

# A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

**FREE!**

*The Voice of the Progressive Movement since 1996*



By Mike Rhodes

The Journey for Justice is comprised of a network of people, organizations, and unions working together to build a unified movement in support of progressive issues. The 2nd Central California Valley Journey for Justice demands:

**Quality Health Care for All**, in particular for the uninsured estimated to be over 46 million Americans, 7 million in California alone.

**Stop the Insurance Companies** from setting policy as to who does and who does not receive quality health care.

**Stop Blaming the Undocumented People** for the increase of health care.

**Support the California Health Insurance Reliability Act** that would create a statewide universal health care that is publicly financed, provides coverage for all medically necessary services and controls costs by elimi-

nating insurance company overhead and using purchasing power to negotiate better prices.

**Support Proposals to Set a Standard for Health Benefits on the Job**, just like the minimum wage for pay.

**Support the Campaign for Health Healthy Kids**

This year, the Journey for Justice will be in:

- Madera on Tuesday, April 17 (tentative) from 5 - 8 PM at Camarena Health Center 344 E. 6th Street.
- Fresno on Wednesday, April 18 from 4 - 9 PM at the Fresno County Library(Sarah McCardle) 2420 Mariposa in downtown Fresno.
- Dinuba on Thursday, April 19 from 6 - 8 PM at the Dinuba Public Library 150 South L Street.
- Reedley on Friday, April 20 from 7 - 9 PM at 1362

L Street in Reedley (Next to Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church)

- Strathmore on Saturday, April 21 from 12 - 5 PM at 19646 Orange Belt Drive

The Journey for Justice will also hold events in Sacramento, Stockton, Modesto, Merced, and Bakersfield. For more information, see:

<http://www.journeyforjustice.net/>

**The Reason for the Journey**

Poverty is hidden and ignored in the Central Valley of California, as in many other parts of the country. A Congressional Research Service Report showed that Valley residents receive \$2000 less per capita in funds for services than the rest of the country. The 2005 County Health Status Profiles of California ranked five of the Valley counties at the bottom of the economic scale with the most persons below 18 years of age liv-

**Continued on page 3**

APRIL 2007

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

PO Box 5077  
Fresno, CA 93755

Change service requested.

PRST STD  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Fresno, CA  
Permit# 02103



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.

**EDITOR:**  
Mike Rhodes

**EDITORIAL BOARD:**  
Carol Bequette • Floyd Harris  
Pam Whalen • Richard Stone  
Dan Yaseen

**LAYOUT/DESIGN:**  
Kris McNew @ Hume Printing

**ADVERTISING DIRECTOR:**  
Dan Yaseen 559-251-3361

**COPY EDITOR:**  
Patty Bennett

**PROOFREADER:**  
Carol Bequette

**TO SUBSCRIBE:**  
send \$35 (regular) or \$10 (low income) to:  
**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE NEWSPAPER**  
PO BOX 5077  
Fresno, CA 93755  
  
(559) 978-4502 (voice)  
(559) 226-3962 (fax)

**E-MAIL:**  
AllianceEditor@comcast.net  
**WEB-SITE:**  
[www.fresnoalliance.com/home](http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home)

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

## Letter to the Editor

“Fresno Mayor Wants to Build Nuclear Power Plant in My Backyard” by Mike Rhodes [Community Alliance, February 2007] left me saddened. When shall we ever learn? The capability to employ nuclear energy for making light bulbs burn is way ahead of our ability to effectively control the, as of yet, unsolvable problems of disposal and or storage of the radio active byproducts and waste. We don’t know, as of yet, how to make the operation of a nuclear power plant fail-safe, contrary to the claims made by the nuclear power industry. Tragic proof of our in- ability to control the proverbial Sorcerer’s Apprentice are the concrete and steel edifices at Chernobyl and Three Mile Island. And we know that we are kept in the dark about the near accidents and/or glitches in such power plants.

Nuclear power plants are not the cure for the catastrophic consequences of the ever growing climatic changes taking place on earth, contrary to assertions made by the \$multi-billion nuclear energy industry. Its purveyors are driven by the single- minded expectation of mega-profit. Opposition to the proliferation of nuclear power plants is not lacking, but unfortunately the opposition is splintered into many groups, each working from a different premise. It’s like fighting a Sherman Tank with darts and arrows. What we need is a manifesto for the world’s anti-nuclear energy opponents to unite.

Unfortunately, the Fresno Bee is still the only daily newspaper game in town, and one can’t help but wondering if the Fresno Bee’s editorial opinion is leaning toward a Fresno nuclear power plant Re: “Fresno power plant backed” [Feb. 23.] In that story we learned about John Hutson, president and chief executive of Fresno Nuclear Energy Group (a group of prominent Fresno businessmen.) But in the Fresno Bee Story [Feb. 18] “TWO VIEWS: should Fresno build a nuclear power plant” John Hutson is cited to have “chaired the Fresno Utilities Commission.” No explanation of that ambiguity was forthcoming. And there is Dr. Patrick Moore, reportedly, a co-founder of Greenpeace, turned nuclear power advocate. I know little of Greenpeace, so I employed a computer search engine and I clicked on to “Greenpeace USA” [www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org).

## IN THIS ISSUE:

<b>Journey for Justice .....</b>	<b>Pages 1 and 3</b>
<b>West Fresno March for Justice .....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Killer Coke Campaign Comes to Fresno .....</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Anti-Militarism Fashion Show at CSUF .....</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Will Faculty at CSUF go on Strike? .....</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Pulling the Plug on Nuclear Power .....</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>The History of May Day .....</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>April 22 is Earth Day .....</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Immigrant Rights Groups Denounce ICE Raids .....</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<b>Queer Eye .....</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>Rally in the Valley - Stop the War .....</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>Fresno Homeless Win Another Round in Court .....</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>We Need an Independent Police Auditor Now! .....</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Peace and Social Justice Calendar .....</b>	<b>Pages 18 &amp; 19</b>
<b>Grassroots Profile .....</b>	<b>Page 20</b>
<b>A Tale of Mice and Mold .....</b>	<b>Page 21</b>



bulldozing the homes of, and criminalizing the existence of Jews, African Americans, or Gays. Why do we let them get away with abusing and violating the civil liberties of the homeless?

The City of Fresno had to be ordered, by a federal judge, to stop stealing homeless peoples property. The city had a policy, admitted to by city manager Andrew Souza, of taking and immediately destroying homeless peoples property. Unbelievably, it took a court order to stop that violation of homeless peoples constitutional rights that guarantees them equal protection under the law. The police are not supposed to be able to come into your home, take what they want, and destroy it. The same is true for homeless people too - just because they are poor, the police do not have a right to declare their property “trash and rubbish” and have it destroyed.

The Community Alliance has provided extensive coverage about this city’s attacks on the homeless. We continue that coverage on page 14 and have set up a link so readers will have access to all past articles. That link is at <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/homelessness.htm>

The lawsuit against the City of Fresno in the case of Pamela Kincaid et al. vs. the City of Fresno et al. has already succeeded in having a preliminary injunction issued. The rampant destruction of homeless people’s property has been halted and the city now has the op-

This information did not bear out Patrick Moore’s bitter attack on Greenpeace nor the accolades bestowed upon Moore by John Hutson, prominent Fresno business- man and a major force behind the building of a nuclear power plant in Fresno. I learned that Greenpeace seems to be concerned with the global climate changes and the catastrophic consequences thereof, with the protection of the world’s forests, with the protection of whales from extinction due to over- fishing by a couple of nations, and with many other manmade environmental dangers which challenge our survival and life as we know it. From where I am sitting, Moore’s repudiation of Greenpeace is unjustified and lacks clinical objectivity.

Mr. Hutson, whatever he is chairing and whomever he is representing as president and chief executive of the Fresno Nuclear Energy Group, is pushing for the construction of a 1,600-mega-watt nuclear power plant in Fresno, at the estimated cost of \$4 billion. It must be noted that the actual cost for the PG&E power plant at Diablo Canyon was 18 times higher than the original estimate. Cost overruns are a very profitable business practice. According to Mr. Hutson, the nuclear plant

**Continued on page 6**

## From the Editor

portunity to settle this case before it goes to trial. The City of Fresno et al. would do the taxpayers of this community a favor if they settled this case out of court. Homeless people should be compensated for the losses they suffered through this city’s barbaric policy and the settlement should serve as a reminder of the need to recognize all citizens’ human rights.

The city, by admitting that the policy in place was wrong, could save the taxpayers a significant amount of money. Coincidentally, it would be the right thing to do. If the city refuses to acknowledge their wrong doing and continues defending its failed policy, the only people to gain will be the lawyers. Do the taxpayers of this community really need to pay additional legal expenses to defend a bankrupt policy that attacked this city’s most vulnerable residents? Would the money be better spent paying for the (contracted out) city attorney’s new luxury automobile or could it be better spent providing basic services like portable toilets and trash bins for the homeless?

The Community Alliance newspaper calls upon the City of Fresno to settle this lawsuit out of court before additional resources are wasted defending an indefensible policy. Call your City Council member at (559) 621-8000 and tell them to do everything they can to settle this case before any more tax dollars are wasted defending this city’s misdirected and illegal policy which was used to attack the homeless.

United States District Judge Oliver Wanger has directed the two parties to get together this month (April 2007) and see if they can work out a settlement. The Fresno City Council will have to approve the settlement. Now is the time to contact your City Council representative and tell them to save your tax dollars and do the right thing to help the homeless in this community.

## Quote of the Month

“To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness,. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places - and there are so many - where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don’t have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”

Howard Zinn, You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times

# March for Justice

By Mike Rhodes

Over 100 marchers started their journey at “Justice Corner” and ended up at the A.M.E. church in West Fresno where a new civil and human rights organization was born. The theme of the march was to support social justice. Signs supporting Health Care for All, Stopping the War in Iraq, ending Police Brutality, and calling for an end to homelessness could be seen throughout the crowd. The diversity at the march was striking and attracted significant attention as it wound its way through poor and working class neighborhoods. Horns from passing cars honked in support.

A program of speakers, on a variety of social justice issues, addressed the growing crowd at the church. Bill Simon, president of Peace Fresno, spoke passionately about ending the war and invited everyone to the Rally in the Valley, an anti war event that happened later in the month.

Gloria Hernandez spoke about the need for an Independent Police Auditor and the need to end police brutality. Gloria is a member of the Central California Criminal Justice Committee who is working to establish an Independent Police Auditor in Fresno. You can find more about that effort at [www.cccjc.org](http://www.cccjc.org).

Several speakers told the audience about their family's incidents with the police. The father of Everardo Torres said his son was arrested by the Madera police and was in the back of a patrol car. His hands were cuffed behind his back when a Madera police officer opened the car door and shot him through the heart. The agony

of his father could be seen as he pleaded for justice. The officer who shot Everardo Torres claimed she intended to use her stun gun and mistakenly upholstered her revolver. The District Attorney did not file charges.

A week and a half before the March for Justice the Fresno Police chased a suspect and fired 80 - 100 rounds of ammunition into him. The suspect, 23 year old Joel Perales, was accused of shooting at the police. This is not the first time the Fresno Police Department (FPD) have played the role of judge, jury, and executioner. The FPD shot and killed a woman in a car lot because she was hitting cars with a hatchet. They shot and killed a young man suspected of stealing some beer from a liquor store. He was unarmed.

Following the stories from the victims of police abuse, awards were given to several people who have done outstanding work in the community. Those honored were James Tucker for his years of service to the community, the youth involved with the homeless cleanup, Simone Whalen-Rhodes, Jermelia X (Lady J), and Latecia Mayle (Lady Bombay). The Raging Grannies sang songs of peace, everyone sang the Black National Anthem,



Marchers chanted “No Justice, No Peace” as they marched through West Fresno. The March for Justice was held on March 3, 2007.

and black youth gave a presentation about African American history.

The introduction of the new social justice organization - the National Network in Action (NNIA) was made by pastor Bryan Jessup. Pastor Jessup introduced the Rev. Floyd D. Harris, Jr. who electrified the audience with his call for social/economic justice. A video of Rev. Harris's speech can be seen at <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/03/03/18372344.php>.



Rev. Floyd Harris Jr (left) was one of the primary organizers of the march.



The Front of the March. About 250 people participated in the March for Justice and the events that followed at the A.M.E. church.

## Journey for Justice cont. from page 1

ing in poverty in the state. The tragedy of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath highlighted the urgency of developing a network of active and moral people united for the just cause of fulfilling people's economic human rights.

The recent freezing temperatures in the Central Valley, which some have said is our version of hurricane Katrina, caused an estimated one billion dollars in damage to crops, especially in citrus. Particularly hard hit was Tulare County, already near the bottom for counties in California in terms of poverty. Most farmers have insurance coverage, with half of their premium paid by the government. As for workers, in the freezes of 1990 and 1998 aid was slow in coming. Many workers lost homes, cars, and had to move to look for work elsewhere. About 12,500 will be left without work in Tulare County alone, where 80% of the citrus crop was damaged. Add to this the ripple effect of laid off workers in packing sheds, truck drivers, and others affected indirectly by the freeze damage. Consumer costs for citrus products are already skyrocketing across the country.

Considering the current anti-undocumented environment, assurances from officials such as Governor Schwarzenegger that all including the undocumented will receive aid are unlikely. In past freezes help for undocumented, estimated to comprise up to 80% of the workforce in Tulare oranges, was almost nonexistent. The proposals for relief to workers made by growers and the Governor are self serving. They are concerned that workers won't be available later in the year if they leave to look for work elsewhere. Some are advocating

a Guest Worker type program in order to have workers available, but not have to support their families. Others in the community are pressing for emergency food banks and assistance, whether the workers are documented or not.

From the Disaster of Katrina and its thousands of victims we learned that as working people we have to organize and defend ourselves, because the government and those that influence it will not voluntarily do it for us. With the Second Annual Journey for Justice planned for April 13 - 21, arms from across the Central Valley are outstretched to the victims of the freeze. United we can make firm our plea for a healthy, safe, and economically secure environment for all of us, regardless of papers or not.

For more information, contact:

Ed Castro 559-250-2733  
[eduardocastrojr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eduardocastrojr@sbcglobal.net)  
Aurora Heredia 559-803-2020  
[centrobellasartes1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:centrobellasartes1@sbcglobal.net)  
Gloria Hernandez 559-268-2261 [iwapgh@aol.com](mailto:iwapgh@aol.com)  
Sandy Perry 408-691-6153 [perrysandy@aol.com](mailto:perrysandy@aol.com)  
Salvador Sandoval 209-631-6461  
[ssandovala@comcast.net](mailto:ssandovala@comcast.net)

###

The People's Tribune contributed to this article. For more information about the People's Tribune, see: <http://www.peopletribune.org/>

CALIFORNIA CENTRAL VALLEY JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE

Health is Human

Care A Right

Health For Now

Care All!!!!

Stop Insurance Discrimination

April 13-21 2007

Sacramento  
Stockton  
Modesto  
Merced  
Madera  
Fresno  
Reedley  
Dinuba  
Stathmore  
Bakersfield





# Anti-Militarism Fashion Show at CSUF

By Ashley Wells

The Spring 2007 semester began for the Feminist Activism class at California State University Fresno with brainstorming. We knew that we wanted to undertake an activist project and we also knew that we wanted to inspire positive change, but how and in what way, was undecided. Our instructor, Dr. Jan Slagter had mentioned an event that the Women of Color Resource Center had organized, The Runway Peace Project, an anti-militarism fashion show that challenged the militaristic doctrine that has been so prevalent in our society. It sounded interesting, but we still weren't sure if we were ready to commit to the event, considering all of the other issues that we were each interested in. So we went around the room and began naming issues that we're concerned with: homelessness, the environment, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, negative police presence, and health care. And as we discussed these issues we came to the unfortunate, but hugely important conclusion that all of these things could be incorporated into the Runway Peace Project, because all of these issues resulted from problems with militarism, which demonstrates the deep and complex ways that war affects all of us. When asked about what drew her to the project, Feminist Activism student Mypang Thao said, "War and militarism affects everyone and the public needs to be conscious of that", and she also felt drawn to it due to her own family's displacement as a result of war. Dr. Jan Slagter said that she supported the Runway Peace Project because it "challenges the normalization of militarism and US imperialist wars by pointing to the incorporation of military styles into contemporary fashion". With all of these things in mind, we knew that we had to address the devastating effects of militarism because it is threatening our well being on a very personal level, even though it may not seem that way on the surface, and everyone needs to be armed with the knowledge and consciousness needed to disable militarism in our communities and to end imperialistic wars under the guise of "freedom."

After we decided to organize our own Runway Peace Project at Fresno State we looked to the Women of Color

Resource Center, for guidance. The Women of Color Resource Center is important because they first organized this event in order to demonstrate resistance to militarism in our culture through fashion. The WCRC is an organization founded in 1990, whose headquarters are in the San Francisco Bay area and is committed to inspiring positive change for women of color. The WCRC provided us with the instructions and information that we needed in order to get our event planning underway. Our Runway Peace Project, anti-militarism fashion show is April 14, 2007 at 7-9pm at the Satellite Student Union at Fresno State, is free, and will also include music, art, poetry, and information tables. Our purpose is to present images, information, and fashion that provoke thought and challenge the supposed normalcy of war and its harmful affects, as well as to provide alternatives to violence and war with activism opportunities within our community.

If you have any question about the Runway Peace Project contact the members of the Fresno State Feminist Activism class at:

The Feminist Activism class and P.O.W.E.R. present

# RUNWAY PEACE PROJECT

**When: Saturday, April 14, 2007**  
**Where: Satellite Student Union**  
(Fresno State Campus on Barstow, between Cedar and Chestnut  
2485 E. San Ramon Fresno, CA 93740)  
**Time: 7PM - 9PM ALL AGES EVENT!**  
**FREE!**



There will be  
-THE Fashion Show  
- Music  
- Poetry Jam  
- Tabling  
- Speakers  
- Art  
- and more!

Project Runway is a fashion show that will feature thought provoking fashion and images that will challenge the normalized status of a military doctrine in our clothing and ultimately in our society.

For more information, please contact us at [runwaypeaceproject@yahoo.com](mailto:runwaypeaceproject@yahoo.com)

Check out our myspace at [www.myspace.com/runwaypeaceproject](http://www.myspace.com/runwaypeaceproject)

[runwaypeaceproject@yahoo.com](mailto:runwaypeaceproject@yahoo.com) or [www.myspace.com/runwaypeaceproject](http://www.myspace.com/runwaypeaceproject)

You may reach the Women of Color Resource Center at: [www.coloredgirls.org](http://www.coloredgirls.org) .

