



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

MARCH / APRIL 2020 VOLUME 48, NO. 2

Peacemaking amid the Pandemic

The closures, lockdowns and quarantines prompted by the Coronavirus are creating the social and economic disruption that can shake the foundation of civil society—and with it the conditions necessary for peace.

For over a decade now (mainly with respect to the threats posed by climate change and food insecurity), Nebraskans for Peace has been warning that our communities and governmental officials need to start preparing for exactly this kind of planetary emergency. Provision for public health and safety... food and water sufficiency... and economic security (an uninterrupted income and benefit stream to households, small businesses, local food producers and local governments) is essential if our communities are to be

able to weather a crisis of this scale.

As we are daily witnessing with COVID-19, however, we're nowhere near adequately prepared. No one at this point knows exactly how long this peril will last (experts say it could be months), but our lack of preparation has made us just that much more vulnerable. Both health-wise and economically, our lives are set to be profoundly disrupted by the pandemic. Nor will this be the last social and economic emergency of this nature we're likely to see. The climate crisis in all its manifold forms—sea-level rise and climate refugees; drought, flood and disease; crop failures and food and water shortages—will see to that.

These closures, lockdowns and quarantines prompted by the pandemic,

though, present special challenges for peacemaking. As a social movement, we're geared for communication and networking. Education and outreach are our stock-in-trade. But now, when we're being urged to stay home and avoid contact to prevent exposure and disease spread, it's hard not to feel neutralized and helpless.

So What To Do?

View this quarantine as an opportunity to hone our skills for self-reliance and reducing our consumption. To cut global carbon emissions in half by 2030, climate scientists are warning that we Americans (who have the biggest carbon footprint per capita in the world) are going to need to cut our *personal consumption* in half by 2030. While we're now trapped in our houses and unable to travel, go shopping or even eat out, this is the perfect time to start individually exploring how we can scale back our high-consumption lifestyles.

Let's not only start cooking again, but learn how to eat lower on the food chain with more locally grown, plant-based foods. Let's get serious about growing some of our own food by gardening in our yards or containers or even a windowsill. Let's try to conserve as much as possible, pare back to the

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Nebraska Report

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Nebraskans for Peace

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

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Peacemaking amid the Pandemic, conclusion

basics, and practice the principle of 'Living Simply So That Others Can Simply Live'. (The 'overview' and 'practicing simplicity' pages at simplicitycollective.com provide a great online introduction for 'Simple Living'.)

But being stuck at home doesn't make us speechless. During this crisis, we can use the tools of social media to communicate with our networks (and our public officials) about the need to permanently cut our consumption and live more simply. We can use this horrific pandemic as a 'teachable moment' to start the long process of building a more peaceful and just world for us all.

"I have taken the 'Simple Living' pledge for reduced consumption and conservation of valuable natural resources. This includes eating meat only once a week, taking the 'No Fly Pledge' and following the simple lifestyle promoted by Greta Thunberg" (the 17-year-old Swedish climate activist).

— Loyal Park, Founding Member
Nebraskans for Peace

In a tweeted message March 16th, internationally renowned climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe connected the coronavirus crisis to the slower-moving catastrophe of climate change: "This crisis really brings home what matters to all of us. It's the health and safety of our friends, our family, our loved ones, our communities, our cities and our country. That's what the coronavirus pandemic threatens, and that's exactly what climate change does, too."

Taking Hayhoe's message to heart, 86-year-old Nebraskans for Peace founding member and Nebraska Peace Foundation President Loyal Park recently wrote, "I have taken the 'Simple Living' pledge for reduced consumption and conservation of valuable natural resources. This includes eating meat only once a week, taking the 'No Fly Pledge' and following the simple lifestyle promoted by Greta Thunberg" (the 17-year-old Swedish climate activist).

Let's all start following Loyal's example: cutting our consumption and living more simply—not just now while we're in the midst of a pandemic... but from this point forward as the path of peacemaking.

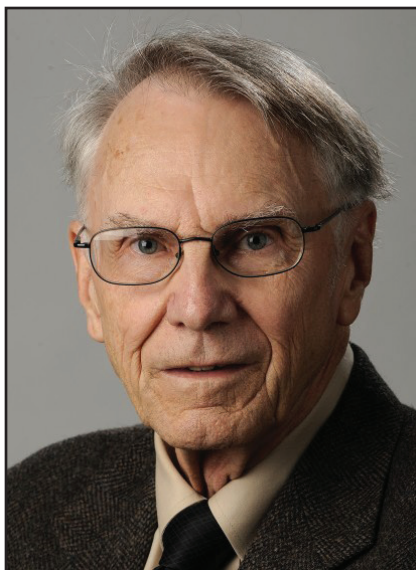
Jay Schmidt Obituary & Tribute

Jay Schmidt, 86, of Lincoln passed away Wednesday, March 19, 2020. He was born April 23, 1933 to Sigfried and Calista (Dougherty) Schmidt, on a farm near Davey, Nebraska. Jay was a retired United Methodist minister having served many congregations in eastern Nebraska.

He was preceded in death by parents, sisters Helen Ehrlich, Georgia Stevens and brother, Keith. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Barbara, daughter, Rachel (Jim) Garver, sons Philip and Michael (Brenda) and grandsons, Nicholas Deliyannis (financée, Melissa Butts), Andrew, Jarod and Tyler Schmidt.

Celebration of Life TBA. Memorials to Nebraskans for Peace or Sacred Winds Native American United Methodist Mission.

From Paul Olson: In addition, I can say that Nebraska has not seen a more determined supporter of peace and justice. Jay, because he stood for justice for people of color and all oppressed people was consistently assigned to out-of-the-way places in his ministries and he worked hard



in these ministries—on the reservations, at Wesely house in North Omaha, and in rural congregations in somewhat depressed rural areas. He started working for civil rights in the 1950s before almost any other Anglo persons in Nebraska, and he was very proud of his friendship from the 1950s at the Uni-

versity of Nebraska with Forrest Stith, later one of the first African-American bishops of the United Methodist Church. Jay was extremely generous to Nebraskans for Peace both in life and in death. He was constantly writing letters to the editor about climate change and peace and justice, trying to get people to join Nebraskans for Peace and help with its causes. He was also a member of the Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska peace and justice committee, the committee dissolved, in Jay's eyes, "because we were too radical." He loved local music, and organized fundraisers for Nebraskans for Peace, using local musicians; in the days when we had silent auctions, he contributed wood sculptures that he had made to the cause and he was a very able wood sculptor. He also wrote poetry. Jay believed that belief required action and action against the grain of our society; Dietrich Bonhoeffer was his theologian, and though he was a very quiet man, he followed Kierkegaard's maxim that "purity of heart is to will one thing." He willed one thing, and that was justice.

