



COLAB

San Luis Obispo County

March 2013 Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 3

COLAB SLO



COLAB
San Luis Obispo County

4th Annual Dinner & Fundraiser

Thursday, March 21st, 2013
Madonna Expo Center, San Luis Obispo

Speaker: Victor Davis Hanson

Author, Historian, Professor, Classicist, And Nationally Syndicated Columnist

Dr. Hanson (author of 17 books, hundreds of articles, and newspaper editorials – including in The San Luis Obispo Tribune) is one of the current era's most incisive and prophetic interpreters. Hanson, through the lens of history, argues that, "The more you give people, the more entitlements they want." "The Welfare State has driven people from self-reliance that sharpens democracy to dependency that blots it out." Dr. Hanson is the Senior Fellow in Residence in Classics and Military History at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and a Professor of Classics Emeritus at California State University, Fresno, as well as a nationally syndicated columnist for Tribune Media Services. He is the fifth successive generation to live in his family farm house (near Selma, California) where he was a full-time orchard and vineyard operator.



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THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

By Michael F. Brown

Recently we have seen a growing number of community classes, forums, and conferences promoting the smart growth doctrine and supporting bureaucrats, consultants, and academics who are involved in its implementation. This is not a coincidental or random occurrence but is the result of a planned campaign to promote so-called “smart growth” and assist local planners in combatting the rising opposition in their communities. It appears that these guardians of the orthodoxy are concerned about the growing public pushback and especially community activism, which is questioning both the underlying premises and the rush to implementation.

The American Planning Association’s (APA) website lists several papers and publications about the growing “problem” of opponents and especially disruptive local activists who are fighting back. In reply and as a result, the APA Board of Directors, in a lengthy June 2012 polemic (Where Does APA Stand On Smart Growth?), felt compelled to defend smart growth on the grounds of social equity. The bolded portions are COLAB’s emphasis.

*While many Americans have benefited from decades of post–World War II suburbanization, many have not. It is also a development pattern has led to some negative consequences for the community as a whole. Our nation is now experiencing heightened concern over the **social, environmental, and fiscal** quality of our communities arising from development practices that aggravate the decline of many urban communities and older suburbs, congest streets and highways, demand higher levels of energy consumption, accelerate the loss of natural resources and deteriorate the natural environment, and limit opportunities for the retention and creation of affordable housing. Often these problems are simply and collectively labeled, *\$prawl*."In response, the **Smart Growth movement** emerged.*

Significantly, APA labels smart growth as a “movement,” not just a set of planning techniques. Local concerned citizens will remember that Supervisor Bruce Gibson and other proponents have disparaged those who have criticized the doctrinal and movement-like antecedents of smart growth as purveyors of “ideology feeding a conspiracy theory.” Well, all right, here is a national professional organization of planners (responsible for developing professionalism and expertise) stating that it is a “movement” after all. It is movement that preaches that “the distribution of resources must be equitable.” This is pure socialist doctrine. The paragraph below is clear:

All planning processes, as well as the distribution of resources, must be equitable. A diversity of voices must be

included in community planning and implementation. Citizen participation helps ensure that planning outcomes are equitable and based on decision making that derives from an inclusive process. Planning processes must involve comprehensive strategies that engage meaningful citizen participation and find common ground for decision making. Appropriate citizen participation requires an open process by which all stakeholders are free to participate regardless of their position on planning policies or their socio-economic status.

As we now know, the so-called “participation” is a highly manipulative divide-and-conquer process designed to achieve the planners’ predetermined goals. Delphi meetings, planted facilitators, ostracism of dissenters, and other outright intimidation are the techniques being used. Throughout the country, informed citizens are catching on and taking action.

“Property Fairness”

In a recent article the APA complains about the expanding efforts by citizens to defend their property rights. APA sees this as an aberrant and irritating trend, which they have cynically labeled as “property fairness.” The article notes that back in 2004 voters in Oregon passed a voter initiative which requires property owners to be compensated for lost value as a result of “planning, environmental or other safeguards.”

