

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Progressive Culture, Politics, Art, and Entertainment Since 1996

Can we rise up from our poverty?

Every spectator is either a traitor or a coward

NOVEMBER 2005

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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The Community Alliance is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly newspaper is to build a powerful progressive movement that will support social, environmental, & economic justice; immigrant rights; and a living wage for all working people. We seek to expose social and political injustices and to link the diverse network of activists working in our community.

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Eulogy for Caroline

by Maria Telesco

A person amounts to more than the worst thing they’ve ever done, Sister Helen Prejean says. Caroline Young’s life amounted to more than the *Fresno Bee* indicated: that she was convicted of killing, was on Chowchilla’s death row for ten years, and died.

Caroline was called “Pineapple” by the 14 other women on the row and was beloved for her warmth, wisdom, and serenity. Caroline never told me when or why she came to the mainland, but she spoke longingly of her native Hawaii, fantasizing of someday returning there.

Undemanding, she had little, asked for less, and appreciated what she was given. She didn’t laugh or talk a lot, but her gentle smile and sad, dark eyes revealed what went unsaid.

Her health declined: skin sallowd, energy fled, mind wandered, hope dissipated—and was ultimately abandoned, because of treacherous kidneys.

In and out of the prison infirmary, back and forth to a nearby hospital for dialysis, a final journey to UMC (Fresno County Hospital). Friends heard death was imminent, but it didn’t happen right then. Caroline rallied a bit—as gravely ill patients often do, before death finally wins out. Word came she was in a coma. Friends wanted to visit her in UMC’s ICU, but the State said no to farewell visits.



Is Radio Station KMJ Operating in the Public Interest?

By Ellie Bluestein

The attached letter was sent to Radio Station KMJ on July 26, with copies to Jim Patterson and to the Federal Communications Commission. In addition, supportive individuals have responded with their own personal letters to all three. To date no replies have been forthcoming from either KMJ or Jim Patterson. Some people have received a form letter from FCC about freedom of speech. We are very disturbed about the lack of response to our complaint. Gail Gaston is filing a request to FCC to deny a license renewal to KMJ based on their permitting untrue and slanderous speech and refusing to acknowledge it by granting our request for an apology and correction. It would be useful to have more supporting letters in the file. Here are the addresses:

Station Manager
KMJ Radio Station
1071 West Shaw Ave
Fresno, CA 93711

Jim Patterson
c/o KMJ Radio Station

Federal Communications Commission
Enforcement Division, Mass Media Bureau
445 12th Street SW
Washington DC 20554

The following letter, on national WILPF letterhead has been mailed to KMJ, Jim Patterson, and the FCC. Our lawyer advised us that this would be the best course of action at this time. In order for a positive response to be forthcoming, there needs to be pressure exerted by as many people as possible. They need to know that we are a distinguished group of Fresnans, not “nutzoids,” Communists, or terrorists. So when you sign your name, be sure to include your most prestigious title (member of Police Chief’s Advisory Board, former school administrator FUSD, former president Fresno County Bar Association, etc.).

Addresses below. Please write to all three. Renewal of broadcast license takes place this year, and it’s time for KMJ to be accountable for the truth. So write those letters. Ellie

Attention: Station Manager
KMJ Radio Station



Comforting messages from both sides of the barbed wire told us that the officers guarding her were very kind, that the nursing care was excellent and gentle, and that a hospice worker was with her to the end, which came just after midnight on September 16.

Her neighbors on the row reminded us that Pineapple is in a better place now, and that the State hadn’t won because the State didn’t get to kill her. In certain circles, that’s terribly important.

We’ll miss you, Caroline. Aloha.

1071 West Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93711

Jim Patterson
c/o Radio Station KMJ
(same as above)

Federal Communications Commission, Enforcement Division, Mass Media Bureau
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20544

Attention Station Manager:

On May 13 of this year, Jim Patterson, substituting for Ray Appleton on KMJ, made the following statement:

“Fresno was a city run by a mayor who, shall be nameless, who chased off the military in Fresno, forced and chased off the Veterans’ Parade. There was a time when we had a mayor in Fresno, California (Karen Humphrey) who was a member of the Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom. Folks that’s a Socialist, Communist, left-wing organization. They’re nutzoids. The fact of the matter is that this city got such a lousy reputation for running off the military and running off the veterans that the Veterans’ Day Parade in Fresno, California, that had been here for years actually gave up and left.”

I hardly know what to credit Jim with first—ignorance or maliciousness.

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom is a 90-year-old women’s peace and justice organization with sections in 38 countries, including on every continent. It was founded in 1915, during World War I, when over 1,000 women, some crossing enemy lines, met at the Hague to talk about ending war, a goal to which they are still dedicated. Women whose sons and husbands were killing each other on the battlefield pledged to work toward the establishment of world peace and the elimination of the causes of war. Jane Addams, the renowned social reformer and educator, became the first international president of the organization. She and Emily Greene Balch, another WILPF activist, became the first American women to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. For 90 years we have continued to play a role on the international stage, with non-governmental standing at the United Nations, an international headquarters in Geneva, and a national office in Philadelphia.

The Fresno branch of WILPF was started in 1965, played an active role in protesting the war in Vietnam, supported the right of the farm workers to organize, took part in the effort to desegregate the Fresno city schools, is active in the effort to decrease air pollution in our area and minimize the use of toxic chemicals, especially at our schools. We have an unequivocal commitment to equal rights for all regardless of ethnicity, color, sex, age, ability, sexual orientation, income, or religious beliefs.

As an organization we believe in nonviolent means of bringing about change. Anyone who supports our agenda is invited to join us. We have no political test for our members. Currently we are strongly opposed to the war in Iraq, to the expenditure of \$80 billion for death and destruction abroad at the expense of our education needs, inadequate health system, and physical decay of our cities and their infrastructure. But most seriously we deplore the use of our young women and men as killers in a foreign land that has never attacked us nor had the means to do so.

Your station is not free to pollute the airwaves with lies that thwart the American right for individuals and groups to pursue their democratic purposes. We demand that both your radio station and Jim Patterson apologize for your slanderous misinformation both on the air and in written form to our organization and that you give out the accurate information about our organization.

Yours truly,
Ellie Bluestein
Fresno Branch, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

The Biggest Free-Speech Soap Box This Community Has Ever Seen: Bringing PEG Access to the Fresno Area

By Mike Rhodes

The effort to bring public, education, and government (PEG) channels, a community media center (CMC), and an institutional network (I-Net) to the Fresno/Clovis area took a step forward recently with the renewal of a contract between the City of Fresno and the Buske Group. The Buske Group is a consultant for the City of Fresno and Clovis in cable franchise agreement negotiations with Comcast, the area's cable provider. Having the Buske Group as a consultant levels the playing field between Comcast and the local government entities that are working in the public interest to bring PEG access, CMC, and I-Net to this region. Renewal of the Buske Group contract was unanimously supported in a 6-0 vote before the Fresno City Council on Tuesday, September 27, 2005.

In an interview on listener-sponsored, free-speech radio station KFCF 88.1 FM, Sue Buske, president of the Buske Group, explained that the local franchise agreement between Comcast cable and the Cities of Clovis and Fresno and Fresno County are up for renewal. The original agreement is decades old and it expired in December 2004, but it was initially extended for a year and will be extended again to accommodate negotiations.

Buske said, "This renewal process presents certain opportunities to the community...to negotiate for channels and bandwidth for community use and also the opportunity to negotiate for and receive funding to support the community's use of that bandwidth in the form of resources that can help fund a community media center."

In addition, Buske said, "Along with the community media center and bandwidth dedicated for video programming on the PEG side there is also the opportunity to make sure public buildings, schools, libraries, and community centers are connected together with fiber for video voice and data and that is what is called an institutional network (I-Net)."

Locals governments have the ability to to negotiate a franchise agreement that can provide these services to the community because the cable company uses public property to deliver their services. Cable companies lay fiber optic cable under streets, use easements underground, and are using above-ground poles they do not own—all to deliver their signal to homes in this area.

Many communities have a franchise agreement that includes PEG access, a CMC, and I-Net. Buske said in the KFCF interview that she believes Comcast may be out of compliance with the existing franchise agreement because they are not providing PEG access. According to Buske, the city can remedy that problem and receive appropriate support for PEG access through a settlement associated with the franchise renewal process.

What Is PEG Access, a Community Media Center, and the I-Net?

The public channels typically provide programming produced by community groups and individuals. A program on the public channel could be about tenant rights and produced by Central California Legal Services, or it could be a cultural presentation of Hmong dancers. An individual could produce a show about local politics, a local church could cablecast a worship service, or Amy Goodman's *Democracy Now!* could be broadcast on public-access TV. In short, locally produced, independent, and alternative video will have a home on the cable network.

The education channels would be used primarily by the schools for education and distance-learning purposes. If you tune in to channel 96 you will see the beginning of the local education/government channel. Channel 96 is the forerunner to PEG. In an agreement reached last year between Comcast, the schools, and the City of Fresno, it was agreed to set up this channel. Right now, you can see coverage of Fresno Unified School Board meetings, electronic field trips, Dr. Mehas's *Speaking of Education* program, University of California programming (UCTV), the NASA Channel, the Annenberg channel, and the entire Fresno City Council session each Tuesday. It is expected that more local education and government programming will be on this channel soon.

The government channels will have the capacity to broadcast the complete city council meetings, board of supervisors meetings, planning commission meetings, and more. The government channels will be the community's window into what is happening in government. There will likely be permanent video cameras in government spaces, which will be turned on when public meetings are taking place. Interviews with elected officials and city-sponsored events will be available on this channel.

A community media center is where much of the programming for PEG channels is produced. Funding to operate such a community media center will come from the cable company as a part of the franchise agreement. Included will be video cameras, editing equipment, studios, and training. All of this will be provided to the community at no cost as a part of the franchise agreement.

The institutional network or I-Net is a part of many franchise renewal agreements. An I-Net provides a high-speed connection between government, educational, and community entities. This connection can be used for accessing the Internet, providing two-way video, and producing point-of-origin TV content. The I-Net can establish locations throughout the community where live TV production can take place. Some examples would be to have an I-Net site at City Hall so we can see what is going on in local government; at a school so we can see musical or theatrical productions; or at a community center where a live cultural event could be shown throughout the community.

Negotiating a New Franchise Agreement

A 2002 franchise agreement between Comcast and the cities of Lompoc/Santa Maria resulted in PEG access channels, a CMC, and I-Net. The agreement gives an



This Community Media Center in Monterey California is funded by the cable service provider in that area.

says have lower incomes than city residents. Sue Buske, city of Fresno and Clovis consultant, says this is not true. "There are cities and counties that have an agreement which includes PEG access, a CMC, and I-Net where cable subscribers actually pay less than communities without these services." Buske says that the prices charged by cable companies are market driven. "Cable rates are determined more by what the competition—like the satellite networks—are charging, than by a franchise agreement," Buske added.

With the renewal of the Buske Group contract, Fresno and Clovis are anticipating face-to-face meetings with Comcast to start around the first of the year. Buske said it will soon become apparent how serious Comcast is in negotiating an agreement that would be acceptable to the community. She added that this is a difficult time to get cable companies to settle these franchise agreements. There is new legislation in Washington, DC (HR 3146 and S 1349) that would take the franchise process out of local control and into the hands of the federal government. This legislation could be the ruin of PEG access, and funding for CMCs, and I-Nets throughout the country. Backers of HR 3146 are claiming that it will increase competition and give consumers more choice. Buske said none of the cable companies are rushing into franchise agreements right now because they are waiting to see what happens with this legislation.

Representative George Radanovich (R-Mariposa), who is a member of the Telecommunications Subcommittee, has not signed on as a co-sponsor of HR 3146. When contacted about the legislation, Radanovich responded, "While I support the removal of unnecessary regulatory barriers, I believe there may be a different way to go about insuring consumers a choice."

A broad coalition of community members, the Buske Group, and the cities of Fresno and Clovis have been working hard to lay the foundation for a successful contract with Comcast. The current process started about 28 months ago and has included a review of the current contract, community needs assessment meetings, and the establishment of a Citizens Franchise Renewal Task Force that includes prominent community members.

Recently, a board of directors and nonprofit organization has been established that will oversee the PEG channels and the community media center once they are up and running.

A good franchise agreement between local government entities and Comcast will provide this area with the biggest free-speech soap box that has ever existed. Everyone who has an opinion or something to say will have the tools needed to get his or her message out to a large audience. Ethnic groups can tell their stories without the message being filtered by Comcast. Residents can hear news and other information in a language they understand. Community groups can speak directly to their constituents and the broader community about the issues that they are interested in. Churches, artists, musicians, schools, and individuals will all have a voice on the cable system if a fair franchise agreement is reached. If you are interested in this issue, you might want to contact your elected representatives. Contact information for local elected officials is available here:

www.co.fresno.ca.us/0110a/default.asp
www.fresno.gov/city_officials/districts/
www.ci.clovis.ca.us/



This community needs assessment meeting was held in Fresno to determine what residents would like to see in the new cable franchise agreement. High on the list was Public, Education, Government channels and a Community Media Center.

initial grant of \$828,000 and ongoing support of \$355,000 a year during the life of the 12-year contract. Lompoc/Santa Maria had about 25,000 cable subscribers when the franchise agreement was signed. You can read about this and the results of other franchise agreements at the Buske Group's Web site: www.buskegroup.com/.

There is a big difference between the number of cable subscribers in Lompoc/Santa Maria and Fresno/Clovis, which has about 84,000 cable subscribers. Many observers close to the negotiations expect Fresno/Clovis to negotiate a much better contract than the Lompoc/Santa Maria agreement.

While the cities of Fresno and Clovis expect a franchise agreement that includes many benefits for area residents, the County of Fresno, which has more than 12,000 cable subscribers, is on the verge of settling an agreement with Comcast that does not include a public channel or a community media center. John Navarrette, director of general services for Fresno County, says the agreement will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in the next month or two.

Navarrette says that the County wants a government channel that will show the entire Board of Supervisors meeting every Tuesday. The Fresno County franchise agreement might also include an education channel, but Navarrette says they do not plan to include funding for a public channel or a community media center in the agreement: "The cable company would pass on the cost of these services to subscribers and that would be an unfair burden on county residents," who Navarrette



Listener Supported, Free Speech Radio for Central California. Owned and Operated by The Fresno Free College Foundation.

Local Programming Schedule

MONDAYS

3:00 to 3:30 PM: *Valley Politics and the African American Community* with Woody Miller, Mel Sanders and Wally Porter. Discussion on a spectrum of issues relating to African American society, culture and politics.

