

Miscellany25: Natural Yogurt in Australia; Australian Wine: No Added Sulfites, No Headaches; PPA; Russia's Declining Population; the Cassiopaea Transcripts; Private Data Theft; Aircraft Pollution of the Atmosphere; Bill Gates' Philanthropy; Why Reward Illegal Aliens with US Citizenship?; Terminal Development in Bali; Nuclear Fusion; The Economic Development Lie; Intellectual Property Laws; US/Mexico Border Wall; Democracy in East Timor

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Commentary on recent news, reading and events of personal interest.

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Natural Yogurt in Australia

Evacuation to Darwin

Serious civil disturbances began in East Timor, where I was consulting, on Tuesday, May 23, 2006. On Thursday, a number of people were killed (army rebels gunned down unarmed police) near the United Nations compound, and a decision was made to evacuate “nonessential” UN staff on Saturday and Sunday, to Darwin, Australia. I have been enjoying the “vacation” in Darwin. It is a pleasant change from Dili – everything is neat and orderly, there are no potholes in the roads, there are working traffic lights at road intersections, the cars don't spew out clouds of obnoxious fumes, and you can drink the water from the taps (faucets, spigots). About the only noticeable difference from the United States is that the cars drive on the left-hand-side of the road. The weather has been very pleasant – warm, but not hot, with clear skies almost every day.

Darwin has some interesting history. It was a frontier town (called Palmerston) during Australia's settlement era in the mid 1800s. There are a few old buildings to remind one of the pioneer days. Although Darwin is not a very large city by modern standards, it is somewhat sprawling. We are located in "Darwin City," which is the tourist area, near the harbor. This is now the winter season in Australia, and people from temperate-climate southern Australia come north to Darwin to enjoy the warm, tropical weather. Although Darwin is located on the ocean, you cannot swim in the ocean because of highly poisonous jellyfish. There are two spectacular national parks just south of Darwin – Kakadu and Litchfield. Australia's famous Ayer's Rock (Uluru) is located a couple days' drive due south of Darwin, near Alice Springs.

Darwin City (the tourist section of the Darwin metro area) is small, consisting of six major parallel streets about a kilometer long and intersected by numerous cross-streets. The street that runs along the ocean (Darwin Harbor) is called Esplanade. Between Esplanade and the ocean is a long park, about a hundred meters wide. It is called Bicentennial Park, and it is really beautiful. It contains many large trees, along with numerous smaller ones (e.g., palms, ipil-ipil) and bushes (e.g., bougainvillea) and open space. It has broad, winding sidewalks and many benches on which park visitors may rest. It has a war memorial, the Cenotaph, honoring Darwin's fallen military personnel in wars over the years.

One thing that strikes me as quite different from Dili, and even the US, is the low level of automobile traffic. There is little need to go to an intersection to cross most streets in Darwin City. Whenever you decide to cross a street, it is quite likely that there will be no cars in either direction. Jaywalking is rampant.

When I arrived, the newspaper headlines announced that a movie was to be made about Darwin in the war years, starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman (both Australians). The role was offered to Russell Crowe (*John Nash, Gladiator*) first, but he insisted on the right to approve the script so the offer was retracted and presented to Jackman. Initially, it was thought that much filming would be done in Darwin. After the film crews visited Darwin, however, they discovered that very few buildings from the 1930s and 1940s remained, so it has been decided to make the film in Bowen, a small town about 200 kilometers south of Townsville, in Queensland state on Australia's east coast. Like Darwin, Bowen is located on the ocean, but, unlike Darwin, which has not preserved many of its historic buildings (or had many destroyed by the Japanese in World War II or by Cyclone Tracy in 1974), it still possesses many "period" buildings, and a "romantic old timber jetty" reminiscent of Darwin Port in 1931.

I don't find the food very interesting in Darwin. In the malls, the "fast food" stores serve "Asian" food that is really "average," to be diplomatic. Some of the restaurants along the streets have better food, but it is "pricey" – for example, about USD12.00 for pasta (e.g., spaghetti), in a "café"-type restaurant, and double that in an upscale restaurant. I ordered a "Reuben" sandwich one day, which was nothing more than a plain mustard-and-roast-beef sandwich (no sauerkraut or thousand-island dressing, and the so-called "rye" bread (from a factory-sliced loaf) was nothing more than sandy-colored white bread (no rye seeds) – a traditional Reuben sandwich includes dark rye bread, corned beef, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese, and Thousand Island dressing). I was told that the manager was from Indianapolis; I suppose that Indianapolis is far enough away from New York or New Jersey that the traditional "New-York-deli" definition of a Reuben need not apply. Milkshakes cost AUD3.50 – 4.50, and as in the US, they may be made of methyl cellulose or some other chemical other than real ice milk or real ice cream (or perhaps ice milk with carrageenan, guar gum, or xanthan gum added – who knows).

Prices in the supermarkets and drugstores are high. A 325-ml bottle of isopropyl alcohol costs about USD8.00 in Australia, compared to USD0.87 for a pint (16-ounce, 473 mL) bottle of 70% isopropyl rubbing alcohol and USD1.24 for a pint bottle of 91% first aid antiseptic isopropyl alcohol (prices at Target stores). A medium-sized jar of Vaseline Petroleum Jelly costs about USD3.60, compared to USD2.59 in the US. A banana costs about USD2.00 (AUD9.50 for four small bananas at Woolworths supermarket). A small plastic food-storage container that cost me thirty cents in Dili costs over two dollars here in Darwin. Gasoline is about \$4.50 per gallon (AUD 1.43 per liter, where the exchange rate is about USD0.74 = AUD1.00). The prices of used cars are very high compared to the US (ads posted on the bulletin board at the Internet café I am currently using: 1980 XD Falcon Wagon, AUD1,500; 1982 Volvo 244 4-door, AUD2,300; 1986 Ford Falcon S AUD1,500, 1991 Ford Falcon station wagon, AUD2,000; 1992 Mitsubishi Express van, 200,000 km, AUD5,555 – cars this old in the US are almost worthless (a couple of hundred dollars).

About the only reasonably priced item I came across was golf. You can play the nine-hole Gardens Park Golf Links course for just AUD12.10 weekdays or AUD13.20 weekends and holidays (about USD10). It is a beautiful, heavily wooded course. If you stay at the Golf Links Hotel, as I did when I first arrived, you can play free (if you did not bring your clubs, rental clubs are available for AUD8.80 (about USD5) any day).

Across the street from the golf course is the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, which is free. It is somewhat different from other botanic gardens I have visited (e.g., Stellenbosch in Cape Town, South Africa), in that it has more the “flavor” of an agricultural experimentation station than a typical botanic garden. It was in fact established by the government over a hundred years ago to determine what kinds of trees from other parts of the world would grow well here. A typical setting in the Botanic Gardens is a field that has about a dozen massive baobab trees from other places (e.g., Africa, Asia), all set out evenly spaced from each other in a geometric pattern. Since the Botanic Gardens features mainly trees, not small plants, it is quite spread out, and walking its trails takes some time.

Most Australians are Caucasian, but the country is in the process of admitting massive numbers of Asians, and the color of the service workers is quickly changing from white to brown. In the first hotel at which I stayed, all of the maids were white girls. At the second hotel they were all Asian, as were the desk staff. The night clerks at the supermarket I used the other night were all Asian. Most waiters in the restaurants in which I have eaten are white Australians (I am so accustomed to Hispanics and Asians as waiters in the US, it now seems a little unusual seeing a white person in this role. The taxi drivers are mostly immigrants from the Middle East (Moslem names) or eastern Europe.

As in the US and Canada, Australia is flooding itself with immigrants from third-world countries to “do jobs that Australians don’t want to do.” A Filipina lady with whom I was speaking one day immigrated to Australia 38 years ago. When she arrived, there were 60 Filipino families in Darwin. Now, she told me, there are 3,000 Filipinos in Darwin. As in the US, when an Asian is able to immigrate to Australia, he sets to work to bring as many family members here as possible – when I visited the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to extend my visa, an Asian lady was enquiring how she could “sponsor” a relative.

Like other former British colonies (e.g., US and Canada), Australia has embarked on a population policy of explosive growth fueled mainly by mass immigration. It is not just the “browning” of the service industries that reflects Australia’s opening the immigration floodgates to peoples from other cultures, racing down the path to its cultural suicide. In Darwin, you can

visibly see the massive construction boom that is being fueled by an exploding population, mass immigration, and a growing economy. My Filipina friend told me that just five years ago, there were practically no “high-rise” apartment buildings in Darwin City. Now, there are many, and many more under construction. What once were parks or parking lots with massive baobab and mahogany trees are now falling to the woodman’s axe and “development.”

The situation here reminds me of Ocean City, Maryland, where I once owned a beach condominium (English Towers) – once the cancer of economic development takes hold, it is impossible to stop. Ocean City long ago entered the phase of “terminal development,” which now threatens Darwin City. It is also similar to my previous home of Clearwater, Florida – a small, uncrowded town in 1950, now an ugly example of cancerous urban growth that is the Tampa/St. Petersburg/Clearwater megalopolis. My friend told me that in the new apartment building (about six stories tall) a block away from our hotel, the (unfurnished) ground-floor apartments are selling for AUD 350,000 (about USD270,000), and the top floor apartments for AUD600,000 (USD450,000), and that there are now apartments for sale for over a million dollars. Five years ago, you could buy a nice home in Darwin City for AUD98,000 (USD74,000). Just as in the US, in Australia’s “growth-based” economy, it is now only the wealthy who can now afford modest homes in this fast-developing area.

Australia owns about forty percent of the world’s uranium ore. As global petroleum production peaks, global use of nuclear power is soon to be greatly expanded, and Australia is making plans on how to develop its nuclear industry (e.g., sell yellowcake ore (as it does with iron ore)), or sell processed uranium, with much more “value added”). Like the US and Canada, Australia has doubled its population in the past few decades, and is set on a course to do so again.

From what I see in Darwin, the Aborigines seem to be a lost people – a completely shattered culture of totally out-of-place aliens in what was once their own land. Many of them wander the malls and streets, usually no more than four or five in a group, barefoot and disheveled; some of them intoxicated. Most are quiet, either walking slowly or sitting on the ground. Occasionally, however, you see one that is quite out of control, yelling at the tourists. No one, including the police, does anything to stop them from loitering on the sidewalks or yelling at tourists, but I did see one evicted from the Sky City Darwin Casino one night for rowdiness. The one who was yelling at tourists in the Smith Street Mall yesterday was speaking perfect English. I didn’t hear what he was saying, but I imagine that he was simply expressing his frustration at having had his culture and habitat destroyed. They are often seen sitting on park benches, bus-stop benches, or simply on the sidewalk. I have not seen any in any position of responsibility, such as a sales clerk, motel clerk, waiter, cook, taxi driver, or motel housekeeper. In fact, I have not seen a single one working at any job – all of the ones that I have seen appear to be vagrants. Actually, I did see one doing something other than sitting and talking. Seated on the sidewalk with his back against a shop wall, he was knocking two hardwood sticks together in a monotonous “click, click, click.” At first I imagined that he was hoping for a contribution from passers-by, but I am not sure. I didn’t notice a cap for coins. Maybe he just likes to click.

I was told that Aborigines are given about AUD3,000 per family per month “welfare” payments. I was also told that Australia wants to increase its population so much that it pays AUD3,000 – AUD4,000 to Australian girls (white, Aboriginal, married, unmarried) while they are pregnant. I find this very difficult to believe, and will seek to verify it.

Australia’s Yogurt

Whenever I am overseas in “developing” countries, I eat a lot of yogurt, if it is available. Yogurt in the US is really awful. It is not tasty and of a delicate semi-liquid consistency as it used to be when I was young. Instead, it invariably is adulterated with thickeners such as carrageenan, guar gum, xanthan gum, or pectin (or “milk solids,” whatever that means). These additives make the yogurt thick, creamy or goeey, or hard-jelled, when it is naturally “fragile” like rennet custard (“Junket”). (Carrageenan makes yogurt (or ice cream) creamy; pectin makes it gel, like “Jell-O,” and “milk solids” or “powdered milk” make it thick, but not creamy or like jelly.) They also make it taste bad. They completely mask the delicate, sour taste of natural yogurt and overpower it with flavors that are not at all interesting at best and just plain awful at worst. It is no wonder that someone in the US got the idea of adding flavorings to American yogurt, since it now tastes so bad.

To my delight, “natural” yogurt is available in supermarkets in Australia. When I first arrived, I tried two different brands – one was very good, and the other was excellent. The first one I tried was Farmers Union Natural European Style Yogurt. The listed ingredients are: skim milk, milk solids non fat, cream, live yogurt cultures. The second one I tried – the really exceptional one – was B-d Farm Paris Creek Organic Biodynamic Yogurt Natural Swiss Style with ABC Cultures. The listed ingredients are: whole milk produced under biodynamic management, cultures (the low-fat version lists skim milk produced under biodynamic management, cultures). No genetic engineering, non-homogenised milk, no preservatives. The label on the container tells an interesting story, which I will quote in full:

“Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner introduced the principles of biodynamic agriculture in 1924. This method of organic agriculture avoids the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides. Soil, plants and animals are seen in a “larger” context, not simply as tools of agribusiness. The ideal biodynamic farm is a self-sufficient system that builds and maintains soil fertility through farm-produced composts.

“B-d Farm Paris Creek is situated in the Adelaide Hills in South Australia. Since 1986 we have used the biodynamic preparations to enhancing the vitality of the soil, the plants and animals. In recent years, neighbouring dairies have adopted biodynamic farming practices and are in conversion status.

“We include their beautiful non-homogenised milk to produce this yogurt [low-fat yogurt, on the low-fat version]. No preservatives, no milk powder, no thickener and nothing artificial are used, nor is the whey, which is rich in minerals, drained off. A delicate blend of probiotic cultures, including acidophilus, bifidum bacterium and casei are essential for a health conscious diet. The freshness and quality of our milk can not be matched by commercial yogurt factories. We hope you enjoy our unique products and look forward to receiving your comments.”

“[B-d Farm Paris Creek,] P.O. Box 22, Paris Creek Road, Meadows 5201, SA, Australia. Please visit us on <http://www.bdfarmpariscreek.com.au> . Phone [61]08-8388-3339.”

