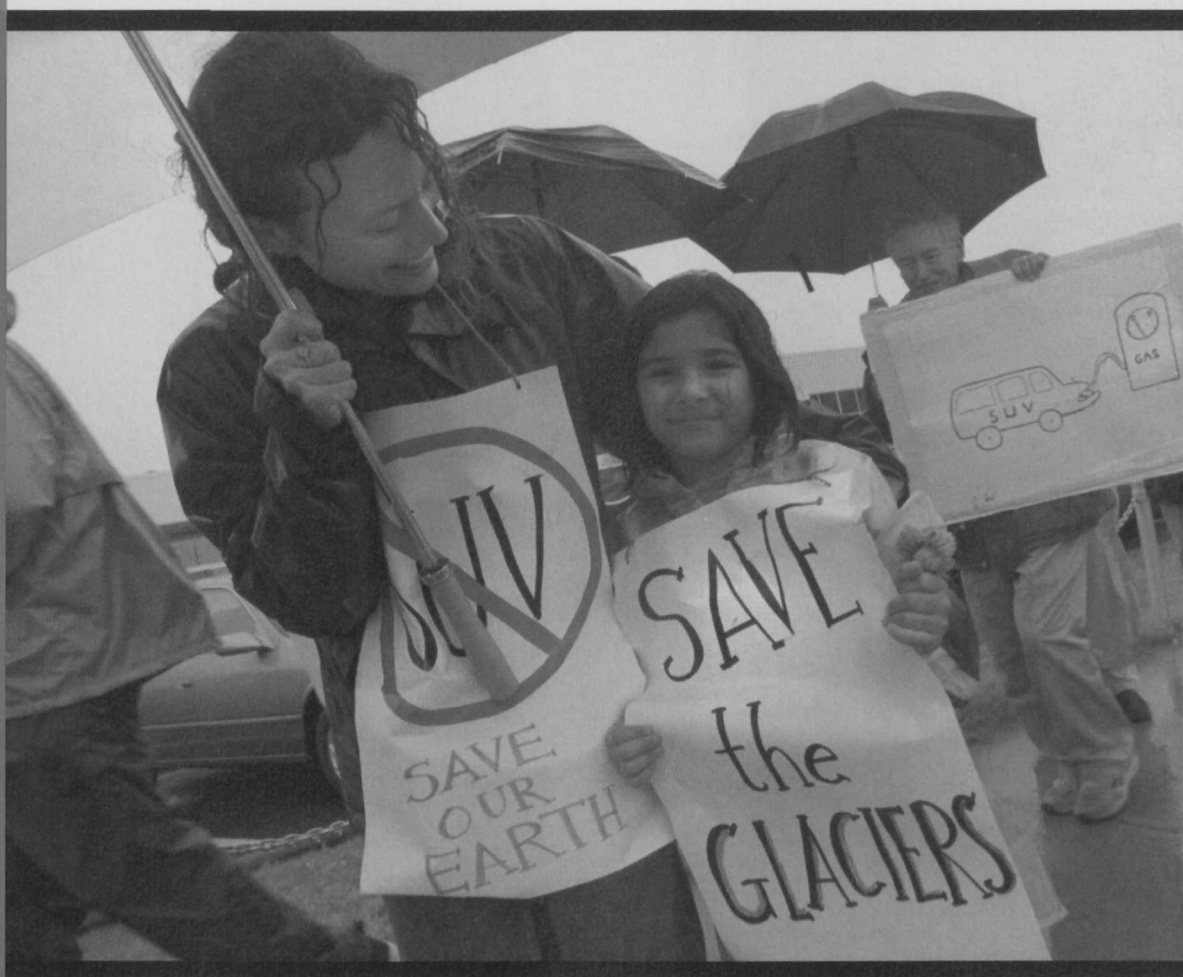
WITNESS MAGAZINE



TRANSPORTATION AND CONSCIENCE

VOLUME 85
NUMBER 7/8
JULY/AUG 2002

WITNESS MAGAZINE

on the cover

Environmental and community activists in Lynn, Mass., gather in front of two auto dealerships to voice concern about the environmental impact of sport utility vehicles. The SUV Action day was the first of its kind in the nation.

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TRANSPORTATION AND CONSCIENCE

FEATURES

Departments

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company, publisher of ***The Witness*** magazine and related website projects, seeks to give voice to a liberation Gospel of peace and justice and to promote the concrete activism that flows from such a Christianity. Founded in 1917 by Irving Peake Johnson, an Episcopal Church bishop, ***The Witness*** claims a special mission to Episcopalians and other Anglicans worldwide, while affirming strong partnership with progressives of other faith traditions.

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Now that the silence is broken

In the April 2002 issue on "Women challenging violence," Julie Wortman wrote, "The silence of violence needs breaking" and that women of faith are committed to doing that.

The Executive Council Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) [of the Episcopal Church, USA] salutes *The Witness* for taking on such a complex and taboo issue. We wholeheartedly endorse what Pat Castillo says ("A Latina activist speaks out") in commenting on hearings the CSW has held on domestic violence: "The church should play a much more active role as a teacher with regard to domestic violence." And "the church must address the roots of violence towards women." Many of those roots are found in Hebrew and Christian scriptures.

In the 1990s, the CSW published a booklet, *Break the Silence of Violence*. It has just released *Now that the Silence is Broken: The Next Step*, in collaboration with the Office of Women in Mission and Ministry (WIMM) at the Episcopal Church Center and Forward Movement Publications. This is a "how to" resource for congregations, clergy and adult and youth groups. It will "continue the educational process in our parishes and dioceses about the issues and implications of domestic violence in our society and churches." Available for $1 from the WIMM Office or Forward Movement, this resource can be the stimulus for a diocesan-wide program or a special Sunday or sermon in the congregation. It is important to speak about a subject that has long been considered "unspeakable."

CSW enjoyed collaborating with *The Witness* to present this issue to the wider church. Thanks very much for a difficult task very well done.

Sally Bucklee, CSW Chair
Laurel, MD

Basic life concerns

Thank you for another excellent edition of *The Witness* (May 2002). The features, Julie Wortman's editorial "Beating new bounds" and the letters touched on issues that are basic life concerns to all who call ourselves "Christians."

The article "Entitled Neighbors" was a timely reminder that God does indeed pay special attention to the poor and needy people of the world and that He chooses to do that through His followers. Even while the administration touts the "success" of the American economy, many people are left out of that "success" because the corporate world in whose employ they find themselves believes that economic injustice is a normal way of life.

I was glad to see the article on sanctions in "Short Takes" that reminds us that the sterile, abstract sanctions that are so easily enacted and so glibly touted by the administration are nothing less than war on the poor and helpless. As the quote from *America* magazine reads, "A three-year old dying of dysentery is not the enemy of the United States," yet we blindly wave the flag and scream for sanctions against any and all that the administration decrees must be our "enemy," even if that does include three-year-old children. May God forgive our ignorance and national self-deception on this issue.

Thanks also for the "Short Takes" feature on the environmental web action center. As a professional environmentalist I very much appreciate the Episcopal Church's addressing these urgent issues. My own church has seriously neglected environmental issues although some of us keep pointing out that we ARE "keepers" not only of our brothers but of our planet, as well. (Psalm 24 is a beautiful reminder.)

Thank you for the encouragement you provide this "liberal" Baptist environmentalist (isn't that a weird combination) by reminding him that he is not alone in thinking that if we call ourselves followers of Christ, we are called to actually DO something for others in a culture that chooses to ignore the "least of these."

Tim McDonald
Chattanooga, TN

The benefit of taking in the world at a walk

by Julie A. Wortman

This past June 1, the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation (based in Bethesda, Md.) held its seventh annual Slow Walk for Peace. This year's event was dedicated to the world's refugees. "Often people around the world are forced to flee their homes and homeland to escape persecution, war or starvation," Shalem noted on its website (www.shalem.org). "At times, these refugees walk many miles through difficult terrain in search of a new place that is safe to call home. ... We will walk in solidarity with these people who long for peace — and a resting place."

The slow walk is a form of meditation, Shalem explains, noting the work and practice of Thich Nhat Hanh. "The practice of walking meditation," this Vietnamese Zen Master says, "opens your eyes to the wonders and the suffering of the universe. If you are not aware of what is going on around you, where do you expect to encounter ultimate reality?"

I'm not sure my hyped-up, multi-tasking, deadline-oriented self is capable of slow walking yet, but I know that even at an ordinary pace a person takes in the world at a level of consciousness impossible at faster speeds. At a walk, a driven mind can downshift enough to match speed with the soul it left behind. At a walk, it is possible to notice the details of life — dogs who spend neglected lives at the ends of chains, styrofoam coffee cups and beer cans clustered abundantly in roadside ditches, lilacs in bloom, drooping party balloons hanging from a mailbox, a street squatter's digs, white sheets flapping in the sun.

Toward Los Angeles by Dorothea Lange (March 1937)/FSA-OWI Coll., Prints and Photographs Div., The Library of Congress

I'm not categorically against traveling at faster speeds, but working on this issue I've become aware of what a radical act walking in this culture can be. Walking requires no special equipment, no ticket, no roads, no fuel beyond one's daily bread. Moreover, it contributes nothing to global warming and seldom results in roadkill or roadrage.

If there are obvious advantages to vehicles that proceed at a faster rate, there are certainly significant costs — economic, environmental, social and psychic — associated with their use. This issue is about weighing those costs. Most often, speed is primarily about consumption, privilege and profit. Can our individual and collective choices about transportation be instead primarily about justice and peace? Plenty of people are praying hard over the requirements of an affirmative response and taking action.

And yes, some are beginning by taking the world in at a walk.

"When you practice walking meditation in the morning, your movements will become smooth and your mind will become alert," Thich Naht Hanh notes in *The Long Road to Joy*. "You will be more aware of what you are doing all day long. In making decisions, you will find that you are more calm and clear, with more insight and compassion. With each peaceful step you take, all beings, near and far, will benefit."

May it be so. ●

Julie A. Wortman is Witness *editor/publisher.*

The Island of Lost Luggage

Korean Airlines Disaster

by Janet McAdams

for Kevin McNiff

What breeze whispers when you step onto
the black slate of the shore?

And what hooves pound the green valley
beyond the flat beach? Caribou, you think,

or bison in the wild. A woman in aviator glasses
weaves through the cabanas — a tourist? you
wonder

and join the queue from the 747, but you still hear
the roar of the missile, still feel the shock

of cold air. At the head of the line, a clerk
hands you two sets of car keys, a single glove,

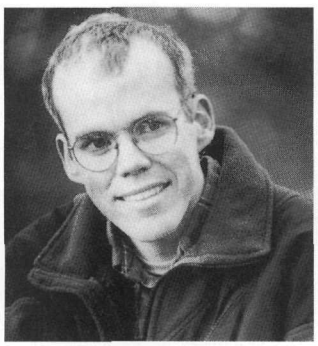
an unopened letter mailed so many years ago.
Kevin, some things are lost forever,

and at the Island of Lost Luggage, they line up:
the disappeared, the lost children, the Earharts

of modern life. It's your bad luck to die in the cold
wars of certain nations. But in the line at
Unclaimed

Baggage, no one mourns for the sorry world
that sent them here. Memory fails

among these easy trees, beside this sheet of
agate water, where an Ivory Bill calls and calls ...



An interview with Bill McKibben

by Julie A. Wortman

BILL MCKIBBEN is a former staff writer for *The New Yorker* and author of *The End of Nature* (Anchor, 1989), *Maybe One* (Plume, 1999) and, most recently, *Long Distance: A Year of Living Strenuously* (Simon & Schuster, 2000). He has been a longtime climate-change watchdog, rare in his strong faith-based perspective.

JULIE WORTMAN: Last summer I saw a newspaper article about an anti-SUV protest you were involved with outside a car dealership in Lynn, Mass., just on the outskirts of Boston. What was that about?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Well, during the 2000–2001 academic year I was a fellow at Harvard Divinity School's Center for the Study of Values in Public Life writing a book on human genetic engineering. But one of the things that I was doing while I was there was a lot of volunteer work on SUVs, among other things. I've worked for most of my life on climate-change issues — I wrote sort of the original book for a general audience on it all, *The End of Nature*, way back in 1989. And, of course, transportation is a big part of that. One of the great difficulties of working on climate change is that it has remained largely an abstract issue in this country and we've made extremely little progress — in fact, none! Americans, in the year 2000, managed to produce about 15 percent more carbon dioxide than they did in the year 1990. So, it's very clear that we're losing badly on this issue. So a lot of us have been thinking over the years that we need some very real symbols to make it real for people. The SUV is probably the perfect one, because it's very practical. I mean, it's very much a part of the problem. Just as the back of the bus was a very real phenomenon for people in the South in a certain era.

If you have a normal car — an Escort or a Taurus or something — and you go in and you trade it in and you get one of the larger SUVs and you drive it for one year, the difference in the amount of energy you use — and hence the amount of CO_2 that you produce — is the same as walking over to your refrigerator this afternoon, opening the door and leaving it open until 2009.

So it's a very real issue. By far the biggest reason that America's CO_2 emissions kept climbing so quickly in the 1990s was because we were converting our automobile fleet into this urban assault fleet. So the SUV is a tremendously good symbol of our heedlessness in the way that we use energy, because so much of it is unnecessary. I mean, no one would begrudge a big vehicle with four-wheel-drive and high clearance to a forest ranger, you know? That makes a lot of sense — if you're a good forest ranger, you've got to be out in the middle of nowhere all the time.

