Decentralized Economy
By V.B. Price

Voters have heard virtually nothing on this election season about what needs to be done in the years ahead – climate change, renewable energy and a green economy. Such matters don’t lend themselves to savage 15 second attacks ads approved by the candidates, nor park up the beleaguered brain cells of media questioners in national debates. For many of us, though, it seems a sure thing that we are on the verge of a gigantic rearrangement of both our economy and our way of life in this country, a rearrangement that will be carried along by the zips of global weather chaos and economic upheavals and insecurity around the world.

Are there any key principles that will help us turn this kind of change into something more than crisis dressed up to look like opportunity for a while or two? The principles may not be simple enough for television, but they seem pretty clear. The first principle is the decentralization of energy. The second is the localization of economic interest and activity. National and regional electric power grids are far too vulnerable to breakdown when they are overloaded. Electricity is sure to become the stopgap fuel of all uses. Water is sure to be clean, but no one has demonstrated a convincing argument as to how that could be done.

Bio fuels that burn food products to run cars will go the way of the dinosaurs in less than a decade. Hydro power remains relatively clean, except for the damage done by the destruction of local species. And with global warming causing increasing periods of drought in the American West, hydropower won’t be able to grow enough to replace coal.

Nuclear energy seems to be the short sighted stopgap, one that is potentially far more harmful and dangerous than any of the others. Nuclear power plants take a minimum of 12 years to come on line. They cost some $4 billion to construct. They’re vulnerable to terrorist attack. Uranium mining, including in situ leaching of uranium ore from groundwater, is dangerous to public health, as has been proven over and over again.

Alternative, renewable fuels lend themselves to decentralization, and, therefore, to the growth of local, decentralized economies. Why ship energy gained from sunshine or wind or waves or chemically processed biomass? Can’t you make it in the backyard?

What that means is that jobs, manufacturing trades, and getting the will help us turn this kind of change into something more than crisis dressed up to look like opportunity for a while or two? The principles may not be simple enough for television, but they seem pretty clear. The first principle is the decentralization of energy. The second is the localization of economic interest and activity. National and regional electric power grids are far too vulnerable to breakdown when they are overloaded. Electricity is sure to become the stopgap fuel of all uses. Water is sure to be clean, but no one has demonstrated a convincing argument as to how that could be done.

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Deadly Cargoes Are Crossing the World’s Oceans

By Wayne O’Leary

The US trade deficit, long a concern to American policymakers, is shrinking at a faster pace in six years. That’s the good news.
The bad news is that a significant reason for the drop was the sudden boom in world trade in coal, which grew in value last year by 19%—to $4.1 billion.

Coal is also key to solving its trade deficit, in other words, by marketing one of the most environmentally productive fuels in the world and contributing in no small measure to planetary climate change caused by carbon emissions.

Coal Consumption Around the World

We are not the only guilty party. Consumption of coal is up around the globe; it’s grown by 30% since 2000, two in every building. So, to solve the global warming problem, let’s just modify our buildings so we don’t need any more coal plants.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a cooperation of seven Northeastern US states which implemented plans requiring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions by 75% from 2008 levels by 2020.

The problem is that the new legislation calls for all college campuses in the US to reduce their CO2 emissions to zero. If every college campus building in the US met this challenge...

The CO2 emissions from just one medium-sized coal-fired power plant each year would negate this entire effort.

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There is a SILVER BULLET for SOLVING GLOBAL WARMING...

Without coal, all the positive efforts underway can make a difference. Over 111,000 vehicles and SUV sold in California in 2009 (1973-1983), the US built approx. 30 billion square feet of new buildings, added over 35 million new vehicles and increased real GDP by $1 trillion dollars to reduce the CO2 emissions.

We don’t need coal, we have what we need: efficient design and proven technologies.

And for anyone who wants a detailed energy plan for the US that avoids both coal and nuclear, one is available.

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GLOBALLY, we have allowed Big Money to buy influence and run roughshod over common sense, particularly in Congress. We’re going to have to fight like crazy to keep Congress from upping Big Coal’s massive and multi-billion dollar bailout subsidy.

