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Angela Price, development director of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence dedicated to peace and social justice, is pictured at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom holiday crafts faire. See more pictures from the crafts faire on page 12 and 13. Front page photo by Pam Whalen.

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COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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

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OPINION PAGE

Our Local “Electronic Public Greenspace”: Are Telephone Companies Threatening Public Access TV?

By Ron Cooper

Fresno needs a public access channel, because local high school games don’t generate the kind of excitement from sponsors or the folks at Nielsen to get scheduled onto local commercial television stations. The same is true for education and governmental meetings, programming in languages other than English, and thousands of other topics representative of the diverse ethnic, political, cultural, and religious communities in Fresno County.

And that’s exactly why there is an effort to bring local cable public, education, and government access channels (PEG)—to allow citizens in local neighborhoods the opportunity to watch and present unique information, events, and programming. But this good progress toward video democracy may face additional challenges, even after the City of Fresno and Clovis and the County of Fresno include public and education access channels in the franchise agreements that are currently being negotiated.

It’s been well reported in the media recently that the two largest telephone companies, SBC and Verizon, are all geared up and ready to provide an alternative cable service to local communities. Sounds good. Competition in video services—like the recent advent of DBS satellite—means there will be more choices for consumers. But the catch here is that neither SBC nor Verizon want to assume the same economic or social responsibilities that the cable operators are in the process of agreeing to under their franchise agreements with local governments.

At the local, state, and federal levels, these telephone giants are letting it be known that their business models do not include paying franchise fees, rolling out services to all neighborhoods without regard to affluence or abiding by the same social obligations—like providing local PEG channels that may eat into their profit margin. If phone companies are permitted to build as they wish, the franchise fees that would be paid locally to provide PEG access channels will never be collected, possibly destroying our opportunity to see the promise of PEG access realized in this community.

PEG channels have the potential in Fresno to be this community’s “Electronic Public Greenspace” where democracy is actually demonstrated through low-cost, televised, community dialogue. Cable companies share a part of their profits as “rent” and these funds create an electronic public/private partnership for greater civic participation. What a concept—invite all residents to participate and actually enhance democracy electronically!

Cable franchise fees are “rent” paid for the benefit of the Fresno community. Not only will local franchising support local media priorities—like PEG access channels—but the franchise also requires the cable operator to invest its network and services throughout its entire service area—not just in the affluent neighborhoods.

This requirement, to serve all, is critically important to maintain an Electronic Public Greenspace in this and other communities. The more neighborhoods in Fresno County that get access to broadband and cable services and training in the use of these technologies—the closer we get to guaranteeing that this community will not be one divided among the technology haves and have-nots.

As they try to shortcut the local franchising process, the phone companies say they are trying to provide better video choices for consumers. But at what cost? Why should the “rent” paid to local government be waived for these huge profitable corporations?

We need to let our local, state, and federal officials know that we care about these services and that future video providers ought to play by the same rules as existing cable operators. Collecting a reasonable franchise fee as “rent” for the commercial use of the publicly owned “right-of-way” should be the same, no matter what kind of private company is profiting, whether phone or cable.

To help keep the public access TV channels alive, once we get them on the cable network, we may need to call upon our local high school football players to throw a Hail Mary pass and bring some attention to this important issue. Maybe then, those who want to bring competitive video services to California communities will accept their public/private partnership responsibilities and financially support public access community channels, our collective Electronic Public Greenspace, our “field of dreams” for the little guy. It need not be complicated. It is the fair and right thing to do.

Ron Cooper is the Executive Director, Access Sacramento Chair, Western States Region, Alliance for Community Media (916) 456-8600 ext. 112

Who reads the Community Alliance newspaper?
Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers union, is seen here reading a copy of last month’s newspaper while at a candle light vigil in Stockton.

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Cable Public Access Victory in Fresno

If everything goes as planned, Fresno County will have public, education, and government (PEG) access channels when the new franchise agreement with Comcast cable is finalized. The Fresno County Board of Supervisors directed its staff to include (PEG) access channels in the new franchise agreement. A broad coalition of community groups had lobbied the supervisors for this outcome and were excited when the supervisors voted unanimously to support the concept of PEG access.

At the December 6, 2005, public hearing on this issue, Randy Reed, the media services coordinator for the Fresno County Office of Education, narrated a Power Point presentation before the board that illustrated the elements that community groups would like to see included in the new contract with Comcast. Reed said after the meeting that the Board of Supervisors agreed on one public access, one government access, and two educational access channels (designated in the franchise); support and infrastructure for community media resources that are inclusive of the entire Fresno County area (not just Fresno/Clovis metro); and supervisors also directed staff to explore, with local educational institutions and other interested community organizations, options for the establishment of a community media center and a model for a 501c(3) organization to operate and manage community media in Fresno. "This was our desired outcome," Reed said. "We now have 90 days to put together a plan to make this work."

After Reed's presentation numerous speakers advocated for PEG access channels and a community media center. These speakers included Sara Hedgepeth Harris from the League of Women Voters, Richard Stone from the Fresno Center of Nonviolence, Silas Cha from the Center for New Americans, Woody Miller from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Jose Luis Baraza from the Center for Independent Living, John Welty, president of CSUF, Cynthia Cooper from the Fresno Coalition for Art, Science, and History, Larry Mullen from the Green Party, Pat Wolk from the Fresno Folklore Society, Cesar Culqui from Club Latinoamericano Del Valle Central, and Camille Russell from Peace Fresno.

These groups came to the Board of Supervisors meeting because they heard that the county contract might not include a public channel. In a [board briefing report](#) posted on the Board of Supervisors Web site, it appeared that one outcome of the December 6 meeting could have been an agreement that did not include a public access channel or community media center. The report was written by John Navarrette, Fresno County director of General Services and lead negotiator for the contract.

Fresno County, which has about 13,000 cable subscribers, did not hire a consultant to help them negotiate the franchise agreement and did not hold community needs assessment meetings to determine public interest in PEG or the community media center. Instead, county staff entered into informal negotiations with Comcast and came to the meeting with a proposal, which according to community media activists, fell far short of what a good franchise agreement should contain.

The City of Fresno (76,000 cable subscribers) and Clovis (13,000 cable subscribers) have hired [The Buske Group](#) as consultants, to help level the playing field and negotiate the best deal possible with Comcast. Although the formal process being used by Clovis and the City of Fresno has taken longer than many expected, Bob Hendricks, chief information officer for the City of Fresno said at the December 6 hearing that "negotiations will start in January of 2006."

At the conclusion of the two-hour hearing, Supervisor Susan Anderson moved that the board extend the current franchise agreement for 90 days. Supervisor Henry Perea added to Anderson's proposal that one of the five proposed channels be designated as a public channel. The vote was 5-0 in favor of the motion.

In analyzing the significance of the December 6 board action, Randy Reed said that "while the County of Fresno was the first jurisdiction to actually bring a proposed deal forward for a vote, the City of Fresno and the City of Clovis are in negotiations with Comcast as well. The difference is that these two cities have both passed ordinances requiring a minimum of one public, one education, and one government access channel as a part of any cable deal from this point forward in their cities." Reed added, "The County did not and still does not have the same requirement for its jurisdiction [un-

incorporated areas and county islands]. That's why the December 6 vote by the Board was so crucial and why a strong collaborative effort within the next 90 days [the time period given by the Board to come up with a workable model for community media] is critical."

For more information about this issue, see www.fresnoalliance.com/home/pegcableaccess.htm <www.fresnoalliance.com/Dec6.htm> <www.buskegroup.com/>

You can also join the Alliance for Community Media listserv by sending an e-mail to Alliance_for_Community_Media_in_Fresno-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.



Woody Miller spoke in favor of a public access channel.



Randy Reed and John Welty helped set up the Power Point presentation that influenced the Board of Supervisors to support PEG access and a community media center.



Sara Hedgepeth Harris spoke, representing the League of Women Voters, in favor of PEG access and a community media center.



Cynthia Cooper from the Fresno Coalition for Art, Science, and History spoke in favor of PEG access and a community media center.



Supervisor Henry Perea included a Public Access channel in the proposal that was passed on December 6. All photos by Mike Rhodes

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pentagon Reverses Position and Admits U.S. Troops Used White Phosphorous Against Iraqis in Fallujah

Thursday, November 17, 2005

<www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=05/11/17/1515223>



The US government has now admitted its troops used white phosphorous as an incendiary weapon against Iraqis during the assault on Fallujah a year ago.

Chemical weapons experts say such attacks are in violation of international law banning the use of chemical weapons.

Peter Kaiser, of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, said, "Chemicals used against humans or animals that cause harm or death through the toxic properties of the chemical are considered chemical weapons."

White phosphorous is often compared to napalm because it combusts spontaneously when exposed to oxygen and can burn right through skin to the bone.

The Pentagon's admission comes after a week of denials that it used white phosphorous as a weapon in Fallujah. While reporters have noted the use of white phosphorous since the war began, it only became a major story last Tuesday when Italian state broadcaster RAI TV aired the documentary *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*.

On that same day *Democracy Now* aired an excerpt of the documentary and interviewed Lt. Col. Steve Boylan, the director of the Pentagon's Combined Press Information Center in Baghdad. During our show Boylan denied the claims made in the documentary that white phosphorous was used as a weapon to target Iraqis.

But the Pentagon was caught in a lie after it was revealed that an official Army publication called *Field Artillery* magazine had disclosed that the Army had in fact used white phosphorous as a weapon.

The magazine, in its March-April issue, reported "[White phosphorous] proved to be an effective and versatile munition... [and] as a potent psychological weapon against the insurgents in trench lines and spider holes."

The magazine went on to report "We fired 'shake and bake' missions at the insurgents, using WP [White Phosphorous] to flush them out and HE [high explosives] to take them out."

On Tuesday, Lt. Col. Barry Venable, another Pentagon spokesperson, admitted on the BBC that white phosphorous was used as an offensive weapon to target insurgents.

The Pentagon has defended its use of white phosphorous by claiming it is a not chemical weapon and that it was only used against Iraqi insurgents, not civilians. However even this would have been illegal according to the Army's own rules of combat. In 1999 the Army published a handbook that read, "It is against the law of land warfare to employ WP against personnel targets."

An Iraqi human rights team has reportedly gone into Fallujah to investigate the use of white phosphorus as a weapon by US forces.

[Below is the full interview, by Amy Goodman.]

AMY GOODMAN: While reporters have noted the use of white phosphorus since the war began, it only became a major story last Tuesday when Italian state broadcaster, RAI TV, aired the documentary, *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*. On that same day, *Democracy Now!* aired an excerpt of the documentary here in the United States and interviewed Lieutenant Colonel Steve Boylan, the director of the Pentagon's Combined Press Information Center in Baghdad. During our broadcast, Boylan denied the claims made in the documentary that white phosphorus was used as a weapon to target Iraqis.

LT. COL. STEVE BOYLAN: I know of no cases where people were deliberately targeted by the use of white phosphorus. Again, I did not say white phosphorus was used for

illumination. White phosphorus is used for obscuration, which white phosphorus produces a heavy thick smoke to shield us or them from view so that they cannot see what we are doing. It is used to destroy equipment, to destroy buildings. That is what white phosphorus shells are used for.

AMY GOODMAN: That was Lieutenant Colonel Steve Boylan, speaking on *Democracy Now!* last Tuesday. But the Pentagon was caught in a lie after it was revealed that an official Army publication called *Field Artillery* magazine had disclosed the Army had, in fact, used white phosphorus as a weapon. The magazine in its March/April issue reported, quote, "White phosphorus proved to be an effective and versatile munition and a potent psychological weapon against the insurgents in



Amy Goodman

trench lines and spider holes." The magazine went on to report, quote, "We fired 'shake and bake' missions at the insurgents using W.P. [white phosphorus] to flush them out and H.E. [high explosives] to take them out." On Tuesday, Lieutenant Colonel Barry Venable, another Pentagon spokesperson, admitted on the BBC that white phosphorus was used as an offensive weapon to target insurgents.

LT. COL. BARRY VENABLE: White phosphorus is a conventional munition. It's not a chemical weapon. They are not outlawed or illegal. We use them primarily as obscurants, for smoke screens or for target marking in some cases. However, it is an incendiary weapon and may be used against enemy combatants.

BBC REPORTER: Can you confirm, then, that it was used as an offensive weapon against enemy troops during the siege of Fallujah?

LT. COL. BARRY VENABLE: Yes. It was used as an incendiary weapon against enemy combatants.

BBC REPORTER: There are suggestions here that if used in that way, an incendiary weapon such as white phosphorus would be against the various conventions governing the use of weapons during war. You disagree?

LT. COL. BARRY VENABLE: Cite the conventions.

BBC REPORTER: The Chemical Weapons Convention.

LT. COL. BARRY VENABLE: Okay. Does it list white phosphorus as a chemical?

BBC REPORTER: No, it doesn't. But it says a chemical weapon can be any chemical which, through its chemical action on life processes can cause death, temporary incapacitation, or permanent harm.

LT. COL. BARRY VENABLE: But this isn't—we're talking white phosphorus is an incendiary weapon, not a chemical weapon.

AMY GOODMAN: That was Pentagon spokesperson, Lieutenant Colonel Barry Venable, being interviewed on the BBC. The Pentagon has defended its use of white phosphorus by claiming it's not a chemical weapon and that it was only used against Iraqi insurgents, not civilians. However, even this would have been illegal according to the Army's own rules of combat. In 1999 the Army published a handbook that read, quote, "It's against the law of land warfare to employ W.P. against personnel tar-

gets." An Iraqi human rights team has reportedly gone into Fallujah to investigate the use of white phosphorus as a weapon by U.S. forces.

To discuss this controversy, we're joined by two guests. On the phone from Italy, Maurizio Torrealta. He's news editor for the Italian state broadcaster, RAI, co-producer of the documentary, *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*. We're also joined from Britain by George Monbiot, a columnist for the *Guardian* of London. On Tuesday, he published an article entitled, "The U.S. Used Chemical Weapons in Iraq and Then Lied About It." We first go to Maurizio Torrealta. You did the documentary. Your response to the new statement of the Pentagon, following up on the Pentagon's denial when you were on the broadcast last week, saying they didn't use white phosphorus as a weapon against people in Fallujah.

MAURIZIO TORREALTA: Well, first of all, I want to say that any time any institution corrects itself, I think, is a great event. And I would like to see many more institutions that are able to admit their mistakes. Then, the correction is not complete, because the Pentagon said that they used white phosphorus as a weapon, but not on civilians. And unfortunately we got really hundreds of pictures of people that seemed to be killed by white phosphorus. And I think an investigation, a United Nation investigation, on that could really finally say the last word about how much has been used against civilian people.

And then there is another couple of questions that I have in my mind. First of all, since the news are something that wasn't unknown—the *Independent*, the *Guardian* wrote about the use of white phosphorus, and a lot of Arabian Web site was—they published information about that. And what makes that became news right now? It is a question that I really can't answer. And I think we should discuss a little bit about this second question.

JUAN GONZALEZ: George Monbiot, I'd like to ask you, the Pentagon is trying to split hairs in terms of how it defines chemical weapons; your perspective on their attempt to get through their own contradictions on this?

GEORGE MONBIOT: The Chemical Weapons Convention could not be clearer. There are two kinds of chemi-



cals listed under it: One is the scheduled chemicals, such as phosgene and mustard gas and VX gas, which cannot be used under any circumstances; then there is all other toxic chemicals which may be used for purposes which do not depend on the use of their toxic properties. However, the moment you use one of those other chemicals for its toxic properties against human beings, you are in breach of the convention. And what we saw very clearly from that extract in *Field Artillery* magazine was that they were firing these munitions directly at the combatants in Fallujah in order to exert the toxic effects of those munitions upon those combatants to flush them out so they could then be killed. In doing so, the US Army was acting in direct contravention of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It committed a war crime.

AMY GOODMAN: I wanted to play an excerpt from the RAI TV documentary, *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*. This part features an interview with Mohamad Tareq Al Deraji, a biologist from Fallujah who heads the Fallujah Center for Human Rights.

NARRATOR: Mohamad opens his PC and shows us images of a victim in Fallujah, a woman lying on the side, clothes intact, hiding a scorched body, a veil covering like a shroud a face melted by the heat.

MOHAMAD TAREQ ALDERAJI: In al-Askeri, I hear some witnesses say, 'Here's some bodies—here's killing by the—a man died from the [inaudible] burns.'

REPORTER: In what state did you find the dead?

MOHAMAD TAREQ ALDERAJI: Different type. Children, women, younger youth, older men. All different form of

people. But many from them has killing and the dead, inside the chicken room or cooking room, some from them when he [inaudible]. There is some witnesses. He say when American attack some places, the big [in Arabic]—shower?

