



from around the world, and right next door...

No. 42
Spring 2014

Dolphins declared “Non-Human Persons”

“Cetaceans in general are highly intelligent and sensitive, and various scientists who have researched dolphin behavior have suggested that their unusually high intelligence as compared to other animals means that dolphins should be seen as ‘non-human persons’ and as such, should have their own specific rights and [that it] is morally unacceptable to keep them captive for entertainment purposes. ”

~ Ministry of Environment and Forests, India



by Alanna Ketler

It was a great day for animal rights activists around the world when India’s Ministry of Environment and Forests agreed to ban the use of dolphins and other cetaceans — such as whales and porpoises — for public entertainment, and to forbid them from being held captive anywhere in India.

The ban was determined in the wake of attempts to open several parks across the country featuring aquariums with dolphins and whales. Activists began to protest, explaining that dolphins and whales are smarter and more sensitive than previously thought, evidenced by their impressive cognitive abilities. They presented a great deal of scientific research to prove the scope of cetaceans’ intelligence and therefore the inhumanity of keeping them captive.

The movement for dolphin and cetacean rights gained significant ground in 2011 when the American Association for the Advancement of Science held a conference that included conservationists, environmentalists, philosophers and animal behaviorists. They then began to gather support for the Declaration of Rights for Cetaceans from the scientific community.

The Declaration:

1. Every individual cetacean has the right to life.
2. No cetacean should be held in captivity or servitude; be subject to cruel treatment; or be removed from their natural environment.
3. All cetaceans have the right to freedom of movement and residence within their natural environment.
4. No cetacean is the property

of any State, corporation, human group or individual.

5. Cetaceans have the right to the protection of their natural environment.

6. Cetaceans have the right not to be subject to the disruption of their cultures.

7. The rights, freedoms and norms set forth in this Declaration should be protected under international and domestic law.

Many experts have long considered dolphins and whales to be highly intelligent. Dolphins have been known to recognize their own reflection in a mirror, give each other distinct names and solve puzzles. They even have their own rich and intricate culture.

Of course, the biggest controversy is the idea of creating the new category of “non-human persons.” Do we stop at dolphins and whales? If not, where do we draw the line? If

we give rights to some animals, how do we then justify our continued exploitation of others? And since we bestow the status of personhood on such non-living entities as corporations, why shouldn’t all living beings enjoy the same legal rights?

Among animal rights supporters, India’s move to abolish captivity for dolphins is seen as a big step forward in the right direction.

“This is a huge win for dolphins,” says Ric O’Barry of the Earth Island Institute’s Dolphin Project. “Not only has the Indian government spoken out against cruelty, they have contributed to an emerging and vital dialogue about the ways we think about dolphins: as thinking, feeling beings rather than pieces of property to make money off of.”

More Information:

www.cetaceanrights.org



Victories for tribal people

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NY turns food waste into fuel

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Israel loves Iran

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Boy creates Braille printer out of Legos

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EQUALITY

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to Nurture Hope
to Exemplify Solutions
to Inspire Action

We envision a world in which people treat each other with respect and kindness, where we consider the Earth to be our home to care for and enjoy. And we see that this world is in the process of emerging!

Positive News is a reflection of this widespread movement and tells its powerful stories.



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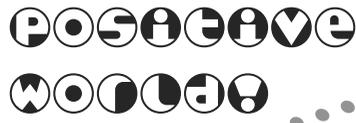
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Electric cars top vehicle sales in Norway

Norwegians have been snapping up electric cars: In the last three months of 2013, the Tesla Model S and Nissan Leaf outsold all other cars, including conventionally fueled models. Rather than environmental concerns, a host of government incentives — totaling an estimated \$8,300 per vehicle — are largely driving the boom, the Guardian reports. Norway, a country of only five million people, currently has around 21,000 electric vehicles (EVs) on the road, compared to 70,000 EVs among 313 million Americans and 5,000 EVs among 63 million people in the UK. More than 1,200 EVs are being sold in Norway per month thanks to incentives that include free electricity for recharging, lower sales tax rates, waived tolls, free parking, insurance discounts and permission to drive in bus lanes, which are less crowded.

Source: e360.yale.edu

Landmark civil rights case upholds right to record police

A federal judge in Indianapolis ruled that police officers who stopped Willie King while he was recording video of an arrest in progress had violated his rights.

As part of a settlement in the federal civil rights case, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department was ordered to institute a new policy prohibiting police officers from interfering with civilians who are recording their actions.

King was arrested in February 2011 after he used his cell phone to videotape police officers arresting another man.

Source: Indiana Lawyer



More people rode public transit last year than any time in the last 60 years

The American Public Transportation Association's latest figures, released in March, show that more people in the US used public transit in 2013 than at any time in nearly 60 years. That amounts to a whopping 10.65 billion passenger trips, beating the previous record in 1956 and a more recent peak in 2008, when gas cost more than \$4 a gallon and 10.59 million trips were taken.

This time around high gas prices aren't the main reason for the spike. The trend is more about a basic shift in attitudes about how people travel in their cities. "Now gas is averaging well under \$4 a gallon, the economy is coming back and people are riding transit in record numbers," says Michael Melaniphy, president of the advocacy group. "We're seeing a fundamental shift in how people are moving about their communities."

Reported by: Jessica Leber for Co.Exist



Brits choose happiness over wealth

People in the United Kingdom believe national happiness is more important than national wealth, according to a new survey.

A YouGov poll commissioned by Action for Happiness revealed that the majority of British people (87%) would choose happiness for their society rather than money (chosen by only 8%). These findings were largely consistent across all UK regions, classes and age groups.

When asked to choose the three most important factors for personal happiness, 'relationships with my partner/family' came out on top (80%) with 'my health' in second place (71%) and 'money' third (42%). 'My appearance' and 'my possessions' were the least selected factors (both 4%).

Reported by: Rachel England for Positive News UK

Wanted:
E n c o

[We have a



Teen are less likely to drink or use drugs than ever

The National Institute on Drug Abuse has been surveying tens of thousands of high schoolers for almost four decades, and not only is drug use down, but almost every form of substance abuse is down. The big exception is marijuana; otherwise, usage of illicit drugs by high school students has been steadily falling for seven years. And not only are the kids not injecting hardcore narcotics any more, they're also consuming alcohol at record lows, as binge drinking continued its five-year decline right into 2012.

Source: Cracked

Stumbling stones honor Holocaust victims

Brick by brick, artist Guenther Demnig is working to change how those who perished in the Holocaust are remembered in Germany. He is installing small, square brass bricks in front of the victims' houses, each one inscribed with the name of the person who once lived there. Guenther first got the idea for the Stolperstein, or "stumbling stones," as part of an art project back in the mid-1990s when he installed 55 such commemorative stones in Berlin sidewalks. "Formal memorials are too abstract," he says. "Not so with the stumbling stones. Suddenly they are there, right outside your front door, at your feet, in front of you." In the ensuing years, the project has mushroomed. Now, there are more than 30,000 commemorative bricks in dozens of cities and towns across Germany.



u r a g e r s
surplus of critics already, thanks.]
~The World

Hunters swear off killing to preserve Iranian wildlife

This spring, 19 Iranian hunters have vowed to stop killing animals by breaking their rifles and setting fire to their traps in public. They hope that many more will soon join them in their effort to preserve Iran's fragile wildlife from the ravages of over-hunting. The hunters are responding to a plea made a month ago by an environmental group in Iranian Kurdistan, a region that's home to many endangered species. The nonprofit organization Chya, which went out to meet with local hunters one-on-one to make their case, has long warned that many species are on the verge of extinction, and that hunting, both legal and illegal, is a major contributing factor. For veteran hunter Hossein Ahmadi, the decision to destroy his equipment was an easy one, especially since he'd seen the impact of over-hunting first-hand. "I mostly hunted partridges, hares, wood pigeons and a few other local birds. But even then, I realize now, that what I did was damaging to our local wildlife. There are hardly any partridges left in this area. The nearby mountains used to be full of wild goats," says Hossein.

Source: The Observers/France 24



The EU Parliament agrees to Arctic protection

The European Parliament recently passed a resolution calling for a protected area around the North Pole which could ban oil companies and industrial fishing fleets from the region. The text echoes the demands of an international campaign which has attracted the support of over five million people, including Sir Paul McCartney and US oceanographer Sylvia Earle. The move represents a clear break from the current positions of Arctic Council members such as Norway, Denmark, Canada and Russia that have resisted calls for permanent protection of the Arctic region. By calling for a sanctuary around the North Pole, MEPs have responded to the millions of people who want to protect the Arctic for future generations.

Source: www.marinelink.com



Governments commit to stamp out illegal ivory trade

Urgent measures against the illegal ivory trade have been agreed upon by key states in an effort to help save the African elephant. Convened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the government of Botswana in December 2013, the African Elephant Summit addressed the issue by looking at the entire ivory supply chain. Gabon, Kenya, Niger and Zambia were among the African elephant range states involved, along with ivory transit states such as Vietnam and Malaysia, and ivory destination states, which include China and Thailand. An estimated 500,000 African elephants remain in the world, and have subsequently been included on the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. Participants agreed upon 14 measures, which governments must begin implementing by the end of 2014. They include taking a zero tolerance approach to wildlife crime, registering ivory stockpiles and forming a network of forensic laboratories to determine the origin of seized ivory.

Reported by Tom Lawson for Positive News UK



A Vote of Confidence for African Women

When genocide tore through Rwanda in the early 1990s, women endured a particularly tough struggle. But in September, Rwanda elected a parliament with 64 percent of seats held by women – more than in any other country in the world!

The exterior walls of Rwanda's parliamentary building in Kigali still bear the pockmarks of bullet and shell holes sustained during the bloody conflict nearly 20 years ago. Set against the city's now rapidly changing skyline, they are a powerful reminder of its tragic past, chaotic days when the entire government was forced to flee the capital.

When the destruction ended, many of Rwanda's widows faced a future of destitution. There were 10 times as many widows than widowers left — almost 50,000 — yet existing laws did not allow women to inherit land or property. But as the country turns the page on its history and forges a new Rwanda out of the ashes, women are playing a central role in its recovery.

The country's post-genocide constitution laid out a requirement for there to be 30 percent female MPs, and in 2008 the nation became the first in the world in which women claim a parliamentary majority. Fast forward to this September and the ballot results showed even more progress. 26 female MPs were elected in addition to the 24 seats reserved for women, genocide survivors, widows, farmers and even former rebels.

Rwanda's 64 percent compares impressively with the 45 percent female representation in Sweden and the UK's 23 percent — all in a country where women only got the vote in 1961. But this is not some sort of national PR exercise: the statistics represent true depth. The increased representation of women in Rwanda has led to tangible policy changes and from that, progress on the ground.

