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Inside the June Issue:

A Mine Is A Terrible Thing To Waste! 2

Bill to Repeal California Tax Credits = Backdoor Tax Increase 3

California Doubles Down on Stupid! 4

Green Pigs Taking America For A Ride! 6

Vexed By Vaccinations! 7

The Daunting Reality Of Social Insecurity 9

The Immorality Of poverty 10

This Deal Would Decimate Our Economy 11

Santa Barbara's Socialist City Council 13

Get Ready For More Pain At The Pump 15

Retiring Like A Millionaire

By Andy Caldwell

I recently wrote about the enormous growth in the cost of county government vis-a-vis the paltry growth in private-sector wage increases over time. Namely, since 1992, county government, including employment costs, has grown 300-500%, ten times what the average family income has grown by, a mere 30%. To wit, Supervisor Das Williams remarked that there must be something wrong in the private sector that wages have not kept up with inflation. Supervisor Joan Hartman then opined that perhaps the disparity in the private sector was due to CEO's making inordinate amounts of money in comparison to the working class! Dear supervisors, close but no cigar!

These comments reveal the most distinguishing characteristic among South County politicians. That is, not that they are all radical progressives, which they are, but that virtually none of them have ever worked in the private sector! Most of them have worked for government, or in the non-profit sector, their entire adult lives. This lack of work experience in the real world has distorted their world view and value of what it takes to make it in the private sector as an employee or an owner of a business. For one thing, neither government nor non-profit entities pay all the same taxes as does the private sector. Moreover, government has the ability to tax and raise fees when they need money, while non-profits can solicit tax-deductible donations from individuals and foundations, or hand-outs from the government, to make ends meet.

Having worked in government for so long has distorted the economic reality of these politicians as they have been able to rely on taxes, fees, and fines imposed by hook, crook and fiat to pay the bills, never having to compete or perform in the market place in order to survive. Case in point? The environmental health services division needed more money to pay for their pension costs, so the supervisors just raised fees by nearly \$1 million. The state of CA needed more money to pay for road maintenance, so they raised the gas tax by several billion dollars.

Wages in the private sector are relatively flat here not because employers are greedy, but because these same politicians have destroyed the best paying jobs in the private sector in their war against energy use and production, ostensibly out of concern for "pollution" and climate change! In other words, they have removed the rungs in the ladder of upward mobility that represented blue-collar middle class jobs. The average family income would have risen if we had not lost scores of manufacturing and industrial jobs, including in the oil industry, jobs that pay higher salaries and better benefits for people with just a high school education, not to mention the generation of taxes to pay for government services and pensions!

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PO Box 7523 Santa Maria, CA 93456

Phone: 805-929-3148

E-mail: Andy@colabsbc.org

(Continued on page 19)

A Mine Is A Terrible Thing To Waste!

By Andy Caldwell

Desperate times call for desperate measures, right? Well, not exactly. The same environmental activists who say we only have 10-12 years to save the planet from climate change don't seem to be in desperation mode at all. Examples abound.

The single biggest perennial problem lying between our society and a relatively carbon-free existence has to do with battery technology. These challenges include ample base mineral supplies to make the battery, the ability to invent a battery that holds a significant charge, the time and infrastructure required to recharge the battery, and the ability to safely dispose of the battery once its useful life is over.

Unfortunately, environmentalists want to live in denial of the fact that it is impossible to supply the base material for these batteries apart from mining the rare earth materials. That is, as is typical, they don't want to support mining operations due to the impact of the same on "sensitive" resources. Meanwhile, they live in denial that children as young as four years old are working in mines in Africa in lieu of disturbing our nearby habitat.

Here in California, in the middle of Death Valley, the usual suspects, including the Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club, are raising a hissy fit about a proposal to search for lithium beneath some salt flats in the desert of death! They would prefer we mine the minerals elsewhere. Newsflash to these perennial nay-sayers! You can only mine for minerals where the minerals are actually located.

In similar fashion, the same people who say we are on the verge of an extinction event are not willing to compromise on measures that will buy us significant additional time. This has to do with the use of natural gas as a bridge fuel to the future in lieu of the use of coal as an energy source. A shift to natural gas has already reduced carbon emissions in our country making the United States the only major industrialized country in the world to actually reduce our carbon footprint. This was only made possible by the same fracking revolution that these activists oppose tooth and nail.

If people truly believed the end was near, they would be living life in a much different manner including being willing to compromise in practical ways that make

sense. Moreover, they would be placing much more emphasis on China, India and Pakistan than they do the United States. These countries, with huge populations and emerging economies, are rapidly gearing up to give their citizens the benefits of modern-day living including cars, refrigerators, and air conditioners, things we take for granted. That is, there is no getting around the fact that quality of life is a function of energy consumption! And, for that, you need energy production.

Finally, what the world needs now, in reality, is nuclear power - the only completely greenhouse gas-free energy source that produces enormous energy supplies with no emissions of any kind. Why won't the radical activists support this technological miracle? After all, upwards of 80% of "spent" fuel is recyclable!

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Bill to Repeal California Tax Credits = Backdoor Tax Increase

By Katy Grimes

\$65.2 billion per year in California income tax credits, deductions, exemptions, and exclusions targeted

The \$65.2 billion per year in various California income tax credits, deductions, exemptions, and exclusions, is now being targeted under the guise of “transparency and accountability.”

Senate Bill 468 by Sen. Hannah Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara), would not only seek to repeal these tax credits, it would create a new bureaucracy performing functions currently performed by a number of existing agencies.

Jackson says, “California has nearly 80 tax expenditures. These are provisions in the tax code – including tax credits, tax deductions, sales tax exemptions and income exclusions – that reduce the amount of tax collected in exchange for an intended public policy objective.”