WOMAN: A shower of fire?

MOHAMAD TAREQ AL DERAJI: Yeah, shower, but different color [inaudible]. And after this, all the people in this place is dead.

REPORTER: Why was the bombing so severe?

MOHAMAD TAREQ AL DERAJI: In the April battle, American say we want to cut the people killing the foreign counters, American counters. After the battle in April, American—he cannot enter the city, but he search about another reason. He found maybe a terrorist is a suitable reason. He continues to attack Fallujah between April and November. More than one hundred houses destroyed to kill Zarqawi and the assistant of Zarqawi.

AMY GOODMAN: That is Mohamad Tareq Al Deraji, a biologist from Fallujah, quoted in the documentary, *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*. We'll get response when we come back. And I should also say we did call the Pentagon. We called the Lieutenant Colonel Venable and asked him to join us, who had stated the reversal of the military position on whether they used white phosphorus as a weapon against people in Fallujah. He was extremely angry, and he refused to come on the broadcast.

[break]

AMY GOODMAN: We're on the line with George Monbiot, author and columnist for the *Guardian* of London, wrote the piece, "U.S. Lied About Chemical Weapons in Iraq"; and Maurizio Torrealta, news editor for the Italian television, RAI, co-producer of the film *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*. We just saw this biologist from Fallujah speaking. Maurizio Torrealta, could you amplify on who he was and what he saw?

MAURIZIO TORREALTA: Yes. He is a member of a human rights organization in Fallujah. He tried a couple of times to be brought to the attention of the Western people what's happening in Fallujah. He visited Rome. And then he went to Strasbourg in the European Parliament, invited by organizations, some political organization and some European deputies. And we met in there, and he told us some information.

But what strikes me is the fact that it's been a year that he was speaking about such things, and just the recent days, I got a lot of letters that have been sent by organizations in Fallujah to the UN, to Kofi Annan, denouncing the same thing, and nothing happened. And we had to put on video those horrible pictures, in order to have some kind of reaction. And the reaction came before from the society. The politicians didn't really care less. So finally it

breaks through. I mean, it became news. And after a year people knows what happened, knows, at least has some idea, of what happened in Fallujah. And really, as a journalist, I'm really scared by the impossibility that the people in Fallujah had, for years, to brought to the attention of all the media what really happened over there.

JUAN GONZALEZ: George Monbiot, your column also mentions that the *Field Artillery* article was not the first mention of the use of white phosphorus, that there was actually some reporting by an embedded reporter at the *North County Times* in Southern California as early as April 2004. Could you talk about that?

GEORGE MONBIOT: Yes. I'll coach you from what he said. He was an embedded reporter with the Marines during the siege of Fallujah, which, as you say, took place in April 2004. And his article goes as follows: " 'Gun up,' Millikin yelled, grabbing a white phosphorus round from



a nearby ammo can and holding it over the tube. 'Fire!' Bogert yelled, as Millikin dropped it. The boom kicked dust around the pit as they ran through the drill again and again, sending a mixture of burning white phosphorus and high explosives they call 'shake and bake' into a cluster of buildings where insurgents have been spotted all week." Now, the key term there is into a cluster of buildings. In other words, again they were not using this white phosphorus for the purposes of illumination or for the purposes of smoke screening, both of which are legal uses of white phosphorus in war. They were using it as a weapon in order to flush the insurgents out of those buildings. Doing so is in breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And in both that article and in the *Field Artillery*, they keep referring to this mixture called "shake and bake," which is obviously a mixture of white phosphorus and explosives at the same time, so it's clearly meant to be used as an offensive weapon, no?

GEORGE MONBIOT: I believe it's a pun on some season-

ing which you have in the United States which you put on a chicken before you put it in the oven. And the idea is that you shake them out of their hiding place and then you can bake them or kill them with high explosives, having shaken them out with your white phosphorus. The use of white phosphorus to do that is not legal.

AMY GOODMAN: I wanted to go back to the documentary, *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*, which is the documentary that RAI Television, the Italian state broadcaster, did last week that *Democracy Now!* also broadcast. BBC then got this reversal from the military on whether they used white phosphorus as a weapon against people in Fallujah. And this goes to the testimony of Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena who worked as a reporter in Iraq before she was kidnapped. She spoke to RAI TV after she was released.

GIULIANA SGRENA: [translated from Italian] Not only in Fallujah. I had heard stories from the inhabitants about the use of certain weapons like napalm in Baghdad during the battle at the airport in April 2003. And then I had collected just before going to interview the city refugees testimonies from other inhabitants in Fallujah about the use of guns and white phosphorus. In particular, some women had tried to enter their homes, and they had found a certain dust spread all over the house. The Americans themselves had told them to clean their houses with detergents, because that dust was very dangerous. In fact, they had some effect on their bodies, leading some very strange things. I would have liked to interview those persons, but unfortunately my kidnappers, who were said to be part of Fallujah's resistance, had forbidden me to tell what I have known about Fallujah by kidnapping me. This world cannot have witnessed this. It cannot have witnessed it, because it's based on lies. The Americans have permitted only to embedded journalists to go to Fallujah.

AMY GOODMAN: That was Giuliana Sgrena. And now Jeff Englehart, who is a former US soldier.

REPORTER: Were any chemical weapons used in Fallujah?

JEFF ENGLEHART: From the US military, yeah, absolutely. White phosphorus. Possibly napalm may or may not have been used; I do not know. I do know that white phosphorus was used, which is definitely, without a shadow of a doubt, a chemical weapon.

REPORTER: Is he sure of it?

JEFF ENGLEHART: Yes. It happened.

REPORTER: How can he be certain?

JEFF ENGLEHART: Well, it comes across radio as a general transmission. When it happens like that, you hear it on the radio through—we have speakers in our trucks—

Continued on page 19



WHO IS USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN IRAQ?

The photo above was intentionally not printed. The image was simply too disturbing. In a horrific and tragic twist, we have learned that our country has been using chemical weapons against the Iraqis. The Pentagon was recently forced to admit that they have used white phosphorus in what they describe as "shake and bake" military operations. See the article starting on page 4. The Community Alliance has photos of the victims of this chemical warfare. They can be seen at <www.fresnoalliance.com/photos.htm> If you go to this Web site to see these pictures, be prepared to see some deeply disturbing photographs of dead men, women, and children—killed by U.S. chemical weapons.



Get Your Freak On— A Letter from India

By Catherine Garoupa

Relaxing in my room one evening, a smile played across my lips when a nearby party began blasting Missy Elliot’s “Get Your Freak On.” Just as I pondered the irony of hearing an American pop song in India, the evening call to prayer (*namaz*) rang out, and the irony (and my smile) deepened.

Another woman on my fellowship program had remarked that India truly was the “Land of Contrasts.” Before leaving the States, her Indian friends described it as such and, initially, she had dismissed these comments as true of any country. But after only two weeks, we had all agreed how true it really was. And that notion still rings true over the days and months I’ve been here, and the thought comes back to me often.

The other day, I read a newspaper article detailing how an Israeli couple had been fined \$100 for kissing at the end of their wedding ceremony. Apparently they were not aware that such open, public displays of affection are frowned upon in India. I knew this was the social norm, but didn’t realize you could actually be charged and fined for it! The birthplace of the Kama Sutra actually has strict laws against public affection. In an even more startling report, I read that a girl whose village council decided she was of “loose character” painted her face black, shaved her head, and banned her from the village for life...India, the world’s largest democracy.

Currently I’m working for a nongovernmental organization (NGO) through the American India Foundation’s Service Corps Fellowship. The unit I’ve been placed in provides trainings for women running for or elected into the three lowest, most local tiers of government. My first week of fieldwork involved driving back and forth to a neighboring district, Haridwar, where elections were soon taking place. I marveled at a hut along the road, which was constructed of propped up tree branches covered in cloth...with a TV resting on the residents’ lone trunk of goods.

The irony and contrasts, I’ve discovered, also encompass the work that I’m involved in. You see, I work for a “non-governmental organization.” To me that title speaks of grassroots work, empowerment, social justice. Yet the organization is directed, wholly and completely, by a 70- year-old man whom everyone addresses simply as “Sir.” Thus the office environment is very hierarchical. In addition, the organization houses two government-funded units. In fact, the government has quickly become one of the NGO’s main funders, as two of their largest international donors have withdrawn. These agencies discovered gross violations in spending and misappropriation of funds. In one case, the NGO applied for and received grants from two different donor organizations for the same amount of money, for the same project, with the same budget. In another instance, money was disbursed several years ago to build a hostel that has still not been constructed.

Unfortunately, international donors have no recourse, so the NGO has the upper hand. It is also difficult for an international funding agency to be fully aware of the ground-level practices of an NGO. Strangely, one funding agency that is withdrawing felt obligated to give the organization notice and supply funds for 2 more years. The NGO was full of glee since, after all, they would not be audited after that two-year period. They subsequently used the funds to purchase two shiny new vehicles, bringing the organization’s total to approximately eight vehicles. Did I mention that the majority of work here is office-based?



Kaushal Ji and Catherine Garoupa in India

I somewhat marvel at these facts, and am somewhat dumbfounded by them. I now realize I had an idealistic viewpoint of what an “NGO” stands for. I assumed that NGOs are grassroots organizations, by, for, and of the people, built on empowerment, justice, and solidarity, and that these principles are evident not only in the work undertaken, but in the work environment itself. I have no doubt that the horde of employees (anywhere from 45 to 150, depending on which units and separately registered “NGOs” you count) who work here believe what they are doing is right, just, and good. I have been told they are paid wages well above the common standard for NGO work, so I’m sure they also have their own well-being and livelihood in mind. And it’s not to say that all of the work done is demeaning, meaningless, or malicious.

But is it really “grassroots?” Do they really work from a foundation of “empowerment” or “social justice”? (It’s important to note that the situation I’ve found is commonplace worldwide, not just in India. Additionally, there are many organizations that do perform empowering, effective grassroots work.) Having my master’s in social work, I’m seeing all those boring, stuffy theories I dreaded learning in class come to life. One now rings particularly true: the more concrete a structure becomes, the more entrenched, bureaucratic, and ripe for corruption it is. The NGO I’m placed at began humbly 30 years ago by bringing a class-action suit against the government for mining activities that were destroying the forests and polluting the environment, in a time before India had environmental laws. It now paternalistically imparts trainings to the illiterate, women, and villagers on literacy, informed self-governance, and legal rights.

Again, it’s not to say that the work is all bad or totally useless. I’ve come to accept as a fact of life that corruption and paternalism exist everywhere, even in the last place I expected to find it. I am humbled by this realization, saddened and enlightened by it, and determined not to let the power of entrenched structures or festering greed penetrate my ideals. Everything in life is imperfect, and I see no harm in acknowledging and accepting that. Yet I vow to maintain a habit of self-reflection, in an attempt to constantly recognize errors and weaknesses, and build upon and strengthen them. I encourage every individual to do the same, both personally and along with whatever organizations or businesses you happen to associate with.

Recently, I began to ponder the Fresno progressive community and would like to start a discussion about our weaknesses. First, we must come from a place of openness and understanding, one where we recognize that any “criticism” is actually feedback that can help us become stronger, to prevent entrenchment and corruption. Bearing that in mind, I would like to pose a few questions. What ways can our actions be heard more, felt more, become more effective? What issues are the most pressing and need to be dealt with now? How should we focus our energies within those efforts? What more can we do to reach out, network, and collaborate? What things as individuals can we improve upon, to bring more to our work? How can we work, within our organizations, as more of a cohesive team? How can we communicate with each other better? What can we all do, individually and collectively, to improve? Please feel free to send any and all comments to valaaradia@hotmail.com. I look forward to hearing your thoughts!

Catherine Garoupa was born and raised in Madera, California. She became involved in the Fresno progressive community through a social work internship with the Fresno Branch of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and has remained active with WILPF since then, serving as vice chair in 2004-2005. In May 2005 she graduated with her master’s in social work from California State University, Fresno. She is now completing a Service Corps Fellowship with the American India Foundation in Dehradun, Uttaranchal, India.

Fresno County Youth Summit

The Fresno County Youth Service Council is planning the 6th Annual Fresno County Youth Summit to empower youth to take responsibility for themselves and their schools. It will be held at Fresno Pacific University Gym. There is no charge and lunch is provided. The Council selected the theme of “Respect: Safe Schools and Cultural Unity.” They want to identify strategies for youth leaders to address bullying, racism, and gangs, with service projects to change the climate of their schools. This event will take place Tuesday, January 10, 8:30 AM–2:30 PM.

What positive initiatives are Fresno youth engaged in to prevent violence and promote multicultural understanding? What opportunities and resources are available to engage thousands more youth in these projects?

Teams of 5–10 students and an advisor from Fresno County secondary schools and community organizations will

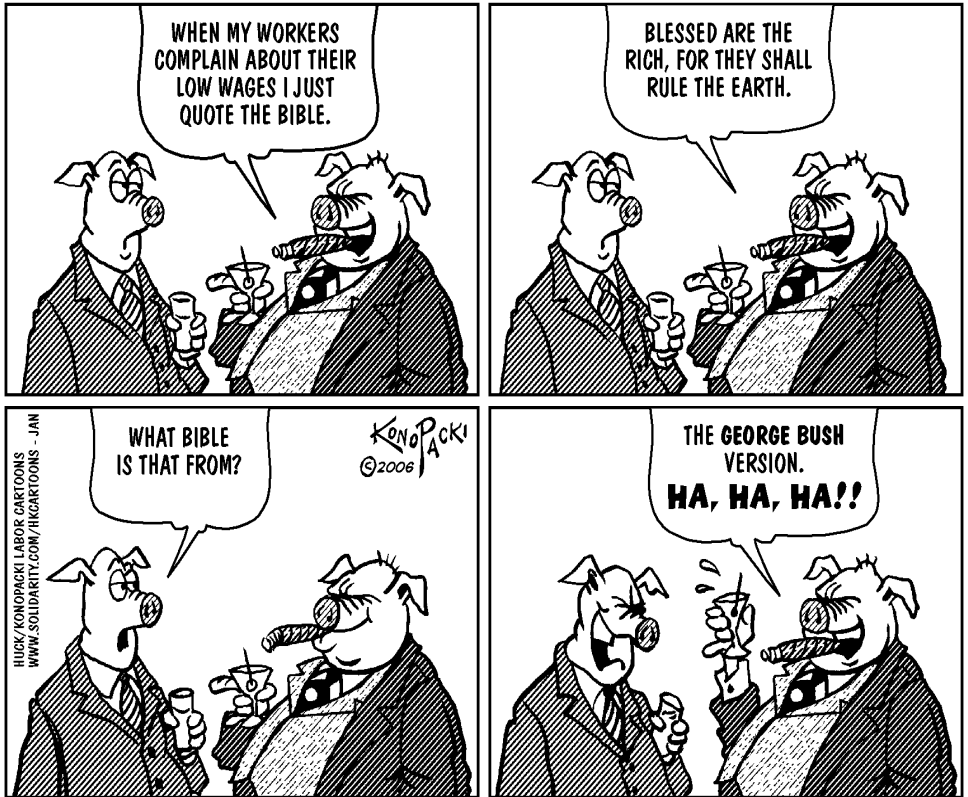
1. Explore opportunities and resources at a Youth Service Fair (8:30 AM–9:20 AM)
2. Hear dynamic speakers challenging them to be responsible and engaged
3. Engage in leadership activities led by Youth Service Council members
4. Dialogue about causes, current initiatives, and opportunities to address:
 - Bullying
 - Cultural conflict
 - Violence
 - Obstacles to youth success
5. Create action plans to engage students in service projects to address these.

To register, e-mail John Minkler at jminkler@fcoe.k12.ca.us. Provide contact information (phone and address) and name of school/organization.

The Fresno County Youth Service Council is sponsored by the Fresno County

Office of Education, Fresno Unified School District, and Central Unified School District.

For more information contact John Minkler, Coordinator, Fresno County Office of Education: 497–3728 or jminkler@fcoe.k12.ca.us.



Smooth-Talking Politicians: They have never had the answer to crime

By Boston Woodard

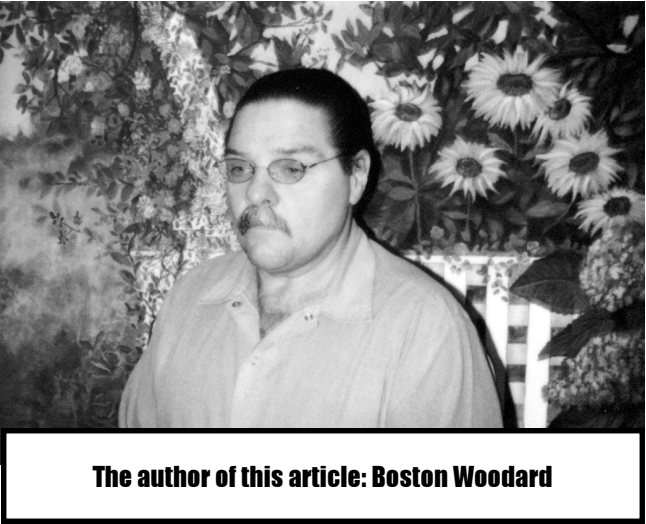
The answer to crime reduction cannot be found in the numerous political circles that govern society. Since the beginning, criminologists have been unable to find a cure for crime and why it continues at such an alarming rate.

