

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Summer 2006

yes!

a journal of positive futures

**Peak Oil.
Money meltdown.
Climate chaos.
Where do you turn?**

DAVID KORTEN

**From Empire
to Earth Community**

JOHN MOHAWK

Indigenous answers

**Neighborhoods prepare
for the worst—and the best**

JOANNA MACY

**Don't despair!
Celebrate**



**5,000 years
of Empire
Ready for a change?**



IMMIGRANTS COME OUT OF THE SHADOWS

IN IRAQ: CREATING A PLACE TO BE HUMAN, FIRST

Dear Reader,

Sitting at a local coffee shop watching eagles circling above the salt water, a friend suddenly asked me a question it seems many are asking: “Do you think people will wake up before it’s too late?”

People are increasingly alarmed about the direction we’re heading, yet many of the people I talk to feel paralyzed about taking action. They don’t understand why there’s so much bad news: climate change, people losing jobs and homes, looming health crises, the quagmire we’ve created in Iraq, and rumors of an attack on Iran—perhaps even with nuclear weapons. And many believe that there is no way to have any effect on these trends.

We disagree.

David Korten’s new book and his article in this issue, “The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community” (page 12), provide a framework for understanding this moment in history. We are behaving, as David points out, much like other empires in decline. But unlike other eras, the stakes today are both local and global. Other empires fell when their military ambitions outstripped their might or their treasury, or when they undermined their ecosystem’s capacity to support their consumption habits. But today we could have a global collapse.

As *Time* magazine says in its cover story on climate change: “Be Worried. Be Very Worried.” Even the corporate press is shaking off its complacency.

David points out that we still have a choice—we can choose Earth Community, a direction called for by the Earth Charter (see *YES!* Winter 2001), based on cooperation with one another and with natural systems. Or we can stay on the empire track until we exhaust our resources and our options.

The scholars featured on page 20–21 warn of collapse, but they also tell of civilizations that made tough choices that averted disaster.

Indigenous peoples learned wisdom and skills from their encounters with various catastrophes, and their experiences could inform our choices today as we face the possibility of system-wide breakdowns (page 22).

Several countries lost access to cheap oil with the fall of the Soviet Union. While North Korea has suf-

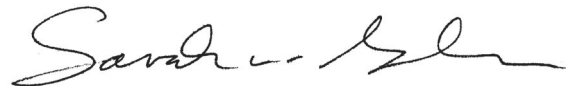
fered chronic food shortages, Cuba avoided prolonged hunger by adopting sustainable agriculture practices (page 36). Maybe we should too.

After the stock market collapse of 1929, groups of unemployed workers rebuilt their local economies as cooperatives, earning a livelihood and providing mutual support (page 26). Will we know how to work together if we have a financial meltdown?

Today, in New York City high-rises, in a Cleveland pub, in a Prescott, Arizona, neighborhood, and elsewhere, people are choosing to work together to prepare for hard times and make their communities more just and sustainable (page 29).

We don’t have to stay on the empire road of domination and violence. As *YES!* writers have been saying for 10 years, we can choose the Earth Community path for a just, sustainable, and compassionate world.

This issue explores the choices we each may face in coming months and years as things change and, perhaps, come apart. Our choices may determine not only whether we make it smoothly through this time of turmoil, but whether we leave future generations the rubble of a failed empire or the foundations for Earth Community.



Sarah Ruth van Gelder
Executive editor

P.S. Thanks to all who sent 10th anniversary greetings and responded to our e-mail request for ways to “thrive and survive in the coming 10 years.” We have posted your responses at www.yesmagazine.org, along with links to 10 years of *YES!* articles on each of the trends in the spring issue, *10 Most Hopeful Trends of the Last 10 Years*.



Linda Wolf



EARLY SIGNS OF COMMUNITY

Petroglyphs and pictographs date from 300 B.C. to 1150 A.D. The Valley of Fire area in Nevada was used for hunting and religious ceremonies of residents of nearby fertile Moapa Valley. First Basketmakers and then Anasazi made their marks on these canyon walls before drought forced them south.

Photo by Trent Chambers

Illustration by Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn for YES! Magazine

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How will future generations remember our time?
As the time when climate chaos, peak oil,
and an unstable global economy unraveled society?
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How likely is collapse?

Nuclear proliferation, bird flu, the debt bomb, climate chaos—facing the perils is the first step to meaningful action.

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Hopi and Iroquois prophecies draw on long cultural memories, offering practical approaches to surviving hard times.

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After the 1929 crash, workers created a cooperative economy, using industrial leftovers and ingenuity.

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The 1990 Soviet collapse cut oil supplies to two countries, disrupting food production. One successfully moved to post-petroleum agriculture, and one failed to. Here's why.

by Dale Wen

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First they passed NAFTA. Then CAFTA. Now Congress is taking up legislation to criminalize those displaced by these trade policies. No wonder people are in the streets.

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The Great Turning as compass and lens

What does it mean to be alive at a time of profound change? The lens of the Great Turning helps us see our part in this historic shift. The compass shows us the direction.

by Joanna Macy

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CALL TO ARTISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

YES! magazine is looking for artists and photographers either already doing work that shares our magazine's mission or interested in working with us. Please contact art director Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn at tdunn@yesmagazine.org.

YES! is published by the Positive Futures Network, an independent, nonprofit organization that supports people's active engagement in creating a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world.

Did an article leave you delighted? Infuriated? Inspired to action?

Tell us what you think, and what you're doing to create a better world

{ Send letters via postal mail to the address below
or e-mail editors@yesmagazine.org }

For a Department of Peace

Editors' note: *We received many letters thanking us for the article by Carol Estes on active nonviolence and its mention of the proposed Department of Peace (YES!, Spring 2006). Letters came from people active in promoting such a department all around the country, from California to Minnesota to Alabama. The following two letters are a sampling.*

Thank you for your wonderful article on active nonviolence. I am one of the state coordinators with the Department of Peace campaign in Minnesota. We have had some great success with our grassroots campaign. Last September, 11 of us from Minnesota met with U.S. Senator Mark Dayton, and the three children attending the meeting were the voices that resonated with our great senator. They asked him to introduce the bill into the Senate and on September 22 he did.

Greg Skog
Eagan, Minnesota

I have been working on this campaign [for a Department of Peace] for three years and find it has been life changing. Creating a Peace Academy to train cadets in the cutting-edge use of nonviolence strategy would save countless lives. The war in Iraq clearly illustrates that the American military is capable of winning any war decisively, but wholly inept at establishing peace. That is because the tools for waging war and for establishing peace are fundamentally different.

If people knew of the true power of nonviolence, the range of disciplines it encompasses, how often it has been utilized successfully, and the degree to which it has been profoundly more effective than violence, this information would radically change our world.

Carol Hillson
via e-mail

The Real Face of Activist Art

As a long-time subscriber to *YES!*, I was pleased when Dee Axelrod asked to interview me for an article she was writing on changes in the arts since 1995. Unfortunately the article that emerged from our lengthy conversation, though seemingly about making things visible, made my contribution invisible. How do we network, create momentum, and model respectful attribution in the movement we are trying to create if the resources we need to access are invisible?

A few corrections:

1. "Reclamation art" and community-based art have been strategies used by activist artists for several decades, both within and outside the art world.
2. The eco-art group that gathered at the 1998 College Art Association consisted of 10 people (not 60, as the article states) and has grown into the international eco-art listserv of over 70 participants, www.ecoartnetwork.org.
3. The Institute for Social Ecology did have a program in art for social change (which I co-created/facilitated with Bob Spivey from

1991–2002) but ISE no longer exists. Despite this loss, educational programs that foster socially engaged art and community-based art practice are beginning to emerge all over the country.

A future article might explore the myriad of strategies available to socially engaged artists and what obstacles we face.

Beverly Naidus
University of Washington, Tacoma
resident of Vashon Island

Beware Success

YES! is my absolute favorite magazine. But beware success. The powers that be can destroy any one thing they want to: attack it from right and left; corrupt it from the inside; co-opt it. But if this world is saved, it will be saved by tens of millions of little things.

Pete Seeger
Beacon, New York

Friends of Trees

If there is any merit to the concept of peak oil—that we are about to see a massive increase in the cost of a dwindling supply of oil—then we should start planning now for how to grow food locally. One way would be to start a massive planting of fruit trees in people's yards and parking strips. I propose this be paid for via a 1 percent tax on all development. And all homes with parking strips should be required to have trees planted on them.

Albert Kaufman
Portland, Oregon

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Zapatistas Launch Campaign

Tens of thousands of masked indigenous Zapatistas and their supporters filled the center of San Cristóbal de las Casas in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, this New Year's Day. Despite extreme poverty and the lack of basic resources, a multitude of men, women, and children traveled hundreds of miles to inaugurate their *Otra Campaña*, the Other Campaign, and to hear the voices of the Zapatista leaders, men and women who serve these people.

Yes, Marcos was there, in his new role as "*delegado Zero*," assigned to travel the country as part of a delegation to listen to the millions of people whose concerns and voices are not heard in the national election campaigns. Thus the name, *La Otra Campaña*.

There's a quiet determination here—no illusions about a quick solution to the worsening problems of neglect and poverty that impact daily most of the people here. Tonight I stood in the midst of tens of thousands of the true leaders of this world who are living proof that the power attained by the powerless through unity is elemental and unstoppable.

Patricia Worth
San Cristóbal de las Casas,
Chiapas, Mexico

Choosing Humane Food

Kudos for addressing the "Food Revolution" (Spring 2006). Indeed, consumers are increasingly seeking out alternatives to conventional retailers and products, and this trend can most clearly be seen by the growing market for animal welfare-friendly products.

Choosing not to support industrialized animal agribusiness is as simple as learning more about the realities of factory farming and opting for those products that do

not result in customary abuses. A good place to start? www.EggLabels.com.

Miyun Park
Vice President, Farm Animal Welfare,
The Humane Society

Raising Voices in Song

I am the artistic director for One Voice Mixed Chorus, an 80-voice gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community chorus in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Our mission is "building community and creating social change by raising our voices in song."

Inspired by the YES! mission, I'm currently designing a concert that will weave stories and music from spiritual traditions across the globe.

The divide is huge between Christian communities and GLBT people. Singers in my chorus are hesitant to sing in churches because of the hurt and rejection so many have experienced at the hand of Christianity. But I take my choir into churches several times each year, and each time the experience is tremendously powerful for both chorus members and the congregation.

There *are* positive stories out there, and I am determined to find them. A group of pastors in Texas recently told their congregations they will no longer perform straight marriages in their congregations until their GLBT members have the legal right to marry. This is an incredible story of standing in solidarity.

If readers know of other stories of spiritual communities taking radical, positive stands with GLBT people, I would be glad to hear of them to incorporate into our concert. Send your stories to ArtisticDirector@ovmc.org.

Jane Ramseyer Miller
St. Paul, Minnesota

Sweden vows to go oil-free in 15 years



A bicyclist in Stockholm, Sweden.
The country has resolved to go oil-free
within the next 15 years.

Sweden has announced plans to be the first oil-free country in the world by 2020. Plans call for renewables—including biofuels, wind, and wave power—to replace fossil fuels. The country already committed itself to phasing out nuclear energy.

“A Sweden free of fossil fuels would give us enormous advantages, not least by reducing the impact from fluctuations in oil prices,” says development minister Monika Sahlin.

Scientists, industry leaders, farmers, and others will develop a detailed plan for presentation to Sweden’s parliament in October.

Sweden already gets 26 percent of its energy from renewable sources, while the European Union average is just 6 percent.

“We want to be both mentally and technically prepared for a world without oil,” *The Guardian* quoted a government official as saying. “The plan is a response to climate change, rising petroleum prices, and warnings by some experts that the world may soon be running out of oil.”

Many Swedish homes are heated by wood-fired boilers, geothermal energy, or waste heat. Sweden is encouraging its citizens to drive non-gas-powered vehicles by offering exemptions from tolls and parking fees. Tax breaks now make ethanol-based fuel one-third as expensive as ordinary gasoline.

—Rik Langendoen

*Rik Langendoen is a longtime YES!
contributor and volunteer.*

GMO Ban Upheld

A United Nations panel has upheld the global moratorium on “terminator” plants genetically engineered to produce infertile seeds. The panel made the decision at its March meeting in Curitiba, Brazil.

Terminator technology prevents farmers from saving seeds from their harvests for the next crop, forcing them to buy from seed companies. A moratorium on the technology, enacted under the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity, had been challenged by Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian delegates lobbied by U.S. advisors and seed corporations Monsanto and Syngenta.

But a broad coalition of farmers, indigenous people, environmental and social justice activists, and local and regional governments defended the moratorium. Worldwide, grassroots opposition to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is mounting.

In Brazil, after protests by more than 1,000 farmers in the GMO-free state of Parana, the Brazilian Environmental Protection Agency fined the Syngenta company 1 million Reals (\$466,000) for its experimental GMO-crop cultivation near Iguaçu National Park.

In Mali, a group of farmers acting as Africa’s first “citizen jury” voted in February against the introduction of GMO crops. After debate and consultation with international experts, the jury proposed focusing research and training on local varieties and organic farming methods instead of using GMOs. The jury’s vote is not binding on the government.

—Lilja Otto

Spring Break Students Clean Up New Orleans

More than 2,700 college students passed up popular spring break spots like Cancún and Florida this year in favor of an unlikely destination: New Orleans' devastated Lower Ninth Ward. Volunteers from 49 states and as far away as Australia came in response to a call by Common Ground Relief.

Common Ground, which has been working to assure that African-American and low-income residents have an opportunity to return to New Orleans, organized the "Second Freedom Rides Alternative Spring Break."

The students came from 275 colleges and contributed \$2 million worth of volunteer labor, according to Common Ground estimates.

In response to residents' requests, the students gutted 200 houses and began cleaning out Martin Luther King Elementary School. Although the government does not plan to reopen the school until fall 2008, Common Ground hopes to open it for community use by May.

Students at historically black colleges and universities were particularly encouraged to volunteer. In the spirit of Common Ground's commitment to "solidarity, not charity" all volunteers were offered anti-racism training and lessons in the socio-political history of New Orleans.

Common Ground called the spring break program the "Second Freedom Rides" in reference to the 1961 bus rides to New Orleans that challenged segregation in interstate bus travel.

Common Ground Relief is a community-based, nonprofit volunteer organization formed immediately after Hurricane Katrina. It operates three medical clinics, four distribution centers, gardening and bioremediation projects, a legal collective, a tool-lending library, and a communications center.

—Elle McPherson

For more information about Common Ground, visit www.commongroundrelief.org.



Molly McLeod

Cornell students volunteer with Common Ground Relief in New Orleans.

Sioux Clinic to Defy S. Dakota Abortion Ban

South Dakota women may soon be making their way to the Pine Ridge Reservation to get legal abortions. The state passed a law in February banning abortions except to save a woman's life. Because of tribal sovereignty, the law will not apply to a reproductive health clinic the Oglala Sioux Tribe has announced it will build on the reservation, says Cecelia Fire Thunder, president of the tribe. The new clinic will open within the next year.

South Dakota attorney general Larry Long questioned whether tribal sovereignty will apply in this case. In the meantime, he says, court challenges will likely keep the new law from taking effect in the immediate future.

Fire Thunder says this issue is bigger than abortion, since half of the roughly 38,000 people who live on the Pine Ridge Reservation are of childbearing age. The Indian Health Service, the tribe's healthcare provider, makes little provision for family planning, she says.

The clinic, to be named the Sacred Choices Clinic, will be a stand-alone, nonprofit entity that will offer reproductive healthcare for all women in the state.

—Daina Saib

Impeachment Movement Grows

Grassroots calls for impeachment of the president are growing. In September, the Santa Cruz, California, City Council called on Congress to investigate whether Bush should be impeached for sending troops to Iraq under false pretenses. Since then, 10 towns from Vermont to California, five state Democratic parties, and 19 local Democratic committees have passed similar resolutions.

A January Zogby poll found that 52 percent of Americans want the president impeached if he wire-tapped U.S. citizens without a judge's approval. The poll was commissioned by Afterdowningstreet.com, a website created to publicize British memos it says show the Bush administration was "fixing" pre-war intelligence to justify the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Founders of Afterdowningstreet have created a political action committee to elect pro-impeachment Democratic members of Congress.

—Carolyn McConnell

States Pioneer Climate Action

In the face of federal inaction on climate change, both houses of the Vermont Legislature have passed a bill that will reduce the state's carbon dioxide emissions 10 percent by 2020.

Led by New York Governor George E. Pataki, seven states—Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Vermont—signed an agreement in 2003 to create a Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

Vermont's new law would make it the first to implement the plan and the first U.S. state to create a mandatory carbon emissions trading market.

The plan caps total emissions and makes power plants purchase allowances that give them the right to emit carbon. Revenue from the sale of the allowances, expected to be \$3–\$5 million, will be used to support energy efficiency measures, renewable energy, new energy technologies, and, potentially, consumer rebates.

Currently, RGGI applies to carbon dioxide emissions from fossil-fuel-burning power plants, which

create a quarter of the emissions in the Northeast. The initiative is designed so that it can eventually include other greenhouse gases and other sources of emissions.

Maryland, meanwhile, has passed the Healthy Air Act, which sets some of the nation's toughest state limits on nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, and mercury—pollutants that cause smog, acid rain, and harmful ozone. The legislation also commits the state to joining RGGI by mid-2007. Because Maryland is more reliant on coal-fired power plants than the other states in the regional pact and its governor opposed strengthened pollution regulation, the new law is considered a major environmental victory.

California may enact a similar greenhouse gas emissions cap if it adopts the Global Warming Solutions Act currently being considered by the state Assembly. The bill requires companies to track and report all greenhouse gas emissions.

California is the 12th largest emitter of global warming pollution in the world. The legislation would reduce greenhouse gases in the state by 25 percent.

—Daina Salb



Mary Lane

Caucus calls for urgent action to promote renewable energy.

Peak Oil Caucus Forms

Members of the U.S. Congress have formed a Peak Oil Caucus in response to predictions that world oil production will peak and decline in coming years.

Representatives Roscoe Bartlett (R-Maryland) and Tom Udall (D-New Mexico) created the caucus last October, and 18 other representatives have since signed on.

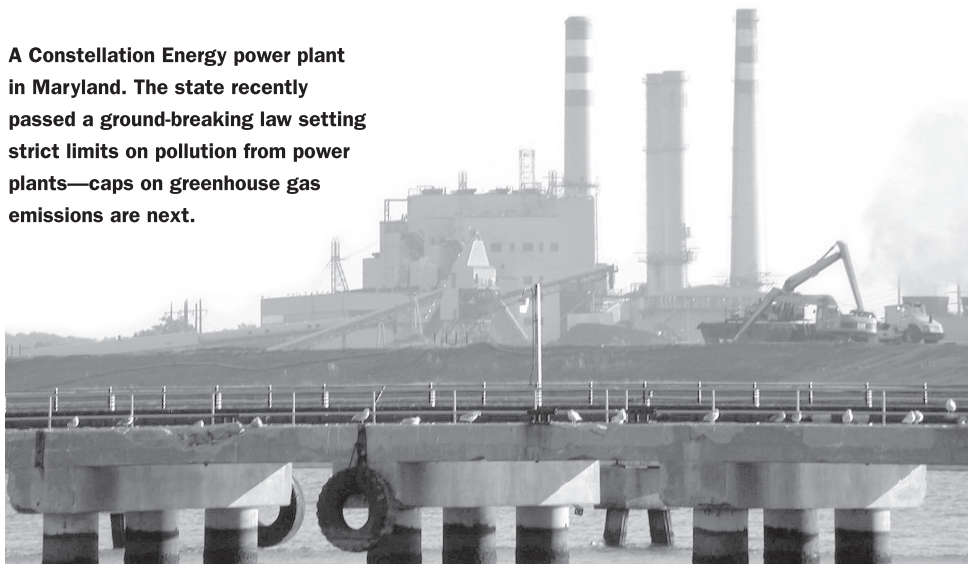
According to Bartlett, the problems created by peak oil will not be solved by concentrating on supply. Any solution, he says, must be grounded in conservation, renewable energy, and improvements in transportation.

"The United States, in collaboration with other international allies, should establish an energy project with the magnitude, creativity, and sense of urgency of the 'Man on the Moon' project to develop a comprehensive plan to address the challenges presented by Peak Oil," caucus members said in a House resolution introduced last year.

In 1956, Shell Oil geologist M. King Hubbert predicted U.S. oil production would peak about 1970, then sharply decline. He was correct, and a growing number of geologists, economists, and environmentalists believe that world oil production will likewise peak in the next two decades, bringing skyrocketing prices and disruption of world economies.

—Carolyn McConnell

A Constellation Energy power plant in Maryland. The state recently passed a ground-breaking law setting strict limits on pollution from power plants—caps on greenhouse gas emissions are next.



Scott Speck, www.scottsspeck.com

Third Ohio Elections Worker Indicted

In February, the former director of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections became the third Cuyahoga elections worker to be indicted for mishandling ballots during the 2004 Ohio presidential election recount. The indictment is the latest fallout from the scandal-plagued 2004 Ohio vote, which provided George Bush his national margin of victory.

Special prosecutor Kevin Baxter alleges that the three Cuyahoga elections workers subverted Ohio voting law in an effort to avoid a lengthy and costly hand recount.

Ohio recount procedure dictates that precincts representing 3 percent of the total vote in a county be randomly selected for both a hand and a machine recount. If the two counts do not match exactly, then elections workers must undertake a hand count for the entire county. If they do match, only a machine recount is conducted. Baxter's indictment alleges that, in Cuyahoga County, elections workers conducted secret pre-counts to identify precincts where the hand and machine recounts matched and then claimed to randomly select these precincts in public.

Michael Vu, executive director of the Cuyahoga Elections Board, maintains that precincts were selected in accordance with past practices and elections workers were prepared to carry out a full hand recount.

Green Party elections observers reported similar mishandling of recounted ballots in seven other counties in addition to Cuyahoga.

Baxter indicated more indictments may be forthcoming.

—**Krista Camenzind**

Krista Camenzind is a former YES! intern.

Instant Runoff Elects Vermont Mayor

Instant runoff voting (IRV) proved the biggest winner in Burlington's mayoral race this March. The election marked the first time voters in Vermont's largest city have used IRV since they adopted it under a successful ballot measure last year.

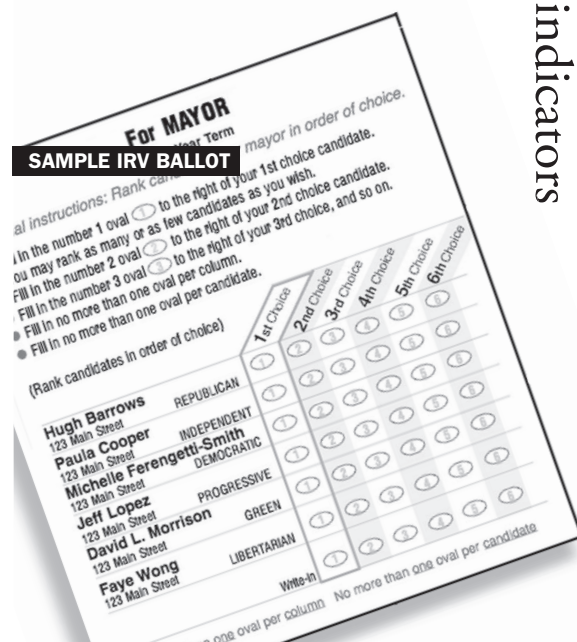
IRV asks voters to rank candidates by preference. When none of the candidates receives an initial majority, a computer quickly eliminates the candidates with the lowest number of votes. The second choices of those who voted for the eliminated candidates are then distributed to the two remaining candidates. In Burlington, Progressive Bob Kiss gained the majority in the instant runoff, despite being outspent three to one by his closest rival in the campaign.

Vermont media called the election "flawless." According to the nonprofit organization FairVote, 99.9 percent of ballots were valid, and exit polls showed a majority of voters liked and understood the new system. The election was closely watched by the state, where legislation for statewide use of IRV has been introduced.

Supporters of IRV argue that it better accommodates voter choice by ensuring that the winner is elected by a majority of voters and eliminating the "spoiler effect" of third-party candidates. It also saves taxpayers the expense of runoff elections and discourages negative campaigning, because candidates aim to receive the second-choice votes of their opponents' supporters.