As well as playing a part in lifting more than one million people out of poverty between 2006 and 2011, women played a central role in drafting a bill where Rwandan women were given rights to inherit for the first time.



Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum meeting with students from Akilah Institute for Women

“ Fundamental to the success of Rwandan women in politics is their innate ability and willingness to work together across party and cultural lines for the common good ”

Rwanda's average life expectancy has risen by 10 years in the past decade, infant mortality has dropped from 1,071 deaths in 100,000 births to 476 last year, and Rwanda was praised at the 2012 World Health Organization's assembly in Geneva for reducing maternal mortality by more than half. Rwanda's new female MPs have been

instrumental in driving forward this remarkable chain of change.

Elsewhere in Africa, women are also making significant gains. Joyce Banda made history in April 2012 when she became Malawi's first female president and only the second woman to lead an African nation

joining Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and now Senegal's recently appointed prime minister Aminata Touré.

With a strong track record of fighting for women's rights, Banda was plunged into the spotlight following the sudden death of her predecessor. In an interview

with the Guardian, she said that being a traditional African woman helped her deal with the burden suddenly thrust upon her.

“It's heavy. But I am able to carry it,” Banda said. “Why? Because I'm an African woman. An African woman carries heavy loads anyway. That's how we are trained; we are brought up that nothing is unbearable. I use that now, positively. I use that now to have the thick skin that I have, and not fear, and move forward, and push.”

The African Union Commission also has its first female chairperson in South Africa's Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and now two African women have won Nobel peace prizes: Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee, who helped bring an end to a 14-year conflict in Liberia by mobilizing women to gather together in public.

Yet much more needs to be done. Last year, Michelle Bachelet, the executive director of UN Women called for a “stronger commitment by leaders to increase women's participation in politics,” acknowledging that there is still a necessity to reverse what remains a huge patriarchal bias in Africa.

As the walls of Kigali's parliament remain robust despite the scars of war, so Africa's women refuse to be bowed by the constant challenges that have faced them in the past. The bravery of these political forerunners reminds us that women's participation in government is absolutely essential to building and sustaining democracy: a lesson not just for Africa, but for people the world over.

More Information:

Story from Positive News UK

Alice Iribagiza Rwema, 25, communications officer

“ Though tremendous positive change in attitudes towards women has taken place in Africa, women are often still overprotected, to the extent that their bodies, thoughts, minds, choices and ideas are controlled and that some harmful practices such as female genital mutilation are even polished up as ‘benefiting’ women.

But as more African women realize they are being represented politically, more women are turning up in elections, both as candidates and voters. For example, in Kenya, the passage of the bill prohibiting female genital mutilation can be attributed to an increase in the number of women in power. Women have also been behind most of the legislation that has brought Rwanda toward ensuring economic stability and social welfare. ”



© Lucy Purdy



Released from Irish Jail, 79-year-old Peace Activist Vows to Keep Protesting

Facing another trial and a return to prison, Margaretta D'Arcy says she will keep protesting to highlight what she calls the "colonizing of our airport for illegal and immoral purposes."

Margaretta D'Arcy, the famed 79-year-old feminist, peace activist, writer and filmmaker, was released from jail on March 22, 2014 after serving three months for protesting against the US military use of Ireland's Shannon Airport.

Following her release, Margaretta continued to reject the

charges against her and her co-defendant, Niall Farrell, that claim they were interfering with the 'proper use' of Shannon Airport by trespassing onto the runway in October 2012 and again in September 2013. They were, in fact, "highlighting the improper use of Shannon Airport by the US military, who have effectively colonized an Irish airport," Margaretta said.

Since 2003, over two million US soldiers, their weapons and thousands of US military aircraft and cargo planes have transited through Shannon Airport on their way to wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. Activists claim the govern-

ment of neutral Ireland has improperly facilitated these movements of troops and weaponry — which could easily have included killer drones and depleted uranium — and failed to inspect any of the military cargos. Neither did the government inspect any of the CIA planes landing at the airport, which have been implicated in illegal 'extraordinary rendition' flights.

Margaretta draws support from many prominent figures, including Sabina Coyne, wife of Irish President Michael D. Higgins, who controversially visited the activist during her detention. Gerry Adams, president of Irish Republican party Sinn Féin, also saw D'Arcy in jail.

More Information:

Story from Common Dreams



Margaretta D'Arcy at her release from Mountjoy prison in Dublin

Nick Bradshaw/The Irish Times

Israel Loves Iran

One evening, as the governments of Israel and Iran renewed their calls to war, Ronny Edry and his wife Michal Tamir, graphic designers and teachers living in Tel Aviv, uploaded a poster to their Facebook page.

The poster was a photo of Ronny with his daughter holding the Israeli flag. The written message: "Iranians, we will never bomb your country. We love you."

Ronny attached a personal letter to the poster, addressed to the Iranian people, that shared his wish to stop a war with Iran by getting to know the other side — all by simply starting a conversation.

The letter read:

"To the Iranian people. To all the fathers, mothers, children, brothers and sisters. For there to be a war between us, first we must be afraid of each other, we must hate. I'm not afraid of you, I don't hate you. I don't even know you. No Iranian ever did me no harm. I never even met an Iranian ... just one in Paris in a museum. Nice dude. I see sometimes here, on the TV, an Iranian. He is talking about war. I'm sure he does not represent all the people of Iran. If you see someone on your TV talking about bombing you, be sure he does not represent all of us. I'm not an official representative of my country. I'm a father and a teacher. I know the

streets of my town, I talk with my neighbors, my family, my students, my friends and in the name of all these people, we love you. We mean you no harm. On the contrary, we want to meet, have some coffee and talk about sports. To all those who feel the same, share this message and help it reach the Iranian people."

Within hours

Tens of Israelis posted their own pictures with the same message.

After 24 hours

Messages from Iran started pouring in. Moved to tears, people wrote back: "We love you, too."

After one week

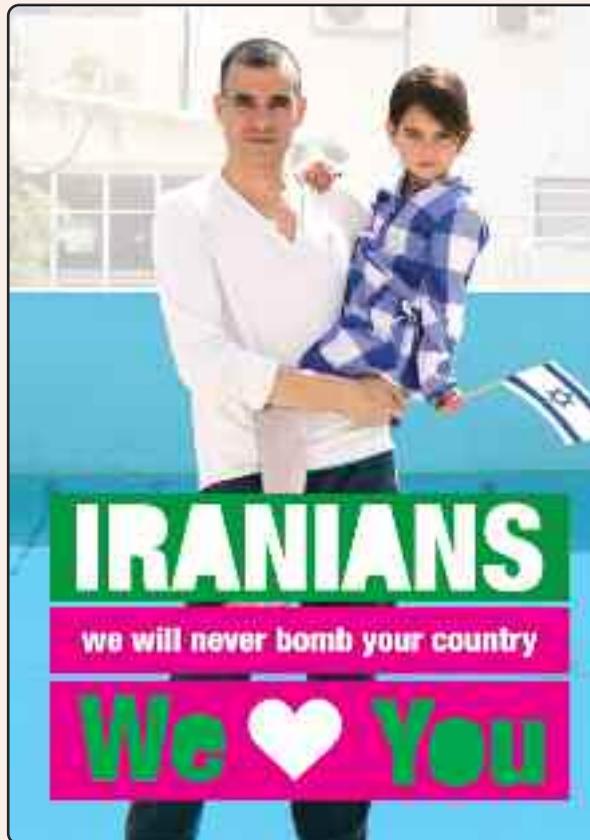
There were more than 7,000 likes on Ronny and Michal's Facebook page. Ronny then created the Israel-Loves-Iran Facebook page.

In the next few weeks

Thousands of pictures from all over the world were posted on the Israel-Loves-Iran Facebook page.

With over a hundred thousand likes, comments, and shares, Israel-Loves-Iran became a movement on Facebook where people started to talk to each other.

As days went by, the conversations on the page grew deeper. People were asking each other questions, sharing their stories and their lives, and talking



Ronny Edry with his daughter

clear, "We love you, too."

Years of hate propaganda on both sides were being stripped away and people finally discovered the other side — not as enemies, but as people.

Up to date

After such great success, and with the backing of this new Facebook community, Ronny and Michal decided to go even further and tap into the true power behind this initiative. Many new projects are coming up, with new ideas and new ways to further expand on this message — campaigns such as Peace, We ARE Ready, Friend Me 4 Peace, and Stop The War.

This campaign, this movement, this community must be shown to more and more people around the world.

Our vision is to expand this community to the entire Middle East, a region that has been under years of hate propaganda, the Fertile Crescent's own 'Iron Curtain,' created and sustained by a small group of extremists and local leaders. The time has come for the people of the Middle East to raise their voices and declare: We Want Peace.

More Information:

thepeacefactory.org
Watch inspiring TED Talk
www.ted.com/talks/
israel_and_iran_a_love_story



Food For Families

by Curt Kinkead

On the coast of California, north of San Francisco, but still within view of The City, lies a village so beautiful and full of people so wonderful that the residents worry the outside world is sure to discover it and fill it to bursting with people who might overrun their green utopia. This impelled the villagers to, for years, remove all road signs pointing to it. And

Chef Robin Ahlgren and Sous Chef Keith Huntley select supplies for the next meal



when this Marin County hamlet finds itself in the finals of any small town beauty contest, the residents choose another town that wants the honor. The Utopians then all vote for their rival, to keep the dreaded spotlight at bay another day.

One of the many assets that makes this secret place so delightful is an all-volunteer charitable venture called Food For Families. On Monday mornings, when the main local restaurant is closed, a group of volunteers ar-

rives to take full advantage of its kitchen, prepares free hot meals for families and single-person households who can't or don't cook, and then delivers them. When I last checked, they were feeding 84 people each week.

When Ilonka Wloch, the publisher of *Positive News*, heard about Food For Families, she asked me to do a story on it, knowing full well that my wife and I had founded Respecting Our Elders, a charity that collects and distributes free surplus food. The happy result of this pairing? Respecting Our Elders has become Food For Families' major supplier, taking a big load off the volunteers, who had been basically passing the hat amongst themselves to pay for the food they were cooking and giving away.

If you want to start something like Food For Families, and you'd love to do it with food you don't have to pay for, start by arranging just one day a week to pick up the perfectly edible food a market would normally discard. Then figure out a place to take everything left over after you've helped yourself. Subsidized housing complexes are ideal places to share such leftovers.



Café thrives with pay-what-you-can model

Colorado's SAME (So All May Eat) Café, a success story in generosity

by Kelly McCartney

Whether through pay-what-you-can cafés, suspended coffee initiatives or food recovery programs, the good citizens of the world are doing what they can to make sure less fortunate folks get a decent meal. And you can count Libby and Brady Birk among the kind-hearted souls working hard toward that end.

