The politics of secession draws in loads of men – and not so many women. A November 2009 “Whither Go Us?” strategy session in Thomas Naylor’s living room could have been a reunion of fraternity brothers, save for the featured speaker. The pens scratching out Vermont Commons’ essays tend to be wielded by the not-so-fair sex, and I recall a few gatherings in Montpelier’s Black Door where, even in the dark, I could see that I was in the minority.

I don’t mind being around men. Au contraire. They hold a deeply rooted numinosity for me: I grew up with brothers and boy cousins, and my childhood best friend was Ira Rubin. But let’s face it: the project of re-weaving sovereignty, democracy, and human-scale sustainability is starving for the joie d’vivre and wisdom of the feminine.

Connection or autonomy?
In 1978, a sociologist had some insights that could be useful in thinking about this conundrum. In her book The Reproduction of Mothering, Nancy Chodorow pointed out that in post-World War II mass society, where the nuclear family often featured an all-present housewife/mother and an absent father, a girl could make the transition into womanhood without losing touch with her mother; in fact, the connection between the two could become stronger as both matured. The female sense of survival, then, had to do with the nurturing of “connected selves.”

In order to enter manhood, though, a boy had to break the bond with mother. Completely and abruptly. He was called to “cut the apron strings,” “be a man,” stuff all expression of vulnerability. The urge to cry his heart out had to be intense — wouldn’t you think? — for social more and peer-group pressure required him to wrench himself from the most important relationship of his young life and, by sheer will, become autonomous.

To boot, the break with mother was the perfect set-up for entry, just a few years later, into the military where each young man was threatened with dire consequence if he waffled while mastering himself as “a machine for killing.”

Social psychologist Carol Gilligan went the next step. Her 1982 In a Different Voice showed how such gender-based upbringing translated into distinct ways of seeing the world. Men and

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Vermont’s Message in a Bottle: Bottling Groundwater Rent for Public Revenue
Gary Filomenhoft
Research by Colin McClung

This article is Part 2 in an ongoing series exploring how Vermont might generate much-needed revenue AND protect our Commons in this new century. Part 3 will be published in our spring issue (May/June 2010).

In the spring of 2008 a Public Administration course at the University of Vermont took on the project of calculating the value of common assets in Vermont. We arrived at an estimated value of $1.2 billion, which would amount to a dividend of $1,972 per-person per-year in Vermont, if we had a common assets fund like some other states.

In evaluating the resources comprising the “Commonwealth” of Vermont, we made a disturbing discovery: Most of the valuable resources in Vermont, including minerals, groundwater, surface water, hydro sites, airwaves, etc., are owned by out-of-state corporations. Vermont is a banana republic without the bananas. This is not surprising when you consider that if you own real estate in Vermont, as far as we could ascertain, you own everything from the center of the earth to the moon; complete privatization is limited only by regulations such as ACT 250, which has little application after development.

This means that the Omya Corporation pays nothing to the state for the calcium carbonate it extracts; the TransCanada corporation pays nothing for using Vermont’s best hydropower sites to generate 550 megawatts (MW) of electricity it then sells to Massachusetts; the Entergy Nuclear/Vermont Yankee corporation pays nothing for using and degrading Connecticut River water for cooling, a process that accounts for 82 percent of surface-water extraction in the state. Yet bottlers like Pristine Springs of Stockbridge, or Vermont Natural pay nothing for taking as much Vermont groundwater as they want and shipping it out of state. (For the complete common-assets report go to: http://www.uvm.edu/giee/?Page=research/greentax/commonassets.html.)

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Guest Editorial

The Senate: Seven So Far, And Counting…

"Politics ain’t beanbag," was the warning of the late, storied U.S. House Speaker Tip O’Neill. In Vermont, he is better known for his other adage: "All politics is local." O’Neill was rather famously corrupt. An awful lot of politics is just that, here in Vermont and in the rest of the nation. Politics has also been described as "war made civilized."

With these gory truths now staring us in the face, I announce to one and all that we of the Second Vermont Republic have plunged in! I say softly from my frosty doorstep in this winter morning’s sun: "Imagine free Vermont!"

Our new Republic...and we plunge in! Into politics, because there is no other way to achieve our dream.

So far we have fielded 2010 candidates for governor and lieutenant governor, as well as seven candidates for our Vermont Senate. Our plan and announced intent is to field 30 Senate candidates.

Yes. We will stand for every seat. All of us contesting all those seats—our seats—as true INDEPENDENTS. Not captives or partisans of any political party or dead ideology.

We will answer to no one but the people. No lobbyists, no lawyers, no Beltway gurus, no PR consultants.

Our heavy candidate recruiting has just begun. It’s easy to see that we ought to run for governor and lieutenant governor as we are, but why run for the Senate and only the Senate?

Since this part of the campaign is my idea and under my generalship, let me explain. First, because we can! We can find and run our 30 heroes.

In fact, we call ourselves "The Thirty."

Recruiting able and courageous people who will take this plunge with us into the dark regions to fight for Vermont and for hope, peace and freedom will not be easy.

But we can find 30.

We know there are a lot more than 30 brave and freedom-loving Vermonters among you, now reading this journal.

Contact us. Join us.

Help us as we try to take the Vermont Senate for the people. This year we will leave the Vermont House to its own devices.

Question: Why the legislature at all? Doesn’t the governor run Vermont? No. He doesn’t.

And the president runs neither the United States nor the U.S. Empire. Please note this carefully.

And feel free to consult any poli sci text or read the Vermont or U.S. constitutions on this point. Legislatures run our various governments, entirely, in virtually every aspect save war. It is legislators, not chief executives, who rule the day and make or alter all laws. That is why we call them "law makers."

And because this is so, no matter that almost no one today understands the fact, we must run a large slate of candidates for the Legislature to be effective in any way in Vermont political life.

It is also a safer thing to do.

There is not just strength in numbers, but also safety in numbers. Lone wolf leaders—even presidents—are exposed.

And the beauty of running for only the Senate and not the House this year is that we can assuage people’s fears about us “forcing” secession. Even with control of the Senate (alone) we could do no such thing. Nor would we want to. The current House would check us were we to try.

But one chamber alone can say “no” to many bad things, including Vermont National Guard deployment to foreign wars and Vermont investments in Wall Street. The Senate by itself can say "NO" to anything. It can certainly place Vermont Independence on the table and in the public eye, so that the people of Vermont can take a long, sober look at it. That continued on page 8.

Contributors:

Gaelan Brown serves Vermont Commons as its business manager and as a member of the Editorial Board. He blogs as "An Energy Optimist" at www.vtcommons.org and is running for a 2010 State Senate seat in Washington County.

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Anne Galloway is the editor of vtDigger.org, a nonprofit web-based news journal reporting in-depth on Vermont issues and events.

Nick Girard is a — make it “the” — Vermont journalist/photographer who wants you to trade that box of frosted flakes for some organic oatmeal (with apples and almonds of course).

Chellis Glendinning is an advisor to the Second Vermont Republic, a psychotherapist, and the author of five books that explore the “personalness” of the political. She lives in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

‘The Greenneck’ lives and writes in the rusted-out shell of a one-ton Chevy pickup somewhere in Cabot.

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Letters to the Editor

RAISING TAXES IN VERMONT: SWEDEN’S CHILLING WARNING

Editor, Vermont Commons:

What Vermonters can expect with a Swedish-style healthcare system? With recent budget shortfalls and discussion of raising taxes to fill the gap it appears timely to describe what happened in Sweden as taxes climbed. It is known in Sweden as the great “Brain Drain,” and the country may never recover.

As Sweden transformed to a socialist state it was heralded as a glowing example of the success of the socialist paradigm. The quality of life was among the highest in the world and people flocked to Sweden from all over the world.

In the 1980s taxes continued to rise and something unexpected happened. Those Swedes with high incomes started to leave as refugees of the tax system. As ex patriots with citizenship in nations with low tax rates, they kept their money and lived in Sweden during the summer when the weather was nice. Instead of collecting a modest amount of tax income from the wealthy the government got none and the socialist dream began to unravel.

Perhaps the most glaring example is Ingvar Kamprad, founder of IKEA and perennial contender for the richest man in the world. As his legal residence is outside Sweden he pays not a Krona in income taxes. He does however have homes in Sweden and drives his old Volvo around all summer enjoying the beautiful countryside. My alma mater in Sweden was full of children of former Swedes who wanted their children raised in Sweden but refused to pay the taxes.

Vermont is edging ever closer to this scenario and does so at great peril. Vermont already has an extremely low number of wealthy residents who bear the disproportionate burden of taxation. States like Arizona and Florida keep taxes low to attract “Snowbirds” who spend money on durable goods there that would have been spent on taxes in Vermont.

With long, harsh winters and beautiful summers, Vermont is similar to Scandinavia. Vermont should look to Sweden as a chilling warning regarding the economic realities of irresponsible taxation. People who know how to make money often know how to keep it. They also often have the money to relocate with relative ease. This is a very dangerous combination for Vermont’s coffers.

We welcome your letters, thoughts, and participation.

Vermont Commons welcomes your input.
Please e-mail letters to editor@vtcommons.org or post to PO Box 1121, Waitsfield, Vermont 05673. Although we will try to print your letters in their entirety, we may edit to fit. Please be concise. Be sure to include your contact information (name, address, telephone, and e-mail) for verification purposes.
ENVY’able Alternatives:  
Electrifying A 21st Century Vermont Without Re-licensing Yankee

Sucosh Norton

Let us be clear. It is realistic to think that the generating capacity of Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee (ENVY) can be economically, environmentally and cost-effectively replaced in the near term by a diversified strategy of conservation, market purchases, and local renewable resources here in our Green Mountains.


There are many arguments for de-licensing ENVY in 2012, most compellingly the danger of operating the plant from an environmental and human-safety perspective. Many have made this argument in the past (ENVY itself has performed an enviable job of it through its recent tritium leak) and many will continue to do so in the future. Countervailing arguments for re-licensing include its benefit to the economy in terms of jobs and low cost of electricity, the perception that nuclear generation is carbon neutral, and the argument that there is no alternative.

I will leave it to VPIRG and others to respond to the first two. In regard to the economy, an alternative to ENVY will provide many more diverse jobs spread throughout the economy, geographically and demographically, with the financial benefit flowing more directly to Vermont. In addition, conservation and local renewables are, and will continually become, cost competitive and more reliable than energy from an aging, rickety nuclear plant. The carbon-neutrality claim is specious on many grounds, beginning with the carbon intensity of uranium. However the argument that there is no cost-effective alternative to ENVY is the most easily countered.

Strategy for Replacement

As summarized in VPIRG’s report, the safest, most economical and most reliable energy future for Vermont is a combination of conservation and development of local renewable resources – wind, solar, bio-mass, and hydro. The table below shows how this might be accomplished using more conservative numbers than are in the VPIRG report due to the shorter time frame I selected: implementation by 2015.

Columns one through three describe the state of electrical energy sources in 2005, the last year for which data were available for this report. Columns four through six describe a future state in 2015, and the last two columns show the variances between 2005 and 2015. The top line is the total electrical energy consumption in 2005 and current projected consumption in 2015 – a 10-percent increase, from 6,300 gigawatt hours (GWh) to 6,930 GWh. Energy is expressed in thousands of kilowatt hours (or GWh) and the installed generating capacity is expressed in thousands of kilowatts (or megawatts – MW). This analysis anticipates that statewide residential, commercial, and governmental energy conservation can eliminate the growth in consumption, and reduce total energy consumption 13 percent, to 6,029 GWh.

The remaining challenge is to offset ENVY’s energy contribution of 2,300 GWh (956 MW of capacity allocated to Vermont). In this scenario, reduced dependence on regional hydro sources, including Hydro Quebec, and continued participation in the New England power-purchase market, combined with an aggressive commitment to local renewable energy sources, replaces ENVY.

