On July 10, thousands of Oklahomans marched and rallied in Bricktown to support the Black Lives Matter Movement. The peaceful event was held with the full support and cooperation of the OKC Police Department, who provided security, while accepting handshakes and hugs from attenders. Speakers called for the work to ensure full equality, rights and safety to continue in OKC and across the country, to build trust and to solve problems together.

Showing Up for Racial Justice Chapter Forming in OKC

SURJ Mission: Organizing white allies for the Black Lives Matter movement

Group meets with OKC Police Chief to discuss concerns about police-community relations.
COMMENTARY

Earth Is the Issue in 2016 Elections

By Nathaniel Batchelder

There’s no future in playing politics with our survival!

Many Americans believe something that is not true. They believe that global warming is a hoax, is scientifically controversial, or is just not important.

For more than 50 years, climate scientists have warned that increasing emissions of CO2 and methane from human sources were warming the atmosphere, and that this would have dire consequences for nature and society if not abated and reversed.

Because the warnings have been ignored - even ridiculed - these gases to risen to levels that could have been prevented fairly easily had humanity acted 20, 30, or 40 years ago.

Concentrations of “greenhouse gases” in the atmosphere have risen high enough to predict with confidence melting icecaps, ferocious weather events, a hotter world with threatened agriculture, and rising seas that will force tens of millions to move inland from coastal cities.

Zoologists report that our human numbers, our consumptive lifestyles, and our warming the atmosphere are causing a “Sixth Great Extinction” of species. Some predict that within 200 to 300 years – unless human behaviors change dramatically - more than half of species now in existence will go extinct, and human numbers will be reduced by half or more.

Despite the warnings, action to reduce carbon emissions – most important-ly by shifting from fossil fuel use to solar and wind power - is stalled by politicians who reject evidence of the problem.

One candidate boasts that he “Digs Coal.” Another says global warming is “a myth.” One Party’s platform says, “Coal is a low-cost and abundant energy source with hundreds of years of supply” and, “We will end the EPA’s war on coal,” and, “We are committed to approving the Keystone XL Pipeline.”

Earth does hang the balance, and voters this November will choose an administration and Congress that are part of the solution, or part of the problem. Mother Nature wants America to vote wisely, and Mother Nature bats last.

PostScript:

Yes, the eco-News IS grim, but humanity’s ennobling qualities – the characteristics that make being human worthwhile - persist through the best and the worst: compassion, love, family, community, loyalty, persistence, determination, independence, creativity, curiosity, adventurousness, joy, delight, etc.

Practice them every moment, for they are our reasons for being alive.

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Republicans Subpoena Environmental Groups

By Nathaniel Batchelder
Director, The Peace House in Oklahoma City

Why would Oklahoma’s US Representatives Frank Lucas and Jim Bridenstine sign a subpoena with other Republican members of the US House Committee on Science, Space & Technology to nine environmental organizations working on global warming and climate change?

One of the organizations is Bill McKibben’s “350.org” - perhaps the world’s foremost global warming concern group. Twenty seven years ago, McKibben published “The End of Nature” warning that emissions of CO2 from burning coal, oil and gas were warming the atmosphere, and that this would threaten nature and humanity.

More recently, 350.org and other groups report that oil companies like Exxon’s own scientists had clear knowledge as early as 1985 that burning fossil fuels was warming the atmosphere, and that this would threaten nature and humanity if unabated.

The environmental groups allege that Exxon and others have spent tens of millions of dollars funding campaigns spreading doubt and disinformation about global warming and its primary cause: the burning of fossil fuels. This sounds like the US tobacco companies that went to historic lengths to perpetuate doubt that cigarettes were addictive or harmful.

Learning that Exxon might be intentionally suppressing global warming science, and that environmental groups were working to hold Exxon accountable, Republican members of the US House Committee on Science, Space & Technology went into action.

Their concern was not global warming and its threats to life, or even Exxon’s apparent efforts to undermine global warming science. Their concern was protecting Exxon’s right to disseminate their scientists’ perspectives on global warming without being hampered by environmental groups.

So, Republicans on the Committee subpoenaed nine groups working on this issue, ordering them to submit to the Committee all documents relating to conversations or collaboration among themselves, or with any others – from 2012 through 2016 - to defame Exxon or attack Exxon’s Constitutionally protected free speech rights.

