

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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THE GAIA newsletter will regularly update the information about our 60 years crisis on this website. That is how a minority of the human population living today in the rich western world = our generation – you and me have managed to seriously harm our common environment and endanger the common future for coming generations and for thousands of species on our living planet – Gaia. We have now an enormous challenge – that is to drastically change our present way of living above our means. This can not be done with more of the same – as our present leaders are preaching in their globalization and consume more mantra. The same persons, the same model and the same thinking that has created this enormous problem cannot solve it. We need a complete turn around. And this is the most difficult thing to do – to change our selves.

## Mike's election Guide

Michael Moore released a new book for the coming presidential campaign. As usual some inconvenient facts about Bush and his gang. But now he also tell the inconvenient truth about McCain. Buy it and read it before the election. Start with this review - Page 6

## The Assault on Reason

Al Gore has released a new book about the Bush administration's assault on reason, truth, civil liberties, the separation of powers, the environment, and world order. Buy it and read it. It may not be so funny as Mike's election guide but certainly as scary....for survival of democracy. Read more on page 9.

## So what does this has to do with global warming ?

Everything. Our economy, our model and life style, our industries, earth with all life forms – everything is connected. What we do – what you do will influence future generations. So read my review on 50 simple things YOU can do to save the earth. Start with voting for Obama. But we need a more radical change. A spiritual mind change as both Al Gore and Eckhart Tolle are concluding. See page 16.

## The Big Bang or the Big Implosion?

So what has REALLY happened with our economy and our financial system? Are we facing another Great Depression or can we go on with Business As Usual ? What we do know is that Trillions of dollars is being sent into a banking system who is broke. Who are we going to rescue? Read more on page 2.

## Financial crisis for dummies

Is it possible for us normal "dummies" to understand what is happening. Yes, naturally it is. Read more on page 3.

## Did we see this coming?

Some of us did. The economical crisis is the same as we did experience in the end of 18-hundreds, 1929 and as a result of the "Reaganomics", i.e. the Reagan and Thatcher "privatization". A lot of books has been covering this. But we always seem to forget our history. So let us look at some of them from J. K. Galbraith to Ravi Batra. They saw this coming. See page 4.

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## The Big Bang or the Big Implosion?

What really happened with the US economy? Most say it is the worst crisis since the Great Depression. McCain even call Wall Street “CORRUPTED”. And now we hear that it may cost the US taxpayers 700 Billion USD in a rescue plan. Who shall we rescue? Other governments and National banks are also pumping billions into the market. By watching television, listening to politicians or “financial advisers” at least I do not get any more understanding to what is happening, except it is a LOT OF MONEY. And definitely I do not see any good explanation WHY it is happening. What are the reasons behind the crisis. The Economist is a very good magazine to study about the economy. So I have been trying to understand what is really happening by reading their website.

The Economist, September 18, 2008 wrote under the headline, Wall streets bad dream: *“The carnage of the past fortnight may have an unreal air to it, but the damage is all too tangible—whether the seizure of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac by their regulator, the record-breaking bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers (and the sale of its capital-markets arm to Barclays), Merrill Lynch’s shotgun marriage to Bank of America or, most shocking of all, the government takeover of a desperately illiquid American International Group (AIG).”*

The Economist, September 25, 2008 continues under the headline, What the death of the investment bank means for Wall Street: *“THE radical overhaul of the City of London in 1986 was dubbed the Big Bang. The brutal reshaping of Wall Street might be better described as the Big Implosion. The “bulge-bracket” brokerage model—the envy of moneymen everywhere before the crunch—has collapsed in on itself. Even more humiliating for the Green Berets of the markets, the new force in finance is the government..... AMERICAN congressmen are used to hyperbole, but they were left speechless by the dire scenario Ben Bernanke, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, painted for them on the night of September 18th. He “told us that our American economy’s arteries, our financial system, is clogged, and if we don’t act, the patient will surely suffer a heart attack, maybe next week, maybe in six months, but it will happen,” according to Charles Schumer, a Democratic senator from New York. Mr Schumer’s interpretation: failure to act would cause “a depression”.*

So Investment banks crashed but then also American International Group (AIG), a huge insurer, had to be rescued. And now the Washington Mutual (WaMu). So what is behind this? Once again consulting The Economist:.... The intensification of the crisis came not from the banks but the “shadow banking system”: the finance companies, investment banks, off-balance-sheet vehicles, government-sponsored enterprises and hedge funds that fuelled the credit boom, aided by less regulation and more leverage than commercial banks. As home prices fell and loan losses mounted, more of the shadow system became insolvent”. Aha – the reason for the crisis is “The shadow system” – the guys in the dark suits and Porsches with hedging, short selling and ways of gambling – the casino economy...Or...?

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## The Financial Crisis for Dummies

You have probably seen all these books – “Computers for dummies” and other short publications who tries to explain something complicated in a simple manner for “normal people”. I consider my self a “normal person” when it comes to the economy. And this means that I just do not understand all the different financial schemes that appeared some years ago and was called “The Banking Industry”. To make money on money! What a fantastic dream – not pennies but millions from heaven – without any work, or....?

So do we really need to now this complex system with “Share-trading, short-term liquidity, short-sellers, hedge funds, the yield on three-month Treasury bills, credit-default swaps (CDSs)” to understand what happened. Naturally you do not have to know this. It is very simple – stupid! With this I mean we should ask “the stupid questions” to our politicians and ask them to explain the very fundamental relationship of what you earn and what you spend.

