

## Another Step Toward Mainstreaming Nonviolence

By **KEN BUTIGAN**, Truthout Op-Ed

The movement that ended President Hosni Mubarak's thirty year autocratic rule not only has created a spectacular breakthrough for Egyptian democracy, it has bequeathed a priceless gift to the rest of us in every part of the planet.

For eighteen days the Egyptian people carried out an unarmed revolution with determination, creativity, and a daring willingness to risk. They marched, they improvised, they prayed, they connected with one another. Most of all, they stayed put—and invited the nation to join them.

Faced with a corrupt and dictatorial police state, such a movement might have been tempted to wage armed struggle. Instead, they reached for, experimented with, and remained largely steadfast about another way: nonviolent people power.

Hence the tactics they chose: Massive demonstrations, brazen and ubiquitous use of social media, befriending the army, work stoppages, and eventually the call for a general strike.

Nonviolent people power operates on the assumption that systems of violence and injustice are not absolute and implacable. Rather, they are kept in place by pillars of support. These props include the police and army; the media; economic forces; cultural and ideological structures; and the general population. The job of a nonviolent resistance movement is to remove this support. Key to this process is alerting, educating, and mobilizing a growing number of people throughout the nation or society to withdraw their consent—and to overcome their fear of the consequences for doing so.

By staying this challenging course over the past three weeks—in the face of jailings, torture, organized thugs, demonization by state media, as well as a series of government half-measures designed to prevent real change—the Egyptian pro-democracy movement pulled down these pillars of citizen consent, economic viability, a number of elites, and even state media. (According to an Egyptian blogger who writes as Zeinobia, one of the state television news readers today said, "We

apologize, we read lies against our own will.")

As each of these supports gave way, the Mubarak presidency, despite its hubris and long-time projection of invincibility, was rendered powerless.

The gift that the Egyptian people have placed in each of our hands is the crystal clear example of the power of ordinary people to unleash seismic social change. It is the latest in an increasingly long line of such examples—from the labor movement and the struggle for women's suffrage, to the Indian Independence movement and the US Civil Rights movement, to the string of breath-taking nonviolent people-power movements that have toppled dictatorial

regimes, including in the Philippines, Chile, the Soviet Union, Indonesia, Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Tunisia.

Each of these prior cases has been incalculably important. What makes the accomplishment in Egypt especially valuable to the rest of the world at this time, however, is that (given the determination of the demonstrators, the stubbornness of the regime, and the ubiquity of social media and other technological innovations) many of us were able to follow this struggle step by step in real time and to therefore see in minute detail how this kind of monumental change happens.

**NONVIOLENCE. . . . . continued p. 8**

## Come and help organize "10 Days for Peace"

By **MIKE CHIAVETTA** and **JOHN LUCAS**

"10 Days for Peace" is coming this September! The Modesto Peace/Life Center, in conjunction with the area peace churches and community groups, is planning a community wide event that will focus on Peace and Social Justice for ten days during the month of September. The kick-off is slated for Sunday, September 11th, the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. The initial event will be a gathering of different community groups and people of faith focused on Peace, Unity, Understanding and Reconciliation.

Following the 9/11 Commemoration will be ten days dedicated to the goals of the 9/11 gathering leading up to September 21, the International Day of Peace.

Some of these events will be personal in which individuals make a commitment to do something for the day. Some of the ideas that have been offered include:

A day of meditation, prayer, or fasting. Wearing a certain color (white?) for peace. A "Pay It Forward Day" or "Random Act of Kindness" day.

We are also planning a few community events. Some of these ideas include:

A community song circle and Peace-Nic

(pic-nic) and an LBGT/ Straight High School Unity Dance.

A community workday such as a river clean-up day and planting of a "peace grove" with the help of Tuolumne River Trust.

A concert at Mancini Bowl in Graceada Park, or at a local church to which the public is invited.

A committee member is working on a peace flag "spectacle" at Modesto Junior College in conjunction with a Civic Engagement Film on Peace. These are but a few of the numerous ideas that have been suggested. The only limiting factor is the amount of individuals willing to take on an event and get it organized.

**ACTION:** If you are interested in organizing an event, come to a meeting of the "10 Days for Peace" Coordinating Committee.

We need volunteers to take up the commitment. The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 10th at the Peace/Life Center, 720 13th S., at 6 PM. We will only go an hour! Promise! Come and be part of the Peace Event of the Year! 10 Days for Peace, 2011! For more information please email me at [chiavetta.mi@monet.k12.ca.us](mailto:chiavetta.mi@monet.k12.ca.us), or call 209-527-7530.



### INSIDE CONNECTIONS

LOCAL . . . . .	2
MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD . . . . .	3
LIVING LIGHTLY . . . . .	4
POLLINATOR . . . . .	5

A MODEST PROPOSAL . . . . .	6-7
NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION . . . . .	8
GATHERING OF VOICES . . . . .	9
NET NEUTRALITY . . . . .	10
A VOICE . . . . .	11

## Rich Man/Poor Man Dinner: Saturday, April 16th

By MIKE CHIAVETTA

One of the gravest issues confronting this world is the mis-distribution of resources and the huge discrepancy between the haves and have-nots. As certain developed countries get the lion's share of food and resources, the rest live in want. Even in highly advanced countries there exists large pockets of abject poverty, child malnutrition and preventable diseases. These facts are the inspiration behind a joint effort by the Modesto Peace/Life Center and Project Hope at Modesto High School to address this issue.

A group of dedicated students and adults are planning a "Rich Man/Poor Man" Dinner. The event will be held on Saturday, April 16th at the Modesto Church of the Brethren. The doors will open at 5:30 p.m., with a program and dinner at 6:00 p.m.

The gist of the event is to bring to focus the fact that 10% of the world's population eats at a certain privileged level and the "other" 90% subsist at a much lower level. The central part of the event is a dinner in which 10% of the attendees will be served a gourmet five-course dinner reflecting the caloric intake of an individual in the developed world. The rest of the attendees will receive much less. A video produced by Modesto High students on hunger, both regional and national will also be shown. Central to the event is a "lottery" of student-prepared biographical representations of fictitious individuals worldwide.

This dinner is a benefit for several organizations. The Church of the Brethren and its weekly contribution to feeding the homeless, Modesto High Project Hope and it's commitment to Haitian relief and the Modesto Peace/Life Center youth activities.

The price of this event is \$10, and it will either be the cheapest gourmet meal that you have ever eaten or a very expensive bowl of beans and rice. What will be priceless is the awareness that participants will receive of a world dominated by the Rich Man/Poor Man dichotomy.

