



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

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COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP IN THE NEWS

In the aftermath of the Japanese nuclear disaster CBG's Dan Hirsch has been in demand by the media and policy makers. A few of his appearances include:

- MSNBC with Lawrence O'Donnell
- NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams
- Testified before the California Senate Select Committee on implications of Japanese accident for California reactors.
- Radio includes speaking on KPCC, KGO, KCRW, Radio New Zealand and on "To the Point" and Which Way LA" (both hosted by Warren Olney).
- March 20, 2011 editorial in the *Sacramento Bee* (with S. David Freeman), other interviews with *Associated Press* (AP), *Los Angeles Times*, and *San Diego Union*

Check our new and improved website at
www.committeetobridgethegap.org
It's a great way to keep abreast of breaking developments and CBG in the news.

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JAPANESE NUCLEAR DISASTER DANTE COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED SUCH AN INFERNO

by CBG President Dan Hirsch

ON MARCH 11, A POWERFUL EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI destroyed offsite power to the atomic reactor complex at Fukushima, Japan, and damaged its backup diesel generators. Without power to run the pumps, three reactors lost cooling, resulting in their fuel melting and radioactivity being released in copious amounts. Cooling to storage pools filled with intensely radioactive spent fuel failed as well, with the fuel apparently catching fire. Immense radiation doses were reported nearby and contamination spread over large areas of land and sea.



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HISTORIC CLEANUP AGREEMENTS SIGNED FOR NUCLEAR MELTDOWN SITE

**Extraordinary Victory,
Culminating 31 Years of Struggle**

ON DECEMBER 6, THE STATE of California, the United States Department of Energy (DOE), and NASA executed legally binding and enforceable agreements for the cleanup of radioactive and chemical

contamination at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL). Bridge the Gap and the local community, in alliance with a set of courageous public officials, have fought for three decades against great

odds and much resistance for this remarkable achievement.

At their core, the agreements require DOE and NASA to clean up ALL the soil contamination they created, with narrow exceptions

continued on page 2



Reuters: Kim Kyung-Hoon

**CBG Discloses
Failure of
US Radiation
Monitoring System**

See page 5

HISTORIC CLEANUP - CONTINUED

for detection limits, Endangered Species Act concerns, and Native American artifacts. Any contamination above background is to be cleaned up; contamination can't be left in place by the trick of averaging with lower concentrations elsewhere. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is to perform independent radiation monitoring for the cleanup of the DOE site—determining local background, identifying contamination onsite, and after cleanup, confirming it has all been remediated. All radioactive waste must go to a licensed “low-level” radioactive waste (LLRW) disposal facility—no more of the past efforts to dump such wastes in municipal landfills or other facilities not licensed for LLRW. The Agreements embody the commitments for which the affected community has long yearned, and so diligently worked.

SITE OF PARTIAL MELTDOWN

SSFL is a former nuclear reactor and rocket testing facility in the hills overlooking Simi Valley and the western San Fernando Valley, about 30 miles from downtown Los Angeles. Established in the 1940s, over the decades it housed ten atomic reactors, a plutonium fuel fabrication facility, a “hot lab” for cutting up irradiated nuclear fuel, and tens of thousands of rocket tests. At least four of the reactors suffered accidents. In 1959, the Sodium Reactor Experiment (SRE) suffered a partial meltdown; radioactivity was intentionally vented into the atmosphere for weeks. The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) kept the accident secret from the public, which is how it remained for twenty years. In 1979, Bridge the Gap released to the news media a pile of AEC records and film footage of the melted core. That began a three-decade-long commitment to help the nearby community deal with the problems associated with the site.

The first goal was shutdown of nuclear activity at SSFL. CBG and others intervened in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission relicensing proceeding which eventually led to a withdrawal of the license

Community members like the Rockedyne Cleanup Coalition, the Susan Knolls Homeowners and Teens Against Toxins never gave up



State Senator Fran Pavely's District Director Rebekah Rodriguez-Lynn, Dan Hirsch, Rep. Brad Sherman, LA City Councilman Greig Smith, and Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks at the announcement of the signing of historical cleanup bill.

application and an announcement by DOE and Rocketdyne (the contractor that ran the site) that all nuclear activity would permanently cease, except for cleanup. This was a remarkable victory, perhaps the first time an unsafe DOE nuclear facility had been shut down by community resistance.