Just remember: Every dollar spent on a fossil fuel is a dollar that cannot be spent creating good jobs with a real... renewable energy and efficient use. Every year we are upping Big Coal is a dollar that cannot be spent renewing the US as a world-class industry leader. But with innovators like Google and Architecture 2030 nipping at our heels, the US industry’s dinosaurs are on their way to extinction, and their fate will be our fate.

This is a work in progress. Please send any updates or comments to the author.

Reprinted: Rachel’s Democracy News & Health #935 www.rachel.org

Fuels from page 1

The big picture

There are far too many unknowns about the spill. “Some of the things they don’t know in the US,” one oil executive, “are simply in di- solved in the aquifer and is moving with them from the Zephyrhills out to the surface of the water, and how deep the deposit is,” adds a note connected to the plume is beneath the aquifer.”

There’s a larger problem according to McCoy. He said that people living in Albuquerque need to understand that the contaminated plume from the spill is in just one small site on Kirkland Air Force Base and at Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico. For example, there is a plume of TCE (trichloroethylene, a carcinogen) in eight different contaminant areas that won’t float on the water surface, which will go right into the ground water and move with the flow. This is essentially the same chemical waste landfill and the mixed waste landfill, haven’t had their day of reckoning. According to McCoy, the site of the contamination beneath these sites remains a mystery. “It’s a very dangerous situation, potentially for Albuquerque’s drinking aquifer,” McCoy said. But the wells are in the same contaminant areas that won’t float on the water surface, which will go right into the ground water and move with the flow.

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When Corporate America teams up with government, there’s no end to the amazing things that can be produced, right? Consider a cooperative, nation-wide advertising campaign developed by the Treasury Department, America’s credit industry, and the Ad Club of New Mexico. Its objective is to teach 18-to-24-year-olds the importance and virtue of handling their personal financial affairs responsibly. Treasury officials proudly launched this instructional campaign on September 20.

Yes, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson rushed out in a panic with a $700 billion injection for Wall Street’s investment banks that same week. The sky is falling, shrieked the media. Financial crisis! These bankers have made very, very bad credit decisions, he moaned – so every man, woman, and child in America must now pay up $2,000 each to rescue Wall Street’s greedheads and heads-on-sticks. Hmmm. That doesn’t exactly mesh with the message of personal responsibility that Paulson’s department is sending to America’s youngsters, does it? Indeed, the slogan of Treasury’s $700 billion ad campaign is “Don’t let your credit put you in a bad place.” Yeah, a place like a Wall Street investment bank.

One of the designers of the ads, said of the 18- to 24- year population, “There is a sense of invincibility among this age group. Our job was to disrupt this thinking.” Yet, that sense has not been collapsed over the last decade to challenge the young people to take responsibility for the mess they’ve made.

JIM HIGHTOWER
Bad Timing on Treasury Department Ads

Both candidates, however, missed the question. One could have been a valuable exercise.

Q&A’s, both meetings were over three hours long.

60 more Democrats, we hear, will make the House filibuster-proof.

Recounting past successes and achievements, they admitted are many. Heinrich’s main flaw is lack of funding its misguided objectives.

The idea behind the ad campaign is to make the House filibuster-proof.

Udall and Heinrich are likely beneficiaries were their campaign coffers.
Rants
By Harry Wilson

The Life-Style Problem

Decades ago the following accusation was hurled at me: “Harry, you have left off preachin’ and gone to medi- dBlin’. My sermons were question- ing the ethics, yes, the “Christian ethics,” of families who made their living inventing and constructing weapons of mass destruction.

[It is very strange how those words -- "weapons of mass destruction" -- have become a phrase to be applied to others, who shouldn’t be allowed to have any, while our stockpiling of them and on-going upgrading of them and use of them is passed over as acceptable and even admirable.]

[It is also very strange that a person who dropped bombs on little children from thirty thousand feet in the air can then be regarded almost universally as a great hero.]