The committee’s letter highlights their concern that the groups were trying to make “an election issue” out of global warming and Exxon’s alleged role in suppressing information about it. Specifically, it says the groups had come together, “to establish in [the] public’s mind that Exxon is a corrupt institution that has pushed humanity (and all creation) toward climate chaos and grave harm” and “[t]o drive Exxon & climate into [the] center of [the] 2016 election cycle.”

On Congressional stationery, the letter was sent May 19, 2016, to the leadership of 350.org, Union of Concerned Scientists, Climate Accountability Institute, Greenpeace, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Family Fund, Global Warming Legal Action Project, Pawa Law Group, and Climate Reality Project.

It was signed by 13 Republicans on the committee. No Democrats signed the letter.

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The Peace House networks with many groups and individuals to bring about public events, peace walks, demonstrations, speakers, editorials, educational events, peace camps … and a host of activities relating to human rights, economic justice and environmental sustainability. If you know us, you know it’s true.

The Peace House website — www.peacehouseok.org — is updated frequently and regularly to share announcements, alerts, photos, and essays about peace as well as events and links to other organizations with whom we are aligned.

Thanks to all who can help!
Glitter-Dropping Activists Found Not Guilty — Free Speech Wins

By Serena Blaiz, reprinted from OklahomaActivist.com

OKLAHOMA CITY – In a case that more than skirted on the absurd, the two environmental activists charged initially with attempting a terrorist hoax, a felony, after black glitter fell from a banner they unfurled inside the Devon Tower, were today found NOT GUILTY of anything but free speech by a Municipal Court Judge. The felony charge was dismissed last year (laughed out of court?) and they were tried June 30 on charges of disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor.

The activists released this statement:

 Judge Phillipa James announced today a Not Guilty Verdict in regards to last month’s Disorderly Conduct trial of local environmental activists Moriah Stephenson and Stefan Warner.

Stephenson and Warner were arrested nearly two and a half years earlier when glitter spilled off of a Hunger Games-themed banner that the activists hung in the open-to-the-public atrium of the Devon Energy building. The glittery banner read, “The Odds Are Never in Our Favor.” At their trial, Stephenson and Warner explained that the banner was intended to highlight the disproportionate ways in which oil and gas development occurs.

Stephenson explained, “Our intent was to highlight that the odds are never in our favor, our being the people’s favor.”

Stephenson explained that oil and gas development disenfranchises communities of color and low-income, rural communities, a practice commonly referred to as environmental racism. Stephenson told the courtroom, “The purpose of the demonstration was to raise awareness about Devon Energy’s involvement in tar sands extraction and the environmentally racist nature of tar sands extraction.”

Warner contributed that the large tax incentives that oil and gas corporations receive have exacerbated our current economic crisis in Oklahoma. Additionally, oil and gas corporations gain wealth from hydraulic fracturing, while homeowners are forced to pay for earthquake damage that results from the disposal of fracking wastewater.

The activists’ lawyer, Doug Parr, argued in court last month that Stephenson and Warner’s actions were a form of protected free speech. Judge Phillipa James found that Warner and Stephenson were both engaged in political protest and that the evidence presented by both the defense and the City of Oklahoma City established that there was no “public alarm” caused by the protest activity.

Same old stale and corporate media got you down?

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Jim Macoy, D.D.S.
Support Chelsea Manning

After years of inhumane treatment, and having been held in conditions that the UN considers to be torture, Chelsea Manning, the Guardian columnist and whistleblower who has been in prison for years serving a 35 year sentence for exposing some of the U.S. government’s worst abuses, attempted to take her own life July 5th, 2016.

Now, Army officials have informed her that she is facing serious new charges directly related to her suicide attempt. These new charges include:

1) Resisting the force cell move team (Chelsea was unconscious when this team arrived, which makes this charge particularly absurd.)

2) Prohibited property (For the items she used to attempt to take her own life.)

3) Conduct which threatens (For somehow putting the prison at risk while attempting to take her own life, quietly, in her own cell.)

If convicted of these bizarre “administrative offenses,” that are effectively charging her for attempting to end her life, she is facing indefinite solitary confinement for the rest of her prison term (another 30 years), “maximum security” classification (in the same facility), and nearly a decade before she can ever be classified as a “minimum security” prisoner.

It is unnecessarily cruel to threaten Chelsea with additional punishment while in this very vulnerable state. The government is trying to silence her important voice—for good. Chelsea has been systematically mistreated by the U.S. government since she was first taken into custody in 2010, including long stretches of extreme solitary confinement even before she had ever been convicted.

