



# Nebraska Report

*There is no Peace without Justice*

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## Nebraskans for Peace Testimony on LB 283 to Create a State Climate Action Plan

Chairman Hilgers and members of the Legislature’s Executive Board:

My name is Ron Todd-Meyer. I am president of Nebraskans for Peace and I am here to urge you to send LB 283 to the floor for debate and to vote for a climate action plan for the State of Nebraska.

The environment and conflict resolution are two of the highest priorities of Nebraskans for Peace because exploitation of our environment is one of the major causes of conflicts in this world. Climate change is already affecting our planet with the displacement of people because they lack access to food and clean water. This lack of access has

contributed to the conflict in Syria and the migration of people trying to escape hunger and a war waged for scarce resources. The U.S. government-backed war in Yemen is about who controls the water. Climate change is also a contributing factor in the number of refugees seeking asylum on our southern border as conflicts and violence rise.

Basically, all wars are fought over who will control resources and who will profit from this control.

Fifty years ago, I served in the U.S. Marine Corps as an infantryman in Vietnam. I continue to question the motives of the decision-makers that led to the loss of 2 million Vietnamese and 58,000

American lives. In the 1980s, I made a church-sponsored trip to Central America to focus on the root causes of hunger among the population. At that time our government was waging a proxy war against the poor of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. More recently, the U.S. government has spent the last 18 years in the Middle East trying to control oil production and distribution and now is threatening intervention in Venezuela, again, because of oil.

These more recent wars are being waged because the U.S. wants to continue having access to the illusion of cheap fossil fuel usage. The increasing use of fossil fuels has contributed to the rising CO2 levels that are creating an unstable climate that threatens the existence of life as we know it.

There are ways, with some imagination and determination, to mitigate some of the damage of human-made climate change. I am a retired Nuckolls county farmer. There is a need to restore carbon to our soils to help retain water and nutrients. There is a need to re-localize our food system. The food we eat today travels, on average, 2000 miles before it reaches the dinner plate. Our current food system is unsustainable. We need to change how we think. Everything and everyone is interconnected.

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## Nebraska Report

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

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# Building a New Citizens Climate Lobby Chapter in Chadron

by *Moni Usasz, Lincoln Citizens Climate Lobby Chapter*

Citizens Climate Lobby works to build a livable world by empowering people to make change. For about five years the only two chapters in Nebraska were in Lincoln and Omaha. Because there was no chapter in the Third District, other Nebraskans were attempting to lobby Rep. Adrian Smith. That didn't work so well because he wanted to hear from constituents.

So in 2015 Becky Seth and I were inspired to try to get a chapter started in the Third District. I recruited my sister Jane Usasz Keber, from Spalding, to help us. We hoped to find someone or several someones willing to take on the challenge. We sent letters by mail, called and emailed old friends and even ex-husbands (thanks, Sam) asking for help. We cold-called NFP members and other activist folks people suggested. I'm sure some of you received our calls or emails. We had two meetings in Grand Island with the Central Nebraska Peacemakers group and several meetings in Scottsbluff, thanks to Byron Peterson's tireless leafleting and name gathering. We also did a presentation at "The Most Unlikely Place" in Lewellen and were featured in the *Garden County News*. Becky and I met with the editors of the *Kearney Hub* and the *Grand Island Independent*.

In June of 2016, I was talking with Frances Mendenhall of Omaha about our failure to find the right people. Frances called back later with information about "Fur Trade Days" in Chadron in August thinking I would be going with them. She reserved a tabling spot and she and her husband Alan Vovolka went on a road trip! I didn't go but Byron Peterson and Nick came over from Scottsbluff and the three of them and Nick

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*you don't have to be in a chapter to help stop climate change. just go to [cclusa.org](http://cclusa.org)/call it will give you the name and phone numbers of your members of*



*congress and a script you can read to them. talking with them (or more likely their staff) is an important way to get involved and help solve this climate change problem.*

# Nebraskans for Peace & the INF Treaty

by Paul A Olson

*In the 1980s, Nebraska witnessed a powerful Nuclear Weapons Freeze movement, fueled partly by the early visit to the state of Randall Forsberg (the architect of the Freeze movement) at the invitation of Nebraskans for Peace, and partly by the concern that Nebraska would be “Ground Zero” in any nuclear exchange between the Soviets and the United States. We were concerned about long-range ballistic missiles as these would be targeted at Nebraska, but we were also concerned about intermediate-range missiles because leading thinkers and Nebraskans for Peace (especially founding*

*member Merle Hansen) argued that no exchange in Europe of intermediate range missiles would stay at that level. The exchanges would escalate, and very soon long-range ballistic missiles or inter-continental ones would be used. The Freeze movement succeeded in organizing all across the state. In Kearney, the public overwhelmingly approved the Freeze; in Lincoln the City Council was about to vote—and we had the votes to win—when the city attorney said that the city could not vote. There was no doubt that there was massive sentiment in favor of stopping the race toward mutual destruction in Nebraska in the 1980s. The same sentiment existed nation-*

*wide. Now the Trump Administration is undoing one of the two treaties that emerged from the Freeze movement, the INF treaty—and one of Trump’s chief military advisors, John Bolton, wants to get rid of the other agreement and negotiate no new START treaty. This is a disaster. The article below, written by John Mecklin of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists and citing numerous authorities on missile warfare, shows what a disaster this is. If the human race is to survive, we must control nuclear weapons and stop the suspension of the INF and START treaties. Please write to your Member of Congress about this, ask your church to act, and tell your friends to get involved.*

## Why the U.S. & Russia should save the INF

by John Mecklin, February 19, 2019

Both the United States and Russia suspended their adherence to the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) earlier this month; each could formally withdraw from the treaty six months after announcing suspension. The treaty’s impending demise has given rise to an impressive series of arguments for saving it.

Mikhail Gorbachev, the general secretary who signed the 1987 pact on behalf of the Soviet Union, contended that although the world has undergone major changes since then, the agreement has not become outdated, but indispensable. “The subsequent changes in the world require not that we abandon the treaty—that laid the foundations of international security after the end of the Cold War—but that we take further steps towards the ultimate goal: The elimination of nuclear weapons,” Gorbachev wrote in the *Moscow Times*.

In comments on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, meanwhile, former U.S. Energy Sec-

retary Ernest Moniz suggested that if the United States and Russia agreed to mutual inspections of systems suspected of violating the INF, the treaty could be saved. “Frankly, the Russians I’ve spoken with said, ‘All we have to do is have mutual inspections,’ because they also have an issue, with Aegis ashore and its programmability for treaty-violating missiles,” Moniz told *Defense News*.