But for the most part we have no need of these kind of vehicles. We've bought them for some combination of putative safety concerns, which turn out to be illusory when you examine them, and much more for some kind of status and image concerns, you know? Someone in Madison Avenue was able to convince us that you are somehow, among other things, more closely bonded with the natural world if you are driving one of these. That's what all the ads are about.

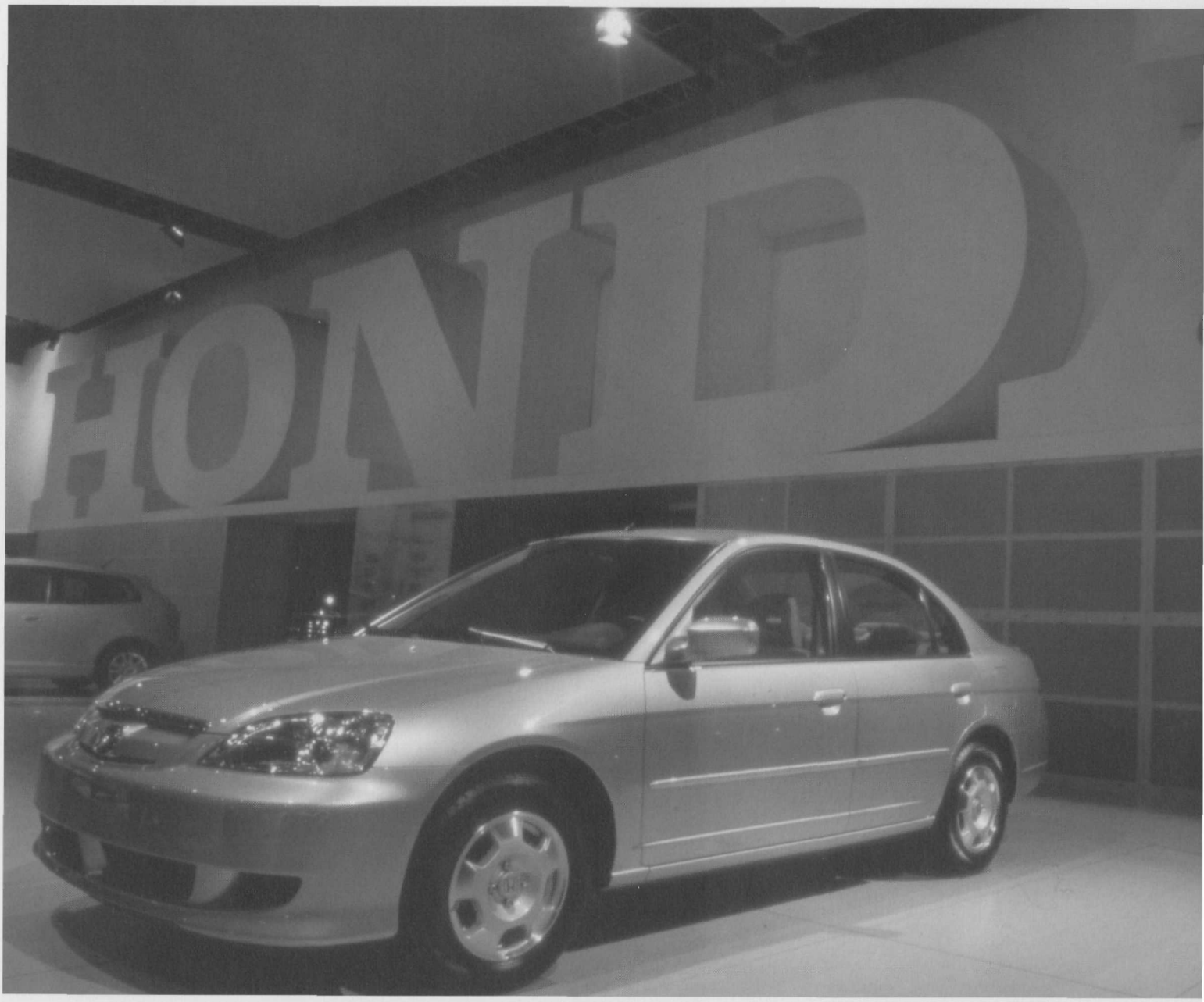
JULIE WORTMAN: I noticed that you had a number of people at that particular protest who were prominent people of faith?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Yes.

JULIE WORTMAN: Why is it so important that people of faith be involved?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Well, what can I say? I'm a Methodist Sunday School teacher. For me, this has always been part of my reason for caring about the environment, this sense that we're talking about this creation. So we wanted very much to involve this community that hadn't been involved as deeply as it should. Every important American social movement that I can think of has required the participation of the church to get its

JESUS DRIVE?



The Honda Civic gas/electric hybrid at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

message across and I think that the environment is no exception. And I think it's really starting to happen.

JULIE WORTMAN: What are the signs you see?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Well, I've been working on this for a long time and talking to church groups is one of the things that I do. Ten years ago it was, "Huh?" People didn't really get it. Now people know that they need to be involved and the question is how much and how radical should our involvement be? I think that within a very short period of time — as with peace issues and hunger issues — it's going to be taken for granted that this is one of the prophetic witnesses that the church is called to make, especially because it's so

SUVs on the lot at a Detroit auto dealer.

linked to all the other justice issues. There's no more effective way that Americans have ever figured out to screw up the lives of people around the world — and goodness knows we've come up with our share in the past — than changing the basic daily physical stability of the world those people depend on. I was in Bangladesh not long ago and it was a great country, a beautiful country — very crowded, but food self-sufficient. Their only problem is that they're a river delta and they're very low to the ground, very low to the water. So if you raise sea level even a little bit, which global warming does because warm water takes up more space than cold water, then you'll be getting very regular and massive floods. In 1998 two-thirds of the country was under water for the better part of three months — under high, deep water — and that's because of us! They're not producing any CO_2. The basic method of transportation in Bangladesh is the bicycle-powered rickshaw! We produce one quarter of the world's CO_2. If they're walking around in water, it is our responsibility.

JULIE WORTMAN: Environmentalist Philip Shabecoff [see *TW* 6/02] says that one of the failures of the environmental movement is that it hasn't made those connections with social justice kinds of issues. Would you agree with that?

BILL MCKIBBEN: I don't know to what extent it's been a failure, but it's certainly been an important part of our work over the years.

JULIE WORTMAN: I was just thinking that maybe it's faith communities that can best make those connections?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Yeah! I think you could run it the other way, too, and say it's been a major failing of faith communities over the years not to understand that one of the things that they're called upon to do is witness to and protect the integrity of creation. There have been too many examples of faith communities whose involvements in issues like hunger and social justice and whatever is incredibly episodic and limited largely to giving people tents after they've had some terrible disaster and very little to figuring out what the real root causes of all these problems are.

JULIE WORTMAN: Yes. I think sometimes that what happens among people of faith is they're very comfortable with disaster relief, but not very comfortable with the substantive issues — economic and social issues — that need to be addressed.

BILL MCKIBBEN: In this case they're not very comfortable with the idea that they're the cause of the disaster. One of the points that I've been trying to make in recent years is that it's inaccurate to talk about such things as huge floods as acts of God. There was a time when that language made perfect sense, but sometime in the last 20 or 30 years, human beings as a species have grown large enough that we really do alter the basic climatic patterns on the planet because of our use of fossil fuels.

Warm air holds more water vapor than cold air does. Therefore you get more evaporation, more drought in arid areas and you get more precipitation, more deluge in wet areas. So it shouldn't be a surprise that 1998, which was the warmest year on record, also saw 3 million human beings, one human being in 20, forced from their homes by flooding. That's not an act of God; that's not a natural disaster. That's at least in part a man-made disaster. And we need to start thinking about them in those ways and taking responsibility for them.

JULIE WORTMAN: What's your take on U.S. energy policy?

BILL MCKIBBEN: I think U.S. energy policy is a complete joke! And I think it's been a bipartisan commitment to do nothing about these issues now for a number of years — and it continues.

JULIE WORTMAN: Why is that?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Well, for two reasons. One: There's an enormous vested interest of energy companies, also fuel industries, in our political system and we see that all the more clearly in the wake of things like Enron or in the wake of the acknowledgment that the Bush administration energy policy was written by the fossil-fuel industry!

And probably even more important is that our political leaders are extremely scared that if they do anything to change our absolute reliance on cheap oil that voters will punish

them for it, that people are unwilling to pay a little more for gasoline, or make the other fairly modest changes that would be necessary to jump-start the transition to a sensible and at least semi-sustainable way of life.

JULIE WORTMAN: What would be your top three picks of changes people could make?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Drive less. You know, if Americans eliminated one car trip in 14, if they were able to plan ahead sufficiently to go to the grocery store three times a week instead of four, it would overnight reduce our fossil fuel use about 5 percent.

Drive small. We just traded in our old Honda Civic, which got 40 miles to the gallon and got a new Honda Civic hybrid — we actually got the first one in the state of Vermont — two weeks ago. So we're tooling around now in a car that's cheap — $20,000, so way below the median price of a new car — and that drives absolutely ordinarily. Nothing in it is odd or unusual. You don't have to plug it in. It's just a Honda Civic — the most vanilla car there ever could be, but because it's got this small engine with an electric battery to assist it, we're getting about 55 miles to the gallon!

So that's number two. And number three is engage in the political action necessary to make these changes permanent. The Senate last month, with 19 Democrats going along, voted against the proposal — the modest proposal — to raise average gasoline mileage to 35 miles per gallon by the year 2015! So, you know, way less than the Honda Civic that I traded in to get this new one.

JULIE WORTMAN: Now, here's a question: We had some people that we gave a *Witness* award to in 2000, Wally and Juanita Nelson, who are long-time activists and people who live simply on the land and so on. We wanted to fly them to the place where we were having this awards event and Juanita said, "If we come, we're going to have to come by train" because of the huge amounts of energy that airplanes consume. Now, I know you travel a lot by air. Would you recommend reductions in that kind of travel?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Well, the same things apply. I do my best and I'm extremely cognizant of the fact that there's something extremely odd about flying to parts of the world to urge people to produce less CO_2. What can I say? One makes one's pacts with the devil where one feels one absolutely has to!

But that's absolutely right. Now in statistical terms, it's driving that's the single biggest problem by far. That's where fuel gets used the most. On the other hand, it's air travel that often is the most discretionary of all transportations. It's crazy the way that we all hop on airplanes at the drop of a hat, especially now, when there are emerging good technological alternatives. Like video conferencing and things like that.

JULIE WORTMAN: Right. I think a lot of people learned that after 9/11.

BILL MCKIBBEN: Yes, and they get tired of being searched like criminals every time they take an airplane now. 9/11 certainly highlighted a lot of these questions for everyone and should have made it clear to us what a stupid idea our very centralized energy system and our deep reliance on cheap oil is for security things as well as everything else. But at some deep level this really should be much more of a moral issue for us than it is. And that's one of the reasons that we were trying to get clergy so involved. To me the highlight of that SUV protest in Lynn was my friend Dan Smith, who's the assistant pastor of the church where I grew up, and his big sign that said, "What would Jesus drive?" That was the image that the newspapers fixed on for the most part and rightly so. I mean, there is no more important environmental decision that most people make in the course of a decade. The only other one is how many children should I have? What car you are going to drive is the kind of decision that one needs to pray over.

JULIE WORTMAN: What do you say to the people who have become convinced, but they own an old Explorer?

BILL MCKIBBEN: I think that if they're able to go and get something like a hybrid vehicle that it makes real sense, because not only are you dramatically decreasing your fuel use, you're also kind of jump-starting these alternative technologies.

JULIE WORTMAN: One of the other posters at the Lynn protest said, "Test drive your feet. Walk away from SUVs." That's a nice poster because it can be read on a number of different levels. I've been noticing that more and more people are talking about walkable and bikable communities.

BILL MCKIBBEN: Absolutely. Bikes and feet. I love being able to ride my bike to work. It's one of my greatest pleasures at the moment. But we've become disembodied as Americans, and that is hard to cure because we've set up living situations that make it unfriendly to walk or ride — suburbs, for example, where things are farther away than they should be. But an awful lot of people manage to overcome that anyway and in the process to become slightly less alienated from their bodies as well.

JULIE WORTMAN: So it sounds like churches could really take a lead on a spirituality of embodiment?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Absolutely. And do it in very practical ways with small steps like having church outdoors and for the minister to make sure he's out on his bike all the time. The town we're in at the moment is a wonderful town — Middlebury, Vt. — and our local Episcopal pastor, Catherine Nichols, was the first person in town to have one of these hybrid cars. The license plate says "70 MPG" and there she is, in her collar some of the time, driving that around. Well, that's a powerful witness. There was a big Earth Day celebration on the lawn of her church, too.

JULIE WORTMAN: There's a guy, Jan Lundberg, in Arcata, Calif., who has an alliance for a paving moratorium. And then there's also a group called Wild Lands CPR, which means Center for Preventing Roads. What do you think of these anti-road campaigns?

BILL MCKIBBEN: At the very least, I think everyone should be able to agree that we have enough roads. We don't need more of them and in fact in all sorts of cases, like old service roads and things, it makes great sense to be retiring roads that we no longer need. And some day we'll retire a lot of them.

JULIE WORTMAN: Well, I'm kind of fascinated by this, because while the anti-SUV

campaign has the virtue of being very concrete, the anti-road campaign has the virtue of catching people off guard.