The second goal was to get an independent epidemiological study done to ascertain potential health risks. DOE had a history of suppressing or shutting down studies that found its nuclear endeavors had caused harm. The community insisted on a study truly independent of DOE, and through extraordinary organizing,

got DOE to provide more than a million dollars in funding for a study that DOE had no control over. A team from the UCLA School of Public Health labored for years and eventually issued reports

concluding that SSFL workers with higher radioactive and chemical exposures from the site had significantly elevated death rates from cancers of the lung, lymph, and blood systems. Subsequent studies by UCLA found that releases of contaminants offsite were at levels significantly above concentrations deemed acceptable by EPA, and a University of Michigan study found that incidence of some cancers increased with proximity to SSFL.

A THOROUGH CLEANUP - THE TOUGHEST BATTLE

The third goal was to force thorough cleanup of the site. This turned out to be the toughest of

all the battles. The Responsible Parties (DOE, NASA, and Boeing, which had purchased Rocketdyne) made repeated commitments that were broken, and fought intensely against having to comprehensively clean up the contamination. DOE and Boeing proposed to clean up only a small fraction of the contaminated soil. Bridge the Gap, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the City of Los Angeles had to file a federal lawsuit against these plans to walk away from most of the contamination. We won an extraordinary victory in that suit, and much credit goes to NRDC's Geoff Fettus and Joel Reynolds, and to Howard Crystal, who prosecuted the case for us.

On a parallel path, year after year, Sheila Kuehl, first as an Assemblymember and then a State Senator, introduced legislation to require SSFL be cleaned up to the most protective EPA standards. Year after year Boeing succeeded in killing the bills, until, in a final push in 2007, Senator Kuehl, and her Assembly co-author Julia Brownley, got SB990 through the Legislature and signed by the Governor. This was an astonishing victory, against very powerful adversaries, and a credit to the extraordinary efforts of Assemblymember Brownley and then-Senator Kuehl, plus the energetic work of the community.

But the fight wasn't over. Boeing, DOE and NASA resisted. They tried in negotiations over implementation of SB990 to return to the situation before the law had passed. And then another miracle occurred. Linda Adams, the Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency, made a personal commitment to the community to fight to get SSFL cleaned up, fully compliant with SB990. She poured a huge amount of political capital and energy into that fight. Along with Deputy Secretary Patty Zwartz and Rick Brausch, a Deputy Director of the Department of Toxic Substances

Control, the fight for SSFL cleanup became a top priority for these senior officials. A moral bond between the affected community and officials empowered to defend them had been created, and courageous, diligent, and constant efforts were undertaken.

BREAKTHROUGHS & VICTORIES

U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, Chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, held a hearing about SSFL cleanup in 2008 at which CBG's Dan Hirsch testified. Also testifying was a DOE official, whom Senator Boxer got to commit that DOE would comply with all state laws. Senator Boxer let DOE know she would hold it to those promises.

And then the breakthrough: DOE Secretary Steven Chu decided that any disagreements with the state about the cleanup

NUCLEAR JAPAN - CONTINUED

For people concerned with nuclear safety, the fear had always been of meltdown at a reactor. That three nuclear plants could be in trouble, however, is beyond comprehension. That spent fuel pools, containing multiple cores, could at the same time also lose cooling and the fuel burn, forcing into the environment much of their radioactivity is a disaster of unique proportions.

Pray for the Japanese. Theirs is a country that knows the consequences of the unleashed atom as does no other. Nuclear fuel, melting and burning, spreading fallout far and wide must have a special terror for them.

In America, we ignored the lessons of Three Mile Island, with industry asserting the accident was an anomaly from which they had learned. We ignored the lessons of Chernobyl, with nuclear advocates claiming “it can't happen here.” But now this disaster in Japan, a technologically advanced society using reactors built by GE, identical to 23

The Boeing Company is suing the state to block the cleanup law.

should be set aside and the focus should be on the desired end-state of the cleanup. He and Assistant Secretary Ines Triay offered to clean the site up to background. After negotiating detailed terms of a binding agreement, finally, in early December, the announcement of a signed agreement was made. NASA signed a parallel agreement for its part of the property.