For tickets and/or information contact [chiavetta.mi@monet.k12.ca.us](mailto:chiavetta.mi@monet.k12.ca.us) Tickets will also be available at the Modesto Church of the Brethren and other area "peace" churches.

## "Cross Pollinated Gypsy Music" a bit of Klezmer and more

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Fishtank Ensemble, heralded as "one of the most thrilling young acts on the planet," tackles everything from wild Serbian and Transylvanian gypsy anthems and French hot jazz to Flamenco and oddball originals.

The band, which will perform at the final concert of the Sunday Afternoons at CBS 2010-11 season 3 p.m. March 13 at 1705 Sherwood Ave. in Modesto, includes two explosive violins, the world's best slap bass player, musical saw, flamenco and gypsy jazz guitar, trombone, opera, jazz and gypsy vocals, accordion and one little banjolele.

The LA Weekly says their concerts are a "not to be missed event" for music lovers. Check them out at [www.fishtankenensemble.com](http://www.fishtankenensemble.com). Tickets: \$20 adults, \$15 students and seniors; \$7 for children Purchase tickets at the venue between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. weekdays, at the door, or by calling 571-6060.

## Country Crossroads Quilters/Central California Art Assn. call to artists

Country Crossroads Quilters is accepting entries from artist 18 years and older for "A Celebration of Fiber Arts Exhibit" at the Mistlin Gallery. Categories include quilts, weaving, needlework, wearable and accessories.

Entries are due Monday, March 7 along with fees for exhibit space reservation. Show dates are March 22 through April 30.

Sponsored by Central California Art Association. Entry form at [www.countrycrossroadsquilters.com/11QuiltShow.html](http://www.countrycrossroadsquilters.com/11QuiltShow.html). Call 209-918-4376, or visit Mistlin Gallery, 1015 J St., Modesto, 209-529-3369. Gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.

## Save the date!

Hold the weekend, June 24-26 for Peace Camp, the Modesto Peace/Life Center's annual event at Camp Peaceful Pines in the Sierra. Mountain beauty. Workshops. Great food. Community. Campfire. Singing. Talent show. Hiking. Plan to join us!

## Friends of the Modesto Library book sale

By CLARE NOONAN

Help the downtown Modesto library and get a bargain, too, by attending the Friends of the Modesto Library book sale Saturday, May 7. From 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the east portico of the Stanislaus County Library, 1500 I St., there will be bargains galore, with hardbound books going for \$1 and paperbacks at 50 cents.

It doesn't matter what you read, this sale likely will have it: popular fiction, biographies, memoirs, military and general history and children's books are other categories.

The Friends of the Modesto Library pays for programs such as story time, special events, and buys the library fun and educational items, including the beautiful aquarium that fascinates young and old.

Gently used books are welcome as are volunteers to help the day of the sale. Contact Clare Noonan to donate books (no textbooks) or volunteer to help sort books or work the day of the sale: 522-5054 or [clarenoo@gmail.com](mailto:clarenoo@gmail.com)

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# Your Members of Congress Are Coming: TALK TO THEM ABOUT THE BUDGET!

## From Friends Committee on National Legislation

House leaders want to make sweeping cuts in federal government spending—in all areas except the Pentagon. President Obama's budget would freeze domestic spending for the next five years—while allowing the Pentagon budget to grow.

Your senators and representative will soon be home to touch base with you. They need to hear from you that their constituents want them to rein in military spending. Consider scheduling a lobby visit to talk with your members about the need to cut the Pentagon budget.

Upcoming House and Senate recess: March 21-25, 2011

## How to Schedule a Meeting with Your Member of Congress

Steps that will increase your chance of getting a meeting:

1. Call your senators' or representative's local office(s). Look up the number here: <http://capwiz.com/fconl/directory/congdir.tt> Ask for the scheduler's name and his or her fax number.
2. Put together a written request for a meeting with the senator or representative. Nearly all verbal requests are rejected. Send the written request to the scheduler and copy any other staff members you know in the office (the original must go to the scheduler). The request should be less than a page long and include

- who is in your delegation, with their titles or affiliations ;
- what you want: a 30-minute meeting with the senator/representative;
- when you want to meet: specify the days and times your delegation can meet;
- where you want to meet: give the location of the district office closest to you ; and
- why you want to meet: to talk about next steps to end the occupation in Iraq .

Tip: Check <http://capwiz.com/fconl/directory/congdir.tt> for your members' contact information, background information, committee assignments, and voting records. You will also find their declared religious affiliations, which can be useful for an interfaith delegation.

3. Fax in the written request as soon as you can, even if you don't have the full delegation.
4. Follow up with a phone call to the scheduler one day after you fax the written request. Don't ask if they have an answer; just ask if they've received the request.
5. Follow up again two to three days later to see if there is an answer.

Find out more about making your lobby visit effective at: [http://www.fcnl.org/getin/resources/meet\\_congress.htm](http://www.fcnl.org/getin/resources/meet_congress.htm)

# Losing the Future: House Republican budget cuts would strangle innovation

By DANIEL J. WEISS and KATE GORDON

The Center for American Progress has released the article "Losing the Future: House Republican Budget Cuts Would Strangle Innovation" by Daniel J. Weiss and Kate Gordon, which outlines exactly how conservatives in Congress will cripple business and job growth by massively disinvesting in clean technologies.

In his recent State of the Union speech, President Barack Obama proposed a number of programs to speed the development and manufacturing of domestic energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors to help American businesses race with their Chinese, German, and other competitors. But before the president's proposals had completed their initial laps in Congress, the Republicans' proposed House "continuing resolution" (or spending bill) for the remainder of fiscal year 2011 waves the yellow caution flag that they would slow down—if not outright halt—the promise of America's clean-tech revolution and all the ensuing companies and jobs it would create.

The new article and accompanying chart show that the proposed bill would slash clean-tech and energy investments by nearly 30 percent, devastating this growing but immature industry that struggled during the Great Recession. The House Appropriations Committee majority brags that it "cuts climate

change funding bill-wide by \$107 million, or 29%, from the fiscal year 2010 enacted level." The proposed budget includes many other cuts that would harm innovation, the economy, and public health. The House Appropriations Committee majority claims its bill would cut spending by more than \$100 billion between now and October 1. And clean energy, one of the great hopes for American global competitiveness, is one of its biggest targets.

