

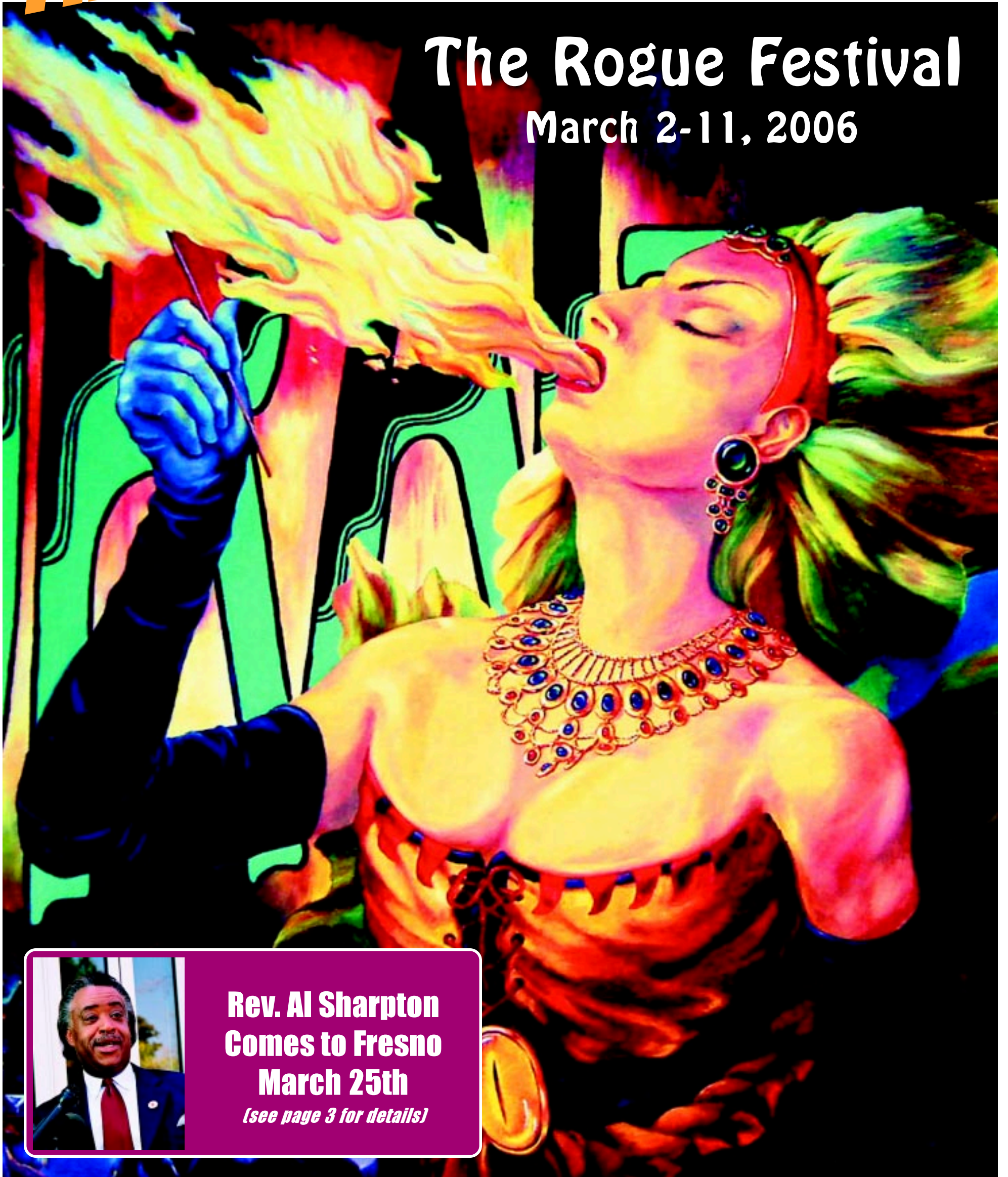
A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

FREE!

Progressive Culture, Politics, Art, and Entertainment Since 1996

The Rogue Festival

March 2-11, 2006



**Rev. Al Sharpton
Comes to Fresno
March 25th**
(see page 3 for details)

MARCH 2006

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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Possible

The Word on the Street

By Umaymah A Rashid • Photos by Richard Stone

In this monthly section, a *Community Alliance* reporter will randomly ask a handful of people at various locations around town about issues of current interest. This month's question was asked at the Fashion Fair Mall. The response to this month's question came as a surprise to us—everyone we talked to wanted to see George Bush impeached.

QUESTION:

Do you think George W. Bush has committed any impeachable offenses?

"Yes, I voted for George Bush and I am a die-hard Republican, but I think he has made a lot of mistakes."
—Larry Stogsdill



"Yes, a lot. There are so many things he has done, I can't remember them all."
—Jesse Martinez



"Yes, he is unfair towards the elderly people, and the needy. He is an unjust person and has lied to us. I feel we need to do something to get him out."
—Linda Hurtado

"Most definitely, and I don't think he should ever leave the country because in 51 other countries he has committed war crimes. The sooner he's out the better."
—Wesley Widdermore



"I think so, the war and Iraq are horrible and I don't like him."
—Griselda Avila



"Yes, we shouldn't have been at war for as long as we have been, I wouldn't vote for him again."
—Justina Harris

"I think he should be impeached, because he lied about WMDs, he lied about secret surveillance, and he is very secretive about what the Administration is doing. He is not trustworthy."
—Habeeba Rahman

"Yes, the country is in a bad situation since he has become President, and I think we would be better off with someone else in power."
—Rochelle Winzer

www.fresnoalliance.com/home



**NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK (NAN) CALIFORNIA CHAPTER
PRESENTS
THE INAUGURAL SCALES FOR JUSTICE
AWARDS BANQUET
MARCH 25, 2006**

**RADISSON HOTEL
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**THEME: "TAKING JUSTICE TO ANOTHER LEVEL"
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Keynote Speaker

The Rev. Al Sharpton

**National Action Network, founder/president
2004 presidential candidate**

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Web site: <www.nancal.org>
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What Is the National Action Network?

The National Action Network (NAN) is a political, social, and activist-oriented organization that was conceived with a focus on action. With the word *National* representing the scope of our activities, and *Network* reflecting the methodology of expansion, the National Action Network is based in New York City, with 35 chapters within the United States. The organization provides extensive voter education awareness, and the national platform revolves around activism on the issues of racial profiling, police brutality, women's issues, economic reform, public education, international affairs—including abolishing slavery in Africa, job awareness, AIDS awareness, and more.

History

In 1991 the Rev. Al Sharpton and a group of political and human rights activists founded the National Action Network (NAN) in Harlem, New York, which is the current location of the NAN national headquarters and the New York State headquarters.

In Harlem at the "House of Justice," the Rev. Sharpton holds weekly "action rallies" where he comments on the events of the past week and lays out the vision for the future. Sharpton also hosts a weekly radio show, "Sharp Talk," on Sundays, 6 PM–8 PM.

The Harlem, New York, chapter is the model for NAN chapters across the country. NAN does not take corporate or government donations. Due to this, they primarily rely on volunteers and their work to make the organization a success.

Mission

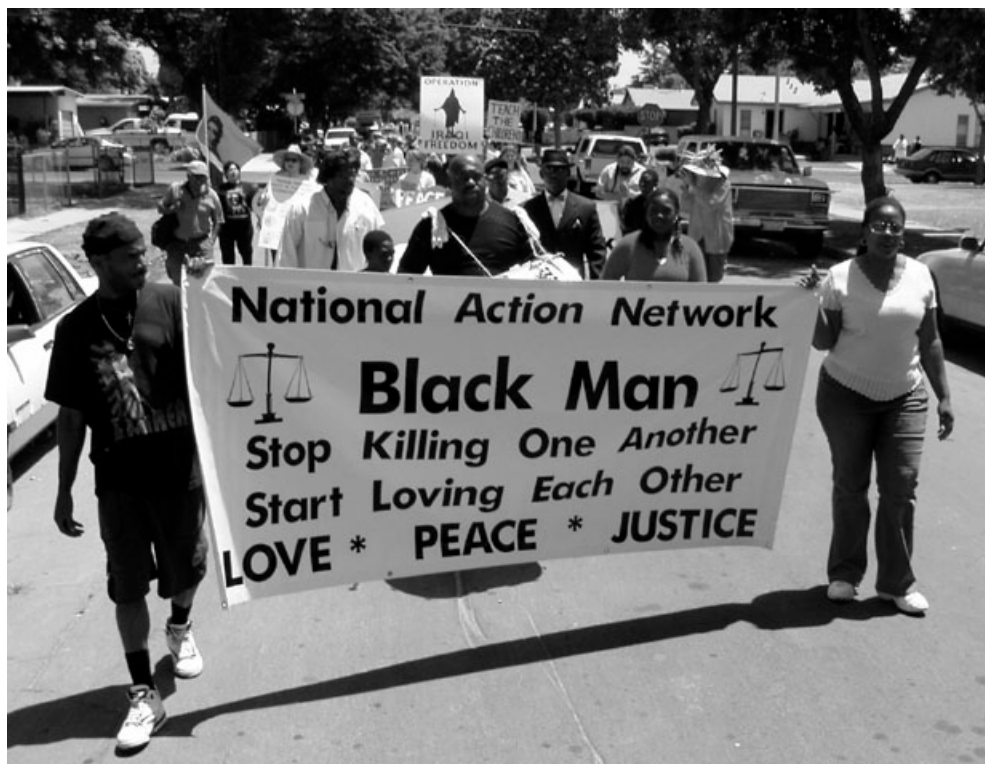
NAN fights for progressive people-based social policies against rising conservative trends of cutting human services and balancing budgets at the expense of working people.

NAN fights to empower people politically by providing extensive voter education and registration campaigns, supporting economically small community businesses, and confronting corporate racism.

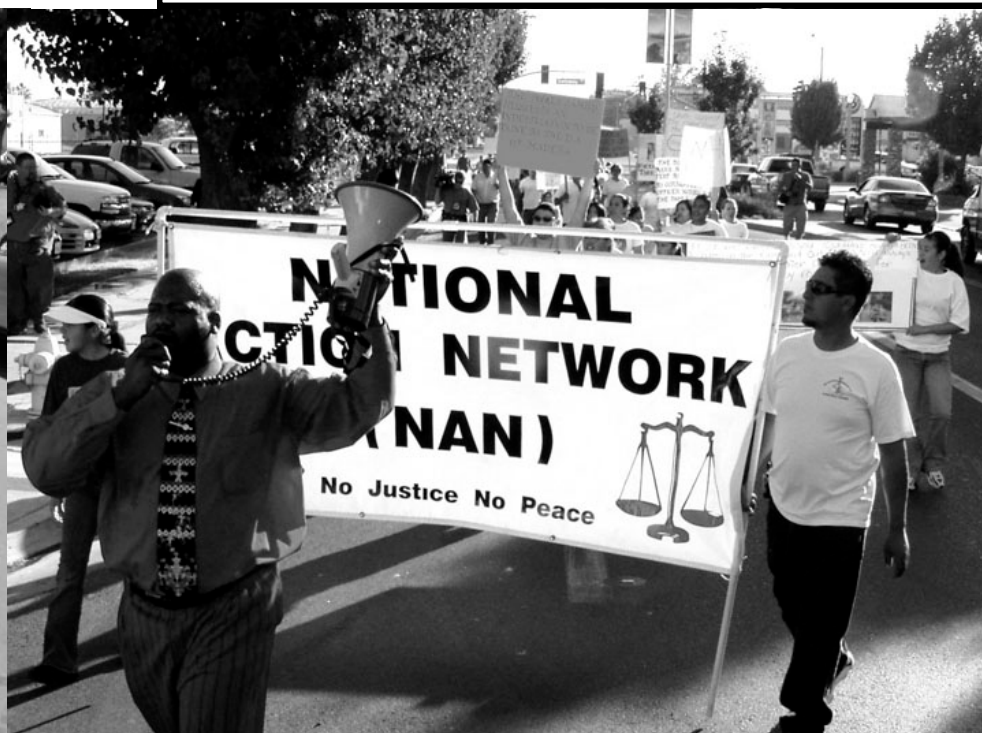
NAN is a political, social, and activist organization that was conceived with a focus on action in accordance with the vision of its founder, the Rev. Al Sharpton. NAN encompasses the vision of Rev. Sharpton by networking in "action" with individuals, groups, and organizations throughout California, New York, and the nation.



Al Sharpton, founder and national president of the National Action Network will be in Fresno on March 25.



The National Action Network organized this Peace March on Fresno's West Side in May 2004. Photo by Mike Rhodes.



The National Action Network stands up for police accountability. This march was held in Madera, to demand justice for Everardo Torres, who was shot and killed by police as he sat in the back seat of a patrol car. Photo by Mike Rhodes.

Get Your Rogue On Right

This year's Rogue Festival has more than 70 acts in nine days — here's our guide to noteworthy, don't-miss local shows

By Jaguar Bennett

The quirky and eclectic Rogue Performance Festival will return to Fresno March 2 through 11. Now in its fifth year, the Rogue Festival has grown to be one of the largest arts events in Fresno: the 2006 Rogue will present more than 200 performances of more than 70 acts in nine days at 15 venues.

This 2006 Rogue features everything from the sublime to the intentionally ridiculous in all genres of performance and visual art: theater, music, dance, independent film, visual art, spoken word, stand-up comedy, found-object puppetry, and indescribably ribald and/or strange performance art.

The Rogue Festival is also probably your best venue to see what's truly new and different by local artists from Fresno and the greater San Joaquin Valley. Founded to provide a venue for independent local performers, the Rogue puts up no barriers to artists who want to connect to an audience.

Rogue organizers don't select what goes in the Rogue Festival; artists enter the festival through a first-come, first-served non-juried application process. Once a performer has a performance slot in the Rogue, the festival does nothing to censor or control what the artist presents.

"We don't decide what you see in the Rogue—you do," said Rogue Festival founder and co-managing director, Marcel Nunis. "The audience is the best judge of what's good, not a committee of experts. The Rogue gives you an immediate, unrestricted experience of the artists and their art."

Eight "don't-miss" shows from the Rogue Festival

An "immediate, unrestricted experience" is all well and good—but with over 70 acts to choose from, it would be nice to have a little guidance on what to see at the Rogue.

The Rogue Festival has complete descriptions of every Rogue performance on its Web site, <www.roguefestival.com>. You can also get a Rogue Map, the official Rogue Festival program, from any Rogue venue.

But these are comprehensive guides that tell you everything about every show. And while you might indeed want to see every show at the Rogue Festival, you do have to start somewhere.

So here, without any desire to slight other shows at the Festival, are some top picks of what not to miss at the 2006 Rogue. All these shows were chosen because they

fit three criteria: they're produced by independent local artists, they're innovative, and they're shows you would not see anywhere other than the Rogue Festival.

