

HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK NEWS

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“TRANSFORMING HATE” DEFINITELY SPEAKS VOLUMES

An idea from the Human Rights Network finally took physical form when Helena’s Holter Museum of Art opened the “Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate” exhibit on Jan. 25, 2008. The show contains over 60 pieces from artists across the country who responded to and transformed the vile messages in white supremacist books like *The White Man’s Bible*, *On the Brink of a Bloody Racial War*, *RAHOWA: This Planet is All Ours*, and others. “Speaking Volumes” opened to a packed house, positive press, and outstanding community response.

The long process culminating in “Speaking Volumes” began with a phone call in December 2003. The Creativity Movement (then known as the World Church of the Creator), a national hate group, had a chapter in Montana that was based in Superior. J.R., the state group’s second in command, called the Network and told Co-Director Christine Kaufmann that he was leaving the group. In order to make a clean break and for his own personal safety, he needed to get out of the area. For a small amount of gas money, he offered to sell the Network the contents of a storage locker in Superior, which he said contained boxes of the group’s books.

The Network agreed to meet with J.R. in Missoula. Network staff talked with him for about an hour and facilitated J.R. also meeting with law enforcement officials. After their meeting, J.R. gave the staffers the keys to the storage unit. Once arrangements had been made with the Mineral County Sheriff to meet at the storage unit for their safety, Network staff headed to Superior with two pickups and a U-Haul to take possession of

the material. Two hours later, the storage unit was empty, and the Network had approximately 4,100 white supremacist books and a few boxes of internal correspondence about the Creativity Movement.

The Network had two main interests in acquiring the books. First, the books were the local hate group’s only source of income. Given that the books sold for \$10 each, the Network had removed approximately \$41,000 in possible revenue from the group. More importantly, the books (*Speaking, cont. on page 2*)



During a reception, people viewing the exhibit listen to the Network’s Christine Kaufmann tell the story behind the books that served as the beginning of the “Speaking Volumes” exhibit.

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Contributors: Christine
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(Speaking, from page 1)

were no longer in circulation, thereby removing some of the ideological glue that had held the Creativity Movement together.

Almost immediately, members of the hate group claimed the Network had received stolen property. The Network produced a signed bill of sale and pointed out that the Creativity Movement had no legal claim to the books in the first place. In 1994, the Southern Poverty Law Center won \$1 million of the group's assets in a lawsuit. The Law Center never tried to pick up the books as part of the judgment, believing it wouldn't be worth the effort. It applauded the Network's acquisition of the books.

Once the books were back at the Network's office, the staff was left wondering what to do with them. Burning or shredding the books seemed inconsistent for the Network, which promotes democratic values. Instead, the Network sent boxed sets to allied organizations, academic institutions, Holocaust museums, law enforcement, and anyone else the Network thought might be interested in the books for research purposes. This still left thousands of the books clogging up office space.

The idea of having artists turn the white supremacist books into art was first mentioned at a staff meeting. Staff thought it would be great if artists would use the books to create pieces that would stimulate public discussion about the dangers of bigotry, anti-Semitism, and intolerance. The Network contacted Helena-area artist Tim Holmes, who created some initial pieces. He



Clarissa Sligh (left), from Philadelphia, was one of the many artists who came for opening night at the Holter Museum.

OPENING DATES AND LOCATIONS

9/1/08	Anaconda	Copper Village Museum
11/3/08	Dillon	UM-Western
1/2/09	Red Lodge	Carbon County Arts Guild
3/13/09	Miles City	Custer County Art Center
5/22/09	Great Falls	Paris Gibson Square
8/21/09	Sidney	Mondak Heritage Center
10/15/09	Bozeman	Emerson Center/ Helen E. Copeland Gallery
1/7/10	Missoula	Montana Museum of Arts and Culture
3/25/10	Billings	Yellowstone Arts Museum

recognized the potential for a larger exhibit and suggested the Network pitch the idea to the Holter Museum.

The Holter pulled together a steering committee from the greater Helena community to help plan the show. More than 100 artists from across the country submitted pieces. About a dozen artists of the 60 whose pieces were chosen came for opening night. The museum was packed and enthusiasm for the show has not yet subsided.

Learning from Art: Out of the Museum and Into Communities

Both the Network and the Holter wanted "Speaking Volumes" to create discussions in the community not just about the dangers of white supremacy, but also the roots of bigotry.