BILL MCKIBBEN: Yeah, absolutely. I've worked hardest on the things that have the most immediate payoff, because I've spent my career worrying about CO_2. And we really only have a very, very few decades to dramatically reduce the amount of it that goes into the atmosphere. We've already waited far too long to avoid serious damage. Everything I do is predicated at some level on most bang for the buck in terms of results. But I think that people like Jan Lundberg are real visionaries doing absolutely crucial work.

JULIE WORTMAN: It's encouraging to see the creativity that's out there with respect to approaching the question.

BILL MCKIBBEN: Absolutely. It's so exciting to go places and see places that have managed to pioneer all sorts of new alternatives. I wrote about a city in Brazil once in a book of mine, a book called *Hope, Human and Wild*. I wrote about a city called Curitiba, south of Brazil. A city of now I think almost four million people. It has the best bus system in the world and it's just amazing beyond belief what a wonderful transit system it has and as a result, its citizens use about 25 percent less fuel than other Brazilians. That's a really big number. And it highlights the point that changes in behavior are possible.

If you go to any poor part of the world you realize that when people don't have the luxury of being able to buy their own huge machine to drive around, then people come up with dozens and dozens of other completely effective ways to move around. And then when you go to other rich parts of the world, like Europe, you realize that with a very little thought people are able to conceive of infinitely more elegant systems than we've come up with.

JULIE WORTMAN: And why is that?

BILL MCKIBBEN: They've taken these issues more seriously for a longer time. They live in somewhat more concentrated circumstances that make other transit alternatives a little bit easier and they're not as thoroughly evangelized by the gospel of comfort and convenience above all as we have been.

The kind of complete and utter hyper-individualism that would lead someone to drive by themselves down the highway in a 3-ton SUV hasn't infected Europe to quite the same degree.

JULIE WORTMAN: After September 11, we were asked to spend money.

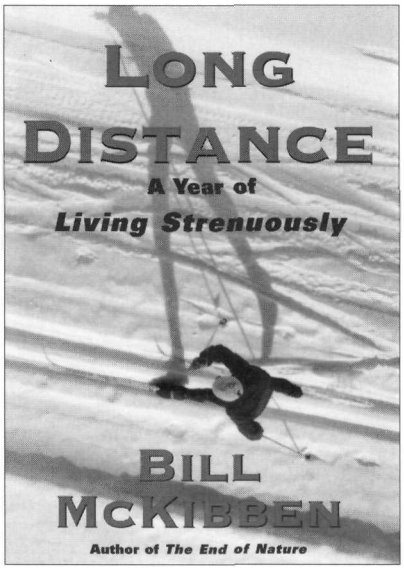
BILL MCKIBBEN: Go shopping.

JULIE WORTMAN: I probably should remember who said this, but a columnist pointed out that people were eager to be contributing to the welfare of the nation and that it could have been a moment to call for energy conservation.

BILL MCKIBBEN: There are a lot of people saying this was THE great opportunity. On September 12, the President could have said, "Look we've got two jobs. One job is we've got to track down this guy bin Laden and the other job is we've got to change forever our reliance on fossil fuel."

We could have done it! We still could do it. There's something pathetic about the sight of people going out and buying SUVs, sticking American flags on them. You might as well stick a Saudi flag on them — that's who benefits if you're driving around in one. It doesn't help us. ●

Julie A. Wortman is editor/publisher of The Witness.



The camp

by Jackie Alan Giuliano

EACH DAY, whether at sea or in port, a typical cruise-ship passenger may generate one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of burnable waste, half a kilogram of food waste and one kilogram of glass and tin — five or six times as much as a person on shore. On a ship carrying 3,000 passengers, this could be as much as 7,500 kilograms a day (16,500 pounds) of waste, much of which is dumped at sea into fragile marine ecosystems. Since international law only concerns itself with the waters a few miles off shore of most countries, these ships are not being held accountable for their destructive actions. In fact, most international treaties governing cruise ship pollution specifically allow ships to dump waste, including untreated human waste, at sea. Every month, 200 cruises take 400,000 visitors to Caribbean ports alone.

Cruise ship companies have paid substantial fines in the last few years. In 1998, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., the world's second largest cruise line, was fined $9 million for dumping polluted water off the coast of Miami, Fla., and Puerto Rico. Last March, the company was fined another $500,000 for dumping off Los Angeles. In July of 1999, Royal Caribbean agreed to pay $18 million in fines to settle a 21-count felony plea agreement. The company's ships violated federal environmental laws in Miami, New York City, Los Angeles, Anchorage, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. In October 1999, Royal Caribbean pleaded guilty to falsifying oil discharge records on one of its ships that was stopped in a Los Angeles port, agreeing to face more than $1 million in fines.

It is unimaginable that international governmental bodies can claim that any level of open ocean dumping is acceptable. The toll that this waste takes on marine life is stag-

aign to 'green' the oceans

© Roger Freeman

gering. Each year, millions of animals become trapped or poisoned by marine refuse. Sea turtles will often die from eating plastic bags that they mistake for jellyfish. Sea lions, birds and other sea life become entangled in plastic six-pack holders, nets, and other debris. Their fate is a slow, painful death as they grow into the entanglement. It is estimated that as many as 30,000 Northern fur seals die annually from entanglement in debris. In one year, nearly 15 billion pounds of trash is dumped at sea worldwide. About 77 percent of all ship waste comes from cruise ships. Cruise ships will also dump bilge water, a blackish liquid that contains oils, fuels, solvents and many other toxic chemicals that gather in the bilges of the ship.

The enforcement problem is magnified since many U.S. ships register their vessels under foreign flags. Even the Disney company's 2,200-passenger vessel *Magic* sails under a foreign flag. The Royal Caribbean company registers its ships in Norway and Liberia, a scheme that saves the company nearly $30 million in U.S. taxes. A U.S. study found that only two out of 111 cases referred to other nations by the U.S. were acted upon.

Although there are signs that regulations are increasing in some countries, we must challenge, once and for all, any ocean dumping. There is no such place as "away" on our Earth, and we must work hard to get all people — especially politicians and corporate leaders — to realize that our oceans are all connected and vital to the health of our planet.

The ultimate enforcer of environmental protection is the consumer. If you are planning a cruise, investigate the cruise line to be sure their ships are not polluters. If they are, do not patronize the company. Ask the same of your friends. If you do take a cruise, take along a video camera and record any dumping or suspicious slicks on the surface. The horrors caused by marine debris — all in the name of recreation — must stop.

RESOURCES

❶ Visit the Center for Marine Conservation's Marine Debris website to learn what you can do about marine pollution at www.cmc-ocean.org/mdio/.

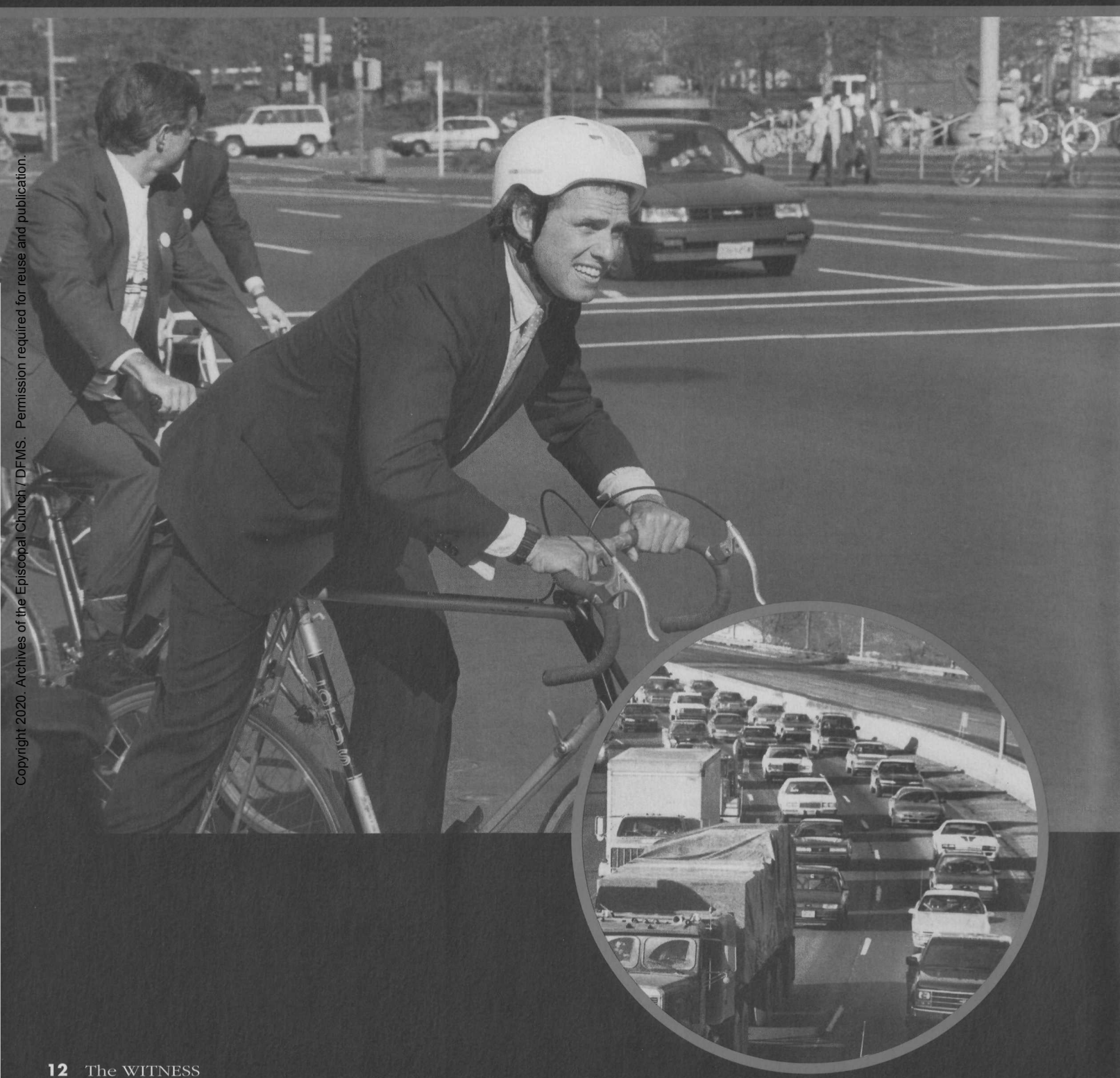
❷ Learn what you can do about strengthening ocean dumping laws at www.cmc-ocean.org/mdio/laws.php3.

❸ Read a comprehensive report on cruise ship pollution at www.guardiannewsltr.com /Subscribers/environews/mar_apr99.htm and at www.ourplanet.com/imgversn/103/07_whisp.htm.

❹ See the National Center for Environmental Health's cruise ship sanitation program at www.cdc.gov/nceh/programs/sanit/vsp/vsp.htm.

❺ Visit the Bluewater Network, a project of the Earth Island Institute at www.earthisland.org/bw/ for information about an ongoing campaign against cruise ship pollution. ●

Jackie Alan Giuliano is a writer who is the Environmental Education Programs Manager and the Manager of Discovery Park for the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation. Reprinted with permission from the author and the Environment News Service (http://www.ens-news.com). The author may be contacted at jackie@healingourworld.com and his website, containing an archive of his commentaries and information on his new book, is at <http://www.healingourworld.com>.



A SOULFUL COMMUTE

Turning practical transport into 'pleasing travel'

by Colleen O'Connor

FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS executive chef Cindy Pawlcyn navigated a daily four-hour roundtrip commute. She lives in Napa Valley, home of her famed Mustards Grill restaurant, and after working there she would drive off to work some more at Fog City Diner and her other San Francisco restaurants. But one rainy night, during the rush-hour commute, she got snagged by a grisly 23-car crash.

"It was like watching a pool game when they break the table and the balls go everywhere," says Pawlcyn, who sat aghast in her Volkswagen Beetle. "There were Jeeps upside down with wheels spinning, people upside down — it was nuts. I couldn't even get my fingers unpeeled [from the wheel]."

A man rushed up from the car behind her. "He said, 'Are you okay?' I said, 'Yeah. I think I'm gonna quit commuting, though.' He said, 'Good idea. I think I am, too.'"

Within six months, Pawlcyn had sold all her San Francisco restaurants. Ending her commute yielded an extra 20 hours of free time each week, which she devotes to tending her organic garden, helping her husband make apple cider in their small winery and cooking dinner twice a week at the home of her octogenarian neighbors, who aren't getting around as easily as before.

"Now when I walk down the street people go, 'Hi, Cindy!' I was never around before. People knew who I was, but didn't know me well enough to stop and talk. It's so nice."

Traffic/ © Jim West

Biker/ © Rick Reinhard

Increasing congestion — and costs

Like MTV and SUVs, commuting seems here to stay. It fragments our communities and takes its toll on our peace of mind. Between 1990 and 1996, incidents of highway violence increased 51 percent, according to the American Automobile Association's Foundation for Traffic Safety. Gridlock and congestion trigger tempers and the problem is getting worse. According to the Association for Commuter Transportation, between 1982 and 1999 traffic delays increased by 235 percent.

Back in the 1960s, Thomas Merton uttered prophetic warning against this addiction to automobiles in his book *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. "We waste our natural resources, as well as those of undeveloped countries, iron, oil, etc., in order to fill our cities and roads with a congestion of traffic that is in fact largely useless, and is a symptom of the meaningless and futile agitation of our own minds."