If you make 100 000 USD per year you have to pay some percent of this in taxes. Higher taxes in Europe but lower in USA. Or? Well in USA a lot of the European “well fare” is privatized. No general free Medicare, retirement plans and higher studies for your kids. So if you live in USA you have to save for this. So why not save in shares and funds since everybody has been telling you these will increase. Now everybody is also telling you to consume more. Spend and borrow from credit cards to home loans. You buy a house with a low interest mortgage, a new car, a new gun, a new wide screen. So now you are actually spending 20 000 USD more than you are earning – per year. But as long as the value of your assets, e.g. your house is increasing you can borrow more. And this will go on for ever...or not? Well as long as you can find someone else to buy your house for more money than you bought it for this may work. But for ever....naturally not.

Now look at this on a larger scale, e.g. the American economy. USA has ever since the Reagan years been running with a large federal and trade deficit. (Lower under Clinton). Last year the trade deficit was 823 Billion USD due to for example oil import and consumer goods. And last year the US military spending was the highest since world war II with 600 billion USD. 50% of the world and together with other NATA countries twenty (20) times Russia. The Congressional Budget Office had pegged next year’s federal budget deficit at more than \$400 billion, or 3% of GDP. Private estimates top \$600 billion. Tack on \$700 billion and various other crisis-related outlays and the total could reach 10% of GDP a level last seen in the second world war. SO what is happening with your assets you have been using for security. Well the value of the dollar has been secured despite of this imbalance since the rest of the world is willing to buy Dollars as a financial reserve. But from the maximum Dollar value during Clinton this has now decreased with 30%.

So the simple conclusions if you spend more money that you earn it will not work in the long run. But then you may say that there are a lot of poor people in the US and many has been forced to leave their homes. So where did this borrowed money go? More on next page.

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## Did we see this coming?

So this is not so difficult. We all live in a capitalistic world. Some of us tried to create a communistic world. It failed. So we are stuck with this as our only “best” model. But there are differences. One extreme is the fundamentalism of Adam Smith “Laissez-fair” that gives all power to the money and none to the state or community. Basically the state should focus on police and army – go to war and control the citizens. After the crash 1929 and also the introduction of democracy and increased social democratic influence at least in Europe a more balanced variant of capitalism evolved with the state as a regulator and also foundation for the “well fare state”. Lord Keynes book “The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money” became the model for many. Keynes basically stated that both depression and inflation were common events in a capitalistic system. The Keynesian formula allowed intervention from the state. During a depression increased government expenditures and decrease taxes would increase demand and the employment. And during “good times” taxes should be increased with lower public expenditures.

Then Milton Friedman appeared on the stage promoting “Monetarism” but basically the same original capitalistic model for the rich with unlimited freedom to the market except for the Central Bank interest rate. Reaganomics was introduced during the Reagan and Thatcher era with total dismantling of state regulations. Tax cuts for the rich increased the gaps and created a new concentration of capital to be “invested”. The start of the speculation and casino economy. This was also the beginning of the increasing deficit.

Lord Keynes was quoted in “American Capitalism” by J.K. Galbraith from 1952: “The ideas of economic and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than commonly understood.” And this can be illustrated with Milton Friedman and his followers. Many European countries even with social democratic governments followed in the footsteps of Reagan and Thatcher. The lessons learned from the Great Depression were long forgotten.

Ravi Batra described in his book “The Great Depression of 1990” from 1985 the fundamental imbalance that Reaganomics had created. But in a much longer historical perspective. I may not agree with everything he is writing and we did not have another Great depression 1990 but we did have “The Black Monday” October 19, 1987 when the Wall Street fell with 22.6%, the largest decrease in 73 years. So what he is warning for is exactly the same phenomena as now is happening. Tax cuts for the rich with increased gaps between the rich and the poor. The even richer will now have money to gamble with – and this is done with an increasing speed and different complex schemes as hedging and short selling. The poor will borrow more money to participate in the spending. (Or receive a check from the government). The whole banking system will consequently work on a very high risk level where you can become a multimillionaire over night but also go bankrupt. All this is part of what we call “The Global Economy”. Read more of the consequences in “The Case against the Global Economy and for a Turn towards the local.” from 1996 by Mander & Goldsmith. Or “The Rise and Fall of Monetarism” from 1987 by David Smith.

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## When will we ever learn?

John Kenneth Galbraith wrote “American Capitalism” 1952 & “The Culture of Contentment” 1992 when he was 84 years old. He refers to the Reagan doctrine as *“To help the poor and the middle classes, one must cut the taxes on the rich.”* He continues *“Ronald Reagan’s single most celebrated economic action, the acceptance of the related budget deficit possible apart, was his tax relief for the very affluent. Marginal rates on the very rich was reduced from partly 70 percent to 50 percent in 1981, then with tax reform the rate on the richest fell to 28 percent in 1986, although this was partly offset by other tax changes. The result as a generous increase in the after tax income in the higher income bracket.”*

Galbraith summarizes the dismantling of the state and regulations: *“Such are the exceptions that the contented majority makes to its general condemnation of government as a burden. Social expenditures favorable to the fortunate, financial rescue, military spending and, of course interest payments – these constitute in the aggregate by far the largest part of the federal budget and that which in recent times has shown by far the greatest increase. What remains – expenditures for welfare, low-cost housing, health care for those otherwise unprotected, public education and the diverse needs of the great urban slums – is what is now viewed as the burden of government.”*

Galbraith wrote this 1992 and this has become very, very true during Bush with the military spending, interest for deficit, the big rescue and no improvement in health care. What is even more alarming for me is that the same thing is now happening in Europe and my own country following this new dogma called “reforms”. Reforms for the very rich.

