

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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Must Tookie Be Executed?

Save Stan "Tookie" Williams Rally at San Quentin, which was held on Saturday, November 19.

Photo by Jeff Paterson

Story on Page 9

DECEMBER 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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Letter to the Editor

My thought for the day: The war in Iraq will go on because of the low count of dead American servicemen. Some 2000 dead soldiers are being shrugged off as collateral damage by the military-industrial complex.

The media does not report the numbers of the wounded and crippled servicemen. Why? Might it jolt into existence the conscience of We the People? Some 295,734,130 are a lot of folk to not give a damn. American culture is brutalizing. Murder, killing, sadism seem to be the ever-recurring topic for entertainment and the political arena of war. And it may get worse if we persist in being passive enablers and facilitators. Up to this point, only the voice of America's intelligentsia is being heard.

But I have seen a dim light at the end of the political tunnel. So when will we once again unite in a decisive and distinctive "Enough is Enough!" as We the People have done many times before.

Isabell Lawson

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"An evil exists that threatens every man, woman, and child of this great nation. We must take steps to ensure our domestic security and protect our homeland."

—Adolf Hitler, proposing the creation of the Gestapo

OPINION PAGE



Let's Begin Now to Leave Iraq

Robert Valett

President Bush's October 6 speech on terrorism rebuffed calls to withdraw from Iraq and rejected the argument that the Iraq war has fostered terrorism. But Roger W. Cressy, a former White House counterterrorism advisor, replied that the idea that the war in Iraq has not contributed to the rise of the global Sunni terrorism extremism movement is "delusional" thinking. More recently, President Bush proclaimed that "we will not rest or tire until the war on terror is won." Realistically this is really not a "war on terror" in the conventional sense. Instead of a "war" we have entered a continual campaign against worldwide terrorist groups that could last forever. Experts now say that we can never reach victory to exterminate terrorists in Iraq or elsewhere. In reality, the Iraq resistance to the occupation is steadily growing by drawing young Muslims from throughout the world; it is dangerously delusional for our political leaders to deny this fact! Could it be possible that the Bush administration is deliberately attempting to mislead the public again?

The Congressional Research Service reports that we are now spending \$7 billion a month to wage the war on terror. That report also stated that the average monthly cost for Iraq alone is now \$5.9 billion (19% higher than last year). And the loss of life is staggering. Months ago President Bush arrogantly proclaimed our "mission accomplished." But in October 2005 we exceeded 2000 dead American troops, (more than 90 percent of whom were killed since Bush's famous proclamation), plus more than 15,000 seriously wounded military personnel. Also *The Lancet* (the premiere British medical journal) has reported that nearly 100,000 Iraqis have died since the US invasion.

Achieving true democracy in Iraq will take centuries of social evolution. For instance, the proposed Iraq constitution recognizes Islam as its guiding source of law. Accordingly, human rights for all will take decades to achieve. In addition, the Iraqi politicians have announced they do not want occupation troops to remain and are calling for a withdrawal timeline. Interior Minister Bayan Jabr of Iraq told an Arab newspaper it will take five years to put down Iraq's resistance to the occupation because of the inadequacy of Iraq's security forces. But polls taken by Sadoun Dulami, the Iraqi prime minister, show that over 85% of Iraqis want the United States to withdraw as soon as possible.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546 recognized the Iraqi government as sovereign, with the June 2004 "transition of power" document as the basis for their motion calling for withdrawal. The world now knows that the United States invaded Iraq under false pretenses to rid it of weapons of mass destruction,

which were subsequently proven to be nonexistent. Then we declared our intent to "liberate the Iraqi people." Neither of these questionable goals has been realized.

Americans are now aware that our occupation forces are not capable of creating security in Iraq. Summer Gallup polls showed that more than 51% of the American public believed that the Bush administration misled us into war, and 58% said that no matter how long US troops remained in Iraq they would not be able to establish a stable democratic government there. The September 19 CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll of the voting population of the United States showed 67% disapproving of Bush's Iraq strategy and 63% wanting to see a pullout of our troops.

The polls are gradually having an effect on American politicians. Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin has led the way by saying that we should acknowledge our past mistakes, avoid making continued mistakes, and plan to end our involvement in Iraq by December 2006. Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont has called for withdrawal plans. On October 27, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts specifically called for the withdrawal of 20,000 US troops from Iraq by this year's end as the first step in a proposal that would significantly reduce military forces in the region over the next 15 months.

And we now have the "Out of Iraq" caucus in the United States House of Representatives considering a rational withdrawal policy following the December Iraqi elections. The bipartisan House Joint Resolution 55 "Homeward Bound" has over fifty Congressional co-sponsors and calls for the administration to announce a withdrawal timetable from Iraq by the end of this year and begin the withdrawal no later than October 1, 2006.

Increasingly Americans everywhere are becoming aware of the rising death rates of our troops in Iraq and the unsupportable financial drain of the occupation, which is actually undermining both our foreign and domestic security as well as the general welfare. Both our national security and homeland defense now demand a reprioritizing of our budgetary expenses and plans. It is time we implement the recommendations of the bipartisan panel headed by former National Security advisors Samuel Berger and Brent Scowcroft, who recommended that we must put more resources into post-conflict security and reconstruction or we will seriously undermine US foreign policy goals and give more impetus to the Iraqi resistance to the occupation.

Some proposals for the withdrawal of troops would parallel the buildup of Iraqi security forces, which may take years to achieve. However, we obviously cannot continue our counterproductive occupation for years to come. Therefore, our plans for military disengagement and enhanced reconstruction efforts should be announced by the end of this year or we must face the dark reality of years of occupation fighting the resistance with untold tragic deaths of our children and grandchildren plus numerous innocent civilians throughout the world!

History records that Nero fiddled as Rome burned. The noted historian H. G. Wells said that human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe and that humankind is now capable of destroying itself by ignorance and modern weapons. Hopefully we have finally learned that many delusional leaders have actually destroyed their countries because of ignorance and false ideologies. Let us not make that mistake again; let us plan now to leave Iraq under United Nations supervision in the near future. We must take seriously the famous words of Thomas Jefferson that "a little rebellion now and then is a good thing." This is certainly the time to rebel on our disastrous occupation of Iraq. Contact your congressperson now!

On October 26 local peace groups held events acknowledging the 2,000 U.S. soldiers and tens of thousands of Iraqis who have died in the war on Iraq. Events were held in Fresno, Tulare, Visalia, and Porterville. To see the current number of casualties in the war, go to: <http://antiwar.com/casualties/>



A SPARK IN THE DARK

by the Rev. Bryan D. Jessup of the Unitarian Universalist Church

It's a complicated time of year in the northern hemisphere. And it's a complicated time in the story of humankind too. Here in America we deal with a scramble of traditions around the winter holidays: Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, earth-centered customs, Ramadan. And, of course, we deal with the major commercialization of *all* the holidays. Furthermore, we now have to deal with a world gone mad with war, greed, fear, hatred, violence, and oppression.

We in the northern hemisphere are now in the darkest part of our year, and we're in a very dark part of our collective human story too.

One of the things we can do about this darkness is to confront it—to take some serious time to think about this season, and what it means. While the earth, indeed, is now in the place in its orbit where the northern hemisphere is pointed farthest away from the sun, the earth, indeed, is also in orbit—is in motion.

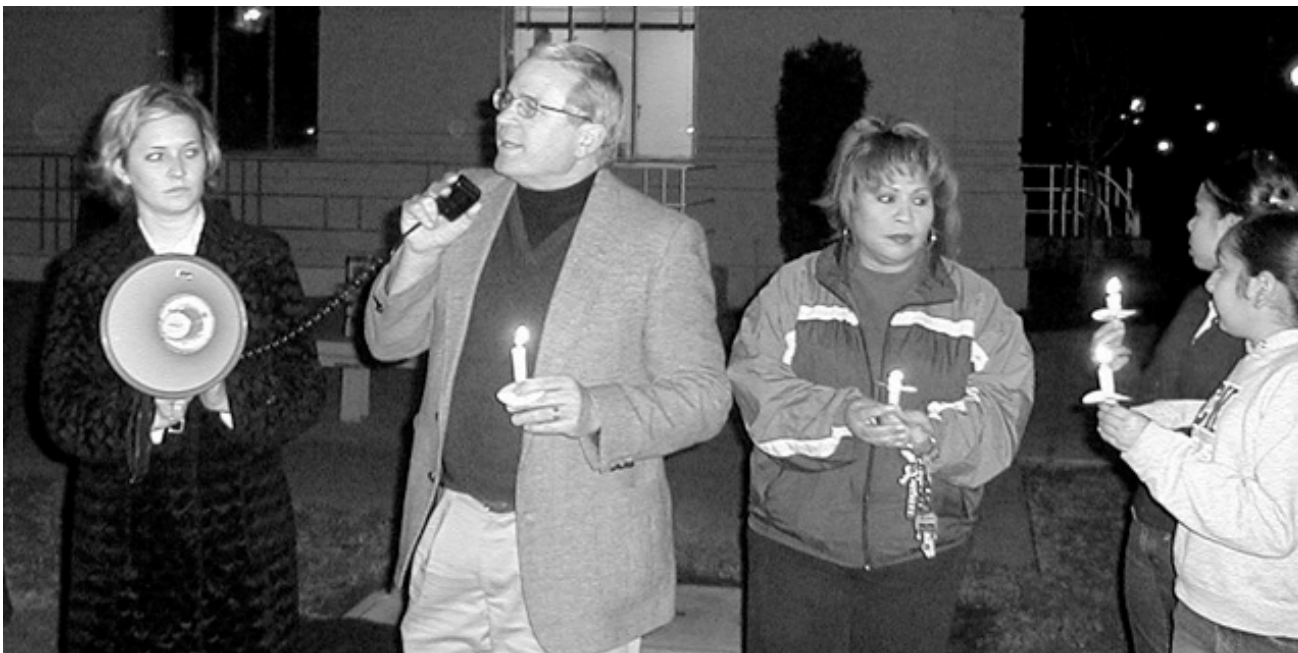
Although right now in our human story there is no doubt that we are confronted with tremendous challenges, our story too is in motion! And people before us have gone through similar times of challenge, have survived, and have actually grown. This *is* the darkest time of the year—but there are sparks of light in that darkness.

In earth-centered traditions the paradox of light being born out of darkness is a mystery that is acknowledged with reverence and faith. Fire-kindling festivals and candle-lighting rituals are common to people all over the globe. Even in darkness, they remind us, we are held by something much bigger than ourselves. And that something is alive and moving, so there is reason to remain faithful.

Yes, there is darkness and there is cold in our human story now. But Amnesty International, MoveOn.Org, Human Rights Watch, and so many more organizations, are still with us, still pleading with humankind to grow up.

Yes, there is darkness in the halls of power of the world—and at the same time 100 Nobel laureates in fields from chemistry to physics to literature to peace have written the leaders of these nations telling them very clearly that we are now at the crucial point where we must honestly amend the violence of our whole way of being on this earth or we will surely perish.

Yes there is darkness in this Central Valley around the way our system treats brown-yellow-black-skinned people who harvest crops and live close to



The Rev Bryan Jessup speaks (in center, with a candle in his hand) at a rally supporting home care workers right to a living wage.

the soil—and, at the same time, regular people band together to form the *Community Alliance*, Cop Watch, Metro Ministry, California Rural Legal Assistance, Centro la Familia—and so many other “candles of humanity” to light the pathway of faithfulness!

“These candles are small,” you may say, “and the darkness is great!” But what the miracle of this season is about (and has always been about) is that even in the darkest times of life, light can be reborn.

Some 2100 years ago, a small group of oppressed Jews had a solitary, beautiful fantasy that they could regain their own identity, follow the religion of their own hearts and live in their own land under their own control—throwing off the economic and social oppression of the Syrian Greeks. They were faithful to the little light they had—and their success is commemorated at Hanukkah time not with a military parade, but with the kindling of candles in honor of the power of the universe and of the human spirit!

Some 35 years ago, a small group of oppressed African Americans gathered around Maulana Ron Karenga, and they had a solitary, beautiful fantasy that they could make a significant impact on the consciousness of African Americans—freeing that consciousness from the notion that it had no viable homeland, and that it had no options during the winter holidays but the commercialized European customs.

It was not probable that that small band of idealists could disseminate the high values of Kwanzaa and have that holiday take hold. But they did not give up. They were faithful to the little light they had—

and the kindling of the Kwanzaa candles has not only survived, it has grown stronger and more widely recognized every year.

The mystery of this time of year, as it says in the I Ching, is wonderful but is also very natural. Out of a time of decay comes a time of growth. Out of a time of darkness, powerful light returns. After a time of stillness, there is movement. The old dies. The new is born.

I have a granddaughter. Her name is Zohar Aviv Naaman. *Zohar* is a Hebrew word that generally means “glowing.” *Aviv* means spring. My granddaughter's name, then, is “The Glowing of Spring.” But words have multiple meanings, even in Hebrew. And in ancient Hebrew, *Zohar* is the word used to describe the very first sparkles during the creation just after God says, “Let there be light.” So *Zohar* also means “a spark in the dark.”

Well, my little spark in the dark, Zoe, is as cute as she can be. She eats crushed bananas and yogurt. She plays with her toys and enjoys Hanukkah candles and Christmas lights without discrimination. She (beyond saying) is a precious being. And as a spark in the dark she has a message for us that is clear as a bell! Her message is: what she needs, every child on earth needs!

It doesn't matter if that child is American or Iraqi. It doesn't matter if that child is Jewish or Palestinian. It doesn't matter if that child is African or Asian. Every child in the world needs the same love, support, and care she has.

My little Zoe is a spark in the dark! She doesn't do politics yet, but by her mere being she has a message. “It's time we kicked our ego-driven greed, our war-mongering, and our world-wrecking violence OUT OF THE MANGER!”

You and I may not think we really have much of a chance of doing that in our current situation. But the wisdom of *all* of our religious traditions tells us not to let go of our faithfulness. The I Ching says, “After a time of decay, comes a time of growth.”

Well, we've seen the decay, so let us keep the faith! Even in the darkness, let us honor the spark of life and hope. Our grandchildren are depending on us.

Michael Parenti to Speak in Fresno

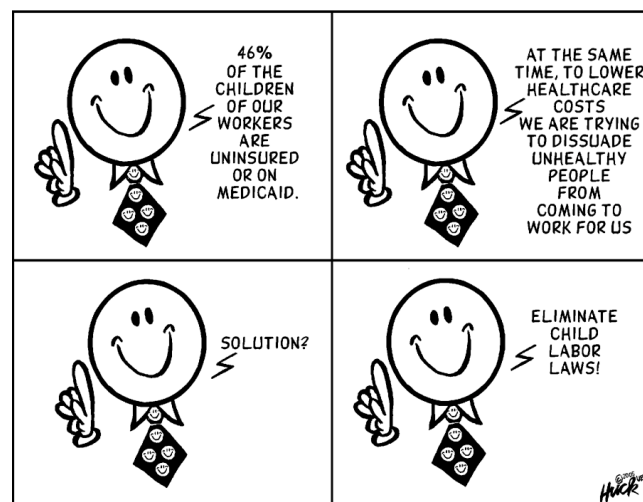
By Angela Price

On Sunday, December 4, at 4 PM, Michael Parenti will be speaking on “Eco Catastrophe and Corporate Power” at the 1st Congregational Church, 2131 N Van Ness Blvd, Fresno. A small reception will follow. Tickets are \$10 (general) and \$5 (low-income) and can be purchased at FCNV, 1584 N Van Ness; at The Movies, 1435 N Van Ness; and at Patrick's Music, 679 E Barstow. This talk is being sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence.

On Monday, December 5, at 11 AM, Dr. Parenti will speak on “Empire v. Democracy” at Fresno City College Theatre, 1101 E University. This is a free event and is being sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence and the Beth Ann Harnish Lecture Series Committee.

Michael Parenti is one of the nation's leading progressive political analysts. His informative and entertaining books and talks have reached a wide range of audiences in North America and abroad. He has won awards from Project Censored, the Caucus for a New Political Science, and many others. He is the author of 16 books, including *The Terrorism Trap*, *Democracy for the Few*, *To Kill a Nation*, and *History as Mystery*. Recent books are *Superpatriotism* and *The Assassination of Julius Caesar*.

For more information call the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at (559) 237-3223, 11 AM to 3 PM weekdays.



Guide to a Greener Holiday

By Brandon Hill

It happened again.

It was mid-October. I was walking through a store with a bounce in my step, throwing things into my cart, when suddenly my blood pressure began to rise, a lump developed in my throat, and my body weakened. As I regained my composure an impulse to destroy arose within me.

I had spotted the yearly but nevertheless alarming premature Christmas display.

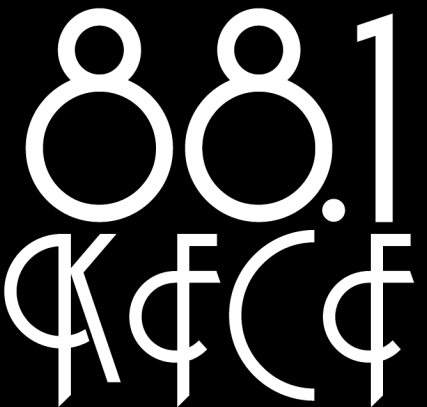
Now don't get me wrong: I love the holidays. But the air this time of year is fragrant with consumerism, the smell of which makes me nauseous. For many people, holiday thoughts are less about yule-tide carols being sung by a choir or chestnuts roasting on an open fire, and more about the yearly struggle to find gifts while money dwindles, or the guilt they feel about the bad environmental effects of their holiday behavior.

Perhaps distress concerning the environmental impacts of the holidays is not typical, but it should be.



Democracy Now! is a national, daily, independent, award-winning news program airing on over 225 stations in North America. Pioneering the largest public media collaboration in the U.S., Democracy Now! is broadcast on Pacifica, community, and National Public Radio stations, public access cable television stations, satellite television (on Free Speech TV, channel 9415 of the DISH Network), shortwave radio and the internet.