Wind and Solar: Of the local energy sources, wind and solar will provide 20 percent of the energy demand. This is an increase of capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vermont’s Electricity Future</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Var</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>GWhr’s</td>
<td>Maximum Capacity MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6300 (est for VT)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>0% (baseline)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13% (growth since 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6300</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Yankee</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>2274</td>
<td>956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Hydro</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1753</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and Natural Gas</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE Power Purchase Market</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Wind &amp; Solar</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Biomass</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Hydro</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Methane</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Small Renewables</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6300</td>
<td>1139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of 40 times current levels. Adding 411 MW of capacity is the equivalent of adding about 40 wind turbines per year for five years.

This is a challenging goal, but it is more a matter of public will than capacity. The technologies are mature, the manufacturing capacity is in place, and wind has the capability to come on line very quickly. Many have argued that because renewables such as wind and solar are intermittent they are unreliable and de-stabilizing to the grid. However, it has been demonstrated and documented that a distributed renewable-energy base, with load matching based on seasonal and time-of-day fluctuations, provides equal or greater reliability than conventional sources. We also know from European countries like Spain and Germany that penetration levels of up to 20 percent are easily managed by utility operators.

**Biomass and Hydro:** Approximately doubling the capability of these two indigenous sources is well within the capacity of Vermont. The state enjoys an abundance of wood for steam generation at the utility scale (such as McNeil) or industrial scale, which could increase from less than 400 to more than 1,200 GWh. The capacity of hydro in this scenario is maintained by restoring and upgrading existing dam facilities, not by constructing new dams.

**Methane:** Methane digesters are now available and in use in Vermont on a very small scale. Increasing the capacity of methane generation is feasible, economical, and will benefit both the environment and farmers by providing high-grade fertilizer and another source of income.

**Small Renewables:** These include residential solar panels (a feasible choice for many Vermonters), small wind turbines, and small-scale hydro, which are rapidly evolving technologies. The addition of 30 MW of capacity in this category is considered conservative.

In conclusion, it is clear that an alternative energy future for Vermont is achievable, practical and desirable. The choice to close ENVY and move aggressively to an energy mix based upon local energy sources will bring security and reliability to our energy future, protect our environment now and over the very long term, and provide substantial economic benefit to Vermonters all across the state by providing good local jobs, stable energy prices, and a distributed tax base.
The purpose of this study was not to challenge the benefits of private business using Vermont resources to create valuable products and services. That goes without saying. We are merely questioning the wisdom of giving away our resources for free. We don’t recall reading in history books about Ethan Allen declaring, “Let’s give our minerals to Switzerland! Let’s give our hydropower to Canada! Let’s give our groundwater to Massachusetts!” (Okay, Louisiana didn’t exist in 1777.) What is a commonwealth after all, if we as Vermont citizens don’t own our common wealth? What happened to sovereignty?

Property rights vary for different resources. Broadband spectrum belongs to the public by law, but the federal government still gives away 98 percent of the spectrum for free. Mineral rights are private in Vermont, but not everywhere. Omya owes nothing to the state for extraction. The geography creating hydro is sold along with titles to dams.

When it comes to water, the law is different. Surface water, and now groundwater, are part of the public trust by law under 2008 State Senate Bill S.304. The legal definition of public trust is, “held by the people in their character as sovereign in trust for public uses for which they are adapted in perpetuity.” In this article, we explore groundwater extraction by bottlers. Is bottling and selling groundwater for profit a “public use” of groundwater? We don’t think so.

**So this out-of-state corporate bottler takes water obtained in Vermont for free, and exports it to Massachusetts, where they create jobs in Pittsfield to benefit owners in Canada. Anything wrong with this picture?**

**Groundwater Withdrawals**

As of 2008, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) stated that 50 million gallons of groundwater was withdrawn on a daily basis in Vermont. Withdrawals from public and private groundwater sources account for 33 million gallons per day. Agricultural withdrawal accounts for 2 million gallons daily, another 12 million is used for commercial and industrial purposes, and the remaining groundwater withdrawals go to mining and the generation of thermoelectric power (USGS, 1997).

**Drinking Water**

Groundwater is currently used for drinking water by approximately 70 percent of Vermont’s population. About 46 percent of the population is self supplied, while about 24 percent are served by public water systems using groundwater (USGS, 1997). It is estimated that 320,000 Vermonters get their drinking water from about 93,500 private wells, which does not include dug wells or springs.

The mean well depth is about 200 feet and the mean yield is about six gallons per minute, according to the ANR’s Water Supply Division (WSD, 2003). Groundwater levels in Vermont are measured at 12 monitoring wells located throughout the state. Is drinking water a “public use”? Most certainly.

**Mapping**

Groundwater mapping in Vermont was established in 2008 by S.304. The statistics gleaned from such an undertaking may offer us a wealth of information formerly unavailable, as the state did not previously keep comprehensive records on groundwater collection. Eighty-seven percent of the public community-water systems in the state had their corresponding Source Protection Areas or aquifer recharge areas mapped by 2008. The remaining public community water systems were using 3,000-foot-radius circles as their Source Protection Areas (WSD, 2003). Existing aquifer maps include the Groundwater Favorability Maps (1966 to 1968), which cover the entire state; the Geology for Environmental Planning series (1975) that covers 66 percent of Vermont, and was primarily based on data from the Superficial Geologic Map of Vermont (1970); and the Centennial Geologic Map of Vermont (1961). In the 1980s ANR provided aquifer maps to 20 towns for planning purposes, while just two years ago the Vermont Geological Survey (VGS) produced an aquifer map in Arlington. These documents included a depth-to-groundwater map, a thickness-of-overburden map, and aquifer-yield maps. S.304 requires complete mapping of state groundwater.

**Existing Revenues**

When the Water Supply Division was asked for “statistics on groundwater revenues for the state of Vermont,” the response was, “too general, anything serving beyond twenty five people is considered a public water system and each is unique.” According to an anonymous staff member the following are the disparate parts that make up groundwater revenue in the state: wells, parts sellers for wells, bottled water, contract operators, chemicals (that go into the processing), permitting fees for wells and residential septic systems, consultants, water use, state administration fees charged, and public water system fees.

With such a labyrinth to untangle, it seems the one area where there is a distinct possibility for the aggregation and distribution of economic rent is the bottled water companies. The following data gives us an indication of how much of the state’s groundwater resources are being collected for privatization and profit rather than public use.

**Bottlers**

The latest figures from the Water Resources Division are that 99 million gallons of water were taken in 2008 for bottling in Vermont by the following companies:

- Vermont Heritage .......... WSID #20110
- Walden Springs Co. .......... WSID #20808
- Vermont Natural Spring Water .......... WSID #8404
- Pristine Springs of Vermont .......... WSID #20427
- Merrill Spring .......... WSID #20433
- Spring Realty Trust .......... WSID #21024
- Clear Source .......... WSID #8400

(Source: Rodney Pingree, Chief Water Resources Division)
Companies taking groundwater for bottling in Vermont must apply for a permit to operate. They must have a source and EPA permit to check water quality, a construction permit, and an operating permit. It is a fairly involved process, according to Dennis Nealon of the Water Supply Division.

One point of confusion is that “collection” and “artesian” are terms wielded by bottled water companies to deny that they are extracting groundwater. When profiled for a Seven Days report (March 2008), these companies insisted they were not bottling groundwater, but instead collecting naturally overflowing water from beneath the surface. Since not “pumped” or “withdrawn,” they may not be subject to rules and regulations governing groundwater. Nice loophole!

There are 14 different companies listed as selling bottled water in Vermont. (Nestle has 15 permits under different names which were not included.)

Vermont Bottled Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permit/Certification Program</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nestle Waters Na Stannwood Mi</td>
<td>Vevey, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Pellegrino Spa</td>
<td>Milano, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ccda Waters Llc</td>
<td>Atlanta, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Geyser Roxanne Sc</td>
<td>Olanca, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icelandic Water Holdings Eff</td>
<td>Selfoss, Iceland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Realty Trust</td>
<td>Vermont?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abspure Water Co</td>
<td>Plymouth, Michigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice River Springs Pittsfield Llc</td>
<td>Ontario, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced H2O, Llc</td>
<td>Mercer Island, Washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Springs Llc</td>
<td>Keau, Hawaii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destiny Deep Sea Water</td>
<td>Kailua Kona, Hawaii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ds Waters Of America Lp</td>
<td>Atlanta, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium Waters Inc</td>
<td>Minneapolis, Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roaring Spring Bottling</td>
<td>Roaring Spring,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Source: VT DEC Permits and Certifications for Bottled Water http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/enb/cfm/programlist.cfm?pid=Bottled%20Water)

According to a Berkshire Eagle article, a Canadian company called Ice River Springs (also known as Aquafarms) extracts water from wells in Vermont, then trucks the water to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, for bottling. In Pittsfield, they have obtained an agreement to build a $12 million bottling plant employing 60 people (Lindsay, 2008). Apparently they get their water from Pristine Springs in Stockbridge, Vermont. So, this out-of-state corporate bottler takes water obtained by Pristine Springs in Vermont for free, and exports it to Massachusetts, where they create jobs in Pittsfield, to benefit owners in Canada. Anything wrong with this picture? Spring Realty Trust also has withdrawal and selling permits in Vermont, and can take water for free and sell it back to us at retail.

Calculating Economic Rent on Bottlers

Table B shows a gross profit of 75 cents on an 85-cent bottle (88-percent profit). This is for a “six pack” of 24-oz. bottles selling for $3. Bottled water is often sold in single 32-48-oz. bottles for more. The cost of water to bottlers is essentially zero. All the costs are in bottling, marketing, and distribution (see table A).

What other business pays nothing for its raw materials? Eighty-five cents for 24 ounces is equal to $4.53 per gallon of bottled water. At $4.53/
gallon, 99 million gallons of bottled water equals $448.5 million of total revenue. Without knowing other business expenses it is difficult to calculate net profit. Consider that Norway charges 50-percent royalties plus 28-percent corporate tax on oil companies drilling in their territory, and still finds companies able to profit from drilling. It explains why Norway has a $600 billion sovereign-wealth fund and Vermont has none. Using 50-percent royalties results in potential revenue of $224.2 million for Vermont.

Another way to estimate the value of bottled water by the gallon is to use the average price of a liter of bottled water at convenience stores: about $1.79. That converts to a price of $6.78 per gallon of bottled water. At $76 per barrel, oil is worth $1.83 per gallon. When we compare unrefined water with unrefined oil we find that water sells for 3.7 times the price of oil and 2.4 times the price of refined gasoline. So bottled water sells for over 3.5 times the price of oil!

Ninety-nine million gallons of water at $6.78 per gallon equals $671 million in retail sales of bottled water. If the wholesale price is half that, it would be $335.5 million. Even if we charged a reasonable rent of 12 percent—equivalent to typical resource rents on minerals or oil—it would still amount to $40 million in public revenue that could be put toward a common asset trust fund or sovereign-wealth fund.

When we compare unrefined water with unrefined oil, we find that water sells for 3.7 times the price of oil and 2.4 times the price of refined gasoline.

So bottled water sells for more than 3.5 times the price of oil!

### Table B: 24-Ounce Bottle Water Calculator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Royalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline</td>
<td>$2.79/gallon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil $76.86/barrel</td>
<td>$1.83/gallon</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>3-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water(Dasani) $1.79/liter</td>
<td>$6.78/gallon</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 gallon [US, liquid] = 3.785 411 784 liter

### Table A: Comparison – Oil Industry versus Water Industry (Source: H2O for Maine, Education and Information, page 9) http://www.waterdividendtrust.com/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 barrel = 42 gallons</td>
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continued on page 29
Editorial, continued from page 2

we will do, my friends, while blocking a lot of bad stuff.

