


# HOMeward

## Street Journal



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### DIGNITY VILLAGE BUILDS ITS FIRST STRAWBALE HOUSE

## Corporation Agriculture Protested at Mandella Garden

by Jack Tafari

First printed in Groundswell News  
(www.groundswell.org.uk)

#### Staff Report

During the recent convergence of activities in Sacramento from June 20-25, 2003, on a Sunday, a group of activists took the opportunity to take back the Ron Mandella Community Gardens, quietly, secretly until the gates were opened, the hole to hide the tools dug, the pickup trucks of plants and compost and tools unloaded and the trucks and rendezvous vehicles driven off to safety. Then the quiet and secrecy diminished into a joyful busting of an open community gardening project. Special plants were placed in an area of the garden for the purpose of removing toxicity from the soil. Impromptu gardeners enmass showed up and started planting organic vegetable and other plants in areas all over the garden. Quickly. Expediently. Water. Water for new plants and trees so long neglected. Water for gardeners sweating under straw hats.



Someone shouted "Peaches", the predetermined code word for "The police have arrived". 10 of the organizers positioned themselves around the apricot tree, and locked their arms together in what is called "lock boxes". They could not be pulled apart. They must stay around that tree, in that garden,

in that city (that has so blatantly disregarded the good of the community in favor of financial gain). The garden belongs to them. The garden belongs to me. The garden belongs to you. We may grow the food we eat. We do not have to be depen-

dent on the government backed multi-national corporations for our seed. We may grow our own seeds, naturally, as nature has intended and has sustained us for eons

see Mandella page 3

As this story goes to press, Dignity Village, the United States' longest running, officially sanctioned tentcity, is putting the finishing touches on the latest addition to its current housing stock, a straw bale house.

The house was built over several weekends in May and June at the village in cooperation with The City Repair Project and the Rebuilding Center and as part of the Village Building Convergence which converged on Portland, Oregon, at that time. Led by building guru Lydia Doleman, the project demonstrated just how easy and how much fun it can be for a small group of people without a lot of prior building knowledge to build their own home on the cheap. And building on the cheap, of course, isn't a bad thing at all, especially to a fledgling community/organization of formerly homeless people like Dignity Village. According to Dignity's treasurer Tim McCarthy who helped build the house, its cost was a little over \$500

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## Ozomatli: Partying For All the Right Reasons

Released through Street News Service [www.streetnewsservice.org](http://www.streetnewsservice.org)

### Kevin Meenan

Originally Published in the July 2003 issue of *Whats Up, Boston, MA*

For nearly 10 years now, Los Angeles' Ozomatli have brought their unique fusion of Latin beats, Afro-Cuban rhythms, salsa, hip-hop, funk, jazz, and more to the masses. Having shared the stage with Carlos Santana, The Dave Matthews Band, Blackalicious, Offspring, and Rage Against the Machine and



with a stint on The Warped tour, the diversity of this Grammy-award-winning group's music is matched only by their own cultural identities—self-described as a "Black - Chicano - Cuban - Japanese - Jewish - Filipino" collective. Whats Up recently sat down with the band to talk about the crew's background, philosophies, politics, and overall message.

The origins of Ozomatli, whose name derives from the Aztec god of dance, lie in a social movement within Los Angeles' inner city. "We didn't form thinking like we were going to try to get a deal or make a record or anything like that. It was just a group of people who ended up at the same place at the same time and had a lot of different things to contribute musically," group percussionist Jiro

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# Ozomatli

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Yamaguchi explains. "It came together at a place called the Peace and Justice center in downtown L.A., a community center formed around a protest by the Conservation Corp."

Described as a "welfare program for inner-city kids," the Conservation Corp. gave menial jobs with low pay to inner-city youths in L.A. "They were trying to unionize to get better wages and benefits for people like single moms. A group of them had a sit-in at the building and through a long process got the rights to the building, which became the Peace and Justice Center."

Having each played a part in the protest, the group formed to play benefits for the new center. "Initially, a lot of our gigs were benefits for different communities and causes. Eventually we started playing shows at clubs and built up a following around L.A. and became a band." The activism came first, and the music followed.

A look at the group's website (which features links to the websites for the United Farm Workers, School of the Americas Watch, International Campaign for Tibet along with information on the Zapatistas movement, Mumia Abu-Jamal, and the business practices of Taco Bell) confirms the group's commitment to their activist roots. At the same time, the band has been pegged as one of the liveliest and most entertaining acts in the industry. Through their relentless touring, their task has been to find a balance between creating the party-like atmosphere their shows are famous for while spreading their message of social justice and change.

For Yamaguchi, this link between having fun with their music while continuing to educate is natural. "Art is the perfect way to present different points of view. It's not as threatening as 'oh you got to do it this way.' It creates a forum where people can open up to different ideas," he explains. "I don't think we necessarily wear our politics on our sleeves. We are not trying to preach to the people. It's more about being all-inclusive and breaking down the barriers."

It is through these lively performances that the group has broken the barriers. Each show starts with a drum-filled march through the crowd and ends with a full group drum circle in the middle of the audience (during which the group has been known to lead the crowd in a musical rendition of the "Hokey Pokey"). In between, the ten members pound out songs from their 1996 self-titled debut and their 2001 release Embrace the Chaos, while partaking in energetic synchronized dances on stage that encourage even the rhythmically un-inclined to bust a move.

"We create an atmosphere that is free, and a party—it's all about vibe," stressed backing MC and percussionist Justin "Nifo" Porée. "The way we come into the show and leave, it's so audience-oriented. We are there to have fun with the crowd. There is no barrier between the band and the audience. People trip out on being included in the experience."

The educated and informative rhymes of Ozomatli take the experience of their shows and albums to the next level. Lyrically, they embrace both English and Spanish on their records. In a time where there is a push towards the erasure of all citizens' native languages other than English (as Massachusetts voters regrettably showed in their vote on the Unz initiative last November), multi-lingual lyrics send a message of tolerance.