With a top-to-bottom community-based model initially sketched out on a cocktail napkin, the Birks' non-profit SAME (So All May Eat) Café in Denver uses fresh, organic ingredients from local farms prepared by volunteers. Their official mission statement emphasizes "serving good food for the greater good."

The couple wanted to find ways to serve their community, and they reflected on their time working in soup kitchens. They remembered how difficult it was for the underprivileged to eat healthy foods on a budget and how hard it was for the soup kitchens to serve nutritious food to their patrons. The idea for a community-oriented café focused on healthy foods sprang from there.

At first, they had some difficulty getting their idea off the ground. "Banks essentially laughed at us," said Libby, and the couple was not even sure the pay-what-you-can concept would be legal. They persisted, however, until they were able to open the restaurant.

The café has not only survived, but has become an essential fixture of the community. The Birkys build a relationship with every person who walks in, and



"From the homeless, jobless or those just getting by, all the way to rich and wealthy, our main goal is to get really good healthy food out to everyone: 'Good food for the greater good.'"

those personal connections have brought in a diverse clientele, from homeless patrons to affluent businesspeople.

It's a simple enough premise that has proven to be quite successful. The healthy fare is served to all who enter — more than 90,000 mouths over the course of almost eight years. In return, diners pay what they can (or more!) or offer up an hour of elbow grease in the kitchen. No one is turned away, and everyone is treated with dignity.

More Information:

www.soallmayeat.org
720.530.6853

Content from www.shareable.net

Elephant pulls down house, then rescues baby trapped under

Purulia, India: In a region fraught with human-animal conflict, here's a story that warms the heart. An elephant smashed a house to bits in a village in West Bengal's Purulia district last month but when it heard a 10-month-old baby crying under the debris, it turned back and carefully removed every last bit of stone, brick and mortar from the infant's body before heading back to the forest.

"I can't believe that the tusker saved my daughter after breaking down the door and smashing a wall. We watched amazed as it gently removed the debris that had fallen on her. It's a miracle," said the baby's mother, Lalita Mahato.

The child's father, Dipak Mahato, said they were having dinner around 8 p.m. when they suddenly heard a "cracking sound" and then a huge crash from the bedroom. "We ran over and were shocked to see the wall in pieces and a tusker standing over our baby. She was crying and there were huge chunks of the wall lying all around and on the cot," Dipak said. "The tusker started moving away but when our child started crying again, it returned and used its trunk to remove the debris."

"Unless people attack an elephant, these gentle giants do not harm human beings. They only come down here in search of food," Purulia forester Om Prokash said.

The human-elephant conflict in these parts has risen over the past few years because of change in land-use pattern that has blocked the elephants' traditional migration routes. Herds routinely raid farms and villages and smash houses.

A similar rescue incident had been reported in Jalpaiguri's Madarihata about six months earlier when an elephant herd carefully removed a little girl from harm's way before smashing several houses.

More Information:

Reported by The Times of India



Walking from Europe to Africa (without money or a passport)



by Maria Grusauskas

Over the past year and a half, 31-year-old Ibbly Okinyi has been living and walking through Europe without spending a dime. From Oslo, Norway he's walked over 1,600 miles south with just a backpack on his back. Ibbly has made his way through Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France and into Spain, where he's currently staying for a few days in Basque country.

Although it may take at least another year, Ibbly doesn't plan to stop walking until he reaches Morocco in north Africa.

"So I've done everything in reverse — it would be the same as crossing over to Mexico from [the US]. You know, people generally try to gear themselves to be rich, and I've tried to make myself poor," says Ibbly, who was born and raised in Australia to a Kenyan father and an Italian mother.

Blogging as he goes, Ibbly only uses public transportation when absolutely necessary — like the ferry (his passage a gift from the captain who heard his story) that took him from Sweden to Denmark. He fuels his journey frugally, eating only when



Still from YouTube video where Ibbly burns his passport

he is hungry: berries and fruit from the wild, and the consistent surplus of perfectly good food he finds in dumpsters all across Europe. He also relies on the hospitality of strangers.

"I try my best not to trade but rather to give freely and receive," says Ibbly. "And I try to be as helpful as I can in the situation that I'm in."

"The adventures don't stop. Because I think when I've traveled with more finances it put a buffer in between me and others.

Posses-

sions can do that in general. Now I don't have anything, so I'm directly involved," he says.

Ibbly's pace is slowing down the further his trip progresses. He sometimes walks just a few miles before he finds himself seduced by the scenery or the people, and decides to stick around for a few days.

But this moneyless journey is more than just a youthful adventure. The idea for such a trip sprouted in a pub while his friends bantered about who would pay the tab, and Ibbly challenged them to consider the possibility of living without money—a bold proposition which he is now living proof of its actuality.

Ibbly's peripatetic journey is also a political statement, as he seeks to locate and emphasize the true connection between human beings that knows no borders of class, nation or race. Ibbly quotes Einstein: "Nationalism is an infantile disease; it's the measles of mankind."

Ibbly believes wholeheartedly that people should not judge each other based on "fake constructions" like

borders and nationality, but as humans, who are the

sum of all that each has lived.

Hardly a hypocrite, he burned both his Italian and Australian passports last October in Holland. A friend filmed the burning, where Ibbly proclaims, "I am my own country ... I'm a human being, not European, not African, not Chinese ..." As police officers stamp out the blazing passports, he tells them, "I love you!"

The walking activist also spent three weeks in Brussels' 127 bis immigration detention center last year, merely for asking to enter and wish everyone a Happy Christmas. It was a premeditated action: his lack of documents landed him a cell.

If Ibbly has fear, it's more about how he'll survive the freezing temperatures of the European winter, and less about the authorities or the humans he might stum-

ble across late at night in the alleyways or parks.

"I think humans are just mirrors of who we are. Where I found it hard to get by has been when I haven't been on top of my game," he says. "I've been very lucky. I haven't had any problems and I've just been received really well. And it's comforting, actually. I find that the world and humans are a lot better than we're made out to be. I think there's a lot of propaganda going around, and people who are scared generally put up a defense mechanism, and they're the people that may be more destructive," says Ibbly.

As Ibbly walks on, optimistic and beaming, he doesn't know what he'll do, exactly, once he reaches Africa or the kind of trouble he may encounter getting into Morocco. He dreams of being able to travel with nothing at all, and thinks he might give away the rest of his stuff once he reaches the warmer climate of Africa.

Ibbly's prolific and passionate blog entries will someday be compiled into a book, at the core of which will lay this certainty: humankind is inherently good.

"I believe the world's going

to progress, I believe in that a lot," he says.

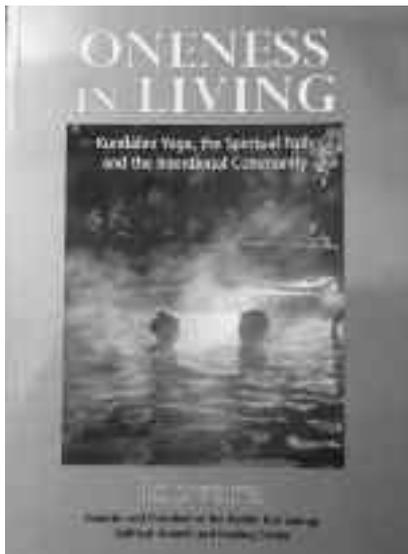


More Information:

ibbywalks.wordpress.com/
Story from www.shareable.net



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"This book has grit and stamina - it's clean. Ishvara has written about his life, not the 'I am born' kind, but one written with courage and clarity about his living work of Kundalini Yoga and Tantric yoga, about practicing masters and about his initiation into secret practices. This is going to blow your mind." -- *Wavy Gravy, activist, clown, author of "Something Good for a Change"*





Ideas for Equality from around the World

From Switzerland to New York, it seems that people are talking more than ever about inequality — and its antidotes. Here are some of the most inspiring ideas from last year that could shift our course in 2014

by Sam Pizzigati

1. Attention, share-the-wealth shoppers

Consumers committed to sustainability can buy forest-friendly paper. But what about consumers who want to strike a blow against corporate pay inequality?

Toronto activists have an alternative to offer: Wagemark, a new initiative that offers a special insignia to



enterprises that pay their top execs no more than eight times what they pay workers.

Canada's top 100 CEOs currently take home 235 times Canadian average worker pay. Big-time U.S. CEOs average 354 times worker pay.

2. Nursing hopes for a more equal future

Top officials of the Massachusetts Nurses Association have just submitted petitions — with more than 100,000 signatures — calling for a new state law that levies fines against any state hospital, both profit and nonprofit, that compensates its CEO more than 100 times the hospital's lowest-paid worker wage.

If state lawmakers don't act on the petition, the nurses plan to collect the 11,000 additional signatures necessary to place their proposal on next November's 2014 statewide ballot.

3. An Alpine assault on privilege

In Switzerland last fall, young activists fell short in their attempt to limit CEO compensation to no more than 12 times worker wages.

In a national referendum, voters rejected the proposal—but only after a massive corporate ad blitz. Just weeks before the late November voting, the "1:12 Initiative for Fair Pay" was actually even in the polls. Expect more on the 1:12 front in the year ahead.

4. Irish eyes smile on a wealth tax

In the Great Recession's wake, austerity budgets are squeezing working families the world over. But instead of slashing public spending

on programs the public needs, two Irish think tanks are pointing out that governments could be taxing the enormous wealth that has concentrated at society's economic summit.

A mere 0.6 percent annual levy on household wealth over one million euros, note the TASC and Nevin Economic Research Institute think tanks, could recast Ireland's entire fiscal landscape.

5. Ignore inequality? Fuhgetaboutit!

New York City voters amazed the nation this November by giving a landslide victory to a mayoral candidate who made eliminating gaps in income and wealth his campaign battle cry.

Among the proposals the newly elected Bill de Blasio will be pushing when he assumes office: an 11 percent hike in the city tax on income over \$500,000 to finance universal access to pre-kindergarten and after-school programs. That proposal, with a few tweaks, could begin remaking America's most unequal city.

6. More transparency

Only 17 members of Congress last year voluntarily released their tax returns. Emory law school's Dorothy Brown wants the IRS to start releasing an annual summary of lawmaker tax returns. A report on this order, says Brown, might build public pressure for moves against tax loopholes.

Back in 1934, Congress actually enacted a law that required all high-income earners to reveal their incomes and taxes paid. But America's wealthy quickly mobilized, and in less than a year had the law repealed.

7. Pension power

Britain's major unions announced this past March that they will be voting the shares their pension funds hold in UK corporations — currently worth more than \$1.5 billion — against any corporate pay plans that compensate CEOs at more than 20 times what workers receive.

British unions will apply the 20-to-1 ratio, at first, to the gap between executive and average or median worker pay. They hope eventually to apply the ratio to the gap that divides top executives and their company's lowest-paid workers.