Standing up and opposing hate groups is necessary and very important work. The Network has used the content of the books and the "Speaking Volumes" exhibit to illustrate how it is the fusion of racism and anti-Semitism that forms the foundation for white supremacist ideology. The term "white supremacy" readily invokes the hatred of people of color. However, the hatred of Jews is fundamental to the beliefs of white supremacist groups. These groups draw on centuries of anti-Semitism and recycle derogatory myths to continue assaulting Jews of today. For a more in-depth look at the anti-Semitism of the Creativity Movement and the story behind "Speaking Volumes," please see the Network's briefing paper *Speaking Vol-*

(Speaking, continued on page 11)

ANTI-ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC HEATS UP IN THE BITTERROOT

When the initial Bitterroot National Forest travel plan was released last fall, the Stevensville District Ranger knew that travel planning was one of the most contentious issues facing public land managers today. However, he wasn't prepared for the onslaught of misinformation and threats of violence.

At a public meeting on the travel plan in January, a woman was speaking during the public comment period on behalf of conservation. As she spoke, she was booed and a threat from the crowd of "putting a bullet in her head" rang out.

In an online news publication, Jim Miller, president of the conservation group Friends of the Bitterroot, said that when he walked into the meeting, "the atmosphere was just hostile." He said people were "using the F-word" and the meeting was "the worst I have ever seen."

While motorized-user groups claimed the comments didn't come from their people, it is obvious that intimidation and bullying directed at the environmental community seems to be on the rise again.

The atmosphere at the meeting wasn't surprising given the antagonistic organizing in the Valley prior to the meeting. The Ravalli County Off-Road Users Association, along with the Bitterroot Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club, ran a series of inflammatory

ads claiming ranchers, motorized users, and hunters were being locked out of the forest. And a month and a half earlier, the Big Sky Coalition rallied hundreds to advocate for in-

havior of the motorized-user groups and called on their leadership to ask their members to respect the democratic process.

The combination of intimidation, bullying and incendiary rhetoric has led to violence against conservationists in the past. Even recently, while attempting to write down the license plate of an illegal off roader, Bob Clark of the Sierra Club was run down by a motorcyclist illegally riding on a Forest Service road. Other calls for violence have been found online.

Mike Dubrasich of the Western Institute, based in Oregon, has targeted the Sierra Club and the Forest Service. He recently told supporters, "If you know a Sierra Club member, please feel free to set their home on fire." In December, Dubrasich also said Forest Service Chief Gail Kimbell had "deliberately burned down millions of acres of forest in her own Region in her very first year." He said the action was "pure evil, treason, and certainly a hanging offense, in my opinion."

Dubrasich called for Kimbell to be "indicted, tried, convicted" and "put to death by lethal injection." He concluded in another post, "Who does that FASCIST PIG [emphasis in original] think she is?"

While Dubrasich doesn't live in the Bitterroot Valley, he is a vocal sup-
(Bitterroot, cont. on page 9)



The Big Sky Coalition's website features Power Point slides from the Ravalli County Off-Road Users. The presentation claims that nothing can be done about climate change, and that the solution lies in large-scale logging projects.

creased logging in the forest.

The Bitterroot Human Rights Alliance, a Network affiliate, responded to the threatening nature of the travel-plan meeting with a guest opinion in local newspapers that outlined the verbal attacks directed at the Forest Service and local conservationists. It also condemned the be-

ANOTHER PRO-INDIAN RULING IN COBELL CASE

On March 5, over objections from federal government attorneys, U.S. District Judge James Robertson set a June trial date for resolving the dispute over government mismanagement of Indian Trust land accounting. Robertson said the trial “is meant to bring this matter to a conclusion.”

In late January, Robertson had ruled that the Interior Department had “unreasonably delayed the completion of the required accounting” for the Indian Trust that owes billions of dollars to Native American landholders. He declared the Interior Department’s actions were a “breach of its fiduciary duty over the last century.”

“This is a great day in Indian Country,” Elouise Cobell said in response to Robertson’s ruling. “Judge Robertson has settled the debate in favor of the plaintiffs and found that an adequate historical accounting is, in fact, impossible.” She said the plaintiffs looked forward to the upcoming trial.

These were the latest developments in a lawsuit filed in 1996 by Blackfeet tribal member Elouise Cobell. The class-action suit against the Interior Department is based on the mismanagement of the Individual Indian Money Trust and seeks to make the federal government account for over \$100 billion that belongs to 500,000 Native Americans. The money, which comes from royalties on Indian land, has been held in the Trust since 1887. Along with accounting for the money, Cobell wants to reform how the Trust is administered (for background, see the June 2006 edition of *Network News*).

