

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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The Voice of the Progressive Movement since 1996



Use the Restroom - Go to Jail!

By Mike Rhodes

Sherri Williams was cited by the police (7-7-07) because she tried to use the restroom at McDonald's at Olive and highway 99 in Fresno. Williams and her husband Al are regular customer at McDonald's, they're homeless and she uses a wheelchair. On that morning, Al bought a cup of coffee and Sherri headed to the restroom. That is when McDonald's manager Michelle Torres saw Sherri and said "I need you to go, you're not purchasing anything, I need you to go." Al told Torres that Sherri needed to use the restroom and wash her hands and after that she would buy something. Torres went to summons a police officer who was in the restaurant.

Moments later the officer arrived and said "They tell me they are asking you to leave but you aren't leaving." Al said "Why do we have to leave?" The officer replied that "This is a private restaurant and they can refuse service to anybody." Al pointed out that they can only refuse service if they have a reason. The officer re-

sponded by saying that if she does not leave "She is going to be arrested."

Sherri was then taken outside and given a citation - PC 602.1 for "Interfering with Business" by officer D.J. Onruh that demands she show up in criminal court on September 5. Sherri and Al believe that they are being discriminated against because they are homeless and Sherri is in a wheelchair. In a letter Sherri sent to McDonald's on June 29, 2007, she wrote about an incident that happened three days earlier. In that incident, Sherri wrote "I was subject to harassment and false accusations by employees of the establishment for use of a public restroom. As a patron at this restaurant there was no legal cause or justification to be escorted out of McDonalds by a Fresno City Police Officer."

Sherri admits that she might take longer in the restroom than other customers because of her disability. In her letter of June 29, Sherri wrote "I have been a regular

patron of this location for several years and never have had regular customers make complaints about my use of the restroom nor harassed by Mc Donald staff as I have in recent months by current management. I am not certain if it's my homelessness or disability but it seems that my presence annoys these employees regardless of the fact that I have patronized McDonalds for years. I may have left a slight mess when using the restroom but it is partly because of my health, limited condition and the inadequate dispenser in the women's restroom. I am not clear who sets the policies, practices and procedures at this establishment but it certainly violations the Americans with Disabilities Act as it relates to accommodating an individual with a disability and the inadequate dispenser in the restroom."

Waiting in the parking lot, while the officer wrote up the citation for her crime of needing to use the bath-

Continued on page 7

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

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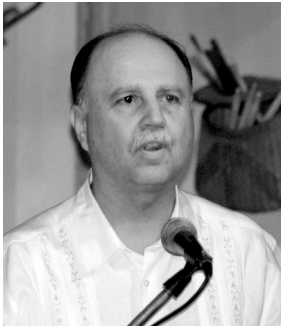
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From the Editor

A number of people have asked me what I thought they should do to help build a stronger movement for peace, social, and economic justice. That is a

hard question to answer because there is so much to be done and people have a wide range of skills, interests, time, and what they feel passionate about. What I think it boils down to is this - do what you feel passionate about and use the skills you enjoy working with. One person might enjoy working on the computer (maintaining a data base, designing web pages, etc) for a prisoners rights group and someone else might do a great job of speaking to high school students about the military (counter recruiting).

Sometimes, what I think a person is really asking me, is what they can do to be more effective in working toward the change we would all like to see. In other words, if another world is possible, what do we need to do in order to bring it about? Bill Moyer wrote about this in, *Doing Democracy*, a book about organizing models for social movements.

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence brought Moyer to Fresno in 1999 for a workshop where he described his philosophy. I remember one of the workshops he did was to ask everyone to break up into four groups, based on how a person saw their role in the movement.

Group one defined themselves as the good “citizen.” Those in this group believe in and promote positive American values and symbols like democracy, freedom, and justice. Examples of good citizens are Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. Those in group two saw themselves as the “rebel” who says NO to violations of positive, widely held human values. The rebel is likely to participate in nonviolent direct action, demonstrations, rallies, and marches including civil disobedience. Group three was the “reformer” group. The reformer uses official mainstream systems and institutions like courts, the legislature, city hall, & corporations to get the movement’s goals and values adopted into official laws, policies and conventional wisdom. The fourth group consisted of those in the “change agent” group. People in this group organize people power and an engaged citizenry, creating participatory democracy for the common good.

The point of the exercise was to show that while we have common goals, there are different tactics and strategies used in the progressive movement. Some people are working on building alternative institutions (like KFCF, a food co-op, or this newspaper), while others are lobbying to reform the system from within (the League of Women Voters & Metro Ministry are good examples of this work). Fresno also has groups that mobilize people to get out on the streets - like Peace Fresno and No Nos Vamos. One point that Moyer makes, that I think is worth repeating, is that there is a need for all of these groups, but that what is most effective changes as political conditions change. A group might need to use street demonstrations or even civil disobedience at the early stages of a campaign. But, after public opinion is on your side, the group might need to shift tactics and lobby elected representatives to achieve the result they are looking for. Alternatively, a group that focuses on reform might discount the value of taking radical action to bring attention to an issue. The problem is that many people and some groups get stuck in one mode or style of work. It is not a failure for a person or a group to shift from one tactic to another as conditions change. Tactical flexibility and respect for the work different progressive groups are doing is essential for our success in changing the world.

