Turn Your Worry About Climate Change into Hope

by Mark Welsch, Co-Leader of Citizens’ Climate Lobby-Omaha Chapter & NFP Omaha Coordinator

A great opportunity is coming up for you to make a big difference to help stop global warming from getting much worse. Yes, you can help stop it! Just a few minutes of your time will help over a thousand of us who will be lobbying your member of Congress (MOC) in Washington, D.C. on June 13th—to urge them to take action on passing a revenue-neutral law to tax fossil fuels and pay people all of that money. This is the single most tactic for halting global warming in our lifetimes.

To change your worry about global warming and climate change into hope, join us by taking the following easy, quick and influential actions:

1. Add the phone numbers for your Members of Congress into your cell phone or cut them out and tape them to your refrigerator (They are on P. 7 of this newspaper.)

2. Make a note on your calendar to call all three of them on Friday, June 9th to urge them to listen closely to the volunteers who will be in their D.C. offices on Tuesday, June 13th, and support our plan to pass a revenue-neutral law to tax carbon and pay people the money collected from the tax.

3. Between now and June 9th, talk about this with your friends and family to find three other people who will join you in making three short phone calls on Friday, June 9th.

4. On June 9th, call all three of your members of Congress. It will take you less than ten minutes and will help A LOT!
Neighbor Report

The Nebraska Report is published nine times annually by Nebraskans for Peace. Opinions stated do not necessarily reflect the views of the directors or staff of Nebraskans for Peace.

Newspaper Committee:
Tim Rinne, Editor; Ron Todd-Meyer; Paul Olson; Matt Gregory

Typesetting and Layout: Michelle Ashley
Printing: Fremont Tribune
Website: Susan Alleman

Letters, articles, photographs and graphics are welcomed. Deadline is the first of the month for publication in the following month's issue. Submit to: Nebraska Report, c/o Nebraskans for Peace, 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508.

Nebraskans for Peace

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

State Board of Directors

Kerry Beldin, Krista Burks, A'Jamal Byndon, Frank Cordaro, Henry D'Souza, Bob Epp, Tessa Foreman, David Fuxa, Cathie Genung (Secretary), Tom Genung, Matt Gregory (Treasurer), Bill Laird, Frank LaMere, Rich Maciejewski, Carol McShane, Patrick Murray (Vice President), Paul Olson, Byron Peterson, Del Roper, Judy Sandeen, Renee Sans Souci, Danielle Savington, Jay Schmidt, Don Tilley, Ron Todd-Meyer (President), Mark Vasina, Brian Whitecalf, Ryan Wishart. Tim Rinne (State Coordinator); Brittany Cooper (Office & Fundraising Coordinator); Susan Alleman (Organization Administrator); Phone 402-475-4620, nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org; Mark Welsch (Omaha Coordinator), P.O. Box 6418, Omaha, NE 68106, Phone 402-453-0776, nfpomaha@nebraskansforpeace.org.

Nebraskans for Peace Chapter & Affiliate Contact Information

Crete Chapter.................... Pat Wikel.................. 402-826-4818
Lincoln Chapter .................... Paul Olson ............... 402-475-1318
Omaha Chapter ..................... Mark Welsch ............ 402-453-0776
Scottsbluff Chapter .............. Byron Peterson ........ 308-783-1412
Southwest Nebraska Chapter .... Dennis Demmel ...... 308-352-4078
Central Nebraska
Peace Workers ..................... Del Roper ............... 308-384-3266

Contact the NFP State Office for information on the UNL, UNO, UNK, Creighton & Nebraska Wesleyan University and Hastings & Doane College Chapters

Hope, conclusion

5. Call your three friends to tell them what happened when you called your MOC and talk about their calls.

This year we’d like to take the call-in day to a new level. We will send a text action alert to everyone signed up to receive them, and an email to every one of our supporters early on June 9th. Sign up here: http://citizensclimatelobby.org/text/

To make it easy and to track the number of calls we’re generating, we encourage you to use the online action tool on Citizens’ Climate Lobby’s website that is specifically set up for the June 9th call-in. It is here: https://citizensclimatelobby.org/call-congress-to-act-on-climate/#38/

We all know that bipartisan support is critical to the success of getting a tax on carbon. Citizens’ Climate Lobby’s plan is a lot like the one proposed by the conservative Climate Leadership Council with members from past Republican presidential cabinets including: James Baker; Henry Paulson, Jr.; Martin Feldstein; and George Shultz.

Both plans will add a small fee on fossil fuels based on the amount of carbon dioxide it produces when burned. That fee will increase every year. All of this money will be paid to the people in the U.S. every month on a per-person basis. This will protect low- and middle-income people from the higher prices the fee will create, by paying us as much or more than the higher prices take from us.

Nebraskans for Peace created three Citizens’ Climate Lobby chapters about five years ago when we brought Mark Reynolds, CCL’s leader, to be our keynote speaker at our Annual Peace Conference. There are now five Nebraska chapters.

Please, for the sake of humankind, join us by making three calls, sending three emails, or both on June 9th.