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Mon-Fri
6:00am & 9:00am

The holiday season has a substantial impact on the environment. According to the EPA an extra 25 million tons of trash is thrown away between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, 25% more than during any other time of year. Add in the additional car trips, the effects of manufacturing the gifts we give and receive (25% of all retail goods are bought during the holidays) and you have an annual festival of environmental destruction.

It does not have to be this way. Environmentally friendly and less consumerist holiday alternatives abound. Despite popular practices, holidays can become more about spending time with family and friends and less about giving and receiving. For the ultimate anti-consumerist statement, you can exercise the option of having a giftless holiday. By taking gifts out of the equation, you are left with a less stressful and more enjoyable holiday. But if going giftless is too extreme, grab your artificial tree and recycled wrapping paper, and check out the following suggestions. Local organizations and businesses have been woven into gift suggestions wherever possible, because of the environmental benefits of purchasing locally.

Gifts for the Home/Garden

Energy-efficient lights and appliances.
The gift of energy efficiency is not only a gift to the earth but a gift of savings. Simply look for the Energy Star label. More information about Energy Star products can be found at <www.energystar.gov>.

Recycled glassware.
Glasses, vases, and other items produced from 100% recycled glass can be purchased from <www.greenglass.org> at reasonable prices.

Native plants.
An ideal seller of native and drought-tolerant plants is the Intermountain Nursery, the Central Valley's only grower of native plants, located just north of Prather on Highway 168.

Green tags.
Green tags allow people to offset their emissions by supporting the production of renewable energy. The average household can offset its emissions for less than twenty dollars a month. More information can be found at <www.greentagsusa.org>.

Gifts of Food

Local, organic produce.
A good source for fresh produce is T.D. Willey Farms, which offers weekly deliveries of fresh, local, organic produce at low prices. For more information go to <www.tdwilleyfarms.com>.

Fair Trade products.
The Fresno Center for Nonviolence offers Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate, and cocoa, with all proceeds supporting their work for peace and social justice.

Gifts of Time

For those that want to keep consumption to a minimum, gifts of time can be an attractive option:

- Coupons for household chores
- Outings to museums, sporting events, or parks
- Monthly lunches with an elderly relative or friend

Homemade Gifts

For those on a budget or those interested in giving unique, purely non-commercial items homemade gifts are ideal.

- Homemade cookies or other baked goods
- Photo albums or scrapbooks
- Homemade potpourri or candles

Books

Share the glory of nature or alert others to the threats facing our environment through the written word. To make this gift particularly environmentally friendly, purchase used books. Several quality titles are listed below

- *Crimes Against Nature*, by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
This highly readable book shines a spotlight on the Bush administration's ghastly environmental record.



- *The Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices*, by Michael Brower, Warren Leon
This is a practical guide that answers the questions of even the most nagging environmentalist, including the eternal paper- versus plastic-bag debate.
- *Turtle Island*, by Gary Snyder
Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of poetry by Beat Generation poet and leading proponent of deep ecology.
- *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson
One of the most influential books of the twentieth century. Revealed to the world the perils of pesticide use, namely DDT.
- *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water*, by Marc Reisner
A history of conflicts over water policy in the West and their impacts.

Memberships to Local Environmental Groups

Support local struggles for a cleaner environment by giving memberships to local organizations.

- Fresno Audubon Society
<www.fresnoaudubon.org>
- Revive the San Joaquin
<www.revivethesanjaquin.org>
- Sierra Foothill Conservancy
<www.sierrafoothill.org>
- San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust
<www.riverparkway.org>
- Tehipite Sierra Club
<http://tehipite.sierraclub.org>

Other Environmental Gifts

- Parks Passes (State, county, and national parks passes are available)
- Duck Stamps
Duck Stamps are not just for hunters, every Duck Stamp sold supports the protection and restoration of wetlands across America. Go to <www.fws.gov> for more information.
- Bat Houses
Keep insect populations in check via an earth-friendly means. At <www.batcon.org> bat houses are available for purchase as well as instruction manuals for those who prefer to build their own.

Other Alternatives

- WILPF Craft Faire
Join WILPF December 3rd at the First Congregational Church for food and local arts and crafts.
- Global Exchange Fair Trade Store
Online store featuring socially conscious gifts for everyone on your list. Visit <www.globalexchange.org>.
- Heifer International
Give an impoverished family the gift of self-reliance by purchasing livestock for them through Heifer International. For more information visit <www.heifer.org>.
- Subscription to the *Community Alliance*
Support local alternative/independent media with a subscription to the *Community Alliance*.

COMMUNITIES WITHOUT BORDERS

5 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE DECEMBER 2005

By David Bacon

In 1982 Guatemalan army troops filled the roads through the highlands above Huehuetenango. As part of the country's civil war, soldiers, carrying Armalite rifles supplied by US president Ronald Reagan, swept into the small indigenous villages of Santa Eulalia and San Miguel Acatan. Accusing the towns of using church youth groups to recruit guerrillas, they began killing political activists. Finally, after the army shot down San Miguel teenagers in front of the church, many families fled. Helicopters chased and bombed them through the mountains, all the way to the Mexican border. For those who stayed behind, there was no work—just devastation.

Policy-makers see migration simply as a journey from point A to point B. They assume that people make decisions about when to leave home, where to go, and how to live based simply on economics—the need for a job. There is no denying the importance of the universal human need for work. But the dislocation of communities worldwide, forced to migrate in search of it, has never been a voluntary process. In Washington, dislocation is a dirty, unmentionable secret of the global economy.

What US immigration policy does not take into account is how the drive for community motivates migration. Current proposals for guest workers are the latest form of this denial.

Corporate interests have successfully made them the centerpiece of almost all current immigration reform proposals, whether made by Republicans or Democrats. By definition, guest workers are admitted on a temporary basis, contracted to employers. They have no right to settle in communities, send their children to school, practice their culture and religion, or speak their language. They can't vote or ex-

grant farm worker, became president of the Sonoma County chapter of the Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB). He brought fellow Triquis from their impromptu encampment to marches and demonstrations in California's state capital, demanding drivers' licenses and amnesty for undocumented immigrants. Living in conditions most Americans equate with extreme poverty, they see themselves not as victims but social actors with a right to acceptance both in Mexico and the United States.

"Indigenous Oaxaqueños understand the need for community and organization," says Rufino Dominguez, who coordinates the FIOB. "When people migrate from a community in Oaxaca, in the new places where they settle they form a committee comprised of people from their home town. This is a tradition they don't lose, wherever they go."

Indigenous migrants from Mexico and Central America overwhelmingly belong to transnational communities like those of Oaxaca's Mixtecs and Triquis, or Guatemala's Mams and Qanjobales. Mixtec scholar Gaspar Rivera-Salgado and Jonathan Fox, an authority on Oaxacan migration at the University of California in Santa Cruz, refer to "Oaxacalifornia" as a "space in which migrants bring together their lives in California with their communities of origin more than 2,500 miles away." They might have equally referred to Pueblayork, the title bestowed on New York by a similar flow of indigenous migration from the Mexican state of Puebla. Migrants from Guatemala's Santa Eulalia don't yet call their Midwest community Nebraskamala, but there are enough of them living in Omaha and surrounding meatpacking towns to justify such a nickname.

These migrants retain ties to their communities of origin and establish new communities as they migrate in search of work. They move back and forth through these networks, at least to the extent the difficult passage across borders allows. Their ties to one another are so strong, and the movement of people so great, that in many ways people belong to a single community that exists in different locations, on both sides of the border that formally divides their countries.

For Oaxacans, the formation of communities outside their home state began back when they became the workforce for industrial agriculture in the northern Mexican states of Sinaloa and Baja California. In 1984, as a young man, Dominguez was one of those who left Oaxaca. In Sinaloa, responding to conditions for mi-



Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca 12/11/02
Members of the FIOB streetsellers and artisans group.
All Photos by David Bacon

That same year indigenous farm workers from Oaxaca, living in Sinaloa's migrant labor camps in northern Mexico, began to rise up against filthy living conditions and back-breaking labor. Radical young Mixtec organizers launched strikes and, together with left-wing students from the local university in Culiacan, faced down growers, police, armed guards, and ultimately, Mexican troops.

Oaxaca's Mixtec, Zapotec, and Triqui laborers were recent arrivals in Sinaloa, but they had already been migrating within Mexico for two decades. Starting in the late 1950s, when Mexican policies of rural development and credit began to fail, the inhabitants of small Oaxacan villages traveled first to nearby Veracruz. There they found work unavailable in their home state, cutting sugar cane and picking coffee for the rich planters of the coast.

Then Sinaloa's new factory farms a thousand miles north, growing tomatoes and strawberries for US supermarkets, needed workers too. Soon growers began recruiting the south's indigenous migrants, and before long, trains were packed with Oaxacan families every spring.

Over the next twenty years, Guatemala's Qanjobal and Mam refugees, and Oaxaca's indigenous farm workers, moved north through Mexico. Eventually they began crossing the border into the United States. Today, both of these migrant streams have developed well-established communities thousands of miles from their hometowns. In Nebraska, Los Angeles, and Florida, Huehuetenango highlanders affectionately call their neighborhoods Little San Miguel. Triquis, living just below the border in Baja California, named their settlements Nuevo San Juan Copala in honor of their Oaxacan hometown. In Fresno and Madera, California, the Mixtec community is so large that signs in grocery stores list sale items not just in Spanish but in a tongue that predates the Spaniards' arrival by centuries. Indigenous migrant streams have created communities all along the northern road. Their experience defies common US preconceptions about immigrants.

In Washington, DC, discussions of immigration are filled with false assumptions. US policy treats migrants as individual workers, ignoring the social pressures that force whole communities to move, and the networks of families and hometowns that sustain migrants on their journeys.

Government policy often requires the deportation of parents caught without papers, who have to leave behind their children born in the United States. Sometimes, in this arbitrary Alice in Wonderland world, the opposite happens, and undocumented youth find themselves forced to move back to a place they don't even remember.

ercise fundamental political or labor rights. They can come only if an employer or a gang boss recruiter offers them a job. Without constant employment, they have to leave. The assumption is that they are here to work, and only to work.

Sergio Sosa, a Guatemalan organizer of Omaha Together One Community in Nebraska, emphasizes that "Mams and Qanjobales face poverty and isolation, even the possible disappearance of their identity. But they didn't choose this. People from Europe and the United States crossed our borders to come to Guatemala, and took over our land and economy. Migration is a form of fighting back. Now it's our turn to cross borders."

When they do, though, they confront a second dirty secret of globalization: inequality. Inequality is the most important product of US immigration policy, and a conscious one. The current spate of guest-worker proposals all assume that immigrants should not be treated as the equals of the people around them, or have the same rights. Among the crucial rights denied to them is the right to community—both to live in communities of their own creation and to be part of the broader community around them.

Nonetheless, migrants can and do carry community with them, along with traditions of social rights and organization. While living in a settlement of bamboo and plastic tents, for instance, in the reeds beside California's Russian River, Fausto Lopez, a Triqui mi-



Agua Fria, Oaxaca 12/11/02
Centolia's mother.

grants that were the scandal of Mexico, he formed the Organization of Exploited and Oppressed People. The strikes he helped organize put their abuse into the public eye.

"Often we went into the fields barefoot," remembers Jorge Giron, from the Mixtec town of Santa Maria Tindu, who now lives in Fresno. His wife, Margarita, recalls that in the labor camp "the rooms were made of cardboard, and you could see other families through the holes. When you had to relieve yourself, you went in public because there were no bathrooms. You would go behind a tree or tall grass and squat. People bathed in the river, and further down others would wash their clothes and drink. A lot of people came down with diarrhea and vomiting." The strikes, they say, forced improvements.

Continued on page 6



Fresno, CA 1/10/02
Jorge Giron, a Oaxacan immigrant from Santa María Pindu, prunes grape vines.

Continued from page 5

While bad conditions kept the cost of tomatoes low in Los Angeles, they were also a factor motivating people to keep moving north. Dominguez followed the migrant trail to San Quintin on the Baja California peninsula, where he and his friends organized more strikes.

Finally he crossed the border, winding up in California's San Joaquin Valley. There he again found Mixtec farm workers from his home state. "I felt like I was in my hometown," he recalls. And just as they had in northern Mexico, Oaxacan migrants formed the Frente, using the network of relationships created by common language, culture, and origin.

Labor organizing was part of the mix here too. In 1993 FIOB began a collaboration with the United Farm Workers. "We recognized the UFW was a strong union representing agricultural workers," Dominguez explains. "They recognized us as an organization fighting for the rights of indigenous migrants." But it was an uneasy relationship. Mixtec activists felt that UFW members often exhibited the same discriminatory attitudes common among Mexicans back home toward indigenous people. Fighting racism in Mexico, however, had prepared them for this. According to Rivera Salgado, "The experience of racism enforces a search for cultural identity to resist [and] creates the possibility of new forms of organization and action."

Even among other organizations of Mexican immigrants, the FIOB is unique. It is a truly binational organization, with chapters all along the migrant trail. Members adopt one overall political program every two years, while chapters address the distinct problems of indigenous communities in each location.

In Oaxaca in the mid-1990s, the Frente began to help women organize weaving cooperatives and development projects to sustain families in small depopulated towns, left behind by migrating men. Taking advantage of its chapters in the United States, the Frente began selling their clothes, textiles, and other artisan work in the north, to support the communities in the south. This activity was an embarrassment to the Oaxacan state government, however, which is still run by Mexico's old ruling party, the PRI. Government hostility grew even sharper because FIOB leaders, like high school teacher Juan Romualdo Gutierrez, not only voiced outspoken criticism but allied themselves with Mexico's left-wing Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Last year Gutierrez was arrested and held in jail on bogus charges of misappropriating a computer until a binational campaign of telegrams and demonstrations won his release.

"You can't tell a child to study to be a doctor if there is no work for doctors in Mexico," Gutierrez says. "It is a very daunting task for a Mexican teacher to convince students to get an education and stay in the country. If a student sees his older brother migrate to the United States, build a house, and buy a car, he will follow. The money brought in by immigrants is Mexico's number-one source of income, but the state government only recognizes the immigrant community when it is convenient." Like many others on the Mexican left, Gutierrez accuses authorities of relying on remittances from workers to finance social services and public works, which are really the government's responsibility.

In Baja California, south of the border, FIOB activists fight for housing for indigenous migrants. They seek to enforce the old constitutional right of people to settle and build housing on vacant land, a right largely eliminated by the neoliberal economic reforms of former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Militants like Triqui activist Julio Sandoval have led land invasions in the

state's agricultural valleys. Large growers are so threatened that Sandoval was locked up for three years in an Ensenada prison. At FIOB's binational congress in Oaxaca in March, Sandoval declared that "as Mexicans, we have a right to housing, and we will force the government to respect us." Binational pressure was indispensable to winning his release as well.

The FIOB started in California as an organization of Mixtecs and Zapotecs, and then broadened to include all Oaxacan indigenous groups. At this year's assembly in Oaxaca, members voted to expand its reach again, to include indigenous organizations from Puebla, Guerrero, and Michoacan.

Mexican indigenous communities in the United States live at the social margin, and FIOB's activity confronts that fact. It is an organization of cultural activists, mounting an annual celebration of Oaxacan dance, the Guelagetza, every year. Its organizers work for California Rural Legal Assistance, advising farm workers of their rights in indigenous languages. In fact, FIOB has won the right to Mixtec translation in California courts, a right still not recognized in Mexico. It knits different communities together through basketball tournaments (unlike most Mexicans, Oaxacans prefer this sport to soccer) and leadership training groups for women.

FIOB's organizing strategy grows out of indigenous culture, particularly an institution called the tequio. "This is the concept of collective work to support our community," Dominguez says. "Wherever we go, we go united. Even though 509 years have passed since the Spanish conquest, we still speak our language. We want to live our culture and to insure that it won't die."

Part of this culture is participatory democracy, with roots in indigenous village life. The organization's binational assemblies discuss bylaws and political positions. In one of the Frente's defining moments, the 2002 Tijuana assembly removed a longtime leader who was no longer accountable to FIOB's members. A woman, Centolia Maldonado, played the central role in this difficult process—a recognition of new sex roles that are a product of the migration experience, which is changing some of the migrating communities' old, patriarchal traditions. FIOB's political platform, adopted at the same assembly, maintains a focus on the problems faced by transnational communities. It condemns US guest-worker proposals, and calls for an extension of the rights of citizenship by implementing the decision made in 1995 by the Mexican government to allow its citizens in the United States to vote in Mexican elections.

Discrimination in Mexico is not the only obstacle to preserving indigenous culture. It's not easy for Mixtec and Triqui parents in Fresno to convince their children, born in the United States, to hold fast to language and traditions light-years removed from California schools and movie theaters. The state's ban on bilingual education, and discrimination from local school authorities, make cultural preservation even harder. But even as some cultural adaptation is inevitable and sometimes even desirable, the experience of forty years of migration argues that economic and social survival depends on maintaining the identity, language, and traditions that hold a community together.

Ruben Puentes, director of the transnational communities program at the Rockefeller Foundation, which has supported cultural development among Mexican indigenous migrants (and a photo-documentary project by this author), asks, "Is there today a growing culture of migration itself, a kind of cultural capital that helps communities survive?" He argues that this developing transnational culture does not get adequate consideration in the debate around immigration policy.

Transnational communities play a growing role in the political life of their home countries, changing the very definition of citizenship and residence. This year, for instance, Jesus Martinez, a professor at California State University in Fresno, was elected by Michoacan residents to their state legislature. His mandate is to represent the interests of the state's citizens living in the United States. Transnational migrants insist that they have important political and social rights, both in their communities of origin and in their communities abroad.

