Hopes and Dreams in the New Year

by Craig Rock, Editor, Co-chair UUCT Social Justice Council

A few weeks ago I delivered the sermon on Human Rights Day at UUCT. I spoke of hopes and dreams in the context of Celebration, Remembering, and Resistance. I talked of the plight of human rights defenders around the world who put their lives at risk defending their neighbors and neighborhoods. Most we never hear about. They live in small villages, towns, and cities of faraway places fighting for a better life for the local people, clean air to breathe, safe water to drink, decent education, housing, food, and health care. Their lives are sometimes cut short because they stand up to gangs, cartels, and corrupt government officials.

Most of us will never have to stand up to gangs or cartels, but maybe to corrupt government officials. But in a way, all UUs are human rights defenders. Our spirituality, to
one degree or another, is based on our seven principles, ranging from recognizing the inherent dignity of all people, to recognizing the rights of our fellow congregants in their pursuit of truth and meaning, to respecting the interdependent web of all existence of which we all are a part. And really wrapping it up, another one of our goals is creating a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

We wouldn't be true to our principles if we skipped the part about recognizing rights of other UU members in their search for truth and meaning. Complicating all of this is the aging population in many UU churches including ours. Many of us have health challenges that we must deal with if we want to stay reasonably healthy. And yet many of us want to see something accomplished before we depart this rather complicated planet called Earth.

We are no different from many UU congregations. "While it’s true that UUs have been active in justice movements for decades, it seems to us that UU leaders and many congregations have embraced justice work as central to our movement in ways not seen in a long time - and in ways that some UUs are experiencing as unsettling or disruptive," the introduction reads in the current issue of UU World ("Do You Have to Be an Activist To Be A Unitarian Universalist? Six UU leaders reflect on activism and religious identity in a racially and politically charged era"). No matter what you think, you'll find support for your philosophy from one or more of the six people cited. For example, I especially liked the comments of Reverend Marilyn Sewell (Minister emerita of the First Unitarian Church of Portland):

"Not all UUs are inclined by personality or temperament to be activists. But do UUs need to care about social justice? Yes. That said,

‖Release‖

I wish I were like the trees,  
Who let their leaves go  
gracefully, without regret.

Or the tumbling stream  
that flushes silt to sea,  
Exchanging murkiness for blessed clarity.

Or the dandelion,  
who bows its head  
to the subtle breeze,  
Unleashing its future without fear or loss.

Instead, I drive white-knuckled,  
defensive, as we were taught,  
Tense and guarded for what may come my way.

I keep a death-grip on my life.

If you asked me for my dying wish  
It would not be for ten more wishes.

It would be to let go of wishing any more.

Wishing I’d made different choices,  
and that I hadn’t hurt you as I did.

And to forego these old and dusty grudges that I keep like pictures
few UUs are people of color and I expect even
two are working class, so it’s difficult for
most of us - or for most mainline Protestants -
to identify with oppressed people: we are
simply too comfortable.....(we) prefer circles
of conversation, dabbling on the margins,
rather than doing the hard work of social
change, which requires getting in the street,
witnessing at city council meetings,
negotiating with the police chief, sitting on
the railroad tracks and blocking the oil
trains...

But whether we are activists or members of
the choir or armchair philosophers, or a
combination of the above, we are all in this
experiment called Plant Earth together. We
all need clean air to breathe, safe water to
drink and all the rest mentioned above. We
need dreams and hopes. To read the entire
UU World article, click here.

Just a few days ago, I came across a Bill
Moyers’ interview (2013) with Wendell Berry
on his hopes for humanity. The video I’m
sharing here includes readings by Berry
ranging from "The Peace of the Wild Things"
to "A Poem of Hope." Berry’s thoughts are as
relevant today as they were back in the days
of Henry David Thoreau*, a major of influence
on Wendell Berry from the mid 1800s.

in a shoebox beside my bed.

I long to embrace my life
with a lover’s touch,
or as you would an injured wren:
precious, tender, true.

