

The Voice of the Progressive Movement since 1996

A man in a red pinstripe suit and glasses is speaking to a group of reporters outside a modern building with large glass windows. Several microphones from news outlets like '30' and '24' are held up to him. To his left, a man in a green and white checkered shirt and headphones holds a microphone towards the speaker. Other people, including a man in a blue and white striped shirt and a man in a dark suit, stand in the background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime. The text 'Lawsuit Filed to Defend Homeless Against Attacks' is overlaid in large, bold, black letters at the top of the image.

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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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The Community Alliance newspaper reserves the right to edit all articles for space and clarity.

Letters to the Editor

While looking over my sample ballot I discovered that Mr. Wesley Firch outlines his plans for California, should he be elected State Senator, 14th District. He wishes to make California an anti-abortion state. Look on the page opposite where VOTER's PAMPHLET is printed, the numbers on the bottom of the page are CS-1300-1. You will see that he lists his plans for California. He is the Democratic candidate, but I cannot vote for him...if you feel as I do please pass this information on to others who share your feelings. I cannot recommend the other candidate but there is a write in candidate I can recommend, Vickie Fouts who is willing to run.

Vickie Haas

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Are you looking for a progressive alternative for the California 14th District Senate race? Are you tired of voting for the lesser of two evils? Do you want to vote for a Democratic candidate who didn't even get his own party's endorsement? As Madera County Chair of the Peace & Freedom Party, I have a suggestion. You are welcome to write in my name, Vickie Fouts, as a vote you can feel good about. Friends from three political parties – including Democrats - have urged me to volunteer to be the candidate in an unofficial write-in campaign that would represent a protest vote against candidates who do not represent their positions on the issues. Vote for Vickie Fouts – the candidate for Peace and Freedom.

The Peace and Freedom Party, founded in 1967, is committed to socialism, democracy, ecology, feminism and racial equality. We represent the working class, those without capital in a capitalist society. We organize toward a world where cooperation replaces competition, a world where all people are well fed, clothed and housed; where all women and men have equal status; where all individuals may freely endeavor to fulfill their own talents and desires; a world of freedom and peace where every community retains its cultural integrity and lives with all others in harmony.

Vickie Fouts

I laud the efforts of the Community Alliance in covering the issue of homelessness in Fresno. As one of the working class, I view the problem of homelessness as related to the affordable housing crisis in Fresno.

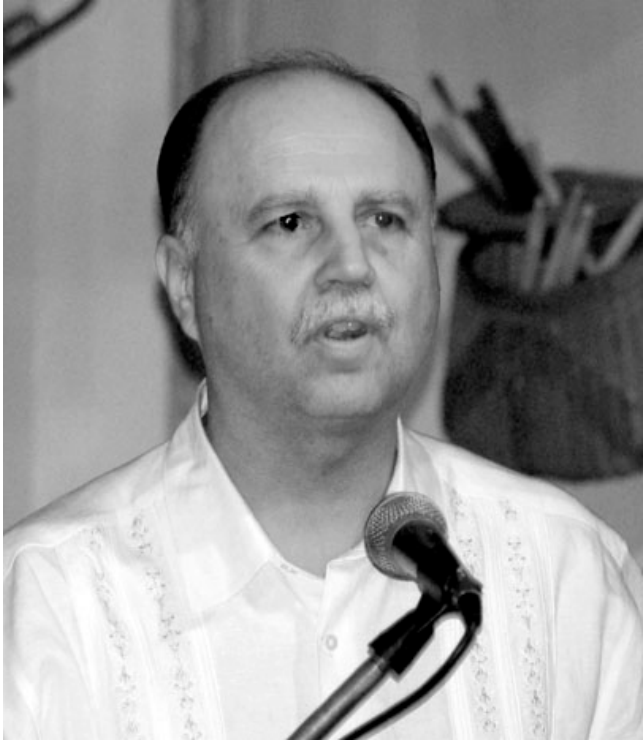
City and County legislators routinely link Fresno's affordable housing crisis to home ownership, and consequently more apartment complexes are being allowed to sell as condominiums than ever before, such as in Southeast Fresno where I live. This is unfortunate, because single college students or lower-middle class workers such as me, are not well-positioned for home ownership. The attractions of Fresno are already minimal. Think how attractive metropolitan cities, such as New York or Seattle are, in comparison. Not only is there a higher percentage of affordable rental units, but thriving arts, thanks to the disposable income which city dwellers, free of mortgage debts, have.

Turning Fresno's older apartment buildings into condominiums is not the same as buying into a retirement community replete with maintenance associations. Whereas custom condominiums are created exclusively for model residents to buy into, local condominiums converted from older apartment buildings discourage such associations. Residents coerced into ownership are less likely to know how to assert their rights when building and grounds maintenance issues arise. When my apartment complex, whose roofs have leaked for several years in a row, becomes leased as condominiums, I shall be responsible for repairs as well as mortgage payments- and lose twenty percent of my living space every time it rains!

Now I ask, what does a multimillionaire like Arnold Schwarzenegger, who lives in mansions, know about this? He isn't a man to have to worry about maintenance bills. If a room in his mansion leaked, it would only amount to two percent of his living quarters. Just as it is difficult for the extremely rich to understand problems of the working class, so it is for the working class to understand the complexities of simply surviving on the street with only a shopping cart for a room.

Please vote Democratic this November. It makes a difference if we vote for and support lawmakers who really represent our interests.

Christine Kroll



From the Editor

This month's front page story about the homeless illustrates the value of having an alternative/independent newspaper in town. The Community Alliance has shined a light on the City of Fresno's attack on the homeless, which resulted in increased community awareness, and has now led to a lawsuit to protect their civil rights. Without this newspaper's investigation, Public Records Act requests, and relentless determination to tell the story, the plight of the homeless would have remained invisible.

The spin-meisters at The Fresno Bee reported on June 23, 2006 that the City of Fresno was doing a great job of cleaning up our city streets. Their headline on that day was: *Cleaning house, Fresno crews descend on downtown area to tidy up a haven for homeless.* More recently, Bee columnist Bill McEwen slammed the American Civil Liberties Union for their support of homeless people's civil rights. The headline on Tuesday, October 19 was

Homeless people not served by ACLU suit. Why does the corporate media get it so wrong?

One reason the corporate media does not get the homeless story is because they are often missing in action. They do not put the resources into investigative journalism needed to tell such an in-depth and complicated story. They rely on city officials to tell them what is going on and they frame the story from the perspective of the ruling elite in this community. The superficial reporting that results, serves the power structure of this community very well. Public Relations personnel for the City of Fresno give the corporate media their spin on events. If reporters tell the story the way the spin masters want it to be told, that leads to access to interview people like the Chief of Police and other government officials. The reporters for the corporate media need this access to public officials so they can keep their jobs. It is a self-perpetuating system, but not a good way to find the truth in a difficult story. In this case, the homeless remained invisible, under constant attack by a city that wants to eliminate the homeless, not end homelessness.

The Community Alliance newspaper has given extensive coverage of these attacks on the homeless. We have reported the story not by standing under a tree talking to city spin-masters, but by interviewing the homeless themselves. In this issue, we tell their story (see page 7) and the story about the lawsuit to protect their rights (front page). The reason the lawsuit is taking place is because the attorneys saw what was happening in Fresno and they were appalled that homeless people's rights were being violated in such a flagrant manner. The attacks against the Fresno homeless are so intense and unique that it caught the attention of several Bay Area legal groups who came to this community and offered their services to help stop this injustice. They are doing this pro-bono (for free).

This community should not tolerate the homeless having their shelters destroyed by bulldozers, their medicine thrown into city garbage trucks, and being constantly stopped and harassed by the

Fresno Police Department. This would not be tolerated if it was happening to any other segment of the community. Could you imagine the outrage that would follow such treatment of the Jewish, African American, or Gay community?

Recently, I was told by several homeless people that they were prevented from registering to vote. They were told, by government workers that because they are homeless, they can't register or vote. What they are being told is a lie! By telling them that they can't register and vote, they are being disenfranchised of their democratic rights in this country. While the Community Alliance has not had time to investigate this story yet, it will be something you will be reading about in a future issue. We will also have an in-depth look at the Diebold voting machines being used by Fresno county.

If you value a Free Press and want to keep this important news coming to you, it is essential that you support the Community Alliance newspaper. We need you to subscribe, donate, and/or advertise in this newspaper. Information about advertising and subscribing is in the box on the upper left hand corner of this page. We can't do this alone - we need your support as we struggle for peace, social, and economic justice in this community.

Stir it Up!
First Wednesday at 3 PM
Fourth Friday at 5 PM
The Community Alliance has these two radio shows on KFCF 88.1 FM.
Hear interviews, analysis, and call-ins about what is happening locally in the struggle for peace, social and economic justice.

Veterans and Their Families Speak Out
Veteran’s Day - November 11, 2006

The Community Alliance invited veterans, their families, and community members to send us their thoughts about this day. Here is what they had to say:

I remember Veteran’s Day as a kid of ten or twelve sitting with my Dad on the curb and waving a flag as tanks and soldiers passed by in parade. I played war with my brothers and friends and thought it was “cool.” To me, Veterans always seemed to like war and be desirous of more military spending by the government.

I no longer think war is “cool” and now know it as the scourge of mankind throughout the ages. I am a Viet Nam-era veteran. I served honorably for four years in the US Coast Guard. I wish veteran’s organizations would focus on advocating on behalf of the mentally and physically wounded veterans and let others advocate for ever-increasing defense spending. My wish for Veteran’s Day 2006 is that the United States stop generating more veterans, and that my grandchildren or anyone else’s never be called upon to fight an unnecessary and unjust war. The world can never be at peace as long as war is profitable.

Paz,
Larry R. Mullen
Green Party Activist
US Coast Guard, 1961-65

Separator line

Unless you’ve been there, you will never understand what it feels like to hold your husband and say goodbye to him. There is the thought lingering in the back of your mind that he will possibly never come home. Standing in the airport watching my husband walk away was the worst day of my life.

My husband is deployed to Iraq for a year. I am reminded of the lyrics of the song, “Seasons of Love” from the musical Rent. “525,600 minutes - how do you measure, measure a year?” How will this next year measure? What will my husband miss? There will be no Thanksgiving, no Christmas, no Valentines Day, no Easter, no birthdays, no holidays. My husband will miss a year of the life of his 2 year old daughter and 4 year old step-daughter. He will miss his step-daughter’s first day of Kindergarten. He will also miss our first wedding anniversary. Politicians can talk on the importance of the “War on Terror”, but I see the emptiness that this war has caused in my home. War divides families. War destroys homes. War has no meaning.



Melissa Halsey
Wife of a U.S. Army Soldier

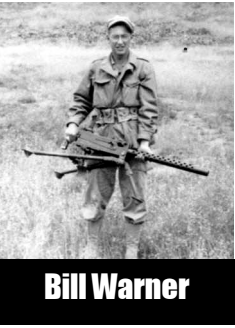
Separator line

A New Holiday?

I grew up celebrating Nov. 11 as “Armistice Day”, celebrating the end of “the War to End All Wars.” Then we came to the realization that someone was just pulling our leg about that, and renamed it “Veterans’ Day.” As we already have Memorial Day and the Fourth of July when we wave the flag for our veterans, perhaps we could come up with a new holiday. How about, “Victim’s Day?”

It would be an annual day of mourning for all of the

native peoples killed making the world safe for U.S. business interests. Participation in a prayer would be required of all schoolchildren, recited by the teacher in Korean, Mon-Khmer, Tagalog, Teribe, Yoruba, Quechua, Sakapulteko, Arabic, Hazaragi, Navajo, etc. Example: “Our Father, who art on Wall Street, we thank thee for all of the blessings we enjoy at the expense of the Third World. May their starving children rest in peace. Amen.”



Uncle Bill (former S/Sgt USMC 1950-1954)

Separator line

Uncle Johnnie was on Saipan. He never recovered from “shell shock.” He would sit in rocker with a wavy smile. He never drove a car after Saipan. Uncle Chuck was a B-17 pilot. He parachuted out of flaming bomber at 10,000 feet. He was a P.O.W. for 3 years. He recovered.

I despised tyranny. With the defeat of Fascists, Commies were next.

When I graduated from college I received my “greetings” by special delivery. I promptly got drunk & had a motorcycle wreck which gave a 6 month reprieve. I had my misgivings about Johnson’s war...but I had a plan. I would be a Quartermaster Officer. “In the rear with the gear.”

I volunteered for Vietnam at the urging of my C.O. When I arrived in ‘Nam, a southern Major asked,“Whar yew frum?” “Sir,I’m from San Francisco.” The whole room went quiet. I was sent quickly up to the front.

G-5 was Psyops & Civil Affairs. I carried a card giving me free access to anywhere. My job was winning the hearts & minds of the civilian population. Families scuttling from the destruction of their villages sobered me up. I convoyed food to “Relocated Strategic Hamlets.” I supervised rebuilding of our destruction. VC gave a me a pass because I was bringing cement for their tunnels. My saddest job was 101st Div. Solation Payments Officer. I would pay worthless Vietnamese money to families who had suffered at the hands of American troops. Empathy for the common Vietnamese people grew within me. I waded through the misery of innocents for 1 year.

I still despise tyranny. Only now I don’t have to drive as far. I’m proud to be a Green, as are my sons.

Dirk Van Gelder

Separator line

This Veterans Day we must never forget that all wars and all killings are a sign of the failure of the human race to communicate effectively with each other and to resolve problems without death and destruction. My seven years in the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force taught me that when nations prepare for war they will eventually use their military skills and equipment against other and generally weaker nations. In the twenty-first century war is an outdated tool for resolving peoples/nations differences. It might be argued that prior to the atomic age war for the most part only killed the two

combatants. This is no longer true. Modern war has the capability to destroy all life as we know it on earth today We must, specifically the United State and the European Union and the United Nations work towards a world in which full employment becomes the law within each nation’s boundaries. Labor unions and peace and social justice groups must work for full employment - that is the passage of a law which will never permit unemployment to rise above two and a quarter percent. Nations must lower the work week to 24 hours a week and train people how to effectively spend their leisure time. Millions of jobs can be created within nations if people are educated on how to spend leisure time. Most people will not want to join armies if they have a decent job. That is why, for the most part, I joined the U.S military fifty years ago - to get and earn a paycheck. Who is the “we” I refer to - it is “we the people”. In peace and friendship.

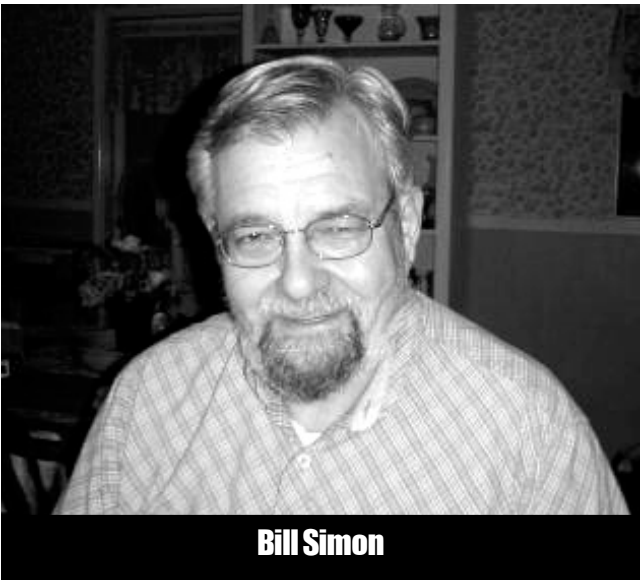


Vincent Lavery

Separator line

Every year when Veteran’s Day rolls around, I remember the year (1968-1969) I spent working with the homeless on Skid Row in Chicago. It seemed like nearly every one of those homeless alcoholics was a veteran, at that time mostly of the Korean War. I always wondered how many of those men would have been alcoholics anyway and how many just had not been able to readjust to society after military service. Even then, the VA was cutting back on their service to homeless veterans. It seems like our support of our veterans is scandalously non-existent. We send them to fight in questionable wars, Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan/Iraq, and offer so little support when they return. Our support for our troops consists mainly in declaring an annual Veteran’s Day so the rest of us can have a day off work or school while we turn a blind eye to those veterans who are suffering from military service, from agent orange, and from depleted uranium. It is time to support our troops by realizing that war is always wrong and never achieves peace.

Bill Simon
President, Peace Fresno





“I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested.”

Smedley Darlington Butler
(July 30, 1881 – June 21, 1940), nicknamed “The Fighting Quaker” and “Old Gimlet Eye,” was a Major General in the U.S. Marine Corps and, at the time of his death, the most decorated Marine in U.S. history. Butler was awarded the Medal of Honor twice during his career, one of only 19 people to be awarded the medal twice.

4 Local Think Tank Presents Series of Articles in the Community Alliance

Some of our region’s best analysts are fellows of the Central California Institute, our local progressive think tank. To provide a forum for the work of our fellows and kindred spirits, we have contracted with the Community Alliance for a series of five articles on subjects of local importance. The continuation of the Institute depends on the interest and support of the community. To utilize the expertise of the fellows, to comment on the work of the Institute, or to provide financial underwriting, contact CCI at FCNV, 1584 N Van Ness, Fresno 93728 or call Ray Ensher at 439-8140.

