

EcoNews: I was already familiar with most of the people interviewed, and the examples of corporate ill-doing that were shown, so maybe I had higher expectations. But yes, dammit, I was right to have higher expectations. It is no longer good enough to display how bad our problems are, however brilliantly you do it. By devoting 90% of the airtime to the problems, and only 10% or less to the solutions, the film may drive some viewers deeper into hopelessness and despair.

ECONEWS

#136 Promoting the Vision of a Sustainable Vancouver Island MARCH 2004

THE CORPORATION

I have just been to see the movie "The Corporation", which everyone is raving about, and which has been called "The next Bowling for Columbine" by the Globe and Mail.

My response? I hated it.

It felt like 2 hours 15? of being bludgeoned over the head with a thick stick, followed by a 15? sweetener at the end to make me walk away with a good feeling.

It seems I am in a minority of one in feeling this way, so don?t let me dissuade you from seeing it, and coming to your own conclusions (for showtimes see <http://www.thecorporation.tv>). Everyone else thinks it?s wonderful!

I was already familiar with most of the people interviewed, and the examples of corporate ill-doing that were shown, so maybe I had higher expectations. But yes, dammit, I was right to have higher expectations.

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By devoting 90% of the airtime to the problems, and only 10% or less to the solutions, the film may drive some viewers deeper into hopelessness and despair.

It's true that the corporation, defined as a "person" in law, shows all the signs of being a psychopath.

It's true that some corporations will lie, steal, cheat, poison and kill to advance their own selfish ends. It is also true that many don't, and never will.

It's true that big corporations are taking over the world's media, food, farms, forests, and pharmaceuticals, and that now they want to get their hands on the world's water supply too.

It's true that big oil and coal corporations have done their best to sabotage progress global climate change, and big chemical corporations have done their best to make sure toxic chemicals remain on the market, causing cancer, asthma, and other ailments that destroy our health and happiness.

All this is true, and much, much more. The problem that we face, as a planet, is that we are steering towards a multi-dimensional social and ecological catastrophe, but the bridge of the Good Ship Earth has been hijacked by corporate leaders whose only agenda is to continue making profits.

The film seems to say that if we take to the streets, as the people of Cochabamba (Bolivia) did in response to the privatization of their water supply, we can be victorious. "The people, united, can never be defeated."

Well, bullshit. It is far more complicated than that, and we deserve to be treated to a proper analysis of the solutions, not a simple recipe for popular uprising.

PERSONALITY DIAGNOSTIC CHECKLIST

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- ___ Callous unconcern for the feelings of others
- ___ Incapacity to maintain enduring relationships
- ___ Reckless disregard for the safety of others
- ___ Deceitfulness: repeated lying and conning others for profit
- ___ Incapacity to experience guilt
- ___ Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviours

Diagnosis: Psychopath

Michael Moore had a better handle on the complexity of the issue when he said, in the film, that when he and his friends were campaigning against the motor industry in Flint, Michigan, they never made the connection that it was they, driving around in their cars, who were also contributing to air pollution and global warming.

The challenge is enormous, so the solutions must be equal to the challenge, both locally and globally. We need to clarify what the ten best solutions are, and organize them into a clear, elegant package that everyone can get behind. And if we don't have those solutions yet, let's be honest and say so, so that we can put more effort into finding them. Here are some suggestions:

1. Create a Global Corporate Charter, such that directors are required by international law to act in the best interests of the global and local environment, and the communities in which they operate, and as well of the corporation itself, which is their only present legal requirement. (For more ideas along these lines, see <http://www.aurora.ca>)
2. Create a Global Treaty on Corporate Charters which will end the validity of the current charters under international law, by an agreed date. Failing that, create an Alliance of Nations for Global Sustainability which will require the use of the new Global Corporate Charter by locally based corporations.
3. Tie global support from agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF to the adoption of the New Global Corporate Charter, by an agreed date.
4. Redefine fiduciary trust so that fund managers have a legal obligation to invest funds in a socially responsible manner, as well as seeking to maximize their clients' gain. Define this in

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global, as well as national terms.

5. Make triple bottom line accounting a legal requirement for social and environmental results, as well as financial results.