Berkeley, California, and Ferndale, Michigan, have also passed IRV ballot measures for mayoral elections, but have yet to use IRV. San Francisco elects its Board of Supervisors using IRV.

—**Elle McPherson**



The Progressive Party's Bob Kiss won the Burlington mayoral race in a "flawless" election marking the city's first use of instant runoff voting.

Chicago Trims Waste

Chicago made itself a leader in recycling among U.S. cities when a new ordinance went into effect this year requiring contractors to recycle at least 25 percent of their construction and demolition waste. By 2007, the city will require 50 percent of its construction and demolition waste to be recycled.

More than one-third of Chicago's overall waste comes from construction and demolition sites. Many of the millions of tons of steel, concrete, brick, and wood that usually end up in landfills can easily be recycled or reused.

—**Daina Saib**



Joe Cavaretta for AP

Western Shoshone people protest nuclear weapons testing at the Nevada Test Site in 2002. The U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination ruled this March that the site is on Western Shoshone land and urged the U.S. to stop testing against the wishes of the Tribe.

Day of Action Against New Weapons Test

Local and national activists have called an International Day of Action on May 28 to stop a huge non-nuclear explosion at the Nevada Test Site. This event kicks off a week of peaceful protest leading up to the planned test, scheduled for June 2.

The detonation, code-named *Divine Strake*, would be 70 times larger than the U.S.' largest conventional bomb and similar to its smallest nuclear bomb, according to Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS).

The Defense Department initially confirmed the test was a simulation of a low-yield nuclear-weapon for destroying underground targets, according to Kristensen. Days later, a Defense Department statement to *The Washington Post* denied the test was linked to nuclear research.

Kristensen is concerned that the test could be used for research

into new low-yield nuclear weapons and that the availability of smaller nuclear weapons would lower the threshold for their use. Congress banned development of such weapons in 1993, but amended the law in 2003 to allow early-stage research and development without explicit Congressional approval.

Nevada Citizen Alert is demanding an independent environmental impact statement, fearing the blast could carry dust from the heavily irradiated test site into neighboring states. The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection also renewed its year-old demand that the U.S. government demonstrate that the test would meet air quality standards. Members of the Western Shoshone Tribe and downwinders from Utah filed for a restraining order to halt the test.

The test violates a decision of the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination urging the U.S. to stop testing on tribal land, where the test site is located.

—Lilja Otto

For information, see www.citizenalert.org, www.wsdp.org, and www.fas.org.

Latin America Breaks Ties to Military Past

In signs of a changing Southern Hemisphere, several Latin American countries moved away from their military past and their ties to the United States this spring.

In Argentina, defense minister Nilda Garre announced that the government would make public all secret military archives to help uncover human rights violations during that country's "dirty war" of 1976–1983, in which 30,000 people allegedly were tortured and "disappeared." The decision came on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the military coup, which was marked by thousands who marched in all parts of Argentina, chanting, "Never again!"

Argentina and Uruguay also joined Venezuela in deciding to end the practice of sending troops to train at the U.S.-run School of the Americas, now renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), where many members of the military in the repressive dictatorships of the 1970s received training. Bolivia will reduce the number of troops it sends to WHINSEC.

In March, activists from the U.S., including School of the Americas Watch founder Father Ray Bourgeois and members of the Marin Interfaith Task Force and Nonviolence International, traveled to these countries to encourage them not to send their military to train at WHINSEC.

—Lisa Garrigues

Lisa Garrigues is a YES! contributing editor.

Percentage of Americans who rated dealing with the nation's energy problem a top priority in 2003: **40**
 Percentage in 2006: **58**
 Percentage of Americans who rated protecting the environment a top priority in 2003: **39**
 Percentage in 2006: **57**¹
 Amount willed to the U.S. Treasury by a 98 year-old widow to help pay off the national debt: **\$1.1 million**²
 Total amount of the U.S. national debt: **\$8.4 trillion**³
 Number of job openings at a new Wal-Mart outside Chicago: **325**
 Number of people who applied: **24,500**⁴
 Percentage of U.S. troops serving in Iraq who believe the U.S. should exit the country in 2006: **72**
 Percentage who said that the U.S. mission is mainly "to retaliate for Saddam's role in the 9-11 attacks": **85**⁵
 Percentage of 600 full-time MBA programs across six continents that required one or more courses in ethics, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, or business and society in 2001: **34**
 Percentage in 2005: **54**⁶
 Percentage of injections, in a Dublin study, that did not properly penetrate the buttocks due to fat tissue: **68**⁷
 Number of times the White House Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board has met since it was created in 2004: **0**⁸
 Number of U.S. universities placed on a Pentagon watch list as a national security threat because they hosted on-campus protests against military recruitment: **8**⁹
 Amount in student loans the average U.S. student borrower will owe at graduation: **\$17,600**¹⁰
 Percentage of students whose federal student loan debt burden at graduation is "unmanageable": **39**¹¹
 Number of paid hours per week a student borrower at a public, four-year university works: **22.8**¹²
 Total value of socially responsible investments in the U.S. in 1995: **\$639 billion**
 Total value in 2005: **\$2.29 trillion**¹³
 Average annual cost of regular checking at the 300 largest banks: **\$266**
 At small community banks: **\$191**
 At credit unions: **\$101**¹⁴
 Estimated number of babies born to women in U.S. prisons each year: **2,000**
 Number of state corrections departments that expressly allow shackling of pregnant prisoners during labor: **23**
 Number of women in labor who have escaped or attempted to escape: **0**¹⁵
 Amount of money spent by the Bush administration on public relations and media contracts over the last two and a half years: **\$1.62 billion**
 Amount of that spent by the Department of Defense: **\$1.1 billion**¹⁶
 Number of karate club members hired at a New Zealand rally to protect 140 vintage cars against pecking by native parrots attracted to shiny objects: **40**¹⁷
 Percentage of Americans who agreed that buying and consuming is the American way in 1995: **89**¹⁸
 Percentage who agreed in 2004: **40**¹⁹

Sources (complete citations at www.yesmagazine.org)

1. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, February 28, 2006 2. Akron Beacon Journal, January 20, 2006 3. Bureau of the Public Debt, April 10, 2006 4. Chicago Sun-Times, January 26, 2006 5. Le Moyne College/Zogby International, February 28, 2006 6. World Resource Institute and Aspen Institute, 2005 7. BBC News, November 29, 2005 8. Los Angeles Times, February 20, 2006 9. The Daily Free Press, January 24, 2006 10. Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2005 11. State PIRGs' Higher Education Project, March 2002 12. Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2005 13. Social Investment Forum, January 24, 2006 14. U.S. PIRG, November 1, 2001 15. The New York Times, March 2, 2006 16. General Accountability Office, February 13, 2006 17. The New Zealand Herald, February 2, 2006 18. Merck Family Fund, 1995 19. Center for a New American Dream, 2004

DAVID KORTEN is co-founder and board chair of the Positive Futures Network. This article draws from his newly released book, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*. Go to www.yesmagazine.org/greatturning for book excerpts, related articles, David's talks, and resources for action.



The Great Turning

From Empire to Earth Community

David Korten

By what name will future generations know our time? Will they speak in anger and frustration of the time of the Great Unraveling, when profligate consumption exceeded Earth's capacity to sustain and led to an accelerating wave of collapsing environmental systems, violent competition for what remained of the planet's resources, and a dramatic dieback of the human population? Or will they look back in joyful celebration on the time of the Great Turning, when their forebears embraced the higher-order potential of their human nature, turned crisis into opportunity, and learned to live in creative partnership with one another and Earth?

A defining choice

We face a defining choice between two contrasting models for organizing human affairs. Give them the generic names Empire and Earth Community. Absent an understanding of the history and implications of this choice, we may squander valuable time and resources on efforts to preserve or mend cultures and institutions that cannot be fixed and must be replaced.

Empire organizes by domination at all levels, from relations among nations to relations among family members. Empire brings fortune to the few, condemns the majority to misery and servitude, suppresses the creative potential of all, and appropriates much of the wealth of human societies to maintain the institutions of domination.

Earth Community, by contrast, organizes by partnership, unleashes the human potential for creative co-operation, and shares resources and surpluses for the

good of all. Supporting evidence for the possibilities of Earth Community comes from the findings of quantum physics, evolutionary biology, developmental psychology, anthropology, archaeology, and religious mysticism. It was the human way before Empire; we must make a choice to re-learn how to live by its principles.

Developments distinctive to our time are telling us that Empire has reached the limits of the exploitation that people and Earth will sustain. A mounting perfect economic storm born of a convergence of peak oil, climate change, and an imbalanced U.S. economy dependent on debts it can never repay is poised to bring a dramatic restructuring of every aspect of modern life. We have the power to choose, however, whether the consequences play out as a terminal crisis or an epic opportunity. The Great Turning is not a prophecy. It is a possibility.



Photo by Ben van der Zee

SILENCED BY EMPIRES

Delphi was inhabited since 1400 B.C. by people who worshipped the Mother Earth deity. Beginning in the 8th century B.C., Delphi became known for the powers of the oracle Pythia, who foretold the future in a trance induced by inhaling light hydrocarbon gases that escaped from a chasm in the earth. Early goddess worship at Delphi gave way to the Greek worship of Apollo. In 191 B.C. the sanctuary fell to the Roman Empire, which stripped it of its treasures to finance wars.

CLASH OF EMPIRES

The Empire of the Sun came to a devastating end. This is Nagasaki, in the early afternoon of August 10, 1945. Photographer Yosuke Yamahata wrote: "I had been directed to photograph the situation in Nagasaki so as to be as useful as possible for military propaganda. At the same time I was concerned to discover the means for one's survival in the midst of this tragedy."



Photo by Yosuke Yamahata
Copyright Shogo Yamahata / Courtesy of IDG Films

Illustration by Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn for YES! Magazine

A turn from life

According to cultural historian Riane Eisler, early humans evolved within a cultural and institutional frame of Earth Community. They organized to meet their needs by cooperating with life rather than by dominating it. Then some 5,000 years ago, beginning in Mesopotamia, our ancestors made a tragic turn from Earth Community to Empire. They turned away from a reverence for the generative power of life—represented by female gods or nature spirits—to a reverence for hierarchy and the power of the sword—represented by distant, usually male, gods. The wisdom of the elder and the priestess gave way to the arbitrary rule of the powerful, often ruthless, king.

Paying the price

The peoples of the dominant human societies lost their sense of attachment to the living earth, and societies became divided between the rulers and the ruled, exploiters and exploited. The brutal competition for power created a relentless play-or-die, rule-or-be-ruled dynamic of violence and oppression and served to elevate the most ruthless to the highest positions of power. Since the fateful turn, the major portion of the resources available to human societies has been diverted from meeting the needs of life to supporting the military forces, prisons, palaces, temples, and patronage for retainers and propagandists on which the system of domination in turn depends. Great civilizations built by ambitious rulers fell to successive waves of corruption and conquest.

The primary institutional form of Empire has

morphed from the city-state to the nation-state to the global corporation, but the underlying pattern of domination remains. It is axiomatic: for a few to be on top, many must be on the bottom. The powerful control and institutionalize the processes by which it will be decided who enjoys the privilege and who pays the price, a choice that commonly results in arbitrarily excluding from power whole groups of persons based on race and gender.

Troubling truths

Herein lies a crucial insight. If we look for the source of the social pathologies increasingly evident in our culture, we find they have a common origin in the dominator relations of Empire that have survived largely intact in spite of the democratic reforms of the past two centuries. The sexism, racism, economic injustice, violence, and environmental destruction that have plagued human societies for 5,000 years, and have now brought us to the brink of a potential terminal crisis, all flow from this common source. Freeing ourselves from these pathologies depends on a common solution—replacing the underlying dominator cultures and institutions of Empire with the partnership cultures and institutions of Earth Community. Unfortunately, we cannot look to imperial powerholders to lead the way.

Beyond denial

History shows that as empires crumble the ruling elites become ever more corrupt and ruthless in their drive to secure their own power—a dynamic now playing out



Earth Community Dialogues

Leadership toward Earth Community must come from people working together from the bottom up to reclaim and rebuild family and community life and restore environmental health. We cannot count on those in power to lead us away from the status quo.

People across the country are taking the initiative to begin broadly inclusive dialogues to address the

imperative and opportunity of this moment of great change. Call these Earth Community Dialogues.

The initial impetus may come from a small group or even a single individual. It may start with a faith community; it may simply be a group of concerned friends. The defining quality is a commitment to engaging in an expanding conversation cutting across racial, religious, and class lines, and devoted to exposing the myths of

Empire, affirming the deeper values most humans share, and acting one community at a time to create a world that works for all.

As the circle of engagement grows, the dialogue will extend into ever-larger community forums and engage the full range of print and electronic media. As these dialogues take root in a growing number of localities, they create a growing potential to merge into ever-larger dialogues of the whole.

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• YES! study guide
See davidkorten.com for
• David Korten
speaking schedule
• Great Turning
discussion guide

All societies are patterned on either a dominator model—in which human hierarchies are ultimately backed up by force or the threat of force—or a partnership model, with variations in between. **RIANE EISLER**



CARCASSES OF AN OIL EMPIRE

An oil collection facility lies in ruins at the giant Burgan oil field in Central Kuwait. The oil field is the largest in the world and was targeted by Iraqi troops retreating from the U.S. invasion in 1991 in a scorched-earth campaign ordered by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. As oil production peaks, global resource wars become more likely, according to Richard Heinberg (p. 34) and other futurists.

Photo by Scott Nelson for Getty Images
Illustration by Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn for YES! Magazine

in the United States. We Americans base our identity in large measure on the myth that our nation has always embodied the highest principles of democracy, and is devoted to spreading peace and justice to the world.

But there has always been tension between America's high ideals and its reality as a modern version of Empire. The freedom promised by the Bill of Rights contrasts starkly with the enshrinement of slavery elsewhere in the original articles of the Constitution. The protection of property, an idea central to the American dream, stands in contradiction to the fact that our nation was built on land taken by force from Native Americans. Although we consider the vote to be the hallmark of our democracy, it took nearly 200 years before that right was extended to all citizens.

Americans acculturated to the ideals of America find it difficult to comprehend what our rulers are doing, most of which is at odds with notions of egalitarianism, justice, and democracy. Within the frame of historical reality, it is perfectly clear: they are playing out the endgame of Empire, seeking to consolidate power through increasingly authoritarian and anti-democratic policies.

Wise choices necessarily rest on a foundation of truth. The Great Turning depends on awakening to deep truths long denied.

Global awakening

Empire's true believers maintain that the inherent flaws in our human nature lead to a natural propensity to greed, violence, and lust for power. Social order and material progress depend, therefore, on imposing elite rule and market discipline to channel these dark tendencies to positive ends. Psychologists who study the developmental pathways of the individual consciousness observe a more complex reality. Just as we grow up in our physical capacities and potential given proper physical nourishment and exercise, we also grow up in the capacities and potential of our consciousness, given proper social and emotional nourishment and exercise.

Over a lifetime, those who enjoy the requisite emotional support traverse a pathway from the narcissistic, undifferentiated magical consciousness of the newborn to the fully mature, inclusive, and multidimensional spiritual consciousness of the wise elder. The lower, more narcissistic, orders of consciousness are perfectly normal for young children, but become sociopathic in adults and are easily encouraged and manipulated by advertisers and demagogues. The higher orders of consciousness are a necessary foundation of mature democracy. Perhaps Empire's greatest tragedy is that its cultures and institutions systematically suppress our progress to the

Three Turnings

The Great Turning requires more than adjustments at the margin of Empire. It requires turning from dominator to partnership relations in each of the three major spheres of human activity.

Cultural Turning

The Great Turning begins with a cultural and spiritual awakening—a turning in cultural values from money and material excess to life and spiritual fulfillment, from a belief in our limitations to a belief in our possibilities, and from fearing our differences to rejoicing in our diversity. It requires reframing the cultural stories by which we define our human nature, purpose, and possibilities.

Economic Turning

The values shift of the cultural turning leads us to redefine wealth—to measure it by the health of our families, communities, and natural environment. It leads us from policies that raise those at the top to policies that raise those at the bottom, from hoarding to sharing, from concentrated to distributed ownership, and from the rights of ownership to the responsibilities of stewardship.

Political Turning

The economic turning creates the necessary conditions for a turn from a one-dollar, one-vote democracy to a one-person, one-vote democracy, from passive to active citizenship, from competition for individual advantage to cooperation for mutual advantage, from retributive justice to restorative justice, and from social order by coercion to social order by mutual responsibility and accountability.

higher orders of consciousness.

Given that Empire has prevailed for 5,000 years, a turn from Empire to Earth Community might seem a hopeless fantasy if not for the evidence from values surveys that a global awakening to the higher levels of human consciousness is already underway. This awakening is driven in part by a communications revolution that defies elite censorship and is breaking down the geographical barriers to intercultural exchange.

The consequences of the awakening are manifest in the civil rights, women's, environmental, peace, and other social movements. These movements in turn gain energy from the growing leadership of women, communities of color, and indigenous peoples, and from a shift in the demographic balance in favor of older age groups more likely to have achieved the higher-order consciousness of the wise elder.

It is fortuitous that we humans have achieved the means to make a collective choice as a species to free ourselves from Empire's seemingly inexorable compete-or-die logic at the precise moment we face the imperative to do so. The speed at which institutional and technological advances have created possibilities wholly new to the human experience is stunning.

JUST OVER 60 YEARS AGO, we created the United Nations, which, for all its imperfections, made it possible for the first time for representatives of all the world's nations and people to meet in a neutral space to resolve differences through dialogue rather than force of arms.

LESS THAN 50 YEARS AGO, our species ventured into space to look back and see ourselves as one people sharing a common destiny on a living space ship.

IN LITTLE MORE THAN 10 YEARS our communications technologies have given us the ability, should we choose to use it, to link every human on the planet into a seamless web of nearly costless communication and cooperation.

Already our new technological capability has made possible the interconnection of the millions of people who are learning to work as a dynamic, self-directing social organism that transcends boundaries of race, class, religion, and nationality and functions as a shared conscience of the species. We call this social organism global civil society. On February 15, 2003, it brought more than 10 million people to the streets of the world's cities, towns, and villages to call for peace in the face of the buildup to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. They accomplished this monumental collective action without a central organization, budget, or charismatic leader through social processes never before possible on such a scale. This was but a foretaste of the possibilities for radically new forms of partnership organization now within our reach.

Break the silence, end the isolation, change the story

We humans live by stories. The key to making a choice for Earth Community is recognizing that the foundation of Empire's power does not lie in its instruments of physical violence. It lies in Empire's ability to control the stories by which we define ourselves and our possibilities in order to perpetuate the myths on which the legitimacy of the dominator relations of Empire depend. To change the human future, we must change our defining stories.

It is fortuitous that we humans have achieved the means to make a collective choice as a species to free ourselves from Empire's seemingly inexorable compete-or-die logic at the precise moment we face the imperative to do so



NASA

GLOBAL COMMUNITY

"Blue Marble: Next Generation." A mosaic of data taken from NASA satellites, this is the most detailed image of the Earth's surface ever produced, emphasizing Earth's reality as a living spaceship.



Evan Schneider for U.N. Photo

GLOBAL CONSCIENCE

The United Nations brings together representatives of all nations to provide peaceful conflict resolution and promote cooperative aid. In Garhi Habibullah, a U.N. medical officer treats victims of the Pakistan earthquake. Information on all U.N. missions is at www.un.org.



OLPC

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

One Laptop Per Child is a nonprofit group developing a \$100 laptop for free distribution to the world's children. The laptops have wireless broadband and even in remote villages make a network of their own, peer-to-peer, extending the reach of global communication and cooperation.

Story power

For 5,000 years, the ruling class has cultivated, rewarded, and amplified the voices of those storytellers whose stories affirm the righteousness of Empire and deny the higher-order potentials of our nature that would allow us to live with one another in peace and cooperation. There have always been those among us who sense the possibilities of Earth Community, but their stories have been marginalized or silenced by Empire's instruments of intimidation. The stories endlessly repeated by the scribes of Empire become the stories most believed. Stories of more hopeful possibilities go unheard or unheeded and those who discern the truth are unable to identify and support one another in the common cause of truth telling. Fortunately, the new communications technologies are breaking this pattern. As truth-tellers reach a wider audience, the myths of Empire become harder to maintain.

The struggle to define the prevailing cultural stories largely defines contemporary cultural politics in the United States. A far-right alliance of elitist corporate plutocrats and religious theocrats has gained control of the political discourse in the United States not by force of their numbers, which are relatively small, but by controlling the stories by which the prevailing culture defines the pathway to prosperity, security, and meaning. In each instance, the far right's favored versions of these stories affirm the dominator relations of Empire.

THE IMPERIAL PROSPERITY STORY says that an eternally growing economy benefits everyone. To grow the economy, we need wealthy people who can invest in enterprises that create jobs. Thus, we must support the wealthy by cutting their taxes and eliminating regulations that create barriers to accumulating wealth. We must also eliminate welfare programs in order to teach the poor the value of working hard at whatever wages the market offers.

THE IMPERIAL SECURITY STORY tells of a dangerous world, filled with criminals, terrorists, and enemies. The only way to insure our safety is through major expenditures on the military and the police to maintain order by physical force.

THE IMPERIAL MEANING STORY reinforces the other two, featuring a God who rewards righteousness with wealth and power and mandates that they rule over the poor who justly suffer divine punishment for their sins.

These stories all serve to alienate us from the community of life and deny the positive potentials of our nature, while affirming the legitimacy of economic inequality, the use of physical force to maintain imperial order, and the special righteousness of those in power.

It is not enough, as many in the United States are doing, to debate the details of tax and education

Portrait of a Perfect Economic Storm

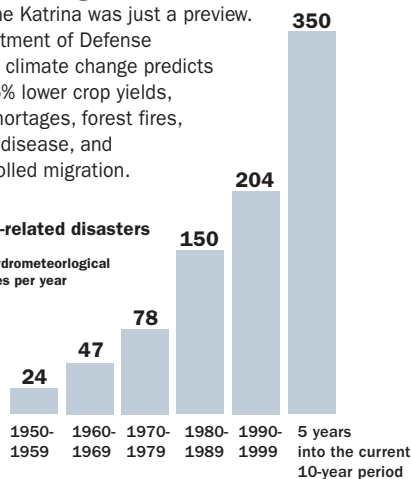
Climate change, financial meltdown, and peak oil will devastate those segments of the economy dependent on oil subsidies and stable global supply lines. These are no longer future issues. A dramatic restructuring of the way we live, including a return to local food and energy self-reliance, has become an imperative.

Climate Change

Hurricane Katrina was just a preview. A Department of Defense study of climate change predicts 10%–25% lower crop yields, water shortages, forest fires, famine, disease, and uncontrolled migration.

Weather-related disasters

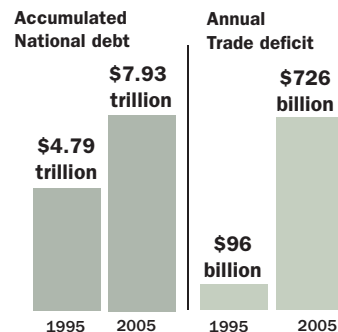
Average hydrometeorological occurrences per year



Source: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

U.S. Financial Meltdown

Growing trade deficits generate foreign debt at a rate of \$2 billion a day. When the rest of the world tires of feeding our profligacy, financial meltdown will ensue.



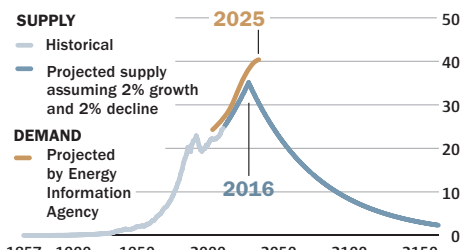
Sources: globalpolicy.org; publicdebt.gov

Peak Oil

Global oil production cannot keep pace with growing demand. Rising oil prices spell the end of economies built on cheap oil, industrial agriculture, car-dependent sprawl, and the global projection of mechanized military force.

Supply and demand of oil 1857-2150

In billions of barrels per year



Supply curve based on EIA projection deemed most likely by Hirsch, et al., http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/pdf/Oil_Peaking_NETL.pdf. Demand projections based on average annual percent change of 1.9.

