



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

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REPEAL LB 775 STARTING NOW

Enough is too much, already. Nebraska state senators, as their first order of business in the Special Session, should unanimously vote to repeal LB 775. As state budget shortfalls loom, it is critical that all sectors of our economy share the pain, including Nebraska's corporate citizens. If Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns does not rise to the occasion, then he is not the man I have come to hope he is—pragmatic and authentically centrist. Just last December, at the 88th annual Nebraska Farmers Union State Convention, Governor Johanns said, in his administration, tax “shift” would not be a four-letter word.

Since October 2001, the Nebraska Legislature has been consumed with the ugly business of cutting muscle from already lean funding for virtually every state agency, the University system and state and community colleges, the Nebraska Arts Council and more. Rural Nebraska was a major blood donor, with the loss of Nebraska Department of Agriculture funding for value-added programs and animal damage control and the elimination of general funds for the Rural Development Commission. Rural property taxpayers will bear additional levy lid overrides as a result of cutbacks in state aid to schools. Rural economic development and value-

added programs help increase income to thousands of small businesses and ag producers across Nebraska. Local, community-based food processing and marketing is one of the pillars of long-term survival for the family farm system of agriculture. Animal damage control is critical way beyond getting varmints out of peoples' basements. Some scientists think human depopulation of rural areas is creating greater opportunities for big, shy predators like mountain lions, lynx, and wolves, which appear to be returning to the state. Reinventing gutted programs like these in the future will be expensive and frustrating. Slashing them in the first place is wasteful and dumb.

As their second order of business, Nebraska state senators had better reverse themselves on the matter of slashing childcare subsidies for the poorest of the working poor. It is just bad policy (deranged, actually) to take quality childcare and peace of mind away from a single mother who is going to school and working to get off welfare. Surely Governor Johanns' strong support for quality childcare for working families is not going to evaporate in an election year.

It would be a mistake to think Nebraskans are not watching to see whose oxen get gored, and

how deeply. I hope the governor does not forget that the majority of Nebraskans who elected him also voted down Initiative 413, put on the ballot by LB 775 beneficiaries, also known as the Business Summit, in a straightforward run at locking corporate welfare into the Nebraska Constitution.

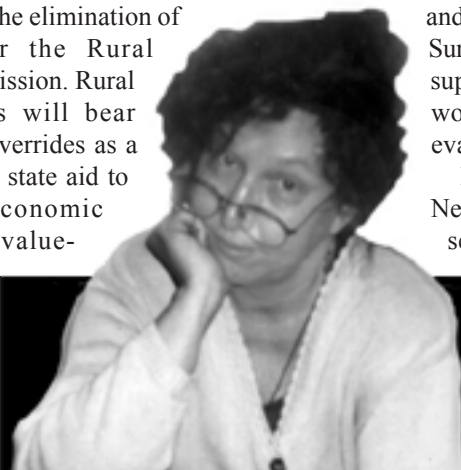
This past legislative session, in light of Nebraska's budget crisis, Sen. Dave Landis proposed sunset legislation on LB 775, bless him. Sen. Bob Wickersham—who will be missed—proposed open books for LB 775 recipients after three years. The Business Summit boys, in case you weren't paying attention, could not come up anything but a vague “it will hurt business practices” argument. To my dismay, Nebraska state senators bought this threadbare excuse.

Excuse me, but LB 775 has cost ordinary Nebraska taxpayers conservatively \$1.1 billion over 15 years. More than a little accountability is due Nebraskans about the jobs created and benefits to the state. A recent *Lincoln Journal Star* article said taxpayers are already on the hook for another \$500 million plus over the next decade.

If by some unobserved miracle, the Business Summit is in fact pulling its weight in creation of meaningful jobs that grow Nebraska communities, why are they not touting the glowing numbers? Why are they

not in fact reporting their LB 775 cost/benefit ratios in heartwarming commercials during the evening news? Why isn't Governor Johanns, the LB 775 enthusiast, calling on Nebraska corporations to share the hard facts and figures of their good news—if indeed there is any—so he can proudly publish Nebraska's success as a model and inspiration for his fellow governors?

The reason the Business Summit doesn't want transparency where the wheels of LB 775 tax breaks-for-jobs meet the road is that they know seven years more data will show the same trend as the Goss & Phillips 1998 study, “Business Tax Incentives: Do the Rich Get Richer?” Two Creighton University economists found that by 1995, Omaha, Lincoln and Class I cities—totaling 52% of Nebraska's population—had received more than 90% of LB 775 income and employment benefits. Cities and towns under 5,000 and rural areas, with 48% of the population of the state, had received a dismal 8.2% of LB 775 investment benefits and a truly shameful 4.6% of LB 775 employment benefits. LB 775 supporters don't want either transparency or accountability, because neither is in their long-term interest. It's time to repeal LB 775. Enough is enough, and more than enough. It's been a long long time since Nebraska's corporate citizens have paid their fair share.



From the Bottom by Sally Herrin

The real political spectrum isn't right to left...it's top to bottom.

inside:

Latin America Briefs	p. 2	A Health Care Questionnaire	p. 9
A Justice Process Towards Peace in the Middle East	p. 3	Chasing the Elusive American Dream	p. 10
Tae'ah'thee: The Omaha Cultural and Interpretive Center	p. 6	The Climate Is Changing The President Is Not	p. 11
Why I Marched to Whiteclay	p. 8	The State Fiscal Crisis in Nebraska	p. 12

Nebraskans for Peace
941 'O' Street, Suite 1026
Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: 402-475-4620/Fax: 475-4624
E-mail: nfpstate@aol.com
www.nebraskansforpeace.org

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Sarah Disbrow, Bud Narveson, Byron Peterson

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Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraskans for Peace is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

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Latin America Briefs

compiled by Sarah Disbrow



Grassroots Political Party Offers New Hope in Haiti

On May 1, International Workers Day, the National Popular Party (PPN) organized a march of 4000 people through Haiti's capital city, Port-au-Prince. Ending without incident, the march nevertheless sent a clear message that an alternative to political paralysis is emerging in Haiti. For the past two years, Haiti has been in a power struggle between the ruling Lavalas Family party (FL) of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the Democratic Convergence (CD), a Washington-backed opposition coalition comprised of 14 tiny parties.

In trying to appease the United States, Aristide has moved steadily to the right, abandoning many of the principles of the original Lavalas movement. The movement burst on the scene in 1990 with the slogan "Haiti is not for sale, either retail or wholesale." The FL has recently agreed to sell some of Haiti's most fertile farmland to Dominican capitalists, who will be setting up "free trade zones" along the border between the two countries. State-owned businesses such as the phone company, electric authority, and airport are also for sale. According to the newspaper, *Haiti Progres*, May 8, "Aristide's promises have foundered since he took office in February 2001 because his government has been blocked from collecting a half-billion dollars in pledged international aid, a sum that the Bush administration clearly intends never to let him have."

Progressive groups that were part of the original Lavalas movement are fed up with the FL. The PPN began to move away from the ruling party after Aristide's inauguration in 2001, as he placed Duvalierists in high government posts, reneged on campaign promises, and embraced neoliberal reforms.

'Plan Colombia' Lacks Accountability

Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy is calling for a Congressional review of 'Plan Colombia' to determine what, if anything, the \$2 billion the U.S. has already spent on the drug war in Colombia has accomplished. The Bush administration is seeking an additional \$537 million for 2003. Leahy has criticized Plan Colombia for its lack of accountability. The original plan called for a total of \$7.5 billion—\$4 billion from Colombia, \$1.6 billion from the United States, and the rest from other countries. So far, the Colombian government's financial support has fallen short, and contributions by European countries have failed to materialize. More important, the plan has failed to provide results. Leahy reports that the State Department predicted a 30 percent drop in coca cultivation by the end of 2002. But while 85,000 hectares were sprayed, coca cultivation increased by 21,100 hectares, a 25 percent rise. There has been no significant drop in the rate of Colombian drugs flowing into the United States.

The Bush administration is pushing an emergency aid package in spite of Plan Colombia's documented failure. Last month Secretary of State Colin Powell certified that Colombia has met U.S. human rights conditions. U.S. aid has been contingent on this certification. Critics argue that certification has little to do with progress on human rights and everything to do with time running out for the renewal of U.S. aid. The Colombian Commission of Jurists has evidence that nearly 80 percent of civilian deaths and disappearances in 2000 were committed by paramilitaries, many of them with documented ties to the army. Senior army officers implicated in murders remain on active duty and some have been promoted. Meanwhile, human rights investigators and prosecutors are being threatened, killed, or forced to flee the country.

Colombian Soldiers Mistrust U.S. Involvement

An American father and son traveling in Colombia gave a first-hand account of soldiers disillusioned with Plan Colombia: "In the nearby town of Pamplona, we meet an army instructor who has lost faith in the war on drugs. After a long discussion, he asks us to address his student soldiers about the U.S. role in Colombia. 'I can't say these things,' he explains. 'But you can, because you will soon be leaving here.'"

"Discussing these matters openly in a Colombian military facility sounds dangerous, but we accept his offer. In their modern classroom, the recruits surprise us. Some refer to the war on drugs as a 'Trojan horse,' a pretense for expanding the U.S. military presence in their resource-rich nation. After all, notes one of the men, 'both sides are running drugs, so why prosecute only half of the traffic?'"