Anyway, I’m going to risk it again -- meddling, that is. Here goes: The greatest problem facing the world is the American lifestyle. That is no small thing, Harry Meddling. Putting into other people’s business. The root of the American impe- rial problem facing the world is the American lifestyle. For a while there it appeared that the price of gasoline was going to help, by forcing Americans to drive less, but it now appears that we’re adapting, and traffic is as bad as ever.

My wife and I never adopted Don Schrader’s life-style. We have a mod- est little car. We have a computer. Since small publishers can’t sell books in book- stores, we have to depend on the Internet. [Find us at www.amadorbooks.com] But it’s very modest, believe me, and it has us all well above our “average.” Our housing and our personal things down-sized much more than it already has been? We’re working on it.

A glance higher up on the social scale makes the problem much more obvious. Here’s a lady who received a new wardrobe worth more than what many fellow citizens have spent for a house. It amounts to ten times what many spend for a car. Even though she says that she’s not accepting charity, now that we have taken note, it is too late. The problem has been exposed, one more time.

All of that talk of billions of dollars for this or that is lost on most people -- except for a dull awareness that it is too much too.

I study the litter on the sidewalk where I walk every morning. The pass- ers-by, who have left that litter, are not affluent. What they leave for others to pick up reveals the problem -- fast-food wrappers, styrofoam, plastics of all kinds, glass bottles whole or shattered, aluminum cans. Even the non-affluent are displaying a grossly wasteful life-style, which is the underlying environmental and imperial problem. The United States of America has to conquer someone in order to get the oil with which to make all that plastic, which ends up as litter. The litter itself indicates that we have and use too many things.

Getting littering stopped won’t be easy - the totalitarian Chinese government can’t stop it at their Great Wall. And recy- cling doesn’t really get at what will finally have to be changed. Americans will finally have to begin to use up less stuff, includ- ing energy. That will mean a changed life-style. For a while there it appeared that the price of gasoline was going to help, by forcing Americans to drive less, but it now appears that we’re adapting, and traffic is as bad as ever.

Free Lunch: How the Wealthiest Americans Enrich Themselves at Government Expense
By Pulitzer Prize-Winning Reporter David Johnston published by Penguin, Inc. (USA) 2007

Review by Jack Pickering

This is the most shocking book I have read in my 92 years. I include books on religious per- sonalities, the Bible, the Holocaust. Those all depicted man’s inhumanity to man, first revealed to me in kindergarten years. Johnstown’s book describes how a small group of businessmen have exploited the rest of us, and have done so in violation of their vaunted principles.

The title clearly is from free-market guru Milton Friedman’s dictum that free lunches don’t exist. When I was young, saloons dished out cheese and sausage gratis. Of course drin- kers unknowingly picked up the tab, as Uncle Milly makes clear. Likewise gamblers pay for floorshows at casinos. But do you know how many business costs are borne unknowingly by us taxpayers? The cost-shifting tactics described in Johnstown’s Cadillac of Nations (1767) – rocky to worst to most business- men, even though most have never read it. The great Scot wrote: “People of the same trade sel- ling together, and each as much as he can, and making away the work of many, is calledMachiavelli.”

My advice is let the winds of change begin to blow away our old life-styles.

For a change we should do exactly what John, a long time resident of Palm Springs, recommends. He says “We all should have a great big and very permanent sign over our houses reading 'I'M IMPORTANT TO THE ECONOMY.'”

Johnston is no great expert - there are many others in the field - but he does have an obsession with what he calls ‘free lunches’.

‘Free Lunch’ as an economic phenomenon is very much a fact of life. We have a clear case of it in American education. We are historically one of the most educated nation on earth. Yet we cannot seem to get our schools to work at anything near an acceptable level.

The reason for this is very simple. As the great Italian economist, Maddison, has observed, “It is easy to produce more, but it is difficult to produce better.”

It is up to each of us to advocate for better education and hold our public officials accountable for the results that we expect from them.

Harry Wilson

ABQ Trial Balloon • November 2008

BOOK REVIEW

December 3-10

Human Rights Week

By Sally-Alice Thompson

Sixty years ago the apex of recognition of the intrinsic worth of every human being was reached. It culminated in the momentous cos- mptive signing of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an inclusive document that outlives the atmospheres of life that make for truly civilized existence. Unfortunately most, if not all, the items listed in this great and hopeful document have been violated in country after country, government after government, not excluding our own.

