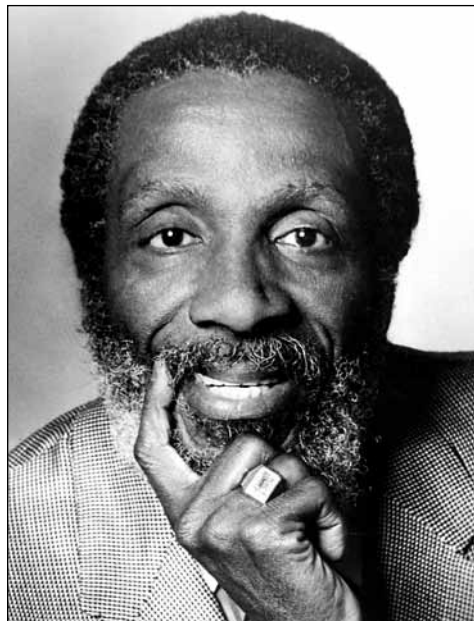


Hear Civil Rights leader Dick Gregory at MJC

Edited by JAMES COSTELLO

Dick Gregory, comedian, civil and human rights activist, author, will speak at the 18th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr.



Commemoration at Modesto Junior College on Saturday, January 21, 2012 at 7 PM in the Media and Performing Arts Center, East Campus. There will be a reception for Mr. Gregory at the King-Kennedy Memorial Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto at 5 PM. Both events are free and open to the public.

Mr. Gregory speaks the truth about racism, sexism, and violence in America. In a Dick Gregory lecture, you will hear that which is not spoken elsewhere. Mr. Gregory's candor, combined with his humor and political satire, makes him one of the most highly sought lecturers on the college circuit.

Born on October 12, 1932, in St. Louis, MO in extreme poverty in a fatherless home, Dick attended Sumner High School where his activism began when he was denied the Missouri State Mile Championship Title in 1951 because he was Black. As one of the

DICK GREGORY cont. p. 4

John McCutcheon plays for us again!

By KEN SCHROEDER

John McCutcheon, six-time Grammy nominee, dean of U.S. folk musicians, and celebrated storyteller has booked his 11th annual performance at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., at 7p.m., Tuesday, January 24, 2012.

A benefit for the Modesto Peace/Life Center, previous concerts have elicited responses such as, in 2010, Modesto High student Lauren Leverone's "I wasn't sure what to expect before the concert but as he started his first song I was blown away by what may very well be the best rhythm banjo playing I've ever heard. His guitar playing proved to be equally impressive. He also treated us to several beautiful melodies performed with precision on the hammered dulcimer as well as a rendition of a Woody Guthrie song with hammered dulcimer backing that really moved the crowd."

John Bruce, a musician with Modesto roots, opened for John McCutcheon's 2007 Modesto concert. He characterized McCutcheon's performance that year "John made it feel like I was sitting on a sofa in his living room. I admire anyone who has the ability to do that." Bruce summed up his experience that evening as "Playing music with today's Seeger."

McCutcheon's latest album, This Land: Woody Guthrie's America, just won the three first places on the Folk DJ charts in November, before it had been officially released more than a month. The three cat-

egories This Land: Woody Guthrie's America swept included top album, top artist, to say nothing of the top song as well as the two runner up placing songs.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$23 at the door, \$15 for groups of 10 or more, \$5 for youth 18 and under and are available at the church, 523-1438, and at Anderson Frame Shop and Gallery, 1323 J St., 579-9913. This is the fifth year that ticket prices have been held at this level.

As a sponsor of the concert you can receive tickets to the concert, your name in the program, and reserved seating. Five levels of



sponsorship are available:

Autoharp — \$40 One ticket

Guitar — \$75 Two tickets

Banjo — \$150 Four tickets

Piano — \$300 Eight tickets

Hammer Dulcimer — \$500 Sixteen tickets

DEADLINE FOR SPONSORSHIP:
SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 2012.

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Join delegation to the US/Mexico border in El Paso/Ciudad Juarez

By FATHER ROY BOURGEOIS, MM
Founder, SOA Watch

Join me at a line that is a concrete expression of the suffering caused by our nation's policies: the southern border of the United States. So many of our neighbors have also tried to cross, climb or swim across this line, fleeing economies broken by U.S. free trade agreements, violence armed and funded from this side of the border, and atrocities caused by the booming U.S. drug market. Many of these line crossers have reached the other side, some have been criminalized and returned, while others have died trying.

The most vicious perpetrators of the violence that is jolting Mexico are none other than graduates of the SOA who comprised two-thirds of the original ranks of the Zetas, the most brutal hired assassins of the drug cartels. These deserters from the elite Special Air Mobile Force Group of the Mexican army acquired specialized knowledge of arms and techniques at the School of the Americas (SOA) that have brought the brutality of the drug violence to unprecedented levels.

For years the SOA Watch movement has cried "No mas, no more" at the gates of School of the Americas. Now it is time to take this message to the US-Mexico border. We go to stand in solidarity with the 50,000 victims of Mexico's so-called "war on drugs." We go to stand at our southern border- every day more militarized - and demand that policies such as the Merida Initiative cease. We go because we believe that justice in Latin America can only exist if we close the SOA, bury the failed military policies of the past, and replace them with policies based on the needs of real people on both sides of the border. As the Obama Administration continues to deport record numbers of immigrants and states pass xenophobic immigration laws, NOW is the time to say "No mas, no more."

ACTION: Join our delegation to the US/Mexico border in El Paso/Ciudad Juarez from February 12-19, 2012. DEADLINE TO APPLY: JANUARY 16, 2012.

Information: write Lisa Sullivan at LSullivan@soaw.org. Visit <http://soaw.org/about-us/partnership-america-latina/212-delegations/3832-soa-watch-usmexico-border-delegation>



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You are invited to the Stone Soup Dinner

By MIKE CHIAVETTA

The story of "stone soup" is an old legend that has numerous renditions. Basically it is about a town that claims it has nothing to give to a hungry group of travelers. Through the clever manipulations of the travelers, the town comes together and through their collective efforts, feeds themselves and the wayward travelers. Motivated by industrious young people, they turn nothing into something.

This is the impetus behind the Modesto High School Project Hope/Church of the Brethren Youth Group's Stone Soup Dinner that will be held on Saturday, February 4th at the Modesto Church of the Brethren from 5:00- 7:30 PM. Proceeds will go to feed the needy in our area and to support Project Hope's continuing effort to send relief aid to Haiti.

In the legend of stone soup, the community contributes to the soup by adding vegetables, bones, spices, and other ingredients. In this stone soup dinner we ask all attendees to contribute symbolically to the "soup" by donating a non-perishable food item. These will be donated to a local food bank.

The dinner will consist of homemade vegan soup, homemade bread, and drinks. The students will be making the



bread! Desserts will be available for sale. All proceeds will be divided between the two organizing groups.

Tickets, \$7 for adults and \$5 for children (12 and under), are available at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, The John McCutcheon Concert and other area events. You can also secure tickets by simply mailing a check for the appropriate amount payable to the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto 95358. Put "Stone Soup" in the memo of the check. Tickets will be held at the front table of the dinner.

Let's be a community that comes together to feed those less fortunate than us!

We hope to see you at the Stone Soup Dinner on Saturday, February 4th!

Young Masters Art Show receiving entries

The Central California Art Association hosts the Young Masters Art Show from January 17 to February 11 for young artists, pre-school through high school, at the Mistlin Gallery. Categories: painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, grouped by age.

The Awards ceremony ends the show on Saturday, February 11 at 2:30 p.m. Receiving for art teachers is Friday, Jan. 13 from 12 to 5 p.m. and for individuals on Saturday, Jan 14 from 12-4 p.m. \$2 per entry for two artworks per student.

