



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN  
NUCLEAR DANGERS & A SAFE,  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## Winter 2025 Newsletter

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# REMEMBERING DAN HIRSCH

February 12, 1950 - July 19, 2025

DAN HIRSCH CO-FOUNDED COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP IN 1970 on the campus of UCLA in order to “bridge the gap” between the generations and campus on the Vietnam war and related problems of race and inequality. When the war ended, CBG’s focus shifted focus to environmental and social justice and to fighting nuclear dangers of all kinds. Over the past 55 years, Dan has been the one constant, the beating heart and soul of Committee to Bridge the Gap.

A pivotal story in CBG’s history involved a meeting with Richard and Pauline Saxson (co-founders of PSR-LA – and Pauline still serves on the CBG Board at the age of 101!) and Dr. Helen Caldicott. They discussed Three-Mile Island and nuclear threats. Dr. Caldicott said that if one wanted people to care about nuclear risks, one needed to show people the local effects and how the nuclear arms race comes home.

Dan, then teaching at UCLA, took this to heart and began a research project with his class – and they found a LOT of nuclear risks close to home! Their work led to:



*Photo by Lisa Bunin*

- The discovery of an almost unknown nuclear reactor in UCLA’s Boelter Hall – with radioactive material stored in a filing cabinet. As a result, the reactor was shut down and led to the banning of other such reactors using weapons-grade uranium nationwide.
- Studying old Atomic Energy Commission reports led to the discovery that radioactive waste was being dumped in the waters off the coast of California. The result was the banning of all such dumping internationally.
- The end of U.S. plans to orbit nuclear reactors in space to power “Star Wars”.
- Very significantly, they discovered there had been a secret partial meltdown in a sodium nuclear reactor on the grounds of Santa Susana Field Lab. This led to the shut-down of SSFL—the first time a community succeeded in closing an unsafe DOE site.
- The closure of DOE’s Hanford N reactor and the ending of U.S. and Russian plutonium production for nuclear weapons.
- The permanent defeat of the Ward Valley Low Level Radioactive Waste dump in the Mojave Valley.
- The adoption of regulations requiring nuclear plants to be protected against truck bombs.
- The closure of San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant and the ongoing fight to ensure the nuclear waste stored on site is moved elsewhere on Camp Pendleton, away from the ocean’s edge.
- The shut-down of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant—set to make California nuclear free by 2025—but now delayed by the Newsom administration.
- More recently, CBG exposed that the cleanup of the toxic Hunter Point Naval Shipyard was dangerously flawed—a striking reminder the nuclear arms race threatens us both globally and locally.

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## REMEMBERING - CONTINUED

Dan worked tirelessly to ensure that radioactive waste be safely disposed of nationwide. Only days before his passing he testified before the NRC to protect safe radiation standards.

And in the process of spearheading this impressive body of work, Dan was a mentor, a teacher, an advisor, the drafter of countless briefs, background documents and comments. He was sought after for expert testimony and the scientific study of many thousands of pages of EIRs and corporate reports. He could be irritatingly precise in his fervor to tell

the truth and make change, but those who worked with him were the better for it.

Dan would be the first to tell you that none of this was accomplished alone. And in the past 10 years, Dan and CBG made a concerted effort to hire and train a new generation of activists and continue his legacy. Those lucky enough to share the journey with Dan found a good and challenging friend. Dan lived a full and generous life, committed to justice, to repairing the breaches and restoring the beautiful world we all share. May his memory be a blessing.

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# DAN'S FINAL FIGHT FOR RADIATION SAFETY

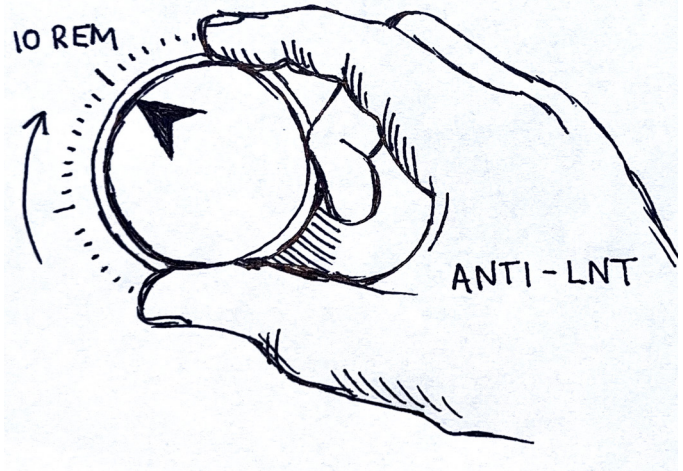
JUST THREE DAYS BEFORE Dan Hirsch's death in July, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) held a webinar to gather public feedback on implementing an executive order from President Trump that could dramatically weaken radiation protection standards. At that webinar, Dan gave a powerful presentation urging NRC to hold firm to the current, thoroughly vetted model of radiation harm and calling for radiation protection standards to be strengthened. Despite being in immense pain from his illness, Dan's incredible dedication to working for peace and justice carried through to the very end.

In May, President Trump issued a shocking series of four executive orders that, if carried through, will usher in the most grievous shredding of nuclear safety regulations this country has ever seen. One of those orders directs the NRC to consider dramatically weakening its radiation protection standard. If federal radiation limits are gutted in the manner urged by the

president, the new standard could allow **four out of five** people exposed over a 70-year lifetime to develop a cancer they would not otherwise get.

Dan's presentation at the July NRC webinar focused on something that few have heard of but nearly everyone has benefitted from: the linear no-threshold (LNT) model of radiation-induced cancer. LNT is simple to explain: the more radiation you're exposed to, the higher your risk of developing cancer – and there is no threshold below which there is no risk: even the tiniest dose of radiation creates some risk of cancer. LNT has been at the core of radiation protection standards for many decades, and has been repeatedly reassessed and reaffirmed by the world's leading radiation science institutions, including the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, the International Commission on Radiological Protection, and even the NRC itself.

Yet despite all this, a contingent of LNT opponents



*LNT detractors ratcheting up the dial on radiation exposure.  
Illustration by Cam Kuta*

advocate for allowing the public to be exposed to 100 to 1,000 times more radiation than is permissible today. Such voices now appear to have the ear of the President. If President Trump's executive order results in the NRC setting public radiation limits at the level LNT opponents often suggest, 10 rem, then the public could be exposed to levels of radiation so high that four out of every five people exposed over a lifetime to the legal limit would develop cancer. Needless to say, this would be devastating for public health, but a boon to the nuclear industry, which could cut costs.

If NRC obeys the directives in Trump's nuclear executive orders, its draft revised regulations—due to be released in February—

may propose to abandon the LNT model and massively raise allowable public radiation exposure levels. CBG will carry on Dan's fight for protective radiation standards and work to hold the ground during this period of historic nuclear deregulation.

After Dan passed away, CBG's Haakon Williams and Cam Kuta put the finishing touches on the LNT article they had been writing with Dan for hopeful publication in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*. That article, "President Trump's radical attack on radiation safety," was published in the *Bulletin* in October.

**Readers can find links to the *Bulletin* article and the video of Dan's NRC presentation on the CBG website.**

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# FIGHT FOR SANTA SUSANA CLEANUP APPROACHES TRAGIC END

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**The polluters responsible for the cleanup of the highly toxic Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) are nearing the endgame for their plans to leave the large majority of site pollution not cleaned up. This year saw the release of, and CBG response to, major documents from all three SSFL polluters, as well as from the captured regulator, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), all geared toward abandoning pollution at SSFL, leaving the community to bear unacceptable risk.**

Over the past year, DTSC has handed NASA and the Department of Energy (DOE) the means by which to break the legally binding cleanup agreements that DTSC is supposed to be enforcing. Euphemistically titled “Multiple Lines of Evidence,” DTSC’s proposal is to essentially forget

about the Administrative Order on Consent cleanup agreements and instead give SSFL polluters multiple lines of excuses for why they should be allowed to leave toxins not cleaned up, even when those toxins are at levels thousands of times above background. In March, DTSC held a public meeting on the MLE approach, at which DTSC appeared ill-prepared and repeatedly cut off public speakers long before their time was up. CBG staff delivered oral comments at that meeting, and submitted written comments.

