

ABQ TRIal Balloon

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Still Testing...

The first edition of the TRIal Balloon generated enough response, in both interest and financial support, to make this second print edition possible. Many people referred to the "professionalism" of the first edition. It is quite flattering, but we must state that no paid professionals are yet involved, except the printer and layout designer. We are "ordinary people committing random acts of journalism." It is obvious that we need a paid editor, which will require much more financial support.

How many citizens want Albuquerque to avoid being a one-newspaper town? We need to hear from all of you. An online version of the TRIal Balloon is available at www.friendsofthetribune.com, or www.TRIalBalloon.com.

We want that on-line version to be a daily, with more features and more time-sensitive content. Another professional is needed for the care and feeding of the website. We imagine this print version as a bi-weekly supplement.

Volunteer to help us "ordinary citizens" at P.O. Box 35058, Albuquerque NM 87176-5058. Send financial contributions to Marvin Gladstone, treasurer, at 429 Montclair Dr, SE Albuquerque NM 87108.

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Al Gore Throws Down the Gauntlet to Mainstream Environmentalists

By Peter Montague

Last week, former Vice-President Gore put the kibosh on any remaining dreams of "clean coal." "Clean coal" is the coal industry's wishful label for a technology that does not exist -- an effective, affordable filter to remove the global-warming gas, carbon dioxide (CO₂), from burning coal, compress the CO₂ into a liquid, and pump it a mile underground, hoping it will stay there forever.

Pound for pound, coal produces far more global-warming gas than any other fuel. As awareness of climate chaos grows, the coal industry is hearing a chorus of blame -- all of it well-deserved -- for wrecking the planet. "Clean coal" is their public relations response to the problem. If "clean coal" does not become workable on a large scale soon, the coal industry will be finished.

But let's get back to Al Gore.

Last week Vice-President Gore issued a profound challenge to the nation: "Today I challenge our na-

tion to commit to producing 100 percent of our electricity from renewable energy and truly clean carbon-free sources within 10 years," he said.

In a 27-minute speech, Gore explained, "I don't remember a time in our country when so many things seemed to be going so wrong simultaneously. Our economy is in terrible shape and getting worse, gasoline prices are increasing dramatically, and so are electricity rates. Jobs are being outsourced. Home mortgages are in trouble. Banks, automobile companies and other institutions we depend upon are under growing pressure. Distinguished senior business leaders are telling us that this is just the beginning unless we find the courage to make some major changes quickly...."

He summarized the root cause: "We're borrowing money from China to buy oil from the Persian Gulf to burn it in ways that destroy the planet. Every bit of that's got to change...."

And he said, "In my search for genuinely effective answers to the climate crisis, I have held a series of "solutions summits" with engineers, scientists, and CEOs. In those discussions, one thing has become abundantly clear: when you connect the dots, it turns out that the real solutions to the climate crisis are the very same measures needed to renew our economy and escape the trap of ever-rising energy prices. Moreover, they are also the very same solutions we need to guarantee our national security without having to go to war in the Persian Gulf...."

And he said, "I for one do not believe our country can withstand 10 more years of the status quo. Our families cannot stand 10 more years of gas price increases. Our workers cannot stand 10 more years of job losses and outsourcing of factories. Our economy cannot stand 10 more years of sending \$2 billion every 24 hours to foreign

See **GORE** on page 2

Kirtland Showboat Sinking in a Jet Fuel Leak

By David B. McCoy

Kirtland Air Force Base July 31 public meeting with a showboat promise to clean up the very large offsite leak of jet fuel to Albuquerque's groundwater provided plenty of public fear. Citizens wanted to know: Could contamination occur in shallow subdivision drinking water wells in Siesta Hills homes? Could toxic fumes surface from the underground plume beneath Bullhead Park? Could real estate values plummet and sales halt? What level of cleanup can be achieved and at what cost?

Will municipal drinking water wells to the north of KAFB be contaminated? How could the Air Force not notice such a huge leak?

Why wasn't action taken earlier? Would Kirtland be willing to forgo their claimed need for secrecy and provide accurate and adequate information posted on a website as

does the Department of Energy?

Some of the worst probably won't occur. But Kirtland hadn't even thought about locating shallow private Ridgecrest residential wells.

The JP-4 and JP-8 jet fuels in the leak contain a carcinogen, Benzene and a neurotoxin, n-hexane. Benzene limits for drinking water contamination are set at only 5 parts per billion per liter. Benzene can only be tasted at a level 1,000 times higher than the level at which it is a danger to health, especially for children and pregnant women. Kirtland has not determined either the amount of benzene, toluene and xylene dissolved in the groundwater and how deep it is beneath the floating plume.

The public fears and questions about the leak all point to the larger issue of whether Albuquerque's large, growing population and real estate development should contin-

ue to be exposed to the soil, air and water contamination from Kirtland and Sandia National Laboratories, along with the dangers of nuclear weapons activities.

A map provided to the public shows the plume of jet fuel in the regional aquifer to be larger than 30 acres. The plume includes jet fuel floating on the water table and its toxic chemicals dissolved into the groundwater. The public was informed the thickness of the jet fuel in the 30+ acre pool varies from 0.3 ft to 1.7 ft.

Accordingly, hydrologist Robert Gilkeson calculates the pool contains greater than 5,000,000 gallons of jet fuel. A shallow 240,000 gallon jet fuel leak at Leemore, California required 89 skimmer wells for cleanup. Given the widespread size of Kirtland's fuel leak at 500 ft, approximately 2,000 skimmer

See **SHOWBOAT** on page 2

Desert Rock Looms on Horizon

By V.B. Price

While U.S. Olympians and their families are worried about the dangers of a thick and never ending blanket of smog obscuring Beijing, some residents of the Navajo reservation are up in arms, battling against their tribal government over the possibility of more smog in the Four Corners coming from the Desert Rock power plant.

Late last month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued an air quality permit for the coal-fired power plant, arguing that new technology will make it cleaner than the other two in the area already assaulting the eyes and lungs of people from Durango to Farmington and points east and west.

Opponents have argued that there's no such thing as a clean coal-fired power plant, and liken the new technology to putting filters on cigarettes, which did nothing to make them safer.

The power from Desert Rock will go to Phoenix, Las Vegas, and perhaps San Diego and Los Angeles. My fear is that those monster cities will need ever increasing blasts of power over the next 40 to 50 years.

Not only will they continue to grow, but to do so they will need more water. With snow packs failing in both the Colorado River watershed and the High Sierras, the only way they can get that new water is to desalinate brackish ground water, clean up polluted aquifers, and desalinate ocean water.

These efforts all require a process called reverse osmosis, or a kind of dialysis, a technique which forces brackish, salty, or polluted liquid in great quantities through filters fine enough to make the water potable. And that requires vast amounts of costly energy. What worries me is that Navajo coal and the power plants already in the Four Corners region will act as magnets to other companies and generating stations, polluting the air even more, but adding dramatically more tax dollars to the struggling Navajo nation, dollars that tribal government, and the people it serves, badly need.

It's a horrible dilemma. In 2003, three other energy companies wanted to build power plants in the region, two small ones and a giant, all to deliver energy to Arizona and the west coast. Desert Rock had the better business plan, but the other three are lurking.

None of this would be a problem if the Four Corners region didn't have some of the dirtiest air in the region and in the nation as a

whole. While the American Lung Association gives Albuquerque an A rating as one of the cleanest cities when it comes to ozone, the area that supplies most of its electricity is an ozone disaster area. And ozone is a terrible danger to young people and old people alike, and to people with chronic illnesses, and heart and lung disease. For them, new power plants can be a matter of life and death.

This year, citizen groups all over the San Juan Basin and in southern Colorado have been concerned that air pollution from the existing power plants would violate federal air quality standards.

The paradoxes in this situation are models for the kinds of entanglements the world will face in the future. The Navajo Nation cites the hundreds of new coal-fired plants in India and China and wonders why the Navajo can't build just one and use the revenue to improve living conditions on the reservation. Local Navajo near the proposed plant argue that Desert Rock will virtually ruin their lives and the northeast part of the reservation, contributing to unlivable amounts of smog. The Navajo also oppose uranium mining on their land, and by extension, oppose nuclear power generation. And those who foresee global warming as the world's coming curse see Desert Rock as another nail in the coffin of humankind. Urban energy users in Arizona, California and Nevada probably have never heard of Desert Rock or the Four Corners, but their living conditions in the short term, could be made palatable by the new plant.

In the analysis of who benefits and who pays when it comes to Desert Rock, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and Atty. Gen. Gary King think New Mexico will pay too great a price in dirty air to support Desert Rock, and they are making plans to oppose it in court and other political venues. Richardson told the Associated Press, "EPA is bending to the will of corporate, financial, and misguided political interests that will pollute New Mexico's skies....We will not allow this ill-advised decision to stand."

Ten years from now, I think the Four Corners area will be chock full of new coal-fired power plants. There's too much coal, too much capital, and too much money to be made. And unless a technological miracle takes place with the plants' emissions, or a political miracle with wind and solar electrical generation, Albuquerque's relatively clean skies could well be befouled with Four Corner ozone.

4th National Conference for Media Reform

By Charles Powell

"Corporate media decides what lies will make news and what facts won't." Those are some of the fitting words spoken during the 3 day event organized by FREEPRESS.NET. From 50 states and around the world, 3,500 activists, journalists, artists, scholars and educators met at the Minneapolis Convention Center. I was fortunate to be one of several New Mexicans to attend the June 6-8 happening.

There are serious concerns that brought us together. The ownership of newspaper, radio, TV, publishing, internet and entertainment media is concentrated in ever fewer hands. Some issues and points of view get covered ad nauseam while others are seldom mentioned, if at all. Women, minorities and the left are under represented. Government spin, propaganda and lies get passed on without much examination or

SHOWBOAT from page 1

wells on 25 ft centers would be required.

Kirtland does not have real plans to acquire and spend the money necessary for equipment to clean up the fuel leak, possibly because Kirtland doesn't believe the fuel leak constitutes any imminent threat to drinking water. Kirtland proudly proclaimed plans to use two skimmer wells at the leak site and a vacuum extraction unit. That would take us beyond the next century, if not at all, for cleanup of the jet fuel.