Since the lawsuit was filed, federal judges have consistently ruled in favor of the Indian plaintiffs. U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth called the government’s conduct “fiscal and governmental irresponsibility in its purest form.” In 2005, he ordered the Interior Department to conduct a detailed historical accounting of the Trust’s money. The Department appealed the ruling, stating it would take 200 years and cost \$13 billion to perform such an accounting. Siding with the federal agency, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals called Lamberth’s order “unreasonable.” However, it still required an accounting of the Trust.

Following many rulings in favor of Cobell and the

plaintiffs, the Justice Department asked the D.C. Court of Appeals to assign a new judge to the case. The Department claimed Lamberth demonstrated bias by consistently ruling for the plaintiffs. The Court of Appeals agreed and removed Lamberth. Judge Robertson took over the case.

In Robertson’s January ruling, he said it had become obvious that the Interior Department could not perform an adequate accounting of the Trust. However, he said a remedy needed to be found for over a century of mismanagement by the Department. Robertson also blamed Congress for not appropriating enough funding to resolve the issue. He said the time had come to “bring this suit to a close.”



Elouise Cobell

Will the Feds Pay Up? Talk of Settlement

Cobell plaintiffs have stated they would settle the case for \$27.5 billion. Outside the courtroom, lawmakers have sponsored proposals calling for a lump-sum settlement. These proposals have come in way short of both the proposed settlement figure and the actual \$100 billion price tag.

Back in 2006, U.S. Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), then chair of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, proposed settling the lawsuit for \$8 billion. He said he forwarded the figure to the White House for consideration and never heard back. Cobell opposed the measure, saying the plaintiffs did not want to be “sacrificed on the altar of political expediency.”

In 2007, the Bush Administration offered \$7 billion to settle the case. In exchange, all tribal and individual mismanagement claims against the government would have been dropped and the government would have been relieved of future liability. The plaintiffs turned down the settlement offer, calling it a “bad faith offer.”

Following Judge Robertson’s recent ruling, U.S. Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-SD), chair of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, said he hoped the decision would lead to a settlement of the lawsuit. He said the main question was whether the Justice Department and Bush Administration were willing to pay up for all the years of mismanagement. □

NETWORK EMBARKS ON “RIGHT TO HEALTHCARE CAMPAIGN”

Approximately 170,000 Montanans live every day without access to quality healthcare because they are uninsured. Close to 34,000 of these Montanans are children under the age of 18.

The crisis of a broken healthcare system has been a growing concern and the topic of much political debate and posturing. However, instead of being treated like a political football, it must be addressed with immediate, tangible policy solutions. Montana simply cannot afford to wait for the federal government to fix the problem.

The Network believes that access to quality healthcare is a human right. It is something we are all entitled to no matter how much money we make, where we live, what race we are, or any other characteristics. As human beings, we are entitled to healthcare.

There are those who would argue that healthcare is a commodity that is bought and sold. In that framework, those who are in an economic position to buy healthcare get the medical attention they need. Those who are unable to pay go without basic medical care. This is the dominant framework in the current debate over our current healthcare system.



Eleanor Roosevelt with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The commodity-driven model has failed and Montana can, and should, do better,” said the Network’s Kim Abbott. “We should not be treated as mere consumers who shop around for medical care and choose to buy, or not buy, it. We are people who are entitled to medical care when we need it, regardless of our ability to pay for it.”

In order to address this issue, the Network is embarking on a campaign to allow Montanans to decide if uninsured kids should have access to quality healthcare in the state. We will be working on the “Healthy Montana Kids Plan” which is a ballot initiative to place a question on the November ballot. The Healthy Montana Kids Plan is a major expansion of two efficient and effective public programs already in place, the Children Health Insurance Plan and Children’s Medicaid. If it qualifies for the ballot and passes in November, it will provide access to healthcare for 27,500 Montana children who are currently uninsured.

Over the next three months, the Network will hold volunteer trainings, gather signatures, and attempt to shift the public debate from healthcare as a commodity to healthcare as a human right. Supporters of the Healthy Montana Kids Plan need to gather close to 25,000 signatures of Montana voters in order to put

this question on the ballot. We ask all of our members and supporters to consider helping with this campaign.

If we are able to pass the Healthy Montana Kids Plan in November, it would make a significant difference. It would mean that thousands upon thousands of parents no longer have to make the impossible choice of paying their rent or taking their kids to the doctor. It would mean that thousands upon thousands of Montana kids will get care earlier, before illnesses become emergencies. It would mean that all of our communities would enjoy healthier futures. It would mean that Montana took a giant step toward economic justice.

This initiative is not a comprehensive solution, but it is an important start. Everyone deserves access to the healthcare. This initiative starts by giving access to children in Montana and is a step toward ensuring that every Montanan sees their right to healthcare recognized and fulfilled by the Montana government – which is all of us.