In reading the label on the B-d Farm Paris Creek Natural Yogurt label, I noticed immediately the reference to Rudolf Steiner, whom it credits as the founder of biodynamic agriculture. Dr. Rudolf Steiner was, in addition, the founder of Anthroposophy, the Waldorf system of education, anthroposophic medicine, and eurhythmy. His was the author of many books on metaphysics, which may be downloaded from The Rudolf Steiner Archive Internet website, <http://www.rsarchive.org/Books> . I was impressed with his writings on prehistoric Earth, and I once wrote an article relating my life experiences to his philosophy (posted at <http://www.foundationwebsite.org/HowICameToKnowRudolfSteiner.htm>).

I have tried many so-called “organic” fruits and vegetables in the US, and, quite frankly, I can’t tell a difference in the taste, even though I know that they are environmentally more “friendly”

than the non-organic ones. The B-d Farm Paris Creek yogurt is a stunning exception. It is so vastly better than the US yogurts (and I have tried *many* of them, across the country), that I am almost at a loss for words to express my delight at having discovered it.

The whole-milk version of the B-d yogurt tasted a little better than the low-fat (skimmed-milk) version. One day, when the supermarket was sold out of the BD Farm yogurt (both whole-milk and skimmed-milk), I purchased another brand, Jalna BioDynamic Yoghourt (Jalna Dairy Foods Pty Ltd, 31 Commercial Drive, Thomastown, VIC, 3074; PO Box 169, Bundoora, VIC, 3083; <http://www.jalna.com.au>). The label states, "Produced from pastures free of chemicals & artificial fertilizers." "Gluten free, Low G.I., All Natural Ingredients, No Added Sugar or Artificial Sweetener, No Added Chemical or Preservatives, 'A' Grade Demeter Certified Milk." "ABC Friendly Bacteria, A=Acidophilus, B=Bifidus, C=Casei." The ingredient list is: "Biodynamic ingredients: homogenized biodynamic whole milk; non-biodynamic ingredients: not more than 5% milk solids, live cultures lactobacillus acidophilus, bifidobacterium & lactobacillus casei > 200 million per serve." Despite its biodynamic credentials, this yogurt appears much like US yogurt – it is very thick (not creamy or jelled, just thick, like thick mud or cement). I suppose that the added "milk solids" changed the taste. Maybe the whey was drained off before it was added to the container (the top of the jar reads, "Real Yoghourt; Created and set in this tub)."

I looked for buttermilk and sweet acidophilus milk in several supermarkets in Darwin City, but could not find any. I did, however, serendipitously find an interesting alternative drink. It is a drink called "Jalna Swiss Vanilla Yoghourt on the go... 98% fat free." The ingredient list is: whole milk, skim milk, skim milk solids, fruit juice concentrate, vanilla, live cultures. Made with lactobacillus acidophilus, bifido bacterium, lactobacillus casei." It has a strong, delicious flavor, and I have not seen anything similar in the US (although it may well be there, since I never was aware of it or looked for it).

(A couple of comments on "organic" agriculture: When I was a boy, insecticide use was much lower than today. As a child in Canada, I recall that about half the apples contained worms – usually just one small white worm, about the shape of a maggot but not as thick, in a short "burrow." There is no external evidence that a worm is in the apple – there is no hole in the skin. Evidently the egg is injected into the apple, and the worm does all of its growth inside the apple (as it eats the apple and forms the wormhole). The worms are not harmful – just soft, white protoplasm (a good source of protein, I would imagine, for carnivores). One of my pleasures as a small boy was for me and my younger sister to each eat an apple, and see whether we would get a worm. You can imagine my satisfaction when it was my sister who got the worm, and my considerable delight when she occasionally had the "gross" misfortune of biting the worm in half (which wasn't very likely, since the worm tended to be at the top or the bottom of the apple, rather than in the middle)! Today, apples *never* contain worms. From my youth, I know, however, that this is not at all natural (or healthy!), and each time I eat an apple without a worm or wormhole, I am reminded of the fact that the grower has probably sprayed the orchard with toxic chemicals. Needless to say, I now always wash apples before eating them.

(Following the Second World War, most people in Canada continued to maintain "Victory Gardens" – small backyard vegetable gardens planted to ensure a supply of fresh vegetables during the difficult war years. Another delight of "natural" agriculture (not that agriculture is "natural," but small polyculture (multicrop) gardens are not a major deviation from a natural setting) was that the tomato plants in our gardens almost always contained a "tomato worm." A tomato worm is a very large bright green worm – a caterpillar about two inches long and a half-inch around, with a small "horn" on its head. The tomato worm eats a few of the leaves of the

tomato plant. As I child, I did not know, and none of my friends knew, (and I still do not know) whether the dangerous-looking horn was poisonous, so we were always careful to pick the tomato worm up gently. It was always exciting to see this possibly dangerous caterpillar crawl along your arm, particularly if your sister was watching. As an adult, I once planted a backyard vegetable garden, in Virginia. I never used insecticides, but I never had any tomato worms. I was always a little disappointed.

(I have often wondered what sort of butterfly or moth apple worms and tomato worms metamorphize into. I imagine that the apple worm becomes a very small butterfly, but that the tomato worm must become a very large one. As a child, there were always lots of small white “cabbage” butterflies on our cabbages (along with a small amount of leaf damage), but I never recall seeing a worm on a cabbage plant. It is rather amazing that, under natural conditions, plants exist quite harmoniously along with a few insects – even in small polyculture gardens there is little damage. It seems that only when mankind goes to agriculture on a massive “factory” scale – large monoculture farms or plantations – that we have epidemics of insect damage. It is only when mankind moves to cruel “battery” production of chickens and eggs that we have poultry epidemics and salmonella on our eggs. The relatives of my youth, who owned small family farms in Canada, never had these problems.

(I read once where certain wasps lay their eggs on caterpillars, and the wasp larva eats the caterpillar alive from the inside. It seems that in the natural world, everything is food for something else. That is, in fact, the way it has to be, for the “web of life” to work. I was somewhat amused by Laura Knight-Jadczyk’s comment that “human beings are not the top of the food chain” – that we are consumed regularly by visitors from “fourth density.” An incredible speculation, but quite consistent with “the way things are” for all other species on the planet.)

Update 17 December 2006. After trying the yogurt drink in Australia, which was both good-tasting and semi-liquid, I decided to look for a similar product in the US, after my return from Australia and East Timor. To my surprise and delight, I found one in our local Publix supermarket. It is called Lifeway Original Kefir Cultured Milk, and it is manufactured by Lifeway Foods Inc., Morton Grove, IL 60053. It comes in a variety of different flavors (plain, strawberry, raspberry, strawberry-banana, peach, cherry, blueberry, vanilla, cappuccino, and pomegranate); the two that I have used are Original Plain Unsweetened and Lowfat Plain Unsweetened. It is sold in quart (32 ounce, 944 mL) bottles, which cost about USD3.00. The ingredients are as follows. For the Original: cultured milk, nonfat milk, inulin (a natural dietary fiber), vitamin A, vitamin D; for the Lowfat: cultured lowfat milk, nonfat milk, inulin (a natural dietary fiber), vitamin A palmitate, vitamin C, vitamin D3. The Original contains 8g of fat and the Lowfat contains 2 g of fat. The Lowfat tastes great and the Original tastes exquisite – just like the natural yogurts that I have enjoyed around the world. The following is a list of the live and active cultures in the Lifeway yogurt: *L. casei*, *L. lactis*, *L. acidophilus*, *L. plantarum*, *L. rhamnosus*, *S. diacetylactis*, *S. florentinus*, *B. bacterium longum*, *Leuconostoc cremoris*, *B. bacterium breve*. The label contains the word “probiotic” in large letters, but I am not sure what that means – I don’t believe that it means “organic” (milk from farms using no synthetic fertilizers, no pesticides, no herbicides, no hormones).

Update 11 March 2007. A little more on Lifeway Kefir Cultured Milk.... The label on the Lifeway Cultured Milk bottle contains the following information:

Lifeway Origin: The Lifeway story began with a real belief in “the American Dream.” In 1986, our family made the first batches of Lifeway Kefir at our home in Skokie, Illinois – just 10 years after we came to the United States from our native Russia. The luscious taste of kefir, long

enjoyed in Europe, caught on quickly in Chicago – our early recipes of the probiotic yogurt-like drink got rave reviews in local supermarkets. We've come a long way from the early days of our original "plain" kefir, to more than 100 varieties enjoyed today.

As you'll soon see, it's as delicious as it is healthful. So from our family to yours, drink up and enjoy!

Sincerely, The Smolyansky Family. Traded on NASDAQ: LWAY

Kefir History: Kefir is the cousin of yogurt and its roots can be traced back more than 2,000 years. Originating in the Caucasus Mountains of Europe where people live well over 100 years, the word kefir is thought to have been derived from the Turkish word "keif" for "good feeling," probably due to the sense of well-being experienced after drinking it.

Australian Wine: No Added Sulfites, No Headaches!

Sulfite Preservatives in Wine Cause Headaches

I have always enjoyed a glass of wine with meals, but a few years ago I became allergic to the sulfite preservative that is added to almost all wines for sale in American stores – not only the American brands, but also those imported from other countries. The headache usually results from just a single glass of wine taken at dinner. The two-day headache begins mid-morning of the following day and lasts through most of the next day. It is always the same – a dull ache behind my right eye.

It did not take me a long time to determine that it was the sulfites in wine that were giving me the headache. Since I am allergic to another food additive – potassium sorbate – I reasoned that perhaps I was not allergic to the wine, but to the sulfite preservative that is added to it. I looked for wines that did not have sulfites added, and found that so-called "organic" wines usually do not add sulfites (in the US, "organic" wines may in fact add sulfites unless the label reads "No sulfites added"). After trying a few bottles of different brands and varieties of no-sulfite-added organic wine, I determined that I could drink it without fear of getting a headache. (Note: I am told that all wines contain some naturally occurring sulfites, so don't make the mistake of asking your wine supplier for a bottle of wine containing no sulfites – he will simply tell you that *all* wines contain sulfites – some naturally-occurring sulfites, at the least. Ask for a wine that has no sulfites *added*.)

Switching to organic wines is not a very satisfactory solution to the sulfite-headache problem. The main problem with organic wines is that they are expensive – about \$15.00 a bottle. There is no reason why a good bottle of wine should cost more than about \$5.00 (a colleague of mine in East Timor who is from Germany tells me that good bottle of Italian wine can be purchased for about USD2.00 in Germany – why is good wine so expensive in the US?). Another disadvantage of organic wines is that most grocery stores do not stock them, and the few specialty wine stores that do stock them carry a very limited selection (a few varieties of one or two brands). One of the delights of wine is that every bottle is different. I was dismayed at the prospect of being limited to a single brand or just a few varieties for the rest of my life. If I had to switch to the same variety of organic wine for the rest of my life, I would just switch to drinking vodka. (All vodkas are virtually identical – there is no more reason for paying a high price for vodka than for paying a high price for a shirt or pair of pants with a fancy label. So, you can spend just a few dollars for a quart of "no-name" generic vodka, and have about the same

product as if you had spent 20-40 dollars for a fancy brand, such as Absolut, Stolichnaya or Tanqueray Sterling. For vodka, it is what you add it to that introduces variety.)

In East Timor, I purchased a wine brand called “Five Judges” from the UN commissary, for USD5.75. (Five Judges Wines, 4 Newington Road, Silverwater, NSW 2118, Australia. Both the Chardonnay 2004 and the Merlot 2003 were good.) Here in Darwin, I have tried a number of other Australian brands in that price range, and they are all pretty good (and none of them gives me a headache!). A particularly good brand, which sells for AUD5.99 (about USD4.50) for a 750 ml bottle, is McWilliams Wines Pty Ltd, 68 Anzac Street, Chullora, NSW 2190, <http://www.mcwilliams.com.au>. I have tried their “Inheritance” label Fruitwood (too sweet for my taste), Chardonnay (2005), Chardonnay Colombard (2004) and Semillon Sauvignon Blanc (2005) varieties, and they are all very good (McWilliams was voted 2006 “Winery of the Year” by Stuart Gregor “Don’t Buy Wine Without Me 2006”). The previous wines are white. A McWilliams red wine is Shiraz Cabernet (also UAD5.99); it is also quite good. Another good wine in the same price range is Carrington Brut Reserve Special Cuvée white sparkling wine (Orlando Wines Barossa Valley Way, Rowland Flat, SA 5352. I tried one other red wine in this price range, a merlot, but it was not very good (harsh tasting, like most inexpensive US wine). I don’t recall the brand.

As a result of the very limited availability of no-sulfite-added wines, my consumption of wine (at home in the US) has dropped substantially. Where I live now (Spartanburg, SC) I am unaware of a retail source for organic or no-sulfite-added wine, and local restaurants don’t bother to stock it. Despite my vulnerability to sulfites, however, I have not totally given up wine. Sparking wine (e.g., champagne) seems to be less of a problem, as do some foreign brands, even if the label specifies that sulfites are added. Furthermore, it is not certain that I get a headache. The effect seems to be cumulative. If I have not had any wine for a week, then a single small glass of wine will often not result in a headache. If I order French or Italian wines in a restaurant, I am less likely to get a headache – perhaps the amount of sulfite added is less in those wines. My dislike of a two-day headache is enough to keep me from drinking wine as much as I did before, but I enjoy it and, several times a month, I will take a chance.

Australian Wines Generally Use Sulfur Dioxide, not Sulfites, as an Added Preservative

When I first arrived in East Timor, I saw mainly Australian wines for sale, along with a few Portuguese brands. Because of my sensitivity to potassium sorbate (which can cause a fatal allergic reaction) I now read the labels on virtually everything I drink, and I was immediately puzzled by the specification of the preservative – every bottle that I picked up contained “Preservative 220.” East Timor is 13 time zones ahead of my US home, and the “jet lag” effect for this big a time-zone shift is about as severe as it gets. Wine helps me sleep, and so even though I imagined that Preservative 220 must be a sulfite, I purchased a few bottles to keep in my hotel room. The first few nights, I had about half a bottle (two glasses) each night. To my surprise – and delight – I did not get a headache. More nights passed, with no headache. A week passed, and still no headache. What was going on?

I decided to determine exactly what “Preservative 220” was. I specified this term to an Internet search engine, and quickly retrieved a selection of web pages on it. It is not a sulfite at all, but sulfur dioxide (a gas). Here follow a few of the articles I found on Preservative 220.

