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## Stopping Pakistan drone strikes suddenly plausible

By ROBERT NAIMAN, *t r u t h o u t* | Perspective

Until this week, it seemed like the conventional wisdom in Washington was that stopping US drone strikes in Pakistan was outside the bounds of respectable discussion.

That just changed. Or it should have.

Writing in *The Los Angeles Times*, Doyle McManus notes that counterinsurgency guru David Kilcullen has told Congress that US drone strikes in Pakistan are backfiring and should be stopped. Until now, Congress has been reluctant to challenge the drone strikes, as they are reluctant in general to challenge “military strategy,” even when it appears to be causing terrible harm. But as McManus notes, Kilcullen has unimpeachable Pentagon credentials. He served as a top adviser in Iraq to General Petraeus on counterinsurgency, and is credited as having helped design the Iraq “surge.” Now, anyone in Washington who wants to challenge the drone strikes has all the political cover they could reasonably expect.

And what Kilcullen said leaves very little room for creative misinterpretation:

“Since 2006, we’ve killed 14 senior Al Qaeda leaders using drone strikes; in the same time period, we’ve killed 700 Pakistani civilians in the same area. The drone strikes are highly unpopular. They are deeply aggravating to the population. And they’ve given rise to a feeling of anger that coalesces the population around the extremists and leads to spikes of extremism.... The current path that we are on is leading us to loss of Pakistani government control over its

Pakistan drones . . . . .continued p. 8

## 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday June 7, 2009  
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## Survey finds increase in green consumer behavior

**Consumers in India, Brazil Top Index; U.S. Consumers Rank Last**

WASHINGTON—In their second annual survey to measure and monitor consumer behaviors that have an impact on the environment, the National Geographic Society and the international polling firm GlobeScan have found an increase in environmentally friendly consumer behavior in 13 of the 14 countries that were surveyed in both 2008 and 2009. Released today, “Greendex™ 2009: Consumer Choice and the Environment — A Worldwide Tracking Survey” is a comprehensive measure of consumer behavior in 65 areas relating to housing, transportation, food and consumer goods. Greendex 2009 ranks average consumers in 17 countries — up from 14 in 2008 — according to the environmental

impact of their discretionary and nondiscretionary consumption patterns.

Like last year, the top-scoring consumers of 2009 are in the developing economies of India, Brazil and China; American and Canadian consumers again score lowest. Consumers registering the best year-on-year improvement in environmentally sustainable consumer behavior are the Spanish, Germans, French and Australians, while Russians and Mexicans show the smallest increase. Brazilians are the only consumers measured in both 2008 and 2009 to show a decrease in their Greendex score.

Much of the increase in the overall 2009 Greendex scores

Green consumers . . . . .continued p. 8

# 27th Annual Peace Camp June 26, 27, and 28, 2009



Camp Peaceful Pines  
near Pinecrest, California



## Registration Form

Early Registration Deadline: **June 1, 2009**

### Adults (age 18 and older)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_ City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Total x \$70 ----- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Youth (ages 4 -17)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Total x \$50 ----- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Infant (ages 0 - 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ **NO CHARGE**

Early registration discount by June 1: subtract \$10 per person \_\_\_\_\_ (-) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I need vegetarian meals \_\_\_\_\_ Voluntary Donation for scholarships \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special Health needs, allergies, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs for cabin assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

I can offer/need a ride Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:  
 Modesto Peace Life Center  
 P.O. Box 134  
 Modesto, CA 95353

**There is an additional \$15 fee for each person who comes to camp without pre-registration.**

### Parent authorization for minor children (must be signed if applicable)

I give permission for decisions to be made in my absence about the need for medical care. I give permission for my child to be treated by a physician or hospital in case of an emergency. I understand and agree that the Modesto Peace/Life Center is not responsible for my child/children. I will not hold the Modesto Peace Life Center, its officers or leaders liable for medical aid rendered.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: *If adults bring children not their own, the parent/legal guardian of those children must complete and sign a separate parent authorization.*

For camp information and scholarship availability:  
 Call Ken Schroeder, (209) 526-2303.

## Come to Peace Camp!

Join us on June 26-28 for Peace Camp at Camp Peaceful Pines for good discussion, stimulating community and fun for people of all ages. The weekend will offer workshops, hiking, campfire, singing, a talent show, children's activities and delicious, healthy meals.

This year's camp will feature community organizer Homero Mejia leading a session on "Organizing to Win Health Care for All." He will help us understand the issues and strategies behind the campaign to achieve health care for all. Also presenting will be students from Modesto High School, who will discuss local student activism, including organizing Project Ecuador to fund the building of a school in that country.

Camp Peaceful Pines is located about 25 miles above Pinecrest off Hwy 108 on the Clark Fork of the Stanislaus River. The camp features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents (unheated) and a cabin for those with special needs. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work. Families and individuals are welcome.

The \$70 fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Young people are \$50. *Early registration, by June 1st, entitles registrants to a \$10.00 per person discount.* Partial financial aid and day-rates are also available. Registration forms and further information are available at [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org).

The camp opens with supper on Friday the 26th and closes at noon on Sunday. Directions and other information will be mailed to participants before camp. Information: Ken Schroeder, 209-526-2303, [kschroeder70@yahoo.com](mailto:kschroeder70@yahoo.com)

Peace Camp is organized by the Modesto Peace/Life Center.

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Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

# Remembering Paul Illick

By JERRY JACKMAN

Paul Illick, who died last month, was born in January 1921 to missionary parents in China. He experienced a unique childhood. After watching the Steven Spielberg movie about China during the chaos prior to World War II Paul said, "I could have been that boy." He claimed to have known Pearl Buck, author of *The Good Earth*. The family left Nanking in 1936. Paul graduated from Cornell University and came to Modesto in 1943 as a conscientious objector (C.O.) working in a hospital until after the war. In the late 40s Paul was among the group of C.O.s who formed Wolverine, a company which built and sold houses and swimming pools. Riding around town Paul would proudly point out houses he helped build. [Ed. note: Wolverine was instrumental in fighting discrimination in housing in Stanislaus County. Several of its members were key participants in the forming of the Modesto Peace Life Center.]

Fred C. Beyer, County Superintendent of Schools, hired Paul in 1956. After several years at County Center 3 as Assistant Audio-visual Director, Paul applied for the sole teaching position in La Grange. After three years, Paul was lured to Stanislaus Union School by higher wages and a much shorter commute. A few years later his reputation at La Grange resulted in him being rehired at a substantially increased salary. He continued teaching there for 17 years. Paul was a born teacher and a lover of nature. I first knew him as "the pigeon man" because we both lived on Robertson Road in West Modesto and he maintained a flock of roller pigeons.

After retirement, Paul kept his immaculate little home at the west end of Robertson Road until it became too difficult to maintain the large yard, garden and birds. The garage, which contained his kayak, sports car, and workbench, was actually larger than the living quarters! He moved to a town-



house across town and continued to raise doves and golden pheasant. In early January 1997, I phoned Paul to report that the raging Tuolumne River was about to flood the garage of his former home. He said, "No kidding! I'll have to get on my bike and ride along there to take some pictures." He was 76 at the time, but Paul would have said 77 because he followed the Chinese custom of including 9 months for gestation!