NFP Scholarships to High School Seniors

Nebraskans for Peace is offering scholarships to graduating high school seniors. Three \$500 scholarships and six \$100 scholarships will be awarded to seniors who wish to pursue a college education. The awards, based upon written essays, will be evenly divided among the three congressional districts. The recipients will be students who wish to further their education in an area consistent with the mission of Nebraskans for Peace: peace with justice through community building, education and political action.

Applications should go within the body of an email (not as an attachment) to NFPscholarships@gmail.com on or before April 12, 2020. Winners will be notified no later than April 22.

The application must include:

1. The student's full name, address, and congressional district
2. The name of the anticipated college or university he or she plans to attend
3. The name of the high school he or she will be graduating from
4. An essay of 750 to 1000 words
 - a. Select one of the three Nebraskans for Peace priorities (www.nebraskansforpeace.org)
 - b. Describe this issue using an alternative approach, using nonviolent or restorative justice techniques
 - c. Specify the procedures people would follow to implement your approach
 - d. Describe examples of specific behaviors based on those procedures
 - e. Identify obstacles to using your alternative approach
 - f. Evaluate how realistic your approach is
5. A digital photo of applicant
6. Permission to reprint essay in the *Nebraska Report* and on the NFP website
7. Contact information of area newspaper, including email address
8. Contact information for high school counselor, including email address.

For more information contact NFPscholarships@gmail.com.

Backing Away from the Brink of Nuclear Catastrophe



by Henry J. D'Souza, PhD & Paul Olson,
PhD, Nebraskans for Peace State Board

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' "Doomsday Clock" now sits at 100 seconds to midnight—closer to planetary catastrophe than at any time since the dawn of the Nuclear Age.

The 73-year-old organization moved the clock forward this past January due to continuing governmental inaction on the global perils of nuclear weapons and climate change. Former Secretary of Defense William Perry warns that humanity is closer to self-destruction today than during the height of the Cold War with the former Soviet Union. And with good reason:

- The number of nuclear-armed nations is growing—India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea have all joined the 'Nuclear Club', increasing the danger of a nuclear incident,
- Carefully crafted nuclear arms control accords like the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), Intermediate Nuclear Forces Agreement (INF), Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and Iran Nuclear Deal are being jettisoned, and
- Instead of moving consciously toward the abolition of all nuclear weapons as required under the United Nations 2017 General Assembly resolution, the U.S. and Russia—which possess 90 percent of the world's nuclear arms—are prompting the renewal of a new arms race with 'modernizations' of their existing arsenals.

All of this is pushing the world right to the brink of catastrophe. That the planet has avoided a nuclear holocaust over the past seven decades can be chalked up primarily to sheer luck. But as

any national security and military expert can tell you, luck is not a reliable *modus operandi*—not substitute for a plan.

As a general rule, the possession of nuclear weapons is defended on the basis of national security: The U.S. has to keep the Soviet Union/now Russia, at bay; India and Pakistan have to be able to thwart each other's aggression; nuclear weapons have to be stalked as a weapon in the War on Terror, in the event terrorists were to gain access to nuclear technology. We know that all this is hot air, that the fate of the earth depends on our reducing and ultimately getting rid of nuclear weapons.

Rarely though is mention made of the risk of accidental launch or detonation as a result of human error or mechanical malfunction. Since 1956, there have been at least 11 documented instances where mistaken information nearly led to an unintended attack. Although there are now over 14,000 nuclear weapons in the world—enough to level the planet multiple times over—research by a team of University of Nebraska-Lincoln scientists has demonstrated that even a limited nuclear blast could lead to global devastation.

According to UNL researchers Adam Liska, Tyler White, Robert Oglesby and Eric Holley, JUST ONE Chinese thermonuclear bomb that destroyed a city the size of Los Angeles would throw so much ash and soot in the atmosphere it would trigger a 'nuclear autumn'. The 'nuclear drought' created by this changed climate would in turn cause worldwide famine, leading to the deaths of one billion people and the end of civilization as we know it.

Far from making us safer, more and bigger and faster nuclear weapons will only drive us closer to the brink of

destruction where our 'luck' will eventually run out and our planetary fate will be sealed. The only solution is for the entire world to jointly start stepping 'back from the brink'.

And without weakening or imperiling any country's national security, there's a plan for how we can do just that.

The "Back from the Brink" campaign, led by the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize-winning Physicians for Social Responsibility, proposes the following five steps to reduce the unnecessary risk posed by nuclear weapons:

- Renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first,
- End the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack,
- Take U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert,
- Cancel their plans to upgrade their arsenals with enhanced weapons, and
- Actively pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

While not a solution in itself, "Back from the Brink" is the beginning of one—and preferable to lurching into a human-made catastrophe.

As President Ronald Reagan once stated, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The only value in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used. But then would it not be better to do away with them entirely?"

With STRATCOM in our midst, the very center of the world's nuclear arms effort, we are asking every Nebraska citizen to write to the president and the Congress to ask that we pull back from the nuclear arms race, from all nuclear arms and from threatening one another with absolute destruction.

Interview: “Delaying Doomsday” Author Explains How to Stop Nuclear Proliferation

by John Krzyzaniak, Associate Editor
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

In this February 13, 2020 interview, Rupal Mehta, a professor of political science at the University of Nebraska, speaks with *Bulletin* editor John Krzyzaniak about her new book, *Delaying Doomsday: The Politics of Nuclear Reversal*. Mehta explains why the Trump Administration’s “maximum pressure” approach to Iran will not work; how a freeze on North Korea’s nuclear program could be achieved; and why she’s optimistic about nonproliferation efforts worldwide.

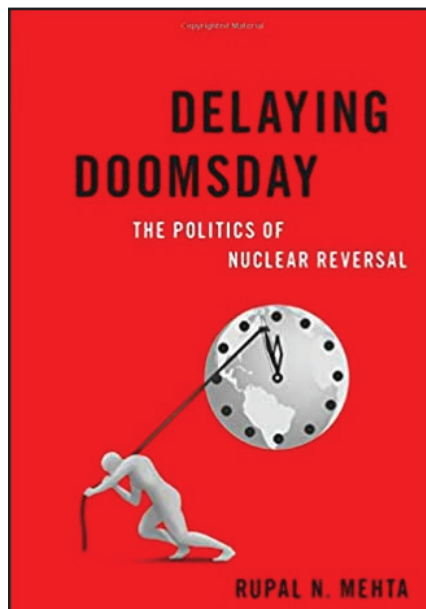
John Krzyzaniak: Both the title and the cover of your book evoke the *Bulletin*’s famous Doomsday Clock. I’m curious whether the Clock shows up anywhere in any of your research or the interviews you did?

