

# DO YOU FEEL THE POWER?

Estimates vary, but clearly the economy of California suffered with the recent Public Safety Power Shutdown. For a couple of million people, "business as usual"- Wasn't.

Taken for granted, electrical dependency is a necessity for most people. A steady supply of current delivered to households and business has nearly gained status as a natural human right. **Pretty good for an invention that has only been around for a bit over a century-** from the beginning electrical distribution has been a commercial enterprise. Centralized production and distribution takes a lot of investment, and as we are learning, a lot of maintenance.

And there's the rub - power doesn't need to be centralized and it doesn't need an endless supply of transported fuel either. There is always some sort of cost in getting electrons to do work for you, but **solar power works.** Unfortunately the industry is installing mega-wattage of photovoltaics that are grid dependent, and have no use at all when the grid goes down. Modern off-grid systems have evolved, dramatically, marketing to the mainstream with added electronic complexity to supply the standard and expected endless on-demand power for all our appliances and toys.

The introduction of **Tesla Powerwall** batteries was touted as a major advance in energy independence. But off-grid batteries have been in use since the beginning of batteries. Sure, the Powerwall is an elegant, compact appliance, That takes up less space, so you can get a car into your garage, but making and storing your own energy on site is not new.

I consciously sought a place not connected to the power grid and have lived off-grid for 30 years. Happily doing without any heavy loads on my old-school system. With the advent of portable electronics, loads did grow of course. But the low current **LED** lighting breakthrough sure helped - quickly evolving to the new standard for my humble 12vdc system. I also pump water 175' up over 900', with a 24vdc 1/2hp motor **with no battery.** Being responsible for your own daily energy budget makes you pay more attention. And that use is not monolithic and standardized, as the calculations solar sales pitches imply. The standard home demands and expectations may be part of the problem.

**The equation was reversed for my system:** *How many watts can I afford to buy? And then, what can I do with that?* Then, adding more capacity as possible. Building organically. Like any path towards sustainability, living within the actual world, and its limitations - Adapting and making do with what is available. **This is the responsible thing to do.**

The latest scientific community warning of impending climate crises targets needed changes in energy production, and now appropriately mentions the need to stabilize and reduce the growing human population, growing at over **200,000 a day**- that's over 150 of us added every minute, 80 million a year - About the same as the total population of California and Canada combined!

What all these people will eat and do in the future is anyone's guess, but lots of them, all over the world are taking to the streets, taking a different kind of power. taking on the powerful, demanding change.

But in this country - we carry on, mostly ignoring, at best bitching about the powerful. Representatives aren't representing, and leadership has gone to their heads. Centralized political power needs a little off grid action too.

The public impeachment inquiry hearings have begun and it **Seems like a slam dunk to impeachment.** Remember, impeachment is a process. The hearings had previously been secretive, much to the chagrin of the GOP, as the House committees, absent a special prosecutor or investigator, exercised their constitutional role to conduct their own investigation, by their own rules.

Witness testimony had been confidential so that testimony would not be colored by what others said - so they may speak with candor. This is a basic interrogation procedure, not a **"Star Chamber."** However, the 16th century English Star Chamber was *originally* established to ensure the **fair enforcement of laws against socially and politically prominent people so powerful that ordinary courts would probably hesitate to convict them of their crimes.** Today, legal or administrative bodies with secretive proceedings are sometimes called *"star chambers"* metaphorically, as a pejorative intended to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the proceedings. That excuse for delegitimizing the proceedings is gone, now it's time to *'kill'* the messengers it would seem.

As career diplomats give sober testimony, the defensive **GOP** Congress only offers attacks and denials, looking more and more ridiculous. The Senators will be the jurors, in a trial for removal from office, so a conviction is not likely, **but opinions could change as more evidence is revealed.**

**THEN IT IS OUR TURN. Trump always enjoys a lengthy appeals process. The airing of impeachment proceedings should color the opinions of everyone, and this time the appeal is in the form of a presidential election.**

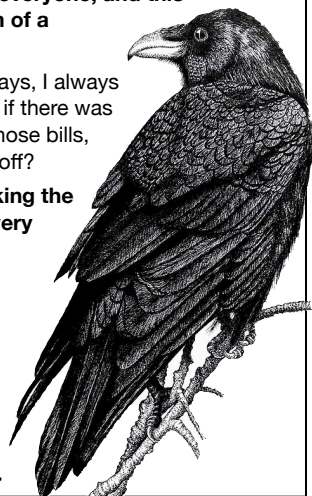
Back in my PG&E bill paying days, I always wondered what would happen if there was general strike against paying those bills, would all the power be turned off?