The Aegis ashore missile defense systems Moniz referenced are at the heart of a recent *Bulletin* article by MIT missile expert Ted Postol, who contended those systems are essentially useless in terms of shooting down ballistic missiles but are capable of firing U.S. cruise missiles. Because these Aegis systems are located in Eastern Europe and close to Russia, those offensive capabilities are rightly worrying to Russia and must be acknowledged, Postol argued, if the INF is to be saved.

Postol expanded on that argument today in the *New York Times*, explain-

ing the dire consequences that will flow, if the INF ends and a nuclear-armed cruise missile race ensues. The Postol warning is clear:

“Consider this: Modern nuclear-armed cruise missiles will be far more fearsome than those that were banned when the INF Treaty was signed in 1987. Advances in computer electronics and guidance technologies have produced conventionally armed cruise missiles that can be commanded to change their routes and targets in flight and loiter to attack at a programmed time.

“With such capabilities, cruise missiles could be launched from many locations at once and could be detonated on numerous targets at once. The warning available would at best be ambiguous, no different from sensing the presence of shadows in a dark forest.

“These terrifying new capabilities on both sides would substantially escalate the chances of a catastrophic accidental use of nuclear weapons during some as yet unforeseen crisis.”

# Let's Just Press Pause on Arms Race

*The following "Local View" guest opinion by NFP State Coordinator Tim Rinne appeared in the Saturday, February 8, 2019 Lincoln Journal Star.*

Boosting defense spending routinely gets equated to boosting national security.

It doesn't matter that the U.S. already spends over two-and-a-half times as much on defense as China, nine times as much as Russia or more than the next seven largest military powers combined (most of which—United Kingdom, France, Japan, Saudi Arabia and India—are our military allies).

Half of our hard-earned tax dollars for federal discretionary spending (everything but Social Security, Medicare

and Medicaid) goes to the Pentagon. This doesn't faze us tight-fisted taxpayers a bit.

***Let's call on all nine nuclear states (U.S., Russia, China, U.K., France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel) to just stop right where they are — freeze all research and development — and not make matters any worse. Everybody just take a breather.***

Nor do we get very worked up over the fact the Pentagon hasn't passed a financial audit in decades.

In November, auditing firm Ernst and Young threw in the towel on trying to conduct a congressionally mandated audit of the Department of Defense's books, stating they couldn't account for \$21 trillion in financial transactions.

Our brains can't even begin to grasp how much money that is. Yet Congress appropriated a record \$717 billion for defense in Fiscal Year 2019.

To hear the Pentagon though, that's not enough. There's a new peril on the horizon, a new arms race we now must win.

China and Russia, we're told, are developing "hypersonic weapons" capable of evading existing missile defense systems and delivering either conventional or nuclear payloads virtually without detection.

The United States, StratCom's commander warns, is trailing in this hypersonic arms race, and we have to catch up. Before we panic and, in our terror, throw even more money at a military that can't account for trillions, let's take a collective deep breath and think about this all a moment.

Security is essential. We can't live without it.

But if we found that our local police

or fire department (central to our local security) couldn't account for even \$500,000 in appropriations, would we just keep shelling out more of our tax revenue to them without demanding to get to the bottom of the situation?

No. We'd want answers. We'd want to know what happened. We'd demand a public accounting. And heads would roll.

Unless we intend to continue gouging the domestic portion of the federal budget indefinitely (agriculture, health, education, transportation, environment), the Department of Defense needs to come clean.

Putting the Pentagon's fiscal house back in order is going to take a while. There won't be any quick fix, and we will continue to live in a dangerous world—

one just made more unstable and jittery with the Trump Administration's announcement that it intends to unilaterally pull out of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia.

So here's a suggestion: With respect to this new nuclear arms race that's ratcheting up and imperiling the world (the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* just set the "Doomsday Clock" at two minutes to midnight), let's everybody just stop.

Let's call on all nine nuclear states (U.S., Russia, China, U.K., France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel) to just stop right where they are—freeze all research and development—and not make matters any worse. Everybody just take a breather and let things cool down a bit.

This is what's called for with the "Back from the Brink" initiative of The Call to Prevent Nuclear War—sponsored in part by the Nobel Peace Prize winner Physicians for Social Responsibility.

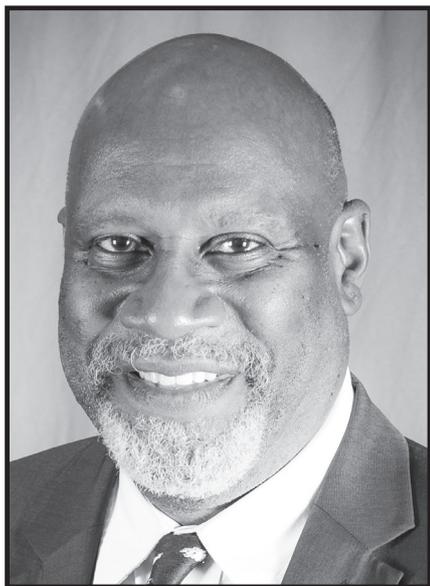
Under this proposal, nobody has to give up anything first, make unilateral cuts to their arsenals or weaken themselves before their enemies. Just stop and step back from the brink.

Then, after a moment, there are five steps that the nine nuclear states should adopt:

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

This isn't a solution in itself. But it could be the beginning of one—and it's preferable to bankrupting ourselves and lurching into nuclear catastrophe.

# Justice ain't nothing but an idea when it comes to race in the U.S. criminal justice system



*A'Jamal-Rashad Byndon  
Community Advocate*

On September 28, 1919, there was a lynching of an African American on the grounds of the Douglas County Courthouse in Omaha. It was one of the turning points in race relations in Nebraska. Omaha has over 64,000 African Americans and the numbers have declined over the years because of the lack of economic and social opportunities. Nevertheless, about a month ago, there was a special “Black History Month” event where six individuals made presentations about the horrendous and grisly acts committed “at the hands of those unknown” (as it is euphemistically expressed). Lynchings at the hands of white mobs were a common occurrence in the U.S. a century ago. Anti-Lynching advocate Ida B. Wells documented at least 5,000 lynching cases in the early 1900s, and she sought unsuccessfully to get a law passed to ban lynch mobs and bring the instigators to justice.

This commemorative event in the Omaha Douglas County City-County Building was held during the lunch hour. There must have been about 60 participants in the legislative chamber who heard a litany of presentations from the author who wrote a novel titled *King of Broken Things* about that lynching, to an African American professor who talked about the brutal murder by an Omaha Police Officer in 1968 of a 14-year old girl, Vivian Strong, whose only misdeed was running from that white police officer after playing in an empty public housing project near present-day Kellom Elementary School. She was shot and killed instantly by this officer, and the family and community suffered immeasurable trauma. Some might ask, why revisit these incidents or homicides? We revisit historical incidents to demonstrate that despite the passage of time, things pretty much remain the same. Instead of lynching and cold-blooded murders (think Emmett Till), how many documented killings are there where the perpetrator went scot-free? The police officer who killed 14-year-old Vivian Strong never saw one day in jail.