In March, CBG and the Natural Resources Defense Council submitted joint comments to DOE opposing its intent, published in the Federal Register, to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. DOE proposes preparing an SEIS – for which it has no legitimate justification, and which would further delay cleanup – containing alternatives that would abandon its promise to complete a full cleanup to background. CBG staff briefed community members and delivered oral comments at DOE’s public meeting.

CBG submitted comments in June on the plan for

*continued on page 4*



Photograph by John Karachewski 2008

*Aerial photograph of the SSFL by John Karachewski, DTSC's SSFL Document Library*

SSFL - CONTINUED

NASA's groundwater cleanup, the Draft Phase 1 Corrective Measures Study and related DTSC Draft Statement of Basis. NASA's plan only targets four out of 70 toxic chemicals detected in its groundwater, and in fact focuses only on three of its 53 wells (the wells where a single pollutant, TCE, is 2,000 times the legal limit). NASA plans to do a decade of active treatment and then simply let the pollutants degrade and trickle away until they reach the cleanup goals – a wait of about 200 years.

In September, DTSC released Boeing's Draft Corrective Measures Study (CMS) and DTSC's related Statement of Basis for Boeing's heavily

contaminated SSFL soil. The CMS is based on the framework set by the 2022 backroom deal between DTSC and Boeing, which gutted Boeing's 2007 Consent Order and gifted Boeing cleanup standards that are hundreds to thousands of times weaker. As a result, Boeing plans to remove a mere 10% or less of its toxic soil from SSFL, leaving the vast majority of its pollution not cleaned up in the midst of the densely-populated surrounding area. CBG staff submitted written comments and delivered oral comments at DTSC's public meeting, the first SSFL public comment period we have faced without Dan.

All of CBG's written comments mentioned herein may be found on our website.

Unless major action is taken now to intervene, DTSC and the SSFL polluters appear poised to sink the final nails in the coffin of the meaningful cleanup of SSFL that they once promised and now betray. We face this tragedy with both deep frustration

as decades of work toward full cleanup are undone, and with immense grief for the communities near this site, and others nationwide, who will bear the costs to their health from a regulatory system that is no longer protecting them.

## CBG NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Your generous donations make this vital work possible.

Please send a donation or give online at [www.committeetobridgethegap.org](http://www.committeetobridgethegap.org)

# FIGHTING FOR RESPONSIBLE NUCLEAR WASTE STEWARDSHIP

CBG CONTINUES TO OPPOSE THE CONSOLIDATED interim storage (CIS) approach to managing high-level nuclear waste. Recent plans call for shipping spent nuclear fuel from across the country to private, temporary storage facilities, which presents twice the risk of a catastrophic transportation accident and distracts from real, permanent disposal.

In October, developers withdrew from the proposed private CIS facilities in Texas and New Mexico, despite a Supreme Court ruling earlier this year upholding the NRC license for the Texas site. We celebrate this victory for the local communities, which have been spared from many thousands of dangerous radioactive waste shipments, and intend to keep up the pressure for better solutions.

We have also contributed to an effort spearheaded by Irvine Mayor Larry Agran to plan for improved local storage of the San Onofre radioactive spent fuel. It will be many decades before this waste can be moved out of the community; yet it currently sits in a vulnerable location right by the ocean and the I-5 freeway. We urge the City of Irvine to approve the funds for commissioning such a plan – to consider options for local relocation and hardened storage of the waste, including



*Mayor of Irvine Larry Agran chairing the City Council study session about the San Onofre waste.*

at “the Mesa” higher up on Camp Pendleton – which would be money well spent if it averts a catastrophic release of radioactivity that contaminates much of Southern California.



## BEAUTY AND THE HUMILIATED

*By Dan Hirsch*

I RECENTLY SPENT SEVERAL MONTHS IN THE presence of beauty so intense that I felt only perpetual awe and gratitude. I had been severely depleted, emotionally and physically, by my activism, this sense of connection with the poor and wounded, and needed to take some time off to do some refectation and “re-charge my batteries.”

So I traveled for a few weeks, camping by lakes and waterfalls, backpacking into the Sierras with their breath-taking snow-covered vistas and immense quiet; I was given sanctuary from the world for a time by two lovely monasteries, their monks living lives on the margin of society with a faithfulness I greatly admired. And then I settled down in a redwood forest and listened.

I spent days without speaking a word, just drinking in the silence; I walked in the company of the great tress and the delicate ferns. I split wood for heating, finding truth in Thoreau’s observation that “splitting wood warms you twice”; I read poetry aloud in front of a great fireplace at night and did physical labor during the day; and I became close with some people of great wisdom, simplicity, and caring. I returned a different man.

During this time away, sheltered in the heart of the world’s goodness, a passage from Camus kept running through my mind as though there was in it a seed of a great truth I had not yet let sprout. Camus, never afraid to confront either the absurdity in life or the beauty of the sun and sea, wrote: “Yes, there is beauty and there are the humiliated. Whatever the difficulties involved, I should like to be unfaithful to neither the one nor the other.” Perhaps in that statement is a key to fronting with greater directness that which makes life worth living and that which makes life difficult for so many people throughout the world.

Yes, there is the ocean breaking all foamy against the rocks, and the quiet magnificence of the redwoods, and the tender moments when people make connection, touching the quick of each other. And yes, there are half a million people in prison today for views their governments don’t like, and thousands strapped to torture tables, and millions who remain hungry in a world of inexcusable luxury. How can we be faithful in such a world?

We can try to be faithful to both, to the redwoods and seascapes on the one hand to the sufferings our sisters and brothers on the other. To be faithful one must love both; to love both we must run from neither; to run from neither we must enjoy fully the beauty of this world and resist mightily its destruction. We know we cannot be fully faithful to either, however, for we stumble and fall so easily, we communicate badly and make many mistakes. But the essence of the kind of fidelity about which Camus is speaking is the willingness to risk, to reach out to the beauty of the natural world and the possible beauty of relationships, fearing but not running from the likelihood of loss. And to risk at the same time the other loss, the one we face when we struggle mightily for the trodden-upon: loss of friends, security, possessions, and for some, even life itself.

With this willingness to risk, this fidelity to life, comes a peace beyond understanding. Because Life is good, and is worth living fully and defending energetically.

“Beauty and the Humiliated”  
*Fellowship Magazine*, July/August 1978.

With thanks to the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

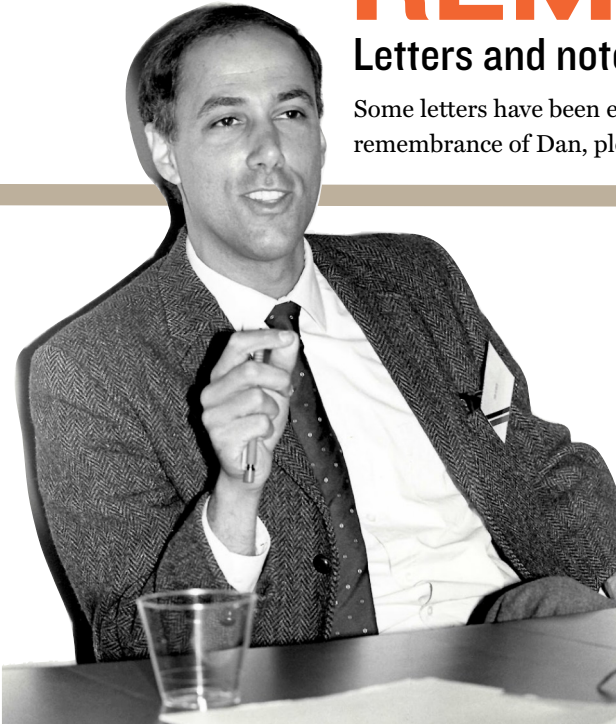
*Photo by Megan Garrett*

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# REMEMBRANCES

## Letters and notes submitted by friends

Some letters have been edited; the full texts can be found on our website. If you have a written remembrance of Dan, please send it to us and we can publish it on our website.