The proposed budget bulldozes the building blocks of clean-tech innovation and economic growth. It would slash spending for science, information, research and development, infrastructure, job training, efficiency, domestic manufacturing, solar and wind power, and transit options that could help reduce our oil dependence. Instead of proposing a budget that invests in future clean-tech jobs, the proposed House Republican budget turns back the clock to the Bush administration era when there was relatively little investment in clean tech and other countries began to lap us. The proposed House GOP spending bill for the remainder of 2011 would strangle clean-tech innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth.

Read the full article at [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/02/budget\\_cuts\\_innovation.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/02/budget_cuts_innovation.html)



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## Waste Not, Want Not

By JENIFER WEST

As we collectively became more affluent, some of the old, commonsense habits seemed to go by the wayside. It's time to revive them – they'll serve us well in these challenging times!

Cook at home. Save money, avoid waste, and get healthier, in the bargain! If you don't know your way around the kitchen, invest in a good basic cookbook, like the red-and-white checked one from Better Homes & Gardens. Here, once again, are some shortcuts that'll make it much quicker and easier:

Prep ahead: A small investment of your time can really pay off! I used to dread cooking dinner after working all day, but now I can throw a meal together in no time. (And a pressure cooker speeds up the process even more!)

Onions, carrots, celery and bell peppers can be chopped, separately, ahead of time. Spread them out on cookie sheets and pop into the freezer. When frozen, transfer them to plastic freezer bags (use a spatula to loosen, if necessary) and store in the freezer. Throw them, frozen, into your dish as it cooks.

Garlic and ginger can be minced, again separately, with a little oil. Line cookie sheets with plastic wrap, form into logs on the cookie sheets and freeze. Wrap the logs in plastic wrap and store in the freezer. To use, break off chunks. Ginger loses a little of its flavor when frozen, so use slightly more than your recipe calls for.

Cheese can be grated and frozen. I pack it in 2-oz packages, or about ¼ cup, double-wrap and freeze.

Watch the weekly sales, especially for deals on staples, and meat if you eat it. I try not to spend more than \$1 a pound for meat, and usually buy extra. When I get home, I portion it out into dinner-sized packages, double-wrap, label and freeze. I recently bought a couple of hams for \$.99 a pound, and had them cut into chunks. For my \$15.50 investment, we'll end up with at least 34 dinners, plus several more batches of soup from the bones. That works out to about \$.31 a serving!

### Buy in Bulk Whenever Possible

Staples like beans, grains (except brown rice), pasta, dried milk, sugar and honey can be stored almost indefinitely at room temperature. Learn to cook with these foods and watch the savings start to add up. Store beans and grains for free – recycle plastic milk or juice containers. Rinse them well, and set aside until bone-dry. Twenty-five pounds of grains or beans is about 3 ½ gallons. A FoodSaver, if you can manage it, can really help. (They sell attachments that will seal canning jars – they work great! Use lids that have already been used for canning – they seal better.)

### Avoid Waste Like the Plague

Get creative, particularly with leftovers. My favorite new toy is an inexpensive Zip-loc hand-operated pump. It takes special bags, but it's great for leftovers! Great suggestion

from the web: Freeze leftover bits of this & that (meat, veggies, beans, rice, even things like stuffing and scalloped or mashed potatoes). When you've collected enough, make soup. Each batch will be different, depending on what you've accumulated. And it's "free"! After I portioned out the ham mentioned above, I ended up with about 4 extra ounces. Rather than add it to an 8-ounce package, I put it into a vacuum bag & tossed it into the freezer. Later, I saved the stock from a jar of ham I'd pressure-canned awhile back – it's in a plastic container in the freezer. When it's frozen, I'll add it to the ham. It's just the right amount to make a quick soup for 1, or maybe 2, whenever the mood strikes.

Don't let fresh veggies go to waste. Use them for stock (see below), or blanch and put them in the soup bag. To blanch:

Bring a large pot of water to boil.

Drop in the veggies and leave a few seconds, just until their color turns.

Drop into cold water.

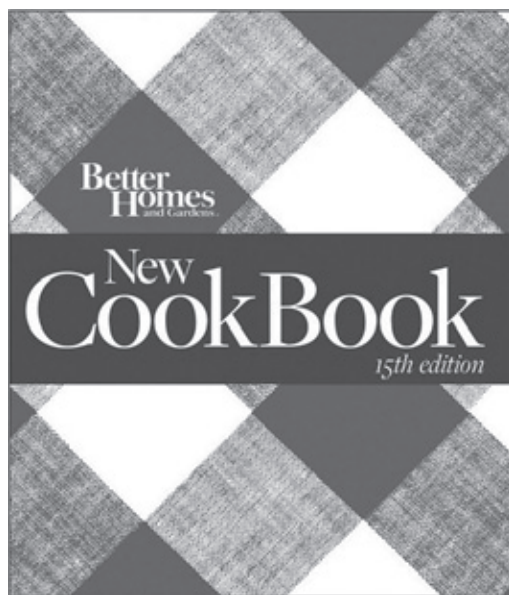
Drain; refrigerate or freeze.

Don't toss stale bread! Cut into cubes, air dry and place in a plastic bag. Bread cubes stored this way can eventually go moldy, so keep the bag in the freezer until you need them. Toss with melted butter and garlic salt, and toast in the oven. Viola – homemade croutons! Or, save for dressing or bread pudding.

Freeze the trimmings from veggies. When you have a full bag, pour it all into a large pot (frozen is fine), add chopped onion and a little garlic, cover with water and boil gently for 30 minutes. Cool, pour into ice cube trays and freeze. Use to enhance beans, soups, pilafs, when cooking veggies, and anywhere else you want to add a little extra flavor – and nutrition!

Buy a whole chicken and cut it up – you'll get at least 13 servings from a single bird! (Instructions available online.) The per-serving cost of a 5-1/2 pound bird at \$.99 would be just \$.39 a serving. At \$.79 a pound, the cost drops to \$.32 a serving.

These are just a few ways to save money, avoid waste and live lightly. No doubt you'll come up with some all your own.



## High Noon: for Russell Joseph Miller

The long awaited day is here.

RJ arrives suddenly, yet as expected.

Is he fine? Is he whole?

We have wandered through the months  
Waiting, yet focused on much more.

Now he will be the focus.

Life goes on but with new meaning  
A grandchild to carry on.

He is my first, and I feel so old.

Too old to start this journey

That should be for a younger one.

Can I still get down on the floor?

Worse yet, can I get up?

His parents – young, strong confident.

Can I measure up to expectations,

Both theirs and my own?

They will figure out what is right.

Right for them, right for him.

Will it feel right for me?

They are nature lovers, hikers, dog walkers.

Russ will love the trees and sand.