"I think it sucks," Yamaguchi said. "In California it was Proposition 227 which basically was the same thing, forcing the schools to be English only. It's not a very realistic way to approach it. You go to a place like Europe and I trip out. Someone from Switzerland might speak four or five languages completely naturally. They



## NORTH AMERICAN STREET NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

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### Molly Rhodes July 09, 2002

Seizing on the chance to make a statement about homelessness the whole world will see and hear, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty plans to take over an abandoned building in Toronto to coincide with a visit by the Pope the end of July. The Pope Squat, as it's known, is designed to harness the socially active energy of the many Catholic organizations that are expected to descend on Ontario, to start making real progress towards the creation of enough affordable housing to house everyone who needs it. According to the Toronto Globe and Mail, the Toronto Social Housing Connections had 60,870 applications for affordable housing in May to fill 337 vacancies. Squatters intend to form a self-managed house and community center, and to keep it going for as long as the world's spotlight prevents the Toronto police from evicting them. "We see the Papal visit as an opportunity to literally get our foot in the door," reads the Coalition's website, www.ocap.ca. "If the city won't build social housing, then we will!"

The fight between San Francisco homeless advocates over how to best serve their clients has come one step closer to reaching the November ballot. Earlier this month, Supervisor Gavin Newsom submitted signatures to City Hall for his Care Not Cash initiative, which would take the money that is currently being given directly to homeless people to more or less use as they please — between \$320 and \$395 per person on average — and redirect it into specific programs to provide services and support for these people. According to the San Francisco Chronicle, the proposed initiative has support among people who see the current cash give away as too tempting for families and individuals who have no intention of using the money to do anything but feed habits, such as using drugs and alcohol, that only keep them homeless. Yet critics doubt that the same city officials who have created the current home-

less crisis will be able to put together the kind of programs needed to help people put their lives back together. The only things that these two groups do agree in is that, despite throwing more than \$100 million towards the homeless problem every year, the city is not doing nearly enough to bring about true change. More information on the initiative can be found at www.carenotcash.org.

A second person has been charged in the murder of Gregory Biggs, a homeless man who was hit by a car and left stuck in the windshield until he died. Clote Jackson was indicted for evidence tampering for removing Biggs from the windshield after he died and dumping his body in a park, in an apparent attempt to cover up the hit and run by his friend, Chante Mallard, the driver of the car. Mallard was indicted for murder in April, and is awaiting trial in jail on \$250,000 bail.

Loss of airline traffic could be a gain for homeless families living in the vicinity of John F. Kennedy airport in New York, where a Manhattan federal bankruptcy judge has ordered the owners of a closed airport hotel to reopen the space as a shelter for homeless families. According to *Newsday*, the shelter will be run by the Salvation Army through the end of September and will provide a home for at least 10 families as they seek permanent housing. The owner of the hotel has also begun negotiations to perhaps extend the shelter lease beyond September, but business owners near the Queens airport don't like the idea of a shelter in the middle of a prosperous strip of real estate. "While we are concerned about the plight of homeless families," said Queens Borough President Helen Marshall in a press release, "we cannot stand by and watch them warehoused in a totally inappropriate site that is near the epicenter of an economic development renaissance."



can just make that switch in their brain. Why not have it be that way? Why not educate people in that way and have us all embrace multiple languages? The U.S. is terrible for that."

Moreover, Yamaguchi and his bilingual band mates fear that the law will have an adverse effect on the youths, particularly those in their native L.A. "What it does is set up kids to fail. It puts them further and further behind to the point that they can't catch up and don't get a good education."

For a band who so clearly embraces diversity, issues like these will naturally hit home. While the group often

participates in and performs at protests, their hope is that the music and the vibe can speak for itself. As they continue to gain popularity and acclaim both here and abroad, their message of togetherness is destined to spread.

After a short winter break from the road, Ozomatli is currently gearing up for yet another tour. They recently released a live CD and DVD, available exclusively at their shows and through their website, www.ozomatli.com. They plan to start work on a third full-length release that they hope to get out later this year. Keep your eyes on their website for current tour dates and news.

# Mandella Protest

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A loud speaker announced "You all have 3 minutes to vacate or you will be arrested". Many left, many stayed. Suddenly the police cars sped away. They had gotten a call that the black bloc were at the IMAX theatre. The black bloc are misunderstood to be a group of people. "Black Bloc" is actually a technique, originally used to keep other activists from danger. Though not intended or planned for this historical purpose, the cops no longer were intent on arresting the guerilla gardeners.

News of the action spread throughout Sacramento from word of mouth and the mobile communication teams assigned to the many convergence activities. People started arriving in droves. Most paid their respects to the heroes locked around the apricot tree. Some brought an organic banquet that had to be hand fed to the locked down defenders of the garden. A chef-decked group fed them with their ladies. A colorful brass band performed around the circle and throughout the garden. Media, mainstream and alternate, were positioned throughout the day interviewing locked down members, photographers snapped. Action tourists showed up as supporters and become the heroes, too, as they joined the gardening. It was a merry celebration of neo-victory gardening for the rest of the afternoon into the evening.

Early evening a small "peaches?" sounded upon the arrival of one police car. The officer asked how everyone was doing. Fine. He left. This created a stir of excitement, lifting of hopes. Would they get away with it for the night? For the week? Should they be calling in the tent city advocates for occupation plans? Could we win? The communications networks spread the word, "Community Campout!". Many came and stayed to bed down under the stars surrounded in the serenity of the most oxygen-producing acre imaginable within an urban boundary.