If you are someone who wants to work for peace, social, and economic justice and you have not found your niche yet, allow me to tell you why I would like you to consider working for the Community Alliance newspaper. By working on the Community Alliance you are helping all progressive groups by giving a voice to the voiceless, building unity, reporting news the corporate media will not cover, and validating the work of political activists working for social change. In short, we are on the front

line in the struggle for giving people the information they need to change the world.

The “political agenda” of the Community Alliance is to help all of the progressive groups in this area succeed. Our goal is to unify these groups and empower the great majority of people to stand up for their best interests - peace, health care for all, environmental/social/economic justice, immigrant rights, and a living wage for all workers.

Right now we need help in the following areas:

- Distribution Coordinator - this person coordinates volunteers who distribute the paper throughout the community.
- Tower District distributor - Distribute the newspaper to businesses and newsstands in the Tower District.
- Grant Writer - write grants for the Community Alliance.
- Writer - Write articles for the newspaper.
- Photographer - We always need photographers to attend community events and take pictures.
- Bookkeeper.

If you are someone with more money than time, we can always use help in that area too. To ensure our long term survival we need more sustainers who can contribute \$10 or more per month. If you can do that, it would be greatly appreciated. If you have frequent flyer miles or office space you can donate, that would also be greatly appreciated.

We hope you will join us in working on this alternative/independent newspaper. But if your passion takes you in a different direction, then you might find the progressive groups directory on page 15 helpful. The important thing is to become active in making this a better world. Not only will the world be a better place with your active involvement, but I can guarantee that you will get as much out of it as you give.

Quote of the Month

"Without a newspaper, an instrument of communication, it is impossible to build a popular movement."

- Mahatma Gandhi

IN THIS ISSUE:

Homeless Woman Arrested for Needing to use the Bathroom	Page 1
Ralph Nader Interview with Amy Goodman	Page 3
Queer Eye	Page 6
Environmental Justice	Page 8
Word on the Street	Page 10
Grassroots Profile	Page 11
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom	Page 12
Fresno Center for Nonviolence	Page 13
Peace and Social Justice Calendar	Page 14
Progressive Community Groups in the Fresno Area	Page 15
Walking to Omega (book review)	Page 16
Golden Gulag (book review)	Page 17
Opinion and Analysis from the Grassroots	Page 18
Universal Health Care for All	Page 19 & 20

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Ralph Nader on Electoral Politics, Corporate Power and His Own Plans for 2008

An interview with Amy Goodman

(Amy Goodman, the host of Democracy Now! is heard Monday - Friday at 6 and 9 AM on KFCF 88.1 FM. You can also watch or listen to Democracy Now! at www.democracynow.org. This interview was heard on July 9, 2007)

The race for the 2008 election is on, and all we hear about is the race for the money. Presidential hopefuls are vying with each other to raise tens of millions of dollars for what is projected to be the most expensive election in history. But hardly anyone is talking about where this money comes from or where it ends up. Fewer still have asked persistent questions about corporate America's grip over not just the elections, but most policy decisions out of Washington, DC.

Today, we spend the hour with a man who has spent the last four decades doing all of this and more. I'm talking about consumer advocate, corporate critic, and three-time (will it be more?) presidential candidate Ralph Nader. We spoke with him in June at the end of a conference called "Taming the Giant Corporation."

Here is the interview:

AMY GOODMAN: The race for the 2008 election is on, and all we hear about is the race for the money. Presidential hopefuls are vying with each other to raise tens of millions of dollars for what's projected to be the most expensive election in history. But hardly anyone is talking about where that money comes from or where it ends up. Fewer still have asked persistent questions about corporate America's grip over not just the elections, but most policy decisions out of Washington, D.C.

Today, we spend the hour with a man who's spent more than four decades doing all of this and more. I'm talking about the consumer advocate, corporate critic and three-time — will it be more? — presidential candidate Ralph Nader. I interviewed him in June at the end of a conference called "Taming the Giant Corporation." I began by asking Ralph Nader, why hold a three-day conference on corporate power, rather than on war?

RALPH NADER: Well, first of all, the corporations are very involved in the war machine. Remember President Eisenhower's statement about the military-industrial complex. He might have called it today the industrial-military complex, because the industrial part is now a supreme influence on the US military budget, which now is half of the entire federal government's operating budget, and as well as effecting foreign policy. Even Mr. Koppel has written that oil is very much involved in the invasion of Iraq. In fact, he went on to say it's mostly about oil in an op-ed in the New York Times — Ted Koppel. So the domination, the corporate sovereignty over our political economy is very much related to our foreign, military and economic policy, including GATT and NAFTA, which are architectures of corporate supremacy over civil values and the rights of workers, environment and consumers.

AMY GOODMAN: Can you recap from this conference of three days — people coming at corporations, dealing with them in many different ways — what you think are the biggest problems and the most effective strategies for dealing with them?

