small-scale enterprises: local food producers, community-owned wind and solar electricity, neighborhood stores that provide goods within walking distance of homes, and so on. To take root, these businesses will need a robust array of community-based financial institutions capable of meeting their capital and credit needs.

## State Partnership Banks

There's no single solution to the thorny problem of how to restructure our financial system, but one of the

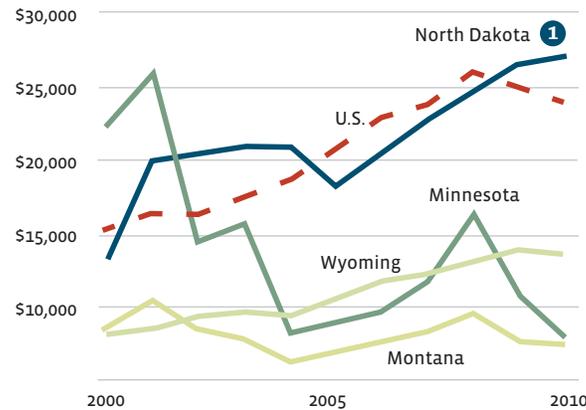
# What a State Bank Can Do for a State's Economy

Lots of lending by banks is a measure of a healthy economy.

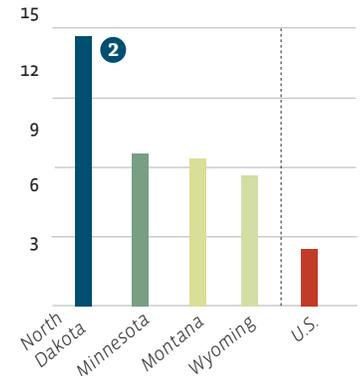
**1** Lending in North Dakota is consistently higher than nearby states that are economically similar. One reason? The support that the State Bank of North Dakota offers local banks.

**2** That's also why North Dakota has nearly double the number of banks per 100,000 than its neighbors, and more than four times the national average.

Lending per capita by all FDIC-insured institutions



Banks per 100,000 people (March 2011)



Source: FDIC

YES! MAGAZINE GRAPHICS, 2011

most promising strategies involves creating state-owned banks that can bolster the lending capacity of local banks, helping them grow and multiply.

North Dakota is the only state, so far, that has a publicly owned bank. Founded in 1919, the Bank of North Dakota (BND) was a populist response to dynamics similar to those we face today. The state's struggling farmers, tired of being at the mercy of powerful out-of-state financial interests that controlled the availability and cost of credit, decided they needed a bank better aligned with their own interests.

BND is wholly owned by the state, which deposits all of its money, except pension funds, with the bank. BND does not compete with local banks; it does not solicit retail banking business and has no branch offices or ATMs.

Instead, BND partners with local banks to expand their lending capacity. Much of BND's \$2.8 billion loan portfolio consists of "participation loans." These are business loans originated by local banks, which then invite BND to finance a portion of the loan (and share part of the risk). This enables local banks to make more loans and maintain more diverse portfolios.

Thanks largely to BND, North Dakota has a more robust community banking network than any other state. It has 35 percent more local banks per capita than South Dakota and four

times as many as the U.S. average. Small local banks account for 60 percent of deposits in North Dakota, compared to only 16 percent nationally.

Over the last decade, lending by North Dakota's local banks has averaged about \$12,000 per capita (plus about \$2,400 in participation lending by BND), compared to just \$3,000 for community banks nationally. BND has also enabled local banks to maintain a higher loan-to-asset ratio than their counterparts in other states, which means they devote more of their assets to productive lending, rather than safer holdings like U.S. securities.

Although BND has some loan programs that accept a higher risk or lower return to meet specific economic objectives, such as its Beginning Entrepreneur Loan Guarantee Program, the vast majority of its lending decisions are made on a for-profit basis. It participates only in loans that make economic sense. As a result, BND has pumped \$300 million in profit into the state's general fund over the last decade. (In a state like Illinois that has a population of 13 million, the equivalent return would be about \$6 billion.)

Inspired by the North Dakota model, activists and small-business owners in more than a dozen states, including Oregon, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, and Washington, backed bills this year to create state-owned banks.

Although none of these bills passed on the first round, they did pick up a remarkable amount of support from lawmakers, given how unfamiliar most people, including most local bankers, are with BND.

To help educate lawmakers and counter misinformation put out by big-bank lobbyists, the Center for State Innovation has produced several reports analyzing how a public bank would function in various states. Its analysis of Oregon, for example, concluded that a state bank would help local banks expand lending by \$1.3 billion, leading to 5,391 new small-business jobs in its first three to five years.

Many of these states, and others, are likely to take up the state bank idea again in the coming months. Although opponents like to suggest that these proposals would simply create yet another (unnecessary) state loan fund, the real power of a state bank lies not so much in its own lending, but rather in its capacity to support local banks and remake the financial landscape to better meet the needs of small businesses and communities. **Y**

**Stacy Mitchell** is a senior researcher with the Institute for Local Self-Reliance's New Rules Project, where she heads up initiatives on community banking and independent business. Her latest book is *Big-Box Swindle: The True Cost of Mega-Retailers and the Fight for America's Independent Businesses*.

[YesMagazine.org/state-banks](http://YesMagazine.org/state-banks)

What state banks could mean for a new economy.

# Want Jobs? Rebuild the Dream

AN INTERVIEW WITH VAN JONES



## Sarah van Gelder

With politics in D.C. hitting new lows, few progressives look to either the Obama administration or the two major parties for leadership in restoring the middle class and transitioning to a green, just economy. Instead, many are returning to a strategy that actually brought real progress during the last century: building strong, unified, and sustained people's movements.

Van Jones is one of those working to build people power today. Jones is a co-founder of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Color of Change, and Green for All. He was appointed as a White House advisor on green jobs, but an attack led by Glenn Beck of Fox News led to his resignation in September 2009. Jones is currently a senior fellow on green jobs and climate solutions at the Center for American Progress and a visiting fellow at Princeton University.

YES! Executive Editor Sarah van Gelder spoke to Jones shortly before he launched the movement to Rebuild the American Dream. With groups involved ranging from MoveOn.org to organized labor, could this be the 21st-century movement that makes hope and change relevant again?

**Sarah van Gelder:** You are launching a movement to rebuild the American Dream. Can you tell me about what you're planning?

**Van Jones:** Sure. It's been almost two years since I resigned from my position at the White House. I spent a year teaching at Princeton and reflecting on what happened and what we can do next.

I came away with some thoughts about how the Tea Party movement was able to derail our movement for hope and change. We didn't have a grassroots mechanism to consolidate our own vision and our own voices. So now the politics of war and austerity have taken over Washington, D.C., and the politics of peace and prosperity don't have a voice in American society.

So, we can continue doing what



PHOTO BY MARTA EVRY

Van Jones at a laborers' union "Fight Back for Good Jobs" rally in Minneapolis in June.

we've been doing—each of us fighting our own battles, often fighting well, but fighting alone and leaving the coordinated, coherent, consolidated movement on the other side to wipe us all out as individual causes.