The goal is more tax “revenue” into state coffers, even if that means repealing existing tax credits.

The California Teachers Association, in support of SB 468, said, “California has spent over \$66.6 billion on the top ten most costly tax credits and exemptions in the past decade. Every dollar of a tax credit to the General Fund that does not generate its cost in new revenue takes approximately 40 cents out of California’s classrooms, representing the share of revenues that would have gone to Proposition 98 from the General Fund.”

The stated intent of the bill is to promote government accountability, however the bill would create another, costly bureaucracy, through the creation of the California Tax Expenditure Review Board, in an effort to repeal tax credits. As the California Taxpayers Association noted in their opposition, “Both the LAO and the State Auditor can initiate studies under their own authority or at the specific direction of the Legislature.” These agencies often independently analyze and make recommendations to the Legislature – without legislation directing them to do so.

Sen. John Moorlach (R-Costa Mesa) said he was having “buyer’s remorse” on the bill. Moorlach said going



after 1031 exchanges to defer paying capital gains taxes on an investment property when it is sold, and ESOP employee benefit plans, should be reconsidered. “I hope another effort comes back instead of this,” Moorlach said.

“More recently, the State Auditor conducted an assessment of several of the state’s primary tax expenditures and recommended improvements to some, while noting that others appear to be achieving their objects,” Cal Tax said. “To provide a more accurate and comprehensive assessment of state revenue impacts, we suggest that any tax expenditure study incorporate ‘multipliers’ and their effects on the economy. Additionally, we believe it is critical to examine California’s policies in the context of competitiveness with other areas of the country.”

SB 468 passed the Senate on party lines.

Katy Grimes, the Editor of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, and the co-author of California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses?

California Doubles Down on Stupid!

By Andy Caldwell

In the wake of last season's horrible wildfires, our electricity providers will now consider shutting off service in advance of impending wind events that could spark a wildfire. They have no choice as litigation arising from their equipment being culpable in these disasters is threatening the companies with bankruptcy.

While the utilities are planning on shutting off our electricity for days at a time, if not upwards of a full week, at the very same time, our dumbstruck legislators and the CA Public Utilities Commission are planning to force us to go all electric in our homes and businesses! Lost on these zealots is the value of redundant energy sources, namely, natural gas, which is considered a clean burning fuel. That is, in the event of impending long periods of time with no electricity to power our refrigerators, not to mention hospitals and convalescent centers, why must we forego the use of natural gas appliances?

Nevertheless, in order to help California "decarbonize", the State PUC wants to force all buildings and business operations to go all electric despite the tremendous cost and poor return on investment. Most people in this state are living from paycheck to paycheck. They can't afford an electricity bill that is going to increase three times faster than their gas bill nor the estimated \$7,200 it will cost to convert the average home from gas to electric. Furthermore, electricity not only costs more, but we don't have the grid capacity to go all electric, especially when you consider the higher voltage system required to recharge car batteries.

These people don't realize that electricity is a secondary power source. It has to be produced by a primary source. Across America, fossil fuels are still the primary power source of 63% of all electricity! Moreover, solar and wind power sources, due to the intermittent nature of their output, must rely on natural gas for back up! Unless and until the state power sources are 100% renewable (which is going to take decades) why fool ourselves converting to all electrical appliances, as if electricity itself is green, when in reality the electricity is still being generated by fossil fuels?

Some people think they are going to get around this problem by installing solar panels on their roof and buying very expensive battery systems for their homes. What they don't realize is that the way most

solar systems are designed means they are not going to work when the utility shuts off the power. And, most of these batteries can only supply power for a few hours.

Ironically, the only reasonable plan to withstand this impending regulatory disaster is to purchase a generator fueled by a very large gasoline or diesel fuel tank, which is illegal to do so in a residential neighborhood, because of the fire/explosion hazard of the same! Nevertheless, we would need the tanks because our gas stations can't pump gas without electricity!

Honestly, this cure of decarbonization is magnitudes worse than the disease of a "carbonated" but reliable energy supply!

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The Price Of Freedom

By Andy Caldwell

This coming Memorial Day weekend, I hope your observation of the same will include a somber but grateful remembrance of the people who died to make and keep you free.

I had the honor of interviewing a holocaust survivor recently in observation of Holocaust Memorial day. Alex Hershaft was five years old when the Nazi's moved into Warsaw. He and his family, along with 400,000 other Jews, were herded into the Jewish section of Warsaw under the penalty of death. Shortly thereafter, walls were erected surrounding the neighborhood transforming it into a prison camp. Hunger and disease outbreaks took the lives of upwards of 100,000 people during the first year of the Nazi occupation.

Young Alex was lucky enough to be smuggled out of the city by a Russian maid, who risked her life in the process. His mother was fortunate enough to successfully disguise her Jewish identity and survive working in a labor camp in Germany. Unfortunately, the rest of Alex's family, including his father, did not survive the war.

As Mr. Hershaft remarked, a key element of the Nazi's success was gained by way of deception which prevented a mass revolt among the masses. The holocaust victims were told they were being relocated away from hunger and disease. He mentioned that the Treblinka gas chamber building was decorated with a Star of David and the inside of the building was disguised as a shower compound. Despots, of course, rely on the gullibility and passivity of their

victims and the world at large.

There are a couple of movies we discussed for their accurate portrayal of the suffering of the Warsaw Jews and the Nazi death camps, including "The Pianist" and "Schindler's List". I would encourage every family to watch these movies to help us to never forget. Also, on June 2 and 5, theaters throughout America are going to feature a limited return engagement of the movie "Saving Private Ryan" in celebration of the 75th anniversary of D-Day. Historians indicate this movie features the most authentic depiction of the D-Day invasion ever created. Seeing this movie with your family would be a great way to observe both Memorial Day and D-Day.