Reproductive Justice – Moving Beyond the Abortion Debate

By Patsy Montgomery

For too long the pro-choice movement has been defined by the singular issue of abortion. While indeed working to protect access to abortion services, pro-choice activists have also been working to increase access to a full range of reproductive health care & contraceptive options. The right of the individual woman to have a child or not have a child, the right to parent children, and the right to control their bodies have been central to the work of the movement. Recently an entirely new framework has been articulated to reflect the goals of protecting the overall health and wellbeing of women and communities. The Reproductive Justice movement recognizes that the “ability of any woman to determine her own reproductive destiny is directly linked to the conditions in her community and these conditions are not just a matter of individual choice and access. Reproductive Justice is an intentional impulse to shape the competing ideals of equality and the

social reality of inequality. Reproductive Justice points out the inequality of opportunity in controlling our reproductive destiny.” (Understanding Reproductive Justice, SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, Loretta J. Ross, May 2006)

At the 1994 International Conference on Population & Development in Cairo, women of color began to talk about the connections between class, race and gender issues in reproductive politics. Later that same year a group of African-American women organized the Black Women’s Caucus at a national pro-choice conference and created the term “Reproductive Justice” defined as reproductive health integrated into social justice.

In 2005, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (ACRJ) identified three main frameworks for fighting reproductive oppression as a way to strengthen and consolidate the movement. These frameworks are: 1) Reproductive Health, 2) Reproductive Rights, and 3) Reproductive Justice.

Reproductive Health places an emphasis on necessary reproductive health services that women need to stay healthy. Reproductive Rights is based on universal legal protections for women and sees these protections as basic rights. Reproductive Justice identifies reproductive oppression as a result of the intersections of multiple oppressions and inherently linked to the struggle for social justice and human rights. The ACRJ stated that while each of the frameworks is “imperative; by itself, a single one cannot achieve the goal of ending reproductive oppression. Ultimately, as in any movement, all three components representing service, advocacy and organizing are crucial to advancing the movement.” (ACRJ, A New Vision for advancing our movement for reproductive health, reproductive rights and reproductive justice. 2005)

Communities of color have led the Reproductive Justice movement. They recognized long ago that narrowly focusing on protecting the legal right to abortion neglects community-wide issues that directly affecting a woman’s decision making process. They understood that working within a Reproductive Justice framework empowers women and girls to challenge the multiple systems that contribute to reproductive oppression. The more inclusive framework brings focus on the outcome ultimately aimed at: better lives for women, healthier families and sustainable communities.

We are living at a time in our country where there is a sustained, systematic denial to women & girls of self-determination and control over their bodies, and this challenge includes but is not limited to reproductive choices. Nationally we have seen, cuts to public assistance, the passage of anti-immigrant legislation, environmental policies that allow toxins in our food, air & water supplies, bias against queer & transgender communities. We are engaged in struggles to achieve workers rights & a living wage, accessible public health care and quality schools, accessible/affordable child care, gender equity, and comprehensive sexuality education. All these issues have an impact on the context in which individuals make choices related to their reproductive health/rights.

Californians are fortunate that we rank number one nationally in public policies protecting reproductive rights, access and freedoms (Guttmacher Institute, February 2006), but if one uses a Reproductive Justice lens to view these successes, one sees much work that needs to be done to ensure all women & girls have equal opportunity to a healthy life & community.

In the Central Valley, equal access to healthy nutritious food, affordable health care, education, reproductive health services, protection from harmful environmental forces, living wages, affordable childcare, transportation, and gender equity remain areas of concern. Hospital takeovers and mergers by religious institutions jeopardize access to reproductive health care services in underserved rural communities where patients may be left with only one choice of provider. Pharmacists who impose their personal, religious and moral ideology by refusing to fill prescriptions for contraceptives put at risk women & teens seeking to prevent an unintended

pregnancy. The Central Valley has some of the highest rates of teen-births and sexually transmitted diseases in the state, yet most public schools continue, illegally, to teach abstinence until marriage curricula rather than state mandated comprehensive sex education programs.

In this November’s election, Proposition 85 would disproportionately affect vulnerable disenfranchised teens, especially those living in rural communities. A girl afraid to tell her parents about a pregnancy isn’t going to march up to a judge in a strange courthouse, especially if she is being abused or is undocumented. She doesn’t need a judge – she needs a counselor and a doctor as soon as possible. Currently 35 states have laws similar to Prop 85. The result has been an increase in the number of second trimester abortions and dangerous self-induced or back-alley procedures.

The influence of conservative religious ideologues in public policy decisions at local governmental and school levels should be of great concern to all individuals and groups working towards reproductive justice & healthier communities. As November 7th approaches, we all need to be vigilant in questioning our local, state & national elected leaders. We need to look at the voting records of those who are asking to be re-elected. Where do they stand on these issues? We need to better educate ourselves and our families, friends and co-workers about how working for Reproductive Justice can improve the quality of all of our lives. In the words of Dolores Huerta, “The most important day of the year and your life is Election Day.” Remember the importance of reproductive justice when you vote.

For more information on Reproductive Justice and how you can get involved check out these websites: www.sistersong.net, www.reproductivejustice.org, and www.plannedparenthood.org

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Patsy Montgomery is the Regional Director of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood Mar Monte. She has lived in Fresno since 1969 and has been an advocate for women’s issues since the early 1980’s. She is committed to social, reproductive & environmental justice causes and is a mentor for the Imagine Change Coalition www.imaginechangecoalition.com Most recently, Patsy was instrumental in bringing 180 college & high school campus organizers reflecting the social justice, reproductive justice and environmental justice movements to Fresno for a two day conference.

Protect Choice: Vote No on Prop 85 This November



Last November, California voters defeated Prop 73, a proposed amendment to the California Constitution that would have required doctors to notify parents 48 hours before terminating the pregnancy of an unwed minor.

But now the measure is back.

In November, Californians will vote on Prop 85—a nearly identical parental notification initiative that threatens the health and safety of our teens.

California voters got it right the first time. But one wealthy, fervently anti-choice man—the proponent of Prop 73—has spent more than \$2 million to put his attack on teen safety back on the ballot.

Supporters of Prop 85—including the Traditional Values Coalition, Evangelicals for Social Action and Right to Life of Central California—are the same people who want to overturn Roe v. Wade and ban all abortions.

We must defeat this measure — again.

This is a paid political ad

The Community Alliance Political Endorsement Grid • November 2006									
Offices	Fresno County Democratic Party	Fresno County Peace and Freedom Party	Planned Parenthood	Green Party	Central Valley Progressive PAC	Fresno Teachers Association	SEIU-UHW	League of Women Voters	Fresno, Madera, Kings, Tulare Central Labor Council
Governor	Phil Angelides		Phil Angelides	Peter Miguel Camejo			Phil Angelides		Phil Angelides
Lt. Governor	John Garamendi		John Garamendi	Donna Warren			John Garamendi		John Garamendi
Sec. of State	Debra Bowen		Debra Bowen	Forrest Hill			Debra Bowen		Debra Bowen
Controller	John Chiang		John Chiang	Laura Wells			John Chiang		John Chiang
Treasurer	Bill Lockyer		Bill Lockyer	Mehul Thakker			Bill Lockyer		Bill Lockyer
Attorney General	Jerry Brown		Jerry Brown	Mike Wyman			Jerry Brown		Jerry Brown
Insurance Commissioner	Cruz Bustamante		Cruz Bustamante	Larry Cafiero			Cruz Bustamante		Cruz Bustamante
US Senate	Diane Feinstein		Dianne Feinstein	Todd Chretien					Diane Feinstein
House of Representatives, District 19	T. J. Cox		T. J. Cox						
House of Representatives, District 21	Steve Haze		Steve Haze	John Miller					
House of Representatives, District 34									
State Assembly, District 34				David Minton Silva					
Fresno County									
Sheriff	Margaret Mims		Margaret Mims		Margaret Mims		Cal Minor		Cal Minor
City Council District 1			Blong Xiong		Blong Xiong		Blong Xiong		Blong Xiong
Fresno County Board of Education		Floyd Harris			Floyd Harris				
State Community College District #4									Leslie W. Thonesen
State Community College District #5			Dorothy Smith		Dorothy Smith				Dorothy Smith
Fresno Unified School Districts									
District 1						Cal Johnson	Cal Johnson		Cal Johnson
District 3					Valerie Davis	Valerie Davis	Valerie Davis		
District 4					Tony Vang	Tony Vang	Tony Vang		Tony Vang
District 5						Michelle Arax-Asadoorian	Michelle Arax-Asadoorian		Michelle Arax-Asadoorian
Fresno County Measures									
C	YES	NO			YES		YES		YES
State Propositions									
1A	YES	NO		YES	YES				YES
1B	YES	NO		No				YES	YES
1C	YES	NO		NO				YES	YES
1D	YES	NO		YES	YES			YES	YES
1E	YES	NO		NO				YES	YES
83	YES	NO	YES	NO					
84	YES	NO		NO	YES			YES	YES
85	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO		NO	NO	NO
86	YES	NO	YES	NO			YES	YES	YES
87	YES	YES		YES	YES		YES		YES
88	NO	NO			YES		NO	NO	NO
89	YES	YES		YES	YES		YES	YES	
90	NO	NO		NO	NO		NO	NO	NO

5 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE NOVEMBER 2006



VOTE
BLONG XIONG FOR FRESNO CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 1

An independent Councilman for all of Fresno and a candidate you can trust!

S U P P O R T E D & E N D O R S E D B Y

Congressman Jim Costa

Fresno County Board of Supervisors
Susan Anderson

Assemblymembers Juan Arambula
and Nicole Parra

Fresno Bee

Central Labor Council of Fresno
& Madera Counties

Plumbers and Steamfitters
Local Union 246

United Food & Commercial
Workers Union Local 8

SEIU United Healthcare
Workers-West

Service Employees International
Union Local 535

SEIU Local 1000

Fresno Firefighters Local No 753

The Black Political Council

James & Coke Hallowell

Asian Village

Kings Winery Medical Center



Vote No on Measure C

Dallas Blanchard

Portland or LA? Where would you rather live? How about when it comes to transportation and air pollution? If you said LA I am sure you are among a tiny minority of Fresnoans. But you would be among an apparent majority of liberals, “progressives,” conservatives, Republicans, developers, building and trucking industry officials, Fresno Bee writers, and politicians who all support Measure C, a sales tax measure that will surely propel our community toward LA style sprawl and air pollution.

A full two thirds of Measure C expenditures will go to new highway and road projects. Supporters claim that this will help clear the air by reducing congestion. If building more roads and freeways is the answer to air pollution, Los Angeles and Houston should have the cleanest air in the nation. Sadly, Measure C will take us

in the direction of these clear failures in land use, transportation, and community planning. More people in more cars traveling more miles means one thing, more air pollution.

Worse, a significant portion of the regional transportation spending goes to new freeway construction of hwy 180 west to I5 and east to the foothills. These new freeways are magnets for suburban sprawl and air pollution. Imagine Fresno/Clovis/Sanger/Reedley/ Orange Cove/Selma/Kerman as one gigantic LA style megalopolis. Measure C takes us decisively in that direction. And you might ask yourself where Caltrans is planning to get the massive amounts of aggregate to pull off these mega-highway projects. Will it come from the proposed gravel mine on Jesse Morrow Mountain? From our river beds? From some new foothill mine like the one that Madera residents fought so hard to stop?

Misappropriating previous Measure C funds to build projects not specified in the original proposal—freeways 168 and 41—has made suburban sprawl bad enough.

Twenty more years of freeways will seal our fate. Some say Fresno is too spread out for real clean air options like light rail. It isn’t, yet. But it’s ironic that Measure C includes money for a “plan” for future public transit alternatives while basically eliminating the possibility of building those alternatives. The time for studies is over. Real, attractive, efficient clean air alternatives to the automobile should already be under construction. A proper Measure C would reverse the ratios giving two thirds for clean air alternatives like light rail and inter-city rail and one third for street repairs. Measure C includes zero funding for effective clean air alternatives.

Backers also claim that, with improvements, people will take the bus. We need evidence of this. Even with more frequently occurring buses on major routes, how many people will actually leave their cars to take the bus? Taking polluting school buses off the road is legitimate. But that is a responsibility of school districts. Plus, any gains made there will be more than offset by losses due to further suburban sprawl on new and

existing freeways.

A sales tax is a regressive tax; it disproportionately hurts those who can least afford it by placing a flat tax on every item purchased in the county. Those most negatively affected by Measure C are served poorly by it. They will not be using the freeways as many of them do not own automobiles. They will not be benefitting from local road projects, nearly all of which are for road widening in the new areas of town where poor people are unlikely to be moving. In fact, such road widening is the responsibility of developers, and Measure C funds will wind up being used to underwrite developers of new housing projects. Trail improvements and bike lanes are also developers’ responsibilities. Again, we should be using these funds to help the poorest members of our community with transportation not the wealthiest and most politically connected special interests in Fresno.

Privately, the stakeholders who were to represent the public interest in planning Measure C admit that they do not like it. Apparently, they were afraid that if they didn’t go along with the current proposal, which is heavily imbalanced toward developer and other business interests, they would be portrayed by those same interests as obstructionist and extremist. They gave way figuring that the spending for buses and bikes is the best that they could get. And this is what it all really comes down to: neither road and freeway building or even rapid growth, for that matter, is inevitable. On the contrary, these are basic political questions. Our quality of life will depend upon slower growth and sensible transportation and land use planning. The proposed Measure C extension would take us in exactly the opposite direction. It is time to take a different direction. We can do better. Vote No on Measure C.

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Homeless Women Speak Out

The statements below are from two of the women who are a part of the lawsuit (see page 1) to stop the City of Fresno from taking and immediately destroying their possessions. These are the declarations, in their own words, they gave to the attorneys working on the case. For more information about this lawsuit, and other statements by the participants, see www.aclunc.org .

Charlene Clay

I am 48 years old and I currently live in Fresno, California. I have lived in Fresno for 15 years. My husband and I have been homeless for approximately six months. We had to leave our last apartment because the rent was \$850 per month and this was more than we could afford to pay. We do not have enough money for an up-front deposit and first and last month's rent to be able to rent an apartment. I would really like to have housing, because I want my grandchildren to be able to visit me. During the time that we have been homeless, I stayed for a little while at the Naomi House for women, but this meant that I could not live with my husband. I have been in several abusive relationships in the past. One of my previous abusers knocked my teeth out. My current husband is not abusive and it is important for us to stay together. Because my husband and I cannot stay together in shelters, and because space is limited there, we sleep outside in tents.

Sometime during the first two weeks of April, 2006, the City of Fresno took almost all of my personal belongings. I do not recall the exact date, but I remember the events well. We were camped on a hill off of G Street. My husband and I were at the Poverello House when we heard that the City was taking people's property. We initially thought that the City was only taking belongings from in front of the Poverello House, but then someone told us the City was going up to the hill where our belongings were. I walked as fast as I could to get there, but I do not walk very fast because I need surgery on my foot, and I have high blood pressure and asthma. By the time I arrived at the site, it was empty, except for the crumpled shell of our tent and a few other stray items. All the tents and items belonging to the Mexican workers we shared the site with were also gone. I could see the tracks in the dirt from where the dump truck had driven.

The City did not give us any notice that it was going to take and destroy our belongings. My husband and I lost almost everything we owned, including: my teeth, my medications, a small TV, a laptop computer, a bike, our dog food, the blankets, sleeping bags, my husband's weights for lifting, and our clothes, including a new pair of shoes I had and my personal papers. I was extremely upset.

The City came again to our campsite on October 8, 2006. We were camped in a new spot, under the bridge at San Benito and H Street. At 8:30 in the morning, the police came without any warning and started taking shopping carts from people. The police threw everyone's possessions on the ground and then took all the carts and threw them onto a truck. After taking the carts, the police said they would be back for all the rest of our



Charlene Clay and her dog Chica at City Hall during the sleep in held to bring attention to the homeless issue.

belongings, at 12:00 that day, but they have not come yet. I do not know where I could go to be safe from these property seizures.

Based upon my experience, wherever I go as a homeless person in the City of Fresno, the City of Fresno workers, accompanied by the Fresno Police Department, will come to take and destroy my personal possessions. This has happened to me twice already and I believe it will happen again. The City of Fresno has made it clear to me by destroying my property twice and by the way in which they did that, that because I am a homeless person, I will always be vulnerable to having my property taken and destroyed by City of Fresno workers and police.

Pamela Kincaid

For the last 5 or 6 years, I have lived in the area just south of downtown Fresno. I make a little money from recycling and selling crafts, but not enough to afford an apartment or other housing. I have occasionally stayed at the Naomi House, which is the one women's shelter in town. However, I am claustrophobic and have had panic attacks when I have stayed there before, so I have not done that for the last 2 years. Also, I have a dog who stays with me for protection and for company, and he cannot stay with me if I am in a shelter. So most of the time, I live outside.

Approximately one year ago, I had set up a makeshift tent by the railroad tracks, just south of the downtown area of Fresno. I believe that this is the railroad's property. A man who works for the railroad comes through the area every month or so, basically to check on things. He asks for people's names, but has never asked me to leave, and I have not heard him ask anyone else to leave. Except for a dock in the back of Wilson's Motorcycle Warehouse, I have never seen any signs in that area telling people they can't be there.

I had also seen Fresno police and sanitation workers come through the area every month or so, taking homeless people's property. I was usually able to keep my belongings from being taken by moving them when the workers came through. Unfortunately, this one time approximately one year ago, I left my property unattended, and when I came back, it was all gone.

Almost all of my possessions were taken, including important documents like my identification, my birth certificate, and my telephone/ address book, which had important contact information for people I want to keep in touch with. Worst of all, I lost family photos, including the only pictures I had of my sister, my daughter, and my deceased mother. Those photos can never be replaced.

No one, either from the City or from anywhere else, told me beforehand that City workers were going to come through that day and take homeless people's property. No one told me any way to get my property back once it was taken. Having previously seen City workers just throw away other people's belongings into a dump truck as if it were trash, I have no doubt that this is what was done to my belongings that day.