DAN HIRSCH TOLD ME YEARS AGO THAT AS HE LEFT high school headed for Harvard, he foresaw a career for himself like that of Daniel Patrick Moynihan: Dapper Dan, Harvard AB, summa cum laude, headed for a White House internship or the like. But Harvard changed him radically, perhaps partly because during his Harvard years the Harvard professor most in the news was not Pat Moynihan but Henry Kissinger.

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer,” Thoreau famously wrote. Dan ended up marching to the beat of a very different drum, but he heard, simultaneously and always, the beat of the general drum. That’s what made him to the end the politician he started out to be as president of his high school graduating class.

He knew who he was. He also knew who they were.

CBG staff have built Dan’s last public act, his testimony against Executive Order 194300, relaxing radiation safety standards, into a cover story for Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Excellent work, and work like this is going to be needed more than ever in the years immediately ahead. AI is ravenous for water and energy, and the big money competing to rule the AI world now looks to generate its own energy in all available ways, including the reckless construction of new nuclear power plants.

W.B. Yeats wrote, “The intellect of man must choose / Perfection of the life or of the work.” Each of us will choose where to draw the line between those two perfections. One does not follow the guidance of a lighthouse by becoming a lighthouse, yet without that guidance where would we end up? Dan is gone now. Let us sail on, still navigating by his light.

—**Jack Miles**, Pulitzer Prize winning author and CBG Board Chair

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Dan helped me understand the absolute imperative of protecting my constituents from harmful radiation. Because of his knowledge and passion we learned of dangers surrounding nuclear plants near earthquake faults and made sure dangerous operations were shut down.

—**Barbara Boxer**, former United States Senator

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IT IS WITH THE DEEPEST SADNESS THAT I LEARNED OF THE passing of my dear friend Daniel Hirsch. As I have known Dan over these past 4 decades I have been always impressed by his unyielding dedication to fight for justice, and world sustainability. His moral compass never wavered. I and the world will miss him dearly.

—**Stuart Turnansky**, friend



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THE GUACAMOLE FUND SENDS THEIR SINCERE condolences to the Committee to Bridge the Gap on the loss of their longtime leader, Daniel Hirsch. Our founder, Tom Campbell, worked with Dan for decades, supporting his incredible activism educating the public via music concerts, receptions and rallies. Dan's activism was something to be admired and was inspiring to all. He was always ready to share his passion with information tables at Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne and Crosby, Stills & Nash concerts with his dedicated staff and volunteers over many years. We will sorely miss you, Dan, but know that your powerful legacy will live on with all the work you have done, on so many fronts, to make this world a better place.

—The Guacamole Fund

I was so saddened to hear of Dan's passing. What an extraordinary man and activist hero. I feel honored and very grateful to have known and worked with him all these years. He will always remain dear in our hearts. I send my sincere condolences to you all and know we will keep his legacy going, continuing to fight for safe energy and a green, peaceful and just world.

—Bonnie Raitt, singer, songwriter

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DAN HIRSCH GRACED MY LIFE IN MANY WAYS FOR THE LAST 45 YEARS. I FIRST MET HIM IN THE FREEZE movement here in LA. As a feminist, socialist and peace activist our lives crossed in so many ways. My boss in the early 80's Jerry Brown loved to talk to him, and Dan could hold his own to Jerry's thousands of questions. Jerry came back because he always learned something and could trust what he learned. During the years I was on the board of Americans for A Safe Future working to stop the nuclear dump site on the Colorado River he was our light and the built the tools we needed to beat those with the money but no morals or care and respect for life; that of the planet or the people, or much less a future. Many can talk about the wonders of Dan, but I was most affected by the values he lived his life from that allowed him all that focus and depth. He was a rare being in this world, he walked his talk. He lived his values, and therefore had so much power in a room before he even opened his mouth to wow everyone. But as an activist he was priceless in how he could support what we were doing in the streets or in our strategic meetings with his brilliance, his research, his talking points, his always yes to showing up and teaching the community. In a world where people have forgotten the costs of wars, inequality and racism he lived his life committed to affecting the world around him for all those issues. I know I am who I am today because of his influence in being a tuning fork of truth, speaking from depth and never backing down. My life was blessed by knowing and working with him.

Dan Hirsch Presente!

—Jodie Evans, Cofounder of CODEPINK: Women for Peace

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I THINK EVERYONE KNOWS HOW MUCH DAN MEANT TO US Simi girls. He was our mentor and dear dear friend. I am so sorry he suffered. He was a bright light in my life and I loved visiting him in Santa Cruz. He spent his life trying to better the planet.

—Dawn Kowalski, Co-founder of the Rocketdyne Cleanup Coalition

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Dan was a fierce advocate for the truth and science, and worked tirelessly to expose what was not true. His curiosity and persistence gave him a grasp of knowledge that was vast and deep and always expanding. He pushed hard to open doors and pushed harder to keep them open in the face of ignorance and inertia. Dan was the passionate voice for so many, a dedicated leader who always tried to move the ball forward. I feel very fortunate that I was able to spend some time with Dan, he was truly one-of-a-kind.

—Charlie Openchowski



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## REMEMBRANCES - CONTINUED

IN MY LIFETIME SO FAR, I HAVE MET VERY FEW truly brave humans. I have met even fewer who have used that bravery to stand up for others, and fewer still that have chosen to dedicate their entire lives to using that courage to oppose institutional corruption. He is the only person I've ever met that clearly was trying to save the world.

The standard to which he held himself was frankly unachievable for many of us mere mortals. Not simply because of his formidable mind, but because of his discipline. His work ethic, what he demanded of himself, was exhausting to witness, and impossible to emulate.

I wish I had gotten to know Dan apart from the work, to better understand him as a person. I suppose I thought there would be more time...and we were always so busy with some looming deadline...to hear of him passing, all I could think was I didn't return his last phone call.

It is no exaggeration to note that I learned something every single time I spoke with Dan. The first conversation I had with him was well over an hour long. I paced the kitchen and listened as he explained many details about the SSFL's contamination. He answered every single question I had. I took pages and pages of notes. His generosity with his time—to educate yet another community member—is astounding in retrospect. I can only imagine how many people have had that same experience...seeking answers and guidance, and finding that in Dan.

He told me once that I was powerful. It remains one of the



most treasured compliments I have ever received, and it worked. He made me believe in my own ability to create change, and my life has been forever transformed by his inspired leadership.

I continue to think about Dan, and to take lessons from his example. Dan's passing has affected me differently than the loss of others; it has pulled me time and again into deep reflection. He is not a person that passes and is then forgotten. He was a giant of a human, and the impact of his life and legacy will be long lasting. I feel deeply lucky to have known him. I hope that we all can take what we learned from Dan, and share it, live it, and treasure it; because our time with him was one of life's precious gifts. I love you Dan, and will be forever grateful for the life you chose to live.

—**Jeni Knack**, co-director of Parents Against SSFL

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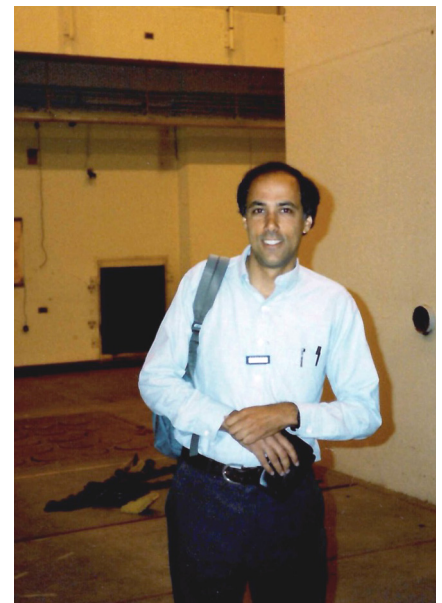
I am so grateful to have met Dan and especially for the day he and his team came to the grove at UC Santa Cruz to speak to my eighth grade students about the CBG. His eloquence and obvious passion about fighting to do the right thing, no matter how hard it got, was inspirational. Whenever I get discouraged, I think about Dan and how he wouldn't put down his sword, so to speak, and I keep going. He will be very missed.