RALPH NADER: Well, the biggest problem is that the avenues to challenge corporate power, to restrain it, to break it up in its present concentrated form, to take it away from the political arena, because corporations are artificial entities. They're not real human beings. They don't vote. They don't die in Iraq. They don't have children. They are entities that are dominating our politics, our electoral systems, our universities, increasingly, dominate almost everything, even moving into

areas that were once prohibited by custom in our country, like commercializing childhood.

And so, this conference really challenges the corporations at every interface that affects people — taxpayers, consumers, workers, communities, children, healthcare, living wage, the varieties of opportunities that people should have that are being denied. We are in the advanced stages of being a corporate state, where — as Franklin Delano Roosevelt warned Congress in 1938 that when government is controlled by private economic power, he called that fascism. And he would consider today's control by private economic power — namely, giant corporations astride the world — as an even more advanced form of what he called fascism: control of government by corporate interests.

AMY GOODMAN: Would you call it fascism?

RALPH NADER: Yeah. The clinical definition is what he was saying. It was obviously colored in a different context in World War II, but the clinical definition of "fascism" is when private concentrated economic power takes government away from the people, turns government into a guarantor, a subsidizer, a covering of corporate power. And corporations now have their executives in high government positions. They have 35,000 full-time lobbies here, like the drug companies getting all kinds of subsidies from Congress. And they have 10,000 political action committees.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt warned Congress in 1938 that when government is controlled by private economic power, he called that fascism. And he would consider today's control by private economic power — namely, giant corporations astride the world — as an even more advanced form of what he called fascism: control of government by corporate interests.



Photo of Ralph Nader by David Shankbone

Now, if you look at the civic side, there's very little of that, although as this conference showed, they've achieved an enormous amount, given their small numbers. I think, basically, if you could quantify corporate power and civic power in Washington, D.C., civic power is probably 1% of corporate power. And, yeah, look what it has achieved. And I think the hope coming out of this conference is not only that we have a lot of solutions that we don't apply in our country, because concentration of power in the hands of the few allows the few to decide for the many, but we have a large amount of unused democratic power, unused civic power, that can be unleashed, organized, to take back our government, if people stopped believing that they were powerless, which they are inbred in ever since we entered elementary school. You know the old phrase, "You can't fight City Hall."

But if we want a society where people have the opportunity to fulfill life's possibilities, doesn't that tell you what the priorities are, which is focusing on subordinating the corporate entity to the sovereignty of the American people, as implied in the Constitution, so that they are our servants, not our masters, so that they have to compete against other models of economic development, like cooperatives, like replacing the HMO insurance companies with full Medicare, like decentralized solar replacing more and more of Exxon and

Peabody Coal and the nuclear industry, like a redefinition of efficiency in productivity as if people mattered, not as if corporations dominate? They actually define our economic terms, and if we defined "efficiency" as if people mattered, we would have a massive energy efficiency program, which would, of course, reduce the sales of Exxon and Peabody Coal and Commonwealth Edison and all the rest, because we would be using less electricity and less gasoline, because we would democratize technology.

Instead, we have what Andrew Kimbrell called, at the conference, these giant corporations are dictatorships. And they have enormous power without anywhere near the commensurate responsibility. They are highly autocratic dictatorships that prevent constitutional rights from being with workers when they go to the workplace. They lose their constitutional rights when they enter that corporate domain.

And because of all this, it is interesting that our political leaders don't like to discuss it. I mean, every politician in this town knows who runs this town. They know who runs the Defense Department, the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration. And there are only a tiny handful of politicians who will raise the banner of subordinating corporate power to the sovereignty of the American people. The debates are sterile. The debates are exercises in parallel news conferences repeating ad infinitum the same words and phrases of evasion. They will not confront the corporate crime wave. They will not confront the destruction of our democracy. They will not confront the usurpation of our electoral processes, even though they can go back to Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and others, who have condemned corporate power as a perilous threat to even a modest democratic society.

AMY GOODMAN: So if corporations are dictatorships, you have a choice of regulating a dictatorship or getting rid of it.

RALPH NADER: Well, you've got to do all these things. For example, you have to strengthen the traditional tools that have curbed corporate crime, fraud, violence, outrages, bigotry. And these are regulation, adequate opportunity for litigation. These are anti-trust, which has been caricatured, but it is a powerful tool if it's adequately applied. You have to give the owners, the mutual fund people, the pension shareholders, more power. They are the owners of the corporation, but they have no power. Just imagine the violation of capitalist principles. These guys at the top, who are paying themselves \$10,000-\$12,000 an hour in compensation, the CEOs, basically have repudiated the cardinal principle of capitalism, which is if you own property, you should control it. And now they have said to their owners, "Get lost! Don't dare tell us what we're going to pay ourselves. After all, we're only your hired hands." And so, that's a very important front or initiative.

We have to ask ourselves, why not more cooperatives. With the internet, you can develop cooperative purchasing and develop specifications for the kind of cars or the kind of insurance policies people should be able to buy. We need stronger trade unions.

AMY GOODMAN: We return to my interview with Ralph Nader. I asked him about labor unions today, how they can regain their momentum and power at one of their lowest points in history.

