

ABQ TRIal Balloon

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1

www.ABQTRIALBalloon.com

JUNE 2008

This is a Test...

The purpose of the Albuquerque TRIal Balloon is to gauge support of Duke City area citizens for a second news daily. The number of tax-deductible contributions generated by the TRIal Balloon will decide whether a second daily is feasible.

A larger version of the TRIal Balloon is on-line at www.FriendsOfTheTribune.com. The proposed daily would have more features and more content that is time-sensitive. A weekly print edition is being considered as a supplement.

When the Albuquerque Tribune's future was in doubt, a group of readers formed Friends of the Albuquerque Tribune (FOAT). Since the shutdown of the Tribune, FOAT

has been exploring the feasibility of a replacement. The Albuquerque TRIal Balloon is the latest step.

If you wish to support a second news daily, send a contribution to FOAT.

Also, watch our web-site for public planning meetings. FOAT is a registered non-profit corporation. To receive a tax deduction, write the check to QUOTE...UNQUOTE, INC. and put FOAT in the lower left space on the check. We have a 501(c)3 umbrella with Quote...Unquote, Inc. until our own is ready.

The future of this effort depends on your support. It is a choice to bring the community together with a daily publication serving our diverse interests.

Good Energy

By V. B. Price

With gas prices threatening to reach \$4.00 a gallon or more this summer, with the general economy in shambles, dangerous uranium mining on the rise, and the mountain west heating up twice as fast as the rest of the world according to recent data, westerners are starting to feel like sitting ducks.

High gas prices could ruin rural economies, sending the fragile mom and pop travel industry in small towns into bankruptcy, and shoot food prices sky high in big cities and small around the region. Global warming is moving so fast around here, that the 20 year drought could last for 50 years or more.

And instead of looking to solutions that respect and help middle to lower income Americans – the vast majority of us -- the federal government subsidizes the zillionaire oil industry and pours billions in incentives into the nuclear power industry, the most complicated, dangerous, and water-wasting-land-befouling power source known.

What's worse, New Mexicans are asked to participate in a trade-off between global warming and so-called "green" nuclear energy by sacrificing the health of the entire northwest part of the state to uranium mining, an updated version of the Cold War uranium boom that has never cleaned up its waste and has caused countless cancers among Native American miners and their families.

The solutions are right before our eyes. Steward Udall said it most eloquently in a letter to his grandchildren published in the March 31 issue of High Country News.

"Americans must finally cast aside our notion that we can continue the wasteful consumption patterns of our past. We must promote a consciousness attuned to a frugal, highly efficient mode of living," wrote the former Secretary of the Interior under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

He admonished the next generation to "Give your unstinting support to all lasting, fruitful technological innovations. Be steadfast enemies of waste. The lifetime crusade of your days must be to develop a new energy ethic to sustain life on earth."

The task ahead does not require that we reinvent the wheel.

It's all pretty clear in the short

run. We need to refine government incentives. Move them from being overwhelmingly helpful to oil and gas, coal, and nuclear power, and heavily beef up incentives for fine tuning the efficiency of auto engines and for renewable wind, solar, and tidal power. It is not a matter of the marketplace. We'll always need more energy. It's a matter of which industry is subsidized.

As transportation becomes more costly in the mountain west, we'll need to shore up rural economies stretched over the vastness of relatively depopulated areas. And the best way to do that is to create a new Civilian Conservation Corps for young people and the unemployed.

A new CCC would work to restore and conserve the land, build and repair roads, create rail lines, and spruce up communities. An employment base like that could swell the ranks of America's dying unions.

A new WPA could also ease the economic disaster caused by undercutting the American workforce by replacement with slave labor in other countries. There are thousands of public works jobs in cities and towns that America needs to have done, before our infrastructure crumbles.

And wouldn't older Americans be reassured to know that a decent public service job was open to them should the economy tank farther than it has and empty their savings dry?

How do you pay for all this stuff? Convert money wasted on a useless war into the funds for an economic reconstruction of the American middle class. Tax dwindling resources like gasoline. Make corporations pay their fair share of taxes, while lifting the tax burden on the middle class and the small investors. Restructure health care and health insurance so it isn't wasting our personal and national fortunes. Conserve. What you don't spend you can't waste.

Americans need jobs that pay a decent wage. They need a government that cares about them, not about CEO's and billionaires who can care for themselves.

Stuart Udall is right. "Be steadfast against waste." And the first place to start is not reducing a strong American workforce to penury.

V. B. Price is an Albuquerque freelance writer, author and commentator.

Nuclear Power, Too Costly to Matter

By Peter Neils

Los Alamos Study Group

With increasing acknowledgment of climate change, and the foreseeable decline in oil production, proponents of nuclear power see an opportunity to resuscitate the comatose US nuclear power industry. The successful effort of Sen. Domenici to have nuclear power defined as a "renewable" energy source in the 2005 National Energy Policy Act is just one sign of this effort.

The stampede to embrace nuclear power as an economically attractive component of a strategy for our energy future should not proceed without careful examination of important considerations that nuclear boosters generally choose to ignore.

The first is defining nuclear power as a renewable. Since uranium is the primary fuel and it is finite and breeder reactors are still an expensive pipe dream, defining it as renewable is disingenuous at best, or downright dishonest if one is less charitable. Let's look at the amount of uranium it would require to make a meaningful reduction in greenhouse gases. If global nuclear capacity were to double by 2050, it would reduce greenhouse emissions by about 5%, less than one tenth of the reductions required to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases, and at least 30 years too late.

Since this is hardly sufficient, let's assume a ten-fold increase in capacity. That would exhaust reserves of high grade uranium in just 5 years, and all known reserves in 20, rendering the massive investment (up to \$4 billion per plant) such construction would require absurd. Moody's Investor Services in October estimated new generation nuclear plants in the United States will cost as much as \$6 billion to \$9.6 billion each, the high end more than double industry projections.

Senator Domenici's plan to "recycle" reactor waste through reprocessing continues to be uninformed by real world experience. Boosters of reprocessing grossly understate problems with mixed

oxide fueled reactors (MOX). France, which has a reprocessing program as well as MOX reactors, has concluded that the program was not cost effective nor, quite predictably, did it reduce nuclear waste. The only waste reduction that occurs through reprocessing is in Mr. Domenici's public relations campaign for nuclear power.

And, of course, the nuclear industry's dirty secret is that nuclear power is not carbon neutral anyway. The technology for the entire nuclear fuel chain is responsible for substantial carbon emissions. When the environmental costs of the fuel cycle are factored in, the operation of a nuclear plant actually produces about one third of the greenhouse gases of a modern natural-gas power stations. Nuclear power is therefore actually closer to natural gas in terms of emissions than it is to true renewables like wind or solar power.

There's an on going effort to link nuclear power to a future hydrogen economy. It is yet another attempt to green-wash nuclear power's image. The question it begs is: If the hydrogen economy is dependent on nuclear power, why, given the problems discussed in this essay, would we regard hydrogen as a sustainable, economically practical component of our energy plan?

Energy efficiency improvements are seven times more effective per dollar spent at reducing greenhouse gases than nuclear power. Anyone who has ever lived off the grid on a hybrid power system understands the absolute necessity of conservation.

Nuclear power is already the most heavily government subsidized power source in history, and we can expect nothing but the same in the brave new world envisioned by proponents of the new nuclear revolution. The existence of a federally subsidized insurance plan gives the lie to any pretenses of safety. If the nuclear power industry is so safe, why can they not find a private entity to insure their power plants? Instead, their liability is limited by Congress to an estimated 2% of the potential costs of a serious accident at a nuclear

power plant, about \$540 billion according to the GAO. With the current cost of a nuclear plant each \$10,000 of investment carries a potential liability of \$1.3 million. Why should taxpayers support an investment that is so risky when we have so many alternatives? The oft quoted MIT study that concluded nuclear must play a role in our energy future did not even look at the impact of a renewed conservation initiative, nor alternatives like concentrating solar or wind. Those areas were "beyond the scope of the study". Does this sound like someone had an idea of what they wanted the study to conclude when they funded it?

Further, with the government already on the hook for both the development of much of the industry and its insurance, as well as the disposal of their waste, why does the nuclear industry need further subsidies? Does this really represent a level playing field when comparing the costs of various options for our energy future? Or, to put it differently: How are citizens supposed to make informed choices about how to proceed into a precarious energy future without accurate analysis of the real costs of our options?

If nuclear power is really a viable enterprise, and now it enjoys a monumental 50 year public investment, isn't it time to ask the industry to stand on its own in the energy market... to run with the big dogs or curl up on the porch?

Dealing with nuclear waste will be expensive in both the long and short term, and we cannot guarantee that the sites in which we dispose of nuclear waste will be secure for the duration that they remain a threat to human health. There is simply no way to assure the maintenance of institutional controls for 10,000 years.

Finally, civilian nuclear power is a pathway to nuclear arms. Of the 60 countries which have built nuclear power or research reactors, over 20 are known to have used their "peaceful" nuclear facilities for covert weapons research and / or production. In some cases

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Support Our Veterans



Jim
Hightower

Politicians should not be allowed to utter the phrase "Support Our Troops" - unless they actually do.

None have shouted this phrase more insistently than the Bushites, yet they've been caught again and again shortchanging our troops on everything from protective gear to family benefits. Most damning has been the abysmal failure of Bush & Company to honor war veterans with adequate treatment here at home, and two recent cases show how empty their words really are.

First is the important, bipartisan proposal made by Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., to establish a new GI Bill for veterans of Bush's war. The original version, signed in 1944 by FDR, was an enormous success, not only moving millions of vets into the middle class, but also democratizing America's college system. Just in financial terms, the investment paid for itself seven fold. Webb now wants those who are sacrificing so much in Iraq and Afghanistan to make the same gains.