TUESDAYS

10:00 am to 12 noon: *Wasteland of the Free* with Rick Flores. An eclectic blend of music, local public affairs, interviews, literary readings, calendar of events and more.
3:00 to 3:30 PM: *Stone's Throw**. Jennifer Stone hosts this program with a wide ranging review of culture - modern to classic.

WEDNESDAYS

3:00 to 3:30 PM: *Stir It Up*. This program is hosted by a different group of progressive community activists each week of the month. Listen in for the community calendar, interviews and more.
• 1st Wednesday of the month: Hosted by Pam Whalen, this program focuses on labor organizing, workplace issues and immigration.
• 2nd: Hosted by the *Fresno Center for Non-Violence*, this program examines issues of peace, social justice, health and community health and economics.
• 3rd: *The Green Scene*. Hosted by the Fresno County Green Party, this program focuses on local political, social and environmental issues.
• 4th: Hosted by Wendy Russell from the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*. This program covers the local impacts and activities concerning national and international politics, economics and human rights issues.
7:00 to 8:00 PM: *Nuestro Foro*. Hosted by Eduardo Stanley and Rufino Dominguez, this public affairs program in Spanish provides news and information to the Valley's Latino population.

THURSDAYS

3:00 to 3:30 PM: Programming focused on the arts and literature.
• 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month: *Art Attack*, with host Janet Flores. This program focuses on the visual and performing arts with interviews and an events calendar.
• 2nd and 4th: *Cover to Cover**. Hosts Richard Wolinsky and Richard Lupoff explore the written word.

FRIDAYS

3:00 to 3:30 PM:
• 1st Friday of the month: *Sierra Nevada Earth First!* A review of environmental issues discussed by Mike Robe and Mark Somma.
• 2nd: *Down in the Valley*, with host Lloyd Carter. This program focuses on water policy and politics, agribusiness, and land use.
• 3rd: *Down on the Farm*. This program concentrates on sustainable agriculture and organic farming and is hosted by Tom Willey, one of the most successful organic growers in the region.
• 4th: *Clearing the Air*, a program looking at issues of urban growth, air quality and transportation. Hosted by Kevin Hall, an activist and journalist, who intensely follows the policies, decision making and impacts of development in the Valley.
5:00 to 6:00 PM:
• 1st Friday: *Radio Rise Up!* Jeremy Hofer features youth issues, community activism and building an alternative culture with words and music.
• 2nd: *Literary Mosaic*. Dorina Lazo explores the local literati.
• 3rd: *It's a Queer Thang*. Programming on gay and lesbian issues with host Jeff Robinson.
• 4th: *Street Heat*. Labor & community issues are the topic with host Pam Whalen.
7:00 to 8:00 PM: *Move On Up*. An audio magazine produced by Devoya Mayo featuring conversations and information concerning the Central Valley's arts scene.
9:00 to 11:00 PM: *Southeast Asian Refugees Program* - Cambodian News and Information with host, Lay Prum.
Last Friday of the month: *That Time of the Month*. From Midnight to 6:00 AM Saturday morning, special music & arts programming by a variety of hosts.

SATURDAYS

4:00 to 6:00 PM:
• 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month: *Music for a Blue Planet* hosted by Kent Stratford.
• 2nd and 4th: *Rhythms in Jazz* with host, Mr. Leonard.
7:00 to 11:00 PM:
• 1st Saturday of the month: *Dixieland Jazz* - Traditional and Dixieland Jazz with host, Lou Beck.
• 2nd: *Earthbeat* (7:00 to 9:00 PM) Annie Compton-Schmidt hosts two hours of music from the world followed by *Jazz with Jim* (9:00 to 11:00 PM) hosted by Jim Compton-Schmidt with two hours of Jazz classics.
• 3rd: *Underground Railroad*. Modern Blues music with host, Michael Hill.
• 4th: *Interstellar Lounge*. Music from inner and outer space with Dan Cook.

SUNDAYS

6:30 to 7:00 PM:
• 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month: *Radio Specials* featuring the best of alternative radio productions from a variety of sources.
• 2nd and 4th: *Ideas on the Edge* with Mike Beevers features interviews with authors of today's most compelling books.
7:00 to 9:00 PM:
• 1st Sunday of the month: *Mousikés Nôtes*. Music by Greek Composers, hosted by Alex Vavoullis.
• 2nd: *Sunday Evening Classics*. Classical music with Bruce Kennedy.
• 3rd: *Time Trippin'*, with host Bob Lambert featuring a musical journey to a specific time in your past. The feel of the year, not the hits it produced.

* Cover to Cover and Stone's Throw are KPFA programs of noted interest to KFCF listeners.



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KPFA audio stream: aud-one.kpfa.org:8000

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Seniors in the Cell Block: Why Elderly Prisoners Will Be the Next Big Problem Facing Our Prison System

By Boston Woodard

People don't think of grandfathers and grandmothers as prisoners, but it is an increasing trend in America's prison system. The elderly prison population as defined by the California Department of Corrections (CDC) is anyone 60 or older. At the California Medical Facility (CMF) in Vacaville, there are many prisoners who are elderly: some in their 60s, 70s, 80s—and a few pushing 90. Many have serious medical problems, as one would imagine, and are classified as medically disabled.

These elderly prisoners are housed in the same units designed to facilitate younger, more violent prisoners.

California's prison population is just shy of 180,000—a 75 percent increase from 1987. But the elderly population has surged greatly, according to corrections reports. If the trend continues, elderly convicts could pose major problems for prison officials uncertain where to house them. And they could become a major burden to the system's already skyrocketing health care costs.

"For decades, prisons have been built based on the model of the young, violent male," says a CMF medical official (who wishes to remain anonymous). That model is fast becoming obsolete.

As their numbers increase, so does the debate over how to treat these prisoners. Should society house violent young criminals together with relatively helpless old men and women? Would it be cheaper and healthier to segregate older prisoners in special facilities such as secure prison farms or nursing homes with less emphasis on expensive measures to prevent escape? Maybe this could give them a much more satisfactory life, save money, and still satisfy society's desire for security. There are hundreds of elderly prisoners throughout the system who were sentenced to an exorbitant amount of time for minor crimes. Some have been locked up for 30 or 40 years after being sentenced to serve 15 to 20 years on a life sentence.

Is the brutality of the penal system a place for the elderly? The excuses handed to the public by the Department of Corrections Public Information Officers and prison administrators—justifying heavy-security penitentiaries designed to prevent escapes and cut down on violence behind prison walls—often just don't apply to older prisoners. Some critics will argue that older people are just as capable of brutality. But statistics show that they neither attempt escape nor instigate assaults.

Crime experts say the elderly prison population is increasing nationwide for several reasons. The nation's aging population naturally produces more aging criminals. Many long-term prisoners are reaching old age. More of the elderly are turning to crime because of economic hardship; many are coming to prison for passing bad checks, shoplifting (stealing food), DUI arrests, and other non-violent crimes. To make matters worse, tough sentencing guidelines, which eliminate probation or home arrest as options, are putting more elderly behind bars.

The older prison population would grow even faster if judges were as tough on the elderly as they are on the

younger convicts. That's because there is probably a sympathy factor present when sentencing the elderly. Judges, conscious of overcrowded prisons, may impose tougher sentences on young criminals than on older criminals guilty of the same crimes. A choice is sometimes between imprisoning one or the other. Some advocates say older convicts get more than their just punishment—they are subject to robberies and assaults by younger prisoners housed in the same cell blocks.

"Most of the guys respect your age," said one 74-year-old prisoner at the California Medical Facility, "But there are always a few who don't. I've seen many old guys get beat up pretty bad since I've been in CMF and the prison staff seem to do nothing to stop it."

Some elderly prisoners are under higher security than their crimes and prison behavior call for. To what extent are these people a threat to society? Should present sentences be relaxed for older criminals? Should mandatory sentencing requirements be set for some? How about freeing those elderly prisoners near death—those with terminal illnesses who are expected to die? Could they be permitted to go home for their final months?

There are those who feel that older prisoners could feign feebleness with hopes of being assigned to areas reserved for old or handicapped prisoners—areas that could be viewed as being too cushy. There is no evidence indicating that California will be making plans to accommodate older prisoners now or later.

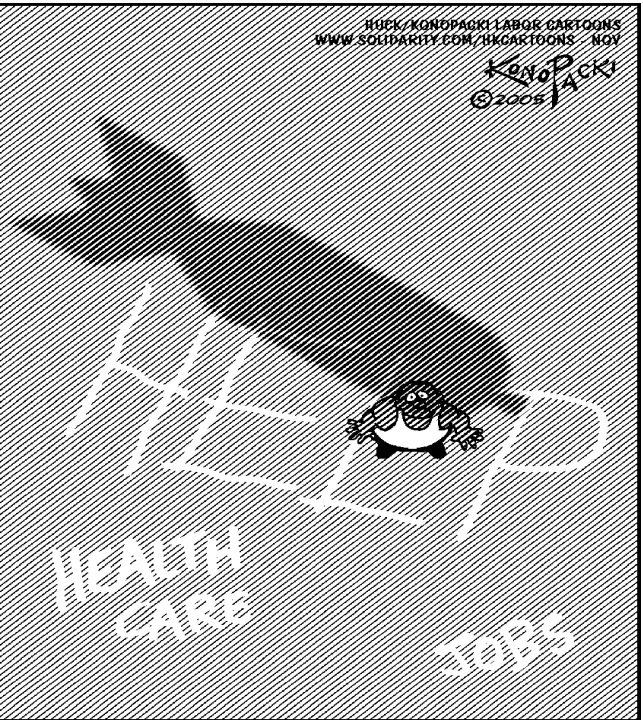
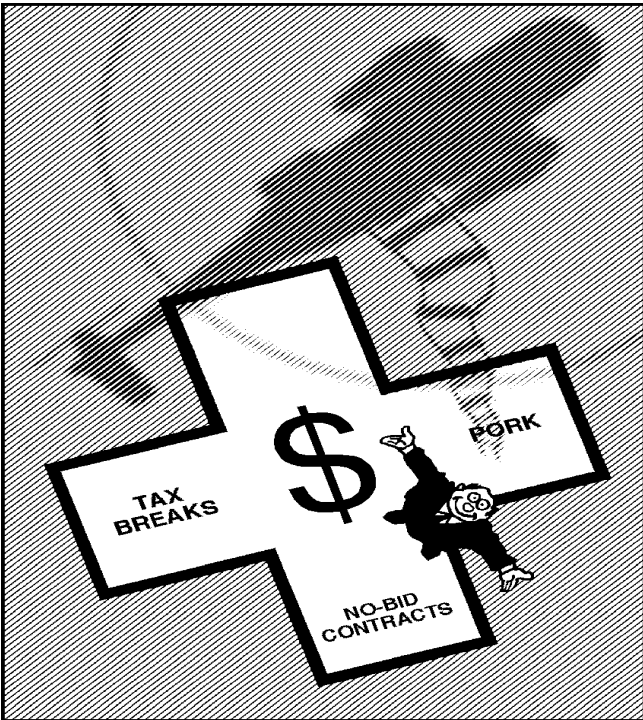
With an increase of older prisoners comes higher prison health care costs, according to some prison experts. Ironically, prisoners are the only United States residents currently living ex-president Bill Clinton's dream of guaranteed health care: in 1976, the US Supreme Court ordered all prisons to provide health care equal to the community norm.

Health care costs make elderly prisoners nearly three times as expensive to house as younger prisoners. Could California lower its prison costs by building some low-security nursing facilities for elderly prisoners? The cost of a nursing facility would be more cost-effective: fewer (or no) guard towers, security cameras, fences, outside patrols, inside security, and the very unnecessary and costly overstaffing of the higher-security facilities.

Corrections officials argue that aged prisoners can't be blamed for exploding health care costs. The reason? They still only account for a small percentage of California's prison population. There are many more elderly prisoners, but elderly does not necessarily mean sick, they argue. There is no driving need for a special health care unit for elderly prisoners.

But with California's stringent sentencing laws such as Three Strikes and the 85% commitments, the wave of older prisoners is coming. Health care costs will rise dramatically. Inevitably, demographics will take over.

Boston Woodard is a prisoner/journalist who has written for the *San Quentin News*, the *Soledad Star*, and edited *The Communicator*. The Department of Corrections has pulled the plug on all three publications.



Measure C Reauthorization: Slow Progress

By Werner Lipton

On October 14, 2005, the Southwest Transportation Center (for school buses and inter-town vans) near Caruthers hosted the Steering Committee (SC) for the reauthorization of the transportation tax (Measure C) for Fresno County. The 24 members of the SC are charged with proposing a draft expenditure plan.

The meeting was intended to obtain maximum input from the diverse interest groups represented on the SC, not to make final decisions. We were reminded that about 24% of voters will oppose any tax, new or renewed (such as Measure C). A recent survey of likely Fresno County voters has shown that about 65% of potential voters favor extension of Measure C. Therefore, many of the 10% who straddle the fence need to be pulled toward the YES side if the measure is to garner the required 66.7% of the vote to pass. This will happen only if all parties agree that no one group will get everything it wants and that the measure will be constructed so that a consensus can be reached by the SC.

Some proposals and issues :

Farm labor transportation should be supported with about \$1 million annually so that these close-to-minimum-wage workers don't have to pay \$10 each way to get to the fields to harvest our food.

The money should be spent mostly where it is collected, that is in the Fresno/Clovis metro area. This idea drew strong opposition, because we are a county-wide community: rural residents spend much money in the metro area and the rural areas must be adequately connected with each other and with the metro area. Also, the current Measure C favors Fresno/Clovis 70% (versus 30% for rural areas). The Coalition for Livable Fresno County Communities proposed a 50/50 split.

Local elected officials should have lots of discretion on how to spend the transportation dollars allocated for local use. In other words, we should trust them. In opposition to such a laissez faire attitude, it was pointed out that the current measure provided projects that were not on the ballot (FW 168), but did not undertake some that were promised (improvements to SR 99). Also, to expect voters to blindly trust elected officials is a fairytale assumption. A public Oversight Committee, missing in the current Measure C, will make sure that the tax dollars are spent as promised on the ballot.

The proposal to offer free public transit for seniors 65 or older, to entice them out of their cars, was praised, but may be impractical because state and federal support are predicated on the collection of a minimum fare box percentage. Also, the current 35¢ fare in Fresno probably is much less of a deterrent than the 30-minute headway on most fixed routes and having to wait out in the open or in minimal shelters or even at stops without benches.

