

# Labor/Community ALLIANCE

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VOLUME 3, ISSUE 8

SEPTEMBER 1998

## Davis or Lungren?

### A clear choice for California voters

by Larry Langford, Labor/Community Alliance

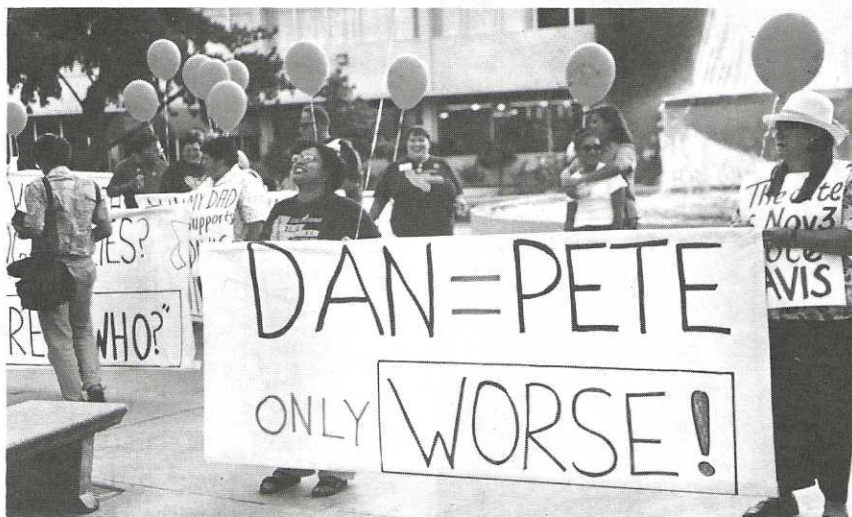
If you have found the first two gubernatorial debates this campaign season as unenlightening as they were uninteresting, don't be lulled into thinking there are not important

differences between the Democratic and Republican candidates. Although both Dan Lungren and Gray Davis are putting an inordinate amount of time and energy into being more-pro-death-penalty-than-thou, California workers should be aware that when it comes to their own safety and well-being, Gray Davis is without a doubt the candidate they should choose this

November. Paycheck issues are especially important in distinguishing between the two candidates. Whether it's the minimum wage, daily overtime, pension protection, or the prevailing wage, Davis has consistently shown himself to be on the side of working people in California, while Lungren has just as consistently shown that he is not.

Davis, for example, supported the Minimum Wage Initiative, Proposition 210, that would have raised the standard of living for more than two million California workers by giving them a living wage. Lungren opposed the initiative, even though the purchasing power of the current minimum wage had reached a 40-year low. And if you think it is only minimum-wage workers who would suffer under a Lungren administration, think again.

Lungren has been a strong defender of Gov. Wilson's attempts to undermine the prevailing wage for construction workers on public works jobs. Whereas Davis has been a strong advocate for enforcing current prevailing wage laws, Lungren would certainly continue the current governor's efforts to reduce pay and benefits



to construction workers hired by the state.

Daily overtime is another issue that clearly distinguishes the two candidates. Davis has promised to sign legislation that would restore the daily overtime pay law so that workers

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is threefold: (1) to strengthen and unite the  
labor movement and the progressive community  
in the Central San Joaquin Valley through  
information sharing,

(2) to promote and defend the rights  
of local working people, and (3) to  
help organize the unorganized.

This publication is printed monthly and  
includes a calendar of events.

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## Ghan attends CLC Conference in Chicago

by Larry Langford, Labor/Community Alliance

Randy Ghan, Secretary-Treasurer of the Central Labor Council in Fresno, attended the second biannual Central Labor Council National Conference in Chicago from July 31 to August 2. More than 400 delegates from 280 or more CLCs from around the nation attended the conference, where the focus was on mobilization, organization, and political action to support national and local labor issues. The conference also enabled CLCs to come together and share information on the most effective means of strengthening grassroots labor movements. The AFL-CIO-sponsored program "Union Cities" came out of the first CLC conference in Denver two years ago. That program has been so successful that at this year's gathering it was renamed "Union: City by City" to emphasize the progress labor has made.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeny gave the opening remarks at the conference. The following day, Linda Chavez Thompson gave delegates some practical experience in direct action by leading a demonstration at a local television station where management is trying to bust and drive out the unions.

For Ghan, however, the most important aspect of the conference was the small workshops where he could meet individually with CLC delegates from other cities. These meetings, he said, were an especially valuable experience for those "trying to come together to form coalitions to advance the agenda of working people." Because smaller councils can be overwhelmed by those from large cities, with their paid staffs and well-financed resources, organizers of the conference were careful to match delegates from cities of a similar size so that they could talk about common problems and share possible solutions. "A recurring theme," said Ghan, "was the value of networking among the delegates, being able to sit down one on one and talk about your own experiences and those of your council."

