

RICHARD  
KORNWEIBEL

## President's Perspective

*Richard Kornweibel, President*

Welcome to Year One of the recently renamed California State University, Sacramento **Retirees Association**...continuing as year twenty-six of fellowship and service. While we began as an exclusively faculty organization, for several

years our official – and beneficial – policy has been to welcome all those who have worked at Sac State. We are intensifying that effort with a change of name and other changes to follow, including additional recruitment measures.

My vision is that we continue and expand in three areas: first, provide a structure for those who wish to keep in touch with valued friends and colleagues; second, provide relevant information to all retirees of Sac State, whether they wish to participate in our activities or not; and third, continue to support the ongoing development of the university.

Our Board is committed to:

- Hosting a fall dinner and a spring brunch.
- Maintaining and upgrading our [website](#)
- Publishing the Silver Bulletin, primarily in electronic format
- Acknowledging the passing of our colleagues
- Sending members email notices of important and useful information when appropriate
- Maintaining close and friendly contact with current employees, managers and students

The Board is also committed to two other initiatives: first, establishing close ties with other university support groups such as the Alumni Association and the Renaissance Society; and second, encouraging the University to turn to the retirement community for volunteers so that our collective knowledge and experience can be of greater benefit to the campus.

This is not an ambitious agenda. At any moment it only takes a dozen or so individuals to keep things moving plus a few more to show up early at events. Personally, I would like to see more turnover of board members and volunteers. To that end, I am committed to no more than two years of service as board president. In the same vein I am happy to announce that the Board has persuaded Tom Griffith to take the reins of the Silver Bulletin and Larry Glasmire to join the board.

Finally, Sacramento State is a harder place to work and prosper today than in the past. Our not yet retired colleagues deserve our sympathetic encouragement. They strive to do the best they can under constrained and rapidly changing circumstances. They deserve whatever modest assistance and support we can provide.

I look forward to seeing you and other friends and colleagues at the Spring Brunch.

Contact Dick at <mailto:kornweibel@gmail.com>

## RETIRES ASSOCIATION

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**MAYDAY! MAYDAY!...**The Spring Brunch is on May Day! To register click [HERE](#).

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Walking on the [American River Parkway](#) at sunset *Gregg Campbell*

"[Inside Job](#)," the 2010 documentary on US financial meltdown *Dr. Wynne DuBray*

I recommend the book "[Cutting for Stone](#)" by Abraham Verghese. *Barbara Glazer*



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[www.csus.edu/org/emeritus](http://www.csus.edu/org/emeritus)



LINDA MARTIN

## The Spring Brunch!

*Linda Martin, Vice President*

Sunday, May 1 - a good day to celebrate the vibrance of springtime and the portent of long summer days to come! Plan to join your friends and colleagues on Sunday May 1 at 11 am for the Association's annual

Champagne Brunch at the Sacramento State Alumni Center.

Find out what others have been doing lately. Maybe they have traveled, or maybe they have finally checked a few things off the "To Do" list. Or maybe they have done something that they have been waiting for you to ask them about. And learn what interesting escapades they have planned for the future!

What would you like to tell them about your endeavors?

You will also have the opportunity to enjoy the talents of current and former Sac State students in the Arts. Our live music will be performed by violinists Sarena Hsu (2012), Laura Rubinstein-Salzedo (BA, 2010) and cellist Courtney Castaneda (MA, 2009) who are looking forward to adding the music they love to play to the lively atmosphere. A large display of visually stunning and intriguing photographs, enthusiastically provided by undergraduate and graduate

students in the Photography Program in the Department of Design will be available for you to saunter past and ponder.

Chef Mike Miller is planning a filling midday meal and our own Viticulture Aficionado has selected an accompanying Italian Prosecco to delight the palate as well, for those who enjoy a bit of something bubbly.

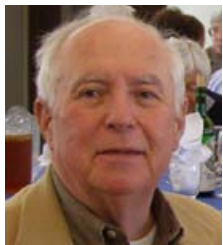
And...oh yes...there will be door prizes, too, which have been generously provided by local businesses who endorse the Association's mission to support Sac State students.

