

Bob's



Quarterly Update

BOB DREIZLER, CHARTERED FINANCIAL CONSULTANT

Specializing in socially conscious investors



WATER: The Next Oil

I'm usually quite agitated when I write my newsletter, but as I started this issue I was rather mellow. Looking out at the Pacific Ocean from the sacred grounds of the Esalen Institute (www.esalen.org), I was contemplating the presence of water in our daily life.

Today, Stacey Bella and I started the morning by soaking in the hot Esalen baths perched on the cliffs 100 feet above the Pacific Ocean. The massive waves from the recent storm crashed below us. Yesterday, we drove down Highway One through a misty fog that turned into rain. Aside from drinking and showering ourselves in water, we also used it in a ceremony after an emotional workshop session.

Water is essential to life, to growth and to the cleansing of the earth. It's also crucial for resource extraction, manufacturing and military strategies.

Though it is everywhere, clean water is becoming scarcer. World population growth, rapid industrialization,

water quality deterioration and global warming all fuel the competition for this limited resource.

The focus of this issue will be water, in particular, our society's addiction to bottled water. Even as I was ranting and writing the last paragraph, while riding the train back from San Francisco, I stopped to drink water from my plastic bottle of Arrowhead (a division of Nestle Waters). I hope to kick my bottled water habit in 2008.

There are so many issues related to water: privatization, the use of water as a weapon and environmental issues such as the massive use of water to liquefy and transport coal. I'll touch on some of these and provide some web resources, but my main question (that will remain unanswered) is this: How did we lose faith in **free** municipal water, a resource from our sink that is often as safe and tasty as the liquid we'd pay a buck and a half for?

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Water: Bottled or Tap?

Christine A. Renner

Thirty years ago, the U.S. bottled water industry barely existed. Last year, Americans spent \$15 billion on bottled water. For a generation disdainful of tap water, a chilled convenience store bottle of water serves as a symbol of our demand for instant gratification.

Successful marketing strategies have convinced many of us that bottled water is healthier than tap water. While it is a better choice than soda, there is little evidence to support the marketing hype.

With rare exceptions, U.S. tap water is very safe. Through constant monitoring and public test results the Environmental Protection Agency subjects tap water to strict standards. However, the Food and Drug Administration leaves it largely to bottled water manufacturers to produce safe products with truthful labels.

In 1999, the Natural Resources Defense Council found that bottled water can contain higher levels of contaminants than tap water. And, plastic bottles come with a considerable environmental burden—the industry depends upon cheap fossil fuels for packaging, transport, and refrigeration.

The United Nations considers access to clean, safe, affordable drinking water a basic human right. In a world where 1 billion people have no reliable source of drinking water and 3,000 children a day die from diseases contracted from tainted water, a growing bottled water industry that perpetuates a decline in the public's trust of tap water sets the stage for larger privatization schemes, and more costly water for all.

As we reach for the next bottle of water, it's reasonable to ask whether the value equals the impact. Asking the question takes the carelessness out of the transaction and indicates a level of awareness characteristic of a socially conscious consumer. Once we do that, it's hard to look at that bottle of water the same way again.

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I update my website with a new commentary at least quarterly. I also update it if there is significant volatility in the stock market or if urgent issues need to be addressed. The current commentary, dated July 12th, is titled "S&P 500 Nears All-Time High!!! - So Why am I Worried?" Please check my website occasionally for updates.

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Bottled Water Facts

[S]ome kinds of plastic bottles have been found to leach low levels of chemicals, including endocrine disrupting plasticizers, into the liquids they contain. ... (P)ublic health experts advise precaution and switching to durable, reusable glass and metal containers. Re-use of plastic bottles is discouraged because surface biofilms retain bacteria even after rinsing, and detergents and heating promote leaching of plasticizers.

This is an environmental as well as health problem because landfilled or incinerated plastic bottles pass this pollution into air and water.

The 'numbers and chasing arrows' on plastic containers are the manufacturer's way of distinguishing between them. They do not guarantee they can be recycled.