A winter week filled with sunshine,  
yet today a cold wind appeared.

It is the season of Emmys and Oscars.

I have been awarded a prize

Greater than any of those...a grandchild!

Wind chimes clang loudly, announcing

The arrival of a new baby.

He is here and beautiful!

Warm and lovely, a little bundle to hold.

Parents tired and proud,

Kind to share him in these first hours.

We pass him around and grandparents delight

In holding, cuddling, just looking at him.

We are all at peace at last.

— Grammy Alice Miller

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# What is the pollinator project?

By KRISTIN GUY and ANNE SCHELLMAN

The pollinator project is a demonstration garden/hedgerow here at the Stanislaus Agriculture Center in Modesto. It is an area planted to shrubs and wildflowers that are appealing to pollinators.

## How did it get started (who/when/why)?

The project is being funded through a Conservation Innovation Grant that the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, in partnership with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, received from the Natural Resources Conservation Service in 2009. They have at least 12 demonstration hedgerows being installed in six regions of the United States (with at least six new hedgerows in California) that were identified as important centers of insect-pollinated crop production. A majority of projects are being planted in fall 2010 and will be maintained and monitored over at least the next two years.

The East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District, University of California Cooperative Extension, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are donating time and expertise in planning, installing, monitoring, and maintaining the hedgerow here in Stanislaus County.

The purpose of the grant is to refine plant lists for pollinators in agricultural and rangeland settings, to develop and test project specifications, and incorporate all this information into formal job sheets.

## What types of plants were selected?

Predominantly natives were chosen for the site. Plants were picked based on their appeal to native bees and other pollinators as a source of food and shelter and the plants adaption to the soils and climate on site. Plants that are known to be problematic if planted near an agriculture site were avoided. More variety than is often seen on private sites was used so that more data can be collected as to the effectiveness and benefit of the plants used in this project. When selecting plants, the time of year and length of time that the plants bloom was looked at to assure that as much of the year as possible will have floral resources available for the pollinators to feed on.



## What pollinators do we have in our area that will use the plants?

The main focus of these pollinator gardens is to promote native bee populations. The hedgerows will also attract a wide variety of pollinators and insects such as moths, butterflies, and beetles and possibly even hummingbirds. California has approximately 1,500 different species of native bees, and the goal is to provide food and shelter for as many of these species as possible.

## What are the benefits of this type of project?

It is becoming clear that pollinators are a declining resource due to habitat loss, alteration, and fragmentation, as well as the use of pesticides, and pollinators are key to the production of many high-value crops in the United States. There is need for more specific information about how and what to do to create the most beneficial habitats. This type of research allows us to get the information needed to educate producers so they may successfully create these habitats on their individual farms. It also serves as a great tool to show producers what these types of plantings will look like and what to expect after a planting gets established.

## Was the project created to help farmers?

This project was created to help farmers and also to help restore habitat for our native pollinators. Research has shown that native bees make a significant contribution to crop pollination, even where honeybees are currently being used. With managed honey bee hives facing their current declines it is very important to look to natives to help support the pollination of our crops. These hedgerows will also benefit honey bees by providing them badly needed additional food sources.

## Can it help other people?

It is important for everyone to do their part in resource conservation. This demonstration hedgerow can be used as an example for people to use in their home gardens as well. Any habitat that is created benefits our native bees and often it is this habitat in a non-farm setting that can help create connectivity between other areas, allowing bees to have the most available resources.

Kristin Guy is a Soil Conservation Technician with USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service. Anne Schellman is Nutrition Education Program Manager, University of California Cooperative Extension, Stanislaus County

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# “Rich Man’s War and a Poor Man’s Fight”

By CAMILLO “MAC” BICA | *truthout*

According to David Nasaw, a history professor at the City University of New York, after having received his draft notice to report for military service during the Civil War Andrew Carnegie, the billionaire rail and steel magnate, paid an Irish immigrant \$850 to fight in his place.(1) Needless to say, Carnegie was by no means unique in his unwillingness to serve, as “draft dodging” was a common practice among the wealthy.

“A large number of the men of his generation, who would later be referred to as ‘robber barons,’ including Phillip Armour, Jay Cooke, J.P. Morgan, George Pullman, Jay Gould, Jim Fisk, Collis P. Huntington, and John D. Rockefeller spent the war as he did, making money by providing the Union Armies with fuel, uniforms, shoes, rifles, ammunition, provisions, transportation and financing.”(2)

Nor was it illegal: The Conscription (Enrollment) Act, passed by Congress in 1863 to address a manpower shortage in the Union Army, allowed an exemption from military service to those who either paid a “commutation fee” of \$300 or, like Carnegie, hired a substitute. Since only the privileged, wealthier citizens could afford such a remittance, military service, fighting and dying, became the exclusive burden of the poor and the working classes. As a consequence, those who were “condemned to serve,” and perhaps to die, viewed their conscription as forced servitude in a “rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight,” the rallying cry that mobilized thousands to take to the streets in protest. During one such uprising, the 1863 New York Draft Riots, some 2,000 protesters were killed and 8,000 injured, according to one estimate.

I believe the protester’s resentment and dissatisfaction with the Civil War draft and its exemption policy was not only understandable, but justifiable. According to contractarians like John Locke(3) , whose thinking profoundly influenced the Republicanism of our founding fathers, military service, especially in times of national emergency, becomes an obligation and civic responsibility of ALL able-bodied citizens in the state. Ideally, these citizen soldiers act from obligation, civic virtue, patriotism and love of country. Any exemption from military service, other than for physical or psychological disability, ignores the universality requirement of this civic (and moral?) obligation and violates the American ideals of fairness and shared sacrifice.

During the final years of the Vietnam War, Congress, at the behest of President Richard M. Nixon, refused to extend the draft law. Military conscription expired automatically on July 1, 1973, ushering in a new era of the all-volunteer

force (AVF). Sadly, however, war continues to be a national pastime. Throughout its existence and especially as the cost in blood, sanity and lives mount in the “war on terrorism” - now America’s longest war - it becomes apparent, not unsurprisingly perhaps, that civic obligation, patriotism and love of country prove insufficient motivation to bring adequate numbers of enlistees to the recruitment station. If the AVF was to succeed, more aggressive - though in the view of some, morally questionable - recruitment practices would be necessary.

Highly funded and technologically sophisticated TV commercials for military services that accentuate the mythological (adventure, glory, heroism, nobility) and the practical (a steady paycheck, money for college etc.), while ignoring its less attractive aspects (injury, death, loss of rights etc.), appear with regularity during broadcasts of sporting events, rock concerts etc. Military recruiters are frequent visitors to high schools, college campuses, NASCAR races, air shows, street fairs etc., trading military T-shirts, dog tags, key chains, violent video games

etc. for contact information, impressing children and young adults with displays of military machinery, weaponry and interactive war games.