It isn’t just your great-grandchildren who will thank you. It’s your family, neighbors and Nebraska farmers today. As you know, climate change isn’t just a future problem. It is impacting us right here, right now.
By Matt Gregory
Nebraskans for Peace State Board Treasurer

From the Berkshire Hathaway (BH) board of directors’ curt comments in the proxy statement sent to shareholders in March, we knew going in that the May 6, 2017 Annual Meeting at Omaha’s CenturyLink Arena would be an environment hostile to the Nebraska Peace Foundation’s latest shareholder proposal. What we didn’t expect was absolute silence on the issue.

For the second consecutive year, the Nebraska Peace Foundation (NPF) submitted a proposal to Berkshire Hathaway for consideration at the company’s annual shareholder meeting. NPF’s 2016 proposal calling for an analysis of the risk climate change poses to BH’s insurance division elicited enough favorable response from Warren Buffett that the Foundation decided to now ask BH to divest of its fossil fuel holdings over 12 years.

To bolster its proposal, the Nebraska Peace Foundation board invited internationally renowned climate scientist Michael Mann and his scientific colleagues Richard Somerville and retired Navy Rear Admiral David Titley, Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska member Frank LaMere, and Creighton University theologian Richard Miller to speak in support of the measure written by former Nebraskans for Peace president Mark Vasina.

Allowing Berkshire Hathaway 12 years to fully divest from fossil fuels, the NPF board believed, provided a generous horizon that precluded any risk to the company’s short-term profitability. In fact, the business case for speedier divestment is already being made. BlackRock, the world’s largest asset manager with $5 trillion in assets (and a Berkshire shareholder) put out a ‘white paper’ this past September warning that climate risk to businesses must be addressed. “We [BlackRock] have over the past two years undertaken a number of internal projects to enhance our understanding of climate change and believe that it presents significant investment risks and opportunities that have the potential to impact the long-term shareholder value of many companies.” BH board member Bill Gates himself has already divested his own “The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation” from BP and ExxonMobil, so it’s not as though NPF was asking for something the least bit extreme.

But although Buffett had earlier during the Q & A part of the meeting stated that “coal is going to go down… if you are tied to coal, you’ve got problems” and that he had a “big appetite” for more billion-dollar wind and solar energy projects, he didn’t so much as utter a word in response to any of the presenters’ two-minute statements. His silence stood in stark contrast to last year when he affably engaged with each of the seven people who spoke. It was almost as if he feared that by speaking he would only make things worse. He could hardly dispute the scientific assessments of three nationally acclaimed climate experts. And what could he say when his own words from his February 2015 shareholder letter about “Noah’s Law”—that if there’s just a 1 percent chance of catastrophic climate change, inaction now is foolhardy—were being recited back to him? Nor could it have been comfortable to have a Native American publicly talk about the threat BH’s Dakota Access Pipeline investment presents to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe… nor that, in Professor Miller’s phraseology, Berkshire Hathaway’s continued investments in fossil fuels constitute an “an ethical house of cards.”

After the final announced speaker, Mr. Buffett had clearly heard enough and called for the vote, even as I stepped up to the microphone and someone else waited behind me. With Buffett himself owning 30 percent of BH’s stock, the resolution was resoundingly defeated 594,044 to 7,784 (though every speaker had received a sizable round of applause). What was said though on Yahoo’s live stream broadcast literally around the world will linger on. For 12 solid minutes, we had Warren Buffett’s undivided attention on climate change. Berkshire Hathaway can never again plead ignorance. Buffett and the BH board now know that the time to start reducing our carbon emissions was yesterday. And to be doing anything that augments them is now not only foolhardy but criminal.

continued on page 4
My name is Mark Vasina, and I represent the Nebraska Peace Foundation. We are here today to urge your support for our resolution calling upon Berkshire Hathaway to divest of its carbon-based assets over a period of 12 years, a very modest proposal indeed.

At the shareholders meeting last year we asked BH to review and report on its exposure to the risks to its insurance businesses posed by climate change, following the lead of the Bank of England, which had recommended such measures to the insurance companies it regulates. After the meeting, we were approached by various shareholders who insisted that we should be seeking full divestiture of carbon assets... so here we are.

We understand that divestiture for a public company that invests in other companies poses somewhat different challenges than those faced by university endowments, pension funds and foundations—including The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation—which have already divested or developed divestiture plans. However, divestiture is not just a social, ethical or moral issue. As the Bank of England emphasized, real financial risks are associated with ownership of carbon assets. These include regulatory and political risks, and changes in technology and investor sentiment.

I will be followed by three prominent climate scientists, Frank LaMere of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, and Creighton University theology professor Richard Miller. Thank you for providing us this opportunity to speak.

Dear Chairman Buffett, board members and shareholders:

As a climate scientist who devotes much of his time to communicating the reality and threat of climate change, it is an honor to have this opportunity to speak to you today.

Warren Buffett, known as the “Wizard of Omaha” is an inspiration to many—a symbol of the value of work ethic, self-made success AND the great reward that comes with foresight.

Now, foresight means recognizing both opportunity and risk. And when it comes to risk, there is no better example than climate change.

