

Prescription For Action

PREVENT WHAT WE CANNOT CURE

Inside: PSR-LA takes the lead in toxics phase-out in health care, environmental justice legislation, pages 3-4

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A Time for Coming Together

By Jonathan Parfrey
Executive Director, PSR-LA

In this time of war and unalloyed sadness, simple acts of comfort and assurance have become as necessary as food and water. With bombs falling in Afghanistan and our own city's atmosphere suffused with anxiety, Physicians for Social Responsibility is today up-n-running and working for peace. The Los Angeles office is now integrally involved in a new coalition, Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace, which not only comforts those afflicted by recent events but works to ensure that the current national emergency will not be used to push ahead ill-conceived military policies nor to undermine human rights and a healthy, sustainable environment.

Physicians for Social Responsibility issued a remarkable statement which, within four days, was signed by over 1100 physicians nationwide. Perhaps you were among the signatories. It's words are worth repeating:

In an interdependent world where cities, financial systems, communications, mass transportation systems, and the infrastructure of advanced societies are so easily attacked and disrupted, traditional military responses and outmoded security thinking are of rapidly diminishing value . . . broad scale military attacks

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Gala Honorees:

Sen. Barbara Boxer and actor Martin Sheen are among the honorees at PSR-LA's Gala Dinner, on Sunday, November 4th. The event will recognize those that have shown outstanding support for peace and public health.



Gala Gathering

PSR-LA Honors Those Dedicated to Peace, Security, and the Environment

Our 21st Anniversary Gala will commence on Sunday, November 4, 6:00pm at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel. It promises to be an exceptionally inspiring evening. Please know that you are cordially invited to attend.

The evening's honored guests include Senator Barbara Boxer, actor and activist Martin Sheen, our own kinetic nonagenarian Sol Londe, M.D., and renowned pediatrician Harvey Karp, M.D.

The Gala begins with cocktails at 6:00pm. An elegant dinner follows at 7:30pm.

Tickets for the Anniversary Gala are \$200. If you are unable to personally attend the event, we invite you to sponsor the attendance of one of PSR's gifted medical students. For more information,

or to reserve a ticket please call Event Coordinator Vikki Paulus at 213/386-4901x109.

Evening, "after 5" attire. Ticket purchases are tax-deductible.

Caldicott Award Winner:

SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Senator Barbara Boxer successfully fought to preserve Ward Valley — site of the state's once proposed radioactive dump, a mere 19 miles from the Colorado River, source of drinking water for 25 million people. Her outstanding and courageous efforts on behalf of Californians altered an otherwise devastating course of mass radioactive contamination.

Senator Boxer became a United States Senator in January 1993, after 10 years of service in the House of Representatives. She was elected to a second, six-year term in 1998. Senator

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PSR-LA 2001 At Work

New Interfaith Coalition Address Threats of War

PSR-LA has taken a lead role in the formation of Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace, a uniquely diverse coalition comprised of a wide spectrum of ethnic and religious community leaders. The coalition is meeting on a weekly basis to address substantive issues such as the preservation of civil liberties, to open dialogue on foreign policy, and to bolster an international court system. A primary political action objective of the coalition is to promote international treaties, currently shunned by the Bush administration, that protects Americans from biological, chemical, and nuclear threats. For more information contact our office or write directly to ICUJP, 215 N. Marengo Ave.

Pasadena, CA 91101, (626) 683-9400, regas@pacbell.net.

Mercury Reduction Bill Passes, Thermometers To Be Banned Statewide

An especially satisfying success for PSR-LA is the signing of the Mercury Bill (SB 633) by Governor Gray Davis. The bill places new controls on the disposal of products containing mercury, such as fever thermometers, novelty products, appliances, vehicle components, and some electrical switches. PSR-LA thanks our members who contacted state legislators. Thanks also to the City of Los Angeles for working collaboratively with PSR-LA to push the bill through.

The mercury exchange program was

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Coming Together

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on nations harboring terrorists run the risk of creating civilian casualties and provoking further cycles of revenge and terror. Our response must not lead to escalation that risks the use of weapons of mass destruction whether nuclear, chemical, or biological in the future. What is needed at this turning point in American history is a reassessment and redefinition of our national security policy. America needs to reassume its role of cooperative leadership with the rest of the international community in building an interdependent, just, peaceful and sustainable global society. This will, indeed, require patience and perseverance from us as a nation. However, if these horrific events of indiscriminate violence against America teach us anything, it is that the old security paradigms of the 20th Century no longer suffice.