In 2004, voters in Oregon approved a sweeping regulatory takings ballot initiative titled Measure 37. The measure undoes a wide swath of legal and legislative precedent by allowing individual landowners to claim compensation from the local community for any decrease in property value due to planning, environmental or other government safeguards.

Now, according to APA, “radical property rights organizations” are proposing similar measures. The tax- and fee-supported planners, academics, and consultants who populate APA don’t like it one bit. The article states:



This article was prepared by Mike Brown, Governmental Affairs Director of the Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business of San Luis Obispo County. Brown has 42 years of state and local government experience.

As expected, radical property rights organizations have seized on the passage of Measure 37 to promote similar ballot measure in other states, and versions of Measure 37 are being quietly folded into ballot measures ostensibly aimed at eminent domain. Regulatory takings initiatives threaten a wide array of planning, environmental, historic preservation, and land conservation measures.

APA will monitor these proposed initiatives and provide regular updates, as well as resources to protect good planning, fairness, and communities of lasting value in your state.

APA Policy: *APA is working on a public relations package to assist planners in responding to the Tea Party/UN Agenda 21 attacks on planning. They hope to roll it out by the end of the year.*

The SLO County Citizen Planning Academy

One of the local manifestations of this effort was the SLO County Citizen Planning Academy, which was held on seven successive Thursday evenings in October and November of 2012. The flyer promoting the Academy stated that it *will provide an engaging opportunity for SLO County citizens to learn about community planning, public involvement, governmental organization, and other related land use and environmental issues. Speakers are knowledgeable planners and expert practitioners.*

The sessions cost \$25 each with a light supper included. Admission was by application and participants were chosen by a panel from the local Central Coast Section of the American Planning Association. There were from 30 to 40 students. The sessions were about 2.5 hours long and covered such subjects as the history of city planning, local government structure, real estate economics, urban design, green building, environmental planning, climate change, education in community, and environmental planning. Presenters included local government planning professionals, private sector consulting firm planners, architects, and Cal Poly professors. For the most part the materials and content appear focused on the way planning works and promoting its value to the community.

The session on environmental planning focused on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and climate change. Cal Poly City and Regional Planning Department faculty were key presenters. The power point slides for this session clearly presented the doctrinal rationale for the creation of extensive new restrictions, regulations, and changed living patterns. Numerous murky “benefits” were listed, including “green community,” “State policy,” “community resilience,” and “global leadership.” Significantly, there were no slides covering the disadvantages, costs, or concerns of citizens and groups

opposed to “smart growth” and related concepts. Obviously there were no presenters representative of such groups or points of view.

The Cal Poly Climate Action Planning Conference

In February 2013, Cal Poly hosted a statewide conference promoting smart growth in the name of climate change. The call for the conference stated:

Join your fellow climate professionals in beautiful San Luis Obispo for the first conference to focus solely on the practice of local and regional climate action planning in California. Hosted by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in partnership with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR), the two-day conference will feature in-depth presentations and discussions on both technical and political facets of climate action planning. The conference will be held on the Cal Poly campus and will feature experts and practitioners from around the state.

Conference sponsors included PMC (the consulting firm that developed San Luis Obispo County’s Climate Action Plan), The Bay Area Air Quality Management district (BAMQD, a government agency), PG&E, Ascent Environmental (a consulting firm), The American Planning Association of California, and ESA (a consulting firm). Of course PMC has billed hundreds of thousands of dollars to San Luis Obispo. Apparently, they made enough money to invest in conferences. The BAMQD, a regulatory government agency, is using public money to be a sponsor. PG&E is of course using money from people’s electric and gas bills. In the end, we all paid for this conference to promote the theory and practice of climate change planning.

Presenters included a bevy of government officials, planners, and consultants, including Brian Holland, Director of Climate Programs for the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI).

