

# HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK NEWS

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## FRINGE PARTY PUSHES “FETAL RIGHTS:”

### JORE-LED FACTION SEEKS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

In late October, state Rep. Rick Jore (Constitution Party of Montana-Ronan) submitted language for a constitutional amendment declaring life begins at conception, and that a fertilized egg has a “paramount and fundamental right to life.” 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*. If the amendment’s language is approved by the Montana Attorney General, Jore and his party can start gathering signatures to place it on the General Election ballot in 2008. Getting on the ballot would require over 44,000 signatures of qualified Montana voters.

The proposed constitutional amendment comes on the heels of almost identical failed legislation carried by Jore during the 2007 Montana Legislature. During a committee hearing on his bill, Jore said he sponsored the legislation to limit abortion and create “due process for protecting” the fetus and giving it rights equal to the pregnant woman. The main proponent of the bill at the hearing was Dr. Patrick Johnston, who came all the way from Ohio to testify.

Dr. Patrick Johnston is the founder of the Association of Pro-Life Physicians, which is comprised of doctors who will not perform or refer patients for abortion services. The group opposes abortion in all cases, even when pregnancy results from rape and incest. While saying physicians need to respond with empathy for women who may be considering an abortion, his group believes it must “respond in compassion to the needs of her unborn child.” The blog “Talk to Action,” which reports on the Religious Right, stated that Johnston’s past writings have endorsed murdering abortion providers and using the death penalty against gays and lesbians.

Along with Johnston, many Religious Right groups supported the bill. Right to Life of Montana, the Montana Family Foundation, and Concerned Women for America spoke in favor of it. “Unborn babies,” Harris Himes of Montana Values Alliance declared, “have the same legal rights” as all Montanans. The Montana Catholic Conference urged the committee to respect and protect

*(Initiative, continued on page 2)*



*Rep. Rick Jore  
(C-Ronan)*

*Human Rights  
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publication of the  
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profit organization.*

*Editor: Travis McAdam  
Contributors: Christine  
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Abbott.*

*(Initiative, from page 1)*  
life from conception. Constitution Party of Montana activists Rick Komeda, Roger Nelson, Timothy Sollid and Jonathan Martin also testified in support of the bill.

Opponents of Jore's bill pointed out the significant problems with it. Beth Brenneman of the Montana Advocacy Program told the committee that women with mental illness can be taking medication that can harm a fetus; however, taking them off these medications can also be problematic. Brenneman told lawmakers they needed to consider all the ramifications of the bill, instead of focusing just on abortion.

Debbie Smith of the Montana ACLU pointed out that Jore's legislation ended doctor-patient privacy, because law enforcement and state agencies could always be in the room. She said the bill made women and their fetuses "adversaries."

The House Judiciary Committee passed the bill 10-7 to the floor of the House. On the floor, Jore said his legislation sought to make up for how society had "devalued life since 1973 and the *Roe v. Wade* decision." Jore admitted his proposal would be used to investigate the private activities of women who experienced miscarriages.

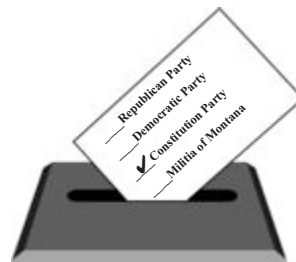
"My view is that we're simply giving due process rights to a human being that can't defend itself," he commented. His bill died on a 45-53 vote.

### **A Platform of Inconsistency and Extremism**

The fringe Constitution Party of Montana's proposed constitutional amendment reveals inconsistencies within its own doctrine. The party promotes both the sanctity of so-

called "fetal rights" and "abolishing" the 14<sup>th</sup> 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 at the same time its proposed amendment guarantees the state will have an intrusive role in every decision a pregnant woman makes.

### **The Constitution Party of Montana**



### **The Radical Right Wing's Collision with Mainstream Politics**

Report Issued by:  
Montana Human Rights Network  
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*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 [www.mhrn.org](http://www.mhrn.org).