From the Australian Wine Institute website, the following information
http://www.awri.com.au/infoservice/wine_and_health/faqs/ :

Q. Why is it necessary to produce wine with additives? Why isn't wine 'additive free'

A. Additives are generally added during winemaking to modify or negate the influence of environmental and harvesting factors, which can adversely affect the quality of the grapes and the resultant wine, and to negate any adverse winemaking factors. For example, additives are used to:

- facilitate the fermentation of the grape juice into wine;
- prevent the growth of micro-organisms in the juice and/or wine;
- acidify or deacidify the wine; and
- prevent or remove off-colours, off-flavours and off-odours.

Winemakers, however, can only use a limited set of specific additives that have been approved by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (formerly the Australia New Zealand Food Authority) and by committees of the United Nation's joint World Health Organisation (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Codex Alimentarius Commission. The amount and quality of the additive that can be used may also be specified.

Certain wines are certified and classified as 'organic'. This means that an even more limited set of specific additives has been used during winemaking and the amount used is also limited. For example, the amount of sulfur dioxide, an antimicrobial and an antioxidant agent, which can be added to 'organic' wines is approximately 50% less than that which can be added to 'non-organic' wines. Organic wines, however, should be consumed sooner than traditionally produced wine (for example, within 12 months of bottling and purchase), because the quality of the wine will diminish with age as these wines are more likely to become oxidised and consequently have a less desirable aroma and flavour.

Q. Why is it necessary to add 'preservatives' to wine?

A. The word 'preservative' refers to protecting the wine from microbial contamination or spoilage by unwanted bacteria, moulds and yeast. These unwanted bacteria, moulds and yeast either naturally occur on the grapes and hence are also present in the juice, or enter the juice from harvesting or winemaking equipment that has not been adequately cleaned or sanitised. Microbial spoilage will make the wine smell and taste unpleasant. Another word for preservative is, therefore, antimicrobial agent. Two antimicrobial agents are currently permitted to be added during winemaking in Australia—sulfur dioxide and sorbic acid—where only a restricted amount of each antimicrobial agent is permitted to be added. In Australia, the EU, New Zealand and USA, there is a legal requirement that the label of a bottle of wine must include:

- 'preservative [sulfur dioxide (220/224) or sorbic acid (200/202)] added', or
- 'contains preservative [sulfur dioxide (220/224) or sorbic acid (200/202)]',

if antimicrobial agents have been added during winemaking. [JGC note: Below, the Online Organic Wine Store Australia specifies that preservative 220 is sulphur dioxide and that preservative 224 is potassium metabisulfite. If this is true, then the Australia Wine Institute information is egregiously in error.]

For additional information on the labelling of additives and preservatives, please refer to the [Australian] Food Standards Code and the Food Standards Code of Australia and New Zealand at website: www.foodstandards.gov.au .

Q. Can you buy 'preservative-free' wine?

There are no wines on the market labelled 'preservative free'. This is because all wines contain naturally a small amount (10–50 mg/L) of the antimicrobial agent, sulfur dioxide, as it is produced by yeast during the fermentation stage of winemaking.

There are, however, wines on the market labelled 'organically grown', which contain a reduced amount of antimicrobial agents. For example, organic winemakers add approximately 50% less sulfur dioxide during winemaking. There are also wines on the market labelled 'no preservatives added'. This means that no antimicrobial agents have been added during winemaking. Your local bottle or liquor shop should stock a selection of these wines. You can also contact the Biological Farmers of Australia [formerly Organic Vignerons Association of Australia] on ph: (08) 8562 2122 or fax: (08) 8562 3034 or Email: BOSS@internode.on.net or postal address: PO Box 503, Nuriootpa SA 5355, or The National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) on ph: (08) 8370 8455 or fax: (08) 8370 8381 or Email: enquiries@nasaa.com.au .

The Australian Wine Research Institute advocates the moderate consumption of wine, but does not recommend that abstaining individuals should commence consuming wine to benefit their health. Consuming wine more than moderately increases the risk of both short- and long-term harm to health.

[End of Australian Wine Research Institute article.]

From the Online Organic Wine Store Australia website,
<http://www.organicwine.com.au/article.aspx?NID=33> :

Wine and Preservatives

The role of preservatives in wine

Despite alcohol being a natural preservative, most wine has had preservative added as a protection against oxidation and bacterial spoilage. The preservative used is one of a number of forms of sulphur: sulphur salts or sulphur dioxide.

Sulphur solutions can be added to grapes and wine at many stages, from just after harvest through to the final bottling. Sulphur is reactive by nature and joins with potential spoilage compounds found in the wine to become "bound" up. Usually these other compounds, if not bound up can result in undesirable aromas, flavours or colours. Any extra sulphur that is not bound up initially stays present in the wine, and over time becomes bound up as traces of air or other contaminants allow spoiling organisms to be produced.

What preservatives can be used in wine?

Sulphur dioxide (preservative 220), also known as SO₂
Potassium metabisulphite (preservative 224)

In white wine, Ascorbic Acid (300) can also be added, but it is technically an anti-oxidant rather than a preservative

How are preservative levels measured?

The level of sulphur is measured as parts per million (ppm) or milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg): very small quantities. Australian Food standards allow for a maximum of 250ppm in dry wine, and up to 300ppm for sweet wines (35g/L+). For the purpose of comparison, dried apricots are usually contain more than 2,000ppm and are allowed up to 3,000ppm. Under organic & biodynamic certification the total sulphur level is usually below 120ppm and may differ for red & white wine (these figures vary slightly between the different certification bodies).

For health and allergy considerations it is the free sulphur level that is the main concern. The figure usually quoted is made up of both the bound sulphur and the free sulphur, which added together give the total sulphur level.

Is No Added Preservative (NAP) wine the same as Preservative Free?

This is not as straight forward as it may seem. Even wines that have had no sulphur dioxide added in the winemaking process can still contain minute quantities. Sulphur dioxide can be a natural product of fermentation, but it is in a form that is very much bound up in the wine, rather than in a free and active state. Technically the term "Preservative Free" should only be used when a wine contains 0ppm of detectable sulphur in total, but in reality this term is used to indicate that no sulphur has been added to the wine (see also Labelling Laws in Australia below).

Doesn't Certified Organic Wine mean no preservative has been added?

This is one of the largest misconceptions about organic wine in Australia. Certification requirements vary across the world from one country to another and from one organisation to another. Under organic & biodynamic certification in Australia, the amount of preservative allowed in the final product is about 50% of what can be used under conventional Australian food standards for wine. In the US, to label your wine as "Organic Wine" no preservative can be added at all.

Can I cellar no added preservative wines?

Some people say that you can't cellar a wine that has no preservative added. I disagree with this: I have had many older NAP wines including a 17 year old red which was in perfect drinking condition. It really depends on the quality & concentration of the fruit and the handling of the wine during the winemaking.

Just like conventional wines, look for a wine that has been made to last the distance for long-term cellaring: The winemaker is usually the best person to ask about this. White wine would be much harder to cellar long term (7+ years) because it doesn't have the tannins that red wine has and is usually lower in alcohol than red wine.

Why does the level of preservative vary so much from one bottle to another?

There are many factors influencing the amount of preservative needed or added. Some of these are outlined here:

Alcohol -The higher the alcohol, the less preservative needed because alcohol is a natural preservative.

White or Red wine (Tannin) - Red wines have higher levels of tannins which are also a natural preservative (extracted from the red grape skins during fermentation). Oak tannins can also be found in wine that spends time in oak barrels.

Quality, Care & Handling – Fruit and wine that is handled carefully in the vineyard and winery has less exposure to elements that cause spoilage and needless preservative. Meticulously clean winemaking equipment and premises also make sulphur less necessary. Healthy grapes of high quality with concentrated flavours and good acid should need less preservative. A winemaker aiming for a premium quality wine (i.e. \$17 and above as a rough guide) will carefully handle this wine, as they do not want to add high amounts of sulphur. The presence of sulphur at higher levels starts to affect the aroma of the wine and may be detected by an experienced wine drinker. In fact French wines are known for high sulphur levels, although it's not necessarily perceived as a bad thing as locals are accustomed to it and have developed a taste for it.

Packaging/Closure - wine destined for a cask will usually have high sulphur levels as this package is slightly permeable. On the other hand, the Stelvin or screw cap closure is a more perfect seal than the cork or cask, and hence less sulphur should be needed.

Labelling Laws in Australia

If the detectable amount of preservative is less than 10 ppm, labelling laws in Australia do not require anything about preservative to be mentioned on the label.

Other Articles to have a look at:

Does wine need 'preservatives'? - from Erl Happ of Happs Winery WA Full Article:
<http://www.happs.com.au/pages/pf.html>

Wine & Health FAQ's - from Australian Wine Research Institute:
http://www.awri.com.au/infoservice/wine_and_health/faqs/

Preservative defined - Wikipedia free encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preservative>

Sulfites in Wine Article (American) – Extract from Wine Spectator, Feb. 2003
http://www.tonymarket.com/pdf/Sulfite_in_wine.pdf

From the Happs & Three Hills Wine Company (Margaret River, Australia) website
(<http://www.happs.com.au/pages/pf.htm>):

Does wine need 'preservatives'?

The chief preservatives in wine are alcohol and tannin. Both are entirely natural. There are very few organisms which will survive immersion in alcohol. It has therefore long been used as a sterilant in medicine. Alcohol is much more stable in wine than sulphur dioxide. Alcohol can be attacked by vinegar producing bacteria but these organisms need air.

Other factors will assist to conserve wine rendering the use of additional preservatives unnecessary. These factors include:

Careful harvesting by hand to avoid damage to the grapes.

Speed of movement between vineyard and winery.
Clean conditions in the winery.
Cool grapes at the crusher, chilled where necessary.
A healthy fermentation.
Regular topping of barrels to exclude air and maintenance of full tanks with a gas cover.
The use of filtration to screen out organisms which could harm the wine, especially prior to bottling.
The presence of tannin, as in red wine, and to a much lesser extent in white.
The use of refrigeration to prevent microbial growth in bulk wine storage.

In the malolactic fermentation bacteria convert malic to lactic acid and eliminate sulphur dioxide binding compounds like acetaldehyde and Pyruvic acid. This then removes one of the main reasons for the use of SO₂, i.e. the chemical binding of these somewhat stale smelling compounds. A good clean ferment of clean grapes in clean containers and its removal from the influence of oxygen at the end of fermentation produces a very stable product. The problems begin with poor containers and oxidation after that point. Wooden barrels in warm conditions are the chief risk.

Happs PF Red is the product of years of experience in red wine making. We do not use chemical preservative in it because of the strength of other natural preservatives already present and the fact that it meets all the conditions listed above. We have been told that it does not produce headaches in those susceptible, diminishes flatulence and even reflux. No kidding.

Happs other reds, the Merlot, Cabernet Merlot, Shiraz and the Fortis, all of which are given wood maturation for a year or more, have very low levels of preservative and easily meet the requirement set for European Organic wines (i.e. below 20 parts per million).

Happs Fuchsia and the white wines are commonly released with preservative levels between 50 and 90 parts per million and these levels naturally decline with time. Corks can have an oxidative effect and these wines do not possess the tannins which protect dry red wines.

Pale Gold commonly needs about 100 parts per million SO₂ to bind up some compounds which come in fortifying spirit.

The legal maximum level of sulphur dioxide is 350 parts per million, a level approached in some chateau cardboard wines. The containers used are permeable to oxygen and the SO₂ is there to extend the shelf life. Many other foods less inherently stable than wine depend upon sulphur dioxide as a preservative of colour and condition. Dried Fruits and some cold stored fresh fruits are examples. Asthmatics may be sensitive to the presence of SO₂.

No other chemical preservative is used in Happs' wines other than sulphur dioxide.

Points to ponder:

The grape sets the upper limits on what can be achieved in the winery. The character of the grape is mainly determined by where it is grown and when it is picked.
The wine maker's understanding of what he does will determine his processing choices.

How long will the PF Red last? Five years minimum. Our experience suggests that it will last as long as any wine containing preservatives. After five years there should be little difference in preservative levels, between wines that initially had, and those which never had, preservatives,

particularly with reds. Its a level playing field from that time on and I expect that preservative free wines will last beyond five years as well as any wine that had it added in the beginning.

[End of Happ article.]

The following article by Andrew L. Waterhouse is posted at <http://waterhouse.ucdavis.edu/winecomp/so2.htm> . Dr. Waterhouse asserts unequivocally that sulfites in wine do not cause headaches. He suggests eating a lot of dried apricots as a means of testing this. But I am puzzled by his assertion. It appears to me that I am allergic to potassium metabisulfite, not to sulfur dioxide. I am not certain of this, of course, since no formal testing has been done, and it appears that labeling and website articles on wine preservatives can be rather ambiguous (e.g., it seems that not all additives must be identified on a wine bottle label; that some labels or articles may not distinguish between sulfur dioxide and potassium metabisulfite , so that the term “sulfites added” could imply the use of either SO₂ or potassium metabisulfite (or maybe even some other sulfite)). It is my recollection that it is always sulfur dioxide, SO₂, that is the preservative added to dried fruit, not potassium metabisulfite. From my experience, I agree that SO₂ does not cause a headache at all – it is evidently the potassium metabisulfite that is the problem, not sulfur dioxide. (I enjoy dried fruit, and have consumed as much as an entire package of dried apricots at a single setting, and have never gotten a headache from it.)

Sulfites in Wine

Sulfites or sulfur dioxide is a fruit preservative widely used in dried fruits as well as wine. It is also produced by the human body at the level of about **1000 mg** (milligrams) per day. Consumption of food preserved with sulfites is generally not a problem except for a few people who are deficient in the natural enzyme to break it down. For these people, the additional sulfites from food can be a problem. There are reports of severe and life threatening reactions when sulfites were added at erroneously and enormously high levels (100 times what was supposed to be used!) on salad bar vegetables. I have found two reviews of the medical effects of sulfites-unfortunately I could find neither on-line as they appear to be too old. They should be available at medical school libraries.