But guess who says no? Bush, the Pentagon, and even John McCain. Why? It would cost too much, say these Washington warmongers, who have already thrown trillions of our tax dollars into the debacle of Iraq.

The second case is the shameful inaction by the top mental health official in Bush's veterans department. Ira Katz has not only gone along with Bush budgeteers who've been shortchanging vets on mental treatment, but he's also tried to cover up the startling suicide rate among veterans who have been victims of this failure. Katz has now been exposed as the author of an agency email that he titled: "Shh!" The email conceded that there are some 35 suicide attempts each day by veterans—half of them successful. Katz's message, however, was not to call for more help for our soldiers, but instead to stonewall disclosure of the problem.

Abandoning those you've sent to war is traitorous behavior by the commander-in-chief.

For more information on Jim Hightower's work - and to subscribe to his award-winning monthly newsletter, The Hightower Lowdown, visit www.jimhightower.com. Distributed by Minute-manmedia.org

A Hard Sell: Military Recruitment on High School Campuses

By Maria Santelli

Two federal laws, No Child Left Behind and the National Defense Authorization Act, mandate that Military Recruiters have a presence on our high school campuses. Although it is common for schools to have a policy governing "controversial issues"—by which students are guaranteed exposure to multiple sides of an issue—the military is not commonly viewed as controversial and students are not guaranteed access to balanced information on the subject. But grassroots efforts being led by veterans, military families, and other community members are working to change that.

In Albuquerque, Another Side Truth in Military Recruiting is one such group. "Recruiters are sales people," said Connie Green, member of Another Side. "You wouldn't buy a car without taking it for a test drive, yet young people all over the country are enlisting in the military without having an opportunity to hear the myths and realities behind the recruiter's sales pitch."

In May 2005, the New York Times reported that nearly 20% of U.S. Army recruiters were under investigation in 2004 for impropriety in their interactions with young people, including "threats and coercion...[and] false promises that applicants would not be sent to Iraq." Things got so bad for recruiters that spring, that the military held a "stand down" on May 20 during which recruiting was suspended across the US and recruiters received additional training.

"There is, from the outset, an unequal power dynamic at work," between military recruiters and high school students, says Green. "Recruiters come to schools—in uniform—and offer big money in enlistment bonuses or college tuition, job training, travel, adventure. It's hard for young people not to get caught up in that excitement." But what the military won't tell you, Green adds, is that status, pay, allowances, benefits, and responsibilities of military personnel can change without notice. That means that, although a recruit is bound to his or her end of the contract, a recruiter is not and an enlistee is guaranteed nothing. For example, while promises of signing bonuses are common to the sales pitch, only six percent of enlistees who signed up for active duty between October 2004 and June 2005 actually received the top bonus of \$20,000.



This is March 15, protest on UNM campus, against militarization of UNM and 5 years of Occupation of Iraq. Photo by Alex Kolberg.

And what about money for college? According to Todd Ensign of Citizen Soldier, 65% of recruits who sign up for the Montgomery GI Bill never receive any money for college, and only 15% actually earn a college degree.

Green has many other examples like these and she and her colleagues have been taking this message directly to young people in the schools. Over the last three

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years, Another Side, led by veterans, including those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, has spoken to thousands of students across New Mexico.

"Young people have a right to know and as adults, it is our responsibility to make sure they have access to all the information they need to make a good decision about their future." Green emphasizes that the choice of military service is one that is unique, in that it carries with it risks and consequences that are "categorically different than other life choices," she says.

Despite this argument, Another Side has met resistance in the public schools. "In our culture, the military is somehow seen as neutral and is given a free pass, more liberally than any other group, to access our young people." And that's not just recruiters, Green says, but also JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps) programs, which Green calls "the soft sell."

Another Side brings the voices of veterans to the classroom to give young people an alternative view of military service and war—"another side" of what they hear from military recruiters, the mainstream media, and the government. "Hearing from a veteran who has been there gives a young person a chance to take the idea of military service for a test drive," Green says, adding that it also is a chance for students to reflect

on what she calls the "increasing militarization" of our schools, our economy, and our culture.

To this end, Another Side created a booklet titled *Your life, Your World, Your Future*, full of opportunities for young people to meet their goals "nonviolently, without the military," says Green. Taking a line from the recruiter's own script, the cover of the booklet invites young people to explore ways to pay for college, serve their community, travel, learn discipline, get job training and have adventures. By making such a resource available, Another Side hopes to show working class youth, who, in today's economy, don't see much of a future outside of the military, that there are other opportunities out there for them.

"What we have today is a poverty draft, not a volunteer military," says Green. "When you look at who is joining, it is not the children of the elites, it is the children of the working class who see the military option as a way out of poverty." But in reality, Green is quick to point out, the military often ends up trapping people in poverty: in a 2002 survey of members of the military by the Department of Defense, almost half reported having financial difficulty and, on any given night, 200,000 veterans sleep on the street.

Another Side is also the founder of the New Mexico GI Rights Hotline. The NM GI Rights Hotline begins operation in March, joining the national network of the GI Rights Hotline, a coalition of nonprofit, non-governmental organizations. New Mexico members of the military can call the hotline to receive information concerning discharges, conscientious objection, grievance procedures, sexual harassment, benefits and other civil rights issues affecting active duty soldiers, veterans and their families. Callers to the hotline, 505-404-6427, will reach a live counselor 12 hours per day.

Another Side acknowledges that some people have good experiences in the military, but a bad experience, especially in wartime, could mean a lifetime of struggle, or worse. "By allowing this to be the trend, our society has decided that a certain portion of our population is expendable," says Green. "When we no longer passively accept this idea, we will be free to more actively pursue alternatives to military intervention—alternatives to war."

Welcome to the ABQ TRIal Balloon

The Board, FOAT

Dear Readers:

Eighty-six years ago, when the Albuquerque Tribune began publishing as a daily newspaper in Albuquerque they wrote: "The mission of the Albuquerque Tribune is 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."

When it became apparent that the Albuquerque Tribune was in trouble, many people wrote letters to the editor expressing their grief and sadness at the prospective loss of this excellent paper, and the prospect of Albuquerque's moving closer to becoming a one-newspaper town. Some of these letter writers moved beyond their emotions to focus on What To Do About It, about alternatives. Marvin Gladstone and Ted Cloak rounded up some of the letter writers last September, and Friends Of The Albuquerque Tribune (FOAT) was born—or hatched.

FOAT has worked along two tracks; one to try to save the Trib, the other to come up with something new in the event of the Trib's

demise. As you know, the first track went nowhere (though we're trying to salvage the online and archival aspects of the old Trib). The second track has led to what you're holding in your hands, or seeing on your computer screen—the ABQ TRIal Balloon.

We hope to be able to fill the hole left by the Trib with regard to diversity of opinion, straight news, and cartoons, and to perhaps add an artistic and graphic component not usually found in a "newspaper".

As to our business or corporate structure, we're moving in the direction of some sort of Cooperative, but this process is still going on. As is the process of deciding on our revenue source priorities. All we know so far about the latter is that it will be honest.

You can help. Besides of course your tax-deductible financial contributions, you can read us, subscribe, attend our community meetings, put in your two cents worth, and submit material for publication—news analysis, opinion pieces, artwork, graphics and you need not be a "recognized" journalist, author or artist. Give us a try.



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The ABQ TRIal Balloon is online at www.ABQTRIALBalloon.com. All material in this publication has been contributed by local writers, photographers, and cartoonists. This issue is distributed by volunteers. Help by passing it along!

Comments and submissions (articles, photos, artwork), are welcomed and encouraged with the understanding that the editors cannot be held responsible for loss or damage. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with unsolicited submissions to ensure

return. Articles and letters will be edited and published at discretion of editors.

Get in touch through our P O Box, or our list-serve, Save-AbqTrib@yahoo.com. Contributions are essential for continued growth of the ABQ TRIal Balloon.

For tax-deductible donations, write check to: Quote...Unquote, Inc., with FOAT in left lower line. Mail check to Marvin Gladstone: 429 Montclair Drive SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108.

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Rants

By Harry Willson

Who Needs the Context?

The American public is allowing the media to make its points through the use of magic words and phrases. It brings to mind the old game of quoting Bible verses, out of context, to make a new point. Here's my favorite example: "Judas went out and hanged himself." "Go and do thou likewise." "What thou doest do quickly."

The Bible doesn't really say that. All three verses do indeed appear in the Bible, in three different contexts, but they don't mean what the person quoting them is pretending.

The media is doing the same thing with old sermons from Barak Obama's pastor. In a somewhat lengthy context the pastor is talking about the idea of God as a God of justice. Slavery and lynching and segregation are offensive to that God, the pastor tells his black congregation. It doesn't matter if white folks sing, "God Bless America." The God of Justice is inclined the other way, the pastor reminds his congregation. In his lathered-up excitement the pastor cries out, "God bless America? No! God damn America!" He doesn't mean that God hates all of white America. He is mocking those who think that a God of justice would approve of slavery, lynching, segregation and unprovoked invasions of other countries, which America has done a lot of in the last half-century.

But out of context, "God damn America" sounds quite dreadful to many Americans, especially those who don't know much recent history and can't see things from the non-Americans' point of view. So the media attacks the pastor as un-American, and even blames Obama for not shutting up his pastor,

as if he could.