In reading the Constitution Party of Montana's platform, it is easy to see why it supports such an extreme amendment and why many of its activists gravitate towards the most radical elements of the ant-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 life of an

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

Along with stridently opposing reproductive freedom, the Constitution Party of Montana's platform supports "The Unorganized Militia," which are groups like the Militia of Montana. Michael Heit, founder of the state party, also helped form Project 7, a militia group in the Flathead Valley that made national headlines for stockpiling ammunition and creating a hit list of local criminal justice employees. The party's platform has continued to support militias, even after Heit left leadership positions.

Similar to groups like the Montana Freeman, the party declares income taxes unconstitutional. The party also 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).

### **The Party's Capacity to Pass an Amendment**

The Constitution Party of Montana has some momentum upon which to build as it advocates for the proposed amendment. It finally got a candidate (Rick Jore) elected to the Montana Legislature in 2006. Also in 2006, the party ran a candidate for Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court who received 86,027 votes. This assured the party it would maintain its ballot access for the 2008 election cycle, meaning it can concentrate on the amendment instead of gaining ballot access. The party has relatively active local chapters in the Flathead  
*(Initiative, continued on page 3)*

## MISSOULA: A COMMUNITY UNDER ATTACK

In November, two more anti-gay assaults occurred in Missoula. Both the victims and law enforcement officials recognized that anti-gay bias motivated these crimes, but under current law the assaults do not fall under the state's Malicious Intimidation and Harassment Act. These recent incidents are further evidence that the current statute needs to be changed.

In early November, two young people were attacked in separate incidents. A 22-year-old male University of Montana student was attacked by four men on the campus footbridge in the early hours of the morning. The victim was repeatedly kicked in the chest and back, after being shoved to the ground. All the while his assailants yelled anti-gay slurs at him.

Following the University of Montana Grizzly football game that same weekend, Jess Keith was attacked by four women. In the Press Box Restaurant, Keith offered an apparently ill woman some water. The woman's friends responded by calling her a "dyke" and directing her to use the men's room. Later the women ambushed Keith in the Missoula Public Library parking lot yelling, "There she is." The attackers exited their car and punched Keith in the face, knocking her to the ground. They proceeded to kick her repeatedly in the back.

More than 20 organizations, including the Network, participated in the "Speak Up, Stand Out" rally on November 26 in Missoula to support the victims and raise awareness. Keith and various state and local leaders spoke to a crowd of 250 about the attacks and their support of legislation that would address these bias-based crimes. The event also rallied support for "The Matthew Shepard Act," which would add sexual orientation to federal hate crimes law. It is currently making its way through Congress. Both of Montana's Democratic U.S. Senators, Max Baucus and Jon Tester, have affirmed their support of the bill. U.S. Rep. Dennis Rehberg (R-MT) has opposed it. To sign a petition asking Rehberg to support the measure, visit Forward Montana's website at <http://www.forwardmontana.org>.

Currently Montana's hate crimes statute does not include sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. As these recent Missoula attacks show, the current law needs to be changed. During the 2007 Montana Legislature and for over 15 years, the Network has supported attempts to add these targeted groups to the current law. In addition, the Network continues to explore the possibility of enacting local hate crimes ordinances. □

### *(Initiative, from page 2)*

and Bitterroot Valleys, Yellowstone County and Great Falls. However, even with these developments, it cannot win on its own. It will need help.

There are various places the Constitution Party of Montana can look for, and possibly receive, support. It will continue to exploit and recruit support from the right wing of the Montana Republican Party, including incumbent legislators.

The Constitution Party can also expect help from Religious Right groups like the Montana Family Foundation. If the Family Foundation does engage, Montana voters will likely receive mailings support-

ing the amendment from Colorado's Focus on the Family Action, a national Religious Right heavyweight and the Foundation's parent organization. These types of mailings occurred during the Family Foundation's push to ban gay marriage in Montana during the 2004 election cycle.

Other less prominent Religious Right groups, like Right to Life of Montana and Montana Eagle Forum, will likely sign onto the amendment campaign as well. The Montana Catholic Conference, which played a significant role in the gay-marriage ban and testified in support of Jore's bill, could be an important partner for

the Constitution Party of Montana if it joins the amendment campaign.

"Across the country, state chapters of the Constitution Party are treated like political lepers that mainstream conservatives try to marginalize and avoid," says the Network's Travis McAdam. "It remains to be seen if other groups will be willing to take on the political baggage that comes from working with the ultra-conservative, right-wing ideologues that make up the Constitution Party of Montana to pass the amendment." □

## Right-Wing Roundup: NEWS RELATED TO MONTANA'S SELF-STYLED "PATRIOTS"

During the past several months, new developments occurred regarding racists, anti-government "patriots," and Montana.