AF Gunnison and DW Jacobsen, Sulfite hypersensitivity. A critical review. *CRC Critical Review in Toxicology*, 17: 185-214 (1987). [CRC Journals](#)

R.K. Bush, S.L. Taylor and W. Busse, A critical evaluation of clinical trials in reactions to sulfites, *J. Allergy Clin. Immunol.* 78:191-202 (1986). [J. Allergy Clin Immunol](#)

The levels in wine average 80 mg/liter, or about 10 mg in a typical glass of wine. A number of studies show reactions by sensitive patients to drinking wine with sulfites, but it appears that their reactions are also caused by other components. For details on this issue see this review: A.T. Bakalinsky, Sulfites, Wine and Health, in *Wine in Context: Nutrition, Physiology, Policy*, A.L. Waterhouse and R.M. Rantz, Eds. [American Society for Enology and Viticulture](#), Davis, 1996. ([Publication List](#))

The medical literature has virtually no reports on sulfites inducing headache. There are many studies of sulfites and asthmatic responses, and a few of these address sulfites in wine. A few studies from Australia shows that even with extremely sensitive people, there is only an asthmatic response in a small number of sensitive subjects (4 out of 24) for a single drink (150 ml) at extremely high sulfite levels-300 mg/liter or 45 mg. No effects were seen at lower levels, such as 150 mg/liter, or with several increasing doses up to 750 mg/liter! See H Valley and PJ

Thompson, Role of sulfite additives in wine induced asthma: single dose and cumulative dose studies, Thorax 56:763-769 (2001). [Link](#)

There are many erroneous ideas about sulfites, so to put the record straight:

- All wines contain sulfites. Yeast naturally produce sulfites during fermentation so there is only a rare wine which contains none.
- The US requires a "sulfite" warning label and Australia requires a label indicating "preservative 220," but nearly **all winemakers add sulfites**, including those in France, Italy, Spain, Australia, Chile, etc etc. So, the wine you drink in foreign countries contains sulfites, but you just are not being warned about it when purchased abroad. Survey studies show that European wines contain an average of 80 mg/L sulfites just as in the US.
- There are a few (very few) winemakers who make wines without adding sulfites. In the US, organic wine must be made without added sulfites. These are unusual because the wine is very perishable and often have unusual aromas from the aldehydes that are normally bound and rendered aroma-less by the sulfites. Look for these wines at natural food stores.
- **Sulfites do not cause headaches!!!** There is something in red wine that causes headaches, but the cause has not yet been discovered. Refer to the Bakalinsky article above. (Many people seem to connect their headache with the sulfite warning label, but sorry there is no connection). To avoid headaches, try drinking less wine, and drink with food. If you think sulfites are causing your headache, try eating some orange-colored dried apricots, and let me know if that induces a headache. These bright colored dried fruits typically have 2000 mg/kg sulfites, so a two ounce serving (56 gm) should contain about 112 mg sulfites.

I get about one note every two months protesting this assertion from individuals who say they get terrible headaches from sulfites. Their experiences may well be true, but anonymous emails cannot be verified and tested, rendering them useless in advancing a valid understanding. I have offered to post their stories if they are willing to verify their identities (to me) and let me compile them in a list for a future research investigation. Unless the sufferers are willing to undergo some actual verification of their affliction by an independent observer, their stories remain hearsay. Neither science nor the law is willing to take a stand on such grounds.

So, if you feel that you are so afflicted and you are willing to go on a verified list of potential subjects of a scientific study, please send me a note that includes your postal address, and daytime phone, and a statement of your willingness to be a participant in a future study. This personal information will NOT be posted in the internet. I will keep this in a list for medical researchers interested in such a study. Just so you know, your note will NOT be a legal document and any future study on human subjects will include many more documents explaining the nature of any study in which you may participate as well as the risks, etc., and you will have ample opportunity to back out if you have concerns about the study.

[Current Testimonials](#)

- In the US, the law states that
 - Wines cannot contain more than 350 mg/liter sulfites
 - Wines with more than 10 mg/liter must have a "Contains Sulfites" warning label

- Producers must show levels below 10 mg/liter by analysis to omit the label
 - Wines must have less than 1 mg/liter to have a label that says "No Sulfites"
 - This level must be shown by analysis
 - All wines must carry the label whether made in the US or abroad
- Still want to get rid of sulfites? In theory, you can remove sulfites by adding hydrogen peroxide to your wine, but there is little specifically known about this treatment. I don't recommend it but I mention it only because I keep getting asked how to do this. The correct amount to add will depend on the sulfite level in the wine, an amount you cannot deduce except by chemical analysis. I have no idea what will happen if you use too much. If you want to learn more, there is a study of the reaction between sulfite and hydrogen peroxide in simple water solutions: M.R. Hoffman and J.R. Edwards, Kinetics of the Oxidation of Sulfite by Hydrogen Peroxide in Acidic Solution, *J. Phys. Chem.* 79: 2096 (1975) [Link](#) Hydrogen peroxide has been used to remove sulfites from cucumbers and dried fruit. Ozkan, M; Cemeroglu, B. 2002. Desulfiting dried apricots by hydrogen peroxide. *JOURNAL OF FOOD SCIENCE* 67 (5): 1631-1635. McFeeters, RF. 1998. Use and removal of sulfite by conversion to sulfate in the preservation of salt-free cucumbers. *JOURNAL OF FOOD PROTECTION* 61 (7): 885-890.
- Every 5 years or so a M.D. asks me if I want to collaborate on wine headaches, but there is no funding for such research. So, if anyone wants to support a Master's student research project on the topic of wine headaches (\$30K) we can start to investigate, and we will even test how to remove sulfites.

Updated May 2006

Andrew L. Waterhouse, Copyright 2002, 2005, 2006

[Minor Wine Components](#)

[End of Waterhouse article.]

Update 13 July 2006.

On my recent return from East Timor, I had to spend six nights waiting for a flight out of Bali. During that time I had a chance to try Indonesian wine. The only brand that I saw for sale was a local Balinese brand, Hatten Wines. The price was 55,000 – 65,000 Rupiah, or, at the exchange rate of 9000Rp = 1USD, about USD6-7.00 per 750 ml bottle. The address on the bottle was: PT Arpan Bali Utama, Sanur, Bali, Indonesia. The brochure that was handed out in a store offering free taste tests contained the following information: "Owner I. B. Rai Budarsa and Winemaker Vincent Desplat. Our wines are natural wines, free of coloring and flavoring, made from local grapes and not their concentrated juice versions. We only bottle the best from Bali's vineyards." The label also contained the note: Cellaring not recommended." I imagine that that is because no preservatives are added. I sampled three varieties: Rose, AGA White, and Alexandria. All were good, but Alexandria was a sweet wine, and I prefer dry. I purchased a couple of bottles, which I drank over a two-day period. No headaches!

When I finally reached my home in the US (after eight days of travel!), one of the first things my wife and I happened to do was visit a local grocery store to pick up a few food items. While I was there, I checked out the wine section. I noticed several brands that I had seen in Australia, including McWilliams, Penfolds, Jacobs Creek, and Yellowtail. The Yellowtail was priced at about USD6.50 per bottle, but the others were in the USD11.00 range – much more than the

USD4.50 that I had paid in Australia. I cannot imagine that the cost of shipping is over \$6.00 per bottle, so I am puzzled why the Australian wines cost so much more in the US than in Australia. To my dismay, all of the Australian wines carried the note, "Contains sulfites." Given the lack of standardization in labeling of wine preservatives, I have no way of knowing whether these wines use sulfur dioxide, as in Australia, and it is just referred to loosely as "sulfites," or whether they actually use potassium metabisulfite for their US market. I may try one someday, to see whether I get a headache, but it is a little distressing to pay \$11.00 for a \$4.50 bottle of wine. [End of update.]

Update 23 April 2009

I have written previously about harmful food additives. The following is an extract from the section "Where Has All the Flavor Gone" of my article Miscellany 18, posted at <http://www.foundationwebsite.org/Miscellany18.htm> .

There are plenty of other additives that are harmful to human beings. I am allergic to potassium sorbate, which is a preservative often used in citrus drinks, such as apple juice, wine coolers, or cocktail mixes, such as piña colada or daiquiri mix. This chemical causes me to have severe chest pain, and difficulty breathing. This reaction is not all that uncommon, and can be fatal.

If you check the World Wide Web on the Internet (search phrase "potassium sorbate"), you will find that some people claim that potassium sorbate has been given a bum rap – that it is not at all dangerous. For example, the Lumen Foods website states, "It is hard to imagine a naturally-occurring nutrient that has been more maligned or more mischaracterized than potassium sorbate – the potassium salt of sorbic acid." (<http://www.soybean.com/ps.htm>). Whatever bad press potassium sorbate has been given is richly deserved. This preservative is very dangerous, and can be fatal.

(It took me quite a while to find out that I was allergic to potassium sorbate. Every once in a while I would have a terrible reaction to a soft drink or mix. I would read the labels of what I had drunk, but there were always so many added chemicals that I could not determine which one was causing my problem. Then, one day, in the early 1980s, a friend offered me a "wine cooler," which triggered the allergic reaction. To my good fortune, the wine cooler had but a single added ingredient – potassium sorbate. My problem was solved. As chance would have it, my children heard a television report a couple of weeks later, discussing the fact that potassium sorbate preservatives could cause fatal reactions.)

Unfortunately for me, I am allergic to the sulfites that occur, either added or naturally, in wine. If I take a large glass of red wine, I almost always get a headache that starts the next morning and lasts for the rest of the day, the night, and the next day. Fortunately, I can purchase, in some stores, "organic" wines, to which no sulfites have been added. Wines from France, Italy, and other foreign countries also tend not to have sulfites added. Champagne appears to have lower levels of sulfites.

It is a shame that so many poisons are added to our food. No wonder today's food tastes so bad. No wonder there has been such an increase in colon cancer. We are simply pickling our guts. [End of update.]

See also the article "Harmful Food Additives" at <http://www.foundationwebsite.org/Miscellany35.htm> .

Cold Medicine Additive PPA: A Tragic Tale

A few weeks ago, my friend Ed forwarded me the following e-mail.

Hi all,

Below is a copy of a letter I received from my classmates at the Ateneo High School. This is something I have been warning my friends and relatives about for the past five or six years.

" I would like to thank those of you who expressed condolences on the recent passing of my mother. She suffered a hemorrhagic stroke while she was driving home from my house on 9/30 and passed away on 10/3.

My mother's stroke and passing was an enormous shock to my family because she did not have any symptoms or risk factors for a stroke. Just the week before she had gone to her doctor for a check up and received a clean bill of health. She did, however, develop a cold while she was visiting me and had taken Alka Seltzer Cold Plus for 3 days.

Since her passing, we have learned that Alka Seltzer is one of the many cold medicines that contains Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) which can cause hemorrhagic strokes or cerebral bleeding even with the first use.

I am forwarding a list of other medications that currently use PPA. These medicines are supposedly being recalled but my mother just purchased this medication less than two weeks ago. Pharmaceutical companies have known about this danger for years, we unfortunately, did not.

I urge you to review the list of medicines with PPA and avoid these medications. Thank you again for your thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

Nancy Moran-Rice

DRUG RECALL INFORMATION

All drugs containing PHENYLPROPANOLAMINE are being recalled.

You may want to try calling the 800 number listed on most drug boxes and inquire about a REFUND. Please read this CAREFULLY. Also, please pass this on to everyone you know.

STOP TAKING anything containing this ingredient. It has been linked to increased hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding in brain) among women ages 18-49 in the three days after starting use of medication. Problems were not found in men! , but the FDA recommended that everyone (even children) seek alternative medicine.

The following medications contain Phenylpropanolamine:

Acutrim Diet Gum Appetite Suppressant

Acutrim Plus Dietary Supplements
Acutrim Maximum Strength Appetite Control
Alka-Seltzer Plus Children's Cold Medicine Effervescent
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold medicine (cherry or orange)
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold Medicine Original
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Cough Medicine Effervescent
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Flu Medicine
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Sinus Effervescent
Alka Seltzer Plus Night-Time Cold Medicine
BC Allergy Sinus Cold Powder
BC Sinus Cold Powder
Comtrex Flu Therapy & Fever Relief
Day & Night Contac 12-Hour Cold Capsules
Contac 12 Hour Caplets
Coricidin D Cold, Flu & Sinus
Dexatrim Caffeine Free
Dexatrim Extended Duration
Dexatrim Gelcaps
Dexatrim Vitamin C/Caffeine Free
Dimetapp Cold & Allergy Chewable Tablets
Dimetapp Cold & Cough Liqui-Gels
Dimetapp DM Cold & Cough Elixir
Dimetapp Elixir
Dimetapp 4 Hour Liquid Gels
Dimetapp 4 Hour Tablets
Dimetapp 12 Hour Extentabs Tablets
Naldecon DX Pediatric Drops
Permathene Mega-16
Robitussin CF
Tavist-D 12 Hour Relief of Sinus & Nasal
Congestion
Triaminic DM Cough Relief
Triaminic Expectorant Chest & Head
Triaminic Syrup !!! Cold & Allergy
Triaminic Triaminicol Cold & Cough

I just found out and called the 800# on the container for Triaminic and they informed me that they are voluntarily recalling the following medicines because of a certain ingredient that is causing strokes and seizures in children:

Orange 3D Cold & Allergy Cherry (Pink)
3D Cold & Cough Berry
3D Cough Relief Yellow 3D Expectorant

They are asking you to call them at 800-548-3708 with the lot number on the box so they can send you postage for you to send it back to them, and they will also issue you a refund. If you know of anyone else with small children, PLEASE PASS THIS ON. THIS IS SERIOUS STUFF!

DO PASS ALONG TO ALL ON YOUR MAILING LIST so people are informed. They can then pass it along to their families.

To confirm these findings please take time to check the following:

<http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/ppa/>

[End of Ed's e-mail.]

I found this e-mail rather incredible, and so I decided to do a little checking. I entered the term "phenylpropanolamine (PPA)" in a search engine, and obtained the following information from <http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/blppa.htm> :

[Urban Legends and Folklore](#)

Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) Recall

Netlore Archive: Forwarded emails warning that non-prescription medicines containing phenylpropanolamine hydrochloride may have adverse health effects were accurate at the time they were issued but are now outdated

Description: Email rumor
Circulating since: Nov 2000
Status: Outdated
Analysis: [See below](#)

Email example contributed by Nancy, 12/06/00:

You may have heard this, or noticed that these products have been removed from the shelves.