Prospectus at Mistlin Gallery, 1015 J St., Modesto, 209-529-3369. Gallery hours: Tues. through Fri. 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday noon to 4 p.m.

Volunteers needed for Modesto High School's Day of Respect

By SHARON FROBA

Modesto High's Day of Respect will take place Wednesday, January 25, 2012. The purpose of the school-wide event is to sensitize students to the effects of discrimination by having community volunteers tell their stories. Subject areas include race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, bullying, and class.

Presentations need not be long (fifteen minutes); they need not be formal (classroom setting). The only requirement is life experience. Please call Sharon Froba at 521-7265 to sign up or to receive more information.

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REPO Auctions in Modesto

By MIKE KILLINGSWORTH

I attended the auction of repossessed homes on the steps of the county courthouse today. I was joined by about twenty predators who were seeking to feed on the carcasses of those whose homes had been repossessed. There was plenty of discussion in the group with occasional smiles and laughter. I guess they were looking forward to a prosperous New Year. I am sure they did not give a single thought to those who were homeless because the bank or finance company took their homes from them. I also doubt that they gave any thought to what a cold Christmas those families would have this year and perhaps for years to come.

I dressed in a big cowboy hat, dark sunglasses, and cowboy boots so as not to look too much like a liberal. As I photographed those at the auction, I noticed that several kept turning away from the camera so as not to let me photograph their faces. I just kept moving until I got the shot I wanted. I did not have plans at that time regarding what I was going to do with those photos other than to see if I could make the people there feel uncomfortable.

Just before the auction started, a vulture circled around me, not knowing why I was taking photographs and, perhaps, trying to make me uncomfortable. As he swooped in on me, I looked him right in his eyes and said nothing. He asked me what I was doing, why was I taking pictures of them? I answered, "I'm just here to put some faces on the vultures who are buying these repossessed homes." That started the conversation I wanted.

He disagreed with me about being a vulture and asked why I thought he was. I told him that he was seeking to profit



from the pain and misfortune of others. He immediately blamed those who had lost their homes saying that, "They did not have to buy those houses; nobody held a gun to their heads." That is when I seized what I called "the teachable moment." I said that most who lost their homes were victims of predatory lending practices, sub-prime loans, and balloon payments; that the lenders had been told by their bosses to write the most expensive loans possible in order to get the highest commission possible." He insisted that he was simply a business man trying to make a living and that many bought homes they could not afford with little or nothing down and were paying for their mistakes. In other words, it was all the fault of those foreclosed upon.

I then was approached by a Hispanic man who identified himself as a realtor. He also asked me why I was taking pictures. I gave him the same answer that I gave the other man. He also was in vehement denial that he was a predator or a vulture. He asked me why I said that and I told him that he was profiting from the pain and misfortune of others. He also claimed that he is just a businessman and that he sometimes

even lost money on the homes he bought. I asked him what he thought happened to the people whose homes he was buying and who did he think lost the most in these situations. He agreed that it was not a good thing but continued to insist that he was "just a business man."

As we continued our conversation I asked him why he would want to help out the banks by buying foreclosed homes after what they did to homeowners and to the rest of us by destroying the economy. I pointed out to him that the banks had used all kinds of rotten tactics to sell mortgages and, when it all tanked, they got a \$750 billion bailout. He agreed that he did not like what had happened and what is happening to which I asked, "What are you doing about it?" "What are you going to do, pick up a gun and start a revolution," was his reply. I told him that a revolution can occur without violence and that if there were any violence it would be from local, state or federal government actions. I told him that what happened and is happening to all of us, but especially to these people, is a moral outrage. He agreed. I invited him to watch in the papers to see how many tens of millions in bonuses the bankers will give themselves this Christmas and New Years.

My parting thought for him was to point out that foreclosures are affecting the Hispanic and Asian communities here in Modesto out of proportion to their numbers. He again agreed that what is occurring is immoral. Before I could walk away, I was asked whom I was working for; did I work for the Modesto Bee or someone else? I told them that I was retired and that I was independently seeking, in my small way, to change the way things work in this country.

Photo credit: FreeFoto.com; <http://www.freefoto.com/preview/9905-04-7/I-was-only-seven-but-I-ll-never-forget-repossession>

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Things to do better in 2012

By JENNIFER WEST

I've never been too big on New Year's resolutions – like most folks, the good intentions with which the year starts for me always seem to get lost in the shuffle somewhere around the middle of January. But breaking out a new calendar does give us an opportunity to pause and reflect on things we could be doing better. And in my case, there are certainly a lot of those!

For starters, I'm going to try to remember to be grateful, every day, for the many blessings I have. There are so many basic things, it's easy to take for granted:

Clean water, available hot or cold, right in our own home, at any moment of the day or night

Food on the table every day, whether bought at the store or grown in the yard

A comfortable home, that's warm in the winter and cool in the summer

Assorted skills and abilities picked up over nearly a half-century of life, and the tools available at this time on the planet, that allow us to do many things well – and the friendships that can grow when one teaches those skills to others

The tick-tock of mechanical clocks, with chimes that ring out the hours

Instant access to information, 24 hours a day, at the touch

of a button

Instant communication, also available 24 hours a day

And there are so many more. In fact, keeping a "thankfulness journal" has been shown to help those suffering from depression – an affliction with which most of us surely must contend at some point or other in our lifetimes.

There are other things, too – intangible, but gifts nonetheless:

Forgiveness

Love, unconditional and otherwise

The power of prayer

The innate human ability to learn, and the instinct to teach

And still others:

Sunshine

The miracle of seeds that send their tender shoots up, reaching for the sunshine, growing into food that feeds the



eye or flowers that feed the soul

The first flowers in spring, and the bees that visit them

Health, to whatever degree we may possess it

Variety, in all things

Friends, two-legged and otherwise

The other thing I'm gonna try to do better is see the good: in others – the people I love and live with, those with whom

I work – even the guy who cuts in front of me to get the to get the best parking spot – even though I'm waiting politely for the person leaving it to drive away and my blinker's on in challenging situations

in life in general.

I figure if I just focus on being more grateful, and looking for the positive, I may not lose ten pounds, or bank a million dollars – but I will stand a good chance of helping to make my little corner of the world a better place to be.

Note to gardeners: The most exciting time of the year is coming up! You can still plant some cool weather crops: broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, carrots, peas, radishes, beets. You can start your tomatoes (if you grow them from seed) anytime in the next month or so, and you can start peppers and eggplant anytime from late January to early March. There's nothing like the sight of tender, green shoots of plants that will one day feed our bodies, to feed our souls, in the middle of winter!

Hear Civil Rights leader Dick Gregory at MJC

from page 1

fastest milers in the country, Mr. Gregory received over 100 track scholarship offers from various universities. He chose Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC).

In his sophomore year at SIUC, Mr. Gregory became captain of the track team and broke the university's record for the half mile, and continued his activism. Mr. Gregory sparked Black students to rally against the university's "White only" policy for the Offing Athlete Award, and segregated seating in Carbondale's only movie theater. In 1953, segregated seating at the local movie theater ended, and Dick became the first Black student to receive the Outstanding Athlete Award. In 1956, Mr. Gregory bridged the gap between White and Black students, and led a successful student campaign to fund the construction of a new student union. An important testament to his and the Black students he mobilized during the 1950s is the impact their actions had on changing the character and direction of a major university. Today, SIUC consistently ranks in the top ten among the country's predominately White educational institutions in the total number of baccalaureate degrees awarded to Black Students.