Strategic Manipulation: One of the main topics of the conference was how to convince the public to accept climate change and smart growth doctrines. The session description below reveals the concerns about public criticism of the entire effort. Of course, in the promotion of the orthodoxy, no one – not even the academics, would consider that there are other issues apart from their “science,” profession, and doctrine to consider. For example, and as we know from various surveys, most Americans do not support a future where they are compelled to live in dense urban cities and villages. Ultimately, they have the dream of the free-standing suburban or rural house complete with surrounding yard. The Cal Poly folks see dissent as a technical problem to be solved:

Creative Approaches to Public Participation

Public participation is a critical part of developing climate action and sustainability plans in California communities.

Plans lacking public support have little to no chance of being implemented, and most grants available for preparing local plans require extensive community engagement as a condition for funding. Traditional methods of public participation aren't well equipped to deal with this technically challenging issue of climate change or the potentially contentious politics.

*This session will explore a range of tools and techniques available to planners to effectively **engage** communities seeking to plan for a more sustainable and resilient future. Discussion will focus on use of locally-relevant terms and examples, interactive techniques, and technology.*

There will be war stories of meetings gone wrong, what we learned, and how we can do better.

Note that the word “engage” can mean involve or participate. It can also mean battle, fight or contest.

Failure of the Conference and Cal Poly: Even before the climate issue was broadly included in the regulatory structure, California business and agriculture (not to mention millions of working people who cannot afford a house) have suffered from increasingly costly delay, expensive "mitigations," exactions, taxes, and regulations. Now a whole new and exponentially expanding regulatory scheme is being rolled out in the name of climate problems. Shouldn't a major public tax supported university be concerned with the economic and social impacts of such a far-reaching and comprehensive effort rather than merely promoting techniques of forcing the whole scheme through?

The fundamental historic mission of universities is to determine which phenomena are important to study and to teach succeeding generations the rigor to study them. In this case the Cal Poly failed in that fundamental purpose and instead conducted a conference which was part technique and part cheerleading. A proper approach would include an analysis of the reasons why a significant and growing portion of society is opposed to smart growth doctrines and their application within their towns and counties. Instead, the session noted above, on how to control, avoid, and/or minimize community opposition to smart growth policies is emblematic of the failure of the core mission of a university to provide competing views of a particular subject.

Should not a university, in both the classroom and at any conference, present different sides of the issue and have

balance? Will next year's conference have sessions led by the Farm Bureau, a taxpayers association, Home Builders, a neighborhood defense group, and so forth to provide balance? The session noted above, on how to combat community opposition and avoid and/or minimize community opposition to the smart growth policies is emblematic of the failure of the institution to provide objective balance. Shouldn't there also have also been a session on how citizens can oppose these policies? As the keynote conference speaker from BAMQD knows, there is a growing revolt in the Bay Area about these very matters. Shouldn't one of those revolt leaders have been invited to present at a session at the conference?

As the UC system Faculty Manual used to state (before the political correctness apparatchiks got it removed in 2003):

The function of the university is to seek to transmit knowledge and to train students in the process whereby truth is to be made known. To convert or make converts is alien and hostile to this dispassionate duty. Where it becomes necessary in performing this function of a university, to consider political, social, or sectarian movements, they are dissected and examined-not taught, and the conclusion left with no tipping of the scales, to the logic and the facts.

Of course the UC President's Office just attempted to drop the University motto, which reads “Let there be Light.” Perhaps the Cal Poly motto should honor its poly-technic heritage and read “Let's Clone Sheep.”



Citizen Sheep in a Planning Delphi Group



By: Emily Esfahani Smith

(Part I of this article appeared in the February 2013 COLAB SLO Newsletter)

H uman Nature in the Raw

Greek literature was almost always about war, another aspect of ancient life that was also heavily influenced by agrarianism, as Hanson argues in his 2001 book *Carnage and Culture*. In the ancient world, one out of nine people were necessary to produce food. Because the soldiers were also all farmers, “war was seasonal,” Hanson says. Farmers could not be away from the farm during harvest time.

War was also very controlled: “Every aspect of war was determined by farming, like how you stockpiled your food and when you launched campaigns.” Hence, Greek agrarian hoplites favored quick infantry battles in which victory was decisive.