But he was a voice crying in the wilderness. By 1999 the cost of traffic jams totaled $78 billion, including the cost of 6.8 billion gallons of fuel wasted while sitting in traffic and 4.5 billion hours of lost time due to traffic delays. The average American now spends 443 hours a year in the car, the equivalent of 55 eight-hour work days, according to John Holtzclaw, Transportation Committee Chair of the Sierra Club in San Francisco. "People just don't have an option," he says.

Historic conspiracy

There's a reason for this. Early in the last century, public policy goals took second place to the needs of private business. Back then America had a vast network of public transportation, including an admirable system of electric trolley cars. In 1936, that system took a quantum leap forward when 100 modern streetcars hit the tracks — some herald this as the greatest advance ever made in the history of electric rail transportation.

But that same year, with an eye on its bottom line, General Motors formed National City Lines, a group of auto and oil companies such as Firestone Tires and Standard Oil of California. Together, they bought more than 100 electric-railway systems in 45 cities — including Los Angeles, Oakland, Philadelphia and Baltimore — then ripped out the tracks and built new roads.

Later convicted of criminal conspiracy, General Motors was fined $5,000. Its corporate treasurer, who helped mastermind the plan, was fined a whopping sum of $1. But despite the conviction General Motors continued to buy electric-rail companies until 1955, when 88 percent of the nation's electric streetcar network had been destroyed. In 1936, when General Motors formed the conspiracy, there were 40,000 streetcars in action. By 1965 there were only 5,000.

Today, bias against public transit continues in the form of hidden subsidies fueled by tax dollars. One of the largest is the public expense of building roads. A prime example is the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century, passed in 1998, which set federal transportation spending for six years. Over $173 billion is allocated for highways, but public transportation projects received only $41 billion. The Transportation Equity Act is up for renewal next year, and activists are already working to win public transportation projects a fair share of the tax dollars.

But even if the impossible happened and public transportation won the entire lump sum, change would still be glacial. "We spent 50 years building ourselves into this situation, and it will take 50 years to completely reverse it," says Holtzclaw.

Bikes, jetpacks and sails

This means that every 16-year-old who receives a driver's license this year will be fighting commuter traffic long past retirement age. For adults, it's a life sentence. Many people — some saying they bordered on road rage — have downshifted to alternate means of transportation: trains, subways, carpools, bikes, ferries and scooters. Telecommuting is a popular option, and so is flextime — workdays staggered around rush-hour traffic.

Meanwhile, visionaries are busy concocting possible solutions. Flying to work, without the hassle of airports, could create a Disneyesque commute. Aerospace engineer Michael Moshier recently conducted a test flight of his space-age invention: the Solo Trek Exo-Skeletor Flying Vehicle, a 325-pound machine that resembles a Buck Rogers jetpack (www.solotrek.com). Eight feet tall, it allows the driver to fly in standing position using two joysticks to control its direction. The Defense Department is paying him $5 million for a prototype to be delivered by 2003, envisioning that his invention will help soldiers quickly enter and exit tight spots. But Moshier, who lives in Silicon Valley, is intimately familiar with roads that are more like parking lots than freeways. So he thinks Solo Trek might be a smart solution, imagining commuters soaring through the air like a host of techno-angels at a breezy 80 miles an hour, getting 150 miles per tank of gas.

Anti-road activist Jan Lundgren, founder of the Sustainable Energy Alliance, also has visions. But his harken back to the golden age of shipping, when everything from citrus to silks was transported over the oceans: all powered by trade winds. Reducing this global scale down to the self-contained marine bio-region of Puget Sound, Lundgren has created the fledgling Sail Transport Network. This summer, his 35-foot sloop will transport musicians from one port to the next, where he hopes to attract the attention of other sailors to help re-establish sail transport as a sustainable alternative to trucks and motorized shipping.

"This is not about moving huge boxes of manufactured junk from one port to another," he says. "I'm talking about a whole new age of relying on local resources — about moving ideas, music, information and culture."

As a social statement, it's both political and spiritual. "You're close to the earth when you're sailing," he says. "The water is alive, much more so than land. When you're participating in a project with such earth-friendly values, you're coming from a spiritual perspective, whether you call it that or not."

Soul of new commute?

But not everyone is gifted with such futuristic vision. Further, lots of commuters are land-locked. And many live in towns that lack mass-transit infrastructure. Then there's a whole subset of commuters — moms with carfuls of kids — who find buses, bikes and scooters highly impractical for their tightly organized shuttling services.

People like this, unable to change their situation, have opted to change their minds. It's as if they read these sentences from *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life* by Thomas Moore, and created the soul of a new commute:

"If we imagine transportation as the process of getting from point A to point B, we are reducing it to absolute unadorned pragmatism whereas it can be an exciting sensual and emotional experience in itself," writes Moore. "Sometimes the difference between practical transport and pleasing travel depends on a simple decision to care for the soul."

Call it the spirituality of community, finding the sacred in the ordinary. Experts on commuter stress recommend that people make their cars into pleasant environments so that, if stuck, they're at least serene: keeping things tidy with waste bags and drink holders. But road-worshippers take this much further. If our bodies are our temples, they reason, so are our cars. Rosaries, prayer beads and Buddhist icons dangle from rearview mirrors. Jesus, Krishna, and the Virgin Mother grace dashboards. Pujas, Arabic prayers and the haunting beauty of Tibetan-bowl music waft from CD players. Bumper stickers are *lectio divina*, and ashtrays converted to altars brim with sacred rocks. Highways are holy places where random acts of kindness take to the road. Call it car karma.

"I've tried to adopt a rather benign attitude toward others in traffic," says Gary Haslop, the information and services technology manager at a Northern California supply company in Brisbane. "I might let someone back out of his driveway, or make a last-minute lane change. I may see the driver behind me drumming fingers on the wheel and then, lo and behold! He's letting someone make the maneuver they need. It's the kind of infectious spread we might all consider supporting."

There's also toll-booth dharma, where drivers pay the toll of the stranger in the car behind them, lifting the spirits of both giver and receiver. Such road-worshippers are driving a new brand of spirituality, one that's evident in the popularity of such books as *Saint Benedict on the Freeway: A Rule of Life for the 21st Century* by Corrine Ware, and *My Monastery is a Minivan* by Debbie Roy.

Traffic as spiritual discipline

It was Gregorian chant playing one afternoon on NPR that gave Roy, a self-proclaimed soccer mom, the idea of her car as sacred space. This idea really seized her imagination later, during a silent retreat at a monastery. Sitting in the chapel and absorbing the silence, gazing at the stained glass windows, she made a startling connection between commuting and the Benedictine hours of the day, where every moment is devoted to resting in the presence of God.

"In the monastery, I meditate. In my minivan, I meditate," she writes. "Repetitive schedules are found in both the monastery and the minivan: 8 A.M. chapel, 8 A.M. car pool; 3 P.M. chapel, 3 P.M. car pool; 6 P.M. chapel; 6 P.M. car pool."

From Buddhists to Christians, road worshippers see traffic as the new spiritual discipline. Impatience, even anger, become tools for developing virtues like humility.

In his book *Living the Mindful Life*, Charles Tart, professor of psychology at the University of California at Davis, writes that he was discussing the nature of evil one day with a group of religious scholars. The next day, driving in the fast lane on the freeway, he struck a deep insight.

"I noticed that a man was trying to pass me, but I was blocking the fast lane and there was too much traffic in the other lanes for

him to go around me on the right. Well, I felt I was going fast enough and it was just too bad if he would have to wait a minute to get around me. Suddenly, I realized that, for all my claimed aversion, I was indulging in evil. I was enjoying another's suffering and feeling powerful and satisfied with what I was doing and feeling."

Many of the experts' strategies for commuter-stress management are actually spiritual principles in disguise. For example, one manual advises: "Remind yourself that becoming upset over situations beyond your control is unproductive." In Eastern religions, this is called detachment. In Western religions it's considered acceptance or surrender. Either way, its a priority for Richard Hasselbach, a former priest who now works as executive assistant and legal counsel for the president of the Borough of Manhattan Community College. His four-hour roundtrip commute is a daily education.

"One of the things I've learned is not to fight with the inevitable," he says. "If traffic is hopelessly tied up I have no choices. There's no point in sitting on the horn."

Still, he admits that he's not perfect. The biggest challenge usually comes when he's finally off the freeway and more than halfway home. "I find myself sometimes frustrated by the slowpoke in front of me, driving five miles below speed limit," he says. "This aggravates me almost more than traffic. In those moments I sometimes sit on the horn, but in better moments I catch myself feeling this truly irrational anger."

He then uses this emotion as a tool for self-reflection. "What I'm encountering with that irrational anger is a piece of my own darkness that I don't usually look at. Since it tipped its hand, I want to get to know it. So is my need to be on the fast track? To always be out in front? If so, how healthy is this? And being in front of what? It becomes a source of meditation, really."

But for Mary Wilkin, who works at a small hospital 50 miles from her home in northwest Ohio, driving and the spiritual don't mix. "I prefer to practice meditation and breath prayer alone in the early morning with a single candle burning. That doesn't translate well to the automobile."

Even the car radio jams her nerves. "Talk radio could tempt me to drive into a ditch and end it all," she quips.

Then she discovered books on tape. "Not self-improvement tapes, not inspirational tapes, but murder mysteries, science fiction, even a few Oprah book club titles. I found that for two hours a day I could enjoy a simple story. It gave me a reason to get in the car every morning at 7 A.M. and again at 4:30 P.M. I looked forward to seeing what happened next."

Susan Hodder, director of a strategic marketing company in Boston, prefers a combination of mindfulness and gratitude. She could focus on the negative aspects of commuting. After all, her daily commute from the Boston suburbs to her downtown office has been massively complicated by construction of the Big Dig — the largest, most complex and technologically challenging highway project ever attempted in American history. Its goal is to dramatically reduce traffic snarls in one of America's most congested major cities, but its construction has tripled weekday commutes.

"Rather than dwell on the hassles of urban commuting, I decided that I would focus on how lucky I am to be in such a world-class city," she says. "I changed my route to work to follow along a winding thoroughfare that follows the banks of the Charles River past Harvard and MIT. Now, as I sit in traffic, I watch the scullers pulling past me, and the geese diving for their breakfast, and I marvel at the range of local architecture as the beautiful Boston skyline unfurls before me. If the Big Dig ended tomorrow, I wouldn't change back to my old route."

Even mass transit doesn't guarantee peace of mind. Meg Carter doesn't own a car, so she uses public transportation to travel from her home in Oakland to her job at a San Francisco bank. According to the recent census, San Francisco has the nation's third worst commute — trailing only New York City and Chicago.

"It can be stressful," she says. "It's a long trip and I have to be at the office at a certain time. There are always several transfers involved, which increases the potential for delay."

Many of the bus drivers won't stop to pick up passengers unless they're dropping people off. "Some of them intentionally look straight ahead so that they can pretend they didn't see any people waiting at the stop, which causes some people to step out into the street and knock on their doors. It's pretty dangerous, on those hills, but people get frustrated after four buses have passed them up and they're half an hour late for work."

But her spiritual practices lend higher vision. As a member of a weekly Benedictine prayer community, she's become attuned to rhythms of the day and the connection to the natural world.

"Early in the morning when I'm leaving home, and late at night when I'm returning, I encounter people out walking their dogs. Cats are hanging out on the doorsteps, and birds are hanging out in the trees. Sometimes I see raccoons and possums in my very urban neighborhood. You're very close to the weather, and not just rain, but wind, heat and cold. There's nothing to mediate between you and the elements when you're walking or waiting for the bus."

Traffic as art

Ultimately, commuting is an intriguing paradox: It's about choice within no-choice.

Back in the 1960s, when the monk Merton lambasted the automobile as the symbol of everything that was wrong with American society, one of his contemporaries offered another way of thinking. Al Hansen, an artist, was a founder of 1960s happenings — the art form melding theater, music, and the visual arts. For him, traffic was a symbol of all those gritty things in life that serve to wake us up.

"There is the traffic jam, the construction job, the bus that gets four flat tires all at once for no readily explainable reason, the train that stops mysteriously in the middle of the tunnel under the East River," he wrote in *A Primer of Happenings*. "To the average person, these might be minor tragedies; a happening person would exult that the normal, mundane order of things has been suspended or changed vividly. To us, the unexpected is not a threat; it is welcome." ●

Colleen O'Connor is a freelance writer based in San Francisco, Calif.

Failing the civil-liberties test?

by Camille Colatosti

SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, I've flown five times. Three times I flew roundtrip, from Detroit, where I live, to Boston, where I have family. Once I flew to Baltimore and once to Paris. My experience with airport security differed each time.

The first time I flew, in November 2001, I couldn't check bags at the curb. But a month later, when I traveled for Christmas, I could do this easily. Several times, I sailed through security just as I did in pre-September 11th days — no one checked my baggage or me in a special way. Once I needed to remove my laptop from its case and run it through the conveyor belt. And once I needed to remove my shoes. A security guard examined them, waved the wand over them, and ran them through the conveyor belt.

Another time, a guard practically massaged my body with a security wand. It beeped at my brassiere and at the snap at the waist of my jeans. I felt violated.

When I flew to Paris, I followed airport guidelines and arrived three hours before my international flight. It took 15 minutes to make it through security. When my plane landed in Paris, I picked up my luggage and walked out the airport doors without anyone so much as checking my passport.