Our program in a nutshell is these four points.

1. No further Vermont participation in or funding for all United States Empire’s foreign wars of aggression. Prosecute all persons on our soil that participated at any level in torture. Bring the Vermont National Guard Home!

2. Not a dime more for Wall Street. Immediately repatriate all Vermont-administered investment funds, retirement and withholding funds and invest those monies here in our Vermont small banks and credit unions, for reinvestment per agreement, in all the things Vermont will need to develop and prosper moving into this new century.

3. Build our clean green job base and provide credit for home refinance, green manufacture, alternative energy, green agriculture for people, relocalized and revitalized town schools and commercial centers, villages and towns.

4. We will begin a serious discussion about Vermont Independence with all the people of Vermont.

How will we campaign, and fund the campaign?

Letters, continued from page 3

not even crack the top 25 in national standard-of-living rankings.

In contrast to having no real choice but to implement a Swedish-style healthcare system, Vermont does have options regarding budget shortfalls. Raising taxes further is one. A far better option is to acknowledge that business is the engine of an economy and to support new business creation in actions as well as words. Vermont needs a fundamental shift in attitude regarding permitting and taxation. In the end this is not a discussion of morality or fairness. It is one of simple economics.

This shift needs to come very quickly or Vermont will have the misfortune of sharing more with Sweden than beautiful summers.

ANDERS HOLM
Middlebury

MANAGING YANKEE’S WASTE IS TASK ENOUGH

Editor, Vermont Commons:

Another problem at Vermont Yankee? Indeed. But wait: let’s not lose sight of the take-home message here. It’s not to be surprised or angry (although that is surely warranted). It’s to recognize that this is simply the nature of humans attempting to manage a material that’s not, in practical terms, manageable. Vermont Yankee’s recent problems are not episodic events of a leak here, a lie by a plant official there, a mistake there. They indicate the much deeper reality that is atomic energy.

How can the atomic industry be anything other than catastrophic? Human decision making and management is imperfect. Unfortunately, nuclear energy management requires perfection. And its impacts are lethal, cancerous and mutating, for hundreds of lifetimes.

Luckily we don’t need nuclear energy; only 1 percent of the sunshine landing on Earth is the amount of energy humans use. And, as has been noted before, we already have the best nuclear reactor we could ever want; it’s a safe distance of 90 million miles away and is called the Sun.

The Greeks wrote the story of Pandora and the box Zeus gave her to warn people against unending curiosity. Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein was a similar attempt to warn society against making those things that we cannot control.

The worst thing that could happen on a legislative end here is if the politicians and regulators see these problems as “management mistakes,” as episodic incompetent actions that “could have been prevented.” While that may be true — Entergy is indeed showing many signs of incompetence — no new management scheme will prevent myriad other mistakes at another time in the future. Nuclear energy has no tolerance for imperfection. We’d be wise to not throw more good money, time, and energy after bad.

Let’s close the plant, finally, and get on with the development of renewable, long-term sources of non-lethal energy, and attempt to manage the 1,200,000 pounds of high-level waste that already exists in Vernon. Isn’t this enough of a challenge?

Ben Falk
Moretown

Of course we will do all the usual things and the new electronic things to boost our efforts.

But in the Senate campaign at least—and I imagine Dennis Steele (for governor) and Peter Garritano (for lieutenant governor) will want to join us in this—I am calling the campaign “Barn Dancing, Bluegrass, and Beer.”

We will put on dozens of Independence rallies and dinners, in church halls and barn dance spots, in farm fields, in tents, and on village greens.

We will invite one and all to a pot luck meal, BYOB, and put on a romping stomping Bluegrass “Git-Down” Dance & Fiddle thing.

A few candidates, will speak, of course, if we don’t get booed down, and we’ll keep those speeches short and sweet.

There isn’t that much that is necessary to say, folks: Things are bad.

We know it is coming from Washington.

And Vermont needs to hike up her boots and cut herself loose. We will do this in town after town after town. Mingle and talk and take names. Pass the hat at the end for $5 or $10 per....is the hope.

Join us. The Thirty. You’re invited.

DENNIS MORRISSEAU
“Thirty for Vermont Senate 2010” Campaign
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802 645 9727
Transition Times: Village-building Convergence Brings Transition Town Back to Its Roots

Carl Etnier

Last year, Montpelier’s Village-building Convergence brought the Transition Town concept back to its early roots in permaculture. Permaculture, now a set of design tools so broad that even its inventors shy away from defining it, originated as a form of landscape design. The design emphasizes perennial crops and ecological interactions that simplify management.

The productive landscape is designed around dwellings.

Montpelier’s Village-building Convergence (VbC), held August 22-30 last year, was inspired by a similar week-long gathering that’s been held in Portland, Oregon, since 2001. The 2009 event was a success, and organizers are hard at work to plan this year’s event, scheduled for August 14-22. The VbC emphasizes projects with large numbers of volunteers who learn new skills while creating new landscapes near dwellings, using perennials. Each project represented a way to Transition from oil dependence to community resilience.

Much of the 2009 activity was around a private house on Main Street, where the owners wanted to convert a rocky, forested back yard into a terraced, edible forest garden. Mark Krawczyk of Burlington Permaculture led the week-long conversion, recruiting volunteers who wanted to learn to clear a small woods using hand tools, turn a slope into a terrace with steps, or design a permaculture landscape for that space.

The landscape design and installation on Main Street was also used as a backdrop for workshops about components of the permaculture landscape. Alissa White taught backyard gourmet mushroom gardening, Nicko Rubin taught an introduction to edible landscaping and small fruits for central Vermont, and Krawczyk demonstrated how to create bat habitat.

The VbC also featured projects and workshops in spaces more public than the Main Street back yard. Gail England directed a crew building an earthen oven at the Adamant Co-op. Emma Melvin conducted a city-wide tour of rain gardens and an installation of a new one at Hunger Mountain Co-op. Adrienne Allison led a medicinal plant walk starting at Montpelier High School, and Zachary Brock headed up a bicycle tour of inspiring gardens, starting with the food garden on the State House lawn.

While the focus was on Montpelier, some events were scattered in the hinterlands (as they’re called in Transition-speak) of Plainfield, Marshfield, Worcester, and Calais.

Though classical permaculture elements dominated the VbC, there was more. I gave a talk about bicycles and motorcycles as practical transportation, and a workshop on nonviolent communication taught how to connect with what’s alive in other people. And there were simply parties at the opening and the night before the closing.

Funding for the 2009 VbC represented its roots both in permaculture and Transition Towns: both the Winooski Valley Permaculture Collective and Transition Town Montpelier were financial sponsors.

Creating an Energy Descent Action Plan, launching local currencies, organizing energy co-ops: these are all important parts of Transition work. And sometimes it’s important and just plain fun to gather in community, roll up your sleeves, and build a new rain garden or earthen oven.

Several years ago now, I vowed to only buy salad greens that are grown in Vermont. I did this when I learned that the organic salad mix that I was buying in the winter was not grown on some pastoral family farm run by hippies in California, but rather an industrial agriculture operation that rivaled its conventional counterparts in size and processes. In the summer, the commitment is a no-brainer; I grow my own salad greens or buy them from local farmers. I can even get those greens well into the fall and in early spring. But the dead of winter is a different thing. Leafy green salads are noticeably absent on our kitchen table December through March.

Toward the middle of the winter, my resolve to eat only local salad greens becomes tough as I start craving something crunchy that comes from the earth. To compensate I have developed a variety of salads that I make in the winter with locally available vegetables that satisfies my need for crunch and freshness, and still enables me to keep my self-initiated boycott of California salad greens. I put these salads into three categories: root salads, alternative greens salads, and grow-your-own greens.

**Root Salads:** Until a few years back, the only root veggies I would consider eating raw were carrots and onions. But, I have discovered that, if prepared properly, just about every root veggie other than potatoes can be tasty raw. By prepared properly, I am talking about the way they are cut up. A salad with big chunks of raw turnip and celeriac is not appealing, but cut the same veggies into match-stick-sized pieces and they can now can be turned into a crunchy root-vegetable slaw that makes a great side to braised pork shoulder or a topping on a grass-fed beef burger.

**Alternative Green Salads:** Cabbage makes a great alternative to leafy green salads and many types of cabbage can last for months in the refrigerator. I had a head of napa cabbage in my refrigerator since September and used it in a salad in early January. There are a lot of great alternatives to traditional coleslaw that will adapt to just about any meal you have. Dress the cabbage with some rice vinegar, sesame oil, fish sauce and ginger, and it becomes a tasty side for grilled tofu and rice.

**Grow Your Own Greens:** Over the past couple of years, I have been growing some of my own micro greens to round out my winter salad repertoire. I learned how to do this from Peter Burke of Calais, Vermont, who teaches his winter “daily gardening” classes throughout the winter at the Hunger Mountain Co-op in Montpelier. While this technique does not produce big leafy greens, in eight to 10 days you will have beautiful soil-sprouted greens from primary leaves. Peter suggests using a variety of seeds (including sunflowers, peas, buckwheat, and radishes) that can be used alone for a more traditional green salad or as a garnish for a roasted beet salad. Each day Peter plants a new seed mix.
“garden” to assure he has a fresh green salad every
day of the winter.

I am not a purist with my “rule” about greens
only from Vermont. I will admit that if I am at a
restaurant and a salad comes with the meal, even
in the middle of the winter, I will eat the salad
knowing that the greens came from across the
country. And I have already admitted to buying
herbs to enhance the salads that I make with local
ingredients. There have even been times when I
have broken down and purchased greens in the
winter to accommodate a house guest’s palate.
But those are the few exceptions to my rule,
and I have found the commitment easy to keep
only because of the alternative salads I now look
forward to when the snow starts to fly.

**RECIPE**

**Root Vegetable Slaw**
Adapted from *Cooking with Shelburne Farms.*
Choose at least three of the following root vege-
tables for this recipe: Carrots, turnips, parsnips,
celeriac, golden beets (red beets also work but will
turn the salad red), or rutabaga.

**In a large bowl:**
Toss together 2 pounds total of root vegetables
cut into 2-inch matchsticks.

**In a smaller bowl:**
Whisk together ½ cup crème fraîche
3 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
1 teaspoon kosher salt (use less if using table salt)
1 finely minced shallot

Pour the dressing into the vegetables and toss to
cut into 2-inch matchsticks.

**In a smaller bowl:**
Whisk together ½ cup crème fraîche
3 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
1 teaspoon kosher salt (use less if using table salt)
1 finely minced shallot

Pour the dressing into the vegetables and toss to
cut into 2-inch matchsticks.

**Cabbage Slaw Your Way**
Start with the basic recipe and then customize it to
match your meal and tastes. Local cabbages that
you will be able to find in the winter in Vermont
may include green cabbage, red cabbage, and napa
cabbage; a mixture of all three can make a surpris-
ingly beautiful salad in the dead of winter.

The basic recipe. Mix together:

- 8 cups of thinly sliced cabbage of your choice or
  a mixture of different varieties
- 1 shallot finely minced
- 2 medium carrots shredded

In a separate small bowl mix:

- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- ½ teaspoon honey
- ¼ teaspoons salt
- several grinds of pepper

Whisk in:

- 1 tablespoon sunflower oil

Now customize it to match your meal:

**Asian add:**

- ½ teaspoon fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon of finely minced ginger

You can also swap out rice wine vinegar for the
cider vinegar for a more mild tang, but if you do
this leave out the ½ teaspoon of honey.

**TexMex add:**

- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro rough chopped
- juice from ½ lime

Refrigerate until you are ready to eat. Prepare
the slaw two to three hours before you are going
to be eating it to give time for all of the flavors to
penetrate the vegetables.