Another presentation at the commemoration that chilled the audience was a reading by the UNO Black Studies Chair about the lynching and cutting out of a fetus from a Black woman because she was angry about the lynching of her husband. This event though was organized to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the “Omaha Race Riot” and the Will Brown lynching. I suspect journalist Theodore Wheeler wrote a novel about the lynching of Will Brown because there was not enough archival information available. A reconstructed

account by current researchers on what led to the lynching conflicts with the original claim by a white woman that Will Brown raped her. Years later, the woman is reported to have recanted and said the incident never happened. But respect for due process and cool-headedness were not running high that warm September day at the courthouse in the white mob intent on gaining Mr. Brown’s body parts as mementos from their carnival of violence. We though, will never know the authentic details. One colleague who did research at the Douglas County Historical Society commented on how scant and poorly held their archives were in regard to that incident and other events related to people of color.

There have been articles and books about the long hot summer of 1919, but not much has changed in the treatment of African Americans in the criminal justice system in the United States. The findings of the “Innocence Project”—which through DNA testing has helped remove over 20 individuals from death row and freed 362 individuals from prison (as well as identifying 158 true perpetrators)—graphically demonstrate the dual justice system we have in this country. Approximately 70 percent of the victims wrongly convicted and imprisoned were people of color. Invariably in these cases, there was a rush to judgment based on circumstantial evidence and bias against the largely minority defendants. One could be faulted for thinking that the white mob has switched from using lynch ropes to our legal institutions as its vigilante device.

Many whites fail to appreciate that each one of these 5,000 to 10,000

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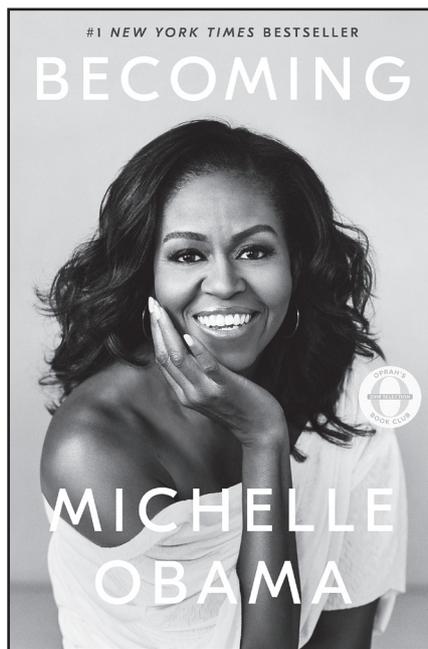
# BECOMING... MICHELLE OBAMA

## *Read This Book!*

by John Krejci

As the blunt title of this review indicates, I really enjoyed and was given valuable insights from reading this memoir. As a 'white privileged male,' it had special significance for me. One comment from a high school counselor reveals the challenge that Michelle faced throughout her life. Michelle's brother Craig was attending Princeton on a basketball scholarship, so she was thinking about following him there for the academics. Despite Michelle's achievements and commitment, the counselor thoughtlessly said, "I don't think you are Princeton material." (Reminds one of Malcolm X's counselor encouraging him to be a carpenter! Some things change slowly.) Her response epitomizes her lifelong responses to this racist/sexist affront: "I am good enough I can do it!" She actually started out asking, "Am I good enough? Can I do it?" She did, in fact, follow her brother to Princeton—a predominantly male, almost exclusively white world.

Where did this courage come from? Michelle admits she was a "sassy" and confident child. Although her parents were of modest means (they lived on the second floor of their Aunt's house in South Chicago), they dedicated their lives to their children. Her father suffered with MS, was handicapped for most of his life, and died early in her life. But according to Michelle, he never missed a day of work at the Chicago water works plant. Her mother was the kind of parent on hearing of an unkind, incompetent teacher, marched right down to the school and had the teacher transferred to administration. Later with her parents' encouragement, Michelle was enrolled in a magnet school, which entailed an hour and a half bus ride and presented her



first challenge to: "Am I good enough? Can I do it?" When her parents learned that Michelle neglected to tell them of a school trip to Paris, fearing they could not afford it, they made sure she went—no matter the cost.

The Robinsons were a large, close family—many relatives and frequent, joyous family celebrations at her Uncle "Southside's" home. But Michelle's world was limited to the two-mile radius of their neighborhood. She admits to not going to downtown Chicago until later on a school field trip. It would take the magnet school first, then Princeton and Harvard Law to enlarge this world. As a Black Woman—double jeopardy—she was constantly put to the test. She knew that she would have to do twice as good to be recognized as competent, while at the same time careful not to break any rules or be judged harshly.

By her own admission she was ob-

sessive compulsive—a perfectionist. She had a plan. This served her well through school, at Princeton, Harvard Law and finally into an elite law firm on the 42nd floor of a Chicago high-rise. She was well-paid, fought to gain respect in a 'good ole boys' world'. She even bought a SAAB! However, she still lived in the same South Shore apartment where she grew up. But the work she was assigned was deadly dull, reading intellectual property cases in her office.

But then lightning struck. "Some deep and unseen fault line in her life began to crumble." Some hotshot, Black Harvard Law student, with an odd name had been assigned to her as an intern! To enjoy the love story that turned her life upside down, you'll need to read Chapters 8 and 9! A sweet moment for me was when they had bailed out of a boring production of "Les Miserables," bought ice cream cones and were sitting next to each other on a curb.

"Barack looked rather curiously, with a trace of smile and asked, 'Can I kiss you?' And with that, I leaned in, and everything felt clear."

And the rest is history... well not exactly. However, I found the chapters on the political campaigns and the years in the White House to be the less interesting parts of the memoir.

