



**Inside the
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The EDC's Three Stooges

By Andy Caldwell

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The entire county recently received a revealing glimpse of what the board majority of Supervisors Janet Wolf, Salud Carbajal and Doreen Farr really believe and truly value at the expense of virtually everything and everybody.

Their real priorities were put on display during a marathon hearing having to do with the Santa Maria Energy Project. The board majority approved the appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of the project as put forth by the attorneys of the Environmental Defense Center and some AI Gore acolytes, about two dozen total. In doing so, these board members denied the rights of the project applicants, and in the process blew off the testimony and support from a majority of mayors of this county (Goleta, Lompoc, Santa Maria, Guadalupe and Solvang), the county Planning Commission, the county APCD, county staff, nearly every union in the county both public and private, the non-profit sector, dozens of community leaders, and their fellow North County supervisors who represent the 160,000 residents who actually live in the two districts most affected by the project.

When Supervisor Steve Lavagnino appealed to these three supervisors by saying they were not just hurting a company but the entire community, they did not wince. When he implored them to compromise, as did the Planning Commission's decision on this same project, they did not shrink from their hard-line position. When he beseeched them to consider the poverty of the North County and the much needed financial boost from this project, they did not show any pity or concern whatsoever.

Supervisors Wolf, Carbajal and Farr proved they are more concerned about the potential threat of climate change than they are about the real threat to our economy, including living-wage jobs, the tax base, the ability to fund public safety and infrastructure, the poor, and the security and value of our domestic energy supply.

Further, in light of the hearing testimony, these board members would rather have oil shipped halfway around the world from countries who abuse women, sponsor terrorism and generate boatloads of pollution along the way than they would allow a locally owned company with a stellar reputation to create some new wells in the middle of an oil field that has been in operation for more than 100 years.

These board members also made it clear that they don't care that California already has the most stringent greenhouse gas regulations in the country and that they are under no mandate to make things even more difficult for project applicants here. Conversely, the realistic probability that the board's extreme position is a violation of the rights of the applicant and could cause the county to end up in costly litigation didn't faze them either.

No, the only thing that mattered is their street credibility with the most radical members of the environmental community. Voters and the unions, who have typically supported Janet Wolf in the past, should remember this day when she comes up for reelection next year. Similarly,

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Global Warming? It Could Be Worse!

By Andy Caldwell

I once interviewed a college student participating in an event to promote awareness of global warming and asked if he had ever considered ice ages as indicative of the fact that the planet has always been either cooling or warming? And, how could mankind ever manage to control these cycles that have been ongoing for eons? Of course, he had no answer. The fact remains that the one thing the temperature of the earth has never done is remain constant over time and that is a fact that we can all agree on.

In view of the fact that the planet has always been changing, then the real debate today is not whether the planet is currently cooling, heating up or remaining temporarily constant, the real question is what causes the planet's climate to drastically change over time and is there anything we can do about it?

Back in the 1970's, many were convinced we were heading into another ice age as evidenced by cover stories in publications such as Newsweek and the New York Times. Not long after that, the current theory emerged, primarily based upon computer models that have not been validated with real time observations, that indicated mankind was precipitating an unprecedented warming of the planet. Now, finally, the last fifteen years on record shows that the temperature of the planet on average has remained constant but some people are living in denial of this fact believing that carbon loading remains the one overarching and controlling mechanism of the planet's temperature.

I have conducted a number of interviews over the years with scientists who have convinced me that the overwhelming influence on our planet's temperature is a function of the sun. The effect of the sun is ameliorated and buffered in some degree by the water cycle with the oceans playing a major role in this cycle, but obviously the onset of ice ages and subsequent periods of recovery demonstrate that our climate can get clearly out of whack over time in terms of being hospitable to man, plants and animals. Finally, Mother Nature herself, by virtue of the emissions from both the animate and inanimate, e.g., animals and volcanoes, contributes more to the carbon cycle than we could ever imagine.

I have also been convinced that another ice age would be the most devastating scenario for our



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planet's health and well-being. It has been estimated that over the last 10 million years the entire Northern hemisphere was under an ice cap for 80% of the time. We had a mini-ice age just a few hundred years ago. There are scientists emerging today, from throughout the world, who are now going back to the theory that we are in fact heading into another ice age!

Here is the irony. If it were true and possible that our use of carbon fuels could warm the planet and hence stave off another ice age, would our government and the anti-oil activists reverse course and demand increased use of fossil fuels to save the planet?

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The Media Frames, Attacks and Humiliates

By Andy Caldwell

There is an old saying in politics that “he who frames the issue usually wins”. Of course it is not just issues that get framed, people get framed too. This all speaks to the power of first impressions. In this day and age, first impressions are more powerful than ever due in part to the lack of critical thinking skills in our society and the fact that the combination of various forms of media, enhanced by star power and reinforced by peer group pressure, is too overwhelming for the perceptions and intellect of the masses.

When the left-leaning media wants to destroy the appeal and power of a rising star, they don't just rely on the talking heads and pundits, they also recruit their allies in the field of entertainment, including Jon Stewart and Saturday Night Live. It is a scary thought to know that most young people get their news from Stewart's show! These shows create caricatures to destroy the credibility and persona of accomplished individuals using satire, invective and ridicule. These shows may be hilarious at times, but should never be considered trustworthy news sources because they offer little to no balance.

One of my radio show guests who covers the media is James Hirsen. James' resume is off the charts. He has a Juris Doctorate, an M.A. in Media Psychology, is a New York Times best-selling author, commentator, media analyst, and law professor!