Delegates were particularly enthusiastic about the renewed emphasis in the AFL-CIO grassroots organizing. "This is an effort to organize the individual communities in rejuvenating the labor movement," said Ghan.



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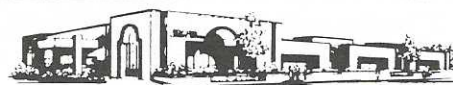
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# The Fresno Bee

## Update from "the war zone"

by Mike Rhodes, Labor/Community Alliance

The Labor/Community Alliance reported last month that a major union organizing drive was under way at *The Fresno Bee*. Unions now represent workers in the editorial department and the pressroom. The election held in the packaging and distribution (P & D) center was lost due to massive National Labor Relations Act violations by the company. Employees in P & D were threatened, lied to, and intimidated. More than 20 unfair labor practices were filed with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The likely outcome will be a new election more closely monitored by the NLRB.

Organizing campaigns are currently under way in many *Fresno Bee* departments, and elections will likely be filed for any day. The Labor/Community Alliance wants readers to know why workers at *The Bee* are organizing and how rabidly anti-union this company is. *The Bee* apparently will spare no expense to defeat the union. Management wants to completely control the working environment and give employees no opportunity to stand on a level playing field to negotiate for better salaries and benefits. If *The Bee* were allowed to continue in the direction it has followed in recent years, most employees would be part-time or on-call with few benefits.

To illustrate *The Bee's* tactics: Some workers in the transportation department have been employed there for 15 years and are earning less than \$10 an hour, with no health benefits, sick leave or vacation time. In fact, if someone in that department is sick for over two weeks, that person is not allowed to come back to work. We have heard stories of employees who had surgery and had to return to work early, against doctor's orders, so they would not be fired. A transportation department employee who had a miscarriage was approached at the funeral by her supervisor and asked when she would return to work. The incidents of abuse and disrespect are endless.

*The Fresno Bee* used to be a halfway decent place to work. Since becoming a publicly held company they have kept their eyes focused on the bottom line. They no longer care for their employees' health and well-being, and will downgrade any department they can to part-time or on-call status. They have implemented two-tier wage scales in several departments and are actively looking to out-source workers in the ad creation/design center, P & D, transportation and circulation

departments. It is all about making more money for the stockholders and enriching the CEO and upper managers.

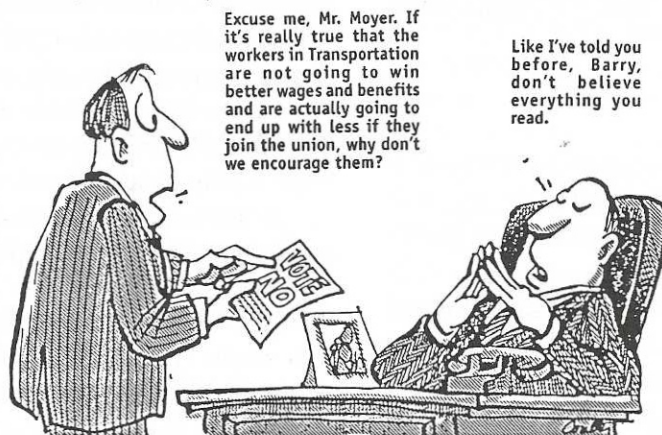
The Labor/Community Alliance knows *The Fresno Bee* can afford to pay employees a decent wage and provide adequate benefits. The stockholders report for McClatchy Newspapers (parent company of *The Fresno Bee*) shows it to be a financially successful newspaper chain. In the latest annual report, McClatchy CEO Gary Pruitt announced record earnings: "We reported record net income of \$68.8 million or \$1.80 per share, up 54.6% from the preceding year."

It is interesting how they can simultaneously have "record earnings" for stockholders and claim the money is "not in the budget" when employees ask for a cost of living increase. The only logical explanation is that *The Bee* is able to achieve "record earnings" by lowering the standard of living of its own employees. The very people who create the wealth for this company are not benefiting from its financial success. It is obvious that *The Fresno Bee*/McClatchy corporation has no intention of sharing its "record earnings" with employees. Years of experience have

proved that. Now is the time to organize a union and renegotiate the terms of the social contract.

The Labor/Community Alliance believes that *The Bee* would be even more successful if employees were in unions and treated fairly. Morale would improve, productivity would increase, employees would enjoy working there again, and the company would probably make even more money. It's unfortunate that management is so short-sighted they don't see this.

