



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

JULY / AUGUST 2020 VOLUME 48, NO. 4

2020 Annual Peace Conference To Be Held Online Saturday, September 26th

Unlike we'd originally hoped and planned, the commemoration of Nebraskans for Peace's 50th Anniversary will not involve any in-person public events. The health peril posed by the COVID-19 crisis has sadly foreclosed the possibility of any such celebratory gatherings. But there's no keeping a resilient and indomitable Peace & Justice organization down—particularly the nation's oldest *statewide* one, NFP.

So on Saturday, September 26th, Nebraskans for Peace will be presenting its 2020 Annual Peace Conference *online*—with four total hours of programming that will celebrate our peacemaking past and detail many of the challenges we face in the decade to come.

The two-hour morning session will feature a keynote address by Dr. Amanda McKinney, M.D., the Executive Director

of the "Institute for Human and Planetary Health" at Doane University on "The Future of Food". As Dr. McKinney states, "Since the dawn of agriculture humans have struggled with food insecurity. In the face of a globalized, industrial agriculture system that is wholly dependent upon fossil fuels and a major contributor to climate change, it's time to examine what this means for our dinner plates. In this conversation, we'll examine the current state of the agri-food system, what potentially lies ahead for our food systems as the world continues to warm, and how we can eat today for both human and planetary health."

For anyone who hopes to continue eating in a world approaching a population of 8 billion humans and progressively impacted by climate disruption, this talk will



Dr. Amanda McKinney, M.D.

spotlight the fundamental link between food insecurity and violent conflict. As we all know from when our own stomachs start growling, hungry people are crabby people. And crabby people aren't very peaceful.

A second keynote address—dealing with the enduring threat posed by nuclear weapons and a belligerent U.S. foreign policy—will headline the afternoon session. Bruce Gagnon, the long-time Executive Director of the "Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space", will deliver a talk entitled, "U.S. Global Dominance and StratCom's Role". Under the Trump Administration, the bel-

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Nebraskans for Peace's state office in Lincoln is located on land that formerly belonged to the Otoe Tribe.

Nebraska Report

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

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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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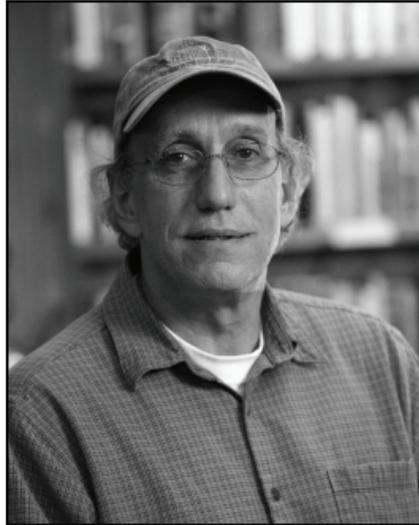
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2020 Peace Conference, conclusion



Bruce Gagnon

United Farm Workers, Bruce Gagnon has a unique insight into both the role of the U.S. military/industrial complex and the struggle of the world's poor.

There is no cost for either the morning session (from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Central Time) or the afternoon session (from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Central Time). Besides the keynote presentations, the program will include a retrospective on NFP's founding in 1970 and a special workshop session on the problem of "White Fragility"—and the urgent need to move from a society premised on white privilege to one of real equality under the law and opportunity for all. Watch your email for a forthcoming 'Schedule of Events' and plan now to virtually participate in this historic 50th anniversary event.

licosity of U.S. imperialism has never been more glaring. From the massive wealth the United States is inequitably accumulating to itself to the disproportionate volume of carbon we emit per capita, the chasm between the rich in America and the rest of the world has grown to levels never before seen in human history. And the U.S. military—with StratCom and its nuclear arsenal at the fore—is there to defend that inequality. A Vietnam War-era veteran who got his start in politics working as an organizer with the

Virtual Lantern Float

To Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Bombings

This year's lantern float will be held online the evening of Saturday, August 8. The hour-long event will feature recorded music, poetry, lanterns on the lake and presentations by Nobuko Tsukui from Tokyo, Japan, and UNL Assistant Professor Tyler White, whose research on the effect of nuclear detonations has shown that even small, localized blasts could produce a "Nuclear Autumn" that would block out the sun and provoke global famine.

An email alert will be coming soon with details for the coming event.



*UNL Assistant
Professor Tyler White*

Nebraskans for Peace Still Going Strong

‘There’s still a vision that the world can be better’

The following article by Cindy Lange-Kubick on the commemoration of Nebraskans for Peace’s 50th Anniversary originally appeared in the Sunday, July 12, 2020 Lincoln Journal Star and is reprinted with permission.

Nebraskans for Peace had been around for 16 years by the time Ron Todd-Meyer joined up.

He’d been busy. In 1966, the Nuckolls County farm boy had been drafted and went off to serve his country for two years—the second in the infantry in Vietnam.

He’d returned home, the fourth generation to farm that south-central Nebraska land.

And over time, he’d come to feel that war wasn’t the answer to our country’s problems, or to any problem anywhere.

“I grew up believing our country had noble purposes, I guess,” said the Nebraskans for Peace board president. “Ten years later, I began to question the whole reason for being there.”

“I think I’ve come to the conclusion that most of the wars are fought because most of the people lack the resources to feed their own families.”

The farm crisis had arrived by 1986 when he took a trip to Central America to study hunger issues, spending time with workers harvesting coffee for wealthy multinational corporations and living lives of poverty.

“We were waging a proxy war against Nicaragua, and I saw the victims of that war and my own complicity in that,” he says.

He started to see what Martin Luther



Ron Todd-Meyer, a Vietnam veteran and retired farmer, and his wife, Lois, a former teacher, are longtime members of Nebraskans for Peace, which turns 50 this year.

King Jr. meant when he talked about the three evils of society: Militarism. Materialism. Racism.

How they worked to keep people down and divided, while their leaders built empires.

“I think I’ve come to the conclusion that most of the wars are fought because most of the people lack the resources to feed their own families.”

He met Lois Todd in 2004 at a Central Nebraska Peace Workers meeting in Grand Island. He’d known her parents, both members of Nebraskans for Peace, her dad a Presbyterian pastor.