6. Ban corporate and union donations to political parties over \$1,000, as Canada has done. (See <http://www.dwatch.ca/camp/BillC24AnalysisAug03.html>)

7. Adopt Three Strikes and You're Out legislation, as California is proposing, revoking the charter of any corporation convicted of three major violations resulting in a fine of \$1 million or more within a ten-year period. Incorporation is a privilege, granted by the people, not a right. (See <https://www.commondreams.org/views03/0307-02.htm>)

"The biggest corporation, like the humblest private citizen, must be held to strict compliance with the will of the people." Theodore Roosevelt, 1902

8. Build local, living economies in our home towns and communities, supporting locally owned sustainable businesses, while restricting the ability of cloned chain stores to set up shop, as many communities are already doing. (See <http://www.ballenetwork.org>)

9. Build a strong, coherent, global movement, as we've already started through the World Social Forum. (See <http://www.choike.org>)

10. Visualize success. We ended slavery. We can also end poverty, and environmental unsustainability.

To Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott and Joel Bakan, I say THANKYOU, for engaging us in thought and debate about these enormous issues. If you are planning a sequel, could it be "Beyond The Corporation", and be packed full of workable solutions that will get everyone fired up and excited? It's positive action that we need, not despair.

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THE ECO-CORNER

\$5/line (non-profits & low-income free)

1" box \$40. \$2" box \$70. Insert \$180

* Recycled, chlorine free paper The Copy Paper Buying Club provides monthly orders at 15-20% savings. A joint effort of Reach For Unbleached & Paper Choice. See <http://www.rfu.org>

* Tax returns done by Financial Professional including self-employed. Great rates. Roxanne Brydges, CFP, 360-6284, boxwood@inetex.com

* Garden designs with nature in mind by Stewardship Natural Landscape Design. Christina Nikolic, 382-4450 stewardshipnld@yahoo.ca

* Are you an outdoor adventurer with experiences to share and trips to plan? The Company of Adventurers would like to hear from you. Al Lubkowski (250) 595-8881

* How healthy is your home? Trained Bau-biologist available for environmental house inspections, incl. indoor air quality, EMF investigations, education and solutions. Oasis Indoor Environmental Testing and Consulting 250-653-9631 law@saltspring.com or visit <http://www.buildingbiology.net>

* For sale: Country Living Grainmill. Never used. Worth \$740 w/accessories. \$300 obo Cal 598-5223

* Can Pamela Morninglight please call Guy? 250-881-1304

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dilutes the salt water, causing the current to switch off.

The Pentagon Report warns that "abrupt climate change could bring the planet to the edge of anarchy as countries develop a nuclear threat to defend and secure dwindling food, water and energy supplies." It concludes: "Disruption and conflict will be endemic features of life.... o-nce again, warfare would define human life." The authors say that climate change should be considered immediately as a top political and military issue, and be elevated beyond a scientific debate to a US national security concern. Here are some of the probable scenarios that the report includes. Please note: these are worst case scenarios, not predictions:

* Britain will have winters similar to those in current-day Siberia as European temperatures drop off radically by 2020.

* Major European cities will sink beneath rising seas as Britain is plunged into a Siberian climate by 2020. Nuclear conflict, mega-droughts, famine and widespread rioting will erupt across the world.

* By 2007, violent storms could make large parts of the Netherlands uninhabitable and lead to a breach in the aqueduct system in California that supplies all water to densely populated southern California .

* Europe and the US could become virtual fortresses trying to keep out millions of migrants whose homelands have been wiped out by rising sea levels or made unfarmable by drought.

* Catastrophic shortages of potable water and energy could lead to widespread war by 2020.

Doug Randall called his findings "depressing stuff" and warned that it might even be too late to prevent future disasters. "We don't know exactly where we are in the process. It could start tomorrow and we would not know for another five years." Experts familiar with the report told the UK Observer that the threat to global stability "vastly eclipses that of terrorism". <https://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/0222-01.htm>

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But wait; the world uses 28 billion barrels a year, so that's all of 34 days supply. If we started using it on March 1st, it would all be gone by April 4th. Is that what we'd risk our global climate and coastal waters for?