Short (but sweet while it lasted). Nearing midnight, a resounding, "P E A C H E S ! ! I mean, peaches upon peaches. An army of cops were on the way, preceded by one or two helicopters spotlighting the garden areas. A fleet of police cars, fire trucks, other law enforcement vehicles, a bus, quickly surrounded the garden acre. They broke down the fence closest to the Apricot tree. A heavily armored squad of policemen surrounded the 10 protectors and 2 supporters.

Assigned to close the circle were twenty-four robo-looking-cops, 2 for each non-violent person sitting down, unable or not intending to move one bit too quickly. Other cops were scouting the garden, rousting would-be campers that were told they could leave without getting arrested.

During the moments before arrests would commence, a police officer was pointing his gun and red laser light in the tree. One of the members of the circle sincerely pleaded with the Fireman to not let that officer shoot the squirrel in the tree. No one was sure what this massive force of might may do wrong. Shooting a squirrel, overwhelming presence all over Sacramento to discourage participation from the less radical—it seemed possible. After the 2 supporters were arrested without resistance and then the 10 had their lock blocks sawed off by the fire department and were arrested, it was time for the police to get that squirrel. It turns out it was actually a man who had climbed up the tree earlier. He was extracted and then arrested, too.

Crowds had gathered on the sidewalks across the street, applauding the arrestees, chants of solidarity and song. Another man that had the brazen courage to use a bull horn, regardless of the 30 day ordinance passed by city council to make it against the law to use just about any item normally used in protests (bull horns, masks of any kind, strict restrictions on signage boards).

Arrest, bus drive to Rio Consummes Correctional Facility, Jail, Solidarity—a long bad story I'll cut short. Court July 21.

**The real truth is they have found a way to control the world's hungry.**

This was no whim, no trivial statement, not just talk, but DO. What turned out to be an illegal exercise of making the world a better place to live. And it is a doing that needs much more doing by many more people. The large agricultural corporate entities, the ones being promoted at the Agricultural Ministerial, have found a way to manipulate the genetic makeup of our very food sources, touting the end products as a way to control world hunger. The real truth is they have found a way to control the world's hungry. The very

genetic manipulation guarantees they will get to patent the end product. A patent gives them the legal rights to all usage of the seeds. If their seeds drift onto a neighboring conventional farm, the patent holder may legally charge the farmer for growing their product. Even though the farmer's crops have been contaminated and unwanted by the farmer. And the big ag corps actually have scientists scouting around, looking for their contamination in farms everywhere so they can claim what their patent has determined is theirs.

Most of the genetically modified crops are grown in the Midwest—canola, soy and cotton. Canola (vegetable oils), soy (baby formula) cotton seed - in most of the food products you eat. Rice may be approved next (California), Salmon. What can you buy that is guaranteed to not contain GE products? Certified organic. Grow your own and away from any possible contaminant. And how are we going to stop this growing devourment by the large industrial agribusiness? Not buy from them.

You can just sit back and continue to eat this unproven to be safe food, easily obtained at the grocery stores and fast food restaurants, cheap, and meanwhile watch the sources of our very sustenance become more and more in the hands of fewer and fewer and richer and richer and more powerful corporations, that have no care for the long term effects these practices will have on our environment and the continuation of our future's seed stocks.

Or we can start caring, NOW, and be willing to take local responsibility for the food we eat everyday. We can get some dirt beneath our fingernails. Support diversity in nature, agriculture and society because that is how nature sustains itself throughout the eons, and how we will continue to survive into the far future. Educate yourself ([www.savethegarden.org](http://www.savethegarden.org), [www.sacmoblization.org](http://www.sacmoblization.org), [www.biodev.org/sacramento](http://www.biodev.org/sacramento))

We can support community gardens, and insist that the City desist from destroying the Ron Mandella Community Gardens and return it into the hands of the community. Try to find another acre in Sacramento with similar attributes the Mandella Gardens has offered our community for over 30 years. You won't find it. A most healthy diversity is in great danger of being lost and paved over for the profits of an out-of-State developer.

# DIGNITY

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US. \$500 isn't a bad price and makes the village's straw bale house a shining example of truly affordable housing.

Dignity's straw bale house was built using natural building techniques which ensure minimal damage to the planet's teetering environment. The locally obtained, non-GMO straw bales, sand, clay and water used in its construction are all, of course, thoroughly biodegradable. All of the lumber used in its construction was recycled from demolition projects and thus saved from that sad, one-way trip to the local landfill.

The straw bales in the house's walls result in a cool interior even on the baking asphalt of the village's current Sunderland Yard site, a quality enhanced by the shade of the large overhang on the building's south face and its arbor for grape vines. The house is wired for electricity which will be generated by the village's windmill. And the house, with its thick straw bale walls and passive solar features such as lots of glass on its south face mean that it would be warm and dry in Oregon's wet, cold winters.

Unfortunately Dignity's straw bale house will be deconstructed by the time Winter arrives and the natural materials used to build it, save the lumber which we'll save and take with us to our next site, will go back to our mother Earth. Dignity's lease on our current site at Portland's leaf composting facility at Sunderland Yard runs out on 1st October and the City wants the site back for the composting of this Autumn's leaves. Although our site development team

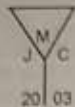
has screened over sixty sites, none for one reason or another has been suitable for a possible future perma-site until just recently. Recently the village has found the willing and friendly seller of a 19.6 acre parcel located far from the center of Portland which seems promising and we're currently examining its feasibility. The site's rough and wild and then there are the neighbours whose concerns have yet to be addressed. Sometimes it seems that although people love the Palestinians, no one wants the West Bank in their backyard!

One thing the village has now that it didn't have when we were simply a rising of poor people is credibility, what city staffer Marshall Runkel refers to as a "track record." We're now incorporated as a 501(C)3 non-profit, a legal entity pursuing our lawful business, and we've helped hundreds of people transition through homelessness into what affordable housing there is in the nearly three years of our existence. It seems the City is now more willing to work with us than it was in our humble beginnings when we were viewed simply as a revolting development among Portland's poor. Once we touch down on perma-site which seems very close at hand now, we'll begin a new kind of development, the building of the green, sustainable village we envision.