The demands of industry are taking priority over the safety of the American people

Anyone who has flown since September 11 has similar stories to tell. Certainly, airport security is important. Many security violations contributed to the September 11th attacks. But are new security measures, new federal agencies and new legislation solving the problem? Of special concern to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a nationwide, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting the individual liberties and freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution and laws of the U.S., is whether new programs to increase security will violate fundamental American liberties.

Three-pronged civil-liberties test

"The ACLU supports efforts to ensure our security from terrorist threats," says Katie Corrigan, ACLU legislative counsel on privacy, "but we remain convinced that we need not sacrifice our civil liberties to protect safety."

The ACLU articulates what it calls a "three-pronged analysis" to promote safety and to reduce the likelihood that new security measures violate civil liberties.

"First," says Corrigan, "any new security proposals must be genuinely effective, rather than creating a false sense of security.

"Second, security measures should be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner. Individuals should not be subjected to intrusive searches or questioning based on race, ethnic origin or religion.

"Finally, if a security measure is determined to be genuinely effective, the government should work to ensure that its implementation minimizes its cost to our fundamental freedoms, including the rights to due process, privacy and equality."

The problem with new federal programs designed to address "homeland security," many civil-liberties watchdogs say, is that, aside from their uncertain impact on safety, few, in fact, pass the three-pronged test.

Office of Homeland Security

President Bush has proposed a budget of $38 billion for the new Office of Homeland Security. Directed by Tom Ridge, the office's stated mission is to coordinate the efforts of federal, state and local agencies that have programs designed to prevent terrorist attacks in the U.S. But although preventing duplication of services seems a worthy goal — no one disputes that government agencies have a poor track record of working with each other — Ridge's new protocols and recommendations may go largely ignored. Ridge lacks authority to enforce recommendations to the 40 federal agencies and more than 200 federal programs that deal with issues of public safety.

SECURITY AFTER 9/11

Armed National Guards watch airline passengers pass through metal detectors and x-ray machines at Sacramento International Airport.

What bothers those concerned about the office's impact on civil liberties is that Ridge is a presidential advisor who lacks cabinet status. As such, he is not required to make the work of his office public. Nor is he required to testify before Congress or to justify his budget requests. While he has spoken to legislators in closed-door sessions, he has not testified publicly.

NorthCom

The Pentagon's new Northern Command will also be working in secrecy. Announced April 17, 2002, and scheduled to take effect on October 1, 2002, Northern Command or NorthCom will be responsible for homeland security in the continental U.S., Alaska, Canada, Mexico and portions of the Caribbean. Directed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, NorthCom will operate independently of the Office of Homeland

'Our roads ought to be avenues of escape'

ACCORDING TO LEAH BRAESCH of Citizens for a Sound Economy Foundation, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit organization, security issues have been a U.S. transportation policy concern since the creation of the first highway. "In 1919, then Lieutenant Dwight D. Eisenhower was part of the first transcontinental motor convoy, 81 trucks and autos, to travel across the U.S., from Washington, D.C., to California. The goal was twofold: to see whether it could be done and to judge the vehicles' military capabilities. On its first day, July 7, the convoy traveled 46 miles in seven hours. After three days' travel totaling 29 hours, the procession had covered 165 miles for an average speed of five and two-thirds miles per hour.

"The journey ended September 6, 1919. The convoy had taken 62 days to cover 3,251 miles — about 50 miles per day.

"After that, the U.S. began building highways but without an overall plan," says Braesch.

"In 1938, Congress called for a feasibility study of a toll superhighway network but this was shot down and states began building their own limited access highways — New York's Bronx River Parkway in 1923 was the first to use medians, and Connecticut's Merritt Parkway, the first toll road, was built in 1938. But highway planning stopped in the 1940s with the war.

"In 1952, when Eisenhower was elected President, he made a commitment to build a nationwide highway network to help U.S. industry move goods swiftly and to provide homeland security. As he put it, 'Our roads ought to be avenues of escape for persons living in big cities threatened by aerial attack or natural disaster.'"

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 created what has since been called the National System of Interstate and Defense highways.

The 2001 Aviation and Transportation Security Act that created the Transportation Security Administration continued a tradition that Eisenhower began — that U.S. transportation policy should serve the needs of both industry and defense.

— Camille Colatosti

Security, although Rumsfeld says he will consult with Ridge.

NorthCom will consist largely of aerospace operations, such as those that the Air Force and Air National Guard have been providing over major U.S. cities since September 11. It will also coordinate naval defense of American shores out to at least 500 miles. As Rumsfeld explained in a press statement, "This is the first time that the continental U.S. will be assigned a commander. The new commander will be responsible for land, aerospace and sea defenses of the U.S. He will command U.S. forces that operate within the U.S., in support of civil authorities."

Transportation Security Administration

NorthCom will also work with the newly formed Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Located within the Department of Transportation, the TSA was created on November 19, 2001, when the President signed into law the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. As a part of the Department of Transportation, the TSA is subject to public oversight.

By November 2002, the TSA is supposed to assume control of screening at the nation's 429 commercial airports and to oversee the purchase and installation of thousands of machines to detect bombs in luggage. Congress created a new $10 tax per airline ticket in order to generate $1 billion a year to fund the agency and to hire about 28,000 people. The TSA now estimates that it will need to hire 72,000 people to accomplish its task and that it will need approximately $6.8 billion.

As of May 2002, the TSA had hired only 1,200 airport screeners and 13 federal security directors to oversee airport security plans.

Many have criticized the TSA not only for the slow pace of its work, but also for conducting random searches and implementing haphazard security measures. There are no consistent standards to assess who is a genuine risk. Airport security personnel have no access to FBI lists, for instance, nor are they trained on how to assess behavior factors, such as past travel patterns.

Likewise, alternative and less invasive airline security measures — such as limitations on the number of carry-on bags, baggage matching to be sure that passengers always travel on the same plane as their luggage, and strict control of secure areas in airports — have not been emphasized.

National ID cards?

The TSA also plans to conduct background checks and issue identification cards to airport personnel: pilots, maintenance workers and others. Tom Ridge of the Office of Homeland Security supports extending this kind of pre-screening to passengers, at least on a voluntary basis. Proponents argue that a voluntary national identification program would give people the opportunity to gain expedited treatment at airports and borders as long as they are willing to submit personal information for a detailed background check. At this point, the TSA is so overwhelmed with its current duties that issuing voluntary national identification cards seems a long way off, but, says ACLU's Corrigan, there are many reasons to reject this proposal.

"Over the past few decades, proposals for a national identification system have appeared as a quick fix to a national problem of tracking one segment of the population or another, including immigrants and deadbeat dads," she explains. "Since September 11, national ID proposals have been discussed as a possible counterterrorism measure. But a national ID card would substantially infringe on the rights of privacy and equality of many Americans, and would not prevent terrorist attacks.

"The rationale for creating a national ID system post-September 11 is to create a clear line between 'us' (innocent people) and 'them' (dangerous terrorists). Everyone would like an ID card that would put them squarely on the right side of the line. Unfortunately, none of the proposed identification systems would effectively sort out the 'good' from the 'bad.'"

As Corrigan explains, identification cards simply confirm that people are who they say they are, but they are only as good as the information supplied and they don't establish motive or intent to attack a plane.

"All 19 of the September 11th hijackers had social security numbers, although not all of them were legitimate," she notes. "One of the hijackers was listed in the San Diego phone book. And still others rented automobiles with their debit cards and lived in suburban Florida neighborhoods. But only a few of the hijackers were on FBI watch lists. An ID card would simply have reaffirmed the hijackers' real or assumed identities. It would have done nothing to establish their criminal motives."

Corrigan is also concerned that national ID cards would not only threaten the basic freedom to move freely, but provide a new tool for racial and ethnic profiling and lead to more harassment of people who are perceived as looking or sounding foreign. "Latinos, Asians, African Americans and other minorities would become subject to more and more status and identity checks — and not just from their employers, but also from police, banks, merchants and others," Corrigan says.

Bridges, pipelines and hazardous material

The TSA is also charged with protection of bridges and pipelines. National Guard troops charged with protecting Bay Area bridges against terrorism, however, claim that they lack the necessary weapons and training. Soldiers say they don't have basic equipment to maintain weapons, are saddled with vehicles that don't run and are not adequately trained on how to use their weapons or on carrying out a wartime mission in areas crowded with civilians.

The bigger question may concern the necessity of National Guard troops on civilian bridges in the first place. Even with appropriate weapons and vehicles, what real protection would they provide? Could they accomplish anything at all or do they simply provide a false sense of security?

Progress has also been slow with the TSA's efforts to increase pipeline safety. After September 11, the Office of Pipeline Safety opened a 24-hour crisis management center in the Department of Transportation headquarters in Washington, D.C., in order to manage emergencies and to "protect pipelines from becoming a weapon against the United States." Yet, proposals to increase safety have not been made public.

Federal policy regarding the transportation of hazardous material has also recently come under fire. On April 8, 2002, Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn, a Republican, vetoed President Bush's endorsement of an Energy Department plan to dispose of 77,000 tons of high-level radioactive waste and spent fuel, currently being stored at facilities across the country, in Nevada's Yucca Mountain.

Congress selected Yucca Mountain in 1987. To date, the project has cost $7 billion. To reach Yucca Mountain, hazardous material needs to travel through 43 states and, says Governor Guinn, it would put 123 million Americans at risk. He argues that there are insufficient protections in place to make transport safe. The project is based on bad science and bad public policy, he says. "The demands of industry are taking priority over the safety of the American people."

The conflict between the needs of industry and the requirements for public safety is also visible at the nation's borders. Trade between Canada and the U.S., for example, has been adversely affected since September 11, as border checks slow down trucks carrying goods between the two nations.

The Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism has, since April 16, 2002, enabled thousands of trucks carrying goods for automakers and other large corporations to avoid U.S. Customs inspections at the Ambassador Bridge, between Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit. A computerized fast lane at the U.S.-Canada border allows well-known businesses that use the border daily — like General Motors, Ford and Chrysler — to transmit information on truck cargo electronically to Customs computers. General Motors, for instance, has approximately 600 trucks running between Canada and the U.S. each day.

Both safe and free?

Since September 11, many national leaders have downplayed concerns about eroding American freedoms, saying that polls show the people of the U.S. believe that limitations imposed on civil liberties during wartime are almost always temporary and that we can expect a return to normal conditions once hostilities are ended. But, as the ACLU has pointed out, the war on terrorism, unlike conventional wars, is not likely to come to a public and decisive end. Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, for example, has equated the war on terrorism with the nation's continuing wars on drugs and crime.

"The civil liberties restrictions that are being put in place are extremely expansive in two ways," ACLU President Nadine Strossen said in a recent press statement. "First, most of them apply far beyond the anti-terrorism context, undermining rights of individuals not even suspected of any crime at all, let alone a terrorist crime. And, second, most of these restrictions are unlimited in time."

That is why, says Strossen, Congress and the American people must carefully scrutinize actions that the government is taking — actions that limit liberty without adding anything to safety.

Adds Strossen, "If we choose the path of advancing both safety and freedom, the benefits to our constitutional democracy will be universal and ever-growing." ●

Witness staff writer ***Camille Colatosti*** *lives in Hamtramck, Mich.*

Advocating for the 'forgotten people of the world'

by Marianne Arbogast

ON THE MORNING *The Witness* interviewed Douglas Stevenson, he had just hung up from a phone call with a government official in Cyprus. A ship had been abandoned by its owner in the Suez Canal area, Stevenson explained, leaving the crew stranded without food, wages or any means of returning home. Since the owner was residing in Cyprus, Stevenson was attempting to enlist the aid of the agency that regulates shipping in that country.

Such interventions are routine for Stevenson, a former U.S. Coast Guard lawyer who now serves as director of the Center for Seafarers' Rights of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey. Its name is potentially misleading: Although based in New York, the work of the Center is international in scope.

It is "the only maritime ministry in the world that has a full-time legal staff devoted exclusively to seafarers," Stevenson says. "What we try to do is be an advocate for seafarers who don't otherwise have a voice. Foreign seafarers are not a constituency of any legislature in the U.S. They are visitors, they're transients. They don't vote."

Although we rely on seafarers for many of our daily needs, most people rarely consider their situation, Stevenson says.

"They're the forgotten people of the world. We don't realize how much we depend on ships to sustain our life. I hear estimates that 90 percent of everything we consume has traveled on a ship at some stage, particularly in this global economy. We very much depend on shipping, but we don't know anything about it."

Today's seafarers are increasingly from developing countries, Stevenson says. "The largest group of seafarers are Filipinos. But there's also a growing number of Chinese, and there's a number from Eastern Europe." Most — with the exception of maids and housekeepers on cruise ships — are men, although some Eastern European women are employed in traditionally male seafaring positions.

They face all of the usual workers' issues, in an unusual work environment.

"When you work at the Cadillac factory in Hamtramck you go home every night," Stevenson points out. "If you've got a problem with your employer you can walk down the street and sue him in court — or you have the police next door if there are other problems."

But ships' crews are "living and working in the same place, in a mobile working environment that goes from one legal jurisdiction to another through very hazardous conditions. Because of this mobility, an unscrupulous ship operator can try to avoid regulation and avoid standards."

National security and shore leave

From time immemorial, the sea has been understood to be a dangerous place. But the respect accorded those who brave its hardships seems to have diminished.

Traditionally, "if you worked on a ship, your pay was considerably more than working on land, as compensation for the long separations and dangers involved," Stevenson says. But recent years have brought "an erosion of the traditional rights of seafarers, eroding pay and benefits and eroding lifestyle."