The fight is not entirely over. The agreements cover the portions of SSFL that DOE and NASA control. Boeing is not yet party to a similar agreement for the remaining parts of SSFL it controls, although one must

we have running here, makes that industry mantra untenable. It is time to pull the plug on this disastrously dangerous technology.

All U.S. reactors also need offsite power to run the cooling pumps. If that power fails, in what is called a “station blackout” accident, backup diesel generators have to work. They didn't at Fukushima, and they could fail here.

For four years, for example, the San Onofre nuclear plant ran with batteries that are designed to startup the diesel generators that weren't properly connected. Four years! A couple of years later one of the diesels failed to start; because the other one was down for repairs, the reactor had no functioning backup diesel generators. A couple of years ago it was revealed that a worker at San Onofre had fabricated—for five years—hourly fire watch logs, recording fire watches that never occurred. The fire watches were supposed to compensate for San Onofre's refusal to fix dangerous flammable electrical cables that never got fixed; a fire

believe that it now sees the writing on the wall and will stop being the odd man out.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

It is an extraordinary victory. Credit must go to a group of courageous officials, who stuck their necks out for this long-suffering community. But most of the praise goes to community members, like those in the Rockedyne Clean-up Coalition, the Susana Knolls Homeowners Association, and Teens Against Toxins, many of whom, for decades, kept fighting, never gave up, and always persisted in struggling for what was right.

could take out the control wires and thus control—and cooling—of the reactor could be lost.

For eighteen months, the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant ran with key parts of its emergency core cooling system disabled, without the operators even realizing it. The plant was built initially to withstand a much smaller earthquake than eventually was shown to be possible at the site when a new fault, the Hosgri, was discovered. Three years ago an additional fault, the Shoreline, was discovered, that may intersect with the Hosgri Fault and result in an even larger quake than that for which Diablo was designed.

Nuclear plants contain one thousand times the long-lived radioactivity of the Hiroshima bomb; their spent fuel pools contain some multiple of that, several Chernobyl's worth. For that radioactivity to stay out of the environment, the fuel needs to be constantly cooled, even after the reactor's fission reaction has been shut down.

The fight isn't over. The Boeing Company has to date refused to sign a similar agreement for its remaining part of the property and is suing the state to try to block the SB990 cleanup. Ironically, while partial nuclear meltdowns are occurring in Japan, this powerful corporation without a conscience is fighting tooth-and-nail to block thorough cleanup of Los Angeles' own partial meltdown site. But those impacted by Boeing's resistance to cleaning up that contaminated site continue their long and righteous struggle, and we will continue to help them.

In the early 1980s, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission estimated that a meltdown at San Onofre could result in 130,000 immediate deaths, 300,000 cancers, and 600,000 genetic effects, for about a million killed and injured. There are huge amounts of radioactivity inside these reactors and spent fuel pools, and one can't ever permit it to escape.

The Japanese tragedy should be a wake-up call. This is simply too dangerous a technology to tolerate. It proliferates nuclear weapons; produces highly radioactive wastes dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years, for which no safe disposal method exists; is a target for terrorists; is uneconomical; and, as now shown in stark relief once again, poses an unacceptable risk of accident. It is time to “bridge the gap” between our current reliance on this unacceptably dangerous power source and a safe, renewable energy future.

Bridge the Gap continues that fight. We need to learn the lessons Fukushima so painfully teaches, and turn to a safer path.

CBG LAUNCHES TRUTH TO POWER CAMPAIGN

In January 2011, Committee to Bridge the Gap launched its “Truth to Power” campaign with S. David Freeman. CBG has been fighting the nuclear industry’s efforts at a nuclear expansion for years. At a time when the nation’s resources and energy should be concentrated on truly clean, renewable energy

sources, the Obama Administration has proposed billions and billions of dollars in loan guarantees and other handouts, and the industry propaganda machine continues to claim that nuclear power is clean, safe, and that there is nothing to worry about in terms of atomic weapons proliferation.