But wait; they think it may be worth \$100 billion. Who can turn down that kind of money? In Newfoundland, 2% of the value remained in the province, so if we take that \$2 billion benefit, spread it over 20 years and share it among 5 million BC citizens, it comes to (let me see?) \$20 a year. Hmm. Is that what we'd risk our global climate and our coastal waters for?

Oh, I forgot about the jobs. In Newfoundland, the federal government contributed \$4.66 billion to make the oil happen, at \$97,000 per job. Hmm. So government handouts are suddenly a good idea?

If we want jobs, we just have to develop the area's tidal and wind energy potential. Studies show that sustainable energy projects generate 60 to 90 times more jobs than fossil fuel projects. So what's this really about? It beats me. Just greed, I think, and a total inability to think beyond the next fill-up of the SUV. (See <http://www.oilfreecoast.org>)

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SWEDISH COLLEGE

One of the solutions to the mess that is overtaking us is called The Natural Step, created by Dr Karl Henrik Robert, a Swedish cancer scientist who was alarmed at the growing rates of cancer, and the toxification of nature by industrial contamination. Developed with a large community of Swedish scientists, The Natural Step lays out four fundamental System Conditions which all human activities need to follow, to re-align our economies with the laws of nature (See <http://www.naturalstep.ca>).

Many businesses around the world, and some communities such as Whistler, here in BC, have adopted The Natural Step as their framework for progress. Back in Sweden, The Blekinge Institute of Technology in Karlskrona, a picturesque city on Sweden's south coast, is setting up a unique one-year international masters program on Strategic Leadership Toward Sustainability, led by Dr Karl-Henrik Robert, based on The Natural Step. The first class of

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WEEK o-nE

Mon 1st ? Thur 4th 9-4:30pm. Save Walker Hook, an environmentally sensitive area and First Nations burial ground. Show your support for the Penelakut First Nation Elders and the Salt Spring Island Residents for Responsible Land Use at an Environmental Appeal Board hearing. Hotel Grand Pacific, 463 Belleville St. Continues Fri 5th to 12th at the Environmental Appeal Board 747 Fort St, 4th Flr. gellam@saltspring.com

Tue 2nd ? Sat 6th Species at Risk 2004 Conference, at the Victoria Conference Centre. Major Canadian conference, major speakers, including Thomas Lovejoy. Fees \$100-\$250. <http://www.speciesatrisk2004.ca>

Clare Rumball (250) 387-9450

clare.rumball@gems1.gov.bc.ca

Tue 2nd, 8 pm "Surviving the Big Squeeze: Climate Change and the Future of Species at Risk", with Dr. Richard Hebda, Curator of Botany and Earth History at the Royal BC Museum; author of over 80 scientific papers on environmental history of the last 15,000 years. \$12 / \$8 Conference Centre. Douglas St.

Tue 2nd, 11-5pm Urban Agriculture Fair, UVic. Many display tables. Organic lunch at 12 noon. 1-3pm Speakers: Mary Alice Johnson: history of the local organic food movement, Jacinda Fairholm: urban agriculture in Cuba; Guy Dauncey: climate change and food; Geoff Johnson: models of urban agriculture. Michel Pujol Room, SUB, UVic. 721-8629

Wed 3rd, 3- 5pm Making Food Matter Food Forum: Connecting and Creating Food Resources in our Capital Region. Launching the First Report: A Baseline Assessment of Food Security in British Columbia's Capital Region. Ante Chamber, Victoria City Hall, 1 Centennial Sq. RSVP Community Council, 383-6166 info@communitycouncil.ca

Wed 3rd 8pm "Teeming with Life", with Internationally renowned ecologist Dr. Thomas E. Lovejoy, originator of the innovative debt-for-nature swaps; founder of the public television series Nature, Scientific Advisor to the Executive Director of UNEP; Chief Biodiversity Advisor for the World Bank; co-author of Amazonia, Global Warming and Biological Diversity, and other titles. \$12 / \$8 Conference Centre. Douglas St.

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Sat 6th, 9am to noon. What is the Earth Charter? The Earth Charter is a major movement in Europe and is spreading throughout the world, as people find it a practical blueprint to foster positive change. Bring questions, ideas and an open mind. Sponsored by Cowichan Kairos, the Earth Charter Society and St. Andrew's Church Outreach Committee. Refreshments will be served. Duncan United Church Hall.