"Few of the soldiers support the U.S.-backed spraying of glyphosate*, a coca-killing herbicide made by St. Louis-based Monsanto (a company that manufactured Agent Orange, a carcinogenic defoliant the United States showered on Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War). The Colombians recount horror stories of human and animal sickness near spray zones. They say unauthorized substances are somehow getting into the mix, that the chemicals are concentrated, and that whatever comes out of the helicopter nozzles finds its way into Amazon River headwaters."

*glyphosate may be linked to non-Hodgkins lymphoma, according to a 1999 Swedish medical study.

A Justice Process Toward Peace in the Middle East

The following article was written by a U.S. citizen and Nebraska resident who has spent 16 years living in the Mideast, including time growing up in the Palestinian territories.

As I open this, my mother is again under virtual house arrest in Occupied Palestine. Her apartment building is right across the street from the Palestinian Authority (PA) Headquarters, where Yasser Arafat lives and works. The sister cities of El-Bireh and Ramallah, home to the PA compound, have been re-occupied by the Israeli Occupation Forces. Over the past two months, we have lost count of occupations and re-occupations.

This re-occupation was not as sensational as the April re-occupation, with its heavy shelling of towns and refugee camps (most notably Jenin), scores of dead, and thousands of arrests, so it has not received a lot of media attention here in the U.S. But for my mother, who is 70 years old and an American citizen, this quieter re-occupation is proving to be more sinister.

For almost the entire month of April, she was confined to her apartment. Because of her close proximity to the PA compound, the curfew in her area was most severe—five to six days of curfew, then its lifting for three or four hours. This was barely time enough to buy a few groceries, check in with family (she didn't have telephone service during that time), then back under curfew again. When Israeli soldiers entered her building to search for weapons, they emptied closets and cupboards, finally choosing her nicest and newest dress, and cut it into strips—they needed blindfolds for all the Palestinian young men they had rounded up and arrested.

This time, Israeli soldiers rounded up all the neighbors in the building, and told them they had to stay in my mother's apartment. That's a total of about 12 people, four of them children and two ladies over the age of 70. The Israeli soldiers have occupied the building stairwell and the roof. They have taken over one of the apartments for their personal needs, throwing mattresses on the floor, nailing sheets to windows, and (after stopping them up) defecating until the toilets have overflowed and the stench is overwhelming. The residents have no access to their own apartments.

Today, my mother's phone again rang and rang, but there was no answer. I try not to let my imagination run away with me, but reports of Israeli soldiers' looting and destruction of the buildings they occupied during the April assault bring me no comfort.

In this sort of crisis situation, it's only natural that we get caught up with the day-to-day misery, humiliations, and dangers of the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories. The question which looms so largely in everyone's mind is—When will it all end? When will the peoples of Palestine and Israel finally be able to live in a state of security? When will young people again look to their future with some sense of hope, some sense of promise for a happy life for themselves and their families, to pursue an education, jobs, careers which could better their lives?

Asking the Wrong Question

We ask, "When will there be peace?" But this may be the wrong question. Obviously, Palestinians and Israelis do not agree on a definition of peace. Just look at Ariel Sharon, who says he wants "peace," while bombing, killing and maiming, denying both Palestinians and Israelis any possibility of "peace." "Peace" to him may mean the absence of Palestinian resistance to the 35-year-old Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories; it may mean the breaking of the Palestinian people's will to pursue the internationally-recognized right of a people to self-determination; it may mean the institutionalization of the status quo which the Israeli occupation has imposed on the Palestinian people, and their continued exploitation. "Peace" may mean any or all of these things to Sharon, but it in no way resembles what "peace" means to Palestinians.

To Palestinians, "peace" means an end to the terror of occupation, the ability to live in a country of their own on the land of their ancestors. "Peace" means being able to build a sovereign nation, founded on the rule of law and respected as such by its neighbors, that provides its citizens with the same kinds of opportunities we enjoy in this country—to get an education, to work and raise families, to contribute to their own society, all without the continuous dangers imposed by a foreign occupying power. "Peace" means the ability and opportunity to interact with neighbors for the sake of mutual development and prosperity.

However, we may be asking the wrong question. For a while, the "peace process" embodied everyone's hope for a brighter future of peace—until, over time, the process became the goal and peace became some vague notion which no one has really defined.

United Nations Partition Plan
UN Resolution 181



Rhodes Armistice Line
after the Founding of Israel



Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

We should rather pursue the goal of justice. Not that this is any easier to achieve, but it may be easier to define. When peoples around the world enjoy the same rights, as defined by international law, international bodies such as the United Nations, and internationally-defined principles, such as embodied in the Fourth Geneva Conventions, then we are on our way to achieving justice. When countries abide by these laws, resolutions and principles, and they are imposed equally on all nations,

then we are well on our way toward achieving justice—and peace will inevitably follow.

How do we achieve justice? Those familiar with the history of the conflict will remember early on, the Palestine Liberation Movement called for a democratic state in Palestine, one where Arabs and Jews, and Christians, Muslims and Jews could live in one state, each enjoying their legitimate rights within a democratic nation. A democratic state was

continued on page 4

not in line with Zionist thinking. Zionism is exclusionist—it calls for a “Jewish State”. In this state, you may participate in the democratic process if you are a Jew—if not, you’re out of luck—just ask the Christian and Muslim Israelis. Is a Jewish state the only way to safeguard the rights and freedoms of Jews? Let’s ask the millions of American Jews who continue to live in our country, who have declined the call to move to Israel, who feel safe and enjoy the blessings of democracy.

The Two-State Solution

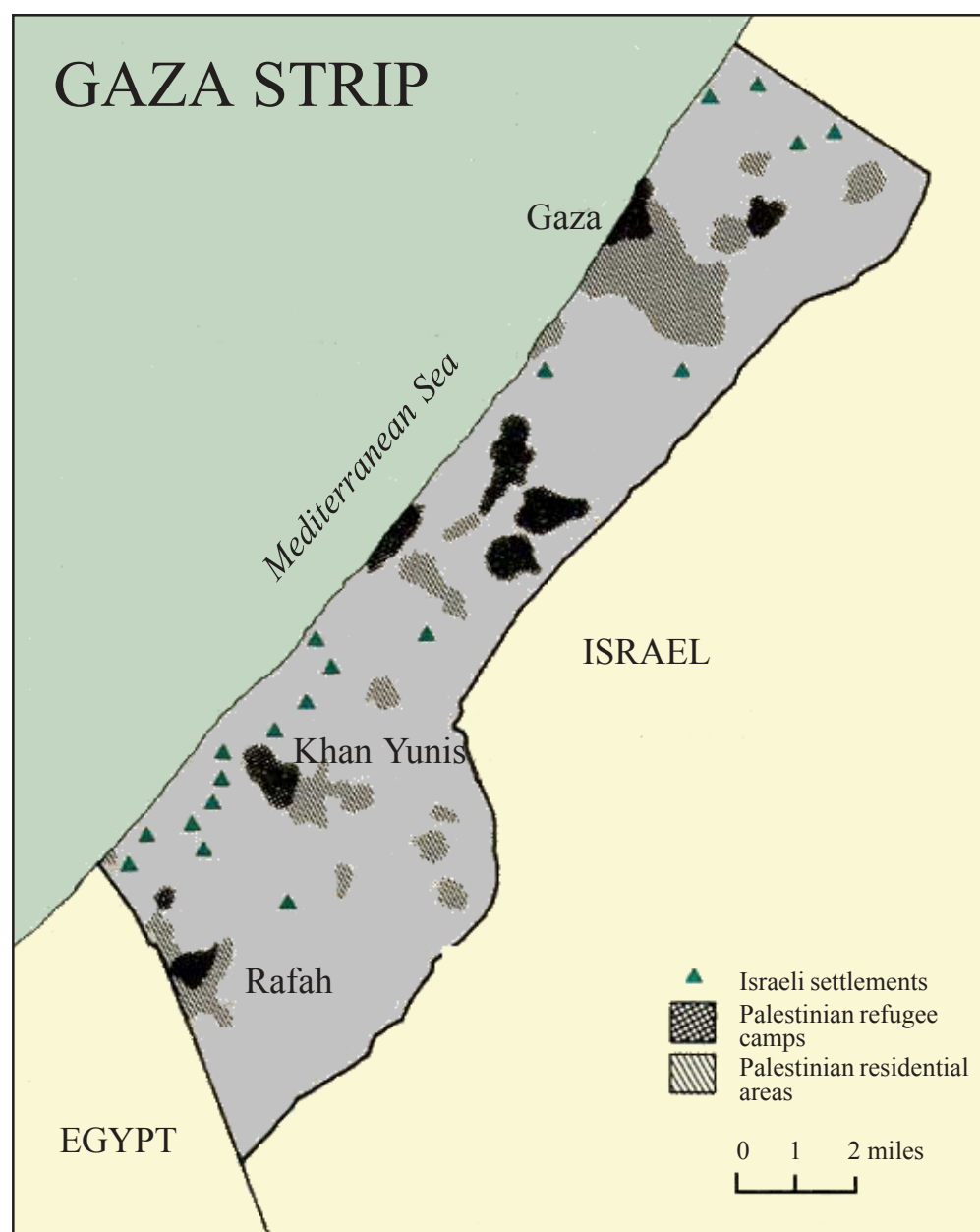
The two-state solution, though not the best plan, has become the focus of attention, given today’s realities. In principle it was adopted many years ago, and embodied in the 1947 UN Partition Plan. At that time, of course, the Palestinians vehemently rejected the carving up of their homeland. To understand why, we need simply recall (as a priest in Jerusalem reminds us) the story of Solomon: Two women brought a baby to him, each claiming to be the child’s real mother. After endless discussions, Solomon could not determine who the child’s real mother was. To decide once and for all, he told the women he would split the child in half, each woman taking a piece. One woman screamed that she would never allow anyone to harm the child in any way—and then

Solomon knew who the child’s true mother was.