Michelle's life plan took an abrupt turn. She quit the elite, but dull job at the law firm, took a lower-paying position with the City of Chicago. When Barack graduated and returned, she followed his community organizing dreams and took an even lower-paying position with a nonprofit. Later came the political campaigns. Michelle never had a passion for political campaigns or politics. She went along, gave her advice, became a good partner in the struggles, but would

# The Humanitarian Crisis in Africa & Its Global Implications

by *Robert K. Hitchcock*

*Robert Hitchcock, formerly head of the Anthropology Department at the University of Nebraska and a great advocate for the conservation of the African environment and its people, writes, in the piece which follows, of the environmental and immigration crisis in Africa. He turns some of our clichés upside down. While NFP has rightly emphasized global warming as a crucial factor in African immigration and in the European resistance to the immigration (witness Brexit and the right-wing anti-immigrant movements across Europe), Hitchcock emphasizes other factors in the humanitarian crisis that need attention also: Africa's population density and rapid population expansion, the desire of highly skilled African workers to find better jobs in more industrialized economies, the war in Yemen that closes it off as an immigration goal, and other factors. We should not want to see Africa stripped of its most skilled people, but we should not want walls either.*

*The usual efforts from the Right to close off African immigration to Europe and the rest of the world, including Trump's proposal for a wall across the Sahara, are inhumane and unworkable. Please write to our congresspeople asking them to formulate legislation in which we work with Europe and Africa to encourage sensible and regulated migration patterns that guarantee Africa a skilled workforce protected from violence and offer guarantees of full human rights protections to émigrés who seek European or new world locations for reasons that everyone should respect—such as local wars. Paul A. Olson*

The main drivers of migration out of the African continent, according to the media, are often cited as (1) conflicts

in African countries, (2) poverty, and (3) environmental degradation and deterioration (including global and local climate change). In fact, other factors have even greater importance, including population growth, declining employment opportunities in many parts of Africa due to economic downturn, a reduction in international development support, and the pull of potential employment opportunities (labor demand) outside of Africa. According to recent Pew Research findings, there were more than a million Sub-Saharan Africans who migrated to Europe in the period between 2010 and 2018.

Migrant flows have varied through time. It is important to note that it is not only poor people who are migrating. Some of the places with the highest rates of migration are those with better-off economies such as South Africa and Ghana. In the United States, the visa diversity program saw 50,000 asylum-seekers and an estimated 30,000 refugees were allowed in during 2018. The situations in five different African countries can be seen as important examples with respect to migration: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. Wars and conflicts have declined in Africa due in part to international and nation-based and local conflict resolution efforts such as those by the African Union (AU). Exceptions include Cameroon, Somalia, South Sudan, and some parts of the Sahel (e.g. Mali, Niger).

Several points need to be made about the causes and consequences of migration of Africans to places outside of the continent. First, the notion of an 'invasion of Europe or the United States' is a myth. The numbers of migrants to both the 28

countries of the European Union and the United States are on the decline, and they have been since 2015-2016. There are several reasons for this: they include enhanced border control on the part of the European Union countries, changes in the social and economic situations in African countries, the reduction of human trafficking especially in the Sahara and Libya, the expanded knowledge people have of the risks involved in crossing the Mediterranean, the difficulties of making the trip, and efforts to promote development, anti-corruption, and conflict resolution at the nation-state and local levels in Africa.

The population of Africa, currently at 1,307,487,480 as of 9 February 2019, is expanding rapidly, and one way of dealing with higher population densities and competition for resources is to move to new places. Africa's working age population will reach 1 billion people by 2030. Besides population growth, climate change is a factor in migration decisions, particularly for people who are highly dependent on natural resources, forests, woodlands, mountainous zones, savannas, and deserts that are experiencing the impacts of global and regional climate change.

An important cause of African migration both on the continent and to places outside of Africa is land grabbing. Seventy percent of the world's land grabs are concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa. These land grabs are a result of both external and internal wealthy elites and companies taking over land for purposes of agriculture, mining, and resource extraction. Some of the people in Africa most affected by land grabs are rural poor

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# What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

## It's Later Than We Think

When it comes to how rapidly global climate is changing, several recent scientific studies indicate that it's later than we think. By 'we' I mean scientists and other informed observers who have been watching the plot to this global story thicken for several years.

Global warming can be a deceptively backhanded crisis. In late January 2019, for example, much of the eastern two-thirds of the United States experienced a sharp cold snap for two days, so cold that President Donald Trump sniggered on Twitter that global warming ought to come back because we need it. Many media pointed out that the cold snap was a result of cold air escaping from the Arctic (the "Polar Vortex")—itself a result of warming Arctic water and melting ice. The rest of the Earth went on warming. Fairbanks, Alaska broke freezing, and Australia had its hottest month on record with an average temperature of more than 86 degrees F.

### Just How Quickly Are the Oceans Rising?

In the journal *Science*, Lijing Cheng and colleagues asked during January of 2019, "Just How Fast Are the Oceans Rising?" This is a very important question not only because warmer ocean water melts ice and raises sea levels, but also because 93 percent of the energy imbalance caused by human emissions of greenhouse gases ends up in the oceans. Lijing, et al. said that "This warming has

contributed to increases in rainfall intensity, rising sea levels, the destruction of coral reefs, declining ocean oxygen levels, and declines in ice sheets; glaciers; and ice caps in the polar regions."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's "Fifth Assessment Report" (AR5), published in 2013, developed five models for ocean temperature rise. Since then, estimates have risen consistently. A "pause" in global surface temperatures that has been widely hailed by warming deniers as the death knell of global temperature rise actually was due at least in part to the redistribution of heat within the climate system from the Earth's surface into the ocean interiors, according to this analysis.

The latest estimates of average global sea-level rise by the year 2100 are now roughly 30 centimeters—close to three feet. This level of warming would have major impacts on ocean ecosystems and sea-level rise through thermal expansion. "The fairly steady rise in OHC [ocean heat content] shows that the planet is clearly warming. The prospects for much higher OHC, sea-level, and sea-surface temperatures should be of concern given the abundant evidence of effects on storms, hurricanes, and the hydrological cycle, including extreme precipitation events," this study found.

### Melting Ice Compounds Methane Emissions

For many years, scientists have been

speculating about the effects of methane emissions on future greenhouse-gas levels and—after thermal inertia works its way in—temperatures. More often, emissions of methane are being detected, often in the Arctic. Despite these discoveries, interactions between melting ice and methane emissions are poorly



understood. How quickly, for example, do methane emissions from melting ice influence global level of this important greenhouse gas?

A study by Guillaume Lamarche-Gagnon and colleagues in *Nature* January 2, 2019 indicates "that ice sheets overlie extensive, biologically active methanogenic wetlands and that high rates of methane export to the atmosphere can occur via efficient sub-glacial drainage pathways. Our findings suggest that such environments have been previously underappreciated and should be considered in Earth's methane budget."

Lauren C. Andrews reported in

# RegeNErate Nebraska

## Our Land, Our Water, Our Food, Our People, Our Way

by Graham Christensen  
GC Resolve

Everything comes from the soil—all that feeds us, nourishes us, provides us with strength and community. It's who we are. Nebraskans know, as well as anyone, that soil is soul.

Even our values are rooted in the soil. Working with the land has given us independence, our sense of shared responsibility and purpose, and our devotion to each other and future generations. Whether we are farmers and ranchers or urban consumers, those Nebraska values are engrained deep in our hearts. It's how we go about our day-to-day lives, and it's how we do business.