Today's migrants often come with experience in the radical social movements of their homelands. When Qanjobales and Mams came to Nebraska, their experience dovetailed with efforts to organize meatpacking workers already under way in the church parishes of South Omaha. "Using social networks to organize people is part of our culture," Sergio Sosa says. "The art is to transform these networks and connect them with African-Americans and Anglo-Saxons. Latinos can do many things, and this is our moment. But we can't do them alone."

Transnational communities, while often founded around a single indigenous ethnic identity, don't exist in isolation from one another. In Omaha's organizing ferment, the organizing styles of Guatemalans and Mexicans blend together, as people reinterpret various traditions of collective action. The alliance between South Omaha's immigrants, the United Food and Commercial Workers, and Omaha Together One Community, an organizing project started by the Industrial Areas Foundation, successfully organized one of the city's main meatpacking plants.

Sosa and another activist from Santa Eulalia, Francisco Lorenzo, then started Grupo Ixim with local Guatemalans. *Ixim* is the word meaning "corn" in each of Guatemala's twenty-three indigenous languages. "It also means the common good—the way that inside an ear of corn all the grains are together," Sosa says. Like many immigrant groups, it first gelled around practical goals. "For example if a fellow countryman were to pass away, we would quickly mobilize to gather money and send the body to Guatemala," explains Jesus Martinez, a meatpacking worker. Ixim groups have also been organized in Chicago, Los Angeles, and other US cities. In the Nebraska group, tension surfaced last year between those who see its function mainly as cultural preservation and others who want more politics. Last year Rodolfo Bobadilla, bishop of Huehuetenango and a former disciple of assassinated Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, visited his parishioners living in Omaha.

A heated debate broke out in a back room at the welcoming fiesta. Martinez, Sosa, and their allies proposed to give the bishop a letter to take home, expressing the sentiment of Guatemalans in the United States about the country's national election. Former General Efraín Ríos Montt, the president who ordered the bloodiest massacres of the 1980s, was once again a candidate. Ixim's activists wanted to remind their countrymen about this terrible past, which has much to do with the fact that so many Guatemalans now live in exile. In the end, they voted to send the letter.

Emigration has complicated social costs and benefits in communities of origin. It threatens cultural practices and indigenous languages. It exacerbates social and economic divisions in small rural towns, as families with access to remittances sent home by relatives bid up land prices beyond the reach of families without that access. San Miguel now boasts a number of large modern houses, owned by refugees of 1982 who live in the United States. With no economic develop-

Continued on page 7



Fresno, CA 1/10/02
Gilberto and Francesca Vasquez, Oaxacan immigrants from Santa María Pindu, prune grape vines.

ment at home, migration has become a necessity. The ability to emigrate increasingly determines social and economic status in communities of origin.

The creation of transnational communities is a global phenomenon. They exist at different stages of development in the flow of migrants from developing to developed countries worldwide. According to Migrant Rights International, more than 130 million people live outside the countries in which they were born—a permanent feature of life on the planet.

Immigration policy in almost all developed, industrial countries is institutionalizing this global flow of migration, as well as the roles of countries that employ it (like the United States) and those that produce the migrants (like Mexico and Guatemala). The main mechanism is guest-worker programs, which assign the migrants' communities of origin the function of providing a labor pool for the production of future workers, while offering no support in return. Instead, home communities depend on remittances from migrants. Mexican president Vicente Fox boasts that some of the world's most impoverished workers send home more than \$18 billion annually—a contribution to the economy approaching those of oil and tourism.

FIOB's Los Angeles coordinator, Ofelia Romero, predicts that "expanded guest-worker programs will lead to the wholesale violation of migrants' rights." In previous periods, when US immigration policy valued immigrants only for their labor power, it produced extremely abusive systems. The memory of the bracero program, which ran from 1942 to 1964, is so bitter that even today defenders of guest-worker schemes avoid association with the name. But before the braceros came, Filipinos were treated the same way—as a mobile, vulnerable workforce, circulated from labor camp to labor camp for more than half a century. And before them the Japanese and Chinese, all the way back to slavery.

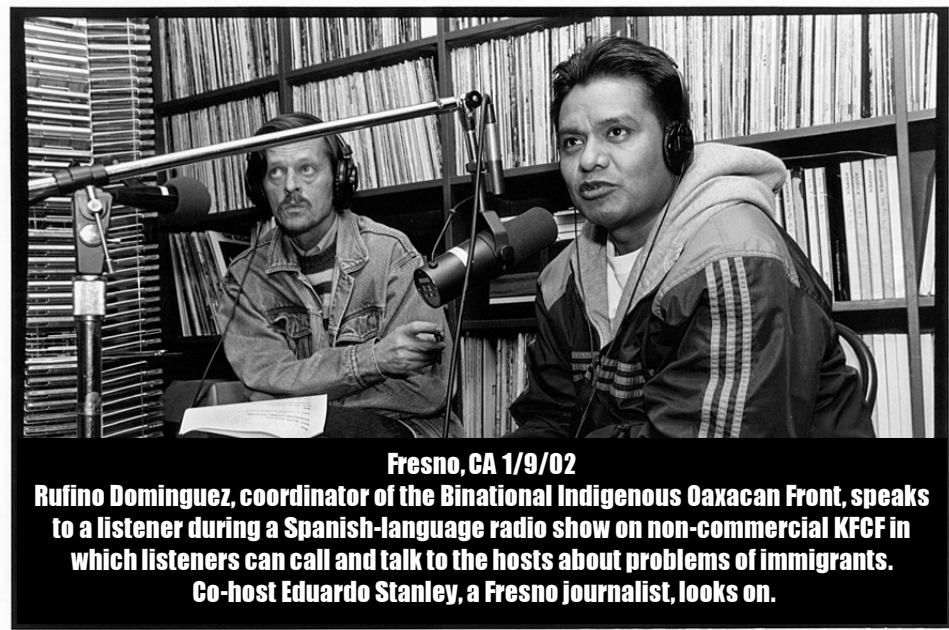
Today, guest workers are brought from tiny Guatemalan towns to the pine forests of the American East and South. Their experience is remarkably similar [see "Be Our Guests," *The Nation*, September 27, 2004]. US immigration policy doesn't deter the flow of migrants across the border. Its basic function is defining the status of people once they're here. Guest-worker programs undermine both workplace and community rights, affecting non-immigrants as well. They inhibit the development of families and culture, denying everyone what newcomers can offer.

The alternative is a policy that recognizes and values transnational communities. A pro-people, anticorporate immigration policy sees the creation and

support of communities as a desirable goal. It reinforces indigenous culture and language, protects the rights of everyone, and seeks to integrate immigrants into the broader US society.

The United Nations' International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families proposes this kind of framework, establishing equality of treatment with citizens of the host country. Both sending and receiving countries are responsible for protecting migrants and retain the right to determine who is admitted to their territories and who has the right to work. Predictably, the countries that have ratified it are the sending countries. Those countries most interested in guest-worker schemes, like the United States, have not.

"Another amnesty is part of the alternative also," Sosa adds, "but ten years from now we're going to face the same situation again, if we don't change the way we treat other countries. Treaties like CAFTA insure that this will happen." Today working people of all countries are asked to accept continuing globalization, in which capital is free to go wherever it can earn the highest profits. He argues that migrants must have the same freedom, with rights and status equal to those of anyone else. "I come from a faith tradition," he concludes. "Faith crosses borders. It says: This world is our world, for all of us."



Fresno, CA 1/9/02
Rufino Dominguez, coordinator of the Binational Indigenous Oaxacan Front, speaks to a listener during a Spanish-language radio show on non-commercial KFCF in which listeners can call and talk to the hosts about problems of immigrants. Co-host Eduardo Stanley, a Fresno journalist, looks on.



Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

Connie Provencio is smiling. She has just shown me the new child-care center behind the Lowell Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC), where she is the director. The child-care area has been custom-built by FUND (a non-profit that helps with small building projects in poor neighborhoods) to look like an oversized dollhouse. It's painted in Crayola colors and is complemented with an outdoor stage and a mural around the perimeter that would make Disney proud. Connie just wanted "a place for the kids while their parents are in classes" and got a dream come true.

NRCs are situated at several elementary schools in at-risk neighborhoods throughout the county (editors note: see the box on this page for more information about what constitutes an "at-risk neighborhood" and where they are located). They're intended to provide support services for the children and families of each school's surrounding area. The NRC mission statement includes: "to partner with . . . residents and organizations . . . [in order] to strengthen and sustain families" with a focus on safety, economic, and health issues, and on improving school attendance.

Connie has taken the mission a step further: "We're here to help with whatever problems arise. We don't just give referrals, we're hands-on. We call for people, make appointments, drive them places, translate for them, and negotiate on their behalf, whatever it takes."

She cites as an example her work with a Filipino woman with several children, just out of an abusive relationship (via the Marjoree Mason Center) who needed a place to live and help with establishing a household from scratch. Connie shakes her head as she says, "I'm someone with years of experience dealing with bureaucracy. But it took me two solid weeks and several trips back and forth to get all the paperwork together—Housing Authority, welfare, landlord. No way a newcomer, insecure with authorities and overwhelmed with family responsibilities, with no phone or transportation, could manage."

Lowell Elementary is the school in the neighborhood I live in. I've watched the establishment of the NRC and seen its positive impact (a government program that

works!). Then a few years ago Connie came in, took a good program, and made it better. The atmosphere in the NRC is alive and welcoming, abloom with classes and services. You can walk in and find social service referrals, parenting instruction, counseling and medical assistance, community-building sessions. Connie is especially proud of the county-funded "First Five" program that provides in-depth attention to preschoolers and their siblings; and the "HIPPIY Program" (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) which brings home-based school-readiness and socialization activities to three- to five-year-olds throughout the area.

Connie came to the NRC through a long apprenticeship with programs like Head Start, and as a home-school liaison (charged with finding out why children were out of school). Under her leadership, the Lowell NRC has won the trust of neighbors, and the partnership of dozens of businesses and organizations that recognize a good investment. The printed program for a recent event recognizing NRC partners listed over 70 collaborators. Some that Connie would like to give special thanks to are FUND; Bethel Lutheran Church; North Fresno Rotary; St. Agnes Gentlemen's Club; Emerson, Cory & Barsotti; and the office of Councilmember Cynthia Sterling.

As she muses on the problems that people bring to the NRC, ranging from domestic abuse to inadequate housing to gang violence, Connie dwells on the lack of resources in and for the area. "A huge problem is the lack of job opportunities. Most of the people I see want to work, but they lack the skills for competitive employment. Or worse, they don't have the legal right to look for work. I know this is politically complex and sensitive, but they are here and their problems are real."

I ask how she copes with the intractability of the neighborhood's institutionalized problems—absentee landlords, transience, and lack of adequate health and nutrition services. Connie answers, "My husband is a good lis-

Neighborhood Resource Centers are established at elementary schools around the county where the population served has great need for social services to enable children to maintain attendance. The current list of NRC's (in addition to the one at Lowell) is as follows:

- Addams NRC 2117 W. McKinley Fresno, 93721 457-2916**
- Huron NRC PO Box 898 Huron, 93234 945-1022**
- Laton NRC PO Box 300 Laton, 93242 923-1202**
- Pinedale NRC 7171 N. Sugar Pine Pinedale, 93650 289-1776**
- Carver NRC 2643 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Fresno, 93706 268-1973**
- Burroughs NRC 166 N. Sierra Vista Fresno, 93702 255-6610**
- Jefferson NRC 1110 Tucker Ave. Sanger, 93657 875-7851**
- Mayfair NRC 3305 E. Home Fresno, 93703 497-0656**

tener and that helps a lot. But our philosophy here is we know we can be of some help to everyone who comes in, and we do our best to do at least that much. I can live with that."

Although, with the completion of the new play area, one long-held dream has been fulfilled, Connie has another: "I'd like us to become a large, multi-purpose center where we could add intervention services for older children, to give them alternatives to gang life." In the meantime, her wish is for lots of toys (new and unwrapped) for the annual Christmas give-away, and a stockpile of furniture and household goods for newcomers to the area. Santa, are you listening?

IDENTITY BOX

Ethnic background—Hispanic
Political affiliation—Democrat
Fresno hang-outs—Sunnyside and Central ("but I have family in the outlying towns")
Motto—"Don't start what you won't finish"
Inspiration—Esther Pereschica (her mother) who raised nine children
Extracurricular interests—travel to the coast; family gatherings; doing financial planning
Unlikely pleasure—*Desperate Housewives*

Contact information: Lowell NRC at 108 N Poplar; (559) 486-7104; lowellnrc@yahoo.com



PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY GROUPS - WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?

Restore Hetch Hetchy

By Ron Good

John Muir, the father of our National Parks, called Yosemite National Park's Hetch Hetchy Valley "a grand landscape garden, one of Nature's rarest and most precious mountain temples, [and] a wonderfully exact counterpart of Yosemite Valley."

However, following a fierce nationwide debate led by Muir, Congress passed the Raker Act in 1913 allowing the City of San Francisco to construct a dam and reservoir in Hetch Hetchy Valley.

Mention Hetch Hetchy Valley to visitors to Yosemite National Park and their response is immediate: a heartfelt feeling of deep sadness for what has been lost, and a fervent hope that what has been lost can somehow be regained—for park visitors, for the people of the United States, for the people of the world, for the plants and animals, and for the glorious granite walls and booming waterfalls of Hetch Hetchy Valley.

A nonprofit organization called Restore Hetch Hetchy has been formed to obtain a "win-win" outcome for San Francisco water and power users and for all other stakeholders. Please visit our Web site, <www.hetchhetchy.org>, to see beautiful images of Hetch Hetchy and to learn more about the movement to restore Hetch Hetchy Valley.

Peace and Freedom Party

By John Crockford

On the heels of organizing three San Joaquin Valley counties in the Peace and Freedom Party in the last year, the party's State Central Committee held a very successful and productive meeting on November 12 and 13 in Fresno. With representatives from all over California, the group's focus included developing a slate of candidates and a unified strategy for the upcoming 2006 elections.

The Peace and Freedom Party will have candidates in all of the statewide races that will be on the 2006 ballot, giving California voters an opportunity to vote for candidates running on a platform committed to socialism, democracy, ecology, feminism, and racial equality, and who truly represent the working class.

In addition, the Peace and Freedom Party will be working to include a referendum on the war in Iraq and Afghanistan on its June primary election ballot. If you would like more information about the Peace and Freedom Party in the San Joaquin Valley, you can visit our Web site at <www.fresnopfp.org>.

FresCAMP Reporting

By Judy Stege

Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR) held their Eighth Annual Conference on October 22 at California State University Fresno. Californians for Pesticide Reform is a statewide coalition of over 180 public interest groups dedicated to protecting human health and the environment from the dangers of pesticide use. The day-long conference, "The Future of Pesticide Reform in California" was attended by over 95 concerned citizens. They were educated and inspired by the leaders of the panels and workshops who are full-time activists as well as by the faces and stories of others living with chemical health problems or who are successfully working in grassroots communities to eliminate chemical/pesticide dependence in rural and urban areas. David Chatfield, Director of CPR, opened the day with the hope that the diverse groups needing and working for pesticide reform—from our campesinos and rural communities to the new urban housing developments, from doctors and lawyers seeking scientific and legal changes to the pregnant woman in her small housing complex struggling to keep ants and mold away from her other children—would come together at this conference to be informed and invigorated, and with renewed energy work together to make changes in how we use pesticides individually and culturally. Most of us left with new ideas and renewed commitment to create a future with clean and safe air, water, food, and lifestyles.

The Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee

By Lydia Flores

To make a difference, the Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee (CVPPAC) participated in Get Out the Vote activities with the Alliance for Better California. Some of us were phone banking and others were walking precincts.

We also prepared packages that contained door hangers, flashlights, and maps for the walkers. We did this in lieu of the October meetings. Those who wished to participate in the Planned Parenthood phone banking spent time at the Van Ness office.

As chairperson of the CVPPAC, I took it upon myself to write articles on our CVPPAC forum listserv, which reflect the mission statement of the PAC. These articles were about housing, jobs, education, living wage, and water to name a few. Since the media is controlled by the advertising companies, these articles are an attempt to build awareness among our members. It is hoped that members will focus on more than just the issues that personally interest them, for it is in solidarity that we will gain a voice to eradicate the abuses. The CVPPAC also promotes the reading of the *Community Alliance*, which carries articles in depth and is the progressive voice in Fresno. To be educated in the various facets of the community is the only way to have informed communication. More about the CVPPAC can be found on the CVPPAC Web site. If you wish to be added to the listserv, please look us up at <www.cvppac.org>.

Men Wanted

Gary Dennis, Executive Director of CHAANGE/San Joaquin Valley has organized a new project to discuss issues of interest to men. Dennis says, "By us men (gay, straight, or bi) coming together to address the issues of HIV/AIDS in an open and welcoming environment, we can privately discuss the things that wouldn't necessarily come up in everyday meetings or conversations. As adults 18 years or older, I think we should be able to discuss these types of topics in a manner that is realistic and true to the game." In an e-mail sent to the Community Alliance newspaper, Dennis said, "These types of discussions need to be taking place since men account for 85% of the AIDS cases in Fresno County according to Fresno County surveillance data. So men, come join with other males at Project: M.A.N. and make some new friends; all at the same time becoming part of the solution and not part of the problem!" Project: M.A.N. gatherings are private gatherings so one must RSVP before coming. You can call (559) 268-1969 and ask for Gary to RSVP.

Help for the Homeless

By Jean Chipp

The Sleeping Bag Project, a nonprofit, tax-deductible, volunteer effort sponsored by the Fresno Free College Foundation, provides sleeping bags and blankets for the homeless during the winter months. All donations of sleeping bags, blankets, and money will be greatly appreciated. Make checks payable to The Sleeping Bag Project, 4618 N First St #183, Fresno, CA 93726. Drop-off sites are: Art Craft Dental Lab, 37184 Avenue 12, #103, Madera Ranchos; Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 E Barstow; First Congregational Church, 2131 N Van Ness; and Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook (Mon-Fri, 10 AM-2 PM). For information call (559) 226-1356.