Dignity Village's first straw bale house is only the start of what we are going to build. To learn more and for updates, check our Web site <http://dignityvillage.org>.

Where do they go  
No place to be,  
What will we say  
No one to see,  
What do you do  
No more plans to be made,  
No tomorrow, no today.

Everyday a madness  
Runs through your soul  
So many ways  
Sadness has taken its toll  
Everywhere another walks on by  
Homeless, hungry cries!



## Canning

by Mike Nettles

People start recycling for many reasons, unemployment, a sanction, something to do at night. Gus, an old local recycler, who works a large part of the grid does it because he believes that if a man does any job, if its honest work, he can hold his head up. Gus also feels that we are doing an important service. In the course of a day, John the weigh master at Sims America, said over three tons of the semi-precious metal is shipped out of their gates. Recycled aluminum makes up nearly twenty percent of the nations supply saves thousands of acres of untouched land from destructive mining and adds to many's financial security.

I started recycling for a less noble reason, I did not like eating in any of the cafeterias at the various missions. In trash cans I found half eaten prime rib dinners and other fancy meals a homeless guy like me could rarely afford. I didn't have to smile and say thank you to the day's spoon jockey, and in the morning I would have made enough money to get a pack of cigarettes and some wine.

At eight o'clock in the morning Sims America opens to the public. On a Monday the truck port is squeezed full with laden buggies, as men and women separate the clear from the tinted, plastic from aluminum.

Often recycling is the only job many who wait there can do. David, a burley ex-high school basketball player, who became an alcoholic, pushes a shopping

cart around until it is full, then buys what he needs for the week. Mick, who for apparent reason is called Chia by many, made his way here on freight trains recycling. Drifters have a hard time finding normal positions.

And the work is not easy. But most make enough for a pack of cigarettes and a light indulgence. I averaged a dollar to a dollar twenty an hour for the time I spend collecting every night, a few may average up to two bucks an hour. An electrical technician who could not find work in his trade, turned a ball cap into a miner's lamp and rigged a bicycle buggy to bring in seventy dollars loads.

During times of inflation the price of metals increase. Presently the price per pound is up a penny from this time last year. Ray, a member of the ranks of city employees who makes just enough to support his wife and kid recycles to soften the edges of his pay check and I have witnessed other city employees, who I believe are laden with new health care increase imposed by the mayor of San Francisco's, subsidize their meager wages recycling on the side. Ray confided his super vision would have a fit if she found out.

It is not known yet if the number of people actually recycling has increased because of the economic down turn, but I have noticed more people on the street have resorted to recycling to make it through the long month between paycheck benefit assistance and addiction.



Elizabeth Holloway

As I am a visitor looking in, I begin to notice a difference in the people. It becomes easy to identify the homeless. It's the teeth. All those with missing or rotten teeth are most likely homeless. Upon asking, it becomes apparent that Medi-Cal would pay for cleaning, but not maintenance, repair or replacement. That reflects the quality of care available to the poor.

There have been many negative reports on street people lately, but who are they? One with whom I spoke had been an amateur scientist, helping to map the skys. His wife is now very sick and he sold everything to keep her in treatment. He still visits her twice a week, gathering cans along the way.

Another is someone's daughter who came to the "big city" with stars in her eyes, only to find there is no easy fortune or automatic success. A third is someone's son/father who lost a leg in an accident and is now confined to a wheelchair, at least until he can get a prosthetic leg. No one helps him in the meantime. He has to compete with the more able for the limited, available services.

How would you feel if you

found out your father/son was neglected by the state because he was in an unfortunate circumstance? Worse yet, when he was trying to survive until his next medical appointment, the police rousted him from the only place he could find to sleep. How would the police feel if they were he? How would you feel toward the state for such ill treatment of your husband/wife who was loyal to you on your sick-bed, even to the point of selling all you both owned? Is this what you expect of California?

There are mothers and children living on the streets, sons looking among the homeless for their fathers, and a paraplegic trying to establish a residence. He is unable to get to his appointments on time in his chair and lacks bus fare to get around and is stranded without the help he is qualified for, yet in spite of this he is cheerful. In my opinion, he has a right to be bitter, but is not. If you don't have an address, you can't get help. Once you are homeless it is nearly impossible to be presentable enough to get a job, but many look anyhow.

Some people live in their cars or vans. One woman was rich until her husband died. Then she lost heart and lives with her daughter. A man

was in the news who picked up bottle caps, cans and scraps of paper. It turned out he's a millionaire, yet lives homeless. There is an entire generation who are disillusioned at the rewards society offers, so they reason "why try?" Some have lost children through divorce and do not have hope to try again to find them. They have no stake in our culture. There is nothing which inspires them. They see the greed and abuse of people and want OUT.

And what about the churches? The state laws forbid throwing mattresses on their floors for the "overflow" homeless, but couldn't they put mattresses outside where they sleep anyway? If the missions really cared, they would find a way. If the religious people cared, they would DEMAND a way. Public bathrooms are even closed to the homeless.

The police need sensitivity training regarding these issues. The authorities say they are doing their duty, but where does conscience come in? As for treatment of these poor, homeless and helpless—the Germans in WWII built fences and used police to herd and lock them in. The Americans use police to herd them outside locked fences. The result is the same.



### Joining SHA

The Sacramento Housing Alliance is a network of concerned citizens which promotes decent affordable housing for low income households and homeless people through advocacy and participation in public discourse.

The SHA does not itself provide or manage housing.