Rupal Mehta: Yes, absolutely. I had been trying to figure out how to convey what I think is one of the core messages of the book, which is that it’s not too late to stop nuclear proliferation: The acquisition of nuclear weapons can be delayed or arrested altogether. Throughout the course of my research and in talking with experts, the idea that this phenomenon is a big part of what is affecting the *Bulletin*’s countdown to midnight came up a few different times. The Clock is also arguably one of the most iconic and influential images in international security and nuclear security, and a lot of the researchers working in the field care deeply about trying to move the hands back. So the title and cover of the book grew out of that.

JK: The basic argument of the book is that if the world wants to stop a particular country from

pursuing or acquiring nuclear weapons, then the United States and the international community need to come up with some sort of package of carrots and sticks—or maybe better to say rewards and punishments—to persuade that country to give up its nuclear ambitions. And there’s a second piece, which is that there needs to be a credible threat of military force backing up those efforts. Is that an accurate characterization?

RM: Yes, absolutely.



JK: To me, that is eminently plausible—almost common sense. So what’s so controversial about it?

RM: I completely agree. I think that anyone who knows how to bargain or engage in negotiation of any sort understands that you have to have some sort of combination of goodies alongside some parallel punishments

to be able to get people to change their behavior.

I think the most counterintuitive and surprising aspect of the scholarship on nuclear reversal or counterproliferation to date has been that the majority of that work has said, “We just have to punish bad behavior.” They say, “It’s nefarious behavior that these states are engaging in, so we just have to punish them with sanctions or threats of force or any other option on the table.” So the argument that I’m trying to make—that you really do need both punishments and incentives—is not a commonly-held view.

What I’m proposing is also sometimes politically untenable or undesirable. Many politicians don’t want to reward a country that is seen to be engaging in behavior that is nefarious or provocative or not in accordance with the rules of the international system. But that’s what is often needed. Rewards can give leaders a way to save face among their domestic audiences, and that aspect is often overlooked.

The final controversial piece is the part about threats of military force against proliferators. Americans have frequently heard the idea of “all options on the table,” so maybe it’s not controversial to them. But it is provocative to claim that this is a necessary ingredient. As soon as that threat translates into the actual use of force, there’s a real risk that a state might become more entrenched in its pursuit of nuclear weapons, which is exactly what the counterproliferation efforts are trying to avoid in the first place.

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The Fight for the Preservation of the Last Wild Buffalo in North America

Environmental journalist Maria Osterberg, a friend and ally of Nebraskans for Peace, wrote the following article from her home in Sweden specifically for the Nebraska Report.

Yellowstone National Park is the homeland of the last remaining herds of bison that are still roaming free in the U.S.

You could also call the park their reservation because as soon as they cross the park borders they are in danger of being shot, and in danger of being captured and shipped to slaughter from inside the park.

Buffalo do not know where humans have drawn their state borders and park borders. They just go where their DNA tells them to go.

Not too long ago they were millions roaming the plains. Colonization almost made them go extinct, but miraculously they survived. Now Yellowstone is using traps to drive their numbers down to as low as approximately 3,000 individuals, which is not

sustainable for a species. From upwards to 60 million less than 200 years ago, the last wild buffalo number fewer than 4,200 today.

We know these majestic animals from Western movies where they are pictured on vast open prairie land in, as it seems, endless numbers.

But they were facing a similar destiny to the indigenous people who lived there in harmony with nature before the European colonizers arrived around the 17th century.

The buffalo were the most important food source for the people living in connection with them and every little part of the body was taken care of and used.

The tribes prayed for each hunted animal and showed gratitude towards the animal's spirit for keeping their people alive.

These gentle giants became a popular target for the invading Europeans and were hunted mainly for their hides.

During the wars against the 'Indians' the hunt also 'developed' into a tactic to starve the population of indigenous people. Huge areas covered with decaying buffalo carcasses and piles of bones offered witness of the immense tragedy that was going on.

The biggest genocide in history is closely linked to the mas-

sacre of the buffalo which almost led to their extinction.

Only 23 individuals remained and saved themselves from certain extinction by seeking shelter in what is today the remote Pelican Valley of Yellowstone National Park. The herds in Yellowstone are all descendants from these 23 survivors.

Yellowstone National Park stretches over three states—Montana, Wyoming and Idaho and is with its breathtaking landscape not only homeland to the prehistoric bison but also to wolves, grizzlies, elk, deer, white-tails, foxes, black bears, mountain lions and other mammals. People from all over the world travel there to experience the beautiful nature and wildlife.

What the tourists are not aware of or informed of are the regulations of one of the park's biggest attractions: the buffalo.

Most people have no idea of the trap inside Yellowstone and the authorized hunts that are keeping the numbers of bison down.

I travelled from Sweden and joined the "Buffalo Field Campaign" (BFC)—a nonprofit organization located in west Yellowstone—as a volunteer buffalo protector in March 2018. This organization was founded by Rosalie Little Thunder from the Lakota Tribe and environmental activist Mike Mease 23 years ago.

In 1997, over a thousand buffalo were shot in the National Park, and Lakota Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the 19th-generation keeper of the sacred "White Buffalo Calf Pipe", came to the park to hold a ceremony for the slain buffalo.

The indigenous people consider

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www.buffalofieldcampaign.org

How Do We ‘Flatten the Curve’ for Indigenous People?



by Kevin Abourezk
Managing Editor, *Indianz.com*

The past few weeks have engendered the kind of fear that typically only a war can cause.

We only have to take a drive around our towns to see our streets and parking lots bereft of the number of cars we're used to seeing. The shelves in our local retail and grocery stores are nearly devoid of items like toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

And our social media feeds have been hijacked by constant alerts and pronouncements about the latest news related to COVID-19.

All around us, life has changed.

Perhaps at no other point in our history have people in distant places like Wuhan Province and Bergamo, Italy seemed so close and yet our friends and neighbors seemed so distant.

But for as much as we're learning about the deficiencies within the American health system as it prepares to confront this pandemic, few of us understand how vulnerable the indigenous people of this land are to this threat.

I've spent the past couple weeks interviewing tribal leaders from California, Oklahoma, Michigan, South Dakota and Nebraska, as well as numerous advocates for tribes, such as the

National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Health Board. I've been feverishly trying to educate myself about the intricacies of the massive federal bureaucracy that serves the Native people of this land and about the Indian Health Service, the federal agency that delivers health care to most tribal communities.

In nearly all of my interviews, the message is the same: Indian Country is not ready for the tsunami that appears poised to wash over America. Like other hospitals in hard-hit areas like California and New York, Indian hospitals and clinics don't have the necessary personal protective equipment—masks, gloves and scrubs—or the COVID-19 test kits necessary to monitor and treat any potential disease outbreaks.

And while this all may sound all too eerily familiar, a major difference exists between Native health care and other hospitals that serve primarily non-Native communities. Native hospitals nearly always serve communities that suffer from disproportionate rates of diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, lung disease and immunosuppressive disorders—all conditions that health officials have said create greater vulnerability to COVID-19.