### Roots Seeks Law License

With a law degree from Rhode Island's Roger Williams University, Roger Roots has returned to Montana and wants a license to practice law. The Network became very familiar with Roots in 1994 when he sued the Network for libel after it called him a Klan organizer. A jury ruled in the Network's favor.

Roots' involvement in the white supremacist movement is well documented. He was an associate of John Abar, a Klan organizer in Montana and Wyoming, throughout the 1990s.

In the early 1990s, Roots authored the pamphlet *Whites and Blacks: 100 Facts (and One Lie)*. Among other things, the pamphlet stated whites are more intelligent than people of color and suggested people of color should be classified as a different species. Serving as a correspondent for *The Jubilee*, Roots wrote articles supporting Red Beckman, an anti-Semitic tax protestor from Billings. *The Jubilee* was a publication based on Christian Identity, a racist theology claiming people of color are sub-

human beasts and Jews are the literal children of Satan.

In 1999, Roots graduated with honors from law school but was denied a license to practice law in Rhode Island due to his criminal past and his lack of candor and truthful-

jurors can ignore laws they don't like and set free defendants even if evidence proves the law was broken. At a 2006 FIJA meeting, Roots reconnected with his old friend Red Beckman, whom FIJA presented with an award for being the "Grandfather of FIJA."

While pursuing a law license in Montana, Roots is representing a well-known white supremacist with Montana connections in Nebraska. In 2006, Rudy Stanko was convicted of being a felon illegally possessing firearms and was sentenced to six years in federal prison (see the June 2006 *Network News* for more on the case).

Stanko, a self-proclaimed reverend of the white supremacist Church of the Creator, is appealing the case and Roots is representing him. Roots and Stanko claim that, as a rancher, Stanko's guns were tools of his trade. They also claim his jury was comprised of Western Nebraskans, who possess different political and cultural viewpoints on guns than Eastern Nebraskans. Therefore, they argue that Stanko was tried by an unlawful jury. The appeal is supported by FIJA, the Second Amendment Foundation, and the Gun Owners Foundation.

*(Roundup, continued on page 5)*



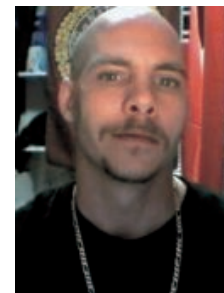
Roger Roots



Rudy Stanko



Shawn Stuart



Dan Benson

ness on his application. Roots re-applied two years later and received his license. He is now living in the Livingston area and has started a business called Trial and Error Enterprises. He is also serving on the advisory board of the Fully Informed Jury Association (FIJA). FIJA, a popular "patriot" group, teaches that



*(Roundup, from page 4)*

### **Former Nazi Legislative Candidate Relocates to Alaska**

In 2006, Shawn Stuart of Butte filed to run for the Montana Legislature as a Republican. At the time, he was also the state leader for the National Socialist Movement, also known as the American Nazi Party (see the June 2006 and October 2006 editions of *Network News* for more on Stuart). After the Network exposed Stuart's Nazi connections, the Montana Republican Party announced it would support the Democrat in the General Election.

Running unopposed in the Republican primary, Stuart picked up 152 votes. While he was soundly defeated in the General Election, he did garner 476 votes, or approximately 18% of the votes cast. He ran a fairly quiet campaign and disappeared from Butte shortly thereafter. He also left the American Nazi Party during an internal fight within the group. At the time, it was rumored he was going to start his own hate group called the European American Forum.

Early in 2007, the Network received a report that Stuart had surfaced in Alaska. As he did during his legislative campaign, Stuart has been emphasizing his military service and time in Iraq. Local newspapers have featured his comments on the war alongside those of other veterans.

The person contacting the Network became concerned about Stuart when he showed up at a poker tournament wearing a Ku Klux Klan T-shirt. The person also told Network staff that Stuart could be found regularly playing poker at the local VFW.