I recently co-authored an article in the journal Scientific Reports demonstrating that climate change played a key role in the onslaught of unprecedented, devastating droughts, floods and heat waves in recent years. The impacts we’re now seeing are the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Carbon emissions must be brought down dramatically within the next few years if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

continued on next page
Mr. Buffett coined the term “Noah’s Law” in his 2015 shareholder letter, to describe the risk posed by climate change, stating: “… if there is only a one percent chance the planet is heading toward a truly major disaster and delay means passing a point of no return, inaction now is foolhardy.”

I couldn’t agree more. The science tells us that we are heading toward disaster in the absence of substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Board member Bill Gates demonstrated bold leadership a year ago when The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced it was divesting of fossil fuel holdings. Were Mr. Buffett to follow suit, it would send a profound message to the rest of the global business community, a message that we can both mitigate risk, and seize opportunity—in the form of massive growth in new, clean energy technology—by tackling this problem head-on before it’s too late.

Thank you.

Richard Somerville

Dr. Richard C. J. Somerville is Distinguished Professor Emeritus and Research Professor at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego. An authority on the prospects for climate change in coming decades, he is a Coordinating Lead Author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore. Professor Somerville serves on the “Science and Security Board” of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, whose “Doomsday Clock” now sits at two-and-one-half minutes to midnight—due in part to the threat to humanity posed by severe climate change.

My name is Richard Somerville. I am a climate scientist and a professor at the University of California, San Diego.

The world is warming. It isn’t natural. It is due to human activities. It is getting worse. The observational evidence is overwhelming. All the warmest years globally are recent years.

We see the weather changing. We see more severe floods and droughts. Sea level rise is accelerating. Ice sheets and glaciers are shrinking worldwide.

Climate change will become more serious unless emissions of heat-trapping gases and particles are quickly and drastically reduced.

The biggest unknown about future climate is human behavior. Everything depends on what humanity does now. We have our hands on the thermostat that controls the climate of our children and grandchildren.

In 2015, the nations of the world agreed in Paris on how much warming can safely be allowed. The Paris target was informed by science. To meet that target, science shows that emissions need to be reduced drastically and quickly. We can’t just muddle through. Dithering and procrastinating lead to catastrophe.

Alleviating the disruption of climate change is cheap, compared to coping with the damage that unmitigated climate change will cause. Want an example? Doing nothing about climate change means that sea level will become so high that coastal cities must eventually be abandoned.

We caused this problem. We can solve it. Polls show that most Americans want strong actions to limit climate change. The forces driving clean energy are powerful. The market is turning against fossil fuels. The prices of solar and wind energy are dropping. They can already compete without subsidies. Vehicle electrification is happening fast. Clean energy provides jobs and economic growth. Progress and prosperity don’t require emitting heat-trapping gases.

Berkshire Hathaway and Warren Buffet are rightly admired and respected worldwide. Helping the world confront climate change should be an important part of their legacy. We owe it to our children and grandchildren.

Thank you.

David Titley

Retired Rear Admiral David W. Titley is a Professor of Practice in Meteorology and a Professor of International Affairs at Penn State where he directs the “Center for Solutions to Weather and Climate Risk.” The former commander of the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, Professor Titley initiated and led the U.S. Navy’s Task Force on Climate Change while serving in the Pentagon. He is a board member of the “Science and Security Board” of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and the Center for Climate and Security, which focuses on the risk climate disruption poses to our nation’s security.

continued on page 6
I am David Titley, Retired Rear Admiral, former Oceanographer of the Navy, and now a Professor of Practice at Penn State. I’ve been a shareholder of Berkshire Hathaway since December 2000. Thank you for your leadership of this enterprise.

When stationed at the Pentagon, I had the privilege of working directly for the Pentagon’s foremost strategic planner: Mr. Andrew Marshall. He taught me how to think about risk, and especially risks that may seem to be distant or low probability, but ones with very high impacts. Climate change is a fat-tailed, emerging risk.

It’s really a risk to people—to us—and when this risk is not managed, we have a security problem.

One example would be Syria. Climate is one of the links in a long chain of events that led to the tragic outcome.

Non-climate events, such as over a million refugees pouring into Syrian cities from the Iraq war stressed Syrian governance. Then, about a decade ago, an exceptionally intense drought and heat spell, linked with high confidence to a changing climate, devastated Syrian agriculture.

Now you have millions of desperate people, with nothing—and a breeding ground for extremists.

Syria is an example of why, in the security community, we say that climate change accelerates the risks of instability—it can make bad places worse—much worse.

Senior military officers know you must address risks and take precautions while you can—before it’s too late. The U.S. Defense Department understands the risks of climate change and has been working quietly to adapt to the changing climate for years.

Winston S. Churchill is alleged to have said “Americans can always be counted upon to do the right thing—after exhausting every other possibility.” But we will prevail—and you, Sir, can help. Here’s my ask: What are government and business leaders doing to stabilize the climate? We should reduce, rather than accept, the risks of unchecked climate change.

Because the ice doesn’t care which party controls the White House, or the Congress—it just melts. Thank you.