More Information:

Content from *Too Much*,
the Institute for Policy Studies
www.ips-dc.org

THE TECHIE MANIFESTO

A CALL TO TECH PROFESSIONALS TO RETHINK PRIORITIES AND RE-ENGAGE WITH A PEOPLE AND PLANET IN DESPERATE NEED OF TALENTED HELP

by Cat Johnson

The goal for many young techies, as detailed in a scathing New York Times opinion piece, is to create the next big sexting app, Tinder, or Candy Crush Saga, not make the world a better place.

Perhaps not so. Cole Peters, a Canadian designer, is pushing back. He recently crafted the "First Things First 2014" manifesto as a way to help focus the tech community on meaningful work. In the manifesto, Cole urges designers, developers, technologists and communicators to refocus priorities "in favor of

more lasting, democratic forms of communication."

The manifesto's signatories agree to a "mind shift" away from the profit and corporations-over-people model to work toward the "exploration and production of humble, meaningful work, and beneficial cultural impact."

The original "First Things First" manifesto was published in 1964 by Ken Garland, a graphic designer who saw that his profession was being wasted on the triviality of advertising. It urged a "reversal of priorities in favor of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication."

In that same spirit, Cole's 2014 version is a call to tech professionals to rethink priorities and re-engage with a people and planet that is in desperate need of talented help.

“IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS MEMBERS OF OUR INDUSTRY TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGES WITHIN IT.”

EXCERPTS FROM FIRST THINGS FIRST 2014:

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, ARE DESIGNERS, DEVELOPERS, CREATIVE TECHNOLOGISTS, AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY COMMUNICATORS. WE ARE TROUBLED BY THE PRESENT STATE OF OUR INDUSTRY AND ITS EFFECTS ON CULTURES AND SOCIETIES ACROSS THE WORLD ...

... WE HAVE NEGATED OUR PROFESSIONS' POTENTIAL FOR POSITIVE IMPACT, AND ARE USING UP OUR TIME AND ENERGY MANUFACTURING DEMAND FOR THINGS THAT ARE REDUNDANT AT BEST, DESTRUCTIVE AT WORST.

THERE ARE PURSUITS MORE WORTHY OF OUR DEDICATION. OUR ABILITIES CAN BENEFIT AREAS SUCH AS EDUCATION, MEDICINE, PRIVACY AND DIGITAL SECURITY, PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS, JOURNALISM, INFORMATION DESIGN, AND HUMANITARIAN AID. THEY CAN TRANSFORM OUR CURRENT SYSTEMS OF FINANCE AND COMMERCE, AND REINFORCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES.

IT IS ALSO OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS MEMBERS OF OUR INDUSTRY TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGES WITHIN IT. WE MUST WORK TO IMPROVE OUR STANCES ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, WORKING CONDITIONS, AND EMPLOYEES' MENTAL HEALTH ...

... ULTIMATELY, REGARDLESS OF ITS AREA OF FOCUS OR SCALE, OUR WORK AND OUR MINDSET MUST TAKE ON A MORE ETHICAL, CRITICAL ETHOS ...

... WE ARE CALLING FOR A REFOCUSING OF PRIORITIES, IN FAVOR OF MORE LASTING, DEMOCRATIC FORMS OF COMMUNICATION. A MIND SHIFT AWAY FROM PROFIT-OVER-PEOPLE BUSINESS MODELS AND THE PLACING OF CORPORATIONS BEFORE INDIVIDUALS, TOWARD THE EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION OF HUMBLE, MEANINGFUL WORK, AND BENEFICIAL CULTURAL IMPACT ...

... IN 1964, AND AGAIN IN 1999, A DEDICATED GROUP OF PRACTITIONERS SIGNED THEIR NAMES TO EARLIER ITERATIONS OF THIS MANIFESTO, FORMING A CALL TO PUT THEIR COLLECTIVE SKILLS TO WORTHWHILE USE.

WITH THE UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS, THEIR MESSAGE HAS SINCE GROWN ONLY MORE URGENT. TODAY, IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY, WE RENEW AND EXPAND THE FIRST THINGS FIRST MANIFESTO, WITH THE HOPE OF CATALYZING A MEANINGFUL REVOLUTION IN BOTH OUR INDUSTRY AND THE WORLD AT LARGE.



More Information:

To sign the Manifesto visit:
firstthingsfirst2014.org



Great Victories for Tribal People

In 2013 indigenous people won land rights, challenged misrepresentation in the media and gained solidarity from unexpected allies

From the suspension of mining concessions in Colombia and the Dongria Kondh's unanimous rejection of a bauxite mine in India, to Vanity Fair's coverage of Awá, the Earth's most threatened tribe, there were reasons for tribal peoples to celebrate in 2013.

And there is still more.

ing lands protesting the real reason they were being forced out: to give a Dubai-based hunting company exclusive access to bring tourists from the Gulf states to shoot the wildlife as trophies.

The region of Loliondo will instead remain with the Maasai, who the prime minister said had taken

The Brazilian government recognizes the Guarani community's land as indigenous

A Guarani community in Brazil celebrated after the government recognized their land as indigenous, and for their exclusive use. The 170 members of Pyelito Kuê/M'barakay community, who live on an "island" of land between a river and a soya plantation, can now stay on part of their ancestral land until the formal demarcation process is complete.

Brazil returns land to the Yanomami

The Brazilian authorities began an operation to remove 11 illegal ranches from the Yanomami territory in Brazil, in order to return the land to the Indians. At least three of the ranches, in the region of Ajarani, were closed. Survival

International has supported the Yanomami for decades; the Yanomami Park was created in 1992 following years of campaigning.

Indian courts rule in the Soliga tribe's favor

The Soliga tribe won an important victory in court after its entire stock of honey was seized by forestry officials. The confiscation of honey was in direct violation of the 2006 Indian Forest Rights Act, which recognizes the rights of India's tribal peoples, such as the Soliga, to live in and from their forests, and protect and manage their land.

Tribal peoples like the Soliga have been living with and protecting the wildlife in their forests for countless generations, and despite severe constraints from forestry officials they have remained determined to manage, harvest and protect their forests sustainably for current and future generations.

The Botswana Bushmen win land rights

Last June, dozens of Botswana Bushmen threatened with eviction, reportedly because they live in an area proposed as a "wildlife corridor," won a significant court victory in their efforts to stay on their land.

After the wildlife

corridor between the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park was proposed, the local and national authorities pressurized the Ranyane Bushmen to leave. In a new hearing, the court ruled that no government officials could enter the Bushmen's compounds without their consent; that their water borehole could not be dismantled without warning; and that the Bushmen's lawyers must be notified before any further attempt is made to resettle them.

"Proud Not Primitive" campaign wins victory in Indian media

A groundbreaking new campaign was launched in India to challenge the deep-seated notion that tribal peoples are "backwards" and "primitive." Such attitudes are often used to justify the theft of their land and attempts to force them to change their ways of life.

By November 2013, the message of the "Proud Not Primitive" campaign was being heard in India. The Hindu, one of the world's largest English-language newspapers, pledged to no longer use the term "primitive" when referring to tribal peoples, an important success for the campaign.



© Peter Greer/Al Jazeera

Tanzanian prime minister agrees to conserve Maasai lands

Maasai people in Tanzania celebrated after the country's prime minister said he would scrap a plan to take 1,500 square miles from them in the name of conservation. They refused the government's order to abandon their traditional graz-

"good care of the area" since "time immemorial."

The Ogiek tribal people of Kenya win back their land

The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights ruled in March that the government of Kenya must not evict the Ogiek tribe from their land in the Mau Forest.



Fiona Watson / Survival International

Immigrant Detainees' on Hunger Strike

by Rachael Stoeve

Veronica Noriega stares through the chain-link fence at several buses with blacked-out windows parked outside the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Wash. Her husband, Ramon Mendoza, is a detainee inside and helped organize a hunger strike in protest of conditions at the facility.

Between 750 and 1,200 of the more than 1,300 detainees held there participated at the strike's peak.

It's March 11, four days after the strike began, and we're outside the detention center with around 150 supporters. The crowd, among them many families with young children in tow, circles picket-style outside the gate, chanting "No estan solos!" (You are not alone!).

At this side of the facility, organizers say, the chants can be heard by those held inside.

The Northwest Detention Center is the only facility in Washington state that holds undocumented immigrants while they await adjudication of their case—a process that may result in asylum, depor-



Supporters of people held at the Northwest Detention Center rally in Tacoma, Wash., on March 11, 2014

tation or release.

The detainees are protesting their treatment and the conditions at the facility: a note, passed to one of their lawyers and published by Seattle's alt-weekly The Stranger, asks for better food, lower prices

at the center's commissary where food and other items are sold and higher pay for detainees who participate in the facility's voluntary work program.

It is unclear how many out of the original 750 hunger strikers are still refusing

to eat. Activists say as many as 12; US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) says the remaining strikers have all eaten.

But the strike has garnered local and national media attention, with solidarity demonstrations happening as far away as New York City. Ultimately, Angelica hopes ICE will investigate the GEO Group-managed prison — which it operates on behalf of ICE — for its alleged abuses, and, in turn, that the federal government will investigate both organizations.

More Information:

prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com

Story from YES! Magazine
www.yesmagazine.org



Gaia University Offers **R/evolutionary** Education

The Dongria Kondh tribe votes against mine construction

India's Dongria Kondh tribe overwhelmingly rejected plans by the British mining giant Vedanta Resources for an open-pit bauxite mine in their sacred



Niyamgiri Hills. Twelve Dongria villages voted unanimously against the mine during consultations ordered by India's Supreme Court in April 2013, on the basis that their religious, cultural and social rights would be jeopardized if mining were to go ahead.

More Information:

Story from *Survival International*, the global movement for tribal peoples' rights. www.survivalinternational.org

by Nicole Vosper

Over the last 10 years, more than a thousand people have benefited from Gaia University, a radical model of higher education. Initiated in the United States but now operating internationally, Gaia U was specifically created, as its website states, "for the benefit life on earth."

The university supports its "un-learners" to achieve Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Integrative Ecosocial Design, as well as a growing number of diploma programs, such as the International Diploma of Permaculture Design. The focus on design is intentional as an empowering process to learn how we can design, interact and intervene with systems to make them more regenerative, and better understand the ecological and social relationships which inform them.

Gaia University is unique in its embrace of action learning. "Associates" learn by doing and are supported to seek and develop learning opportunities for themselves rooted in the real world. Other than an introductory orientation, several online modules and a Transformative Action Learning Certificate course that facilitate action learning, the remainder of an associate's experience is determined by themselves.

All over the world, associates self-direct their own learning, designing curriculums to gain the specific skills they both need and desire to develop themselves, rebuild their communities and restore their ecosystems.

Participants have done everything from developing alternative education centers to starting social enterprises, or-



Students in Chile as a part of Gaia U Latina collaborate toward real-world solutions

ganizing radical social movements, creating community gardens and more.