In addition, while the average amount of money spent each year on non-Native patients is about \$10,000 per person, the amount spent to treat Native patients is about one-third of that.

“There's no mystery as to why Indian Country suffers from healthcare disparities that are alarming and shocking when there isn't a pandemic running across the globe,” Kevin Allis, CEO of the National Congress of American Indians, told me this week.

And other socioeconomic disparities may further endanger the health and lives of indigenous people in America

should this pandemic crash onto their shores.

Native people experience overcrowded housing at a rate of eight times the national average, and nearly 32 percent of rural tribal households live more than 10 miles from the nearest grocery store.

Within my own family living on the Pine Ridge Reservation, my uncle's home shelters more than a dozen adults and children, three generations of poverty-stricken but proud Lakota people.

Were just one of those inhabitants to catch the coronavirus, very likely my uncle's entire household would fall ill, and with most of the adults suffering from chronic health conditions, this illness could very well mean a death sentence for one or more of them.

And so it goes for so many of our reservation kin.

Households made up of already sick adults with only poorly prepared and drastically underfunded hospitals to serve them likely will create an inexorable tide of infections in our tribal communities.

So how can we slow or stop this worst-case scenario from happening?

Write your Members of Congress. Tell them that tribes need to be included in any legislation that is designed to provide relief to communities and hospitals preparing for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tell them that it is morally wrong to continue to neglect the indigenous people of America who paid for their healthcare with the ceding of millions of acres of their land.

Tell them that providing support to one of the most vulnerable populations in our society is simply the right thing to do if we truly want to “flatten the curve” and meet the challenge presented by this threat.

Aho! Wopilatanka my relatives!

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

Enriching Life at the New Greenhouse-gas-juiced EPA

Inside the Trump Environmental Protection Agency, war was declared on President Barack Obama's 'anti-growth' (read: 'environmentally protective') policies. All species of 'progressive' policies were to be hunted down and exterminated. Doublethink was required of all EPA employees who survived a stringent purge of soft-heated, tree-hugging extremism.

Executive orders poured down on businesses allowing use of public lands for mining, oil extraction and other moneymaking activities. The United States in June 2017



became the only nation on Earth to pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement, as Trump maintained that the climate crisis didn't exist. In the meantime, the Atlantic Ocean was rising around his Mar-a-Lago resort on the eastern shore of Palm Beach. With his usual talent for ignoring awkward scientific facts (*science? What a laugh!*), Trump ignored the saltwater bubbling up in his backyard. Any suggestion otherwise was regarded as a 'libtard hoax' and a 'war on coal'.

Prior service at major oil companies became a necessary qualification for a high-level position at the new EPA. Consider Scott Pruitt, the all-wise Trump's first choice to head the EPA (*remember him?*). His decisions were a fine fit at the new EPA, but he had to leave because of his troublesome habit of using the taxpayers' dime for personal travel and expensive interior decorating. Pruitt also had a bad case of diarrhea of the mouth, of spreading his oil-friendly attitudes too often and too coarsely. Once one has power, it is not necessary to make a point of it. Such behavior only incites the rabble. Pruitt thus took a walk to make way for another EPA administrator who could enhance business-friendly toxicity on tippy-toes, while being humble about using taxpayer money for personal use. Can you remember his name or his portfolio of greenhouse-gas-producing and other toxic assets? I couldn't either, until I asked Google. Mission accomplished! It was Scott Wheeler, a veteran coal lobbyist.

Once personnel issues were settled, the all-wise Trump EPA then turned its attention to upholding the right of coal-powered power plants to soil the atmosphere with all manner of toxic chemicals. At the Ministry of the Environment, the lights burned late to scrap Obama's "Clean Power Plan." With the usual doublethink, Big Brother declared coal to be the fuel of the future. Ancient relics of the tree-hugging past (such as wind and solar power) were defunded whenever possible. To advance its wonder at the amazing properties of dirty air (*toxic spew is the smell of money on the hoof!*), as many restrictions on toxic air pollution as possible were annulled.

Polluting companies were told to ignore their atmospheric pollution. Trump thus qualified for the Pulitzer Prize in Alt-fackery.

Next up was cancellation of flaring rules for industries that enrich the lower atmosphere with methane—one of Trump's most cherished greenhouse gases. With a masterful stroke of doublethink, the word-wizards at the new EPA created the "Affordable Clean Energy Rule," issued in August 2018, in which "states were given more power over regulating emissions." In states like California, that means regulations would likely be stricter, whereas states that produce fossil fuels are likely to weaken regulations. The following month, the EPA announced it would relax rules around releasing methane flares, inspecting equipment and repairing leaks. Got it, Libtards? Methane is 'clean energy', and the more of it the better, especially if it is leaking from oil rigs. The amount of methane in the atmosphere is increasing faster than carbon dioxide. The folks at the new-greenhouse-gas-juiced EPA plan to help it along.

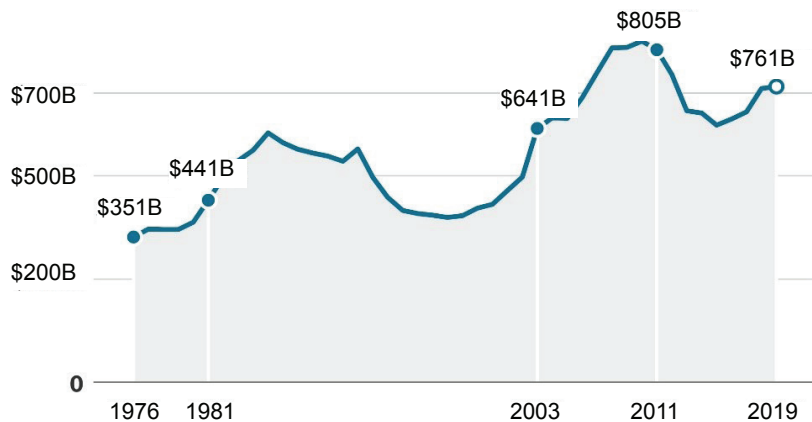
Along the same line of thinking, fuel-economy standards for motor vehicles were judged to be relics of a past era. The Obama Administration had enacted fuel-economy targets requiring that cars get 54 miles per gallon by 2025. Why strip drivers of their right to burn as much gasoline as possible, which is, of course, bad for business? In August 2018, the Trump Department of Transportation and EPA limited the target to 34 miles per gallon by 2021.