Paul was a member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and for years also attended the College Avenue Congregational Church. Paul liked organ music and played the organ. Paul retained his antiwar sentiments and participated in Modesto Peace-Life Center events. An avid hiker, backpacker, and nature photographer, he was an early member of the Audubon Society, Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club, and the Native Plant Society. It was Paul's idea that the three groups should merge their newsletters to form the *Valley Habitat* newsletter. For many years Paul showed impressive slides at the Yokuts January "show us your best shots" program meeting.

He remained lean and hardy but reluctantly gave up backpacking and the more demanding day hikes.

Five years ago he invited my wife, Sandy Wilson, and me to hike to a ledge overlooking Tulloch Lake where he had once photographed eagles in their nest. We were impressed at how he scrambled up the steep mountain and, on hands and knees, found the narrow ledge where the nest had been. But this time there was no nest although vultures circled in the sky above us.

In recent years, Paul noted the loss of his senses of taste, smell, hearing, and vision. He gave up driving and moved to Samaritan Village in Hughson. He enjoyed his new neighbors and the facilities, and crammed way too many books and mementos into his apartment. Felled by a stroke, he was scarcely recognizable as the extraordinarily virile man that we had known. His voice was just a whisper when I asked him if he thought it was about time for chicks to hatch on that rocky ledge. "Yes" he said. Paul was 88. He would say 89.

# The whys of Single Payer

By DAVID HIMMELSTEIN, M.D.

*The following contains the testimony of Dr. David Himmelstein at a hearing organized by Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor on April 23, 2009 in Washington.*

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. My name is David Himmelstein. I am a primary care doctor in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and associate professor of medicine at Harvard. I also serve as national spokesperson for Physicians for a National Health Program. Our 16,000 physician members support nonprofit, single-payer national health insurance because of overwhelming evidence that lesser reforms will fail.

Health reform must address the cost crisis for insured as well as uninsured Americans. My research group found that illness and medical bills contributed to about half of all personal bankruptcies in 2001, and even more than that in 2007. Strikingly, three-quarters of the medically bankrupt were insured. But their coverage was too skimpy to protect them from financial collapse.

A single-payer reform would make care affordable through vast savings on bureaucracy and profits. As my colleagues and I have shown in research published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, administration consumes 31 percent of health spending in the United States, nearly double what Canada spends. In other words, if we cut our bureaucratic costs to Canadian levels, we'd save nearly \$400 billion annually more than enough to cover the uninsured and to eliminate co-payments and deductibles for all Americans.

By simplifying its payment system, Canada has cut insurance overhead to 1 percent of premiums one-twentieth of Aetna's overhead and eliminated mounds of expensive paperwork for doctors and hospitals. In fact, while cutting insurance overhead could save us \$131 billion annually, our insurers waste much more than that because of the useless paperwork they inflict on doctors and hospitals.

A Canadian hospital gets paid like a fire department does in the U.S. It negotiates a global budget with the single insurance plan in its province, and gets one check each month that covers virtually all costs. They don't have to bill for each Band-Aid and aspirin tablet. At my hospital, we know our budget on January 1, but we collect it piecemeal in fights with hundreds of insurers over thousands of bills each day. The result is that hundreds of people work for Mass General's billing department, while Toronto General employs only a handful mostly to send bills to Americans who wander across the border. Altogether, U.S. hospitals could save about \$120 billion annually on bureaucracy under a single payer system.

And doctors in the U.S. waste about \$95 billion each year fighting with insurance companies and filling out useless paperwork.

Significantly, these massive potential savings on bureaucracy can only be achieved through a single payer reform. A health reform plan that includes a public plan option might

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## What's my soil type and why do I need to know

By ANNE SCHELLMAN, Horticulture Program Representative, UCCE-Stanislaus County

Understanding the relationship between soil and plants can help you solve some of the mysteries related to plant death and decline. Many people feel their plants grow poorly because they have "bad" soil, when in reality their watering practices should be examined. If you have a sandy soil, you will need to water more often. For clay soils, water is held longer and watering should not be done as often.

To find out your soil type, try doing this simple home test.



Step 1-Take a handful of soil, moisten it lightly and squeeze it in your hand. If the soil forms a cast of your hand that breaks when handled, you have a loamy-sand textured soil. If not, go to step 2.



Step 2-Roll the soil between your hands to form a "ribbon" that extends over your hand. If the ribbon breaks at about 1/2" or less, your soil is most likely loam. If it doesn't break, go to step 3.



Step 3-If you can extend the ribbon to at least 3/4" and it breaks, your soil is clay loam.



Step 4-If the soil ribbon continues to extend to at least 1" long, your soil is composed mostly of clay.

There are actually a total of twelve soil textures, but determining if your soil is close to one of the four types will help you to understand its water and nutrient holding capacity.

### Loamy Sand

Sandy textured soils are the first to warm up to optimal temperatures for spring planting, which may give gardeners a few days advantage in the growing season. Sandy soils have large particles, and large pore (air) spaces. Water and nutrients move through these soils readily, so will need to be added more often than in other soils. The addition of compost allows the soil to hold onto both nutrients and water for a longer period of time.

### Loam

Loam soils contain about 5-10% organic matter and pro-

vide an excellent mixture of sand, silt and clay for gardening. This soil holds onto both water and nutrients well, but can still benefit from the addition of compost.

### Clay Loam

Clay-based soils hold onto water and nutrients longer than sandy soils. Clay soils have smaller particles and so water, air and nutrients do not travel through the smaller pore spaces as quickly. The addition of compost for this soil will help this soil type drain better.

### Clay

Clay soil has very small particles, so the air spaces in the soil are small too. This means the movement of water, air and nutrients is limited. Clay soils greatly benefit from the addition of compost, which will need to be done each season before planting new vegetables.

### Adding Organic Material to your Soil

Compost is a form of organic matter that has gone through a decomposition process. Never add fresh manure, straw or other non-decomposed materials to your garden soil immediately before planting, as it will tie up nutrients and make them unavailable for a time to your plants. Fresh manure may also contain excessive salts that can "burn" plant roots.

### Is My Soil Compacted?

Many times garden soil is compacted from the heavy machinery used during home construction. Soil may also become compacted when it is wet and then tilled by hand or machine. Working wet soil destroys soil structure by collapsing air spaces, causing dense clods which make water penetration and planting more difficult.

### When is My Soil Ready for Tilling?

Wait until the soil is moist but not too wet before tilling. Pick up a handful of soil and roll it into a ball in your hand. If the ball crumbles when it hits the ground, you can start tilling your soil.

### Should I Add Gypsum?

Many gardeners believe the addition of gypsum, a common soil amendment will improve the drainage of their soil. However, the addition of gypsum does not improve drainage in physically compacted or heavy clay soils. The better choice of soil amendment is (yes, you guessed it) compost.

**INFORMATION:** Email the author at [aschellman@ucdavis.edu](mailto:aschellman@ucdavis.edu), University of California Cooperative Extension, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Suite A, Modesto, CA 95358, (209) 525-6800.

## Water wars pose major world crisis

By DONNA PHILLIPS and TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

"I'm thirsty, the young boy said, awakening from sleep. This common statement inspired the boy's father, Sam Bozzo, to move forward on his ambitious documentary film, *Blue Gold: World Water Wars*, based on the groundbreaking book by Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, even though his financial sponsor pulled out that same day.

The film synopsis states, "Wars of the future will be fought over water, as they are today over oil, as the source of all life enters the global marketplace and political arena. Corporate giants, private investors, and corrupt governments vie for control of our dwindling fresh water supply, prompting protests, lawsuits, and revolutions from citizens fighting for the right to survive. Past civilizations have collapsed from poor water management. Can the human race survive?"