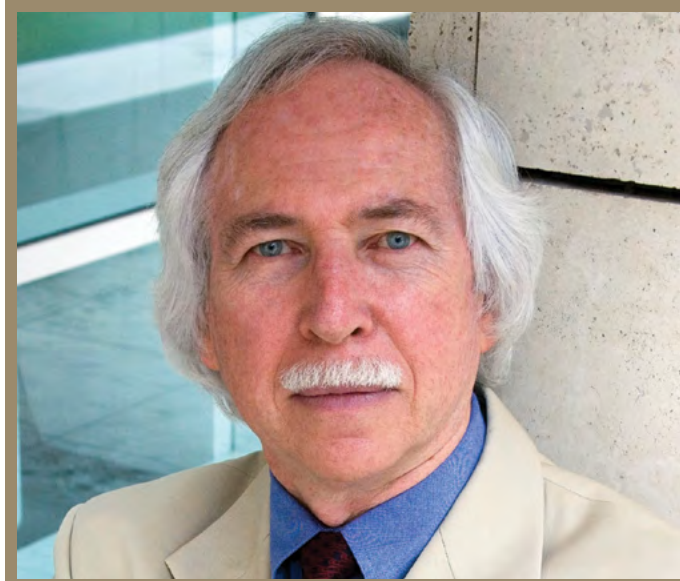
The Truth to Power campaign seeks to clearly articulate the choices we are being offered in by media and in the halls of Congress – to “pick your poison” – choose between replacing carbon dioxide with plutonium. With nuclear energy the risks of accident, terrorism, waste disposal, and proliferation of weapons are far too great, and there are sensible and safe alternatives that truly address the global warming problem. The choice must be between the sun and the wind and carbon dioxide and plutonium.

Although the need for this campaign was clear in January, the recent ongoing tragic events in Japan magnify the importance of countering the nuclear industry’s spin machine in the United States. Even as the reactor cores were melting at Fukushima, nuclear industry talking heads proliferated on media outlets, assuring the public that “it can’t happen here.” But we know that it can, and unless the public has all the facts about nuclear energy, the nuclear lobby will continue to promote these radioactive factories as a “clean and safe” solution to climate change.

The “Truth to Power Campaign” will take Hirsch and Freeman on speaking tours across the country to speak to educators, students, and local officials about the risks of nuclear energy and the clear, sensible renewable-efficient alternatives available. These tours will initially target those states that are considering licensing new or renewing nuclear plants. CBG is currently seeking grants and financial support for a full roll out of this campaign. Check our website www.committeetobridgethegap.org to stay updated on the campaign.



S. David Freeman conducted the first major study in 1973 for the Ford Foundation that showed how energy efficiency could be the most cost-effective way to reduce pollution. Former Chair of the Tennessee Valley Authority (1977-84), where he pioneered solar power and efficiency measures and shut down eight nuclear plants; former General Manager of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, where he initiated the solar program in California, implemented efficiency measures, presided over the decommissioning of the Rancho Seco Nuclear Power Plant; former head of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the New York Power Authority; featured in the film, “Who Killed the Electric Car?”; author of *Winning Our Energy Independence: An Insider Shows How*.



Meet our New Board Member JACK MILES

JACK MILES has been a friend and supporter of Bridge the Gap for 35 years. Jack is a Pulitzer-Prize-winning author (for *God: A Biography*), a MacArthur Fellow (the “Genius Award”), and currently Distinguished Professor of English and Religious Studies at the University of California, Irvine. Jack previously served on the Los Angeles Times Editorial Board (where he wrote numerous editorials opposing the then proposed Ward Valley nuclear waste dump) and as editor of the Times’ Book Review Section. We are very grateful to have him aboard.

CBG DISCLOSES FAILURE OF U.S. RADIATION MONITORING SYSTEM

AS RADIOACTIVITY SPEWED out of the damaged Japanese atomic reactors and spent fuel pools, officials in the U.S. were quick to reassure the American public that no “harmful” radiation could reach this country. What they didn’t say was that the National Academy of Sciences has repeatedly found that there is no such thing as a safe level of radiation—all radiation increases cancer risks, with more radiation producing more risk, and less radiation producing less risk, but with no threshold below which there is no risk.

And what they also didn’t say, but took Bridge the Gap to reveal, was that less than half of EPA’s radiation monitors were reported as running. Many of the broken ones had been broken for months.