There are no guarantees here; these shows may or may not be great, but they are local and different:

- **Baba for Now**, *Lost and Found on the 99*: Simply put, this is one of the weirdest local shows you're ever likely to see. Fruit, office chairs, the Mammoth Orange stand on 99 — it all combines into a performance art/video phantasmagoria that's also touching and full of life. *At Dianna's Studio of Dance.*
- **All Too Real Players**, *Junkarella*: This all high-school troupe does found-object puppetry—which means they take ordinary objects and fill them with character and energy. You wouldn't think you could feel sorrow and pity for a bundle of rags, unless you had seen All Too Real's tsunami story in the 2005 Rogue. *At Starline.*
- **Johnny Stafford**, *Skin & Ink*: These incredibly beautiful photographs reveal the individuality of a wide assortment of people who have one thing in common—their intricate tattoos. *At Salon 637L.*
- **Tanjora Tribal Bellydance**, *The Return of Ishtar*: Tanjora's tribal fusion bellydance interprets the origins of the art in the temple dances of the priestesses of Ishtar. *At Starline.*
- **Mallory Moad**, *The Wheel of Dada*: You never know what performance artist Mallory Moad will do. Here you know even less—*Wheel of Dada* incorporates random chance and audience participation to make a different show in every performance. *At Veni Vidi Vici.*
- **You're Doing Good Productions**, *It's OK to Like Porn!*: We included this one because it certainly is—ahem—daring. Solo performer Aaron Bonilla relates the lessons he's learned about humanity and sexuality while working at a porn shop. *At Spectrum Gallery.*
- **Echoes of Australia**, *Songs of the Didjeridoo*: If you like world music, this is the Rogue show to see. Solo didjeridooist Tom Hosler puts it best: "If the earth had a voice, it would be a didjeridoo." *At Spectrum Gallery.*
- **Fresno State Film Collective**, *New Wave Films*: And you thought they didn't make films in Fresno. This series of shorts, inspired by French New Wave cinema, are all different, but all intriguing, and beautifully shot. *At Javaavava.*



"Lost Watch," by Priscilla Yamamoto, from the New Wave Short series by the Fresno State Film Collective.

Fresno's Theater Renaissance

After five years, the Rogue Performance Festival is starting to feel less like an annual novelty act and more like a community institution. It's hard to remember that when the Rogue started, the idea of an independent theater festival based in Fresno seemed risky—if not downright dumb.

"The first year, a lot of people took a wait-and-see attitude about the Rogue," said Nunis. "The theater scene was kind of flat then, and generally people didn't think Fresno had an audience for independent productions. I'm sure some people expected us to fail."

Instead, the Rogue has grown bigger and faster than anyone—even the founder—expected. The first Rogue had an audience of 1,200; the 2005 Rogue had an audience of 6,000. Every year the festival has added more venues, more performances, and more days, in a spiral of increasing supply and demand for independent art.

"Our original model was slow, steady growth. That didn't happen. It just spiked," said Nunis.

Along the way, the Rogue has become a springboard for artists looking for a bigger audience. Patrick Combs's one-man show, *Man One Bank Zero*, featured at the 2004 Rogue, is now playing off-Broadway. Former Fresnan Tim Hernandez wrote a successful novel based on his play *Skin Tax: Diary of a Macho*, which premiered at the 2003 Rogue.

The Rogue was also the first sign of what is proving to be a renaissance in Fresno theater. Three new theater companies have opened in the last year: the Woodward Shakespeare Festival, Epic Theatre, and Artists Repertory Theatre—all of which are mounting productions for the 2006 Rogue Festival.

"This is exactly what we wanted," said Nunis. "The idea behind the Rogue was never just to create a festival but to change Fresno. These new companies are powered by people who are doing their own thing above and beyond a once-a-year event."

"What the Rogue has done is to show the arts community that there is a market for new art in Fresno—you just have to grab it. You don't have to wait for a producer to let you be in a show; you can be your own producer," said Nunis.

The Rogue is leveraging the new growth of arts groups to expand the Rogue Festival itself. The Rogue's "Bring Your Own Venue" program allows outside institutions, like Fresno Filmworks, Arte Americas, and the African-American Museum, to present their own programs under the Rogue banner.

The Rogue has even achieved official recognition—on February 28, the Fresno City Council proclaimed the March 2-11 period "Rogue Performance Festival Week."



Lost and Found on the 99. Photo courtesy of Rogue Festival.



Mallory Moad, *Wheel of Dada* incorporates random chance and audience participation to make a different show in every performance. Photo courtesy of the Rogue Festival.

So is the Rogue becoming too respectable? Nunis laughs at the idea. “We [the Rogue organization] can always get stodgy, but we can’t control what the artists do. They can be as crazy as they want.”

Facts about the Rogue

The Rogue Performance Festival will take place March 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 11 at multiple venues in the Tower District and downtown Fresno.

On most festival days, the earliest show will start at 1:00 PM and the latest show will start at 11:30 PM. For a full schedule of performances, check the Rogue Performance Festival Web site <www.roguefestival.com>, or get a Rogue Map from any Rogue venue.

The Rogue Map and the Rogue Web site also list movie-style G to NC-17 ratings for the performances. Not all shows at the Rogue are suitable for all ages, so you should check ratings before bringing young people.

At most Rogue Performance Festival venues, performances will happen simultaneously, with no more than a 30-minute gap between performances. Most Rogue venues are within convenient safe walking distance, so it’s easy to hop from show to show.

Ticket prices at Rogue shows are capped at \$7. Many shows are only \$4. For added value, you can get Rogue Ready Pass for \$30 (available at any Rogue venue). Each Rogue Ready Pass is good for admission to five Rogue Mainstage shows (worth \$35 if purchased individually) or 10 Rogue Cafe shows (worth \$40 if purchased individually).

All Rogue Festival box office sales go directly to the performers. The Rogue Performance Festival is organized by a local nonprofit organization.

The venues for the 2006 Rogue Performance Festival are:

Rogue Mainstages

Starline, 833 Fern
Dianna’s Studio, 726 N Fulton

Rogue Dance Mainstage

Dianna’s Studio, 826 N Fulton

Rogue Cafes

Veni Vidi Vici, 1116 Fulton
Ashtree Studio, 1035 N Fulton
Spectrum Gallery, 1306 N Wishon

Rogue Galleries

Salon 637, 637 E Olive
Ashtree Studio, 1035 N Fulton
Veni Vidi Vici, 1116 Fulton

Rogue Film

Javawava, 1940 N Echo

Rogue BYO Venues

Arte Americas, 1630 Van Ness
Severance Building, 1401 N Wishon
The Tower Theatre, 815 E Olive
Fagan’s Irish Pub, 2039 Kern

Rogue BYO Gallery

African-American Historical and Cultural Museum,
1857 Fulton



Stafford’s gallery show *Skin & Ink*. Photo by Johnny Stafford.

The Ill-Advised Solo Show

By Kelly Borkert

Although the demand for sword swallows and fire eaters is high, the local art marketplace and bustling community of the Rogue Festival performers typically cater to a different flavor of performance art. With this year’s smorgasbord fast approaching, one stalwart tenant of the multi-ringed circus, composer/performer Blake Jones of Kingsburg, has turned his sights toward what is frequently taboo in day-to-day life. Jones has been moved to explore the difficult science of songwriting as it navigates the sometimes crooked divide between religious conscience and political action.

Recognizing the recent merging of church and state, as well as the seemingly distant history of timeless topical songwriting, Jones has been researching the collective psyche of local community activists and clergy who lean toward progressive viewpoints while simultaneously walking the talk. One goal of this is to come to an understanding of what makes some folks deliver—and others not—after (hand on a Bible) they take an oath of office. Deciding to pitch his craft in their direction, Jones is inviting people of conscience to gather round and see if he can do justice to those who do, and those who don’t. While not as traumatic as Dylan gone electric, Jones gone solo and hellbent on reconstructing the In-God-We-Trust American spirit may be just as brave for the trying. As Jones himself explains,

“After 9-11, I felt that George W. Bush stole our flag. After 2004, I felt that he and his gang were trying to hijack my Savior. I am a Christian and I feel that many of W’s gang have a severely flawed theology. As an American I think that many of their actions are distinctly undemocratic, and in direct opposition to traditional American ideals. As an artist I feel that one tries to distill feelings and ideas and then expresses these feelings and ideas through the medium of their craft. I’m a songwriter, so naturally I wrote a bunch of songs.”

Blake Jones’s “Ill-Advised Solo Show” happens at Veni Vidi Vici on Saturday, March 4, 8:30 PM, Friday, March 10, 6:15 PM, and Saturday, March 11, 1:15 PM. Admission is \$3.



The bellydance troupe Tanjora Tribal Bellydance. Photo courtesy of the Rogue Festival.

Sheriff Admits to Spying on Peace Fresno, Will Not Run for Re-election

By Mike Rhodes



Mark Schlosberg, police practices policy director of the ACLU of Northern California, has worked hard to defend Peace Fresno members' civil liberties. In this photo, he was speaking at CSU-Fresno, following the revelation that undercover law enforcement officers had attended a forum organized by the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition. For more information about that incident, see <<http://www.indybay.org/news/2005/05/1737944.php>>.

Camille Russell knew two and a half years ago that she and other members of Peace Fresno had been spied upon by an undercover agent of the Joint Terrorism Task Force. But it was not until this week that Fresno County sheriff Richard Pierce admitted his department's role in what Russell and some legal observers are calling a violation of Peace Fresno members' civil liberties. It was revealed today that representatives from California Attorney

General Bill Lockyer's office have been negotiating with Pierce for months over the release of information surrounding the infiltration of Peace Fresno.

Russell, who was president of Peace Fresno at the time of the infiltration, said "our group has been expecting the release of a report from the AG's office for months now. We were anxious to know what possible justification they would use for infiltrating a completely nonviolent group whose members are engaged in no criminal activity." Unfortunately, Nathan Barankin, who is with the Attorney General's office, is now saying that his office might not issue the report. In an interview with the *Fresno Bee* regarding potential legal action that could result from this case, Barankin said, "The courts are constantly moving the line in areas respecting civil rights. After 9/11, the courts have engaged in more line-drawing based on a greater threat.

"If there was a guarantee that a court would look exclusively at the Peace Fresno facts, we feel confident that we would win. But there's no guarantees.

"The issue might become more about expanding law enforcement's boundaries. In light of today's realities, further eroding civil rights and privacy for California citizens is not a good thing for law enforcement, or any of us, in the long run."

At a press conference held on February 10, 2006, Peace Fresno representatives made it clear that they are not satisfied with the attorney general's response. Russell, speaking at the press conference, said, "Attorney General Lockyer is the top law enforcement official in the state. If law enforcement agencies don't abide by his guidelines for protecting the privacy of people attending religious, social, political, and educational meetings, it is his job to discipline those agencies. I want to know how he plans to do that."

Past Peace Fresno president Dan Yaseen and current president Lisa Solomon echoed Russell's frustration with the Attorney General's response and called for supporters to contact Lockyer, asking him to release the report. Russell continued, "We deserve a full report from the attorney general that details the extent of the infiltration of Peace Fresno, including information about other government agencies that were involved."

Peace Fresno is working with the American Civil Liberties Union and local attorneys to defend their civil liberties. Mark Schlosberg, police practices policy director of the ACLU of Northern California, applauds the Attorney General's finding, but he added, "Action needs to be immediately taken to ensure the future protection of Fresno County residents' privacy rights. We urge Attorney General Lockyer to exercise his constitutional authority and direct the Sheriff's Department to put in place clear guidelines prohibiting future unlawful spying on political activists. We also urge full disclosure of the results of the investigation."

Schlosberg said the Attorney General's office should issue a report publicly disclosing how and why the sher-

iff authorized the infiltration, what information was collected on the group and its members, and any other cases of surveillance or infiltration of political or religious groups by the Fresno County Sheriff's Department.

"This is particularly alarming in the current political climate," said Russell. "Since December, we've discovered that the National Security Agency is secretly monitoring the phone calls and e-mails of Americans and that the Pentagon monitored the peaceful anti-war activities of UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz students. Today's revelation is only one more example of unlawful government spying."

Peace Fresno discovered that during the first six months of 2003, a member of the Fresno County Sheriff Department's Anti-Terrorism unit infiltrated and conducted undercover surveillance of the group. The ACLU and Peace Fresno asked the Attorney General to investigate the role of the Fresno County Sheriff's Department Anti-Terrorism Unit in conducting surveillance of peace and social justice groups and to issue specific guidelines to the Fresno County Sheriff Department clearly stating that law enforcement may not monitor or spy on individuals or groups involved in First Amendment activity without reasonable suspicion of a crime; and to publicly release the Attorney General's findings.

Peace Fresno members discovered one of its members had been a government agent when the *Fresno Bee* published an obituary on September 1, 2003, about Aaron Kilner's death in a motorcycle accident. In his obituary, Kilner—known to Peace Fresno as Aaron Stokes—was identified as a member of the Fresno County Sheriff's Department's "anti-terrorism team." When members of Peace Fresno saw the picture and read the obituary they began piecing the story together.

In the midst of the Attorney General's investigation into the Sheriff's department infiltration of Peace Fresno, Sheriff Richard Pierce announced he would not run for re-election, ending his 40-year career in law enforcement. Pierce has also been under fire and investigation for several incidents, including moonlighting with a security guard agency, his department's selling of three Sheriff's cars (at a very reasonable price) to the same security company he worked for, and the revelation that security guards at Harris Ranch had been given computers and access to DMV records.

The Peace Fresno Press Conference can be seen here: <<http://www.indybay.org/news/2006/02/1801553.php>>

More information about Peace Fresno can be found here: <www.peacefresno.org>



Aaron Stokes, independantly wealthy, started frequenting PeaceFresno meetings and demos in January, 2003. Even bussed with us to protest WTO in Sacramento. He was killed in a motorcycle accident late August as Aaron Kilner, anti-terrorist cop, spying on PeaceFresno. We would never have uncovered his truth had not Fresno Bee printed his photo in the accident story. PeaceFresno and American Civil Liberties Union is gearing for legal action. Here he is at PeaceCorner Feb. 7, 2003.

This is a photo of Aaron Kilner, the Joint Terrorism Task Force agent that infiltrated Peace Fresno. Thanks to Elfie and Maia Ballis for the photo. See their Web site at <www.sunmt.org>.



Did the undercover operation against Peace Fresno and legal action that may result from it force Sheriff Pierce to end his 40-year career in law enforcement?

Rally in the Valley for Peace and Social Justice - March 18, 2006 Coalition Groups Registration

Group
Name _____
Address _____

Phone number (_____) _____
E-mail _____

Contact person
Name _____
Address _____

Phone number (_____) _____
E-mail _____

- ☐ **We want to participate and reserve a space for tabling.**
 - ☐ If you bring your own table and chairs, there is a \$10 charge to reserve a space before March 6. After March 6, the fee is \$20.
 - ☐ If you need a table and two chairs, there is a \$20 charge to reserve a space before March 6. After March 6, the fee is \$30.
- ☐ **We want to co-sponsor.** This means you will help publicize the event and donate what you can to help defray the costs. You will be listed as a part of the coalition in publicity and information about the event in the program.
- ☐ **We want to endorse.** This means you support the event and want to make a financial contribution.

SEND THIS FORM TO:
PEACE FRESNO
P O BOX 5115 • FRESNO, CA 93755-5115
LISA SOLOMON (559) 287-4515

Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

So I call A.J., the coordinator of the local ACORN office, to make an appointment for our interview.

Surprise #1: He speaks with an English accent.

So I get to the building, and I'm directed back to his office. Surprise #2: A.J., last name Dahli, is of Asian Indian ancestry.

How does someone like him, who (it turns out) is a full-fledged lawyer, wind up doing community organizing among the immigrants and poor neighborhoods of Fresno?

As we trace this improbable journey, here comes surprise #3: A.J.'s previous jobs were with Arthur Anderson of Enron notoriety and with Representative Radanovich, our right-tilting congressman. A.J. explains: "When you have a \$90,000 law school debt, your first obligation is to pay it off. And I have no qualms about the specific work I did." But as soon as he was quit with his creditors, he sought out work he could really believe in.

It wasn't easy to convince ACORN that although he was obviously well qualified for the office work, that he was the man for a job that includes door-to-door organizing in black, Latino, and Asian communities. Wouldn't his obvious foreignness get in the way? And why would a lawyer want such a hands-on job with unlawyer-like compensation? "I had to be very persistent," he says, "but eventually I won them over."

Growing up, A.J. was inspired by the civil rights and independence movements he read about, and he now welcomes the chance to return to the ideals of his youth. "I see frustration in the people around us, and I want to harness that anger into constructive activity. There

are all these intractable problems for people with limited means: Where can they afford to live? How can they find decent employment? How can they protect their children from crime and drugs? I want our business and political leaders to understand what it's like for the people I work with. I want them to become responsive and responsible."