I recall my own last days as a pastor, not in a black church, but in an integrated [chicano, native American, white] church, in the mid-1960s. I stated, "Americans had better be hoping that there is no just God. If there is a just God, America is in trouble." I was concerned then about the assassinations of world leaders like Mohammed Mossadegh of Iran and Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, and the unprovoked bombing and invasion of Viet Nam. Since then I have ceased believing in any supernatural Entity at all. But I still try to believe in some kind of Undeviating Justice, and I can understand perfectly well Barak Obama's pastor, and his frustration.

Who needs the context? Some of the current problem is rooted in the refusal of most Americans to admit what the context is. Some observers have suggested that thoughtful residents of the Middle East, and other parts of the world, too, for that matter, hate America because of what America has done to them over the past fifty years. The suggestion infuriates some people. "Why do you hate America so?" they ask. They shout down the suggestion with words like "unpatriotic" and "pro-terrorist."

But we don't hate America. We do tremble for our country when we think of any kind of over-arching Justice. We're not surprised that the current administration has pulled out of the World Court. And then more magic words come up. They call us "defeatists" and say we are advocating "surrender." I don't think we should surrender. I think we should apologize, admit the war was and is a miserable mistake, stop it, stop the occupation, and make complete reparations for the damage done.

In order to think clearly about all this, we do need the context. Email: harry@amadorpublishers.com.

Santa Fe Votes to Amend Municipal Charter to Require Ranked Choice Voting in Municipal Elections

In the March 4th municipal elections, Santa Feans voted for seven amendments to the municipal charter that will bring better government and cleaner elections. Changes to the charter include increased access to initiative, referendum and recall, giving the mayor more opportunities to vote, requiring the local judge to be a lawyer, creating a system of public campaign financing, and implementing Ranked Choice Voting in municipal elections.

Santa Fe's city charter functions much like a state's constitution. It serves as the overriding law. Ordinances passed by the council must be consistent with provisions of the charter, and the charter can only be amended by the people, not by a vote of the council. With this in mind, Santa Fe's municipal charter is reviewed every ten years for possible amendments.

In 2005, a charter review commission was appointed by the council. They met regularly during 2006, and came up with seven amendments. These amendments were approved by two other city committees, Ethics, and Finance, and were forwarded to the people by a unanimous vote of the city council. All seven amendments were approved by voters.

Ranked Choice Voting was among this package of direct democracy and good government reforms that passed overwhelmingly by Santa Fe Voters. Ranked Choice, also known as Instant Runoff or Single Transferable Vote, is a voting method used in most other democratic countries. The benefit of Ranked Choice is that it ensures a majority winner without the cost of holding a second election.

Santa Fe joins a dozen other jurisdictions that have adopted Ranked Choice Voting in the past four years, including San Francisco and Minneapolis. Most have done so in order to eliminate expensive traditional runoffs, which costs the city and the candidates a great deal of additional money and generally results in very low voter turnout.

Ranked Choice Voting replaces the traditional runoff in a simple way- by allowing voters to rank their second and third choices on Election Day. If no candidate receives a majority of votes, election administrators simply perform the runoff using the original ballots, instead of having to conduct another election.

Ranked Choice has other benefits as well. In San Francisco, we have seen more collaborative campaigning. With candidates vying for second choice rankings of similar candidate's voters, there is less room for negative and smear campaigns.

And Ranked Choice effectively eliminates the spoiler phenomenon inherent in plurality systems, meaning that the winner does not need a majority to win. Plurality systems are flawed because it leads into two extremes- either a winner without majority support from a crowded candidate field, or the choice between only two candidates.

Voters are tired of feeling that their representatives don't really represent them, and one result is decreased voter participation. Ranked Choice answers that not only by ensuring a majority winner, but by giving votes more power. A voter can vote for a favorite candidate, knowing that

his second choice will count if no candidate receives a majority of first choices.

Ranked Choice Voting is growing in popularity, and campaigns are beginning in other New Mexico cities. It is in use in several caucus states by the Democratic and Green Parties. With a little luck, this system will lead to better election systems and a true multiparty democracy.

Rick Lass is a director of Voting Matters, a non profit organization dedicated to a more democratic system of representation and increasing voter participation. He can be reached at www.votingmatters.com

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they have succeeded in producing nuclear weapons: India, Pakistan, Israel, South Africa, possibly North Korea, and Iran, at its peril, is nibbling around the edges.

Every nuclear power plant is a potential target for a terrorist or a hostile nation, essentially a pre-deployed WMD. An attack by a plane, bomb or conventionally armed missile would be sufficient to cause a massive nuclear release. Further, the proliferation of nuclear materials associated with a build up of nuclear power plants complicates attempts to keep those materials out of the hands of terrorists as well as rogue nations. Statistically, based on the industry's safety record, a ten fold increase in nuclear plants would mean a reactor core damage accident every 3 years.

In the heady days following World War II, nuclear power was touted as the wave of the future,

producing power too cheap to meter. Most civilians lacked the sophistication or skepticism to question its safety. We live in a different world now and are, hopefully, much wiser. When we read a glowing essays about nuclear power that do not even acknowledge, let alone address, any potential downsides, we should immediately be on the alert. And when our Congressional delegation extends carte blanche to an industry that Wall Street will not touch, which they unstintingly do, we must insist on accountability. For our delegation to be unquestioningly promoting nuclear power when we live in an area which should be at the forefront of the real energy revolution is an embarrassment.

We don't need a "Manhattan Project" for energy, we need a "New Deal" for energy, putting thousands of people to work

MEDIA ARTS CHARTER SCHOOL SET TO OPEN

By Marvin Gladstone

Exuberantly, we exited our final hearing before the Public Education Commission in Santa Fe, new charter in hand. Still, we found ourselves as confused as the dog chasing the car. What to do when he catches it? The dilemma was, and remains, aggravated by the novelty of ours being the first-ever charter granted by the State of New Mexico (as distinguished from those issued by local school districts). Dr. Don Duran, Assistant Secretary of Education for charter schools, cautioned that we were to be his "guinea pigs". Patti Gladstone, President of the Governance Council of the new school, responded "so long as we're not the sacrificial lamb!"

That was September 12, '07, some nine months ago. Starting a new four-year high school was and remains daunting, particularly with no faculty, no students, no schoolhouse, no money and a bureaucracy nearly as uninformed as we. Those difficulties were compounded by the fact that our school would be teaching "media arts", for which there was neither an established curriculum nor teacher certifications.

The need for a media arts high school had, for some time, been evident to those of us long associated with Public Access Channel 27. Barely able to satisfy the burgeoning film industry's growing appetite for "below the line" (grips and grunts, etc.) workers here, New Mexico was getting few of the "above the line" (cinematographers, screenwriters, editors, etc.) jobs. Filmmakers were coming in from California bringing their own talent, doing their thing, and taking the money back out. With a quarter-century-plus of national award-winning public access experience, having trained thousands of videographers, editors and television producers, we deluded ourselves into believing that organizing such a school would be a breeze. An opportunity presented itself when, in 2006, the 1999 charter school

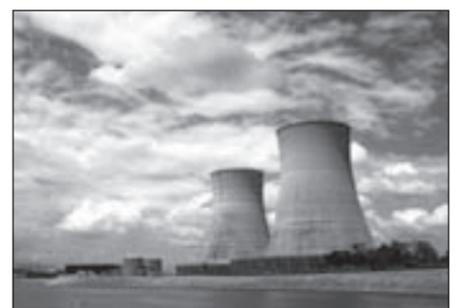
act was amended to authorize, for the first time, state (as distinguished from local school district) chartering, commencing in 2007.

Of the ten applicants for the first-ever-to-be-issued state charters, our Media Arts Collaborative Charter School was the sole survivor. Five had withdrawn after receiving negative evaluations of the applications, and four were rejected by the Public Education Commission. (One has since appealed to the Secretary of Education, who reversed the denial.)

The statute refers to us as "founders". We refer to ourselves as "flounders". Noses to grindstones, we're persevering. In addition to the full core curriculum (subject-integrated with media arts) required for a diploma and college-admission eligibility, the new high school will teach analog and digital filmmaking, television, radio, web design, animation and journalism. Its "collaboration" will not be limited other secondary schools and college-level media arts programs. Significantly, it will coordinate with Public Access TV (the students producing their own programs, probably on their own local origination channel), Albuquerque Studios and other filmmaking enterprises "primarily through mentorship and internship initiatives).

If, as expected, pending reformative federal legislation is enacted, the school will look to initiating its own low-power FM radio station. Even closer to home, the prospect of a successful effort to supplant the regrettably-now-defunct ABQ Tribune with an online daily, suggests the possibility of a "journalism lab" for these high-schoolers. Its emphasis will be hands-on.

Well, obviously we're sailing on, determined to open in September with an approved curriculum, a schoolhouse, a faculty, and a gaggle of inspired (for our first-year start) 9th and 10th graders, to be housed in our own building on the east end of Nob Hill (4401 Central NE). You may reach us at www.NMMediaArts.org, or by calling 505-243-1957



building huge concentrating solar plants with storage capacity that would power the turbines in non-daylight hours. Great strides are also occurring in photovoltaic and, of course, wind. We have the most of the means at hand to address the energy problem, we just lack the vision.

Los Alamos Study Group
2901 Summit Place NE,
Albuquerque, NM 87106-2028
phone: 505-265-1200
fax: 505-265-1207
cell: 505-577-3366
website: lasg.org, or <http://www.youtube.com/LAStudyGroup>

TRANSPORTATION SUBSIDIES; WHO'S REALLY ON WELFARE?



By JW Madison, Rails, Inc.

There are several major arguments against passenger rail and rail transit, arguments still heard all over New Mexico. While all these arguments are wrong, several are at least plausible. One is pernicious. We call it The Subsidy Gambit.