Source: Department of Energy, Energy Information Association

YES! Magazine graphic, copyright 2006. Text by David Korten

policies, budgets, war, and trade agreements in search of a positive political agenda. Nor is it enough to craft slogans with broad mass appeal aimed at winning the next election or policy debate. We must infuse the mainstream culture with stories of Earth Community. As the stories of Empire nurture a culture of domination, the stories of Earth Community nurture a culture of partnership. They affirm the positive potentials of our human nature and show that realizing true prosperity, security, and meaning depends on creating vibrant, caring, interlinked communities that support all persons in realizing their full humanity. Sharing the joyful news of our human possibilities through word and action is perhaps the most important aspect of the Great Work of our time.

Changing the prevailing stories in the United States may be easier to accomplish than we might think. The apparent political divisions notwithstanding, U.S. polling data reveal a startling degree of consensus on key issues. Eighty-three percent

of Americans believe that as a society the United States is focused on the wrong priorities. Supermajorities want to see greater priority given to children, family, community, and a healthy environment. Americans also want a world that puts people ahead of profits, spiritual values ahead of financial values,

and international cooperation ahead of international domination. These Earth Community values are in fact widely shared by both conservatives and liberals.

Our nation is on the wrong course not because Americans have the wrong values. It is on the wrong course because of remnant imperial institutions that give unaccountable power to a small alliance of right-wing extremists who call themselves conservative and claim to support family and community values, but whose preferred economic and social policies constitute a ruthless war against children, families, communities, and the environment.

The distinctive human capacity for reflection and intentional choice carries a corresponding moral responsibility to care for one another and the planet. Indeed, our deepest desire is to live in loving relationships with one another. The hunger for loving families and communities is a powerful, but latent, unifying force and the potential foundation of a winning political coalition dedicated to creating societies that support every person in actualizing his or her highest potential.

In these turbulent and often frightening times, it is important to remind ourselves that we are privileged to live at the most exciting moment in the whole of the human experience. We have the opportunity to turn away from Empire and to embrace Earth Community as a conscious collective choice. *We* are the ones we have been waiting for.

www.YesMagazine.org

More about David Korten's book "The Great Turning" at www.yesmagazine.org/greatturning
 • myths of Empire • related articles
 • blog—Signs of the Great Turning

How likely is collapse?



Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn for YES! Magazine

Michael Marien

Much attention has been given recently to the prospect of collapse, catastrophe, and decline. Are these fears reasonable? What is likely and not-so-likely? Which concerns should take top priority? And what should we do?

One may justly ask why all this gloom and doom is appearing in *YES!* The answer is paradoxical: the first step toward a positive future at the individual, community, society, or global level is to address seriously the problems at hand and to take meaningful action. A full basket of big, messy problems is now in front of us. If not addressed in a constructive way, they could result in local or regional catastrophes, or collapse of societies, civilization, and perhaps even the human species.

Prospective catastrophe then and now

After the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, fear of more nuclear explosions became the major concern of many people. As the arms race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union continued to escalate, visions of “nuclear holocaust” were frequently evoked as a way to stop the madness and reduce or eliminate these fearsome weapons. This justified fear perhaps reached a high point in December 1983, when environmental scientists posed the “nuclear winter” scenario in *Science* magazine, arguing that nuclear war would not only devastate people and cities, but could

FACES FROM A LOST EMPIRE

Easter Island is one of the Pacific’s most extreme examples of deforestation, says Jared Diamond, author of *Collapse* (see page 21). The island once possessed a forest of palms, and it has popularly been thought that natives deforested the island, partly in the process of erecting giant statues for their chiefs. The island has 887 statues; the largest is 72 feet high and 165 tons. Without trees, the Rapa Nui natives were unable to build fishing canoes; they lost their main source of heat, raw materials for clothes, and tools. Starvation, cannibalism, civil war, and a population crash ensued.

also darken the skies and chill the atmosphere, leading to extinction of many plants and animals.

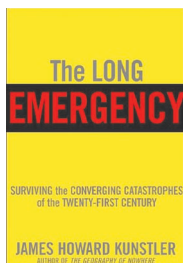
With the end of the Cold War, fear of all-out nuclear war virtually disappeared. But new fears are growing which, collectively, could be as bad or worse:

Global Warming, due to human-induced release of greenhouse gases, leading to rising sea levels and more extreme weather events such as hurricanes and droughts;

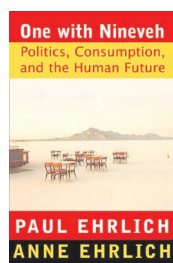
Severe Ecosystem Damage, due to growing human numbers placing demands on nature, leading to loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services;

Terrorist Attacks, which could involve nuclear weapons, “dirty nukes” (conventional bombs laced with radioactive materials), bioterrorism, tampered food supplies, or attacks on chemical plants, the Internet, or the electrical grid;

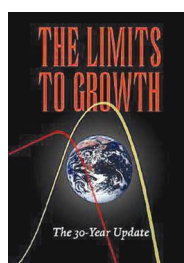
New and Revived Diseases, most notably at the moment the prospect of an avian flu pandemic if the H5N1 virus mutates so it spreads easily to humans;



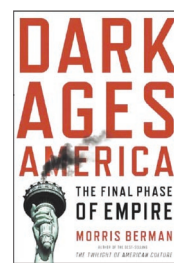
A critic of urban sprawl charges that America is “sleepwalking into the future” as we face the end of cheap fossil fuel and global warming, which will shut down the global economy and reduce living standards. (2005)



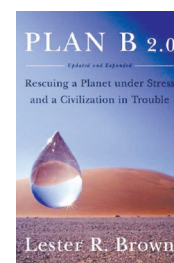
Two Stanford environmental scientists describe today’s hubris as rivaling Nineveh’s ancient kings. But unlike the regional ecological collapse of Mesopotamia, “this time the collapse could be global,” due to increasing population and runaway consumption. (2004)



In the updated edition of their 1972 book, the authors maintain that humanity has squandered the past 30 years, and the world will experience overshoot and collapse due to global resource use and emissions. “We are much more pessimistic about the global future than we were in 1972.” (2004)



The U.S. is in a state of “advanced cultural disintegration.” Parallels between America and late-empire Rome, and the subsequent slide into the Dark Ages, are increasingly suggestive. The author critiques “liquid modernity,” the market-driven public media, Pax Americana, alienation, and civic ignorance. (2006)



Our global economy is outgrowing earth’s capacity, moving civilization “closer to decline and possible collapse.” The response must involve stabilizing the climate, restoring the earth, ending poverty, feeding people better, and building a new eco-economy. (2006)

Prolonged Energy Crisis, brought on by a major reduction in global oil supply, which could be due to a sudden terrorist attack or a long-term waning of available oil in the face of rising demand and insufficient alternatives;

A Great Economic Depression, brought on by rising deficits and defaults, or collapse of the U.S. dollar.

Thus, the landscape of justifiable fear has changed radically in the past two decades, from a single overwhelming threat of nuclear war between superpowers to a multitude of highly uncertain threats from every direction, which could unfold in any of numerous combinations of political, economic, and especially health and environmental concerns. And if today’s stew of possible calamities is quite different from that of 20 years ago, it is likely that 20 years from now the prospect will again be different—for better or worse.

Rough guesses for uncertain times

Is all or most of the gloom portrayed in the books referenced on pages 20–21 warranted? Probably. Those who take the “pooh-pooh position” of flat denial have probably not read any of these well-documented works. That said, can any distinctions be made about what is likely and what is not? There are many uncertainties, but some rough estimates can be attempted.

All-Out Extinction, of all humans, is a remote possibility at present, but in 20 years, with major climate changes and several other catastrophes, it could be taken much more seriously. Remarkably, there are no programs to study the possible futures of humanity at any major university.

Total Collapse, as suggested by Jared Diamond, begs further questions. Is this likely for some societies, most societies, or all societies? Will it be permanent, or only temporary? Collapse does seem likely in decades ahead for small and weak societies (it is only in the past decade that we have begun to use the phrase “failed states”), and we can see ghost towns and decaying communities even in the U.S. Collapse seems unlikely, at present, for big, rich, and diverse societies.

Catastrophes, both natural and man-made, will happen. Most will be local or regional, but some (i.e. pandemics) can be global. Most people, communities, and societies will recover, to some degree (e.g. San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and New Orleans after Katrina, although the latter may or may not fully regain its past glory).

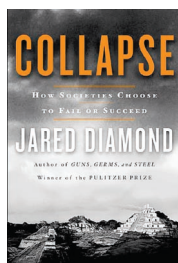
Overall Decline, for most people in the U.S. and elsewhere, for decades or more, seems likely. Think of it as “punctuated evolution” or “jagged evolution,” rather than the linear, ever-upward evolution that is widely assumed. Arguably, decline is already underway, but it is masked by obsolete industrial-era views of economic growth—the GNP measure—rather than a more sophisticated progress measure such as the Genuine Progress Indicator or the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare.

What we should do

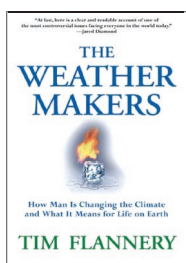
Many households, businesses, local governments, and communities around the world are pursuing sustainable practices, as are many European national governments. But much more can be done on many fronts, especially in turning the U.S. government



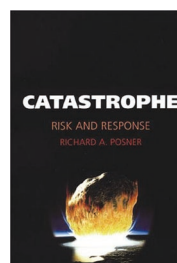
A Cambridge professor and UK Royal Astronomer offers a broad catalog of risks from science and technology, especially fast-growing damage to the environment. The British edition has a more explicit title: *Our Final Century: The 50/50 Threat to Humanity's Survival*. (2003)



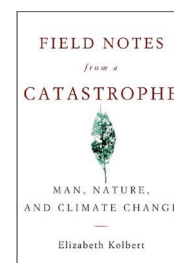
This best-seller by a UCLA geography professor ably describes past societies that destroyed themselves by overexploiting resources, and points to three present countries (Australia, China, Haiti) and the state of Montana that face deep troubles. (2005)



An Australian scientist's lucid overview of climate change over 10 millennia, warning of "inevitable" collapse of civilization if business as usual continues. Suggests possibilities of rainforests turning to desert and huge amounts of methane released from ocean floors. (2006)



Providing a catalog of four categories of risk—natural disasters, scientific accidents, other unintended human-made catastrophes such as global warming, and intentional catastrophes—the author warns that risks of global catastrophe "are growing, probably rapidly." (2004)



A *New Yorker* writer offers vignettes of today's climate change. "It may seem impossible to imagine that a technologically advanced society could choose, in essence, to destroy itself, but that is what we are now in the process of doing." (2006)

around from laggard to responsible world leader. Local action is all well and good, but sensible policies at the national and global level are necessary. There is no dearth of advice, although it is scattered around: hundreds of books advocate wise and humane policies to enhance our chances for survival and well-being. One of the best is Lester Brown's *Plan B 2.0* (see above), a lucid introduction to what is needed.

Jared Diamond does not prescribe any policies, but he nicely synthesizes lessons learned as to why past societies destroyed themselves. Such societies fail to anticipate problems before they arise, to perceive problems that have arrived, and to solve problems once perceived. Despite America's surfeit of information and knowledge, we fail in all three dimensions because we are not effectively organized to succeed in these multi-disciplinary and multi-agency tasks. Seriously facing our era of multiple transitions and multiple catastrophes in an already crowded and angry world of 6.5 billion people, projected to be 9 billion people by 2050, will require extensive attention to the organization of our knowledge resources—and to promoting civic education.

At the "elite" level of knowledge production, our present understanding of the world and its problems is highly fragmented among academic disciplines and professions, increasingly partisan think tanks, and a plethora of profit-driven media outlets. Imagine if medicine were practiced in the same way: a world of specialists in brains, eyes, ears, lungs, skin, feet, etc., with no general practitioners to assess the whole body. What academia lacks are generalist "knowledge integrators" who can assess the big picture of various

sectors and humanity in general.

At the popular level, more attention has to be given to developing informed citizens who can see through political flim-flam, appreciate what science has to offer, sort out what is most important and what actions are needed, and know how to evaluate success. Suffice to say that, despite—or perhaps because of—the ever-growing abundance of information and the miracles of the Internet, we are "amusing ourselves to death," to cite the prescient 1985 book of the same name by the late Neil Postman. Or check out *Attention Deficit Democracy* by James Bovard, for a current variant.

It's not pretty

We are unlikely to rethink our organization of knowledge and ways of informing ourselves any time soon. So we will continue to elect reality-challenged leaders with learning problems, suffer from various catastrophes, and react inadequately when they do occur.

But perhaps one of these catastrophes will serve as a wake-up call, and perhaps enough of us will finally realize that we cannot continue as we have. Then we will begin to organize knowledge for survival and human benefit, elect responsible leaders who promote the public interest and the interest of humanity, make wise investments with our public funds, and educate all citizens for the promises and perils of life in the 21st century.

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Indigenous Prophecies

**Food, climate change, and surviving hard times:
It's not for sissies, but we've been here before**



Dan Namingha

Deer Migration No. 6

Acrylic on Canvas

48" x 48"

John Mohawk

Many American Indian traditions contain stories about how things were in the distant past and how the world came to be the way it is now. And many of these project into the future how things will come to be. In these stories we have some of the major prophecies. Two of these are probably the best known: the Hopi prophecies, because the Hopi elders made attempts over more than five decades to warn the world of the coming changes, and the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois, because as one of the most closely studied, they are also one of the most communicative. Both are instructive, although somewhat misunderstood.

Some cultures experience prophecies as something that happens to an individual. God, or some other supernatural force, designates someone, usually a male, to receive information about what is about to happen. That person becomes a prophet.

In American Indian cultures, it is usually the collective, the people, who are given the information, although sometimes a teacher or individual arises among them to become a prophet. Certainly in historic times American Indian cultures produced charismatic prophets. Of special interest, however, is an earlier kind of prophecy akin to the Hopi prophecy, which does not designate a prophet but becomes the teachings of a people.

In the ancient Hopi prophecies, we hear of worlds that once existed, of how people became corrupted and debauched, and how the powers of nature abandoned them. The people were forced to flee underground, only to emerge later to rebuild their world. The same thing happened three times, until emergence into this, the fourth world. But the fourth world, we are led to understand, is not permanent.

This kind of prophecy is about how things were in the past and how they will come to be again. The Hopi story is that things were just wonderful until people forgot their obligations to the forces of nature; then nature abandoned them to natural catastrophes, destroying their civilization. But the people survived and emerged to rebuild.

This story should be thought of not as a fantasy but as a collective memory. The archaeological and geological records show that past civilizations did exist in the desert Southwest, they did decline and disappear, and the people did re-emerge. The story is true.

Europe in the "new" world

When Europeans first began streaming into North America four centuries ago, they came from a continent that experienced persistent food shortages. A prevailing symbol of pre-modern Europe is the vision of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: War, Famine, Disease, and Death. These images are not

simply bogeymen. War was fairly common and often led to famine, which weakened the populations, leading to diseases and, of course, death. Waves of epidemic disease swept through Europe and the “known world,” Asia, Asia Minor, and Africa, for centuries. The climate of Western Europe was often unpredictable, too cold for crops some years, warm enough other years. Often there wasn’t enough food to eat, and it was not unusual that people in one place, say Bavaria, might be starving while people in another, say Tuscany, had a surplus. Not everyone was starving all the time, but almost every area experienced hunger some of the time.

But when they arrived in the Americas, Europeans found plenty to eat. We know now that the Indians were responsible for this, although they gained scant praise or acknowledgment at the time. The English arrived in New England at a time when the region had been experiencing epidemic diseases and population declines, which may have been ongoing for generations due to infections brought by the Spanish far to the south. But the Indian legacy to New England was a bounty to the English.

The Indians had managed their world to take advantage of nature’s capacity for food production. Where berries would grow, the Indians encouraged them. Wherever Indians went, they planted food crops, especially nut trees. There is evidence that the walnut groves that the English immigrants encountered were planted by Indians as a food source.

And nature helped. Food sources existed in North America in some abundance, especially the chestnut tree, which once comprised one-sixth of the North American

Dan Namingha

Dreamstate No. 54, Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 24"

Dan Namingha is an artist from the Tewa-Hopi Tribe whose work reflects his deep respect for the earth and the spirit of his ancestry. “Change and evolution are a continuum—socially, politically, and spiritually,” he writes. “The future of our planet and membership of the human race must be monitored to insure survival.” Visit his gallery at www.namingha.com.



The Hopi story is that things were just wonderful until people forgot their obligations to the forces of nature. Then nature abandoned them to natural catastrophes and destroyed their civilization. But the people survived and emerged to rebuild

forest. In addition, the Indians knew which wild plants to use as food. For famine to arrive in the North American forest, you would need one of the four horsemen: war.

Disease and death, as I have said, preceded the arrival of the English. Some argue that the depopulation of the Indians accounted for some of the abundance of game, including the pigeons. But the forests had been managed in a way that encouraged, indeed helped feed, game populations. Indian land management, both at the village level and in the forest lands, encouraged food production. For the most part, the Indians didn’t plant foods that were already available in abundance. Instead of creating a garden of blueberries, they encouraged the

productivity of blueberry plantations established by nature. They didn’t bring the blueberries to the village, the village went to the blueberries. During the nut and berry seasons, Indians were forever off somewhere gathering, drying, and preparing for storage foods that were provided by nature under the encouragement of humans. It was edible landscaping on a grand scale. The English, upon arrival, turned their livestock loose on the forest, and the blueberry and other wild food plants were destroyed. The English thought they were making “improvements” to the land.

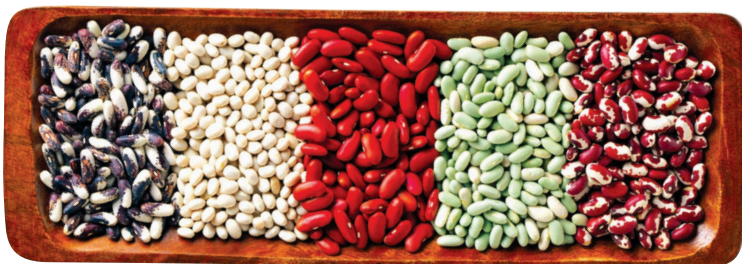
In addition, Indians had pushed agriculture as far north as possible in the millennium prior to English

arrival, and the English benefited from the existence of beans, squashes, and, of course, corn. While the English concentrated their agriculture on small plots and pastures, the Indians managed huge areas of forest, burning off the underbrush periodically to make way for grasses to feed the deer and elk and other animals. It was mega-farm development with nature as the guiding hand. The English thought the Indians were nomads, but the English never had a clue what the Indians were doing. Indians of the woodlands had learned to cooperate with nature, which is an admonition of the Hopi story. And, like the Hopi, they had learned that sometimes even cooperation with nature was not enough to avoid catastrophe.

The English arrived at an opportune time. The past 400 years had seen the nicest weather imaginable. It

was certainly nicer weather than the ancient Indians knew. The English were at first a bit astonished at how violent storms could get even in this period of nice weather, and they would eventually encounter the tornadoes, blizzards, and hurricanes to which North America is prone. But the English have never seen North America at its worst, or even at its average.

The Iroquois have a story about how the world was transformed. In this transformation the spirit of cold or ice is restrained, and the creator of good things—many of which are good things to eat—creates a world of plenty. The people are encouraged to be happy and grateful for this bounty, but they are forewarned that although things are productive and plentiful, they may not remain this way. Indeed, they will not. The Hopi and the Iroquois are consistent on this point: change will come.



Saving seeds

Peruse the produce at your local grocery store and you might see two or three varieties of tomato. Flip through the pages of Seed Savers Exchange's annual yearbook, and you'll see 5,500 varieties of tomato, from "Austin's Yellow Pear" to "Wapsipinicon Peach."

Seed Savers Exchange was founded by Diane and Kent Whealy in 1975, after her grandfather passed down seeds his parents brought from Bavaria when they immigrated to Iowa in the 1870s. The Decorah, Iowa-based non-profit has since grown into an internationally recognized network of 8,000 members who collect, conserve, and share heirloom, or handed-down, seeds.

Less than 5 percent of the tomato and sweet corn varieties available in the early 1900s are still available today. Varieties that have been cultivated for centuries by families and communities for flavor and local conditions have been sacrificed to industrial agriculture's demand for uniformity, appearance, and durability. By saving heirloom seeds, Seed Saver's grassroots efforts play an invaluable role in protecting genetic diversity and our future food security. It's fun, too. Seed savers say that once you've started experimenting with "Georgia Flame Pepper" and "Rouge d'Hiver Lettuce," plain old peas and carrots will never seem the same.

—Elle McPherson

Seeds are available to non-members through a catalog and online at www.seedsavers.org.

You probably think this planet's about you ...

Human beings are hopelessly anthropocentric. To paraphrase the song: "You're so vain, you probably think this planet's about you, don't you?" So when something happens, like a giant volcano or a tsunami, an event in the Earth's history that has nothing to do with human beings, people rush forward looking for someone to blame. "God (or whatever) is punishing you because you didn't do whatever it was I wanted you to do." That kind of admonition is almost always followed with a prescription that has little to do with the problem at hand. Either you are to throw virgins into the volcano, murder persons of some religious or sexual orientation, or turn over all your worldly goods to the person who's exhorting you in the first place.

The real problem is that people have experienced a real climatic change over the past 12,000 years that enabled the invention of agriculture. Agriculture provided a much more stable food supply, but it is also very vulnerable to climate changes. Even when a relatively small change occurs, such as happened in 1815 when a giant volcano erupted in Indonesia, sending dust into the air and causing a "year without a summer," great suffering ensues. Whether climate change is sudden or gradual, whether it gets warmer or colder, change is bad for people who are dependent on agriculture.

The food systems of the North American Indians were more resistant to climate changes because, outside of the gardens, they promoted nature as the engine of food production. But those systems were destroyed by people who never saw them for what they were. And even very careful Indians, cooperating as well as they could with nature, experienced societal collapse in the desert Southwest and in desert cultures in Central and

South America because conditions arose with which they could not cope.

Given the information that climate change is inevitable and that its arrival will be a tremendous challenge to our food production capacities, a rational society would at least try to take measures to prepare for the future. It may be true, as stated in the Hopi prophecy, that human greed and foolishness will trigger the changes (actually I'm inclined to think that is true), but whatever the causes, the inevitability of change is clear enough. Our species was given 12,000 years of warm weather to prepare for the day when things would change again. Perhaps it will become colder or perhaps warmer, or worst of all, perhaps it will first become much warmer, then get cold. The latter would be the worst because the impact on the biology of the world would be equivalent to a catastrophic cleansing. Plant and animal systems in the north would be invaded by species and diseases from the south in a giant wave of extinctions. There would be no cold-weather species left. Then it would get cold again. Not a good outcome.

Human beings are very adaptable, but they might not be that adaptable. The 12,000-year summer is probably coming to a close with either a super summer or a new winter. No one knows how much time is left. It would make sense to prepare for the future, but our systems of economics and politics are unlikely to move in that direction.

The good news is, they could. It would be a daunting task. Food production and energy production systems would need to be devised that assumed there would be no replacement parts. Food plants would be selected based on their capacity to grow using less water and shorter growing seasons. Survivability and profit may not always coincide. Ways of taking advantage of what nature has to offer—instead of finding ways to overpower nature—would drive priorities.

This kind of thing happened in the past. People made choices based not on what they wanted to do, but on what was possible to do. The earliest agricultural societies arose because when food became scarce, the group so affected could not migrate to the next valley because that valley was occupied by other people. So they were forced to plant crops. And the crops they planted were the ones that could be domesticated, which were probably not their favorites. So they planted grain crops, and in the early years they suffered. The first agriculturalists almost always shrank in size relative to their ancestors and the peoples around them. But over time they recovered, somewhat. Eventually they thrived, but now they were vulnerable to drought

and sand storms and early frosts. And now, when they were hungry, they could not move to the next valley. Now, when hungry, they must live on stored surpluses or starve. It was a problem for a long time, and is still a problem in a lot of places.

Some of the very earliest human migrations took people out of Africa, through Asia Minor, and into Central Asia. There they established cultures that have survived tens of thousands of years in intensely hostile environments. Later, humans learned to survive in the arctic. And in rain forests. Humans can survive almost anything. But those were hunter-gatherers who evolved into herdsmen or moved on when things got difficult, not post-industrialists and refugees from a false utopian global economy.