Probably the greatest asset, however, to enabling the AVF to meet its manpower requirements, as it strains to wage three wars and occupations, is the state of the economy. With the official unemployment rate at about 9.5 percent, with jobs being outsourced at a rate of about 12,000-15,000 per month, with over 1.2 million more Americans expected to lose their homes to foreclosure in 2011 and with deep cuts in scholarships and Pell Grants, recruiters can now entice prospective enlistees with generous enlistment bonuses, steady salaries and a comprehensive GI Bill to pay their college tuition, fees and living expenses should they choose to continue their education upon completion of their enlistment contract.

While motivations may be complex, I think it fair to say that, given these dreadful economic realities, military service in the AVF has become a “job to be filled by cash inducements,” and the citizen soldier, driven by civic obligation, patriotism and love of country, has been replaced by homo economicus - a professional military of individuals motivated primarily by need and the realization that, in order to provide for themselves and their families or go to college, few if any alternatives are available to them other than military service. This is not to say, of course, that there are members of the military who are not motivated by such things, especially among the officer corps, or that homo economicus is not patriotic or does not love his country. It is just that, were it not for the economic incentives, they, like their more privileged

counterparts, would have been less likely to enlist. Further, to point out how the government exploits economic inequities to increase enlistment is not to belittle the personal sacrifices of those who serve out of love of country. Rather, it is to call attention to the prevalence of unequal sacrifice, an injustice that must be remedied. In light of such coercive economic conditions, perhaps the term “all volunteer force” is a misnomer, as enlistees can hardly be said to have chosen military service voluntarily.

Despite the deep recession, not all segments of American society are suffering economically. Banking and corporate executives, for example, continue to enjoy lucrative salaries and bonuses. Under the war economy, Main Street struggles, Wall Street thrives and America suffers the largest income gap between its richest and poorest citizens in recorded history. Consequently, although the draft with its exemption clause may be gone, little has changed since the Civil War. The children of the privileged and the wealthy, uncoerced by economic need, feel no compunction to place their physical and mental well-being in jeopardy by enlisting in the military. As a result of this extreme economic inequity and the AVF’s economic incentives, the modern equivalent of the substitution fee, once again the burden of fighting and dying falls upon the poor and working classes. Consequently, the AVF, not unlike the draft-military of 1873, smacks of classism and remains unrepresentative of American society. In fact, it may be even more insidious. During the Civil War, draft dodgers like Carnegie were at least required to pay the commutation or substitution fee out of their own pockets. In the AVF, it is paid for by the taxpayers. Ironically, given the system of taxation in this country that provides lucrative corporate

**Highly funded and technologically sophisticated TV commercials for military services that accentuate the mythological (adventure, glory, heroism, nobility) and the practical (a steady paycheck, money for college etc.), while ignoring its less attractive aspects (injury, death, loss of rights etc.), appear with regularity during broadcasts of sporting events, rock concerts etc.**

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tax loopholes and tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, these economic incentives to military service (i.e., the pay raises, enlistment bonuses, GI Bill etc.) are paid for, not by those who are spared (i.e., the privileged and the wealthy), but rather by those who are required, by economic need, to make the sacrifice, enlist in the military and risk injury and death in war - the poor and the working class.

One may argue, however, that my thesis that the AVF is unrepresentative of American society is disproved by the oft-cited Heritage Foundation Study, "Who Serves in the U.S. Military? The Demographics of Enlisted Troops and Officers," by Shanea Watkins Ph.D. and James Sherk, published on August 21, 2008. According to this Study's findings:

"Members of the all-volunteer military are significantly more likely to come from high-income neighborhoods than from low-income neighborhoods ... One quarter of enlisted recruits come from the wealthiest fifth of U.S. neighborhoods."

I think, however, that even a cursory review of the study reveals that its methodology is flawed and its conclusions unsubstantiated. For example, isn't the importance and purpose of this study to determine the economic status not of the neighborhoods from which recruits come, but rather of those individuals who actually serve in the military? If so, then why distract the reader with tangential information that may or may not be relevant to making this determination. To their credit, the researchers acknowledge and explain this crucial flaw in their data:

"Individual or family income data on enlistees do not exist. The Defense Department does not maintain records on the household income of recruits or officers."

But, yet, despite this alleged unavailability of data, the researchers draw their conclusions about the economic status of enlistees, based not on sound factual evidence, but, rather, on approximation, speculation and assumption.

"For example, 10 recruits in 2006 came from census tract 013306 in San Diego. Accordingly, we assigned to each of these 10 recruits a median household income of \$57,380 per year (in 2008 dollars), the median income of that tract in the 2000 Census."

After having approximated the household income of

## the citizen soldier, driven by civic obligation, patriotism and love of country, has been replaced by homo economicus

each recruit based upon the median household income of the census tract in which they lived, the researchers, as part of their "improved methodology," recorded their findings into quintiles. The first quintile included those making \$0-\$33,267, the second \$33,268-\$42,039, the third \$42,040-\$51,127, the fourth \$51,128-\$65,031 and the fifth, \$65,032-\$246,333. Here, again, there is cause for concern as the fifth quintile, the one designated by the researchers as the "wealthiest Americans," is clearly suspect. Besides the fact that designating individuals with an annual income of \$65,031 as the "wealthiest Americans" is ludicrous, the fifth quintile is three times greater than the previous four combined. Was this an oversight or a blatant attempt to fabricate findings that indicate a greater representation of the "wealthiest Americans" in the military?

In drawing their conclusions, the researchers interpret their data as follows:

"... more than three-quarters (76.5%) of enlisted recruits come from neighborhoods where the median family income is more than \$40,000 per year."

What Watkins and Sherk fail to mention, however, is that their findings also indicate that more than three-quarters (75.03 percent) of enlisted recruits come from neighborhoods with incomes of less than \$65,000, and only 6.15 percent from neighborhoods with an income of over \$90,000.

Had the researchers divided this fifth quintile into sets more commensurate with the first four, say in increments of about \$12,000-\$15,000, their findings would have further corroborated my contention that the number of individuals with military service decrease exponentially as the levels of income increase. Also indicated is that not one individual from a household with an income exceeding \$246,333, the demographic more reasonably designated as the "wealthiest Americans," serves in the military. Given these and other discrepancies and abnormalities, it is clear that the Heritage Foundation Study is flawed, that it is either sloppy research or intended to deceive. In either case, it warrants little if any credibility and, not only does it fail to refute my thesis, it affirms it.