Approximately 2 months ago, I was again staying near the railroad tracks, just south of downtown. Since the previous time that my property was destroyed, I had managed to accumulate a few things that I was keeping with me. I had many of my belongings in a shopping cart, covered by a tarp. This was an old, outdated cart that had been abandoned and I was using it to store my possessions. This is one of the ways I could move my possessions. I left for an hour or two in the middle of the day, and when I returned, the cart had been taken. Items that had been stored in the cart had been dumped onto the ground. Some items, such as clothing, were still there. However, other important items had been taken. These included a toolbox and various tools (screwdriver, wire strippers, flashlight). Those tools were very important to me because I used them to make a little income. For example, I used the wire strippers to take wire off of metal items so they can be recycled. I used my other tools to take apart metal items to sell for scrap. Also, I used these tools to make crafts, such as jewelry and "dreamcatchers," which I was able to sell to make a little bit of money.

Since I knew that City workers often came through the area and took homeless people's belongings, I was sure that this is what had happened that day. I later confirmed with other homeless people in the area that City workers had been in the area that day, and that the workers had been particularly focused on taking shopping carts. I never received any notice from the City or from anyone else that people from the City were going to be coming through the area taking carts or anything else, and I was not given any way to get my belongings back after the fact.

I have also personally observed other raids, including one that happened approximately 4 ½ months ago. In that raid, I saw City workers destroy homeless people's property, even though it was clearly owned. For example, I saw City workers use a bulldozer-type machine with "claws" to scoop up and destroy an eight-man tent that was set up near the railroad tracks. That tent belonged to a homeless man I knew from the area, who was living in the tent but who just happened to be gone when the City people came by. He also had some cats staying with him. I think the cats may have been inside the tent at the time it was destroyed; at any rate, I never saw them again after that. I saw a very similar raid about a month earlier. One of the City workers told me at that time that they were doing these raids because local politicians were upset about having seen stories on the news about how homeless people were living on the streets of Fresno.

Before I became homeless, I used to have a house and a job. I lost both when I developed injuries at work that made it impossible for me to keep my job. I hope that someday I will be able to get off the streets and into permanent housing. But the fact that the City keeps taking and destroying my property makes that goal seem that much harder to achieve. I always live with the fear that the City will come and take what few possessions I have left.



Pam Kincaid tells her story at the press conference announcing the lawsuit to protect homeless people's constitutional rights.

Homecare Workers Win Big

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors affirmed their commitment to provide quality homecare to Fresno residents by voting to approve a groundbreaking new contract that significantly improves wages and benefits for local homecare workers. Community leaders, clergy, and other residents praised the Supervisors as they ratified a three year contract that will provide wage increases of \$2.10 per hour and health benefit improvements of \$0.20 per hour to 8,500 homecare workers represented by SEIU United Healthcare Workers-West.

"This is something we've been working on for 15 years. These improvements in wages and benefits will make a major change in the quality of life for those of us who receive assistance, but also for those who provide for us on a daily basis," said John Wilkins, an IHSS con-

sumer who receives homecare services.

Before today's vote, Fresno County homecare workers earned only \$8.15 an hour. After today's vote, homecare workers will see their wages rise to \$10.25 by October 1, 2008 and will receive dental coverage in addition to their current medical benefits, effective October 1, 2006. The contract expires on October 1, 2009.

"In order to make housing and healthcare more accessible, you've got to close the gap between wages and the cost of living. Fresno County and its homecare workers are closing that gap with this agreement," commented Pastor Paul Werfelman of Hope Lutheran Church.

The agreement includes approximately \$61 million dollars in state and federal matching funds over the next three years to pay for over 80% of the improved wages and benefits. It is estimated that the wage increase will result in \$40 million dollars of new spending activity in Fresno County. The new spending will also generate new tax revenues – possibly as much as several hundred thousand dollars a year.

"One of the reasons I'm supporting this increase is because of the millions of new dollars in matching funds that will be infused into the local economy. And these dollars will go a long way towards helping disabled and elderly county residents find consistent quality care," said Supervisor Susan Anderson.

"Our new contract with IHSS Homecare workers is a win for the whole community. Homecare clients, who are some of Fresno's most vulnerable residents, will get the consistent support from seasoned caregivers. And Fresno's economy will benefit from the spending activity and additional tax revenue created by our better paid homecare workers," said Supervisor Bob Waterston.

8,500 homecare workers are employed by Fresno In-Home Support Services, an agency governed by the County Board of Supervisors that makes it possible for Fresno seniors and people with disabilities to live with dignity in their own homes, rather than in nursing homes. Five times cheaper than institutional care, IHSS homecare provides assistance with house cleaning, meal preparation, laundry, and grocery shopping, bathing, groom, and transportation to medical appointments.

"Homecare isn't just my job, it's my commitment to care for the community I love: Fresno. With our new contract, I can afford to stay in my job and keep providing quality care for my client so she can remain living with dignity in her own home," said IHSS homecare worker Judy Keifer.

###

SEIU United Healthcare Workers-West, with more than 140,000 members, is the largest and most powerful healthcare union in the Western U.S. We represent every type of healthcare worker, including nursing, professional, technical and service classifications. Our mission is to achieve high quality healthcare for all.



Homecare workers have been struggling for a Living Wage for years. The above march was held in October of 2003. Photo by Mike Rhodes

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Henry Perea

Fresno County Board of Supervisors



"After meeting with both candidates I.U.O.E. local 39 chose Scott Miller as the candidate who best understands the needs of the working people"

-Marina Magdaleno

Business Manager, IUOE local 39



"Our organization interviewed both candidates in the City Council Race for District 1. And VOTED Unanimously to endorse Scott Miller. He is a father and businessman with a strong track record of working to improve his community. He is a public servant NOT a career politician."

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Whither Darfur?

Aaron Tesfaye

Sudan is a nation confronted by three intractable political challenges, where peace has been elusive and political solutions to state-society conflicts chimerical. In the south of the country, the people under the leadership of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) had fought the central government for some twenty years and in the process up to a million people had lost their lives. In the east, there is a simmering rebellion fueled by politics and disgruntled army elements that live scattered among the Beja in and around Kasala. In the west, the region of Darfur has become known as a land of an all-out scorched-earth war, rape, plunder, and refugees.



The daily suffering of the people of Darfur has left Africans as well as the world scrambling for a "solution" to this intractable problem. Since Darfur borders Chad and the Central African Republic, the crisis has led Darfurians to become cross-border refugees. They have fled for survival, attempting to escape the marauding *Janjaweed* (Arab militias) and the central government's aerial bombardments. They live in a no man's land in tent cities in the middle of the Sahara desert.

In antiquity, Sudan was a province of Meroe. It came to be known as *Beled al Sud* (land of the black people) in AD 700 when Islam was introduced into the region. The citizens of ancient Meroe and their leaders were black Africans, and historians have noted that the kingdom was so powerful that it had attempted the conquest of the land of the Egyptians. When the soldiers of the Prophet, Muslim Arabs, began to subjugate Christian Sudanese, Darfurians initially resisted and were conquered. Just as the 25th Egyptian dynasty subjugated most of the northern area of what is now known as Sudan, the Arab Muslims conquered and controlled South Sudan and Darfur.

The atrocities committed by the conquerors in the process of the Islamization of Christians and followers of traditional African religions bordered on genocide, and the rampant racism of the occupiers and the introduction of slavery into the region sealed the fate of many Darfurians. The new system opened the way to the sexual exploitation of women and child labor. Thus it would not be an exaggeration to state that today's Darfur insurrection is an anti-slavery rebellion conducted in the 21st century.

In the south, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army under the late John Grang, fought the Khartoum government to a standstill for almost three decades and has finally had its voice heard. Today it has established *de facto* independence. The Machako Agreement signed between Khartoum and the SPLA in Kenya gives the vice presidency of the Sudan government to the president of the SPLA. In addition, the agreement guarantees, at least on the level of theory, a fair and balanced scheme for economic development and a formula for



SLA Rebels rest in territory that is now free from government rule. The Sudanese government and their Janjaweed militias began attacking Darfur's civilian population in response to an SLA-led rebellion in 2003. (Photo by Shane Bauer)

wealth sharing. It also assures self-rule up to six years, after which a referendum is to be held in the south on whether to stay within Sudan or opt for *de jure* independence. The SPLA has forced the Khartoum government to make key concessions to end the conflict and the government has acquiesced, forced also by international pressures.

However, while peace is holding in the south, no olive branch has been offered in Darfur. The inhabitants of Darfur continue to suffer from the maniacal raids of the state-sponsored Arab militias and government helicopter gun ships. These raids so far have claimed the lives of 300,000 people and displaced 2.5 million inhabitants who have become refugees. Those affected by the terror are estimated at about 4 million and close to a million of those are beyond the reach of humanitarian assistance.

The Darfur insurrection started in 1987. The year is important because it was a year of famine in the region and also a time when Arab Muslims began to organize and provoke the Darfurians, namely, the *Fur*, *Zagawa*, and *Massalit* farmers. The government soon began to organize the Janjaweed, the mounted Arab militia that has operated in league with the government to push largely African ethnic groups out of the area. This was a period of rising ethnic antagonisms. The civil war in neighboring Chad began to spill over across the border bringing with it a supremacist ideology that was adopted by some Arabs giving rise to the Janjaweed.

The creation of the Janjaweed was a direct consequence of the ethnic composition of the Sudanese regular army. For decades the army had been mostly composed of Kordofan Nubas and some Darfurians. Since military service did not exactly appeal to Nile-based Arab elites

who have dominated the political process, and because Darfurian troops were considered unreliable in fighting their people, the government came up with the idea of having a fighting force imbued with racial hatred that would stamp out the Darfur rebellion. It found this fighting force among northern pastoralists who had suffered from the desertification of their pasturelands. Although allegations have been made that the government recruits Janjaweed from the "Arab" tribes of Chad, most of the recruits are immigrants or their descendants from West Africa who, for one reason or another, have been Islamized.

In any case, the provocations by the Janjaweed quickly turned into direct attacks using modern weapons secretly provided by the Sudanese central government of Sadiq al Mahdi. These attacks and the government's open policy of disarming Darfurians led to outrage and to the establishment of the *Fur* self-defense militia, which was renamed the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA). When Arab pastoralists refused to pay blood money for atrocities committed against Zagawa farmers, the Zagawa joined the SLA.

According to Minni Arkoi Minawi, leader of the SLA and a former English teacher, the manifesto of the Sudanese Liberation Army gives as its purpose the establishment of a nation in which the diverse peoples can live within a framework of determining their own destiny, live in political equality, where there is no discrimination based on race or in the distribution of economic goods. However, before these lofty goals could be realized, the SLA split into two groups. The majority group favored Minni Arkoi Minawi and the other group went under the leadership of Abdulwahid Mohammed Alnur, a Fur.

A different armed group operating in Darfur is the Justice for Equality Movement (JEM), whose beginnings and agenda are a bit different from those of the SLA. In 1989, General Omar Albashir overthrew the Sadiq al Mahdi government in a military coup. The coup was successful in part because an important politician and Muslim scholar, the Sorbonne-educated Ph.D., Dr. Sheik Hassan Al-Turabi, was a key behind-the-scenes leader of the new government. In 1991, Al-Turabi became the General Secretary of the National Islamic Front (NIF), which facilitated the building of a network of Islamic organizations and officials from the local population in far-flung Darfur. In 1999, Al-Turabi brought the government of Sudan to a standstill when he requested that parliament devolve some of the powers of the all-powerful presidency. The situation led to a crisis, to the dissolving of parliament, to the firing of thousands of NIF members from government posts, and to the declaration of a state of emergency. During this period, NIF-sponsored black African officials who had been organized by Al-Turabi in Darfur lost their livelihood overnight. In 2003, they formed the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which is led by Dr. Khalil Ibrahim Muhammad, an Al-Turabi supporter. Muhammad was the author of *The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in the Sudan*, an outlawed manifesto that claims that Nile-based Arabs have dominated the government at the expense of the majority of Sudanese. Indeed historically, the British colonial rulers after tacking Darfur on to Sudan in 1917, only provided education in Darfur to the sons of chiefs, so as not to produce challengers to



Although the Sudanese government controls the large cities, most of the territory in Darfur is now controlled by various rebel groups. (Photo by Shane Bauer)

their authority. As a consequence, in 1935, the region had only one elementary school. There was no maternity clinic until the 1940s, and when Sudan attained independence in 1956 Darfur had few hospitals and very little infrastructure and endured a policy of malign neglect by the national elite, raising the question of whether Darfur had a future in Sudan. Thus, when the Darfur rebellion began, the JEM was a natural ally and its units cooperated with SLA forces in the opening phase. Although initially the Khartoum government had tried to cut a separate peace with the SLA, the latter had demanded that both the SLA and the JEM be part of the peace process

In mid-2004, the Darfur tragedy forced itself into the international arena. In sharp contrast to the official U.S. reaction to the Rwandan massacres under the Clinton administration, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell called the situation in Darfur “genocide.” He accused the Sudanese government of using famine and mass rape as weapons of war. But such castigation was for international consumption. Sudan, after all, is a major oil producer and has become a critical ally of the U.S. in its war against terror. Thus neither the U.S. nor the European Union prodded the United Nations for international sanctions. But the irony is that southern Darfur also contains significant unexploited oil reserves that are attracting diverse international interest into the region from countries such as China, Britain, the US and some Horn of Africa nations that have their own agendas.

By May 5, 2006, the African Union (AU) managed to get some of the rebels to join with the government in Khartoum in signing the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in Abuja, Nigeria. But the peace agreement seems to have actually made security worse because it removed the capacity of Darfurians to defend themselves against the Janjaweed, which is critical to civilians in the area. Only one of the three major rebel groups involved in Darfur’s forty-month civil war signed the DPA with the government of Sudan. That group is the SLA faction headed by Minni Arkoi Minawi. This SLA faction announced that it would honor the ceasefire imposed by the agreement and moved its major fighting force north, where Minawi is fighting for control of his own ethnic group, the Zagawa.

By ending offensive operations that used to keep the Janjaweed at bay, the SLA faction of Minni Arkoi Minawi has let security of the people deteriorate so



Photo by Shane Bauer

badly that the local SLA force is a ragtag army without equipment. Many of its fighters are children armed with clubs. And Khartoum has done little to disarm the Janjaweed, which is terrorizing the people such as the *Massalit* in villages and on farms. AU troops that have been sent to Darfur rarely conduct aggressive patrolling that could provide a deterrent to the violence, claiming they are not mandated to conduct patrols but are expected only to report cease-fire violations.

Meanwhile, Minawi and his forces that are signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement have been conducting a reign of terror throughout villages in North Darfur in an effort to fight the rival SLA faction led by Abdulwahid Mohammed Alnur and others who have rejected the Peace Agreement. The violence has been focused against civilians; the killing has targeted young men. The internecine conflict has contributed to the displacement of tens of thousands of people.

In August 2006, the three Darfur rebel groups that had refused to sign the African Union peace deal met in Asmara, Eritrea, and

formed a new alliance to fight the Khartoum government. They called themselves the National Redemption Front (NRF). The front consists of the Justice and Equality Movement, a holdout faction of the original Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), and the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SFDA). The NRF rejects the Darfur Peace Agreement, otherwise known as the “Abuja Document,” and claims the “front will not only deal with Darfur issues but all issues in the Sudan.” The NRF is also expected to renew calls for Sudan to replace African Union troops with a UN peacekeeping mission. Meanwhile, the AU, which has threatened sanctions against groups that do not accept the peace deal, will mull over this latest development during its upcoming summit in Gambia as it scrambles for an “African solution” to the conundrum: Whither Darfur?

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November 7, 2006 General Election

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QUEER EYE

Was Mayor's Forum Farce?

by Dan Waterhouse

When he convened the Forum for Civic Understanding this past April, Fresno Mayor Alan Autry picked up where he left off in 2004 before his "defense of traditional marriage event" at City Hall.

According to city documents, Autry chose the topic of "the community relationship between heterosexual and homosexual people in Fresno." Autry said he picked the topic for the first forum because "I care about all the citizens of this city and all of our families. And I am concerned that the harsh rhetoric of political demonstrations on both sides of this issue (committed relationships) hurts all of us."

He selected participants who he hoped to be "informed civic leaders, clergy, business people and citizens coming from varying perspectives who are willing to listen to one another and work together when common interests are discovered." The only "leaders of the gay/

lesbian community" invited were Robin McGehee and Diana Bohn of the Gay Straight Alliance Network and Robin Greiner and Ellis Vance from the Central California Alliance. No representatives from groups such as Community Link (which organizes the annual Pride Parade) or the Imperial Dove Court were invited.

The forum was facilitated by Rev. Bryan Jessup of the Interfaith Alliance and Dr. Ron Claasen of Fresno Pacific University. It was patterned after the Radio Forum for a Better Understanding, which was broadcast on KMJ every week from 1937 to 1954.

According to McGehee, Autry told those attending that he had had a burden on his heart for two years because of the City Hall event in August 2004. Autry explained the burden was that there were two groups in the community now at odds with one another. However, McGehee said, Autry repeatedly made statements justifying what he had done in 2004. According to her, Autry kept bringing up the San Francisco marriages and kept saying that same-sex marriage was an issue to just a few, radicals in the queer community.

McGehee confirmed Autry's statements about same-sex marriage were identical to those he made at a meeting he had with representatives from Community Link and Central California Alliance in August 2004, shortly before the City Hall rally. Autry asked for that meeting to "explain" to the queer community why he was holding the rally.

Gail Gaston, representing the city's Human Relations Commission at the forum, echoed McGehee's comments. Gaston said she felt the forum was something done by Autry to rid himself of guilt over the 2004 marriage rally. She added that Autry and Rev. Jim Franklin of Cornerstone Church firmly stood on their religious beliefs and tried to explain why they actively campaign against gay and lesbian relationships.

Franklin was the other organizer of the 2004 City Hall rally.