ACORN is a national organization with mostly autonomous local chapters. The local office has the mission to go to the underserved areas of its city, recruit members one by one, and—when a base of around ten serious people has been established—to have house meetings where common interests and priorities are identified, and trust is established. "Our goals are to help a group of neighbors become a political influence. We look for issues that matter to them, ways to achieve visibility (including civil disobedience when needed) and objectives we can succeed with. We want people to learn that they make a difference."

One recent success: Fresno ACORN's lobbying has helped get "inclusionary zoning" language, which guarantees a percentage of affordable houses, into some recent development plans. They have also gotten a Gates Foundation grant to support an education committee to do oversight and lobbying regarding appropriate allocation of school funds. They are also currently providing free tax preparation for low- and middle-income people, with a focus on getting Earned Income Tax Credits disbursed to those eligible. A.J. says these can make a big difference to a family at the edge of insolvency.

Other longer-range goals are to obtain a "living wage" for workers beyond the skimpy minimum wage increase Arnold has proposed; and to bring an influx of decent affordable dwellings to the area.

A.J. wants to express appreciaiton to the local supportive churches; to FIRM and PICO (organizations with complementary activities); and to unions like CTA, FTA, and SEIU. He has special praise for the work of Jamie

Wilson and Floyd White, key community members in Fresno ACORN's development.

As for us in Reader-land: "Financial assistance is always appreciated, but if you can distribute fliers about our work, and right now about the tax preparation assistance, your help would be most welcome."

IDENTITY BOX

Ethnic identity: Sikh
Political party: unaffiliated
Religion: Sikh
Most frequented parts of Fresno: Southwest Fresno for work, Livingstone's for leisure
Inspirations: Jesus
Non-political interests: soccer (especially following the Liverpool team)
Unlikely pleasures: reading the Bible

Contact info: (559) 222-9013; caacornfirro@acorn.org; <www.acorn.org>



Rally in the Valley for Peace and Social Justice

Support our troops! Bring them home now!

by J. Hubbell, C. Russell, D. Yaseen

March 18 is the three-year anniversary of U.S. "Shock and Awe," beginning the war in Iraq. Lisa Solomon, President of Peace Fresno, says, "We will mark this sad day with a huge anti-war event. Everyone who is against the war needs to come out on Saturday, March 18, to say SUPPORT OUR TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME NOW!"

The main speaker will be the nationally known peace activist Nadia McCaffrey. Nadia McCaffrey lost her son, Patrick, in June of 2004, in an ambush near the American military base at Balad, Iraq. Nadia is known as the mother who defied President Bush by allowing the media to view her son's flag draped coffin. She will show filmmaker Mark Manning's *Journey to Peace*, which documents her trip to the Middle East and meetings with Iraqi mothers. Nadia will talk of her loss and work opposing war.

Sureya Sayadi, MD, will share her personal story. Sureya was born in Kirkuk, Kurdistan, Iraq. At age of 12 she fled from Kirkuk due to Saddam's policies toward the Kurds and went to a refugee camp in Iran. At 16 she was sponsored by an American family in North Dakota. She now lives in the United States. She is Vice President of "NMCI", an international non-profit organization for women and children in Middle East. Sureya has family members all over Iraq and Middle East.

Nadia and Sureya will show *Caught in the Cross Fire*, a short new film focusing on the American attack on Falluja. Mark Manning was the only un-embedded western journalist to enter Falluja after the U.S. bombardment. He spent three weeks filming inside the ravaged ancient city. "His footage provides a rare glimpse of the innocent victims' plight and dispels the myths of war and the nature of the 'enemy'." A question and answer period will follow the presentations.

"Rally in the Valley" begins at 12 noon and ends at 4 PM. There will be other speakers and live music. It will be an opportunity to meet with peace, social justice, and environmental activists and organizers from valley and mountain communities. About 600 people attended last year's "Rally in the Valley" at Fresno County Courthouse Park, despite the wind and rain. Ken Hudson, Peace Fresno Board Member, says, "The ex-

citement at last year's event was incredible. As the war grinds on, we need more people to break their silence and take action. "Rally in the Valley" is the place to take a stand and to get involved. Stop the war! Bring the troops home now."

This year Peace Fresno, www.peacfresno.org, and the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition at CSU Fresno, www.csufresno.edu/campuspeace, join to organize the annual event. All peace, social justice, and environmental justice organizations and progressive political groups are asked to co-sponsor or endorse the event and to table at the Rally to inform the public about their issues. Group leaders should use the accompanying form to register as a sponsor, endorser, and/or participant.

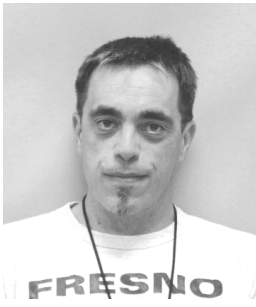
The location of the "Rally in the Valley" has not been finalized yet.

For more information about "Rally in the Valley," call Peace Fresno's voice mail at (559)-487-2515 or e-mail president@peacefresno.org. Details about speakers and performers will appear at www.peacefresno.org as they are confirmed.



Nadia McCaffrey, whose son was killed in Iraq, will be the featured speaker for the Rally in the Valley. Photo by Mike Rhodes.

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QUEER EYE

Coalition Against Hate Forming at Fresno State

By Dan Waterhouse

Students and faculty at Fresno State have had enough of spiritual violence being preached on their campus. In response to the unwelcome intrusions of “hate speech” preacher Anthony Munoz, a coalition of students, faculty, and community members has been created. The group counts gays, lesbians, straights, Christians, and Muslims among its members.

Members took part in a “kiss-in” organized by POWER—People Organized for Women’s Empowerment and Representation—countering the preacher’s messages of hate on the Lincoln’s Birthday holiday.

The “kiss-in” was in the Free Speech Area in front of the Student Union.

Several hundred students gathered to teach Munoz about love and tolerance, and to let him know he is not welcome on the Fresno State campus. “Love is more powerful than hate. His message means nothing to us,” POWER president Michelle Verity Colvin said to the crowd.

The crowd—gay and straight, Christian or otherwise—came back with its message that the campus belonged to them, not to Munoz.

Munoz did not make his usual Monday appearance. In media interviews, he attempted to make himself look like the victim, not the perpetrator. When interviewed by the *Fresno Bee*, he appeared sad when the reporter told him he is called a “hatemonger” by students. “I feel misunderstood,” Munoz replied.

He told the media that he plans to stay away for a while because of the “hate” exhibited toward him by students. He claims he fears he will be harmed. He promises to be back. Munoz told the *Bee*, “It’s a big campus. If they don’t like me, they can find other places to go.”

Munoz, who is pastor of the Pentecostal Souls Harbor Holiness Church in Pinedale, has been preaching in the Free Speech Area for several years. His message typically includes: “Sodomy, it’s to DIE for” and signs promoting the idea that AIDS is the ideal “cure” for homosexuality. Munoz also rails against women, Muslims, Catholics, and anyone else he thinks is sinful.

While most people try to ignore him, others are angered by his message—even the vocal Christians. The director of Campus Crusade for Christ recently said Munoz and his group “are very insensitive to those around them.”



Colvin and SHOC (Stopping Hate on Campus) Coalition vice-president Bre Slimick on the podium.

The current crisis began last fall when Munoz returned to campus, railing against queers, lewd behavior and dress, abortion, fornication, and evolution. In a letter to the *Collegian* in September, Colvin said there was “a very real conflict” between students and Munoz. She said Munoz “creates a threatening and hostile learning environment.”

“When we (women) are repeatedly and publicly called whores because of the way we dress,” Colvin wrote, “and when a visiting preacher is allowed to wear a button on his shirt that says ‘AIDS: Homosexuals Contribution To The World,’ it’s time for us to take a stand.



POWER (People Organized for Women’s Empowerment and Representation) chair Michelle Colvin addressing the crowd of several hundred people.

It’s time for us to take our campus back from these hatemongers.”

As is their wont, Channel 30 Action News got the story wrong. Their reportage made the issue to be 100 percent about queers, and even dragged the Roeding Park sex sting cases into the story. No mention of the fact that straight students, Christian students, and Muslim students all have had a bellyful of Munoz.

The coalition is considering several options: find ways to get Munoz and his cohorts off campus, or find ways to give voice to other perspectives. Group members agree that the crisis could have a positive outcome, by raising awareness on campus and creating coalitions among the campus community.



Gay and straight Fresno State students on the Free Speech Area’s podium, with signs calling for love and tolerance.



A Fresno State student holding his placard expressing his belief in God’s peace.



Students standing behind Colvin on the podium. All photos on this page by Dan Waterhouse.

Crystal Meth Persuasion

By Chris Jarvis

AIDS seems to be a disease that has never succumbed to predictability. In fact, with HIV's constant mutation, it seems intent on surviving and conquering. Although AIDS has become more manageable than it used to be, it's still a critically dangerous disease.

But even with the danger of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, some strange interpersonal dynamics are playing out. For gay men, "barebacking," the practice of having unprotected sex for the thrill, is a well-known term. Men on the "down low" endanger unknowing spouses by having secret and often unprotected sex with other men. AIDS, now more than 23 years in our consciousness through the news media and other sources, carries less weight than it used to, making younger generations fear it less and less. It's a problem when we as a society become so accustomed to something that we forget, at times, it's even there.

Has our apathy become the catalyst HIV needs?

Our world is ripe with the fruits that allow us to dismiss consequence and approach risk. In the world of HIV and STDs, the current enabler seems to be crystal meth, a cheaply and easily produced drug responsible for a startling rise in HIV and other STD infection rates.

A study by the Michigan AIDS Prevention Project in 2004 <<http://www.pridesource.com/article.shtml?article=11949§ion=news>> shows that for MSMs (Men who have sex with men), crystal meth use jumped from 4% to 9%, and a recent survey from the Center for HIV Educational Studies and Training in New York City states that "crystal meth has physiological effects that suggest it plays a stronger role in HIV infections than even cocaine and alcohol."



Another study by the San Francisco Health Department came to some startling conclusions, including this: 25% of HIV-negative gay men who tested positive for syphilis also reported recent speed use. It went on to state that among approximately 63,000 gay and bisexual men tested in 2001 and 2002 at public clinics, 7.1% of meth users were HIV positive, as opposed to 3.7% for non-users <<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/aids/>>.

Crystal meth has managed to increase infection rates for a few documented reasons. First of all, meth increases the sex drive and enhances sexual experience. Meth increases euphoria while reducing inhibitions. A "liberation" is created with the use of crystal meth, which makes it so detrimental to judgment. It's easier, even more so with the additions of alcohol and temptation, to let your guard fall <<http://www.cdnaids.ca/web/backgrnd.nsf/cl/cas-bg-0087>>.



The Community Alliance newspaper thanks Chris Jarvis (photo above) and Gay Fresno for this article.

Meth creates risk even outside a sexual encounter. If it's smoked, sharing a pipe could possibly transmit blood from one user's cut lips to another. If it's snorted, bloody noses, more common to those who use the drug, can transmit blood from one person to another through the sharing of a straw. Injection poses even more danger with the sharing of needles. HIV may not survive well in air or dried blood, but other STD's do <<http://www.cdnaids.ca/web/backgrnd.nsf/cl/cas-bg-0087>>. Jena Adams, supervising communicable disease specialist with the Fresno County Health Department, works daily with disease testing, prevention, and counseling, and provided me with statistics surrounding meth and STD infection rates.

She told me that meth is often used by gay men to initiate, enhance, and prolong sexual encounters, and that reports indicate a much higher percentage of meth use in regards to STD infection rates. I learned that Fresno is #3 in California for meth use among the 19 counties included in the study <<http://www.fresnohumanservices.org/communityhealth/communicabledisease/>>.

The data come from a state office of AIDS study covering the years 2001 and 2002, showing that condom use is lower among gay methamphetamine users who tested at publicly funded clinics.

Of those who contracted gonorrhea, 10.1% were meth users compared to 6.1% who were not. Of those who contracted hepatitis C, 4.7% were meth users compared to .8% who were not. Statistics covering meth users' sexual practices show that meth users only practiced safe sex 25.9% of the time when compared to non-meth users who were safe 42.7% of the time.

In fact, in all the categories we covered, meth users consistently were more unsafe than non-meth users, and were higher in all categories of contracted sexually transmitted diseases.



I asked Jena if this was a top concern for California health departments, and what was being done about it.

"Absolutely. It's the number one concern right now. We're providing more education for counselors and outreach workers so they can have the tools to deal with this. There's more HIV education through community based organizations. We're asking questions of the people we test and talk to, such as when the last time was that they used meth, when was the last time they were tested for HIV and other STDs and how often they use protection.

"When we talk to individuals, we're also trying to identify what stage of behavior change they're in. In other words, do they see it as a problem? If they don't see it as a problem, it becomes much more difficult to educate them on treatment, whereas someone who's ready for help is more likely to accept our suggestions and programs. They have to be ready for action. If they are, we can get them into a treatment program."

As we discussed the specific areas of concern which tend to be posing a higher risk for gay men, Jena brought up gay circuit parties.

"With syphilis on the rise in the last couple of years, particularly in San Francisco and Los Angeles, a lot of focus has been put on outreach to those who frequent circuit parties."

Jena pointed out that meth use tends to be much higher within the confines of a circuit party. People from all over the world travel to be a part of these events, and tend to have multiple sexual partners before returning home. Subsequent positive test results reveal the difficulty in tracking



down sex partners. The information, such as a full name or home town, is sketchy at best. This makes it easy for the disease to spread quickly.

Regardless of sexual orientation or number of encounters or partners, regardless of whether you believe the person you're sharing a monogamous relationship with is keeping their end of the bargain, it only takes one slip to contract a sexually transmitted disease.

Choices are personal, but survival is universal. Sex has to be safe, no matter what your head is telling you. With meth thrown in the equation, the chance of making the wrong decision is much, much higher. Meth disrupts the safety and self-preservation centers of the brain. What you think is okay under the influence of



drugs can be the one decision which changes everything forever.

AIDS clearly depends on our hedonism in order to survive, and crystal meth ramps up our delusions of invincibility.

That's a dangerous combination.

The Fresno County Health Department Specialty Clinic is located at 1221 Fulton Mall on the first floor. The clinic performs confidential testing (*you must sign a consent form*) on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8 AM to 11 AM and 1 PM to 4 PM, and on Tuesdays from 1 PM to 4 PM. Anonymous testing (*no identity required*) is available Tuesdays from 8 AM to 11 AM and Thursdays from 1 PM to 4 PM.

The clinic can be reached at (559) 445-3434 or <www.fresnohumanservices.org/communityhealth/communicabledisease>.

Rapid HIV testing (30 minutes) is offered on the Health Department's mobile unit. For dates and locations for the mobile unit, please contact the clinic.

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Reprinted from Gay Fresno: For the Community, By the Community <www.gayfresno.com>



Fresno Folklore Society Concert News

by Pat Wolk

Look what the Fresno Folklore Society has planned for March! Three concerts, all different—something for everyone—in comfortable, lovely settings, at affordable prices. Consider joining the Folklore Society and receive a monthly newsletter that fills you in on all of our activities. We are a group that knows how to have fun and be active in building a peaceful, just, environmentally friendly world. See our Web site: <www.fresnofolklore.org>.

March 9, Thursday, Fresno Art Museum 7:30 PM; \$15 advance; \$20 door
Perfect Strangers is a band of established bluegrass veterans and exciting talent that has been generating a lot of interest and enthusiasm during the past three years.

Chris Brashear is a charismatic singer with a high, clear voice, a dynamic instrumentalist, and a songwriter with a penchant for writing memorable bluegrass songs on topics other than failed love. Chris is the band’s fiddler.

