

Labor/Community ALLIANCE

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OCTOBER 1999

CARPENTER'S BUILD SOLIDARITY

by Phyllis Fess Baker and Pam Whalen



photo by Mike Rhodes

Carpenters' "March for Dignity"

"You're Beautiful", shouted Doug Whipple, Field Representative of the Carpenters Union, as hundreds marched through residential construction sites in North Fresno. It was mid-morning on September 17 and Union members and their supporters were winding through future subdivisions marching, carrying signs and chanting encouragement to the low-paid non union carpenters building \$100,000 homes. Homes that they could never dream of buying.

As the march proceeded Doug and other Carpenters entered the sites, shook hands with the workers and chatted

with them. Some of these workers joined the rally at the end of the march. "I feel that this rally today will help us get a better deal because last year when the Union was active, it forced them to give us a raise", said Don Tiano, one of the workers. Dave Ingram from the Carpenters Union echoed that sentiment, "We are going to keep agitating until these contractors give these people a decent living," he said at the rally.

The rally, which was in both English and Spanish, addressed the crowd of marchers which included representatives of many Locals, including IAM, CWA, CFA, UFCW, SEIU 535, IBEW, The Sheet Metal Workers and the Steelworkers. Churches and community groups also came out to support the action. The Unitarians, Congregationalists, and Catholics were joined by several community groups including the Fresno Center for Non-Violence, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the Green Party, No Nos Vamos, and The Labor/Community Alliance.

This march was a result of years of work by the Carpenters Union to rebuild their own union and the Labor movement through organizing, mobilizing and coalition building.

"Organizing the unorganized is the right thing to do. Grassroots organizing worked for Peter J. McGuire 120 years ago and it should work for us today. I'm not giving up until every person has what we have in the union."

George Gunderson

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The Carpenters' "Valley Storms" swept into action in Fresno during the spring of 1997. A worse time for grassroots, workforce initiated, family and community supported organizing could hardly be imagined. Or could it? The residential housing market was booming in Fresno. Developers ruled the day, and thousands of the unskilled, those with little or no documentation, those wanting to escape the fields, and ex-union folk with grievances, lined up. All were desperate to survive. They were not only easy prey for unscrupulous

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LABOR/COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

The Labor/Community Alliance is independent and dedicated to building a coalition of organized labor and progressive community groups to pursue economic and social justice for working people in Fresno and the Central San Joaquin Valley. The Labor/Community Alliance is affiliated nationally with Jobs with Justice. This newsletter is published monthly.

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EDITORIAL

As the Labor Community Alliance completes its third year (see anniversary article, pg.12) the need for this publication and the unifying power it represents are evident in the pages of this very edition. The Living Wage Campaign is being spearheaded by church and social justice organizations. In solidarity with unions historically involved with immigrant issues, we are educating our readers about immigration issues. Differences in focus, priority and strategy may often arouse contention between labor unions and community-based organizations. But Ben Franklin's aphorism remains true today: "We must hang together, or assuredly we will hang separate." The LCA is committed to hanging in there.



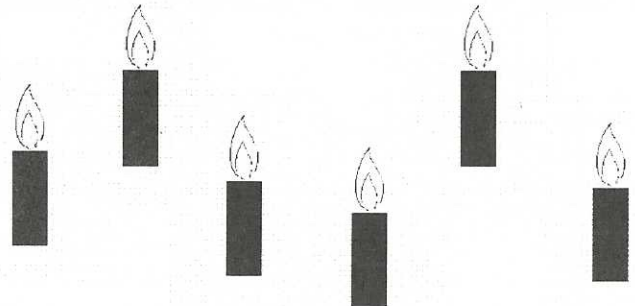
"STOP THE HATE"

A MISSION OF HEALING, A VOICE OF HOPE

"Stop the Hate" *Interfaith Vigils Against Hate Violence* begin in Fresno with a noon rally at the CSUF Peace Garden on Friday, Oct. 1 and continue with community events. The week of events will conclude with a community-wide vigil Oct. 7 at Fresno's Courthouse Park (near the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. bust) beginning at 7 p.m. Major community leaders will speak at this event.

Dr. Su Kapoor is chairing the events with a steering committee for the Interfaith Alliance of Central California.

Groups participating and endorsing (at press time) include Metro Ministry; Human Relations Commission (City of Fresno); CSUF; the Multi-cultural Council; the Fresno Center for Nonviolence; the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno; W.I.L.P.F.; Amnesty International; L.G.B.S.A.; CCNC; N.A.A.C.P.; the Labor Council; Labor/Community Alliance; teacher groups and The Fresno Bee. For further details contact Ray Ensher at 439-8140.



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CARPENTER'S BUILD SOLIDARITY *Continued from page 1*

contractors, but in the eyes of a community seeking cheap housing, they were socially acceptable prey.

The fashionable form of organizing would have been to sit down with the developers and the politicians and "work something out." But there was little incentive for even this mild form of worker protection. Developers, with their city/county backing, had no fear. Fresno yielded an unending, no-trouble supply of workers for its residential expansion. Among these disenfranchised workers, union reps and gringo do-gooders were perceived as a threat.

The initial goal of the Carpenters' "Valley Storms" was to break down the barriers between union and unorganized workers. Carpenter to carpenter, roofer to roofer, they would ask questions, hear stories, hear worries, build trust, make friends, and, when possible, join in creating a solution. The uniqueness of the strategy was its reliance on personal contact and issue-oriented informational assistance. Often bilingual, Carpenters went "on site" in pairs. They provided daily hand-outs conveying goodwill and interest in worker issues, weekly bilingual newsletters, and special mailers, each focused on basic, educational information about the rights of site workers and the benefits of organizing, whether in a union or simpler forms of worker solidarity. Looking to aid workers in their struggle to make gains with the developers, Carpenter teams focused on maintaining steadfast, caring contact with the workers of the Valley.

In September of 1998 the "Storms" expanded. Stretched across 46 counties from Delano to Redding, and Tahoe to Monterey, five (5) Crew Leaders invested deeply in seeking unobtrusive but effective strategies to nudge unorganized residential workers toward collective action. We had a chance to speak with Doug Whipple and his co-worker George Gunderson before the March. Their mission, quite simply, is to expose the slimy, bloated underbelly of the underground economy, though they do wish to avoid simply trashing developers. The sad truth, according to Whipple, is that "the developers cry about increases in building fees while workers just want to feed their families."

"The union, the trade, it's been good to me. My dad told me 'get a trade and a union and nobody can take it away from me'. The only way most people have protection and a chance to better their lives is through the brotherhood and sisterhood of a union. Everyone deserves it."

Doug Whipple

The underground economy of residential development has sought ways to avoid benefits and worker protection. Often, cash payments help avoid lawful employer obligations, and subcontractors provide a screen behind which to hide. In consequence, unprotected workers are forced to do extra work, sometimes without recompense; workers are responsible for the maintenance of contractor equipment "if the equipment breaks down and you can't work, you don't get paid," says Whipple. Workers are under constant threat of management, all to maintain, in most cases, a barely subsistence lifestyle.

"WE'LL BE THERE!"

The Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

was founded by Peter J. McGuire in 1881, during an era when organized labor was woefully under attack by monopoly capital upstarts, often in the form of a growing movement of young, wealthy inheritors of the legacy of Big Business. Today, Carpenters Local 701 proudly displays the authentic Fresno Charter signed by Mr. McGuire on 7 November 1901. McGuire also helped found the American Federation of Labor. His organizing philosophy was and is the motivating force of the Carpenters: "We'll Be There." The Carpenters believe that the struggle of any union labor cannot be won in isolation. For working people to gain equality, or even a modest equity, with those that "own" the wealth that they produce, no picket line, no protest, no action of demand shall go unaccompanied by those 'outside' but deeply supportive. The Carpenters will be there, and they will bring their friends.

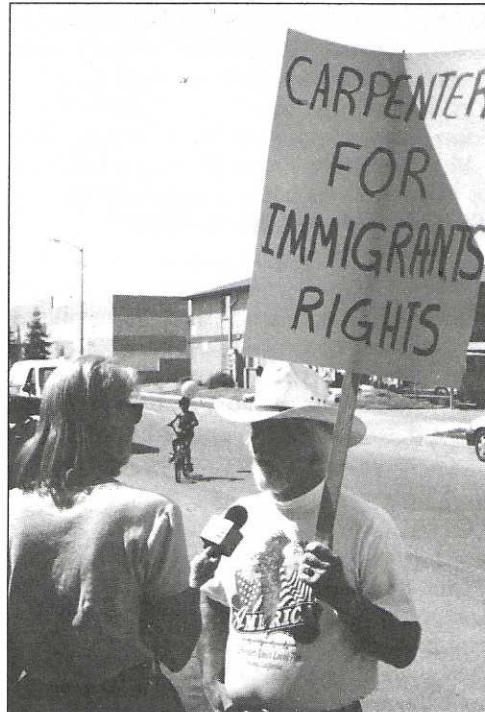


photo by Mike Rhodes

George Gunderson talks to the media in support of immigrant rights.

workers are encouraged to think they are worthless throwaways, trapped in abusive conditions. Indeed, today's unorganized residential workers are paid by the foot, in contrast to union workers who are paid by the hour. Developers hire ten unskilled workers to do what two union workers could do and then make the workers divide the base value of the house among themselves, about \$2.50 an hour per worker, to build a gated community house, garage included.

Today's developers dismiss and evade issues raised about the quality of residential housing built by temporary or unskilled workers. Satisfied with "creating jobs", any old job, they ignore the need for secure, family maintenance income jobs, and the protective benefits and retirement secure jobs so needed in the Valley. And community members are complicit. Willing to accept product glamour over product quality now, we will soon face a renewed crisis of deteriorating housing, property devaluation and the eyesores of declining, residential communities. Unless, of course, we wake up to the historical call of the Carpenters to join their struggle with and for exploited, unprotected residential workers!

Nor will such struggles be won without the support of a community. The community must take a stand in solidarity with the oppressed and challenged workforce. Today, Whipple and Gunderson want to "fire up the community" about the impoverishing exploitation of those workers whose back-breaking labor maintains the moderately opulent life-styles of middle-class Fresnoans. The

FRESNO CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

Center Report: October 1999

by Richard Stone

IRAQ & THE BEE: Last month, the week before our presentation of superb eye-witness reports from Iraq, the *Bee* published an editorial concluding that U.S. sanctions were only peripherally to blame for the continuing devastation of Iraq. I wrote to the editors challenging them to send a reporter to our event where they would get a different perspective based on a broader array of facts. They did not respond. In frustration I called publisher **Keith Moyer**, who referred me to **Jim Boren**. We talked for quite a while about the systematic denial in the *Bee* of the existence of a progressive community. While acknowledging our access to "letter to the Editor" I stated that a 250-word riposte was hardly sufficient to present a well-documented, carefully thought-through position based on information not available in the mass media. And furthermore, The *Bee's* failure to cover local events related to national issues that they run stories on (Iraq, Mumia, needle exchange, etc.) is bad local journalism. As a result of that conversation, a contingent of us will be meeting soon with **News Editor Charlie Waters**. TO BE CONTINUED....

SECOND TUESDAY: Join us each month for straightforward conversation on a subject of personal significance to the hosting Board Member. For Oct. 12th, Gerry Bill has invited **Wendy Rose**—noted Native American poet and educator—to talk with us about the transformation of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. Pot Luck 6:30 p.m., program at 7:30.

THE PEACE CHALLENGE; the information sheet for the *Challenge* has been distributed throughout the FUSD, Clovis and County systems; to churches affiliated with the Fresno Ministerial Association; and to dozens of youth groups around the county. Anyone willing to make 5-10 follow-up calls to encourage participation, please call me (Richard) at 266-2559. Or if you know groups of teens who might become involved, please contact them directly. We want our donor to get his money's worth, and continue his pledge next year.

TUTORING PROJECT; In conjunction with Gaia House, the Center is hosting a home-work program 4 afternoons a week for at-risk kids from the "lower Tower" area. Another way to use the Center space to advantage. Thanks to Tonee, Kristen and Aaron for initiating the project.

MONEY MATTERS: Thanks to all who supported the yard sale with donations and volunteer efforts. Financial report next month. We'll be gearing up for our annual **phone-a-thon** soon. This will be critical to next year's financial well-being. Please plan to respond generously. **Gerry Bill** has joined Ray Ensher and the Valletts as a lifetime member, making a \$1000 donation in memory of his father. \$500 of that amount has been designated for the Lily Stone Memorial Fund for underwriting special speakers and programs (like the Bill Moyer seminar last January.)

TREASURER STILL NEEDED; \$50/MONTH STIPEND. LEAVE MESSAGE OF INTEREST AT 233-3223.

The Welch Report 16 September 1999

by Jack H. Welch, M.D.

On Hiroshima Day three of us from the Center participated in a rally at Livermore, protesting the work of the *Livermore Nuclear Weapons Laboratory*. One of the speakers was Ms. Jacqueline Cabasso, director of Western States Legal Foundation, from whose important speech, "*Abolition 2000: End the Nuclear Threat!*" the following is taken:

US Trident submarines patrol the world's oceans as they did at the height of the Cold War, ready instantly to target cities around the globe.

"The START process is dead. Provoked by NATO's expansion, the US..decision to go forward with a national missile defense system, and the US-lead NATO bombing of Yugoslavia without a UN mandate, the Russian Duma has refused to ratify START II...There are now no formal nuclear arms control negotiations underway."

A review of US. nuclear weapons policy, signed by President Clinton in December 1997 "reaffirmed the US policies of threatened first use and massive retaliation, and recommitted the US to nuclear weapons as the 'cornerstone' of our national security for the foreseeable future.

"The US is planning to spend at least \$4.5b a year over the next decade on nuclear weapons research, development, testing and production"—an amount well above annual Cold War spending.

"There are about 8,400 operational warheads, of 12 types, in the US arsenal. Under the guise of 'stockpile stewardship', alterations and modifications are currently underway on most of these types." The first new nuclear weapon since the end of the Cold War... was flight-tested in spring 1998, in Alaska, over local protests. The story was not carried in any US newspaper outside of Alaska, but was front-page news in Turkey!

"On 11 June at Livermore Lab Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson dedicated the massive 150-ton metal sphere that will be used as the target chamber of the National Ignition Facility (NIF), and announced new collaborative agreements with France and the U.K. to share the facility...The dedication ceremony reaffirmed the central role of nuclear weapons in US, French and British "national security" programs.