According to Ellis Vance, some of the issues raised included: a committed relationship is a relationship between two people who love each other and are committed to each other for a lifetime, regardless of sexual orientation; should the Bill of Rights be for the purpose of supporting and protecting the rights of all citizens or for taking them away; the government should recognize committed relationships for all its citizens; laws should not be based on particular religious beliefs, doctrines, or dogma.



Credo

by Richard Stone

To complement "Grassroots Profiles", I'm initiating this month a variation called "Credo", Latin for "I believe". These articles are to be based on interviews with older members of our progressive community, and will attempt to uncover the sustaining underpinnings for a life of social activism. Since the questionnaire I've developed for these interviews is less direct than the one used for "Profiles", I decided to test it out on the most willing victim around: me. So here is the interview with Richard Stone, a director of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence and the Community Alliance, yoga instructor and proprietor of Partnerships in Understanding.

Q) What are the principles, articles of faith, and vision that guide your activities?

A) I believe we are part of a universe that is evolving in ways we hardly understand, and each of us is a unique bit of energy that can either assist in, or detract from, a successful evolutionary project. I believe we live in the midst of a great paradoxical directive: to be true to our individuality, while respecting the great ordering principles that have led us this far.

Q) How do you come to these beliefs?

mindfulness, and above all to not harbor resentment whatever the source.

Q) Who else has been a significant teacher or example?

A) The way into social responsibility was opened by my working at a summer camp that welcomed kids across ethnic and class lines, including kids with some degree of physical or psychological disability; and by joining the Peace Corps leading to a 2-year sojourn in Ethiopia. I was propelled into public activism as a result of my double "coming out" at around the age of 30 as a Jew and as a gay man.

The examples of Gandhi and Malcolm X have influenced me deeply. I've worked closely with two teachers who significantly impacted me. The first was Judith Binetter, an Israeli teacher of body awareness (and a refugee from Nazi Germany) who inducted me into an understanding of "living in the body" and profound interpenetrating relationship—I call her "my Fateful Other." The other was George "Elfie" Ballis, who is best known as our movement videographer, but who I first knew through his "tribal work" at Sun Mt., which greatly enhanced for me the integration of personal and public understanding into, as he puts it, impeccable action.

Q) What are your present sources of guidance and inspiration?

A) From several sources, including reading and association with teachers, but primarily from powerful personal experiences that led me to an unconventional understanding of what "living a life" means.

Q) What has changed for you over the years?

A) I have come from constant anxiety to relative peace amid the seemingly opposed demands of enacting one's "will and skill" on one side, and being a creature embedded in nature on the other. I have come to see there aren't predetermined right answers in difficult situations, but at best improvised "satisfyingly effective solutions".

Q) What did you learn from your parents?

A) From my father, I learned the virtues of dedication to one's commitments without complaint, and of giving dependable support to those who rely on you. From my mother I learned broad-spectrum generosity, open-

A) One great arena for learning has been the responsibilities I've been privileged to carry at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. There several strong-minded people work together under the principle of consensus, and we struggle to maintain focus amid a barrage of competing concerns. The other "practice" has been my 30-year companionship with Avigdar Adams, a uniquely talented, strong-willed and compassionate person, in whose company I've learned that the long-term goodness that radiates from a partnership is at least as important as the day-to-day feelings of "happiness" (or not).

Q) What are your current activist goals deriving from your beliefs?

A) My goals are to promulgate a real understanding of how to live out the Center's 4-point Peace Agenda, so that we work both individually and collectively, at many levels, to find balance. My particular role is often to bring disparate parts of our social system into constructive engagement.

Q) Recommended books, movies, music, expressive of your experiences and beliefs?

A) A few old favorite writers are novelists Dostoyevsky and Doris Lessing, and spiritual teacher Krishnamurti. With music, Broadway musicals were my introduction to the life of emotion. My current preference runs to world music, like Nusrat Fatah Ali Khan, and Yiddish Klezmer music. A couple of movies that have touched me: French films Children of Paradise and And Now My Love; musicals Cabaret and Little Shop of Horrors; gay-themed Maurice and Philadelphia; and Gandhi.

Q) A favorite piece of writing (yours or someone else's)

A) A client once commissioned me to write a brief compendium of suggestions I'd made as she coped with depression and confusion. I call it "Guidelines for Time Travel to the Present", and here are a couple of paragraphs from it:

I am limited in my abilities, intelligence, judgment, energy. I act without certainty and I make errors. This is my human condition, not a genetic flaw or failure of character...

The single most important thing I have to do each day is face my reality. Take in my situation; ascertain what needs to be done; obtain information about things I'm unsure of, seeking advice and perspective from others; discover what is lacking and direct attention toward making needed changes; rest—without complacency or agitation—in imperfection...

I can either strive to understand the meaning of life, or I can live it. There are no right answers to life's questions. There is only continuing improvisation, done more or less skillfully, serving to set up the next scene. My best bet is to enter in as fully as possible, with attention and effort...then see what happens. I am now in the next situation. This is the present. This is living.

Contact info: Phone:266-2559; e-mail: richard2662559@yahoo.com###



Simone Whalen-Rhodes and Conn Hallinan
All photos on pages 14 and 15 by Howard Watkins.



Some of the Community Alliance Editorial Board members - from left to right: Richard Stone, Pam Whalen, Mike Rhodes, the Rev. Floyd Harris Jr.

Community Alliance Celebrates 10th Anniversary

by Conn Hallinan



Conn Hallinan gave the keynote address (the text of the speech is re-printed on this page)

The alternative press is a difficult subject to get one's hands around in a short talk. It is a subject that best lends itself to either a one-second blurb—"Do it"—or a six-hour lecture. I want to try to do this in a half hour. So if you will bear with me a moment, I would like to open this talk with a paragraph from the alternative press:

"These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered."



Maria Erefia from Radio Bilingue 91.5 FM

Thomas Paine, December 23, 1776

When Paine wrote those words it was not the best of times, and there was a reason why Paine entitled his newspaper, The Crisis. George Washington had been decisively defeated on Long Island and the city of New York had fallen. By December 23, 1776, the Continental Army was in full retreat across New Jersey. Things couldn't be much worse for the American Revolution than they were at that moment.

As we all know, it turned around, but a good deal of that turn around was due to Thomas Paine and his essays that informed and fired people's imagination throughout the colonies. Washington ordered Paine's words from the Crisis read to his troops before they crossed the Delaware in a blizzard and attacked Trenton for one of the most important victories of the Revolutionary War.

Common Sense, which was published in January 1776, sold 100,000 copies within two months, one for every 25 people in the colonies. Until Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" came out in 1852, it was the number one best seller in U.S. history.



Bill Balsley, general manager of the low power KVLP-LP radio station in Visalia

Both Paine and Stowe used words—in Paine's case set in argument and logic; in Stowe's case, embedded in the power of fiction—to change people's consciousness. The first helped build a revolution against colonialism, the second, to provoke a revolution against slavery. The fact that one was a news essay and the other a novel is irrelevant. Both used prose to alter the thinking of a nation.

The Crisis and Uncle Tom's Cabin were outside the mainstream. They were outside precisely because they challenged the dominant wisdom and culture of the day. The

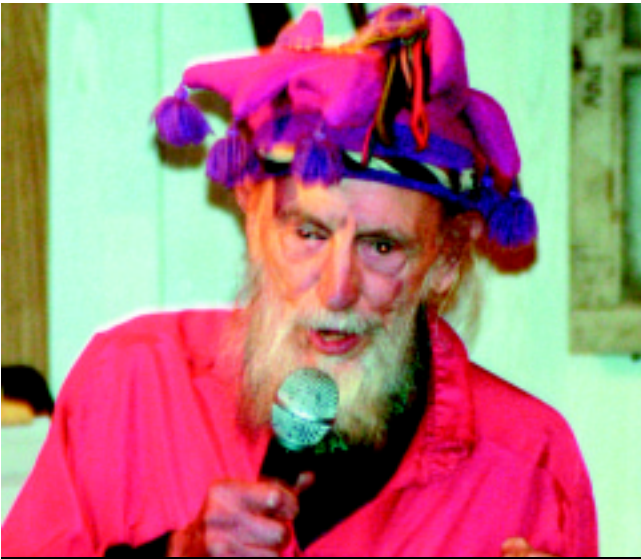


Food Not Bombs provided a wonderful dinner for everyone

mainstream mass media of those times was very different in form than it is today, but not in content. There was a New York Times, but it only cost a penny, and its slogan was not "All the News that's Fit To Print," but "will not soil the breakfast cloth." Also there was no Anne Coulter and the Texas Chainsaw Massacre II (Sorry, I always see these last two things as somehow cohabitating the same stream of ideology)

In a sense, the history of our country is also the history of the alternative press.

In 1827, John Russwurm and Rev. Samuel Cornish pub-



Elfie Ballis became the events jester. He showed us a new docu-poem video compilation of local actions for peace and justice that he and Maia produced. He also sang and spoke passionately about the need for the community to support alternative/independent media



Dan Yaseen and Pat Wolk



Ellie Bluestein and City Council member Cynthia Sterling



Susan and Mike Rowe



Vic Bedoian, executive director of KFCF 88.1 FM

lished the first African-American newspaper in America, the Freedom Journal, to discuss the abolition of slavery. That, in turn, lead to the publication of a host of anti-slavery newspapers culminating in 1847 with the publication of Frederick Douglass's great hammer of abolition, The North Star, emblazoned with its mast head: "Right is of no sex—truth is of no color—God is the father of us all, and we are all brethren."

Like all great struggles, the fight for abolition inevitably forced Americans to confront other problems.

Jane Gray Swisshelm, who reported for the Spirit of Liberty, an abolitionist newspaper in Philadelphia, was the first woman allowed to sit in the gallery of the U.S. Senate. It was somehow natural that the struggle for abolition should lead to the struggle for women's suffrage, and that the suffrage movement should have its own press as well. The struggle for suffrage inevitably bumped up against the conditions of women in the garment in-



Abid Yahya and Nicholas Nocketback from The Undercurrent newspaper

dustry, particularly following the Triangle Waist Shirt fire in New York City where more than 140 women burned to death.

Which inevitably raised the issue of trade union rights, since only trade unions were willing to fight for safe working conditions and decent wages.

A host of women's publications, trade union newspapers, Yiddish language broad sheets, and political magazines sprang up. Many of these actually preceded the struggles they reported on. They were less mirrors than catalysts, writing about things that had only begun to develop.

When I.F Stone started the I.F. Stone Weekly in 1953 with the slogan "The third time they officially deny it, you know they are lying," it was in the middle of the McCarthy period and the deepest depths of the Cold War. Only a few progressive national publications were hanging on—the Nation, the New Republic, The National Guardian, and a handful of others. Stone's undertaking looked a bit quixotic at the time, but within a few years there was an explosion of the underground press—the Village Voice, the LA Free Press, the Berkeley Barb, the Kaleidoscope, the Quicksilver Times, and a host of others appeared in cities across the country.

Most of these publications came out initially to reflect the changing cultural conditions created by the Beats and jazz, but soon began to report on the Southern civil rights movement that the mainstream press was ignoring. When the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s home in Birmingham, Alabama was bombed in 1963 the only northern reporter in the state was African-American reporter Carl Bloice from the left-wing People's World.

But the alternative media, which also included the invaluable Pacifica Foundation, created a reality through their reporting that the mainstream could not continue to ignore. And so the northern press began covering the fight against segregation, and when it did, the walls of legal segregation came tumbling down.

Let me give you one small example from my own history.

I remember a CBS News film clip from 1963. It was Walter Cronkite—probably the most famous TV journalist of our generation—climbing out of the navigator's seat of a F105 Thunder Chief that had just finished bombing some National Liberation Front fighters in the Mekong Delta. He interviewed the pilot and commented "We did some good work out there today, didn't we, captain?" The man agreed, and Cronkite signed off from the front.

Five years later I saw the CBS News Special of Cronkite

Continued on page 25



Bill Balsley, Bryan Jessup, and Ruth Austin enjoy the evening



Lydia Flores and Andy Hart listen to one of the evenings speakers



Mike Rhodes is the editor of the Community Alliance newspaper



The event was held at the Full Circle Brewery



Rych Withers, the president of the Fresno Free College Foundation (owner and operator of KFCF 88.1 FM) congratulated the Community Alliance newspaper for publishing during the past ten years.



Gail and Everett Gaston

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Food Fight

By Michael Leonard

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are a reality in today's world. Their exact definitions, extent of their use, and potential health risks are also real uncertainties. Still, state and federal politicians continue to put the interests of the agriculture industry before communities.

Two specific areas of debate are the extent of local governments' control over the crops in their districts, and the information that consumers are given about the food they buy. The decisions will impact agriculture from seed to store shelf.

Last year, Senator Dean Florez, D-Shafter, introduced S.B. 1056. Its primary concern was reducing air pollution in the state, particularly in the San Joaquin Valley. The Senate approved it 31-8 in June. A month later, in what appears to be an example of "gut and amend," Florez offered a new version of the bill that, quite literally, crossed out all content pertaining to air pollution and replaced it with a lot of language regarding seeds. Now the legislation asserts that, after July 1, 2006, policy on the sale and use of seeds and nursery stock is of state domain and operates "to the exclusion of local regulations." This could prevent localities from following counties like Mendocino and Santa Cruz that have banned genetically modified crops within their limits.

Several groups oppose S.B. 1056, including SF Bay Area Physicians for Social Responsibility. President Robert M. Gould, M.D., said, "[I]t is...a fundamental issue of allowing the existence of local policies that are more protective of health and the environment than state or federal standards."



The Organic Consumers Association, on its website, expressed the concern that "it will override future restrictions on genetically engineered crops and seeds." The group organized statewide call-ins to the Assembly throughout August against what they call "the Monsanto Bill."

The agricultural giant owns the rights to most of the genetically modified seeds used on American farms, and its interest in S.B. 1056 was suspected. Monsanto Spokesperson Chris Horner said, "There is a misconception that we are directly involved...(the bill) is broad-based and a lot bigger than one company. It was not one company's initiative." He explained that Monsanto is a company "strictly involved in agriculture. Farmers are our customers." Thus, the business's interest is that farmers have access to the best technology available, as well as clarity on and freedom to choose from products that have already undergone stringent federal safety tests. Banning such products on a local level, Monsanto believes, limits that clarity and freedom.

Horner added, "It is a dead issue for us." He noted two organizations that were directly supporting S.B.1056, the California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) and the California Seed Association.

The bill was approved by the state Assembly 51-24 on August 24, 2006. It then went to Senate, where it landed in "unfinished business" with the legislative session's end. An October 12 article in the *Fresno Bee* cited that Senator Florez plans to introduce a "multi-issue bill" in January. A spokesperson in his office said that S.B. 1056 will not be part of the new bill's language and that the Senator has not indicated if he will re-introduce it at all in the next session. Not yet explained, however, is what prompted Florez to ditch a successful effort and return with a more controversial proposition in the first place.

On the national level, H.R. 4167 is also idling while Congress is out of session. Passed by the House of Representatives in March, it was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labors, and Pensions where it will be analyzed and possibly voted on by the Senate.

The "National Uniformity for Food Act" would establish a standardized food labeling system across the 50 states. California has its own stringent practice since 1986's



Proposition 65. The plan, as explained in a recent AlterNet article, "prompted food corporations to make changes nationwide, since no company wanted to create a separate package for food sold in the most populous state. Because many companies felt it would look better to simply remove some ingredients than to say their products contained carcinogens, the law has led to the phase out of some 750 chemicals, according to California's attorney general." H.R. 4167 would force California to ignore Proposition 65 in favor of lax federal regulations more appealing to Big Agriculture businesses.

In an e-mail, Senator Dianne Feinstein explained her opposition to the measure: "H.R. 4167 prohibits localities from enacting food safety regulations that are stronger than those required by the federal government. It also prevents state and local governments from filling gaps in food safety laws when the federal government has no warning standards for a food product."

Wes Rolley, Organizer for the Rural Greens Caucus of the California Green Party, summed up the repercussions of the two bills on both chow and culture, "If localities can't block state rulings, and states can't label their own food...it equals free reign for Big Agriculture to do whatever they want."

For more information on S.B.1056 and agricultural issues, including genetic engineering, go to www.organicconsumers.org or www.cfbf.com.

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Leonard is a graduate student in the Media Studies Program at New College of California in San Francisco, and an independent journalist.

No More Stolen Lives!

On October 22, 2006 a march to stop police brutality went from Justice Corner (C and Fresno street) to the new amphitheater across from the Fresno Police Department (FPD). Many of the marchers were family members who had lost loved ones at the hands of the FPD. At the amphitheater, testimony was given by the family members about their sons, brothers, or husband's stolen life.



Murder on B Street. The family pictured above had their loved one killed one block from where the march started. The young man who was killed had failed to raise his hands fast enough. The police said they thought he had a gun, shot, and killed him. Of course, he did not have a gun. There are many sad stories about stolen lives in Fresno. The police shot and killed one woman here because she had an ax and was in a car lot. They shot one young man who was suspected of having stolen some beer. He started to drive off and was shot multiple times. The police claim they heard a gun shot, which they later claimed "might have been" a backfire from an automobile.



The family of Everardo Torres spoke about the injustice that ended his life. Torres was arrested and put in the back of a Madera Police Department car. While he was in custody and handcuffed in the back of the cruiser a police officer opened the door and shot him through the heart



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

WILPF Page for November compiled by Ellie Bluestein geneb@csufresno.edu

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 1, Wednesday, noon to 1:00 p.m.
Women in Black at Courthouse downtown.

November 9, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Regular WILPF meeting at Center for Nonviolence (1584 N. Van Ness). All members urged to attend

Thursday, November 16, noon till 1:00 p.m.
Women in Black Silent Vigil at CSUF Free Speech area.
All WILPF members invited—bring a friend.