Information on growing-your-own soil-sprouted
greens can be found at www.TheDailyGardener.
com.
Behind Bars, For Profit: Should Vermont Continue To Privatize Our Prisons?

Anne Galloway

(The original version of this story appeared online at vtDigger.org)

Ashley Ellis, a 23-year-old anorexic who was convicted of a misdemeanor traffic offense, died in prison last August — just two days after she was incarcerated at Northwest State Correctional Facility in St. Albans — because she didn’t receive the medication she needed.

Not long after, the Vermont Department of Corrections decided not to renew its contract with Prison Health Services Inc., the corporation that has been responsible for inmate medical care in the state since 2005, and invited other companies to bid for the contract.

The company that rose to the top of the list and has been in negotiations with the state since October, Correct Care Solutions, is relatively new.

Unlike Prison Health Services, which has a long track record nationally of racking up lawsuits, settlements, and complaints of poor inmate care, Correct Care appears to be less plagued so far by reports of substandard care, though two families filed lawsuits against the company in 2009 for the deaths of inmates in Virginia and Illinois.

The two corporations, Prison Health Services and Correct Care, have several similarities and a key connection. They are both for-profit, out-of-state providers based in Tennessee, and both have been led by the same CEO, Gerald (Jerry) Boyle, according to a previous Vtdigger.org report by Terry J. Allen. Boyle headed Prison Health Services for a five-year period. He was also a vice president for EMSA, which held the first contract with the Vermont Department of Corrections from 1996 to 2000.

Andrew Pallito, Vermont’s Corrections commissioner, is optimistic that Correct Care will provide better medical services to inmates. He says the company’s local management team will be composed of Vermonters. Pallito says he is also impressed that Correct Care “came to the table with a lot of new ideas” and vetted local Prison Health employees in a rehiring process. Most of Correct Care’s staff and local management team members will be Vermonters, Pallito says.

“I really have high hopes for this company,” Pallito says. “They’re new; they’re small. In the end, it’s our responsibility to manage this company and make sure that they do what they say they’re going to do.”

Correct Care was scheduled to begin providing not only medical care but also mental health services to Vermont inmates on Feb. 1. The state was paying Prison Health Services for medical services alone. Prison reform advocates say they anticipate health care for inmates won’t change much under the new company.

Ed Paquin, of Disability Rights Vermont, says the idea of consolidating mental and medical services is sound, “if the leadership is right.” But, “if you’re trying to do something this complex on the cheap, you could be looking for trouble,” Paquin says.

Matthew Valerio, defender general, also appears to have doubts.

“Fundamentally, we’re going to end up with more of the same,” Valerio predicts. “But it’ll be a new face in the crowd, and hopefully they’ll do better. I don’t have any hope that there’s going to be any fundamental change here.”

From January 2008 to May 2009, PHS reported 169 sick-call and pharmacy violations system-wide, and Corrections imposed $19,200 in fines, according to Terry Allen’s December Vtdigger.org article. From August — the month Ellis died — through October, Northwest alone racked up 43 additional penalties, Allen reported.

Disabilities Rights Vermont Inc. has investigated four inmate deaths since 2005 (in addition to Ellis’), all under PHS care and all related to drug withdrawals, according to Paquin, executive director of the nonprofit group. Under federal law, Paquin’s organization is authorized to probe complaints of abuse, neglect, and civil rights violations.

Recently, Disability Rights created a memorandum of agreement with Corrections that requires new standards of care for intoxicated prisoners.

“We’ve looked into about four deaths in the last four years that would indicate there was a problem in identifying a need, monitoring the need, or delivering [appropriate] services,” Paquin says.

Can Correct Care Solutions offer Vermont inmates more services for $2 million less and provide better care? Sen. Dick Sears, longtime chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, says, “There’s nowhere to go but up as far as I’m concerned.”

Seth Lipschutz, supervisory attorney for the Prisoners’ Rights Office, is less sanguine about the notion of hiring a for-profit outfit to provide services for inmates. He advocates for a community healthcare program for inmates, similar to one in Hampden County, Massachusetts, in which prisoners receive services from local community health centers.

“I guess what I have to say about it is stupid cliché kind of stuff — like, all right, so you put together a prison and an HMO; like, what kind of health care do you think you’re going to get?”

In the end, it’s our responsibility to manage this company and make sure that they do what they say they’re going to do.” Vermont Corrections Commissioner Andrew Pallito
Lipschutz says, “Just like the HMOs in the community, they’re running a profit, so the less care they provide, the more money they make. You’ve heard all the horror stories: care is denied, so you add the element of the most despised people in America having an HMO, and of course you’re going to have stuff like this happen [the death of Ashley Ellis]. Duh.”

“They’re running a profit, so the less care they provide, the more money they make.” Seth Lipschutz, Prisoners’ Rights Office

The contract: details, details
The Department of Corrections’ contract with Correct Care, which according to state officials runs to 500 pages, was not finalized as of this writing, and officials were reluctant to talk about specifics. Dr. Delores Burroughs-Biron, chief medical officer for the Department of Corrections, says hiring a single contractor that provides comprehensive services will ensure that mental health care is better integrated into the medical system for inmates. This, she says, will improve communication and enable the contractor to “see our population holistically.”

According to the Department’s bid proposal, the contract would run for three years, with an opportunity for two one-year extensions. Correct Care would be responsible for health screening and routine care for inmates in the state’s eight prison facilities, along with chronic-disease management. The corporation would also run two infirmaries, two hospice-care units, a medical housing unit and intermediate care and secure mental health units at Southern State Correctional Facility in Springfield. Under the state’s contract with Prison Health Services, inmates could wait two to three days for non-emergency medication.

In Ashley Ellis’ case, although she was eligible to receive medication because of her anorexic condition, a series of problems led to a delay, and ultimately, her death. Less than two days after Ellis was incarcerated on a misdemeanor offense, she died in jail of a potassium deficiency-induced cardiac arrhythmia because she didn’t receive the medication she needed, according to the Vermont Defender General’s investigation.

“In the end with Ashley Ellis, there was no reason she shouldn’t have gotten the potassium,” Pallito says. “There was no excuse for it. We have a system in place to make sure all offenders are getting their medications.”

Terry Allen reported on Vtdigger.org that no one competent to assess Ellis’ health was present at her medical intake. There was no doctor at the facility, and one RN (for a single shift) was available during the two-day period Ellis survived in jail, according to Department of Corrections records. Nursing at the Northwest facility on weekends (5 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Monday), by contract, was light and assigned to licensed practical nurses, Allen wrote. LPNs are barred by state nursing regulations from assessing patients, Allen reported, and may not have had the training to understand how critically ill Ellis was.

According to Allen’s article, PHS was allowed to staff Northwest and other facilities on weekends (and many weekday shifts) with no one above the level of LPN. From Friday evening to Monday morning, one PHS doctor is on call, by phone, to

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One of the most interesting tension points in the politics of climate change and renewable energy is the issue of state sovereignty. Any “global” solution that tries to force people, businesses, or governments to invest in renewable energy, or to pay a carbon tax, will meet resistance from nations and individuals who simply want the cheapest energy possible. Hugo Chavez made this point loud and clear at United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15) in December. As an executive at a national solar power company, a co-founder of a “low carbon diet” nonprofit, and a Vermont State Senate candidate who supports the consideration of Vermont’s peaceful secession, I am very close to these issues and the paradox is not lost on me.

The prospect of a global treaty enforcing a clean-energy policy or a carbon tax on a global scale seem slim to none. The truth is, rich nations don’t want this bad enough, and poor nations can’t afford it. Aside from the political obstacles to a global climate-change or renewable-energy treaty, there are moral (soverignty) questions as well, unless one is convinced that life on this planet is about to end unless we take aggressive, global action to remove CO2 emissions from our energy systems.

Should “rich” nations like the United States and England tell the “poor” nations like Venezuela and Nigeria that they can’t burn their vast oil reserves, but instead they have to install solar panels and geothermal heat pumps? Of course, I would argue that every country would be better off keeping its oil as a production input (make stuff out of it instead of burning it), and that the best thing they could do is sell some oil now and invest that income into renewable energy for their future. But since the U.S. hasn’t even adopted a salient renewable-energy policy of its own, how could we presume to try to force undeveloped nations to pay a carbon tax?

I believe we’re all envisioning the same green, just, sustainable future, but there are major disagreements in terms of how to get there.

I believe that market forces are our only hope, and the states/nations that invest in domestic renewable energy will show the rest of the world the real values of a “green economy.” Then other states will follow that example. Any state that transitions to renewable energy before fossil fuels run out will have a stronger overall economy, a healthier population, and a stable and affordable energy supply to serve as the foundation of its production economy over the long term.

And I believe that smaller states like Iceland, Germany, Switzerland, New Zealand, Costa Rica, and Vermont have a much stronger chance at achieving this than large states, like the United States, which are permanently wedded to oil and war.

The gigantic size of the fossil fuel markets in the industrialized nations presents a huge political barrier to clean renewable energy. In the U.S., there is simply too much money to be made selling oil and coal; those industries will be untouchable politically until the fossil fuels really run out.

As I demonstrated in this space in our most-recent issue (Vermont Commons, Winter 2010), fossil fuels have been subsidized by the federal government (our tax dollars) at a ratio of 99 to 1 compared with the federal subsidies for clean energy. So what should Vermont do if we want to build a clean, green state with a stable energy future? Since huge amounts of our federal tax dollars and our share of the exploding national debt are going to subsidize oil and coal, how will we also afford to make the necessary subsidies for renewable energy?

Or are you banking on “hope” – that the U.S. government will somehow be fixed and turned into a benevolent empire instead of a corrupt empire?

If that’s all you’ve got, I would like to offer another idea: That Vermonters should chart our own path and show the world how strong and healthy a state can become once it commits to a green economy with a foundation of renewable energy and localized food and manufacturing.

But again, how can Vermont do this while the majority of our tax and government-debt dollars are used for endless global warfare and welfare for fossil fuels and Wall Street?

It’s a good question, and it’s why I see nonviolent secession as a potential means to sustainability. I don’t see states exerting their sovereignty as something that will undermine our hope for a clean energy future. Quite the opposite. Vermont will arguably not be able to create a real...
green economy while part of the United States, if the past and present are any indication of the future. Yet, sadly, the mainstream renewable-energy and climate-change movement in Vermont is apparently in conflict with the Vermont secession/sovereignty movement, as evidenced by the public discord between environmentalist Bill McKibben of 350.org and economist Thomas Naylor of the Second Vermont Republic.

Both sides now
I am very close to this conflict. I have supported, and continue to support, environmentalists like Bill McKibben, though I don’t know him personally. I’ve been to 350.org and other similar “talk a lot but don’t do much” rallies, and although these groups may not be achieving anything tangible at least there is a growing number of people thinking about sustainability. I’m not a member of SVR, but I support the consideration of many of the ideas espoused by Thomas Naylor. He may come across as a radical, with his empire-bashing rhetoric, but he speaks truths that others dare not mention. SVR argues that Vermont sovereignty is a prerequisite for sustainability, and that Mr. McKibben’s efforts are merely pandering to the empire. Mr. McKibben may have a naïve hope for a sudden turn to benevolence by the United States empire, but in this regard he’s no different from most other people.

The irony is this: I believe we’re all envisioning the same green, just, sustainable future, but there are major disagreements in terms of how to get there. So I hope that those who see climate change/renewable energy as “the issue” and those who see sovereignty and good government as “the issue” will soon come to terms with each other and start working together.