Winning talent shows as a comic during a hitch in the Army set the stage for his group's early success as a comedian on the Chicago nightclub circuit. His big break occurred at Chicago's Playboy Club where he became the first Black comedian to work in first-line White night clubs and on national television. His new fame brought calls from Medgar Evers and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to help the growing Civil Rights Movement. He participated in almost all of the major and minor marches, demonstrations, and rallies of the Civil Rights era. Mr. Gregory spoke at marches, voter registration rallies, and benefit shows for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1963, he chartered a plane,

and then collected and delivered 14,000 pounds of free food for poor people in two counties in Mississippi.

Dr. King and Mr. Gregory were often jailed together as they demonstrated for civil rights in the 1960s, and at Dr. King's urging, he became increasingly involved with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) efforts to bring freedom, justice, and equality to all Black people in America. As a result of his activism, his career suffered. Mr. Gregory gave up a million dollars a year because Dr. King taught him a higher principle – the philosophy of non-violence, which he follows to this day.

Using humor and satire to make his points, Mr. Gregory has authored 15 books on subjects including the plight of Black people in America, health and nutrition, and commentaries on American politics, history, government, and culture. His latest book is *Callus On My Soul: A Memoir*, with Shelia Moses.

In 1967, following the example of Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Gregory fasted, consuming only distilled water for 40 days, to protest the Vietnam War. Since that first fast, Mr. Gregory has fasted over 100 times, often to call attention to important social problems.

In the area of global hunger, Mr. Gregory spent over a million dollars researching a nutritional solution. Starting in 1974, he developed the 4X Formula, a nutritional formula that requires no cooking or refrigeration. Responding to the famine in East Africa in 1985, Mr. Gregory made numerous trips to African countries donating over 2,600 pounds of his 4X Formula. Not only did his actions reduce the cost of rehabilitating a starving child in Ethiopia from \$4.00 to 45 cents per day, but the children taking the 4X Formula showed such marked improvement that the Ethiopian government made the formula available throughout all of the country's rehabilitation centers. After seeing the human suffering and

death caused by famine, Mr. Gregory vowed to make his formula available to all the world's hungry people. Major corporations have offered him up to \$90 million for his formula. Mr. Gregory has turned down these offers, instead wanting to use the economic value of his formula-based products to significantly improve the wealth of Black Americans.

Please join us to hear this man's inspiring message.

The event is free. However, we depend solely on donations of money or services from our co-sponsors, caring groups, businesses, and individuals like you. Will you help us bring Dick Gregory to our community? Donors who give \$100.00 or more will receive preferred seating and an autographed copy of Mr. Gregory's book, *Callus on My Soul*.

ACTION: Make your tax-deductible check payable to "Modesto Peace Life Center-MLK." Send it to Jim Costello, 1849 Richard Way, Ceres, CA 95307-4504. The Peace/Life Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Our tax ID # is 94-2800825. Information: jcostello@igc.org

SPONSORS at press time: City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; Associated Students of Modesto Junior College (ASMJC); Modesto Peace/Life Center; California State University, Stanislaus; Frailing, Rockwell, Kelly, & Duarte; Rubén Villalobos; Gene Palsgrove & Mary Baucher; College Avenue Congregational Church; Valley Lexus/BMW; MJC Civic Engagement Project, Prime Shine, Modesto Irrigation District, Central Valley Democratic Club, MOCSE, Solange Altman, John Lucas, Kevin Rice, and Odessa Johnson.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Committee: Wendy Byrd, Glen Carrington, James Costello, Brett Forray, Julie Fox, Jim Johnson, Ruth-Helen King, Bryan Marks, Tommy Muhammad, Barbara Page, Gene Palsgrove, Dan Onorato, Monika Schortner, Rubén Villalobos.

Occupy Movement spread to small towns and cities in California

From News, University of California, Riverside

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The Occupy Wall Street movement that began in New York and spread to America's largest cities and abroad also found support in many of California's smaller towns and municipalities, according to researchers at the University of California, Riverside.

Occupy movements "emerged in seemingly unlikely places, demonstrating the depth of frustration that people feel about the recession and the austerity measures that have been taken by authorities," researchers from UCR's Transnational Social Movements Research Working Group wrote in a report issued this month.

In an ongoing study of the breadth of the protests against economic inequality, high unemployment and greed – "Diffusion of the Occupy Movement in California" – the researchers identified Occupy movements in 143 smaller California towns and cities.

"Big cities got the movement early. The spatial depth of the movement to small towns is not well-known," said Christopher Chase-Dunn, a professor of sociology known internationally for his research of social movements.

People in medium and small-sized towns are occupying space, organizing events, and lending their voices to the movement in their own towns, graduate student Michaela Curran-Strange added. "They are focusing on local issues as well as national and regional ones."

"The Occupy Barstow website proclaimed that Barstow is 'about as far from Wall Street as you can get.' But the Barstow occupiers probably did not know that there were also Occupy actions in Weaverville, Idyllwild, Calistoga, El Centro and many other small California towns, even in very remote areas," Chase-Dunn and Curran-Strange wrote in their report.

A survey of 482 incorporated towns and cities in California found that 143 of them – nearly 30 percent – had Occupy sites on Facebook between Dec. 1 and Dec. 8. Many of the small and medium-sized towns are very active with likes, posts, and events on their Facebook pages. For example, the town of Arcata has about 17,000 people and 2,950 subscriptions

on their page.

A few of the medium- and small-sized towns created pages fairly early, Curran-Strange said. For example, Petaluma Occupiers created their Facebook site on Sept. 27; South Lake Tahoe and Arcata on Sept. 28; the Coachella Valley on Oct. 2; and Half Moon Bay on Oct. 5.

"When you think about the fact that Occupy Wall Street states on their website that they began on September 17th, that's pretty impressive that West Coast towns – some of them medium and small – picked up on it almost immediately," Curran-Strange noted.

Facebook Occupy sites in California's smaller cities were nearly evenly divided between the northern and southern halves of the state, with 70 identified north of Bakersfield and 73 south of the Kern County city.

"This was fairly unexpected," Curran-Strange said. "Southern California is more densely populated than Northern California,

with the exception of the Bay area, of course, so fewer pages were expected from Northern California."

The north-south finding also is interesting because most people believe that the political culture of Northern California is much more Leftist than that of Southern California, Chase-Dunn and Curran-Strange wrote. "Our findings suggest that this is no longer true, at least as indicated by the propensity to establish Occupy sites."

The two researchers found that the Occupy movement relies on social media such as Twitter and Facebook as well as public assemblies to organize, communicate, and raise awareness about growing inequalities that spawned the national movement.

"This snapshot of the Web presence of the Occupy movement shows where and the extent to which this movement diffused from its early presence in the largest cities to the smaller cities and towns of California," Chase-Dunn and Curran-Strange explained.

Discussions on local movement Facebook pages illustrate the variety of issues that are important to local participants, ranging from student loan debt, rising tuition costs and raising taxes on the rich to corporate crime and moving toward a more democratic and sustainable economy. Most pages

have become a forum for sharing news of all kinds as well as images associated with the movement.

For example:

- A Yreka man who lost his home to foreclosure organized an Occupy group in the small Northern California town.
- Occupy Riverside activists helped an ex-Marine reoccupy the home that he and his family were evicted from as a result of foreclosure.
- Occupy Petaluma protestors successfully petitioned Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to suspend evictions during the holidays.
- Ojai organizers urged participants to move their savings from accounts from large banks such as Wells Fargo and Bank of America to local banks and credit unions.
- Occupy Davis protested tactics of police who pepper-sprayed students protesting tuition increases at UC Davis.
- Occupy Redding is supporting postal workers who are protesting job cuts.

Noting that many Occupy encampments have been removed by authorities, the UCR researchers observed that events such as the crackdown in Oakland and the following one-day shut-down of the Port of Oakland "show that this movement has broad support and is capable of powerful collective action."