We recently discussed two columns he had written, one having to do with the mainstream media's full scale assault on Senator Ted Cruz and the second on Hollywood's inability to directly and specifically condemn the Obama administration regarding their objections to the National Security Administration's surveillance program.

Hirsen highlighted the talking points the media conspired to use in order to go after Cruz indicating a coordinated attack aimed to disparage the Senator and blame him entirely for the partial government shut-down. Saturday Night Live went as far as to refer to Cruz as a jackass despite the fact that he graduated from both Princeton University and Harvard Law with honors. Cruz is an accomplished attorney who has argued before the US Supreme Court on numerous occasions.

With respect to the NSA scandal, some Hollywood celebrities appear in a video titled “Stop Watching Us-the Video”. The video was released and a rally took place on the 12th anniversary of the Patriot Act. Don't you find it ironic that this protest video avoids any mention of President Barack Obama, the one person responsible for the activities of the NSA? President Bush was never spared the outrage, was he?

This NSA scandal is monumental. Our government has not just been monitoring cell phone and internet communications from suspected terrorists. It has been reported that Obama's minions went so far as to bug the land line of our allies, including German Chancellor Merkel!

Our national debt, infuriated allies, and threats pertaining to the citizen's right to privacy are issues which command a serious, somber and respectful conversation and debate among adults.

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Lost Opportunities For Our Youth

By *Andy Caldwell*

My employment history is no different from many in my generation. My first pursuit was as a paperboy for the News Press. As a kid, minimum wage standards didn't apply. I was nonetheless able to save a lot of money on my path to financial independence. Plus, there were some great bonuses! The News Press took me to Disneyland for my first visit there ever. We also went to see the Dodgers and the Lakers. I earned enough money to buy my first ten speed bike, stereo, and motorcycle. This was all before I turned 16.

After that, I got two jobs at the same time working at the Lompoc City Library. As is the case with so many in the workplace, I never again worked for minimum wage again after landing this first job as a young teen. On the weekend, I was the night custodian earning triple the minimum wage. I worked seven days a week, albeit part time. I eventually saved enough money to buy a car.

By the time I entered the work force just out of college, I could tell prospective employers that I had been working continuously since I was thirteen years old. So, why the trip down memory lane?

Kids growing up today, with the child labor laws being what they are, are robbed from being able to earn money and gain valuable experience while growing up. The experience and opportunities we enjoyed have all but vanished. The minimum wage today discourages employers to hire a young person, even one who has come of age, due to the lack of previous job experience.

If the labor laws and minimum wage requirements were not a big enough hurdle for kids to earn money, now they also have to contend with environmental regulations too. Did you read the story about a cheerleader's car wash fundraiser being shut down because it is now illegal to allow the wash water to run into the street untreated? I belonged to clubs that did carwashes for fundraisers and I earned money washing cars. Who didn't? This prohibition actually applies to everyone, here in California anyway, including mobile car washes and people who want to wash their own car on their own driveway. How ridiculous! Where does the dirt on your car go during a rain storm anyway?

I am perfectly aware that children can be subjected to abusive situations by unscrupulous employers and I am not advocating for such. But, I believe the pendulum has gone too far in the other direction and we are now shielding our kids not from abuse but from the opportunity to gain valuable experience, learn lessons in responsibility and finance, and the opportunity to explore the market place.

In some communities, the unemployment rate for teens looking for work is 40% or higher. The under-employment rate for some college graduates is off the charts. With Governor Brown having just raised the minimum wage, things are only going to get worse.

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Consumers Buffeted by Higher Electrical Rates

By Andy Caldwell

Local activists want you to believe that the mandate forcing utility providers to switch to wind and solar for 33% of our electricity supply, is not going to lead to skyrocketing electricity rates and power shortages. Talking about living in denial! Our rates have already been going up and the mandates are not yet in full effect! The driving force behind all this is nothing but a carbon tax disguised under the moniker of the Global Warming Solutions Act. The estimated price tag? \$180 billion. This money has to come from somewhere!

In the real world, our government would not have to mandate and subsidize the green energy sector if it could compete on its own merits. If the utility companies could economically develop and rely on alternative power sources then they would not need the force of law to make the switch. That is the one simple truth you can count on in a free market economy.

Regarding the cost of mandates on our electricity supply, Tam Hunt, a local activist, said that predictions of huge increases in energy costs, blackouts and brownouts coming our way had “no basis in fact”. I can point to recent testimony from the California Independent Operator System, plus numerous studies from experts and scholars at the Heritage Foundation, the Manhattan Institute and other think tanks that say otherwise.

The US Energy Information System published figures comparing the basic cost of energy. Nuclear, gas, and coal generated energy cost 10-11 cents per kilowatt hour. Solar PV cost 14.4 cents and solar thermal 26.2 cents per hour. But, there is nothing basic about the current regulatory scheme to promote alternative energy supplies.

Let's look at some of the costs and values that are not included in these rate comparisons. San Luis Obispo's Diablo nuclear power plant in 2011 contributed \$1 billion to the region in direct, indirect and induced benefits. Annual payroll for over 1,400 workers was \$202 million. The plant is the largest property taxpayer in the county at \$25 million per year. The plant provides low cost, carbon-free electricity to more than 3 million people. Yet, looming over the plant is a mandate requiring the plant to add cooling towers to its operation. The expected cost? \$5 billion!

