

Soft Landing

**Trailhead
for the
Path to the Future**



Geoff Kohn

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to everyone who didn't get a raise or bonus because of "general economic conditions" in spite of good financial performance by their company.

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What is wrong in America today? Well, lots.

We hear our politicians all braying and trumpeting about how they intend to get the economy moving and create the jobs needed for perpetual exponential growth. The fact of the matter is that Washington does not have the first clue about how to accomplish this because perpetual exponential growth is impossible in a finite world. The economic situation we are currently in is generated from the simple fact that there is too much wealth concentrated at the top and not enough left in the middle and bottom. This creates a situation where it is pointless to hire people to produce anything because nobody has any money to buy it. We need to place our emphasis on demand-side economics for a while and see if we can get the equation back in balance. We are already looking after the interests of production and distribution and that clearly is not enough.

We are driving our country towards the edge of a cliff at high speed, we know the cliff is up ahead somewhere but we're not sure exactly where. Our best option at this point is to try to find a way to slow down and figure out where we really are, what we really need and how to get along on this planet. Assuming that we can act quickly enough to avert a crash, we will need to think long and hard about where we, as a civilization,

are going to go next. It is possible that we will decide, as a people, that we do not want to get back on our current track at all, but rather, we might want to find a new path that goes in a completely different direction, that option should be on the table. I believe that we went way astray about half way through the twentieth century and we would do well to re-evaluate the fifties and before. I would be the last person to suggest that we abandon everything that we have developed over the past fifty years, but there are some useful elements of our civilization that are sitting in the dustbin of the past. It would be useful to take a look back at that era to see just how differently we do things today, and then do an honest evaluation of what we have improved and what we have worsened. Currently we apply the industrial model to all aspects of our existence. We need to question whether this furthers our aspirations or has it become obsessive-compulsive behavior.

Our current system looks a lot like a Monopoly game to me, the goals are the same in both - Accumulate all the wealth and win. Capitalism and Monopoly both have rules. In Monopoly, the rules are fixed and violations are called cheating. Capitalism has rules that are somewhat flexible and can be changed at will just by lobbying Congress for some beneficial (malevolent?) language that can be added to a bill and enacted into law. This flexibility has been applied to making the game easier to win for the last thirty years. The same

flexibility that is making the game easier to win can be equally applied to making the game more difficult to win. I will expand this thought in a moment.

There are many who claim that government is the problem and they are partly correct. Government is part of the problem, but this is not because of the nature of our form of government, it is because of the nature of our government's relationship with the business world. Government has become part of the problem, more by what it hasn't done than by what it has done. Government has totally shirked its responsibility to regulate society; instead, it has taken on the role of promoting a particular vision of the future and pushing what we need to do to get to that future. Look at our cities; they are built with a mix of private funding and redevelopment funds and the only thought in the process is to make money for someone. This direction, or maybe lack of direction, has been a disaster. It is getting increasingly difficult to get around in our cities because they are not particularly well designed for the modes of transportation that we most commonly use. We need to either change our modes of transportation, or come up with a new model to follow in the design of cities. We build tall buildings in earthquake zones, we build sprawling residential developments on prime farmland, we build cities on floodplains, we build coastal cities in areas that are prone to hurricanes and tsunamis, and we give absolutely no thought to the

environment in which we are building. When the inevitable happens and there is a disaster, our government quickly steps in and repairs the damage without solving the problem. I don't particularly mind the government stepping in to help people after a disaster, but next time we have one, we should focus our recovery on averting the next disaster instead of setting it back up. This country was founded and this government was established for the benefit of We the People. Are We the People benefitting under our current system? I would suggest an answer of "No".

At some point in the past we got snookered into believing that we would all benefit by allowing business to run roughshod and unregulated. History challenges this thesis. Every time we reduce regulation, the industrial empire gets farther ahead and the rest of us fall farther behind. We have a congress that we look to for leadership when, in fact, our representatives and senators should be our servants. We allowed them to assume a role of leadership, but they abuse the privilege and have become the servants of business and industry instead of serving us. I see a conflict here. The real problem is the cozy relationship between government and business. The constitution sets up a government that was designed to protect the interests of its citizens – all of its citizens. An American government that does not protect all of its citizens is corrupt.

When one guy gets all the money in a Monopoly game, the game is over. The economic world that we are living in has the feel of a Grand Game of Monopoly that is almost over. We could stand by and wait until this game ends. But then what would we do after this game is over while we are waiting for a new game to start up? I, for one, do not want to find out. The billionaires who are at the top of the pyramid will be broke when the great computer that tracks their holdings crashes. They will still have credit cards, of course, but in the face of a true disruption credit cards will not have value. They might have some gold on hand, but in the face of a true disruption food will have more value. If we get to the point of a full blown disruption, a producing garden and a greenhouse producing food will be what have real value as will a reliable supply of clean water. We need to understand that our dependence on the fragile economic system and infrastructure that we have built is absolute. Our survival requires that we strengthen these systems and that we do it in a thoughtful manner.

The alternative that I see would be to change the basic rules of the game and restructure it so that equilibrium can be achieved and the game can keep going. Any rule change designed to extend the game must involve getting money and property back into the hands of those who are already out or almost out of the game. For the last fifty years we have been trying to

refine the rules of our Grand Game of Monopoly to make it easier to win. It is finally becoming clear that for the Grand Game we need new rules that are capable of keeping us playing together for a long time, all across the planet. In other words, we need rules that make it impossible to win. There must be avenues for individuals to get ahead, because when individuals get ahead, they tend to bring the rest of us along, but there also must be limits. Some groups among the native occupants of our land would have their tribal elders consider the repercussion of any action for seven generations into the future. The spiritual value of seven generations is recognized today by the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers. (There will be several places in this book where I make reference to thoughts with which you may not be familiar. Any of these thoughts are easily accessible on the internet.) Today Washington and Wall Street have trouble planning seven quarters into the future and Washington sometimes balks at planning seven weeks into the future. If George Washington could have seen this far into the future, he might have requested that our Capitol not be named after him.

When we play Monopoly at a party, it is a good thing that there is an end to the game because sooner or later we get tired, run low on food and drink and it's time to go home. In the Grand Game, we need to understand that we are home already and we need to be damn sure

that we don't run out of food or drink. Where does lettuce come from? Do you even know? We have been playing this game for thousands of years under a variety of rules with varying degrees of success in terms of satisfaction with the outcome. There have also been some major disruptions when games have ended abruptly. Look back to the Dark Ages and the rise and fall of Empires. Those disruptions were painful for the people involved and took a long time to recover and get a new game started. It might be noted that during the disruptions, the farmers still farmed and the craftsmen still plied their crafts and the merchants continued to trade while the rulers sorted out who owned what real estate.

I truly don't care about the rest of the world at this time because until America has its own house in order we will continue to be powerless to help the rest of the world. And when we do get our house in order, we will lead the world by example, not at gunpoint. Our goal must be to create a "New World Order" that is based on sustainability in all regions, not on domination by the guys who ride around in their own jets and have all the money. This order must eliminate exploitation of the developing world by the developed world and incorporate self sufficiency for all regions. We should maintain a world economy based on trading things that we want across the world without any region of the

world depending on any other region for requirements of life.

When I refer to America getting its house in order, I do this based on the knowledge that, if not the wealthiest nation on the planet, we are at least the best balanced in terms of available natural resources. There is truly no excuse for having homeless people or people living in poverty in America. A large part of getting our house in order involves learning to live with what we have. This means providing for all of our energy needs and all of our food needs and all of our water needs and all of our health needs and providing for the defense of our country and for the education of our children. Someone else is going to have to defend the interests of the Industrial Empire, because those interests are no longer our interests.

This means not continuing to feed the rest of the world unless we can do it in a sustainable manner and it means abandoning our claim on the whole world's resources which support our vain and inefficient lifestyle. This means not ruining our farmland and soiling our air and rivers and overexploiting our aquifers so that somebody somewhere can fly around in a private jet and tell everybody else how to live. It means learning to behave responsibly as a civilization – something we haven't done since the dawn of the industrial revolution. The Industrial Empire has pretty much had its way with the planet and the people of the

planet from the time we figured out how to burn coal, channel the heat, and let it do our heavy lifting. And the lifting has gotten heavier and heavier as we express a perceived need to move faster and faster. Time is money, but money is not sense. Over time people have made a lot of money in activities that hindsight dictates made no sense at all. We cannot continue to pray for our heavenly father to help us while we rape our earthly mother.

Everywhere industrialization goes, the same problems follow. The people who control our industrial world operate from the assumption that all the resources of the planet are theirs and that they have the right to develop and exploit those resources, at the point of a gun when necessary. I have no problem using that which is available, but we have gone a little too far in the way we use resources. We mine ore in Africa, and then ship it to Belgium to process it for its content, and then send that output to Singapore to be made into something that can be assembled in China and sold in the U.S.A. There are many paths to market that are as or more convoluted than this. It takes a lot of effort to transport everything through our very inefficient pathways. We would do much better if we were to develop the resources that we need, then do most of the processing at the point of extraction, using local labor that is not exploited, and ship prepared materials or even finished products. This would build strong local

economies that would benefit the local people and enable participation in a world economy. I like coffee, but it doesn't grow here in America. I like the thought that I can make things here in America that are useful to people who produce coffee. What I don't like is the industrial empire tearing out the jungle and running off the indigenous people so that they can satisfy my desire for coffee. This was the model that developed during the Colonial period and continues today under a variety of guises. I would be happier knowing that the people who produce my coffee are healthy and comfortable and that they have time to enjoy their lives as I enjoy mine. The emphasis of my "New World Order" would be on local and based on the assumption that areas that cannot support a human population should probably not be inhabited by humans, even when those places have gold or oil.

We need to learn how to live with less oil, not just keep producing more. It is time to question the postulate that more, bigger, and faster is always better. We are going to transition into an era of local focus; we can still choose whether to do it gracefully or clumsily.

We watch as the TV economists try to explain how we got into our current mess and what is needed to get out, but if you read their body language while they speak, it is clear that they know that they are full of shit. They struggle with their words while they try to look like they know what they are talking about, when in fact

they don't. For the most part they are just trying to get out the talking points that some think tank committee thought up. They're just occupying television to grind their client's axes for them as they nervously stammer through their little skits.

What our TV economists and leaders don't seem to understand is that there can be no American economic recovery until we determine the next direction that we want to go. The current economy is played out – it will not grow any more. We have taken the planned obsolescence, disposable everything model as far as it will go. It is in the best interest of the investor class at this point in history to ease up and allow the rest of us to determine the new direction. They have made heavy investment in machinery and automation and distribution over the past few years. Now it's time to invest in sustainability. If the productivity of the American worker is the best in the world then why is our economy faltering? It is faltering because American consumers have no money and American business is not offering what we need. We have very cleverly shifted enough jobs out of the American economy and into the economies of our foreign competitors that we can no longer afford to buy the output of those factories that have our jobs. Neither do we have the capability of producing many of the things that we once produced. Consider the American national security ramifications

of being dependent on other parts of the world for things that we need.

The Solution

The solution to our problems is to share some of the wealth in this country. You may have a problem with the concept of sharing, but after thirty years of class warfare in which the upper class has been winning every battle by playing with a stacked deck, there is no other way to get the equation in balance. This could be accomplished by the people on top waking up to understand that they need to keep the rest of us in the game. I don't see this as a likely scenario. Or, We the People could shake up the system in the next election and install a government that will work for us. The constitution allows this and the founding fathers encouraged it. There is no need for structural changes of any kind here, this is what the Constitution was designed for.

I see a future for America that involves a shift back to local focus in satisfying our needs. This includes getting away from the emphasis that we place on the industrial model where everything is done for maximum efficiency and profit. We need to slow down and rediscover what is important in our lives. I doubt that very many of us spend our time off of work thinking about how to make that extra nickel for our employer. I expect that most of us spend our off time doing whatever it is that we enjoy, and I would argue that we should all have more time to do just that. In order for this to happen, we will need to find a path to

self sufficiency on a number of levels. These would include people being able to produce a lot of what they eat and it would also require that we find ways to satisfy most of our energy needs from our local environments.

What I would do and what Congress should do; would be to require that foreign owned business, publicly traded business, and privately held business that is over a certain size, give a large part of their after tax profit back to the employees in the form of a tax free bonus. This bonus would need to be done as an even distribution to all employees, with each employee getting the same amount otherwise it would be pointless to do this. Merit bonus is a good concept, but it would not accomplish the needed goal. At this point in time, we need to get enough money into everyone's hands that we can afford to build a world that we can live in for a long time to come. The days of a few having excessive resources and the rest having nothing need to fade into the past. It is time for the middle class to actually have some money, not just the privilege of being able to rent a little when they need to.

This distribution cannot become more undeserved compensation for those at the top and those at the top have already demonstrated a hideously inflated notion of what they are worth. If this were merit bonus, those at the top would no doubt grab it all and the rest of us would still be winning our race to the bottom. This

would have to be an even distribution to all employees of these large businesses because the real need here is to get money out into the economy where it will be available to rebuild our wasteful economy into a sustainable one. Every business requires all of its human capital in order to survive. This bonus is an investment into that human capital.

At the same time, we need to consider the stockholders and require businesses to pay dividends instead of retaining all the earnings to serve as private slush funds for the boards of directors. It is unconscionable to allow our business world to sit by, flush with cash, and watch our economy collapse. Our business leaders have no clue what to do with all that cash. It is time to put some cash in the hands of people who might use it more wisely. This is not a demand that anybody clean out their piggy banks, it is simply a requirement that they share profit for a few years, at least. I can see no other way to get the amount of money that we need into the economy and more specifically into the areas where it is needed. The Fed can print money as fast as it wants, but Wall Street seems to be able to grab it as fast as it comes off the press.

Ultimately, we will outgrow our era of financial grotesquery and get back to people working for their living on a local level. Here is where the concept of soft landing comes in. This transition from the end of the

Industrial Empire to a sustainable world economy can follow a smooth path or a bumpy one. At some point in the future the human population will either choose to be in balance with nature, or we will be forced to be in balance with nature. As this balance is achieved, our obsession with growth and quarterly profit will evaporate. The fact of the matter is that the concept of growth and quarterly profit is diametrically opposed to the concept of sustainability. The growth model is a model for the past. We need to find a sustainable model and work within that model going forward.

In the end, the interests that are now controlling the world economy will let go of much of their control. As we wean ourselves from our unsustainable past into a sustainable future, there will be changes in the basic needs of a world economy. The multinational corporations that currently control most of what goes on in the world will find that many of the services that they provide are simply not needed in our New World Order. They have the choice of letting go of some of their power and influence while they continue to provide the services that we still need, or they can continue playing a busted flush until we the people wake up and call their bluff.

I would argue that it is in their interest to encourage an orderly transition to a sustainable future. This would be a future where industry continues to provide raw materials to the people of the world and the people

of the world use those materials to make their lives more comfortable. This would replace our current model in which everything is made somewhere else by people who can't afford to buy the stuff they make. This stuff is designed to quickly wear out so people will hurry up and buy more, from the lowest bidder, to keep the world in feudal debt to the owners.

This cannot be a program just for the officers and CEO's; it has to be broad based to get money in wide circulation. This does not mean that people of exceptional ability should not be well rewarded for their efforts, but that should be in the regular compensation of those individuals. If the thought of tax free causes anyone a problem, consider that this distribution is after the business has already paid taxes on the money and further consider that a large portion of this money will be spent quickly to take care of all kinds of things that have been neglected as We the People have been getting broker and broker. As this money is spent, the uncle can take his cut in the form of taxes that will be paid by all kinds of people who will be able to find work first taking care of everything that has been neglected, and then building our sustainable future.