Because water is a vital issue that that affects each one of us worldwide, screen writer Bozzo, who usually researches facts from a distance, felt compelled to go it alone to document water related horrors already exiting on the planet. He made this film because while Global Warming is an issue of 'how' we live, the water crisis is an issue of 'if' we live.

The film was made to educate, inspire and stir each one of us to do what we can to help. The Salt Lake Tribune wrote, "Unlike many other films that simply drown an audience with hopelessness, *Blue Gold* actually has some ideas that will work to help the world avoid an epidemic..."

*Blue Gold* has exposed corporate giants, who forced developing countries to privatize their water supply for profit. The resulting military control of water aided by corrupt governments, who are willing to use water for economic and political gain, creates the formation of a new geopolitical map and power structure, setting the stage for world water wars.

**ACTION:** Bozzo outlined his film's urgent message at a recent talk, pointing out the need to become aware of what is happening with the global water supply and to act locally to deal with it.

He suggests the use of terraced land in mountainous terrain to catch rain as an alternative to allowing run off into rivers and oceans. He promotes legislation to protect our waterways, and encourages people to connect with Food and Water Watch, an organization that conducts letter-writing campaigns to people who make water and land use policy.

Order this award winning PBS documentary from [www.bluegold-worldwaterwars.com](http://www.bluegold-worldwaterwars.com). Learn more about the issue and express interest in seeing the movie come to local film venues.



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# Rivers of Birds, Forests of Tules: Central Valley Nature & Culture in Season

By Lillian Vallee

## 56. River of Rebellion

We are standing in the cool shade of venerable cottonwoods and oaks in Caswell State Park. Tall nettles, golden currant and blackberry crowd the prickly understory and wild grape tendrils reach for sunlight in the dense growth of a riparian gallery forest. My companion, Tamara Glanzer, marvels at the jungle lushness in the Central Valley heat: "So much for the image of the Valley as a desert," she says.

We are here to visit the river and to find a historical marker. One hundred and eighty years ago, almost to the day, on balmy May days like the ones we are enjoying now, a Yokut Indian named Cucunuchi (baptized as Estanislao in Mission San Jose by the president and prefect of all the missions, Padre Narciso Duran) staged a rebellion on a bank of the river that later came to bear his name: *Rio Estanislao* or the Stanislaus River.

Few of us spend any time thinking about why our county is the only California county named after an Indian leader, equal in stature and magnetism, some scholars say, to leaders such as Tecumseh or Pontiac. Estanislao had made such a powerful impression on the Mexican soldiers sent to flush him out of his forest stronghold that they began to refer to the river and the surrounding area, with some trepidation, as "the territory of Estanislao."

It is difficult to imagine the merciless speed with which history struck California Indian communities in our area. A mere two decades before the battles on the Stanislaus, Gabriel Moraga had been the first white explorer, and he renamed the river (known as the Laquisamne to the Yokuts who lived there) after Our Lady of Guadalupe. Two decades after the rebellion against the Mexican military in 1829 came the Gold

Rush. The course of events is heartrending. Local journalist-historian Thorne Gray concluded the preface to his meticulous account with these words: "Future scholars and writers will finish this task. If some of them are natives, they will tell this story better than I. May we then cry together."

In Modesto we are reminded of a long struggle whenever we pass Betty Saletta's sculpture of Estanislao outside the Stanislaus County Courthouse. The figure's expression is grave; his hand is extended in a gesture calculated to stop, to fend off, to protest, or perhaps simply to make us consider why he has reappeared on a site devoted to matters of justice.

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**It is difficult to imagine the  
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history struck California Indian  
communities in our area.**

The Mexican army needed three forays into Estanislao's territory to dislodge insurgents. A young ensign, Mariano Vallejo, parlayed the third sortie into a career-maker in spite of having killed old women and removed children for distribution as servants and slaves. Mexican authorities in California feared that Estanislao would stage a major uprising against the entire mission system undergoing a half-hearted secularization. Estanislao would have understood that the Indians were not going to be given back the rich mission lands they had labored on and been promised. As chief producers of the hides and tallow, the currency of the day, the missions continued to support the presidios and regional governments.

Estanislao was educated by Padre Duran, whom Captain August Duhaut-Cilly describes in 1827: "...no soul ever held less joy than that of Fray Narciso." The date may have had something to do with it. Under pretext of a visit to his home place, the esteemed Estanislao defects and takes 400 neophytes with him, a move deeply distressing to Duran.

Duhaut-Cilly reports that during his visit, Fray Duran predicted the end of the world, and in some ways he was right. The mission system met its end in 1831 with the ouster of Governor Manuel Victoria, "a vigorous opponent of secularization." California was in turmoil, but the native populations continued to lose ground no matter what they did: they could convert or run, intermarry or not, conform or rebel. The land/resource grab was on and philosophy became its handmaiden.

Estanislao would have witnessed nightmarish scenes: an inhumane work regimen, severe punishments meted out for disobedience, hangings, poor nutrition, and

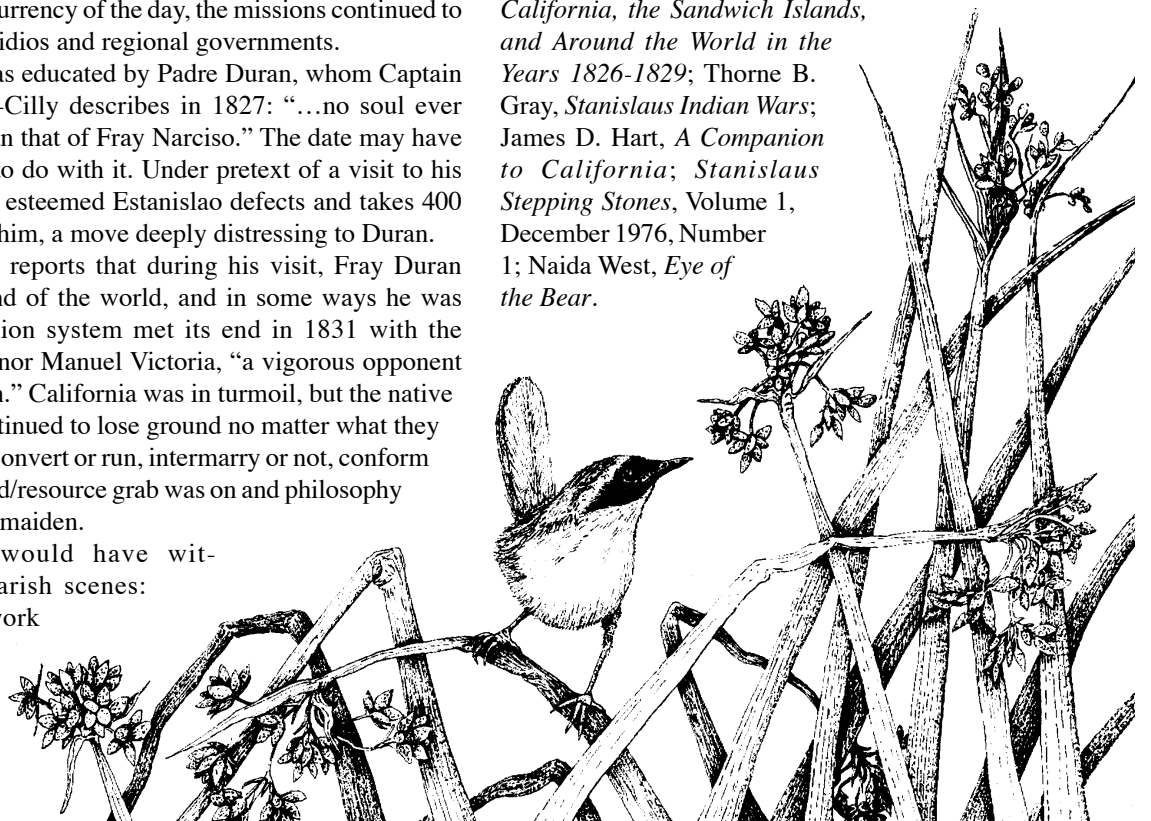
disease decimating his community (and his two children). As an *alcalde*, an overseer and person of authority at the mission, he would have been in charge of enforcing mission rules and timetables among his people. It was not unusual for *alcaldes*, well-versed in the workings of the mission and the military, to become leaders of insurgencies when Indians rebelled at various missions or fled to the interior, to *el valle de los tulares*, the impassable tule marshes covering four million acres of the Central Valley. Valley Indians had a reputation for troublemaking and "insolence."