It leaves employees with only one option: organize!



## Let's Organize: Who to Contact

### Marty Keegan

Director of Organizing  
Graphic Communications Union Local 404  
518 West Duarte Road  
Monrovia, CA 91016 (626) 357-6476

### Chuck Davis

Northern California Mailers' Union Local 15  
1780 Whipple Road, Suite 103  
Union City, CA 94587  
(510) 487-1386, 487-1388

### Mike Rhodes

Communications Workers of America Local 9408  
130 W. Shields Ave.  
Fresno, CA 93705  
248-9408, 226-0477 (home)



## What message is The Fresno Bee sending its employees?

During the union organizing campaign, an employee in the packaging and distribution center was warned by management and "union busters" that if the Teamsters won the election there would be mandatory drug testing. The employee, who has a substance abuse problem, was told that right now it is up to the company to decide when and if drug testing will take place. He was told that if the Teamsters lost the election the company would not begin random drug testing. This cynical anti-union/pro-drug message helped defeat the union in packaging and distribution and is currently being used in other departments.

## The sting of The Bee

When packaging and distribution employees gathered to talk about the union after work, they would often do so out in the parking lot. They were shocked when security guards were called out to disperse them.

❁ Who directed the security guards to perform this illegal act of harassment against employees? *Answer:* Harvey Zimmerman, retired Community Relations Director.

❁ Who threatened a worker's mother with job loss if her daughter voted for the union? *Answer:* We can't tell you, because she is too scared to say.

❁ Is it true that pressroom manager Dennis Lyall was demoted because HE lost the election in that department? *Answer:* Yes.

❁ Is Dennis Lyall's demotion a signal to other managers of what will happen to them if they lose an election? *Answer:* You bet!

❁ Is Fresno Bee management trying to buy off union leaders and supporters with bonuses, salary increases, and promises of better jobs and working conditions? *Answer:* This is true in every department where an organizing drive is taking place.

The Labor/Community Alliance now has a web site on the Internet. The address is:

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Congress/1885/>

Here you will find:

- The Labor/Community Alliance newsletter
- A calendar of events in the organized labor and progressive Fresno community
- A directory of labor and community groups in Fresno
- Links to other sites & more

We hope you will find the information at this site of value, and that it will help build a stronger progressive movement in Fresno and the Central Valley. Let us know what you think.

## First senior resource center for Fresno on schedule

by Ray Ensher

Fresno is the sixth largest city in the state of California, and has the dubious distinction of being the largest city without a senior center. This will be changing if Fresno's determined senior residents (over age 55), who numbered 72,321 in the 1990 census, have anything to say about it. The issue of a senior center has been brought up twice in Fresno. The last time, in 1975, it fell on deaf ears in the Fresno City Council.

The pressure is now on, with the current council allocating \$1.5 million toward such an effort, as a result of the lobbying of Councilman Sal Quintero and senior activists. A dedicated group of board members, working under the guidance of the Fresno-Madera Area Agency on Aging, has set a time line for working up a proposal and then locating the right facility to accommodate a senior center.

Board members envision the senior resource center as a facility providing "one-stop shopping" through a collection of services that will enable seniors to access the resources they need in one location. In addition, the center will provide traditional as well as innovative activities to enhance the quality of life for seniors and their families.

Now is the time to join together to address the current and future needs of Fresno seniors, who have contributed to the growth and development of this community. The next steering committee meeting will be September 29 (Tuesday) at 9 a.m. at the Area Agency on Aging office, 4974 E. Clinton. According to the time table adopted by the board, input and public hearings are being held as to what seniors feel are important features for Fresno's first senior resource center. Several councilmen have already placed a time for this input from their constituents on their district agendas. For further information or meeting dates, contact the agency, 488-3621. Jo Johnson is the agency's executive director.



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# Calendar of Events ~ September 1998

## Friday, September 4

*Latin American Music Series*, featuring Grupo Arauco. Call 266-2623 for details.

## Saturday & Sunday, September 5 & 6

*United Farm Workers of America (UFW) Fourteenth Constitutional Convention* begins at 8 A.M. Saturday in Fresno Convention Center Exhibit Hall. Theme will be "Realizing Cesar's Dream." Call 646-3376.

## Sunday, September 6

*Labor Day Picnic*, Noon to 6 P.M., near CSUF Satellite Student Union. Entrance free. Dinner served 2-4 P.M., \$7.50 for adults, children under 12 free. Call 275-1151.