This Professor Emeritus of Harvard University in USA concluded in his chapter *“The License for Financial Devastation”* with basically all the phenomena that has caused our recent crisis.: *“Under the broad and benign cover of laissez faire and the specific license of the market, there are forces that ravage and even destroy the very institutions that compose the system, specifically business firms whose buying, selling and financial operations make the market. This is a striking development of modern capitalism; the particular devastation is of the great management-controlled corporation. ...In 1980 the chief executive officers of the three hundred largest American companies had incomes twenty-nine times that of the average manufacturing worker. Then years later the income of the top executives were ninety-three times greater....The mergers and acquisition mania was, without doubt, the most striking exercise in self-destruction of the culture of contentment. There have, however, been two other highly visible manifestations of this deeply inborn tendency. The first of these was the real estate speculation.....Ranking with the real estate and banking aberration was the best publicized of the exercises in financial devastation; the collapse of the savings and loan associations, or in common parlance, the S&L scandal”....* So This grand old professor basically tells us the story of the housing loans and speculation fueled by total deregulation of the financial markets that resulted in the present crisis. Galbraith died 29 April, 2006 and did not have the chance to experience his worries come true.

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## Mike's Election Guide

I found this by coincidence on our trip to USA in August hidden among hundreds of books on business, travel, self help to get rich etc. Just released by Michael Moore – one of the very few who dare to and has the ability to describe another reality out side main stream indoctrination. It is a funny book to read with a lot of irony – but scary. Buy it and read it! And also buy and read “Stupid White Men” by Michael Moore to learn the horrifying background.

His conclusion is that the democrats now have an open goal but they still can miss it. Bush who took the power eight years ago despite he did not win the election and after that has messed up basically everything should if any reason is valid mean that his partner in crime, McCain should not have any chance at all to win the election. But still this may happen.

So back to Mike's Election Guide. In chapter 2 *“How to elect John McCain – or How Many Democrats does it take to lose the most winnable presidential election in American history”* he present *“a blueprint for how to blow it”* with the following points:

- Keep saying nice things about John McCain
- Have Obama pick a white conservative guy as vice president
- Keep writing speeches for Obama about that “The danger is Iran and to eliminate this threat”...And that “I will always keep the threat of military action on the table.”
- Forget that this was a historic year for women
- Show up at each gunfight with a peashooter – that is in all debates be polite and honest “while “McCain and his people roll out their nuclear arsenal on you”

After MM wrote is book Wall Street has crashed and demands 700 Billion Dollars to survive. So with this how could anyone except a few multi rich people vote for a Republican president. Well one reason would be that the democrats and Obama is doing exactly those things that Michael Moore is warning them not to do – and this was demonstrated in the first TV debate. Obama was polite to McCain and addressed him with respect. McCain didn't even look at Obama. The democrats have so many arguments against this republican mess but they don't not dare to use them. Instead they go on the defensive and try to make Obama have the same ideas as McCain.

MM repeat some of all the rumors that our spread around to discredit Obama. And his worry is that Obama is too intelligent and too soft. His fictive ironical question from the mainstream America is: *“Has Barack Obama ever personally rotated the tires on his car. Because that's what separates us from the terrorists”*. And the old statement about which candidate do I want to have a beer with, MM make the following observation: *“They say we Americans do not want to elect someone smarter than we are. They say we rather elect someone shit-faced and dumb. Why? So we can feel superior. So we can laugh at the idiot?”* Like Bush! And MM concluded: *“John McCain too is going for the same -Real men drink Bud and fight wars for 100 years”*.

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## The war hero?

It seems that the most important task of an American President is to go to war. But Bush when he did so against International laws he also lied and caused the death of hundreds of thousands innocent civilians and a few thousands American soldiers. So Bush is really a war criminal. MM writes about WMD in the chapter "Ask Mike!" and, in it, ordinary voters, (Real or fictive?) ask questions about politics and current events. Some are more serious than others ("If Iran has weapons of mass destruction, we should invade, right?"), which still gets Mikes special answers. *"Excuuuuuse me? Did you say the words, 'weapons of mass destruction?' Take it back. I SAID TAKE IT BACK!"... "So here's my new policy: If any president or general or cable news pundit says that "country X has weapons of mass destruction," or is "building them" or is "thinking", of getting them, or is seen shopping at the Weapons of Mass Destruction Mall", I am going to say, plain and simple, "You are lying".*

So how can the republican party under Bush and now maybe under McCain after all these "events" from lying, spying, going to war and break down the economy still have a chance to win? I have lived in USA several years but this is still a mystery. For us Europeans Mike's comments is so very clear when he describes the total breakdown of logical thinking in the Bush (and republican) politics such as about Iraq:

*"We went there and overthrew him (Saddam) for them. That doesn't work. I'm sure they hated Saddam, but I'm also sure they liked going to the movies every week, having a drink every night, and I'm certain women liked wearing whatever they wanted and going wherever they damn well pleased. Now most of the movie theatres and the bars are driven underground. At least 40 Christian churches have been bombed or otherwise attacked, as has the only Jewish synagogue (Baghdad was one of only a few Arab capitals with a protected and open synagogue under Saddam). And since 2000 the life expectancy for an Iraqi male has dropped from 65 to 48 years."*

Then Michael Moore makes the comparison between Iraq and Vietnam and dares to ask: *"What's So Heroic About Being Shot Down While Bombing Innocent Civilians? Like Iraq, Vietnam was not a noble cause. It's time we stopped letting politicians and the press perpetuate the McCain War Hero myth."* The "question" is presented like this: "Why did the Vietnamese shoot down John McCain and put him in prison for five years? He seems like such a nice guy." And once again Moore ask the question our "embedded" media avoids.