Estanislao's fortifications on the Stanislaus were brought down with the tool of New World conquistadors: fire. Cortez had burned the aviaries of Tenochtitlan to demoralize the Aztecs, and Vallejo set fire to the riverine jungle of the Laquisamne.

Estanislao was never captured; he returned to the mission and gained pardon from the embattled Governor Echeandia, "the first governor of California under the Mexican republican constitution," who lasted exactly four years (1825-1829). Not only were the Indians "restive" during his short tenure, so were his unpaid soldiers in Monterey. He resigned, profoundly discouraged.

Back at Caswell, we run into State Park Ranger Michael Whelan making his rounds. He informs us that the plaque we are looking for has been stolen and probably recycled for cash. He is kind enough to make us a color copy of a photo with the inscription. The heavy rock to which the plaque was bolted is still there, however; on it we leave a mugwort leaf, bitter herb said to dispel bad spirits.

**Sources:** Walton Bean & James Rawls, *California: An Interpretive History*; August Duhaut-Cilly, *A Voyage to California, the Sandwich Islands, and Around the World in the Years 1826-1829*; Thorne B. Gray, *Stanislaus Indian Wars*; James D. Hart, *A Companion to California*; *Stanislaus Stepping Stones*, Volume 1, December 1976, Number 1; Naida West, *Eye of the Bear*.



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Oak Valley Medical Building  
1425 West "H" St.  
pflagoakdale@dishmail.net

# A story of a Jewish escape

By FRED HERMAN

*The author delivered these thoughts at the annual May 20 Day of Respect, at which people from diverse minorities told their own stories to classes of high school students.*

It hits me as a very old person, three years older than dirt and two years younger than god, that I'm chatting with folks who weren't around in 1990 when the Berlin Wall came down and the so-called Evil Empire collapsed. Wow! Do ask questions...

You may need a bit of history and a bit of geography. The geography is easy. The city of Danzig, where I was born, once was part of the Hanseatic League of Baltic seaports. (My school taught the Hanseatic League, algebra and a foreign language in the second grade.) After Germany lost World War I, the winners made Danzig a free city, run by the League of Nations as a port for Germany, and Poland, which had no other outlet to the sea.

The history is a bit tougher; history has no beginning and no end. When Germany lost World War I, the winners demanded crushing reparations. Inflation resulted — my dad spoke of buying a loaf of bread with a wheelbarrow of money. So people looked for someone to blame. This dynamic is hardly new. It happens here too. The time was right for prophets and scapegoats. A wild-eyed orator named Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist Party (Nazis for short) rediscovered the Jews.

Hitler saw a pure blond, blue-eyed Germany running the world. Invading Danzig, not Poland, began World War II. And when Germany lost World War II, Danzig went to Poland and was renamed Gdansk, which became the birthplace of the Polish Solidarity labor movement.

Legally Danzig and Germany were separate. This counted in World War II America. Our Bay Area German friends had to turn in guns, cameras, radios and binoculars, be home at 9 p.m., and avoid some parts of San Francisco. No such limits on us, refugees from a conquered land, But that was 1942 America. In 1938, Germany and Danzig were one in spirit. Imagine making an independent nation of San Francisco.

Traditionally when something goes wrong, Europeans blame someone, preferably a minority. That's not unknown in the United States, either. When jobs were scarce in earlier depressions, we blamed Irish, or Italians, or newly free African slaves. Today it's people from south of the Rio Grande trying to feed their niños, and Asians whose land was wrecked by a war called Vietnam. Germany's Jewish people were an easy target. They stood out, looked *a bit* different, dressed *a bit* different, spoke *a bit* different and had money when others did not. They had a study ethic — pay attention! — and succeeded at what they were allowed to do.

It was a race thing, not a religion thing. My mother's dad

was a rabbi, but I doubt I was in a temple more than twice in my first eight years, then only for bar mitzvahs. We were *not* religious. I have a vivid image of a little boy — me! — in short pants and almost home from school. A storm trooper in full regalia — helmet, billy club, gun, uniform with swastika armband, boots up to the knees — suddenly looms and hollers "Are you a Jew?" I'm scared out of my wits! I'd heard of these guys beating people, I didn't know *how* to reply. I surely wasn't one *religiously*. Probably not what he had in mind. I stammered something about not knowing, or not understanding the question, and ran home.

After *Schindler's List* ovens and its terrors, that seems like small stuff. But it scared the bejeebers out of this kid, and surely left scars. So 70+ years ago I learned firsthand about the racism that results when one people disrespects another.

My lawyer father often opposed Nazis in Danzig's courts. Between that and hatred reaching fever pitch in the Reich next door, it took no crystal ball to see the future. We did plan to emigrate to America one day. Still, it was a shock when a stranger, like in a scene from "Amadeus," came to the door on a Friday and said, "I saw your name on a list. They'll come for you on Monday." So we left on Saturday. Some stuff had been sent off. More was left behind. We crossed the Polish Corridor and the Reich by train into Belgium, arriving on Sunday night. I've Googled maps of Belgium and can no longer find the frontier village just west of Germany, but a customs guy told us "sorry, but the USA now wants visas for children."

I still don't understand the fine points, but someone had to re-enter Germany on the day the police were due in Danzig. Mother, whose life had been about tea parties and summer homes, volunteered. As an eight-year-old, I was not fully aware of all that went on, but a tense day ended at dusk as the Aachen train brought back mom, kiddie visas in hand. Any problems? I don't know. To her credit, she never said - in my presence, anyway.

We continued to Antwerp and found our ship to the promised land - a swastika fluttering on its smoke stack. But there were no complications, just stress, big time.

Most Jews planned ahead and got out of Danzig. But all traces of them are now gone. When we visited 10 years ago, no one even knew where the temple or the Jewish school were. Recently, a touring museum exhibit about Danzig toured California. It included a clipping about the last load of refugee kids sent to the British countryside - my cousin among them - and a group picture of my school. If you looked closely, you saw me in the second row.



Expulsion of Polish civilians by the Nazis, 1939.

I want questions and comments. Nothing happens until ideas flow in two directions. But if someone asks about the Holocaust, I'll have no first-hand insight. Six million people murdered in a so-called Final Solution, the official Nazi plan to wipe all Jews off the earth. But the nearest I personally came to losing any close relatives was two who fled, an uncle to Shanghai and an aunt to the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius.