They took each other’s names when they married, and six years ago, they left the farm and retired to the countryside near Emerald.

Nebraskans for Peace turns 50 this year, and the events the group had planned have been waylaid by COVID-19. An April concert at the Indian Center was canceled; the fall annual meeting will be virtual.

They’re holding board meetings via

Zoom, Ron said. The upside? More attendees.

And it fell to Ron to reach out to the media and be the face of the group, a task he agreed to with a reluctant willingness.

He’s stalwart in his beliefs, a letter to the editor writer, a panelist, a member of the Nebraska Food Council and the Lincoln-Lancaster County Food Policy Council, promoting and advocating for more people to grow their own food.

The group he represents has a dues-paying membership of 1,200. A bimonthly newsletter called the *Nebraska Report* that found its way into hundreds of mailboxes, the outline of the state held aloft on the wings of a crane, before printing problems turned it into an online-only publication.

Nebraskans for Peace had its roots in a group of farmers and rural pastors who organized against the war in Vietnam in the late ’60s, he says.

They stood with the poor and the

conclusion on page 4

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Yes, here's my membership to Nebraskans for Peace at the special introductory rate of \$25

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How did you hear about NFP? _____

Or to become a member online, visit:
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Membership payments to NFP are NOT tax-deductible due to our political activity. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to the Nebraska Peace Foundation for our educational work.

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

Nebraskans for Peace Still Going Strong, conclusion

rights of laborers and minorities that have evolved and broadened with the times. The push for a nuclear freeze in the '80s. Early protests of beer sales in Whiteclay in the '90s.

Standing for civil rights and economic justice.

"Dealing with racism and our whole economic structure and how it's contributed to this disparity."

They advocate for the environment and against the devastating effects of climate change. They promote peaceful conflict resolution and promote food security.

They grant scholarships, hold workshops, honor Peacemakers of the Year. Smart people write columns and book reviews for the newsletter. They support legislation and hold vigils.

"We are still anti-war," Ron says. "We want to reduce the military budget."

They swim against the prevailing tides.

Lois is a retired teacher and longtime member of Nebraskans for Peace, too.

She knows that not everyone agrees

with the group's philosophy, but she also sees that reasonable people respect a perspective that's grounded in facts and reason.

"It's still important for the voice to be there," she says. "It's like a pebble in your shoe."

Her son and his wife both served in Iraq. They talk to Ron about the military, about being veterans.

"When you're in the military, there is this camaraderie with your fellow soldiers," Ron says. "We need to find that working toward peace."

Tim Rinne has been the group's state coordinator for 28 years. Paul and Betty Olson were early members; Paul Olson continues to organize an annual lantern float at Holmes Lake on the anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

He penned the group's history, grounded in the early work of Nebraska progressives and pacifists.

"Due to some degree of modesty, he does not give enough credit to himself and his late wife, Betty," Ron says.

But he credits the work of many to keep the group alive for half a century when many other peace and justice groups of its generation have disappeared.

"May it flourish for another 50 years and with good support," Olson wrote.

Lois and Ron Todd-Meyer hope so, too.

All those years ago, the Vietnam veteran began to see the relationships between government power and war and the needs of everyday people.

He sees it still.

"I saw how everything is interrelated. What affects one of us, affects all of us."

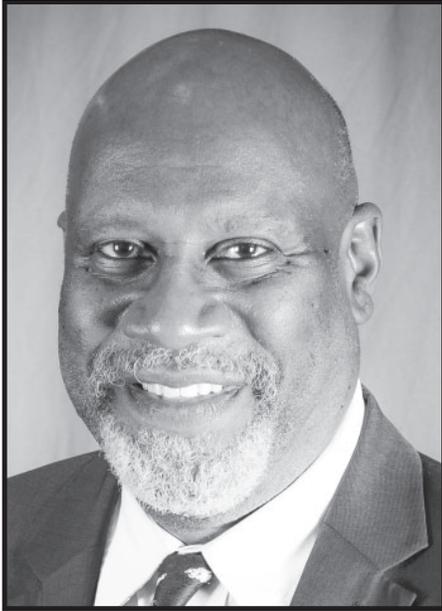
He sees it today in climate change. In a pandemic.

"We cannot distance ourselves from other people or other nations."

The work of peace can be frustrating, he says.

"In some ways, you could say we failed because the world is a more dangerous place than ever," he says. "But I guess there's still a vision that the world can be different. That it can be a whole lot better."

Make it Plain by Bearing Witness



A'Jamal-Rashad Byndon

Can we have a conversation on race?

What are the racial topics that are clearly off the table for whites when they approach the issues of the racial divide and the high level of racism in the United States?

These are essential questions that need to be pondered before we try to deconstruct the murder of George Floyd by four of America's 'finest' citizens who were sworn "to serve and protect". The conversation starts at the beating heart of the matter—Racism. The yardstick of racism can determine the quality of life for African Americans and other people of color. Like a carpenter who sees all the tools and materials that will be needed to fix what's broken, from the wood, nails, saw and hammer, I see anti-racism as the means to solve what afflicts us in this country. As a victim of American Democracy, I have only to compare the standard of living and quality of life of African Americans to whites in this country to measure how short we have fallen from the promise of justice for all.

At times I become disillusioned when the very institutions, groups and individuals who are charged to protect and aid our existence do not deliver on that promise. As an African American man, who has an African American family and promotes the Black family (including teaching a course at the university until it was eliminated), there is no easy way for

African Americans to survive white-controlled institutions that put constant impediments and roadblocks in our paths.

The multitude of social and economic disparities between the racial groups in America clearly measure this reality. We live in an apartheid society that has historically oppressed folks by various means. And when Malcolm X comes along and says, "By Any Means Necessary", whites become dismayed with his intent. Yet, the double standard on display in the practices of our public and private institutions with respect to equal opportunity in hiring, housing, and equality under the law goes unchecked. Only in the criminal justice system do we see "Affirmative Action" policies rabidly implemented, with our jails and prisons disproportionately filled with people of color.