"Gaia U gave me the most whole-systems, whole-person transformative learning experience that I've ever experienced," said Ethan Roland, Master of Science graduate and recent author of "Regenerative Enterprise," who completed his degree while developing a successful permaculture design business.

"It wasn't in a bubble or some cloistered campus outside of reality. With Gaia U, you're immersed in real-world work," Ethan said. "Gaia U gave me the ability to learn how to learn, so that I can continue to learn in an accelerated way, wherever I

go and for the rest of my life. I don't think any other university focuses on that."

The focus on learning how to learn is a huge part of Gaia University.

"We start from the perspective that it is your life, your passions, your projects, your vi-

"Participants have done everything from developing alternative education centers to starting social enterprises, organizing radical social movements, creating community gardens and more."

sion — and the rapidly changing contexts in which they are emerging — that best give rise to what you need to learn and how you need to learn it," said Liora Adler, co-founder of Gaia U.

Gaia University Latina also launched this March, making Spanish-language program services available to participants worldwide.

With inequalities widening, climate changing accelerating and ecosystems degenerating, the time is now to support a global community of doers, dedicated to achieving social justice and ecological restoration on every continent.

More Information:

www.gaiauniversity.org
888-316-2092

12-year-old creates low-cost Braille printer out of Legos

by Garvin Thomas

Silicon Valley is awash in stories that begin in a garage and end with someone making billions of dollars.

"Shubham's goal now is to make free, detailed instructions on how to build the printer available to anyone who wants them."

Shubham Banerjee's story, though, is slightly different. For one, it starts at a kitchen table, and second, 12-year-old Shubham isn't in it for the money. "I think I'm doing something that could actually help people," he says.

The "something" Shubham did was create a low-cost Braille

printer using a \$350 Lego Mindstorms kit bought for him by his father.

Shubham got the idea after a flyer was dropped off on the family's doorstep soliciting donations for an organization that helps the blind. He realized he

knew very little about what life must be like for the visually impaired. "I asked my dad, 'How do blind people read?'" Shubham says. "My dad said, 'Google it.' So I did."

Shubham learned that Braille printers are expensive: "They start at around \$2,000," he notes. Shubham figured that price put them out of reach for many peo-

ple who might benefit from them. At first he dreamed of buying the printers and giving them to blind people when he was older. It then occurred to the young inventor to try and make one himself. "I didn't know if it was even possible," Shubham says.

He spent the next four weeks working after school at the family's kitchen table. Often staying up past midnight fiddling with his creation, Shubham worked through seven failed prototypes before finally coming up with the right configuration.

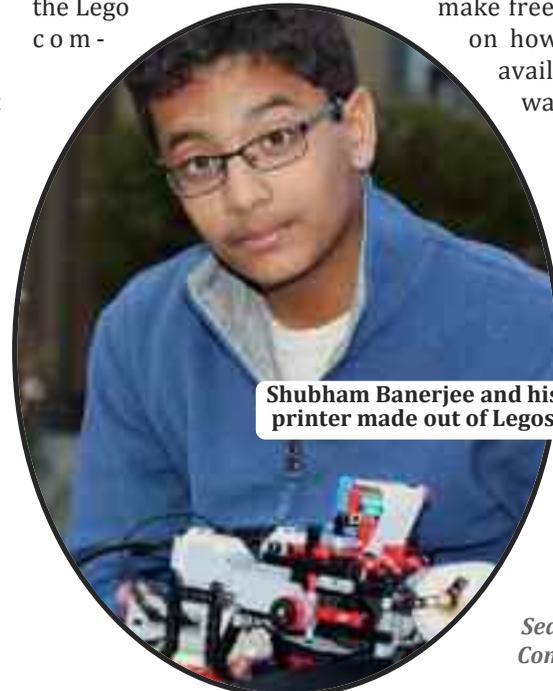
Late one night Shubham's printer (now called Braigo) printed its first letter. "It was a eureka moment," Shubham recalls. "My mom was like, 'Yeah!'"

People, both sighted and blind, have reached out to him

from around the world with messages of admiration and congratulations. Even the Lego com-

pany tweeted a compliment to him.

Shubham's goal now is to make free, detailed instructions on how to build the printer available to anyone who wants them.



Shubham Banerjee and his printer made out of Legos

To watch the video:
www.youtube.com
Search: Shubham Banerjee
Content from NBC Bay Area



Is Elder Eviction a Crime?

San Francisco activists file historic elder abuse charges against predatory landlords



Tiny (Lisa Gray-Garcia) speaks to supporters and press about the charges filed

by Katherine Russell

On Feb. 5, criminal charges against several San Francisco landlords were filed with the city's district attorney in accordance with California Penal Code 368 — which defines crimes committed against elders and dependant adults — by a coalition of tenant activists and seniors.

Spearheaded by poverty writer, educator and activist Lisa Gray-Garcia (a.k.a. "Tiny"), the group held a press conference outside the San Francisco Hall of Justice to announce the charges filed in response to a flurry of Ellis Act evictions specifically targeting senior citizens in primarily rent-controlled buildings.

The controversial Ellis Act allows landlords to use the state law as an eviction tool, even to expel tenants not in violation of their lease requirements. "The civil law does protect this crime. That's why this [action] is not a law-

suit but a criminal charge," Tiny explains. "Yet you have a situation where people with absolutely no power are being thrown out in the street, many of them seniors. I'm talking people 70, 80, even 90 years old."

The twin crises of a shrinking housing market and a widening income disparity have reached a boiling point in the San Francisco Bay Area. This disparity is greatest in the city itself, where escalating protests against the encroachment of tech companies and their

well-paid employees into previously low-income neighborhoods acutely spotlight the growing class conflict.

"We're receiving at least 10-15 calls a week from elders and families facing these type of evictions," said Tiny, who is also a founder of the Poor News Network, a "poor-people led" non-profit offering community education, art classes and media access.

"We're now in a really accelerated phase of an ongoing movement that has been going on for years — and that is, the eradication of poor people from the San Francisco Bay Area," she said.

The elder abuse charges are currently under investigation by the district attorney's office. "At this point, we're moving forward very slowly and deliberately to protect the

testimony of the victims, to avoid any retaliation. They're vulnerable—a lot of these people have physical and psychological disabilities as well as advanced age. But we're working on a lot of fronts on this issue," Tiny explained.

Tiny cites her own experiences with homelessness as a child trying to survive with her single mother, Dee, as part of the impetus to stand up to senior evictions.

"I speak for people not spoken for, who have no voice. That's why I do what I do," she says. "All my life, as an indigenous person, I've practiced eldership—the value of honoring and respecting your elders. My elders raised and supported me and I owe them the same. I also owe them respect for their age—it's a basic understanding. We [indigenous people] follow our own values, not capitalistic values."

More Information:

www.poornewsnetwork.com/

5 Ways to Empower Others

What makes a good leader? The gift of strengthening everyone else.

by Starhawk

An empowering leader holds and serves a vision broad and deep enough to inspire others and allow them to take parts of it and make it their own.

An empowering leader helps the group develop a strategy—a plan for getting from here to there, with milestones and goals along the way.

An empowering leader rarely uses command mode. Most of the time, she leads by example and persuasion. But when command is called for, an empowering leader will step forward and then step back into a more democratic mode once the need has passed.

An empowering leader also steps back. He doesn't hog the center or the spotlight, but is always looking for ways to share.

All of this is, of course, the ideal. We can strive for it, but most of us will fall short in one way or another. An empowering leader makes mistakes. If she doesn't, she's probably not experimenting enough. An empowering leader is also a good learner, a willing apologizer, someone who can make amends and move on.

Keep Power Circulating

Power tends to concentrate, and even the most benevolent and empowering leader may unconsciously begin to hoard power over time. When power becomes permanent and static, the group often stagnates.

Collaborative groups need strategies for sharing power and developing leadership in all group members. To keep power circulating and flowing freely in the group, we can adopt a few key elements in our structure.

1. Limit the Accumulation of Power

We can make agreements that limit how much responsibility any one person can take on, how many committees they can join, for example, or how many aspects of a project they can coordinate. We can break big tasks into smaller roles and share them.

2. Share Roles and Responsibilities

Meetings typically are co-facilitated, so that a powerful

role is shared. When roles can be shared, we can also reinforce one another's strengths and compensate for our weaknesses. A born Grace whose strengths are affiliative might look for a partner who is more of a boundary-setting Dragon.

3. Rotate Roles and Responsibilities

Many roles benefit by being rotated—for example, meeting facilitation. Some roles put people in center stage—media spokes, for example, or convener of a gathering. People who take on those roles get more attention—both positive and negative. Rotating them can spread both the praise and the blame around more fairly.

Other roles are more in the nature of chores that must be done—taking notes at meetings and distributing them, turning the compost, doing the dishes after the potluck. When they are shared, no one person is stuck with an unpopular task.

4. Train and Apprentice

Some roles require training and preparation: facilitating big meetings, keeping accurate books, propagating cuttings in the greenhouse. For the long-term growth of the group, we can create ways that people can learn, apprentice and be mentored in those skills. And when skills are needed by the group as a whole—for example, communication skills, consensus process skills—the group should devote resources to provide overall training for all its members. It will be well repaid over the long term by improvements in function and by hours and hours of fruitless arguments avoided!

5. Pass Power On

Because roles of power are fluid in collaborative groups, part of a leader's job is to sense when and how to pass the power on. Power circulates, and we can trust that when we let go, others will take on the tasks and responsibilities, freeing us up to find new areas of interest and new challenges.

More Information:

Story from Yes! Magazine
Excerpted from *The Empowerment Manual: A Guide for Collaborative Groups* by Starhawk
www.starhawk.org/



NY turns food waste into fuel

by Joel Rose

Every year in the US, we send millions of tons of food to the landfill. What if we could use all of those pizza crusts and rotten vegetables to heat our home? That's already happening in one unlikely laboratory: the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant in Brooklyn.

The plant's longtime superintendent, Jimmy Pynn, shows off the plant's crown jewels: eight huge, shiny, oval-shaped steel tanks known as digester eggs. Each one contains millions of gallons of black sludge that's roughly the consistency of pea soup. Jimmy calls it "black gold."

"It has a pungent odor to it," Jimmy says. "To most people it's like ugly, yucky stuff."

Where others see foul and potentially hazardous sludge, Jimmy sees a source of renewable energy, thanks to trillions of helpful bacteria inside the digester eggs.

"The digesters like to be fed like us: three times a day," he says. "They like to be kept warm, at 98 degrees. And whether we want to admit it or not, we all make gas. And that's what we have these guys for: to make gas."

In this case, that gas is methane, which can be used to heat homes or make electricity. Right now, what these bacteria are digesting is mostly sewage sludge. But they're being introduced to a new diet: food scraps. The hope is that this plant will soon take in hundreds of tons of organic waste from houses and apartments.