I don't really come from dysfunctional parents; they functioned very well for nineteenth century Europe. The trouble was, this was twentieth century America, and when *they* didn't adapt, their kids were tagged as different. Mom was the typical displaced person, a caricature refugee. She nagged my dad but never complained to me. She did not plan on a life running a boarding house. Did she blame dad or Hitler? I often wish we had communicated more, but you did not lay things like that on your kids. Other times I'm glad I didn't know.

Any anti-Semitism, irrational hatred of things Jewish, in America? My family felt its existence, but besides not getting invited to the best parties and maybe feeling racism from the father of a girl I worshiped in the eleventh grade, I didn't. In my senior year at progressive Berkeley High, young refugees from Germany included the student body president and secretary, class president, yell leader, editor of the paper and a star athlete.

So what do we learn from all this? A law professor pal talks about "slippery slopes." Such as making ethnic jokes or disrespecting people for their looks, their likes and their language. First government allows it, then makes it law, and then it becomes easy to put people into ovens.

A few years ago I rode on a Fourth of July float in downtown Modesto. My job was to keep a five-year-old from falling off the truck. That kid may be here with us now. He yelled my lesson to spectators in four words: "Be nice to people!"



"Gdansk: location." Online Map/Still. Britannica Student Encyclopedia. 17 May 2009 <<http://student.britannica.com/eb/art-54822>>.



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# Torture

By JOHN CORY, *truthout* | Perspective

*They say that the first casualty of war is truth, but they are wrong. The first casualty of war - is reality. In war, the unreal becomes real and the lie becomes truth.*

- John Cory

On Tuesday evening, I watched Anderson Cooper and Bill O'Reilly utter the same euphemism for torture. "Harsh" techniques, they said. And then, to each of their guests they posed the question of whether or not these "harsh interrogation techniques" worked and shouldn't that be an important part of judging their merit? I felt dirty just listening to them.

Harsh interrogation techniques, coercive tactics, enhanced techniques - these are the rebranding tools for torture. In order to avoid turning our eyes away or burying our heads in the sand, we grab politically acceptable words and terms to diminish the sting and shame of actual torture, so we can brag about being a moral society open to the discussion of stressful questioning of enemy combatants. Sterile words remove us from the very real sins of torturing human beings. And the more we become adept at anesthetic language, the easier it becomes to talk without vomiting when we speak our sins aloud. The easier it becomes to torture. The easier it becomes to maintain the nobility of torture as a tool of patriotism.

The talking heads on television now preen and prep to define reality. Torture is not the issue, they say. The politics of torture is the issue and that is the shiny object we should all be focused on. This is political. Right versus left, not right versus wrong.

The Republicans tell us that torture is legal if the Justice Department and the president say it is. Nixon said if the president does it, it is not illegal. But the ensuing investigations and judgments proved him wrong. This time around, the president generated supportive judicial opinions, so that everyone could wave a paper in America's face and say, "See, it's all legal. The Justice Department says so. It is not torture in the strictest legal definition because there is no organ failure or death. God bless America. Amen."

If torture (harsh interrogation) works - why does it take 183 times to get results? Does it wear off after the first five times? Like a bad inoculation? Or did the prisoner just forget the question while he was choking to death and so you had to keep repeating everything?

Republicans and FOX News tell me that President Obama has disgraced and endangered America by smiling and shaking hands with Hugo Chavez, a particularly despicable character. But incorporating the practices of the KGB and Communist China in our interrogation of enemy combatants is the American thing to do. We hate the Evildoers of the world except for those wonderfully effective torture techniques they use.

They tell us that torture is the only way to avoid another 9/11. Haven't we kept America safe since that awful day? Thanks to torture, no one has attacked us since. Never mind that we didn't pay attention to the threat previously, or that



we lost focus because the warnings came from Clinton and he was not a real President. Or that Richard Clarke and others shouted about their hair being on fire over the possibility of an attack. No one could have imagined such a thing. No one. Except of course the people who put it in memos that were ignored.

But that was the past and this is the present. Do not look back in anger. Look to the future. Torture is the only way to protect us, to keep us safe. Torture will teach them not to dare think of another attack. It is revenge for what the Evildoers have wrought upon democracy, but even more importantly, it is the sword of justice that will lay waste to our enemies.

We are all Jack Bauer now. The ticking time bomb is out there and we need torture to save America. The threat is imminent. Be afraid. Be very afraid.



Voices intone the gravity of having released these memos authorizing torture that now tell the enemy what to expect and how to defend themselves against these "harsh" techniques. But these warnings and complaints come from the same men who willing revealed the identity of a covert CIA agent for political gain, an agent who was protecting America.

For 60 years, America has denounced the torture tactics of our enemies as being criminal. From WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam to the Iraq War, torture was evil. We invaded Iraq and overthrew Saddam because he was evil and tortured his people. We denounced the torture of POWs in Hanoi and pointed out that torture only served a propaganda purpose. And now, we say torture is not torture because we do it humanely. If America tortures, it is not the same as Communists and tyrants and Islamic fundamentalists. There is good torture and bad torture. America defines the difference.

And so, the great talking heads and pundits of the media village will inoculate us against guilt and anger by explaining the game of politics and morality. The game of semantics will numb our indignation if we just listen to their soothing voices in the darkness that has become America. They will calm our troubled hearts. They will ease our pain and whisper the words we so desperately want to hear, "There, there, you are America. You are good. You are special. You do not torture. You simply protect us from the monsters under the bed. Hush now, don't look in the mirror; just close your eyes and everything will be all right."

*John Cory is a Vietnam veteran. He received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star with V device, 1969 - 1970.*

<http://www.truthout.org/042409J> Friday 24 April 2009

# Getting a death grip on memory

By NORMAN SOLOMON

A headline in the New York Times announced a few days ago: "Brain Researchers Open Door to Editing Memory." This news ran above the fold on the front page.

"Suppose scientists could erase certain memories by tinkering with a single substance in the brain," the article began. Readers quickly learned that it's starting to happen: "Researchers in Brooklyn have recently accomplished comparable feats, with a single dose of an experimental drug delivered to areas of the brain critical for holding specific types of memory..."

Big deal.

American media outlets have been pulling off such feats for a long time.

The scientists trying to learn how to wipe out "specific types of memory" are lagging way behind.

Don't need to remember the vast quantities of napalm, Agent Orange and cluster bombs that the U.S. military dropped on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in the 1960s and 1970s? Or the continuing realities of burn victims, dioxin poisoning and unexploded warheads?

Don't want to consider the many thousands of civilians killed by Salvadoran death squads, Guatemalan troops and Nicaraguan contra guerillas during the 1980s, courtesy of U.S. taxpayers?

Don't care to recall the Pentagon's estimate that the Gulf War in early 1991 killed 100,000 Iraqi people during a six-week period?

Forget about it! That's what selective memory is for.

Prefer not to recollect how the U.S. government trained and armed President Reagan's beloved "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan -- including the likes of Osama bin Laden and other fundamentalist mujahedeen -- for their insurgency against the Soviet occupiers in the 1980s? Rather not remember how those "freedom fighters" became "terrorists"?

Hate that particular gray? Then wash it away!

Enough bleach in the spin cycles will do the trick. There's more than one way to be "editing memory."