To build a strong economy we need to enable fuller participation. Helping those who already have almost everything get the rest is not a way to build anything. It is a good way to kill the promise of freedom that

America should hold up for our citizens and for the rest of the world. Within the rules that I propose, people will have the resources to buy their lives back, who knows, maybe the banks will be forced to return to a model in which they accept deposits and pay interest to use our money to loan to our neighbors instead of loaning their money to everyone at ridiculous interest rates and charging ridiculous fees for everything. The difference here lies in the distinction between our money and their money. We create the wealth, we should share in it.

I can remember when your local banker knew you by face or reputation and could loan you a few dollars without a credit check. That was before the “too big to fail” banks bought all the little local banks. Maybe we should redefine the banks that are “too big to fail” as “too big to allow”, ever. I would have no problem with requiring that the big banks be broken into many smaller more manageable banks. The Congress allowed them to grow; the Congress could force them to shrink. It would hinge only on whether the Congress were doing our bidding or theirs,

How would I accomplish this redistribution? I would expect that big business and foreign owned business give a large part of their profit to their employees and shareholders to boost the economy. Here is how my rules would work. Business would figure their taxes and profit at the end of the year as

they do now. The companies would then be allowed to set aside 10% of their profit for growth and distribute 35% of the profit to shareholders. Another 35% would go to the employees as an even bonus distribution with an equal share going to each employee. The last 20% would go to America to support educating our children and doing R&D for our future (more on this in a moment). If the business world were to get ahead of the curve and support this, that would make it easy. If congress were to get on board, that would make it quick. Otherwise we can just take this American Revolution to the polls next election.

I arbitrarily put the growth percentage at 10% and that might be too high. This would only apply to business that basically is too big already. Part of this whole plan is based on the thought that the era of economic growth is over. Does this mean that there will be no prosperity in the future? No, it simply means that the prosperity will be shared. I do recognize that as we move from our economy of excess to a sustainable future, there will be new businesses created to fill the voids in the market that exist because of the unwillingness of our current business community to take conservation and sustainability seriously. This plan is focused on the big business that has made its living by ignoring or opposing the environment. They have become strong by ignoring the environment and they are the only ones who have the strength to

accomplish the cleanup. The small business that will get a start in this shake up will be too small to be affected by any of these rules, but I would hope that they would take an enlightened view in compensating employees. The new small business that will provide support for the move to sustainability will be allowed to grow but there will be a need for a mechanism that makes it difficult for the large business that has created the mess that we are in to acquire the new breed of environmental and sustainable business. Big business should be encouraged to participate in the move to sustainability, but by the avenue of innovation not by the avenue of acquisition. There is a long track record of big business acquiring and closing businesses that are based on conservation and sustainability.

The purpose of all this is to get the biggest business taken down to a manageable size and to allow new and smaller business a chance to grow and flourish. I do see a need to make it difficult for future business to grow to the size that current corporations are. This Share the Wealth plan would need to be in place at least for a few years, maybe a decade or more, to accomplish a transition to sustainability and to start us on a path to environmental cleanup.

I would redefine “employee” to include anybody who showed up on the premises for the purpose of doing work for the company. This would be necessary because I have no doubt that some of these big

companies would fire their entire staff and hire them all back through a temp agency so they don't have to share the wealth with those who help create it. Anybody who works for a company for a day should be entitled to 1/365th of a share of the profit for that year. This might have to include people who work at a company as part of their employment by another company. The thought here is to make it difficult for business to avoid responsibility for the welfare of their employees. A share of the profit would be the employee allocation for the year divided by the average number of employees. I would implement this for a few years then review the outcome and consider changes.

This is not about money any more; it is about people and a transition to a future where we will be able to survive on our planet. I can accept that there will be some large businesses that will be unable to adjust to a new way of doing things and some of these will be forced to cease operation. These categories of business are the ones that produce things and stuff that we probably will not need in the future. By requiring them to share profit with the shareholders, the shareholders will be in a position to invest in new business without having to cash out of their current investments. When we think about growth, we need to make a distinction between companies growing and the economy growing. Current policy seems to encourage companies growing, but it does nothing for the economy. The tax code has

been a stacked deck favoring the merger and acquisition set for a long time. Share the Wealth is intended as restacking the deck to favor the rest of us for a while – a long while. To get the economy growing, we need more small business and the largest businesses need to shrink. Ultimately, though, the economy will shrink down to a sustainable steady state. The growth model needs to be replaced with something that makes more sense based on our limited understanding of the Physics and Biology of the planet. This should be less controversial than it is. Why do we exert more effort studying Mars and Jupiter than we exert studying our oceans and rivers? Are our leaders afraid that we will learn that they have been leading us down the wrong path?

This proposal would put a lot of money into the hands of employees who truly deserve a share of the fruits of their labor. This would also position these people to participate more fully in the economy. As the economy swings back into motion, these people will be faced with decisions on how they want to spend their additional income. They certainly can spend it on toys if they want, but they should be encouraged to spend some on American made improvements that will help reduce our energy expenses and improve the environment going forward. The same tax code that now rewards people who shift jobs and production out of the country could be modified to discourage

consumption of things not made here. We will also be in a better position to take ownership positions in business and to fund development and growth of new business. The point here is that the “job creators” have been busier stuffing their piggy banks than creating jobs. We need to require that they leave some of their winnings on the table so that others can take up the role of job creator.

We need major changes in the way we do things if we are to survive as a civilization. These changes need to happen quickly and for this to occur, we need to get money into the hands of the people who will make the necessary changes. Big business has had the opportunity for years to start moving in the direction of conservation and sustainability, but their inertia has continued to propel us down the wrong path. It’s time to shock the system into action.

This plan would also put a lot of money in the hands of the stockholders who might use part of it to fund more new business. I believe that by giving a share of the profit to the stockholders and employees and letting them decide what the next step should be is going to serve America better than expecting boards of directors to do anything useful with all that money. For a few years, at least, there will be a need to invest in returning some of our natural resources that have been shuttered, back to production. I would expect this to happen because as we move back towards self sufficiency, all

kinds of American business will be looking for American raw materials so that they can produce goods that are “Proudly Made in America”.

OK, what is this education and R&D fund? We need to educate our children for them to be useful citizens. This part of the plan would provide that money be allocated from profit and distributed to the 100 nearest institutions of higher education. The actual distribution of this money should be carefully considered by local or regional groups, but the intent here is that the allocation be made on the basis of enrollment so that there is a similar amount available to educate each student. It is possible that some should go to elementary and secondary schools, but this could be done as partnership with higher education providing resources to primary and secondary. This money would be given to the schools as an unrestricted grant. It could be used for tuition for students. It could be used to adequately compensate faculty. It could be available for materials and supplies to be used in student R&D projects. And there should be support for the arts and vocational programs. The specifics for allocation might need a little tweaking because there are no doubt some schools that are isolated geographically and some provision should be made to get these funded by the same forces that are funding the less isolated schools. I think that we all lose when we have to shutter schools because of lack of funding. The purpose of all this is to provide

funding for education at a level to which education is not accustomed. This will set schools free to educate and innovate. Some of this money could be allocated to paying off existing student loans so our recent graduates can shed their burden of indentured servitude.

The major goal of this entire plan is to focus on developing America into a sustainable, self sufficient economy. To accomplish this goal, we need lots of human energy directed towards solving our problems. This level of available R&D funding will allow us to pursue every track that creative minds wish to pursue. This is important because in our current system, we have grant committees allocating scarce resources into projects that appear to them to have promise. Under the current system, the researcher defines his project and expresses goals for the project. A committee then decides what is funded and what is not, often based on requirements put forth by those who provide the funds. I recoil at the sheer absurdity of scarce educational resources in a time of record profits and business that is flush with cash. It is time to change the rules and share the wealth with all of us who create it and to invest heavily in the areas that provide the most benefit to society. This plan will focus the resources that we need on a local level which will effectively allow us to pursue what makes sense on our own local level. We cannot continue to allow Wall Street to loot Main Street. The

new national policy will be to allow local communities to retain their wealth and to use it to further the development of the local communities. This will create true prosperity, not artificial prosperity based on attracting business through tax breaks.

Education

Here is where the symptoms begin to show up that define the illness that is infecting our society. The problem is not in children being smart or stupid; most children are much smarter than we give them credit for. And it is not in their being able or not able to perform well on standardized tests, the problem is the standardization itself. Our whole education system is based on an industrial model where efficiency is more important than effectiveness in producing an acceptable product (with, in this case, a very loose definition of acceptable). We have adopted the assembly line model in educating our young people and have given no thought to the fact that we are attempting to apply uniform production techniques on a non-uniform raw material. Any industrial environment faced with this situation would have a rigorous incoming inspection process and a variety of remediation steps in place before processing begins. I am certain that procedures of this nature would be rejected in the educational environment as being too expensive.

In the first few years of the assembly line education process, some of the parts get left off of some of the children because at that stage of their development, those parts just don't fit yet. That sets them up to go through the rest of their lives with those parts missing. I am not willing to blame the teachers or the unions or

any of the other popular scapegoats. I blame the system itself.

At the end of the school year when the students are ready to move on to the next grade, there are invariably some who didn't fully understand the math or language arts that were presented, and there might be other sub-topics that different specific individuals have difficulty with. When they come back in the fall, does the new teacher for the next grade know these students and where they stand in terms of what they did or didn't learn the previous year? Well, maybe they are aware of where every student in their class is, or maybe not. My point is that the assembly line approach lets a lot of our young people down.

The solution is not to train the children in how to take standardized tests, which is really just teaching them how to game the system, but rather to shift the whole system to a craftsman approach. To do this, I would use the one room schoolhouse as a model where there are multiple age groups in each classroom and the students come back to the same teacher for six to eight years. This could be decentralized into numerous actual one room schoolhouses, or it could use existing school facilities. In a model such as this, when the students go home for the summer and the teacher goes on summer break, the teacher is quite aware of exactly where each student is in their academic progress. When the children come back to school in the fall, the teacher

knows the strengths and weaknesses of each student and can pair an older student who is strong in a subject with a younger student who is weak in that subject to reinforce both student's knowledge.

It might also be useful to include material in the curriculum that is relevant to the lives they will be leading when they are done with school so the real world is less of a surprise when they graduate. This would be a good place to start learning the skills that will be required for self sufficiency and the mind-set for sustainability.

From here I might follow my train of thought a little farther. As we seem to want to move away from publicly funded education to privately funded education at all levels, we should consider what this means on a deeper level than we usually look. At this point in time, many of our large state universities get more funding from private sources than they do from their respective state legislatures. They need to get their operating budgets from somewhere, but what is the trade off when they rely on private funding?

The people who provide funding generally have expectations on how their money will be used. They have made their money doing something and the funds that they provide are often provided to further the area in which they have made their money. An oil man donating money to his alma mater is not likely to earmark his contribution to funding a department in the

engineering school that is developing energy efficient housing that he sees as a threat to his business. He is going to expect the school to be figuring out better ways to produce, transport, and sell more oil and in the process, provide him and his colleagues with trained graduates who will staff their oil companies and help them to continue growing into the future. There might be an additional expectation that the curriculum maintain the status quo surrounding his industry. The strong get stronger and the rest don't have a chance.

I agree that private funding is an appropriate support for education, but at least some should be in the form of unrestricted grants. Our universities should be centers of free thinking and that mission is compromised when their survival is predicated on targeted funding. The people who are currently granting money on a restricted basis need to understand that our world is going to change and that people who resist change will be left behind. By granting unrestricted money for research, the future will unfold as it will and the business that is funding education will be uniquely positioned to take advantage of what is developed at the local schools. By providing large amounts of unrestricted funding on a local level, our universities will be free to begin creating our future based on what we have locally instead of their current role of preparing us to participate in an internationally homogenized world of industrial insanity. At this point

in time, we need to quickly draw back to a local level and figure out how to survive at that level before we make another attempt at global.

I would expect that if we are to move ahead as a civilization, we need to free the creative energies of our young people rather than channel and restrict them. We need to put enough money into our educational and research system that young people can pursue their ideas and maybe find some new ideas that work along with many that don't. By providing funding in a more local scope, we encourage each region and locality to develop unique solutions to their own problems and at the same time we prepare our children to stay home rather than go out in the world. A system such as this will in the longer term tend to concentrate wealth where it really belongs instead of in the accounts of those who most effectively exploit others. We need flexibility to experiment in our search for new ways. And we need to be free to pursue paths that might need to be abandoned if they prove to lead nowhere. The point is that we need to find out where paths lead rather than have a committee of experts determine that they lead nowhere without actually walking them.

It is counterproductive to ridicule any research that is being done. I know that the media like to ridicule scientific studies like the sex lives of ants and that is low fruit for ridicule, but if the reporter realized that the purpose of the study was understanding ant

reproduction and how that can be applied to reducing economic damage from ants, the story takes on a whole different spin and no longer looks like a waste of anybody's money. A little thought can often make a ridiculer look ridiculous. Think about this when you see the TV personalities heaping ridicule on anything. Decide for yourself whether the ridicule is deserved or simply ridiculous.

Our young people are incurring a mountain of debt as part of becoming useful citizens. Too often, our young graduates are told that they invested in the skills that were needed last year and all those positions are filled. Maybe they could borrow more and invest in the next set of obsolete skills. We can no longer allow our children to be sold into indentured servitude as a requirement of their being educated for the benefit of our civilization.

Health

It is simply not acceptable that a group of people should be allowed to profit on our healthcare, without doing anything to care for our health. This business model was originally developed and fine tuned in the protection rackets, and those were only slightly more blatant than our current health insurance system. The protection rackets provided protection against the potential acts of the protectors; health insurance provides protection against the inevitable. “For Profit” insurance companies simply should not be allowed to profit from our basic healthcare. If for no other reason than when there is money to be made from sickness, there is incentive to keep us sick.

If there were no profit in health insurance and only cost, maybe we could start looking at healthcare with an eye to really lowering costs. It was not a good idea to allow our hospitals and clinics to be snapped up by for profit hospital chains. I have no objection in the world to healthcare professionals being well compensated for their training and talent, but they should exercise their skills without having to support million dollar CEOs and a pack of investors acting like economic aphids on the healthcare system. Need facts? Search “healthcare executive compensation”.

Most of the hospitals that are currently owned by the hospital chains were once non-profit hospitals until they got squeezed out by a lack of access to credit in

spite of reasonable financial health. This is just another symptom of too much money at the top. All of this accumulated money needs to be invested in something and the investment managers believe that the only goal is to maximize short term yield. Search “hospital privatization” for more information on hospital closures and Medicare/Medicaid fraud.

This manifests in exponential growth in healthcare costs which leads to exponential increase in healthcare expense which translates into record profits for healthcare industry. Someone with a kidney stone, or a tumor, or a sick child is not in any position to negotiate a better price or even to shop for a different facility. The people who profit from healthcare are aware of this.

I heard some rhetoric the other day about having to be allowed to take chances and be responsible for our own behavior. Well, when people are brought into a hospital in bad enough condition, they are not put out on the curb to die, they are taken care of in a professional manner whether they can pay or not. Healthcare is, in fact, a right.

If people are taken care of whether they can pay or not, why do we maintain this sham that we call health insurance. It is expensive for those who pay for it and more so because the ones who pay for it are also paying for the free care that is given to indigents, and more

again because they are paying the insurance companies a profit on top of that.

Indigents don't go away by wishing them away. They go away when there is some money left for them after everyone else has been to the economic trough. At this point in history the richest of the rich pretty much eat their fill at the trough then bring home enough to feed their pet politicians. The middle and working classes fight over the scraps, then their children lick out the trough which leaves nothing for the poor who show up at hospitals sick and are treated, as indigents.

We recognize that health care is a right. We simply need to adjust our thinking to expect that everyone will contribute to the maintenance of an excellent healthcare system that would provide basic needs during life and comfort at the end of life. For those who want more than the basic, there will still be clinics that charge to provide services that go beyond basic. If people want to use insurance to assure them that they will have the care that they want, there should be no objection to insurance providing that function. But insurance companies should simply not be allowed to profit on health care. If private insurance does not wish to do this, it should fall on government. A healthcare system should not be a lucrative profit center for anybody who is not caring for another's health.