"We could be taking all of Brooklyn's organics," says Ron Gonen, New York's deputy commissioner for recycling. "And rather than paying millions of dollars to send it to landfill, right here in Brooklyn convert it into clean, renewable energy."

This is similar to what happens in your backyard compost heap — but here, the bacteria do their work without oxygen. It's called anaerobic digestion.

Anaerobic digestion isn't a brand new idea. What is new is the idea of adding food waste into the mix, at least in the U.S. It's already being done in Europe.

"It's the first, what I'll call the baby step," says Paul Sellew at Harvest Power.

"In 2015, New York restaurants will be required to stop sending their organic waste to landfills."



Courtesy of New York City Department of Environmental Protection

Each of these eight digester eggs contains millions of gallons of black sludge

"Because ultimately in New York City, just the restaurants alone, you're talking well over a million tons a year," he says.

This fledgling industry is trying to build more compost plants and digesters to han-

dle all of that waste, says Paul.

As for the trillions-strong hordes of hungry bacteria? Let's just hope that they can handle the bounty about to befall them.

A New Leaf in the Rainforest: Longtime Villain Vows Reform

by Rhett Butler

Few companies have done as much damage to the world's tropical forests as Asia Pulp & Paper (APP). Fortunately, under intense pressure from its customers and conservation groups, APP has embarked on a series of changes that could significantly reduce deforestation in Indonesia and serve as a model for forestry reform.

A year has passed since APP — under intense pressure from environmental groups and having lost the business of dozens of major customers, including Wal-Mart, Staples and Xerox — announced a new conservation policy.

With an endorsement from Greenpeace, which had arguably been APP's fiercest critic, the company committed itself to a series of forestry reforms that had earlier been adopted by its sister company, Golden Agri Resources.

These include a pledge of zero deforestation in woodlands that sequester large amounts of car-



An acacia plantation, near Pekanbaru in Riau Province, operated by PT Arara Abadi, Asia Pulp & Paper's largest pulpwood supplier

bon or have high conservation value; a commitment to strict monitoring of its forestry practices; a vow to acquire prior consent from communities for new tree plantation development; and an agreement to set up a disputes resolution process.

But APP went further, saying its reforms would apply to all of its suppliers and adding a peatlands management component to limit emissions in existing plantations. APP's policy also came with apparent support from the highest levels of the company, something that was lacking with previous pledges to stop pulping Indonesia's rainforests, which had been repeatedly broken.

Today, changes are plainly visible in APP's operations. Most im-

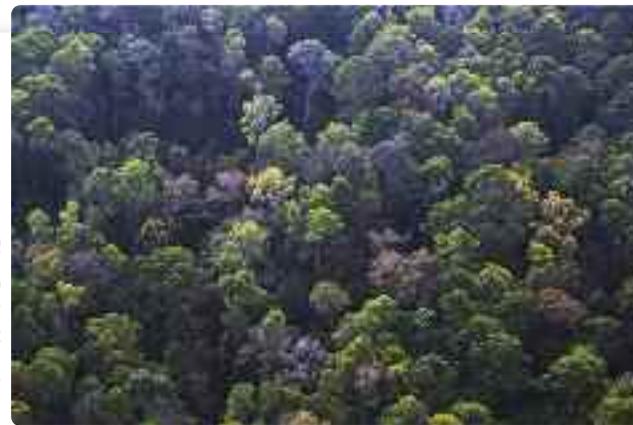
portantly, the company appears to have stopped converting natural, undisturbed forests. Gone are the greenwashing public relations specialists who once did everything they could to conceal the destruction that APP was wreaking on Indonesia's forests.

They have been replaced by well-established sustainability consultants and teams of biologists who have conducted assessments of high-conservation-value forests across the majority of APP's concessions, documenting the presence of key indicator species in both plantations and areas protected under the company's moratorium. Remote sensing analysts and field teams, funded by APP, are using satellite

imagery and ground surveys to determine how much forest remains across the company's holdings so these woodlands can be protected, while other specialists are conducting training in conflict mapping and dispute resolution with local communities.

In late January, APP hired the Rainforest Alliance to conduct an independent audit of the implementation of its policies. APP has also readily admitted to some missteps, reporting two breaches of its deforestation moratorium and sending a monitoring group, The Forest Trust, to investigate complaints.

"APP is quite brave to bring in Rainforest Alliance," said Lafcadio Cortesi, forests campaign director at the Rainforest Action



A canopy of untouched rainforest in the Giam Siak Kecil Biosphere Reserve, an area managed by Asia Pulp & Paper as a conservation zone. Until the last few decades, much of Indonesia and Borneo were covered by such pristine tropical forests

Network (RAN), which remains an outspoken critic of APP despite the policy. "Independent verification is one signal that this is moving along on the right track."

But has APP truly transformed its operations? Among its critics, the jury is still out. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), RAN and the Indonesian NGO Greenomics are waiting to see the results of assessments conducted over the past year by The Forest Trust and Indonesian auditors.

And environmentalists are now raising the bar, asking APP to not only abandon deforestation, but commit to addressing its deforestation legacy through ecosystem restoration. APP is proposing a modified form of restoration, meaning that it wouldn't convert plantations back to natural forest, but would support efforts to return degraded natural forests in the same ecosystems back to health. WWF welcomes that, but wants APP to restore as much degraded forest land as the company has razed in recent decades.

More information:

e360.yale.edu/

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❖ **He will turn our attention to the environment...**

Pollution is the #1 killer in the world today, and new reports say the consequences of global warming will come sooner and be more catastrophic than expected if we fail to act in time.

❖ **With his help we will see that all life is one...**

Acting as one human family, we will rebuild our world along more just and compassionate lines, and thus create the only basis for lasting peace.

❖ **His public work has already begun...**

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WHO IS THIS MAN?

www.ShareInternational.info/pn

Some people have asked, so to clarify, this is an advertisement, not an article. ~ The PN Design Team

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Photo courtesy of One Billion Rising

One Billion Rising event in the Philippines

by Heather Crawford

You may have already heard of One Billion Rising, since it's the largest global movement to end violence against women and girls the world has ever seen. Growing out of the 15 year-strong V-Day movement, One Billion Rising saw people in 207 countries come together to rise up and dance for an end to the violence in its first year alone.

Why "one billion," you may ask? As astonishing as it sounds, that is the number of females who will likely be abused in their lifetime, about one third of the

world's female population.

Unique to this global movement is the central role of dance, with people of all genders coming together to dance the same steps in flash mobs all over the world. The movement uses dance as a revolutionary act, engaging and inspiring people in a refreshing way.

Celebrated for the second year on February 14th, 2014, this year's Rising focused on the theme of justice. Here are just a few outcomes:

In Guatemala, one Rising event was held in front of a major courthouse. Not only did a Supreme Court judge dance

alongside local activists, but the action lead directly to the creation of a Special Cabinet for Women in Guatemala.

India experienced a fundamental shift with the participants from virtually every sector of society, including auto-rickshaw and taxi driver activists. In many cities and rural areas people came out into the streets in the thousands. More men also joined in this year's events.

Highlights from the Mexico Rising included House of Representatives members dancing and pledging to do everything in their power to end human trafficking and make Mexico City a violence-free zone for

women.

The action also resulted in the closing of one of the major prostitution dancing halls in the Mexico City.

On March 1st, Norma Bastidas, the "fastest woman in the world," began her journey to complete the world's longest triathlon in an effort to combat human trafficking and empower survivors. Follow her journey from Cancun, Mexico to Washington, D.C. at www.normabastidas.com.

The Rising in Lima, Peru saw nearly 50,000 people pack the city square. The broad participation across sectors is evident in such cultural changes as football players wearing One Billion Rising t-shirts at games to construction workers committing to treat women with respect and ending sexual harassment in the streets.

In an historic first in Swaziland, Africa, women publicly addressed the issues that affected them without other organizations speaking on their behalf. Issues that had been ignored by society were finally brought to light. Even traditional leaders, the custodians of a culture which often suppresses women and girls, committed to change. In addition, two new organizations — Swaziland Women in Action and a domestic workers union — have been formed and are gaining massive support.

More Information:

Vday.org
Onebillionrising.org

We Are Not A Loan

Strike Debt is a nationwide movement of debt resisters creating economic justice for all

Debt is a tie that binds the 99%. With stagnant wages, systemic unemployment and public service cuts, we are forced to go into debt for the basic things in life — and thus surrender our futures to the banks.

Debt is major source of profit and power for Wall Street that strives to keep us isolated, ashamed and afraid. Using direct action, research, education and the arts, we are coming together to challenge this illegitimate system while imagining and creating alternatives. We want an economy in which our debts are to our friends, families and communities — and not to the 1%.

Principles of Solidarity

Adopted by consensus of the Strike Debt NYC general meeting of January 6, 2013

Strike Debt is building a debt resistance movement. Most of us fall into debt because we are increasingly deprived of the means to acquire the basic ne-

cessities of life: education, health care and housing. Because we are forced to go into debt simply in order to live, we think it is right and moral to resist it.

We also oppose debt because it is an instrument of exploitation and political domination. Debt is used to discipline us, deepen existing inequalities, and reinforce gendered, racial and other social hierarchies.

Every Strike Debt action is designed to weaken the institutions that seek to divide us and benefit from our division. As an alternative to this predatory system, Strike Debt advocates a just and sustainable economy, based on common goods, mutual aid and public affluence.

Strike Debt is an offshoot of the Occupy movement. It respects many of the principles that were adopted by Occupy participants from other non-hierarchical movements. These include: political autonomy; direct democracy; direct action;

a culture of solidarity, creative openness; and commitment to anti-oppressive conduct and language. We strive for a world without ableism, homophobia, racism, sexism, transphobia and all forms of oppression.

Strike Debt engages in public education about the debt system to counteract the self-serving myth that finance is too complicated for laypersons to understand. In particular, it urges direct action as a way of stopping the damage caused by the creditor class and their enablers among elected government officials. Direct action empowers those who participate in challenging the debt system.

Strike Debt holds that we owe the financial institutions nothing; whereas, to our communities, families and friends we owe everything. In pursuing a long-term strategy for national organizing around this principle, we pledge international solidarity with the growing global movement against debt and austerity.

THE DEBT RESISTORS' OPERATIONS MANUAL

a project of
STRIKE DEBT /
OCCUPY WALL STREET

The Debt Resisters' Operations Manual

Written by a network of activists, writers and academics from Strike Debt, The Debt Resisters' Operations Manual provides strategies for opposing common forms of debt and lays out a vision for a societal movement of debt resistance. The full text of the manual is available for free at strikedebt.org/drom/

More Information:

strikedebt.org



New Act Grows Food on Vacant Lots

California boosts small-scale urban farming with passage of Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act

We didn't think it was possible, but California just got a little greener.