### **Nazi Compatriot**

### **Moves Back to Washington**

Shawn Stuart wasn't the only member of the National Socialist Movement to leave Montana this year. While Stuart was the group's Montana leader, Dan Benson served as the group's unit leader in Libby. In March 2007, Benson moved to Spokane, WA, where he served as that city's unit leader. By November 2007, the National Socialist Movement's Jeff Schoep announced Benson has resigned from the group, most likely because of the internal fight that led Stuart to leave as well.

While in Libby, the Network received reports that Benson and his cronies marched down sidewalks and distributed white supremacist literature. In July 2006, they escalated their activism. Benson and fellow Nazi-Party member Ervin Stradley faced charges of malicious intimidation, harassment, disorderly conduct, and assault. The charges stemmed from multiple encounters with a multi-racial family in Libby.

Benson and Stradley ended up pleading guilty to lesser charges. Each had jail time suspended and were fined \$100 (for more on Benson, see the June 2006 and October 2006 editions of *Network News*).

### **Racist Bank Robber Gets More Prison Time**

In May 2005, Jay Vaughn Gregory robbed a Missoula bank with a fake handgun and threatened to detonate a bomb. A federal judge in Missoula sentenced him to 20 years in federal prison. In August 2007, a Utah judge added another 20 years for robbing a bank in Salt Lake City.

Gregory claimed he robbed banks in an effort to overthrow the

government and create an Aryan homeland. He also said he was a member of the white supremacist paramilitary group The Order. During the 1980s, The Order carried out armored car robberies, assassinations, and other crimes in the name of a racist revolution. Gregory was not known to be a member at that time.

Gregory tried to justify his robberies by saying he was trying to save America from non-whites and immigrants. He told jurors that he wanted Utah, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana to secede from the union and form a "racially pure" white homeland. After sentencing, he threatened the Utah judge, saying the judge couldn't "escape the wrath you so rightfully deserve."

### **Freemen Leader's Son in Trouble**

For committing bank fraud, conspiracy, and threatening public officials, the leader of the Montana Freemen, Leroy Schweitzer, was locked up in a Colorado federal prison. His projected release date isn't until 2018. His son, Craig Schweitzer, appears to be channeling his father's ideology in a dispute with the Federal Aviation Administration.

Craig Schweitzer runs a business chartering air travel for hunters in Alaska. His flying license was revoked by the FAA for numerous violations. Schweitzer had exceeded weight limits on his planes and had not disclosed on his medical application that he was cited for refusing to take a breathalyzer test after being pulled over on suspicion of drunk driving. Before the current controversy, he was fined \$500 for assault when he threatened to get a gun and *(Roundup, continued on page 10)*

## TURNING DOWN THE VOLUME: NETWORK CONTESTS STOKES' BROADCAST LICENSE

Since taking over Kalispell's KGEZ Radio, John Stokes and his callers have used his talk show, "The Edge," to target and harass people in the Flathead Valley. They have discussed violent acts they would like to carry out against community members, even giving directions and addresses to the targets' homes. Stokes has also burned green swastikas at his station to intimidate local conservationists, whom he calls "Green Nazis."

For these reasons and many others, the Network and other community members submitted petitions with the Federal Communications Commission to deny renewal of Stokes' broadcast license in 2005. In April 2007, the FCC announced it would renew the license. However, with the help of pro-bono attorneys, the Network has filed a "Petition for Reconsideration" with the FCC to try to get a reversal of the decision.

In the letter announcing the license renewal, the FCC's Peter Doyle restated some of the charges leveled against Stokes by petitioners. They included Stokes' use of his radio station to incite violence, launch personal attacks against his perceived enemies, and spread lies. Despite the volume of information submitted, Doyle concluded that the FCC wouldn't deny Stokes his license. He claimed the charges made by the petitioners were "matters of opinion" that did not "constitute willful and deliberate misinterpretation" by Stokes. Doyle also said some of the petitions, including the Network's, had been filed too late with the FCC.

A telecommunications attorney based in Washington D.C. read the decision and disagreed with the FCC's ruling based on two main points. First, precedent stated that broadcast licenses couldn't be used to incite violence. Second, the FCC claimed KGEZ served the public interest without citing any supporting evidence. The attorney offered to work with the Network to formally appeal the FCC's decision.