Kirtland's unrealistic and underfunded cleanup plan serves to deflect the public from Kirtland and

GORE from page 1

countries for oil. And our soldiers and their families cannot take another 10 years of repeated troop deployments to dangerous regions that just happen to have large oil supplies."

You can listen to Gore's speech here and you can read his prepared remarks here. The speech was a real bell-ringer, and I urge you to watch and listen to it yourself. You won't be disappointed. The man has a vision -- an inspirational vision. He also has a real recognition of what's at stake: "The survival of the United States of America as we know it is at risk. And even more... the future of human civilization is at stake," he said.

In laying out his energy challenge, Gore did mention the coal industry. He spoke of shutting it down: "For example, we must recognize those who have toiled in dangerous conditions to bring us our present energy supply. We should guarantee good jobs in the fresh air and sunshine for any coal miner displaced by impacts on the coal industry. Every single one of them."

In his speech, Gore did not mention "clean coal." However, in an interview with Katie Couric on CBS the following day, he was asked about "clean coal" and he responded as follows:

rebuttal. Giant telecommunications corporations are attempting to turn the Internet into their own private fiefdom.

There were 69 panels and workshops offered in 7 blocks during the 3 days. I cannot describe or even mention them all here. However, these sessions were assembled within 5 themed tracks. The tracks were (1) media policy; (2) civil rights, social justice & media; (3) journalism & independent media; (4) media reform activism & movement building and (5) media & democracy: the next frontier.

The panels and workshops I attended: Media and Elections: Uncovering 2008; How Far Have We Come? People of Color in the Mass Media; How to Tell Your Story; Media and the War: An Unembedded View; and Are You Being Served? Holding Local Broadcast Stations Accountable at the FCC.

That last listed panel served to

remind us that TV and radio stations are required by the terms of their licenses to operate in the "public interest, convenience and necessity." Under current FCC rules, stations must renew their licenses every eight years.

The celebrities in attendance were Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN); Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN, the first Muslim U.S. Congressman); John Nichols and Katrina vanden Heuvel, The Nation; Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein, FCC Commissioners; Janine Jackson of FAIR and Counter Spin; Phil Donahue, Bill Moyers, Amy Goodman; Medea Benjamin, Code Pink; Naomi Klein, The Shock Doctrine; Norman Solomon, War Made Easy; Arianna Huffington, Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND), and Dan Rather.

Regional caucuses were held for 1½ hours. I attended the Four Corners caucus that included Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico,

Utah and Nevada. We discussed common concerns then broke into smaller groups by state. Those joining me representing NM were Steve Ranieri (facilitator) and Allen Cooper, both of Channel 27; Marjorie Childress, JoAnn Bejar, and Karlos Schmieder of SWOP and Dallas Timmons. (Leslie Clark and Tara Gatewood of KUNM were also at the conference.) We listed local concerns and possible actions.

The films I saw were "Body of War," "Broadcast Blues," and "Freedom of Expression." The other films shown but I didn't see were "Further Off the Straight & Narrow: New Gay and Lesbian Visibility on Television," "This Brave Nation," "Blood and Oil," "Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes," "Media That Matters Film Shorts," and "Tim Wise: On White Privilege."

A CALL TO ACTION
"Media reform begins with Me." was one of the themes of this

surface like jet fuel does. Sandia's Mixed Waste Landfill, only about a mile upgradient from the Mesa del Sol subdivision, has over 700,000 cu ft of radioactive and hazardous waste above the groundwater. There are solvents, heavy metals, over 40 different radionuclides, including tritium, depleted uranium and more than 125 barrels of plutonium waste.

The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) remedy for the Mixed Waste Landfill and dozens of other Sandia dump sites that have put billions of gallons of waste water into the groundwater is to leave the waste under dirt cov-

ers. The identical dirt covers to be used at Sandia will not protect the groundwater at Los Alamos National Laboratories, according to the NMED.

Federal law for groundwater protection practices have often not been enforced at either Kirtland or Sandia Labs dumpsites by NMED. This is why the Kirtland jet fuel leak was not detected 20 years ago which would have prevented the 5,000,000 gallon pool being in the regional aquifer now.

In addition to this decades old water contamination concern, Kirtland and Sandia Labs also have plans to openly burn and detonate

over 1,000,000 pounds of toxic waste and high explosives during the next ten years into our breathing air. Albuquerque will bear the health burden of breathing unmonitored toxic waste. Some wastes will be imported from other states and foreign countries that will not allow such open burning.

Concerned citizens and their homeowner associations must bring pressure on Governor Richardson, the New Mexico Environment Department and representatives to enforce hazardous waste management, cleanup and safety laws.
*David B. McCoy, Director
Citizen Action New Mexico*

all, it would occur "some time in the future," he said. "Clean coal" is not just a matter of scaling up something that already exists and "we know works," as Thomas Friedman falsely asserts.

Most importantly, something that might occur "some time in the future" is not going to be important in any plan to "produce 100 percent of our electricity from renewable energy and truly clean carbon-free sources within 10 years."

With his bold challenge, Al Gore has permanently altered the terms of the energy debate. In the past, the debate has always started with, "We're going to be using coal for the next 50 to 100 years, so even though it's the dirtiest fuel imaginable, let's assume we can find a way to live with it."

This has been the position of the coal industry (understandably) and of all its environmentalist supporters (far less understandably): the Clean Air Task Force, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental Defense Fund, the Union of Concerned Scientists (and see this), the Apollo Alliance, the Izaak Walton League, the National Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy (both of which endorse the carbon storage plans of the Climate Action Partnership, which are discussed here), the World Resources Institute, the Pew Center on Climate Change, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, among others.

These groups are all thinking small and timid, just the way the coal and oil industries want them to think. Some of them -- most notably the Clean Air Task Force and Natural Resources Defense Council -- are even being paid large sums to try to persuade us all to think in that same small way. And they are running their timid-think campaigns partly with coal industry money lightly

laundered through charitable foundations (Doris Duke Foundation and Joyce Foundation, in particular).

But Al Gore has given the lie to these propagandists for the coal industry who say we are destined to rely on coal for the next 50 or 100 years: "Today I challenge our nation to commit to producing 100 percent of our electricity from renewable energy and truly clean carbon-free sources within 10 years," Gore said. Bold. Visionary. Inspiring. Transformative. All the things mainstream U.S. environmentalists no longer are.

Yes, Gore's plan would be expensive. It would cost \$1.5 to \$3 trillion dollars. In other words, it would cost almost as much as the Iraq war. It would cost almost as much as building all the coal plants and oil-drilling platforms that the coal and oil industries want us to believe we cannot live without (at least until the coal and oil are all gone). But after we make the initial large investment in solar, wind, and geothermal, the fuel is free. Which is precisely why the coal and oil industries oppose renewable energy and will do their best to derail Al Gore's bold challenge.

Al Gore has issued a grand invitation -- comparable to, but even more important than, President Kennedy's impossible challenge to the nation May 25, 1961, to put a human on the moon within a decade, which we accomplished just 8 years later on July 20, 1969.

No doubt the American people are up to meeting Gore's challenge. But are Congress and the nation's civil-sector "leaders" -- including the nation's mainstream environmentalists -- up to it? It's an open question.

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workforce of the coal and the coal-based electric power industries must be real and backed with substantial sums of money and a detailed long-term plan. Otherwise, it will be a cruel hoax. We must never allow Al Gore to renege[1] on his promise to the working men and women whose jobs his plan would eliminate.

Understandably, the coal industry and its friends are trying to spin Gore's speech as an endorsement of so-called "clean coal." For example, Thomas Friedman, the *New York Times* columnist, wrote July 20, "Mr. Gore proposed dramatically improving our national electricity grid and energy efficiency, while investing massively in clean solar, wind, geothermal and carbon-sequestered coal technologies that we know can work but just need to scale." [Emphasis added.]

No. In his speech, Gore did not say we know carbon-sequestered coal technologies can work and just need to be scaled up. Speaking the next day to Katie Couric, he said clearly that "clean coal" does not exist and, he said, to claim it exists is "deceptive." Furthermore, he said it is up to the coal and electric power industries to prove that "clean coal" technologies can be invented and then operated safely. If carbon storage were to occur at

Couric: "Do you think clean coal is an oxymoron?"

Gore: "There's no such thing as clean coal. It's non-existent. Theoretically, it might be possible, many years from now, to come up with a way to clean it as it's burnt. But there's not a single demonstration project in the United States. They're not doing anything... to put substance... to the slogan, "clean coal." Clean coal doesn't exist."

Couric: "Doesn't it take as much energy to produce it as it would to burn coal? I mean, isn't that the argument against it, the whole process is, I mean, we're not gonna get into great detail here. But, is, that's my understanding, anyway."

Gore: "One of the reasons they have been slow to install these systems for capturing the CO2 when the coal is burnt is that it's expensive. But with more work and some point in the future, after that work is done, it may be possible. But the burden should be on those who are burning it to show that it can be clean. It's not now. And just to say it's clean, that's deceptive." [Emphasis added.]

If your goal is 100% carbon-free electricity within 10 years, coal is not in the picture. The coal industry will have to be shut down, and new jobs created for its workers. This commitment to the combined

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SO IT WAS ABOUT OIL AFTER ALL



Jim Hightower

“Out of the question.” “Don’t be silly.” “Never was a factor.”

Such are the absolutes that President Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and other White House figures have employed whenever anyone has suggested that their real reason for invading and occupying Iraq was a crude item spelled o-i-l. But now that Bush & Company’s oil-soaked regime has only a few months to go, a new honesty and an urgency is creeping out about their true intentions.

First came the news that the

Iraqi government would give no-bid contracts to ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, and a handful of other Western oil giants, allowing them to enter the rich oil fields of Iraq. They are to develop the productive capacity of the fields, which will give them a favored position for winning lucrative long-term licenses to privatize Iraq’s massive oil reserves. It’s a process that shuts out China, Russia, and even oil ventures that would be Iraqi-owned. This is Big Oil’s fantasy come true.