Discard these Medications

subject: Phenylpropanolamine

Stop taking anything containing this ingredient. It has been linked to increased hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding in brain) among women ages 18-49 in the three days after starting use of medication. Problems were not found in men, but the FDA recommended that everyone (even children) seek alternative medicine. The following medications contain Phenylpropanolamine:

Alka-Seltzer Plus Children's Cold Medicine Effervescent
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold medicine (cherry or orange)
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold Medicine Original
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Cough Medicine Effervescent
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Flu Medicine Effervescent
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Sinus Effervescent
Alka Seltzer Plus Nighttime cold Medicine Effervescent
BC Allergy Sinus Cold Powder
BC Sinus Cold Powder
Comtrex Deep Chest Cold & Congestion Relief
Comtrex Flu Therapy & Fever Relief Day & Night
Contac 12-Hour Cold Capsules
Contac 12 Hour Caplets
Coricidin D Cold, Flu & Sinus
Dimetapp Cold & Allergy Chewable Tablets

Dimetapp Cold & Cough Liqui-Gels
Dimetapp DM cold & Cough Elixir
Dimetapp Elixir
Dimetapp 4 Hour Liqui Gels
Dimetapp 4 Hour Tablets
Dimetapp 12 Hour Extentabs Tablets
Naldecon DX Pediatric Drops
Permathene Mega-16
Robitussin CF
Tavist-D 12 Hour Relief of Sinus & Nasal Congestion
Triaminic DM Cough Relief
Triaminic Expectorant Chest & Head Congestion
Triaminic Syrup Cold & Allergy
Triaminic Triaminicol Cold & Cough
Acutrim Diet Gum Appetite Suppressant Plus
Dietary Supplements
Acutrim Maximum Strength Appetite Control
Dexatrim Caffeine Free
Dexatrim Extended Duration
Dexatrim Gelcaps
Dexatrim Vitamin C/Caffeine Free

Please discard any of these medications as soon as possible

2005 Update: Most if not all of the products listed above which formerly contained phenylpropanolamine hydrochloride have been reformulated to eliminate the ingredient. Consumer questions about phenylpropanolamine and its potential health hazards may be directed to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at 1-888-INFO-FDA.

Some manufacturers of over-the-counter medicines containing phenylpropanolamine have offered refunds to consumers who purchased the products before they were voluntarily recalled in late 2000. To inquire about the availability of such refunds, dial the 800-number for consumer questions listed on the product packaging.

Comments by Carla Homan: This email has it mostly right. In November 2000, the FDA issued a [public health advisory](#) about phenylpropanolamine hydrochloride (PPA), the drug mentioned in the email. This drug is found in many over the counter (OTC) medicines, specifically in cold and flu remedies, as well as appetite suppressants. The drug will likely be banned, but because this process takes time, the FDA issued the health advisory in the meantime and manufacturers are voluntarily recalling and/or reformulating medicines containing PPA.

The main problem with this drug is that it elevates your risk of having a hemorrhagic stroke, especially with (but not limited to) first time use among women. Because the uses of PPA are not serious enough to warrant taking even that small chance, the FDA recommends that you stop taking any medications containing the drug.

Rather than looking at a limited list such as the one contained in the above email, you'd be better off checking the package of any cold, flu or appetite suppressant medication for the drug, which will appear in the list of active ingredients and may be listed as phenylpropanolamine, phenylpropanolamine hydrochloride, or phenylpropanolamine

bitartrate. Many manufacturers offer several formulations of their cold and flu remedies, some of which do not contain PPA. Pseudoephedrine is an effective alternative to PPA for use in cold and flu preparations, but unfortunately, there is no approved alternative OTC drug for use in appetite suppressants. Therefore, if you are using any OTC medications to suppress your appetite for weight loss or other reasons, you should stop using the medicine and talk to your doctor about getting a prescription drug instead. Additionally, some prescription decongestants and cold and flu preparations contain PPA, so if you are using any prescription medicines for these purposes, talk to the prescribing doctor to see if you should continue using the medicine.

One word of caution: Though the email states your risk is for "increased hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding in brain) among women ages 18-49 in the three days after starting use of medication," don't think you are safe if you've used the drug for longer than three days. The three-day window was merely one of the guidelines used in the study that prompted the health advisory; for the study, they defined PPA exposure as having used PPA within three days prior to the stroke. Risk of stroke may be present after three days of use. For detailed information, see the [final report](#) of the Hemorrhagic Stroke Project, Web-published by the FDA.

As always, your best resources for reliable information on medicines and medical conditions are your own physician and pharmacist.

Sources and further reading:

[Public Health Advisory: PPA](#)

U.S. Food & Drug Administration

[Phenylpropanolamine \(PPA\) Information Page](#)

U.S. Food & Drug Administration

Carla Homan is a writer and researcher based in Washington, D.C.

(Last updated: 02/03/05)

[End of Homan article.]

As incredible as the PPA incident may seem, it appears to be true. There are far too many chemical additives in our medicines and foods. As I have written before, I am highly allergic to the food preservative potassium sorbate, used in many soft drinks or "mixers," particularly those containing coconut juice or the juice of citric-acid fruits. A single soft drink containing potassium sorbate has killed people in the past, and will kill more in the future. In addition to sulfites and PPA in this article, I have previously written about the dangers of carrageenan. Natural oils in foods such as peanut butter have been replaced by artery-clogging hydrogenated solid fats. Much of the industrial world is poisoning its population with fluoride additive to drinking water. It is no wonder that cancer rates and heart disease rates are high in all industrial societies, that diseases such as autism and attention-deficit disorder are soaring, and that the rates of allergies such as asthma are at record levels. We are poisoning ourselves, with our industrial agriculture and factory farms. Of course, this fits nicely into the plans of the economic forces that control modern industrial society – cause diseases by contaminating the food and water, and then offer to treat the economy-stimulating diseases using high-cost medical care.

Russia's Declining Population

A few weeks ago, Russia's president, Vladimir Putin commented on Russia's declining population. Here is an excerpt from a Reuters news release of May 11, 2006.

Putin talks babies, avoids tangle with US in speech

By Richard Balmforth

President Vladimir Putin offered couples cash to have more children to halt a dramatic decline in population and called for a stronger army in a key speech on Wednesday in which he shrugged off sharp attacks by Washington.

Putin, defying predictions he would focus on foreign policy, zeroed in on Russia's dwindling population -- an issue with huge implications for the economy -- which is falling by 700,000 people every year.

In his annual speech to the nation, the president, who in July hosts leaders of the G8 group of rich democracies, responded only obliquely to stinging criticism from the White House of his democracy record.

"Not everyone in the world has been able to move on from the stereotypes of bloc thinking and prejudices which are a carry-over from the epoch of global confrontation, though there have been fundamental changes in the world," he said.

U.S.-Russian relations, which have been unusually warm under Putin, hit their coldest moment last week when Vice President Dick Cheney accused Moscow of backsliding on democracy and using its vast energy resources as a tool for "intimidation and blackmail" against its neighbors.

President George W. Bush, who will next meet Putin in St Petersburg in July, followed up by saying in a German newspaper that Russia was giving out "mixed signals" on democracy.

[portion deleted]

MORE BABIES PLEASE

His proposal to boost the birthrate is Putin's first real attempt to tackle a catastrophic demographic decline in the world's biggest country.

Describing the issue as contemporary Russia's most acute problem, he told Russian couples he would more than double to 1,500 roubles (\$55.39) monthly payouts to families for the first baby and then double that to 3,000 roubles for a second child.

Average wages are below \$100 a week.

The trend is driven by low life expectancy, particularly among men, due to poor diet, heavy drinking and smoking.

If it continues, officials say today's population of around 143 million will be down to 100 million by the middle of the century, translating into a weaker workforce and smaller army.

"We are talking about love, about women, about children, about the family," Putin said.

"The problem of low birth rates cannot be resolved without a change in the attitude of our society toward the issue of family and family values," he said.

Deferring to another powerful pillar of the Russian establishment, just a day after the 61st anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany by Soviet forces, Putin said Russia needed armed forces capable of responding to modern threats.

"We ... must build our own house, strong and reliable, according to what we see is going on in the world," he said.

(Additional reporting by Dmitry Solovyov, Christian Lowe and Guy Faulconbridge)

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[End of Reuters article.]

Mr. Putin's concerns about Russia's declining population are ill-founded. Putin is, of course, not alone among political leaders in his phobia of a declining population. As observed in the Bible, (Proverbs 14:28) "A large population is a king's glory, but without subjects a prince is ruined." A political leader's power is directly proportional to the number of people he controls, and to their economic productivity. Political leaders always exhort their people to maintain high population levels and high levels of economic productivity. There is not a single world leader calling for reduced population and reduced economic activity in his nation, only more, more, more, no matter how devastating the resulting damage to the planet's biosphere (or even his own country's environment).

The world's current high human population levels have been enabled solely because of the use of massive amounts of fossil fuels, in particular oil. Global oil reserves are about half exhausted, and global oil production is peaking. At current rates of consumption, all oil reserves will be exhausted by 2050. As global oil production starts its inevitable decline, the world human population will follow. Before long, the planet will return to a human population level that can be sustained by the planet's current solar energy flux (not just because oil will soon be gone, but because the mass species extinction that is caused by large human numbers and industrial activity (i.e., by high total energy consumption) cannot continue without destroying mankind as well). That population level is at most a few hundred million people existing at a low level of living (low energy consumption level), or a few tens of millions of people living at a high standard of living (or some combination of both). In the case of Russia, the maximum long-term-sustainable population is far below current levels. Here are some figures from the "Population Analysis" for Russia posted at internet website <http://www.foundationwebsite.org> :

- A. Maximum high-agricultural-productivity population (10 persons/hectare of arable land, corresponding to global population of 14.0 billion): 1,238,600,000.
- B. Maximum low-agricultural-productivity population (1 person/hectare of arable land, corresponding to global population of 1.40 billion): 123,860,000.
- C. Maximum solar-energy population, low level of living (.35674585 persons/hectare of arable land, corresponding to global population of 500 million): 44,186,541.
- D. Maximum solar-energy population, high level of living (.0035674585 persons/hectare of arable land, corresponding to global population of 5 million): 441,865.
- E. Sustainable primitive-agricultural population (.21404751 persons/hectare of arable land, corresponding to global population of 300 million): 26,511,925.

F: Sustainable hunter-gatherer population (.0035674585 persons/hectare of land, corresponding to global population of 5 million): 441,865.

G. Minimal-regret population: 441,865.

From these figures, we see that Russia's current population of 143 million already exceeds the maximum population that can be supported by low-agricultural-productivity (low-energy-input) population, or 124 million, and is far above the number that can be supported long-term on solar energy (44 million).

But, unlike most other countries, Russia is on the right track. If it continues to lose population at its current rate, it is conceivable that it can transition to a solar-energy-sustainable population level without experiencing the massive die-off that will soon occur in most other industrial countries. Some other countries, such as Italy, also have low birth rates, and could be decreasing their populations, but they refuse to do so and supplement their otherwise-declining populations through mass immigration. That approach not only assures the cultural suicide of the nation, but also ensures that the country will undergo a massive die-off as global petroleum production begins its inevitable decline.

President Putin, your country is on the right track. That Russia's population is declining is a very good situation, for the long term. Your country – your culture – has been very prudent in its refusal to move to mass immigration as a “solution” to declining population. That approach is not only culture-destroying, but it keeps the population far above the long-term carrying capacity and makes it more vulnerable to catastrophic population decline as global petroleum reserves exhaust. Through its population decline, Russia is moving in the right direction. When global petroleum reserves exhaust, Russia will not face nearly the population die-off that other countries with expanding populations, or with populations far exceeding their solar-energy carrying capacity, will. In expressing their strong dislike of immigration, your country's youth are serving the long-term interests of Russia well. They are protecting Russian culture, and promoting the likelihood that Russia will survive the global die-off that is certain as the petroleum-fueled industrial age comes to an end.

In the long run, Russia's declining population will serve it well. With a strong culture and a long-term-sustainable (solar-energy-sustainable) population, it may be one of the few intact nations remaining after global petroleum reserves exhaust, and all nations that far exceed the solar-energy carrying capacity are gone. Russians: Keep up the good work! Do not fear population decline. It will serve you well. Population growth serves only the wealthy. Large human population and industrial activity destroys the planet and cannot continue. Continue to resist immigration to your country, and do not discourage Russia's current population decline. It is a blessing in disguise. This planet may soon be yours!

The Cassiopaea Transcripts

Several years ago, my website (<http://www.foundationwebsite.org>) received a “hit” from a hyperlink on a website called “Cassiopaea” (<http://www.cassiopaea.com>). That website is owned and operated by Mrs. Laura Knight-Jadczyk (“Laura”) and her husband, Dr. Arakadiusz Jadczyk (“Ark”). Each day, out of curiosity, I take a look at some of the links to my site, as I did with that one. I was pleasantly surprised at what I found. The Cassiopaea site contains writings of Laura and Ark on a variety of “New Age” topics, including modern physics, unidentified flying objects (UFOs), alien abductions, metaphysics, and Earth prehistory (e.g., Hyperborea, Atlantis, Lemuria/Mu).

Laura channels from a source called Cassiopaea, and, since 1994, she has recorded transcripts of her channel sessions (mostly done using a talking board, a few via trance of her erstwhile associate, Fred). She has published excerpts of the transcripts in some soft-cover publications, and previously published most of them (through August, 2001), in their entirety, on a CD. More of them (through September, 2002) are now available (free of charge) from the Cassiopaea website. I had copied them from the CD to my computer quite some time ago, but, because of their length and my preoccupation with other things, I never got around to reading more than just a few selections from them. Since my evacuation from East Timor to Darwin, Australia, on May 28, I have had a lot of time on my hands, and so I decided to read all of them. I finished reading all of them several days ago.

If you wish to have a very interesting description of ancient history and the current metaphysical state of the world, I recommend highly that you read Laura's transcripts from Cassiopaea. One of the things that interested me about her channelings was the similarity of some of the material to that of Rudolf Steiner (who declined to identify the source of his information). To access them from the Internet, proceed as follows: Navigate to site <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/casschat>. Click on "files" and download the file sessions.zip (or click on sessions.exe if you don't have a copy of the WinZip file compression program on your computer).