Now that you know what we have planned, you won't want to miss this. Invite a guest. Reach out to other retiree friends to come and reconnect with colleagues. It's going to be a lovely day.

Costs are \$35 for a member of the Association and \$35 for the member's guest, and \$45 for nonmembers. Notice how, by joining right now, you can immediately derive your first benefit of becoming a member! You can join the Association [here](#).

Remember that you won't receive an invitation or registration form in the mail so register right now for the Spring Brunch by accessing the registration form at: <http://www.csus.edu/org/emeritus/04gBrunchReg.htm>

Contact Linda at <mailto:ljmartin@saclink.csus.edu>



BOB CURRY

## Hawaii Habit

*Bob Curry, Economics*

During eleven previous summer sessions I have taught Asian Economic Development at the University of Hawaii's main campus at Manoa. I've been invited to do so again during summer 2011 when the course will

be modified to include a special analytic focus on the history, structure, program features and performance of [APEC](#) (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation). APEC is composed of 21 member economies that collectively account for about 45 percent of the world's landmass, 40 percent of its population, 60 percent of global economic activity and 45 percent of international trade.

The upcoming summer session course will be featured in an APEC Certificate Program for Undergraduate Students that UH Manoa intends to offer to undergraduate students so that they will be better prepared to observe APEC's summit scheduled in Honolulu on November 12-13, 2011. Each participating student will be able to use her/his certificate coursework as part of major, minor and/or general education requirements. The certificate will be awarded by UH Manoa's APEC Studies Center.

The summit will be a "big deal" for many UH students for this reason: each annual summit features a welcoming address by the host country's head of state. In it he/she sets an agenda that guides APEC's future activities. Observing this tradition, President Obama will address the members as he returns to his birthplace to be spokesperson for the citizens of his country and his state of origin. It's interesting to note that the President has strong ties to Hawaii. He was educated at Punaho School from the 4th through the 12th grade. While at UH Manoa his father earned a BA in Economics and his mother, who was a brilliant and productive scholar, received a Ph.D. in Anthropology.

In preparing the syllabus and course materials I have been assisted by staff professionals at APEC's Secretariat and scholars at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies - each located in Singapore. Prior to the course I will present a professional paper on APEC at a meeting that will focus on "Advancing Asia-Pacific" sponsored by the East West Center and the University of Hawaii.

Contact Bob at <mailto:currybob2005@gmail.com>



PETER  
SHATTUCK

## Elizabeth's Travel Journal

*Peter Shattuck, History*

During all of our travels, Elizabeth has kept a detailed journal, documenting where we went, what we saw, and – of course – what we ate. The journals let us enjoy again, or sometimes suffer again, the wanderings of the past twenty-five years. Last fall, for example, we took a Central European trip that began in

Prague and then went by riverboat down the Danube to Budapest. We gazed at the famous buildings, traipsed through awesome cathedrals and around gilded Parliaments and over statue-covered bridges, and found it all quite fascinating. But for all the splendor of St. Stephen's in Vienna, or the quaintness of Regensburg, or the cornucopia of the Budapest market, I remember most vividly a delightful evening at a small Czech restaurant, deep in a Prague cellar.

Just off the Old Town Square, in a side street near a Starbucks, we found a cryptically marked entrance to what might be the restaurant. In we went, and "down and down and down" stone steps into a thirteenth century cellar. From our table, we could survey the decorations: under the arched stone roof, skulls, pikes, pewter plates, guns, steins, and a six feet by three feet bellows, all hanging on the rough stone walls. Two huge stuffed animals guarded one end of the room, a sullen wild boar and a cheerful black bear. Three musicians played enthusiastically: bass, accordion, and clarinet mixed traditional Czech tunes with "che sera, sera" and "besame mucho." When they took a break, the bass – the instrument, not the player -- leaned comfortably against the wall and the boar.