# Raise Student Learning by Focusing on the Whole Student

By Scott Key

Accountability is the current mantra in education. It has led legislators to mandate norm referenced tests to measure student learning. But, instead of using carrots, the federal and state governments are using the stick—the threat of losing funds or being taken over—to push schools to raise their test scores. Students are threatened with not being promoted to the next grade or not graduating if they don't pass one of these standardized tests. While many teachers object to teaching to the test, these pressures have led many school districts to change what happens in schools by re-aligning curriculum and instruction to the state tests and eliminating art, physical education and even recess. These efforts have raised scores in some schools but others continue to struggle.

Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) is caught up in this drive for higher test scores. Low test scores have led some parents to seek alternatives such as inter-district transfers and home schooling. FUSD may lose 1,600 students, which would adversely impact the budget and hamper efforts to raise scores. While Superintendent Michael Hanson has dealt with some budgetary and managerial issues, many in the community still believe that FUSD is a district in crisis. These feelings are magnified when low test scores are combined with high drop-out rates, high student migration rates, and conflict between board members and administrators. Everyone wants to fix things. HOW?

FUSD has implemented a number of changes that senior administrators hope will right the ship and steer towards increased test scores. The focus has been curricular and instructional. The District is moving quickly towards all elementary schools using the same materials, in the same way, on the same day to raise test scores across the district. High schools offer special CAHSEE (California High School Exit Exam) classes to help stu-

dents pass the test and graduate. While this obsession with test scores is yielding modest gains at best, it is unknown whether this approach could lead to increased grade retention and drop out rates.

Why isn't this focus on curriculum and instruction working?

One answer came on March 9, 2007. Fresno Pacific University hosted their first annual Educational Forum with Dr. James Comer, creator of the School Development Program, as the keynote speaker. Michael Hanson, five FUSD board members, and over 100 FUSD administrators listened with other educators, community workers, and politicians as Comer explored how society has and continues to undergo rapid change and how this impacts the ability of families and schools to meet the basic needs of children. One of the most basic needs is support for development. Comer called on schools to create a new kind of school environment that supports child and adolescent development.

This development involves growth in *the six developmental pathways*—physical, social-interactive, psychological-emotional, ethical, linguistic, and cognitive-intellectual. Unfortunately, according to Comer, most schools focus only on the linguistic and cognitive pathways, but it is growth along all pathways that prepares children for school and life. While some children have positive early childhood experiences that prepare them for success in school, other children come to school "underdeveloped" and need additional attention and support.

Schools are the primary agent for socializing children into the mainstream of society. Comer believes that success in school requires children to "identify and internalize the values of school" and "all children need protection and sustained support to develop and prepare for successful participation in the life of their societies." Schools need to stop seeing children as *the sum of their parts* and focus on *the whole child*. This means that schools should stop tinkering with curriculum or class size and commit to creating and managing an environment that helps all children develop fully and gain the skills needed in school and life. The foundation for this environment is intentional interaction and bonding

between school staff and students.

This message resonated with Michael Hanson who called this approach "common sense." Hanson admitted that changes have "not been pervasive or fast enough" and that "too many students are hidden." The key is interpersonal relationships and developing "natural communities." While this would look different at each school, Comer has developed a framework of nine essentials to help schools. Over the past 35 years, more than 1,000 schools have implemented this framework with 1/3 showing dramatic gains, 1/3 modest gains, and 1/3 no change. Comer attributes success to the level of buy-in and commitment from parents, students and school staff.

Hanson did not commit resources for this program because, in part, he believes that "this is not a financial issue but a heart/belief issue." Hanson believes that Comer's program can serve as a framework for "entry into the conversation" at each school site where staff development decisions are made. The challenge will be how to change beliefs. If sites want to utilize this program, they are free to do so.

The stage has been set for dramatic changes. The job of public schools is to help children become productive citizens. FUSD has children from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds who need support to develop fully. Comer's approach deemphasizes testing and offers assistance to create better learning environments. There are several schools set to close and two new elementary schools set to open in the fall. Some of these schools could serve as pilot schools, where Comer's approach is allowed to incubate.

Will FUSD take the plunge? Does Comer's approach go far enough? These questions will be answered in the May 2007 Community Alliance newspaper.

For more information on Comer's approach, check out [www.schooldevelopmentprogram.org](http://www.schooldevelopmentprogram.org)

*Scott Key is a professor in the School of Education at Fresno Pacific University. Before coming to FPU, he was at the University of Illinois and a member of the Small Schools Workshop in Chicago.*

## Please Join the Fresno County Democratic Central Committee

As we Celebrate and Honor  
**PILLARS OF THE PARTY**

Friday, April 13, 2007

The Ramada Inn University  
324 E. Shaw, Fresno

6:00 – 6:30 P.M. Reception & No Host Bar

6:30 – 7:30 Dinner and Keynote Speaker

***Congressman Jim Costa***

7:30 – 8:30 Recognition of PILLARS OF THE PARTY

\$50 per person

Mail checks to:

FCDCC

PO Box 1121

Clovis, CA 93613

Reserve your seat by calling: 834-9900

Tickets can be delivered as necessary.

Sponsorships and Tables Available

For information contact Gary Alford

(559) 906-5611

*“Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and officials, but the voters of this country.”*

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

## CSU Faculty on Verge of Largest Higher Ed Strike in US History

After nearly two years of contract negotiations, faculty at Fresno State and the twenty-two other California State University campuses voted this March to strike if labor negotiations fail to produce a contract in coming weeks.

The faculty, who number almost 24,000 statewide, are represented by the California Faculty Association.

At the center of the dispute is lagging salaries in the CSU. The California Post-Secondary Education Commission produces a report annually on faculty salaries in the CSU. This year the disparity between faculty salaries in the CSU and other comparable institutions across the country has grown to over 18%.

At this time, average salaries among tenure track faculty in the CSU are even less than those at the state's community colleges.

“This situation makes it more difficult to continue to hire and keep good faculty members,” says Diane Blair, a Communications professor at Fresno State.

The two sides are awaiting the report of a neutral fact-finder, which will analyze the negotiations. After the release of the report, expected before the end of March, there will be a legally mandated 10-day period of further negotiations before any walkouts may start. If the fact-finding report fails to produce a settlement, two-day “rolling strikes” would occur throughout the statewide system beginning in April.

Top CSU administrators, who have received 22% increases to their salaries over the last two years, claim that the faculty are being offered a very generous 25% increase over the next four years.

Faculty union leaders counter that Administration is stretching the truth. “As the saying goes, the devil is always in the details,” Blair contends, “and the reality is that faculty will only be able to count on a 14.7% increase over four years under the administration's current offer—that's a minimal cost of living increase that we would be locked into for four years.”

Blair asserts that the faculty union is asking for a 25% increase, so if administration were truly offering that much the contract would already be settled.

Since 2002, the only faculty raise was 3.5% in 2005. Union leaders argue that administrators have received



**California Faculty Association members participated in an informational picket at CSUF on January 24, 2007.**

pay raises and perks during this time, while student fees have nearly doubled and faculty have been told there isn't enough money to increase their salaries.

“Faculty believe that the money is there to support a fair salary increase. It is the administration's priorities and not the budget that's the real problem,” Blair argues. “The future of higher education in the Valley is at stake. Most faculty are willing to strike because they are invested in the future of Fresno State. They want to see the university succeed and continue to meet the needs of our students and the community.”

**What can members of the community do to support faculty and students?**

Community members can voice their support for the faculty and their efforts to secure a fair contract by writing letters, e-mailing, or calling the CSU Chancellor or California state legislators. If anyone is interested in joining Fresno State faculty on picket lines should a 2-day strike occur, they are encouraged to write the local CFA chapter at [cfaresno@yahoo.com](mailto:cfaresno@yahoo.com).

### Letter to the Editor continued from page 2

should be in Fresno because Fresno has the economic need for it, and Fresno has the water. I can't address the economic need, but Mr. Hutson is all wet concerning the availability of the water. We should be very interested in the logistics of that use of water which according to Mr. Hutson is so plentiful. Mr. Hutson seems to believe that nuclear energy is a hedge against gas prices. I think not! The world has been overloaded with nuclear power plants for a size-able number of years, but gas prices keep going up by leaps and bounds. But the probability of finding a solution for safe storage of nuclear waste or disposal is going down faster than the gas prices are going up. And with each new nuclear power plant the odds for a disastrous mishap are going up.

We know that Europe has shut down 7 nuclear plants in the first two weeks of 2007. Sacramento has shut down its nuclear plant some years ago. Austria has a nuclear plant that has never been in use because the Austrians, by popular vote, have chosen to waste their tax money over handing their children the, as of yet,

unsolved problem of nuclear waste disposal and the high possibility of a nuclear disaster a la Chernobyl or Three Mile Island. We were told that South Korea wants to shut down the nuclear energy plant.

Let us reject a Fresno nuclear power plant before we get into it too deep. We, here in Fresno County, also love our children without reservation, and we are wise enough not to assume that the opposition to nuclear energy are stupid or wild eyed, lawless fanatics, as Dr. Moore seems to categorize Greenpeace. Let that group of Fresno influential businessmen turn their faces toward other ventures of making mega-bucks. Meanwhile, we the people must be very vigilant and we must make certain that local government and/or the Fresno Nuclear Energy Group don't roll over us like a Sherman tank. I have seen quite a bit of it, having lived around here for over 50 years, and having been a local government watcher and participant in community and city council proceedings.

Isabell Lawson

# Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee

[cvppac.org](http://cvppac.org)

PO Box 5845, Fresno, CA 93755

559-435-7360



# Pulling the Plug on Nuclear Power in Sacramento

by Ed Smeloff &amp; Peter Asmus

[Editor's note: This article follows up on a series of articles the Community Alliance printed in February 2007 about the plan to build a nuclear power plant in Fresno. The information below is from the book: *Reinventing Electric Utilities: Competition, Citizen Action, and Clean Power* by Ed Smeloff & Peter Asmus, Copyright 1997, Island Press. This is the first installment in what will be a four part series. We at the Community Alliance think our readers should know why the Rancho Seco nuclear power plant in Sacramento was shut down. This chapter is reprinted with the author's permission.]

In the early dawn of the day after Christmas, 1985, something went wrong at the Rancho Seco nuclear reactor located on the outskirts of Sacramento. At 47 seconds after 4:13 a.m., alarm bells sounded in the control room, the nerve center of the gigantic nuclear power plant. At that moment, the operators had lost control of the 913 megawatt (MW) nuclear reactor that provided SMUD with most of its power. For the next 26 minutes, panic and mayhem ensued.

To the astonishment of those on the plant's graveyard shift, the critical system that controls the reactor suddenly went dead. The integrated control system (ICS), which was supposed to keep the power plant in a precisely tuned balance by controlling the pumps and valves that send cold water into the reactor, had suddenly failed. The failure of this intricate computer system had never happened before at Rancho Seco, and the crew was not sure what to do. Automatically, valves and pumps set themselves at a halfway position. In 16 seconds the temperature in the reactor climbed from 582°F to 607°F. With the increase in temperature, control rods automatically fell into the reactor core, stopping the nuclear chain reaction.

Once the plant stopped producing power, alarm systems began to blare. Unfortunately, the alarms signaled emergencies that had nothing to do with the actual problem. They included fire alarms, an earthquake alarm, and an alarm warning of rising temperatures in the spent fuel pool, where most the highly radioactive material at Rancho Seco was stored. The control room was filled with a cacophony of noise and confusion.

In less than a minute after the reactor scram, the control room operators realized that cold water still flowing into the reactor core would send temperatures tumbling faster than safety regulations allowed. This was a potential catastrophe. If the reactor cooled too rapidly, the eight-inch-thick steel walls of the vessel containing the nuclear fuel could crack like a hot glass plunged into cold water. A breach of the reactor vessel would uncover radioactive fuel, resulting in a core meltdown.

The control room operators knew the situation was precarious. But with the ICS out, they could not control the valves that allowed cold water to enter the reactor. Instead, they had to send workers scrambling throughout the plant—in some cases down three flights of stairs—

to close valves by hand. But there, workers encountered new difficulties. The manual controls on the valves had not been properly maintained. Several of them stuck. Workers had to use wrenches to close some of the valves. One valve could not be closed.

An emergency heating and air conditioning system designed after the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 went on. But the system made so much noise that the operators were forced to shut it down just two minutes later. Six minutes after the ICS failed, the temperature in the reactor had dropped by 85°F. If this continued, the temperature would soon reach the point where the metal in the reactor walls would become brittle. If the reactor cracked, large quantities of radiation would be released into the containment building, the plant's last line of defense.

At 4:40 a.m., with the overcooling still not controlled, a senior reactor operator noticed that two switches in a recess above the control panel were set halfway to the off position, indicating that circuit breakers had cut power to the ICS. He flipped them on, 26 minutes after they had gone off. He then collapsed on the floor of the control room. An ambulance was called and he was taken to a local hospital where he was later released with a diagnosis of hyperventilation. The temperature of the water in Rancho Seco's core fell by 180°F in 24 minutes. NRC regulations require that a reactor vessel not be cooled at a rate exceeding 100°F per hour. That morning Rancho Seco cooled down almost four times that fast.

At 5:00 a.m., operators discovered that a reactor feed water pump had been left running after water flowing into it had been cut off. The pump burned out and radioactive water spilled onto the floor of the auxiliary building that housed equipment connected to the reactor. Two workers entered the contaminated room and found three to four inches of water on the floor. They did not wear respirators, a violation of safety rules. Fortunately, they were not there long enough to be exposed to a dangerous level of radiation.

At 8:41 a.m., more than four hours after it started, the “unusual event,” a term used by the NRC to describe the least serious of four categories of emergency situations, was declared over. But the ordeal for SMUD had just begun. The troubles at Rancho Seco would force the Sacramento municipal utility to confront issues no other utility in the country had faced until that time.

## The Economics of Nuclear Power

The cause of the December 26, 1985, Rancho Seco accident was a crimped wire in a tiny electrical switching box. A short circuit had cut off power to the ICS, the computer that controlled the operation of the nuclear reactor. The problems at Rancho Seco, however, were much more extensive and severe and involved hardware, management, and training. However, the biggest challenge for SMUD would be the economics of nuclear power. At the time of the accident, SMUD did not believe that it had any other alternative but to repair the plant and get it running again. The cost of those repairs eventually brought the Sacramento utility to the brink of bankruptcy. After investigating the accident, the NRC uncovered a multitude of problems at the plant relating to plant design, training, and communications. Still, SMUD management initially thought it could get the plant running in one or two months. However, the NRC disagreed and ordered the utility to conduct a complete review of every major system at the plant.

The financial institutions that had sold SMUD's tax-free bonds began to worry. They had been severely criticized for not exercising adequate oversight of other utilities that had made large investments in nuclear

**Tuesday, April 17  
7 PM**

**The Cost of Nuclear Energy: What's Really at Stake? Open Panel Discussion. This event will be held at CSU-Fresno in McLane 121. This is a free event sponsored by the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition. For more information, contact Donna Hardina at 278-2307.**

power.

The two major credit rating agencies, Moody's and Standard and Poor's, announced that they were reviewing SMUD's AA bond rating after the NRC decision to delay the plant's restart. A lower bond rating would mean higher interest rates on the money SMUD borrows to finance construction.

A prolonged outage at the nuclear power plant would be a major blow to ratepayers. Every day the plant was idle the utility had to purchase \$262,000 worth of power. In addition, they were paying for the large work force that normally operated Rancho Seco plus a throng of contractors who were swarming over the plant trying to figure out what needed to be done for restart. In short order the costs of repairing the nuclear reactor began to strain SMUD's financial capabilities. SMUD's financing, like that of other public power agencies, comes from revenue bonds. In order to sell revenue bonds a utility must demonstrate that it has adequate income to pay them off. Income has to be sufficient to cover the interest and principal on the bonds plus a reserve margin. These fiscal fundamentals mean that large capital projects, like building or repairing a nuclear reactor, could create financial difficulties for utilities like SMUD.

At the time SMUD decided to build Rancho Seco it entered into a contract with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), the nation's largest electric utility, which served the area surrounding Sacramento. That contract, called an integration agreement, allowed SMUD to finance the construction of Rancho Seco with tax-exempt revenue bonds. Both SMUD and PG&E foresaw long-term benefits from this arrangement. Surplus power from Rancho Seco would be sold to PG&E, and the operation of the two utilities' bulk power systems would be integrated into one system. PG&E would supply back-up power when Rancho Seco was closed for repairs or refueling, and SMUD would give PG&E the exclusive right to buy the low cost surplus power from the plant that both parties assumed would be available in large quantities. The sharing of power reserves and the integration of a large geographical region, essentially all of Northern California, into one network was seen as a sound arrangement. As the cost of large power projects increased, the power industry saw this type of partnership between utilities as necessary to meet the growing needs for electricity.

The integration agreement served SMUD and PG&E well for the first seven years that it was in effect. A large quantity of the electricity that PG&E produced came from oil-fired facilities that had been built about 20 years earlier. With the increases in the cost of oil brought about by the 1973 and 1979 crises in the Middle East, it was becoming expensive for PG&E to operate these plants. The surplus power from Rancho Seco was, at the time, less costly than burning oil. Also, PG&E was concerned about power shortages in Northern California. The San Francisco-based utility was struggling to complete the two Diablo Canyon nuclear reactors that had been ordered at the same time as Rancho Seco. Delays were causing alarm that in the near future there might not be enough sources of power to meet the growing energy demands of Northern California. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the electricity from Rancho Seco was seen as essential for maintaining a reliable power grid for an area inhabited by more than 7 million people.