ANSWER: *"I'm guessing, in spite of his anger management issues, he is a nice guy. He has devoted his life to this country. He was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of our nation. And for that, he was tortured and then imprisoned in a North Vietnamese POW camp for nearly five-and-a-half years. "Sadly," he writes, "McCain's sacrifice had nothing to do with protecting the United States. He was sent to Vietnam along with hundreds of thousands of others in an attempt to prop up what was essentially an American colony, South Vietnam, which was being run by a dictator whom we installed."*

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## The war hero or war criminal?

Mikes inconvenient truth is: *“Lest we forget, the Vietnam War represented a mass slaughter by the United States government on a scale that sought to rival our genocide of the Native Americans. The U.S. Armed Forces killed more than two million civilians in Vietnam (and perhaps another million in Laos and Cambodia). The Vietnamese had done nothing to us. They had not bombed or invaded or even sought to murder a single American. President Johnson & the Pentagon lied to Congress in order to get a vote passed to put the war in full gear. Only two senators had the guts to vote “no.... The United States dropped more tons of bombs on the Vietnamese people than the Allied powers dropped during all of World War II”*

And MM dares to question the “war hero” myth: *“John McCain flew 23 bombing missions over North Vietnam in a campaign called Operation Rolling Thunder. During this bombing campaign, which lasted for almost 44 months, U.S. forces flew 307,000 attack sorties, dropping 643,000 tons of bombs on North Vietnam (roughly the same tonnage dropped in the Pacific during all of World War II). Though the stated targets were factories, bridges, and power plants, thousands of bombs also fell on homes, schools, and hospitals. In the midst of the campaign, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara estimated that we were killing 1,000 civilians a week. That's more than one 9/11 every single month -- for 44 months.*

What's not heroic about that? Is it any wonder all politicians speaking in public about John McCain are required to preface their remarks with a fawning admiration for his war service? As Moore points out, in his memoir Faith of Our Fathers, McCain called it "illogical" and "senseless" that he was limited to bombing only military targets: "I do believe," McCain wrote, "that had we taken the war to the North and made full, consistent use of air power in the North, we ultimately would have prevailed." In other words, McCain believes we could have won the Vietnam War had he been able to drop even more bombs.

MM tells that McCain was shoot down when he was bombing a heavy populated area and landed near the presidential palace. He almost drowned but was saved by Vietnamese civilians. “Just like we would do, if someone had just bombed our neighborhood, right”. And McCain was attacked by an angry mob but once again rescued and sent to prison – alive – and later released. *“So let me ask you this question again. If someone just had been dropping bombs on your home, how would you react? After seeing your child blown to pieces, what would you do to the man who fell out of the sky, the man who committed this act. Please answer honestly. And if you did decide to let him live, what kind of justice should be handed to him.? Should it be death penalty we are asking for those we are charging with 9/11 crimes in Guantanamo Bay. Or should it be five years in prison.”*

Millions of innocent people in Indochina, Iraq and Afghanistan has been killed or mutilated because of the US led war. And many American soldiers have been killed or mutilated. They are all the victims and heroes who most of them were forced into a war they did not want. So why is not McCain such a hero – the difference is that he is using this fact to portrait him as a more suited commander in chief compared to Obama – who has killed no one!



# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## Al Gore has the merits to become president

Definitely and he was even voted president by the American people but Bush managed to take this away from him with the help of his brother. So reading Mike's Election Guide – "One Last Job to Do When the Election Is Over" makes perfect sense to me. Put Bush, Cheney and the others in his illegal gang on trial. MM gives us 35 articles to prosecute them for.

But naturally Al Gore will never become the president because now he has a second time delivered some inconvenient truth about the American Democracy in "The Assault on Reason". He start the introduction with:

*"Not long before our nation launched the invasion of Iraq, our longest-serving Senator, Robert Byrd of West Virginia, stood on the Senate floor and said: "This chamber is, for the most part, silent—ominously, dreadfully silent. There is no debate, no discussion, no attempt to lay out for the nation the pros and cons of this particular war. There is nothing. We stand passively mute in the United States Senate. - Why was the Senate silent?"*

*In describing the empty chamber the way he did, Byrd invited a specific version of the same general question millions of us have been asking: "Why do reason, logic and truth seem to play a sharply diminished role in the way America now makes important decisions?" The persistent and sustained reliance on falsehoods as the basis of policy, even in the face of massive and well-understood evidence to the contrary, seems to many Americans to have reached levels that were previously unimaginable.*

*A large and growing number of Americans are asking out loud: "What has happened to our country?" People are trying to figure out what has gone wrong in our democracy, and how we can fix it.*

*To take another example, for the first time in American history, the Executive Branch of our government has not only condoned but actively promoted the treatment of captives in wartime that clearly involves torture, thus overturning a prohibition established by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War.*

*It is too easy—and too partisan—to simply place the blame on the policies of President George W. Bush. We are all responsible for the decisions our country makes. We have a Congress. We have an independent judiciary. We have checks and balances. We are a nation of laws. We have free speech. We have a free press. Have they all failed us? Why has America's public discourse become less focused and clear, less reasoned? Faith in the power of reason—the belief that free citizens can govern themselves wisely and fairly by resorting to logical debate on the basis of the best evidence available, instead of raw power—remains the central premise of American democracy. This premise is now under assault."*

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## Democracy in danger

What Al Gore dare to say is very brave. That the fundamental concept of American Democracy is in danger. That the “free” press, television and other media is not doing their essential job – to monitor and criticize our leaders – to question what are lies and deception:

*“American democracy is now in danger—not from any one set of ideas, but from unprecedented changes in the environment within which ideas either live and spread, or wither and die. I do not mean the physical environment; I mean what is called the public sphere, or the marketplace of ideas.*