But over the last several decades, agriculture has become increasingly industrialized. The result: we've lost control of our food system to a handful of large corporations. Industrial Ag's extractive business model, more concerned with profits than people, continues to degrade the soil, poison water and foul the air. And in the process, this model exploits workers and animals alike, while threatening our health, safety and the well-being of our communities.

Many people have been left behind as Industrial Ag has replaced cooperation with competition, separating us from our connection to the soil and also our connection to each other. We've seen rural communities erased from the map, urban communities transformed into food deserts, and Native communities prevented from growing their traditional crops on lands that have belonged to them for thousands of years.

Just as the soil itself is under threat, so is the Nebraska way of life. It seems there is nothing left for these Industrial Ag

corporations to take but our souls.

This is the way it has been—but it's not the way of the future.

RegeNErate Nebraska is a community of Nebraskans who are bucking the system, in favor of the solution which lies in the soil: **regenerative agriculture.**

Regenerative is about going back to the way farming was, so that our future can be the one we know it can be. Studies are



showing farmers can achieve great benefits by adding diversity through techniques such as cover cropping, prairie restoration, forestry, and augmented livestock grazing. For example, a recent Iowa State Study shows that by simply adding another crop rotation besides corn and soybeans a farmer could eliminate 96 percent of chemical herbicide applications and 86 percent of synthetic nitrogen applications, while increasing yields. Adding diversity saves farmers money and protects our water.

Regenerative practices draw down carbon from the atmosphere and sink or sequester it in the ground. Agriculture can be our best chance for removing rising greenhouse gas emissions that exacerbate climate change, rather than being a catalyst of it.

Furthermore, going regenerative has the potential to address a myriad of intersecting crises. When farmers prioritize care

of the soil, they put high-quality, nutritious food directly into the hands of people who most lack access. Regenerative farmers can partner with communities to help reclaim the urban consumer's connection to the land, and each other. And together, the farmer and the consumer can unleash food democracy, instead of succumbing to food scarcity.

Nebraska is already home to a flourishing network of regenerative farms, and many have joined together under the farmer-owned co-op model, allowing them to pool a wide variety of products and satisfy growing demand. By giving back to the land and water what they take from it, these farmers are finding drastically reduced input costs, and even achieving higher yields.

Industrial Ag would have you believe that nutritious food is more expensive. What they don't tell you is that they have manipulated the system through perverse subsidies which artificially lower the cost of food and encourage the use of inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides that cost us all more in the long-term. They don't tell you that a vast majority of subsidies go to the top two percent of industrial farm operations, instead of smaller independent farms producing food crops, and they don't tell you that our nation could save \$8 billion per year by investing in small-scale, regenerative operations.

### Regeneration is a Native Concept

When it comes to cooperation and harmony between the land and the people, Indigenous peoples are the world's leading experts. Chief Looking Horse, great-grandson of the venerable Chief Sitting Bull, and keeper of the sacred pipe of the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota tribes teaches us of the sacred hoop between time,

*conclusion on page 15*

# WHAT'S HOT, CONCLUSION

the same issue of *Nature* that methane being produced in sediments under the Greenland Ice Sheet was reaching the atmosphere as ice melted during the summer, suggesting that glacial melting was becoming a significant global source. "This water, which is known as pro-glacial discharge, was supersaturated with methane, and the amount of methane released to the atmosphere from this discharge rivals that from other terrestrial rivers," Andrews wrote—a source of emissions and potential global warming that had heretofore been unknown to scientists.

"Atmospheric methane concentrations [have] varied substantially in the past," wrote Andrews, "and it has been hypothesized that large reserves of methane can form and be trapped under ice sheets and glaciers when there is a favorable combination of carbon-rich sediments, high sub-glacial pressures, oxygen-poor conditions and low temperatures. Rapid release of this methane during glacial retreat might trigger rapid warming, but whether large-scale release of such glacial methane could occur in the future is disputed." Ice-core samples from West Antarctica also have been found to contain methane-producing microbes.

## A Quick Sea-level Rise of 30 Feet

The melting of Greenland's ice sheet, the largest in the Northern Hemisphere, was reported by early 2019 to be accelerating to a rate reaching a 'tipping point,' to become "a major factor in sea-level rise around the world within two decades," according to a paper in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* summarized by John Schwartz in the *New York Times*. Greenland's ice loss in 2012, at more than 400 billion tons per year, had quadrupled the rate of

# Your Foundation Speaks

by Loyal Park, Nebraska Peace Foundation President

Give to Lincoln Day 2019 is May 30th this year. Nebraska Peace Foundation (NPF) has participated in this fundraising activity of the Lincoln Community Foundation for many years. Lincoln Community Foundation has special funds set aside to provide promotional amounts to be added to all donations. We have benefited each year from the promotional amount to the tune of \$600 to \$1000 each year being added to the total given through Give to Lincoln Day (G2LD).



This year they are providing a way to save the processing fee charged to each donation. That is by making your donation through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) with Lincoln Community Foundation. For 2019 you will need to have the DAF in place by May 1st and make the donation to NPF by May 15th.

For more information on DAF, contact Michelle Paulk at Lincoln Community Foundation (402) 474-2345 or call me (402) 489-6662.

2003. Losses stopped rising in 2013 and 2014, and then accelerated again after that. Another study, also published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* during January of 2019, surveyed four decades of ice melt data in Antarctica and found faster losses in some regions than scientists had previously estimated. Ice loss in Antarctica has increased from about 40 billion tons per year during the 1980s to about 250 billion since roughly 2010, a six-fold increase.

In the meantime, another report in *Science* this past December 2018, by Paul Voosen, describes how quickly Antarctic ice can melt, with global sea-level rises of 6 to 9 meters, or as much as 30 feet: "Some 125,000 years ago, during the last brief warm period between ice ages, Earth was flooded, with sea levels 6 to 9 meters higher than they are today. Temperatures during this time, called the Eemian, were barely higher than in today's greenhouse-warmed world. Scientists have now identified the source

of all that water: a collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet. Glaciologists worry about the present-day stability of this formidable ice mass. Its base lies below sea level, at risk of being undermined by warming ocean waters, and glaciers ring-ing it are retreating fast... The Eemian is not a perfect analog, as its sea levels were likely driven by slight changes in Earth's orbit and spin axis. But the work, if it holds up, could suggest the recent melt at the ice sheet is the start of a similar collapse, rather than a short-term variation."

Run your eyes across a map of the world and do a quick survey of urban areas that would suffer a severe dousing with a sea-level rise of 20 to 30 feet—New York City, Miami, Mumbai, Shanghai, Tokyo, Sydney and many others, and you'll have an idea of what keeps climate scientists awake at night.