On the banjo is Bob Black, a veteran of Bill Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys. Bob’s stunning solos and subtle backup are a joy to hear.

Jody Stecher is a music innovator of considerable stature. Jody received a 1999 Indy Award and has been a Grammy finalist several times for his work with Kate Brislin. He sings true bluegrass style and plays surprising mandolin with a big, round tone.

National flatpicking champion Peter McLaughlin is the band’s guitarist. He is equally powerful as a rhythm player and soloist. Peter played in Laurie Lewis’s band for several years and records for Dog Boy Records.

Paul Knight, bass, has played with Laurie Lewis & Grant Street and with Peter Rowan for over a decade. His robust energetic bass style is an excellent fit for Perfect Strangers’s rambunctious approach to bluegrass music..

March 19, Sunday, House Concert, 6661 N. Forkner 5:00 PM; \$10
Hans York, guitarist and singer-songwriter. Performs. You may recognize him as Hannsjoerg Scheid, who performs each New Year’s with Lyquid Amber. An award-winning singer-songwriter, York has quickly made himself a name as an extraordinary DADGAD player and strong, engaging performer with a distinctive style and a delightful and approachable manner; he is a world musician in the true sense of the term. More info at <www.hansyork.com>. Seating limited so phone for reservation: 431-3653. Birthday celebration for Hans will follow the performance.

March 24, Friday, Fresno Art Museum 7:30 PM; \$15 advance; \$20 door
Three outstanding singer-songwriters share the Bonner stage: Steve Seskin, Brian Joseph, and Kenny Edwards. We heard them perform solo at the 2005 Kate Wolf festival, but they agreed to come and share the Bonner stage. Seskin will have you wiping away a tear one minute and laughing out loud the next. His songs all have messages that touch the hearts of everyone: from the feelings of a little boy missing his father, to growing up and being true to yourself, to being considerate to and respectful of one another (as expressed in “Don’t Laugh at Me”). More info: <www.steveseskin.com>. Seskin will conduct a songwriting class the following day. Contact Annette Butler for information: <www.musicintheround.com>.

Brian Joseph appeared in a garden concert here following the Labor Day Strawberry Festival. Humorous songs about everyday life are his specialty. His lyrics are described as witty, sensitive, and insightful; his finger styling on guitar as elegant; his voice as warm and velvety: <www.brianjosephmusic.com>.



Sketch of Brian Joseph. In concert on March 24

Kenny Edwards is a superb guitarist, mandolin player, bass player, lyricist, composer, singer, and arranger. From California to Nashville since the 1960s he has been much in demand as a session player, also composing and singing backup. From California to Nashville his musical and writing credits are too numerous to mention. Check him out: <www.kennyedwards.com>.

Tickets for the March 9 and March 24 concerts may be purchased two weeks prior to the concert at The Movies Video Store; Patrick’s Music, National Hardware, Gift Shop at the Fresno Art Museum; or by phone: 431-3653.



Perfect Strangers March 9



Hans York. He appears at our home on March 19

Creative Fresno

By Jarah Euston

“Fresno: It really does suck here.”

So says a popular faux-retro T-shirt, which has received considerable buzz in these parts. It would be easy to dismiss the shirt as an example of the trite irony that only appeals to Urban Outfitted teens that think everything “sucks.” It would be easy, if only our college graduates moved back to Fresno to start their families. It would be easy, if only our downtown were bustling on Saturday night. It would be easy, if only we weren’t ranked lowest in the state for parks per capita. It would be easy if Fresno became an attractive place for creative professionals.

Last August, Mayor Alan Autry announced the formation of the Creative Economy Council (CEC), a volunteer committee charged with telling the city how it can better attract, support, and retain creative professionals. These are the knowledge workers that power our information economy, and they include anyone who uses his brain instead of his brawn to make a living. It’s no secret that Fresno faces a severe brain drain: we continuously lose our best and brightest to more cosmopolitan cities. Without these knowledge workers living in Fresno, it

becomes difficult to attract the kind of businesses and jobs that will power our city into the future.

The CEC has taken a cue from Richard Florida’s book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Florida posits that creative professionals first choose where they want to live, and then where they want to work. In January, the CEC released its report, “Making the Grass Greener: Recommendations to Retain, Attract, Develop, and Support Knowledge Workers,” with the aim of making Fresno a top choice for creative minds.

There are nearly 100 recommendations in the report, from no-cost policy changes like relaxing the noise ordinance downtown for live outdoor music, to more ambitious ideas, like funding a Cultural Arts Director position.

The first step to positive change in Fresno comes from changing our mindset. We need to embrace, celebrate, and promote the things that make us unique, such as our agricultural heritage and cultural diversity. What if there were a different cultural festival on the Fulton Mall every weekend? Or a harvest festival for each of our specialty crops? Celebrating our assets will help to change others’ —and our own—perception of Fresno.

Creative professionals are drawn to vibrant urban environments, and the CEC believes creating a livable

downtown is key to attracting these workers. By improving transportation into and within the city’s core, enabling free WiFi downtown, and creating unique neighborhood districts, we can help make Fresno a more attractive place for creative professionals.

This is not a report designed to collect dust at City Hall. It’s a plan for action that has been embraced by the mayor and the city.

Suzanne Bertz-Rosa, a designer and CEC member notes that the formation of the CEC itself is an indication the city is serious about change.

“It’s been embraced by the city. They’ve taken it as their own as a beacon to follow.”

But the report cannot be implemented by the city alone. It will take nonprofits, community groups, businesses, and dedicated individuals to make sure the recommendations are followed. We urge you to download the report at <www.fresnocec.org>, and identify one cause or recommendation you’re going to champion. Call your council member, and let him or her know it’s important to you. Monitor the progress, and get involved. Let’s make sure the next big T-shirt trend is “I heart Fresno.”

Jarah Euston is a member of the Creative Economy Council and editor of <www.FresnoFamous.com>.

Getting in the Way

by Scott Key

Muslims and Christians throughout the world have raised a unified voice calling for the release of four Christian Peacemaker Team members in Iraq. The militants who seized the hostages have said that they would kill them if thousands of Iraqis held in coalition prisons are not released. Deadlines have passed. The fate of the hostages remains uncertain. Will the world forget about these men until it is too late?

Christian Peacemaker Teams traces its beginnings to the 1984 Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg, France. Ronald J. Sider, professor at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, challenged those gathered that “unless we are ready to die developing new nonviolent attempts to reduce conflict, we should confess that we never really meant that the cross was an alternative to the sword.” Two years later, leaders of the North American Mennonite and Brethren churches discussed Sider’s challenge and the concept of Christian Peacemaker Teams was born.

The motto of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is “Getting in the Way.” CPT is committed to transforming lethal conflict through the nonviolent power of God’s truth and love. By sending unarmed women and men into harm’s way to promote peace, CPT places teams in crisis situations and militarized areas around the world at the invitation of local peace and human rights workers. For more than a decade, teams of CPTers have gotten in the way in Gaza, Haiti, Bosnia, and Chechnya, and today teams are in the way in Iraq, Columbia, Palestine, Ontario (Canada), and Arizona.

What does it mean to “get in the way”? According to the CPT Web site <www.cpt.org>, CPTers work at creative public witness, nonviolent direct action, and protection of human rights. The strategy has developed over the years. Starting with a local invitation, CPT sends trained international teams to support local efforts to “get in the way” of injustice through direct nonviolent intervention, thereby creating a public witness reported to a larger world community. In Arizona, CPTers conduct cross-border prayer vigils and monitor vigilante and border patrol treatment of migrants. In Palestine, CPT has maintained a continuing presence in the West Bank since 1995 and CPTers have stood with Palestinian and Israeli peace groups to oppose Israeli military occupation, collective punishment, settler harassment, home demolitions, and land confiscation. And, in Iraq, CPTers walked with Iraqis through the war and continue to report abuse and to support Iraqis committed to nonviolence.

The abduction of the four CPTers in Iraq is troubling because CPT established a presence in Iraq prior to the war. CPT has been committed to providing first-hand, independent reports, working for the rights of Iraqi prisoners who were illegally detained and abused, and training others in nonviolent intervention and human rights documentation. Long before the western media covered Abu Ghraib, CPT members publicly denounced the torture of Iraqis at the hands of the coalition forces. While the media has moved on, CPT contin-

ues to document and denounce illegal detention and abuse. It is crucial to tell the stories of innocent Iraqis like Greg Rollins did in the quarterly newsletter *Signs of the Times* (Fall 2005).

When most westerners left Iraq, CPTers stayed to continue working along side Iraqis for human rights and peace. For example, human rights workers in Karbala established Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT) in January 2005. Joe Carr reported that one MPter reflected, “The US is using this violence to justify staying. We need to rebuild ourselves by ourselves. We need assistance, but it should be like the assistance CPT gave to MPT—they didn’t control us; they only gave inspiration and an example.” The presence of CPT in Iraq has inspired and shown that peace crosses religious and ethnic lines. One MPter said, “We started MPT because we believe that the real spirit of Islam is mercy and forgiveness.” The focus on nonviolence is seen as a positive because everyone, not just the young, can participate. When asked what CPTers in the United States can do, MPters responded, “Put pressure on your government to give the happiness back to Iraq. Let them begin reconstruction and be courageous.”

Over the past decade, it has become increasingly dangerous for Americans and Canadians to serve as CPTers. Gone are the days when most westerners were immune from capture, torture, and death. Today, with increased press coverage, the best way to reach the world is through the abduction and killing of westerners, especially Americans. Media outlets will show videotapes over and over again. The danger is real and four courageous CPTers continue to be held as pawns in Iraq. But, there are many others who have served and continue to serve in Iraq, Palestine, and elsewhere.

Locally, Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, who directs graduate academic programs in peacemaking and conflict studies at Fresno Pacific University, has been involved with CPT since its early inception. He served as the recording secretary of its first meeting and says, “I have been in the way of violent people many times, and have walked without fear on five continents, and always my naïveté, local friends, and status as an American kept me safe. Few Americans realize how powerful they were because of this self-censorship by opponents who feared our power. Being American is no longer a shield, but has become a bull’s-eye.” Ruth-Heffelbower believes that the capture of CPTers in Iraq means that we now must ask: “How does a person who wants to bring peace where there is injustice behave in this new world?” These are important questions because “we can actually endanger the people we want to protect if we don’t respond wisely.”



Tom Fox, is one of the abducted Christian Peacekeeper Team members. Photo courtesy of CPT - www.cpt.org



Christian Peacekeeper Team member Norman Kember at a February 2003 Stop-the-War rally in London. He was abducted November 26, 2005 in Baghdad, Iraq. Photo courtesy of CPT - www.cpt.org

CPT is one organization attempting to respond wisely. There are many ways to get involved. CPT often makes a call for “Urgent Action” on its Web site. This action usually revolves around letter writing, phone calls, and participation in demonstrations. But, there are other ways to get involved, such as joining the Christian Peacemaker Corps or being part of a CPT Delegation. The Christian Peacemaker Corps has full-time members who commit to three years of full-time service and spend time in crisis situations and short-term organizing back home. Reserve members commit to three years of part-time service (between two and twelve weeks per year) and augment the full-time corps. Training is required to become part of the corps, but another option is CPT Delegations : these people spend 7–14 days in crisis settings around the world. Delegates offer a link between communities experiencing violence and concerned groups back in their home communities. Go to the CPT Web site for more information on these and other opportunities.

While responding wisely to new realities is critical, the goal of “getting in the way” remains the same. CPT will continue to respond to local invitations to come alongside to work for peace and justice throughout the world. While the danger has increased, the need has increased too. The world needs courageous people to stand up for peace and justice. The world needs more people willing to “get in the way.” CPT is one of several groups involved in direct nonviolent action as a means to promote peace and justice without killing.

Scott Key is a professor at Fresno Pacific University, a member of Mennonite Community Church, and a member of Peace Fresno.



Christian Peacekeeper Team member Harmeet Sooden, was abducted and is being held in Iraq. Photo courtesy of CPT - www.cpt.org

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

The World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela

By Mike Rhodes

Under the unifying slogan of "Another World Is Possible," tens of thousands of participants came to the World Social Forum (WSF) in Venezuela to build a powerful movement against neoliberalism (see sidebar), war, and imperialism. Having the WSF in Venezuela this year highlighted the achievements and the advances made by the progressive movement in South America. With left, indigenous, or socialist leaders elected in Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina, there is a great deal of enthusiasm and hopefulness about this region's ability to determine its own destiny.

The WSF is organized in a decentralized format that encourages grassroots participation. This is accomplished through a series of workshops and forums that bring together political activists from throughout the world to give them the opportunity to share experiences and build social networks. Each day, during the six days of activities (January 24–29, 2006), there were hundreds of forums, discussions, and meetings to choose from.

The opening event at this year's WSF was a march with over 60,000 participants demonstrating against war and imperialism. There were large delegations from all over South America— including delegations from Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, and of course Venezuela.

While the majority of participants at this year's WSF were from South America, there were a substantial number of US citizens participating. San Francisco-based Global Exchange, for example, had a delegation of about 200. Representatives and delegations from US labor unions, antiwar, and faith-based groups were at the march and participated at the forum.

Several hundred Cubans were at the front of the march,

The WSF was set up as the grassroots alternative to the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in Davos, Switzerland, by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. While the WSF is not intended to eliminate the street demonstrations that have confronted the WEF, it does provide an opportunity for grassroots activists to envision and build a new future that is an alternative to the global domination of US imperialism and corporate interests. The regional WSF in Caracas was one of three being held throughout the world. The others are being held in Pakistan and Mali. Dan Yaseen and Camille Russell, two Peace Fresno activists, will be attending the WSF in Pakistan at the end of March.



Maria De La Villanueva, a community radio journalist from Venezuela, said there are two views about the purpose of the WSF.

Venezuela president Hugo Chavez, speaking at a large stadium to WSF participants, spoke about the Bolivarian revolution, which is uniting the countries in South America into an economic/political bloc that can better represent the interests of this region's people. He also addressed the problem of cultural and informational domination by corporate control of the mass media. Chavez said that a new television network (Telesur), independent of corporate interests, has been established and is now broadcasting throughout the region. He called on leaders in the region to establish an economic bloc that will be a counterbalance to US corporate economic interests.

During this address to the WSF participants, Chavez introduced US antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan as "Ms. Hope." By contrast, US president George Bush was referred to by Chavez as "Mr. Danger." Sheehan spoke the next day at an event titled "Women Say No to War" with Code Pink/Global Exchange co-founder Medea Benjamin.

Sheehan, who lost her son in Iraq, said "George Bush is illegitimate and should be evicted. Let's not talk about impeachment, he was never elected. After he is removed from office he should be tried for war crimes." Sheehan said that sometimes comments like these have led people to question her patriotism. In response, she said that "patriots fight against an occupying force" and asked what the audience would do if a foreign force had invaded and occupied their country.

"I love my country," Sheehan declared, but "I love human beings of all countries even more." She said that patriotism is being used to drive the United States to war, which is creating incredible wealth for a few corporations, such as the oil companies that are profiting from the war. Sheehan argued that we need to reclaim patriotism or perhaps change the word *patriot* to *matriot*. "We need a matriarchal society that is more nurturing and fostering of life."

In the question-and-answer period, Sheehan was asked by Pam Whalen, a union organizer in Fresno, "Would you please run for president?" While declining the opportunity to run for president, Sheehan did say she was considering running for senator in California against Diane Feinstein. The crowd roared their approval and the first \$20,000 for the campaign was collected. Unfortunately, at an exchange rate of \$2,144 (Venezuelan) to \$1 (US), more money will need to be raised before a viable campaign to run Sheehan for the senate is a reality. If Sheehan runs, she said she would run as a Democrat.



Community Alliance editor Mike Rhodes and Jean Hayes meet up at the World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela. Hayes, who is from Fresno, was on an Oil, Natural Resources, and Sustainability delegation organized by Global Exchange to the World Social Forum.