Thursday, November 10, 1:00 p.m.
Faire Committee meeting
486 W. San Ramon #101 (229-9807)

Thursday, November 16, 3:00 p.m.
Stir it Up with WILPF on KFCF

Saturday, December 2, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
WILPF 2006 HOLIDAY PEACE CRAFT FAIRE
First Congregational Church, 2131 N. Van Ness

Please send news and articles and photos for the December WILPF page to Meta Schettler by November 15. <dr_schettler@yahoo.com

HELP FOR THE FAIRE

We're off to a great start. Ingrid has sent out contracts to vendors. Those wanting tables may contact her at ingridcarmean@sbcglobal.net or 225-8491. Julie Young-Andrews will again be coordinating the food. Nancy Waidtlow and Janet Capella are handling the White Elephant table. Linda Dryden is arranging music performances. Call Joan Poss (227-6134) and Ellie Bluestein (229-9807) to volunteer time and food contributions. We need strong hands for helping with early set-up and late afternoon take-down. Alvora Trujillo has volunteered to be in charge of coordinating volunteers at the Faire. Our greatest need now will be publicizing the event and bringing lots of people. Contact Marilyn Byrne if you can help with that. She has flyers. (skippy41@csufresno.edu or 301-6676). We can use baked goods, preserves, produce, plants, handmade items, for sale at the WILPF table. We look forward to a great Faire, as always.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

Membership chair, Vickie Fouts, has been sending out renewal notices to members who are behind in dues, or lapsed. We hope you will renew your membership and enjoy the benefits of a subscription to our national WILPF publication, PEACE AND FREEDOM, a subscription to Community Alliance News, access to our WILPF list serve (fresnowilpf@lists.riseup.net) and of course participation in our decision making and events. Membership dues may be sent to WILPF at P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755. Questions may be addressed to Vickie at socialjustice@sti.net or by phone at 658-8260.

Lynn Graham (495-0264 or 215-1548) is in charge of our telephone tree and needs volunteer callers. Please volunteer to help her. We use the phone tree sparingly, but it is very important for those members who do not use e-mail. With just a few volunteers the task is not time consuming. Kudos to Su Kapoor for his organizing efforts on the Gandhi birthday celebration and Stop the Hate.

RAGING GRANNIES

The Raging Grannies was the culminating act at the Fresno Free College Foundation/KFCF annual banquet. Their four songs were well received, bringing the entire audience to their feet, singing along, and holding hands for the last song, "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream."

RUTH OBEL JORGENSEN, former WILPF intern and Branch Secretary, was interviewed for: "Tracked in America: Stories from the History of U.S. Government Surveillance," which examines the history of surveillance in America through the personal stories of 25 individuals directly affected by surveillance and the historical perspective of six notable historians. It is a series created by the ACLU to be distributed to schools, organizations, community groups, around the country. Ruth's part in the series is based on her experiences as a student leader of the peace group at CSUF, when they were subjected to

surveillance by the police and boldly and fearlessly initiated actions against the surveillance, resulting eventually in a pledge from President Welty that it would not be allowed.

For information about the series: Ravi Garla at rgarla@aclunc.org or call 415-621-2493, x332.

A DIALOGUE FOR A JUST IMMIGRATION REFORM
Sponsored by Pan Valley Institute of the American Friends Service Committee and the Coalition for Immigrant Rights of the Central Valley. September 29-October 1. Attended by Vickie Fouts on behalf of our branch. Excellent meeting, in Spanish with English translation for the two non-Spanish speakers. The purpose of the event was to establish relationships with different Central Valley organizations and to identify barriers and create strategies toward the struggle of just immigration policies.

The group came away with short and long term plans. The long term plan is to get legalization for all immigrants. The short term plans include working with the media and congress members until the election and then until congress goes back to work again, on such issues as not building a border wall, having an ID picture in order to vote, signing up new registered voters and seeing that they vote. Vickie will make a full report and ask members to visit congress people and donate funds to help with the effort. Vickie says it was a terrific experience. Wonder Valley Ranch was a great place to have the conference, and it was funded by grants from several foundations, enabling people to attend at no cost, and in some cases paying travel expenses. Vickie hopes that other social justice groups will consider applying for grants in order to provide events where all who wish can attend no matter what their economic situation.

The facilitator for the gathering was Francisco Herrera from San Francisco. Francisco is a musician and used his guitar music and singing as a wonderful organizing tool throughout the gathering. Mark Silverman, Director of Politics for the Immigrant Legal Resource Center in San Francisco, was a guest speaker and gave an overview of the current status of immigrant issues in Congress. He plans on returning to Fresno soon to present a workshop on how Congress works when it comes to getting bills passed.

Thanks for attending, Vickie

KUDOS TO STEVE SACKS for the great job he did in organizing a full page ad in "The Fresno Bee" urging our exit from Iraq. Many organizations, including WILPF, sponsored the ad and of course many individuals contributed to the cost.

WOMEN IN BLACK

by Marilyn Byrne and Meta Schettler

Women in Black have expanded to the CSUF Campus to protest the war in Iraq from noon to 1:00 the third Thursday of each month. The next demonstration will be Thursday November 16th. We welcome the general public and

encourage more WILPF members to join us. Initially started in 1988 by Israeli women in response to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Women In Black vigils have spread throughout the world. Women stand in silent vigil to protest war, rape as a tool of war, ethnic cleansing and human rights abuses all over the world. Women in Black is a world-wide network of women committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence. As women experiencing these things in different ways in different regions of the world, we support each other's movements. An important focus is challenging the militarist policies of our own governments. We are not an organization, but a means of communicating and a formula for action. Please wear black & bring a sign!

Co-sponsored by WILPF & Campus Peace & Civil Liberties. Please contact Meta Schettler for more information, 278-4593.

I urge you to come out and join us.. It is a very healing experience. I have included a poem describing my experience.

Standing for Peace

Marilyn Byrne

From 12:00 to 1:00
against the rhythm of lunch traffic
in the center of the Free Speech Area
on the CSUF Campus. I stand
the one on the far left
in a straight line opposing
the college's semicircular platform.
A Woman in Black in silence
I hold a sign:
U.S. Foreign Policy Causes Terrorism.

I wait anticipating
the signal my hour passed,
while student's browse
like shoppers in a Mall.
Oblivious some remain
extensions of their cell phones.
Others stop to collect handouts.
My eyes search
the crowd across the table
attempting contact.

The sun cooks
my head as water droplets rise bubbling
from my forehead. My hair falls
into my face attaching
like glue to the gloss on my lips. I feel
drops of sweat creep
down my back. I move
up and back to shake
needles from my feet. My sign tilts
as I raise my hand to brush
the hair from my lips.

The campus clock chimes once.



Dixie Salazar and Angela Price at last year's WILPF Craft Faire. This year, the Peace Community Craft Faire will be held December 2 (10 am to 4 pm) at the First Congregational Church.

Fresno Center for Nonviolence



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

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

THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.



FOUR REALITIES & 20 ACTIONS FOR IRAQ

The first reality with regard to Iraq is "There are no more brilliant ideas that can fit on a one-page policy paper and get us out of this mess". So said Gen. Anthony Zinni, retired from the US Marine Corps, speaking to the world Security Institute board of directors and staff in May 2006 in Washington D.C.

The second reality is "that we aren't pulling out". If you think that we can just walk away—"you can't". The third reality is recognizing that Iraq is not a 1- or 2- year problem— It's actually a 5- to 7- year problem.

The fourth reality is that, instead of drafting a brilliant strategic paper, we should start burrowing into the detailed actions of what must be done in the political, economic, security, and social areas to reconstruct Iraq. For this to succeed, the institutions in Iraq must be strengthened to stand up to the current chaos and instability; their institutions and the people have to be bolstered and made to believe.

20 ACTIONS

The writer's first recommendation is to build a set of international advisory groups that have experience, knowledge and understanding of how to structure federations, how to formulate revenue sharing, and how to distribute and work autonomously. An information campaign is needed to sell to the Iraqi people why it's in their interest to see this unity government succeed, to see the issues they're going to have to come to grips with work. There is need to have a mediation effort with the insurgents, with some of whom (not disaffected Sunnis) a line of communication can be built.

We are building a military that will have over 300,000 Iraqis, which need the obvious military capabilities but also an intelligence capability. There needs to be a humanitarian component to our presence in Iraq, including medical, veterinarian and civic action projects. Also in terms of security there should be an alternative to the militias (which we should not have allowed): an option of a "territorial guard", meaning one gets a decent paycheck for specific tasks.

On the economic side, there is need for a system in the region to bring together Iraqis who want to establish their businesses with international investors to work out the kinds of businesses that could be promoted and developed. The author also would recreate a healthcare system within Iraq.

One of the things that works well is the creation of a formalized dialogue process. The Saudis have created such a dialogue program in which King Abdullah engages the people by talking about reforms and change on the public media. A series of youth programs should be begun where young Shia, Sunnis, Kurds and other minorities are brought together. A "brain drain" that is going on in Iraq needs to be reversed. Ideas from distinguished retired people in the US could be sought.

CONCLUSION

"What we need now is detailed thinking of these realities. What we had better understand... is that the key is the Iraqi people... You can't work this by simply thinking this is a security problem, by creating more military forces, building them in our image and sending them out to kill, and think that's going to work." (That was Vietnam.) "It is time now to say that the one element that's holding this together, the Iraqi people, have to be brought into this process, and actions taken to give them some sense of hope for their future." (Source: Gen. (ret.) Anthony Zinni, USMC, Distinguished Military Fellow, The Defense Monitor, July/August 2006.)

The FCNV is a Host Organization

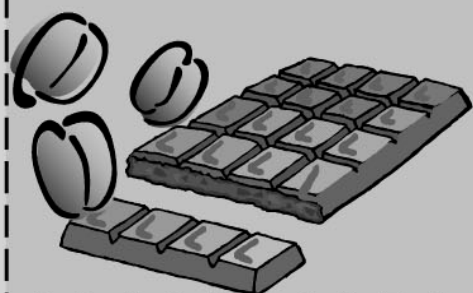
to many non-profit groups in the Fresno community. We provide a safe meeting place and media resources to the groups using our facility, including:

- Youth Link
- Rondalla
- Project: Male
- Central California Institute
- CVPPAC
- Peace Fresno
- WILPF
- FACTS
- Prison Moratorium Project
- CCCJC
- Community Alliance

Fair Trade

**organic coffees,
teas, and chocolate**

Available at the FCNV
& the WILPF Craft Faire
(December 2nd 10-4)
First Congregational Church
2131 N. Van Ness Ave.



Stir it Up

Wednesday November 8th, 3 p.m. 88.1 FM
Richard Stone and Dan Yaseen host Fresno
State political science professor Dr. David
Schechter who will discuss the election results.

New to Our Library

DVD's

- Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices
- Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers
- Dr. Strangelove
- Hidden in Plain Sight
- We (By Arundhati Roy)
- Soldados: Chicanos in Vietnam
- Cull of the Wild: The Truth Behind Trapping

BOOKS

- A Lawyer's Journey: The Morris Dees Story

Second Wednesday Video Series:

November 8th

Why We Fight

An unflinching look at the anatomy of the American war machine, weaving unforgettable personal stories, with commentary by a "who's who" of military and beltway insiders. Featuring John McCain, William Kristol, Chalmers Johnson, Gore Vidal, Richard Perle, and others. Why We Fight launches a bipartisan inquiry into the workings of the military industrial complex and the rise of the American Empire. Discussion to follow evening showing.

Noon & 7:00 p.m. – FCNV

Join us for a potluck at 6:30 p.m.

A Modern Modest Proposal

by Sara Jane Olson: with Caren Hill, J.S., and April Watson.

A lifer, watching another lifer walking away to her housing unit, commented, “She just got a four-year rollover from the Board.” What she meant was that the woman had appeared before the Board of Parole Hearings to be considered for parole. Not only had she been denied a parole date, she has to wait another four years before she comes up for another parole hearing.

The lifer said, “A lot of women are getting multi-year denials. It’s really common now. Some of us lifers are thinking of writing to Governor Schwarzenegger to ask him, if the state is never going to let us out, to commute our life sentences to Death Penalties. We don’t want to live in prison for another 20 years. We’d rather die. At least we’d have a choice.”

Another woman, who has a 30-to-life sentence, is going to turn 55 years old on her next birthday. She says, “If I don’t win my writ, I don’t intend to spend years living in here. I intend to help myself die. I wish I had another choice.”

It is a given in California’s prison industry (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation / CDCR) that a life sentence may as well be a life-without-possibility-of-parole term. Whether one gets 15-to-life, 25-to-life, 75-to-life plus “enhancements” of 20 years or more, it’s all the same. The odds in favor of a grant of release, before one has fermented for two times the number in the “— —to-life” judgment in the state’s “Injustice Stew”, are virtually nil.

It doesn’t matter who is elected governor or what political party prevails in the State Assembly or in the Senate. “Tough on Crime” and “Three Strikes (even for shoplifting) Means Life” attitudes have a near-genetic grip on the psyches of all elected officials and the general population of the state.

To win freedom, a prisoner must find some way to go to court, usually with the aid of a volunteer attorney from such groups as Justice Denied or an Innocence Project. Few prisoners have any money for a lawyer or the education to represent themselves. Courts rarely rule in a prisoner’s favor. Well over 95% of appeals or Writs of Habeas Corpus brought by prisoners are denied.

Schwarzenegger has allowed a few people out of prison after a court has ruled in their favor when they’ve appealed a parole board denial. Gray Davis, former Democratic governor, was so enthralled by the generous donations to his campaign for governor from the powerful prison guards’ union (California Correctional Peace Officers Association / CCPOA), he declared, “no one convicted of murder would get out of prison while he was in office.” He kept his word. There is no redemption in a California governor’s type of Christianity, at least for prisoners.

Prisoners must go before the Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) to plead for a release date. The Board’s former title, the Board of Prison Terms, changed on July 1, 2005, was far more apt. Prison terms is what the Board is all about. It is composed entirely of victims rights groups and former prison industry and law enforcement personnel. Crime victims’ relatives populate the victims’ right groups. They cannot be objective. This makes sense. Who could be? Most relatives of crime victims are incapable of forgiveness and it should not be expected of them. They are already allowed to appear before the BPH and to argue against release considerations for their targeted prisoners. However, because they cannot forgive, they should not be members of the BPH. But they are.

Despite a large amount of press attention to reformation policies in the California prison industry, only a tiny fraction of television segments about prison reform that provide the culture’s predominant persuasive pressure on the public have ever been broadcast. There’s no political capital or advertising money in compassion for prisoners. Dehumanization, ridicule and fear mongering are the qualities that rate the pots of gold. Lip service for prison reform is nice, but in a political system dominated by corporate lobbyists and monopolized media, it’s not cool.

Generally speaking, most lifers are never going to get out of prison and captivity costs the state billions of

taxpayer dollars per year. As long as the War on Drugs persists, arrests won’t decline. The prison industry will grow and grow and cost more and more. Sentences will get longer and longer and releases fewer and farther between denials. Elected political officeholders will never have the courage to reform a cruel system because it guarantees reelection. It must be mentioned that they are all very afraid of the prison guards’ uber union and its power as well. A terrified public will never condone widespread accommodation of former felons in their communities. Therefore, here is a modest proposal that some inmates dreamed up to help reform the prison industry that Californians may accept.

In California, the average prisoner costs \$34,000 per year to maintain WITHOUT rehabilitative, humane medical and dental, or less-than-overcrowded housing programs. As lifers and LWOPs (Life With Out Parole) age, they become decrepit and disabled and cost taxpayers EVEN MORE. After much thought and creative riffing, a number of prisoner-inspired possibilities emerged that will end inmates’ lifestyles of incarcerated despair while earning income for prisoners’ families and the state. The potential for lucrative entertainment franchises is huge as well.

People who are convicted as lifers and LWOPs have committed dangerous crimes, usually concluding with a victim’s death. A prisoner in the CDCR / CCPOA / BPH realm is forever the being she was at the moment of the act(s) for which she was convicted or pled guilty. A prisoner is always dangerous.

Therefore, a prisoner hunt offers superb opportunities for sport, entertainment and money-raising for the state and its citizens while it promises a quick, relatively painless death for the prisoner prey. No faulty anesthetic procedures or wimpy anesthesiologists fearful they might have to intervene in an execution “gone wrong”. All there is to it is a clean bullet through the brain from a high-powered rifle, thank you!

The state can charge at least \$1,000,000 per hunt. Another prospect, once the sport has caught on, is a bidding procedure. The highest bid wins the hunt. The price could rise well beyond \$1,000,000. Obviously this is a sport that can be undertaken only by the very rich. However, lobbying groups such as the National Rifle Association or Focus on the Family might hold fund-raising contests for which the winning prize could be - voila! - a prisoner hunt. These groups could rake in millions.

The majority of the hunt fee will go to the state to augment the prison budget. However, the prey could earn a specific small percentage to be willed either to loved ones or the prisoner’s chosen charity.

Prey are selected on a volunteer-only basis. A mechanism must be devised to prevent any prisoner being forced or intimidated into “volunteering against her will”. No wheelchair-bound prisoners may apply. Volunteers with minor disabilities may be acceptable if they don’t impair movement. A prisoner is ineligible for the hunt if she is disabled or ill.

Policies that prepare volunteer prey for the hunt should be instituted to insure the most exciting contest. Health screening, better diet, and exercise programs would prepare the prey for a topnotch performance.