The argument could also be made that the Zionists did not accept this partition plan—their militias took far more land than had been allotted to a Jewish state by the partition plan, and they occupied West Jerusalem, although Jerusalem as an entity had been designated as an international city. Recalling these historical facts is necessary, not to lay blame, but to provide context.

Now after the passing of more than 54 years, most Palestinians recognize that a two-state solution is better than continued Israeli military occupation and all the life-threatening dangers it poses. It must be better than living under the constant threat of bombing and destruction and killing, as happened in the Jenin refugee camp and the rest of the occupied territories in April—and that perhaps it holds the best possibility for security and stability, justice, and eventually peace.

The two-state solution must be based on principles embodied in international law, the Fourth Geneva Conventions and UN Resolutions related to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict—and there are hundreds of them. This process shouldn’t be an excuse to negotiate these laws and principles—it should be a time to apply and enforce them. Through their application it may be easier to reach an



objective “just” solution, as opposed to a “peaceful” solution.

This framework of a just resolution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict will not contain any new, earth-shattering ideas. Those of us familiar with the history and the nature of this conflict have heard these ideas before, modified and elaborated. We are striving to resolve a 54-year-old conflict. This is not a resolution of the 1967 war—this is a resolution to catastrophic events of 1948, which only resulted in an armistice agreement. There has been no final or formal resolution—one of the reasons why this conflict keeps rearing its ugly head every few years.

All the outstanding issues must be addressed with an eye toward achieving justice for the majority. The fundamental issues must always be foremost in our minds—we should not allow ourselves to be distracted by the clutter on the ground—settlements, by-pass roads, newly created fences. All these prevent us from focusing on the fundamental principles of sovereignty, self-determination and security.

The broad outlines of a two-state solution are familiar to many of us:

1. **The immediate end to the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories**, which is the worse form of violence, the worst form of terrorism. Gone would be the dangers posed by the presence of foreign soldiers—especially at the roadblocks, where there have been too many stories of humiliations and killings. Several years ago I took a day trip with friends to see their family home in Haifa. On the way back to the West Bank, we were stopped by a very young soldier at a road block. After looking at our passports (we were all American citizens), he decided the driver could go on but the rest of us would have to go back. After some discussion, the driver backed up a ways and told us he would meet us on the other side of the field next to the road, which we were to cross on foot (in full view of the soldier). There are estimated to be over 300 road blocks in the occupied territories today; transportation of people and goods is often at a standstill resulting in a virtually paralyzed economy.

conclusion on next page

2. Although in 1948 Palestinians did not want to divide their beloved homeland, many feel today that a division and a sharing of Palestine is the only reasonable course of action today. The political boundary between Palestine and Israel should very closely approximate **the boundaries which existed on June 4, 1967**. Both sides have shown themselves amiable to minor modifications. This does not mean handing over parts of East Jerusalem to Israel in exchange for parts of the Negev Desert going to Palestine—that would only be sowing the seeds for future conflict. There must be mutual recognition of each country's secure borders, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

These boundaries present at least two compromises which the Palestinians have been willing to make—first, the creation of Palestine on only 22 percent of historic Palestine. The second, that this state will consist of two non-contiguous territories, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, whose connection to each other must be guaranteed, for the long-term, by the Israelis. Israel must recognize these two major compromises during the negotiation process, and offer reciprocal compromises.

3. In the 1947 UN Partition Plan, East Jerusalem had been designated as an international city, to remain undivided and accessible to all. In reality, it is divided, in spite of all claims by Israel to the contrary. Although Israel has consistently and persistently violated the Fourth Geneva Convention by taking Palestinian lands in and around East Jerusalem and creating housing for Jewish (not Arab) Israeli citizens, the Arab character of East Jerusalem, especially the Old City, remains strong and undeniable.

Jerusalem must be recognized as the capital of Palestine. While physical partition of the city to accommodate two capitals may not be feasible or desirable, this status in principle cannot be denied. Details may be negotiated and creative solutions found, including sovereignty over the holy sites in the Old City.

4. **Jewish settlements, or squatter colonies, must all be removed from the West Bank.** They represent some of the most aggressive and condescending attitudes of Israelis toward Palestinians.

They are the result of the systematic theft of Palestinian lands to create them and the roads which connect them; the by-pass roads chop the occupied territories into bantustans. Both the theft of these lands and the transfer of Israelis to the occupied Palestinian territories constitute two flagrant violations of the Fourth Geneva Conventions, which must be corrected. The colonists just outside our home town have been a very serious danger to Arabs living in the areas below them—a former classmate of mine has been constantly subject to being shot at by them, or having olive trees burned down during midnight raids.

5. While most Palestinians have accepted the principle of territorial compromise, few can ignore the calculated injustice and terrorization of Palestinians in 1947-48. The events which resulted in the creation of the state of Israel are called “An-Nakbeh” (The Catastrophe) by Palestinians, and mark the virtual destruction of their social and civil society as they knew it. Close to 800,000 Palestinians fled their homes in fear for their lives, following the Deir Yasseen massacre. Although they were the victims, they and the Arab governments have since been blamed for this human tragedy; it is time for Israel to acknowledge its responsibility for this calamity.

The Right of Return recognizes **Palestinians' right to return to their homes** and towns and villages. In principle, it is a right which cannot be denied the four million Palestinian refugees who are today scattered around the world. Israelis object, on the grounds that it would destroy the “Jewish character” of Israel, and that Israel could not absorb such numbers. But in fact, Israel already accepted the refugees' right to return when it accepted membership in the United Nations.

As a principle, the Right of Return cannot be denied Palestinians. In reality, not all Palestinians living in the diaspora would wish to leave their current homes. Many have successfully settled in other countries, have careers and jobs, families, and would not want to be uprooted yet again. But accepting the principle, while leaving the details of implementation (i.e., resettlement or compensation) open for negotiation, would go a long way toward

creating the sense that justice is being pursued.

6. A more **equitable distribution of resources, especially water**, must be found. Israel consumes the monster's share of water, which it draws from the aquifers which lie mostly under the West Bank. In 1988, the West Bank Database Project estimated that each colonist receives 1,000 cubic meter of water per year, while each Palestinian receives only 171 cubic meters per year. While Israelis enjoy green grass and cool in swimming pools during the summer months, Arabs are forced to cope with water shortages and rationing. Most Palestinians, like my mother, wait with anticipation for winter rains, knowing that if the rains are good, there will be enough water to carry them through the dry, hot summer.

This framework is based on the concept of two states for two peoples, where the principles of self-determination, mutual respect and equality are applied and enforced, leading to the just resolution of a conflict which has lasted for too long. As each people comes to terms with the new, mutually-agreed upon realities, it is hoped they will work toward mutual security, stability and economic development, realizing that their success in building a hopeful, conflict-free future is contingent on their working together.

We shouldn't allow the actions of extremists, who are a minority, deter the majority from pursuing a course of deliberate actions that will lead to justice. These minorities, those who would insist on establishing an Islamic state in all of Palestine, and those who still dream of a Greater Israel stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates, are fewer in number than those Palestinians and Israelis who are willing to compromise—they are willing to see two states, one Palestinian and one Israeli, co-existing side by side, west of the Jordan River. There have been many polls conducted over the years, especially recently, which tell us this is so.

This is not a time for building fences to separate two peoples—two peoples whose pasts have been, and whose futures are, inextricably intertwined. It is a time for building bridges, that these two peoples may grow and flourish, and together enjoy the blessings of peace and security, through justice. And this time around, let's have more women negotiators—especially mothers!

Contact Congress

Sen. Chuck Hagel

346 Senate Russell Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4224
202-224-5213 (FAX)
402-476-1400 (Lincoln)
402-758-8981 (Omaha)
308-632-6032 (Scottsbluff)

Sen. Ben Nelson

Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Room B40-5
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-6551
202-228-0012 (FAX)
402-391-3411 (Omaha)
402-437-5246 (Lincoln)
ben_nelson@bennelson.senate.gov

Rep. Doug Bereuter

1st Congressional District
2184 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-225-4806
202-225-5686 (FAX)
402-438-1598 (Lincoln)
402-727-0888 (Fremont)

Rep. Lee Terry

1728 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-4155
202-226-5452 (FAX)
402-397-9944 (Omaha)

Rep. Tom Osborne

507 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6435
202-226-1385 (FAX)
308-381-5555 (Grand Island)
308-632-3333 (Scottsbluff)

Capitol Hill Switchboard

202-224-3121

President George W. Bush

The White House
Washington, DC 20500
202-456-1111

Capitol Contacts

State Senator, District

State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

State Capitol Switchboard

402-471-2311

Governor Mike Johanns

PO Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848
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Tae'ah'thee

(New Moon Moving)

The Omaha Cultural and Interpretive Center

by Dennis Hastings & Richard Chilton
Omaha Tribal Historic Research Project
Omaha Indian Reservation
Macy, Nebraska

The primary purpose of this project is to provide a home for a sacred living being called Umon'hon'ti, also known as 'The Venerable Man,' or 'The Ultimate Omaha' or (more) commonly the Sacred Pole. He, along with the Sacred White Buffalo Hide, and 250 other ancestral remains, has been repatriated to the Omaha after a century of 'protective custody'...