Frank LaMere

Frank D. LaMere is a member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. A nationally prominent spokesperson on Native American issues, LaMere has been advocating for political and economic justice and empowerment for Indian citizens for over 40 years through speeches, legislative testimony and direct nonviolent action. He more than other person is responsible for publicizing the predatory sale of alcohol to the dry Pine Ridge Reservation from the border town of Whiteclay, Nebraska, and—after 18 years—for finally ending this century-long human rights and sovereignty transgression against the Oglala Lakota Nation.

It was the indigenous people of this continent who first consecrated the ground on which we live and grow—who offered up prayers and petitions asking that we be allowed to live and to provide a way for the generations to come! In exchange for the blessings given by the Creator, our forebears agreed to be good stewards of the land. We knew that it was a sacred trust. The stewardship of our Mother Earth who provides for us has now changed, but the covenant remains the same. Let there be no mistake about that my relatives! If we continue to disrespect our Earth Mother those things given us—bountiful harvest, protection from the elements, and good clean water—will surely be taken from us! Our elders speak of it! It has been foretold!

On Christmas Eve my son came from Standing Rock to visit us for one hour. His mother and I worried about him! How is it there? Why did you go? I asked! He said, “It is dangerous, Dad, but someone has to protect our water.” I nodded and said Ah-Ho! That is good! He is a water protector. I stand on his shoulders! “Mni Wiconi” the protectors proclaim. Water is life!

Bearing that in mind, I am told this waterway flowing south from Standing Rock and passing just a short walk from here would be fouled by any kind of breach in the Dakota Access Pipeline. My sense and my years tells me that this will happen! Millions would be poisoned!

I am further told that this collective body holds a 15 percent interest in an oil company that is a 25 percent shareholder in the Dakota Access Pipeline. I would ask that you walk away from that investment! Stand today with Mother Earth!

I am a Winnebago Indian. The Missouri River brought us here when we had no place to go! We stand with Mother Earth now as she stood with us! Think about that! Mni wiconi! Water is life.

Pi-nah-gi-gi!
Dear Chairman Buffett, Board members and shareholders,

I am Richard Miller. I am an associate professor of philosophical theology and sustainability studies at Creighton University. I write and teach on ethical issues raised by the climate crisis.

As a rationale for voting ‘no’ on the divestment resolution, the Board maintained “that Berkshire should not limit its universe of potential investments based upon complex social and moral issues” and that following state and federal laws was sufficient to meet your obligations.

There is not only an overwhelming consensus in the scientific community about the reality and dangers of climate change, but there is also an overwhelming consensus among all major ethical theories that one is not morally justified to use increased profits as a rationale for doing harm to others. By continuing to invest in and thus promote the extracting, processing and burning of fossil fuels, Berkshire is doing harm to people around the world and creating conditions that will threaten future generations.

While one is not morally justified to use increased profits as a rationale for doing harm to others, one cannot also opt out of ethical considerations by appealing to moral complexity. Where you are doing harm to others—especially at this scale—there is no neutral space.

Nor can you simply appeal to the fact that Berkshire is following state and federal laws when those laws are themselves unethical, in that they allow the United States to violate the human rights of poor people around the world and set in motion a catastrophic future for young people.

The consensus among ethical theories will in due time become self-evident to the reality person—analogous to the way slavery as an evil is self-evident today. Indeed, the recognition of the immorality of investing in fossil fuels is rapidly gaining ground as more and more institutions divest their fossil fuel holdings.

Mr. Buffett, you are standing on an ethical house of cards and it is only a matter of time before it comes tumbling down. Like the thousands gathered here and the millions on live stream, I admire your considerable achievements. But I am afraid that if you do not change course very soon, history will not judge you kindly.

Thank you for your time.
China has gone on a solar-power building binge meant explicitly to show the world that it now leads on climate change, and that the United States under President Donald Trump is on its way to global irrelevance. Trump, as has been his custom, is doubling down on stupidity.

In less than a decade after 2008, China has become the world’s predominant producer and user of solar power on a mass scale, a trend that accelerated after Donald J. Trump was elected president of the United States. Trump’s description of global warming as a Chinese “hoax” has been highly resented in China, which has been using solar power as part of a global propaganda offensive to show the world that it is a leader in combatting climate change, having surpassed Germany as the largest solar-power market in the world. By early 2016, China had 43.2 gigawatts of solar capacity, compared to 38.4 gw in Germany and 27.8 in the United States. World capacity reached 200 gw in 2015 and 320 gw in at the end of 2016 (Martin, 2016). Even with China’s unprecedented growth, however, its solar plants generated only one percent of the country’s total power generation in 2016—66.2 billion kilowatt-hours.

Growing Chinese dominance of solar-panel manufacturing was a major reason why world prices fell by 80 percent between 2008 and 2013. John Fialka, writing in Scientific American, said that “China had leapfrogged from nursing a tiny, rural-oriented solar program in the 1990s to become the globe’s leader in what may soon be the world’s largest renewable energy source.”

“Beijing sees Trump’s election and his ignorant denial of climate change “as a rare and unexpected opportunity to boost Chinese soft power by positioning itself as the world’s premier climate-change fighter.””