Several SC members advocated a 30-year program so that major programs can be undertaken and completed. One such project would move the BSNF/Santa Fé line to the Union/Southern Pacific right-of-way (RR consolidation), which would require about \$200 million of local dollars to attract sufficient state and federal dollars to accomplish the task of freeing the metropolitan area of the hazard posed by at-grade crossings and the increased pollution caused by cars and trucks waiting for nearly 50 trains to pass each day.

The question of 20 versus 30 years and what can and can not be done with the dollars collected within these respective periods, will be posed to potential voters at the next survey. Regardless of the duration of the measure, attracting state and federal funds to supplement local tax money will be a major goal.



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Specific projects will be discussed and recommended at the next two meetings because law requires that the eventual expenditure plan must undergo Environmental Impact Review before it can be placed on the ballot in November of 2006. The overall emphasis will evaluate projects regarding their effect on air quality.

The two November meetings of the SC are scheduled for November 10 in Clovis and November 28 in Fresno. Check the Council of Fresno County Governments Web site at <www.fresnocog.org> for the latest updates on time and place.

Show up! Have your say!

Werner Lipton, Coalition for Fresno County Livable Communities



What Is Measure C?

Each time you buy anything in Fresno County, except food or medicines, a 1/2 cent for each dollar you spend ends up in the Measure C kitty. This transportation-purposes tax was approved by Fresno County Voters in 1986 and became effective in 1987. Over its 20-year life, the tax is expected to raise about \$800 million. The tax will expire at the end of 2006.

If the tax is re-authorized in November of 2006, it will become effective in 2007 and run for 20 or 30 years, depending on which period will be on the ballot.



Room
for
Something

Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

Jeff Robinson is truly a “voice” for the GLBTQ community (that’s gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning . . . or sometimes “queer” for short)—most literally as long-time co-host of “It’s a Queer Thang” airing the third Friday each month at 5 PM on KFCF, 88.1 FM. Jeff can be heard spinning records and disseminating pertinent news, both local and national.

But Jeff has also been heard (and seen) over the years in many other venues: in classrooms, in “sensitizing sessions” (e.g., for the police), on the TV news, and at public actions—speaking up for the rights of GLBTQ folks to be recognized as fully human.

And more figuratively Jeff’s “voice” can be heard through the many organizations and activities he has helped establish and/or sustain: Peace in the Tower marches, Community Link (both the agency and the newspaper), the Pink Pages, and the Pride Parade & Festival Committee, to name a few.

Like many people deeply engaged in social change, Jeff is an “accidental activist.” Coming from a mostly unsupportive family, as a young man Jeff was insecure in his gayness and was far from having leadership aspirations. In his twenties, after seeing a San Francisco gay publication, he thought he’d like to see one in Fresno, after two previous attempts had ended. He began working with Cindy Williams and others on a publication called Q&A; and some years later, when that too ended, he became full-fledged editor of the still-publishing Community Link.

Meanwhile, after the uproar inside the gay community following out of the internal community uproar following the firing of a leading AIDS activist, and the external threat of Lyndon Larouche’s call to quarantine people with AIDS, Jeff was energized and became deeply involved in efforts to reinvent a GLBTQ organization to lobby, provide information to the public, and offer sup-

port services to the community. “For six months,” he recalls, “I was just one of dozens of people brainstorming and organizing. Then, almost overnight, we were down to a few. It was plain that, if anything was going to happen, I’d have to take on major responsibilities. It never had occurred to me I could do that. But I guess I can...actually, it turns out, I’m pretty damned resourceful.”

One of Jeff’s proudest accomplishments is his work with youth—begin, again, accidentally. “A trained facilitator had started a youth group, and I attended as support. Then he stopped coming, but the need was there, so I became the leader.” Now, some 15 years later, the Link Youth Group still meets every Friday (currently at 7:30 PM at the Center for Non-violence.) Over the years, this group has forged ties with the Gay/Straight Alliance Network (with groups on several high school campuses); and they have held public talent shows, holiday parties, and even proms for teens needing a safe place a to be themselves.

Looking back, Jeff says he understands that his work is largely about “building bridges and connecting with others.” He has been involved with such groups as the Peace & Freedom Party, MEChA and MAPA, the Imperial Dove Court (where he served a year as “Emperor”), the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, and Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG). “It works both ways: we ask for their support, we give ours to them.”

Jeff also says that “becoming an activist saved my life...I found skills I didn’t know I had, community and family. I found strength in standing up for what I believe—I’m comfortable now with being called a Pushy Queen when I know what I’m pushing for is just.” He also values highly the camaraderie he’s found working with such people as Diana Bohn, Robin McGehee ,and Peter Robertson; and organizations like the Knights of Malta and the Golden State Bears, the Reel Pride Festival, Central California

IDENTITY BOX

Place of birth: Bartsville, Oklahoma
Main identity: gay Caucasian
Religious affiliation: pagan
Political affiliation: Democrat “for now”
Fresno areas most habituated: downtown and the Tower
Mottoes: “Live and let live”; “When a door closes, a window opens”
Nonpolitical interests: gardening, cooking, aquarium fish, travel
Unexpected pleasures: old romantic comedies like *Barefoot in the Park*

Contact information: 266-5465; <www.communitylinkfresno.org>



Association, and the “open and welcoming” religious congregations of Fresno.

Over the years, Jeff has seen real progress in public opinion about gays, and he even sees most corporations now as “getting it” that it is in their interest to be inclusive. But fatigue and impatience do set in, and the publicity-generating power of the religious right is daunting. So what keeps him going? “Sometimes it’s just a thank you, a word to say I made a difference in someone’s life. But my basic MO is just to keep moving.”

And what can readers do to raise his spirits and help the cause? “Vote appropriately, don’t tolerate disparaging remarks and jokes, attend our events (like the Parade and Reel Pride), march with us.”

I look at the list of Jeff’s involvements (in everything from weekly “gay volleyball” sessions to a recent garden tour). Beyond his community commitments, Jeff has earned his Marriage & Family Counseling credential and works full-time at a juvenile facility, and he maintains a healthy domestic life with his partner Juan. And I can only marvel at Jeff’s stamina and zest for life. Fresno is lucky that he’s here...and that he’s “gay and proud.”



155,000 Low-Income Adults Struggling to Put Food on the Table in Fresno and Tulare Counties

By Edie Jessup

It is not our “opinion.” We have the research, and now we have comparative data on hunger and food insecurity in California, and specifically in Fresno and Tulare Counties.

Because we have not “gotten worse,” can we celebrate that 35%–40% of adults in our two counties with incomes below 200% of the poverty line don’t know where their next meal is coming from at times, or that our neighbors are going hungry?

I think not. Doing no worse than in 2001 is not doing better. What is food insecurity? Food insecurity is lack of assured access (through socially acceptable means) to enough food to lead an active, healthy life. Hunger is the result. Lack of income and lack of living-wage jobs are the cause.

The California Health Interview Study, released by UCLA on June 7, 2005 (Hunger Awareness Day), shows that food insecurity in California has increased by 5% since 2001. Statewide, 2.9 million people do not have reliable access to enough food, because of a lack of economic resources.

The highest rates of food insecurity are in the San Joaquin Valley. In Fresno County at least 100,000 of your neighbors are food-insecure and at risk of hunger; in Tulare County the figure is 55,000.

The gravest concerns throughout California are the increase in hunger among these populations:

1. Adults age 65 and older: Grandma and Grandpa are hungry, and only in California are SSI recipients not allowed to participate in the Food Stamp program (even if they qualify by income).
2. Low-income pregnant women: 40.7% of low-income pregnant women were food- insecure in 2003, re-

sulting in an increase in poor health for mom, and impairing a new generation with the results of gestational diabetes.

3. Low-income households with children: 38.3% are food-insecure and 10.9% are experiencing hunger.
4. Unemployed adults: 40.4% are food-insecure.
5. Low-income wage workers: this is the fastest growing population facing food insecurity .
6. And, in an apparent racist turn here in Fresno, a rise in food insecurity and hunger in Latino, African American, and Asian populations. The health outcomes are more severe in Latino, African American and Asian populations here.

Beyond the fact that this is unnecessary (unnecessary because there is plenty of food), hunger and food insecurity bring other costs to our society in

- 1) increased lifelong medical costs for care of chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer;
- 2) costs our society in children not being ready to learn in school because of being hungry, and not getting adequate amounts of food. Children use food differently than adults in that the first two thirds of food fuel go to critical organ development and growth. By not getting the ‘last’ third of good nutrition needed, brain development and social development are impaired.
- 3) adults unable to work and contribute to the common good in our communities because of deferring food to their children, or because of chronic illness developed as a result of lack of reliable healthy food.

The CHIS Survey of Food Insecurity and Hunger in California is a monumental and reputable study recognizing hunger as a critical measure of health. It is the largest health survey ever conducted in any state. Yet even so, we know that the survey did not capture the real number of hungry people in our two counties: Because the survey included only adults, and only those who had landline phones and spoke English, the number of hungry neighbors is even higher than the 155,000 reported. Not surveyed were farmworkers, monolingual other than English speakers children were not counted in this study, and people who did not have landline phones.

We must act on these findings: 155,000 adults at risk of hunger in Fresno and Tulare Counties.

We cannot ignore the data. We cannot ignore the real people, our neighbors, who are suffering.

This is not emergency hunger. It is systemic hunger, politically endorsed, because we as a community allow it to continue.

The food banks (Community Food Bank in Fresno, and Foodlink Tulare County) deal day-to-day with supplying food to hungry people through the emergency food system. They have the expertise, they know the extent of hunger, and they know our local capacity for responding to hunger through emergency food. They do critical work for our communities—but admit that they only have enough food to respond to one-third of the need.

The new CHIS data on food insecurity and hunger is a start on truly addressing the systemic issues that we face.

Both the Fresno and Tulare County Boards of Supervisors have declared themselves “Food Stamp Friendly Counties.” That requires action on their part, and a renewed investment in enrolling all people eligible for Food Stamps in our area. Full enrollment in Food Stamps would go a long way toward solving a month-to-month issue for low-wage and low-income people. Full enrollment in the Food Stamp Program would bring in \$89 million in federal money to the Fresno County economy. Why are we not doing that?

Why are our federal child nutrition programs not providing all children with good food at school, with breakfast, lunch, and after-school snacks? Why are we adults not seeing that all kids get summer lunch (80 sites throughout Fresno city and county distributed Summer Lunch in 2005). Why are there threats of cutting WIC and seniors’ nutrition programs?

We have work to do, because the answer to the CHIS data on hunger and food insecurity is to assure that wages and supplemental programs—until families have enough income to put food on the table—must cover a month’s worth of living expenses and food.

Join the food banks and Fresno Metro Ministry to assure that the federal, state, and local programs are sufficient for a healthy community. If you want more in-

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POETRY CORNER

WOW—an avalanche of poetry arrived! I have selected two poems, both from new contributors. Additional poetry, submitted by Stephen Barile, Muaj Hmoo Lauj, Jason Barilecorn and Francine Ramos, can be found in our online edition, where we have fewer space considerations:
<www.fresnoalliance.com/home/magazine/2005/2005_index.htm>

RATIO OF SORROW: A Media Guide, by Charles West

A missing
young attractive
white woman

Is equal to,
or greater than:

the death of
two children
in your city,

a dozen people
in your state,

fifty people
in your country

a hundred or more
people in Europe,

or ten thousand people
in the third world.

GRIEF, by Nancy Gauquier

I grieve for the brothers and sister,
the parents, friends, lovers, neighbors,
who have been lost in war,
I grieve for the love

that has exploded
into shards of hearts,
for all the lives torn
from the shattered earth,

for the roots severed,
limbs torn
skin ripped,
souls cast into pits of hatred

I grieve for the end
of a child's faith
when her smile
blows up in her face,

I grieve for the soldier
who cannot think about
what he does.

Progressive Thursday
presents
"Beyond Treason"
The US government's long history of conducting
deadly military experiments.

WEDNESDAY, November 16, 2005
6:30-9:30 PM

Round Table Pizza • 5763 N. First Street • Fresno, CA
(SW corner of First and Bullard)

**It is a free, wheelchair accessible event open to anyone
wanting to discuss topics of interest to the progressive
community.**

Contact: Larry Mullen (559) 227-0293
or
Leah Haymond (559) 906-9702

PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY GROUPS - WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?

Central California Criminal Justice Committee Update

By Gloria Hernandez

CCCJC has been busy lately! We will be updating our webpage <www.cccjc.org> with our new proposal for the office of Independent Police Auditor in the City of Fresno. As you may recall the mayor asked a blue ribbon commission to study the issue in Fresno, which recommended the Sacramento version instead of the San Jose version on police oversight. We believe that any proposal before the city council be adjusted because the City of Sacramento recently changed their model to include monitoring their fire department, and that is not something that has been discussed here in Fresno. Also the Sacramento model reports directly to the Mayor or City Manager. We want the IPA to report directly to the City Council therefore, it would take the majority to terminate the IPA. We beleive that this would allow the IPA to do the job otherwise, the person would be afraid to take on the cops. If the mayor is given has all the control, the IPA could and would be weak.

We have all heard the mayor pushing the City Council to adopt a model for an IPA, or he will try to put it on the ballot for next year. CCCJC has requested to meet with the mayor to make sure he understands CCCJC's proposal. Please visit our Web site to read our history, our mission, and our new improved proposal. While there please make sure you check out the links to the research we did on the numbers of people killed by FPD.

Please contact your councilmember to push him or her for accountability and oversight. Remember, an injury to one is an injury to all.

Update from Fresno COPWATCH

You and the Fresno police may not be hearing or seeing us, but FRESNO COPWATCH is out there. FRESNO COPWATCH decided to go underground because it's safer for us. But we will tell you that FRESNO COPWATCH is still out there, and we are getting calls for support from as far away as Arizona.

- FRESNO COPWATCH did not stop when one of our members got bit by a K-9; and

- FRESNO COPWATCH did not stop even when we saw what the New Orleans cop did to that AP cameraman; and

- FRESNO COPWATCH didn't stop even after the police announced plans to put up cameras in the high-risk neighborhoods and in some cop cars. That didn't even faze us because we know they already have eyes in the sky with the helicopters flying overhead at least 5-6 times nightly in our neighborhoods—and that still hasn't stopped the crime or the police brutality. And we need an IPA to independently oversee those videos, because we all know videos can be edited. FRESNO COPWATCH won't stop watching the cops.