**Of course that would be rocking the boat, and then how would every one charge their phone?**

There is a disturbance in the **FORCE** - Feel the power, generate some, *then:*  
**GENERATE SOME CHANGE.**

⊙ **CHARGE!**

- Joshua Golden



## BIG TECH & DEMOCRACY Can't Coexist

Robert Reich Writes:

**"Who is responsible for protecting democracy from big, dangerous lies?"**

A good question. Democracy - rule by the people that adheres to principles of social equality has never had an easy path, big dangerous lies have always imperiled it. Perhaps that tells us something about our brand of democracy and its failings?

**Robert Reich**, economist and professor who served as US Secretary of Labor from 1993 to 1997, continues:

*"Donald Trump lies like most people breathe. As he's been cornered, his lies have grown more vicious and dangerous. He conjures up conspiracies, spews hate and says established facts are lies and lies are truths."*

*This would be hard enough for a democracy to handle without Facebook sending Trump's unfiltered lies to the 45 percent of Americans who look to it for news. Twitter sends them to 68 million users every day."*

**The Internet, through disintermediation changes the way we consume. As Reich points out:**

*"Amazon eliminates the need for retailers. Online investing eliminates the need for stock brokers. Travel agents and real estate brokers are obsolete. At a keystroke, consumers get all the information they need."*

*But democracy can't be **disintermediated.** We're not just buyers and sellers. We're citizens who need to know what's happening around us in order to exercise our right to self-government, and responsibility for it."*

*Intermediating between the powerful and the people was once mainly the job of publishers and journalists - hence the term "media".*

**This role was understood to be so critical to democracy that the constitution enshrined it in the first amendment, guaranteeing freedom of the press."**

Freedom of the press, the right to publish and disseminate information, thoughts, and opinions

without restraint or censorship is absolute, it doesn't just apply to news and facts.

But the term Press, short for Printing press implies a certain hierarchy. The means of dissemination being in the hands of those that have the means to publish. Though we all have the right to publish anything, the democracy of ideas implied by press freedom is inherently flawed if monopolies of distribution exist.

**Reich calls for anti trust action:**

*"Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook says he'll run political ads even if they are false. Jack Dorsey of Twitter says he'll stop running political ads altogether."*

*They insist they aren't publishers or journalists. They say Facebook and Twitter are just **"platforms"** that convey everything and anything - facts, lies, conspiracies, vendettas - with none of the public responsibilities that come with being part of the press.*

**Advertising isn't the issue.**

*The reason 45 percent of Americans rely on Facebook for news and Trump's tweets reach 68 million is because these platforms are near monopolies, dominating the information marketplace. No TV network, cable giant or newspaper even comes close. Fox News' viewership rarely exceeds 3 million. The New York Times has 4.7 million subscribers.*

*Facebook and Twitter aren't just participants in the information marketplace. They're quickly becoming the information marketplace.*

**Antitrust law was designed to check the power of giant commercial entities. Its purpose wasn't just to hold down consumer prices but also to protect democracy. Antitrust should be used against Facebook and Twitter. They should be broken up."**

**But even then, democracy will be at risk.**

The need to tell dangerous lies and adherence to them by uncritical thinkers points to a flaw in the **monopoly of democracy**, where all votes are equal.

When a well informed, thoughtful, and socially responsible vote is equivalent to an ignorant, misguided, and selfish, vote, **democracy itself needs reform.**

We who are responsible for living and have been born in the third world. We who ask for justice and live in South America.

We who die in Bolivia unique and desolate.

We are that history that doesn't get written and that walks about with its head cut off.

\*\*\*

A student dies, shot in the back.

Spilled blood

spreads in the street

like a cry.

Who can write about innocence?

*Blanca Wiethüchter  
b. 1947, La Paz  
d. 2016, Cochabamba*



**"We are Born like this Into this**

**Into these carefully mad wars Into the sight of broken factory windows of emptiness Into bars where people no longer speak to each other Into fist fights that end as shootings and knifings**

**Born into this Into hospitals which are so expensive that it's cheaper to die Into lawyers who charge so much it's cheaper to plead guilty Into a country where the jails are full and the madhouses closed Into a place where the masses elevate fools into rich heroes"**

*~ Charles Bukowski*

*"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."*  
*~ Buckminster Fuller*



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