Sat 6th, 9:30-12:30 Native Plant Gardening Workshop with Patricia Johnston, Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Pre-register: 479-0211

Sat 6th, 10-3pm Seedy Saturday, Courtenay. Florence Filberg Centre. 250-703-9547. The start of the gardening year!

Sat 6th, 1pm CRD Parks Walk to the petroglyphs along the Coast Trail. Meet kiosk, Aylard Farm parking lot off Becher Bay Road. 478-3344. East Sooke Regional Park

Sat 6th 2-4pm Composting Basics, Victoria Compost Ed Centre, 1216 North Park Street, Free. 386-WORM to register

Sat 6th, 5:30pm Dinner with David Orchard. Support for a man who had the courage to bare his beliefs in the face of crumbling Canadian sovereignty. It has cost him dearly. If you are a former progressive conservative member, sympathizer, or just politically curious. attend the potluck (bring a dish). Help David retire his campaign debt, and find out what's happening behind the scenes in Canadian political theatre. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 4235 Departure Bay Rd, Nanaimo.

Sat 6th 6:30pm Vancouver Island Vegetarian Association vegan potluck supper. All welcome! Bring a dish to share (no meat, fish, eggs, dairy, whey, honey) and plates, cups, utensils. Speaker: Al Rycroft, Senior Editor of the Peace, Earth and Justice News. \$3. First Met Hall, 932 Balmoral Ave.(near Quadra). 386-2100 <http://www.IslandVeg.com> .

Sun 7th, 10-4pm Seedy Saturday, Nanaimo. Bowen Park Auditorium. 250-741-1928. The start of the gardening year!

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Sat 13th 9:30-12:30 Native Plant Gardening Workshop with Patricia Johnston, Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Pre-register 479-0211

Sat 13th, 10-3pm Seedy Saturday, Cobble Hill Hall, Watson Avenue. 250-743-7305. The start of the gardening year!

Sat 13th, 10am VNHS Field Trip: Spring Plants of Observatory Hill. Meet first Parking lot on left at top, bring lunch.. <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>

Sat 13th, 10-3pm CRD Parks Coppermine Hike, East Sooke Regional Park. Meet kiosk in Pike Rd parking lot off East Sooke Rd. 478-3344. Adults only

Sat 13th 11-1pm Friends of Ecological Reserves AGM. Speaker: Katie Christie on links between spawning salmon and songbird communities. Juan de Fuca Library Meeting Room. 383-5358. Optional walk in Garry oak stand after.

Sat 13th 2-4pm Cane Fruit Production. Learn to grow berries, sample jams. Victoria Compost Ed Centre, 1216 North Park Street. Free for compost club members, \$5-\$10 for non members. 386-WORM to register

Sat 13th ? Sun 14th Permaculture II Weekend Workshop 10am-5pm, Springridge Commons, Compost Education Centre & a Permacultural Backyard. \$40! (bursaries available- agriculture@vipirg.ca)
. 721.8629

Sun 14th, 1pm CRD Parks. Join guest naturalist from Mayne Island Naturalists Club for a hike up Mount Parke. Meet parking lot, end of Montrose Rd. 478-3344.

Sun 14th, 1pm CRD Parks. Follow a naturalist up Bear Hill, looking for signs of spring. Meet Brookleigh boat launch parking lot off Brookleigh Rd. 478-3344.

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Fri 19th, 6pm A Canadian Minister of Peace? Saul Arbess and Penny Joy discuss this proposal and the future of the Victoria Peace Centre. 2125 Lansdowne (near Foul Bay). 592-6484 6pm potluck; 7pm talk, 8pm AGM

Sat 20th, 1pm Global Day of Action to End the Occupation of Iraq. o-ne year after the bombs started falling....The World Still Says No To War. Rally in Centennial Square. Contact Eric Lescarbeau, 385-7078. stopthewarcommittee@hotmail.com

Sat 20th , 9am-4pm Organic Turf Management, with Heide Hermary of Gaia College. \$50, includes lunch. At Cedar Hill Golf Course, 1400 Derby Road, Victoria. Call Josh at (250) 381 9995.

