
COMMON SENSE II

Capitalizing on the familiarity and influence of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" pamphlets that provided American colonists with exposure to the conversation of great thinkers in the pre-Revolutionary period, this paper assumes the name COMMON SENSE II. Similarly, today's series of pamphlets strives to give a direct response to great political events and ideas of our time.

January 2020

Pre-Election Issue

Vol. 15 Issue 1

Coming of the Light: Hope for Humankind

By Bob Passi

In the natural calendar December 21st is the shortest day of the year (the fewest daylight hours in the northern hemisphere). It also heralds the return of the lights as the very next day the days begin to get longer: more daylight hours. The symbolism is hard to miss. Before the solstice, as more hours of the darkness encroach on human life, the sense of fear and insecurity grows as does a sense of defensiveness and distrust. It is easy to begin to think that worshipping the Dark



Gods of death, vengeance, wrath, war, and destruction makes sense.

But the solstice and nature intervene by giving us a growing sense of hope: faith that things will get better and preparing room for dreams and the potential of life returning with an entirely new sense of possibility and wonder. We look toward a future of life being sustainable once again.

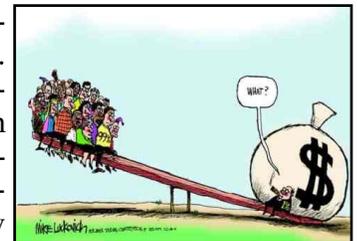
Christians translate this into a story of hope and potential with the birth of Christ at such a time. It is about the birth of a baby to humble parents, born into a world that does not even notice or seem to care. That symbol of hope is intuitively recognized by the lowly and the wise but not by the established power. That hope had been gestating within a human being, the mother, for some time, getting ready to emerge into the world as a new life, a new possibility.

The fact that hope and a new beginning are represented as a baby is a clear reminder that it must be nurtured and supported within a caring environment if it is to reach adulthood, if the nascent po-

tential is to reach fruition with its gifts to humankind.

Every new life on the planet contains much of that same promise whether it be within the natural world or within the human world, and all are sacred and connected. They are all there to serve some purpose: to complete the plan of interconnection and sustainable life on this planet, the web of life.

But this world, as we well know, is not without its distractions and its negative forces. The Dark Gods still exist in the shadow and know full well how to create darkness and fear, even in the light of day. They know war and vengeance, destruction and intimidation. They know how to entice people to focus on the shadows of life under almost any circumstances. They know how to use wealth and



power to create the necessary illusions and distractions to keep people from attending to the light and the potential of each human life and within nature.

Our mission, should we be willing to accept it, is to keep the faith in individual human potential, to learn to band together for strength and support, to keep the human spirit alive and well, and to keep moving forward in the face of opposition.

We do not need to confront and defeat the Dark Gods and the forces of darkness on their chosen battlefield, using their dark weapons of choice. We need to learn to trust and follow the light in another direction with courage and determination; it is about having the discipline to ignore their distractions, their taunts, and their self-serving arguments; it is about resisting their seductions and temptations of wealth and power. They will tell you that such wealth and power can be yours if

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Ready or Not!

By Valerie Conner

you will simply abdicate and give over the control of your future.

It is not easy. It is risky. It requires determination, focus, courage, and a willingness to make sacrifices. It requires a recognition that most people are good and are willing to work to keep that dream alive long enough for it to be realized. It requires a recognition that only by uniting in that dream, in faith in the light, can we find the strength, not to defeat the armies of darkness and their leaders and power, but to define a better way to live, an alternative that leads back to a sustainable world in harmony with the planet on which we live.

The time for action is not infinite. We cannot continue to allow that potential to be devoured, year after year by the ravenous Dark Gods. Waiting until next year no longer works. The planet has put us on notice that we have already put that transformation on hold far too long. The Earth is giving us an ultimatum. This is one



Shadow_Demon_by_BenWooten

of the few last chances we have to correct the arrogance and hubris of our present systems that seem to think that they know better than nature how to run this planet and that we can simply continue to consume our planet without any negative consequences—that somehow wealth trumps nature, logic, and the laws of the universe.

We who seem to be trapped within that system are being told to consume and feed the fires of the destruction of our planet with our service to that system.

I do not believe we are willing to be complicit in our own suicide. I believe that finally, facing this existential threat to the human race, we will screw our courage to the sticking point and rise: rise, unified and with one voice, to choose human solutions for saving ourselves and the planet on which we depend for life.

We have within us that spark of life always ready to be fanned into flame by the hope and inspiration of the coming of the light, of the potential and possibility of human life. And when each individual flame stands next to each other, we create the fire of creativity and resilience that



will forge new worlds and save us from destruction.