"President Boris Yeltsin has endorsed a plan to reactivate and modernize thousands of tactical (short range) nuclear weapons. With its conventional forces weakened, Russia's military doctrine is relying increasingly on nuclear weapons."

In 1995 many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from around the world drafted the *Abolition 2000 Statement*, "calling on all states, particularly the nuclear weapons ones, to initiate immediately and conclude by the year 2000 negotiations on a nuclear weapons abolition convention that requires the phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework..."

"As NGOs... we want the total elimination of nuclear weapons... and a new system of international security based on mutual cooperation and sustainable development — NOW." It is a matter of life (nuclear disarmament) and death (nuclear proliferation).

ACTION: contact President Clinton and our Congresspersons, urging their support of *Abolition 2000*.





Womens International League for Peace and Freedom



Stop the Hate!



October 1-October 8. Many events will be taking place on the CSUF campus and throughout the community. Check the schedule on the calendar in this newsletter. WILPF members Su Kapoor and Regina Hansen are very involved in organizing this as a healing and hate prevention effort to counteract some of the violent acts against specific groups that have taken place in this community and throughout our nation. Let's support this effort.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Addressed issues of Hispanic Children and Youth in Closed Circuit Television

On August 2 members of community organizations were invited to a closed circuit broadcast from the White House by Hillary Rodham Clinton. She presented an overview of concerns facing young people from Latino and Hispanic families. She spoke of the current information on the importance of the first three years in the child's total development, particularly on the child's learning skills and intellectual development. She said, "These are all our children." She indicated there is a need for partnership around children's needs. She spoke of the slogan, "Leave no child behind."

The total of two hours was organized to include informed speakers from key agencies. They presented considerable data and information to validate the need for action. Speakers emphasized problems that include issues of poverty where 42% live below poverty level, compared to 16% whites. They spoke of problems to access to programs which encourage developmental. They emphasized the lack of health care where infant death, child abuse, teen pregnancy and suicide are high statistics. Other issues included immigration barriers; effects of welfare policies including low wages. There is the issue of attitudes in main stream America toward Hispanic youth. These affect progress and engagement in educational programs. An encouraging part of the two hours were the speakers from a variety of existing programs who described successful efforts which demonstrated existing programs which meet the needs of Hispanic children and youth. Included were comprehensive approaches in various cities where staff work with parents and children from birth through college. They illustrated community involvement with varied approaches and consistent work that gained success for Hispanic children and youth.

Fresno Branch News

Campaign Reform: As we move closer into the campaign elections it becomes increasingly evident that huge fundraising machines are increasing problems for a democratic society. Elections should be decided by voters and not by fundraisers delivering bundles of thousand-dollar checks. Reform bills will again appear both in the House and Senate in coming weeks. It is appropriate to urge both Senator Dianne Feinstein (202-224-3841 and Senator Barbara Boxer, (202-224-3553) to insist that finance reform bills should be passed this season.

Youth Violence Prevention AB 235 (KUEHL)

This bill would implement recommendations of two state commissions (The Little Hoover Commission and the Juvenile Task Force) which called for improved leadership and coordination of violence prevention now scattered among 10 state agencies. The bill would establish a *Youth Violence Prevention Authority* within the Office of the California Attorney General. It would give new leadership and raise the overall priority needed for violence prevention efforts throughout the state. Urge signature by Governor Davis.



Saturday morning, October 16, 10:00 a.m., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, Regular WILPF members' meeting. Slate of nominees for WILPF board will be presented. **Rebecca Shen** and **Jean Kennedy Douglas** will report on the

WILPF UN seminar which they attended in August.

Selective Service System

Have you noticed that the Selective Service System was deleted from the budget that was passed by the house of representatives? This is the best chance we have had since the system of registration was instituted to finally get rid of it. We need to lobby our senators to not reinstate it when they vote on the budget. How wonderful it would be to not have that functionless bureaucracy around hanging over the heads of our 18 year olds! Please contact Senators Boxer and Feinstein and ask them to vote it out of the budget.

Hague Peace Conference Report

Millie Livingston, a resident of Auburn, attended the Hague Peace Appeal in May. The conference, which dealt with several strategies on promoting a more peaceful world was attended by over 8,000 people. Livingstone gave a presentation at the Fresno Center for Non Violence over the summer. For more informa-

Calendar of Events October 1999

Thursday, September 30, 6:30 PM

Meeting of the *Living Wage Campaign* at the SEIU 535 offices at 3485 W. Shaw, Suite 103. Call 226-0477

Friday, October 1, Noon

Stop the Hate Interfaith vigil against hate violence begins with a noon rally at the CSUF Peace Garden. Call Ray at 439-8140 for more information.

Thursday, October 7, 7 PM

Stop the Hate community-wide vigil at Fresno's Courthouse Park (near the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. bust). Call Ray at 439-8140 for more information.

Friday, October 8, 7:30 pm

Fresno Art Museum Orville Johnson & Mark Graham, Kings of Mongrel Folk. Wry humor, virtuoso harmonica, soulful blues, hot pickin' and sweet country vocal—that's what you get when Orville and Mark combine forces. Mark wrote such humorous witty classics as "I Can See Your Aura and It's Ugly" and "Zen Gospel Singing." \$10 Advance; \$12 at the door. Info: Pat Wolk 431-3653

Saturday, October 9, 9:30 AM

Monthly board meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness.

Tuesday, October 12, 6:30 PM

Second Tuesday at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness. Wendy Rose will host the evening program: Columbus day or Indigenous People's Day?

Thursday, October 14, 6 PM

Meeting of MAPA (Mexican American Political Association) Fresno at Arte Americas, 1630 Van Ness. For more information call 485-4707 or 252-3330.

Thursday, October 14, 6:30 PM

Meeting of the *Living Wage Campaign* at the SEIU 535 offices at 3485 W. Shaw, Suite 103. Call 226-0477

Friday, October 15

Deadline for submissions for the November issue of the Labor/Community Alliance Newsletter. Call 226-0477

Monday, October 18, 7:00 PM

Madera County Greens Community Forum. Jim Shackelford of the Forest Service make a presentation on Noxious Weed in Madera County. A Madera County Greens business meeting will be held after the forum from 8:30-9:00pm. For more information, call Bob at 641-7427

Monday, October 18, 7:30 PM

Amnesty International Group 264 will meet at the Center for Non Violence, 985 N Van Ness. Call 224-0924

Thursday October 21

Death Penalty Focus will have as guest speakers a husband-wife team who have survived the prison experience - him inside, her outside.

Friday, October 22, 5 PM

Street Heat on KFCF 88.1 FM. Featuring Labor and community activists.

Saturday, October 23, 7:30 pm,

Fresno Art Museum MIKE SEEGER. Internationally famous for American traditional music. "His instrumental technique borders on the astonishing. He switches easily from guitar to banjo to autoharp to fiddle to mouth harp, singing and foot stomping all the while. Just playing with authenticity and style is a trick in itself but Seeger does it with class and jovial spirit." Philip Elwood, San Francisco Examiner. \$12 Advance; \$15 at the door. Info. 431-3653.

Monday, October 25, 6:30 PM

Labor/Community Alliance monthly meeting at 985 N Van Ness.