The coming millennium is not for sissies, but our generation should do what it can to provide options for whatever conditions arise. We have the capacity to provide those options if we can be realistic and if we have the will. The problem is, we who undertake this task won't make much money doing this, and until the fat lady sings, most of the people in the culture(s) around us are unlikely to be supportive.

Human beings have a tremendous capacity to recover from disaster through collective amnesia. Mount Vesuvius has a thriving population at its base, the beaches where the tsunami of 2005 wreaked havoc are being rebuilt, areas of South Florida that were destroyed by hurricanes are being repopulated. The Hopi warned that our capacity to forget the past should not overwhelm our obligation to learn from it. We should listen to their message.

John C. Mohawk, is a columnist for *Indian Country Today*, an author, a professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and a *YES!* contributing editor.

Message from the Hopi Elders

"To my fellow swimmers:

There is a river flowing now very fast.

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

They will try to hold onto the shore.

They are being torn apart and will suffer greatly.

Know that the river has its destination.

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

At this time in our history, we are to take nothing personally, least of all ourselves,

For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey come to a halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over.

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

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

We are the ones we have been waiting for."



Making a Living

Before Social Security and the WPA, the Unemployed Exchange Association rebuilt a collapsed economy



A carpenter learns to pick apricots



Los Angeles cooperative barbershop



Entrepreneurs of cooperation

Jonathan Rowe

The mood at kitchen tables in California in the early 1930s was as bleak as it was elsewhere in the United States. Factories were closed. More than a quarter of the breadwinners in the state were out of work. There were no federal or state relief programs, nothing but some local charity—in Los Angeles County, a family of four got about 50 cents a day, and only one in 10 got even that.

Not long before, America had been a farming nation. When times were tough, there was still the land. But the country was becoming increasingly urban. People were dependent on this thing called “the economy” and the financial casino to which it was yoked. When the casino crashed, there was no fallback, just destitution.

Except for one thing: The real economy was still there—paralyzed but still there. Farmers still were producing, more than they could sell. Fruit rotted on trees, vegetables in the fields. In January 1933, dairy-

men poured more than 12,000 gallons of milk into the Los Angeles City sewers every day.

The factories were there too. Machinery was idle. Old trucks were in side lots, needing only a little repair. All that capacity on the one hand, legions of idle men and women on the other. It was the financial casino that had failed, not the workers and machines.

On street corners and around bare kitchen tables, people started to put two and two together. More precisely, they thought about new ways of putting two and two together.

Building a reciprocal economy

In the spring of 1932, in Compton, California, an unemployed World War I veteran walked out to the farms that still ringed Los Angeles. He offered his labor in return for a sack of vegetables, and that evening he returned with more than his family needed. The next

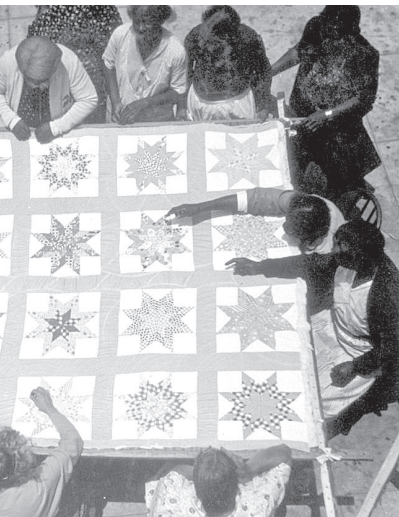
day a neighbor went out with him to the fields. Within two months 500 families were members of the Unemployed Cooperative Relief Organization (UCRO).

That group became one of 45 units in an organization that served the needs of some 150,000 people. It operated a large warehouse, a distribution center, a gas and service station, a refrigeration facility, a sewing shop, a shoe shop, even medical services, all on cooperative principles. Members were expected to work two days a week, and benefits were allocated according to need. A member with a wife and two kids got four

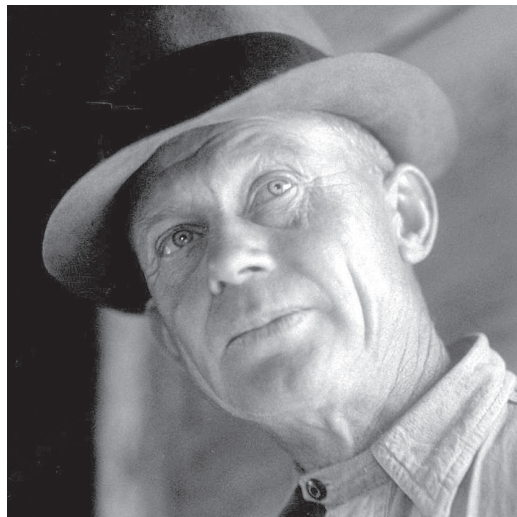
schooling had stopped at high school.

Some groups evolved a kind of money to create more flexibility in exchange. An example was the Unemployed Exchange Association, or UXA, based in Oakland, California. (The UXA story was told in an excellent article in the weekly East Bay Express in 1983, on which the following paragraphs are based.)

UXA began in a Hooverville called "Pipe City," near the East Bay waterfront. Hundreds of homeless people were living there in sections of large sewer pipe that were never laid because the city ran out of money.



Quilting unit
James Blanding Sloan



Portrait of a "cooperator"



Pacific Cooperative League cutting wood in Berkeley Hills

times as much food as someone living alone.

The organization was run democratically, and social support was as important as material support. Members helped one another resist evictions; sometimes they moved a family back in after a landlord had put them out. Unemployed utility workers turned on gas and electricity for families that had been cut off.

Conventional histories present the Depression as a story of the corporate market, foiled by its own internal flaws, versus the federal government, either savvy mechanic or misguided klutz, depending on your view. The government ascended, in the form of the New Deal; and so was born the polarity of our politics—and the range of our economic possibilities—ever since.

Yet there was another story too. It embodied the trusty American virtues of initiative, responsibility, and self-help, but in a way that was grounded in community and genuine economy. This other story played out all over the U.S., for a brief but suggestive moment in the early 1930s.

The UCRO was just one organization in one city. Groups like it ultimately involved more than 1.3 million people, in more than 30 states. It happened spontaneously, without experts or blueprints. Most of the participants were blue collar workers whose formal

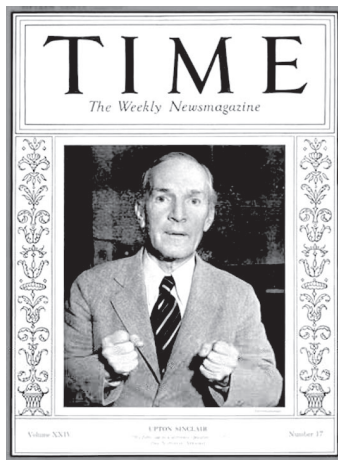
Among them was Carl Rhodehamel, a musician and engineer.

Rhodehamel and others started going door to door in Oakland, offering to do home repairs in exchange for unwanted items. They repaired these and circulated them among themselves. Soon they established a commissary and sent scouts around the city and into the surrounding farms to see what they could scavenge or exchange labor for. Within six months they had 1,500 members, and a thriving sub-economy that included a foundry and machine shop, woodshop, garage, soap factory, print shop, woodlot, ranches, and lumber mills. They rebuilt 18 trucks from scrap. At UXA's peak it distributed 40 tons of food a week.

It all worked on a time-credit system. Each hour worked earned a hundred points; there was no hierarchy of skills, and all work paid the same. Members could use credits to buy food and other items at the commissary, medical and dental services, haircuts, and more. A council of some 45 coordinators met regularly to solve problems and discuss opportunities.

One coordinator might report that a saw needed a new motor. Another knew of a motor but the owner wanted a piano in return. A third member knew of

These images are from the 1934 "Exhibition of Photographs and Etchings of Personalities and Activities in the Self-Help Cooperatives of California." Photographs courtesy of the UC Berkeley Bancroft Library collection.



UPTON SINCLAIR ran for governor of California on a platform to end poverty in the state by turning idle farms and factories into self-help co-ops. He outlined his ideas in a 1934 issue of *Time*.

books. Amidst the floundering of the early 1930s, this was something that actually worked. Yet in most accounts the self-help co-ops get barely a line.

The one exception is Upton Sinclair's campaign for governor in 1934. Sinclair was a kind of Ralph Nader of his day. He based his campaign on a plan he called End Poverty in California, or EPIC, which was based in turn on the self-help cooperatives, UXA in particular. It would have taken the state's idle farmland and factories and turned them into worker co-ops.

The idea of a genuine economy shorn of Wall Street contrivance touched a chord. Some 2,000 EPIC clubs sprang up. Sinclair won the Democratic primary, but California's moneyed establishment mustered \$10 million dollars to pummel him. EPIC died with his campaign, and the idea has been associated with quixotic politics ever since.

To say UXA and the other cooperative economies faced challenges is to put it mildly. They were going against the grain of an entire culture. Anti-communist "Red Squads" harassed them, while radicals complained they were too practical and not sufficiently committed to systemic change.

But the main thing that killed the co-ops was the Works Progress Administration and its cash jobs. Those WPA jobs were desperately needed. But some of them were make-work, while the co-op work was genuinely productive.

The co-ops pleaded with FDR's Administration to include them in the WPA. Local governments were helping with gasoline and oil. But the New Dealers weren't interested, and the co-ops melted away. For years they were period pieces, like soup lines and Okies.

Or so it seemed. Today, the signs of financial and ecological collapse are mounting. We are strung out on foreign debt and foreign oil, and riding real estate inflation that won't last forever. Add the impending

a piano that was available. And on and on. It was an amalgam of enterprise and cooperation—the flexibility and hustle of the market, but without the encoded greed of the corporation or the stifling bureaucracy of the state. The economics texts don't really have a name for it. The members called it a "reciprocal economy."

The dream fades

It would seem that a movement that provided livelihood for more than 300,000 people in California alone would merit discussion in the his-

tor collapse of the natural life support system, and the '30s could seem benign by comparison.

In this setting, the economics of self-help are increasingly relevant. The possibility of creating such an economy, though, might seem remote. In the 1930s, there still were farms on the outskirts of cities—family operations that could make barter deals on the spot. Factories were nearby too. Products were simple and made to last, and so could be scavenged and repaired.

All that has changed. The factories are in China, the farms are owned by corporations, and you can't walk to them from Los Angeles anymore. Products are made to break; the local repair shop is a distant memory. Hyper-sophisticated technology has put local mechanics out of business, let alone backyard tinkerers.

An idea resurfaces

Yet there are trends on the other side as well. Energy technology is moving back to the local level, by way of solar, wind, biodiesel and the rest. The popularity of organics has given a boost to smaller farms. There's also the quiet revival of urban agriculture. Community gardens are booming—some 6,000 of them in 38 U.S. cities. In Boston, the Food Project produces over 120,000 pounds of vegetables on just 21 acres.

Then consider the unused land in U.S. cities: some 70,000 vacant parcels in Chicago, 31,000 in Philadelphia. Large swaths of Detroit look like Dresden after the firebombing. A UXA could do a lot with that.

I'm not getting gauzy here. Anyone who has been part of a co-op—I once served on the board of one—knows it is not a walk in the park. But it is not hard to see the stirrings of a new form of cooperative economics on the American scene today. You can't explain Linux, the computer operating system developed community-style on the web, by the tenets of the economics texts. Nor can you so explain Craig's List, the online bulletin board that people use at no or minimal cost.

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Jonathan Rowe is a YES! contributing editor and director of the Tomales Bay Institute.



Making a Living

Before Social Security and the WPA, the Unemployed Exchange Association rebuilt a collapsed economy



A carpenter learns to pick apricots



Los Angeles cooperative barbershop



Entrepreneurs of cooperation

Jonathan Rowe

The mood at kitchen tables in California in the early 1930s was as bleak as it was elsewhere in the United States. Factories were closed. More than a quarter of the breadwinners in the state were out of work. There were no federal or state relief programs, nothing but some local charity—in Los Angeles County, a family of four got about 50 cents a day, and only one in 10 got even that.

Not long before, America had been a farming nation. When times were tough, there was still the land. But the country was becoming increasingly urban. People were dependent on this thing called “the economy” and the financial casino to which it was yoked. When the casino crashed, there was no fallback, just destitution.

Except for one thing: The real economy was still there—paralyzed but still there. Farmers still were producing, more than they could sell. Fruit rotted on trees, vegetables in the fields. In January 1933, dairy-

men poured more than 12,000 gallons of milk into the Los Angeles City sewers every day.

The factories were there too. Machinery was idle. Old trucks were in side lots, needing only a little repair. All that capacity on the one hand, legions of idle men and women on the other. It was the financial casino that had failed, not the workers and machines.

On street corners and around bare kitchen tables, people started to put two and two together. More precisely, they thought about new ways of putting two and two together.

Building a reciprocal economy

In the spring of 1932, in Compton, California, an unemployed World War I veteran walked out to the farms that still ringed Los Angeles. He offered his labor in return for a sack of vegetables, and that evening he returned with more than his family needed. The next

day a neighbor went out with him to the fields. Within two months 500 families were members of the Unemployed Cooperative Relief Organization (UCRO).

That group became one of 45 units in an organization that served the needs of some 150,000 people. It operated a large warehouse, a distribution center, a gas and service station, a refrigeration facility, a sewing shop, a shoe shop, even medical services, all on cooperative principles. Members were expected to work two days a week, and benefits were allocated according to need. A member with a wife and two kids got four

schooling had stopped at high school.

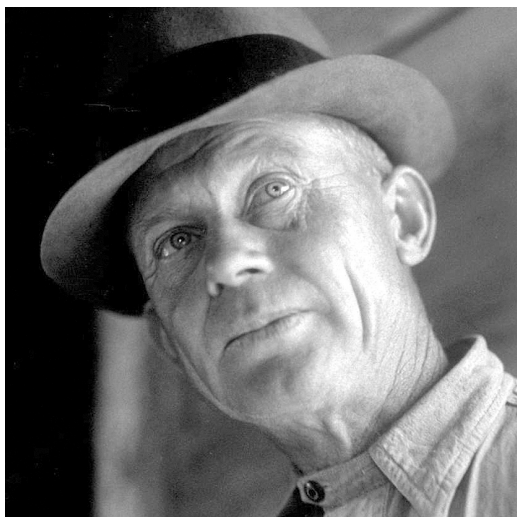
Some groups evolved a kind of money to create more flexibility in exchange. An example was the Unemployed Exchange Association, or UXA, based in Oakland, California. (The UXA story was told in an excellent article in the weekly East Bay Express in 1983, on which the following paragraphs are based.)

UXA began in a Hooverville called "Pipe City," near the East Bay waterfront. Hundreds of homeless people were living there in sections of large sewer pipe that were never laid because the city ran out of money.



Quilting unit

James Blanding Sloan



Portrait of a "cooperator"



Pacific Cooperative League cutting wood in Berkeley Hills

times as much food as someone living alone.

The organization was run democratically, and social support was as important as material support. Members helped one another resist evictions; sometimes they moved a family back in after a landlord had put them out. Unemployed utility workers turned on gas and electricity for families that had been cut off.

Conventional histories present the Depression as a story of the corporate market, foiled by its own internal flaws, versus the federal government, either savvy mechanic or misguided klutz, depending on your view. The government ascended, in the form of the New Deal; and so was born the polarity of our politics—and the range of our economic possibilities—ever since.

Yet there was another story too. It embodied the trusty American virtues of initiative, responsibility, and self-help, but in a way that was grounded in community and genuine economy. This other story played out all over the U.S., for a brief but suggestive moment in the early 1930s.

The UCRO was just one organization in one city. Groups like it ultimately involved more than 1.3 million people, in more than 30 states. It happened spontaneously, without experts or blueprints. Most of the participants were blue collar workers whose formal

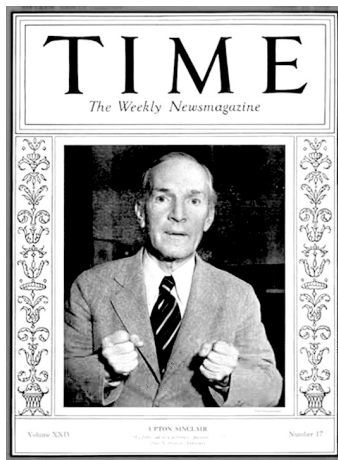
Among them was Carl Rhodehamel, a musician and engineer.

Rhodehamel and others started going door to door in Oakland, offering to do home repairs in exchange for unwanted items. They repaired these and circulated them among themselves. Soon they established a commissary and sent scouts around the city and into the surrounding farms to see what they could scavenge or exchange labor for. Within six months they had 1,500 members, and a thriving sub-economy that included a foundry and machine shop, woodshop, garage, soap factory, print shop, woodlot, ranches, and lumber mills. They rebuilt 18 trucks from scrap. At UXA's peak it distributed 40 tons of food a week.

It all worked on a time-credit system. Each hour worked earned a hundred points; there was no hierarchy of skills, and all work paid the same. Members could use credits to buy food and other items at the commissary, medical and dental services, haircuts, and more. A council of some 45 coordinators met regularly to solve problems and discuss opportunities.

One coordinator might report that a saw needed a new motor. Another knew of a motor but the owner wanted a piano in return. A third member knew of

These images are from the 1934 "Exhibition of Photographs and Etchings of Personalities and Activities in the Self-Help Cooperatives of California." Photographs courtesy of the UC Berkeley Bancroft Library collection.



UPTON SINCLAIR ran for governor of California on a platform to end poverty in the state by turning idle farms and factories into self-help co-ops. He outlined his ideas in a 1934 issue of *Time*.

books. Amidst the floundering of the early 1930s, this was something that actually worked. Yet in most accounts the self-help co-ops get barely a line.

The one exception is Upton Sinclair's campaign for governor in 1934. Sinclair was a kind of Ralph Nader of his day. He based his campaign on a plan he called End Poverty in California, or EPIC, which was based in turn on the self-help cooperatives, UXA in particular. It would have taken the state's idle farmland and factories and turned them into worker co-ops.

The idea of a genuine economy shorn of Wall Street contrivance touched a chord. Some 2,000 EPIC clubs sprang up. Sinclair won the Democratic primary, but California's moneyed establishment mustered \$10 million dollars to pummel him. EPIC died with his campaign, and the idea has been associated with quixotic politics ever since.

To say UXA and the other cooperative economies faced challenges is to put it mildly. They were going against the grain of an entire culture. Anti-communist "Red Squads" harassed them, while radicals complained they were too practical and not sufficiently committed to systemic change.

But the main thing that killed the co-ops was the Works Progress Administration and its cash jobs. Those WPA jobs were desperately needed. But some of them were make-work, while the co-op work was genuinely productive.

The co-ops pleaded with FDR's Administration to include them in the WPA. Local governments were helping with gasoline and oil. But the New Dealers weren't interested, and the co-ops melted away. For years they were period pieces, like soup lines and Okies.

Or so it seemed. Today, the signs of financial and ecological collapse are mounting. We are strung out on foreign debt and foreign oil, and riding real estate inflation that won't last forever. Add the impending

a piano that was available. And on and on. It was an amalgam of enterprise and cooperation—the flexibility and hustle of the market, but without the encoded greed of the corporation or the stifling bureaucracy of the state. The economics texts don't really have a name for it. The members called it a "reciprocal economy."

The dream fades

It would seem that a movement that provided livelihood for more than 300,000 people in California alone would merit discussion in the his-

tor collapse of the natural life support system, and the '30s could seem benign by comparison.

In this setting, the economics of self-help are increasingly relevant. The possibility of creating such an economy, though, might seem remote. In the 1930s, there still were farms on the outskirts of cities—family operations that could make barter deals on the spot. Factories were nearby too. Products were simple and made to last, and so could be scavenged and repaired.

All that has changed. The factories are in China, the farms are owned by corporations, and you can't walk to them from Los Angeles anymore. Products are made to break; the local repair shop is a distant memory. Hyper-sophisticated technology has put local mechanics out of business, let alone backyard tinkerers.

An idea resurfaces

Yet there are trends on the other side as well. Energy technology is moving back to the local level, by way of solar, wind, biodiesel and the rest. The popularity of organics has given a boost to smaller farms. There's also the quiet revival of urban agriculture. Community gardens are booming—some 6,000 of them in 38 U.S. cities. In Boston, the Food Project produces over 120,000 pounds of vegetables on just 21 acres.

Then consider the unused land in U.S. cities: some 70,000 vacant parcels in Chicago, 31,000 in Philadelphia. Large swaths of Detroit look like Dresden after the firebombing. A UXA could do a lot with that.

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Where We Live

Neighborhoods aren't waiting: they're envisioning the best and preparing for the worst



Photo courtesy of Great Lakes Brewing Company

Straw-bale construction information booth at Cleveland's annual Burning River sustainability festival.

lighting, waterless urinals, green roof, and many other high-performance features, the building demonstrates how sustainability contributes to historic preservation and neighborhood redevelopment. It's the home of a bank branch, as well as the Cleveland Green Building Coalition, EcoCity Cleveland, and other nonprofit organizations promoting the regeneration of Cleveland.

A few blocks away at the Great Lakes Brewing Company, Cleveland's flagship microbrewery, owners Pat and Dan Conway are working to create a zero-waste business. In addition to reducing the energy used in brewing and cooling the beer, the company uses spent grain from the brewing process to make cracked-barley beer bread and pretzels for their restaurant. Other grains go to a local farm to be used for growing organic mushrooms. Recycling and vermicomposting take care of much of the brewery's other waste, and waste vegetable oil powers a shuttle van—affectionately called the “Fatty Wagon”—that takes customers to downtown sporting events. To support the larger sustainability community, the brewery hosts monthly meetings of Entrepreneurs for Sustainability, an organization of green entrepreneurs, investors, government, and nonprofit leaders making sustainability and a local living economy the development drivers for the region.

Another center of innovative regeneration is the Cleveland EcoVillage. A transit-oriented development centered around a stop on the rail line connecting downtown with the airport, the

{ CLEVELAND }

Community action turns the Rust Belt green

Ed D'Amato

Despite world-class amenities like its orchestra, museums, parks, and acclaimed healthcare facilities, Cleveland, Ohio, and surrounding Cuyahoga County still suffer from a Rust-Belt image of abandoned industrial buildings, impoverished neighborhoods, and the burning Cuyahoga River.

Much of the city still fits that stereotype. But there are distinct signs that Cleveland is at the beginning of a Great Turning and is reinventing itself as one of the most ecological cities in America. Although local governments are starting to provide official leadership, Cleve-

land's transformation toward greater sustainability is not being driven from the top down. It is happening mostly because of the actions of thousands of committed and caring people at the grassroots, organizing in such groups as EcoCity Cleveland and Entrepreneurs for Sustainability.

A symbol of this transformation is the Adam Joseph Lewis Cleveland Environmental Center. Originally built as a bank in 1918, it was renovated in 2003 as Ohio's first commercial green building retrofit. With energy-efficient geothermal heating and cooling, abundant day

EcoVillage includes 20 town homes boasting super-energy-efficient design and superior indoor air quality. Future plans call for efficient cottage homes marrying green design with affordability, improved pedestrian and bicycle connections, and the ecological restoration of a 22-acre greenspace around a city recreation center to improve habitat quality and demonstrate techniques for preventing stormwater pollution.

The green movement in Cleveland isn't confined to just a few, visible projects. A sustainability mindset has taken root in the city and county governments. Faced with the continuing loss of industrial jobs, officials are realizing that economic development needs to focus on things like alternative energy, resource efficiency, and quality of place.

The City of Cleveland, for example, hired a sustainability programs manager in 2005 to help the city save money and create jobs—as well as improve environmental performance. This staff person will conduct energy audits of city buildings, promote development of wind turbines, change building codes to encourage green building, institute anti-idling policies for city trucks, improve recycling programs, and reform procurement procedures.

With the help of the Rocky Mountain Institute, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission is developing the Cuyahoga Valley Initiative, a sustainable development plan to restore the ecology and economic vitality of the Cuyahoga River Valley. The initiative asks provocative questions about the coexistence of industry and natural systems, the importance of place, and the potential for the Cleveland region to capitalize on the clean-water technologies that have brought the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie back to life.

The collective power of individual efforts has helped the entire community realize its potential to thrive by, as EcoCity Cleveland's director David Beach says, "creating a green city on a blue lake."

Ed D'Amato is a sustainability and alternative transportation activist from Cleveland, Ohio.

"Resiliency is like physical fitness."