Instead, regret and fear,
twin anchors, hold me fast,
close in against the shore.

“Cast off! Cast off!”
I hear them call
from the open, exotic lands
my heart yearns for.

But the waters in between
my here and theirs
hold unknown hazards,
unlike this dark familiar port.

This day, a prayer:
To ease my grip
on what once was,
or what is meant to be.

That I may find
Myself content
To drift and float
Upon life’s boundless sea.

REGISTER NOW - A Few Spots Left

Be the Change You Want to
See in the World
A Workshop on Non-Violent
Communication
A Poem on Hope (by Wendell Berry)

It is hard to have hope. It is harder as you grow old,
for hope must not depend on feeling good
and there’s the dream of loneliness at absolute midnight.
You also have withdrawn belief in the present reality
of the future, which surely will surprise us,

Click here to read the full poem or click on listen to it on the above video.

Saturdays, January 6 and 13

Are you wondering how to connect with people in your life who have radically different political views than yours? Or how to interact more effectively with people with whom you disagree? When you talk with those on an opposite side of an issue, is it difficult to listen without getting defensive, justifying your position, or thinking about your rebuttal before the other has finished speaking?

Would you like instead to live in a world:
- where everyone’s needs matter and every voice is heard?
- where conflict can be resolved with care and kindness?
- where you meet your needs in cooperation with mine, not at my expense?

The first day we will start exploring and understanding Non-Violent Communication (NVC), and the second day will bring us more practice and confidence with our new skills. This two-day workshop is led by Sylvia Haskvitz, a Tucson resident who has been living, sharing, and teaching NVC since 1989. In addition to leading workshops, Sylvia is a certified NVC trainer, has written books and essays, and produced TV and radio programs focusing on NVC.

Thanks to subsidies from the sponsoring congregations, registration fees are a bargain at:

$65 per person prepaid after November 30
Fee includes the two-day workshop and lunch on both days.

Some $20 scholarship rates are available for folks with limited resources.

REGISTER EARLY TO SAVE YOUR SPOT! Click
Richard Higgins writes in UU World (Summer 2017), "Thoreau, who was baptized and raised a Unitarian, was, to put it mildly, one of our wayward youth. He never returned to the meetinghouse, but now, improbably, 200 years after his birth, the meetinghouse has come to embrace him. Unitarian Universalists today teach and celebrate the liberal religion he championed more vibrantly than ever. (Click here to read an interesting article on this earlier period of Unitarianism.)

None of us alone can save the nation or world. But each of us can make a positive difference if we commit ourselves to do so.”
~ Dr. Cornel West

QUESTIONS?? Text, call, or email Bob Wallace:
414-617-3914 bob@robertmwallace.com
In November, we deposited $39,647.34 and expended $48,661.16 for an overrun of $9,013.82. At the beginning of December we had a balance in the checking account of $10,865.99. The reasons we spent more than we took in were:

1. We paid three payrolls this month. Each one is about $8,000.
2. We paid the restocking fee of about $800 for a dishwasher that wasn’t compatible with our electrical system. However, a new operating dishwasher has been installed and is operating.

We have used 0 dollars of the credit reserve. There is $59,816.10 in the restricted funds. Most of the money are the payments for the Santa Fe trip and will be drawn down as the expenses for the trip are paid. The fund also holds the $20,000 gift from Reah Barrows. Discussions are underway in the Finance Committee on how to use this generous bequest, which will be sent to the Board. We have $4,417.04 in the Capital Campaign Fund. We borrowed $8,900 from the fund in 2016 and have paid back $3,600. We still owe the fund $5,300.

In looking at the financial analysis of November, we see the pledge income is down about 5%, but the plate collection is up. In general expenses are in line with the budget, except for the Search Committee which has spent very little of their $10,000. That is to be expected, as their expenses will come in the spring as they pay for potential candidates to come and interview.