Every Saturday 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Food Not Bombs feeds the hungry near the Olive Avenue entrance to Roeding Park. Volunteers are needed to help cook food Saturday mornings, 9:30 AM at Sierra Vista United Methodist Church, corner of Maple and Illinois. Donations of good or almost good produce can be dropped off also. They are always in need of servers at the park.

Every Sunday 1:00 - 2: PM

Food Not Bombs serves on Sundays as well, at Roeding Park. To volunteer contact us at the Gaia House at 266-5305. Donations of food, clothing, or whatever, are always accepted. Donations are tax deductible.

Every 4th Saturday 8:00 PM 'til?

Cultural Coffee House: Open-mike poetry, spokenword, acoustic music, song, or anything you have on your mind. Donations for each event go to one set individual or group that needs it for a certain purpose. Followed by dancing to d.j., an art show, political movies, etc. The Gaia House, 1009 N. Wilson between Olive and Palm.

Monday - Friday 9:00 AM

Democracy Now! on radio KFCF 88.1 FM. Amy Goodman, award-winning veteran journalist, appropriately subtitles this show "The Exception to the Rule" as the program covers news of the nation and world from a progressive viewpoint, with focus on the history and economics of workers, women and people of color around the world.

Every Tuesday and Thursday 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

St. Benedict Catholic Worker feeds the hungry in front of Fresno County Jail (Fresno and M Sts.). Volunteers are needed. The Catholic Worker is located at 4022 N. Cheryl Ave. Fresno (Cross streets are Marks and Ashlan). Donations of food are ALWAYS welcome. For further information call Bryanor Liza Apper at 229-6410.

Every Monday and Thursday 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Scalzo Talk A radio program for unions, about unions and to union people. A radio program with a union voice. Interviews of local people on labor issues and political issues that deal with the working people. KAAT 103.1 FM. For more information, visit their web site at: www.scalzotalk.com

Every Wednesday 7:30 PM

David Bacon's Labor Journal on KFCF 88.1 FM.

David Bacon's experience as a union organizer and his worldwide contacts in the labor community make him uniquely qualified as a journalist specializing in issues and concerns of working people.

We receive many calendar items for this newsletter after our production deadline. For up to the minute calendar information check our web site at: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Congress/1885/calendar.htm> and/or join our email alert service by writing to us at <clr2@jgc.apc.org>.

THE LIMITS OF IMMIGRATION POLICY

by Rachael Kamel

What is immigration policy good for? What is its appropriate scope of action, and what phenomena lie beyond its reach? We at the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) believe that these fundamental questions must be addressed before it is possible to evaluate any given policy.

The 1990s have been marked by many complex geopolitical and economic transformations. Among these are the emergence of the United States as the world's sole remaining military superpower, the rapidly accelerating integration of global markets, and unprecedented deregulation of the global movement of capital.

Such phenomena are related to the widening gap between rich and poor on a global scale (both within and between nations), a marked increase in environmental degradation, a decline in food security throughout the developing world, and a parallel decline in living standards and economic security for working people in advanced industrial countries. Some of these are twenty and thirty year trends that only now have entered into broad public awareness in the U.S., while others have been sharply intensified over the past decade, and all are linked together through intricate webs of causation and interaction.

A worldwide increase in displacement and migration, including increased labor migration to the U.S., is also part of this web. Yet none of these phenomena, including migration, are susceptible to control through immigration policy. We believe that the entire debate over whether to restrict, where to restrict, and how to restrict immigration hugely misses the mark.

What policy can determine, in large measure, is the conditions under which immigration will take place. How much or how little of it will be clandestine and fraught with risk? How many political refugees will be turned away at ports of entry, without ever having the opportunity to go before a judge? How many border crossers will drown in the Rio Grande or die of exposure in the Arizona desert? How many undocumented workers will be too fearful to report violations of wage and hour laws or to join in union organizing campaigns? Here, we believe, the weight of all of the arguments—both economic and humanitarian—falls on the side of respect for human rights and dignity as a non-negotiable plank in any progressive platform.

There is a corollary question for all of us, immigrant and native-born alike: how many of our democratic rights and freedoms will we trade away in exchange for spurious schemes to stop "illegal" immigration and international drug trafficking? (Or in exchange for not unrelated and equally spurious promises to "get tough on crime" and "end welfare freeloading"?) In each case, the supposed benefit never arrives, but the bitter costs, which fall most heavily on the most vulnerable, are cemented in place.

It is instructive, in this regard, to consider the experience with employer sanctions, which were mandated by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. It has been widely documented, including by such agencies as the General Accounting Office (GAO), that employer sanctions resulted in a sharp increase in employment discrimination against people whose names, accents, or appearances were perceived to be foreign. There is equally broad agreement, likewise, that employer sanctions did not result in any decrease in the entry of undocumented workers into the U.S. labor market. Finally, the U.S. experience is echoed on a global scale: according to researcher Saskia Sassen, employer sanctions have failed to achieve their stated goal in every country that has tried them. Worker verification ups the ante of repression for a policy that has already been shown to be unworkable.

Our commitment to human rights is guided not only by our spiritual and ethical values, but also by our understanding of labor market economics. Simply put, wages and working conditions for those at the bottom of the heap—which is where most immigrants are situated—form a floor for all working people. The lower the floor, the more conditions are depressed for everybody. The more immigrant workers are forced into conditions of claustrophobia, the greater will be the downward pressure on the entire spectrum.

There have always been tendencies in the labor movement that have sought to defend the prerogatives of more privileged workers against "competition" from the less privileged—whether immigrants, women, or native-born people of color. Likewise, there have always been countervailing tendencies that have worked to build solidarity among all working people, across barriers of race, gender, and nationality. Horizontal hostility, ethnic tensions, and divisions among marginalized communities are realities that must be addressed and ultimately overcome—not enshrined in differential treatment in legislation.

Some of labor's most dynamic representatives—including unions like UNITE, SEIU, or HERE—have recognized that immigrants, like women workers and those drawn from native-born communities of color, represent the hope and the future of the U.S. labor movement. At the same time, it is also true that the AFL-CIO has yet to reverse its official support for employer sanctions [AFL-CIO says it has now stepped back from its proposition of support and has criticized employer sanctions as being discriminatory]. There is no single "labor" view on immigration policy, because this, too, is a site of contention and change.

Finally, we come to the question: what positive alternatives does the Service Committee advance? AFSC, of course, is not primarily a policy advocacy group; our efforts focus on community-based movements for social change. When we see policies that will do great harm to the communities we work with, we oppose them. When we see specific openings to advocate for constructive changes, we take advantage of them—in partnership with the affected communities. We have called, for instance, for the extension of the 245(I) program, which facilitates family reunification; for a permanent amnesty for Central American refugees; and for an end to military patrols at the U.S.-Mexico border (which, following the fatal shooting in April 1997 of a Texas teen, were suspended by the Pentagon). We also work continually at many levels to advocate for greater accountability by immigration officials.

We believe immigrants should be protected by the same basic human and constitutional rights available to all people in the United States, whether or not we think such a stance will fly in Washington. We do so both because of our deeply held values regarding the infinite worth of human life and because of our considered conviction that basic change is made possible primarily through social struggle.