Because the truth is, we need both sides of this equation to get to a sustainable future, and Vermont is the perfect place to prove this. I look forward to spending the rest of my life on this earth building that future, in Vermont, through my involvement in Vermont’s business, nonprofits, and government communities. •
Off to Cali for a few days, a work-related trip that promises to be nasty, brutish, and short. Indeed, promises are kept: Flight number one, for which he’d arisen at 3:30, stumbling through the dark past the slumbering cows to the car, is hindered first by an elderly gentleman’s sudden loss of consciousness upon boarding the plane and then by the forced disembarking of the ass at the rear who’d viciously and loudly derided the poor, passed-out fellow for delaying the flight. He’s never been much on authoritarianism; nonetheless, it felt like sweet justice when a pair of stern-faced and side-armed policemen escorted the blowhard back to the terminal.

It was enough to jack his JFK connection and ensure a torturous day that didn’t end until 18 hours after it began. It had been more than two years since he’d traveled by plane, long enough that he’d forgotten that wrung-out feeling of going too far, too fast. As he winged his way across the sky, 33,000 feet above the ground, suckling a complimentary OJ and trying to ease the kinks from his long, bony legs, he couldn’t help but marvel at the brief history of flight and how quickly we’ve adopted it as an assumption. Less than a century since the first commercial flight, and already we complain about it taking 18 hours to travel nearly 4,000 miles. Goodness. Such gall.

Still, it was good for him to get out, to see what the rest of the world is doing and talking about. On his SFO Air Train, bound for the rental-car agency, he counted 14 companions. And of those 14, nine rode with heads down and thumbs fumbling, oblivious to the world beyond smart phone. Two of the remaining five were a pair of 40-something female travel mates, slender and stylish and engaged in conversation about a friend who’d resolved to include the word “beer” in every one of her 2010 Facebook postings. Well. At least they were actually speaking to each other.

And then, driving out of the Bay Area, southeast-bound along a maze of interstate, carried on an endless stream of traffic, past an endless array of opportunities to consume something, anything, fruitlessly searching for a good classic rock station. The hills, lush and beautiful and almost collapsing under the weight of industry; the cars, shiny, new, sleek, seductive.

The funny thing is – and he laughs, actually laughs out loud – it feels just fine.
Change Is
The Earth orbits the Sun at distances that vary by 3,000,000 miles across the year. Volcanoes explode, ice fields melt, sea vents open and close, gasses continually exchange between rock and plants, ocean and atmosphere. Human influence is only one factor in Earth’s climate stability. Accurately engaging the issue of global climate change requires an understanding that the Earth’s climate has never done anything but change. With this in mind we move forward knowing that if the human project is to be successful on planet Earth, it will be highly adaptive in the face of climate – and all other – forces of change.

Design for Change
Good design is design for change. Good design is structurally diverse and not dependent on any single element for its overall success. Good design harnesses the forces of evolution, leveraging both the built and biological environment, and integrates them for maximum resilience. This article briefly overviews strategies for developing biologically adaptive, intentional ecosystems (permacultures) and climate-buffering landscapes (microclimates) in which humans can live more resilient lives if times get more difficult, or even if they don’t.

Adapting to rapid changes entails developing resource systems (both built and biological) that will be functional across a wide range of conditions. This is true for changes in all systems, whether they be financial, cultural, or ecological. What specific challenges would we design for to be adaptive to changes in the global climate? Such changes are likely to include: longer droughts, hotter summers, possibly colder winters, more severe wind events, increased pest success, more acute precipitation events, earlier and later frosts, failure of pollinators, and other irregularities that have always tested humanity’s ability to thrive and survive on this planet.

Specific Climate Challenges
High-performance landscapes and buildings are designed to meet the following characteristics of Earth’s changing climate. Many of these challenges are already occurring in New England:

- Precipitation via disastrous forms (e.g. high volumes of rain, snow, hail).
- Increasing overall success of pests including animal, fungal (e.g. blight), and others.
- Decreasing influence of pollinators.
- Increasing likelihood of drought conditions.
- Increasing likelihood of annual crop failure due to spring flooding.
- Increasing probability of early flowering and fruit-set, and consequent crop failure from frost damage.

Strategies
Neither predominant agricultural models nor most housing and transportation systems are designed to withstand significant climate changes. Landscape-level developments that intention...
ally adapt to these changes employ the following components, among others:

1. Microclimate development including windbreaks, snow-retaining hedgerows, thermal mass via water and stone, and sun-trapping vegetated and/or built arcs. These systems provide a buffer against regional climatic stresses by localizing climate at the site level.

2. High biodiversity of crop species and crop systems, utilizing neighboring warmer and colder climate zone diversity (U.S.D.A. hardiness zones +/- 2 zones) and the intelligence of complex ecosystems. Reviving the genetic diversity lost in the wake of global industrial agriculture is a prerequisite for adapting to rapid change. Since current challenges are so severe – from climate changes to persistent biospheric contamination – we will likely need to not only revive past levels of diversity and health, but evolve greater, unprecedented levels of biodiversity and ecological connectivity.

Microclimate Development
A microclimate is any discrete area within a larger area of differing climate. Microclimates exist unintentionally in nature, but good design creates microclimates intentionally. Since cold is a limiting factor (along with light) in sustainably inhabiting the New England landscape, developing warm, protected microclimates is the top priority here.

Microclimate Development Strategies
The first step in crafting beneficial microclimates is proper site selection, as some landscape features cannot be changed at all or only to a small extent. The second step in localizing your climate is site design. Once a site has been chosen a handful of strategies, planned for and implemented carefully, can optimize the existing climate of the site to more fully meet the needs of the site’s inhabitants.

Design of warm microclimates checklist:
1. Face – southerly, and avoid cold air drainages and dams
   • South-Southwest = warmest
2. Slope – vertical-space harvesting
   • The further poleward the steeper the slope should be to capture the most solar energy.
3. Bowl – solar arc/sun trap
   • Utilize energy-harvesting forms.
4. Minimize radiative losses – provide cover
   • Nighttime losses of heat are the most difficult to avoid.
5. Wind-shelter
   • Buffer and deflect, create eddies, preserve and enhance hedgerows.
6. High mass
   • Stone and water are the primary heat-retaining materials.

Cooling strategies, however, will likely become increasingly important, especially in southern New England, if conditions continue to warm.

**Good design harnesses the forces of evolution, leveraging both the built and biological environment, and integrates them for maximum resilience.**

Optimized microclimates result in the following:
- Lower active energy needs for buildings (less fuel, less cost, less pollution). Example: passive solar house within a passive solar landscape.
- Longer growing seasons relative to the surrounding environment. Example: climate-designed garden spaces that stay frost-free for weeks longer in the spring and especially in fall, than adjacent areas.
- Higher yields from plants and animals, via better growing conditions. Examples: warmer environment for heat-loving crops; cool-shaded spaces for dome-sheltered spaces for plants, animals and buildings.
- More enjoyable, lower stress and healthier human habitats. Longer outdoor living season; more fresh air; more contact with water, plants, living systems; and greater physical activity and mental stimulation. Example: outdoor living spaces comfortable in the summer, warm in the winter.

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7. High absorption (low albedo)
   • Utilize color effectively.
8. Time your microclimate
   • Design for a particular time of day and year, usually whenever limiting factors are most present.

Examples of microclimate-creating features are hills, fields, cliffs/stone, gullies, ridges, groundwater, ponds, lakes, roads, walls, lawns, roofs, and courtyards. Employing such features in the development of climate-protected spaces is more effective than attempting to create new microclimates from scratch.

**Diversity + Connectivity = Resilience**

Of primary importance for increased food security and regional resilience is developing diverse and interconnected food-crop systems. The following strategies highlight the benefits of high-biodiversity, polycultural food systems.

**Many Crops**

Early and late frosts, intensifying drought, heat and cold, and other stresses select against certain crops. A broad range of species with different flowering cues and hardiness capabilities is insurance against poor fruit-sets, pollination failure, and other problems due to capricious weather. A wide array of dry and wet-hardy crops is a hedge against a season of drought or inundation. Intentional genetic diversity in species and variety is fundamental to any resilient ecological system.

**New Crops**

Developing innovative new crossbreeds also helps to ensure resiliency of food systems. For example, crossing a sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*) with a Nanking cherry (*Prunus tomentosa*) can create a next-generation cross that flowers like the Nanking (late, thus avoiding the killing late-spring frosts) but has a larger, sweeter, and more marketable cherry. Hybrid vigor is crucial to develop across plant and animal families. Adapting our food system to ever-changing conditions entails continually increasing the fitness of each component in the system, from human to plant to animal. That is good breeding. Breeding never ends, but continually adjusts to fit changing conditions with each successive generation.

**Warmer and Colder Hardy Crops**

Rapidly warming and cooling trends will probably outpace the agility of current agricultural systems. Durable farming systems are designed to adapt to changes of 10°-15° F warmer or colder within the span of a few decades. This is possible to achieve through highly diverse crops, highly connected agricultural-ecosystems, microclimate buffering, keylining, mycelium webs, and other biological resiliency strategies. Imagine Zone 4 becoming just 10-15 degrees warmer (an average low of -10 F): A diversity of bamboos, palms and bananas could be grown. Some apples can withstand -50º F or colder – a real plus if the global ocean conveyor belt stops or changes direction.

**Evolution as Adaptation to, not Controller of, Change**

The question is not if or how much things are changing; changes in Earth’s climate, in human society, and in every other planetary system are guaranteed by the full faith and backing of the Milky Way galaxy. The question is whether or not we will view such changes as an adaptive challenge – as a challenge to cultivate biodiversity, ecological resilience, and an increasing, not dulling, sensitivity to the possibilities around us. What if our task was fitness within, not attempted control of, the fluid, fluctuating conditions of our existence? •
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I
t was the loons that finally got to Marissa. Her husband Mike being from New Hampshire, they both continue to feel a connection to beautiful Lake Winnipesauke. Marissa read an article that described how, one year recently, perhaps after a January thaw, the loons were fooled by whatever meteorological or ecological signals they divine into thinking spring was at hand, and returned to the lake just in time for a powerful February snowstorm. People discovered their lovely but very dead bodies along the shore, the beaks tucked into their feathers in a dying effort to stay warm. The stranded polar bears in An Inconvenient Truth had troubled Marissa, but the loons’ untimely deaths at Lake Winnipesauke were more than she could take.

An optimist by nature, however, she was not deflated; she was motivated (an attribute she deftly holds on to). “I choose to believe that there’s something unique going on that we can change, and protect species,” says the 33-year-old South Burlington resident.

The path was laid out for her. The Unitarian-Universalist Church in Burlington, which they attend, was organizing “eco-teams” – groups of households who meet with a facilitator, share ideas and information about conserving energy, and encourage each other as they adopt ambitious low-carbon diets. One Sunday after church Marissa and her sister Danielle, who was living with them at the time, walked through the front door with a new vision in mind: In a country where it’s easier to consume than not to, and where self-indulgence masks as necessity, they would practice self-denial.

Mike – 21st-century to the core, facile with the acronyms for every computer part and function, keeper of an electronic menagerie of screens, hard drives, and digital paraphernalia – went on the offensive.

“When Marissa came home she was, ‘We need to cut back on this and this,’ which I immediately translated to not having my high-tech house,” he recalls.

(Speaking of high-tech, what’s that little red light over there? My cell-phone charger? You mean the damn thing stays on even when I’m not charging? Better yank the plug.)

Where was I? Oh yeah; Mike was whining about his computers.

It happens that Mike has a penurious Yankee streak, too – and it revved at higher rpm’s after he got laid off and took a lower-wage job for a medical software company. Their first, tentative efforts at a low-carbon lifestyle unearthed a practical benefit he could relate to.

“Most of the steps you can take end up saving you money,” says Mike. “That’s a big deal to me. If for nothing else, even if you don’t believe in global warming – and some people don’t – it’ll save you money, and you can’t argue against that.”

(“Oh Dumping! I’m busy writing this column for Vermont Commons. How about shutting off that tap? It’s only been whistling FOR 10 MINUTES!”)