"So far, the research has been done only on animals," the Times reported in its April 6 story. "But scientists say this memory system is likely to work almost identically in people."

The Times account managed to balance enthusiasm for the advances of scientific research with some potential downsides: "Millions of people might be tempted to erase a severely painful memory, for instance -- but what if, in the process, they lost other, personally important memories that were somehow related?"

Dominant media have blotted out countless painful memories -- national or personal -- if only by treating them as irrelevant or incidental to news and concerns that really count. All in a day's work: part of the mix of organized forgetting.

"The greatest triumphs of propaganda have been accomplished, not by doing something, but by refraining from doing," Aldous Huxley observed. "Great is truth, but still greater, from a practical point of view, is silence about truth." And, of equal relevance to the brave new world of U.S. mass media in 2009: "The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human."

With constant media prompts, the widely replicated screens end up screening us, from ourselves and from each other.

Now we know the names of the Pentagon's drones -- Predators and Reapers -- but not the names of the people they're killing.

Easy enough to approve of bombing people when they've been rendered unreal. Forgetting becomes a simple matter.

Is some memory not worth remembering? Of course, we could always let the market decide.

*Norman Solomon is a journalist, historian, and progressive activist. His book "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death" has been adapted into a documentary film of the same name. His most recent book is "Made Love, Got War." He is a national co-chair of the Healthcare NOT Warfare campaign.*

URL: <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2009/04/09>

## Increase in green consumer behavior

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was due to improvement within the category of housing, where the Greendex measures the energy and resources consumed by people's homes. Changes within the categories of personal transportation, food and consumer goods were mixed, some up, some down. The results show that both cost considerations and environmental concerns were motivators in consumers adopting more environmentally sustainable behavior over the past year.

First conducted in 2008, the Greendex survey was expanded in 2009, with the addition of Argentina, South Korea and Sweden to Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Spain and the United States. Seventeen thousand consumers were polled online (1,000 in each country), answering questions that measured their behavior in the areas of housing, transportation, food and consumption of goods. Each respondent earned a score reflecting the environmental impact of his or her consumption patterns within each of these four categories, and four corresponding "sub-indices" were created. Consumers were then assigned an overall Greendex score (a measure of the relative environmental sustainability of their consumption patterns) out of 100, based on their performance within the four sub-indices. By comparing this year's scores with the previous year, changes in environmentally sustainable consumption at both the global level and within countries can be monitored.

Consumption as measured by the Greendex is determined both by the choices consumers actively make — such as repairing rather than replacing items, using cold water to wash laundry, choosing green products rather than environmentally unfriendly ones — and choices that are controlled more by their circumstances — such as the climate they live in or the availability of green products or public transport. The initiative considers both of these types of factors, with 60 percent of the 65-variable index based on choice or discretionary behavior.

### Findings

Consumers in all 14 countries surveyed in both 2008 and 2009 show an increase in their

Greendex scores this year, except those in Brazil, whose slight decrease dropped them from first to second place.

### Greendex Overall Scores

Consumers	2009	2008
Indians (1)	59.5	58.0
Brazilians (2)	57.3	58.6
Chinese (3)	56.7	55.2
Argentineans (4)	54.7	NA
South Koreans (4)	54.6	NA
Mexicans (6)	53.8	52.7
Hungarians (7)	53.3	51.7
Russians (8)	52.0	51.1
Spanish (9)	51.4	48.0
Germans (10)	51.1	48.1
Swedes (10)	51.1	NA
Australians (12)	50.5	47.8
French (13)	49.5	46.5

British (13)	49.4	48.2
Japanese (13)	49.3	47.4
Canadians (16)	47.5	46.3
Americans (17)	43.7	42.4

Not surprisingly, respondents in most countries named the economy as their No. 1 national issue, much more so than in 2008. But the results indicate that economic troubles may have worked to the environment's advantage in a number of instances: Among those who reported that they reduced energy consumption at home over the past year, some 80 percent say that cost was one of the top two reasons they did so. And of those who say they reduced their consumption of fuel for motorized vehicles in the past year, nearly three-quarters cite cost as one of their top two reasons. Furthermore, majorities in four countries — Argentineans, Mexicans, South Koreans and Chinese — said that high fuel prices motivated them to change their transportation habits permanently.

"Interestingly, the economic upheaval appears to have had a silver lining for the environment," said Terry Garcia, National Geographic's executive vice president, Mission Programs. "But will positive behavior changes survive when an economic recovery starts? We hope the green behaviors that consumers are adopting now to cut costs will become part of their permanent lifestyles and that environmental concerns will become increasingly important for consumers around the globe."

While, overall, consumers felt the economy was the most important issue facing their countries, consumers in many countries registered strong concern about the environment. Many said this concern was one of the top two reasons for recent behavior changes. Fifty-five percent of consumers across the 17 countries agreed they are "very concerned about environmental problems"; only 14 percent disagreed.

Chinese, South Korean and Brazilian consumers were the most likely to register concern about the environment. Air pollution, climate change/global warming and water pollution ranked fourth through sixth on a list of 12 global concerns, just behind the economy, fuel costs and poverty. Roughly two-thirds of consumers said they were concerned about each of these environmental issues.

Six in 10 consumers across the 17 surveyed countries agree that people need to consume less in order to improve the environment for future generations (only 12 percent disagreed), showing that consumers recognize the connection between their actions and the environment.

When it comes to overall Greendex scores, consumers in the top-scoring developing countries generally show smaller increases this year than those in developed countries, due in part to their adopting more consumptive behavior as they become more economically successful and aspire to higher material standards of living. However, in spite of fears their Greendex scores could drop with economic development, most of these countries have improved their scores.

"Both the powerful inertia of energy-intensive countries and the growing consumerism in large, rapidly developing economies present a challenge to governments and industry. It is critical for both to create more sustainable choices for consumers across the full spectrum of consuming behavior," said Lloyd Hetherington, CEO of GlobeScan.

## Pakistan drones

. . . from page 1

own population."

Presumably, causing the Pakistani government to lose "control of its own population" is not an objective of United States foreign policy.

McManus says there's no sign that the Obama administration is taking Kilcullen's advice and the Obama administration is unlikely to abandon "one of the few strategies that has produced results." But a Washington Post report suggests otherwise:

Although the missile attacks are privately approved by the Pakistani government, despite its public denunciations, they are highly unpopular among the public. As Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari's domestic problems have grown, the Obama administration last month cut the frequency of the attacks. Some senior US officials think they have reached the point of diminishing returns and the administration is debating the rate at which they should continue.

Since it is manifestly apparent that 1) the drone strikes are causing civilian casualties, 2) they are turning Pakistani public opinion against their government and against the US, 3) they are recruiting more support for insurgents and 4) even military experts think the strikes are doing more harm than good, even from the point of view of US officials, why shouldn't they stop? Why not at least a time-out?

Why shouldn't members of Congress ask for some justification for the continuation of these strikes? The Pentagon is asking for more money. It's time for Congress to ask some questions.

*Robert Naiman is senior policy analyst at Just Foreign Policy.*

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## The Blind Tour Guide

taps across Puerto Rico until the red  
tip of the white cane hits ocean.  
Here, he declares, we have a beach.  
I'm on the blind tour.  
It's been going on forever.  
Tomorrow in Venezuela we'll walk  
into buildings, sing in espanol and dance  
till we bump in the dark.  
We shut our eyes  
and hold the coattails of our blind  
guide, sure as a compass,  
striding into jungle,  
never grazing one winged bug.