You may call for info: (916) 442-1198

Annual Membership dues:  
Standard, \$35;  
Low-income, \$15

Organizations:  
Full, 0.1% agency budget;  
Associate, \$100

Send donations to:

Sacramento Housing Alliance  
PO Box 2430  
Sacramento, CA 95812

# Welcome to HOMEWARD:

Please help us make a difference!



Homeward Street Journal has been publishing since 1997 as a non-profit project of the Sacramento

Homeless Organizing Committee, which is a part of the Sacramento Housing Alliance. The paper's mission is to alleviate miscommunication between communities by educating the public about housing and poverty issues, and by giving the homeless a voice in the public forum. Homeward also informs the homeless of shelter and occupational assistance, and acts as a creative self-help opportunity for those individuals who wish to participate.

The opinions expressed in Homeward are those of the authors, and not necessarily the Sacramento Housing Alliance or SHOC or Homeward.

### Submissions and Editorial Policy

We welcome any participation in contributions. Articles, poems and other writing can be submitted at our office in the Loaves & Fishes complex, or mailed to the address below.

All writing submitted for publication will be edited as necessary, with due respect for the authors' intent. The editors will attempt to consult with an author if changes are necessary, however, the paper will go to print with the story as edited if the author is unavailable.

All letters to the Editor must be signed to be published. If the writer wishes to remain anonymous s/he should so state, but the letter must still be signed.

Poetry and graphics will not be edited, either the paper will publish the submission or not.

In submitting articles to the paper, authors give their permission to print their submissions in accordance with the above stipulations, as well as publishing excerpts on Homeward's webpage and possible reprinting in NASNA member papers, with due byline. Any requests for stories outside the above three will be referred to the author.

Subscriptions are available with a \$15 contribution. Make checks out to SHOC.

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Special Thanks to our volunteers:

Paula, Ed,  
Lillian, Elizabeth,  
Lee

# Max's VIEW

## THE END OF THE REPUBLIC?

Max Biddle

At the end of the 19th century a conservative Republican Secretary of State, John Hay, while surveying the state of the American Republic, concluded that we had become a nation of corporations, by corporations, for the benefit of corporations. He and many leading political leaders came to realize that the burgeoning industrial revolution had produced a corporate oligarchy that through excessive influence and money was dismantling the Republic. This led to the beginning of a century of reforms and social legislation to address the inequities in our Capitalist system. We as a nation came to understand that unbridled capitalism would endanger the basic freedoms of our democratic Republic.

Beginning in the 1880's, Congress began to address this threat to our democracy by legislation to limit the excesses of U.S. Corporations, the Sherman Antitrust Law as one example. Along the way more laws were required to protect Americans from the inequities of a market system that concentrated too much power in the wealthy. By the 1930's and the great depression, it became starkly apparent that the economic system still did not disperse itself equitably throughout the whole population. Many Americans who did most of the work, and produced the product that made capitalism work, received very little in return, and the massive poverty of the depression brought society to the edge of a revolution. Wisely the Roosevelt Administration knew the construction of some basic social protections were required if capitalism was to survive. The need to address the failure of capitalism to spread the wealth to the greater number of people required government action.

Over the last century the success of these legislative interventions succeeded in spreading the wealth throughout the population.

A progressive tax system availed us the ability to treat the citizenry fairly. Child labor laws finally addressed the crime of exploitation of our children. Work Safety Laws forced U.S. Corporations to treat their workers like human beings. Minimum wage laws brought about incomes that improved the worker's standard of living and began the march

toward a middle class society so essential to a stable democracy. The Social Security system has prevented the greatest hardships during economic downturns for those retired or unable to work. Medicare has provided the elderly and disabled with some minimum health care. There are many other examples of the progress to mold capitalism into serving the democratic process.

Now, after a century of taming the excesses of capitalism, the Bush Administration has decided to put a halt to this hard won social and economic progress and return us to the nineteenth century. A review of the Administration's policies will provide a road map of how the people around Bush intend to dismantle everything.

Reforming Medicare, the Bush proposals are designed to force everyone into a private insurance program even if one can afford it or not. Cutting Federal extensions to unemployment payments is another attempt to undo one of the most successful programs aiding people out of work temporarily when states run out of funds. The educational programs are designed to undercut public education, and eventually force everyone into private schools. The so-called faith based initiative will make this society's safety nets the sole responsibility of religious organizations, most likely without any forthcoming funding, as was done when Reagan made mental health care a local responsibility in California.

The political right is trying to sell the public on privatizing Social Security. This is nothing but a Trojan Horse, an insidious attempt by those advising the administration who have always wanted to eliminate this program. Privatizing Social Security will allow Wall Street and the Corporate structure to get their greedy hands on the last program that the elderly still have safe from the recent massive theft of their other retirement programs. Just think if the likes of Enron had access to Social Security funds.

Another form of restructuring society to fit the right-wing political agenda is by the use of tax policies and deficit spending to force the restructuring of social policy. The administration sells tax cuts as a growth policy, but almost nobody believes it will stimulate the economy. But it is

a weapon to help redistribute wealth back to the ruling elite and rob the funds needed to maintain Social Security, Medicare, and all the other federal programs. Big deficits give the political right the excuse they need to eliminate Federal social programs that took nearly 60 years to build. Knowing that programs like Social Security are too popular with the public to destroy head-on, the tactic is simply to eliminate their funding. The process is obvious, continue to cut taxes until the safety net is wiped out.

America is at a historic crossroads in determining what its future will be, and the Republic's survival as a democracy is again in doubt. The complete control of Congress, the White House, and the government bureaucracy, by a right-wing agenda, has again established a Corporate Oligarchy, a government of Corporations, by Corporations, for the benefit of Corporations.