On September 28, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act (AB 551) which authorizes tax breaks for landowners who lend their property to urban farmers.

According to SPUR, the new support for urban agriculture will not only increase the usage of vacant, privately-owned land as productive farms, but it will also go a long way towards providing stability for farmers struggling to make it on borrowed land.

"Operating on a month-to-month lease means you never know what will happen tomorrow or the next day," Caitlyn Gal-



loway of San Francisco's Little City Gardens told KQED. "It makes smart investments in our

business, like longer-term tools and infrastructure, much riskier."

By sweetening the deal for landowners, small-scale farms

"When I see these types of gardens sprouting up throughout the city I'm inspired by them, and am committed to helping expand this movement."

like Little City Gardens will have a better chance to thrive as well as benefit the communities that choose to opt in as incentivized zones.

"Slow-local food tastes better, it's healthier for you, and it's better for the environment," Juan

Carlos Cancino, a Greenhouse Partner and researcher behind the bill, told the *Earth Island Jour-*

nal.

"When I see these types of gardens sprouting up throughout the city I'm inspired by them, and am committed to helping expand this movement."

The Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act went into effect on January 1, 2014.

More Information:

Story from Huffington Post Good News

Belief in immortality hard-wired?

By examining children's ideas about "prelife," the time before conception, researchers found results which suggest that our bias toward immortality is a part of human intuition that naturally emerges early in life. And the part of us that is eternal, we believe, is not our skills or ability to reason, but rather our hopes, desires and emotions.

by *Nicholas Tufnell*

According to a recent study led by Natalie Emmons of Boston University, the tendency to reason in terms of an eternal mind is "a universal cognitive default," regardless of race, religion or culture. In other words, we all come into this life believing we're immortal, with a large proportion of us never truly shaking the belief off.

Emmons examined the development of prelife reasoning in children to shed greater light on the sensation many people have of owning a particular, ineffable and fundamental core, which exists separate to the physical state, even if it can be reasoned that these ideas are non-scientific and irrational. "I study these things for a living but even find myself defaulting to them. I know that my mind is a product of my brain, but I still like to think of myself as something independent of my body," said Emmons.

About intuition

It is often said that these feelings emerge due to the inculcation of religious beliefs — that is, the idea of a "soul", or other similar notions, arise from our understanding of what constitutes a religious-based afterlife, whether we believe in it or not — or from cultural influences such as TV, films or books.

However, Emmons hypothesized that perhaps this wasn't a cultural phenomenon but was instead the result of intuition, in much the same way a child intuitively

"We have the ability to reflect and reason scientifically, and we have the ability to reason based on our gut and intuition. And depending on the situation, one may be more useful than the other."

"learns" to talk. To assess this theory, Emmons focused on the concept of prelife, rather than afterlife, as notions of prelife are largely left untouched by religion: "Considering their absence from the vast majority of Christian and Jewish faiths, which account for a third of the world's religions, cultural scripts about prelife existence are not as ubiquitous or pancultural as they are in the case of afterlife."



Child participating in the study

How were the children examined?

Emmons studied 283 children (five to 12-year-olds) from two distinct cultures in Ecuador, and examined them for any developmental changes in reasoning. The first group of children was from an indigenous tribe who had no concept of a religious prelife and the second group was raised in a Roman Catholic environment.

The examination included presenting the children with drawings of a young woman, the same woman pregnant and a baby. Emmons then asked the children to describe how they might have felt if they imagined themselves existing prior to conception, in the womb and as newborn babies, using the pictures as prompts. "By

being self-referential in nature, the investigation was the first to systematically examine children's reasoning about their own, rather than another's, capacities during a period detached from a biological earthly body," the study reads.

Stunning conclusions about prelife

Despite the disparate nature of the two groups, Emmons discovered they both provided similar answers. The children believed that while they had no physical manifestation before birth, they could nonetheless still think, and feel emotions. This led Emmons to conclude that our bias towards a belief of some kind of existence prior to material embodiment emerges naturally in early life, with mentality — such as feelings and emotions — taking precedence over bodily attributes.

The necessity for having evolved this apparently universal technique of believing in a form of eternal life is not entirely clear, with Emmons postulating it might be a by-product of our highly developed social reasoning: "We're really good at figuring out what people are thinking, what their emotions are, what their desires are."

However, the fallout of this developed sense of reasoning is to sometimes find patterns and connections where there are none, such as seeing faces in inanimate objects, believing there is "purpose" to the universe, or in this instance, believing in eternal souls.

More Information:

Read the full study:

www.bu.edu/cdl/files/2014/01/EmmonsKelemen_prelife_withsuppmat.pdf
Story from Wired and Science Daily



Denver Rapper Teaches Kids to be **GARDENERS** not Gangstas

HIP HOP artist Itef Hotep Vita, known as "DJ Cavem Moetavation," grew up surrounded by poverty, candy and soda, but was influenced by his sharecropper heritage to grow food. Now, through his music, he's growing a following of green students. This is DJ Cavem's story.



DJ Cavem spilling rhymes in the garden with sage, rosemary and thyme

I'm DJ Cavem and I am a HIP HOP artist, an organic gardener and an educator. I come from a family of sharecroppers, activists and organic farmers, but I was raised in the city.

You could say I began farming at an early age. I planted my first crop at age four — two apricot trees in the backyard. So I had these different forces — my family roots and my urban neighborhood — coming together in my childhood and now in my music.

I follow and teach the basis of HIP HOP culture: Higher Inner Peace, Helping Other People. In order to bring about the respect that HIP HOP deserves I share its history: that it was created by youth to cause positive change, to stop violence and provide an artistic outlet. When this is un-

derstood, it makes perfect sense as to why it works for my curriculum and as a teaching tool.

HIP HOP is a gateway to our youth, particularly high school-aged students. Music influences their decisions, what clothes they wear, what they want to be as an adult and even the food choices they make.

I'm a student of the science of life. My focus has not been around the academic guidelines of science. When I'm talking about how to grow food, how to prepare food, what foods to consume and the realities of climate change, science is just organically a part of it all. "Roots, Beans and Greens" and "Home CookN" from my last album "The Produce Section: The Harvest," hit on those topics and

have a very powerful message. Through songs like these I can get kids excited, and also teach them something real about living a better life.

Another big part of our workshops are hands-on activities. We take inner-city youth into environments that they are not familiar with like the forest, mountains, aquaponic centers and recording studios.

It is amazing to watch their eyes expand when they see a

corner parking lot transformed into a garden. We build rapport and tell these youth the truth about their food, their health, their community and their access to healthy resources. We empower them to see food as medicine, to grow their own food, to look at homeopathic holistic remedies to illness. I have taken this curriculum to various schools, college campuses, youth events and summer programs.

struggle with connecting the classes, with getting rich people and poor people in the same room. But I have had the privilege to perform for both audiences, from green elite fundraisers to gang intervention cook-outs. The challenge is finding balance and appealing to everyone while remaining true to my art and myself.

More Information:

www.djcavem.com
Content from Yes! Magazine
www.yesmagazine.org

Kazoo's D.I.Y. Corner

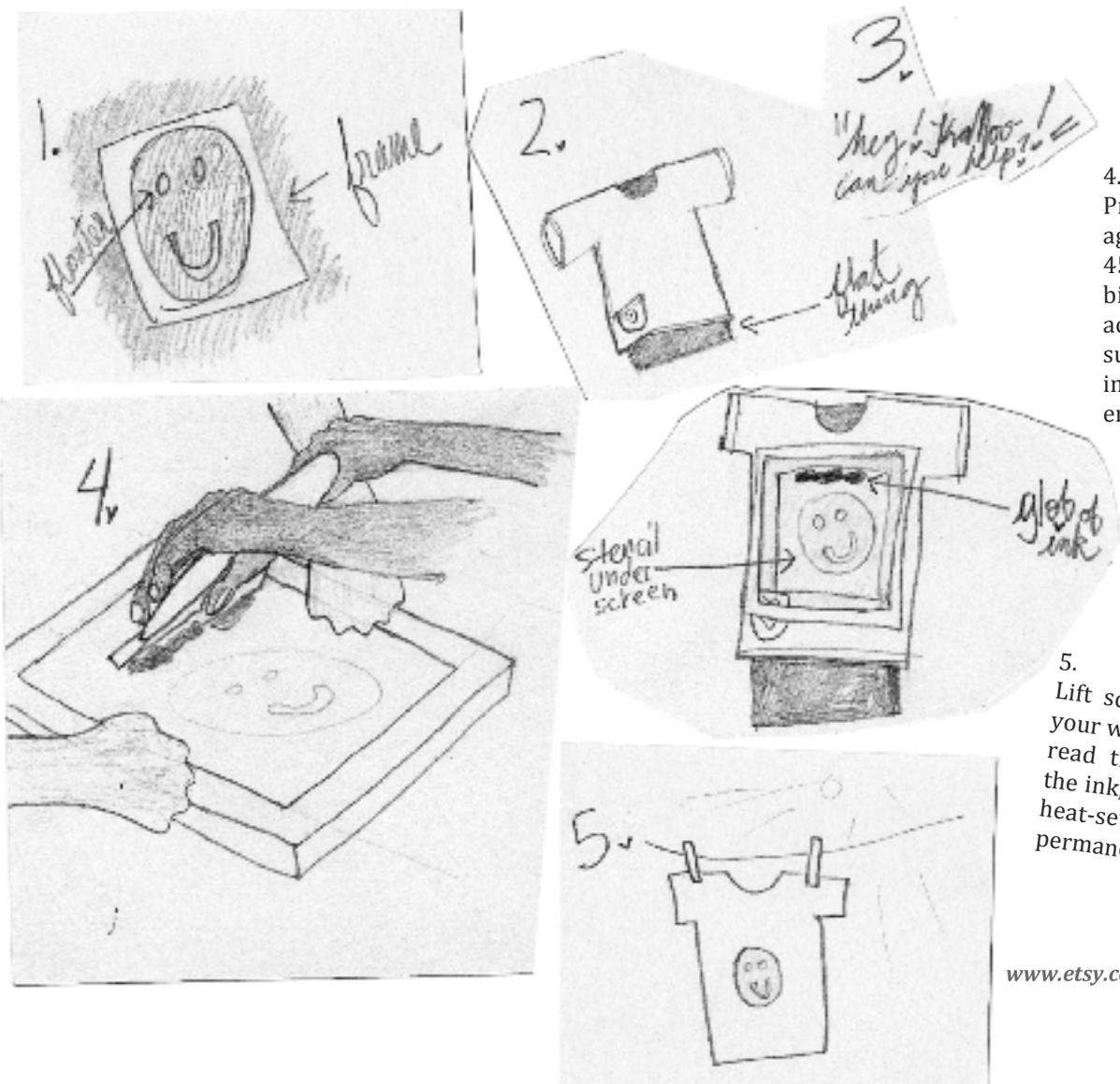
How to screen Print using the PAPER STENCIL METHOD

Ever get an idea for a t-shirt and wish you could make it? Well, now you can! It's as easy as drawing or printing your image and cutting it out. You can use a silkscreen that you buy at an art store, or make your own by stretching an old sheer curtain over a sturdy wooden frame (like a picture frame), then staple-gunning the edges so the surface is taut. You will need some fabric ink, thin paper, a utility knife or scissors, and a squeegee or something hard, smooth and flat like a folded piece of cardboard.