***California cities with Occupy pages on Facebook:

Alameda, Amador, Anaheim, Antioch, Apple Valley, Arcata, Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Atherton, Atwater, Bakersfield, Beaumont, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Brea, Brentwood, Burbank, Calabasas, Calistoga, Camarillo, Chico, Chula Vista, Citrus heights, Claremont, Coachella, Colton, Compton, Concord, Corona, Coronado, Costa Mesa, Covina, Cudahy, Culver City.

Danville, Davis, Delano, El Centro, Elk Grove, Encinitas, Escondido, Eureka, Fontana, Fresno, Fullerton, Gilroy, Half Moon Bay, Hayward, Healdsburg, Hemet, Hollister, Imperial, Irvine, Laguna Niguel, Lake Elsinore, Livingston, Lodi, Lompoc, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Madera, Malibu, Manteca, Martinez, Marysville, Merced, Mission Viejo, Modesto, Montclair, Monterey, Mount Shasta, Mountain View.

Napa, Novato, Oakland, Oceanside, Ojai, Ontario, Orange, Oxnard, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Palmdale, Palo Alto, Paradise, Pasadena, Perris, Petaluma, Pico Rivera, Pomona, Poway, Rancho Cucamonga, Red Bluff, Redding, Redondo Beach, Redwood City, Rialto, Richmond, Riverside, Sacramento, Salinas, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Fernando, San Francisco, San Jose, San Leandro, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo.

Santa Ana, Santa Barbara, Santa Clarita, Santa Cruz, Santa Monica, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sierra Madre, Simi Valley, Sonoma, Sonora, South Gate, South Lake Tahoe, South San Francisco, Stockton, Sunnyvale, Tehachapi, Temecula, Thousand Oaks, Torrance, Tracy, Turlock, Ukiah, Vacaville, Vallejo, Ventura, Victorville, Visalia, Vista, Walnut Creek, Watsonville, West Hollywood, Woodland, Yuba City.

For more information, see <http://irows.ucr.edu/papers/irows74/irows74.htm>

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The Winter of Our Occupation ... a proposal from Michael Moore

Friends,

And now it is winter. Wall Street rejoices, hoping that the change of seasons will mean a change in our spirit, our commitment to stop them.

They couldn't be more wrong. Have they not heard of Washington and the troops at Valley Forge? The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike in the winter of 1936-37? The Michigan Wolverines crushing Ohio State in the 1950 Blizzard Bowl? When it comes to winter, it is the time historically when the people persevere and the forces of evil make their retreat!

We are not even 12 weeks old, yet Occupy Wall Street has grown so fast, so big, none of us can keep up with the hundreds of towns who have joined the movement, or the thousands of actions — some of them just simple ones in neighborhoods, schools and organizations — that have happened. The national conversation has been irreversibly changed. Now everyone is talking about how the 1% are getting away with all the money while the 99% struggle to make ends meet. People are no longer paralyzed by despair or apathy. Most know that now is the time to reclaim our country from the bankers, the lobbyists — and their gofers: the members of the United States Congress and the 50 state legislatures.

And they're crazy if they think that a little climate chaos (otherwise known as winter in the 21st century) that they've helped to bring about is going to stop us.

I would like to propose to my Occupying sisters and brothers that there are many ways to keep Occupy Wall Street going through the winter months. There is perhaps no better time to move the movement indoors for a few months — and watch it grow even bigger! (For those who have the stamina to maintain the outdoor occupations, by all means, keep it up — and the rest of us will do our best to help you and keep you warm!)

The winter gives us an amazing opportunity to expand our actions against the captains of capitalism who have occupied our homes with their fraudulent mortgage system which has tossed millions of families out onto the curb; a cruel health care system that has told 50 million Americans "if you can't afford a doctor, go F yourself"; a student loan system that sends 22-year-olds into an immediate "debtors' prison" of working lousy jobs for which they didn't go to school but now have to take because they're in hock for tens of thousands of dollars for the next two decades; and a jobs market that keeps 25 million Americans un- or under-employed — and much of the rest of the workers forced to accept wage cuts, health care reductions and zero job security.

But we in the Occupy Movement reject this version of the "American Dream." Instead, I suggest we shift our focus for this winter to the following actions:

OCCUPY THE WINTER

A proposal to the General Assembly of Occupy Wall Street from Michael Moore

1. Occupy Our Homes. Sorry, banks, a roof over one's head is a human right, and you will no longer occupy our homes through foreclosure and eviction because well, you see, they are our homes, not yours. You may hold the mortgage; you don't hold the right to throw us or our neighbors out into the cold. With almost one in three home mortgages currently in foreclosure, nearing foreclosure or "underwater," the Occupy Movement must form local "Occupy Strike Forces" to create human shields when the banks come to throw people out of their homes. If the foreclosure has already happened, then we must help families move back into their foreclosed homes — literally (see this clip from my last film to watch how a home re-occupation is accomplished at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVYIBikzwmk&feature=youtu.be>). Beginning today, Take Back the Land, plus many other citizens' organizations nationwide, are kicking off Occupy Our Homes (<http://occupyourhomes.org/>) Numerous actions throughout the day today have already resulted in many families physically taking back their homes. This will continue every day until the banks are forced to stop their fraudulent practices, until homeowners are allowed to change their mortgage so that it reflects the true value of their homes, and until those who can no longer afford a mortgage are allowed to stay in their homes and pay rent. I beseech the news media to cover these actions — they are happening everywhere. Evictions, though rarely covered (you need a Kardashian in your home as you're being evicted to qualify for news coverage) are not a new story (see this scene I filmed in 1988). Also, please remember the words of Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur of Toledo (in 'Capitalism: A Love Story'): Do not leave your homes if the bank forecloses on you! Let them take you to court and then YOU ask the judge to make them produce a copy of your mortgage. They can't. It was chopped up a hundred different ways, bundled with a hundred other mortgages, and sold off to the Chinese. If they can't produce the mortgage, they can't evict you.

2. Occupy Your College. In nearly every other democracy on the planet, students go to college for free or almost free. Why do those countries do that? Because they know that for their society to advance, they must have an educated population. Without that, productivity, innovation and an informed electorate is stunted and everyone suffers as a result. Here's how we do it in the U.S.A.: make education one of our lowest priorities, graduate students who know little about the world or their own government or the economy, and then force them into crushing debt before they even have their first job. That way has really worked well for us, hasn't it? It's made us the world leader in ... in ... well, ok, we're like 27th or 34th in everything now (except war). This has to end. Students

should spend this winter doing what they are already doing on dozens of campuses — holding sit-ins, occupying the student loan office, nonviolently disrupting the university regents meetings, and pitching their tents on the administration's lawn. Young people — we, the '60s generation, promised to create a better world for you. We got halfway there — now you have to complete the job. Do not stop until these wars are ended, the Pentagon budget is cut in half, and the rich are forced to pay their taxes. And demand that that money go to your education. We'll be there with you on all of this! And when we get this fixed and you graduate, instead of being \$40,000 in debt, go see the friggin' world, or tinker around in your garage a la the two Steves, or start a band. Enjoy life, discover, explore, experiment, find your way. Anything but the assistant manager at Taco Bell.

3. Occupy Your Job. Let's spend the winter organizing workplaces into unions. OR, if you already have a union, demand that your leaders get off their ass and get aggressive like our grandparents did. For chrissakes, surely you know we would not have a middle class if it weren't for the strikes of the 1930s-1950s?! In three weeks we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the workers in my hometown of Flint, Michigan taking over and occupying the General Motors factories for 44 days in the dead of winter. Their actions ignited a labor movement that lifted tens of millions out of poverty and into the middle class. It's time to do it again. (According to the Census Bureau and the New York Times, 100 million Americans either live in or near poverty. Disgraceful. Greed has destroyed the core fabric of our communities. Enough!)