Chelsea is a transgender woman being forced to serve out her sentence in an all-male prison, which is in itself dehumanizing and exhausting emotionally. She is currently being denied medical treatment for her gender dysphoria, which experts have stated is the only course of treatment through which she would no longer be suicidal.

This is not the first time the government has harassed Chelsea with outrageous charges while in prison. Last year, they threatened her with solitary confinement for minor “infractions” including possession of LGBTQ reading materials and an expired tube of toothpaste. We gathered more than 100,000 petition signatures in response, and the outcry we generated kept her out of solitary. Now we need to do it again. Please, sign the petition and spread the word. Chelsea is depending on us.  

https://www.freechelsea.com/


Understanding Trump and Learning How to Respond to Trump Supporters

By George Lakoff, published by Common Dreams
condensed and adapted by Pat Hoerth, Oklahoma City

We tend to understand the nation metaphorically in family terms: We have founding fathers. We send our sons and daughters to war. The conservative and progressive worldviews dividing our country can most readily be understood in terms of moral worldviews that are encapsulated in two very different common forms of family life: The Nurturant Parent family (progressive) and the Strict Father family (conservative).

In the strict father family, father knows best. He knows right from wrong and has the ultimate authority to make sure his children and his spouse do what he says, which is taken to be what is right. When his children disobey, it is his moral duty to punish them painfully enough so that, to avoid punishment, they will obey him (do what is right) and not just do what feels good. Through physical discipline they are supposed to become disciplined, internally strong, and able to prosper in the external world. {If} they don’t prosper that means they are not disciplined, and therefore cannot be moral, and so deserve their poverty. What you become is only up to you; society has nothing to do with it. You are responsible for yourself, not for others — who are responsible for themselves.

In a world governed by personal responsibility and discipline, those who win deserve to win. Donald Trump publicly insults {others} mercilessly because he knows he can win an onstage TV insult game. To conservative eyes, that makes him a formidable winning candidate who deserves to be a winning candidate. Electoral competition is seen as a battle. Insults that stick are seen as victories—deserved victories.

The strict father logic extends further. {In} a well-ordered world, there should be (and traditionally has been) a moral hierarchy in which those who have traditionally dominated should dominate. The hierarchy is: God above Man, Man above Nature, The Disciplined (Strong) above the Undisciplined (Weak), The Rich above the Poor, Employers above Employees, Adults above Children, Western culture above other cultures, America above other countries. The hierarchy extends to: Men above women, Whites above Nonwhites, Christians above non-Christians, Straights above Gays.

Family-based moral worldviews run deep. Thus your moral worldview defines for you what the world should be like. When it isn’t that way, one can become frustrated and angry.

How Trump Uses Your Brain to His Advantage

Most of thought—an estimated 98 percent of thought—is unconscious. Unconscious thought works by certain basic mechanisms. Trump uses them instinctively to turn people’s brains toward what he wants: Absolute authority, money, power, celebrity.

Some mechanisms are:

1. Repetition. Words are neurally linked to the circuits that determine their meaning. The more a word is heard, the more the circuit is activated and the stronger it gets, and so the easier it is to fire again. Trump repeats. Win. Win. Win.

2. Framing: Crooked Hillary. Framing Hillary as purposely and knowingly committing crimes for her own benefit. Repeating makes many people unconsciously think of her that way.

There is a common metaphor that Immorality Is Illegality, and that acting against Strict Father Morality (the only kind of morality recognized) is being immoral. Since virtually everything Hillary Clinton has ever done has violated Strict Father Morality, that makes her “immoral.”

3. Well-known examples: Repeating examples of shootings by Muslims, African-Americans, and Latinos raises fears that it could happen to you and your community. Fear tends to activate desire for a strong strict father.

4. Grammar: Radical Islamic terrorists: The grammar suggests that there is something about Islam that has terrorism inherent in it. Imagine calling the Charleston (white male) gunman a “radical Republican terrorist.”

5. Conventional metaphorical thought is inherent in our largely unconscious thought. {One} metaphor used by Trump: Make America Great Again. As if there was some past ideal state that we can go back to just by electing Trump.

6. There is also a metaphor that A Country Is a Person and a metonymy of the President Standing For the Country. Thus, Obama, via both metaphor and metonymy, can stand conceptually for America. Therefore, by saying that Obama is weak and not respected, it is communicated that America, with Obama as president, is weak and disrespected.

7. The country as person metaphor and the metaphor that war or conflict between countries is a fistfight between people, leads the inference that just having a strong president will guarantee that America will win conflicts and wars. Trump will just throw knockout punches.