But wait! The Iraqi people themselves hate the very idea of Western control of their oil wealth. How are the oil barons going to get away with this invasion of Iraq’s sovereignty? Enter honest revelation number two.

For years, Mr. Bush himself has been vociferously denying that his regime wants to build permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq - bases with thousands of ground troops. But - hello - there is now a rush by the White House to cut a far-reaching deal with the Iraqi government to station U.S. soldiers on dozens of military bases there indefinitely. As part of the deal, Bush is insisting that our soldiers be immune from Iraqi law, be free to fight battles without Iraqi permission, and be allowed to detain anyone in Iraq who might threaten our “interests.”

The president has called Iraq a war for “freedom.” And now we see it - he’s using our soldiers to free Big Oil to grab all it can. What a disgrace.

US Navy resurrects Fourth Fleet to police Latin America

By Humberto Santana

Washington announced in April, 2008 that it is resurrecting the long-ago moth-balled Fourth Fleet to reassert US power in the Caribbean and Latin America. Created at the time of World War II to combat German submarines attacking merchant shipping convoys in the South Atlantic, the Fourth Fleet was seen as no longer necessary after the Second World War and was disbanded in 1950.

The Pentagon’s statement on the revival of the fleet gave a far vaguer indication of its new duties, saying it would “conduct varying missions including a range of contingency operations, counter narco-terrorism, and theater security cooperation activities.”

“Rear Admiral James Stevenson, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command, said the re-establishment of the Fourth Fleet will send a message to the entire region, not just Venezuela,” AHN news reported.

The “message” began to be transmitted just weeks after Venezuela, Ecuador and Colombia came into sharp conflict over a border provocation caused by the Colombian military’s bombardment of an encampment of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas inside Ecuadorian territory.

The Fourth Fleet began operations on the first day of July out of the Mayport US Naval Station, a nuclear facility in the state of Florida. The fleet, which will operate as part of the Pentagon’s Southern Command, will be comprised of various ships, including aircraft carriers and submarines, and will operate from the Caribbean to the southern tip of South America.

While the new naval unit does not yet possess large numbers of arms and personnel, it will be equipped and granted similar importance as the Fifth Fleet, now

deployed in the Persian Gulf, and the Sixth, operating in the Mediterranean.

The thrust of this decision is to give the US Navy a far broader role than it currently plays in Latin America. While Washington can point to no imminent military threat in the region, the reactivation of the Fourth Fleet has a powerful symbolic significance, indicating a return to gunboat diplomacy.

It is a demonstration of US intentions to maintain absolute military dominance over the region, and in particular over those countries with large reserves of petroleum and natural gas, including those that are governed by supposed enemies of Washington, like the governments of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia.

The central objective of the Fourth Fleet will be to further the military and political “security and stability” of the region, according to the commander of naval forces for US Southern Command, Vice Admiral James Stevenson. The fleet will “certainly bring a lot more stature to the area and increase our ability to get things done,” Stevenson told reporters.

As far as democracy goes, a far greater danger is posed by Washington’s closest ally, the government of Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, who is personally implicated in the operations of drug traffickers and right-wing paramilitary death squads which, with CIA and US military training, have specialized in the killing of trade unionists, peasants and university students.

The US appears likely to lose its only permanent military base in South America - located in Ecuador’s port city of Manta - when the Pentagon’s lease on the air force facility expires in November of next year. Ecuador’s President Rafael Correa has vowed not to renew it, while the country’s constituent assembly is drafting a

new constitution that is to include a prohibition against any foreign bases on Ecuadorian soil.

In the meantime, the American military is searching for other possible bases, including in Paraguay. “We’re always looking for opportunities for what I call lily pads places we can go in for a week or two and then get out,” Lt. Gen. Norman Seip, commander of US Air Forces Southern Command told the US military newspaper Stars and Stripe. “It increases our presence, and makes us more unpredictable in operations.”

Reestablishing the Fourth Fleet, with its aircraft carriers as well as US Marine and Navy Seal contingents, provides a floating base for US interventions throughout the continent.

Behind the resurrection of the Fourth Fleet lie the same fundamental tendencies underlying the explosion of American militarism on a world scale. It is the attempt by US imperialism to offset its relative decline as an economic power by reliance on its continuing military supremacy. Europe and increasingly China are playing a growing role in Latin American trade and investment at the expense of US interests.

Trade between Latin America and China topped \$100 billion last year, a 46 percent increase over 2006. Meanwhile, the European Union, which is second only to the US in terms of Latin American trade and foreign investment, is increasingly outstripping Washington in the negotiation of free trade agreements on the continent. Today, the US accounts for less than 20 percent of the exports from Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru.

The one area where US imperialism can still demonstrate unquestioned superiority against its economic rivals is in the deployment of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines, which is just what it is now preparing to do off the coasts of Latin America.

Really “Supporting the Troops:” The New Mexico GI Rights Hotline

By Maria Santelli, coordinator and volunteer, NM GI Rights Hotline

self?”

He laughs, nervously. “Yeah.” And then begins to cry hard.

Greg is depressed and suicidal.

It was either kill himself, he says, or leave. “You made the right choice,” I say. “You’re not alone.”

Let’s get you on the road to straightening all this out.”

Greg’s not alone. The Pen-

tagon estimated in December of 2007 that 20,000 service members are AWOL or UA—Unauthorized Absence—as the Navy and Marines call it. The GI Rights Hotline estimates twice that, maybe more. And veteran and active duty suicides are endemic.

The GI Rights Hotline is a national network of nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations—24 in all, founded in 1995. That year it received 1700 calls. Last year, the network received 43,000 calls.

The New Mexico branch of the Hotline network opened in March and began assisting local service men and women, veterans and their families, as well as pitching in answering some of the hundreds of calls that come in each week from around the country. Hotline counselors are volunteers with specialized training in service members’ rights, military grievance and discharge procedures, compassionate listening, suicide prevention and rape crisis. We staff the Albuquerque line live 6 days per week, and return messages daily.

Service members, veterans and their families can call 505-404-6427 to reach the local NM office, or toll free, (which will get you to the NM office each evening and on weekends), 1-877-447-4487. Individuals interested in volunteering with the hotline can call 505-410-7657.

Most callers to the hotline have seen things and been treated in ways no one deserves—by and in the name of the US military. Most are very young—18, 19, 20 years old, and talk about being recruited under pressure or false promises or worse. The recruitment contract is four pages, but it is numbered in such a way that Page 2 can be removed—the fine print—without the recruit ever knowing. Unscrupulous tactics like this are taught to recruiters using tax dollars: \$20 billion is the recruiting budget for FY 2009.

Truly supporting the troops means a whole lot more than slapping a yellow ribbon on your SUV. If the people of this country actually had any idea of how our military treats the men and women who wear its uniform, they’d be stunned. I am, each time I answer a call on the Hotline.



It’s Sunday and I’m still in bed when the phone rings. “Jake” is calling from the east coast, so it’s almost 9am on his end; it’s not even 7am yet in New Mexico, though. He’s obviously stressed and

needs to talk right away. Jake was in a car accident three days ago and has a broken arm, but he hasn’t gone to the hospital yet because he’s afraid. “Will they know I’m AWOL? Can the hospital turn me in?” Six months ago Jake decided to go AWOL because he couldn’t go back to Iraq. “Getting medical care at a civilian hospital shouldn’t trigger anything,” I say, but it won’t look good to them that he waited three days to come in after an accident. “Go to the hospital, Jake. Get treatment. If anything happens, call us back. We’ll help you.”

The next call comes in a few minutes after Jake and I hang up. And the next one a few moments after that. It continues like this all day. Another typical shift on the GI Rights Hotline.

A mom needs help for her son who has been diagnosed with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) after returning from the GED camp run by the US military. He’s not talking, but he’s not going to stay in the military, either. “What could have happened to my son that would cause him and ten of his friends to come home from the military’s GED camp with PTSD?” she asks me, beside herself with sadness and anger and determined to get her son out of the National Guard.

Next call: “My son was blown up in Afghanistan. He was never evaluated for PTSD or TBI [Traumatic Brain Injury]. We’ve got him in treatment at a civilian hospital, but his Sergeant is making threats and calling him names. They won’t recognize that he’s sick. All they care about is sending him to the other war in Iraq.”

The call I get next breaks my heart. “Greg” is AWOL, almost a year now. His call’s a hang up, but I get his number from the caller ID and call him back.

“Hi, this is Maria from the Hotline [I’m intentionally vague until I’m sure I’m talking to the right person]. We received a call from this number. Is there anything we can do?”

“Yeah, thanks for calling back. I don’t even know where to start.” I offer to ask a few questions to see if that’ll help.

“Okay,” he answers.

“Are you active duty?”

“Well...sort of...”

“Have you discharged your-

Rants

By Harry Willson

"On Resistance"

What would the American people do if some power from a different hemisphere bombed all our sewage treatment plants, all our electric power plants, and all our water supply stations? What would we do if, after that, that same power sent an invading force into every city, arrested the state governors and city mayors, and went house to house breaking down doors and arresting the male inhabitants? What would we think when they looted our museums and confiscated our crops and minerals? Would we as a people object? What percentage of our population would form some kind of resistance movement?

I try introspection, and on the assumption that I'm not much different from my neighbors, I think some of us would resist. I know how seriously I resent it when intruders break the doors of my house. I become a mortal enemy of the intruder, and I don't "get over it."

But I notice that the American people are very passive. I don't think the majority believe that protest, let alone armed resistance, is patriotic. Our current population could not pull off anything like the original American Revolution. That kind of zing is missing. A fire has gone out. Solidarity is nowadays quickly and easily mocked, and not taken seriously at all.

When election fraud occurred in the Ukraine, the Ukrainians massed in the streets until some kind of correction was made. Here we have had two fraudulent presidential elections in a row and the Americans never protested seriously at all. Even after the evidence is out, we have tolerated the fraud, and done little to guard against the next attempt to steal another election.

Comparisons to the fall of Rome come to mind. They had little "defense," except mercenaries, whose loyalty is fragile when things get rough. Our National Guard is in another hemisphere, so they won't be much help in defense, when it comes to that. The fact that our National Guard is the invading and occupying force in someone else's country makes the word "defense" all the more inappropriate.

