

# NORTH COAST



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In a dark time the eye begins to see  
~Theodore Roethke

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## IT'S THE OIL, STUPID!

BY BILLY HULTZ

*"The USA is an oilgarchy."  
~Said by many*

What was Vietnam about? Iraq? Afghanistan. Colombia? Venezuela? Or, bring it all back home, ANWR, Global warming, SUVs, The Clean Air Act? The Clean Water Act? It is about oil, and has been for the last three-quarters of a century. Who rules America? Who rules the world? Those with power. Power comes from oil. Oil powers your car, powers the electric plants that run your television, lights and computer, the military planes, ships and tanks.

Thus it is no surprise that the new President of Afghanistan is a former AMACO employee, one of the oil companies bidding to build a pipeline from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. Or that the recent coup attempt against the democratically elected President of Venezuela was partially caused by his refusal to stop selling oil to Cuba. It is also, tragically, no surprise that the current residents of the White House are both 'oil men' who, though they lost the popular vote, were placed in office by their exercise of raw power.

Okay, children, raise your hand if you were ever taught about the oil depletion allowance. What? *No one?*

Okay, let's make it a little easier... How about Teapot Dome? That was taught in your in your U.S. History class — wasn't it? No?

How about the Osage Indians' land and how they lost it?

Didn't they show you the map of the oil leases off the coast of Vietnam?

How about Indonesia? *Huh?*

Does anyone know what percentage of the oil revenues Exxon and the other multinational oil companies in Venezuela produce, goes to the people of that country? Half? 10%? Try 1%.

And getting back to that mysterious oil depletion allowance, guess what percentage of oil company profits are exempted from taxation under that 1927 law? 1%? 10%? Try 25%.

During Bill Clinton's campaign for President there was a famous sign that hung in the 'war room' that said, "It's the economy, stupid." Well, our economy is based on

oil, and so is our foreign policy and our environmental policy. So in fact: *It's the oil, stupid.*

I blame the media and the educational system, but it's really our apathy and ignorance as human beings. I've met people who had no idea that plastic was made from oil. People don't even question the fact that our roads are,

### ELECTION ACTUALITIES

Actualy remains that "progressives" or whatever fail to vote in massive numbers thereby turning the system over to those who do vote while whining and whinging and wailing as well as raving, ranting and raging (*mea culpa*) — all most impotently. As long as the W thinkers vote, we will have a succession of Ws. Until those who think otherwise vote, they remain politically impotent no matter what. Free speech includes freedom to ignore.

Getting people to register has been a very big effort of many factions for many years. Statistics reveal again and again that people who might be called Conservative or Right Wing or Republican register *and* vote. People who might be called Progressive, Left Wing, Moderate even, much less Democratic or Green or Libertarian may register but whether they vote is questionable. All of which is particularly actual in terms of people who may also be grouped in lower quintile socio-economic classifications. Poor people are the worst and most apathetic voters. Followed closely by protesters and activists of the more radical persuasions.

Politicians know all this in great detail and pay attention almost exclusively to 1) those who contribute to their campaigns either with money or effort and 2) those who vote for them as tracked by polling station statistics. The people you may not like who have taken over the system did so by learning the mechanics of the system — especially party organization and candidate selection processes. Study voter statistics and learn a lot about your area. All parties have voluminous information on voting patterns, analytical methodologies, etc.

~MILO G. CLARK

Milo Clark is a former North Coast resident who lives in Hawaii. He wrote this as a note in response to being sent a copy of the NCTE.

for the most part, made of oil. Did you know very durable and strong roads have been made out of molasses? Yes, it smells funny and gets sticky in the summer, but so does blacktop. You can grow sugar to make molasses; you usually have to kill something or someone to get oil.

Until the world realizes the effects of oil and those who control it on the economy, environment and politics of each and every one of us, we are doomed to continuous war and environmental disaster. And that's the good news. With the current administration in the only remaining superpower controlled by oil men we have reached the tipping point. Our choices are limited in any search for a solution short of armed revolution, which is hardly ever as much fun as it sounds. The one glimmer of hope I can see is for democratic control of corporate behavior globally, and as with all things globally we would have to begin locally.

Thus once again I humbly raise the question: Why don't we write a ballot measure that states:

*"Whereas corporations in the State of Oregon are chartered to conduct their business at the mercy of the sovereign people of the State of Oregon. And whereas corporations enjoy the rights of citizens in the United States of America. Therefore any corporation chartered in the State of Oregon shall responsibly obey the laws of this state and if convicted of violating any state laws shall, after three convictions have its charter revoked by the State of Oregon and prohibited from doing business in the State of Oregon for no less than five years."*

We could call it the "Responsible Corporate Citizens Act."

If this were to become a ballot measure and passed in Oregon it would be a shot heard round the world across the bow of the multinational corporations and we would gain the power to democratically control the behavior of these modern day pirates. Yes, it would be dangerous. People get killed fighting corporations. But wouldn't it feel good to think of yourself as a citizen rather than a consumer?

The Beloved Reverend Billy Hultz is founding publisher and editor of *The Upper Left Edge*, which suspended publication in March this year.