Under their new diet, Mike and Marissa had to lose 5,000 pounds – of annual carbon emissions, that is. Their “Atkins” reference was a booklet by David Gershon titled Low Carbon Diet: A 30-Day Program to Lose 5,000 Pounds, described at www.empowermentinstitute.net as “Fun, accessible, easy-to-use guide that will show you how to dramatically reduce your CO2 output in just a month’s time.”

Not all the steps are so much fun. Switching all the light bulbs to compact fluorescents was easy, but keeping the thermostat at 65 degrees the rest of the winter took some getting used to. Marissa and Danielle got fleece blankets with their names on them, to forefend the domestic chill. Mike the New Englander added another layer of clothing without skipping a beat.

They got a low-flow shower head – although “low-flow” has become a misnomer; theirs cuts water-usage in half but maintains high pressure, so Marissa can wash her long hair without a problem. In fact, she’s gotten used to it and compares it favorably to “being blasted by a fire hose.”

But showers is “it” for Marissa, who has given up baths. Danielle, before moving out, cut back from daily baths to one a week, unless she really needed to unwind.

They manipulated their finances to buy a new ENERGYSTAR® refrigerator, one of the most important conservation investments a household can make. (Let’s see... we bought ours when? Hmmmm... when we moved into this house in 1992. Well, let’s not dwell on that.)

One of their biggest sacrifices has been reducing their use of the dryer. No more “super-soft fluffy shirts” for Marissa. Mike draws the line there: “I have to dry my clothes,” he insists. Sometimes, though, it’s Mike who plays the eco card. They’re learning to cut each other slack, knowing each will bring different tolerances to this family endeavor.

Clearly it’s working. Marissa and Mike have shed not 5,000, but 12,900 pounds, all the more impressive since they started from an emissions footprint about 30 percent smaller than the average U.S. household’s.

Outside the house, they’re keeping their automobile tires properly inflated, reducing gas consumption. Fortunately, that improves how the car handles, which Mike enjoys. (That reminds me – I’ve been driving around with the sound system in the car for a week. Great; now I have to worry about my carbon tire tracks.)

“...The main goal,” says Marissa, “is to be aware of what you do and your impact on the world, and find ways to make a dramatic difference in your life.”

There’s a little town house in South Burlington where six tons of CO2 isn’t going into the atmosphere anymore. There are houses all over Vermont that emit dozens of tons of carbon. The question that confronts each of us is, where would we rather live? •
Climate change may very well be the most complex socio-economic, political, scientific problem ever confronted by the inhabitants of the planet earth. And it will not be solved by hundreds or even thousands of teeny-boppers and college kids shouting pithy expressions like “350.org.” Nor is it any more likely to be solved by 178 heads of state meeting in Kyoto or by 193 meeting in Copenhagen, as was recently the case.

The prevailing scientific theory explaining global warming is that climate change is caused by excessive carbon emissions produced by human sources such as automobiles, power plants, and manufacturing plants. To curb carbon emissions, political activists like Middlebury College’s Bill McKibben consider one and only one option – namely, trying to persuade Congress to tighten carbon-emission standards nationwide. His so-called 350.org campaign is aimed at convincing Congress to set emission standards at levels that will ensure that atmospheric CO2 does not exceed 350 parts per million, a level thought to be safe for human survival.

There is a problem with the McKibben paradigm. Politically speaking, it is unbelievably naive. McKibben comes from the wing of the political left which truly believes that only the federal government can solve all of our problems all of the time. What he fails to grasp is that the federal government, particularly the Congress, is owned, operated, and controlled by Wall Street and Corporate America, a group that would be quite content with no carbon-emission standards whatsoever. They like things just the way they are. No matter how many 350.org rallies Mr. McKibben organizes, nothing is going to change. The U.S. government has lost its moral authority and is unfixable.

Not content with trying to influence Congress, McKibben vigorously promoted the recent international conference on climate change held in Copenhagen. It was as though he were betting that if the U.S. Congress could not solve the problem of climate change, then surely a global body of nearly two hundred heads of state could do so. That’s quite a heroic leap of faith!

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On the final day of the 12-day conference an agreement was reached that was hailed by President Barack Obama as “a significant breakthrough.” What Obama, who McKibben refers to as “the most interesting politician of my lifetime,” called a breakthrough was a nonbinding agreement in which no one was committed to anything. The Copenhagen agreement was a complete sham. Nothing at all was accomplished.

But why did this come as a surprise to anyone? The track record of big international organizations such as the League of Nations or the United Nations is singularly unimpressive. How many wars has the U.N. prevented? Certainly none in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Palestine, or Africa. Indeed, assembling 200 of the world’s leaders in one room would appear to be one of the least likely ways to solve any problem.

As economist Leopold Kohr said in his prescient book The Breakdown of Nations, “There seems only one cause behind all forms of social misery: bigness. Whenever something is wrong, something is too big.” Kyoto and Copenhagen were both too big to accomplish anything. So too are the United States, China, India, Russia, and Brazil. Not to mention the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

If there is a path to the solution of the problem of global climate change, it is highly unlikely that it will be initiated by either China or the United States, the two largest producers of CO2 emissions. It will be initiated by a handful of smaller, more manageable countries building a coalition of like-minded nations, one country at a time. Only after the coalition has reached a size of, say, 50 or 60 countries, should negotiations begin with the United States and China. Such a process could take years, not 12 days. This is not kids’ stuff!

Both 350.org and the Copenhagen climate-change conference were complete flops. McKibben and his climate-change colleagues should take a large dose of the elixir known as humility. Hard work should replace breast-beating and self-aggrandizement. We might all gain from the experience.
For 33 years, Project Censored (PC), at Sonoma State University (SSU) in northern California, has engaged in pioneering research on, and advocacy for, First Amendment issues. Founded by Carl Jensen in 1976, Project Censored is now headed by Professor Ben Frymer. On July 1, Frymer took over from Professor Peter Phillips, who stepped down after 13 years of distinguished service as director. PC works cooperatively “with numerous independent [U.S.] media groups” (according to the organization), primarily to train SSU students “in media research and First Amendment issues and the advocacy for, and protection of, free press rights in the United States.”

For more than three decades it has “trained over 1,500 students in investigative research,” and continues doing so through “a partnership of faculty, students, and the community,” cooperatively engaged in “research on important national news stories that are underreported, ignored, misrepresented, or censored by the U.S. corporate media.”

Repealing Glass-Steagall facilitated a financial coup d’etat that “cemented the takeover of the government by a small class of connected insiders” who run the country for their own self-interest.

In its annual editions and daily on its web site (projectcensored.org), PC offers the best of what the corporate media censor or suppress. Censored 2010 provides more of such information than ever, and credit goes to Peter Phillips, Mickey Huff, and the entire Project Censored team. As Dahr Jamail ends his introduction, “we are fortunate to have (a valued) ally like Project Censored.”

Tricia Boreta and Peter Phillips explain why: “Because the absence of real news from corporate media has never been so complete”: “Lies, deception, propaganda, superficial coverage, and overt censorship are on the rise,” and as a result democracy is being willfully destroyed.

Twenty-eight professors, nationally, have incorporated PC “curricula and investigative procedures into their classrooms.” They, and a free and open Internet, are the future. But not without a long, tough struggle against powerful dark forces determined to hold on and control all news and information sources. It’s for public outrage and committed organizations like PC to stop them. It’s our country and our choice.

PC 2010’s Top Five Censored Stories
(1) U.S. Congress Sells Out to Wall Street
Americans get the best democracy money can buy, and it comes more than ever today from Wall Street. “Since 2001, eight of the most troubled firms have donated $64.2 million to congressional candidates, presidential candidates and the Republican and Democratic parties.” Is it surprising that they own them? As senators, Barack Obama and John McCain got “a combined total of $3.1 million.”

Influential House and Senate finance and banking committee members got $5.2 million from bailout recipients like Goldman Sachs, Citibank, AIG, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and others. In the last election cycle Obama received at least $4.3 million from the same ones, investments that yielded big returns.

From 1998 to 2007, financial and banking companies “spent $1.7 billion on federal campaign contributions and another $3.4 billion on lobbyists.” In 1999, Glass-Steagall was repealed, the landmark 1933 law that curbed speculation and separated commercial from investment banks and insurance companies. In January 2000, the Commodity Futures Modernization Act legitimized swap agreements and other hybrid instruments, which prevented regulatory oversight of derivatives and leveraging and thus let Wall Street firms legally pillage and speculate, which they did.

The result was a financial coup d’etat “cementing (projectcensored.org), PC offers the best of what news stories that are underreported, ignored, and range from national and international stories to those that affect local communities.

(2) U.S. Schools Are More Segregated Today than in the 1970s
According to a UCLA Civil Rights report, “schools in the U.S. are 44 percent non-white, and . . . Latinos and blacks, the two largest minority groups, attend schools more segregated today than during the civil rights movement forty years ago.” The result is:

- unequal education that denies disadvantaged youths access to college and better jobs;
- growing numbers of those youths become “virtually unemployable” for anything other than menial labor or the military; which makes them vulnerable to future poverty, poor health, gangs, crime, and incarceration in America’s gulag prison system in each of the 50 states.

The report stresses the need for “leaders who recognize that we have a common destiny in an America where our children grow up together, knowing and respecting each other, and are all given the educational tools that prepare them for success in our society.”

Instead, Barack Obama, like his predecessor, backs privatizing public education, destroying a 374-year tradition in America, ending government responsibility for it, and making it another business profit center at the expense of future generations of disadvantaged youths.

(3) Toxic Waste Behind Somali Pirates
By blaming the victims, the international community and dominant media have ignored the “unregulated (IUU) fleets from around the world that have been poaching and dumping toxic waste in Somali waters since the fall of the Somali government eighteen years ago.” Foreign interests have been using hundreds of vessels to loot “the country’s food supply,” according to the High Seas Task Force (HSTF), stealing “an estimated $450 million in seafood from Somali waters annually” and ruining the livelihoods of Somali fishermen.

Instead of rectifying the problem, the UN passed “aggressive resolutions that entitle and encourage transgressors to wage war on Somali pirates.” NATO, the EU, and other countries issued similar orders. Starving Somalis are responding as they have before: “aggressive resolutions that entitle and encourage transgressors to wage war on Somali pirates.”

Instead of resolving the problem, the UN passed “aggressive resolutions that entitle and encourage transgressors to wage war on Somali pirates.”

(4) Nuclear Waste Pools in North Carolina
Progress Energy’s North Carolina Shearon Harris nuclear plant “contains the largest radioactive waste storage pools in the country.” If the cooling system malfunctions, “the resulting fire would be virtually unquenchable and could trigger a nuclear meltdown.” According to Helen Caldicott and other experts, the likelihood of such a malfunction happening somewhere is virtually certain — the result of human error, faulty maintenance, a terrorist attack, or some
Behind Bars, continued from page 13

cover the roughly 1,600 inmates incarcerated in 2009, and many of the 7,000 to 8,000 people who pass through the state’s jails annually.

Allen reported that Dr. John Leppman, a PHS physician, says he typically fields 20 to 30 calls on a weekend. Nurses can work 12-hour shifts. One nurse said she was ordered to work 36 hours straight because no one else was available, Allen reported.

When asked whether more registered nurses will be on duty under the contract with Correct Care, Dr. Burroughs-Biron, who has been involved in the contract negotiations, said, “The hours will be different, yes.”

Though she declined to talk about specific staffing recommendations, she added that the contract includes new “features,” and she talked about how in the Massachusetts system it’s typical for one doctor to be on call for 10,000 inmates, compared with 1,600 in Vermont.

“For us, the bottom line is getting the appropriate management team in that will make sure that what we want done is what is being done,” says Burroughs-Biron. “It’s a matter of management as well as line staff adhering to policy – because I can write fabulous policy, fabulous directives, and if people don’t adhere to those, it really doesn’t matter in the long run.”

