

Bank Settlement: \$25B down, \$675B to go

By VAN JONES, Reader Supported News

This week a \$25 billion settlement was announced in which big banks pay up for a portion of their bad deeds in the home foreclosure crisis. Everyone is trying to determine whether this is a good deal or a bad deal.

Here is how I score it. This deal represents small progress on a small problem. Now it's time to make big progress on the big problem.

Don't count on finding many good points in the deal itself, because there aren't a lot. In fact, the main win can be found in what's NOT in the deal.

A truly horrible deal would have let the banks write a small check and then seal the door on all further investigations and pursuits of accountability. This deal does NOT do that. Because this settlement limits legal immunity for banks, this deal does not automatically let the banks off the hook for all of their wrong-doing. Except for a few issues like

robo-signing, state attorneys general can still fight for more compensation and relief for the banks' victims. Government officials can proceed with investigating and prosecuting banks for their role in crashing the economy and the housing market. In other words, the door is still open to solve the much bigger problems we face. Our fight for justice can, and will, continue.

That is small comfort, perhaps, but it was hard won. So we should honor the hard work of New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, California Attorney General Kamala Harris and others, including many grassroots progressive organizations like New Bottom Line. They fought courageously to prevent a total sweetheart deal for the banks. This outcome is the result of determined activism, and without this heroic effort, the deal would have been drastically worse.

BANK SETTLEMENT cont. p. 8

Open Letter to the Occupy Movement: Why We Need Agreements

By STARHAWK, LISA FITHIAN and
LAUREN ROSS (OR JUNIPER)

From the Alliance of Community Trainers, ACT

The Occupy movement has had enormous successes in the short time since September when activists took over a square near Wall Street. It has attracted hundreds of thousands of active participants, spawned occupations in cities and towns all over North America, changed the national dialogue and garnered enormous public support. It's even, on occasion, gotten good press!

Now we are wrestling with the question that arises again and again in movements for social justice—how to struggle. Do we embrace nonviolence, or a 'diversity of tactics?' If we are a nonviolent movement, how do we define nonviolence? Is breaking a window violent?

We write as a trainers' collective with decades of experience, from the anti-Vietnam protests of the sixties through the strictly nonviolent antinuclear blockades of the seventies, in feminist, environmental and anti-intervention movements and the global justice mobilizations of the late '90s and early '00s. We embrace many labels, including feminist, anti-racist, eco-feminist and anarchist. We

have many times stood shoulder to shoulder with black blocs in the face of the riot cops, and we've been tear-gassed, stun-gunned, pepper sprayed, clubbed, and arrested,

While we've participated in many actions organized with a diversity of tactics, we do not believe that framework is workable for the Occupy Movement. Setting aside questions of morality or definitions of 'violence' and 'nonviolence'—for no two people define 'violence' in the same way—we ask the question:

What framework can we organize in that will build on our strengths, allow us to grow, embrace a wide diversity of participants, and make a powerful impact on the world?

'Diversity of tactics' becomes an easy way to avoid wrestling with questions of strategy and accountability. It lets us off the hook from doing the hard work of debating our positions and coming to agreements about how we want to act together. It becomes a code for 'anything goes,' and makes it impossible for our movements to hold anyone accountable for their actions.

The Occupy movement includes people from a broad diversity of backgrounds, life

OPEN LETTER cont. p. 8

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You are invited to attend the Twenty-Fifth Peace Essay Contest Awards Reception

Friday, the Ninth of March

7:00 in the evening

at the Mary Stuart Rogers Learning Center,
Modesto Junior College/West Campus
2001 Blue Gum Avenue, Modesto

MCs: former Peace Essay Contest writers

Presenter: William Broderick-Villa, attorney,
Former Mayor of Waterford and Waterford High School teacher

Light refreshments will be served. The public is welcome.

The Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center
Co-sponsored by the Modesto Junior College Department of
Literature and Language Arts

The "Yo-Yo Ma of Banjo" to play at CBS

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Sunday Afternoons at CBS presents one of Canada's best instrumentalists, Juno Award Winning Banjoist Jayme Stone, and his band in Room of Wonders, Sunday March 11 at 3 p.m. 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto.

Jayme Stone takes banjo beyond anything you have heard before, as he and his group explore music from Eastern Europe to Asia, Latin America to the Middle East to Africa, creating a mesmerizing sound of beauty and wonder.

Join the 20th Anniversary Season finale celebration after the concert at Tresetti's World Café pre-St. Patrick's Day, not-for-profit fundraiser from 5 to 9 p.m. on 11th St. between J and I Sts.

Both events promise an afternoon and evening of great music followed by great food and beverages.

Info: 571-6060, www.cbsmodesto.org/concerts

John McCutcheon concert successful: THANK YOU!

By KEN SCHROEDER

The John McCutcheon concert was again a successful event, filling the venue with nearly 300 people, generating community and hope and raising over \$2,500 for the Modesto Peace/Life Center.

Many thanks to those who attended, worked on the planning, made copies, sent out the mailer, hosted meetings, coordinated sponsorships, became sponsors, sold tickets, made announcements, designed the poster, put up posters, coordinated the tech work, set up the sound, moved chairs and the piano, strummed ukuleles, baked cookies, staffed the intermission refreshments, handed out programs and collected tickets, sold CD's and books, staffed the Peace/Life table, emceed, coordinated volunteers, made donations, wrote press releases and articles, set up lodging and food, promoted the concert by email and social media, drove long distances to attend, showed people where to park, handled finances, cleaned up after the concert, sang along, laughed, cried and brought energy to the event.

Special thanks to the Modesto Church of the Brethren for hosting for 11 years and selling tickets, to Anderson Custom Framing for being a ticket venue, to Marian Martino for program design and to the Funstrummers for their ukulele entertainment in the lobby before the concert.

See you next January for the 12th Annual Concert!

WWW.PEACELIFECENTER.ORG



Costa Rica Eco Tour Adventure

Come explore the wonders of Costa Rica from July 11-23, 2012. The cost is \$2335.

During this eco tour, we will learn about Costa Rican culture, tour a sustainable farm that produces its own electricity and take a day and night hike through the rainforest. We will also observe sea turtles nesting and go wildlife viewing while meandering the canals of Tortuguero.

Learn how sloths are being helped at a sloth sanctuary, gain knowledge on the growing of shade-grown coffee, the roasting process and participate in coffee tasting. We will also have the opportunity to zip line through the rainforest, walk on suspended bridges through the canopy and more!

Space is limited. Call 209-613-7517 or email Joanne Larson, jolen6@sbcglobal.net for full itinerary, more information and to reserve your spot!

Peace Camp wants you! Register early and save!

By KEN SCHROEDER

Peace Camp is looking for you to come on June 22-24 for a reunion to mark 30 years of Peace Camp. If you have enjoyed camp at some time in those 30 years, come and celebrate and see familiar and new faces. Invite your old and new friends, your family, and your grown children to join us for community, good times and renewal. As always, we will be at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Rd. off Hwy 108 in the Sierras past Pinecrest. All ages are welcome. New campers are always welcome.