I, for one, never want to forget World War Two, including my own father's sacrifice in the Pacific Theater. The effort to defeat Hitler and Japan during World War 2, and the subsequent war on terror, has cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans. Let us honor their sacrifice.

Relatedly, let us not ignore the fact that there never seems to be a shortage of totalitarian regimes in the world. North Korea, Iran and Venezuela come to mind. And, there is no doubt that China wants to rule the world as it prepares for hegemonic control at the expense of our liberty and freedom. China actually declared war on us years ago, albeit this war has been fought by way of espionage and cyberwarfare, including the theft of our military and technological assets worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

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Green Pigs Taking America For A Ride!

By *Andy Caldwell*


The American Energy Alliance reports that 79% of the electric vehicle tax credits were claimed by households with an adjusted gross income of more than \$100,000 per year, according to a study by the Pacific Research Institute, and that a hugely disproportionate share of these vehicles were bought in California? This explains why 67% of voters throughout the rest of the country are opposed to these tax credits which cost billions of dollars.

What all this means is that relatively well-off people are assuaging their environmental conscience at the expense of the little people! Moreover, in spite of various taxpayer subsidies to the manufacturers, on top of the \$7,500 tax break to the consumers, these electric vehicles are then sold at a tremendous loss by the manufacturers. The manufacturers sell the vehicles at a loss by hiking the price on the rest of their fleet, that is, the vehicles that people who earn less than \$100,000 can afford and want to buy!

To fully understand this tangled web of tax breaks and wealth transfers, one must take into account the federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards. The CAFÉ standards dictate to auto manufacturers a mandated target intended to reduce the average fuel consumption of their fleet. In 2011, the average fuel standard was 24 miles per gallon. The Obama administration forced an exorbitantly high standard of 54 miles per gallon by 2025. The problem is that most Americans still love SUV's and pickup trucks, which don't get much more than 20 mpg, if that. Consequently, the manufacturers had to virtually give away electric cars to bring up their averages.

Now, contrast the poorest state in the country, Mississippi with California. In 2017, the residents in Mississippi purchased a grand total of 128 electric vehicles! In the same year, Californians purchased 95,000! Californians have been going hog wild, as in pigs at the trough for the \$7500 tax credit, due in part to their overwrought attempts to prove how green they are, and in order to save money on our extremely high gas prices. Ultimately, that means poor folks in other states are paying higher taxes in order to support the tax credit inordinately accruing to Californians and our higher fuel prices, and they are paying more for their vehicles via the CAFÉ surcharge.


Another lesson lost on fans of electric



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vehicles? Electricity is a secondary source of energy that must be produced by a primary source. That is, plugging a car into an outlet doesn't make the car green unless the electricity was created by wind or solar according to radical environmental purists. Nevertheless, 77% of America's electricity supply comes from fossil fuels! Another 15% comes from nuclear and hydro-electric. What that ultimately means, in reality, is that only 10% of these so-called green vehicles are running on renewable energy!

Finally, if you consider the enormous cradle-to-grave impacts of both the energy and mineral resources necessary to build and utilize wind and solar, and to dispose of the same, namely the batteries and solar panels, these energy sources aren't very green at all!

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Vexed By Vaccinations!

By Andy Caldwell

I have interviewed a dozen medical professionals and activists who have theories about the prevalence of autism ranging from the obesity of the mother, to chemicals in our environment, and, of course, what some surmise as the chief suspect, vaccines, i.e., the chemicals and viruses that we voluntarily inject into the bodies of our infants and children.

One particularly noteworthy conversation on this subject was with Dr. Jane Orient M.D., the executive director of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, based on an article she wrote for The Conservative Pundit and testimony submitted to a senate oversight committee that is considering federal legislation to cope with the anti-vaccination movement. Whereas, some states, including California, are already trying to protect, via mandate, what is known as herd immunity measured by the rate of vaccinated individuals in our society, the federal government is now considering intervention by way of mandatory vaccination protocols.

According to the Center for Disease Control, in the 1970's, the autism prevalence rate was 1 in 10,000. Twenty-five years later, the rate exploded to 1 in 1,000. Last year, the rate was 1 in 59! Whereas, some people will explain part of this meteoric rise as a result of better diagnostic abilities on the part of physicians, that explanation is grossly insufficient to explain this phenomenon.

Dr. Orient makes a point we cannot afford to ignore. Namely, we know, without a doubt, that certain medicines such as Thalidome (once used to treat morning sickness), can cause severe birth defects. We also know that certain viruses, such as the Zika virus, can cause severe birth defects. What is not widely known however is the phenomenon of "vaccine injuries".

Every time a child is vaccinated in this country, a tax is paid into a vaccine injury fund from which \$4 billion has been paid in damages to those who suffered injuries. This damage fund was created in order to shield vaccine manufacturers from lawsuits. According to an article in Science Magazine, however, the court has never yet paid any damages associated with a petitioner claiming that a vaccine caused autism.

Hence, nobody has proven that autism is caused by vaccines and there is no doubt whatsoever that vac-



cines save countless lives. However, damage has occurred in the past from vaccines that are no longer being used, including the vaccine against small pox and the original vaccine for whooping cough. Yet, somehow, we are supposed to completely deem as safe our current vaccination protocols which call for over 50 injections despite the onset of vaccine injuries in some?

I believe the immunity from lawsuits against the manufacturers of vaccines, apart from which, we would definitely have a shortage of vaccines with horrible consequences stemming from the same, has prevented us from more thoroughly investigating the cumulative and synergetic effect of our overly robust vaccine schedules. Some vaccines include live viruses injected with adjuvants, such as aluminum and Thimerosal (which contains mercury), into infants while their brains are still in development.