## Tuesday, September 8

*Second Tuesday Potluck & Discussion*, Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Monthly discussion of nonviolence in daily life. Potluck-6:30 P.M., program-7:30. Karen McCarter will speak on "Peacemaking in the Food Chain."

## Friday, September 11

*Candace Gingrich*, 8:30 P.M., Piccadilly Inn, 2305 W. Shaw. Sponsored by Central California Alliance, a prominent gay and lesbian community organization. Call 265-7117.

## Friday & Saturday, September 11 & 12

*24-Hour Vigil in Honor of Leonard Peltier's Birthday*, in front of Mexican Consulate, 830 Van Ness Ave. Includes food drive for Chiapas in Peltier's name. Food can be dropped off at the event. Call 497-0833.

## Saturday, September 12

*Fresno Center for Nonviolence Board Meeting*, 9:30 A.M., 985 N. Van Ness. Guests welcome. Call 237-3225.

## Sunday, September 13

*Democratic Socialists of America* meeting. Call 221-8568.

## Tuesday, September 15

Deadline for submission of information for the October issue of *Labor/Community Alliance*. Call 226-0477.

## Thursday, September 17

*Death Penalty Focus*, 7:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness. Call 323-4871.

## Saturday, September 19

*Critical Mass Bike Ride*, 5 P.M., Fresno City College (grassy area near Maroa). Support bike lanes and mass transit.

## Sunday, September 20

*OUTFEST*, CSUF, celebration of the gay, lesbian, bisexual transgender presence in Fresno. Call 488-6568.

## Monday, September 21

*Amnesty International*, 7:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness. Call 224-0924.

## Tuesday, September 22

*ACLU*, 7 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence.

## Wednesday, September 23

*Central Labor Council*, 6 P.M., UFCW/SEIU offices. Call 275-1151 for details.

*Meet Silvio Manno*, informal reception for elementary school teacher who refused to give his ESL students a standardized test in English, Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness. Call 266-2559 for details.

## Friday, September 25

*Street Heat*, 5-6 P.M., KFCF 88.1-FM. Featuring Central Valley labor/community activists.

*A New Millennium: Nuclear Weapons Forever?* 7 P.M., Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook. Presentation by Cindy Pile of Nevada Desert Experience, faith-based group working for abolition of nuclear weapons.

## Monday, September 28

*Labor/Community Alliance/Jobs with Justice*, 5:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 226-0477.

## Tuesday, September 29

*Design Committee for Fresno Senior Resource Center*, 9 A.M., 4974 E. Clinton. All interested citizens invited. Call 488-3621 for more information.



## Ongoing Activities/Programs

*Street Heat*, Fourth Friday, 5-6 P.M., KFCF 88.1-FM. Featuring Central Valley labor/community activists.

*Scalzo Talk*, Mon & Thurs 6-9 P.M., KAAT 103.1-FM. Interviews with local people on labor and political issues.

*Democracy Now!*, 9 A.M. and 4 P.M., Monday-Friday, KFCF 88.1-FM. Amy Goodwin covers news of the nation and world from a progressive viewpoint, with a focus on the history and economics of working people, women and people of color around the planet.

## Weekly

*Every Friday*, 9 A.M.-1 P.M., Mexican Consulate, 830 Van Ness Ave. Coalition of groups holds a "Campaign for Justice" to put pressure on Mexican government to allow people the right to vote, calling for peace in Chiapas and to stop U.S. military intervention in Mexico.

*Every Saturday: Food Not Bombs* feeds the hungry; 1-2 P.M. near the Olive Avenue entrance to Roeding Park. **Needed: volunteers to help cook food Saturday mornings**, 9:30, Sierra Vista United Methodist church, corner of Maple & Illinois.



## Social Security works

### If you think it's hard getting by on social security . . . try getting by without it.

For more than 60 years Social Security has provided a minimal level of income security for those over age 65. In 1935, the year Social Security was enacted by Congress, more than 50 percent of all older Americans were in poverty. Today that number is just 12.5 percent. Without Social Security half of all senior citizens would be back in poverty again.

#### Social Security is secure.

Social Security is solvent now and, with only minor adjustments, will remain solvent into the distant future. Social Security is backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government. Unlike money put into a savings and loan, the stock market, or real estate ventures, Social Security cannot leave you penniless in old age.

If you are now over age 25, there is a 98 percent chance you will live to age 65, and an 80 percent chance you will live to age 75. If you are going to get old, and chances are you will, then you have an obligation to plan for your own support in old age.