Or, all the folks who are fighting foreclosures, who are trying to make banks more accountable to the American people, fighting against union busting, fighting against major cutbacks in essential services, fighting against the attempt to destroy Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and fighting for jobs—all these Americans could stand together under a common banner of defending the American Dream.

For the YES! Magazine readership, which is a very conscious, green, and spiritually grounded readership, the idea of defending the American Dream might sit poorly at first. I think

that's because what used to be called the American Dream got turned into the American fantasy, which is the idea that everybody is going to be rich and that buying a bunch of things will somehow make you happy. Well, that American fantasy has led to an American nightmare.

But that does not take away from the power of the American Dream itself. The very first thing Dr. King says about his dream in his famous speech is this: "I have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American Dream." He's referring to the notion that hard work should pay; that ordinary people, no matter what sort of family they were born into, should be able to work hard and get someplace. Ordinary people, if they're willing and able to work, should be able to get up in the morning, find a job, and walk through the front door

with the dignity of a paycheck able to give their kids a better life. And they should be able to retire with dignity.

That is the American Dream. That is why people have come here from all around the world, and that's why those of us whose families didn't choose to come here have chosen to stay—because we believe that we, too, can make good on that promise.

Well, that dream is exactly what is being destroyed for tens of millions of Americans by dream killers who are shoving an austerity agenda down our throats. They have painted a wrecking ball red, white, and blue, and they expect the American people to stand here and salute while they knock down the pillars of America's great middle class and all the pathways into the middle class for Americans who are not yet there.

»

» I think that we have a responsibility to meet that cheap patriotism with a deeper patriotism that defends the best values of our country.

**van Gelder:** You mentioned that you learned some lessons about how to go about that organizing from the Tea Party. What did you learn?

**Jones:** Yes. People think of the Tea Party as a solid organization with a headquarters, a building, a receptionist, a president who you could get a meeting with.

That's not the way the Tea Party works. The Tea Party is in fact an open-source brand that thousands of organizations use but nobody owns.

they stand for rugged individualism!

Yet, on our side, we technically stand for "solidarity forever," "Kumbaya," "can't we all get along," "let's all cooperate," and yet we act in ways that are extremely individualistic: my group versus your group, crabs in a barrel, "Why did they give *her* that grant?"

So I think our challenge is to get our movement to be as warm and fuzzy and cooperative as the Tea Party.

The American Dream Movement is trying to take the very tactics that made the Tea Party such a force: identifying pre-existing assets, organizations, and leaders, and getting them to cooperate under a shared brand and framework.

Depression—the government should be stepping forward as a lender, spender, and employer of last resort.

People say, "Well, it's not possible, because of the deficit." *Au contraire*. If we just went back to Clinton-era tax policy and military expenditures, we could kill the whole deficit in 10 years. It's impossible to deal with the deficit if you refuse to put increased tax revenues on the table and if you refuse to wind down the wars. That's when you then have the excuse to destroy Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

It's not a question of wallets but a question of will—whether or not we connect all the people who need work with all the great work that needs to be done in our country.

## IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH THE DEFICIT IF YOU REFUSE TO PUT INCREASED TAX REVENUES ON THE TABLE AND IF YOU REFUSE TO WIND DOWN THE WARS.

You have the Tea Party Patriots, Tea Party Nation, and Tea Party Express and other national federations. You also have 3,528 affiliates of the Tea Party Patriots alone. Many of these organizations pre-existed the Tea Party movement—many of them go all the way back to the Perot days. There are some new people, but most have been around for a very long time.

They've been able to achieve an incredible amount of cooperation. For example, they have consolidated their values in a Contract from America, which between 50,000 and 100,000 people worked on together as a wiki.

This is a very interesting development. Here you have the most staunch advocates of rugged individualism, and yet this is the most collectivist strategy for taking power that we've seen in the history of the Republic—3,528 affiliates all using an open-source brand, writing their documents collectively using a wiki. But

Just like you can't copyright or trademark the Tea Party because it's part of American history, nobody can copyright or trademark the American Dream. The deeper patriots who are fighting to rebuild the dream can keep their own organizational affiliation, but use the banner of the American Dream Movement to face off with the cheaper patriots whose policies actually kill the American Dream.

**van Gelder:** What is this movement's jobs agenda? We're in a period of protracted, high unemployment—how will this movement help?

**Jones:** We're the richest country in the history of the world—still. Our economy is as big as two Chinas; it's almost as big as all of Europe. We're not a poor country, although we may have poor leadership. In a crisis like this—which is the worst crisis that we've had since the Great

And that is where the American Dream Movement comes in, because we want to disrupt this austerity mania and put forward more common-sense ideas. For instance, on Wall Street right now, you have people who are literally sitting with their feet up on their desks, sipping a latte, while a computer runs a thousand trades a second, based on algorithms—and makes tons of money. Yet people say, "We can't tax rich people because we'll discourage them."

We could have a small tax on every one of those lightning trades, and *The New York Times* says we could pull billions of dollars off of Wall Street to fund massive infrastructure projects across America, and get skilled workers back rebuilding America's roads, bridges, hospitals, and schools.

**van Gelder:** Are other organizations working with you, especially on that

jobs agenda? Who's at the core of this movement?

**Jones:** We have a number of patriotic organizations involved, including MoveOn.org, The Center for Community Change, AFSCME, the Campaign for America's Future, Change to Win, the Sierra Club, Green for All, and Progressive Democrats of America. And we expect to get a lot of patriotic and smart business folks

benefits and instead create a good employment program for millions of Americans.

Number two, veterans are coming home to nothing; there are 17 suicide attempts a day among our young veterans. We took them from a military battleground with support and now we're throwing them into an economic battleground with no support. We can do better than that.

Number three, millennials are

Movement is to bring together those Americans and others who are willing to stand up for a common-sense, balanced approach to our crisis, and who are not willing to throw away the American dream just so that rich folks don't have to pay their taxes.

We think we can get the government to be Americans' government, to be a partner to the American people economically:

- Tax Wall Street so that we can

## IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF WALLETS BUT A QUESTION OF WILL— WHETHER WE CONNECT THE PEOPLE WHO NEED WORK WITH ALL THE GREAT WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN OUR COUNTRY.

to step forward.

Patriotic, responsible businesses in America are getting punished while these global corporations that call themselves American companies get away with murder. A lot of global corporations call themselves American corporations, but they treat America the way that a foreign corporation often treats countries we used to call Third World countries. They take, take, take, and give nothing back. When these global corporations want to use our court system or when they need the support of our military or they want to use our roads, then they're American corporations. But when it's time to create a job or to open up a plant or to declare their profits, all that's done overseas with the tax havens and their off-shore operations. Those are the corporations, plus the worst of Wall Street, that are making the American Dream impossible. And so we have a very serious challenge.

The first step is to identify all of those constituents that need a new economy. We have identified five:

The long-term unemployed—at some point we've got to stop talking about extending their unemployment

graduating off of a cliff into the worst job market since World War II. We need a youth employment program so that we don't do long-term damage to the employment and income prospects of a whole generation.