Although our waiter had little English, and we less Czech, we managed to communicate. Three hundred grams worth of crackly, crisp-skinned suckling pig, with horseradish, peppers, and mustard, would be split between us, accompanied by "crisp wedges of fried potatoes w/onion + a small mixed green salad," as Elizabeth noted. To wash it down, a bottle of Czech-grown Muller-Thurgau.

All the other patrons were Czech, but not quite the traditional national image. At a long table in the center of the room, twenty five people, perhaps co-workers, gathered, becoming more exuberant as the evening went on. Some were clearly central European, but about half were as evidently Muslim, including head-scarf-wearing women. But no one seemed to reject the wine or beer, and after a while the headscarves came off, and they all had a marvelous time. We toasted them, and they cheered and toasted us.

Dinner cost about a thousand Czech kronor, just over fifty dollars. It was hardly as stunning as the Prague Castle or the Charles Bridge, but thanks to the journal, the evening remains wonderfully clear in sensory memory.

Contact Peter at <mailto:pfhstry@csus.edu>

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

*continued from page 1*

In 2010 I took a 90-day [World Cruise on Princess Lines](#) to 25 countries, a marvelous, perhaps once in a life time, experience. **Richard Kellough**

Nancy and I are long-time fans of the quality productions and intimate setting of the [B Street Theatre](#). **Tom Griffith**

I highly recommend the free Friends of the Library Author Lecture Series, held in the University Library Gallery; contact the Library's Sally Hitchcock at [hitchcoc@saclink.csus.edu](mailto:hitchcoc@saclink.csus.edu) for 2011-12 speakers and schedule. **Geri Welch**

When planning a visit to Amador County, stop in on Main Street in Plymouth where you'll find the fine [Taste](#) restaurant open for lunch on Saturday and for dinner Thursday-Monday, OR across the street the [Vintage Market](#), open Wednesday-Sunday 10-6, where chef and caterer Beth Sogaard offers tempting fare to eat there or take away... and you'll find out about her GREAT cooking classes, too. **Linda Martin**

[The Great Courses](#) has dozens upon dozens of courses in almost all fields done by top professors from all over the U.S. and is especially good for the visually impaired. **John W. Connor**

In the past few years my worldview and goals in life have been greatly revised by reading and listening to a book by the CEO of World Vision called "[The Hole in Our Gospel](#)." **Gerald Frincke**

Consider "going solar [photovoltaic](#)" for your home electricity, as it freezes inflationary increases in your main utility cost, and as a result, we are very impressed with our Chevrolet VOLT, as we are getting 40 miles of fully electric drive range and 39mpg when the gas engine does kick in; and we also have the Nissan LEAF car, so basically for any/all of our local, day-to-day, driving we have ZERO emissions and actually ZERO "fuel costs" as our PV panels essentially give us "free" nighttime charging for the EVs. **George Parrot**

The [Cameron Park Library](#) has an absolutely fabulous book sale the 2nd Saturday of each month from 9:00 until 12:00, often only \$5.00 a bag for some real treasures! **Harry Dennis**



SHEILA HARD

## To The Rescue

*Sheila Hard, University Development*

On behalf of [River City Food Bank](#), I extend thanks to the Association for its blast e-mail, seeking volunteers in our time of need.

River City Food Bank is a great organization that provides three days of emergency food to almost 40,000 clients per year. As you may have heard, it was destroyed in an arson fire on October 21. Remarkably, this volunteer-powered organization was soon able to resume dispensing food from a truck parked on the street in front of its former headquarters. However, client

data that would have been entered directly into the computers had to be filled out on paper forms, creating a tremendous backlog of data entry.

The Sacramento State Retirees Association sent an email to its members seeking volunteers. I am happy to report that three individuals personally volunteered their time, and one generous soul offered a donation towards paying for some additional help.

Thanks for another illustration of the Retirees Association's concern for the community.

Contact Sheila at <mailto:sh@sheilahard.info>



TOM GRIFFITH

## Social Networking for Sac State Retirees?

*Tom Griffith, Silver Bulletin Editor*

Our Association President recently asked me, with a slight note of disdain, "Are you on Facebook?"