The word used time and again by US participants to describe the experience at this year's WSF is *hope*. The opportunity to meet with other participants from 140 countries around the world reinforced the forum's theme that another world is possible. Laura Wells, who is a Green Party candidate for controller in California (www.laurawells.org), saw hope and was inspired by the fact that Venezuela used to have a two-party political system, but now Hugo Chavez, who describes himself as a socialist and is outside of the two-party system, is president. Wells said "a series of incidents happened in this country that led to a radical change in government." She believes that conditions can change in the United States as a result of one crisis or another, and that we need to be ready to seize the opportunity. Building the Green Party and running for controller in this year's election, when viewed in the context of the huge changes taking place in Venezuela and South America, is a strategy that makes more sense to her now than ever before.

The WSF consisted of thousands of workshops and events spread out over six days on subjects as diverse as stop-



Medea Benjamin and Cindy Sheehan with a group from Colombia. After the World Social Forum, Sheehan went to the State of the Union address in Washington DC where she was arrested for wearing an antiwar T-shirt.

chanting in solidarity with the WSF theme that another world is possible. Representatives from Puerto Rico, Haiti, Canada, and Australia also had a presence at the march. In addition to the delegates who identified with their country of origin at the march, many participants marched behind the banners of grassroots organizations working on human rights issues, environmental justice, or women's rights.



Pam Whalen asked Cindy Sheehan to run for president.

ping the war in Iraq, instructions on how to build a low-power FM transmitter, and human rights in Haiti. At a workshop about social movements in Latin America, participants heard first-hand accounts from numerous countries. One panel member from Bolivia spoke about the recent electoral victory of Evo Morales. He described the building of the popular movement that included three sectors: unionized agricultural workers, the indigenous move-



60,000 participants marched on the first day of the World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela. This delegation is from Argentina.



The Cuban delegation led the march.



Hands off Haiti. These solidarity activists support democracy and are opposed to US intervention in Haiti's internal affairs



There were several delegations from Colombia at the march.



Grace Loumo, executive director of Aware-Uganda spoke about women's rights.

ment, and organizations working to stop privatization. Evo Morales was dependent on the grassroots movement for his election and will be held accountable to carry out their demands. According to another speaker on the panel, this is in stark contrast to the situation in Venezuela where there is not a strong popular movement. Workshop participants were told that while the left holds state power in Venezuela, the ability to maintain

and advance the revolution without a powerful popular movement is in a precarious position. That is the challenge in Venezuela: to strengthen the progressive social and political organizations that will defend the advances being made and hold elected leaders accountable, even as the United States and their CIA surrogates are trying to destabilize the country and overthrow the Chavez government.

There were also speakers at this workshop from Mexico, Ecuador, and Colombia. The speaker from Mexico was optimistic that the July 6, 2006, elections in that country will see a progressive candidate elected president. He said that the winds of change from South America will blow north to Mexico this year.

At another workshop, Grace Loumo, executive director of Aware-Uganda, spoke about women's rights. Loumo said, "Women are still fighting for the right to own property in Uganda." She said, "Women are themselves treated like property by their husbands. We do not even have the legal right to own an animal." Conference participants pointed out that the new Venezuela constitution gives women many new rights, including valuing the work they do within their homes. Loumo was excited to have the opportunity to meet with women from throughout the world to discuss strategy and compare notes.

The new Venezuela constitution, adopted in 1999, says, "The State guarantees equality and equity between men and women in the exercise of their right to work. The State recognizes work in the home as an economic activity that creates added value and produces social welfare and wealth. Housewives are entitled to social security."



Paul LouLou Chery, Secretary General of the Confederation of Haitian Workers, was meeting with Haiti solidarity activists, union members from around the world, and other WSF participants. Chery thought the WSF is a great opportunity to meet and talk with people about the victories and failures of the social/economic justice movement and to develop new strategies for future work.

Some participants compared this year's WSF to something between Woodstock and the biggest political march or demonstration you have ever seen. It was simultaneously a learning experience and street festival with po-

litical activists attending from all over the world.

But there were problems at the WSF—many participants complained of poorly organized events that had been cancelled without notice, the large distances between activities, and the lack of communications about events that happen with little or no notice. There is also a "Tower of Babel" phenomenon, with dozens of languages spoken and very few of the events being translated. Spanish was the primary language in use.

In spite of these criticisms, the mood at the WSF was upbeat and optimistic. Paul LouLou Chery, secretary general of the Confederation of Haitian Workers, said the WSF was a great opportunity to meet others. Chery said, "We are here to discuss our successes and failures...we are looking for a new path." Chery said he was hopeful because so many people had come together to share their experiences and learn from each other. He concluded, "The decision to have this event in Venezuela was appropriate because this country is an inspiration to the world." He was talking about President Hugo Chavez's independent politics—which is marshalling Venezuela's resources to benefit its people (and which is sometimes at odds with the United States).

Maria De La Villanueva, a community radio journalist from Venezuela, had another perspective on the WSF. Villanueva said, "There are two views about the purpose of the WSF. The WSF brings together two different groups. It brings together grassroots activists from popular organizations around the world and workers with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)." According to Villanueva these two groups have two significantly different perspectives. She said, "The participants from the NGOs largely look at how they can 'help' the poor. The grassroots activists are working for structural economic and social change" that will bring about a more just world. "The WSF provides an opportunity for these groups to come together and discuss the issues surrounding these strategies for social change."

What is Neoliberalism?

(Excerpted from *The New Yorkermagazine*)

Twenty years ago, a radical economic experiment began in Latin America. With economies beleaguered by foreign debt and runaway inflation, many of the region's politicians decided that salvation lay in a program of market-friendly reforms that became known as the Washington Consensus—privatization of state-owned businesses, balanced budgets (usually achieved by cutting social spending), free trade, and openness to foreign investment. Reform, the promise went, would lead to prosperity.

The reforms happened. The prosperity didn't.

Continued on page 21



Stop violence against women—this was one of many feminist groups at the march.



The Colombia delegation at the march



Wayuu man with hat.
Photo by Emily Achtenberg



You can see natural coal in the middle of the river?
Photo by Emily Achtenberg

Save that Date!

The Community Alliance newspaper will present

THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED
A film about the attempted U.S. backed coup in Venezuela

Monday, May 1, 2006
7:00 PM
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Venezuela Reality Tour A First Hand Account

By Jean Hays

Che Guevara once said, “Let me say, at the risk of seeming ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love.” After spending almost three weeks in Venezuela, where Hugo Chavez is lovingly and passionately working to bring about positive change, I know what Che was talking about. The new Bolivarian Revolution led by Chavez, and its “Robin Hood” effect, as exemplified in the adoption of the 1999 constitution (the 27th in the country’s history), is ready to give an array of benefits (once reserved only for the privileged) to the grassroots and indigenous people there. Now health care, with the help of visiting Cuban doctors, is free, as is education for all people. These are only two of the many positive reforms taking place, each of which is being enacted with the help of oil and natural gas revenues.

I went to Caracas to attend the Sixth World Social Forum. Most of the presentations I attended were worthwhile, but it was my encounters with the Venezuelans themselves that made me realize that what was going on there is a true revolution of the heart. My Global Exchange group visited one of the many Mision Ribas schools for adults working toward their high school diploma. (Mision Robinson serves elementary school children, and a third Mision prepares college students for graduation). In Caracas there are numerous high-rise apartment buildings housing poverty-stricken people who came to the city during the pre-Chavez regime, heeding promises of jobs for everyone. Upon arrival, there were no jobs, and no education for any of these people. Now, under the Bolivarian Revolution, these adults are enthusiastically learning to read, write, and be empowered. In the two classrooms we visited, student after student told his or her story and expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to learn. Many said they were helped and encouraged by their own children to keep working and learning! I have never seen such passion. When I asked how I could inspire parents of my own students to become more involved, more motivated and to place a greater emphasis on education, these wonderful people responded, without waiting for the translation, “Mas amor! Mas Amor!” It was a moment I will never forget. At the end of our classroom visit, several of the women who had spoken to us came to me and I was engulfed in a circle of love as one of them placed a baseball cap on my head which said: Mision Ribas.....!Necesario es Vencer! Everyone in our group was given a Spanish edition of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* and a warm invitation to return. I know I will go back.

After an intense week in Caracas attending more World Social Forum sessions and visits to various cooperatives, each of which is set up and run by a committee representing the larger group, our Global Exchange delegation split up into four interest groups and went our separate ways, planning to meet again on February 3 (2006) back in Caracas. I had chosen to be in the Oil, Natural Resources, and Sustainability group, and we headed to Maracaibo, in the state of Zulia where the oil refineries are located. During our stay we visited the Wayuu, Jupka, and Bari, indigenous peoples living at the foot of the Sierra Perija mountains. In this region the Tule and Manuelote reservoirs supply water to Maracaibo, the capital city, which holds over half the state’s population of approximately 2.5 million people. The rivers which fill these reservoirs also supply the three groups of indigenous people. Our three-hour one-way bus trip to meet with each group on three consecutive days proved very rewarding. The land was beautiful, and the people welcomed us with food and celebration. They took us to their rivers where we swam and took in the beauty of this place. There is one big problem, however; coal is found here in these beautiful lands and mining concessions have been and are being granted. Corpozulia, the national government’s regional develop-

ment corporation, plans to open new coal mines along both rivers and above both reservoirs in the heart of the indigenous lands. The dumping of waste and coal runoff into the rivers would make it deadly for all living organisms that depend on the water. Besides this, deforestation due to the coal mining process, and the construction of a railroad delivering the coal through the Sierra Perija mountains to a large port (Puerto America) to be built at the mouth of Lake Maracaibo in the Gulf of Venezuela, (for the international shipping of coal and its extraction by multinational corporations) will add to the devastation to these beautiful lands where the Wayuu and Jupka people live. As if that weren’t enough, multinational cattle ranchers are trying to clear the indigenous lands for grazing and are burning down homes that stand in their way.

In order to solve all these problems, Hugo Chavez Fries will have to walk a fine line. The governor of the state of Zulia is a strong member of the Opposition Party, and he realizes that coal is important to countries such as the United States, which consumes more than 900 million tons of coal each year. On the other hand, Herencia Gonzalez, manager of the regional institution of Hidroven, the government’s water authority, and Dr. Ana Elisa Osorio, minister of the environment, both of whom visited the coal mines currently in operation in the Sierra Perija, said they were shocked by what they saw. Is it worth destroying our natural heritage and our water source for coal? Gonzalez asked. That is, indeed, the question. Chavez is known to be a champion of the indigenous people, but can he arrive at an equitable compromise without succumbing to the pressures of energy-guzzling countries such as the United States and Brazil? The United States will be watching and ready to accuse Chavez of more Hitler-like tactics. Upon our return to Caracas from Maracaibo, four members of our Global Exchange group presented a letter to the office of the Minister of the Environment, asking that the plight of the Wayuu and Yupka peoples be taken into consideration as coal mining decisions are being made. Our group of four was warmly received and were in conversation with the minister’s representative for more than two-and-a-half hours. That gave us great hope, to be mere guests in the country and to be able to offer constructive criticism to the government without being fearful of being arrested—which is not the case in many other countries, ours included.

If you want to know what you can do to help these and other indigenous people, visit the terrific Web site of Global Response (www.globalresponse.org), run by one of our group. Other ways to get information about what is really happening in Venezuela (you can’t get it here in the American media, except on Pacifica Radio) include www.Venezuelanalysis.com (run by Greg Wilpert et al.)

ONG Sociedad Homo et Natura
e-mail: homoetnatura@cantv.net
Professor Lusbi Portillo, Coordinador General

This man is an expert on the plight of the Wayuu, Yukpa, and Bari peoples in their fight to keep the new coal mines out of their lands

The Chavez Code, by Eva Golinger (This book, written by a dual citizen attorney, offers an eye-opening look at what the United States is doing to subvert Chavez’s Bolivarian Revolution.)

Altogether, it was an intense three weeks, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world. The revolution of the hearts of the Venezuelan people has helped to open mine to the possibilities of what can be done if our direct actions are fueled by mas amor, as those wonderful women of Mision Ribas reminded us.

###

Jean Hays is a professional musician, recently retired from FUSD. She is active in Peace Fresno and FRESCamp. You can reach her at 559-313-7674



Markers set in place by the transnational mining companies to identify where the natural coal can be found in the Cachiri River. Photo by Emily Achtenberg



This is the Mision Ribas school for adults working toward their high school diploma. Photo by Jean Hays



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

WILPF DATES:

Saturday, March 4, 7PM: A Single Woman A play on the life of Jeannette Rankin, CSUF's Alice Peters Auditorium, Craig School of Business

Thursday, March 9, 7 PM: WILPF Business Meeting 1584 N Van Ness

Wednesday, March 22, 3 PM: WILPF Stir It Up on KFCF 88.1 FM

Thursday, March 23, 7PM: Thirsting for Fresh Drinking Water Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook Ave (See below)

Saturday, March 25, 10 AM: Uprooting Racism Book Discussion (See below)

Thursday, April 6: Save the Date—Jane Addams Peace Garden Statue Unveiling

Thirsting for Fresh Drinking Water: Join us for the program, *Thirsting for Fresh Drinking Water*, on March 23. Despite the agricultural wealth of our Central Valley, many small rural communities such as Ducor, Alpaugh, Tonyville, do not benefit from the vast water system feeding nearby farms. While these areas often rely on contaminated ground water as the sole source of drinking water in their homes, agribusinesses just down the road receive clear river water at highly subsidized rates. Meanwhile people in these small towns have had to resort to bottled water for home and school use while contaminated wells are shut down and an inadequate water delivery system brings muddy water to the taps. Come hear representatives from the communities being impacted and from the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water. For more information contact: Ellie Bluestein, 229-9807; Lydia Flores, 435-7460; or Bette Noblett, 439-1361.

Uprooting Racism Book Discussion: WILPF members and a group of diverse women from the community will be meeting to discuss *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* by Paul Kivel. We will be meeting on the last Saturday of the month, every other month, or March 25 (Women's Herstory Month), May 27, July 29, September 30, November 25 (Thanksgiving weekend, so this one may need to be changed). Our first meeting will be held at Stone Soup, 1345 E Bulldog Lane, on March 25. The meetings will start at 10 AM with a lunch break included and will end around 1 PM.

We will have a get-acquainted meeting, three meetings to discuss 1/3 of the book each time, and then a wrap-up meeting. This gives people time to read, take in, and work on what they have learned. We will be working with Francine Oputa and the National Coalition Building Institute at CSUF as facilitators. We hope this will lead to alliances or coalitions to work on systemic, institutional racism in Fresno. The books have been ordered directly from the publisher and will be available at the first meeting for \$12. We hope to keep the cost of the lunch to about \$5. We are still working on the details on how to provide lunch. If you are interested in participating, contact Vickie Fouts at socialjustice@sti.net or 658-8260 by March 15.

Raging Grannies Valentine's Day Demonstration: (by Marilyn Byrne) Fresno Raging Grannies showed up in



The Raging Grannies came out on Valentine's Day to sing songs of peace at this military recruiting station. Photo by Howard Watkins.

front of the recruiters' offices in their most outrageous and colorful attire. We were supported by local peace and counter-recruitment organizations. Indymedia and progressive news covered our demonstration along with local Channel 47 News. Fourteen of our 15 Grannies came out to support our Valentine's Day Demonstration, which was part of a nationwide event. We sang our songs and all of us proceeded to the military offices to sign up to serve in Iraq. It was 12:30 and the Air Force office was closed until three. Doors were shut in our faces by the Army recruiters; the Navy let us in but told us they did not have paper registration and we could sign up online. We asked questions which were politely received. We were asked repeatedly to leave, which we did well before the six policemen came to escort us out of the building. We felt good about what we did. We were sorry that the Army recruiters didn't understand that we were on their side and did support them and are proud of their service in Iraq. We just want them home where they can live their lives out in relative safety. Our next goal is to demonstrate in an area that is accessible to a greater flow of traffic.