Here are two good unions to get your fellow workers to sign up and join: UE and SEIU. The CWA are also good. Here's how to get a quick primer in organizing your place of employment (don't forget to be careful while you do this!) (See http://www.ueunion.org/org_steps.html). If your company is threatening to close down and move the jobs elsewhere, then it's time to occupy the workplace (again, you can get a lesson in how to successfully occupy your factory from my movie).

4. Occupy Your Bank. This is an easy one. Just leave them. Move your checking and your credit card to a nonprofit credit union (<http://www.ncua.gov/DataApps/ResearchCU/Pages/default.aspx>). It's safe and the decisions made there aren't based on greed. And if a bank tries to evict your neighbor, Occupy the local branch with 20 other people and call the press. Post it on the internet.

5. Occupy the Insurance Man. It's time to not only stand up for the 50 million without health insurance but to also issue a single, simple demand: The elimination of for-profit, privately-controlled health insurance companies. It is nothing short of barbaric to allow businesses to make a profit off people when they get sick. We don't allow anyone to make a



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YOU ARE INVITED to the Occupy Solidarity Social Forum

From OCCUPY OLYMPIA

Occupy Olympia invites the Occupy Wall Street Movement to participate in an Occupy Solidarity Social Forum. Occupy Olympia has agreed, by consensus at General Assembly, to host a self-organized gathering of the Occupy Wall Street Movement to network, build unity, share tactics, workshop strategies, discuss diversity and discuss how to develop action plans. Olympia, the capital city of Washington, is near the Seattle Tacoma airport, has a strong history of organizing and is home of The Evergreen State College, offering plenty of space.

The Alliance For Global Justice, co-sponsor of the Occupy Solidarity Social Forum, brings their national reach and uncompromising ethic and integrity to make this event a success. Together, Occupy Olympia and AFGJ agree that the movement will gain strength if we help open space for sharing, discussion and development. Together we will create the space for a wide diversity of occupy movement members to bring their knowledge and skills to the table to share the

goal of growing the strength of the movement.

We propose to organize the gathering on Feb. 18-19, 2012. Travel subsidies will be offered based on need, cost, and with support of the local occupy groups depending on availability of funds. The conference is open to anyone who registers and self-identifies with the occupy movement. Registrants are encouraged to seek formal support from their general assembly as a voice but not as a representative. There will be a registration fee with no one turned away for lack of funds.

Occupy Olympia seeks Occupy Wall Street recognition of this national forum in Olympia which is small, beautiful and neutral, nestled between Occupy Portland and Occupy Seattle.

ACTION: Register at <http://occupyolympia.org/ossf-2012/>. Participants should come prepared for tent camping or sleeping on church basement floors. Subject to funding availability, travel subsidies will be offered for participants from existing Occupations. You can contribute to the travel fund go to: http://afgj.org/?page_id=1777.

The winter of our occupation

from page 6

profit when we need the fire department or the police. Until recently we would never allow a company to make a profit by operating in a public school. The same should be true for when you need to see a doctor or stay in the hospital. So I say it's long overdue for us to go and Occupy Humana, United Health, Cigna and even the supposed "nonprofit" Blue Crosses. An action on their lawns, in their lobbies, or at the for-profit hospitals — this is what is needed.

So — there are my ideas for the five places we can Occupy this winter. Help the foreclosed-upon to Occupy their homes. Occupy your college campus, especially the student loan office and the regents meetings. Occupy your job by getting everyone to sign a union card — or by refusing to let the CEO ship your job overseas. Occupy your Chase or Citi or Bank of America branch by closing your account and moving it to a credit union. And Occupy the insurance company offices, the pharmaceutical companies' headquarters and the for-profit hospitals until the White House and Congress pass the true single-payer universal health care bill they failed to pass in 2010.

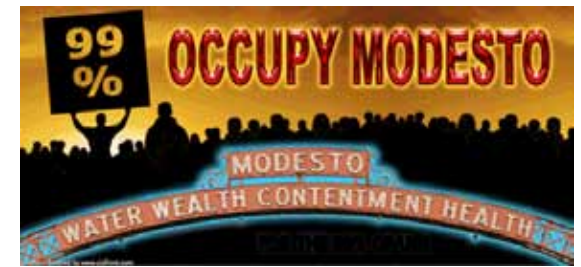
My friends, the rich are running scared right now. You need no further proof of this than to read this story from last week (<http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/ticket/republicans-being-taught-talk-occupy-wall-street-133707949.html>). The Republicans' top strategist met privately with them and told them that they had better change their tune or they were going

to be crushed by the Occupy Wall Street movement. They didn't have to change their greedy actions, he assured them — just the way they talk and PR the situation. He told them never to use the word "capitalism" — it has now been made a dirty word by the Occupy movement, he said. Only say "economic freedom" from now on, he cautioned. And don't criticize the movement — because the majority of Americans either agree with it or are feeling the same way. Just tell the Occupiers and the distressed Americans: "I get it." Seriously.

Yes, in just 12 short weeks we have killed their most sacred word — Capitalism — and we have them on the run, on the defensive. They should be. Millions are coming after them and our only goal is to remove them from power and replace them with a fair system that is controlled by the 99%. The 1% have been able to get both political parties to do their bidding. Why should only 1% of the population get to have two parties — and the rest of us have none? That, too, is going to change. In my next letter, I will suggest what we can do to Occupy the Electoral Process. But first we must start with those who pull the strings of the puppets in the Congress. That's why it's called Occupy Wall Street. Always better to deal with man in charge, don't you think?

Let's Occupy the Winter! An #OWS Winter will certainly lead to a very hopeful American Spring.

Yours, Michael Moore
MMFlint@MichaelMoore.com
WWW.MichaelMoore.com



Declaration of Occupy Modesto

We, the People of Modesto, California, United States of America, have awakened. Awakened to find 1% of people owning 42% of everything. Awakened to a nation that spends nearly half its taxes on wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. A county in which many can't keep their homes because 15.1% are unemployed, and many more underemployed. A country which bails out corporate moguls, but not average citizens, in which people can't afford to see their doctors or obtain needed medications.


Occupy Modesto - people from all walks of life, ethnicities, ages, religions, political backgrounds, social values, races, genders and orientations - says "enough." We are peacefully dedicated to changing mass systematic injustice.

Our nation has enough money for war but not for the poor. Enough illegal, unethical and immoral corporate greed. Enough fear tactics. Enough police brutality. Enough Big Brotherism disguised as national security, enough war on drugs and personal liberty. We ask "more." More accountability, appropriate allocation of money for quality education, health care, peace, communities, and families.

Statement of Solidarity

We, the people of Modesto and Stanislaus County, stand in solidarity with Occupy Wall Street organizations across the country. In doing so, we unite for justice, peace and equality. A people united will NEVER be defeated!

ACTION: Join the movement! Visit <http://www.occupymodestoca.org/> to sign up for Occupy Modesto's email list.