{ NEW YORK CITY }

All Together Now keeps urban residents ready for anything

Courtney Thompson

What does it take to be ready for disaster—a terrorist attack, an outbreak of avian flu, a hurricane, or even simply a building on fire? According to the New York City project All Together Now, New Yorkers should have on hand a stock of fresh water, several days worth of food, alternative lighting sources, first-aid kits, and "go" bags with vital documents such as insurance cards and passports. But just as important as supplies is the community cohesion implied by the group's name. The program set out to create disaster-resilient communities in New York City's five boroughs by having participants meet regularly with neighbors to go over these precautionary methods and, along the way, get to know each other and each other's needs—so that if and when disaster strikes, neighbors can rely on neighbors.

Alan Leidner, an All Together Now group leader for his building in Manhattan's Upper West Side neighborhood, says, "My involvement in 9/11 is what triggered my interest in this program. Personally, I want to have plans ready for my family in case something happens again." But through the program, Leidner, 57, didn't just plan for his family. He rounded up 25 participants in his 55-unit building, ensuring that his family has 25 allies looking out for them in case of disaster.

"Our goal is to create a tight-knit community, whether that be within

one's apartment building, one's block, or one's neighborhood," says David Gershon, CEO of the Empowerment Institute, who created the program. "By doing this, if and when a disaster strikes, the community can look out for one another. The stronger members can keep an eye out for the elderly or the disabled."

Launched roughly two years ago, All Together Now has been a pilot program jointly run by the Empowerment Institute and New York City's Office of Emergency Management, with funding from the federal government. During its first two years, All Together Now received data from 40 participating buildings (and 3,800 people) in the five boroughs—a number that fell short of the organization's goal of 170 buildings by 2005. Gershon says at least 50 more buildings were involved in the project, but that in its beginning stages All Together Now failed to collect data from them.

All Together Now recently received a \$300,000 grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which will allow the project to scale the emergency preparedness tactics from the family and building level to the block level and eventually the entire city. Gershon says other major cities in the country are considering the adoption of All Together Now.

Courtney Thompson is a writer living in New York City.

It's getting people in shape for the future," says David Gershon of the Empowerment Institute.

{ NEW ORLEANS TO OTTAWA }

After the storm, brainstorming begins

Francesca Lyman

Creative and effective responses to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita came not from where most had expected—the U.S. government—but from the grassroots.

Take Common Ground Relief, which started with \$50 and three people. The group runs medical and legal clinics and four distribution centers offering food, water, and clothing. Volunteers do everything from tarping, gutting, and cleaning homes to “bioremediation” of soil contaminated by sewage and toxins. So far, the group says, it has offered relief to 50,000 residents in four parishes.

Since Katrina, Americans are looking to their neighbors, local governments, and to themselves to prepare for disaster. “Confidence in the federal government’s ability to protect the American public has continued to fall to a new crisis level,” according to studies done by the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University several months after Katrina.

“One of the key things we’re learning is that we have to strengthen our neighborhoods,” says Gwendolyn Hallsmith, director of Global Community Initiatives, a Montpelier, Vermont-based group that does sustainability planning with cities. “Because if they don’t have inner resiliency, connectivity, communications, there’s nothing government can do to help. Government



Scott Braley, www.scottbraley.com

Common Ground Relief served hundreds of New Orleans victims in the weeks before any official aid appeared. Supply trucks arrived at all hours, and some that were supposed to go to large organizations like the Red Cross arrived too late in the evening. This truck arrived at Common Ground in the middle of the night, and dozens of volunteers sleeping in their tents came out to unload.

will never be able to be the only response for a disaster like Katrina. We need to depend on each other, too.”

What does it mean to be resilient? According to Hallsmith, it means having “an adaptive capacity rather than just the skills and training of emergency response.” Hallsmith has been working with a group in Canada called “Imagine Calgary” on developing that capacity, which she defines as “the ability of a system to adapt to change, to be able to respond to disturbances, surprises, shocks, and uncertainty.”

“Resiliency is like physical fitness,” says David Gershon of the Empowerment Institute in Woodstock, New York.

“It’s getting people in shape for the future.” Gershon helped create New York’s All Together Now (see page 30).

Resiliency also involves another paradigm shift, say activists: communities must start considering possible future scenarios.

One way they are doing this is through a process called “Imagine.” This process gets the public involved in creating future scenarios for their communities. It has most often been used in Canada, but the original idea is credited to Bliss Browne, director of Imagine Chicago.

What does it look like in practice? After doing an inventory of the city’s resources, “Imagine Calgary” recom-

mended that the city, often called the Houston of the North for its oil and gas industry, fund and develop renewable energy sources. The citizens anticipated that the city could face oil and gas shocks in the future, and they felt it important to stem climate change. And because glaciers, a major source of the region's water, are already shrinking as a result of climate change, the group has recommended that the city institute targeted water conservation strategies for the coming 100 years.

Other Canadian "Imagine" groups, such as Envision Halifax and Imagine B.C., along with Cities Plus in Vancouver, B.C., have also been looking ahead 20, 30, and even 100 years.

"Imagine B.C.," based at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, B.C., has sponsored public dialogues so that experts in a range of fields can "get out of their silos [of specialty] and find common solutions," says Joanna Ashworth, the group's director. Artists have joined forces with economists, for example, to illustrate a range of individual and collective economic behaviors and their impacts on the environment years ahead.

"We know that the government is listening because they've quoted our materials," says Ashworth. "The culture of dialogue is starting to permeate public policy."

This kind of thinking has reached Canada's capital, too. "We were intrigued by the idea of planning for 100 years out, like Vancouver," says Ned Lathrop, who manages planning for the city of Ottawa. The city was planning to update its emergency operations and at the same time to plan for growth, Lathrop says. So the city decided "to marry" resiliency with sustainability. "After all, the more sustainable you are, the more resilient you will be," says Lathrop. "The more you conserve, the less resources you will need."

Francesca Lyman, author of *The Greenhouse Trap*, a book about global warming, is a writer living in Seattle.

Waves crash against the Malecón at Havana's seafront.

{ CUBA }

Cuba's hurricane resilience—solidarity and readiness

Lilja Otto

With this year's hurricane season expected to be every bit as fierce as last year's, international disaster organizations are looking to Cuba for disaster-management strategies.

"Cuba is one of the best prepared, if not *the* best prepared for natural disasters," U.N. emergency relief coordinator Jan Egeland told Reuters. "The same hurricane which would take zero lives in Cuba would kill massively in Haiti."

When Hurricane George struck in 1998, only six people died in Cuba; 209 were killed in Haiti. The six hurricanes that hit Cuba from 1996 to 2002 killed 16 people, compared to 649 killed elsewhere in the region.

Key elements of the island's hurricane preparedness strategy are extensive training, community planning, and simulation drills.

Disaster-response training starts in childhood as part of school curricula and continues with adult education at the community level. It is also part of standard training for healthcare professionals. Over 95 percent of the population has been trained in a four-step framework: information, alert, alarm, and recovery. As a result, virtually all



Alex Bramwell

Cubans understand weather warnings that refer to these steps and know their roles during every stage of a storm.

Community-based disaster planning uses the same four-step framework. Before the hurricane season, planners map both risks and assets such as storm-proof houses, vehicles, and doctors. Taking into account people's needs, every neighborhood then determines who will stay where and assigns those in charge of helping the neighbor with the broken leg or the single mom on the third floor.

Two-day community-level simulations called "Metoro" bring the plans to life around May, before the storms build up. Local officials, health workers, and teachers rehearse their roles as evacuation coordinators and discuss responses to possible scenarios based on their local plan. Then everybody practices the evacuation and carries out safety preparations such as cutting tree branches or securing wells.

The combination of education, planning, and practice builds a culture of safety and puts both the logistics and motivation in place to enable people to cope with storms that cause devastation and panic elsewhere.



Susan DeFreitas

Thomas Arnold and Tim Stone dig sunken beds in the EcoHood's newest organic garden. Arnold's teepee is in the background.

{ PRESCOTT, ARIZONA }

EcoHood ideas take root in older neighborhoods

Susan DeFreitas

The Lincoln-Dameron neighborhood in Prescott, Arizona, encompasses roughly two blocks, including two apartment buildings and 30 houses, the majority built in the 1930s. It's a middle- to low-income neighborhood, about 50 percent Hispanic/Native Americans along with European-American college students and retirees. The neighborhood, which is built around the floodplain of nearby Miller Creek, is home to six greywater systems, two rainwater cisterns, five organic gardens, 25 heirloom fruit trees, and (at last count) 57 chickens.

Welcome to Prescott's "EcoHood."

A central figure in the growth and development of this neighborhood sustainability initiative is Prescott College instructor, landscape contractor, and self-described "permaculture activist"

Andrew Millison. Millison had always thought of the area as a prime location for an urban ecovillage. But it wasn't until he purchased a home 20 miles outside of Prescott that the concept really took shape.

"Here I was," said Millison, "getting introduced to the concept of peak oil while simultaneously burning up a quarter to half tank of gas every day. That's pretty much when it hit me—the age of cheap oil was coming to a close."

At the same time, three eco-minded friends—Catherine "Wind" Euler, Jesse Pursely, and Marcee Keller—moved into the Lincoln-Dameron district intending to get more community-oriented and sustainable. Millison moved there soon after.

The development of the EcoHood has continued as a self-organizing pro-

What is permaculture? Gardening like nature

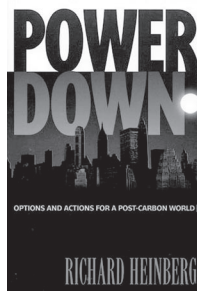
Permaculture is a sustainable agricultural system that reproduces natural interactions of plants and animals in the smallest practical area. Australian scientist Bill Mollison and researcher David Holmgren developed permaculture in the 1970s, based on the concept that everything in nature is connected and interdependent. Permaculture involves long-term planning, using native plants and animals together with structures so that they support each other and perform multiple functions, recycling all waste, installing energy-efficient systems, and relying on renewable resources instead of fossil fuels.

So what does permaculture look like? In a back yard, for example, land is divided into areas according to how frequently elements are used. Fruits, vegetables, and spices are placed near the back door for easy collection. Plants are grouped according to which ones interact best to nourish one another and minimize pests. Structures for rabbits or chickens also function as rain collectors or to provide shade and protection from wind.

Mollison developed planting patterns that maximize plant growth. He discourages planting in traditional rows, and recommends considering the landscape instead—what direction the wind blows, or the area that gets the most sunlight.

Permaculture is easy to maintain, and planting perennial rather than annual plants reduces labor and minimizes soil disturbance. It can be used almost anywhere plants can grow, and it helps make people and communities self-reliant.

— Daina Saib



POWERDOWN: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World

by Richard Heinberg

New Society, 2004, 208 pages, \$16.95

reviewed by Carolyn McConnell

"...The purpose of this book is not to provide yet another cheerful manual on how to save the (human) world (as we know it). But neither is it my goal to helplessly bemoan our inevitable collective fate. Rather, it is to explore realistically our options for the next century."

Following up on his jeremiad about the coming end of cheap, abundant energy, *The Party's Over*, Richard Heinberg now answers the next question—if an entire way of life is ending, what do we do now? Don't read Heinberg in a weak mood; his vision is dark. But he offers clear analyses of what the end of the oil era means, why there is no substitute for oil that would provide the same standard of living, and what choices humanity faces. Although he thinks contraction of human society is inevitable, he also thinks we have crucial choices about *how* we contract.

In *Powerdown*, Heinberg outlines what he sees as the four options for industrial societies in the next decades: *last one standing*—competition for remaining resources; *waiting for a magic elixir*—wishful thinking, false hopes, and denial; *building lifeboats*—preserving fragments of civilization in small enclaves (what you might call the retreat-to-the-monasteries path); and *powerdown*—cooperation, conservation, and sharing. The first two paths would bring collapse, mayhem, and perhaps extinction, and he hopes we avoid them, while he advocates the last, with some sympathy for building lifeboats.

cess. Members share a vision of ecological sustainability, but they approach the project in a variety of ways.

Within a few months of moving in, Wind Euler installed permaculture systems (see page 33) that are now run and maintained by student renters from Prescott College. On just over an acre, across the creek from a McDonald's, Euler and her tenants raise chickens, turkeys, corn, squash, tomatoes, and carrots. Greywater recycled from household activities such as laundry, dishes, and showers irrigates plants in the landscape.

Marcee Keller also installed greywater irrigation, but focused more on eco-oriented home improvement. The artist's studio she's building behind her home was designed by students from the Ecosa Institute, a program for sustainable architecture and design. It will be built with sustainable materials and designed for maximum energy efficiency. Keller and Millison also plan to remove the fence separating their yards to maximize garden space and to share compost, rainwater, and a children's play area.

Jesse Pursely focused more on a life of ultra-simplicity. Although he and his friend Thomas Arnold moved into the house on Dameron Street over two years ago, they have never turned on the gas or electricity. Arnold lives in a tepee in the back yard while Pursely and his girlfriend essentially live as if they were "squatting" in the home they actually own.

Andrew Millison has made his home into a showcase for a whole range of permaculture systems, including rainwater cisterns, a movable chicken coop, and sunken-bed organic garden patches. Indoors, he uses earthen plasters and wood heat.

The EcoHood now encompasses seven households, including college students already living on the block and young couples who moved to Lincoln-Dameron to be part of what was happening there. The concept has unfolded organically, with neighbors swapping skills, information, tools, and, at times,

childcare, chickens, and compost.

Prescott's EcoHood is generating interest. Last year, the Ecosa Institute purchased a plot of land in the area to use as green student housing. In the summer of 2006, Ecosa's permaculture design certification course will center around designs for public space in the neighborhood.

Perhaps most promising of all, Millison's presentation on the EcoHood last year at a local satellite of the Bioneers Conference attracted the attention of Chris Carlile and Christian Nys, two investors in Phoenix-based permaculture developments. Plans are now in the works for an affordable housing permaculture apartment/condo development centered around community gardens and supported by greywater, rainwater, and solar energy systems.

All of which would probably be baffling to a real estate agent assessing the area. But while the EcoHood would hardly top the charts of the booming local real estate market, Millison maintains that, from an ecological point of view, Lincoln-Dameron is the wealthiest neighborhood in town. The EcoHood has water at 12 to 20 feet, with old wells throughout the neighborhood, sits on an average eight feet of topsoil, and is sheltered from wind by topography and large, established cottonwoods.

"Those ritzy new houses up on the hills," said Millison, "are situated high off the water table on solid rock. They're exposed to wind and wildfire, isolated from town, and they're huge—which means they're costly to heat and cool."

The EcoHood is not a glossy, high-end vision of sustainability. It is, in fact, a model that challenges our very notion of wealth and how we measure it. Homes in the neighborhood tend to be smaller than the modern norm—1,000 to 1,500 square feet—making them more amenable to a green retrofit. But who needs a bigger house when you have more nature, more community, and more living space by extension? And how do you assign a dollar value to

fresh food, streets that are safe for kids to roam, and a bike trail that runs alongside your backyard creek into the heart of town?

These are the intangibles that have proven increasingly attractive to like-minded folks in the area. As more people from outside the neighborhood become interested in joining it, a key challenge for Millison and his neighbors will be how to avoid “eco-gentrification.” The solution to that challenge will rest largely in finding ways to make the concept appealing to their retired and Hispanic neighbors.

Plans for meeting this challenge—like the EcoHood itself—are in the formative stages. Residents are considering such ideas as neighborhood block parties, a vegetable stand, tool library, or garden club. This kind of neighborhood outreach will become more necessary as the EcoHood moves out of individual backyards and into the neighborhood’s public spaces.

Despite the challenges, Millison says the advantages of the EcoHood model of community sustainability are far-reaching and fundamental. “By working in a middle- to low-income neighborhood, you make it accessible. By working within the existing human footprint, you preserve wilderness, cut down on fuel consumption, and give yourself access to the waste stream of the city for recycled materials.”

Additionally, the EcoHood model doesn’t require a large initial investment on the part of its participants or a shift from mainstream models of family and homeownership.

“Really,” said Millison, “the concept is about bringing traditionally rural values like self-reliance, respect for the land, and community into the city.”

Susan DeFreitas is a writer and poet who lives in the high desert of Prescott, Arizona.

More information on Prescott’s EcoHood, Andrew Millison, and other Arizona-based permaculture projects is online at www.millisonecological.com. Information on the Ecosa Institute’s Permaculture Certification Course is available at www.ecosainstitute.org.

Waiting for a tech fix?

Daina Saib

All the talk about our reliance on fossil fuels causing major climate change, potential large-scale natural disasters, and a total collapse of our way of life can take the wind out of your windmill. But through the ages, human ingenuity has produced solutions to many pressing problems. Some of them even worked.

Descendants of old-time problem solvers are hard at work on the issues of the day:

Do you lie awake at night thinking, “If we run out of oil, how will I ever be able to power my iPod?” A guy in the Netherlands can help you rest—he’s developed a hand-cranked iPod battery recharger. And that’s not all. With a hand attachment you can recharge the battery using the pedal power of riding your bike.

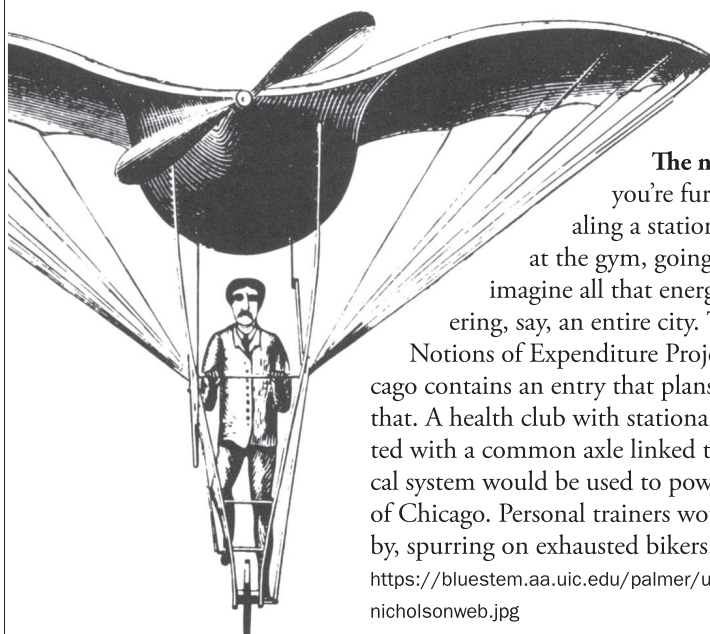
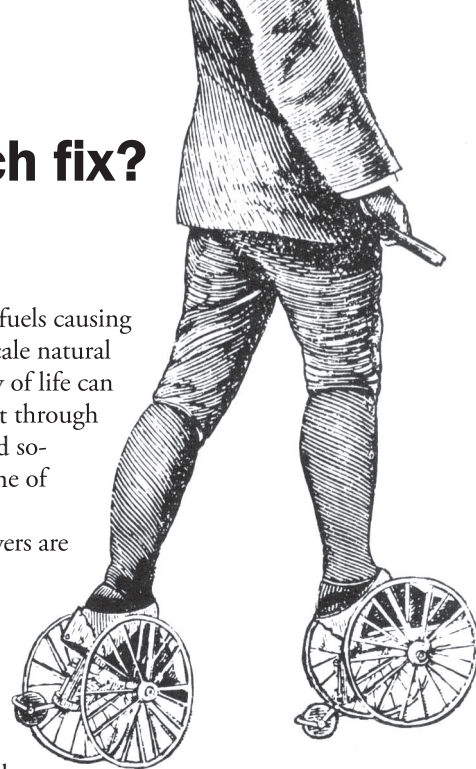
<http://geektechnique.org/projectlab/236>

If you want to be eco-conscious and still look like a *fashionista*, then the “power purse” may be for you. Created by a doctoral student at the University of Iowa, the purse uses solar energy to recharge your cell phone and other electronic devices while you’re out catching some rays. And it’s chic enough to bring front row during New York Fashion Week.

http://pubs.acs.org/subscribe/journals/esthag-w/2005/aug/tech/rp_purse.html

If you see kids on a seesaw and ask yourself, “How can that energy be used to power developing countries as a low-cost alternative to solar and wind energy?” you’re not alone.

https://bluestem.aa.uic.edu/palmer/upload/_1_pandiansmall.jpg



The next time you’re furiously pedaling a stationary bike at the gym, going nowhere, imagine all that energy was powering, say, an entire city. The

Notions of Expenditure Project in Chicago contains an entry that plans to do just that. A health club with stationary bikes fitted with a common axle linked to an electrical system would be used to power the city of Chicago. Personal trainers would stand by, spurring on exhausted bikers.

https://bluestem.aa.uic.edu/palmer/upload/_0_nicholsonweb.jpg



Post Petroleum

Peak oil preview: North Korea & Cuba

The 1989 Soviet collapse cut oil to two countries and disrupted food production. Here's how one adapted—and the other didn't

Dale Jiajun Wen

That peak oil is coming is no longer a question. It's only a matter of when. The global food system we are familiar with depends crucially on cheap energy and long-distance transportation—food consumed in the United States travels an average of 1,400 miles. Does peak oil mean inevitable starvation? Two countries provide a preview. Their divergent stories, one of famine, one of sufficiency, stand as a warning and a model.

North Korea and Cuba experienced the peak-oil scenario prematurely and abruptly due to the collapse of the former Soviet bloc and the intensified trade embargo against Cuba. The quite different outcomes are partly due to luck: the Cuban climate allows people to survive on food rations that would be fatal in North Korea's harsh winters. But the more fundamental reason is policy. North Korea tried to carry on business as usual as long as possible, while Cuba implemented a proactive policy to move toward sustainable agriculture and self-sufficiency.

The 1990s famine in North Korea is one of the least-understood disasters in recent years. It is generally attributed to the failure of Kim Il Jung's regime. The argument is simple: if the government controls everything, it must be responsible for crop failure. But this ideological blame game hides a more fundamental problem: the failure of industrial chemical farming. With the coming of peak oil, many other countries may experience similar disasters.

North Korea developed its agriculture on the Green Revolution model, with its dependence on technology, imported machines, petroleum, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides. There were signs of soil compaction

and degradation, but the industrial farming model provided enough food for the population. Then came the sudden collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989. Supplies of oil, farming equipment, fertilizers, and pesticides dropped significantly, and this greatly contributed to the famine that followed. As a November 1998 report from the joint UN Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Program observed:

The highly mechanized DPR [North] Korean agriculture faces a serious constraint as about four-fifths of motorized farm machinery and equipment is out of use due to obsolescence and lack of spare parts and fuel. ... In fact, because of non-availability of trucks, harvested paddy has been seen left on the fields in piles for long periods.

North Korea failed to change in response to the crisis. Devotion to the status quo precipitated the food shortages that continue to this day.

Cuba faced similar problems. In some respects, the challenge was even bigger in Cuba. Before 1989, North Korea was self-sufficient in grain production, while Cuba imported an estimated 57 percent of its food,¹ because its agriculture, especially the state farm sector, was geared towards production of sugar for export. After the Soviet collapse and the tightening of the U.S. embargo, Cuba lost 85 percent of its trade, and its fossil-fuel-based agricultural inputs were reduced by more than 50 percent. At the height of the resulting food crisis, the daily ration was one banana and two slices of bread per person in some places. Cuba responded with a national effort to restructure agriculture.



Tom Haskell

NORTH KOREA, AFTER PEAK OIL

A nursery in Chongin, North Korea. The center serves a healthy, high-protein lunch, supplementing scarce food for children and breastfeeding mothers. The devastating 1990s famine underscores the unsustainability of industrial chemical farming.

FROM PHOTOGRAPHER
TOM HASKELL:

"As we see disasters, manmade or natural, there is very little time to see the response to those problems. It has been my goal for the last 10 years to document the response to those problems, especially for the United Nations and very particularly for the UN World Food Program, which my wife headed for those 10 years. I also tried to peek into different cultures with an eye toward the common emotions we humans share." His photo gallery is at www.haskellpix.com.



Tom Haskell

CUBA, AFTER PEAK OIL

A woman works in a community garden, amid individual plots of land and larger community plots. Cuba survived by promoting sustainable agriculture and community self-sufficiency.

