



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024
VOLUME 52, NO. 1

Introducing New Staff: Marshawn Ford

For the first time in nearly 15 years Nebraskans for Peace has hired a new staff member and we are thrilled to introduce her. Two of our staff have retired and we found ourselves in need of support in the Omaha area. We put out a new job description for the new Omaha Community Organizer and received over 80 applications. After a lengthy selection process and interviews we hired Marshawn Ford. Marshawn started at the beginning of December and has been an amazing new addition and we are thrilled to have her on the NFP team. Following is a short biography and photo of Marshawn.



Marshawn Ford

Certificate Leadership

BSBA, MBA

CEO and co-founder of 3Sisters

Instructor in Business with MCC

Board member of MOWBC

Nebraska Black Women United

United Way Community Investment

I have spent the last 12 years in a nonprofit working in the areas of nonprofit management, program management, and fundraising. For the last six years and have been advocating for women and girls by way of empowerment and support and in the last three years, I have been focusing on closing the gap on homelessness by helping to distribute millions of dollars in emergency rental assistance and helping families seek true affordable housing as well as fighting for equity in healthcare.

I am honored to be a part of the Nebraskans for Peace family and to be able to help invoke change on a community and state level. I hope to bring more community awareness to the organization along with connecting with other community organizations. I hope to build our network and advocate change on a bigger scale while keeping the same standard that Nebraskans for Peace has always fostered.

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family, shopping, and traveling but my favorite thing to do is bake. I have been baking since the third grade and can make just about anything. I often joke I am a mini-Martha Stewart. I am also a lover of books and enjoy reading any chance I get. My calming place is by the water reading a good book.

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Nebraska Report

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

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Printing: Fremont Tribune

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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, P.O. Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501-3466.

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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Capital Punishment, conclusion

about the crimes that someone committed, and instead indicate that a person's race and gender, as well as the race and gender of the victim, are key components in sentencing. Put simply, our system has cared more about the demographic information of those involved in the crime than the circumstances and nature of the crime itself.

4. Our method of execution is barbaric. Nebraskans may want to give ourselves a pat on the back for finally getting rid of the electric chair (which we were the very last state to do, and we didn't outlaw it until 2008). However, no pats on the back shall be given. Lethal injection, while bloodless, is disguised as putting someone to sleep and letting someone die without pain. In reality, the drugs that are injected are paralyzing so that the observer cannot tell how the person responds or reacts. Autopsies, however, reveal that there is not always enough anesthetic present to have made the executed unconscious. Some autopsies show that the executed often would have felt their lungs fill with liquid and experience what would have felt like drowning. Ironically, the most quick and painless method of execution is the guillotine, but it leaves behind more blood than the state or the public feels comfortable seeing.

All of these are concrete and well-researched, but what if each of the issues I point to above were magically fixed somehow, and our legal system could get it "right?" While I believe that God does not make junk and no human life is a waste of space, some might argue that our world would be better off overall if some people had not existed or if they stopped breathing. If the latter argument could ever be proven, then surely I would be able to agree that in that one isolated case, the death penalty would be okay to carry out, right? Wrong. Whether the responsibility lies with the governor, the jury, the judges, our lawmakers, our voters, or a shared responsibility amongst all of these, we should not be okay with any of those people being responsible for ANYONE'S death. The governor, judges, voters...these institutions are part of a collective "we" or "us." We should not kill – not even if we don't care what it does to "them." So when people ask me why I am against the death penalty, you will understand what I mean by my answer: **It's not about what it does to them, it's about what it does to us.**

Because the
system isn't

BROKEN

by Schmeeka Simpson

Non-Profits, Grant Money, and White Saviors: Poverty Pimping in North Omaha, Part 1

If you have been keeping an eye on money and politics in Omaha, then you've definitely heard about the historical amount of dollars, \$335 million of them, that has been pledged from the Nebraska State Senate (the State of Nebraska) through Legislative Bill 1024- The Economic Recovery Act and LB531, (LB531 directs State Investment into LB1024), to support key non-profit organizations, for profit businesses and the general economic development of North, Northeast, and South Omaha.