Two recent events demonstrate this racial double standard: When white Officer Derek Chauvin, who was 44 years old, murdered George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 25th, the legal system initially did nothing. After an outcry, Officer Chauvin was subsequently arrested and charged with third-degree murder. As the protest became louder, they upped the degree of the murder

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charge. Now, if the races were reversed and it was a civilian African American who murdered Officer Chauvin, millions of Americans would be calling for the death penalty for that poor Black man. Meanwhile, he would have been beaten by law enforcement officials before he got into the jailhouse. As in the case of Micah X. Johnson, they might have killed him before his trial.

The second example is the recent tweet

by Ja Keen Fox, a member of the Omaha Mayor's LGBTQ+ advisory committee. On July 8th, Mr. Fox tweeted a reaction to the many white police officers who showed solidarity with Derek Chauvin. Mr. Fox tweeted, "Rest in Power Micah X Johnson." For those who are not aware, Micah X. Johnson was the African American who killed five Dallas police officers in 2016. Ja Keen's logic was that if white police officers can support a white officer (or officers) in the brutal murder of George Floyd, then he has the same right to offer homage to an African American who was responsible for the death of innocent individuals. How are these arguments different from each other, as on their face, the reasoning all sounds logical and equivalent? This difference in racial perspective is why we need a national dialogue on race topics.

If we are to change the scope and landscape and trajectory of racism in the United States, it will require a significant paradigm shift toward 'cultural humility'. That term means that we learn about other people's cultures from them. If we are serious about dealing with racism and other social roadblocks, then those who are victims of those 'isms' should not always have to teach others about their experiences. We must move upstream folks by just doing it, and by stopping creating the land mines of racism.

George Floyd did not die from a heart attack, or undefined causes or 'at the hands of those unknown' as recorded on the death certificates for over 5,000 African Americans in this country. But rather, he died under a slow premeditated murder for eight minutes under the flag of lynching in the United States. If our white-controlled educational institutions were honest, they would offer academic courses on Native American genocide and African slavery, along with the same level of focus as given to the Jewish Holocaust. Meanwhile, George Floyd is merely one of the thousands of African Americans who have been unjustly murdered by the white people who practice this duality of justice in American law. This sorely needed conversation is not about assigning 'white guilt' or providing appeasement, but about righting the wrongs that are embedded in over 400 years of oppression. We must

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Our Name, Our Justice



Dewayne Mays

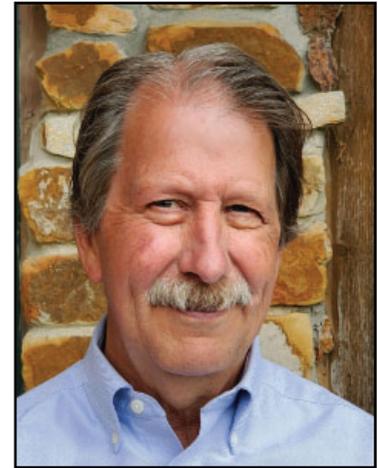
The “Local View” guest editorial below by Dewayne Mays and Bill Arfmann appeared in the June 11, 2020 edition of the Lincoln Journal Star under the title ‘Our Name, Our Justice’ and is reprinted with permission.

The understanding reached between representatives of Black Lives Matter and Lincoln Police Chief Jeff Bliemeister recently (June 4, *LJS*) is good but not enough to heal the wounds exposed in the wake of the George Floyd murder.

Lincoln, named for our slavery-ending president, needs to live up to its name. Frederick Douglass, black civil rights leader and recruiter of Union soldiers, visited Lincoln’s White House often. After one visit, he remarked, “Perhaps you may want to know how the President of the United States received a black man at the White House... I will tell you how he received me... with a hand and a voice well-balanced between cordiality and respectful reserve; I tell you, I felt big there!”

Lincoln as a city must make all its people feel big.

One episode from the recent history tells the story (July 26, 2019, *LJS*). Jeremy Williams, Lincoln African American elementary teacher and summer Lyft driver, went to Garland Street for a passenger. A pick-up driver pulled up beside Mr. Williams, said he did not look like he belonged there, then associated teenagers began to damage Williams’



William Arfmann

car. Williams felt correctly that the “not belonging here” was racist. Though the community raised money to repair Williams car, the “not belonging here” remark cuts deep.

In this city, no one doesn’t belong.

People of color belong in all neighborhoods, all kinds of jobs, all educational levels, all shops and restaurants and all levels of law enforcement and government.

Natives have been here 10,000 years, and *we* stole their land and/or used *our* military to remove them. African Americans have been here for 400 years and came to the Lincoln area, often as Civil War veterans. Latinos were in the West from the beginning of European/Mestizo settlement. And Asian Americans have been here from the launching of the railroads.

Protesters probably do not protest the police alone but the 400-year-old social order they protect:

- In the Lincoln public schools, people of color make up 33 percent of the students, yet only 6.5 percent of administrators and teachers.
- Lincoln has reserved its poorer housing and neighborhoods for people of color; “You don’t belong here” has been the mantra.
- Nationally, African Americans’ median family income was 57 percent

After Years of Wasted Spending, Congresswoman Barbara Lee Calls for Cutting the Pentagon Budget by Nearly Half and Reprioritizing Programs That Keep Us Safe

Washington, D.C. – On June 15, Congresswoman Barbara Lee of California introduced House Resolution H.Res. 1003 calling for upwards to \$350 billion in cuts to the Pentagon budget. Last year’s \$738 billion National Defense Authorization Act was the largest on record, coming at the expense of health care, education, infrastructure spending, and public health research. In the middle of a global pandemic, it’s more clear than ever that wasteful spending on unnecessary and endless wars does not keep our country safe or healthy.

“For years, our government has failed to invest in programs that actually keep our country safe and healthy. The prioritization of defense spending and the underinvestment in public health has led to 10 times more deaths from COVID-19 than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. By over-prioritizing the Pentagon and military solutions, our country is drastically underprepared for any crisis that needs a non-military solution.

“We cannot continue to prioritize funding for a department known for its waste, fraud, abuse, and failure to pass an audit—especially when the money to ‘protect national security’ is failing to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Our foreign policy has been militarized to the point that we must repeatedly resort to military solutions for non-military problems.