Cuban agriculture now consists of a diverse combination of organic farming, permaculture, urban gardens, animal power, and biological fertilizing and pest control. On a national level, Cuba now has probably the most ecological and socially sensitive agriculture in the world. In 1999, the Swedish Parliament awarded the Right Livelihood Award, known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize," to Cuba for these advances.

Even before the 1990 crisis, primarily in response to the negative effects of intensive chemical use as well as the 1970s energy crisis, Cuban scientists began to develop biopesticides and biofertilizers to substitute for chemical inputs. They designed a two-phase program based on early experiments with biological agents. The first stage developed small-scale, localized production technologies; the second stage was aimed at developing semi-industrial and industrial technologies. This groundwork allowed Cuba to roll out substitutes for agricultural chemicals rapidly in the wake of the 1990 crisis. Since 1991, 280 centers have been established to produce biological agents using techniques and supplies specific to each locality.²

Though some alternative technologies were initially developed solely to replace chemical inputs, they are now part of a more holistic agroecology. Scientists and farmers recognized the imbalances in high-input

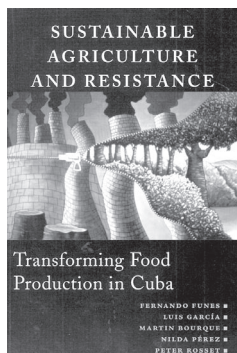
monoculture, and are transforming the whole system. In contrast to the one-size-fits-all solution of the Green Revolution, agroecology tailors farming to local conditions. It designs complex agroecosystems that use mutually beneficial crops and locally adapted seeds, take advantage of topography and soil conditions, and maintain rather than deplete the soil.³

Agroecology takes a systemic approach, blurring traditional distinctions between disciplines and using knowledge from environmental science, economics, agronomy, ethics, sociology, and anthropology. It emphasizes learning by doing, with training programs allocating 50 percent of their time to hands-on work. The wide use of participatory methods greatly helps to disseminate, generate, and extend agroecological knowledge. In short, the agricultural research and education process has become more organic as well.⁴

Important institutional changes have eased the transition. Big state farms have been reorganized into much smaller farmer collectives to take advantage of the new labor-intensive, localized methods. The change from farm-laborer to skilled farmer is not an overnight process—many newly established collectives lag behind established co-ops in terms of sustainable management, but programs are in place to help them catch up.

Cuba's research and education system played a pivotal role in the greening of the country. The focus on human development has practically eradicated illiteracy. Cuban workers have the highest percentage of post-secondary education in Latin America. This highly educated population prepared Cuba well for the transition to the more knowledge-intensive model of sustainable agriculture.

In the 1970s and 1980s, most agricultural education was based on Green Revolution technology. The 1990 crisis rendered many agro-professionals powerless without chemical inputs, machinery, and petroleum. In response, agricultural universities initiated courses in agroecological training. A national center was created



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RESISTANCE: Transforming Food Production in Cuba

Edited by Fernando Funes, Luis García, Martín Bourque, Nilda Pérez, and Peter Rosset.

Food First, 2002

307 pages, \$18.95

reviewed by Lilja Otto

Sustainable Agriculture and Resistance shows the transformation of Cuba's food production to a system largely independent of fossil fuel and chemical inputs. These essays from leading Cuban agronomists detail the context and structure of the conversion, including social organization and agro-ecological training. They also cover key techniques used in Cuba's agriculture today, ranging from ecological pest management to the replacement of farm machinery with animal traction. Case studies illustrate experiences with green medicine, urban agriculture, community-based rice production, new forms of property, and cooperative organization.

For Spanish speakers the book has extensive references to the large body of current Cuban research on sustainable food production.

For more, see the Food First video, "The Greening of Cuba."

Can You Say Push Mower?



A single gallon of gasoline contains the energy-equivalent of **500 hours of human labor.**



A barrel of oil contains the energy-equivalent of almost **25,000 hours of human labor.**

Source: www.lifeafterthoilcrash.net/research.html

Graphic copyright YES! Magazine, 2006

Dale Wen is a visiting scholar with the International Forum on Globalization. A native of China, she specializes in China and globalization issues.

www.YesMagazine.org
More information on biofuels
www.yesmagazine.org/energyreturn

1. Peter Rosset, "Alternative Agriculture Works: The Case of Cuba," *Monthly Review* 50:3, July/August 1998.
2. Nilda Pérez & Luis L. Vázquez, "Ecological Pest Management," in *Sustainable Agriculture and Resistance: Transforming Food Production in Cuba*, Fernando Funes, et al., eds. Food First Books: Oakland, 2002.
3. Miguel A. Altieri, "The Principles and Strategies of Agroecology in Cuba," in *ibid.*
4. Luis García, "Agroecological Education and Training," in *ibid.*

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Cross-Cultural Relations

Can soap operas save the world?

Carol Estes

Soap opera as the key to world peace? It's a stretch. But not as big a stretch as you might think. Because we humans—even we digital, postmodern humans—absolutely adore a good story.

Consider for a moment the pervasiveness of narrative in our lives. American adults watch an average of 33 hours of television per week—which is nothing but stories. We make about 1.4 billion trips to the theater each year to see movies, and we spend \$24.3 billion to rent or buy movies on DVD and video. What's more, we identify so strongly with the imaginary heroes of these stories that we weep, laugh, and have nightmares about the imaginary things that happen to them.

As literary scholar Barbara Hardy has noted, “We dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative.” In short, we humans are creatures of story.

And that can be a very good thing. Through story we climb inside the skin of someone whom we might otherwise never meet or talk to. We live their lives for a few vicarious hours, feel their suffering, their longing, laugh or maybe cry with them. In a world where hatred of “them” is the leading cause of death, empathy is a powerful tool.

That's why soap opera has become “one of the most widely recognized methods of healing societies at war and mobilizing people to work across divisions,” say conflict resolution practitioners and scholars Marco Konings and Ambrose James.

And that's why career peacemaker Susan Collin Marks—executive vice president of Search for Common Ground and a woman who learned the importance of stories while ducking tear gas canisters and

rubber bullets in the townships of South Africa—now finds herself making radio soaps.

Conflict resolution 101

If there is a “classic” model for the relatively peaceful transformation of violent conflict, South Africa is it. Not because they did everything right, but because they did it first. When South Africans decided, in 1990, to transform their culture of race-based violence and oppression to one of egalitarian democracy—and to do it by employing conflict resolution techniques on an unprecedented scale—they were sailing bravely into uncharted and treacherous waters.

The world eagerly followed their progress. Television screens and newspaper pages around the globe were filled with stories of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning partnership of two enemies, F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela, and the high-level talks in which the Nationalist government negotiated itself out of power.

But by focusing on the top, the media not only missed the best stories, they missed the real lesson from South Africa. Peace, it turns out, is not made by national leaders in high-profile negotiations. The real heavy lifting in the peace process occurs well below the radar of the international media, at the regional and local levels.

Marks was a member of the Western Cape Regional Peace Committee, set up under South Africa's 1991 National Peace Accord. The ground-breaking accord set up a country-wide structure of national, regional, and local peace committees. “In the interests of defusing the violence,” Marks says, “people from nearly every sector were willing to work with, rather than against, one another.”

The work of peacebuilding in South Africa and elsewhere is largely a rehumanizing process, calming fears by destroying dehumanizing stereotypes. When two enemies truly hear and understand each other's stories, they discover their shared humanity



Golden Kids youth reporter working at Search for Common Ground in Liberia.

Search for Common Ground

Committee members wore beepers so they could be summoned day or night. And they repeatedly were. They intervened in crises, sometimes physically standing between enemies in a confrontation. They monitored demonstrations, mediated conflicts between the police and the local residents, between provincial representatives and squatter warlords, between youth and the education department, between taxi organizations and commuters, and between competing civil and political organizations. They established peace committees, lobbied government ministers, trained people in conflict-resolution skills, and introduced peace education into the schools.

But again and again, no matter what kind of work the committee was doing, Marks and her fellow committee members found themselves listening to stories—hundreds of them.

“Everyone has a different truth,” Marks says. The work of peacebuilding in South Africa and elsewhere, she has found, is largely a rehumanizing pro-

cess, calming fears by destroying dehumanizing stereotypes. When two enemies truly hear and understand each other's stories, they discover their shared humanity. And that, says Marks, is the common ground they can build on.

Turning on to soap opera

South Africa's democratic elections in April 1994 were a stunning achievement for the thousands of peacemakers, like Marks, who'd worked so hard for four years. But they had no time to celebrate. That same April, ethnic divides between Hutus and Tutsis, whipped up by hate radio, ignited a slaughter in Rwanda that killed 800,000 people within 100 days. And in the Balkans, the death toll from ethnic conflict and genocide in the former Yugoslavia climbed to over 200,000.

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) quickly set up field offices in both Macedonia, a multiethnic and still peaceful region near Kosovo, and in Burundi, Rwanda's



Search for Common Ground

Former child soldier Emilia Taylor now is a youth journalist with Talking Drum Studio in Sierra Leone. The studio's radio soap opera, *Atunda Ayenda* ("Lost and Found"), is aimed primarily at youth, tackling such hot-button issues as elections, truth and reconciliation, and human rights. It has achieved an astonishing 90 percent listenership.

neighbor to the south. They planned to apply the lessons they'd learned in South Africa to keep the violence from spreading.

But in these countries there was no National Peace Accord, no structure of local and regional peace committees with hundreds of organized, trained peace workers. How could one organization with a small staff and limited resources transform an atmosphere of violence in a nation verging on lethal conflict?

The easy answer to the big-impact-with-a-small-staff dilemma is to use the media to promote your message. The hard part is getting people to listen, especially in conflict zones.

"People in conflict zones quickly tire of political speeches, debates, and reports of more violence," observes Francis Rolt, radio director of Common Ground Productions. They face a steady diet of bleak, discouraging, frightening news, and they simply lose hope.

So they tune out the news—and tune in to the soaps. That's how it happened that SFCG opened a radio station in Burundi in 1995.

There are others who use soap operas to educate or to change behaviors: Wear condoms. Don't beat your wife. Send girl children to be educated, and so on.

But Burundi's Studio Ijambo pioneered soap opera for peace with *Umubanyi niwe Muryango* ("Our Neighbors, Our Family"), a show that follows the daily lives of two neighboring families, one Tutsi, one Hutu. And, in a country where 87 percent of

the people listen to the radio, the strategy worked. Burundi remained relatively peaceful, and 82 percent of those responding to a recent survey felt that the programs of Studio Ijambo had greatly helped reconciliation.

Then in 1999, SFCG discovered another story-based format that became spectacularly successful. In *Inkingi y'ubuntu* ("Heroes"), individuals who had risked their lives to save someone of a different ethnic group told their stories—Tutsis told of saving Hutus, and Hutus described rescuing Tutsis.

Just telling these stories was an act of bravery. Admitting that you saved an enemy exposes you as disloyal to your ethnic group; in the same way, publicly thanking someone who saved you exposes that person as a traitor to his or her ethnic group.

Nevertheless, 200 heroes have come forward to tell their stories.

"We thought this show would run for six months, maybe a year," says Marks. "It's been running now for five years!"

In Macedonia, SFCG created a television drama for children. In *Nashe Maalo*, families from three ethnic backgrounds—Macedonian, Albanian, and Roma—live together in a magical, talking apartment house. The building advises the children who live there on the problems and conflicts in their lives. The children of the three families become fast friends, despite differences among their parents.

Both the popularity of *Nashe Maalo* and its impact have been remarkable. Almost three-fourths of the children in Macedonia watched the show, and research has shown that before viewing the series, only 30 percent of them would have invited a child of another ethnicity into their home; after watching just eight episodes, that figure doubled. Although the last episode aired in 2003, SFCG has found ways to develop outreach activities based on the show: live theater, puppet theater, a magazine with a parent-teacher guide, a music CD, and a knowledge quiz.

In Sierra Leone, the problem was not ethnic conflict but the complete failure of government.

A decade of vicious warfare had left 50,000 dead, thousands mutilated, and 2 million displaced. An estimated 27,000 children had been used as child soldiers. Gangs of youth—bored, destitute, hopeless, and furious—roamed the streets.

So SFCG's Talking Drum Studio created *Atunda Ayenda* ("Lost and Found"), a radio soap opera that airs five times a week. Aimed primarily at youth, it tackles such hot-button issues as elections, truth and reconciliation, and human rights. It has achieved an astonishing 90 percent listenership, according to an independent evaluation; more importantly, 80 percent of its listeners regularly discuss the issues it raises with family and friends at bars, markets, and meeting places.

Two thousand episodes later

SFCG now produces hit soap operas not only in Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Macedonia, but in Liberia, the Congo, Angola, Indonesia, Ukraine, and the Palestinian Territories. In each of these places, the staff of SFCG use the shows as jumping-off points for other projects—for raising issues that can't be talked about on a personal level, as starting points for community meetings, and as catalysts for focus groups on national issues simultaneously addressed through other SFCG radio programs. Through the humble soap opera, they've opened dialogue between bitter enemies in countries around the world and helped all sides understand their differences and act on their commonalities.

But perhaps you're not convinced—maybe you still think soaps are only for couch potatoes with too much time on their hands. One last story, then, for you.

One day the generator broke down at the radio station that broadcasts *Atunda Ayenda*, the most popular radio soap opera in Sierra Leone. As station staff tried to fix the problem, two military vehicles pulled up outside the station, spraying rocks and dust. Armed soldiers jumped out and came running into the station.

Their demand?

Hand over a tape of the day's episode of *Atunda Ayenda*. If the soldiers didn't get to hear it, the officers told them, they would certainly mutiny.

The folks at the station handed over the tape, the soldiers sped off, and a catastrophe was averted.

Or was it? Tune in next week to find out.

Carol Estes is a YES! contributing editor. Learn more about Search for Common Ground at www.sfcg.org.

What's your cultural proficiency?

When times get hard, people often pull apart along lines of race, religion, and nationality. What skills do we need to develop in order to navigate the misunderstandings and mistrust that can accompany diversity? Few people are born culturally proficient; this continuum provides a tool to assess where you and the groups you work with stand—and where you might go. Excerpted from *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders*, by Randall B. Lindsey, Kikanza Nuri Robins, Raymond D. Terrell, published by Corwin Press.

There are six points along the cultural proficiency continuum that indicate how people see and respond to difference:

- 1 Cultural destructiveness:** *See the difference, stomp it out.*
The elimination of other people's cultures
- 2 Cultural incapacity:** *See the difference, make it wrong.*
Belief in the superiority of one's own culture and behavior that disempowers another's culture.
- 3 Cultural blindness:** *See the difference, act like you don't.*
Acting as if the cultural differences you see do not matter, or not recognizing that there are differences among and between cultures.
- 4 Cultural precompetence:** *See the difference, respond inadequately.* Awareness of the limitations of one's skills or an organization's practices when interacting with other cultural groups.
- 5 Cultural competence:** *See the difference, understand the difference that difference makes.* Interacting with other cultural groups using the five essential elements of cultural proficiency:
 - Name the differences: Assess culture
 - Claim the differences: Value diversity
 - Reframe the differences: Manage the dynamics of difference
 - Train about differences: Adapt to diversity
 - Change for differences: Institutionalize cultural knowledge
- 6 Cultural proficiency:** *See the differences and respond positively and affirmingly.* Esteeming culture, knowing how to learn about individual and organizational culture, and interacting effectively in a variety of cultural environments.

You can reach the authors at The Cultural Proficiency Group, culturalproficiency@earthlink.net.



What it means to be alive at a moment of global crisis and possibility



The Great Turning as compass and lens

Joanna Macy

“Thinking of the Great Turning reminds me I don’t have to save the world by myself; then there’s more energy for my little piece of it—getting the military out of my son’s school.”

—Anti-recruitment activist in San Francisco

“It strengthens me to see my work for renewable energy in the context of the *grande virada*.”

—Corporate consultant in Brazil.

“I love telling the children in our eco-camp that their restoration project is part of the *grosse Wandlung*, and they are part of it, too.”

—Teacher in Germany’s Black Forest.

“Now I recognize *el gran cambio* right here in Barcelona, and at the same time it links me with activists around the world. I feel less isolated.”

—Spanish community organizer.

E grande virada, die grosse Wandlung, el gran cambio... Wherever I go, in every group I work with, the Great Turning becomes more rewarding as a conceptual frame. It is a name for the transition from the industrial-growth society to a life-sustaining society. It identifies the shift from a self-destroying political economy to one in harmony with Earth and enduring for the future. It unites and includes all the actions being taken to honor and preserve life on Earth. It is the essential adventure of our time.

REBIRTH AT STONEHENGE

About 2200 B.C., the Beaker people began building a double ring of stones inside a henge originally built in 2800 B.C. Eighty “bluestones” weighing over 4 tons were transported from southern Wales, several hundred miles away. Immediately after, another people tore that down and rebuilt the circles with local “sarsen” stones. Researchers believe the site was used as a place for celebration, and even today revelers gather there each year to welcome the summer solstice.

Photo courtesy AP

Illustrations by Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn for YES! Magazine

Of course, most people involved in this adventure do not call it the Great Turning. They do not need that name in order to fight for survival and to fashion the forms of a sane and decent future. Yet more and more of us are finding that concept to be wonderfully useful.

For me as teacher, activist, and mother, the Great Turning helps me see what the physical eye cannot: the larger forces at play and the direction they are taking. At the same time, it sharpens my perception of the actual, concrete ways people are engaging in this global shift. In other words, it serves me as both compass and lens.

The big picture

From the countless social and environmental issues that compete for attention, we can take on isolated causes and fight for them with courage and devotion. But the forces we confront seem so great and time so short, it's easy to fear that our efforts are too scattered to be of real consequence. And we tend to fall into the same short-term thinking that has entrapped our political economy.

The Great Turning invites us to lift our eyes from the cramped closet of short-term thinking and see the larger historical landscape. What a difference it makes to view our efforts as part of a vast enterprise, a tidal change commensurate to the crisis we face. What is underway, as many have observed, is a revolution that is comparable in magnitude to the agricultural revolution of the late Neolithic and the industrial revolution of the past two centuries. As the industrial-growth society spins out of control comes the third revolution, which is even now given names, like the ecological or sustainability revolution, or the Great Turning.

While the first two revolutions, as former EPA administrator William Ruckelshaus reflects, “were gradual, spontaneous, and largely unconscious, this (third) one will have to be a fully conscious operation. ... If we actually do it, the undertaking will be absolutely unique in humanity's stay on Earth.”

As compass, the Great Turning helps us see the direction in which our political economy is heading. Because the industrial-growth society is based on an impossible imperative—limitless increase in corporate

profits—that direction leads to collapse. No system can endure that seeks to maximize a single variable. Already our system is on “overshoot,” using up resources beyond Earth's capacity to renew and dumping wastes beyond Earth's capacity to absorb.

The losses inflicted on the biosphere now affect every system essential to life, and deplete the diversity required for complex life forms. Yet life is a dynamic process, self-organizing to adapt and evolve. Just as it turned scales to feathers, gills to lungs, seawater to blood, so now, too, immense evolutionary pressures are at work. They are driving this revolution of ours through innumerable molecular, intersecting alterations in the human capacity for conscious change.

Still, as Earth's record attests, extinctions are at least as plentiful as successful adaptations. We may not make it this time. Natural systems may unravel beyond repair before new, sustainable forms and structures take hold. That is part of the anguish that is widely felt.

That anguish is unavoidable, if we want to stay honest and alert. The Great Turning comes with no guarantees. Its risk of failure is its reality. Insisting on belief in a positive outcome puts blinders on us and burdens the heart. We might manage to convince ourselves that everything will surely turn out all right, but would such happy assurance elicit our greatest courage and creativity?

The Great Turning, as a compass pointing to the possible, helps me live with radical uncertainty. It also causes me to believe that, whether we succeed or not, the risks we take on behalf of life will bring forth dimensions of human intelligence and solidarity beyond any we have known.

The scene on the ground

This third revolution of our human journey is not only a possibility; it is a present, ongoing, multifarious phenomenon. The Great Turning is like a lens through which we can perceive the extent to which it is happening. This lens is crucial, because it reveals developments that are ignored or distorted by the mainstream, corporate-controlled media. In the words of Gil Scott-Heron, “the revolution will not be televised.” It is hardly in the interests of billion-dollar industries, or the government that serves them, that we should know how they are being challenged and supplanted by grassroots initiatives.

These initiatives are sprouting on all sides, like green shoots through the rubble of a dysfunctional civilization. The Great Turning lens reveals that initiatives as different in character as a wind farm, a lawsuit against election fraud, and a fleet of kayaks protecting marine

mammals are all part of an historic transition. It is important to review the three dimensions of this transition because they make it easier to see the Great Turning in action and to recognize our part in it. While presented as first, second, or third, they are not to be taken as sequential or ranked in importance. They co-arise synergistically and are mutually reinforcing.

The first dimension includes all the efforts underway to slow down the destruction being wrought by the industrial-growth society. These range from petitioning for species protection to soup kitchens for homeless families, to civil disobedience against weapons makers, polluters, clear cutting, and other depredations. Often discouraging and even dangerous, work in this dimension buys time. Saving some lives, some ecosystems, some species, and some of the gene pool for future generations is a necessary part of the Great Turning. But even if every battle in this dimension were won, it would not be enough. A life-sustaining society requires new forms and structures.

The arising of these new forms constitutes the second dimension. Here we see the emergence of sustainable alternatives, from solar panels to farmers markets, from land trusts to cohousing, permaculture, and local currencies. At no other epoch in our history have so many ways of doing things appeared in so short a time. Many of them—as in health, animal husbandry, and pest management—reclaim old, traditional practices.

Yet, as promising as they are, these forms and structures cannot survive without deeply rooted values to nourish them. To proliferate and endure, they must mirror who we are and what we really want. They require, in other words, a profound change in our perception of reality.

This is the third dimension of the Great Turning: a shift in consciousness. Both personal and collective, both cognitive and spiritual, this shift comes through many avenues. It is ignited by the new sciences and inspired by ancient traditions. It also arises as grief for our world. Irreducible to private pathology, this grief gives the lie to old-paradigm notions of the isolated, competitive self. It reveals our mutual belonging in the web of life.

Now, in this very time, these three rivers—anguish for our world, scientific breakthroughs, and ancestral teachings—flow together. From the confluence of these rivers we drink and awaken to what we once knew: we are alive in a living Earth, source of all we are and know. Despite centuries of mechanistic conditioning, we want to name, once again, this world as holy.

Whether they come through Gaia theory, systems theory, chaos theory, or through liberation theology,

shamanic practices, or the Goddess, such insights and experiences are absolutely necessary to free us from the grip of the industrial-growth society. They offer us nobler goals and deeper pleasures. They redefine our wealth and our worth, liberating us from compulsions to consume and control.

So rich is the harvest, that when we claim these new understandings, there's little room for panic or self-pity. Instead, gratitude arises to be alive at this moment, when, for all the darkness coming upon us, blessings abound. They help us stay alert and steady, so we can join hands to find the ways the world self-heals—and see the present chaos as seedbed for the future.

Seeds for the future

Among such blessings for me now, I count the explorations my colleagues and I are making into the mystery of time. With “deep time” practices, we enliven our felt connections with past and future generations, and open our hurried, fragmented lives into vaster expanses of time. The ancestors, who bequeathed us life, become more present to us, and so do the future ones, whom we carry within us like seeds.

These practices, long a feature of my workshops, gave rise to an extraordinary event last year. In Australia, where the Dreamtime is still a reality to the aboriginals who welcomed us, several dozen of us gathered to devote a full lunar cycle to immersion in deep time. The event was called “Seeds for the Future: Training for the Great Turning.”

There, under the wheeling stars by the southern sea, we felt the power of this planet-time. In our silence, rituals, and role play, we sensed the ancestors and the future ones moving in our midst, encouraging us in the work that is ours to do. In our discussions, we felt the presence of those living now and the magnitude of their manifold efforts on behalf of life. Earth Community became for us not only a promise, but a present reality.

Returned to our daily lives, we call each other seedlings. That's what the Great Turning makes of us: seedlings of the future. How can I falter now, with so many hands and hearts at work, and all generations lending their support?

