

“Is Karl Rove among the Eco-Terrorists and are they at Clam Beach?”

by Tim McKay

Victor T. Schaub 2nd Annual Memorial Lecture on Local Politics, Humboldt State University Department of Government and Politics, September 7, 2005

First let me say that it is a great honor for me to be asked by Sondra Schaub and the Political Science Department to speak here tonight. Victor Schaub was a gentle and powerful presence among a handful of special people I call communitarians who helped Arcata and Humboldt County transition from the old-growth timber economy of the past into a community poised to be on the cutting edge of a sustainable future.

Others who took up the challenge and helped to create the Humboldt County of today include: Sarah and Tom Parsons, Dan Hauser, Alex Stillman, Julie Fulkerson and many others. Wes Chesbro should be mentioned on this list. Wes advises against making such lists because someone is inevitably left off and feels excluded.

A complete list would be voluminous because the region has been blessed with so many committed, dedicated, hard working and nurturing people.

Well it's safe to speak tonight because the Eco-Terrorists are all at Clam Beach, well some of them might be at the Clam Beach Inn-- It's hard to keep track of them after all, because it appears that Republican Spin Doctors like Karl Rove almost entirely control their whereabouts.

With that said we'll get back to those devious E-T's and Clam Beach later on.

My allusion to national spin doctor prime, Karl Rove is a pointer to the necessary thinking and discussion that we need to have regarding the fate and future of community with the context of larger history and our nexus to state and federal policies.

I alluded to the fact that Arcata and Humboldt County are *poised* to be on the cutting edge of a sustainable future, but in a different turn we could go down the different path where the leaders in developing the global future could be in India, China, Japan, Germany or even Spain, with the United States being left by the side of the road.

I want to come back to that, but I feel a need to fill-in some of the history that brought us to this place and time in Humboldt County.

One of the several challenges we face to repair our leaking ship of state is to a better job at teaching our history. Nat Hentoff wrote

in a recent column,. among other things, that 91 percent of eighth grade student surveyed in a recent poll couldn't list two issues that were important in causing the Civil War! Hentoff goes on to quote David McCullough who says "You can't be a full participant in our democracy if you don't know our history." (1)

With that said, this is one of the last places in North America to be invaded or settled by Euro-Americans. Prior to the discovery of gold, the northwestern part of what is now California was little visited by Euro-Americans. The Redwood Coast and Klamath-Siskiyou Region was already settled by the Wiyot, Hupa, Yurok, Tolowa and Karuk people and other Indian tribes (2).

These tribes developed a complex material and spiritual culture based in no small part on the wealth created by the several runs of abundant salmon that occurred in the North Coast Rivers and streams (3).

After contact with Euro-American settlers the lives of the indigenous peoples changed with varying degrees of disaster. Smaller tribes that occupied the bald hills or prairies that stretched southward from Redwood Creek first saw the rather sedentary Roosevelt elk they lived with and on killed off by market hunters feeding the wave miners that moved into to places like Orleans and north along the Klamath to Happy Camp.

Commercial centers to supply the interior mining endeavors sprang up at Trinidad, Arcata and Crescent City. Arcata became one of the more enduring hubs of the pack train trade supplying sites on the Klamath and Trinity Rivers.

After the elk were gone, the new settlers drove domesticated cattle on to the prairies where destitute tribes bereft of their elk preyed upon them to survive.

These Indians by and large did not survive. In the early 1860s the depredations of settlers against the Indians were particularly epitomized by the Indian Island Massacre. On February 25, 1860 more than 200 Wiyot Indians were killed, largely while they slept, in coordinated attacks by whites around Humboldt Bay and in the Eel River Valley.

Most of the victims were on Indian Island, where traditional ceremonies had been under way for a week. The Island had been sold one settler to German immigrant Robert Gunther on February 22 (4).

This past came into the present when I served a brief stint on the Humboldt State Associated Students Legislative Council in the late 1960s. I recall that a group came to the council asking for it to support of a resolution asking the U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] to change the name of Gunther Island back to Indian Island.

This is one of few memories from my Legislative Council experience. A Humboldt student, a young woman who had grown up in Eureka, and who may have been a council member whined, "They were only diggers!"

The derogatory epithet "digger" came from the digging stick that many California Indians used to dig the roots and bulbs of plants that were used for medicine, food or basket making.

The Humboldt student council, and several other local bodies, passed the resolution, and in 1970 the USGS reinstated the name Indian Island. Recently the Wiyot Tribe, after years of hard work and successful organization have reclaimed most of the island though purchase or negotiated gift.