- The cops haven't stopped harassing the poor people who are forced to drive without a license because the city doesn't have adequate public transportation. FRESNO COPWATCH notices no one is saying how much money the department has made off the tow-truck referral fees (\$50 per impounded vehicle) or what they are doing with that money. It's a tactic similar to that used by the coyotes when taking advantage of undocumented people: they set them up when crossing the border and then call border patrol...and the cycle repeats, and they get more money when the people try to cross again and again. Yet another reason we need an IPA is that we need someone to report independently if the cops have a real reason to stop all of us, or if they are just trying to get the \$50 referral fee (or the cars to sell later)?

- FRESNO COPWATCH will not stop watching cops—after all, *Cops*, *LAPD* and all the other cop shows are still on TV encouraging us to watch them, right?

Stop police brutality. Become a FRESNO COPWATCH member: All you have to do is stand a safe distance away from them and watch them. Let them know everyone is watching them.

Terrorist Attack on Fresno!

By Gary Dennis

As the executive director of CHAANGE/San Joaquin Valley, I have the chance to speak out on the real “terrorist threat” that has hit Fresno. Not the same terrorists that you hear President Bush speaking about, claiming they are a “real” threat to American society. Not the same terrorists we seem to continually fear and be on the “defense” against.

Nevertheless, this terrorism is real and is born of deep-seated hatred. The names of these terrorists are prejudice and discrimination! These terrorists have been in business since the beginning of this country and have been rooted in our nation since its inception. Here in this country, we are still feeling the pains of the terrorist act of slavery. Prejudice and discrimination said that it was okay for one race to enslave another race.

And now once again, it looks like these terrorists might have struck and have said that one sexual orientation is better than another. The fact that some person (or persons) would burn down two gay-owned and -operated businesses in less than a week's time should give the community pause.

Is arson an act of terror? In some cases yes, if the motive is revenge, intimidation, or creating a scare or panic within a community. Although the exact motive behind these fires remains unknown, this is a really good opportunity for the gay community to come together. If antagonists want to tear down the community, then the gay community's response should be to come back and build it bigger than before to show these terrorists that play time is over! They should rebuild the one location called North Tower Circle into a real two- or three-story tower—to show the community what a real tower looks like and to let it stand as a beacon of hope for the gay community.

It's sort of sad that the gay community would have to have a club to serve as its beacon of hope, but there are no gay community centers where gays can hang out. That's why I, the executive director of CHAANGE/San Joaquin Valley, am willing to open my doors to allow gay individuals to come and hang out and have a place of belonging. The Fresno Center for Nonviolence (where the CHAANGE/San Joaquin Valley office is located) in is a place of safety and security for gay and questioning individuals. Please feel free to give us a call at (559) 268-1969.

Peace and Freedom Party

Kevin Akins, state chair of the Peace and Freedom Party of California, has announced the founding of a chapter in Madera County and the appointment of Vickie Fouts as the interim Madera County chairperson. Vickie was sworn in at the Madera County Clerk's office on September 20. She hopes to have meetings in the City of Madera and Eastern Madera County soon for the county's 72 Peace and Freedom Party members, and she hopes to grow the Party.

Vickie Fouts, a resident of Coarsegold, is also the branch president of Fresno Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a board member of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, the treasurer of the Central Valley Progressive PAC, and the circulation and advertising director for the *Community Alliance* newspaper.

This is the second San Joaquin Valley County to see a newly organized Peace and Freedom Party chapter in the last year. The Fresno County Peace and Freedom Party was organized in November of 2004 by John Crockford. Both chapters hope to run candidates in 2006. For more information, please contact John Crockford at (559) 593-1167 or john@crockford.org for Fresno County or Vickie Fouts at (559) 658-8260 or socialjustice@sti.net for Madera County. You can also check out their Web sites: <www.fresnopfp.org> and <www.peaceandfreedom.org>.

PROGRESSIVE THURSDAY VIDEO INVITES YOU TO CELEBRATE ITS FIRST BIRTHDAY ... ON A WEDNESDAY!

By Larry Mullen

On WEDNESDAY (yes, Wednesday), November 16, the collective known as Progressive Thursday invites you to celebrate its first birthday at a free showing of the video *Beyond Treason* at 7:00 PM at Round Table Pizza, 5763 N First Street, Fresno (the southwest corner of First and Bullard). *Beyond Treason* is a shocking video about depleted uranium that everyone should see,” said projectionist Dave Sarro.

The group—run by Tim Coates, Leah Haymond, Larry Mullen, and David Sarro—has shown a video every odd-numbered month in 2005, and tries to present a varied selection of videos of interest to the progressive community. The series began with *End of Suburbia* followed by *Bush's Brain*, *Tales of the San Joaquin*, *American Jobs*, *Arsenal of Hypocrisy*, and now *Beyond Treason*. They also collaborated with the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Fresno to show *The Corporation* at the Full Circle Brewery.

“The venue is a nice size for the 18 to 45 people who have attended the showings,” said Tim Coates. “We are previewing a video on genetically modified foods for the January showing,” he said. The location has easy freeway access and is wheelchair accessible. If they like, people can buy something to eat and drink while at Round Table. “We have the facility booked for the third Thursday of the odd numbered months for 2006,” says Leah Haymond, “So mark your calendars!”

Progressive Thursday advertises in the *Community Alliance*, on the KFCF radio community calendar, in flyers, and by word of mouth—so tell your friends! The group thanks those who have supported the video series and welcomes comments for improvement. Everyone is invited to watch November's video, “Beyond Treason,” and have a piece of “birthday cake.” Contact Larry Mullen at (559) 227-0293; Leah Haymond at (559) 906-9702; or <www.fresnogreens.org> for more information.

Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee

The Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee (CVPPAC) is a young organization that is moving to change the focus, direction, and style of the politics in the Central Valley. Last year CVPPAC organized two forums for the public: one at Fresno High School, to allow school board candidates to express their points of view and one at Hoover High School, to showcase the measures on the ballot, with a panel discussing the pros and cons. The objective was to reach out to the voters to express voters' concerns. It was important to make the statement, “Your vote counts, and you are essential in the election process.”

In order to be effective and prepared for the next round, the CVPPAC has been studying the city council, the school board, and recently the board of supervisors. In our presentations we have asked, What is the composition of each unit? Who supports their campaigns? What are their values? In addition the CVPPAC has been working with Alliance for Better California, walking precincts and phone banking to Get out the Vote. It takes effort to convince citizens that they are vital in a democracy.

Death Penalty Focus

Death Penalty Focus does not have scheduled meetings at this time. However, peer counselors are available at any time by appointment, for families, friends and loved ones of all prisoners - those on death row, general population, or awaiting trial. Call Donna at 559-456-4974, Maria at 559-255-9492 or email maria.telesco@att.net

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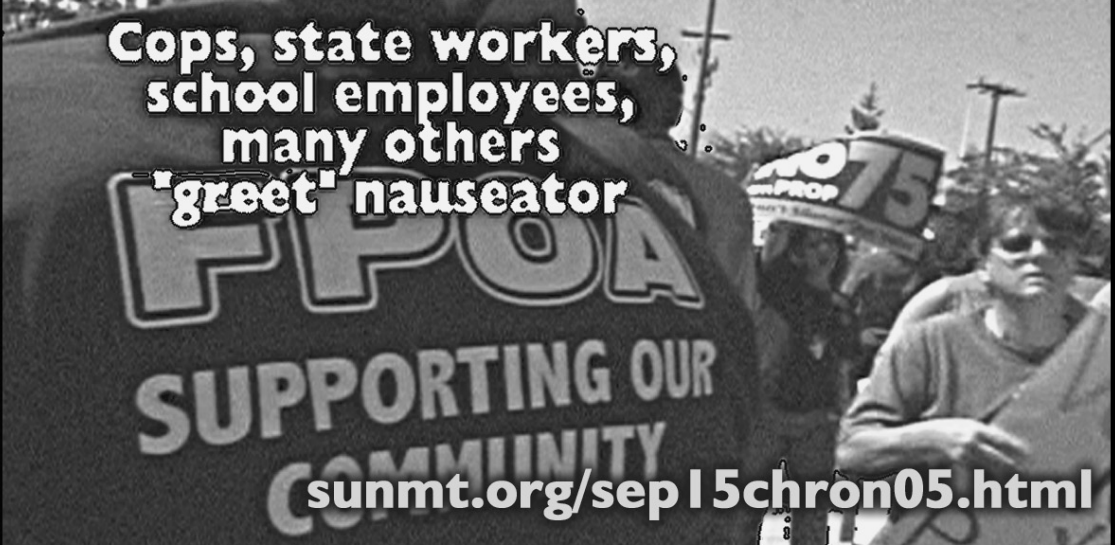
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school employees,
many others
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sunmt.org/sep15chron05.html



sunmt.org/aug29chron05.html

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New Sun Mtn. Ad??

Still a little room here....

Fresno Housing Alliance & The People's Housing Summit: "Raising Voices and Visions out of Fresno's Housing Crisis"

by Dr. Matthew A. Jendian



Rising rents. Apartment units in a constant state of disrepair. Absentee landlords. Inaccessible designs. Sound familiar? These were part of the housing stories shared on Saturday, October 15, 2005, as about 300 people participated in the "People's Housing Summit" organized by Fresno Housing Alliance (FHA) at Valley Christian Center. Recognizing renters occupy 50% of Fresno's housing units, the People's Housing Summit intended to:

- raise voices not often heard to express concerns and understand our housing crisis;
- prioritize action steps to guide FHA's work the next 6-12 months;
- develop leaders and relationships for FHA; and
- start developing strong tenant associations to make the vision of safe, affordable, accessible housing for all a reality.

A REPRESENTATIVE HOUSING STORY. Leslie, her husband, and their daughter, along with several other family members, are limited to living in a three-bedroom apartment in Fresno due to cost considerations. "Our landlord has been very slow in responding to requests. One maintenance man is used to service multiple complexes. We have had a persistent roach problem for two years. Pictured below is a cluster of baby cockroaches in the crack between the ceiling and the wall.



This was taken in broad daylight. Though the maintenance man sprays on request, he only sprays individual apartments. It never works to eradicate the infestation. The entire complex needs to be treated on a regular basis, which the manager refuses to do. Lately, we have spotted flying red ants and larger, different varieties of cockroaches.

"There is also an occasional mold problem. The air conditioning leaks water on the landing at the top of the stairs; there is a resultant soft spot that could cave through at any moment. Children play on this landing.



The air conditioning broke this past summer, and it took 36 hours for our manager to have it fixed. During that time, small children were left to suffer in weather that reached 106 degrees."

ANOTHER STORY. Khon explained how she has tried to contact the owner of her apartment to repair things that were not safe, yet. "He does not respond to my requests. For example, many of the floor tiles in my apartment have been torn for a long time. Also, there is a big hole in the wall, and the electric outlet and wiring is exposed (see photo). No one has ever come to make these repairs. Most of the rooms in my apartment have something wrong. The stove has not worked for a very long time. Now, I use only propane gas to cook my food.

"Recently, I have a new problem. My apartment complex just got a new owner. I got a letter from the new owner two months ago that told me to move out at the end of the week because his company wants to remodel the whole complex and was told the rent will increase \$350. I am happy things will be fixed, but because I only have SSL, I can't afford to pay the increased rent. It is sad for me to lose my apartment because I have been a resident in this area for many years."

AND ANOTHER STORY: Deborah described her landlord as a "slumlord": "He feels because I am on a lim-

ited income he has not had to put out the money it would take to fix this apartment. My carpet has not been changed for over 10 years. When Section 8 told him that he had to change it, he only replaced the carpet in the living room and the hall. I have sustained several injuries from falling or tripping over the worn out carpet that had several raised places. I have fallen three times and once cracked a rib when I tripped over a raised piece of carpet and hit the door jamb.

"The bathroom has been the worst place of all the rooms. There have been years of water damage to the walls and around the tub area. One morning when I was showering and leaned against the wall in the bathtub, my body fell through the rotting wall. Instead of fixing the wall by tearing out the old rotted pieces behind the tile, my landlord just put in a plastic wall fitting around the tub. I still live with the rotting walls and mold."

AND ANOTHER STORY. Jesús and his parents described their struggle for accessible housing. "We have lived for about ten years in an apartment in Southeast Fresno, near the Fairgrounds. As parents, our challenge is that our apartment is not made for someone in a wheelchair. This means Jesús is not able to get around on his own. Each time he needs to go to a different room, because the doorways are not wide enough, someone has to carry Jesús from one wheelchair to another wheelchair.

"The countertops are not at the right height for Jesús when he is in his wheelchair. It is also not possible for him to get into the bathtub without assistance. This makes daily living much more difficult. It requires heavy lifting all the time, which is harder and harder for us to do. In addition, our apartment has always had a lot of mold infestation as well as many cockroaches.

"We are so thankful that a home is currently being built for us through Habitat for Humanity, at their 'Crossroads Community' site in southwest Fresno. We tell our story, with the hope that it might help others understand the housing challenges faced by people in wheelchairs and with other accessibility concerns."

AND YET ANOTHER STORY. Another couple, whose identity was not revealed to protect them from retaliation by the homeowner, described the situation of living with their seven children in a three-bedroom rental house in south-central Fresno since 1997.

"We have always paid our rent on time and have tried to be good tenants, notifying the owner, who lives in San Jose, of repair needs, but we have had difficulty getting him to respond. On the occasions when someone has been sent to make repairs, the work has often not been properly completed.

"Plywood board still surrounds a hole in the bathroom floor made when a new toilet was installed several years ago. The bathroom floor also has exposed piping near the bathtub, and the ceiling leaks into the kitchen and laundry room area. We have been asking for these repairs to be made for the past two years, but so far we have not received a response."

THE PROMISE. The preamble of the 1949 Housing Act reads: "The Congress declares that the general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people require housing production and related community development sufficient to remedy the serious housing shortage, the elimination of

substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family, thus contributing to the development and redevelopment of communities and to the advancement of the growth, wealth, and security of the Nation."

THE PROMISE UNFULFILLED. The median-priced house in Fresno County in August 2005 was \$273,000 (California Association of Realtors), and the percentage of Fresno County households able to afford that median-priced house in Fresno County has decreased to a record low, 18%, down from 24% in April 2005, 31% in April 2004, 40% in August 2003, and 60% in 1999. The median household income in Fresno is \$40,000, but a family needs an estimated annual income of \$72,300 to buy the median-priced home in the Fresno County, assuming a 20% down payment and a 5.87% mortgage interest rate.