On March 5, the Network held our fourth volunteer training, and we will be holding eight more in various communities across the state. If you are interested in ensuring the right to healthcare for yourself, your family, and your neighbors, please contact us to find out when we are holding a volunteer training near you. □

NETWORK LAUNCHES “EQUALITY PROJECT”

Since 1993, the Network has been front-and-center in advocating for equal rights and protection under the law for Montana’s gay and lesbian community. In 1994, it helped form Pride Inc., which served as a statewide gay and lesbian civil rights organization.

Over the years, the Network and Pride worked closely together, including sharing office space, engaging in strategic discussions, sponsoring community education programs, and lobbying at the legislature.

Recently, Pride Inc. closed its doors due to lack of funding and staff. While the Network will miss this strong ally, it is committed to continuing the efforts toward gay and lesbian equality. To that end, the Network has started the “Equality Project,” which will sustain the efforts to include the gay and lesbian community in Montana’s anti-discrimination laws.

The Equality Project has outlined a three-year plan to organize support for amending the Montana Human Rights Act, the state’s bedrock civil rights law, to include sexual orientation and gender expression.

Currently, there is no legal recourse for the discrimination faced by gays and lesbians every day. It is legal to fire gays and lesbians from their jobs, kick them out of their homes, or refuse them service in a restaurant. Amending the Human Rights Act would outlaw these types of discrimination.

While the Network and its allies

have gained the support of about half of Montana’s legislature over the past 16 years, the right wing continues to exploit gay and lesbian issues as political wedges. To gain the necessary votes to pass gay and lesbian civil rights legislation, an expanded grassroots movement must be developed across the state, including in rural areas. That’s where the Equality Project comes in.

on the campaign’s upcoming website and will engage in other public activities. The goal is a public education campaign that reaches across the state.

The collective effect of 50 Voices speaking from the far reaches of Montana, the public testimony at the legislature and in the media, and the public discussions that result will bring more people into the broader human rights movement. If you are interested in becoming one of the 50 Voices or helping with the campaign, please contact the Equality Project’s director, Linda Gryczan, through the Network at network@mhrn.org or (406) 442-5506.



*U.S. Rep. Dennis Rehberg
(R-MT)*



*U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson
(R-ID)*

One of the first public actions taken by the Equality Project was condemning an anti-gay “joke” between U.S. Representatives Rehberg and Simpson.

“50 Voices for Equality”

The Equality Project is going to take the struggle for gay rights to the community level where, instead of being a political wedge issue, it becomes a discussion about the Montana values of fairness and justice. The campaign is called “50 Voices for Equality.”

Fifty respected Montanans (one for each Montana Senate district) will be recruited to act as a spokesperson for the campaign. Some will be prominent citizens, while others will be everyday Montanans. All will be part of the fabric of their communities. The 50 Voices will be featured

Check Out Upcoming “Out at the Library” Exhibit

The Network and its Equality Project are proud to be co-sponsoring the upcoming “Out at the Library” exhibit at the Missoula Public Library.

“Out at the Library” features a museum-quality exhibit celebrating gay and lesbian history, literature, and culture. It will be on display at the Missoula Public Library between April 15, 2008 and May 31, 2008.

The exhibit was created by the San Francisco Public Library and has already been displayed in major U.S. cities. It covers topics as diverse as political newsletters and pulp fiction; pioneers like Harry Hay and Barbara Gittings; poetry and protest; and much more. The exhibit will be displayed just inside the library’s main entrance.

In conjunction with the exhibit, (*Equality Project, cont. on page 9*)

ON THE (BISON) RANGE: TRIBES SEEK MANAGEMENT ROLE, CONFRONT ANTI-INDIAN SENTIMENT

The National Bison Range in Moiese, MT, is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Since 2004, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have managed the Bison Range under a compact with the federal government. They are the only tribes so far to take advantage of the ability to sign compacts with federal agencies to jointly manage lands “of special geographic, historical, or cultural significance to the participating tribe,” as stated under the Tribal Self-Government and Indian Self-Determination Acts of 1994.

The joint management agreement was controversial from the start. Then in December 2006, the Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it was terminating the agreement with the tribes. It cited reports of alleged tribal misconduct and unacceptable working environments. The tribes responded with 114-page report denying the charges. Eventually, the two sides resumed discussions.

Blue Goose Alliance Leads Opposition

Since the Network last reported on the Bison Range and the resurgence of the anti-Indian movement in its February 2007 *Network News* (<http://mhrn.org/networknews.html>), the tribes and Fish and Wildlife Service have gone back and forth about a new agreement. The topic has generated heated discussion from supporters and opponents in local newspapers and online forums.