The budgeting process was laid out. In January emails will go out to staff responsible for different programs in the church and to committee chairs asking them to send us the amount of money they would like in the budget for fiscal year 2018-2019. We suggest that committees working with staff, e.g. RE Committee working with the RE Director, Jamili Omar, advise her on monetary needs for their program. We will ask for the budget numbers by December in the Holland Sanctuary

December in the Holland Sanctuary

December celebrations in Holland Sanctuary included Human Rights Day Celebration on December 10, the December 17th Holiday Pageant (see photo on left), the Yule Celebration on December 21, the Christmas Eve Family Service, and the Child Dedications on New Year’s Eve (see photo below).

The Child Dedication in the photo below included Naomi Scarlett Monday, daughter of Teresa Anthofer and Jeffrey Monday; and Penelope Josephine Keszler and Theodore Nikolas Keszler, daughter and son of Brad Leszler and Kate Doak-Keszler.
February and put them together in an “asking budget.” The pledge drive will be the end of February and the first of March, with cleanup by middle of March so that the Finance Committee has a “final” amount of income to work with. The Finance Committee will put together a recommended budget for the Board of Trustees to discuss at their April meeting. The Board recommended budget will be sent to the congregation two weeks in advance of the congregational Annual Meeting May 6, 2018. The final budget is adopted by the Congregation at that time.

The next Finance Committee meeting is Tuesday, January 2 at 7 in Servetus.

UA German Dept. Professor Joella Jacobs will speak on...

**Five Shades of Kafka:**
**Metamorphic Readings of A Report to an Academy**

Franz Kafka is perhaps best know for The Metamorphosis, a story of a man-turned-bug, yet his works are full of animal characters and transformations that blur species boundaries. In A Report to an Academy, an ape turns human through sheer willpower and necessity, it seems, and this story has been interpreted in so many different ways that the text appears metamorphic itself. This talk will present five ways of understanding the narrative, demonstrating why Kafka’s prose is so timeless and applicable to our present day problems. Attendees are welcome (though by no

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**WELCOMING POTLUCKS - Jan 27th, 2018**

UUCT offers you an evening of fun, food, and conversation with newcomers, friends, and church members. The potlucks are open to ALL members and everyone interested in becoming a member. Sign up today to participate in our Welcoming Potluck dinner!

These dinners are participatory events, which means that each guest brings a portion of the meal assigned by the hosts (who provide the venue). All registrants will be contacted by the host/ess to whom they are assigned about a week prior to the dinner with information about location and time. The next dinner is planned for January 27th. **SIGN UP BEFORE JANUARY 14TH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS FUN EVENT!**

The registration form will be available here as well as in the office and in Goddard Hall on Sundays. UUCT looks forward to breaking bread with you in January!

All you need to do is open the attached Word Document highlighted at the bottom of this page. Fill out the bottom half of the document with the information requested and return it to the church office by January 14. Please fill out the form COMPLETELY and PRINT. Once you sign up, please mark your calendar to remind yourself of the date -January 27th. The last day to sign up for this dinner is January 14th. If you have any questions, e-mail Julia Mehrer at perujourney@gainbroadband.com or call (520) 762-4035.

You can also mail the form to Welcoming Potluck, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Tucson, 4831 E. 22nd Street, Tucson. **PLEASE KEEP THE TOP HALF**
Make a World of Difference in 2018

Thanks to supporters like you, we at UURISE can celebrate our deep commitment to refugees and immigrants - fueled by optimism and a passion for justice. We get to step in to some pretty difficult places, and we never forget who is backing and supporting us in this shared vision and mission to help refugees and immigrants.

It is challenging to get a broad view of the work that UURISE is engaging in, so we would like to share just one fresh, recent snapshot of the way we engage with timely proficiency in the needs of our constituents:

During the recent Lilac Fire, UURISE played a key role supporting communication and evacuation efforts. Due to the local undocumented community's unwavering trust in UURISE, we were able to advocate for the welfare and safety of those in the path of the Lilac Fire.