Threshold criteria should be developed to choose appropriate volunteers:

1. BPH rollover for a certain amount of years after several release denials
2. Four outright denials
3. More than one parole board refusal by the governor; perhaps after the second refusal following a BPH grant of release
4. In the case of a sentence longer than 25-to-life; for instance, let’s say 32-to-life is the sentence and the first BPH appearance results in the denial of parole
5. Exhaustion of appeals leading to no hope of release
6. * * The HUNTER must be a CRACK SHOT * *

Recently, for the first time in nearly four decades, it has been suggested that prisoners be used as subjects for drug tests by multinational pharmaceutical corporations. Although a prisoner would be remunerated for voluntary participation in such tests, even posing this idea leads one to the conclusion that, not only does the system of imprisonment dehumanize an inmate, but the entire American culture does as well. Therefore, inmates who volunteer and qualify to participate in the hunt will earn a Certificate of Official Human Being signed by the current governor.

More ideas include:

1. A public contest to name the hunt, e.g., “Survivor: Chowchilla”
2. Television rights to broadcast the hunt live could be sold by CDCR for a massive amount of money
3. Live broadcasts could lead to the development of a television series, e.g., “Stories from the Hunt”
 - a. The prey’s back/story
 - b. The hunter’s back/story
 - c. The prey’s family’s story. “What are they gonna do with the money?”
 - d. the hunter’s family’s back/story. “He always wanted to do something like this.”
 - e. The prey’s guards’ stories
 - f. The guards’ families’ stories . . . and on and on and on . . .
4. A television program could become the catalyst for a major movie or even a movie series.
5. Rights to video games, books, comic books, toys and Halloween costumes.

A course designed for maximum sport with hiding places, lots of foliage, groves of trees and numerous water hazards can add to the thrill. Under no circumstances may the prey be armed or wield arms of any kind. Although highly, even prohibitively, unlikely, the hunt course could include a line, a boundary of some sort, over or beyond which, IF a volunteer prey crosses, she can be freed. The chances of this occurring MUST be negligible, of course.

Several prisoners suggested that Dr. Jack Kevorkian would be an excellent in-prison hunt supervisor. Perhaps he could be extradited to California in order to act in this capacity. Others came up with the idea that, if a lifer or LWOP, after the age of 50 years, is not able to be considered for volunteer prey, the lifer’s bunk may be swapped for a coffin. That way, a lifer will get used to sleeping in one because that’s where she’ll spend eternity as there’s no real bed in her future.

Several prisoners voiced an aversion to being hunted; too traumatic. They thought that they would like to be given the opportunity to sell thir bodies for organ harvest. This would go over big with the anti-stem cell development people, like the President. Again, there could be a bidding procedure for those who are a physiological match with the volunteer organ donor. The volunteer must be Hep C and HIV negative and drug free. During the final 90 days of life, organ donors might, besides improved health care, diet and exercise, receive top-flight body care products in order to prepare superficial body parts for . . . oh . . . skin grafts, tips for nail salons, and hair for wigs, weaves and extensions.

A California lifer’s sentence is like a terminal illness. As time passes, it doesn’t get easier. In fact, as the years go by, it gets worse and worse. Prisoners often view, with amusement, the option of commuting a death sentence to life-without as a step up in human rights terms. It may be a step up for a Death-Penalty-hungry public but not necessarily for a prisoner; not really.

On July 1, 2005, the CDC added the word “rehabilitation” to its title. Still, there’s no rehabilitation for lifers and LWOPs. This makes sense. If they’re never going to get out, why bother?

With a hunt or organ sale, prisoners rehabilitate themselves. They give back to society that they so grievously harmed that they may never walk among law-abiding citizens again. They get a bonus for their families or groups in their former communities to help those who come after, lending a hand to the next generation. Help prisoners help themselves. Hunt them. Shoot them. Set them free!

Sara Jane Olson W94197 506-10-04Low C.C.W.F.
P.O.Box 1508 Chowchilla CA 93610-1508





The Inside Track: Patronage, Cronyism at Fresno Unified

By Larry Moore

The local business elites who see themselves as the wise leaders of our fair community are pouring their school board campaign contributions – more than \$80,000 as of Sept. 30 – into a series of slick, mailbox-stuffing flyers. Radio and television commercials featuring Assemblymember Juan Arambula are airing daily across the dial. The *Fresno Bee* has predictably endorsed the Autry-Arambula slate in its entirety.

And, their business-media coalition's political strategy of union-bashing at public events has intensified, exceeding even the attacks Governor Schwarzenegger launched at teachers and other public employees in last year's special election fiasco (see *Arambula story, this page*). While Proposition 74 against teachers and Proposition 75 targeting unions failed statewide, they passed here at home.

Arambula apparently feels he is free to demonize teachers and every other school employee as a way to garner votes for his slate of candidates. Ironically, he stood before hundreds of those same workers last November at a Get Out the Vote rally and urged us on to victory, pledging his support and solidarity.

Meanwhile, the "run-it-like-a-business" crowd who seek to impose on Fresno Unified their vision of a top-down, CEO-driven corporate model are beginning to dip their straws into the district coffers, moving from their positions as unbiased civic leaders into highly paid employees and consultants.

This stands in stark contrast to the school district's stated "Community Values of the Fresno Region" (Choosing Our Future, January 2005):

Conflict of Interest: We agree to disclose any personal or professional conflict of interest that may affect our objectivity before engaging in work that will impact the community. We seek to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

The two most prominent examples are Nancy Richardson and Kurt Madden. Both served on the FUSD Superintendent's Advisory Task Force in 2004 which issued the Choosing Our Futures report. Before the report was even finished, Richardson was hired on as an independent contractor to assist the superintendent "in forming community alliances" for six months at \$57,000. She has contributed \$4,000 to this year's Autry-Arambula slate.

Kurt Madden started Oct. 1 as the district's new chief technology officer. His salary range is \$106,357 to \$129,277. He came from the faith-based One by One Leadership nonprofit organization.

Two other members of the nine-member 2004 Task Force were Peter Weber and Deb Nankivell. FTA attempted to confirm reports of private consulting contracts with Weber and Nankivell directly as individuals or indirectly through private consulting and nonprofit firms but was rebuffed by Fresno Unified. Consulting contracts for less than \$15,000 per year do not require school board approval and do not appear on board agendas or minutes. The district refused a recent request to physically inspect its contracts.

Richardson, Madden, Weber and Nankivell gather and work together at both the Fresno Business Council (www.fresnobc.org) and Fresno Citizens for Good Government (www.fcgg.org). One recent act of "good government" successfully advocated for by this "citizens" group was privatization of the Selland Arena and convention center. Predictably, a sizable number of union jobs with decent pay and benefits were lost.

The lists of directors and founders of both organizations overlap heavily, and are repeated almost in their entirety when cross-referenced with the campaign contribution reports of the Autry-Arambula "Voices for Excellence" PAC.

As if to affirm their faith in themselves and their good works, both organizations proudly proclaim the "Community Values of the Fresno Region" found in the district report. At the top of their list of values is this statement:

Stewardship: We will lead and follow as stewards of our region, caring responsibly for our community assets. We will work together to achieve the greatest, long-term benefit for the community as a whole.

Noble words, but when laid next to their actions and political philosophy, it becomes clear their vision of care and stewardship for community assets has ominous implications for the interests of working families.

Arambula: Spanish for 'Arnold'?

Local Democrat Attacks Working Families, Right to Organize
By Larry Moore

Democratic Assemblymember Juan Arambula has taken more than a page from the neo-con playbook. He appears to have swallowed it whole. In a recent tirade on right-wing radio, he attacked everything from workers' right to organize, to pensions for public employees. One had to hear it to believe it.

Given Arambula's oft-proclaimed humble beginnings, the countless hours that working class Fresnans have volunteered on his behalf and the hard-earned dollars they have contributed to his political races, it was a stunning betrayal.

Arambula appeared on the Ray Appleton show on KMJ 580 in mid-October to discuss the Fresno Unified School Board election. Kevin Hall, FTA Associate Executive Director, was there to represent the voices of teachers, school nurses and librarians.

At issue were school board candidates Michelle Arax Asadoorian, Valerie Davis, Cal Johnson and Dr. Tony Vang, who have been endorsed by FTA, California School Employees Association, Service Employees International Union and the Central Labor Council, versus the 2006 Autry-Arambula slate endorsed by a coalition of local businessmen (see *Community Alliance*, October 2006).

Arambula is also apparently willing to put his money where his mouth is — at least money that others have given to him, including the very unions he's attacking. As of Sept. 30 he had contributed \$5,000 from his Arambula for Assembly account to the Voices for Executives in Education PAC.

To hear Arambula imitate Arnold, go to www.fresnoteachers.org and click on "2006 School Board Debate" or contact kevin@fresnoteachers.org.

Follow the Buck

Major campaign contributions to the Autry-Arambula slate as of Sept. 30, 2006, as reported to the Fresno County Clerk's Office, Recipient Committee Campaign Statements, are:

\$10,000 Level
Samuel Reeves

\$8,000
Donaghy Sales LLC

\$5,000
Arambula for Assembly 2006
Amy Arambula
Granville Homes Inc.
Lyles Diversified Inc.
River Park Properties II
Richard Spencer
Van-G Trucking Inc.

\$4,000
Nancy Richardson

\$3,000
Willa M. Correll

\$2,000
Peter Weber

\$1,000
Coke Hallowell
Sun-Maid Growers
Corporate Aircraft
Bennett Frost Personnel Services
DeYoung Properties – Team 5
Gunner & Andros Investments
Richard Johanson
Generation Homes
US Properties, LLC
American Ambulance
Diana S. Dooley
Ruiz Food Products Inc.

(Computer science teacher Larry Moore is president of the Fresno Teachers Association)

Vote For Change



Cal Johnson
Edison High, District 1
Special Needs Programs

Having worked in our local Community College system for more than three decades, Cal is an expert in programs designed to help students with special needs, including assistance for students with learning and physical disabilities. Elected by the members of the California School Employees Association to the community college district's Personnel Commission Board, he is an administrator who has earned the respect, trust and endorsement of school employees



Valerie Davis
Sunnyside High, District 3
Parents and Student Engagement

A credentialed teacher with 20 years of elementary, middle and senior high school experience and a two-year incumbent on the school board, Valerie will continue to involve parents in the decisions that affect their children's education – like class sizes and school safety. She is known to parents, teachers and students throughout the district for her tireless commitment to visiting schools and learning firsthand about their needs to create the best possible learning environment



Dr. Tony Vang
McLane High, District 4
Bilingual Student Expert

A CSU Fresno Professor of Education and specialist in classroom strategies for English Language Learners, "Dr. Tony" as he is known throughout Fresno's Hmong-American community emigrated from Laos and learned English at age 17. He understands the needs of bilingual students and their non-English speaking parents. He trains new and current teachers in effective classroom methods, and as a School Board member provides a critical voice for this important constituency.



Michelle Arax-Asadoorian
Bullard High, District 7
Reading Intervention Specialist

A parent of three daughters who have attended Fresno Unified schools and a teacher and administrator for 16 years with the district, Michelle is the lead teacher in an intensive reading intervention program for first graders. She understands the critical importance of helping children in small groups at their level. She will bring the direct classroom experience to the school board that is necessary to evaluate the current administration's reform programs.

Teachers Support Independent Voices

PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, November 2
 Día de los Muertos: In commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of Fresno County, Arte Américas and the Fresno Historical Society are collaborating to celebrate Arte Américas’ annual tradition of Día de los Muertos. This year we are honoring our Valley’s native and early settlers. The following communities are joining us this year for Nuestra Herencia/Our Heritage: African-American, Armenian, Greek, Filipino, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Mexican, Native American, Portuguese, and Sikh. Each one will erect an altar/display that represents their ethnic community and/or history. The exhibit will be on view from October 12 through November 12. Día de los Muertos exhibition opens October 12th and ends November 12. The annual procession from St. John’s Cathedral, 2814 Mariposa Street, Fresno, CA to Arte Américas, 1630 Van Ness, Fresno, CA will take place November 2. Call Arte Américas for further information: (559) 266-2623 or visit our website... www.arteamericas.org

Thursday, November 2 • 7:30 PM
 The Fresno Poet’s Association presents Jesse Lee Kerchval at the Fresno Art Museum, 2233 N First. For more information see www.fresnopoets.org for further information or call 226-1528.

Friday, November 3 • 5:15 PM
 Two films: *Maximum Security University* (dir. Tom Quinn) and *Inside Corcoran: Where Hell Begins* (by the California Correctional Peace Officers Association) will be shown in Instructional Technology Bldg. 101 at Fresno State, entrance off Barstow near Cedar. This film is sponsored by the Cineculture Club at CSUF. Cineculture seeks to promote cultural awareness and discuss issues related to diversity through film. For more information: President: Kumar Navaneetha Krishnan kum.nav@gmail.com Advisor: Denise Blum dblum@csufresno.edu

Friday, November 3 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM
 The Reedley Peace Center presents Speaker: Pulkit Sawroop, a refugee from India, who is now a pre med student at Fresno Pacific University, will tell his story. Pulkit has worked at the National Institute of Health and with the Center for Disease Control, and has chosen to work on world health 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 dfriesen0@gmail.com

Friday, November 3 • 7 PM
 LUNAFEST. Films by...for...about women. Fresno State - Satellite Student Union. For more information call 278-4435.

Saturday, November 4 • 10 AM - 1 PM
 The first planning meeting for the California Central Valley Journey for Justice 2007 will be held at the Comite No Nos Vamos offices. Address: 453 N. Fresno Street (near Belmont) in Fresno. Representatives of community groups and organizations throughout the Valley are invited to attend. This will be a “potluck” meeting—bring something to share. For more information, please call: Salvador or Gloria Sandoval (209) 631-6461.

Sunday, November 5 • 12:30 PM
 The world’s oldest and most reputable peace organization, from Nobel Peace Prizes to U. N. resolutions, the International Peace Bureau has been in the forefront of the peace movement for almost 100 years. A very exciting conference just took place in Helsinki, Finland. Come and hear all about it from our members who attended: Barry Nishkian and Fran Saunders. At the Center, 1584 N. Van Ness. Pot-Luck 12:30; Program 1:00 PM. FREE Information: 237-3223

Tuesday, November 7
 Election Day GET OUT AND VOTE! - FREE
 TIME: All Day WHERE: Your local polling site
 WHY? So that: You’ll still have the right to vote next year. You won’t have to mail your absentee ballot from Guantanamo or Abu Ghraib. You’ll have done your best to protect our freedoms, support our troops and bring ‘em home. You’ll earn that cute little sticker that says “I VOTED.”

Wednesday, November 8 • 12 Noon & 7:00 PM
 Second Wednesday Video Series - Film: “Why We Fight.” Warns of the dangers of the Military-Industrial Complex. Both showings at the Center, 1584 N. Van

Ness. Pot-Luck at 6:30 preceding the evening showing. Discussion follows 7 PM showing only. Information: 327-3223

Wednesday, November 8 • 3 - 3:30 PM
 Post-Election report hosted by Richard Stone and Dan Yaseen KFCF radio, 88.1 FM

Friday, November 10 • 5 PM and 8 PM
 Fresno Filmworks presents “Half Nelson” at the Tower Theatre. Boasting an astonishing performance by Ryan Gosling, this incisive drama is both honest and inspirational. Gosling stars as Dan Dunne, an idealistic, charismatic middle-school teacher who is beginning to lose his struggle with cocaine and alcohol. 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

Saturday, November 11
 Veterans Day

Thursday, November 16 • Noon - 1 PM
 Women in Black at the CUSF Free Speech Area. For Justice. Against War. Please join us for a silent vigil. Protesting all forms of militarism! Wear black, bring a sign, women only.

Co-sponsored by POWER, Campus Peace & Civil Liberties Coalition & WILPF, Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom. Please contact Whitney Thompson for Campus Peace, whitneyt06@csufresno.edu — or call 278-4593 for more information about WIB, www.womeninblack.org

Thursday, November 16 • 6:30 - 9:30 PM
 Progressive Thursday presents: Ecoparque and Gone Tomorrow, the Hidden Life of Garbage This will be our first double feature Progressive Thursday presentation. Both are short videos. Ecoparque, the film (33 minutes), explores the creation and impact of Ecoparque, the place - a park flourishing on a formerly barren urban hillside thanks to an innovative system that uses residents’ wastewater not only to transform one canyon, but to make a scientific and economic case for neighborhood-scale, nature-mimicking facilities being preferable over centralized conveyance and chemical treatment for many canyon communities. Gone Tomorrow, the Hidden Life of Garbage (20 minutes) is based on the book of the same title and is about recycling and waste in the United States. These videos will be presented at Round Table Pizza, 5763 N. First St., Fresno. For more information contact Larry Mullen at (559) 227-0293 or go to www.FresnoGreens.org

Thursday, November 16 • 8 PM
 Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents Inner Ear Poetry Jam. \$3.-cover 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com

Friday, November 17 • 5:15 PM
 Celebrating International Education Week!
 Kordavision will screen in the Peters Educational Center, located on the west side of the Save Mart Center, 2640 E. Shaw Ave, Fresno. Admission is FREE and parking is FREE in all student (green) lots. Hector Cruz Sandoval. 2005. Cuba. Spanish and English. 90 min. No Rating. This film is sponsored by the Cineculture Club at CSUF. Cineculture seeks to promote cultural awareness and discuss issues related to diversity through film. For more information: President: Kumar Navaneetha Krishnan kum.nav@gmail.com Advisor: Denise Blum dblum@csufresno.edu

Friday, November 17 • 7:30 PM
 THE ANCIENT TONES: Kathy Kallick (guitar & vocals); Bill Evans (banjo & vocals); Tom Bekany (mandolin & vocals); Cindy Browne (acoustic bass). Bluegrass & more. Fresno Art Museum, 2233 N 1st St. Tickets are available at these independently owned stores: The Movies Video Store; Patrick’s Music, National Hardware or online at www.fresnofolkconcerts.com The Museum Gift Shoppe carries tickets for the concerts at the Fresno Art Museum. Or send a check made out to FFS and send with an enclosed SASE to Pat Wolk, 6661 N. Forkner, Fresno, 93711.