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Green Tips For A Green Planet: Winterize your House

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Winter finds us indoors more and seeking safe, eco-friendly, non-toxic ways to stay warm and comfy. Marye Audet of Lancaster, Texas offers "35 Ways to Winterize Your Home (Without Poisoning Your Family)" from an article on the Planet Green, <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/>

Tips for Winterizing Your Home, Safely

1. Consider using green alternatives to traditional insulation. There are several options including cellulose and spray foam.
2. Learn from the old timers! Plant evergreens close to your home and consider planting a windbreak on your property. A windbreak can save up to 30% in energy costs.
3. Your attached garage can add to the difficulty in heating your home. It is a large, unheated space that usually shares a wall with either the kitchen or the den. Either way, keeping it warm helps keep the whole house warm. Find instructions on line to make a garage solar heater.
4. Install a permanent furnace filter to save waste and to keep your air clean.
5. Wrap the windows in plastic to keep out those arctic blasts.
6. You can also use bubble wrap to cover your windows. The air in the bubbles helps to insulate even more.
7. Sew a draft stopper
8. Install weather stripping
9. Use non-vinyl blackout curtains to trap the heat in and keep the cold out.
10. Add a door sweep to each exterior door.
11. Head to your local feed store and buy straw bales to place around the foundation of your home. This will block cold air and help keep the floors warmer, especially if you have pier and beam.
12. Have your furnace serviced to make sure that it is running properly and safely.
13. Check the duct-work where it is exposed. Our house is old and pier and beam and all the duct work is under the house. Over the course of a year raccoons and other visitors may pull at it, tear it, or loosen it from the registers. We almost always have to repair a few
14. While you are checking the duct-work consider insulating it as well. This helps keep the heated air warm as it moves through unheated spaces under the house or in the attic.
15. Reverse the direction on your ceiling fans. This will push the hot air down and help it recirculate through out the house.
16. Install foam insulation gaskets around your electrical

outlets and keep the outlets covered when not in use.

17. Installing storm doors and windows can save you up to 45% on your energy bill.
18. Move furniture off your vents.
19. Consider these high efficiency heating tips:

The US Department of Energy demands that home furnaces convert 78% of their total energy expenditure into heat. There are furnaces that run at nearly 97% efficiency. Buying one is both green and thrifty. If your furnace was made before 1992, it may be extremely wasteful by today's standards. Replace it with a newer, greener model.



Clean your air filters on a regular basis. The dirtier the filter, the more expensive the heating bill.

Clear all furniture and debris from your vents. By removing obstructions from your vents, you can better heat yourself and your family. Your chair or your drapes may appreciate that they are being warmed, but I doubt it.

Give your heater a tune-up. Like a car, the best way to keep the motor running is by having it serviced regularly. A yearly check-up can keep your heater at peak performance.

Seal your ducts. A leaky duct can be a big energy suck. Make sure those ducts are air-tight. Insulate them to be extra-green.

Buy a computerized thermostat. Computers, they are everywhere. You can program your heating system to heat your home only when people are there. Why heat a house that no one is in? Don't ask me. I don't do that.

20. Cover your water heater with an insulating blanket. Look up the video by Sierra Club that shows you how.

21. If you have an old fashioned radiator use a fan to help spread the warm air and a put a reflector behind it.

22. Buy organic cotton thermal long johns for everyone in the family.

24. Wear layers of clothing made from breathable organic fabrics.

25. Eat soups to help keep your body temperature up.

26. Shut the door on rooms you don't use, if there are any.
27. If you live in an old house, live in it the way they used to. We have a fireplace in the kitchen and a kitchen door. We spend many winter days around the kitchen table with the fireplace crackling (we have had a lot of trees fall the past year) and the door closed. We keep the heat to the other areas of the house very low.
28. Improve the air quality of your home. Sealing your thermal envelope too tightly can be dangerous if you don't look out for your air quality. Get a heat recovery

ventilator if you seal your house up tight.

29. Grow some herbs and vegetables inside. Not only are they great to add to soups and stews but plants filter toxins out of the air.
30. Open the curtains on the south/west side of the house during the day to get the most of the sun's warmth. Close up at night to keep out the cold.
31. Cold feet? Put a little ground cayenne or ginger in your socks. You can do the same with mittens but don't do this with small children. If a finger goes into an eye it is painful!
32. Put hot baked potatoes wrapped in a piece of flannel in your bed about 15 minutes before you plan to get in it. Your bed will be warm and you will have potatoes ready to make hash browns at breakfast.
33. Another old fashioned fix it to hang a thick curtain in front of the door. Use the round hangers and you can easily push it aside to open the door.
34. If you have a two story house the upstairs will always be warmer than the downstairs. Plan on spending more time up there.
35. Bake bread. It is fun, it warms up the house, and it tastes great.

"Door to Healing": Courageous poets create peace and healing through poetry

These poems were submitted by Noel Russell, Memorial Medical Center Cancer Services Complementary Therapy program support participant, and MPLC activist. Several of them were penned by published

Gathering of Voices poets who are also members of the program.

The Door to Healing, edited by Lin Sexton, is compiled from seven writing groups of works by cancer survivors and caregivers who have participated in Memorial Medical Center Cancer Services Complementary Therapy programs. The anthology is made possible by a grant from the Memorial Hospital Foundation. Writing groups help participants find renewed strength, new friendships, and experience restorative self-expression. These are a small sampling of the writing found in this collection, available through Cancer Services at 209-569-7789. Visit <http://www.memorialmedicalcenter.org/patient/cancer/healing-writing.html>



Door to Healing

I could always find her in the kitchen
 She seemed to always be there.
 It was her domain.
 It's where she cut our hair,
 An old dish towel around our shoulders.
 It's where she nursed our wounds
 When we fell while roller-skating.
 It's where we shared coffee secrets
 And cried when the old man passed.
 It was the place where we gossiped
 And sometimes laughed till we hurt.
 Warm cherry pie, a fresh cup of coffee,
 A mother's hug. . .
 I wish I could walk through her front door
 again.

- Dan Murray

Small World

You sit in your small chair and meditate
 You walk through your small house with sage
 You live your small life, you believe, in
 peace
 You remember
 The large world around you as
 You ride down the street on the bus
 The sign you see says STOP WAR
 You remember your slumbering mind
 In which
 The words flowed line by line
 Saying. . .
 You know there are bombs bursting in air
 Over the sand where men run
 You know there is
 A small child crying somewhere
 Silently under her bed
 Wondering
 When her small world will
 Explode
 You know these things -
 Yet you claim to know peace?

- Joan Harrison

Words

At last I have found my voice
 When I was a child I was told to hush,
 That little people should be seen but not
 heard
 I got the message
 I loved to sing,
 Music was breathing.
 Now I am grown and growing in worldly
 words
 Words have always drawn me to them
 Their descriptiveness

Their sound
 Their written shape
 Their full stories
 I will not hush
 I will break out and write and speak
 I will not be timid
 - Lisa Sanders

When I Tell You My Story

When I tell you my story a door opens
 You walk through to where I am
 And for a moment we meet
 For a moment
 We hold the same experience in our hands
 And our eyes
 And we are not alone.
 So I tell you my story
 In bits and pieces
 In poems and prose
 Small memories
 Snapshots of my life
 Big memories
 Murals I have lived
 Each one a door to being known and
 knowing
 Each one a door to healing.
 - Lin Sexton

The Door

The door opened to a blank wall,
 dark like a new chalkboard
 that had never felt the scrape of chalk
 or an old black eraser.
 The door held secrets she wanted to know,
 knowledge not given to everyone,
 gained through pain, sorrow, a longing for
 peace.
 She searched for the opening, a key, or a knob
 permitting passage into the world beyond.
 Frantic she looked for something to show
 her the path.
 Exhausted, she stopped, leaned her body
 against the door. The door quietly slipped open,
 revealed the world beyond, a new horizon.
 A crimson thread slipped through the eye
 of a needle into silky fabric becoming
 a new dress ready for Saturday night
 The door gently shut.