These Community Groups Have Moved...

A block north of the old place, to a storefront, still south of Belmont, still in the barrio... parking located next to the meat market La Estrella. The space is bigger, so we will be able to hold more cultural and political events inside.

Comite NO NOS VAMOS (498-6033)
San Joaquin Valley Coalition for Immigrant Rights (498-6033)
FRESNO COPWATCH (498-6033)
Centro Bellas Artes (237- 2783)
Comite PRO UNO (498-0206)
453 N Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93701

Persistent Military Recruiters Bothering Your Children?

Peace Fresno and the Central Valley Counter-Recruitment Coalition want to know if any students in this area have experienced one of the following: being contacted by a recruiter after completing an "opt-out" form, or being pressured to take the military aptitude test. If so, please contact Peace Fresno at www.peacefresno.org or leave a voice mail at 487-2515.



The Death Penalty: Facts Do Not Lie

By Boston Woodard

August 2005 marked the 27th anniversary of the US Supreme Court's landmark decision to reaffirm a state's right to utilize the death penalty. There are thousands of people under sentences of death in the 36 states that permit capital punishment. As we know, California is one of them.

As reported by America's TV, radio, and print media, the US crime rate is out of control. If the argument that death penalty use deters crime is true, and 36 states currently administer the death penalty, why then hasn't the United States seen a dramatic drop in the murder rate? The murder rate is, in fact, up in some areas. Do the citizens of America seriously believe that expanding the use of the death penalty to all 50 states, as well as expanding the number of crimes eligible for death penalty administration, will help solve the problem of violence in this country?

Instead, why doesn't the United States take notes from other countries around the world who have seen the futility of the death penalty as a deterrent and taken steps to change their outdated laws? They include Austria, Australia, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden, South Africa, and Venezuela.

Recent figures show that it costs over \$2 million to prosecute and see a capital case through the first stages of appeal. Additionally, there is the cost of death row security and the execution itself. To incarcerate someone for 30 years, on the other hand, costs around \$900,000—savings of well over \$1 million. Multiply that by the thousands of men and women who are on death row in the United States, and the savings will be well over a billion dollars over 30 years.

The death penalty is a deterrent? I don't think so. It is an economic money-making machine, and a convenient soapbox from which politicians spread fear and misinformation to the public in an effort to get elected and re-elected.

Case in point: in the past ten years or so, the US Supreme Court and the US Senate overwhelmingly approved the death penalty for more than fifty federal crimes: 23 that currently call for the death penalty; 19 crimes that are elevated from life imprisonment to death; and 12 new offenses that qualify for capital punishment. This vote to kill came despite stern warnings from several senators that innocent lives will be lost in the government's get-tough campaign.

Since 1972, dozens of individuals have been sentenced to death and later found to be innocent. The lives of innocent people are put in jeopardy by capital punishment.

In case of a mistake occurring when it comes to capital cases, its not simple to reverse or commute the defendant's sentence—especially if the sentence, death, has already been carried out.

Politicians, both state and federal, are rapidly enacting more legislation to severely limit a defendant's right to seek federal habeas corpus. They complain that it costs too much money. The courts in this land also seem to be jumping on that same bandwagon, moaning and groaning under the weight of all the appeals being filed by today's death row prisoners.

Excuse me, for a moment there, I thought that the search for truth and justice, as well as the sanctity of life, was precious in this country. What was I thinking? Given the finality of executions and the ever-present possibility that an innocent person could be put to death, should cost-saving measures and attempts to unclog our judicial system's logjam in the courts supersede an exhaustive appeals process, however long it takes?

There is also the issue of the apparent disparity between the haves and have-nots. Who is more likely to receive the death penalty? The Washington-based Death Penalty Information Center found that since Georgia's current death penalty law took effect in 1973, prosecutors in the circuit court of Chattahoochee sought the death penalty 39 percent of the time in capital cases when the defendant was black with a white victim, 32 percent when both defendant and victim were white, 6 percent when both defendant and victim were black, and not once when the defendant was white and the victim was black. The US General Accounting Office

also reported that blacks are far more likely to be sentenced to death if their victim was white.

California's state government is responsible for the premeditated execution of thirteen men since the 1978 reinstatement of the death penalty.

The most effective way to deter crime is clear, swift, certain, and even-handed punishment. Since it is evident that capital punishment as it is currently carried out in the United States does none of these, that seems more an argument for abolition of the death penalty altogether.

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



THE DEATH PENALTY IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH DEMOCRACY

by Maria Telesco



In a democracy, "we, the people" vote into public office those to whom we entrust the duty to manage our bureaucracy and to "protect and serve" us. They are our servants, not our masters. We don't hire them to rule, govern, punish, torture, abuse, humiliate, degrade, or kill us—nor kill for us.

In a democracy, anybody can hire another to perform any task that's legal. I can hire someone to wash my car, cook my meals, sweep my floor. But I can't legally hire someone to kill another human being, because I can't legally kill one myself. If I hired a hit person to murder whomever I wanted dead, both the hit person and I would soon end up on death row. So what makes it okay for a public servant to order the killing of someone and claim he's doing it for me? This government employee has no right to kill anyone, any more than you and I have—let alone to pretend he's doing it for us. I haven't authorized anyone to kill for me—it would be illegal. What about you?

When these murderous thugs—the politicians—assassinate their next victim, whether it be Stanley "Tookie" Williams or someone else, they'll say they're doing this for me. And for you. And for "The People of the State of California." Or the State of "Kah-lee-forrrrrrr-nee-ah." But they lie.

"Tookie" has done some bad things in his life, and some good things. Haven't we all? And as Sister Helen says, every person amounts to more than the one worst thing he or she has ever done. If we as a nation think it's okay to kill wrongdoers, then why don't we kill them all? Why are we so selective? Why do we execute only the poor? People of color? Those who had a lousy lawyer?

What gives a politician the right to decide who lives and who dies? To play God? And what gives this politician the right to assign a prison guard to do his dirty work for him? Why don't the governor, the judge, the DA, and anyone else who wants to see Tookie dead, have the guts to kill him themselves? With their own hands?

What right does some hireling have to take a living human being, strap him down so he's totally helpless, recite some words to try and justify his act, pump poison into him and turn him into just so many pounds of dead meat? And why doesn't the guard whose as-

signment it is to perform the nefarious deed even get paid any extra for "chust doing [his] chob?" When he hired on, did they tell him killing would be in his job description?

And what will he say when his child asks, "Daddy, what did you do at work today?"

Must Tookie Be Executed?

By Kalima Aswad

The State of California, backed by the US Supreme Court, says yes, the public is better off by killing Tookie Williams. The state of California has set the execution date for December 13, 2005.

I never met Tookie and haven't had the pleasure of reading any of the several books he has written, but as an ex-death row prisoner myself, I feel a need to speak on his behalf. I got off death row 33 years ago and am still in prison. I, along with others who got off death row in 1972, but remain incarcerated, are living proof that public protection is not justified by state imposed murder.

Even if he is guilty, must Tookie die? His case is unique because he has been convicted of murder and he is also credited with saving many from following the path of the crime and violence that marked his early life. It is generally accepted that if someone kills a person, it is a crime against society, against "the people." On the other hand, if someone saves a life, it is a service to society.

One of the things that justifies a government's existence is in protecting people, (although not in any way it sees fit). It also has the responsibility of meeting the real needs of its citizens.

The situation in black communities in California and all across this land is desperate. People are living in a state of fear as gangs run rampant in seas of alcohol, crime, drugs, and violence.

For a long time, people of these communities have been crying out for protection—help from anybody: police (who often turn out to be a bigger source of fear than the gangs they are asked to control), preachers, doctors, lawyers—anybody who can help turn the situation around.

What I'm saying is not difficult to confirm. Turn on any news telecast on any given day and the painful message of another shooting death blares out—a mother's agony at her child being blown away in another senseless act of violence.

"Tookie the Terrible," from death row, the one held largely responsible for gang violence, writes from his prison cell on San Quentin's death row, pleading for young people to turn away from the lifestyles that lead to crime, drugs, and violence, and to turn to education and productive lives.

So forceful have been his efforts that he was nominated more than once for the Nobel Peace Prize, the most prestigious award in the world today. Powerful people in the United States opposed the Nobel nominations: "It would be wrong to reward this guy. He is a criminal!" they cried.

That is an interesting argument, considering some uglier facts of US history: this nation was born under the shadow of institutionalized slavery; there was genocide against Native Americans; and Japanese Americans were sent en masse to internment camps during World War II, among other things. We as citizens are encouraged to accept those facts and yet to look beyond them: "Look at what America stands for today."

If it's right for people to judge America by what it stands for today, isn't it right for Tookie to be judged the same way? Why is there such an obsession with the notion that people in Tookie's situation have no redeeming qualities? Richard Nixon and G. Gordon Liddy (and many others) of the Watergate era could reinvent themselves; so could Alabama's Governor George Wallace. But for a nobody like Tookie, the consensus seem to be, "He can't contribute anything to society." That's why they execute people.

Continued on page 10

The execution of Stanley “Tookie” Williams is scheduled for one minute after midnight, December 13, 2005, at San Quentin State Prison. Death Penalty Focus and Amnesty International will hold a vigil service on the street in front of St. John’s Cathedral, Mariposa and R Streets, on Monday evening, December 12, 2005, starting at 5:30 PM.



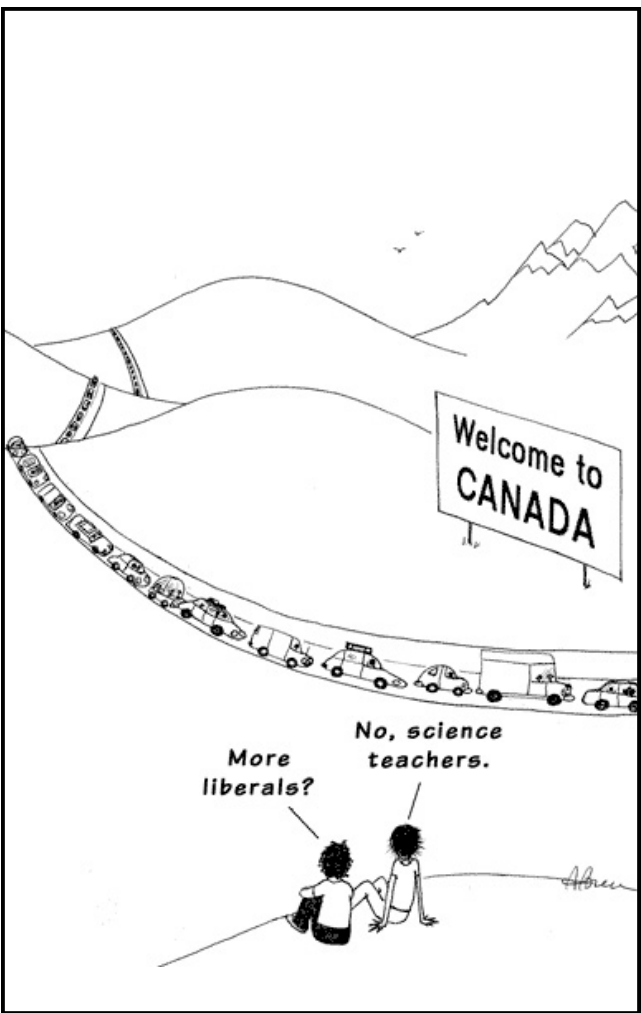
Continued from page 9

I think there are at least two other reasons California is in such a hurry to execute Tookie. One, the state has failed miserably in its own method of dealing with the problems of gangs and violence, and it needs to make an example out of someone to cover up its own ineptness. Second, because Tookie has the ability to reach out and help young people change their lives, it makes the state’s ineptness even more apparent.

Former governor and so-called liberal Jerry Brown wants to run for the State Attorney General’s office. It would be interesting to see what he has to say on this issue: considering how Tookie turned his life around, is executing him more beneficial to the people of California and the nation than commuting his sentence to life in prison?

Kalima Aswad spent time on death row and has been in prison for 36 years without a break.

[<www.savetookie.org>](http://www.savetookie.org)



Americans so dishonored to finally express themselves freely; their hurt, their pain, all because of the color of one’s skin. Fresno High sophomore Tyquis Bentley who read a poem at the commemoration ceremony in honor of Rosa Parks was glad to learn about the history.

“It changed my whole outlook about the past and how important it is to my present,” said Bentley. “I didn’t realize how important this lady was until I started hearing all of the stories from adults who grew up around that time and they were talking about segregation. I can’t believe the way black people were treated and how far they come under that type of abuse.”

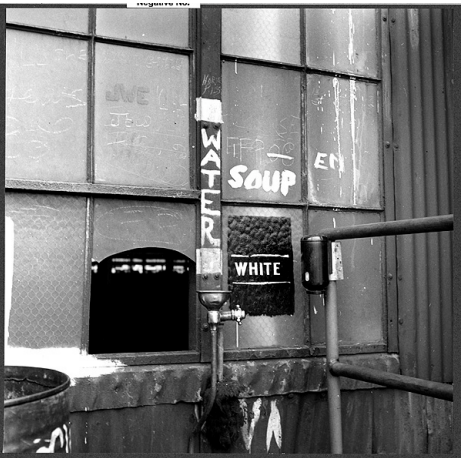
Bentley went on to explain his new fondness for the Civil Rights Leader Parks as he was able to reflect on what his classroom would have looked like if there hadn’t been a Civil Rights Movement.

“That means I wouldn’t have half of the friends I have now because they are all different colors and shades—even me!” (referring to his biracial background.)

As the candles flickered, a moment of silence renewed the vision, suggesting that there is still work to be done in this day...it was our youth who stepped up to collaborate such an event; perhaps this is the beginning of understanding legacy and the importance of human rights with civility.

“Quiet strength incorporates life skills which demonstrate dignity with pride, courage with perseverance and power with discipline in a comfortable environment of peace.” —
—The Rosa and Raymond Institute for Self Development

Julia Dudley Najieb is a writer, poet, speaker, and teacher at Fresno High School who recently became a member of SCLC. You can contact her at jad72@cvip.net.



Rosa Parks honored by candlelight... remembering the Mother of the Modern Day Civil Rights

By Julia Dudley Najieb

FRESNO—On the chilly night of November 3rd, members of the community huddled around the outside stage of the African-American Historical Museum by candle light, as the warmth of fiery, heartfelt words permeated the crowd who reflected on the courageous Mother of the Modern Day Civil Rights—Rosa Parks—who passed away at age 92 on Monday, October 24th.



It would be because of Parks’ courage one December afternoon in 1955, Montgomery, AL, that an entire nation would have to confront the issues

of racism against their own community of Americans who happen to be black. During the ridiculous times of the Jim Crow segregation laws—laws endorsed by our United States government—Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a city bus. The humble, soft-spoken Parks did not resist arrest and paid her \$14 fine; not realizing that such a large fine then would pay off later. She was ready to challenge the segregation law in court. Her actions triggered a 381-Day boycott of the Montgomery bus system which inspired a series of events leading to the end of legalized segregation in the United States and a heightened awareness of human and civil rights worldwide.

The situational irony for this great activist was that she could not get a job anywhere in Alabama after taking her public stand for civil rights. In the midst of threats and harassment, she and her husband Raymond moved to Detroit in 1957. She worked as an aide in the Detroit office of Democratic U.S. Rep. John Conyers from 1965 until retiring in 1988. Raymond Parks died in 1977.



Mrs. Parks became a respected figure in Detroit, where a street and middle school were named for her and a papier-mache likeness of her was featured in the city’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.

In honor of the eternal civil servant and activist Parks, a group of Fresno City College students had a vision to bring the community together to reminisce the past, the present and ideal future of Fresno race relations with the respect of the changes we see today because of Rosa Parks’ determination. Under the guidance of Fresno City College professors Gennean Brown, Dr. Jean Kennedy and Kehinde Solwazi, a wonderful celebration commenced which included local students from Fresno High School and Fresno City College; ministers of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); Jack & Jill of America; Councilwoman Cynthia Sterling; Dr. Su Kapoor; representatives of the African-American Museum; and other community representatives who performed poems, songs, emotions and remarks of gratitude to Parks.

The cold chills ran through the crowd unnoticed, for more importantly on the stage, Solwazi took the audience down memory lane as he explained how he was a young black man at the time working at a restaurant who during his lunch breaks would have to eat in the kitchen, away from the segregated whites. He recalled the anger and dismay he felt then, wanting to know what to do with his own frustration and hate. Luckily it would be Rosa Parks who would allow a group of



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Honoring Rosa Parks in Fresno

By the Reverend James W. McDonald, LCSW

As read before the Fresno City Council on November 1, 2005

This past week we remember the life of Rosa Parks. As we all know, she provided the spark that ignited the civil rights movement that has radically changed many of the laws and practices of how things are done in the United States.

When I was a child I lived in New York City, and later moved to the Deep South where I saw a decided contrast: radically segregated housing and schools; drinking fountains where signs proclaimed that "white" and "colored" water was served side by side; and enforced servitude of one population toward another. I vividly recall the time that I was walking down the main street on a crowded sidewalk and an elderly Afro-American man stepped into the gutter to avoid blocking my way (I was nine or ten and even at that age instinctively knew it was wrong for him to defer to me!).

Many of us stepped forward when Dr. King called for volunteers to help with voter registration and later with organization for a march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery. We learned many things during that period. One of the first was to commit ourselves to the principle of non-violence. We also learned how to protect each other with our own bodies in case one of our brothers or sisters was being beaten, so that each of us would absorb a blow or two but no one of us would be beaten severely.

There are significant principles at community building in those simple lessons for all of us. These include the lesson that peaceful nonviolence is stronger than weapons of force and the lesson that none of us is free from harm if one of us is being harmed. Some of us were beaten, gassed, and arrested during this period, and I was privileged to be among them.