Sunday, November 19 • 3 PM
 Fresno Metro Ministry’s 23rd annual Thanksgiving Festival of Choirs will be held at Hope Lutheran Church. For more information call 485-1416 or email carmen@fresnometmin.org

Sunday, November 19 • 4 - 5:30 PM
 Peace Fresno and La Raza Law Student Association of the San Joaquin College of Law are co-sponsoring an educational forum on the new Military Commissions Act of 2006. The forum will be moderated by Jeffrey G. Purvis, James K. and Carol Sellers Herbert Professor of Constitutional Law and will be held at the San Joaquin College of Law, located at 901 5th Street, Clovis. For more info. contact Dan Yaseen 432-3445 danyaseen@sbcglobal.net or Steve Malm 264-9122 SteveDM88@aol.com

Friday, November 24 • 5:15 PM
 Source (Zdroj) will be shown in Instructional Technology Bldg. 101 at Fresno State, entrance off Barstow near Cedar. Martin Marek & Martin Skalsk, Czech Republic, 2005, 75min.

In Czech, Russian, English and Azerbaijani with English subtitles. Selection from the Human Rights Watch Traveling Film Festival. This film is sponsored by the Cineculture Club at CSUF. Cineculture seeks to promote cultural awareness and discuss issues related to diversity through film. For more information: President: Kumar Navaneetha Krishnan kum.nav@gmail.com Advisor: Denise Blum dblum@csufresno.edu

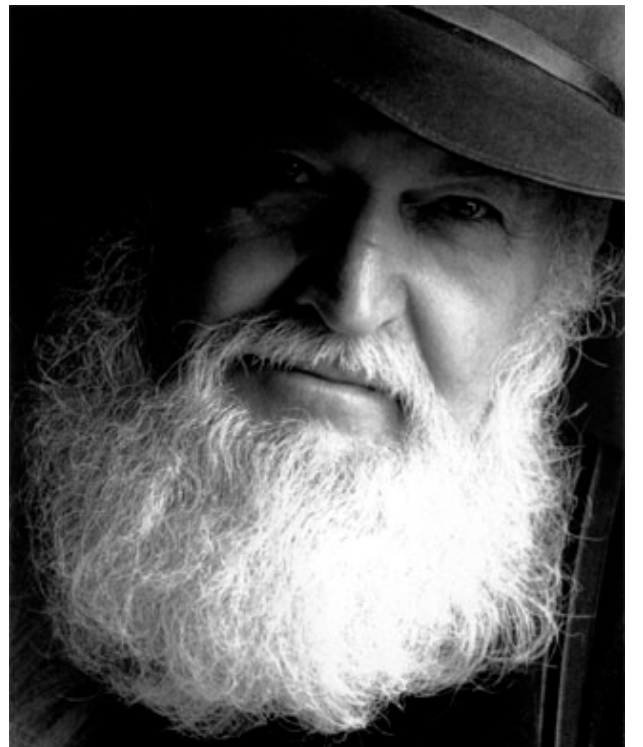
Saturday November 25 • 3 - 7 PM
 Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents Saturday Afternoon Blues Jam Hosted by Russ Allen. \$3.-cover Belly Dancing with Cory Zamora Featuring Bayle Zena, Gregory & Denise 8:00pm \$5.-cover 620 F St. Downtown Fresno (559) 264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com

Saturday December 2 • 10 AM - 4 PM
 The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom will hold the Peace Community Craft Faire at the First Congregational Church, 2131 N. Van Ness Blvd. in Fresno.

Saturday, December 2 • 7:30 PM
 UTAH PHILLIPS. That first class rapsallion and rabble-rouser, folksinger, humorist, and storyteller. Fresno Art Museum 7:30pm. Frank Moschella will open.

UTAH PHILLIPS is a first-class rapsallion and rabble-rouser, as well as a folksinger, humorist, archivist, and storyteller. Pete Seeger says: “If you have never heard Utah Phillips live, you’re in for a treat. He’s fantastic. Unique. You’ll feel better ever after, as you recall him. There’s no one like him.” Rolling Stone: “Call him a conspicuous enigma: a canny, uncanny blend of Mark Twain and Will Rogers, with a touch of P.T. Barnum and more than a hint of Huck Finn. Utah Phillips is also one of the most important songwriters to be found in North America.”

Tickets are available at these independently owned stores: The Movies Video Store; Patrick’s Music, National Hardware or online at www.fresnofolkconcerts.com The Museum Gift Shoppe carries tickets for the concerts at the Fresno Art Museum. Or send a check made out to FFS and send with an enclosed SASE to Pat Wolk, 6661 N. Forkner, Fresno, 93711.



ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

**Every Sunday
3 - 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 3 PM (meet at the Tulare side of the park). For more information see: <http://cafefresno.org/>

**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 Monday and Tuesday
7–9:30 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. If you would like to help us prepare our meal, we meet every Saturday at Wesley United Methodist Church (1343 E. Barstow) at 10am. For more information see: <http://myspace.com/fresnofnb> . For more information on Food Not Bombs you can contact us at fresnofnb@hotmail.com or visit the offical FNB website foodnotbombs.net

**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 Hughes and Olive Ave. 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 holds a demonstration for peace at Mooney and Walnut in Visalia.

**1st Sunday of every month
3 - 5 PM**
Fresno Stonewall Democrats meeting at Java Wava,1940 North Echo across from Fresno High 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 more information contact Jay Hubbell at (559) 292–4905, e-mail fresnostonewall@mangen.com, or visit the Web site www.mangen.com/stonewall/

**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 visit their Web site at www.fresno.humanists.net

**2nd Monday of every month
1 PM**
The Living Wage Committee will meet at the SEIU 250 office, 1279 N Wishon. For further information contact Frances Sivak at (559) 222-5240 or fsivak@msn.com www.livingwage-fresno.org

**3rd Monday of every Month
6:30 PM**
California Prison Moratorium Project will meet at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N Van Ness. Everyone is invited to attend this meeting. The discussion “Uncaging the Valley” mobilizing a valley wide coalition an exclusive valley focused project. Potluck is encouraged but not required. Upcoming, speakers from the anti prison movement are being scheduled. Call Deb Reyes at (559) 916-4370 for more info.

**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.

**3rd Thursday of every month
6 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 Thursday of every month
ART HOP. For more information contact Maria Franco at mfranco@fresnoarts.org or call (559) 237- 9734.

**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 contact JEAN HAYS skyhorse3593@sbcglobal.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. Please call (559) 444–2065 for more information.

**4th Thursday of every month
7 PM**
FresCAMP (Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) meeting. For more information e-mail frescamp@sbcglobal.net or call (559) 227–6134.

**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.

**4th Friday of every month
5 - 6 PM**
Street Heat on KFCF, 88.1 FM in Fresno. This is the Community Alliance radio show.

**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).

**2nd Saturday of every month
10 AM**
The Black Political Council meets at King of Kings on Martin Luther King Blvd.

**4th Saturday of Every Month
8 -10 AM**
Tower Beautification Cleanup. Meet at the Olive/ Wishon corner of the Chicken Pie Shop. Bring hat, gloves, broom or rakes and weed hoes, water. We supply orange vests, pick up bags, grabbers and extra tools. Why do we do this? To beautify our community and build empowerment through responsibility for our quality of life. Questions:? Call Coordinator, Gay Amend, at 237-6716 Sponsored by the Tower Trust, Council Districts 1 and 3 and the City of Fresno Sanitation Department which provides supplies and insurance.



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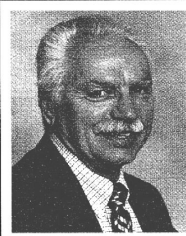
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Amy Goodman and her brother David read the Community Alliance when they were in Fresno on their book tour. Their new book is called *Static, Government Liars, Media Cheerleaders, and the People Who Fight Back*. You can hear Amy on the Democracy Now! Radio show heard Monday - Friday on KFCF 88.1 FM.



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**Margaret Mims for Sheriff
Blong Xiong for City Council District #1
Dottie Smith for State Community College District #5
Floyd Harris for Fresno County Board of Education District #1**

**Propositions supported are:
84 YES • 85 NO • 87 YES • 89 YES • 90 NO
Vote YES on Measure C**

For more information about the CVPPAC, go to: www.cvppac.org

Why We Need an Alternative/Independent Press in Fresno continued from page 15

standing on the banks of the Perfume River while the U.S. Army pounded Hue, the ancient capital of Vietnam, which has been captured by the National Liberation Front in the 1968 Tet Offensive. As thousand-year old walls crumbled under the assault of howitzers and 1,000-pound bombs, Cronkite said the war couldn't be won.

But Cronkite's conclusion—which because it came five years too late cost the Vietnamese people two million lives—was just a case of the mainstream media finally catching up with the alternative press, which had relentlessly reported the truth about Vietnam, which had exposed the lies and the horrors, and had helped mobilize an anti-war movement that was winning the battle for the hearts and minds of Americans.

At every turn in our history, the alternative press has been there, to anticipate, to inform, and to organize.

This is not unique to Americans. In 1788, there were three newspapers in Paris. In 1790, there were 100.

There is a reason for this and I want to take a moment to consider it.

We human beings have always put down our thoughts. We seem driven to do so. We have painted our ideas on the cave walls of Lascaux and Alta Mira when we just becoming human, we have scratched them into the walls of the Australian Outback, carved them into stone cylinders in the Ur of the Chaldes. Archeologists recently uncovered a note from a New Kingdom scribe in Thebes sent to a pupil 3,500 years ago

“Set your heart firmly on writing, a useful profession for one who does it. Your father had hieroglyphs, and he was honored in the streets.”

We love to read and write. We love to communicate our ideas to others, and when we do it, we are honored.

But while people have always put down their thoughts, the transmission of ideas is particularly important once humanity invents this system called capitalism.

In all the systems that proceeded capitalism, one didn't need a media to tell you the source of your oppression.

In slavery, it was obvious: the slave owner. And slaves could see with their own eyes the difference between being a slave and being free. They either remembered their former lives or could observe the difference between bondage and freedom. There wasn't a whole lot complex about how to resolve it either: Make a run for it, or get rid of the slave owner.

Feudalism was a little more complex, but not much. If you were a serf, you had a pretty good idea how to make your life better: get rid of the lords and own your land. Plus you had a lot of people living in cities who weren't serfs and seemed to do just fine. In short, you had two systems living right alongside one another, Feudalism and early capitalism, one a constant example and reminder for the other.

But capitalism is a very different kind of beast. It allows no other system but its own. It makes everything into a commodity that is up for sale: life, death, health, politics, you name it; it will sell it to you, discounted at your local Wal-Mart. It camouflages its nature behind a screen of ideology about freedom and the rule of law, though the essence of those laws, as Anatole France once remarked, was to prevent both the rich and poor from begging in the streets and sleeping under the bridges.

And more than any society that has gone before it, it understands the need to control information. No sooner had Gutenberg invented the movable type printing press, than you had to get a license from the state to use it. For under capitalism, ideas matter, and whoever controls the media, controls those ideas.

45 million people in this country have no health care, and while profits are at an all time high, working people's real wages have declined. Who is to blame? Illegal immigrants, of course.

Our country is embroiled in an insane war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and has at least two other possible wars on the drawing boards—Iran and North Korea. The U.S. has never been so disliked around the world, and on most issues we can count our allies on one hand. And who is to blame? Back-stabbing, cut-and-run Democrats, allied with Islamofascists who hate us for our freedoms, the ones we just lost under the Patriot Act, Oh, also gays, and effete liberals. And Mike Rhodes and the Community Alliance.

Last week, the publisher of the Los Angeles Times was fired. The LA Times was not making enough money. It was making a 25 percent return on its investment, more than three times the amount of return the average business in the U.S. makes. But it wasn't enough. His parent company wanted him to lay off reporters and he refused. He apparently had some silly, old-fashioned ideas that the job of a newspaper was to report the news, as opposed to telling people what they ought to think on the way to the mall.

We talk about media conglomerates, but most people have no idea what that really means. It means from the time that Ben Bagdikian wrote his first edition of the “Media Monopoly” in 1983 until the fifth edition in 2002, the number of media giants that dominate 85 percent of the newspapers, magazines radios, television stations, music, and movie studios shrank from 52 to eight.

These huge corporations themselves are dominated through their boards of directors and large stockholders by insurance companies, banks, pharmaceutical companies, oil companies, and such military giants as Lockheed-Martin—the largest arms company in the world—Boeing, Teledyne, General Dynamics, General Electric, (which owns NBC) and others.

A study by the National Association of Newspaper Editors found that 33 percent of the editors of daily newspapers admitted—I underline that word “admitted”—they would not run an article that would throw an unfavorable light on one of their parent companies. Okay, so nothing on banks, insurance companies, energy, arms spending, health care right off the top.

And you wonder why the media has a feeding frenzy around a story like Jon Benet Ramsey? In part this has always been the case, but it becomes more acute when the crisis of the system deepens and the country is at war.

Zogby International conducted a poll this past May that asked two questions.

The first was: “Some people say President Bush lied so that we would go to war with Iraq. Others say he was given faulty intelligence and did not intentionally mislead the nation. Which do you think is true?”

Some 51.8% said that Bush lied, but watch what propaganda does. In this case, Fox News. Between 89.1% and 63.2% of the viewers of ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and MSNBC thought Bush lied. Among Fox News viewers, 2.3% thought Bush lied.

The second question was stimulated by a comment that U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made that President Bush has already received an okay by Congress to go to war with Iran and need not return for any further authorization.

Zogby asked “Do you agree or disagree that the President has the right to use military force against Iran without the support of Congress?”

By margins of between 96.9% to 68.8%, viewers of non-Fox television disagreed that the President has the right to attack Iran without seeking congressional authorization. Only 14.7% of Fox viewers disagreed that the President has to seek such authorization. And while the network news audiences are falling, Fox News's numbers are rising.

This is exactly the moment when we need a vital alternative media, but looking around can be a little depressing. I think the difference these days is that our “alternative” press is more about life-style than it is about political choices.

Back in the early 1970s the Underground press found out there was lots of money to be made by handing out newspapers free, thus raising their circulation, and then filling 65% of their pages with ads. It also discovered that it wasn't good business to annoy their advertisers.

There are weekly alternative newspapers in cities and towns all over the country, but most of their news is about how to snag clothing deals, where to go hear music, or what farmer's market has the best arugula. What you don't see much about is how the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are bringing foreign policy home, one aluminum casket at a time, or the 20,000 wounded that are being shortchanged by the Veteran's Administration. God forbid you should hear about the 600,000 plus Iraqi dead.

You don't see much about how developers are paving over the Central Valley, or much about the local and state politicians who help them do it. You don't see much about poor people, Hispanics, Hmong, Arab-Americans, In-

dian-Americans or Native Americans. Most of the so-called alternative weeklies are part of big chains, like the New Times conglomerate, and they dutifully keep an eye on the bottom line.

This is not a good situation. If there is one thing we can learn from looking back over the past almost 400 years of capitalism is that no social revolution or major reformist movement got anywhere without a media. Period. There are no examples to the contrary. Because under capitalism you have to change peoples ideas and then their ideology. That isn't easy when capitalism is so all embracing.

You can get away from it, of course. You can go east from here, build yourself a shack in the mountains and subsist on nuts and squirrels. The problem is that is really hard to build a mass movement around nuts and squirrels.

If we are to do something about the world we live in, we are going to have to build a real alternative press that informs, agitates, organizes—and amuses and annoys. Hopefully it will annoy the people we want to annoy, but occasionally we will annoy our friends. That comes with job description. But the main thing is that we build a paper that lets the voiceless speak; that is more interested in masses than malls, and that understands that if people can't dance, most of them won't want to be in your revolution.

You can't let someone else do this job. You have to raise money. You have to distribute the paper. You have to report for it. You have to write for it. Say you can't write? Learn. It's not quantum mechanics. Is it hard? You bet. You think getting rid of war, racism, sexism, and homophobia, exploitation and Republicans is going to be easy? Next to all of those things writing is a piece of cake. We are all going to have to learn a lot of stuff we never thought we would have to before this is over.

On April 19, 1783, Thomas Paine wrote his last Crisis.

“The times that tried mens souls,” are over - and the greatest and completest revolution the world ever knew, gloriously and happily accomplished.

But to pass from the extremes of danger to safety from the tumult of war, to the tranquility of peace, though sweet in contemplation, requires a gradual composure of the senses to receive it. Even calmness has the power of stunning, when it opens too instantly upon us.

I must admit I look forward to the confusion of calmness, but Paine is making an important point: it's never over, and it never should be. And it wasn't for him. He went on to write thousands of essays and scores of books, including one of the great works of the 18th and early 19th centuries, “The Rights of Man.”

So, after you all make things right here in Fresno, you are still going to need the Community Alliance.

But there will be moments that make it all worth it.

When Paine wrote the first Crisis, the Revolution was on the ropes. By the time he wrote the last one, Lord Cornwallis had surrendered to Washington at Yorktown. When the British troops marched out to stack their arms and surrender their colors, the British regimental band played “The World Turned Upside Down.” Paine was delighted.

We have had those moments. We will have them again. The mainstream press usually tries to take the credit. The New York Times, for instance, thinks that its reporting and editorials ended the Vietnam War. I beg to differ. We will know who kept the Continentals alive at Valley Forge, who began the agitation to end slavery, give women the vote, organize workers into unions, derail the war in Vietnam, shame the country into ending our support for apartheid, challenge racism and homophobia.

