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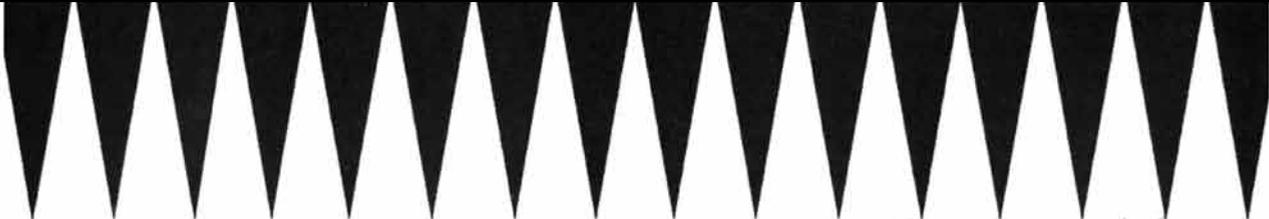
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EDITOR:

JOHN O'KANE

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT:

ALEXIS MANNING

ASSISTANT EDITORS:

DAVID GORDON

DELIA URBANEZ

DESIGNER:

HELI SWENSSON

INTERN:

CINDY THAYER

CONTRIBUTORS:

WILLIAM BLUM

NOAM CHOMSKY

ROBBIE CONAL

MARC COOPER

SLOBODAN DIMITROV

S.A. GRIFFIN

ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

JAMES KUNSTLER

JASON LEOPOLD

NOMI PRINS

CHANNING SARGENT

PETER DALE SCOTT

SANDRA TSING-LOH

DAVE VAN PATTEN

RENEE VAN WINKLE

DAVE ZIRIN

COVER:

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JOHN O'KANE



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by John O'Kane

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Slobodan Dimitrov is a photographer based in the Long Beach/Los Angeles Harbors. His 20 year long project on the Piledrivers can currently be seen in the lobby of Local 2375, Wilmington CA. He was selected for the Los Angeles Public Library Neighborhood Project to document the community of San Pedro for the public archives in 2000. In 2008 he received another commission from the Los Angeles Public Library to document industrial Los Angeles in the Port of LA. In July 2010, the Artist Portrait series was exhibited at Angels Gate Cultural Center. To date he has had over 130 exhibits, nationally and internationally. He has been a contributing photographer for *The Dispatcher*, *LA Weekly*, *The Building Trades News*, *Random Lengths*. His work has appeared in *The Nation*, *Carpenter*, *Solidarity*, *SEIU*, *UNITE*, *Machinists Int.*, *America at Work*, *The Progressive*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, and *The Economist*, among many labor publications and newspapers. sdimitrovphoto.com

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WATER HOGS

MARK HERTSGAARD

Consuming 80 percent of California's developed water but accounting for only 2 percent of the state's GDP, agriculture thrives while everyone else is parched.

"I've been smiling all the way to the bank," said pistachio farmer John Dean at a conference hosted this month by Paramount Farms, the mega-operation owned by Stewart Resnick, a Beverly Hills billionaire known for his sprawling agricultural holdings, controversial water dealings, and millions of dollars in campaign contributions to high-powered California politicians including Governor Jerry Brown, former governors Arnold Schwarzenegger and Gray Davis, and U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein.

The record drought now entering its fourth year in California has alarmed the public, left a number of rural communities without drinking water, and triggered calls for mandatory rationing. There's no relief in sight: The winter rainy season, which was a bust again this year, officially ends on April 15. Nevertheless, some large-scale farmers are enjoying extraordinary profits despite the drought, thanks in part to infusions of what experts call dangerously under-priced water.

Resnick, whose legendary marketing flair included hiring Stephen Colbert to star in a 2014 Super Bowl commercial, told the conference that pistachios generated an average net return of \$3,519 per acre in 2014, based on a record wholesale price of \$3.53 a pound. Almonds, an even "thirstier" crop, averaged \$1,431 per acre. Andy Anzaldo, a vice president for Resnick's company, Wonderful Pistachios, celebrated by showing the assembled growers a clip from the movie *Jerry Maguire* in which Tom Cruise shouts, "Show me the money," reported the *Western Farm Press*, a trade publication. At the end of the day, conference attendees filed out to the sounds of Louis Armstrong singing, "It's a Wonderful World."

Agriculture is the heart of California's worsening water crisis, and the stakes extend far beyond the

state's borders. Not only is California the world's eighth largest economy, it is an agricultural superpower. It produces roughly half of all the fruits, nuts, and vegetables consumed in the United States—and more than 90 percent of the almonds, tomatoes, strawberries, broccoli and other specialty crops—while exporting vast amounts to China and other overseas customers.

But agriculture consumes a staggering 80 percent of California's developed water, even as it accounts for only 2 percent of the state's gross domestic product. Most crops and livestock are produced in the Central Valley, which is, geologically speaking, a desert. The soil is very fertile but crops there can thrive only if massive amounts of irrigation water are applied.

Current pricing structures enrich a handful of interests, but they are ushering the state as a whole toward a parched and perilous future.

Although no secret, agriculture's 80 percent share of state water use is rarely mentioned in media discussions of California's drought. Instead, news coverage concentrates on the drought's implications for people in cities and suburbs, which is where most journalists and their audiences live. Thus recent headlines warned that state regulators have ordered restaurants to serve water only if customers explicitly request it and directed homeowners to water lawns no more than twice a week. The *San Jose Mercury News* pointed out that these restrictions carry no

enforcement mechanisms, but what makes them a side-show is simple math: During a historic drought, surely the sector that's responsible for 80 percent of water consumption—agriculture—should be the main focus of public attention and policy.

The other great unmentionable of California's water crisis is that water is still priced more cheaply than it should be, which encourages over-consumption. "Water in California is still relatively inexpensive," Heather Cooley, director of the water program at the world-renowned Pacific Institute in Oakland, told *The Daily Beast*.

One reason is that much of the state's water is provided by federal and state agencies at prices that taxpayers subsidize. A second factor that encourages waste is the "use it or lose it" feature in California's arcane system of water rights. Under current rules, if a property owner does not use all the water to which he is legally entitled, he re-

**Although
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of California's
drought.**

— Mark Hertsgaard

linquishes his future rights to the unused water, which may then get allocated to the next farmer in line.

Lawmakers have begun, gingerly, to reform the water system, but experts say that much remains to be done. For years, California was the only state in the arid West that set no limits on how much groundwater a property owner could extract from a private well. Thus nearly everyone and their neighbors in the Central Valley have been drilling deeper and deeper wells in recent years, seeking to offset reductions in state and federal water deliveries. This agricultural version of an arms race not only favors big corporate enterprises over smaller farmers, it threatens to collapse the aquifers whose groundwater is keeping California alive during this drought and will be needed to endure future droughts. (Groundwater supplies about 40 percent of the state's water in years of normal precipitation but closer to 60 percent in dry years.)

Last fall, the legislature passed and Governor Brown signed a bill to regulate groundwater extraction. But the political touchiness of the issue—agricultural interests lobbied hard against it—resulted in a leisurely implementation timetable. Although communities must complete plans for sustainable water management by 2020, not until 2040 must sustainability actually be achieved. The Central Valley could be a dust bowl by then under current trends.

There are practical solutions to California's drought, but the lack of realistic water prices and other incentives has slowed their adoption. A shift to more efficient irrigation methods could reduce agricultural water use by 22 percent, an amount equivalent to all the surface water Central Valley farmers lacked because of drought last year, according to an analysis that Cooley of the Pa-

cific Institute co-authored with Robert Wilkinson, a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Kate Poole, a senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The Brown administration has endorsed better water efficiency—and put a small amount of money where its mouth is. Conservation is the No. 1 priority in the governor's Water Action Plan, and the drought measures he advanced in 2014 included \$10 million to help farmers implement more efficient water management. An additional \$10 million was allocated as part of the \$1.1 billion drought spending plan Brown and bipartisan legislators unveiled last week. Already more than 50 percent of California's farmers use drip or micro irrigation, said Steve Lyle, the director of public affairs at the California Department of Food and Agriculture; the new monies will encourage further adoptions.

Meanwhile, underpriced water has enabled continued production of such water-intensive crops as alfalfa, much of which is exported to China. Rice, perhaps the thirstiest of major crops, saw its production area decrease by 25 percent in 2014. But pasture grass, which is used to fatten livestock, and many nut and fruit products have seen their acreage actually increase. Resnick told the Paramount Farms conference that the acreage devoted to pistachios had grown by 118 percent over the last 10 years; for almonds and walnuts the growth rates were 47 and 30 percent, respectively.