This little masterpiece of the brainwasher's art just won't go away, despite abundant evidence to the contrary. Its proponents whisper, whine or shout that passenger rail is **SUBSIDIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT!**, that it **DOESN'T PAY FOR ITSELF!** As a scare-tactic epithet, "Subsidy" is the Liberal or "Commie" of transportation debates. It's also a big stinking red herring.

Subsidy—that is, public support—is the very food of transportation; but while passenger rail has to fight every year for scraps, our auto and air modes are stuffed so full that they can barely move (literally). Here are some examples:

Auto Subsidies:

- The costs of our roads, highways, signage, etc are not nearly covered by drivers; ie, through road tolls and fuel taxes. They're paid by everybody, driver or not.

- Same with the police, the courts, emergency personnel, ambulances and hospitals; roughly 25% of whose work is devoted to auto-related casualties and property damage.

- Same again with the health and economic costs of air pollution, continuous road maintenance, road closings and traffic jams. We all shell out for these through lost wages, lower productivity, higher taxes, even-higher medical bills, and in the cost of everything we buy that was made someplace else (which unfortunately is almost everything we buy).

- Our roads and highways are built on land that's been "condemned", that is removed from the tax base; as opposed to the land under railroad bridges and rights-of-way, which is taxed.

- There is an extensive and not widely understood subsidy structure underlying so-called "free" parking and the accommodation of cars and their shelters in our residential and commercial buildings and on their lots. These costs are built into what we pay for houses, streets, and consumer goods, whether you own one motor vehicle or several or none.

Air Subsidies:

- Airports, control towers and associated structures are built and operated by tax-funded government entities, such as the FAA.

- Pilots, mechanics and some other workers are trained in large part by the military, saving the airlines a bundle.

- Air traffic controllers and their support workers are civil servants, paid by all of us and at a lower rate of pay than they would earn as key corporate employees ("below market wages")

- As with highways, the often-prime real

estate under our many vast airports has also been removed from the tax base.

--- The results of government-funded research, prototyping, testing and maintenance plans for military aircraft provide a free jump start for the manufacturers and caretakers of civilian aircraft, parts and maintenance equipment, as many civilian aircraft are adaptations of military aircraft.

--- Airlines enjoy some exemptions from federal anti-trust laws, especially concerning the setting of fares.

These road and air subsidies are by no means all bad. We think our air traffic controllers and emergency responders should be public servants. And almost nobody thinks we should plow up our rural and farm-to-market roads just because they're not "profitable" through user fees. The problem is one of unfairness and favoritism. The lopsided nature of our taxpayer-funded transportation support has led to the mess we're making of our cities, suburbs and landscape—rampant (and subsidized) sprawl, gridlock, death, injury, personal and public insolvency, preventable disease, a dirty environment, even war and global warming.

A Rail-anchored transportation system provides huge savings in fuel / energy consumption, very little death or injury, greater take-home pay, less "stress", greater worker and business productivity, open space preservation, "livable" communities—trust us, this list goes on and on. Rail is also the perfect complement to both renewable energy and the use of non-motorized transportation (biking and walking advocates take note). Plus, people just like trains. All over the All American, car-loving West, local and regional Rail face opposition campaigns worthy of Karl Rove; opposition that shrinks dramatically about one minute after the trains start running. Just ask around the Liberal hotbeds of Dallas, Salt Lake City and Calgary Alberta.

A dollar's worth of government (read public) support for well-run transit has been shown to return at least 4 dollars in benefits to the public. With Rail-anchored transit, this return is much higher. Sounds more like a shrewd investment of the taxpayer's money than a "subsidy", doesn't it?

Rail transportation in all its many forms is the wave of the future as well as the past. If New Mexico, or anyplace else, is going to buck this wholesome trend (or just keep stalling,) let's at least clear the air as to just who's getting what handouts from where.

SUBSIDY SOURCE MATERIAL
www.nmrails.org/paying for itself
www.nmrails.org/red herrings
www.assmotax.org/release
www.vtpi.org
www.hasbrouck.org/blog/archives
www.unitedrail.org
www.nsrailnews.com
www.ecotopia.com/webpress/carsubs
www.moderntransit.org
www.narprail.org

Loco or Local: New Mexico's Sustainability Status

By Astrid Webster

At the same time that New Mexico is a fragile desert ecosystem, it is the site of choice for many environment-threatening industrial developments.

Among those proposed are a two billion dollar Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) at Los Alamos, the Desert Rock (coal burning) power plant, the Louisiana Energy Services uranium enrichment plant at Eunice, an expansion of WIPP's role to include hotter radioactive waste and new nuclear missions at Sandia National Lab. New Mexico is the promised land for many such developments because, as a poor and sparsely populated state, we are inclined to accept undesirable industrial developments that promise to bring jobs without mustering much resistance.

The eco-frailty of our state, the growing economic and environmental challenges we face are ample reason to rethink the true costs consequences of such projects. How we use our resources and what we call development readily fall under two headings, Loco or Local.

Loco

Every couple of years, when Los Alamos National Lab (LANL) wants to do something nobody except people who do it for a lot of money would do, they hold "hearings" on environmental impact statements (EIS). Topics are presented as though the people had a choice, the Department of Energy and the National Nuclear Safety Administration do what they had planned, using community objections to hone the document that avows no detrimental impact.

Despite citizens and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) saying no since 1970, the nuclear weapons establishment grows and has begun manufacturing new plutonium pits to trigger new weapons of mass death.

Last month LANL, aided by a huge damage-control ad agency, trotted out dozens of lab employees to counter objections by hundreds of people who have, over the years, called for no new pits or factories. To have any impact beyond venting at faux hearings, we will have to get the attention of policy and lawmakers, via the media, directing them to halt funding for pit production, the CMRR, and any new nuclear weapons, funding economic and environmental recovery through insulat-

ing buildings, solar, wind and geothermal power instead.

Local

Mayor Martin Chavez on March 27 announced broad changes to the traffic code, to the comprehensive bike plan, and to the number of cycle riding police officers to make Albuquerque more responsive to bicycle transportation and recreation. Included in his proposal is a 500 bike rental program, complete with 25 rental sites throughout downtown, Nob Hil, Old Town, and Uptown locations.

Over 100 cyclists gathered to hear the mayor and Jay Hart, director of the city's Parks and Recreation Dept. announce the bike program. Hart quipped that when



he and Chuck Malagodi, the city's bicycle safety educator, head for a meeting Hart, who normally drives a car, arrives after Malagodi on his bike. On a warming planet, education is always a good thing. The mayor has promised that motorists and cyclists will get more education to facilitate their getting along on the roads of Albuquerque, giving us less heat and congestion and more fresh air.

QUOTE

"A [free] man does not look forward to a future state of things which he tries to bring about by suspect means; but he draws now, so far as he can, on the natural force in him that is no different from what it will be in a free society, except that there it will have more scope and be persistently reinforced by mutual aid...Merely by continuing to exist and act in nature and freedom, a free man wins the victory, establishes the society..."

Paul Goodman,
Drawing the Line,
 Random House, NY 1962.

ALBUQUERQUE BALLOON MUSEUM NATIVE AMERICANS AND BALLOONING

An exhibit called "Native Americans and Ballooning" opened on April 20 and will run until the end of 2008 at the Anderson-Abruzzo Albuquerque Balloon Museum. The exhibit honors the relationship between American Indians and the sky, as well as their historic connections with ballooning. The service of American Indians in the U.S. Balloon Corps in World War I is featured along with their contributions to various balloon-based scientific programs.

Included in the exhibit are artifacts by North and South American Indians. Among

them are paintings, beadwork, jewelry, sand paintings, and folkloric paper balloons. Notable is a Navajo hand-woven plaque by Mary Holliday Black, entitled "Navajo Balloons Over Monument Valley." Also noteworthy are three balloon-related pots by Robert Tenorio of Santo Domingo Pueblo. One is entitled "Balloon Fiesta over Sandia Pueblo."

The Balloon Museum is in Balloon Fiesta Park, north of Alameda Blvd., and is open Tues. through Sun. from 9 to 5.

Farming for Freedom

By *Joran Viers*
Bernalillo County Cooperative
Extension Horticulture Agent

Botanist, horticulturalist, ecologist. I am anything but an economist, hailing from a family steeped in the honorable tradition of knowing next to nothing about handling money, at least in terms of making it grow as if by magic. I confess that our modern American economy greatly confuses me, and it seems like we've traded in any real production for naught with the exceptions of wild gambling and paper speculation. Gone are the days when local communities were self-sufficient and self-sustaining. Food has become a commodity best suited for production halfway around the world and then subsequently shipped to all points on the globe. Why would anyone choose to farm, to grow food for themselves and their community?

There are a good, but dwindling number of folks who do want to do the work and live the life of a farmer. Growing food is a genuine and important act of physical and emotional labor: movement of muscle and the ensuing honest aches and pains that come with the job; a mix of fortifying yet sometimes brutal sun, wind, and rain on crops and human flesh; the emotional high, realizing that one's best efforts yield fresh, wholesome food to nourish both mind and body. But escalating fuel prices may finally force produce trucks to quit rumbling across our nation. Should that happen, consumers will turn to the country's farmers with pleading eyes and hungry bellies and finally admit

that the food they purchase indeed does not "come from" a store!

Large cities in relatively unproductive areas seem most at risk. Yet there is hope for (more) local production, and for the real benefits that this reasonable venture can yield. Can we feed all of our residents from local production? Obviously, it's highly unlikely! However, we could take specific action in regards to producing

Will the pursuit of purely personal gain always take precedence over the needs of the whole community, and of those yet to come?

fresh, unprocessed vegetables, fruits, and even meats grown outside of the current industrial meat model - the general public know little if nothing about the biological fallacies that underpin our modern meat production system.