One of our workshops will address the issue of immigration, which affects many millions of people and is a source of heat in this year's election. We'll learn what's happening and how individuals are affected. In addition, there will be good food thanks to Deborah Roberts, singing led by Scott Gifford, campfire, talent show and recreation.

The camp fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Adults are \$80, young people 18 and under are \$60, and children 3 and under are free. **Save \$10 a person by registering by June 3.** Partial scholarships and day rates are available.

Registration forms can be printed out from <http://stanislausconnections.org/2012/PCamp%202012.pdf> and mailed.

Third Annual May Day Ukulele Play Day

By LORRIE FREITAS

On May 5, 2012, play all day from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lessons by teachers from Santa Cruz ukulele and Portland ukulele groups. Lunch homemade by the Funstrummers. A songbook to sing and play from all day.

Register at Funstrummersuke@aol.com or call 209-505-3216.

IN MEMORIAM
MARTIN J. ZONLIGT

November 14, 1934 — January 31, 2012

Sovereignty in Action: Venezuela Delegation

Submitted by SHELLY SCRIBNER

There will be a delegation to Venezuela sponsored by School of the Americas Watch (SOA) and the Task Force on the Americas

Participants will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the overthrow of the coup against President Hugo Chavez, the most significant people-power victory for the sovereignty of Latin America in many decades.

We will learn about food sovereignty by visiting cooperative agricultural initiatives promoted by the Bolivarian government of Venezuela to boost local production of food staples. We will also be introduced to a new approach to coffee production.

Participants will experience examples of national and regional sovereignty, such as a new housing mission, Mision Vivienda, learn about new levels of medical care through the Cuban doctors program, and visit a nationalized food production industry that supplies local communities.

On the political front, in Caracas, we'll examine the new CELAC, Community of Latin American and Caribbean states (which does not include the US and Canada). CELAC is a significant step for asserting Latin American sovereignty.

We will travel from Caracas, to Barquisimeto, Sanare, and Barinas. Back in Caracas we might meet with opposition representatives, members of the National Assembly.

When: APRIL 7-14, 2012

Cost: \$1400 (does not include fare to and from Venezuela). Partial are scholarships available upon request.

Trip Leader: Lisa Sullivan, SOA Watch Latin America Liaison.

Application & information: Dale Sorensen, 415/924-3227, or geodale1@earthlink.net

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The Rest of the Story

By JENIFER WEST

Loyal readers of this column, if such there be, may recall that this writer ended up in the hospital last fall. Spent a week there, in fact. And I can assure you that's a bit of a rough way to get a vacation. But I was very well taken care of, and the problem, which started with an incorrect prescription medication and ended up mimicking a heart attack, has now been resolved.

But it led us to discover another, potentially even more serious issue that my husband didn't realize he had.

One of the souvenirs of my heart adventure was a blood pressure cuff. I used it a couple of times a day for a week or two, but as we'd been told my heart was fine, and the numbers always looked good, I sort of tapered off. About a month after I'd been in the hospital, I picked it up on a whim. Of course, everything was fine. Then my husband stuck out his arm.

He's always been athletic, taken pretty good care of himself and been about as healthy as they come. So we weren't concerned. But the readings were funny – blood pressure a little high, irregular heartbeat. Then I realized we'd had the cuff on upside down. Tried it again, the correct way. Huh – same thing. As he felt fine, we decided to wait, and check it again the next day. But the readings were goofy again. I encouraged him to get it checked.

The nurse listened to our story, then listened carefully to his heart. And she nearly sent us home. But my husband pointed out that his readings on the cuff had shown an irregular heartbeat for two days, while mine had been ok. At first she downplayed it, explaining that those drugstore cuffs can sometimes be inaccurate. But my husband insisted that they check further, citing my concern about the funny readings. So they wheeled in the portable EKG machine.

Next thing we knew, we were waiting for an ambulance.

Turns out he was having what they call "atrial flutter." In the ambulance, they talked and joked with him, showing him the "textbook case" flutter readings on their fancy machine. So aside from being a little shaken by his first ambulance

ride, he was doing fine.

Driving along behind, I wondered what kind of weekend we were about to have.

But they let him go after an hour or two. It seems this kind of thing can come and go. So after confirming that he would see a cardiologist right away, they sent us home.

The first thing out of the cardiologist's mouth, and it wasn't a question, was, "You have sleep apnea, and you're not using your machine, right?" When my husband admitted that he did and he wasn't, the doc explained that

untreated sleep apnea, a condition in which one stops breathing

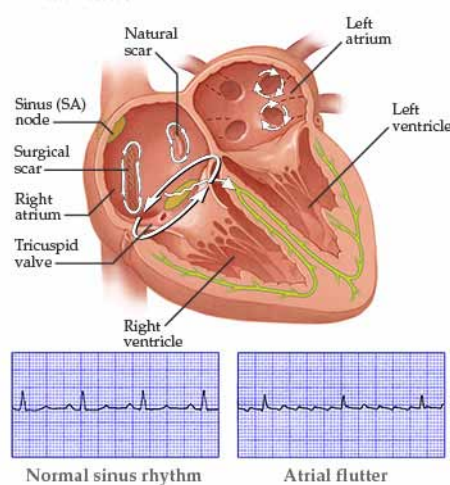
frequently while sleeping, can eventually cause other problems – particularly of the heart. (A friend later told me she'd lost someone very dear to her to a heart attack, while they were working to get his sleep apnea under control.) He prescribed some medications, including a blood thinner. And I knew our dinner menu, which generally includes plenty of leafy greens fresh from our backyard, was about to change.

That very night, my husband began to make a sincere effort to wear his "scuba mask" – the machine that helps keep him breathing all night. To our amazement, the adjustment only took a couple of nights. We eventually added a humidifier, which made a tremendous difference. Not only was he sleeping better, he began to feel better in general.

That little adventure was about three months ago, and we've been able to get the medication and our dining habits balanced. So we were both a little dismayed when we learned the next part of the plan.

The other medication the doc put him on, several months ago, is supposed to regulate the electrical charge in the heart, which controls its rhythm. But he apparently needed a little something more than the medication. So the heart doc explained that they wanted to, in effect, jolt it back into rhythm. The procedure itself is, for obvious reasons, very quick. Still, we were both a little uneasy. But, these are medical professionals, and we decided to leave it in their hands. We

Atrial Flutter



did a little prayer work ahead of time, though – that certainly never hurts!

The day finally arrived, and we headed in to the hospital. My husband doesn't react well to anesthetics, and between our trepidation about the procedure itself and concern about how he might feel once he awoke, it was a bit of a tense ride. When the medical team was assembled, they sent me out of the room. For him, it was so quick he was shocked when he came around to find they were already done – and that he felt perfectly well.

Out in the lobby, I sat holding his cell phone, waiting – and trying not to worry, or think about what was going on in that room. (And trying to tune out

something called the Jerry Springer Show. We don't own a TV, and I was absolutely appalled by what's shown in broad daylight, in a public place, these days.) Although it seemed much longer, the doc came out in less than ten minutes to tell me everything had gone very well, and that his heart was back in rhythm.

So far, his heart seems to be holding that rhythm. So now we wait. They'll check again in a couple of months, and let us know if he can start phasing off the medications (which we hope!).