Some have referred to the suicide bombers and hijackers as cowards. I do not understand that. The word seems more fitting for those of us who tolerate murder and arson and rape and door-breaking, and do nothing to resist.

Dr Richard Phillips, researcher, statistician, and author of the book "Witness To A Crime", will be in Albuquerque September 30th. Dr. Phillips researched the Ohio elections of 2004, carefully documenting the widespread and extensive fraud that resulted in the Republican Party victory for George Bush in that state. Dr. Phillips will speak at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard S.E. at 7:00 PM. Free, but donations accepted.

But perhaps I should not be so hard on our people. They have been heavily bombarded, that is, seriously brainwashed, by the mainstream media. The people are busy with two or three jobs, trying to maintain an absurdly high standard of living. They are being lied to all the day long, and all evening, too, blatantly and subliminally. They have been taught to believe that protest is un-American. They have not been taught any history. Many, perhaps most, do not comprehend the concept of the negative number. Preachers and teachers have done their best to rescind what Rousseau called "the Social Contract." "Get yourself saved." "Get the highest-paying job, no matter what is entailed." Greed has been regarded as not only permissible but "cool," for several decades. How could I be expecting a revolution, given all that? We lack the guts for it.

Having said that I must add that I'm glad we as a people seem to have lost the guts for additional pre-emptive wars of aggression and torture. Our people are sick of it. It will come to an end soon, unless someone steals the next election.

Just look, again, at what we're able to tolerate!

[1] Four dollar a gallon gasoline, soon to be five dollars.

[2] A huge bail-out for banks and "investors."

[3] Ads which suggest, "Consult your doctor."

[4] Slogans like "Support the troops," in the face of torture, Walter Reed Hospital filth, a promised veto of a new G.I. Bill of Rights, and fourth and even fifth deployments into a war/occupation zone. "These are times that try men's souls."

Harry writes a Rant of the Month at www.amadorbooks.com -- come see the Library of Old Rants. Email Harry at harry@amadorbooks.com

GUEST EDITORIAL

Mission Accomplished

By Sally-Alice Thompson

Contemporary wisdom has it that the present administration is inept and incompetent. Nothing could be further from the truth. The achievements of the goals of the resident of the White House and/or his administration are nothing short of astonishing.

They have accomplished the return of American military to the Philippines. They have concluded an agreement to place missile bases in the Czech Republic, against the wishes of its citizens. They are bullying Poland to accept military bases.

The secrecy with which they operate leaves one to conjecture that other countries or areas such as Kosovo and Georgia are also being pressured to accept American military bases.

They have invaded two countries, Iraq and Afghanistan, for the benefit of their clients, the oil companies. The invasions have both occurred without a declaration of war. They continue to threaten Iran, and are poised to commit aggression against this third country at any time.

None of these small countries, on the other side of the globe, pose the slightest threat to the security of our nation.

They have continued the practice of previous administrations of making enormous gifts of our tax money to Colombia, Egypt, and Israel, called "military aid", for the purpose of propping up unpopular tyrants. This money is used for repression of the citizens in the case of Egypt and Colombia, and genocide of the Palestinians in the case of Israel.

They have succeeded in the greatest transfer of wealth in this country since the days of the robber barons. The privi-

leged have become inordinately wealthy, at the expense of the middle class and the poverty-stricken.

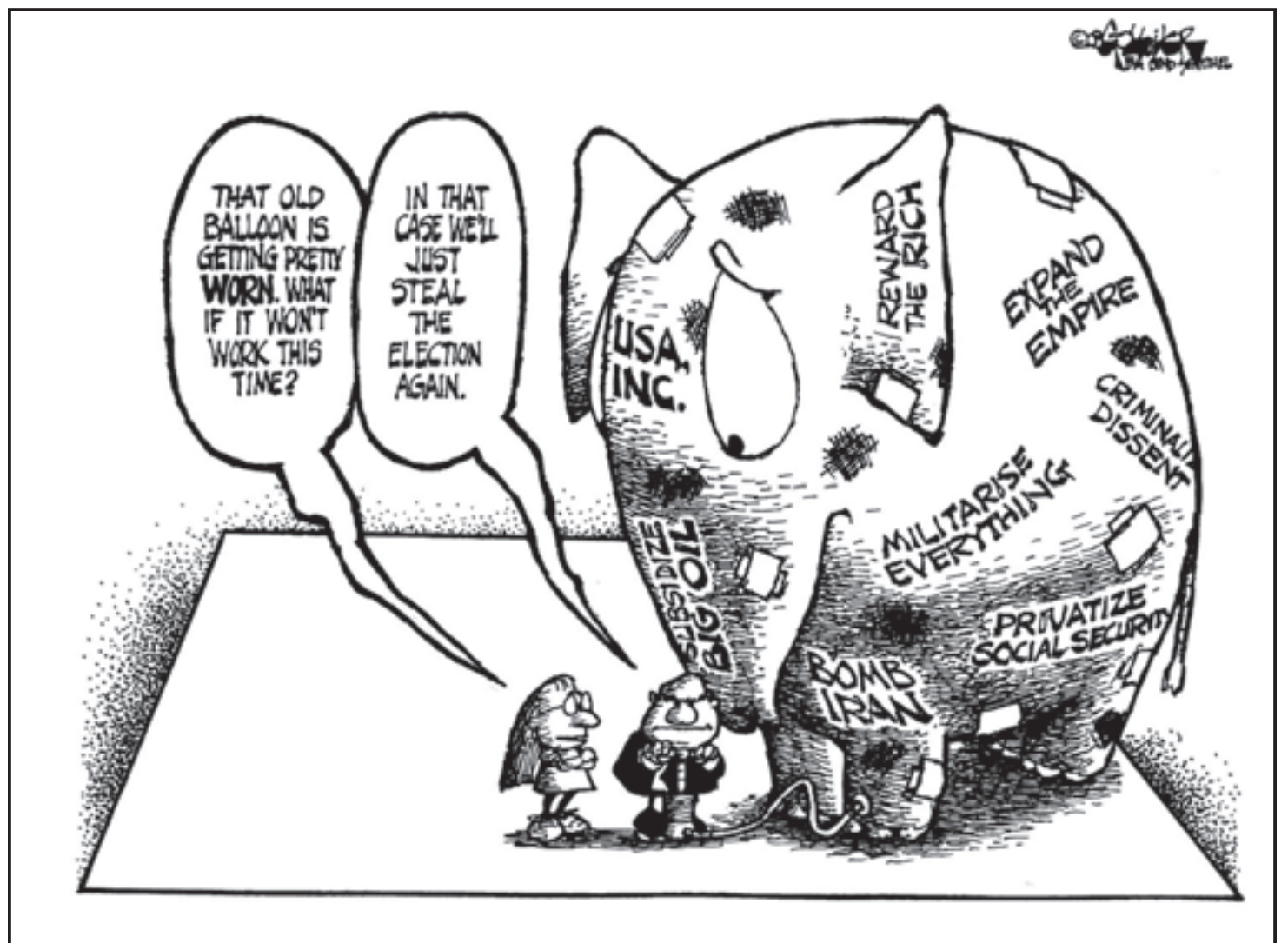
They have, under the rubric of the "War on Terror" managed to become able to name anyone of their choosing as "enemy combatants". This places any one of us in the position of being subject to arrest without our traditional right to face our accusers or trial by a jury of our peers. They have, further, exempted any thief of our Fourth Amendment rights from prosecution. With the War on Terror umbrella these conditions will continue into perpetuity, since the recourse of people with real or perceived oppression is surreptitious revenge.

Using the title of Commander in Chief in time of war (even though it is a war of choice) the constitutional position of executive has been gradually enlarged, infringing on greater and greater prerogatives of the legislative branch.

All this has been accomplished with hardly a squeak from the loyal opposition, which seems to be more loyal than opposition.

As long as the American people acquiesce to this usurpation of their rights, the next administration, in the human tendency to keep any power handed to it, will continue in this downward spiral of American freedoms. There is even a possibility that there will be no election.

With the invasion of Iran, martial law could be declared and the elections called off. The unlimited desire for control over the citizens of this country and the people of the rest of the world has been somewhat satisfied. It can never be completely satiated, because the more power the power hungry achieve, the more they want.



Supreme Court Upholds Habeas Corpus

By Jack Pickering

Non-citizens have the same rights as citizens to the Writ of Habeas Corpus, according to the U.S. Supreme Court on June 12 in the case of *Boumediene v. Bush*. By a 5-4 vote The Court agreed with the Center for Constitutional Rights and its allies that detainees held for 6

years at a U.S. base on the island of Cuba can now ask federal courts to review their detentions.

In 2002 the Center alone sponsored the first habeas corpus case on behalf of the detainees. Then the Bush administration and its Congressional allies maneuvered around the detainees' constitutional right. The Detainees Treatment Act (2005) and

the Military Commissions Act (2006) eliminated habeas corpus for persons charged as "enemy combatants." The high court's new decision declares this denial to be unconstitutional.

Writing for the majority in the new decision, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that the Framers of the Constitution viewed "freedom from restraint as a fun-

damental precept of liberty."

(Digested from the CCR bulletins by Jack Pickering)

The Center for Constitutional Rights is dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Human Rights. Contact at www.centerforconstitutionalrights.com or 212-614-6464.

Don't Drill the Breadbasket. Eat it!

By Fiona Sinclair

Like many poor rural areas of the west, New Mexico faces a grab for its resources. Driven by the rising cost of fuel this trend is now focused on drilling for oil and gas, which means the degradation of some of the most pristine areas of our state.

How the states oil and gas reserves are divided appears arbitrary on the surface, but dig a little deeper and Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) type behavior emerges alongside backroom deals and government complicity with industry. Many have heard the gasps of exasperated Galisteo Basin Santa Fe county folk fighting off the rigs, but it's also happening to those who live further on the margins in poor counties like Rio Arriba and Mora where people have less of a voice.