Rachael Kamel is in the Community Relations Division of the American Friends Service Committee, where she served as coordinator of the Mexico-U.S. Border Program from 1995 to 1997.

CENTRAL VALLEY INSTITUTE

Vincent Lavery, who is a long time community activist, has a proposal for a Valley "think tank" that he would like to see get off the ground. The project got a boost last month when the Center for Nonviolence gave its support to the project.

Essentially the Central Valley Institute (CVI) would give a voice to the liberal and progressive community when major issues are discussed in the media.

Generally, the views of the "left" are ignored

by the local media in this community but Mr. Lavery believes that having a think tank might change that. He envi-

sions specialists

who could speak

as spokespersons

on a variety of is-

ssues - civil liberties, en-

vironment, military ex-

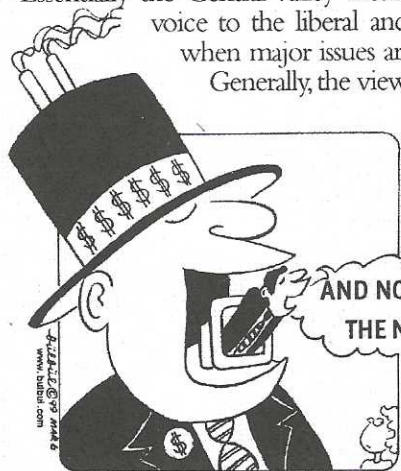
penditures, public edu-

cation, farm workers,

police conduct, minority

groups' rights and protections, women's issues, foreign policy, consumer issues, etc.

If you would like to help on this project or have questions you can call Mr. Lavery at 439-0821.



A MESSAGE FOR WORKERS ABOUT UNIONS

by Marcello Salcido

As we turn the corner into the next millennium, many workers including new immigrants, don't have the slightest idea what unions are all about. When the smoke cleared at last month's Labor Day rallies and picnics across the country, unions pledged to rededicate their efforts towards winning political victories. The need to educate non union workers about the many advantages of joining a union was hardly mentioned. After all the pork ribs were eaten and the music and speeches at picnics ended, the average worker knew little about unions. There are some today that view union's roles as somewhat obsolete in today's job environment; powerless to say the least. That concerns me greatly. Despite the fact that unions have a powerful message to tell about the good they have done for members, no one seems to be beating labor's drum.

Marcello Salcido served as the last president of the United Food & Commercial Workers Union Local 126

No one seems to be telling today's workers what unions are doing for members in today's world. That lack of information has been missing for some time.

I remember my first experience with a company union back in the late 50s. No one within my immediate family in the Sanger and Reedley area belonged to a union, nor did any of my uncles and cousins, and they were many. To be honest, none of us would even have considered joining a union then. Perhaps it's because unions seemed to be for somebody else. Certainly not for us small-town people, especially Hispanics. Besides, the employers who were mostly farmers that we worked for seemed "too small"

to be unionized and they too seemed to be struggling to make ends meet. We knew the bosses children and it would have seemed wrong and somewhat dishonest to even consider soliciting a union. That would be like breaching a line of trust then, and the issue had never arose up until then.

In general, the mentality towards unions in Reedley was that unions had no place, at least there. Reedley was and still is a small agricultural community. It's merchants most favorable statements of unions were that, "they were necessary in the old days but not now." Unions were said to be "mob controlled" and led by unscrupulous union leaders who were merely interested in their member's dues money. Merchants would "circle the wagons" if rumors had it that union organizers were in town asking too many questions about anyone's employees. Some employers at the time formed "company unions" to give workers the impression they already had a union, without having to pay dues and be bound by rigid union rules. My employer fit that category.

I recall the case of a young lady who had worked at a large supermarket in Reedley. Rumors circulated at the time that she had been fired for "talking union." One day, I was strongly urged by my boss to attend "an employee's union meeting" that would take place after work. I was totally shocked that we even had a union and more so, that my boss was almost making it mandatory that all employees attend. After all, when hired my coworkers had forewarned me never to bring up the subject of unions. I was told to jot down any work issues I might have to present them at the meeting. I made a short list of "issues."

At the employee's union meeting that evening, one of the owners supervisors chaired the meeting. She said to notice that none of the department heads were present. She emphasized that the union meeting was for "employees only," which in turn allowed us to speak more freely without fear of reprisals. She compared us to "one big happy family" where each family member depended on the other. She proclaimed that the employee was not fired for wanting to "bring in a union," but for complaining too much and "making trouble." Seeing the handwriting on the wall, I recall slowly reaching into my pocket and crumbling my list of "issues" before someone saw them.

In the years that followed, I learned more about what unions stood for. Without question and in complete contradiction to what I had been told about union officials, most union officers are extremely dedicated and qualified and place high value on the worth of their members. Members simply want a "fair shake" from their employer. Those members see the payment of reasonable dues as a wise investment, when their union is committed to fighting for their best interests. Most members enjoy 30% higher wages, receive better benefits, and have considerably more job security; than their non-union counterparts. And, the quality of the members contracts nearly always match their degree of participation in their union. When workers know they have "a good

Continued on page 12

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Valley Labor Chatter

DONATIONS TO DRESS CHAVEZ SCHOOL

As Chavez Adult School is nearing completion in central Fresno, community groups and unions are seeking donations to dress the entry way with a bust of Chavez, late leader of the United Farm Workers Union, on an eye-level pedestal, and a 4' by 6' granite etching of the famous Huelga photo shown in the Sun/Mt ad in every issue of this paper.

\$18,000 is needed. Donors of \$200 or more will receive a laminated 2' by 3' poster of the etching signed with a personalized message by the photographer, George Elfie Ballis. Donors of \$500 or more will receive the signed etching poster and have their names engraved on the Chavez pedestal.

It is especially important that local unions donate to this installation honoring a valley union leader. The fund drive is coordinated by Venancio Gaona who can be reached at 251-2486. Checks should be made out to Chavez Gifts and mailed to El Concilio, Box 11549, Fresno, CA 93774. They are tax-deductible.

ELECTION VICTORIES RESULT IN NEGOTIATIONS, CONTRACTS

Several groups of workers in the San Joaquin Valley are experiencing Union representation for the first time. Following a string of Union election victories earlier this year three groups of workers are either at the bargaining table or have ratified their first contract. Substitute teachers with SEIU 535 voted to approve the contract with FUSD in September. Employees at Channel 21 and those at Golden Valley Health Clinics in Merced and Stanislaus Counties started their negotiations in September.

FAREWELL TO OPEN SHOP!

After a long contract battle last year faculty at CSUF have some good news. Governor Davis has signed a bill that provides for employees of the State University system to pay an agency fee. This provision will now allow the California Faculty Association to be compensated for representing all of those in the bargaining unit.

ALAMEDA CLC SUPPORTS IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

On June 21 the Central Labor Council of Alameda county passed a resolution opposing government repression of immigrants and supporting measures to help them organize. The Council recognized the historic role that immigrants have played in building the labor movement and the role that they continue to play in reinvigorating it. The resolution states that thousands of immigrant workers both with and without documents, have mounted large and effective campaigns to organize unions in California in the last decade. These efforts have created new unions and strengthened and revived many others, benefitting all labor, immigrant and native-born alike.