Today, war and farming are no longer central components of a citizen’s way of life in the West. Only a small portion of the population is needed to perform the basic tasks of state: one out of 100 people in America farm, and there is no longer a military draft. “You can take over 300 million Americans and disconnect them from the agricultural economy, and they’re not going to starve; just a very few can feed them all,” he explains. Technology has made food abundant and has turned war into a remote spectator sport, experienced behind the glare of a 3D film or a videogame for most men, fortunately.

The separation of farming and war from daily life has had moral consequences on Western culture. In the past, the prevalence of farming and war meant that territory and honor were very important. “The ideas are very different today. If you say that we can’t leave Afghanistan because it would dishonor the people who have already died there, or those you promised to protect, you would get laughed at in the intellectual circles.”

Our distance from war also puts us at a distance to certain realities of being human. “War fascinates people because it is a time when all language and artifice vanished and everything comes to the surface. It creates savage passions. It is human nature in the raw, and it fascinates and rightly repels people. In war, you see more than usual levels of heroism, cowardice, and industry.”

But technology has deceived people into thinking that human nature has changed. He gives an example: “People say that predator drones have revolutionized war by a sort of remote control killing, and I say it hasn’t. Yes, the delivery system has changed. But the rules of war—and the human minds behind the drones—have stayed the same.”

The Ideal Citizen

Classical wisdom, formed on the farm and on the battlefield, is not only the basis of democratic governance, but it is also central to good citizenship. Today, you don’t have to be a soldier or a farmer to be a good citizen, but you should give back to your community in some way, Hanson argues.

He counts the principles of ancient Greek citizenship off on his fingers: “First, beware of success. Success can lead to self-destruction and divine retribution. When things are going well for you, be modest, because it’s not necessarily always from your talent, but also from your luck.” That’s a lesson Greek heroes learned the hard way.

Second, “Don’t have inflated expectations of human nature. Humans are not born, as Rousseau thought, as good people who need to be liberated. Rather, they need to be civilized. Thucydides knew that civilization was very thin. You need to preserve it. We are one blink away from savagery.” He sharpens his point by citing Occupy Wall Street. “Did you see all of the feces and debris on their campgrounds? Is this what 2,500 years of democratization and science have led to?”

“The point is that human nature is capable of doing as much damage as good if it’s not carefully embedded within civilization.” The 2008 Greek riots show how quickly order can dissemble in chaos and violence.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, a citizen of ancient Greece had more responsibilities than rights. Fulfilling those duties embodied civic virtue: “You, as the ancient Greek, must participate in government and vote. You must raise a family. You must not break the laws. You should own land and produce food for the country. You must be in the militia. In exchange, the ancient Greek received freedom and protection.”

Mindful of his duties to the state, for instance, Socrates refused to flee Athens when he was being sentenced to death unjustly, even though he had the opportunity to. “Today, there’s a sense that you don’t owe anyone anything.” As Hanson has written elsewhere, “every Greek man, woman, and child now owes about \$40,000 to the northern Europeans, with almost no means of paying back that huge sum.”

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¹ This article is used by permission of the author and the Hoover Institution of Stanford University. It was first published in *Defining Ideas: A Hoover Institution Journal*.

Finally, the ancient Greeks were skeptical of utopianism. “They didn’t think education can really change human nature. They knew that we are simply human beings with appetites and that what a person says is not necessarily what he does or how he lives.”

Hanson points out that Greece, once the cradle of Western civilization, has abandoned these ancient and time-tested principles. This brings to mind the fourth requirement of good citizenship: an awareness of history.

If Hanson were in charge, he would put the Greeks to work learning the lessons of the past. “The solution to a lot of these problems is reading good literature. I would assign them to read the Iliad by Homer, the History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides, the Annals by Tacitus, the Leviathan by Hobbes, The Prince by Machiavelli, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Gibbon—and, of course, we don’t read enough 19th-century novels, like Joseph Conrad’s books.”

Are We Civilized?

Civilization is a precarious accomplishment, as Thucydides and Edmund Burke both knew—it is difficult to secure and easy to lose. Are we at a tipping point? “We, of the modern world, don’t have a consistently civilized people. We think we do, but they have often never been tried. I worry about that.”