- Roberta Bearden

Washing Dishes

Mom loved washing dishes.
 I could never understand why.
 She would take her time, never in a hurry.
 When I asked her why she liked that tedious
 chore,
 her response was, "Mija, don't you know that
 having dirty dishes to wash means that
 there's food in the house?"
 Every home we've owned has had a
 dishwasher.
 I've never used them.
 Now I love washing dishes.
 Looking out the window
 watching birds come and go in the yard,
 kids riding bicycles, skateboarding,
 neighbors raking leaves, mailmen coming to
 deliver mail,
 beautiful clouds in the sky.
 I love to listen to the radio while I'm
 cleaning the counter,
 and I pray and thank God for dirty dishes.
 - Becky Correa

Our Hometown

We grope through some foggy days
 That conceal the sun's gold rays.
 We hold out for skies of blue,
 Turning rose when day is through,
 We endure the summer heat,
 Sidewalk burning 'neath our feet.
 Soon cooled deltas blow our way,
 Making treetops dance and sway.
 We survive both flood and drought,
 Water in or water out.
 Never mind how full the cup;
 We don't drown, we don't dry up.
 Here we walk down tree-lined streets,
 Where a friendly neighbor greets.
 Here our children grow and play;
 Here we live, learn, work, and play.
 This is our Modesto dear,
 Our hometown - we like it here!
 - Laurie Christopherson

Shots

As a nurse I've given lots of shots
 In hips and arms and thigh.
 When I got sick it didn't take me long
 To realize
 That when it comes to needles
 I really do believe
 That it truly is more blessed
 To give than to receive!

- Diane Dunaway

Creativity

"We have only to be ourselves."
 Sounds simple
 But it takes tax and toil,
 courage and calling
 To peel away the layers,
 Glued by time and experience
 In order to birth that authenticity,
 To liberate that sacred part.
 - Nancy Fontana

I Would Marry You Again

I would marry you again,
 lie down beside you when you are tired
 help you raise your children and share mine,
 call home when I am late,
 leave on a light when you are,
 hold your hand when everything familiar
 falls away,
 make you promises and keep them.
 I would marry you again,
 wipe my feet before entering the house,
 learn to cook
 take turns doing the dishes,
 bring small presents designed to bring
 delight,
 stay still when you are sleeping,
 bring coffee when you wake,
 listen gratefully when you share your
 dreams.
 I would marry you again,
 bring you pleasure not found in the Song of
 Solomon,
 better even than King David could
 command,
 rub your body with perfumed oils,
 taste them on my tongue,
 and when you have been tamed
 promise always to hold you loosely.
 - Ed Bearden



New Year Resolve: add your voice for a just peace

By DAN ONORATO

The recent spate of Republican presidential candidates trying to outdo one another in supporting Israel is plain foolish. This mindset, shared by many Democrats, shows an arrogant disregard for international law and informed world opinion, and runs counter to America's best interests.

Israel and most of the mainstream American media would have us believe that Israel's settlement building in Palestinian territory is legal, even if controversial. After all, they imply, it's their rightful land. But that claim was settled in 2004 when the International Court of Justice reiterated earlier international rulings that it's illegal to acquire territory by war. Consequently, the court ruled unanimously that Israel has no right to Palestinian territory it has occupied since the 1967 war, neither in Jerusalem nor in Gaza, the West Bank, or the Golan Heights. Moreover, on the three long-standing "final status" issues in contention—borders, Jerusalem, and the Palestinian refugee issue—the UN has consistently and overwhelmingly for three decades voted in favor of international law as set down in the Geneva Conventions and UN resolutions. That body of law is clear: the border should revert to the "Green Line," where it was before the 1967 war; East Jerusalem is the Palestinian capital; and Palestinian refugees have a right to return to their land. Israel simply ignores these legal rulings with impunity, a defiance made possible because our government doesn't hold Israel accountable to the same standard the U.S. applies elsewhere.

We pride ourselves as a people who respect the rule of law and human rights. When President Obama spoke two years ago in Cairo in an effort to create better relations with Arab and Muslim countries in the Middle East, he underlined the need to adhere to international law and to promote democracy in the region. Yet when the rest of the world condemned Israel for its brutal invasion of Gaza in 2009 or its violent reaction in 2010 against the flotilla carrying humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza, the U.S. was

conspicuous for its toothless public response. When the Palestinians in September brought their request for statehood before the UN, the President and Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, repudiated the Palestinian effort to assert the same self-determination our leaders so enthusiastically praised in Tunisia and Egypt and support in Libya and Syria. The hypocrisy and duplicity were transparent, but world opinion seemed not to matter. Obama claimed he was concerned the Palestinian initiative would undermine the "peace process." But the "peace process," as it's been practiced, has been a sham for many years, enabling Israel to postpone a final peace agreement while pursuing its incessant takeover of ever more Palestinian land. Since the Oslo Peace Accords of the early 1990s, Israel has transferred over 300,000 of its citizens to settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Most of the rest of the world sees Israel's land grabs for what they are: illegal acts of aggression against a weaker people intended to prevent a Palestinian state that's independent and economically viable. And the world sees Israel's

persistent expansion into East Jerusalem and the West Bank as the main obstacle to any just and enduring peace between Israelis and Palestinians. It's also lamentably clear that in its long-standing role as Israel's unequivocal supporter, the U.S. is viewed not as a fair broker for peace but as a further obstacle, its moral leadership virtually bankrupt.

General Petraeus and many former State Department and military leaders, concerned about America's real interests in today's fast changing Middle East, have urged the President and Congress to re-evaluate their lop-sided support of Israel. A large and growing number of Americans share their view. A recent Pew Charitable Trust poll indicated that 45% of Americans were in favor of accepting the Palestinian bid for statehood; 25-36% were opposed. This sea change in American public opinion, despite the preponderance of pro-Israel opinion in mainstream media coverage, is telling. Americans care about fairness. When Americans learned of the brutality of Israel's invasion of Gaza and, more recently, when they heard Netanyahu refuse to halt

Israeli settlement building in Jerusalem, knowingly undermining any peace talks, Americans understood the injustice, and they questioned why their government was not condemning such blatantly arrogant abuses of force and power. Among those changing their attitudes toward Israel are many American Jews who can't reconcile their pro-human rights religious and political tradition with the way the State of Israel treats Palestinians. In fact, many Jews and others are wondering if Israel hasn't lost its soul.

I'm not against the State of Israel or its people. Like all peoples, Israelis have a right to live in a secure peace, free from missile or other attacks. I want them to

live in harmony with Palestinian residents of Israel and enjoy friendly relations with their regional neighbors. What I'm against is our government supporting Israel when Israel tramples on Palestinian human rights and disregards international law. Congress continues to turn a blind eye toward Israel's flagrant violations. The constant lobbying of the American Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) and groups like Christians United for Israel (CUFI) frightens our political representatives into a herd mentality. But a counter force is growing.

Israel is on the defensive, largely for reasons I've already stated. Two months ago Israel agreed to an extraordinary prisoner exchange in a deal brokered by Egypt: Israel freed 1,000 Palestinians from prison in exchange for one Israeli soldier. This bargain reveals Israel's desperation: Israel is deeply fearful that Egypt, under popular pressure, will break its treaty with Israel, and Israel made this calculated magnanimous gesture to improve its worsening image in the world. Domestically, Israel's desperation is equally apparent in its

political contradictions. Israel is undermining its identity as a democracy with recent proposals to call itself a "Jewish state." It can't be both democratic and Jewish, since nearly 25% of its population is Palestinian, most of whom will resist this imposition as intolerant, racist, and anti-democratic. Israel has

also passed a recent terrorism law making any Israeli citizen who publicly sides with the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign liable to be put in jail. These recent changes show Israel losing the very civil liberties—freedom of religious expression and free speech—that make a democracy authentic.

At the same time, the Palestinians are becoming more pro-active in determining their future. Mahmoud Abbas's appeal to the UN in September for statehood status put them front and center on the world stage. With less fanfare but increasing effect, the Palestinians' BDS campaign is having people around the globe ques-

tioning Israel's moral standing. In addition, the Palestinians' weekly nonviolent resistance actions against the illegal Israeli Separation Barrier (the Wall) are through Internet coverage gaining international attention and respect. Meanwhile, the Arab Spring, with all the attention it's drawn to the legitimacy of self-determination and democracy, has created a context that legitimizes the Palestinians' initiatives.