Voices from Sister Jose Women’s Center

Share the Plate - January 21

This winter Stacy sleeps on the porch of Sister Jose Women’s Center during Operation Deep Freeze so she can be with her dogs who do not like to be kept inside. But she hopes for a permanent home where she can have her freedom and personal space. This is the key, she says, to getting back into the mainstream of life. Living on the streets means worrying everyday about meals and where you will sleep the next night as well as safekeeping possessions.

As a 64-year-old homeless woman she is a reminder to all of us that our sisters on the street could be our mother, aunt, or old friend. Stacy’s story is but one from the 35 women a night who can find shelter at the Center. The new 9000 sq. ft. facility at 1050 S. Park Ave opened in May 2017. Already the number of homeless women they serve is growing.

Daily visits are up from a previous high of 65 guests to a new high of 95!

UUCT supports of the mission of Sister Jose’s, to care and nurture homeless women in a welcoming and safe environment, through our Share the Plate program. On January 21 half of all non-pledge money donated will go to the Center. Please plan to make a generous donation.

Also visit their website, srjosewomensshelter.org, to learn more about the work they do and ways you can help by volunteering or providing other much needed items. You may also give to Sister Jose Women’s Center and receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit on your Arizona state tax return.
In particular, our amazing Program Manager, Ana Palomo-Zerfas, worked long hours in partnership with the numerous agencies involved to keep communication systems open and effective with undocumented people and their families in the fire-effected area. We focus on those who are very high risk due to poor communication channels and being invisible to the dominant culture due to their status. UURISE stepped in the gap and effectively built bridges of reliable information and assistance. Thank you, Ana!

This is just one small example of the wholistic approach that we take at UURISE in order to bring just treatment of all people who need advocacy, protection and representation.

As the year ends, we know that you receive many requests for support. UURISE is in a critical moment. There are diverse “time-sensitive fires” burning that need our expertise.

Will you answer the call to be a part of this historic demand for social justice and mercy? GO TO

http://uurise.org/donate/

OR MAIL YOUR CHECK TO

UURISE
1600 Buena Vista Dr.
Vista, CA 92081

MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS

January 6 and 13 - Non Violent Communications Workshop - See page 1.

January 7 - UUJAZ Day at the Legislature Training for all Baja 4 congregations, Holland Sanctuary 2:30 PM.

January 9 - Presentation on “Franz Kafka’s Report to an Academy - See notice on this page.

January 9 - UUCT Membership Committee Meeting, 5 PM, Holland Sanctuary.

January 12 and 13 - Border Issues Fair and Festival, Good Shepard UCC Church, Sahuarita - See page 4.

January 13 - Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast - See page 3.


January 28 - First class presentation on “Literature of the Borderlands” - See page 3.

February 3 - SAVE THE DATE! Annual Service Auction and Dinner. Please consider purchasing a restaurant gift card this month to donate to the auction.

Exploring Tucson

On your next trip to Downtown Tucson, consider visiting the Etherton Gallery, 135 S 6th Ave.
Etherton Gallery specializes in vintage and contemporary fine art photography, paintings, prints, sculpture, and mixed-media works by local and regional artists. Cited as “one of Tucson’s early and most enduring contemporary art spaces,” the gallery has been voted “Best Gallery” in Tucson for twelve years running. As one of the Southwest’s premier galleries, its inventory incorporates museum quality works including turn-of-the-century western American ethnographic and landscape photographs.

Click here to visit its website
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Literature of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands

A four-part series of lectures and discussions
January 28, February 4 and 25, March 18*

The U.S.-Mexico borderlands extending from Chula Vista/Tijuana on the West Coast to Brownsville/Matamoros on the Gulf Coast for more than one-hundred and fifty years have been the focus of numerous Mexican American, Native American, Anglo American, and Mexican writers who have explored this geographic area’s diverse cultural, social, linguistic, demographic, and geopolitical dimensions.

Chuck Tatum, Emeritus Professor of Spanish at the University of Arizona and a long-time member of MVUU, will lead discussions on border literary production with an emphasis on contemporary writers who have grappled with pressing issues faced by U.S. and Mexican citizens who live along the 2,000 mile border. Highlighted will be the multi-faceted aspects of immigration. There will be a few short readings. Chuck has written and lectured on borderlands literature for over forty years. The classes are free and the readings will be sent to you via email (pdf).