*It is simply no longer possible to ignore the strangeness of our public discourse. I know I am not alone in feeling that something has gone fundamentally wrong. In 2001, I had hoped it was an aberration when polls showed that three-quarters of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein was responsible for attacking us on Sept. 11. More than five years later, however, nearly half of the American public still believes Saddam was connected to the attack.*

*At first I thought the exhaustive, nonstop coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial was just an unfortunate excess—an unwelcome departure from the normal good sense and judgment of our television news media. Now we know that it was merely an early example of a new pattern of serial obsessions that periodically take over the airwaves for weeks at a time: the Michael Jackson trial and the Robert Blake trial, the Laci Peterson tragedy and the Chandra Levy tragedy, Britney and KFed, Lindsay and Paris and Nicole.*

*While American television watchers were collectively devoting 100 million hours of their lives each week to these and other similar stories, our nation was in the process of more quietly making what future historians will certainly describe as a series of catastrophically mistaken decisions on issues of war and peace, the global climate and human survival, freedom and barbarity, justice and fairness. For example, hardly anyone now disagrees that the choice to invade Iraq was a grievous mistake. Yet, incredibly, all of the evidence and arguments necessary to have made the right decision were available at the time and in hindsight are glaringly obvious.*

*Those of us who have served in the U.S. Senate and watched it change over time could volunteer a response to Senator Byrd's incisive description of the Senate prior to the invasion: The chamber was empty because the Senators were somewhere else. Many of them were at fund-raising events they now feel compelled to attend almost constantly in order to collect money, much of it from special interests, to buy 30-second TV commercials for their next re-election campaign. The Senate was silent because Senators don't feel that what they say on the floor of the Senate really matters that much anymore—not to the other Senators, who are almost never present when their colleagues speak, and certainly not to the voters, because the news media seldom report on Senate speeches anymore. “*

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## The Politics of Fear

Al Gore concludes that the Bush administration is using the old trick of fear combined with repeating lies until they seem “true”. In the chapter “The Politics of fear” he states: *“The single most surprising new element in America's national conversation is the prominence and intensity of constant fear. ....It is a serious indictment of the present quality of our political discourse that almost three-quarters of all Americans were so easily led to believe that Saddam Hussein was personally responsible for the attacks of September 11, 2001. and that so many Americans still believe that most of the hijackers on September 11 were Iraqis.”* He continues this with:

*“Television's quasi-hypnotic effect is one reason that the political economy supported by the television industry is as different from the vibrant politics of America's first century as those politics were different from the feudalism that thrived on the ignorance of the masses of people in the Dark Ages.*

*Our systematic exposure to fear and other arousal stimuli on television can be exploited by the clever public relations specialist, advertiser, or politician. Barry Glassner, a professor of sociology at the University of Southern California, argues that there are three techniques that together make up “fearmongering”: repetition, making the irregular seem regular, and misdirection. By using these narrative tools, anyone with a loud platform can ratchet up public anxieties and fears, distorting public discourse and reason.*

*There are, of course, many historical examples of vivid imagery producing vicarious traumatization that has been used for positive purposes. For example, the images of civil rights protesters being threatened with snarling dogs and being brutalized with fire hoses helped mobilize ordinary Americans to become part of a broader movement for social justice. In my own experience, I have learned that visual images—pictures, graphs, cartoons, and computer models— communicate information about the climate crisis at a level deeper than words alone could convey. Similarly, the horrifying pictures that came back to us from both Vietnam and the Iraq war helped facilitate shifts in public sentiment against failing wars that needed to end.*

*Even though logic and reason have played more prominent roles in the medium of print, they can also be used along with images to powerful and positive effect in the television medium. In fact, visual images of suffering are significant precisely because they can help generate empathy and goodwill. The horrifying pictures from inside Abu Ghraib prison communicated the essence of the wrongdoing there far more powerfully than any words could have. Even so, when such strong feelings are manipulated, the possibility for abuse becomes considerable.”*

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## The Politics of Terrorism

Al Gore continues his interesting analysis with reason:

*"It is well documented that humans are especially fearful of threats that can be easily pictured or imagined. For example, one study found that people are willing to spend significantly more for flight insurance that covers "death by terrorism" than for flight insurance that covers "death by any cause." Now, logically, flight insurance for death by any cause would cover terrorism in addition to a number of other potential problems. But something about the buzzword terrorism creates a vivid impression that generates excessive fear.*

*The flight insurance example highlights another psychological phenomenon that is important to understanding how fear influences our thinking: "probability neglect." Social scientists have found that when confronted with either an enormous threat or a huge reward, people tend to focus on the magnitude of the consequence and ignore the probability.*

*"Consider how the Bush administration has used some of the –techniques identified by Professor Glassner. Repeating the same threat over and over again, misdirecting attention (from al-Qaeda to Saddam Hussein), and using vivid imagery (a "mushroom cloud over an American city").*

*September 11 had a profound impact on all of us. But after initially responding in an entirely appropriate way, the administration began to heighten and distort public fear of terrorism to create a political case for attacking Iraq. Despite the absence of proof, Iraq was said to be working hand in hand with al-Qaeda and to be on the verge of a nuclear weapons capability. Defeating Saddam was conflated with bringing war to the terrorists, even though it really meant diverting attention and resources from those who actually attacked us.*

*When the president of the United States stood before the people of this nation and invited us to "imagine" a terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon, he was referring to terrorists who actually had no connection to Iraq. But because our nation had been subjected to the horrors of 9/11, when our president said "imagine with me this new fear," it was easy enough to bypass the reasoning process that might otherwise have led people to ask, "Wait a minute, Mr. President, where's your evidence?"*