When an Italian cruise ship sunk off the coast of Tuscany earlier this year, there were reports of men pushing past women and children to access lifeboats. “There was not a lot of Titanic-style chivalry on board,” Hanson notes wryly. “They were all supposedly civilized. Apparently not.”

The decline in civility—in the idea of being a good citizen—has taken a particularly tough toll on men, who have not adjusted to today’s post-industrial economy as fluidly as women have. “As society has been cut off from the drudgery of nature and the tragic view of things, it has become whiney. This is probably sexist, but it’s had a more direct effect on the males of the species who have had their muscular world radically redefined.”

“All the young men I knew growing up knew how to do these things. But the young kids I see today don’t know how to run a lawn mower or a chain saw. Today’s male lives at home. He kinda’ sorta’ dates a girl, kinda’ sorta’ doesn’t date her. He is becoming superfluous as a bread-winner and family head.”

In the ancient world, farming and war instilled a sense of duty and responsibility in men. Today? “Men don’t know

much about farming, and few are in the military, but most know a great deal about video games,” says Hanson.

Hanson comes back to the virtue of self-reliance and the toll its absence is taking on society: “Today’s suburban American has a therapeutic view of the world. We think we all die in our sleep at 90 years old without ever being sick. We don’t expect to lose our jobs. When these things happen, we go to counseling, thinking life’s not fair. Or we look to the government for help.”

“The society’s attitude toward the citizen—that we will guarantee you a degree of material and psychological security—is something that we can’t honor.” He adds: “I think that we are emasculating the citizen.”

Aside from studying history and the good literature of the past, Hanson thinks that we should find heroes to admire that are paragons of self-reliance. For his part, Hanson looks to truck drivers and hardware store owners. “I just stopped by a truck stop in a wild area near where I live, and the guy who owns a shop there has been robbed three times. And yet, he stays open. He simply gets a bigger gun than the one he had last time. That spirit of audacity is what we’re lacking—the sense that ‘I’m going to make it. I’m going to take the consequences on my own.’”

Hanson’s forthcoming book dwells on another type of hero: “The Savior Generals,” as he calls them. These men—like Themistocles, George Washington, William Tecumseh Sherman, and Matthew Ridgway—were all men of action, just like the truck drivers, hardware store owners, and farmers that Hanson admires so much.

“They all have one thing in common,” he tells me. “They were blunt and they lived the lives that they advocated.” One could say the same thing about Fresno’s classicist-in-chief.

Emily Esfahani Smith is the managing editor of the Hoover Institution journal *Defining Ideas*. Her writings have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Times*, *Daily Beast*, and *New Criterion*. Emily contributed a chapter titled “Performance Art: The Faux Creativity of Lady Gaga” to *Acculturated*, a book published in 2011 by Templeton Press. A recent Dartmouth College graduate, she was editor of the *Dartmouth Review*.

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CEQA MUST BE AMENDED

By: Andy Caldwell

We need to support Governor Brown in his efforts to reform CEQA, the California Environmental Quality Act. CEQA requires that all projects be analyzed to determine if the potential exists for the project to have a significant impact upon the environment. The devil is in the details! Just what constitutes a significant impact and what resources are worthy of the protection of CEQA?

CEQA was created to ensure that anything defined as a project identify potential impacts to the environment and mitigate the same. Unfortunately, lawyers and NIMBYs have helped morph CEQA into a bulwark against progress of any kind and projects of all types.

CEQA is a deal killer when its provisions are triggered by people who use the tactic of delay to slay a project. CEQA has become a literal blank check of obfuscation due to the vagaries of its requirements and the insatiable demands and challenges generated under its cover.

Things we considered as impacts to environmental resources at one time meant something substantial and truly significant. CEQA could and should represent the

opportunity to ask whether there is a better way to do projects with less harm to the environment, the community and our quality of life, but it has become distorted.

