



reduce
reuse
rejoice!

In this Season of Gratitude
our thoughts turn to those who
have made our success possible...

Thank you,
Best Wishes for the Holidays,
& Happy New Year!

Newground Social Investment

Bruce

Larry

Nancy

Bruce Herbert, Larry Dohrs
& Nancy Herbert
www.newground.net

Newground

Social Investment

**A blessing now and in the year to come
for you, your friends & family, and our
collective wish for universal peace and belonging.**

Many thanks to all who helped light up the winter darkness at our fifth annual holiday gathering last week. The celebration was among the best ever; and this year a professional photographer joined us, whose images are linked at: newground.net/news.asp#4pics

2010 has seen highs, lows, and transitions

Bruce and Nancy attended his niece's wedding held at the historic La Fonda hotel on the plaza of Santa Fe, NM. It was a beautiful and grand family gathering – but one which none of the oldest generation was able to travel to. While we thrilled to watch Sarah enter this new phase of her life, Bruce was also saddened by the absence of his parents and favorite aunts and uncles.

Larry spent the entire summer in Seattle with family – the first time that had actually ever happened. It was a unique and somewhat poignant opportunity, as his kids are now 14 and 19 and developing interests that may take them far from home.

The S&P 500, at this writing, is up 12.7% for the year – even though the economy only slowly recovers from *The Great Recession*. High unemployment and a still-weak housing market continue to create fear and uncertainty, as questions abound whether we can return to the *old normal*, or should instead move toward an economic reset (one guess as to which choice Newground advocates for).

Despite the tumult of recent years and the serious questions that face us, I find myself feeling more content than I ever have. Why? My initial quip (following Malcolm Gladwell's 10,000 hour rule) is that I must have finally amassed 10,000 hours of therapy! But I also sense in society's consciousness a certain reorientation toward simplicity.

Many struggle and are experiencing scarcity. Yet, we are each still here one-day-following-the-next and still finding ways to laugh, still needing to cry, still participating in the most elemental, shared, and sacred functions of living. I've spoken with many who report that their habits through this time have changed for good.

As we consider the Season's meaning in relation to money and this work, I reflect on the culmination of a stirring speech on economics given by Robert Kennedy in the year of his assassination, where he said:

continued on back...

The gross national product measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile; and it can tell us everything about America – except whether we are proud to be Americans.”

Let us aspire to shift the foundations of this economic system. With media as it is, we risk focusing so much on what has been “lost” that we fail to see that something new may have stumblingly been found.

In 2010 shareholder advocacy was a particularly bright spot for Newground. We had success with **TJX** regarding their stores’ energy efficiency, with **Microsoft** and **Starbucks** on disclosure of political spending, with **Plum Creek** on fair vote-counting and shareholder democracy, and – importantly – with **McDonald’s** on reducing pesticides.

In recent weeks we filed eight new shareholder proposals with: **Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway, Boeing, Chevron, Massey Energy, Nordstrom, Plum Creek, and Time Warner.**

Mcdonald’s. Last year we filed a proposal asking the co. to assess its pesticide use – because they are the world’s largest buyer of potatoes, and potatoes are a particularly pesticide-intensive crop. It was an important question that Newground wanted put on the table.

First challenging our proposal at the SEC, the company soon moved to dialogue. They then agreed to study pesticide use in their potato supply chain, using integrated pest management best-practices found globally.

McDonald’s met each timeline early, and conducted the pilot project with roughly 30% of its US suppliers. A few weeks ago the company reported that in 2011 they will roll it out to 100% of their potato suppliers; they have already introduced it to their European, Canadian, and Asian consortiums; and they want to do the same thing for every one of their other agricultural crops – lettuce, tomatoes, onions...

Finally, the company declared that this should not be a McDonald’s-only initiative, but an industry-wide one. They are taking the lead in moving the global industry. None of this would be happening if, rather than engage, Newground had sold its McDonald’s stock and walked away.

Every client can take pride knowing that they have directly supported this work – which Newground does pro-bono on behalf of community and environmental organizations nationwide. Thank you for your vision!

Together, we are making the world a better place.

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