WILPF Save the Water Campaign Update: The Save the Water Campaign is gearing up for two big events: World Water Day and our campaign strategy retreat, both slated for the end of March. We are encouraging WILPF members to organize an action or educational event to call for "Water not War" on March 22, World Water Day. The Campaign is pleased to be sending Olivia Zink, leadership team member, to Mexico City for the Fourth World Water Forum

RETHINK WATER; STOP THE WAR, Part IV: Global Warming (by Phil Erro)

A suicide bomber in Baghdad blasts body parts everywhere. American artillery shells packed with white phosphorus blister women and children in Fallujah. We are shocked and repulsed. Blinded by dust in Iraq, we don't see our Sierra snowpacks shrinking.

Before Europeans came to the San Joaquin Valley, snow fell in our Sierra Nevada Mountains all winter and spring into April at elevations 3,000 feet and higher. This allowed huge quantities of water to build up in mountain snowpacks that functioned as a massive reservoir that released water all summer as the snow melted. But as coal-burning trains, gasoline cars, and diesel trucks became more numerous in our valley, we unwittingly produced millions of tons of CO₂ as we burned increasing amounts of fossil fuels. Before we burned petroleum and natural gas, the granite faces of our Sierras and the sandy floor of our Valley reflected much of our sunlight back into space. But as we've filled our air basin with CO₂ and water vapor by combusting fossil fuels, these two gases have trapped ever more solar heat in our valley. In the future as we retain more heat in the San Joaquin Valley, we will have more precipitation in our mountains; but there will be a shift from snow to rain.

As our valley air warms up, it absorbs more water. As this moisture laden air rises above our Sierras and cools at high elevations, the water in the air condenses and falls as rain. Our warmer air also causes rain to fall at higher elevations in our mountains than before, pushing the snowline in our Sierras from 3,000 to over 4,000 feet above sea level. Our Sierras become steeper over 3,000 feet elevation, and the combined effect of more rain on steeper slopes is less infiltration of water into our mountain sides and more runoff. Our Sierra snowpacks are also smaller and melt earlier in the spring

than they used to because of our warming air. Historically snow has stored water in our mountains in the cold season and released it gradually in the spring and summer. Our reservoirs are designed to receive water in the spring and simultaneously take in and discharge water in the summer, delivering water when it is needed most and preventing spring floods. But when rain and snow melt water fill our dams before summer, dam operators are forced to release water downstream to leave room for late spring runoff that could otherwise cause floods. Our reservoirs do not have enough capacity to contain both a global warming-induced increase in precipitation and earlier snow melt. Going forward, water available for human use from our Sierras will decrease 15% to 30%. This will occur as global warming makes summer temperatures rise. Spring discharges from our dams will revive some fisheries and river habitat and locally recharge some aquifers but will deprive us of water for domestic use and irrigation. With the storage capacity of our reservoirs reduced, the San Joaquin Valley will experience fall and winter flooding and spring and summer droughts as our as rain displaces snow in the Sierras. For more information, check out these Websites: www.livescience.com, www.nrdc.org, www.brightsurf.com, www.eurekalert.org.

What can we do locally to reverse this reduction in water supply? We can drive our cars less, turn down our thermostats, and make other choices that decrease the amount of hydrocarbons we cause to be converted into CO₂ and water vapor. To get auto makers to make more fuel efficient cars, truck and bus manufacturers to put natural gas instead of diesel engines in their vehicles, power companies to switch from fossil fuels to solar and wind energy, and local authorities to put in light rail, we have to work collectively through the likes of WILPF, the Central Valley Progressive PAC, and MoveOn. We have five congressmen from Modesto to Bakersfield who need to feel our heat on global warming.

This is the last of four articles on securing water for our future. Besides addressing global warming to restore our high Sierra snowpacks, we can thin our forests to increase their water yield and treat our waste water the way marshes would to harvest potable water. We have to take charge of our water supply and pay for it up front. Finally, we need to convert our landscapes to xeriscape to free up water for domestic use. If you'd like more information on these topics, please contact this WILPFer, Philip Erro, at philipperro@sbcglobal.net.

Quote of the Month:

"I believe that there is a plan and a purpose for each person's life and that there are forces working in the universe to bring about good and to create a community of love and brotherhood. Those who can attune themselves to these forces—to God's purpose—can become special instruments of his will."

—Coretta Scott King

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THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.



IRAQ WAR DEBATE

You might not expect a West Point graduate, Vietnam vet and career soldier to come out with a book titled "The New American Militarism: How Americans are Addicted to War". However, that is what Andrew Bacevich, who directs the program in International Relations at Boston University, has done.

A conservative, Bacevich argues that Americans have fallen prey to a philosophy that all international problems are seen as military problems, and the likelihood for finding a solution except through military means is discounted. The result is war as a permanent condition, a point supported by consideration of the relative weight given to the Pentagon and the State Department. During the military buildup of the '80s the claim of proponents was "peace through strength"—having a big enough military meant you wouldn't have to use it. But having such a large and sophisticated military has proved a tough temptation for politicians to resist using.

PREVENTIVE WAR

Bacevich has carefully traced the role of leading religious conservatives in promoting a "crusade theory of warfare" to replace the more long-standing and cautious doctrine of just war. "A crusade theory of warfare provides the mindset and justification for offensive military action, for so-called preventive wars like the current war in Iraq. The just war ethical tradition mandates the use of force for defensive, not offensive, purposes. How did this change happen? Beginning in the '70s a growing number of politically active religious conservatives told Americans that communism was everywhere on the march and America's subjugation was imminent, accompanied by an urge to action: "Christian American's true destiny is to wield military power in the death struggle with godless communism".

A third century teacher, Mani, taught a division of the world starkly between the forces of good and forces of evil, and urged the former to stamp out the latter. Early Christians regarded this belief "as heretical because it blinded people to their own capacity for evil and encouraged gross self-deception". After the Soviet Union imploded, and 9/11 stunned Americans, these same politically active religious conservatives were quick to substitute Islam for communism. Southern Baptist President Jack Graham declared, "Satan is the ultimate terrorist" and "this is a war between Christians and the forces of evil, by whatever name they choose to use". A crusade theory of warfare marched on, giving sanction to a new stratagem, "preventive war".

JUST WAR

The ethical tradition of just war lays down rigorous tests if a war, always understood as a tragic option and always to be a last resort, can be considered just and justifiable. Such conditions include... "just cause" (usually self-defense); public declaration of war by a lawful authority; no ulterior motives (self-aggrandizement or vengeance), reasonable probability of success, and avoidance of harm to non-combatants...

"In moving from a just war ethic to a crusade theory of warfare Americans have lost their way, and some Christian leaders have betrayed their faith. Christian faith ought always to be a check on war's excesses and a challenge to an over reliance on the military, not a cheerleader in war's camp." (Source: Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Fri., Dec.9, 2005 by Anthony B. Robinson, pastor of the United Church of Christ) -- **This report reflects personal opinion but is consistent with the agenda of the FCNV. It is based upon mail from peace and justice centers around California, and at times upon other print sources.**



A DOZEN ROSES FOR PEACE

A large portion of the money we raise goes towards the upkeep and running of the Center. Recently, as we grappled with the probability of a rent increase, one of our honorary members said, "Let's find twelve people willing to sponsor one month's rent." And so, our program "A Dozen Roses for Peace" was born!

We are looking for twelve people who are able and willing to be one of our "Peace Roses" by donating \$700 for one month's rent. Or, if the amount is too large for one person, it can be shared by a couple of friends. Yet another way would be for a church, or an organization, to have its congregation or membership donate a month's rent.

The March Rose is our very own **Gerry Bill**, the Center's Director, and we have promises of two others. People can also choose which month they would like to be a Rose!

A plaque is being designed that will hang in the Center showing the names of those donating. They will also be honored at our Anniversary in June – and in any other way we can think of!

For more information contact Angela at 435-6383 or
angela.price41@comcast.net

Fresno Center for Nonviolence

Second Wednesday Video Series:



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March 8 & 9: Children in the Crossfire

Children in the Crossfire examines the plight of the youngest victims of Northern Ireland's never-ending religious strife. When offered a chance to spend the summer abroad, four kids from Northern Ireland are faced with an overwhelming challenge. Joining a group of children from both sides, their inbred prejudices quickly fade in a summer of fun. But a greater challenge awaits them when they return home from America. This film will serve as a point of discussion for children affected by war in Iraq. 96 minutes. Discussion to be led by activist Vincent Lavery, featured actor and advisor to the film.

MARCH 8: FCNV. 12 noon and 7:30 pm.

MARCH 9: Special Showing at the CyberSub Café – 7:30 pm only. Discussion to be led by Vincent Lavery. 5042 N. West Avenue (Shaw & West) / 261-1711

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Sat. March 4th 7:00 Sun. March 5th 2:30

Sat. March 11th 2:30 & 7:00

PG Rating

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www.roguefestival.com

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March 16, 2006

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PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE Calendar of Events

March 2 -11

The Rogue Festival. See page 4 for details.

Thursday, March 2 (also on Monday, March 20) • 6 PM

California Prison Moratorium Project will meet at the Fresno Center for Non Violence, 1584 N Van Ness. Everyone is invited to attend this meeting. The discussion “Uncaging the Valley” mobilizing a valley wide coalition an exclusive valley focused project.

Potluck is encouraged but not required. Upcoming events include movies - the group is booking the documentary “After Innocence” and bringing the producer and writer to Fresno, speakers from the anti prison movement are being scheduled.

Call Deb Reyes at 559-916-4370 for more info.

Thursday, March 2 • 5 - 8 PM

The Fresno Arts Council (FAC) sponsors ArtHop, which was founded more than 10 years ago by local artists. On the first Thursday of each month, artists and art galleries open their exhibition studios to the public to view art from 5 PM to 8 PM. A recent exhibition reception held at the TW Patterson Building brought more than 1,000 people to downtown Fresno—people who maybe wouldn’t ordinarily visit Fulton Mall. It gave them a chance to see some of the contemporary sculpture and artwork installed on the Fulton Mall. To be added to our ArtHop mailing and e-mail list, please e-mail mfranco@fresnoarts.org or call (559) 237-9734.

Friday, March 3 • 6:30-8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker Janet Nichols Lynch, author of *Peace is a Four-Letter Word*.

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.

Friday, March 3 • 7 PM

Join Bryan and Edie Jessup for an evening sharing their experiences walking for a month on the historic pilgrimage route of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela across northern Spain.

First Friday at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook, Fresno (between Ashlan and Dakota).

Saturday, March 4 • 7 PM

Women’s Herstory Month : *A Single Woman*. A play based on the life, speeches, letters, and interviews of Jeanette Rankin, lifelong pacifist and the first woman elected to the US Congress (even before national women’s suffrage). CSUF’s Alice Peters Auditorium - Craig School of Business. Tickets available at The Movies - 1435 N Van Ness Ave or Carol Bequette 229-9661 or cbequette@aol.com or at the door \$8 General/\$5 Students

Sunday, March 5 • 3-5 PM

The newly formed Interfaith Social Justice Collaborative will sponsor a Social Justice Fair at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N. Millbrook. The theme will be “Working Together in a World at Risk.” Six panelists representing different local houses of worship will discuss ways in which their congregations have addressed social justice issues such as religious tolerance, economic justice, family and children’s needs, open and affirming outreach, and the Iraq war. For more information see page 23 or contact Connie Young: (559) 225-2547.

March 6-8

Campus Peace and Civil Liberties is brining the PETA “Animal Liberation Project” to CSUE, March 6, 7, and 8 from 11 AM to 2 PM in the free speech area. An open debate on animal liberation with PETA spokesperson Sangeeta Kumar will occur at 7:45 PM on Tuesday, March 7 in USU 312-314. All events are free and open to the public.

Wednesday, March 8 • All Day

International Women’s Day. For more information see<<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/womday97.htm>> <<http://www.indybay.org/womyn/>><<http://www.womensaynotowar.org/>>

Wednesday, March 8 • Noon Forum; 1:30 PM Training

Building Healthy Environments. A healthy lunch will be served! Forum Focus: Building Healthy Environments. The role of the public health professional in city & county land use decisions for better nutrition, food access, & physical activity w/ Lisa Feldstein of the Public Health Law Program, Nutrition & Land Use Education Project. Trinity Lutheran Church, 3973 N. Cedar, Fresno, between Ashlan and Dakota.

Wednesday, March 8 • 12 Noon & 7:30 PM

“Children in the Crossfire” Second Wednesday of each month, Video Program at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence,1584 N Van Ness, Fresno (across from Fresno City College, SE Corner Van Ness & McKinley , entrance on Van Ness).

Thursday, March 9 • 5-6 PM

The West Fresno Democratic Club is sponsoring an ongoing Voter Registration Volunteer Training on the second Thursday on each month. The sessions will be given by Fresno County Elections Office staffers. Please call for location information: (559) 264-0097 or (559) 225-6827. The duration of this Voter Registration Drive: thorough July 2006. The “Get Out the Vote” drive will be mid-July 2006 to mid-November 2006.

Thursday, March 9 • 7:30 PM

The Fresno Folklore Society presents Perfect Strangers: five of the best playing bluegrass: banjo, bass, fiddle, guitar, & mandolin, \$20 at the Fresno Art Museum. For more information about FFS Concerts: <www.fresnofolklore.org> or (559) 431-3653.

Friday, March 10 • 5 PM and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks, in conjunction with the Rogue Performance Festival, presents *Ballets Russes* at the Tower Theatre. Unearthing a treasure trove of archival footage, filmmakers Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine have fashioned a dazzlingly entrancing ode to the revolutionary twentieth-century dance troupes known as the Ballets Russes. 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: \$10; \$8, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to <www.fresnofilmworks.org>

Friday, March 10 • 6:30-8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents Speaker: Bryan Jessup, minister at Universalist Unitarian Church of Fresno. Topic: Liberation Theology

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

Saturday, March 11 • 8 AM-Noon

Plant A Row for the Hungry’s 6th annual Citrus Saturdays conclude with a donation day at the Garden of the Sun, 1944 North Winery (just south of the Discovery Center). Donated oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, and lemons will be distributed through the Community Food Bank’s network of area food pantries.

Saturday, March 11 • 3:30 - 5 PM

Central Valley Progressive PAC finalizes the logistics of the Candidates Forum which will be held at UU Church on Saturday, April 8th. Letters have been sent out to candidates. The CVPPAC will discuss strategies for the upcoming elections as well. Articles about issues which are important to the Central Valley and which are to be placed on the www.CVPPAC.org website have been promised. Bring a friend. Meetings are held at the Center of NonViolence, 1584 N. Van Ness at McKinley.

Saturday, March 11 • 6 PM-Midnight

Mardi Gras style fundraiser to help the victims of the tragic hurricanes of 2005 at the Army National Guard Armory, 701 E Yosemite, Madera. More information about this event is available from the Madera NAACP chapter: (559) 232-8659 or gloryb2Hisname@aol.com.

Saturday, March 11 • 7 PM

Club Latinoamericano del Valle Central is launching the new season of their International Cine Forum with the great Mexican film: The Crime of Father Amaro. The Fresno Art Museum continues to be a partner in the project and the films and discussions will be presented in the Bonner Auditorium. For more information, see: <http://www.clublatoamericano.org/>

Wednesday, March 15

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

Thursday, March 16 • 6:30-9:30 PM

Progressive Thursday presents *Invisible Ballots*. This documentary presents an in-depth expose of all-electronic computerized voting. See page 17 for details.