The council also pointed out that current immigration law and its enforcement has been used to retaliate against workers who organize and protest against sweatshop conditions. The Alameda CLC has called for the following actions:

- ☛ End employer sanctions
- ☛ End to interagency sharing of information with the INS
- ☛ Declare a new amnesty program to allow immigrants to establish legal residency and expedite the citizenship process.

- ☛ Drastic cuts in immigration enforcement, and use the money saved to increase enforcement of workers rights and fair labor standards.

The California Labor Federation, SEIU, and UNITE, as well as the Central Labor Councils of the South Bay and Los Angeles, have also called for an end to government sanctions against immigrants. This resolution will be sent to the AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles on October 11-13.

PRO WORKER BILLS ON GOVERNOR'S DESK

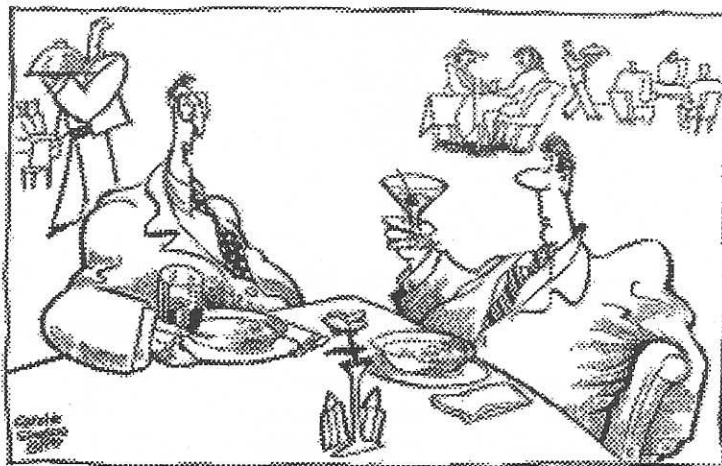
The following bills have passed in the State legislature and must be signed by Governor Davis by October 10 to become law:

RIGHT TO ORGANIZE BILL PASSES State contractors won't be able to use workers' own tax money against their right to organize if Assembly Bill 442 (Cedillo) is signed into law.

PICKETLINE FREEDOM OF SPEECH goes to the Governor. Assembly Bill 1268 (Kuehl) conforms California law to federal law and protects strikers against instant injunctions.

UNDERGROUND ECONOMY BILLS PASS, (Scofflaw) employers will face steeper penalties for providing inadequate payroll records to workers under Assembly Bill 1652 (Steinberg), the wage and hour provisions formerly contained in Assembly Bill 633. The bill also provides penalties for failing to provide rest and meal breaks. AB 633, now focused on garment manufacturers, heads toward the Governor's desk as well.

HEALTH AND SAFETY BILL PASSES, 25-12 Tragic incidents like the deaths at Contra Costa's Tosco Refinery may be prevented if the Governor signs Assembly Bill 1127 by Darrell Steinberg. The Federation-sponsored bill passed the Senate 25-13 on Sept. 7, picking up an unexpected vote from Richard Rainey. Rainey represents the district surrounding the refinery, and faces a strong challenge from worker-friendly Assembly member Tom Torlakson in Contra Costa and Alameda counties.



"Positive reinforcement may be more productive, but, dammit... it's just not as much fun."

FRESNO HEALTH CONSUMER CENTER

by Valta Pointer

All low income families, now have a health care advocate in Fresno. The Fresno Health Consumer Center, a project of Central California Legal Services is here to provide assistance with all Medi-Cal problems.

Fresno County has between 18 and 20 thousand residents who are eligible for Medi-Cal. Many of them do not realize this. Rules and regulations for Medi-Cal have been changed. If your family doesn't have Health Care Coverage and you are eligible for Medi-Cal or aren't sure you are eligible for Medi-Cal, call 441-1160 or 1 (800) 300-1277. Fresno Health Consumer Center can help determine eligibility for Medi-Cal; then assist you with your application.

If you are paying medical bills that should be covered they offer assistance in getting them covered. Please do not go on with out Health Care Coverage because you feel it is too expensive. Healthy citizens are the greatest natural resource any nation can have.

Fresno Health Consumer Center is affiliated with Health Consumer Centers state wide. One on going project being conducted in Los Angeles by the National Health Law Program is locating children exposed to lead poisoning. This is a devastating life long problem. Most children today who are exposed to lead poisoning are in low income neighborhoods. If your children are covered by Medi-Cal ask your doctor to have the test for lead poisoning done. When you are given the results of the test, call the Fresno Health Consumer Center. The information will be forwarded to the National Health Law Program in L.A. Lead poisoning causes many problems for children that may not be noticed until they enter school, sometimes it leads to mental retardation. So, this test is very important, especially if your child is having problems in school. Healthy children today make healthy adults for the future.



UNIVERSAL HEALTH FOR CALIFORNIA

by Ray Ensher

SB 480 has now passed all the legislative hurdles and now goes to the governor's desk for consideration. It is anticipated that it will be signed by Governor Gray Davis.

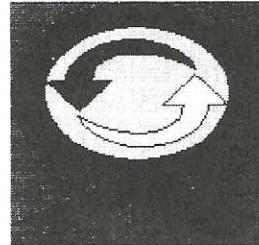
The legislation has been an effort by Health Care for All-California and other consumer organizations to secure a study of a universal health care program for California.

A report and study is to be submitted to the legislative body and governor by 2002.

The local health care organization, Health Care for All-Central California, participated in the support of SB 480. Local meetings have been put on hold until further work is needed. Contact Bill Young or Ray Ensher for further information, 439-8140.

NEEDLE EXCHANGE ACTIVIST NEEDS HELP

by Diane Scott



Even though AB518 looks as though it will become law and decriminalize needle exchange, three volunteers, Audrey Alorro, Jean Rodriguez, and Bobby Bowens, of the San Joaquin Valley Needle Exchange Works, need an outpouring of support from Valley people, to try to get DA Ed Hunt to drop the charges against them. Write: Fresno County District Attorney, Ed Hunt, 2200 Tulare Street, Fresno, CA 93721, asking him to drop the charges so that these people can continue their work to save lives of innocent partners and children, give medical care on-site, provide AIDS prevention education, and make referrals to drug treatment programs.

The current law is wrong and it is not reducing drug usage. Ms Alorro would like a copy of your letter sent to her, P. O. Box 2030, Merced, CA, 95344. or, for a petition to sign, contact Diane Scott, 222-6135.

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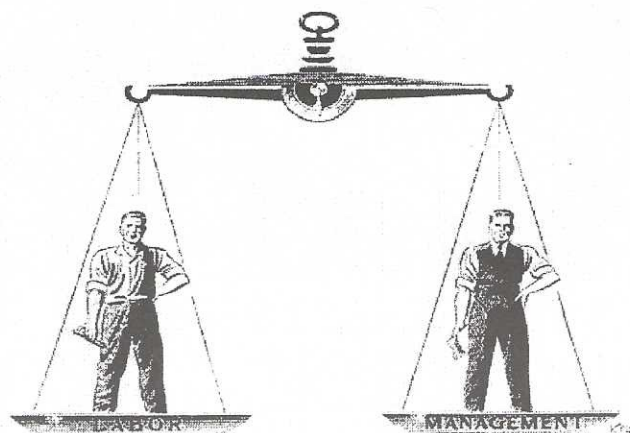
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thing going" with their union; they readily accept the challenge of "spreading the news" of the fruits of their successes to other workers. Their assistance in organizing new members can lead to tremendous victories. Contrary to national labor trends, we doubled the local's membership size during my tenure as president of the local despite great obstacles. I'm sure that other unions could cite even greater achievements.