As much as I hate to admit it, an outcome is more likely to go your way if you prepare well. You know, educate yourself on the issues, think strategically, develop a plan, consider what could go wrong, have a Plan B and C, implement your plan...all the things we criticize the Trump Administration of not doing. The general election is 10 1/2 months away. Between then and now we need to develop a platform that expresses our vision for America while convincing others it is a better view than the Republicans'.



The first step in developing a platform takes place at precinct caucuses. Unlike in many past election cycles, this year Minnesota will hold a Presidential primary on Super Tuesday, March 3rd, but that does not mean there won't be caucuses. The rest of what traditionally gets done at caucuses will still happen, which includes consideration of resolutions. It is that consideration of resolutions that begins the platform building process.

Any eligible voter who substantially agrees with the caucuses' party may attend and participate. Anyone there may submit a resolution for fellow caucus goers to vote to accept or reject. Those accepted go on to further consideration at the county convention. Successful resolutions eventually become planks of the state and possibly national party platform. (See Vicki Andrews' article page 6.)

Preparation involves carefully wording your resolution and the supporting rationale (the "whereas" clauses). But it also involves getting people in other caucuses to submit the same or similar resolutions which increases the credibility of the resolution.

Certainly learning about the various candidates is another part of preparation. By becoming involved in campaigns, you can really impact the outcome. November 3rd is coming quickly; it's time to get prepared. It's how you can maximize your impact on our future.



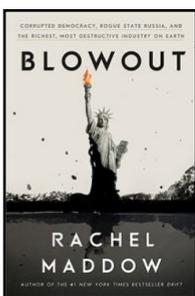
Doug Johnson



Boom or Bust

By Valerie Conner

Any consumer of news (real news) is inundated with stories of Big Oil, Russian adventurism, Big Money, general corruption, and climate change. In *Blowout: Corrupted Democracy, Rogue State Russia, and the Richest, Most Destructive Industry on Earth*, Rachel Maddow shows the connection between them. In sum, she traces the history, theory, and result of oil on the world stage.



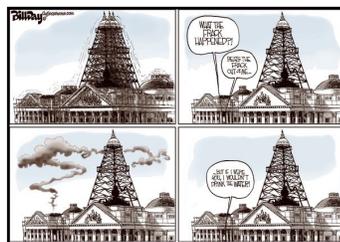
For all of our history, this country has been blessed with an abundance of natural resources that allowed us to develop and flourish. The key is “resources,” not “resource.” One would think that the discovery of vast oil reserves

would ensure a nation’s economic liberation. Wrong. Where the sole resource of a country—be it first, second, or third world—is oil, a precious commodity on the world market, it often becomes what is known as the Resource Curse. The oil industry is particularly prone to encouraging corruption in nations or states that find, develop, and exploit their new-found manna. The need for upfront investment opens the door to high rollers to curry favor with government officials. Once both taste the high life, they become reluctant to share the profits with the general population, leaving them worst off in health, education, and general standard of living than before. Multi-national corporations that transcend national borders are often in a position to override governmental laws and regulations.

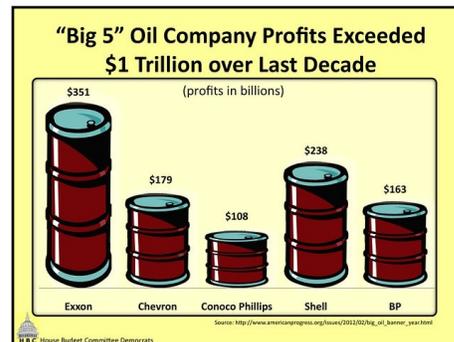


From wildcatters in Oklahoma to palaces in Equatorial Guinea to Russian pipelines to Europe, Maddow explains how Big Money and Big Oil corrupt themselves and the world in which they operate. This is not a national phenomenon. It is the result of the nature of the industry—its reliance on high stakes investments and need for large scale operations—and human nature.

Her narrative of Oklahoma’s oil and natural gas boom is illustrative. A boom-bust economy is always hard on economic stability. Good governmental entities build infrastructure and fill its “coffee cans” in the boom years to lessen the impact of the lean years. When extreme and unnecessary tax advantages to the industry and its operators starve the governmental services that the general population deserve, a line is crossed. She recounts how fracking increased earthquake activity and climate change intensified tornado activity and severity that went unaddressed for decades because of the tax advantages afforded the oil and gas industry left the state coffers bare. For too long schools had no tornado shelters, for example. Finally, the teachers had had enough and insisted on positive change for the safety of children and the general population. Regular Oklahomans agreed and voted the necessary tax reforms.