—**Kathleen Caine**

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I WORKED CLOSELY WITH DAN FOR MANY YEARS, MOSTLY ON SANTA Susana, but with detours into several other nuclear waste and botched cleanups in California. He was a tireless advocate for the victims of the Santa Susana mess, and tried his level best to hold agencies and politicians accountable to the public. He tried so hard that it ultimately ruined his own health. It was incredibly difficult work. He was up against a large national defense contractor, agencies that wanted to paper over the whole cleanup, and way too many elected officials who were deliberately oblivious to the environmental and public health disaster that occurred at Santa Susana. (There were some notable and heroic exceptions such as Sheila Kuehl, Julia Brownley, Linda Parks, and Linda Adams who come to mind immediately. There were others.) My role was small, but rather constant over the years. I always admired his tenacity, preparedness, persistence, and knack for achieving little victories.

—**William Craven**, Retired Chief Consultant at the California Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee



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DAN WAS A GENUINE HERO IN ALL THE environmental issues he felt so strongly needed to be studied, and brought to the attention of the public. He became my personal hero when remembering him from the high school we had both attended in Los Angeles, I reached out to him as a source for advice about the oil wells that pumped at Beverly Hills High School.

He helped me selflessly and was always there for me as I navigated trying to close the industrial sites at the high school. And he was proud of me and continued to encourage me for many years. When I was asked to testify at a state senate hearing he met with me in LA to go over my speech. He spent hours with me fine tuning what I was going to say. As he put it, you need a sound bite for the news and you still don't have one yet and sure enough he found it for me and it was on the local news.

What an incredible human being Dan was. When he thought he could help on a number of different environmental issues he never refused. I am truly grateful for his support and he was always available to steer me in the right direction. And when the oil well was shut years later he took the time to email me a note of congratulations. He always made my efforts feel worthwhile, no matter how small my successes were.

Dan was a wonderful inspiration who kept me going during my biggest defeats. I will always think of him as the champion he was for me and so many other people. I greatly admired Dan for trying to save our earth for future generations. Indeed he will be profoundly missed for his unerring integrity and willingness to step up, educate us and continue on behalf of all of us.

—Jody Kleinman



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With Dan's passing, we have lost a truly remarkable teacher, mentor and political activist—a thoughtful, relentless anti-nuclear, pro-humanity advocate who always made himself available to share his knowledge, wisdom and strategic insights in confronting the nuclear power industry. In our decades-long struggle to shut down San Onofre (ultimately succeeding in 2013) and now to remove, repackage and relocate 3.6 million pounds of dangerously stored nuclear waste at San Onofre/Camp Pendleton, we could always count on Dan to help us think things through. If—no, when—we finally succeed in moving San Onofre's stored nuclear waste off the beachfront bluff and into a fortified storage facility on higher ground, I'll certainly remember Dan's role in helping make our victory possible.

—Larry Agran, Mayor of Irvine

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AS HEAD OF SIERRA CLUB CALIFORNIA AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL Working Group's lobbying in Sacramento, I worked with Dan on several issues over the last 25 years or so. I found Dan's insightfulness and thoroughness to be super helpful in our work together. Not everyone can go between academia, grassroots activity, and legislative advocacy and pull it off. Dan could.

I also knew Dan in my role as an occasional lecturer in his environmental studies courses at UC Santa Cruz. I was a UCSC environmental studies major back in the day, so had a feel for what the university is about in that regard. Here is what I observed from being in Dan's classroom and also hanging out with some of his more advanced students after class: Dan was not just inspirational for these young adults who want to work for change -- he focused on how politicians and governmental agencies work and how to influence them — in detail. I am sure that many, many of his ex-students look back on his classes as professionals today and are grateful for his mentorship and detailed teaching.

His legacy will live on.

—Bill Allayaud



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## REMEMBRANCES - CONTINUED

I FIRST MET DAN WHEN WE WERE STUDENTS AT Harvard doing working against the Vietnam War and for education reform. We stayed in touch all these years. I've been a community organizer all these years too so we had some things in common all these years. In the CBG newsletter I followed Dan and his colleagues work for nuclear safety at many locations and environmental work.

Dan had a bit of the manner of an Old Testament prophet. He kept at justice work relentlessly....the words indefatigable and poignant come to mind. But he regularly took the time to be out in nature, out in the country and he loved doing that too.

In 2022 for our 50th College Reunion, I organized one of the events called, "Activism During Harvard and Activism After Harvard". Of course Dan could have been at either part of this, but the "Activism After Harvard" was more important and that's where he stood and walked a path for justice. He led a BIG life and will be missed.

—**Lewis Finfer**, Massachusetts Action for Justice Director and Community Organizer, Boston Desegregation and Busing Initiative Co-Chair



Sometimes in life, providence moves, and we find ourselves in the presence of and inspired by an individual who's both singular in person and purpose. In 2022, then serving as Chair of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, I met Dan when he testified before the Board on behalf of the citizens who were rightfully concerned about the contamination of the Santa Susana Field Lab. But not until I was removed from the Board for openly disagreeing with the secretly negotiated agreements for the cleanup, did I closely ally with Dan, CBG and others who were advocating for a full cleanup.

For over 45 years, Dan was tireless and ever diligent in championing the cleanup of the Santa Susana Field Lab. Like Gandhi, Dan was driven by right livelihood. He lived a life guided by principle in pursuit of alleviating suffering for those who had been harmed in this case by corporate and government inaction, irresponsibility, and malpractice. He was relentless in his search for the truth. No one could match his technical brilliance at analyzing mountains of deceptive data and misinformation produced over decades by bureaucratic ineptitude and corporate malfeasance. His analyses were meticulous and precise, and his presentations were flawless, not to be refuted.

Dan led a simple, quiet life. He lived in a cabin in the woods, wore flannel shirts and blue jeans, used a wood burning stove, gardened in competition with forest critters, and could often be found using a chain saw to clear debris after storms.

Unbeknownst to many, he suffered quietly from an ailment that eventually took his life. But he continued to work with unwavering determination and courage. We are forever indebted to his unflagging leadership, nurturing guidance, technical expertise, and strategic brilliance. I will forever cherish our friendship and the time we spent together.

—**Larry Yee**, Former Chair of the LA Regional Water Board and retired from the University of CA

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IT'S VERY HARD IN JUST A FEW WORDS TO CAPTURE Dan Hirsch: Brilliant and strategic and fearless, single-minded and serious, relentlessly committed to a better, peaceful, nuclear energy-free world. That we haven't gotten there yet is no fault of his—far from it—but it pained him deeply.

He had a comprehensive knowledge of the issues, the numbers, the risks, and the fatal flaws at the heart of the nuclear power industry since its inception. Given all this, he understood that compromise on nuclear energy is an oxymoron.

Dan was kind, generous, honest, and indefatigable, and his efforts over decades on behalf of others never ceased. Time and again communities sought his aid and advice, and when he could, he gave it, as he did to me. He was the smartest person in whatever hearing room he was in, and over the years he was in too many to count. I never doubted his ability to answer any question of substance in any meeting we attended—ever.

For me, Dan was a mentor and friend from the early 1980's when I was a young lawyer with the Center for Law in the Public Interest, immersed in fighting Diablo Canyon. A decade later we worked together to stop the Ward Valley low level radioactive dumpsite that threatened to contaminate the Colorado River, and, in 2004, we sued and won to prevent a superficial cleanup of the infamous Santa Susana Field Lab site—a battle that, to Dan's frustration, disbelief, and dismay, continues today.