The Center for Seafarers' Rights works on several levels, from direct intervention in crisis situations to advocacy for legislation to better protect seafarers.

Seafarers have felt the impact of tightened security regulations over the past year, Stevenson says.

"You have ongoing problems of seafarers not being paid their wages, not being provided with medical care, and other forms of abuse and intimidation, but the big issue I'm dealing with today is the backlash from 9/11 and the preoccupation of government agencies with protecting security by denying shore leave to seafarers," he explains.

The Seamen's Church Institute is located very close to Ground Zero, Stevenson adds — and, in fact, provided extensive hospitality to rescue workers after the attacks.

"There aren't any agencies that have a better understanding about the need to protect security than we do, because we were directly affected by it. So we are not saying that government agencies should not be allowed to exclude people from entering the borders if they pose a security risk, but those measures should be reasonably calculated and not just be a knee-jerk reaction to keep people from entering the country — particularly those on ships."

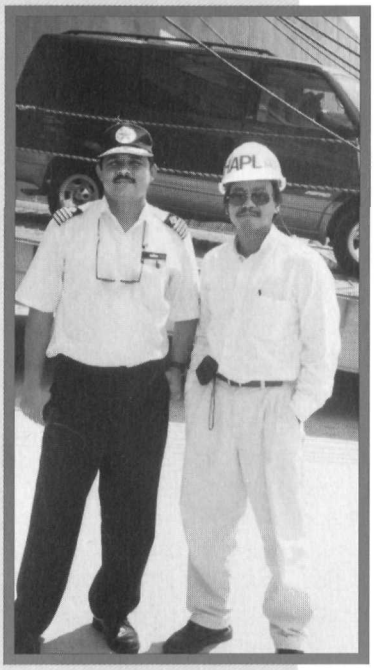
A Seamen's Church Institute press release points out that "maritime law and practice has long recognized that shore leave is essential for maintaining seafarers' mental and physical health." Moreover, it explains, "mariners who are well-paid and well-treated by their employers are extremely unlikely to jump ship. Greatly increasing penalties to the owners or operators of ships from which crew jump

Rescuing seafarers in Tampa

CHRISTIAN VILLAGOMEZA, an Episcopal priest in Tampa, Fla., says he didn't even know where the port was until he got a call from his seafarer brother-in-law, whose ship was coming into Tampa. Villagomeza made his way to Tampa Bay to find his brother-in-law waiting for him outdoors on a cold February day. A large group of men were lined up nearby, waiting their turn to use a single pay telephone.

Villagomeza, who now serves as a full-time port chaplain, traces his concern for the needs of seafarers to this initial contact. A 1998 graduate of the Seamen's Church Institute port chaplain training program, Villagomeza began his ministry in Tampa Bay in 1999.

Initially he was regarded with suspicion by some of the other chaplains, whose emphasis differed from his, he says. "They would climb up on board and give you the Bible. I just go there and be with them, and if there is a problem, they come to me." But over time, Villagomeza was able to build rapport and help to establish the ecumenical "Tampa Port Ministries," which occupies a double trailer at the port.



The most frequent problem Villagomeza encounters is seafarers not being paid their wages, he says. He is able to help them *interpret their contracts, suggest possible courses of action, and* occasionally intervene with an agent or owner. Sometimes he contacts the Center for Seafarers' Rights for assistance.

"In one case, I was contacted by a chaplain in Paducah, Ky. [where the Seamen's Church Institute's Center for Maritime Education is located], and they told me that a ship was at the anchorage, out at sea about 20 miles away in Tampa Bay, and they were fishing for food. They had three stowaways and no way of coming into the port. So I asked the help of the Tampa Pilots' Association and they helped me go there and deliver some provisions. Finally they came in, but they were still not allowed to step down, all of them were being detained on board. There were 15 Filipinos and five Haitians, and three of the Haitians were stowaways. They were being guarded by U.S. marshalls."

Villagomeza learned that the ship's crew had not been paid in five months, but they were so demoralized that they agreed to the ship owner's strategy of taking them in small groups to an airport in Texas, from which they were deported without pay.

"Those things I cannot do anything about, especially when there is no permission to bring it to the authority or to the ITF (the International Tradeworkers Federation union). They were not able as one body to ask for help — they had become too individualized and their self-esteem was very low. Some of their contracts had already been finished and they were still there."

At the same time, however, another ship's crew was facing problems on the other side of the bay. They, too, had not been paid wages for five or six months. In this case, the crew members did ask Villagomeza to contact the ITF, and found a maritime lawyer to take on the case. The ship was "arrested" — taken out of the owner's custody and placed under the authority of U.S. marshalls. Villagomeza helped with food and other needs while the case proceeded, and eventually the crew members won seven months of back pay. Only one stayed on with the ship, and Villagomeza put the others up in his home while they made arrangements to return home.

Villagomeza and the other chaplains are currently raising funds for a seafarers' center on land given them by the port authority. Villagomeza is drawing up plans for a building in the shape of an anchor.

"I conceptualize this in such a way that every immediate need of the seafarers will be inside the building," he says. "Of course, the Baptists will not agree with me if I say we will have a bar inside. But there will be a communications center with telephones and email, a library, a fitness center, a little bank and post office and a chapel. We are looking at a sophisticated area where seafarers all over the world will say proudly, 'I can't wait to get back to Tampa.'" — *M.A.*

would prove a far more effective method of preventing illegal entry than increasing restrictions on shore leave."

The U.S. is the only major country in the world that requires crew members to have visas as a condition of shore leave, says Stevenson, who regards this as an unnecessary and burdensome requirement.

Legal training and assistance

The problem of abandoned ships, like the one near the Suez Canal, is one that Stevenson deals with on a regular basis. Owners facing financial difficulties will sometimes simply walk away, leaving a ship's crew stranded far from their homes.

"They're in a foreign place, they probably haven't been paid in several months, they have no ability to buy food or anything. It's really a horrible situation," Stevenson says. "We work to provide direct assistance to seafarers who are the victims of injustices, and at the same time, we try to work systematically to correct the problems so they don't recur. We are trying to promote legislation in the U.S. to require proof of financial responsibility for any foreign ship that comes into U.S. waters."

The Center also provides training to port chaplains worldwide, to help them better understand maritime law and seafarers' rights.

"Many ports around the world have church maritime agencies that provide services to seafarers. When they have legal problems with seafarers they contact me and we give them assistance. We're very collaborative in that regard and very ecumenical. We are also involved in helping develop and sustain new maritime ministries in ports where they don't now exist — we're focusing now primarily in Latin America."

The Center assists seafarers in understanding their legal rights and will assist with litigation when necessary. Although they do not directly file lawsuits, they can intervene with letters or phone calls, and sometimes help seafarers find lawyers.

"The leverage we have varies from case to case," Stevenson says. "Sometimes we have no leverage. Sometimes it's just the moral force of the church. Sometimes it just astonishes me that anyone would even open my letters. We generally have legal standing, but there are the practicalities — the cost of litigation may far

outweigh the amount in question."

Sometimes the Center's role consists in bringing publicity to abusive situations that might otherwise go unchecked. Last August, for instance, they learned that a recruiting firm was illegally taking money from Kenyan citizens in exchange for cruise ship jobs they could not have taken, due to lack of maritime certification. Stevenson's concerns were publicized in a Kenyan newspaper, on the web and in a maritime publication.

"This was another area in which we find absolutely unscrupulous people taking advantage of some of the poorest people in the world," Stevenson says. "They take the fee and give nothing in return. In the case of Kenya, the government was complicit in it, probably through some corrupt officials."

Lack of adequate maritime training is a growing worldwide problem that leads to unemployability, Stevenson says. "In the U.S. the unions provide a lot of schools, but in most other parts of the world the seafarers have to pay for it themselves. In some countries the schools are no longer certified, so the seafarers have no way of getting training. Basically the entire seafaring workforce of Tanzania has been put out of a job, because Tanzania doesn't have qualified schools any longer."

The Center's staff consists of Stevenson, one assistant attorney, and law school students who work as interns. Stevenson considers the mentoring of young attorneys "one of the hidden programs" of the Center.

"We've been fortunate in being able to attract the best and brightest from some of the top law schools in the country who have a desire to do some public service work before they begin their life career," Stevenson says. "And they have a very unique opportunity to really help people, in very interesting, hands-on work. We may not be dealing with a large number of young lawyers, but I think at least some of the future leaders of the legal profession will have a background of understanding that law isn't just about making money. They will have at the beginning of their career some very good experience in public service, and also see how the church can work in this environment."

Developing international standards

Stevenson is currently involved with two significant U.N. efforts to develop international standards on living and working conditions for seafarers.

"The first is that the International Labor Organization (ILO) — which is a specialized agency of the U.N. headquartered in Geneva — has decided that it's going to try to consolidate its many different conventions dealing with seafarers into one major convention," he says. "This is quite a monumental task and one we strongly support."

There are currently two major maritime conventions that every country has to follow, Stevenson explains. One is SOLAS — the Safety of Life at Sea convention — which deals with technical safety standards for ships, and the other is MARPOL, or the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.

"What we want to do is have a third major convention which would have equal status with the other two, which deals with the living and working conditions of seafarers. So instead of having a bunch of little conventions dealing with a variety of issues that no country has ratified, we would have one major convention that combines all of them that would be capable of being ratified. This would be a great way of raising the consciousness of states about the importance of ships' crews, and it would set worldwide standards for them."

As part of the International Christian Maritime Association delegation to the ILO, Stevenson is helping with background information as well as drafting work.

The second effort has to do with setting human safety standards on ships.

"The International Christian Maritime Association also got NGO status at the IMO — the International Maritime Organization. In the past few years the IMO has come to realize that since 80 to 90 percent of maritime casualties are caused by human factors, it's time to start looking at those human factors in developing safety standards. If people are fatigued, if they aren't well fed, if they're not taken care of, that reduces their efficiency and safety. Very few maritime disasters are caused by boilers blowing up, which used to be the major cause of maritime accidents 100 years ago. Now the world has pretty much legislated ships to be pretty safe machines — but the human beings are unsafe, because the standards for them need some development."

Stevenson travels to Geneva regularly, and recently spent a week at an IMO meeting in London.

"We feel that we have a very important voice in this process because really it's the maritime ministries, it's the port chaplains, who have a better understanding of the problems that seafarers are encountering than probably anybody in the world, other than the seafarers themselves. So it's a very important opportunity — and obligation, I think — for the church to share its experience and knowledge with the bodies that are creating standards that affect the lives of seafarers."

Creating awareness of seafarers

The Seamen's Church Institute, which includes the Center for Seafarers' Rights, is a nonprofit ecumenical agency affiliated with the Episcopal Church that has existed since 1834. Its other programs include the Center for Maritime Education, an independent maritime education program to enhance mariners' safety and professional competency; and the Center for Seafarers' Services, which provides direct care to mariners in the greater Port of New York/ New Jersey and along 2200 miles of inland waterways. The Institute trains port chaplains and has initiated new programs such as Ministry on the River, which offers pastoral and practical assistance to mariners serving on river vessels, and to their families, through a network of "River Friendly Churches."

Stevenson feels that the church could play a stronger role in helping people become aware of the existence and needs of seafarers. Some churches observe "Maritime Day," he says, and he has put on educational programs in churches that have requested them. Anyone interested in supporting the Center's legislative efforts can find information on the SCI website (www.seamenschurch.org) or subscribe to their free periodic newsletter.

"Even if you could include seafarers in your prayers, there would be some focus on them," Stevenson says. "The first step is understanding and knowledge. We have to do a better job of bringing to the wider public's attention the world of mariners." ●

Detroiter ***Marianne Arbogast*** *is associate editor of* The Witness.

WELFARE AND

Will there be justice for the poor?

by Beverly G. Ward

In 1967 the Kerner Commission said: "Most new employment opportunities do not occur in central cities near all-[black] neighborhoods. They are being created in suburbs and outlying areas and this trend is likely to continue indefinitely." It recommended expansion of aid to local public transportation service and routes serving the inner cities in an effort to allay the "civil disorders" of the 1960s. The Commission's recommendation has largely gone unheard.

High users of public transit are most likely to be of Asian, black, or Hispanic heritage; central city dwellers, particularly female workers, living alone; households with no vehicles; or low-income persons. Since these are characteristics shared by those who received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), it would appear that transit should likewise meet the needs of adults participating in the new welfare reform program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Mobility problems certainly disproportionately affect poor blacks who live in inner cities.

After World War II, public transit systems, specifically buses and commuter rail companies, faced an unending spiral of fare increases and service cuts. Higher incomes, increased suburbanization, highways and private auto use, all contributed to this decline. The Federal Transit Act (formerly Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964) was presented by President Johnson as part of his Great Society. But in light of the funding that was available for the interstate highway system, the Federal Transit Act was only a token gesture to address public mass transportation needs. Over the years, the funding for public transit has been reauthorized at 20 to 25 percent of the federal budget for surface transportation, while the needs for public transit have continued to increase, e.g., rural transportation, clean air transportation control measures, and in 1998, to provide transportation for welfare reform. The underinvestment in mass transportation and land use patterns have forced large segments of the U.S. population to become dependent on private automobiles to meet their basic needs. Marcia D. Lowe wrote in 1991, "One of the greatest ironies of the 20th century is that around the globe, vast amounts of such priceless things as land, petroleum, and clean air have been relinquished for motorization — and yet most people in the world will never own an automobile."