The Epidemic of Theft of Private Data

It seems that every few days now you read in the news of the theft of another large data file containing the private data of thousands or millions of US citizens. I have had a long-standing interest in privacy and data theft. When, in 1986, I started to write my book on US tax reform (<http://www.foundationwebsite.org/VAT.htm>), I intended it to be a book on privacy, including discussion of the dangers of widespread use of the Social Security Number (SSN) as a universal identifier and the use of the SSN as a numerical identifier in computer data bases. After I got started on the book, I realized that the US tax system was perhaps the most significant factor relative to privacy invasion, and so I switched the topic of the book from privacy to income tax policy. (I had acquired an interest in tax policy from my work in 1975-76 when I supervised a series of agricultural tax policy studies in Haiti.)

For several decades, I have refused to provide my SSN to organizations that requested it "for identification," unless the law specifically required me to do so (e.g., to my employer for tax withholding and to my bank). Naturally, this position has caused me a lot of trouble, and, in recent years, I have been "worn down" to the point where I have in fact released it to a few organizations (such as the Academy for Educational Development's health insurance plan).

This past year has seen a significant rise in the number of instances in which computer data bases containing personal data have been stolen. Just before I came to East Timor, American Express Ameriprise informed me that my personal data had been stolen from one of their computers. When I was at my doctor's office getting a medical exam prior to my departure to East Timor, the doctor's office asked for my SSN. I had never been asked for it before by that office, since I had simply paid the bills in cash, without the involvement of an insurance carrier. Now, however, I had some medical insurance, and I wished for it to pay for the physical exam. I told the office lady that my medical insurance carrier (AARP Health Care Options / United HealthCare) did not require use of the SSN. She told me that she could not file the claim without it. I called the insurance company and had the representative assure the physician's billing staff that the SSN was not at all required. I told the office worker that I would agree to her entering my data into their database, as long as my SSN was not entered. I even offered to

show her my SSN “for identification,” as long as she did not enter it in the database. At that point, the billing lady informed me that “their system” simply would not accept an insurance claim without the SSN, and she would have to enter it into the database. At that point, I gave up and simply paid for the physical myself.

I did not investigate, but I imagine that the physician’s office does not file any claims directly to insurance companies, but instead turns them over (by direct computer transfer) to an intermediary “claims broker” who then files with the insurance companies. In this day and age where almost everyone allows use of his SSN by health-care providers, such a broker almost surely has set up a data base using the SSN as a unique personal identifier, and simply refuses to process any claims without an SSN.

During my “exchange” with the doctor’s billing staff member, she assured me that none of the doctor’s office personnel would misuse my data, and that there were policies and safeguards in place to ensure the privacy and security of my data. I explained to her that I had little worry that the doctor’s office staff would misuse my data, but that my concern was that the data would at some point be stolen. I pointed out to her the frequent reports of database theft, and that American Express Ameriprise had just informed me that my personal data had been stolen from them. She had no response to that comment.

The really striking feature of the recent thefts of personal data from government databases is the attitude and response of the government, including the US senators and representatives who are being pressed to address this issue. They adamantly refuse to address the root cause of the problem, viz., that the government has allowed the use of the SSN as a universal identifier. Instead, the government officials attempt to blame the organizations from whom the data was stolen, by accusing them of not following good procedures. That is really an absurd position! Even banks get robbed all the time. No matter what safeguards are in place, data will be stolen if it is valuable. And blaming the criminals who have stolen the data is as foolish as blaming the bank robbers for a bank robbery. What makes data most valuable, and most desirable to thieves, is the existence and widespread use of a universal personal identifier, or “key.” Unless and until the government prohibits the use of the SSN as a database key, databases will remain very easy to use, attractive to thieves, and the problem of theft of personal data will continue.

(The US proposed the Social Security Number in 1935, as part of the Social Security Act. Following the loud public outcry against the introduction of the SSN, the US government promised that it would never allow the use of the SSN as a universal personal identifier. What a lie! For some time, Social Security Cards (such as my own, issued in the mid-1950s) did in fact carry the legend, in large letters, “Not for Identification.” That legend was deleted long ago, as the US government reneged on its promise to prevent the use of the SSN as a universal identifier.)

In the Privacy Act of 1974, the US government did introduce some restrictions on the use of the SSN. For example, it contained a “grandfather clause” requiring that no state that did not already use the SSN for driver’s license numbers prior to 1974 could do so in the future. (To its credit, a total ban on use of the SSN as a driver’s license number was introduced just a few months ago.) Also, it prohibited the setting up of any system of records based on the SSN by any organization receiving federal grants. That includes, for example, almost any educational or medical organization of any size (since most of them receive federal grants). A lot of people do not realize this. When my sons enrolled in the University of Arizona in the 1980s, for example, they were asked for their SSNs. I explained to them that since the University received federal

grants, it was prohibited (by the Privacy Act of 1974) from setting up a system of records based on the SSN. It was clearly in violation of the law. One of my sons in fact refused to provide his SSN. He was eventually allowed to enroll, but only after he was “punished” with substantial harassment in the form of inordinate delays in his registration (resulting, as I recall, in his being unable to enroll in a couple of necessary classes when they “filled up”).

The response of the US government to data theft is the same as its response to the September 11 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York. The 9/11 attack was the direct result of America’s policies of mass immigration, open borders, and massive international free trade. But the government refused to accept responsibility for this, and simply blamed the attackers! That is like blaming a germ for a disease – what use is there to that? The government response to the theft of personal data from government databases is exactly the same. Instead of blaming itself for allowing and promoting the use of the SSN as a universal identifier, it blames the criminals who stole the data, or the specific organization or office from which the databases were taken, or the individuals who carelessly “took the data home” or “left the data in a laptop computer at the office.” It *never* blames itself for allowing and promoting the use of a universal personal identifier – the SSN – as the root cause of the problem. The really amazing thing is that the public seems to accept this absurd response.

In closing, here is a sample news article on recent theft of personal data. It exemplifies the “shoot the messenger” attitude of the US government, in pointing the finger of blame at anyone except the ultimate source of the problem – its very own introduction and promotion of the use of the SSN as a universal personal identifier. Nowhere in this or any other article that I have read on data theft has the government acknowledged its essential role in this situation. Once again, it has little interest in fixing the problem, since data theft, like any other form of crime (or “natural” disasters, or war), increases gross domestic product (GDP). The more data theft, the more economic activity that is spent on security in trying to prevent it and on efforts by individuals to repair the damage caused by it (e.g., fraud, identity theft). Data theft pours money into the coffers of the wealthy elite who run security firms to “thwart” it, law firms to resolve identity theft cases, and banks whose cost of operations (all paid by customers) rises to address it. Since data theft is good for business and the economy, the government will simply pretend to be concerned and trying to do something about it, when in fact it will continue policies that enable and facilitate it. The situation is analogous to the “War on Drugs,” the “War on Poverty,” the “War on Terrorism,” or the feigned “efforts” to stop mass illegal immigration – drugs and terrorism and mass immigration are great for the economy, and so the government is not about to do anything effective to reduce them.

Thieves Steal Personal Data of 26.5M Vets

By Hope Yen, Associated Press Writer, 23 May 2006

Thieves took sensitive personal information on 26.5 million U.S. veterans, including Social Security numbers and birth dates, after a Veterans Affairs employee improperly brought the material home, the government said Monday.

The information involved mainly those veterans who served and have been discharged since 1975, said VA Secretary Jim Nicholson. Data of veterans discharged before 1975 who submitted claims to the agency may have been included.

Nicholson said there was no evidence the thieves had used the data for identity theft, and an investigation was continuing.

"It's highly probable that they do not know what they have," he said in a briefing with reporters. "We have decided that we must exercise an abundance of caution and make sure our veterans are aware of this incident."

Veterans advocates expressed alarm.

"This was a very serious breach of security for American veterans and their families," said Bob Wallace, executive director of Veterans of Foreign Wars. "We want the VA to show leadership, management and accountability for this breach."

Ramona Joyce, spokeswoman for the American Legion, agreed that the theft was a concern. "In the information age, we're constantly told to protect our information. We would ask no less of the VA," she said.

Nicholson declined to comment on the specifics of the incident, which involved a midlevel data analyst who had taken the information home to suburban Maryland on a laptop to work on a department project.

The residential community had been a target of a series of burglaries when the employee was victimized earlier this month, according to the FBI in Baltimore. Local law enforcement and the VA inspector general were also investigating.

"I want to emphasize there was no medical records of any veteran and no financial information of any veteran that's been compromised," Nicholson said, although he added later that some information on the veterans' disabilities may have been taken.

Nicholson said he does not know how many of the department's 235,000 employees go through background investigations. He said employees who have access to large volumes of personal data should be required to undergo such checks, but he does not believe the VA employee was involved in the theft.

"We do not suspect at all any ulterior motive," he said.

The department has come under criticism for shoddy accounting practices and for falling short on the needs of veterans.

Last year, more than 260,000 veterans could not sign up for services because of cost-cutting. Audits also have shown the agency used misleading accounting methods and lacked documentation to prove its claimed savings.

"It is a mystifying and gravely serious concern that a VA data analyst would be permitted to just walk out the VA door with such information," Illinois Rep. Lane Evans (news, bio, voting record), the top Democrat on the Veterans Affairs Committee, said in a statement signed by other Democrats on the panel.

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who is a Vietnam veteran, said he would introduce legislation to require the VA to provide credit reports to the veterans affected by the theft.

"This is no way to treat those who have worn the uniform of our country," Kerry said. "Someone needs to be fired."

The VA said it was notifying members of Congress and the individual veterans about the burglary. It has set up a call center at 1-800-FED-INFO and Web site, <http://www.firstgov.gov>, for veterans who believe their information has been misused.

It also is stepping up its review of procedures on the use of personal data for many of its employees who telecommute as well as others who must sign disclosure forms showing they are aware of federal privacy laws and the consequences if they're violated.

Deborah Platt Majoras, chair of the Federal Trade Commission, said her task force has reached out to the three major credit bureaus to be alert to possible misuse.

On the Net:

Information for veterans suspecting identity theft:

<http://www.firstgov.gov> or 1-800-FED-INFO

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[End of AP article.]

Atmospheric Pollution by Aircraft – “Tragedy of the Commons” All Over Again

On May 5, 2006, the BBC World television channel presented a segment of Stephen Sackur's *HardTalk* program in which Mr. Sackur interviewed Mr. Praful Patel, Indian Civil Aviation Minister. Mr. Sackur pointed out that the Indian aviation industry was growing by 25 percent a year, and that this was contributing significantly to atmospheric pollution. Mr. Sackur asked Mr. Patel how he could justify such growth, in the face of mounting concern over the planetary damage (global warming) being caused by atmospheric pollution by aircraft. Mr. Patel responded emphatically that India was not going to be “held hostage,” and had no intention of restricting development of its aviation industry when the developed world already possessed this industry. His response was reminiscent of the response of Brazil when developed nations criticized it for destroying the Amazon rain forest – “we have no intention of limiting our destruction of the Amazon rain forest, and resent criticism from countries that have already destroyed their own forests!”

The situation is what Garrett Hardin discussed in his book, *Living within Limits*, a couple of decades ago. Resources that are held in common, such as the atmosphere, are particularly vulnerable to destruction from users. Hardin coined the phrase, “tragedy of the commons” to refer to the phenomenon. (The Amazon Rain Forest is an interesting case, in which the forest (sometimes referred to as the “lungs of the planet”) is used by all inhabitants of earth (who breathe the oxygen it produces), although it is owned by a single country. It is hence of common use, but single ownership.)

The feature article of the current issue of *The Economist* (“The dirty sky: Why air travel will be the next green battleground,” 10 June 2006) discusses the problem of atmospheric pollution from aircraft emissions. The article observes that next month the European Parliament will vote on whether to extend its emission-trading system (which now covers its five dirtiest industries) to airlines. It identifies two ways of limiting emissions: (1) taxing them; (2) setting a cap on pollution and letting polluters trade the right to emit.

These approaches are unlikely to make much difference. The heart of the problem is that the world is under the control of leaders who wish to maximize economic activity, and they will do so no matter what the cost to the planet's biosphere. They are similar to proposing conservation as a means of "solving" a resource-scarcity problem – e.g., a ten percent reduction in fuel consumption is a total waste of time, if the population or the economy is then allowed to grow by ten percent. All that any of these measures may accomplish is a temporary reduction in pollution levels (e.g., by the introduction of new technology) or the distribution of the benefits and costs (e.g., by Europe's giving India money to India in exchange for its "right" to pollute the air). The primary objective in any event is to increase economic activity. If that can be done by reducing an "externality," such as air pollution, then that is fine (and usually generates even more economic activity), but in no case will anything be allowed to limit overall economic growth. The scheme of selling pollution emission rights does nothing to solve the problem – it just "buys off" those who complain that they are not being allowed to commit their "fair share" of the destruction. From the economist's viewpoint, it is fine to destroy the Earth's skies, as long as it promotes economic activity and generates wealth for the planet's oligarchic elite. To make it morally acceptable, however, economists exhort that it be done "equitably," or "efficiently." It is just fine to destroy the biosphere for monetary gain, as long as we all share equally in the rape, the pillage and the plunder, in the "joy" or "lust" of doing so.

As a system of planetary management, economics is "the great destroyer." The terrible problems that we are experiencing today – mass species extinction, global warming, massive increases in human misery – are all a direct result of economic development and economic activity on a massive scale. Large human numbers and global industrialization are destroying the biosphere, and society's addiction to "growth-based economics" ensures that this destruction will continue. The false promise of a high standard of living for billions of people is an irresistible enticement to the deceived masses, who are following their venal leaders to their complete destruction. These problems will not abate until this pernicious system is gone.

Bill Gates' Philanthropy

Bill Gates is an admirable man. Having earned a massive fortune through his Microsoft Company, he set himself some time ago to addressing the issue of how to spend his massive wealth for good. A couple of days ago, I read a news report that he planned to step away from the job of active management of Microsoft within two years, to devote his time to management of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The article that I read mentioned that he was now worth an estimated 67 billion dollars, and that he had already given away 12 billion dollars.