Dear Fellow Senators: In 2022, the Nebraska State Legislature passed the Economic Recovery Act (LB1024), which provided \$335 million in funding to assist North Omaha, South Omaha, and other communities that were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision to appropriate funds received by the state under the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)—represents a historic investment in disadvantaged communities in Nebraska.”
—Senator Justin Wayne¹

“LB1024, that bill will have generational impact,” said now Former Gov. Ricketts. “It will invest in affordable housing, infrastructure, crime prevention, financial literacy, job training, education—all the things that go into making sure we are developing the full talent of all of our people here in the state of Nebraska.”²

Much of this \$335 million—about \$250 million—would have come from Federal Funding, specifically, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), but the Economic Recovery Act (LB1024) was amended (changed) by the State Legislature through LB531 to fund the North and South Omaha grants using state dollars instead of the federal aid originally slated—the ARPA funds, due to federal spending deadlines. A significant portion of this funding was earmarked for a grant program overseen by a special committee called the **Economic Recovery Special Committee of the Nebraska Legislature**. As required under LB1024, the legislature contracted with a company out of Omaha, Olsson, to develop a Coordination Plan for the use of these funds in North and South Omaha.^{3,4} These North and South Omaha Recovery State funded grants aims were to provide lasting changes to these communities by providing considerable financial support specifically, \$115 million assigned to North Omaha, \$111 million to South Omaha, and \$7 million to projects advancing both communities. These funds have been long awaited and much celebrated by the communities and businesses slated to receive them if they completed the grant process and were chosen to receive the funds.

“A year after debate launched over a whopping \$335 million law aimed largely at lifting North and South Omaha, 35 recommended grant winners have emerged from a pack of 367.”^{5,6}

If you have been keeping two (2) eyes on money and politics in Omaha, then you have heard numerous complaints about how the money is being managed and distributed. Headlines of local publications ranging from “Complaints rise about South/North Omaha grant process as Friday announcement approaches”⁷ and “Senators fight over north Omaha redevelopment funds”⁸ have highlighted a process that seems broken, with complaints from stakeholders, community members, and even the Senators themselves that sponsored and co-sponsored LB1024.

“The Federal American Rescue Plan Act had a lot more reporting requirements and a lot more things that were making it more difficult for some of these different entities,” Sen. Vargas said. “There was a need for more flexibility of the funds for a lot of these programs or organizations.”⁹

“State Sen. Lou Ann Linehan said she was not OK with what she called a “disconnect” between what architects of the Economic Recovery Act wanted and what appears to be happening.”¹⁰

“Leo Louis II of the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation said his nonprofit had worked years previously to refine its growth proposal, then rushed to make its request for funds comply with the committee’s late suggestions. It still

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1 LB1024 The Economic Recovery Grant Coordination Plan. https://www.nebraskalegislature.gov/pdf/reports/committee/select_special/econrec/LB1024_2023.pdf

2 ‘Real work’ begins on \$335 million investment to revive areas including North and South Omaha | *Nebraska Examiner*

3 LB1024_2023.pdf (nebraskalegislature.gov)—Olsson Report

4 https://www.nebraskalegislature.gov/pdf/reports/committee/select_special/econrec/LB1024_2023.pdf

5 Lengthy list of South and North Omaha grant proposals whittled to 35 | *Nebraska Examiner*

6 LB1024_2023.pdf (nebraskalegislature.gov)—Olsson Report

7 <https://nebraskaexaminer.com/2024/01/25/complaints-rise-about-south-north-omaha-grant-process-as-friday-announcement-approaches/>

8 Senators fight over north Omaha redevelopment funds | *Nebraska Public Media*

9 <https://www.ketv.com/article/north-south-omaha-debate-to-disperse-millions-of-dollars/43856237>

10 ‘Real work’ begins on \$335 million investment to revive areas including North and South Omaha • *Nebraska Examiner*

A Presidential Perspective on Capital Punishment

by NFP Board President Maggie Ballard

There are three topics about which I have a hard time containing my passion, excitement, and knowledge. One of those topics is the death penalty. I grew up being taught that it was wrong, then spent a short amount of time in high school wondering if it could be used in rare, extenuating circumstances (although in all honesty, I think I just wanted to have different views than my parents on something, and to fit in with some of my more conservative peers). By the time I graduated high school, I was back to being confident that Capital Punishment has no place in a civilized society. Most of the reasons I cited for being against it at that time in life were spiritual in nature. While basing one's personal beliefs on one's spiritual truth is completely valid, I am going to focus why the death penalty has no place in our state or our country from a legal standpoint.