1. Cut your paper stencil, keeping any pieces that you need to "float" inside of the paper border. For example, if you made a smiley face you would need to cut out and put aside the smile and the eyes to float inside of the circle face.

2. If printing on a shirt, put a piece of flat lumber or cardboard inside the shirt, so you have a flat printing surface that has only one layer of fabric. Position your cutouts on the printing surface as desired and lower the screen flat side on top of stencil.

3. Have a partner help for this part. Press down on the screen frame to ensure complete contact with all cutouts. Hold the screen tightly in place. Put a few teaspoons of ink on the screen above the image so that it doesn't overlap the cut-away space.



4. Press your squeegee against the surface at a 45-degree angle, grabbing the ink as you pull across the stencil. Make sure that all areas of the image have been covered.

5. Lift screen and admire your work! Make sure to read the directions on the ink, as some require heat-setting to become permanent.

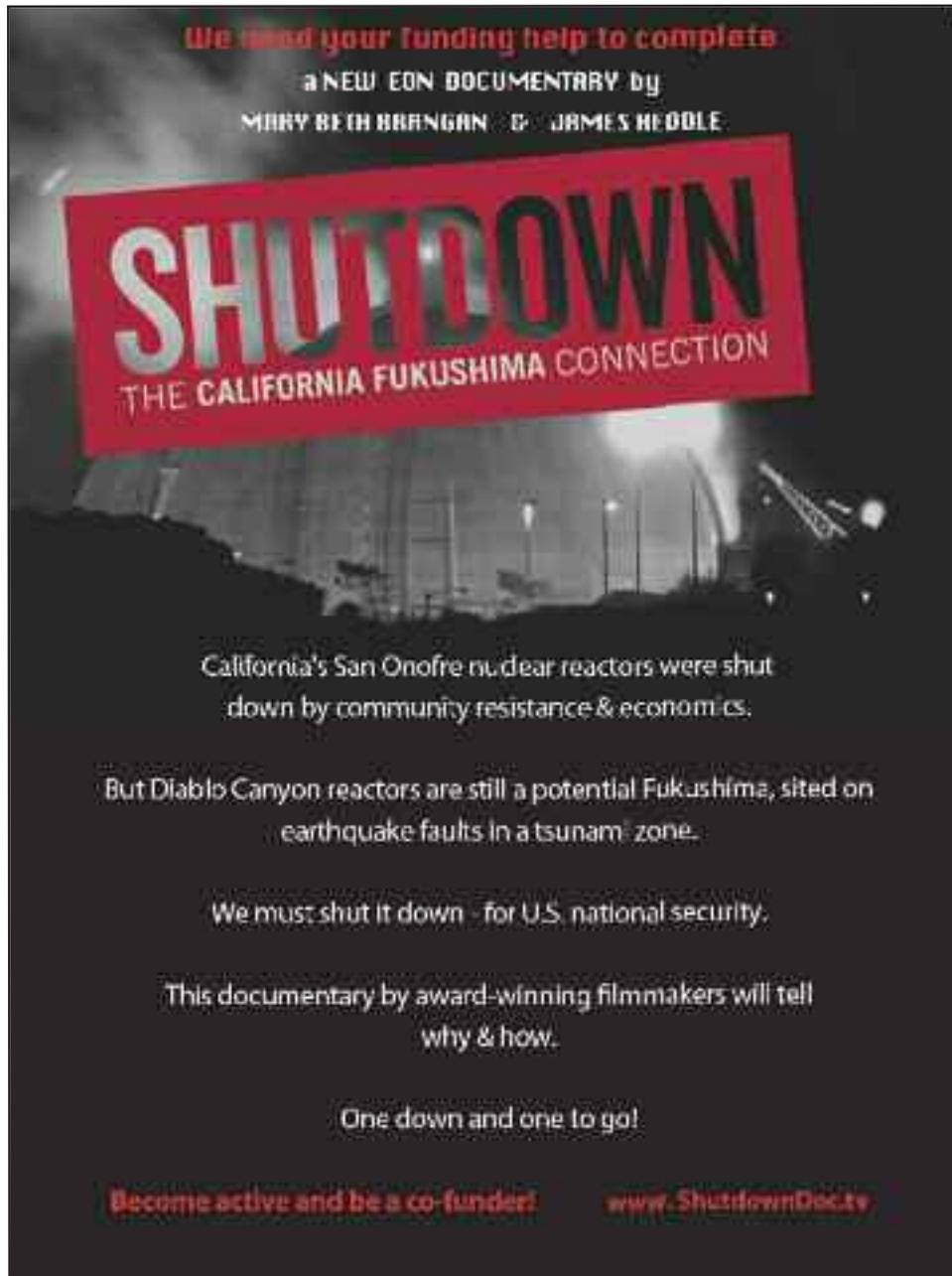
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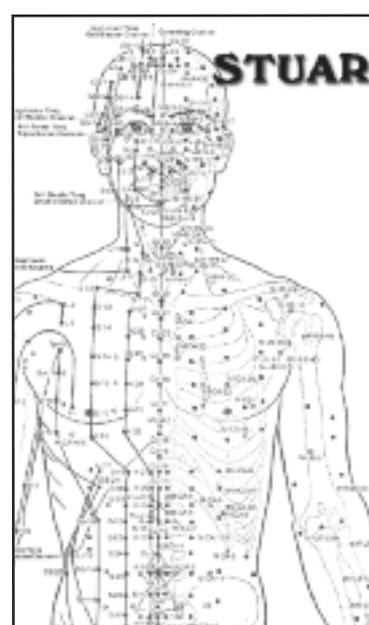
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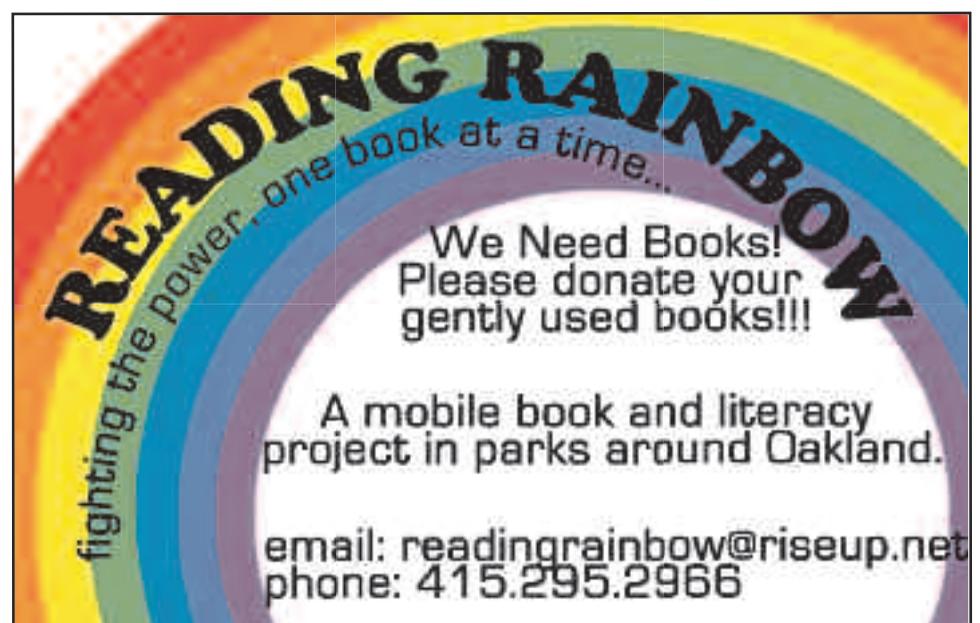


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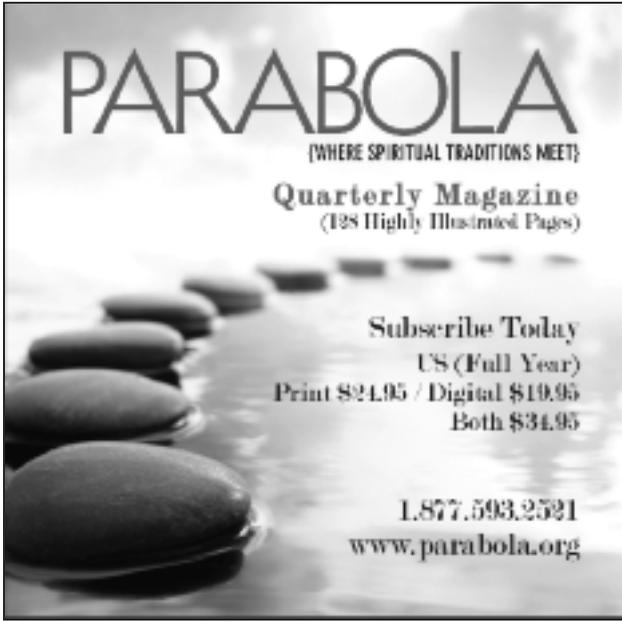


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Viva la Sharing Spring!

by Adam W. Parsons

As spring begins to bloom, the sharing economy movement is ramping up its activities with a series of events being planned in different cities and world regions.

Pioneered by Shareable along with several partners — including OuiShare, the New Economy Coalition, the New American Dream, Peers, The People Who Share and others — many big sharing events will be hosted throughout the spring months from San Francisco to Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires to Bristol in the UK.

Come June 1st, these collaborative events will culminate in Global Sharing Day 2014, which will bring communities together to demonstrate the power of neighborhood sharing, in everything from local skills swaps and street sharing jamborees to time banking, carpooling, community gardening and the collective purchasing of food or energy.

Following the success of Shareables' map jams project with local sharing groups from across the world, the Sharing Spring aims to bring together the leaders behind these solutions and spark a mass movement for economic sharing.

Inspired by the people-power movements for social justice that have swept the world since 2011, in particular the Arab Spring, Occupy and the Indignados, the Sharing Spring will highlight the grassroots alternatives that already exist to economic, environmental or social challenges but don't rely on governments for their implementation.

As Shareable states on their website: "While creating a new economy requires political change, that takes time. People need solutions now ... Yet, there's still little awareness of the options people have to take hold of their economic destinies right now."

Sharing Spring reminds us of the options we have to care for one another. Let's share now!

More Information:

www.shareable.net

Content from Dissident Voice



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