As one who was an activist in the civil rights movement, I am proud of the improvements that we as a society have made. For example, the laws that segregated our schools and neighborhoods are gone; the laws that permit discrimination in employment or housing are no more; and it is no longer illegal to date or mate across racial or ethnic lines. When we discuss these things in classes at the university, I am delighted to see the startled expressions of the young students who wonder that such things could ever have been illegal and ask in amazement, "What kind of people would do those things?"

While I am proud of many of the changes that we have made, I am also concerned about the pace and the place of change. For example, although *de jure* discrimination is no longer the law of the land, *de facto* discrimination still occurs. For another example, Fresno is expanding north and east, away from the original inner city. When we abandon our older neighborhoods to gangs and decay by moving our city out to the suburbs, our entire city loses. None of us is free from harm if one of us is being harmed.

Fresno is rich in so many things: we have talent! We have wealth, we have decent universities, we have creative, compassionate women and men, and we have caring, dedicated educators. We have the

strength of diversity, which means that we can approach problems from diverse angles and come up with multiple solutions. We have so many resources to use to further the advances we have made.

As we recall the victories of the movement that brought civil rights to all as a reality and not merely a dream, let us continue to work for full realization of that dream that all people will be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. Let us remember those who are poor and neglected whom it would be easy to forget: the homeless and destitute, the old, the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Let us remember the children who did not ask to be born into poverty or neglect. Help us to use our resources to strengthen those who work to benefit others and those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all.

Let us pray together:

Dear Lord, we ask your blessing on all our efforts to combine all of our strengths and talents and resources so that the barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed we may live together in justice and peace; that all may sing together, "We have overcome." Amen.

The original article was delivered as an invocation at Fresno City Council on Tuesday, November 1, 2005. Jim McDonald is an Episcopal priest and a social worker in independent practice in Clovis and can be reached by email at jameswmcdonald@yahoo.com



The Cable Franchise Agreement Is of Strategic Importance to the Progressive Movement in Fresno

By Mike Rhodes

Progressive activists and organizations currently have no unfiltered voice on local television. They are effectively locked out of the medium used by the majority of area residents for news and entertainment. A new agreement between the County of Fresno and Comcast Cable could include a public-access channel and community media center, which would give you the ability to communicate with over 100,000 subscribers and their families with your message of peace and social and economic justice.

The County of Fresno is on the verge of settling the franchise agreement with Comcast and it does *not* provide a public-access channel or community media center. The county is asking Comcast for a government channel, so they can give you the information they want you to know. The county might include an education channel in the agreement, but even that is not certain.

This important decision will be made at a meeting on Tuesday, December 6, at the Hall of Records, which is located in Courthouse Park in downtown Fresno. The outcome of this meeting will determine the progressive movement's access to the mainstream media for the next 5-10 years (the likely length of the franchise agreement).

If you care about getting your message out to the community on the cable network, you need to do two things:

1. Contact your representative on the Board of Supervisors and tell him or her that Public, Education, and Government (PEG) channels and a Community Media Center (CMC) need to be included in the franchise agreement with Comcast. Contact information is below.
2. Get any organization or group that you are affiliated with to pass a resolution in support of PEG access and a CMC. Send the resolution to the each member on the Fresno County Board of Supervisors.
3. Attend the December 6 Board of Supervisors meet-

ing, where there will be an opportunity for public input. The time of the meeting, which was not available at press time, will be posted to < www.fresnoalliance.com/Dec6 > when it is available. You can also call the clerk of the Board of Supervisors at (559) 488-3529 or email her at bseidel@co.fresno.ca.us to inquire about the time of the meeting.

Contact your representative on the Board of Supervisors:

Phil Larson at (559) 488-3541 or email barlow@co.fresno.ca.us
 Susan Anderson at (559) 488-3542 or email bourbon@co.fresno.ca.us
 Henry Perea at (559) 488-3663 or email pinedo@co.fresno.ca.us
 Judy Case at (559) 488-3664 or email beigi@co.fresno.ca.us
 Bob Waterston at (559) 488-3665 or email burrows@co.fresno.ca.us

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SILENT NO MORE

Valley's youth present their digital stories in an entertaining way

By Eduardo Stanley

FRESNO, CA—Not too many people realize that young people inhabit their own world, with complex and positive thoughts, in which they pose questions and demand answers that adults don't have. Not often do young people have the opportunity to express these thoughts. But is anybody listening?



Part of the youth group during the dialogue with the audience in Madera.

"Sharing Our Silence—We Live, We struggle, We overcome" is an original project worth watching. Seven youth from different social, ethnic, linguistic, and geographical backgrounds got together last June to start a journey: to write and produce their own digital story.

The stories' content ranges from cultural heritage to reflections about life and self-identity. The project, coordinated by the Pan Valley Institute (PVI) of the American Friends Service

Committee of Fresno, started with short lessons in script-writing, voice-over narration, and editing. Then, each participant worked on the script with the assistance of Mai Der Vang, PVI representative, and Anthony Cody, one of PVI's youth cultural organizers.

"About five years ago we started a dialogue between Hmong and Mixtec women about their experiences as immigrants in the Central Valley," says Myrna Martinez Nateras, PVI program director. "Many of their children started their own dialogues. As a result, a youth group was formed." Implementing the digital story project was made possible with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Fresno Regional Foundation's Grants Advisory Board for Youth, and AFSC Human Migration and Mobility.

"At the beginning I was nervous, but as the project progressed I started feeling confident," says Judy Yang, of Fresno. "It was great working with the other kids, the whole thing was good." The project took about three months to complete, and editing took place in different locations. "It took a lot of work," says Cindy Vang, also from Fresno. "I enjoyed editing, putting together the music, the voice and the photos," expressed Kenia Lopez, a resident of Madera.

The seven stories reflect a wide variety of interests and concerns of our Valley's youth:

- "In Search Of..." by Joseph Cody, 19, examines his shyness and identity struggles.
- "The Masks of Humanity," by Dwayne Curls, 20, criticizes social stereotypes.
- "In My Neighborhood," by Danny Lopez, 12, takes a look at children's concern about gangs, and the importance of participating in sports as an alternative to involvement in gangs.
- "Two Worlds Two Ways," by Judy Yang, explores the issue of very young Hmong girls marrying due to cultural pressure.
- "Children of the Rain (Se'e Savi)," by Kenia Lopez, 13, is about her Oaxacan cultural heritage and the folkloric dance group, Se'e Savi.
- "Listen," by Cindy Vang, 17, draws our attention to the eviction of thousands of Hmong refugees in Thailand.
- And "Mi Mundo Mixteco," by Rafael Flores, 28, shares the experience of living in three cultural worlds: Mixtec, Spanish, and English.

The first level of production involved researching information, taking photos, and rewriting the scripts several times. The kids received training in voice projec-



Mai Der Vang presenting her poem with qeej player, Rickey Lo.

tion, artistic creativity, and script writing. Then, with the assistance of Tudor Stanley, the project's production director, the stories slowly became short movies.

The result was a professional-looking series of seven digital stories, produced on DVD, with the vibrant voices and images of our youth: strong and passionate, with deep but practical reflection about being young today.

But the project didn't finish there. The youth decided to present the stories in each of their home communities where they are from: the group visited the Fresno Art Museum in

Fresno, Goshen Elementary School in Goshen, and MLK Middle School in Madera. "Besides presenting the stories and the DVD, we wanted to continue showcasing the talents of these youth," said Tudor Stanley. "It was also important for PVI that the group have a dialogue with the public."

The digital stories became part of a multimedia premiere, with the young filmmakers at the center stage: it included poetry, dancing, and an opportunity for a discussion between the youth and the public. Dwayne



Jorge Santacruz (guitar) and Dwayne Curls rehearsing before the premiere.

Curls, of Goshen, read a poem about cleansing his soul, with guitar music played by Jorge Santacruz, 17, of Fresno. In between the stories, Mai Der Vang presented a poem, in front of projected images of Laos, that expressed her longing for Laos; even though she was born in Fresno, the collective memory of the elders has become part of the youth's memories. Mai Der's voice was accompanied by the music of the qeej, played by Rickey Lo of Fresno. The qeej is a Hmong instrument used in cultural celebrations and rituals, particularly in funerals to bid farewell and send off departed loved ones. After Kenia Lopez's story expressing her pride of being part of Se'e Savi, the folkloric dance group from Madera presented a traditional Oaxaqueno dance.

Finally, a dialogue, facilitated by the youth members, was open to the public. In every community the public participated in answering the youth's questions about the themes that touched them the most, how to show the stories to others, and how the youth in attendance felt about the show.

Although the audience's reaction was a little bit different in each community, each audience showed surprise, followed by excitement. "We never ask our kids what they think; now I understand that's a mistake," said a father in Goshen. "I can't believe the quality of this event, way to go!" said a teacher in Madera. "Who said young people can't say important things?" asked a young mother in Madera.

One of the peak moments was to see the pride in the eyes of the youth involved in the project. Judy Yang received an emotional hug from her mom in Fresno. "She was happy; she was proud of me," she said. Cindy Vang also was congratulated by her family: "They were proud of me!" In Madera, Kenia was the star: "My friends, my family. They loved all this!"



Oaxacan dance group Se'e Savi, of Madera.

And now, most of the participants wonder how to continue communicating their thoughts. "I wish to continue with this experience," said Kenia. Cindy agrees, "It would be great to have more kids involved, more stories." Most important, the experience left more than just good memories. "I learned more about my own culture," said Judy. "I am now more aware about some important issues going on in my community."

NOTE: For more information about this project or to purchase the DVD with the short movies, contact PVI: (559) 222-7678.

Eduardo Stanley is a writer for New America Media and an editorial board member of the Community Alliance Newspaper.



Happy ending, the young authors with their assistants. All photos by Eduardo Stanley

Fresno Free College Foundation Annual Banquet Friday October 28, 2005



David Barsamian receives a standing ovation. All photos by Howard Watkins.



FFCF Executive Director Vic Bedoian talks with Amir Zamanian at the banquet.



Vickie Fouts, president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, presents Donna Hardina (faculty advisor) and Liz Trujillo (president of the CSUF Campus Peace & Civil Liberties Coalition) with this year's Free Speech Award. The coalition received the award for its work in bringing public attention to the rise of government surveillance of groups and individuals working for social, political, and economic justice.



David Barsamian was the featured speaker at the banquet. His talk was titled "Another World Is Possible" and included a presentation of Gil Scott Heron's song, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised."



Representatives from community radio station WWOZ in New Orleans -- internationally known as NOLA's "Jazz and Heritage Station" spoke about rebuilding their station after hurricane Katrina. Donations were collected to help them get back on the air. For more information see <http://www.wwoz.org/>



Debra and Jim Kratzer

The revolution will no be televised

You will not be able to stay home, brother.
You will not be able to plug in, turn on and cop out.
You will not be able to lose yourself on skag and skip,
Skip out for beer during commercials,
Because the revolution will not be televised.

The revolution will not be televised.
The revolution will not be brought to you by Xerox
In 4 parts without commercial interruptions.
The revolution will not show you pictures of Nixon
blowing a bugle and leading a charge by John
Mitchell, General Abrams and Spiro Agnew to eat
hog maws confiscated from a Harlem sanctuary.

The revolution will not be televised.
The revolution will not be brought to you by the
Schaefer Award Theatre and will not star Natalie
Woods and Steve McQueen or Bullwinkle and Julia.
The revolution will not give your mouth sex appeal.
The revolution will not get rid of the nubs.
The revolution will not make you look five pounds
thinner, because the revolution will not be televised,
Brother.

There will be no pictures of you and Willie May
pushing that shopping cart down the block on the dead
run,
or trying to slide that color television into a stolen am-
bulance.
NBC will not be able predict the winner at 8:32
or report from 29 districts.
The revolution will not be televised.

There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down
brothers in the instant replay.
There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down
brothers in the instant replay.
There will be no pictures of Whitney Young being
run out of Harlem on a rail with a brand new process.
There will be no slow motion or still life of Roy
Wilkins strolling through Watts in a Red, Black and
Green liberation jumpsuit that he had been saving
For just the proper occasion.

Green Acres, The Beverly Hillbillies, and Hooterville
Junction will no longer be so damned relevant, and
women will not care if Dick finally gets down with
Jane on Search for Tomorrow because Black people
will be in the street looking for a brighter day.
The revolution will not be televised.

There will be no highlights on the eleven o'clock
news and no pictures of hairy armed women
liberationists and Jackie Onassis blowing her nose.
The theme song will not be written by Jim Webb,
Francis Scott Key, nor sung by Glen Campbell, Tom
Jones, Johnny Cash, Englebert Humperdink, or the Rare
Earth.
The revolution will not be televised.

The revolution will not be right back
after a message about a white tornado, white light-
ning, or white people.
You will not have to worry about a dove in your
bedroom, a tiger in your tank, or the giant in your toilet
bowl.
The revolution will not go better with Coke.
The revolution will not fight the germs that may cause
bad breath.
The revolution will put you in the driver's seat.

The revolution will not be televised, will not be tele-
vised,
will not be televised, will not be televised.
The revolution will be no re-run brothers;
The revolution will be live.

Fresno Center for Nonviolence



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THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.



AMENDMENT AGAINST TORTURE

Senator John McCain, one of the strongest supporters of the war in Iraq, has sponsored a legislative amendment that would prohibit the "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" of prisoners in the custody of the US military. The Senate approved the amendment by the overwhelming vote of 90 to 9.

Joining Senator McCain in his push for unequivocal language banning the abusive treatment of prisoners were Senator John Warner of Virginia, the Republican chair of the Armed Services Committee, and Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a former military lawyer and Republican. Also supportive were more than two dozen retired senior military officers, including two former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs, Colin Powell and John Shalikashvili.

Remaining out of step with this march toward the continuation of a longstanding commitment to human values is President Bush, who is trying to block this effort to outlaw the abusive treatment of prisoners. Senator McCain's proposal is an amendment to the huge defense authorization bill, which Mr. Bush has threatened to veto if that is what it takes to defeat the amendment.

Senator McCain has stated, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, states simply that 'No one shall be subject to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.' The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the US is a signatory, states the same." "The McCain amendment would end the confusion and the perverse hunt for loopholes in the laws that could somehow be interpreted as allowing the sadistic treatment of human beings in US custody." (Source: Bob Herbert, *New York Times*, October 10, 2005)

LICENSE TO TORTURE

President Bush and his lawyers have asserted repeatedly that the "war on terror" clothes the president as commander-in-chief with extraordinary, unilateral (war) power—the power, for example, to designate an American citizen as an enemy combatant and imprison him indefinitely, without trial or opportunity to demonstrate innocence. In memorandums in 2002 and 2003 on the torture of prisoners, the administration argued that the president could order the use of torture even if it was forbidden by treaty or by Congressional statute (the memoranda later were withdrawn).

The administration also has maintained that decisions taken under the president's power as commander-in-chief should not be subject to effective review by the courts. Thus, it argued that detaining a citizen as an enemy combatant could be justified by a government statement of alleged facts without any meaningful legal process to verify them. Retiring Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, however, said last year, "A state of war is not a blank check for the president when it comes to the rights of the nation's citizens." (Anthony Lewis, *New York Times*, Op-Ed page, October 15, 2005)

Vice President Cheney made a proposal late last month to Senator McCain, which would give the president the power to allow government agencies outside the Defense Department (e.g., the CIA) to mistreat and torture prisoners as long as that behavior was part of "counterterrorism operations conducted abroad" and the prisoners were not American citizens. That would legalize the illegal prisons the CIA is said to be operating around the world and obviate the need for the outsourcing of torture ("extraordinary rendition"); it also raises disturbing questions about Iraq. The proposal was rejected. (Source: *New York Times* Editorial, October 26, 2005) -- 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.

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Fresno Center for Nonviolence

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December 14: Incident at Oglala: The Leonard Peltier Story

In 1974, two FBI agents died in a gun battle on the Pine Ridge reservation. Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM) was falsely convicted of the murders, despite evidence of innocence. This documentary reconstructs events surrounding the incident, highlighting the overwhelming FBI repression and atmosphere of government terror on the reservation. It also illustrates the brave efforts of American Indians like Peltier to organize and fight back. 90 min. Discussion with Native American activist Michael Black Bull to follow.

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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755
Vickie Fouts, Editor, (559) 658-8260 or socialjustice@sti.net

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

WILPF DATES:

Saturday, December 3, 10 AM-4 PM: Peace Community Crafts Faire, 2131 N Van Ness Blvd

Wednesday, December 7, Noon: Women in Black, Fresno County Courthouse Breezeway

Thursday, December 8, 7 PM: There will be NO WILPF business meeting due to the holidays and crafts faire

Wednesday, December 28, 3 PM: WILPF Stir It Up on KFCF 88.1 FM

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

Progressives and Religion:

Since Bush took office, there has been a lot of talk about religion in the progressive movement. Many of us were raised never to talk about politics or religion; but today, it seems to be all I talk about. We were also taught that religion and politics are never to mix. As someone who belongs to no organized religion and practices her own brand of Goddess/Native American spirituality, it may seem strange that I belong to several progressive religious listservs: some Christian, some multi-faith. Their religion is much different from that of Bush and his friends. These groups seem to share my progressive views about poverty, universal health care, housing, the environment, immigration, crime, war, violence, debt relief, nuclear weapons, and more. I always take part in their action alerts, sending off e-mails to our nation's leaders. It feels empowering and fun to send Republican Congressman George Radanovich, an e-mail that states, "As a person of faith I . . ." If you wish to learn more, I urge you to check out National Council of Churches <www.nccusa.org>, Faithful America <www.faithfulamerica.org>, Sojourners <www.sojn.net>, Interfaith Alliance <www.interfaithalliance.org>, and Friends Committee on National Legislation <www.fcni.org>.

Jim Wallis, founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine, has written a book called *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*. I have a copy but haven't gotten around to reading it. *Sojourners* has nationwide study groups on the book. If you would be interested in a starting a study group in the Fresno area, let me know. Maybe we can learn how to use religion as an important tool against the right . . . as they have used it against us.