Having said all that, there is no denying that an extremely serious health crisis is among us as measles are making a comeback despite the fact that a vaccine against this dreadful disease was created decades ago. It is most unfortunate that the people who refuse to vaccinate their kids are not only risking the health of their own child, but that of other children who are still too young to be vaccinated. The threat of pneumonia, encephalitis, the onset of blindness, and death from measles is prevalent. I believe some of the fears associated with the Measles/Mumps/Rubella vaccine combination vs the subsequent and proven threat of contracting measles, could be abated by administering these shots separately.

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The Miracle Of Liquid Sunshine!

By Andy Caldwell

Creative destruction refers to new technologies that destroy old ways of doing things. Today's example is the demise of payphones via cell phones. Unfortunately, some destruction is not creative at all as is the case with the war against both food and energy security in favor of intermittent and unreliable energy substitutes.

Steve Greenhut, writing for *The American Spectator*, wrote that "the entire history of human existence has been defined by a mad search for calories. Hunger, poverty, and short life spans are the norm, not the exception. I feel a combination of optimism and dread about the state of humanity when the biggest "food security" problem is that delicious, life-sustaining food (namely meat products) is too expensive and readily available".

Similarly, Dr. Robert Zubrin, PhD, in his book "Merchants of Despair" wrote that the use of basic energy, in the form of "fire-driven" machines, liberated mankind from the slavery of brute toil, replacing poverty with plenty, isolation with mobility, darkness with light, and ignorance with knowledge. Without fire, there can be no human existence worthy of the name." He believes the effort to control climate is really nothing less than an effort to constrain humankind's ability to manage and use energy supplies due to overwrought concerns about the growth-inducing impacts of the same. That is to say, some people believe the worst thing that can happen is that which promotes population growth and consumerism.

Let's discuss the effort to replace ag operations and traditional energy sources with wind and solar farms, the latest example being Lompoc's Strauss Wind Energy Farm. The project entails constructing 30 enormous wind turbines, 492 feet tall, with a span of more than 450 feet which is significantly larger than the wing span of a 747. The project will impact 3,000 acres of farm ground, require moving nearly 1 million cubic feet of dirt, the removal of over 600 oak trees, the generation of over 16,000 construction truck trips, and require up to 400 tons of steel for the construction of each tower.

What is worse than all the cradle-to-grave ecological impacts of manufacturing, installing and operating this power source? The impending epidemiological impacts of the same. How would this project present

a health hazard you ask? One of mankind's best friends in nature are bats. One bat can eat between 500 and 1,000 mosquitos and other disease-carrying insect pests in just one hour, or about 6,000 per night. It is a well-known fact that wind turbines kill upwards of a million bats each year (not to mention hundreds of thousands of birds, including endangered species), meaning billions of mosquitos and other disease-carrying insects will live to spread diseases.

Another effect of these wind turbines is the incredible noise generated by the same, which has been compared to that of a helicopter, along with another phenomenon known as infrasound, which refers to the low frequency vibrations of these turbines which pummels the human anatomy of nearby residents.

We need to have an honest discussion in our society regarding the cost/benefit analysis, from cradle to grave, of the various energy sources available to us. Such an analysis will prove that oil, natural gas, and nuclear are far superior to wind and solar by every metric imaginable.

Unlike wind and solar, nuclear, oil and gas operations produce 24/7, take up very little land, and they rarely create deleterious impacts upon birds and bats. Moreover, oil and gas are just as natural to the earth as is sunlight and wind. In fact, when its properties and uses were first discovered and vastly appreciated, oil was referred to as the miracle of liquid sunshine!

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The Daunting Reality Of Social Insecurity

By Andy Caldwell

The crisis preventing government from providing services and maintaining infrastructure is due to political misfeasance across the board. Politicians at every level of government, along with elected judges, have created a situation that is serving to bankrupt local and state government via the government pension crisis. Moreover, a similar crisis is threatening the retirement of the private sector as it affects Social Security and Medicare.

Unfortunately, most citizens are clueless as to what is happening. This has to do with their inability to see non-events! The non-event of our enjoying bigger freeways, adequately maintained roads and schools, and plentiful water supplies. Worst of all? The average citizen doesn't realize that the benefits they plan to rely on in their old age will be cut when they can least afford it.

In Lompoc, some citizens are protesting for the right to vote for higher taxes in order to pay down the pension debt that is engulfing the third largest city in the county. Of course the situation is never characterized as such. No, the citizens are always asked to give more to prevent service cuts. But, the service cuts are due to unfunded pension liabilities. In essence, local citizens are faced with the situation to forgo supplementing their own retirement savings in order to make public employees whole in their retirement.

To put this in context consider the following. Years ago, a judge issued a ruling that taxpayer-funded government pensions can't be cut going forward, regardless of the ability of taxpayers to foot the bill for the same. Similarly, neither can social security benefits be cut from those government workers who get both social security and a government pension! What that means in practical reality is that most government workers will earn at least double in retirement than their counterparts in the private sector. Some of the pension/social security double-dippers will earn, in retirement, more than they earned while working!

Compare this situation to the plight of the average citizen, solely dependent upon Social Security. The cost of benefits paid out by the Social Security Administration will begin to exceed its outcome next year. In 16 years, Social Security will face a \$15 trillion shortfall! That means that all retirement

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benefits will face significant cuts. Medicare's hospital insurance fund is even worse off. It is on track to be bankrupt in 2026.

Meanwhile, the county of Santa Barbara continues to struggle with an unfunded pension liability of nearly \$900 million and other post-employment benefits that exceed \$100 million, for a total unfunded liability of over \$1 billion.

Unfortunately, some people don't consider our current situation as all that bad! Believe it or not, in a recent presentation to the board of supervisors, the annual payout of \$100 million in local government pension payments was characterized as "an economic engine investing back in our community"!