In recognition of the crying need to return to that hopefulness of sixty years ago, when people all over the world desired the fulfillment of material and spiritual needs for all, the United Nations Association and Veterans of Peace for Albuquerque have declared December 3 through 10 to be Human Rights Week. We are asking any group or individual who can to join us in making that week one in which Albuquerque becomes aware of the countless number that are so debilitating to the human spirit. We are expecting Mayor and City Council proclamations.

On November 15, a celebration of Laguna Pueblo will be held at 6:00 PM at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE.

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WHAT: "Flags: Variations on a Theme"

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The Rio Metro “Get Connected” Regional Transit Plan

By JW Madison

The voters in the counties of Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia will soon be asked to approve the next major step toward a real regional transit system for the metro area—a three-county regional rail and bus service and funding plan has been approved by the Board of Directors of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (“Rio Metro”). This regional transit plan includes the Rail Runner and additional transit services in the Rio Metro district, comprising these three counties.

The plan will also fund connecting bus services to 12 Rail Runner stations in the district. It also expands the availability of dial-a-ride service in each of the counties, as well as expanding local transit service.

The 21st Century Transportation Task Force; Rail Transit for Albuquerque?

By JW Madison

In 2006, Albuquerque Mayor Marty Chavez attempted to implement our city’s first Rail transit system in at least 80 years. The first segment of this system, the “Red Chill Line”, would feature sleek modern streetcars travelling daily on double track along Central between Attrisco and Carlisle (“Streetcar”, whether modern, vintage or replica, can be thought of as “Light Light Rail” for this article).

Initially, this proposal enjoyed the backing of a majority of the City Council. But after a well-publicized outcry, several Councilors backed off, killing the deal. This outcry was not entirely flat-earth auto-centered idiocy; there were some real concerns about the length and location of the route, how to pay for it and the manner in which the proposal was being moved through the political process.

One response to this setback was the establishment of the 21st Century Transportation Task Force. Contrary to impressions fostered by the local media, this Task Force actually worked on other transportation issues besides the Streetcar—namely, reviewing and recommending a significant increase in funding for transit (including the Streetcar), bikeways, and pedestrian improvements.

The 21st Century Transportation Task Force

The 21st Century Transportation Task Force began meeting in January of 2008 to discuss the City’s Quarter-Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax and comment on an independent cost-and-benefit analysis of the proposed modern streetcar transit system. The Task Force met a total of seventeen times over an eight-month period.

The Task Force’s charges, as contained in the Ordinance (O-07-71) that created the Task Force, included the following:

A. Develop an understanding of the adopted City policies regarding roadways, public transit, and other multi-modal transportation improvements as contained in the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and in other relevant documents;
B. Review the history, expenditures, and the needs associated with the current Transportation Infrastructure Tax;
C. Review current plans for expansion of the roadways, public transit system, and other multi-modal transportation improvements;
D. Familiarize itself with the Street Car system as proposed;
E. Familiarize itself with the relationship between land-use regulation, transit and pedestrian/bicycle use;
F. Monitor the progress of the cost and benefit analysis as described above and evaluate its findings and recommendations;
G. Generate a report or reports (majority and/or minority if necessary) summarizing the available information and making recommendations with respect to the dedication of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax, the development of a regional transportation plan and the development of multimodal transportation improvements; and

Services provided:

- Minimum energy efficiency standards for passenger vehicles
- Minimum energy efficiency standards for commercial vehicles
- Minimum energy efficiency standards for passenger vehicles in multiple-engine configurations
- Minimum energy efficiency standards for commercial vehicles in multiple-engine configurations
- Minimum energy efficiency standards for heavy-duty trucks

Energy Efficiency of different modes of transportation

If you think passenger rail is a luxury or a waste of the taxpayer’s money, these graphs by Canadian James Strickland help to demonstrate why it’s not. If you want to see the entire article of which these graphs are a part, go to www.nmrails.org and click on the last “graphs” entry.