Those that were working depended on sucking air through filters for three or four days, sending

them by FedEx to Alabama, where an additional day to several days are taken to measure the radioactivity, meaning there is a time delay of a week or so to produce results. Furthermore, most of one of the key

...less than half of EPA’s radiation monitors were reported as running. Many of the broken ones had been broken for months.

radionuclides, radioactive iodine, passes right through the filters and so the devices can’t provide useful readings. And there were no monitors, working or otherwise, on the California coast between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

CBG also disclosed that EPA had intended to deploy “deployable” radiation monitors, which are capable of seeing radioactive iodine, up and down the West Coast to fill in the gaps where there were

no stationary monitors, but that EPA headquarters in Washington ordered them not deployed. An EPA regional official sent out an email almost apologizing for the decision, but inexplicably, in the midst of the Japanese nuclear

disaster, the deployable monitors were ordered not deployed. There was extensive national news coverage of CBG’s disclosures.

Despite claims by EPA that radiation levels detected were “thousands of times lower than any conservative level of concern,” CBG disclosed that levels of radioactive iodine in rainwater were 25-100 times higher than EPA’s Maximum Contaminant Levels specified by the Clean Water Act. The pattern of federal government denials and bland reassurances is troubling, raising the specter of whether the Administration’s push for more taxpayer subsidies for new nuclear plants was conflicting with its obligation to provide accurate information about the potential impacts of the Japanese atomic disaster.

CBG FIGHTS EFFORTS TO WEAKEN RADIATION PROTECTION STANDARDS

IN ITS LAST FULL DAY IN office, the outgoing Bush Administration attempted to release new guidance that would have increased the permissible concentration of radioactivity in drinking water many thousand-fold. The draft Protective Action Guides (PAGs) would also have dramatically weakened requirements for long-term cleanup of contamination, allowing doses so high that, by EPA’s own estimates, one in every four people exposed would get a

cancer that they would not have gotten in the absence of the exposure. Bridge the Gap led a successful effort to get the PAGs pulled back, just before they were to be published in the Federal Register, and to push the new Administration to reconsider them. That review, alas, continues to drag on. The good news is that we have to date prevented bad PAGs from being issued. The troubling news is that EPA still hasn’t issued guidance that is affirmatively protective (i.e., that

requires drinking water to meet the Safe Drinking Water Act standards and long-term cleanup to meet Superfund standards). CBG has exposed—and pressed EPA to fix—a range of other failures to adequately protect the public from radiation exposures. Despite findings by the National Academy of Sciences that exposure to general radiation is 35% more dangerous than current official agency estimates upon which safety regulations are based, and that X-rays

and the radioactive material tritium may be 2-3 times more dangerous than general radiation, EPA has so far refused to correct its standards accordingly. Radiation continues its status as a “privileged pollutant,” allowed at risk levels that far exceed what is permissible for any other carcinogen. Occupational radiation limits, for example, are set at the equivalent of about 1000 chest X-rays per year. If workers received the permissible dose each year over 50 years, an astonishing one fourth of them would get a cancer from that exposure, according to the government’s own estimates. Yet occupational radiation limits haven’t been tightened in decades. CBG continues its fight for radiation standards that are truly protective.

TEENS AGAINST TOXINS

A Message From Devyn Gortner

AS THE FOUNDER OF THE YOUTH GROUP, TEENS AGAINST TOXINS, I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING CLOSELY WITH DAN HIRSCH FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS. WE ARE ALL OVERJOYED THAT THERE IS FINALLY A SIGNED CLEAN UP DEAL AT SSFL AND BELIEVE DAN IS DUE THE BULK OF THE CREDIT. HIS ENTHUSIASM, TENACITY, HUMILITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND DRY SENSE OF HUMOR HAVE BEEN INCREDIBLY INSPIRING TO ME AND ALL THE TEENAGERS IN MY ORGANIZATION.