In the meantime, he wears his mask. And has warned all his buddies about the perils of untreated sleep apnea.

And that, Dear Reader, is the rest of the story.

Ed. note: heart graphic courtesy of www.MouseRunner.com



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2012 Peace Essay Contest Winners

Division I (grades 11 – 12)

First Place: Morgan Krueger, Modesto High School

Second Place: Jonna Mae Pagaduan, Oakdale High School

Third Place: Danny Wong, Oakdale High School

Honorable Mention: Mason Bettencourt, Enochs High School; Marlene Moshekh, Elliott Alternative Education Center

Finalists: From Enochs High School High School: Eliette Avaujo, Joey Borges, Amber Esparza, Carlos J. Gutierrez, Stephen Hutchins, Ashley Johnson, D.J. Lopez, Mark Martinez, Madleine McNeilly, Ashley Murray, Courtney Smith, Christine Walbert, and Diana Younan; Madison Becker, Whitmore Charter; Megan Yana, Valley Oak Jr/Sr High School

School Winners: Mason Bettencourt, Enochs High School

A school winner was chosen for all schools with ten or more entries in this division.

Division II (grades 9-10)

First Place: Sebian Martinez-Escobar, Modesto High School

Second Place: Carolyn Stevens, Whitmore Charter School

Third Place: Sayra Garcia, Denair High School

Honorable Mentions: Shae King, Tristan Lima, and Krystal Ramos, Denair High School

Finalists: Jenna Cole, Katelynn Lawson, and Jordon Titus, Denair High School; Henna Hundal, Turlock High School; From Whitmore Charter: Alivia King, Morgan Lesan, Kellie McKiernan, Lisa Overholtzer, Peter Rodrigues, Austin Schoppet, Zach Schuchardt, Kaitlyn Slovek, Camille Stone, and Dana Wheeler.

School Winners: Sayra Gracia, Denair High School; Carolyn Stevens, Whitmore Charter

A school winner was chosen for all schools with ten or more entries in this division.

Division III (grades 7-8)

First Place: Liliana De Simone, Oakdale Jr. High School

Second Place: Lorena Lopez, Empire Middle School

Third Place: Alexandria K. Yaum, Blaker-Kinser Jr. High School

Honorable Mentions: Jennifer Morrow, St. Stanislaus Parish School; Elizabeth Robinette, Austin Romito, Oakdale Jr. High School

Finalists: Alexander Delgado; Creekside MS; from Oakdale JrHigh School: Logan Black, Hannah Chappell, Haley Fuller, Leah Gayton, Makayla Johnson, Alex Pena, Pedro Rodriguez, Kamaldeep Singh, Shaye Spani, and Jasmine Yong; From Prescott Sr. Elementary School: Aleza Kossels, Sandra Navarro, and Katharine Rodriguez.

School Winners: Alexandria K. Yaum, Blaker-Kinser; Lorena Lopez, Empire; Arden Brooks, Great Valley Academy; Liliana De Simone, Oakdale; Aleza Kossels, Prescott; Kennedy Bruce, Roberts Ferry; Jennifer Morrow, St. Stanislaus.

A school winner was chosen for all schools with ten or more entries in this division.

Division IV (grades 5-6)

First Place: Aaron Linares, Lakewood Elementary

Second Place: Jasmine Khatibi, Lakewood Elementary

Third Place: Julie Origel, Emilie J. Ross Middle School

Honorable Mentions: Anthony Cannon, Fremont Open Plan; Javier Medina, Mary Lou Dieterich School; Dorina Youhana, Lakewood

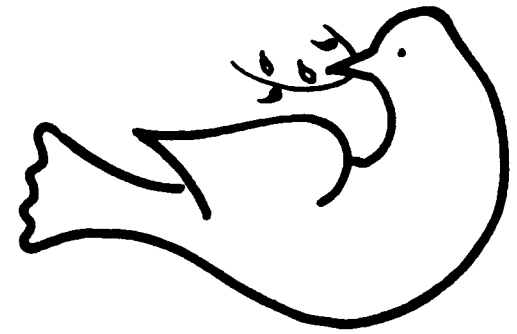
Finalists: Marlee Baker and Edith Fernandez, Whitmore Charter, Shelby Benz, Stanislaus Union; Sera Boatman and Maya Guzman, John Muir Elementary; Isabel Diazdeleon & Jose Quezada, Adkison Elementary; Alison M. Divis & Shania Sharar, Savage Middle School; Mehar Nijjar, Agnes Baptist School; Kade Edan Nomof, Lakewood; and Cody Schut & David Torres, Fremont Open Plan.

School Winners: Isabel Diazdeleon, Adkinson; Mehar Nijjar, Agnes Baptist; Jaime Bedoy, Alberta Martone School; Anthony Cannon, Fremont Open Plan; Sera Boatman, John Muir; Aaron Linares, Lakewood; David Sanchez, Roberts Ferry School; Liana Gamino Robertson Road Elementary; Salma Reynoso, Christine Sipherd Elementary; Jackson Runyon, Sonoma; Shania Sharar, Savage; Marlee Baker, Whitmore Charter

A school winner was chosen for all schools with ten or more entries in this division.

The 25th Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center.

Co-sponsored by the Modesto Junior College Department of Literature and Language Arts



The 2012 Peace Essay Contest

By **INDIRA CLARK**

The 25th Peace Essay Contest invited 4-8 grade students to reflect on their own experience observing on verbal bullying. Grades 9-10 focused cyberbullying. Division I entries from 11th and 12 graders, explored the use of social media and technology to promote a particular point of view or agenda.

There were 767 qualifying entries from public and private school throughout Stanislaus County.


Thank to our screeners and judges: Anna Brown, Indira Clark, Luella Cole, Chris Davidson, Tina Driskill, John Frailing, David Franklin, Pam Franklin, Simeon Franklin, Analisa Freitas, Lorrie Freitas, Jenlane Gee Matt, Elaine Gorman, Nancy Griggs, Linda Knoll, Linda Legace, John Lucas, Linda McFelter, Gil Moss, Tom Myers, Kaye Osborn, Linda Owen, Sheila Rose, Sandy Sample, Linda Scheller, Shelly Scribner, David Tucker, Phoebe Tyson, Rachel Tyson, Annaliese Akpovi, Jim Beggs, Peggy Casteneda, Steve Collins, Jim Costello, Susan Janis, Judy Kropp, Barbara Manrique, Russ Matteson, Dan Onorato, Judy Sly, Julie TenBrink, and Anita Young.

2012 Peace Essay Committee: Margaret Barker, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Linda Legace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner, David Tucker.

Sponsored by the Modesto Peace/Life Center, the contest is co-sponsored by the Modesto Junior College Department of Literature and Language Arts

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Division I First Place Winning Essay: The Global Network

Morgan Krueger

Modesto High School ~ Ms. Pereira

The advances in technology that have been made over the last few decades have been controversial. There are many great achievements that have come about due to recent technological advancements, but there are many drawbacks as well. Social media is no different. It can be used to help the abused and the oppressed, or it can be used to keep those people from throwing off their burdens and seeking a better life. Depending on how it is used, today's social media could be responsible for spreading ideas, rallying support for peaceful protests, and eventually helping us come closer to the ideal goal of a more peaceful world.