In late May, the Network and one of its members, Kate Hunt, filed a "Petition for Reconsideration" with the FCC. The petition stated Stokes had used his license to "repeatedly and systematically encourage and incite specific and often imminent violent acts" against people in the community. It stated KGEZ offered nothing to the Flathead Valley.

The petition cited much of the information contained in the Network's original objection, including audio clips of Stokes himself. These clips included Stokes falsely accusing Network staffers of laundering money, being under criminal investigation, and participating with domestic terrorist groups. Audio clips also featured Stokes calling the Network a domestic terrorist organization and claiming that it gave awards to anti-Semites.

The petition stated Stokes had failed to demonstrate a single example of programming that responded to local community needs. Instead, his descriptions of KGEZ programming were "cryptic and meaningless." The petition also took Stokes to task for lying

in his FCC filings and for trying to prevent citizens from participating in the license renewal process. "The record amply demonstrates that KGEZ is being operated as a menace to its community," the petition concluded.

In June, Stokes filed his opposition to the Network's Petition for Reconsideration, to which the Network has filed a reply.

### Stokes Legal Problems Continue

Back in 2001, Stokes thought the State of Montana was going to make him a millionaire. The Department of Transportation was expanding Highway 93 and needed a seven-foot wide piece of property on which KGEZ is located. Stokes initially said the state would have to pay  
(*Stokes, continued on page 10*)



*John Stokes lights a green swastika on fire as part of his battle against local conservationists, whom he calls "Green Nazis."*

# Fair Lending is Economic Justice:

## NETWORK HELPS COMBAT PREDATORY LENDING

Tiki Hut Title Loan is a so-called “payday” lender in Billings, MT. While portraying itself as offering a service to the community, its real attitude towards customers may be revealed by its registered name with Montana’s Secretary of State--Loan Shark, Inc. Loan Shark, Inc. is registered to Matthew O’Bleness at Tiki Hut’s address.

Jennifer Beardsley, Montana Legal Service’s Statewide Consumer Protection attorney, has dealt with many clients trying to recover from horrible experiences with predatory lenders. One of her clients accessed a loan to pay a veterinarian bill for his dogs.

By the time he met with Beardsley, he had eight loans with interest rates ranging from 300%-700%. The lender threatened to get him thrown in jail. An employee of the company even came to his house to make the threat in person. Beardsley’s client had already been making payments to the lender for a year, but he ended up having to file for bankruptcy.

Beardsley says her clients already live on “incredibly tight budgets.” Once they take out one payday loan, they can’t pay it off because of the outrageous interest rates. The person takes out another loan to pay off the first. An endless “debt trap” ensues, which leaves declaring bankruptcy the only option for some clients.

In November, a coalition of Montana organizations, including the Network, submitted language for a ballot initiative that restricts the interest rate charged by predatory lenders to

36% annually.

Following nearly eight years of failed legislation, the coalition decided a ballot initiative was the best way to address regulation of short-term lending. During the 2007 legislative session, community proponents of a bill pointed out the predatory nature of these loans and how the companies target certain groups of people.

Beardsley said research done in Billings shows payday lenders do target low-income people, the elderly and disabled. The Center for Responsible Lending reports that 66% of borrowers are low-income women. As an example of specific targeting, the Center quotes a payday lender’s business plan which stated, “welfare-to-work mothers [are an] excellent opportunity for check cashing and cash advance businesses.”

Nationally, neighborhoods of color have three times as many payday loan businesses as white neighborhoods, and people of color are two times more likely to borrow money from predatory lenders.

Beardsley described a trend she has witnessed with divorced women. They find themselves with less household income than when they were married and have trouble keeping up with bills. They own their cars, so they use title loan businesses. The women must keep paying the loans or they lose their car, which would cause some to lose their jobs. Therefore, the money goes to the lender, instead of towards groceries and meeting other basic needs for themselves and their children.

Advocates for human rights, consumers and low-wage earners, along

with women’s rights organizations, are working together to help protect Montanans who access these types of secured loans. Payday loan companies often charge annual interest rates of up to 650%.

These loan companies are set up to extract maximum profit from the working poor by increasing payday loan fees and interest rates. This leads to debt traps in which the borrower is forced to take out another loan to pay for the interest on the first.