—Sam Geall, Executive Director, China Dialogue

said Donald Chung, one of the authors of a U.S. Department of Energy report, who studies the solar industry for DOE’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colorado. China bought solar companies and invited others to move to China, where skilled labor was supplied at relatively low wages. Solar was designated as one of seven favored industries in the national government’s

“Beijing sees Trump’s election and his ignorant denial of climate change “as a rare and unexpected opportunity to boost Chinese soft power by positioning itself as the world’s premier climate-change fighter.””

—Sam Geall, Executive Director, China Dialogue

said Donald Chung, one of the authors of a U.S. Department of Energy report, who studies the solar industry for DOE’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colorado. China bought solar companies and invited others to move to China, where skilled labor was supplied at relatively low wages. Solar was designated as one of seven favored industries in the national government’s
Because the Trump administration has not yet released its full budget proposal for fiscal year 2018 in time for production of this flyer, and Congress has not yet finalized the FY2017 budget, the figures here are based on the 2017 proposed budget altered to incorporate budget-related announcements, including at least $54 billion more for the Pentagon, increase in Homeland Security, and reductions for other slices of the pie.

Each year War Resisters League analyzes federal funds outlays as presented in detailed tables in “Analytical Perspectives” of the Budget of the United States Government. Our analysis is based on federal funds, which do not include trust funds — such as Social Security — that are raised separately from income taxes for specific purposes. What federal income taxes you pay (or don’t pay) by April 18, 2017, goes to the federal funds portion of the budget.

See www.warresisters.org/piechart.htm for our complete 2018 budget analysis after it is released in April or May. On that page you will also find more details on our methodology and the assumptions behind it.
Q: Who Will Benefit from the Keystone XL?

by Sally Herrin

In 1902, the Texas Fuel Company established an oil refinery on the Texas Coast, at Port Arthur. The company was founded following the discovery in 1901 of a gusher at Spindletop, a salt dome oil field at Beaumont, Texas. When the exploratory well ‘came in,’ Spindletop blew 100,000 barrels of crude oil for nine days, and the U.S. petroleum industry was born. Texaco, as the company was later known, was for many years the only truly national oil company, selling fuel under the same name in all 50 states, and was one of the ‘Seven Sisters’ that together dominated worldwide petroleum production and sales from the mid-1940s through the 1970s: Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP), Gulf Oil (now part of Chevron), Royal Dutch Shell, Standard Oil Company of California (now Chevron), Standard Oil Company of New Jersey (later Exxon), Standard Oil Company of New York (later Mobil, now part of ExxonMobil), and Texaco (merged in 2002 with Chevron).

As any fool can see, the history of the petroleum industry illustrates perfectly the principle of corporate concentration, whereby multinational companies gather more and more wealth into fewer and fewer hands. This history might be a parable for the failures of capitalism, fostering the 1% control of most of the wealth and resources of the Earth, to the detriment and suffering of the remaining 99%. And that’s not all, by any means. Texaco, and other petroleum giants, have a long ugly history as bad actors. During the 1930s, Texaco’s CEO, Torkild Rieber, illegally supplied the Fascists under General Franco in the Spanish Civil War with three and a half million barrels of oil. In 1939 Rieber, who like many U.S. industrialists of the time admired Hitler, sent Berlin coded information about ships and their cargoes leaving New York bound for Britain, allowing the Reich to destroy many ships, until British intelligence was made public in 1940 and Rieber was forced to resign. During the Blitz, as detailed in the novel Gravity’s Rainbow by Thomas Pynchon, Royal Dutch Shell was complicit in radio control of Hitler’s V-2 rockets, the world’s first long-range guided ballistic missiles.

According to Calvin DeWitt of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in 1989 Texaco sold half its interest in the Port Arthur refinery to form a Texaco-Saudi joint venture. “Today two giant [refinery] companies remain. One is Motiva, a joint venture of Royal Dutch Shell and Saudi Refining, formed to secure a petroleum outlet for Saudi Arabia and a reliable stream to Shell. The other is Valero, a participant with TransCanada’s Keystone, whose sizeable enterprises place it in the top 10 Fortune 500 companies. Both Motiva and Valero have in recent years developed the capacity to process heavy sour crude at Port Arthur. In 2012 Motiva completed a five-year project that more than doubled its capacity to 600,000 barrels of crude per day. And the recent expansion of Valero’s Port Arthur refinery increased its heavy sour crude throughput capacity to 310,000 barrels per day.”

In 2012, then-Representative Ed Markey (now U.S. Senator) told Congress that Alberta’s starting terminal for the Keystone XL is owned by the Koch brothers’ industrial conglomerate, Koch Industries. Likewise, Koch owns the Port Arthur, Texas refinery that will serve export markets—not North America.

The 115-year-old Port Arthur refinery complex is the REAL key to Keystone, operating as it does in a federally-designated Enterprise Zone, a giant tax loophole the Kochs are eager to exploit. If they can move their crude all the way from Alberta to Port Arthur, Koch Industries will pay NO U.S. taxes on the tar sands petroleum they refine and export.

The Kochs, the Saudis and the other petroleum lords are not nice people. They care nothing about global warming or the public good. TransCanada and its supporters offer only lies that center on job creation and U.S. energy security. The truth is most of the construction is complete, and future jobs would render chump change for a few short months while the last leg is built. And U.S. motorists will not see a single drop of fuel from the project as 100 percent
of production is destined for export to China and India—two rising industrial powers which already suffer horrendous air pollution and are huge contributors to atmospheric carbon.