There are a thousand more struggles I could point to where in the end our foes played the equivalence of “The World Turned Upside Down.” Ask the Sheriff of Fresno County why he isn't running for re-election and what he thinks about Mike Rhodes and the Community Alliance, and can he whistle “The World Turned Upside Down”?

Frederick Douglass said in his West India Emancipation speech of 1857, that: “Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.”

As long as we have an alternative media that fights for liberty not Lexuses, we can resist with words the prescriptions of tyrants. As long as we can give the people a voice, they cannot be silenced.

CCWF Holiday Gifts

About 4,000 women are confined, most for nonviolent crimes, in Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF), Chowchilla, the world’s largest women’s prison. Many have few relatives or friends, or those relatives/friends may live too far away to visit, or can’t afford to make the trip. The women are crammed, eight to a small room, in bunk beds. So, while the women are lonely and miss their loved ones, the overcrowding means a severe loss of privacy and limitations on personal freedom, conditions that are hard to bear.

The CCWF Family Council, in conjunction with several Prison Ministries and church groups has undertaken a project which will result in the delivery to each woman of a one-gallon Ziploc bag containing an equitable assortment of small gifts during the December Holiday Season.

The purpose of the project is to give tangible evidence that people outside do care, to supply practical items which will be useful and appreciated, and to raise awareness of people outside about the circumstances and needs of people inside.

You can respond to these needs in two ways:

- 1. you can donate a couple hours of time, once a month, befriending and visiting a specific inmate. The gift of friendship can be arranged by Nancy Turk in Visalia at 627-1088.
- 2. donations to the gift bags can be given to Maria Telesco at 255-9492.

The women may receive only authorized items. Toiletry items must be small sample/travel sizes:

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Body Wash / Bath Gel
- Hotel Size Bar Soap
- Hand Lotion
- Toothpaste
- Tooth Brush

Authorized food items should be in individual packets and have NO FOIL WRAPPING.

- Coffee
- Tea Bags
- Hot Chocolate
- Individually wrapped hard candies
- Miniature chocolate bars

Also: Picture post cards (no stamps)

- Stationery
- Envelopes

Monetary donations are also needed and welcome. Checks may be made payable to FCNV Prison Ministry, and sent to Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno, 93728. The deadline for donations is November 1st. Items for gift bags can be delivered to Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno 93728 during open hours M-F 11-3 or by appointment. If pick-up is needed, call Maria Telesco at 255-9492.



THE ANCIENT TONES: Over 100 years of Professional musicianship

Bill Monroe often spoke of “**The Ancient Tones**” that were the basis of his music, bluegrass. Comprising elements of the ballads, dance tunes, and religious music brought by immigrants from the British Isles plus the music that came to be blues and jazz brought by immigrants from Africa, those ancient tones give the music its distinctiveness, its possibilities, and its soul. Kathy Kallick and Bill Evans have formed a new band based on just those elements, a band called The Ancient Tones.

Kathy and Bill have played together many times in the past few years, and both have been making contributions to bluegrass since the 1970s. They’ve toured the country and the world with their music, collaborated with some of the top contemporary acoustic musicians, have an obvious reverence for traditional bluegrass but have recorded a number of their own compositions, and have never forgotten to have fun playing this music.

Kathy Kallick (guitar, vocals) has been among the elite of contemporary songwriters and singers since co-founding with Laurie Lewis the internationally-acclaimed band, Good Ol’ Persons, in 1975. In 2001, she received a “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the California Bluegrass Association for all her contributions. She’s released 14 albums, which include more than 100 of her original compositions and arrangements, and been on countless compilations. Both of her releases with The Kathy Kallick Band — *Walkin’ In My Shoes* and *Warmer Kind Of Blue* — enjoyed substantial success on the bluegrass charts,

Virginia native **Bill Evans** (banjo, vocals) has been involved with bluegrass for more than twenty-five years,

and currently performs with Jody Stecher (The Secret Life of Banjos), the Bluegrass Intentions, Due West, and the Bill Evans String Summit. Bill was a member of Dry Branch Fire Squad for most of the ‘90s, and has released two highly-regarded solo albums. He hosts his NashCamp Banjo Retreat with Sonny Osborne (and has presented banjo workshops across the country), has produced two popular instructional DVDs and is about to release a third (as well as a new bluegrass songbook), and is a columnist for Banjo Newsletter.

Acoustic bassist **Cindy Browne** has more than 30 years’ experience as a touring and recording musician playing a variety of styles that range from jazz to classical to ethnic folk to bluegrass. She has accompanied many

well-known jazz musicians, and teaches and directs the jazz program at Las Positas College. She’s known for her recent work with Due West, String Summit, The Webster Sisters with Scott Nygaard, Kaila Flexer, jazz guitarist Mimi Fox, Wake The Dead, and Kathy Kallick’s “Reason & Rhyme” album.

Tom Bekeny (mandolin, fiddle, vocals) has played in and recorded with The Kathy Kallick Band for the past 10 years, and with High Country for more than 15 years. He’s a co-founder of Done Gone and Tenbrooks, an early member of Laurie Lewis’ Grant Street String Band, and is featured on the Kathy/Laurie album, “Together.”



Initiative Overload

By Ruth Gadebusch



As democratic as the initiative process appears, it has gotten out of hand. Its original intent, created in a more simple time, was to allow citizens to have direct input in covering voids of the legislature. Instead, it has become one more way for the rich to buy government.

Anyone with the finances can write an initiative, file it with the election authorities, and pay signature gatherers. With any financial backing at all it is a simple matter to qualify for the ballot. They are supposed to be confined to one subject matter but it becomes a judgment call as to just how far that subject can be stretched. The gathering of signatures was, and is, vastly more difficult when dependent on volunteers, which before the advent of paid signature gatherers kept some restraints on the proliferation of these measures.

Do we really want our government bought? It is bad enough when the rich decide to offer themselves as candidates, usually starting at the top with no experience in government. They then proceed to put millions into their candidacy, to the absolute disadvantage of ordinary candidates, perhaps more qualified. Acquiring wealth whether through inheritance, luck, or hard work does not qualify one for the position. Nor, should it disqualify one; however, there is no denying that it tilts the field completely and totally when one has access to such bounty.

There is no doubt that money, prodigious quantities of it, are required to run for public office — often times, even at the beginning level of the most obscure office. If one has his/her own money s/he can bypass the system of soliciting it freeing him/her to concentrate of the campaign itself. The good news is that one of wealth is not beholden to the givers. The bad news is that they may be unable to identify with those of lesser wealth thereby ignoring the constituent base. Most assuredly an under funded candidate is unlikely to overcome the advantage of campaign money regardless of qualifications of either candidate.

Having said this about candidates and money, my greater concern goes to California's unique process of government by initiative. Of greatest concern of all is that so many of these initiatives are constitutional amendments to California's already overburdened constitution. Worse yet is that many of them are bought and paid for by out of state moguls.

Proposition 90 (so called property-rights) on this November's ballot is one such. More often than not, the money is funneled in a way that the source is well hidden. The *San Francisco Chronicle* identifies Howie Rich, the backer of Prop 90, as "a wealthy libertarian who believes in limited government and has long used tax-exempt groups to promote his favored candidates and political beliefs — property rights, term limits, tax cuts and school vouchers, among others." We pay for this doubly, first through the tax exempt entity and again as it skewers our constitution.

There are many tax exempt groups formed purely for political gain that exercise great power in elections through money without ever having to identify their contributors. Candidates, as well as certain groups, must list their sources of campaign income.

Adding to the problem is that so many of these initiatives — 1A, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90 in this election — are constitution amendments making them near impossible to change once passed. Regardless of how one feels about the issue we would do well to very seriously consider if they belong in the constitution. Note: Proposition 1A was placed by the legislature, giving no more assurance that it belongs in the constitution than those placed by signature gathering. Keep in mind that no matter how far reaching these propositions are they require only a simple majority to pass. Once in statute or the constitution, they can only be changed by another initiative or a super majority of the legislature.

No matter how well written or good intentioned, there is a problem with voters getting the whole picture. For

just this one election there are 76 pages of very fine print. Without doubt this is a challenge for the lawyers who deal with them on a daily basis. For us ordinary citizens it is a super challenge. We end up reading summaries, perhaps tilted by the writer, or being swayed by the advertising.

Speaking of advertising, here is another method of buying the election. Even in our valley it is quite costly, but still more so in the larger markets of this huge state. These measures are often drafted in ways that keep the courts busy interpreting the meaning and the effect on existing laws.

Further more it isn't just the propositions with which the voters must contend in this election. There are the candidates, their statements, and bond issues. All told the voter handbook contains 192 pages which we are supposed to comprehend and that does not include the local measures and candidates. That information came in the sample ballot, another 40 pages. The actual Fresno ballot is two pages 18 inches long.

Is it any wonder than many do not feel it is worth the effort — mistaken as that idea may be? It is a daunting process for politically active citizens and more so for everyday citizens. It is healthy to have a variety of candidates offering their service but I fear so many other considerations on the ballot spread our attention too thin.

It is time for the initiative process to be modified to better fit today's conditions. It is time for the legislature to take its responsibility more seriously. They should even go so far as to give us more reasonably apportioned districts. Alas, I don't advise anyone to hold their breath until these kinds of reforms are done by the legislature. Anybody for another initiative? Or even 3 or 4 or more, since they can only contain one subject!

Correction to my October column on Proposition 85: it requires only parental notification, not consent, which carries the same problems without accomplishing the desired effect.

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Ruth Gadebusch was born and raised on a Georgia farm. In 1977 she was elected to the Board of Education of Fresno Unified School District and served for thirteen and a half years. She continues to be active in the community while serving as Vice-President of the Center for Civic Education (promoting responsible citizenship and democratic principles internationally) and writing for the Liberal Opinion, a weekly national newspaper.

No Home For A Man With AIDS

Gary Dennis

There is nothing like the joy of coming home after a hard day of work. If you're like me, you might put on some music, take a shower, cook some food, light candles and incense, and just simply relax. Or maybe you're a television watcher or a book reader, well, whatever it is you do at home, I'm sure you're glad you have one. Well, that's not the case for all people. I just recently had an encounter with someone who had AIDS and he had trouble finding himself somewhere to live. Particularly he was looking for a clean and sober living environment like a home of some type that could help him. But the problem was, he said none of the places



that he tried would accept him because he had AIDS! Luckily for him, my HIV/AIDS education and experience also included Fair Housing training. Funny as it may be, that is actually how I got started in the HIV/AIDS arena in the first place. I used to work for the Fair Housing Council of Central California under their HOPWA grant. HOPWA for those of you who don't know is Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA). One of the main things that we dealt with was housing discrimination issues; and in my cases, those against people living with AIDS. What people may not know is that AIDS is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act and is also afforded the same privileges as other disabilities covered under the act.

Since I knew all this, I was able to calm the man down and refer him to the proper places to get his situation handled. Unfortunately, I have been unable to get back in touch with him to find out how his progress is coming but one thing you can be sure of is that this type of situation has happened to and is still happening to others living with AIDS. Some other things that had come up in my conversation with this man were the fact that there are no AIDS housing/complexes. I don't know if any of you all remember the Miller Project or the Van Ness house. Both of these places were around before I moved here to Fresno but now I don't see them and I haven't heard too much mention about them either. But from what I saw in a 1999 Fresno County AIDS Housing report, these places once existed. What happened?!! To me, things like this show the progress and growth (or lack thereof) of this community in regards to HIV/AIDS and the concern for the people living with this disease. I'm very concerned when people don't take action and more particularly when people stop asking "WHY?" Folks, you have to understand that HIV is a human disease meaning that human lives are at stake; that is why the "H" in HIV stands for Human. One of PROJECT: MALE's core beliefs states this, "We believe that individuals infected with HIV/AIDS deserves to be treated with dignity and respect regardless as to the circumstances that may have caused them to acquire this disease and that they should not be discriminated against in accessing medical treatment, housing, or employment." So if you feel this way too, give us a call at (559) 268-1969 and let's talk about it to make Fresno County a better place for people with HIV/AIDS!



Progressive Thursday presents

EcoParque and Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden life of Garbage

Two short documentaries on wastewater and garbage landfills.

Thursday, November 16, 2006

6:30-9:30 P.M.

Round Table Pizza

5763 N. First street

Fresno, CA

(SW corner of First and Bullard)

Doors open 6:30

Video 7:00

Discussion 8:00

This event is free, wheelchair accessible and open to anyone interested in discussing progressive topics.

Contact Larry Mullen at 559 227-0293



The Word on the Street

by Wendy Russell

He gave me a big huggy squeeze and kissed me before I left. Through the window glass we wave bye again as I head to my car. For the gazillioneth time I give thanks for that man.

It's that time of month again and I have a decision to make. Where do I go to ask this month's Question:

Thanksgiving is coming up. What are you thankful for?

The old large trees of the Tower District pull me in their direction. Maybe there is some nice Fall color beginning and I could enjoy that while also collecting 'Words' on the street. On Olive in the Revue's parking lot I see Richard "Guto" Ferraguto, who I've known since back in the day when I restored my beloved 1959 Rambler station wagon. He also owned an old car, a huge convertible - lots of old cars actually, but today he is in a Toyota and probably thankful for its much lower fuel costs.

So I ask Guto our Question: Thanksgiving is coming up. What are you thankful for?



Guto

"I'm thankful that I've gone on a vegetarian diet after reading this book, *Mad Cowboy*, and it seems to be working real good for me. I'm thankful that I'm alive and well on this planet. And that I became a grandfather last October." Here he busts into the biggest of smiles, "Hi, Samuel!"

I ask Guto for one strong fact from the book that powered his decision to quit eating meat. Get ready, because he gave me a disgusting one: in L.A. they grind up 40,000 pounds of unwanted dogs and cats every month and feed them to cows that in turn becomes the meat on the family dinner table.

Whew! I'm thankful I don't have *that* job. And that I am in *this* life, instead of a cat dumped at the pound in Los Angeles!

Instead, I'm in this life with two great sons, Noah Russell, who is meeting me for lunch today, and Brook Bernstein (I'm really his step-mom and sure we had some rocky times but I give thanks for even that - because it helped



Amy Hernandez

us both be who we are today). I also have some great kids I never had - by that I mean young people in my life that are like my own - but are not. Like Chris Lane, who lived with us three years after high school. I give thanks for all my kids.

Next door at Piemonte's I see Amy Hernandez efficiently working the counter. She is another Almost Daughter of mine. I go in and ask her boss if she could step outside for a photo and The Question, so he called another employee over to take her place at the counter. Her boss clowned around a little and I could see this was a happy place to work. The place was packed with friendly, chatty people ordering sandwiches as I got her answer:

"I am thankful because the love of my friends and family has enabled me to be self-sufficient. Their support has led me to happiness. I'm also thankful I can enjoy freedom of choice and equality."

On my way out, one of Piemonte's customers made a funny comment and so I asked her the Question next. Thelma E. Ware became serious:

"I'm thankful for my family - my natural family and my church family - and for having God in my life because He enables all of this. And I'm thankful for my health."



Thelma E. Ware

With her purchase, Thelma hurried home to her own cooking as I walked the sidewalk very thankful that my wonderful husband does most of the meal preparation at our home. He says I could be a good cook - if I just stayed in the kitchen - but I just can't bear wasting time cooking when there is *anything* better to do, so I make sure my life is jam-packed with lots of things that are better to do, while he likes to settle down cooking the ultimate meal to go with a particular wine. It's a perfect match and I give thanks for that.



Angelica Ramirez and Thomas

Noah had shown up at the Revue. We order and consume tasty sandwiches - all food is tastier if prepared by others, have you noticed? Next we walk across the street to see his paintings displayed at the Dream Salon. A cute kitten played in the geometric shapes on the floor made from golden sunlight streaming in through the square windows.

I ask owner Angelica Ramirez our Question: Thanksgiving is coming up. What are you thankful for?

"I'm thankful for loving family and friends believing in my dream. I'm thankful for their support in opening my

business - we painted together and my brother did the graphics - and for investing in me!"



Mitchell Takarakis

By now we are all petting the little kitten. "Our Dream kitty is so pretty!" Angelica adds, "And Thomas the cat is thankful for finding me. She is a rescued kitty!"

Strolling under the orange, rust and green trees I marvel once again at we humans. One Question that I ask varied people and yet the answer remains the same. We love each other. We need each other.

Later I caught up with Mitchell Takarakis and asked him what he was thankful for:

"I'm thankful for my friends and family, and for my health, my faith and my church, Truth Tabernacle, and the revelation of Acts 2:38."

Yes, we are all one and the same. We move towards the light of love, to where it shines brightest for each one of us. I sure hope your flame helps you to blaze up to your highest. Like mine does. My husband never says anything remotely like, "You aren't capable of doing that!" or "That's an impossible dream!" No, instead he is my staunchest supporter. He builds me up. I build him up. I am thankful for that.

I stopped at the KFCF 88.1 fm studio to see what answer I might find there. I Asked Ali Rezapour, an immigrant from Iran 28 years ago and host of Common Ground: Thanksgiving is coming up. What are you thankful for?

"I am thankful for my family that includes my wife, Aurora, and my four children; Sabrina, 12, Gabrielle, 10, Ismail, 6, and Miguel Mohammad, 4. I'm also thankful for the independent media of KPFA/KFCF that allows an alternative point of view that begs to differ from the Sean Hannitys and the Bill O'Reilly's that seem to fill the mainstream media of today. I am especially thankful of Amy Goodman that has given me new hopes to help bring a more factual view of current events. I do believe in the good heart of Americans and I want to be a part of this effort to bring more truthful information to my fellow citizens so they can decide for themselves on how to change the world by changing their community. A thought that I keep in my mind in this struggle is to seek light in the darkest."

"Seek light in the darkest..." Good words. If those closest to you bring darkness to your spirit, step out of that line and follow your heart to love. And give thanks for those that let you shine.



Ali Rezapour