I have been the recipient of philanthropic beneficence in my life, and I appreciate first-hand the tremendous difference that good works can achieve in human lives. When I was very young, I can still recall my great surprise at having free access to the wading pool and swings in MacDonald Park in downtown Kingston, Ontario, Canada, to the beach at Lake Ontario Park, and to the city public library. Even at that age, it seemed that everything of value had to be paid for, and I can still recall the feeling of surprise and gratitude in being given something of significant value for free.

While a teenager, I recall taking advantage of the Carnegie Library on Library Street in Spartanburg, South Carolina. It was a modest, cubical, red-brick building with wooden floors, large windows and high ceilings, quiet and filled with fresh air in the age before air conditioners, and I delighted in the privilege of checking out books at no cost. I can still recall one of the books I read at that time – a book on yoga, with a royal blue cover. The Carnegie Library of

Spartanburg has long ago been demolished, and is now just a memory. But its legacy lives on in the memories of all of those who benefited from it over the many years of its existence.

I received a full scholarship to Carnegie-Mellon University (then Carnegie Institute of Technology), paid for by General Motors. Without the largess of Carnegie and GM, my parents or I would not have been able to afford a first-class education. My graduate education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was paid for by a NASA fellowship.

I have been able to realize my full intellectual potential directly because of the substantial gifts of others. Philanthropy can make a tremendous difference in the lives of many.

Andrew Carnegie contributed much of his fortune to educational and cultural institutions, such as the Carnegie libraries, Carnegie Tech and the Carnegie Endowment for the Arts. His philanthropic efforts have created a lasting legacy that lives on through the people whose lives he has enriched.

But this article is about Bill Gates. My hat is off to Mr. Gates. He has a good heart.

I cannot help but wonder, however, if his charity will have the lasting impact that Carnegie's did. Carnegie emphasized education. His endowments made a significant difference in the intellectual and knowledge capacities of many people, and the effect of his efforts has been amplified through time. I have not heard much about how Mr. Gates is investing his fortune, but it appears that his point of view is very different from Mr. Carnegie's. All I have heard of Gate's efforts is in fighting HIV/AIDS or other diseases. If this is so, it seems to me that his efforts will have little long-term effect. His philanthropy seems oriented toward lost causes, and memory of it will disappear as soon as the people he has helped pass away.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is simply one manifestation of the result of mass human overpopulation of the planet and mass intermingling of species. It is the population explosion of human beings that has caused the current planetary crisis, and treating the symptoms, such as treating or curing HIV/AIDS, is of no help in solving the problem that produced these symptoms. If a species overpopulates – such as rabbits, lemmings, reindeer on St. Mathew Island, the settlers of Easter Island, or human beings on planet Earth – it is *supposed to* undergo a die-off, via starvation, disease, mass suicide, or war.

While trying to find a cure for this disease or caring for those afflicted with it is intellectually challenging and a respected humanitarian gesture, it is of no significant long-term benefit to mankind or the other species that inhabit the planet. Finding a cure for smallpox, polio, malaria, tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS or any other disease is of little use, if the planet “dies” anyway. Saving the lives of millions, or providing palliative care to hundreds of millions, is of no long-term value, if the biosphere is destroyed. In fact, these actions may actually *increase* the level of human misery (in numbers and severity) and contribute to the demise of the biosphere, if they simply result in a higher level of human overpopulation and greater destruction of the biosphere. The focus of Mr. Gates' philanthropy, if it succeeds in finding a cure for HIV/AIDS or any other major disease, will simply help increase the planet's human population and make the planet's environmental problem worse. Rather than reduce human suffering, such actions will simply increase it.

The HIV/AIDS problem, and all of the other serious problems currently facing the denizens of the Earth's biosphere, are the direct result of bad planetary management. These problems will not go away until the current system of planetary management, based on economic growth,

industrialization and “globalization” (large human numbers and industrial activity) is replaced by a rational system of planetary management that promotes the long-term sustainability of the human and other species of the planet. From what I know of Mr. Gates’ program to date, his efforts are not directed to these concerns.

As Fife Symington, a former governor of Arizona, remarked after he lost his fortune, “It was mine to gain and mine to lose.” Mr. Gates’ fortune was his to make and it is his to spend, and I do not presume to suggest to him how he spend it. I do not know what his objectives are. (As a very successful capitalist and a member of the planet’s wealthy elite, Mr. Gates may in fact be fully aware that treating disease caused by human overpopulation simply makes the overpopulation problem worse, but it provides fabulous economic activity opportunities for pharmaceutical manufacturers.) There may be spiritual value in providing loving care to a dying patient, even if this effort accomplishes nothing to avoid such suffering, or causes even greater suffering, in the future. I cannot help but wonder, however, if Mr. Gates might take a lesson from Mr. Carnegie, and derive a measure of gratification from investing some of his very substantial resources in education, specifically, given the current world crisis, in addressing the ultimate cause of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (bad planetary management, large human numbers and industrial activity), rather than in focusing on finding cures for current diseases (which will ultimately make the problem worse) or on providing palliative or even life-extending care to their victims (which has no effect on the problem at all).

As Laura Knight-Jadczyk’s sources have so often observed, “Knowledge protects, ignorance endangers”; and “All there is, is lessons.” The planet is undergoing a massive change, and few people understand why, or what, if anything, should be done about it. Investing a fortune in holding the hand of a dying patient, or in treating symptoms instead of addressing the cause of a disease, seems rather unfulfilling. What is the point to eliminating HIV/AIDS, for example, if the planet dies anyway? Or if a new pandemic just takes its place? (HIV/AIDS is not just a “one-time “fluke” – the root cause of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is the gross intermingling of species that is accompanying globalization.) I suppose that finding a cure for AIDS is still a self-gratifying intellectual accomplishment, but it falls very short of the vastly more challenging adventure of addressing the root cause of the disease and saving a planet from destruction at the hands of an intelligent, rapacious species. As the world’s richest man, Bill Gates is in a position to decide what game he plays, and how he plays it, and he is in a position to make a real difference. As an exceptional capitalist, he played his first choice of game exceedingly well. He is now in the process of moving on to his second game – that of philanthropist. At the present time, it seems that he has little interest in saving the planet, and would rather invest his efforts in providing palliative care to many people, or in the intellectually challenging problem of finding a cure for a sophisticated disease. If, after considering all of the alternatives, that is what he wants to do, that is fine. But I wonder if it has occurred to him whether “saving the planet” would not be a much more interesting game to play than simply holding the hand of, and comforting, a dying planet.

Why Reward Illegal Aliens with US Citizenship?

A few weeks ago, the US Senate passed a bill granting illegal aliens in the US a “path to citizenship.” There are an estimated 11-12 million of these people in the US. If they learn English and pay a small fine, they may become US citizens. Illegal aliens are criminals who have violated our immigration laws. Why would any sane government reward their illegal activity by granting them a “path to citizenship”?

For some years, the US government has conducted a lottery in which it awards US citizenship to 50,000 people each year. Prior to the latest government action of awarding citizenship as a reward for criminal behavior, the citizenship lottery was the most outrageous policy of which I was aware. US citizenship was and is viewed by our leaders as being of so little value that it was and is given away, free. I could not imagine anything more absurd than this, but now we have it. Break the law, invade our country, take our space, murder our citizens, send our money back to your country, replace our culture with your own, and what do we do – we reward you by making you a citizen!

In its last days, the Roman Empire extended its citizenship, once very highly valued, to masses. I would conjecture that America's following suit is strong evidence that its days are numbered. The barbarians are "at the gate," and, rather than attempting to repel them, our senators and representatives are inviting them in and making them citizens. As in the case of Rome, this approach will fail spectacularly. What was the concept of "America" in its time as a strong, vital culture is fast disintegrating.

Recently, before passage of the "citizenship reward" bill, illegal aliens were so bold as to stage massive demonstrations demanding legal status and citizenship. Some of them displayed placards declaring, "Immigrants today, voters tomorrow." How right they were. The US Congress has just made their dream of conquest come true.

On average, every immigrant to this country, legal or otherwise, causes the destruction of about an acre of natural land. By allowing 12 million illegal aliens to stay in our country, rather than deporting them, our leaders have made a commitment to the destruction of another 12 million acres of natural land.

In 1950, the population of the US was about 150 million. Now, it is about 300 million – double, in just half a century, mainly because of America's mass immigration population policy. (The birth rate for the US population had dropped to replacement level by 1972 – most of America's population growth in the last several decades has been from immigration, not from births of the population that preceded the immigration explosion.) The increase in population in the US has led to severe overcrowding. The size of US cities has expanded to the point where commute times are now unbearably long. Because of the overpopulation caused by America's mass immigration policy, it is no longer possible for most families of average means to own a cottage at a nearby lake, in the mountains, or at the beach. Because of the US population explosion, having a vacation home in a nice natural setting close to home is now a luxury reserved for the rich.

In 1950, it was possible to visit a US national forest any time of the year, without making reservations a year in advance, as is now necessary. A few decades ago, a whitewater raft trip down the Colorado River or other major river was very reasonably priced – a hundred dollars or so. My stepdaughter, who lives in Arizona, recently inquired about the cost of a whitewater raft trip down the Colorado now. It would cost over \$2,000 per person. For a family of four, that price is out of the question. (I recently took a whitewater raft trip down the Ayung River in Bali – the cost was \$61, and I made arrangements the day before – not a year in advance! Some operators advertised the same trip for as little as \$40. A few years ago I rafted down the Zambezi River in Africa for less than \$100.) Mass immigration is great for the US economy, but it is very costly in terms of its reduction in the quality of life for America's middle class, who lose their living space and their natural environment as the population explodes.

When I was a boy, a man on an average salary could afford to support a family of four, with his wife at home, and buy a home and a car. Now, because of globalization (massive international free trade), US middle-class workers must compete with foreign workers earning a dollar a day. The US policy of massive international free trade has destroyed the economic quality of life for America's working middle class. A young couple starting out today will probably never own their own home, unless both work in the competitive labor market. Through its policies of mass immigration and massive international free trade, America's leaders are destroying the quality of life for America's middle class.

The recent turn of events – of converting illegal aliens to US citizens – is not unexpected. I wrote some time ago that the US government would never deport the illegal aliens, and would turn them into citizens instead. This is quickly coming to pass. It is very clear that the US government cares nothing about the average US citizen. It is a plutocracy that serves only the interests of the oligarchy – the wealthy elite who own the country. The government does not care that its policies of mass immigration, open borders, and mass international free trade have destroyed the quality of life for middle-class Americans, and has destroyed American cultural values. It serves only to promote the generation of wealth for the elite. To the government, middle-class citizens are nothing more than economic production units. It does not distinguish between those who are sixth-generation Americans and those who just crossed the Mexican border illegally. In fact, it gives preferential treatment to illegal aliens – they are allowed to break the law and are massively rewarded for it, whereas American citizens who break the law just go to jail. (It gives preferential treatment to illegal aliens over US citizens because, whether they be migrant farm workers or computer software engineers, they are willing to work for less than US citizens – if they demanded the same wage rates as US citizens, they would be of no more value to the oligarchy than long-term citizens.)

The debate over illegal immigration has focused on economic considerations, since that is all that matters to our leaders. In the debate over the Senate's immigration bill in May, South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsay Graham had the following comments: "The economy is as good as it's ever going to get in your lifetime. The estimated 12 million immigrants in the country have assimilated into the economy and it's humming." (Quote from Yahoo news, 25 May 2006, "Immigration bill facing final Senate vote.") The fact that they are destroying our environment, destroying our culture, overcrowding our land, and degrading the quality of life for all but the wealthy elite who profit from their low wage rates and economic activity, was never discussed, from the news reports I saw. Our country is being sold down the river by our venal politicians, who care nothing for our culture, our environment, or the quality of life for the American middle class.

One US leader (President Bush, as I recall) recently asserted, "Mass deportation is not an option." Why not? These people are criminals who have invaded our country illegally. Why should they not be departed immediately, and effective actions taken to ensure that no one dares to invade our country again? In fact, why bother to deport them at all? Simply take effective measures, such as making illegal immigration a capital crime, enforce the law, and they will be racing for the border. Why not? You know the answer – their presence here generates more wealth for America's wealthy elite, and our country's leaders serve only them.

What is happening in the US is also happening in other former British colonies, such as Canada and Australia. Former British colonies seem to have a propensity for committing cultural suicide – and environmental suicide. Like the US, Canada has also doubled its population in the last several decades. Vancouver is now referred to as North America's Asian capital. When I was consulting for Canada Trust Bank in 1997, I was at times the only Caucasian in the bank

elevator. The June 10 issue of *The Economist* contains an article entitled, “The Toronto terror plot: The plan to behead the prime minister.” A gang of Canadian Moslems was found to be plotting a wave of attacks, including blowing up the Toronto stock exchange, storming the national public broadcaster and the Parliament buildings in Ottawa and beheading the prime minister.

While I was consulting to Canada Trust Bank in 1997-98, an employee of the Bank – a Canadian – asked me how to become an American citizen. He had a master’s degree in finance and a successful career, but he had been repeatedly told by US immigration officials that his skills were not needed, and he would not be allowed to immigrate. He asked me how this could be, when the US allowed millions of aliens, most of them uneducated, from Mexico, Asia, and other parts of the world to enter and remain illegally. I told him that that is exactly the way that it is – if you want to immigrate to the US, you simply break US law and enter the country illegally. My friend was not prepared to do this, so he remains in Canada, while 12 million illegal aliens are about to be rewarded for their crime by being granted US citizenship. What kind of message does this sort of behavior communicate?

Under its policy of mass immigration from alien cultures, Canada has now created a Moslem population of 750,000, or two percent of the total population. The *Economist* article noted, “Peter Donolo, a political analyst, points out that if Mr. Harper’s [Stephen Harper is Canada’s prime minister] Conservative Party is to turn its current minority status into a majority at the next election, it needs to win seats in cities that are home to large numbers of immigrants.” The phenomenon of “tyranny of the minority,” in which a small minority can decide the outcome of a close election, is already at play in Canada. Once an ethnically different minority population reaches about two percent, a democratic nation is no longer in full control of its destiny. When the percentage becomes much more than that, such as the ten percent Hispanic population of the US or the 25 percent Copt (Christian) population in Upper Egypt, violence erupts and civil strife ensues.