Fresno's situation parallels a statewide problem where the most affordable region was the High Desert region (28% of households in that area could afford the median-priced home there), followed by the Sacramento region at 19%. The Santa Barbara region was the least affordable in the state at 6%, and the overall statewide affordability index stood at 14%, the lowest level on record since 1989.

At the same time, apartment rents have increased to "\$719 a month for a three-bedroom unit, up from \$486 a month in 1997" (Source: Sanford Nax, *The Fresno Bee*, 9/25/05).

In 2003, according to the US Census, 52.2% of renters in the City of Fresno experienced a housing cost burden, spending 30% or more of their monthly income toward housing, and 34.2% of homeowners with a mortgage experienced a housing cost burden. With housing costs increasing significantly the last two years while wages have stagnated, this housing cost burden has likely only gotten worse. This means families have less disposable income to spend on other needed items, which is impacting the local economy.

FRESNO RANKED FIRST IN THE NATION IN CONCENTRATED POVERTY. Based on data from the US Census 2000, Fresno has the nation's highest concentration of residents in extremely poor neighborhoods, according to a study released by the Brookings Institution, the Washington, D.C.-based think tank. In Fresno, 43.5% of all poor people citywide lived in extreme-poverty neighborhoods—areas in which 40% or more of residents live below the federal poverty line. The average household earnings in these areas barely exceed \$20,000, and four in 10 adults are disconnected from the labor force—unemployed and not looking for work.

"Concentrating poverty compounds the effects of just plain poverty," said Alan Berube, primary author of the Brookings Institution Study, "Katrina's Window: Confronting Concentrated Poverty Across America," which focused on extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods where high crime and a lack of quality housing, stable job opportunities, and supportive schools erode the quality of life, and limit the chances that a family might rise above the hardships imposed by their own financial straits.



“A large body of research has demonstrated that concentrated poverty exacts multiple costs on individuals and society. These costs come in the form of: reduced private-sector investment and local job opportunities; increased prices for the poor; higher levels of crime; negative impacts on mental and physical health; low-quality neighborhood schools; and heavy burdens on local governments that induce out-migration of middle-class households. Together, these factors combine to limit the life chances and quality of life available to residents of high-poverty neighborhoods.”

We must, as a community, realize that poverty, affordable housing, economic development, crime, physical and mental health, and quality schools are all interconnected! A “Regional Jobs Initiative” approach to create “25,000 to 30,000 net new jobs within five years at an average salary of \$29,500” and “generate long-term, sustainable economic development in the Fresno Region” will only succeed to the extent that these other issues—poverty, affordable housing, quality schools, and so on—are addressed.

PEOPLE’S HOUSING SUMMIT PRESS CONFERENCE. Immediately following the summit, a press conference was held in which Fresno City Council member Cynthia Sterling addressed those gathered about the importance of the housing issue in sustaining a vibrant and healthy community. Also participating in the press conference were the Rev. Sophia DeWitt of Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, Inc.; the Rev. Steve Ratzlaff of Mennonite Community Church; Tony Miranda of Habitat for Humanity; and Leslie Gacad and Deborah Napoleon, both Fresno State students and tenants.

Unfortunately but not surprisingly, despite the notifications sent out to local elected officials and various media outlets in Fresno, Councilmember Sterling was the only elected official who was present personally for any part of the summit (Ricardo Munoz, Sterling’s staff member, was also present the entire day). The *Fresno Bee*, the *Community Alliance*, KMPH-Ch. 26, and KSEE-Ch. 24 all sent media correspondents during the course of the day’s program, but no media were present during the press conference.

MISSION & HISTORY OF FHA. The **Fresno Housing Alliance is a coalition of community members committed to increasing the availability of safe, decent, accessible, affordable housing in Fresno.** Its initial organizational members include Faith in Community and its constituent congregations, the League of Women Voters of Fresno, Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, Habitat for Humanity of Fresno, Housing Partnership for the Disabled, the Fresno/Madera/Tulare/Kings Counties Central Labor Council, and participants representing various tenant rights and legal services groups, businesses, nonprofits, educational programs and institutions, and other civic and community groups in the Fresno area.

The Fresno Housing Alliance was launched in July 2004 by Faith in Community, a network of 20 Fresno congregations and community-based organizations addressing affordable housing and other economic and social justice issues. Faith in Community had sponsored a key organizing event in May 2004—a bus tour of slum housing and a press conference with Mayor Alan Autry. As a result, Mayor Autry enlisted Faith in Community’s support in addressing the affordable housing issue. The creation of the Fresno Housing Alliance is recognition of the massive scale of Fresno’s growing affordable housing deficit and the urgent need for a broad-based, pluralistic coalition of community members to accept responsibility for research, action, and results along with public agencies, the market, and the nonprofit

Continued on page 16

PAUL ALLEN’S OTHER YACHT

By Paul Rogat Loeb



In the wake of the New Orleans disaster, I thought of an article I read about Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen’s other yacht. The 300-foot *Tatoosh* carries a 30-person crew, two helicopters, a swimming pool, a spa, a private movie theater, six other surface boats (including a separate 54-foot racing yacht and two Hobie catamarans) and a submarine. Reading about the *Tatoosh* and a third yacht just slightly smaller made me wonder about Allen’s yacht of choice. Did it have two swimming pools? Four helicopters? Twelve other on-board boats? And what was Allen doing with two yachts, when he could only ride on one at a time?

Allen bought the *Tatoosh* in 2000, when it was America’s second largest. Three years later, he added the *Octopus* (aptly named for a Microsoft man), enabling him to leapfrog the founder of Victoria’s Secret to own the largest yacht in the world. Itself since surpassed by the yachts of Oracle founder Larry Ellison and the ruler of Dubai, the *Octopus* is 413 feet long, with seven decks, a 60-person crew including several former Navy SEALs, seven other on-board boats, a basketball court, the obligatory movie theater and swimming pool (just one?), and two submarines, one of which can stay two weeks on the ocean floor. It turns out that Allen also owns a third megayacht, plus two personal Boeing 757s (in case one is in the shop).

We know Allen is unimaginably rich, so maybe his yacht collection comes as no surprise. But the Republicans are talking about permanently ending the estate tax in the new Congressional session. Our leaders are already lavishing more and more gifts on those who already have more than they can ever use, even in the midst of crises from the Iraq War to the New Orleans disaster, to the shifts in global warming that, by warming the ocean, turned a routine hurricane into a cataclysmic one. Allen’s yachts remind me of our choices about what we value.

As former Congressman Ron Dellums once said, you can tell a nation’s soul by the state of its budgets. Time and again we have the chance to house people, feed them, give them health care, affordable education, and a decent chance in life. Or to invest in renewable technologies to head off future climate-related catastrophes. Or at least to rebuild critical infrastructure and restore dignified lives to the wounded and displaced when tragedy hits. Each time we’re told we don’t have enough resources. Yet in the richest country in human history, we make it a point, at every turn, to help those of vast wealth accumulate more and more. Recently I saw a \$3 million Brentwood house being torn down so someone could build one on the same lot worth twenty million. I’ve seen comparable extravagance throughout the country, combined with massive cuts in practically every program that serves the needs of ordinary citizens. The super-rich get infinite breaks with nothing asked in return, while more and more Americans struggle just to survive, even in the absence of unexpected cataclysm.

The proponents of ending the estate tax warn of devastated small farmers and businessmen, though they can’t come up with a single case of a family farm that’s gone under in recent years as a direct result, and the handful of affected family businesses could be addressed with modest increases in the exemption level. Evidently

it’s far more salable to couch these and other regressive cuts with salt-of-the-earth images than those of Paul Allen on his yacht or Paris Hilton in her gilded video playpen.

We might remember Dwight Eisenhower’s famed words: “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed—those who are cold and not clothed.” So is each massive regressive tax break.

Permanently ending the estate tax will cost the public another trillion dollars over ten years. But we were already making things far worse before the ending of the estate tax.

The top 5% of Americans now get \$110 billion a year from Bush’s tax cuts, with most going to the top 1%, during a reign that’s cut child abuse prevention, community policing, AmeriCorps, low-income childcare, health care, housing, and even support for military families. Because payment of Social Security taxes is capped at \$90,000, and because capital gains taxes have been cut to a maximum of 15%, self-employed carpenters making \$30,000 a year already pay a higher percentage of their income than do Paul Allen and his co-founder Bill Gates. In Seattle, where I live (and in whose suburbs Allen and Gates reside), the public paid \$300 million to subsidize a football stadium for a team Allen owns, and the City Council has just allocated \$50 million to fund a mile-long streetcar connecting downtown with Allen’s cluster of biotech companies. Meanwhile the high school my son attends recently had to lay off 11 teachers.

We should debate where our government should spend the revenue it takes in. But we also need to discuss where it gets this revenue, and how to share the burden equitably. As Bill Gates Senior wrote, in opposing the estate tax repeal, “Our society has facilitated wealth-building by creating order, protecting freedom, creating laws to govern property relations and our marketplace, and

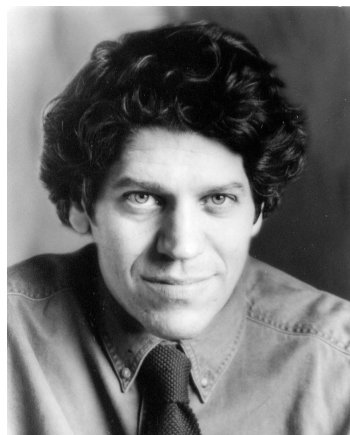
investing in an educated work force. What’s wrong with the most successful people putting one-quarter of their wealth back into the place that made their wealth and success possible?”



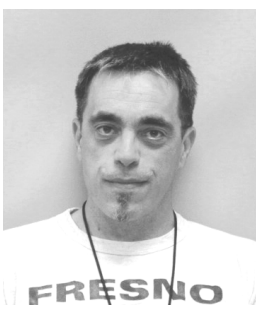
That’s one key argument: those who have the most benefit infinitely more from the institutions of our society than do those who have far less. The other argument is the concept of enough, where we question whether our most important social priority really is to do everything possible to enable a tiny few to buy as many yachts and \$20 million houses as they please. Do we really need to help Allen be able to fly 500 of his closest personal friends wherever and whenever he chooses on his two 757s? We might remember that there are more important goals to support with common resources, and more important things to live for.

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Paul Rogat Loeb is the author of *The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen’s Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*, named the #3 political book of fall 2004 by the History Channel and the American Book Association, and of *Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time*. See <www.paulloeb.org>.



Trying to save some room for more photos to come



QUEER EYE

Bars Damaged in Suspicious Fires

by Dan Waterhouse, NewsLink, and Nathan Christoffersen, GayFresno.com

Someone is torching gay-owned bars.

"The fire at the Dance nightclub is definitely arson," MacAlpine said. "The cause of the fire at the North Tower Circle is currently under investigation."

ing that you [the city fire and police departments] focus your attention on apprehending the individual(s) responsible for setting these fires. I am aware that the fire at the North Tower Circle was indeed arson and an accelerant was found at the scene [NOTE: this statement was based upon NTC owner Wigley saying that the fire at his nightclub was arson]. This is horribly disturbing to those of us ... who attend bars and/or related businesses that cater to gay clientele...."

The other fire, at Dance, was reported at around 4 AM on October 1.

The North Tower Circle was gutted in an early morning fire September 26.

A wall at the shuttered Dance nightclub was set on fire early in the morning of October 1.

The two-alarm fire at the North Tower Circle was reported at approximately 4 AM by a motorist driving past. According to NTC owner Virgil Wigley, the bartender had finished cleaning up and left shortly after 3 AM.

Wigley told Nathan Christoffersen of GayFresno.com that he had "received a call from my alarm company around 3:40 AM, asking if I wanted a police unit dispatched because the alarms were going off." A passing motorist reported the fire at the same time to Fresno 911 operators.

The fire centered on an outside wall near the stage area. The wall behind the stage collapsed during the fire. Flames spread throughout the north side of the building and heavily damaged the roof.

Bartender Thomas FitzGerald told Christoffersen, "The entire dance floor, all of the lighting, as well as the back patio were destroyed. There was severe damage from heat which melted all of the cash registers, games, straws, and the ATM machine."

Investigators estimate damage at \$375,000.

At press time, no decision had been made whether the NTC would be rebuilt. Owner Wigley commented, "I hope to rebuild, but it's up to the insurance company."

At an October 5 press conference held in front of the burned-out NTC, Fresno deputy Fire Marshal Don MacAlpine said investigators had not ruled out anti-gay hate as a motive. MacAlpine said, "We haven't ruled that out; we are considering all options.

"We're treating it as the most serious possibility, which [would be] a serial arson targeting the gay and lesbian community," MacAlpine added.

MacAlpine said laboratory tests are being done to confirm the use of accelerants at the North Tower Circle. He added, "Even if evidence of liquid accelerants isn't found, [that] doesn't mean the fire wasn't arson."

Fresno police captain Dennis Bridges said he wanted to assure the community that its concerns are being taken seriously.

MacAlpine added that his team are hitting this investigation "hard." He said his investigators are being assisted by the Gang unit.

Both MacAlpine and Bridges say that someone knows who did this. People talk, they brag. They tell someone else about what they've done.

They added, if anyone has any information at all about either fire, call Don MacAlpine at (559) 621-4446 or Crime Stoppers at (559) 498-STOP. With your help, the



An outside shingled wall next to the rear loading dock was set alight. Investigators have confirmed that an accelerant was used.

The fire was controlled before it spread inside the building. MacAlpine said damage is estimated at between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

Dance is located three blocks up Maroa from the NTC.

MacAlpine pointed out several other similarities during the press conference. "Besides the closeness of both scenes," MacAlpine commented, "both fires occurred at around the same time, they occurred on weekend nights, and both clubs have current or past connections with the LGBT community."

Dance closed at the end of June after Fresno police filed charges with the state Alcoholic Beverage Control agency that owners Jose

Lopez and Herb Fisher had failed to "abate objectionable conditions" at the club. The accusation was filed days after a fatal shooting in a parking lot across Maroa from the club. The club's liquor licenses currently are suspended, indefinitely.

Fisher moved his club, The Fresno Express, from where DejaVu is now to the Maroa location in 2000. Due to declining LGBT patronage, Fisher changed the nightclub's format from gay to straight in 2003.

At the time it closed, Dance catered to primarily hip-hopppers. After the hip-hopppers moved in, according to Fresno police, gang members frequented the club and troubles followed.