Well, here is a newsflash! This particular engine is backfiring! It is about to blow a hole in the engine block that will render this gravy train inoperable.

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The Immorality Of Poverty

By Joe Armendariz

Jesus said, circa 33 A.D., "the poor will always be with you."

Two thousand years later in the United States, the richest country on the planet, 39.7 million people live in poverty.

Darn it if Jesus wasn't right. Smart man that Jesus was.

And yet, turn on any cable news program, or click on any political blog, or pick up any newspaper, and you're almost certain to read about the sizzling-hot American job market.

Indeed, the rest of the world, according to President Trump, is jealous of our strong economy.

At 3.6 percent, at the end of April, the national unemployment rate is at historic lows. And this is true across the board. Asians, Hispanics, women, even high-school drop-outs. Everybody who wants to work is working.

In California, the unemployment rate is a little higher than it is nationally, but at 4.3 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is still low.

And this is a good thing, because working is a good thing. It gives us purpose. Working affords us dignity and the opportunity to produce, and, inevitably, working allows us to consume.

However, tragically, working doesn't automatically result in escaping poverty.

In America and California, and certainly here in Santa Barbara County, tens of thousands of people are working but are also living just above, right at, or even below the poverty line.

According to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, 48 percent of families today earn \$50,000 or less of annual (pre-tax) income. For a family in this income category, their average after-tax income is just below \$23,000, or \$1,900 a month.

This startling statistic describes 59 million households in America today. Families in this situation more often than not have days instead of money left over at the end of the month. They literally are living paycheck to paycheck.

And to make matters worse, these families are spending an average of 17 percent of their take-home pay on residential and transportation energy costs. In fact, residential electricity costs represent 69 percent of household utility bills.

For 59 million families in America today, every dime they earn working is spent keeping the lights on, paying the rent, putting food on the table, going to the doctor, and filling their gas tank.

These families live off-camera, on the economic margin, and in the shadows.

They aren't spending weekends wine tasting, or out on the slopes skiing, or in the Channel sailing. You won't find them protesting an affordable housing project, or a neighborhood school, or the building of a hospital.

And they certainly aren't spending their evenings attending public hearings to offer comments on an environmental impact report for a trucking application.

Indeed, the idea these struggling families would spend their time opposing trucking oil from one facility to another, knowing that by doing so might result in the cost of filling their tank to go from \$40 to \$60, or

(Continued on page 17)



**Howard Jarvis
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This Deal Would Decimate Our Economy

By Andy Caldwell

Supervisors Joan Hartman and Das Williams propose to pass a resolution on June 4 to endorse Alexandria Ocasio Cortez's Green New Deal (GND) which will wipe out our GDP! The GND is a draconian green fantasy that demands the extremely radical elimination of our carbon footprint. This, despite the fact that the trillions of dollars required to develop the technology and build the infrastructure in order to comply is not available, nor is it possible to build the same in the ten to twelve year time frame called for, even if we begin taking draconian steps beginning today.

I am hereby calling out the proponents of this resolution as complete and total hypocrites who are unwilling to do much of anything except engage in this exercise of virtue signaling in an echo chamber of their fellow imposters. That is, these politicians are not willing to suffer the draconian expense of their own rhetoric! Instead, they rely on their ability to impose regulations, mandates, and taxes on the private sector, regardless of the cost to each individual person they represent, while eschewing the same imposition on county operations because they either can't afford or don't want to suffer the same infliction themselves!

The county is a behemoth entity with some 4,000 employees who have a large carbon foot print of their own that has actually grown despite other previous meaningless resolutions to reduce the same! That is, the county has not done anything draconian with regard to their own operations, including curtailing their employee's commute to work. Nor have they begun constructing utility-sized solar for their operations which is necessary because plugging equipment into a socket that is, in reality, ultimately powered by fossil fuels will no longer cut it! The GND also requires the abandonment of the carbon-intensive materials used on construction projects. The one project the county has initiated is the enormously expensive trash digester at the Tajiguas landfill, but that is being charged to rate payers.

Following is a list that the GND would require the county to do. I suggest they begin immediately, unless their resolution is nothing but more hot air!

Supervisors must immediately close the county employee parking lot to all employees who don't drive an electric or hybrid vehicle. Better yet, do what the

Chumash do, make all employees ride a bus to work! Quit using asphalt and concrete on county construction projects as these materials are carbon-intensive. Build a utility-sized solar farm to power their operations, including an entire new fleet of electric fire and sheriff vehicles, and construction equipment. That is, go all electric and charge the same directly by your own solar power. Eliminate the use of all plastic as it is a byproduct of oil. Until the construction project is complete, have all north county buildings sign up for PG&E's 100% solar-powered electricity option for their current electricity supply. Only use electric vehicles or bus service to attend local meetings, or better yet walk or bike, even in the rain! Forego the use of plane and train travel for all meetings outside the county by either telecommuting to the same or using an electric vehicle to attend until the GND electrifies all planes and trains! Eliminate the use of natural gas powered hot water heaters, appliances and heating systems.

I can assure you the board won't do any of these things. They will claim they don't have the money or the will to do anything this drastic. Nevertheless, they will pass this resolution on a 3-2 vote. Meanwhile, count on them to vote against the common sense approval of locally produced energy projects in order to maintain the appearance of doing something positive, however meaningless, via the GND.

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Our Farmers Could Use A Friend!

By Andy Caldwell

Farmers in our county find themselves surrounded and besieged by conflicts and threats galore!

In Carpinteria, avocado growers are not able to protect their trees from pests due to the threat of liability if the insecticide drifts to nearby marijuana grows. Between Santa Ynez and Lompoc, wineries are upset that the smell of marijuana grows are affecting the ability of wine tasters to smell the wine they are drinking and they also don't like the photo bombing visual impacts of the white plastic hoop tents that some marijuana growers use to shade their plants, as it affects winery venue wedding photos.