Under any reasonable plan, healthcare would be free to infants and small children. When people start

working, they start paying their way; there are many ways by which this could be implemented. When people stop working, they should be allowed to pay for or buy coverage to provide advanced needs beyond basic coverage or what they can afford themselves. That or be prepared to be kept comfortable while nature runs its course and they die when their time comes. We just need to recognize the simple fact that nobody and no procedure can save lives forever, every one of us will die of something. Those who want to spend their own money to prolong their lives should be allowed to and those who are content with their longevity should be allowed to choose their end with dignity.

We will need to define what basic healthcare is and what extended healthcare is at some point in time, but I would rather leave those specifics to health professionals. It does seem clear to me that what would be defined as basic or extended healthcare will change as we go through the various stages of our lives.

What is clear, though, is that our healthcare industry cannot continue to be the most profitable segment of the economy in which to put our investment money. We need to find a way to structure the system such that we continue to compensate our healthcare professionals at a level commensurate with their training and skill, and at the same time reduce the deadweight that the system currently carries.

Our options for providing healthcare going into the future would range from doing nothing and leave it “for profit”, to adopting a single provider system, or create a system of private health insurance to be run on a not for profit basis. England uses a single provider system where healthcare is public and tax supported. That seems to work for them. Germany and France use slightly different flavors of private, but not for profit, insurance. They and many other countries have excellent healthcare at substantially lower cost than we have in America.

Maybe we could simplify it and just pay our doctor directly on an annual subscription and have him kick a few bucks into a fund to pay specialists when they are needed. The bottom line here is that sooner or later, everybody needs some form of healthcare and the people who provide that care deserve to be compensated for what they do. It is ridiculous that we fight as hard as we do to keep a pack of freeloaders pulling enormous profit from that system at our expense while they do nothing to care for our health.

While I am discussing the role of insurance in healthcare, allow me to digress and include automobile insurance as part of this discussion. Automobile insurance should fall into the same class as health insurance and be provided on a not for profit basis. There is a mandate in every state that we carry automobile insurance in order to drive a car. There are

penalties provided for operation without insurance, yet insurance companies are among the most profitable in our economy. I fail to see much difference between paying taxes to the crown without representation and being required to pay premiums to an insurance company. Financial responsibility should be part of driving a car, but if it is to be a requirement, I don't think it acceptable that my automobile insurance premiums should be paying a multi-million dollar CEO or paying to sponsor nets behind the goal at football games, or paying to sponsor bowl games, or TV shows or any of that. I expect that if my premiums were simply paying to repair damage done in collisions, my premiums would be a lot less than they are now. I also expect that if automobile insurance were not for profit, the insurance companies might go back to requiring several quotes before they release payment for the repair. This is all part of the stacked deck that America is playing against.

Let me make myself clear here. This is not an attack on free enterprise. It is simply an observation that when a product or service becomes a requirement under penalty of law, that requirement removes that product or service from consideration as free enterprise. It becomes a mandatory service. It can't be both ways, insurance is either a free choice or a mandatory service and the business world cannot be allowed to profit on what government requires.

Environment

There are a lot of strange debates going on about the environment. It amazes me that people can get as confused as they do over our environment. Some believe that we should put nothing man made into the environment and others believe that as long as somebody can make a buck on it, it doesn't matter what gets put into the environment. Most of the people who believe the latter suffer the downside of pollution without participating in the profit.

Yeah, I know they say it's about jobs, but really it's about perception. It does not make sense to put major effort into activities now that will present problems for future generations. When we are creating something new, we need to give consideration to the seven generations and use this guidance in our approach to releasing our creation. If we truly believe that we must allow environmental degradation in order to provide jobs for our citizens, then we are so far off track that we probably deserve to become an extinct species, or at least to endure a period of chaos while we try to find our way. We need to realize that just because we now depend on massive inputs of energy for all aspects of life this does not mean that we should not even be looking for alternatives, either in cleaner sources of energy, or in ways of reducing our massive energy consumption. I know that this will be expensive to do and the people on top have no interest in spending their

money to get it done. They are content to continue selling us as much energy as they can get us to use and the only thought they give to where the byproducts of our energy consumption go involves lobbying against environmental regulation. The thought behind sharing the wealth is that this plan would give Americans enough income that we could spend our money to accomplish the move to sustainability instead of expecting the people on top to spend their money. I have faith in the American people to get this problem solved. But first we need to recognize that there is a problem, and then we need a means to focus our nation's creative energies on solving it. You want jobs? Give America a goal and some money to accomplish that goal and there will be lots of jobs. Our current crop of job creators offer only excuses for their inaction.

Our political leaders and the Industrial Empire have already well demonstrated their lack of interest in pursuing anything but the status quo. The Industrial Empire is essentially a conservative movement although our current crop of liberals provides little opposition. By definition: conservative – “disposed to preserve existing conditions, institutions, etc., or to restore traditional ones, and to limit change”. This would favor status quo. They are quite happy having us depend on them for all that we require to live. And they find it especially pleasing that they can charge whatever they want for their services and provisions.

Conservatives in the media like to ridicule liberals, but let's take a moment to look at the dictionary definition of liberalism – “a theory in economics emphasizing individual freedom from restraint and usually based on free competition, the self regulating market, and the gold standard”. Isn't this what the conservative TV talkers claim to believe in? I'm not making this up and I have trouble seeing what there is to ridicule here, other than how the popular media has completely turned this around. If you like to look at the other side of coins, you might consider that welfare expense by the government is much more beneficial to the landlords and food stores than it is to the people who receive it. It is a way to pull more money out of the pockets of most of us and put it into the pockets of the people who seem to already own everything these days.

The debate is currently framed as whether our massive consumption of energy will be satisfied by fossil fuels or alternative sources in the future. We have it within our reach to be able to reduce our energy consumption and still be able to have all of the comforts that we currently enjoy. I will go into this in more depth in a later section, but we currently have electronic devices that use less energy than previous devices of the same genre and technology is within our reach that would reduce our need for energy to make our structures comfortable. This technology is not five

years out like it has been for the last forty years. It could begin deployment in months.

Since we have the capacity to move almost anything from anywhere in the world to anywhere else in the world and get it there tomorrow, we should take this as confirmation that we really don't need to live in as close proximity as we do in our great cities. Most of what we do in the cities in terms of economic activity could be done as well or better in a decentralized setting. We really don't need offices for most of the routine clerical work that is done. If we can outsource an entire office to India, why can't we just close the office and pay the workers to stay home and do their work in a home office and save the expense of the commute. This would ease environmental stress and at the same time provide lower expense for the company and more real income to the worker. With our communication technology, any place is as good as any other to get clerical work done. People could be paid piecework or hourly and the job would get done without an office or traffic. The downside is that companies would have less control over the activities of their workers. The upside is that workers would have more freedom. And if we get to a level where we actually realize our goal of living decentralized and self sufficient and in a completely sustainable manner, we might discover that much of what we now do in terms of economic activity really isn't worth doing anyway. How much of what we do

would we do if we didn't get paid to do it? The most common answer would be "Not much." If this is the case, how much time would we want to give to the industrial system if we were self sufficient? I would argue that we could develop a society where we spend a lot less time at work as individuals, but that economic activity would continue because there are things that we produce that make our lives easier.

It would make sense to me to have parents home a lot when the kids are growing up to teach them and guide them (difficult to do when both parents work). It would also make sense to me to find a way to offer employment that will allow our children to get established when they finish their education and the rest of us to work when we need something we don't have or can't make. I would like to grow past our mentality that dictates that if we don't work, we don't eat. This would be replaced by a mentality where we produce our food and that would free us to work when we want to and not because we have to. The Industrial Empire is fond of their model under which they require everybody to participate. I feel that individual freedom is more important. The goal should be making all of our lives easier, not just making more money for someone else.

There is a common belief in management that the job is more important than the worker and that any worker is replaceable. This is correct; any worker in the

workforce is replaceable. What we need to do is turn this thought around. We are currently threatened with losing our jobs if we are late or miss work because we are replaceable. If we are replaceable, then there should be no objection to anybody working the hours that they need to accomplish their own goals. We could have a pool of qualified workers and allow them to adjust their schedules to assure that the factory is staffed and that the workers have the income that they need to pursue their happiness. I am looking towards a world where growth and profit are secondary, where family and humanity become primary and where we fully understand that we must conserve and preserve our environment. If most of us were adequately compensated and those at the top were not so over compensated, perhaps we could find more time to watch our children grow up and encourage them to find better ways of adapting to our environmental challenges.

As the Europeans ran out of wood to burn after they cleared their forests to make things and to keep warm, they fouled their rivers to the point that they no longer found fish in their nets to eat. And through soil depletion and early monoculture farming, their fields would no longer sustain them. So they came to America and continued to follow the same path that didn't work for them in Europe. We follow that path today although Europe is making efforts to change course.

Part of our new relationship with our environment should focus on preservation and restoration. The other part of our new relationship with our environment will involve learning how to sustain ourselves in our immediate environment by using natural flows of energy. These two aspects of the environment are much more intertwined than we know. When we start paying attention to our local environment (beyond the weather report) and when we try to find ways to fit in to the environment instead of dominating it we will find that by not needing as much external energy we leave less of a footprint on the planet and our local environments will flourish. We need to create a new focus for our engineers as we move towards sustainability. Instead of applying an energy intensive solution to every problem that we confront, we need to find solutions that use what is available. Our current efforts at energy conservation often actually increase overall consumption of energy. There are technologies that increase the efficiency of our gas furnaces, but these technologies only work because they incorporate an electric fan to force the draft. Sure we end up using less gas, but we use more electricity. When we implement a power saving technology then see an explosion in the use of that technology, we actually increase our consumption of energy. LCD monitors use less power than the old CRT monitors, but now we routinely have two or three of

them on our computer. This is not a problem in itself, but it becomes a problem because we do not have acceptable ways of disposing of the byproducts of our energy consumption. If our extra monitors were running on photovoltaic electricity with no environmental repercussions, fine – hook up ten if that makes you happy.

There are programs currently going on all over the planet that are directed towards taking people from the 19th century directly into the 21st and skipping parts of the 20th. By this, I am referring to places in India, China, and Africa that are putting in cell towers and providing people with a phone and a solar charger. This solves their problem of communication without putting up poles and stringing wires to every house. These same places are putting electric lighting into people's homes by selling them a battery, an LED, and a photovoltaic panel. These people will come into the 21st century without the expense of installing and maintaining a power infrastructure to support residential needs. This is huge; it allows them to put more of the output from their power plants to productive use. It also encourages or even requires that these people understand budgeting their energy consumption. This scenario does not harm the environment because the energy is produced locally and there are no byproducts. These people have a finite amount of energy available and they use what they have responsibly.

Now that the developed world is providing this kind of technology to the developing world, we need to play leap frog and start adopting this technology back into our way of life. In order to do this, we need to break free from the industrial system that is dominating every aspect of our lives and find ways to re-connect with mother earth. We can do this without giving up our comforts and conveniences.

America needs to start looking at how we handle our basic functions like transportation, communication, providing our food and maintaining our health. As we strive for self sufficiency both on a national level and individual level, small things like decentralizing the production of energy will pay large dividends in our future. Don't mistake self sufficiency for isolationism. There is no need in the world for us to isolate ourselves from anything, but when America achieves self sufficiency, we can buy or not buy anything we want from anywhere in the world. And we can sell or not sell anything we make to anywhere in the world. The world of the future should have free trade among trading partners who deal with each other as equals and remove any trace of exploitation from our dealings. Free trade doesn't benefit anybody when it is designed to exploit everybody. Our current world economy only benefits the people who are involved in moving stuff from one place to another and who supply us with everything that we need. Most of what we used to

produce locally now comes from the other end of the earth and whether we like it or not, when we eliminate local production, we become slaves to the distribution system.

We have to clean up the environmental messes that we have created. The industries that cannot operate without environmental subsidy should simply be phased out, but their equipment should be left in place and be kept maintained. In the event that their product becomes valuable enough to be produced without environmental subsidy, we should have the equipment available so that we can modify it to operate without environmental impact. It is absolutely contrary to our national interest to allow any more industrial equipment to be moved out of the country. Products that are produced overseas, under relaxed environmental rules, should be taxed at the border to eliminate that competitive advantage. This is about cleaning up our environment and learning to live with what the environment provides. The thought of allowing industry to move operations to a locale where they have relaxed environmental rules is contrary to our interest as planetary stewards. We are either going to live sustainably or we are not going to survive. This means the whole planet and there can be no safe haven for those who would contaminate our environment.

Maybe we could landscape with native vegetation interspersed with edible plants and create a new garden

of Eden. Moving towards a sustainable future would not eliminate jobs as we are currently led to believe; it will actually create jobs. Perhaps some jobs will be lost in the oil and coal industries as we shift emphasis away from these materials as fuels, but there will be jobs created for delivery drivers who will bring milk, meat, bread and any of a variety of other commodities to our homes and reduce the amount of fuel used by millions of us driving out daily to pick those items up. The packaging industry likes for us to recycle our disposable packaging and they threaten us with a loss of jobs if we try to eliminate disposable packaging, but the reality of this situation is that we would create jobs by eliminating disposable packaging. Instead of having a bottling plant 500 miles away that can produce and bottle product for distribution in a 500 mile radius because they only have one way shipping, we would have hundreds of local bottling plants that would employ lots of people in sanitizing and refilling bottles. This would apply to milk, pop, fruit juice, and beer. We would have one-way transportation of ingredients and we would employ people on a local level to process those ingredients into products for local consumption. We would also need to employ people to get the product to customers and to get the containers back to the processors. This would be much superior from an energy standpoint as well as from a waste standpoint. Think for a moment about the difference in energy

required to melt a bottle or can as opposed to the energy required to sanitize a bottle.

Changing our system from disposable back to refillable would not provide excessive levels of profit for large corporations, but it would provide reasonable profit to small businessmen and lots of jobs for you and your neighbors. First of all, somebody will have to build the buildings for the bottling plants, then somebody will have to design and manufacture the small scale bottling equipment, and finally, there will be a need for people to work at the bottling plant and work in distribution when it is in production.

At some point in our evolution, we will have to get past our current mentality of bagging, then boxing, then double bagging everything we eat or use. We need to get back to getting as much of what we need as locally as possible. When we get to this mentality, it will be easy to start back to reusable and refillable containers. Now, we buy a bag of flour and bring it home, dump it in a canister and throw away the bag. At some point, we need to get to bringing the canister to a store where we refill it and save the step of bagging and unbagging it. So far, we have evolved from taking out a small pail of trash once a month to taking out two large trash cans once a week. We need to reverse this trend for our own good.

Real Estate

In my lifetime, I have seen 2 economic meltdowns that have been credited to the real estate industry, while history supports that there have been more. The real estate industry looted the savings and loan system in the 80's using a scam which involved bad investments in commercial real estate. The current financial mess was triggered by the sub-prime lending frauds (also real estate based). We tried in both these instances to change the financial rules and increase supervision to tighten up on the banking business. We have never looked at regulating the real estate business which, I am sure, is busy laying the groundwork to loot the economy again in 15 to 20 years. Perhaps a RICO investigation would be appropriate. Or at least, we need a root cause analysis of why our system gets looted periodically. And this analysis should not be done by a bunch of hacks who are appointed by our politicians. At this point in time, the hacks and politicians can be viewed as the problem. It is not to be expected that they will provide solutions. Have you ever wondered why the game of Monopoly is based on real estate as the vehicle for one player to bankrupt the rest of the players? The game of Monopoly was developed during the Great Depression and has been entertaining us ever since. Somehow, I think that the solution to our problems goes deeper and is more

fundamental than just adding rent control to our Grand Game of Monopoly.