One striking aspect of California's water emergency is how few voices in positions of authority have been willing to state the obvious. To plant increasing amounts of water-intensive crops in a desert would be questionable

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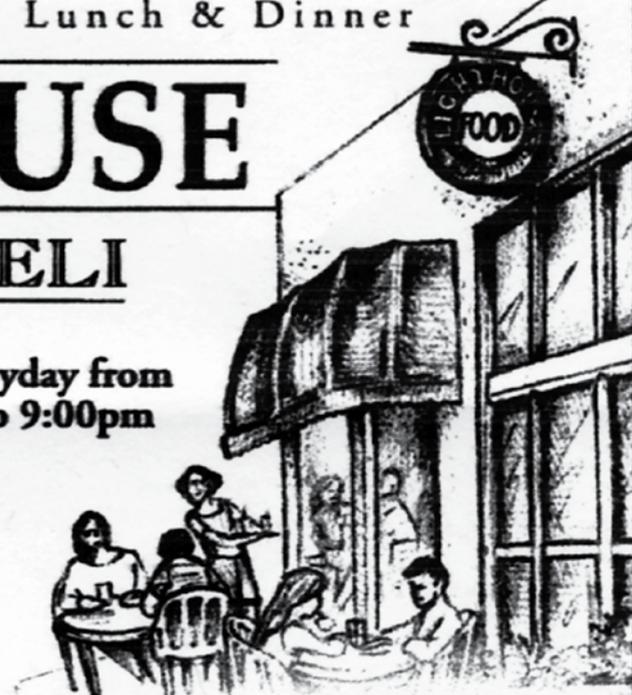
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CALIFORNIA WATER

in the best of times. To continue doing so in the middle of a historic drought, even as scientists warn that climate change will increase the frequency and severity of future droughts, seems nothing less than reckless.

Yet even a politician as gutsy and scientifically informed as Jerry Brown tiptoes around such questions. The *Daily Beast* asked Brown if in this time of record drought California should begin pricing water more realistically and discouraging water-intensive crops. Responding on the governor's behalf, spokesman Lyle simply skipped the water pricing question. On crop choices, he cited a reply Brown recently offered to a similar query: "Growing a walnut or an almond takes water, having a new house with a bunch of toilets and showers takes water. So how do we balance use efficiency with the kind of life that people want in California?... We're all going to have to pull together."

"California Has One Year of Water Left, Will You Ration Now?" asked the headline of a widely discussed opinion piece *NASA* scientist Jay Famiglietti published in the *Los Angeles Times* on March 16. The headline overstated the situation somewhat, and editors soon corrected it to clarify that California has one remaining year of stored water, not one year of total water. As Famiglietti was careful to state, California's reservoirs today contain enough water to supply a year of average consumption.

So if California endures a fourth year of drought, the only way to keep household taps and farmers' irrigation lines flowing will be to summon to the surface still greater volumes of groundwater. But that strategy can't work forever; worse, the longer it is pursued, the bigger the risk that it collapses aquifers, rendering them irretriev-

ably barren. Aquifers can be replenished—if rainwater and snowmelt are allowed to sink into the ground and humans don't keep raiding the supply—and that is the expressed goal of California's forthcoming groundwater regulations. The process takes many decades, however, and extended relief from further droughts.

California is caught between the lessons of its history and the habits of its political economy. Droughts of 10 years duration and longer have been a recurring feature in the region for thousands of years, yet a modern capitalist economy values a given commodity only as much as the price of that commodity. Current pricing structures enrich a handful of interests, but they are ushering the state as a whole toward a parched and perilous future.

The price of water, however, is not determined by inalterable market forces; it is primarily a function of government policies and the social forces that shape them. Elected officials may dodge the question for now, but the price of water seems destined to become an unavoidable issue in California politics. "As our water supply gets more variable and scarce in the future, we're going to have to look at how we price water so it gets used more efficiently," said Cooley of the Pacific Institute. "In some ways we've come a long way in California's water policy and practices over the past 20 years. But if you look into a future of climate change and continued [economic] development, we can and need to do much better."

Mark Hertsgaard has reported on politics, culture and the environment from more than 20 countries. His most recent book is: *HOT: Living Through the Next Fifty Years on Earth*.

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TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP AND THE DEATH OF THE REPUBLIC

ELLEN BROWN

A republican form of government is one in which power resides in elected officials representing the citizens, and government leaders exercise power according to the rule of law. In *The Federalist Papers*, James Madison defined a republic as “a government which derives all its powers directly or indirectly from the great body of the people...”

On April 22nd the Senate Finance Committee approved a bill to fast-track the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a massive trade agreement that would override our republican form of government and hand judicial and legislative authority to a foreign three-person panel of corporate lawyers.

The secretive TPP is an agreement with Mexico, Canada, Japan, Singapore and seven other countries that affects 40% of global markets. Fast-track authority could now go to the full Senate for a vote as early as next week. Fast-track means Congress will be prohibited from amending the trade deal, which will be put to a simple up or down majority vote. Negotiating the TPP in secret and fast-tracking it through Congress is considered necessary to secure its passage, since if the public had time to review its onerous provisions, opposition would mount and defeat it.

Abdicating the Judicial Function to Corporate Lawyers

James Madison wrote in *The Federalist Papers* that the accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny: “Were the power of judging

joined with the legislative, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control, for *the judge* would then be *the legislator*.”

And that, from what we now know of the TPP’s secret provisions, will be its dire effect.

The most controversial provision of the TPP is the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) section, which strengthens existing ISDS procedures. ISDS first appeared in a bilateral trade agreement in 1959. According to *The Economist*, ISDS gives foreign firms a special right to apply to a secretive tribunal of highly paid corporate lawyers for compensation whenever the government passes a law to do things that hurt corporate profits--such things as discouraging smoking, protecting the environment or preventing a nuclear catastrophe.

Arbitrators are paid \$600-700 an hour, giving them little incentive to dismiss cases; and the secretive nature

of the arbitration process and the lack of any requirement to consider precedent gives wide scope for creative judgments.

To date, the highest ISDS award has been for \$2.3 billion to Occidental Oil Company against the government of Ecuador over its termination of an oil-concession contract, this although the termination was apparently legal. Still in arbitration is a demand by Vattenfall, a Swedish utility that operates two nuclear plants in Germany, for compensation of €3.7 billion (\$4.7 billion) under the ISDS clause of a treaty on energy investments, after the German government decided to shut down its nuclear power industry following the Fukushima disaster in Japan in 2011.

Under the TPP, however, even larger judgments can be anticipated, since the sort of “investment” it protects includes not just “the commitment of capital or other resources” but “the expecta-

tion of gain or profit.” That means the rights of corporations in other countries extend not just to their factories and other “capital” but to the profits they expect to receive there.

In an article posted by Yves Smith, Joe Firestone poses some interesting hypotheticals: Under the TPP, could the US government be sued and be held liable if it decided to stop issuing Treasury debt and financed defi-

**Public Citizen
observes that
the TPP would
provide big banks with
a backdoor means of
watering down
efforts to re-regulate
Wall Street, after
deregulation triggered
the worst financial
crisis since the
Great Depression.**

– Ellen Brown

cit spending in some other way (perhaps by quantitative easing or by issuing trillion dollar coins)? Why not, since some private companies would lose profits as a result?

Under the TPP, or the TTIP (the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership under negotiation with the European Union), would the Federal Reserve be sued if it failed to bail out banks that were too big to fail?

Firestone notes that under the Netherlands-Czech trade agreement, the Czech Republic was sued in an investor-state dispute for failing to bail out an insolvent bank in which the complainant had an interest. The investor company was awarded \$236 million in the dispute settlement. What might the damages be, asks Firestone, if the Fed decided to let the Bank of America fail, and a Saudi-based investment company decided to sue?

Abdicating the Legislative Function to Multinational Corporations

Just the threat of this sort of massive damage award could be enough to block prospective legislation. But the TPP goes further and takes on the legislative function directly, by forbidding specific forms of regulation. Public Citizen observes that the TPP would provide big banks with a backdoor means of watering down efforts to re-regulate Wall Street, after deregulation triggered the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression:

“The TPP would forbid countries from banning particularly risky financial products, such as the toxic derivatives that led to the \$183 billion government bailout of AIG. It would prohibit policies to prevent banks from becoming ‘too big to fail’, and threaten the use of ‘firewalls’ to prevent banks that keep our savings accounts from taking hedge-fund-style bets.”