Our precious Ogallala Aquifer, the great underground reservoir running close to the surface from South Dakota to Texas, provides 82 percent of the drinking water for the middle third of the country and irrigates 20 percent of America’s farmland. Though a State Department report released in 2011 declared minimal environmental impact, TransCanada is a major client of the firm which wrote the report. The first two phases of the Keystone project are complete, and in the first year of operation alone, 30 spills occurred. One of these spills leached 21,000 gallons of oil into the North Dakota soil. According to a post at AskMen.com in April 2013, already “half of U.S. water consumption is used for energy—cooling power stations and petroleum refining… The Enbridge pipeline that burst and spilled a million gallons of Canadian tar sands crude into the Kalamazoo River in 2010 has still not been totally cleaned up. Three years and $800 million of clean-up operations later, Canada’s heavy, bituminous oil continues to seep through the riverbed rather than float near the water’s surface.” Many believe conventional pipelines may not be adequate to carry the hot corrosive dilbit slurry. Talk is cheap, and glib assurances from Koch Industries and TransCanada will be worthless when—spills occur.

Former director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies at NASA, James Hansen, wrote in 2011 of the Keystone project, “An overwhelming objection is that exploitation of tar sands would make it implausible to stabilize climate and avoid disastrous global climate impacts. The tar sands are estimated… to contain at least 400 GtC (equivalent to about 200 ppm CO2). Easily available reserves of conventional oil and gas are enough to take atmospheric CO2 well above 400 ppm, which is unsafe for life on earth. However, if emissions from coal are phased out over the next few decades and if unconventional fossil fuels including tar sands are left in the ground, it is conceivable to stabilize earth’s climate.”

Petroleum (for the enrichment of multinational corporations) has long dominated the “strategic interests” of the U.S. that drive this country into the disastrous wars from Southeast Asia to the Middle East which have spanned my lifetime. The petroleum lobby is one of the largest and most powerful in D.C. As I write, the Train Wreck from Which None of Us Can Look Away is in Saudia Arabia, cementing cozy relations, having won the admiration of the oil sheiks, despite public anti-Islamic pretensions, by overturning President Obama’s executive order to halt pipeline construction. The sheiks know #45 is one of their own kind, at heart.

You need to remember whom it is you are up against when you attend the Nebraska Public Service Commission hearings this coming August in Lincoln, to testify against the Keystone XL pipeline. The truth is, this may well be our last, best chance to stop the Keystone XL project. You need to recall exactly what is at stake, which is virtually everything you and I and all our relations, human and other, depend upon and love. I’ll see you there.
In recent months, many have discovered the writings of James Baldwin through the film “I Am Not Your Negro.” The title, taken from a manuscript left unfinished on Baldwin’s death in 1987, carries a message that regrettably still requires repeating. Despite the passage of time, the documentary shows that in the United States ideas about racial relations and white supremacy pretty much remain as they did 30 years ago.

Politically correct pundits are apt to say nowadays that race is merely a social construct, that beauty and race are only skin deep. Someone should go tell that to the millions of families who still experience the traumas of racism. In this still deeply racially divided country, though, it is interesting to watch the reactions of both African Americans and whites to Rachel Dolezal—the white woman who believes she is black despite being born and raised white. Many African Americans find it offensive that Dolezal can appropriate the African American experience and profit off it by being the head of an NAACP chapter, teaching Black Studies and, most of all, producing a book (*In Full Color: Finding My Place in a Black and White World*) that will be a bestseller in some circles of the blind on racial issues. Dolezal’s tale has so captured the national fancy that the New York Times even called on her to lead a discussion about race on Facebook.

This media fixation on Dolezal illustrates the amazing problems with race issues in the United States. Overall, her example will probably have less of an impact upon the African American experience than it will on her personal finances. How really does her story differ from the parasitic example of John Howard Griffin’s 1961 book *Black Like Me*, where a white man dyed his skin to pass as black and then wrote a best-selling book about it? There are whites who earn a living off the backs of African Americans, yet rarely relinquish the benefits and privileges of living in a white supremacist society.

Today, we’re hearing more and more about the ‘intersectionality’ of oppression—the notion that overlapping or intersecting social identities of race, gender, class and religion foster their own related systems of oppression, domination or discrimination. It’s even become trendy in some circles to argue that race oppression is equal to all other forms of oppression. Yet, as the long painful histories of African Americans and Native Americans illustrate, this simply isn’t true. On a certain level, one can argue that ‘discrimination is discrimination’ and all discrimination is by definition dehumanizing and therefore wrong. But there is still a matter of proportion—and, I would argue, a danger of presumption that all discriminations are equal. Are we honestly saying that the right to transgender bathrooms is of the same caliber as racial profiling and being pulled over based on the color of your skin?... That sexual identity is equivalent to race?

The Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie came in for some harsh criticism when she said that transgender women experiences are not the same as women who have experienced sexism or feminist pushback all their lives. But all Adichie was in effect saying was that a woman who was once a man still carries the experiences or mentality of her male past—that there are residuals of masculinity in the DNA of transgender women as opposed to biologically born women who have experienced gender issues their entire natural lives. Bruce Jen-
What’s HOT, conclusion

five-year plans. China thus found itself with a glut of solar panels (with twice as much production as overseas sales), which was absorbed within the country by policies that favored installation of roof-top solar collectors.

China’s advanced thinking regarding solar power includes anticipation of an international grid in which it will be the main advocate and supplier, as a backward-looking United States fades into irrelevance under Trump, with his reliance on outdated fossil-fuel technology. According to a report in Scientific American. “In October, Liu Zhenya, former chairman of China’s state-owned power company, State Grid Corp., came to the United Nations to shed more light on his nation’s evolving solar ambitions, which he said are part of a plan aimed at organizing a global power grid [which he calls the Global Energy Interconnection] that could transmit 80 percent renewable energy by 2050.” The Chinese have invited the nations of the world to support a Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO), to be chaired by Liu, “a global grid that would transmit solar, wind and hydroelectric-generated power from places on Earth where they are abundant to major population centers…”

Tom Phillips reported from the Longyangxia Dam Solar Park in the western province of Qinghai, Tibet for London’s Guardian, illustrating just how closely China’s leadership identifies with solar power’s potential for international influence: “High on the Tibetan plateau, a giant poster of the Chinese president, Xi Jinping has been hung near the entrance to one of the greatest monuments to Beijing’s quest to become a clean energy colossus. To Xi’s right, on the road leading to what is reputedly the biggest solar farm on earth, a billboard greets visitors with the slogan: ‘Promote green development! Develop clean energy!’” Behind him, a sea of nearly 4 million deep-blue panels flows towards a spectacular horizon of snow-capped mountains—mile after mile of silicon cells tilting skywards from what was once a barren, wind-swept cattle ranch.

According to the Guardian report, “Xi said that unlike Donald Trump, a climate denier whose election as U.S. president has alarmed scientists and campaigners, he was convinced global warming was a real and present danger that would wreak havoc on the world unless urgent action was taken.”

“Our response to climate change bears on the future of our people and the well-being of mankind,” Xi said, vowing to “unwaveringly pursue sustainable development.” Sam Geall, the executive editor of China Dialogue, a bilingual website on the environment, said that Beijing sees Trump’s election and his ignorant denial of climate change “as a rare and unexpected opportunity to boost Chinese soft power by positioning itself as the world’s premier climate-change fighter.”

FURTHER READING


Binge.


Bruce E. Johansen, Frederick W. Kayser Professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, is the author of the forthcoming Climate Change: An Encyclopedia of Science, Society, and Solutions.
Crow and the utter effacing of one’s culture and languages. They haven’t experienced it. They can’t know.

Something of this nature actually occurred about five years ago during “Black History Month” at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. A hand-picked Nigerian American gave a lecture on how to solve the race problem in America. He acknowledged that many would not accept his solution, but since he had a captive audience of a hundred mostly gullible white students whose attendance was mandatory, he put forth the proposal that the land in the United States be allocated to respective racial groups based upon their population size. This arrangement, he claimed, would end infighting and conflicts because relocation (essentially a revival of the policy of segregation) would separate blacks and whites. The most insulting moment of that joke of an academic lecture, though, was when he actually sought to measure audience support for his crazy scheme by asking for a show of hands. As I feared, most of those white students agreed with that bow tie-wearing carpetbagger’s idea.

But here’s the point: That Nigerian-born-and-raised man presumed to tell black Americans what was best for us. He acknowledged that many would not accept his solution, but since he had a captive audience of a hundred mostly gullible white students whose attendance was mandatory, he put forth the proposal that the land in the United States be allocated to respective racial groups based upon their population size. This arrangement, he claimed, would end infighting and conflicts because relocation (essentially a revival of the policy of segregation) would separate blacks and whites. The most insulting moment of that

The Danger of Presumption, conclusion

Crown and the utter effacing of one’s culture and languages. They haven’t experienced it. They can’t know.

Thirty years ago, James Baldwin was feeling compelled to remind White America that he was not their ‘Negro.’ Today, despite the election of black president, African Americans are still having to remind White Americans that “Black Lives Matter.” Three decades have passed, and things, regrettably, haven’t changed all that much.

After all this time, we are still working to find our voice to speak truth to power... and while we are glad to have allies, the last thing we need is for others to presume to speak for us.

Rachel Dolezal presumes she can be black and speak for African Americans. Caitlyn Jenner presumes that gender reassignment surgery means she can speak for women. A Nigerian academic presumes he knows what it means to be African American and can tell black Americans what we should do. This is all presumptuous. And it’s not helpful.

NFP State Board member A’Jamal Byndon, is a Community Consultant with Nebraska Families Collaborative and an adjunct professor at UNO.
Paul Olson, conclusion

is being done.” This was the 1970s. We drove up to Whiteclay. Mr. Harris knew what he was talking about.