What is necessary to bolster local production? Several things, the most obvious being land, water, people willing and able to farm, and consumers willing to buy from farmers. Locally, there is land, especially in the South Valley; there is water, though that will always be a limiting factor

here in the arid southwest and due to the disappearing aquifer and subsequent use of river water.

There are those who are willing to farm, although often they approach the venture with an unrealistic and romantic view of the journey from process-to-product. A much more efficient way of linking buyers with farmers is a primary concern.

Although access is a problem, let's think beyond short-term economic gain. Access to land is becoming more difficult, with the huge increase of houses built on good, arable land. Are we willing to think beyond our own pocket-books, often already bulging with windfall gains of one kind or another, and consider the common good?

Will the pursuit of purely personal gain always take precedence over the needs of the whole community, and of those yet to come? Have we become lost in a lottery dream of making it rich on the bad luck of others? How this 'nightmare' impoverishes us all!

Here are a few basic concepts:

Buy directly from farmers at growers' markets, and be cheerfully willing to pay fair prices for goods.

Limit our use of and time in the electronic world (TV, cable, movies, pod casts, internet, etc.) and get outside into the natural landscape and grow some food - it's not that hard to do.

Make changes a family affair and participation in this routine, essential.

Remember Victory Gardens of World War II fame? We were involved in a war that pulled us



together, and required us to do our part. Maybe a return to that concept in some form is what we need today. Even though there are constant debates regarding U.S. involvement in a "just war" it is reasonable to assert that most, if not all of us, need and want freedom from high prices for all the basics, from the insecurities of the global economy (dependent as it is on transportation systems that use fossil fuels), and from poor health a sedentary, junk-food fueled lifestyle has produced. So, I propose a new term: Freedom Farms.

Freedom Farms would be small in size, ranging from the backyard to a few hundred acres. They rely on biological systems for productivity, thus having much in common with Organic rather than Petroleum production (Organic to denote its legal standing, which legal standing brings with it regulation and paperwork that not all wish to abide; Petroleum to denote its prime importance in

current food production systems). Freedom Farms could begin to return us to a local food base, perhaps freeing us from multi-billionaire corporate interests that seem to view the great American masses as nothing more than resources to be exploited until they dry up.

There is great strength and accountability in our own internal production systems, starting with farming and food. We need to recapture the ability and the right to be self-reliant and self-sustaining; both independent and interdependent on a local basis. That should not be a luxury, but what each of us deserves. Ultimately the choice must be ours. Will we choose between being free people, feeding and sustaining ourselves, or will we simply decide to be a serf population, forever toiling for the gross benefit of others?

Having had my say, I'm turning off my computer and go outdoors to plant some greens.

Leftist Latin American Leaders Sign Deal on Food Security

By *VOA News*

Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua have launched a \$100-million food security fund aimed at boosting the supply of staples such as corn, rice and beans and offsetting sharp increases in global grain prices.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez launched the deal Wednesday in Caracas, along with Bolivia's Evo Morales and Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega. Cuban Vice President Carlos Lage also was present.

As the agreement was signed, President Chavez blamed capitalism for soaring world food prices. He also said production of some farm products will be increased in response to the situation facing many nations.

The four Latin American countries belong to a regional trading bloc known as ALBA, which Mr. Chavez and former Cuban leader Fi-

del Castro formed in 2004. The bloc is considered a socialist alternative to a U.S.-backed free trade deal.

Separately, Bolivia's president received the support of the other leaders ahead of a vote on May 4 involving the eastern state of Santa Cruz, an opposition stronghold that seeks greater autonomy from La Paz.

Three other opposition-controlled eastern states, representing Bolivia's wealthiest provinces, are planning to cast votes on autonomy issues later this year. Mr. Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous leader, wants to break up the large land holdings of eastern farmers, many of whom are of European descent, and redistribute the property among indigenous groups.

He also wants to redistribute the nation's oil and gas wealth, which is centered in the east.

Some information for this report was provided by AFP and Reuters.

I DECLARE A SQUASH BUG WAR!

By *Andrew Stone*

I have found the Terrorists of the Garden, and they are the Squash Bugs - aka *Anasa tristis* of the family Coreidae, as in ¡Que Triste! when you get them. You'll know them by the fetid smell they emit when disturbed or crushed! You may watch in horror as your healthy cucumbers, squash and melons - all members of the cucurbit family wilt and die if you don't get rid of these vine borers. Having assiduously gardened in New Mexico for the last 34 years, I've learned to deal with these creatures through a multi-pronged strategy that does not involve toxic chemical pesticides.

1. Grow local varieties adapted for our climate. Seeds from native New Mexican varieties give the competitive edge to plants that are already acclimated and selected for this climate over generations. You can order native varieties online from Native Seed <http://www.nativeseeds.org/>.

2. Don't plant cukes or squash until mid-June! By holding off planting CUCURBITS until the second week of June, you can avoid squash bugs almost all together. Planting when the moon is waxing, and in a water or air sign, will give the best results. For 2008, I recommend planting June 12th through June 21st. You'll get fast germination and strong initial growth in the longest days of the year.

3. Plant Sacrificial Squash I grow several hundred pounds of pickling cucumbers every year and have noted that squash bugs actually prefer squash over melons and cucumbers. One effective strategy is to plant pumpkins and squash off in a corner of your garden as a diversion from your cukes and melons.

4. Use Chicken Tractors. Hens can quickly scour your garden of harmful pests, and do a bit of cultivating in the process. If you make a movable 10 by 10 pen, you can concentrate their foraging in specific parts of your garden. Do this in the spring before you plant. One of the best reasons to keep birds is for their high nitrogen manure, which excels as a way to "ignite" your compost pile. Gather your leaves and green

plant stuffs into a pile, soak the chicken manure in a large tub for 12 hours, and pour it onto the compost pile.

5. Feed Your Plants. A really sound investment for your garden is a backpack style, hand-pump 5 gallon sprayer. You can make your own compost teas for feeding your plants through the stomata on the undersides of their leaves. Take an old pillow case, fill it with mature compost, and drop it like a tea bag in a tub of water. A day later, you'll have a nice brown nutrient-rich concoction with which you can feed your plants. By keeping your plants well fed, their natural immunities will provide the greatest protection from insect predators.

6. Lay Traps For The Bugs. Lay some old boards under your plants. During the hot part of the day, the bugs will take refuge under the shade of the boards and you can easily gather them and squish them. By paying attention when they first start to appear, you can reduce their population and avoid their prolific breeding. If you see their eggs on a plant, you can "paint" them with mineral oil to prevent them from hatching.

7. Homemade Insecticide. Make a truly disgusting all natural homemade insecticide to spray on your plants by blending a head of garlic, a few tablespoons of cayenne pepper, some non-filtered cigarette butts or tobacco, and the squash bugs you gathered in step 6 with a quart of water. Add this to a gallon of water, but be sure to strain this mixture after blending or you will clog your sprayer tip!

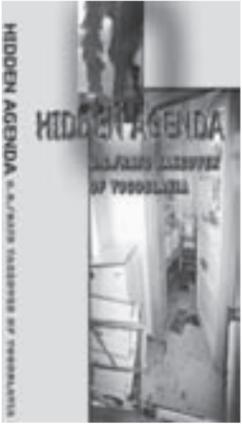
8. Declare A Truce. If you take the attitude that everything under the sun has a right to live, and that it's better to share than be greedy, then you can be at peace with the squash bugs. And after a season of pickling a gallon of cucumbers every day for 6 weeks, I actually become grateful to the little bugs for reducing my work.

If you have feedback or any garden tip, email www.stone.com/Form.html. For more information www.lamontanita.coop

REVIEWS

Hidden Agenda-U.S./ NATO Takeover of Yugoslavia

By Sally-Alice Thompson



The former Yugoslavia is back in the news. Most Americans are still in the dark as to the background of the breakup of this former eastern European country. How did this relatively poor country, that provided free medical care for its highly literate citizens, evolve into a fragmented,

violence destroyed group of antagonistic ethnic groups? Do you know?

A great deal of insight into the unfolding of events in Yugoslavia is explained in *Hidden Agenda*: how potential animosities were encouraged in the age-old divide-and-conquer techniques, how threats and removal of financial assistance were ladled

out, and how a special court was formed for the purpose of convicting Slobodan Milosevic, the president who was desperately trying to hold his country together. It illuminates the collaboration of the media in providing humanitarian excuses for military interference with the use of allegations that were never refuted when they turned out to be false.

The fact that no American lives were expended in the aggression is one of the reasons that Americans were not informed as to the nature of the situation. Many eastern European lives and much infrastructure were sacrificed.

This book, a project of the International Center, is a compilation of essays and documents about the breakup of the country, abetted by NATO and the US when they no longer needed the country as a buffer between Western Europe and the Soviet Union. It includes chapters by Ramsey Clark, Michael Parenti, and Sara Flounders. It is available on loan at the library of the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE.

MUSIC REVIEW

Black 47's Iraq--"Bring 'Em Home" --For the Troops/Against the War

By Bill Nevins

"Hey President Bush, whatcha doin' to us? We been through hell, man, it's time to come home!" wails Larry Kirwan, voicing many's the US soldier's anguished plea in "Stars and Stripes", the opening song on Black 47's new album, *Iraq* (www.UFOmusic.com). Black 47 sings with the authority of the many fans who have been emailing Kirwan from the Iraq battlefield since that fateful St. Patrick's Day, 2003 when Bush launched his ill-fated invasion. No small number of Black 47 fans themselves have ended up in the thick of the fighting. A working class band's fans have lives like that.