—Vincent Snyder, Architect

A stunning design of a world-class Native American cultural facility is soon to be built among ancestral Reservation lands on a Nebraska bluff overlooking the Missouri River.

Nestled among woods rich in both sacred and historic sites, Tae'ah'thee (New Moon Moving), the Umonhon (Omaha) Cultural and Interpretive Center, reflects an interpretive composite of the strength and power of Umonhon cosmology and the resilience of an ancient people to adapt to modern life.

A textured, multi-varigated 45,000-square-foot building of concrete and slate construction, Tae'ah'thee's unique and remarkable design exemplifies both geographic and cultural place, incorporating

state-of-the-art thinking in exhibits, conservation and scholarly research within a culturally appropriate setting.

Described as a "living sculpture," Vincent Snyder's aesthetic provides in both shape and line an unmistakable presence of what 21st century visitors can yet learn about themselves through the shadows of the past. As Mr. Snyder notes:

...the client's primary concerns are for an expressive building...uniquely Omaha, alluding to a proud, powerful past while simultaneously anticipating the promising future...[with] independent operating hours...[while] energy efficient...a design acknowledg[ing] the necessity of a transcultural dialogue...[through] a buried quadrilateral container in a dialectic with a collection of figural elements emanating and evolving from circular origins with registrations to mythical and celestial references. Most notably...are the predominance of dualities, the sanctification of the landscape, and the deference to the cardinal directions—all of which continually clarify the individual Omaha's position within the world.

Below New Moon Moving are low-lying wetlands, while both atop and below the bluffs to the north and south there is accompanying wilderness, all of which is to be set aside as a wildlife sanctuary,

featuring several hiking and horse trails and at least two canoe landings. Mr. Snyder continues:

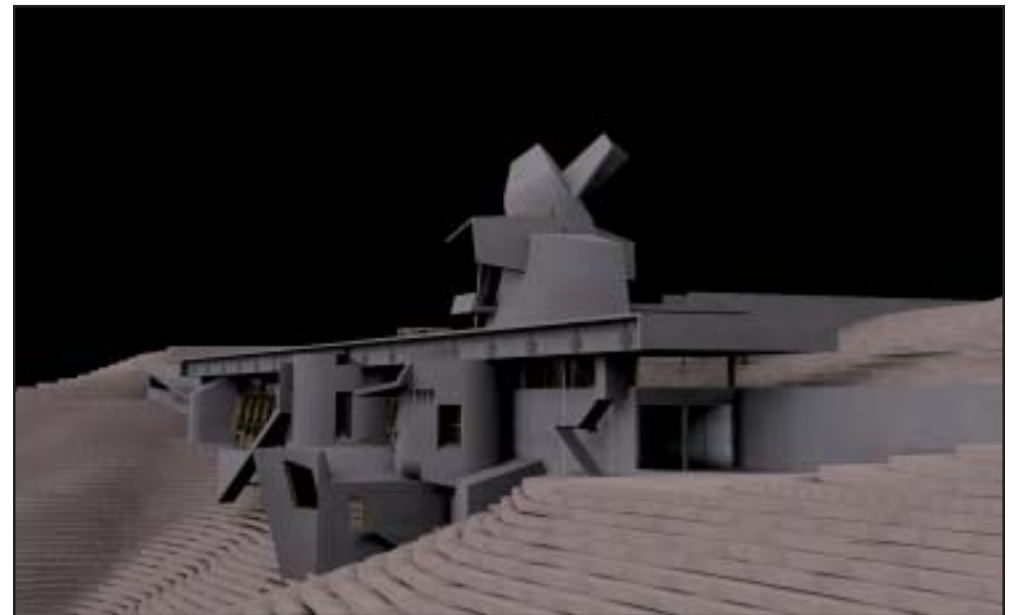
Scrub trees cover the sandstone bluffs into which this project is nestled some 270 ft. above the Missouri River with visibility of over 50 miles eastward into the prairies of Iowa. This site is within close proximity of Hole-in-the-Rock

and Chief Blackbird's grave, both of which served as expeditionary markers for westward adventurers such as Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and later, George Catlin.

The planned 3,500 acre sanctuary is valued at over \$2 million dollars, unimproved.

accompanying research library, open to both the public and scholars, will aid academic and conservatory work—a prime focus of New Moon Moving's mission.

Among its many educational and community service components, Tae'ah'thee will also serve as the administrative offices for OTHRP's numerous cultural, repository, research and



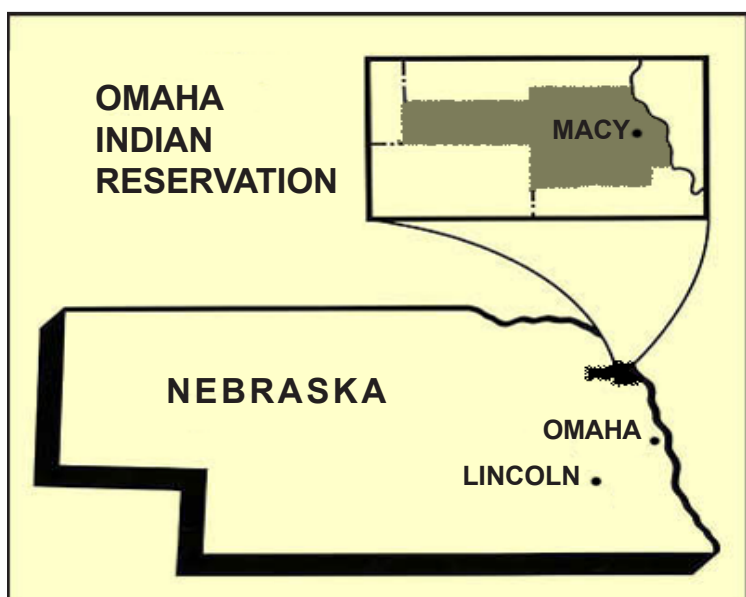
The center, which will be situated on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River, is topped by a three-dimensional cone that has the same configuration as the tipi.

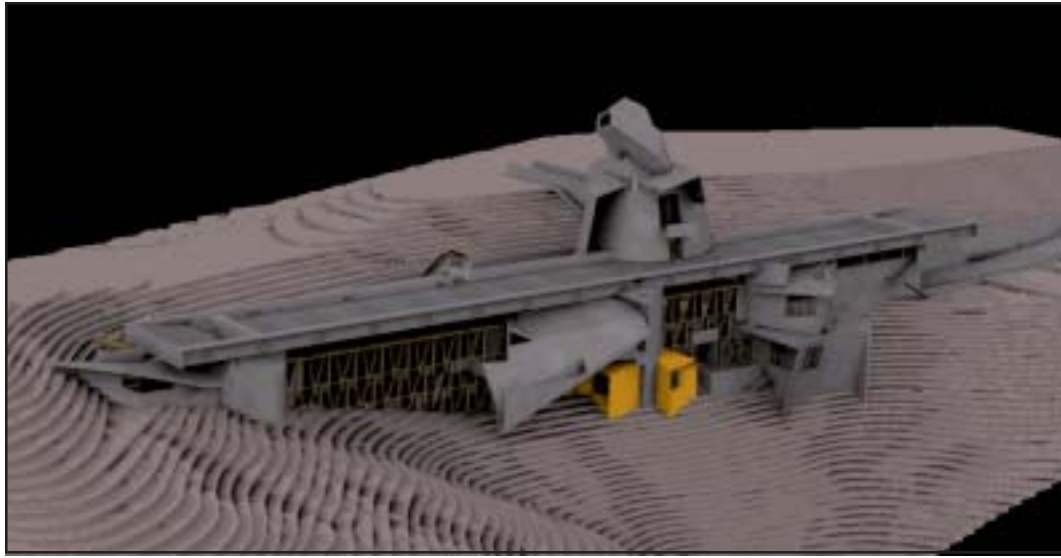
Amid the many visual displays and interactive media to be seen throughout Tae'ah'thee are a number of cultural artifacts and sacred objects—valued for insurance purposes at more than \$3.5 million dollars—returned to the Umonhon Ningashinga (Omaha people) in the late 1980s through the work of the Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project (OTHRP), the organization responsible for the New Moon Moving's presence and initial operation.

It is OTHRP's belief that a pro-active, ecological approach must be incorporated into the project to effectively convey the cultural resilience and reality of the Umonhon. The Umonhon are one of the major Native cultures of North America and Tae'ah'thee, in turn, will serve as the central repository for all cultural material and archival documents of the Tribe. An

service interests. A restaurant and an outdoor concourse large enough for public gatherings is also provided. Groundbreaking is anticipated by mid-decade, with construction expected to take up to three years.

The genesis of Mr. Snyder's expressive design lay among historic photographs, some compiled by the Nebraska State Historical Society, others appearing in a landmark collaboration between the Indo-European/American and Umonhon cultures: *The Omaha Tribe* by Alice C. Fletcher and Francis LaFlesche, and the *27th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution*, published in 1911. Just as this work established field anthropological research for generations to follow, Tae'ah'thee is expected to be a model for the future operational design of such culturally-specific facilities.





Tae'ah'thee's architectural design is intended to "wear the land around it like a robe."

The Umonhons first met the European sometime before 1640 and, with trade and commerce, change occurred on both sides. As Mr. Snyder relates, once photography appeared the Umonhons had already drastically altered their lifestyles:

Complex spatial layerings are especially evident in...traditional ceremonial clothing and northern plains tipis ...which simultaneously reflected such transcultural influences as the adaptation of cotton canvas and commercial pigments to dress the body and house the individual.