Fighting environmental degradation is nothing new in the lives of the people of Mora. From the "special waste" permit battle which successfully halted daily shipments of dried human excrement trucked from the overfull sewage systems of Los Angeles, to a pending gravel plant permit that will destroy one of the most unique historic and agriculturally rich water cultures in the U.S., local folk have had more than their fair share of land base protection struggles in recent years. With over 60,000 acres of state land and unknown acres of private land leases already slated for oil and gas development in Mora County alone, the struggle continues.

The current drive for oil and gas exploration in the West started under the Bush administration and stems from two consecutive actions facilitated by Dick Cheney. The little known 2001 Executive Order, 'Actions to Expedite Energy Related Projects' accelerated the issue of permits, and a 2001 BLM Leasing Instruction Memo modified Federal land use policy in favor of oil and gas production. These actions stripped over 50 million acres of land in the West of wildlife, wilderness, and environmental protections, thereby opening the door to an explosion of oil and gas development. The effect of this legislation is now felt hard in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah. Today, with prices pushing \$130 a barrel, the administration is on track to open an additional twelve million acres per year for drilling in twelve Western states. New Mexico is one of them.

Last time I checked we were in the midst of the sixth greatest extinction with human caused carbon levels rising to unprecedented levels. Never worry, for as global sea levels rise, California fires rage, the banks of the Mississippi swell, glaciers and loggerhead turtles disappear, someone will be driving to the bank to deposit a big fat check at the expense of our ecological land base so the economy, which got us into this pickle in the first place, doesn't implode. Buy bye world.

Coalbed Methane (CBM) sits atop the oil shale throughout the Rocky Mountain region and it is most likely the resource of choice for speculators in Santa Fe, Mora and Rio Arriba Counties. CBM is touted as a carbon neutral climate change gas, but unfortunately when extracted it sucks water out of the ground at a rate of 10 gallons per minute and then dumps it on the surface as pollution. In the



Wyoming Powder River Basin where CBM extraction is on a rampage, the aquifer has dropped 200 feet since 2003, while the toxicity of the soil has increased exponentially creating a host of ecological problems.

It is plainly obvious that the decision-making processes which enable this type of environmental destruction, clearly place short term profit over long term effects. A more sustainable course of action would consider the role the Rocky Mountain region needs to play in an effort to establish sustainable bioregional food, water and renewable energy security, rather than driving the price of a depleting resource down a few pennies so people can bring on climate calamity at a faster rate.

As a former breadbasket producing region Mora is a perfect example of an area which could benefit all New Mexican's if given an injection of cash to restimulate the agricultural base, rather than injecting carcinogenic chemical fracking fluids into our aquifer thereby destroying one of the most water plenty areas of the state.

Driving on the freeway through the big city scape it is easy to gripe and moan high gas prices, but you don't have a rig slashing up your neighborhood every other block, you don't have gas flares tearing your eyes, gravel plants destroying your watershed, pipe lines flying through your cow pasture, or the ubiquitous twenty ton truck careening through your community.

Today over 50 percent of the planet lives in cities and the major provider for these primary points of consumption is the natural world.

In New Mexico 93% of the population live in a city, which put another way means that only 7% of people in the state have eyes, ears, sense and time to advocate for the trees, the plants, the mountains, deserts, rivers and animals.

We have two choices: We can dig below the land of enchantment for finite resources such as uranium, copper, coal, oil & gas, utilizing technologies of enormity which disrupt and mostly destroy all life, or we can create plenty on top of our dry yet abundant landscape and redirect ourselves toward a sustainable future. The latter is the voice of reason, which many times profit is deaf to, however in the face of massive ecosystem col-

lapse (18 out of 23 at last count), species die-off, (50,000 per year), pollution (40% of all freshwater on earth) those currently making the decisions in high office would do well to heed the voices of the guardians of the natural world.

Folk living on the frontlines of resource wars are the best advocates for the environment. Because they know their land base, and know it better than those who draw on its resources, they provide a first line of defense against its destruction. But it's going to take more than frontline defenders to save the planet at this point in our global crisis.

On a fundamental community level the time has now come for people to shape new local economies that foster small scale interchange such as a shared plan for local food production, public transportation and non invasive renewable energy production. Instead of relying on government entities to make these decisions for us, we also need to set an example to others by living what is entirely possible and within our reach. This involves change, and for some change is hard, but as my 87 year old mother say's "change is as good as a rest."

The Rocky Mountain West is a great asset for the South West region. Here in New Mexico we have enough resources to meet our needs and provide for generations to come if we manage our use correctly. So think twice before you flip the switch on your lights, drive to the grocery store for goods flown in from the four corners of the earth, or find yourself supporting stopgap measures like opening the Arctic or rural New Mexico to further degradation. These things do not come easy from an earth all ready depleted of its resource base.

And remember, all the answers to the current ecological and economic crisis are right in front of us, if only we care to look, if only we care to see. But once you do, I guarantee you'll never look back.

Dr. Fiona Sinclair lives completely off-grid in Northern New Mexico where she harvests water, composts all waste, eats food grown within a 100 mile radius including her garden, strives to have zero carbon emissions, and is active in her community. For details contact cleugh@nmmt.net.

Guild Created to Preserve Family Farm

John Shipley, Executive Director
Rio Grande Valley Farmers
Guild

On June 30, 2008 a corporate charter was issued to the Rio Grande Valley Farmers Guild, a domestic cooperative organized by a group of farmers in the South Valley. The twelve farming groups created the Guild to assist farmers in containing production costs as well as increasing marketing opportunities for locally grown produce and value-added products.

While a variety of crops are grown by the Guild members particular emphasis is being given to growing cereal grains for human consumption. Included among these grains are corn, soybeans, oats, rye and barley. Also included are more exotic grains like spelt, amaranth, millet and quinoa.

The focus of the Artisanal Grain Project is to provide the raw material for the creation of new markets for value-added products which can be produced from these grains.

By assisting farmers in creating more revenue per acre for crops grown, the Guild will be a partner in making for a more healthy agricultural economy for local farmers. The grain crops will be grown in rotation with legumes in order to provide natural fertilizers rather than depending on chemical fertilizers.

In addition to being able to rotate crops to maintain non-chemical growing conditions, many of the grains utilize less water than conventional crops. This will make it possible to more fully and effectively manage available water for other irrigation needs. Some of the grains, like millet,

can be planted in mid-summer and utilize monsoon rains for its entire water needs.

The healthful use of cereal grains in our diet has long been recognized by physicians, nutritionists and other health care workers. Some of the grains are gluten-free, allowing people with gluten allergies to consume more healthy grains. Additionally, anecdotal evidence suggests these gluten-free grains and value-added products can help families dealing with children with autism as they seem to do better on a gluten-free diet.

The goal of the Guild is to establish an active local market for the grains and other produce. It is also intended that by creating value-added products the Guild will be able to create new, locally owned business ventures and related employment. This would serve as the economic engine for creating a healthy agricultural economy in the South Valley and beyond. When agriculture thrives it serves as a magnet for other successful business ventures.

Lastly, but perhaps more important, when farmers increase their income with ventures like the Artisanal Grain Project, they save the farmland from development themselves. By using Conservation Easements and the Tax Credits now available in New Mexico, farmland is placed on a level playing field in competing with development. It helps save the land and the water for growing the food we need.

For information about the project call 873-8689 For conservation easements call Cecilia McCord at 270-4421 For info on tax credits call Ethan Epstein at 848-1886

Texas border town battles the government for more security, not fences

By Angela Kocherga

EAGLE PASS, Texas —The mayor of a small Texas town is fighting against the building the US/Mexico border wall and taking on Washington DC.

His town is closely tied to its sister community across the Mexican border and the two cities share not only economies, but also families.

When driving down Main Street in Eagle Pass, TX, it's easy to understand why the mayor of the border town is leading the battle for Local Governments Fighting Fence. Just over the river is Mexico and the little town of Piedras Negras.

"Piedras Negras/Eagle Pass operate basically as the same community — even though we represent two countries," said Chad Foster, Eagle Pass Mayor.

The sister cities share an economy which is bolstered by a common border culture. The people who live there converse easily in both English and Spanish, and all it takes to cross the border is a walk over the bridge.

Mayor Foster is a familiar face in the Mexican City. He says just because Texas border towns have

close ties to Mexico, it doesn't mean they don't care about security. Most cities, like Eagle Pass, grew up around forts.

Some border towns want more patrols rather than fences.

"We've been fighting illegal entries for generations, but it didn't come to the forefront until prior to the November 2006 election. Then, there was such an unrealistic spin put on the reality of the Texas border," said Foster.

"[The fence would go]...below that camera tower, along that tree line and along those cars. Then it would go back into the golf course. And you'd fence out the city park," said Foster.

The city park Foster mentions is used by Eagle Pass children to play softball. But under the current plan, the land would be fenced off to secure the border.

At the Cactus Café, talking about the fence is popular, and suspicion of Federally awarded fence contracts is widespread.

"Personally, I believe somebody is making the money out of it," said Fito Barrera, Eagle Pass resident.

As construction begins, Texans who don't want to be fenced in, vow they won't back down.

Increasing U.S. Income Inequality and Consequences: a Harvard Study

By Jack Pickering

The rich have been getting richer and the poor, poorer in the USA since the Seventies, according to an article by Elizabeth Gudrais in *Harvard Magazine*, summer issue. This inequality, moreover, has affected all aspects of American life, including longevity. An average Japanese, for instance, can expect to live 82.3 years as against 77.9 in the USA, even though Japan's average income is considerably lower. The average is lower in Japan, but there is less inequality. The figures are from Prof. Ichiro Kawachi, one of a dozen professors consulted by Gudrais. The same relation between income distribution and life expectancy exists throughout the world, according to Prof. Lisa Berkman. She also found that a strong sense of community, as in Italy and Spain, adds years to average lives. Moreover, as income inequality rises, a sense of community falls, according to Prof. David Williams and Erzo Luttmer.