We all understand that the current state of the world, in so many ways, isn't what we've hoped and worked to achieve, with a federal government ruled by resentment, cruelty, chaos, and a contempt for the United States Constitution. And in what turned out to be my final conversations with Dan, he expressed clearly his own disappointment.

But here's the essential message for all of us: To his final days,

through fires, floods, illness, and political upheaval, he kept fighting, and that is his charge. All of us need to stand up, speak out, and be heard in the struggle for a healthy, humane planet. It's a battle we have to win.

I'll always remember, and be grateful that I knew, Dan Hirsch. He was the conscience of the movement for nuclear sanity. He can never be replaced, but he will never be forgotten.

—Joel Reynolds, Natural Resources Defense Council



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DAN AND I GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER WHILE SHOVELING MUD FOR ABOUT FOUR HOURS ON A WET winter's day. A landslide had blocked his road and I had said that if he ever needed help I'd be there. So we shoveled and talked, took a few breaks and talked some more. We cleared the road and became friends. He shared some of his past, pulled up a song from his phone, and told a few jokes. He listened to my tales as well.

Over the last few years we repeated that routine, clearing fallen trees, stacking wood. But the most enjoyable time was our hikes. Dan knew the Santa Cruz Mountains like the back of his hand and he showed me beautiful places I had never seen before. While some of his stories included famous people and historically significant events, it was when he talked about the El Salvadoran family, particularly Irene, that his tone shifted. He spoke like a proud father of this child he had helped raise. And he cherished stories about Tyrone and helping this young boy grow into a man.

Dan's brilliant mind was matched by his physical strength. I could barely keep up with his shoveling prowess or his hiking. He pushed his body as much as he pushed his mind—an example for others to work hard. Dan's moral clarity was a guidepost to questions I had for him.

He always sought truth over dogma. As a young man, Dan took the Shakertown Pledge—a commitment to an ecologically sound life and to live a life of creative simplicity. That depth of character is rare. I will miss Dan's brilliant recall of facts and history, his power and eloquence of oratory, his compassion, his wry humor, and his walks of exploration. But mostly I will miss the neighbor up the hill who could use my help every once in a while.

—Rick Moran, friend

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## REMEMBRANCES - CONTINUED

I CAME REGULARLY TO CALIFORNIA TO VISIT LAURA Huxley, my aunt and Aldous Huxley's widow, from 1968 till her death in 2007. For Laura, Dan was one of the family. I met him often and got to know him well. We have known each other and kept on meeting through the upheavals and the formidable changes of our era.

I first met Dan in the early seventies. Laura was the author of *You are not the Target*, a self-help book that had become a best seller a few years earlier. She would do her "recipes for living and loving" with a group of young and intelligent people. Dan was part of the group. They would meet in the Beverly Hills gardens, the ones with a fountain in the middle. She would make big use of all kinds of techniques. One was what she called "the box". One person, the subject, would lie on the floor (in this case, the grass), and the others would hold him or her down with their hands, locking the subject's arms, legs, and head. At first they would press heavily, and this would evoke the rage of the subject, who would scream and pant; then they would give in a bit, until the subject would finally erupt and be free of all the blocks. A strongly cathartic and intense exercise, useful to explode repressed anger. Imagine doing that in the Beverly Hills public gardens. What would the passers-by think? One time a police car stopped, and the policeman came out and walked towards us. Promptly Dan stepped up and went to talk with him. Laura continued without ever minding the policeman. Later Dan told us he explained what was happening, and the policeman understood. Not only did he accept the idea, but he said, maybe we policemen should try it. With no hesitation Dan invited him to the group. Well, perhaps it was not appropriate. Those were the days when such things could happen.

Another time, when Dan was visiting Laura at her Hollywood house, and I was also there, Daniel Berrigan turned up. He was a Jesuit priest, who, during the Vietnam years, would burn draft cards, lead protests and get into trouble with the police. He was fiercely protesting the war. He also happened to be a friend of Dan. I was struck by the warmth and intelligence that radiated from him. Not one of your usual protesters. At that time Dan had become a Gandhian, was living very simply, and was becoming more politicized.

Later, I became aware that an important relationship with a woman had flourished in his life. I remember visiting him with Laura. And I was moved by the beauty of his dream, of living simply, of having found the love of his life in a relationship of sharing, rigorously following high ethical principles, eating vegetarian and being close to nature. Little did we know about the future. That dream was later shattered by illness, and Dan suffered from the loss for the rest of his life.

As the years went by, Dan kept supporting Laura, and Laura kept supporting him. She told me that even though Dan was not a lawyer, he knew more than most lawyers did—by testimony of the lawyers themselves. He would find the tricky aspect of a contract in no time or anticipate the unpredictable consequences of an agreement. He would instantly see what

could go wrong. His mind raced so fast I found it hard to keep up.

I also heard Dan lecturing in a small venue on Wilshire Blvd. He made it very clear why nuclear plants are dangerous: they could be easy terrorist targets. Bomb them, and millions could die in the explosion. A great lecture. I turned, and I looked at the audience. Among them, a couple of movie stars I had seen a few days before on TV. I could see how people of all kinds loved and respected him.

One day I went to UCLA to do some research (no internet yet in those years, and no cell phones). While I was away, Laura, already quite frail, had what looked like a stroke. Dan came to look for me but did not know where I was on campus. So he went first to the research library, where I would most likely be. He searched all five floors of this big building looking for me everywhere. He went to the Powell library, the student shop, the cafés, and could not find me. At last he found me in the medical library, a rather unlikely place for me to be. That was Dan: looking for me in each single place I could possibly be, leaving no stone unturned. I felt that for him it was a way of life: through perseverance and thoroughness you reach your aim.

My last meeting was a few years ago, after Laura's death. He was finally in good shape (his health later degraded), and we had a walk together in Santa Monica. He apologized for having been rough with me at times: it was because it was of his illness, he said, and now he felt so much better. But he hadn't been, I told him. We always got along very well. However, I know that at times he could become unpopular. When I remember him, I think of the Latin saying "*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*", meaning "Truth is a dearer friend than Plato" or, interpreting, "I will tell you an unpopular truth even if it makes you uncomfortable, because truth is what I care for above all else."

I remember him fondly: the gently ironic look that would see through you, his fierce honesty, his unwavering search for justice, his uncompromising stance: this is what I treasured in him and always will.

—Piero Ferrucci



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TODAY WE REMEMBER AND HONOR DEAR SAINTLY Dan. He was brilliant in all ways with a remarkable full life which cannot be summarized in a short letter. Volumes would be needed. He worked unselfishly and nonstop on what he knew and believed to his dying day.

St. Dan sacrificed his life beyond mere mortals. At a young age he recognized he lived a privileged life. At a ripe college-age he took a vow of poverty to dedicate his life to noble causes and humanity to make the world a sustainable, healthier, and more equitable place. He could easily hang with the likes of Aldous Huxley, his wife Laura, Daniel Ellsberg, and many other renowned, respected, and important folks who made an impact for good. He worked tirelessly to end the war in Viet Nam. He organized and sustained the Committee to Bridge the Gap because he knew organizing and activism were essential to correct the wrongs of greedy corporations, fat cats, and political lackeys. Working on a lifelong, never-ending quest of many little known or unpopular issues along with nationally recognized controversies. I'd nominate him for Sainthood...but humility and humbleness were his traits. Public recognition, and awards made him recoil. He dedicated himself to education, activism, and passing his torch through his interns and by example. No job was beneath him even cleaning up goat excrement at the Quaker Center. Sadly, this work eventually cost him quality of life as well as his life from contracting Q-fever.

What kept St. Dan going when an issue seemed lost and futile? Sheer willpower and determination even when he had his doubts of success. He knew what was in front of him was essential and needed sustained activism. Undeterred he'd put one foot in front of the other to keep going, even at the end of his life when pain racked his body.