“People expect Congress to focus on those threats most likely to harm them—not waste their money on expensive weapons designed for the wars of yesterday while the most potent threats to Americans struggle to attract funding. Redundant nuclear weapons, off-books spending accounts, and endless wars in the Middle East don’t keep us safe.

“We all want to provide the best for our men and women in the armed services. And especially at a time when families across the country are struggling to pay the bills—including more than 16,000 military



**U.S. Representative
Barbara Lee**

families on food stamps—we need to take a hard look at every dollar and reinvest in people. It’s time to cut weapons of war and prioritize the well-being of our troops, anti-poverty programs, public health initiatives, and diplomacy.

“Congress needs to prioritize our safety and our future, not more war.”

The full text of the resolution, which details the Pentagon’s rampant waste, fraud and abuse, can be found here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/1003/text?r=1&s=1>.

Congresswoman Lee of California’s 13th District is the Co-Chair of the Steering & Policy Committee, a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, former Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Chair Emeritus of the Progressive Caucus, and Co-Chair of the Pro-Choice Caucus. She also serves as Chair of the Majority Leader’s Task Force on Poverty and Opportunity.

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

A Matter of Basic Intelligence

When President Donald Trump denies the existence of the global climate crisis despite global scientific and political consensus that the time to pursue solutions of this existential crisis is long overdue, it's time to question not only his politics, but also his basic intelligence. The same was true when Trump advised us to drink Lysol to combat COVID-19. Yes, a tall glass of Lysol might kill the virus, but it



also has problematic side effects, such as death. One day such things are greeted as Received Truth. The next, we are expected to forget them to make room for the next glob of noxious toxic waste dragged up from 'the swamp' of alt-facts.

This is the same president who, early during the worst pandemic in a century, advised us to close our eyes and let it vanish. His Received Truth was the same when the United States has one death, as when it had 135,000.

Away from the halls of alt-facts, employment in wind and solar power has passed that of the coal industry, and

the use of renewables (sun, wind, and geothermal energy) recently passed that of coal for production of electricity in the United States. Any appeal of using a dirty, carcinogenic fuel to produce power has lost any appeal it may have had. It's now an expensive fuel, not only as defined in dollars, but also in health. Coal compa-

nies are ditching coal plants. The market has gotten up and left coal behind. These are not ragged-haired hippies; they are capitalists in suits and ties. When Trump blares support for "wonderful, clean coal," he is worse than oxymoronic. It's a matter of basic intelligence.

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days. These are only matters of geophysical facts and medical science. Who needs them? However, what about patriotic war-time history?

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I might be able to tolerate denial that rising levels of carbon dioxide don't warm the atmosphere and Lysol can clean both your bathtub and your lungs if these were the only two examples of lapses in basic intelligence in the Oval Office these

Genius (2020) recount that the president, while visiting Pearl Harbor, according to John F. Kelley, his former chief of staff, "seemed to have no idea of what had actually happened there." Throughout *A Very Stable Genius*, he is depicted as misinformed and confused, while at the same time utterly certain of himself.

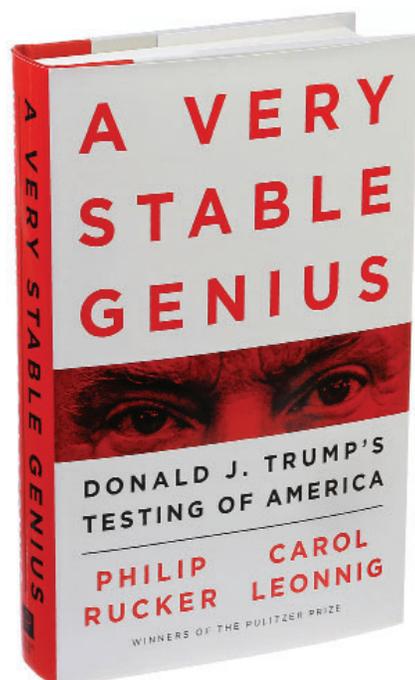
One more example of Trump's limited, vain notions of himself came at the Pentagon when, again according to Rucker and Leonnig, "military lead-

Washington Post national investigative reporter Carol Leonnig and White House bureau chief Philip Rucker, both Pulitzer Prize winners, provide the definitive insider narrative of Donald Trump's unique presidency with shocking new reporting and insight into its implications.



"This taut and terrifying book is among the most closely observed accounts of Donald J. Trump's shambolic tenure in office to date."

- Dwight Garner, *The New York Times*



ers and Trump's national security team, alarmed by 'gaping holes in the president's knowledge of history...' tried to give him a gentle lesson on American power. The meeting ended after Trump exploded, saying, among other things, "You're all losers, you don't know how to win anymore". "You're a bunch of dopes and babies" he told the roomful of generals and admirals, all of whom had spent decades serving their country—many of whom, in so doing, had put their lives on the line—but were being called losers and babies by a man who had been deferred from service in Vietnam five times for fallacious bone spurs. "If brains were dynamite," said one observer, "He wouldn't have enough to blow his nose."

While we are wrinkling our noses, consider these breaches of reality. Now, I know that Trump is world-famous for fabricating almost everything he breathes on, but these are special, especially the ones attributed to son Eric Trump and El Primo's son, Donald, Jr., which indicate that lack of basic intelligence isn't just a matter of old age (full disclosure: I am 70 and getting older every day). Stretching his bona fides as a rather clumsy political operative, Eric asserted (in May of 2020) that the Democrats had invented the coronavirus to deflate daddy's poll numbers, a nasty piece of chicanery that daddy himself usually reserves for the Chinese. Eric called it the Democrats' "cognizant

strategy," whatever that means.

Some of Eric's defenders said he was simply arguing that the Democrats were trying to harvest political points from the pandemic, which requires considerably fewer kilowatts than inventing a virus that is capable of killing at least a quarter million people (and counting). Watch out for those cunning Democrats, said Little Donald. They'll milk the coronavirus for all it's worth until the day after the election, and then it will go poof! The Trumps still think they can make the pandemic disappear. Talk about 'fake news'!