Black 47 (aka The House Band of New York City) works hundreds of gigs a year from their Manhattan base, retaining a fierce fan base--every lyric known and every chorus shouted--not unlike St. Paddy's Day crowds in any major American city--rebels and patriots, saints and profligates, cops and felons, raving beauties and pug uglies--causing, brawling, laughing or weeping as the mood or the music flows. Frontman Kirwan knows his audience's minds well as he wears his own Irish-born heart boldly on his sleeve. Didn't war-weary Irish themselves come to America desperate for freedom and peace only to get sucked into fighting rich men's wars against people--like themselves--better left alone?

Kirwan and Black 47 stood against rich man GW Bush's Iraq War from day one. But US war mania raged--insults and threats were hurled at them by former fans and feelings were hurt, to say the least when Kirwan roared out "Downtown Baghdad Blues" in those dark months. GW and his war were then very popular in America. Still, Black 47 held their ground. They kept speaking out, onstage and in press interviews and on the barstools after each show: "Will somebody tell me what the hell we're doin' here [in Iraq] in the first place?"

Well, times have changed. W's ratings are in the toilet and he'll be lucky to get out of office unimpeached. The Iraq War drags on, no end in sight, and it is NOT popular. Still, the big time politicians--with the notable exception of Gov. Bill Richardson--dodge the stop-the-war issue. Brave soldiers serve tour after tour in Iraq. Americans and Iraqis die in their thousands. Dead, maimed and emotionally scarred vets trickle home. Families suffer. Sadly, for some it's no longer top news. But it is real and present for

those trapped in the murderous fray:

"When you're knockin' down doors for them DC whores, Don't ever let on that they used ya" sings a brave war weary Marine in Kirwan's bitter epic "Battle of Fallujah" on Iraq.

Over the years since St. Patrick's Day, 2003--when this endless Iraq War started--Black 47 fans have been sending Kirwan emails and bending his ear at shows to let their favorite bard know "just what its really like" to be themselves in the war zone, or to have friends, relatives and loved ones "over there". Not every message is an anti-war or anti-Bush cry--though many are. Plenty of these messages and conversations, according to Kirwan, are just "snapshots" of what is going on and of what these brave American sons and daughters and their loved ones are feeling.

Larry Kirwan continues to listen to the painful words flowing from Americans in Iraq, and it was inevitable that he would summon his band of rock n roll warriors together to give those words the attention they deserve. The songs on Iraq are very specific in place references and other details, down to the myriad "faces of the enemy" and the weaponry employed. While Black 47's group name came from the hard year of Irish famine 1847, the murderous AK 47 is referenced in so many of these songs that the name takes on new irony: "I'll hear those '47s forever!" A centerpiece of the cd is Kirwan's touching tribute to those twin warrior-heroes Cindy Sheehan and her son, Casey.

Iraq is Black 47's strongest album, both lyrically and musically. It is certainly their most focused. While it keeps Black 47's trademark wry humor, it's on balance a very serious piece of work. The music--ranging from firey Irish airs to jazzy freestyling--complements and drives home the hard-bitten lyrics. Comparisons to Rudyard Kipling's Barrack Room Ballads and Allen Ginsberg's Howl or Bob Dylan's Highway 61 Revisited spring to mind. "The best minds of my generation . . ." may now be pinned down in Sadr City, Ramadi or Samarah. But they are not forgotten by those who love them, and Black 47's Iraq is both a tribute to their bravery and a voicing of profound love. "Bring them home!", pleads Kirwan from the battlefield of the soul. All Americans should listen.

Iraq can be purchased via www.black47.com

The End of America

By Donald Gutierrez

Naomi Wolf's book *The End of America* begins with these words: "I am writing because we have an emergency" (1). This warning is preceded by a quote from Justice William o. Douglas: "A nightfall does not come all at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight where everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such a twilight that we all must be aware of change in the-however slightest we become unwilling victims of the darkness."

Douglas's warning goes to the heart of Wolf's book, which is that a society can be in the process of moving from a democratic to a fascist one (that "twilight") without most people realizing it. Wolf uses parallel examples from Fascist Italy and Germany to show that dictators like Mussolini and Hitler came to absolute power within democratic institutions.

She terms this process a "fascist shift." "Both Italian and German fascisms came to power legally and incrementally in functioning democracies; both used legislation, cultural pressure and baseless imprisonment and torture, progressively to consolidate power.... both aggressively used the law to subvert the law: (21).

This process, Wolf asserts, is what is happening in our country right now. Though Brown shirts are not storming through Greenwich Village beating up NYU student activists or liberal professors, there are signs that America is indeed becoming a closed

society. *End* exhibits this ominous process as ten steps: Invoke an External Threat, Establish Secret Prisons, Develop a Paramilitary Force, Infiltrate Citizen Groups, Arbitrarily Detain and Release Citizens, Target Key Individuals, Restrict the Press, Cast Criticism as 'Espionage' and Dissent as 'Treason,' Subvert the Rule of Law. Just eight of these steps turned Thailand into a police state within a few days, and the same process, Wolf warns, is underway here, if more subtly and gradually.

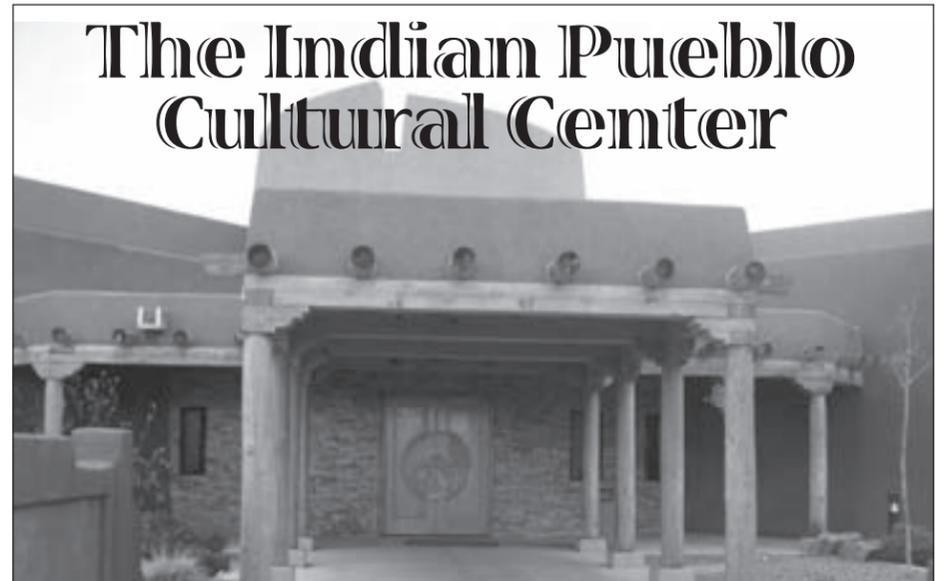
End is a Wake-Up call to make us citizens realize that we reside in Justice Douglas's "twilight" and are moving towards the darkness of fascism. Thus the relative brevity of the book, and the rousing effectiveness of these elaborated ten chilling steps.

It is hard deciding which of these steps are more pernicious, but it would seem that step ten, *The End of the Rule of Law*, embodies the preceding nine in a terrifying climax and as, Wolf states, they interplay and enhance each other in such a way that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, each

See **END** on page 7



The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center



By Katherine Augustine

Since the grand opening in August 1976, much has happened at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. Situated on Indian land at 12th and Menaul, the Center is owned and operated by the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico. The opening 32 years ago was celebrated with an Arts and Crafts Fair, where 140 artists showed their work. Speeches were made by Senators Joseph Montoya and Pete Domenici, Representative Manuel Lujan, and Archbishop Robert Sanchez. Fifty-six dancers performed from Acoma, Laguna, San Juan, and Taos Pueblos. A commemorative coin was designed by Joseph Lonewolf and his sister Grace Medicine Flower of Santa Clara, also a poster by Pablita Velarde of the same Pueblo.

Friends of IPCC was founded the following year to cultivate interest in Pueblo Indian life and history. The friends are also dedicated to the growth and development of the Center. Some Friends work in an archive preserving documents and other records of Pueblo history and traditions. Other Friends work as Museum docents or in other activities to help the staff.

The original kiva-style building houses the museum, a video theater, the archive, gift shops, and the Harvest café. The Café is being enlarged with a grand opening this

summer. Other buildings include the children's museum, called Pueblo House, and a classroom building. A large new wing was opened in April 2004. This South Wing contains conference rooms and a gallery. An exhibit entitled "Timeless Beauty:

Pueblo Women Artists of the 20th Century" is featured in the south gallery. On May 16, descendants of the featured artists will share memories of their mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers.

Invited Pueblo dance groups perform for the public every weekend. A free lecture regarding Pueblo life is sponsored by the Friends at 11 a.m. on the first Monday of every month in the South Wing. A reception for prospective Friends precedes the lecture.

Katherine Augustine writes for "Round the Roundhouse" in Santa Fe and is the author of a children's book, *The Apple Seeds*. She wrote a monthly column for the *Albuquerque Tribune* for a decade until the paper closed. She also has written for *Prime Time*, *Senior Times*, *Pueblo Horizons*, *Laguna Pueblo News*, and *New Mexico Magazine*. She is a retired nurse/educator, world traveler, and volunteer for civic organizations. She is a member of Laguna Pueblo and adheres to her tribal language, customs, and traditions.

END from page 6

contributing to, and climaxing in, fascism. Each of Wolf's steps are so suggestive that, for purposes of brevity, I will try only to hit some of the crucial points among them.