According to an industry watchdog, the average borrower takes out nine payday loans per year. The organization reports that some 40% of borrowers don’t realize the hefty interest rates they are charged and assume it is less than 30% APR.

The campaign to pass the initiative in Montana will raise public awareness about the predatory nature of payday loans. When it comes to economic justice, it’s not only about equal pay and fair taxation, but corporate responsibility to the individual as a consumer and government responsibility to protect the people from unjust practices.

Beardsley said the predatory lending business model assumes its clientele is disenfranchised and won’t be aware that there are attorneys, through organizations like Montana Legal Services, to help them battle predatory lenders.

“I believe they [predatory lenders] are legalized loan sharks,” she said. According to filings with the Secretary of State, the owners of Tiki Hut seem to agree. □

## THE BIG SKY COALITION: NEW GROUP, OLD SCHOOL “WISE USE”

On November 1, the first major public event of the Big Sky Coalition was held at the fairgrounds in Hamilton. Although the event was relatively civil, the rhetoric used by some of the 500 attendees and panelists echoed the anti-environmental “Wise Use” movement.

According to its website, the Big Sky Coalition “represents a diverse group of Montanans who believe that current forest management policies are resulting in annual catastrophic fires.”

The group insinuates that there is an unbalanced approach to environmental issues, like forest management, and that this is causing fires that have a “negative impact on the health and economic interest of Montana citizens.”

These statements align the group with other Wise Use organizations like Citizens for Balanced Use, which recently stated that wildfires were a direct result of wilderness designation and sustainable-forest management advocated by environmental organizations.

The leaders of the Big Sky Coalition are Tom and Charlotte Robak, transplants from San Luis Obispo, CA. The Robaks own a place on the West Fork of the Bitterroot River as well as several other properties up and down the Bitterroot.

Tom Robak has been very active in protesting streamside setback regulations in Ravalli County. Two adver-

tisements in the *Ravalli Republic* opposing the setbacks were paid for by Robak, with one featuring the name of the Big Sky Coalition.

Along with the Coalition, organizers of the November rally included retired Forest Supervisor Vito (Sonny) LaSalle, a long-time critic of efforts by local environmentalists; and state Sen. Rick Laible (R-Darby), also a critic of streamside setback

repeated the old Wise Use canard that “every tree is sucking moisture out of the already-dry land.”

As in their press statements, LaSalle’s and Robak’s opening comments at the rally stated that they were not there to blame anyone. However, the content of their literature and presentation repeatedly blamed environmentalists for delaying timber projects through litigation which set

the stage for catastrophic fires. Friends of the Bitterroot, a local environmental organization, has indicated it would be willing to discuss thinning in the wildland-urban interface, but the type of logging proposed by the Big Sky Coalition in the name of fire management would do more damage than good.

In a recent Big Sky Coalition blog post, James D. Peterson, Ex-

ecutive Director of The Evergreen Foundation, was quoted at length from his presentation to the Lolo Resource Advisory Council in Hamilton on November 27, 2007.

The Evergreen Foundation is a front group for extractive industry heavyweights like the Boise Cascade Corporation. Peterson at one point in his presentation stated, “...radical environmentalists hate the free enterprise system more than they love the environment.” He claimed environmental groups have undue influence with the Forest Service.

He went on to positively recognize the efforts of the Big Sky *(Coalition, continued on page 9)*



*Based in the Bitterroot Valley, the Big Sky Coalition is the newest “Wise Use” group to organize against Montana environmentalists.*

regulations and the efforts of local environmentalists.

According to the Network’s Bitterroot organizer Bill LaCroix, these two men and Ravalli County Commissioner Alan Thompson (another of the rally’s panelists), have locally promoted Wise Use concepts and have made comments in the local press blaming environmentalists for fires.

During the rally, an attendee referred to environmentalists as “obstructionists,” and Laible reiterated a line from the Coalition’s literature. He said he was “mad as hell and not going to take it anymore.” Laible also



*(Coalition, from page 8)*

Coalition’s rally, to blame the federal government for both fires and economic downturns in extractive industry, and argue that climate scientists are wrong in their assessment of the fire and drought situations in the West.