Joanna Macy, Ph.D., a Buddhist teacher and deep ecologist, is widely known for her workshops at the interface between social change and spiritual breakthrough. Her books include *Coming Back to Life*; *World As Lover, World As Self*; and *Widening Circles, A Memoir*. See www.joannamacy.net. A 30-day event, similar to the Australian event mentioned above, will take place on the Central Oregon Coast September 12–October 12, 2007. See www.seedsforthefuture.org or write thegreatturning@aol.com.

hieroglyphic stairway

Drew Dellinger

it's 3:23 in the morning
and I'm awake
because my great great grandchildren
won't let me sleep
my great great grandchildren
ask me in dreams
what did you do while the planet was plundered?
what did you do when the earth was unraveling?

surely you did something
when the seasons started failing?

as the mammals, reptiles, birds were all dying?

did you fill the streets with protest
when democracy was stolen?

what did you do
once
you
knew?

I'm riding home on the Colma train
I've got the voice of the milky way in my dreams

I have teams of scientists
feeding me data daily
and pleading I immediately
turn it into poetry

I want just this consciousness reached
by people in range of secret frequencies
contained in my speech

I am the desirous earth
equidistant to the underworld
and the flesh of the stars

I am everything already lost

the moment the universe turns transparent
and all the light shoots through the cosmos

I use words to instigate silence

I'm a hieroglyphic stairway
in a buried Mayan city
suddenly exposed by a hurricane

a satellite circling earth
finding dinosaur bones
in the Gobi desert
I am telescopes that see back in time

I am the precession of the equinoxes,
the magnetism of the spiraling sea

I'm riding home on the Colma train
with the voice of the milky way in my dreams

I am myths where violets blossom from blood
like dying and rising gods

I'm the boundary of time
soul encountering soul
and tongues of fire

it's 3:23 in the morning
and I can't sleep
because my great great grandchildren
ask me in dreams
what did you do while the earth was unraveling?

I want just this consciousness reached
by people in range of secret frequencies
contained in my speech

Drew Dellinger is a spoken word poet, teacher, and activist.
He is founder of Poets for Global Justice and author
of the collection of poems, *love letter to the milky way*.
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NEW MEXICO PUEBLOS

For thousands of years, the Pajarito Plateau was home to Paleo-Indian hunters and later to hunter-gatherers who moved through the canyons seeking game and wild plants. About 2,000 years ago, small family groups of Anasazi moved into the canyon occupying pit houses and cultivating corn, beans, and squash. About 800 years ago, a sudden influx of migrating people led to the creation of villages (pueblos). About 600 years ago, with the arrival of the Spanish, the residents left the canyon, never to return.

Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn for YES! Magazine
Photo by Ashok Rodrigues

How NAFTA, CAFTA, and other corporate-friendly trade policies displace farmers and create mass migration, and how we can do better

Alternatives to a wall

by **Oscar A. Chacón, Amy Shannon, and Sarah Anderson**

The year 2006 may go down in the history books as the year when immigrants came out of the shadows to demand a place of respect in American society. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants, documented and undocumented, have marched in the streets of cities across the country. Thousands of students walked out of class to join them.

The direct focus of these demonstrations has been proposed legislation that would turn every man, woman, and child who is in the country without authorization into a criminal and turn people who give even

humanitarian assistance to unauthorized foreigners into felons. Perhaps most extreme, it would authorize construction of a 700-mile wall along the U.S. southern border.

Whatever the outcome of this legislative battle, the protests have sparked a long-overdue debate on immigration issues. If we are to lay the foundation for more sensible policies, the debate must be broadened to recognize the links between U.S. policies and the conditions that drive migration in the first place.

Why people migrate

The massive influx of migrants in the past several decades, particularly from Mexico and Central America, cannot be traced to a single cause. However, economic globalization policies supported by the U.S. government are significant factors. NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) almost certainly contributed to the sharp increase in the number of Mexicans living in the U.S. without authorization, from 2 million in 1990 to an estimated 6.2 million in 2005.

With barriers to agricultural imports lifted, Mexican farmers have found themselves competing with an influx of cheap, heavily subsidized U.S. agricultural commodities. Facing dire poverty in the Mexican countryside, millions have made the wrenching decision to leave behind families and communities and head northward.

Despite NAFTA's record, Congress approved a similar agreement with Central America last summer that is expected to have similarly devastating effects on small farmers in those countries. Throughout the

continued on page 50



Bob Pepping for Contra Costa Times/KRT

Student Daniel Tellez, 17, wearing a Mexican flag, joined hundreds of students from local high schools in a walkout and protest on March 27, 2006, in Concord, California. The students were protesting new immigration legislation.



People gather at Love Park in Philadelphia for the National Day of Action on Immigrant Rights April 10, 2006.

Michael Perez for Philadelphia Inquirer/KRT

Inviting immigrants out of the shadows

Common sense immigration policies for a globalized world

by Oscar A. Chacón, Amy Shannon, and Sarah Anderson

Raise living standards in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.

We should work with our neighbors south of the border to strengthen small- and medium-sized enterprises—the sector that employs the largest number of people in Latin America. We should also look for ways to make the money sent home by immigrants a transformative force for sustainable local development.

Reopen the debate on the future of the Latin American countryside.

We should stop promoting export-oriented agribusiness and instead support small-farmer organizations around the world in their call for food sovereignty. The right to regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives is the core principle of food sovereignty. We should also support fair trade, through which farmers receive fair compensation for their products.

Reduce the economic insecurities that are fueling the anti-immigrant backlash in the United States

through raising the minimum wage, strengthening labor laws to protect unions, expanding public health care, and increasing training benefits—particularly for those displaced by economic globalization.

Cancel impoverished countries' crippling debts,

without imposing onerous conditions that deepen poverty or degrade the environment. We should press industrialized nations and multilateral financial institutions on this count. Organized groups of immigrants could play a strong role in demanding that their governments of origin apply savings from debt cancellation to much-needed investments in human resource development.

Devise a set of policies that bring immigrants out of the shadows

and allow them to contribute fully to the well-being of our country. These policies should include provisions for family reunification. Every foreigner residing in the U.S. should have the opportunity to become a legal permanent resident, with provisions for becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen in the future. Anyone who decides to remain outside the law should be identified, investigated, and, if proved to be a threat, deported.

A fence divides Nogales, Arizona, from Nogales, Mexico. About 20,000 people live on the Arizona side, left; 200,000 on the Mexican side.



Patrick Schneider for Charlotte Observer/KRT

politicians have not only failed to recognize these global links, they have also scapegoated immigrants for domestic policy failures.

There is a growing segment of U.S. society that has not benefited from the country's overall economic growth—the 45 million who lack health insurance, the hundreds of thousands who have had their retirement benefits cut, the tens of thousands who have lost well-paying manufacturing or technology jobs in just the past few years. As in developing countries, workers in the United States have suffered from trade and globalization policies that encourage corporations to pit workers and communities against each other in a global race to the bottom in wages and benefits. The deep sense of insecurity caused by these changes leaves many people looking for someone to blame. Foreigners make an easy, albeit mistaken, target.

Building transnational alliances

Over the past several years, anti-immigrant extremists have succeeded in polarizing the public debate. What we need now is a real exercise in democratic account-

If we fail to recognize the connections between migration and globalization, our policies will provide a temporary Band-Aid solution at best. And yet U.S. politicians have not only failed to recognize these global links, they have also scapegoated immigrants for their domestic policy failures

continued from page 48

developing world, farmers are particularly vulnerable to import competition because of World Bank- and IMF-promoted cuts to support for small-scale agriculture.

Migration has also been stimulated by natural disasters both acute—like hurricanes—and chronic—like soil erosion and aquifer depletion. Put bluntly, most people who die in hurricanes do so because poverty has forced them onto marginal lands, because they live in substandard housing, and because unfettered development has eroded the natural environmental defenses that protect vulnerable areas. Rather than addressing these problems, most developing-country governments are pressured by international financial institutions to slash spending for social and environmental protections, look the other way when foreign investors damage the environment, and devote scarce resources to pay interest on external debts.

If we fail to recognize the connections between migration and globalization, our policies will provide a temporary Band-Aid solution at best. And yet U.S.

ability, one that acknowledges the transnational nature of the challenges we face. We need to listen to the wise and solution-oriented voices of the local elected officials, law enforcement officers, and the business, religious, and immigrant community leaders who truly care about these matters and who are often misrepresented by those who claim to speak for them.

There are common-sense alternatives to building a wall around our country (see page 49). The American people need to reject the fortress mentality and take back the issue of migration from those who want us to embrace fear and hate. This proud nation of immigrants needs its citizens to reclaim the best traditions of our nation and to build a better world for all.

Oscar A. Chacón is the director and Amy Shannon is the associate director of Enlaces América, a support center for Latino and Caribbean immigrant organizations based in Chicago. Sarah Anderson, of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC, is the co-author of *Field Guide to the Global Economy* and "Debt Boomerang 2006."

IRAQ IN FRAGMENTS

Kurdish farmers from “Iraq In Fragments,” the James Longley documentary of a country pulled in different directions by religion and ethnicity. The film explores the lives of ordinary Iraqis—people whose thoughts, beliefs, aspirations, and concerns are at once personal and illustrative of the larger issues facing Iraq today. See www.iraqinfragments.com.



James Longley

In Iraq: A place to be human, first

Bill Weinberg

As Iraq teeters on the brink of civil war, with Sunni-Shiite violence terrorizing the center and south, the northern city of Kirkuk is waiting to explode. In this city, Kurds and Turkmen had been forced from their homes under Saddam. They are now returning to find Arab families in their houses. The Kurdish militias that control much of Iraq's north hope to annex oil-rich Kirkuk as the capital of their autonomous zone. A tense three-way rivalry between Kurds, Arabs, and Turkmen has developed.

Yet it is in Kirkuk that Iraq's civil resistance movement is building a new model for a secular society that puts equal citizenship ahead of ethnic or sectarian identity.

The Iraqi Freedom Congress (IFC), founded in March 2005, brings together labor unions, student groups, women's rights organizations, and neighbor-

hood assemblies to defend civil society against the occupation troops and profusion of armed factions. The IFC is working to establish a parallel governance structure to that of the U.S.-backed regime and armed militias linked to ethnic and religious groups. Its working model for this program is a Kirkuk neighborhood that it has established as an autonomous zone, dubbed *Al-Tzaman*—Solidarity.

“Anybody can live in this area,” IFC president Samir Adil said of Al-Tzaman, speaking at a Tokyo conference held by Japan's Movement for Democratic Socialism in January to support Iraq's civil resistance. “This is a humanity area—nobody has the right to ask you your religion or ethnic identity.”

The neighborhood of some 5,000 has a mixed population of Sunni Arabs, Christians, Turkmen, and Kurds, and has been an IFC autonomous zone for

"Unembedded" Photo Exhibit

An Iranian Kurdish woman lives hidden in the mountains of northern Iraq because she is the wife of a Kurdish separatist leader.



Rita Leistner

A father shows his hand to snipers as he carries his child across the front line between U.S. forces and the Mahdi Army in Najaf.



Kael Alford

An evening in Zowra Park. Socializing after dark in Baghdad ceases during periods of heavy fighting or suicide bombings, but rebounds as soon as there is a perceived lull.



Thorne Anderson

Through the "embedded journalism" program, Americans have become accustomed to photos taken inside the U.S. military cordon, removed from the day-to-day realities of ordinary Iraqis. In a touring photo exhibit and book entitled *Unembedded*, four independent photographers take viewers across front lines and cultural barriers to explore issues underreported by mainstream media. Learn more at www.unembedded.net. and www.chelseagreen.com.

a year. In a starkly divided city, it has become a haven for peaceful co-existence. The IFC renamed the neighborhood Solidarity from its Saddam-era militarist appellation of *Asraiwal Mafkodein*—"Prisoners of War and Missing," a tribute to conscripts lost in the war with Iran.

"There is no government in Iraq—the government is only within the Green Zone," Adil says, explaining the proliferation of militias. "If you give security they support you." Adil admits the IFC has established armed checkpoints in Al-Tzaman to prevent infiltration by militia and insurgent groups at night. He claims a local presence by the al-Zarqawi network has been cleared out by the IFC's efforts. Adil says the IFC is now seeking to establish a second autonomous zone in the Baghdad neighborhood of Husseinia—and is in a contest with the Shiite Badr militia, which has a presence there.

"Every household in Iraq is armed now," Adil says. "Iraqi society is a jungle society—you have to have a gun to defend your family." Despite this reality, he emphasizes that the IFC is seeking to build a civil resistance to the occupation—not an armed insurgency. "Civilian people are paying the price for the armed resistance, so we believe it is a bad tactic," he says. "But we are mobilizing the people to protect themselves."

In addition to Kirkuk and Baghdad, Adil says the IFC has a significant presence in Basra in the south and in the northern Kurdish-controlled zone.

"Iraq has become an international battleground," Adil says. "Every terrorist group and every terrorist state wants to exploit the situation in Iraq—Iran, Sunni political Islam backed by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the U.S."

Adil, like many of the IFC leaders, is a veteran of political struggle against the Saddam Hussein dictatorship. Born in Baghdad in 1964, he was imprisoned for six months in 1992 for labor activities. He was tortured in prison—he never removes his cap, but a long scar can be seen extending down his scalp to his temple. Supporters in Canada launched an international campaign that finally won his release. Exiled to Canada, he returned to Iraq in 2003 to help revive an independent political opposition.

If post-Saddam Iraq affords the possibility of building a new political movement, the new ethnic and religious polarization makes that movement more essential than ever, Adil says. To illustrate how the atmosphere has changed, Adil, who was born into a Shiite family, says he only became aware that his wife was born into a Sunni one when they discussed returning to Iraq together and realized their "mixed" marriage could become an issue. His wife chose to remain in Canada.

The IFC brings together several organizations, including the Federation of Workers' Council and Unions in Iraq—one of the major post-Saddam labor alliances, the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq—which is fighting the Sharia measures in the new constitution, and the Kurdistan Center for the Defense of Children's Rights.

An incident that helped spark the IFC's founding came in March 2005, when a Christian female student was physically attacked by the Sadr militia at a campus picnic at Basra University, and a male student who came to her defense was shot and killed. Thousands of students marched in protest, and the Sadr militia

lic services as fueling the growth of political Islam. "The public schools now demand payment that many families cannot afford," he says. "Religious schools are filling the void. And political Islamic groups exploit children for suicide bombings."

Sanaria, a nine-year-old girl from Kirkuk who was part of the IFC delegation at the Tokyo conference, recounted friendships torn apart in her school by the ethnic tensions, and how she was ostracized by Turkmen and Arab classmates for speaking Kurdish.

Even a month before the horrific bombing of the Golden Mosque at Samarra, Samir Adil warned that Iraq was sliding toward collapse of the government and

While Arab nationalists call for officially defining Iraq as "part of the Arab homeland" and Kurdish nationalist parties ultimately seek secession, Adil says the IFC sees Iraq as first and foremost "part of the world"

was driven from the campus. These struggles led to the establishment of the National Federation of Student Councils, another IFC member organization.

Also attending the Tokyo conference was Nada Muaid, vice president of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, who described the group's volunteer medical teams, computer classes for women, and shelters in Baghdad and Kirkuk for women fleeing domestic violence or "honor killings." Such cases of women being murdered by their own families for adultery or even for being raped have exploded since the U.S. invasion, Muaid says. "Political Islam has pushed women back under this occupation."

Basic services are in rapid decline because of the heightened insecurity. "NGOs are pulling out due to kidnappings just as needs are growing—water is of poor quality and unreliable; blackouts are frequent," Muaid says. The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq is organizing self-help projects for women and expanding its medical teams into full health clinics.

Azad Ahmed Abdullah of the Children's Protection Center tells a similar story. The group was founded in 1999 in the Kurdish zone to help children wounded or left homeless in the war or addicted to drugs. It spread after the fall of Saddam and now runs shelters in Baghdad and Kirkuk, and is establishing programs in Basra and Sulaymaniyah. The Tokyo conference featured an exhibit of art by Iraqi children from the Protection Center's workshops—most of it, not surprisingly, on themes of war.

Abdullah sees the collapse of the economy and pub-

civil war. "Ethnic and nationalist conflict is deepening day by day. The militias carry out disappearances, throw bodies in the desert every night."

Adil says the IFC advocates non-collaboration with the Iraqi government as long as the country is occupied by foreign troops and as long as the new state is based on "dividing power and oil proceeds between the ethnic factions." Instead he calls for "public accountability and visibility [regarding the] administration of resource money for the benefit of the Iraqi people as a whole."

While Arab nationalists call for officially defining Iraq as "part of the Arab homeland" and Kurdish nationalist parties ultimately seek secession, Adil says the IFC sees Iraq as first and foremost "part of the world." He says the IFC opposes federalism as a recipe for civil war and the permanent fracturing of the Iraqi state. He calls for an Iraqi state in which the citizen is not a member of an ethnic or religious group but "human first, human last, and human always."

Asked for a message for readers in the United States, Adil says, "The U.S. lost in Vietnam not because the U.S. lost soldiers in Vietnam, but because they lost the support of the American people. But we don't want the American people to just protest to bring the troops home, but to support the secular progressive forces in Iraq, to think about the Iraqi people. We do not want another Taliban regime or Islamic Republic in Iraq."

Bill Weinberg is a veteran journalist covering human rights, ecology, and war. He is the author of *Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico* and editor of www.ww4report.com.

Notes from Underground

MYCELIUM RUNNING: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World

by Paul Stamets

Ten Speed Press, 352 pages, 2005, \$35.00

reviewed by Starhawk

If humans as a species and complex human culture are to survive the myriad ecological and social catastrophes looming over our future, we desperately need to rethink our relationship with the natural world. We need to shift from a model of controlling nature to one of listening to her and learning from her. We need to forgo arrogance in favor of humility, a word from the same root as humus, its core meaning to bend low to the earth.

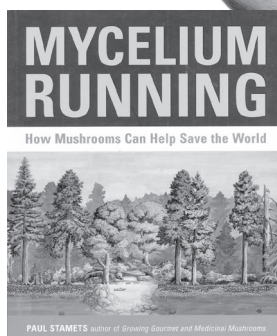
No one is better equipped to guide us through this process than Paul Stamets, the shaman of fungi. Over the last few years, Paul Stamets has been electrifying audiences at Green Festivals and Bioneers conferences with his research on fungi and their multiple uses in earth healing. People come away from his slide shows starry-eyed, their despair about the state of the global ecosystem temporarily in abeyance. Now he has collected his research into a new book.

We writers like to believe that the words we put on paper will somehow save the world. Stamets's book, *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World*, just might do it. Stamets has turned his vision to the ground, to contemplate the lowly fungi. In so doing, he has discovered powerful allies of healing and fertility.

Mushrooms are the fruiting bod-

ies, the reproductive organs, of mycelia, much larger, underground webs of threadlike structures. Mycelium plays a hugely important role in the life of a forest. The hyphae, or threads, hold the soil, improving its structure and ability to absorb water and nutrients. Mycelium excretes enzymes that break down decaying matter and wood, transforming them into soil, recycling nutrients and preparing the ground for other forms of life. Mycorrhizal fungi are symbiotic with plant roots, extending their reach and allowing them to transfer nutrients. The mycelium that permeates soil is sensitive to information, and Stamets begins this book with a chapter on mushroom mycelium as "nature's internet."

His experimentation and careful documentation have led him to discover fungi's astounding capabilities. Mushrooms are a nutritious food, high in protein, and many are powerful medicinals



with antibacterial, antiviral, and anticancer properties. The enzymes secreted by mycelia can destroy pathogens, and mushrooms can be used for mycofiltration to treat contaminated water.

Because mushrooms break down tough, organic compounds like the lignins and cellulose in wood, they have evolved the ability to split chemical bonds. In mycoremediation, mushroom mycelium is used to clean up oil spills and break down toxins in contaminated soil. Heavy metals cannot be broken down, because they are elements, but they can be taken up in mushroom fruiting bodies and safely disposed of.

Stamets has also discovered mycopessticides. Many mycelia attract insects, and some have evolved to then kill their insect hosts. Stamets has developed methods of ant and termite control using mushroom mycelia that are safe (for everything but the insects), nontoxic, and enormously effective. He now has research on fungi that can neutralize smallpox, anthrax, and nerve gas.

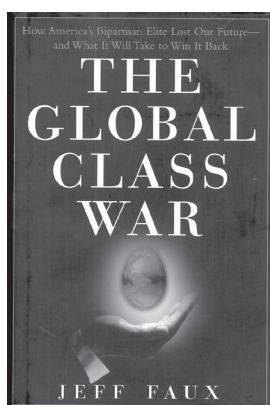
The first section of his book details these discoveries and more. The second section is the how-to part, filled with valuable information on ways to

cultivate mushrooms and grow mycelium. Stamets' company, Fungi Perfecti, www.fungi.com, sells mushroom spawn, spores, and everything related. Nevertheless, Stamets has generously packed this section with the low-tech methods of propagating mushrooms without buying spawn. It includes a chapter on gardening with mushrooms. The final section describes many of the most useful species.

The book is lavishly illustrated, with beautiful photographs of mushrooms, drawings of the stages of the mushroom life cycle, and electron microscopy of spores and gills and life processes. *Mycelium Running* is an invaluable resource for anyone involved in earth healing, permaculture, forestry, gardening, or bioremediation. I use it in the permaculture courses I teach, which now always include a section on the multiple uses of fungi. And it's a key resource for the work I've been doing in New Orleans with the Common Ground Bioremediation Project, teaching methods of healing toxic soil using natural means.

Okay, I admit it—Paul Stamets is also a friend of mine, and besides being a genius, he's a really nice guy. But even if he weren't, even if he'd run off with my lover or fleeced my old grandma in a shady real estate deal, I'd have to rave about this book. It's expensive, \$35, but worth every penny. For if we succeed in moving through this crisis time, and making the transformation to a just and balanced world, fungi will play a vital role in sustaining health and creating abundance. And we'll have Paul Stamets to thank, for teaching us how to reach out and enlist their aid.

Starhawk, www.starhawk.org, is an activist, organizer, and author of The Earth Path, Webs of Power, The Fifth Sacred Thing, The Spiral Dance, and other books on feminism, politics, and earth-based spirituality. She does trainings in permaculture design and peace and justice activism (for more information, see www.earthactivisttraining.org and www.rantcollective.net).



**THE GLOBAL CLASS WAR:
How America's Bipartisan Elite
Lost Our Future—and What It Will
Take To Win It Back**

by Jeff Faux

Wiley, 2006, 292 pages, \$27.95

reviewed by Chuck Collins

Globalization is producing not just a borderless market, but also a borderless class system. The result, as Jeff Faux, founder of the DC-based Economic Policy Institute, argues in his new book, is that U.S. standards of living will inevitably decline. As Faux observes, we are only just beginning to understand how “far up the pyramid of privilege the floodwaters of America's competitive crisis are going to reach.”

The news media suggest that we look at the world in terms of political parties, nation states, and national interests, but the corporate ruling elite has gone bi-partisan, wireless, and borderless. Faux calls this global governing group the “Party of Davos,” referring to the annual gathering of the world's business leaders at a ski resort in Switzerland. This party is well organized, shares a worldview, and has built institutions such as the World Trade Organization to bypass national governments and advance a neoliberal free-trade agenda.

This insight isn't terribly new. But Faux gives a terrific analysis of the 1994 North American Free Trade

Agreement and how business and political elites—the Party of Davos—in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. worked together to enact a treaty that has increased inequality, worsened living standards, and accelerated environmental destruction in all three countries.

To head off America's competitive crisis, we in the U.S. need to buy less and save more, export more and import less. This will not happen without political upheaval in the U.S. and economic dislocation with our main trading partners on our northern and southern borders.

What makes Faux's book worth reading is not this depressing insight, but the solution he offers. By looking at the global economy through the lens of class, Faux comes up with an intriguing regional plan for a counter to the current corporate scheme of globalization. The solution lies in forging greater alliances across borders between workers and civil society organizations, starting with Canada and Mexico.

Faux proposes the creation of a North American common market with Canada and Mexico. Such a common market, like the European Union, would remove trade barriers among the three countries and permit free flow of workers. Together, the three countries would create a customs union and a common tariff that would protect them from a competitive race to the bottom with emerging trade blocs in Asia, especially China with hourly wages less than 50 cents.

Faux's North American market would include a development fund for Mexico, a continental bill of rights that would raise labor and environmental standards, and a North American Congress for citizen participation in governance. Such a common market would stretch from Chiapas, Mexico, to the Arctic North, include 430 million people, and have a Gross Domestic Product of \$20 trillion a year.