#### Social Security is about responsibility.

Prior to 1935, however, most people could not save adequately for retirement. The reason: Most employers did not contribute to retirement accounts and most workers earned too little to save enough on their own. By requiring employers and individuals to contribute equally to a minimal retirement account, the Social Security system ensures that both employers and individuals live up to their responsibilities.

#### Most workers do not have a pension.

More than half of all working Americans do not have a pension plan of any kind. The millions of people in America who clean offices, serve food, pump gas, clean clothes, and work in our malls depend on Social Security for all or most of their retirement support.

#### Even with a pension, you probably can't afford to retire without Social Security.

Most Americans cannot retire without the help of Social Security. More than 60 percent of all retirees depend on it for at least half their retirement income. On average, even the top 20 percent of wage earners depend on Social Security to supply 20 percent or more of their retirement income.

#### Women and Social Security

Because women live longer, earn less, change jobs more often, work fewer years (due to childbirth and care), and tend to work in jobs that do not have pension plans, Social Security is a particularly important source of retirement income for women.

#### Social Security Is adjusted for inflation.

Social Security is inflation-adjusted so that real benefits do not decrease as you age. Only 10 percent of private pensions have cost-of-living adjustments. Without inflation adjustments, and with a 7 percent inflation rate, your after-retirement income will shrink 50 percent every 10 years. In real terms that means that if your total retirement income is \$30,000 at age 65, it will be the equivalent of just \$15,000 by age 75, and \$7,500 by age 85. Because Social Security is inflation-adjusted, all Americans—especially those on the bottom of the economic ladder—are partially protected from the ravages of inflation.

#### Social Security helps families.

In addition to providing income security for aging parents, Social Security provides income to the disabled, and to spouses and minor children of the deceased. In fact, Social Security is one of America's largest children's programs, providing needed cash assistance to more than 3.2 million children.

#### Social Security helps the young.

Without Social Security, millions of older Americans would be forced to move in with their middle-aged children, and college savings for America's teenagers would vanish overnight. It is not an accident that the start of Social Security coincides with a dramatic increase in the number of young Americans able to go to college.

#### Only minor changes are needed.

The Social Security system has undergone minor modification dozens of times over the last 60 years, and minor changes will continue to be needed to keep Social Security solvent into the second half of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A major restructuring of the Social Security system, however, is simply not needed. Even if no corrective action is taken over the course of the next 30 years, the Social Security Trust Fund will have enough to pay off 94 percent of its total debt obligations. The notion that today's young will "never collect Social Security" is simply wrong.

#### NCSC's position

The National Council of Senior Citizens believes Social Security is an earned right and that the current generation has a moral obligation to preserve this retirement assistance program and pass it on, in a healthy condition, to the next generation. The National Council of Senior Citizens recognizes that minor corrective adjustments will be needed from time to time in order to keep Social Security in long-term financial balance. These changes do not need to be drastic, however, nor do they need to be hastily adopted. Only slight course corrections are needed to keep Social Security solvent and stable into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

*(Thanks to Del Berg for forwarding this article. Del is a member of the Labor/Community Alliance executive and editorial board, and is also on the state board of the Congress of California Seniors. Contact Del at (209) 532-2008 to help him organize a CCS chapter in the Fresno area.)*

### Remember these dates

**October 5**—Deadline to register to vote in the November 3 general election.

**October 27**—Deadline for County Registrar of Voters to receive requests for absentee ballots.

**November 3**—General election. Get out and vote! Mailed absentee ballots must be received by this date.

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## Davis or Lungren, cont. from page 1

cannot be forced into working 10 or 12 hours a day without just compensation. Lungren has defended the elimination of daily overtime regulations and, as a result, California workers lose an estimated \$1 billion per year in overtime pay. Davis has opposed Wilson's attempts to raid the public employee pension funds to balance the state budget, and supported Proposition 162, which would make such actions illegal. Lungren has, of course, defended Wilson's attempts to get his hands on this money and would probably do the same himself, if given the chance.

It has been pointed out many times before, but it bears repeating. The outcome of this year's state elections in California will have far-reaching national consequences. The next governor and legislature will redraw congressional districts in the state, and those changes could be enough to shift the balance of power in Congress. The voters of California need to ensure that whoever makes those decisions has the interests of working people at heart. Using that criterion, Gray Davis is the obvious choice for the next governor.

## Demonstrators oppose Lungren

Demonstrators—most of them members of CSEA/SEIU Local 1000—supporting Gray Davis for governor and protesting the anti-worker positions of candidate Dan Lungren, were kept at a distance from the site of the debate on the CSU campus in Fresno August 18. Davis supporters were told that if they passed the police line they would be arrested.