###

Part 2 of this article will be printed in the May Community Alliance newspaper. To read the entire chapter now, go to [www.fresnoalliance.com/home/seco](http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/seco)



**In February promoters of nuclear power brought industry apologist Patrick Moore to Fresno. Anti-nuclear protestors repeatedly disrupted his talk - they questioned the environmental impact, the cost, and safety issues of building a nuclear power plant in Fresno. Photo by Will Ward**



# The History of May Day

## (Part 1 of 2)

By Paul Jackson

Since ancient times, May Day has been a day in which the people found hope in the first harvest, already brought in. It's also been a day to celebrate the imminent arrival of summer. In Europe, as recently as the seventeenth century, the day was celebrated by rural, so-called "pagan" peoples, both in exuberant festivals as well as solemn ceremonies. Such ceremonies acknowledged the change in seasons, and welcomed the forthcoming season, bringing a new opportunity to restore understanding, and to achieve justice and fairness among people. Since the socially conservative Victorian Era, May Day has usually been celebrated by large picnics, traditionally attended by people wearing formal clothing-an odd way to enjoy a natural setting! For many people, especially religious people, the time of year in which May Day falls is traditionally a time for making amends and reconciling differences between people.

In all of these cases, the spirit of May Day is such that all members of a community have been invited to join in cooperative activities. The spirit of that day arrives after wintertime when resources were not so plentiful and were conserved within each household. Whether for practical or traditional reasons, the day's arrival calls for fairness and understanding among all members of a community, negotiating individual needs within the social framework, and doing justice wherever needed.

In the last century, members of local communities have come together on May Day to hold picnics and to address community concerns. In Central California, such picnics were attended by ever-growing numbers of

residents until 1908 when Raisin Day was created by the raisin growers' association as a promotional activity that, during its 25-year existence, included parades, festivals, and loss leaders (loaves of raisin bread) that attracted statewide attendance and heavy national media coverage.

Before Raisin Day was introduced as a promotional activity, however, the spirit of May Day had already manifested in California's Central Valley. In May of 1896, while the economy was in deep recession, Fresno residents established a community market. The market was located across from the city hall of those days (now the

Fulton Mall), where it would be publicly accessible, and employed a barter system instead of cash. Similarly, residents set up a bartering market in Dos Palos in 1932 to address community needs during the Great Depression.

Four other manifestations of the spirit of May Day-oriented more to the community as a whole than to labor specifically-occurred in the early history of the Central Valley:

\* As 2,000 people gathered in Sanger to attend the May Day picnic in 1908-while San Franciscans were still in the aftermath of the 1907 earthquake-the picnickers gave donations, as well as prize money from contests, to the ongoing relief effort. (FMR 5/2/1908.)

\* On May Day, 1915, Central California joined the nationwide social movement advocating use of high schools as community centers during non-school hours.

\* On May Day, 1916, Californians, including 15 Fresnans, who were concerned about a social safety net, met in L.A. at the California State Conference of Social Agencies.

\* On or about May Day, 1925, a movement in the spirit of community arose within the secondary education system. In the Central Valley, schools at Caruthers, Hanford, Kerman, Lindsay, Madera, and Riverdale began holding an annual "community day"-a custom for strengthening ties between parents and teach-



ers that continues until today and is now known as "open house."

These examples illustrate the overall aim of May Day, which is to build community. Justice within the community can be achieved, however, not only by individuals who build community around apparent barriers or constraints imposed by a restrictive arbitrary economic and social systems, but also by struggling for justice within the system. Hence, it was appropriate that the First International-a group of 400 labor representatives who met in France in 1889-claimed May Day to represent the concerns and interests of the labor movement, to be discussed in the next issue of the Alliance.

###

Paul Jackson is a freelance writer and volunteer for Fresno Food Not Bombs. He can be reached at [pjackson32@hotmail.com](mailto:pjackson32@hotmail.com).



# Improving Your Home's Energy Efficiency with Passive Solar Design

By Geoffrey Smith

Many of us are concerned about environmental issues like pollution and global warming. A great way to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions is by decreasing energy use in our homes through passive solar home design. Passive solar design helps with heating and cooling by taking advantage of such concepts as shade, sunlight, thermal mass, and building orientation.

In our climate, it's important to provide as much shade as possible to your home. This can be accomplished by placing awnings over your windows or by planting

shade trees. Deciduous trees are often recommended because they provide shade in the summer, but lose their leaves and allow the sun through in the winter. Trees planted on the north side of your home provide more protection from the summer sun, but don't block the winter sun.

In the winter, it's good to let the sunlight into your home. Large southern windows allow your living space to be warmed by solar energy. To improve the passive solar design of your home, it's beneficial to have thermal mass inside the home. Thermal mass can be concrete, bricks, stone tile, or any other material that will "store" the sun's energy during the day. These materials are heated by the winter sun in the day then slowly release the heat and warm your home throughout the night.

Building orientation with passive solar is related to the layout of your home. It's best to have a home where most of the length runs east-west because that gives

more opportunity to shade the home along the north side while placing large windows on the south to let in as much winter sun as possible.

Choosing a house with good passive solar design is a great way to help save money on energy costs and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One of the best things about passive solar is that it can be a low-cost or no-cost option to saving energy. For more information about passive solar design see The Passive Solar House by J. Kachadorian, contact a passive solar design specialist, or see EcoBroker.com.

###

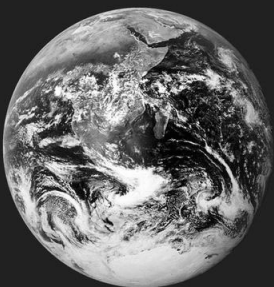
Geoffrey L. Smith is Fresno's only EcoBroker Certified® Realtor®. He can be reached at (559)392-5841 or [gsmith@londonproperties.com](mailto:gsmith@londonproperties.com).



**Offline Independent Energy Systems**  
PHOTOVOLTAIC DESIGN, INSTALLATION & SALES  
*23 years of inspired service*

Don Lowebug  
Cynthia Lowebug  
[ofin@aol.com](mailto:ofin@aol.com)  
559 877-7080

Box 231  
North Fork, CA 93643  
<http://www.psnw.com/~ofin>  
License #661052



## MEDITATION FOR INNER PEACE & HAPPINESS

Raja Yoga is the most ancient form of meditation.

You can learn to maintain stability of mind in stressful situations and gain more control over your life. Both individual and group instructions are available. No charge. Monthly events: Women of Spirit & World Meditation Day.

Call Veena Kapoor: (559) 435-2212

Website: [www.bkwsu.com](http://www.bkwsu.com) • email: [Rajayoga@Gmail.com](mailto:Rajayoga@Gmail.com)





# Pledge for the Planet

By Connie Young

In honor of Earth Day, April 22, several area houses of worship will be encouraging their members to commit to doing at least one more thing than they’re already doing to care for the planet. The Green Sanctuary Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno (UUCF) has created an Earth Day Pledge form which suggests a wide range of actions that participants might take to reduce their impact on the earth. While not all-inclusive, nevertheless it challenges those at all levels of environmental awareness to do more.

The 7th principle of the UU Principles and Purposes states that members will affirm and promote “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”. Every major faith tradition calls upon the faithful to be good stewards of the environment. College Community Congregational Church, Mennonite Community Church, and Wesley United Methodist will be participating in this project and other congregations are welcome to use the pledge card. The outcome of this campaign will be discussed at an interfaith forum on climate change that will be co-sponsored by the Interfaith Social Justice Collaborative and UUCF in September. For more information, please contact Connie Young at 225-2547 or cyoungnrn@sbcglobal.net

## Earth Day Pledge Suggestions

Please select at least one item from each category (in addition to what you’re already doing) and record it on the pledge card at the bottom of this page:

### Home

- \_\_ Set thermostat at least 1 degree lower in winter, higher in summer
- \_\_ Drive at least 2 mph slower
- \_\_ Replace at least 3 incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent bulbs
- \_\_ Keep vehicle tires properly inflated
- \_\_ Buy local produce and products
- \_\_ Buy second-hand items whenever possible
- \_\_ Wash only full loads of laundry or dishes
- \_\_ Use re-useable dishes and utensils instead of disposables
- \_\_ Trip link (consolidate errands)
- \_\_ Carpool, ride bike, take bus to work at least one day/week
- \_\_ Take advantage of free home energy audit and make recommended improvements
- \_\_ Install low flow toilet(s), solar hot water heater and/or solar panels
- \_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Congregational

- \_\_ Write article about global warming for your house of worship’s newsletter
- \_\_ Find out what your faith tradition is doing about global warming
- \_\_ Carpool to worship service or congregational events at least once a month
- \_\_ Help start and/or support a congregational recycling program
- \_\_ If you serve on a committee, encourage it to take action(s) related to global warming
- \_\_ Use local produce and products at congregational functions
- \_\_ Use re-useable dishes and utensils instead of disposables at congregational functions
- \_\_ Help start or join a green committee (promoting recycling, carpooling, etc) at your house of worship
- \_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Community / Work

- \_\_ Write at least 2 letters to the editor about the need to conserve
- \_\_ Attend at least 2 programs about global warming issues
- \_\_ Start or join a green committee (promoting recycling, carpooling, etc) at work
- \_\_ Write a letter to your City Council member, asking what the city is doing about global warming
- \_\_ Watch An Inconvenient Truth with a friend
- \_\_ Read The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Global Warming
- \_\_ Support and/or join an organization that advocates for conservation, air or water quality
- \_\_ Get involved in the debate about nuclear power
- \_\_ Learn about co-housing at [www.fresnocohousing.org](http://www.fresnocohousing.org)
- \_\_ Participate in carbon offsetting at: [Carbonfund.org](http://Carbonfund.org) or [Offsetters.com](http://Offsetters.com)
- \_\_ Learn about carmakers’ suit over CA’s vehicle pollution regulations at [www.environmentaldefense.org](http://www.environmentaldefense.org)
- \_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

# Get on the Bus

by Maria Telesco



First-grader Julius, age 7, had never given them any trouble at school. In fact, he was reading above grade level. His teacher, Sister Loretta, told me he had been “the perfect kid.” Then one day he came to school and “right out of the blue” grabbed another child’s lunch sack, ran with it to the restroom, and proceeded to flush it down the toilet, flooding the restroom and hallway. Julius was hauled off to the principal’s office. He was reluctant to explain his behavior, but Sister Loretta gently wheedled it out of him.

On the school bus yesterday, they had passed by a big building downtown. He knew how to read now, he said. The letters on the building spelled “J A I L.” He knew what that meant. He told his teacher that Mommy had done something bad, he didn’t know what, and now she was in jail. He missed Mommy very much. He

thought if he did something bad too, he could go to jail and stay there with Mommy. The foster family that had been caring for him sent him back to the “County,” he was put into another school, and that’s the last we heard of little Julius.

She told me this story at a professional women’s gathering about 20 years ago. I said something like “oh, too bad, tsk, tsk” and promptly pushed it to the back of my mind, where it fermented. It resurrected itself when I first learned of *Get On The Bus (GOTB)* a few years ago.

On Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 40 buses filled with more than 600 children will travel from California cities and towns to all five women’s prisons in the state to enable the children to celebrate Mother’s Day with their incarcerated

9 **COMMUNITY ALLIANCE** APRIL 2007

moms. Sponsored and supported by literally dozens of churches of all faiths, as well as civic and religious organizations and foundations, *GOTB* has grown exponentially since its first adventure, when one lone bus traveled from southern California to Valley State Prison for Women (VSPW) carrying a total of 17 children from nine families, along with their caregivers.

The yearly *GOTB* program, begun in 2000, has been uniting mothers and their children on this special day by bringing children and their caregivers to the two women’s prisons in nearby Chowchilla – Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF) and VSPW. The two Chowchilla facilities, across a narrow country road from each other and more than five miles from the nearest highway, are the largest women’s prisons in the world. Together they house more than 8,000 women, 75% of whom are mothers, and 80% of whom are incarcerated for non-violent crimes such as shoplifting, writing bad checks or possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use. Draconian sentences for such relatively minor crimes result from harsh mandatory sentencing regulations.

The program will also transport participants to California Institution for Women (CIW), Norco; Ventura Youth Correctional Facility (VYCF), Camarillo; and California Rehabilitation Center (CRC), Norco. Buses from Fresno and Visalia will depart for the southern California prisons. Buses from various parts of the state, as well as from the local area, will go to the two Chowchilla prisons.

The majority of prisoners come from poor urban areas. All the women’s facilities – and most of the men’s – are in remote rural areas. The children rarely, if ever, get to visit their mothers, unless they participate in *GOTB*. Prisoners’ families and the children’s caregivers are generally poor and unable to finance a journey of several hundred miles, effectively forcing the children to serve the same sentence as their mothers. Most mothers report that they do not see their children even once throughout their entire period of incarceration.

Set to arrive between 8 and 10 AM, buses will depart very early on May 11<sup>th</sup> from different areas throughout the state and will travel for hours to the various prisons. Food, beverages and snacks will be provided to children, guardians, volunteers and counselors traveling on the bus.

Inside the prison, a complimentary hot dog lunch will be served to all children and adult participants. Each mother will get a photo with her child[ren], and each child will get a photo with his/her mother. On the way home from the visit, each child will receive a Teddy Bear as a gift from Mom, along with a letter from Mom that she had prepared a few days before. Each child will also receive a “Goodie Bag” to keep him/her occupied, with such things as coloring books and puzzles.

Seeing the children greet their mothers is a dramatic and unforgettable picture. Seeing the mothers greet their kids is gut wrenching. According to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), 200,000 children in the state have an incarcerated parent, and live with relatives or in foster care. Children who have regular visits with parents demonstrate better emotional and social adjustment, as well as a lower degree of juvenile delinquency. The parents demonstrate lower rates of recidivism and higher rates of successful family reunification upon release. There are about 170,000 prisoners in California and about 11,000 of them are women.

All this does not come cheap. Last year it cost over \$4,000 to provide for the needs of each bus and its occupants. Bus rental, driver salary, fuel, food, Polaroid film for the photos and countless other expenses suck up money like a sponge. This year, the price of gasoline has increased by about 50% - maybe more – over last year. The State of California and the CDCR are gracious to allow this and other social programs to take place within its correctional facilities. However, all costs are obtained by GOTB from donations. Not a single penny is paid by the State, its taxpayers or the CDCR.

Donations of Teddy Bears, new or “barely used,” and of “regular size,” are needed. If you have a Teddy Bear[s], call Maria Telesco @ 255-9492 for pick up, or drop off at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, every Monday – Friday, 11 AM to 3 PM.

Tax-deductible (Tax ID # 94-1605666) donations in any amount are needed, and time is getting short. Checks should be made payable to *Get On The Bus*, and mailed to Father James Rude SJ, Fresno Area Coordinator, 1550 N. Fresno St., Fresno, CA 93703. For additional information, call Maria Telesco at 559-255-9492, or contact [www.getonthebus.us](http://www.getonthebus.us) or [info@getonthebus.us](mailto:info@getonthebus.us)

###

# Immigrant Rights Group denounces ICE Raids

By Mike Rhodes

Members of the Central California Coalition for Immigrants Rights (CCCIR) visited elected representatives last month (March 2007) calling for a moratorium on raids being carried out by the Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) in valley towns. The group chose International Woman's Day to visit senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer to ask for their support of a moratorium on the raids being carried out as part of "Operation Return to Sender." At a press conference held before the visits, spokesperson Estella Galvan said those raids have "caused distress and suffering among immigrant families who are divided and living in a constant state of persecution." Galvan said "these raids are having an impact on immigrant communities throughout the country." One raid was carried out on February 8 in the Central Valley community of Mendota. It is estimated that approximately 200 people were detained.

Participants at the CCCIR press conference said that the raids are a senseless tactic and one that will not provide a solution for the current immigration system. They said the immigration system has not kept up with the social and economic realities and demanded that Congress enters into a serious discussion and passes a comprehensive immigration law—one that takes into account workers' labor rights and immigrant families' human rights.

The Pan Valley Institute, which is affiliated with the American Friends Service Committee helped organize the press conference and visits to Feinstein and Boxer. A press release they issued said "proposals for temporary workers, because such proposals are an extension of the Bracero Program implemented between 1946 y 1964, a program that benefitted the farming industry while participating workers are at this time still unable to collect part of salaries withheld according to the stipulations of their contracts."



**Conception Pacheco (second from the right) said "we come to this land, work in your fields, and receive no medical benefits at all and we get no amnesty. Enough with hating and treating us like the worst delinquents. We want to live a happy life, we want to live at peace, we want to live without fear, and we want to live knowing that we pay our taxes. Having a drivers licence is something we have dreamed about all our lives."**

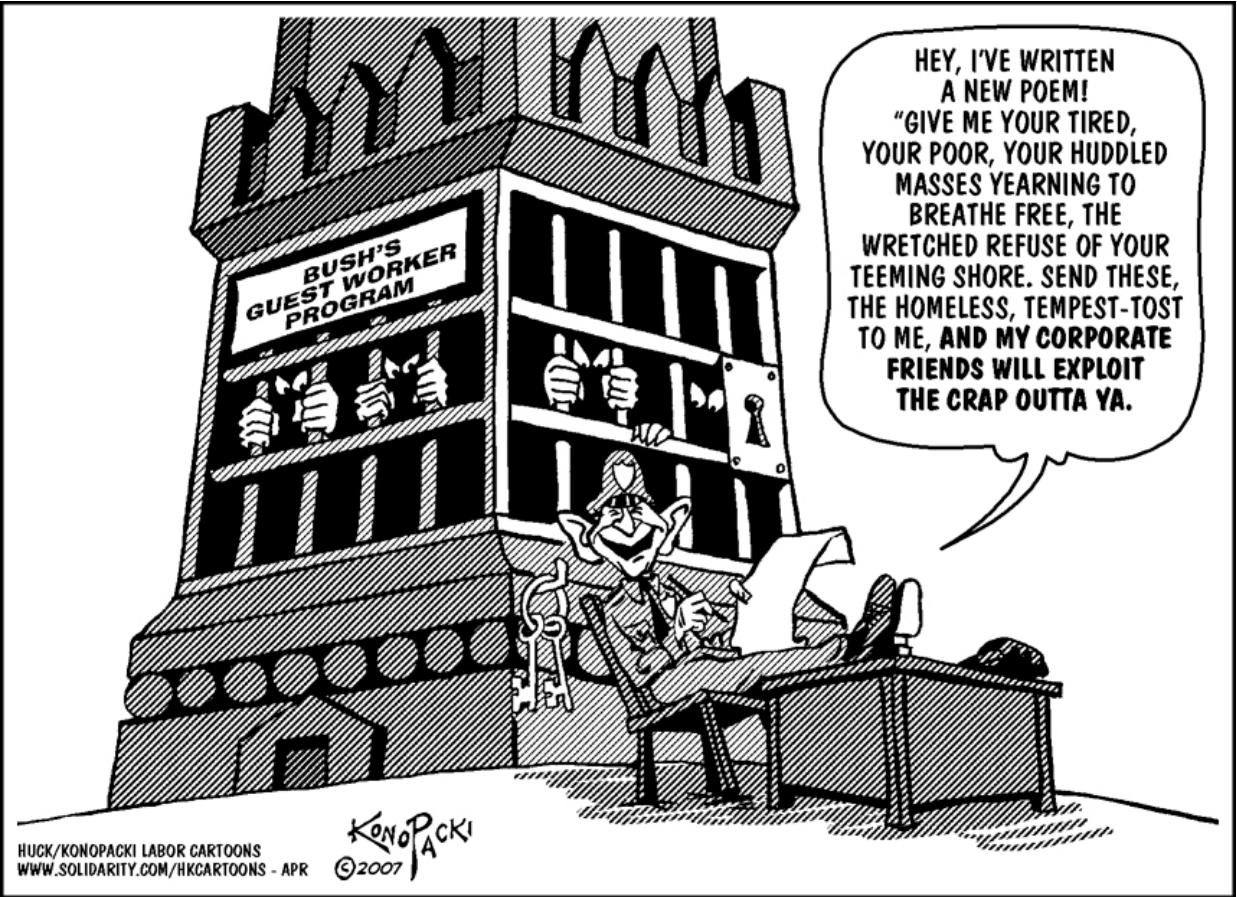
The Pan Valley press release continued "we wish to request a moratorium on the raids so that families will no longer be divided and destroyed. No one, except a mother, knows the depth of the pain produced by having been separated from her children, especially when this separation is the result of a violent act. Children who are separated from their mothers and fathers, who are then deported, are exposed to serious psychological problems, as are their parents. This suffering is unnecessary."