I admitted that, yes, I was, and explained that this was necessary to keep up on the latest comments,

photos and "Likes" posted by the rest of the family – my wife and three daughters. Although I don't look at Facebook very often, I do find it interesting in both content and in the way the designers keep changing the format to promote more and more openness. Recent examples are a new format that reveals more of your history (I'm from Valhalla, NY), and changes in privacy settings that encourage increased sharing (my page is limited to Friends and Friends of Friends). I was surprised to learn that there are now almost

700 million people on Facebook and that the US accounts for less than a third of these. Here are additional interesting [Facebook statistics](#).

But the thrust of this article isn't Facebook; it's the upcoming addition to the Retirees Association's website that your forward-thinking board recently approved. This addition, "Retiree Profiles," could be viewed as a means of social networking, albeit a very modest and low-tech one. Retiree Profiles will enable campus retirees to share reflections on their work and retirement activities. All faculty and staff retirees for whom we have current email addresses will soon be receiving an email with a brief set of questions to guide the writing of profiles. I look forward to seeing you on our website!

Contact Tom at <mailto:tgriffith@csus.edu>



ROVENA HILLSMAN

## Jazz Jam at 80

*Rovena Hillsman, Business Administration*

The only other report of activities I have written in 15 years of retirement was for the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). My 80th birthday celebration was a "jazz jam" at a Pensacola Hilton attended by about 200 people.

I have spent my retirement volunteering and supporting public libraries, the opera, the symphony, the jazz society, and the DAR to name a few. In Pensacola I have hosted sev-

eral national family history conferences and have published articles in genealogy magazines. This year I am hosting two conferences and helping with a third in Atlanta.

My focus in book collecting since retirement has been in the book arts. Soon after retirement I joined SHARP, Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing and have continued that affiliation. Their journal, *Book History*, is worth the price of membership. I do visit California at least once a year and hope to see you all for a fall gathering.



SAM PARSONS

## The Art of Sam Parsons

*Tom Griffith, Silver Bulletin Editor*

When I first heard that campus photographer Sam Parsons would be having a retrospective show of his 30-year career, I assumed it would be nice walk into

the past. It took me a while to realize that this show is not going to be just Sam putting up representative periods of his work. No, this is going to be an ART exhibit.

I was given a sneak preview of the show at a recent lunch with Sam. While the show will include hundreds of the “head shots” Sam has taken over the years, including many of you reading this, we will not actually identify individual shots because they will be in a one-minute movie showing a rapid morphing of faces. When I asked if viewers will be able to recognize anyone,

Sam replied “Those who need to can go to a link and watch it slower on their computer.” I must admit this stung a little because the implication was that this is a work of art and it is what it is. (I will still look at the slowed version.) Sam will also be “representing” the evolution of computers and campus expansion through works he has created for this show.

Sam said of the show, with his usual modesty, “This exhibition is not intended to be a history of the last 30 years at Sacramento State, but, rather, a collection of work I found interesting.” Um... “interesting?” Knowing Sam, I’m sure the show will be exciting!

The exhibit, “Depth of Field: 30 Years of Photography and Multimedia” is in the University Gallery Annex. It runs April 1-30. Hours are 10 am to 5 pm, Tuesday through Saturday.

Contact Tom at <mailto:tgriffith@csus.edu>



GERI WELCH

## Lunch Bunch Keeps Munching

*Geri Welch, Membership Co-Chair*

They are world travelers, avid hobbyists, volunteers and caregivers for family members. In other words, they are a lot like many other busy retirees from Sacramento State. But there’s something else that’s impor-

tant to this group of people – the friendships they made during their careers at the University.

In a strong testimony to their friendship, these retirees, several of whom met while working at the College of Business Administration, manage to find time for a monthly luncheon at a variety of local restaurants.

The lunches started with a smaller number in 2003, but the number has grown as retirements occurred and the gatherings continue on a regular basis. Coordinating the schedule is a daunting task, but one that “convener” Pennie Provo (retired in 2004 after 35 years of service) takes on cheerfully.