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San Luis Obispo is also the home of two very large solar farms under construction. The largest is the Topaz Solar Farm, a project encompassing 9 square miles of land, some 3,500 acres, that is expected to generate enough electricity to power 160,000 homes. Exempt from having to pay property taxes, the County of SLO will forego \$20 million in annual tax proceeds. Once constructed, the plant will employ but 15 people, that is, if the project can withstand workers becoming infected with Valley Fever! But wait, there is more!

Remember Solyndra? The company made solar panels and went belly up after receiving a \$535 million loan guarantee from the feds and a \$25 million dollar tax break from our state government. SLO's other solar farm, Sun Power, got over \$1 billion from the feds. Topaz Solar ended up losing their \$1.9 billion guarantee.

Warren Buffet then stepped in and bought the Topaz project based in part on the fact that high rates for the power produced were locked in and he expects electricity prices to continue to rise significantly. In essence, Buffet knows that California consumers will be forced to pay whatever it costs to operate a solar farm, plus a built-in guaranteed profit margin. Buffett didn't become famous for being altruistic. His number one rule is to never lose money. Unfortunately, you are the source of his profits in this venture.

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What Is The CA Agricultural Labor Relations Board?

By Katy Grimes

California government includes many boards and commissions with members appointed by the governor. Most people never get to see who these decision makers are, despite the far-reaching effects of their decisions on the people of the state.

Such is the case with the Agricultural Labor Relations Board. Made up of five members, the board was created when the Agricultural Labor Relations Act was signed into law in June 1975 by Gov. Jerry Brown.

Only 18 days later, Brown nominated the ALRB's first five members, which the state Senate confirmed:

* Chairman Roger Mahony, at the time an auxiliary Catholic bishop for Fresno and the future cardinal and archbishop of Los Angeles. He had been involved in farm workers' issues for many years.

* Joe Ortega, an attorney for farm workers.

* Leroy Chatfield, a former high-level UFW staffer who helped write the ALRA.

* Richard Johnson Jr., executive vice president of the California Agriculture Council.

* Joseph Grodin, a labor law professor and future California Supreme Court Justice.

According to the new 2013 book, "Trailblazer: A Biography of Jerry Brown," by Chuck McFadden:

"The growers felt betrayed. They believed the appointments of Chatfield, Ortega and Mahony meant the board weighed 3-2 in favor of the unions. Brown himself said that he had envisioned the board as balanced, with Ortega and Chatfield representing the unions, Johnson and Grodin representing the growers, and Mahony serving as the swing vote."

The 2008 book, "César Chávez, the Catholic Bishops, and the Farmworkers' Struggle for Social Justice," by Marco C. Prouty, sheds further light:

"Instead, Mahony became a lightning rod. Brown later remarked that he 'didn't know [Mahony] that well,' and didn't anticipate the bishop to be 'as much a polarizing force as he' was. Mahony's 'image in the farming community was more pro-UFW' than Brown realized, but regardless, the governor 'felt it was important to have a board that all sides would have some confidence in, but particularly the farm workers'...."

"Mahony may have harbored a personal preference for the farmworkers, but CALRB's records indicate

that the bishop maintained his professionalism."

An ALRB study, "Setting the Record Straight," found that the five board members produced dissenting opinions in just 7 percent of cases.

In 1976, Mahony faced a major funding crisis for the ALRB and had to lay off workers and faced numerous other problems, as described in Prouty's book.

Union decline

The subsequent decades have seen a reduction in the ALRB's reason for existence, as farm unionization has declined. According to a 2000 study by Phillip Martin of University of California, Davis, "Labor Relations in California Agriculture: 1975-2000," the ALRA was passed "to ensure peace in the agricultural fields by guaranteeing justice for all agricultural workers and stability in labor relations." Instead, "what has happened over the past 25 years [1975-2000]: Union activities, measured by elections or unfair labor practice charges filed, peaked in 1975-76, and have since fallen over 90 percent."

Despite passage of the ALRA in 1975, membership in unions was met with mixed results. Membership in the UFW had fallen from a high of 70,000 in 1972 to a low of 6,000 in 1974. After the ALRA's passage, membership then rose in 1977 to only 18,000.

And at the time, Brown ally Rose Bird was his secretary of agriculture and a major author of the ALRA. She now is remembered as the first and only chief justice of the California Supreme Court to be removed from office by voters, along with associate justices Cruz Reynoso and Joseph Grodin. The latter, of course, had been one of Brown's first appointments to the ALRB.

Current ALRB

According to the board's website, "The agency's authority is divided between a Board composed of five members and a General Counsel, all of whom are appointed by the Governor and subject to confirmation by the Senate."

With two vacancies, the board currently has three members:

* Chairwoman Genevieve A. Shiroma, who has served on the board since 1999, was appointed by Gov. Gray Davis. She was reappointed by Brown in 2011.

Windmills: The Refuge of Ideologues

By Andy Caldwell

Do you find it disturbing when ideologues exploit tragedies to further their cause? It is especially appalling when an effort to manipulate tragedy for political and social advantage serves to distract attention and resources in a manner deleterious to the victims.

Take the recent Typhoon Haiyan that caused widespread death and destruction in the Philippines. The global warming crowd immediately jumped on the bandwagon and cited this natural climatic event, along with Hurricane Sandy, as proof positive that fossil fuels must be abandoned immediately or these types of major storm events will become routine. But, typhoons in the Philippines and hurricanes on our east coast are routine! Never mind that there is no scientist on the face of this planet that can make a connection between increased carbon dioxide loading in the atmosphere, a relatively new phenomenon, and any one of a number of nations that have been getting hit by more than a dozen typhoons per year since, well, forever!