– *What You Should Know About Plastic Water Bottles*, Sierra Club Corporate Accountability Committee. www.sierraclub.org/cac/water

When Pepsi admitted in August [2006] that it bottles tap water under its Aquafina label, the beverage giant agreed to change Aquafina's labels to indicate that the water comes from a public source. Pepsi's not alone, Coke's Dasani and Nestlé's Pure Life brands of bottled waters have long been known to come from municipal sources, which adds up to most of the bottled water sold in America coming straight from the tap.

Nestle will pay only .000087 cents per gallon for the water it takes from McCloud's springs (in California), or only 8.7 cents for 100,000 gallons. A 16-ounce bottle of the same water sells for about \$1.29, or \$10.32 per gallon.

– *Because People Matter*, November/December 2006.

PLASTIC BOTTLE ALTERNATIVE

If bottled water is worse for your wallet, your health and the planet, what is the best alternative? Combine easy home filtration systems with portable stainless steel, aluminum or glass containers. Ideal Bite recommends SIGG Swiss-made bottles, available at Ideal Bite's website (www.idealbite.com). Each year, you'll save about \$400 purchasing pitcher or faucet filters instead of bottles, reduce the 1.5 million tons of plastic used to package water globally **and** keep nasty chemicals from leaching into your drinking water.

– *Hitting the Bottle*, Ideal Bite Press Release, 8/8/2006.

SOCIALLY-CONSCIOUS

INVESTING

Align your investments
with your values



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WATER QUOTES

Water is life's matter and matrix, mother and medium. There is no life without water. – Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, Hungarian biochemist and Nobel Prize Winner for Medicine.

In an age when man has forgotten his origins and is blind even to his most essential needs for survival, water along with other resources has become the victim of his indifference.
–Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring* (1962)

Eighty percent of all the diseases you could name would be wiped out if you just gave people clean water.
– Dean Kamen [inventor of the Segway]

“We believe there are Four Sacred Things that can't be owned,” Bird said. “Water is one of them. The others are the earth and air and fire. They can't be owned because they belong to everybody. Because everybody's life depends on them.”

“But that would make them the best kind of thing to own,” Littlejohn said. “Because if your life depends on it, you've got to have it. You'll pay any price for it. You'll steal or lie or kill for it.”

“That's why we don't let anybody own them,” Bird said.

The Fifth Sacred Thing by Starhawk (1993)

We think of our land and water and human resources not as static and sterile possessions but as lifegiving assets to be directed by wise provisions for future days.

– Franklin D. Roosevelt

Anyone who can solve the problems of water will be worthy of two Nobel prizes - one for peace and one for science.

– John F. Kennedy

A man from the west will fight over three things: water, women and gold, and usually in that order. – Senator Barry Goldwater

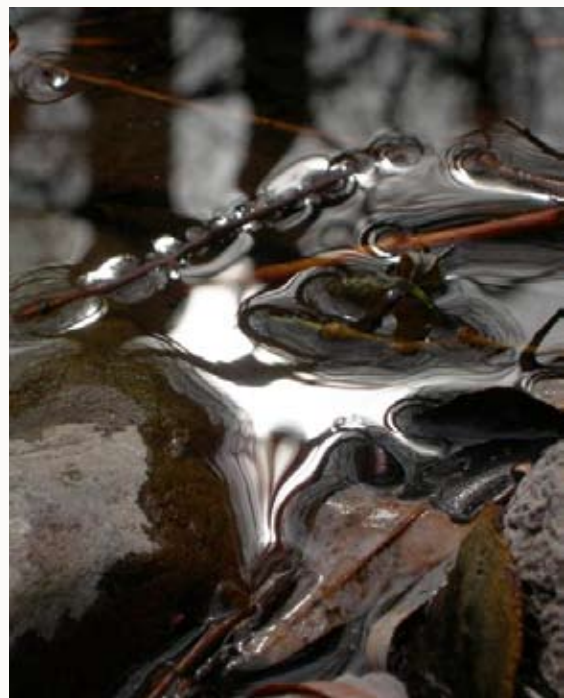
Throughout the history of literature, the guy who poisons the well has been the worst of all villains.