Membership:

Did you know that you can make a monthly pledge to National WILPF? When you pledge monthly you will never receive a renewal notice again. No more trying to remember if you are current in your dues. And pledging members help WILPF stay strong and carry out our work. A pledge of as little as \$5 a month will contribute significantly to WILPF. Your status as a pledging member lasts as long as you wish. You have the option of automatic deduction from your bank account or your credit card. If you are interested, contact Jody Dodd at jdodd@wilpf.org or (215) 563-7110. We currently have six members making monthly pledges. Won't you join them?



Cynthia Loweburg and Catherine Campbell at the 2002 WILPF Crafts Faire

Building the Beloved Community:

During the WILPF Congress I attended four workshops on racism. Two of them were facilitated by Sha'an Moulert from Vermont. Sha'an has now become the chair of the Building the Beloved Community Issues Committee. With my strong interest in racial justice and my wonderful experience with Sha'an, I just had to become a member of the committee.

Our mission is to provide educational information about the history and nature of systemic racism, connections between oppressions, internalized oppressions, racial justice, and the struggles for racial justice.

There are 28 of us on the committee—from across the nation, representing a range of ages and ethnicities—and we have set up our own listserv. Some committee members are from the National Office or Board. Only a handful are really active on the list, but they have been very supportive of me. They have helped me find my voice as a white ally for my black sisters and have given me a safe place to discuss my concerns about racial injustices that become more apparent to me the more I work in this area. They are there to give advice, share their own experiences, or just support me for the work I am trying to do in Fresno. It feels like I have a new family.

One of the first things we discussed was the systemic and institutionalized racism within WILPF. We need to work on this issue before taking our message of building the beloved community out into the community. We hope to work with branches by giving them the support they need to address racial injustices in their branches and communities.

The committee has applied for a racial justice grant from WILPF. We want to take a Building the Beloved Community Workshop to four branches on the east coast. Hopefully we can take it nationwide at a later date if we can find the funds. Fresno WILPF has also applied for a racial justice grant to put on book discussions with women of different cultural backgrounds.

We are in the process of updating our Web site with useful information about racism for branches to use. I strongly urge members to check it out at <www.wilpf.org> under "Issues." One of our members, Donna Lamb, has four articles posted there, along with two from Tim Wise. Donna's article "Racism in Progressive Movements" is very eye-opening and would make a great community discussion. If you are interested in working with me to build a beloved community in Fresno and to work for racial justice, let me know.

RETHINK WATER; STOP THE WAR, Part II: B.Y.O.W. - By Phil Erro

The US Congress fronted \$80 billion to finance our invasion of Iraq, presumably to secure a reliable supply of oil for decades to come. If we can pay for oil in this manner as taxpayers, why can't we pay for water the same way as rate payers? Every household would pay into a fund, which would be used to educate Valley residents about the origins of our water and water conservation, to develop demand-side and supply-side strategies to have enough water for future growth, and to plan water infrastructure.

B.Y.O.W. (Bring Your Own Water)

As important as converting our landscaping to xeriscape is (Part I), our biggest challenge is to re-tool our thinking about water. Sunlight evaporates our water from the sea to form water-laden clouds, which are blown by prevailing winds over California's Coastal Range to our Sierra Nevada, where the water droplets fall to the ground either as rain or snow. Rain seeps through beds of gravel and sand, becoming filtered water before it joins our streams. Snow does the same thing as it slowly melts in the spring, summer and fall. Some of the rain and snow-melt water doesn't flow into our streams but travels through layers of gravel and sand beneath our valley floor. When we intercept this purified water in rivers or pump it out of our aquifers, we wrongly assign it a value of ZERO. We take for granted the solar energy that evaporates and purifies our water, and we don't think about the wind that drives clouds eastward until they collide with our mountains. As water harvesters and filters, our mountains are a geologic gift. But we don't assign value to these natural processes. We only count the costs of building dams, canals, and wells, and the cost of pumping. If, on the other hand, each household were required to contribute \$3000 to a regional Bring Your Own Water fund, we could finance water-use education, water-conservation incentives, recovery of used water, improved management of water districts and municipal water supplies, and planning of water infrastructure. This \$1.5 billion to \$2.0 billion regional fund could give Central Californians the financial muscle to plan and shepherd a water system that could serve the needs of its people and other life forms for decades. Once we commit to paying more for water and sewer treatment, such practices as watering our gardens with gray water, taking short showers, and xeriscaping will be accepted as the price of living in our semi-arid region. As people migrate into Central California from high rainfall areas, they will be charged a \$3000 Bring Your Own Water fee. Just as owners of new rural houses pre-pay the cost of putting a power line (typically \$30,000 a mile) to their homestead, so too would all Central Californians pay in advance for future water supplies. Residents of the City of Stockton didn't pay up front to be educated about water and to fund water planning. When Thames Water executives sold them on cheaper water rates, they took the bait. Now they're paying exorbitant rates for inferior water service. This would not have happened if they had brought their own water. Where do WILPFers stand on this? Do we value water enough to pay now for future water security? Next—Part III: Mimicking marshes and enhancing our forest spigot.

Quote of the Month:

"If we divide into two camps—even into violent and the nonviolent—and stand in one camp while attacking the other, the world will never have peace. We will always blame and condemn those we feel are responsible for wars and social injustice, without recognizing the degree of violence within ourselves. We must work on ourselves and also with those we condemn if we want to have a real impact."

- Ayya Khema in *Be An Island*

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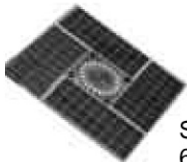


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8AM – Noon Saturday January 28 field trip

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For more information see www.cvppac.org



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The Fresno Folklore Society

By Pat Wolk

In addition to being a member of the famous Fresno art family, the Hansens, Rob Ickes (rhymes with *yikes*) is a founding member of the bluegrass supergroup, Blue Highway, one of the fastest rising groups in the genre. After their first recording was released in 1996, this group swept the International Bluegrass Music Association awards with wins for Album of the Year, Emerging Artist of the Year, and Dobro Player of the Year. Since then, Rob has gone on to win IBMA Dobro Player of the Year a total of seven consecutive times, and he is the only person other than Jerry Douglas to ever receive the award. He's in Fresno for the holidays.

For fifteen years Joe Craven performed as sideman for the respected David Grisman Quintet. A multi-instrumentalist, Joe wears many hats, performing music & sound effects on a wide variety of recordings, including commercials, soundtracks, computer games and several Grammy-nominated projects. Much appreciated by all ages, Joe captures the child's spirit in all of us. Yes, that's an angel food cake pan. This intimate evening with these long-time friends will include their own music as well as old and new tunes and songs from blues to bluegrass; jazzy to funky; and, well, a mix that only two guys like these could come up with.

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Sat, Feb 4 TSYGANKOV & SHEVCHENKO—Russian
Thurs, Mar 9, PERFECT STRANGERS—5 guys play bluegrass
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Fri, Mar 24, SESKIN, JOSEPH, & EDWARDS—Three songwriters share the stage
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Support Needed for the Local Folk Music Scene

A message from Paul Kamm & Eleanore MacDonald

Nationwide, smaller (and many larger) venues are suffering terribly right now, riding a slippery slope of falling attendance for the last year. Why? Money woes? Fear? Home entertainment centers, video games, and DVDs? Too old? Not interested? Do you know? In any case, these venues are hesitating—more than ever—to book smaller, lesser known (but no less talented) touring acts. Which means that folks like us are finding it more difficult to carry on with what we do . . . and that then translates eventually to an inability to record and continue giving forth the fruits of our labors, the embodiment of our heart and soul, in live or recorded song.

We ALL must continue to support the live music that we love. We all must do our part to keep the arts alive in these troubled times. If the music-loving crowd—in particular those of you who cherish the music of the smaller, independent artists—doesn't get out there, supporting and helping to pay the less-than-living wage of most of the smaller touring artists you have loved— then great independent music will disappear. All of that stuff you love that falls underneath the radar of the Greg Browns and John McCutcheons and Eliza Gilkysons. Poof, gone. Please continue to support live music and your local venues—go out to shows, support hard-working musicians who bring you the music you love, socialize with your community members . . . If you don't, it will be your loss as well as ours. We hope to see you along the road.

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CWA Local 9408 Sees Change in Leadership

By Stan Santos

On Thursday, November 3, the newly elected officers for Communication Workers of America, Local 9408 were formally sworn in. CWA Local 9408 represents employees of Texas-based SBC Communications, with more than 900 members who provide telecommunication service to communities throughout the Central Valley. The election was the culmination of a hard-fought campaign, which saw the transfer of leadership from the administration of Nadine Cox, president for the past 15 years, to that of Roy Granados and "the New Crew." Some observers characterized this historic moment as an upset, with a strong majority of the CWA membership making a clear choice for a new style and road for their union. The importance of this election was defined by the highest turnout in the history of this union, with the participation of 57.5% of eligible voters, or 503 ballots.

Outgoing president Nadine Cox led the CWA in protecting union jobs and preserving the resources of the local. She maintained a prescription reimbursement benefit as well as other programs to provide services to members. She negotiated with SBC to seek alternatives to closing service and engineering departments in the Fresno area, which would have resulted in the loss of union jobs. Nadine Cox and Georgia Johnston represented the CWA in the community, working closely with the Central Labor Council and other groups on political and union issues.



CWA Local 9408 new Officers are being sworn in by Nadine Cox, President. Left to right: Stan Santos, Nadine Cox, Rich Ramirez, Josh Culwell, Delia Molina, Irene Santos, Roy Granados, Peggy Bissel and Momma Dove (supporter) and Chris Bingham

Critics of the outgoing leadership have cited an organizational style that relied on cooperation with management in the implementation of practices and changes in the work environment that were considered detrimental to union members. These include production and service quotas and employee monitoring through such measures as global positioning (GPS). Some members felt that their grievances were not aggressively pursued. There was also the perception of a disparity in the level of representation of inside workers (i.e., operators, directory assistance, business services, and engineering) and outside techs (including linemen, splicers, maintenance, and installation and repair technicians.

In early 2004, SBC and the Communication Workers of America were locked in tense negotiations for contract renewals for major portions of the 740,000 workers represented by this nationwide union. Over half a million CWA members are involved in the "information highway." SBC sought to keep wage scales low, while increasing the cost of health benefits. Job security was increasingly threatened by outsourcing and offshoring, with SBC call centers located in such faraway places as India and the Philippines.

In the Fresno area, Local 9408 members were anxious to join the fight for a better contract, one that protected their jobs and guaranteed good wages and benefits. As the negotiations bogged down, the techs at the Orange Yard in Fresno staged an informational picket to put the management on notice that they were willing to undertake labor actions to press their demands. On the day of the action, almost 50 techs participated and succeeded in creating a sense of unity and strength. This action was not supported by the CWA Local 9408 officers, except for Mike Devins, 1st vice president, who appreciated the effort.

Spurred on by the success of their first action, the rank and file called for another informational picket to take place at the SBC Central Office in downtown Fresno. This action was to create public awareness of the negotiations and allow greater participation by the members. Again, the effort was initiated independently of the Local 9408 officers and succeeded in mo-

bilizing the enthusiastic participation of more than 200 members and receiving local media coverage. CWA subsequently called a four-day strike against SBC, which brought about a five-year contract that provided increases in wage scales, while protecting members from skyrocketing health-care costs. SBC was also forced to agree to preserve retirees' benefits for the life of the contract and bring union jobs back to the United States.

During the strike, strong criticisms arose around the perceived lack of support by Local 9408 for direct action on the part of the rank and file. The seeds for a change of leadership were planted during this time, with independent members demonstrating a more activist organizing philosophy. These differences in philosophy evolved into a platform for change, empowering members and offering them an alternative to the established leadership.

The "New Crew" campaigned in Visalia, Hanford, Porterville, and Fresno, reaching out to CWA members who are working hard to provide for their families while serving the customers of SBC. Those dedicated technicians travel long, lonely stretches of road winding up toward Kings Canyon National Park and the Tule Indian Reservation, and far to the west, past Lemoore and Coalinga to the "Canyons." The Fresno area techs work in all kinds of weather and around the clock to maintain the network and provide new services for one of the fastest growing population hubs of the United States. These include basic telephone, DSL, and Hi-Cap business lines, and the rapidly expanding optical fiber-based services. The inside work force, including Operator Services, Directory Assistance, Business Services, and Engineering are vital to the network, but among the most vulnerable as automation and cost-saving measures continue to threaten their jobs.

As the term of CWA Local 9408 president Nadine Cox comes to a close, members recognize all that has been achieved. As stated by one member when the outcome of the election was announced, "We are a family." As such, there may be differences in tactics and strategy, but in the end, the union must remain united and strong. CWA faces the most powerful forces in corporate America: forces driven by increasingly sophisticated technologies, complicated mergers, and immense profits. The fate of CWA and working people lies in the struggle to grow and strengthen worker organization, particularly in unorganized sectors. The new CWA leadership is looking forward to working with Fresno-area labor organizations and supporting the community in the years to come.



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

December 2005

community

Christmas Tree Lane walk thurs 12.01.05

where: Van Ness Boulevard (Shields to Shaw)
address: Van Ness Boulevard
when: 5:45 PM - 10 PM
cost: Free or Donations
details: 2005 will be the 83rd traditional Christmas Tree Lane.Walk nights will be Thursday, December 1 and Wednesday, December 7. On opening night, there will be band music and the arrival of Santa on a fire engine. During walk nights, Van Ness is closed to vehicles for walkers from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
For more information, call 559-225-3116
<http://www.oldfig.org/about/christmastreelane.html>

words

Fresno Poets' Association: David St. John and Michael Clifton thurs 12.01.05

where: Fresno Art Museum
address: 2233 North First Street
when: 7:30 p.m.
cost: \$4 - \$5
details: The Fresno Poets' Association's monthly reading in the art museum's Bonner Auditorium features local poets David St. John and Michael Clifton. St. John has been honored with many of the most significant prizes for poets, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. His work has been published in countless literary magazines, including The New Yorker, The Paris Review, Poetry, American Poetry Review, Harper's, Antaeus, and The New Republic, and has been widely anthologized. He is the author of nine collections of poetry. Clifton, a Reedley native, earned an MA in English from Fresno State and a PhD in American Literature at Indiana University, Bloomington. He has published in a variety of scholarly journals, and has poems in "Down at the Santa Fe Depot: Twenty Fresno Poets" and "How Much Earth: The Fresno Poets."
<http://www.fresnopoets.org/>

music

REGGAE THURSDAY NIGHTS: RSI @ Veni Vidi Vici thurs 12.01.05 (and each Thursday night in December)

where: Veni Vidi Vici
address: 1116 N. Fulton Ave.
when: 10PM
cost: FREE!!!
details: REGGAE THURSDAY NIGHTS HAVE MOVED! Selections by Reality Sound International: Veni Vidi Vici's features a full bar, with a nice, laid back, romantic, lounge type atmosphere. Ages 21+
<http://www.FresnoReggae.com>

theater

All My Sons fri 12.02.05

where: John Wright Theatre - California State University, Fresno
address: Fresno State Campus
when: 8 p.m.
cost: \$15 - \$8
details: All My Sons
By Arthur Miller
Directed by Edward EmanuEl
Special Guest Artist Dan Pessano as Joe Keller
University Theatre says farewell to one of America's greatest playwrights, Arthur Miller, with a produc-

tion of his award winning play. Set in post-World War II America the ghosts of twenty fighter pilots rise from their graves and point their fingers at the enemy. That enemy turns out to be a huge surprise.
December 2-4 & 6-10, 2005 John Wright Theatre, Speech Arts Building
For more information, call the Theatre Box Office at 559-278-2216. Advance ticket purchase is suggested. Tickets can be purchased at the Theatre Box Office or on-line at www.csufresno.edu/Theatre.
<http://www.csufresno.edu/Theatre>

food & drink

Kitty Christmas fri 12.02.05

where: California Feline Foundation
address: 550 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno
when: 4:00pm-7:00pm
cost: gift for kitties (see below)
details: The California Feline Foundation will hold its 13th Annual holiday Kitty Christmas Open House on Friday, December 2nd, 2005 from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Foundation's Adoption Center located at 550 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA 93728. The evening's festivities include visiting with our own shelter kitties as well as Hurricane Katrina animals, shelter and clinic tours, gourmet hors d'oeuvres, wine and beer, and raffles for fabulous prizes. All that is required for admission is a generous gift for the kitties such as:

- Tax deductible cash donations;
- Gift cards to pet supply stores;
- Canned kitten & cat food;
- Paper towels & bleach;
- Laundry detergent;
- Antibacterial liquid soap; or
- Heavy-duty trash bags

For more information, please call (559) 233-8690 or visit www.valleyanimal.org.