Shortly after the club closed in June, a well-known Fresno businessman said he was looking into what it would take to reopen Dance as a gay nightclub again. It's unknown whether Dance was targeted for arson because of the businessman's activities.



people involved will be found.

The press conference was called by Equality California. EQCA field director Molly McKay, Sue Stone (president of the Central California Alliance) and Gary Dennis of CHAANGE also spoke.

Stone told the media that many gays do not feel safe in Fresno. She said the actions of certain local elected officials, attacking the LGBT community, have created fertile soil for anti-queer violence.

One of those politicians, Fresno mayor Alan Autry, did not return calls from the *Bay Area Reporter*, seeking his comments on the fires.

In a letter posted on GayFresno.com two days before the press conference, Christoffersen said, "We as a community, not only in Fresno, but throughout the state of California and the Central Valley, are ask-



As this month's edition of the Community Alliance was being readied to go to the printer, another arson fire occurred, one block away from both the North Tower Circle and Dance. The Bail-U-Out bail bond office at 2908 North Wishon Avenue, was set on fire shortly before 7 p.m. on October 16th. Investigators have been working to determine whether this fire is connected to the earlier two.

Investigators need the public's help. They have a 'person of interest,' described as a white male, medium-average build, with longish hair. This man was seen leaving the area of the Dance fire. They also are seeking information about a white pickup truck that has been seen in the area at significant times. If you have any information about this man or the vehicle, please call Deputy Fire Marshal Don MacAlpine at (559) 621-4446, or Crime Stoppers at (559) 498-STOP. Callers to Crime Stoppers can provide their information anonymously.

Fresno Center for Nonviolence



1584 N. Van Ness Ave., 93728 ~ www.centerfornonviolence.org ~ email: info@centerfornonviolence.org

**dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through
SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY**

THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.



WHY THE LEVEE BROKE

New Orleans had long known it was highly vulnerable to flooding and a possible direct hit from a hurricane. The federal government has been working with state and local officials in the region since the late 1960s on major hurricane and flood relief efforts. Following flooding in May 1995 Congress authorized the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project (SELA).

Over the 10 years since 1995 the Army Corps of Engineers spent \$430m on shoring up levees and building pumping stations. But \$250m in crucial projects remained undone, even as the levees around New Orleans continued to subside. After 2003 the flow of federal money toward SELA dropped markedly. "The Corps never tried to hide the fact that the spending pressures of the war in Iraq, as well as homeland security, coming at the same time as federal tax cuts, was the reason for the strain."

In early 2004, as the cost of the conflict in Iraq soared, President Bush proposed spending less than 20 percent of what the Corps said was needed for Lake Pontchartrain (for building up levees and protection for pumping stations). The 2004 hurricane season was the worst in decades, in spite of which the federal government came back this spring with the steepest reduction in hurricane- and flood-control funding for New Orleans in history, requiring that the Corps office there impose a hiring freeze.

There also was a growing recognition that more research was needed to learn what New Orleans must do to protect itself from a Category 4 or 5 hurricane—but again the money was not there. In its current budget the Bush administration proposed a significant reduction in funding for southeast Louisiana's hurricane protection project: \$10.4m, a sixth of what local officials say they need.

Washington knew that this day could come at any time, and it largely knew the things that needed to be done to protect the citizens of New Orleans. "But in the tradition of the riverboat gambler, the Bush administration decided to roll the dice on its fool's errand in Iraq, and on a tax cut that benefited mainly the rich." That gamble has lost, big time. (Source: Will Bunch, senior writer at the Philadelphia Daily News, on AlterNet, September 1, 2005)

The following is the ending of last month's Welch Report, "A Declaration of War", not printed then. On migration the original language focused on enhancing international cooperation, linking migrant worker issues and the human rights of migrants. The US wants to replace the language with "the sovereign right of states to formulate and enforce national migration policies". Regarding the U.N. General Assembly, the most democratic organ of the U.N. system, the US deleted references to its role in codifying international law and ultimately its authority, relegating it to a "talking shop".

In September 2002 President Bush threatened the U.N. with "irrelevance" if it did not embrace his call for war in Iraq. At that time the U.N. made the choice to reclaim its charter, and to join with people and governments around the world who were mobilized to say no to war, thereby defying the US drive toward war and empire. It is time again "for the U.N. to defend itself, and to say no to empire." (Source: Phyllis Bennis, fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. August 31, 2005, Tom Paine.com). **This report reflects personal opinion but is consistent with the agenda of the FCNV. It is based upon mail from peace and justice centers around California, and at times upon other print sources.**



In Other News...

LAST CALL FOR PAIRS: The Pairs Project is about to start its second season, with orientation meetings from 3-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 6th, at the Center. If you are interested in joining the enrollees -- including Councilman Brian Calhoun -- in this mind-broadening endeavor, call us at 237-3223, or go to our website under Programs for an application.

BOTTOM LINE: Our two recent fundraising activities were, financially, only moderately effective: the Steve Thachuk guitar concert and the book sale together netted about \$2000. By other standards, though, they were great successes. The evening of music and chocolate was quite magical, with brilliant playing, a beautiful setting and wonderful confections. We especially thank **Rebecca Rangel** for making the music available and for her intensive efforts to publicize the event and make it "just right;" but we also want to thank all of you who contributed desserts to our reception -- we could not have done it without you!

The **BOOK SALE** took a tremendous amount of work to lug and sort books, with dozens of volunteers making significant contributions--a real measure of community support. Special thanks must go to **Julius Rasmussen** and **Ken Hudson** for providing hauling power, and to **Comité No Nos Vamos** and the **Islamic Cultural Center** for allowing us use of their tables.

As for our financial well-being, please keep in mind that our **annual appeal** letter will be made later this month, another chance to show to what extent the Center is valued.

BOOKS & BOOKBAGS: Books by "friends of the Center"--including Valta Pointer's charming yet profound new memoir "And It All Began In Taft"--are still available at the Center, and at the December WILPF Boutique. We also now have capacious, sturdy canvas totes, sporting a picture of Einstein, for sale at \$15: "We cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war."

SAYING "NO" to FUR: courtesy of the Humane Society, we will be sharing anti-fur materials at the WILPF craft fair in December. Learn more about this atrocity and how you can help prevent it.

The FCNV is a Host Organization

to many non-profit groups in the Fresno community. We provide a safe meeting place and media resources to the groups using our facility, including:

- Youth Link
- Rondalla
- CHAANGE
- MECA
- Death Penalty Focus
- Central California Institute
- Peace Fresno
- WILPF
- FACTS
- Prison Moratorium Project
- CCCIC

Fresno Center for Nonviolence Second Wednesday Video Series:



Independent, original documentaries. Learn what you're missing from mainstream media.

SHOWING NOV. 9th:

LIFE over DEBT: AFRICA

Life Over Debt is a national AFSC campaign highlighting the need for cancellation of Africa's debt. Devoya Mayo is a local community organizer who, through her affiliation with the AFSC, was able to take part in a 5-week tour in Kenya in 2004. It was during this tour that Devoya, with others from around the globe, worked and learned together about issues facing Africa and how we can all become involved in this important campaign. **Program with slides and music.**

Noon & 7:30 PM - Discussion to follow

1584 N. VAN NESS -- ACROSS FROM THE YELLOW BOOKSTORE



More events added daily at fresnofamous.com
independent entertainment
news + commentary

NOVEMBER 2005 EVENTS

Can you pass the cello test?

tues 11.01.05
where: starline
address: 831 E Fern
when: 9ish
cost: 2–3 bucks
details: Featuring: The only thing you ever cared to love. Foggy headed televangelists. No Cello warp demension two. TANGRAM (LA) . This will come a lot easier if you just let go. FIN (kiss LA one more time). Trevor is not opposed to presenting an amazing spectacle. EATCHO heart out baby, stop killing time, go nowhere, anywhere, somewhere else. Try your luck, where were you when the fun started? Lights, Bubbles, Action...Buy the ticket, take the ride. Don't come prepared or don't come at all. Let's stop killing time, just slow it down a bit.
<http://starline1.com>

Poetry Jam

weds 11.02.05
where: Coffeehouse and Pub
address: California State University, Fresno
when: 7 PM–9 PM
cost: Free
details: YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.
Beginning & Experienced Poets, Singers, Musicians, and Dancers Welcome.
The First Wednesday of each month, Fall 2005.
For information: (559) 278-4435
<http://studentaffairs.csufresno.edu/wrc/index.html>

3rd Annual Nudes in November

thurs 11.03.05
where: Chris Sorenson Studio
address: 2205 S Van Ness
when: 5 PM–9 PM
cost: Free
details: Multi artist all media exhibition.

Art Hop Reception for Carl Noone

thurs 11.03.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 5 PM–9 PM
cost: Free
details: Carl Noone, "Something New of Something Old" plus the music of Rich Severson.
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

Branching Out: Poetry for the 21st Century

thurs 11.03.05
where: Woodward Park Library
address: 944 E Perrin
when: 7 PM
cost: Free
details: The Branching Out series aims to present accessible and engaging talks by distinguished poets and scholars about celebrated and classic poets in five American cities: Fresno, Houston, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Kansas City. The national program is put on by Poets House and the Poetry Society of America. Locally, the program is hosted by the Fresno County Library and the MFA Program in Creative Writing at Fresno State. This month Martin Espada speaks on Pablo Neruda.

Lowlights

thurs 11.03.05
where: Tokyo Garden
address: 1711 Fulton St
when: 9:30 PM
cost: \$3
details: Arcata's Lowlights will be bringing their brand of lo-fi psychobilly post-rock to Fresno's Tokyo Garden. Joining them will be local acts The Batteries and Rademacher.
<http://www.tgbrand.com>

Rademacher

thurs 11.03.05
where: Tokyo Garden
address: 1711 Fulton Street
when: 9:30 PM
cost: \$3
details: Rademacher performs with the Lowlights from Arcata, The Batteries from Fresno and Sean Duncan of Modesto's Duncan Booth! It all takes place after ArtHop at the World Famous Tokyo Garden.
<http://www.tgbrand.com>

Sharing our Silience

fri 11.04.05
where: Fresno Art Museum
address: 2233 N First St
when: 6 PM
cost: Free
details: "Sharing Our Silence" is a project of the Youth Learning Group of the Pan-Valley Institute of the American Friends Service Committee. Seven Central Valley youth use the power of digital storytelling to tell about real issues and topics that concern them, such as culture, self-identity, oppression, and hope.
<http://www.fresnoartmuseum.org>

Tempest

fri 11.04.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 8 PM
cost: \$12 advance; \$14 day of
details: Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents "Tempest"
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

The Vagina Monologues

fri 11.04.05
where: Temple Theatre
address: 514 E Visalia St, Hanford, CA
when: 7:30 PM
cost: \$15
details: The Vagina Monologues Special Benefit Production of.... THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES By Eve Ensler, directed by Henry A. Gonzales. Garden party begins 30 mins prior to curtain with live music, wine tasting, food and information booths. Call for Reservations: (559) 584-7241. Portion of proceeds to benefit the KCAO Barbara Saville Women's Shelter. Temple Theatre is located next to China Alley in Hanford.

Shinzen Cultural Faire + Fall Color Festival

sat 11.05.05 (also 11.6)
where: Shinzen Japanese Garden at Woodward Park
address: Alluvial and Friant
when: 10 AM–5 PM
cost: Free with park entrance
details: This event is held in the garden and features art auctions, art exhibits, children's activities, educational displays, floral arts, food booths, Japanese poetry, koi exhibits, martial arts, plant sales, raffles, tea ceremonies, and a performance by the Clovis Heiwa Taiko Drummers. The Fall Color Festival celebrates the gorgeous autumn colors of the garden foliage. The teahouse is open for viewing, and docents are available to answer questions about the garden.
<http://www.shinzenjapanesegarden.org>

The Neptunes

sat 11.05.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 8 PM
cost: \$5
details: "The Neptunes"
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

Darlene Ahuna

sun 11.06.05
where: Memorial Auditorium
address: 2425 Fresno St.
when:
cost: \$20
details: Darlene Ahuna is one of Hawaii's foremost female vocalists. She is a multiple Na Hoku Hanohano Award winner, including "Female Vocalist of the Year," the highest recognition available from the Hawaiian music industry. Darlene has performed extensively throughout the Hawaiian Islands, at Carnegie Hall in New York City, throughout the US and Japan. Darlene will be performing in Fresno on Sunday, November 6, 2005. The Polynesian Club of Fresno, No Te Here O Te Hiroa, will perform at her concert. Tickets available at the Polynesian Club of Fresno Studios, 3430 W. Ashlan, #110, Fresno, CA 93722 from 6 to 9 PM, Mondays–Thursdays. For more information, please contact Linda Kuma at (559) 225-5995.

Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker

sun 11.06.05
where: Saroyan Theatre
address: 700 M Street
when: 3 PM
cost: \$26–\$50
details: Come see Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker. It is the best holiday gift for your friends and family. Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker will brighten the hearts of audiences everywhere. Tickets are \$26, \$40, and \$50 and will be available September 9. To purchase tickets visit www.ticketmaster.com, call 485-8497, or stop by any Ticketmaster outlet or the Fresno Convention & Entertainment Center Box Office.
<http://www.nutcracker.com/>

Green Machine

thurs 11.10.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 8 PM
cost: \$5
details: Green Machine!
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

Jim Yoshii Pile Up

thurs 11.10.05
where: Tokyo Garden
address: 1711 Fulton St
when: 9:30 PM
cost: \$5
details: The Jim Yoshii Pile-Up will bringing their brand of indie-sounding-emo-math-rock-gone-wrong to Tokyo Garden. They are touring in support of their new album, "picks us apart," which is available on Absolutely Kosher records.
<http://www.tgbrand.com>

Joel Pickford & the Hellhounds

sat 11.12.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 8 PM
cost: \$5
details: ALSO check out our ale house at the Kearny Park Renaissance Faire
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

Kearney Park Renaissance Fair

sat 11.12.05 (also 11.13)
where: Kearney Park
address: 7160 W Kearney Blvd
when: 10 AM–5 PM
cost: \$6
details: The faire will open each day with Henry VIII sending his troops to Scotland to retaliate against their border raids. A border war will be re-enacted in the open area between the English and Scots camps. Henry, Catherine Parr, and the English court will then have a public banquet to celebrate the victory. The afternoon stage performances will address the Christmas amnesty and release of the prisoners and the subsequent Advent celebration in London. With jousting!
<http://www.cirga.org/fares/kearneypark/kearneyfaire.asp>

Orquesta Bakan
sat 11.12.05
where: The Starline
address: 833 E Fern
when: 9 PM
cost: \$12 before 10 PM, \$15 after
details: Starline Salsa Club presents Orquesta Bakan de San Francisco.
<http://www.starlinesalsaclub.com/>

Rob Thomas
sat 11.12.05
where: Saroyan Theatre
address: 700 M Street
when: 8 PM
cost: \$43
details: Matchbox Twenty frontman, Rob Thomas, is taking his act on the road to support his multiplatinum solo album, “Something to Be.” Tickets are \$43 and can be purchased at www.ticketmaster.com, by phone at (559)-485-8497, at any Ticketmaster outlet, or at the Fresno Convention & Entertainment Center Box Office.