Thanks to popular websites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, it is now easier than ever to reach a worldwide audience with a particular idea. This idea can easily spread and become a mass movement. Past ways of communication were limited. For example, texting and e-mail are both limited as their message will continue to spread only if individual people take it upon their own shoulders to pass the message on. But even that has its limits, because one can only share an idea with immediate friends. And if a person's friends don't resend the idea, then the message stops. With social media, this isn't a problem. When a person 'likes' a page, 'posts' an idea or 'tweets' a message, this information is automatically made available to that person's friends, followers, and even strangers, depending on the security settings. Or if someone creates a page, everyone across the globe can access this

page, enabling a message to spread faster and farther than it would if relying on e-mail or texting. Social media has given us the power to spread an idea across the globe in a matter of seconds. And if the idea being sent is one of peace, then the dream of a more peaceful world is one step closer to becoming a reality.

In the past few years, social media has been used internationally to rally people to stand up against government bullying and abuse, and to support the cause of peace. An example of this was Wael Ghonim's Facebook page that started a peaceful movement against the oppressive Egyptian government. Even though the government responded with violence, the acts of the protesters were peaceful. Social media was vital to this movement. Sometimes people who support a cause are hesitant to act, because they don't know if they are alone. With social media, people have the comfort of knowing there are hundreds or even thousands of other people who believe in the same idea, or support the same movement. Peaceful protests have a noticeably higher turn out when social media is used. This is because more people receive the message, and those people are more likely to show up if they can see there will be a large number attending. This is an example of when there is strength in numbers. In Egypt, no one was brave enough, or foolish enough, to stand up against the government alone. But using social media individual people banded together for support, and were able to change their government without resorting to violence.

The intent and the outcome of the protests in Egypt dif-

fered greatly. When most people think of the Egyptian protests, they remember the terrible violence that accompanied it. But remember, the original group of protesters, the ones who joined together due to Ghonim's Facebook page, used no violence in their protests. The violence came from the oppressive government, as well as from a few rebel groups. The intent of the protests was to bring about political change peacefully. Political change was eventually achieved, but regrettably the peace of the protestors was broken.

This does not mean the Egyptian protests were a failure. The fact that this change of government started off with a peaceful protest that was organized by social media, is unique. Let's make that a precedent; when people want change, whether it is economic, political, or social change, they should go about it peacefully. Social media can help this idea and spread it around the world.

The rise of social media has forever changed our society. Whether or not this change is welcomed by all, citizens need to learn to use the advantages of social media to further promote peace. While the movements that are started by social media can sometimes veer off of their original course; social media can still be of great value when promoting peace. From spreading ideas to organizing protests, social media can be a priceless treasure in achieving our goal of a more peaceful world.

It's Women's History Month: what's olive oil and vinegar got to do with it?

By **TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL** and **DONNA PHILLIPS**

Women use the lion's share of cosmetics and toiletries, all of which involve over-the-top packaging, often unhealthy chemicals, and lots of shipping transportation space. A talk with my green-practitioner friend, Donna Phillips, yielded some healthy, dollar saving, almost package-free green tips for beauty and body care both women and men can add to their daily routines.

Olive Oil Over All

When I was a little girl, I remember my mother used olive oil to condition her hair. That was probably a practice she brought with her from Russia. Unfortunately, the large can of olive oil lived in a bathroom cabinet and almost never made it to the kitchen. "We are what we eat" and it is well known that olive oil leads to good health inside and out. Donna, who likes to point out the word olive as "O Live", sug-



gests olive oil is a fine over-all body moisturizer including face and eyes, and as a nail cuticle massage. She adds; Sesame oil is used in the Middle and Far East as a bodyrub before bathing for circulation, healing and energy (Chi).

The Lovely Lemon

Again, the lemon is beneficial both inside and out. Donna has shared the following "skip the spa" recipes:

As an exfoliant scrub:

1 t. lemon juice, 1 t. honey

1 T. ground almond meal

Massage on face and neck in circular motion, leave on face a short time and rinse with clean filtered water.

Mix the juice and some of the pulp of 1 lemon with salt as an exfoliant.

As a facial toner and softener

Beat a large egg white with 1 1/2 T. lemon juice. Apply to face and neck. Let dry and rinse with clean filtered water. Dry face and apply Witch Hazel.

Rinse hands in lemon juice to remove garlic and onion smells and berry stains.

To strengthen and shine fingernails, soak them in lemon juice for 10 minutes and rinse well.

Blackheads, pimples and other facial blemishes

1. Dab with lemon juice at night before going to bed, rinse off in the morning - should see results within one week.

2. Place paper thin slices of potato on skin blemishes,

let dry over night or for several hours before removing and rinsing clean.

To prevent dandruff and/or lighten hair

Mix 6 T. lime juice and 3 T. lemon juice with 3 T. shampoo. Sit in sun for 15 to 20 minutes before rinsing.

Vinegar for vitality

Donna advocates a daily drink of unfiltered apple cider vinegar with "the mother", honey and water as a body cleanse to alkalize the body for maximum health benefits, including cleansing the arteries and promoting beautiful skin and hair.

Her detox formula starts with 1 t. vinegar and honey to taste in a cup of water taken in the morning and at night working up to 1 T. of vinegar.

Baking Soda

Use for brushing teeth and to absorb underarm odor. Mix with a bit of water and dab on razor burns and scrapes.

These are just a few of the countless green beauty and personal hygiene aides that can be put together at little cost to promote a healthy planet and a healthy you.

Please share your suggestions by sending them to seekerseer@sbcglobal.net

Next month: Green Spring Cleaning Tips.

Photo: Courtesy of Alex Ex

Poetic Portraits of a Revolution

Poetic Portraits of a Revolution, produced by the Academy Award-winning organization Empowerment Project, sent nationally recognized spoken word poets and youth educators Will McInerney and Kane Smego along with project translator and interpreter, Mohammad Moussa and professional photographer and videographer Sameer Abdelkhalek to Egypt and Tunisia from June 15 – August 9, 2011 to collect oral histories, capture photographs and video, and create poetic reflections that depict the sights, sounds, and emotions of life in both countries during this time of transformation in an attempt to combat anti-Arabism, Islamophobia, as well as one-dimensional, or romanticized conceptions of revolution by covering a broad range of perspectives within these monumental movements for change.

The *Poetic Portraits of a Revolution* project utilizes first-hand accounts to highlight and powerfully convey what it would be like to experience, in person, one of the most significant social movements of the new millennium through the stories of the people themselves and the art that they inspire.

Poetry and recordings from the group's journey have been featured in nationally broadcast radio segments on the

American Public Media show "The Story" with Dick Gordon, as well as on "Morning Edition." All the material gathered during the trip is currently being transformed into a live theater performance, a photography and poetry installation, a book publication, and a film production to be presented across the country and internationally.