That's not to say that labor unions are perfect. There are a few "rotten apples" that need culling lest they contaminate the 99% that are not. Officials that use deceit and unscrupulous tactics to take advantage of their unsuspecting members have no place in unions. There are a few officers of unions that misuse their members trust; by inflating their salaries without their members knowledge, by misusing union funds for personal gain, by violating the local's bylaws thus denying to their members due process. The very worst are those who blatantly refuse to enforce contractual provisions simply to benefit employers, or stuff the ballot box. Those deserve to be run out of town. The same "secret ballot" process that unions use to bring new members into the union should be used to rid the union of these unsavory characters. As I said before, thank goodness that 99% of union officers do not conduct themselves in such a manner, and I'd join their unions in a heart beat.

Finally, I encourage all unions to redouble their efforts towards educating workers about the benefits of belonging to, or joining a union. Also allow me to take this opportunity to thank the working class, union or non-union, for their enormous contribution towards making the USA the envy of the world.



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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

by Mike Rhodes

This month marks the Third anniversary of The Labor/Community Alliance Newsletter. The newsletter began as a project of the Labor Party (Frank Little Chapter) and at first was printed for free at various union offices. We started out making a couple of hundred copies each month but soon found that there was such a need for the publication that we were starting to burn up the union copy machines. Readers were particularly interested in the calendar, our pro-labor, and unashamedly politically progressive orientation. Today we are printing 3,000 copies a month at Hume Printing (look for the union label) and have plans for further expansion.

The Labor/Community Alliance is no longer a chapter of the Labor Party but we still appreciate their slogan: "The bosses have two parties, Now we have our own!" We became a local chapter of *Jobs with Justice* over a year ago because they work hard on a national scale to link organized labor and community groups who are struggling for social and economic justice. This is the work that The Labor/Community Alliance is doing. We are not actively building a third party to challenge the Democrats and Republicans.

The Labor/Community Alliance supports efforts that will organize the unorganized, defend workers rights, and unite labor & community groups on projects of common interest. The newsletter has done a lot to make organized labor visible in the progressive community. But perhaps, even more important than that, this newsletter has unified and strengthened the left in Fresno. Groups are no longer as fragmented and isolated as they were three years ago. They can reach out to a broader audience with this newsletter by announcing their events in the calendar and publishing articles that *The Fresno Bee* would have censored.

WILPF NEWSLETTER

The Women's International League For Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is now printing their newsletter (*The Catalyst*) in this publication. We are really excited to have WILPF join with the Fresno Center for Nonviolence in printing their newsletter in these pages. There are some pretty big advantages to everyone in this arrangement. For example, both WILPF and the nonviolence center get their message out to thousands of more people than before. Everyone who reads this newsletter knows what these groups are doing and can participate in their events.

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

The editorial board has been joined this month by Myrna Martinez Nateras who will help us to improve our coverage of immigrant rights issues. This newsletter is committed to providing substantial coverage of events, issues and concerns of the immigrant community. Myrna is the Program Coordinator for the Pan-Valley Institute in Fresno which focuses on immigration issues. The Pan-Valley Institute is affiliated with the American Friends Service Committee.

LOCAL POLITICS - WHO DO YOU SUPPORT FOR MAYOR?

by Mike Rhodes

Fresno will have mayoral elections in March 2000. Does the progressive movement and organized labor have a candidate that they are running? Is there even a candidate that is worth supporting? To answer this question I asked about a dozen local political activists what they thought.

Karen Humphrey, former Fresno Mayor and a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, had some thoughtful insights on the question: "I think some of the people mentioned as possible candidates could or may represent the interests of working people and the progressive community. They include (in no particular order) Chris Petersen, Bryn Batrich, Dan Whitehurst, Henry Perea, Sal Quintero and Dan Ronquillo. I base this assessment either on the political positions they have taken in the past, what I know of their positions now, or their party affiliation.

In addition, Ms. Humphrey said "The issue is that I'm not sure the 'interests of working people and the progressive community in Fresno' are visible enough or clear enough to any of the candidates. Many pay lip service to 'working people' and even show up at Labor Day picnics without being specific about what they would actually do in office. I think a good candidate certainly would work with and be sympathetic to the issues of organized labor, but would also look at working people's issues more broadly as well. And while organized labor is a political force in Fresno—on some issues, the progressive community is perceived to be too small and disinterested in local government to be a factor which has to be considered."

When asked what can be done to change this situation Ms Humphrey responded "what needs to be done to get candidates who represent the interests of working people and progressives in Fresno is to organize, organize, organize. Establish enough of a presence and a clear enough set of principles and positions sufficiently ahead of an election to attract candidates who support those positions. You can't wait for a sympathetic candidate to emerge—and then hope she or he will have enough money to mount a serious campaign. You have to "grow" candidates either by encouraging politically active people who do care about these constituencies early on, or encouraging your own members and activists to become candidates.

Randy Ghan, secretary treasurer of the Central Labor Council in Fresno, said "there are several people who are not yet official that could make interesting Mayoral prospects. That in itself is the problem...too many candidates and several of them are friendly to Labor interests. As soon as the filing period is complete we will finalize our examination of the prospects and be forthcoming with our plan/strategy regarding that race...stay tuned."

Ray Ensher, a Democratic Party activist and member of The Labor/Community Alliance said "there are not potential Mayoral candidates that I think are fully of a progressive attitude. The closest would be Dan Whitehurst and Dan Ronquillo. Although I fear Whitehurst in regard to his leaning toward developers. Mr. Ensher suggested that "the Alliance needs to consider working to put up a candidate that truly represents the progressive positions."

What became apparent to me while working on this article is that the progressive movement and organized labor in Fresno does not have a pro-active plan for electoral politics in this community. We wait to see who the candidates are and then support the lesser of two (or more) evils. Sometimes we even divide our votes, like in the Lloyd Carter and Tom Boyajian race in the District 1 City Council election last November.

It is easy to write off candidates like Alan Autry who recently switched party affiliates from American Independent Party to the Republicans (ugh!). Republicans Chris Mathys and Garry Bredefeld are also unlikely to win our support. Mike Eagles, whose ads claim that he is "a rich Republican" is a no brainer.

We are left with the Democratic Party candidates, either declared or un-declared that Ms Humphrey has already mentioned: Chris Petersen, Bryn Batrich, Dan Whitehurst, Henry Perea, Sal Quintero and Dan Ronquillo.

In coming months this newsletter will provide space to evaluate these candidates from a progressive and Labor perspective. But, in the long run, I think Karen Humphrey and Ray Ensher got it right when they said that we need to be encouraging our own members and activists to become candidates.



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MEMORIAL MARCH



photo by Mike Rhodes

*Community march in honor of farm workers
held in Fresno on September 4, 1999*

Over 200 people came to the Memorial March in honor of farm workers that have died in automobile accidents including the 13 on August 9, 1999.

