

Prescription For Action

PREVENT WHAT WE CANNOT CURE

Inside: Remembering Sol Londe M.D., Getting Out the Vote, Pesticides Drifting into Communities, PSR-LA Violence Prevention Program, Star Wars and the Environment, Calendar of Events

Winter 2005 • Physicians for Social Responsibility—Los Angeles • Volume 24 No. 4

Health is Our Finest Social Value

By Felix Aguilar M.D., M.P.H.,
PSR-LA Co-President

The most stunning revelation of the presidential election was that a plurality of voters — 22 percent — cited “moral values” as the chief determinant in how they cast their vote. And it appears that these values were largely derived from a fundamentalist Christian philosophy.

I do not question the good Reverend James Dobson’s adherence to the teachings of the famous pacifist of two millennia past. Instead I wish to suggest that there is another social value that may better serve America today. This value is testable, measurable and objective. It is universally valued. Everyone wants it — no matter if they’re a pauper or billionaire, gangster or saint or politician.

Health and well-being are indisputably, laudable and universally valued.

Health as a value is however regularly abrogated. When tobacco firms receive taxpayer subsidies, public health is harmed. When nuclear plants annually pump-out tons of radioactive toxins human health is being sacrificed. When car exhaust destines inner city children to stunted lives, health is being blasphemed.

Health is an infallible compass. A north star that faithfully leads to good policy solutions.

PSR believes that this value, health, also lends special insight about war. I quote from Barry Levy and Victor Sidel’s book “War and Public Health.”

“War accounts for more death and disability than many major diseases com-

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Physicians for Social Responsibility Co-President Felix Aguilar M.D. greets Honoree Governor Howard Dean M.D. at the 2004 PSR-LA Gala Dinner.

PSR-Los Angeles Honors Activists at Annual Gala Dinner

By Denise Duffield

PSR-LA’s 2004 Annual Gala Dinner was an unparalleled success. Featuring a most inspiring and accomplished set of honorees, nearly 500 people attended the September 7 dinner at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel in Santa Monica.

Producer Lawrence Bender (*Good Will Hunting, Kill Bill*) presented the Caldicott award to Governor Howard Dean M.D., asserting that Dean would be influential for decades “because as you all here know, it takes a doctor to understand a national depression, to heal open wounds, to comfort the human suffering of a nation.”

Gov. Dean inspired the audience with poignant and often humorous reflections on his rise as a political contender, offering his unique perspective on the challenges facing the country today. He forcefully expressed his regard for

Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the role our organization has played.

“PSR has led the way. You have been a group of people that has been far-sighted, thoughtful . . . and courageous in standing up for the things that have to be stood up for,” Dean said. He further urged the crowd to continue discussing difficult issues with people from all political persuasions in an attempt to find commonality and to build community.

Rabbi Leonard Beerman offered a memorable introduction of PSR-LA’s Peacemaker Award recipients, life-long friends, Wally and Suzy Marks. “Wally and Suzy have never been good at defending themselves against the demands of conscience,” he said. Beerman praised the Marks’ support of grassroots organizations that work to

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Remembering Sol Londe M.D. • 1904-2004

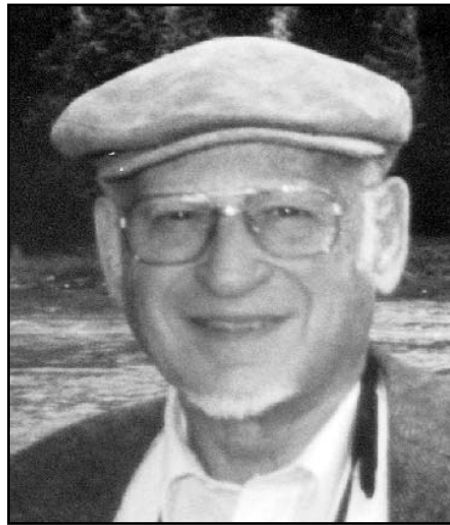
A founding member of Physicians for Social Responsibility in 1961, Sol Londe M.D. died this past October. Also, a long-time Los Angeles chapter board member, and frequent author in these pages, Sol led a prestigious pediatric career in addition to brilliantly fulfilling his "social responsibilities."