Former U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater said transportation is the "to" in Welfare-to-Work (WtW) initiatives, realizing that many welfare recipients and the working poor have limited access to transportation. Welfare parents and others seeking employment need access not only to jobs, but other services such as daycare facilities, schools, training programs, and health care providers. Persons with private automobiles take for granted the ability to plan and control work trips, errands, shopping, recreation and other trips. Lack of automobile ownership, however, limits access. Automobile ownership is associated with class in that automobiles symbolize not only status in American society, but also freedom. Popular slogans abound such as "It's not just your car, it's your freedom" and "On

Chris Hellin/*Shooting Back* (Chronicle Books, 1991)

the road of life, there are passengers and drivers." These slogans come to have real manifestations.

Violence, disenfranchisement, economic exploitation, and segregation laws have been used to limit black mobility on physical, psychological, economic, and other social levels since Africans were forcibly moved to the American colonies. Throughout this history, some aspect of transportation has been a major locus of dissent — the Underground Railroad, Plessy vs. Ferguson, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the bus boycotts, the Freedom Rides — continuing to this writing with the Los Angeles Bus Riders Union and the Environmental Justice Action in Atlanta, Ga.

The intersection of space, ethnicity, and income only intensifies the issues related to women's travel. Female-headed households comprised 88 percent of all U.S. households receiving public assistance in 1996. Women outnumber men in urban areas from 115:100, overall, to 157:100 for those over age 65. The concentration of women and female-headed families in the city is both cause and consequence of the city's fiscal woes. Women live in cities because it is easier and cheaper for them to do so, but because fewer women are employed, and those that are receive lower pay than men, they do not make the same contribution to the tax base that an equivalent population of men would. Concomitantly, they are more dependent on public resources, such as transportation and housing. Concerns about adequate childcare may restrict a woman from taking a job outside the home. Access to goods and services when traveling with small children may be limited by the design of public transportation facilities.

It is one thing to say that federal funds are available for welfare reform, but these funds do very little if the infrastructure, such as buses, 24-hour bus service, and daycare, is not available. Even in areas where there is relatively good bus service, research suggests that public transportation is not a feasible option for many rural and inner-city residents. Legislators, policymakers, and transportation providers often are not users of public transportation services. The real conditions that users face are often far removed from the decisionmaking arena.

The connection between work and access to employment opportunities was overlooked in the welfare reform legislative process. In 1998, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) found that only about 6 percent of welfare recipients owned automobiles. While two-thirds of all new jobs were in the suburbs, three-quarters of welfare recipients lived in rural areas or central cities. In metropolitan areas with excellent public transit systems, less than half of the jobs were accessible by transit. The median price of a new car was equivalent to 25 weeks of salary for the average worker in 1991. (For a low-income worker, the price would be considerably more.) Approximately 9 million households or 10 million Americans of driving age, most of whom are low-income workers, did not own cars. There were no new funds, however. Congress "set aside" formula grant dollars that would have been used to provide general transportation services. Thus, the available formula grant funds have been reduced. Transit authorities now compete with each other and other entities for these funds through "innovative" grant proposals.

The disconnection between federal policy and reality continues with examples of the lack of coordination between federal programs. The FTA found "most state welfare plans submitted to the federal government barely mentioned transportation." Peter Edelman, former Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services stated, "[Welfare reform] closes its eyes to all the facts and complexities of the real world and essentially says to recipients, 'Find a job.'" Edelman resigned his post in protest over the bill.

Welfare reform mandates that TANF recipients "work first." The profile of the recipients at time of enactment suggests that those subject to employment mandates of the Act faced significant challenges in meeting this requirement. Lack of transportation seemed to be chief among the challenges. For many rural recipients there may be no transportation — no private automobile and no public transportation. Where public transportation is available in rural areas, temporal gaps may pose barriers. The service may be available days or hours during the week not compatible with commuting needs. Studies from three major metropolitan areas found that geographic and temporal gaps existed in areas with public transit systems ranked among the top 25 in the nation. Many TANF participants have passed the critical five-year period of program participation. Although welfare reform addresses transportation as an allowable support service for participants, few states have transportation elements as part of their statewide plans. Former Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Administrator Gordon Linton stated in 1999 that the failure of the legislation and state plans to address transportation needs of TANF participants was "poor planning."

Today's spatial patterns of poverty pockets, edge cities, exurbs, and "fortified enclaves" have been developing for many years and are part of the economic and other social characteristics of the U.S. Public transportation could and should provide us choices other than the private automobile, but the lack of it continues to contribute to the reproduction of social differences. ●

Beverly G. Ward is a transportation policy expert in Atlanta, Ga. She is a Quaker. This article is condensed from a longer paper which is available at The Witness' *website, <www.thewitness.org>.*

Exploring an alternative politics of trade with Dana Frank

by Jane Slaughter

Buying 'local' can be good for the environment, but what values lie behind 'Buy American' campaigns?

WHAT RULES should govern the flow of goods from one society to another? The "free trade"/"fair trade" debate has raged for decades. Labor historian Dana Frank is intrigued by the "Buy American" campaigns that have won so many working-class enthusiasts. Perhaps the apex was the spectacle, in the 1980s, of local unions in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Alabama selling their members the chance to take a sledgehammer to a Toyota. Using economic arguments that sound credible on one level, "Buy American" crusades promote a self-righteous nationalism that spills over into jingoism.

Frank's book *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism*, argues that protectionism and "free trade" are not the only choices for economic relationships between countries; she proposes an alternative politics of trade based on working people's common interests.

JANE SLAUGHTER: What got you interested in the "Buy American" movement?

DANA FRANK: I was thinking about writing a book about the history of the union label. There's a long history, that starts in the 1870s, of goods and services being marked as having been produced by union workers. People might remember restaurants carrying a sign that said "Union House." Or the TV campaign from the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, in the 1970s, with the workers singing that catchy little song: "Look for the union label ..."

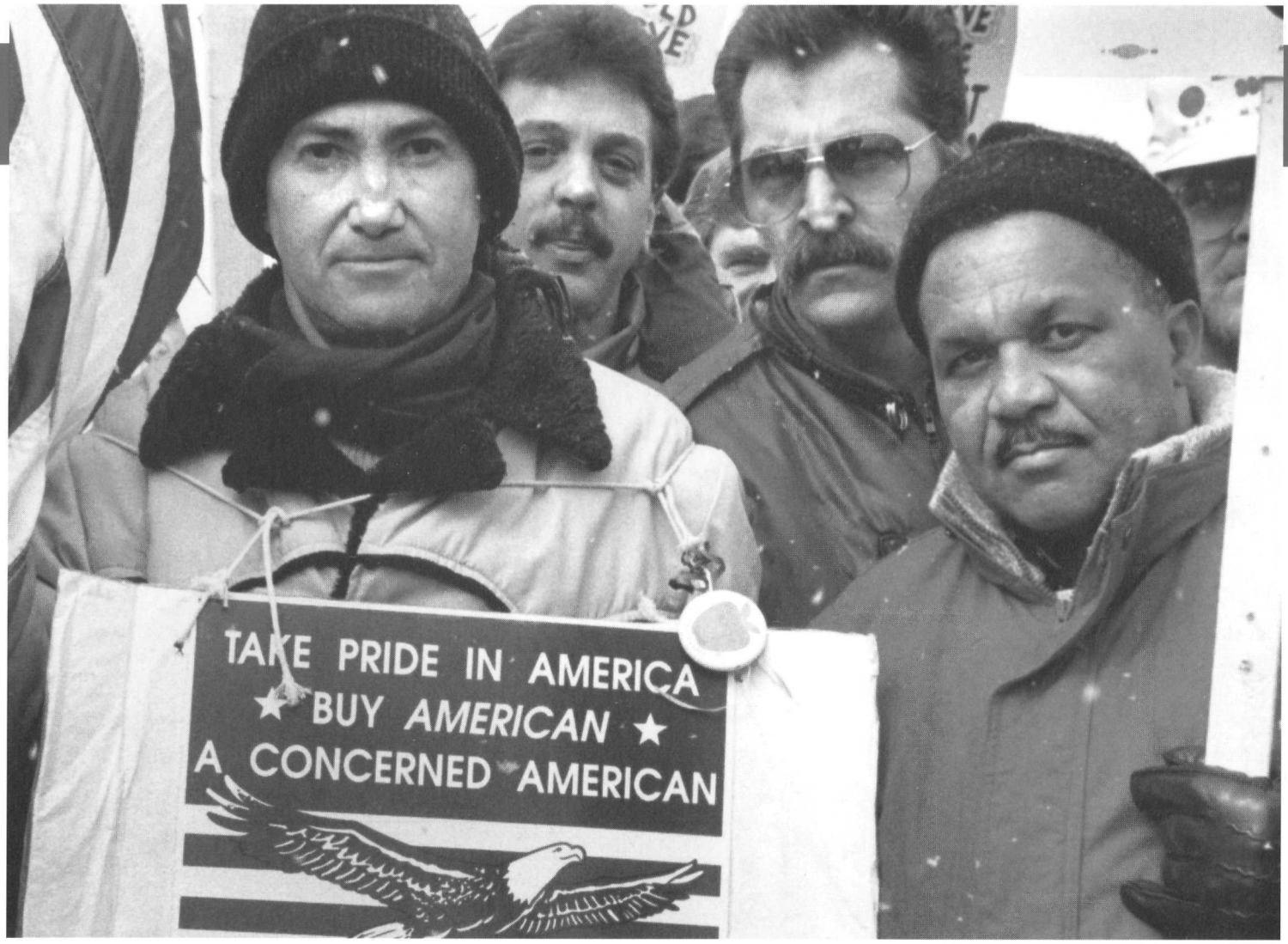
But I realized that by the 1980s the union label had mutated into "Buy American." It had lost the class dimension and became nationalism instead. I was interested in how that happened, and I wanted to write for ordinary people about difficult issues of trade and globalization and make it acceptable from people's own starting point—because we've all thought about whether "Buy American" would save jobs.

I had also always been interested in anti-Asian racism, because in California I grew up with Asian Americans and knew what they had gone through and my family hadn't.

JANE SLAUGHTER: There is a movement that says we should try to keep our economic interactions closer to home, both to avoid spending so much on transportation and to encourage community. But you see "Buy American" as different. What's the logic behind "Buy American"?

DANA FRANK: When we think about Buy American campaigns, we need to think about "What's the goal we're trying to achieve?" The economic logic seems clear: we buy goods made in the U.S., and then the manufacturers will take the money they make from that and reinvest it in the U.S. And union folks, especially, want that to be reinvested in good union jobs. We're trying to create some kind of national community, and we're trying to say, "We want good jobs to be sustained within the U.S."

The problem with that logic is that while we're trying to make a deal with nation-based capital, the money the companies are making is being invested overseas as fast as it can, because the profit rates are higher and labor costs are often lower. Often for-



eign-made goods are cheaper because they're the product of exploited workers.

So while we think we're in some kind of partnership with nation-based capital — while they're waving the flag — they're taking their money and investing it overseas.

A good example is General Motors. General Motors is investing in Brazil and China and all over the world with the money that it might make selling cars in the U.S. They're looking for the highest rates of return; they're not looking to sustain community in the U.S.

So what happens is that we end up in alliances with the very corporations that are causing the problem we're trying to solve. We end up with the wrong friends, and at the same time we end up with the wrong enemies. We end up seeing workers in other countries as undermining us and as somehow our enemy, when we should be thinking of working people in other countries as our allies.

JANE SLAUGHTER: It seems that Buy American is often a sentiment that comes from the grassroots. It's not just something that's manipulated by the media or by corporate spinmasters. Why do people tend to jump on "foreigners" as their first explanation for what's wrong, and to economic nationalism as their first solution?

DANA FRANK: One reason is that it seems like a path to democratic control of the economy. It seems like the way that we can be empowered to use our consumer dollars and create the good society.

And part of the reason is that we don't have a lot of other alternatives. We're alienated from the mainstream political parties. Both the Democrats and Republicans support free trade. Neither one is supporting the labor movement the way they should, since they're both largely corporate-controlled parties. So we're stymied at that end, and often the trade union leadership is not offering us a way to have democratic control of our unions and to use our unions the way we would like to use them. And so people are looking for a way to feel powerful in relation to huge global forces that are dragging down our communities.

JANE SLAUGHTER: It ends up making strange bedfellows, but if a Buy American campaign was in fact able to increase consumption of U.S.-made goods, and somehow did increase, in some small measure, the number of jobs that were needed to produce those goods in the U.S. — don't people have the right to try to protect their own jobs, especially if they're higher-paying and it seems like the only people benefiting from imports are the owners of corporations?

DANA FRANK: First of all, the first part of your question just isn't going to happen, because the cat's out of the bag with globalization. All the trade agreements and federal policies, like NAFTA and now the Free Trade Area of the Americas, are greasing the wheels for that money to go outside the U.S.

The second problem is when we start identifying "us vs. them." When that's defined geographically, it sets up people in foreign countries as the enemy. You start drawing these circles of who is the "us" and who is the "them," and historically, again and again that line is defined in racial and anti-immigrant terms. So then you have this notion of a white, native-born "we" that's being protected from "them."

With the way the economy exists, we can't go backward. We have to acknowledge that there are transnational corporations, there are institutionalized trade systems—we have to fight them, but we also have to think of people outside our borders as our allies and comrades rather than as the people we're fighting against.

JANE SLAUGHTER: We have to think about transnational solutions because transnationalism is here to stay.