The high point in U.S. inequality was reached in 1928, when the richest 1 percent got 21 percent of national income. Then, as the middle class grew, the share of the super-rich fell to 10 percent by the Sixties; started climbing again in the Seventies; and passed 20 percent in 2006. Such inequality might be tolerable if things got better for the poor as the rich got richer. But, in fact, things got worse on the lower rungs of the economic ladder, according to Prof. Lawrence Katz. That fact is disguised by the U.S. government's poverty index, according to Prof. Christopher Jencks.. That

is so because the index is based solely on the cost of groceries, while other costs, such as those for energy and medical care, have risen much faster.

For the rich, both investment income and executive salaries have soared. As recently as 1965 the average salary of big-time U.S. CEOs was 25 times that of workers; now it is 250. Moreover, the top marginal tax rate of 35 percent is the lowest since the income tax started in 1913. A worldwide poll showed the citizens of 43 countries disapproving such disparity by an 85 percent majority, whereas U.S. disapproval was only 60 percent. So report Profs. Alberto Alesino and Edward Glaeser.

American tolerance of inequality is deeply rooted in our tradition of individualism. The main defense of inequality is that it stimulates high achievement. But professor Kawachi has marshaled evidence that teamwork often gets better results. Another issue is quality of life. Inequality clearly reduces life expectancy. It also increases crime and reduces neighborliness, according to Prof. Erzo Luttmer. Though one might suppose that the less affluent would work politically for change, in fact they seem to become demoralized. The poor tend to shun political activity, including elections. Consequently contributions tend to outweigh votes, according to Prof. Feijre Compante. Moreover, U.S. social mobility has slowed down since 1975. Profs. Katz and Claudia Golden have found a big drop in educational upwardness. From 1900 to 1975 the average American got 6 years more schooling than his parents. Now it's about zero!

My Dad the Artist

By Rosina Roibal

I remember loving the smell of ink and other chemicals from my dad's printing equipment in the early 80's. As a child, I spent hours in buildings like the old Casa Armijo (now a charter school on Isleta) and the old Taller Media that was in the basement of the Harwood Center, either watching my dad work the printing equipment or helping make buttons/t-shirts. I've definitely worn more political t-shirts and buttons than non-political t-shirts and buttons. My dad has worked with SWOP most of my life. I knew he was devoted to organizing early on because he would go to long meetings all the time while I got to know other children with similar parents. We would partake in art projects like murals, plays, poetry, and other projects like a coloring book that was taken to a partner school in Nicaragua. My dad also took my sisters and I to protests and community events where he would take photographs. I have never thought of my dad as an artist until a few months ago when it was suggested I interview my dad for this issue of Voces Unidas. I'm glad I had this opportunity to learn about my dad, Roberto Roibal, the artist. Here is our interview: Rosina: In the 70's, what kind of art did you make? Roberto: My most enjoyable art

forms were silkscreen and photography, which we used as a medium to educate and organize people. We formed an art collective to make media work and did it for free for organizations we worked with directly. My minor in college at the time was fine arts. The art we were doing with the collective was visual arts, booklets, t-shirts, bumper stickers, and fliers. We'd make art everywhere even on walls and on cars. I used to make photomurals, which is a large photo that is put on boards and walls. Using a slide projector you project a slide negative and spray photo developer on the wall until the tones are right. At a huge demonstration in 1970, this guy Spencer made photomurals of other demonstrations. We also got into offset printing with My Dad, the Artist printing presses and equipment that we bought for cheap prices. There was a Taller Grafico that closed and donated all of their posters, designs, paints, and equipment. We gave them a proposal about the work that we do here, and they chose us to give it all to. I worked with the Grape Boycott committee in Santa Fe for a while, and then moved to Albuquerque, where we had a local grape boycott ABQ committee. We were also asked by the AFL-CIO to take on the Coors Boycott (because of the racism at the Coors plant). I went to the Chicano Studies program at UNM to form a boycott commit-

tee. Every Friday, for four years we picketed against both boycotts and we made bumper stickers, buttons, t-shirts, and textile graphics. We set up some of the printing equipment at Chicano studies, and those people became interested in learning how to do design work. We formed "El Taller Media" (the media shop), where we did all kinds of printing, like posters (which we sold as fundraisers, and took to Cuba as gifts). We ran out of space, so were able to lease the Armijo school on Isleta, where there were other collectives, like a seed coop, fundraisers for different groups and projects. We were thrown out of there by the county because of the type of work we were doing. We then went to the Harwood Center, in the basement. This is also where SWOP started. We had huge printing presses, a huge Robertson camera (with extremely fine quality), Davidson presses. We did a lot of posters for the different movements around the state, like WIPP, Big Mountain actions, Indian lands fighting Uranium mining, MEChA and other stuff in Albuquerque. Rosina: How did people express themselves artistically? Roberto: There were dance groups and community centers based around art. There were also musicians, poets, dancers, writers, and street theater. They would go to the Student Union Building at UNM and do skits on Nixon and the war.

It was real exciting. Their work was to promote social justice and to promote anti-war. Posters and performers were brought in from all over the world (like Rini Templeton). Rosina: How did people express themselves politically? Roberto: Organizers expressed themselves through theater and Taller Media and writing. Organizations sponsored artistic events and brought musicians. Rosina: What was different about art/politics in the 70's from today? Roberto: Today we don't see as many different kinds of art for activities (like silk screen art). It was real movement work, and groups didn't have money to have professional companies making their posters like they do today. They needed us to make it. I don't know of any printing collectives today. There are a few people who make t-shirts, like Cy Evans (who makes our silk screens). We used to do a lot of trainings and workshops on printing and photography. We never got paid, it was all volunteer work. We used money we made to buy new supplies. There was more interest back then in maintaining all of these projects and equipment. It seems like the work has changed. Today people don't have time, the economy is different today (harder to volunteer), the equipment is expensive. Rosina: What was the challenge in passing on art to young people?

Roberto: We would try to make it fun. In the 80's with SWOP we would do silk screening workshops for young people. We did tile art with kids and muralists. You girls [his daughters] would help silkscreen posters and t-shirts. Working with young people wasn't a focus of our work, because teens weren't that interested, especially with the dangers of using paper cutters and printing presses. Photography was hard to teach young people. There wasn't a lot of demand. A young person had to be really interested in pursuing this stuff, and we didn't see that. Rosina: Why do you think young people aren't interested in learning old songs from their own culture? Roberto: There aren't classes in high school, and young people don't know much about those old projects and collectives. Art collectives like Offcenter Community Arts are the best way to teach young people about art. The Harwood Art Center does trainings. We do need more centers that focus on the community and people of color. You have to expose young people to it, so they have the chance to become interested. Technology is different today, and young people can easily get interested in graphic design.

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Local or Loco

By Astrid Webster
Board member
Los Alamos Study Group

"Many years ago while writing a book about Livermore, Nuclear Rites: A Weapons Laboratory at the End of the Cold War, I discovered that the lab had written its final environmental impact statement for a new incinerator before holding public hearings and that the hearings were, unbeknownst to most participants, mere public theater. I wonder if the "Complex Transformation" hearings are also just theater. If so, they still serve a purpose, since they're a rare venue today where fundamental questions are being asked about the U.S. nuclear arsenal."

Hugh Gusterson, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March 27, 2008

Hundreds of New Mexicans have stood in Gusterson's shoes, leaned into a microphone and spoken from their hearts to the Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Nuclear Safety Administration's (NNSA) Complex 2030 or Complex Transformation. Despite an overwhelming preponderance of objections to any further development of nuclear weapons or infrastructure, the complex transformation caravan plods on amidst cost overruns, security lapses and billing scandals too numerous to track, with nary a clear mission in sight.

Changes resulting from public comments range from the sublime to the nonexistent. The name change from Complex 2030 to Complex Transformation might well have come from the public insistence that there be no Complex at all and the vain hope in DOE and NNSA that transformation might somehow be mistaken for eradication long enough to get a new Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) and few hundred plutonium pits

built. An anonymous LANL, the Corporate Story, blogger may have said it best when he quipped that the hearings exist so the sponsors can figure out what they can get away with.

Two certainties that have grown ever since Senator Domenici began his ascendance as New Mexico's nuclear Pied Piper, accompanied by an ever rising federal nuclear investment: the spread of nuclear weapons has become intertwined with the myth of nuclear deterrence and New Mexicans are cycling into an ever deepening poverty accompanied by declining indicators of well-being, especially among children.

This imperviousness to public opinion is strikingly similar to another piece of political theatre being played out in our own back yards and mesas. Last year the Albuquerque Tribune reported on City Councilor Michael Cadigan's efforts to reserve the use of Tax Increment Development Districts (TIDDs) for infill and blighted area development. Erik Siemers quoted him on December 4, 2007 as saying "After a number of meetings with SunCal and meetings with neighborhood associations, it became clear to me that, philosophically, I can't support any TIDDs in the greenfields." Smart man. In the presence of 175 citizens gathered in the council chambers to object to use of TIDDs to benefit greenfield developers, then Council President Brad Winter cast the lone dissenting vote in a 4-1 decision, taking a firm position opposite most of the people in attendance. Cadigan's most recent effort to correct that threat to Albuquerque's future was again nixed when Councilman Winter's swing vote defeated Cadigan's amendment that TIDDs be limited to their intended use.

Last month's 1000 Friends of New Mexico's email to its membership summarized the effect of this taxpayer giveaway:

The state-approved TIDDs for

Suncal and Mesa del Sol (both in Bernalillo County) will siphon a combined \$52 million annually from the state general fund to pay the developers' bills for infrastructure. This pre-approved capital outlay to private developers for the next 25 years amounts to the combined general fund capital outlay given in 2008 to 31 of the state's 33 counties, with only Santa Fe and Bernalillo counties excluded. Over the 25 year life of just these two projects, the state will have diverted over \$1.3 billion in general fund revenue.

The people clearly know some things their government has yet to figure out. With drought projected to spread throughout the Southwest as the globe warms, our groundwater cannot keep up with residential, agricultural and commercial use. New Mexico's groundwater goes to Intel's computer chips while river waters are reprocessed for our children's lips. Agriculture that has given people in this valley a chance for sustainability for centuries is forced to take a back seat to nuclear industries that can wipe out millennia worth of environmental effort in a few seconds. As campaign promises crisscross the state in preparation for another exercise in wishful democracy, we are in need of new hearing aids to fit to the bulging heads of aging belief systems.