Another perennial battle pits row crop farmers against urbanites with ignoble intentions. Farmers can nearly always expect conflicts arising from encroaching urban development, especially school districts searching for cheap land on which to build schools. In particular, noise, lights, smells, dust, and the fear of pesticide and herbicide drift don't always make for good neighbors between farmers and urbanites.

These tensions are further exacerbated by the machinations of urbanite neer do wells. These people, whom I call ranchette vigilantes, buy what was once farm land that has subsequently been carved up into residential lots and then they complain about neighbors who are still working the land to earn a living.

Another source of tension arises when farmers and ranchers try to create more income on their property but their neighbors want the land preserved "as is" for the "open space" value of the same. That is, the vigilantes oppose the construction of wineries, coolers, greenhouses and hoops, along with additional residences. They impede what is necessary to keep the land in active agriculture by exerting a nonexistent right to enjoy the "undisturbed" bucolic vistas of their neighbor's land, as if these properties existed solely to provide open space and green belts. They thereby deny the ability of farmers and ranchers to make a living and pay for the cost of the land.

Finally, we have people wanting to draw a line around our existing urban boundaries thereby preventing future development in order to achieve their no growth agenda. This, despite pressing state mandates that require us to grow. Accordingly, a fight is brewing in LAFCO, the Local Agency Formation



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Commission. Supervisor Joan Hartman wants to create an "open space" policy sponsored by the Environmental Defense Center which has never done anything positive for agriculture.

Ironically, it is an existing policy of LAFCO which prohibits "leap-frog" development which presents the most serious threat to prime ag land as it requires new development to be contiguous to existing development, all of which originally began in the middle of our valley floors some 100 plus years ago. The solution to this dilemma is to head to the hills, as most cattle ranchers have some land to spare for housing and the cows won't mind! That is, cattle ranchers do not normally have the same concerns as do row crop farmers regarding carefully planned urban development.

To be clear, we must tread lightly and carefully while we seek to protect prime ag land. Ethically, we must forego trying to force any farming family to stay in ag, as it is their right to agree to be annexed into a city. They may have no choice due to the fact that California is making it nearly impossible to stay in farming by way of the coming \$15 minimum wage, overtime pay, water restrictions, and the inability to adequately protect crops from pests and diseases. Then again, we don't want anybody forced out of ag either due to urban sprawl and encroachment, including, in the case of Carpinteria, marijuana encroachment!

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Santa Barbara's Socialist City Council

By Andy Caldwell

Santa Barbara City Council members are guilty of felonious misconduct as it pertains to their violation of the law of supply and demand and the law of unintended consequences, in passing a just cause eviction ordinance. A "Just Cause" ordinance, truth be told, makes it extremely difficult and expensive for a landlord to evict a bad tenant for just cause! Moreover, the premise behind a just cause eviction ordinance eviscerates and confounds the contractual relationship between tenants and landlords.

This ordinance will not solve the problem of high rents, nor will any good come as a result of it. What is completely lost on these decision-makers is that the cost of a rental is a function of the price of the rental unit itself! Any attempt therefore to decouple the landlord's costs and the renter's cost is nothing less than a socialist's pipe dream- it won't work in the real world.

I believe contracts, in the form of rental or lease agreements, are private affairs and government should butt out unless somebody's civil rights are being violated. Nevertheless, the city council has now virtually abolished month-to-month rentals, instead requiring all agreements to consist of a yearly lease, with the penalty of forced relocation costs hanging over the landlord's head for violations of the ordinance. Ostensibly, the purpose behind this is to give tenants some form of assurance they will be able to live for a year without a rent increase or an eviction notice.

What the city council and the activists behind this effort will not admit is that some landlords will be motivated to sell their units, creating a rental unit shortage, rather than get caught up in a costly legal quagmire, or worse, they will leave the units vacant! Don't scoff, in cities that have just cause ordinances and rent control, this option of leaving a unit vacant is so popular that politicians have started to create a punitive tax on landlords who leave their properties vacant!

In the meantime, let's ignore the fact that the supply of housing here is limited by our extremely meager water supply along with the artificial constraints on building height limitations, and the implacable no-growth sentiment of a majority of the citizenry. Conversely, the demand for housing is relatively insatiable. This includes the desirability of the locale (living by the ocean, our weather, and the proverbial escape from



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LA), the pressures for housing placed on the community by the continuous growth of SB City College and UCSB, and the fact that a lot of rich people can and will withstand whatever the market demands.

In other words, I don't believe the community can be made truly affordable, in part, because the citizenry lacks the will and the means to do so. That is, will City College and UCSB ever accept enrollment caps? Will the community pay for more water for new development? Are they willing to support high rises? And, gasp, are they willing to vastly expand urban growth boundaries (read that sprawl)? Having lived on the Central Coast for 50 years, I can tell you the answer is no to all these questions as all of these things are considered anathema. Moreover, if we did do all of these things, more people would still want to live here thereby proving the law of supply and demand is incontrovertible.

So, where does that leave us? Token and broken theories of accommodation such as micro-housing units, just cause eviction ordinances and, finally, rent control. In other words, these social justice warriors tinkering around the edges will accomplish nothing in the long run in their attempt to burnish their street cred among the poor and assuage their own conscience for living among the privileged and the elite.

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The Battle Continues Between Guns And Hoses

By Andy Caldwell

For some time, there has been a Hatfield/McCoy strain between our county fire department and the sheriff's department. It first became manifest when the two departments went back and forth on sharing aircraft that could be used for both fire and law enforcement purposes.