In addition to Pennie, regulars include Jan McPherson (retired in 2000 after 24 years); Flo Baeressen (retired in 1991 after 18 years); Joan Boyd (retired in 2001 after 42 years); Art Jensen (retired in 2008 after 32 years); and Linda Downing (retired in 2005 after 35 years). Others join in on a time-available basis.

As colleagues, the group saw each other through many major life events. As retirees, the conversation still revolves around family and friends, but also encompasses the latest trips, or plays and movies enjoyed.

Other regular retiree lunch gatherings bring together longtime friends and colleagues from the Admissions Office (Helena Bennett coordinates this group) and from the History Department (Gregg Campbell handles the scheduling). Do you know of other groups who continue their Sac State work friendships into retirement?

Contact Geri at <mailto:geri.welch@att.net>



## Mediterranean Honeymoon

*Howard Harris, Facilities Management*

Eiko (Kay) and I were married on September 4, 2010 at Slocum House in Fair Oaks in the company of family and a few close friends. My friend, Sonny Lo, an administrative law judge, who worked as an attorney for the California State University for a number of years, married us. We took a cruise of the Mediterranean for our honeymoon and visited Spain, Italy, Monaco, Greece and Turkey.

Contact Howard at <mailto:harrish@csus.edu>



ALAN WADE

## Legislative Report (submitted January 27)

Alan Wade, Past President

The legislature along with the news media will be preoccupied with one item, the \$25.4 billion state budget deficit and how to fix it. Jerry Brown, the once and now governor, has outlined a tough-minded plan for

repairing the deficit which includes \$12.5 billion in budget cuts, as a quid pro quo for a legislature-born June ballot initiative to extend the modest 2009 temporary tax increases for five years.

The proposal seems reasonable enough, with much less in the way of tricks, smoke and mirrors than recent past efforts. The governor has a few weeks to convince both Democrats and Republicans that this is our best chance to avoid disaster for the state, with additional cuts for the rest of the year being cryptically referred to as "Draconian" and "unspeakable." The governor believes that attempting to scare the electorate would only backfire on his efforts.

The lion's share of the \$12.5 billion in cuts are of course aimed at the usual suspects – the poor, the sick and disabled, and the frail elderly, who have no clout. These add up to \$4.3 billion, about a third of the total proposed. Here, we see some vestigial smoke and mirrors: reductions in Medi-Cal will require reduction in state contributions, which will have to be heard and decided (eventually) by the Supreme Court. We also have to ask: will even these cuts for the vulnerable have enough impact on the "voting classes" to cause a favorable vote on the June tax extensions? It sometimes seems that more than half the voting electorate doesn't think we should have these programs anyway.

Brown faces a difficult task. Does he have the political wizardry needed to get both Democrats and Republicans even to get the tax quid pro quo on the ballot? No Democrat is enthusiastic about cuts to the poor and defenseless. Republicans have taken a pledge to oppose any and all tax increases under all circumstances, and have taken the position that the June ballot proposal for extension of current tax levels is a tax increase. Further, local redevelopment agencies are flexing their muscle and demanding exclusion of several billion in reductions in their pet projects.

On higher education, all three systems are taking significant hits, resulting in significant increases in student costs. Should [CSU-ERFA](#) take any position on the consequences of \$500 million cut in the CSU budget? (See David Elliott's addendum to this report)

Further cuts in K-12 will take place next year if the tax initiative fails. Can California actually afford to preside over the

end of public education as we have known it? Probably all but the most sectarian of the anti-government right would not want this to happen either. However, off-year initiative campaigns with no big name candidates on the ballot are notoriously unpredictable.

Prisons and correction reform are left out of the budget equation as of now, as is public pension reform. The latter omission has attracted the attention of the Marcia Fritz anti-pension crowd. Brown says pension reform is coming in a second package of proposals, wisely left out of the budget vote.