Not to be one-upped by his little brother, Donald, Jr. soon was calling on reporters and his 2.8 million Instagram followers with a scoop. He claimed, with no evidence (Daddy does this roughly every 15 minutes) that Joe Biden has been molesting children: "See ya later, alligator," Little Don told his Instagram followers, next to a photo of Biden, "After while, pedophile!" said another alligator nearby. Maybe that's what Daddy meant by "clearing the swamp" —character-assassinating reptiles. Make that foamy Lysol topping a double, Donald, on a slab of pecan pie.

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).



Dictatorship & The Election

by Paul A. Olson, President Emeritus of Nebraskans for Peace

The June 3, 2020 *Washington Post* featured a guest editorial by Salman Rushdie, the great Asian Indian novelist who is now an American citizen, entitled “I’ve Seen Dictators Rise and Fall, Beware America.” Rushdie is no fool. He has seen two dictatorships come and go—that of Indira Gandhi in India and the Pakistani military dictatorship. He sees the United States as showing all of the signs of moving toward a dictatorial government. He is, I think, correct, given our country’s recent use of executive orders, its scapegoating of some people and ethnicities, its appointment of blatantly partisan judicial and Department of Justice officials, and its use of military or military-style force on civilians. The present government has not sought to broaden its appeal in three years but to create a frenzied following that has all the marks of a cult. That is not how one runs for reelection in a democracy. It is my belief that the peace movement needs to be considering what it will do if the elections are cancelled or voided after they are held and if a national emergency is declared. Do we:

- Accept the status quo?
- Try to create a general strike?
- Create a series of nonviolent protests?
- Endeavor to emigrate as quickly as possible?
- Try to discourse with those imposing an authoritarian regime?

I would like for NFP to have discussion of this matter.

What is “Responsible Investing”?

by Tyler Mainquist

There are many terms being used to describe investment options that aim to deliver a competitive financial return while also seeking specific non-financial results. The historical keyword was “SRI” which meant “Socially Responsible Investing.” The acronym has been repurposed to “Sustainable, Responsible and Impact” investing, and you may see each of those words used on their own as well. For the last year, the most popular term has been “ESG” which stands for “Environmental, Social and Governance.” This column will help explain what the investment companies are trying to convey with these phrases, and future entries will help provide additional details, benefits, challenges and examples.

I place “Responsible Investing” above other terms in the hierarchy of descriptors. It captures an investor’s desire to use their financial resources in a way that reflects their sense of responsibility to their community, whether that is local or global. There are many subsets.

“Sustainable Investing” most commonly refers to environmental sustainability: Ensuring that the companies owned in a portfolio have minimal detrimental impact on the natural world, or are actively working to improve it. Addressing global climate change via decreased fossil fuel extraction/consumption is a key goal, as evidenced by the Divestment campaign from Bill McKibben, 350.org and others. Additional environmental drivers include decreasing pollution, reducing deforestation, and encouraging restorative agriculture practices. Some firms refer to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to inform their investment choices.

Beyond the environment, many investors want to financially support companies that have policies, products or services that align with their own values, and consequently avoid companies that oppose them. This is sometimes known as ‘values-based investing’; or ‘faith-based investing’ if values come directly from one’s faith life; or even “Biblically Responsible Investing”

(BRI) if investors trace their stated values to the Bible. This aspect is where “socially responsible investing” really got its start: From the Quakers investing their community resources according to their values, and later when investors pressured companies to stop supporting apartheid in South Africa—the original divestment campaign. Today, common social goals include supporting companies which operate with appropriate ethics, including policies to help ensure human rights throughout their workforce, supply chain, and board of directors. Most also avoid weapon manufacturers, tobacco companies, and the private prison industry.

“Impact Investing” seeks a measurable, positive outcome beyond just financial return. This may occur because the asset management firm targets companies whose products or services provide a direct social benefit, or because they use a portion of the assets for community projects. Other options—called ‘impact notes’—function more like a bond where investors are quoted

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Sourcing Our Food Locally

The following “Local View” guest editorial by Wally Graeber originally appeared in the June 2, 2020 edition of the Lincoln Journal Star under the headline of ‘Chicken, Egg and Local Sourcing.’

Why don't we grow more of our food locally right here in Nebraska? Some argue that we as consumers must first create the demand for local ingredients. This can be seen as the classic ‘chicken or egg’ question: Does local production come first, or must we create local demand?

During COVID-19, our typically reliable national food supply chain is showing signs of disruption, as well the pitfalls of scale and depending on a fragile global economy.

Due to the pandemic, Lincoln-area food producers are seeing record-breaking interest in locally produced food. “Community Supported Agriculture” (CSA) memberships are quickly selling out, with waiting lists growing by the hundreds each week. Local meat processors who usually have a few months advance for a reservation date are now booked until the end of 2020.

Food produced in Nebraska typically accounts for only 10 percent of what is available on the grocery shelf or the restaurant menu, according to a recent study by Megan McGuffey and published by the Center for Rural Affairs. As it stands today, the other 90 percent is imported from California, Texas and Florida, plus that from Mexico, Central and South America.

What would it take to increase the amount of local food consumed in Nebraska to 25 percent? Do you think we could do it by 2025? The decision making power is in the money in our pockets, with food from local farmers or the grocery store, and prepared in our kitchens. Can we all support a sustainable trajectory of new and local purchasing and eating habits?

Our food supply chain is determined by what the producer believes they can sell in a given season. Without the demand, the supply will not be planted, grown, harvested, distributed, sold and cooked.

With COVID-19 outbreaks, there is



Food produced in Nebraska typically accounts for only 10 percent of what is available on the grocery shelf or the restaurant menu... The other 90 percent is imported from California, Texas, Florida, Mexico, Central and South America.

a predicted shortage of animal products. A majority of these animals are raised in confined corporate feeding operations throughout the world, many not in Nebraska.

Why are we not eating more Nebraska beef, chicken, pork or goat? This is due in part to the lack of processing plants open to small-scale ranchers. USDA-certified processing facilities that work with small-scale producers are harder to find today due to a more intensive and stringent legal certification process.