The changes this oligarchy has made to assure its supremacy include international trade agreements that compromise our existence as a sovereign nation. These agreements, signed mostly in secret, undercut the rights of independent nations to protect their work force from exploitation. It deprives countries of the ability to protect their own environment, as well as safety and wage bases that allow for a basic decent standard of living. International tribunals now make the rules that undercut not only the authority of the U.S. Constitution, but all the many States' Constitutions as well.

When we finally realize that government policies are decided in corporation boardrooms, instead of in Congress or by the democratic process, it will be too late for our Republic. Indeed, with the selection of this President by five members of the Supreme Court, in what many legal experts consider a gross violation of that court's role concerning elections, shows the extent the political right will go to hold on to power.

The Bush Administration is taking advantage of the terrorist threats around the world to wrap itself in the American flag, immersing itself in patriotic rhetoric to move us toward a one world government controlled by the international corporate struc-

ture. It is a shame to watch the Republican Party surrender itself to the two influences: the international corporate structure that has compromised our independent sovereignty, and the fundamental religious right who's agenda is to eliminate the separation of church and state and create their own form of religious dictatorship here.

We have reached a crisis that imperils this nation. A crisis as serious as the Civil War that threatened to tear this nation into two parts. Wrapped in the American Flag to camouflage its true agenda, this administration is selling the country right out from under us. As we march toward a one world government controlled by an International Corporate Cartel, the Bush Administration and his right-wing advisors are accomplishing what the Communists, the Nazis, or even the Civil War could not do - bring down our Republic.

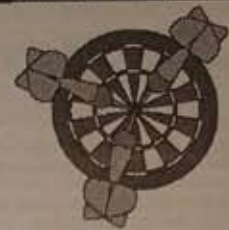
Laissez-Faire Capitalism is bringing back cheap labor, exploiting child labor and indeed using forced labor to bring its products to market. It is eliminating the middle class jobs so vital to a stable democracy. The Administration is more than willing to put the lives of American soldiers at stake to aid in the global exploits of the International Corporate Agenda. And unfortunately, just like in Vietnam, Americans are again being led down the path of military adventurism. There is nothing that a Corporate Government won't do to produce profits.

The true patriots in America today are those crying out in opposition to an administration that is bound to turn America into nothing more than fair pickings for a corrupt Wall Street and a business culture that only see the American people as targets for their dishonest schemes.

The bottom line is, Americans must rise up and save the Republic before it becomes nothing more than a subsidiary of Halliburton and the Bechtel Corporations, and is listed as The United States of America on the New York Stock exchange and sold to the highest bidder.

A country is supposed to be a community of people, not a commercial enterprise.

May God save the Republic.



# Does Anyone have a Band-Aid for My Broken Leg?

by Kathleen

You are riding your bicycle down the street, crossing an intersection in the crosswalk, with a green light. You pedal past an empty lane, then cross in front of a car in the first turning lane. The driver appears to be anxiously waiting for the signal to change. You suddenly realize the big, black, shiny new SUV in the second turning lane has not been so patient as it knocks you down and seems determined to grind your bike - as well as various of your own body parts - into the road.

Finally, after what seems like 10 lifetimes, the driver realizes there is something impeding her forward motion - Darn! ... like handlebars, your gears, your pedals, your wheels, your kickstand, all gouging into the hot, black asphalt as if consciously trying to resist being assaulted. The frame arches around your body as if intentionally trying to protect you from sharing its fate. When forward motion stops, you realize you are now some 15 feet forward and to the left of where you had been moments before, and lying across the railroad tracks. Out of nowhere the memory that another train is due any time springs into your mind. You do not notice your brand new gold-wire glasses have been scraped off your face, that your leg is stretched out at a somewhat obtuse angle. As the woman driver stares, overtaken with hysteria at the minor damage to her beautiful, black, shiny new SUV, you struggle to walk, unassisted, and get your bicycle to a safer location. It seems akin to the case of David vs. Goliath. Only this time, the big, black, shiny Goliath won. No contest.

This is not some abstract nightmare. It was an actual event. With this in mind, continue with me and picture the following:

Shortly after you realize you have lived through the above described experience, the police show up. They observe the situation, gather evidence, interview several witnesses. The woman who ran you down, repeatedly claiming she never saw you in front of her, despite your ground level actually being several feet higher than hers, appears to be in an ongoing state of frenzy, apparently unable to prioritize between focusing on her scratched bumper and passing the buck to you for causing the accident.

You arrive at Sutter General in an ambulance. Things are rather fuzzy, both from the trauma of your ordeal and a possible concussion. Your ribs, hip, a thigh that is rapidly growing a massive hematoma, and a broken leg are all protesting the length of time you are left waiting in the hall, unattended. Your questionable ability to focus adds a new dimension to the walls, ceiling and floor, all swaying and somewhat rotated. Someone eventually takes an x-ray, and the ER doctor tells you your lower leg is broken, but not your thigh - as if that makes everything okay. Having been ignored to this point, what would you expect to be next on the ER doctor's agenda? Perhaps checking out your head? Your eyes? The road burn on your cheek and forehead? Of course there's the blue area with dark purple dots forming on your side and problems taking in a deep breath might suggest a problem

with your ribs. But he's the doctor. He's the expert. He IS the medical "god" whose job it is to take competent medical care of you. Right? Well, ... Now if you were just an average 53 year old Joanne (or Joe), run down by a monstrous SUV in beautiful downtown Sacramento, California, this would be a typical, rational expectation of ER care. However, it appears there are several issues that must be addressed in this modern age of prejudicial consideration and treatment before any such conclusions. Such issues become all the more obvious when I went to take photographs of the "crime" scene at the edge of town - 12th and North "B" streets

Having been a UC Davis grad student, I was fortunate enough to have had amazing professors who encouraged me to always ask questions, evaluate situations and people on an individual basis, rather than merely taking the easy way out by pigeonholing my world into less challenging categories, involving far less or no thinking at all on my part. Others in this city obviously were deprived of such an advantage. Riding my bike near the location of 12th and "B", I sensed an attitude of contempt from drivers-by that seemed to increase as I passed the Alkali Flat light-rail stop, as if some invisible line of demarcation between civilization and the domain of the homeless existed there. Somehow I had transitioned from one of those good people trying to save our air and gas to a possible, then obvious "throw-away person". For who else would voluntarily enter this zone of unwantedness?