Marchers came to demand:

- ⌘ General Amnesty for All Immigrants
- ⌘ Driver's Licenses for ALL Immigrants in 2000
- ⌘ Eight hour shifts, and overtime pay
- ⌘ Better safety and low cost transportation
- ⌘ Better and lower cost housing

The march was sponsored by El Comit  No Nos Vamos, Frente Indigena, MAPA, Proyecto Campesino, Pan Valley Institute, Coalicion para los Inmigrantes del Norte de California, Comit  de los Pobres, UFW, and the Hmong National Council. If you would like more information call 497-0833 or 490-1087.



Photo by George Ballis

DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR ALL IMMIGRANTS IN 2000

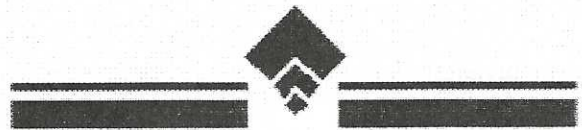
by Gloria Hernandez

I felt sick inside when I learned of the farm labor accident that killed 13 persons and the several more accidents that have followed since the article I wrote (published in *The Fresno Bee*) on the right to a driver's license was published. It was scary, people kept telling me the article was right on target.

Yet, AB 1463, the legislation to allow people without status to get a driver's license died in the Senate Transportation Committee because Senator Jim Costa would not vote in favor of it, even after the amendment to allow only those persons who have filed for adjustment of status with the INS office in Fresno. Jim Costa stated that those documents could be fraudulent and thus he could not vote in favor of it.

At the public hearing to discuss the issue of the farm worker's transportation problems, I kept hearing the farm workers and their supporters tell the legislators that one solution to the day hauling problem is the right of all to a driver's license. They stated some of the same reasons I had stated in my article. However, mostly I heard, "we need the license to stop the intimidation and attacks by law enforcement on unlicensed drivers". The unlicensed persons lose their cars, have to pay fines that no one else has to and are forced to drive without insurance. This emotional stress on top of having to endure another 10 + hour day at work (with mid-evil working conditions) is very sever.

How do I feel about Jim Costa not voting in favor of AB1463? Well, its clear that he has not only prejudged the people (accusing them of using fraudulent documents) but what really hurts is that he just doesn't care about those of us who drive the same roads. Jim, I really think that it's time to put all the anti-immigrant, prejudging, and warped thinking aside and vote for what is best for all of the people who use our state roads, avenues, freeways and highways.



The Campaign Continues---Get Involved!

What you can do:

- ✱ Continue to circulate petitions for *Driver's Licenses for ALL Immigrants* (call the number below for petitions).
- ✱ Call the Immigrant Rights Coalition and share ideas on what else can be done.

For more information, contact El Comit  No Nos Vamos in Fresno at (559) 497-1833 or 498-6033.

THE LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

The Living Wage Campaign in Fresno is in negotiations with the Central Labor Council of Fresno, Madera, Tulare, and Kings Counties (CLC). Some CLC leaders have informally indicated that the Living Wage Campaign is not seen as a high priority.

Bill Camp, Co-Director of the AFL-CIO of CA, has indicated that the priority of the state organization is to work for an increase of the California's minimum wage to \$6.75 indexed to the inflation rate. The state AFL-CIO plans a campaign to gain support of the new minimum wage from progressive organizations and churches. They think that they cannot focus on both the Living Wage Campaign and the Minimum Wage Campaign simultaneously. This alternative approach to improving the lives of the working poor in the Central Valley is one that we would be happy to consider. The Labor Community Alliance is the umbrella group for many progressive organizations in Fresno. It seeks to find ways to advance the common goal of a decent living wage for all working people.

In the light of these developments in the Living Wage Campaign, the community groups and union activists at the September 9th meeting decided that it was essential to re-evaluate the project's strategy. Participants at the meeting concluded that the Living Wage Campaign would not be nearly as effective without broad support of organized labor. Therefore, it was decided to send a letter to the CLC formally requesting that they approve the Living Wage Campaign. The letter, sent Friday, September 11, makes clear that The Labor/Community Alliance is willing to take a back seat in the campaign if that would increase the chance for success.

The groups working on the Living Wage campaign are encouraging the unions directly effected by privatization to take a leadership role in the project. The Fresno City Employees Association and Operating Engineers Local 39 have the most to gain by pushing for a Living Wage because it is their members who are being laid off under city privatization.

Several groups present at the second Living Wage Campaign meeting were inclined to carry out the campaign even if the CLC does not join the coalition. "If the CLC supports the Living Wage Campaign but does not have the resources to work on it, then we hope they will give us their blessing to move the project forward", The Rev. Bryan Jessup of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno said. The Rev. Bob Baker, pastor of College Community Congregational Church said, "This is a human issue that the community has an important stake in. I hope that the CLC will join with us in a coalition on this campaign, or at the very least not stand in the way of the project."



Oakland Living Wage Action

A Living Wage Campaign is a valuable opportunity for community interest groups and organized labor to join together to work on a project of common interest. Stopping the privatization of city jobs and guaranteeing that employees are paid a "living wage" are important and achievable goals. It was exciting to be at a meeting where a large number of community groups and union representatives came to work on and to recognize that a primarily "labor" issue concerns all who care about Fresno. Interested citizens, from diverse groups, came to the table to be partners in a coalition dedicated to economic and social justice.

The question is: How can we all work together to increase the minimum wage and work toward a living wage for all workers? Come to the next Living Wage meeting and find out. Thursday, September 30, 6:30 PM at the SEIU 535 offices at 3485 W. Shaw, Suite 103. Call 226-0477

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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.



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WITH OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS. THE WEEK OF
EVENTS will conclude with a COMMUNITY-wide
vigil OCT. 7 AT FRESNO'S COURTHOUSE PARK (NEAR
THE REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BUST) begin-
ning at 7 p.m. MAJOR COMMUNITY LEADERS will
speak at this event. PLEASE check the CALENDAR
ON PAGE 6 FOR DETAILS.

Let's Get Organized

Are you tired of:

- X** lousy wages;
- X** no benefits;
- X** no respect on the job?

**Call one of the following local
union organizers to help you
make the world a better place
to work!**

Pam Whalen, Gene Garcia,
Yolanda Guerra
SEIU Local 535
Public Employees, Health Care, Social
Services
(559) 275-1404

David Yancy
Plumbers Local 246
Plumbers
(559) 252-5367

Glen Westersund
Engineers & Scientists of CA Local 20
Technical & Professional Workers
(559) 263-7481

Kenneth McCormack
International Brotherhood of
Electrical Workers Local 100
Electricians
(559) 251-8241

Marc Scalzo
International Association of
Machinists & Aerospace Workers
Local 653
Auto Repair, Industrial, Retail
Consumer, Electronics
(559) 264-2817
www.scalsoatalk.com

Doug Whipple
Local 701
Carpenters
(559) 268-3895

Jimmy Hammack
Teamster Local 431
(559) 486-5410

Al Madrigal, Jr.
United Steel Workers of America
Manufacturing
(559) 264-5342

Frank Flores
Sheet Metal Workers Local 162
Sheet Metal Manufacturing
(559) 255-0454

Hotel Employees
Restaurant Employees Union
Local 19
Restaurant Workers
(559) 485-0601

James Todd
Rachel Rodriguez
Ninfa Franco
SEIU Local 250
Health Care Union
Representing 47,000 Health Care
Workers in No. California
(559) 271-7005