We have people who cannot afford a place to live and we have numerous government programs in place to help poor people pay their rent. These programs are actually welfare for the landlords who keep rent at an artificially high level because they can. For this reason most politicians are reluctant to end the rent subsidies. On the other side of that coin, we have real estate investors and banks that own over a million vacant homes that are in foreclosure or off the market. It is contrary to any sensibility of free market to prop up the price of homes and commercial property by artificially reducing supply in the face of need and demand. This is probably good for the few at the top, but it's a disaster for America. How can anybody in their right mind support free market principles and allow this situation to exist. A market is either free or it isn't. A market that is controlled by business is no freer than a market that is controlled by government. A market ceases to be a free market when it comes under control. When there is a need to control a market, there arises a requirement for regulation.

The last thing in the world that the real estate industry wants is to have property values reflect what that property is really worth. If those million houses were suddenly dropped on the market in today's economy, the housing market would fall dramatically

and the real estate interests would lose income from sales commissions. I would venture that if real estate were subjected to real free market forces; there would be a need for massive re-evaluation of bank portfolios. At the moment, though, the banks are content to maintain their charade that their portfolios of vacant homes and commercial structures are worth what they loaned on them. I don't believe that a free market liquidation would support their valuations. We should not allow the kind of dishonesty that we have been tolerating from all levels of government and business. It is time to open the books and let things fall where they will so that we at least know where we really are before we try to do a reset.

In the interest of pursuing our free market ideal, we should require that the real estate and development interests hold a national no-reserve auction of all vacant properties shortly after the share the wealth bonuses are handed out. I am sure that lots of people would come out of that with "no-mortgage" homes among their assets. A Social Security check would stretch a lot farther if the recipient had no rent or mortgage to worry about and farther still if retirees could produce some of their own food. Or is it a rule in this Grand Monopoly game that rent/mortgage is one of the mandatory revenue streams in which we all must participate. Come on, it's time to get the rest of us back in the game. Getting back to the Monopoly theme, we

need some FREE PARKING on this game board and we need a way to buy our FREE PARKING passes. Everybody should have the opportunity to own a home and we need to end the insanity of bubble economies, starting with popping the current bubble.

As part of getting our relationship with housing back into some kind of equilibrium, we will need to develop a mechanism for renegotiating the value of our existing mortgages based on the property values established in a surplus property auction. I harbor no illusion that it will be easy getting America back in synch with what is real, but sooner or later we are going to have to hit the RESET button. We have been playing against a stacked deck for too long already. We need to reshuffle and re-deal and set ourselves free. It is time to create a new set of rules that favor the rest of us over the wealthy. Let the wealthy keep what they already have, but let the rest of us have a chance at the American dream. Serfdom is not the American dream.

While we are getting rid of or reducing our rent or mortgage, maybe we would be wise to allocate some of our windfall towards getting rid of our utility bills. And if we can reduce our utility bills, next we might back off from the ridiculous cost of being connected. Recently a million people told Netflix that they didn't agree with the price increase and walked. That power and leverage should be used on all providers of overpriced services. Once we own our homes, maybe

we could get to know our neighbors and see if there are things that we can do together as a community that improve our lives and further benefit the environment.

A restaurant doesn't have to be 20 minutes away in a commercial district and decked out in neon with a large parking lot. A restaurant could just as well be a neighbor's converted garage 3 doors down the block run by a neighbor who happens to love to cook and is content feeding a few extra people at meal time for a few extra dollars. It is amazing to think about what could be if we could get past the burden of artificially generated high fixed costs that are created by our zoning system. This thought is in direct opposition to the philosophy of giving tax breaks to big business so that they will grace us with their presence. It is much more about leveling the playing field so the rest of us have a chance. If big business wants to come into our community and play, they are going to have to pay their full share. We really need to re-examine lots of the ordinances that have been passed and decide which ones benefit us and which just ones benefit the development community.

We need to look long and hard at the whole concept of tax breaks. This system pits community against community in a contest to see which community will allow business to pay the least of their share in operating the community. We definitely need to consider legal changes that would require all

government entities to tax everyone within their jurisdiction at the same rate. If I am paying tax at a particular rate, I don't think it unreasonable to expect a business up the road to be paying at the same rate. If there were rules statewide and nationwide that there are no tax breaks, business will be forced to choose locations based on factors like availability of power, transportation, and a workforce with appropriate skills. Corporations will be forced to become good citizens instead of being the freeloaders that they too often are. This could serve to reduce taxes for all of us who actually pay our taxes because the services that we need cost what they cost and We the People would be paying less if the factory up the road were paying its share.

In our last and continuing financial meltdown, money didn't just disappear, it moved from one account to another. If you follow that money and find out who took it there are a lot of people who belong in jail for the massive fraud that has been committed. This fraud requires more punishment than paying a fine without admitting wrongdoing because a lot of people have done wrong. We need to know who these people are, they deserve jail and not a comfortable "for profit" private jail, but a nasty bottomed out public jail where the rest of the criminals are. White collar criminals are criminals and deserve treatment no different from any other kind of criminal.

We need to understand that there are people who really don't mind sitting in jail for a few years if they have a stash waiting when they get out. The only way to eliminate this kind of parasite from society is to make their punishment enough of a drag that they find other occupations. And, of course, find and recover their ill gotten gains.

Get Out of Jail Free cards need to be eliminated from the game board, but some activities that have traditionally been defined as crimes need to be redefined. Our current drug laws can be viewed in the same light as Prohibition. They define a variety of activities as criminal that many people view as harmless. The laws create a criminal subculture by artificially inflating the cost of certain substances beyond their real value. By eliminating the laws against drugs and regulating their production and distribution, we would also eliminate excessive profit and in effect end the subsidies that these laws provide to the criminals who smuggle drugs across our borders. While I mention this, I might also ask where the Department of Homeland Security has been in reference to smuggling operations. Drugs are certainly no less abundant on our streets in the years since the Department was created.

Economics

When everything is owned by a select few that's not freedom and democracy, that's feudalism. So, here is the question "How do we make capitalism compatible with freedom and democracy?", because it is the natural tendency of capitalism to drift towards feudalism. What we need to tackle is how to maintain the incentive system that makes capitalism so desirable, in terms of providing for our needs, without allowing the system to dominate us and defile our environment.

It is easy to give a brief comment on supply side economics because there isn't much there to comment on. It is typical of the bullshit that the conservative think tanks were putting out in the seventies and nobody really noticed until the eighties. The government latched on to it and after the S&L crisis used it to sell us on a recovery plan which was predicated on building up the strength of the supply side of the economy on the theory that by pushing money to the top there would be a trickledown (do a search on "trickledown") effect that would bring the economy back to its feet. Well, we tried that and it didn't work. We found that providing the people on top with luxuries did not provide nearly as many jobs as we needed to get back on our feet.

The economic planners of the eighties were sincere, but misguided. They built a system and made a case that only views half of the equation. Our focus has been

on the people who own the means of production and we concentrated wealth in their hands. We have built a system where, yes, they have the money available to expand and provide jobs in the manufacturing sector. But, no, they are in the business of making money and they are not about to expand and provide jobs in order to produce stuff that either nobody wants or nobody can afford. The job creators and the cost cutters are the same people wearing different hats. Currently they are more focused on cost cutting than they are on job creation. Since this is a fact of capitalism, we need to find a way to get money out of the hands of the industrialists who are not creating jobs and into the hands of the consumers who will create jobs. Consumers who have money will demand goods and services and this demand will create jobs. Big corporations with tons of cash are not creating jobs. They told us that by creating policies that funnel more money into the hands of the wealthy we would improve the economy. Well, we did and it didn't. Then they told us that the only solution was to funnel more money into the hands of the wealthy so we went back to sleep and woke up broke and unemployed. Now it looks like, after bailing out the banks, they want to funnel all the money into the hands of the wealthy so they can create jobs. For who? Their son in law? Think about it for a few seconds and it is clear that their plan was flawed from

the start and the harder we push that plan, the worse off we get.

Supply side economics has the production covered and evidence indicates that the producers have plenty of cash on hand to produce anything we think we need. The current proposal before congress is to create jobs by spending a lot of money to rebuild the infrastructure. This will have a positive effect on the distribution portion of the economic equation. This type of program will have a short term positive effect on the economy. It will not have any lasting effect on the economy, though. We cannot base our economic recovery on government spending unless we plan to spend a lot of money that we don't have for a very long time. Let me say that the interests that benefit most from our infrastructure improvements least want to share in the expense of making those improvements.

By sharing the wealth we create a scenario where people do have money and they do demand goods and services and they do pay taxes to support development and maintenance of public services. Part of the economic equation is consumption and unless we flush massive amounts of money into the hands of the consumers quickly, the rest of the recovery program is a waste of time and money and makes no sense. Any money that gets spent from a Government Jobs Bill will be quickly soaked up by Wall Street anyway because the general contractors who will do the actual hiring place a

very high value on the services that they provide. A program that gives a few construction workers enough money to pay their cell phone bill and their cable bill and rent and food and transportation will accomplish nothing other than the maintenance of the status quo for the duration of the program. At this point in the evolution of society, we need to find a new status quo and it will be expensive getting there. The only way to accomplish this is to turn creative forces loose. In the long term, a lot of people will prosper and they might or might not be the ones who are currently prospering. It is time to roll the dice and determine the next move. Maybe we will pass GO and collect the jackpot. Our current path leads directly to an economic and environmental equivalent of JAIL.

What we are trying to do in terms of spending federal money to put people to work improving the infrastructure, strengthening “first response”, and helping educate our children is probably a good step, but it doesn’t go nearly far enough. We are throwing nickels at problems that need dollars.

If we are going to pursue a shift to sustainability, this will certainly shift the focus as to what specific infrastructure improvements are needed. This is too important to our future to allow some committee at the top level to plan this out with the industrialists who stand to get richer by selling us a high tech hyper-efficient system that still doesn’t do what we need. We,

as a people, really don't even know what we need for a sustainable future because we haven't given it any real thought yet. We need to take some time and think about what we really need and why we need it. There are probably lots of things that we cannot really define why we need them and these things need to be reconsidered as to whether we actually need them or just want them. There is no shame in wanting things, but we should understand our motivations and not mistake wants for needs.

Federal spending alone is simply not enough to really get the economy going again because it still does not address the fact that average Americans cannot afford to pursue their dreams, and below average Americans have forgotten how to dream, they are just trying to survive. It is time for We the People to assert ourselves and recognize that there is no room for a ruling class in America. There is major work ahead and the business community has the resources to do it, but no interest in getting anything done. They are too busy flying around in their private jets feeling all smug and cool and pleased with themselves. It has become our responsibility as citizens to take what should be our fair share of the resources of our great land and put those resources to work for us in developing a future that provides our needs with less effort than we currently exert.

I'm not talking about taking away anything that the industrial system or any individual already has except for their stranglehold on our future; I am talking about requiring that in the future they share more wealth with the people who create that wealth.

I know that in the current business environment management considers workers to be replaceable because if they fire somebody or somebody quits, they can easily find someone else to come in and take the position. This is only true because if a person quits or retires, the rest of the people in their department can train a new person. This thought breaks down if the whole department were to walk. Generally speaking, management lacks most of the specific knowledge required to get product out the door and it would be difficult if not impossible to smoothly replace an entire department. For evidence of this, you need look no farther than case studies of companies attempting to shift production to Mexico or China. There is more involved in training new employees than translating a few work instructions into Spanish or Chinese. What needs to transfer to a new employee is technique and understanding beyond what can be captured in a work instruction. Sharing the wealth would be a start to recognizing the true value of the human capital that is the foundation of every business.

What we need is attention to the demand side of the economy. As long as most of us have little money

available after rent, food and fuel there will be no need to produce much in the way of consumer products. If we had done it right back during the eighties, we would have looked at both sides of the economy with the understanding that an economy has two sides and they have to be in balance to achieve true prosperity.

We have seen 30 years where the supply side of the economy has received all of the attention. This could be viewed as 30 years of class warfare waged by the industrial class against the middle and working classes. The people at the top are under pressure to create a few jobs and they are struggling mightily to find a way to do this without giving anything to the rest of us. Now that the pendulum is swinging back our way, the upper class is whining about equitable distribution of wealth being class warfare. They still don't understand that by strengthening the middle and working classes, they strengthen their own position.

The problems that we are facing are about what I would expect from elite economists. They cannot see the economy from our side no matter how hard they try. Maybe President Obama should take his council of economic advisers and cut them loose to live on minimum wage jobs and see how far they can stretch a couple hundred dollars a week before taxes. I suspect that some of these economists routinely spend more on lunch than a minimum wage person makes in a week. It could cause them to revise some of their models of how

an economy works. They might then be able to figure out that the economy is not just for the benefit of the very wealthy, but for the very wealthy to become very wealthy and to remain very wealthy, there needs to be a demand side of the economy to consume what the supply side supplies and when the top gets greedy, the whole system suffers.

That a strong foundation is required for a tall building is obvious to a structural engineer. Tall buildings with weak foundations will fall over eventually (Leaning Tower of Pisa should be a case study in remediating poorly designed systems. Remediation is expensive). That should apply to economic systems as well as structural systems. Right now the people on top are flying pretty high with no foundation left to support them. I expect that if the people at the top are allowed to crash the system the folks lower down will do little to help them, but rather will fight over the scraps that remain and the top tier will simply disappear into the ensuing chaos.

Let me say this clearly, this crash is not inevitable although there are lots of people who think it is. What is inevitable is some major adjustment to our economic system and our civilization. We can either take control of the change, or just let it happen. I would argue that we will be much better off if we take control of the process and that involves a complete change of leadership in this country. We need to hand control of

the country over to people who are respected members of our communities, who probably don't really want to hold office, but who would be willing if asked. We need to get away from the politicians who mount expensive ad campaigns to convince us to vote for them because these are exactly the wrong kind of people to have running our country.

Maybe it is time that We the People give the business world a good spanking for its own good. They have not been good American citizens and are in desperate need of correction. We need legislation that would recognize that the stockholders are the true owners of publicly traded corporations. This legislation should relieve the boards of directors of much of their discretion in running business contrary to the interest of the shareholders. We need a requirement that large corporations disperse substantial amounts of profit to stockholders and to workers as well. This would serve to recognize that management, the workers, and the stockholders all need each other. A successful enterprise requires the right combination of brains, heart, and money. Bigger is not necessarily better.

Smaller businesses would not be required to do any of this until they get over a certain size threshold. What qualifies as a small business? Family owned businesses with a handful of employees would definitely qualify as small business. Publicly traded corporations with thousands of employees would definitely not qualify.

Privately held corporations that have incorporated for tax consideration but have only a handful of employees would probably qualify as small, but privately held corporations that hold other corporations would not qualify and neither would their subsidiaries. Smaller business and their employees will benefit the most under this system because they will have customers who can pay for their goods and services. When the growth, merger, and acquisition game comes back into play, the corporations will be ripe for regulation of their behavior with regard to employees and stockholders. There should also be rules in place that discourage market dominance by a small group of players.

Stockholders should have veto authority over any terms in executive employment contracts. It should not be the responsibility of the stockholders to honor any agreements that reward failure. Failed CEO's should be out on their ass. No more golden parachutes.

I am sure that there will be arguments that this will hamper corporate ability to grow and I would argue that many corporations are too big already. I believe that we are all diminished when we lose a good manufacturer to buyout followed by closure just because someone else grew bigger faster and found that by removing obstacles from his path he could grow even bigger and faster and have a chance to be the last man standing in the Grand Game of Monopoly. As a pillar of Capitalism, competition has gotten us about as

far as it can. We need to gently remove the competition pillar and replace it with a cooperation pillar before we can progress into a sustainable future.

If we are to find any level of true innovation, it will not come from the stale research labs of the big corporations. It will come from the backyard entrepreneurs who will now have a chance because there will be a market for the new products that they will create. Right now there is little incentive to make anything new for people to buy because for the most part people are having a tough time covering food, housing, and transportation. A requirement that corporations share much of their wealth with the employees, who created it, will in turn get that money spread all over the economy. I see no advantage to the economy from consolidation of many companies into few and I see peril in allowing too much power into the hands of a few. In the future, we need to place value on human capital and environmental capital. We cannot continue to view these two factors as ripe for exploitation.