One of the primary groups fighting tribal management is the Blue Goose Alliance, a self-proclaimed “conservation organization. . . [that’s] mission is to promote the establishment of the National Wildlife Refuge System as a separate agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior.” The Alliance’s main efforts over the last few years, however, have been to stop any management of the Bison Range by the tribes. The group’s main activist in Montana is Missoula’s Susan Reneau.

Susan Reneau, who once invited Militia of Montana founder John Trochmann to address a Missoula Republican gathering, has connections to the anti-Indian Movement. She has called prominent anti-Indian activist Lisa Morris a “dear friend.” She sometimes sounds very much like Morris, switching her focus from the Bison Range to rants against tribal governments and Native Ameri-

cans in general. “I do not support this move [joint management of the Range] and do not support the approval of more Indian governments to become federally recognized,” she said. “I only want the best people to care for our federal public lands and those people are Civil Service workers.”

On the Blue Goose Alliance list serve, Bill West, manager of the National Bison Range for the Fish and Wildlife Service, posted a piece by Richard Lamm attributed to *High Country News* that discussed the notion of so-called white guilt. Lamm wrote that people of color used to experience discrimination that kept them from participating in society. However, Lamm down played the challenges people of color face today, saying current racism is more of a “hurdle than a barrier.” He blamed people of color for using the charge of racism to “excuse low performance.”

Reneau’s statements and West’s posting illustrate the racially-charged atmosphere of the Bison Range debate. Reneau’s comments insinuate that tribal employees cannot handle management tasks. The racist stereotype that Indians are lazy and incompetent has surfaced frequently during the debate. West’s decision to post the Lamm piece shows how desperate the Blue Goose Alliance is to down play the element of race. Lamm’s piece basically claims racism is not a problem in America, and, when it is a problem, it is something people of color use to their advantage.

The Blue Goose Alliance has been joined by a few other environmental organizations in opposing joint management. They have provided political cover for anti-Indian groups and activists. As the controversy continues, the rhetoric of the two movements is merging. Anti-Indian activists like Lisa Morris have adopted conservationists’ arguments, while Reneau, West and others are starting to delve into the issue of race and questioning tribal sovereignty.

Citing anti-tribal conspiracy theories, the Blue Goose Alliance also claims to be helping the federal employees of the Bison Range pay their legal fees. “The employees need verbal and written support but more importantly right now, they need cash,” Reneau wrote. “They are up against a federally recognized Indian government with \$378 million in local banks and my sources within the
(*Bison Range*, continued on page 8)

SECRETARY OF STATE IMPLIES SECESSION: WHITE SUPREMACISTS AND OTHERS TAKE UP THE CAUSE

In February, the *Washington Times* published a letter by Montana Secretary of State Brad Johnson. The letter's topic was a case currently before the U.S. Supreme Court dealing with the gun ban in Washington D.C.

Johnson claimed that, if the Supreme Court upheld the ban, it would void the contract by which Montana entered statehood. While he didn't specifically use the word "secede," he laid the groundwork for that conclusion, and he found a willing audience to accept it.

Kalispell's April Gaede, an influential white supremacist (see the October 2006 and August 2007 editions of *Network News* for more information), posted an article about Johnson's letter on "Stormfront," an online clearinghouse for the white power movement, under the heading "Montana may pull from Union." Readers followed up with comments that this was "really good news for White people," that the state would become a "white wonderland" and an "ethnic homeland." Many readers said the possibility of secession made them ready to move to Montana. Gaede later posted a message that she didn't really think Montana would secede, but the article demonstrated how Montanans thought differently and made the state a great place for white supremacists to live.

"White supremacists have talked for decades about creating an Aryan homeland in the Pacific Northwest," said the Network's Travis McAdam. "We believe that Johnson must clarify what he really meant in his letter. If he wants secession, Montanans need to know what their Secretary of State is promoting. If he doesn't, his explanation may stop people from associating our state with a haven for racists and anti-government activists."

In his letter to the *Washington Times*, Johnson referenced a website where Montana lawmakers had endorsed a resolution restating much of his letter. The resolution was created by the Montana Shooting Sports Association's Gary Marbut earlier this year.

Back in 1994, when Congress passed an assault weapons ban, Marbut drew up a plan to repeal Article I of the Montana Constitution so the state could secede. In 2000, he proudly told the media it was still sitting on his computer. Marbut and his organization have aligned with the militia movement over the years, as the Network chronicled in its report *Shooting for Respectability* that can be read at its website.

