

ECONEWS #189

A monthly newsletter funded by your donations that dreams of a world blessed by the harmony of nature, the pleasures of community, and the joys of personal fulfillment, guided and protected by our active citizenship.

A very big thankyou to Anita Galitzine, Sonya Young, Robert Thompson & Anna Escher, Jim & Marie Bohlen, Freya Keddie, Mallory & Ralph Pred, Jan Steinman & Carol Wagner, Derek & Judy Spearing, Hugo Suttmoller, Margaret Hantiuk, Riki Vogt, Paul & Marie von Baich, & Doreen Hynd.

<i>The Money</i>	Dec/Jan	Feb	March
Copies printed	1700	1700	1750
Sent by email	2999	3005	3020
Print, postage	\$680	\$826	\$850
Editorial	\$450	\$450	\$450
Donations	\$1814	\$438	You?
Advertising	\$0	\$120	
Balance	\$2762	\$2044	

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\$1 a word. maximum 5 lines. Non-profits and low-income free. 1" box ad \$50.

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* Check out our heritage house for sale, Oak Bay border - good deal on a great house. www.bytheowner.com/117266

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SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE

On May 12th we get to vote for a new system of voting in BC. Under the present system, governments are being elected by a minority of the electorate, with the result that the majority of the voting population is perpetually sulky, angry, or irritated, because their views are not being represented. No wonder there's so much cynicism and bitterness in our politics. On May 12th we can change this by voting YES to the Single Transferable Vote. To be a successful persuader, every supporter must be able to explain the STV system in less than 2 minutes - KISS: Keep it Simple, Stupid. So here's the essence of STV in three easy steps:

1. **Fewer Ridings, more MLAs per Riding.** BC will have 20 ridings instead of 79, and each will have between 2 and 7 MLAs. BC will still have 79 MLAs.

2. **You vote for as many candidates as you want, ranking them in order.** You can vote for just one, or for several.

3. **Second and third choices are also counted.** The vote-count is done in rounds, and after each round the candidate with the fewest votes is removed. When a voter selects a candidate who is eliminated, their second choice vote is counted. This continues until the clear winners emerge.

To help you be persuasive in your dinner-table discussions, here are:

Ten Reasons Why STV Makes Sense

1. The Citizens Assembly that recommended STV was created by a unanimous vote of the BC Legislature.
2. After studying many possible ways of voting, the members of the Citizens Assembly chose STV by a 95% margin.
3. STV is very simple: you put a "1" by your first choice of candidate, and rank more candidates if you want to.
4. More women get elected under STV (50% more in Australia), and people from minorities stand a much better chance of being elected.
5. Voting does not require a computer, unless you want to tally the votes faster.
6. Under STV, almost no votes are wasted. 90% of voters will see one of their choices elected, compared to less than 50% in the current system.

7. STV does not cause more minority governments. It causes more coalition majority governments. This creates more respect, since parties need the support of other parties to form a government.

8. In most Ridings, voters will elect MLAs from different parties, giving them a choice of who they can turn to.

9. STV will encourage less negative campaigning, because parties may need to cooperate to form a government.

10. STV does not encourage the election of fringe candidates. Each candidate will need around 20,000 votes out of 100,000 to be elected – and if they have that much support they deserve to be elected.

To learn more, go to www.stv.ca, where you can volunteer to help – and help is really needed as we approach May 12th. In the Capital Area Riding, call Philip Symons, 250-592-6484. In the Mid-Island (Malahat to Qualicum), email Jordan Ellis: jordan.ellis@stv.ca. In the North Island/Sunshine Coast, email Jamie Deith: jamie.deith@stv.ca.
Facebook: www.tinyurl.com/7f5h6m

The Zero- Mile Diet

12 Steps to Sustainable Homegrown Food Production

with Carolyn Herriot

March to Oct 2009 \$45/step
[www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/
Zero_Mile_Diet.htm](http://www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/Zero_Mile_Diet.htm)

CARBON FOOTPRINTS

President Obama is using the term – so we'd best get used to it! In Britain, the British Standards Institute, The Carbon Trust and the government have launched a new standard that provides a consistent way of measuring the greenhouse gases associated with any goods or services, from the cradle to the grave. The new standard (PAS 2050) has been piloted with 75 product ranges; one of its purposes is to encourage other companies to find ways to reduce a product's footprint. The effort involved almost 1,000 industry experts from the UK and internationally, and covers everything from cosmetics to cottage pies, and will lend itself to carbon-labeling for everyday products and services. See www.carbon-label.com and www.bsigroup.com/pas2050

Here are some examples, measured in CO2e (carbon dioxide equivalent):

Men's large white T-shirt: 650 gm
100% orange juice: 360 gm per 250ml
Potatoes: 160 gm per 250 gm serving
Men's medium black hoodie: 2.8 kg
Canada would do well to emulate, since this will soon catch on globally.

CUPE's ECO-BARGAINING

CUPE (the Canadian Union of Public Employees) is giving the other unions a run for their credibility by creating green clauses that CUPE Local branches can insert into their collective agreements. These include clauses on such things as CO2 reductions, energy efficiency, car-sharing, public transit passes, green cleaning products and establishing workplace environment committees. "Unions have always tried to make living conditions better for workers. Taking on climate change to improve the environmental health of the planet is another way unions can enhance workers' lives." www.cupe.ca

OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP

If you walk, run, or cycle along our rural roads, you know how much litter there is – mostly junk food containers, tossed from passing cars. Operation Clean Sweep coordinates a Canada-wide clean-up on April 20-26, and anyone can register a group to take part – the deadline is March 15th. www.pitch-in.ca