For years, PSR has recognized the insufficiency of the proposed national missile defense system and its inability to respond to acts of terrorism, observing that it could not deflect a nuclear bomb delivered surreptitiously by truck, boat or airplane.

Our focus remains to reduce threats at

their source. In this regard, the Bush administration has been spectacularly unhelpful. In July of this year the administration rejected recently negotiated monitoring procedures within the Biological Weapons Treaty. Bush dismissed the bio-treaty for an appalling reason—the administration realized that international monitors visiting American sites would have found secret U.S. bio-defense programs that violate the ban. With fear abounding about bio-weapons, doesn't it make sense that the U.S. lead the fight against terrorism by honoring existing treaties?

It should also be noted that despite the low-tech methods employed by the terrorists, President Bush is still pushing Russia to scrap the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Apparently the administration has failed to understand the key, most immediate lesson from the crisis: the U.S. is not an island. Our nation needs other nations, just as each of us needs others.

Let us then come together. Let us be a community of physicians and friends, a community of conscience. Please attend the upcoming gala on November 4th, or any of the other terrific events mentioned in the calendar of this newsletter. Let's gather together, break bread, talk and find in each other the peace that eludes our world today.

We've Moved!

Up from the basement, PSR-LA moved to a new office October 1, 2001. Centrally located near downtown in shared office space with the renowned organization, Environmental Defense, PSR is better poised to serve our long-neglected members who reside east of La Brea Boulevard. This move is in preparation for establishing a multi-organization environmental center sometime in 2003. Although we miss our neighbors at Planned Parenthood and Midnight Special Bookstore, now we have much more room to do our work, a separate conference area and a terrific view of the city.

An Open House will be held at our new office on Tuesday, November 6, from 4:00-8:00pm.

NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBERS:

Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles

3250 Wilshire Boulevard, Ste. 1400
Los Angeles, CA 90010-1438

Phone: (213) 386 4901
Facsimile: (213) 386 4184

Email and website will remain the same.

Email: psrsm@psr.org
Website: www.psr.org

Staff listing:

Executive Director
Jonathan Parfrey x112

Environmental Health Coordinator
Martha Dina Arguello x110

Public Health Organizer
Johanna Congleton x111

Events Coordinator
Vikki Paulus x109

Development Associate
Kraig Hill

Newsletter Editor
Kim Zanti

Wonderful Volunteers
Elaine Budin and Orpha Goldberg

PSR-LA at Work

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kicked off in July with a press conference at T.H.E. Clinic in Los Angeles. The program encourages residents to exchange mercury thermometers for a safe alternative. Training has been completed at six of the ten participating clinics. Grants from Kaiser Permanente and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency allowed for the purchase of 118 aneroid sphygmomanometers and 2,000 digital thermometers. Now, a hefty 24.5 pounds of mercury is permanently removed from the medical waste stream. (Note: 1 gram of mercury is enough to contaminate an entire 20 acre lake.)

DOE Hearings

In consultation with PSR-LA, the Department of Energy organized two hearings in the Los Angeles area concerning the recycling of radioactive waste into consumer products. Over one hundred individuals turned out at the hearings in Santa Monica (Ken Edwards Center) and at Simi Valley City Hall, many to speak against this new proposed regulation. Many PSR members testified. Once recycled, these metals—leftover from 50 years of producing nuclear weapons and nuclear reactors—can be refashioned into anything...zippers, belt buckles, dental braces, spoons, jungle gyms, earrings, re-bar, pots, pans and more. PSR believes that such waste should instead be disposed of in a licensed facility. Locally, the Rocketdyne facility at the western end of the San Fernando Valley has shipped these toxic materials to metal recyclers and would like to continue doing so. To become involved in the campaign, please call the PSR office.