America is weakened by the level of foreign investment and ownership that we allow. Foreign investors do not contribute to our balance of payments problem, they exacerbate it. Foreign investors do not do start ups in this country. They buy successful American business and export the profit while they initiate cost cutting, eliminate jobs and try to exploit

American labor. We need to keep American profit in America and use it to build America. We can't continue to carry the whole world forever. It would be simple to reduce the amount of profit being sent to foreign shores. Pass a law that would limit the amount of money going out and provide for the distribution of the money that stays directly to the employees of that business and to the future of America. If foreign investors can't live with this, they can sell their companies back to the employees and go back where they came from. Capital assets should not be allowed to leave with them.

Foreign owned business should be required to do 65% to employees, 20% to the Education and R&D fund with 15% allowed to leave the country. Would this discourage foreign investors from buying successful business and just milking it? You bet it would. Among other things, it would nullify their gain generated by depressed wages to the point that they might do better keeping their money at home and providing jobs for their own people, or do we want to continue to supply cheap American labor to foreign business. This does nothing beneficial for our own economy. Besides, what are they going to do? Sell our business back to us at fire sale prices? I don't see that as a bad thing. It would create a whole category of small to medium sized American business, hopefully employee owned. We cannot quietly stand by and watch business make

record profits every year while we slide deeper into depression.

Two hundred and thirty-five years ago Thomas Paine noted in his pamphlet, "Common Sense" that America had the resources to go it alone. That is still the case.

World Finance

I see the world financial system as controlled by a bunch of racketeers who are very good at what they do. They have conned the whole world into taking a string of ones and zeros in the bankers' computers in trade for natural resources. They manipulate governments by controlling the finances of the candidates for office. Where local custom allows they simply finance and install the leadership. In return they get policies enacted that are very contrary to the interests of the people of those countries. The targeted countries include the entire world; and any countries that try to promote their own real national interests become candidates for "nation building". In the process of nation building, outside military forces come in and install a government that will be more compliant with the wishes of the Industrial Empire.

The world financial community has managed to get the entire world so in debt to them that nobody will ever be able to afford to pay back everything that has been borrowed. Our leaders have pledged our futures, so we just continue to surrender our resources and our freedom to the Industrial Empire, it's almost like a real obligation exists. The financial world is desperately struggling to stick the world's taxpayers with the bill for the commitments that the politicians have made. The current economic problems are like a giant game of musical bags where everybody is scrambling to avoid

getting caught holding the bag. When the music stops, it will get ugly when there is only one bag left and it becomes clear that it is the people of the world against the financial domination of the banking houses of the world. I grant that there is nothing wrong with the convenience of credit and currency, but if push comes to shove, barter (the money of peasants) will work fine.

Recently we have been hearing about large businesses closing their doors and letting thousands of people go. I have been seeing the announcements that other large companies are planning massive layoffs and terminations. Why is this happening at a time when our leaders are announcing that they have plans to create more jobs? This is because our leaders have no clue how to create more jobs or even how to preserve the ones we have. They seem to think that they can magically bring the economy back by lowering taxes on the wealthy people, who already have more money than they can spend, and this based on the very false assumption that they will spend it creating jobs. Well, they will spend it, but not on anything that will get the economy moving. They will spend it on increasing their holdings and increasing their share of the pie so they can continue to pay a disproportionately low share of the cost of maintaining our freedom and democracy, both of which are slowly slipping away. If we maintain our current trajectory, it won't be much longer before the Wall Street types own 100% of nothing, because

that's all that is going to be left when they are done with it.

The real job creators are the small and growing businesses and these get snapped up by big business as soon as they show any kind of viability. When a small business is taken over by big business or foreign investment, cost cutting is generally the first order of business, often to the detriment of the employees, but also to the detriment of the brand. Instead of continuing growth in employment and continued investment in capital goods, these businesses are shifted to a lean manufacturing model with much work outsourced to the low bidder on the other side of the planet. This model should be dumped as it makes no sense for America. If the larger corporations were to share the wealth with their employees, all of us could afford to support American business instead of buying the cheapest import at some big box store.

In order to continue The Grand Game we need new rules to limit distributions to owners of the larger businesses to 35% of the profit and require distribution of the rest going 35% for bonus to employees, 20% to education and R&D and 10% staying within the business for growth. I believe that a plan of this nature would be a force to fuel the rest of the economy. I find it astonishing that some of our Representatives and Senators in Congress really think that the solution to our problems will come from collecting more taxes from

the poorest Americans. You can get a lot more blood out of fattened pigs than you do out of parched turnips. What do they expect to accomplish? Create a violent backlash like that which is happening all over the world? The backlash has started and I would hope that the folks in Washington have the wisdom to head it off. It will take some substantial change to head this one off. We are moving beyond what can be placated by propaganda.

No, we can't afford freeloaders in our society, but I don't think I would define freeloaders the same way that our leaders in Washington would. I would re-define freeloaders to exclude the working and unemployed people who don't pay any taxes because they are too poor. I would revise the definition of freeloaders to include corporations that don't make anything or do anything that benefits the public at large. I am speaking here of businesses that have the government as their only customer (try finding a Lockheed Martin toaster at Wal-Mart). This is getting back to the cozy relationship between government and industry. A business that draws its entire income from government contracts is being disingenuous if it supports candidates who claim to want to lower taxes and cut spending. I'm speaking of all the government contractors who routinely delay contracts and continually raise costs as though they expect the taxpayers to cheerfully pay whatever is billed. When

their quarterly profit falls, they beat the drums of war and get back on track at taxpayer expense. I am speaking of the un-American businesses and business men who lobby for loopholes so that they pay little or no tax and those who blackmail communities to grant tax abatements. These are the true freeloaders.

In the real world, we come up with an idea, develop it into a product and sell it. In their world, industrial freeloaders dream up pie in the sky and bill the taxpayers to develop and build it while they take their government dole and give it to their executives and shareholders and funnel lots back to the politicians who make their cushy existence possible. Here we are back to an out of control government that is supporting an out of control industrial system. You want to pay off the debt? Stop feeding the monster. Stop supporting industrial freeloaders. And stop listening to those moronic economists who tell us that debt is good and necessary. It may be good and necessary for the bankers of the Industrial Empire, but it is incredibly bad for the American taxpayers.

How would redistribution impact this system? Redistribution, by itself, would have minimal impact on the freeloading portion of industrial system. The main changes that I see would be in the private and consumer sectors of the economy where new businesses could get established to satisfy needs in alternative energy and conservation. As a result of redistribution, tax revenues

would go up simply because there would be more money sloshing around in the economy instead of sitting on a shelf in somebody's vault. This revenue could be allocated to continue feeding the monster, or it could be used to pay down our debt.

In the event that we get a congress elected that would be willing to do our bidding in this redistribution, I would expect them to give very serious thought to putting the monster on a diet. I would further expect that they will facilitate our transition from world dependency to self sufficiency.

Think Tanks

The first thing I will say about think tanks is that they are not unbiased. The people involved in think tanks are paid quite well to be among the most biased people on the planet.

We are constantly barraged, by the media, with the opinions of the “experts” from the highly respected think tanks. Highly respected by whom? I have no respect at all for what they do, although I have to give them credit for how well they do it. What they don’t tell us is that for the most part think tanks are not really research organizations staffed with scientific experts. They are propaganda factories staffed with wordsmiths and spin doctors. How dare they speak sneeringly of “elitists”. They are the elite. Their role is not to evaluate data and arrive at conclusions. Their role is to accept a conclusion and produce justifications with bulleted power point slides to feed the talking heads of the media. They feed out – we buy in. If you want research based on the evaluation of evidence, look to the academic institutions that the think tanks struggle to discredit. Think of the contrast between peer reviewed research and highly paid contrarian bullshit.

When we hear about a thought generated by a think tank, we should view that not as coming from any authority, but rather from the propaganda arm of a well funded special interest. Consider also that there are no well funded special interests that are focused on

protecting the planet or We the People. The big money is generated by ruining the planet and dominating We the People. The well funded special interests are all well funded because of their free run on the environment and they want to keep things the way they are.

There are well funded special interests who keep threatening us with job loss when we try to protect the environment. Well, they will not be nearly as well funded when they have to pay their share of the eventual clean-up of the mess they are making. If the polluters had to pay for the illness that they cause, clean alternative energy might begin to look more attractive. They don't want to be stuck with the bill to subsidize clean energy, but what they don't tell you is that they, themselves, are heavily subsidized because of the simple fact that they aren't paying to clean up their mess. The simple fact is that they don't want to share their subsidies. Remove the subsidies to polluters and cost parity is already here. If the coal and oil interests had to pay to restore the atmosphere and rivers and land from the damage that they cause, they would not survive. Since We the People are eventually going to pay for the consequences, the sooner we get to a sane level of consumption, the smaller the mess will be that we will eventually have to remediate.

The think tanks very skillfully turn around any discussion of new products and substances. This

discussion takes the form that whenever something new comes along, if there is money to be made, it is expected that we will accept an assumption that it is safe until someone proves otherwise and that proof can often be difficult because monetary roadblocks are thrown in the way of research that might provide a conclusion contrary to the interests of those making the money. Even if there is eventually the proof needed to define a product as a nuisance, like asbestos, DDT, Freon, the producers fight it to the end, then pay out what they need to as part of their cost of doing business. I will not presume to classify all or even very many manmade substances as inherently dangerous, but neither will I accept that “new” always means safe and good. When we develop new classes of substances that do not naturally occur, we should spend a little time considering the future repercussions before we fall back on the assumption that we can just pay off the victims for a small share of the profit. Apparently they really don’t mind sharing, but as a matter of principle they just need someone to require it. In the situation where bans have been put in place against producing dangerous substances in America, they have shifted production overseas and continue making their mess somewhere else. It is almost like they are insisting on a right to make a mess of things. I view this as the Industrial Empire, or maybe the capitalist system going through a bratty adolescent stage and the system now needs to

mature into something sustainable that can serve all of us going forward.

I have no objection to the existence of think tanks or even to the harm that they often do as they spew their nonsense in our society. I do believe that they should be required to reveal who is providing their funding and if it comes from a shell, who it is funding the shell. If this information were available, we would know who is really talking when the think tank speaks. The people who want to damage freedom in America should not be allowed to hide behind laws that allow them to do this damage anonymously. If the people who provide the funds are proud of their beliefs, they will not hide behind walls of anonymity. If they are ashamed of their beliefs, funding will dry up. Be very suspicious of anonymously funded think tanks.

Media

Divided we fall. This is a very simple concept and it has become the foundation of our two-party system. In America we watch too much television and get entirely too caught up in the nonsense that proliferates in Washington and diffuses beyond. The beginning of the end was when the television sets began appearing in airports and restaurants and bars and anywhere else people congregate. This simple intrusion into all of our lives has had the effect of cutting off public discourse on most topics and has effectively channeled our public conversations down the paths that they want us to follow. They can do this because of the predictability of human nature. Where prejudices exist they exploit them, where prejudices don't exist they create them in order to create the distinctions that perpetuate the "us versus them" mentality.

The media very effectively hides behind their darling, the freedom of the press amendment to the Constitution which they interpret to give them carte blanche to say anything regardless of truth or factual content. The media has become a propaganda outlet. I remember in past decades when we spoke sneeringly of communist propaganda, and now we defend capitalist propaganda. Propaganda is propaganda regardless of which side of the fence it comes from. Propaganda molds our belief system down the paths where the

propagandists want to lead us, generally by substituting emotional content for truth.

In the past, communist propaganda would tell the people in the communist world how well they were doing in terms of conquest in battle and industrial output. The facts occasionally supported their reporting and often did not.

Our current brand of propaganda tells us that there are no problems with the environment and anyone who says there are is a liar. Besides, they tell us, pollution is acceptable because it is a necessary requisite for jobs and any regulation of pollution is an unreasonable attack by government on someone's freedom.

The environment belongs to everybody and pollution should be regarded as an unreasonable attack by the polluter against the citizens in the vicinity of the polluter. What do they give us in return for taking our resources and leaving foul air? They give us a piece of paper telling us how many 1's and 0's are in our column in their computer. Do those 1's and 0's have any value at all in the real world? What would we have left if all the computers went down? I guess we would still have some facilities in our neighborhoods that might be capable of producing things that are useful and if the product was in enough demand to cover cleaning up the local environment, we could continue to produce. What this really means is that the industrial empire is content to control our lives with maximum gain for themselves

and minimal thought given to our health and welfare. Try to imagine the nightmare of eliminating currency in favor of credit. We all would be completely at the mercy of the financial institutions and they have demonstrated again and again that they have no mercy.

Healthcare is a trillion dollar industry within the industrial empire and this industry would not be as profitable as it is if we lived in a healthy environment. They can tolerate thousands of cancer deaths every day because they have not done any clinical double blind tests to prove or disprove the negative effects of all the man made stuff that they put into our air, water, and food. They not only don't do those studies, they deny funding to anyone who would. And if anybody does complete a study, they engage the services of the think tanks to discredit science with words.

We are way less free than we like to believe, only now we are held in serfdom not by a king or communist regime, but rather by a capitalist system to which we owe more money than exists. We are held hostage by the energy companies who hide behind their free market propaganda while they arbitrarily set prices much higher than market conditions or production costs can justify, and then continually post record profits at our expense. They expect us to share the pain; I expect them to share the gain. I agree that the cost of energy production is still somewhat low, but I have trouble with the energy companies taking as much as

they do out of the economy. What we pay for energy is still pretty cheap with reference to its value, but at the same time it is priced way above what it costs to produce. The real solution to this is to put ourselves into a position where we don't need to buy or sell energy on the world market. This can be done. We need to get ahead of the curve here and start moving towards sustainability and self sufficiency before energy costs more than we have. We will be in serious trouble if we are still dependent on foreign oil when China is the only country that can afford to buy it.

Our system is no longer based on what we need or what we want, it is controlled from the top down and is based on what the people at the top produce and try to market to the rest of us. There is very little two way communication between us down here and them up there. Look at the web sites of the large companies and try to find a place to offer comment or suggestion. Generally, unless you are a stockholder or investor, they don't want your thoughts.

It is interesting how the business community can deride government as being the problem and without skipping a beat step up with their hand out, palm up, asking for help from that very same government. The spin doctors do their best to make government look like the source of all problems when government places reasonable demands on industry. Then we have the public/private partnerships. These are business

structures that shift the risk and expense to the taxpayers and then the profit goes to industry. Capitalism On Steroids Without Any Risk (COSWAR) is the order of the day. Maybe the “war” in there helps it sell on Wall Street.

Does anyone really believe that by reducing the taxes on the wealthiest Americans they just might give all of us jobs? Doing what? They are using as many of us as they need already, so what are they going to put the rest of us to work doing? Referring to a class of people as the Job Creators rings hollow when those people are wearing their cost cutting hat and eliminating jobs. The best we can hope for is that business be required to share the wealth with the rest of us so we have enough money available that we can provide our own jobs on a local level while we work towards our goal of self sufficiency and sustainability. If our current leaders in congress are not able to share the wealth, we can replace them with servants who will in the next election. This is where the second American Revolution will be fought – at the ballot box, not in the battlefield. We already have a perfectly good constitution and that constitution was written, at least partly, with our current situation in mind. The Founding Fathers would have loved social media.