*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).*

# Justice ain't nothing but an idea, conclusion

lynchings in American history generated trauma in African Americans that—like slavery and Jim Crow themselves—lingers to this day. Our repeated failure to face this horrendous past, to own up to it by openly addressing it in our educational and political systems, but to instead continue to bury it, is poisoning us like a festering wound under the skin. During the commemoration at the Douglas County Courthouse, many were struck by the participants' failure to link these historical horrors to the current educational curriculum. An African American professor reported that when he teaches a diversity course, only half a dozen of the 30 students even know who Will Brown was. But how could it be otherwise, when what little education we provide about the lives of African Americans is generally confined to "Black History Month"?

It continually amazes me to hear

self-proclaimed pundits and Pollyannatypes speak of post-racial developments when we continue to have people of color killed or murdered in cold blood. The prison and criminal justice system mirror this duality in their treatment based on race. People of color are in the minority in America, yet when it comes to the population in the criminal justice system—and the amount of time spent in it—they are disproportionately larger. Even the majority of jailers and administrators of the criminal justice system are white. Look at the make-up of the committees. They are comprised of the law and order folks who represent the historic status quo.

One such example of how things remain the same was the murder of Zachary Bear Heels. This Native American with a mental health condition was beaten to death near 60th and Center Street in

Omaha in 2017. There were other officers at the scene who merely looked on—as did the 5,000 individuals that warm September day in 1919. Those police officials who were not charged by the County Attorney (or the County Attorney deciding to drop criminal charges against the officers in spite of their being fired from the Omaha Police Department for not following standard operating procedures) looks way too much like 'justice' from a century ago. How can we not see the link between the 1919 death of Will Brown and the death of Zachary Bear Heels? There is a knowledge gap about our historic narratives that, in 2019, is still undermining our thinking here in Nebraska. And if we don't start fixing it today, you can bet that 100 years into the future we'll still be wrestling with these issues of justice for all, not having learned from our mistakes.

## MICHELLE OBAMA, conclusion

rather have been otherwise engaged. She did not care for the rough-and-tumble of politics nor the nasty lies of the opposition and the tabloids.

Several insights from her years as FLOTUS (First Lady of the United States) are noteworthy. First her commitment to her children is admirable. She dedicated herself to making their lives as 'normal' as possible. The dedication of *Becoming* reads in part: "To the love of my life: Malia and Sasha, my two most precious peas, who are my reason for living." The former President is mentioned in only one sentence in which she says she will not forgive him for saying something that endangered her children!

What stood out to me, as it will to millions of women who are trying to balance career and family, is the challenge to be a caring mother, good wife, First Lady, and role model for America. Her own

ever-faithful mother reluctantly moved into the White House and provided additional child care and helped keep the children out of the limelight, for which Michelle is very thankful.

Michelle was overwhelmed by the myriad of staff, present to meet her every need. Besides her personal staff and aids, there were maids, butlers, cooks, wardrobe people, hair stylists, makeup artists, chauffeurs and, of course, the ever-present Secret Service. The downside of this was the lack of privacy and the frustrating limitations of living "in a bubble." However, she was gratified to befriend many of the long-serving White House staff. Imagine how thrilled the African American staff were to serve the first Black First Lady.

The role of First Lady provided a

platform to speak out and act on issues that she thought important. It was a chance to make a difference in the lives of children, especially those who were poor and minorities. She grew up in a poor neighborhood and made it. Others could too. She was concerned about childhood obesity, so she worked with young people to plant a vegetable garden on the White House grounds. She visited schools and spoke to children about healthy eating and exercise. She used her unique position to blaze a trail, make a difference and challenge stereotypes. She was very aware of the subtle, and not-so-subtle racism that her family, and especially Barack, endured. But she did not dwell on it. Thinking "I am good enough. I can do it," she became the First Black First Lady. Read this book.

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## Building a New CCL Chapter, conclusion

(their dog greeter extraordinaire) tabled and talked with folks over the weekend.

Frances called me the next week and said she had two people, Cheryl and Steve Welch, who might be interested in starting a chapter in Chadron! She had talked to them once at the CCL table. Then later, Cheryl and a friend visited a neighboring booth and were going to try on dresses at the church across the street. Frances asked if she could tag along and continue talking about Citizens Climate Lobby. They were agreeable and Frances kept on talking and Cheryl said she and Steve would think about it. Their unique backgrounds gave them strong interest and concern about climate change. Cheryl had taught students from the Marshall Islands who are climate change refugees. Steve's academic background was meteorology and he'd been reading and talking about climate

change for years.

Since Lincoln and Omaha were so far away, Frances found a volunteer, David Kline, from the Boulder, Colorado Chapter who Skyped over the Internet with interested folks from the Chadron area about CCL. After that meeting, Steve and Cheryl and their friends agreed to start a chapter! David Kline came in a day early and did a radio interview about CCL and a presentation that evening. There were 30 people at the presentation. Great questions were asked, particularly about how agriculture would be impacted by carbon fee and dividend. Afterwards, we all met at Steve and Cheryl's place for a late supper and good conversation.

The next morning, September 24, 2016, Becky led the Climate Advocacy Training Group Start with 15 people attending. We

now have a Chadron chapter in the Third District all the way up in the northwest corner of the state, THANKS to Frances. The Boulder Chapter continued their involvement and sent two Chadron members, Ann Buchman and Una Taylor, Washington D.C. the next June. Roger Weiss was in D.C. that November and both Steve and Cheryl and some of the students from the Marshall Islands have attended the CCL Conference in D.C. and lobbied our Members of Congress! Rep. Smith now knows that some of his constituents are concerned about climate change and want him to take action.

But the Third District is big enough for several more chapters. Grand Island, Kearney and Hastings anyone? If you want to learn more, please contact me at [musas@neb.rr.com](mailto:musas@neb.rr.com).

# Humanitarian Crisis in Africa, conclusion

people, some of whom are indigenous farmers and agropastoralists.

Another cause of out-migration from African countries is economic and political crisis, as seen, for example, in Zimbabwe in the past two decades. Zimbabwe, which had a population of 14,030,368 in 2018, saw over 2,000,000 of its citizens outside of its borders, many of them in South Africa, but there were also Zimbabweans who had migrated to the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and the United States. When asked why they left, some of the Zimbabweans said that it was because they saw no future for their children under the present social, political, and economic conditions in Zimbabwe. Some of the Zimbabweans who left were skilled doctors, nurses, academics, and company managers.

There is great diversity in African migration patterns, which have been characterized as both regular and irregular. Only a portion of African migration is conflict-related—many of the people who have left their countries have gone to other African countries as refugees and some have remained in their own countries as internally displaced people (IDPs). The threat of poverty-driven migration out of Africa has been disputed by recent research, and the push factors are often overstated in the media. Migration is a rational strategy, one opted for by sizable numbers of people. Major goals of migrants are to improve economic opportunities and to increase security for themselves and their children.