Suit Against Recycling Rad Waste

PSR-LA, Committee to Bridge the Gap, and Southern California Federation of Scientists filed suit October 9 in Sacramento Superior Court seeking to block adoption of regulations by the Radiological Health Branch. The regulation would permit large amounts of radioactivity to be left in place at contaminated nuclear sites. The suit states that cleanup levels for contaminated

nuclear sites would be set so high that individuals would be exposed to residual radioactivity officially estimated to produce a fatal cancer in 1 of every 60 people exposed—grossly exceeding the 1 in 1,000,000 risk of cancer incidence normally required by the EPA. Indeed, the EPA has “non-concurred” on the rule, saying it could result in exposures that are “non-protective of public health” and that subsequent lists of Superfund sites may include these nuclear facilities cleaned up to exceedingly weak standards.

Environmental Justice Takes Lead

PSR-LA was present when Governor Gray Davis signed four bills that advance environmental justice in California. The bills develop a statewide standard in addressing environmental justice through the establishment of a working group on environmental justice. The bill also encourages local jurisdictions to incorporate environmental justice in general plans, promote the redevelopment of brownfields sites in economically depressed neighborhoods, and reduce air pollution in communities of color and low-income areas. PSR-LA was part of the original group to visit Assemblymember Marco Firebaugh (D-East Los Angeles) which stimulated the legislation.

Reproductive Health Trainings at Los Angeles Clinics

On August 18, PSR-LA Co-President, Jimmy Hara M.D. conducted a stimulating training for the entire staff of Clinica Oscara Romero. Dr. Hara developed a slide show presentation to accompany the PSR report *Generations at Risk: How Environmental Toxicants May Affect Reproductive Health in California*. A Liberty Hill Foundation grant is enabling PSR-LA to conduct a series of ongoing trainings at low-income clinics.

Dental Board Under Scrutiny

PSR-LA took an active role at California Dental Board meetings encouraging the board to revise the existing patient fact sheet concerning potential harm from mercury. And recently The Dental Board Sunset Reform bill (SB 134) was signed by Governor Davis

requiring dentists to provide this revised fact sheet, for patient's review and acceptance, on the possible health risks related to mercury when using a dental amalgam that contains the substance.

Congress Agrees to Compensate Rocketdyne Victims

Congress approved a program last year to compensate thousands of military workers stricken with cancer. Rocketdyne, a DOE military facility in the San Fernando Valley, is responsible for increased cancer among its workers and PSR-LA is working to publicize a public hearing on the program, October 23, at the Posada Royale Hotel, 1775 Madera Rd. in Simi Valley. Please attend.

Public Health and Energy Generation

On September 22, PSR-LA and the American Lung Association co-sponsored “A Symposium on the Health Effects of Energy Generation” at Good Samaritan Hospital. Ninety public health professionals and energy specialists spent the day exploring issues of energy generation in California and the impact on public health. A number of the participants committed to joining the distributive generation coalition which will advocate, along with the Air Resources Board, to protect the health of Californians and the air quality of the state while helping to assure reliable local power generation.



Ken Bransford, M.D., speaks of the health effects of energy generation at a symposium sponsored by PSR-LA and the American Lung Association.

Gala Gathering Cont.

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Boxer serves on the Foreign Relations Committee, where she chairs the Subcommittee of International Operations and Terrorism and the Subcommittee of Superfund, Toxic Risks, and Waste Management. A champion for society's most vulnerable members, Senator Boxer this year authored the Children's Environmental Protection Act, which would require that environmental standards be set at levels that protect children. Senator Barbara Boxer puts the public interest at the top of her agenda and is a conscientious steward of the well being of the public and of the planet; with the Caldicott Award, PSR-LA recognizes her achievements and actions and expresses gratitude for her work.

Peacemaker Award Winner:

MARTIN SHEEN

A longtime friend of PSR-LA, Martin Sheen has for twenty years steadfastly pushed for the abolition of nuclear weapons. His activism has placed him side by side with laborers, farm workers, peace protesters and parish workers. He frequently places himself on the frontline, even courting civil disobedience. Mr. Sheen's activism flows from his Catholic faith, and good friends such as Fr. Daniel Berrigan and Davida Cody M.D. PSR proudly honors Mr. Sheen with our 2001 Peacemaker Award.

One of the finest actors of his generation, Martin Sheen is currently seen Wednesday nights portraying President Josiah Bartlet, on NBC's "The West Wing." The program brilliantly explores contemporary issues, having recently taken on the complex issues raised in the aftermath of September 11. Martin's voice graces dozens of documentaries, often tackling urgent social ills. Having studied with the Living Theater in 1960's New York, Martin's work as an actor deeply reflects his concern as a vital and caring human being.