We are witnessing how Big Oil and corruption have infiltrated our national government. Why else would Rex Tillerson, an oil magnate with no governmental experience, be appointed Secretary of State? Certainly not to protect Americans and all life on Earth. Somehow, kicking the petroleum habit solves



many problems: increased climate change, Mid East importance, and Russian hold on European fuel. Maddow ends with the prediction that nothing less than the existence of democracy is at stake.

2020 Itasca Progressive Caucus Memberships available now!

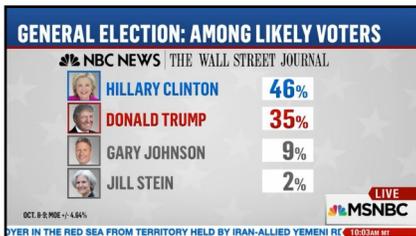
Make your \$25 check out to
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 Mail to:

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Grand Rapids, MN 55774

The Media Are Doing It Again

By Nancy Rudd

Polls, polls, polls on the Democratic Presidential candidates. I've said it before and I'll say it again: If I believed in polls, Hillary Clinton would be our President. She didn't have a con-



cession speech prepared. The New York Times said that Donald Trump had a 15% chance of becoming Presi-

dent. I noticed the difference in phone banking for Obama in 2008 and 2012. With the increased usage of cell-phones in 2012, fewer people were answering unknown phone numbers. There were many other issues that contributed to Hillary's loss, but polls are misleading.

Each week and sometimes every day, I hear or read a poll of percentages. Rarely do the polls say how many people were involved or what the exact questions were. I saw one with just over 2,000 people and one with just over 7,000 people. Does this really represent the electorate?



As the television talking heads repeat over and over, to beat Trump in 2020, we need to get the people who voted for Trump to vote for the Democrat. A centrist candidate should run. Really? I actually saw an article where a woman quoted the talking heads almost verbatim, "I want to vote for Elizabeth Warren, but I think that to beat Trump, I'll need to vote for Peter Buttigieg, because he is a more centrist candidate."



Michael Moore, one of the few who stated that Trump could win in 2016, said that the working class is talked about like it's "lunch bucket Joe."

The working class is made up of women, people of color, and young people 18-35 (this last group has the lowest wages). In 2020 70% of the electorate will be from these three groups.

If we are waiting for white men to come back—and some might—most will still vote for Trump.

So why should we run a centrist trying to get back this group? We need a progressive Democrat who has plans to help people and level the playing field between those with billions of dollars and the rest of us.

Trump only won by about 77,000 votes in the states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. So who do we want to get back? Since the 60s, the only Democrats who have won the white male vote were Lyndon Johnson and Bill Clinton in his second term. Other than these two times none of the other Democratic Presidents since John Kennedy have won the white male vote.

Some people think that we are more divided than ever before. Maybe we are a bit more divided since the advent of social media and their problems. I believe that we have always been divided, but the Trump personality of lashing out at anyone who isn't loyal to him has given people the right to argue about our divisions. Having had a political twitter account with 1,400 followers and growing before I shut it down, I found out that it is very hard to seek common ground with a Trump voter. In the two years I tried, I only succeeded once. I found out what Trump voters do not like are facts and the places to find them.



I agree that we need a progressive candidate with plans. I've liked Elizabeth Warren, but I will still vote for the Democratic nominee whoever he or she may be. I just hope that when all is said and done, that the candidate who runs against Trump is progressive, will excite people, and will get them out to vote.

I've heard that things have been worse before and that we will survive having Trump as our President. I fear for our democracy and this republic if Trump wins again. Of course, that is if we survive an impending war with Iran.

COMMON SENSE II is published by the Itasca Progressive Caucus in Grand Rapids, Minnesota

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The Wounds of War

in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen;
Escalating Threats of War with Iran

featuring

Kathy Kelly

Thursday 1/30/2020

Kathy Kelly is an internationally known peace activist, as well as co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, (www.vcnv.org) a campaign to end U.S. military and economic warfare. She lived in Baghdad throughout the 2003 “Shock and Awe” bombing and has spent time in Afghanistan living and working with the Afghan Peace Volunteers. She has stood with the people during warfare in Gaza, Lebanon, Bosnia and Nicaragua and visited Syrian refugee camps.

She believes that “where you stand determines what you see.”

Kathy will share what she has learned on her travels in these war-torn countries over the years. She will also discuss the dangers of the recent U.S bombings and the escalating threats of war with Iran as well as the actions we can take to prevent future suffering of people affected by endless U.S. wars and how we can resist those wars at home.