Number four, all of the victims of foreclosures by banks and all of the families whose heads are being held underwater by bad mortgages need relief. American taxpayers and homeowners bailed out America's banks, and yet America's banks will not do the same favor for the American people. The bankers themselves would be homeless were it not for the generosity of the American people. There is potential for a movement there.

And fifth, our so-called public employees—our cops, firefighters, teachers, nurses—the backbone of our country, the backbone of every one of our communities. These are America's everyday heroes. They're the ones who never abandon America in a crisis. And yet, we're supposed to throw a million of them under the bus this year alone. That's morally wrong and indefensible.

Just those five constituencies are about 30 million Americans.

The job of the American Dream

fund infrastructure.

- Remove the subsidies from big oil and other big polluters, and fund the jobs of tomorrow with clean and green solutions.

- Force banks back to the table with Americans, and keep Americans housed in a sane and fair way.

- Also, let's responsibly wind down these wars so we stop spending over \$3 billion a week just on stationing troops overseas and supplying them. Imagine if we had \$3 billion to spend in Detroit or New Orleans or Appalachia.

There are many ways for us to reallocate the dollars we have to put people back to work, to secure our safety net, to maintain our status as a middle-class country and a country where people who are not in the middle class have a shot at getting there. But we need a political movement to do that, and that's what the American Dream movement is all about. **Y**

**YesMagazine.org/rebuild**

Extended interview: Van Jones on his Tea Party "brothers and sisters" and his prayers for Glenn Beck.

**YesMagazine.org/borgos**

Rebuild the Dream organizer Seth Borgos on how to build a people's movement

## FROM THE PUBLISHER



**IN SPITE OF THE DAILY DISCOURAGING ENVIRONMENTAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC NEWS, COAXING LIVING THINGS TO GROW SOMEHOW SEEMS TO MAKE FOLKS OPTIMISTIC.**

# A Growing Movement

Recently during lunch at the YES! offices, online editor Brooke Jarvis made a casual comment I found quite stunning. Brooke, a sharp, talented 20-something, said “I don’t know a single person under 30 who doesn’t want to own a farm.”

What? Own a farm? I turned to several 20-somethings at the table and asked if they agreed. They did. They waxed eloquent about their love for lambs, ducks, chickens, bees. (No one mentioned weeding.) They confessed they weren’t sure they would ever actually own a farm, but their yearning was definitely real.

I think that just five years ago the 20-somethings in our office were not longing to own a farm. Something in our culture is changing. A growing segment of people don’t want to just buy organic, healthy food. They want to grow it. This new lust to farm seems to cross class, race, and politics.

For example, Robert Jeffrey Jr., an African American pastor in Seattle, started Clean Greens Farm to bring produce to the inner city, where fresh food is hard to find. He’s gotten a tremendous response from young people of all races ready to get their hands in the dirt.

Another sign comes from the

just-launched “Mother Earth News Fairs” inspired by interest in the “how to” of growing your own. At the recent fair near Seattle, a crowd of more than 10,000 attended workshops on everything from canning to beekeeping to building the perfect chicken coop. Organizer Bryan Welch told YES! Magazine’s Susan Gleason that what the people at the fair shared in common was not their politics, but their optimism. In spite of the daily discouraging environmental, political, and economic news, coaxing living things to grow somehow seems to make folks optimistic.

City codes are catching up. You can now keep bees in New York City, goats in Seattle, and chickens in Los Angeles. And, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the number of very small farms (under 50 acres) has been steadily increasing.

So what’s going on? I think we’re seeing the convergence of three major cultural trends:

**A response to uncertain times ahead.** Awareness is increasing that climate change is affecting crop yields and that the global economy can’t be relied on to supply safe food. In the face of such uncertainty, there’s an almost instinctual desire to secure one’s food supply.

A good place to start is growing your own.

**A rebellion against agribusiness.** A lot of Americans of all political stripes are appalled at what mega-corporations are doing to our food supply. Whether their revulsion is driven by compassion for animals and/or farmworkers, concern for their families’ health, worry about destruction of the environment, or resentment of concentrated wealth and power, the practices of agribusiness are driving people to look for alternatives that are humane, healthy, and community-friendly.

**An enhanced appreciation of good food.** Relishing delicious food has become part of mainstream culture, which brings an appreciation of really fresh food. After all, what is more delicious than a ripe tomato or an ear of corn just picked from the garden?

Owning a farm may not be everyone’s dream, but my hunch is that the trends driving the urge to grow one’s own will only intensify. So here’s to the under-30s (and a lot of over-30s too) who are leading the way to a healthier, happier food system.

**Fran Korten**, Publisher



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Equitable Economies for a Living Earth

**THE NEW ECONOMY WORKING GROUP** is an informal alliance coordinated by the Institute for Policy Studies that includes YES! Magazine, the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, and the Living Economies Forum, plus individual members Gar Alperovitz, Stacy Mitchell, and Gus Speth. Its mission is to articulate and popularize a bold vision and strategy for a New Economy that works for all of Earth's people and the living systems on which their well-being depends. [neweconomyworkinggroup.org](http://neweconomyworkinggroup.org)



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Things To Do, Places To Go

**Mondragón Seminar and Tour**

*September 18-24, Mondragón, Spain.* See the inner workings of the world's most successful consortium of worker-owned businesses. Rooted in education and sustainable social values, the Mondragón Cooperatives embody a democratic model of economics for the 21st century. Organized by Praxis Peace Institute. [praxispeace.org/conference12](http://praxispeace.org/conference12)

**No Impact Week**

*September 18-25, nationwide.* The No Impact Experiment is a one-week carbon cleanse—a chance to see the difference no-impact living has on your quality of life. YES! is partnering again with the No Impact Project. Join the challenge—and watch for blogs and multimedia documenting the fun! This year's "Giving Back" day will coincide with 350.org's Moving Planet day of action. [yesmagazine.org/NIW](http://yesmagazine.org/NIW)