For years, smooth-talking politicians have conned the public into believing that the solution to this never-ending nightmare depends upon the decision they make at the ballot box on election day. Society is continually deceived by the landslide victories and empty promises of its elected officials. Decades have passed and politicians still lay claim to understanding the criminal mind. Elections and campaign promises continue at a rapid pace, each candidate ostentatiously exhibiting “insights” on crime and how to make it disappear.

Billions of dollars have been spent in search of a solution to this horrific problem that continues to plague our society.

Experts repeatedly contend they know how the criminal mind functions, yet our jails and prisons are bursting at the seams. Taxpayers have been footing the bill for studies designed to find the key that will unlock the secrets of criminal behavior.

Society has been duped by the federal and local authorities into believing they alone can solve the mystery. Politicians, seeking money and power, have latched onto the disease of crime for nothing more than to gain votes at the polls. They recognize crime as an ugly sore that society wants to be rid of. Instead of fulfilling their campaign promises to wipe out the ugly sore, they pick at it ever so slowly, so as not to attract undue attention. The sore continues to fester and grow, until more money is needed to contain it. We need to



wake up and view these people for what they really are. Let’s face it—crime means corrections, and corrections is big business.

The answer to this age-old problem does not lie exclusively within free society. The answer also lies within the razor wire and walls of misery and despair. We also hold part of the key to unlocking the criminal mind. Throughout the years, few have directed their ideas or studies in this direction. Who can better understand the criminal mind than another criminal?

Each year, bills are presented to the legislature demanding harsher penalties for crimes committed against society, yet the public continues to live in fear. The criminal mind does not value and/or weigh the consequences of illegal acts. The penalty phase is not a component of criminal behavior. Granted, illegal acts should be punishable, but lawmakers and public servants should also be held accountable for their unlawful doings each year: from California to Massachusetts, public servants commit criminal misdeeds. Their punishments are the slightest of reprimands and/or removal from their elected positions. That doesn’t appear to be equal justice under the law. Acts such as these set the example for the children of tomorrow, the children of today, and the numerous lawbreakers already behind bars.

Corruption and an unfair government are the major causes of crime today. The criminal mind accepts this kind of justice as an invitation to challenge the system, to test the waters of an overflowing, politically corrupt cesspool.

Until steps are taken to ensure that all people will be treated equally under the law, inside and outside the courtroom, the world will continue its path toward self-destruction.

We have to recognize where crime begins before we can conquer it. People have to stop looking at themselves as victims and nothing more. If an individual ever received a traffic ticket for speeding, he or she broke the law, therefore committed a crime...and becoming a criminal.

Criminal acts vary in degree, but until we face up to the truth and stop justifying our actions as not as bad as those of our counterparts, nothing will ever be done to find a solution. The children of tomorrow depend on what takes place today. They deserve a panel of public servants who will be more law-abiding, more truthful, and more honest than the ones who serve today’s society.

Understanding the offender and recognizing why he or she committed such acts is more important than placing an excessive prison sentence on him or her and never finding the real answer. Excessive sentences are designed to punish, yet 98 percent of all offenders will be released back into society. The public doesn’t realize that the effects of rehabilitation often start to reverse after a certain point of incarceration. Criminals need to be rehabilitated and placed back into society before this transition starts.

Our government must take the initiative and step up to the plate. It must face the nation and proclaim partial responsibility for the unacceptable conditions of our environment and the increase of crime upon the streets.

At this rate, we will never be able to fulfill a dream that children of the future so desperately need to come true. The dream, rather, will continue to be a nightmare; equal justice will continue to be a farce; and court will continue to be held in the streets.

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

The Heart of Interfaith Work: What Lies Ahead for our Nation?

By Edie Jessup and Ghassane Habib

The Interfaith Alliance of Central California will sponsor an keynote address by the Reverend Dr. Welton Gaddy, director of the national Interfaith Alliance at the Fresno Islamic Cultural Center on Thursday, January 5, 2006, as part of their annual meeting. The public is invited to consider with Dr. Gaddy “The Heart of Interfaith Work—What Lies Ahead for our Nation?” The event will begin with a vegetarian dinner at 6 PM provided by the IACC. Dr. Gaddy’s presentation will start at 7 PM, followed by a question-and-answer session.

In addition to being a prolific writer, Dr. Gaddy provides regular commentary to the national media on issues relating to religion and politics. He has appeared widely, including on *CNN Presents: The Fight Over Faith*; PBS’s *NOW with Bill Moyers*, *Frontline*, “The Jesus Factor,” and *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*; *NBC Nightly News* with Tom Brokaw; *CBS Evening News* with Dan Rather; *ABC World News Tonight* with Peter Jennings; numerous National Public Radio stations including KQED’s *Forum* in San Francisco and KCRW’s *The Politics of Culture* in Los Angeles. While ministering to churches with a message of inclusion,

Dr. Gaddy emerged as a leader among progressive and moderate Baptists.

The Interfaith Alliance is a grassroots organization drawing from more than 75 different religious traditions or beliefs with 47 local alliances in 38 states. Dedicated to promoting mutual respect, cooperation and civility, The Interfaith Alliance strives to promote religion as a positive and healing force in the life of the nation. The Interfaith Alliance of Central California seeks to bring to public discussion a genuine interfaith voice, grounded in compassion, justice, and civility.

The Fresno IACC chapter’s core values include:

- Affirming religious pluralism and celebrating differences
- Protecting minority rights
- Separation of church and state
- Civility in political debate.

Interfaith religious leaders of the Central Valley welcome the public to join in the work of the Interfaith Alliance, and to meet Dr. Gaddy and hear his powerful message for religious diversity and respect. The public is invited on January 5, 2006, 6 PM, to the Islamic Cultural Center, 2111 East Nees (between Maple and Chestnut).

“Sometimes [President] Bush comes close to crossing the line of trying to serve the nation as its religious leader, rather than its political leader.”

The Reverend Dr. C. Welton Gaddy



Observing Eagles in Dumna Country

By Rick Heredia

Mike Smith spots a raven in a Tree of Heaven tearing at the wing of a coot. Plucked feathers drift down, still warm. The bird wants what little meat is on the coot wing. A moment later, the raven takes flight, carrying the wing in its claws.

Smith knows what is happening. Years of studying eagles and other raptors tell him that there is only one way that raven could have gotten that wing: A bald eagle snatched a coot from the cold gray waters of Millerton Lake and made a meal of the unlucky bird. The raven scavenged the wing from the prey remains left on the ground.

Smith, standing at the edge of Millerton’s Ramp 1 parking lot where a boat named To-Qhill is parked, scans the area with high-power binoculars, hoping to spot the bald eagle.

A few raindrops fall. The air is finger-numbing cold. The sky and lake are slate gray. Yellow leaves flutter to the ground. It is the off-season at the Millerton State Recreation Area, so there are few visitors. Except for the life-and-death encounter between the eagle and coot, and a raven’s raucous caw carrying across the void, the park is peaceful, quiet. Solitude prevails.

But solitude is not what Smith seeks. He looks for bald eagles. And he is not disappointed. The previous day, he spots one perched in a tree on McKenzie Point.

McKenzie is popular with Millerton’s wintering bald eagles. Consequently, it is a stop on the park’s bald eagle tour, which take place on the lake. Stopping points might include Hillis Cove, Cattlemen’s Cove, McKenzie Point, Winchell Cove, Sea Scout Cove, and Fine Gold Bay. The boat ties up at Fine Gold and visitors are served hot chocolate.

Millerton is a popular destination for winter migrating eagles, Smith says. He guesses that more than 100 different eagles, all ages, come to Millerton during the winter. Millerton is just one of many stopping points for migrating eagles, some of which have come from the Great Slave Lake area in the Northwest Territories, nearly 2,000 miles to the north.

The tours have become something of an institution at Millerton, which was made a state park on November 20, 1957. Each weekend this winter during January and February, visitors from Fresno and other places around the San Joaquin Valley, as well those from the Bay Area, will trek to Millerton to take a tour.

Millerton’s eagle tour program is among the oldest in the state park system. Currently, Millerton is the only state park offering eagle tours. So visitors taking them have the rare opportunity to see eagles in the wild. When they do, they are thrilled and excited. That is because, like many in nearby Fresno, they do not realize how close they live to eagles. “When I tell people what I do, eyes pop out. ‘Eagles? Here?’ Yes, they are here,” Smith says.

The first eagle tour at Millerton happened in 1984. Mel Harada was the ranger on board. He recalls that visitors went out on a rented 12-foot open barge. They sat on folding chairs they carried from the courthouse. The barge had no railing and the passengers had no protection from the elements. Still, they were willing to endure bitter cold for the thrill off seeing a bald eagle in the wild.

Harada, now retired, says that initially he and the other rangers wondered if there would be any interest in the tours. After all, he says, who would want to come to Fresno and Millerton Lake in the dead of winter?

Apparently, lots of people. The week the tours were announced, they were booked for the season—December, January, and February. And 700 to 800 people were put on a waiting list.

That was 21 years ago. In all that time, Harada’s and Smith’s enthusiasm for eagles and introducing park visitors to them has not diminished. Something visitors will discover when, bundled against the morning cold, they trundle into the old Millerton Courthouse, filing past Smith and a ranger on hand to introduce them to the world of the bald eagle.

In a room at the back of the courthouse, surrounded by mounted wildlife that includes a bald eagle found below Auberry on the San Joaquin River in the mid-1990s that had been electrocuted, the visitors start the tour. Here, Smith gives a presentation on that which they have come to see: eagles, especially those connected with Millerton Lake. At the end, they will have many questions. Smith answers them with patience and good humor. He loves sharing his knowledge about eagles with anyone interested.

Some of the things Smith might tell visitors:

- The females are bigger than the males. Females can average 10 to 12 pounds; males, 8 to 9 pounds. Smith has encountered a 15-pound female.
- An eagle’s visual acuity is eight times ours. An eagle flying more than a mile high can still spot prey on the ground.
- When capturing prey, the bird goes into an at-



Mike Smith in the Millerton Courthouse, posing with a mounted bald eagle.

tack stoop, tucks in its wings, and streaks downward at a steep angle at 100 mph. A thin transparent membrane, called a nictitating membrane, covers the eye to project it.

- Valley grasslands and blue oak woodlands are critical bald eagle habitats and destroying them for development will have severe repercussions for the raptors. This comes after the bald eagle was nearly wiped out by the toxin DDT. Eagles’ gradual recovery in the post-World War II era has been gratifying. But today they face another danger.

“What we’re seeing now is a slower type of potential threat, and that is habitat loss, and it will take years to see how the impact...affects their numbers, but we know it will,” Smith says.

Following the presentation, visitors will hike down to the water’s edge and board To-Qhill, the park’s eagle boat. To-Qhill is a Dumna Indian word meaning “bald eagle.” One of the things Smith emphasizes during a tour is that visitors are in Dumna country. The Dumna

What: Millerton Lake State Recreation Area annual bald eagle tours. The state park is located 20 miles northeast of Fresno. Call 559-822-2332 for reservations, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Walk-ons are welcome, if space is available.

When: Weekends, beginning January 7th and 8th through the end of February.

Where: Meet at the historic Millerton Courthouse, 8 a.m. Dress warm, wear layered clothing. Bring binoculars.

Cost: \$15 a person. The cost includes admission to the park.

are one of many tribes or groups that lived in and around what is now the state park. Fort Miller, from which the town of Millerton took its name, was built on a Dumna village site. The fort was established less than a month after the Camp Barbour treaty was signed on April 29, 1851.

So, recognizing Dumna ties to the land, and recognizing, too, that local Indians have close cultural ties to eagles, in November 2002, park officials invited some Dumna to a ceremony to dedicate the eagle boat. During the ceremony, much to the amazement of some, a bald eagle appeared and flew over the group.

To-Qhill is a covered, 30-foot aluminum pontoon boat that can seat 25 passengers comfortably. It cruises the lake at up to 20 mph and once out on the water, spotting eagles is uppermost in everyone’s mind. Binoculars dangle from necks. Anticipation is high. Once on board, visitors are treated to more interpretive facts about bald eagles. Smith and an accompanying ranger use props to demonstrate how such things as an eagle’s weight and wing span compare with those of the red-tailed hawk, which is plentiful in the area, and the California condor.

As Smith and the rangers on the eagle tours know, nature hands them many surprises. For example, visitors have seen eagles snatch coots, gulls, and other birds from the water.

“Last January, we were coming out of Ramp 1, we had just boarded the boat and were headed to McKenzie Point,” Smith recalls. “As we got closer to Rattlesnake Island, I saw an eagle carrying a gull in its talons. The gull was dead. The eagle was flying low off the water, about six feet. So we moved the boat to Willow Cove, parked. The bird was in a blue oak. We could see the feathers flying everywhere. Everybody on the boat had a great view of the eagle plucking the gull.”

Eagles can be quite territorial. Smith recalls the time he saw a golden eagle attack a bald eagle that had intruded into the golden’s territory. The bald eagle was perched in the top of a bull pine. It was hunting.

The golden streaked in. Just as quickly, the bald eagle rolled over and dropped off the side of the tree, upside down. The two raptors locked talons and tumbled end over end, breaking branches as they fell. They separated just before they hit the ground and the attacker chased off the intruder.

“I’ll never tire of seeing a bald eagle,” Mel Harada says. “Their spirit, their strength rejuvenate my spirits each time I see them.”

“I’ve always been fascinated with birds of prey,” says Smith, who worked for 15 years at Central Valley Indian Health in Clovis. “One reason for my appreciating them, is the high respect native people have for eagles.”

Rick Heredia (Northern Paiute) is a freelance writer who has met bald eagles in the wild. His next goal is to add the Oxford World Atlas to his book collection.



Mike Smith, eagle tour guide on board the eagle boat, To-qhill.



Spring Valley Elementary School students (O'Neals) on an eagle tour in January 2005.

Environmental Sustainability and Critical Habitat

By Brandon Hill



Currently in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is a bill that could change the face of one of our landmark environmental laws and in turn the landscape of America. The Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act (H.R. 3824) is one of many attempts to reform the Endangered Species Act (ESA). According to supporters, this legislation is the solution; it will strengthen the ESA, lead to increased recovery rates and meanwhile alleviate the burdens imposed on landowners. Opponents, however feel otherwise, branding it the “Extinction Bill” and asserting that it creates entitlement programs for developers. The reforms now being considered may very well decide the fates of dozens of listed species in Fresno County whose fates are already placed in great jeopardy.

Sponsoring the reform bill is Congressman Richard Pombo (R) of Tracy. Among Pombo’s claims to fame are proposals to put national park lands on the auction block, sell naming rights to public places, and open up California’s coasts to new oil drilling. Supporting the Pombo legislation is the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition whose membership includes organizations such as the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Association of Home Builders, National Mining Association, and several San Joaquin Valley water districts. Additionally, the bill is co-sponsored by Valley Congressmen Costa, Cardoza, Radanovich, and Nunes.

The two key justifications for reform cited by proponents of the Pombo bill are the burdens of the ESA on landowners and the low recovery rate for listed species. Kerman farmer Paul Betancourt elaborates on the effects of the Act on property owners: “In an extreme case, a farm could be shut down; restrictions on water supply would be the most likely possibility.” He then



added, “If the population continues to grow, the general public will begin to feel the pinch in housing prices as a result of environmental mitigation costs.” At the heart of the debate on the burdens to landowners is the issue of critical habitat designations, a requirement that will be repealed if the bill passes. Aside from the alleged burdens on landowners, advocates for repeal claim that critical habitat is ineffective. A Fish and Wildlife Service fact sheet validates their claims by stating, “Designating critical habitat for species already on the endangered species list provides little conservation benefit to species.”

Promising to alleviate the burdens of the ESA on landowners are provisions that compensate landowners for compliance with the law. One such provision requires that the government reimburse a property owner no less than fair market value for a proposed use if the use is hampered by measures imposed by the ESA. According to estimates done by the Congressional Budget Office, this measure could cost taxpayers roughly \$20 million per year though the amount could vary significantly. For Betancourt this use of tax dollars is a constitutional matter and is more than justifie: “The farmer should be compensated; the concerns about the cost to taxpayers are not enough justification. We can’t continue ignoring the constitution.” He then adds, “Farmers are taxpayers too; we’re just as concerned about wasting taxpayer dollars.”