**The press conference was well attended. All photos by Mike Rhodes.**



**Rosa Lopez said she was going to Senator Boxer and Feinstein's office to tell her what effect these (ICE) raids have in the immigrant community. Her sign says "No Human Being is Illegal."**



Listener-Sponsored Radio

## KFCF 88.1 FM

Your connection to  
PACIFICA'S KPFA and DEMOCRACY NOW!

KFCF is owned and operated by the  
FRESNO FREE COLLEGE FOUNDATION,  
a non-profit corporation.  
(559) 233-2221 • [www.kfcf.org](http://www.kfcf.org)

## Ali Rezapour, M.D., Inc.

*Personalized Medical Care  
For The Whole Family*

6769 N. Fresno St., Suite 204 (559) 353-3952  
Fresno, CA 93710 Fax (559) 261-2610





# QUEER EYE

## Local School District Admits Its Error, Allows Gay-Straight Alliance Club

by Dan Waterhouse

It took almost three years, but the Madera school board agreed on March 13<sup>th</sup> that the Gay Straight Alliance at Madera High School would be recognized as an official student club. The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California and the Gay Straight Alliance Network negotiated the agreement on behalf of about 10 students who had been trying to gain recognition for the club, which hopes to provide a safe haven for students to discuss lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues.

“We’re all just so happy and excited that our school is finally treating us like any other club so we can do everything we can to make Madera High School safe for everyone,” said Thalia Arenas, a senior who has been involved in the Fresno-area schools GSA since its inception and currently serves as president. “We knew that what the school was telling us about requirements for clubs couldn’t possibly be legal, and we’re glad they finally understand that and won’t put up any more roadblocks.”

“Many of the students were freshmen when they started trying to organize the club,” Fresno GSA program assistant Sara Martinez said. According to Martinez, the students began the club three years ago, unaware that GSA Network even existed. She said the students finally connected with GSA in 2005.

Arenas and several other students were told when they first approached school officials that all clubs must be approved by the school board and that such approval might take six months. They then met off-campus at a local community center.

The GSA club members approached school officials again a year later and were finally allowed to meet on campus, but were told the GSA would not be a school-sponsored club and therefore they wouldn’t be allowed to make announcements, post bulletins, raise funds on campus, or do other things that so-called school-sponsored clubs were allowed to do. Several other clubs at Madera High School were granted the benefits that the GSA club wasn’t — including Bike Club, Bowling Club, Hip-Hop Club, Ping Pong Club, and Snowboarding Club.

In January of this year, the ACLU sent a letter to Madera school officials explaining that the federal Equal Access Act requires public schools to treat all non-curricular student clubs equally and prohibits favoring some clubs over others by classifying them as either school-sponsored or non-school-sponsored. Ironically, the Equal Access Act was passed into law at the behest of religious conservatives who wanted the opportunity to create religious clubs in public schools. In order for the Act to pass constitutional muster, it was amended to allow equal access for non-religious clubs.

“The board members knew they had been in the wrong,” Martinez said. “They knew they couldn’t legally do what they had done.” Martinez added the club was approved by a 4-3 vote, with the three nay-sayers saying they had personal issues with the club’s existence.

“It was a long battle for the students; many are seniors now, and they started working on this when they were freshmen or sophomores,” Martinez commented. “Six of the 10 were at the board meeting the other night.”

The mom-and-pop merchants (who took the blunt of the 2001 property damage) complained to the Bee: “The dollar loss isn’t as bad as feeling unwanted in the community. They present these events and never ask whether we want to participate.” Residents told a reporter, “they make our neighborhood a parking lot. Then when there’s problems, they turn the crowd back into the residential district as an angry mob. Do we get a say in any of this?”

Marketing Committee members defended the events. One restaurant owner said, “we’re just trying to pay our employees and make it. We’ve got to have events. We have to have action that makes the Tower vital, makes people want to come down, or this neighborhood will be back where we were 10 years ago when houses were selling for \$40,000 instead of \$90,000.”

The question raised in 2001 of whether the neighborhood’s uniqueness should be marketed to the rest of Fresno remains unanswered and debated in 2007. The debate frames a struggle between those who need to pull in patrons for the survival of their businesses and those who believe the Tower should be its own community with a business district catering to the surrounding neighborhood and a smattering of outsiders.

The debate also roils Tower homeowners. Many see the neighborhood as divided between the “haves” and the “have-nots” — poorer owners and renters who say they struggle to pay their mortgages or rent and have little use for the rules set up by the City of Fresno governing how property is maintained. Resentment towards the district’s Specific Plan and architectural design review requirements simmers just below the surface, especially in the poorer areas outside the neighborhood core around Olive and Wishon avenues.

The future of Fat Tuesday after this year is an open question. Some residents, like the Fresno Bee’s Bill McEwen, are calling for the bars and restaurants to shut down next year, and some say the neighborhood is quickly declining. One neighbor noted that gang bangers infest the area. Other folks retort that McEwen and others of his ilk should just move out and go up North. One Towerite blogged that violence is part of the lifestyle of the youngish crowd that hangs out in the district, and people need to just accept it.

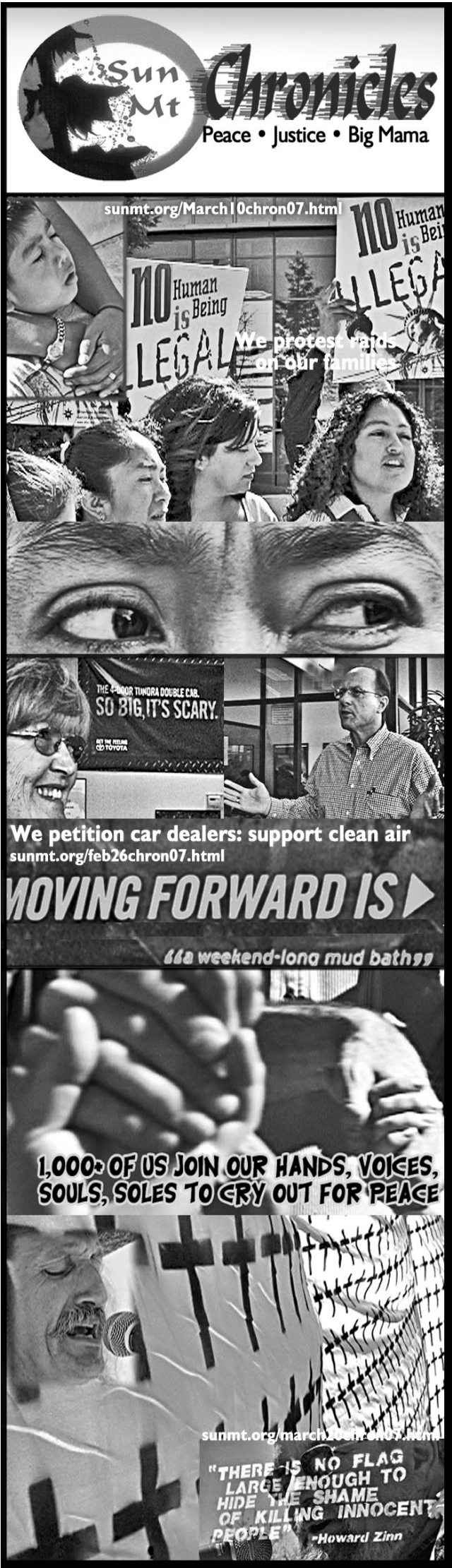
Can the Tower, as most people know it, survive the debate?

They were very excited by the vote. They had worked so hard.”

“This is a tremendous victory for all students at Madera High School,” said Carolyn Laub, Executive Director of GSA Network. “We hope to help all schools in California understand that they’re required to treat all clubs equally, and we hope schools come to appreciate the role GSAs play in giving students a safe space to support each other and reduce harassment at their schools.”

“Schools have to understand that the Equal Access Act guarantees the rights of students to form all kinds of clubs from GSAs to religious clubs and that schools can’t pick and choose what sort of activities and privileges to dole out to the clubs they like,” said Natalie Nardecchia, Pride Law Fund Legal Fellow at the ACLU of Southern California. “It shouldn’t have taken Madera school officials two years to do the right thing for these students, but we’re happy for the students that it’s finally happening.”

The Madera GSA group joins other GSAs in Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern Counties. There is one other GSA in Madera County, at Yosemite High School in Oakhurst. The first GSA in the Central Valley was created by students at Fresno’s Bullard High School after another student killed himself. The teenager had been harassed by other students because he was gay.





# END THE WAR NOW!

## A Message of Hope

[Editor's note: The following speech was given by Pablo Rodriguez at the March 18, 2007 Rally in the Valley in downtown Fresno. Rodriguez is an associate at the Dolores Huerta Foundation.]

The one thing that binds us together as Americans is hope. Our nation is troubled and divided by a bitter and never ending war that with each passing day robs us of our future. In order to change this we must dissent. We must do the work to turn our course around to end this war and bring the troops home and promote peace. We must continue doing the work we are doing in Fresno today and make it clear that we, the people of the United States, are servants of justice. We must dissent. We must end this war and begin the process of rebuilding our country.

The rebuilding will not begin in the cities of Washington D.C., New York, San Francisco, or Los Angeles. The building, the critical mass to end this war, is going to come from cities like Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Bakersfield, Visalia, and Merced.

It is because we work the land. It is because we are products of this land that we share the common understanding that it is hope that unites us and dignity is our moral compass. Through the labor of our hands and the love of our hearts we can end this war and we acknowledge that the process is not an easy one. In fact, we acknowledge the fact that there continues to be much hard work ahead of us. We must convert the naysayers that tell us the work is too hard or maybe even impossible. We must convert those people that

challenge us and the people that may mock us for taking on this work in the Central Valley. To those people, we ask that you remind them that it is for the dirt that we the people in the Central Valley find under our nails that proves to the world that we do not fear hard work, we honor it.

We are living in urgent times. Our country is in danger, not only from our misguided policies and what they are doing to us locally but what we are doing to the world. Only if we dissent, only if we speak truth to the false idols of power and money can we insure our children will live fruitful lives filled with hope. Only through broad and fundamental dissent will we allow ourselves to confront the challenges that face our valley. Too many of our children are growing up believing that there are only three options here in the valley - the military, the cemetery, or the penitentiary.

The military that coerces through a poverty draft that plays on our hopes for being able to lift and rise ourselves out of poverty. The cemetery because far too many of our youth are moving from poverty to violence, taking lives and taking their own and they end up in the penitentiary. I refuse to reconcile, I refuse to be OK with living in a valley that builds more prisons than universities.

It has been said that our hearts are a muscle the size of our fist. Keep loving, keep fighting, and when you retell the stories of the message that came from Dolores Huerta today, tell them that today we are working to end this war, so get your hands dirty with us or get out of the way.



**Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey expressed frustration with Democrats in Congress who were promoting a bill to continue the funding of the war. Woolsey vowed to vote against that proposal (which she did) and work for an end to this unjust war. You can see a video of her speech at: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/03/21/18380927.php>**



**Bill Simon, president of Peace Fresno, introduced the speakers at the Rally in the Valley for Peace and Justice. Over 1,000 people attended this event.**



**The Rally in the Valley was held at Eaton Plaza in downtown Fresno. The photo above shows marchers leaving the plaza and heading for the Federal Building where a die in was held. Photo by Howard Watkins.**



**Lonesom Jem performed everyone's favorite anti-war songs throughout the day. With Jem, in the photo above, is his daughter Masha Lily Bluestein. Photo by Howard Watkins.**



**In his introduction of the Raging Grannies, Peace Fresno president Bill Simon said they were the conscience of the community. The beloved grannies sang songs of peace at the Rally in the Valley. Photo by Howard Watkins.**



**Green Machine performed Rasta-rific Reggae for the participants at the Rally in the Valley.**



**David Swanson, the Washington Director of [www.Democrats.com](http://www.Democrats.com) and of [www.ImpeachPAC.org](http://www.ImpeachPAC.org), called for an immediate end to the war and the impeachment of President Bush. You can see Swanson's entire speech at: <http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/>**



**The Die-In at the new downtown Federal Building included hundreds of anti-war protestors. Photo by Howard Watkins.**



**Pablo Rodriguez spoke at the rally. His message of hope and struggle is printed on this page. Pablo was speaking for United Farm Worker co-founder Dolores Huerta, who was scheduled to speak at this rally but was unable to attend. For more information about the Dolores Huerta Foundation, see: <http://www.doloreshuerta.org/>**



# Word on The Street

By Wendy Russell

It was a real sunny day at the Rally at the Valley for Peace and Justice in downtown Fresno on March 18. There was a ‘Die-In’ in front of the new Federal Building with hundreds of people laying down to make the point. There were peace and information booths scattered on the grass to the south of the old Fresno water tower with Green Machine playing music and speakers talking peace. All the usual people that attend such events were there including a Congresswoman. It was all such a normal day.

I took this month’s Question for *Word on the Street* directly to the people at the Rally and as I sat at the *KFCF 88.1fm* booth, I watched a vibrant woman brighten up the spot as she stopped to buy one of our t-shirts, so I decided to ask her the Question:

*Earth Day is April 22. What do you do to “green up” the earth? Any tips on how to lessen our dependence on oil?*

MARY BUTLER laughed, “Consume, consume, consume to hurry up the day! No, but really; pay attention to your consumption patterns because - whether you think so or not - it’s excessive. I’m one to talk; I consume like crazy and it’s hard to stop! But the first step is to pay attention. Paga atencion!”



Mary Butler

As I watched the crowds and listened to the speakers I also thought of our Question. I have heard that once oil becomes scarce that next petroleum-based products, such as rubber tires for cars and plastic tubing for intravenous solutions would disappear, so I hoped to collect clever substitutes from people on the street, such as a safe mosquito repellant or fuel made from compost. One real example is a little one; save those plastic bags the Fresno Bee comes wrapped in to use as gloves for messy chores. The obvious examples are riding your bike more, selling your car and getting off the power grid by installing solar panels.

Next my attention was grabbed by a striking, straight and tall man on a bike, wearing a sarong topped with a cool “Homeland Security - Fighting Terrorism Since 1513” t-shirt picturing our Native Americans. I had to ask ED PARKER:

*Earth Day is April 22. What do you do to “green up” the earth? Any tips on how to lessen our dependence on oil?*

“You come to 1495 N. Roosevelt and see! You can’t miss my garden - it’s got a blue neon peace sign!” Ed Parker’s voice had that deep radio-voice timbre as he extended his invitation to all interested persons, “... But I don’t like to think of it as a garden - it’s more than a garden - it’s for meditation - it’s a place where I let my mind go on vacation. A garden is drawing pollinators, insects, birds and people to look. A garden is growing healthy food. And don’t say you can’t grow anything! It starts with a little bit of courage - get dirty! It takes thought and planning; a garden is not a rush job. Learn to notice a little more. Sit in your garden at the various cardinal points; north south east and west and observe. At what time of the day is the sun right there? When does that tree shade your garden? And a hint; if you have a plant that’s not doing well, place it next to one that is, for I have found that there is Plant Ego and one plant will not be outdone by another! And because water is such a scarcity, hand water. Plant drought tolerant annuals -” then he explains, “that means they drop their seeds and grow back the next year - such as *Borage* - it’s good for the stomach, it’s pretty and the freeze didn’t even phase it.”

Here seventeen year old REBECCA KERN, also manning



Ed Parker

our booth, interjected “It tastes like honey!” She was reading *The Italian Boss* in between selling *Democracy Now!* and *KFCF 88.1fm* t-shirts.

Ed Parker nodded agreement and continued, “Add living ensembles to your garden of living art pieces. Make sure you plant trees. I talk to my plants non-verbally: ‘I’m coming in to dead-head you now, it’s to make you look healthy and to attract other fauna!’ “

Ed gave us a deep hearty laugh - “Another thing about plants - take poison oak for instance - it grows next to water, it’s bright; warning you; don’t touch! And the cure for it lives right next door! It’s called Mugwort. Grandma *knows* what she’s doing!”

He pushed his bike through the crowd towards the stage as I chuckled at his joyful exuberance inviting all of you to come see his garden! It was a happy day of friends, hope and democracy in action as we all exercised our rights of peaceful assembly debating the issues of our times. Maybe this time we would make a difference! My thoughts went from here to there that happy afternoon.

My attention and camera turned towards DEBBIE JO WAGNER. Most days she works as a pediatric occupational therapist for a local nonprofit, a “great organization” Debbie Jo told me, but today she marches for peace shrouded head to toe in a black body bag emblazoned with the words *War Is Death*. I asked her this month’s Question:

*Earth Day is April 22. What do you do to “green up” the earth? Any tips on how to lessen our dependence on oil?*

“I go to thrift stores and yard sales. And I trade. A really easy way is when you are thinking about buying something, put it off. You might find out you didn’t need it. Use things longer. Buy used.”