Long affiliated with Washington University in St. Louis, Sol pioneered research in childhood hypertension. Among other innovations, he helped establish blood pressure standards for children. After relocating to Los Angeles, at seventy-nine, Sol began working as a pediatrician at the downtown juvenile hall, where he worked for sixteen years.

Sol met his wife, Jeanne, also a PSR-LA board member, at a 1983 disarmament protest. Their wedding cake was appropriately decorated with a peace symbol.

In the 1980's Sol was our group's most popular speaker. He lectured in schools, at Elks Club meetings and elsewhere about the effects of nuclear testing on human health.

PSR-LA director Jonathan Parfrey



remembered Sol at a memorial service at Temple Kol Tikvah in Woodland Hills. "Sol had an unquenchable hope in people and their ability to right social structures. His faith out-stripped that of religious devotees. Sol believed peace and justice could be won here and now."

Jeanne has generously requested that memorial gifts be made to Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles.

Walking Las Vegas

By William Perkins M.D.

Clearly, millions of Americans cared very deeply about the recent election. I was no different.

In the months leading up to the November election I, and many others, made numerous phone calls to swing states, helped register voters locally.

The last weekend in October I traveled to Las Vegas to help get out the vote. Not an official PSR-LA project I was nonetheless joined in Nevada by many supporters, including Richard and Pauline Saxon, Don and Judy Broder, Nina and Marc Merson, Leonard Fisher, Sidney Bergman, Susan Cooder, Loren Woodson, Lila Garrett, Bob Zaugh, Alice Lynn, Andrew Wainer, Nicola Scott, Liz Morgan, Ken Stack, Bill Higgins, Tim Wood, Claire and Melanie Schlotterbeck, Jonathan Parfrey -- about forty PSR-LA members all told. Some took to the

phones but most of us walked precincts, knocking on doors and talking with voters about the candidates and the key issues facing the nation.

Even though the election didn't turn out as I would have liked, I was nonetheless so impressed with the thousand-plus volunteers, mostly young people, that I do not regret travelling to our friendly neighboring state.

There will be many post-election assessments. People will point fingers and say what went right and what went wrong. I have to say that the get-out-the-vote experience was extremely positive. I saw a new generation of bright and motivated social activists. They have a wonderful esprit de corps and I look forward to the coming years -- working with them to build a new L.A. community of professionals and activists.

PSR LA

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PSR-LA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DINNER



please join us for an exciting evening discussion

THE END OF OIL

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF MEDICINE IN FORMING ENERGY POLICY

with

MICHAEL T. KLARE PH.D.

Professor, Hampshire College and defense correspondent for "The Nation"

DEAN BAKER M.D., M.P.H.

Chief, Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, UC-Irvine; Director, Center for Occupational and Environmental Health

Monday • January 24, 2005

5:30 PM — no host bar • 6:30 PM — dinner

Luxe Bel Air Summit Hotel

11461 Sunset Blvd., Bel Air (just west of the 405)

Tickets will be held at the door.

Dr. Klare is the Five College Professor of Peace and World Security Studies (a joint appointment at Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst). He previously served as Director of the Program on Militarism and Disarmament at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.

An expert in occupational and environmental health, Dr. Baker has more than two decades of research experience in occupational and environmental epidemiology as well as children's environmental health. Dr. Baker is also the lead editor for the World Health Organization textbook on *Environmental Epidemiology*, which is used for teaching in many countries of the world.

Please reserve _____ tickets at \$55 per person / \$100 per couple.

Enclosed is my Check or VISA MasterCard in the amount of \$ _____.

Card number _____ Expiration date _____.

Sorry, I cannot attend. Enclosed is a contribution in the amount of \$ _____.

Name _____.

Address _____.

City/State/Zip _____.

Email _____.

Seating is limited. Reservations must be received by Thursday, January 20, 2005.

Please make your payment payable to: Physicians for Social Responsibility
Mail to: 617 South Olive Street, Suite 810 | Los Angeles, California 90014-1629
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Gala Honors Activists

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"diminish the score of agony and enlarge the realm of care and reason which are so notably lacking in our times."