Not surprisingly, the Pombo legislation has met fierce opposition from environmentalists. Opponents of the bill object to nearly all of the key assertions made by the proponents of the legislation. On the issue of critical habitat for instance, environmentalists stand in stark contrast to the proponents of reform. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, an organization which works for the recovery of endangered species, “Critical habitat is the only portion of the Act that specifically protects habitat and explicitly establishes recovery as a management goal. It works: species with critical habitat are twice as likely to be recovering as species without it.” Oddly enough, this assertion is validated by six US Fish and Wildlife Service reports. Dr. Patrick A. Kelly, associate professor of biological sciences and coordinator of the Endangered Species Recovery Program at CSU Stanislaus stakes out the middle of the road: “Clearly, endangered creatures do have critical habitat requirements but that is not to say that they cannot be protected without designating critical habitat. And, some species that have critical habitat designations are not doing so well regardless.”

Also contested is the premise that the ESA is “broken” because of low recovery rates. Sarah Matsumoto, field director for the Endangered Species Coalition, an organization comprised of environmental groups replies, “It is unrealistic to measure success based solely on the number of species delisted.” Only 7 of more than 1200 species have gone extinct after being listed under the Act, and even these never had the chance to benefit from the Act’s protection due to their seriously depleted state at the time of listing.”

Echoing Matsumoto, Kelly says the premise is “to put it mildly, unsound.” He instead cites lack of funding as the main obstacle to higher recovery rates: “The US Fish and Wildlife Service, the primary agency involved with ESA enforcement, does not receive enough funding to conduct status surveys for species that may need listing, let alone the resources required to recover the species that are already on the list.” Kelly also notes that the reforms proposed will only make species recovery “much more expensive” which leads to concerns about the costs of compensating landowners for compliance with the law. In contrast to proponents’ claims, a report done by the Congressional Research Service states that the notion that critical habitat places restrictions on private property is merely a “public misperception” and instead simply, “generates guidance to landowners on avoiding penalties under the act.”

Matsumoto also states that the ESA’s effect on landowners is minimal: “Of more that 219,000 development projects reviewed under the Endangered Species Act between 1998 and 2001, less than one percent were found to potentially jeopardize listed species—and most of these were allowed to continue.” However, environ-

mentalists still have reservations about measures designed to compensate landowners for the burdens of compliance. Matsumoto shares their concern: “The federal government would have to pay for profits developers hoped to gain, including any profits lost due to mitigation to protect endangered species. This provision would quickly drain funding used to help restore wildlife and the places they live.”

For those interested in protecting the ESA from attacks such as this, several options exist: contact elected officials who sponsored the legislation, join in the efforts of local organizations, editorialize in print media, work to pass a pro-ESA resolution at the local level, and perhaps most important, urge Senators Boxer and Feinstein to oppose any legislation that weakens protections for endangered species and their habitat.



Progressive Thursday Presents

The Future of Food
An in-depth critique of
genetically engineered
foods and crops and how
they affect us.

January 19, 2006 • 6:30-9:30 PM
Round Table Pizza
5763 N. First Street • Fresno, CA
(SW corner of First and Bullard)

This event is hosted by the Fresno
County Green Party and is free,
wheelchair accessible, and open to
anyone interested in discussing
progressive topics.

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

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Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

Eduardo Stanley is a *Community Alliance* insider: an editorial board member and a frequent contributing writer. Yet he is probably unknown to many of our readers since most of his work as a journalist is done in Spanish, and much of it deals with fringe minorities like Oaxacans and Hmong.

A native of Argentina, Eduardo received a scholarship for a postgraduate course in the University of Bucharest (Rumania), which helped him to get away from the Junta, the repressive military government of Argentina (1976-1982). While in Rumania he met his wife, Myrna, now also a Fresno activist. His years in Romania gave him the opportunity to temper his reaction to the right-wing totalitarianism he fled with a realistic view of left-wing totalitarianism. The next stop was Mexico, for three years. Then Eduardo and Myrna came to the Fresno area and, like so many of us long-timers, had no intention of staying.

But here it is, twenty years later, and Eduardo has found himself a niche writing for Pacific News Service, a San Francisco-based organization founded during the Vietnam War to distribute non-mainstream stories to broadcast and print news outlets. As a freelancer, Eduardo chooses his subjects by “nosing around and finding an angle,” with a preference for stories that introduce different cultures to his Spanish-speaking readers. This vocation is bearing fruit: he now feels that the various minority groups around the Valley are attending to each other and finding common ground.

Eduardo believes that Latino journalists are now working together much more collegially, talking about how to get better coverage and upgrade the content of their media. He feels part of a network, including notably the Oaxacan community, and the Porterville community represented by *Noticiero Semanal* a weekly journal. And he is encouraged by the willingness of the Spanish-language press to present such stories as his recent profile of a 25-year-old Pakistani immigrant woman who drives a tractor. “There is a new understanding of diversity,” he says, and this allows him the freedom to follow the stories that give him most satisfaction, those

where he goes to out-of-the-way places and meets people with unfamiliar backgrounds...and they attain mutual trust.

Eduardo still feels his professional milieu needs substantial development. “We lack financial resources to do our work properly. Spanish TV stations may have the biggest viewership in the Valley, but the profits are a fraction of the English stations’. We can’t get the big advertisers to take us as a serious market.” He also works to create an expectation for the Spanish media beyond “folklorica and novelas”: he takes a more critical, analytical perspective reflecting the problems, hopes, and aspirations of immigrants.

What can our readers do to support his work? “Support independent media, like the *Alliance* and KFCF” (88.1 FM, where Eduardo has a weekly show, *Nuestro Foro*, on Wednesdays at 7 PM). “And,” he adds, “contact us with stories and leads, let us know what *you* see as important or interesting issues.” [Editor’s note...Y quizas aprender español, maybe we can each learn a little Spanish.]



Birthplace: Rosario, Argentina
Main identity: Latino (“although my bloodlines include a grandfather from England—hence Stanley—and an Italian grandmother”)
Religious affiliation: None
Political affiliation: Independent (“I used to be a Democrat”)
Most frequented part of Fresno: The Tower District
Inspirations: “I got my work ethic from my father, my love of adventure and creativity from the ‘60s protest movements and rock ‘n’ roll”
Motto: “Es positivo ser critico...use your intelligence, don’t rely on first impressions”
Nonpolitical interest: photography
Unexpected pleasures: “I roast my own coffee and raise my own chiles.”
Contact: nuestroforo@kfcf.org

Post Election Chaos

By Dan Waterhouse

At the end of November, word leaked that Schwarzenegger had taken a message from voters to heart and was swinging back to the centrist role he had staked out right after the recall election two years ago. The message: “We are increasingly fed up with the extremes of both major parties; we are more apt to identify ourselves as independent or ‘decline to state’ than in the past; we may become the majority of this state’s voters if things don’t dramatically change in Sacramento.”



Shocking the state’s Republican Rad Right, Schwarzenegger announced that he was appointing openly lesbian Democrat Susan Kennedy as his Chief of Staff. Prior to the announcement, she was a member of the state Public Utilities Commission for two years. Kennedy describes herself as a “moderate Democrat.” According to political writer Daniel Weintraub, Kennedy is: “While [she] is a social liberal, she is also an economic liberal in the classical sense—one whose first instinct is toward individual freedom, not government regulation.”

The *Bay Area Reporter* says Kennedy has “parted ways with other queer Democrats” in recent months. Although she married her partner in Hawaii in 1999, she was critical of attacks on Senator Dianne Feinstein by activists after Feinstein made her “too much, too fast, too soon” statement on gay marriage after the 2004 presidential election. She opined in the *San Francisco Chronicle* shortly after the election that “the gay community’s criticism” of Feinstein “revealed the gay movement’s greatest challenge going forward: blind self-righteousness.”

After Schwarzenegger’s announcement, Kennedy said she was tired of the partisanship in Sacramento. She feels it’s time to “put up or shut up.” When she worked for former governor Grey Davis, she was trusted by moderates on both sides of the state legislative aisles.

Republicans are revealing exactly how badly off their party is in California. Fresno’s Mike Der Manouel said the party “can’t raise any real money without” Schwarzenegger. Sacramento’s talk jock Eric Hogue comments: “The party has no other option [another Republican to oppose him next year] and Schwarzenegger knows it, advantage Arnold, and Phil Angelides. It may be 10 years before the GOP has another opportunity.”

The Republicans have so alienated their moderates that the California party is almost entirely dependent on the radical right for grassroots support. Hogue thinks Schwarzenegger turned his back on the conservatives because he believes they don’t support him.

Former Republican Senate leader Jim Brulte summed Schwarzenegger up neatly to Weintraub: “Schwarzenegger reflects politically where most Californians are. He is a fiscal conservative. He is socially moderate. And, he’s environmentally progressive.” Hogue adds that Schwarzenegger is his own man and an independent of sorts.

Many rightists are demanding the party withdraw its endorsement of Schwarzenegger’s 2006 campaign for reelection. The State vice chairman, for in-

stance, resigned from his post when Kennedy remained chief of staff. Others attempted to force the governor to appoint an ultra-right justice to the state Supreme Court as a price for their continued support. In another indication that he has turned his back on the Republican ideologues, Schwarzenegger nominated a moderate Republican appeals court justice on December 9 to fill the seat left vacant by Supreme Court Justice Janice Rogers Brown. Nominee Carol Corrigan is no ultra-right ideologue. She compares favorably to retiring US Supreme Court justice Sandra Day O’Connor.

After first saying he was going to “sit out” Schwarzenegger’s reelection campaign next year, Der Manouel urged the party grassroots to focus on developing a strategy to “defeat our well-regarded adversaries” — cops, firefighters, and nurses. He sees them as the barrier to radical right control in the state. Der Manouel says the party should forget running candidates for statewide office if the public safety and education workers can’t be destroyed as political opposition.



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PROVIDING HEALTH CARE & HEALING ARTS IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY

Amnesty or . . . Jail?!?

With the immigration debate heating up nationally, the Community Alliance went to the streets to ask a handful of people what they think.

By Eduardo Stanley
Photos by Tudor Stanley

FRESNO—Displaying an incredible lack of compassion, on Friday, December 16, the House of Representatives approved by a vote of 239 to 182 a bill that would make almost any of the undocumented immigrants in the country eligible for... jail! Introduced on December 6 by Republican James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisconsin), HR 4437 is also known as the “Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.”



FIDELINA MAIDANA, Madera
Yes, no question about it. Many people are here working hard and they arrived a long time ago; it's not fair. It would be the right thing to do because it will allow them to work and feel better and more confident.

In supporting the bill, 36 Democrats joined 203 Republicans. Opposing the measure were 17 Republicans, 164 Democrats, and 1 independent.

The bill is so repressive that even 17 Republicans voted against it, as well as several “conservative” Democrats. Among other provisions, the bill would allow Mexico to be literally fenced off along hundreds of miles of

its border with the United States. This metal fence would also incorporate sensors, cameras, high-power lights, and many other high-tech devices to detect the entrance of undocumented immigrants.



RAFAEL FLORES, Madera
Yes, I think it's a very good idea. Those undocumented contribute to the economy of this country; they pay taxes so I think they deserve the residency. It would help a lot to the United States; it will make it more secure, safer.

While the main part of the approved bill concentrates on controlling the border, it doesn't address the concerns of temporary workers or the issue of amnesty for those already living in the country. Other amendments are currently being discussed, such as not granting US citizenship to those undocumented workers' children who are born in the United States.

A bill from the House of Representatives must be ap-

proved by the Senate before going to the president's desk. It is expected that HR 4437 will not be popular among senators. More than 500 organizations, including faith organizations, have opposed the bill.

“Sooner or later Washington will have to deal with the almost eleven million undocumented immigrants around the country,” said activist Leonel Flores of Fresno. After all, without them and the work that they do every day, a big part of the economy might stop functioning.

The *Community Alliance* took to the streets recently, to ask people their opinions about granting amnesty to undocumented workers, and why. We visited the Fulton Mall on a cool day, asking for the opinions of both passersby and workers.

FRANCISCO REYES, Fresno
Yes, an amnesty would be good and people could work without fear.

RACHELLE ARCÍA, Fresno
Yes, they should have documents. It's right. Also, this way, they can go by the rules like everybody else.

ELODIA RÍOS, Fresno
Yes, I would like an amnesty to be approved. It would be a good thing. Many people in Mexico need a job and here they are needed.



MARIANA ANAYA, Fresno
The government always does whatever it wants. But I think an amnesty is right. Those who benefit from this situation (people crossing the border without legal residency) are the coyotes. If those people don't pay the coyotes anymore, even the government benefits because that money can be of better use.

Eduardo Stanley
Central Valley reporter
(559) 440-0755



PATRICIA TREJO, Fresno
Yes, [amnesty] should be approved. They say they don't like undocumented, so approving an amnesty the problem is resolved. Besides, there could be better social control: people would have driver's licenses and insurance. It would be really better.

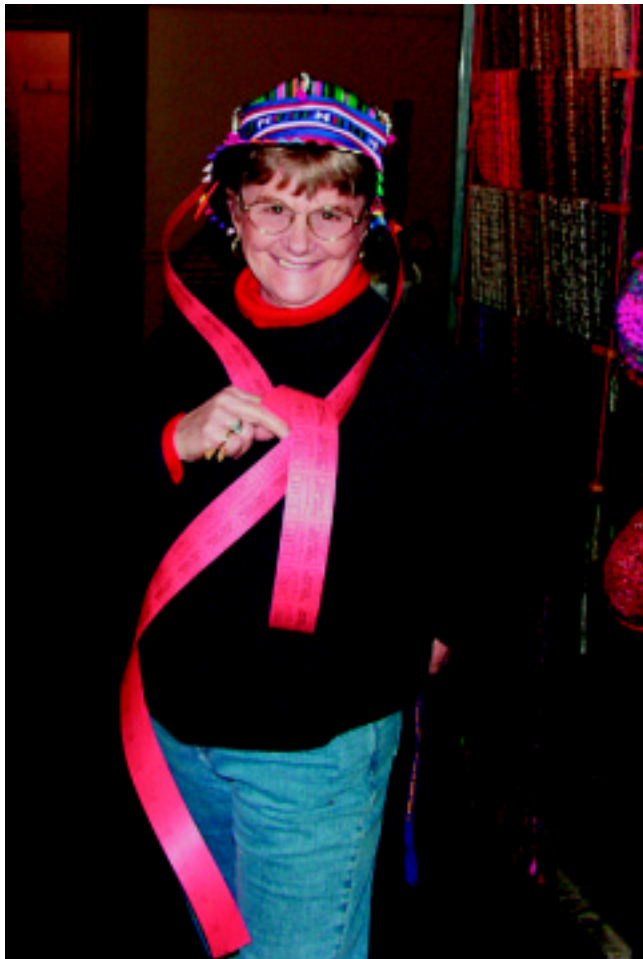




WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing



Crafts Faire Report

December 3 saw the most successful WILPF Peace Community Crafts Faire ever. Not only did we net \$3264.17, but we will be receiving a matching amount from an anonymous WILPFer. Hopefully with these funds Fresno WILPF will be a louder voice in the community, with the ability to put on more programs or do other important peace and social justice work locally.

This could not have happened without the dedication and work of so many of our members. Special **THANKS** go out to the Crafts Faire committee of Ingrid Carmean, Ellie Bluestein, and Joan Poss. Ingrid organized everything around the vendors and the church, while Ellie and Joan worked on getting us volunteers. **THANKS** to Laura Fultz for stepping up to help them after the election and learning the ropes from Ingrid. **THANKS** to Julie Young, who is always there to efficiently run the kitchen and Linda Dryden for handling the entertainment. **THANKS** to Pat Wolk for selling all those raffle tickets, Catherine Campbell for spearheading the silent auction, and Nancy Waidtlow and Janet Capella for taking care of the White Elephant Sale. **THANKS** to Natasha Fouts for handling all that money. **THANKS** to all who brought delicious soups, breads, and desserts. **THANKS** to all the volunteers who took a shift in the kitchen, serving food; worked the White Elephant Sale and the WILPF table; and did set-up and clean-up. **THANKS** to Marilyn Byrne and all the Raging Granies for their wonderful premiere performance. **THANKS** to all the entertainers and Bill Lehr and Mike Riley for loaning their sound equipment and being there all day to run the sound. This month's quote of the month is dedicated to all who made this event such a successful one.