**County Supremacy:  
Linking Loggers and “Patriots”**

The language and organizing methods used by the Big Sky Coalition and its allies have drawn heavily from the Wise Use movement. When Wise Use began, the founders established it to funnel corporate money to community groups promoting anti-environmental ideology. The goal was to make extractive industry appear to have grassroots support. It quickly began promoting loggers, miners, and off-road enthusiasts as the “true environmentalists.”

Wise Use activists view traditional environmentalists and any adoption of their ideology in public policy as radical. As an example, the Big Sky Coalition’s literature asks, “Do you feel like government policy is being dictated by a small radical group?”

Over the years, the Network has witnessed plenty of overlap between the Wise Use and “patriot” movements. The concept of county supremacy and a strident dislike of the federal government are the binding components. At its basic level, county supremacy holds that all political power should reside at the county level. Generally, there are two versions of the idea. The Wise Use movement teaches that county commissions should have the ultimate authority in determining what is done with all the land within a county’s boundaries, including land under the jurisdiction of federal and state agencies.

The other version of county supremacy was popularized by the racist and anti-Semitic Posse Comitatus. The Posse believed the county sheriff was the only legitimate law enforcer, and it was the duty of the sheriff to protect citizens from the federal government. This belief was part of a larger anti-Semitic conspiracy theory claiming Jews controlled the government. This version of county supremacy was largely incorporated into the anti-government “patriot” movement.

At the local level, these two versions of county su-

premacy often merge, and the overlap between militia and Wise Use groups isn’t new. John Trochmann, founder of the Militia of Montana, has said Wise Use fits with his group’s ideology. A pioneering Wise Use group, the National Federal Lands Conference, advocated forming militias back in the early 1990s. It also listed the Militia of Montana’s contact information in its newsletter.



*Sen. Rick Laible (R-Darby) has been an early ally of the Big Sky Coalition*

**The Latest Player**

Ron Arnold, the Wise Use movement’s founder, stated, “Our [Wise Use] goal is to destroy, to eradicate the environmental movement.” Masquerading as “environmentalists with common sense,” the Big Sky Coalition is the newest group seeking to carve out its own niche in Montana’s anti-environmental movement.

Although the Big Sky Coalition has thus far maintained a civil existence, it is not clear if the Robaks fully understand the history of anti-environmental activism in the Bitterroot Valley or the Wise Use nature of their approach. It is, however, clear to the Network that the Big Sky Coalition represents a concerted effort to garner support for the sanctity of private property rights and extractive industries. □

*A big THANK YOU*

To all of you who have (and will!) supported the Montana Human Rights Network’s End of the Year Appeal!



*Donations to the Network help us to advance equality, justice, and democracy for all the people of Montana.*

*(Stokes, from page 6)*

him \$10.9 million before dropping the total to \$4.7 million. Following a provision in the law, the Department of Transportation deposited \$750,000 into an account that Stokes could access. However, when the two sides agreed on a price of \$400,000 for the piece of land, Stokes was required to pay back \$350,000. By the time he did, interest had accrued and he owed \$450,000.

In July, Stokes accused his attorney in the case, Anaconda's Wade Dahood, of embezzling \$400,000 of the money that the Department of Transportation had placed into the account. Dahood denied the allegation, saying Stokes was "trying to find some way to rescue his fragile economic condition." Stokes responded calling Dahood "old and senile and crazy in the head." He filed a complaint with the Montana Supreme Court's Office of Disciplinary Counsel against Dahood.

The highway expansion case didn't result in the flow of taxpayer funds to Stokes that he wanted, but he has kept that dream alive. His current target is the City of Kalispell. The city wants to extend an airport runway, but KGEZ's broadcasting towers are higher than the Federal Aviation Administration will allow in proximity to a runway.

Stokes claims the city won't pay him a fair amount to either move the current towers or change them. "I will not accept any of the proposals," Stokes wrote in a guest editorial. He has also claimed that "at no time" has the city "bargained in good faith" with him. In the past, Stokes told listeners of "The Edge" that he wanted \$2.5 million to move the towers. He also claims the city is encouraging neighboring property owners to file lawsuits against him.