Bangladesh and the Philippines have suffered literally millions of casualties and untold damage from typhoons for eons. So has India, China and Vietnam. The inescapable fact is that typhoons are part of the regular storm pattern in these areas and these storms predate any and all trends in climate change. In fact, some of the most massive and deadliest storms were recorded during the last mini-ice age, a few hundred years ago! But the rest of the story has to do with the lack of safe and stable building designs, early warning systems, evacuation plans, and infrastructure, such as dams, sea walls, and flood conveyances, to contain and dissipate storm runoff.

One of the products in our society that we take for granted is concrete. There is no substitute that compares with concrete. We use concrete to build foundations, shelters, dams, bridges, sea walls, buildings, flood conveyances, and structures of all kinds. It is a marvelous product that has saved countless lives, protected investments and infrastructure, lasts forever, and it is relatively cheap and easy to manufacture and install. But, there is one problem. Concrete kilns are one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gas emissions and our current California regulatory pogrom on all manmade carbon sources is going to make this otherwise ubiquitous product extremely expensive. Jerry Brown, while he was Attorney General, challenged the future use of concrete to build roads and bridges on these grounds!

Ideology drives our decision-making process as it influences our values and priorities. Our current choice is to raise the cost of living here in the United States by raising the price of concrete, and utilizing more expensive and less reliable energy supplies to make concrete as we switch from coal and natural gas, our most affordable, productive and stable sources of power.

Do you really think windmills and solar panels are going to ameliorate typhoon and hurricane patterns? If I lived in the path of the same, I would rather take my chances with a dam, flood conveyance, shelter and sea wall made of concrete.

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Wolf, Carbajal and Farr Flunk Business Means Test

By Andy Caldwell

Supervisors Wolf, Carbajal and Farr have never run a successful business and this was never more evident than during Tuesday's hearing on the Santa Maria Energy (SME) Project. The stark reality? These Supervisors are either ignorant or dishonest to have characterized their decision on this project as being a balanced "win-win".

The two mainstays of the North County economy are agriculture and oil. What these sectors have in common is that neither has the luxury to set the price on the product they sell because the global economy sets the price. The only way to make a profit and stay in business is to control costs and even then, there is no assurance the market will not fall out from beneath you before you have the opportunity to recoup your investment. Farming and oil are therefore very high risk ventures. Regulatory uncertainty on top of market volatility becomes the death knell of investor confidence.

With respect to SME, these Supervisors threw the company in the path of two colliding buses. They are forcing the company to risk investing millions betting the price of oil will continue to rise for decades to come, all the while knowing that the company will also be forced to buy California greenhouse gas emission credits which are set to increase in cost while the availability to purchase the same vanishes over time.

As a way of background, California has the most stringent greenhouse gas regulations in the nation, but for Wolf, Farr and Carbajal, that is not good enough. They capitulated to activists who want to drive the oil industry out by adopting a standard that was more than four times as expensive as the state mandate. This despite the fact that the state mandate in effect will already achieve its goals of greenhouse gas reduction without the county piling on.

Since SME can't control the price of oil or the cost of production, nor the newly enhanced regulatory costs, they have no assurance of making a profit. The company is faced with the stark reality of having to further delay the project in order to sue the county because the standard imposed is not proportional to the impact they will have.

The irony? The controversy here is not even about oil use per se, but the impact of heating water to make steam, something we all do every day in our own

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homes, as that is what is triggering the greenhouse gas concerns. Lost on these supervisors is the fact that most greenhouse gases come from consumers, not business. Greenhouse gas is generated by your car, air conditioner, hot water heater, and freezer!

Governor Brown admits California's climate regulations are meaningless unless others follow suit, but the fact remains emerging economies are not following. Why? They know there is a direct connection between energy use and increased standards of living. Why keep their people in poverty to assuage the anxiety of activists living in relative paradise based on hyped predictions of climate catastrophes and associated computer models?

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The Evil Sire of the Environmental Movement

By Andy Caldwell

Evolution speaks to the theory that superior life forms evolve as species successfully adapt to changing and ever challenging circumstances. Let's discuss the evolution of the modern day environmental movement.

Centuries ago Thomas Malthus theorized that the population of mankind will always outstrip the world's resources. Malthus's theory had to do in part with the ability of mankind to feed himself. They partly attributed starvation of the masses to the inability of the planet to keep up with the needs of the burgeoning population.

As applied, this theory led to millions of people starving to death because it was believed that they had exceeded the resource capacity of their civilization's capacity to feed themselves. If other societies had stepped in to feed these people on the basis of humanitarian purposes, then the suffering masses would simply reproduce and eventually even more people would starve to death. So, it was determined to let nature take its course.

Speaking of nature, Darwin then came along and introduced the theory of evolution. This theory coupled with Malthus is that the best and the brightest, with mankind being part of the animal kingdom, adapt and survive as a matter of biological superiority.

Superiority became the key word as believers in the eugenics movement applied Malthus and Darwin's theories along racial lines. They held that the reason undeveloped countries, such as those in the Third World, were always struggling to survive stemmed from the fact that they were genetically inferior. If the human species is to thrive, their theory dictated it was in the best interest of modern society to root out the inferior gene pools in order to prevent these inferior people from breeding and increasing the competition for the scarce resources of the planet. Out of this world view came the national socialist movement defined by Rudolph Hess as nothing more than applied biology.