Similarly, Trump, et al. dropped "Climate Change" from the federal list of national security threats. If there's no global warming, how

Military Spending and the Coronavirus Crisis

Our national debt has reached about 23 trillion dollars. About half of the discretionary debt derives from military spending, military pensions, the Veterans Administration, and military costs incurred in the Energy Department which controls nuclear bomb-making. Now we are spending several trillion dollars more to pull ourselves out of the coronavirus disaster and the accompanying economic turndown—this at a time when we have cut most of our revenue sources in order to artificially stimulate the economy. The deficits which have created this incredible national debt are directly correlated with military spending. Below you will find a chart which shows how our deficits have grown. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget has indicated that we have less space for borrowing and are incurring greater economic risk by borrowing when we have such tremendous debts and deficits. President Trump has declared a national emergency to make \$50 billion more available to states and local governments to fight the Coronavirus, and Congress has appropriated \$2 trillion more to shore up the economy. This is occurring at a time when we have cut taxes for the rich and need to spend more on medical infrastructure. We have partially dealt with this crisis by calling on the military to handle our medical equipment shortages, but this is not a good way to

U.S. military spending is higher than at any time other than the height of the Iraq war, adjusted for inflation



1976 was the earliest year with complete data. Includes the military's overseas contingency fund. Numbers in billions.

Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies *THE WASHINGTON POST*

do things in that, if military expenditures are really needed, they should not be diverted to civilian uses. What we lack is a realistic judgment of what actually we need in the way of military expenditures to stay secure, how much of our costs are expended toward

world domination which we do not need, and how much of what we are spending on the military could go toward ventilators, masks, emergency hospitals, swabs and everything else we need to respond to this pandemic.

— Paul A. Olson

Welcome to Citizens' Climate Lobby's "Far Middle Campaign"

Do you believe that climate change shouldn't be politicized? Join us in the #FarMiddle, a radical space where we work together to solve our biggest problems, like climate change. The Far Middle is purple, because it's a mix of Democrat blue and Republican red. Watch the two minute video at www.FarMiddle.com and a 3-headed friend will share more about how it works.

After watching the video, please call and/or write your members of Congress to ask them to work together, shoulder to shoulder, on

#ClimateSolutions. Share with them why you think #ThreeHeadsAreBetterThanOne!

The Far Middle is the radical idea that we need to work together to solve our biggest problems, like climate change. After all, what are the chances that one side has all the exact right answers, and the other side has all the exact wrong answers? Exactly zero.

We're authorizing Democrats and Republicans in Congress to work together, shoulder to shoulder, on climate solutions that both sides can support. Our future depends on it. Not

right. Not left. Straight ahead.

For more information about this or any other climate change issue, please contact Mark Welsch, NFP's Omaha Coordinator and Co-leader of the Omaha Chapter of CCL NFPOma-ha1970@Gmail.com 402-453-0776



Citizens' Climate Lobby

The last wild buffalo, conclusion

buffalo and all living beings as relatives.

Arvol asked for people to respect the ceremony and prayed for the protection of the buffalo's way of life.

The Montana Department of Livestock (DoL) decided to open fire and shoot eight more bison during the ceremony. Rosalie Little Thunder was arrested for 'trespassing onto private land' to pray for those buffalo.

We should ask ourselves why the indigenous people of America were able to live in harmony with millions of bison for thousands of years, but it took the European colonizers only a few hundred years to almost obliterate them from the surface of the earth.

This could also stand as an example of what we are facing right now as our planet enters the sixth mass extinction.

Given this situation, you would think that the preservation of these majestic animals that more or less 'came back from the dead' would be of high priority.

But instead, the vast open grasslands are mainly prioritized for cattle and the meat industry. The buffalo raised behind fences are crossbred with cattle (so-called 'beefalos') and they are not living a natural life anymore.

This means the Buffalo Field Campaign is of great importance and a needed voice for the voiceless.

We all know that the cowboy culture is very much alive still today and that eating a lot of meat is a big part of Western society, which makes the fact that public land is leased to ranchers for a small amount of money not surprising at all.

Bison and wild horses are not considered as important, although surveys show that there is a sizable public interest of their protection and preservation.

The capture and hunt of wild buffalo are being legitimated by an alleged fear of wild buffalo infecting livestock with the disease "brucellosis". Paradoxically, there is no documented case of buffalo ever transmitting brucellosis to cattle: on the contrary, the origin of this disease is from cattle. It is also found in elk, and they have been implicated numerous times in transmitting brucellosis back to cattle. There are no travel restrictions for elk however; they are allowed to cross state and park borders and a lot of money is made off of the tags that are sold to hunters.

Rewilding the world feels like the most accurate answer to our alarming

situation on this planet.

Recognizing that truth makes it even more heartbreaking to watch buffalo being baited into fenced-in areas with hay after harsh winters when they are hungry and tired. They smell the hay and when other buffalo come along it feels safe for them to join in.

After a while they are chased into smaller and smaller enclosures by riders on horseback until the 'endstation'—a chute leading up to the slaughter trailers.

The BFC covers not only common fieldwork. They are also filming and documenting the brutal handling of these wild animals as they are hauled off to slaughter, often injured due to the stress of being captured.

Everything is very 'clever calculated', as the meat is handed out in Indian reservations and therefore the process seems justifiable.

There is a saying: "The herd belongs to no man. The herd belongs to the land and the land belongs to the herd."

In order to protect these wild herds we need a mind shift. Rewilding our surroundings is the only way of supporting collapsing ecosystems and trying to turn things around. Buffalo play an important part of keeping the soil healthy and we actually have a lot to learn from them.

Being a volunteer with the Buffalo Field Campaign means you will spend your days with knowledgeable, devoted people out in the field observing buffalo herds and following them on foot or on skis. Every day you learn something new and every day a wildlife report is written to keep the count and track of these beloved animals.

The beauty of nature and the warm welcoming of being part of the buffalo-protector family—united in the fight for a better world and for reconnecting to nature and learning how to live a more sustainable life—is hard to explain in words. You really have to experience it in real life to completely understand.

A visit will give you memories for a lifetime and something meaningful to be part of.

Your Foundation Speaks

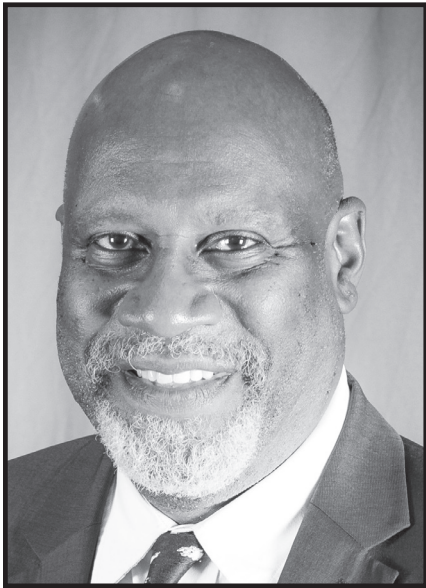
by *Loyal Park, Nebraska Peace Foundation President*

With no end in sight to the coronavirus pandemic, the Nebraska Peace Foundation keeps careful watch on its \$900,000 endowment account. Since our investments are fossil free, we are avoiding the chaos of the oil market and our alternative energy stocks are doing relatively well. However nearly all of our investments, including the bond funds, are down.