*Even if you believe that Iraq might have posed a threat to us, I hope you will agree that our nation would have benefited from a full and thorough debate about the wisdom of invading that country. Had we weighed the potential benefits of an invasion against the potential risks, perhaps we could have prevented some of the tragic events now unfolding there."*

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## The Politics of Fear is an old trick

Al Gore refers to his father who campaigned together with Ed Muskie against “tricky Dick” Nixon in the 1970 election. Speaking on the television the night before that 1970 election, Senator Ed Muskie of Maine addressed the real choice confronting the voters:

*“There are only two kinds of politics. They’re not radical and reactionary or conservative and liberal and not even Democratic and Republican. There are only the politics of fear and the politics of trust. One says you are encircled by monstrous dangers. Give us power over your freedom so we may protect you. The other says the world is a baffling and hazardous place, but it can be shaped to the will of men. Cast your vote for trust in the ancient traditions of this home of freedom.”*

The next day Nixon and the politics of fear had won the election like Bush one generation later. And with the same ugly result. Gore summarizes in “The Politics of fear”:

*“Terrorism relies on the stimulation of fear for political ends. Indeed, its specific goal is to distort the political reality of a nation by creating fear in the general population that is hugely disproportionate to the actual danger that the terrorists are capable of posing. Ironically, President Bush's response to the terrorist attack of September 11 was, in effect, to further distort America's political reality by creating a new fear of Iraq that was hugely disproportionate to the actual danger Iraq was capable of posing. That is one of the reasons it was so troubling to so many when in 2004 the widely respected arms expert David Kay concluded a lengthy, extensive investigation into the administration's claim that Iraq posed an enormous threat because it had weapons of mass destruction with the words We were all wrong. As we now know, of course, there was absolutely no connection between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein.*

*In spite of that fact, President Bush actually said to the nation at a time of greatly enhanced vulnerability to the fear of attack, "You can't distinguish between them.....*

*....History will surely judge America's decision to invade and occupy a fragile and unstable nation that did not attack us and posed no threat to us as a decision that was not only tragic but absurd. Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator, to be sure, but not one who posed an imminent danger to us. It is a decision that could have been made only at a moment in time when reason was playing a sharply diminished role in our national deliberations.”*

USA is one of the very few countries in the world that was never invaded (If we neglect the fact that white man did invade America). Still it seems that U.S. leaders need to have a BIG enemy as a threat to all Americans, Indians, Black Panthers, Japanese, Communists, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian and now Al Quaida. This country that has half of the world's weapons and military bases all over the world is threatened! From what?

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## The Economy of Fear

Oh yes we have made a fortune on your money and now we gambled all of it away so if you don't give us a couple of Trillions more to gamble with – YOU will loose your job, your home, your pension.....But be safe – McCain is on your side – he is going to protect you.....

### The meltdown

**Lehman files for bankruptcy. Merrill is bought by Bank of America. The Fed and major banks expand lending. Anxiety lingers.**

By David Ellis, CNNMoney.com staff writer  
Last Updated: September 15, 2008 1:07 PM EDT

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NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) — Wall Street was a vastly different world Monday from what it looked like just days earlier, following one of the most harrowing days in the history of U.S. financial industry.

In less than a day, Lehman Brothers, one of the nation's oldest investment banks, filed for bankruptcy — the largest ever announced in the United States. And Bank of America executed a bold and swift \$50 billion takeover of Merrill Lynch, while the fate of other brand-name financial institutions remained in doubt.

#### Wall Street's Wreckage

- Bank of America buys Merrill
- AIG down 51%
- Can WallSt be saved?
- Is your money safe?
- Credit crunch hits small biz

Biggest bankruptcy in history

Nightmare on Wall Street

'Reckless, stupid, greedy'

Manic Monday

### Nightmare on Wall Street

- Thousands of jobs lost
- Insurance giant AIG at risk
- Shares tumble round globe

Wall Street turmoil again hits world stocks

### McCain: Greed created Wall Street's problems

AP Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. - Republican presidential candidate John McCain says Wall Street's financial turmoil is the result of unchecked corporate greed.

By Associated Press  
9:50 AM CDT, September 16, 2008

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican presidential candidate [John McCain](#) on Tuesday called for a high-level commission to study the current economic crisis and claimed that a corrupt and excessive Wall Street had betrayed American workers.

"Those fundamentals are threatened, they are threatened and at risk, because some on Wall Street have treated Wall Street like a casino," McCain said.

So from one day to another McCain managed to change his opinion from that "the fundamentals of our economy is strong" to a blame game on Wall Street...and now the Democrats. But who is really responsible for the economical politics with deregulation, tax cuts and deficit during the last 8 years??

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## Press Stop – What happens now?

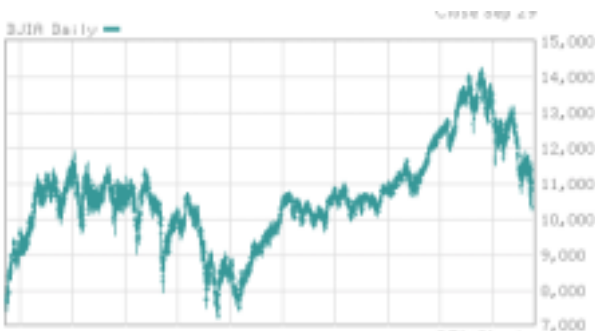
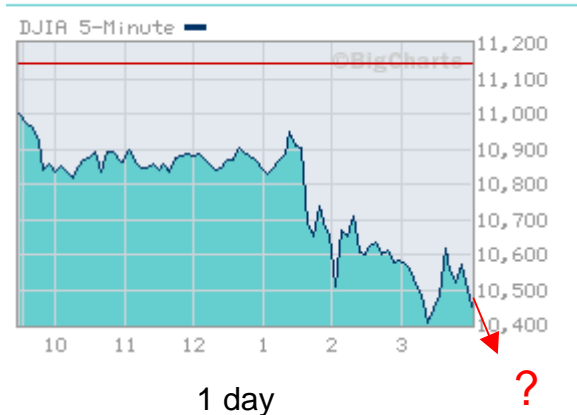
### Breaking News