Interestingly, the police allowed a small group of pro-Lungren Republicans to demonstrate their support in front of the building hosting the debate. When this contradiction was pointed out to the police, the Republicans were briefly moved to the free speech area.

The pro-Davis group demanded equal time in front of the building but the police refused to cooperate. They then marched past the building carrying several large signs and a two-headed Pete Wilson/Dan Lungren dummy, escorted by nervous campus and city police officers. They took their protest on to the corner of Maple and Shaw for maximum visibility. In addition to Local 1000 members, enthusiastic members of Labor/Community Alliance/Jobs with Justice, and the California School Employees Association were also present.

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## One Letter = One Hundred Votes

by Larry Langford, Labor/Community Alliance

If you don't believe that politicians pay attention to letters from voters in their districts, then be assured that there are others who do, especially in the business community. Recently the California Chamber of Commerce publicized its role in the defeat of what it calls "job killer" legislation, meaning attempts to increase the minimum wage. And this defeat is not just the result of money talking, because a large percentage of the chamber's membership consists of small businesses that have few financial resources to spare for political contributions.

Two such pieces of legislation were before the Assembly this year, AB 1684 (Solis) and AB 2685 (Alquist), both of which sought to increase the minimum wage, although the scope of each was quite different. AB 2685 is the simpler of the two bills and would have simply raised the minimum wage to \$6.50 by March 1, 1999. Sponsors argue that despite recent increases, the current wage of \$5.75 is still too low to support the cost of living. According to their figures, the minimum wage of 30 years ago had the purchasing power of \$7.33 in today's dollars. The federal minimum wage is \$5.15; President Clinton wants to raise it to \$6.15 by January 1, 2000.

The sponsors of AB 1684 agree with this argument but are seeking a more long-term solution to the problem, one that would forgo the necessity of passing periodic legislation to keep the minimum wage in line with the rate of inflation. The Solis bill would have required a standard minimum wage for all industries in California of \$6.75 by January 1, 1999. Beyond this increase, the bill would have required the Industrial Welfare Commission, beginning on September 1 of that year, to adjust the minimum wage according to the Consumer Price Index, which measures the rate of inflation. This adjustment would be made every September and would become effective by January 1 of the following year.

Backers of the bill admit that it would entail significant costs to public and private employers, but they also argue that these costs may be offset by low-income workers needing less public assistance. Opponents point out that the minimum wage has been increased four times in less than two years, and that it is still too soon to assess the impact of these increases on job growth or the survival rates of small businesses, which employ a significant number of workers in the state.

The minimum wage certainly needs to be increased, but whether or not one supports these particular bills, the point is that legislation can be passed or defeated by the concerted efforts of even a relatively small group of people. The religious right learned this lesson years ago, and it's time that labor did the same. Keep an eye on what's going on in Sacramento, and let your elected representatives hear about what you want done. Information about legislation in the California Senate or Assembly can be found at: [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov).



## Teacher fights state-mandated test

by Larry Langford, Labor/Community Alliance

Silvio Manno, a bilingual education teacher at Rowell Elementary School in Fresno, has taken a courageous, if somewhat lonely, stand against what he calls a "deliberately orchestrated" attempt to destroy the academic motivation of his students. The issue in question is the Stanford Achievement Test, ninth edition (SAT 9), which is given to all students in grades 2-11 in the California public school system, and is meant to measure competency in areas such as reading, language, math, spelling, science, and the social sciences.

Although it is supposedly an objective measurement of a student's academic achievement, Manno believes that the SAT 9 "lacks legitimacy when applied to non-English speakers" and "openly puts linguistically different children at a disadvantage." His second-grade students, all of whom speak Spanish as their primary language, were defensive and angry at the prospect of having to take the mandated test in English while they were still in the process of learning the language. Manno, therefore, took a stand to protect them from what he sees as "a humiliating insult" that could harm them psychologically and stigmatize them academically.

The response to this stand has been mixed. Not surprisingly, the principal of Rowell Elementary, whom Manno says is sympathetic to his decision, gave him a five-day suspension, which is now under appeal. Parents in the community have strongly voiced their support for him, publicly protesting against the test and against the disciplinary action taken against Manno. The faculty at Rowell, however, seem to be ambivalent. Manno says other bilingual teachers at the school support his opposition to the test, but so far no else has issued a refusal to administer it. In fact, he is the only teacher in the state of California to do so.

What Manno says disappoints him the most, however, is the position taken by the Bilingual Advisory Committee. Paul Garcia, president of the committee in the Fresno Unified School District, confronted angry parents demonstrating at Rowell Elementary and openly questioned the legitimacy of Manno's opposition to the test. For Manno, it is "a contradiction in terms to accept SAT 9" while opposing other assaults on bilingual education, such as Proposition 227.