Debbie Jo Wagner

Debbie Jo stops and exclaims, “Oh look! The Raging Gran-nies are singing!” We paused and watched those lively ladies sing songs of protest. Then she continued, “Watch the movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, by Al Gore, then go to [www.aninconvenienttruth.com](http://www.aninconvenienttruth.com). That’s where you can find many green tips, get more in-depth information, learn how to change your life and why. That’s where to begin your journey.”

Young JOSEPH BOONE is an eighteen years old student at Buchanon High School, where he says the school has “a very half-assed recycling project. They might have even taken away those trash cans.” I ask him our Question next:

*Earth Day is April 22. What do you do to “green up” the earth?*

*Any tips on how to lessen our dependence on oil?*

Joseph said, “I work at a grocery store and we waste a lot of bags. It’s a complete waste once you take the groceries out of the store unless you reuse and conserve paper and plastic bags!”

Joseph looked so smart and happy. We parents just watch the children grow, I thought, wondering what his were



Joseph Boone

like to have produced such a good thinker, out here to-day, trying to change his future world. Sitting there I watched friends dance with their children. Friends that I had seen grow up, date, settle down, begin families, now spin and twirl with laughing children. It was a good day. A normal day.

Next to our booth was the the Green Party’s booth. There I asked LARRY MULLEN, a retired science teacher, this month’s Question:

*Earth Day is April 22. What do you do to “green up” the earth? Any tips on how to lessen our dependence on oil?*

“In WWII there was sacrifice; there was no rubber for (civilian) tires, no nylons for women, they rationed gasoline and meat ... we saved soap slivers... I have to have courage to preserve instead of conserve. Conservation now means using it slowly until it’s gone. We must think differently. I haven’t made it that far, I still drive. I haven’t been able to make that sacrifice. We must restructure our society; I just can’t wait two hours for a bus.”

Answers in hand, the Rally ended and I made my way home to write this column. It was a normal day. A good day.

Then my cell phone rang and everyting changed. Only 25 years old and a strong swimmer, Jarrett Sturgill, my best friend’s dear and precious son, had drowned up at Angel Falls above Bass Lake, victim of fast cold water and one false step. Every parent’s very worst nightmare knocked right on the door and barged right in, not waiting for permission.

Please go right now and hug your child. Tell them - again - how much you love them. Tell them - again - to be careful out there. Tell your little ones there is a reason for your rules and remind your big ones they are not as invincible as they think. Tell them that everything can change in a heartbeat.

And tell them - again - that you love them.



Larry Mullen



# Fresno Homeless Win Another Round in Court

By Mike Rhodes

Homeless people in Fresno won a favorable ruling in federal court last month. Caltrans director Will Kempton, who is listed as a defendant in the lawsuit which claims homeless people had their property taken and immediately destroyed, made a motion, through his attorney, to dismiss the charges. Kempton is named in the complaint because he was in charge of Caltrans, when homeless peoples rights were allegedly violated. The motion to dismiss was denied. The lawsuit against the City of Fresno, which is ongoing, was not affected by Kempton’s attempt to withdraw from the suit.

The lawsuit filed in October 2006 seeks to stop the City of Fresno from bulldozing homeless peoples encampments. A preliminary injunction was issued in November and city crews have stopped the attacks. On February 16, 2007, the City of Fresno even cleaned up trash that had accumulated near an encampment. City crews were able to conduct the clean up without destroying homeless peoples tents, medicine, and other personal items. They had claimed in court that they could not distinguish between trash and poor peoples property. On February 27, Fresno City Council member Jerry Duncan formally requested the City Manager’s office set up portable toilets near homeless encampments to mitigate the problems this lack of facilities had upon businesses in the area.

At the nationally broadcast Homelessness Marathon, Fresno mayor Alan Autry told me that something had to be done about the trash accumulation and lack of portable toilets near homeless encampments. He directed his staff to set up a meeting to discuss the problem. On March 16 I met with Kyle Loreto (mayor’s office) and Bruce Rudd (city managers office) who told me all of the reasons why the city could not provide these basic services. It came down to this - they would rather have the homeless people use the business and residential neighborhoods as a toilet than admit the homeless have a right to exist. It was clear, by the end of the meeting, that mayor Autry will direct his forces to harass and chase homeless people from one private or public location to another with no solution in sight. The mayor’s strategy, if you can call it that, is



Caltrans director, Will Kempton is still part of the lawsuit. The suit alleges that Caltrans played a role in taking and immediately destroying homeless peoples property.

to make life so miserable for the homeless that they either leave the city, convert to evangelical Christianity at The Rescue Mission, go to jail, or be constantly harassed on the mean streets of Fresno.

In issuing his ruling, United States District Judge Oliver Wanger, made the point that several of the attacks on the homeless took place on Caltrans land. Caltrans provided the City of Fresno with an encroachment permit for the August 25, 2006 raid and conspired to conduct the raids with the city. Wanger said Caltrans had prior knowledge that the raids would occur and he denied the motion, made on behalf of Caltrans director Will Kempton, to dismiss the charges.

Attorneys for the city and the homeless are in the process of discussing the possibility of a settlement in the case. If an agreement can’t be reached the lawsuit will proceed through federal court with a trial by jury likely in 2008. The plaintiffs in the case have said they want this to be a class action lawsuit that would benefit all homeless people in Fresno who were affected by these raids. For more information about the attacks on the homeless, that led to the lawsuit, see:

**Down and Out in Fresno**  
Wednesday Feb 4th, 2004  
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2004/02/04/16695221.php>

**Homeless sweep in Fresno**  
Wednesday Feb 4th, 2004  
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2004/02/04/16695471.php>

**The H Street Encampment**  
Thursday Feb 5th, 2004  
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2004/02/05/16695921.php>

**Homeless attacks in Fresno Continue**  
Monday Feb 16th, 2004



The photo above shows Caltrans destroying homeless peoples encampment. Photo by Mike Rhodes.

<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2004/02/16/16705551.php>

**Government Agencies Destroy Tent City**  
Friday May 12th, 2006  
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/05/12/18228251.php>

**Fresno Homeless Under Attack**  
Thursday May 25th, 2006  
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/05/25/18253011.php>

**Fresno Homeless Attacked and Insulted by City Workers**  
Thursday Jun 22nd, 2006  
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/06/22/18281976.php>

**Fresno Police Department Raid Homeless Encampment (Again)**  
Saturday Jul 1st, 2006  
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/07/01/18284552.php>

**Bulldozers, Barbed Wire, and Harassment for Fresno’s Homeless**  
Saturday Aug 26th, 2006  
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/08/26/18301032.php>

Also, there is a comprehensive list of articles on the homeless situation in Fresno at:  
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/homelessness.htm>



## California Gastroenterology Associates

Board Certified Gastroenterologists

Naeem M. Akhtar, M.D., F.A.C.G.  
Shahla P. Durrani, M.D., F.A.C.G.  
Mikhail Alper, PA-C

1381 E. Herndon Ave., Suite 104 • Fresno, CA 93720  
Ph. (559) 438-0017 • Fax (559) 438-8882

451 E. Almond Ave., Suite 103 • Madera, CA 93637  
Ph. (559) 673-4000 • Fax (559) 673-3661

[www.CGACastro.com](http://www.CGACastro.com)

learn connect refresh



**MOMMY MATTERS**  
CHAMPLAIN & PERRIN  
[WWW.MOMMYMATTERSONLINE.COM](http://WWW.MOMMYMATTERSONLINE.COM)  
559.433.0172

Lamaze Classes  
Mommy & Me Yoga  
Maternity Wear  
Photography  
Support Groups  
CPR Classes  
Parenting Classes  
Baby Sign Language  
Modern Infant Furniture  
State of the Art Parenting Supplies

1010 e. Perrin Suite 107 Fresno Ca 93720



# Fresno County Grand Jury calls for an Independent Police Auditor

By Mike Rhodes

The Fresno County Grand Jury, in a special report issued on February 26, 2007, wrote that an Independent Police Auditor (IPA) would assure transparency between the public and the police department. Police chief Jerry Dyer said "I support all efforts that increase the level of trust the community has of its police department. An independent auditor can serve to further enhance an agency's transparency." Fresno mayor Alan Autry has indicated his support for an IPA too.

The grassroots community group that has been working on this issue for a number of years is the Central California Criminal Justice Committee (CCCJC). The problem the CCCJC has had in establishing an IPA is that the Fresno City Council has refused to approve any version of an IPA that has come before it. Several versions of an IPA have been brought before the council and each one has been rejected.

The CCCJC is considering putting the IPA proposal on the 2008 ballot and letting voters decide the issue. To learn more about the CCCJC and the IPA, you can visit their website at [www.cvpac.org](http://www.cvpac.org). You can also read the Grand Jury report on their website. Here is what the CCCJC says about their organization and the need for an IPA:

The mission of the Central California Criminal Justice Committee is to work to ensure that the constitutional and human rights of the people of Fresno will not be violated by the police department.

Our purpose is to establish a police review mechanism that will empower the community and enhance

nity that the Fresno Police Department was unjustifiably targeting their children while driving.

With an increase in complaints about this type of misconduct and a groundswell of interest in discussing this issue, a small group of members of the community began to grow into a network of citizens seeking greater information about the activities of the local police department.

After an initial series of meetings in which community members described police abuses and demonstrated anger and frustration with the situation, a decision was made to work towards two specific goals. The first and immediate goal was to make the police aware of our concerns and to get a response from the department. The second goal a long range plan would be to form a citizen oversight group to act as a permanent mechanism to establish a better relationship between the people and the police.

Our goal is

- \* to ensure the integrity of investigations of police misconduct.
- \* to enhance the community confidence in the Fresno Police Department, thus reducing judicial and liability expenses.
- \* to make public reports.

- \* to make policy recommendations to the police department and the public.
- \* to insure the thoroughness of internal affairs investigations by having the power, by recommendations and by direct subpoena, to require the presence and consideration of witnesses and documents at specific internal affairs investigations.



October 22, 2003 demonstration to stop police brutality. The community demands an Independent Police Auditor. Photo by Mike Rhodes

mutual respect between the police and the people. We know that the formation of such an entity will improve our quality of life and reduce crime.

The Central California Criminal Justice Committee had its beginnings in a series of informal meetings that began in March of 2000 in response to fears expressed by women in the AfricanAmerican commu-



### Kern Street Cobbler

- Boot & Shoe Repair
- Clothing Alterations
- Dry Cleaning
- Zipper & Leather Alterations
- Zipper & Leather Repair

**(559) 268-3539**

Civic Center Square  
2323 Kern Street  
Fresno, CA 93721

Open 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM  
[www.kernstcobbler.com](http://www.kernstcobbler.com)



### HUME

PRINTING & LITHOGRAPH, INC.

SERVING FRESNO SINCE 1911.

3021 W. Dakota Ave., Ste. 199  
Fresno, CA 93722-4975

Phone: 559-226-4863  
Fax: 559-226-4828

E-mail: [humeprinting@sbcglobal.net](mailto:humeprinting@sbcglobal.net)

A COMPLETE OFFSET & LETTERPRESS FACILITY

### Home Birth Services

at  
CHINATOWN

Family Medicine and Midwifery  
Medical Office



**Chanah Cossman**  
Midwife and Nurse Practitioner  
CNM, NP, MSN

Se Habla Español

829 F Street  
Fresno, CA 93706  
Phone: (559) 266-0444  
Fax: (559) 266-7745



Chase Flower Shop  
(559) 233-8631  
1405 N. Van Ness Ave  
Fresno, CA 93728

World Wide Delivery  
[www.chaseflowershop.com](http://www.chaseflowershop.com)

Michael Butler  
Floral Design



### California Alliance for Retired Americans C.A.R.A.

**Gene Roza**  
★ Active Volunteer ★

OFFICE: (559) 570-6041 FAX: (559) 244-6016  
HOME: (559) 297-9552 CELL: (559) 905-3521  
E-mail: [c21generoza@aol.com](mailto:c21generoza@aol.com)





### Gene Roza

REALTOR®



**Adanalian & Vasquez**

1415 W. Shaw Ave.  
Fresno, California 93711  
Business (559) 570-6041  
Direct (559) 905-3521  
Fax (559) 244-6016  
E-Mail [c21generoza@aol.com](mailto:c21generoza@aol.com)

Each Office Is Independently Owned And Operated



Office  
1990-2002



Circulation:  
10,000 Copies  
Published monthly

#### Advertising Rates

	One month	Six months
Business Card (2 x 3½)	\$40	\$150
(4¼ x 5½)	\$60	\$300
(5½ x 8½)	\$120	\$600
½ Page (8½ x 11)	\$200	\$1,000

# GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT!!

## Advertise in the....

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

**The Voice of the Progressive Movement since 1996**

All ads need to be camera ready  
(typesetting, layout, and design is extra)  
120 line screen • Black and white only  
Digital files must be 150 dpi and JPG, TIF, or EPS file format  
**Deadline: 15<sup>th</sup> of month preceding publication**

For more information contact:  
Dan Yaseen  
(559) 251-3361 • [danyaseen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:danyaseen@sbcglobal.net)  
**Community Alliance**  
P.O. Box 5077 • Fresno, Ca 93755

# Fresno Center for Nonviolence



1584 N. Van Ness Ave., 93728 - [www.centerfornonviolence.org](http://www.centerfornonviolence.org) - email: [info@centerfornonviolence.org](mailto:info@centerfornonviolence.org)

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

FCNV Page Editor: Brandon Hill

## THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.



### BUSH'S HEALTH CARE CONSPIRACY

Following President Bush's State of the Union address in January it can be imagined some of his handlers said to each other, "Now that the voters have made clear that a universal health care system is their number one domestic priority, why don't we grab that issue from the Democrats? Since the Democratic Congress hasn't gotten the message and isn't really creating a new health care system, let's make it work for us!"

"One obvious thing the President realized was that the American people want a national health care system for themselves and their children as much as they want our troops out of the killing fields of Iraq." So he offered several unworkable suggestions: relief from payroll taxes and a tax credit to the uninsured.

His proposed \$15,000 income tax deduction for middle-class families would jeopardize both Medicare and Social Security while not providing enough money to purchase real health insurance, projected to cost \$16,500 for a family of four by the year 2009. Employers would be encouraged to bail out of the health care system even faster than they are today.

His plan for fixing the health care system is more of the same—more big bucks for the insurance companies. He believes that government has a responsibility for the children, the elderly and the disabled, but for everybody else, "private insurance is the best". "Then he offers several plans to provide more billions of federal dollars to the private insurers who have driven the cost of the health care system up 73% since 2000, using up 31% of every health care dollar for CEO salaries and multiple bureaucratic costs rather than a single payer, such as Medicare. (The highest paid CEO (at United Health) gets 122.7 million dollars a year.)

The President also gave a big plug for the idea of so-called federal/state partnerships: he will be urging the provision of federal funds to the states so that the poor and the sick can be covered to purchase insurance with an "affordable choice"—more money for these same insurance companies.

And what about "junk lawsuits"? This whole line of argument has been fully discredited by the facts: only about four-tenths of a percent of medical malpractice lawsuits succeed in the courts. It is a big "No-No" to try to stop people from being able to bring lawsuits against the moneyed interests when we are injured. It's the insurance companies who have been fueling this fire, convincing doctors they must spend millions of dollars for insurance to protect themselves from lawsuits.

A single-payer system would end a lot of the problems of medical mistakes and malpractice because the medical costs of the small numbers of suits that win in the courts would be covered in a universal system that would cover all health care costs for an injured person. The President and other administration ideologues have hammered together a package that would continue to send billions to "market-place" solutions rather than providing a less expensive, high-quality health care system for everybody in the country, a system more like those enjoyed by the 37 advanced nations of the world who have better systems than ours. The voters recently did indeed vote for a national response to the health care crisis.

(Source: Bush's Health Care..., Marilyn Clement, national coordinator of Healthcare Now; Tom Paine.common sense January 24, 2007)

### Pelco Tour April 5<sup>th</sup> – 2pm

The FCNV is scheduled to tour Pelco which defines itself as "a world leader in the design, development, and manufacture of video security systems and supporting equipment." Participants should meet at Building 7 at 2 p.m. at Pelco @ Peach near Dakota at 3500 Pelco Way or at the FCNV for carpooling at 1 pm. RSVP with Diane Marks(642-3793)

### Mark your calendars now!

**Saturday, June 23, 5:30 p.m.**  
**Our Center celebrates 15 years!**

*Medea Benjamin* will be our keynote speaker.



Guests, left to right, Joyce Glaspie Young, Maria Telesco, and Donna Larsen (with Richard Gomez, our engineer, in background) at KFCF radio station on March 14, talking about close friends and family members on death row. A new prison ministry program "C.O.P.E. - Coalition of Prison Empowerment" is now a program of the Center. Call Maria Telesco at 225-9492 for more information.

### The FCNV is a Host Organization

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

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

### STIR IT UP

with host Dan Yaseen and guests Jean Hays and Scott Key who will be talking about counter recruitment.

This is a call in show. They would love to hear from you. Wednesday, April 11 – 3 pm KFCF 88.1 FM

Second Wednesday Film Series presents

## THE GROUND TRUTH

The filmmaker's subjects are patriotic young Americans - ordinary men and women who heeded the call for military service in Iraq - as they experience recruitment and training, combat, homecoming, and the struggle to reintegrate with families and communities. The terrible conflict in Iraq is a prelude for the even more challenging battles fought by the soldiers returning home - with personal demons, an uncomprehending public, and an indifferent government.

Wednesday, April 11 – Noon & 7 pm at the FCNV  
Potluck @ 6:30/Discussion to follow evening showing.  
For more information call 23-PEACE





## WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Catherine Garoupa, Guest Editor, <Catherine@calcleanair.org>

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

### Cluster Meeting in Fresno!

(Contributed by Ellie Bluestein)

Make your reservation for the cluster meeting of Northern California WILPF branches on April 28, at Margaret Hudson's lovely garden and barn. Gathering at 9:00 a.m. Meeting 10:00-12:00, lunch, meet again 1:00-3:00. Brunch and lunch available. No registration fee, just \$8.00 for meals. Let us know you're coming so we can order food. We will have reports from National and International WILPF as well as branch presentations, so we can learn of their activities and meet each other. Discussions on WILPF priorities—Water, Building a Beloved Community, the Middle East.