**Green Festivals**

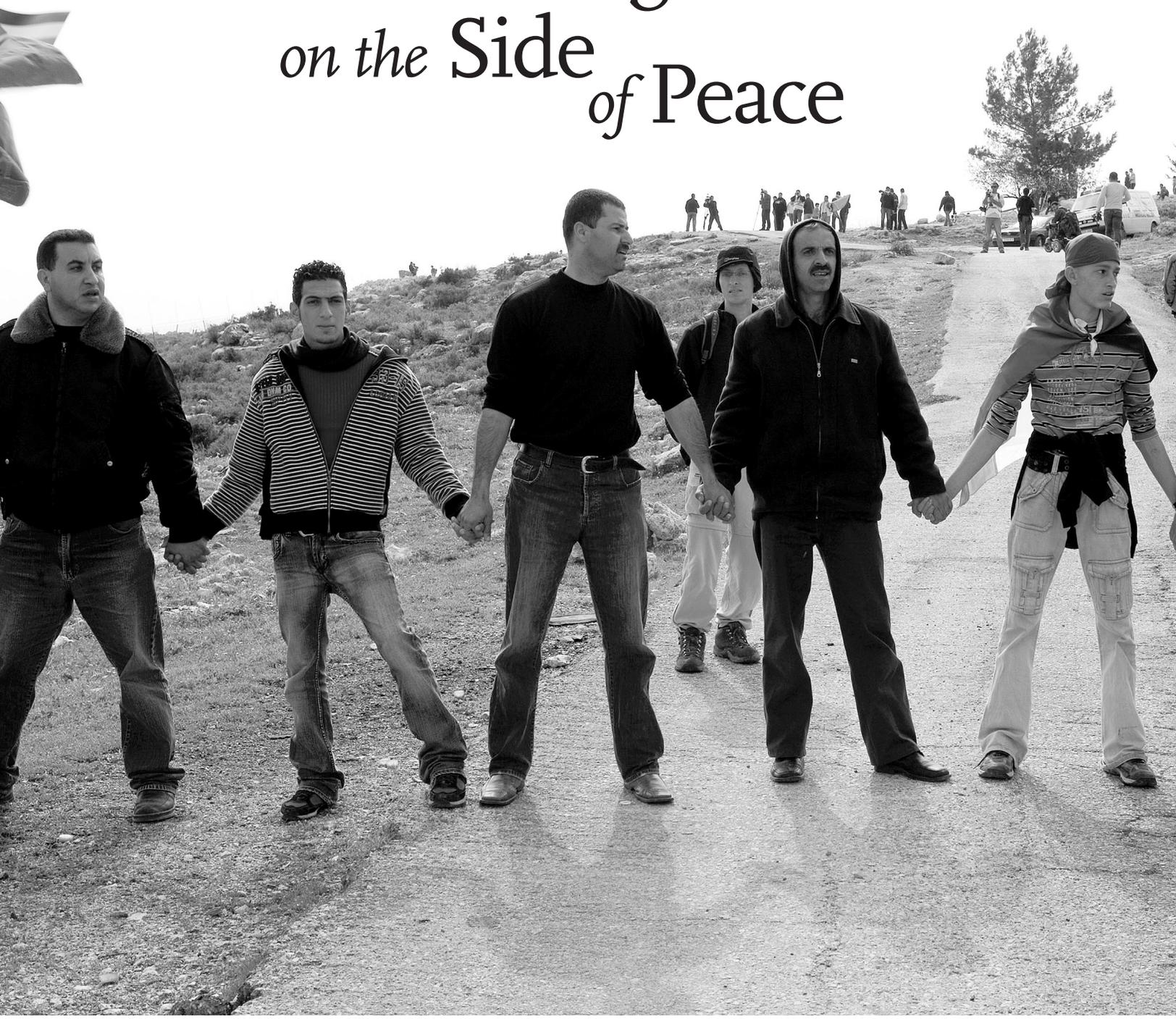
*October 1-2, New York, October 29-30, Los Angeles, November 12-13, San Francisco.* Global Exchange and Green America present these annual gatherings featuring speakers, workshops, and 350-plus green businesses, fair-trade goods, and nonprofits. Frequent speakers include Amy Goodman, Van Jones, Frances Moore Lappé, and David Korten. Also featuring organic dining, live music, and eco-films. Find YES! at the Los Angeles event. [greenfestivals.org](http://greenfestivals.org)

[YesMagazine.org/events](http://YesMagazine.org/events)

For an expanded listing of upcoming events

Growing up as a Jewish American, I had been taught that Israelis and Palestinians constituted two separate, irreconcilable sides in the Middle East conflict. It was not until I went to Jerusalem that I learned that there is a decades-long tradition of Palestinians and Israelis working together to confront the occupation and challenge oppression through nonviolent protest. ***Here's how one man's journey changed everything I knew about the Middle East conflict.***

# Standing *on the Side* of Peace





## Jen Marlowe

**I**n January 2008, a group of young men and women protested outside the Israeli Ministry of Justice, holding signs reading, “No to the killing of democracy!” and “Twelve citizens are dead ... someone must be held responsible!” The protesters, who were calling for the just treatment of Palestinians, were Jewish Israelis.

I knew the young demonstrators from my years of work in Jerusalem. Our friend, Aseel Asleh, a peace activist, had been killed by the Israeli police eight years before, when he was 17 years old—along with 11 other unarmed Palestinian citizens of Israel. The attorney general had just closed the case, after a grossly inadequate internal police investigation left their deaths unresolved. My friends wanted answers.

Growing up as a Jewish American, I had been taught that Israelis and Palestinians constituted two separate, irreconcilable sides in the Middle East conflict. It was not until I went to Jerusalem that I learned that there is a decades-long tradition of Palestinians and Israelis working together to confront the occupation and challenge oppression through nonviolent protest.

### Sami's Story

I first learned about Palestinian-Israeli partnerships from Sami Al Jundi, a Palestinian from the Old City of Jerusalem. Sami's story of resilience and transformation from a militant to a peace-builder inspired me from the start of our friendship.

I met Sami in June 2000, when I began working with a program he co-founded in Jerusalem for Israeli

and Palestinian youth. He and I spent that summer and the next four years bringing young people together from all over the country to work on peace-building projects. In 2007, we began work on his memoir, *The Hour of Sunlight: One Palestinian's Journey from Prisoner to Peacemaker*, recording in detail his earliest memories of living under occupation, his decade in Israeli prison, and his subsequent immersion in nonviolence and peacemaking.

Sami never thought about nonviolent activism until he went to prison. Growing up, he watched Israeli soldiers evict his family from their home, beat Palestinian teenagers during demonstrations, and kill one of his neighborhood heroes. He felt he had no choice but to become a fighter. When he was 18 years old, he and two friends built a bomb to be used against police. The bomb detonated prematurely, killing one friend and injuring Sami and the other. Sami was arrested, interrogated, tortured, and sentenced to 10 years in Israeli prison.

In prison, Sami read a collection of speeches by Martin Luther King Jr., writings from Black Panther leader Angela Davis, and the teachings of Gandhi. He studied armed conflict and its impact. He concluded that war was disastrous for all humanity.

It was in prison, ironically, that Sami first met Israelis who supported Palestinians' struggle for freedom. Mordechai Vanunu, an Israeli nuclear energy technician who leaked information to the press in 1986 about Israel's nuclear weapons program, was in solitary confinement in the same prison. Sami and his fellow inmates shouted “Good morning, Vanunu!” each day as they passed his cell en route to the prison yard.

In 1987, Sami was transferred to a smaller prison. There, he befriended two members of an Israeli Marxist organization with ties to the Palestinian resistance movement. His new friends supported the Palestinian struggle to achieve statehood. Sami

»

**International protesters try to prevent the Israeli army from approaching the village of Bil'in during the third anniversary of the village's fight against the separation wall.**

PHOTO BY KAREN MANOR / ACTIVESTILLS.ORG



Sami Al Jundi and his family in the old city of Jerusalem. At right, with author Jen Marlowe outside the mosque of his mother's destroyed village, Zakarriya.