Sat 20th 10-4pm Living at Peace with Earth Workshop. Ecological crisis, spiritual crisis, and the healing of the Earth, with Jim Profit, SSJ. Queenswood, 2494 Arbutus Rd. 477-3822. \$40

Sat 20th, 1pm CRD Parks. With spring fast upon us, it?s time to shake out the cobwebs. Join a naturalist at the Francis/King Nature Centre off Munns Rd. 478-3344.

Sat 20th, 2-4pm Planning Your Year Round Vegetable Garden, Victoria Compost Ed Centre, 1216 North Park Street. Free for compost club members, \$5-\$10 for non members.386-WORM to register

Sat 20th 7pm MEATOUT 2004 Benefit Show! Local musicians like Immaculate Machine and Dave Noisy, raffle, and other veggie fun. Garry Oak Room, 1335 Thurlow St.

Sat 20th ? Sat 27th The Mysticism of the Earth: Preached Retreat with Jim Profit, SSJ. Previous quiet retreat experience required. Queenswood, 2494 Arbutus Rd. 477-3822. \$420 live-in; \$273 commuting.

Sun 21st, 8am VNHS Field Trip: Birding Viaduct Flats and Quicks Bottom. Meet Interurban Rd,

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Viaduct Ave West <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>

Sun 21st, 1pm CRD Parks. Myth, Magic and Medicine. Plants play a large role in the magic, medicine and myth of our lives. Join us to find out more. Meet Francis/King Nature Centre, off Munns Road. 478-3344. Adults o-nly

Sun 21st, 3pm Discussion of a proposal to create a Minister of Peace for Canada. Garry Oak Room, 1335 Thurlow, Fairfield. What if we succeed in ending the occupation of Iraq? How do we move toward and ethic and practice of peace, and the essential art of peacebuilding? Saul Arbess, 383-5878, sarbess@shaw.ca .

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WEEK FOUR

Mon 22nd, 9pm The Bottom Line: Privatizing the World. Are we losing the Common Good? TV 4 KNOW

Mon 22nd, 10pm Free Trade is Killing my Mother. Filmed at the Quebec City Summit of the Americas anti-globalization protests. TV 4 KNOW

Tue 23rd, 5pm Island Food Security and Accessing Local Food Workshop with food activist and researcher Emily McNair. UVic SUB, Room B-028. Free. agriculture@vipirg.ca 721.8629.

Wed 24th, 7:30pm VNHS Birders? Night: "Fascinating Birds and Wildlife of Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands". UVic Fraser 159. <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>

Wed 24th, 8pm Bitter Harvest: Out of Eden. 2nd of 3-part series o-n the inside story of genetically modified foods. TV 4 KNOW.

Wed 24th, 10pm Seeds of Change. Twelve Canadian Prairie Farmers travel to Costa Rica to

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meet up with local organic farmers. TV 4 KNOW.

Thur 25th ? Apr 17 Organic Gardening ? Increasing Your Yield. 8-session course with Mary Alice Johnson & Tina Fraser, with field trips to local organic farms. Camosun Interurban Campus. \$215. Call 370-4563 to register

Thur 25th, 11pm The Bottom Line: Privatizing the World. Are we losing the Common Good? TV 4 KNOW

Fri 26th, 7pm EcoNews Dessert Potluck Mailout Party. Come help fold, stuff, chatter and make friends! 395 Conway Rd (off Interurban, just past Camosun College). Bus #8, 21. 881-1304

Sat-Sun, 27-28th Centre for Self Awareness Holistic Health Fair, Saanich Fair Grounds, \$6 per day/\$10 -2 day. 995-5227 Marilyn.

Sat 27th, 8:30am VNHS Field Trip: A Nature Walk o-n UVic Campus. Meet Cedar Hill X Rd, opp Henderson Rec Centre <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>

Sat 27th, 10-5pm Advanced Composting, Victoria Compost Ed Centre, 1216 North Park Street. \$40 for compost club members, \$25-\$50 for non members. 386-WORM to register

Sun 28th, 9:30am CRD Parks Beginner Birding Basics. An Introduction to bird watching. Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park, meet kiosk, Eagle Beach parking lot off Pat Bay Highway. 478-3344.

Mon 29th, 7:30pm VNHS Marine Night: "The Bigger They Are, The Harder They Fall: The Recovery Of Blue Whales In California" Swan Lake Nature Centre. Free <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>