Descended from the Mound People of the Ohio River Valley, the Umonhon adapted to the ways of other regional Native Nations as they moved farther into the Northern Plains. The earthen lodge, a form of mound and more permanent structure, was borrowed from the Arikaras and Pawnee, as was a basic Siouan design, the tipi, more practical for travel on the prairie. Thus earthen lodges became winter homes while tipis were used for the warmer months and traveling.

A simple and humble people, the Umonhon chose to decorate their sacred forms as everyday items remained unadorned. The sacred tipi for the White Buffalo Hide, for example, is not elaborate, but includes a quiet coloration, both top and bottom, of a delicate waving of corn as it grows, fruitful and plentiful. Sky, earth and the balance of harmony between—corn maiden's gift to the Ningashinga (people)—is a manifestation of their "Old Ways" still held strongly among the Ningashinga into our modern time.

Introduction of European styles led to even more change in traditional dress. Glass beads quickly replaced seed, and the French shawl with its hand-tied fringe became more popular with the women than government-issued woven blankets. Cloth was later substituted in both the tipi and clothing.

Such photographs also show how traditional practices were being sustained when significant change occurred from the use of hide to canvas tipis. Most Native cultures retain the circle as a basic cultural marker, and it is crucial to recognize the linguistic inference in describing a circular form as "geometrical" (as Indo-European scholars tended to do) as a term of

measurement induced from Euro-American cultural usage rather than Umonhon cultural meaning. Mathematical calibrations of area, a purpose of geometrics, has no relevance in Umonhon culture, but the spatial reality of the inclusion of "the circle being whole," reflecting harmony and balance, does.

Of particular interest to Mr. Snyder was the aura of the male headdress. In studying the photographs, the architect discerned how the feathers and horse hair roaches worn by dancers seem to reside at an angle "almost resting upon the air" while at the same time "remaining eager" for the slightest movement of the wearer to express motion. When this occurs, the feather and horse hair move in syncopation and yet are distinctly different from one another, "as if both were alive," which of course, is true, since the animals sacrificed their lives to be honored in such a way by the humans during ceremonial occasions when such regalia is worn.

This "dance" of natural materials used in both the headdress and tipi housing did not escape Mr. Snyder's keen eye, later becoming simplified, abstracted and enlarged as "the crown" of his interpretive sculpture piece dominating the architectural design for New Moon Moving.

Returning to a relationship with the land—another essential quality of Native American life—Mr. Snyder drew upon the *27th Annual Report*, where Fletcher/LaFlesche showed photographically the creative use of the bison robe or blanket to project the mood of the wearer. In his design, the actual building too will "wear the land around it like a robe."

Taking the basic clan structure of the Umonhon Hu'thuga (Tribal Circle) transposed into mathematical terms, Mr. Snyder placed the clan names according to their ancestral position in the Hu'thuga into a three-dimensional cone. This "tipi topped by a headdress reflected against its poles" became the Confluence of Sky and Earth, the sculptural piece where one enters Tae'ah'thee, containing the first view of the river, the memorial to the ancestors and the headdress "feathers" aligned both to the spring solstice and the ancient town site of the Umonhon, Tonwontonga (Big Town), located near the present town of Homer, Nebraska.

In this way, the depiction of the Hu'thuga is whole and complete, as will be Tae'ah'thee.

Architect Vincent Snyder

Born and raised in Wahoo, Nebraska, Vincent Snyder was in his early years a boxer, who found himself on more than one occasion meeting a challenger from the local Omaha Reservation. Even in youth he appreciated the local topography, and intuitively sensed an integration of both the land and sky so integral to Umonhon ancestral practice.

Receiving both a bachelor's and Master's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Mr. Snyder continued his studies first at the Harvard University School of Graduate Design, and later at Princeton University, receiving a second Master's in Architecture in 1988. He is presently an Assistant Professor in Design at the School of Architecture of the University of Texas-Austin.

Mr. Snyder's professional career includes associations with the noted architects Michael Graves (1986-88) and with Frank O. Gehry and Associates (1988-94), where he served a number of roles as design team member, Project Designer and Senior Associate. Since 1995 he has engaged projects through his own architectural firm, Vincent Snyder and Associates, of Austin, Texas. He is a registered architect in Texas, California and Nebraska.

Mr. Snyder's collaboration with Dennis Hastings on what was to become Tae'ah'thee (New Moon Moving) commenced in 1995. The design has thus far received two national awards.

Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project

Formally incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization in 1991, the Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project (OTHRP)—one of the more successful and influential groups of its kind in the United States—has been for nearly a quarter-century at the forefront of cross-cultural "coalition building, public education and advocacy to effect positive social change" between the Native and non-Native communities.

The group has facilitated important original research in a wide range of related fields, including collaborations with the Library of Congress for the remastering of archival Omaha music (www.loc.gov/memory/omahamusic.htm) and production of major exhibits held at such institutions as Harvard University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

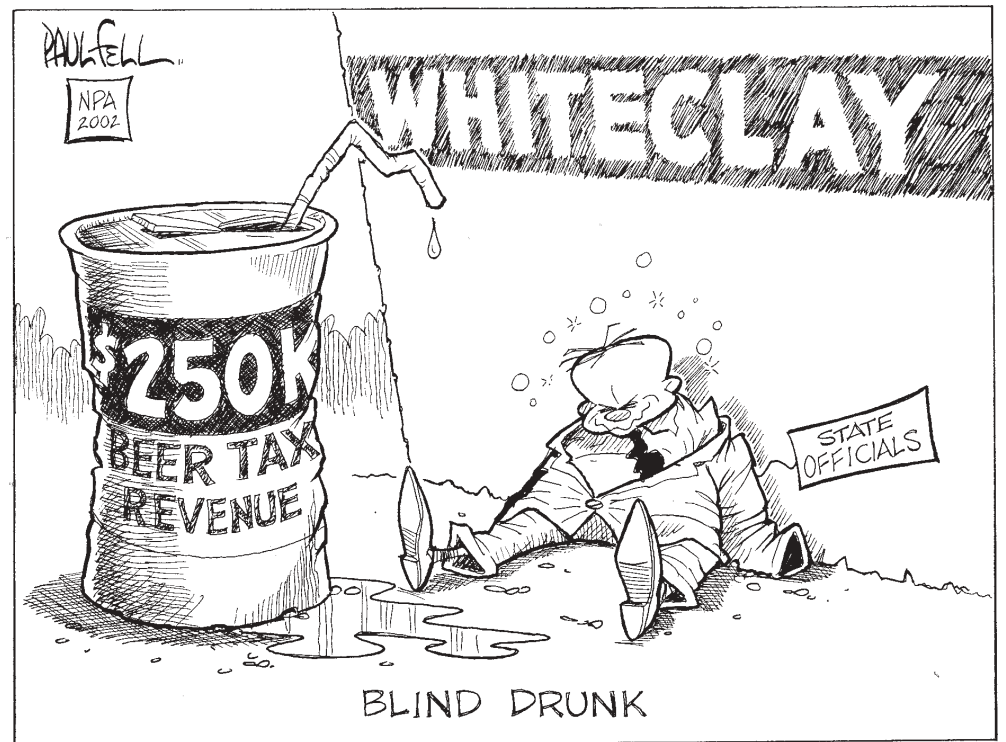
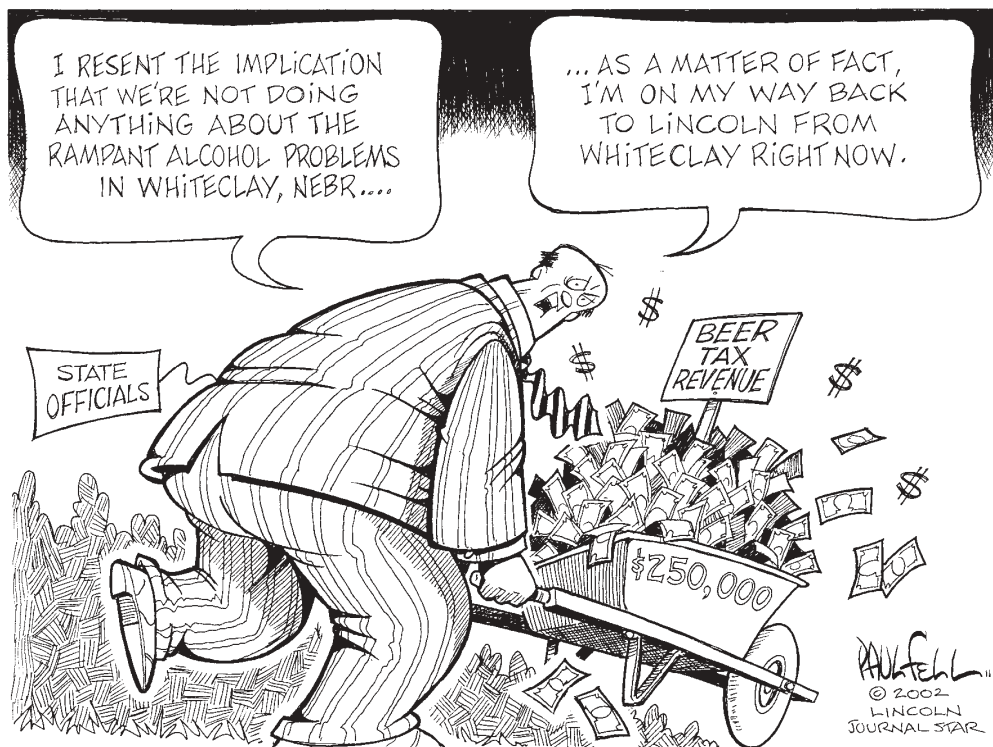
OTHRP worked with both the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature and the United States Congress to successfully pass landmark legislation on repatriation, including both LB 612 and LB 340, (adopted by the legislature in 1989), and the Federal Native Graves and Repatriation Act of 1990. Since the late 1970s, OTHRП successfully negotiated a return of sacred objects, including the Sacred Pole and White Buffalo Hide and other cultural materials from, among others, such institutions as Harvard University, the George Heye Collection of the Museum of the American Indian and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

OTHRP was an original facilitator for, and helped achieve designation of, the Susan LaFlesche Picotte Memorial Center in Walthill, Nebraska as a state landmark, later listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Picotte (Umonhon) was the first Native American of either gender awarded a medical degree in 1889.