All photos on page 12 and 13 by: Howard Watkins, Pam Whalen, and Mike Rhodes



Membership Directory:

By now you should now have your new WILPF Membership Directory. Thanks to our intern, Kris Smith, for helping me get this done after three years without an update. This is the third year we have not had a membership chair, so it took Kris and me many hours to get this accomplished. I am happy to say that our outreach resulted in 14 members rejoining and 28 members paying their dues current. We also added two new members at the Crafts Faire. Please think about volunteering for membership chair, so we can have a yearly directory that will take much less time to prepare; it will help to keep our members current and active. Membership Directory Update: Please note that Teja Dillon has recently passed away. Hopefully we will be able to send you quarterly updates to the directory.

Water Policy Conference - By Kris Smith

On November 17 and 18 I attended a water policy conference in LA. The conference was put on by POWER (Public Officials for Water and Environmental Reform) and the attendants were from across the state, including students, utility workers, advocates, environmentalists, policy makers, legislative analysts, and members of the Winnemem Wintu and Karuk tribes. Panel discussions were informative and interesting.

The conference began with keynote speaker Richard Katz, a board member on the State Water Resources Control Board, who entertainingly discussed water management in CA, what we know about the situation in the delta, and what can be done about it. In the following panel discussion, there was consensus that the delta is in trouble and that something needs to be done about it. A presentation by John Geesman, Commissioner for CA Energy Commission, followed where the topics were water and energy: "Diet for a Large State."

Following the discussion, several breakout sessions were offered, including one on securing water for the environment, paying for infrastructure, getting water issues in the news, the CA Watershed Program, a world view of water principles, and ag and urban conservation issues. Also offered were panels on the San Joaquin River restoration and dam removals, which I attended. The first session, the restoration of the San Joaquin River, had panel members that included a state senator, general manager of Friant Water Authority, San Joaquin River restoration project manager, and a legislative advocate.

This session was particularly interesting because of the differing points of view of each panelist. To begin with, two of the members are currently in a legal battle over the restoration process and the illegality of the Friant Dam, which made their discussion a bit heated. Also interesting were the perspectives of the legislative advocate and the state senator. The advocate, Martha Guzman, has worked with many of the smaller communities in the Valley and presented valid concerns over where the restoration water will come from, pointing out the environmental racism that exists in our state, where lower-income communities are not given the same access to quality water, which we all need to live healthy lives. The senator, however, was not concerned about taking clean water from poor communities and instead began talking about pulling yourself up by the bootstraps.

As one could imagine, the differing views of the panelists led to a very interesting discussion on the restoration

tion process, which opened up points for further discussion and understanding prior to the actual restoration of the river.

The next panel that I attended was also about dams. There was discussion of restoring Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite to a natural river and dismantling the Matilija Dam in LA. Information was presented on the inability of sediment to reach the beaches due to damming, which leads to beach erosion, and on the number of unused dams California. This panel included Ron Reed, a member of the Karuk Tribe, who discussed his difficulty obtaining fish from the river that his people depend on for food.

The following morning was a presentation on water transfers by John Gibler, entitled "Water for People and Place: Moving Beyond Markets in California Water Policy." Several panel discussions were offered on topics that included CALFED, the Colorado River, water reuse, effectively integrating regional water management entities, and public participation. I attended the panels on access to safe drinking water and the Landscape Efficiency Taskforce. The first panel included members of rural valley communities who fought to get bottled drinking water into their children's schools because the tap water running into the school was so polluted. The second was a review of a taskforce which is responsible for evaluating and implementing effective water management for landscaping on city and county land.

The conference closed with a presentation by The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water on their publication Thirsty for Justice: A People's Blueprint for California Water, which outlines the water situation in California, focusing primarily on environmental injustice and discrimination. A final panel discussion presented ideas and issues related to these injustices and what can be done about them. A common theme throughout the workshop was the importance of not just

WILPF DATES:

Wednesday, January 4, Noon: Women in Black
Fresno County Courthouse Breezeway

Thursday, January 12, 7 PM: WILPF Business
Meeting 1584 N Van Ness

Wednesday, January 25, 3 PM: WILPF Stir It
Up on KFCF 88.1 FM

expecting others to change, but of making changes on an individual level, beginning with ourselves. For more information on the Thirsty for Justice report, log on to <www.ejcw.org/blueprint.htm>.

Women Challenge US Policy; Building Peace on Justice in the Middle East— Part I:

This is one of WILPF's National Campaigns for the next three years, with *Save the Water* as our other one. WILPF's Middle East campaign will examine the role of US policy in the dynamics of current conflicts. It will educate communities to policy dimensions seldom discussed regarding Palestine, Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. What economic interests underlie the power struggles in the region? What US policy changes will end violence and promote justice? The campaign will work to bridge gaps, engage diverse groups in developing a women's vision for US foreign policy, and join with women in the region to claim UN Security Council Resolution 1325's promise that women's active participation can bring peaceful, democratic resolution to the conflicts.

Our branch needs a local contact person for the Middle East Campaign to work with National WILPF and the campaign committee. It probably wouldn't consist of much more than receiving updates from them and then sharing them with our membership. Please let me know if you are interested in volunteering. Look for Part II on our Middle East Campaign next month.

US Department of Peace and Nonviolence:

Two San Jose WILPFers, Lois Fiedler and Roz Dean, were among a dozen people at a San Jose City Council meeting on November 8 speaking on a resolution supporting the US Department of Peace and Nonviolence, which passed unanimously. San Jose is the 10th largest city in the US to pass such resolutions. To learn more about this effort nationwide check out <www.thepeacealliance.org>. Any one for taking this before the Fresno City Council?

A STRONG WOMAN VERSUS A WOMAN OF STRENGTH

A strong woman works out every day to keep her body in shape
but a woman of strength builds relationships to keep her soul in shape.

A strong woman isn't afraid of anything
but a woman of strength shows courage in the midst of her fear.

A strong woman won't let anyone get the best of her
but a woman of strength gives the best of herself to everyone.

A strong woman makes mistakes and avoids the same in the future
but a woman of strength realizes life's mistakes can also be unexpected blessings
and capitalizes on them.

A strong woman wears a look of confidence on her face
but a woman of strength wears grace.

A strong woman has faith that she is strong enough for the journey
but a woman of strength has faith that it is in the journey that she will become
strong.

Marta S. Hardy

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.



THIS IS NOT THE REAL AMERICA

"I have become increasingly concerned by a host of radical government policies that now threaten many basic principles espoused by all previous administrations, Democratic and Republican. These include the rudimentary American commitment to peace, economic and social justice, civil liberties, our environment and human rights. Also endangered are our historic commitments to providing citizens with truthful information, treating dissenting voices and beliefs with respect, state and local autonomy and fiscal responsibility."

Our political leaders have declared independence from the restraints of international organizations and have disavowed long-standing global agreements, including those on nuclear arms, control of biological weapons, and the international system of justice.

Instead of our tradition of espousing peace as a national priority unless our security is directly threatened, we have proclaimed, and are practicing, a policy of "preemptive war": the right to attack other nations unilaterally to change an unsavory regime or for other purposes. When there are serious differences with other nations, we brand them as international pariahs and refuse direct discussions with them to resolve disputes. There are determined efforts by top US leaders to exert American imperial dominance throughout the world.

REPLACING ALLIANCES

These revolutionary policies have been orchestrated by those who believe that our nation's power and influence should not be constrained. Even with our troops involved in combat and the United States facing the threat of terrorist attacks, our declaration of "You are either with us or against us!" has replaced the forming of alliances based on a clear comprehension of mutual interests. "We now find civil liberties and personal privacy grossly violated under some extreme provisions of the Patriot Act. Of even greater concern is that the US has repudiated the Geneva accords and espoused the use of torture in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, and secretly with the so-called 'extraordinary rendition' program." The president and vice president are insisting that the CIA should be free to perpetrate "cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment" on people in US custody.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Instead of reducing the US reliance on nuclear weapons and their further proliferation, we have insisted on our right to retain our arsenals, expand them, and therefore abrogate nearly all nuclear arms control agreements negotiated during the last 50 years. "America also has abandoned the prohibition of 'first use' of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear nations, and is contemplating the previously condemned deployment of weapons in space."

Protection of the environment has been greatly weakened because of government subservience to political pressure from the oil industry and other powerful lobbying groups. Our government has abandoned fiscal responsibility by unprecedented favors to the rich, while neglecting US working families. Members of Congress have increased their own pay by \$30,000 per year since freezing the minimum wage at \$5.15 per hour (the lowest among industrialized nations.) Church and state have become increasingly intertwined in ways previously thought unimaginable.

"As the world's only superpower, the US should be seen as the unswerving champion of peace, freedom and human rights. . . We should be in the forefront of providing human assistance to people in need. It is time for the deep and disturbing political divisions within our country to be substantially healed, with Americans united in a common commitment to revive the historic political and moral values that we have espoused during the last 230 years." (Source: Pres. Jimmy Carter, *Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*. Simon & Schuster, Nov. 2005). --

This report reflects personal opinion but is consistent with the agenda of the FCNV. It is based upon mail from peace and justice centers around California, and at times other print sources.

CRITIQUING the CORPORATE BEAST: MICHAEL PARENTI

December granted us the privilege of hosting Michael Parenti, one of the nation's leading progressive political analysts. While most often associated with his writings on the struggle between democracy and empire, on December 4, Dr. Parenti offered attendees insight into "why the corporate rich oppose environmentalism." Key to his discussion was the cultural disconnect between "environment-as-life" and "environment-as-capital," one necessitating symbiosis and the other expressing disregard for long-term human dependence on the environment and the finite quality of our natural resources.



More than 100 people attended the event, coming from destinations as far as Reedley and Madera. The event received additional support from the Dean of Arts and Sciences, CSU Fresno, and a wonderful array of treats graciously donated by Center members. The lecture was taped by Channel 14, and shown throughout December.



Dr. Parenti also paid a visit to Jim Grant, an interview to be aired at a later date. This interview will be available at the Center's Video Library in the near future. An additional surprise was Dr. Parenti's agreement to lecture on "Empire vs. Democracy," free for students of Fresno City College. Amazingly enough, nearly 500 students came to hear him speak.

Dr. Parenti has won awards from Project Censored, the Caucus for a New Political Science, and many others. He is

also the author of 16 books, including *The Terrorism Trap*, *Democracy for the Few*, *History as Mystery*, and *The Assassination of Julius Caesar*.

Fresno Center for Nonviolence Second Wednesday Video Series:



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

January 11: Redemption The 'Tookie' Williams Story

Redemption tells the story of Stan "Tookie" Williams, founder of the Crips L.A. street gang. The film chronicles his fall into gangbanging, his prison term, and his work writing children's novels; these books encourage peace and anti-violence resolutions which have earned him multiple Nobel Peace Prize nominations. Starring Jaime Foxx. 95 minutes.

**12 Noon and 7:30 PM - 1584 N. Van Ness
ACROSS FROM THE YELLOW BOOKSTORE - 237-3223**

THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

By Lydia Flores

The CVPPAC is moving into high gear once again. The group is working on organizing The Progressive Issues Forum - which will take place in early 2006, possibly at CSUF. The purpose of the forum is to bring together many different groups working on progressive issues, build unity, and develop a vision and a strategy for achieving political power in this community.

Because of the November special election, the Progressive Issues Forum was put on hold until 2006. Another objective of the CVPPAC in holding the Issues Forum is to educate citizens so that they will be well informed when voting on issues or asking questions of candidates. For this they need to have background information.

Howard Watkins is working to bring a speaker to Fresno that would draw a large audience, such as Al Franken, State Senator Sheila Kuehl, or San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. It is hoped that CVPPAC can name a speaker soon so we can move forward to arrange the other logistics of the forum.

The forum is looking to include workshops on the following topics:

- Affordable Living (housing/wages/jobs)
- Schools / Education
- Transportation / Measure C
- Health care
- Air quality
- Public Safety / Independent Police Auditor.

On another front, Mike Rhodes will be reviewing what we have learned from the three presentations on the City Council, the school board, and the Board of Supervisors. In order to have time for analysis and discussion, an evening meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, January 4. This will be a members-only meeting.

You can join the CVPPAC by going to <www.cvppac.org>. The CVPPAC's goal is to change the way things are done in the Central Valley. What will the CVPPAC do with information? How can the CVPPAC have the most impact on the upcoming elections? How do we involve others in this endeavor? In this last election, success came about because of the number of citizens involved. How do we strategize? Please join us if this interests you.

The CVPPAC is requesting that members sign up for the comprehensive leadership training offered by the National Women's Political Caucus, on Saturday, February 11, 2006. You may not want to run as a candidate, but leadership training will help you participate more effectively in campaigns. Call Carol Bequette 229-9661 or Mary Stanley 268-5756 to register. This training has earned the reputation of being one of the best in Fresno . . . and it costs a mere \$45.

Look for updates on our Web site, <www.cvppac.org> and in the *Community Alliance* calendar.

Fresno has Only Liberal /Pro- gressive Think Tank in California

By Ray Ensher

Few citizens know that the only California liberal/progressive think tank was conceived in Fresno in 1999 and finally established in Fresno in April 2003. The Central California Institute (CCI) is the only such organization in the state. It has no membership, only contributors.

The CCI is a nonpartisan policy research foundation. The institute speaks from a liberal/progressive perspective on a wide range of concerns, including peaceful solutions to conflicts, cultural diversity, health and en-

vironmental concerns, and a number of other issues. The guiding philosophy of the institute is to help create a well-informed populace that seeks to understand all sides of an issue in order to form rational judgments and effective responses.

If you or your organization would like to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge and experience offered by the CCI, you are invited to contact them at (559) 439-8140. Whether you are seeking insight into a breaking news event, need a speaker for your meeting or conference, or have any other reason, the CCI looks forward to hearing from you.

The Fresno Folklore Society Presents

By Pat Wolk

John McCutcheon, whom the *Washington Post* calls "Virginia's rustic Renaissance Man," will perform at Fresno Art Museum's Bonner Auditorium. His Fresno concerts always sell out. Once you've seen and heard him in person, you want all your friends to hear him too. Learning at the knees of some of the great traditional masters, McCutcheon mastered the banjo, guitar, fiddle, autoharp, mountain dulcimer and jaw harp, but he is also known throughout the world for his mastery of the hammer dulcimer, for his song writing—rich in detail and still broad in scope—and for his singing and wry wit and storytelling.



What they say about McCutcheon:

"The most impressive instrumentalist I've ever heard."
—Johnny Cash

"John McCutcheon is not only one of the best musicians in the USA but also a great singer, songwriter, and song leader. And not just incidentally, he is committed to helping hard-working people everywhere to organize and push this world in a better direction."
—Pete Seeger

"He has the uncanny ability to breathe new life into the familiar. His storytelling has the richness of fine literature."
—*Washington Post*

In addition to his musical gifts, he has championed grassroots community organizing, helped reshape the musician's union, promoted international musicians, written articles for numerous publications, chaired literacy campaigns, and in his spare time toured the world filling concert halls on four continents. And he comes to Fresno each January to perform in our warm and inviting Fresno Art Museum because he likes us. Want to know more about his music and activism? See his Web site: <www.folkmusic.com>. All tickets are \$20. Phone: 431-3653. This event will sell out.

The Green Party Supports Fair Wage Initiative

The Green Party of Fresno County announces that the Green Party of California is expecting to have a Fair Wage Initiative back from the Secretary of State to circulate this month. Persons interested in helping collect signatures should contact Larry Mullen at 227-0293, or visit <www.cafairwage.org/> for more information.

Many Green candidates will be running in this year's statewide and local elections. To help with a campaign contact the California Green Party at <www.cagreens.org> or the Fresno County Green Party at <www.fresnogreens.org>.

This month, Progressive Thursday will present the movie, *The Future of Food*. You may contact Larry Mullen, or Leah Haymond at 906-9702, for more information.

Finally, we have a tabling opportunity at Fresno State on January 28. This is a great way to be an active Green Party member. Please contact Larry Mullen for more information: 227-0293.

FresCAMP Reports

By Judy Stege

The Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides is committed to educating others about the toxic chemicals accumulating in our bodies. We also are working to provide alternatives to lessen pesticides and other toxic chemicals in our environment. We work with Fresno Unified School District to support the Healthy Schools Act, which calls for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices in schools. We also need these safe practices in our homes.

Perhaps you have some ants strolling into your warm home, and you call them pests. These little creatures are truly awesome in their physical abilities and group efforts. Watch the movie *Antz* again to refresh your memory. Fantasy aside, ants are just looking for a higher standard of living, with food (usually sweets and oils) and water available. Check out with your children the site <www.antweb.org/california.jsp> for a close-up look at types of ants. A safe way to eliminate ants is to wash them away with soapy water. This destroys their exoskeletons on the spot, and removes the scent trail to eliminate immediate followers. Go outside and look around to find out where they are entering. Ants go in straight lines, up walkways, hoses, corners and along cracks. Plug entryways with chalk or petroleum jelly. Remove any infested potted plants in the house. Wipe and sweep up your kitchen daily. You can use boric acid baits like Terro outside near nests, trails and along slab foundations. But be sure they are out of the way of pets and children. The baits will eliminate ants at the source, but it takes a few weeks, so be patient and just use a bit more soapy water in your home for a while. This safe IPM practice will make your bodies and our future environment healthier.