» was tremendously excited by their political discourse. They were Israeli, he was Palestinian, yet they shared one basic ideal: They refused to live under occupation or to be occupiers. Sami began to consider the possibility that the struggle for Palestinian freedom might be undertaken with Israeli partnership.

A few years after Sami's release in 1990, he ran into Hussam, an acquaintance who worked for the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence. Hussam invited him to the center, where he gave Sami a booklet by founder Mubarak Awad—a blueprint for direct nonviolent action. The booklet suggested concrete, nonviolent ways that Palestinians could block the occupation—such as stopping soldiers by linking their bodies together into a human chain or planting olive trees to mark Palestinian land as their own and stop its expropriation by Israeli soldiers. And, Awad wrote, whoever might accuse nonviolent adherents of cowardice should understand: Nonviolence does not protect one from the violence of an opponent. In fact, its effectiveness lies partially in revealing the oppressor's unprovoked brutality. The book opened Sami's mind: Here

were ways that Palestinians could transform their reality without spilling blood. Sami returned to the Center the next day, and many more times in the days and weeks that followed.

Sami's affiliation with the center gave him the chance to see firsthand that it was possible for people to change their own beliefs and take action. He met Peter Weinberger, a Jewish American college student who came to volunteer at the center. As a teenager, Peter flirted with militant Zionism. After encountering a poem by the preeminent Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, Peter decided to try to understand Palestinian reality for himself. Sami took Peter all over the West Bank and East Jerusalem. He showed him where Israeli settlements were expanding onto Palestinian land and pointed out new checkpoints, signaling heightened Israeli military intrusion into Palestinian communities. Sami watched Peter slowly grow into an advocate for Palestinian rights.

In December 1995, Sami attended a nonviolent action in Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem. Under the Oslo Accords, Israeli troops had begun pulling out of Bethlehem. The residents of Dheisheh were tearing down the

high metal fence that the military built years earlier, cordoning off the refugee camp from the main road. When Sami arrived at Dheisheh, he heard activists speaking an array of languages, including Hebrew. He was quietly thrilled to witness Israelis working with Palestinians to rip apart a barrier that represented Israeli control over Palestinians' freedom of movement.

In 1996, Sami co-founded a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue group with Hussam and two French Israeli women. The group, composed of peace activists from Jerusalem, met weekly. There, he befriended an Israeli American named Yoel, and they often attended nonviolent demonstrations together against demolition of Palestinian homes or settlement expansion. Sami recognized a distinct dynamic that Yoel brought to the actions. Yoel, unlike Sami, could confront the soldiers without risking arrest or beating.

#### Breaking Down Barriers

Jewish Israelis such as Yoel are afforded a protection that Palestinians are not. Israeli peace activists often use this privilege to challenge the occupation or to protect Palestinians, who don't have that status. Though growing

numbers of Israelis have been arrested and injured by the Israeli military in recent years, the stark power imbalance remains. Power and privilege raise complex questions in the peace and justice movement, and some joint peace initiatives are regarded with skepticism, especially when the initiatives do not tackle the root causes of injustice.

But in recent years, more and more Israelis have joined Palestinians in directly confronting the state and its military. They are challenging some of the most egregious manifestations of the occupation. In 2002, Israel began

Al-Araqib, a Bedouin village in the Negev Desert. The actions are expanding in scope and numbers and have achieved small victories: The barrier has been rerouted in the villages Budrus and Bil'in.

### New Signs of Hope

The growing movement contains a kernel of hope in a bleak political landscape. It is this hope I felt when I heard about the protest that my Jewish Israeli friends staged in January 2008, demanding justice for the murder of 17-year-old Aseel and the 11 other Palestinian citizens of Israel.

were reportedly shot and killed. Starting in 2008, activists have sailed boats into the region, seeking to break the Israeli siege on the Gaza Strip; Israelis and Jewish Americans have been on board many of the boats. Finally, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) initiative has grown steadily since Palestinian civil society first called for a boycott of Israeli products and institutions in 2005. Ironically, the number of Israelis who accept BDS as a nonviolent strategy may actually swell in the wake of a new Israeli law criminalizing those who support boycotts. Even Israelis who don't identify

## THE SIDES IN THIS CONFLICT ARE DEFINED NOT BY NATIONALITY, BUT BY THOSE WHO TAKE A STAND AGAINST INJUSTICE ... AND THOSE WHO PERPETRATE OR TOLERATE IT.

construction of a section of a separation barrier in the village of Bil'in. The barrier often meanders deep into the West Bank, expropriating large swathes of land to Israel and separating many Palestinian villagers from their orchards. Since 2005, Bil'in residents have organized weekly demonstrations against the barrier. I have gone to many of these demonstrations and marched toward the barrier with Palestinians, Israelis, and activists from all over the world. Each time, we met a barrage of tear gas and rubber bullets. We demonstrated in Bil'in on New Year's Eve 2010. The next morning, I attended the funeral of one of the villagers, 36-year-old Jawaher Abu Rahma, who collapsed and died after she was overcome by tear gas. The Palestinians and Israelis who had marched together the day before stood silently in the Bil'in cemetery as Jawaher was laid into the ground.

Bil'in is not the only example. Every week, Palestinians and Israelis demonstrate together against home evictions in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem, against Israeli settlement expansion in Nabi Saleh in the West Bank, and against the repeated destruction of

Aseel's older sister, Nardeen, wrote a letter to the demonstrators:

"Dear friends ... of Aseel, of mine, of ours,

"In these difficult days there is nothing more comforting and calming than to read, to hear, and to see you demonstrating for Aseel and for justice ... I'm proud of you, I'm proud to be your friend, and I'm proud to be on your side in this struggle."

The sides in this conflict are defined not by nationality, but by those who take a stand against injustice, oppression, racism, and violence—and those who perpetrate or tolerate it. Both sides include Palestinians and Israelis.

Today, the nonviolence movement has expanded beyond the borders of Israel and Palestine and is breaking open new possibilities for Palestinians to obtain justice. On the 2011 anniversaries of the May 15 "Nakba" (a day that commemorates the 1948 expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians) and of the June 1967 war, thousands of unarmed Palestinian refugees attempted to cross from Lebanon and Syria to return to their homes inside Israel. Approximately 35

as left-wing activists are speaking out against the new law, characterizing it as an undemocratic silencing of political dissent.

The United Nations will likely vote in September 2011 to recognize a Palestinian state. And, though this move may spark ever-harsher repression by Israel, I expect it to lead to new fronts of nonviolent resistance and new forms of Palestinian-Israeli partnership.

As these developments unfold, I remember something Sami Al Jundi said to me: It is better for all our children if every child's needs and rights are secured. If we want to build a better future for our children, we must work on our dreams together. 

Jen Marlowe is a Seattle-based human rights activist and filmmaker and the author of two books, *The Hour of Sunlight: One Palestinian's Journey from Prisoner to Peacemaker* and *Darfur Diaries: Stories of Survival*. Her most recent feature-length documentary is *Rebuilding Hope: Sudan's Lost Boys Return Home*.