Tracing this line of the evolution of CEQA constitutes a trail of tears, financial ruin and economic havoc in the State of California. There are too many communities and jurisdictions in our State who specialize in exploiting the vagaries of CEQA to prevent growth and development. Moreover, there are a cadre of activists and attorneys who make their living using CEQA to kill projects. We don't need to do away with the law, but we do need CEQA reform, and we need it now!

To accomplish reform, we need to eliminate attorney's fees in CEQA lawsuits, as legal challenges have become a cottage industry. Additionally, we also need to set a limit as to what constitutes a resource and what constitutes a significant impact to a resource. Currently, there is no limit on what can be construed as a resource to be protected, nor is there any limit as to what can be considered an impact to the same. Any "impact" to any "resource", no matter how trivial, can be deemed significant.

Continued on page 8 . . .

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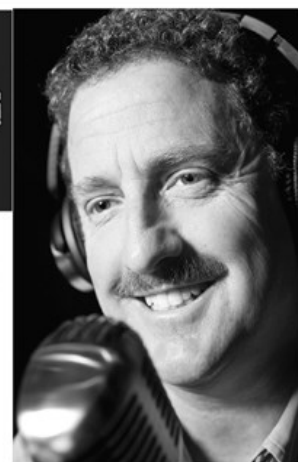
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SEE IMPORTANT INFO - THE LEFT STRIKES BACK BELOW

For example, some years ago, the tag team of CEQA and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) stalled a hospital project out of concern for eight flies! We now actually have a fly preserve as a result! CEQA doesn't always need the help of the ESA, it can kill common sense single handily! How about the fungus growing on rocks in a field in Santa Barbara that warranted a lichen restoration program! Flies and fungus! These are resources worthy of stalling projects?

CEQA must be amended to balance its provisions with economic considerations. Economic vitality and job creation must be considered and appropriately valued in the CEQA process and should be considered an overriding consideration in approving projects.

Limitless appeals and studies on projects that have been thoroughly vetted must cease. We need a quicker, expedited process of CEQA review. The obfuscation afforded project opponents is used to bankrupt projects by years of associated delays and expensive studies. Opponents should have to prove abuse of discretion to prevail.

Governor Brown's interest in CEQA reform indicates his realization that the evolution of this law has created insurmountable obstacles to economic investment and recovery in our state. He is personally interested in reforming CEQA for the sake of the California High Speed Rail Project and to implement Smart Growth policies. We might not agree on the projects we want to move forward,

but we can all agree CEQA is no longer helping any of us realize our California dreams.

How this lesson has been lost on some factions of organized labor, who are currently opposing CEQA reform is beyond me. Labor should be interested in reform as the abuse of the law hinders investment in our economy and growth of our tax base, the ultimate source of wages and benefits in both the public and private sector. CEQA is a literal job killer.

We need less paralysis of analysis and more jobs and prosperity! Delay and obfuscation accomplishes nothing for the environment or the economy. For too long, CEQA has been exploited to rob people of their dreams, communities of their vitality, and California of its ability to plan its future with confidence.

Please contact the Governor's Office and your State Representatives and urge them to adopt meaningful and comprehensive CEQA Reform.

This article was first published on February 28, 2013 in the SLO New Times, Santa Maria Sun, and Fox and Hounds Daily. Andy Caldwell is the Executive Director of COLAB of Santa Barbara County, host of the daily Andy Caldwell Radio Show and KUHL Radio AM 1440, and a sought after guest speaker .



THE LEFT HITS BACK

Leftist political operative Tom Fulk, has set up a new website to attack COLAB.

Public speakers who question Smart Growth and other regulatory policies and those who dare to question California's leftward drift are attacked.

Displayed at the end of this article, you will find the website address to the new propaganda site, SLOSENSE.

SLOSENSE and Tom Fulk labels those who oppose current Smart Growth policies and speak to public bodies as "fanatics".

Clearly your continued activism and support of COLAB and its allies are going to be even more important in the future.

Accordingly, your presence at COLAB's March 21st Fundraiser is even more important. It will demonstrate solidarity in the face of this new well-financed and concentrated attack on COLAB.

[www:http://slosense.com](http://slosense.com)



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