*Sessions on January 28 and February 4 will be at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 7570 N Thornydale, Tucson at 2:45 PM. Sessions on February 25 and March 18 will at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson at 3 PM.

Calendar of (Short) Readings


Next Social Justice Council Meeting - January 21
After Sunday Services - Noon in the Servetus Room

UUJAZ TRAINING
FOR DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE
JANUARY 7, 2:30 pm
AT UUCT IN HOLLAND SANCTUARY

UUJAZ stands for Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network - The above training is for UU Day at the Legislature on Monday, February 19th, 9:30 AM - 3 PM. Join with other UUs from throughout Arizona at the State Capitol on Monday, President’s Day, February 19, to rally for social justice in Arizona. You will meet with legislators, talk with others about social justice issues, and have the opportunity to attend workshops.

Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast
Saturday, January 13, 2018, 8 AM

Pueblo Gardens Neighborhood Association is holding its 28th annual Martin Luther King

March 18 - Luis Alberto Urrea: “The Devil’s Highway.”

Sign up by contacting Craig Rock at duniterock@gmail.com All Are Welcome

Co-sponsored by Mountain Vista Unitarian Universalist Congregation (MVUU) and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Tucson (UUCT).

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Join NAMI’s Faith Network
(Informational Meeting on the Network’s work at Woods Library, January 23, 6:30 PM 3455 N 1st Ave, Tucson)

UUCT’s Social Justice Council is currently exploring the possibility of forming a NAMI support network at our church. It all depends on how many people are interested in volunteering. At a recent Social Justice Council meeting, UUCT member Scott Whitley described the above meeting at Woods Library as a 30-minute powerpoint presentation and discussion describing ways to educate and guide future speakers on the topic. Both St Francis and St. Phillips have an ICS mental health program.

What can NAMI’s FaithNet Program do for our faith community?

1. Initiate a mental health ministry to educate and support persons and families living with mental illness.

2. Present educational sessions on mental illness and the vital role spirituality plays in recovery.

3. Provide information about community mental health resources.

4. Provide a NAMI resource table for our health or community event.

Breakfast on Saturday, January 13. It will held at the Boys and Girls Club, 2585 E. 36th Street in Tucson. Doors will open at 7:15 AM. Breakfast will be served at 8 AM with the presentation of the colors and the National and Black Anthems directly after. The program will follow with speakers and a raffle after the keynote speaker.

The breakfast is free with donations accepted at the door. Raffle tickets will be sold. All money earned will be used to continue this tradition in helping school age youth in the area realize their dreams through scholarship programs.

Pueblo Gardens is the only neighborhood in the city of Tucson to honor Dr. King in this way in working to keep his dreams alive.

What Is Politics? Course with Noam Chomsky
What is Politics?

Course Instructor(s): Noam Chomsky and Marv Waterstone
Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30-7:30 pm
From Thursday, January 11, 2018 - to Friday, March 2, 2018

Learn about and discuss politics with one of the greatest public intellectuals of our time, Noam Chomsky. Chomsky and UA emeritus professor Marv Waterstone will co-teach a seven-week class titled “What Is Politics?” that is both a general education course for UA undergraduates and open to the public through the College of SBS’s new Community Classroom program. Connecting students from multiple generations and political outlooks, this course is sure to stimulate ideas, debate, and dialogue.

In “What is Politics?,” Chomsky and Waterstone will look at urgent contemporary issues and place them in their historical and conceptual contexts. The course examines industrial state capitalism as the dominant organizing principle of our economy. Students will interrogate some of the most
5. Collaborate with our faith community during the annual Mental Illness Awareness Week and our Community Walk for Mental Illness - NAMIWalks.

6. Train persons in our congregations to provide caring support to persons with mental illness and their families through prayer, hospital and home visits, support groups, and inclusion in worship and other social activities.