When it became apparently and painfully obvious that directly killing the so-called inferior races was no longer politically correct, the movement directed its efforts to directly control population growth in the communities and countries inhabited by these inferior

racers via abortion, birth control and mass sterilization. The United States government, the U.N. and organizations like Planned Parenthood joined forces to facilitate this effort. It became extremely successful when the US government, under LBJ, began to tie food aid to the success of population control efforts, taking a page directly out of the play book of Malthus.

This brings us to the modern day environmental movement. While doing everything we can to lower the birth rate around the world to less than the replacement rate, another reason emerged to give moral impetus to the movement. That is, we were doing all this to save and preserve the carrying capacity of the planet for the sake of mankind. But now, a new ideological value is added to the mix and that is that the planet itself has rights too. This view holds that over-utilization of, and impacts to, the resources of the planet violates the sacredness of Mother Earth.

There you have the genealogy of the movement as identified by author Dr. Robert Zubrin in his expose of the cult of anti-humanism: Malthus, Darwin, Eugenics, Population Control, and the Environmental Movement.

The impetus of the doctrine has never veered off course. Today's focus may appear to be new with the emphasis on the threats associated with climate change, endangered species, the use of the world's natural resources, and the impacts of technology, but as rotten as it is, Malthus lives. This explains why the only medical aid we send to some countries is birth control.

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The COLAB Magazine

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The Time is Now to Form a More Perfect Union

By Andy Caldwell

It is imperative that organized labor reassess their allegiance to Supervisors Wolf, Carbajal and Farr because these three politicians are failing them badly, in every way imaginable. As somebody who is supportive of unions in a very practical way, I can say this with some authority and experience.

I have been involved with unions most of my adult life, including having worked as the Industrial Relations Manager at Union Sugar, the liaison between the union and management. As the founding executive director, I also helped form COLAB, the Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business. Since our inception we have had numerous union representatives on our board including SEIU, The United Auto Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers, the Tri-County Central Labor Council, the Building and Construction Trades Council, the Deputy Sheriffs's Association, County Firefighters, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Most of us can fully appreciate the sensitive relationship that exists between management and labor in the struggle to pay the workforce a competitive wage with good benefits while staying profitable. This delicate balance can easily get out of whack when the union members work for government as most politicians have given themselves the luxury of deftly avoiding accountability and culpability for long term debt and deficits, something the private sector must deal with in real time. However, in this day and age, the incredible tsunami of debt and deficits has finally caught up to even the public sector, as evidenced by local governments here in California having to file for bankruptcy.

The business as usual approach involves the public sector unions endorsing, contributing and working for the candidate that promises to be the most generous benefactor once elected. It is not uncommon for these unions to ask for such commitments in writing. Having these commitments is as good as gold once labor negotiations begin as they are in essence sitting across the table from the very candidate they hand-selected. The generosity goes both ways.

Unions on average are the biggest donors and hardest campaign workers. It is not uncommon for them to donate more than 50% of the total contributions received by a candidate. Second, having the en-



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dorsement of popular high-profile public servants, like county firefighters, is very compelling to voters.

Having said all that, the recent Santa Maria Energy Project should be a wake-up call to all union members. Wolf, Carbajal and Farr choose to pander to the extremists at the Environmental Defense Center instead of supporting the maximum creation of new jobs and increased tax benefits. In other words, the politicians demonstrated their true allegiance is with the EDC not these same unions, most all of whom supported the project.

Union negotiations are currently underway in the halls of county government and it is not looking good. The Supervisors can blame things on the economy, but the truth of the matter is, they can't pay their bills or make good on their promises to either taxpayers or union workers because their overwrought concerns and allegiance lie elsewhere.

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Obama's Choice for Resilience? Salud Carbajal

by Andy Caldwell

Our government is based upon the concept of separate but equal branches of government to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful to the detriment of our liberty. Over the years, we have seen a breakdown in this concept with the Executive Branch using executive orders to bypass Congress, the courts legislating from the bench, and Congress simply failing to fulfill their own constitutional duties including their duty to hold the other two branches of government accountable via the power of impeachment.

A current example of the breakdown in our system of checks and balances has to do with the efforts of activists and politicians who want to enact various environmental protocols that have been put forth by the United Nations having to do with climate change. Due to devastating impacts to our economy, the Senate refused to adopt these goals and neither the House nor the Senate have agreed to support analogous legislation aimed to cap carbon emissions. Nonetheless, some non-governmental organizations, activists, and politicians have decided to take matters into their hands and lobby to by-pass both Congress and recalcitrant State governments in order to achieve their goals.

A couple of months ago, I wrote about a conference I attended at UCSB having to do with this effort. The event promoted the agenda of an international organization known as ICLEI whose mission it is to encourage climate change legislation throughout the world based upon the protocols of the United Nations. This event launched the Resilient Communities Campaign, aimed at getting government officials to commit to enacting policies to address the impacts of climate change. The campaign worked as intended. President Obama has now issued a Executive Order that skirts Congress and will put tremendous pressure on states and municipalities to create resilient communities. What does that mean?

The executive order aims to give the federal government control over water, infrastructure, and even dictate land use policies at the local level under the guise of preparing for, or responding to, climate change whether that be in the form of droughts, floods, storms, wildfires and other natural events.