Silvio Manno is himself an immigrant from Italy who came to this country 21 years ago. He worked for 11 years as a custodian at Rowell Elementary before becoming a teacher there. He has a degree in psychology and a master's degree in linguistics. Beyond merely facilitating language acquisition, Manno sees bilingual education as an important tool in helping students retain their native culture and ethnicity, which young immigrants or the children of recent immigrants tend to lose quickly. He does not yet know what impact the passage of Proposition 227, which abolished bilingual education in the public schools, will have on him as an educator, but he sees it as a tremendous setback for his students, one which he believes may set them up for future academic failure.

## Boycott Wells Fargo

The Steelworkers Union is asking everyone who banks with Wells Fargo to change banks and close their accounts. Wells Fargo is bankrolling the union-busting activities of Oregon Steel in Pueblo, Colorado. Hundreds of strikers have been permanently replaced, and Wells Fargo continues to provide funds to the otherwise bankrupt company.

## A little bit of Cuba

by Romina Green

After a long journey through the United States, members of the Pastors for Peace caravan met at McAllen, Texas, where they made the long-awaited border crossing. The U.S. Treasury, feeling hopeless knowing the eighth caravan would go through, sent a letter saying only 15 individuals could go on the trip. The group organizer, Lucius Walker, sent a letter back naming Cesar Chavez, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Mahatma Gandhi, Jesus Christ, and others.

Travel though Mexico was hot and tiring, but by July 23 everybody's dream was being fulfilled as we arrived at Havana, Cuba. The group separated, and we were assigned to stay in various churches around the city. We received warm welcomes from government officials and local organizers.

I was staying in an area right next to what is called Old Havana. The first night I went walking, along with others from our group, through this rundown part of town. The U.S. embargo has made it very difficult for Cubans to acquire paint and other materials to keep up the condition of their beautiful buildings. Streets throughout Havana were always crowded. One could feel the strength in their community. There were no commercial billboards, just those to uplift the causes of the revolution, which are health care, education, and social equality. One billboard said: "Every day 25 thousand children in this world die of curable diseases... none is Cuban." They are very proud of their 100 percent literacy rate and the fact that they have one local doctor for every 150 families. People spoke very highly of their health care system, but also said that medicine is often not available.

They are a fighting nation, and I could tell that it will take more than an embargo to set their spirits down for the love of their nation. Children are a top priority for the Cubans; they recognize the importance of their young people. "This is a free country," I always heard people say. We attended a three-day conference: "1st U.S.-Cuba Friendship Conference," where a number of myths about Cuba were debunked. Even though what Pastors for Peace delivered was so little compared to what the people need, it meant a lot for it symbolized that not everyone in the United States agrees with the official government policy of the blockade.



## Human rights event in Fresno

by Ellie Bluestein, *Women's International League for Peace & Freedom*

Eleanor Roosevelt, a truly great woman and our first representative to the United Nations, is the one most responsible for the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Here is what she said then:

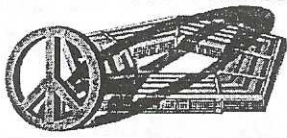
"Where, after all, do universal rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

In the 50 years since its adoption by the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has become the conscience for the world, the standard by which nations and people measure their progress, the goal toward which they strive. Yet few of us have ever seen a copy of the declaration or studied its implications. This is our chance. Now, while people all over the world are celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we here in Fresno can take part and inform ourselves about what it contains.

On Saturday, October 24, starting at 9:30 a.m. at Fresno City College auditorium, a community event will feature workshops that deal with the provisions of the Declaration with regard to the rights of children, women, labor, prisoners, immigrants, and the right to be free from discrimination of all kinds. An excellent keynote speaker, Ann Fagan Ginger of the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute, and entertainment from our diverse Fresno community will round out the day.

Help us spread the word about this special day, and be sure to come to take part. Bring students, workers, parents, grandparents, friends and neighbors. We are also looking for group sponsors, and we could use some monetary contributions to cover the cost of printing and publicity. If you can get your organization, church, or school to sign on as a sponsor, please call Joyce at 224-0924, or Ellie at 229-9807. We have great information, a video, and other materials that we can share with you.