The ambitious collaboration is being produced by the Empowerment Project, an Academy Award-winning, tax-exempt not-for-profit organization, coordinated by acclaimed documentarians, David Kasper and Barbara Trent. Empowerment Project has been supporting media activism and social change since 1984 through filmmaking and distribution, consulting, training, public speaking, and programs in sustainable living.

Coupling artistic innovation with practical application, the PPR team has linked up with local organizations and individuals on the ground to set up interviews and collect oral histories covering a wide spectrum of perspectives--from organizers, journalists, teachers, and internet activists, to laborers, women, youth, politicians, and elders--to raise awareness around the situation in Egypt and Tunisia.

The ultimate goal is to raise international awareness around the experiences of people in both countries, as well as to offer connections between the revolutions in North Africa and current social and political movements in the United States and abroad. In addition, the project aims to promote alternative forms of news and information transmission that break from the sensationalized conventions of mainstream media and focus on the human and emotional element of stories that are often lost in the facts.

To learn more about the poets and the PPR, visit <http://www.PPR2011.org/>

Note to the Reader:

Stanislaus Connections presents poetry from the documentary project, *Poetic Portraits of a Revolution*, which provides a moving glimpse into the Arab Spring as it began in Egypt and Tunisia. A description of the project, and poetry will be found on these adjoining pages as well as on page 9, "A Gathering of Poets." For more information on *Poetic Portraits of a Revolution* and the people who made it, visit <http://www.PPR2011.org/>

Finding Meaning

There is a word being thrown around a lot in Cairo these days
Baltegayya or armed thugs
its used by police to describe protesters
and by protesters to point out henchmen hired by the police
it seems like everyone is a baltegayya to someone
it's a difficult word to define
kind of like Revolution

So we've been tiptoeing a fault line searching for answers
in the stories that shook a nation's foundations to the ground
finding fragments of meaning beneath the rubble

Like 33 stops on a subway map with the names of famous
politicians
and one scratched off on every metro car where Mubarak's
name used to be,
like a lottery ticket reminding a country
that sometimes when enough people play the odds
everyone wins
and a new name written by passengers in its place
with sharpie and shaky handwriting
al shohada', the martyrs
a memorial for Egypt's underground movement visible for
all to see

We are finding meaning
In the pride of a woman named Heba
who told us how she confronted a police officer during a
protest
And how he couldn't gather the courage to make eye
contact with her
I guess it was too intimidating to look directly into her
determination

We are finding meaning
In the tales of a protester named Mohammad

injured by a sniper's bullet
he recalls lunch on the front lines
Where a man was passed a small loaf of bread
and tore half of it for the person next to him, who did the same
like shreds of a better tomorrow
passing between palms that can't quite read the future
Mohammad said that when the bread reached him it was
just a tiny piece
But he too tore it in half and shared it with the unknown
man beside him
In Tahrir Square, you didn't always know your brother's
name

We are finding meaning
In the story of a Cairo cop with a heavy conscious
trying to regain hold of his humanity
by helping a street artist keep paint from dripping off the
face of a martyr's mural
there is already enough blood on his hands
and he knows it

We are finding meaning
In the charred carcass
of the old party headquarters,
abandoned and torched by protesters
after the fall of their dictator
its beautiful blackened bones bear
an unfortunate resemblance
to the church firebombed during a
clash between Christians and Muslims
just a few weeks later,
and I think...

They say God works in mysterious ways,
well the Devil must counterfeit his minted miracles
with a sweaty stack of his own

And revolution is no different
For every tale of wonder and transformation
there is another of stagnation and false hope

like the fruit vendor who still makes less than minimum wage

like the family who's child has been replaced by a picture frame

like the woman who still hears cat calls in the street after
the crowds have dispersed

But one thing is for sure
some incredible changes in consciousness have occurred
here
but many seem to feel that it may not be time
for fireworks just yet
We could learn a lot from them
Cause back home
our revolution is still raging too

— PPR 2011



continued on pages 7, 9 and 10



Spy Games

July 8th, one of our last days in Egypt
and we still hadn't seen the pyramids
told it was a necessity so we took the morning off
2 hours later I realized we were surrounded by tourists for
the first time
and I wondered if they even knew
that just across town hundreds of thousands of protesters
were gathering
in a resurgence of the revolution

This is what drew us to Egypt
to point our cameras at people not pyramids
like Fatallah, a labor organizer
who has more wrinkles of wisdom in his cheeks than the
sphinx has cracks in its nose
we traveled to Alexandria just to sit with him
didn't have time to rummage through the ruins of the great
library
that burnt to the ground in that city 2000 years ago
rather we walked for hours with this 76 year old
encyclopedia of life

it reminds me of a west african saying about the griot's,
traveling oral poets held to the highest regard by the people
they say, when a griot dies a library burns to the ground
but we know for certain fatallah is still breathing
and egypt is waiting for the history text books to be revised
the people here know two types of foreigners
those who only revere the past
and those who are ready to steal their future

so as our cameras focus on faces
and it's clear we aren't tourist
we're often accused of being spies
just yesterday a local news station
reported that 4 Americans had been arrested for taking
pictures
and a photo of our photographer Sameer was among them,

we all laughed and checked his wrists
for any hiding handcuffs
realizing the falseness of the story
But we were flattered really,
I mean we didn't even have to stretch
the project budget to buy tuxedos and wristwatch gadgets
to fit the spy image
although,
Sameer does have a G shock watch
that's water resistant

and tell's you the phase in the lunar cycle
but all jokes aside
the labeling of all foreigners as spies
is a trusty gadget tucked into the utility belts
of most governments,
it's easy for the people to miss the guillotines fastened to
the power structures above them,
when they're set on finding the Brutus in their midst,
but not all are fooled
and many Egyptians remind us
that the Military machine is still in power
and just as no amount of change can
make a parking meter work like a jukebox
the music of gun barrels will never sound quite like
democracy
ringing from rooftops

and so here in Egypt
there are sentiments hanging from rear view mirrors in the
form of a cross
and stored by countless taxi drivers in Qurans on
dashboards

Phonebooths

A man with eyes as red as break lights
stopped us in the subway and asked
"Ento tsawwarou ley?"
"Why are you filming?"
We were annoyed at first but remembered the night before
the movie Iron-Man was playing on the TV at a friend's
apartment
the villains were Arab terrorists speaking Egyptian dialect
This is how the world knows his people
We asked a young poet here, what's the one thing he would
say to the world
He said we are a normal country,
we have roads, cars, and buildings,
it's not a desert with camels
and it reminded us why we're here

We met with a medic the other day named Mustafa
and as he spoke, I felt like I was sitting in front of a
superhero
a nanotechnology engineer turned field medic
Tahrir Square was this ordinary superman's phone booth
and it was a tight squeeze sometimes
he said that at moments in the Mosque turned hospital,
"There were more doctors than patients"
He cradled memories drenched with anesthetics
that made our hearts go numb
as blood spilled from his stories like they were typed with
wounded fingers