8. The metaphor that The nation Is a Family was used throughout the GOP convention. From Trump’s love of family and commitment to their suc-
cess, we are to conclude that, as president he will love America’s citizens and be committed to the success of all.

Even if he loses the election, Trump will have changed the brains of millions of Americans, with future consequences. It is vitally important people know the mechanisms used to transmit Big Lies and to stick them into people’s brains without their awareness. It is a form of mind control.

It is crucial, for the history of the country and the world, as well as the planet, that all of this be made public. Such responsibility rests with ordinary citizens who become aware of unconscious brain mechanisms.

**How Can [Progressives] Do Better?**

First, remember not to repeat false conservative claims and then rebut them with the facts; you are inadvertently reinforcing the false claim by verbalizing it. Instead, use facts to support positively-framed truth. Use repetition.

Second, start with values, not policies and facts and numbers. For example, progressive thought is built on empathy, on citizens caring about other citizens and working through our government to provide public resources for all, both businesses and individuals. That’s how America started. The public resources used by businesses were not only roads and bridges, but public education, a national bank, a patent office, courts for business cases, interstate commerce support, and of course the criminal justice system. From the beginning, the Private Good depended on Public Resources.

Private enterprise and private life utterly depend on public resources. Instead of defending “the government,” speak about the public, the people, Americans, the American people, public servants, and good government. And take back freedom. Public resources provide for freedom in private enterprise and private life.

The conservatives are committed to privatizing just about everything and to eliminating funding for most public resources. The contribution of public resources to our freedoms cannot be overstated. Start saying it.

Third, avoid nasty exchanges and attacks. Civility, values, positivity, good humor, and real empathy are powerful. Calmness and empathy in the face of fury are powerful.

Values come first, facts and policies follow in the service of values. They matter, but they always support values.

Emphasize that all issues are human issues, freedom issues. This is more compelling than the “identity politics” of women’s issues, black issues, Latino issues. Those issues are real, and need public discussion. But they all fall under freedom issues, human issues.

Always speak from, and stress empathy, devotion, love, pride in our country’s values, public resources to create freedoms.

Prepare consciously to engage opposition. We must understand Trump and his supporters to stand up to them calmly, civilly, and effectively.

George Lakoff is the author of The Little Blue Book: The Essential Guide to Thinking and Talking Democratic (co-authored with Elizabeth Wehling). His previous books include Moral Politics, Don’t Think of an Elephant!, Whose Freedom? and Thinking Points (with the Rockridge Institute staff). He is Richard and Rhoda Goldman Distinguished Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, and a founding senior fellow at the Rockridge Institute.
Historians still debate the use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima & Nagasaki.

One side says the bombs ended the war quickly, made unnecessary a land assault on Japan, ultimately saving lives on all sides.

The other side says the bombs were unnecessary, that Japan was already "on the ropes" with a total US blockade in place preventing delivery of supplies from outside. Surrender was inevitable.

A third view is gratitude that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima & Nagasaki left such devastating images, that they have prevented a later nuclear exchange thousands of times more horrible.

Human nature is such, I assert, that it would not have been possible for humanity to have invented nuclear weapons, have nuclear arsenals, and never use them.

The hydrogen bombs developed shortly after World War II were monstrous by comparison. The Hiroshima & Nagasaki bombs were only atomic. Compared to even the earliest hydrogen bombs, they were like gliders compared to today's trans-oceanic jumbo jets.

Indeed, the "trigger" of a modern nuclear warhead is actually an atomic bomb, the size of a soccer ball, four times the power of the Hiroshima bomb. This “trigger” sets off the hydrogen components in an explosion hundreds of times the power of the Hiroshima & Nagasaki bombs.

Could humanity have possessed such weapons, and been wise enough never, ever, to have used them? I doubt it. It seems inevitable that at some point, during at least one of the many wars, conflicts and military adventures since 1945, it would have been just too tempting to use nukes in hopes of “winning.”

I think it is the only the memory of the Hiroshima & Nagasaki bombs that has prevented a nuclear war – the horrific photos of those smashed cities, including the hundreds of thousands of men, women and children vaporized, incinerated, burned alive or killed later by radiation sickness.

They gave their lives for us. We should inscribe their names on a great wall and give thanks to them, for their sacrifice appears to have saved the world from nuclear war since then … at least so far.
A Year in the Life of a Leaf

By Hal Spake, Norman, OK

A year ago my wife and I bought a 100% electric car – a Nissan Leaf – the world’s most popular electric car. It had been a lease car, had less than 8,000 miles on it, and, thanks to my wife’s bargaining skills, we got it for under $10,000.