## Camouflage

If the earth could hide  
clouds cover oceans  
valleys disguise themselves  
like lizards flattened and changing  
on changing leaves  
with flowers  
like hearts  
wilting  
milkweed's white  
blood pulsing  
and the earth so still  
like a white rabbit  
in new snow  
just breathing

11-28-83

## Divining

Hold me in your hands  
and I'll divine  
wells, underground  
oceans, old song  
lines, agates  
with deep white rings.  
I hum around  
your one still place,  
finding things  
on hillsides  
and mountains.  
Keep walking, you'll see  
the stones of Golgotha  
where so much slips  
underground

## Hale Bopp

Coming is like a comet  
you say, light moving  
in all that dark.  
And in the wild  
Hale Bopp fills the sky  
from head to tail like a bridal  
train poking  
at the order of the heavens  
and slips into the leafy  
arms of the oak.  
Reticent  
as a hermit with his lantern  
she coaxes us out  
into the night  
tentative with tiny lights  
leading heaven  
knows  
where.

## What the mud knows

What the trout knows  
scale, flash, rockbottom, mud  
knows water, its maker,  
and waves roll  
in me when the moon swells  
round about the black oaks.  
Water knows windows  
and all surfaces  
toes, mud  
puddles holding moon  
leaning toward creek  
longing for sea,  
sand, a bed,  
bottoms  
of what floats: boats, rafts, leaves  
ducks, tubes, feet, eels, whales  
jelly fish billowing  
and night.

Tide is the water's clock  
as waves read the shore  
like braille.

Earth knows even more,  
water soaks her,  
dark and loamy  
she holds it  
in her mud skin.  
round, spinning  
safe, (nothing  
ever  
falls  
off)



## Susan Wooldridge: poetry ambassador

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Susan Wooldridge has mentored and inspired thousands of adults and children, including youth-at-risk and teachers, at writing and creativity workshops throughout the United States and is a regular presenter at ArtFest in Port Townsend, Washington.

She fosters creative expression among people of all ages and backgrounds through a series of workshops now in their sixth year at rural California libraries sponsored by Poets and Writers organization and the California Center for the Book.

Her process helps people learn to “play with language and imagery” and to incorporate collage and found objects into the creation of collage journals.



She is the author of *poemcrazy: freeing your life with words* (in a 21<sup>st</sup> printing from Three Rivers, Random House) and *Foolsgold: Making Something from Nothing and freeing your creative process*. (Harmony Books, Random House, 2007.) Her poetry chapbook is *Bathing with Ants*. (Bear Star Press).

Anne Lamott (author of *Bird by Bird*) says of *poemcrazy*, a long-running Quality Paperback Book Club Selection, a Writer's Digest Book Club Selection and a Book Sense (Independent bookstores) pick; “This is a wonderful book. Smart, wide-eyed, joyful, helpful, inspiring. You're going to love it, and love writing poetry more for having read it.”

Rachel Naomi Remen (author of *Kitchen Table Wisdom*) writes of *Foolsgold*, featured by both One Spirit and Quality Paper Back Book Clubs: “*Foolsgold*? In a word, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. And a book that may save your life.”

Check out Susan's website at [www.susanwooldridge.com](http://www.susanwooldridge.com)



## Update on gun ownership needed

Why is driving a car considered a privilege while gun ownership is considered a right? If misused, both can kill people.

The U.S. Constitution is the most sacred non-religious document that we treasure. However, it was written 230 years ago when assault weapons did not exist. Clearly, the time has come for an update.

We should not set a goal of taking the arms of those who responsibly use their property. But, how can anyone reasonably argue that criminals and the mentally infirm should have the right to bear arms?

During all of wild years of Dodge City Kansas, a total of 7 murders were perpetrated. In one day at Virginia Tech, 29 citizens were gunned down by a wacko. The wild West appears more civilized than we are today.

**Bruce R Frohman**  
Modesto



## Humane Society Legislative Fund: campaign for the humane treatment of all animals

By LOUIS & MARGARET DEMOTT-FELDMAN

*“Until we extend our full circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace.”*

—Albert Schweitzer

With the passage of Proposition 2, the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, on the November, 2008, ballot, Californians demonstrated their concern and their conscience for what the Humane Society Legislative Fund calls, “creatures long forgotten by an otherwise animal-loving nation.”

The Humane Society Legislative Fund (HSLF) is an advocacy organization that works at the state and federal level to inform the public about animal protection concerns, to back humane candidates for office, and to support animal welfare legislation. Formed in 2004, HSLF defines itself as, “a separate lobbying affiliate of the Humane Society of the United States, which is incorporated under Section 501 (c) (4) of the Internal Revenue Code.”

An outstanding characteristic of this animal welfare organization is that it is able to spend almost all of its income on supporting legislation to improve the welfare of animals and on supporting candidates who are concerned about the welfare of animals. In their own words, HSLF is all about, “helping to level the playing field for animals.”

In its January/February, 2009, newsletter, *Humane Activist*, the reader encounters a list of HSLF-supported animal protection bills before the U.S. Congress. Among them are: the *Pet Safety & Protection Act* (To prohibit the sale of dogs and cats from random source “Class B” animal dealers for research);

the *Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act HR 503* (To prohibit the possession, shipping, transporting, purchasing, selling, delivering, or receiving of a horse for slaughter for human consumption); the *Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act* (To phase out routine non therapeutic use of antibiotics in farm animals, which supports overcrowded, unsanitary factory farming conditions); and the *Shark Conservation Act of 2009* (To end the cruel practice of cutting off sharks’ fins and throwing them back in the water, often while still alive).

By contributing monetarily to HSLF, any person can be a part of this organization’s relatively new political force to enact animal protection laws, including the aforementioned animal protection bills, as well as other bills not mentioned in this article but that are a part of HSLF’s “Legislative Lineup” for animal welfare. Although contributions to HSLF are not tax deductible, they provide powerful support for *all* animals and may also be used for political purposes, including supporting or opposing candidates for public office.

**ACTION!** Put yourself in a position to support the animal causes that are important to you by contacting HSLF today at 519 C Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002 or at [www.hslf.org](http://www.hslf.org). Show that you’re concerned with the humane treatment of *all* living things, so that we humans can learn to coexist with other life forms in an increasingly more *peaceful* world.

## Single payer

... from page 3

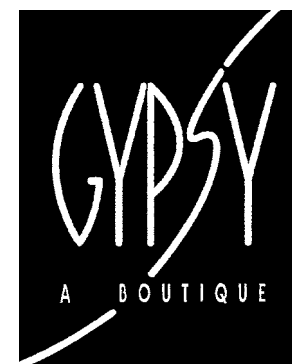
realize some savings on insurance overhead. However, as long as multiple private plans coexist with the public plan, hospitals and doctors would have to maintain their costly billing and internal cost tracking apparatus. Indeed, my colleagues and I estimate that even if half of all privately insured Americans switched to a public plan with overhead at Medicare’s level, the administrative savings would amount to only 9 percent of the savings under single payer.

While administrative savings from a reform that includes a Medicare-like public plan option are modest, at least they’re real. In contrast, other widely touted cost control measures are completely illusory. A raft of studies shows that prevention saves lives, but usually costs money. The recently completed Medicare demonstration project found no cost savings from chronic disease management programs. And the claim that computers will save money is based on pure conjecture. Indeed, in a study of 3,000 U.S. hospitals that my colleagues and I have recently completed, the most computerized hospitals had, if anything, slightly higher costs.