FresCAMP will meet on January 30 at 7 PM in Madera. Please call 277-6134 or e-mail frescamp@sbcglobal.net for details.

CHAANGE

CHAANGE plans to ask the city of Fresno in 2006 to designate August 16 as HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. CHAANGE/San Joaquin leader Gary Dennis says it would be a day when the city not only gives recognition to the residents who have the disease, but also holds activities to educate people about it.

For this year's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, CHAANGE/San Joaquin plans a fashion show, called 2006 Fresno Extravaganza, a benefit fundraiser mainly for University Medical Center's HIV Division, Dennis says. A model search for the event will be held from noon to 5 PM on January 14 at the Gold Gym at 4015 N Blackstone.

"We would like to see more change and progress when it comes to HIV/AIDS awareness and support," Dennis says of the coming year. "I'm not saying that nothing has been accomplished since we first opened the doors a year or so ago, but if you look at the level of involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS in other cities throughout California, you will have to agree that Fresno is lacking in comparison. This to me is a big surprise considering that they still are strongly impacted and hurt most by this epidemic."

Dennis says getting the information out there, such as prevention and where to get tested, is vitally important.

"In my opinion, with all the information and resources that are available, there is no reason for anyone to get infected."

The group's next meeting is January 5 at the Center for Nonviolence. Call (559) 268-1969.

Volunteer Opportunity!

The Community Alliance needs volunteers for newspaper distribution. 1-2 hours a week. We also need one person to post the events of progressive groups on local Internet community calendars. Approximately 2 hours a week. Interested?

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For more information see www.cvppac.org



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Interesting Times for Medical Cannabis Patients in the Valley

State ID card program may hit Fresno this spring; Clovis joins other Valley cities passing illegal dispensary bans; Federal agents crack down on providers.

By Mark Stout

Fresno County moves forward with state medical marijuana ID Cards

In a December 1 Board of Supervisors briefing report titled, “Medical Marijuana Identification Cards,” Fresno County’s Public Health Officer, Ed Moreno, MD, MPH, stated that the Department of Community Health will be soliciting “letters of interest from community organizations to issue state-produced medical marijuana identification cards.” These state ID cards, called for by Senate Bill 420, will provide both local and state law enforcement and cannabis dispensary owners assurance of a medical cannabis patient’s valid physician recommendation. SB 420 is Assemblyman Mark Leno’s legislation of 2003, which clarified California’s medical cannabis law created by Proposition 215 of 1996.

Medical cannabis will still remain illegal under federal law, but it is unlikely that a typical patient with a modest amount of medicine would be at risk. According to the December 2005 California NORML Reports, “California NORML believes this danger is overblown. ‘They haven’t gone after a patient yet,’ observes Cal NORML attorney Bill Panzer, ‘I don’t think they would. They would look very, very bad.’” As reported below, larger cultivators and providers remain at high risk of federal arrest and prosecution.

The CA Department of Health Services staff estimates most counties will have programs in place by mid-2006. The Fresno Department of Community Health is aiming for an implementation date of April 2006. For more information on the State medical marijuana ID card program go to <<http://dhs.ca.gov/MMP>>.

Clovis City Council violates state medical cannabis law, courts legal action

On December 5, 2005, the Clovis City Council passed a medical cannabis ordinance, which confirms the rights of patients to use their physician-recommended medication, but also creates troubling limits on access to medicine. The new ordinance creates high hurdles to outdoor cultivation, requiring a “secure, locked and fully enclosed structure,” with a ceiling, roof, or top. By limiting each caregiver to providing cannabis for a maximum of four patients, the Clovis ordinance is a de facto prohibition of medical cannabis dispensaries. This has serious implications for patients that are not able

Coming up: Tuesday, January 17th Court Support for Joe Fortt

Status hearing at 9:00am before Judge Anthony W. Ishii in U.S. District Court, 5th Floor, 1130 O Street, Fresno, CA, 93721. Check “Court Calendar” for Judge Ishii at: <http://www.caed.uscourts.gov> within days of court date for exact order on calendar. Call 559-273-4037 for more information.

For Court Support updates, see “Upcoming Court Dates” from Americans for Safe Access at: <http://safeaccessnow.org/article.php?id=354>

to grow their own medicine due to poor health, disability, or rental housing that does not accommodate indoor growing.

As reported in the August 2005 *Community Alliance*, the City of Fresno is being sued by Americans for Safe Access (ASA), working in concert with Shaver Lake attorney Bill McPike, for restricting medical marijuana dispensing collectives from operating as described in California law. McPike commented with regard to Clovis, “It is the city exceeding its jurisdiction trying to supplant what they want and attempting to preempt state law.” McPike is not alone in this observation. Prior to the June 2005 Gonzales v. Raich decision, Bakersfield cannabis dispensary owner Joe Fortt had proposed opening a second medical cannabis dispensary in Clovis, and was quoted frequently in the media. Speaking recently from Fresno County Jail, where he awaits federal trial (see below), Fortt says, “Clovis needs to comply with SB 420, and otherwise is courting a lawsuit.” SB 420 allows for compensating caregivers for their actual cost of procuring cannabis.

Federal Agents Pack the Fresno Gulag

Three former medical cannabis dispensary owners from the Valley are now in the Fresno County jail awaiting federal trial after being arrested this summer by federal agents on cannabis charges. The following summaries are excerpted from “Federal Medical Marijuana Cases in California” by Dale Gierenger, PhD, Director, California NORML, as found on <<http://canorml.org>>.

Kern Co—July 20, 2005. **Joseph Fortt [Jail ID # T00229134]**, director of American Kenpo Kungfu School of Public Health, [despite closing the doors to his Bakersfield medical marijuana dispensary, a day after the Gonzales v. Raich decision] arrested for cultivating over 2000 plants at three different locations. Charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess more than 1000 plants (10 year mandatory minimum).

Merced—August 10, 2005. Patient activist **Dustin Costa [Jail ID # T00229755]** arrested on federal charges. The charges stemmed from a raid in February 2004, when some 900 plants were seized from Costa’s greenhouse. Costa had maintained that the plants were all for legal Prop. 215 patients. After 18 months of court continuances, state officials turned DC’s case over for federal prosecution.

Bakersfield—September 8, 2005. DEA arrests **James Holland [Jail ID # T00230818]** and two associates in raid on the Free and Easy cannabis dispensary. Kern



17 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE JANUARY 2006

County sheriffs summoned the DEA after being called to investigate a robbery at the facility. Police found plants growing at Holland’s home plus 20 lbs of marijuana, and illegally possessed firearms. Holland is being held without bail.

Mail is always much appreciated and can be sent to these federal cannabis defendants at:
Defendant Name – Jail ID #
PO Box 872
Fresno, CA 93712

Having visited Joe and Dustin for months, I can vouch that the conditions in the gulag leave a lot to be desired, and I wonder how many times Fresno County has been sued for not providing better telephone access to inmates. Support for these caregivers caught up in the War on Drugs is greatly needed. Inmate mail, money, and visitation guidelines are available at <<http://fresnosheriff.org>>.

Coming up: Monday, January 30—Court Support for Dustin Costa

Status hearing at 9 AM before Judge Anthony W. Ishii in US District Court, 5th Floor, 1130 O Street, Fresno, CA, 93721. Check Judge Ishii’s court calendar at <www.caed.uscourts.gov> within days of court date for exact order on calendar.

For court support updates, see “Upcoming Court Dates” from Americans for Safe Access at <<http://safeaccessnow.org/article.php?id=354>>.

Great listserv for staying informed and involved!

<<http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/asa-cc>>
Central California e-mail forum for Americans for Safe Access members and other medical marijuana patients and advocates. To be used for events, news updates, and community organizing for medical marijuana advocacy.

Does the Government Owe You Thousands of Dollars?

By Manuel Romero

Each year in Central California, approximately \$100 million dollars of Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) goes unclaimed. The IRS estimates that in Fresno County alone, more than \$45 million dollars goes unclaimed. Thousands of families do not claim the credit simply because they do not know about it. Although paid tax preparers are more likely to claim the credit on behalf of eligible families, these tax preparers also encourage “rapid cash” loans, which can cost the client up to half of his or her refund in interest and fees.

For some, getting the EITC can make a difference in paying the rent, buying groceries, and meeting other day-to-day needs. It can also be a down payment on a home, seed money for a small business, or funding for post-secondary education.

What is the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

EITC is a credit that remains underutilized. The EITC is a \$36-billion program that provides tax reductions and wage supplements for low to moderate-income working families. The EITC can return as much as \$4,400 a year per family.

Who is Eligible for the Federal EITC?

Generally, a person must have worked and earned a limited income, have a valid Social Security number (Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) are not sufficient), and be a US citizen or legal resident.

For tax year 2005,

- Families with one child, who earn less than \$31,030 in 2005 (or less than \$33,030 for married workers), are eligible for a credit of up to \$2,704.
- Families with two or more children, who earn less than \$35,263 in 2005 (or less than \$37,263 for married workers), are eligible for a credit of up to \$4,400.
- Workers at least age 25 and under 65, without a qualifying child, who earn less than \$11,750 in 2005 (or less than \$13,750 for married workers) are eligible for a credit of up to \$399.

Claiming your EITC through the I-CAN!-EIC Program

If you meet the eligibility standards for the EITC, you can now claim it and complete your tax forms free of charge through the Central California Legal Services, Inc. (CCLS) I-CAN! EIC computer program. You can also apply for the EITC for the last three years if you have not previously claimed it.

I-CAN! EIC is a self-help Web-based program that helps those that are eligible to claim their EITC and complete their federal and state tax forms. The program has a video guide in English and Spanish that reads the questions to users and is available to anyone with access to the Internet. Among users, 98% rate it as easy or very easy to use, and it is certified by the IRS as an online tax provider. It is completely free. The program will be accessible beginning January 2, 2006, at <www.centralcallegal.org>.

For further information or questions, contact Manuel Romero at (559) 570-1258 or mromero@centralcallegal.org. Manuel is the special projects coordinator for CCLS and has been involved with the EITC campaign for the last three years

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Belmont Ent. Group/Joe G. Productions Presents:

sun 01.01.06

where: The Belmont
address: 1533 E. Belmont
when: 6pm
cost: \$7
details: The '06 party continues on New Years Day.
Groups include:
Light This City
The Funeral Pyre
Burnt in Effigy
Our Last Day.

music Belmont Ent. Group/Joe G. Productions Presents:

thurs 01.05.06

where: The Belmont
address: 1533 E. Belmont Ave. Fresno, Ca.
when: 6pm
cost: \$7
details: Bands include:

Stereo Tactic
Flight 409
Halfmoon Drive

music The Belmont

fri 01.06.06

where: The Belmont
address: 1533 E. Belmont
when: 7pm
cost: \$10/\$11
details: Scars For Tomorrow
The Final Burden

music Numbskull Productions Presents

fri 01.13.06

where: The Belmont
address: 1533 E. Belmont
when: 7pm
cost: \$8
details: Animosity
Set Your Goals
More to Pride
At Risk
Figure it Out
Pinky Swear

theater Hamlet: A Staged Reading

tues 01.17.06

where: Sunnyside Library
address: 5566 E Kings Canyon Rd, Fresno, 93727 - (559) 255-6594
when: 6:30 pm
cost: FREE
details: The Woodward Shakespeare Festival and the Fresno County Public Library present The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. A staged reading in two parts. Part 1 on January 17, Part 2 on January 24, 6:30 pm at the Sunnyside Library. Directed by Greg Taber (WSF audiences will remember him as Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet and Benedicke in Much Ado About Nothing). Feel free to bring a copy with you to read along. Refreshments provided by Kate Henry, discussion to follow.
<http://www.woodwardshakespeare.org>

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

sports 2006 ECHL All-Star Game

weds 01.25.06

where: Save Mart Center
address: 2650 E. Shaw Avenue
when: 7:00 PM
cost: \$14 - \$22
details: The 14th Annual ECHL All-Star Game and Skills Competition, presented by Bud Light, will be held January 24-25 at Save Mart Center.

“The ECHL is delighted to award the 2006 ECHL All-Star Game and Skills Competition to Fresno,” said Game has become the showcase event for the ECHL and continues to grow on an annual basis. The City of Fresno and Save Mart Center provide an outstanding community and venue to host the 2006 event.”
<http://www.fresnofalcons.com>

music French Connection

sat 01.28.06 and sun 01.29.06

where: William Saroyan Theatre
address: 700 M. Street
when: 8:00 pm on Saturday and 2:30 pm on Sunday
cost: \$25-\$52 \$10 Student Rush
details: Join the Fresno Philharmonic as they present French Connection with guest pianist, Fabio Bidini. Enjoy music from Berlioz, Ravel, Saint-Saens, and Debussy. Get your tickets today by calling 559.261.0600 or vist www.fresnophil.org. It's a concert you don't want to miss.
<http://www.fresnophil.org>



Fallujah Continued from page 5

speakers and then the transmission goes to the speakers, so it's audible. And as they'd say, "In five [inaudible], we're going drop some Whiskey Pete." "Roger. Commence bombing." I mean, it just comes across the radio, and like, when you hear "Whiskey Pete," that's the military slang.

NARRATOR: Contrary to what was said by the US State Department, white phosphorus was not used in the open field to illuminate enemy troops. For this, tracer was used. A rain of fire shot from US helicopters on the city of Fallujah on the night of the 8th of November. [inaudible] will show you in this exceptional documentary, which proves that a chemical agent was used in a massive and indiscriminate way in districts of Fallujah. In the days that followed, US satellite images showed Fallujah burned out and razed to the ground.

JEFF ENGLEHART: The gases from the warhead of the white phosphorus will disperse in a cloud. And when it makes contact with skin, then it's absolutely irreversible damage, burning flesh to the bone. It doesn't necessarily burn clothes, but it will burn the skin underneath clothes. And this is why protective masks do not help, because it will burn right through the mask, the rubber of the mask. It will manage to get inside your face. If you breathe it, it will blister your throat and your lungs until you suffocate, and then it will burn you from the inside. It basically reacts to skin, oxygen, and water. The only way to stop the burning is with wet mud. But at that point, it's just impossible to stop.

REPORTER: Have you seen the effects of these weapons?

JEFF ENGLEHART: Yes. Burned. Burned bodies. I mean, it burned children, and it burned women. White phosphorus kills indiscriminately. It's a cloud that will within, in most cases, 150 meters of impact will disperse, and it will burn every human being or animal.

AMY GOODMAN: That was Jeff Englehart, who is a

former US soldier, speaking from Colorado. As we wrap up, Maurizio Torrealta of RAI, where he is being broadcast, the documentary *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*. The response in Italy, not to mention the rest of the world, to this documentary?

MAURIZIO TORREALTA: The response in Italy is bizarre, because when we broadcast it, we had one day before, having some response, because then we had two days of strike. The newspaper were on strike. So there were a few newspaper that wrote about it, and then there was a silence for two days. And then again there was nothing, nothing for three or four days. But actually, now, yesterday and the day before, it was the first news on the first page. Why? Because it came from outside.

At that point, the news had been bounced in the United States, in England, and it became — some information transformed themselves in news and now is the news. And now, yesterday was a major newsbreak of the major channel of the Italian television. So it has been a strange, very strange [inaudible]. The news really has been diffused, but didn't have a reaction right now.

It seemed like there are two different media that are fighting: One media which is based on the Internet and which is based on the net and on streaming and has a different way to spread around; and the other media, the mainstream media, which is very slow, very much controlled, and doesn't come out right away with information, only after it became something bigger. That is my impression, which is not—doesn't make me happy at all.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And George Monbiot, this news is now beginning to spread on the corporate media here in the United States. But what's happening in Britain? Are you having similar battles between the corporate media and the Internet?

GEORGE MONBIOT: Well, the corporate media has picked it up pretty well comprehensively, and they have messed it up pretty well comprehensively. The misreporting of this issue is second almost to none that I've ever come across before. They have managed to

mix up the use of white phosphorus against military versus civilian targets. For example, repeatedly, I'm saying, in the media, that it's a war crime if it's used against civilians but not if it's used against the military. The Chemical Weapons Convention does not mention the word *civilian*. It does not mention the word *noncombatant*. There is no distinction made. If you use white phosphorus as a weapon against human beings, that is a war crime. It doesn't matter whether those human beings are civilians. It doesn't matter whether they are military. It remains a war crime.