**A DAY WITHOUT THE PENTAGON**



**OCTOBER 19, 1998**

For information about this day of action at the Pentagon and how to rid the world of the military's parasitic influence, contact:  
War Resisters League • 339 Lafayette St.  
New York, NY 10012  
(800) 975-9688 • email: [wrl@igc.apc.org](mailto:wrl@igc.apc.org)  
<http://www.nonviolence.org/wrl/nopentagon.htm>

## Union Summer

by Vanessa Rhodes



Since 1996 the AFL-CIO Union Summer program has contributed to campaigns nationwide and encouraged a new generation of activists to take leadership roles in the growing labor movement. The program offers grassroots organizing and an in-depth look into labor issues. In sites around the country

participants join with local unions to work in critical campaigns for union organizing.

After completing a year at the University of California at Santa Cruz, I was eager to get hands-on experience in union organizing and activism. Growing up in a family of organizers, I realized that a summer of organizing was going to be challenging. I was joined in Chicago by students from around the country, and community organizers from SEIU Local 880.

Our largest and most successful campaign was one for a living wage in the city of Chicago. On our first day in the field, we participated in a rally, putting pressure on the aldermen to pass the living wage ordinance. It passed 49-0, in contrast to a devastating loss the year before. Union Summer, SEIU, ACORN and the New Party continued petitioning after the victory, in order to place the issue on the ballot.

Helping unionize health care workers became a large part of Union Summer's efforts in Chicago. Through house calls and phone banking we signed up members and organized a successful union rally. Union Summer also participated in boycotts of Guess products. Through both campaigns, we raised hell and informed the public. On both occasions we rallied outside Marshall Fields. Marshall Fields has a code of conduct stating it will not purchase from suppliers that have unjust working conditions. However, they purchase and sell Guess products that are produced in sweatshops in both Mexico and in Los Angeles. So Union Summer staged an action, chanting loudly outside the department store: "One potato, two potato, three potato, four. Take off your Guess jeans, and throw them on the floor."

These exciting campaigns, along with the grassroots activism, made for an exciting summer for interns participating in Union Summer 1998 in Chicago. I encourage all youth to get involved in making a difference in other communities. You learn the self-confidence and skills you need to make a difference in your community and eventually to change the world. *Si Se Puede!*

**For more information, contact:**

Union Summer, 815 16<sup>th</sup> St., NW., Washington, DC. 20006

Telephone: 1-800 952-2550; Fax (202) 202-639-6230

E-mail: [Unionsmr@aol.com](mailto:Unionsmr@aol.com); <http://www.unionsmr.org/>



## Labor/Community Alliance

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HK AUG 1998



Find out what's going on  
"Inside the Hive"— more  
information about union  
organizing at *The Fresno  
Bee* on pages 3 & 4.

## Californians organize to oppose proposed bracero program

by Amber López

On August 12 Orange Cove joined two other Central Valley rural towns, Mendota and Huron, in passing city council resolutions in opposition to all agricultural guest worker legislation. These communities have concluded that there is no labor shortage. The proposed legislation would bring in thousands of farm workers from Mexico and Central America, depressing wages and increasing unemployment among U.S. farm workers, while offering little protection to guest workers from unscrupulous employer practices.

Two main proposals are working their way through Congress. The first is an amendment recently passed by the Senate as an amendment to the Commerce, State, Justice Appropriations bill to create an alternate means of securing H-2A visas. Congress reconvenes in early September to draft a final version of this legislation, which would then be put to the House and Senate for a final vote.

This amendment leaves out standard of living requirements, and adds a state and regional registry for U.S. workers. U.S. workers would have to apply to the registry as individuals seeking agricultural work to be referred to employers. The required wage is five percent above the prevailing wage rate. If U.S. workers refuse to work for these wages, they would be deemed unavailable and, under a number of clauses, can be removed from the registry and replaced with lower-paid braceros.

The second proposed program, the H-2C Agricultural Guest Worker program, creates a new visa. Employers apply for braceros using an attestation claiming there is a labor shortage. Employers would also have the power to conduct their own prevailing wage studies and set wages accordingly. The new legislation mandates

withholding 25 percent of the guest worker's wages, to be placed in a trust fund. That money would be repaid only if the worker returns home on time and applies for the money to the U.S. Treasury within 30 days. This mandate may have its biggest impacts on the agricultural communities where these workers will be concentrated. Wages are so meager that any withholdings will greatly impact the level of business transactions, especially among small business owners. The loss of sales tax revenue could be devastating.

The Bracero Program Educational Campaign has engaged community members and elected officials in a discussion of how this legislation would affect them and their communities, and how they choose to respond. In addition to educational forums, petition and letter-writing campaigns are under way. To learn more, please contact Amber López at (530) 756-6555, ext. 12, amblopez@ucdavis.edu, P.O. Box 2143, Davis CA 95617.



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