On a personal note, Dan had a big heart and was empathetic to a fault. He was always concerned about my family's activities and health. He always wanted to help however he could. We enjoyed hiking together all around his mountain. Also memorable was working together trying to figure out how to get his water system functioning, making sure there was adequate fire clearance around his house, getting the sink to drain, and other important mundane tasks around his house was a side of St. Dan that was heartfelt and down to earth. I was so fortunate to be in the presence of St. Dan's brilliance, humanity, and activism.

St. Dan is impossible to replace. Truly one in a million. Many folks will need to step up to pick up where he left off. Fortunately, this is in part the case and his life's work will carry on through the Committee to Bridge the Gap along with his spoken and written documents. We all carry on St. Dan's legacy and must continue to do so. All my love my brother St. Dan. Rest in Peace for your life's dedication to humanity and the planet.

—Ron Pomerantz, CBG Board Member

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Dan Hirsch was a noble man who in some ways lived the life that Jesus lived. He was highly intelligent, and dedicated his life with a passion to helping the general population and politicians in the US to understand and to avoid the genetic and carcinogenic dangers posed by radioactive isotopes produced in nuclear reactors. He also participated in many forums around the nation taking on the nuclear industry and its consistent lying and, shall I say evil deeds and he was so bright and well informed that they had no hope in opposing him.

He lived a very quiet and dedicated life and was very close to Dr. Richard Saxon, a wonderful medic, and his wife Pauline. The planet cannot afford to lose such people—few and far between in the general population. We will miss him enormously.

—Helen Caldicott, physician, author, and a founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility



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IN JEWISH TRADITION, A RIGHTEOUS PERSON IS DESCRIBED AS SOMEONE WHO “WALKS UPRIGHTLY, ACTS justly, and speaks truth in his heart.” Dan Hirsch was a righteous person.

Dan was a dear friend. He was also a teacher who taught me justice, a mentor who modeled truth, and a political sensei who insisted that I maintain a posture of integrity in my political pursuits. Even though I haven't seen Dan in over 40 years, he has been with me throughout my political and personal journey. And he will continue to be with me as that journey continues to unfold in these complex and challenging times. His memory is a blessing.

—Jonathan Jacoby, Founding Executive Director, The New Israel Fund

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## REMEMBRANCES - CONTINUED

I FIRST MET DAN IN THE FALL OF 2014, AT MY VERY first SSFL public meeting. I was there with five other local moms—each of us questioning how our children were all diagnosed with rare and aggressive cancers while living so close to each other. We came looking for answers. We wanted to know if the toxic and radioactive contamination from the SSFL could be to blame.

Dan was there. He was livid. State scientists had just told us that there was "no risk" from the site's contamination—that any pollution leaving the SSFL from wind, rain, or wildfires—did so at levels too low to threaten human health. Dan pointed out that their own data contradicted their claim. I remember feeling intimidated at his outrage. But now, looking back with

everything I've learned, I realize that his indignation was the only sane, moral response.

That's the heart of Dan Hirsch's legacy. He stood in the gap for our community—fearlessly confronting negligent agencies and powerful polluters who would rather spend millions on lawyers, lobbyists, and greenwashing than take responsibility and clean up the site.

Dan was a force of nature. He never compromised when it came to protecting our health and our children's future. Even when it cost him time, energy, and peace, he fought on. We hope to honor him by carrying out the work he began.

—**Melissa Bumstead**, Founder and Co-director at Parents Against SSFL

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Dan has come to Redwoods Monastery for more than 30 years. We have been always impressed by his integrity, his intelligence and his selfless commitment for peace, and his honesty towards the 'other'. His faithful friendship remains with us as a witness of hope and commitment to our planet and to humanity. We honor him for who he was and what he gave to so many people.

—**Sr. Veronique Geeroms**

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ON JULY 19, 2025, THE WORLD LOST DANIEL OREN HIRSCH—A MAN WHOSE LIFE was defined not by titles or accolades but by principle, conviction, and an unwavering belief in humanity. Hirsch's passing marks more than the end of a life. It marks the closing of a chapter written by a giant who dared to think globally, act morally, and live intentionally.

Hirsch's philanthropy was borderless. His estate is a study in global solidarity, designed with the precision of someone who believed that every dollar has a moral trajectory. Organizations like Doctors Without Borders, GiveDirectly, and the Against Malaria Foundation stand at the center of his philanthropic design. Each organization represents a fight that Hirsch considered central to humanity's survival—the fight against disease, the fight against poverty, and the fight for life-saving humanitarian aid.

They are not large bureaucracies but intimate communities of service—feeding the hungry, sheltering the vulnerable, educating the young. By supporting them, Hirsch affirmed a timeless truth: justice is not abstract. It begins in neighborhoods, in kitchens, in shelters, and in classrooms. This balance between the global and the local, between structural change and personal compassion, is what made Hirsch's vision so powerful. He understood that the fight for justice must be waged everywhere, at every level.

Hirsch's life and legacy arrive as both a gift and a challenge. His generosity reminds us that resources can—and must—be instruments of justice. His planning demonstrates that philanthropy is not an afterthought but an intentional practice. His values remind us that the work of justice is never finished, only inherited by the next generation.

In our era of inequality, climate crisis, and social fragmentation, Hirsch offers us a model. He teaches that intellectuals can be activists and that one life, lived with integrity, can become a multiplier of hope. Hirsch's estate plan reads less like a legal document and more like a moral blueprint—a declaration that every act of compassion is a building block for a more humane society.

Daniel Oren Hirsch is gone, but the thunder of his impact remains. His life calls us to stand taller, dream bigger, and give more boldly. That is the enduring legacy of a giant. As we honor his passing, we must also accept the responsibility he leaves us: to live with conviction, to give with intention, and to believe that our lives can be instruments of change.

—**Tyrone Taborn**, excerpt from *US Black Engineer & Information Technology*

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## OUR CONVERSATION REMEMBERING DAN

Pauline Saxon and Susan Clark, CBG Board Members

**Pauline:** I loved Dan, he was like another son to me and of course I admired him – he was so smart. I met him at UCLA when he was 21 and just graduated. He was slender, good-looking and kind of shy. He was the same age as one of my sons, but they never became friends.

**Susan:** Yes, he loved and admired you and was always very protective of you. I think you were another mother. You and Richard introduced us in 1988 at a PSR fundraiser in your garden and Helen Caldicott was there. Three years later he was our mentor for Americans for a Safe Future. When we went to hearings in Sacramento about Ward Valley, he was like a conductor, and we were the players. He either gave us our remarks or checked what we had written. He was the smartest person in the room and a force to be reckoned with.

**Pauline:** You know Susan, I'm 101. I don't remember a lot of things but as you tell it, some of it is coming back.

**Susan:** Do you recall telling Dan, "You can't go on TV in those jeans and a plaid shirt. Susan, you have got to take him shopping."

**Pauline:** Yes, I sort of do. Oh, he must have been thrilled!

**Susan:** Indeed. We met at a small men's store in Studio City. "Dan, you look like you're going to have oral surgery!" "Worse", he said. He politely waved off the clerk, crossed to the back, sorted through the rack, and found a brown tweed jacket. It fit. In 30 minutes, we were out the door with that jacket, two shirts, one tie, one belt, two pairs of slacks, one pair of socks and a pair of shoes. With a grin he said, "that's done."

**Pauline:** It was probably worn for the rest of his life. I remember I told him, "You've got this nice house in the woods but if you want to meet a nice woman and have a good relationship, you have got to get rid of those filing cabinets."

**Susan:** Well, he heard you and a shed was built that housed most of those filing cabinets.

**Pauline:** I remember how well he took care of his mother. That was the compassionate part of Dan. He seemed to have a lot of compassion for the world but not too much for individuals.