The extreme gun rights crowd has also welcomed Johnson's implications of secession. Online readers have congratulated Montana for potentially starting the second Civil War and have asked for real estate listings.

Some have discussed the need for Montana to take over the nuclear weapons in the state. One person said Montana could only fight off the federal government if it retained control of the weapons. Another said Montanans needed to locate the launch codes to "those beasts stacked in the silos," because then the federal government wouldn't be "able to do [expletive]!!"

"Groups like the Militia of Montana and Montana Freemen have hurt the state's reputation," McAdam said. "Discussions about white supremacists moving here and citizens taking over nuclear weapons doesn't help. Brad Johnson needs to clear up the confusion and declare his intentions." □

(*Bison Range*, from page 7)

CSKT [the tribes] tell me they have BILLIONS, with a B in other banks not listed. Yes, this is like a John Gresham novel."

The tribes have also been opposed by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). The Network's concern for PEER's use of anti-Indian stereotypes that exacerbated anti-Indian sentiment around the Bison Range controversy was covered by the *Missoula Independent* ["Butting Heads," 11/29/07]. PEER staff acknowledged receiving a letter from the Network outlining its concerns, but PEER focused on its doubts that the tribes could adequately manage the Bison Range.

The Good News

In January and February, the tribes and the federal government participated in negotiations in Missoula, Pablo and Denver, CO. These meetings were facilitated by the U.S. Department of Interior. While waiting outside the meeting, Susan Reneau told the media, "I'm opposed to special interest groups taking over our public lands. And I'm also extremely opposed to a sovereign nation taking over a national refuge or a national park."

After more than a year since the previous agreement was terminated by the federal government, the Annual Funding Agreement, which outlines the joint-management agreement, is scheduled to be completed this spring. The Agreement is currently drafted to put the tribes back in a management role at the Bison Range. Both parties made it clear that the joint operation was not "privatization," a charge leveled against the agreement by the Blue Goose Alliance, PEER and others. □

(Bitterroot, from page 3)

porter of the Big Sky Coalition based in the area. Dubrasich's comments supporting the Coalition are posted on the Coalition's website, which also links to his blog. The Coalition has been trying to legitimize itself through the backing of local politicians like Sen. Rick Laible (R-Darby) and supporting the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership, a deal between conservation groups and the logging industry. That makes the Coalition's decision to side with Dubrasich and his violence-laden tone both puzzling and revealing.

On the Big Sky Coalition's website under "Forestry Solutions," there is a link to a Power Point presentation by the Ravalli County Off-Road Users titled "Analysis of Fire Season Data 1989-2007."

The Power Point claims that nothing can be done about climate change,

and that the solution lies in large-scale logging projects. This conclusion fits with many of the speakers' comments supporting more logging at a Coalition rally last November. Despite this history, the Coalition's Executive Director Sonny LaSalle has claimed that his group does not support large-scale logging in the forest. The Power Point advocating the direct opposite is still on the group's website.

The antagonistic atmosphere that is developing in the Bitterroot is alarmingly similar to what happened in the Flathead Valley a few years ago. At that time, local radio station owner John Stokes was promoting negative stereotypes of local conservationists, who in turn experienced various forms of harassment and intimidation (for more on this, see the Network's report *School Yard Bullies: The Harassment of Conservationists in the*

Flathead on our website).

Groups like the Big Sky Coalition and Mike Dubrasich's Western Institute are providing the rhetoric in the Bitterroot. Based on what happened at the travel meeting, some locals are taking the next step. The Big Sky Coalition may also re-energize the atmosphere in the Flathead, where it plans to hold a meeting in April.

"The local conservationists, whether in the Bitterroot or the Flathead, are not the only targets. The democratic process itself also becomes a victim," says the Network's Travis McAdam. "When conservationists face threats at public meetings and while recreating on public lands, their desire to participate in the democratic process not surprisingly can break down. Physical threats and intimidation cannot be allowed to set the tone when debating public policy." □

(Equality Project, from page 6)

the Missoula Public Library will offer six weeks of interactive and informative programs—all focused on aspects of gay and lesbian life in Montana and beyond. Contact the library for more information at (406) 721-2665 or through its website at <http://missoulapubliclibrary.org/>.

Rehberg's Joke Offensive, Not Funny

In February, the Network and the Equality Project condemned U.S. Rep. Dennis Rehberg (R-MT) for making a "joke" at the expense of the gay and lesbian community. They also demanded an apology and asked to meet with the Montana Congressman.