SHARED WORLD INVESTMENT

If you want to invest in financial sanity, there is no better place than the Citizens Bank Shared World Term Deposit, which provides microcredit to the world's poorest people to help them start their own small businesses. It pays 2%, higher than a comparable one-year term deposit at Canada's big banks. The deadline for RSPs is March 2nd – and it qualifies as a Tax Free Savings Account. Click on www.tinyurl.com/2n43kd

GLOBAL ZERO

The time we are living in is exceptional, and it is totally appropriate to dust off biggest dreams, starting with total nuclear disarmament. For the past 18 years, the issue has been asleep. That all changed in December with the launch of Global Zero, dedicated to achieving the elimination of all nuclear weapons. The meeting was attended by 100 leading people including Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, and former key people from India and Pakistan. In July, Barack Obama told a large crowd in Berlin "This is the moment to begin the work of seeking the peace of a world without nuclear weapons", and in September, Russia's Vladimir Putin said that it would be better "to close this Pandora's box". The group wants to collect as many signatures as possible, so please sign on at www.globalzero.org.

BAN CLUSTER BOMBS

And then there are those awful cluster bombs which release hundreds of smaller bomblets, many of which fail to go off. They were used in Kosovo, Iraq, and most recently by Israel in Gaza. A third of all the casualties are children, and 60% of people are injured while going about their normal activities. In May 2008, 95 nations signed a global treaty to ban their current design (including Canada and the UK, but not the US, Russia, or Israel). 30 ratifications are needed urgently for the treaty to become international law. Please urge Canada to sign – see www.stopclustermunitions.org and click on "Take Action".

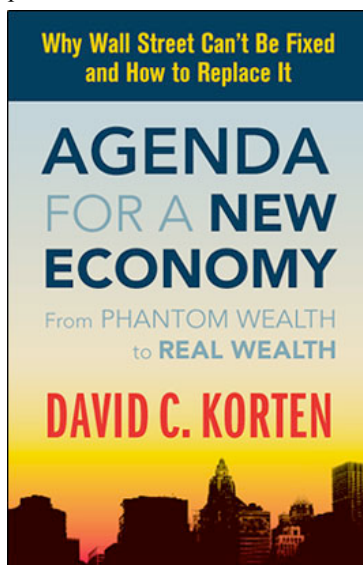
AGENDA FOR A NEW ECONOMY

Right on the heels of the economic crisis, like a publisher's dream, comes *Agenda for a New Economy: from Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth*, by David Korten (Berrett-Koehler). Korten has spent his life working to make the global economy more people-centered, and his knowledge and experience is assembled into this one short book. As the cover story shows, the collapse of the global

economy has created an enormous and historic opportunity. It is capitalism's equivalent of the fall of the Berlin Wall, for communism.

Subtitled *Why Wall Street Can't Be Fixed and How to Replace It*, Korten's Agenda contains 12 core points:

1. *Redirect the focus of economic policy from growing phantom wealth to growing real wealth.* This means abandoning GDP as the way we measure wealth, and adopting instead social, environmental and real wealth indicators that measure the progress towards happiness, social justice, and ecological sustainability that the vast majority of people want.



2. *Recover Wall Street's unearned profits, and assess fees and fines to make Wall Street theft and gambling unprofitable.* Treat it like a criminal syndicate, and legislate against selling, insuring, or borrowing against an asset you don't really own. Impose a 0.25% tax on every sale of a financial instrument, and use the income of \$100 billion income for public purposes.

3. *Implement full-cost market pricing as a fundamental market principle.* Eliminate corporate welfare, and build in costs for ecological and environmental health damages (such as the carbon tax).

4. *Reclaim the corporate charter.* Only issue charters to corporations that serve a well-defined public purpose; revoke the charter of any corporation that consistently violates the law; end all corporate involvement in elections; and end all tax-breaks for lobbying work.

5. *Restore national economic sovereignty.* Renegotiate global trade agreements that give global corporations the right to own and operate in other countries without regard to that country's laws.

6. *Rebuild communities with a goal of achieving local self-reliance in meeting basic needs.* Create strong incentives for each community to live within its environmental means. Here my space runs out, so just the summary:

7. *Implement policies that create a strong bias in favour of human-scale businesses owned by local stakeholders.*

8. *Facilitate and fund stakeholder buyouts to democratize ownership.*

9. *Use tax and income policies to favour the equitable distribution of wealth and income.*

10. *Revise intellectual property rules to facilitate the free sharing of information and technology.*

11. *Restructure financial services to serve Main Street.*

12. *Transfer to the federal government the responsibility for issuing money.*

"Now is the hour. We have the power to turn this world around for the sake of ourselves and our children. We are the ones we have been waiting for." To obtain your copy of David's book, go to www.davidkorten.org/NewEconomyBook

ACTION OF THE MONTH CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

There is a hugely important global conference in Dec 2008 in Copenhagen, when a new treaty will replace the Kyoto treaty which expires in 2012. We need a 40% reduction in emissions below 1990 by 2020, but the benchmark for success is being set at 25%. Canada's current goal is only 6% below 1990, and the US goal is to return to the 1990 level (0% below).

To put pressure on Canada, the NDP has re-introduced its Climate Change Accountability Act (Bill C-377), calling for Canada to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2020 (below 1990), and 80% by 2050, with interim targets for 2015 - 2045.

The Bill was unanimously supported by the NDP, Liberals, and Bloc when it was introduced in 2006, but never received royal assent. Now it is back again, and we must apply all the pressure we can to persuade Stephen Harper to go along with it.

Action 1: Write to Stephen Harper, urging him to support the bill.

Action 2: Make a list and then approach five well-known people or organizations who might send a similar letter.

The Rt. Hon Stephen Harper, Office of the Prime Minister, 80 Wellington St, Ottawa K1A 0A2. pm@pm.gc.ca