We will host guests Friday night, so please let Carol Bequette know if you have a bed available (229-9661). Call in food reservations Jean Hays (439-0280), Joan Poss (227-6134)

### Special donation...

(by Ellie Bluestein)

A set of the Jane Addams Peace Award books was presented to the Ann M Leavenworth school on behalf of Fresno WILPF. Ann was a valued member of Fresno WILPF for many years. She served on the Fresno School Board and the State Board of Education and was responsible for many student-friendly innovations and improvements as well as for involving the community in the education process. Many WILPF members were active in having a school named in her honor. Each year on Ann's birthday a set of the Jane Addams Peace Award books has been presented to their resource center.

Send in your donations for the Uprooting Racism project during our Women's Herstory Month fundraising!

### National WILPF...

is planning a robust presence at the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, June 27-July1. To read about this and other National WILPF work, visit <www.wilpf.org>

### Thoughts

(from Catherine Garoupa)

Earth Day - a time to reflect on humans' relationship with the vast, varied natural world surrounding us. Working for the Central Valley Air Quality (CVAQ) Coalition, that topic has dominated my thoughts a lot lately. During many different local events about health and the environment, one principle that repeatedly comes up is the Native American tradition of considering the impact today's decisions will have in seven generations. If only!!

Here are some thoughts (in my opinion, profound insights) from Chief Seattle:

*"How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?"*

*Every part of the Earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clear and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people ....*

*The rivers of our brothers they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember to teach your children that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness that you would give my brother....*

*The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath...if we sell you our land, you must remember*

*that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers."*

### WILPF Calendar

**Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup> @ 7 PM - WILPF meeting, Fresno Center for Nonviolence**

**Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> @ 10 am – 5 pm, Tower and Griffith Post Offices, Tax Day flyer distribution – Show people how their tax dollars are *really* being spent!!**

**Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 12 to 1pm: Women in Black – Silent Anti-War Vigil @ Fresno State Free Speech Area, Speaker's Platform – Wear black, bring a sign, women only. Co-sponsored by Campus Peace & Civil Liberties Coalition and POWER. Please call Meta Schettler 278-4593 or see <[www.womeninblack.org](http://www.womeninblack.org)> for more information.**

**Wednesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 3 PM: WILPF Stir-It-Up on KFCF 88.1 FM – featuring Kathy Kelly with Voices for Creative Nonviolence**

**Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 9 am to 3 pm: WILPF Cluster Meeting, Margaret Hudson's Barn (Full details below.)**

#### SAVE THE DATE:

**Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, WILPF Yard Sale – 804 East Fedora, Nancy Waitdlow's house. Call 224-1738 for pickup or directions. Get your good junk out where it can be treasure for someone else and for WILPF! Make space.**



**Randi Rhodes is on Air America Radio**

## Save Progressive Talk Radio in Fresno

By Billie Jo Emery

Many faithful listeners were shocked and devastated to learn that KFPT, Fresno's Progressive Talk radio station is being sold and is expected to change format in the next few weeks. It is expected that the new format will be sports-oriented.

KFPT offers a variety of Progressive hosts and programming and fills a void in this area. For many it was eye-opening as hosts presented facts and background information that other media often leave unreported.

An effort is under way to save Progressive Talk in

Fresno.

NonstopRadio.com is a group which was able to save their Progressive station in Madison, Wi. when it was announced that the station owner wanted to change to a different format. This group is available to help those in other areas faced with similar situations. Save Fresno Progressive Talk Radio is working with them. Since our local station is being sold, however, the situation is more complicated.

Efforts are being made to contact both the new and current owners of the station to see if there's anything that can still be done at this point. Another option is to look for another station in the area that would be open to switching to this format, or possibly buying a station.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Petitions are being circulated to show listener support for Progressive Talk. It is important to show that listeners value this station and support the sponsors.

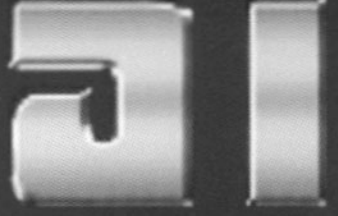
For more information, volunteering to help in some way, or to request petitions, please contact:

Save Fresno Progressive Talk Radio  
c/o Billie Jo Emery  
4980 E. Heaton Av. #116  
Fresno, Ca. 93727  
Phone: (559) 229-2800  
email: [Amber1andBJ@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Amber1andBJ@sbcglobal.net)

### Partnerships in Understanding

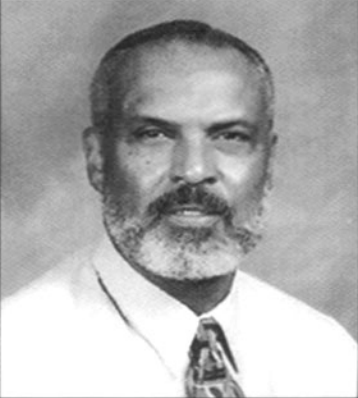
**Consultations with Richard Stone, M.A. concerning life values and mental health**

**First meeting at no cost  
(559) 266-2559**



## A-One Brokers

## A-1 Realtors



**Ira E. Simpson**  
Owner/Broker  
Notary Public

**Office**  
(559) 226-2300  
**Fax**  
(559) 226-5300  
**Cell**  
(559) 647-7171

**1761 W. Shaw #103**  
**Fresno, CA 93711**

# PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Sunday, April 1  
2 - 10 PM**

Freeze Relief Benefit on Encina next to the Fox Theater in Visalia. All day food drop-off site Music by Mezcal, Conjunto Califas, Pleasant Uprising and Falling Awake Donation/Admission - Tri Tip BBQ. Co-sponsors: Tommy's Restaurant Color Spot AFSC Proyecto Campesino Put on your dancing shoes! Let's help those families whose lives have been severely impacted by the Freeze of 2007! Bring your canned food and your donations! If you can't come, make your donations to AFSC-Proyecto Campesino - Freeze Relief. Mailing address: 208 W. Main Street, Ste. M, Visalia, California 93291. 733-4844. One hundred percent of your donation will go to assist freeze victims.

**April 1 & 2**

Soulforce Equality Riders at Fresno's Pacific University. To see why they are coming to FPU, go to: <http://www.soulforce.org/article/926>

In March 2007, fifty-six young activists will board two buses and begin a two month long journey that will take them to thirty-two colleges that have policies banning the enrollment of openly LGBT students. Through dialogue with administrators, faculty and students, the young activists of the 2007 Equality Ride will make clear the harmful effects of the false notion that homosexuality is a "sickness and a sin." To make public their case for equality, the young activists on the Equality Ride will hold vigils, Bible studies, class discussions, community forums, and press conferences.

For more information, see: <http://www.soulforce.org/index.php>

**Sunday, April 1  
7 PM**

Soulforce Equality Riders presentation and get-together at College Community Congregational Church. Dessert will be served. All are welcome. For more information call 435-2690.

**Thursday, April 5  
6 PM**

Rockin' Blues & Zydeco. Blues Master Ron Thompson, 6 pm, free. Evo Bluestein & Bad Boys Zydeco, 9 pm \$5. Crossroads (SW corner Cedar & Shields - 559-222-2233). Dance, listen, have a beer. For more information see: <http://www.evobluestein.com/crossroads.html>

**Friday, April 6  
4:30 - 6:30 PM**

Join Peace Fresno at the Peace Corner, Blackstone and Shaw, to protest the Iraq War. Help convince Congress and the President that we must end this immoral and illegal war and bring the troops home now.

**Tuesday, April 10  
3 - 4: 30 PM**

Harm Reduction and Needle Exchange: Fresno County, A Case Study. A presentation by Dr. Marc Lasher. Reception immediately following presentation. This event will be held at the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Peters Building, Room 191, California State University, Fresno

\*Relaxed Parking in University Business Center Lot and Parking Lot A. \*There is NO CHARGE for admission.

Dr. Marc Lasher is the medical director of the Fresno Free Medical Clinic, clinical physician at the Aegis-Fresno methadone clinic, and clinical instructor for the Family and Community Medicine Residency Program at UCSF- Fresno. He is a dedicated community activist who has worked tirelessly to enhance access to health care for the most vulnerable populations in Fresno County. Dr. Lasher has been recognized by Temple Beth Israel, the Fresno- Madera Medical Society and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for his community service efforts. He received a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Social Work and a teaching credential from California State University, Fresno and received a Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine from the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific.

For more information, please contact the College of Health and Human Services at 559- 278- 4004. University faculty, staff, students and community colleagues are all WELCOME!

**Wednesday, April 11  
12 Noon and 7:00 PM**

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence (1584 N. Van Ness)

Monthly Video Series. April video: "The Ground Truth." Patriotic young Americans, ordinary men and women who heeded the call for military service in Iraq, as they experience recruitment and training, combat, homecoming and the struggle to reintegrate with families and communities. The terrible conflict in Iraq is a prelude for the even more challenging battles fought by the soldiers returning home with personal demons, an uncomprehending public, and an indifferent government. Both showings are at the Center. There will be a potluck at 6:30, prior to the evening showing, and a discussion afterward. All are invited. FREE. For info call 237-3223

**Friday, April 13**

The Road to Freedom Bus Tour will be in Fresno. Discrimination against people with disabilities interferes with their freedom, access, and inclusion and limits job opportunities and self sufficiency.

For more information contact Lisa Brown, Fresno Disability Rights Advocates, 559-485-5199. [lab2000lab@aol.com](mailto:lab2000lab@aol.com)

**Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 13-15**

Fresno Filmworks presents the 3rd Annual Fresno Film Festival at the Tower Theatre--22 films from 12 countries. To celebrate this year's theme, "The Craft of Film," filmmakers from Hollywood and from the Central Valley will present their work and talk about their craft. Festival passes can be purchased online at [www.fresnofilmworks.org](http://www.fresnofilmworks.org) ; the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave.; The Movies, 1435 N. Van Ness Ave.; WineStyles in Fig Garden Village, and at the door, for \$40. Tickets for individual programs can be purchased from TicketMaster. For full schedule information, go to [http://www.fresnofilmworks.org/f\\_festival07.php](http://www.fresnofilmworks.org/f_festival07.php)

**Friday, April 13  
2 - 5 PM**

Center for Independent Living open house at 3008 N Fresno Street. Empowering people with disabilities since 1976. Questions? Call: 221-2330.

**Friday, April 13  
6:00 - 6:30 P.M. Reception & No Host Bar  
6:30 - 7:30 Dinner and Keynote Speaker Congressman Jim Costa  
7:30 - 8:30 Recognition of Pillars of the Party**

Join the Democratic Party Central Committee as they celebrate the Pillars of the Party at the Ramada Inn University, 324 E. Shaw, Fresno. Reserve your seat by calling: 834-9900. Tickets can be delivered as necessary. \$50 per person. Mail checks to: FCDCC, PO Box 1121, Clovis, CA 93613. Sponsorships and Tables Available. For information contact Gary Alford - (559) 906-5611.

"Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and officials, but the voters of this country." Franklin D. Roosevelt

**Friday, April 13  
8 PM**

The Occupation: Is it Apartheid? Guest speaker: Michael Hubbard at the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, 2111 E Nees Avenue at Maple. Mr. Hubbard, a member of the Olympia, Wa Friends (Quaker) Meeting, will present an eye-witness report on the daily lives of Palestinians under occupation. He will share the Israeli harassment by soldiers & settlers of school children and describe his activities in Hebron to help protect children en route to school.

Mr. Hubbard has extensive experience in the Middle East. He has worked for a contractor for the U.S. Development Agency as a professor of Actuarial Science at the University of Cairo. This event is co-sponsored by Peace Fresno.

**April 13, 14, & 15**

Fresno Filmworks Presents the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fresno Film Festival.

**April 13-21**

2<sup>nd</sup> Central California Valley Journey for Justice. For more information see page 1 & 3.

**Saturday, April 14  
3:30 PM**

The Central Valley Progressive PAC meets at the Cen-

ter for Non Violence, 1584 N. Van Ness at Mc Kinley. Howard Watkins , newly retired, is the chair. Brenda Emerson is vice-chair. Mark Stout and Laura Fultz have accepted an invitation to speak about solar energy. We would like to know how competitive mega-solar panels are and how would the City of Fresno go about to help homeowners and businesses put solar panels right away. Bring your questions. Call Lydia Flores for information at 435-7360 or [www.cvpac.org](http://www.cvpac.org)

**Saturday, April 14  
7 PM**

The California State University Fresno Feminist Activism class and P.O.W.E.R. will present the Runway Peace Project, an anti-militarism fashion show, in the Satellite Student Union at Fresno State (CSUF). The event is free and will also feature music, poetry, art, information tables, and more. The purpose of the Runway Peace Project is to deconstruct the militaristic doctrine that has infiltrated our culture and lead us into war, and to ultimately challenge its supposed normalcy by presenting thought provoking images, fashion and information. We will provide statistics and analysis with regard to war as well as opportunities to get involved with activism in our community. If you have any questions or would like to get involved you may contact us at: [runwaypeaceproject@yahoo.com](mailto:runwaypeaceproject@yahoo.com) or [www.myspace.com/runwaypeaceproject](http://www.myspace.com/runwaypeaceproject)

**Tuesday, April 17  
6 - 8 PM**

The Advocacy Coalition of Tulare County (ACT) for Women and Girls, and Planned Parenthood Mar Monte (PPMM), are convening a new alliance to address justice issues that are critical to Central Valley communities. They are initiating the Central Valley Alliance for Women and Justice with an initial focus on sex education in our communities, and other reproductive justice issues.

This meeting will be co-hosted by the ACLU of Northern California, a sponsor of California's progressive sex education law. Each of us understands the frustration of working in "silos," often struggling to get our voices and those of our constituents heard among the more organized and allied groups in both the northern and southern areas of the state. Our goal with the Alliance is to break out of these silos by establishing a connectedness among like-minded activists and advocates working in the Valley.

This meeting will take place at the American Red Cross Building 505 W. Main Visalia, CA 93291 (On the corner of S "W" St. and Main Street. Phone # 559.732.6436) The meeting will use a World Café format and include a light dinner. Seating is limited and will be based on a first response basis. Individuals and organizations from throughout the Central Valley (San Joaquin to Kern counties) are invited to participate. Feel free to share this invitation with other progressive people and groups. The Alliance for Women & Justice believes in bringing all age groups together as equal partners in advocacy for equality and justice.

Please RSVP by April 13th to: Patsy Montgomery at 559-488-4908 x 301 or Email her at [patsy\\_montgomery@ppmarmonte.org](mailto:patsy_montgomery@ppmarmonte.org)

**Tuesday, April 17  
7 PM**

The Cost of Nuclear Energy: What's Really at Stake? Open Panel Discussion. This event will be held at CSU-Fresno in McLane 121 at 7 p.m.. This is a free event sponsored by the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition. For more information, contact Donna Hardina at 278-2307.

**Friday, April 20  
4:30 PM**

The Fresno State chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) will be hosting a 420 event. Start time is 4:30 pm in the free speech area on Fresno State's campus. There will be music by The Attila and Dave Project, Murder Americana and others. There will be speeches by medicinal marijuana lawyer, Bill McPike, along with multiple informational booths. The event is free of charge to all. This is a non-smoking event because of campus regulations. For more information contact: Aron Oblath at [musicman737@csufresno.edu](mailto:musicman737@csufresno.edu). For more information about NORML see: <http://www.canorml.org/>



Friday, April 20  
5:15 PM

Innocent Voices.  
Luis Mandoki. 2004. Mexico/Puerto Rico/USA. Spanish w/English subtitles. 120 min. Rated R for disturbing violence and some language.

Set in 1980's El Salvador, where Chava's twelfth birthday enlists him automatically in the army. Chava, spends his 11th year chasing a first love, shielding siblings from bullets, testing his mother, and taking on the role of his absent father. 2005 Seattle Int'l Film Festival- Best Picture Audience Award, 2005 Santa Barbara Film Festival - Audience Award, 2005 River Run Film Festival - Jury Best Picture Award And Best Foreign Language Film Award And Best Screenplay Award Post-screening discussants, CSUF Salvadoran students, Walter Ramirez & Maria Rivera

Cineculture continues to be a film series provided as a service to the Fresno State campus students, faculty, and staff at no charge. However, anyone interested in taking Cineculture for academic credit for the Fall semester, please sign up through Continuing and Global Education: tel. 278-0333. For further info., contact Dr. Denise Blum [dblum@csufresno.edu](mailto:dblum@csufresno.edu). This film will be shown in McLane 121 on the CSUF campus.

Saturday, April 21

The Interfaith Youth Alliance is organizing its Annual Earth Day Clean up. More information will be posted soon on [www.ifya\\_net.org](http://www.ifya_net.org)

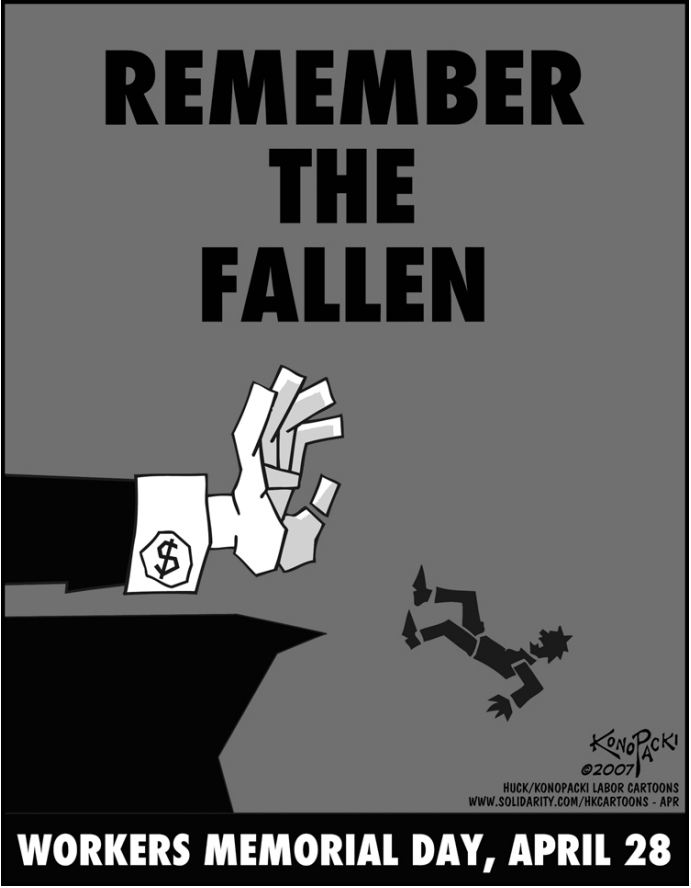
Sunday, April 22

Earth Day  
For information about the origin of Earth Day, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Day)

Wednesday, April 25

7 PM  
Life and Music of John Coltrane at the Woodward Park Regional Library, 488-3856

In celebration of Jazz Appreciation Month, the Library will host a discussion of Coltrane's life and music lead by Les Nunes. The Buchanan High School Jazz Combo



will also give a musical performance. Co-sponsored by Jazz Fresno and radio station KFSR. This is a free event.