The TPP would also restrict capital controls, an essential policy tool to counter destabilizing flows of speculative money. And the deal would prohibit taxes on Wall Street speculation, such as the proposed Robin Hood Tax that would generate billions of dollars worth of revenue for social, health, or environmental causes.

Clauses on dispute settlement in earlier free trade agreements have been invoked to challenge efforts to regulate big business. The fossil fuel industry is seeking to overturn Quebec’s ban on the ecologically destructive practice of fracking. Veolia, the French behemoth known for building a tram network to serve Israeli settlements

in occupied East Jerusalem, is contesting increases in Egypt’s minimum wage. The tobacco maker Philip Morris is suing against anti-smoking initiatives in Uruguay and Australia.

The TPP would empower not just foreign manufacturers but foreign financial firms to attack financial policies in foreign tribunals, demanding taxpayer compensation for regulations that they claim frustrate their expectations and inhibit their profits.

Preempting Government Sovereignty

What is the justification for this encroachment on the sovereign rights of government? Allegedly, ISDS is necessary in order to increase foreign investment. But as noted in *The Economist*, investors can protect themselves by purchasing political-risk insurance. Moreover, Brazil continues to receive sizable foreign investment despite its long-standing refusal to sign any treaty with an ISDS mechanism. Other countries are beginning to follow Brazil’s lead.

In an April 22nd report from the Center for Economic and Policy Research, gains from multilateral trade liberalization were shown to be very small, equal to only about 0.014% of consumption, or about \$.43 per person per month. And that assumes that any benefits are distributed uniformly across the economic spectrum. In fact, transnational corporations get the bulk of the benefits, at the expense of most of the world’s population.

Something else besides attracting investment money and encouraging foreign trade seems to be going on. The TPP would destroy our republican form of government under the rule of law, by elevating the rights of investors--also called the rights of “capital”--above the rights of the citizens.

That means that TPP is blatantly unconstitutional. But as Joe Firestone observes, neo-liberalism and corporate contributions seem to have blinded the deal’s proponents so much that they cannot see they are selling out the sovereignty of the United States to foreign and multinational corporations.

Ellen Brown is an attorney, founder of the Public Banking Institute, and author of twelve books including the best-selling *Web of Debt*. EllenBrown.com.

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WHY THE RICH DON'T CARE ABOUT JOBS FOR THE REST OF US

PAUL BUCHHEIT

Many of us wonder what possible reason could exist for the failure to invest in American infrastructure, to create millions of jobs as a result, and to help everyone in the long run. Analysis reveals personality traits and beliefs and misconceptions that might account for such behavior. Here's a look inside the billion-dollar brain:

1. It's All About Me.

Several studies by Paul Piff and his colleagues have revealed that upper-class individuals tend to be narcissistic, with a clear sense of entitlement. Worse yet, they believe their talents and attributes – *genius*, even – have earned them a rightful position of status over everyone else.

Scariest yet, according to one study, the American sense of entitlement has been growing over the past 30 years, despite the fact that most of us have lost ground to the super-rich. And most disturbing is that “upper-class” individuals tend to behave more unethically than average citizens.

This “all about me” attitude means that the wealthy don't have to depend on others, and that they have less need to understand the feelings of others. This directly impacts our daily lives. The greater the concentration of wealth, the less a society invests in infrastructure. Our investment in infrastructure as a percent of GDP dropped by 60 percent from 1968 to 2011.

As the super-rich take their helicopters to and from work, they're having multi-million-dollar bunkers built under their houses to sustain them for when a possible revolution comes.

2. It's All About Lazy People Who Refuse to Work.

**The lazy people
who refuse
to work are, in
reality, the tax
avoiders
who are getting
\$2.2 trillion
without
having to
work for it.**

– Paul Buchheit

Congressmen and CEOs don't normally see the people affected by their actions. This leads to a resentment of the poor, and imagined abuses in the minds of people like Paul Ryan and Scott Walker, both of whom likened the safety net to a “hammock,” and Texas Republican Louie Gohmert who decried the purchase of crab legs by people on a \$5-a-day food stamp budget. John Boehner daydreamed: “This idea that has been born...that, you know, ‘I really don't have to work...I think I'd rather just sit around.’”

Almost all healthy adult Americans, of course, want to work. But in 2011 Senate Republicans killed a proposed \$447 billion jobs bill that would have added about two million jobs to the economy. Members of Congress filibustered Nancy Pelosi's “Prevention of Outsourcing Act,” even as a million jobs were being outsourced, and they temporarily blocked the “Small Business Jobs Act.” In April, 2013 only one member of Congress both-

ered to show up for a hearing on unemployment. When asked what he would do to bring jobs to Kentucky, Mitch McConnell responded, “That is not my job. It is the primary responsibility of the state Commerce Cabinet.”

The lazy people who refuse to work are, in reality, the tax avoiders who are getting \$2.2 trillion without having to work for it. The Safety Net costs us \$370 Billion. But Tax Avoidance costs us \$2,200 Billion (tax expenditures, tax underpayments, tax havens, and corporate nonpayment). That's \$2.2 trillion, six times more than the safety net, most of it benefiting the wealthiest Americans.

3. It's All About Waiting for the Free Market to Work Its Magic.

Conservative analyst Michael Barone said, “Markets work. But sometimes they take time.” Thirty-five years, so far. Beneficiaries of low taxes and deregulation desperately want to believe

that “trickle-down” works, or at least to convince middle America that it works. They want to believe, against all logic, that lower taxes mean more tax revenue.

This is all this in the face of mountains of data disproving *supply-side* ideas. As far back as 1984 the Treasury Department concluded that most tax cuts lose revenue. More recent studies by Saez et al and by the Economic Policy Institute found no connection between

tax rates and economic growth, and Piketty, Saez and Stantcheva determined that the optimal tax rate could be over 80 percent.

There is also hard evidence that cutting taxes on the rich fails to stimulate job creation, and that raising taxes on the rich has the opposite, beneficial effect. The facts come from Kansas and Minnesota. Despite early optimism by trickle-down adherents, tax cuts in Kansas have been disastrous, leading to revenue losses, cutbacks in education and health care, and sluggish job growth. In Minnesota, on the other hand, tax increases on the rich have led to higher wages, low unemployment, and rapid business growth.

The rich don't care about creating jobs. They don't care about Robert Reich's insight about more and more jobs being lost to smart technologies, leading to a society in which "those who create or invest in blockbuster ideas will earn unprecedented sums and returns," leaving much less for the rest of us.

The solution, says Chris Hedges, is to take on corporate power by instituting "a nationwide public works program, especially for those under the age of 25, to create conditions for full employment." Every American, of course, deserves the opportunity to earn a living wage. It will take a revolution against narcissism to make it happen.

Paul Buchheit teaches economics at DePaul University. He is the founder and developer of the Web sites UsAgainstGreed.org, PayUp-Now.org and RappingHistory.org, and the editor of *American Wars: Illusions and Realities* (Clarity Press).

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THE THERETHERE: THE BUSINESS OF COLLECTIBLES AT THE LONG BEACH ANTIQUQUE MARKET

CHANNING SARGENT

Three young women wearing wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses and baggy “boyfriend jeans” with espadrille sandals stand around a clear plastic u-shaped tub. One of them picks it up and tosses it in her hands. “What do you think it is?” she says. Her friend grabs it and puts it in their cart, which is stacked with colorful vintage Pyrex dishes and enamelware basins. “I don’t know but I like it,” she says. “It’s a tchotchke holder. A dust-covered tchotchke holder,” their other friend says. They’re at the Long Beach Antique Market, along with over 10,000 other visitors. Nearby, two older women, each in bright, printed viscose blouses, wheel their carts to a corner by the snack bar at Veteran’s stadium. “Aw, look at your bear!” one says to the other, as she sits on the shaded bench by the water fountain – possibly the only shaded place for the public to sit in the entire 20 acre market. What looks like a small, plush black teddy bear hangs over her cart. “It’s made out of some kind of brush, or something,” the other says. “It’ll be so cute in my garden.” They are best friends, Deborah and Laurie, and they’ve been visiting flea markets together for ten years. “We go through withdrawal when we don’t go often,” Deborah says. The two met at the stables in Long Beach a decade

around the stadium, selling vintage and antique collectibles, including everything from kitchen and home wares to clothing, accessories, furniture, estate jewelry, comic books, toys and, of course, tchotchkes of every imaginable sort. Some vendors line up at the entry gates as early as 4:00 a.m. in hope of scoring a convenient and strategic booth in their respective zones (priced according to proximity to entry gates), while others sleep in their vehicles overnight to ensure that they’re the first ones in line. All vendors must have their booths set up and be ready to sell no later than 6:45 a.m. However, gates open to the pub-



Rotary phones.