**U.S. lawmakers reject \$700 billion plan to bail out the financial system, Dow Jones down 600 points.**

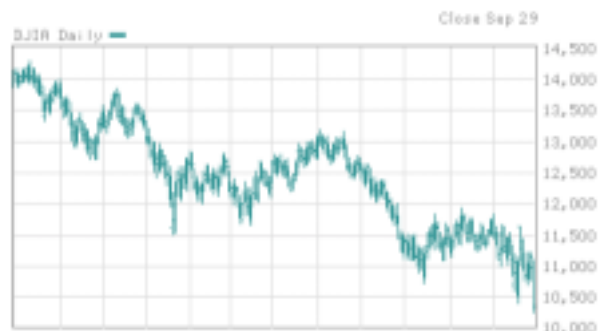
*“Government officials, Treasury chiefs and political leaders from both sides of the political divide thought they had agreed Sunday on the details of a \$700 billion rescue plan that would prop up the nation's ailing financial system -- and be supported in the House of Representatives. But the US House of Representatives on Monday voted against the \$700bn bail-out package endorsed by the Bush administration, with angry Republicans ripping into the latest proposal for a \$700bn financial rescue package, while supporters offered only half-hearted support.*

*News of the defeat shook sentiment on Wall Street, where the Dow Jones Industrial Average immediately plunged by more than 600 points.... Governments, markets and businesses around the world were watching developments in Washington closely amid fears that failure to tackle the crisis on Wall Street could have disastrous repercussions for the entire global economy. Markets tumbled again on Monday, affected by continuing uncertainty over the U.S. bailout plan and fresh anxiety over the longterm consequences of so-called "toxic debts" which have already brought many established financial names to their knees.”*

So now the blame game started again. But not discussing the REAL REASON behind the crisis. Because as Al Gore said REASON is no longer consulted- How can McCain & Palin have the shame to go out there and say "we will solve this". More of the same can not "solve this"! They should hide in the dark or at least come out as humble people and apologize – we were wrong – Bush was wrong – The republican "deregulate" everything was wrong – We need not only a NEW DEAL, we need a new thinking, model and life style!!



Dow Jones Industrial Average



1 year

# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## What has this to do with global warming?

When we recently visited USA between two hurricanes and before the present financial storm I did my own simple survey as I have done many times before. I check different book stores for what is selling right now. As before most books are fiction and the non fiction part is “how to” get rich, get sexy, get slimmer, get healthier, get successful in business, love etc. – that is self help and management books. It took a very long time for me to find anything about the environment. This subject did not seem interesting any longer and as I mentioned in my August Newsletter it never did. Naturally this is a big problem around the world and especially in the US. Not even the hurricanes triggered any discussion about global warming. And now the election is up together with the financial crisis. Maybe we have to use the “Tricky Dick and Bush” strategy – Fear! We will all die if we do not halt global warming. The problem is that we will not. Some poor people in Asia and Africa may die and some future generations may get a hell to live in. And we will make thousands of other life forms extinct. But we will survive if we have enough money! So let us build walls to protect us!

Almost 20 years ago the original book “50 simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth” was published and sold in more than 5 million copies in 23 languages. This has now been rewritten and it was the only environmental book I found in my small survey. One of the authors John Javna says surprisingly in the preface that the reason they have wrote a completely new book is that they have discovered that the old one with changing to low energy light bulbs etc. simply did not work. *“In retrospect, I can see that 50 Simple Things didn’t really educate people about the nature and extent of the environmental problems themselves... That this gave us a false feeling that these problems were being solved...when they weren’t.”* I have the same feeling. And I am also frustrated that nothing is happening and that it is so very difficult to change. In the new book there is 50 new things we can do on a higher level, and I agree in all of them, but still it will not be enough!

So looking at the shelf with Oprah’s book club I found “A new earth” by Eckart Tolle. I have been reading many “New Age” books before including “The Power of Now” with the same author. And I have also studied Fromm and other in his generation as well as Al Gore’s “Earth in Balance – Ecology and the Human Spirit.” Finally I have always been interested in native Indian thoughts about Nature and the Great Spirit. My own conclusion is that – Yes we need a spiritual dimension – we need a mind change if we are going to be able to redirect the dangerous path civilization now is traveling. Eckart Tolle goes so far that he compares history of mankind with a *“chronic paranoid delusion” full of fear, greed and desire for power.* And looking at the recent financial crisis he may be very right. He concludes : *“If the structures of the human mind remain unchanged, we will always end up re-creating fundamentally the same world, the same evils. the same dysfunction.”*

We all need to find our way to change but I believe in the Holistic thinking and what the native Indians, C.G Jung, Schumacher and other saw in a circle balancing four dimensions – Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual is necessary to really change our pattern. Our present one-track mind only focusing on one single issue – money - will not work.



# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## So what are the latest news on carbon dioxide?