Thursday, April 26

12 Noon - 1 PM  
WOMEN IN BLACK. For Justice. Against War. Please join us for a silent vigil. Protesting all forms of militarism! CSUF Free Speech Area, Speakers' Platform. Wear black, bring a sign, women only. Co-sponsored by: Campus Peace & Civil Liberties Coalition, POWER & WILPF, Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. Please call 278-4593 for more information.

Friday, April 27

5:15 PM  
Emmanuel's Gift.  
Drs. Lisa Lax and Nancy Stern (identical twin sisters). 2005. USA. 82 min. English. Rated G. This is the true story of Emmanuel Ofose Yeboah, a disabled athlete from Ghana, Africa, who rode a bicycle across his en-

tire country with one leg. He became a national hero and has become a champion of the disabled for his country. Atlanta Film Festival Audience Award 2005. Post-screening discussion facilitated by Tony Molina, M.D. (Student Health Services)

Cineculture continues to be a film series provided as a service to the Fresno State campus students, faculty, and staff at no charge. However, anyone interested in taking Cineculture for academic credit for the Fall semester, please sign up through Continuing and Global Education: tel. 278-0333. For further info., contact Dr. Denise Blum [dblum@csufresno.edu](mailto:dblum@csufresno.edu). This film will be shown in McLane 121 on the CSUF campus.

Saturday, April 28

Workers Memorial Day. For details, see: <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/>

Saturday, April 28

3 - 5 PM  
A Forum on the Military Commissions Act. Can you be declared a Terrorist and lose your Constitutional Right of Habeas Corpus? This event will be held at the Unitarian Church at 4144 N Millbrook in Fresno. Sponsored by the Social Justice Coordinating Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. Co-sponsored by Peace Fresno

Tuesday, May 1

International Workers Day  
For more information see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Day)

Tuesday, May 1

6:30 PM (doors open) 7 PM (program begins) 7:30 PM (movie)  
May Day event - the movie *Bread and Roses* will be shown. \$10.-cover (but nobody will be turned away for lack of funds), 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323. [www.fullcirclebrewing.com](http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com). This event is a benefit for the Community Alliance newspaper. For more information email [AllianceEditor@Comcast.net](mailto:AllianceEditor@Comcast.net) or call (559) 978-4502.

## Fresno County Library Calendar of Free Events

**Empowering Seniors to Prevent Healthcare Fraud**  
April 2 at 11 am, Woodward Park Regional Library, 453-6767

April 3 at 11 am, Sunnyside Regional Library, 453-6767

April 5 at 11 am, Cedar-Clinton Branch Library, 453-6767

April 6 at 11 :30 am, Fig Garden Regional Library, 453-6767

April 9 at 11 am, Senior Resource Center Library, 453-6767

Seniors and their family members and friends will learn valuable tips in this discussion lead by Beverly Magana from the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program. Information will help participants recognize and guard against healthcare fraud.

**Cowboy Art**

April 4 at 4 pm  
Cedar-Clinton Branch Library, 442-1770  
The artwork of Frank Jackson will appeal to young and not so young alike. Jackson is a former rodeo star and blacksmith artist with an important message about the importance of staying in school and how women can participate in blacksmith work as well.

**Book Discussion: The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary**

April 5 at 7 pm  
Fig Garden Regional Library, 438-4071  
This program is part of a monthly book discussion series. This month's book is by Simon Winchester and can be checked out in print and audiobook formats at multiple library locations.

**Woodward Shakespeare Festival Reader's Theater: "Timon of Athens"**

April 10 at 6:30 pm  
Woodward Park, 488-3856  
Theater and Shakespeare fans will enjoy a staged

reading of this classic work. Bring your copy of the play to read along and then discuss after the performance.

**Book Discussion: Rise and Shine**

April 10 at 7 pm  
Politi Branch Library, 488-3856  
This discussion will precede a presentation by author Anna Quindlen later in the month as part of the Town Hall Lecture Series.

**Bilingual Story Hour**

April 12 at 4 pm  
Sanger Branch Library, 875-2435  
Parents are invited to drop in with their children for stories, songs, rhymes, and finger plays presented in Spanish and English on the second Thursday of each month.

**Genealogy Search at Your Fingertips!**

April 13 at 10 am  
Gillis Branch Library, 224-0140  
Learn to trace your family tree through online library resources. All cultures are welcome.

**Afterschool Stories and Crafts**

April 18 at 3:30 pm  
Sanger Branch Library, 875-2435  
Parents and their children ages 6-12 will enjoy art projects and storytelling.

**Infant & Toddler Lapsit**

April 19 at 4 pm  
Sanger Branch Library, 875-2435  
Parents are invited to bring their children to help get them ready to read with stories, songs, and rhymes.

**Antique Appraisal Clinic**

April 21 at 1 pm  
Mosqueda Branch Library, 442-1770  
Kathryn Osterberg Sobelman will appraise your family heirloom or estate sale treasure. One item per person. Appraisals are verbal estimates only and are not guaranteed.

**Life and Music of John Coltrane**

April 25 at 7 pm  
Woodward Park Regional Library, 488-3856  
In celebration of Jazz Appreciation Month, the Library will host a discussion of Coltrane's life and music lead by Les Nunes. The Buchanan High School Jazz Combo will also give a musical performance. Co-sponsored by Jazz Fresno and radio station KFSR.

**Book Discussion: 44 Scotland Street**

April 26 at 6:30 pm  
Kingsburg Branch Library, 897-3710  
This monthly book discussion meets the final Thursday of each month. This month's book is written by Alex McCall Smith.

**Poet Richard Katrovas**

April 26 at 7 pm  
Woodward Park Regional Library, 488-3856  
Poet and author Richard Katrovas will read from his works. The New York Times book Review has described the poems of Kotravas as "tough, direct, gritty, and full of wonder..."

**Healthy Eating: Diabetes Prevention**

April 27 at 5:15 pm  
Politi Branch Library, 431-6451  
Important health information presented by California State University, Fresno dietetic interns. Sponsored by the University of California Cooperative Extension. Pre-registration is required.

**Branching Out: Hettie Jones on Beat Poets**

April 30 at 7 pm and May 1 at 7 pm  
Woodward Park Regional Library, 488-3856  
Poet Hettie Jones will share readings of her work. Jones' writing reflects the genre known as Beat poetry, which evolved during the 1940s by a group of writers interested in changing consciousness and defying conventional writing. Among this group were such notable writers as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Frank O'Hara, Joel Oppenheimer, and Charles Olson, many of whom were also great friends of Jones. The evening of poetry will start with a jazz prelude by musicians Randy Morris and Jacinda Potikian at 6:30 pm

# Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

The Way Ministries...John 14:6 has been a small Christian outreach working for 15 years out of the home of Rev. Henry Oputa and his wife Francine.

Although employed full-time at Cal Trans, Henry’s heart has always been in establishing a ministry “to share God’s love with neighbors, to inspire self-confidence and motivation for pursuing their goals.” Not sure how best to accomplish this in his adopted homeland, Nigerian-born Henry was inspired by a conference he attended in 1990. Called “African American Males as an Endangered Species” , it addressed challenges to black youth who, statistically, had a better chance of going to jail than to college. “I didn’t hear solutions there, but I knew I had to do something. I prayed for guidance and talked with Francine, and we came to the idea of our ‘Saturday School’, which we began in the spring of ‘91. We developed a curriculum for children up to 12 years of age, focused on African and African-American culture. We teach self-esteem, responsibility and joy in learning.”

In the class, Henry uses the Ibo culture of his upbringing including basic vocabulary, music, games and crafts, to interest the children in their own backgrounds. He also calls on African American professionals—doctors, engineers, business people—to demonstrate the possibilities open to those who educate themselves. He is especially pleased with having been able to bring in his Cal Trans associates to explain the process of building the Highway 180 “gap” right near the U St. neighborhood. The children were able to see the development step-by-step from design to clearing the right-of-way to construction to utilization.

Meanwhile, by 1993, the Oputa’s neighborhood had been cut off by not only by the highway construction but also by the Community hospital expansion, and had fallen into severe neglect. One day, Henry saw a small group of kids hanging around aimlessly, and moved by some combination of ministerial and proprietary concern, addressed them. “Boys, look at the mess on this street. Do you like it?” When they said no,



he said, “Meet me Saturday morning at 9:00 and we’ll clean it up.” He recalls thinking that no one would take him seriously, but come Saturday some 15 kids showed up to work. Thus began the “North U St. Clean-up Project”, which meets the first and third Saturday every month. The program includes prayer, pre-school educational activities, an hour of trash pick-up and (in summer) swimming.

Henry estimates that between the two programs close to 1000 children have participated. He notes that several of his “graduates” stay on to assist (“some have been with us as long as 7 years as participant and helper”); that some have gone on to college (“Francine sometimes has CSUF students show up at her office and ask, ‘Remember us?’”); and he especially remembers two girls, now enrolled at Fresno Pacific, who came by their old neighborhood to say “Thanks for getting us through hell.”

Henry expresses deep appreciation for the total support of his wife and their three children Chunyaendu,

## IDENTITY BOX

**Name— Henry Oputa**  
**Birthplace— Akure, in the state of Ondo, Nigeria**  
**Primary identity—Black American from Nigeria**  
**Religious affiliation—Christian**  
**Fresno stamping grounds—Downtown, West Fresno, the Tower, the Northeast**  
**Inspirational figures: “my father, Chief D.C. Oputa”, Jesus Christ**  
**motto—ifeanyi-chikwu, nothing is impossible with God**  
**other involvements—president of Igbo Association of Central California, a tribal association for immigrant Nigerians**  
**unlikely pleasures—occasional bowling, song writing (in English and Ibo)**

Photo by Howard Watkins

Ife-chudeni and Nwchakwu; the Board members of the Ministry (especially his minister partners Cande Thind and Dr. R.C. Adams); and the professionals who come to address his charges, including colleagues at CalTrans and Bud Gaston.

Henry’s long-range goal has been to establish a full pastorate in the neighborhood, “ a Christian fellowship with Sunday worship services.” And in March the first step in this venture has been taken with the establishment of regular Sunday worship at the nearby Yokomi Elementary School, “fellowship & refreshments 10:30-10:50, worship service at 11:00” .

A man of dignity, sincerity and modesty, Rev. Henry Oputa has quietly made a significant contribution to the “at-risk” neighborhood his family lives in. He is a shining example of what someone with vision and faith can achieve far from the spotlight of publicity and public funding.

Henry is welcoming of help for the children’s programs, both physical (“especially on our twice-yearly field trips bowling and fishing”), and financial; and of prayers in support of his new pastoral endeavor. He can be reached at 233-8546, or by email at [ifeanyi@comcast.net](mailto:ifeanyi@comcast.net) .

# Poem on Media

I heard a story the other day  
about a Bangor Daily News (BDN) media official  
telling peaceniks they had not covered their recent protest  
because it was old news.  
Redundant....old hat....  
stuff like that.

One peacenik thought about it  
and wrote the guy back  
and wondered if the BDN  
was going to judge car crash stories  
and murders and fires  
by the same journalistic standards.

I’m certain the BDN scribe was insulted by such audacity.  
How dare you say such things to me he must have thought.  
I am the creator of the community reality  
I am the maker of fortunes and careers  
I am the breaker of hearts and lives  
I am the one who does as his corporate bosses tell him  
I am the chief lackey around here.  
Who are you to challenge me?

I remember many years ago  
a media gate keeper telling a friend and me  
not to worry our pretty little heads  
about informing the public on a particular concern.  
The newspaper, the Orlando Sentinel, had a plan.  
They were on the case and had it under control.

The media was the message  
the media is the god.  
A democratic debate was not needed  
activism was not needed  
the public was not needed  
agitation was not needed  
ideas from the great unwashed were not needed  
the media boys were on the case.....  
Go home and find something useful to do  
with your otherwise wasted lives.

And so it goes today  
from Iraq to Bangor.The pages are filled with all the news that is fit to be printed.  
Whole sections of the paper are left blank for me now  
as I rustle though the daily rag  
passing the big adverts,  
the color pictures of men in orange suits  
in handcuffs  
on their way to trial  
for another sensational murder  
or driving under the influence  
of a crazy society.

Pages of stories about oranges looking like grapefruit  
and birds singing in winter  
while Baghdad blows up again  
and people cry invisible tears  
and Washington burns our health care money.  
And politicians tell us they are almost there.

The news is twisted  
and turned  
and flattened out  
and squeezed  
and bled  
and contorted  
and changed  
and shortened  
to fit the tiny spaces  
between the ads for women’s underwear  
and cars  
and SUVs  
and hummers  
and big stories about violent video games  
and returning heroes from a war far away.

A letter here and an announcement there  
keep alive the illusion  
that all is well here at home.  
That democracy and the old ways are sound.


But the truth lies with the rusty scissors  
as fewer pages are clipped  
and stored  
in our scrapbooks  
where the stories of our lives

used to be collected to pass on to our children  
so we could teach them  
about the good work that was done  
to keep the fires alive.

Somehow the spirit rages on.  
The Russians learned to read between the lines  
of Pravda  
and today we turn the Times upside down  
trying to learn the same lesson  
so we can be free again.

—  
By Bruce Gagnon to Organizing Notes

Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space  
PO Box 652  
Brunswick, ME 04011  
(207) 443-9502  
<http://www.space4peace.org>  
[globalnet@mindspring.com](mailto:globalnet@mindspring.com)  
<http://space4peace.blogspot.com> (our blog)

<div>PATIENCE MILROD</div> <div>LAWYER/LICENCIADA EN LEYES</div>	844
	North Van Ness
	Fresno, California
	93728
	559/442-3111 pm097@csufresno.edu 

<div>THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF FRESNO</div> <div></div> <div>Welcomes you, whoever you are and whomever you call family, our doors are open.</div>	<div>Rev. Bryan D. Jessup</div> <div>Church School &amp; Sunday Services 9:00 &amp; 11:00am</div> <div>(559) 227-6146 4144 N. Millbrook <a href="http://www.uufresno.org">www.uufresno.org</a></div>
--	--



# A Tale of Mice & Mold Dispatches From The Edge

Conn Hallinan

*“It’s the same the whole world over It’s the poor wot gets the blame It’s the rich wot gets the gravy Ain’t it all a bleeding shame.”*

World War I British soldiers sang that little ditty as they marched off to the horrors of the Marne and Flanders. The wounded vets in Walter Reed Hospital living in run-down rooms infested with rodents, cockroaches and mold could chime in with their own version of a “rich man’s war, poor man’s blood.” Because the current scandal is not about Bush Administration incompetence, it’s about a simple trade off: profits over bandages. When Secretary of Defense Robert Gates fired Army Secretary Francis Harvey following the Washington Post’s devastating revelations, Gates said he did so because the Army has shown “not enough focus on digging into and addressing the problems.”

But “addressing” the problem will require jettisoning former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s high-tech subsidies to the nation’s arms makers at the expense of the grunts, as well as the White House’s mania for privatization. Harvey was brought in by Rumsfeld specifically to reduce the federal work force and, as he said in a speech last year, “improve efficiency.” A former executive for the one of the nation’s leading arms producers, Westinghouse, Harvey hired IAP Worldwide Services run by two former Halliburton executives which promptly reduced the number of people providing service at Walter Reed from 300 to 60.

The cutback and resulting increase in workloads kicked off an exodus of trained personnel, which an in-hospital study just released by the House Committee on Oversight and Governance found could lead to “mission failure.” While President Bush has railed about “red tape” and “bureaucracy” as the source of the problem - Republican metaphors for government the administration has actually allowed veterans’ health care to lag behind civilian care. And more cuts, plus a funding freeze by 2010, are on the boards. In contrast are the way the “Big Five” arms companies, Lockheed Martin. Northrup Grumman, Boeing, General Dynamics, and Raytheon are treated. The first three of the above “Five” will corner one out of every four dollars in the \$481.5 billion military budget.

In turn, the companies pony up tens of millions in contributions by Election Day. Since 2000, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman and General Dynamics have poured \$62.5 million into the election cycles, favoring Republicans at a rate of a little more than two to one.

Someone always has to pay for these handouts, and in this case it’s the vets. Take the disability scandal. A recent study by Army Times found that the Army is systematically shortchanging wounded soldiers by keeping their disability ratings low. According to the Government Accountability Office, the number of soldiers approved for full disability benefits fell from 642 in 2001 to 209 in 2005, in spite of a huge influx of wounded and disabled from the Iraq War.

If soldiers are rated 30 percent or more disabled they are entitled to disability retirement pay, medical benefits and commissary privileges where prices for goods are significantly lower than in the civilian market. A rating below 30 percent means they get severance pay and no benefits.

What the Army (and Navy, Marines and Air Force) are doing is deliberately low-balling the disability ratings and then throwing up roadblocks to force soldiers into the Veterans Administration (VA). While the VA does generally raise the disability ratings, the Army saves money because the VA designation does not come with

*“It’s the same the whole world over  
It’s the poor wot gets the blame  
It’s the rich wot gets the gravy  
Ain’t it all a bleeding shame.”*

commissary and exchange privileges, or military health care.

In one case, a Marine was discharged for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at 10 percent disability. Using the same information that was used in the Marines Corps’ determination, the VA rated him at 50 percent disability.

If the Army rates soldiers lower than 30 percent, and those soldiers develop disabling conditions after they are discharged, tough. They can go to the VA, but besides their severance pay, they get no more money from the Army.

This is not about big bucks. In 2004, the Army paid out \$1.3 billion in disability benefits to some 90,000 soldiers. The current war in Iraq is costing approximately \$8 billion a month.