Since the interest and dividends from these investments are vital to supporting Nebraskans for Peace, we hope they will continue through this pandemic. We have faith and are looking to the long term and hope to see everything stabilize soon.



To Be or Not To Be Afrocentric?



A'Jamal-Rashad Byndon

Malcolm X was born in Omaha, Nebraska May 19, 1925 and was assassinated February 21, 1965—55 years ago. To this day, his evolution from street thug and hustler to one of the greatest African American icons of the 20th century is an inspiring story for African Americans. His words and teachings (available on YouTube) should be required in African American informal educational institutions and organizations, particularly given where we are at as a society in the U.S. After a 400-year-long legacy of enslavement, genocide, rape, murder, segregation, lynching, disenfranchisement and discrimination in the United States, we should be much farther along the arc of racial justice than the hatred and turmoil we're still daily witnessing.

We now have local district elections for the school board, city council and county commission in Omaha and Douglas County where people who look like us are in the position of leadership—something that was forbidden 50-plus years ago. We should be continually asking ourselves though: Are we better off economically than were 50 years ago as a group. And if the answer is negative,

then, this being 2020, to what do we attribute this reality? Do we have the strength of will to ask the probing questions and render the evidence-based hypotheses that will enable us to squarely face the facts and move forward?

As a father and husband, my role is often defined by how I respect and treat my family. I am reminded of Batswana parents telling their children when they leave home to remember their names. Our last names demonstrate that we belong to a family or clan. Yet, for many who have lost their way, they operate and behave as if they are not connected to our people. For example, in the local government-controlled schools, a majority of the school board members and the school superintendent are people of color. Yet, when you examine the multicultural content of the curriculum, the ethnicity of the high achievers, and the outreach efforts to African American community groups, you'd never know people of color held those posts. What good is a gun if there are no bullets? What good are schools if they are merely the funnel for jails and prisons? Only in Omaha can we have over 400 African American students achieve 'A' and 'B' grade-point averages, and many can't gain entrance into post-secondary institutions. Why is there rarely an African American student who annually achieves a Regents Scholarship to the University of Nebraska?

The Malcolm X metaphor from over 55 years ago about the "House Negro" and the "Field Negro" still rings true. Those House Negroes were inextricably linked to their masters, and the Field Negro was Afrocentric and concerned with the masses of oppressed folks working in the field or community. As a lifelong Nebraska resident with 65 years of deep roots in both the African American community and the experience of racial discrimination, I've come to see how those appointed and anointed so-called 'Negroes' are pawned off as if they are

working on our behalf. Meanwhile, they are gaining an excessive amount of weight, income and other trinkets off the oppression of their brothers and sisters.

Three African American brothers have deconstructed the parody of "liberty and justice for all" that people of African descent face in 21st century America. The first, African American psychologist Umar Johnson, identifies five concepts that we should focus on if we want to change our conditions in the United States:

- 1) Imprisonment or mass incarceration of African Americans,
- 2) The mis-education or brainwashing of African Americans,
- 3) Economic conditions
- 4) Gentrification
- 5) Police Genocide practiced on African Americans.

The second brother, Khalid Yasin, speaks about Islam and the true teaching of being a Muslim. Yasin says that no man is Allah and for others—particularly Black Muslims—to propagate that Allah came to earth as a man is a form of heresy. As someone who lacks a clear understanding of other religions, at face value, it is not my place or my intention to offer a distorted perspective of these religious beliefs and practices. Yet, from where I sit, many adherents don't seem to follow the teachings or principles of their holy books. Based on their behaviors, you'd never know they subscribed to those beliefs.

The third figure I cite is Khalid Abdul Muhammad, a Black Nationalist leader and former member of the Nation of Islam who died in 2001 under mysterious circumstances, but who during his life raised serious challenges to the United States government and the white supremacy regime. He was silenced for a racially inflammatory speech in 1993 for

conclusion on page 13

“Delaying Doomsday”, conclusion

JK: The Trump Administration’s “maximum pressure” approach to Iran seems like a policy of only punishment. All sticks and no carrots. If you were advising the administration, would your recommendation be to offer more positive incentives? And, if so, how do you do that without looking like you’re rewarding a bad actor?

RM: A lot of that was worked out in the lead up to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the agreement between Iran and world powers that was signed in 2015. A complex arrangement of rewards, sanctions, and potential punishments was laid out to the Iranians, and they accepted a deal that had those components.

If I were advising the Trump Administration, I’d first want to know what their ultimate goal is. If the goal really is to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons, then sooner or later there needs to be some kind of face-saving incentive for Iran.

What’s also very important is that agreements be credible. In the book, I assume agreements will be upheld by both sides, but experience shows that’s not always true. That’s another hurdle for the Trump Administration today, because they’ve been reneging on deals that other parties think are working. That will make it difficult going forward when the United States is trying to convince other countries to sign on to agreements.

JK: You stress the importance of credible military threats as a key piece of the puzzle. Do you think there’s a credible military threat against North Korea today?

RM: I don’t. I will admit, however, that I don’t have any access to Pentagon war plans, and I’m not privy to any

classified information about what’s going on inside the Defense Department. But from what I’ve been able to gather from public information, a preventive war or the use of military force against North Korea would be incredibly risky and undesirable. And to some degree, I think that what we’re seeing in North Korea reflects that. Even though the North Koreans claim that they’re wor-



UNL Political Science Assistant Professor Rupal Mehta

ried about a U.S. invasion, they’ve been able to ramp up their nuclear program with very little reaction and very little pushback from the United States. That suggests that military threats are not actually affecting their calculation, or at least not in the way the United States wants.

JK: Do you think there was ever a credible military option against North Korea?

RM: My reading of the history, including recently declassified documents going back 20 or 30 years, is that there really hasn’t ever been substantial support within the U.S. government for using military force against North Korea.

I think the reasons for that are clear—it would put the South Koreans and other allies in the region in grave danger, plus it could jeopardize the shaky U.S. relationship with China. This was made especially clear during the lead up to the 1994 Agreed Framework. Though there had been murmurings of a plan to attack North Korea, according to former Secretary of Defense, Bill Perry, they were never activated or pursued. When President Clinton realized the serious toll that military force would take on the Korean peninsula, he abandoned the idea.

JK: So does that put North Korea out of reach in terms of convincing them to give up their nuclear weapons?

RM: I don’t think so. Even though the military threat may not be credible, North Korea could still be incentivized to give up its nuclear weapons program. It might just require a slightly more nuanced concoction of rewards and punishments. Again, though, the United States will need to shore up its credibility. If the United States can devise a clear strategy and find a way to help solidify its credibility, then I think that even an entrenched state like North Korea could be convinced to at least pause their nuclear program and put an end to the hostility.

JK: Overall, are you optimistic about nonproliferation across the world?