Deborah and Laurie.



Robot lamps.

ago when they both trained horses, and soon learned that they shared a passion for swap meets. Within a few visits to various markets and meets, they decided to start selling together, but their experience with dealing was short lived. “It’s more fun to just buy,” Laurie says.

Over 800 vendors have set up in the parking lot



“Shabby Chic”.

lic at 5:30 a.m., for early admission. At twice the general admission price, beginning at 6:30 a.m., most visitors at such an early hour are dealers looking to score the pre-picked over gems and “flip” them – that is, sell them to their own buyers. Some will do so at their storefronts, others on eBay, and others right there, at the flea market, from their own booths.

Cathie Goldberg, owner of House 1002, a vintage shop in San Pedro, has a game that she and her staff play when they attend the market. “We each go out and buy one thing, and then see who flips their thing first.” A regular shopper at the Long Beach Antique Market for 25 years, she just started selling there one year ago. Her years of attending the market did not prep her for the vending experience. “We made a lot of mistakes,” she says. Arriving at 4:00 a.m., they found that all of the good parking spots for unloading were already taken. They had to squeeze her truck into a narrow space, and couldn’t open the doors all the way to get their items out of the crew cab, so they unloaded through the windows. Once unloaded, they got in the wrong entry line, ending up in the wrong section, far from where they were supposed to be. Finally in their booth, they found they did not bring enough tables to hold their items, nor did they have an easy-up tent. When the sun came up, they couldn’t hide from it. Having brought no water, they spent nearly \$30 for single-bottles of water from the snack bar, each priced at \$4. By 11:00 a.m., they were completely burned out.

“People don’t realize how hard this business is,”



Weird industrial hat thing from a new vendor selling “refurbished” art stuffs.

says Malibu John. He’s sitting under an easy-up tent at booth J 045, near the front entrance. Dealing in collectibles for over 27 years, he’s known as the “dealer’s dealer” – the man others go to learn what their items might be worth. “We all say we’re not in this for the money, we’re in it for the love, but the truth is, we wouldn’t show up here at four in the morning and do this for another ten hours if we weren’t in it for the money,” he says, leaning back in his canvas chair. He sells at the market every month, and with the rest of his time, he shops. Four to five days a week, he scours garage sales and estate sales looking for antiques and collectibles that he can flip for a

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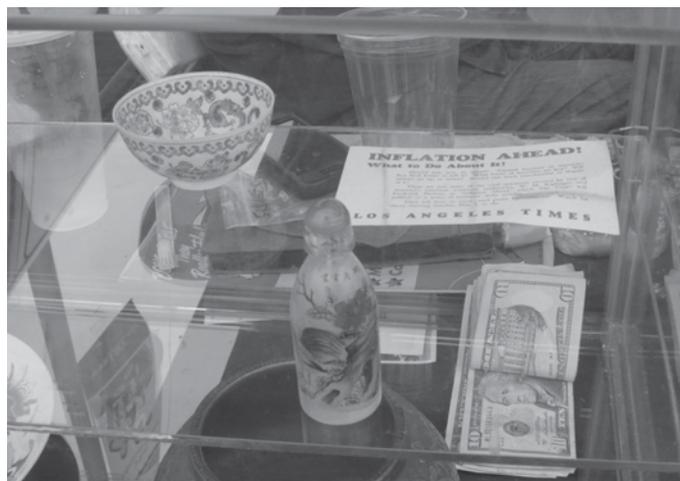
profit. “Nobody sells because they like to sell. They sell because they like to find things,” he says. The work is in the sell, the play is in the hunt. “You might not like to sell, but you like to hunt, and you have to sell, if you hunt.”

A young couple asks the price of two small pink porcelain dishes in Malibu John’s display case. “\$200. They’re Chinese,” he answers. The couple nod their heads and slowly move along. Malibu John is familiar with all the potential mistakes people make when getting into the business. First there’s the hunt, and then there’s the flip, and with each comes a learning curve regarding price.



Old “garage sale” style vendor.

“The trick is to find a thing at a low enough price that you can sell to people who will think your price is low enough,” John explains. He compares the business to selling oranges. The orange business only has three steps: grower, distributor, seller. The antiques and collectibles business, however, has innumerable steps: the original manufacturer



Pink bowl and wad of cash.

to the original seller, to a garage sale, to a flea market, to the end user, an item can bounce 100 times, as John puts it. “I might sell something to Steve, who might sell it to another dealer, who’ll sell it to another and the thing might wind up right back in my hands,” he says. A few months ago, he saw an Indian pot on his friend’s shelf in Santa Barbara, and asked him where he got it. His friend said he got from a friend who’d recently passed away. He’d bought it from a vendor at the Rose Bowl Market 20 years ago for next to nothing. “The vendor had all these Indian ceramics, and he was practically giving them away,” his friend said. Malibu John said he’d been that vendor.

“Worth is a relative value,” John explains. An item’s value is relative to several variables like the economy, technology, and the venue. Something may be worth more at a flea market than a garage sale, and worth even more at an antiques shop on Melrose. Even then, that same



Malibu John and his friend Joe.

item's worth is further determined by economic shifts. "We're the first business to feel an oncoming recession, and the last to recover," says John. First, Antiques Roadshow came along and changed the market, as suddenly everyone started holding pieces for professional appraisal and hoping to get \$50,000 for the piece of junk in their garage. "Next, eBay came along and blew the whole business into the water," John says. People can sell on eBay to an international marketplace for much more than they can get at a local market, and sellers don't have to be professional dealers – they can – and are – anyone with an Internet connection. According to John, since eBay, fewer are selling at meets, and fewer dealers are buying.

With these changes, the look of the markets has changed. Ten years ago, markets resembled massive garage sales. Now, the markets resemble a large outdoor mall, with vendors setting up almost fully furnished shops, as Cathie Goldberg explains. Within the last five years, a new kind of vendor has infiltrated the market. This vendor caters to a younger, more design-oriented clientele that cares more about style than quality. They sell refurbished, repurposed furniture and wares in styles known as "shabby chic," or "steampunk." "You wouldn't have seen those kinds of vendors ten years ago," Deborah says. Laurie agrees, adding, "I don't know why anyone would want a refurbished rotary phone or a lamp that looks like an industrial robot."

Malibu John explains that the younger shopper

goes for a look more than quality or history. They don't care where a chest of drawers comes from or who owned it first or even what it's made of. It could be an Ikea chest that's been painted and distressed. The substance doesn't matter as long as it's got style. "As we dealers like to say, there's no there there," Malibu John says. He leans back in his chair and grabs a roll of dollar bills out of his display case. "Everybody really just wants to buy this wad of cash," he says.

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arms raised high
& negotiates the ether of
falling dreams one foot in front of the other
with verse

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& weeps openly over the most casual cliché
breathes art
bleeds light
befriends trees
& everything yet to know

wears the untrained hair of a nervous garden
& is learning to play Gershwin's Rhapsody
on Picasso's blue guitar

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others taste cake

– S.A. Griffin, author of *Dreams Gone Mad*
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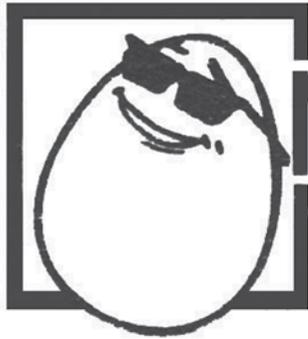
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SLUMMING FOR JESUS

JOHN O'KANE

Sal has been sitting on the bus-bench for several minutes staring at the condos across the way, wondering where the woman might have gone. He gets up and walks around to check the mailboxes. The building security prevents him from inspecting the names, except at a unit down the street. He mentally

prepares himself to be as inconspicuous as possible, but discovers that the listing uses initials for first names. He commits this block to memory and decides to come back later.