7. Provide additional services upon request.

   Education leads to understanding.  
   Understanding leads to empathy.  
   Empathy leads to loving, compassionate care.

National Alliance on Mental Illness - Southern Arizona  
6122 E. 22nd Street, Tucson, AZ 85711  
520-622-5582 or email namisa@namisa.org  
Website: www.namisa.org

significant consequences of this orientation, including climate change, social inequality, potential nuclear terrorism, and the expansion of militarism and warfare. Students also will investigate the achievements and difficulties involved with working for progressive change.

Tuition: $250.00

Registration began November 29 at 10 am and will continue until the class is full.

For more information or to register, click here.
Common Ground on the Border Festival and Santa Cruz Valley Border Issues Fair
January 12th and 13th at The Good Shepherd UCC, Sahuarita

The time has come to register for this year's gathering of artists, musicians, scholars, and activists who will provide rich experiences for us as we consider the push and pull of the borderlands. Common Ground on the Border and Border Issues Fair are combined during the same two-day time period because each enhances the other. We encourage you to consider attending both. We are excited about this year's program, which offers some of our favorite classes and some new ones as well. Come and experience drumming, songwriting, storytelling, weaving and much, much more. Singer/songwriter Holly Near will share her compelling message of equality and dignity for all.

Border Issues Fair will offer lectures by Father Sean Carroll, S.J. the Executive Director of the Kino Border Initiative in Ambos Nogales, Seth M. Holmes, PhD, MD, from the School of Public Health and Graduate Program in Medical Anthropology, Berkeley Center for Social Medicine, University of California Berkeley and Chris Rickard, a policy counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union’s National Political Advocacy Department. We are thrilled that they will be with us this year!

The entire event is only $90 and includes all Border Issues Fair lectures, 2 classes at Common Ground on the Border, 2 evening meals on Friday and Saturday, the concert with singer/songwriter Holly Near on Friday night and the faculty/student concert on Saturday evening. You may register for this event in full or in part(s). See the links below to register. Please share news of this event with your friends.

Good Shepherd United Church of Christ is located in Sahuarita, 17750 W Camino Manoj (about 27 miles from UUCT).

Borderlands Fair Brochure
Borderlands Fair Registration Form

Why is it such a dangerous time for land activists?
(from a LA Times Interview with John Knox, December 22, 2017)

There are basically three reasons that come together. One is simply there’s greater demand for the natural resources these activists are trying to defend. Many of these countries are pretty rich in natural resources — minerals, lumber, land that can be used for palm oil plantations or other industries. And that leads to the second factor, which is that many of the groups living in these areas are vulnerable for other reasons. They are rural, they don’t have much money, they’re already marginalized in their own countries and don’t have a standing in the political debate.

The last is the absence of effective rule of law, either in the country as a whole or in a region. A common denominator is the courts, police and law enforcement mechanisms are ineffective. What I see over and over again is that these murders and other kinds of harassment take place when there’s impunity.

(Click here to read the full story.)
Appeals Court Upholds Grand Canyon Uranium Mining Ban

Havasupai Tribe, Conservation Coalition Celebrate Key Win for Water, Wildlife, Sacred Lands

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK — The Havasupai Tribe and a coalition of conservation groups praised today’s decision by the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upholding the Department of the Interior’s 20-year ban on new uranium mining claims across 1 million acres of public lands adjacent to Grand Canyon.

The court ruled that the ban, adopted in 2012, complies with the Constitution and federal environmental laws, and that the protected area was not too large, as plaintiff mining companies had argued. The ban protects the aquifers and streams that feed the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon from toxic uranium-mining waste pollution and water depletion.

The Havasupai Tribe, Grand Canyon Trust, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity and National Parks Conservation Association intervened in the case in 2013. The groups and the Department of Justice won a 2014 decision by U.S. District Court in Arizona, which upheld Interior’s 2012 uranium mining withdrawal. Mining companies appealed the decision to the 9th Circuit.