My home state of Massachusetts recent experience with health reform illustrates the dangers of believing overly optimistic cost control claims. Before its passage, the reforms backers made many of the same claims for savings that were hearing today in Washington. Prevention, disease management, computers, and a health insurance exchange were supposed to make reform affordable. Instead, costs have skyrocketed, rising 23 percent between 2005 and 2007, and the insurance exchange adds 4 percent for its own administrative costs on top of the already high overhead charged by private insurers. As a result, 1 in 5 Massachusetts residents went without care last year because they couldn’t afford it. Hundreds of thousands remain uninsured, and the state has drained money from safety-net hospitals and clinics to keep the reform afloat.

In sum, a single-payer reform would make universal, comprehensive coverage affordable by diverting hundreds of billions of dollars from bureaucracy to patient care. Lesser reforms even those that include a public plan option cannot realize such savings. While reforms that maintain a major role for private insurers may seem politically expedient, they are economically and medically nonsensical.

More information: Physicians for a National Health Program, 29 E Madison Suite 602, Chicago, IL 60602; email: [info@pnhp.org](mailto:info@pnhp.org); [http://www.pnhp.org/news/2009/april/testimony\\_of\\_david\\_u.php](http://www.pnhp.org/news/2009/april/testimony_of_david_u.php)



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GEORGIA  
ANDERSON

How wonderful it is that nobody need  
wait a single moment before starting  
to improve the world.

— Anne Frank *Dairy of a Young Girl*  
Young German Jewish diarist (1929-1945)

## 2009 Peace Essay Contest

Our world is filled with a variety of peacemakers. Some make the headlines while others quietly work behind the scenes. Some deal with international situation while others work in their own communities. They may be as close as a family member or next-door neighbor, or as far away as someone on the other side of the globe. The focus of each person's work may differ, but common to all peacemakers is a commitment to using nonviolent principals and actions to nurture and encourage a more peaceful world.

The 2009 Peace Essay Contest invited students to study *living* peacemakers in our community and throughout the world. Each writer nominated one of these peacemakers whose work inspired them, to be the 2009 Peacemaker of the Year.

The 23rd annual Peace Essay Contest received 448 qualifying essays.

Sponsored by the Modesto Peace/Life Center and by the Modesto Junior College Department of Literature and Language Arts, the contest was open to all students, grades 5 – 12, who live or attend school in Stanislaus County.

2009 Peace Essay Committee: Margaret Barker, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Russ Matteson, Suzanne Meyer, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, and Shelly Scribner.

Stanislaus **CONNECTIONS**, published by the Modesto Peace/Life Center, has promoted non-violent social change since 1971. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the center or editorial committee. **CONNECTIONS** encourages free speech to serve truth and build a more just, compassionate, peaceful and environmentally healthy community and world. We seek to enhance community concern, bridge interests of diverse groups. **CONNECTIONS'** editorial committee views peace as built on economic and social justice and equal access to the political process. We welcome pertinent signed articles - to 800 words - and letters with address, phone number. We edit for length, taste, error and libel. Deadline is 10th of the month. Send articles to Myrtle Osner, 1104 Wellesley, Modesto 95350, 522-4967, or email to [osnerm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:osnerm@sbcglobal.net) or Jim Costello [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org).

Photos and ADS should be submitted as high-resolution JPEG or TIFF files. Do NOT submit as pdf files if possible.

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# Be The One

By BRIAN LEWIS

Division II ~ First Place, 2009 Peace Essay Contest  
Johansen High School ~ Mrs. diCristina

*"My oldest brother was adopted... So it was always our intention to adopt at least one, but when we traveled to Thailand to adopt our oldest child, we just saw all these beautiful children who didn't have a home and we realized that it was God's calling for us to put some of those children into our home."*

Soon after I started the fifth grade, I realized that my teacher was different from the others. Instead of instituting favoritism and trying to distinguish the "teacher's pets" from the "troublemakers," she expressed to the class that she wanted everyone to learn and participate with enthusiasm that year. The girls who fondly surrounded her after school caught my attention as well; all were of differing ages and physical characteristics yet somehow all daughters of my teacher. After it came to my attention that these daughters were all separately adopted children, I began to understand why and how she had the amazing talent to seem so patient and fair, even when dealing with the most troubled children faced with difficult backgrounds. I gladly nominate my fifth teacher, Mrs. Ruggieri-Vesey as Peacemaker of the Year.

*"We have a sign in our house that says "Be the one." Too often people wait for someone else to exercise the character traits that all of us know we should exercise instead of "being the one" to initiate a proactive change. We put that sign in our home because we want our daughters to practice that idea within our family, and also in the hopes that the message will be spread to others, and that they in turn will spread it to others, and so on."*

Mrs. Ruggieri-Vesey planted the seed in my mind that if we want respect from others, we need to be willing to give respect to them. Many a time on the playground when conflict would arise, the scenario beginning with "He started it!" would appear, but by "being the one," the idea was given to us that we should be the ones to end it, even if someone else did start it. By taking a bold step to adopt children from all over the world and unite their hearts together through love and understanding, she was "the one." By ignoring the constant scrutiny upon her family and instead focusing on developing respect, harmony, and love, she was "being the one." By treating each child in my fifth-grade class with equal respect and viewing each one of us with great potential, she was "being the one."



*"People often look at our family and think, "Hmm, that odd, that's out of the ordinary; four are Asian, and two are African-American. "But we aren't bound by biology. We are bound by our hearts."*

As a student of history, I have observed the amazing inability for all of mankind for any extended period of time to look beyond biology and bind themselves together with their hearts. I have read numerous accounts of dynastic conflicts fueled by generations of misunderstanding and stubborn refusal to "be the one" and initiate diplomacy. How it saddens me that many continue with this immature finger-pointing, but it truly inspires me to find examples of individuals willing to sacrifice independent pursuits for the altruistic work of peacemaking and "being the one." I believe with the positive influence of people like my fifth teacher, this idea of "being the one" can be paid forward to the rest of the world. I have hope for humanity through the precedents of the selfless. In her own words, Mrs. Ruggieri-Vesey explains: *"I have to quietly go on and change things one person at a time, that's just how I am, but it doesn't mean it's any less important"* Teachers may not end up on public television for their quiet good works, but I know myself that the power of "one" multiplied through classrooms to communities to countries and throughout continents can impact societies worldwide.

*"It was something so little to give on my part; just another plate on the table and another bed in our home, but I knew it would be such a large impact on them. I knew that I would only have to do a little but it would bless them so much."*

Growing up in a home with so many blessings and potential opportunities, I know that I have so much to give. Mrs. Ruggieri-Vesey has helped me greatly in realizing the importance of selfless service and a life dedicated to aiding those who would be blessed with my help. Because of her example, I will go out into the world and pay forward the idea of "being the one." I will "be the one" to forgive where I seek forgiveness, apologize where I seek apology, and show love where I feel the need for love. Mahatma Gandhi said it well: "Be the change you wish to see in the world." My fifth grade teacher lives it well, and through her belief in "being the one," I will spread it well.

(All italicized quotes were taken from an interview of Mrs. Ruggieri in her classroom on November 5, 2008.)

**"War will exist until that distant day  
when the conscientious objector  
enjoys the same reputation and  
prestige that the warrior does today."**

— John F. Kennedy, 35th US president

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