I was once told by a transportation planner that “nobody cares about energy efficiency”. Well, I always have. The rest of the world no doubt will care if the worldwide production of oil falls and demand is met by supply only at outrageous prices. (Plus, there’s that other little problem.) The price of crude oil has tripled in the past four years; I do not think it is going to go back down, and continuing to generate the equivalent of that one-time supply of energy is going to be difficult. Thus, as a society we should be rapidly moving towards more efficient transportation systems as soon as possible. Or, if possible, use human power or eliminate the need for urban transportation altogether, by reintegrating work, shopping and residential uses.

Ok, lecture over, here are the pretty graphs. The data portrayed here should be interpreted primarily to give a sense of “order of magnitude”; the “typical efficiency” figures in particular will vary significantly depending on what you consider typical. The “typical” usage is either from ridership data or is estimated. Please see below for the detailed data table supporting the graphs.

The Rio Metro area is forecasted to experience population increases not seen since the 1920s. This rapid growth has been driven by the desire to spread out, and continuing to generate the equivalent of that one-time supply of energy is going to be difficult. Thus, as a society we should be rapidly moving towards more efficient transportation systems as soon as possible. Or, if possible, use human power or eliminate the need for urban transportation altogether, by reintegrating work, shopping and residential uses.

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See TASK FORCE on page 7
**Natural Techniques Help Farm Profitability and Preservation**

By Jacinda Witt

The demand for locally grown and organic foods continues to increase and that demand has created a growing awareness that there are fewer and fewer farms to meet that demand. That awareness is creating a growing need, not only to preserve our farms and farmland, but to revive local agriculture, in order to insure future supplies.

The question being asked is, “Why are our farmlands disappearing?” One answer is that selling real estate to developers has been more profitable than small to medium scale, local farming. Of course, there are as many reasons for the disappearance of farmland as there are farmers, but they all need to feed their families and pay their bills, the same as everyone else. There are farmers whose yield consistently dwindles despite farming more acreage. At the same time, the costs of farming continue to rise, if their yield does not. This is true of both conventional and organic, or sustainable, methods.

At a recent agricultural meeting, preserving our farmlands was a main topic of discussion. When it was announced that one of the suggestions for preserving farmland was to make farming profitable again, laughter was among the responses. It was said that the suggestion was too over-arching and idealistic.

It was then asserted that farming can be profitable and that it is not as difficult as most might tend to think. These ways to improve profitability are to shorten growing time, increase yield, without increasing the acreage farmed, and produce a value added crop. Now you are farming, right?

There is a farm in our midst that is doing just that. Virgin Farms, in Albuquerque’s South Valley planted seed beginning June 8th of this year. We were harvesting yellow squash only three and half weeks later and acorn squash after only fifty days, instead of the usual ninety. We have produced approximately twenty tons of organic, natural produce off of less than four acres in less than 120 days, without sacrificing nutrition.

At Virgin Farms, our focus is healthy soil. Healthy soil produces healthy vegetation. Healthy soil is a natural deterrent to weeds and healthy vegetation is a natural deterrent to insect infestation. Nutrient dense, meats and produce are a by-product of healthy vegetation, where are by-products of nutrient dense foods.

The nutritional value of the foods produced today, both conventionally and “organically,” generally lack nutrient density and, therefore, the nutritional value we are told we require for good health. The problem is that our soils are severely depleted, minerally and biologically. The good news is it is possible to solve that problem, as Virgin Farms has.

At Virgin Farms we have dedicated ourselves to being a model for profitable farming, and we are achieving that goal by shortening growing time, increasing yield and producing value-added foods, i.e. foods with actual nutritional value. Suddenly, idealistic is realistic.

For further information or to arrange tours. 

**FARM FACT**

Nearly 1.8 million acres of farm and ranch land have been protected around the country by state farmland protection programs. Such programs, which purchase conservation easements on agricultural land, offer farmers and ranchers an alternative to selling agricultural land for development in areas experiencing intense development pressures. The programs also help to keep land available for future generations of farmers. To learn how much land your state has protected to date, view AFT’s “PACE: Status of State Programs” fact sheet at www.farmlandinfo.org or call the Farmland Information Center at (800) 370-4879.