[YesMagazine.org/hour-of-sunlight](http://YesMagazine.org/hour-of-sunlight)   
Jen Marlowe and Sami Al Jundi talk to GRITtv's Laura Flanders about their book.

# YES! But How?



# Cotton with Conscience

Research by Lily Hicks and Krista Vogel

1

## ORGANIC AND FAIR

Much of the clothing we purchase every year carries hidden environmental and social costs. Growing non-organic cotton, for example, uses copious amounts of pesticides, herbicides, and water. That's one concern for people who want to make low-impact, ethical choices as consumers. Another issue is that clothing sold in the United States is often produced in the developing world, in factories with poor wages and working conditions. To ensure that you're buying fair labor clothing, look for companies that are transparent about their production process. Green America's *National Green Pages* is a good source of information if you're looking to buy the most sustainable and fairly produced clothing available.—K.V.

Interested? [greenamerica.org/pubs/greenpages](http://greenamerica.org/pubs/greenpages)

2

## SWAP SOME

Before you toss your old clothes into the nearest charity drop box and go shopping for new ones, consider a clothing swap. You can arrange one yourself with friends in your living room or take part in a clothing exchange with a difference. Swap-O-Rama-Rama is a community clothes-swap party that also raises funds for nonprofits.

The cost? A bag of old clothes and a donation of no more than \$10. Once you pull your finds from the communal heap, volunteers at sewing and silkscreen stations help you decorate and mend your "new" clothes. Artist Wendy Tremayne founded Swap-O-Rama-Rama with a "no mirrors" rule. Swappers give each other face-to-face feedback instead.

Clothes swaps are an attractive alternative to buying, given that the average American household spends \$1,725 every year on apparel. But even more attractive is the assurance that your new outfit won't support sweatshop manufacture or farming with harmful pesticides.—L.H.

Interested? Find a swap or start your own by visiting [swaporamarama.org](http://swaporamarama.org)

*Organic cotton production systems replenish and maintain soil fertility, reduce the use of toxic and persistent pesticides and fertilizers, and build biologically diverse agriculture. Organic cotton represents 1.2 percent of global cotton production, according to the Textile Exchange Farm and Fiber Report 2010.*

3

### RECYCLE TO INSULATE

You can wear recycled cotton—or use it to insulate your home. Home insulation is available that is made from 90 percent post-consumer recycled denim and cotton fibers, uses less energy to manufacture than traditional insulation, contains no fiberglass or formaldehyde, and doesn't off-gas.

The cotton industry's "From Blue to Green" campaign showed that consumers are eager to recycle when it collected more than 40,000 pairs of old jeans in 2010. These were used to make insulation that was then donated to community housing projects.—K.V.



The EPA estimates that each person in the United States throws out 10 pounds of clothing every year.

5

### WEAR LOCAL

We're more likely to find evidence of the "buy local" movement in our refrigerators than in our closets. A pair of organic cotton jeans leaves an 85-pound carbon footprint after its 10,000-mile journey from the field in India to the store in North America. That's no walk to the farmers' market.

That's why Rebecca Burgess' challenge—a year of wearing only clothes made from materials sourced within 150 miles of her front door—is especially innovative. Of the 20 pieces in Burgess' wardrobe, her favorite is what she calls the "Golden Pants," made of local, organic, color-grown, undyed cotton.

Burgess started the Fibershed Project to show what really sustainable clothing production looks like. She and other textile artists produce stylish, eco-friendly clothing from local materials.

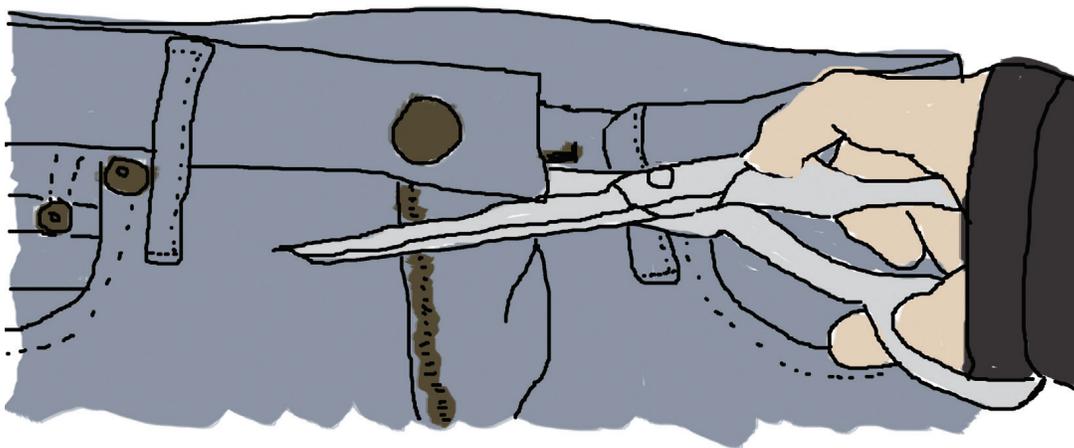
The results shown on the Fibershed blog are so desirable that you'll be tempted to try a sustainable clothing project yourself, like dyeing wool using homemade natural plant dyes.

Burgess is raising funds through the project to build a solar-powered fabric mill in Northern California. That would make wearing local easier—and show what can be done elsewhere.—L.H.

Interested? [fibershed.wordpress.com](http://fibershed.wordpress.com)

[YesMagazine.org/fibersheds](http://YesMagazine.org/fibersheds) 

Photo Essay: Behind the scenes of a fibershed



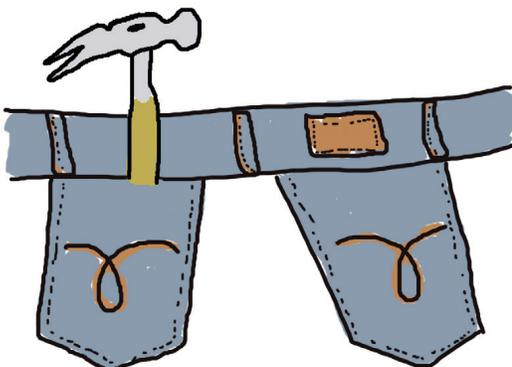
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### MAKE IT WITH OLD JEANS

Reuse your old jeans to create a tool belt or gardening apron. Cut the legs off as if you were making a pair of cutoffs. Cut along the seams of the inner legs, and cut out the front fly. Trim the back

into an apron shape, leaving the pockets intact. If the waistband is too small, cut off the front button and use an old belt to hold your tool belt in place. Sew on strips of leftover denim to hold hammers, etc.

You can leave the cut edges raw, finish them on the sewing machine, or apply some leftover latex paint on the edges to prevent unraveling.—K.V.