RALPH NADER: One is they've got to mount an assault on the WTO and NAFTA. WTO and NAFTA are basically an albatross around the neck of workers, of consumers and of clean environments, to begin with. They are an end run around our courts and regulatory agencies. We couldn't have gotten airbags under WTO, because that would have been considered a unilateral move under this global trade agreement and a non-tariff trade barrier. It would have been considered too high a standard imposed on importing cars, even though it's the same standard on domestically produced cars. What WTO does, it prevents us from being first in the world. It pulls down our standards so our workers have to compete with brutalized child labor in third world countries. It makes this impossible to prohibit the importation of products from child labor — that's a violation of the WTO — even though you can't buy a product here in the US made from child labor in the US. It is the greatest loss of sovereignty — local, state and national — in American history. And it's an autocratic system with secret courts and secret equivalency procedures. I mean, it's just a total contra-

diction in subversion of our democratic society. So that's the first thing that has to be done, to invoke the six-month notice of withdraw and renegotiate pull-up trade agreements, where we pull up the rest of the world and our standards, instead of pull-down trade agreements that subordinate health and safety to trade agreements. That's the first time that's ever been done. Trade usually stuck to trade, trade agreements. Now, they've become very imperialist, and they subordinate health and safety, consumer, environmental, and worker rights.

The second thing that has to be done is something no Democratic politician will ever utter, except maybe for Dennis Kucinich. Not one Democratic politician will say, "We should repeal the notorious anti-worker Taft-Hartley law of 1947."

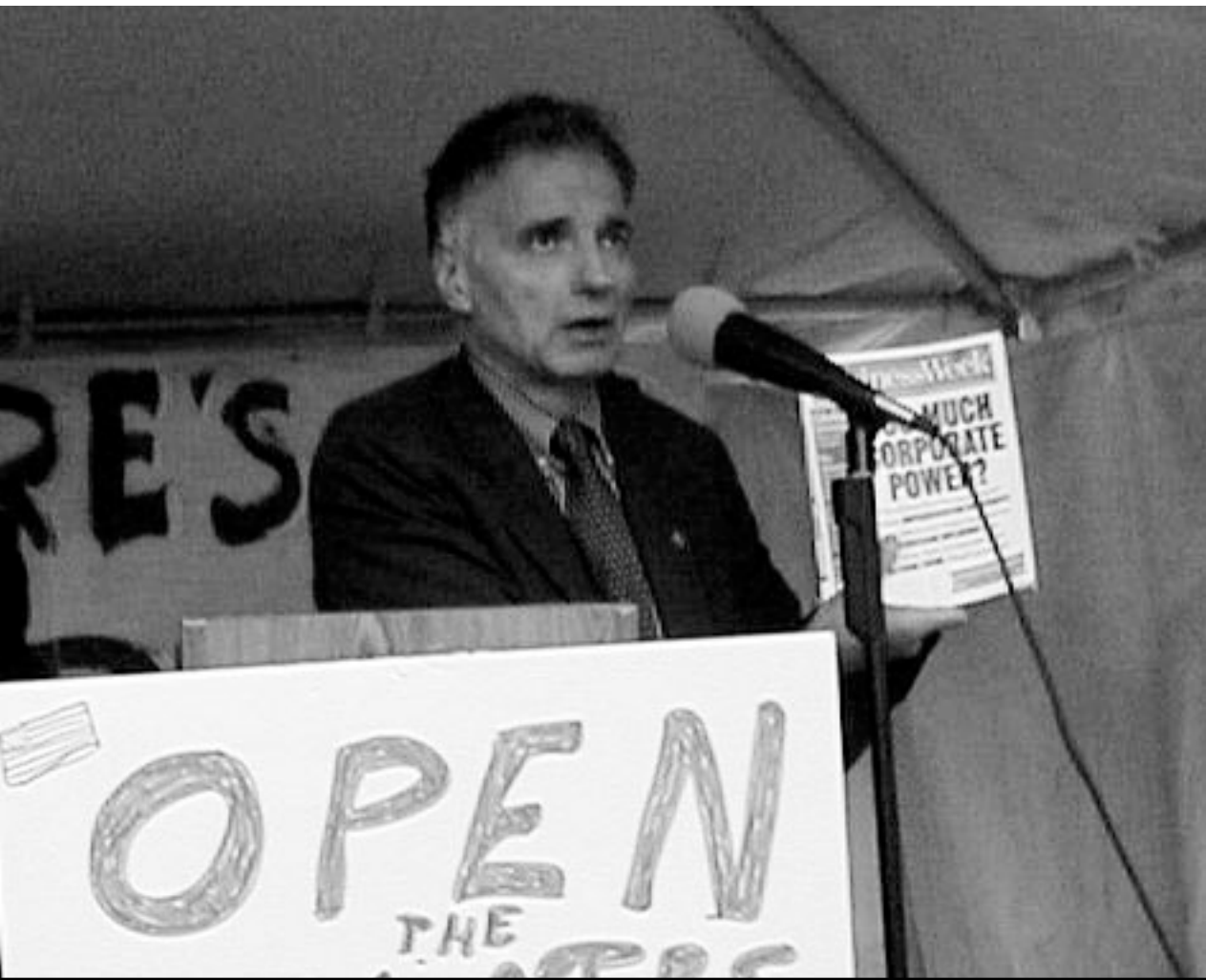
AMY GOODMAN: Explain what it is.