Unfortunately the court also rejected a challenge to the Canyon Mine, a uranium mine located on the Kaibab National Forest six miles south of Grand Canyon National Park. The court’s decision allows Energy Fuels Inc. to mine without initiating or completing formal tribal consultations and without updating an obsolete federal environmental review dating to 1986.

"The Havasupai people have been here since time immemorial. This place is who we are," said Don Watahomigie, the Havasupai Tribal Chairman. “The Creator made us protectors of the Grand Canyon. The Havasupai Tribe is gratified to know that the court has recognized the validity of the mineral withdrawal and what we have always known — that this place, these waters and our people deserve protection. The lives of our children and the purity of our waters are not to be gambled with and are not for sale.”

"This is a great day for the Grand Canyon, for the Havasupai people who rely on its sacred waters, for the people who love this wonder of the natural world, and for the Havasupai people who have long been清楚 about the dangers of mining for uranium in our land," said Greg McVay, Executive Director of the Havasupai Tribe. "We are pleased that the court has upheld the ban on uranium mining in the Grand Canyon, which is so vital to the people of the Havasupai Tribe and to all who value our culture and natural environment."

Environmental Defenders Targeted
(from the LA Times December 28, 2017)

Gloria Capitan couldn’t have imagined her fate. Her cause felt just, and her community was behind her. Besides, who would kill a 57-year-old grandmother?

It had been a long two years. Since 2014, a coal stockpile down the road had been polluting her town, Lucanin, sickening her family and covering the coastline in ash. Capitan, like a Philippine Erin Brockovich, was campaigning for its closure when a mysterious man began visiting her at home and making vague threats of violence.

It happened on July 1, 2016, around 8 p.m. Capitan was in her small karaoke bar, a one-minute walk from her house, singing a saccharine pop ballad with her 8-year-old grandson, Jerson. Two men on a motorcycle pulled up outside. One entered, a yellow handkerchief covering his face. He shot Capitan three times — once in the arm, twice in the neck — then he fled. Jerson looked on, screaming.

“Everybody cried when they saw Gloria,” Jerson said later, as his parents nodded, their eyes downcast. “Then we left the place. We went down to the house. But no police came.”

(Click here to read the full story.)

December 19, 2017 (From the Sierra Club)

An Attack on Public Lands There, An Attack on Public Lands Everywhere

By Courtney Bourgoin

Despite President Trump and Interior Secretary Zinke’s best attempts to slash national monuments and close off our national parks for industry and the rich, the movement to protect public lands is not slowing down. In fact, it’s growing and in a huge way.

On December 4th, Trump announced major and unprecedented reductions to American public lands—the reduction of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by nearly 50% and Bears Ears National Monument by 85%. Less than a day later, Interior Secretary Zinke released recommendations to shrink or alter management for eight other national monuments.
for the wildlife that call it home,” said Ted Zukoski of Earthjustice.

In January 2012 then-Interior Secretary Ken Salazar issued the 20-year ban that prohibits new mining claims and mine development on existing claims without valid permits. The mining industry claimed that the Interior Department’s exhaustive, 700-page evaluation of environmental impacts was inadequate. Interior’s study of the mining ban showed that without a withdrawal in place, 26 new uranium mines and 700 uranium exploration projects could be developed, resulting in more than 1,300 acres of surface disturbance and the consumption of 970 acre feet of water.

Under the 20-year ban, existing mine operations are projected to have about one-tenth of the surface impacts and one-third the water usage. According to Interior’s study, new uranium mining could have major impacts on springs, wells and aquifers, including increased levels of uranium beyond the Environmental Protection Agency’s drinking water standards and severely depleted groundwater, endangering public health and wildlife, and compromising the values of the tribes who consider the springs sacred.

“This decision rewards years of cooperation toward protecting the water, air, and people that mining near the Grand Canyon puts at risk,” said Grand Canyon Trust’s Roger Clark. “History has shown us how uranium mining can go wrong on the Colorado Plateau, we’re glad for more time to make sure the same legacy isn’t also bestowed upon the Grand Canyon.”