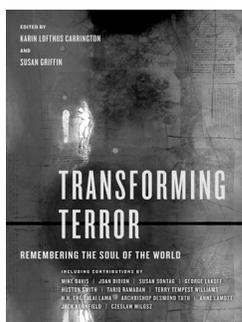


# The Soul of the World

ESSAYS ON THE DEFINITION OF TERROR  
AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF TRANSFORMATION



PHOTO BY SZYMON MAZUREK, ISTOCK



## Transforming Terror: Remembering the Soul of the World

EDITED BY  
KARIN LOFTHUS CARRINGTON  
AND SUSAN GRIFFIN

University of California Press,  
2011, 370 pages, \$24.95

REVIEWED BY VALERIE TRUEBLOOD

“The soul of the world!” Not a phrase we’ll hear in election speeches, not one that comes up in talk about our ongoing wars. But the writers, teachers, poets and prophets gathered in this book are remembering that soul.

The essays in *Transforming Terror* turn our manipulated understanding of terrorism inside out. What stares from these pages is terror, a thing belonging not to those who inflict it or those who retaliate, but to those who feel it.

One path the essays take is personal, psychological—how the victim experiences terror and what may be done to “heal” it—and ultimately reassuring to us as people who think our hearts are in the right place. A task, the giant task

of improvement, is repeatedly imagined for us, and we’re seen as up to it. In this country, liberal impulses often act as their own gratification, but in the hands of Susan Griffin, who co-edited the book, the concern with healing moves far beyond liberalism and into a radical protectiveness of all life.

The other path, more likely to shame than reassure us, is political, factual, shocking, and visionary. Vision is not optimism. It is scalding, in pieces by Wendell Berry (“rogue” violence excuses our own, while a systematic, violent overreaching wipes out lives, economies, and the land), Vandana Shiva (industrial devastation of villages is terrorism), Eqbal Ahmad (the label “terrorist” shifts with the political >>

## IN REVIEW ::

Acting on principle is, we're told, a good in itself.

But it is still a political act, in the sense that you're not doing it for yourself. You don't do it just to be in the right, or to appease your own conscience; much less because you are confident your action will achieve its aim. You resist as an act of solidarity. With communities of the principled and the disobedient: here, elsewhere. In the present. In the future.

—from Susan Sontag's essay "On Courage and Resistance"

The world gets better. It also gets worse. The time it will take you to address this is exactly equal to your lifetime.

—from Rebecca Solnit's essay "Hope in the Dark"

» winds), Daniel Ellsberg (our own repeated threats of nuclear first-use are terrorism). It is somber, in Congresswoman Barbara Lee's speech opposing force after 9/11. It is humbling, in Michael Nagler's eloquent essay on the risks Gandhi's followers accepted along with the beauty and practicality of *satyagraha*.

The one-by-one approach of the more psychological pieces, relying on personal transformation, may be out of scale with the sweep of Berry's manifesto, or Susan Sontag's tribute to activist martyrs, or even Amos Oz's suggestion—the only funny one in the book—of a university department of Comparative Fanaticism. Yet the goal the psychologists set here is more than the familiar American one of selfhood. They believe we can mine our natures not for more satisfactions but for a hidden ore of goodness. They take seriously the idea of a world-soul, and use a kind of chaos theory to make the claim that private changes of heart can set off a swell of peacemaking in the world.

A wonderful effect of this book is to put us in the presence of heroes: Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, the Israeli refuseniks, the extraordinary Marla

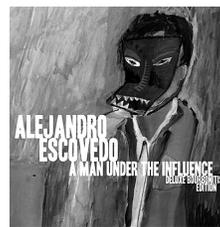
Ruzicka, killed in Iraq while working to publicize the terror the invasion unleashed on civilians. Rebecca Solnit's enlivening essay "Hope in the Dark," under no illusions but never resigned, shows us how the two paths of *Transforming Terror* might actually converge, bringing forth new heroes. "Where there is danger," the poet Hölderlin wrote, "The saving powers grow too."

In the midst of the information-storm—already bringing us, from think tanks, the idea that leftist South American regimes foster terrorism—is enlightenment still possible? Yes. If our elected officials can't find it, we can send them this passionate collection. We can also look past them, stop conjuring a circle of fanatics sitting on a rug, summon some passion of our own, and get to work. As Susan Sontag wrote, "The likelihood that your acts of resistance cannot stop the injustice does not exempt you from acting." To take with us, we have this book of radical good will.

**Valerie Trueblood** is the author of the collection *Marry or Burn*, a finalist for the 2011 Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award. She lives in Seattle, where she was a founding member of Live Without Trident.

## YES! PICKS ::

Musical inspiration while putting out this issue



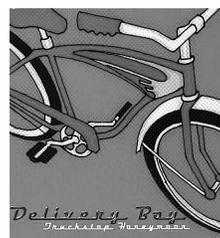
### A Man Under the Influence

This is **Alejandro Escovedo** at his most fiery and most graceful. "Wave," "Rosalie," and "Across the River" are from his powerful theater piece, *By the Hand of the Father*, a musical dialog between first generation Mexican immigrants and their American-born children, a soundtrack of lives.



### Little Joy

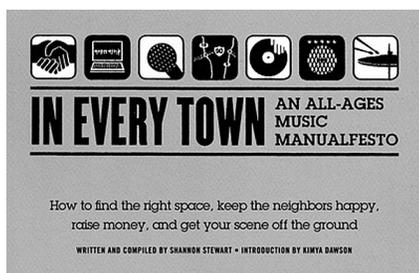
Listen to this sweet and breezy album outside on a warm evening under a string of glowing lights. **Rodrigo Amarante** adds Brazilian texture—"Evaporar" is in Portuguese. Imaginative instrumentation—glockenspiel, ukulele, bassoon—gives an overall vintage quality, like happy music from a long time ago.



### Delivery Boy

The husband-wife duo **Truckstop Honeymoon** takes a page from Johnny and June Carter Cash but mixes in punk and playful humor. The pair's edgy song lyrics run the gamut from an anti-war anthem to a romance in a waffle house.

🎵 Have a listen at [YesMagazine.org/music](http://YesMagazine.org/music)



## In Every Town: An All-Ages Music ManualFesto

SHANNON STEWART  
AMP, 2011, 287 pages, \$14.99

REVIEWED BY JAIMEE GARBACIK

I grew up in a cultural sinkhole in the backwoods of central Maine. There were no all-ages music venues. The closest place that held shows was a dilapidated church an hour and a half away, and believe me, you could feel the distance. Those shows smelled like the apathy and itchy feet of every teenager with nowhere to go and energy to burn. It didn't belong to us, and I longed for the skills to bring people together and have it mean something. I wanted a voice.

All-ages venues aren't just escape routes for kids with nothing better to do. They create a synergistic relationship between youth and the community that will keep the arts vital, and they enable young people to gain experience in organizing. No one understands that better than Shannon Stewart, whose efforts to establish youth space in Seattle culminated in The Vera Project, an all-ages venue with a model for power-sharing that garners international acclaim. As co-founder of the All-ages Movement Project (AMP), Stewart has since created a nationwide online network for all-ages music and arts venues to share information, resources and best practices.

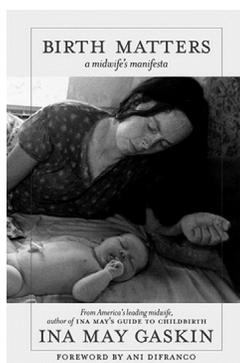
Stewart compiled accounts from all-ages venues across the nation for *In Every Town* to illustrate the ins and

outs of business licenses, zoning permits, and how to publicize events cheaply in ways that capture people's attention. The examples make this process accessible, whether you hope to operate all-ages events out of a basement or a \$2 million hall, legally or without official sanction, on government property or in a squat.