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**The Decriminalization of Abortion Upheld by Mexico Supreme Court**

By Alexander C. Sanger, the grandson of Margaret Sanger, who founded the birth control movement over eighty years ago, is currently Chair of the International Planned Parenthood Council.

On August 28, Mexico’s Supreme Court by an 8-3 vote upheld as constitutional the decriminalization of abortion.

The law, passed in 2007 by the Mexico City Legislativa Assembly, decriminalized the act of abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The law also defined a pregnancy as starting upon implantation and required public health centers in Mexico City to provide abortion information and free services, with an opt-out for doctors with conscientious objection. With this law, Mexico City joined Puerto Rico, Cuba and Guyana in the Hemisphere as having decriminalized abortion in the first trimester.

The law was immediately challenged by the pro-criminalization forces in Mexican society, as violating the right to life as set forth in the Mexican Constitution. The decision, finding that it did not, was a constitutionally limited one, unlike the broader Roe v. Wade decision from the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973. The Roe decision found that in the U.S. Constitution there was a right to privacy that required that abortion be decriminalized before fetal viability. The Mexican Constitution held that the Mexican Constitution permitted, but did not require, the same legal safeguards as the nation to decriminalize, or criminalize, abortion. One judge said, “It is not up to the Supreme Court to legalize or criminalize abortion.” With this decision as precedent, other states in Mexico can decriminalize abortion should they choose to do so.

The Mexico City abortion law addresses a controversial public health problem: unsafe abortion. There are estimates that there are between 500,000 and 1 million unsafe abortions a year in Mexico, with approximately 100,000 annual abortion-related hospital admissions. From 1990 to 2005, 21,646 women in Mexico died of medical complications caused by abortion, with abortion accounting for 37%. These figures are probably underestimated, given the illegality of the procedure. Since the decriminalization, there has been one death from abortion in Mexico City.

Additional maternal deaths in the past were in no doubt caused by lack of access to family planning services, which would have reduced these complications. Since the law was passed, Mexico’s abortion rate has declined as an indication of the law’s effectiveness.

There is a good chance you can create a certified wildlife habitat on your church grounds or in your backyard. For more information, contact Virginia Birr (505 296-1431; njcushman@yahoo.com). Or go to the National Wildlife Federation’s web page at http://www.nwf.org.

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**Gift Your Church with a Wildlife Habitat**

By Jacinda Witt

The first Unitarian Church, located on the southwest corner of Comanche and Carlisle NE, recently dedicated a nationally certified wildlife habitat as part of it’s campus. The four requirements for certification for a wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation are to furnish food, water, cover, and a place to raise young, and to focus on native plants.

See it for yourself. Visit the habitat on the church grounds.

The habitat is located between the church sanctuary building and Carlisle Blvd. You can follow the path through the habitat to really get a feel for the place. Our aim is to reconnect our children and families with the out-of-doors. (Refer to the wonderful and thought provoking book, Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv). Third and Fourth graders from the church do a bag count every year to record how fast the habitat is becoming diverse, supplying food for the birds, lizards, and other critters who live there. We’ve seen children take their parents by the hand and guide them through the habitat.

For more information, contact Nancy Cushman (505 296-1431; njcushman@yahoo.com). Or go to the National Wildlife Federation’s web page at http://www.nwf.org.
When Encountering Law Enforcement

The in the waning of the weeks of the independent campaign, Obama’s utterance of “spreading the wealth” provoked the kind of outcry which suggested an abysmal ignorance of our witnessing of the greatest redistribution of national wealth and income since the Gilded Age. Among the world’s developed nations, the United States now stands behind only Mexico and Turkey in witnessing the widest gap between rich and poor. For 30 years, but aggravately during the past eight, America’s majority taxpaying middle class have seen its assets and income redistributed to, and concentrated in, the tax-avoiding wealthiest one percent – indeed, worse, to the top one-tenth of one percent. The latter are, of course, the loudest resurrectionists of the old system, and adding trillion-dollar publicly-funded bailouts of failed and failing brokerage houses and banks.