He asked to take a break from the interview
as he mentioned the people he's watched ride the delicate
seesaw between life and death
its a lot like the one that teeters between laughter and
crying
and as he chuckled nervously
I couldn't tell which way his emotions were leaning
His eyes have seen things my nightmares can't imagine

it seems like everyone's looking for God's protection
For a calm blanket to cover their country
So as things move forward on unknown highways
It is certain that there is no looking back
The wrinkles on Fathalla's hands will tell you this journey
takes a long time
And fear mongering can set up road blocks made of
quicksand
But there are many Egyptians racing along
like the 76 year old walking library
whose filled his shelves with enough tales of Revolution
to know there are greater threats than espionage
and there are many like him
who have been trained for 30 years to spot the lies
so for every voice accusing us of being spies
there are symphonies of assalamu alaikum waiting to greet
us on the streets
we left Egypt the other day
with a new found appreciation of living, breathing, history
despite what the government, the army, and the media say

— Kane Smego

I've been lying awake the past few nights wondering how
he sleeps

A couple of days ago we interviewed a giant
not the kind with a club the size of a dinosaur femur, that
only speaks in grunts

In fact it was the man who dared to question her right to
speak that seemed unable to say much more than fe fie fo fum
while she grinded his bones to make her point
I thought she was goliath at first
But realized she is David with a slingshot for a tongue
A 5 foot giant in her own right
a supernova that he mistook for a starfish
with a mind so sharp hidden beneath her headscarf
it could have qualified as a concealed weapon

I wonder if the riot police on the 25th of January were as
terrified of her as he is
tear gas bringing her to the point of suffocation
but it couldn't choke the hope tucked inside her throat
so she came back
with a million others like her
like the man who asked why we were filming

And I realize that the world has been wrapping Egyptians
in stereotypes for so long
that all we see are mummies buried beneath the image of
pyramids
But we are learning what real Egyptians look like
as we stare into the eyes of people like Amina and Mustafa
and it's clear that there aren't any capes waving behind them
their only superpower is being human
reminding us that we all have a phone booth inside of us
we just have to have the courage
to open the door

— Mohammad Moussa

from page 1

Bank Settlement: \$25B down, \$675B to go

That said, there is a reason why many progressives and housing advocates are furious, and why many struggling homeowners are left wondering, "How does this help me?"

Millions of homeowners and families are still suffering under the tremendous weight of a debt blanket that is smothering the economy.

This \$25 billion settlement helps only a fraction of those homeowners and addresses only a very limited set of fraudulent behaviors. A number of homeowners will get some cash payments, but the amounts are negligible compared to the pain and injustice they have experienced. The actual total cash paid out by the banks is only \$5 billion dollars, to be split among the nation's largest banks -- hardly a stiff penalty considering that the six largest banks in the U.S. paid \$144 billion in bonuses last year. And enforcement mechanisms remain murky.

We must not forget the more than 14 million homeowners (one in five) whose homes are underwater, beneath a crushing total \$700 billion in negative equity. We must not forget the more than 4 million families who have lost their homes. We must not forget the millions of families who are in some form of foreclosure proceedings on this very day.

These are the Americans who have suffered and continue to suffer. They are worried today, like yesterday, whether they will still have a home to live in tomorrow. They are the ones who must choose every month whether to pay bills or to feed their children.

Here are three things that must happen next:

- 1) The U.S. Department of Justice and state attorneys general must investigate and prosecute banks more aggressively than ever, at a much larger scale than anything that has happened to date.
- 2) We must force banks to make massive principal reduction of hundreds of billions of dollars, to immediately relieve the 14 million homeowners in the country who have underwater mortgages.
- 3) We must change laws and regulations to prevent this kind of crisis and fraud from ever happening again.

Two weeks ago, I called for hundreds of billions in principal reduction for homeowners. This would free up Americans to start new businesses, spend money on worthwhile products and services, and invest in their children's futures. We still need to address the \$700 billion in negative equity, which in turn is only part of the nearly seven trillion dollars in total lost equity created by the banks' irresponsible, and in some cases, illegal practices.

We need a solution at the scale of the problem, so that families can get back on their feet, the economy can get working, and people can reach for their American dreams again instead of watching them drown.

That is why I say: \$25 billion down, \$675 billion to go.

From: <http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/site/bank-settlement-25-billion-down-675-billion-go>

from page 1

Open Letter to the Occupy Movement

experiences and political philosophies. Some of us want to reform the system and some of us want to tear it down and replace it with something better. Our one great point of agreement is our call for transparency and accountability. We stand against the corrupt institutions that broker power behind closed doors. We call to account the financial manipulators that have bilked billions out of the poor and the middle classes.

Just as we call for accountability and transparency, we ourselves must be accountable and transparent. Some tactics are incompatible with those goals, even if in other situations they might be useful, honorable or appropriate. We can't be transparent behind masks. We can't be accountable for actions we run away from. We can't maintain the security culture necessary for planning and carrying out attacks on property and also maintain the openness that can continue to invite in a true diversity of new people. We can't make alliances with groups from impacted communities, such as immigrants, if we can't make agreements about what tactics we will employ in any given action.

The framework that might best serve the Occupy movement is one of strategic nonviolent direct action. Within that framework, Occupy groups would make clear agreements about which tactics to use for a given action. This frame is strategic — it makes no moral judgments about whether or not violence is ever appropriate, it does not demand we commit ourselves to a lifetime of Gandhian pacifism, but it says, 'This is how we agree to act together at this time.' It is active, not passive. It seeks to create a dilemma for the opposition, and to dramatize the difference between our values and theirs.

Strategic nonviolent direct action has powerful advantages:

We make agreements about what types of action we will take, and hold one another accountable for keeping them. Making agreements is empowering. If I know what to expect in an action, I can make a choice about whether or not to participate. While we can never know nor control how the police will react, we can make choices about what types of action we stand behind personally and are willing to answer for. We don't place unwilling people in the position of being held responsible for acts they did not commit and do not support.

In the process of coming to agreements, we listen to each other's differing viewpoints. We don't avoid disagreements within our group, but learn to debate freely, passionately, and respectfully.

We organize openly, without fear, because we stand behind our actions. We may break laws in service to the higher laws of conscience. We don't seek punishment nor admit the right of the system to punish us, but we face the potential consequences for our actions with courage and pride.

Because we organize openly, we can invite new people into our movement and it can continue to grow. As soon as we institute a security culture in the midst of a mass movement, the movement begins to close in upon itself and to shrink.

Holding to a framework of nonviolent direct action does not make us 'safe.' We can't control what the police do and they need no direct provocation to attack us. But it does let us make clear decisions about what kinds of actions we put ourselves at risk for.

Nonviolent direct action creates dilemmas for the opposition, and clearly dramatizes the difference between the corrupt values of the system and the values we stand for.

Their institutions enshrine greed while we give away food, offer shelter, treat each person with generosity. They silence dissent while we value every voice. They employ violence to maintain their system while we counter it with the sheer courage of our presence.

Lack of agreements privileges the young over the old, the loud voices over the soft, the fast over the slow, the able-bodied over those with disabilities, the citizen over the immigrant, white folks over people of color, those who can do damage and flee the scene over those who are left to face the consequences.