I believe that much of the racism that existed in the Humboldt Bay area towards the Indian people is in the past, but my Indian colleagues aren't so sure.

As recently as 2001 a drunken band of whites shot up the town of Chiloquin, Oregon near the headwaters of the Klamath River, hollering for the "Sucker lovers come out and fight" [A reference to the two sacred sucker fish of the Klamath Tribes that are now on the Endangered Species Act's list of endangered species].

Another historical monument to racism in the Humboldt Bay Region was the expulsion of the Chinese from Humboldt County.

The Chinese were brought to California to build the Transcontinental Railroad, and they also worked in the mines. Anti-Chinese sentiment also festered in some of California's early labor organizations.

After a shooting incident in Eureka in 1885, the entire Chinese community was rounded up put on barge and shipped out to San Francisco.

Chinese and Japanese people moving into the area in the post World War II era encountered prejudicial and curious stares (5).

Ironically, a Chinese company recently purchased the Samoa Pulp Mill on Humboldt Bay.

Mining for gold was in decline by the 1880s but persisted well into the 20th century, and it is vestigial today with small scale suction dredgers maintaining a recreational industry.

With the exception of a growing redwood industry around Humboldt Bay, much of the region remained in a time warp. A common phrase in Humboldt History reflecting this, and I don't know where or when it originated, is: "No law north of the Mad River, and no God north of the Klamath."

Humboldt County was the setting for a land scandal in the 1880s in which dummy entry men were enlisted to apply for timberland under the federal Timber and Stone Act. Tens-of-

thousands of acres of prime old growth redwoods were consolidated and transferred to corporate timber interests. Legal challenges to the frauds were rebuffed, but one low level functionary did time in a federal penitentiary for perjury.

Early efforts to turn redwoods into lumber were impeded by their sheer size. Innovations in steam technology and milling changed that. As the timber industry grew after 1900 and through World War I and up to the Great Depression, immigrants of various ethnicities came to work in the woods and mills.

Efforts to organize labor here and elsewhere in the Western U.S. were initiated by the Industrial Workers of the World [IWW] and others. The timber barons resisted unionization by populating their work forces with immigrants of one ethnic group or the other and other techniques.

Unions became widespread in the industry anyway. Labor relations were generally peaceful. One deadly exception was a confrontation between strikers and the Eureka police at the Holmes Lumber Company in 1935 that left several people dead. A plaque in the present day Bayshore Mall commemorates the site of the tragedy (6).

Humboldt's isolation was breached primarily by ship. Crossings of the bar on Humboldt Bay were often harrowing or deadly. The

prevailing northwest winds of spring and summer could also make a boat trip from San Francisco a long a tortuous affair. The jetties to the entrance of the bay represent the oldest and most enduring federally funded project.

Changes came to transportation and access with the completion of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad to Humboldt Bay in 1914 and the long rise of the Redwood Highway.

The founding of the Save-the-Redwoods League [SRL] in 1918 signalled that the stately old growth coast redwoods that so captured the human imagination would not be around forever. The League adopted a strategy of acquiring superlative groves for preservation along the Redwood Highway. Redwood saving efforts culminated in the creation and expansion of Redwood National Park in 1968 and 1978 and the acquisition of the "Headwaters Grove" in March of 1999.

Though most of Humboldt's historical isolation workers found that they had to be ingenious to make a living. Redwood markets were specialized and fluctuated depending on whether there was a recession, depression or booming economy.

Working in the woods was seasonal depending on Humboldt's monsoonal rains. It wasn't uncommon for people to work in the woods part of the year and fish in the ocean, or work at other times



in a different occupation to make ends meet (7).

Farming and dairying were common endeavors. Humboldt once had many sheep and a woolen mill. Ship building was an established industry on Humboldt Bay for decades. But, all in all, lumber was king and lumber barons were by-and-large local people.

World War II was the catalyst that changed the world and Humboldt's world as well. Chuck Lindgren (SP?) from a prominent Yurok-Scandinavian family in Trinidad left that sleepy town for the first time in the 1940s when he was drafted to go to war.

World War II shifted industrialization to the West Coast: shipyards, aircraft factories, military bases were expanded to be point of embarkation for hundreds of thousands of soldiers going to the war in the Pacific.

The familiar landmark of Founder's Hall was painted "camo" to reduce its likelihood of being a target, and even area residents of Italian descent became subjects of a 1942 federal relocation program, much like the more infamous forced internment of Japanese Americans (8).