One piece of legislation attracted some interest from our committee in early January, when AB89 was introduced. The bill was inspired by a letter from several dozen UC administrators who in a public letter had threatened to sue the state if their pension bases were not raised. AB89 attempts to place a cap on all public pensions, mentions PERS and STRS beneficiaries by name, but says nothing about the separate and (largely) independent UC retirement system. While there is some agreement within our committee that there should be a cap on the salary on which pensions are based, we need to follow this bill and watch for amendments that could be mischievous. Input from SCORE lobbyists could help with this.

Our SCORE (California State Coalition of Retired Employees) friends have not met since December. I will report later on the collective wisdom gleaned from our next meeting with them, which is scheduled for February 14.

Meanwhile, we might want to follow the budget process carefully, examine the impact of the cuts on higher education (especially the CSU) and consider a public statement on their impacts, and gear up for the next battle in the long war ahead over pension and certainly health care financing "reforms."

*Addendum from Committee Member David Elliott, possible template for a statement from CSU-ERFA about the CSU budget reductions: "We are very concerned about the additional \$500 million in cuts the governor has proposed for the CSU. This is a significant amount for our system, especially as it comes on the heels of several years of similar budget reductions and dramatic CSU tuition increases. But, as difficult as such a cut would be for our students, and our system, we would prefer this {course of action} over additional reductions in the social support programs on which the vulnerable members of our society depend."*

*Editor's Note: Alan Wade is Director of Legislative Affairs for CSU-ERFA.*

Contact Alan at <mailto:alanwd9@gmail.com>



HORTENSE SIMMONS

## Kwansaba For Hortense

*Eugene B. Redmond, Guest Writer from Southern Illinois University*

*Note from Steve Gregorich: Many of us were befriended by Hortense Simmons during her professional years at Sac State as well as her retirement years working on our association's board. So far did her friendliness extend, that at the time of her death due to ALS, our association received emails from far and wide: Australia, Ukraine, Europe, and from many around America. It is not possible to reprint all of those accolades here. I have selected one. Professor Redmond put together a collage of photos taken at the celebration for Hortense that was held on September 11, 2010 at her Georgia home just prior to her passing. He also wrote a kwansaba for her.*

The kwansaba is a 49-word poem of seven lines. Each line contains seven words, none of which can have more than seven letters. Exceptions to the seven-letter rule are proper nouns and some foreign words. The Eugene B. Redmond Writers Club of East St. Louis invented this poetic form in 1995.

## South by West by World: An Odyssey

*a kwansaba for sister/colleague Hortense Simmons*

you elope with a dream ferryin' you  
forward to Howard U/Ohio/California—Sacto,  
to be exact-o!—then spin a web  
of leaders, skolars, lovers & futures from  
the mean & cream of academe. later,  
an esteem'd teacher at sea, you twice-  
marry your dream, Florida-flava'd & free.



Contact Steve at <mailto:jansteve1@directcon.net>

## IN MEMORIAM

PRESTON JAY STEGENGA,  
International Programs  
Sept. 17, 2010

BRIGHAM ALICEN ARNOLD, Geography  
September 26, 2010

MADELINE (Madge) E. JONES,  
Student Employment  
October 7, 2010

AILEEN I. DRAPER, Student Health Services  
October 8, 2010

MARION ROWE DOBBS, Home Economics  
October 12, 2010

IRIS NORDBERG, widow of Orville Nordberg,  
Education  
October 19, 2010

JOHN L. SHOKA, Government & Ethnic Studies  
November 16, 2010

HORTENSE ELOISE SIMMONS,  
English and Ethnic Studies  
November 26, 2010

MAUD UDVARDY, widow of Miklos Uvardy,  
Biological Sciences  
December 17, 2010

DENNIS L. KENNEDY, Business  
December 20, 2010

ROBERT TZAKIRI, French and Humanities  
December 5, 2019

MARYJANE REES,  
Speech Pathology and audiology  
January 9, 2011

FRED JOYCE, Educational Administration  
January 10, 2011

JAMES A. SAUM, Counselor Education  
January 27, 2011

LEOPOLD (LEO) MARTIN, Facilities  
February 11, 2011

ELTON WARD LONG, Criminal Justice  
February 12, 2011

HAROLD KERSTER, Environmental Studies  
February 16, 2011

RAGNOR, J. SEGLUND, Accounting  
February 17, 2011

*(Click for [Detailed Information](#))*



TOM  
KANDO



MADELEINE  
KANDO

## Deficit...Schmeficit!

*Tom Kando, Sociology, and Madeleine Kando*

Wisconsin's Governor Scott Walker and his Republican minions are now trying to take away most collective bargaining rights from public employees (shrewdly excluding police, firefighters and state troopers).