Part of my thinking involves putting lots of people to work in activities that will eventually put them comfortably back out of work. The short term would be

focused on energy conservation, remediation of the environment, and re-establishing our connection with the natural world. The long term would involve a move to self sufficiency where people would largely work for themselves satisfying their own needs. Of course there will be community aspects to this future and that will have to evolve into a variety of systems that suit each locality and each group of people. The day of everybody working for some huge entity in exchange for all of our basic needs must end. We need to get past our current system of working as hard as we do just to pay our basic overhead. We could build a civilization where we will be able to satisfy our basic needs with much less work than we currently perform and this would leave us with time to enjoy our families and to pursue the arts, sports, music and whatever else we enjoy. If we could provide our own food locally and our shelter was kept comfortable by natural forces we would not need to produce much in the way of exchange goods for outside product. This is not to say that we would not want goods from other places, just that we would not need them.

When we think seven generations into the future do we want a world where everybody lives in great cities and speaks one language and scoots around by themselves in private people movers and elevators under complete worldwide homogeneity. Or would the human species' survival be better served by breaking

from that path and developing a diverse world where people adapt to their local environments and we learn how to live happily and under reduced stress?

We won't be out of the woods until a majority of Americans can look at TV propaganda and say "This is nonsense". About all I see on the news channels is a bunch of bald headed men and blond ladies trying to get us stirred up over liberals or conservatives or who knows who that are the source of all our problems. The source of our problem lies in the divisions that the media creates. As long as we are divided, the Industrial Empire stays on top. When we unite, we win. I'm not saying that anybody should turn off their TV; we should just start working towards building ourselves a world in which their propaganda is irrelevant.. The fact that we have people who hate other people just because they abide by a different brand of bullshit attests to this fact. I am sure that all of us know people who are on the other side of the political divide who we consider to be friends in spite of the fact that we hate that side of the political divide. The divide is artificial and we need to understand this. When we learn to respect and understand opinions that we disagree with, then we can start working to improve our world.

This same media could be part of the solution in getting America back on track. It would take a new philosophy and a complete change of direction to change our culture of fear into a culture of cooperation.

But, a media that can sell us on fighting multiple wars on the other side of the planet against people who have no weapon manufacturing capacity, but are somehow a threat to us, could just as easily move us down more peaceful paths if there was a will. If we really want to end terrorism, why don't we just dry up the terrorists' supply of weapons. If they don't get them from us or our friends, they don't have any, period. If we were to not meddle in their affairs, they would have no reason to attack us using weapons that they get from us.

Energy

Energy is the only real issue currently facing humankind. When this problem is solved, most of our other problems will find solution as a result. Currently we use huge amounts of energy to keep ourselves comfortable in structures that are not designed with any particular environment in mind. We use huge amounts of energy to move ourselves and our stuff around. We use huge amounts of energy to grow our food. We use huge amounts of energy to extract and process our resources. We use huge amounts of energy to process information, disseminate propaganda and communicate. We use huge amounts of energy in intra-specific competition (war) over who gets access to the energy that we seem to need so much of in all areas of our lives. We have bankrupted ourselves fighting wars over oil. The world civilization that we live in was designed and built in an era where energy was cheap and abundant. That is no longer the case. We could step up the pace of exploration and production of fossil fuels and continue to pretend that energy is cheap and abundant, or we can reduce our need for energy by using our brains and concentrating our effort on conservation. By implementing conservation measures we will not have to eliminate much from our lives except for the waste.

The days of depending on big energy and big food to satisfy our needs will come to an end and we will either

be ready for this end or not. The choice is ours. If we choose to be ready, sharing the wealth will provide the best means to prepare. Somehow, I don't see us getting where we need to go if the path is driven by a convoluted set of tax deductions and credits that continue to push us down the wrong path. What we need is to allow the forces of true freedom and democracy to help us find our new path.

We could save huge amounts of energy in our structures, but this would require effort. We could use some Share the Wealth education and R&D money to fund building construction technology programs that would develop energy efficient building materials and methods for each of the individual regions of the country, and for some localities with specific needs. This effort will undoubtedly spawn lots of local industry that will produce the materials and equipment that we will need to shed the yoke of big energy. We will need architects to be trained in more than curb appeal. I have no problem with making structures beautiful as long as they are functional first. I would expect that this kind of improvement would be easy to fund if people have money in their hands and are aware that conventional energy will become unaffordable at some point in the future. I believe that if America is set free financially, there will be demand for sane alternatives to the insanity that currently predominates.

There is a lot of advanced research going on, but it is all linearly pursuing the advancement of what we already have. Current federally funded research is structured towards the creation of products that industry can provide for investors to invest in and keep the rest of us in the revenue streams. This is exactly the wrong approach. If industry is going to provide it and investors are going to invest in it, then industry and investors need to be funding it, not taxpayers. This gets back to the COSWAR concept. If there is money to be made from developing products, the investment community should be investing in developing those products. But if those products have no market without inclusion in some requirement, they should be considered to be of questionable value. If there are products or technologies that will provide little profit but great benefit, those are the areas where public funding should be focused. If the next big thing is developed using funds provided by a federal grant, I would argue that the benefit from the patent belongs to all of us. The industrial and investment communities have plenty of money to develop new stuff, if they want the reward, they should take the risk.

Share the Wealth is simply a mechanism to take the decision of what to fund and how much funding to give to what out of the hands of the politicians and investment community and put it into the able hands of our citizens. We need to start looking in relatively

unexplored areas for solutions to the problems that loom. To date, we have restricted our search for solutions to areas familiar to Wall Street or the energy companies. And most of what they are suggesting might be ready in five years. Well, their solutions have been five years out for the last forty years and I haven't seen any of them solve any real problems, yet. It should be clear by now that real solutions will not be generated by that source. In fact, the solutions to our energy problems lie so far from the comfort zone of Wall Street and the energy companies that these problems have no solution at all without first removing Wall Street and the energy companies from the decision process. A long term solution will be to find new ways to build using materials and construction techniques that are appropriate to the site under development. A shorter term solution would be to find design solutions and technologies that can be applied to remediation of our current structures to make them acceptably energy efficient. This is not some abstract thought about saving the planet. It is about lowering everyone's bills and about making everyone a better planetary citizen. If we can do this, the planet will heal itself.

Currently, the only design criteria for our structures involves keeping out the rain and wind. Beyond that, we assume that we can input enough energy to keep comfortable. I can understand the need for building codes because there certainly are developers who

would build a house that is comfortable in the springtime, which they would sell in the springtime and leave the owner to upgrade the air conditioning when it got hot and upgrade the heating system when it got cold and replace the plumbing and roof when they start leaking. But, Uniform Building Code? This whole concept is flawed from the start. It only makes sense if we assume that poor design is acceptable and we have enough energy available to power our way past that poor design. The basic concept, that there is anything uniform about the conditions that we design to from region to region across the country, is mistaken.

If we are to ever get our energy picture in order, we will have to give more thought to designing buildings that use natural energy and less thought to just sizing the HVAC in order to make our buildings habitable.

If you think back real hard and try to remember your history, you will recall that we have not always had virtually unlimited access to enough energy that we didn't have to give a thought to good design. Our worldwide energy delivery system is truly a marvel, but we have outgrown it and it is time to start moving to the next stage of human evolution. Archaeology recognizes that earlier cultures built structures and dwellings that were specific to their environment and available materials. Those cultures that did not build to their environment did not survive; nor did the cultures that were unable or unwilling to adapt to changing

conditions. Don't make the mistake of considering our civilization a survivor, yet. We have a long way to go to be considered a survivor. We need to get on a sustainable path, and stay on that path.

When one goes from Florida through the Carolinas to New England and across the Midwest from the mountains, to the prairies, to the oceans, white with foam, one will see the same houses and commercial structures in all regions and locales with the only differences being the relative size of the air conditioning and heating units for each region. Perhaps some of the educational and R&D funding could be used to provide the developers with a more enlightened world view and provide the architects with better tools to do their job.

There is no path to energy conservation or reduced dependence on foreign energy under a Uniform Building Code. Is there a need for building codes at all? Absolutely. Again, the developer community certainly needs someone to ride herd on them, but does the owner/builder who is building for his family need all the requirements of a Uniform Building Code? Probably not. There should evolve a series of regional building codes that allow or even require the use of construction materials and techniques that can maximize the use of natural energy fluxes that are available in each region.

The current code is deemed useful because it allows an architect to design houses to code that can be built and sold in Dubuque or Yuma. It also allows a

developer to be able to predict his development costs without ever going to either place. Of course this also makes it easy to move construction workers to the site of the next big boom because they need no training to comply with a local code. They are already trained to Uniform Code. I have often wondered if our buildings are designed to a target utility bill, and if that is the case, we need to revise the target to zero. There will be enough construction work in all regions of our country doing energy remediation that construction workers will not have to follow the booms to different regions in order to find work.

The way to solve the problem of declaring uniformity where it does not exist is not in a quick knee jerk response with a flurry of code writing activity. The way to solve this problem would be to give building inspectors a little more latitude when they evaluate plans for owner/builders. The inspector needs to be covered against responsibility if there is a problem in a building. Of course, the inspector should make suggestions where he sees potential problems. I would like to view the role of the building inspector more as a construction consultant than just as a construction cop. It would be useful if we could tap the inspector's experience but not leave him personally liable if an "experimental" structure fails to perform as hoped. If we are not allowed to try new things, we will not learn anything new. We need to find ways to make our

structures habitable without massive inputs of outside energy. And this will not happen without removing some of the barriers to innovation.

Transportation

We could save major amounts of energy in moving ourselves around if we would make any effort at all to change in this area. As long as we have a few hundred million people driving to and from work every day and making multiple runs to the store every day and just getting out cruising every day, we will be using way too much energy on transportation. We talk once in a while about high speed rail links between cities, but these are not what people need as re-entry level public transportation. I say re-entry level because 60 years ago, we started dismantling our excellent public transportation system so we could sell more cars, tires, and gasoline. Big mistake.

Our nation was built on the rails and we have since abandoned them to the industrial empire which gives us little or no access to this transportation network that was built with tax benefits and public bond issues and federal subsidies and land grants. Why do We the People allow these assets to be denied to us. I don't particularly mind if the railroads keep what they have because they do a pretty good job of taking care of it. But I don't think that it would be unreasonable to ask them to give back a little bit. I would like to see the railroads start putting a few cars on the back of every train and allow people to ride for a cheap monthly pass, like \$20 a month for unlimited riding.

If there is interest, maybe we could go back to rail for low cost slow transport. What we have done with AMTRAK is a joke. We spend a lot of money to subsidize passenger rail service but we still have it priced above the competition. If we were serious about getting rail passenger service going, we would make whatever investment is required to get rail service available for less money than air travel or driving. For \$20 a month unlimited travel, passengers would not be able to demand much in the way of amenities. I would start with a boxcar equivalent and passengers could get off and on by just slowing the train enough that people could walk off the train onto the platform or from the platform to the train without difficulty. Like maybe a modified people mover in the concourse of an airport. Think 21st century hobos here, the 20 bucks could almost be viewed as a bribe to keep the railroad detectives off our backs and assure that there will be a few empty cars at the back of the train. This could be accomplished with little or no real expense to the railroad and if people show any interest, we could look to upgrades. If someone else has another proposal, speak up. The real purpose of this book is to provoke thought and conversation. If there were a reason to bring the train to a full stop to accommodate the needs of a passenger, there could be a flag system to notify the engineer to stop. In the past, flags were used to stop the

train at remote stations if there was a passenger waiting.

I see propaganda from the railroads claiming that they can carry a ton of freight 490 miles on a \$4.00 gallon of diesel fuel. It would take me and eight or nine of my buddies to weigh a ton, but they want to charge us a couple hundred bucks each to travel that distance as passengers. This is wrong. When people start talking about high speed rail for a hundred billion dollars to link cities, that is insane. Rail should not be competing with air travel on speed; it should be competing on price. If it costs them a buck for enough fuel to haul my happy ass from San Diego to San Jose, I would like to know why I can't buy a ticket for \$20. And I would argue that if I could buy that ticket for \$20, air transportation would take a huge hit; and people would drive a lot less on intercity routes. Who cares if it's slower?

If necessary, laws could be enacted to relieve the railroad of liability if passengers hurt themselves in transit so insurance companies and lawyers can't pump up the cost. Healthcare would cover the injury and it would not have to be anybody's fault. If people are afraid of getting hurt they should stay home. The world is not a safe place and some activities are inherently unsafe. The point being that if there is a cheap form of transportation available, people will use it. In the event that we become serious about self sufficiency, there are

hundreds of small towns along the railroads that currently have no passenger service and are all but abandoned. If you doubt this, try driving across the country on old US highways and state roads that follow the rails. This might be used as a start to get unneeded people out of the cities and out to where they can provide for their own needs. I expect that there are lots of people who live on welfare who would love a chance to have their own place where they can provide for their own needs. Instead of giving them food stamps we could teach them to garden. If you doubt that self sufficiency is a possibility, while you do your road trip, note that most of the old abandoned farmsteads have wind pumps in the yard which used to provide water to the occupants. We were self sufficient out there in the past and now we are not. It would not take much to go back to self sufficiency and we would really not have to give up our conveniences.

All this stuff that I am talking about here already exists. All we have to do is make it available for uses other than sitting and decaying. So once we get some people interested in moving back to small towns and providing for their needs themselves, we can set up local renewable energy and do some local industry. With Share the Wealth money available it would be very possible to establish all kinds of small scale business that would focus on satisfying the needs of their local

population while also minimizing impact on the environment.

Automobile transportation will certainly have to transform from the oil soaked mess that it is into something cleaner, which could be almost anything. Electric vehicles are a good direction to go, but they would be best in a small town, local environment. Living with the expectation that everybody in a city can drive as much as they want is simply not realistic. There are energy limitations as well as space limitations in urban settings. If we want to continue our urban model, we will need public transportation for transport within the city. We may want to begin placing less emphasis on urban development, but that is a decision that we cannot allow to be made for us by people who profit from development. We would be better off to have a few vehicles delivering our normal commodities to our homes or communities rather than have all of us out and about getting lots of things in a variety of places while we drag a ton and a half of machinery with us everywhere we go. We might use coal plants to provide the electricity to charge our vehicles at first, but we need to transition to local, environmentally friendly sources of electricity as quickly as we can.

Over time, trucks should largely disappear from the highways and be used only for local delivery and for local delivery, they could run on electricity. The railroad should be the way that long distance freight

travels. I don't know about your world; but in the future, my world will not be in as much of a hurry as our world is now. Maybe we could hire some people to load and unload train cars instead of having everything so highly mechanized. I know that cost cutting and elimination of jobs is good for industry's bottom line, but it is not necessarily good for the rest of us. Where automation is used to improve quality and uniformity, that can be a good thing, but when it is used just to trim the payroll, not so good. I don't have much use for next day air delivery service simply because of the burden that it puts on the environment. Maybe people could take their kids fishing or go play golf while they wait a day or two for stuff to arrive. I see a need for a complete change in mind set as to what is important and what is not. Meeting commitments would be important, keeping busy all the time would be less important. Having time with family and time to enjoy life would be important, getting ahead would be less important. Do the math, not very many of us are going to join the 1% and be fabulously wealthy. It is also clear to me that we should not have to work as hard as we do just to get by. If a large part of our labor goes to someone else in the form of profit to the business, by sharing the wealth, we could get by nicely on much less work. That would leave us time for family and whatever else it is that we value.

Air travel was non-existent at the beginning of the last century; it has been grossly over applied. From an energy standpoint, air travel is a huge consumer of energy; if we are to attain self sufficiency as a nation and sustainability as a planet, we will need to drastically reduce energy consumption in the transportation sector. A small passenger jet burns enough fuel on take-off to move 200 tons of freight a thousand miles on the railroad. Air travel is some pretty low fruit for our energy diet. I would argue that there is no need at all for private jets. Individuals should simply not be allowed that kind of carbon footprint and we should not be polluting our upper atmosphere. Travel between destinations that have no ocean separating them should be on the ground. Ground transportation may take more time, but often, on shorter runs, it doesn't, particularly with the security circus that we have at our airports.