Lifetime Achievement Award Winner:

SOL LONDE, M.D.

Sol Londe's life is a record of intellectual rigor, social activism and concern for the common good. He has served as a Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, UCLA Medical School and Associate Clinical Professor Emeritus at Washington University, St. Louis. Dr. Londe is internationally known for his pioneering clinical studies of blood pressure and



Sol Londe, M.D.

and hypertension in children. He began this research at age 55 and published the last of 22 papers on the subject at the age of 80—the same year that he met his wife

Jeanne while waiting for a plane at LAX, both en route to lobby for the passage of nuclear freeze legislation. Sol and Jeanne have faithfully served on the board of PSR-LA for over eighteen years. Sol is also the chapter's most acclaimed public speaker. His eloquent speeches are only matched by his enlightening articles published in our newsletter. In addition to his activism as a PSR-LA member in the Rocketdyne Cleanup Coalition and in the fight to protect Ward Valley from becoming a nuclear waste dump, he has worked on many social and environmental issues since the 1930's.

Socially Responsible Medicine Award Winner:

HARVEY KARP

A practicing pediatrician and child development specialist for 25 years, Harvey Karp, M.D. is Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the UCLA School of Medicine. A leading expert on pesticides and human health Dr. Karp serves as a spokesperson on these and other environmental issues for PSR-LA and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Karp serves as an adviser on children's environmental health to the

California Department of Health Services, the California Medical Association and has lectured extensively on environmental risks to children. A contributing editor to the American Academy of Pediatrics' *The Green Guide*, Dr. Karp is writing revolutionary new book on colic, *The Happiest Baby on the Block*, to be published in June 2002 by Random House.



Harvey Karp, M.D.

Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles' Board of Directors, 2001

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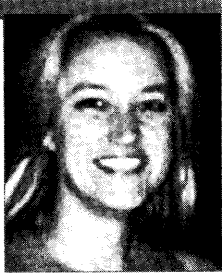
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Richard Saxon, M.D.
Retired

Robert C. Wesley, Jr., M.D.
New Life Cardiology, Las Vegas

MEMBER PROFILE: Anne O'Meara, M.D.



A gynecologic oncologist in practice at the University of Southern California/LA County Hospital, Dr. Anne O'Meara's primary areas of clinical activity are the surgical treatment of gynecologic cancer; palliative care medicine; and the care of indigent women suffering with cancer.

Most recently, as an active member of PSR-LA, Anne has served an educator in our project to promote mercury toxicity awareness.

Anne began her medical studies and graduated with

honors from Northwestern University in Chicago. She completed her residency at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and her fellowship at the University of Miami. After completing her training in 1998, she then served on the faculty of the UCLA School of Medicine for one year and is currently an Assistant Professor at the Keck School of Medicine at USC.

In addition to her membership in PSR-LA, Anne is a member of several medical associations and human rights organizations. PSR-LA is fortunate indeed to have Dr. O'Meara as a member. Her expertise and dedication to the improvement of human life greatly complement and support our work.

A Letter to the President

October 15, 2001

George Walker Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Re: a new tax rebate will do little to protect

Dear President Bush,

America is under attack. In this terrible crisis, as Commander-in-Chief, you are daily making life-and-death decisions, the repercussions of which will be long-lasting. Physicians for Social Responsibility, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning organization of 20,000 members nationwide, respectfully suggests that an investment in enhancing the nation's health and security will pay tremendous dividends in years to come—and may, in the near future, save lives.

Southern California's regional trauma centers are vastly underfunded and ill-prepared. For example, UCI Medical Center, Orange County's largest trauma center, has only enough antidotes to treat 20 patients of a biological or chemical attack. The situation in Los Angeles County is worse. Today, the sheer number of casualties of urban violence and other injuries are pushing the health infrastructure to the breaking point. For the good of all Americans the nation's trauma centers and health departments need additional funding to address bio-terrorism and the many other threats facing our communities.