Even bigger changes were in store following the war. Returning soldiers were offered the benefits of an expanded "GI Bill" that included opportunities for training, a college education and a low interest loan to buy a house.

With such opportunities in store many decided to take them on the West Coast rather than back in the rural communities that they hailed from in Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa or elsewhere.

With so many people buying new houses in in the West lumbering regions were hit with an unprecedented boom. Many lumbering areas, including Humboldt County, doubled in population between 1945 and 1950. Douglas-fir trees that couldn't be given away during the depression were sold, cut and milled in short order.

Arcata joined Eureka and surrounding communities to create one of the major lumber center's in the West. Finished lumber poured out of Humboldt County by ship, rail and truck. Between 1950 and 1959 some 22,000,000,000 board feet of trees were sent through the mills here, and in turn some 10,000,000,000 board feet of wood waste was burned in contraptions called Tee-Pee burners. Few remain as rusting hulks on the landscape, but in their day they were fed almost continuously with mill ends, chunks of tree butts and sawdust via conveyor belts from the back end of of hundreds of mills.

During much of the 1950s and early 1960s it rained down sawdust in Arcata 24 hours a day! By some accounts, Arcata had the highest level of particulate pollution in the United States. At the time as many as 40,000 Humboldt residents worked in some aspect of the timber industry.

To the powers that be during at that time it seemed like a golden opportunity to turn wood waste into pulp and they set out to build the infrastructure to provide water through the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District, and to build two pulp mills on the Samoa Peninsula that were completed by the mid-1960s.

At the same time Humboldt also got the first commercial power generating nuclear reactor in California at King Salmon-today the plant is gone but the hot fuel rods are still there.

The post war boom went on like it would never end. California launched a statewide water project that envisioned multitudes of new dams. One of these was actually built on the Trinity River and led to huge water diversions to the San Joaquin Valley beginning in 1968.

Another dam on the Klamath River, completed in 1964, is now the subject of a decommissioning campaign.

By the late 1960s mills in Humboldt County and timber regions throughout the Western United States were closing because the big trees that used to be put them were increasingly in short supply on privately held timber lands, and the smaller second growth trees were being processed in highly automated second growth mills that used much less labor.

Political initiatives were made to increase logging on National Forests, of which there are about five million acres in our

Klamath-Siskiyou Region (9). Vast acreages of cut over forest were sprayed with herbicides also being sprayed in Vietnam.

The unpopular war in Vietnam converged with the rise of the Baby Boomers, the children of the World War II generation, and the advent of the first Earth Day in 1970. Here in Humboldt, the college that had some 3,200 students began to grow and grow. Young people came here because they cared about nature, they became activated in their opposition to the war and they acted on local issues because they were accessible to act on.

The killing of four Kent State University students and the wounding of nine others by national Guardsmen in Ohio sparked protests across the United States. Humboldt Students voted to strike and more than 2,000 marched from Humboldt to the Arcata Plaza.

Youth in Humboldt built new institutions like the farmers market, the North Coast Cooperative, Youth Educational Services [YES], the Open Door Health Center and the Northcoast Environmental Center. The Center for Community Development at Humboldt State championed a resurgence of interest and caring by Native Americans for their rich cultural history and their communities.

The new Humboldters took up the challenge of the Caltrans

building a six-lane freeway through Arcata that would remove some 260 units of student housing and won a small victories in holding it to four lanes, getting replacement housing built, and turning out the city council that had promoted the freeway.

Ironically, the freeway issue spilled over to Eureka and it's long planned freeway, which would have cut the city in two, fell by the wayside and was taken off of the books!

An Army Corps of Engineers project to build a high dam on the Mad River was put a vote in 1972 and was defeated, one of few such projects in the United States to ever suffer such an end.

The fledgling Redwood Region Audubon Society's members whose ranks were populated with students and wildlife professionals successfully press for the establishment of the Humboldt Bay Wildlife Refuge in 1972.

Botanists and ecologists at Humboldt State banded together with community members to entice the Nature Conservancy to preserve the Lanphere-Christensen Dunes.

The Arcata Marsh project was pressed as an alternative to the high tech, energy intensive sewage treatment.

Students at Humboldt State organized efforts to protect the last old Growth coast redwoods in Redwood Creek that built upon the 1968 creation of Redwood National Park. When the park was

expanded by some 48,000 acres in 1978 and the Park Service was given the mission of restoring the Redwood Creek watershed that had largely been logged.