With friends and family in attendance, Wally and Suzy's remarks were both personal as well as political. Suzy graciously thanked many in attendance, including a heartfelt message of gratitude to her husband, Wally. "You have shown me just what a life of dedication, infused with intelligence, and propelled by compassion can look like."

Wally spoke of his support for grassroots organizations in Los Angeles and his involvement with the Liberty Hill Foundation. He also discussed recent trips he had made to Israel and the West Bank in order to explore possibilities for peace. "What I learned from our travels is that if we want to be peacemakers, we must support the art of communication," he emphasized.

Past PSR-LA honoree, Harvey Karp M.D., presented Philip Landrigan M.D. with PSR-LA's Socially Responsible Medicine award. A national expert on environmental toxins and children's health, Dr. Landrigan gave a sobering portrait of the need for radical improvements in environmental health policy. Fewer than half of the 3,000 high production chemicals in use today have been tested for human toxicity. Landrigan noted "only recently have environmental contaminants such as lead, mercury, pesticides, and household chemicals have been acknowledged as a children's health problem."

In addition, Landrigan offered his insights on what it means to be a "socially responsible" physician. He said "physicians need to think beyond the care of the individual patient to the root causes of disease, which are almost



Gala Dinner Honorees Wally and Suzy Marks received the PSR-LA Peacemaker Award for their lasting dedication to progressive action.

never medical. You have to think about economics, social justice, and militarism; you have to think about war if you are going to ultimately be a socially responsible physician."

PSR Founder Helen Caldicott M.D. closed the evening by discussing the urgency of efforts to prevent nuclear war. Stating that "we are all physicians to a planet that is acutely ill," Caldicott gave a rousing call for dedicated and vigilant efforts to turn the tide of militarism and nuclear dangers.

Pianist Nikita Sokolov gave a stirring rendition of Bach and Rachmaninoff. A student of Mary Cummins, the 16-year old Sokolov is the winner of many awards, including the Music Teacher's Association State competition.

The gala raised money to sustain PSR-LA's vital activities. We are deeply grateful to our donors and friends for their support.

PSR-LA gratefully acknowledges the following sponsors whose generosity helped make our 2004 gala a success:

Nobel Prize Sponsor

Shirley Magidson

Peacemaker Sponsors

Wally and Suzanne Marks
Pauline and Richard Saxon M.D.

Environmental Health Sponsors

The California Endowment
Nancy Gibbs M.D.
Fred and Maryann Segal
Alan Sieroty

Violence Prevention Sponsors

Drs. Donald and Judith Broder
Jodie Evans and Max Palevsky
James Korb, M.D. and Regina Pally
Honorable Marvin and Dr. Marjorie Braude

Table Sponsors

Air Quality Management District
Liz Crawford and Carmi Zlotnik
Jodie Evans and Max Palevsky
St. John's Well Child Center
William Perkins M.D.
Jose Quiroga M.D.
Wendy James
V. John White

And the many friends of PSR who gave generously to help us continue our vital work.

Join the PSR-Los Angeles e-mail and action alert list today!

Log-on to offer your opinion to decision makers on key issues that PSR-LA is working on.

http://actionnetwork.org/psr_la/home.html



Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act - SB 391 Florez-Escutia

By Martha Arguello

In the past four years, California has experienced numerous incidents where pesticide use had drifted outside the area of application. These drift incidents have exposed well over a thousand people to pesticides, resulting in short and long-term illnesses. Hundreds of thousands of people in California live in areas where they are at risk of health effects from pesticide drift. Frequently the communities most affected by pesticide drift are low income communities with limited access to medical care.

As a result of these mass poisonings, a number of environmental health and justice organizations including PSR-LA, the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation and Californians for Pesticide Reform came together to push for better emergency responses to drift incidents.

This October, a coalition of farm worker, environmental health and rural organizations applauded passage of the Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act, SB 391 (Florez-Escutia), which will provide for improved response to pesticide drift incidents and pay the uncompensated and acute medical bills of victims of exposure.