It isn’t clear though, whether, under the final contract, Correct Care will be required, for example, to provide medication immediately, or to staff facilities with registered nurses on weekends. Lawmakers say they have no authority to require that the Douglas administration incorporate specific rules into its contracts with companies, though Rep. Alice Emmons and Sen. Dick Sears, both members of the Legislature’s Corrections Oversight Committee, say they might introduce legislation that would address these issues.

More broadly, Sears says, the Legislature has no control over which company the Department of Corrections decides to hire. “It’s really the administration’s decision,” Sears says. “I had serious qualms about the prior one, and I expressed them to the then-commissioner, and they went ahead with them. Unfortunately, that company lived up to our concerns.”

Emmons says the Legislature cannot micro-manage the details of the contract. “We can give general direction in terms of what we’d like to see, but in terms of getting into the nitty-gritty and the specifics, that’s all negotiated with the Department of Corrections and the vendor.”

Lipschutz, of the Prisoner’s Rights Office, takes issue with this assessment of the Legislature’s authority. He says if legislators wanted to, they could pass a law that required any contract with a private prison health service in the state of Vermont to include certain elements they deemed necessary. Lipschutz says that instead, legislators provide “theoretical oversight,” and, in effect, allow the Department of Corrections free rein to run the justice system.

“That’s a classic pass-the-buck thing,” Lipschutz says. “They don’t want to do it, so they’re just saying we can’t do it. We can’t make the Department of Corrections do anything. We’re the Legislature;
we make the laws of the state, but the Department of Corrections, they’re above the law. We can’t require them to do anything in their contract.

“That’s absurd. That’s just the legislator abandoning his or her responsibility.”

A bill requiring that medications be administered immediately would have a direct impact on inmates’ health, Lipschutz says. “What goes on … routinely is that people come in off the streets, and they’re not allowed to have any of their own medication. We understand the security concerns about this. The inmate says this is penicillin and it’s actually OxyContin; how are we supposed to know, right?”

Legislature sitting it out?

Lipschutz says the Corrections Department needs to control possible illegal drug use in prison, but there are other ways to deal with the problem that can create better conditions for inmates. He suggests they could set up a prescription with a pharmacy in advance for patients who are reporting in, and create a system for people who come off the street to get their medications the next day.

“If they cared, they could figure this one out,” Lipschutz says.

Matthew Valerio, the Defender General, supports a bill to address the issue, but so far lawmakers haven’t taken it up.

“Frankly, I’ve had discussions with legislators, but at present I don’t have anybody sponsoring it,” Valerio says. “My guess is they’ll do something. They’ll attach it to something else. This isn’t going to be a priority for anybody; this is going to be an add-on to an existing bill somewhere along the way.”

Sears suggested that a legislative committee might hold hearings on Ellis’ death to figure out “what we can learn from it.”

Lipschutz said a hearing would be counterproductive at this point. “The whole system is rotten to the core as far as I’m concerned, and holding hearings on it isn’t going to change anything,” he says. “I wouldn’t be opposed to hearings, but am I going to go around advocating, ‘You guys should hold hearings on this’? Nah, I’m not going to waste my time on that.”

Correct Care will be the fourth for-profit inmate medical company the state has contracted with since 1996, and Pallito hopes it will be the last for a while.

“If this doesn’t work, the next question is, is there any company we can work with?” Pallito says. “We’re starting from scratch with this company, and I have high hopes . . . so if it doesn’t work, it’s going to be disappointing.”

Why did the state stop providing services in-house?

As Rep. Alice Emmons puts it, “People felt [contracting] was more cost effective.”

Is it?

“I don’t think that people are convinced either way. We had problems, but we also didn’t have the incarcerated population that you do now. You need a medical person, a psychiatrist, on board that’s employed by the DOC when it’s run in-house, and sometimes those positions are hard to fill.”

With the Corrections population spread throughout the state – from Newport and St. Albans in the north, to Springfield, Windsor, and Rutland in the south – psychiatric staff members would almost have to clone themselves to provide services during low-staffing periods such as weekends. The question remaining is whether it will be any different if the physicians and mental health experts are paid, instead, by a profit-taking corporation.
Sap Line Shredding: Spring skiing in parallel with Vermont’s working landscape. (BRIAN MOHR/EMBERPHOTO.COM)
women of all ages, but predominantly adolescents, were asked to problem-solve a situation: medicine for a man’s wife was needed to keep her alive but, due to lack of money, was unattainable. What to do? Girls and women came up with strategies to get the needed medicine by befriending the pharmacist or bonding together with friends to raise the money. In other words, relational strategies.

Boys and men, on the other hand, tended to weigh the pharmacist’s legal rights as a tax-paying capitalist against the wife’s need for intervention. In other words, strategies based in abstraction.

Let’s be clear: the distinct worlds that Chodorow and Gilligan described are, of course, not universal. Other cultures, particularly land-based and indigenous ones, support the development of their men with less rigid pathways to individuation. And since the women’s and men’s movements in the dominant society, many of today’s children have been raised by fathers providing mindful care and/or mothers with successful careers. Yet, I sense that essentialism or absolutist gender qualities were never in Chodorow and Gilligan’s minds; rather these hearty feminists were exploring ways to rethink that ineffable place where biology, psyche, historical context, and social construct meet and play ball.

Be that as it may, ingrained social mores do not change that fast or that universally, and so it may not strike us as odd that more men bring enthusiasm to a politic that appears to enhance separateness. The word “secession” itself is linked to a host of related concepts like “autonomy,” “separatism,” “schism,” “nullification.” On the surface, such language may fit the male psyche like a jigsaw piece nestled into its perfect mate.

**The whole**

I say “appears to enforce separateness.” Secession’s stated emphasis on autonomy doesn’t begin to reveal the whole. Let’s face it: forging good personal relationships and true democracy in a “family” of 300 million is one dismal prospect. Communication, connection, and the “personal touch” are only to be had in groups that don’t need supercomputers, satellite communications, foreign wars, and wireless surveillance to stay afloat.

Or shall we say: a people without a nation-state is like a fish without a bicycle. The truth is that a nation-community like Vermont is far more relational than mass technological society. It’s relational in the sense that its citizens meet around chicken pot pie, apple cobbler and tea, herds of sheep, P.T.A., and town meetin’ to envision their future. And again in that relationships with nearby and far-away nation-communities call for nurtured tending through trade, mutual aid, and respectful agreements.

In the end, women may not be the sole proprietors of humanity’s connectedness and caring, but, needless to say, we surely have something essential to offer the work of healing and survival in today’s sad, desperate world.

Maybe the word “secession” is a misnomer. Creating sovereign community is a process: a re-forging of the body politic to enhance connectedness after all the aggression and alienation of the nation-state, a re-nurturing of human relationships and caring for the motherland.

Perhaps women, with all our ingenuity, might invent some different ways to reach such an agreeable goal. Maybe we can use words like “solidarity” and “pro-choice,” instead of “secession” and “separatism.” Ride down the avenue on white horses like the suffragettes. Honor our herstory and all the brave women who have fought for what is small and beautiful. Start Vermont consciousness-raising groups. Burn our social security cards. Take back the country – all the while, weaving our bodies/our selves into a shared world that is better than this one. •

**Women have something essential to offer the work of healing and survival in today’s sad, desperate world.**
Democracy requires free, open, vibrant, and diverse media, elements totally absent under our corporate-driven system.

(5) Europe Blocks U.S. Toxic Products
Unlike the U.S., European countries “are moving toward a . . . model of insisting on environmental and consumer safety” that requires assessing thousands of chemicals for their potential toxic effects. New regulations will mandate that companies seeking market access eliminate toxic substances and produce safer electronics, automobiles, toys, and cosmetics.

Without compliance, the products of hundreds of U.S. companies may be excluded from European markets, and according to Mark Schapiro, author of Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products and What’s at Stake for American Power, only 5 percent of all chemicals in the U.S. have undergone even minimal testing.” Further, new EPA requirements consider the “costs to industry” in assessing an “unreasonable threat to public health” as a reason to side with industry and keep regulations minimal to nil.

The divergence between U.S. and European regulation has made this country “the dumping ground for toxic toys, electronics and cosmetics. We produce and consume the toxic materials from which other countries around the world are protected.”

Truth Emergency: Inside the Military/Industrial/Media Empire
Former PC Director Peter Phillips and former Associate Director Mickey Huff discuss the terrible toll from America’s imperial wars, with special emphasis on the carnage in Iraq. A “literal Truth Emergency” exists, given the absence of “a truly free press” to report accurately on events and developments abroad or at home at a time of grave economic crisis and misdirected spending for militarism and banker bailouts.

In January 2008, a Truth Emergency Movement held its first summit to devise ways to promote and distribute truths to a population starved for them and defeat the military-industrial-media complex’s dominance. Summit leaders quoted famed journalist George Seldes (1890-1995), saying that “Journalism’s job is not impartial ‘balanced’ reporting. Journalism’s job is to tell the people what is really going on.”

It’s for committed alternative sources to counter corporate media propaganda, and for citizens to turn to them for real news, information, and analysis to stay informed. Otherwise, a free and open society is impossible.

Pentagon Propaganda, Spin, and Lies about America’s Imperial Wars
The lies, propaganda and spin come from dominant domestic and international media sources: so-called National Public Radio, Public Broadcasting, and the BBC; state propaganda services like Voice of America; many figures in academia and the clergy; and ideologically driven conservative and extremist organizations that control most vital information given the public. Without them imperial wars are impossible, because popular opposition could be marshaled against them. Most Americans today distrust the popular media. It’s time they directed that sentiment toward real change.

Fear and Favor: Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)
FAIR’s Peter Hart writes about how the global economic crisis has impacted corporate newsrooms and the media overall, as “owners who gambled on debt-financed expansions” have been hammered by shrinking advertising and subscriber revenues, with no light at the end of the tunnel in sight.

Surveys show that large majorities of broadcast and print journalists say financial pressures have increased, and about one-fourth cite considerable owner and advertiser influence in their newsrooms. Consider Fox News, for example. A summer 2001 Seth Ackerman FAIR article cited its “extraordinary right-wing tilt” as “The Most Biased Name in News.” Its founder and president, Roger Ailes, was described by former George H.W. Bush aide Lee Atwater as operating on “two speeds: attack and destroy.” Reputedly, he only hires on-air staff who assure him they’re Republicans, yet Fox insists its reporting is “fair and balanced.”

The Hyperreality of a Failing Corporate Media System
Andrew Hobbs and Peter Phillips explain that “Hyperreality is the inability to distinguish between what is real and what is not,” typical of how the corporate media operate, especially Fox News. Since most people rely on television for information, they’re “embedded in a state of excited delirium and knowinglessness,” the same sentiment expressed by an old TV sitcom law professor complaining about new students coming into his classroom “with a head full of mush.”

In the corporate media, model democrats like Hugo Chavez are called strongmen, autocrats and dictators. Figures like Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck become folk heroes for the extreme right. Others as bad get prime-time exposure, while real journalists are nowhere in sight.

Electoral Fraud, Eroding Democracy, and Media Complicity in 2008
At a time of corporate-controlled electronic voting, it’s easier than ever to rig elections, and convincing evidence shows that’s precisely what happened in 2000 and 2004. The U.S. Supreme Court hijacked the 2000 election even though the Florida recount showed Gore won the state and the election. Fraud was even more extreme in 2004, denying John Kerry the office he won.

The process repeated in 2008, in the form of millions of disappeared votes with electronic ease. Without verifiable paper receipts or paper ballots, however, recounts aren’t possible. Today’s privatized voting process lets corporate interests decide at the ballot box who’s elected and who’s not. It’s even easier when the losing side won’t complain and when the dominant media support the sham.