II Totalitarian Italy, Germany and Russia justified their existence and their increasing and finally totally illegal power by urging the existence of a dangerous external enemy. To perpetuate the treat, these regimes covertly wanted that enemy sustained. In the case of the Bush administration, its "War-on-Terrorism" fixation is ideal. Having a dangerous external enemy turns internal dissent into treason, making valid criticism ultimately condemnable as treason. Such a fraudulent emergency, Wolf urges, leads to Hitler's Enabling Act of 1933 and Bush's Signing Statements, both crucial stratagems for circumventing parliamentary/Congressional checks and balances.

More dramatically frightening is Wolf's Establish-Secret-Private-Prisons step. This elicits Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, all the Black Cells stretched around the world. Wolf at this juncture formulates a major insight about the "fascist shift": "A secret prison system without habeas corpus is the cornerstone of every dictatorship"

(46). There is not space to pursue that potent insight (Stalin's gulags and Hitler's concentration camps come to mind) except to cite Wolf's idea that Guantanamo ultimately threatens us, especially in view of Bush's National Defense Authorization Act of 2007 which endangers all Americans by putting civil society under martial law, thereby allowing for detentionary treatment of critic "traitors" of the regime. (Ronald Reagan had plans, according to a recent "Progressive Populist" piece by Ted Rall, to place half a million dissidents in concentration camps).

Paramilitary Forces suggest both Mussolini's and Hitler's gaggles of thugs increasingly organized to commit targeted violence against enemies.

Wolf connects this parallel with material from Jeremy Scahill's brilliant work on the paramilitary corporation Blackwater, including their disturbing presence and even criminal conduct on New-Orleans streets after Katrina.

Wolf might have developed the implication here that Blackwater could evolve into an American S.A. Patrolling the streets of American cities and towns, attacking dissident demonstrators and so on.

The supposedly discontinued TIPPS program, whereby mail-carriers and others would report "suspicious" people, is just one of numerous examples in America today of surveillance. One not mentioned in *End* is the enormous degree of surveillance going on in college campuses today, as well as the far more lethal ordinance carried by campus cops. Wolf's haunting quotation:

"Surveillance leads to fear and fear leads to silence" (88) pinpoints a central insight about any police state.

Government spies infiltrate dissident organizations, even including "Veterans for Peace", while Arbitrary Detention and Release (both steps, again, with parallels drawn with totalitarian societies) is observable in the 75,000 Americans on the "No Fly List" (including Wolf). Targeting key individuals is obviously effective through silencing (including torturing) dissident

leaders and thus intimidating the general population. Restricting the Press is a crucial process. Wolf cites the attempt to slide PBS to the right through urging fewer liberal programs. A more lethal example was the U.S. Military threatening to fire on independent journalists (including Americans) if the transmitted stories electronically, as well as forcing them to reveal their political attitude towards the Iraq War. The broadest example of press restriction was the manipulation of the press by the White House to convey lies—to date, 935—to justify the 2003 invasion.

Criticism as espionage and dissent as treason imply an advanced phase of Wolf's "fascist shift," as it could destroy key areas of the constitution through several means, such as H.R. 1955 which, if passed by the senate, would virtually indict and thus repress any public expression of "suspicious" ideas or thoughts. Right-wing publicists like Anne Coulter and William Kristol are already viciously attacking liberals as well as media like *The New York Times* as traitorous, helping to establish a public mindset consonant with the repressive outlook of the Bush Administration towards dissent.

III All of this climaxes darkly in the Subversion of the Rule of Law. As with Hitler, this process, which Wolf claims, can occur quite quickly, involves a series of increasing demands by a leader for more power, more rights until a tipping point is reached at which a checks-and-balances system collapses and the president/leader becomes the Supreme Leader. One recalls the numerous instances of contempt for and dismissal of Congress and thus of the public exhibited by Bush/Cheney since 2001. Two recently passed laws, the Military Commissions Act of 2006 and the National Defense Authorization Act of 2007 further subvert the institutions designed to promote representative democracy and protect the public from government autocracy. The MCA allows government to declare any American an "Enemy Combatant" at the President's will. In a short final chapter, "The Patriot's Task," Wolf implores all Americans to demand accountability from the government and restore democracy.

Wolf's book would have benefited from an index, as there are a lot of significant names and events one would like quick referral to. More seriously, as Chalmers Johnson has so authoritatively shown in his triad of "Blow back" books, the Pentagon's increasing and extremely expensive militarism involved in maintaining a global imperialism represents a major force in a "fascist shift," a consideration Wolf says virtually nothing about.

Despite those shortcomings, *The End of America* is a rousing call to activism because, instead of focusing merely on one or two serious violations of our social contract with Washington, it piles up ten to arrive at a powerful condemnation of dangerous White House malfeasance. If her bold comparisons of the Bush Administration with the solidification of tyranny achieved by Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini might appear excessive to some, it is nevertheless the very disturbing similitude of those comparisons that should make Americans subordinate their daily concerns and begin taking action against a government regime that is taking their freedom and ultimately their country away from them.

Remembering & Honoring RUBEN SALAZAR



By Roberto Dr. Cintli Rodriguez

For close to 40 years, my memories of journalist, Ruben Salazar, have been of smoke, fire, riots, rampaging police, and his premature death in East L.A. on August 29, 1970. Seared into my memory is running home every day to see the Inquest held into his death. What is actually seared is not the fact that he was killed by a nine-inch tear-gas projectile, fired into the Silver Dollar Café by a Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputy, but rather, that no one was ever brought to justice. Neither was anyone brought to justice for the deaths of Angel Diaz or Lyn Ward, who also died on that day.

After years of memories of injustice, I instead choose to remember him this year on his birthday: Feliz cumpleaños – Happy Birthday, Ruben. On March 3rd, this pioneering journalist from Juarez-El Paso should have gotten 80 candles. Instead, on April 22, he will get a belated birthday present – his own 42-cent U.S. postal stamp. Also being honored are four other journalists Martha Gellhorn, John Hersey, George Polk and Eric Sevareid.

Lost in the controversy over his death and the violent repression of the National Chicano Moratorium rally (attended by 30,000 people) against the Vietnam War – was the historic nature of his journalism. Clearly, he was a journalist before his time and what he reported in the El Paso Herald Post and the Los Angeles Times, from 1955 through 1970, still seems relevant to this day. He covered an unpopular war; Vietnam. He also covered Cuba, the Dominican Republic and the upheaval in Mexico in the 1960s. He also wrote about the anti-war movement, black-brown relations, police repression, the border, the inhumane treatment of migrants, the trouble in the lettuce fields, and social and educational inequalities. In his last interview, he even complained about a meddling vice president who was attempting to stifle press freedom.

While not an activist, his journalism brought the emerging Chicano civil rights movement to the nation's attention. He defined for the nation – in language that mainstream society understood – what it meant to be Chicano. On Feb 6, 1970, he wrote: "A Chicano is a Mexican American with a non-Anglo image of himself." Activists to this day cringe at that description; for activists, a Chicano/Chicana was more than an image, but an unapologetic social and political rebel.

The issuance of a U.S. Postal stamp is a fitting tribute, yet, a stamp is not large enough to convey his life's work, nor the impact that his death has had upon an entire generation. The lack of prosecution of anyone over his death (or Diaz or Ward) accelerated what anthropologist Victor

Turner refers to as a "primary process" or a massive volcanic political eruption. In this case, Mexicans – through the organizing efforts of the national moratorium – rebelled against years of living a dehumanized existence. It is similar to the process that exploded during the 1910-1920 Mexican Revolution and also during the Mexican Independence movement 100 years before against a brutal Spain.

In California, this process can be traced to the East L.A. Walkouts of 1968 and to the even earlier strikes and boycotts of the United Farm Worker's Movement throughout the country. And yet, it was his unjust and unpunished death that completely unleashed this process or movement nationwide. Those seeds of injustice created an instant martyr.

Ironically, a primary process can be both an explosive time and a time of intense creativity. Such has been the case in regards to Salazar, though that political activity and cultural explosion – which had actually brought him to the protest that day – has been mischaracterized by historians as a nationalistic and separatist impulse. My experience tells me quite the reverse; that it was a rehumanization project in response to an ultranationalistic impulse in which Mexicans were not always welcomed or treated as fully human.

Nearly 40 years after his death, I have begun to develop a journalism class on his life's work. As I have been perusing over archives of the Media, Democracy and Policy Initiative, the group responsible for promoting the issuance of the Salazar stamp, I am in touch with a very special history. Included in the archives are his early work, notes, photographs, letters, FBI files, the coroner's report and most special, the actual typewriter he used to write with. I get a feeling of frozen time. Yet truthfully, as I speak with his family, friends and colleagues, what strikes me is that he has not been forgotten and that his death is still an open wound.

His memory is living history. While many of us will always seek answers and justice, after a generation, it is also now time to remember him for the contributions he made, both to the journalism profession and to the world we live in.

Rodriguez, PhD., who grew up on Whittier Blvd. in East L.A., is a long-time journalist-columnist and the author of "Justice: A Question of Race" – a book that chronicles his own police brutality trials in East Los Angeles. He is currently a faculty fellow at the Mexican American Studies and Research Center at the University of Arizona. He can be reached at: XColumn@gmail.com or 520-743-0376 or go to: <http://web.mac.com/columnoftheamericas/iWeb/Site/Welcome.html>

Unsavorly Connections of "Immigration Reform" Group

A leading "immigration reform" group has been connected to ethnic hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center. FAIR, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, was founded in 1979 by John Tinton, who warned of a "Latin onslaught." He and other FAIR leaders have advocated "eugenics," the idea of breeding better humans as the Nazis proposed. FAIR accepted \$1.2 million from

the Pioneer Fund, founded in 1937 to promote the racial stock of the early North American colonists. In 2006, FAIR hired Joseph Turner as western representative. Turner refused to dissociate himself from neo-Nazi skinheads, who often demonstrated at his rallies. FAIR's president has appeared a dozen times on CNN's "Lou Dobbs Tonight."