To say it differently, I will never be able to support the death penalty because it goes against everything I stand for and believe about the world from a spiritual perspective. I believe that the only person that is okay to kill is the person that has absolutely nothing good inside of them. And I do not believe that there is anyone on this planet with nothing good inside of them. From a Criminal Justice standpoint, I take issue with the death penalty for four main reasons:

1. Criminal penalties are meant to serve at least one of four purposes: **Incapacitation, Deterrence, Restitution, or Rehabilitation. The only function that the death penalty is proven to serve is incapacitation.** There is no evidence that proves it is a deterrent. It obviously cannot rehabilitate. It is not carried out

I will never be able to support the death penalty because it goes against everything I stand for and believe about the world from a spiritual perspective. I believe that the only person that is okay to kill is the person that has absolutely nothing good inside of them. And I do not believe that there is anyone on this planet with nothing good inside of them.

consistently or swiftly enough to be restitution—instead, it serves more as revenge. Handing out revenge is a threat to our system.

2. **The state does not take responsibility for what it does when the state kills. Jurors make the recommendation for the death penalty but say that it's truly going to be left up to the judge.** The judge passes along the jury's recommendation and says, "I'm just doing what the jury said. Plus it's not even up to me. Ultimately, it's up to the governor. They can pardon this person if

they believe they shouldn't be executed." The governor points to the recommendation of the jury and the confirmation by the judge and says, "It's really not up to me—the agents of our system have already spoken."

On top of that, when jurors are interviewed, they often say that recommending the death penalty in the case they sat on was a gift to the victim's family - it was something they thought would make the victim's family feel better. We have a formal, rational legal system, which by definition, is not to contain ulterior motives. Our legal system is not put in place to give people gifts.

3. **The number one predictor of those that will be sentenced to death is the sex of the alleged offender.** This why our country has historically, rarely executed women: when women are painted in a light that matches how they are socially expected to behave, states have a hard time sentencing them to death. But a woman that goes against social norms, e.g. a lesbian or a sex worker, she is harder for jurors to take sympathy with.

The number two predictor of those that will be sentenced to death is the race of the person they allegedly killed. When the victim was white (non-Hispanic), the person convicted of killing them is much more likely to be sentenced to death than if the victim was non-white. When the offender is non-white and the victim is white, they are even MORE likely to be sentenced to death. People of color that kill people of color are not as likely sentenced to death. White people that kill people of color are even less likely to be sentenced to death.

These two predictors tell us little

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The Deep Costs of Profiting from War

Since December 8 2023, the United States has vetoed three times a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The United States was the only member that voted against these resolutions, essentially continuing the bloodshed and genocide of the Palestinian people. The question is why and what do these votes say about who the United States is and what does our nation stand for?

The United States is the largest arms merchant on the planet. U.S. based Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, and General Dynamics (the last two have plants in Nebraska) are the 5 largest war contractors in the world. According to the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft these arms merchants recorded profits of \$196 billion in 2022. The arms industries contribute \$83 million to Congressional campaigns and employ 820 lobbyists. On October 24, two weeks after Israel began bombing Gaza, Greg Hayes, CEO of Raytheon [RTX] stated "I think across the Raytheon portfolio, you're going to see a benefit".

The United States spends more on war than the next 9 nations combined. If the costs of injuries, physical and emotional, inflicted on our soldiers and endured by our veterans are included, the U.S. is spending \$1.5 trillion a year for war. Additionally, the U.S. military is the world's largest institutional producer of [GHG] emissions contributing to a warming climate.

In 1960, Dwight Eisenhower, a 4 star Army General and departing President, warned the nation that empowering the military and the corporations that contract with the Pentagon would lead to a military industrial complex control of Congress. Eventually, the cost of our involvement in wars would deplete the national treasury

and threaten our own security. Today the U.S. is funding forever wars. After 20 years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, which were arguably started under false pretenses, the U.S withdrew most of its troops and left both nations in shambles. Soon another war emerged when, claiming that an expanding NATO threatened his rights to rule land he claimed was historically part of Russia, Putin invaded Ukraine, a nation whose people wanted the freedom to chart their own national course. The arms industry thus found another market

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for their destructive weapons. Now, in addition to Ukraine, the industry is supplying more bombs and missiles to Israel for the destruction of Gaza. Is a conflict between China over Taiwan next on the list?

The National Priorities Project tracks the cost to our country of funding these wars. Since 2001 they have cost over \$9 trillion and along with the tax cuts for the wealthy are the largest contributor to the national debt. Meanwhile, Americans who invest in Pentagon corporations are reaping profits from the sale of weapons that are the cause of the death and trauma of innocent civilians caught in the middle of these conflicts.