"We are thrilled that this law passed," said Martha Guzman, Legislative Advocate for California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation. "This is one step towards addressing the serious problem of responding to pesticide drift in our state. We look forward to making more progress in preventing these exposures from occurring in the first place."

"This law is a good first step in protecting our rural communities," said



Californians for Pesticide Reform celebrate the passage of SB391; creating resources for proper treatment of California residents exposed to pesticide drift.

Teresa DeAnda, Central Valley Representative for the statewide coalition Californians for Pesticide Reform which strongly supported the law. "We hope that it will raise the profile of pesticide drift as a serious risk to public health in the Central Valley and other agricultural areas in the state."

The Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act (SB391 Florez-Escutia) will ensure that the victims of pesticide drift incidents are properly responded to and treated with respect. Many victims have been hosed down naked in front of others with a fire hose or left with hundreds of dollars worth of medical expenses that are never reimbursed. SB 391 will prevent the ill treatment of these victims and ensure immediate and proper response to each incident.

The Pesticide Drift Exposure

Response Act will establish a reimbursement process to pay for the uncompensated and acute medical bills of victims of pesticide incidents and ensure proper response to pesticide drift incidents are included in counties' Hazardous Materials Response Plans.

PSR members sent over 250 letters and faxes to the legislature, Governor and to Cal EPA chief Terry Taminan in support of the Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act. More than 45 organizations supported the bill, including California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, Californians for Pesticide Reform, Pesticide Action Network, United Farm Workers of America, California Medical Association, and the grower-organization Community Alliance with Family Farmers.

Health is our Finest Social Value


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bined. It destroys families, communities, and sometimes whole cultures. It directs scarce resources away from health and other human services, and destroys the infrastructure for these services. It limits – and often totally eliminates – human rights. War leads many people to think that violence is the only way to resolve conflicts, a mindset that contributes to domestic violence, street crime, and many other kinds of violence in the

world. War contributes to the destruction of the environment..”

Let us apply fundamental concepts of public health to the political sphere. Let us promulgate a moral standard of health. Let us examine each and every issue using the following criteria: does this activity, or policy, engender health and well-being or will it lead to greater problems, disease and harm?

Despite a strict adherence to the scientific process, physicians are today ben-

eficiaries of public confidence bordering on the mystical. This is no surprise. Medicine is rooted in ultimate religious virtue, compassion -- as well as the ancient art of healing. As Gov. Howard Dean M.D. beautifully portrayed, physicians can play an important role in civil society. We are messengers of health. Let us evangelize. The times demand it. 

Volunteer Physicians Needed for PSR-LA's Gun Violence Prevention Program

By Candice Kim

Physicians for Social Responsibility's Violence Prevention Program works to bring a public health focus to the violence prevention debate. PSR recognizes the unique voice of health care professionals as experts with first-hand knowledge of the tragic effects of gun violence, and strives to assert this position by becoming among the foremost advocates of firearm injury prevention.

Concerned physicians are spreading the concept that gun violence is a public health epidemic through vehicles such as visits to medical schools, roundtables, in-service trainings, legislative visits, reality tours and *grand rounds*.

Physicians are needed to present "Preventing Death and Injury from Firearms: What Physicians Can Do," PSR-LA's powerful PowerPoint slide show. You may also consider organizing a grand round or brown bag for your own facility or present at one of the many venues that request presentations.

In 2000 a survey by the American Academy of Pediatrics revealed 87 percent of pediatricians believed they should make inquiries about the availability of firearms in the home. The survey also found that 96 percent agreed or strongly agreed that pediatricians should advise parents who own firearms to unload their guns and lock them away. Clearly, physicians believe that their role in firearm violence prevention is important.

However, the same survey revealed that only 15 percent of pediatricians said they always identify families who keep firearms in their homes. Over 30 percent surveyed said they never do so. Only 33 percent of physicians reported always recommending that families should unload and lock up their guns. Thirty-seven percent said they never provide that guidance.