RM: I’m more optimistic now than I was when I first started the project, many years ago. That’s in part because we’ve seen just how often diplomatic efforts toward counterproliferation can work. That’s not to say that I don’t agree with the assessment that the Bulletin made with its latest Doomsday Clock announcement. But I do think that in this one area, there might be cause for optimism.

To Be Afrocentric, conclusion

a year and castigated by the Black Muslims (as was Malcolm X) for speaking truth to power. Some African Americans believe he was assassinated and that the so-called ‘natural causes’ cause of death from a brain aneurysm was a fictional cover story.

If, as in the case of Malcolm X, one belongs to a religious sect and then chooses to leave, devout adherents often feel that they have a right to your life as atonement for your exodus. (A Nation of Islam member publicly confessed to assassinating Malcolm X in 1965, though in a telegram eight months before, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had directed the New York City FBI Bureau to “do something about Malcolm X.”) As Africans, who have lived under the boots of slavery and Jim Crow laws and know firsthand the horrors of multi-generational oppression, we have a moral imperative to operate according to high ethical standards. And when our leadership falls from those standards, they should be held to the same yardstick as the masses are expected to follow. It was in fact the personal hypocrisy of Nation of Islam founder Elijah Muhammad that drove Malcolm X to break with the NOI.

On a broader level though, I can’t help but wonder if by our very religious beliefs we African Americans aren’t in some way contributing to our own oppression? For example, consider Christianity. How is it that only eight generations after the abolition of slavery we continue to adopt the religion of our enslavers? And what is so ironic about this fact is that this European-descended brand of Christianity worships a ‘white’ Jesus—and its adherents don’t even follow their Savior’s basic tenets. If they did, African Americans would not have been stuck at the bottom of society for over 400 years. As Malcolm said, if you pray to someone else’s God, and he does not hear or answer your prayers, then you must be praying to the wrong God. One could accordingly posit the question: Would African Americans better off if they had no religion? If we followed the

teachings of Malcolm X instead of Martin Luther King Jr., would we be further ahead within or without this system? These are the timely questions that we must ask ourselves in this barren land for Black folks.

In the meantime, we should realize that some individuals and institutions have moral or religious beliefs that are not going to change and debating such topics with them is fruitless. To do so is akin to African Americans expecting that white supremacy adherents and its apologists are going to give us anything except a hard time. At the end of the day, this white supremacy system has existed for over 400 years, in part, because we have not learned to love each other more than our oppressors. Like a bad dream from which we cannot seem to awake, African Americans trapped in this Land of Oz have been unable to deconstruct and stop the behaviors that are thwarting our bid for freedom and self-determination.

Many of our so-called leaders’ lives are similar to soap operas—rife with dysfunction. Someone is constantly cheating within systems. Institutions are exploiting our conditions. And sell-outs and collaborators are working against our self-interest. The herd itself is without a group identity, comprehensive plan and measurable goals for achievement, as evidenced by the conditions of our community and group. Just think of the hundreds of ‘Negroes’ in Omaha marching down the street in the Juneteenth parade each year to celebrate the anniversary of the release of Blacks from slavery, while thousands of African Americans are sitting in jails and prisons for victimless crimes during their worthless parade.

As Malcolm X so eloquently asked more than half a century ago, who taught you to hate yourself and your physical features? If we are serious about transforming our communities and liberating ourselves from white hegemony, it means we must close ranks, figure out our game plan from the five points Umar Johnson suggests, and then execute it. Anything else is whistling Dixie.

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HARD TRUTH, conclusion

The fastest-growing and most unpredictable cost faced by all Nebraska school districts is special education, currently state-funded at about 46%. This is the kind of cost over which it is impossible to exercise local control. Federal AND state mandates are clear: public schools MUST provide services for ALL district children with special needs—INCLUDING children attending religious and other private schools! And if your district does a good job, other families may elect to move into your district, ballooning your budget and illustrating how no good deed goes unpunished in this crazy world.

Federal funding for special education averages about 12%. It would be possible for the Appropriations Committee to fund 80% of special education statewide at the cost of \$150 million dollars, of which \$37 million would go to unequalized schools. The remaining \$113 million, however, would be offset by state aid, effectively reverting to state coffers. Neat trick, eh? I am told by my betters that this could be done without passing a single law, MUCH LESS any surrender of local tax authority.

The \$37 million allocation would have to be ongoing, year after year, and must not be allowed to dwindle like so many good intentions. And costs will continue to go up, because costs DO. But stabilizing special education funding would help slow the bleeding, to say the least.

Property tax is to a school district the bird in the hand. In the bushes, Senator Linehan and the Governor say, are many birds, can't count them all, but the number will increase every year.

The fundamental inequity in Nebraska tax policy is a matter of priorities. Some students of tax policy hold that the most equitable balance of taxation is one third income tax, one-third sales tax and one-third property tax. Of all taxes, property tax is LEAST indicative of the ability to pay; a house or land, assessed at high value in itself, may generate little to no income—as when corn sells at or below the cost of production for much of the past 40 years.

An estimated two thirds of Nebraska's schools receive no equalization aid and get

5% of their funding from federal support (anti-poverty programs, school lunch, etc.). About 95% of the money that educates the children in these communities comes down to property tax. Many farmers and ranchers sit on the boards of those schools, and they are remarkably good stewards of the public trust. According to the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association, 68 districts “actually dropped their spending in 2018-19 when compared to the previous year. About 50 others saw under a 2% increase in spending.” To keep their schools, the beating hearts of these communities, these boards and many more farmers and ranchers vote thumbs up for a levy they know they cannot personally afford. “Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it,” concludes the NRSCA.

By contrast, income tax is most indicative of ability to pay. But locally allocated income tax in Nebraska funds just 2.3% of education costs. And it is corporate income tax which is rebated by tax incentives like LB775 and the Nebraska Imagine Act.

If we want a robust future for Nebraska, robust funding for education will be key... along with carbon sequestration and regenerative agriculture; ramped-up energy farming (wind, solar and biofuels); river, soil, and wetlands restoration; recreation and tourism and the arts; and general cultivation of the good life sought by highly productive individuals—who, through virtual and real life commuting, can choose to live anywhere they like and who are likely to be the major economic drivers of the 21st century economy.

Republican Governor Mike Johanns had a way of addressing issues by asking two simple questions: What stands in the way of a particular public good or desirable outcome? How can those obstacles be overcome?

What is the chief obstacle to robust state funding for education?

Corporate tax rebates are the first pigs at the public trough. Vern Janzten, Vice President of Nebraska Farmers Union, wrote in a recent “Local View” in the *Lincoln Journal Star*, “Like past failed corporate subsidy pro-

grams, funding for LB720 will automatically get priority regardless of whether state revenues are good or bad while also avoiding the Legislature's own budgeting process. Public investment through tax incentives should focus on creating quality, good paying jobs with benefits. However, LB720 with AM2207 would provide taxpayer subsidies to companies to create jobs in both urban and rural areas that pay wages so low a family of four would still qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, free school lunches and Medicaid expansion.”