**We have evidently NOT UNDERSTOOD ANYTHING!**

Washington Sept. 25 2008: WASHINGTON (AP) \_ The world pumped up its pollution of the chief man-made global warming gas last year, setting a course that could push beyond leading scientists' projected worst-case scenario, international researchers said Thursday. The new numbers, called "scary" by some, were a surprise because scientists thought an economic downturn would slow energy use. Instead, carbon dioxide output jumped 3 percent from 2006 to 2007. That's an amount that exceeds the most dire outlook for emissions from burning coal and oil and related activities as projected by a Nobel Prize-winning group of international scientists in 2007. Meanwhile, forests and oceans, which suck up carbon dioxide, are doing so at lower rates than in the 20th century, scientists said. If those trends continue, it puts the world on track for the highest predicted rises in temperature and sea level.

Emissions in the United States rose nearly 2 percent in 2007, after declining the previous year. The U.S. produced 1.75 billion tons of carbon (1.58 billion metric tons). And China passed the United States as the No. 1 carbon dioxide polluter in 2006. The emissions, which are based on data from oil giant BP PLC and look at the burning of fossil fuel and production of cement, show that China has become the major driver. China emitted 2 billion tons of carbon (1.8 billion metric tons) last year, up 7.5 percent from the previous year. "We're shipping jobs ashore from the U.S., but we're also shipping carbon dioxide emissions with them," Marland said. "China is making fertilizer and cement and steel and all of those are heavy energy-intensive industries."

What is "kind of scary" is that the worldwide emissions growth is beyond the highest growth in fossil fuel predicted just two years ago by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said Ben Santer, an atmospheric scientist at the Lawrence Livermore National Lab. Meanwhile, forests and oceans, which suck up carbon dioxide, are doing so at lower rates than in the 20th century, scientists said. If those trends continue, it puts the world on track for the highest predicted rises in temperature and sea level. Under the panel's scenario then, temperatures would increase by somewhere between 4 and 11 degrees Fahrenheit (2.4 to 6.3 degrees Celsius) by the year 2100.

9.25.2008 8:39 am

## Global Warming Reality Check

Global Carbon Emissions Up 38% Since 1992

The increase in emissions out-paces even the worst-case scenarios published by scientists affiliated with the U.N.

The Kyoto Protocol, which industrialized nations other than the United States have agreed to adhere to, aims to reduce emissions in those countries 5% *below* 1990 levels by 2012.

Ultimately, scientists have said the world needs to reduce its emissions by 50% or more below 1990 levels by mid-century to avert the worst consequences of global warming.

latest news\*

[thedailygreen.com](http://thedailygreen.com) news feed

# GAIA Newsletter – Autumn 2008

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## So who will win this time – Hope or fear?

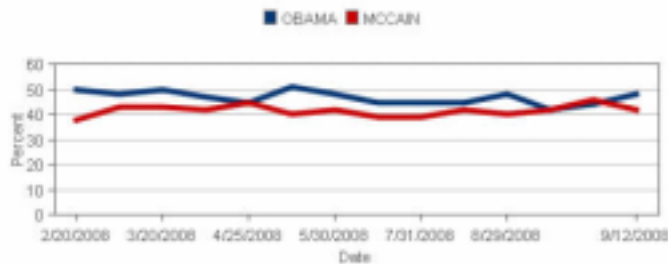
The CNN/Opinion Research Corp. survey is not a measurement of the views of all Americans, since only people who watched the debate were questioned and the audience included more Democrats than Republicans.

Fifty-one percent of those polled thought Obama did the better job in Friday night's debate, while 38 percent said John McCain did better. Men were nearly evenly split between the two candidates, with 46 percent giving the win to McCain and 43 percent to Obama. But women voters tended to give Obama higher marks, with 59 percent calling him the night's winner, while just 31 percent said McCain won. The Cowboy against the wimp, or?

*"It can be reasonably concluded, especially after accounting for the slight Democratic bias in the survey, that we witnessed a tie in Mississippi tonight," CNN Senior Political Researcher Alan Silverleib said. "But given the direction of the campaign over the last couple of weeks, a tie translates to a win for Obama."* And after this financial crisis it is impossible for Obama to loose, or....

Naturally it is important who will win and naturally the rest of the world hope for Obama. But even if he will win his arms are tied – he will inherit a crisis in the economy, environment, health care, Iraq etc and he can not solve this with "More of the same". He has to dare to CHANGE so many fundamental things that will influence the American way of living. And there are no more money left for social well fare and health care reforms. I hope he will be able to find a way out of this mess that Bush has created together with all his friends in the establishment. But the crisis is even bigger. What really is needed is a new American Revolution.....that will harmonize with GAIA – or only planet and our common future.

2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION HORSE RACE



# GAIA Newsletter – September 2008

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## Finally some good news

Coming back from USA between two hurricanes just to experience another financial hurricane we got some good news via a Green Peace newsletter. And in our forest we could pick mushrooms (Cantharellus tubaeformis and Cantharellus cibarius) and lingonberries.

**GREENPEACE** International

**CLIMATE CAMPAIGN**  
Double success

Dear Friends,

We've got some great news about our campaign for a nuclear-free Middle East, and a European law to cut CO2 emissions from cars.

Climate campaigning works -- but hardly anybody knows about it yet! Can you please share the success stories below with your friends, and invite them to join us too? Simply *forward* this email.



### **GREAT CLIMATE CAMPAIGN NEWS:**

#### **European Parliament votes to reduce emissions from gas guzzlers**

In a long-awaited display of responsibility, the European Parliament's Environment committee has voted through a strong package to reduce emissions from cars. As the committee went into session, it seemed certain that a compromise package riddled with loopholes would be the one to pass. However, the MEPs voted to stick with meaningful legislation, turning their backs on nine months of lobbying by the car industry.