Due to the surge in demand, many

local meat lockers are now booking processing appointments nine months in advance, up from just a month or two prior to the pandemic. We are now scheduling the processing of local animals before they are even born. Most ranchers have never seen this extraordinary forwarding of schedules in their careers. Until we start to understand what it takes to produce our food locally, we may not be able to match our demand with the supply from the producer.

Consistency is the name of the game when it comes to having a reliable volume of locally sourced ingredients.

Let's consider a favorite spring-time crop, such as asparagus. In the past month, local farms harvested about 100 to 500 pounds each. With the near-freezing temperatures only just behind us, many farms will have a below-average supply. This causes grocery stores to resort to suppliers in California to fill the gap. If our supply is being produced by a handful of individuals and a crop loss occurs, it can send what had become a reliable market back to our old habits of buying from distant, faceless growers.

Restaurants are typically the most reliable location where local food is purchased, accounting for up to 30 percent of local farm sales. Restaurants provide a service, taking on the tasks of cooking, dish cleaning and creating a space for us all to relax and socialize.

During the current age of COVID-19, restaurant dining rooms are closed or have limited seating, eaters are forced to cook at home, and producers are left without their typical wholesale restaurant buyers.

If we are going to transition into a more sustainable local food system in Nebraska we have to get to know our farmers. We will need to show up at farmers' markets, order ahead of time and increase our skills in the kitchen.

We must invest in CSAs and find ways to make cooking at home together more exciting. We must do this all with a newfound appreciation that our food is best grown by a local, safe and reliable source.

Wally Graeber is supply coordinator at Lone Tree Foods in Lincoln.

Bearing Witness, conclusion

start by making real changes.

Here are some examples of 'good faith' first steps:

1. Removal of any racist public artifacts and statuary that celebrate the Confederacy and white supremacist figures.
2. Retelling the history by the victims of American Democracy so that white supremacists are not teaching our history and our culture from their lying lips.
3. Initiating reparation conversations/dialogues and supporting House Resolution H.Res. 40, which calls for a study of payback for billions of hours of slave labor that made many whites rich in this country.
4. A purge of white privilege jobs and opportunists (including people of color passing as white) from public institutions that deceptively suggest racial diversity within those apartheid systems.
5. Abatement on all taxes on families to color that fall below the new poverty levels.
6. Creation of media opportunities where people of color can learn about their true history and culture instead of the caricatures current everywhere (Aunt Jemima, Washington Redskins, etc.)
7. Enactment of a mandatory 'sin tax' on any religious and private institution that can trace its acquired wealth back to the slave trade and slavery. The Catholic Jesuits would find most of their income returned to the descendants because of these sinister dealings. Georgetown University in Washington D.C. has already taken action to begin this dialogue.
8. Abolition of all textbooks and publications that paint Africans (and other people of color) in a degrading slapstick buffoonery manner. Many of the modern "Sambo"-type textbooks currently being used would come under community review.
9. Establishment of long-term tracking systems of students of color who graduate from public educational institutions to measure student success and institutional effective-

ness. Omaha Public Schools has one of the highest graduation rates for people of color. However, their employment and graduation rates from post-secondary institutions remain in question.

10. Reevaluation of the whole 'cradle-to-prison' pipeline that has created a 'cottage industry' whereby law enforcement officials are continuing the oppression of people of color. Further, we must get the police out of the schools because of the tendency to cite, write excessive tickets and foster an intimidating learning environment.

African American author James Baldwin was quoted as saying, "I hear what you are saying, but I see it's not what you are doing." We must replace the brainwashing books on ourselves with books by figures such as the French West Indies philosopher Frantz Fanon, who said that "Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it."

In the present historical moment, we well know what is being asked of us to do. We know our "mission". The only question is whether we will "fulfill it or betray it"?

Our Name, Our Justice, conclusion

of white income in 1968; in 2016, the ratio was worse—56 percent, despite reductions in racial gaps in college attendance and high school achievement. African American, Native American and Latino data for Lincoln are probably not vastly different.

- COVID-19 rates among persons of color in Nebraska are far higher than for whites. State health data show that, in insurance, health care, and mental health care, people of color are many times worse off in this state.
- Jobs are poorer, minimum wage jobs more common and unemployment higher.
- In Lincoln, African American drivers constitute 4.3 percent of the population, yet 11 percent of the traffic stops; stops of other people of color also show disparities. People of color report surveillance, discourtesy and indications that they are not welcome

in stores and restaurants.

Policing needs to improve, but the anger this city has witnessed in recent days is, we think, not only anger at the police but at a culture of disparities and historic white privilege that the police sustain but did not create.

Knowing that we need changes in housing, schooling, employment, health care and law enforcement and courts, Nebraskans for Peace and the Lincoln chapter of the NAACP organized an annual "Truth and Reconciliation" picnic about five years ago, one named for Nelson Mandela and modeled after South African processes.

We had about 70 to 100 people at each picnic, discussing policies for healing and justice. Few—too few—city officials and community leaders attended.

We also recently began to talk with the Lincoln Public Schools and assorted pastors and lay leaders of various faith

traditions on issues in education. We hope to go on to the other areas. We have mostly only our personal resources to give to the cause.

The leadership of the city has not extended a blessing yet. We know Lincoln has organizations concerned about racism. We are willing to work with anyone willing to organize, organize and organize—to make our city a community where no one hears, "You don't belong here."

Each of us can act. Our power lies in continued, thoughtful action. To effect change, we must move forward in relationship with each other, altering Lincoln's de facto policy and its culture so we honor the city's worthy name.

Dewayne Mays represents the Lincoln Branch of the NAACP. William Arfmann represents Nebraskans for Peace, Lincoln.

Can Biden Win the Climate Vote?

This article is excerpted in part from a July 8, 2020 posting on Grist.org.