**Susan:** His son, Tyrone Tyborne, wrote, "his legacy arrives as both a gift and a challenge." I got the gift of his friendship, trust, humor—all were a lifeline to me in the early years of widowhood and later in Covid. On our many phone visits he began by saying, "How are you? Really?" And we talked about what he'd seen on his walks in the woods, our favorite Russian authors, the state of the world, good and bad, family, our health (or lack of) and the arc of our lives. He had a dry, irreverent sense of humor which made me laugh.

**Pauline:** Yes, he could be very funny. He got along very well with Richard and probably Alex too.

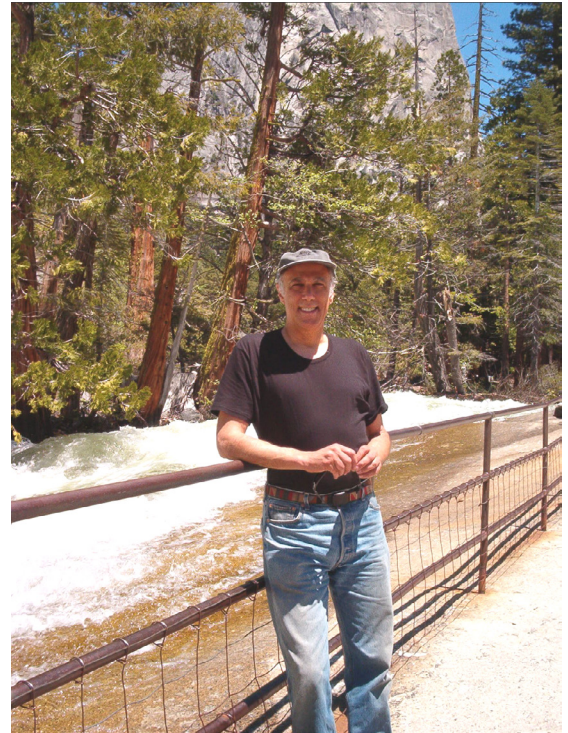
**Susan:** He did. We had many fundraisers here for CBG. Dan always arrived early, requested water and a quiet room. When the guests had eaten and had a visit, Alex would go and knock on the door and say, "Okay, you're up". He would walk into the room, nod to the group and begin talking about the latest issue of CBG. He was brilliant. After everyone had left, he relaxed, sat down, ate and told funny stories. He had no small talk unless he felt comfortable.

**Pauline:** I worried about Dan alone in that house near the woods and up that terrible road. Especially when he'd say he was sick. I didn't understand what it was. I thought he might be exaggerating.

**Susan:** No, he was in pain most of the time and worked long hours to distract himself from it. He didn't sleep much. One day in LA after a tough session preparing for a hearing at UCLA about the Colorado river, we went for Chinese food—his favorite. He looked exhausted. I said, "Can you give me 90 minutes?" "Oh, I've so much work to do." Silence. "Ok." We drove to Disney Hall, I had the tickets, sat down three minutes before the lights dimmed. He was mumbling, "I shouldn't be here, I have to work." The concert was Schumann and Mendelsson-piano and violin. After 20 minutes his face relaxed, eyes half closed and a small smile. Neither of us spoke until the end. He just said, "thank you."

**Pauline:** Oh, I never knew that. He must've trusted you and you knew him better than I did. I do miss him.

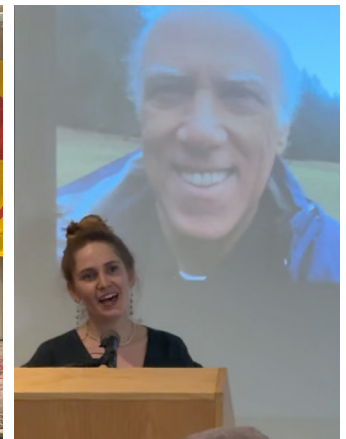
**Susan:** I miss him too and always will. I do remember all of his fantastic accomplishments but mostly I want to remember our dear friend.



# GATHERING TO CELEBRATE DAN HIRSCH

ON NOVEMBER 8 IN SIMI VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, CBG held a memorial in remembrance of Dan. It was a moving reunion of many of the activists who had worked for or with Dan and CBG over the last 50 years. The audience of nearly 100 people filled the room and Zoom streaming hosted another 60 people. We are grateful to those who spoke, both live and via pre-recorded video: Catherine Lincoln, Congressman Brad Sherman, Warren Olney, Joe Lyou, Audrey

Ford, Diane D'Arrigo, Michael Dieden, Anthony Zepeda, Haakon Williams, Denise Duffield, Jodie Evans, Arjun Makhijani, Laura Lake, and Bill Magavern. Special thanks to Jack Miles (our gracious memorial emcee), Susan Clark and Dana Gluckstein for their essential support, and Cindi, Fred, and Devyn Gortner, without whom the memorial would not have come together. A recording of the memorial is available upon request; please reach out if you would like to see it.



Top: Congressman Brad Sherman speaking at Dan's memorial. Middle left: Melissa Bumstead, Warren Olney, Cindi Gortner, Jeni Knack, and Catherine Lincoln. Middle right: A group seated at Dan's memorial. Lower left: Marie Mason and Holly Huff, co-founders Rocketdyne Cleanup Coalition. Lower center: CBG President Anthony Zepeda speaking at Dan's memorial, as CBG Board Chair Jack Miles and CBG's new Executive Director Haakon Williams look on. Lower right: CBG's Deputy Director Audrey Ford singing.

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## PEACE, AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES: CBG LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

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*By Haakon Williams*

ONE OF DAN'S PARTING WISHES WAS THAT WE WHO remain at CBG have the opportunity, if we wish, to carry on the work. Our Board and staff are unanimous: we are dedicated to continuing the mission of the organization to which Dan devoted his life. With this decision comes a host of questions, chief among them: What existing projects will we stay involved with? What new projects might we take on?

As you can read elsewhere in this newsletter, we have done significant work this year on SSFL, radiation safety standards, and high-level nuclear waste. We have also continued to work on other major projects that were in process when Dan left us. On Hunters Point, we continue to monitor the Navy's retesting program, and are providing research support for an ongoing lawsuit by UC Berkeley's Environmental Law Clinic against the Navy for its severely inadequate cleanup. On Diablo Canyon, we provided public comments in a November California Coastal Commission hearing, urging the Commissioners to deny PG&E's application for a Coastal

Development Permit for continued operation of its aged nuclear plant located in an active earthquake zone with an embrittled reactor vessel. Finally, as the Trump administration greatly exacerbates the nuclear power push that began under the Biden administration, our nuclear greenwashing project is moving to the forefront. We are on the verge of publishing a major work exposing the cozy interconnections and conflicts of interest that are driving the hype.

The world we face today is, in some ways, quite similar to the world of 1970 from which CBG was birthed, which is to say: the nuclear arms race continues to be felt here at home. Between the deregulation of radioactivity, the spectre of nuclear power expansion, and the ongoing failure to deal with nuclear waste, there is no shortage of grave nuclear threats. And yet, we face a world today that is, in many ways, very different from the world of 1970; thus, we will be looking at ways to refresh and recalibrate our mission with new projects, new Archimedean levers and places to stand from which to move the world.

Over the winter, we will be contemplating the direction of our future work, and look forward to telling you about this as it unfolds. We hope you will walk alongside us in this next chapter of CBG's story, as you have walked alongside Dan all these years.

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## STAFF UPDATES

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**Over the decades, many remarkable people have worked with and learned from Dan. Today's CBG staff stands humbly in that lineage, with those of us on program staff now having trained with Dan for a combined total of 20 years.**

**Haakon Williams** has worked with CBG since 2018 and now serves as the organization's Executive Director. Since 2023 he has lived with his family among the redwoods of coastal Mendocino.

**Catherine Lincoln** has worked with CBG since 2007 and currently serves as Chief Operations Officer. She lives in Santa Rosa with her husband.

**Audrey Ford** lives and works in Santa Cruz and has been with CBG for seven years. Currently she is focused on directing the move into CBG's new office and spearheading the Archive Initiative.