In France, the Moslem population is now about six percent of the population, and last year, Moslems launched waves of street riots and torched thousands of cars. Australia (where I am now located, having been evacuated from East Timor) is following the same mass-immigration path to cultural suicide. Australia, take note: if you continue your “multicultural” program of mass immigration from alien cultures, you, too, will soon have massive street riots and home-grown terrorist plots from your own Moslem citizens. Soon, your Moslem citizens will be plotting to take your prime minister’s head, as they recently attempted in Canada. The Moslem cleric, Abu Bakar Bashir (Ba’asyir) just released from an Indonesian jail after serving two years for plotting the Bali bombings (in which many Australians were killed) proclaimed, upon his release from jail that the Australian Prime Minister John Howard should convert to Islam, or he will be damned to burn in Hell. Australia’s previous “white Australia” policy served it very well – under that policy, it was a homogeneous, stable, European-culture society. Now, under a policy of tolerance, inclusiveness and multiculturalism, it is headed to instability, cultural disintegration, social strife, and turmoil. (Australia’s “white Australia” not only served it well, but it served the planet well, too. It is universally agreed that diversity is a wonderful – and necessary – thing, but the gross intermingling of species and subspecies (races) that is accompanying the extreme human overpopulation and mass migration of human and other species is reducing diversity very substantially. The “homogenization” of human and other species caused by gross intermingling and mass extinction of species are leading to a planetary ecological disaster.)

The terrorist bombings in London on July 7, 2005, were planned and executed by Moslem British citizens.

The US, Canada, Australia, and Britain have all invited substantial Moslem populations into their countries. Previously, those populations had cultural values that differed substantially from those of historic British culture. In all of these countries, the Moslem culture is in conflict with the historic British / European culture. These countries have wilfully introduced a cultural “virus” into their societies. In their culture of tolerance, inclusiveness, permissiveness and multiculturalism, that self-infected virus will flourish. As in France, as soon as their numbers are large enough (six percent was the “tipping point” in France), this virus will soon rage out of control. It is very interesting to observe how all of these countries are bent on their self-destruction.

The US, Canada, Australia, and Britain have all invited massive numbers of people from alien cultures into their midst, and those cultures, like a pernicious disease, are now in the process of destroying the host. America’s 9/11 attacks were planned and executed by Moslems that the US invited in. The recent “Toronto” plot to behead Canada’s prime minister was planned and executed by Moslems that Canada had accepted as citizens. Britain’s July 7 terrorist attack was planned and executed by Moslem British citizens. France’s massive riots of last year were carried out by its Moslem citizens. Spain’s Madrid subway bombings were conducted by Islamic terrorists that Spain had invited in. Australia’s tourists in Bali were targeted and killed by Moslem terrorists. As Malcolm X once observed, “The chickens have come home to roost.”

I have worked in several Moslem countries. Overall, Moslems are loving, wonderful people, just like people everywhere, and Islam is as loving a religion as Christianity and Judaism. I love Moslems just as much as I love Christians and Jews (or members of any other major religion). I love all decent people, and enjoy aspects of all cultures. But loving individual people of other cultures, including even aliens living in your own country, is one thing, and loving mass immigration, which destroys countries and cultures, is quite another. What is the point to inviting millions of people from alien cultures to our European-based culture, Christian countries for them to overcrowd our country, destroy our environment and culture, and assassinate us? We do not have to make Moslems (or Mexicans or Indians or Chinese or any other group) citizens to enjoy the pleasure of their company and their culture. We can visit them in their own countries, and they can visit us in ours, and we can both preserve and protect our own cultures and countries. There is no need for us to invite them to reside in our country in massive numbers to destroy our environment, culture, and middle class. Few other countries except the former British colonies have set up programs of mass immigration from foreign cultures. Call the embassies of other countries – Japan, India, China, Zambia, Korea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel (if you are not a Jew) – and ask them about emigrating to their countries. They will laugh in your face (unless, of course, you promise to bring large amounts of money, such as Malta, Zambia, Costa Rica, and many other “will-trade-citizenship-for-cash” countries).

Bali – Another Example of Terminal Development

I recently spent a long weekend in Bali. During my stay, I traveled across a good portion of the island, on my way to a white-water rafting site (on the Ayung River). Bali is highly overrated as a tourist destination. Its former cities have now merged into a megalopolis – an urban slum dotted by a large number of luxury “western” hotels. The “rural” areas are no longer rural at all, but simply “suburbs” of the urban-sprawl “cityplex.” A friend of mine, who also visited Bali that same weekend, had visited there just twenty years ago. At that time the island was still largely undeveloped. It is amazing how fast a place can be transformed from an uncrowded, largely natural setting, to a massive urban slum. Isn’t economic development (along with massive population growth) wonderful!

The Case for Nuclear Fusion

On May 25, I saw a segment on BBC World television that discussed the future of nuclear fusion as a source of energy. One of the people interviewed on the program estimated that nuclear fusion might become a commercial source of energy within 50 years. Like nuclear fission, nuclear fusion is a very impractical method of generating energy. If the total costs are examined, it is a very expensive source of energy (the fusion process makes the containment facility radioactive, resulting in long-term costs that, like the waste from nuclear fission, are passed to future generations).

Apart from its high expense and environmental drawbacks, fusion energy shares the same major drawback of all mass-energy sources: the planet's biosphere cannot tolerate the industrial use of energy on a large scale. Mankind's large numbers and industrial activity are causing the extinction of an estimated 30,000 species per year. The habitat destruction and pollution caused by industrial globalization is destroying the biosphere at a very rapid rate. The only way that this mass species extinction will be halted is for human numbers and industrial activity to be reduced quickly to a small fraction of their current levels. The development of nuclear fusion will not help to bring this about. The continued use of any energy source on a scale exceeding the solar energy flux, to which the planet's biosphere is adapted, will continue to destroy it.

The Economic Development Lie

International development agencies really know how to "lie with statistics." Because of economic development, the number of desperately poor people on the planet has increased by several billion in just a few decades, and the planet's biosphere is being quickly destroyed. But, rather than admit that their policies of economic development are increasing the number of people living in abject misery and are destroying the planet's environment, the economic development agencies point to various ratio indicators as evidence that their programs are in fact improving the situation.

The most egregious example of this is per capita income. Almost everywhere on the planet, environmental destruction is increasing and the number of miserably poor people is increasing, yet the development agencies stress that per capita income is increasing, so things are actually getting better. What a lie. This sort of deception is repeated over and over with indicators such as the percentage of people having ready access to clean water or sanitation facilities. The fact is that, although these indicators may be increasing, the destruction of the environment continues and the number of people living in hellish conditions is increasing rapidly.

The Selective Enforcement of Intellectual Property Laws

For a number of years, there has been much discussion of "intellectual property." US copyright and patent laws extend for many years, offering entrepreneurs material rewards for their inventions for very long times.

I have often speculated about the seemingly inconsistent application of these laws. Currently, for example, the US government exerts much effort to protect US software and music from "piracy," such as downloading of music from sites such as Kazaa, or the sale of copied software and music media (CDs, DVDs, etc.) in Asia. The thing that I find interesting is the instances in which intellectual-property protection is not enforced.

In some cases, the reason is well known. For example, IBM simply allowed the name "FORTRAN" to enter the public domain out of generosity. But it is my understanding that the US government would not grant a patent for the computer magnetic core memory invented by IBM, because it was not "practical" to do so (too many billion of them were being made). I read once where the man (a Virginian) who invented the ubiquitous "happy face" was able to establish his authorship, but the government decided against protecting his invention. And it refused to award a patent to Igor Sikorsky, the Russian who invented the helicopter. I wonder why.

The US Will Ask Mexico for Permission to Build a Border Wall?

Since I have been in East Timor for the past few months, I do not hear much US news, and my wife frequently mentions "snippets" during our telephone or Internet-chat conversations. She told me a few weeks ago that US President George Bush had announced that the US would ask Mexican President Vicente Fox for permission, before proceeding to construct a border wall or fence along the US-Mexico border. Can this be true?

The Crisis of Democracy in East Timor

I have commented a number of times about the fact that the US government ceaselessly promotes democracy for others, when our own Founding Fathers would have nothing to do with it (although George Bush and many other Americans seem ignorant of the fact, the Founding Fathers set the US up as a republic, not a democracy). They agreed with Plato (author of *The Republic*) that democracy is an extremely poor form of government, in which the elected leaders will pander to the desires of the masses. The word "democracy" does not even appear in either of the country's two founding documents, the US Declaration of Independence or the US Constitution. Whenever democracy fails to produce the "desired" result, such as the takeover of Algeria or Palestine by radical Islamists, or the loss of power of indigenous peoples to migrants, such as in the case of Fiji or the Solomon Islands, the US government is quick to assert that the problem is not with democracy but with some other factor.

The most recent example of democracy producing unintended results may be East Timor. East Timor was a Portuguese colony until 1975, when Portugal abandoned all of its colonies. Indonesia promptly invaded East Timor until it gained its independence on 20 May 2002 after a bloody war. Ethnically, East Timor is overwhelmingly Catholic, whereas Indonesia is overwhelmingly Moslem. It is an interesting development that the current prime minister of East Timor, Dr. Mari Alkatiri, is a Moslem. He traces his roots in East Timor several hundred years, back to the time of Arab traders.

The people who promote democracy are generally the same ones who espouse tolerance, inclusiveness, egalitarianism, and multiculturalism. In the case of East Timor, they did not comment on the curiousness of the situation in which a country that is 95 percent Catholic and had just won its independence in a bloody war from a Moslem nation would elect a Moslem as its prime minister.

The strangeness of this situation is now being reflected in the continuing occurrence of public demonstrations demanding the resignation of Mr. Alkatiri. But Mr. Alkatiri refuses to resign. Why should he? He was chosen by democratic elections in full compliance with the East Timor Constitution. The "powers that be" are now scrambling around, trying to figure out how to suspend the Constitution, or parts of it, to allow a new election in which Alkatiri will be removed.

As I have observed on several occasions, democracy is a system that is useful only for governing bodies that don't really matter, such as social clubs. It works well only with an electorate that is relatively well-educated and homogeneous, so that most of the electorate have about the same values and points of view on the issues to be resolved. It is not a good system for managing anything that really matters, such as operating a ship, an aircraft, a business, or a planet.

In addition to the problem of democracy, East Timor has other serious problems. It has a small population – under a million people. It is very small in size, and it has limited agricultural resources (it is the eastern two-thirds of the mountainous tropical island of Timor). Its population is very poor and largely uneducated. Its only sizable economic resource is offshore oil deposits, which are worth an estimated USD16 billion over the next several decades. Quite frankly, East Timor is so small, both in terms of population, geographic size, and economic development that it is hard to see how it can afford to have the “overhead” of all of the institutions required by a democratic system of government. It would make much more sense if it were operated as a fiefdom, such as Bahrain or the Arab oil states, or simply agreed to be a protectorate of some other large country (such as nearby Australia) and managed / administered by that other country, such as is the case with a number of other small islands (e.g., the island of Guadeloupe, which is simply a French overseas department).

The current government of Timor-Leste is very intent on preserving and maintaining its Portuguese heritage, at least with respect to language. Under Indonesian rule, Bahasa Indonesia was taught in all schools. Today, Timor-Leste has two official languages – Portuguese and Tetum – and two working languages – English and Bahasa Indonesia. It is interesting to note that the Portuguese ruled Timor-Leste for 450 years as a stable colony. It did this by keeping the indigenous people uneducated and occupied essentially as slaves in subsistence agriculture. When Portugal abandoned all of its colonies in 1975 and Indonesia took over, it started a program of education and raised the level of expectations of the people. They now want to be “free” and live under “democracy.” That approach will destroy Timor-Leste, just as surely as it has destroyed Haiti and numerous other countries.

For the past six years, the United Nations and other development agencies have been promoting democracy in Timor-Leste. Over the past two months, civil law and order have collapsed, along with the country's government's authority. People are now desperately hoping for a return to stability and law and order. It is interesting to observe that under 450 years of Portuguese rule, stability and law and order were relatively strong, and that since Timor-Leste was abandoned by the Portuguese, it has seen nothing but civil strife and now, a near-total collapse of social structure and government. Evidently “freedom” and “democracy” come with a price – anarchy. Or perhaps democracy is not the right “country model” for Timor-Leste.

It is interesting to draw a parallel of the Timor-Leste experience to that of China. Chinese culture values social stability more than it values individuality (personal freedom, individual rights). Today, it exists as essentially two parallel nations – a very poor rural, agricultural nation, and a modern, technological urban nation. (See the recent book by Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao, *Will the Boat Sink the Water?* (Public Affairs, 2006) for a description of the system.) This scheme will likely continue, since it is not possible for China (or India, in a similar situation) to raise the standard of living of its billion people to western standards without totally destroying the planet's biosphere (from industrial pollution and its effects, such as mass species extinction and global warming). With this approach, which is reminiscent of the Portuguese approach to rule of East Timor, there is stability and progress – China is set to become the world's greatest superpower. It is also interesting to draw a comparison between the Portuguese colonial

approach, the Chinese two-nation approach, and the “minimal-regret” synarchic-government approach to planetary management that I proposed some time ago (in my book, *Can America Survive?*). Under the minimal-regret concept, the planet’s human population consists of a single-nation high-technology population of five million and a globally distributed low-technology (hunter-gatherer) population of five million.

As I have commented before (in “A Country Model for East Timor,” in *Miscellany24*), Timor-Leste is so small, its terrain so mountainous, and its people so ethnically diverse and uneducated (and likely to remain so, if they have to master four languages!), that it does not seem rational to attempt to impose a modern democratic system of government on it, as the UN and other development agencies have been attempting to do for the past six years. That six-year effort has resulted in a total collapse. In fact, the country is far worse off now than it was six years ago, following its independence from Indonesia. At that time, following its long, bloody, and successful revolution, it was relatively cohesive, and the population, although very poor and ethnically diverse, had been bonded by the challenge of combating a common enemy and were looking forward to building a nation. Now, the cohesiveness is gone, and the major ethnic groups are killing each other, burning each other’s homes. The people have lost respect for the government, and are looting not only private stores and markets, but government facilities as well.

After the spectacular failure of a concerted six-year effort to impose a modern market-oriented democracy on Timor-Leste, it is time to reconsider whether that type of society and government is right for this country. The fact that Portugal ruled it with a high degree of stability – and little environmental damage – for 450 years must be considered. Democracy is not the right country model for Timor-Leste. It is time to consider a different country model.