For those of you unfamiliar with Teens Against Toxins, we are a youth group dedicated to the cleanup of SSFL, other polluted locations and harmful toxics in our environment. Our groups' first effort was a tongue in cheek "Bake Sale for Boeing" which raised \$99.31. We presented the check to Boeing at the SSFL site and made a YouTube video about the event which was featured on Michael Moore's website. Soon after this, one

of our teens, Robin Estrin, wrote a letter to Boeing which was featured on a number of websites including the Huffington Post. We were asked by Boeing to tour the site which was both interesting and disturbing. They tried to convince us that the greatest dangers were rattlesnakes and falling/tripping when getting out of the bus. Somehow they seemed to have forgotten about the radioactive and chemical waste we were walking near.

This past fall we joined a number of local elected officials including Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, Supervisor Linda Parks, Congressman Brad Sherman and LA City Councilman Greig Smith, in presenting an oversized letter to Boeing similar to our oversized check we had presented to Boeing following the bake sale. Our teen group also filmed a short video which was featured on CNN's Toxic Towns website. All our videos can

be seen at our website www.teensagainsttoxins.org.

Our more recent efforts include letters to editors of local papers, press conferences, gathering petitions at local farmer's markets and setting up a several thousand person Facebook campaign to get comments in on the AIPs (Agreements in Principle). Just last month Dan and I were both interviewed on NPR's local Which Way LA show with Warren Olney. Absolutely none of this would have happened without Dan Hirsch and Committee to Bridge the Gap. I am honored to know Dan and proud to be associated with Committee to Bridge the Gap. We hope you will support this important work.

IN MEMORIAM

BRIDGE THE GAP HAS LOST THREE BELOVED FRIENDS

MILLIE PLOTKIN, along with her husband Shel, began serving on the CBG Board in 1974, continuing until her health made it no longer possible in 2008. Her commitment to the organization is perhaps best demonstrated by her quip some years ago when a foundation wanted to give us a grant but was concerned because we had a married couple on the Board whom the foundation worried could represent a voting block. Millie told the foundation that if it would help us get the grant, she would be willing to divorce Shel! Millie was a feisty, progressive soul, and we will miss her. Our hearts go out to Shel.

REVEREND H. MIKE FINK also served on the CBG Board for more than three decades, from 1977 until his death. Mike was a Methodist pastor, serving for many years as the Chair of the interfaith University Religious Conference at UCLA. He was instrumental in finding us a home lasting

27 years in the First United Methodist Church of WLA when we lost our previous office after holding a news conference about the Three Mile Island accident. A gentle and committed soul, he exemplified the best aspects of quietly making faith visible in service to social justice.

S. DELL SCOTT was one of the original founders of Bridge the Gap, literally helping give birth to and sustain us. Dell was a prominent lawyer and progressive force in Los Angeles. In the midst of the Vietnam War, he recognized the importance of finding a way to "bridge the gap" between the generations, reach out and change opinions in order to work to end the war. He and his wife Ruth held countless meetings in their home with young people, bringing in neighbors and friends, to break through misconceptions about the war and related issues, changing minds, opening hearts. Ruth and their daughter Carol remain in our thoughts.



CBG'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND CONCERT A GREAT SUCCESS

The June 13, 2010 celebration for Committee to Bridge the Gap's 40th anniversary was attended by over 120 people. While honoring 40 years of hard work and commitment, the event also proved to be a great reunion. Co-founder S. Dell Scott was able to attend as well as early members Joel Hirsch, Marshall Glick, Dr. Roger Kohn, former executive director Joe Lyou and former staff, Bill Magavern. A number of current volunteer staff from around the State, Tony Zepeda, David Weisman, Emily Churg and members of the Rockedyne Cleanup Coalition, who

often communicate via email, were delighted to be able see one another face to face. Following presentations by the Teens Against Toxins, Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, and a speech by Dan Hirsch, the lovely Amanda McBroom inspired and amused the crowd with her singing, featuring her Grammy winning song, The Rose.

Photos: Top row, left to right: The fabulous Amana McBroom; Teens against Toxins, Michelle Smolaraki, Ryan Moorman, Robin Estrin and Devyn Gortner; CBG Executive Coordinator, Catherine Lincoln. Middle row: Assemblywoman Julia Brownley presents Dan Hirsch with Commendation; Former Executive Director Joe Lyou with (left to right) Barbara Johnson, Dawn Kowalski, Holly Huff and Marie Mason. Bottom row: The crowd catches up with old friends at reception; CBG Board Chair, Susan Clark. Photos by David Michel Lincoln.