Internationally, the U.S. has, for far too long, been associated with undemocratic regimes. The Al Qaeda terrorist organization has its roots in CIA-supported activities. International agencies, on the other hand, that provide humanitarian assistance, which in turn promote human rights and social justice, are economically hard-pressed. We ask you to support these international efforts. Help them encourage the formation of democratically elected governments. An international commitment to human rights is an excellent hedge against future aggression.

A tax rebate will simply not address these problems.

Please know that the following individuals, and dozens more, have contributed their recent tax rebate to Physicians for Social Responsibility—an investment in our institution, as it works to bring peace and justice to this stricken planet. For the sake of our nation's security, Physicians for Social Responsibility requests that the administration invest, rather than divest, in programs that enhance public health and security.

The following individuals are those who have generously donated their tax rebates to Physicians for Social Responsibility—Los Angeles:

Elizabeth and Leonard Adler
Blanca Andres M.D.
Irving Aptaker
Beatrice Avcollie
Philip and Elizabeth Augerson
Eleanor Belser M.S.W.
Denise Berg
Mary Copperud
David Dassey M.D.
Willoiam Daughaday M.D.
Adele Dionne
Judith Dubin
Eleanor Fry
Patricia German
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John Gregory Ph.D.
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Natalie Magistrale
Jonathan Parfrey
William Perkins M.D.
Git Polin
Mollie Portner
Toni Stein
Thelma Teitel
Paul Teschke
Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Walchuck
Lilian Weiner
Frank Wilken
Mr. and Mrs. T.T. Woodson
Helen Wolff M.D.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: Fall/Winter 2001

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28,
12:30-1:30PM

"Peacemaking: An Advanced Course."

Exec. Dir. Jonathan Parfrey shares his perspective on the vocation of peacemaking. Mr. Parfrey also offers a report on military activity in the Persian Gulf, as well as the frightening possibility of weapons of mass destruction being used overseas and on our shores. All Saints Episcopal Church, 132 No. Euclid Ave., Pasadena. For more information, call 626/796-1172.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4,
6:00-7:00PM

PSR's Gala honoring Martin Sheen, Senator Barbara Boxer, Sol Londe MD and Harvey Karp MD. Please call 213/386 4901 x109 for more information.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6,
4:00-8:00 PM

Open House at the new offices of PSR-LA. Join us as we celebrate our new location, new neighbors and renewed commitment to serving Los Angeles. For directions, contact PSR-LA at 213/386-4901.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12,
7:30-9:00PM

Gayle Green discusses her compelling

new book, *The Woman Who Knew Too Much: Alice Stewart and the Secrets of Radiation.* The noted epidemiologist Alice Stewart, now 97 years old and living in Birmingham, England has issued warnings about the serious health threats associated with low levels of radiation for the past 40 years. Dr. Green speaks about Stewart's efforts. Gayle Green is professor of Women's Studies and Literature at Scripps College in Pomona. Midnight Special Bookstore, 1318 Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica. For more information, please call PSR at 213/386-4901.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, DEC. 7-8

A town hall meeting, sponsored by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and co-sponsored by PSR-LA, will be held Friday at the First Church of God at 9550 Crenshaw Boulevard, Inglewood. The town hall will run from 1 - 7PM on Friday and all day on Saturday. For more information call 310/794-5964.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12,
6:00-9:00PM

Holiday Dinner with the Reverend James Lawson, colleague of Martin Luther King, Jr. who will discuss non-violence and the crisis facing the world

today. The dinner will be held at the Sisters of St. Joseph conference center in the City of Orange. For information and directions please call the OC Alliance at 714/637-8313.

THURSDAY & FRIDAY, JAN. 17-18

The Precautionary Principle

Workshop, a groundbreaking public health initiative, invokes our vocation's oath to "first do no harm" as a basis for establishing policy. The January workshop brings today's leading thinkers on this new public health paradigm. Speakers include Ted Schettler, M.D., attorney Carolyn Rafanelli, and editor Peter Montague. The same location TBA. For more information please contact Martha Arguello at 213/386-4901 x110.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23,
4:00-6:00 PM

The Honorable Warren Christopher will address the topic, "Foreign Policy Of the Bush Administration: A One-Year Assessment." The former Secretary of State is the featured speaker at the 22nd annual Bernard Brodie lecture sponsored by UCLA's Burkle Center for International Relations. UCLA, Korn Convocation Hall; for more information, call 310/825-0604.

PSR LA

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