Lack of agreements and lack of accountability leaves us wide open to provocateurs and agents. Not everyone who wears a mask or breaks a window is a provocateur. Many people clearly believe that property damage is a strong way to challenge the system. And masks have an honorable history from the anti-fascist movement in Germany and the Zapatista movement in Mexico, who said "We wear our masks to be seen."

But a mask and a lack of clear expectations create a perfect opening for those who do not have the best interests of the movement at heart, for agents and provocateurs who can never be held to account. As well, the fear of provocateurs itself sows suspicion and undercuts our ability to openly organize and grow.

A framework of strategic nonviolent direct action makes it easy to reject provocation. We know what we've agreed to — and anyone urging other courses of action can be reminded of those agreements or rejected.

We hold one another accountable not by force or control, ours or the systems, but by the power of our united opinion and our willingness to stand behind, speak for, and act to defend our agreements.

A framework of strategic nonviolent direct action agreements allows us to continue to invite in new people, and to let them make clear choices about what kinds of tactics and actions they are asked to support.

There's plenty of room in this struggle for a diversity of movements and a diversity of organizing and actions. Some may choose strict Gandhian nonviolence, others may choose fight-back resistance. But for the Occupy movement, strategic nonviolent direct action is a framework that will allow us to grow in diversity and power.

This entry was posted by sa2011er on Tuesday, 8 November, 2011

For follow-up responses to this post, visit <http://trainersalliance.org/?p=221>

Visit Lisa Fithian's "Organizing for Power, Organizing for Change" at <http://organizingforpower.wordpress.com/>



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Aya

It's hard to describe the energy inside a sunset
Or better yet the feeling of sand as it sits in your hands
I've never been able to describe what it's like to absorb
The portraits on earth that have erupted from mother-
nature's core
And for our time here in North Africa
We've seen amazing sights
And we've met extraordinary people whose greatness
Hangs like medallions from their necks
But it's hard to describe the outstanding when it's subtle
Or to explain the incredible when it's subdued
So I'm not sure how to tell you what Aya is like

24 years old
Arab, Muslim, African, woman
any and all expectations crumble around her
like the ruins of Carthage that line the coast here
and stereotypes splinter beneath her feet
like thin ice over an ocean of misconceptions
that she is fully prepared to dive headfirst into
cuz, the phoenix feathers in her hair will dry up every last
drop of ignorance
long before she has to hold her breath
or her tongue
which is not something she's very good at
it can argue fluently in 3 languages
has an appetite for freedom
and abhors the taste of silence
if it hadn't been for her
we would have likely lost our camera to undercover police
last week that wore their aggression pinned to their chests
in place of a badge

Back in the States
there are students taking notes in lectures
on terms that Aya uses to describe the demands of her people
while they stay up nights in libraries writing term papers
she and her peers are staging sit-ins in city centers
to make sure this semester doesn't end like the last one

I watch her pride trickle down her cheeks
as she recalls the news of January 14
that the overseer living in the president's palace for the last
23 years
had finally fled the plantation
she and the youth that led this revolution are sowing new crops
that belong to them this time
but the work is hard
the summer is hot
and the fields are still filled with police who are twice
Aya's size and age

but she is unmoved
A revolutionary firecracker
with gunpowder in her eyes
and lashes that stitch together into a fuse which burnt a
house of cards
to the ground
until all that was left was a one way plane ticket for the
king turned joker
because the revolution in Tunisia was ignited by the youth

Thousands like Aya whose dreams were too bright
for Ben Ali's henchmen to censor and smoke out
like Mohamed Bouazizi

the 26 year old fruit vendor whose body was the first match
like El General
a 21 year old rapper whose voice for justice fanned the
flames from a prison cell
and like Mohamed Hanchi
whose body became one of over 300 reminders of why the
youth will never turn back
an ember of inspiration that burns in Aya's eyes to this day
the ground in Tunisia is covered in wax
tears have been shed, blood has been spilled
but you can still hear the flames flickering behind her
tongue

— Kane Smego

The Poems Already Written

For the past five weeks we have been trying
to translate sights and sounds into the language of poetry
Now we are in Tunisia
still carefully crafting metaphors to transform the mundane
into the miraculous
but sometimes... the metaphors are the raw images themselves,
and the greatest poems are already written long before pens
touch paper
I could have searched the catacombs of stanza and verse
for literary relics buried in the pages of history's greatest
wordsmiths
and would never have discovered as flawless an example
of irony
as a room full of laborers on hunger strike,
folding food into my palms like prayers as we parted ways,
I was so ashamed that all I could offer them were blessings
to fill the empty temples in their bellies.

They told us of their incarceration during the last regime
political prisoners jailed for demanding wages worthy of
feeding their families
they spoke to our camera with voices as faint
as cries for justice in government prison cells
where they watched wrinkles form
where dimples used to dance
and now they are still doing time
waiting for their records to be cleared
so they can find work again

Sometimes the most eloquent speeches
are delivered in body language by children who are still
learning to speak
like the little boy who kept stepping in front of our camera
with giggles
reminding us that there are stories to be told here beyond
the interviews
like how he and his toddler siblings were still learning to
navigate
In a world that isn't quite ready for them
While their faces shine as if solar flares have been planted
into their skin

Their innocence is blinding

And their father's vision for them is even brighter
He spoke to us outside the family of five's home
Or rather it was a single room
That everyone fit into by squeezing their satisfaction inside it
I'm sure he left any possible complaints in there



Clockwise from top left: Will McNerney, Mohammad Moussa, Sameer Abdel-Khalek, Kane Smego

Because he never even mentioned his poverty during the
interview

This man read his thoughts like poems
And said if you don't know hunger, you can't speak about it
And if you don't know freedom, then it's like you were
born without a mom
So I hope his children might have two mothers one day

yes sometimes the best poems are already written
and sometimes pens are not the weapon used to write them
like the wooden club brandished by the side of a Tunisian cop
thicker than a Louisville slugger
with a grip that reeks of the scent which sweats from
clinging to orders too tightly
it screams for the days of the old regime
with splintered teeth and a rotten tongue
I stand and watch the policeman ride by on his motorcycle
bludgeon baton in his palms and I know
that my foreign passport is an immunity card here
But I wonder
how many stories will it leave on the flesh of his fellow
Tunisians?
Poems of resilience and struggle tattooed and beaten
into the consciousness of a people

Its hard to make ink do that
and It's tough to think outside the bruised box
And look Tunisia's future square in the face

We've only spent a week here so far
but hope the coming days have enough space
For healing

Because honestly, the path ahead seems long
And the people are tired of waiting
As they chant in the streets
"Al shaab yourid al thawra min jadid"

"The people demand a new revolution"

— Kane Smego

more poetry...