Militarism is so entrenched in our economic system and psyche that we seem numb and virtually incapable of seeing the suffering of others. Perhaps this disconnect contributes to so much dysfunction and division in our national politics.

There are groups of Palestinians and Israelis who work to live side by side in peace. There are many Americans who work for justice and peace. Recently Gideon Levy, an Israeli journalist wrote an opinion article in the Israeli newspaper Haartz suggesting the only way to stop the bloodshed is for the United States to halt all arms sales to the Netanyahu government of Israel. This work is undermined by those who insist we need to be afraid, to hate the 'other' and to profit from the manufacture of bombs and missiles that destroy, kill, and

traumatize innocent children.

Note: This piece was originally submitted to a Nebraska news outlet that refused to print it. Along with another article in our paper we will not shy away from the truth and continue to call out our over bloated military budget.

Note: Like another article in this issue this piece was submitted to a Nebraska news outlet who refused to print it. Our media is choosing to ignore how much the US and our corporations profit from the military industrial complex.

Ron Todd-Meyer: lives near Lincoln, a retired farmer, a USMC combat veteran of the American War on Vietnam and member of Nebraskans for Peace and Veterans for Peace, organizations that work for racial and economic justice, mitigate environmental degradation and end militarism.

The Palestinian Struggle Against Forgetting

by Lory J. Dance

Originally published in Mondoweiss as an Op Ed

October 25, 2023

In solidarity with those who fought racial apartheid in South Africa, bell hooks emphasized, “[The Black American] struggle is also (1) a struggle of memory against forgetting.”

As a Black American with chosen family in Gaza, I support the Palestinian struggle of memory against forgetting. I remember that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is much older and more complicated than the rise of Hamas. I recall the (2) first Zionist Congress in the 1890s, which designated Palestine as the site for a Jewish homeland; and the post-WWI period, during which (3) Great Britain sponsored the Zionist colonization of Palestine. I will not forget an atrocity of the 1940s: Nazi Germany’s Holocaust against millions of Jews and other innocents.

I will also not forget that in the aftermath of this Holocaust, the modern state of Israel was carved out of Palestine in 1948 with the (4) Plan Dalet, which created 750,000 Palestinian refugees and destroyed or appropriated 400 Palestinian towns and villages in only a couple of years. I will not forget the Six-Day War of 1967, after which Israeli leaders sanctioned the occupations of Gaza and the West Bank. Israeli forces have effectively blockaded the Gaza Strip since June 2007. I will not forget that Human Rights Watch has summarized (5) the past 15 years of repression by calling Gaza an “open air prison” for its population of over 2 million Palestinians. I must not forget that the overcrowding and resource shortages in Gaza have been exacerbated by habitual IDF military airstrikes, which the Israeli government euphemistically calls “mowing the grass.”

Like persons of the Palestinian diaspora, and some in the Jewish community, I am a descendant of a displaced people (namely West Africans forcibly removed, brutalized, and enslaved). I understand desires to correct or minimize historical wrongs and return to a homeland. The (6) founding and colonization of Liberia by African Americans in the 1820s was one attempt to correct the tragedy of American slavery. Viewing Africa as the “Promised Land,” African Americans, sponsored by the American Colonization Society,

were forced to suffer for the sins of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

I sympathize with the need of Jewish people (particularly Holocaust survivors) to have a sanctuary from the inhumanity of Nazi Germany, the horrifying legacy of European pogroms and massacres, and other forms of antisemitic racism. As I recall the horrors of the Holocaust, I will not forget how Palestinians are continually forced to suffer for the sins of the Nazi Holocaust against European Jews.

I repeat, “The Palestinian struggle is a struggle of memory against forgetting.” I will never forget the policies, practices, and legacies of ethnic cleansing by Israeli leaders against Palestinians that continue with recent and current attacks on Gaza. I demand an immediate cease fire!

repatriated in West Africa. African Americans did this despite the fact that the region was already inhabited and settled by ethnic groups that had been there for centuries.

Though empathizing with African Americans fleeing American racism, I must not forget that these settlers (now called Americo-Liberians) colonized and seized the lands of pre-existing West African populations. I admit this while recognizing that my beloved hometown of Petersburg, Virginia, and its historically large free Black population sent many Black settlers to Liberia (including Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the first president!). While ensuring that the histories of Blacks from my hometown are not forgotten, I must also remember that Indigenous Liberians

I understand this latest Hamas response to occupation as part of a complex history. I remember that in 1948, Israeli forces inhumanely relocated Palestinians from Palestinian townships to the Gaza Strip. While in Israeli-occupied Palestine, I witnessed Palestinians living under apartheid conditions of discrimination and dehumanization, much like Black South Africans did under apartheid there or what African Americans suffered here in the Jim Crow era.