The restoration of Redwood Creek gave rise to a passionate group of professionals, and Redwood National Park was the crucible for developing the techniques and industry for watershed restorationists. Humboldt County became a crucible for sustainable living and its influence in that regard has spread around the world (10).

Other initiatives curbed runaway logging on National Forests, protected some wildlands there as part of the Wilderness System [1984] and many, many miles of local rivers and streams were protected as a part of both the state and federal wild and scenic river system. These initiatives of earth healing arts over the last 30 years have been like an rich up welling in the sea.

So where the Hell are we today, and what does the future hold?

I remember a day many years ago, I was on the campus of Diablo Valley College, it was a time when protests against the Vietnam war were just in their infancy, and there on a wall outside the photo lab someone had painted a quote from the American playwright, Arthur Miller, "When the guns boom the arts die."

If we are to continue to encourage the earth healing arts that

have flourished here in the past the war must end. We must work in our communities to end the war!

Wes Chesbro, our State Senator, and also the founder of the Arcata Community Recycling Center said at the untimely passing of his dear friend Victor Schaub that he was "a community leader, a loving husband and father--a champion of the downtrodden, who always gave of himself to others."

George Lakoff is widely popular today for offering a possible antidote for the poison affecting our nation, or should we say our family. By Lakoff's definition Victor was a subscriber to the "nurturant parent model" (11).

Two key elements of the model are empathy and responsibility and flowing from them Lakoff says are a host of core values including: freedom, opportunity, prosperity, fairness and community-building, service to the community, and cooperation in a community among others.

We can incorporate service to community into our lives in many ways: giving blood, volunteering, public service, tithing and so on. There as many opportunities as there are unique situations in our community.

Meanwhile, Karl Rove, spin doctor prime for intelligent design, is out there zipping along on his ATV [all terrain vehicle for the un-

initiated] with his trusty band of eco-terrorists, high on adrenalin induced by the noise and smell made by fossil fuels a burning, chasing down those pesky, little snowy plovers.

The nexus here is that I happened to get caught up in the debate over vehicle use on Clam Beach, a popular nearby beach area that many families avoid because of bad experiences with motor vehicles and the arrogant people who drive them there.

I was reading in the McKinleyville Press how vehicle enthusiasts had gone to a public meeting and acted rudely in response to a proposal for a compromise plan for the beach where general recreational driving would be restricted to the fall and winter months. It's a compromise because it contains exceptions for commercial fishers, the handicapped and elderly to access the beach by vehicle, and because there are plenty of people who'd just as soon ban all vehicles on the beach.

Then I read in article in the North Coast Journal quoted or implied that the compromise plan was created by "eco-Terrorists."

I've been noting that Karl Rove's minions have been castigating bird watchers for wanting to protect wetlands as "eco-terrorists." They call people who want the Clean Water Act enforced "eco-terrorists." They've repeated it so many times, from even before May 2, 1995 when the right-wing-whackos blew up the federal building in



Oklahoma City, they've repeated it so many times that when there's a suspicious fire in a subdivision under construction the news media have on occasion suggested it must be the work of "eco-terrorists" without checking the facts.

It's a perfect example of the repeating a big lie over and over again until people think that its the truth.

Then I saw the PBS video Karl Rove -- The Architect, which lays bare the techniques that have proven so successful in Rove's planning winning elections. Which is counter intuitive -- you attack your opponent's strengths (12). I recommend that people view this program in conjunction with their study of *Don't Think of an Elephant...*

A quick read that covers much of the details about the Bush anti-environment campaign is in Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s, *Crimes Against Nature* (13).

Attacking the environmental movement is a cover for our adversaries' obvious weakness. As Lakoff points out they have to use Orwellian devices like "Clear Skies Initiative" and "Healthy Forests Act" to mask their obvious intent. And of course if we repeat the offending term as part of a defense we reinforce their message.

That said, I believe that someone is here in the audience with a petition to help families reclaim safe experiences on Clam Beach by

reducing reckless driving there. And it will save fuel. The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors will be considering the matter Tuesday September 13 at 1:00 p.m.

During World war II the government rationed gas as part of the campaign to win the war, but in Bush's war on terror the only sacrifice required is from our family members in uniform and those of the Iraqi people.

Kennedy claims that a one mile per gallon increase in the corporate average fuel efficiency, or CAFE standards, would equal double the oil we would get from drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and than an 8 mile per gallon increase would end our need to import oil from the Middle East.

As you must all know we are doing exactly the opposite of what we need to do. The recently enacted energy bill "will send billions of dollars in tax subsidies to energy companies," primarily oil companies (14).

