



ALL ABOARD FOR THE LIBERATION OF GAZA

Last year we had two Gaza Freedom Flotilla boats—one of them just didn't work as we were taking off from Spain so we ended up with one boat, the Women's Boat to Gaza. This time we have four with two of them starting out in Scandinavia because part of this is to have educational events all the way to Gaza, all through Europe so that we can continue to talk to people about the horrific, horrific conditions in Gaza and mobilize support for Palestinians. By the year 2020, only two years from now, the World Health Organization says that Gaza will become uninhabitable because of the lack of water, the lack of electricity, the sewage problems that are going on there. The blockade of Gaza has just been horrific for those people, those two million people in there. So we sail to educate people about what's happening and to let the Palestinians in Gaza know that we're not forgetting them, that we are going to sail boats and hopefully we'll be able to get in there.

We have only shallow draft boats as one would expect but that really gives us the opportunity to reach more people that live along the waters, the rivers and canals. And then we have two boats going on the outside of Europe,

going in the Atlantic Ocean and making port visits on Atlantic ports in Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, France, Spain and then coming on in to the Mediterranean where the two boats will meet up eventually and then head to Gaza.

There is a port in Gaza City and 40 years ago the people in Gaza were able to export products and import products but for the last 40 years the Israelis have refused to allow international boats to come in. Although, in 2008 there were two little boats that came in carrying 44 internationals and that then took out some Palestinians that needed health care and some students that had scholarships and couldn't get out. But really, since late 2008 there have been no international ships that have been allowed to get in.

The Israeli Navy has been very brutal in stopping these boats. If you remember in 2010 they stopped our six boats. I was on one of them. unarmed civilians on a ship in international waters and they executed nine people and another person subsequently died from his injuries.

All Aboard Continues on page 3



CANNABIZ ZEITGEIST

Sentiments in the **cannabiz**, for the most part are grim in the Humboldt community, a place some would call the heart and soul of cannabis, where cultivation as we know it began. There seem to be two archetypes playing the game these days. You're either one of over 400 permit holders, or interim applicant, struggling with the county to stop penalizing you, treat you fairly and come out of the process alive, or you're one of 10 to 15 thousand farmers untrusting or unable to afford legalization, grappling with a market set to collapse and county officials with your head on a chopping block. Some speculate only 1/10 are going to be able to foreseeably participate in the legal market. What will happen to those who fall out or never participate in the process?

institution as a whole. There is little sympathy for folks who are patiently waiting to see what happens to those getting permits, before they put themselves in a dangerous situation. A process, proven to be riddled with scandals, bribes, backroom deals and money interests no less. Are cultivators meant to be inspired to cooperate with so much corruption and illegal activity going on?

Recently Kym Kemp reported that an employee of Humboldt County was **"taking bribes for expedited permit approval on building and grading projects,"** A Humboldt County Sheriff's dept. press release states they, **"received complaints about County Inspector Patrick William Mctigue, 47, of Fortuna. The complaints alleged that Mctigue was receiving money from members of the public for expedited permit approval on building and grading projects. Multiple victims came forward to the Sheriff's Office alleging that Mctigue had defrauded them. Mctigue is believed to have received over \$100,000 from the victims."**

On top of scandals, corruption, and greed, the devastation of a crashing economy is endured by all. Across the County I hear farmers saying they are tapping out due to risk of loss in a multitude of capacities this year, many are not growing or significantly downsizing. Nurseries and supply stores have record low sales; you can hear the praying mantis praying in the little containers, it is so quiet.

This guy was in charge of your legalization fate folks and he is clearly showing you what it means when Supervisors speak of having to **"pay to play"** as was insisted necessary to go legal in several past Supervisor Meetings.

The underground market is the only way many, even in compliance, are surviving. Compliance has evolved from the standard goal for all farms, to an exclusive club for a rich minority. Instead of making the compliance easier and criminality less intense for the majority of the community, our County has opted to make it incredibly difficult, expensive, and increase the criminality of those who opted to wait and see, before investing in government's claimed good intentions.

The County is sending a clear signal to cultivators, regardless of their status; they are still criminals in their eyes, and so being taxed like no other agricultural industry. There is a lot of irony and bias riddled within the legislation and a clear punitive approach to legalization, and against those who do not trust their lives in the hands of government. This is a primary complaint you hear from cultivators resisting the Counties attempt to legitimize their existence.

There has also been little consideration on the part of the county for people who, based on prior dealings with the government, have little cause to trust the



-Cannabiz Continues on page 16

FORWARD TOGETHER TO A NEW POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

This Mother's Day a convergence of unlikely bedfellows launched a Poor People's Campaign — echoing the Poor People's Campaign Martin Luther King, Jr. initiated half a century ago aiming to "transform the political, economic and moral structures of our society." Is there a strategy that can make that aim more than a vain hope?

The testing ground for the new Poor People's Campaign was what came to be known as the Forward Together movement that developed in North Carolina over the past dozen years. It shows how a coalition of movements, acting as a non-party opposition, can challenge reactionary political forces and transform the political arena. Forward Together is best known outside the state for its Moral Mondays and its surprise defeat of North Carolina's anti-trans "bathroom bill," but those are only two of many Forward Together experiences to draw on in constructing a new Poor People's Campaign.

Today, when the government, the political system, and both parties primarily represent the interests of corporations, banks, and the 1 percent, the time for a non-party opposition may have arrived. What might a non-party opposition that draws together a wide coalition to affect public policy by direct action look like in Trump's America? Maybe a whole lot like North Carolina's Forward Together.

The story of what came to be known as Forward Together is told by its founder and leader, William Barber II, in *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement Is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear*. Barber, a black minister and the son of a minister, built up an extensive network and wide respect through his decades as head of the North Carolina Civil Rights Commission, the leader of the state NAACP, and the minister of a local congregation known statewide for its outstanding programs for the poor.

In 2007 Barber persuaded the North Carolina NAACP to convene a People's Assembly with what he called the "fourteen justice tribes in North Carolina." The assembly, held on Jones Street outside the statehouse, unanimously adopted a fourteen-point agenda representing the concerns of those fourteen tribes. It outlined eighty-one action steps. The People's Assembly became an annual event. The movement it spawned came to be known as Historic Thousands on Jones Street or HK on J

-Forward Together Continues on page 16

The Forgotten Class

For two years, U.S. politics has been dominated by the anger and resentment of a self-identified "forgotten" class, some left behind economically and others threatened by changes to their way of life.

At a time of rock-bottom joblessness, high corporate profits and a booming stock market, more than 40% of U.S. households cannot pay the basics of a middle-class lifestyle — rent, transportation, child care and a cellphone.

A study conducted by **United Way** found a wide band of working U.S. households that live **above the official poverty line, but below the cost of paying ordinary expenses.** Based on 2016 data, there were 34.7 million households in that group — double the 16.1 million that are in actual poverty.



The study suggests that the **economically forgotten** are a far bigger group than many studies assume — and appear to be growing larger despite the improving economy.

The study dubs that middle group between poverty and the middle class **"ALICE"** families, for **Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed.**

These are households with adults who are working but earning too little — 66% of Americans earn less than \$20 an hour, or about \$40,000 a year if they are working full time.

When you add them together with the people living in poverty, you get 51 million households. It's a magnitude of financial hardship that we haven't been able to capture until now.

By the numbers: Using 2016 data collected from the states, the study found that North Dakota has the smallest population of combined poor and **ALICE** families, at 32% of its households. The largest is 49%, in California, Hawaii and New Mexico.