–Unknown

Water links us to our neighbor in a way more profound and complex than any other. – John Thorson, water expert

Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting over.

– Mark Twain, 1884



WATER, PRIVATIZATION AND WAR

Over the past two decades, the (World Bank and International Monetary Fund) have increasingly required countries to privatize water systems and other public services as a condition for receiving much-needed loans or debt relief. –“The Promise and Perils of Water Privatization,” Trillium Asset Management, Fall 2005.

In the U.S. the 1,400 mile-long Colorado River is at record low levels and a decade long drought is threatening drinking water supplies for major cities and irrigation for food production in the western part of the U.S.” – *Filling Your Cup With Water Plays*, Aug. 13, 2007, Yahoo! Financial News

Britain’s Defence Secretary issued a bleak forecast that violence and political conflict would become more likely in the next 20 to 30 years as climate change turned land into desert, melted ice fields and poisoned water supplies. –*Armed Forces are put on Standby to Tackle Threat of Wars over Water*, Feb. 28, 2006, www.Commondreams.org.

Solar Cookers International (www.solarcookers.org) will undertake a two-year pilot project to increase water quality awareness and introduce the Portable Microbiology Laboratory (PLM) and the Safe Water Package to communities in Western Kenya. The effort will be led by SCI founder and Sacramento State University biology professor Dr. Bob Metcalf. A unique aspect of the PLM test is that they demystify science and microbiology; they are easy to use in rural settings and do not require extensive education or scientific training.—*Solar Cooker Review*, November, 2007

Answers to Water Quiz on back page
1.D (97.5%); 2. True; 3. A-3 Gasoline \$2.87, B-1 Bottled water \$10.32, C-4 Tap water \$0.0019, D-2 Beer \$15.36; 4. D-2,906 gallons; 5. 132 gallons (US) and 53 gallons (British); 6. There’s no right answer, I just want you to ponder the question.



CURRENT PHOTO EXHIBITS (AS OF JANUARY)

SACRAMENTO NATURAL FOODS CO-OP in the dining area (Alhambra and S Street)

THE WEATHERSTONE (21st Street between H and I Street)

MEGAMI BENTO-YA (1010 10th Street, near K Street)

Every Second Saturday in STUDIO 2 of the gallery behind Michelangelo’s Restaurant (1727 ½ I Street)



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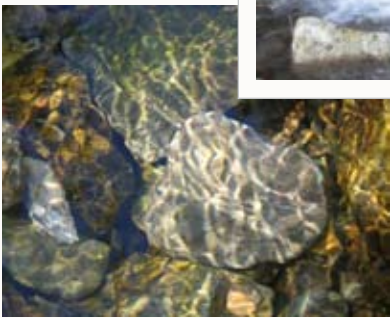
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WATER QUIZ

1. Water covers two-thirds of the Earth's surface. What percentage is salt water? A) 75%; B) 90%; C) 95%; D) 97.5%.
2. More than 60 million water bottles are thrown away each day and 20 million barrels of oil are used each year to make the plastic bottles containing that water. True or False?
3. Match the costs per gallon (at the convenience store next to my office) to the product: A) Gasoline; B) Bottled water (Evian); C) Tap water; D) Beer (Corona)—1) \$10.32, 2) \$15.36, 3) \$3.29, 4) \$0.0019.
4. How many gallons of water does it take to grow enough cattle feed to produce a quarter-pound hamburger? A) 100; B) 753; C) 1,560; D) 2,906.
5. The recommended basic water requirement per person per day is 13 gallons, but people can get by with about 9 gallons: 2 for food and drink and another 7 for hygiene. How many gallons of water does the average U.S. citizen use? Average British citizen?
6. Why do you drink water from plastic bottles?

Answers on page 5



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Return service requested