art

Holiday Green Wreath Workshop sun 12.04.05

where: The River Center
address: 11605 Old Friant Road
when: 11am - 2pm
cost: \$40
details: Create natural wreaths and holiday decorations at this hand-on workshop led by Master Gardeners. A warm, light lunch is provided along with all materials. Bring garden clippers and dress warmly. This workshop is fun to attend with friends. Class size is limited. Reservations: 248-8480, ext 110
<http://www.riverparkway.org>

music

SHAKA BLACK, DUB STATION, Tom O'Brian, Green Machine w/ Ras Horace, and Reality Sound sun 12.04.05

where: Livingston's STARLINE
address: 831 Fern Ave.
when: 9PM
cost: 6-8\$
details: Sunday, December 4th, 2004 brings ALL AGES LIVE REGGAE with SHAKA BLACK, DUB STATION, Tom O'Brian, Green Machine w/ Ras Horace, and Reality Sound on the 1's & 2's. The show is happening at Livingston's STARLINE.
<http://www.FresnoReggae.com>

music

Off The Air and Hand Born Present Show and Shop weds 12.07.05

where: The Fat Cat Music House & Lounge

address: 930 11th Street, Modesto
when: 6-11PM
cost: \$5.00
details: Get your hip and handcrafted holiday gifts to the sounds of live independent music. Featuring sounds from Built Like Alaska (Oakdale), Saguaro (Oakdale), Critter (Modesto), Rademacher (Fresno). Are you crafty and want to sell your goods at this event? Visit www.handborn.com to apply (must be 21+)
<http://www.handborn.com> and
<http://www.myspace.com/offtheair>

words

Poetry Jam weds 12.07.05

where: Coffeehouse and Pub
address: California State University, Fresno
when: 7pm - 9pm
cost: Free
details: YOUR 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>

community

Christmas in the City fri 12.09.05

where: Granite Park- Ashlan & Cedar
address: 4000 Cedar Ave. Fresno, CA 93727
when: 10 a.m.- 11 p.m.
cost: free before 4 p.m., after \$3.00
details: Christmas in the City is open daily from December 9 until January 20, 2006, featuring an open air ice skating rink, a festival of lights, Santa's village, farmer's market, crafts faire, rides, carolers, performances, and much more. The event benefits Granite Park's Kid's Foundation. For more information please call 222-PLAY.
<http://www.granitepark.com>

food & drink

Holiday Bake Sale sat 12.10.05

where: Whitie's Pets
address: 5215 N. Blackstone Ave.
when: 10am-2pm
cost: free
details: The Valley Animal Center's Pennies-for-Pets Volunteer Auxiliary is having a Holiday Bake Sale at Whitie's Pets (5215 N. Blackstone Ave.) on Saturday, December 10th from 10am to 2pm. Bring your furry friend and your sweet tooth for an assortment of Christmas treats, delectable desserts, and fresh coffee. Proceeds support the Valley Animal Center, the valley's premier no-kill animal shelter and low-cost spay/neuter clinic currently under construction in Fresno. Please call (559) 233-8690 or visit www.valleyanimal.org for more information.
<http://www.valleyanimal.org>

art

the Indie Bazaar sat 12.17.05

where: 4525 N. Wishon Fresno, CA 93704
address: 4525 N. Wishon Fresno, CA 93704
when: 10 am to 5 pm
cost: free!
details: Takao Design presents our first ever Indie Bazaar! Come and shop unique hand-crafted indie goodies you won't find anywhere else! We'll also be showcasing artwork for sale from local arteests! Come shop, come hang out, come and say hello!
<http://www.takaodesign.com>

For more local events, visit

www.fresnofamous.com

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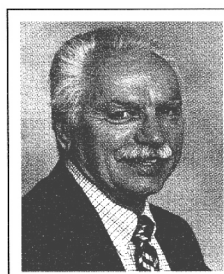


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NP5 Photo

Did you know that the largest living tree in the world is in Sequoia National Park? The tree was originally named the Karl Marx Tree by the Kaweah Cooperative Commonwealth, founded in 1885 near Visalia. The tree has been renamed the General Sherman Tree.

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**COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**
Progressive Culture, Politics, Art, and Entertainment Since 1986

COMMUNITY ACTION

Calendar of Events

Thursday, December 1 • Social hour 5:30 PM, Dinner and Program 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Fresno Metro Ministry's 35th Anniversary and Awards Dinner. Honoring: Margaret Hudson, David "Mas" Masumoto, Champions of Better Air Quality, Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, and the people of Fresno Metro Ministry. This event will be held at the Hope Lutheran Church in Fresno. For more information call Carmen Pauls Wiens at 485-9109 or email carmen@fresnomet.nin.org .

Thursday, December 1 • 5 PM

World Aids Day < www.worldAIDSday.org > at the Tower Theater. Remembrance, Keynote Speakers, Special Performances. For more information contact Valerie at 445-3434.

Thursday, December 1 • 5 - 8 PM

Young at Art would like to invite you to their Annual Gallery Show. Join them for their ribbon cutting, appetizers & 'docent' led tours of student show & facility. 6023 N Palm Ave. , Fresno, CA 93704 (559) 447-9200 www.youngatarffresno.com

Friday, December 2 • 5 - 7 PM

Foreign Film Series for Teens
Politi Branch Library, 225-2879

The first program in a series of foreign film nights designed for teens in grades 7-12 will feature a film from China. At each program, participants will also enjoy food from the featured country and learn fun facts about the country and its culture.

Friday, December 2 • 5 PM and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents "The Squid and the Whale" at the Tower Theatre. Writer-director Noah Baumbach earned awards for best direction and best screenwriting at this year's Sundance Film Festival for his comedy-drama, starring Jeff Daniels and Laura Linney. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave., The Movies, 1435 N. Van Ness Ave., and at the door, for \$10; \$8, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to www.fresnofilmworks.org

Friday, December 2 • 5:15 PM

Cineculture at CSUF presents the film *Rocks With Wings* by Rick Derby. 2001. USA. 113 minutes. Rating: PG
In 1988, award-winning filmmaker Rick Derby heard about a girl's basketball team on a New Mexican Navajo reservation that was writing itself into the state's record books. ROCKS WITH WINGS chronicles the 14 years Derby spent following the team, shooting more than 300 hours of footage with much of his own money. Shiprock High School's girl's varsity basketball team was fighting a losing battle when a young African-American named Jerry Richardson landed a teaching job at the school in the mid-80s. He inherited the job of coaching the girl's basketball team, who, under his guidance, won a handful of state championships and achieved acclaim. This movie will be shown in room ED 170 in The Kremen School of Education. For further info., contact Dr. Denise Blum dblum@csufresno.edu

Friday, December 2 • 6 - 10 PM ATTENTION ALL ARTISTS

The Fresno Arts Council is sponsoring "Dining with the Artists" dinner/entertainment/auction event @ the TW Patterson Building on Friday, December 2, 2005, from 6-10pm. The cost is \$100 per person—invitations will go out next week. The committee is preparing a package to "market" local ARTISTS. Please deliver 150 pieces to us by Tuesday, Nov. 22 of your business cards, or previous invitations, or post cards anything that markets your artwork will be included in this package. An idea is a post card with 2 or 3 art pieces of your work. Be sure the advertising material delivered to us by Nov. 22 includes your name, address, phone, e-mail and website. If you have questions, contact me at 237-9734, or by e-mail mfranco@fresnoarts.org.

Friday, December 2 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents Speaker: Andres Zamudio will report on his project "Inter-religious Dialogue." This project has attempted to determine what a variety of religious groups in the Fresno area have to say regarding environmental concerns and other social issues.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on 'L' street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen@telis.org

Saturday, December 3 • 10 AM - 4 PM

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Craft Faire 2005 will be held at the First Congregational Church at 2131 N Van Ness. There will be music, food, friends, and shopping for the best gifts for the holidays.

Enjoy Free Music & Entertainment
Visit Old Friends & Meet New Ones
Find Unique Handmade Holiday Gifts
Amazing Arts & Creative Crafts
Fill Your Tummies with Great Yummies
Signature Homemade Soups, Breads & Dessert
Raffle Prizes, Silent Auction & More!
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Fresno WILPF's Raging Grannies!!
A generous WILPF member has offered to match whatever funds we make at the Crafts Faire so the more you buy the more WILPF makes in matching funds so come by and BUY, BUY, BUY

First Congregational Church
(The Big Red Church)
2131 N Van Ness Blvd, Fresno
between McKinley & Clinton
For further info contact Joan Poss 227-6134 or ilsasso2003@yahoo.com Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, Fresno Branch

Sunday, December 4 • 3 PM

Fresno Stonewall Democrats will meet at Carrow's restaurant 4280 N. Blackstone at Ashlan. for more information contact Chuck Krugman by email at ckrugman@sbcglobal.net or by phone at 226-3717.

Sunday, December 4 • 4 PM

Michael Parenti will speak on "Eco-Catastrophe and Corporate Power" at the Big Red Church, 2131 N. Van Ness. This is event is sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. There will be a small reception following.

Michael Parenti is one of the nation's leading progressive political analysts. His informative and entertaining books and talks have reached a wide range of audiences in North America and abroad. He has won awards from Project Censored, the Caucus for a New Political Science, and many others. This lecture is based upon a recent paper entitled, Why the Corporate Rich Oppose Environmentalism.

Tickets will be \$10.00 (regular) and \$5.00 (low income) and can be purchased at the Center from 11 - 3 Mon-Fri or at the Movies in the Tower. For more information call the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at 559-237-3223 Mon-Fri 11 AM to 3 PM.

Sunday, December 4 • 7-9 PM

UU Church of FRESNO is hosting Tom Willey of T & D Willey Farms for a pot-luck dinner and slide show. Mr. Willey will be presenting his experiences with organic agricultural cooperatives in Japan. UU Church of Fresno (4144 N. Millbrook) 435-4891

Monday, December 5 • 11 AM

Dr. Parenti (see previous calendar listing) will speak on *Empire v. Democracy* at Fresno City College Theatre, 1101 E. University. This is a free event and is being sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence and the Beth Ann Harnish Lecture Series Committee.

Michael Parenti is one of the nation's leading progressive political analysts. His informative and entertaining books and talks have reached a wide range of audiences in North America and abroad. He has won awards from Project Censored, the Caucus for a New Political Science, and many others. He is the author of 16 books, including *The Terrorism Trap*, *Democracy for the Few*, *To Kill a Nation* and *History as Mystery*. Recent books are *Superpatriotism* and *The Assassination of Julius Caesar*.

Tuesday, December 6

Public Access TV. The issue of whether Fresno County will include a Public Access channel and Community Media Center will be decided at the Board of Supervisors meeting today. For more information see: http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/pegcableaccess.htm

Friday, December 9 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents the Video: *Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price*. This video will be introduced by Aaron Hall.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on 'L' street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen@telis.org

December 10

Human Rights Day. For more information see: http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2005/issue3/0305p24.html

Saturday, December 10 • 3:30 PM

The Central Valley Progressive PAC meets to review its information , the concerns of its members and friends to begin to decide the next steps to be taken to change the focus of the politics in Fresno. Members and friends are welcome. The meetings are held at the Center for Non Violence at 1584 N. Van Ness (at Mc Kinley) For information www.cvppac.org

Monday, December 12 • 5:30 PM

The execution of Stanley "Tookie" Williams is scheduled for one minute after midnight, December 13, 2005 at San Quentin State Prison. Death Penalty Focus and Amnesty International will hold a vigil service on the street in front of St. John's Cathedral - Mariposa and R Streets - on Monday evening, December 12, 2005, starting at 5:30 PM.

Tuesday, December 13

Must Tookie be Executed?

Go to http://www.savetookie.org/

Tuesday, December 13 • 6 - 9 PM

Open House Party/Fundraiser at Acorn, 3636 N. First Street, Suite 139 in Fresno. Acorn is a grassroots organizing project. For more information see www.acorn.org

Wednesday, December 14 • Noon and 7:30 PM

Incident at Oglala: The Leonard Peltier Story. In 1974, two FBI agents died in a gun battle on the Pine Ridge reservation. Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM) was falsely convicted of the murders, despite evidence of innocence. This documentary reconstructs events surrounding the incident, highlighting the overwhelming FBI repression and atmosphere of government terror on the reservation. It also illustrates the brave efforts of American Indians like Peltier to organize and fight back. 90 min. This show is a part of the Second Wednesday Video Series sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. The FCNV is located at 1584 N Van Ness. For more information call (559) 237-3223.

Thursday, December 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the January 2006 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to AllianceEditor@Comcast.net

Sunday, December 18 • 1 PM

Pam Whalen and Mike Rhodes will discuss the World Social Forum (WSF) at the Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley meeting. Pam and Mike attended the WSF in Porto Alegre Brazil in January 2005 and are going to Caracas, Venezuela for the 2006 gathering. The WSF brings together progressive activists from all over the world to share experiences, discuss strategy, and work for peace, social and economic justice. The theme of the 2005 gathering was "A New World is Possible." The meeting will take place in Room 1 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N Millbrook. For info call June at (559) 645-1719, or visit their Web site at www.fresno.humanists.net

Wednesday, December 21 • 7:30 PM

TV Worth Watching - GRAPEVINE TV MAGAZINE on channel 49 (cable ch 9). Maria Telesco will be discussing her work with Death Penalty Focus. This show will be repeated on Thursday, December 22 at 1 PM and Sunday, December 25 at 2:30 PM

For 10 years, "Grapevines" have been weekly programs featuring interesting and important religious, civic, business and educational leaders from all over the valley. These stimulating conversations are usually enhanced with Sun Mountain "docu-poems" or footage filmed by KNXT. "Grapevine" airs 3 times weekly. Call Jim (559-488-7440) for more information or to recommend a Grapevine program you'd like to see!

Sunday, December 25 (Christmas Day) • 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
Peace Fresno will be at Shaw and Blackstone (SE corner) on Christmas Day. This is now an annual event, open to all who wish to join us in calling for peace on a holiday that has meaning for many.

Monday, December 26 • 5:30 PM
TV Worth Watching - David Barsamian: Another World Is Possible will be on channel 49 (cable ch 9). Mr. Barsamian was the keynote speaker at the Fresno Free College Foundation (the owner and operator of radio station KFCF 88.1 FM) banquet. This program will be repeated on Wednesday, December 28 at 8:30 PM.

Friday, December 30 • 8 PM
Lyquid Amber Fifth Annual Winter Concert
Lyquid Amber will perform their annual holiday concert of original compositions at the Fresno ArtMuseum, Bonner Auditorium, \$15 advance, \$20 door. Tickets: Fresno Art Museum Gift Shop, Patrick’s Music, or Mail Order: (559) 297-8966 Lyquid Amber is Hans York, guitar; Evo Bluestein, banjo; Eva Scow, violin; and Kevin Hill bass. Sample their music and/or purchase at <http://lyquidamber.com> If you missed their summer performances, here is what musician Chris Eacock wrote: *“The band put on a fantastic show at Arte Americas! Bela Fleck, Stanley Clarke and Jean-Luc Ponty played at the Tower Theatre the following night. Their music had the same caliber of talent and style.”*

ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Every Sunday • 4 PM
Sunday Food Not Bombs serves free food at Courthouse Park to anyone who is hungry. They start cooking at 1 PM and serve the food at 4 PM (meet at the Tulare side of the park). If anyone would like to donate or help cook, they should contact Becky Asami at 304-3409, or email her at Littlejap@csufresno.edu

Every Tuesday • 6:30 - 8:30 PM
The Fresno River Zen group meets in Horsley Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook, Fresno. This group welcomes all who wish to seek clarity, compassion, and harmony with oneself and the world through mindful meditation. Emphasis is on bringing peaceful actions from personal experience in meditation to healing the world. Teaching and practice in the spirit of the Suzuki Roshi Lineage is led by Grace Schireson, an ordained Zen priest. For more information, call Grace at (559) 877-2400 or email her at grace@emptynestzendo.org .

Every Tuesday and Thursday • 7–9 PM
The St. Benedict Catholic Worker serves a meal to the homeless, working poor, and visitors and released inmates in front of Fresno County Jail (corner of Fresno and M streets). Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve the meals. For more information contact Liza Apper at (559) 229–6410 or liza.apper@sbcw.org ; or visit their Web site: < www.sbcw.org >.

Every Tuesday • 7 PM
Peace Fresno meets at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at 1584 N Van Ness, south of McKinley. If you want to help stop Bush’s endless war against the world, come to this meeting! For an up-to-the-minute listing of all peace actions in the Fresno area, call the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at (559) 23PEACE (237–3223). For more information about Peace Fresno, call 487–2515 or visit their Web site at www.peacefresno.org.

Every Friday • 7 PM
Reedley Peace Center holds it weekly peace meeting at the Fellowship Hall at Reedley’s First Mennonite Church, 1208 L Street, Reedley. Programs vary, but the focus is always on peace issues: local, state, national, international. The contact is Carol Krehbiel: (559) 637–9098 or krehbiel@cvip.net. The meeting is free, open to the public, and accessible to the handicapped.

Every Saturday • 1–2 PM
Food Not Bombs feeds the hungry near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park. The location for cooking on Saturday is at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 E Barstow, between First and Cedar, starting at 9 AM. They are always in need of servers at the park. For more information call Dallas: 452–0277, or e-mail fresnofnb@yahoo.com. Visit the Food Not Bombs Web site at www.fresnoalliance.com/FNB/

Every Saturday • 1 PM until the last patient is served
Medical clinic for the homeless, actively injecting drug users, and prostitutes. You can find them near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park. Staffed by Dr. Marc Lasher and volunteers. Accepting financial donations. Contact: 266–0444.

Every Saturday • 1–3 PM
Fresno Free Bicycle Repair Clinic. Most Saturdays. Donations of bicycle parts, inner tubes, and blinky lights welcome. Volunteers needed to help with minor repairs. The bicycle clinic is near the Olive Ave entrance

to Roeding Park, beside Food Not Bombs. For more info and to arrange donations, e-mail fresnofreebikeclinic@yahoo.com.

ONGOING MONTHLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

1st Sunday of every month • 1 - 3 PM
The South Valley Peace Center <<http://www.svpc.info/>> has peace demonstrations at the northwest corner of Mooney and Walnut in Visalia. Come out and demonstrate for peace. Bring a sign with your favorite peace message.

1st Sunday of every month • 3 - 5 PM
Fresno Stonewall Democrats meeting is open to the public. Stonewall Democrats’ focus is on social and political issues of interest to progressives in general and progressive and liberal Democrats in particular. For meeting location and other information contact Jay Hubbell at (559) 292–4905, e-mail <fresnostonewall@mangen.com>, or visit the Web site<www.mangen.com/stonewall/> .