Ramadan

Ramadan is the lunar month when Muslim's fast from sunrise to sunset
No food or water
Distancing yourself from the material world is meant to recharge you spiritually

Many have given up more than food and water this year
I can't imagine how Mabruka Mbarki must have felt the first month without her 16 year old son after he was killed by police,
his memory lives on in songs of those who stood by him in protest

My mother used to tell me
how much it bothered her when people would avoid mentioning my sister's name after she passed away
So I understood when Mrs. Mubarki thanked us profusely just for asking to hear her son's story and spoke
reopening a vault of memories
whose lock most would not have been brave enough to tamper with
her collar bones slanting downward like ledges leaning under the footsteps
of optimism
tiptoeing towards the edge
ready to jump
'cause the death of a child
can be suicide

for a last hope
she exhaled deeply
and all her life seemed to come up out of her
her last gasp of oxygen throwing itself from balcony of her lips
as she tried to catch her breath
and our hearts sank

slowly as a single tear down the cheek of a father
into the graveyard of his jawline
like foreshadowing of his son's burial the next morning

His voice quivered as he confessed with a smile struggling to form
"There is no celebration as joyful as a martyr's funeral"
another tear falls from the crack in his composure
and crashes from his chin
the same way I imagine his sons body collapsed to the ground
when they shot him in the back
his fathers hand catches the runaway drop
cradles it in his palm
and balls the emotion back up

He reminds me of my father
and how I try to downplay the dangers I slip myself into
because I don't want him to worry
to be honest I've never seen him cry
even at his own father's funeral
but the reversal of fate is much harder to swallow
they say the worst nightmare is when a parent buries their child
the thought alone leaves a lump in my throat
and an after taste of reprisal under this man's tongue
he demands justice be handed to the murderer who took his son
but somehow
he wears it with a smile and firm handshake that says
"Don't worry about me
my child is in a better place"
I hope my father never has to say the same

That type of sacrifice is too much for some
like the mother of a 14 year-old killed just weeks ago
before we met
she sat broken and upset
she told us "The Revolution did nothing for me,
it only took my child"
I could tell this wasn't her normal face
you see my Mother grew up during the Lebanese civil war
and her expression always changes when she talks about
conflict and pain
Whatever the reason for a bullet being shot, the emotions it
triggers are often the same
And the residue it leaves behind is filled with memories
that might not go away
These are lessons I thought I knew
But when I sat in front of this mother
I was barely equipped to look her in the eyes

Ramadan is a time of patience
and Tunisia has known this all too well for the past 23
years
we've only been away from our families for 2 months
but with every "good luck" and "safe travels" at the end of
an email
I know what they really mean is:
"Please make sure you come home"

— PPR 2011



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The OWS Blues

By JOHN B. MUDIE

In September of 2011 a few disturbing “leaks” began to emerge in the media. A new wave of protesters was soon identified as OccupyWallStreet, (OWS). The new phenomenon was quick to face what others before them had to face ... marginalization. The new group’s actions were ignored at first and treated as typical labor-like ‘sit down strikes’. Media reporters, through on site interviews, tried to assess details of the goals of these protestors. The reporters were disappointed in that they were unable to identify the leaders of this group nor could they discover what the protesters wanted. From the sidelines, acting somewhat as ominous advisors, was the Anonymous group. The Anonymous group reminded everyone “that they would not forget and they would not forgive.” The eyes and cameras of the Anonymous group are in continual search for police brutality. Police brutality makes people uncomfortable here as well as abroad.

Prior to the time of the OWS protests, many Americans watching the news were described as supportive of what we now call The Arab Spring. One after another the dictatorships of eastern nations including Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen fell to citizens who demanded democracy as well as freedom now. We await the conclusion of the people’s struggles in Syria to achieve the results of those other nations. In the mean time the OWS protests are less prominently shown by the media. They are much replaced by our fixations on football, the ballyhoo of the presidential election “process,” or the newest season of “Survivor.” Still the signs carried by the OWSs keep reminding us that we are ninety nine percenters.

“You don’t need to be a weatherman to know which way the wind blows”. So, said Bob Dylan in his classic from *Subterranean Homesick Blues*. Many are now anxious when they recall the prophet’s predictions of our modern period’s downward slide and its causes. There have always been with us those that call Cassandra’s or “Henny Pennies.” These, always sense and remind us that the sky is falling. Their thoughts are quickly relegated to the trash bin of ideas by self-appointed thought police. Never-the-less...

In 1929 Buckminster Fuller gave us his *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*. Of course he was not providing a handbook for our future astronauts. He was providing us then

with the insight that our earth is a spaceship and we have to get along with whatever we have aboard. At that time most people were of the opinion that we had more than enough stuff to get along. If only we could use it up faster, wouldn’t we all be happier?

But things change! Today, here in the United States, there are **more than** thirty thousand nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other citizen groups, studying the issues of social and ecological sustainability. They do so in the most complete meaning of the word. Hopefully, your mailbox is not filled daily with their individual pleas of the day. In the whole world the number of these organizations is greater than one hundred thousand and growing. Together, these groups dissect a broad range of issues while they follow Gandhi’s advice: “Resist, while others create new structures, patterns, and means.” Today, these groups tend to be local, poorly funded, marginalized by the right and the newly purchased media, as well as being overworked. These characteristics seem to meld with those of the OWSs, the Occupy Wall Streeter’s.

If you ask all of the groups described above as to their goals, principles, etc., you will find that they are not at odds with each other. It’s hard to imagine that this has never happened before. It could be argued that such might never have been possible before the Internet entered our lives.

Throughout the centuries there have been many prophets as far back as Lao Tzu and on to the present with Gandhi and Fuller. They have declared a world’s growing consensus that we could all go away in a twinkling. More recently Paul Hawken and Amory Lovins have proposed a *Natural Capitalism* and natural capital in their works.

As early as 1995 Hawken has had much to say about Occupy Wall Street. He dates his use of the term “Natural Capitalism” to 1997. You can print a PDF of his famous 1997 article on *Natural Capitalism* at http://www.paulhawken.com/paulhawken_frameset.html.

There is uniform agreement among the groups described above in many of our human needs and rights. They believe that self-sufficiency is a human right. They imagine a future where producing the means to kill is not a business but a crime. They imagine a future in which families do not starve, parents can work, children are never sold, and in which women cannot be impoverished because they choose to be mothers.

These groups believe that air and water belong to us all, and not to the rich. They believe seeds and life itself cannot be owned or patented by corporations. These notions must

be quite scary to some high courts and governments but not to the ninety nine per centers in general.

Imagine Hawken saying the following in 1997 [...] “No one started this world view, no one is in charge of it, and no orthodoxy is restraining it. It is the fastest and most powerful movement in the world today. It is unrecognizable to most American media outlets because it is not centralized. It is not based on power nor led by white, male, charismatic vertebrates, [...]”

Another passage from Hawken’s early work that predates the positions of the OWSs, follows. [...] “Our children will look back fifty years from now and wonder what they accomplished. They are avidly reading Harry Potter books, and what they know from these books is that today’s world is run by Muggles. Muggles represent a hyper-rational, mechanical, and authoritarian world devoid of magic. Muggles worship; things, money, economic motives, and hyper-growth at all cost. What these children reflect is the reemergence of a celebratory resistance to what visionary activist Caroline Casey calls the “reality police.” They include angry columnists, vacant politicians, licensed economists, and others who cannot see that what is emerging now is the possibility of being fully human.”

For those interested in further readings of Hawken and Lovins and others, refer to *Nature’s Operating Instructions: The True Biotechnologies*. Copies can be purchased from Bioneers at http://store.bioneers.org/Original_Instructions_p/book-natures-ops.htm

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