It is a system” worth salvaging? If so, a fundamental restructuring of the country was accomplished through extensive group discussions, the development of a working outline and draft report, and on-going revision of the outline and draft report with input from all members. All of this culminated in the 29-page Final Report that was recently submitted to Mayor Chavez and the City Council for their consideration.

Brief Summary of Recommendations:

- Transformation of the 1/4, Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax:
- The Task Force unanimously recommended the elimination of the 1/4, Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax.
- For 30 years, but aggravately during the past eight, America’s majority taxpaying middle class have seen its assets and income redistributed to, and concentrated in, the tax-avoiding wealthiest one percent – indeed, worse, to the top one-tenth of one percent. The latter are, of course, the loudest resurrectionists of the old system, and adding trillion-dollar publicly-funded bailouts of failed and failing brokerage houses and banks.

Veterans For Peace is a national organization made up of past and present members of America’s armed forces. We have died or are now refugees since the first Iraq War. Returning vets who are not getting the care, benefits and services they deserve and are entitled to are often ignored.

Palestine conflict. We also call for the end of the death penalty. In support of the Constitution we believe that we should prohibit Congress from giving the president the authority to start a war.

In support of the Declaration’s guaranty of life and the pursuit of happiness we encourage public investment to create high quality jobs, fair labor policies, enforcement of labor laws, and regulation of industry. We want an environmental policy stressing alternative energy sources. We want protection of the rights of women, and improved reproductive health services. We want health care for our veterans and for all people.

In support of the Bill of Rights we strongly oppose government spying on our citizens, and torture, and all other abuses of civil liberties. We expect our government to respect the First Amendment and desist from favoring some religions in the form of faith based initiatives. We stand for the values of the America that we all love. We are the defenders against those who call themselves patriots and seek to destroy the rights to life liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all who were created equal.

For further information about the Albuquerque chapter of Veterans For Peace contact the chapter president, Charles Powell, 505 271-9274.
Emma Goldman’s “What is Patriotism?” Speech
San Francisco, CA, 1908

In the early summer of 1905 San Francisco Bay was host to the most powerful naval fleet assembled to date. The new battleships of the Atlantic Fleet, later known as “The Great White Fleet,” accompanied by a “Torpedo Flotilla” of six destroyers and several auxiliary ships were in the harbor. Two of the reactors of the Great White Fleet’s voyage was to ensure that Americans were aware of the reasons for having a strong and capable navy and to let them see those capabilities first hand. It was within this context that Emma Goldman, an avid anar- chist, gave her speech “What is Patriotism?” at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco in 1908.

A United States soldier (private first-class), William Burdula, attended the lecture in uniform and was witnessed shaking her hand. Within two weeks, he was court-martialed in violation of the 62nd Article of War, and found guilty by a military court, dishon- orably discharged and sentenced to five years at hard labor on Alcatraz Island, San Francisco, California.

Men and Women: What is patriotism? Is it love of one’s birthplace, the place of childhood’s recollections and hopes, dreams, and aspirations? Is it the place where, in child-like naiveté, we would watch the passing clouds, and wonder, ‘What is this so swift?’ The place where we would count the milliard glittering stars, terrified lest each one should be our eye should be,’ piercing the very depths of our little souls? Is it the place where we would listen to the music of the birds and long to have wings to fly, even as they, to distant lands? Or is it the place where we would sit on Mother’s knee, enraptured by tales of great deeds and conquests? In short, is it love for the spot, every inch of which is a wellspring of recollections of a happy, joyous and playful childhood?

If that were patriotism, few Americans who are old enough would be called upon to be patriotic, since the place of play has been turned into a factory, mill, and mine. As the deepening sounds of machinery have replaced the music of the beach, No! Not only what is the tales of great deeds, for the sto- ries our mothers tell today are but those of sorrow, tears and grief.

What, then, is patriotism? Patriotism, sir, is the last resort of scoundrels,” said Dr. Samuel Johnson. Leo Tolstoy, the great- est anti-patriot of our time, defines patriotism as the prin- ciple that will justify the training of wholesale murderers; a trade that requires better equipment in the exercise of little killing than the making of such necessities as shoes, clothing, and houses; a trade that guarantees better rewards and a more prominent position in society than that of the honest workingman.