Rehberg left a package on the airplane seat of fellow U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) during a congressional delegation trip to the Middle

East. The package included a stuffed sheep with gloves attached to it, books on cross-dressing and sign language, a Village People CD, and a T-shirt apparently referencing the scandal involving U.S. Sen. Larry Craig (R-ID), according to *The Hill*, a Washington, D.C., newspaper.

Craig pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct in August after being accused of using a series of foot taps and hand signals to solicit gay sex in a bathroom at the Minneapolis airport. He tried unsuccessfully to withdraw his guilty plea and has denied he was soliciting sex. The T-shirt Rehberg gave Simpson read, "My senator may not be gay, but my governor is Butch [a reference to Idaho Governor Butch Otter]."

Rehberg told *The Hill* he was proud of the gift bag. "I spent a bit of time putting the things together," he boasted. The Network quickly took

Rehberg to task for making fun of his gay and lesbian constituents.

"He plays silly pranks while he votes against hate crimes protections," said the Network's Christine Kaufmann. Rehberg voted against a House resolution in May 2007 that would have amended the federal definition of a hate crime to include gender identity and sexual orientation. Montana's gay and lesbian community demanded an apology and asked for a meeting with Rehberg.

Rehberg did not apologize, saying only that he meant no offense. As for the meeting, he said he had no time to meet with Montana's gay and lesbian community while in the state. As Montana's lone congressman, all members of the state's gay and lesbian community are his constituents. Instead, Rehberg told his constituents to come and meet with him in Washington D.C. □

(CI-100, from page 12)

life of an innocent child for the crimes of his father.” Not surprisingly, party activists are the driving forces behind the protests in front of health clinics in Missoula and Great Falls.

Along with stridently opposing reproductive freedom, the party’s platform supports many other anti-democratic notions, such as “The Unorganized Militia,” which are groups like the Militia of Montana. Similar to groups like the Montana Freemen, the party declares income taxes unconstitutional. Finally, the Constitution Party of Montana seeks to dismantle public education by abolishing the Department of Education, eliminating compulsory education laws, and abolishing property taxes (which help fund local public schools).

Jore told the press that he expected to have the support of churches that oppose abortion, citing Catholic and evangelical churches specifically. However, the Catholic Church has released a statement that it will not support the measure, and only four churches have endorsed it as we go to press—Butte’s Floral Park Baptist Church, the Frenchtown Community Church, Great Falls’ Westside Baptist Church, and Great Falls’ Triumph Lutheran Brethren Church.

Support for CI-100 has also not materialized from some of Montana’s leading Religious Right groups. Gregg Trude, head of Right to Life Montana, told the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* that his organization was neither supporting nor endorsing CI-100. Like its statewide counterpart, a local anti-choice group, Yellowstone Valley Christians for Life, announced it would not be taking a position. Back at the state level, the Network has learned Jeff Laszloffy of the Montana Family Foundation has said his group will not jump on board. So far, the only Religious Right group to formally endorse the measure is Montana-HOME (Help Our Moral Environment), a group led by leading anti-gay and censorship activist, Dallas Erickson.

Without much help from Montanans, Jore may have to look outside of the state. Currently, three other states face “fetal personhood” ballot initiatives. Nationally, the Thomas More Law Center has provided legal support for many of the initiatives. The Law Center, founded by Domino Pizza magnate Tom Monaghan, frequently represents the interests of Religious Right organizations. Jore has told the press that he expects the fight over

CI-100 to go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Law Center is a likely ally, since they have already had a presence in Montana.

In 2001, the Law Center represented Jonathan Martin’s Pro-Life Great Falls in a lawsuit against the City of Great Falls. Martin, chairman of the Constitution Party of Montana, sued the city when it tried to prevent his group from protesting in front of Planned Parenthood with graphic placards featuring pictures of allegedly-aborted fetuses.

Decline to Sign

The Network is part of Montanans for Safe and Healthy Families (<http://noci100.org>), a coalition of over 20 organizations opposed to CI-100. In order to stop CI-100, the coalition needs your help. First,

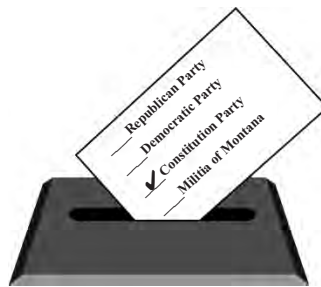
please decline to sign any petitions supporting CI-100 or seeking to put it on the ballot.

Second, please let us know if you see Jore or his anti-choice cohorts out in your community collecting signatures. Let us know when and where you see signature gatherers. Also, observe how signatures are being gathered:

- ◆ Gatherers must explain what they are asking people to sign.
- ◆ Court rulings dictate petitions cannot be left unattended and the signature gatherer must be present when a petition is signed.
- ◆ Signature gatherers must be Montana residents.