It has an 86-mile range on a single charge according to the manufacturer, but I frequently go over 100 miles. Only once has the remaining charge indicator dropped below 20 miles.

Experts assure us that all-electric cars reduces one’s carbon footprint, even if your electricity is produced with coal. As more electricity is produced with solar and wind power, electric cars become even cleaner.

It is an exceptional car for commuting, and maintenance is a snap: It uses no gasoline, oil, fan belts or engine coolant. The only real maintenance is keeping the tires inflated and occasionally changing the cabin filter.

The big advantage is the low cost of fuel. Charging the battery with typical home electricity (110-volts) takes about 18 hours. Electricity in Oklahoma averages 9.5 cents per kilowatt hour. At that rate, a full charge costs $2.28. Off-peak hour electricity costs only 5-cents per kilowatt hour, so a full charge in off-peak hours costs $1.20. That means the “fuel cost” for 86 miles of driving $1.20 to $2.28. Not bad. (Charging with 220-volt electricity takes only 6 - 7 hours.)

This past year I put 6,000 miles on my Leaf. That means it has been fully charged roughly 66 times. At the 9.5-cents/kilowatt-hour rate, my fuel cost would be $160.50 for 6,000 miles driving. Using the off-peak hour rate of 5-cents/kilowatt-hour brings the cost down to $79 — roughly the cost of 2 oil changes for those driving gasoline-powered cars.

Driving a total electric car has some drawbacks. There is the limited driving range. In the winter, using the cabin heater can dramatically shorten the driving range, but the car does have a heated steering wheel and heated seats that don’t consume much electricity, and which readily compensate for a chilly cabin. Driving with a “lead foot” also shortens the range. The air conditioner does not seem to have much impact on the car’s range. Unlike other small cars, whose engines struggle at stop lights, the A/C doesn’t strain the car’s motor.

When merging onto highway traffic, the Leaf has more than enough acceleration to pin you to the seat. It has plenty of leg room, a stylish interior, and lots of gauges for the inner geek. My early morning drives are wonderfully quiet and tranquil – no engine noise.

After a year of driving, I say it’s a great car, great fun, and economical. The added bonus is that its environmental footprint is half that of a car with an internal combustion engine and would be even lower if solar panels were used for the charge.

Hal Spake is an Oklahoma native, a veteran of AF Branch of NSA, a retired diplomat, a Unitarian, Chair of Common Cause Oklahoma, and a member of Americans Against the Next War.

“My attorney suggested that we try to work things out in mediation to avoid a litigation disaster”

Since 1988, Jim Stovall, founder and Director of the Mediation Institute, has worked with individuals, families, and organizations to resolve difficult and complicated disputes that often threaten valuable relationships. Jim works to assist those in conflict to retain control over the decision-making process and prevent a matter from turning into a lengthy court battle or a painful grudge match.

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SURJ comes to OKC

Showing Up for Racial Justice chapter forming

SURJ is a national network of activists working to organize white people for racial justice. The Oklahoma City chapter is being organized by the Center for Conscience in Action until it can be self sustaining. Anyone can participate, all that is needed is a desire to work on the mission. Sign up to be alerted to meetings and other events. You can start right now to move forward in Showing Up for Racial Justice.

SURJ Action Steps
- Sign up with the OKC chapter - facebook.com/surjokc
- Sign up with SURJ national - http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/
- Sign the petition to have the OKC Police reinstate their body cams policy - www.ipetitions.com/petition/ocpd
- Contact President Obama on unlawful use of deadly force by police (Amnesty International action) - http://bit.ly/1AMjL40

What we are doing in OKC
There was an extremely successful and peaceful #BLM action on July 10

Group meets with Oklahoma City Police Chief Citty to discuss community concerns

OKLAHOMA CITY – A coalition of local groups met Thursday with Oklahoma City Police Chief William Citty and two deputy chiefs, Jeff Becker and Tom Jester, to express concerns about police department policies such as body cams and assault rifles.

The meeting, which took place in a conference room at police headquarters, was organized by Rena Guay, Program Director of the Center for Conscience in Action and founder of SURJ OKC, and attended by Amanda Armstrong of Amnesty International Group 238, Sara Bana of the Ending Violence Everywhere Coalition, Nathaniel Batchelder of the Oklahoma City Peace House, Joe Meinhart of the OCU One World Program and the Human Community Network, Dwain Pellebon, Ph. D., of the Police and Community Trust Initiative (PACT), and the Rev. Lori Walke of Mayflower Congregational Church UCC.