Back in Lincoln, I made a few speeches about Whiteclay and Pine Ridge, and Betty Stevens wrote about them for a Lincoln daily newspaper. NFP State Board member Byron Peterson remembers one of the speeches, but nothing came of it. After a while I gave up.

Later, I did an evaluation of the Loneman School near Oglala on the Pine Ridge. Parents, teachers, school board members, bus drivers, everyone told me that children were addicted to alcohol and glue sniffing by the middle grades, and that the community could not defend itself against the bootleggers from Whiteclay. Furthermore, the police—whether federal, state or local—were all in the pockets of the bootleggers. The reservation was a community that could not defend its own children against those who would poison them.

That impotence has a history. In the late 1930s, the Roosevelt Administration sent Gordon Macgregor to the Pine Ridge to research why so many difficulties arose there. He discovered that the federal government had systematically destroyed the livelihood of the Pine Ridge Lakota by forcing them to raise wheat where it could not be raised; forcing them to sell off their cattle herds, the successors of the buffalo herds; dividing the children from their parents and sending them off to Indian schools where they lost all their traditional culture; dividing up family groups so that the governance of the reservation was in chaos; and forcing the people to abandon their religion and give up everything that was holy to them. McGregor published his findings in a book entitled Warriors without Weapons.

Part of this process was setting up the liquor stores at Whiteclay and destroying the buffer zones that surrounded the reservation. The poisoning of the Pine Ridge peoples was not an accident; it was done systematically, with malice aforethought, and across decades. The payment for Little Big Horn did not end with the killing of Crazy Horse at Fort Robinson. It continues to this day.

Now the Census Bureau says that more than 52 percent of Pine Ridge residents live below the poverty line; hardly anyone has a job; tuberculosis and diabetes are eight times the national average; 80 percent of residents suffer from alcoholism and a quarter of children are born with fetal alcohol syndrome. Men live 48 years on average; women 52—between 20 and 30 years less than U.S. citizens as a whole.

Perhaps this more than century-long history of genocide on the borders of Nebraska is beginning to be reversed by the actions of Frank LaMere, Tom Poor Bear, Vernon Bellecourt, Tim Rinne, Mark Vasina, John Maisch, Patty Pansing Brooks, William Laird, the leadership of the Oglala Lakota people, and many others.

I meet people who say, “Shutting down Whiteclay is only going to lead to more bootlegging and more wrecks on the road.” Such people do not recognize that the process of healing a culture does not happen overnight. It is not a matter of Marxist instant revolution making everything new. Constructing a decent society is slow: so is controlling the agencies that would destroy that society and learning to act with goodwill, love and decency to produce some visible effect.

The people that created the Sun Dance and Black Elk can, as Black Elk predicted, have their tree root and grow again and see the circle of their nation come to be unbroken or at least less broken. But it will take a long time. Peace-loving people in Nebraska, including the members of Nebraskans for Peace, will have to work for at least a century—in the Legislature, before the Liquor Commission, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, with our federal legislators, and with the leadership and people of the Pine Ridge themselves.

The fact that we have gotten as far as we have is due to the patient and long efforts of people like Frank LaMere who, unlike me, saw the problem and did not give up. He is our model. We should also hope to form alliances with people who are not politically fashionable such as that gruff rancher “Harris” who first awakened my conscience on Whiteclay.

The poisoning of the Pine Ridge peoples was not an accident; it was done systematically, with malice aforethought, and across decades.

The payment for Little Big Horn did not end with the killing of Crazy Horse at Fort Robinson. It continues to this day.

The Winnebago have made an effort at social reconstruction by controlling their own police force and their own schools, developing employment opportunities and starting businesses, developing alcohol treatment centers and rehabilitation, and generally creating a degree of hope. That kind of social reconstruction can also happen on the Pine Ridge. However, it will take as long for it to occur as it has taken to destroy one of the great branches of The Great Sioux Nation.
Speaking Our Peace

by Paul Olson, NFP President Emeritus

The Slow Work of Whiteclay

Recently, the Liquor Commission and Attorney General, under pressure from the Nebraska Legislature, churches and a variety of groups voted to close Whiteclay liquor stores—the culmination of a 40-year battle by Nebraskans for Peace and a century-long battle by the Native Americans at the Pine Ridge.

In the 1970s, I was heading an institute designed to help Native American teachers and aides, particularly those from the Northwest Nebraska area having numerous Lakota students. My wife Betty and I and our three kids went during spring break on Highway 20 across northern Nebraska, visiting the schools. If we could not visit the school, we visited Native American agencies. No Indian teachers existed, but the civil rights movement had produced a few Indian aides.

We stopped in Rushville to talk to teachers, aides and a superintendent named Jones, good on Indian issues. At the end of the day, we discovered no motel rooms available in Rushville. We asked around and were told that a rancher named Harris (I believe) had a turkey-hunting ranch nearby with a couple of cabins where we could stay. In the morning we had breakfast with Mr. Harris, a rather typical roughshod rancher. I recall his saying to me something like this, “Olson, you want to do some good in Indian territory; well this teacher stuff is fine, but you got to work on the real issues. The real issue is Whiteclay. There is rampant drunkenness there, illegal liquor, murder, theft, prostitution, all the crimes you can think of and nothing

continued on page 14