DANA FRANK: Yes. We can't make it go away. And there's also this very tricky question of "what's our community?" Is our community defined in geographic terms? Is it defined in ethnic terms? Is it defined in national terms? We are not going to get it about the way the world is structured if we don't start thinking of "our community" in class terms.

JANE SLAUGHTER: It seems like Americans are so quick to jump to "American" as the community that they identify with. Why is that?

DANA FRANK: Like in many countries, there's a long history of nationalism that goes along with nation-states. And historically, in the U.S., it's also tied in with the U.S. desire to dominate the world, and the sense of arrogance that we're the best country in the world, or we have the only real democratic country in the world, and therefore we know what's best for the rest of the world. Since September 11 people are understandably scared, but the question is, again, does that mean that we fall back on the sort of "we" that says "we should dominate the world"? I believe that means landing right back into alliances with transnational corporations that are creating the same problems we're trying to fight against, like Lockheed Martin [Marietta]. These huge military contractors were running patriotic ads with flags in *The New York Times* within days of September 11, and they have a tremendous stake in militarization.

These corporations are waving the flag, but that's just greasing the skids to go overseas as fast as they can. They are backing agreements like the Free Trade Area of the Americas, or trying to give Bush "fast-track" authority, precisely so that they can leave the country.

JANE SLAUGHTER: The language used in Buy American campaigns has often been that of "invasion." How does that contribute to the emotional tone of the campaigns?

DANA FRANK: There's a whole set of language: not only invasion, but "flood." The flood of foreign products. People can watch for that kind of language in the press; it goes back to the notion of the "yellow peril" which was first promoted at the turn of the century. It also ties in with the notion that Pat Buchanan is pushing—that white people in the U.S. are being engulfed by people of color and immigrants. It's always a tidal wave-invasion-flood metaphor, that somehow we're being taken over. And of course the "we" that we're constructing is white.

JANE SLAUGHTER: Can you say more about how racism has been thoroughly intertwined with Buy American campaigns?

DANA FRANK: There have been three big phases of Buy American campaigns. The first was during the American Revolution, with the non-importation agreements and the Boston Tea Party. But the second and much bigger wave was in the 1930s. A lot of it was sponsored by William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper mogul. That campaign attacked both foreign goods and foreign workers. An imported product was seen as the product of foreign workers, who were dangerous whether they were in the U.S. or whether they were somewhere else. Hearst promoted the concept of "the yellow peril" — that Asians were about to take over the U. S., and that both their products and the people should be purged.

Most people are familiar with the Buy American campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s. You saw a resurgence of every stereotype in the book against Asians, and the notion that Japanese capital was taking over the U.S. You saw the equation of Japanese goods with Pearl Harbor —

JANE SLAUGHTER: I remember the United Auto Workers used phrases like "the Japanese are savaging our market." *Our* market.

DANA FRANK: Again, who is the "our," the "we"? And there were references to sneaky Asians, the various inscrutable Orientals — all these stereotypes that have been around since the late 19th century.

At some level there's a notion that it is not legitimate for Asian people, whether it's Japan or China, to be a viable economic competitor. And so racism is trotted out the minute there's any kind of economic power in Asia that is somehow seen as a viable competitor to the U.S. Especially with China as a growing economic power now, I think we're about to have the Cold War again, this time using the "yellow peril." You saw it when the Chinese captured the U.S. spy plane in the spring of 2001. People were calling up the Ethnic Studies Center at the University of Oregon and saying that all people of Chinese descent should be interned. There was a resurgence of every stereotype in the book.

The latest manifestation of Buy American is that since September 11th there's been a huge resurgence of nationalism and patriotism and corporate-sponsored nationalist campaigns. There's certainly been a lot of nationalism in ad campaigns — that you should buy a Chevrolet because of September 11th, for example.

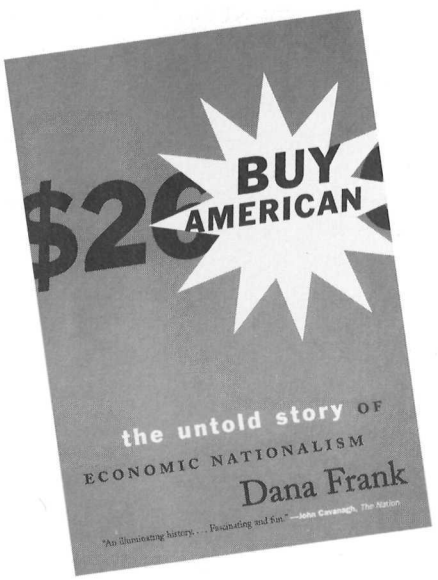
JANE SLAUGHTER: Because a Chevrolet is the most all-American car!

DANA FRANK: Somehow, that would stop terrorism. There's a shameless willingness to manipulate nationalism and people's fears in order to support the corporate agenda. And there has been a resurgence of desire to buy American, but the economy is so transnational and mixed up now that it's almost impossible anyway, precisely because of this long-term restructuring that we call globalization.

JANE SLAUGHTER: What reactions have you had to your book from working people?

DANA FRANK: Most people have been excited by what it was saying, because they knew there was something wrong in the Buy American logic. They liked what I was saying — that it was time to move past the nationalist approach to trade issues. ●

Jane Slaughter is a freelance writer who specializes in labor issues.



Small town names gay "Couple of the Year"

A gay couple was named "Couple of the Year" in Lincoln City, Ore., a small, vacation/retirement community of 6,300 people. The award was given to Rick Brissette and Dan Beck on April 13 during a "Community Days" celebration sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

"Rick and I both arrived in Lincoln City about 15 years ago from opposite corners of the country," Beck told the assembled crowd. "We found, not only each other, but a community that just said no to the hate being promulgated in our beautiful state."

In an email announcing the award, Beck said that it "is sponsored by Lincoln City's newspaper, *The Newguard*, and when our names were announced by its publisher, a rather conservative man who just moved here, the banquet hall erupted with cheers, applause, yelling and general pandemonium. People were genuinely as surprised, thrilled and blown away as us. Our friends were jumping up and down on their chairs screaming. Afterward, the reception line felt like those one sees at weddings. People I did not even know slapping me on the back saying, 'Congratulations. You guys deserve it. It's about time. Maybe some day this kind of thing will not be so unusual.'"

Ground rules for dialogue

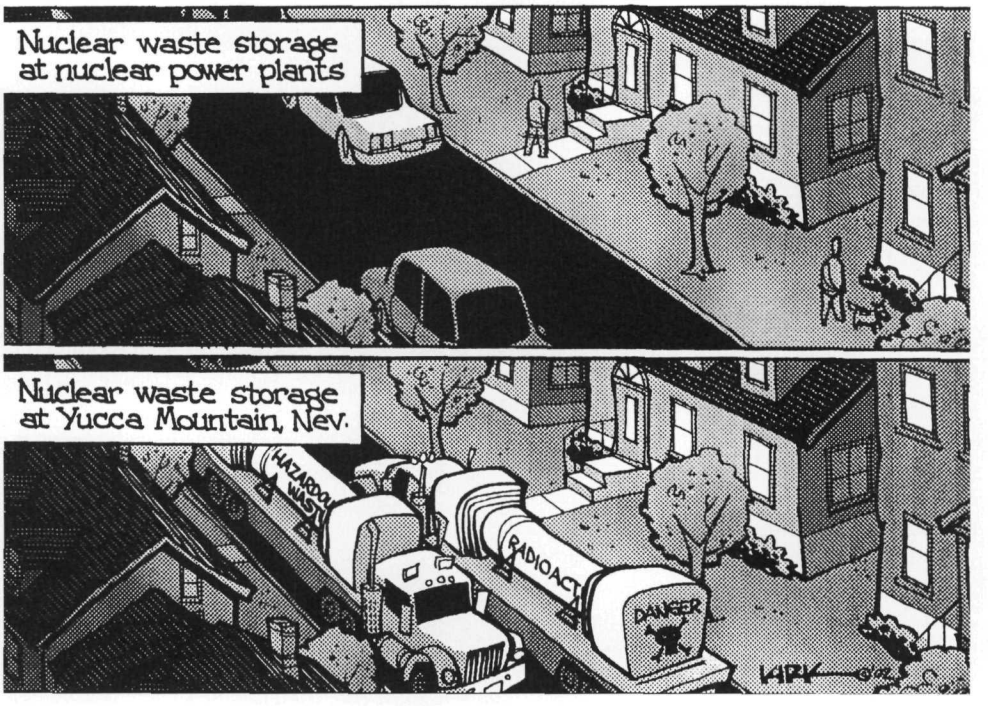
The ground rules that are accepted for interfaith dialogue should be applied to dialogue between progressive and conservative Christians, Rosemary Ruether suggests in *The National Catholic Reporter* (4/12/02).

"For years I have been a part of interreligious dialogues, between Christians and Jews, Christians and Muslims and Christians and Buddhists," Ruether says. "Certain ground rules have evolved that help make dialogue possible. Each side must give up the assumption that they are out to convert the other side to their faith, that they alone have the true faith and the others are heretics, idolaters or demon-worshippers. Each starts with an attitude of mutual respect for each other's faith. They assume that there is some truth in both religious perspectives and both are partial and historically constructed, although pointing to deep truths. Each can learn from the other both to more deeply appreciate the other's faith, and also to better understand their own faith. ...

"I would suggest that the same presuppositions that make dialogue possible between religions are also necessary for dialogue between Christians, even Christians in the same denominations. Dialogue is impossible if some Catholics start with the assumption that those of the other side are stupid, perverse or evil, and that your group alone has the fullness of the truth, that the goal is to make the other side either submit to your fullness of truth or get out of the church.

"Such presuppositions, unfortunately, are exactly the presuppositions of right-wing Catholics and Protestants with regard to the liberals of their churches. It is these presuppositions that make dialogue impossible.

"What is to be done? I believe it is essential that neither side gain the power to drive out or silence the other side. Each must continue to coexist within their churches, even if it means constructing distinct media of communication, educational institutions and networks to maintain one's own existence. We must continue to clarify not simply the surface points of difference, but the difference of presuppositions. This will not lead easily to a new consensus, but rather to a clarification of the depths of the differences. But most sides must continue to exist and to try to communicate."



Elderly face crisis in developing world

"Aging is no longer just a first-world issue," United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan told the United Nations' Second Assembly on Aging, held in April in Madrid (*The New York Times*, 4/9/02).

In an article on the Assembly, Emma Daley

wrote, "Three-quarters of the people over 60 live in the developing world, while even rich nations have long wondered how they will continue to finance pensions and health care for future generations." The United Nations estimates that the number of people over 60 will rise to two billion in 2050, from 600 million today, with the 'oldest old,' those 80 or older, increasing to 350 million from 70 million.

"For many millions of older people, especially the rural poor in developing nations, food, water, electricity, medical care and security are still in scarce supply. The United Nations Population Fund commissioned a study of the elderly in South Africa and India, and concluded that urbanization, migration, the breakdown of traditional social structures and the AIDS crisis has forced many older people, especially women, into extreme poverty and isolation.

"Thousands of older people who once expected to be supported by their children have instead watched them die of AIDS, leaving children to be cared for by grandparents who do not even know how the disease is contracted and who have no money to pay for food or medicine."

Work fetish?

The popular television show *The West Wing* "fetishizes workaholism," writes Susan J. Douglas (*In These Times*, 4/29/02). "Overwork is made to seem exciting and glamorous. Watch the way the camera moves. People in *The West Wing* — because they're so important — are always walking at a brisk pace up and down the halls, in and out of offices, in groups of at least two, and the tracking cameras virtually jog to keep up with them. ...

"Millions of us have, over the past 15 years, been asked to do a lot more at work, in exactly the same amount of time, often with fewer resources. This speed-up has often been accompanied, and made possible, by downsizing and layoffs. It also imposes enormous stress on family and personal life. But we're supposed to feel that the busier we are, the more important we are, and tough shit for those out there without a job.

"*The West Wing* celebrates liberal politics and even, at times, social justice. Yet it also canonizes the expectation that staying late at work is more important than going to your kid's science fair — or even seeing an old friend."

Court ruling upheld

Last May 22, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit affirmed a district court ruling that Samuel L. Edwards was not the legal rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Accokeek, Md., and that the Vestry of St. John's could not deny Washington's Bishop *Pro Tempore*, Jane Holmes Dixon, access to St. John's for the purpose of exercising her ecclesiastical authority. (see *TW* 10/01). Samuels and the Vestry members in question do not accept the ordination of women. ●

"Bishop to the women" dies in Cambridge, Mass. May 30

Suzanne Radley Hiatt, organizer of the first ordinations of women priests in the Episcopal Church USA, died in Cambridge, Mass., of cancer on May 30. Hiatt, 65, was among the 11 women ordained at Philadelphia's Church of the Advocate on July 29, 1974, a service called "irregular" because it occurred without the permission of the women's diocesan bishops. (The three ordaining bishops were retired or had resigned.)

In 1971, with Emily C. Hewitt, Hiatt co-authored *Women Priests: Yes or No?*, a book that became a primary resource in the movement for the ordination of women. Having refused to permit women's ordination in 1970 and 1973, the church's General Convention finally approved women priests in 1976. For her lifelong leadership and support of church women, Hiatt was often referred to as "bishop to the women."

Hiatt was the former John Seely Stone Professor of Pastoral Theology at the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS), in Cambridge, Mass., which has established the Suzanne Hiatt Chair in Feminist Pastoral Theology. A memorial service was held at EDS on June 17.

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