For everyone who hated being a teenager in a place with nowhere to do anything that felt important, or for anyone still there, this is the way out, beyond, and through the wild woods. There really is potential for communities to recognize, support, and cherish a strong and innovative youth culture *in every town*. This book will give you the tools to make it happen.

Jaimee Garbacik serves on The Vera Project's youth-led governing body.

[YesMagazine.org/all-ages](http://YesMagazine.org/all-ages)   
How young people are creating their own music collectives



## Birth Matters: A Midwife's Manifesta

INA MAY GASKIN

Seven Stories Press, 2011, 250 pages, \$16.95

REVIEWED BY SUSAN SMARTT

Ina May Gaskin, the mother of modern-day midwifery in the United States, began her training over three decades ago. Thanks in part to her life's work, a new corps of certified American midwives has been

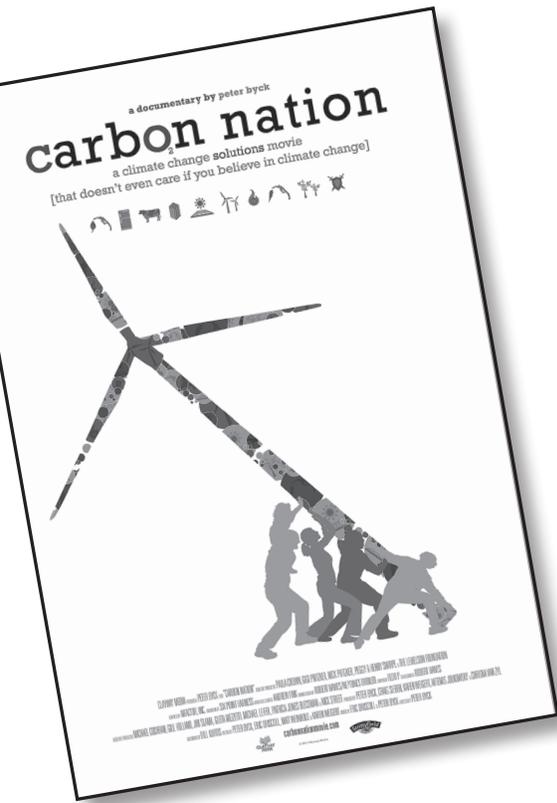
trained, and home births are increasingly available. But highly technical obstetrical practice is still the norm for hospital birth in America, despite a lack of evidence to justify it.

In *Birth Matters: A Midwife's Manifesta*, Gaskin's most recent book, she tracks our country's tragic transition from a "wellness model" of midwife-attended birth, to an "illness model" of medicalized obstetrics, in which pregnancy and labor are subject to strict management and intervention. She writes about for-profit medicine, big business pharmaceuticals, and cites evidence about how under-researched drugs and protocols increase poor outcomes rather than prevent them. She notes that while obstetric technology can be life-saving, it can also be misused, and as long as the U.S. rate of cesareans continues to rise (it is nearly triple the 10 to 15 percent recommended by the World Health Organization), so will our dismal rate of maternal mortality.

Gaskin articulates our culture's failure to understand the impact of mind-body connection as it relates to healthy, normal birthing. She marvels that this disconnect prevents us from appreciating how fear and adrenaline, both of which are heightened in the hospital setting, disrupt the delicate cocktail of natural hormones essential to coordinating effective contractions, cervical dilation, and birth.

The "midwife's manifesta" of the title calls for woman-centered maternity care as a basic human right. Gaskin recommends a competent and compassionate system with effective division of roles, and checks and balances to enable midwives and obstetricians to work as partners toward the common goal of woman-centered birth. Rather than valuing sterility and convenience at the cost of normal birth, Gaskin aims for a new birth culture in which our understanding of physiology allows birth to be both a physical and spiritual encounter with the sacredness of life.

Susan Smartt is a midwife living in Tennessee.



**Carbon Nation**

Directed by Peter Byck, 2010, 82 minutes.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT MELLINGER

The last time Americans united behind a single cause was during the 1940s, when we overhauled our national industry to fight WWII, according to Peter Byck, director of the documentary *Carbon Nation*. He believes a national mobilization of that scale could halt our excessive carbon production and combat the escalation of climate change.

*Carbon Nation* zigzags across the United States, seeking out those who are developing low-carbon energy projects now—finding common ground among rural entrepreneurs, nonprofits, urban community organizers, and even planners in the Pentagon.

“This is no longer the purview of

Birkenstock-loving tree-huggers,” says Col. Daniel A. Nolan III of the Department of Defense “Green Hawks” who promote energy alternatives in the interest of national security and to save soldiers’ lives.

One of *Carbon Nation’s* virtues is its celebration of Americans who are far from that tree-hugger stereotype and working for carbon solutions. Cliff Etheridge is a farmer from Roscoe, Texas, who once struggled to make a living on arid, windy land. “We sat here and prayed for rain and cussed the wind. Now, what we’ve been cussing all these years turned out to be a blessing,” he says. Wind-farming installations are providing Roscoe’s farmers with steady income, while allowing them to continue farming around the turbines. The enterprise will eventually provide clean energy to more than 250,000 homes.

Some reviews have criticized Byck as naive about the overwhelming political, cultural, and legislative obstacles to adopting carbon-neutral alternatives on a national scale. Perhaps Byck set himself up for criticism with his overuse of the campy stylistic devices of an infomercial-style voice-over and retro graphics. Yet the dire warnings of other climate change films have done little to inspire unified national action. Byck’s film, with its documentation of Americans across the political and cultural spectrum, transcends partisanship and makes progress toward a rational, national conversation.

While carbon-conscious innovators are successfully expanding their activities, the well hasn’t yet run dry for carbon producers, and there are no direct financial disincentives to producing carbon. Given these “perverse incentives,” the film’s message is especially important: We can start creating the market for carbon alternatives ourselves, now, and peacefully make the changes needed for our future well-being.

Robert Mellinger is a former YES! intern.

**Who Took the Bomp? Le Tigre on Tour**

Kerthy Fix, 2011, 69 minutes.

Sparked by Kathleen Hanna, famously of Bikini Kill and riot grrl, Le Tigre is a small group that put across some big ideas on its 2004 tour. The feminist band’s art school aesthetic encourages you to DIY, and their political lyrics and dance-punk beat get you on your feet.

**To Be Heard**

Martinez, Legiardi-Laura, Shaffer, Sultan, 2010, 87 minutes.

The Power Writers Program does more than encourage teenagers in the Bronx to write—it empowers them through education and self-expression. The film follows three friends as they approach adulthood, challenged by poverty, crime, and family stress. Poetry gives them strength—and good teachers (sometimes) make a difference.

Watch film trailers at [YesMagazine.org/59films](http://YesMagazine.org/59films)



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