As the polls show, the American people are way ahead of their leaders on this issue. Increasingly, Americans are taking note of the imbalance of power, the disproportionate brute force, the injustices Palestinians suffer under occupation, and the way our government fails to hold Israel accountable. More and more people are seeing through AIPAC's fear tactic that criticizing Israel is a form of anti-Semitism.

What is needed now is for more of us to speak out for the change we want our leaders to support. As the Occupy Movement demonstrates, change must come from the bottom. Churchgoers need to raise this moral issue in their churches. Students need to ask their history and social studies teachers to explain the background, context, and debate. We citizens need to demand more balanced coverage in the media and more moral courage among our congressional senators and representatives. It's up to us to educate our leaders and embolden them. When they're confident they have support, more will add their voices to ours, and momentum will build away from fearful and misguided knee-jerk conformity toward more intelligent critical thinking. Together we'll shape a foreign policy that's wiser and fairer, beneficial to Israelis and Palestinians alike, and to America and the world.

ACTION: Write Senators Feinstein and Boxer: Hart Senate Office Bldg. Ste. 331 (Feinstein) or Ste.112 (Boxer), Washington DC 20510, and your Congressional representative: Dennis Cardoza, 1224 Longworth HOB, Washington DC 20515 (and whoever takes his seat); Jerry McNerney, 312 Cannon HOB, Washington DC 20515; George Radanovich 2410 Rayburn HOB, Washington DC 20515.

To learn more about the nonviolent movement among Palestinians, google: "nonviolent resistance against the wall" and "Palestinian nonviolence."



One word rarely used in connection with 'peace process' is 'justice'.

Source: The Palestinian Chronicle

when the rest of the world condemned Israel for its brutal invasion of Gaza in 2009 or its violent reaction in 2010 against the flotilla carrying humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza, the U.S. was conspicuous for its toothless public response

Louise and Me in Cambridge

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

I met Louise Jordan on Friday morning, November 25, 2011 in a small row house in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, UK. My host (my sweetheart), Claudine, had invited Louise to stay in her home the night before Louise's scheduled appearance at the Cambridge Folk Club. Claudine has a gift for spotting talent and helping fledgling artists find their footing.

Louise Jordan is an English Folk artist just completing her first year as a full time professional musician. Naturally, she plays guitar and sings, but she started on cello, doubled on piano, and studied vocal technique. All of these were done in the classical style and forms. Louise's technique and ability to cross genres have provided her with the inspiration to expand a bit out of English Folk and venture into singer-songwriter territory.

(Louise's arrangements of English folk tunes are gently inventive and she sings like an angel. Her ability to add cello and piano give her recordings a more sophisticated touch than many of her peers. Her version of "Sally Gardens" alone is worth the price of TEMPVS, and the rest of the CD will delight you too. To an American listener, Louise is quintessentially English. Her accent, her diction, and her arrangements are all impeccable and part and parcel of English Folk music. TEMPVS, is a wonderful CD and worthy of your time and money. It is available on iTunes. You can contact Louise through Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/louisejordan-sings>.) Visit her website at <http://louisejordan.co.uk/>

Louise is still in her 20s and just starting out on her career so the room, the meal, and the company were a welcome respite from long solo drives to short solo performances. She and I hit it off right away. We chatted about lots of things before finally getting around to playing some music together.

And when that went well too, I offered to support her on stage. To my surprise, she accepted.

We spent the rest of the day going over the 6 songs she would have time to do that night in Cambridge, and they all seemed straightforward enough to me, and they are good tunes (easy to hum). Playing original material of good quality is always easier than playing bad original material, and Louise made my job very easy in that respect.

My philosophy with regard to these types of gigs is to 1) do no harm, 2) stay out of the way of the vocal, and 3) add something of value to the song whenever and wherever possible. It seems to work as a general rule, and it worked well enough that night. Dick Gaughan was the real attraction in Cambridge that night, so the fact that the room was packed (about 200 people) had very little to do with Louise, and zero to do with me. We were opening for him, and I was a last moment add-on. Still, Louise acquired a few fans that evening, and comments about my playing were positive.

The Cambridge Folk Club is housed in the upstairs meeting room of a large pub called the Golden Hind. It seemed an interesting bit of synchronicity to me. The Golden Hind was the ship Sir Francis Drake sailed in the eastern Pacific Ocean exploring for Queen Elizabeth I and causing trouble for the Spanish. Drake's expedition landed in what is now California, but evidence pointing to any specific location remains scant and contradictory. Playing my first English gig in the Golden Hind made me feel as though Cambridge was trying to make me feel a little more at home.

The meeting room/auditorium lacked both a green room and, more importantly, a second exit. So Dick Gaughan,



Louise Jordan, and myself were forced to approach the stage from the audience. (Indeed, my walk to the stage was blocked by an eager fan's attempt to get back down front where he would have a chance to see everything up close.) Dick, being an old pro and more than likely familiar with the room, acquired a spot stage left in the audience and watched our performance. Louise and I made no such provision, so once we were

finished we were forced by the crush of the crowd to exit the room in order to get a drink and find a place to sit. We missed, according to all reports, an excellent show.

After all was said and done, Claudine told me how significant the evening had been. Louise scored the gig in a coup, so it was a big show for her. The Cambridge Folk Club is apparently one of the more prestigious folk clubs in England. So a gig under the auspices of the Cambridge Folk Club is a feather in any new artist's cap. Further, Louise prefers to trust her own abilities and she rarely has any supporting musicians on stage with her. So my appearance with Louise at the Cambridge Folk Club was proof to Claudine that I would have little trouble creating a career as a mandolin player in the English Folk scene.

I have to admit a musical career in England is a mighty temptation. The idea of spending my days thinking about music and working on skills seems like heaven, and up to now, an unattainable goal. I'll return to England in the spring to visit Claudine again. Louise plans a spring tour of southern England, so... If I get invited, and it if goes well... Who knows?

Looking back on it, the whole thing seems a bit dreamy. I arrived in Cambridge, spent the following day with Claudine and Louise in preparation for Louise's gig, and was on stage before I quite realized what was happening. Now I have a possible opportunity to pursue the dream of music. Heady stuff!

Here's hoping your Holidays were lovely and the New Year brings you joy.

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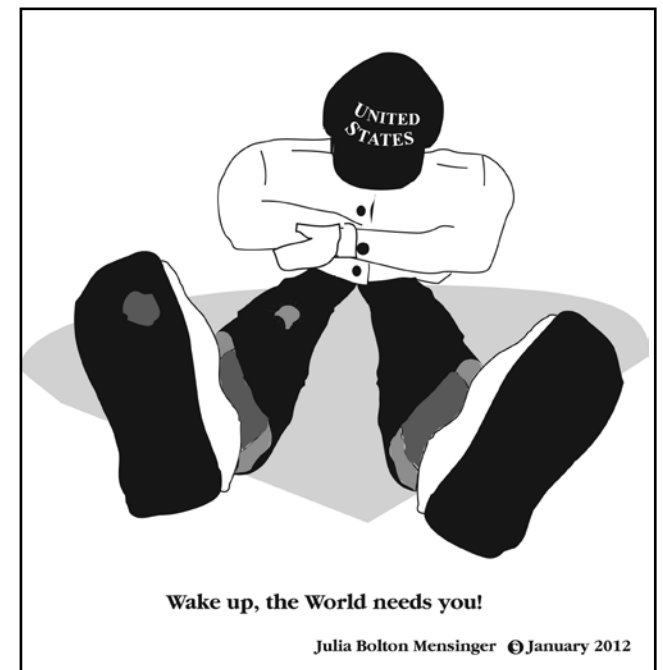
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