The group, which is not a formal organization at this time, came together expressly for this meeting.

“We had a cordial and productive meeting with representatives of our city’s police department,” said Ms. Guay. “We were warmly received and our concerns listened to, and for the most part our questions were answered, with honesty and more frankness than we expected. We did share a number of concerns about nationwide incidents of police violence and how that related to our community, in reality or in perception. Here in OKC, the body cams policy changes are of particular concern to us.”

“We also discussed law enforcement’s commitment to increasing community trust through the PACT Initiative,” said Dr. Pellebon, “The PACT Summit earlier this year included a diverse group of community leaders working with five police chiefs and one sheriff to implement 20 action items to reduce tensions, prevent violence, and increase honest and respectful communication.”

“I came away with a greater appreciation for Chief Citty’s role in working with multiple stakeholders to find solutions to keep his department and community safe,” Ms Guay said. “We just want to make sure that all sectors of the community are also seen as stakeholders. We look forward to continuing the dialog we started today and we let Chief Citty know that we are anxious to be part of an effort to reduce tensions, prevent violent police interactions whenever possible, and to support department policies or activities that would adequately address such concerns.”

Recently the department’s operations manual was put online, in full, for the public to read. “I think that’s a good step in the direction of more accountability to the citizens,” said Ms Guay, “that can help the community become more familiar with policies that get reflected in everyday police work – or in some cases should be but aren’t.” Sections of the manual include “Personal Conduct” and “Police-Community Relations.”

“We appreciate the sometimes dangerous nature of police work, but want to ensure that citizens are involved as much as possible, along with public officials, in holding accountable those who violate policies, act unprofessionally or, in worst case scenarios, use undue force ending in injury or death. We believe that more community communication and involvement will foster more trust and less violence.”
Black humanity and dignity requires Black political will and power. Despite constant exploitation and perpetual oppression, Black people have bravely and brilliantly been the driving force pushing the U.S. towards the ideals it articulates but has never achieved. In recent years we have taken to the streets, launched massive campaigns, and impacted elections, but our elected leaders have failed to address the legitimate demands of our Movement. We can no longer wait.

In response to the sustained and increasingly visible violence against Black communities in the U.S. and globally, a collective of more than 50 organizations representing thousands of Black people from across the country have come together with renewed energy and purpose to articulate a common vision and agenda. We are a collective that centers and is rooted in Black communities, but we recognize we have a shared struggle with all oppressed people; collective liberation will be a product of all of our work.

We believe in elevating the experiences and leadership of the most marginalized Black people, including but not limited to those who are women, queer, trans, femmes, gender nonconforming, Muslim, formerly and currently incarcerated, cash poor and working class, differently-abled, undocumented, and immigrant. We are intentional about amplifying the particular experience of state and gendered violence that Black queer, trans, gender nonconforming, women and intersex people face. There can be no liberation for all Black people if we do not center and fight for those who have been marginalized. It is our hope that by working together to create and amplify a shared agenda, we can continue to move towards a world in which the full humanity and dignity of all people is recognized.

While this platform is focused on domestic policies, we know that patriarchy, exploitative capitalism, militarism, and white supremacy know no borders. We stand in solidarity with our international family against the ravages of global capitalism and anti-Black racism, human-made climate change, war, and exploitation. We also stand with descendants of African people all over the world in an ongoing call and struggle for reparations for the historic and continuing harms of colonialism and slavery. We also recognize and honor the rights and struggle of our Indigenous family for land and self-determination.

We have created this platform to articulate and support the ambitions and work of Black people. We also seek to intervene in the current political climate and assert a clear vision, particularly for those who claim to be our allies, of the world we want them to help us create. We reject false solutions and believe we can achieve a complete transformation of the current systems, which place profit over people and make it impossible for many of us to breathe.

Together, we demand an end to the wars against Black people. We demand that the government repair the harms that have been done to Black communities in the form of reparations and targeted long-term investments. We also demand a defunding of the systems and institutions that criminalize and cage us. This document articulates our vision of a fundamentally different world. However, we recognize the need to include policies that address the immediate suffering of Black people. These policies, while less transformational, are necessary to address the current material conditions of our people and will better equip us to win the world we demand and deserve.