### Stokes' Swan Song?

By September, media reports surfaced that Stokes was trying to sell KGEZ. Griffin Media Brokers has advertised the station for \$4 million. Their ad states that the license comes with the station at no charge. According to the Network's attorneys, Stokes cannot sell his FCC license until the current contention of its renewal is resolved. That means Stokes is misrepresenting the terms of sale to potential buyers, as he cannot unload his station until a decision is made on the Network's motion before the FCC. □

*(Roundup, from page 5)*

shoot a woman who was serving him with legal papers. Schweitzer's appeal of the FAA ruling was denied.

"As much as people love America, and I feel for it too, I think our government has betrayed us," Craig Schweitzer said. "There are men who fought and died for the freedoms we're supposed to have in this country."

Craig Schweitzer might be heading down the same path as his father. Leroy Schweitzer began his anti-government journey in 1977, when the IRS audited his crop dusting business. Schweitzer refused to pay his \$700 tax bill, and the IRS froze \$6,000 in his business account. A business partner ended up paying the delinquent taxes. Schweitzer was audited again in 1978 and shortly thereafter became a full-blown tax protestor.

### Racist Leaflets Dropped in Dillon

Beginning in May, the City of Dillon began experiencing racist leaflets being dropped at businesses and left on cars. The fliers warned readers about the dangers of interracial sex with quotations such as, "Don't have sex with Blacks or Hispanics! Avoid AIDS." An investigation into the source of these fliers continues, but there are no suspects at this time.

The Network was able to track the text of the fliers to National Alliance literature that has circulated around the country. The National Alliance is one of the largest and most active hate groups in the United States. Some of the National Alliance fliers containing the text feature a photo of an African American man

proclaiming he lied about being HIV positive and had sex with "dozens of white women."

Neither the National Alliance logo nor contact information appears on the Dillon fliers but much of the content is exactly the same. National Alliance literature has been found in many Montana communities over the years, as the hate group has had local recruiters based in the state.

The fliers also illustrate how immigration has become the favorite wedge issue for the radical right wing, achieving a status that parallels the hatred of gays and lesbians. Along with the warnings about "Blacks and Hispanics," the fliers state, "...inter-racial heterosexual sex is now at least, if not more, as dangerous as multiple partner homosexual contacts." □

(Exhibit, from page 12)

Once back at the office, the Network sent complete sets of the books, which featured titles like *The White Man's Bible* and *On the Brink of a Bloody Racial Holy War*, to various monitoring groups, academic institutions and museums. That still left 4,000 books on the shelves, and the Network wondering what to do with them.

The Network approached the Holter Museum about using the books to create art pieces that would stimulate public discussion about bigotry and intolerance. Artists from around the country submitted pieces, some of which directly incorporate the books while other pieces are a response to the material in the books. Over 60 pieces were selected for the show.

The exhibit is scheduled at the Holter Museum from Jan. 25, 2008, through April 15, 2008. It will then travel almost constantly through 2010 to 10 other Montana cit-

**Opening Dates and Locations**

1/25/08	Helena	Holter Museum of Art
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 Art Museum

ies (see inset box). Stay tuned for more information about the exhibit coming to your community! ☐

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## “TRANSFORMING HATE:” ART EXHIBIT OPENS IN JANUARY

The Human Rights Network has been working on a project with Helena’s Holter Museum of Art for the past couple of years. The goal of the project was to create an exhibit that transformed white supremacist literature into art pieces that would stimulate public discussion about bigotry and intolerance. The exhibit, “Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate” is scheduled to open in January 2008.

The story began with a phone call back in December 2003. A defector from the racist Church of the Creator Northwest called the Network. He told Network staff that he wanted to leave the white supremacist movement and was willing to talk to the Network about the Church of the Creator’s activities.

The defector also told Network staff that he was in charge of filling mail orders for the hate group’s propaganda. To that end, he had the combination to a storage locker in Superior, MT, which contained several boxes of internal correspondence and many more boxes full of the group’s white supremacist books.

In order to leave the hate movement and get out of Montana, he offered to sell the materials in the storage locker to the Network for a small amount of gas money. Network staff scheduled a meeting in Missoula with the defector and determined he really did want out of the movement. After having him sign a bill of sale, Network staff headed to Superior with two pickup trucks and a U-Haul to take possession of the materials.

*(Exhibit, continued on page 11)*



Tim Holmes piece titled “One Truth Faith”



Tim Holmes piece titled “The White Book, Extra Bleach”



Lei Curtis piece titled “Superior”

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