So, how will the feds respond to wildfires in our county? Will they weigh in on the plan to let Goleta

Beach wash into the ocean? Will they have a say in renewing the State Water project in light of our drought conditions? Thankfully, we might not have to go to Washington, D.C. to get the answers to these questions as County Supervisor Salud Carbajal is among the Obama appointees assigned to oversee implementation of this effort.

How did Supervisor Carbajal get appointed? Well, he happens to be the Vice President of ICLEI. This is no coincidence and neither is the use of the word resilience in the campaign of ICLEI and the actual text of the executive order. Congress and state governments have been successfully bypassed. Mission accomplished. Score one for the activists at the expense of our constitution, states rights and local control.

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Cinderella
Friday, December 13th***



Making a Monkey Out of Taxpayers

By Andy Caldwell

Ah, the sweet smell and beautiful sight of the Vandenberg Monkeyflower! The what? The Vandenberg Monkeyflower! The newest candidate for the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). This flower, which exists primarily within areas already off limits to any type of development, including agricultural development, has nonetheless been deemed worthy of extra protection within the existing confines of a protected biological reserve and Vandenberg Air Force Base.

The three biggest threats to the Monkeyflower are other plants, wildfires and climate change! So, how will we recover the species? Will the feds pay to have somebody weed out the grasses within the 5,000 acre critical habitat designation, plucking out that which doesn't belong there? And, what will be done in the event of a fire considering that the larger area is a preserve for Burton Mesa Chaparral, another so-called rare species that burns hotter than gasoline in a wildfire? Can the feds really prevent a fire? Finally, I find it amazing that the Feds have also cited climate change as a threat to the plant when there is no proof whatsoever that the plant was ever present in abundance coupled with the fact that the climate has not yet changed.

Moreover, what is really amazing about this listing is that the Fish and Wildlife Service actually admits that the species is getting listed in spite of the fact that neither the life history nor the reproductive biology of the plant has ever been thoroughly studied. So, the plant is being listed as endangered when we have no idea how it survives or reproduces? And, it is already within areas that are off limits to development, and the most significant threats are beyond our ability to control?

This listing along with thousands of others just like it are indicative of the fact that the ESA is in need of serious reform. The original intent of the act was not to protect flies, weeds, and the subspecies of subspecies of subspecies of either plants or animals. Neither was the listing process created to preclude any and all activities within the range of the species. The goal was to simply preserve species from going extinct when and where possible and that can be accomplished by just moving the species from one suitable location to another or artificially helping supplement

reproduction. Further, the ESA will list a sub-species as endangered in one area of the country, when there are literally millions of the same species in other areas.

This is a serious issue in our county because we have more listings than any other county in the continental United States and even more listings than many states. This is not happenstance. It is due to the fact that activists have learned to how to use the ESA to tie up land in order to curtail uses, including agriculture and recreation. A map of critical habitat designations of the species listed in our county, especially the North County, indicates there is virtually no land that is not deemed critical to some species.

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Andy Caldwell

The Voice of Reason

for the California Central Coast

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The Andy Caldwell Show

The Green Grim Reaper

By Andy Caldwell

The unfortunate reality of producing energy is that no source comes without a price. The truth is you can't produce anything without having an impact on something. Activists continuously demagogue the oil and coal industries claiming threats associated with accidents, spills, and climate change, but they are hypocritically silent when it comes to real world impacts arising from green energy. It is high time we put all the cards on the table when discussing the pros and cons of various energy sources.

Can you imagine if any industry was responsible for over one million avian deaths per year? And, what if some of the deaths were to federally protected species? Well, the fact of the matter is the darlings of the green energy movement, wind turbine facilities and solar farms, are the culprits responsible for this ongoing slaughter, and for the most part, our government and the environmental community have been giving their pals a pass.

Speaking of passes, consider California's Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area in the Bay Area, the home of the highest-known density of golden eagle nesting sites in the world. Perhaps the most prolific kill site in the world, these wind turbines have been killing golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, and hundreds of falcons, vultures and other raptors each and every year since it was built in 1982. Why has there been no campaign to close this facility?

Dr. K. Shawn Smallwood recently published a study comparing bird and bat fatality rate estimates among North American wind energy projects. His findings

are startling. He estimates 888,000 bat and 573,000 bird fatalities per year, with the Altamont Pass project responsible for a significant percentage of these kills.

The other darling of the green energy revolution is the massive solar farms being built in the California desert. These projects are also killing birds. Some birds are getting singed and fried while flying over the panels, others are mistaking the sheen coming off the panels for a body of water and are diving into them. Dozens of birds are dying every month that we know of, however, the count is probably significantly higher because some of the birds are weakened while flying over the solar panels and die somewhere else over the desert, never to be found or counted.

Locating wind and solar farms in areas of migratory bird paths and prime raptor corridors is incongruent with ecological values and the laws designed to protect our feathered friends such as the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act. But of course the wind farms are dependent upon the very same wind corridors that attract the birds in the first place!

Just last week, the Obama Administration, for the first time ever, fined a wind company \$1 million for killing 14 golden eagles, but the feds have a long history of fining oil companies tens of millions for the same violations. Why the double standard and what about Altamont Pass?

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Memo to Chicken Little Activists

By Andy Caldwell

Consider the fact that California has 70 earthquakes per day, 448 per month, over 2,000 per month, and 25,383 per year on average. California produces 218 million barrels per year. What is the correlation between earthquakes and oil production? There isn't any to speak of. So why bring it up? Because some activists are claiming there is a correlation. The truth is the sky is not falling but the earth is shaking, and the shaking has nothing to do with oil.