Determining and promoting best practices for gun violence prevention is an important element of the violence prevention program at PSR-LA. Physicians and activists can also get involved in the legislative arm of the violence prevention program. Use your first-hand knowledge of the gun violence epidemic to advocate for legislation that can pro-

Causes of Death · L.A. County · Ages 0-24 · 2000

Firearms	433
Motor vehicle related	209
Malignant neoplasms	169
AIDS	7

Information provided by the California Dept. of Health, 2002.

tect public health. Volunteer to make visits to legislators or sign up to be on our e-alert mail list to keep abreast of ongoing legislative work at PSR-LA.

http://actionnetwork.org/psr_la/home.html

Physicians seeking greater involvement in our violence prevention program can also volunteer to provide tattoo removal to ex-gang members and gang-impacted youth through the "Ya Estuvo" Tattoo Removal program at Homeboy Industries.

The Homeboy Jobs for a Future (JFF) program provides free tattoo removal services to any client requesting them; giving priority to those clients who have

tattoos that inhibit their safety, their ability to secure employment or their mental health. The service is provided on site. JFF has a state-of-the-art laser tattoo removal machine and a number of doctors who donate their time. PSR-LA is committed to recruiting additional doctors willing to provide this very important service. The waiting list for this service is a mile long and any M.D. can be trained to use the equipment.

To become a part of the PSR-LA Violence Prevention committee or become a volunteer, please contact PSR-LA Public Health Organizer Candice Kim by e-mailing candice@psr.org or by calling (213)689-9170 x104.

Star Wars and the Environment

PSR-LA is coordinating a national effort challenging the environmental underpinnings of the Bush Administration's missile defense system. The vast constellation of new missiles, satellites, radar systems, ships, and laser-tipped 747's are now being constructed to ostensibly shoot down enemy missiles. The government is currently expending tens of billions of dollars annually on these untested and geopolitically risky weapons.

Unbeknownst to many, the new missile system will have considerable impacts on the environment. Environmental documents reveal that military rocket launches will boom from six-per-year to more than forty. Exotic rocket fuel chemicals, probably responsible for extensive developmental disease

here in California, may, when dispersed in the atmosphere, profoundly deplete the earth's life-saving ozone layer. Also, high above the atmosphere, the aftermath of missile tests, the jagged speeding debris, may damage communication satellites, the Space Station and perhaps even astronauts in space.

Coordinating efforts of the Center for Defense Information, Arms Control Association, Lawyers Alliance for World Security and Center for Public Environmental Oversight, PSR-LA director Jonathan Parfrey has helped lead this national effort to review the Missile Defense Agency-Ballistic Missile Defense System's Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. PSR-LA is now working with environmental attorneys seeking to litigate over the DOD's faulty plans.

If you wish to volunteer on this exciting project, please contact Jonathan Parfrey at (213) 689-9170 x107.

Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles invites you to a special gathering

Coffee, Croissants, and Commitment



Start the weekend right. Join PSR at the lovely Warszawa Restaurant in Santa Monica. Sip on delicious coffee. Nibble on perfectly crafted French-handmade croissants. And afterwards, take a stroll on the beach. And what is the price of admission for this little piece of paradise? Absolutely nothing at all . . . 'cept a little of your time and political activism.

Sat., January 15, 2005

10:30 AM - 1:00 PM

(drop-in anytime between these hours)

Warszawa Restaurant • 1414 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica
(near Santa Monica Blvd.)

PSR needs your voice. Or more precisely, we need your handwriting. We need your active support of important legislation regarding peace and security, the environment, and preventing violence in our streets. As you know important legislative initiatives may only become law when people engage in the unglamorous activity of sitting down and writing policymakers on their beliefs.

At the *Coffee, Croissants, and Commitment* breakfast you will be briefed on the issues. You will be given pen and paper, envelopes and stamps. And, with good company nearby, you will be encouraged to write policymakers on urgent issues of the day. Together we can make LA a healthier, safer city.

Contact PSR to reserve your place at the table.

Physicians for Social Responsibility is committed to eliminating weapons of mass destruction, preserving a sustainable environment and reducing violence. PSR was American recipient of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize.