He returns to his comfortable vantage on the bus-bench, not yet able to separate from the area, like a force prevents him from leaving. The stillness of the next few minutes shatters as a cop appears between two condos and moves toward the front door of one. Curiously, he sees no black-and-white parked in the vicinity. And the cop is familiar. He remembers him from the park earlier and wonders why he's here. The cop buzzes one of the occupants but gets no response. He buzzes again as he gets a call on his cell, and fades toward the street mumbling something to the caller while gazing at the upper floor of the building. He keeps talking as he walks down the sidewalk and into the street, continuing down the block until

he reaches the end. He puts the cell in his pocket and continues to gaze at the windows on the upper floor until a black-and-white pulls up to the curb. The cop gets in and the car lays a patch, his lights and siren engaged.

Sal recognizes the driver, also from the park. He presses his back firmly against the bus-bench and reflects.

Somarrhea watches the cop from the upper floor of her condo, wondering who he's looking for, and feeling anxious from the attention. Cops rarely come to this neighborhood. There are few renters and the property owners either take care of their own security or hire private cops who can creatively circumvent the rules. Some, like her, get body guards. Depending on cops in this day and age of mafia-like fiefdoms is useless. They always come too late

or are no match for the lean and mean, privatized sleuths that the best money can buy. When it comes to threats from the growing number of street warriors, these are by far the best option.

Spying the movement from her bedroom window, she grabs her high-powered telephoto lens and shutters it nervously before withdrawing into the safety of her super king-sized bed. Staring pensively through the skylight, she hears a rustling downstairs, gets up and shuffles to the hallway.

"Who is that out front?" she asks, assuming that the perpetrator of the noise below is Cedric, her live-in bodyguard. His response assures her it is.

"Not sure...been working out in the exercise room," he says, while moving part way up the staircase.

"I think there's a cop outside looking around. Could you check it out and see what he wants?"

"Will do!"

She returns to her bedroom, moves to the window and peeks below, seeing no one except a man sitting on the bus-bench up the street who appears to be waiting for someone. She frames his face with her lens and ponders its features. She's perplexed by them and feels she has seen him somewhere before, wondering if he's a cop too and hoping Cedric will try to find out who he is.

She gets a charge from looking at faces, especially from a downward angle on the sly to capture them in the raw, when they're about to reveal the secret wishes and desires of their owner. A friend told her she was a natural physiognomist, whatever that was. She gloats in the feeling that she can play god in a way, perform

as a sort of peeping tom in reverse. It isn't a question of replacing experience. She's simply turned on by her ability to seduce lower life forms and mingle in their habitats.

"No officers of the law outside," Cedric hollers up the staircase. "They musta been looking for a neighbor's lost cat or something and made it back to coffee break!" She hears him but continues to snap the man on the bench, feeling something isn't right. The usual thrill is gone. She tries to recall where she has seen him before. Why is he sitting on that bench?

"Okay, that's alright Cedric...probably nothing. Could you make sure all the doors and windows are locked downstairs? And could you be sure to wake me by seven

**He had dreamy,
hungry orbs
tranced toward
the beyond, limp
wrists, beard
and long locks
reminiscent of early
Jim Morrison,
and androgynous
features.**

— John O'Kane

or so? Have to be somewhere.”

In the brief instant it takes to utter these words Sal moves along the bench and gazes off to the left, giving her a different angle on his face. Now she’s sure she’s seen him recently. But why is he here? Does it have anything to do with her?

“You got it,” Cedric answers as he pours himself a brandy and glances at the headlines of the newspaper.

Sal suddenly looks toward the upper floor of the building the cop was interested in, thinking he sees a flash of movement past the window. She must live there.

She pulls away from the window like she’s trying to avoid waking someone, and tiptoes across the room, as spacious as an artist’s mega-studio. A wealth of images covers the walls, abstract paintings and portraits, including a few of her own, mostly photographs from her travels. She stands in front of a mirror on the back wall and concentrates on her appearance, like it’s someone else’s and she’s judging it. She moves to her left where another mirror hangs between two narrow windows that extend nearly all the way to the twenty-foot ceiling. The rays streaming from the natural skylights and the sandwich of window light are the perfect storm for renewing her purpose. Satisfied for the moment, she strips with a sense of urgency, swivels and shifts, gyrates through a battery of tests to capture every speck of light possible before the storm ceases, like a photographer preparing a shoot.

Sal is distracted by a car turning the corner up the street, and gets up from the bus-bench. He speed-dials a number on his cell.

As the illumination flattens, she breaks from her semi-trance and hurries to the workout area on the other side of the room, ready for the exercise routine that has kept her in perfect shape since her early twenties when she began modeling. Relieved of the need to work, she works hard at her craft. She’s very aware of her ability, and it gives her a great sense of pride to get others to guess her age in the mid-twenties as she approaches forty.

And it isn’t just the exercise and quality diet that’s responsible. She likes to think that it’s from learning to live a good life after escaping the religious brainwash of her early years. A friend from High School who converted to Catholicism and became a nun, she’s fond of telling, looked like she was already in her early fifties at the twenty-year reunion. So much for the plentiful spirit and the need to deny! She felt that somehow action, the mere fact of doing something, moving around, shaking it up, body-bonding, released restorative retins into the cells that let them breathe more freely, and extended life. At the other end of good, positive well-intended action was the spirit in waiting.

Once she was tempted by a mate who’d found Jesus, and obsessively tried to fill her with the same otherworldly fixations and denials. And he succeeded for a time. She made a good faith effort for several weeks, but gradually found herself getting attracted to Jesus look-alikes around town, and eventually decided to find a way to meet one. Camera-ready, she began to troll along the beach at various hours to capture a quality specimen.

She found a roost near the breakwater where she lensed a couple of prospects, and after perusing the images for a few days returned to the area to snag one in particular who seemed close to what she imagined Jesus was like. He had dreamy, hungry orbs tranced toward the beyond, limp wrists, beard and long locks reminiscent of early Jim Morrison, and androgynous features.

After tracking his movements for a few days she decided to lie in wait at the perfect location, barely dressed to kill. He was easy to engage in conversation, though he didn’t seem all that into the experience of it. Perhaps this was a foreboding since he was actually a “Jesus Freak” to boot, and tried to convert her from her sinful ways. She could never get him more than a few feet away from his bible, even as he lay flailing supine, his soul laid bare. She took him back to the place on the beach where she found him, leaving him bleached out agog mumbling his bible lingo.

Soon after she realized he forgot his bible, so she carried it with her on strolls along the beach. But she could never find him again, and one day buried it in the sand near the spot where they met. She never knew if her dose of spirit exorcized his baggage or rerouted it. The whole ordeal certainly gave her a clear flight plan.

Her only other interest in anything mystical or quasi-religious was a local cult that several property owners in her circle began to dabble in. But that was short-lived...

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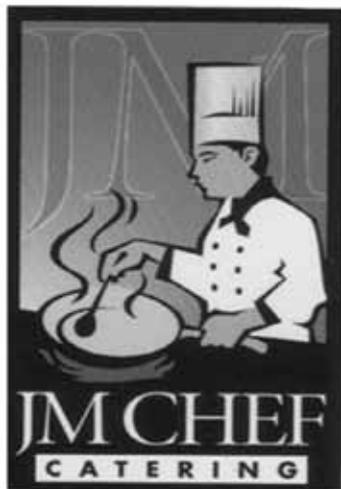
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ORGANIC GOING MAINSTREAM

ANNA LAPPE

You know organic food has gone mainstream when *Men's Health* waxes poetic about an organic diet in between shout-outs to a “hot new sex app” and pictures of actress Chelsea Peretti in stilettos. And you know the business of organic is moving out of the margins when CNBC's ornery “Mad Money” host, Jim Cramer, describes organic as “one of the most lucrative trends of our era.” Sounding more like a permaculture geek than a money manager, Cramer recently said:

“Many people will probably tell you that organic food is really just for rich people; that it's not an economical way to approach agriculture, that it can't feed the world. Well, guess what? None of that's true.”

For years, the organic food industry boasted that it was experiencing double-digit growth year to year. That's not so impressive when your products are less than 1 percent of the total market. But that's all changing.