San Joaquin Valley Town Hall featuring Lynn Truss
weds 11.16.05
where: Saroyan Theatre
address: 700 M Street
when: 10:30 AM
cost: \$20
details: Lynne Truss is the world’s most famous punctuation “stickler” and advocate for the unappreciated semicolon and the misunderstood apostrophe. Her international bestseller, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, turned the subject of punctuation into a hilarious must-read book that won the Book of the Year Award at the 2004 British Book Awards. She promises to do the same for the subject of manners in her new nonfiction book scheduled for release in 2005. For tickets call 444-2180.
<http://www.valleytownhall.com/>

Inner Ear Poetry Jam
thurs 11.17.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 8 PM
cost: \$3
details: Inner Ear Poetry Jam!
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

Glen Delpit & the Subterraneans
fri 11.18.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 8 PM
cost: \$5
details: Glen Delpit & the Subterraneans!
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

Fresno Philharmonic
sat 11.19.05 (also 11.20 at 2:30 PM)
where: Saroyan Theatre
address: 700 M Street
when: 8 PM
cost: \$25 - \$52
details: “Chopin & Dvorak” Derek Han, piano; Petr Vronsky, conductor. Pianist Derek Han’s elegant, polished, and compelling playing has dazzled audiences across five continents. Petr Vronsky is among the leading Czech conductors who have also been successful on foreign concert stages. For tickets call 261-0600.
<http://www.fresnophil.org>

Open Mic with Jim Rust + Central Calif Songwriters association
sat 11.19.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 4 PM
cost: Free before 8 PM, \$5 after
details: “Open Mic with Jim Rust” 4 PM–6 PM, no cover. Central Calif Songwriters association “Songwriters in the Round” 8 PM \$5 cover.
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

Rolling Stones
sun 11.20.05
where: Save Mart Center
address: 2650 East Shaw Avenue
when: 8 PM
cost: tba
details:
<http://www.savemartcenter.com>

Gwen Stefani + MIA
fri 11.25.05
where: Save Mart Center
address: 2650 East Shaw Avenue
when: 8 PM
cost: tba
details:
<http://www.savemartcenter.com>

QUIET!
fri 11.25.05
where: Full Circle Brewery
address: 620 F St
when: 8 PM–11 PM
cost: \$5
details: An evening of acoustic music at the Full Circle Brewery in Chinatown. All proceeds from the show will be donated to Fresno’s Poverello House. Performing are acoustic versions of Rademacher, Panty Lions, Duncan Booth, Vernal Falls, and El Olio Wolof.
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com/>

Reel Pride Night Out!
fri 11.25.05
where: Tower Theatre
address: 815 E Olive
when: Box office opens 7 PM—Film begins 8 PM
cost: General Admission \$10; Reel Pride Members \$5
details: Reel Pride Night Out! premieres *Transamerica* starring Felicity Huffman. On the big screen, the *Desperate Housewives* star Felicity Huffman often has been relegated to the supporting category of friend/sister/neighbor. With the poignant and often deliriously funny road-trip feature *Transamerica*, she steps into the challenging lead role of a solitary pre-operative transsexual and delivers an extraordinary portrait. The film marks an auspicious debut for writer-director Duncan Tucker, whose fresh, character-driven storytelling should make the film (scheduled for December release by the Weinstein Co.) an art-house favorite.
<http://www.reelpride.com>

Belly Dancing with Cory Zamora
sat 11.26.05
where: Full Circle Brewing
address: 620 F St
when: 8 PM
cost: \$5
details: “Belly Dancing with Cory Zamora” featuring Gregory
<http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com>

Thanksgiving Spectacular at Tokyo Garden
sat 11.26.05
where: Tokyo Garden
address: 1711 Fulton St
when: 9 PM
cost: \$5
details: Local favorites Rademacher will be performing with the indie rock royalty of Fresno, Pinkeye, and the up-and-coming Bay Area progressive rock band Hijack the Disco.
<http://www.tgbrand.com>

The Concert to Save the Earth
sat 11.26.05
where: Tower Theatre
address: 815 E Olive
when: 8 PM
cost: \$20
details: Inspired by Neil Young’s challenge in Be the Rain, we have a job to do, we have to save Mother Earth. Friends of the River Parkway Trust have joined forces to create an incredible evening of rock, folk, and blues. Musicians and river buddies from San Francisco to Big Creek will gather to perform a set of great songs from a variety of artists, as well as a few tunes of their own. Tickets include a complimentary drink and dessert following the show. Don’t miss this fun concert November 26 at 8 PM to benefit the San Joaquin River Parkway. More information at www.towertheatrefresno.org. Tickets are available at <http://reservations.riverparkway.org> or by calling (559) 248-8480.

For more local events, visit

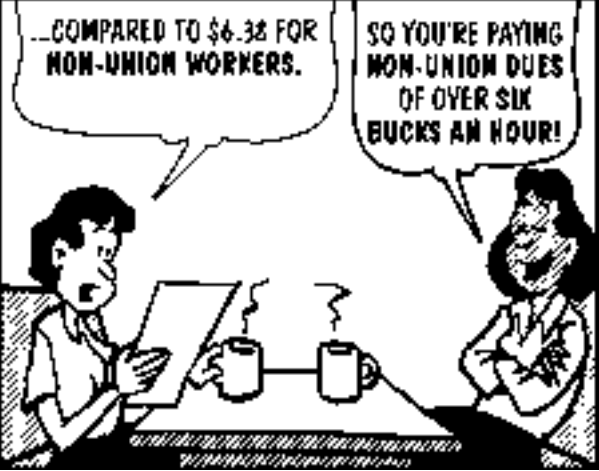
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Our Vision
For an Alternative/Independent Newspaper

Since 1996, the *Community Alliance* has grown from a one-page labor newsletter to a 20+ page monthly independent newspaper that helps frame the local debate about environmental justice, health care, workers’ rights, GBLT issues, immigrant rights, transportation, elections, and more!

In fact, the *Community Alliance* is THE fastest-growing alternative/independent publication in California. We have tripled our circulation in the last year, have doubled our space for articles, and are positioned for even greater advances in the next year. We are now printing 6,000 copies a month. Our long-term goal is to become the alternative/independent WEEKLY newspaper in the Fresno area, with a circulation of 50,000 copies. A widely distributed WEEKLY newspaper, which supports progressive social change, will help transform this area from a Republican stronghold to a region where progressives are in power.

Our fast growth shows that THIS COMMUNITY WANTS AND NEEDS AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER.

So . . . why don’t we start next week?

Unlike the corporate / mainstream media, we don’t have a lot of money backing us up. We don’t have a Rupert Murdoch. We don’t have a Time Warner. But fortunately we have YOU. And we’re asking you for money.

In bringing you the *Community Alliance*, many people—people just like you, who care about the well-being of this community—have volunteered many hours of their time, month after month, year after year. Although the newspaper does have a modest amount of income from advertising and current subscribers, this barely covers printing and distributing the papers. And in making the transition from a monthly to a weekly newspaper, the *Community Alliance* is moving beyond the boundaries of a “volunteer project.” *To bring a weekly newspaper to you, we need to pay our staff...*

If you are currently a subscriber, THANK YOU! You have been bringing the *Community Alliance* not only into your home, but into the homes of other people as well. We are asking subscribers to seriously consider an additional pledge of \$120 per year (or \$10 per month) to continue the Valley’s progress toward media freedom and democracy. This is maybe one-fifth the cost of a basic cable bill (and at least five times as valuable, right?)! Just \$10 a month, but it could make all the difference in whether this independent media project moves forward.

If you are not currently a subscriber, thank you for reading the *Community Alliance*. Sure, you can pick it up free all over town, but we are asking you to become a subscriber today. Just \$35 a year! That’s less than \$3 per month. If you can afford the luxury of one overpriced coffee drink per month, you can afford to support our society’s highest ideals.

Our ability to bring you a weekly publication is entirely dependent upon the amount of support we receive from you. Readers, we know that you care about this community; that you care about a free and independent media; that you care about social and economic justice; and that you will be as generous as your circumstances allow. Please follow through with your good intentions, and support media democracy RIGHT NOW!

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board
Mike Rhodes, Pam Whalen, Rev. Floyd Harris, Carol Bequette, Eduardo Stanley, Janet Slagter, and Richard Stone

YES! I want to subscribe to the *Community Alliance* newspaper:

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Community Alliance newspaper, P.O. Box 5077, Fresno Ca 93755

Continued from page 11

sector.

Since its launch, the Fresno Housing Alliance has organized:

- a field trip for 35 leaders to San Diego to learn about the San Diego Organizing Project’s affordable housing strategy;
- a “What’s Up with Affordable Housing Workshop” with City, County, and housing development experts; and
- a “People’s Housing Summit” on October 15, 2005.

WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO BECOME PART OF FRESNO’S HOUSING SOLUTION. The main product of the summit was the formation of three tenant associations representing the north, southeast, and southwest portions of the Fresno metropolitan area. These associations will help organize tenants, informing renters of their rights and creating pressure for property owners to make needed housing repairs.

The Fresno Housing Alliance has formed functional committees engaging more than 60 community leaders in researching housing needs, public policy, funding, and alliance strategies, with the long-term strategic goals of:

- creating an exemplary, proactive City code enforcement program against slums;
- moving the City Council toward adoption and enforcement of a significant inclusionary housing ordinance; and
- increasing the available land, financial resources, and the number of nonprofit developers building high-quality affordable housing to meet the scale of our local needs for such housing.

The Fresno Housing Alliance is staffed by the Relational Culture Institute (RCI) and Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM). Please call 276-2304 or 487-1500 for more information. You may also contact committee chairs directly:

- Public Policy Committee: Rev. Steve Ratzlaff (251-5703; ffalztar@sbcglobal.net);
- Housing Needs Committee: Betty Higdon (225-4068; behigdon@worldnet.att.net) or Shirley Carlson (439-6895; scarlson@attitude.com);
- Organizational Committee: Tony Miranda (237-4102; habitatfresnotm@hotmail.com) or Mary Savala (431-1227)

Dr. Matthew A. Jendian is a member of the Fresno Housing Alliance. He is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at California State University Fresno, and Director of the American Humanics Nonprofit Administration Program.

Continued from page 6

formation on these programs, join us at the Community Hunger & Nutrition Forums and in our Food Resources task group. “The State of the Plate” here in Fresno can change. Help us solve the problem revealed by the CHIS data—not only with generous donations to food banks today, but by addressing hunger issues long-term: We must advocate for systems that do not discriminate. We must assure ongoing access to healthy food for all our neighbors. We must promote full utilization of the federal nutrition programs.”

There is nothing more humiliating to adults than having to beg for food for their children or for themselves. There is nothing more shameful than my community withholding food and programs that can answer the hunger of my neighbors. Let’s get busy.

The California Health Interview Survey on Food Insecurity and Hunger in California is available at <www.cfpa.net> and on Fresno Metro Ministry’s Web site, <<http://www.fresnometmin.org/>>

Edie Jessup has worked for years in the Valley and in Maine with low income advocacy and helpful services. Currently, Edie works for Fresno Metro Ministry on their Hunger & Nutrition Project, advocating and promoting systemic change in access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food for all Fresno residents.

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Vickie Fouts, Editor, (559) 658-8260 or socialjustice@sti.net

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

WILPF DATES:

Wednesday, November 2, Noon: Women in Black Fresno County Courthouse Breezeway

Thursday, November 10, 7 PM: WILPF Business Meeting 1584 N Van Ness

Wednesday, November 23, 3 PM: WILPF Stir It Up on KFCF 88.1 FM

Saturday, December 3, 10 AM-4 PM: Peace Community Crafts Faire 2131 N Van Ness (See below)

Saturday, March 4: Save the Date—A Single Woman, a play

New Lifetime Member: Congratulations and thanks to Polly Victor who recently became a lifetime member of WILPF. Polly answered National WILPF's call for new lifetime members to help us raise \$45,000 by August 31 so WILPF could get an additional \$45,000 in matching funds. Polly joins other branch lifetime members Ellie Bluestein, Mary Ellen Clay, and Joan Poss. Thanks for all your support.

WILPF Retreat: Fifteen members and two guests attended our yearly retreat on September 17 and one new member stopped by for lunch. Thanks to Sandra Iyall for opening her home and beautiful yard to us. We started off with an ice-breaker picked up at the Congress, then went on to thank last year's board members and welcome the new board members. A report of last year's activities was discussed. Peace Camp was discussed with a lot of good ideas shared. Last year's intern, Lupe Orosco, gave a report on her internship while Joan Poss read Rick Petinak's report. Both reports gave us ideas of how we can improve the program and how the internship helped the students grow. Lupe's report back on her interview with Pam Lane-Garon on peace education and peer mediators in the schools prompted us to vote to donate T-shirts for a school's peer mediators.

There was a report from those who attended the Congress in August. It was agreed to bring to Fresno the play about the life of Jeannette Rankin, *A Single Woman* (which was performed at the Congress) during Women's Herstory Month in March. Ellie Bluestein gave a report on the KMJ situation where Jim Patterson said WILPF is a "socialist, communist, left wing organization. They're nutzoids."

Joan Poss lead a discussion on increasing member involvement. It was decided to send out a survey to members asking what they would be willing to help with. Other items discussed was using more personal contact, reaching out to other groups for new members, filling the membership chair position, listing new members on the WILPF page of the *Community Alliance* and getting out a new membership directory. Marilyn Byrne discussed how starting a Raging Grannies group locally could help. Our annual crafts faire was also talked about.