I recall that as recently as March 2023, after (7) Israeli settlers violently torched the village of Huwwara in the West Bank, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich stated, “I think the village of Huwwara needs to be wiped out. I think the State of Israel should do it.” In 2021, Smotrich complained to Palestinian members of Israel’s Parliament,

BROKEN, continued

was passed over, he said. Louis said he hoped lawmakers would reexamine the process and recommendations. “We got to make it right,” he said.¹¹

“One South Omaha applicant (Pelshaw) who went through the lengthy process also has gone as far as to lodge complaints with the State Ombudsman’s Office, Attorney General’s Office, State Auditor’s Office and others..., Pelshaw asked the ombudsman for help in urging the DED to “correct glaring and intentional errors and to fairly rescore our project using all of the correct inputs. Pelshaw said the couple turned to other state officials when the DED stopped responding to their requests for proof that it followed “proper protocol” in scoring. The Peshwa’s are filing a formal appeal to the DED demanding a rescore.”¹²

These complaints about the faulty grant application processes, lack of community input, lack of community oversight, the seemingly misuse of funds for shovel ready dirt other than investing into or the creation of jobs in North Omaha, lack of access to information, lack of response from the Department of Economic Development (DED), etc... are so grievous that Senators have requested the establishment of an Inland Port Authority to provide information, coordination and oversight concerning the appropriation of the funds that the community can finally access.

“An inland port authority is an area controlled by an independent board that can engage in marketing, issue and sell bonds, and acquire property... such a board would help to ensure that appropriated funds meant for underserved areas of Omaha are

utilized for that purpose... Senators Wayne and McKinney urged the state’s Executive Branch to support the City of Omaha in pursuing this endeavor, and expressed their support for future legislation that would reappropriate funds from the Department of Economic Development to the authority, should it be established”¹³

“The fight centers on plans by the state Department of Economic Development to build a business park in economically impoverished north Omaha, near Eppley Airfield. Sen. Justin Wayne, who represents part of the area, says the department’s plan to create sites suitable for business development won’t create jobs, contrary to what the Legislature intended when it set aside money for revitalization two years ago.”¹⁴

If you are keeping your 3rd eye on money and politics in Omaha, you may be experiencing some déjà vu, because you have heard and seen this particular song and dance before, especially in North Omaha when it comes to grant funding.

“**This is a money grab, and I’m tired of the poverty pimps takin’ out my community all the time. That’s what we’re doing again,**” Wayne said.¹⁵

“The money that’s been allotted for this project was clearly intended to create jobs for an area of the state that really needs it. As a fiscal conservative I’m seeing \$90 million be spent to create zero jobs,” Senator Slama said.¹⁶

Whether it be from the state or local non-profits, there seems to be a pattern of concern regarding the use, **or misuses**,

of grant funding within the North Omaha community. If you continue looking into this issue, some questions may even arise such as: Why is there a recurring theme of grant money given to North Omaha, but the monies not used in the manner of which it was intended? Why are Non-profits in North Omaha traditionally either ill-funded or non-effective? Why are there so many non-profits in North Omaha anyway, an area in dire need of business and economic enrichment?

Senator Terrell McKinney has raised these genuine concerns, specifically about the alarming number of non-profits in the community, their effectiveness and overall impact on business growth in North Omaha. Sen. McKinney proposed Legislative Resolution 1127 (LR1127) in 2023, in efforts to conduct a formal interim legislative study on the impact of non-profits in areas like North Omaha to get answers to these questions.

*This study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of: (1) How an oversaturation of nonprofit organizations and philanthropy may stifle economic growth and independence in areas of high poverty; (2) How decisions in communities of high poverty are affected based on different philanthropic donors and nonprofit organizations; (3) Possible solutions to create more balance and lessen any negative impacts of nonprofit organizations and philanthropy in areas of high poverty; and (4) How other states and nations handle this issue to promote economic growth and independence in areas of high poverty.*¹⁷

Senator McKinney outlined in the hearing introducing LR1127 exactly what

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11 <https://nebraskaexaminer.com/2023/02/05/north-omaha-lawmakers-challenged-about-process-thatrecommended-225-million-in-grants/>