As I pedaled under the train bridge, one car driving toward me nearly bumped me. What was he - Blind? I was wearing a hot pink T-shirt. I have long red hair. My legs scream for the sun and add new meaning to the definition, "white". But then a second and then a third car nearly did the same thing and it dawned on me that I was just another involuntary participant in some sort of sporting event - you know, like bowling? Further, once within the official boundaries of "Never Never Land", the underpass just before the Salvation Army and Goldie's - the porno shop the "christians" in the area publicly prefer over a new homeless shelter - attitudes become even more pronounced. One driver spat on an elderly lady wrestling her flat wheeled shopping cart up the hill. She never lost stride in her robotic walk, eyes fixed on the pavement beneath her feet as if that were the only reality worth considering. Another woman walking on the side of the road, obviously suffering from some sort of physical/neurological problems, was nearly hit by an on-coming car full of teens playing chicken, laughing hysterically as they drove off after causing the woman to fall onto the hot blacktop, skinning her knee.

There was a cop car across the street who may or may not have seen what happened. But you would think they would have at least noticed the squealing tires and erratic driving. As the cops drove past me, moments later, they ignored my attempt to wave them down to address the incident. It was as though I, too, had now become invisible, just another "throw-away person".

Unfortunately, I have personally observed such stereotypic categorizations and treatment toward the poor and homeless at Sutter Hospitals, as well - and on more than one occasion. I assume the location of the accident was made known to the hospital en-route, by the ambulance and, possibly, also by the police. The patient was dressed casually in what were originally clean clothes, prior to getting shoved some 15+ feet across the oily, filthy roadway. Her body, on arrival at the ER, was covered with blotches and scrapes of soot-covered grime, now ground into her flesh as if part of its texture. To further enhance their questionable opinion of this accident victim, her front teeth were missing. Had she been dressed to the 9's, they may have at least been more likely to investigate, to ask if they were

knocked out during the accident. They may, at the least, have chosen not to use it as further evidence of her unworthiness to be considered a valid human being, deserving of proper medical attention and respect. They may also have learned she was the victim of a previous act of violence and was, in fact, a battered wife - not even homeless. And she DID have medical insurance through her employer!! But no one knew. They just assumed. Such presumptions far too frequently tend to justify a policy of doing the least amount of work for the most money possible instead of doing their jobs as doctors and nurses - supposedly compassionate, helping-humanity type professions. I realize the quality of care offered to the poor and/or homeless does not determine whether or not the hospital can get/keep government grants, private donations, etc. - only the head count matters. However, kindness, respect, at least a little civility might be nice... not to mention some attempt at appropriate attention to medical needs.

After the Sutter ER doctor determined only her lower leg was broken, they "sort of" haphazardly splinted it. Casts cost more in time and money. I have seen more professional jobs done by Cub Scouts with sticks and duck tape at the Big Bear Jamboree. Further, without questioning about any medical background that might be compromised by various medications (such as an extended history of kidney problems), the doctor gave her a prescription to fill, whenever she could, for 800 mg. Motrin to take "as needed for pain" (known to cause renal failure in some patients), then sent her out the door on crutches, still spacing out. They never

did give her anything for pain at the hospital, not willing to spend an extra dime. Nor did they ever check for head or rib injuries. This may have allowed them to feel more comfortable about expecting her to crutch her way to the nearest bus stop. Nor did it occur to anyone to ask if she even had bus fare, her purse lost at the scene of the accident. Not in any condition to think logically, she crutched the entire 12 blocks to her home, which they didn't even know if she had. Once there, she shared with her roommate the entire trip to the hospital - 3 times - obviously unaware of each repetition. Her right pupil was so dilated you could barely see a blue rim in her eye.

That was July 3rd. On July 8th, when I was finally able to get to UC Davis Med Center, the attending ER physician expressed his lack of approval at such a slapstick attempt at medical expertise by joking, "Oh! So now you've come to UCD to see a REAL doctor!" Although having to wait there for more than 10 hours, knowing competent, genuinely caring doctors and nurses were there to help makes the wait worth it in the long run. Being treated respectfully, no matter how you are dressed, is just an added bonus.

Different criteria for various degrees of quality in medical treatment, determined by one's subjective view of a patient's socio-economic status is, to say the least, inappropriate. So why is dehumanization of the poor and homeless so casually accepted as status quo? As in all areas of social justice - or injustice, as the case may be - it seems a well-established, socially accepted habit - expectation, if you will - to look the other way, take the easy way out, ignore the obvious, even as it comes crashing down like a ton of bricks. But unless it lands on someone's own proverbial head, that person tends to avoid such an epiphany at all cost. Someone once said ignorance is bliss. A more socially responsible and courageous person responded, however, that "Once you know the truth, you become responsible for it". Perhaps this is why some choose to look the other way. For if we recognize the injustice, the indignation, we may be expected by others to publicly acknowledge, define such issues. Even more unsettling, possibly overwhelming to some, may be personal expectations of self or some sense of obligation to do something about it - and perhaps failing. Could it be this same sort of indifferent attitude Martin Luther King, Jr. had in mind when he stated, so profoundly, that an injustice to one is an injustice to us all?

Such integrity takes a great deal of courage. But there is strength in integrity and the need for self-respect can be contagious. The medical profession and its representative institutions apparently need to be reminded of their obligation to hold accountable those who fail to meet ethical and moral responsibilities, their obligation to set an example of humanity to man, to remind them of the meaning behind the oath they took to "First, do no harm". This should include issues that touch a patient's soul, not just his/her physical needs. Such wounds can be successfully attended to by such gifts as kindness, and respect, freely offered, no matter what the patient's wardrobe, no matter what the patient's address.