Nothing can really change so long as Nebraska's subsidized corporations get fed first. LB775 incentives are sunseting, though Nebraska taxpayers will be on the hook until 2025. Governor Ricketts and his friends have repackaged the same old snake oil as the Nebraska Imagine Act, hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate income tax to be rebated through 2050.

In Iowa, a Republican governor is proposing a 1-cent sales tax to fund education and property tax relief, but I guess all Republican governors are not created equal. Great things would seem possible in Nebraska's heavily Republican legislature, if Republican Governor Ricketts were in fact on the side of public education and property tax reform. But OUR Republican governor takes no interest in being part of the solution—determined to put corporate interests first, puppet master Pete Ricketts is the core of the problem itself!

The Nebraska Imagine Act pays black-mail to corporations that MIGHT otherwise relocate, in the hope that they will drive Nebraska's economy. Meanwhile, Nebraska rewards the REAL economic drivers of the number one industry in this state—farm and ranch families who cannot pick up their land and go away—with some of the highest property taxes in the nation (and of course their hopes and prayers).

Let's move TEEOSA to the front of the line. Fund schools first, and tie corporate incentives for better pay and benefits for workers to revenue growth. Make robust education funding an actual priority, not just something we like to SAY.

A state budget is a moral document—a meme way too true to be trite. Fund Nebraska public schools first.

What's HOT, conclusion

can it threaten anything? Trump's Troupers also removed restrictions on every pipeline or planned pipeline (including the Keystone XL). Since oil and tar sands are such wonderful substances, who could complain about spilling some of it? Trump & Co. also wrote these orders in such a way as to make them immune from judicial review. The wisdom of Big Brother needs no expensive, democratic, time-consuming second-guessing.

The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also eliminated "Climate Change" from its strategic plan—again, since global warming does not exist, there can't be any reason to waste time or toner planning for it, because catastrophic disasters obviously cannot be caused by non-existent problems.

Turning back to the coastlines, which some misguided liberals had been wasting excess tears asserting that sea levels were

rising, the new cast of stable geniuses at the EPA solved the problem by rewriting the definition of 'flood'. What used to be 'flood' at your ankles was now a 'flood' at your eyeballs.

The next step may be to wipe out defining floods at all—taking another page from Orwell's war on contrary thought, wherein the English dictionary went on a drastic thinning diet by eliminating inconvenient words, thereby absolving obedient subjects from worrying about the concepts that they had represented. Since the seas can't be rising because global warming does not exist, who needs Obama's executive order that required federally funded projects to factor rising sea levels into construction plans? In the same way, Trump Troupers over at the new EPA drastically narrowed the jurisdiction of the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' definition of what's considered a federally protected

river or wetland. This was but a baby-step toward taking down the entire "Clean Water Act", since any good Trump Trouper knows that we have no unclean water now. It's all a matter of definition when the powerful write the dictionaries.

(There is much more of this; the Trumper carbon-lovers have been very busy. To see more, without the sarcasm, see:

Gibbens, Sarah. "15 Ways the Trump Administration Has Changed Environmental Policies." National Geographic. February 1, 2019. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/02/15-ways-trump-administration-impacted-environment/>)

Bruce E. Johansen, Frederick W. Kayser Professor at the University of Nebraska—Omaha, is author of Climate Change: An Encyclopedia of Science, Society, and Solutions (2017).

What Keeps NFP Going?

Greetings from Vancouver Island! My name is matthew heinz, and I'm Vice Provost, Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies and Professor at Royal Roads University in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. I hold a doctorate in communication studies from the University of Nebraska. More importantly, I had the pleasure and privilege of working full-time for Nebraskans for Peace for two years from 1990 to 1992, first as newsletter editor and then as state coordinator. You may have known me as Bettina Heinz Hurst at that time.

During that time, and in my subsequent years of being an NFP member, I gained much appreciation and respect for the organization, its ability to survive in a conservative political climate, and its continued meaningfulness and relevance in its members' lives, including my own. I would like to capture this phenomenon, both for the immediate benefit of Nebraskans for Peace and Nebraska, and for the long-term benefit of peace and

social justice organizers and researchers elsewhere.

With the support of State Coordinator Tim Rinne and Organizational Administrator Susan Alleman, I've designed a research project to explore what makes Nebraskans for Peace work. If you are at least 18 years of age and are a past and/or current NFP member, you are eligible to participate.

There are a number of ways in which you can contribute to this project:

1. You could participate in a phone, Skype, or email interview with me; and/or
2. You could send in a photograph or image that captures your NFP experience; and/or
3. You could submit a short (30-second) video clip for inclusion in a website designed to showcase the meaning NFP members attribute to the organization; and/or

4. You could participate in a 3-question, 5-minute online survey.

I hope to create a few publicly accessible publications (a PDF report, a research article, a website) as a result of this research, which should be helpful to NFP as it documents its history, examines its successes and challenges, and looks toward the next chapter of a 50-year-old organization. I am planning to present my preliminary findings at the 2020 Nebraskans for Peace Annual Conference.

If you'd like to take part in this project, please send me an email at matthew.heinz@royalroads.ca. I will then send you detailed information on the various ways in which you can participate. This research project has been approved by the RRU Research Ethics Board. My research profiles are available at <http://www.royalroads.ca/people/matthew-heinz> and on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthew-heinz-57263645>).

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HARD TRUTH

by Sally Herrin

Fund Public Schools First!

Last year Nebraska ranked a dismal 49th in sales and income tax funding for K-12 public education. Despite a quarter century of obligation under the Nebraska Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA), the state of Nebraska has fully funded the formula just twice, according to State Senator John Stinner.

TEEOSA is a bit like the golden rule, a well-reasoned formula for collective benefit. Too bad the Legislature didn't keep it fully funded. In the beginning, a board monitored the workings of the formula, but within a few

years such formal oversight was abandoned. TEEOSA runs today on autopilot and has not had a broad-based stakeholder review since 1990.

The Revenue Committee bills State Senator Lou Ann Linehan keeps bringing forward reduce the certainty of property tax revenues and replace those dollars with the uncertainty of increased state funding based on anticipated future revenues from projected growth. A wide range of both education and agriculture organizations are rightly skeptical that Linehan's proposals will provide real

property tax reductions and real state replacement revenues.

The coalition of stakeholders—education and agriculture—has brought forward provisions to increase the state share of special education funding, to raise local allocated income tax financing (currently at 2.3%) back towards the original 20% levels, to increase the funding of the property tax credit fund, and to lower the local effort rate—a move that would benefit the bigger schools as well as struggling rural districts. Those more widely acceptable provisions were not accepted.