It would include the world's first, eleventh, and twelfth largest economies. The three countries are already deeply intertwined, with 85 to 90 percent of exports from Canada and Mexico already going to the U.S.

While global governance seems forever elusive, the idea of greater regional government has some real possibilities. Traditional protectionism ignores how bound together we are with ordinary citizens of Canada and Mexico. As Faux writes, "As long as the people of Canada, Mexico, and the United States see their political interests as separate from one another, while the elites of these same nations see their interests as joined, the gap in wealth and opportunity between the Party of Davos and the rest of us will continue to grow in all three nations." The Party of Davos has globalized; it's time for the Party of the People to do the same, or at least to regionalize.

Most members of the transnational elite are not interested in this conversation, though we must search for vocal allies among the owning classes. Their interests are served by silence and disorganization among the non-elites. Canadian and Mexican elites have been well rewarded in their "role as interpreters and emissaries" of U.S. capital interests.

Hope lies in the myriad examples that Faux describes of citizens building alliances across borders around issues such as labor rights, public access to water, environmental policy, and many others. They serve as an inspiring foundation for a greater commonwealth.

Chuck Collins is Senior Fellow at Class Action (www.classism.org) and co-author with Felice Yeskel of Economic Apartheid in America: A Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity (New Press).



HEALTHY MONEY, HEALTHY PLANET: Developing Sustainability Through New Money Systems

by Deirdre Kent

Craig Potton, 2005, 320 pages, \$34.99

reviewed by Paul Glover

There are already thousands of run-for-your-life crisis books. Celebrations of success are rarer. Deirdre Kent's book *Healthy Money, Healthy Planet* is a fine contribution to the latter, a great tool for those who want to convert today's bad news into good news.

Community currencies, for example, have begun to prove that economics and ecology can become friends. Kent's book explains the differences between money that connects people and money that controls people. The author starts with an authoritative history of national money systems.

Commercial bankers create money just by signing loan contracts. Only 10 percent of the dollars they lend are backed by bank reserves; 90 percent are fantasy credits. Here's the trick: bank interest charged can never be repaid because, like musical chairs, the moneylending game doesn't provide enough credits for repaying both principal and interest. The resulting deliberate dollar scarcity forces a desperate scramble for sales regardless of damage to communities and nature.

Bankers foreclose the inevitable losers and then control more wealth than

ever. And control of money decides where jobs are available and for how long; decides who owns land and what gets built; decides what is legal and what's a crime; decides who lives well and who struggles. (For a fuller discussion of money systems, see Thomas Greco, "The Trouble with Money," and Bernard Lietaer, "Beyond Greed and Scarcity," *YES!* Summer 1997.)

Why should bankers have all the fun of printing money? There are now thousands of community currencies dedicated to social justice, environmental repair, and neighborhoods. Local cash can fix problems that dollars ignore, Kent points out.

Healthy Money dedicates most chapters to these proven solutions, rather than stuffing them into the last paragraph, as do so many books. She compares paper scrips, digital credits, smart cards, and barter banks. She prefers that monetary theorists take action, and risk blundering in the real world.

At the same time, Kent exhorts community organizers to act on the larger stage. She endorses healthy globalization that promotes labor rights and environmental justice. She is enthusiastic about commodity-backed international currency, such as the Borsodi Constant, a currency backed by fixed amounts of commodities. Kent also supports carbon-emissions-rights currency, which creates a trade in the right to spew carbon, as a way of capping global pollution. She recommends that currency activists learn business sense from those who comprehend profit and loss.

And since money multiplies its force when banked, the author considers community banking to be just as necessary as community currency.

Some community currency advocates are skeptical of local currencies that are not backed by national currency. But all national currencies are in debt to nature, since modern economies extract resources faster than they replenish.

Even the United States' dollar is no longer backed by vast domestic petroleum reserves, boundless woodlands, and deep soils, nor by gold or silver, but by \$8 trillion debt, rusting industry, and declining military control of foreign oil.

That's why HOUR systems (ithacahours.com) are deliberately backed by local labor and sustainable partnership with nature. As the notes say, "HOURS are backed by real capital: our skills, our time, our tools, forests, fields and rivers." When dollars, euros, yen and yuan fade, HOURS can take over.

Kent does not pretend to have written a how-to manual. But *Healthy Money* prepares us well to understand finance, while making it serve our neighborhoods and revive the planet our grandchildren will inherit.

Paul Glover is founder of Ithaca HOURS, the Ithaca Health Alliance, and Citizen Planners of Los Angeles. He is a consultant for grassroots economic development: www.paulglover.org.

HOME ENLIGHTENMENT: Practical, Earth-Friendly Advice for Creating a Nurturing, Healthy, Toxin-Free Home and Lifestyle

by Annie B. Bond

Rodale Books, 2005, 600 pages, \$ 27.95

reviewed by Lilja Otto

Have you ever felt the urge to take the fresh air from your last hiking trip home, but found that "Mountain Spring" room spray leaves you feeling drowsy, unsatisfied, even sick? From nontoxic air fresheners and cleaners to healthy lighting, furniture, and bedding, Annie B. Bond's recent book reveals a multitude of effective, earth-friendly choices.

Home Enlightenment covers solutions for the entire house, room by room. The guide has quick tips for beginners and extensive background information, making it a reference for sustainability pros as well. Change is easy with Bond's simple advice.

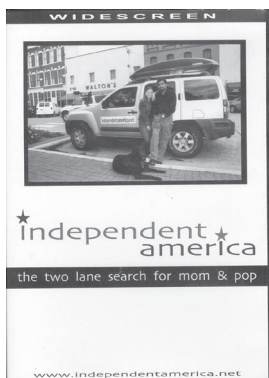


Hackberry General Store along Route 66 in Mohave County, Arizona.

INDEPENDENT AMERICA

a film by Heather Hughes & Hanson Hosein, 80 minutes, on DVD at www.independentamerica.net

reviewed by Daina Saib



Two married former NBC journalists embark on a road trip across 32 states, documenting independent, local businesses and their struggle to compete with the spread of corporate retail giants such as Starbucks and Wal-Mart. Along the way, filmmakers Hanson Hosein and Heather Hughes talk to locals on all sides—from economists, activists, and political leaders to small business owners, union workers, and average Americans. They also interview a top executive from Wal-Mart.

To make things interesting, Hosein and Hughes give themselves some rules of the road. They can only travel on secondary highways and country roads—no interstates—and they can do business only with independently owned companies, so all of their food and lodging must come from "Mom & Pop." This proves challenging.

Wal-Mart is the big bogeyman of the film, and the other retail chains introduced at the beginning, Starbucks and Borders, were not allotted enough time for their effects to be fully fleshed out. But Hosein and Hughes are likable and the difficulties of their journey are educational and entertaining.

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Time to Get Smart About Energy



Linda Wolf

Have you noticed? Two momentous debates on our collective future have recently turned. All of us who have been speaking out on these issues for years are now playing in a whole new ballgame.

I'm talking about the debates on global warming and peak oil. For too long the debate has raged over whether global warming was happening and whether human activity was causing it. On oil, the debate was whether we needed to worry about oil production peaking and when that might occur. Those debates are now over.

Due to untiring efforts by dedicated scientists, savvy advocacy groups, courageous independent media, and lots of truthseekers and truth-tellers like you, we've faced down the disinformation campaigns of Big Oil and reached a turning point in the public discourse.

I've been tracking the political, religious, media, and business positioning on global warming and peak oil. Here are some recent landmarks:

- October 2005: U.S. Representatives Bartlett and Udall form the bipartisan Congressional Peak Oil Caucus to "address the inevitable challenges of 'Peak Oil.'"
- January 2006: President Bush declares the U.S. must break its "addiction to oil."

- January 2006: At a Houston Technology Center briefing, the CEO of the premier firm that tracks energy data tells an audience of industry insiders that the "peak oil" people are right—the era of cheap oil is over. He closes by saying that conservation is the most important way out of the crisis ahead.

- February 2006: 86 prominent Evangelical leaders endorse the Evangelical Climate Initiative, which demands that Evangelicals respond to the urgent crisis of global warming "with moral passion and concrete action."

- April 2006: *Time* magazine's special issue on global warming sounds an unequivocal alarm that the Earth is at the tipping point with melting ice, drought, wind, disease, and fire raging out of control. The magazine reports a whopping 85 percent of Americans believe "global warming is probably happening."

The political winds have shifted. The hot question is no longer "is this happening?" but "what do we do now?" That shift is triggering new debates with lots of new sources of contention.

How far can biofuels take us? How about nuclear? Can we get the price of solar low enough to take off? How much wind energy can

we produce and in whose backyard? Does hydrogen make sense or does pursuing it divert us from better solutions? To what degree can energy efficiency solve our problems? And how much can we rely on technology to save us and how much must we change the way we live?

We all need to get smart about those questions because there's going to be plenty of balderdash out there. One way I've found to sort through the arguments is to focus on Energy Returned on Energy Invested (EROEI). It's a ratio that tells how much energy it takes to create the energy we want to use. As the chart on page 39 shows, in the good old days of cheap oil, we got 100 units of usable energy for every 1 unit of energy consumed in retrieving and processing the oil (an EROEI of 100 to 1). At that ratio, from an energy-invested perspective, oil was practically free.

But the ratios have declined dramatically. For oil today, we get less than 10 units of energy for every 1 unit we invest to get it. For ethanol made from some forms of sugarcane and corn, the EROEI may be as low as 0.8 to 1—we get less energy out than we put into making it—clearly a non-solution. Other sources of ethanol (such as cellulose) now yield 6 to 1, but may eventually have an

EROEI as high as 10 to 1. The calculations are tricky, so expect to see different numbers from different sources.

Once you've mastered EROEI, you have to ask how a particular source of energy matches the need it will serve, and what side effects it will bring—especially how it contributes to global warming. Those questions force us to confront the enormous quantity of oil we use every single day. Worldwide use is 85 million barrels, of which the United States uses 21 million. According to one best-case scenario, to supply the current U.S. oil needs with ethanol made from switchgrass (an especially efficient source), we'd have to grow switchgrass on two-thirds of all the farmland in this country.

As the new debates roll forward, we've got to keep our brains turned on and, as usual, discern what's coming from vested interest groups like agro-business giant Archer Daniels Midland, what is politically feasible but may be foolish, and what are real solutions. And, as we face the twin crises of global warming and peak oil, we've got to be willing to face some tough truths about how we need to change the way we live.

The new openness to recognizing the crises before us creates tremendous opportunities for building a more just and sustainable world—opportunities you read about in every issue of *YES!* So, as the new debates heat up, let's all weigh in with courage and smarts for choices that create community, health, and joy.



Fran Korten
Executive Director

Events & Announcements

www.yesmagazine.org

More events at www.YesMagazine.org/events

Sustainable Communities Conference

June 8–10, 2006, Burlington, Vermont. Join the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies to share ideas for building strong local business networks. *YES!* board chair David Korten is a featured speaker. Co-sponsored by *YES!* For more information, go to www.livingeconomies.org/events/conference06.

Southeast Social Forum and Planning Meeting for U.S. Social Forum

June 16–18, 2006, Durham, NC. Making local, state, and regional connections to demonstrate that “another South is possible.” For more information, contact Project South by telephone (404/622-0602) or via email at general-info@projectsouth.org.

World Peace Forum

June 23–28, 2006, Vancouver, British Columbia. Under the banner “Cities and Communities Working Together to End War and Build a Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World,” this forum will promote partnerships between cities and the anti-war and peace communities to end wars and create a world of peace, justice, and sustainability. For more information, visit <http://worldpeaceforum.ca>.

Great Turning

Community events, including lectures and Earth Community Dialogues, in conjunction with the publication of *YES!* co-founder and board chair David Korten's new book, *The Great Turning*. Organized with partner organizations in cities around the country. Visit www.yesmagazine.org/greatturning for details and updates.

May 12–14, Pasadena, California, www.allsaints-pas.org

May 15, San Francisco/Oakland, California, www.globalexchange.org

May 16, Sonoma, California, www.praxispeace.org

May 24, Portland, Oregon, www.livingearthgatherings.org

June 2, Jacksonville, Florida, www.unf.edu/thefloridacenter

June 2, Gainesville, Florida, www.fcpj.org

June 3, Tampa, Florida, www.earthcharter.org

June 8–10, Burlington, Vermont, www.livingeconomies.org

June 12, Philadelphia, www.whitedog.com

June 14, New York City, www.allsoulsnyc.org

June 23–24, St. Louis, www.uujec.org

October 15, Washington, DC, www.greenfestivals.org

November 11, San Francisco, www.greenfestivals.org

National Conference on Dialogue & Deliberation

August 4–6, 2006, San Francisco. Conference for those dedicated to solving group and societal problems using honest talk and collaborative action. Discussion of using graphic and performing arts to magnify dialogue. For more information, visit www.thataway.org.

How to Make Change

New Guide for Movement Building

How can we overcome the fragmentation of our social movements to generate real momentum for change? One way is to bring together social change leaders from diverse movements and backgrounds to develop trust with one another. That is what we at *YES!* did from 1999 to 2004, when we held 10 "State of the Possible" retreats for over 200 leaders.

In a booklet titled *Movement Building for Transformational Change*, Fran Kortzen and Roberto Vargas review lessons from those retreats. They tell of strategies for helping people see the underlying common basis of their work in a large historical context. The booklet can be read on the *YES!* website (www.yesmagazine.org/movementbuilding) and can be ordered on the web or by phone for \$5.00 plus shipping and handling.

—Fran Kortzen

PFN Gains Hawaii Board Member

At our February board meeting, we welcomed Puanani Burgess as our newest board member, and honored the service of Dan Spinner, who retired from our board after serving for three years. Puanani lives in the Wai'anae community of Oahu, where she promotes local, sustainable, economic development. She is board chair of the Women's Institute for Leadership Development in San Francisco. She is currently making use of the visits of our board chair, David Kortzen, to develop an "Earth Community Dialogue" among major stakeholders in Oahu on the island's future.

—FK



Lappé



Jones

Frances Moore Lappé & Van Jones Join *YES!*

Van Jones and Frances Moore Lappé have agreed to join the *YES!* team of contributing editors.

Frankie Lappé has been one of my heroes since I read *Diet for a Small Planet* many years ago. Her most recent book is *Democracy's Edge: Choosing to Save Our Country by Bringing Democracy to Life*.

Van is a more recent hero. He published his first article in *YES!* in 2004 right after the election. He is emerging as a powerful spokesperson for the rights of young people of color targeted by the criminal justice system and for the broader issues of how we work together for a better world.

Find articles by Frankie and Van at www.yesmagazine.org and look for future articles by them in *YES!*

—Sarah van Gelder

Thank you, Lynn and Dee; Welcome, Tracy and Doug

Lynn Brofsky, who first started as art director in 1999, has resigned to focus on her fine arts. We are grateful for her commitment to *YES!*, her skills, and her vision for our magazine. Thanks, Lynn!

Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn, our new art director, designed this issue, and will be bringing her considerable talents to the redesign and relaunch of *YES!* (see below). She brings many years of design and illustration experience, most recently at the *Seattle Times*.

Dee Axelrod, senior editor beginning last fall, left *YES!* to spend more time on art and family.

Join me in welcoming contributing editor Doug Pibel to his new position as managing editor. Doug has been writing for *YES!* almost since its founding. He wrote for "Yes but How?," and covered such issues as democracy, safeguarding the vote, stopping Wal-Marts, and simple living.

—SvG

YES! to Relaunch

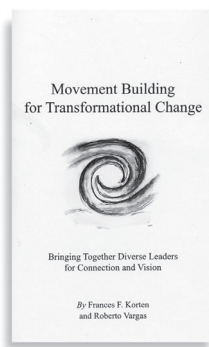
It's been 10 years since we started *YES!* and it's time to relaunch. We're making plans now for some changes in format and design, possibly a new paper stock (although we promise to maintain our exceptionally high recycled-content standards), and some new features. If we can pull it off, you'll see the results in our Fall issue.

—SvG

You've Got Mail

More than 5,000 educators nationwide are getting a monthly dose of *YES!* stories with resources for teaching and learning about justice, sustainability, and peace inside and outside the classroom. The *YES! Education Connection News* helps get students thinking and talking about practical solutions to the problems they hear about every day. The newsletter also links teachers to networks to support them as they bring challenging issues into class. Educators can sign up for the free newsletter at the Education Connection at www.yesmagazine.org. Spread the good news—tell teachers about the *YES! Education Connection News* and help them bring solutions to the next generation.

—Kim Corrigan



Movement Building
for Transformational Change



Bringing Together Diverse Leaders
for Connection and Vision

By Frances F. Kortzen
and Roberto Vargas

Become a *YES!* Dedicated Friend



In 2002, as the U.S. began to gear up for an invasion of Iraq, **Jes Richardson** sprang into action in the hope of preventing another war as disastrous as Vietnam. With the help of some high school students, Jes built a 10-foot tall Gandhi puppet and formed the Gandhi Peace Brigade, which began touring the country calling for peace.

Jes is now gathering signatures for the Children's Petition for World Peace and recruiting people to join him for a summer 2007 tour leading up to a World Wide Candle Lighting Ceremony in India on October 2, 2011, Gandhi's birthday.

Jes was first drawn into political movements in the 1960s by the Vietnam War and the possibility of being drafted. Always an activist, Jes, who lives in California, has participated in actions ranging from support of the United Farm Workers' campaigns during César Chávez's time to opposing the destruction of old-growth forests.

Jes supports *YES!* as a Dedicated Friend because he appreciates the positive images that *YES!* creates in people's minds and the positive influence it has in people's lives.

As a nonprofit organization YES! relies on people like Jes for support. If you would like to become a Dedicated Friend of YES!, just fill out the coupon below and send it in. Or call 800/937-4451 (ask for Ezra), or sign up at www.yesmagazine.org—click on "donate."

Yes! I would like to become a Dedicated Friend of the Positive Futures Network

Your subscription to *YES!* is included when you sign up for a monthly or quarterly donation—

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Searching for simple and practical ways to live sustainably?
Want to be part of the solution? Here are answers to the questions
you're asking about creating a safer world for yourself and your family

Yes! But How?

Sustainable party

I was cleaning up after a recent party and realized that there was a lot of unnecessary waste left over. How can I throw a more environmentally conscious party?

Throwing a sustainable party is easy as long as you plan ahead. Start by sending out invitations via e-mail to save on paper. For a more formal event requiring paper invitations, print on recycled.

Organize carpools or rideshares for your guests or encourage them to use public transportation or bicycles—make it easy by mapping out bike and transit routes to your party.

Instead of using balloons, streamers or other plastic party decora-

tions, use natural objects like seashells, stones, or greenery. Minimize energy use with energy-efficient light bulbs or for a more intimate, candlelit atmosphere scatter nontoxic beeswax tea lights around the room. If giving gifts, choose ones without packaging like movie tickets or gift certificates.

Use reusable dishes, flatware, and other utensils as well as cloth napkins. If you plan to serve beer, get a keg, which will be reused and will cut down on waste from bottled or canned beer. Kegs are usually available in a couple of sizes, and you can ask your guests to pitch in for the cost of a keg rather than bringing their own beer. Each guest should bring their own cup for easy recognition so they won't use a new one each time they fill up.

Buy just enough food for the number of guests you will have. Try to buy only locally grown, organic foods and consider serving food that doesn't need plates. If you have leftovers, store them in reusable containers or donate them to a soup kitchen. Set up labeled recycling containers in a visible and accessible place.

Most importantly, let your guests know about your plans so that they help. Chances are your guests will have other creative ideas for how to keep the event sustainable.

Daina Saib

For more, see youthxchange.e-meta.net/main/dontwasteyourparty.asp
www.bcn.es/agenda21/A21_text/guies/sustainablecelguide.pdf

Grass-fed beef

My friend served "grass-fed beef" at a dinner party the other night, and it was delicious! Can you tell me more about it, and where I can find it?

For those of us who crave the occasional steak, grass-fed beef is a less destructive alternative to conventionally raised meat, which is an environmental threat second only to cars. While most cattle are raised in huge feedlots and fed a diet of grain, antibiotics, and growth hormones, grass-fed cattle are raised on pasture. Grass-fed beef is leaner, has up to four times more "good" fat (omega-3s) and Vitamin E, and is also higher in CLA, a nutrient associated with lower cancer risk. The risk of mad cow disease and E. coli is also significantly reduced.

More than 70 percent of the U.S. grain harvest (mostly corn and soy) is fed to cattle, producing only a pound of beef for every 16 pounds of grain and diverting food resources from the one in six people worldwide who go hungry every day. Grain-based beef production requires huge amounts of water (2,500 gallons per pound of beef) and petroleum-based fertilizers, and is a leading cause of topsoil loss. Livestock waste from feedlots is a major source of air and water pollution. Raising cattle on pasture limits these environmental depredations and spares cattle the health complications that are a product of a grain-heavy diet.

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Send us your questions

editors@yesmagazine.org

Yes! But How? YES! magazine, PO Box 10818 Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Please include your name, address, and an e-mail address or telephone number

Local Harvest is a great online resource for finding locally produced food, including beef. Many small-scale farmers go above and beyond organic standards, yet are not officially certified due to the high cost. A number of online retailers, such as American Grass Fed Beef, offer a wide variety of products and ship directly. On the West Coast, In N' Out Burger and Burgerville use locally raised, grass-fed beef.

A note about labels: "organic" and "grass-fed" are not the same. The USDA organic label requires animals to be antibiotic- and hormone-free and fed an organic diet, but does not guarantee the animals were raised on pasture. Likewise, "grass-fed" doesn't guarantee the beef was produced according to organic standards. Look for labels that say both organic and grass-fed.

Due to the lower fat content, grass-fed beef cooks approximately 30 percent faster.

Elle McPherson

See www.americangrassfedbeef.com and www.localharvest.com

Frequent flyer or ...

I live in Manhattan and often go to Boston for work. The plane is the fastest option, but my daughter came home from school with a calculation of our ecological footprint and it seems like flying makes my feet look huge. Should I go back to driving my car? What's my best option?

Carbon from our frequent flights represents the fastest-growing part of overall emissions. Yet driving your personal vehicle by yourself is not a good alternative as it is the most energy-intensive mode of transport. You're much better off on the train, spending half the energy, or carpooling with three others, which gets you there on a quarter of the energy you use driving alone.

The round-trip commute between

New York and Boston in the average car takes 20 gallons of gas and causes about 400 pounds of carbon emissions. The same trip by air would use 13 gallons of fuel and emit around 250 pounds of CO₂. An important reduction, but climate experts say carbon emissions at high altitudes accumulate in the stratosphere due to low air density and because there is no vegetation to absorb the carbon. The climate effect is much more drastic, so conservative calculations double airplane emissions for a meaningful comparison with other means of transport. This makes the plane the worst possible option. The best options are trains, which produce 180 pounds per passenger (the Europeans have that down to 95 pounds) or buses, which produce only 76 pounds.

Picture this: offsetting the carbon emissions from taking this trip in your own car once a month requires the work of 74 full grown sugar maple trees. Taking the train instead would free 40 trees to clean up other carbon emissions.

You can calculate your carbon emissions in pounds of CO₂ per passenger mile for other trips: for air travel multiply miles by 0.64, then double that number to account for the actual climate effect; for car travel multiply by 0.79–0.97, depending on model; for trains by 0.42; and for overland bus travel by 0.18. Or use a web-based carbon calculator (see below), but remember they don't account for high-altitude effects.

There is also a time and stress factor. Driving the stretch on your own takes about 3.5 hours, and leaves you with no time for reading or working. But taking a plane may

not be better. With a journey lengthened by the trip to the airport, security, check-in, and boarding, the real time for the commute is the same—although you'll get about 30 minutes to read or work. Here the train is the most attractive. It takes the same amount of time but gives you the full trip to do your work or simply unwind on the way home.

One last tip: if you often have meetings outside the town center and no public transport is available from the train station, consider car sharing. This means driving only a fraction of the journey and still being flexible at your destination.

Lilja Otto

Carbon counters on the web include www.safeclimate.net and www.carboncounter.org. Car sharing information by city is at www.carsharing.net.

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Additions to the West Bank separation wall by London-based graffiti artist Banksy. Dialogue reported by Banksy:

Old man: You paint the wall, you make it look beautiful.

Me: Thanks.

Old man: We don't want it to be beautiful, we hate this wall, go home.

More information: <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article4153.shtml> or www.banksy.co.uk/