The current rift has to do with our emergency dispatch operations, as county fire no longer wants to share dispatch services with the sheriff's department. I believe an underlying reason for this proposal has to do with the historical under-staffing of the sheriff's department. That is, not having enough people on hand to handle the duties has led to too much overtime and stress on the operators which in turn created even more vacancies.

This subject is not altogether easy to report on, because most of the people involved don't always tell you what they really think or believe due to professional courtesies. Ostensibly, the purpose of splitting the two services has to do with the goal of border-less dispatch. What that means is that the fire department wants all calls for fire service to be sent to the nearest unit, meaning a city fire unit could respond to a call in the unincorporated area of the county, and vice versa.

The county supervisors intend to build an operations center to house this new dispatch service despite the fact that the current dispatch center has room to accommodate both departments. They would like the center to be in the North County to create a geographically separate back-up option to the South County center in case workers can't get to that center due to fires or floods!

Besides the financial considerations having to do with duplicitous dispatch centers, the sheriff believes bifurcating dispatch in this manner could actually put people at risk by slowing emergency response times!

Nevertheless, the Board of Supervisors seems all too happy to precede with a divorce of the dispatch services in spite of the fact that the separation could cost millions of dollars the county doesn't have to spend. In that regard, the proposition to split the services has always been predicated on the willingness of city fire departments to help foot the bill since they will all be on one system.

As it turns out, the City of Santa Maria just built a very expensive and well-equipped state of the art emergency operations center that would have fit the bill perfectly except that Santa Maria is using a different computer-aided dispatch system than what all the other fire agencies in the county use. Hence, the largest city in the county, that has room to spare in its center, has no incentive to pony up to participate in this project.

Where does that leave the county for financial partners? Well, Lompoc and Guadalupe are flat broke. Solvang and Buellton, on the other hand, are already under contract with county fire for services, meaning they don't have their own fire department that needs to be dispatched! Nevertheless, man the torpedoes to county finances! Our county supervisors seem intent to proceed full steam ahead on building this dispatch center!

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Get Ready For More Pain At The Pump

By Andy Caldwell

Assembly Bill 345, which is working its way through the CA state legislature, proposes to shut down the oil and gas industry in this state based upon the junk science supposition that oil and gas operations pose a health risk to neighboring properties. The bill is part of the effort to “keep oil in the ground” at all costs to our society, and believe me, the cost to keep oil in the ground is tremendous.

Oil and gas operations are an essential component of our energy supply, a mainstay of our economy, a cornerstone of the tax base, and the value of the same is protected by our Constitution. That is, oil and gas deposits are privately-owned minerals, which can't be taken away, without just compensation.

I have never quite understood the religious fervor with which extreme environmentalists have attacked the use of natural products including oil, gas, and coal. These products enabled the onset of the industrial revolution which lifted mankind out of millennia of poverty and misery. That is, these fuels vastly improved everyone's quality of life, extended our life span and saved countless lives in a number of ways, including by way of revolutionizing our ability to grow and store food, and protect us from the elements!

Moreover, the push to replace these life-saving fuels any time soon with renewables is a pipe dream. This is due to the fact that, despite decades of research and tens of billions of dollars invested, we still don't have the technology available to realistically store wind and solar power for use throughout the day and night, as these sources can only produce energy for a few hours a day, in limited locales, if that! Nevertheless, the California state legislature continues to try and find a way to shut down our oil and gas industry. This is simply reckless.

In addition to being a valuable property right, it goes without saying oil and gas are an essential energy source for our state. What will we do without locally produced oil and gas? We are already subject to shortages! Are we going to import 100% of what we need to fuel our vehicles, planes, trains, factories, and homes? We don't have the infrastructure to do so. How much higher do you want your auto and home fuel bills to go?

The oil and gas industry also represents one of the

best paying job sectors in our state. Many of the people employed in this sector of our economy make six figure salaries with only a high school education! Where are they going to find equivalent work?

Finally, the oil and gas sector pays inordinately high taxes. Venoco and Exxon Mobil were the top two tax payers in our county before they were shut down by virtue of the pipeline break three years ago. The county and our local schools are losing millions of dollars in revenue as a result.

It is not too early to contact the Governor's office and ask him to be waiting for AB345 with his veto pen!

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Earth Day Poseurs And Provocateurs!

By Andy Caldwell

Earth day celebrations should honor the people who are both good stewards and producers of earth's natural bounties, that is, the people who, in effect, celebrate earth day each and every day! These producers, who provide society with food, fiber and minerals, present a stark contrast to the people who pretend that Mother Nature is some pure and benign entity that must be left to her own devices regardless of the cost to society.

For instance, one invariable focus of earth day in Santa Barbara posits that the off-shore oil industry is bad for the environment. This is due to the fact that too much focus has been placed on extremely rare mishaps involving the industry, along with too little regard to the benefits of the natural bounty of off-shore oil and gas deposits, along with an unrealistic portrayal of our natural setting.

For instance, one of the largest sources of air and water pollution in this region are not the oil rigs in the ocean, which are highly regulated and monitored, but the natural oil and gas seeps which produce pollution of the air and water all day long, year in and year out. In fact, we have the second largest seeps in the entire world located just off shore UCSB. These seeps release 10,000 gallons of oil per day into our waters. The gases being emitted include methane, a gas that is more conducive to climate change than carbon! Every twelve months, these natural leaks produce the equivalent amount of oil that was released during the 1969 spill. Ergo, significant air and water pollution from oil and gas deposits is a natural occurrence.

On the other hand, before the rigs became operational off our coast, they were required to offset (eliminate)

more than 100% of their emissions they themselves would generate before they could receive a permit to operate. What does that mean? It means we have less air pollution than we would have as a result of the rigs being there!