Lydia Flores and Ellie Bluestein discussed the water group they have formed along with Bette Noblett. *Save the Water* is one of the two national WILPF campaigns for the next three years. The other campaign, *Women Challenge US Policy: Building Peace on Justice in the Middle East*, was also mentioned. Vickie Fouts talked about the new *Building the Beloved Community* issues committee of which she is a part along with nearly 30 other WILPFers nationwide. Vickie discussed how some women of color at the Congress felt there was institutional, internal racism within WILPF and at the Congress. This will need to be addressed and worked on before we can start bringing *Building the Beloved Community* outside of WILPF. *Building the Beloved Community* will be discussed more in next month's issue.

Last we discussed a proposed budget and finalized a budget of \$4633 which includes \$500 for intern use, \$300 for president's use for such things as attending community events on behalf of WILPF, nearly \$300 for ads and donations for community events, cost of

copies, mailings, *Community Alliance* page, rent at Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Since the annual crafts faire is our only major fundraiser and we usually bring in only about \$3000 we will need to do more fundraising and find a fundraising chair. The meeting ended with each person sharing thoughts about the retreat and about WILPF in general.

Peace Camp: Peace Camp co-chair, Marilyn Byrne, has reserved O'Neill Park for the week of June 19, 2006 for our next Camp Harmony. Planning will begin soon and we need several members on our committee. Please help if you can. Contact Marilyn at skippy41@csufresno.edu or 448-9144 for more information or to volunteer.

Membership Directory: We hope to have a new directory available in time to hand out at the crafts faire. Big thanks to our intern, Kris Smith, for preparing the mailing and to Joan Poss for helping Kris get it in the mail.

Raging Grannies: Marilyn Byrne is organizing a Raging Grannies group in Fresno. The first meeting was at Ellie Bluestein's on October 17. If you are interested in joining please contact Marilyn at skippy41@csufresno.edu or 448-9144. Check out the great pictures and stories about Raging Grannies nationwide at www.wilpf.org. Thanks to Marilyn and Ellie for helping things get off the ground.

Crafts Faire: Our annual Peace Community Crafts Faire will be here soon. This is a major undertaking for our branch and the current committee of Ingrid Carmean, Ellie Bluestein, and Joan Poss could really use your help. The only reason the Crafts Faire succeeds is that it has so much good history. **That means we could really use someone to help Ingrid with the vendors so she can pass on her knowledge of the process**, as it was passed down to her from Desi Cortez and Desi learned from those before her. The vendor application forms are already coming in. If you can join the committee or volunteer for the event, please contact Ellie Bluestein at geneb@csufresno.edu or 229-9807 or Joan Poss at ilsasso2003@yahoo.com or 227-6134.

Crafts Faire Yard Sale—By Nancy Waidtlow: Last year the yard sale part of the Crafts Faire made over \$400 for WILPF. You can help us do the same this year by taking a few minutes to identify some gently used items that you no longer need. We may not be as lucky as we were last year weather-wise, so let's limit the clothing to really special items that will be worth the space it takes to display them. But look for knickknacks, kitchen and bath items, jewelry, books, games, linens, pillows, etc. Things can be brought to my house, 804 E Fedora Ave, two blocks east of Van Ness Blvd, and five blocks north of Shields, phone 224-1738. And if anyone can help with signs, transporting, set-up and/or tear-down, as well as selling at the Faire, let me know.

Water Meeting: A very successful meeting on water issues was held on September 29, sponsored by WILPF and Unitarian Universalist Church, at the UU Church. Lloyd Carter did an excellent job of outlining the sources of our water, where it's going, who's using it, future predictions and possibilities, and answered many questions from a very interested group of people. The next meeting in January will be about the global water situation. Kris Smith and Lydia Flores introduced the possibility of a study group based on the syllabus prepared by WILPF. Six people showed interest in the study group and plans on being made to go forward with the study group. Stay tuned for more details.

New Board Members: Please welcome two new board members. Kris Smith, our intern, is our new secretary and Natasha Fouts is our new treasurer, who was voted for unanimously at our board meeting on October 13. Thank you Kris and Natasha. We are still in need of program, fundraising, and membership chairs. Please let us know if you are interested in the positions.

A Single Woman: WILPF will be bringing to CSUF a play on the life of Jeannette Rankin, the first Congresswoman before women even had the vote, which was performed at the WILPF Congress in August. This will

be March 4, 2006 in honor of Women's Herstory Month. To learn more see www.nevada-shakespeare.org. More details in the coming months.

RETHINK WATER; STOP THE WAR, Part I: Xeriscape—By Phil Erro

We WILPFers want to end the war in Iraq now. Do we dare divert our attention to other issues, especially something as mundane as water? Let's see, we invaded Iraq to give western corporations unfettered access to oil and water in the Middle East so that they can market these resources in the most profitable manner possible. Thames Water, a subsidiary of the German conglomerate RWE, has bought the City of Stockton water supply. Do you suppose there is a connection between NAFTA liberalization of California's water laws and the Bush administration's drive to set up laws in Iraq that give corporations like RWE a free hand to acquire watersheds and aquifers (and of course oilfields)?

If we want to have water 10 years from now, we need to comprehend that water is being seized from the commons and placed among the assets of multinational corporations. We need to have a good understanding and appreciation of how we get water now and how we can secure that supply in the future. Conservation of water, naturally, is a quick means of securing water for future growth. Because our landscaping accounts for 50% to 70% of our household water consumption in Fresno, our gardens are a good place to start finding water. The 20% to 25% water savings gained by converting to water-wise landscaping can provide water for our increasing population. Besides conserving water, however, we need to rethink how we obtain and manage it.

Water-wise landscaping

Fresnans use 326 gallons of water per day—about twice as much as people in Los Angeles. One reason for this is that we have bigger yards. We plant lawn, which uses over 3,500 gallons per month per 1,000 square feet in July, and trees, each of which consumes between 1,000 and 3,000 gallons of water on a hot summer day. We could replace part of our lawns with native grasses and shrubs; and we could plant water-thrifty, light canopy trees. Some popular, attractive native grasses are purple fountain grass, Mexican feather grass, and deer grass. Ceanothus, grevillea, and blue beard are shrubs that use little water but produce vivid blue and red blossoms that attract butterflies. Desert willow, western red bud, and Chinese pistachio are trees that display beautiful flowers and graceful, sparse foliage. An easy way to trim our yard's appetite for water is to plant clumps of water-wise grasses and shrubs in a suitable area of a lawn and replace old, shabby trees with drought-tolerant trees. To see what a garden of all water-thrifty plants looks like, go see the native plant garden at St. Therese Church on Wishon and Pine in Fresno's Tower District. Happy xeriscape!! You can check out the following Web sites for more information. Fresnans use 326 gallons of water per day compared to about half that much for people in Los Angeles. One reason for this is that we have bigger yards. We plant lawn, which uses over 3,500 gallons per month per 1,000 square feet in July, and trees, each of which consumes between 1,000 and 3,000 gallons of water on a hot summer day. We could replace part of our lawns with native grasses and shrubs; and we could plant water-thrifty, light canopy trees. Some popular, attractive native grasses are purple fo_9 <----**Something missing???**



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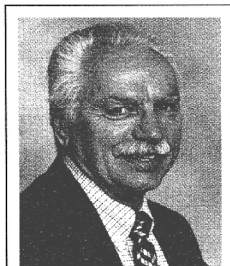


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Follow the Money

By Nancy Ellis and Stephen Lewis

California voters go to the polls on November 8 to oppose or support eight propositions that have the potential to change life for all of us. These propositions deal with issues ranging from parental notification for abortions to changing the regulations for electric utilities, and almost everything in between. The full text of all eight ballot measures totals more than 31,000 words, an average of nearly 4,000 words each. How many voters will have actually read and understood the propositions on which they will be voting?

How will most of us decide whether to vote yes or no? Watching television spots? Asking friends? Reading the short descriptions in the voter guide? Perhaps there is a reliable short cut: follow the advice of Deep Throat.

W. Mark Felt, a.k.a. Deep Throat, was the Number 2 man in the FBI who helped Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein break the Watergate burglary case in 1974. Felt's advice to the reporters was, "Follow the money."

Who financially supports or opposes each of the eight ballot measures? What are their interests? Important clues to the actual intent of these ballot measures can be ascertained from uncovering who "invests" money to get them passed or defeated.

Bob Merrill, a volunteer for the Alliance for a Better California, calls this "a battle between corporations and their workers. They are trying to develop a healthy climate for corporate America and silence the voice of workers." Is Merrill right?

Follow the money.

California now makes this easy. The State requires that most donations to groups supporting or opposing ballot measures (or candidates) report their donations, and this information is available on an hourly basis at <www.cal-access.ss.ca.gov>.

Here is a quick overview:

Proposition 73
Supporters: Catholic Common Good Foundation of Calif., Life on the Ballot, and California Pro-Life Council.

Opponents: Californians Against Arnold's Special Interest Election, Feminist Majority Foundation, Planned Parenthood, and American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California.

Proposition 74
Supporters: Citizens to Save California—A Coalition of Business and Taxpayer Organizations and Reform California.

Opponents: Californians Against Arnold's Special Interest Election, Committee to Protect California's Future, No On 74, A Coalition of Teachers and School Board Members for Quality Teaching.

Proposition 75
Supporters: Coalition for Employee Rights, Yes on Proposition 75, with major funding from SBAC-PAC and California Republican Party, Reform California, Californians for Paycheck Protection, a Project of the National Tax Limitation Committee.

Opponents: Committee to Protect Workers' Voice—Carpenters, Laborers, and Operating Engineers, Californians Against Arnold's Special Interests, Committee to Protect California's Future, Coalition of Nurses, Educators, Firefighters, School Employees, Law Enforcement, Building Trades, State Employees and Public Employees Opposed to Paycheck Deception, Workers' Rights Protection Fund of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, No Special Elections.

Cut out and take with you to the polling booth!



A Progressive Guide to the Propositions

Nix the Six:

Vote NO on

- Proposition 73.....Puts teenagers' lives at risk**
- Proposition 74.....The anti-teacher initiative**
- Proposition 75.....Attacks labor unions**
- Proposition 76.....Cuts school funding**
- Proposition 77.....Unfair reapportionment scheme**
- Proposition 78.....The big drug companies' scam**

Vote YES on

- Proposition 79.....Guarantees deep discounts on prescription drugs and will save the taxpayers millions of dollars.**
- Proposition 80.....Will make our utility bills more affordable by re-regulating the power industry and by encouraging renewable energy.**

For more information see <www.noonproposition73.com/> and <www.betterca.com/>.

Proposition 76
Supporters: Citizens to Save California—A Coalition of Business and Taxpayer Organizations, Reform California.

Opponents: Californians Against Arnold's Special Interest Election, Committee to Protect California's Future, Action-Impact.org, No Special Election.

Proposition 77
Supporters: Californians for Fair Elections, Californians for Fair Redistricting, Redistrict California.

Opponents: Californians for Fair Representation, For Judicial Restraint, Californians Against Arnold's Special Interest Election and Committee to Protect California's Future.

Proposition 78
Supporters: Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America California Initiative Fund and Californians for Affordable Prescriptions.

Opponents: Californians Against Arnold's Special Interest Election, No Special Election

Proposition 79
Supporters: Alliance for a Better California, Californians Against Arnold's Special Interest Election, Yes on 79, A Coalition of Consumer, Senior, Labor and Health Organizations

Opponents: Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America California Initiative Fund and Californians Against the Wrong Prescription.

Proposition 80
Supporters: Alliance for a Better California, Californians Against Arnold's Special Interest Election and Yes on 80—Lights on California

Opponents: Californians for Reliable Electricity, More Power Through Choice

In general, the groups that support Propositions 74, 75, 76, 77, and 78 are corporations, drug manufacturers, and businesses. The groups that oppose these initiatives are Califor-

nia labor unions that represent teachers, police officers, firefighters and nurses.

Proposition 79, Prescription Drug Discounts, is supported by California's working people, the groups listed above that oppose Governor Schwarzenegger's propositions. Proposition 80 is supported and opposed by a wide spectrum of political groups.

David Schecter, Political Science Professor at CSU Fresno, said that this election is strongly Republican/conservative oriented because the current legislature is unwilling to pass Governor Schwarzenegger's pro-business agenda. As a result, the Republicans are trying to bypass the Democrat-controlled State Legislature by taking their agenda directly to the voters.

When asked why Schecter thought Proposition 74, Teacher Waiting Period for Permanent Status, and Proposition 76, State Spending and School Funding Limits, were supported by Fresno-based political action committees that donated a total of \$59,000, Schecter said, "The bottom line is they would like to see a more business-like, merit-based education system." Businesses tend to "think of students as widgets. Schools need to produce good ones in the most efficient manner."

Follow the money. Support is a two-way street.

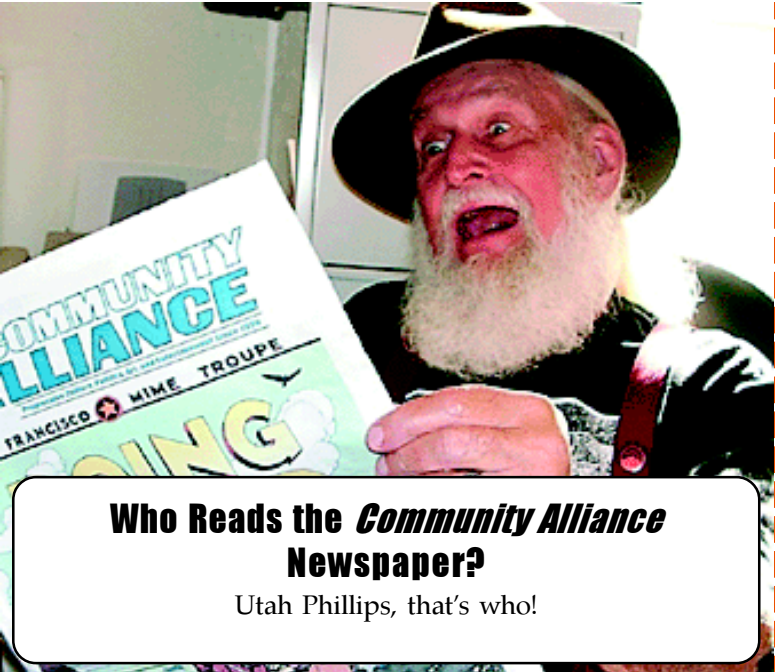
Chris Mathys, president of the Valley Taxpayers Coalition and former Fresno city council member, said that local businesses donate money to support propositions seemingly unrelated to their businesses because "They know that a politician will remember who supported their projects." He explained that a business knows that if they support one project it could transfer that support into other areas that they really care about. Mathys said, "Politicians support people who support them and their issues."

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