They've mixed up several other things, as well. And the result of this is that if we're not careful, we can see excuses made for the use of this weapon as a weapon of war. And the whole point of the Chemical Weapons Convention is to prevent that from recurring. If we look back to the first World War and saw how mustard gas and phosgene were used and saw in the subsequent commemorations of that war these lines and lines of men with their hands on each other's shoulders walking along, because they could not see, because they had been blinded by this gas or their lungs had been destroyed by this gas, the undermining of the Chemical Weapons Convention threatens to bring about the kind of gas warfare which we saw in the first World War and which we saw in the war between Iran and Iraq. It's absolutely essential that we get this story right and we make it completely impossible for states such as the United States or, indeed, any other, to use poison toxic chemicals as a weapon of war and to use it ever again.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, George Monbiot and Maurizio Torrealta, I want to thank you both very much for being with us. And I want to point out I don't think the military is confused, because when Lieutenant Colonel Boylan first on *Democracy Now!* denied the use of white phosphorus as a weapon, he said as a weapon against people. He didn't say insurgents or civilians. He said we didn't use it against people. So that's an interesting point, and I wish they had joined us today. George Monbiot of the *Guardian* of London, and Maurizio Torrealta, news editor for the Italian television, the state broadcaster, RAI, co-producer of the film *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*, thanks so much for joining us.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Calendar of Events

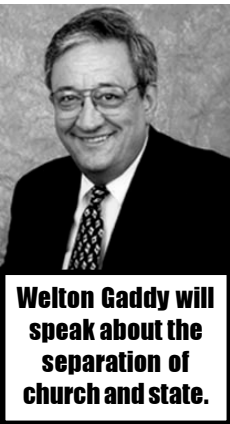
Thursday, January 5 • 5–8 PM

ArtHop @ Gallery 25
660 Van Ness (& Mono)
264-4092

Hamlet Lung—The Proletarian Collection. Artist and shoemaker Armando H. Torres's solo exhibition of digital photography opens Thursday, January 5, for ArtHop and runs until January 29. Artist reception on Sunday, January 8, 2–5 PM. In our current capitalist democracy, it is easy to state that a work of art is a commodity. It is much more difficult to determine which commodities are works of art. Every ruling class creates its own art, and consequently its own culture. History shows that the formation of a new culture, which centers around a ruling class, demands considerable time and reaches completion only at the period preceding the political decadence of that class. So the question is, does the proletariat have enough time to create art in the twenty-first century? E-mail aht_gto@yahoo.com or go to <www.myspace.com/hamletlung>.

Thursday, January 5 • 6 PM

The Interfaith Alliance of Central California will sponsor a keynote address by the Reverend Dr. Welton Gaddy, director of the national Interfaith Alliance at the Fresno Islamic Cultural Center as part of its annual meeting. The public is invited to consider with Dr. Gaddy "The Heart of Interfaith Work—What Lies Ahead for our Nation?" Vegetarian dinner at 6 PM; Dr. Gaddy's presentation at 7 PM, followed by a question-and-answer session. See more information about this event on page 7.



Welton Gaddy will speak about the separation of church and state.

Friday, January 6 • 6:30–8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents the documentary *Plan Colombia: Cashing In on the Drug War Failure*. Twenty years of the US war on drugs in Colombia, paid for by US tax-payers—still, more and more drugs and narcodollars are entering the US every year. Is it a mere failure by Washington? Or is it a smokescreen to secure Colombia's oil and natural resources? Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7. 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 at dfriesen@telis.org.

Saturday January 7 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. presents "Superluckycatz," jazz/rock/soul, \$5 cover, 620 F St., downtown Fresno, (559) 264-6323, <www.fullcirclebrewing.com>.

Sunday, January 8 • 3 PM

Fresno Stonewall Democrats will meet at Democrats in Action, 255 N Fulton, Suite #104, in Fresno. This is a new meeting location and a special time for this month due to New Year's Day falling on our usual meeting day. Our speaker will be Ginny Terrell, area vice president of the California Democratic Council. We will also be discussing our plans to facilitate a conference to establish a GLBT community center in Fresno. Come and get involved and meet interesting people in your community. Fresno Stonewall Democrats represents the interests of the LGBT community in Fresno and surrounding areas. For more information contact Chuck Krugman at ckrugman@sbcglobal.net or (559) 226-3717.

Monday, January 9 • 5:30 PM

Tune to channel 49 (cable channel 9) for TV Worth Watching—"Interview with Dr. Joel Beinin: Talk @ CSUF: Q & A on the situation in the Middle East." Mr. Beinin spoke at CSUF in November 2005 on the subject of: The War on Terror and the Failure of the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process. This program will be repeated on Wednesday, January 11, at 8:30 PM.

Tuesday, January 10 • 8:30 AM–2:30 PM

Fresno County Youth Summit. The Fresno County Youth Service Council is planning the 6th Annual Fresno County Youth Summit to empower youth to take responsibility for themselves and their schools. It will be

held at Fresno Pacific University Gym. There is no charge and lunch is provided. The council selected the theme of "Respect: Safe Schools and Cultural Unity." They want to identify strategies for youth leaders to address bullying, racism, and gangs, with service projects to change the climate of their schools. See more information about this event on page 6.

Wednesday, January 11 • 12 Noon–1:30 PM

Fresno Metro Ministry Community Hunger & Nutrition Forum, "The State of the Plate 2006," at Trinity Lutheran Church. RSVP to 485-1416.

Wednesday, January 11 • 12 Noon & 7:30 PM

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence presents the made-for-TV movie *Redemption: the Stan "Tookie" Williams Story*, starring Jamie Foxx. A discussion will follow the 7:30 PM showing. This show is a part of the Second Wednesday Video Series sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. The FCNV is located at 1584 N Van Ness. For more information call (559) 237-3223.

Wednesday, January 11 • 3 PM

Stir It Up on KFCF 88.1 FM. Gerry Bill will talk about his recent 'round-the-world sabbatical visiting Muslim nations. Richard Stone is the host.

Friday, January 13 • 10:30–11:30 AM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Garlanding Ceremony will be held at the Fresno County Courthouse Park (1100 Van Ness), at the statue of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Please bring flowers. Keynote speaker is Michael Hanson. Contact: Gail Gaston (559) 681-3140 or Dr. Sudharshan Kapoor (559) 435-2212.

Friday, January 13 • 5 PM and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents *Paradise Now* at the Tower Theatre. Winner of the Amnesty International Award at the Berlin Film Festival, the controversial new work from Palestinian filmmaker Hany Abu-Assad about two suicide bombers from the West Bank is a powerful plea for peace and understanding. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E Olive; The Movies, 1435 N Van Ness; the Fig Garden Bookstore in Fig Garden Village; and at the door; for \$10; \$8 for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to <www.fresnofilmworks.org>.

Friday, January 13 • Reception 5:30 PM • Program 6:30 PM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Evening Reception and Awards Presentation: Fresno City Hall, 2nd Floor Lobby & Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street. Contact: Dr. Jean Kennedy (559) 270-1023 or Julia Dudley (559) 457-2780.

Friday, January 13 • 6:30–8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents Elijah Penner, peace worker with Mennonite Central Committee in Phnom Penh, Cambodia: "On the Street Where I Live: Stories of Ordinary Cambodian People." Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7. 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 at dfriesen@telis.org.

Saturday, January 14 • 8–9 AM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast will be held at the Veterans Memorial Building (Independence Room), 453 Hughes Avenue (corner of 5th & Hughes), Clovis. Members of the community are invited to enjoy a delicious breakfast while listening to various community leaders. Cost for the breakfast is \$5 per person. Contact: Caroline Carlson, (559) 324-2416.

Saturday, January 14 • 3:30 PM

The Central Valley Progressive PAC meets to review its information and the concerns of its members and friends to begin to decide what steps will be taken to change the focus of politics in Fresno. Members and friends are welcome. The meetings are held at the Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N Van Ness (at McKinley). For information: <www.cvppac.org>.

Saturday January 14 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. presents "The NoTones," soulful with a reggae vibe, \$5 cover, 620 F St, downtown Fresno, (559) 264-6323, <www.fullcirclebrewing.com>.

Sunday, January 15 • 1 PM

Sydney Story, speaker: "Humanists Are Not the Only Skeptics: Skepticism and Belief in Other Cultures" at the Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley meeting. The meeting will take place in Room 1 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N Millbrook. For info call June at (559) 645-1719, or visit their Web site at <www.fresno.humanists.net>.

Sunday, January 15 • 5:30–6:30 PM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Candlelight Vigil at the Fresno City Hall Fountain, 2600 Fresno Street. Candlelight vigil to be held in commemoration of the Reverend Dr. King.

Monday, January 16 • 10 AM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. March and Food Drive to End Childhood Hunger in Fresno. Marchers will assemble at St. John's Cathedral, 2814 Mariposa Ave, at 9:30 AM. A "Mountain of Food" to end childhood hunger will be collected at the church. The march will take place from St. John's to City Hall, then to the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium. The march will begin promptly at 10:00 AM. Contact: Enrique Reade (559) 940-2159 or James Lett III (559) 284-6420.

Monday, January 16 • 11 AM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Program, Memorial Auditorium, Fresno Street between N and O Streets (across from the Fresno Water Tower). An inspiring and enjoyable program will be hosted by the City of Fresno's Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Committee. Contact: Ed C. Bailey (559) 304-5772.

Monday, January 16 • 5:30 PM

Tune to channel 49 (cable channel 9) for TV Worth Watching—Interview with Michael Parenti: "Empire vs Democracy." This program will be repeated on Wednesday, January 18 at 8:30 PM.

Wednesday, January 18 • 7–9:30 PM

The Great Oxford debate—at a place to be announced. The motion before the house will be "Intelligent Design versus Evolution." If we cannot find panel members to fill this topic, the format will be a conversation involving three panel members and the audience sitting in a circle discussing the following topic: "The US Political System Is Bankrupt." Please call Vincent Lavery at (559) 455-0821 if you wish to be part of either panel.

Wednesday, January 18 • 7 PM

"Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness" slideshow from the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance will be shown at the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter meeting at the University of California Center, 550 E Shaw, Fresno.

Thursday, January 19 • 6:30 to 9:30 PM

Progressive Thursday presents *The Future of Food*. This documentary presents an in-depth investigation into the disturbing truth behind the unlabeled, patented, genetically engineered foods that have quietly filled US grocery store shelves for the past decade. The video will be presented at Round Table Pizza, 5763 N First, Fresno. Buy your favorite entree and join us for dinner; doors open at 6:30, video begins at 7. A discussion will follow after the film. Progressive Thursday is hosted by the GROW working group of the Fresno County Green Party and is a free, wheelchair accessible event open to anyone interested in discussing topics of interest to the progressive community. For more information contact Larry Mullen at (559) 227-0293 or Leah Haymond at (559) 906-9702.

Thursday, January 19 • 7–9 PM

"Water Realities: Privatization?" The program will include part of the video *Thirst* and a discussion with Diane Parks, member of the Citizens Coalition at Stockton. Find out how Stockton lost their water to an English company and then to a German one. Monterey is also privatized and can't break the contract. How do we protect ourselves from privatization? The program will

be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N Millbrook. It is sponsored by the UU church and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. For more information call Bette Noblett at (559) 439–1316 or Lydia Flores at (559) 435–7360.

Thursday, January 19 • 7:30 PM

John McCutcheon, Fresno Art Museum, \$20. “John McCutcheon is not only one of the best musicians in the USA, but also a great singer-songwriter, and a song leader.” —Pete Seeger Fresno folks are great fans of John McCutcheon. With over 22 CDs to his credit and his “Mail Myself to You,” a US Post Office hit, we expect a sell-out: <www.folkmusic.com>. For more details, see page 15.

Thursday January 19 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. presents, “The Inner Ear Poetry Jam,” \$3 cover, 620 F St, downtown Fresno, (559) 264–6323, <www.fullcirclebrewing.com>.

Friday, January 20 • 6:30–8:30 PM

Music Night at the Peace Center. Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7. 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 at dfriesen@telis.org.

Sunday, January 22 • 6:30 PM

KFCF 88.1 FM. Mike Beevers will interview nationally known FBI whistleblower Sibel Edmonds. She has a fascinating story at the heart of the 9/11 debacle. She has been gagged by the Justice Department. Find out what she can tell us.

Monday, January 23 • 4 PM

Wildlife Rescue, Fig Garden Regional Library, 438–4071. Fresno Wildlife Rehabilitation will talk about how they rescue endangered animals. Docents will bring in birds of prey to view.

Monday, January 23 • 7 PM

Open discussion at the Center for Nonviolence: “What can we learn from the Third World?” Center board members Gerry Bill and Richard Stone both spent time in “the third world” this past year. They invite interested others to join them in discussing what is different there, and what their way of life can teach. (For a preview, listen to Gerry and Richard on Weds., Jan. 11 at 3 PM On “Stir It Up”, KFCF, 88.1 FM.)

Wednesday, January 25 • 10 AM–2 PM

Fresno Metro Ministry: Regional Summer Lunch Summit, Trinity Lutheran Church. For more information call (559) 485–1416.

Thursday, January 26–Saturday, January 28

Solar-electric class by Phil Erro at Fresno Adult School. Reduce or eliminate your PG&E electric bill. Enjoy your own clean power. For details, call Sherry McClelland at (559) 457–6015 or e-mail at sherry@fresnoadultschool.com. Check out <www.fresnoadultschool.com>: click Community Education link, then click Home Improvement. Schedule: Thursday, January 26, and Friday, January 27: classroom presentation, 6–8 PM, Saturday, January 28: field trip, 8 AM–12 noon

Friday, January 27 • 6:30–8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker Audrey Hindes, teacher of religious and biblical studies at Fresno Pacific University: “Fair Trade and Beyond” —a close look at food production. Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7. 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 at dfriesen@telis.org.

Saturday January 28 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. presents “Belly Dancing with Cory Zamora & Friends,” \$5 cover, 620 F St, downtown Fresno, (559) 264–6323, <www.fullcirclebrewing.com>.

Monday, January 30 • 7 PM

The Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (FresCAMP) will meet in Madera in January. Please call 277–6134 or e-mail frescamp@sbcglobal.net for directions and car pool information.

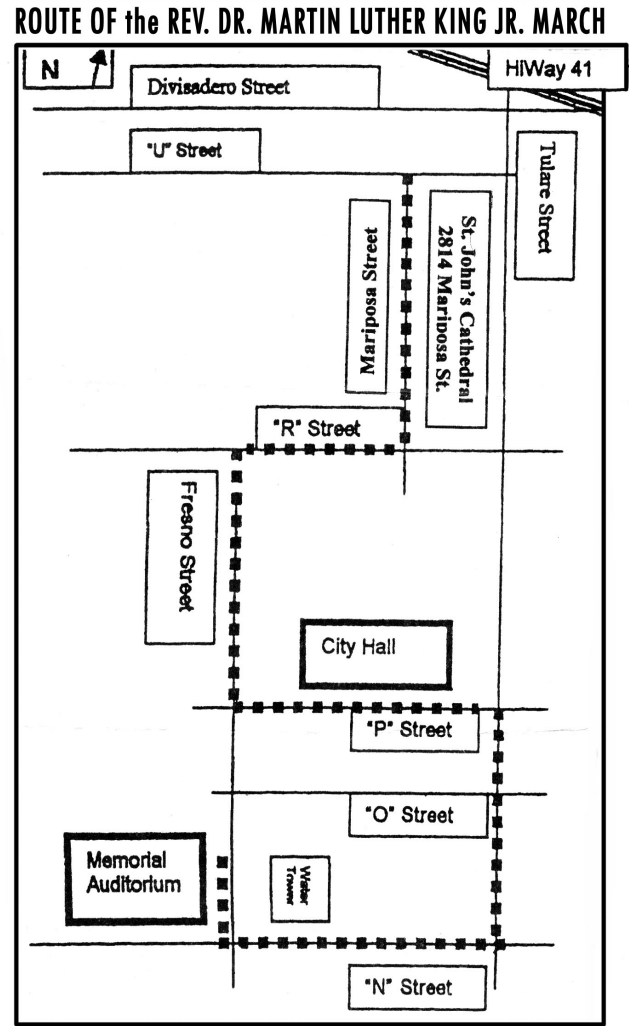
Tuesday, January 31 • 12 Noon

The League of Women Voters will have a (brown bag) meeting on inclusionary zoning, held at the Sunnyside Branch of the Fresno County Library. The presenters will be Jeff Roberts (opposes) and Keith Bergthold (supports). Inclusionary zoning is a land-use concept in which local ordinances require builders to include a certain amount of housing for low- and moderate-income households. In contrast, exclusionary zoning is a technique that effectively drives up the cost of housing, excluding lower-income households from the community. Both speakers will present their perspectives on

the issue of whether inclusinary zoning is one possible solution to the absence of affordable housing and the over-concentration of low-income housing in certain sections of the city, as pointed out in the recent Brookings Institute report. For more information call (559) 251–3236 or e-mail shh13@cvip.net.