What Army Times found was that soldiers, uninformed that they could appeal their disability rating, accepted the first rating they were offered. “Soldiers are trained,” says Ron Smith, deputy general counsel for Disabled American Veterans. “When the evaluation board says, this is what you get,’ the soldiers say, Yes sir.’ A lot of people don’t appeal.”

Indeed, only one in 10 challenge their assigned rating.

What the boards are very eager to do is put soldiers on “temporary disability retirement” that reduces their basic pay and tosses them out of hospitals. That category has jumped four-fold between 2001 and 2005.

Most of these vets go home, they are on “temporary disability” for 18 months before they are reevaluated again to find there are either no services available for them or that such services are hundreds of miles away. According to an Associated Press study of soldiers killed in Iraq, almost 50 percent come from towns of fewer than 25,000, and 20 percent from towns of less than 5,000.

Not only are these towns small, they are poor. Almost 75 percent of the dead came from towns whose inhabitants earned below the mean per capita national income, and more than half from towns where poverty rates topped the national average.

When veteran advocates complained about the disability issue, Pentagon spokesperson Marine Major Stewart Upton responded with the verbal equivalent of the “fog of war”: “We are in the midst of a business-process review that will generate improvements to the program effectiveness, including timeliness goals for processing cases and standard definitions of start and end points as well as other metrics to ensure that progress can be accurately measured over time against common metrics.”

Squalor and disability rip-offs are just a part of the way that the Pentagon is shortchanging vets. According to findings released by the American Psychological Assn., the military’s mental health system is so overwhelmed that returning vets and their families are not getting the help they need.

While more than three out of 10 returning solders from Iraq and Afghanistan have a “mental disorder,” a special task force found there was “no evidence of a well-coordinated or well-disseminated approach to providing behavioral health care to service members and their families.” Some 40 percent of the psychologist slots in the Army and Navy are unfilled, which not only means vets and their families don’t get seen, but that the psychological staff on the job is overwhelmed. According to the study, 33 percent of the mental health staff is burned out, and another 27 percent reports “low motivation for their work.”

When the vets go home, there are even fewer mental health resources, and between 80 to 90 percent of the caregivers are not trained to deal with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). “I know guys who are dealing with doctors who have no concept of PSTD,” Russell Terry, chief executive officer of the Iraq War Veterans Organization told the Houston Chronicle.

Screwing the vets isn’t incompetence; it’s a trade off. If someone gets the gravy, someone gets the shaft.

559-485-4787

PARALEGAL ASSISTANCE  
UNLIMITED

Family Advocacy (Help With Any Legal Matter) & Divorce

IRENE ZUPKO

255 N. Fulton #107  
Paralegal / Investigator / Notary  
Fresno, CA 93701  
Cal. P.I. LIC. #A7625-1  
E-mail: irenezupko@aol.com

PAUL PIERCE

PAUL PIERCE

ORGANIZATION  
DESIGN &  
DEVELOPMENT

636 EAST FLORADORA  
FRESNO, CA 93728  
559.264.4421  
PAULPIERCE@COMCAST.NET

Sue Stone MD

Holistic & Integrative  
Family Medicine

559.435.1650  
Fax: 559.435.1471  
docsue@docsue.com

7415 N. Cedar Ave. Suite #101 • Fresno, CA 93720

NOTHING  
IS  
TOO  
GOOD  
FOR OUR  
TROOPS!

Literally.

# OPINION AND ANALYSIS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

## Why I Belong to an Open and Affirming Church

By Ruth Gadebusch

What happened? Is there something in the air? March seems to have morphed from Women's History Month to Bash Gays Month! Almost simultaneously, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared homosexual acts as immoral; a Baptist minister said even though homosexuality was inborn it was a sin to practice; and the Pope reaffirmed his stand on homosexuality and ordered politicians to fight for the church's stand. Wow!



Hope for some softening of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, had come in the Pentagon's data that half as many homosexuals were discharged in 2006 (612) as in 2001 (1,227). Also, the Williams Institute of UCLA did a study ascertaining that 65,000 gay men and lesbians currently serve in the military with approximately a million veterans. Marine General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff dashed any hope of softening when he came out stunningly for the policy, saying, "We should not condone immoral acts." When these comments raised a ruckus, he attempted to backtrack, which was one of those times that the more you try to explain, the worse it gets.

One prominent columnist has defended his right as a Christian to hold such beliefs. As a private citizen that might be true but as a government official it was totally out of order. Although I must note that I don't quite understand how a religion that promotes love and tolerance can be so intolerant.

Adding to the problem of individuals having to live in secrecy is the loss of skills needed by the military. It seems to be a short sighted policy at best. At worse it is discriminatory for no advantage to the military, not to mention this nation's commitment to fairness. Many military women can attest to more problems created by heterosexual men than having homosexuals in the military. Of course, the same conservatives don't like women in the military either, do they?

Perhaps topping the general was the pronouncement of The Rev. R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., that scientific research "points to some level of biological causation." For most of us that means that homosexuality is beyond the control of an individual. For the good reverend it means that homosexuality remains a sin, regardless of its base. Furthermore, there might be possible medical treatment in utero to change the baby's sexual orientation. I don't know how that stacks up with the religion's usual condemnation of stem cell research and other medical advances.

Not to be outdone, Pope Benedict XVI reaffirmed his ultra conservative views and urged politicians to fight for legislation banning gay marriage and all such matters. Granted, he has the right to demand whatever he pleases of his church members. He does not have the right to legislate it for all. Adherence to religious doctrine is a matter of persuasion, not legislation, in this nation. Remember that bit about separation of church and state.

My own church was the first in Fresno to become "Open and Affirming" meaning ALL are welcome. This was done after much study and contemplation and we did lose a few members; however, we gained much, much more. Admittedly, bowing to the tender sensibilities of a few, we call it a commitment service rather than wedding.

The question of gay marriage could easily be solved by government offering civil unions with all the ensuing rights (not a new idea in much of the world), leaving the churches to offer marriage according to their own beliefs. It is time for acceptance of homosexuals in all phases of our society. Another's sexual orientation does not affect my orientation, nor my marriage. It isn't contagious, folks! Whether by choice or innate, it does not matter. Personal behavior is just that: personal so long as it does not infringe on

another. I suspect that homosexuals have contributed to society in direct proportion to their numbers. Here, I note that the first casualty in Iraq was homosexual, many of our most revered artists were/are homosexual and on and on in every segment of society. It is time — past time — that they be accepted as the human beings they are. Let us stop this fuss and get on with respect for all.

###

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

**FULL CIRCLE BREWING CO. LTD.**  
The most unique micro-brewery and  
live entertainment venue in Fresno  
620 F St. Downtown Fresno  
[www.fullcirclebrewing.com](http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com)

**QUAKERS**  
FRESNO FRIENDS MEETING  
Silent Worship Sunday 10-11 AM  
2219 San Joaquin, Fresno

ALL WELCOME

**Perfect Balance Yoga**

NW corner of  
Fresno & Shaw

info1@PB Yoga.com  
[www.pbyoga.com](http://www.pbyoga.com)  
559-222-6212

5091 N Fresno St | Ste 133 | Fresno, CA 93710

**Jacob M. Weisberg**  
Attorney at Law

LAW OFFICE OF  
**JACOB M. WEISBERG**  
844 N. VAN NESS AVE.  
FRESNO, CA 93728

(559) 441-0201  
FAX (559) 442-3164  
EMAIL: [jmw@jweisberglaw.com](mailto:jmw@jweisberglaw.com)

**Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley**

Meets on the 3d Sunday of each month  
in Room 1 at the UU Church,  
4144 N Millbrook at 1:00 pm.

"A welcoming community"

HSJV Web site: <http://fresno.humanists.net/>

**First Congregational Church**  
United Church of Christ  
2131 N. Van Ness Blvd. (South of Clinton)  
559-227-8489

Sunday Worship & School 10:00 am

We welcome you...no matter who you are  
or where you are on life's journey.

**The Big Red Church**





Seven years ago **TOWER GARDEN SUPPLY** opened with a modest budget and a passion for gardening. Since then we've grown much stronger thanks to the support of our local community. Now T.G.S. boasts a reputation as an industry leader in **HYDROPONICS & LIGHTING**.

**DISCOVER WHAT THE BUZZ IS ALL ABOUT!**

**\*Huge Inventory of Lighting, Hydroponics & Organic Soils**

**\*Over 500 Sq. Ft. of Working Hydroponic Gardens & Growrooms**

**\*Complete Turn-Key Grow Room Setups ranging from 2'x2' to 40'x60'**

**\*Authorized Distributor of Current Culture Hydroponics**

**\*Largest Sunlight Supply Lighting Dealer in the Valley**

**\*Supporting School & Community Garden Projects**

**\*Locally Owned & Operated Since 1999**

[www.towergardensupply.net](http://www.towergardensupply.net)

**FRESNO-TOWER DISTRICT**

**3 E. OLIVE**

**(559)495-1140**



**VISALIA-DOWNTOWN**

**121 N. COURT**

**(559)627-2323**



**MENTION THIS AD  
TO RECEIVE 10%  
OFF ALL LIGHTING &  
GROW ROOM SETUPS**

# Grandma's

## ALL NATURAL

MARKET & NURSERY



403 W. Olive Ave.  
Fresno, CA 93728  
**(559) 495-1141**

*Located in the heart of the most agriculturally  
productive valley in the world.*

- ☼ Organically grown herbs, California natives and vegetable starts
- ☼ Natural groceries and locally grown organic produce

*Providing people with healthy life-style alternatives  
while helping to build a stronger community.*

FRESNO **F** FILMWORKS PRESENTS

# 3RD ANNUAL FRESNO FILM FESTIVAL

20+ FILMS FROM 12 COUNTRIES  
CELEBRATING THE CRAFT OF FILM



**APRIL 13-15  
2007**

**AT THE HISTORIC TOWER THEATRE**

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO

**FRESNOFILMWORKS.ORG**

TICKETS & FESTIVAL PASSES AT TICKETMASTER OUTLETS, TICKETMASTER.COM OR 559.485.TIXS. ALSO AVAILABLE AT TOWER THEATRE BOX OFFICE, WINE STYLES AND THE MOVIES VIDEO STORE. FOR MORE INFO 559.221.0755

**PRESENTING SPONSOR: KJEWEL**

FRESNO ARTS COUNCIL, PARDINI'S CATERING, JA PHOTOGRAPHY, KFSR RADIO, JANZEN IDEACORP, SMG, CAMERAD INC., CON AM, VALLEY PUBLIC TELEVISION, DONAGHY SALES, PROFESSIONAL PRINT & MAIL INC.

Leaves of Grass  
Landscape Design

559-877-2089

Rebecca Wamsley  
34134 Wild Rose Lane  
North Fork, CA 93643

Eclectic Design  
Water Features  
Mosaic

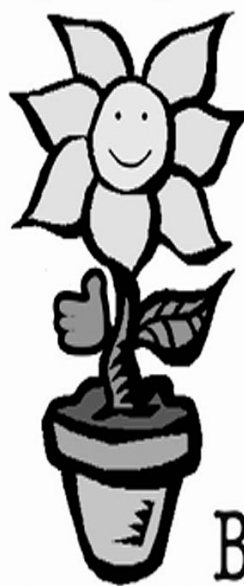


**PINE RIDGE GOATS**

ENVIROMENTALLY FRIENDLY  
VEGETATION CLEARING  
FIRE FUEL REDUCTION SERVICE  
REG. PUREBRED KIKO BREEDING STOCK  
ABCA BORDER COLLIES

Tina & David Cheney  
36125 Cressman Rd, Shaver Lake, Ca. 93664.  
559-841-2179 cell 559-285-1507 vehicle 559-974-7928  
[pineridgegoats@netptc.net](mailto:pineridgegoats@netptc.net)

**hydroponic & indoor garden supply**



**Payneless Gardening**  
member of Family Hydroponics

Phone: **(559) 252-1656**  
**4656 E. Dakota Fresno**

**B'CUZZ**  
Stimulants

GENERAL  
HYDROPONICS  
— bringing nature and technology together —



**familyhydroponics.com**



## The Howard K. Watkins Photographic Archive Project

Longtime Fresno community photographer and activist, Howard K. Watkins, is partnering with the Fresno Regional Foundation and the Henry Madden Library at CSU Fresno to establish the Howard K. Watkins Photographic Archive Project. The Project's goal is to make Howard's more than 150,000 photographs publicly accessible as an online historical archive.

The collection includes photographs of numerous progressive and social justice groups and activities, elected officials at all levels of government, community and business leaders, members of the judiciary and legal community, celebrities, events, parades, political rallies, athletes, historic buildings, several award winning photographs, and much more. The collection is the largest of its kind documenting much of the greater Fresno area since the 1970's.

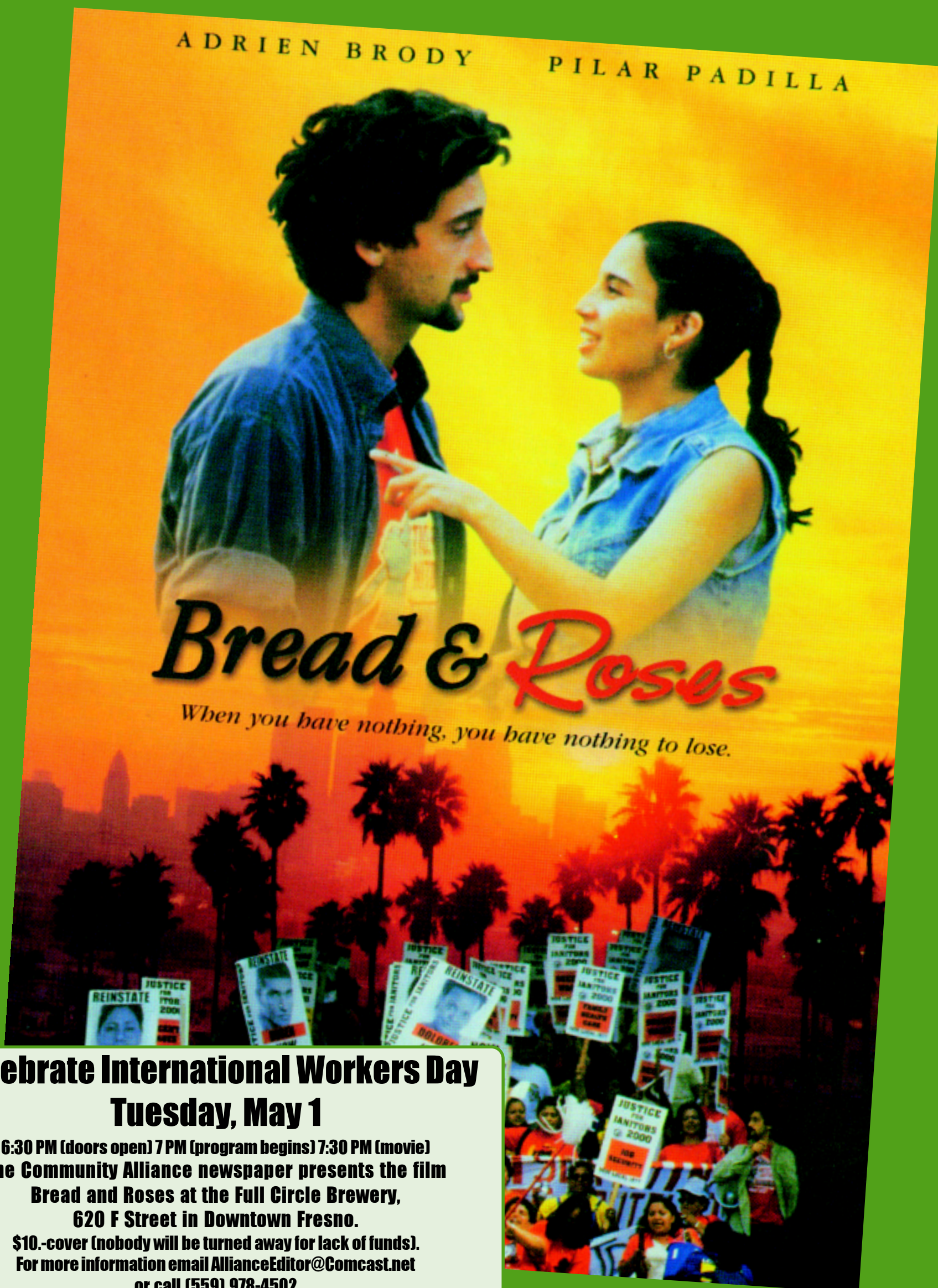
Howard will be donating his time to help input identifying information for each photograph made available online. The cost for the Project includes \$100,000 to have his 120,000 negatives professionally scanned into photographs. Those photographs, plus Howard's more recent 30,000+ digital photographs, cost \$50,000 to put online, and another \$50,000 to include a comprehensive index and archival storage system.

This is your opportunity to preserve this visual history of our community. Individuals and organizations pledging monetary support this year will be listed on the project website as Charter Donors at the following levels: Patron (\$10,000+), Benefactor (\$5,000+), Sponsor (\$1,000+), Donor (\$500+), Booster (\$250), Supporter (\$100), Friend (\$50), and Other. Due to the long-term nature of this project (it will take thousands of hours to identify the people in all of the photographs), donors of

\$1,000 or more may commit to payment over two years.

The Fresno Regional Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, is accepting tax-deductible donations to support this project with donations to be made payable to the "Fresno Regional Foundation." Please note that your donation is for the "HKW Photo Archive Fund." Howard requests readers of the Community Alliance to send their check c/o the Community Alliance at PO Box 5077, Fresno, CA 93755. The Community Alliance can then bundle the checks and forward them to the Regional Foundation. This will enable the Project to give recognition to both the individual donor and to the Community Alliance.

For more information about the project, you can e-mail Howard directly at [watkins3@comcast.net](mailto:watkins3@comcast.net)



### Celebrate International Workers Day Tuesday, May 1

6:30 PM (doors open) 7 PM (program begins) 7:30 PM (movie)  
The Community Alliance newspaper presents the film  
**Bread and Roses** at the Full Circle Brewery,  
620 F Street in Downtown Fresno.  
\$10.-cover [nobody will be turned away for lack of funds].  
For more information email [AllianceEditor@Comcast.net](mailto:AllianceEditor@Comcast.net)  
or call (559) 978-4502