RALPH NADER: Which basically obstructs the organization of unions, which transfers control of union pension funds to management. With all these trillions of dollars, imagine the power that workers could have. They would own a third of the New York Stock Exchange. They would be able to put real muscle in investor ownership. And it prevents workers from helping one another, called secondary boycotts, among many other notorious provisions.

AMY GOODMAN: I wanted to ask you about these secret trade deals that are being made behind closed doors between the Democrats and the White House, that reports say are being the language being drafted by the White House. Rick MacArthur, publisher of Harper's, said on Democracy Now! that "[Congressman] Rangel, [House Speaker Nancy] Pelosi are saying, '[...] we're gearing up for the 2008 election. We've got to raise a lot of money.' They're closer to the Clinton wing of the party, which is the pro-so-called-free-trade wing of the party, the pro-NAFTA, pro-permanent-normal-trade-relations-with-China part of the party. And this is a way of saying to the corporate community [...] — Wall Street, Wal-Mart — [...] we're open for business, we want to raise money from you." In order to compete for campaign money, the logic goes, the Democrats have to cater to big corporate donors.

RALPH NADER: The corporate Democrats in action again. Why should we all be surprised? When you ask Democrats in Congress, "How are you doing against the Republicans in the coming election?" the first answer is about money. It's not about justice. It's not about agenda. It's not about mobilizing people. It's about dialing for corporate dollars. These two parties have sold the US government and the American people to the highest bidders. And that's why we have a corporate sovereign political economy, and that's why workers are daily in peril of losing their economic security and their pensions and retirement or their jobs or their health and safety in the workplace.

You know, we have to pay attention, Amy, to something very important, and that is the language. We are in the process of seeing the corporatization of our highways, the corporatization of our water systems, and still people on our side use the word "privatization." They use the word "white-collar crime," instead of using the word "corporate crime." They use the word "private sector" instead of "corporate sector." We have to stop using the words of the opponents, because they control the language. Democrats should use the words "corporate welfare" more often. They should talk about cracking down on corporate crime, fraud and abuse, that are ripping off Medicare and Medicaid and the US taxpayer across the board. But you can say that ad infinitum, but they're not going to do it as long as they view their electoral processes in terms of dollar signs.



Ralph Nader speaks at Wash U against the corporate control of the October 17 2000 debates, which he was excluded from.

AMY GOODMAN: Ralph, let's talk about "NABbing" the elections. That's National Association of Broadcasters. The money you mentioned that these candidates are raising, tens of millions of dollars, will be well over a billion dollars in 2008. What would you see as a different way for the media to play a role here? How do you see the media being challenged? Explain how the process works right now.

RALPH NADER: Right now, the media focuses on the horse race: who's raising the most money. The candidates who raise the most money get the most attention. They get the most specific polls. And the ones who aren't raising the money, even though their record is far superior and their rhetoric is far superior, like Dennis Kucinich and Mike Gravel, they don't get hardly any attention. So the networks and the mass media have bought into the wealth election. That's one.

The second is, they have made possible a private form of corporate government, known as the Commission on Presidential Debates. So this commission was created in 1987, as you know, to get rid of the League of

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Women Voters, which sponsored presidential debates, and they went around and they got money from Philip Morris and Ford and AT&T and Coors beer, and they now control the main gateway to tens of millions of Americans. No matter how many states you run in as a third party or independent candidate, if you don't get on those debates, you don't reach tens of millions of people.

And who is the gatekeeper? The Democrat and Republican parties, who even kept Ross Perot off in 1996, after he got 19 million votes in 1992. I called him up, and I said, "Ross, how does it feel for a billionaire to be excluded?" And he says, "Absolutely right." He said, "I couldn't even buy thirty minutes of airtime." They refused him to buy thirty minutes of airtime so he could do his charts on, you know, on the deficit.

And, yeah, these TV stations are using our property. We own the public airwaves. We're the landlords. They're just tenants. And they use our property free. They don't pay as much as you pay for your auto license. And they decide who is on and who isn't on TV or on the national debates. So if you don't break that connection between the Debate Commission and ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, CNN, you can't break the power of this corporation called the Debate Commission and have more diverse debates with more voices and choices, which, by the way, the American people want. In the

Camejo \$81,000 in transcription costs and handwriting expert fees for defending our right to be on the ballot, which they got us off through all kinds of shenanigans. First people in American legal history who had to pay court costs for defending their right to be on the ballot. So ballot access obstructions is the political bigotry of American politics. It's very hard to get liberals who love civil rights and civil liberties and who are Democrats to be at all excited about the systemic obstruction of fifty state laws at one level or another that can be used by either Democrat or Republicans against third-party candidates.