2nd and 4th Sunday of every month • 1 PM
South Valley Peace Center meets at the Visalia Friends Meeting House, 17208 Ave. 296, Visalia. Contact: info@svpc.info <http://www.svpc.info>

3rd Sunday of every month • 10 AM–12 Noon
World Meditation Day is observed to promote peace within oneself and harmony in the world. Held at 7319 N Fourth St, Fresno. Program includes guided meditation followed by discussion and light refreshments. Call Veena Kapoor, (559) 435–2212, for more information.

3rd Sunday of every month • 1 PM
Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley meet in Room 1 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N Millbrook. For info call June: 645–1719, or visit their Web site at www.fresno.humanists.net

2nd Monday of every month • 5:30 PM
The Living Wage Committee will meet at the SEIU 250 office, 1279 N Wishon. Community Alliance for a Fair Economy (CAFE) is taking the lead in this effort. We are in the research and planning stages of development. Further information contact Frances Sivak: (559) 222–5240 or fsivak@msn.com.

4th Monday of every month • 7 PM
FresCAMP (Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) meets at the Barn at Margaret Hudson’s house, 4230 N Arthur. For more information e-mail ilsasso2003@yahoo.com, call (559) 227–6134, or visit the Californians for Pesticide Reform Web site at www.1000friendsoffresno.org/pesticides.html

1st Tuesday of every month • 6 PM
The San Joaquin Valley Coalition for Immigrant Rights meeting at 328 N Fresno Street. For more information call (559) 498–6033.

3rd Tuesday of every month • 12:30 - 2 PM
The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) a progressive coalition of community, church and labor organizations have their monthly meeting at the Fresno Senior Resource Center located at 2085 E. Dakota in Fresno. It is an open meeting to all with concerns on local, state & federal issues that matter to seniors, voters, taxpayers. For more informaiton call Gene Roza at 559-905-3521or visit the CARA website at: www.californiaalliance.org

3rd Tuesday of every month • 7 PM
The Fresno Free College Foundation (owner and operator of KFCF 88.1 FM) Board of Directors meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno. The public is invited. For more information call (559) 233–2221, e-mail kfcf@kfcf.org , or visit www.kfcf.org.

1st Wednesday of every month • 12 Noon–1 PM
Women in Black– Silent Vigil at the Fresno County Courthouse entrance. Show your support for PEACE and for negotiated settlements of US current military actions! Meet downtown at the Fresno courthouse, and stand silently, advocating for PEACE. For more info, call 278–7140 or 225–2850.

1st Wednesday of every month • 7 PM
The Fresno County Democratic Central Committee meetings are held in the State Building Assembly Room. The address is 2550 Mariposa Ave. Call Steve Haze, Chair – 855-8844 stevehaze@psnw.com or Jay Hubbell, Secretary - 292-4905 / jayhubbell@comcast.net for more information.

1st Wednesday of every month • 7:30 PM
Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno.

1st Thursday of every month
As Terry Allen, former Fresno artist and musician, says in a song, “The Art Mob’s Out Tonight” and that night would be the first Thursday of every month downtown at the newest Fresno arts hot spot and at various other locations around Fresno. You can see a variety of styles, perspectives and medias: contemporary expressionist, abstract expressionist, conceptual, painting, collage, assemblage, sculpture, photography and more, all coming from talented local artists. Come out and join the art mob on First Thursdays; enjoy some wine, a cracker or two, and a “Truckload of Art” (Terry Allen again). For more information contact Maria Franco at mfranco@fresnoarts.org Or (559) 237- 9734.

2nd Thursday of every month • 5 PM
The Human Relations Commission meetings are open to the public. Regular meetings are usually scheduled on the second Thursday of each month in Meeting Room 2165N of City Hall. Any person who wants to place an issue before the Commission should first contact the HRC staff at 621–7770.

2nd Thursday of every month • 7 PM
Fresno LGBTQ Social Group (<http://www.gayfresno.com/social/>) Carrow’s Fresno 1484 E. Shaw Ave (one block south of Fashion Fair) Get together and hang out.

2nd Thursday of every month • 7 PM
Monthly meeting of the Fresno County Green Party, County Council, at the California State Building in downtown Fresno. The address is 2550 Mariposa Ave., and is located between O and P streets and Fresno and Tulare. Enter through the main door along the pedestrian mall just off P Street. Call (559) 265–3647 or go to www.cagreens.org/fresno for more information.

2nd Thursday of every month • 7 PM
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom meeting, 1584 N Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information e-mail socialjustice@sti.net.

3rd Thursday of every month • 6–8 PM
Fresno County Bicycle Coalition, monthly meetings to provide a forum for bicyclists to organize, discuss common concerns, and influence public policy. If you are interested in helping Fresno County become more bike-friendly, you are invited to join this group. We meet at the Revue Café, 620 E Olive (at Lucerne) in the Tower District. Please call (559) 444–2065 for more information.

3rd Thursday of every month • 6:30 PM
Central California Criminal Justice Committee is meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1564 North Van Ness (Southeast corner of McKinley and Van Ness).

1st Friday of every month • 4:30–6:30 PM
Peace Fresno is at Shaw and Blackstone Avenues to protest the occupation of Iraq and other harmful domestic and foreign policies of the Bush administration. Peace Fresno advocates alternatives to war and social and environmental justice. For more information go to <www.peacefresno.org>.

1st Friday of every month • 7–9 PM
Dances of Universal Peace. Sacred Circle Dances from Around the World at the First Congregational Church, Van Ness and Yale.

1st Saturday of every month • 9:30 AM
Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley meets at Denny’s Restaurant at Abby and Divisidero. Call 439–8140 for more information.

1st Saturday of every month • 3–5 PM
Women of Spirit—a gathering of women rediscovering their own spirituality and enabling others to do the same. You are invited to join the circle of women the first Saturday of each month, at 7319 N Fourth St, Fresno. Beginning and closing meditation, discussion and activity, light refreshments after closing. The event is free. Both men and women are welcome. Contact: Veena Kapoor, (559) 435–2212.

2nd Saturday of every month • 9:30 AM
Fresno Center for Nonviolence monthly meeting at 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information about the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, see their Web site <www.centerfornonviolence.org> or call 559–23PEACE (237–3223).

For up-to-the-minute information about what is happening in Fresno’s progressive community, join the Community Alliance email alert network. We send out an updated calendar of events once a week and alert you when there is an emergency rally or demonstration. This is a free service. You can join by sending your email address to <AllianceEditor@Comcast.net> and say you would like to subscribe to this service.

Fresno Mayor Autry Supports Unpopular Police Auditor Plan

By Mike Rhodes

Fresno Mayor Alan Autry is pushing a plan for an independent police auditor (IPA) that is not supported by the City Council, the Fresno Police Officers Association, or the Central California Criminal Justice Committee. In a plan that seems to be taken directly out of Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's ill-fated strategy of putting unpopular ideas before the voters, Mayor Autry says he will put the IPA issue on the June 2006 ballot. The mayor wants an IPA that is similar to Sacramento's. Gail Gaston, who is a member of the Human Relations Committee and works with the CCCJC, said the mayor's plan would not result in an "independent police auditor."

Speculation about why Autry would propose a version of the IPA that nobody seems to want falls into a couple of categories. One theory is that the mayor is making this proposal to undermine the CCCJC, which was gearing up to put the issue on the 2006 ballot. The CCCJC brought the issue before the City Council twice already and was preparing to start a ballot initiative, when the group was contacted by H. Spees, a close political ally of the mayor, who said he wanted to work with them to pass the IPA. This led to the mayor's proposal.

Ellie Bluestein, an active member of the CCCJC, sent an e-mail to supporters saying, "A third rejection of the proposal for an independent police auditor would have been pretty disappointing. But an approval of Mayor Autry's proposal based on the Sacramento model would have put into place a system that would not be effective, that would not guarantee an unprejudiced, impartial office. To set up a system that would be geared for failure would not have been a victory. We have to use our time now to educate the City Council and the community to the type of auditor system that would succeed in Fresno and if necessary bring it to the electorate for approval. So we have a lot of work ahead, and we're not giving up. We need to make it clear that this proposal is not a condemnation of the police but an effort to enhance community trust and cooperation between the police and the public and to guarantee that all Fresnans are treated with respect and dignity."

The Fresno Police Officers Association thinks the proposal from the mayor for an IPA could be retaliation for the FPOA's opposition to the November 8 ballot initiatives, which were strongly supported by Autry. The FPOA strongly opposes any IPA proposal.

A majority of City Council members have made it clear that they oppose any version of an IPA proposal. Even Jerry Duncan, who is one of mayor Autry's closest allies on the council, publicly criticized the mayor's IPA plan and warned him not to use city personnel to gather signatures for the initiative.

Mayor Autry has consistently supported the IPA concept and has helped bring the issue before the City Council on several occasions. But, it was never clear which IPA version the mayor supported. With the CCCJC beginning to organize a local effort to put a "San Jose style" IPA on the June ballot, Autry might have seen his pro-

posal as a way of circumventing the CCCJC proposal. If the City Council had adopted his proposal on November 15, he would have won—a weak IPA would have been implemented. Since the proposal failed, the mayor can tell the community that he tried to pass an IPA proposal, and it was the City Council that voted against it. If the CCCJC moves ahead with its initiative for the June ballot, the mayor can put his proposal on the ballot too, creating a confusing situation for voters.

The CCCJC is hoping residents will become educated about the two IPA options and choose the version that has the best opportunity for holding the police accountable to the public. Information about the IPA proposal is available at <<http://cccjc.org/home/>>. The CCCJC also has copies of the proposal they are supporting, and material comparing the two systems; if you interested in these materials, please call (559) 485-4707.



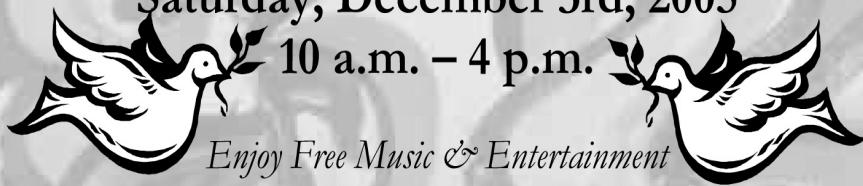
Ellie Bluestein (left) and Fresno City Council member, Cynthia Sterling, support having an Independent Police Auditor in Fresno.

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom

Peace Community Crafts Faire

Saturday, December 3rd, 2005

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.



*Enjoy Free Music & Entertainment
Visit Old Friends & Meet New Ones
Find Unique Handmade Holiday Gifts
Amazing Arts & Creative Crafts
Fill Your Tummies with Great Yummies
Signature Homemade Soups, Breads & Dessert
Raffle Prizes, Silent Auction &
Many More Wonderful Surprises!*

*First Congregational Church
(The Big Red Church)
2131 N. Van Ness Blvd, Fresno
between McKinley & Clinton*



*For further info contact Ellie 229-9807 or geneb@csufresno.edu or
Joan Poss 227-6134 or ilsasso2003@yahoo.com*

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, Fresno Branch



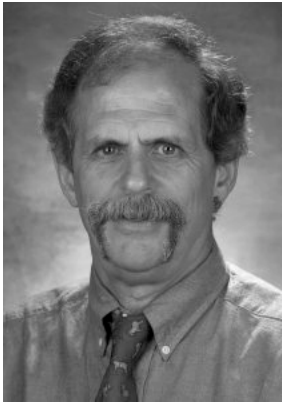
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Town Hall Forum on Jobs Held at CSUF— But Where Were the Workers?

By Dr. Robert Merrill

The town hall meeting, “American Jobs: A National Conversation,” held in Fresno on October 19 was a theatrical success (just as President Bush’s scripted appearances are). However, there were several problems with the event. First, the meeting was dominated by businessmen; workers and union members were absent. Second, the moderator failed to ask critical follow-up questions, which could have pointed out the way in which some individuals avoided answering his questions or put a political spin on their answers. Third, the audience participation was limited largely to individuals seated in the front rows.

The meeting opened with the question of what constituted a good job. Asking a group of businessmen, entrepreneurs, and managers what constitutes a good job is likely to produce a different answer from how an hourly or entry-level employee might respond. This likely explains why the priorities of this audience differed significantly from the priorities of the general public (based on national rankings of responses to this question). Far more meaningful discussions might have occurred if a variety of employees—farm laborers, teachers, nurses, janitors, salespeople, store managers, and so on—were present. Including line employees, union leaders, and even the unemployed as part of our community might produce a more complete set of questions and possible solutions to Fresno’s high rate of unemployment and poverty.

CNN’s Frank Sesno, who moderated the meeting, missed a good follow-up, when one individual stated that Fresno did not want the skill set he brought home from his experience in the Silicon Valley. No one was even curious enough to ask what that skill set was. Thus, the first stop in critical thinking was missed. Agreement that agriculture will remain the mainstay of Fresno was obvious, but no one examined whether this industry provides wealth only to its large landowners and a small percentage of managers and technical help, at the expense of providing a living wage to all its employees. Most of the employment in agriculture is at the low-wage end and seasonal. A similar situation exists in distribution-center warehouse employment, with the slight improvement that this low-wage employment is year-round.

Several panelists listed typical business complaints regarding government regulations (on safety, environmental protection, worker’s comp, health insurance, etc.), which they see as increasing costs and stifling expansion. No one countered with the suggestion that a healthy workforce and clean air and water might be important to all Valley residents. Amazingly, no one suggested that perhaps government played a helpful role in supplying farmers with taxpayer-subsidized water deliveries, for instance. No one suggested that government largesse in one area might be balanced by constraints in another. Certainly if our community is to solve some of its unemployment and

poverty problems, a good start would be to acknowledge both costs and benefits assigned by government to various individuals and groups in the Valley.

One of the next discussions originated when panelist Fred Ruiz, founder of Ruiz Foods, stated that his company had a challenge finding qualified workers, and that he spent \$700,000 to locate and bring out-of-area workers to staff his \$60,000-\$90,000 salary jobs. Ruiz charged that local workers couldn’t read, can’t write, lacked sufficient math skills, and failed to possess a good understanding of work ethics.

Moderator Senso then asked Fresno County Schools Superintendent, Pete Mehas, for a response. Mehas apparently accepted Ruiz’s statements regarding poor writing and math skills of local workers, as he attributed these educational failures to parents not doing their job, and politicians failing to hold the line on high school exit-exam testing. Was Mehas shifting the blame to avoid accountability or overlooking other explanations, especially since he backs Schwarzenegger’s cuts to education?

Moderator Senso did not ask Ruiz where he finally found his skilled employees, and the audience was left to assume that local education was to blame. Also left unanswered was whether the educational problems were at the college or K-12 level. After the meeting concluded, I asked Ruiz where he obtained his employees, as I thought that answer might allow Mehas to examine schools in that locality. Imagine my surprise when Ruiz stated Chicago as the location where he obtained qualified employees, and that he was looking for college-educated individuals with 10 or more years of management experience. The patient, Ruiz, withheld crucial information (the previously unmentioned college education and 10 years of experience), resulting in a misdiagnosis, and the audience departed with erroneous conclusions, or worse yet, reinforcement of their standard prejudices.

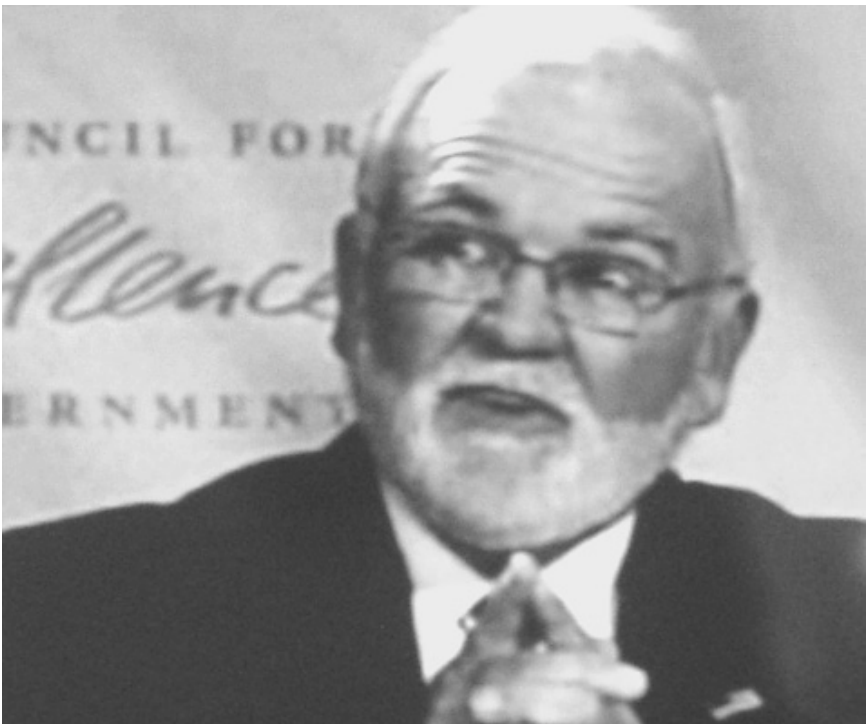
Also missing from this town hall was any attempt by the moderator to inquire more deeply into the frequent statements of educational shortcomings mentioned by several participants. Nor was any inquiry made of Mayor Autry, or anyone else, regarding insight into the types of jobs that might reduce Fresno’s unemployment. No one asked the mayor how his promotion of marriage events contributes to or detracts from solving the unemployment and poverty problems in Fresno.



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Finally, the event, being held on the campus of California State University, could have examined how increased funding for the educational mission of the university and higher entrance standards might aid in improving Fresno’s economic future. When the leadership at Fresno State puts more emphasis on asking the community to help academics first and athletics second, the university might provide a greater contribution toward a more complete economic and cultural enhancement of the Fresno region.

If Fresno wants to move ahead, it needs the next town hall meeting to be more inclusive and have much less of a “Chamber of Commerce” appearance. All the segments of our diverse community need to be brought into the discussion if we want long-term solutions that can evolve over time, solutions that are sustainable. Here’s hoping it will happen.



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Rey Leon, from the Latino Issues forum, asked why the voices of farmworkers and the poor were not being heard at this event.