Over the years OTHRП has been responsible or provided significant material for the publication of at least ten books, the production of four film documentaries, and construction of three websites, receiving numerous local, state, regional, domestic and international awards for its work in scholarship, film and cultural leadership. Its most ambitious project remains construction and operation of its Interpretive Center/Museum, Tae'ah'thee (New Moon Moving).

The organization exists primarily on the commitment of its Founder/Director Dennis Hastings, a Ph.D. candidate. OTHRП's Board of Directors presently includes several distinguished Umonhon tribal elders and non-Natives, including the current and a former Tribal Council Chairman and six Ph.D.s.

For more information contact:
Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project
Rural Route #1, Box 79A, Walthill, Nebraska 68067
margerycoffey@yahoo.com www.jackalopearts.org



Why I Marched to Whiteclay

by Linda Ruchala

This guest editorial by UNL Associate Professor of Accounting Linda Ruchala appeared in the Saturday June 8 Omaha World-Herald, the same day she and six other NFP members participated in the Third Annual Memorial March commemorating the unsolved murders of Ronald Hard Heart and Wilson Black Elk, Jr. The following Monday, Linda was one of seven NFP members charged for drinking beer at the "beer party" on the front lawn of the Governor's Mansion. They have a court date of July 17 in Lancaster County Court where they will enter their plea on this Class IV misdemeanor charge of drinking on public property, which carries a penalty of a minimum \$100 fine and maximum \$500 fine.

I don't know much about Indian issues in general. I don't have any Indian friends or contacts. I've never been "on the rez," except to drive through on my way to other places. My images of Indian life are vague. I am about as far away from Indian struggles in experience or training as is possible. By profession, I am an associate professor of accounting at the UNL College of Business Administration.

I know massive injustices have been done—have been standard—since the whites have stepped on this continent. I know what most people have read—that poverty, disease, illiteracy, alcoholism, lack of hope—all things bad and destructive to a culture are epidemic, while anything good—decent jobs, educational opportunities,

intact culture and ritual are incredible struggles for very small gains. But this is not news. We've all known this for a very long time.

So, what takes me 400 miles away from my Lincoln home on this weekend to walk with the members of the Lakota tribe?

On Saturday, June 8 the Third Annual Memorial March for Justice from Pine Ridge to Whiteclay will be held. This march marks the third anniversary of the unsolved murders of two Oglala-Lakota men and the annual protest over the continued sale of staggering amounts of beer and malt liquor by several Nebraska establishments that border the dry Pine Ridge Reservation.

My trip to Whiteclay is fueled by outrage over the more than 11,000 cans of beer sold daily in this unincorporated village of just 14 people. Annually, that represents more than \$3 million in revenues from alcohol sales by the four off-sale dealers at the edge of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the home to some 18,000 Lakota.

When—in the name of free enterprise—white business owners can operate a business that primarily profits from fostering the human misery of alcoholism among the residents of the bordering reservation, and when tribal leaders have repeatedly pleaded for the end to such sales, this utterly offends my sense of ethics.

When the state says that private enterprise is so hallowed that it privileges the owners of these small shops to feed the disease of alcoholism among a targeted minority population, even when the closest

legal place to drink these beverages is probably a motel room in Rushville 21 miles away, I believe that the state is sanctioning morally abhorrent behavior.

When the greed of a state that takes in approximately \$250,000 in taxes from that alcohol suggests that it can devise no mechanisms for alleviating suffering or for responding to the pleas of the tribe, it is not a government that represents my values.

When white-owned private business and the state both profit from such "free enterprise," while at the same time another branch of the same state refuses to grant Indians similar economic self-determination though its refusal in the last legislative session to let tribes develop casinos, this adds insult to my sense of injustice and suggests a duplicitous standard in resulting in continued, state-sanctioned discrimination. Setting aside my own personal feelings about the social bankruptcy of gambling, how can the state argue both that nothing can be done to reduce the misery and nothing can be done to increase the economic activity that might generate alternatives? In other words, we permit an easy access to alcohol, arguing that the alcoholics should have the responsibility to self-determine and self-regulate whether they "choose" to exercise their addiction, while telling the tribe that it cannot self-determine and self-generate its economic future.

The sense of outrage is profound. When Indian groups and other representatives have exhausted all opportunities to create positive change, then it is time for new channels for change.

Some might suggest that closing down these establishments is a simplistic notion, one that will not address the root problem. I agree that revoking the Whiteclay licenses will not solve the problem of alcoholism within these tribes. As the *Denver Post* stated in a recent editorial on Whiteclay: "The ultimate answers will have to come from the Native Americans themselves." But, stopping alcohol sales in Whiteclay will get the State out of the business of sanctioning and profiting from Indian misery. It will get the State out of deliberately flouting the stated wishes of the Oglala-Sioux tribal government that they not sell alcohol in Whiteclay. Finally, it will open the door to provide some extra breathing space for the tribal government to address the substance abuse problems and the chemical dependency on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

These are issues of basic human dignity and social justice that must command our attention and our action. My values suggest that there could be no more important way for me to spend this weekend except by standing in solidarity with my fellow citizens, the Lakota of Pine Ridge. The Lakota need to know that the "inability" of the State to act does not represent what I, and many other Nebraska citizens, believe. The Lakota need to know that some of us outside of the reservation are listening and think that our State can be doing a much better job of responding to the crises facing the reservation communities than it currently is doing.

A Health Care Questionnaire

1. Is America the healthiest country in the world in terms of life expectancy (average length of life)? Is it in the top ten countries? Twenty countries?

ANSWER: No, it is not the healthiest, nor is it in the top ten or twenty. In the United Nations Human Development report published last year, and revised annually, it ranked 25th, behind the rich countries and a few poor ones as well. It has been declining relative to other countries since the early 1950s. In 1960 it was thirteenth.

2. What percent share of the world's health care budget is spent in America?

ANSWER: According to the World Health Organization, the United States of America spent 42 percent of the entire world's health care bill in 2000, yet it comprises only 4.6 percent of the world's population.

3. What is the largest difference in life expectancy (average length of life) between populations in America?

ANSWER: It is 41 years between American Indian men on Indian Reservations in South Dakota, and women of Asian descent in Bergen County, New Jersey. This is from a study, *U.S. Patterns of Mortality by County and Race: 1965-1994*, by Chris Murray of Harvard University published in 1998.

4. What is the largest difference in life expectancy among countries in the world?

ANSWER: It is 43 years between Japan, the world's healthiest country, and Sierra Leone, the least healthy country, according to the *United Nations 2001 Human Development Report*.

5. Could you believe that the healthiest country in the world, as ranked by life expectancy (average length of life), is the rich country with the most smokers?

ANSWER: Japan's life expectancy is 80.8 years (U.S. is four years lower), and according to the *American Cancer Society's Tobacco Control Country Profiles 2000*, twice as many men smoke in Japan than the U.S. Japan has only had a 4 percent decline since 1970, whereas the U.S. rate has halved during that time. No other rich country has as many smokers as Japan.

6. Suppose the United States could eradicate all deaths from heart disease, our number one killer, and keep the other disease death rates unchanged, would we be the healthiest country in the world?

ANSWER: No we would not surpass Japan in health, but we would be in the top five countries. See John Lynch's paper in the *Journal of the American Public Health Association* (1998 volume 88, pages 1074-1080) to see how the calculation is done.

7. If we spend so much money on health care and have such a technologically advanced health care system, why aren't we healthier?

ANSWER: Health care as carried out today is not found to be a factor producing health outcomes in rich countries. Japan spends half as much per capita as we do, yet is much healthier. Surprisingly, harm due to medical care is a significant cause of death. See *Seattle Times* Op-Ed "Medical care may harm your health" Jan. 10, 2000. Thomas Pynchon in *Gravity's Rainbow* said "If you can get them asking the wrong question, the answers don't matter." The right question is number 15.

8. Who lives longer after reaching age 35, the Harlem New York City man or the a man from Bangladesh (a country east of India)?

ANSWER: The male from Bangladesh lives longer according to a study carried out by Colin McCord and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1990 (Volume 322, pg 173-77).

9. Who lives longer? A Washington, D.C. black man or a person from Ghana (a country in West Africa)

ANSWER: The person from Ghana lives longer, according to the data from Chris Murray referred to in the answer to 3, and the *UNDP Human Development Report 2001*.

10. Which group was healthier—the cave man (hunter gatherers), or farming populations after plants and animals were domesticated?