While chemical agriculture defenders like to say that organic food is still marginal, that's becoming less and less true. Today organic food sales are 5 percent of the total — but even that figure hides the true heft of the industry. Most of American farmland is dedicated to industrial crops — commodities such as corn and soybeans — that are mainly used in animal feeds, sweeteners or ethanol production rather than eaten by people directly. If you consider the organic percentage of food we eat, the figures grow: 12 percent of fruit and vegetable sales and 7 percent of dairy are organic. For certain crops the figures jump. “Organic carrots make up 23 percent of the market. Organic kale is 50 percent of the total,” said Laura Batcha, the executive director of the Organic Trade Association.

Choosing organic produce and grains means eschewing foods that were irradiated (treated with radiation,

often to slow the sprouting or ripening process or to increase shelf life), and made with genetically engineered seeds or fertilized with sewage sludge. Choosing organic-certified meat or poultry means reaching for products raised without artificial growth hormones, antibiotics and a bevy of other drugs, including arsenic-based ones. Those are just a few reasons consumers are choosing organic-certified foods in the marketplace. The benefits of doing so — from personal health to environmental sustainability — are becoming increasingly clear to American consumers.

Companies are catching on. Last month, Chipotle became the first major fast-casual chain to declare it would be breaking up with genetically engineered ingredients, for the most part. (Unless it drops soda and shifts entirely to organic-certified sources for meat and dairy, it is still

selling foods that have been made with genetically engineered ingredients.) While a partial shift, this very public move is evidence that companies are feeling the consumer demand for healthier and more ecological food.

Booming organic food sales has companies with big investments in chemical agriculture doubling down on their PR campaigns to tamp down consumer demand for organic.

From my conversations with consumers across the country, there is a tsunami of demand for these products. National polls reflect the sentiment I've been hearing on the ground. In a 2015 survey conducted by Wolfe Research, 55 percent of female respondents ranked natural and organic as extremely important or very important in their purchasing decisions, up from 43 percent in 2013.

All of this has companies with big investments in chemical agriculture — from animal pharmaceutical giants (Elanco) to chemical companies

(Bayer) and biotech behemoths (Monsanto) — doubling down on their public relations campaigns to tamp down consumer demand for organic.

These companies and their trade groups, such as the Biotechnology Industry Organization and CropLife America (the gussied-up version of the National Association of Chemical Manufacturers), are spending hundreds of millions of dollars every year to combat popular concerns about the chemical cocktails used on farm fields or genetic engineering used on seeds.

Booming organic food sales has companies with big investments in chemical agriculture doubling down on their PR campaigns to tamp down consumer demand for organic.

—Anna Lappe

They're also investing in front groups, nonprofit organizations established to be perceived as working in the public interest but effectively PR arms for industry that pour millions into marketing campaigns. Take Elanco, which is a member of the Industry Partner Council of the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, whose communications efforts include a campaign countering concerns about antibiotic overuse on factory farms — this despite the well-founded science on dangerous antibiotic-resistant bacteria fostered by just such overuse.

For a forthcoming Friends of the Earth report on

the food industry's corporate spin, I reviewed the expenses of 14 of these nonprofit food industry front groups, seven of which were launched since 2009. Based on filings with the Internal Revenue Service, these groups spent more than \$135 million on media campaigns, websites, media representative training and more from 2009 to 2013. That figure doesn't even include the more than half a billion dollars spent by just three trade associations — the Grocery Manufacturers Association, CropLife America and the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) — in that period. (Note: BIO's spending includes amounts for agricultural and health care biotechnology.)

All this money is having an effect. The PR firm Ketchum, for example, was employed last year by BIO to develop a campaign to improve public perception of genetically modified organisms, including developing GMOAnswers.com, a website with industry-approved commentary about GMOs. As part of this work, Ketchum seeks out negative biotech-related tweets and points authors toward GMOAnswers.com. Since its launch, said a Ketchum representative in Delta Farm Press, "There's been about an 80 percent reduction in negative Twitter traffic as it relates to GMOs."

This infusion of well-funded spin is distorting the conversation about food, health and sustainability. As organic food sales boom, some of the most lucrative companies in the world are threatened. In response, these companies are spending more than ever to shape the conversation about food and sustainability. As they do, it's all the more essential that the public make informed choices based on science, not spin. Fortunately, despite the millions being spent on it, more people are exposing this spin, and organic continues to go mainstream — whether the chemical and biotech industry likes it or not.

Anna Lappé is the author of *Diet for a Hot Planet: The Climate Crisis at the End of Your Fork and What You can Do About It*; and a co-founder of the Small Planet Institute, and Real Food Media Project.

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GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY FORUM

CATHY SIEGNER

The third Global Food Safety Forum, being held June 13-14, 2015, in Beijing will explore ideas laid out in a newly released white paper entitled, "Food Safety Technologies: Key Tools for Compliance." Chapters by authors in both the private and public sectors discuss recent technology development in food safety regulation and how technology intersects with enforcement and compliance.

The upcoming event is drawing officials from China's food and agriculture agencies, along with representatives of research and industry groups, all with an eye toward further exploring that intersection and what it holds for the future.

China makes perfect sense as a venue for such a forum since it's possibly one of the largest food ingredient suppliers to the U.S., said Rick Gilmore, Ph.D., president and CEO of GIC Group, a Virginia-based company specializing in international agricultural and trade issues.

"Exporting there is a huge market, but we're also using their ingredients for imports to the U.S. to third-market countries," he said.

GIC Group and its Beijing partner, Bric Global Agricultural Consultants Ltd., founded the non-profit Global Food Safety Forum in 2010, which now has staff both here and in China with a mission to advance food safety in Asian markets.

Technology's applications to food safety hold the promise of developing standards that can lead to more reliable food safety, Gilmore said. "It's a huge political, economic and technological issue, but given the complexity of the Chinese economy, it's technology that's critical," he said, adding that mass spectrometers for pathogen detection and similar investments will enable China

to leverage its regulatory agency resources to reach out to all the country's provinces.

Other food safety considerations are tied to import/export markets and involve transparency, regulations and potential inspection obstacles. The volume of Chinese food exports is high, but Gilmore said the ratio is higher for rejection of those exports than for any other supplier. "How do they avoid those cargo rejections? We are available to them, and we have workshops on it," he said.

The Chinese are aware of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), particularly the foreign food safety verification aspect, which the

Technology's applications to food safety hold the promise of developing standards that can lead to more reliable food safety.

– Cathy Siegner

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is in the process of implementing, Gilmore noted that the Chinese government recently adopted some stringent amendments to the country's food safety law in response to several high-profile scandals involving food products. The regulatory challenges there are greater because of the size of

the population and the vast food production and distribution networks.

Then there's China's structure consisting of a central government and semi-autonomous provincial governments. While the U.S. has numerous agencies overseeing food safety, the Chinese now have the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA), which was established in 2013 and replaced the former State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA).

Gilmore said that in the time he's been involved with food safety issues, the Chinese government has made "a sea change" in its food safety regulatory architecture. They passed the food safety law amendments, toughened up enforcement, and found new modes of coordination with the provincial level, for example.

"They've got a new pilot for food safety liability insurance that they'll be implementing that we're very pleased about, so there are some really important initiatives with these new amendments. They recognize that they have a long way to go, but they've made a lot of progress," he said.

The forum will not shy away from issues such as food fraud or economically motivated adulteration of imported or domestic food products, Gilmore said, adding that such matters are important considerations for any food company operating in China.