Uranium pollution already plagues the Grand Canyon and surrounding areas. Proposals for new mining have prompted protests, litigation, and legislation to make the ban permanent. Dozens of new mines threaten to industrialize iconic and sacred natural areas, destroy wildlife habitat, and pollute and deplete aquifers. Scientists, tribal and local governments, and businesses have all voiced support for the protections enacted by Interior.

“Sierra Club applauds this decision to uphold the limits on mining on public lands adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park and to protect the park and the greater Grand Canyon region from the hazards of uranium mining, which poses a threat to the people, lands, water, and wildlife of the region,” said Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club’s Grand Canyon chapter director. “We are disappointed that the court did not uphold the challenge to Canyon Mine, however, and we will continue to do all we can to ensure permanent protection of these lands.”

With those two moves, this administration just conducted the biggest rollback of public lands protections in American history.

Our campaign continues to join with partners on the ground—stressing what’s at risk and why these places mean so much to so many people.

Utah:

In Utah, Bears Ears National Monument’s importance to Tribal Nations cannot be overstated. The cultural, archaeological and natural value on that land encapsulates centuries of history—one of a larger fight for Indigenous sovereignty. The Bears Ears designation is a notable example of the Antiquities Act serving people historically marginalized from conservation decisions and its benefits.

That same importance exists for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument among Hispanic communities. The site speaks to the strong Latino influence in the region with thousands of archaeological sites. The site of over 6,000 people standing in solidarity to oppose these monumental changes at the Salt Lake City Capitol building speaks for itself.

Nevada:

In Nevada, the Gold Butte National Monument designation was one centered on its importance for the Paiute Nation. The desert landscape is a place where Southern Paiutes have coexisted with its rare wildlife and flora for time immemorial. Our Wild America campaign organizers have created a strong relationship with the Tribal Nation in the Las Vegas area and attended several solidarity events in concert of protecting this landscape. Historically threatened by vandalism and artifact robbery, undoing protections andshrinking boundaries at this site comes at the grave expense of Tribal Nations who fought for its safety. The campaign will continue to defend Gold Butte National Monument and all of the culture and history it holds.

California:

Zinke has been eyeing Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument for some time now. Rich in outdoor recreation opportunities and awe-inspiring forestland, the monument is one of invaluable ecological benefits and happens to be quite a popular site for Sierra Club outings. The Mother Lode chapter has taken advantage of the protected and public landscape for day trips with many young Californian immigrants and DREAMers benefitting from the Deferred Action for Childhood
One of the great symbols of the American West, the Grand Canyon was first protected as a national monument by Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. The canyon is surrounded by millions of additional acres of public lands that include wilderness areas, two national monuments, lands designated to protect endangered species and cultural resources, and old-growth ponderosa pine forests. The canyon area is also home to indigenous people, including the Havasupai, Kaibab Band of Paiutes, Hualapai and Navajo tribes, and has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. In 2016 the greater Grand Canyon region attracted over 6 million tourists and recreationists, and Grand Canyon tourism contributed $904 million to local economies and supported nearly 9,800 jobs.

“This victory is wonderful news for a region already riddled by decades of uranium industry pollution and plunder,” said Taylor McKinnon of the Center for Biological Diversity. “This decision is critical to protecting the Grand Canyon’s precious aquifers, biodiverse springs and surrounding public lands for future generations.”

“After an extensive review process and substantial public participation, the Department of the Interior’s decision to protect one of the world’s most enduring landscapes and the sustained health of indigenous communities that live within the watershed of the Grand Canyon was a strong and appropriate one,” said Kevin Dahl of the National Parks Conservation Association. “The court’s action in upholding this ban is commendable.”

The uranium mining companies have 45 days to seek a rehearing by the three-judge panel or by the 9th Circuit sitting en banc. The companies also have 90 days from this decision, or from a denial of rehearing (whichever is later) to petition the U.S. Supreme Court for review of the 9th Circuit Court decision. Such petitions are granted in only a tiny fraction of cases.

Download the decision here.