We recognize that not all of our collective needs and visions can be translated into policy, but we understand that policy change is one of many tactics necessary to move us towards the world we envision. We have come together now because we believe it is time to forge a new covenant. We are dreamers and doers and this platform is meant to articulate some of our vision. The links throughout the document provide the steppingstones and roadmaps of how to get there. The policy briefs also elevate the brave and transformative work our people are already engaged in, and build on some of the best thinking in our history of struggle. This agenda continues the legacy of our ancestors who pushed for reparations, Black self-determination and community control; and also propels new iterations of movements such as efforts for reproductive justice, holistic healing and reconciliation, and ending violence against Black cis, queer, and trans people.
Why activism in music matters:

‘Dangerous times demand dangerous songs’


By Tom Morello for L.A. Times July 15, 2016

Morello, who is perhaps best known as the guitarist for Rage Against the Machine, has long paired music with activism. The artist, who has worked with Bruce Springsteen and has a new project, Prophets of Rage, touring this summer, was asked by The Times to express why politics and pop live in harmony.

Music made me feel that I could have my hands on the steering wheel of history.

All music, and art for that matter, has a political point of view. Saccharine pop reality show hit-makers encourage escapism. In punk rock basements, dangerous truths are revealed.

Music and meaning are always on a collision course in our culture. Music has the unique property of speaking to the individual and community in the language of our earliest ancestors. The right combination of rhythm and rhyme, when it washes over a throng or transmits through an ear bud, can feel like the truth and resonate deep in our reptilian brain in a way that can provide a spark for action.

Can music change the world? Of course it can. It does every day. Music changed me. It was the music of Public Enemy and the Clash; the truth that resonated in the beat, the lyrics and the chords of those bands that made me feel less alone in my worldview.

Music made me feel that there were actions that I could take within and without the borders of my small Illinois hometown that could affect the future. Harmonizing and hell-raising, poetry and politics, singing and striking, rhythm and rebellion. The message was a simple one: “The world ain’t gonna change itself. That’s up to you.”

At 17, I didn’t choose to be a guitar player; the guitar, more or less, chose me. Once saddled with that as my calling I had to figure out how to use the damn thing to great purpose. Was it possible to forge a guitar into a divining rod of truth and fury?

There has never been a successful social movement in this country that has not had a great soundtrack.

— Tom Morello

Then it dawned on me that there has never been a successful social movement in this country that has not had a great soundtrack. Joe Hill’s union anthems put wind in the sails of those fighting for an eight-hour workday in the early 20th century. “We Shall Overcome” steeled the resolve of Freedom Riders during the civil rights movement.

Jimi Hendrix’s “The Star Spangled Banner” channeled the moral cacophony of the Vietnam War through a Marshall stack at Woodstock. And one or two Rage Against the Machine songs were heard pumping in the streets as Starbucks windows were shattered during the Seattle anti-globalization uprising.

But what is the responsibility of the artist in troubled times to speak to the issues of the day? I believe the only responsibility we have as artists is to tell the truth as we see it. I would never suggest that musicians who have
no political point of view pretend to have one for my sake. If however you do have a point of view and censor yourself out of fear or passivity then you’ve done yourself and your times a grave disservice.

To weave one’s convictions into one’s vocation is a responsibility that extends beyond the arts. As Martin Luther King famously said, “The hottest place in hell is reserved for those who remain neutral during times of moral conflict.”

You don’t abdicate your responsibility to your convictions simply because you don’t have a microphone or a recording studio at your disposal. If you’re a nurse you do it via the nurses’ union. If you’re a soldier or police officer perhaps you do it via a campus organization. If you’re a student you do it via a campus organization. If you’re a nurse you do it via the nurses’ union. If you’re a soldier or police officer perhaps you do it by following your conscience instead of your orders.

So, while the powers that be would prefer that you and I remain neutral during times of moral conflict.

It’s changed by average, everyday ordinary people who have had enough of the status quo standing up for a world that is more decent, just and humane.

It’s changed by people willing to use their intellect, creativity, strength and courage to make that world come to be. What can you do to change the world? Dream big and don’t settle. And remember that any substantive progressive, radical or revolutionary change that has ever occurred in our country has come from below, not above. Aim for the world you really want to live in without compromise or apology.

That ideal seems quite distant today as our country is teetering on the edge of the abyss. Donald Trump will be the Republican nominee because racism, misogyny and advocating war crimes are not seen as character flaws in the Republican Party. Hillary Clinton will be the Democratic nominee because subservience to Wall Street and being complicit in war crimes are not seen as character flaws in the Democratic Party. This election season it feels like we are in Pompeii with the volcano erupting and the only boat out of town is the Titanic. Do I vote? Yes, I do, but casting a ballot into the void every four years for one of the two monopoly party candidates is not enough. The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.