As difficult as it is to imagine that Los Alamos will shrink the nation's nuclear footprint by building a 2.7 billion dollar CMRR and new pits, it is no more outrageous than some of the other plans that DOE and NNSA and our congressional delegates have in store for New Mexico. The Mesa del Sol site is certainly worth watching, if only to figure out what the rest of us get for that 1.3 billion.

As for what's in store for Nuclear New Mexico, find more up to date information at LASG.org. (Los Alamos Study Group, 265-1200).

CALLING ALL CULTURAL ACTIVISTS, ARTISTS, AND CONCERNED PEOPLE!

By Leslie J. Fishburn-Clark

We invite you to join us at the 2nd annual Albuquerque Cultural Conference, "Building a People's Culture: Critical Dimensions," on Labor Day weekend 2008. We expect hundreds of people from the Southwest and across the country to attend our holiday weekend of poetry events, panels, and workshops on the state of American progressive culture, as it is and as it should be. We want this meeting to empower us to further common work. To do that, we're stressing personal and political forms of empowerment. In our panels we'll look at the social, economic, and cultural crisis of the present, as well as the history of cultural struggles, forms of grassroots organizing, the question of leadership, and the uses of cultural memory and resilience. We're not focusing on "Building" a people's

culture in a top-down way: rather we're looking at the

"Critical Dimensions" of leadership, coming as it must from a genuinely democratic and respectful set of purposes.

Albuquerque Cultural Conference 2008 Labor Day weekend - August 30 - September 1 Harwood Art Center. To kick-off the conference, we're sponsoring a poetry reading at the South Broadway Cultural Center. Among the invited poets are Simon Ortiz, Demetria Martinez, Levi Romero, Margaret Randall, Luci Tapahonso, and Jason Yurcic. Poetry Reading August 29th 7-10pm South Broadway Cultural Center.

For more information and to register, visit www.albuquerqueculturalconference.org email us at ABQconference2008@yahoo.com join the conversation on our blog at ABQconference2008.blogspot.com, or call 345-5729.

The Decision to Use the Bomb

Excerpts from the Writings of Gar Alperovitz

"On many occasions General Dwight D. Eisenhower recalled that when he was told the atomic bomb was going to be used he was conscious of a feeling of depression... Japan was already defeated... dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary..." The man who became President of the United States was clear...it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing."

"The vast majority of top World War II military leaders are on record agreeing with President Eisenhower that the use of the atomic bomb was unnecessary. Even the well known "hawk" General Curtis Lemay judged "the war would have been over in two weeks." Admiral William Leahy, President Truman's Chief of Staff, later wrote: "[T]he use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already

defeated and ready to surrender... [I]n being the first to use it, we... adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages."

"Most historians understand that one reason atomic weapons were used instead of the readily available alternative was political, not military. US Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, president Truman's chief adviser was quite open in explaining that he saw the bomb as a way to make the Russians more "manageable" on the continent."

Gar Alperovitz, is author of many works on the bombing of Hiroshima, including two widely cited books, Atomic Diplomacy; Hiroshima and Potsdam and The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb.

**See Gar!
Save The Date
Oct 25,
Lobo Theater
FREE talk**

From the FOAT Board...

By Rosamund Evans, President

We do miss the Albuquerque Tribune, and we know we are a long way from filling that gap in this community. We are also grateful that a solid group of citizens has volunteered time, skills, and resources to work toward a community owned newspaper. As our on-line effort is expanded we can offer more news with frequent updates. We need investment, of course, for more of what we know we want to become reality.

We are building and growing a base of supporters through the print issues, which are able to show the promise of what can be. We distributed the 10,000 copies of the first TRial Balloon by "network".

One volunteer walked door-to-door to deliver nearly 1,000 copies! This issue will be carried at Newsland, 2112 Central, SE; Page One, 11018 Montgomery Blvd and Bookworks, 4002 Rio Grande NW. But it is the enthusiasm of our supporters that will determine the eventual outcome. We can bring attention to issues or events that are not covered, or covered inaccurately, or dismissively by other media. We don't have paid reporters at this time. We

think we can deepen the conversations, however, with the news and opinions we publish.

We want your participation and your comments. Right now you can use our P. O. Box 35058, Albuquerque, NM, 87176-5058 to be in contact.

FOAT Board

David Barbour
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Rosamund Evans
Leslie J. Fishburn-Clark
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Volunteers:

The many writers you have become acquainted with in the two issues of the TRial Balloon. **Cartoons:** Gary Golliver, Keith Lewis - Computer support-Alex Kolberg, Andrew Kolberg

Distribution: - and much more-Frances Rauch

Proofreader: Hillari Strabi
Videoographer: Mike Swick

Zachary Richard on Culture and Resistance: "When You Love Something, Protect It"

By Bill Nevins

"When it is gone, it ain't never comin' back no more Jamais, jamais, jamais, jamais . . . no more."

--from "No French No More" by Zachary Richard

Zachary Richard's is a unique American voice, expressing both remembered loss and retained hope, rooted in historical awareness and crossing cultural and national boundaries. Richard (pronounced in the French way: Ree-CHAWD) is a direct descendant of Les Acadiens (later known as Cajuns), those French-speaking farmer-settlers who long ago forged a peaceful, durable social alliance (L'Acadie or Acadia) with the proud Micmac peoples of maritime Canada—perhaps the best example of European-indigenous socioeconomic cooperation on this continent.

He's painfully aware of history: how that rich achievement was destroyed by a blunt imperial land grab—the forced British expulsion in the late 1700s of the Acadian settlers from what was renamed Nova Scotia.

That dispossession sent Richard's ancestors to eventual refuge in Louisiana, where, over centuries, they've carved out a new culture still rooted in French language and a dedication to hard work and love of both the land and the peoples of their adopted home. In Richard's historical songs, Native American heroes like Crazy Horse stand side by side with Acadian leaders like Beausoleil Broussard and Jackie Vautour.

Cajun songs, like those of many exiles, are often happy-sounding explorations of heartbreaking subjects. Richard's original ballads in both French and English, delivered in a smooth baritone that can soar to a weeping wail, are not MTV pap, and you'll never hear them on American Idol. Story songs of Canadian voyageurs, indigenous rebel heroes, jaded Louisiana pirates, economic exploitation and environmental concern color his three decades worth of recordings and his legendary live performances.

Zachary Richard is a songwriter who puts his heart, and his career, on the line for his beliefs. He's noted for his many benefit concerts, most recently on behalf of Gulf Coast relief. And in the last decade, he's established himself as both a published, prize-winning poet (in French and in English) and as an astute, journalistic observer and commentator. CounterPunch recently featured his article on the destruction wrought in Louisiana last year by hurricane floods, Bush administration bungling and the cumulative effect of decades of environmental mayhem. His cultural activism has won him official honors from the governments of both France and Quebec.

Richard's perspective, both as a writer and as an activist, is at the

same time generously global and intensely local. Born and raised in the southwest Louisiana Cajun country, he still lives there on a ten acre family farm, but he is a cultural icon in Canada—revered as a returned exile—and far better known in France than in the US. His album Cap Enrage went double platinum in Canada and his signature song "Travailler, C'est Trop Dur" has become a trans-Atlantic Francophone standard.

Richard started out in the early 70s to study law, but, as he puts it, the lure of zydeco party music distracted him from that staid career path. He taught himself Cajun accordion and mastered songwriting.

After he graduated summa cum laude from Tulane University, frenetic performing quickly took over for "Zack". The music press tried to stereotype him as "the Cajun Mick Jagger", a seeming heir to "Ragin' Cajun" Doug Kershaw's "bayou wild man" persona, but Richard proved he had a lot more in him than being a singing advertisement for gumbo and beer.

Over the decades, with two dozen albums, he has become known as one of our continent's most thoughtful and sensitive musical social commentators, as well as the author of mature love ballads which could bring tears to a stone and jump-up novelties like "Crawfish".

I spoke with Zachary Richard recently by phone from his home in Scott, Louisiana. At the time, he was preparing to record a new album in Montreal.

BN: You've been a well known social activist for decades. In view of the devastation caused by the hurricanes of 2005, what are your priorities in terms of cultural and environmental activism?

ZR: My interests and priorities are the same as they've always been, with two major areas of interrelated focus: the French language and Acadian culture of Louisiana and Louisiana's natural environment. Those are two of the three reasons I live here, the third being my family. My family is doing okay, despite the inevitable losses we all experience with time, but our culture and our environment here are in a very menaced situation. When you love something, you want to protect it. That's a very normal reaction.

BN: What are you doing to defend language and culture at present?

ZR: Defending the French language and culture here can be a full time job. There are some 250,000 people in Louisiana who still speak French, but the numbers are decreasing each year. The most effective way to counter this is through language immersion school programs.

There are now at least twenty-eight French immersion programs in Louisiana public schools, as well as many Spanish language immersion programs, which I also applaud. As you know, education these days has become focused



on tests under the No Child Left Behind policies. In fact, recent results have shown that kids in these language immersion programs score much higher in standardized testing, and there are volumes of proof of how language education makes you a better student and a better citizen.

However, not all school boards have embraced these programs, despite their demonstrated value. Those twenty-eight French immersion programs are in a fragile state. About half are well-established, as in Lafayette, but others are in danger. For me, such programs preserve the local culture and develop a sense of tolerance and openness to other cultures.

BN: Why is language itself so vitally important?

ZR: Without the language you have only a vestige of the culture. Other aspects of the culture, such as music or cuisine, may survive, but the language may disappear here in a generation. That is unacceptable to me. It is a difficult fight, but anything worth fighting for is difficult.

BN: What was the cultural impact of the hurricanes last year in your part of southwestern Louisiana?

ZR: Many schools were destroyed, and classes had to be merged. We raised more than \$300,000 this past fall through concerts in Canada and France, specifically for hurricane relief to help Acadian Louisiana rebuild itself, and we are now trying to get that money into the hands of the people who need it. But we have a lot more to do, and there are roadblocks. In Vermillion Parish and other areas here the school boards seem paralyzed. There's been no movement from FEMA on rebuilding schools, and some schools will have to be built fourteen feet off the ground according to the flood protection standards they are tossing out!