One final point, given war's extreme profitability for the privileged and the wealthy (the corporatists, bankers, politicians - the military-industrial, Congressional complex) and the fact that with the AVF, they and/or their children will never step onto the battlefield and suffer war's deleterious effects, it is not surprising, therefore, that our nation is embroiled in a quagmire with the longest and most expensive war in American history. As the wars and occupations continue virtually ignored except by the small percentage of Americans who are directly impacted by the killing and dying - members of the military and their families - voices from both ends of the political spectrum are calling for the reinstatement of the draft as a means of sharing the burden of military service, or to "reinvigorate" the peace movement.

I have always opposed the draft as immoral and unconstitutional, but as the situation in this country has grown dire, drastic measures are required. Consequently, as much as it pains me to say, I think that the most plausible solution to what can only be described as war profiteering and a violation of the principle of universal obligation and shared sacrifice, is to reinstate the draft, but with a stipulation. Unless and until these gross economic inequities are remedied and educational and employment opportunities are made available to all, only those young men and women whose families earn an annual income exceeding \$250,000 will be subject to mandatory military service with few if any exemptions other than REAL, documented and severe medical impairment.

This "Fairness Draft," will accomplish three important goals. First, it helps furnish the manpower necessary to sustain the AVF and ensure the national defense. Second, it satisfies both the intent of the social contract and the principle of distributive justice by ensuring that the burden of military service is shared equally by all segments of the population, regardless of economic status. Lastly and, perhaps most importantly, as the cost-benefit analysis changes, that is, should the lives and well-being of the children of the privileged and the wealthy - the progeny of bankers, corporate executives, politicians etc. - be placed at risk, the frequency and number of wars will decrease significantly.

By providing a fair distribution of sacrifice, with fewer unnecessary and immoral wars, and the eventual educational and employment opportunity for all, the Fairness Draft is a good first step toward creating a more perfect union and ensuring that the alleged struggle to end terrorism no longer remains a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight."

#### Footnotes:

1. David Nasaw, Andrew Carnegie, Penguin Press HC, (October 24, 2006)
  2. Ibid, p. 85.
  3. John Locke, Second Treatise on Government, Hackett Publishing Company, (1980).
- Source URL: <http://www.truth-out.org/rich-mans-war-and-a-poor-mans-fight67666>



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## Mainstreaming nonviolence

... from page 1

We were able to see this campaign in slow motion: the initial call, the gathering momentum, the series of repressive attacks, the galvanizing power of Days of Prayer, the lulls, the unexpected developments (the release of Wael Ghonim, for example, and his electrifying television interview), the government's ineffective sticks and even more ineffective carrots, the wave of strikes that began to spread across the country, the much anticipated resignation speech that turned out to be a defiant declaration of authority, and then the undoing of that authority the next day.

This eighteen day saga riveted the world. It offered us a new, three-dimensional awareness of our power to make change through determined, nonviolent action. And it offers us a glimmer of hope as we stand at a monumental crossroads in human history.

In a time of virtually permanent war, growing poverty, threats to civil liberties, ecological devastation, and many other problems, humanity faces the challenge and opportunity to choose powerful and creative nonviolent alternatives. We can continue to opt for the devastating spiral of violence and injustice, or we can build civil societies where the dignity of all is respected and the needs of all are met. True peace and long-term human survival depend on this.

Egypt gives us a clear and radiant example of the non-violent option.

As President Obama said in a press conference after Hosni Mubarak's resignation, "It was the moral force of nonviolence, not terrorism, not mindless killing but nonviolence, a moral force that bent the arc of history toward justice once more."

For eighteen days, Egypt "mainstreamed nonviolence." Mainstreaming nonviolence does not mean creating a utopia where conflict, violence, and injustice do not exist. Instead, it is the process of nurturing a culture that advances nonviolent options for addressing complicated challenges in ways that are neither violent nor passive. We have much to learn from this powerful experiment in this peaceful and determined struggle for justice.

All of us owe debt of gratitude to the pro-democracy movement in Egypt for this monumental gift that reveals for people everywhere the power and possibilities of nonviolent change in a world wracked by violence and injustice.

Source URL: <http://www.truth-out.org/another-step-toward-mainstreaming-nonviolence67709>. Also see <http://wagingnonviolence.org/2011/02/another-step-toward-mainstreaming-nonviolence/>

## Ten Lessons from Tunis & Cairo

By MAS'OOD CAJEE

The Tunisians & Egyptians, in shaking off long-standing dictators, have inspired the downtrodden and hopeless well beyond their borders. The Chinese government has moved to block TV & internet discussion of events in Cairo by their citizens. The marchers in Tunis and Cairo have even inspired Russian protestors. We can learn a lot from their experiences. Here are some of the lessons:

1. Courage trumps tyranny. It just needs to be nurtured and kindled. Moreover, courage is contagious.
2. An authoritarian police state is no match for nonviolent people power. An uprising grounded in the prayers of the oppressed is a tremendous thing. Ordinary people can change their own situation.
3. Expect no support from the "international community." In fact, at best, expect ambivalence and a steady supply of tear gas canisters and rubber bullets.
4. Change can occur without strapping explosives to torsos or vehicles, without bombs or bullets.
5. Change isn't easy or free. The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of martyrs, as Thomas Jefferson once said.
6. Once fear of the tyrant and his minions is removed from the hearts of the people, the game is up.
7. Once the tipping point comes, once the paradigm shift occurs, things change rapidly and suddenly. The mighty will fall quickly. The tiger, you will find out, was made of paper after all.
8. You don't have to wait for a Great Leader. You don't have to wait for the Messiah. You don't have to wait for "Salaheddin." You just need good grassroots organizing and will. Mosques and churches help. Communication tools like satellite TV, smart phones, and social media also help.
9. Cruel, callous regimes don't last forever. Regimes that limit freedoms and crush dreams certainly cannot last.
10. Tyrants are not immune from revolt. Revolts are not immune from tyranny either. The gains of change must be defended against chaos, anarchy, and other bad happenings.

Mas'ood Cajee is a dentist in Manteca, California, who also holds a Master of Public Health degree. He is a practicing Muslim whose ancestors came from India, by way of South Africa.



Valley Progressives and Peace Center members vigil in solidarity with union workers and the people of Libya on February 26. PHOTO: Leo Stutzin.

**DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS:** Tenth of each month. Submit peace, justice and environmental event notices to Jim Costello, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org) Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing. To access updated calendar items, see <http://stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm>



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## People

People,  
A world together  
a culture chorus  
Greek-Arabian rap  
sophisticated Brahmins  
singing show tunes

People,  
the goods are movin'  
Denmark does pasta  
Japanese fanatic about flamenco  
the New World of novelty  
Henna art on the bare arm Hispanic  
Chinese acrobats wearing Egyptian  
costumes

People,  
the ideas are movin'  
the MacWorld is not  
a straight road to hell  
nor a paradise either  
Bits of exotica  
mined by the cool hunter of trends

People are movin'  
playing the Chinese Mah-Jongg computer  
game  
with internet German groupies  
Taiwan is rising  
tallest building in Asia  
world's largest department store  
coming soon

## A Mere Shadow

She that walks and leaves no tracks  
finds memories  
in the willow thicket along the stream  
and in the scent of fire.  
Her gaze crosses the cobalt lake  
that lies beneath the sheltering sky---  
lifts up a memory to the soaring ridges,  
skirted by spruce,  
dusted by snow.

## I Cannot Stay

I cannot stay  
I wither here  
The soil is poor  
Underlain with hardpan  
Gives no room  
For roots to grow  
No oxygen for breathing.

I wither here  
Don't ask me to stay  
I cannot stand  
The summer temper  
Broiling up the dust  
Thwarting bees in season  
Orchard trees dying one by one  
In hardpan giving  
No room for roots to grow  
No oxygen for breathing.

I will not stay  
I wither here  
I cannot root in boggy earth  
In this winter's chill  
Full the foggy smell  
Of slow decay  
Each living thing here  
Surviving in its own wretched way  
Or succumbing  
To the rotting ground  
Underlain with hardpan  
No room for roots to grow  
No oxygen for breathing.

## Buddha and the Smiling Idiots

The Cambodian immigrant,  
College trained and poorly paid,  
willingly came  
to teach the unteachable  
the art of drawing  
the human figure.  
Twelve intent faces,  
understood  
and drew...  
This, an offering  
to that thin slice of Sublime,  
in a bit of space,  
in a moment of time.

## Dying in Room 16B

She lies in the bed  
Under a comforter  
Though the temperature is 80.  
She insisted on a window.  
Holding her pillow  
She rises up to view  
A blank wall.

Her squinting eyes  
Pencil on it during day hours  
But at night  
With her watery sight  
She paints falling stars  
On the blue-ink wall.  
She lies on the warm beach  
Hugging her lover.



## Poet Elizabeth Massaro

Elizabeth Massaro has lived in the Central Valley for many years. She received her advanced teaching credential from Fresno State. While looking for a teaching position, she took a temporary job at a local printing company in Porterville. When she started working the night shift, she found that that shift got paid significantly less than the day shift. She talked the night shift into signing a petition for equal pay for equal work, which she presented to the bosses of the company. The night crew got their raise!

Elizabeth has affection for the Walker Wilderness Area in the Sierras. She has been writing poetry all her life. She writes hoping to catch the feeling of a moment in a word picture. Elizabeth has been spotted attending poetry venues in Modesto and Sacramento.



# The Not-So-Neutral Net:

**The FCC's new rules on Net Neutrality open the Internet to corporate discrimination. But it's not too late to preserve Internet freedom.**

By JENN ETINGER

Without Net Neutrality, Internet providers can act as gatekeepers on the Web, preventing users from using sites and applications from competitors.

The Internet was created as an “open” or “neutral” platform, and net neutrality is the principle that ensures that Internet providers can't interfere with a user's ability to access any content on the Web, whether it's a community blog, a YouTube video, or a major news site. It's essentially the First Amendment of the Internet.

In late December, the Federal Communications Commission enacted new rules on net neutrality—rules that are supposed to protect Internet users from discrimination and to prevent Internet providers like AT&T, Comcast, and Verizon from acting as gatekeepers on the Web.

But the FCC missed the mark, and its rules not only fail to protect Internet users, but bolster the big phone and cable companies' ability to carve up the Internet among themselves. As Net Neutrality champion Senator Al Franken said, the rules are “simply inadequate to protect consumers or preserve the free and open Internet.”

The limited protections leave the door open for the phone and cable companies to favor their own content or applications.

During the presidential campaign, Barack Obama came out strongly in favor of net neutrality, saying he would “take a back seat to no one” on the issue. But in the end, Obama's FCC chairman, Julius Genachowski, failed to deliver on the president's promise, instead issuing ambiguous rules riddled with loopholes that corporate lobbyists will easily undermine.

Over the past several years, the phone and cable companies have flooded Washington with millions of dollars and hundreds of lobbyists to buy support in Congress and put pressure on the FCC. Public interest groups and a few lawmakers have tried to fight back, and more than two million people have urged the FCC to adopt strong net neutrality rules, but Chairman Genachowski ultimately caved to industry demands and turned a deaf ear to the public.

## What Went Wrong: Real vs. Fake Net Neutrality

At its core, real net neutrality is a clear rule of non-discrimination that governs all Internet providers. It means that your provider can't slow down your service in order to speed up someone else's. It means that your provider can't exploit legal loopholes to slow down your access to Netflix while speeding up Hulu because it happens to own Hulu. It means that there's one Internet, whether you access it from your home computer or your mobile phone.

But the rules that the FCC passed in December are vague and weak. The limited protections that were placed on wired connections, the kind you access through your home computer, leave the door open for the phone and cable companies

to develop fast and slow lanes on the Web and to favor their own content or applications.

Worse, the rules also explicitly allow wireless carriers—mobile phone companies like AT&T and Verizon—to block applications for any reason and to degrade and de-prioritize websites you access using your cell phone or a device like an iPad. That means these companies could block something like the music service Pandora, while offering unlimited access to its own preferred applications, like VCast.

We're already seeing what a world without real Net Neutrality will look like. Just weeks after the FCC's vote, MetroPCS, the nation's fifth-largest wireless carrier, announced new plans that would block popular applications like Skype and Netflix while favoring YouTube. This is particularly egregious because MetroPCS serves a lower-income audience that is increasingly moving toward the mobile Web as their only way to get online.

Some companies are already marketing “deep packet inspection” technology that would allow carriers to nickel-and-dime you by charging you every time you visit Facebook or try to stream a Vimeo video. If MetroPCS gets away with its scheme—which appears to violate even the FCC's weak rules—you can bet that AT&T and Verizon will waste no time in unveiling their own plans, which would mean higher bills and fewer choices on the mobile Web.