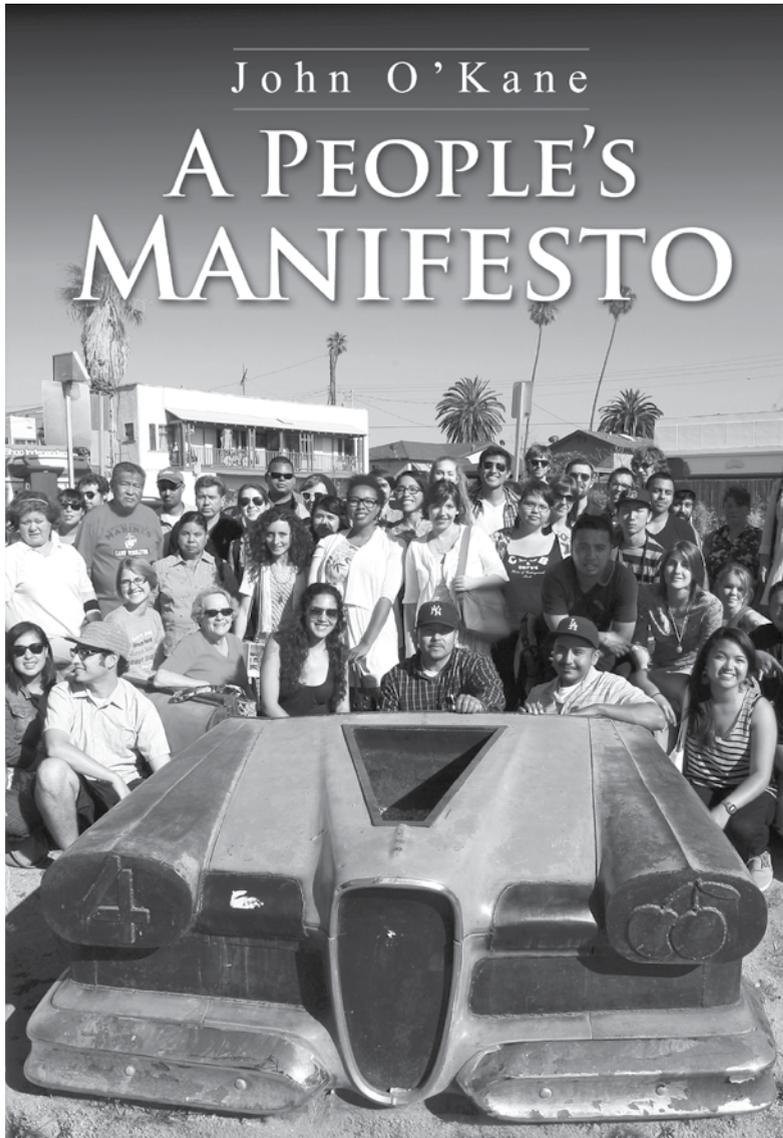
The huge cultural differences between the U.S. and China make putting together a food safety forum an interesting experience, he acknowledged. One way the Chinese food culture varies from the American is that they cook all their vegetables, so the source of *E. coli* there is not likely to be fresh produce as it has sometimes been here, Gilmore said.

"Pathogen control in these open air markets is serious stuff. Avian flu and these things are very serious stuff. But human consumable products such as fresh fruits and vegetables or undercooked meat and poultry, you don't get that as much," Gilmore said.

Cathy Siegner writes for FoodSafetyNews.com.

Publisher of *AMASS* Magazine Releases *A People's Manifesto*

2015-05-13 www.everythinglongbeach.com/publisher-of-amass-magazine-releases-a-peoples-manifesto/



A People's Manifesto, by John O'Kane, editor and publisher of *AMASS* Magazine, is a new book just published by SPD Books. It focuses on the opinions and perspectives of the people, ordinary citizens, non-experts, outsiders, those without influence, about the state of American society over the past several years, especially since the Great Recession of 2008. More specifically, the author engages in a series of conversations with a diverse number of people from varying backgrounds on the issues: the economy and jobs, political polarization, campaign reform, the elite domination of political life, the Tea Party phenomenon, inequality, immigration, austerity and the ongoing budget crises, and foreclosures, among others.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part compiles these conversations in an easy-to-grasp journalistic style, at times reading like a novel. All of the conversations are with enlightened Long Beach citizens from differing lifestyles and political orientations. A significant part of these conversations includes a focus on Occupy Long Beach and its efforts to raise awareness about these issues above, as well as its relation to other activists in the area from a wide spectrum of age groups. The cover is a photo taken at Cherry and 4th streets of a group of local activists ranged around the remains of an Edsel (taken by long-time Long Beach photographer Slobodan Dimitrov). The second is a sampling of op-ed pieces from

Huffingtonpost and other publications over the course of the past six years or so about the issues that the citizens in part one discuss and react to. These are in chronological order and in response to the post-recession crisis as it evolved, and mostly left in their original form.

The book's tone and substance are shaped by a striking irony. Populism is all the rage these days. Bloggers and journalists from across the political spectrum are obsessed with speaking for the people, citizens who have become victims of the Great Recession of 2008. But these very-same citizens can rarely speak for themselves. One of the quite remarkable insights to come from all this is that citizens without access to insider "facts" can make sense of these times and pass along knowledge—not mere information—that motivate others to learn and act. And they can express their opinions through a variety of venues, especially op-ed writing.

The book is 200 pages long, and priced at \$24.95. It can be purchased at Apostrophe Books in Belmont Shores, and at other bookstores in the area, as well as online at Amazon and other sites.

GUN CONTROL TED NUGENT AND LIES ABOUT GUNS

TIMOTHY JOHNSON

National Rifle Association board member Ted Nugent attacked President Obama and gun safety advocates for calling attention to the deaths of children from guns, calling such efforts “The Big Lie” -- a phrase associated with Nazi propaganda.

Gun accidents and homicides involving children happen far more frequently in the United States than in other affluent nations. In a May 13 column posted on conspiracy website WND (World Net Daily), Nugent wrote, “The Big Lie about guns is that innocent kids are being gunned down or are accidentally shooting each other.”

Arguing that “very few kids under the age of 10 die or are injured as a result of gun-related accidents,” Nugent wrote, “The vast majority of teenagers who die as a result of guns are involved in gangs. They are punks, thugs and street rats who have dropped out of school and let out of their cages over and over again by a so-called ‘justice system’ gone bad.”

Hitler first wrote about “the big lie” in *Mein Kampf*. The Nazi leader accused Jews of telling “the big lie” to corrupt “the broad masses,” who he claimed “more readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie.” The phrase is also associated with tactics used by chief Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels.

It’s hard to argue that accidental gun deaths involving children are not worth calling attention to, let alone that covering such tragedies is comparable to Nazi-style propaganda. And it is no surprise that accidental shootings involving children receive widespread media coverage, given how shocking and senseless they are. According to a project of Everytown

for Gun Safety, there have been at least 88 incidents just this year “in which a child 17 or under fired a gun unintentionally and someone was harmed as a result.” In 2013, the group documented at least 100 accidental shooting deaths of children aged 14 or younger. A *Mother Jones* report that examined the same time period found 84 fatal gun accidents involving children aged 12 and under, 64 of which involved a child pulling the trigger, killing themselves or someone else, which debunks Nugent’s claim that

found “a review of hundreds of child firearm deaths found that accidental shootings occurred roughly twice as often as the records indicate, because of idiosyncrasies in how such deaths are classified by the authorities.”

National media has also covered two high-profile instances where a child accidentally fatally shot an adult. One incident occurred in August 2014 when a 9-year-old girl lost control of a fully automatic Uzi submachine gun, accidentally killing her shooting instructor at a gun range. In December 2014, a 2-year-old child fatally shot his mother in an Idaho Walmart after reaching into her purse and finding her handgun.

The NRA frequently criticizes the media for covering gun accidents involving children. Following national reporting on the Kentucky accident, NRA News host Cam Edwards claimed that coverage of the incident was a “campaign of shame” where the “mass media” sought to “hold themselves up as our betters” and “wanted to make a point that this is what happens in Bumpkinville.”

After the Uzi incident received widespread coverage, Edwards called the media attention “exploitative” and warned against drawing a “larger lesson” from the tragedy.

NRA News also attacked an ABC News *20/20* special that showed how children will often play with unsecured firearms even after being shown the NRA’s “Eddie Eagle” safety program -- which teaches children who come upon a firearm to “stop, don’t touch, leave the area and tell an adult” -- and has advocated against holding parents criminally responsible when an unsecured gun leads to a child being shot.

Timothy Johnson is a columnist at MediaMatters.org.

It’s hard to argue that accidental gun deaths involving children are not worth calling attention to, let alone that covering such tragedies is comparable to Nazi-style propaganda

– Timothy Johnson

children are not “accidentally shooting each other.”

Indeed, one such shooting captured national headlines when a 5-year-old boy accidentally killed his 2-year-old sister in rural Kentucky with a rifle designed for children.

Pediatrics, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, recently looked at data from 2009 and found that 662 children aged 14 or under were hospitalized after being accidentally shot that year.