Other Midwestern states are moving in the same direction. The purported objective is to help close the state's \$3.6 billion budget deficit. Most states have a budget deficit these days. Wisconsin's is by no means the worst.

We propose a much better plan, one that would keep public workers from demonstrating and still satisfy the Republican governor and his supporters:

Wisconsin has about 30,000 households making over \$1 million a year. (It also has 100,000 millionaires, measured by net worth). The source for these figures is [here](#).

People who make over a million a year don't get taxed more than someone who makes \$380,000. It's all the same to Uncle Sam, whether you earn \$380,000 or \$10 million, you get taxed at 35% max. Does that seem logical to you?

In addition, most states also levy income taxes. For example, Wisconsin's rates range from under 5% to nearly 7.75% of income over approximately \$300,000.

Why not tax those who make over a million dollars a year a few percent more? Note that we are talking about income, not just being a mere "millionaire," which many of us approach by just owning a relatively nice house and a few investments.

If 30,000 Wisconsinites would each pay 5% more on each million they make, this would yield \$1.5 billion on just their first million! Add to this a 5% tax on the additional millions earned by the super-rich, and presto, your budget deficit is gone. End of story. All these people need to do is forego a few trips to the Bahamas.

You may say that we are mixing apples and oranges - state and federal taxes - and that we are proposing to raise federal taxes to remedy state deficits. But how revenue is increased is irrelevant. There are plenty of mechanisms for the different levels of government to share revenue with each other. The federal government already rebates billions to the states all the time.

We can hear you say: "Oh, that reeks of socialism. That's not what America is about." Really? Did you know that in

Holland the highest tax rate is 52%? Compare that to the highest bracket of 35% in America, which only kicks in if you make more than \$380 thousand! And of course, they also have additional levels of taxation over there, just as we do.

This plan would not only solve many states' budget deficits, but it would also make this country more equal. On this [list of countries ranked by income equality](#), you can see where America ranks on the 'Gini index'. The Gini index is a measure of income inequality. A country that scores 0.0 on the Gini scale has perfect equality in income distribution. A score of 100 indicates total inequality where only one person corners all the income.

The most equal countries on the list are Denmark and Japan. Holland ranks fairly high in terms of equality. America, as you can see, ranks about the same as some very underdeveloped countries in Africa, like Sierra Leone and Senegal. We are not suggesting bringing back proscriptions. This was the method used by Roman dictator Sulla and emperors such as Julius Caesar to solve their budget deficit. They declared a list of the richest citizens - many of them senators - to be criminals, chopped off their heads and appropriated all their assets. We don't favor this method, even though our own average [senator's net worth](#) is \$14 million, and Congress' total net worth is \$2.5 billion.

We suggest a more civilized form of redistribution (another taboo word in America, along with "socialism."). Redistribution based on a more progressive and therefore more just tax system, one more similar to the ones in Europe, Japan, Canada and the rest of the Western world.

What is so abominable about the current fiscal debate in this country is that there is a near consensus that the problem is just one thing, namely overspending at the public level. Anyone who dares to suggest that there are two sides to the issue - too much spending and insufficient revenue - gets tarred and feathered. So it's open season on Unions, on teachers and on the entire public sector. No matter that spending by the states is already way, way down.

As a society, we are driving in the wrong lane, in the wrong direction. We are trying hard to emulate the enormous inequalities of banana republics. Not content to have a top tax rate of 35% for millionaires, the Republicans want to reduce the rate to 29%! The 2010 elections prove that the brainwashing of the public is now complete.

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