Reality also requires us to recognize that off-shore oil drilling has served to deplete the oil reserves that are the source of these seeps. The oil industry also helped capture the gases that were being released from the ocean floor, via seep tents, thereby preventing their release into the atmosphere. In fact, when drilling was stopped as a result of the pipeline break three years ago, locals have observed a major increase in the seep activity in addition to more tar on our local beaches.

There is another huge and positive benefit of the offshore rigs along our coastline and that has to do with the fact that they serve as artificial reefs which benefit sea life. Biologists estimate that as many as 45 different species of fish live in the ecosystem created by the rigs, along with hundreds of millions of invertebrates!

In conclusion, off-shore oil production helped to reduce both naturally occurring air and water pollution, and it created the conditions by which sea life has flourished abundantly. This is clearly worth celebrating!

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The Immorality Of poverty *Cont.*

(Continued from page 10)

higher, is the type of political activism and eco-fanaticism they can't afford.

I'm certainly no moralist. I probably have more vices than any two people. However, I do not and I will not support policies that hurt our most vulnerable populations. I challenge someone, anyone, to explain why supporting any policy that will result in higher energy costs isn't hurting (intentionally or otherwise) those who can least afford it.

Consider the following adverse health and welfare impacts to low-income households from high energy costs, according to a 2011 survey by the National Energy Assistance Directors Association:

—24 percent went without food for at least one day

—37 percent went without medical or dental care

—34 percent did not fill a prescription or took less than the full dose

—19 percent had someone become sick because their home was too cold

And here's the other thing: The families who are disproportionately impacted by rising household energy costs are minorities and senior citizens. And, of course, also children.

So, again, I ask, where is the economic justice I hear so much about from my friends on the political left? Or from those woke activists claiming to care about people over profits? Families over corporations?

How do these folks square the circle of their relentless anti-energy-abundance green activism? Or their people of the climate, fanatical capitalist manifesto-ism?

Their social justice, "eat the rich" ditty is way off tempo and totally out of sync with economic reality and what is required to care for the less fortunate.

They aren't hurting oil companies or the economically mobile. They are hurting and holding back the working poor from ever achieving economic mobility. And for that they ought to be ashamed.

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Joe Armendariz is the executive director of the Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association. .



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Discriminating Against Gifted Children?

By Andy Caldwell

It is beyond dispute that the Santa Barbara Unified School District needs a new board and new administrators. In addition to hiring Just Communities to promulgate propaganda relating to alleged implicit bias in our society, a move that seeks to encourage our youth to have a victim's mentality, the district also tried to eliminate the GATE program for gifted and talented children in the community due to concerns of "perceived" institutional racism.

We should all take umbrage at the use of the word "perceived"! In this day and age, when the last vestiges of institutionalized racism have long been vanquished, these wanna-be social justice warriors have been left without a hill to die on! They wallow in their own distorted perception of reality because without a victim class to exploit and manipulate, their political power base ceases to exist.

Decades ago, I saw a movie that changed my world view. The movie was "Harrison Bergeron" based on a short story by Kurt Vonnegut. The movie was set in the year 2081. By then, the dream of all egalitarians was finally realized, for everyone was truly equal. However, the devil is always in the details, isn't he?

One means by which everyone was made equal was the requirement that every person wear an electronic head-band type device that served to dumb down everyone's IQ to the lowest standard denominator! With respect to physical agility, superior athletes were fitted with weights and other encumbrances to ensure they would not have a competitive advantage over the competition.

Vonnegut's prescient vision is classified as a dystopian science fiction story. The definition of dystopian is "relating to or denoting an imagined state or society where there is great suffering of injustice". Progressive egalitarians are always blaming the system, including various scapegoats, for the plight of the poor and less fortunate, such as "white privilege", corporate greed, the 1 percent, Wall Street, capitalism, etc., etc.. They simply don't want to admit that some people are smarter and more gifted than others, or that they are more disciplined, or that they were willing to sacrifice and take risks that paid off.

No, the progressive egalitarians believe it is up to

government to lift up the poor, but what they never want to admit is that their plan invariably involves bringing down the successful. Well, as Vonnegut points out, that simply leads to a different kind of unjust suffering on the part of people who should otherwise be allowed to use their talents to better their own lives.

The following words, lost on today's progressive/socialist movement, were written by the Presbyterian

(Continued on page 19)

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Retiring Like A Millionaire *Cont.*

(Continued from page 1)

Finally, with respect to gross income disparities, what none of these politicians want to admit is that the pensions being given to government employees are the pensions of a millionaire. They should do the math! For a government employee to be able to earn a significant portion of their salary for the rest of their life means that somehow, someone had to invest more than the equivalent of their entire lifetime earnings in a fund that made incredible returns on the investment. But, of course, that did not happen! Instead billions of dollars of debt have accumulated along with billions more in fees and taxes!

For instance, a late, distinguished former District Attorney hauled in \$225,000 per year in retirement. In today's market conditions, he would have had to have accumulated \$5 million in investments in order to get that rate of return for life, but he did not make as much as \$5 million in his entire career! Where did the money come from? Taxes, fees and debt! Hence supervisors, what is amiss here has nothing to do with the private sector as it relates to these income disparities!

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Discriminating Against Gifted Children? *Cont.*

(Continued from page 18)

minister Rev. William Boetcker in 1916, excerpts of which were quoted by Ronald Reagan: "You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help strong men by tearing down big men. You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves."

Preventing a child from taking advanced classes in order to get ahead is in itself a despicable form of discrimination. The fact is, the biggest problem these education justice warriors have is the number of over-achieving Asian students, many of whom are recent immigrants! How are they a problem? Despite being language-challenged, and racially, and perhaps even culturally, distinct, they are outperforming everyone, including the children of so-called white privilege despite the aforementioned alleged perception of institutional racism.

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