Water travel is an area of transportation that deserves review. I am certain that a lot of our intercontinental passenger traffic could be carried on the water instead of in the air, but I am also thinking that in the future we will place less of a premium on time. Getting there and back should be a pleasurable part of the travel experience. Why bustle through an airport and get on a plane to be uncomfortable for a number of hours to get across the ocean when you

could be pampered on a ship for a few days to accomplish the same goal.

Let's look at how our transportation system has evolved and improved during the course of the industrial revolution. We started carrying our cargo on our backs. The next development involved domesticating animals and we carried our freight on their backs. From here, we figured out how to attach some poles to our animals so that they could drag more than they can carry. While this was going on, some cargo was moving on the water by boat. When the wheel came into use, we could carry more cargo faster than we could by dragging. As we developed needs to carry more and more cargo from where the resources were to where we were, we started building a network of canals which allowed a mule or two to move a lot of cargo slowly from one place to another. Keep in mind here that what mules left behind on the path was picked up and used in people's gardens as fertilizer.

The next advancement was the railroad. In its infancy, the railroad moved similar amounts of cargo to what the canal boat moved, but it was faster. It also used wood or coal for fuel and put soot into the air and turned the areas adjacent to the railroads grey or black. When the railroad reached maturity and could efficiently move immense amounts of cargo long distances quickly, we started moving more and more freight by truck. This move to truck was generated by a

need for efficiency which was satisfied by loading a trailer at its origin and unloading it at its destination and eliminating a few jobs for the people who previously transferred cargo from the truck and into the railcar, then back to a truck. At this time, energy was cheap enough that no one really noticed a difference in transportation costs. Back then, it was cheaper to burn the fuel than to employ the people. Besides, it was the consumer and small businessman who bought retail, sold wholesale and paid the freight both ways. Now we have lots of cargo that is transported by air so that it gets to its destination very quickly and the cost of transportation has gone through the roof.

OK, so we have moved from canals that employed a lot of people moving cargo slowly with little cost to the environment, to railroads that employ fewer people to move more cargo at higher cost to the environment. We extended this advance to trucks that employ more people, but at much higher cost to the environment. Finally we put our cargo on jet aircraft where we can put more pollution up much higher in the atmosphere.

When we start looking at paths to sustainability, we should keep the above in mind because there are gains that can be had in simply selecting the mode of transportation that is most appropriate to the task at hand. I don't know what your experiences are, but I can recall numerous times where my employer insisted that I order materials or parts to be shipped next day air that

then sat on a shelf for six months or more before we actually used them in a project. This scenario is probably widespread and while shipping a box of screws or a package of documents on a less energy efficient mode than it needs does not create an unsustainable situation, if you multiply that box or package by a million and do it every day all over the world, that adds up to real cost, both financial and environmental. The argument that we will lose jobs in the process of following a more energy efficient path is simply wrong. We will lose some jobs in some sectors of the economy, but we will gain more jobs than we lose; we will still need people working, they will just be doing different kinds of stuff.

Coal

Coal. Just one word speaks volumes. Coal is the basis of our industrial civilization. It is really as simple as that. Sure, oil is also significant in our world, but oil and coal are basically the same thing, just solid and liquid forms of carbon compounds that nature put in long term storage and man is trying to get back into the air. Kind of like a global bank robbery of God's Bank while We the People either watch, help, or kick people's asses who get in the way. Hell, most of us are buying tickets in the grandstand to cheer as our standard of living and quality of life deteriorate.

Coal. We become emotional when coal or carbon is in the discussion. Clean Coal is ushering in a new future. Clean Coal. Tell that to a miner as he comes up out of the mine at the end of his shift. If he was mining clean coal he would be ready to pick up his date and go dancing; without wasting time to shower and change. Tell that to a housewife who lives downwind from a coal fired power plant. We all know though, that "clean coal" is really no more than an unlikely juxtaposition of two words strategically placed to make us feel good about fouling our planet.

Coal. The most extensively subsidized material on the planet. These subsidies come in the form of subsidy to the coal infrastructure going right back to the beginning of the industrial revolution. The canals first, then the railroads were heavily subsidized by the

provision of public land and public money in the form of grants and backing the bonds. The railroads biggest customer was and is coal. The rest of the subsidy comes as environmental subsidy when we allow coal to operate without cleaning up the mess that it makes. There are neighborhoods where you get cited and fined for not cutting your grass, but nobody seems to notice the soot and ash that constantly falls in our yards and on our roofs.

Whenever there is even a hint of a conversation on long term energy policy we are immediately threatened with a massive loss of jobs. Well, that won't happen, if for no other reason than the fact that there aren't that many mining jobs left. Mining has become a capital intensive mechanized industry. It was labor intensive at the turn of the last century. That is no longer the case. The industrial apologist think tanks that currently control American opinions are conglomerations of well paid wordsmiths defending the turf of coal and oil. They promote all kinds of nonsense that, on the surface, appears to make sense. It is only when you look beyond the glossy surface and actually think about it that most of their logic breaks down.

I don't deny that if we stopped mining coal tomorrow that our world would come to a screeching halt. But I don't hear anybody talking about immediate and instant stopping of coal production.

Right now, we have lots of coal fired power plants and those plants were built in a variety of eras and to a variety of environmental specifications. Generally, the newer plants are less polluting. If we were to set a goal of replacing coal with alternatives over the next fifty years, we could set a schedule of shutting down the dirtiest plants first and move towards the cleanest last. I don't deny that we might find ways to clean up emissions from coal fired plants; neither do I deny that we might need to keep some coal in our energy stable. I do believe that we need to make an effort to phase it out.

Politics

The Democrats and Republicans have done a great job of dividing us to the point that we don't even know where our real interest lies any more. We get stuck in the rut of thinking about abortion and taxes and war and immigration and religious freedom and the damn government. I agree that these are serious issues, but they are served up by politicians as a distraction to divide us at election time. The politicians speak passionately about these issues during their campaign, and then do nothing about them after the election.

We need to wake up and see that we, as citizens, have more in common with each other than most of us do with the ruling class. Regardless of what they have been saying when they ask for our vote, the politicians have been busy borrowing trillions of dollars against your and my future earnings and using that money to promote the goals of the Industrial Empire as though they were our own goals. It's time to fill the congress with Americans instead of Democrats and Republicans. And while we are at it maybe we should kick out the think tank based bureaucrats and lobbyists who have caused more problems than they could ever solve. It is time to get back to our roots of freedom and democracy. But this time around we must institute some policies to ensure that all Americans have a chance to participate in the American dream and that the dream continues for a long time.

Right now, the future is dictated by the economic interests that think they stand to gain the most by influencing the future to go their way and the rest of us have very little to do with directing our destiny. The future that they have chosen for us includes placing more emphasis on things than on people. The damage that we can inflict on our planet in the process is astounding. We constantly explore to find every ounce of our favorite materials so we can keep lots of people busy making and transporting lots of stuff that we don't really need. All the while, the stuff that we really do need is not available because nobody has the time to think it up.

Clearly Wall Street and Washington do not understand that by hoarding all the money on the supply side they are killing our economy. We need to create requirements that attention be given to the demand side so that we can revive our economy. It should be abundantly clear that our economy needs more than a government jobs program in order to pull out of its slump, although any jobs will probably help. An economy implies participation by everybody and the more participants and the more vigorous their participation, the more vibrant the economy. The current set of rules has too many people sidelined through no fault of their own.

The WPA, CCC and a variety of jobs programs helped get us past the Great Depression, but it wasn't until we

had full employment generated by the war that we had anything approaching a vibrant economy. Our approach to the environmental problems that loom should be looked at with a wartime mentality; this will generate the next strong economy.

The trap to avoid here is big businesses trying to get into the act with major engineering projects to remediate the environment. We are nowhere near a level of understanding that could justify major geo-engineering projects. We must understand that the industrial empire got us into the worldwide environmental mess that confronts us. We don't need a huge flurry of cleanup and remediation projects, at our expense that might help or might make things worse. That is attacking the symptoms. The Native Americans would consider what effect their actions would have seven generations into the future. Do a search on "seven generations" for more on this thought. We have not done that kind of deliberation in the past so we must start now. We have to go closer to the source of our problems in order to solve our problems. Our first priority is to reduce drastically, our overall consumption of energy. This should be done with conservation measures focused on residential and commercial structures. We also have to address energy consumption and environmental pollution in the transportation sector.

While we are implementing conservation measures, we will have Share the Wealth funds available to support an honest and unbiased assessment of what environmental damage we have actually sustained. As part of this assessment we can discuss which areas need active remediation and which areas will recover better if we leave them alone.

In our current economic climate, we are at the mercy of big business to effect the change that we need as a civilization and big business is very comfortable resisting change. By adopting Share the Wealth, the decision on how to best satisfy future energy requirements will be put in the domain of individuals and I truly believe that we can build a vibrant economy based on energy conservation and sustainability.

To get ourselves out of the economic doldrums we are in, we need to do a little tuning on the whole capitalist system. The capitalists and investors should be able to ply their trades in business, but for their own protection they should be required to share with their employees and with the shareholders. This being because employees are also customers and if customers are broke, business suffers. Even though this share the wealth plan is strictly between the employers and employees, it will fall on government to insure that rules are made and that the rules are followed by the business community. The days of the cozy relationship between government and business must end. We can

no longer afford to have business supporting politicians who funnel the wealth of the country back to business through tax breaks and subsidies. Maintaining our freedom and democracy is expensive and we all must pay our share.

There is a relationship between a business and its employees that must be understood. Without the company, the workers are struggling, but without the workers, the investors have nothing. We have attempted, by enacting a minimum wage, to address the demand side of the economy, but this approach has largely been a failure. As we increase minimum wage, the cost of living increases twice as fast fuelling an inflationary spiral. And the business community continues to post record profit. What I propose would carry no minimum wage requirement; it is based on the thought that business will pay their employees the going rate for people with the needed skills. Some businesses will pay their employees better than others, but at the end of the year, all public owned and foreign owned business will pay a bonus based on an even distribution of a fixed percentage of the profit. When business has a good year, the employees share the success, when times are not so good, the employees share the hardship. This will serve to end the nonsense that some employers try to pull by not giving meaningful bonuses or raises because the economy is bad enough that they can get away with it and have

their employees grumble but not walk. How bad can the economy actually be when business continues to post record profit while the rest of us suffer?

I believe that the TEA party people began their movement with their hearts in the right place and had their movement hijacked as fast as it started. As soon as the high powered speakers and television ad campaigns picked up their theme, their movement was doomed. They are seeing only part of the picture on how to get the country back on its feet. Simply lowering taxes on the very wealthy will not get us to where we need to be as a civilization, besides, we are all in this together and we all need to pay our fair share. I know that we look to the investors and business class for our livelihood, but coddling them is not providing us with benefit. They are taking our labor and not providing what we really need. Wall Street has turned into a casino where the wealthiest people gamble with our lives. This needs to stop.

Ideally, the business community would participate and facilitate the changes that we need, but if they don't see sufficient value then We the People need to take control as provided in the Constitution. The government needs to be an active participant in the distribution of profit in this country, but it should not be a party in that redistribution. It should be making the rules that facilitate the distribution of profit, not taking it and distributing it. Government should not be taking

money from successful people and businesses for the purpose of giving it to favored people and businesses through grants and tax breaks. The whole concept of using the tax code to encourage some activities and discourage others is flawed. By using tax code, we are assuming that the people who need to be encouraged or discouraged have enough money for a tax advantage to be an incentive. Then assuming that they do have enough money to act, are they acting because they expect benefit from the change, or are they just looking for a tax dodge. The other flaw in using tax code in this manner is that the people who really need to change their patterns and adopt the changes don't have enough money to do what is needed so tax breaks don't really have any effect on them anyway and consequently do not achieve the goal for which they were enacted. I think we might be much better off if we just use taxes to raise enough revenue to provide the services that we need for government to provide and use other forms of legislation or information to try to direct the flow of society. Who knows, if the 50% of Americans who don't pay tax had an income they might start paying. Don't ever think that people stay in poverty as a tax dodge.

What government should be doing is to require that in addition to paying a portion of profit as taxes, another portion will be shared with workers and stockholders. This would reward the workers who created the wealth and would also expand the tax base

by putting an enormous amount of money in people's hands and allow the economy some breathing room while we put our house in order. By requiring that education and R&D be unconditionally supported, we would remove barriers to innovation. I think of this as a structural adjustment to capitalism. If we really want the system to grow and evolve, we need to assure that we will have customers and that a good part of being a customer is tied up in whether or not the customer has the money to buy what we are selling. A customer with money comes to your store to buy. A customer without money regards your store as a museum.

The Free Market is only free in the words of the blathering TV economists who tell us about the infinite wisdom of the free market. This thought breaks down in the real world where there are people who have the power to manipulate markets, who use that power to manipulate those markets and rob the economy blind as a result of their manipulation. In addition to the free market nonsense, we are also bombarded with the privatization nonsense. Privatization of services is just a ploy to get money out of the pockets of taxpayers and into the pockets of favored freeloading business.

Our democratic political system is a good system as is our capitalist economic system. But both need some scrutiny to see what we could do to make them better. In the past, businesses were started with a vision for the future and that vision often included providing for the

needs of those workers who helped create the wealth. Somewhere along the line the businesses were taken into public ownership and the management was turned over to people whose only goal is to maximize the profit and growth of the company. They strive to increase “shareholder value” without actually sharing with the shareholders. This works well for the Wall Street Casino, but somehow, the people who actually built the companies got sidelined, and then cut out. These managers are the people who sell off divisions and move operations overseas while they cut pay and benefits to employees. Is the goal really to compete with the rest of the world or would we be better served if we focused on our own needs? There needs to be provision in the system to curtail some of the zeal of the money managers who think they are being productive while they tear our manufacturing base apart. We need to move from capitalism to an enlightened capitalism that understands that when a business goes public, it needs to have some rules applied to it that will ensure that its people will be treated well and that the value to America will be preserved. It can be a little unnerving to see major segments of our economy being bought by foreign interests and then managed in a manner that compromises our security as a nation. This is what happens when foreign business buys American business and moves the factories to China or Mexico. We not

only lose jobs, we also lose the ability to make the things that we used to make. This should be discouraged.

Some formula needs to be derived to find the sweet spot where business makes enough profit and at the same time the workers make enough income and the shareholders also receive enough dividends to keep the whole system going. At some point, we are going to need to slow down and refocus.. Government is not the problem, although there are lots of politicians and propagandists who publicly claim that it is. The problem is the cozy relationship between government and business. The politicians who claim that government is the problem are struggling with a budget that is out of control. They are trying to solve the budget problem without addressing the fundamental issues that have caused the problem.

We can no longer afford to be fighting multiple wars in a variety of theaters all over the world. It is time to bring our troops home and put in place a plan for national defense that does not include foreign adventure. We have no business sending troops overseas without a specific declaration of war by congress. If congress is not willing to make a specific declaration of war, troops should not be sent.

Look at the word government, it is rooted in the word govern which means regulate which is all it should be doing. But regulate means regulate and that means create rules and enforce them. This requires

that people be employed and paid at taxpayer expense to see to it that the rules are followed. If rules are bad rules, they should be changed.

The time for change is now and the focus of the change must be on We the People. We cannot let another ten years get behind us. I'm telling you, now it's time to run; please, don't miss this starting gun.

Constitution

What is the constitution and what does it mean? Is it a blueprint or a plan? Or is it just a concept? Is it a correct application of the principles of freedom and democracy to stack the Supreme Court with ideologues who have no clue as to the meaning of freedom and democracy? I think the constitution is more than a rigid document where we look and try to find language that might let us get away with the kind of nonsense that we are trying to get away with. What are we really trying to do here? Are we trying to preserve the world of the founding fathers or are we trying to preserve the ideals of the founding fathers? The constitution says what it says and we can find authorities to narrowly interpret every word and line based on what someone thinks that the founding fathers meant and how to apply that to situations that the founding fathers could have never imagined. The constitution also means what it means and what it means is freedom and democracy. Ask yourself what was going on when we revolted against the crown. There was a beginning of upward mobility in American society and there was a majority who believed that we could do just fine alone, so off we went. Our system allowed people to prosper, then suffer, then prosper, then suffer, and now we are just in another suffering cycle and trying to figure out how to get past it. The last time we got out of it, we put in place all kinds of government programs that did get us out of it,

but we have consequences going into the future. The last few times we have had dips in the economy; we have put in place policies that have tended to push the next valley a little deeper, then deeper and deeper. We are in a place now where we have to make some decisions on what we want our country to look like going into the future. Do we want to continue making economic valleys deeper, or do we want to find a way to smooth the graphs out a little? Part of this equation is to look at how the constitution is to be interpreted because the constitution vests all the power with We the People.