One of the mind control tricks radical environmentalists play on the unsuspecting public is to confuse them as to the distinction between correlation and causation. In essence, unless proven otherwise, correlation of facts, experiences, and observations may be attributable to nothing more than mere coincidence. Causation, on the other hand, speaks to a direct and specific relationship between one thing and another that speaks to a definitive cause and effect.

With regard to this latest sky is falling warning from anti-oil activists having to do with their claim that hydraulic fracking causes earthquakes, consider the fact that they have no scientific data to back up their claims! These activists, who never seem to be held accountable for their past failures to prove causation with respect to catastrophe, nonetheless continue unabated making wild claims with impunity.

Wayne Lusvardi of CalWatchdog recently conducted a review of a study by University of Durham, U.K., Richard Davies Ph.D. on this subject titled "Induced Seismicity and Hydraulic Fracturing for the Recovery of Hydrocarbons". Lusvardi also used other sources, including reports from the UC Berkeley Seismology Laboratory, to come up with records and analysis of human caused earthquakes here in California and around the world with a focus on activities occurring between 1929-2013.

During this study period, there were an estimated 109,200,000 natural caused large earthquakes worldwide, with 2,132,172 occurring in California alone. While seismic events attributed to man were 198 worldwide with 10 here in California, including one quake on the Central Coast. Statistically, these man-made events are nil.

What I found most fascinating about the review is that of the ten CA human-caused earthquakes, dams and

reservoirs were attributed as causing nearly half, with geothermal power plants and regular (not involving fracking) oil and gas extraction being blamed equally for the rest. Fracking was not cited as a source for any California earthquakes. Alarming residents about the non-existent threat presented by fracking here in earthquake country is nothing more than a rhetorical shakedown. Will any climate change advocate admit that good old green geothermal power plants pose more danger than fracking a well?

There is one caveat that needs to be mentioned related to fracking. This has to do with some other studies that point to reinjection of wastewater from fracking operations as being suspected of causing some seismic activity in Ohio and Oklahoma. It is ironic that the fracking operations per se are not suspected of causing the quakes, but the state's waste disposal laws which required reinjection of wastewater. The law of unintended consequences strikes again

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The Inestimable Loss of Great Leaders

By Andy Caldwell

Today is the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. This brutal assassination and the subsequent violent deaths of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy forever rocked the foundation of our society. Little did we all know fifty years ago that this tragedy was only the beginning of one of the most turbulent, violent and destructive decades ever. One of the most troubling aspects had to do with the fact that the threats and the violence rose from within.

Have you ever wondered what would have happened if any of these three leaders, so young and full of hope, promise and vision, had lived? Would the Vietnam War have been abated? How would the civil rights movement have proceeded under the continued leadership of MLK? If Bobby Kennedy had lived, would he have beaten Nixon and thereby prevented our country from experiencing another crisis of confidence in the form of Watergate?

Of course, we will never know the answer to any of these questions, but we know enough about these men that we can still pay tribute to and learn from their dreams, values and vision. Everyone will have their own take, but who can help but wonder how these great men would approach today's reality?

President Kennedy spoke to every citizen and asked them to consider what they could do for their country instead of asking what their country could do for them. Could this value statement not be interpreted as the very antithesis of today's entitlement mentality? JFK also challenged people who believed communism was the way to go by inviting them to come to Berlin! Couple this hard line stance with his backing down the USSR on the Cuban missile crisis. Who then would find it hard to believe he would have been anything but a staunch aggressor in the war on terror?

Martin Luther King dreamed of the day when people would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. Would this man of the cloth have remained silent when welfare benefits helped initiate a familial implosion in inner cities across the land? What would he say about the emerging pathological lifestyles that have now become the norm?

Bobby Kennedy believed that the problems of poverty

could be solved by legislation that actually encouraged private sector industries to locate in poverty-stricken areas in part due to his steadfast belief that private sector job creation was the ultimate solution to unemployment. RFK made no apologies as he stressed the importance of work over welfare. How strange would it be to have a leading democrat embrace these values and tenets today?

Of course, the real test of leaders is what they accomplish over time. Because these men were cut down in their prime, we will never know or be able to appreciate the full potential of what could have been and the full potential of their legacy. All the world suffered an immeasurable loss.

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County Taxpayers, Can You Spare Another \$1.5 Billion?

By Andy Caldwell

All residents of our county are served by county government. The services rendered include the jail, district attorney, public health, mental health, social services and flood control. In order to continue these vital services, the Board of Supervisors must be held accountable for the debilitating fiscal state of county government.

As you read the following verbatim excerpts from a recent county staff report, do pause long enough to do the math! Add up the unfunded infrastructure, worker's compensation, retiree health care, and pension shortfalls! It comes out to \$1.5 billion in debt and deficits!

The Santa Barbara County Employees' Retirement System (SBCERS) administers a cost-sharing multiple employer defined benefit pension plan for the County of Santa Barbara and nine other

independent local agencies. The County's pension costs have steadily increased since FY 2002-03 when the retirement contribution was \$32.4 million. Over the subsequent 10 years, retirement costs through FY 2012-13 have increased to \$99.7 million or 208.2% while pensionable payroll has risen 14.3%. Retirement costs are projected to increase significantly in FYs 2013-14 and 2014-15 due to several factors including the fact that the FY 2014-15 retirement contribution assumes a reduction in the assumed rate of return on invested funds from 7.75% to 7.5%. The projected impact would be to increase the contribution by \$10.9 million.