Official records also underreport the number of children killed in gun accidents, according to an investigation by *The New York Times* that

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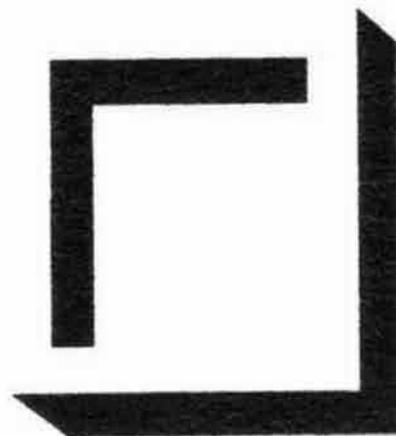
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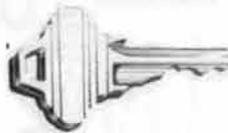
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**LAPD CHIEF
QUESTIONS
POLICE KILLING OF
HOMELESS MAN**

RENEE LEWIS

The chief of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) on Thursday questioned an officer's fatal shooting of an unarmed homeless man, as the department announced it would host a community meeting in Venice Beach about the incident. The man, who friends identified as "Dizzle," was shot and killed by police officers outside a bar near the neighborhood's boardwalk on Tuesday.

Police officers had responded to a call saying a homeless individual with a dog was harassing customers, according to the Los Angeles Times. Dizzle, a black man in his early 20s, was fatally shot as officers attempted to detain him.

A security camera on a nearby building captured the incident, but the LAPD did not elaborate on what was recorded, except to say there was no evidence that Dizzle attempted to arm himself during the struggle, the Times reported.

A town hall-style meeting hosted by the LAPD was planned in Venice to address the incident, according to homeless advocacy groups. News of the community meeting followed a Wednesday statement by LAPD Chief Charlie Beck in which he said he had not seen evidence to justify the shooting death, and that the investigation was ongoing.

"Any time an unarmed person is shot by a Los Angeles police officer, it takes extraordinary circumstances to justify that, and I have not seen those extraordinary circumstances," Beck said during a news conference.

The Los Angeles Times identified Dizzle as Brandon Glenn and said he was described as a kind man who constantly told people he loved them and was known for his "hand hugs" — or grabbing someone's hand before saying goodbye. Dizzle's death comes amid a national movement against police brutality after a series of fatal police shootings of unarmed men.

His death is also the second recent police killing of an unarmed homeless man in Los Angeles — in March, a homeless man nicknamed "Africa" was shot and killed by police

nalization of the homeless can't be separated," said Eric Ares, communications coordinator for the Los Angeles Community Action network, a group that focuses on poverty in policy making.

"They are also two areas with a large houseless population that is being criminalized and displaced through gentrification, with the police being used to do that," he added. "Venice Beach and Skid Row are the two most police-saturated areas of the city, and it is no coincidence it's also where homeless folks butt up against wealthy folks."

During Thursday's meeting, Ares said members of the LA Community Action Network would call for more social outreach, services for the homeless, and affordable housing — instead of more police. Another issue the group plans to raise is the use of police in handling social issues, including those that involve the homeless, as opposed to an alleged crime.

Ares helped coordinate the national Homeless Bill of Rights campaign aimed at ending the criminalization of the homeless. The campaign culminated in the introduction of legislation in California, Oregon, and Colorado to protect the rights of the homeless to rest and carry out other basic acts of survival in public areas.

Criminalization of the homeless comes into play in the latest incident, Ares said, because of the extreme violence taken against Dizzle in a situation that he said happens all the time. "I do know the incident happened outside of a bar ... how many incidents are there where someone fights with a bouncer and it ends up in a murder?" Ares asked.

Growing criminalization of the homeless has created a situation in which those individuals are characterized as disposable and less than human, Ares said. One recent example,

Ares said members of the LA Community Action Network would call for more social outreach, services for the homeless, and affordable housing — instead of more police.

— Renee Lewis

in the city's Skid Row neighborhood.

Homeless advocates said they would attend Thursday's meeting to highlight that while police brutality may have played a role in the shooting, there were broader issues at play — namely gentrification, a lack of affordable housing and criminalization of the homeless.

"I think it's important to understand that in Venice Beach and also in Skid Row, police brutality and the crimi-

Ares said, was the extreme force taken against an unarmed, black homeless man last month in Venice Beach for a nonviolent crime.

Video of the incident showed the man, Samuel Arrington, sitting under an umbrella on the beach when

officers came to cite him for having it tied to city property. Officers soon forced Arrington to the ground, used a taser on him four times, struck him in the head multiple times and hog-tied him in front of a crowd of over 100 onlookers.

“In those cases a person might get arrested or ticketed, but the extreme violence seems to happen to the homeless folks,” Ares said.

Renee Lewis writes for Aljazeera and other publications.



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JAMES H. KUNSTLER

Elon Musk, Silicon Valley's poster-boy genius replacement for the late Steve Jobs, rolled out his PowerWall battery last week with Star Wars style fanfare, doing his bit to promote and support the delusional thinking that grips a nation unable to escape the toils of techno-grandiosity. The main delusion: that we can "solve" the problems of techno-industrial society with more and better technology.

The South African born-and-raised Musk is surely better known for founding Tesla Motors, maker of the snazzy all-electric car. The denizens of Silicon Valley are crazy about the Tesla. There is no greater status trinket in Northern California, where the fog of delusion cloaks the road to the future. They believe, as Musk himself often avers, that Tesla cars "don't burn hydrocarbons." That statement is absurd, of course, and Musk, who holds a degree in physics from Penn, must blush when he says that. After all, you have to plug it in and charge somewhere from the US electric grid.

Only 6 percent of US electric power comes from "clean" hydro generation. Another 20 percent is nuclear. The rest is coal (48 percent) and natural gas (21 percent) with the remaining sliver coming from "renewables" and oil. (The quote marks on "renewables" are there to remind you that they probably can't be manufactured without the support of a fossil fuel economy). Anyway, my point is that the bulk of US electricity comes from burning hydrocarbons, and then there is the nuclear part which is glossed over because the techno-geniuses and politicians of America have no idea how they are go-

ing to de-commission our aging plants, and no idea how to safely dispose of the spent fuel rod inventory simply lying around in collection pools. This stuff is capable of poisoning the entire planet and we know it.

The PowerWall roll out highlighted the "affordability" of the sleek lithium battery at \$3,500 per unit. The average cluck watching Musk's TED-like performance on the web was sup-

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What happens when the solar panels, battery, etc., reach the end of their useful lives, say 25 years or so, when there is no more fossil fuel (or an industry capable of providing it economically). How will you fabricate the replacement parts? By then the techno-wizards will have supposedly "come up with" a magic energy rescue remedy. Stand by on that, and consider the possibility that you will be disappointed with how it works out.

What gets me about Tesla's various products and activities is that, when all is said and done, they are meant to extend the fatal rackets of contemporary life, especially car dependency and the suburban development pattern. Car dependency can and probably will fail on the financial basis, not on the question of how you run the car. The main economic problem we face is the end of growth of the kind we're used to, the kind that generates real capital and enables bank lending. It is already happening and has led to fewer loans for fewer qualified borrowers. It will also lead to the end of government's ability to pay for fixing the elaborate hierarchy of paved highways, roads, and streets that the cars

have to run on. Imagine the psychic pain of the Silicon Valley billionaire driving his \$87,000 Tesla P85D down a freeway that the State of California hasn't been able to repair in five years.

James H. Kunstler is the author of many books, most recently *World Made by Hand*. Kunstler.com.

What happens when the solar panels, battery, etc., reach the end of their useful lives, say 25 years or so, when there is no more fossil fuel or an industry capable of providing it economically?

— James H. Kunstler

posed to think he could power his home with it. Musk left out a few things. Such as: you need the rooftop solar array to feed the battery. Figure another \$25,000 to \$40,000 for that, depending on whether they are made in China (poor quality) or Germany, or in the USA (and installation is both laborious and expensive).



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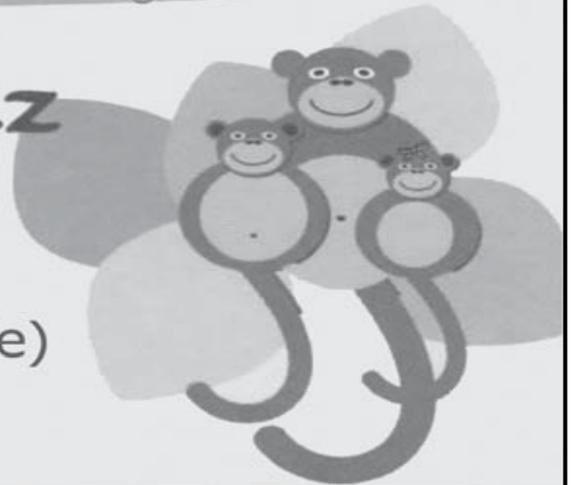
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