When Democratic presidential primary candidate Bernie Sanders agreed to exit the race last April and help former Vice President Joe Biden take the White House, the two announced the creation of a series of joint “unity” task forces to bridge their policy divides—particularly on climate change. Over the course of the primary campaign, Biden had touted his plan to build 500,000 electric vehicle chargers and put his faith in American exceptionalism while Sanders bashed fossil fuel executives and promoted the “Green New Deal”. To try to find a middle ground for the Democratic Platform, Sanders appointed Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Sunrise Movement co-founder Varshini Prakash, and Catherine Flowers, the founder of the Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice, to the joint climate task force. Biden selected former Secretary of State John Kerry, former Environmental Protection Agency administrator Gina McCarthy, and former Biden policy advisor Kerry Duggan, along with two members of Congress.

From the just-released platform proposal, titled “Combating the Climate Crisis and Pursuing Environmental Justice”, it’s clear that Sanders’ camp had some meaningful influence. While the Green New Deal is never mentioned, traces of it are all over the place. In a July 8th Twitter message, Prakash wrote about her experience on the task force explaining that she had two goals: to push Biden to increase his ambition on climate change in terms of timelines and benchmarks, and to place environmental and climate justice at the heart of all of Biden’s climate policies.

On Prakash’s first goal, there was certainly some success. Previously, Biden’s climate policies centered around achieving 100 percent clean electricity by 2050. The task force shaved 15 years off that goal. It also came up with a slew of closer, more specific benchmarks: Within five years, make all school buses electric and help spur retrofits of 4 million buildings by unlocking private sector funding and setting efficiency standards, and by 2030, zero out the carbon footprint of all new buildings.

As for Prakash’s second goal, she applauded Biden’s commitment to putting environmental justice at the heart of his climate policy agenda by “directing federal funds to disadvantaged communities, ending pollution & toxic waste sites, and creating mitigation strategies and rebuilding from disaster in just and equitable ways.”

Naturally, there is evidence of compromise throughout the task force’s plan. While the document endorses repealing fossil fuel subsidies and addressing methane emissions from oil and gas infrastructure, it does not say anything about fracking or pipelines like the KXL. However, it does urge the Democratic party to explicitly fess up to “historic wrongs” perpetrated against Native American tribes with respect to infrastructure (i.e. pipelines), and to commit to a more robust and meaning-

ful consultation process with tribes across all federal agencies.

Primary season left the Democratic party deeply divided, and some on the climate left will inevitably remain skeptical that a Biden Administration will be ambitious enough. This document is by no means the scripture of climate policy. But Biden has proven to be pliant, allowing himself to be pushed further and further on climate since first announcing his candidacy, and this experiment in intra-party negotiation and compromise offers some evidence that the trend could continue.

Below is the news release Prakash sent out July 14th when Biden formally unveiled his \$2 Trillion “Build Back Better” blueprint for Environmental Justice, Sustainable Infrastructure, and an Equitable Clean Energy Future.

Varshini Prakash on the Biden Plan



WASHINGTON, D.C.—Throughout this election cycle, our generation has relentlessly pressured the Democratic establishment to grasp the existential urgency of the climate crisis. We pushed every single presidential candidate to show us their plan, and we weren’t afraid to say when they fell far from what was needed to provide a livable future for our generation. We’ve also been clear: the climate crisis is not just an existential threat, but our greatest opportunity—if we have to transform everything, let’s build a

better future. It’s no secret that we’ve been critical of Vice President Biden’s plans and commitments in the past. Today, he’s responded to many of those criticisms: dramatically increasing the scale and urgency of investments, filling in details on how he’d achieve environmental justice and create good union jobs, and promising immediate action—on day 1, in his first 100 days, in his first term, in the next decade—not just some far off goals.”

“Our movement made this possible, but there’s more work to do, and the urgency of the crisis demands that we keep pushing. Vice President Biden must build on these commitments and make these actions an immediate and urgent priority. Our movement, alongside environmental justice communities and frontline workers, has taught Joe Biden to talk the talk. Now, let’s defeat Trump and mobilize in mass after the election to get Biden to walk the walk.

“Two things are clear: Movements matter, and there’s more work to do. What we’ve shown is that when we organize, we can change the terrain of possible, and the common sense of society. But millions are without jobs. Storms are battering our coasts as we speak. The summer is getting hot. Babies are being born into an increasingly uncertain world. Folks can’t breathe. So roll up your sleeves, and let’s keep pushing.”

Your Foundation Speaks

by Loyal Park, Nebraska Peace Foundation President

Donations to Nebraska Peace Foundation go into two different accounts depending on the wishes of the donor. The **“unrestricted account”** helps pay the day-to-day educational expenses of Nebraskans for Peace. This includes the salaries and costs of the *Nebraska Report* and Annual Peace Conference.

Donations into the **“restricted account”** add to the investments in the permanent endowment of Nebraska Peace Foundation. These investments bring in a yearly yield of 4 to 5 percent in dividends and interest. These dividends and interest then go into the unrestricted account to support Nebraskans for Peace as listed above.

Please indicate on your check whether you want your donation to go directly to the unrestricted account or to the restricted account where it will be invested in socially-responsible, fossil-free and mainly renewable energy stocks and bonds.



Tyler Mainquist, conclusion

a known return for a fixed term of years, and the proceeds are used to finance specific projects that are expected to eventually pay for themselves. Recent impact investments have been created using crowdfunding techniques, outside of the traditional financial system, meaning less regulation but also less oversight.

The greatest growth within Responsible Investing has come from firms using ESG factors when deciding which companies to include in their fund. The firms have recognized that 1) a company’s environmental, social and governance attributes represent valuable insight into potential earnings risk in the future; but also 2) investor demand for Responsible Investing is growing rapidly, and if they want a piece of the action then an easy way to is relabel an existing fund to have “ESG” in the name, even if the fund’s holdings have not changed. On one hand, considering ESG data is better than nothing, but a product name does not tell a complete story.

Another valuable aspect of investing responsibly is to be (or to utilize) an engaged asset owner. Shareholders in a publicly traded company have the privilege/responsibility of voting on proposals, whether initiated by the company’s own board or by other share-

holders. Some asset managers—particularly those on the Sustainable and Impact side of responsible investing—maintain staff to engage with company management, to help them understand and improve their performance on ESG factors. Some even focus on writing and submitting shareholder proposals to encourage companies to move in a different direction. That is distinct from other firms who may create “ESG” funds, but whose own management opposes proposals that would seem to align with the funds’ goals.