Indeed, conceit, arrogance and egoism are the essentials of patriotism. Let me illustrate. Patriotism assumes that our globe is divided into little spots, each surrounded by an iron gate. Those who have had the fortune of seeing the earth being some place, that spot consider themselves nobler, better, grander, more intelligent than those living beings inhabiting any other spot. It is, therefore, the duty of everyone living on that chosen spot to fight, kill and die in the attempt to impose his superiority upon all the others.

The inhabitants of the other spots reason in like manner of course, with the result that from early infancy the mind of the child is provided with blood-curd- ding stories about the Germans, the French, the Italians, Russians, etc. when the child has reached manhood he is thoroughly satu- rated with the belief that he is chosen by the Lord himself to defend his country against the attack or invasion of any for- eigner. It is for that purpose that we are clamoring for a greater army and navy, more battleships and ammunition.

An army and navy represent the people’s toys. To make them more attractive and acceptable, hundres and thousands of dol- lars are being spent for the dis- play of toys. That was the pur- pose of the American government in equipping a fleet and sending it along the Pacific coast, that every American citizen should be made to feel the pride and glory of the United States.

The city of San Francisco spent one thousand dollars for the entertainment of the fleet; Los Angeles, sixty thousand; Seattle and Tacoma, about one hundred thousand. Yes, two hundred and sixty thousand dollars were spent on fireworks, theater parties, and reveileys, at a time when men, women, and children through the breadth and length of the country were starving in the streets; when thousands of unemployed were ready to sell their labor at any price.

What could not have been accomplished with such an enor- mous sum? But instead of bread and shelter, the children of those cities were taken to see the fleet, that it may remain, as one newspa- per said, “a lasting memory for the child.” A wonderful thing to remember, is it not? The imple- ments of ‘civilized slaughter’, if the mind of the child is poisoned with such memories, what hope is there for a true realization of human brotherhood?

We Americans claim to be a peace-loving people. We hate bloodshed; we are opposed to violence. Yet we go into spasms of joy over the possibility of pro- jecting dynamite bombs from fly- ing machines upon helpless citi- zens. We are ready to hang, elec- trocute, or lynch anyone, who is supposed to risk his own life in the attempt upon that of some industrial mag- nate. Yet our hearts swell with pride at the thought that America is becoming the most powerful nation on earth, and that she will eventually plant her iron foot on the necks of all other nations.

Such is the logic of patriotism. Thinking men and women the world over are beginning to real- ize that patriotism is too nar- row, too limited, too short-sighted to meet the necessities of our time. The centralization of power has brought into being an international feeling of solidarity among the oppressed nations of the world; a solidarity which repre- sents a greater harmony of inter- ests between the workingman of America and his brothers abroad than between the American miner and his exploiting capitalist, a solidarity which fears not foreign invasion, because it is bringing all the workers to the point when they will say to their masters, “Go and do your own killing. We have done it long enough for you.”

The proletariat of Europe has realized the great force of that solidarity and has, as a result, inaugurated a war against patrio- tism and its bloody specter, mili- tarism. Thousands of men fill the prisons of France, Germany, Russia and the Scandinavian countries because they dared to defy the ancient superstition.

America will have to follow suit. The spirit of militarism has already permeated all walks of life. Indeed, I am convinced that militarism is a greater danger here than anywhere else, because of the many tribes capitalism holds out to those whom it wishes to destroy.

The beginning has already been marked in our own schools. Children are trained in military tactics, the glory of military achievements extolled in the curriculum, and the youthful mind perverted to suit the government. Further, the youth of the country is appealed to in glaring posters to join the Army and the Navy, “A fine chance to see the world!” cries the governmental huckster. Thus innocent boys are morally shang- hai-ed into patriotism, and the military-Moloch strides conquer- ing through the nation.

When we have undermined the patriotic lie, we shall have cleared the path for the great structure where all shall be united into a universal brotherhood -- a truly free society.