Saturday, March 18 • 11 AM

Rally in the Valley to end the war in Iraq. March 18 is the three-year anniversary of US shock and awe, beginning the war in Iraq. Lisa Solomon, President of Peace Fresno, says, “We will mark this sad day with a huge anti-war event. Everyone who is against the war needs to come out on Saturday, March 18, to say “SUPPORT OUR TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME NOW!” We will begin at 11 AM with a 45-minute street demonstration at the corner of Cedar and Shaw, Fresno. The organizers will provide signs. “Rally in the Valley” begins at noon and ends at 4 PM. There will be other speakers and live music. It will be an opportunity to meet with peace, social justice, and environmental activists and organizers from Valley and mountain communities. For more information, go to <www.peacefresno.org>.

Saturday, March 18 • 11 AM

Mass March & Rally to Stop The War on Iraq: Civic Center, at Grove and Larkin, San Francisco (near Civic Center BART). For more information, see <<http://www.actionsf.org/>>.

Sunday, March 19

The Fresno Folklore Society presents Hans York at a house concert, 6661 N Forkner, \$10. For more information about FFS Concerts: <www.fresnofolklore.org> or (559) 431-3653.

Tuesday, March 21 • 12:30-2:30 PM

Medicare Part D Advocacy Training & “Shout Out.” See page 23 for details.

Thursday, March 23 • 7 PM

FresCAMP (Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) meets in Madera. E-mail frescamp@sbcglobal.net or call (559) 277-6134 for location or car pool information. We welcome new members.

Thursday, March 23 • 7-9 PM

Thirsty for Fresh Drinking Water, Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 North Millbrook (south of Ashlan). Despite the agricultural wealth of our Central Valley, many small, rural communities such as Ducor, Alpaugh, Tonyville, do not benefit from the vast water system feeding nearby farms. While these areas often rely on contaminated ground water as the sole source of drinking water in their homes, agribusinesses just down the road receive clear river water at highly subsidized rates. See page 23 for details.

Friday, March 24 • 7 PM

Central California Alliance is inviting the community to hear Lambda Letter Project’s Boyce Hinman at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook. In addition, CCA will present the first \$1000 Kathryn Stephens Memorial Scholarship to some deserving student for the purpose of supporting their college expenses. Mr. Hinman is the founder and chief lobbyist for the Lambda Letters Project and has been with it

since its founding in 1988. He has been in civil rights advocacy since the early 1970s and served briefly, on the board for the Society for Individual Rights in San Francisco. In the 1970s, he served as an openly gay man on the board of directors of the Northern California Conference of the United Church of Christ. Boyce will speak on bills and issues of importance to the following groups: GLBT, people with HIV/Aids, people of color, and women, and will also focus on the anti-gay marriage bills pending in the state and nationally.

Friday, March 24 • 7:30 PM

The Fresno Folklore Society presents three outstanding singer-songwriters at the Bonner stage: Steve Seskin, Brian Joseph, and Kenny Edwards. \$15 advance; \$20 at the door. We heard them perform solo at the 2005 Kate Wolf festival but they agreed to come and share the Bonner stage. Seskin will conduct a songwriting class the following day. \$20 at the Fresno Art Museum. For more information about FFS Concerts: <www.fresnofolklore.org> or (559) 431-3653

Saturday, March 25 • 6 PM Reception, 7 PM Dinner, 8 PM Speaker

The Reverend Al Sharpton will be the keynote speaker at the first annual Scales of Justice Awards Banquet at the Radisson Hotel (Ventura & M in Fresno). Theme: Taking “Justice for All” to another level. Sponsored by the National Action Network and the West Fresno

Democratic Club. For more information call (559) 264-009. See page 3 for more details.

Sunday, March 26 • 5 PM

El Porvenir—Sustainable Development in Nicaragua. Elisabeth Merritt, the Director of US Operations will be speaking in the College Community Congregational Church Social Hall. She will be speaking about El Povenir’s sustainable development work in Nicaragua. There will also be pictures and comments from Fresno work brigade volunteers. Join us for refreshments and a chance to find out about this nonprofit organization that is making it possible for poor people in Nicaragua to improve their health, environment, and standard of living through sustainable self-help community development in potable water, sanitation, health education, and reforestation. If you have any questions or need any information, please call (559) 229-2191

Monday, March 27 • 7 PM

Elizabeth Merritt, the Director of US Operations for El Porvenir will speak at the Unitarian Universalist Church. El Porvenir supports self-help, community-initiated water, sanitation and reforestation projects. El Porvenir means “the future.” Clean water means a healthier future for Nicaraguan children. El Porvenir sponsors “responsible tourism.” Travel with us and contribute in a substantial and positive way to the development of Nicaragua. For more information see <<http://www.elporvenir.org/>> or contact Ingrid

Carmean at (559) 225-8491.

Thursday, March 30

Air America host Al Franken will be in Fresno. Details to be announced soon.

Friday, March 31 • 7 PM

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. will be appearing at Modesto JC East Campus Gym. The college is located at 436 College Ave, Modesto. Tickets are \$10 general, \$8 students and seniors, and \$100 VIP seating (includes private reception). His appearance is in conjunction with Earth Day activities. Phone (209) 575-6866 for VIP reservations.

Saturday, April 1 • 2 PM

IN MEMORY OF HEINZ KUSEL
To honor the life and work of the artist, and much-appreciated teacher of artists, the College of Arts and Humanities of CSUF will host an afternoon event and reception from 2-5 p.m.

A DVD chronicling Kusel’s career of creativity will be shown at 2:00 and 3:30 p.m.. at the Art Bldg. Auditorium (Conley 101). There will also be an exhibit of his work at the President’s Gallery in the Thomas Administration Bldg.

The event is co-sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, whose mission was close to the heart of Heinz Kusel.

Job Posting

The Coalition for Clean Air (CCA) seeks a candidate for a newly created position operating from the CCA San Joaquin Valley office (to be located in Fresno). This is a new, evolving, and dynamic position dedicated to expanding the network of environmental advocacy in the region through faith-based outreach, while establishing a permanent and effective CCA presence in the San Joaquin Valley. For a more detailed job description or to apply, please see our Web site <www.coalitionforcleanair.org> or contact Sarah Sharpe at sarah@coalitionforcleanair.org .

Help Wanted: Adopt a High School

The Central Valley Counter-Recruitment Coalition (CVCRC) currently has the following positions available:

Job title: High School Campus Representative—select high school of your choice

Job description: Serve as a liaison between your high school and the CVCRC. Make contact with the vice principal, career center director, activities director, school newspaper editor, PTSO/PTA president, and so on, to explore ways to disseminate CVCRC’s message on campus. Help schedule monthly CVCRC lunchtime campus visits by yourself and/or other CVCRC volunteers. Share ideas and inspiration with other high school reps.

Qualifications: Interest in reducing the military’s presence and influence on your high school campus. Basic understanding of methods for countering military recruitment (literature and training available).

Time commitment:

- 1. 1-2 hours/month—coordination, contacting campus personnel and CVCRC volunteers
- 2. 1-2 hours/month—attending CVCRC meeting, usually on Saturday
- 3. 1 1/2 hours/month—campus lunchtime visit (optional)
- 4. ½ hour (one time only)—training and school district approval required if you want to make campus visits

Compensation: The satisfaction of speaking out against the militarization of our youth, providing information about the alternatives to the military, and possibly saving the life of a high school student.

For more information: Connie Young, Edison High School Campus Rep. at Phone: 225-2547 or email: cyoungrn@psualum.com

Quick Facts on Bottled Water Versus Cleaning Up the Drinking Water Supply

Members of the United Nations estimate that if the world took half of what it currently spends on bottled water (\$100 billion annually) and invested it in water infrastructure and treatment, everyone in the world could have access to clean drinking water.

But bottled water is cleaner, right? Actually, the US EPA sets more stringent quality standards for tap water than the FDA does for bottled beverages, and roughly 40% of bottled water is actually just tap water.

1.5 billion barrels of oil are consumed each year to produce the plastic for water bottles, enough to fuel 100,000 cars. According to the Container Recycling Institute, only 14 percent of plastic water bottles are recycled.

A water bottle in a landfill or lying around as litter will take over 1,000 years to biodegrade. <<http://www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/Bottled020606.cfm>>

Poetry Corner

Once a week I meet with the residents of a group home for teen girls coming out of juvenile hall. Although I always go with a plan, what happens during our sessions is typically a “happening” rather than an activity—I try to ride the surf of their tumultuous emotional lives. At a recent meeting, one girl spontaneously asked if she could read a poem. In a flash, two others ran to their rooms to get their poems.

I had brought a copy of the new *Alliance* that day, and I asked if they’d like to have their work in the paper. They said they’d copy out their poems for me the next week. Here are poems from two of the girls. The third had gone AWOL (a frequent occurrence at homes like this) before I returned.

**Get Real
by Star**

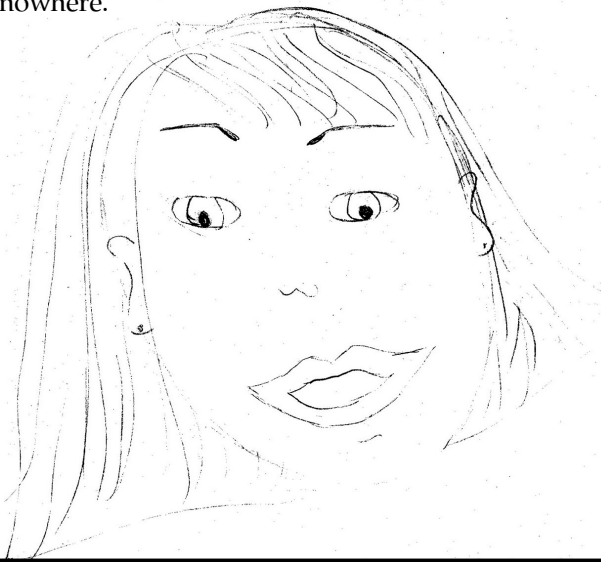
You sit lost, confused
blind to know what is in front of you.
I try to lend you my eye to help you see
lend you my hands to guide your way
but still you refuse my help ‘n’ remain the same.
When will you realize what he is doing to you ‘n’
open up your eyes ‘n’
get real
to the game.

**The Constant State of Moving Nowhere
by Raquel Lynn**

Here I am, here we are as it will go on forever.
Noise, always noise. Candles burn, lights are low.
I haven’t a place to go,
life in its constant state of moving nowhere.

The music is nice, floats in the air.
Sounds of waves crashing everywhere.
Percussive submission, mind condition.
Writing with a left hand, unknowing and taking the chance.
Why not fly? Why not try?

The constant game I play to stay high,
but all is just a state of mind.
All is reality of your choice.
Constant evolution, constant adaptation
the constant state of moving nowhere.





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UFW Criticisms No Surprise in Central Valley

By Eduardo Stanley
Translated by Elena Shore, New America Media

EDITOR'S NOTE: A recent series of *Los Angeles Times* articles (reprinted in the *Fresno Bee*), which is critical of the United Farmworkers Union and its leadership, is sparking a reexamination of the revered union's historical inheritance. Eduardo Stanley (nuestroforo@kfcf.org) is host of the bilingual *Nuestro Foro*, a weekly radio program on KFCF in Fresno, California.

FRESNO, Calif.—Just four decades ago, California farm workers didn't have bathrooms, drinkable water, medical insurance, a work schedule, or retirement benefits. The list of abuses they endured could fill several pages.

In the mid-1960s, a strike by Filipino agricultural workers demanding better salaries set off a movement led by Cesar Chavez (1927–1993) that would achieve significant improvements in work conditions. This marked the birth of the first union of agricultural workers, the UFW (United Farm Workers).

A series of articles by Miriam Pawel, which recently ran in the *Los Angeles Times*, presents harsh criticisms of the union and its founder. According to Pawel, the UFW has stopped organizing farm workers in order to dedicate itself to real estate and other revenue-generating services. The Chavez family, she writes, controls all positions in the organization and uses its influence for political campaigns, among other things.

"The articles blame the UFW for the dire situation farm workers find themselves in today, but it seems to ignore those who are truly responsible—the growers," says David Bacon, a former UFW activist, now a journalist specializing in unions. "As far as owning other businesses, that's common among many unions in the United States."

Bacon adds that to avoid responsibility, growers have used middlemen—contractors who recruit workers and are responsible for their productivity—this releasing the growers of all legal, housing, transportation, and insurance responsibilities. This makes it harder to solve problems arising in the fields, where primitive housing and working conditions—like the lack of bathrooms or basic services—persist.

Pawel says she conceived the series while reporting on farming conditions in the San Diego area. "Then I asked myself, 'Where is the UFW?'" She adds that it took her a year to work on the articles.

Pawel denies having any antiunion motives. She reports that the farm workers are no better off than they were 30 years ago—in 2004 Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed a UFW-backed proposal to increase minimum wage to \$6.75

Continued from page 13

The tension between these two sectors (NGOs and grassroots groups) was most clearly illustrated in workshops and events about the situation in Haiti. Grassroots activists from Haiti, who support exiled president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, were surprised and disillusioned to see Camille Chalmers from the Social Hemispheric Council onstage with Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, during his principal speech to WSF participants. The presence of Chalmers at the table with Chavez was viewed as giving legitimacy to those who participated in the US-engineered coup that exiled Aristide. Grassroots activists wanted to know why they were not invited to have a representative at the table, but those that legitimize the coup did.

US and Canadian Haitian solidarity activists, grassroots activists from Haiti, and other WSF participants are also upset that the Brazilian government, whose president is a leftist, is sending troops to Haiti (through the UN) to maintain order. A demonstration was held at the Brazilian embassy to protest that country's intervention in Haiti's internal affairs.

But, representatives at the WSF from NGOs working within Haiti see things differently. According to a report from one workshop, anti-Aristide participants disrupted a question-and-answer period by refusing to give up the microphone as they attacked the Aristide government as being illegitimate. Some of these NGOs receive funding from conservative US interests (with ties to the CIA) and are seen as undermining legitimate solidarity efforts both in Haiti and at the WSF. There is a clear conflict of interest between the NGO participants who attempt to foster good relations with the (illegitimate) Haitian government and those from grassroots organizations who oppose the coup and are struggling to support democracy and build a more just society.



Cesar Chavez breaking his last fast, Delano, 1988.
Photo by Eduardo Stanley. (c) Copyright, 2006

per hour—and that the UFW is trying to maintain an image that doesn't correspond with reality.

"The question is whether or not to organize the farm workers," Pawel says. She reports that in 2002 the UFW removed all references to farm workers from its constitution in order to shift its focus to political work "to benefit Latinos," an ambiguous and unusual definition for a union. While the UFW's political presence increased, its membership declined dramatically.

"In the last few years, various laws protecting farm workers were approved in California, thanks to the UFW," says union secretary Tanis Ybarra. "The *Times* doesn't make it clear that the constitution was changed in order to include those who work in agriculture-related fields, like packers."

Ybarra says the article is biased and claims the editorial line of the *Los Angeles Times* has become more conservative after the paper was bought by The Tribune in 2000.

But criticisms of the farm workers' union are nothing new. "Before, you'd find UFW activists everywhere, but not anymore," says Pablo Espinoza, a former union member and a well-known advocate of farm workers' rights in the Central Valley. He adds that the mid-1960s, when the union began, was a unique moment in history, when hundreds of volunteer organizers led the farm worker cause with energy and conviction.

Then the movements for civil rights, peace, and women's rights coincided, followed by the Chicano movement. Young people were very politically active. Their collective energy put a unique stamp on that era. Later, however, conservatives regained lost ground, eventually neutralizing left activism on campuses.

In the early 1970s Cesar Chavez began a series of "purges" to marginalize members deemed to be Communists and those who might question the union leadership. The farm workers' movement became a cult of personality. The image of the Virgin of Guadalupe was carried at the forefront of its marches, symbolically pushing the union's social convictions to second place.