And historically, Amy, that's where all the great ideas came from. In the nineteenth century it was the anti-slavery party, the women's suffrage party, the farmer party, all the things we read about briefly in our history books that pushed these social justice movements before one or both of the two parties picked up on them. So they're — you know what I like to say? What would happen to nature if it prohibited seeds from sprouting? What would happen if big business could totally extinguish small business? That's what the big two-party

elected dictatorship is doing to a whole array of local, state and national candidates who would like to give the American people more voices and choices.

AMY GOODMAN: How do you think mass movements should organize themselves and hold politicians account-

able, make them more accountable to citizen, civilian, non-citizen movements than corporations?

RALPH NADER: Well, let's start with the easy things, like half of democracy is showing up. So why don't workers who have lost their jobs or their pensions to industries that have gone to communist China with US Department of Commerce subsidy and encouragement, why don't they mass and rally? I mean, who's keeping them from rallying and massing? American Idol? Is that what's doing it? I mean, let's stop making excuses for ourselves. Let's take the farmers, the dwindling number of farmers. They have great important causes that mesh with environmental causes at times, and the whole issue of genetic engineering and the dispossession of the small family farm by the big suppliers corporations and the big buying corporations. Why don't they come to Washington, the way they did twenty years ago with their tractors? Show up!

Why, for example, can't a coalition of existing groups — the Urban Coalition, the NAACP, the trade unions, the consumer, the environmental groups, the neighborhood groups — in each city sponsor auditorium sessions for the major candidates or whatever candidates they want to invite that are going through New York or Boston or Houston or Denver or Los Angeles or St. Louis or Miami? They couldn't turn them down. And they could say, "We want you to be here at the auditorium

year 2000, at least three national polls had a majority of the people wanting me and Buchanan on the national debates, and I don't think that's just because people wanted to stay awake.

(In order to fit this interview into the August Community Alliance newspaper, we have removed a section of the interview addressing the individual Democratic and Republican candidates. To read that section of the interview, go to: <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=07/07/09/131226>)

AMY GOODMAN: The Independent unannounced: Ralph Nader.

RALPH NADER: Too early to say. It's too early to say. If I was going to run — and I have not decided at all — the biggest problem is getting on the ballot. The Democrats filed twenty-one phony suits against us. We won most of them, but it was very draining. In Pennsylvania, they got a Democratic judge, using a Republican law firm, Reed Smith, to assess me and Peter

to respond to our agenda. We're the ones who are going to say no. We're the ones who are going to say yes."

AMY GOODMAN: I want to end with healthcare, I think one of the critical issues of the day that is so rarely explained. If there was a healthcare system in this country that you designed, what would it look like?

RALPH NADER: Well, it would look like full Medicare for everybody, whereby the government is the payer. The government now pays over 50% of the healthcare bill. Huge amount of waste in fraud inflicted by these corporations on Medicare and Medicaid, for example, drug companies getting all kinds of corporate subsidies. So the government is already over 50% — federal, state and local government. So it's full government — it's called a single payer, which means it can almost eliminate \$200 billion of computerized billing fraud and abuse, which has been documented by the General Accounting Office and by the leading expert on this, who should be on your program, Malcolm Sparrow, a lecturer at Harvard University. And when I said, "\$200 billion, Mr. Sparrow? Every year?" he said, "That's the lowest estimate." That's just computerized billing fraud and abuse in the healthcare industry.

It would dramatically reduce administrative expenses. A doctor was at the hearing today — no, yesterday, I guess — and she said that the per capita administrative expense in this country in healthcare is almost \$1,900. In Canada, it's under \$500. So it's more efficient. It's less corporate crime. It covers everybody. It saves lives. 18,000 people die in this country, according to the Institute of Medicine, because they can't afford healthcare. That's six 9/11s every year. And the outcomes are better. In Western countries, the outcomes in terms of infant mortality, in terms of life expectancy, in terms of lower levels of anxiety — they don't have to worry about losing their life savings for a tragic illness — are all better than the United States system.

AMY GOODMAN: And what do you think it would take to achieve this?

RALPH NADER: It would take about a million people spending 800 million hours over a period of two years in key congressional districts. You've got about 25% of

the Congress already for it. And once the Washington politicians hear the rumble of the people, you will see a change that will surprise even the cynics among us. They've got to hear the rumble of the people and about 2,000 organized people in each congressional district, connecting with a popular sentiment that's all for this. And they can give you chapter and verse in their own family, in terms of tragedies due to the healthcare system — denial, malpractice, corruption, insensitivity, deferral. It can happen.

AMY GOODMAN: Does George W. Bush matter anymore?

RALPH NADER: Yeah, he matters, because he's a national security menace. He's a destroyer of our Constitution, a violator of our statutes, a revoker of our regulations. He's a war monger. He's a war criminal, clinically a war criminal. And he's still in charge. And I said some time ago, he's a giant corporation in the White House masquerading as a human being, although I sometimes wonder about the word "human." I don't think it's possible to see a more obsessively compulsive person with so much contempt for the traditions of our country, including conservative traditions, which is why so many libertarians and conservatives like Pat Buchanan have opposed him again and again.