Additionally, the Santa Barbara County Retirement Board is considering breaking out administrative costs (more than \$4 million per year) previously included in the net assumed rate of return and assessing these costs separately. The impact would be increased annual funding for the County's share of these administrative costs (the majority of such costs).

The October 15, 2012 SBCERS Actuarial Valuation Report identified an unfunded pension liability for the system of \$827.7 million as of June 30, 2012.

SBCERS also administers the County's cost-sharing multiple employer defined benefit post employment healthcare plan (OPEB Plan). The OPEB Plan provides medical benefits to eligible retired County employees and their eligible dependents. The result of

the County's "Pay as you Go" funding approach is that the County's total unfunded liability for retiree medical benefits was \$173.9 million at the end of FY 2012-13.

The County was self-insured for Workers Compensation claims (claims paid to injured workers) incurred through 06/30/10 (tail claims). These claims are not closing as quickly as initially thought and the actuarially projected ultimate loss has been rising over the past four years. The current ultimate liability to taxpayers is \$187,823,000! The county has been increasing the premium assessment to keep pace with the escalating value of the projected ultimate loss. The adopted budget for WC premiums (tail and current claims) for FY 2013-14 is \$13.6 million. Based on the most recent actuarial information, a mid-year increase of \$1.2 million will be implemented in FY 2013-14 for a total premium of \$14.8 million.

The County has an increasing backlog of unmet maintenance needs for its public buildings, facilities, parks and road infrastructure, currently estimated to be \$292 million. These deferred

maintenance needs, if not addressed, will continue to increase at potentially accelerated rates. The County is responsible for maintaining: 1,670 lane miles of roadways, adjacent bike lanes plus related traffic signs and signals, bridges, drainage culverts, sidewalks and curbs. 1.8 million square feet of floor space in 286 buildings, and 8,500 acres of park and open space as well as 90 miles of trails.

Supervisors Lavagnino and Adam have been sounding the alarm while Supervisors Wolf and Farr continue to spend money on frivolous projects! Supervisor Carbajal is the wild card as he routinely vacillates when it comes to handling fiscal responsibilities.

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The COLAB Magazine

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There Is No Place Like Home

By Andy Caldwell

For years, we have all observed the never-ending debate over the high cost of housing in our region. I thought I might share some of the solutions that have been put forth, from the bizarre to the practical to the selfish.

An old curmudgeon that used to show up from time to time for the public comment period at the Board of Supervisors shocked the room with an observation bordering on being ludicrous but nonetheless prescient. The City of Santa Barbara had just concluded a homeless encampment sweep, literally, as they swept up tents and trash they discovered in some bushes. The speaker noted that the City had just destroyed the most affordable housing in the community. I had to sit back and think about that for a moment.

What is a home? One definition is that a home is a place of residence and refuge. It is a place in which an individual can live and store their personal property. It is a place to provide safety and used as a center base for their daily activities. The truth of the matter is a tent in the midst of bushes, or a cardboard shelter under a freeway overpass could fit the definition of a home, albeit, most of the community would condemn the same as being substandard and obviously not think twice of rooting these people out and destroying their settlement.

It reminded me of something I learned in college many decades ago having to do with squatter settlements around the world. These settlements were actually considered forms of affordable housing for millions of people! I was shocked to learn there was a community of 30,000 living in just such a community adjacent to the Mexico City dump. I have seen some of these communities first hand. People would start with natural materials, move up to cardboard, then, once they could afford it or gather it, they would utilize some weather impermeable materials such as tin.

Another time, former Supervisors Rose and Marshall actually suggested creating a temporary emergency ordinance to allow people to set up a tent in someone's backyard. The ordinance was never adopted, but eventually the county did allow some properties to allow people living in their vehicles to park overnight in parking lots in the community.

In some major metropolitan areas, some of the work-

ing poor and many homeless actually ride all night buses as a way to keep warm and out of harm's way. There are others who might spend the night in restroom stalls, as depicted in the movie "The Pursuit of Happiness", the real life story of Chris Gardner.

Of course, the stand-by favorite solution to the lack of affordable housing in the south county is to advocate building the houses somewhere else! The North County and Ventura County are the perennial favorite locations, with Isla Vista not far behind.

Where's home? Judging from these observations, it is where we permit it, where we dump it and where people manage to eke out their existence.

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The EDC's Three Stooges

Cont.

(Continued from page 1)

when Salud Carbajal makes his run for Congress in the near future, let it be known that he can't be trusted to be balanced in his decision-making process, no matter how many times he declares himself to be a pragmatic politician.

The insult here is that if Santa Maria Energy moves forward, the project will generate as much greenhouse gas emissions as it would have under the Planning Commission's approval with the difference being millions of dollars in greenhouse mitigation fees leaving our community forever, accomplishing absolutely nothing except to facilitate Gov. Jerry Brown stealing away this money to help balance the state budget.

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What is the CA Agricultural Labor Relations Board? *Cont.*

* Cathryn Rivera-Hernandez was appointed by Davis in 2002 and re-appointed by Brown in 2013.

* Bert Mason was appointed by Davis in 1999, and served until 2002. He was appointed again by Brown in 2012.

The general counsel, Sylvia Torres-Guillén, was appointed by Brown in 2011.

Executive Secretary J. Antonio Barbosa, who runs day-to-day operations, is appointed by the board and has held his position since 1992.

This series will report on the backgrounds of the board members and officials.



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