In these conditions, preservation and expansion of language immersion programs are not a priority, and I fear they may become "hurricane victims" themselves unless the recovery process is managed with cultural awareness. We are doing what we can do to encourage that.

For the fascinating full interview visit us on the web at www.ABQTRialBalloon.com or Zachary Richard's bilingual website www.zacharyrichard.com

PERIODICIDE

(the killing of a great newspaper)

By Marvin Gladstone

"In the early 1850's Horace Greeley's ace roving reporter Bayard Taylor, wrote his chief from one of his cross-country swings, 'The Tribune comes next to the Bible all through the West.'"

Forward to "Horace Greeley, Voice of the People", William Harlan Hall, Harper & Brothers, 1950.

The reference was, of course, to Greeley's great muckraking Civil War daily *New York Tribune*, ultimately to suffer the same fate as its less-famous, but equally obstreperous namesaked descendent, the *Albuquerque Tribune*.

While bemoaning the conversion of Albuquerque into a one-daily-newspaper town I recently found myself in Houston, a city four times our size, fourth largest in the country, its denizens having long since been subjected to the same fate.

When reports of the ABQ *Tribune's* impending demise first reached the eyes and ears of its faithful constituency last summer, Ted Cloak and I initiated our to-be-doomed effort to save it. Into its eighty-fifth year of uninterrupted maverick Pulitzer-winning publication its death, if as inevitable as it appeared to be, ought not be suffered in silence. Its readers, if not its staff, would go down kicking and screaming!

As it turned out, the killing of the *Trib* was to be as illegitimate as was its birth. Initiated in the bowels of the Great Depression, the economic necessities of that decade induced its owner E.W. Scripps to enter into a cost-saving "joint operating agreement" with the *ABQ Journal*, wherein virtually all of the *Trib's* business functions would be operated jointly with those of the *Journal*. The JOA provided, essentially, that each of their respective newsroom and editorial operations would remain, most critically, independent of the other's.

Such a pooling arrangement violated, on its face, federal antitrust law, but it persisted notwithstanding for some 37 years.

By 1970 television's five o'clock "news" broadcasts had so effectively displaced America's afternoon dailies as to generate rescue efforts. One of those was the enactment that year by Congress of the Newspaper Preservation Act, notably vigorously promoted by Scripps and the *Journal*. The NPA granted a limited exemption from the federal antitrust laws to such joint operating agreements as that which had been pioneered by the two dailies and under which they had been operating illegally for more than three-and-a-half decades.

The *Trib* and the *Journal* continued to operate under the JOA, now legitimized, for another 37 years, during which the public's reliance upon the evening television "news" continued to grow, with a corresponding decrease in afternoon print media readership, and an accelerating adverse effect upon advertising revenues.

As of the summer of 2007 the *Trib's* days appeared surely to be numbered. Scripps looked to cut its claimed losses by closing the *Trib* and, if that might be effected, the *Journal* would thereby and thereafter enjoy a monopoly on daily print newspaper publication. Such closure would be win-win for both Scripps and Tom Lang, pub-

lisher of the *Journal*. The only losers would be the *Trib's* news and editorial staffers and, of course, the even less relevant public.

There was, however a problem. Having convinced the Congress back in 1970 that the JOAs required protection from antitrust enforcement in order to preserve print newspaper editorial diversity from otherwise fatal television competition, the proponents of closure would now argue from the other sides of their mouths. The termination of the JOA for which they now advocated would effectively create a monopoly by killing the *Trib* and transforming our two-daily-newspaper town into a mini-Houston, the readers of its single daily to be deprived of the divergent editorial views with which they had long been favored.

Although, post-Reagan, there had been little enforcement of the antitrust laws, approval by the Department of Justice of such a monopoly-creating scheme would nevertheless be required. An end run around the law, known as the "business failure exception", suggested itself. To avail themselves of the exception, Scripps would need to show that there was no alternative to an inevitable closure, hence no reason to continue the alleged economic bloodletting. Such a showing would entail a seemingly *bona fide*, but necessarily doomed pseudoeffort to "sell" the *Trib*.

The assets thus "offered" for sale would not, however, include the to-be-terminated JOA. Because the *Trib* was assertedly losing money with the JOA advantage, its losses would necessarily be exacerbated without the JOA. For that reason, the likelihood of a legitimate "offer" from a profit-motivated "buyer" would be slim to none. Acquisition by a publicly-funded nonprofit *pro bono publico* entity, rather than by a profit-motivated commercial business might, however, prove a feasible alternative to closure.

Scripps "listed" with Robert Broadwater, a New York broker. Excepting the exclusion of the JOA from the "sale", its terms (e.g., price, contingencies, etc.) were subjected to a confidentiality proscription, and have never been disclosed. Nor has the consideration, if any, to be paid by the *Journal* to Scripps for facilitating the latter's to-be-"legitimized" daily print media monopoly. True to expectations, receipt of an "offer" was duly reported, the terms thereof being quite as secreted as were the terms of the "listing", and whether anything of value was transferred between the *Journal* and Scripps as consideration for their otherwise mutually-advantageous deal. So, too, the relationship, if any, of the "buyer" (reportedly a public relations firm) to any of the selling principals, was and remains unknown.

2007 was now coming to a close. It was ten minutes 'til noon. Sounding the alarum, loyal *Trib* subscribers had organized themselves into the nonprofit FRIENDS OF THE ALBUQUERQUE TRIBUNE, or "FOAT". Most of the FOAT participants were *Trib* subscribers whose subscription expirations would post-date the impending closure. Because they had contracted for continued publication of their afternoon daily no proposed short-rate refund could

compensate for loss of the benefit of their bargains. Thus might they enjoy standing to enjoin the breach of their subscription agreements. Compounding that breach would be the resultant creation of a monopoly. And compounding further the compounded breach was the fact that the JOA had some 13 years yet to run, the subscribers (indeed the entire *Trib* readership) standing, arguably, as third-party beneficiaries thereof.

Without the wherewithal, however, to finance private antitrust litigation, FOAT was obliged to seek intervention by the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice. DOJ nonaction, if not approval, would be required for the pre-expiration termination and the consequent closure of the *Trib*. Although FOAT's pleas received sympathetic attention among DOJ mid-levelers their expressions of concern would ultimately come to naught.

FOAT's last-ditch effort to forestall closure was a bid to acquire from Scripps the *Trib's* name, subscriber and advertiser lists, and its archives; and to continue publication on line. The offer transmitted through Broadwater recited a nominal consideration, inasmuch as Scripps' argument for JOA approval of the closure was based upon the "business failure" antitrust exception. If, as Scripps argued, there was no way to realistically anticipate the *Trib's* ultimate salvation, stanching the asserted fiscal bleeding by closure should, the argument continued, be permitted. But the very ground for invoking the exception, i.e., inevitable demise with persisting continuing losses, meant that those "assets" had no value, justifying FOAT's nominal price offer. (Somewhat, but not entirely tongue-in-cheek, FOAT sought operating grant money from the Scripps-Howard Foundation, the mission statement of which quite neatly matched FOAT's. Not surprisingly, no response was forth-

coming.)

The rejection (actually, its receipt was never acknowledged) of an offer to continue publication of a newspaper which would otherwise close its doors would suggest that the motive for closure had less to do with shrinking revenues than with opportuning that excuse to create of the *Journal* a monopoly of the daily newspaper business in Albuquerque. Such, of course, has regrettably come to pass.

"Plan C" ("A" being DOJ injunctive intervention, "B" FOAT's acquisition proposal) was FOAT's attempt to substitute for the *Trib* an online daily on the model, among others, of the *San Diego Voice*. The *Voice* organizers had similarly failed to acquire the name and goodwill of the defunct afternoon daily *San Diego Tribune*. They launched and have successfully continued their noble online undertaking. ABQ's new online *TRIAL Balloon* (pun definitely intended, with well-earned credit to our stalwart 93-year old FOAT co-editor Jack Pickering) would be complemented by such occasional print editions as money might permit. Taking the reins was and is Rosamund Evans, the first issue of the print edition having hit the newsstands on Rosamund's 80th birthday! She has been instrumental in organizing five well-attended public forums, and inviting national attention to FOAT's salvation effort. We're doing our best to keep both Jack and Rosamund out of the pool hall and off the shuffleboard!

This, then, is our second print issue, and we plan to keep the presses rolling, God willing and the creek don't rise! We will continue to adhere to the *Trib's* mission, i.e., "to inform the community. Our allegiance is to the reader. Our commitment is to the truth. Our job is to question. Our ambition is to provide a forum through which this city becomes a better place to live."

September 2 will see the opening of the brand new *MEDIA ARTS COLLABORATIVE CHARTER SCHOOL* ("MACCS"), the very first state-chartered school and one of very few media arts public high schools in the United States. Included in its broad-based media arts curriculum is a Journalism component. Journalism will be taught, as MACCS' Mission Statement recites, "with ethics and responsibility". An important expectation for the future of the *TRIAL Balloon* is its function as the new school's online and Journalism laboratory with, hopefully, such regular or irregular print issues as circumstances might permit.

"The flow of information that is the lifeblood of democracy is being choked by a media system that every day ignores a world of injustice and inequality, and the growing resistance to it. No, the media system is not the sole cause of our political crisis, nor even the primary cause, but it reinforces every factor contributing to the crisis, and it fosters a climate in which the implementation of innovative democratic solutions is considered all but impossible.

"The closer a story gets to examining corporate power, the less reliable our corporate media system is as a source of information that is useful to citizens of a democracy. Commercial indoctrination of children is crucial to corporate America." (*John Nichols and Robert McChesney, IT'S THE MEDIA, STUPID.*)

The "periodicide" of the *Tribune* will serve the students as an object lesson in irresponsibility and absence of ethics; and yet, hopefully, its Lazarus-like revivication as the *TRIAL Balloon* is vindicating FOAT's persisting optimism.

La vida no es de justicia; bastante, es la lucha permanente por justicia!