Lastly, the FCC's short-sighted action failed to contend with a series of drastic deregulatory decisions made during the Bush administration that severely hamstrung the FCC's ability to oversee the phone and cable companies. By failing to restore the agency's authority over broadband, the FCC risks seeing even these rules tossed out in court.

The FCC rules were designed to appease the phone and cable companies—but even that didn't work. Verizon has already filed suit against the agency, showing that these gatekeepers will settle for nothing less than total deregulation and a toothless FCC.

## Undoing the Damage

The FCC still has the opportunity to put in place a solid framework that would put the public interest above the profit motive of the phone and cable companies that it is supposed to regulate.

The FCC's new rules are certainly a setback in the quest to protect the Web as an open platform and an integral piece of our communications infrastructure and our democracy. In the absence of clear FCC authority and oversight of the Internet and a strong Net Neutrality framework that protects your right to go wherever you want, whenever you want online, AT&T, Comcast, and Verizon are free to interfere with your Internet experience.

The FCC still has the opportunity to put in place a solid framework that would put the public interest above the profit motive of the phone and cable companies that it is supposed to regulate. And the FCC should take immediate steps to close the loopholes it created, to strengthen its rules, and to include wireless protections. The fight is far from over. We can work to change the rules, demand better oversight and consumer protections and make sure that the big companies can't pad their bottom lines on the backs of their customers.



**Without Net Neutrality, Internet providers can act as gatekeepers on the Web, preventing users from using sites and applications from competitors.**

Illustration by Melissa St. Hilaire.

Jenn Ettinger wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. Jenn is media coordinator for Free Press, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to reform the media: <http://www.freepress.net/>

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# The instrument that gave me a voice

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

John Leventhal. Buddy Miller. Waddy Wachtel. Nina Gerber. If you enjoy the music of Shawn Colvin, Roseanne Cash, Emmy Lou Harris, Stevie Nicks, Dave Alvin, or Karla Bonoff then you have heard Leventhal, Miller, Wachtel, and Gerber. Their guitars and sometimes backing vocals provide counterpoint to meaty lyrics or sweeten the sound of a sad song. It was Wachtel who created the one note guitar part that literally propels Stevie Nicks's huge hit, "The Edge of Seventeen."

I have no idea why, but I have always wanted to be like Leventhal, Miller, Wachtel, and Gerber. They are the musicians in backing band who serve as the foil for the singer-songwriter. I never wanted to be James Taylor, I wanted to be Danny Kortchmar. By the same token, I never wanted to be like Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin. I have never wanted to be known for stepping out. I have always wanted to be the kind of player whose work you miss when it's not there.

Thing is... I am a mediocre guitar player. At best. Seriously. I have very little ability to do what John Leventhal, Buddy Miller, Waddy Wachtel, and Nina Gerber do. I taught myself guitar as a teenager. Learning only enough to accompany my voice and write songs. I never dreamed I could play lead guitar, and I always relied on band members to play lead for me. Thirty years after my first strum, I'm still not a good lead guitar player and I suppose I never will be.

In the early 1990s I picked up the mandolin as an option for jamming when there were already too many guitar play-

ers. I took to it quickly. The tuning seemed natural, my hand seemed to find melodies and riffs all by itself. Indeed I taught myself "Premier Suite des Symphonies" (which you might know better as the theme to Masterpiece Theater) while trying to teach myself the well-known fiddle tune, "The Girl I Left Behind Me." The fact that "Premier..." just came to me as I tried to find the other tune changed my sense of myself as a musician. From that moment on I have believed that I don't need to sing a song to have a voice. I can make the mandolin my voice; I can play the melodies I hear in my head.

As my mandolin skills grew, the fantasy of being the genius behind the singer-songwriter continued to slumber despite the fact that I could play at increasingly advanced skill levels. The problem is, no models for sideman-extraordinaire on mandolin exist. The closest is probably Sam Bush, a mandolinist whose career has included a significant stint as bandleader for Emmy Lou Harris's Nash Ramblers. Bush even plays electric mandolin, but he uses that mainly as an amusing departure from his more middle-of-the-[mandolin]-road work. Further, Bush now leads his own band, preferring to support himself rather than someone else.

Leventhal, Miller, Wachtel, and Gerber are primarily --if not solely-- guitar players. They stick to guitar because the guitar is as close to an instrumental sine qua non as pop music will ever have. It is a cultural icon, and the normative instrument for all popular music in America. On the other hand, public perception of the mandolin is often colored by preconceived notions of its capabilities. These notions have been developed in most listeners' minds by infrequent exposure to Bluegrass, a genre almost single-handedly invented by a Kentucky mandolin player named Bill Monroe. Mandolin's reputation as a hillbilly instrument has had a broad and lasting effect in the music industry. For example, Bluegrass legend, Alison Krauss, dismissed mandolinist Adam Steffy from her band, Union Station, in the late 1990s. Then she hired mandolinist Dan Tyminski and asked him to play guitar.

Still my dream started to enter my waking hours when two things happened. 1) I heard Chris Thile play both with Nickel Creek and as a solo act. His virtuosity showed me that mandolin could step into popular music without saying to the listener, "We're playing Bluegrass now." 2) I bought a solid body electric mandolin: two hundred dollars worth of 4 string fire and gold sparkle paint. The pop and rock songs that have been rolling around in my head for 30 years started falling out of my hands. Yes, they were usually an octave higher than the original guitar parts, but they were still there.

I eagerly, maybe gleefully, dug old guitar effects boxes out



of storage, dusted off the old amplifier, plugged everything in, and started experimenting. After a few months I settled on a few tones and treatments that I felt were interesting, useful, versatile, and still constituted a personal voice.

Finally I needed to address the issue of amplification. On a trip to San Diego a few years ago I stumbled across a little Marshall GR15R-CD. It is designed specifically to get excellent tone at low volume. It sounds so good that I can easily play in completely acoustic settings without overpowering an acoustic guitar or a voice. Bonus #1: this amplifier was made with solid-state circuitry rather than tube circuitry, so it's small and light as a feather. Bonus #2: it has an output jack that allows me to plug it into a PA should I need volume suitable for a larger audience.

I'm ready to roll and I have reunited local singer/songwriter who goes by the sobriquet, "Señor." Catch us at a coffeehouse in the near future.

**ACTION:** Friendly reminder: I'm sure the folks at the Great Valley Museum will appreciate: The Tule Fog Fete is Sunday, March 6, 2011 at Caswell State Park from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can catch me there playing folk and Bluegrass music with people who have appeared in these columns. The electric and the amp will stay home.

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