12 <https://nebraskaexaminer.com/2024/01/25/complaints-rise-about-south-north-omaha-grant-process-as-friday-announcement-approaches/>

13 NORTH OMAHA LAWMAKERS ADVOCATE FOR CITY TO ESTABLISH INLAND PORT AUTHORITY — Kissell Kohout, ES Associates LLC (kisselkohoutes.com)

14 Senators fight over north Omaha redevelopment funds | Nebraska Public Media

15 Senators fight over north Omaha redevelopment funds | Nebraska Public Media

16 Senators fight over north Omaha redevelopment funds | Nebraska Public Media

17 LR172.pdf (nebraskalegislature.gov)—Sen. McKinney Interim Study on Non-profit Saturation in densely populated areas of high poverty.

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

A Personal Relationship with a Vanishing Beach

I remember, at the age of about eight, in the late 1950s working my way with my parents and siblings through sea grass several feet high through sandy hills that swallowed our legs up a line of sand dunes south of Daytona, in eastern Florida. My grandparents lived west of a highway behind (west of) the dune hills that we crested on the grassy, sandy paths up, then down the dunes, onto a huge, flat beach.

At low tide, the beach stretched outward (east) more than a hundred yards, most of it firm sand packed hard by the ocean's waves on a waterfront that was becoming well-known as the first site of stock-car racing. Later, as the beach became narrower and the popularity of stock-car racing grew, the track was moved inland, to what today is known as the site of the Daytona 500 and other races.

Condos March Up the Beach

We had a personal relationship with that beach as we grew and aged, and as we watched it change, a sign in time for that huge sandspit called Florida. At our age of six or eight, our grandparents lived in a single-family house south of Daytona which is now more than 100 years old. Today, it is one of a small number that has not been replaced by condos six to

about 12 or more stories high. The ranks of sand dunes have been mostly pushed away to open land that, at the time, was considered more valuable. By the time I was about 18, a high school graduate in

My sister, two years my junior, seemed not to fully comprehend why, as we stood on a sea-front porch facing east, when I said that, in a few decades, our beloved beach would be swept away by storm tides as the land level sank. The collapse of our childhood fantasy beach took place in roughly ten years, with a gut-punch from Hurricane Nicole, in 2022.

1968, my parents owned a second-floor condo on the same route that we had raced through, on foot, as children.

The beach was shorter now at both high and low tides; at low tide, some parts of the beaches still provided room for fishing, but any cars that rode along the beach often found their tires swallowed by soft sand along the dunes and tall grass. The tall grass that remained on the few dunes along the beach was shrinking, too. (Because of its stock-car background, driving of cars was allowed on this beach long after it became illegal on others).

A Gut-punch from Hurricane Nicole

By the time I was about 50, in 2000, I was studying atmospheric sciences, and climate change, which was not widely discussed then, outside of scientific circles. My sister, two years my junior, seemed not to fully comprehend why, as we stood on a sea-front porch facing east, when I said that, in a few decades, our beloved beach would be swept away by storm tides as the land level sank. The collapse of our childhood fantasy beach took place in roughly ten years, with a gut-punch from Hurricane Nicole, in 2022.

Nicole was not much of a storm in the annals of hurricanes, as it moved

slowly north-northwest along Florida's east coast. Based solely on wind speed (as a Category One), it was barely a hurricane at all.

Nicole's lack of forward motion as it moved parallel to the coast enhanced its erosion of sand. The storm lasted long enough for high tide to coincide with its on-shore flow. Photos in local newspapers showed ebbing floodwaters washing parts of aging condos grounds into the ocean.

The last video I saw of that beach showed the dune grass underwater, as parts of the condos crumbled into rising ocean. The counter-clockwise rotation of the storm drove the ocean up the beaches out of the east, eroding even more sand, flooding the basements and lower floors of many of the condos, which were aging by now. One of them collapsed, killing several residents who could not escape.

Relative Land Values Change

The damage from Nicole and other storms elsewhere in Florida was changing the relative value of land in many parts of Florida that had enjoyed a few feet of extra elevation relative to the beachfront. Liberty City, for example, began as public housing west of Miami, and almost 20 feet above the beaches on the ocean.

These have become the ironies of climate change in a place once called paradise. People caught up in this new form of eviction have come to call it "climate gentrification."

As seas rose and land sank, land that had begun as the state's first public housing development in 1937 was drawing real estate agents with plans to evict the area's Black, low-income occupants.