What's important is to basically get back to self-determination. Do we really believe in self-government? Do we really believe in accountable government? And do we really believe that the supremacy of the people has to be reinstalled over the supremacy of what Jefferson called the moneyed interests and which today are the giant corporations? And I think that in addition to the various tools of accountability that we've discussed here at this conference, such as regulation; litigation; investor power; public delivery systems, when the corporations aren't interested, like the Tennessee Valley Authority; stronger labor unions; organized consumers; cooperatives; here's what we really need in a broad sense: we need to exercise the ownership that we already have of the great public assets of the United States of America, from the public airwaves to the public lands, to the government's research and development, to trillions of dollars of labor pension funds, all of which are owned by the people and controlled by corporations.

And so, that's no big deal, theoretically, is it? To revert control back to the owners? That's a basic conservative principle.

The second thing we have to do is increasingly displace the operations of corporations with better operations: more efficient energy, more

renewable energy, more credit unions that are accountable to their small investors, more Medicare replacing the HMOs. All over the country, we see examples of displacement of corporation, and that is really a very powerful and exciting movement, if it obtains a magnitude of significance.

And then, the third, we have to structurally, constitutionally — every way — subordinate this robot called the corporate entity, not its employees or its people. The robot has to be subordinated to the supremacy of human rights of real individuals. And that shouldn't be a hard sell, either, if we start talking about these things more often, if we don't leave it up to Democracy Now! to talk about it, if we don't leave it up to an occasional TV, you know? An occasional TV, a very occasional TV.

We have to increase our expectation levels. It all starts with increasing our expectation levels of what kind of society we want and what kind of world we want to bequeath to our descendants. If we're not motivated enough by the past great reformers and civic patriots of our past, the fighters against slavery, women's rights and all the rest of the social justice movement, if that isn't enough to motivate us, then just look around this country and see the tragedies, the dispossession, the injustice, the exclusions, the disrespect, the gouging, the rip-offs, the using of taxpayer dollars against those small taxpayers themselves, the lack of health and safety, the hundreds of thousands of lives lost every year in occupational disease and medical malpractice and air and water pollution and denial of healthcare and so on — who weeps for those people?

And we have to stop making excuses for ourselves. That's the key. We have to multiply our own civic energies with our neighbors, our relatives, our coworkers, our friends. When that happens, when word of mouth takes over as the prime communications system in this country, nothing can stop it. We have to replace big talk with small talk. And we have to make it apparent to millions of people that striving for justice is one of life's greatest gratifications. In fact, outside of the family, it is the greatest gratification. Without justice, there's no such thing as liberty and freedom, there's no such thing as fulfilling life's possibilities. And I want to thank the people who came to this conference and lent us their energies and energized themselves and hope they'll go throughout the country and do the same thing. Thank you.

AMY GOODMAN: Former presidential candidate Ralph Nader, speaking at a three-day conference on "Taming the Giant Corporation." I spoke to him in Washington, D.C. in June.

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Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate, corporate critic, and three-time presidential candidate. Democracy Now! can be heard on KFCF 88.1 FM or by going to <http://www.democracynow.org>

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QUEER EYE

“Brian Calhoun Meets the Community”

by Dan Waterhouse

I ran into Fresno councilmember Brian Calhoun at Central California Alliance’s President’s Circle Brunch event two weeks after Pride. I had been invited because I’m considered a “community leader” due to my news media work.

It appeared his hand was being held at the event, figuratively speaking, by a former school board member and seeming political ally of Fresno mayor Bubba Autry. It also appeared, from remarks he made, he was unaware he was speaking to a gay community organization.

He was smoozing the community, looking for votes in his newly announced run for the County Board of Supervisors against two-term incumbent Susan Anderson. After giving a somewhat rambling campaign speech which included a few tepid words about embracing diversity—it should be noted he hasn’t embraced our community in his two terms on the city council—he opened the floor for a few questions.

The first question that came up concerned the independent police auditor. Calhoun made it clear there is NO

support for it from the current City Council. He made some snide comments about Sacramento and San Jose and said the council resents the Mayor bringing this back again and again because they will never approve it and the Mayor knows it. Calhoun said the council feels there are enough checks and balances in place—Internal Affairs, the Chief, the District Attorney’s office and the council—to prevent or respond to problems.

Another question was raised, about Fresno’s homeless, and here’s what Calhoun had to say: The homeless will be moved. They will be moved to a location outside of downtown.

Supposedly, the Fresno Rescue Mission and Poverello House have agreed to move to the location the City is buying away from downtown. A source tells me there have been discussions but no commitment by “The Pov” to move—they own a great deal of the property where they are presently located.

There was an interesting revelation during this year’s City budget hearings—the area where the Poverello House is, is also the site of the new police headquarters building. The redevelopment agency may be used to

assemble the needed land (which could be at least four city blocks square). My source says the “Pov” might consider moving—if the city came up with eight figures behind the dollar sign.