The overall lesson: “Know What You Own.” Feel free to contact me with questions, or watch for additional information in the future. I can be reached at tmainquist@aicinvest.com (preferred), or call 402-423-4022, or text 402-227-8314.

Tyler Mainquist offers products and services using the following business names: Central Financial Services (CFS) – insurance and financial services Ameritas Investment Company, LLC (AIC), Member FINRA/SIPC– securities and investments | Ameritas Advisory Services (AAS) – investment advisory services. AIC and AAS are not affiliated with CFS or Nebraskans for Peace.

HARD TRUTH

of life became apparent, for the so-called mental health abortion my mother wanted for me. Before *Roe v. Wade*, a white girl from a ‘nice’ (i.e., middle class, or better, or well-connected; respectable) family could, by swearing to three psychiatrists that she would kill herself if forced to bear the child, secure an abortion in Atlanta at the—I kid you not—Catholic hospital with the best doctor in town. Pregnant at eighteen, unwilling to marry the boyfriend whose babe ’twas, I took my bad self to a Home in the bayou country of south Georgia and learned how to lay down time.

Except for walks in the swamp and chores, there was nothing at all to do but watch soap operas or game shows on the only TV. After listening to other girls’ stories for a week, I began to see how bitterness was the sure and certain road to a ruined life. So like I say, I learned how to lay down time.

I tell you this not just for shock value, but because learning to lay down time has served me very well subsequently in ways too many to detail, through graduate school, through illness and pain, through recovery, through more than a decade in a wheelchair, arthritic and immune-compromised, and most significantly through a half century of advocacy for justice and peace and watching hard-won victories wither and come to little as it sometimes seems.

Pandemics shake up how people think, according to Gianna Pomata, retired professor of the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University. She is quoted in *The New Yorker*, July 20, 2020: “‘The Black Death really marks the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of something else.’ That something else was the Renaissance.”

To my mind, a year out of ‘normal’ could do a lot of our children a world of good and would certainly shake up the way they think. There is little in modern ‘normal’ life which has prepared children (or most adults, come to that) for a life that does not feature rushing around, burning fossil fuel, running errands to get cheap goods from China at box stores and cheap food at restaurant chains. A year, one hopes for less, without overscheduling. A year without being taught to the test. A year tacked on if necessary at the other end of K-12/13. A year of learning how to lay down time.

HARD TRUTH

by Sally Herrin

Keep Our Kids Home

Last week the teachers union for Lincoln Public Schools, the LEA (Lincoln Education Association), boldly urged prudence and common sense in this pandemic. “Our preference would be for a delayed reopening of school buildings until we are firmly in the green range on the COVID risk dial, or until we have 14 days with no new cases.”

The LEA statement came in advance of Governor Pete Ricketts’ announcement Friday that it’s time for kids to go back to school. This same governor has blocked local control of mandatory masking in public places by holding federal CARES (Coronavirus Relief Fund) money hostage. For the record, one of the most damaging rightwing compulsions has been and continues to be the mixed message, which successfully befuddles those who consume the Jägermeister shots of the masses—Rush Limbaugh, *FOX News*, et al.

At his Friday press conference, Ricketts unveiled the new Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) re-opening template, LAUNCH NEBRASKA. <https://www.launchne.com>. The NDE’s “Re-Entry Scenario Planning Process” is a carefully crafted planning tool for schools, which begins “Plans require priorities. This is an opportunity to live into equity.”

The plan uses a clever acronym, RAPID, for Recommend, Agree, Perform, Inform, Decide. The document spells out options and also dead ends—half-days, for example, won’t work because of the cleaning involved. Kudos to all who contribute to wise planning now, but the issue, at less than a month out, is not how or whether to open, but when.

The importance of education is not up for debate here. And to be sure, FAR too many children and families have relied on schools for nutrition, health screening and

much more, and of course for plain old childcare in this country. But there are other ways to deliver ALL these services while protecting the plurality of teachers, staff, children and families—not to mention the rest of us—from COVID.

Recently, a thoughtful online post began, “As a child and family therapist, I strongly disagree with the arguments that ‘schools should reopen for children’s emotional health’. No version of this situation is good for children’s mental well-being, so we are choosing between bad situations here. Calls to open up schools are short-sighted and illogical.”

The post goes on to identify dangers to children’s emotional, developmental and even existential health of opening brick-and-mortar schools too soon, “so much more death of their loved ones, friend’s [sic] loved ones, and community members... rigid and developmentally inappropriate behavioral expectations to maintain social distancing for hours at a time... restricting engagement with their peers, even though those peers are right in front of them... cleaning rituals that keep their community trauma present with them... somehow having to have the executive functioning within all of this to meet educational standards... shame and self-doubt when they reasonably can’t... unable to receive age-appropriate comfort [touching, holding, hugging] from teachers and staff when dysregulated from all of this, thereby experiencing attachment injuries daily.”

In the worst cases, children may lose teachers and staff to COVID for weeks at a time with no warning, leaving such children to wonder if these people will die as well. In the very worst cases, children themselves risk infection (by Trump’s Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ reckoning “only” fifteen

thousand or so children are likely to die). “Returning to school as things are now is NOT better for children’s mental health. It is a complete rationalization by people who are uncomfortable with children not engaging in productivity culture,” the post concludes.

“I strongly disagree with the arguments that ‘schools should reopen for children’s emotional health’. No version of this situation is good for children’s mental well-being, so we are choosing between bad situations here.”

And there it is. The hard truth. Behind the push to open brick-and-mortar schools while COVID cases are on the rise is so-called “productivity culture”. Hardcore winner-take-all capitalism, in the persons of President Donald Trump and Governors Brian Kemp and Pete Ricketts, must kickstart their wasteful, inequitable, toxic stalled economy at ANY COST, including irreparable harm to a generation of American children and hundreds of thousands more COVID cases at a minimum, dragging out the pandemic in the U.S. for us all.

Did I ever tell you about the time I did five months in an institution for bad girls? I was too far along, when the facts