Back on the beachfronts, rising rents and insurance costs are now driving people, most of them elderly, out of their ocean-view retirement homes. An ocean-front location, which once carried a considerable premium over inland locations that became more expensive,



Parts of the Daytona Beach's coastline were swept away by Hurricane Nicole's storm surge, November, 2022.

the new premium for a few dozen feet of elevation. In Miami and other seaside major cities, streets and lower floors of very tall condos and office towers threatened to flood as stronger hurricanes move closer to shore over sinking land. On top of these problems (one that is not much discussed) has been sinking of the land itself.

"Climate Gentrification"

These have become the ironies of climate change in a place once called paradise. People caught up in this new form of eviction have come to call it "climate gentrification." Before you buy an ocean-view condo on the East Coast, take a look at how much of it is subsiding.

The New York Times published a large map of this very phenomenon during February of this year, from Maine

to Florida in January, 2024. The view is rather shocking. If you are in the mood, take a walk on the beaches that front on the ocean and imagine what it looked like 50 to 100 yards wider. The coast is crumbling into the ocean as we watch.



*Bruce E. Johansen has written and published several books on this climate change during the past 25 years, the most recent of which will be *Nationalism and Nature: War and Warming*, due out in October from Springer publishers in Frankfurt, Germany.*

BROKEN, continued

is meant by a “poverty pimp”, the motive for the presence of these poverty pimps in the North Omaha Community and the outcomes of their presence.

“As you all know, I represent District 11, which encompasses most of North Omaha. My district has benefited from little to no investment over the last 30 years of my life since I’ve been alive. Even so, new nonprofits sprout up each year and millions of foundations, foundational, philanthropic and even government dollars go out to support these causes. Some in my—some of my community view some of these nonprofit entities and philanthropists as merely being self-serving while operating under the guise that they are benefiting the North Omaha or greater Omaha community. To use the informal lexicon, a term for this is the “poverty pimp.” To elaborate, the definition of poverty pimp is by way of reSPIN, public relations, which is an organization based in Washington, D.C. Those who use this appellation suggest that those so labeled profit unduly from the misfortune of others and therefore do not really wish the societal problems that they appear to work on to be eliminated permanently, as it is not in their interest, own interest for this to happen. The most frequent targets of this accusation are those receiving government funding or that solicit private charity to work on issues on behalf of various disadvantaged individuals or groups, but who never seem to be able to show anything, any amelioration of the problems experienced by their targeted populations. Some even suggest that if profit were eliminated as a factor, greater steps in the alleviation of oppressive situations could begin to truly occur.”¹⁸

Poverty pimps are those who profit from the misfortune of others and in this context, specifically non-profit entities and philanthropists that are self-serving while operating under the guise that they are benefiting the North Omaha or greater Omaha Community. Therefore, these entities do not really wish the societal problems that they appear to work to be eliminated permanently, and never seem to be able to show any amelioration of the issues experienced by their targeted populations because it is not in their best interest for this to happen.

The research supports what Senator McKinney suspected, that the poorer your community is, the more non-profits your community has. So, are the non-profits the demand? The community the supply? Or is the other way around?

“Overall, community-oriented nonprofit densities in neighborhoods increase as poverty level increases, i.e., there are many more of these nonprofits per capita in high poverty areas than in lower poverty areas. The average nonprofit density in the 100 metros was 69 nonprofits per 100,000 population, increasing from 62 in low poverty tracts (poverty rates of 0-10 percent) to 173 in high poverty tracts (poverty rates of 40 percent or more), a ratio of 2.8 times the low poverty density.”¹⁹

Because why would anyone want to work themselves out of a job? Non-profits can be big business.

The Non-Profit Industrial Complex defined as: a “system of relationships” between nonprofits, foundations that fund them, the local, state, and federal government and the owning classes.”²⁰ It is a billion-dollar system of industry that uses

the poor for job security, and usurps global and local, political and community power from the masses for means of influence and control. Even though the definition of a non-profit is: a legal entity organized and operated for a collective, public, or social benefit. Unlike for-profit businesses that aim to generate profit for their owners, nonprofits exist to serve the community and further social causes, also known as a non-business entity, much business is conducted by the hands of non-profit organizations, foundations, charities, on the backs of the communities they claim to serve.

“These mission-driven entities are also an increasingly important economic engine. In 2015, the non-profit sector represented 5.4 percent of the gross domestic product and contributed \$985.4 billion to the U.S. economy; in 2017, it accounted for 10.2 percent of the national workforce. And while the nonprofit sector is not exclusively an urban phenomenon, its economic weight is often concentrated in cities.