Not a liberal, Thomas Friedman sarcastically remarked in a recent column, "Wow, I am so relieved that Congress has finally agreed on an energy bill. Now that that's out of the way, maybe Congress will focus on solving our energy problem" (15)

I recently was invited to an energy round table convened by Congressman Mike Thompson at U.C. Davis. Energy experts from

Davis, Humboldt's Schatz Energy Lab and entrepreneurs from the alternative energy industry all gave their perspectives on the promise and progress of alternative technologies including: bio-mass, wind, hydrogen, hybrid technologies, bio-fuels and more.

But the common theme among all of these people is that alternative energy research continues to decline in the United States while it increases in Europe and Asia.

Our dreams of earth healing and energy independence to benefit our community requires an end to the oil war and the passage of a real national energy bill that puts muscle into alternative energy technology, research and production.

I'd like to end with a quote from William McDonough and Michael Braungart that we ask,

“How can we support and perpetuate the rights of all living things to share a world of abundance? How can we love the children of all species--not just our own--for all time? Imagine what a world of prosperity and health in the future will look like, and begin designing for it right now. What would it mean to become, once again, native to this place, the Earth--the home of all our relations? This is going to take us all, and it is going to take forever. But then, that's the point” (16).

People in this region have been designing for a sustainable

future for some time we need to remember that persistence is victory and keep working.

Thank you for bearing with me...

END NOTES:

- (1) Nat Hentoff, "Our Failure to teach the young how we govern ourselves," *Eureka Times-Standard*, September 4, 2005.
- (2) Descriptions of pre gold rush encounters between the Yurok people at Tsurai and various Europeans and Americans are to be found in: *The Four Ages of Tsurai: A Documentary History of the Indian Village on Trinidad Bay*, edited by Robert F. Heizer and John E. Mills, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952. Lucy Thompson's *To the American Indian: Reminiscences of a Yurok Woman*, Heyday Books, Berkeley, 1991, is also recommended.
- (3) Salmon rich in health promoting Omega-3 fatty acids were consumed in large quantities, up to 1.4 pounds daily per person. See: *Health Effects of Altered Diet on the Karuk People: a Preliminary Report*, Kari Marie Norgaard, Ph.D., Karuk Department of Natural Resources, Orleans, California, 2004.
- (4) See Owen C. Coy, *The Humboldt Bay Region, 1850-1875*, The California State Historical Association, Los Angeles, 1929, and Dennis Turner's, *Place Names of Humboldt County California: a Compendium 1542-1992*, Eureka Publishing Company, Eureka, California 1993.; and, finally, Lynwood Carranco's *Redwood Country*, Star Publishing Company, Belmont, California, 1986, especially "Bret Harte in Union (1857-1860).
- (5) See Lynwood Carranco's "A study in Prejudice: The Chinese And Humboldt County, California," in *Redwood Country* [see above].
- (6) For more on unions in the timber industry see: Frank Onstine's *The Great Lumber Strike of Humboldt County 1935*, Mercurial Enterprises, Arcata, 1980; Daniel Cornford's *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1987; and Robert Tyler's *Rebels of the Woods: the I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest*, University of Oregon, Eugene, 1967.
- (7) For a rich reflection on working in Humboldt in the days of yore see Glen Nash's *Making a Living, Making a Life in Humboldt County*, Eureka Printing Company, Eureka, California 1996.

(8) The oral histories of many area Italian residents are in Stephen Fox's *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans during World War II*, Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1990.

(9) David A. Clary's *Timber and the Forest Service*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1986.

(10) Two works that capture the Humboldt spirit of restoration and sustainability are Ray Raphael's *Tree Talk: The People and Politics of Timber*, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1981 and Freeman House's *Totem Salmon: Life Lessons from Another Species*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1999.

(11) George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant!: Know your Values and Frame the Debate: the Essential Guide for Progressives*, Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, Vermont, 2004.

(12) *Frontline: Karl Rove -- The Architect*, PBS Video, 2005.

(13) Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. , *Crimes Against nature: How George W. Bush and His Corporate Pals Are Plundering the Country and Hijacking Our Democracy*, Harper - Collins Publishers, New York, 2004.

(14) Associate Press, "Bill gives boost to energy firms," Daily TriPLICATE, July 29, 2005.

(15) Thomas L. Friedman, "Too Much Pork and Too Little Sugar," New York Times, August, 8, 2005.

(16) William McDonough and Michael Braungart, *Remaking the Way We Make Things: Cradle to Cradle*, North Point Press, New York, 2002.