# Peaceful Heart, Peaceful World

Street News Service [www .streetnewsservice.org](http://www.streetnewsservice.org)

**Alissa Fleet**

*Reprinted from Whats Up, Boston, July 2003*

The question has seemed more urgent lately. How? How do we do it? How do we bring about peace in the world? A real and lasting peace, for everyone.

Along with many others, I have found an urgent answer. And that is to bring about peace right away, starting wherever you are at this very moment, with whatever you are doing right now. We don't have to wait until the next peace march; we can make every step we take a step towards peace.

We do this literally, by putting great care and attention into the way we walk and by bringing that same care and attention to every thing we do. When we start doing our everyday activities—walking, eating, talking—in a spirit of awareness, we touch the peace that is already within us and in everything we encounter.

Many of us have learned this spirit of mindfulness from Thich Nhat Hanh or "Thay" (Vietnamese for "teacher"), as he is affectionately called. Based on his experiences in trying to bring a peaceful end to the war in Vietnam, Thay prescribes this special way of paying attention to all the ordinary activities of life as the way to transform ourselves personally. The idea is that when a community of people begin to transform themselves in this way, it gives way to a transformation of society. In this way, all of us are world leaders; when we begin to make peace in our own worlds, it has a profound impact on the global situation.

In this over-booked, over-achieving society, living mindfully does not come naturally to us. To do it well, we need practice! Here in Boston, as in many other places, there is a group of us who set aside a time each week to practice mindfulness. We practice not just by doing peaceful acts, but by being peace. When we're being peace, we naturally bring out the peaceful nature that is in everything we encounter and in each person we meet. The practice of being peace helps us not only become more peaceful inside, but prepares us to be true peacemakers in our families, in our communities, and on a global level.

During our weekly practice of "being peace" we simply do ordinary things as beautifully as we can. What exactly do we do during this time? We start by listening to the ringing of a bell. Listening to the bell reminds us to let go of our worries and distractions for this short time, and to focus on cultivating the kind of peace we want for ourselves and our world. And then...

We breathe. Sitting on the floor or in chairs we enjoy breathing. We let our attention

follow each breath, in-out, in-out, noticing the subtle variances and textures. After a few minutes of just watching the breath, there's usually an endless reel of thoughts whizzing by, interspersed with moments of calm and clarity. We spend a lot of time learning how to enjoy breathing, because our breath is the one thing that's always with us. As we learn to connect with our breath, we can return to it at any time in our busy lives; it becomes a reminder of the continuous cycle of coming and going that we are a part of.

We walk. We practice walking slowly, in mindfulness, remembering that "peace is every step." As we start walking, we bring some of the clear-headedness we experienced as we were just sitting and breathing, out into the world. Suddenly walking seems different. When we walk now, we feel grounded and solid. We are aware of the fact that every step we take, every action we take in the world, can be done in haste or in mindfulness. During this time we consciously take steps in mindfulness.

We eat. This is the fun part. Each person has the chance to offer their neighbor a cup of tea, a cookie, and then, once everyone is served, we enjoy, these as fully as we can. We make a kind of ceremony of passing around the plate of cookies and while all of this is done in silence, there's a very sweet joy that seems to get stirred up as the plate of cookies goes around. We then use all of our senses to nourish ourselves. We feel how hot the outside of the tea cup is to the touch, we notice the color of the tea, how thirsty we are before we take a sip, and how our thirst is then quenched.

We listen. When someone speaks, we practice listening not just to the words, but to the feelings and the person underneath the words. Listening to someone fully, with all of our being, has a way of bringing out the best in them.

We speak. Since our time together is very precious, we speak only about the things that are important to us. We try to speak in a loving way; in a way that inspires and brings people together.

These are such basic things! Breathing, walking, talking; we do them all the time. But when we practice doing them together as beautifully as we can, for even just two hours, it cultivates a very deep joy in us. That joy has a way of rippling out into our relationships, our friendships, our own family, and the human family. At the same time we are practicing the skills we need most as peacemakers: listening deeply to the suffering of others and speaking in ways that heal and join people together. When you come back to the present moment, you come back to the only place where true transformation can happen. And that's exactly where the world needs you.

## Obituary

### **Matt Goggin**

parapalegic, aged mid-20's.  
Hit by car in Colorado,  
family spread ashes here

### **Bonnie Lou Mack**

d. 2/20/03 aged 63  
Natural causes

### **Louis Reitman**

d. 4/21/03 aged 70 years  
of heart attack

### **Bryan Alan Carraway**

d. 4/21/03, aged 21  
Drowned near I St. bridge,  
jumped into river to avoid fight

### **Merle Anthony "Tony" Shannon**

aged 42  
Shot and killed in Richmond

### **Ms. Terry Alee**

d. 5/1/03 aged 47 yrs.  
Hit by train on Arcade Creek bridge

### **Glenn Herren**

d. 5/12/03 aged 53  
of heart disease - Found on sidewalk

### **Kevin Wohlenberg**

d. 5/22/03 aged 41  
homicide - killed on pipe bridge

### **"Famous" Amos Jordan**

d. 6/6/03 aged 58  
of cancer

### **Bret "Madness" Alan Vaughan**

d. 6/8/03 aged 33  
Hit by car

### **Alfred Sutton**

d. 6/11/03 Homicide  
died of head injuries from beating

### **Vanderbilt Thompson, Jr.**

d. 6/19/03  
of prolonged illness.

### **Wayne "Homer" Crawley**

d. 6/26 or 6/27/03  
found on Norwood Ave,  
cause pending, no sign of injury