Free and Open to all (free will offering will be taken to support VCNV)

Thursday, January 30, 2020

Chili Feed from 5:30 – 6:30; presentation at 6:30

Christ Episcopal Church Social Hall

520 N. Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids MN

parking lot behind church, enter by side door (north)

co-sponsored by:

Grand Rapids Area Earth Circle

Spirit of Christ the Healer Roman Catholic Community

It's Resolution Time

By Vicki Andrews

Not New Year's resolutions; it's too late for that, but an even more important type of resolution: one that can have far-reaching effects. Have you got an idea for a change in focus on a current issue that you want to share, or perhaps a totally new issue that you believe needs to be addressed? The issue can be anything that can be changed by political action—and that includes a lot! Whether your cause is protection of the environment, stopping endless war, healthcare, or a fair minimum wage for all, now is the time to let your voice be heard,



<https://live.staticflickr.com>

On Tuesday, February 25, 2020, precinct caucuses will be held across Minnesota, beginning

Minnesota Precinct Caucuses
7:00 pm, Tuesday, February 25, 2020

at 7:00 pm. A precinct caucus is a gathering (along party lines) of your neighbors, people who live in your area of town or township, to discuss ideas and issues that are important to them. Caucus locations can be found in local newspapers and other media, or you can go to www.mnvotes.org, which answers all your questions on the upcoming election process. In addition to selecting delegates to the county convention, the first step to becoming a state or national delegate, people are able to submit resolutions to be voted on. When a majority of the caucus

adopts a resolution, it advances to the organizing unit—usually the county—convention for consideration to send it to the State Platform, Issues, and Legislative Affairs Committee. Resolutions having support from at least five organizing units drawn from at least two Congressional District may be selected for consideration at the state convention for inclusion in the DFL Ongoing Platform or Action Agenda.

Resolution forms are available from the county party headquarters, at the caucus, or online at www.dfl.org under “Precinct Caucuses, 7. Resolutions.” Fill out the top section (if you need help with any of the information, contact your local DFL office). Select the category your resolution falls under, and print or attach your resolution as directed. Your resolution is the change you want to see; in the next section you may add several of your strongest supportive points. Keep your resolution and supportive points short and to the point.

Next, share your resolution with friends and family; ask them to present the resolution at their caucuses. Leave paper copies at your local DFL office. Use social media to get others on board. Ask them to bring the resolution to their caucus. Remember, the more caucuses that support your resolution, the better the chance it has to be included in the platform or action agenda. If it doesn't make the cut this year, don't give up. Caucuses are held every two years, and you can try again.

MINNESOTA DFL RESOLUTION FORM
(Attach one resolution per form and one subject per resolution)

The State DFL Ongoing Platform includes the provisions of the Minnesota Constitution: Protect Labor, Party, The State DFL, Action Agenda is a set of recommended public policy positions which the party supports and will promote during the next two years. This form must be completely filled out for a resolution to be considered.

Congressional District: _____ Organizing Unit: _____ Precinct: _____

Prepared by: _____ Contact Name / E-mail: _____

This resolution should be considered under the following category: (check one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture & Food	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult & Interest Issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Business & Community Development	<input type="checkbox"/> National Security & International Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Civil, Human & Constitutional Rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resources & the Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety & Crime Prevention
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Security
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Tax & Budget Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Government Accountability to the Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Health & Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Affairs
<input type="checkbox"/> Labor & Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> Local or Party Issues

Individuals at their precinct caucuses can submit resolutions. When a majority of the caucus adopts a resolution, it advances to the Organizing Unit convention for consideration to send to the State Platform, Issues, and Legislative Affairs Committee. Resolutions having support from at least five Organizing Units drawn from at least two Congressional Districts may be selected for consideration at the State Convention for inclusion in the DFL Ongoing Platform or Action Agenda.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: (fill in prior or attach your resolution here. Be concise and use everyday language.)

You may add a brief explanation or your two or three strongest supportive points here.

Be filed at the Precinct Caucuses
 This resolution was: Adopted Defeated
 (Adopted 5 August 2017, Rev. A) A-1 www.dfl.org 651.201.1200 or 1.800.999.7427

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: GET INVOLVED AND GET IT DONE!

Event	Date /Time	Location
DFL Headquarters Open (326-6296)	Tues & Thurs 2-5 pm	DFL Headquarters
Itasca Progressive Caucus (259-4490)	3rd Tuesday 6:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
DFL Central Committee Meets	4th Monday 6:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
DFL Social Club & Lunch	1st Wednesday Noon	DFL Headquarters
DFL Pot Luck (Open to the Public)	3rd Wednesday 5:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
Working Families Alliance	1st Monday 6:30 pm	Dutchroom
Earth Circle	3rd Saturday 2:00 pm	GR Public Library
Circles of Support	Thursdays 6:00 pm	811 NE 4th St. GR
Haven: A Place for All	Mondays 5:30	Kiesler Center
Deadline for <i>Common Sense II</i>	February 7, 2020	conray@arvig.net