The African migration experience is highly variable, and it should be analysed on a case by case basis. Feedback from migrants themselves provides insights into the reasons for migrating and the factors that were taken into consideration by migrants. One common reason given is the lack of employment and income generating opportunities in the countries where they live. Some migrants cite problems with service delivery, including electricity, water, and sanitation. Others point out the difficulties that they have in getting access to adequate land and

housing, both in urban and rural areas.

Several conclusions can be drawn: with respect to refugees, a large portion of the population seeking refugee status are women and children; there has been a feminization of the process. For asylum seekers, more are men of productive age (18-45), and many of them seek legal means of entrance into other countries rather than risk going in illegally. Many of the asylum seekers are skilled and educated individuals; thus, there is a brain drain from Africa and a brain gain in Europe and the United States.

***The best way to handle the humanitarian crisis in Africa is to treat people who are seeking to migrate with fairness, care, and dignity.***

Some of the places to which migrants sought to enter in the past are off limits now, notably Yemen, where the world's worst humanitarian crisis exists. In Yemen over 10,000 people have been killed and over 14 million people are risk of starvation, due to the Saudi-led and U.S.-assisted assault on the Houthi. Also, the Middle East and the Gulf are less open to immigrants due to local conflicts and restrictions. The EU, the U.S. and local countries have largely disrupted the trans-Saharan human trafficking that reached its zenith in 2015. The European Union is also returning people to their places of origin, some of which are conflict zones, which raises serious ethical and human rights concerns.

Suggestions for resolving the crisis

include the erection of a Sahara border wall, recommended by President Trump in advice to Spain in early 2018. The Sahara Wall would cross 11 countries, cost 3.5 billion dollars, involve 90,000 temporary workers who would have to operate in temperatures as high as 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Second, the closing of European borders, in fact is already occurring and has been for the past several years. Third, the shutting off of access of migrant boats to European ports, leaving them to wander from country to country. There is already a tightening of asylum criteria and a rejection of numerous claims for asylum in European countries. In addition, there are the pressures in European nation-states to return migrants to their original countries. In the case of the United States, the numbers of African Muslim asylum seekers who were denied access rose sharply between 2017 and 2018.

The best way to handle the humanitarian crisis in Africa is to treat people who are seeking to migrate with fairness, care, and dignity. Promotion of development (the enhancement of individual and community well-being) in African countries will also help greatly. Better coordination of relief and development efforts among the various international and non-government organizations would be useful. More balanced assistance to refugees in refugee camps will help, including increasing their commodity support and rations to full levels (rather than the quarter levels that it is now). The promotion of education of women and girls in particular will lead to slower population growth rates. Efforts to reduce corruption and increase transparency in governments, especially at the highest levels, will work well, as has been argued by Transparency International and the Open Society Institute. Overall, taking a diversified and human rights-based approach to the immigration issue will serve everyone well both in Africa and internationally.

# HARD TRUTH, continued

energy potential of the wind? Wind is a gift, remember? Unlike coal and oil and uranium, wind need not be mined from the mountains nor pumped from the bowels of Earth nor the floor of the sea, nor require us to ravage habitats and ecosystems nor poison water or soil or air. To capture the power of the wind, no one has to dam rivers and drown rich valleys and woodlands or drive people and critters from their homes. Workers don't have to be exposed to explosions or toxicity or cave-ins or nuclear meltdowns, nor do the communities where wind installations already exist. No fracturing of the Earth. No use or abuse of groundwater. Wind is a gift, remember, with no fuel costs, ever. Like dreams, like sunlight, like love—wind is free.

And that is the root of the problem for late modern capitalism. If wind is free, the capitalists cannot control it. They cannot make wind scarce nor secure it for themselves. If they could, believe me, they would. And because wind is free, because wind blows for all, for the just and the unjust alike, wind energy can help make possible the rise of true common wealth, the real Holy Grail—a world with enough for all. As enough for all would mean the end of the omnipotence of the 1%, whatever hastens that day (for instance, widespread wind energy development) must be put down, set aside, hindered, delayed, in short avoided at any cost.

My own 'Aha!' moment on wind came in conversation with progressive farmers who understood that between corporate concentration, captive markets and the enormous influence the grain and meat trade exercise through funding the campaigns of right-wing politicians in the statehouses and Washington D.C., for the foreseeable future, farmers and ranchers were not going to get a fair shake. For the past 20 years, with the American Corn Growers Foundation, Nebraska Farmers Union and the better sort of elected officials, Nebraskans for Peace and fellow travelers around the state, my friends and I have worked to bring wind energy to Nebraska.

Given the urgency of a global transition away from fossil fuels, opposition to wind

development seems irresponsible at best, and downright irrational in the long run. Yet there are people, including Trump, still calling climate change a hoax, and social media is fertile ground for lies and distractions. And this sort of con game is critical for their purposes, as the fossil fuel industry captains can't very well line up at legislative hearings

***And because wind is free, because wind blows for all, for the just and the unjust alike, wind energy can help make possible the rise of true common wealth, the real Holy Grail—a world with enough for all.***

and say they oppose renewable energy production—which would reduce atmospheric carbon and save millions of lives and untold suffering—because the 1% STILL aren't rich enough.

Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial writer Art Cullen of Storm Lake, Iowa, calls these shills and con artists "Astroturf": the artificial 'grassroots' opposition made entirely from petroleum by-products, storm troopers sent by FOX and other right-wing media to counter wind energy development.

Opposition to wind energy projects ranges from philosophical arguments (opposition on principle to subsidies, to the exercise of eminent domain and even to creation of new energy sources on the grounds that it is better to conserve and use less energy) to subjective aesthetics ('viewshed denigration' which in plain English means 'I don't like the way wind turbines look, I don't want to see red lights on the horizon on starry nights, I don't want my scenery spoiled') to phony 'science' funded by unknown sources and spread on social media citing threats to human health from shadows, 'flicker,' mystery ailments, alleged toxicity of the concrete and steel used to build the pads on which the poles are built, and danger to birds (long discredited by decades of actual research by avian scientists).

In Nebraska, to threaten the Sandhills is like burning "Old Glory." TransCanada proposed routing the Keystone Pipeline through the heart of those fragile grasslands and wet meadows to get people arguing about WHERE the pipeline was going instead of larger questions about tar sands and emitting more atmospheric carbon and WHETHER the

pipeline should be built at all.