Capitalism is a good system, but it needs some adjustment. About two thirds of the after tax profit should be distributed to the employees and shareholders in the form of a tax free bonus in the first quarter of each year. This would be the foundation of a vibrant sustainable economy. And it would leave an economy that is awash in money. This would create jobs and tax revenues to sustain whatever it is that we decide the role of government should be.

I favor a role for government that protects the rights of all citizens and provides protection for all citizens, but is not particularly intrusive into the lives of individuals. I believe that government should be involved in supervising industry in such a manner that industry serves the people instead of dominating us. I don't blame industry for trying to dominate; I just don't

believe that we should allow that to continue. It is in the mutual interest of We the People and of them the industrialists and bankers that we have more sharing.

Let's be ultra clear here. I am not proposing a tax, I am not proposing an increase to the minimum wage and I am not proposing giving anything to anybody who does not deserve it. Neither am I proposing taking anything from anybody or any business that they already have. This would be a "Share the Wealth" plan. It would take effect at a chosen point in time and would serve to distribute money to people based on the current profit that they helped create. Individuals or businesses that have cash reserves would not be required to share those reserves, this would only affect profit as it is made. If there are losses incurred, there would be no bonus paid that year. This only would affect current profit and that, only from very large business and foreign owned business. Small businesses would benefit from this plan as well because there would be a lot more money available for people to purchase their goods and services. It would kick hundreds of billions to trillions of dollars into the hands of hard working Americans who would use that money to build whatever kind of future they want. Business would continue to pay their employees whatever they are paying now, the only change would be that at the end of each year, big business would be required to evenly distribute a share of their profit to their workers

in the form of a tax free bonus because this bonus would be paid after the business paid taxes on it and double taxation of the same money is wrong. The purpose of this plan is to get money into the hands of people and further reduction would be counterproductive. In addition, there would be a requirement that distributions be paid to shareholders. This plan would actually allow the government to lower tax rates and increase revenue by virtue of the fact that the distributed money would not be hiding in the huge variety of shelters any more. It would be out in the open and moving around the economy and every time it changes hands, it would support the aspirations of Americans and help pay for the cost of our freedom.

Goals

The goal is no longer to get more of everything faster than ever before. The goal is no longer to grow as big as possible. The new goal is to get enough and to have enough so that nobody is in need. The new goal is to establish ourselves as a self sufficient country populated by self sufficient people. Then we will be able to trade with anybody, anywhere, from a position of strength.

The next big thing is not a high tech advancement and it will not have anybody going "WOW". The next big thing will require a lot of work on the part of all Americans. The next big thing is energy conservation and we have to realize this going into our new era of shared prosperity. This thought is nothing new, there are lots of people who have been advocating this for years and the people who have had the power to do anything about it have not been listening.

Now that people are taking to the streets in frustration over the mess that the people on top have made, it is time to, again, point out the need for conservation. Back when the financial meltdown started under the watch of President Bush and factories started closing in large numbers, I was actually encouraged because I saw that as an opportunity to get this country going towards a cleaner future of using less energy. The technical aspects of this revolution that did not happen are quite simple. You think about

conservation, then you design something that will accomplish the particular aspect of conservation that you were thinking about, then you make that thing, then you install and use it. If it works as well as you had originally hoped, you make some more and sell them to your neighbors. Or you could simply publish the design and let your neighbors do their own energy conservation.

Share the Wealth could exponentially accelerate the process of reducing our need for energy by funding education and R&D with no strings attached. Wall Street and the energy companies will not be able to block this conservation movement if there is funding available that is beyond their control and that is one of the goals of this proposal – to put all of us beyond their control.

Back at the dawn of the financial meltdown, I was feeling optimistic because there were shuttered factories that could have easily been converted to make the kind of hardware that would be useful in energy conservation and remediation. As I thought about it more, I started to get discouraged because in spite of the need, there was no money available to implement any of what I was thinking about, so my thoughts remained thoughts.

Our national cheerleaders have been busy on TV chanting “drill baby drill” and lucky us, we have a few jobs drilling in North Dakota now. Many of the

shuttered plants in the mid-west are still sitting there shuttered. We could generate full employment all across the country by preparing for self sufficiency. But this can only happen if we make a commitment to get the job done and if we go into it with the understanding that we are building a new world where we will be doing a lot of things for ourselves and consequently our needs for money and things and jobs will be reduced in this future.

Now that people are taking to the streets and I am proposing "Share the Wealth". It is time to take the thought a step further. As the Occupy Wall Street movement gains traction and if the American people like this "Share the Wealth" thought, then maybe we could lean on congress to do something for We the People just this once. If congress continues to stand against the American people on this issue as they do on most issues, we do have an opportunity to throw out the entire House, a third of the Senate, and the President in November 2012. This could be a unique form of revolution called an election and if you don't participate, you lose your right to bitch about the outcome.

This time around, I might suggest that simply replacing Democrats with Republicans or replacing Republicans with Democrats is not the answer because those people just don't get it. I could argue that anybody who can raise a few million dollars to drop on

a campaign for public office is not the kind of person that we want holding that office, but you already know that. In the last few election cycles, there have been shifts in the makeup of both chambers. After the elections are over and we get past the bad taste in our mouth from having elected whoever it is that we elected, we have had to listen to the new office holder talking like we voted him in because we liked him. Most of these clowns got voted in because the other guy was known to be detestable and they were unknown. In this next election cycle, there might be a need for massive write-in campaigns. We the People will need to find local people whom we respect and send them to Washington to do what clearly needs to be done. This is going to have to happen through social networks and write-in ballots. I would be very surprised to see our current cast of Washington characters do anything that benefits anybody but themselves.

If we can get congress to act and put some of the money that we make into our hands, then we will be able to do what we need to do in terms of energy conservation and remediation of our inefficient structures. Our biggest problem in pursuing conservation all along has been that there is no money available to follow any avenue towards conservation or energy self sufficiency. The kind of change that we need is not in the realm of the government. It is in the realm of the people. There is a small but very vocal group of

businessmen who oppose government involvement in conservation; actually they oppose anybody's involvement in conservation although they don't seem to mind grabbing funds for research into advanced energy production systems. This approach does little to reduce our need for energy; it just shifts where it comes from. We still waste too much energy and pay too much for the privilege of wasting what we waste.

I tend to agree with the people who feel that the government should not be making the decisions as to what direction the conservation movement should go, but the government will need to help when we need regulatory roadblocks lifted from our path. The conservation movement is a general direction, not a specific destination. I say this because the specifics of conservation will almost certainly turn out to be regional or even local. There is a small and currently rather quiet group of radical centrists who will take the lead in moving to sustainability.

If this "Share the Wealth" plan is adopted, lots of people will have lots of money available for conservation, but it will still be up to them to decide what to do with that money. I hold no illusion that everyone will choose to invest in conservation and self sufficiency, but at least, now there will be money available and it will fall on the back yard entrepreneurs to start providing the solutions to our energy problems that are not being provided by big business. Maybe

during the twenty-teens conservation will be as cool as hot cars and surfing were during the sixties. We are going to need that kind of energy to make this happen. Ten years from now, when energy becomes ridiculously expensive, there will be lots of people who will have invested in sustainable living and they will be doing quite well. There will also be lots of people who will have a yard full of broken mechanical toys and they might be struggling.

Whatever happened to people just working for a living and having time for their families? Or what about those of us who need two incomes to get by? How does that dovetail in with “family values”? What I am looking for in an economy is one where I can give a lot fewer hours to the Industrial Empire in order to cover my needs. Actually I would be happier giving nothing to the empire and all of my time to a local economy.

What are the economic ramifications of allowing owner/builders a free hand to build their own homes? If a person who is paying \$500 a month in rent can scrape up an extra \$500 and go to the big box building center they can get materials to put up some kind of shack and cut their rent to nothing by squatting in a vacant lot. We have enough poor people around the country, shanty towns would not be particularly out of place. Who cares if the shack falls down in a year? This person has saved \$6,000 in rent during that year and if they haven't spent the money foolishly supporting a

variety of local business, they have enough to build a better shack the next time around. They have probably learned a few lessons in construction, insulation, and weatherproofing. Maybe they are smart enough to notice during their year of living on the edge that the sun comes up in certain areas and that it can warm the shack in the morning and by middle afternoon the shack is overheating if windows are exposed to that part of the sun's daily transit. These might be the people who lead us into a future where energy is used wisely because they can't afford to and don't even have the facility to just slop on a few more kilowatts when they get cold or hot in their shack. These people will be learning the lessons that aren't taught in our colleges and universities today and these kinds of people will lay the foundation of the regional architectures that we desperately need. Under current law in most jurisdictions this would be illegal so we might need to make a few adjustments to the law. What I am talking about here is taking the power back from them and making it work for us.

This is part and the manner of the path to the future that I am talking about. At our immediate point in history, wages are either stagnant or down and the cost of everything is up. To compound that situation, it is largely illegal for us to do anything about it. Zoning limits what we can do and where. Building codes limit how we go about doing what we need to do. Health

regulations further limit our flexibility in pursuing happiness. Are the above factors necessarily a bad thing? No, they all evolved to protect us from unscrupulous business interests, but they have been manipulated by those interests into a system that perpetuates that which was supposed to be held in check.

It is time to step back and re-evaluate a lot of our ways of doing things. Perhaps doing something like a nationwide kaizen study, where we would take a serious look at exactly what we really have and evaluate it in terms of where we want to go, might be in order. There has been remarkably little planning or direction in our development. Or if there is planning and direction, it has been in the back room and needs to come out into the light for scrutiny.

I really don't like tearing anything down until there is something better to replace it and this goes more for social structures than it does for physical structures. This is where the concept of soft landing comes in. If we wait for the present system to fall apart, the replacement might be a lot worse than what we have and I expect that there are powerful interests that are hoping for a crash so that they can provide and enforce their alternative. We have our work cut out for us. We have a lot of laws and regulations that we need to evaluate and either maintain, modify, or eliminate. This needs to take the form of many, many community

dialogues where decisions will be made as to where we want our communities to be seven generations in the future. It will not be easy, but it must be done, because if we don't do it ourselves someone else will do it for us and it is not likely that we will be pleased with what they impose.

This could work if people on the local level can get together and discuss topics on a planned agenda to reach specific conclusions as to what they need and what they don't need from the variety of programs that are offered by government. Programs that are useful in some regions might not be needed in others and we as a society need to know this, but we need to hear it from our local citizens, not from think tanks that are trying to perpetuate insanity. When conclusions are reached, they need to get to our elected representatives and our elected representatives need to start listening to us and stop listening to the lobbyists for the special interests.

Keep in mind that while this process goes on, there will be powerful forces for the status quo trying to derail a lot of it and influence the rest. The forces of division will work hard to have their way and if America is to prosper going into the future, the forces of cooperation have to prevail. Keep this in the front of your thinking – the forces of cooperation must prevail. Before we dig in our heels on a point we have to ask ourselves if other ways might not work as well. The goal of the discussion is to develop a system that better

suits the needs of our society as a whole. This might shake out to a variety of regional or local solutions. What works in one community might not work in another. Just remember that when the fear mongers threaten us with a loss of jobs, they are referring to jobs working for them. They are scared to death of us creating jobs working for us. Have no fear of losing jobs working for them. All their positions are already full anyway and when they can cut more they certainly will as part of their cost cutting program. Their cost cutting will continue until they wither and die.

Change will happen when the people on the right and left discover that we have more in common with each other than we have in common with the people who create the various brands of bullshit that keep us divided. Understand that the forces that currently prevail don't care if America survives or not, as long as they stay on top.

Do we want a government that is always busy doing things for us, or do we want a government that simply protects our interests as individuals. This would mean protecting the rights of individuals over those of greedy organizations. No matter how you try to justify it, we cannot allow the kind of accumulation of wealth at the top that we have been allowing, and we cannot continue to allow the exit of our wealth into foreign bank accounts. The founding fathers rebelled against foreign ownership as much as anything and we have allowed

foreign owners to not only own our business and siphon off the wealth of our people, we have allowed them to buy off our institutions of government and use that control to tax us to subsidize them.

For those who are angry over the actions and expense of “the government” there are a few points that deserve consideration:

1) The Government doesn’t do anything or spend anything unless a majority of the House approves, nobody in the Senate objects, and the President finds it acceptable.

2) The House, Senate and President don’t do much without consulting the “stakeholders” through their lobbyists.

3) The “stakeholders” who bestow their largess upon the politicians, using the lobbyists as their middlemen, are capitalists.

It is time to redirect our anger from “the government” toward the capitalists who have created the mess that we are in. Again, my words are not intended to be an attack on capitalism as a system. My intention is to point out that while there are capitalists who behave responsibly and work for the benefit of society, there are also capitalists who through their behavior give the rest of their caste a bad name. What we need is to make some systemic corrections that will restore the good name of capitalism and provide a

strong foundation to support our economy and our country moving into a sustainable future.

My perfect world would use the sun and wind and earth and community to keep me warm, fed, and entertained. Your perfect world might not look the same, but there is room for all of us and all of our views. For me to be right, you don't have to be wrong.

The corporate world is populated by dinosaurs. Our capitalist system has been growing and evolving in an environment where the set of controls that were designed to assure its health have been gutted, discarded, or ignored. The system has promoted and insisted on its right to go on a fast food diet of quintuple burgers and double super sized fries with a gallon vanilla shake. I would have no real objection to these entities making themselves sick other than the fact that their sickness infects all the rest of us and that does not promote a healthy civilization. The American business scene going forward will be populated by more numerous, but smaller businesses and rules will be institutionalized that will discourage conglomeration into large entities. In a world where America is self sufficient and a large proportion of our citizens are self sufficient, there is no real gain in being able to dominate on the world stage. We should be able to play on the world stage, but on our terms.

We are dependent on large business entities for our jobs and for our housing and for our transportation and

for our food and for our water and whether we think about it or not, even for the air we breathe. It is time to step back and apply triage to the system because it is suffering from the equivalent of a heart attack. Think of a requirement to share the wealth as economic defibrillation. It will shock the system back to life long enough for us to take an objective look at what we need to do going into the future to get our ecosystem healthy and to put our American economy back in a position of long term strength.

What I am proposing is a system involving social responsibility, where we, as individuals, should make our own decisions and control our destinies. We should not have state bureaucratic structures controlling our lives. Neither should we have our lives controlled by insurance clerks, or bank clerks, or credit bureau clerks. I find it interesting that current propaganda would lead so many Americans to object violently to even the thought of bureaucrats telling them how to live, but have no similar objection to clerks running their lives. My thought of requiring big business to share the wealth directly with their employees in the form of tax free bonus would accomplish the goal of a jump start for the future. The people gain without money going through the government filter. As an offshoot of this plan, ultimately there would be a lot more money circulating among the people and even with lower tax rates, there would be more revenue available for

maintaining and improving our infrastructure and providing for our defense.

The 18 to 30 demographic has the power to accomplish this kind of change. This demographic generally has poor attendance at the polls but if they were to exhibit good attendance at the polls this time, they could swing the election results to something that would cause a quantum shift in reality.

Change is coming whether we are ready or not. Our lives will improve if we can anticipate this change and prepare for it, or our lives could get much worse if we refuse to heed our clear warnings.