In May 2010, the Network issued a briefing paper sounding the alarm about an anti-government event to be held in Missoula that month. One of the scheduled speakers was a radical militia leader from Alaska named Schaeffer Cox. Prior to the so-called “Liberty Convention” in Missoula, Cox had already toured Montana touting his anti-government ideology to local right-wing groups.

Evidently, the Network wasn’t the only entity concerned about Cox. The FBI began watching Cox sometime after his initial Montana speeches. Through informants, the FBI compiled a case against Cox and other members of his Alaskan militia for plotting to kill a judge and law enforcement officers.

In May 2010, Cox did speak at Celebrating Conservatism’s “Liberty Convention” at the Adams Center in Missoula (see the August 2010 edition of Network News for more). Calling himself and his wife the king and queen of dissidents, Cox told convention attendees that Alaska was “on the edge of blood in the streets in Fairbanks,” and that he had 3,500 men under his command. He claimed that his militia could have anyone it believed to be tyrannical put to death. He said:

“They [the government] only understand us if we speak in their language of force… I have a hunch that they will only see that light when it is a muzzle flash. Know what I mean? We can’t beat them at the polls, because we can’t overcome the votes bought with money stolen from us… Declare war. I have... It takes only a few more people willing to kill for freedom than those willing to kill for tyranny.”

He also talked about an elaborate escape of disguises and chases with the “Feds” through airports while he and his wife were flying back to her home state (Montana) for the convention. He discussed how he and his family were hiding in safe houses.

According to the Convention’s main organizer, Mona Docteur, the Network’s warnings in the press leading up to the Liberty Convention helped ensure low turnout at the event. However, even the sparse crowd of 250 was visibly taken aback by Cox’s speech. They writhed in their seats, and some attendees even left as his comments became more and more extreme.

It turns out that Cox wasn’t all talk. In June 2012, Cox was convicted of nine federal charges, including conspiracy to kill federal law enforcement officers and possession of illegal weapons. Coleman Barney, a “major” in Cox’s militia, was convicted of gun charges and sentenced to five years. Lonnie Vernon, a militia foot soldier, was convicted, along with Cox, of gun and murder-conspiracy charges. Cox and Vernon face sentencing in November 2012 and could receive life sentences.

The convictions are the most recent example of a history of conflict between Cox and Alaskan authorities.

In March 2010, Cox faced charges of second-degree felony assault for choking and punching his wife in front of their two-year-old son. He ended up pleading guilty to a lesser charge of reckless endangerment and received a suspended sentence. Afterwards, he bragged that there were 80 militia supporters (Cox, cont. on page 6)
ready to “storm the building” to protest the domestic violence charge.

Later in March 2010, he was “monitoring” an arrest as part of his response to an alert from his “Liberty Bell” network. The Liberty Bell notifies other “patriots” if somebody believes their rights are being violated. The “patriots” receiving the alert are supposed to rally to the location where the supposed abuse is happening.

While responding to an alert, Cox failed to tell an officer that he was carrying a concealed .38-caliber pistol. Cox pleaded not guilty to a misdemeanor charge of weapons misconduct.

While awaiting trial on the weapons charge, Cox and his fellow militia members started concocting the plan that eventually led to the current convictions. Authorities stated Cox planned to bring his family to Montana but would return to Alaska to engage in “guerilla warfare.”

Back in Montana, many of the local groups that Cox spoke to in 2009 and 2010 aren’t attracting the big crowds they were a few years ago.

In the Bitterroot Valley, Celebrating Conservatism has been relatively inactive since late 2010. After serving as its leader, Docteur was relegated to selling Goji Berry juice as a weight-loss product. This summer as she faced health problems, Docteur and her supporters tried to revive Celebrating Conservatism to raise money for her alternative cancer treatments.

While their numbers may be down, the remnants of Celebrating Conservatism and the anti-government groups that promoted Cox in 2009-2010 continue to be a salient force in Montana. The conviction of guest speakers and national leaders like Schaeffer Cox is another reminder of what can happen when anti-government rhetoric starts to move from talk to action.

One of the Network’s board members sent in this photo earlier this year. It was from a steel bridge over Ashley Creek on the west edge of Kalispell. The bridge is part of the Rails To Trails bike path system. Someone had scratched various white supremacist slogans into the bridge. The photo displays “Sieg Heil—It means ‘Hail Victory’” and “WPWW,” which stands for “White Power Worldwide.”

(No On LRs, from page 3) to people who have pre-existing conditions. They can no longer drop people’s coverage just because they get sick. Because of these reforms, young people are able to stay on their parents insurance policies for longer (up to the age of 25).

The ACA also implemented a “medical loss ratio” which ensures that at least 80% of premium revenue actually goes to paying for medical care instead of corporate administration and profit. Additionally, the ACA set up a system to make information about insurance policies easier to access for those who are looking to purchase policies for themselves and their families. It also expanded the Medicaid program and set up a system that will offer various levels of subsidies for people who can’t afford private insurance, as well as tax-credits for small businesses that provide coverage for their employees.

LR-122 is a politically-driven statement against healthcare reform that solves nothing and cannot be enforced. It simply wastes time and energy that would be better spent making sure that Montanans can get access to the healthcare they need.

We are urging Montanans to vote against LR-122.

(No On LRs, from page 4)