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Calendar of Events: Winter 2005

Saturday, January 15, 2005

Coffee, Croissants, and Commitment Breakfast and letter-writing gathering

Drop-by and visit with your PSR colleagues and friends at the lovely Warszawa Restaurant in Santa Monica from 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM. Sip on delicious coffee. Nibble on croissants. Write policy-makers on legislation regarding peace and security, the environment, and preventing violence in our streets. Warszawa Restaurant, 1414 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica (near Santa Monica Blvd.). Contact PSR to reserve your place at the table: (213) 689-9170 or lainfo@psr.org.

Tuesday, January 18, 2005

Global Security Seminar Michael Parks, USC School of Journalism

Join PSR-LA's erudite monthly dinner seminars at the UCLA Faculty Club. This month Mr. Paks, Dean of the USC School of Journalism, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and former Los Angeles Times editor-in-chief, will speak on international affairs and journalism. Dinner begins at 6:30 PM. Fee: \$25 or \$29. Must reserve via Dr. Bennett Ramberg at bennettramberg@aol.com, or call (213) 689-9170 x107.

Monday, January 24, 2005

PSR-LA Annual Membership Dinner

Please join us at 5:30 PM for cocktails, and 6:30 PM for dinner.

The brilliant Dr. Michael T. Klare will discuss "The End of Oil: The Looming Geo-Political Crises." He will be joined by Dean Baker M.D., M.P.H., Director of the Center for Occupational and Environmental Health at UC-Irvine, who will discuss "The End of Oil: Health Effects of Oil

Production and Use." Luxe Bel Air Summit Hotel, 11461 Sunset Blvd., Bel Air (just west of the 405).

Tickets are \$55 per person | \$100 per couple. For more information please call (213) 689-9170 or lainfo@psr.org.

Thursday, January 27, 2005

Peace and Security Planning Meeting

Join us for a PSR-LA peace and disarmament planning meeting at the home of Sidney Bergman M.D., 345 Amalfi Drive in Santa Monica canyon. Dessert, coffee, and tea will be served. Help envision and plan exciting PSR-LA activities for the coming year. Reservations required. Please contact Jonathan Parfrey at (213) 689-9170 x107 or parfrey@psr.org.

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

Global Security Seminar David Goodstein, California Institute of Technology

Prof. Goodstein is author of the groundbreaking books, "Out of Gas: The End of the Age of Oil," and "Feynman's Lost Lecture." Dinner begins at 6:30 PM. Fee: \$25 or \$29. Must reserve via Dr. Bennett Ramberg at bennettramberg@aol.com, or call (213) 689-9170 x107.

February 25-26, 2005

Environmental Health & Global Trade

A major conference on environmental health, global trade and LA's ports is being organized by the Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center, EPA and others will commence at the First Congregational Church of Long Beach. PSR-LA supports the Center, organized at the USC-Keck School. Focusing on local impacts of

global trade, speakers include Dr. Kenneth Olden, director of the National Environmental Institute of Health Sciences and Terry Tamminen, California Cabinet Secretary. For more information contact Andrea Hricko at scehsc@usc.edu or (323) 442-2745.

March 18, 2005 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Gino Strada in person!

The Italian medical relief organization, EMERGENCY, operates hospitals in Afghanistan and Iraq for those wounded in war and for surgical emergencies. The group's founder, Gino Strada, will greet PSR supporters at the lovely Studio City home of Drs. Judith and Donald Broder. Hear a current firsthand account of these two wars, their impact on civilians, and the heroic treatment of the injured. Also see www.emergency.it To make a reservation call (213) 689-9170 x107 or lainfo@psr.org.

Thursday, March 24, 2005

Global Security Seminar

Paul D. Holtom, MD, USC-Keck School of Medicine, will speak on "Infectious Diseases in War, Sanctions, and Embargoes." Dinner begins at 6:30 PM. Fee: \$25 or \$29. Must reserve via Dr. Bennett Ramberg at bennettramberg@aol.com, or call (213) 689-9170 x107.

August 4-7 – save the dates

Remembering the First Sixty Years of an Atomic Eternity

The Bush Administration is trying to revive nuclear detonations. Join hundreds of concerned citizens at the Nevada Test Site, the most bombed and desecrated place on the planet – a half-day's drive from Los Angeles – to commemorate this landmark in human history. Call (213) 689-9170 x107 for more information.

PSR LA

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