ANSWER: Biological anthropologists have uniformly found that health declined with agriculture, so the cave man or hunter-gatherer was healthier. See Larsen's paper in the *1995 Annual Review of Anthropology* (page 185-213).

11. Is the chance of a teenager getting pregnant in the U.S. related to the income gap where they live?

ANSWER: Yes, a study by Rachel Gold found that birth rates of teenagers aged 15-17 varied with the income distribution in the counties they lived. Where the gap was bigger, whether it was in rich, middle income, or poor counties, there were more teenage births. See *Maternal and Child Health Journal* (2001) page 161-67.

12. True or false: America leads the world in the number of prisoners?

ANSWER: True. America houses one quarter of the world's prisoners. See the *New York Times*, March 26, 2001.

13. True or false: America leads the world in the number of homicides per capita?

ANSWER: True, according to the *Population Reference Bureau*.

14. How many homeless children are estimated to live in America, the richest and most powerful country in world history?

ANSWER: According to the *New York Times Magazine* March 24, 2002 article by Jennifer Egan, "between 900,000 and 1.4 million children in America are homeless for a time in a given year."

15. What is the most significant factor affecting the health of a population?

ANSWER: According to research done since 1979, the factor most responsible for the health of a population is a measure of the hierarchy in society. The income gap is the statistic usually looked at. We have studies showing this relationship among countries, and within countries, such as the United States. Other aspects that are influenced by the income gap include violence, and various behaviors. The factors usually considered as being important, such as not smoking, eating right, exercising, medical care, etc. are less significant, as evidenced by Japan's being the healthiest country, yet with the most smokers. Studies on this relationship are summarized on the equity-health web site at <http://depts.washington.edu/eqhlth/>. The best single source is the book: *Unhealthy Societies, The Afflictions of Inequality* by Richard Wilkinson, published by Routledge.

These questions and answers were compiled by Stephen Bezruchka, MD, MPH, Affiliate Associate Professor, Department of Health Services, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Washington, Seattle, USA sabez@u.washington.edu

Chasing the Elusive American Dream

by John Kretzschmar

UNO William Brennan Labor Institute

Over 50 participants spent Saturday, April 6 chasing the “American Dream” around the Sheetmetal Workers’ hall in Omaha. Five different presentations focused on how the American Dream (which means different things to different people) is fast disappearing from sight. It was the third annual statewide conference sponsored by UNO’s William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies.

Dennis Hitchcock (International Association of Machinists) keynoted the conference. Hitchcock examined globalization by comparing the lifestyles of working families in four different countries. There were, of course, distinct differences between the lifestyles of families in China, Denmark, Poland, and the U.S., but what was more interesting were the similarities. He pointed out that in many countries (not just the four he mentioned) employers and their government allies were attacking worker rights and noted that the reduction in worker rights makes it easier for employers increase profitability. This reduction, he said, also stops employers from fairly sharing the profits with the workers who produced them.

Hitchcock said globalization and trade treaties that don’t include workers go hand in hand. He singled out the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA—which is NAFTA on steroids). He closed by enjoining everyone to take the time to educate themselves, their family and friends about the dangers inherent in the way global trade is now being conducted. Only when enough people know about how treaties are negotiated behind closed doors without representatives of workers present will they begin to demand that needed changes be made.

Participants then headed to one of three workshops. The workshops repeated three times, so no one missed a thing. Elizabeth Drake’s (AFL-CIO) workshop explored the importance of the International Labor

Organization’s “Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work” (www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/decl/). She emphasized that this ground-breaking document is important needs to become a pillar on which all global trade treaties are based.

Esther Lopez (AFL-CIO) ran a workshop addressing “Immigration Reform and the Impact on Immigrant Workers.” Lopez pointed out that many immigrants are aggressively recruited by corporations and want to come to the U.S. because around the world 47 percent of workers live on \$2.00 or less per day. She stressed the importance of working class solidarity. When employers are able to divide the workplace by race, gender, nationality, or anything else, workers lose their ability to share in the profits that they generate.

Charles Williams (National Education Association) led a workshop focusing on the role and function of unions in our economy. Dr. Williams touched on a variety of issues relating to the formation of unions, political and economic democracy, and collective bargaining. He emphasized (1) the importance of broad-based unity when advocating for political agendas that emphasize economic and social justice; and (2) the use of union pension funds to push publicly traded companies to fairly treat workers inside and outside of the U.S.

The conference ended on a high note. Mary Beth Maxwell (Jobs with Justice or JwJ), who described herself as a “trouble maker” is a native Omahan. She explained that JwJ labor-community partnerships around the U.S. are not just chasing but capturing bits and pieces of the American Dream. Maxwell explained that success of JwJ is based upon building broad and deep coalitions with labor, community, religious organizations and students. The result has been that across the country JwJ has been instrumental in organizing unions, winning living-wage laws, fighting for Affirmative Action, and ensuring prescription coverage is there for the elderly. She urged everyone to find ways to get involved to make a difference and, if need be, to become a “trouble maker.”

... by raising the MINIMUM WAGE

The federal minimum wage was first passed as part of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act. It was passed to put a floor below which wages would not fall. By doing this it would:

- be the first step in a path toward the American Dream by allowing employees to work their way out of poverty; and,
- increase their disposable income and thereby their ability to consume goods and services.

The reality is that raising the minimum wage is a matter of simple justice. Work should be a bridge out of poverty, but for many it is not. The price of everything goes up but those working for the minimum wage have no real way to stay even. The current minimum wage is \$5.15 per hour. At that rate a full-time worker will earn approximately \$10,712 a year. This is significantly below the federal poverty level (a grossly inadequate amount as judged by UNL’s Bureau of Business Research) for a family of four in 2000 (or \$17,524). Even by past minimum wages, \$5.15 is pitiful. The value of today’s minimum wage, when adjusted for inflation, is \$2.90 below the purchasing power of 1968’s minimum wage.

Both Sen. Ted Kennedy and Rep. David Bonior have been trying unsuccessfully to raise the minimum wage since 1998. This year’s attempt is the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2002 (S. 2538 and H.R. 4799). The bill would increase the minimum wage by \$1.50 in three steps: 60 cents 30 days after enactment; 50 cents on January 1, 2003; and 50 cents on January 1, 2004.

The same forces that fought against the minimum wage in 1938 are fighting against increases in it today. Sometimes they attach ‘poison pills’ to the bill to make it undesirable, such as letting individual states opt out of the minimum wage, or ending overtime after 40 hours of work per week, or eliminating some of the jobs to which the minimum wage applies. All are being considered to torpedo the bill, or are already attached.

And the same arguments against its passage are being trotted out again. When the minimum wage was last raised in two steps (1996, 1997), there were predictions of between 130,000 and 140,000 jobs lost. Certainly the possibility of job loss exists, but so does improved productivity to offset the increase costs. The U.S. Council of Economic Advisors evaluated the effect on jobs in December of 1998 this way: *“Increases in the minimum wage have been important in raising the earnings of low-wage workers. Empirical research suggests that recent minimum wage increases have had little or no adverse effect on employment.”* And a 1998 study of small businesses that were surveyed said that the last increase in the minimum wage didn’t have an effect on their employment or hiring policies.

The opposition also claims that the majority of those workers paid the minimum wage are teenagers. This is also a false claim. Let’s look at a profile of the minimum wage worker:

- 74 percent are adults
- 26 percent are teenagers
- 46 percent are full-time employees
- 60 percent are female
- 40 percent live in the poorest fifth of U.S. families
- 40percent are sole bread winners in their families

The bottom line is that a raise in the minimum wage is long overdue. In fact, the minimum wage should be annually increased—and it would be if it were simply indexed to inflation, or the average hourly wage for non-supervisory workers, or the poverty level, or—better still—the compensation packages for CEOs that have increased over five times in just the last decade.

G.W. stands for Global Warming...

The Climate Is Changing The President Is Not

by Mark Zimmermann

It may be a myth that Nero fiddled while Rome burned, but it is readily apparent that President George W. Bush is going to keep fiddling around as the entire planet continues to heat up. Scientific reports and predictions keep coming in from around the world and even from within his own administration and still he does nothing but dismiss them as “bureaucracy” and call for even more fossil fuel use.

One of the most recent predictions was made this spring by scientists at the Hadley Center in U.K. They write that in as few as 20 years climatic feedback loops could begin to sharply accelerate the process of global warming. An example of this would be more deforestation in the Amazon due to drought and warming, which means less trees to absorb CO₂, which means more drought and warming. They warn that without action to limit greenhouse emissions the average global temperature could rise 3 - 7 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

Two recent articles in *Science* magazine this June don't bring any better news. In the more widely reported of the two, a team of scientists from Cornell, Princeton and other universities suggest a link between global warming and the spread of disease-causing pathogens. They theorize that as winters grow milder and climates in general become warmer insects, such as mosquitoes, are able to migrate into new ecosystems—often where indigenous species have no natural immunity. The lead author, Dr. Drew Harvell, was quoted in the *Financial Times* (6/21/02) saying, “What is most surprising is the fact that the climate-sensitive outbreaks are happening with so many different types of pathogens—viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites—as well as a wide range of hosts including corals, oysters, terrestrial plants and humans.” Some of the human diseases they think could likely proliferate under global warming conditions include malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever and Rift Valley fever.