The organizers of the WSF provided some statistical information from last year's forum in Porto Alegre to help us better understand who participates in the forum and why. They found that 49.8% of the people at the WSF said the reason they attended was for the exchange of experience among the participants; 47.9% attended because they wanted to contribute toward a fairer society; 42.4% came for the democratic debate of ideas; 20.6% came to contribute toward the formulation of alternative proposals to the neoliberal model.

A large percentage of participants (88.1%) agreed that organized civil society should take part in formulating governmental policies (but 3.4% of participants disagreed and a surprising 8.5% were indifferent). And 87.4% of participants believe that organized civil society should criticize and pressure government to change policies. But, who are the 4.2% of the participants who disagree with that statement?

It is interesting that 10.2% of the participants at the 2005 WSF in Porto Alegre disagree, when asked if they thought the process of globalization means the concentration of wealth makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. 15.4% agreed that globalization means more opportunity for all, rich and poor.

Participants were asked where they considered themselves on the political map. 60.1% thought of themselves as left, 19.8% were center-left, 4.5% were center, 0.6% center right, and 1.6% were right. 13.4% of the participants had no opinion about where they are at on the political map.

When asked about what process should be used for building "the other possible world" the WSF talks about, 90.4% said the road should include strengthening the mobilization of civil society on the global, continental, national, and local level; 72.3% said the path to building "the other

Chavez succeeded in getting intransigent growers to negotiate with the UFW. Latinos still feel a sense of pride and racial and social vindication when they remember that historic moment, which came after decades of powerlessness and humiliation. Their adoration of Chavez, therefore, is understandable. But many of his admirers quietly criticize the changes in the UFW and Chavez himself. They are careful not to do this in public, so as not to betray the union's almost religious sense of solidarity. Thus, a double view of the union exists—one public, the other private.

This is why the *Los Angeles Times* series didn't cause a commotion in the Central Valley, where the UFW was born and fought its most memorable battles for the dignity of farm workers.

"Union organizers always had a paternalistic attitude toward farm workers," says Luis Magaña, an activist from Stockton. "Let me defend you, poor little farm worker." Magaña adds that the UFW didn't allow independent organizations or local leaders to work in defense of workers. "They arrived immediately and seized control of the situation."

Paternalism is part of the political culture of farm workers. Given its social fragility and a traditional and deeply religious ideology, the agricultural working class doesn't lead radical social changes in industrialized societies. It tends to depend on leaders who are sometimes messianic and whose revolts often end in defeat, as happened in the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

A leader doesn't make history, although he's an important part of it, argued Leon Trotsky (1879–1940). The process makes the leader. The mythification of Cesar Chavez could only succeed as the result of collective complicity and the farm worker ideology that favored it.

If the 1960s were marked by excitement and solidarity, the social climate today is disadvantageous to unions. The UFW's slackening of organizing adds to the daunting realities in the fields.

"When the UFW began, the farm workers were primarily Texans and US-born Mexican Americans," says Magaña. "But in the 1990s indigenous Oaxacans, Central Americans, and even unemployed professionals from Mexico and other countries began to arrive," as well as Pakistanis and Indians. This work force is highly mobile, moving from field to field and migrating to other states, following the farming seasons. Organizing is becoming more and more challenging.

Some working conditions today are similar to those of 40 or 50 years ago. While the UFW debated over leadership and strategy, growers were quietly reclaiming the power they had lost. The state of the UFW—just like the problems faced by farm workers and the possible solutions—should be discussed without taboos or fanaticism. This can only happen if the emotions swirling around the union and its historic inheritance can be tempered.

possible world" should include the democratization of governments; 59.3% said it should include direct action; 59.2% said it should include the democratization of the multilateral organizations (the UN, WTO, World Bank, IMF); and 13.5% believe the road should include direct action with the use of force.

Villanueva, the radio journalist from Venezuela, says there is a discussion within the organizing body of the WSF to analyze the outcome of the event's discussions. One view is that it is enough to bring everyone together for five or six days of discussions. Whatever comes out of those discussions and the networking that takes place during those days is the purpose of the WSF. The alternative to this approach is to have proposals and a process that would develop a political strategy.

The WSF clearly has the ability to bring together progressives from social and political movements, intellectuals, and grassroots activists from all over the world, as an alternative to promoting globalization and the neoliberal agenda. The question is, Can the WSF shift gears and move the left to develop a unified strategy and tactics that will counter this system, which has created so much inequality, poverty, and war? Perhaps the better question is, Does the WSF even want to move beyond providing an opportunity for people to come together to discuss issues and network?

If the WSF continues to bring 100,000 people together each year and give them hope and inspiration, that is a good thing. It is unknowable whether attempting to develop a strategy to counter US imperialism would improve the WSF or if the effort would be divisive and lead to the organization's ruin. What we do know is that the next WSF will be held in January 2007 in Kenya. There is also talk of having a regional WSF in the United States.

For more information about the World Social Forum, see www.forumsocialmundial.org.br.

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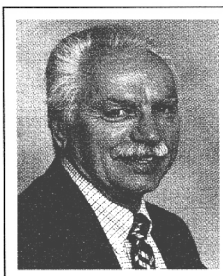


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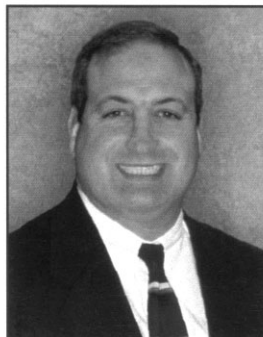
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“Justice Corner” in West Fresno

The local chapter of the National Action Network with support from Peace Fresno is establishing a “Justice Corner” at the intersection of C and Fresno Streets. “This will be the bookend to the Peace Corner at Blackstone and Shaw Avenue’s” says Aline Reed, a member of the local NAN group. The Peace Corner project has been a monthly presence by Peace Fresno members since the advent of war in 2001.

Supporters of peace and social justice issues are invited to join with NAN and Peace Fresno members on the third Friday of every month from 4:30 to 6:30 PM.

For more information contact the Rev. Floyd Harris Jr., California state president of the National Action Network: (559) 264 -0097; <www.nancal.org>; Xyfloyd@aol.com.

Are Animals Today’s Slaves?

By Whitney Thompson, Campus Peace and Civil Liberties
PETA is bringing its Animal Liberation Project to Fresno State: March 6, 7, and 8, from 11 AM to 2 PM in the free speech area. An open debate on animal liberation with PETA spokesperson Sangeeta Kumar will occur at 7:45 PM on Tuesday, March 7, in USU 312-314. All events are free and open to the public.

Why should you care?
Humans have short memories when it comes to oppression. Just a few decades ago, “coloreds” lived under apartheid in America; going back just a few more decades, women could not become educated and serve in professions, inherit property, have custody of children, legally protect their own bodies from many instances of abuse, or make their own their reproductive choices. At the same time, the systematic destruction of indigenous people was accepted as a matter of racial fact. A few centuries ago only the upper class had any social, political, or economic power.

Today we like to believe that we have conquered oppression in all its forms, but there is one glaring exception that too many enlightened people refuse to acknowledge. The abusive hierarchy of humans over non-human animals is nearly identical to the forms of oppression mentioned above. A claim of superiority accompanies a system in which the “superior” dominates the “inferior.” Lacking the exalted status of the superior, the inferior may be caged, controlled, beaten, abused, experimented upon, used for sport or entertainment, derided, killed, and, in this case, even eaten. Most of all, as in all the scenarios previously mentioned, the oppressor will not tolerate hearing the truth—that she or he is no better and no worse than the oppressed.

Of course, human and non-human animals are very different, just as all animals are from each other. To paraphrase the philosopher Steve Best, non-human animals do not write sonatas, they do not build spaceships, they do not travel to exotic places, they do not think and act in an ethical manner like human beings. But this misses the point: the point, for Best, is how much human and non-human animals are alike. Both clearly exhibit an interest in maintaining their lives and their freedom; both use forms of speech; both form complicated social bonds and love and protect their offspring; and, most of all, both are capable of experiencing pleasure and pain. To deny life and liberty and to intentionally inflict pain and death on animals—human or non-human—is wrong. Creating a system of such behavior is oppression. So the question is: What side are you on?

Medicare Part D Advocacy Training & “Shout Out”

Help organize people in your community to fight back against this Medicare Part D disaster. Join with senior and disability groups in urging Congress and the State legislature to reconsider and replace Medicare Part D with a real prescription drug benefit. Abolish the late enrollment penalty. Eliminate the donut hole of non-coverage. Reduce co-payments and deductibles. Increase consumer counseling and support for appeals. Protect consumers against drug plan marketing abuses. Learn what you can do to protect yourself and others from harm by fighting for legislation and funding that protects Medicare beneficiaries.

The Fresno and Central Valley Workshop will be held on Tuesday, March 21 from 12:30 - 2:30 PM at the Senior Resource Center, 2025 East Dakota., Fresno. Workshop is free, but advance registration is required. Each registered participant will receive a Medicare Part D Advocate Toolkit. To register, or for more information, contact Gene Roza at (559) 905-3521 or C21generoza@aol.com. Workshop sponsored by the California Alliance of Retired Americans (CARA). Co-sponsors include Senior Action Network, Gray Pan-

thers, Older Women’s League, Congress of California Seniors, and Health Access California.

Forum on Local Water Issues

There will be a local forum on water issues Thursday, March 23 from 7-9 PM. Thirsty for Fresh Drinking Water, Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 North Millbrook (south of Ashlan). Despite the agricultural wealth of our Central Valley, many small, rural communities such as Ducor, Alpaugh, Tonyville, do not benefit from the vast water system feeding nearby farms. While these areas often rely on contaminated ground water as the sole source of drinking water in their homes, agribusinesses just down the road receive clear river water at highly subsidized rates. Meanwhile people in these small towns have had to resort to bottled water for home and school use while contaminated wells are shut down and an inadequate water delivery system brings muddy water to the taps. But some solutions are being found. Come hear Paola Ramos, Coordinator of Economic Justice Coalition for Water, based in Oakland, and Ruth Martinez of Comité Si Se Puede de Ducor. The water in Ducor was so polluted that residents had to use bottled water even while they continued to pay their water bills. The water was muddy and smelled bad, with a high sulfur content. Come find out how this was changed and how it is changing in Alpaugh, Orosi, and throughout our valley. Tulare and Kern counties have the highest incidence of water pollution in the Valley. How are we impacted by this situation, and what can we do about it? This is the third in a series on water. Sponsored by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. Spanish translation will be available. There is no charge. Materials and resource information will be available. For more information call Lydia, 435-7360; Ellie, 229-9807; or Bette, 439-1361.

The Green Party

Progressive Thursday presents *Invisible Ballots*. This documentary presents an in-depth expose of all-electronic computerized voting. Underneath the radar of public scrutiny, election officials and voting machine manufacturers are putting into service tens of thousands of touch screen voting machines that cannot be relied upon for accuracy or security from tampering. Elections already using these machines are often plagued by “glitches” and “technical problems” that only technicians working for the manufacturers can solve. Voting is swiftly coming under the control of private corporations using secret software with little or no independent oversight. These companies and the people who run them are rife with corruption and insider alliances. Mysterious election upsets are increasing, and verified recounts are impossible. If voting becomes privatized, there may be no way to get it back. 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 PM, video begins at 7:00 PM. 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 go to <www.FresnoGreens.org> or contact Larry Mullen at (559) 227-0293.

The Interfaith Social Justice Collaborative

The newly formed Interfaith Social Justice Collaborative will sponsor a Social Justice Fair at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N. Millbrook. The theme will be “Working Together in a World at Risk” which will be held on Sunday March 5 from 3 - 5 PM. Six panelists representing different local houses of worship will discuss ways in which their congregations have addressed social justice issues such as religious tolerance, economic justice, family and children’s needs, open and affirming outreach, and the Iraq war. The panelists include Kamal Abu-Shamsieh, Islamic Cultural Center; Anidelle Flint, Unitarian Universalist Church; Alan Gilmore, Wesley Methodist Church; Steve Ratzlaff, Mennonite Community Church; Tanvir Singh, Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Fresno; and Mike Smith, College Community Congregational Church. Representatives from numerous other houses of worship and interfaith organizations will be available to provide information about their social justice work. Join the interfaith community, be inspired by others who are putting their faith into action, and find new ways to work together in a world at risk! Contact Connie Young: (559) 225-2547.

California Central Valley Journey for Justice

By Jason Flores and John Crockford
The Journey for Justice, planned for April 2006, will go through cities and towns of the California Central Valley

from Bakersfield to Sacramento. The journey will consist of forming a chain of communities and exchanging information and demands with one another in order to share strength and support to understand and find solutions together. The intent of the journey is to bring together a united people in a movement for economic, social, and political justice, highlighting the need for a more fair and humanitarian criminal justice system and healthcare as it pertains to everyone’s right to life. In California, as across the nation, the health care system is in crisis, and those most affected are the poor and working class, therefore we must band together to support one another in the struggle and road to a better standard of living. The Central Valley ranks as one of the highest across the U.S. in terms of poverty, unemployment, and poor health care, which emphasizes that the social conditions in the area need to be addressed. We intend to bring together public employees, healthcare workers, farm workers, religious leaders, labor and the urban and rural poor in a unified movement for justice and economic human rights for all in California. The Journey for Justice will consist of a link through various communities in the Central Valley, with activities taking place at the tentative following cities and dates:

Bakersfield/Delano	Wednesday, April 12
Visalia/Tulare	Thursday, April 13
Reedley	Friday, April 14
Fresno	Saturday, April 15
Madera	Sunday, April 16
Merced	Monday, April 17
Stockton	Tuesday, April 18
Sacramento	Wednesday, April 19

Originally inspired by the commemoration of the 1965 United Farm Workers march on Sacramento, the Journey for Justice has evolved and will demonstrate the different faces of poverty. Growing numbers of workers are falling into poverty for the first time and our intent is to give support and help find solutions.

Today’s crisis calls for unity across the artificial lines of geography, industry, occupation, color, nationality, and religious belief. This Journey for Justice will be a model for the society we are striving to create. We believe in a world with health care for all, education for all, sustenance for the poor, human rights for all, and freedom from police abuse.

The co-sponsoring organizations for this event are:
Merced Labor Party (209) 631-6461
California National Action Network (559) 318-4557
Community Homeless Alliance Ministry (408) 294-5563
California Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign/WEAP (510) 451-7379
For more information call (209) 631-6461.

Central Valley Progressive Pac to Hold Local Candidates Forum April 8th

The Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee (CVPPAC) will be holding a candidates’ forum on Saturday, April 8, 2006, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Unitarian-Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno (1/2 block south of Ashlan). This is a great opportunity to personally see and question the candidates and have time to make a difference in the June 6 primary election. Some races will likely be decided without a run-off vote in the November general election.

Candidates for the following nonpartisan races are being invited to participate:

Fresno City Council Districts 1, 3, 5 and 7
Fresno County Board of Supervisors Districts 1 and 4
Fresno County Assessor-Recorder, Auditor-Controller/Treasurer, County Clerk, District Attorney, Public Administrator/Coroner, Sheriff, and Superintendent of County Schools.

The forum is co-sponsored by the UUCF’s Social Justice Committee and is open to the general public free of charge. This forum is presented as an educational opportunity to help voters learn more about the candidates and their positions on important issues. No endorsement vote will be taken at this Forum. The candidates will be allowed a short opening statement and participate in a question-and-answer period. Child care and light refreshments will be provided. While there will be no charge to attend the forum, free-will donations will be accepted to help defray expenses. Forum details will be posted later this month at <www.cvppac.org>. A current listing of declared candidates can be found at the Fresno County Clerk’s Web site at <www.co.fresno.ca.us/2850/Post/P2006candidatelist.pdf>.

Who reads the *Community Alliance* newspaper?



Cindy Sheehan and Medea Benjamin are seen reading the *Community Alliance* newspaper in Caracas, Venezuela, during last month's World Social Forum.



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