It is important that you do not interfere with anyone gathering signatures, as that is against the law. Send any information you gather to Research Director Travis McAdam at travismc@mhrn.org. □

The Constitution Party of Montana



The Radical Right Wing's Collision with Mainstream Politics

Report Issued by:
Montana Human Rights Network
P.O. Box 1222
Helena, MT 59624

The Network's report The Constitution Party of Montana: The Radical Right Wing's Collision with Mainstream Politics is a comprehensive look at the party. It is available at our website.

(Speaking, from page 2)

umes: *The Books, the Hate Group, and the Anti-Semitism that Underlies It All*. It can be found at the Network’s website.

Just opposing hate groups is not enough. Since 1990 when the Montana Human Rights Network formed, it has seen many organized hate groups come and go in the state. The Aryan Nations chapters folded and Klan units formed. The Klan disappeared and the Creativity Movement gained a hold. The National Alliance and American Nazi Party rose to prominence with the demise of the Creators. All of these groups amplify and prey upon the racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, and class inequity that already exist in our communities.

Communities need to address these underlying systemic problems. The Network hopes the dialogue fostered by “Speaking Volumes” will promote discussions of the problems that communities face. Only when the roots of bigotry and intolerance are dealt with can we declare victory and view the “Speaking Volumes” exhibit as representative of our collective past.

**Help the Network
Travel with the Exhibit**

“Speaking Volumes” will remain in Helena through mid-April. During that time, the Network will host programs about how the white supremacist books and the ideology they pro-

mote relate to more common forms of bigotry. Scheduled presentations include examinations of anti-Indian and anti-gay discrimination.

When “Speaking Volumes” leaves Helena, it is already slated to visit nine more Montana communities and tour consistently through 2010 (see box on page 2). The Network will conduct programs in all the communities where the exhibit visits. Its ability to do so depends on funding to keep staff on the road. If you are interested in learning more about the exhibit or helping the Network support its community education around “Speaking Volumes,” please call Michele Herrington at (406) 442-5506 ext. 14 or by e-mail at development@mhrn.org. □

MHRN’S MERCHANDISE LIST

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GATHERING SIGNATURES TO INVADe MEDICAL PRIVACY: JORE, FRINGE PARTY TRYING TO QUALIFY AMENDMENT

In January, Montana's Attorney General gave the go-ahead to Rep. Rick Jore and his extreme Constitution Party of Montana to start gathering signatures to place CI-100 on the November 2008 ballot.

CI-100 declares that life begins at conception, and that a fertilized egg has a "paramount and fundamental right to life." To get it on the ballot, Jore and his anti-choice supporters need the signatures of 44,615 registered voters, including 10% in at least 40 of Montana's House of Representative districts. They have until June 20, 2008 (for more background on CI-100, see the December 2007 edition of *Network News*).

The Constitution Party of Montana's anti-choice measure is part of the right wing's overall campaign to limit reproductive freedom by infringing on the rights recognized in *Roe v. Wade*. "I realize this challenges the very foundation of *Roe v. Wade*," Jore has told the press.

CI-100 also reveals inconsistencies in the fringe party's own doc-



Rep. Rick Jore
(R-Ronan)

trine. The party promotes both the sanctity of so-called "fetal rights" and "abolishing" the 14th Amendment, essentially advocating for giving due process rights to the fetus and taking them away from other Americans. The party also pays lip service to keeping the government out of the lives of its citizens while, at the same time, CI-100 gives the state the ability to have an intrusive role in every decision a pregnant woman makes.

While Jore and CI-100 supporters are focusing on banning abortion,

the proposed amendment has many other dangerous outcomes as well. During the 2007 Montana Legislature, Jore said this type of proposal would be used to investigate women who experience miscarriages. CI-100 could also prohibit the use of certain birth control methods and lead to a ban on stem-cell research and in-vitro fertilization. Ultimately, CI-100 would undermine the ability of pregnant women to make private medical decisions in consultation with their doctors.

In reading the Constitution Party of Montana's platform, it is easy to see why it supports such an extreme constitutional amendment and why many of its activists gravitate toward the most radical elements of the anti-choice movement. Its "Sanctity of Life" plank states that, from the moment of "fertilization," the egg is a "human being created in God's image." Unlike many conservative entities, the party holds that women whose pregnancies result from rape and incest must carry their fetuses to term, because it is "unconscionable to take the
(CI-100, cont. on page 10)

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