That’s why we formed Prophets of Rage. Rage Against the Machine, Public Enemy and Cypress Hill — all smashed together into an elite revolutionary task force. Chuck D, B-Real, Tim Commerford, Brad Wilk, DJ Lord and myself. Three radical groups forged into an alloy of hip-hop and hard rock firepower bent on having our say during these tumultuous times. Our music and our politics do not change because of opinion polls, focus groups or lobbyist payoffs. The message is written in the mosh pit. Dangerous times demand dangerous songs.

What do we sing about? Empowerment. Poverty. Police brutality. Immigrant rights. Racism. Militarism. Threats to civil liberties. Union busting. But it all amounts to nothing unless it’s got a roaring soundtrack, a ripping guitar solo and a huge groove that can decimate a club or make a field of 50,000 bounce until the Richter scale shakes.

The goal is a simple one: boost morale and lift the spirits of those fighting for a better world while playing a devastating, ass-kicking, ear-shattering rock ’n’ roll show. Both the Trump and Sanders campaigns are often described by the media as “raging against the machine.” Sorry, but we intend to demonstrate what raging against the machine really means.

We will not sit on the sidelines of history. We will not go quietly into that dark night. The first stop on our “Make America Rage Again Tour” will be a protest concert outside the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

People sometimes say, “Hey Tom, shut up and play your guitar!” Oh, I’m gonna play my guitar all right, you can bet on that. But I’m never gonna shut up about human rights. I’m never gonna stop fighting for a more decent, just and humane planet. And if that pisses some people off, too bad.

Harmonizing and hell-raising, poetry and politics, singing and striking, rhythm and rebellion.

What better place than here? What better time than now? ■

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**Summer Concert for Social Justice**

**featuring**

**The Starvation Army Band***

Hosted by the First Unitarian OKC Social Justice Committee

**Friday August 26th at 7:30 - 9:30 pm**

First Unitarian Church 600 NW 13th Street Oklahoma City

Tickets $10/adult and $5 child at the door.

This Concert is in Memory of beloved Social Justice Committee member Jerome Simpson and his work with the homeless and working poor. Come sing songs by Woody Guthrie, David Rovics, Pete Seeger and many others. It is sure to be an evening of fun, laughter, and education. Proceeds will fund the Social Justice Committee to continue their work with the home- less and the working poor.

Join us for a family friendly fun evening of music and song. Light refresh-ments will be provided.

*Jonathan Marshall, Aaron Baker and Terry Craghead. OKC activist musicians.
Thank You, Contributors! For Your Investment in Peace & Justice

Thank you for your generous support of The Peace House from January 1, 2016 through July 22, 2016.

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August - September Events

August 17 Wednesday - Join us for a discussion on renewable energy and insight on your options to go solar, wind, geothermal and other options. How easy is it? What will it take to produce enough? Who will help me in Oklahoma? Now is the time to consider your options. Earth Rebirth, 325 E Comanche St, Norman. 6-9 PM.

August 18 Thursday - OKC Democratic Socialists of American meeting & potluck. 7 PM at Holiday Inn Express, 1629 S. Prospect, OKC.

August 21 Sunday - Jewish Muslim Film Institute presents Dancing in Jaffa. 1:45 pm at Mercy Mission Building, 3840 N. St. Claire, OKC. Free but must RSVP at: www.jewishmuslimfilmstitute.com/showingsoon. Renowned ball-room dancer, Pierre Dulaine takes his belief that dance can overcome political and social differences and applies it to 11-year-old Jewish and Palestinian Israelis.

August 26 Friday - Summer Concert for Social Justice. See ad pg 15.

September 7 Wednesday - Let’s Talk About It Oklahoma (scholar-led book discussion series) kickoff. Full Circle Books, along with the Oklahoma Gazette, will be hosting The Worst Hard Time: Revisited. Books can be borrowed for free from Full Circle, library style. 6:30 - 8:30, 1900 NW Exp'way.

September 10 Saturday - The Human Community Network September Gathering will continue the work of systemic change for a more peaceful, participatory, and sustainable Oklahoma. OCU Walker Center for Arts and Sciences, Room 151. 1-4 PM

September 24 Saturday - International Day of Peace Celebration (formerly known as Pinwheels for Peace). March and Rally at Myriad Gardens. See facebook.com/okcdayofpeace