Wind farms at Ainsworth (2005) and Broken Bow (2012) demonstrate the environmental soundness of Sandhills wind generation. Nebraska is "one of four states in which wind turbine technicians were the fastest growing positions... Average pay for those jobs? Almost \$26 per hour." (*Norfolk Daily News* editorial, 3/14/2019). And as the windiest counties in Nebraska are also the poorest counties, one would think that wind energy development would be heralded as a Godsend. But this session in the Unicameral, the opposition's strategy is the same: lies and distraction, a fake emergency in the Sandhills, beating the same old drum.

Demonization of renewable energy, including biofuels, is especially painful to me when it comes from self-styled environmentalists, often making perfection the enemy of the good. The real question here, when questioning wind, has to be "Compared to what?"

The subsidy to wind is the federal production tax credit which is being phased out with the cooperation of the wind industry because the purpose is served: wind is now competitive with coal. Compared to the coal, petroleum and nuclear power industries, in the past and today, all wind subsidies together come to pocket change. And oil, gas, nuclear, butane and wood-fuel producers pay no state

# RegeNErate Nebraska, conclusion

nature and humans. It is our responsibility as temporary inhabitants of the earth to maintain, strengthen and repair the sacred hoop. To this end, Native leadership and knowledge are a key aspect of RegeNErate Nebraska. We are honored to be joined in partnership by local tribes, including the Winnebago, Ponca and the Omaha Nation, who have commenced local initiatives to increase food sovereignty and quality, while preserving and protecting the soil for future generations.

Former Winnebago Vice Chairman, Vincent Bass, reminds us, regenerative agriculture “is actually a Native concept.” He continues, “If the tribe cannot produce its own food with traditional practices, the Winnebago will never be truly sovereign.” This applies to all Nebraskans who understand that we must be the ones in control of our food systems, and this starts with regenerating our relationship to the land and all it provides for us. In this vein, the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska recently launched their own “Food Sovereignty Initiative” in October 2017.

The Ponca Tribe is in the process of increasing their bison herd, using regenerative practices, with plans to purchase land in northeastern Nebraska near their original sovereign territory. Additionally, the Ponca plan to open a Tribal health clinic in South Omaha that will incorporate contemporary and holistic approaches to health care. It will also include Tribal programs and services that include cultural

and ceremonial activities for all Natives in the Omaha metro area. The clinic will also be utilized as a location to distribute their agricultural products and educate young people about traditional land practices and Indigenous plants. Ponca Cultural Director Dwight Howe states, “Re-identifying Indigenous plants allows for our people, especially our youth, to know who they are and where they come from. And this gives them a sense of direction of where we are going into the future, while reaffirming our sense of place in the sacred circle.” In the Omaha Nation, activities around reclaiming food sovereignty are also taking place including aquaponics, and increasing the planting and use of Indigenous plants seen as sacred and necessary for medicinal purposes, while also increasing pollination, an important natural process for the growing of food.

We look forward to learning more from Indigenous partners and incorporating their knowledge and approaches as we continue to grow RegeNErate Nebraska statewide.

## A Transformational Transition

The food choices you make impact the environment—but you can be part of the soil solution. Whether you raise regenerative foods yourself, reclaim a vacant lot in your city to start a community garden or food forest, or help to develop a rural-to-urban food pipeline in your community, you can connect with other Nebraskans to get

started in a regenerative direction.

Even if—especially if—you live in a town or city and don’t have a background in farming, you are part of the soil solution, because your choices control what the farmer produces, and give you access to regenerative farmers.

We must shift from building fossil fuel pipelines, school-to-prison pipelines, and all pipelines of oppression, and start building regenerative food pipelines—funneling connection, community, and care to everyone living in their path. This is the regenerative way; this is the Nebraska way.

The Nebraska state motto is “Equality Before The Law”. Nebraskans even had a ban on corporate agriculture as of recently, won by a grassroots people’s initiative to get it on the ballot. This is an example of how Nebraskans do business... by principle. We must continue to hold our public servants accountable to us—and ask them if they will stand with Nebraskans or the corporations that have put good people at risk.

The Emancipation Proclamation was about freeing bodies and sustaining war. The RegeNEration Proclamation is about freeing ourselves from the injustice of Industrial Ag by regenerating the soil, and the Nebraska way.

Visit the RegeNErate Nebraska website at [www.gcsolve.com/regenerate](http://www.gcsolve.com/regenerate) to connect with the folks who are already making this vision happen and start growing your home community—from the soil up.

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sales tax, while renewable energies are not exempt.

You want to talk eminent domain?... Which in Nebraska for wind installations is always by public/private partnership? Compare that to hydropower and the seven dams on the Missouri River built by the Army Corps of Engineers, condemning all the best food production land of the Missouri River Tribes, the best farmland, the best hunting grounds, the richest sources for gathering wild foods—easily the single greatest cause of the permanent poverty of those tribes.

As I write, it is the Ides of March, and around the world, millions of children and youth are skipping school to demand from us—their elders—meaningful, timely action on climate change. What a fitting day it is—the day in the year most sacred to outrage at betrayal: the day Caesar was slain in the Roman forum, crying in shock and horror to his knife-wielding friend, *Et tu, Brute?* You too?

The Youth Climate strike, according to the day’s *New York Times* “was a stark display of the alarm of a generation. It was also a

glimpse of the anger directed at older people who have not, in the protesters’ view, taken global warming seriously enough.”

I have been pondering all week how people with children and grandchildren can go on with business as usual. How do you look your own offspring in the eyes and channel an inner Marie Antoinette?: *Well, I won’t be around to see the worst of what is coming, so I really can’t be bothered to change the way I live. We’ve had ours. Too bad for you kids. After us Boomers, the flood.*

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# HARD TRUTH

*by Sally Herrin*

## Swindled Out of Our Own Wind

My home, Nebraska, is the sixth-, maybe even the third-windiest state in the country. These Great Plains have atmosphere the way other places have mountains or ocean. Tumultuous weather plays out across the living blue that is Big Sky by day—clouds like animals made of light passing or darkening into towers of thunder and lashing rain... And always the wind is in our ears, roaring or singing or whispering even in the high summer daze of blinding heat when the clouds go missing day after day.

Only a very blind and foolish people would fail to see the gifts that come blowing in the wind. Fresh clean air comes to mind, and scent, and of course pollen top my list of the wind-borne *sine qua non*—the essential conditions—for Life on Earth. And wind is full of energy.

Boats with sails have plied the Nile for 7,000 years at least, and some scholars suggest an earlier date in South Asia by tens of thousands of years. By 200 BCE, in China water was pumped with wind and

in the Fertile Crescent, blades woven from reeds powered windmills for grinding grain. In the Middle Ages, wind power figured heavily in food production across the Middle East, and merchants and crusaders brought wind technology to Europe. The roots of seafaring may go back hundreds of thousands of years, even encompassing ancient human society.

So if we are so smart as a species and we've known about the power of wind so long, how come for the past century—until very recent years—have we so largely ignored the