**Cameron Kuta** has been working with CBG since 2022 and lives in Santa Cruz. He works on all of CBG's projects and lately has been busy with the move out of Dan's house.

**Anthony Zepeda** has worked with CBG since 2002, as an intern, webmaster, a board member and now as CBG's President. Tony, an attorney, lives in Chatsworth where he is raising two children alongside his wife, Cassandra.



*Haakon Williams, Catherine Lincoln, Audrey Ford, Cam Kuta, Anthony Zepeda, and Alex Dodd. (Not pictured: Laura Giges)*

**Alex Dodd** is based in Oakland and has now been with CBG for four years. He is the lead analyst on CBG's nuclear greenwashing project and CBG's work on the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Superfund site.

**Laura Giges** has been CBG's bookkeeper and financial guru for 25 years. Laura lives with her husband in Santa Cruz.

For us, Dan was a daily collaborator, guide, and friend; we miss him terribly. When Dan passed in July, his work, at last, was done; however, as Dan would be the first to say, the work is far from complete. We are both invigorated and honored by the opportunity to carry it on.

# MOVING OUT, AND ONWARD

*By Audrey Ford*

THE PAST FEW MONTHS have been challenging, to say the least. As many may know, Dan's beautiful home in the Ben Lomond redwoods served as the CBG headquarters for the last 20 or so years. We all felt deeply connected to that place, and living there in the peace and beauty of those quiet, abundant woods was one of Dan's lifelong dreams fulfilled. Speaking truthfully, saying goodbye to that treasured space has been nothing short of heartbreaking. But in honoring Dan's final wishes, it became clear that the right path forward was to let go of the home and ensure that the funds be distributed to the charities of his choosing.

Once the decision was made, we were faced with the daunting task of packing up and relocating a lifetime's worth of dedicated peace-work and simple living. What followed were three frenzied months of navigating movers, house cleaners, painters, realtors, roofers, inspectors, foundation assessors, electricians, prospective buyers...the list goes on, and on...and on. I've lost count entirely of the number of donation runs that were made, but we took extra care to ensure that all that was not needed avoided a life in a landfill and ended up in the hands of communities in need, including Santa Cruz Food Not Bombs, Breathe California, Farmworker

Families, Santa Cruz Animal Shelter, the Watsonville Community Health Clinic, and Habitat for Humanity ReStore, to name a few.

The archives were a different story. Dan's many years of dedicated service resulted in quite the accumulation of papers and files – a collection that we at CBG now have the immense benefit, and responsibility, of stewarding. These precious materials are a chronicle of CBG's many hard-fought battles, historically significant public interest campaigns that involved not only Dan but many of you reading this newsletter. The CBG archives are a priceless resource for our ongoing work, and contain vital insights for the next generations of activists. That

work, those stories, deserve to be preserved and made available for reference by those who seek to know Dan – or follow in his footsteps. Digitizing and cataloging three sheds and half of a home's worth of files is no small task, and we could use your help. To kickstart the CBG Archives Initiative, we have received a very

generous \$10,000 gift from an anonymous donor, who told us that their hope with this gift is to show others that one way to honor Dan's passing is by giving money to the organization to which he devoted his life. If you are able and would like to contribute to matching this \$10,000 grant, we would be moved, and grateful.



*Dan's home in the redwoods. Top: Moving out of Dan's living room.*



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN  
NUCLEAR DANGERS & A SAFE,  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

December 2025

## A Letter to Help the Year Begin

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JACK MILES  
Board Chair

ANTHONY ZEPEDA  
President

PAULINE SAXON

SUSAN CLARK

CINDI GORTNER

RON POMERANTZ

CATHERINE LINCOLN

Dear Friends,

For the first time in nearly five decades, CBG closes the year without its leader, Dan Hirsch. Dan's passing this past summer left a hole in the heart of CBG, but it also drew our organization closer in ways that Dan had always hoped to see. CBG's board and staff collaborated in an unprecedented fashion to chart our path forward and bring closure to important projects.

Dan always wrote his letters to "help" end the year. This year, we honor that tradition by helping him close it one final time and step toward the year ahead. As we do, we carry forward the values that defined his life's work: an unwavering pursuit of truth, a deep faith in humanity, and a steadfast commitment to protecting the vulnerable. These principles will continue to guide CBG in all that we do.

In the months since Dan's passing, I have thought about the mythological story of Sisyphus, who was condemned by the gods to forever push a boulder up a mountain. As Sisyphus would reach the summit, the boulder would slip from his hands and roll down to the plain below, where he would return to push the rock uphill again for eternity.

Over the years, CBG undertook many campaigns with Dan leading the way. Time and again, we approached the summit only to find that final victory remained just out of reach. In the face of discouragement, however, CBG always persisted with determination. Dan often reminded us of Camus' reinterpretation of the Sisyphus story, arguing that "the struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart." In that spirit, we press on, knowing that there is meaning not only in the outcomes we seek but in the act of striving toward them.

This was Dan's way; victories were rarely final, and some fights had to be taken up again and again. Unlike Sisyphus, though, Dan's work was always destined to come to a close, and there is a measure of solace in that he can now rest in peace. CBG's work, on the other hand, continues. We step behind the boulder for another push toward the summit, carrying with us Dan's spirit and his unwavering commitment to public health and environmental safety.

In this newsletter, you will find project updates prepared by CBG staff. The updates show our dedicated efforts over the last year and that there is much left to be done. We hope you keep faith with us that our good work must not end, and that we also must, once again, humbly rededicate ourselves to truth and the betterment of humanity.

We wish you a Happy New Year, filled with blessings and joy.

Anthony Zepeda



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN  
NUCLEAR DANGERS & A SAFE,  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

# COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

## ANNOUNCING THE CBG ARCHIVES INITIATIVE

Dear Friends,

CBG has a deep commitment to protecting the world and future generations from nuclear and other threats. Since Dan's passing, the staff of environmental activists he trained is continuing his legacy and working hard daily to prevent the deadly growth of nuclear risks.

We are also launching a project to preserve and make available the archives from Dan's lifetime of work, which are a priceless resource for the public interest campaigns to come (see p. 18 for more details).

Your contribution to continuing CBG's important work is crucial, especially now. Please take a moment to show your support – there are lots of ways!

CBG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization—donations are tax-deductible.

1. Send a check using the enclosed donation envelope
2. Give online at [committeetobridgethegap.org](http://committeetobridgethegap.org). We take Paypal and credit cards!
3. Transfer stock or securities
4. Leave something in your will
5. Make CBG a beneficiary of your IRA or (if over 70 ½) make a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD) from your IRA.
6. Sign up for Action Alerts by sending your email address to [committeetobridgethegap@gmail.com](mailto:committeetobridgethegap@gmail.com) or introduce someone else to CBG.

Thank You!

Catherine Lincoln, COO

**Questions? Call (831) 336-8003**

**or email [committeetobridgethegap@gmail.com](mailto:committeetobridgethegap@gmail.com) for more information**

### COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP

PO Box 4

Ben Lomond, CA 95005-0004

(831) 336-8003

[www.committeetobridgethegap.org](http://www.committeetobridgethegap.org)

[committeetobridgethegap@gmail.com](mailto:committeetobridgethegap@gmail.com)

Anthony Zepeda, *President*

Haakon Williams, *Executive Director*

Catherine Lincoln, *Chief Operations Officer*

Audrey Ford, *Deputy Director*

Cam Kuta, *Project Manager*

Alex Dodd, *Assistant Director*

Laura Giges, *Bookkeeper*

Megan Garrett, *Newsletter & Graphic Design*

**INTERNS:** Gabriela Arguello, Nicolás Brosnan, Olivia Dietrich, Hayden Galvan, Kayla Galvez, Trey Guzman, Michaela Levine, Jaden Parker, Anthony Taylor, Katherine Wu

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jack Miles, *Board Chair*

Anthony Zepeda

Pauline Saxon

Susan Clark

Cindi Gortner

Ron Pomerantz

Catherine Lincoln

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