Today’s dominant media system is bottom-line driven, unresponsive to public needs, and concerned only about the interests of wealth and power. As a result, fiction substitutes for fact. News is carefully filtered, dissent marginalized and denigrated, and supporting the powerful substitutes for full and accurate reporting. The fallout has impacted wars called liberating ones; civil liberties are suppressed for our own good; Washington has become a wholly owned subsidiary of Wall Street; and patriotism means supporting militarism, global dominance, lawless ness, torture, and an Orwellian society in which “war is peace, freedom is slavery, [and] ignorance is strength.”

The Project Censored team has made PC a national treasure. Democracy requires free, open, vibrant, and diverse media, elements totally absent under our corporate-driven system. PC holds it accountable by revealing what that system suppresses. It’s our best hope to restore freedom in a healthy and functioning democracy, something very much absent in today’s corporate-dominated America. **
Message in a Bottle, continued from page 7

**Scarcity, ecological caps, and preservation allocation**

Six public water supplies have experienced insufficient water quantity to meet their water demands. Water shortages have occurred at Jericho Heights (Jericho), Ogwheels (Milton), Magic Village (Londonderry), Deep Rock Water P.D. #8 (Barre Town), Eaton’s Mobile Home Park (Royalton), and Windy Hill Acres (Springfield; WSD, 2003). Monitoring of groundwater extraction should help prevent these problems in the future.

A future threat to surface and groundwater is the projected need for cooling water for power plants, and nuclear power in particular. By 2030, global energy consumption is expected to grow by 50 percent. New England’s projected growth in this period is 15 percent (Nature, 2008). If Vermont decides to meet this need with nuclear power — a source that may be making a comeback — the increased demand upon scarce water resources will be exacerbated. For example, the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant meets 35 percent of the peak electrical requirements of the state and uses the adjacent Connecticut River for condenser cooling water.” It uses a boiling water reactor which, according to David Lochbaum, a nuclear engineer with the Union of Concerned Scientists, “takes approximately 19 million gallons of surface water a day out of the Connecticut River during the summer, and less in the winter.”

If nuclear energy is expanded, an increase in energy needs will require increased withdrawal from the Connecticut River and, at some point, surrounding sources, especially if the Connecticut River’s ecosystem begins to falter due to the increased thermal discharge. Groundwater resources could become a logical option and will become increasingly vulnerable to extraction with a rise in energy – especially nuclear energy – consumption. All of this would be precipitated by a rising population and the lack of an alternative energy infrastructure in place.

At some point, to offset the risk to ecosystems and aquifers, groundwater extraction will have to have an ecological cap. Withdrawal should be capped when it begins to negatively impact various aspects of the ecosystem, as determined by independent scientific research teams funded by fees on bottled water companies. Such a cap would be placed upon the companies’ withdrawal and/or collection limits previous to new or reissued permit registration. Companies taking groundwater would be educated and made aware beforehand of their growth potential in a specific region so they can anticipate and adjust to the cost of doing business in Vermont accordingly.

Some percentage of the revenue, perhaps 2 percent of 3 percent, should be spent on preservation of the resource. This percentage would go back not just to the state, but also to the exact region within most impacted by the collection. Under the provisions of an ecological cap and preservation fees, state authorities and bottled-water entrepreneurs could calculate the actual growth potential of their business within Vermont. The companies would then be able to prepare for their

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**A future threat to surface and groundwater is the projected need for cooling water for power plants, and nuclear power in particular.**

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“Collection” and “artesian” are terms wielded by bottled-water companies to deny that they are extracting groundwater.

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I don’t know if you’ve noticed it, but secession is in the air.

First of all, a fellow named Bill Miller has started a new website, SecessionNews.com, and it is a Drudge Report-like compilation of anything connected with secession across the land and around the world. It is an extraordinary endeavor, and it reflects a great deal of talk about, interest in, separatism and independence these days. Miller, a retired computer engineer, has undertaken this, he says, because he has a passionate interest in getting Americans to understand that secession is a legitimate and honorable political strategy. Increasingly, it seems, they’re listening.

**Libertarians are important allies for secessionists,** since they get to the nullification/secession place with only a few prompts if they’re not already there.

A regular contributor to the Miller site is Russell Longcore, who has also started up a new site of his own, the bluntly named DumpDC.com. Longcore, who seems to have insurance and publishing businesses in Georgia, writes long and vigorously about secession in his fairly regular posts. “Secession,” he says, “is on the lips of many Americans today. When they look at a Federal Government that is spinning wildly out of control, state secession begins to have an allure as a remedy. American has gone from a nation of sovereign states with a carefully defined Federal Government to a nation where states are but subservient territories of a rapacious, tyrannical ruling entity that entirely ignores any restrictions on its power.” His site figures to do something about that.

Last December, another new voice was added to the cause, from something called AttacktheSystem.com that considers itself to represent the “radical Left.” It argued that secession should be supported because it was the best way to bring down the United States Empire and all that it stands for, including its support for corporate capitalism – long time goals of the traditional Left. Vermont liberals of the Sanders persuasion should take a look at it (“Why the Radical Left Should Consider Secession”).

In January, one notable event, carried by the AP to the lengths of the land, was the launch of the campaign by Dennis Steele and Peter Garritano (and others) for an independent Vermont, but you know all that. You might not have known that another secession campaign, or something very close to it, was launched just before that in Texas, where the Texas Nationalist Movement (“Independence. In our lifetime”) announced its support for the Libertarian candidate for governor, Debra Medina. She is “in line with the core beliefs of our organization,” it said, and she introduced in 11 states (Washington, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Missouri, Mississippi, Kentucky, Illinois, Maryland, and Rhode Island).

Last year (also tracked on this site), Tenth Amendment resolutions were introduced in 33 states, passed both houses in five, and were okayed by the governors in two. The movement looks to be gaining momentum again.

In February, that movement held a Tenth Amendment Summit, in Atlanta, assembling state representatives and candidates from across the country for a one-day closed meeting on strategies, and the next day hearing presentations from Judge Napolitano, the Fox commentator, and Ray McBerry, a secessionist candidate for Georgia Governor.

Also in February, there took place a remarkable conference boldly announced as on “Nullification, Secession, and the Human Scale of Political Order” in Charleston, South Carolina, maybe the first-ever large-scale scholarly conference on secession open to the public. It featured many leading secessionist scholars, including Donald Livingston, Thomas DiLorenzo, SVR’s Thomas Naylor, Marshall DeRosa, Kyle Scott, and yours truly, and was attended by about 100 people, an impressive enough turnout considering the admission cost of $200-$400.

A national Tea Party convention was also in February, not exactly a secessionist event, but a measure of the underlying discontent that is leading people at least to protest the system (and the debt) they’ve been given and start thinking (some of them) about alternatives.

So what’s going on?

Basically, of course, it is the growing dissatisfaction, in blue states as well as red, and the purple and mauves, too, with a government grown too big, complicated, and corrupt to function. It can’t do health care, swine flu, stimulus payments, carbon limits, education, jobs, corporate bonus control, or airport security. It can send 30,000 soldiers to the sinkhole of Afghanistan, because Congress long ago gave up any role in military policy and the peace movement long ago folded up, but that’s what presidents always do when they want to seem to be strong. Reagan invades Granada, Bush I Panama and Iraq, Clinton Kosovo, Bush II Iraq and Afghanistan. All for no reason other than showing that they can do something in Washington.

But there’s more to it than that. There is a deep and fundamental perception that corporate America – briefly, Wall Street – really is in the saddle and runs the country, and for its own benefit, of course. Very successfully, too, and with complete impunity. It cares nothing for public opinion and has no shame. This may always have been true, but there used to be the accepted illusion that the corporations had some interest in making the people happy, or prosperous (“What’s good for General Motors is good for the country”). Now that the country owns General Motors, these same corporations make no pretense that they are interested in spreading the wealth. And it is because the public perceives it – unconscious if not knowingly – that there is the general sense of unease, of anger.

Many of those feeling this unease and anger, of course, don’t know what to do about it other than going to tea parties and shouting at town halls. But it is clear that a great many others are following the inexorable, logical train that leads to secessionist thinking: this system is broken and can’t be fixed, party (including third party) politics is part of the problem not the solution, armed rebellion doesn’t have a chance against an apparently ruthless state, and the only way to change things and have a chance of a better world is through peaceful secession – getting out, not getting back. It has, too, the virtue of seeming to be doable – not like revolution or regime change or socialism or any other variant of extreme politics.

It’s not that I have any great faith that the mass of people of this nation use logic, but it just feels as if more people are following this line of thinking these days than… than… any time since, say, 1865.
The Commonwealth of Vermont presents...
A 21st Century Statement of Principles
Share your ideas and solutions with us at www.vcommons.org/platform

Political Independence. Our primary objective is political independence for our once and future Vermont republic, through the legitimate constitutional process of nonviolent secession from the United States.

Entrusting the Commons. We advocate the creation and maintenance, through legislation and oversight, of a Vermont "Commons" - environmental, cultural, social, informational - to value and protect all that we Vermonters share in common - our air, our water, our land, and our property, both private and communal.

Human Scale. We believe that life is best lived on a human scale, in face-to-face contacts with neighbors and friends, in communities that are decentralized in structure. Small is still beautiful.

Financial Independence. We support the creation and use of a publicly owned Bank of Vermont that would issue low-interest loans and foster a peer-to-peer mutual credit system, and the creation and use of a statewide alternative currency system.

Food Sovereignty. We support family-owned farms and small businesses that produce innovative, premium-quality, healthy, locally manufactured products.

Election Integrity. We recommend that Vermont, in conducting its local and state elections, replace all corporately-owned electronic voting machines with the time-honored traditional hand counting procedure used by each Vermont town's board of civil authority, encouraging a process that is open, public, and transparent.

Energy Independence. We encourage 21st century approaches that move us away from our reliance on imported fossil fuels and centralized electrical generation, and toward policies that encourage import-substitution, and a more local and diversified energy portfolio, with emphasis on self-sufficient home 2.0 business-generated energy.

Homestead Security. We celebrate Vermont's small, clean, green, sustainable, socially responsible towns, farms, businesses, schools, and places of worship. We encourage the diversification of our 21st century Vermont's working landscape, and the creation of more opportunities for Vermonters to produce their own food, energy, and value-added products.

Education for Democracy. All young Vermonters should have open access to learning opportunities that enable them to realize their own unique potentials and to participate actively and responsibly in their communities and society at large. Drawing on the "Vermont Design for Education," we advocate the replacement of federally mandated standardized testing and rigid rote learning with "hands on" community-centered education, and the creation of a "communiversity" in every Vermont town's public school.

Economic Solidarity. We encourage Vermonters to buy locally produced products from local merchants, rather than purchase from giant, out-of-state mega-stores. We support fair and open trade with nearby states and provinces.

Power Sharing. Vermont's strong democratic tradition is grounded in its town meetings. We favor devolution of political power from the state back to local communities, making the governing structure for towns, schools, hospitals, and social services much like that of small decentralized states like Switzerland. Shared power also underlies our approach to international relations.

Equal Opportunity. We support equal access for all Vermont citizens to high quality education, preventative and routine health care, housing, and employment.

Tension Reduction. We urge the Vermont state legislature and governor to issue a call for the return of Vermont National Guard troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, and the other 700 plus U.S. military bases in more than 150 countries around the world. Consistent with both Vermont's long "live and let live" tradition and policies of nonviolence, we do not condone state-sponsored violence inflicted either by the military or law enforcement officials. We support a voluntary citizens' brigade to reduce tension and restore order in the event of civil unrest, and to provide emergency assistance when natural disasters occur. We are opposed to any form of military conscription. Tension reduction is the bedrock principle on which all international conflicts are to be resolved.