Yet, while nonprofits have created new, socially conscious jobs for professionals and paraprofessionals in cities, when it comes to combating poverty, their growth has left a more complicated legacy. Rather than helping people out of poverty, nonprofits have often created jobs that keep employees trapped one rung above the bottom of the economic ladder.”²¹

Much of the reason why it is “Expensive to be poor” is because those expenses fund the continuation of non-profits through wealthy donors, Foundation Board trustee salaries, and government contracts.

Maybe if we investigate the well

conclusion on next page

18 <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/107/PDF/Transcripts/Urban/2021-08-13.pdf>- LR172

19 <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/67311/2000381-Community-Oriented-Nonprofits-and-Neighborhood-Poverty.pdf>

20 <https://incite-national.org/beyond-the-non-profit-industrial-complex/>

21 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/09/24/how-rise-urban-nonprofits-has-exacerbated-poverty/>

BROKEN, conclusion

documented but hardly discussed, colonialist, racist, predatory capitalistic origins and continuing practices of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex run largely by the white noblesse in the United States we could get a better understanding of their underlying and foundational purposes and pierce the veil of the white savior façade.

Maybe the reason why North Omaha is over-saturated with non-profit organizations, which are perpetually ineffective, lack structure and support but yet receive grant funds that are consistently misused, misrepresented and misappropriated is because that's what those non-profits are designed to do.

Maybe the system isn't broken? Maybe it's working as it was originally designed?

“ALEXANDRA GOSWAMI: Good afternoon. My name is Alexandra Goswami, G-o-s-w-a-m-i. And I don't live in North Omaha or in any way represent North Omaha, so I'm not going to speak to that specifically. I'm going to speak to what I know. I have worked as a finance and accounting professional in non-profits in an audit and in a specific non-profit capacity for a number of years now, specifically in Omaha. And I agree in particular with something Senator McKinney said earlier about how the question that he would present, I'm paraphrasing, so pardon me if I misquote, the question he would present to non-profits is: What are they doing to work themselves out of business? And as an accounting

and finance professional, I would also pose that question to a number of non-profits in Omaha. I see a lot of wealth concentrated in non-profits. I see a lot of focus on boards and sustaining the organization itself in a fiduciary capacity and a capacity that is imbalanced in terms of the mission a lot of the time. In particular..., a lack of focus on the mission and working themselves out of business and centering people who are being, you know, probably they would say served by these non-profits and more focus on the business aspect of the non-profit. So, I very much encourage this interim study. I think that there is a large, missed opportunity throughout Omaha, probably Nebraska at large, for policymakers and non-profits to partner. Because presumably there is a lot of the same desired impacts for serving the public, and I think that a lot of times non-profits are focusing on donations and pleasing donors and less on a policy focus that would actually alleviate some of the root causes of the problems that cause these non-profits to exist in the first place.”²²

Make sure you check back for Part II of: *Non-profits, Grant Money, and White Saviors-Poverty Pimping in North Omaha* in my new column called “The System Isn't Broken” printed quarterly by Nebraskans for Peace. We will explore the origins of the Non-profit Industrial Complex and the harms that have been perpetuated by their existence around the globe and how that has trickled down into North Omaha.

Thank you!

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Palestinian Struggle, conclusion

“You’re here by mistake, it’s a mistake that Ben-Gurion didn’t finish the job and didn’t throw you out in 1948.”

Smotrich and other Israeli elites, including Yoav Gallant, Peter Lerner, and Benjamin Netanyahu, fuel an ongoing genocide through generalized references to Palestinians as “mistakes,” “butchers,” and “animals” who deserve to be denied access to humane resources, including electricity, food, and water.

I repeat, “The Palestinian struggle is a struggle of memory against forgetting.” I will never forget the policies, practices, and legacies of ethnic cleansing by Israeli leaders against Palestinians that continue with recent and current attacks on Gaza.

I demand an immediate cease fire!

Note: This piece was originally written for and submitted to a news outlet in the

Midwestern U.S. They refused to publish it. This was a not-so-subtle reminder that mainstream American news media would prefer to continue forgetting complexities about Palestinians.

Thank you to Jackson Meredith for his assistance with editing this piece. Thank you to Mette Lundsryd Stendevad for her crucial presentation at Malmö University (“A Struggle of Memory Against Forgetting: Palestinian Women of Syria Speaking Back”). This presentation inspired the title for my Op-Ed.

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