In the second article, Brian O'Neill (Brown University) and Michael Oppenheimer (Princeton) propose using the health of coral reefs as a guide (or a canary in a coal mine, if you will) because they do not tolerate very wide changes in water temperature. In addition

to their innate value as a living species, corals support a wide variety of other marine ecosystems. And, the authors warn, if the declining health of coral reefs indicates that we are going too far, the break-up of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet will indicate that we missed the “Bridge Out” sign some ways back up the road. If that were to happen, sea levels will rise about 5 meters (16 feet), flooding Manhattan up to Greenwich Village, the southern third of Florida, and coastlines and islands around the world. Although scientists think the potential for its melting will remain low for most of this century, Oppenheimer was quoted as saying, “There is some evidence that when global temperatures were 4 degrees (Fahrenheit) warmer than today the ice sheet disintegrated.”

Last year Bush ignored warnings from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the National Academy of Sciences. This year he is even disregarding a report from within his own administration. But then again, parts of it are astonishingly inhumane.

The “Climate Action Report 2002” (which can be found at www.epa.gov/globalwarming/publications/car/) was prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Departments of Energy and Agriculture, NASA, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as part of the U.S. obligation under the 1992 U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change signed by the current president's father. It is significant in the fact that for the first time the current administration admits that climate change is “likely due mostly to human activities.”

The report summarizes a 14 percent increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. from 1990 to 2000 and projects a 43 percent increase from 2000 to 2020. In forecasting possible impacts on our country, it uses a 2.5 - 4.0 (Celsius) degree scenario, much narrower than the 1.4 - 5.8 (2.5 - 10.4 Fahrenheit) range used in the IPCC report last year.

What is stunning is the short-sightedness and detached “get used to it” attitude in parts of the report. In Chapter 6 for example, after predicting higher heat indexes and more frequent heat waves, it says, “At a minimum, these changes will increase discomfort,

particularly in cities; however, their health impacts can be ameliorated through such measures as the increased use of air conditioning.” No mention that air conditioners running on fossil fuels helped get us into this situation in the first place, or that three quarters of the world can't afford them in any event.

The key word in this report seems to be “adapt”; “...adapting to a changing climate is inevitable.” Or consider this gem: “At the same time, greater wealth and advances in technologies are likely to help facilitate adaptation, particularly for human systems.” Apparently polar bears had better start brushing up on their advanced technologies or they'll be out of luck. Actually, though, the report does do some predictions for non-human systems such as this, “A few ecosystems, such as alpine meadows in the Rocky Mountains and some barrier islands, are likely to disappear entirely in some areas. Other ecosystems, such as Southeastern forests, are likely to experience major species shifts or may break up into a mosaic of grasslands, woodlands and forests.”

Despite these dire predictions, the ironically titled “Climate Action Report” suggests no new action to mitigate these outcomes except the weak voluntary plan put forth by Bush last year in an effort to deflect criticism from other nations and environmentalists in this country. The White House remains adamant in its opposition to actual action programs such as the Kyoto treaty. Bush's lead climate negotiator, Harlan Watson, told a press conference in London recently that the U.S. would not be attending the next round of climate negotiations in 2005, “We want no part of that... The next time we take stock on climate change has been set by the president at 2012.” (*The Guardian* 5/14/02) There was no explanation as to the significance of that date or the fact that future administrations may have other intentions.

Bush's disdain for the IPCC report apparently did not prevent him from exerting enough influence to have its chair, climate scientist Robert Watson, replaced by an Indian economist, Rajendra Pachauri. Although Pachauri has sounded conciliatory in the press after his selection, it is probably too early to

know if he will set a different tone on the panel.

The posture of U.S. leadership with its head in the sand has not stopped the rest of the world from taking action however. At the end of May, the remaining countries of the 15-member European Union finished ratifying the Kyoto Protocol. And one week later another large milestone was crossed when Japan also signed on.

In order to take effect the treaty must be signed by 55 countries and must include enough “Annex 1” (developed) countries to account for 55 percent of CO₂ levels in 1990. The first requirement has been met as 74 countries had ratified as of this writing. The second requirement currently stands at 35.8 percent. The major Annex 1 countries which have not yet ratified are the U.S. (34 percent by itself), Russia (17.4 percent), Canada, Australia and Poland with 2 - 3 percent each. This makes it imperative that either the U.S. or Russia ratify. For an up-to-date status of the ratification process (in an easy-to-read thermometer graphic), go to http://unfccc.int/resource/kpthermo_if.html.

There is some hope that Russia will agree. First, since its economic collapse in the 1990s, Russian industrial output and fuel use is much lower than its 1990 baseline. In other words the Russians would be able to sell perhaps billions in emissions quotas. Secondly, perhaps the Russians are realizing the effects climate change may already be having on their country. The southern part of the country has been suffering from dust bowls. And Siberia is being plagued by both flooding and record-breaking fires. So far, more than 6,400 square kilometers of forest have burned, almost four times the amount during the same period last year. Melting snow and thawing permafrost have contributed to the flooding of several rivers and officials are citing a 0.8 degree temperature rise in the 1990s as a leading cause of both the fires and the flooding.

It's still an open question what Russia will do, but that's more than can be said for our own country. If they do ratify Kyoto and the U.S., the world's leading greenhouse polluter, stands alone as unwilling to accept responsibility, then it will be the Bush Administration that will be remembered as unable to “adapt” to new realities.

The State Fiscal Crisis in Nebraska

Prepared by the National Priorities Project - May 2002

States are in fiscal crisis:

Forty-three states and the District of Columbia face severe budget gaps for fiscal year 2002, totaling **\$27 billion**. The vast majority of states have imposed significant cuts to balance their budgets. **Nebraska is no exception with a \$220 million budget shortfall in its 2001-2003 budget cycle.** More hard times lie ahead as most states debate or finalize additional budget cuts for next year. At the same time, the unemployment rate in Nebraska increased from 3 percent to 3.6 percent over the past year.

How much is \$27 billion?

...more than federal spending on all of science, space and technology
...almost as much as federal spending on elementary, secondary and vocational education

What is the federal government doing to help state governments?

Very little. On the plus side, next year's federal budget proposes a few increases in federal formula grant programs to states. These include a \$12 billion increase in Medicaid and the creation of a new program called First Responders, funded at \$3.5 billion. However, overall, the total amount in grant programs would be cut by \$2.4 billion (after inflation is taken into account), resulting in serious losses to local communities. Additionally, many programs important to families such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant have been level-funded. In other words, once inflation is taken into account, those programs will have less money and provide fewer services.

Under the proposed federal budget for FY2003, Nebraska will lose:

Highway Planning and Construction.....	-\$60,535,760
Airport Improvement Program.....	-\$4,286,000
Workforce Investment Act.....	-\$2,263,240
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.....	-\$3,068,780
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Programs.....	-\$3,153,400
Clean Water State Revolving Fund.....	-\$943,760
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.....	-\$1,047,420

For the complete list of programs being cut, visit the website at: www.nationalpriorities.org

Notes and Sources: Budget gap numbers are from the National Conference of State Legislatures. The unemployment rates are March, 2001 and March, 2002 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The comparison between FY2002 and FY2003 federal formula grant programs (which represent 85 percent of total federal aid to state and local governments, including both mandatory and discretionary spending) excludes undistributed allocations. If undistributed allocations are included, there would be an increase of \$3.5 billion or 1 percent. Discretionary spending would be cut by almost \$5 billion (almost 4 percent). For the estimated cuts for federal programs, we assumed an inflation rate of 2 percent and applied this to information in the OMB's Budget Information for States. © 2002 National Priorities Project, Inc.

The federal budget deficit under the Bush Administration:

The Bush Administration pushed through Congress two major changes that turned the federal budget from surplus into deficit:

- The 2001 tax cut package primarily benefits the very wealthiest people. Over the course of the 10-year tax cut, very little benefit will accrue to middle- and low-income families.
- The Bush Administration also sought significant increases in the military budget even before September 11. In the summer of 2001, the Bush Administration proposed a 10 percent increase in the military budget for FY2002—much more than the pace of inflation or economic growth. And, if a current emergency supplemental proposal is approved, the FY2002 budget (of \$350 billion) will have an additional \$14 billion tagged on to it. For FY2003, the Administration has proposed a \$46 billion increase over this year's military budget, much of which will do nothing to protect the U.S. from real threats.

Tax Cut Benefits in 2003

(in billions)	Top 3 percent
	\$17 b
Poorest 30 percent	
\$4 b	
Under \$20,000	Over \$200,000

What are the Alternatives?

Local campaigns across the country seek tax changes and cuts in unnecessary military weapon systems. Proposals include:

- ◆ **Freezing the federal tax cut for the wealthy.**
- ◆ **De-coupling state estate and business taxes from federal rules.** Most states have a tax structure that is in part tied to federal rules so when the federal rules change, states lose revenues. New state tax structures can be implemented stemming unexpected losses.
- ◆ **Eliminating spending on unnecessary weapons systems.** Ballistic missile defense will do nothing to protect Americans from terrorists, nor will nuclear weapons. Cutting these and other programs would save money in the short- and longer-term.

The Tax Cut to the Richest 3 percent is...

...more than federal spending on community and regional development
...two-and-a-half times federal spending on training and employment

Notes and Sources: The tax cut benefit estimates are based on reports by the Joint Committee on Taxation. The **National Priorities Project (NPP)** offers citizens and community groups tools and resources to shape federal budget and policy priorities which promote social and economic justice. For more information about your state visit the NPP Database at <http://database.nationalpriorities.org> or contact us at 17 New South Street, Suite 302, Northampton, MA 01060 (413) 584-9556 www.nationalpriorities.org ◆ info@nationalpriorities.org