Thursday, February 2 • 7–9 PM

Health Care for All, conference at CSUF Peters Auditorium at the Craig School of Business at CSU Fresno. The conference will have a keynote speaker from Senator Shelia Kuehl’s office (Kuehl is lead author of the California Health Insurance Reliability Act [CHIRA]) and other speakers dealing with problems solved by legislative passage, an overview of the legalization and a local campaign in support. There will be a Q&A session. Details: Ray Ensher 439–8140 or Devin Carroll (co-chair) 439–6368.



Poetry Corner

This month’s writer is A. C. Williams, an inmate at the euphemistically named Pleasant Valley State Prison (“Pen State”) who corresponds with our friend Valta Pointer. Mr. Williams says this piece is not written to claim racial superiority but to set right the historical record.

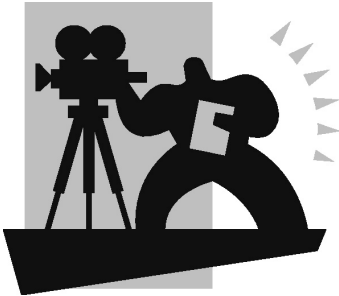
Children of the Sun


In the morning of the World,
when the fingers of love swept aside the curtains of time,
our “dusk Mother” Ethiopia held the stage.
It was She who wooed civilization and gave birth to nations.
Egypt was Her first-born and to Ur of the Chaldees She sent Her sons and daughters,
who scattered empires in Asia as the wanton winds of August scatter the seeds of flowers.
Beside the Mediterranean,
She built Phoenicia,
and in ships with purple sails She sent Her children to the blue Aegean,
there to found Greece,
the marvel of men and the Queen of (European) history.
Troy was Hers,
and from the burning city fled swarthy Aeneas,
who set the ferment for Rome,
the Eternal City.
Her spirit called to Arabia and out of the mystic deserts surged the Black soldiers of Islam,
who welded the world into a new empire and sang their songs of love and victory in the
vales of Andalusia.
On the isles of all the oceans,
and from where the southern cross bends low to kiss the restless waves to where the arctic
holds in leash its frozen world,
Her hand touched.
Religion, art, literature,
science and civilization are Hers,
and eternity but lives in the warmth of her radiant glow.
I have chosen to call the unnumbered millions of Her descendants the Children of the Sun.

2005 Top 20 Overlooked Films on Video

Jeff Booth
(owner of The Movies video store)


1. The Yes Men
2. Vera Drake
3. Rivers and Tides
4. The Inheritance
5. A Fond Kiss
6. Distant
7. Waydowntown
8. Maria Full of Grace
9. Brother to Brother
10. The Agronomist
11. A Very Long Engagement
12. Dear Frankie
13. Me and You and Everyone We Know
14. Walk on Water
15. Look at Me
16. Layer Cake
17. Turtles Can Fly
18. Mad Hot Ballroom
19. Stanley’s Gig
20. Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices

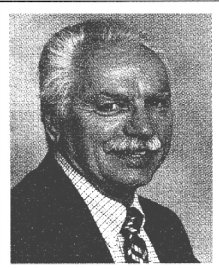





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One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, “My son, the battle is between two “wolves” inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked is grandfather, “Which wolf wins?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”

Clean Air Activists Put Air Quality Rule Over the Top

Valley developers to be held accountable for air pollution under new regulations.

By Laura Fultz, Mark Stout, and Rick Boucke

Finally, there is a major victory in reducing air pollution in our Valley. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District passed the Indirect Source Rule (ISR) at their December 15, 2005, governing board meeting, with an unexpected unanimous vote. Developers now face paying mitigation fees for air pollution caused by new development or they can offset paying fees by building air-quality-friendly developments. Clean air activists packed the governing board meeting room in Fresno, as well as the Air District's Bakersfield video teleconference (VTC) room, in a stunning four-hour show of environmental health advocacy.

There were earlier efforts to pass a San Joaquin Valley ISR rule in the 1990s, which failed due to an underdeveloped Valley air-quality-advocacy community. The successful ISR rule has been in the making for close to two years. It has been an uphill battle between the building industry, wanting to keep the status quo, and state and federal laws (the Clean Air Acts combined with Senator Dean Florez's SB 709), which required development of the ISR. District staff held many meetings with stakeholders (building industry & environmental organizations) to hammer out the details of the rule.

Kathryn Phillips, manager of Environmental Defense's California Clean Air for Life Campaign, was intimately involved with the development of this new air rule, and helped educate other members of the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition (CVAQ) about its significance and technical elements. While CVAQ members aggressively pushed for an even tougher measure, representatives of the building industry pushed back hard in an attempt to soften the regulation on developers. Members of CVAQ knew we had done a good job when the California and national Building Industry Associations came out swinging to kill the final proposed rule.

One argument developers used against the proposed rule was that it would price home buyers and small business commercial tenants out of the real estate market. The air quality mitigation fees to be imposed on new home and commercial builders can be reduced by incorporating clean-air-friendly features and community design such as bicycle lanes, solar panels, energy efficient water heaters, infill location, and mixed residential/commercial land use. Air District staff calculated that the highest fee a new home builder would pay, assuming an unlikely worst case of no air-quality-mitigation features, was \$781 per home through 2008, increasing to \$1772 for 2009 forward. This is roughly 0.25% of a new home sale price through 2008, then increasing to 0.5%.

Gordon Nipp, a Bakersfield Sierra Club leader and retired mathematics professor put this small potential cost increase into perspective: "Housing costs went up 40% last year in Bakersfield, and it has very little to do with fees."

It took a concerted effort by CVAQ member organizations utilizing several e-mail action alerts and listservs, coupled with hundreds of phone calls, to bring clean air advocates to this meeting. The clean air activist turnout, which was the largest to date, reflected the depth of the Valley's air

quality coalition, and their concern for the health of Central Valley residents. Both the Fresno and Bakersfield meeting rooms were full, with a majority wearing colorful "Vote Yes on ISR" stickers on their clothing. This must have had no small impact on the governing board members, used to much smaller turnouts of industry lobbyists and environmental health organization staff. Dozens gave compelling testimony, with the ISR supporters greatly outnumbering the opposition.

Members of a new environmental justice organization, LUCA (translates to Latinas United for Clean Air) delivered gripping testimony of how asthma has affected their families and community. Their words were translated for the board by Daniela Simunovic of Fresno Metro Ministry.

Roger Isom of the California Cotton Ginners Association, and Manuel Cunha, president of the Nisei Farmers League, both urged the governing

board to pass the ISR rule. Due to a 2003 law passed by Senator Dean Florez, agriculture has been brought under regulatory oversight by the air district, and farmers have spent millions of dollars to comply with new air-quality regulations. These Valley agriculture lobbyists, who at first opposed regulation on their members, were very effective advocates for other community members, including the building, doing their share. If the Air District did not pass the ISR rule, as promised in its State Implementation Plan (for Clean Air Act Compliance), it would likely be forced to impose even stricter regulations on other industries, such as agriculture.

John Richau of Unlimited Energy showed local and state solar industry backing for the rule. He presented a letter of support, which recognized that, with incentives for devel-

opers to incorporate solar energy, jobs would be created. The national PV Manufacturers Association also wrote a letter of support.

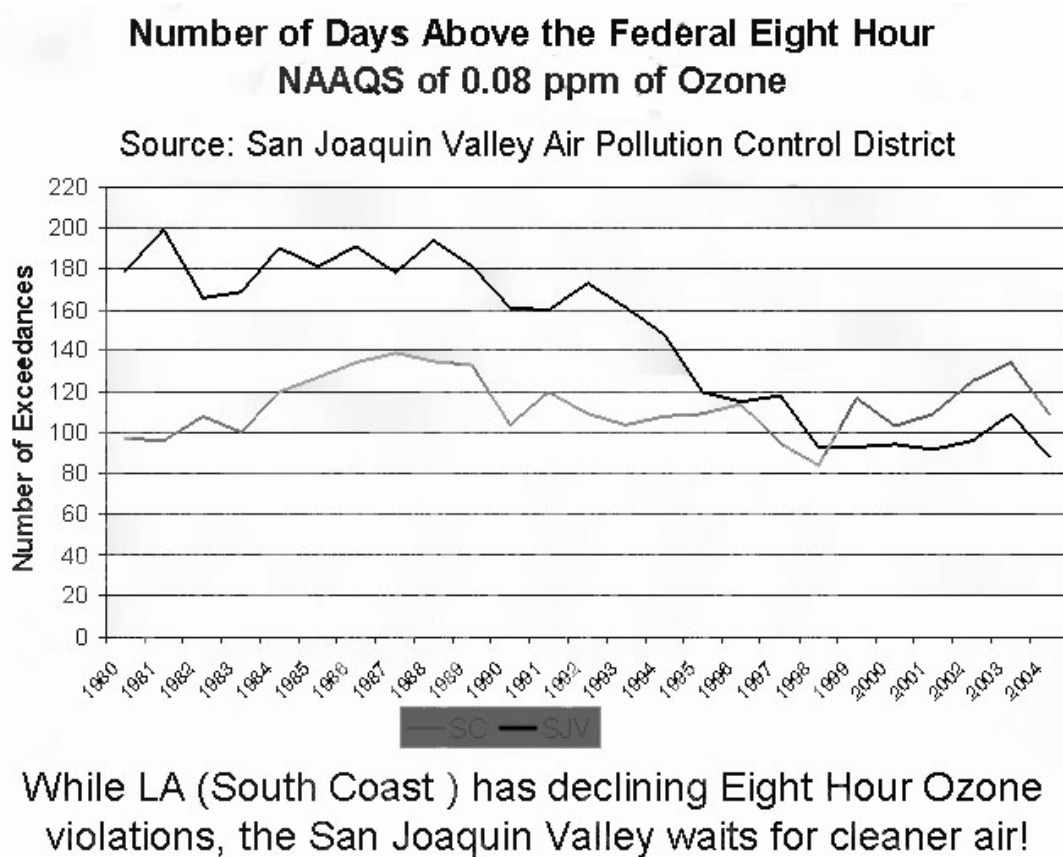
Dr. John Telles, a Fresno cardiologist, told of the medical crisis being created due to our poor air quality. He said, "We had 10 ambulances lined up in front of Saint Agnes with patients... The emergency room is filled with asthmatics and people with chronic lung problems. If you had a heart attack, there might not be an ambulance to take you to the hospital."

After four hours on the ISR, including staff presentation, lengthy public hearing, and board deliberation, they finally voted. The unanimous "yes" vote was surprising, considering at least two board members were opposed to the rule prior to the meeting. The vote was clearly influenced by the moving testimony of health care professionals, clean air advocates, and supportive industries.

Being the first air-quality rule to mandate that builders reduce pollution in new developments or pay mitigation fees, this resulted in great news coverage before and after the rule was passed, going national on the Associated Press wire and being reported in the *New York Times*. Surely passage of the ISR sets a precedent for other places in which the air quality is in nonattainment status.

For updates on the continuing battle for clean air in the Valley, visit the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition's Web site at <www.calcleanair.org>. To get involved in our ongoing campaigns, call the Environmental Health Program at Fresno Metro Ministry: (559) 485-1416.

www.calcleanair.org
Working together,
we can make a difference!



A grandmother from Fresno told how heartbroken she was to encourage her grandchildren to move out of the Valley because of concern for their health. Imagine, asking your loved ones to move far away so they don't face elevated risks of asthma and heart attacks later in life!



The Central Valley Air Quality Coalition's annual Clean Air Action Day at the State Capital. Photo by Mark Stout



Statement from Barbara Becnel, Stan’s advocate and co-author

On Tuesday, December 13, we lost a great friend, fighter and human being. The state of California murdered Stanley “Tookie” Williams in cold blood, cruelly and maliciously. His execution was a 35-minute atrocity that will not be forgiven or forgotten.

We will continue to fight to prove Stan’s innocence, to continue his message of peace and to end the racist death penalty.

To all of the supporters who spent countless hours fighting to save Stan’s life, I say thank you for everything you have done. We mourn this great loss but must continue the struggle.

We will be in touch regarding the memorial service currently being planned.

Keep your heads up. Stan would expect nothing less.

In struggle,
Barbara Becnel



Barbara Becnel. Photo by Jeff Paterson



Statement by Maria Telesco, Death Penalty Focus, December 12, 2005

At a candle light vigil at St. John’s cathedral in Fresno prior to the scheduled execution of Stanley “Tookie” Williams

William Shakespeare said of Julius Caesar, “The evil men do lives after them; the good is oft[en] interred with their bones.”

The death penalty is evil and inhumane. And it’s hypocritical. If a condemned prisoner has not rehabilitated himself, the Powers-That-Be say, “We are not judging you by your crime, but by your lack of rehabilitation. Maybe we would have granted clemency if only you had repented and been rehabilitated and turned your life around.”

When a condemned prisoner indeed has been rehabilitated, has cleaned up his act, the same Powers-That-Be say, “Too bad, rehabilitation doesn’t matter, we are judging you by your crime, not by your rehabilitation.” This is a Catch-22 that no prisoner can overcome.

The United States is the only western industrialized democracy that still practices the death penalty—still practices killing those who are deemed to be “throw-away people.” In our use of capital punishment, we are in the good company of Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and China. All the other developed countries have eliminated this abomination, including Russia, Turkey, and South Africa.

No wealthy person will ever be found on death row! The death penalty is a “privilege” reserved for the poor, for people of color, and for those who had a lousy lawyer. The wealthy defendant who can afford the best lawyers will not go to death row—whether or not he is guilty of the crime. The impoverished defendant who cannot finance the “dream team” almost certainly *will* go to death row—regardless of innocence or guilt.

The United States has executed just over 1,000 people since the death penalty was reinstated in 1977. Eleven of those have been in California. Soon it may be twelve (Editors note: Stanley Tookie Williams was executed by the state shortly after midnight). What good has been achieved? What has this accomplished?

Every death penalty case costs between \$3 million and \$7 million. That’s between \$3 billion and \$7 billion—that’s billion with a “B” to kill about 1000 people—and I challenge anyone to demonstrate what good has been achieved.

Is the country safer? More secure? Will you be able to go to bed tonight without locking your door—will you feel safer now that another human being has been killed? I won’t!

More than 120 persons sentenced to death since 1977 have been found innocent: they were exonerated and freed because of DNA evidence. Many others have also been freed, whose cases did not depend on DNA. Many of these innocent people were convicted by the testimony of the actual perpetrator—the person who really did the crime, who lied to save his or her own life. It’s now being shown that several factually innocent people have actually been executed in this country. When I brought this to the attention of a prominent clergyman—not in Fresno!—he told me, “This is the price we have to pay for liberty and justice.”

The death penalty is a hypocrisy, a travesty, an obscenity, and an abomination. The elimination of capital punishment—first by moratorium, then by total abo-

lition—is what will *really* make us safe and will promote justice.



A Statement from the Reverend Floyd Harris

The National Action Network, the Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr., California state president, under the leadership of the Rev. Al Sharpton of New York, with different clergy and community leaders from all walks of life, denounce the execution of Mr. Stanley “Tookie” Williams.

At the candle light vigil, Rev. Harris asked and answered the question, Is Brother Tookie Williams better off dead or alive? Mr. Williams rehabilitated himself while he was incarcerated. Since 1979, Brother Tookie has published children’s books and educated young men and women on the importance of staying out of gangs. From the East coast to the West coast, the execution is a wake-up call for the nation. Mr. Williams, who is a positive black leader, could have continued to make a big difference in the world. No elected official has come up with an effective way of dealing with gang problems, other than throwing our young men and women in prison! Mr. Williams could have continued to be an asset to our community, and he maintained his innocence to the end.

Mr. Tookie Williams died around 12:35 AM on December 13, 2005, by lethal injection at the San Quentin State Prison. Rev. Harris aggressively criticized the media for depicting Mr. Williams as he appeared in his early prison days with bulging muscles and a defiant stare. Harris says this was an attack and an unfair portrayal by the media, and he wants African Americans to understand that no matter if they have on blue jeans or a blue suit, they are still “Negroes” in America’s eyes. Harris says he knows for a fact that it is possible for police and district attorneys to make up things, and plant things on people, which can result in an easy conviction.



All photos on this page, except the picture of Barbara Becnel, were taken on the night before the execution of Stanley Tookie Williams. Photos by Mike Rhodes.