(Reported in SPLC Report, Vol. 37)

WHAT WOULD 'UNIVERSAL' BE LIKE?

By Martha Burk

I live in New Mexico, where every other person is running for political office, thanks to the fruit-basket-like turnover created by the retirement of Republican Senator Pete Domenici, who's been aging in place on Capitol Hill since 1973. The debate between Republican aspirants for the Senate -- both current members of the U.S. House -- is already heating up. In their first encounter, they predictably tried to "outconservative" each other. Heather Wilson, representing urban Albuquerque, labeled herself a "commonsense" conservative. She attacked Steve Pearce, a down-stater with more rural constituents, for his vote against expanding children's health insurance. Pearce countered that he is the "true" conservative, and said giving poor kids insurance would be "Hillary Care Lite . . . the beginning of socialized medicine."

W-a-a-i-t a minute. Socialized medicine? With that remark, Pearce shows he's clueless about medical care, and so are lot of other candidates. Not to mention conservative Rush Limbaugh clones who are out of control in the blogosphere, raving about the government controlling your private medical decisions. Maybe they need a little lesson on what "socialized medicine" is -- and is not. And maybe they'd be surprised to learn that the United States already has one form of socialized medicine. But I'm jumping ahead.

Many people, including Pearce, evidently equate "universal coverage," which Hillary Clinton does advocate, with the dreaded "socialized medicine." Universal coverage means just that -- everyone would have health insurance. Some would have it through employers, some through privately purchased plans, and some through government-subsidized programs if they're too poor to foot the full bill. Universal coverage does not mean the government would provide health care as a "welfare" or "entitlement" benefit to everyone, regardless of income or employment status.

Though having insurance would be mandatory, type of coverage would be up to the individual. Choice of doctors and hospitals under universal coverage would remain much as it is now -- controlled by the type of plan the individual is covered under -- and in no small part dictated by

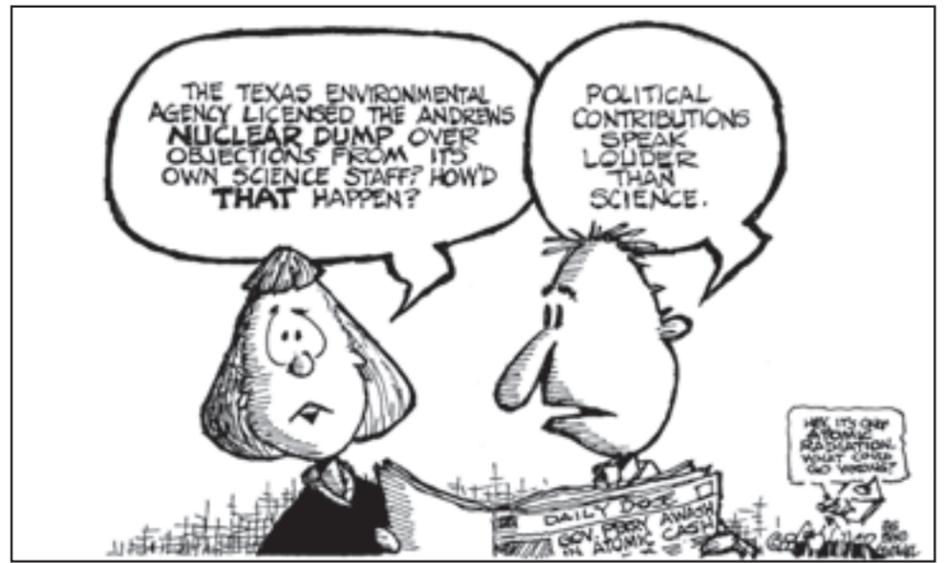
insurance companies. In some scenarios, insurance companies would be required to cover pre-existing conditions, stopping the practice of "cherry-picking" only the healthiest patients for inclusion in their plans.

Another term we hear a lot about is "single payer." Single payer means a system of health care that provides universal and comprehensive coverage, with the government as the insurer issuing the payments. Everyone's health care would be paid for out of one publicly administered trust fund (paid for by taxes on both individuals and business) which would replace our current multi-payer insurance company system and its premiums. In single payer, the government would not be the primary provider of health care. It would just be the primary payer. There would still be freedom to choose doctors and other health care professionals, facilities, and services.

Doctors would remain in private practice and be paid on a fee-for-service basis from government funds, just as they're paid now by insurance companies. The government would not own or manage medical practices or hospitals. Single payer is what we have now with traditional Medicare. Insurance companies are eliminated -- no more hassles with gatekeepers, denied coverage, and trying to find doctors "in network." Ask any senior who has been liberated from HMO hell and you'll see how easy and popular single payer would be if everyone had it.

If "socialized medicine" is none of these -- just what the heck is it? Simple. It's a system of health care in which all health facilities are owned by the government. Doctors and other health care personnel work for the government and draw their salaries from the government. This is the model used in the U.S. Veterans Administration and the armed services, where the government owns the hospitals, and medical professionals are government employees. It works pretty well for vets, but red-hot rhetoric notwithstanding, none of the candidates -- nor either political party -- advocates socializing the entire medical system of the United States.

So the next time you hear a candidate hurling "socialized medicine" around like a flame-thrower, ask them if they have any idea what they're talking about.



Sierra Club Disappointed by Commissioners' Denial of Contested Case Hearing and Granting of WCS Radioactive Waste Disposal License in Andrews County, Texas

Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club

The Lone Star Sierra Club expressed disappointment at today's two-to-one vote by Commissioners of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality which denied a contested case hearing and granted Waste Control Specialists the right to permanently dispose of tons of radioactive "byproduct materials" waste in Andrews County on the border of New Mexico. The license is the first of two that WCS is seeking as they attempt to create the largest commercial radioactive disposal site.

Sierra Club requested a contested case on behalf of several members in Eunice, New Mexico located five miles from the WCS site alleging that the applicant - among other failings -

- failed to adequately characterize the underground geology and hydrology of the site - a claim supported by staff geologists at TCEQ;
- failed to model for severe weather events, including high winds;
- did not consider the potential for radioactive traffic accidents;
- did not look at surface water run-off; and,
- did not even perform the required one-year of pre-operation monitoring.

"As the Office of Public Council and Commissioner Larry Soward agreed, Sierra Club and the Eunice, New Mexico residents established that because of the failings of the site, we deserve the opportunity to show before an Administrative Law Judge that the site is not adequate to dispose of these Cold-War era uranium wastes and other materials," said Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director for the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club. "As it stands right now the public may never know why former members of the TCEQ sci-

ence team looking at the application considered it one of the worst in the agency's history and if the geology is as they believe, residents of Eunice, New Mexico will face the consequences."

Reed said Sierra Club is considering making a motion for the TCEQ to reconsider the decision, and if needed, appealing to State District Court.

Pat Bobeck, a former TCEQ staff geologist who left the agency due to objections to the pending WCS licensing, attests that after years of application review and WCS efforts at improvements in the application, the applicant failed to adequately characterize the site. "The application contained inconsistencies and contradictions and a lack of detailed geologic data," Bobeck noted. "There is water there in that clay and in the siltstone and water is going to move that waste around. It's going to cause problems and there's no way around that."

Rose Gardner traveled from her home in Eunice, New Mexico 5 miles from where the WCS waste would be stored to attend today's TCEQ decision.

"This stinks that the TCEQ has denied my right to a hearing about something so close to where my family lives and has been living for the past half a century. We should be able to contest that!" said Gardner. "I don't believe this is a safe site. I think that the radioactive waste would filter down through the cracks and salt domes in that clay. It'll leach right down into our precious groundwater. I am concerned about what this could mean for the health and well being of my family."

Waste Control Specialists (WCS) site in Andrews County Texas is 5 miles East of Eunice, New Mexico.

For More Information Contact: Cyrus Reed, 512-740-4086 or 512-477-1729 or Donna Hoffman, 512-477-1729 or 512-299-5776

READER SURVEY

Please take a few moments to tell us a little about yourself and what you want in your daily news source to help guide our efforts.

- 1) Did you read the Albuquerque Tribune regularly occasionally not at all
- 2) Did you subscribe for home delivery? always sometimes never
- 3) What were the parts of the Trib you cared about, read, or used most often? Check all that apply.

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<input type="checkbox"/> editorials/guest editorials	<input type="checkbox"/> letters to the editor	<input type="checkbox"/> local news	<input type="checkbox"/> local features	<input type="checkbox"/> investigative reporting
<input type="checkbox"/> national/international news	<input type="checkbox"/> obituaries	<input type="checkbox"/> sports news/stats	<input type="checkbox"/> TV & movie reviews/guides	
<input type="checkbox"/> other? _____				
- 4) What are your current preferred news sources?

<input type="checkbox"/> Internet publication web sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet blogs	<input type="checkbox"/> other local papers	<input type="checkbox"/> national/major city papers
<input type="checkbox"/> public radio	<input type="checkbox"/> public TV	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial radio/TV	<input type="checkbox"/> magazines <input type="checkbox"/> word of mouth
- 5) Would you prefer to read a new version of the Trib in:

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<input type="checkbox"/> not interested at all		
- 6) Your age is between:

<input type="checkbox"/> 18- 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 40-55	<input type="checkbox"/> 56-75	<input type="checkbox"/> over 75
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- 7) Your highest formal education level is:

<input type="checkbox"/> technical studies/degree	<input type="checkbox"/> some college	<input type="checkbox"/> college grad	<input type="checkbox"/> H.S. grad	<input type="checkbox"/> graduate studies/degree	<input type="checkbox"/> doctorate
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