Calhoun mentioned working with the County, and claims the County won’t talk with the City. The only way the City will talk with the County about providing services is if the City controls them and the County pays for them. The on-going dust-up about fire service in the metropolitan area is a prime example—the City won’t talk to the county fire protection district unless the district agrees in advance to the city taking over fire protection from Reedley west, and from Kingsburg north. The county Supervisors say city residents have bankrupted the county and Fresno’s government must contribute its fair share, to pay for county services. “No court in the world will stop us from moving the homeless out of downtown!” Calhoun made it clear the homeless who aren’t placed elsewhere will be given the choice of moving to the new location or leaving Fresno.

Calhoun also was asked about future plans for Roeding Park. A draft Park Master Plan was posted on the City’s website recently, which shows more than half of the park being devoted to the Chaffee Zoo. The local media has been reporting how crowded Fresno’s few parks are.

He confirmed that the zoo will take up much of Roeding Park. He was queried whether the City would build more park space in the vicinity to make up for the lost acreage. After stammering a little and talking about the new “regional” park on Figarden Drive in northwest Fresno, he eventually said new park space would not be added in Central Fresno.

Peace Fresno

By Bill Simon

Between July 23 and 26, Peace Fresno members participated in “California Calling” with 24 other peace groups throughout the State of California; and you are invited to join us in doing it again from August 13-16 and September 10-13. People from every congressional district in California called their Congressional Reps to tell them to end the war in September. The House switchboard is 202-224-3121. We are also discussing joining with other groups in actions leading up to the

next scheduled Iraq Occupation funding bill in September.

As announced elsewhere in this issue, Peace Fresno will host John Morearty at our non-business meeting on August 21, 7:00 pm at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. We are also arranging for the San Francisco Mime Troop to perform this year’s play at the Roosevelt High School Auditorium on September 20. Ticket information will be available on our website soon, www.peacefresno.org. We are also working with the Central California Criminal Justice Committee and other groups to arrange a forum on the question:

“Should Fresno have an Independent Police Auditor?” The forum will be held at Fresno Pacific University on October 22. Look for more information as panelists and sponsors are confirmed.

Finally, join us at the Peace Corner: Blackstone and Shaw on Friday, August 3 and September 7. As far as the Iraq Occupation goes, tell your Senators and Representatives that we want a “do nothing Congress”, not one more bill passed about the war or its funding.

Contact Peace Fresno at www.peacefresno.org or 487-2515.

News You Might Have Missed

By Mike Rhodes

Fresno Bee Jobs Outsourced

According to Editor and Publisher, The Fresno Bee is cutting jobs in their advertising production department by outsourcing them to India. Seven out of the 31 positions in this department will be effected by the move. The magazine quoted President and Publisher of the Bee Ray Steele as commenting that the move will “serve our advertising customers more effectively, efficiently, and economically while focusing on our core business: producing relevant and compelling news and advertising information in our newspapers and on our Web sites.”

Comments on Mindhub, a listserv set up to address the concerns of Fresno’s “creative class,” was less kind in addressing the motivations of The Bee. Chuck Krugman wrote “so much for supporting the local creative community and the community as a whole.” Jo Anne Yada wrote “as a person who works in the creative department at the Fresno Bee and friend of those who lost their jobs, I’m totally disgusted with this decision.”

During a union organizing drive in the late 90’s, Bee management threatened to outsource advertising production jobs if employees voted for the union. The threat succeeded in limiting the support for the union, but in the end did not stop The Bee from outsourcing the jobs.

Attacks on the Homeless Continue

The City of Fresno has continued its attacks on the homeless. In addition to the arrest of a homeless woman who needed to use the restroom at McDonald’s (see page 1), there have been other shocking incidents. On July 5, with temperatures of 111 degrees, the city forced homeless people from a shady encampment. You can see the details of that story here: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/07/05/18433389.php>

Later in the month I received a call from a homeless person who lives near Roeding Park. He asked me if the police could stop him and his friends from sitting on the

grass during the day. “They (the police) came up and told us we would be arrested if we were found ‘lounging about’ in the park after July 14.” I told them to get the badge number and name of the officer threatening him and to ask for the citation of the Municipal Code he is allegedly enforcing. Good grief! Now the homeless can’t sit in on the grass in a public park?

Mayor Alan Autry’s Agenda

Fresno mayor Alan Autry has made no secret that he is unhappy with the Fresno Unified School District (FUSD), making several unsuccessful attempts to takeover or otherwise control the district. At his State of the City address this May, Autry said he supports vouchers. Asked for a clarification on the mayors position, I was informed by the city’s Public Information Officer that “according to Amy Arambula, the City Education Liasion, the Mayor supports school vouchers for both Charter and Private schools.”

Juan Arambula, Amy’s husband and a member of the Assembly in Sacramento, authored and helped pass Assembly Bill 1403 in the senate. One critic of Autry and Arambula’s efforts to take over and privatize FUSD schools wished to remain anonymous. He wrote me that the legislation was “not surprising from an elected official who publicly supported unconstitutional legislation that would take away the power of elected officials and give it to the mayor of any given city. Mayoral takeover of school boards; mandatory takeover of school districts by county offices of education; and school vouchers – all bad ideas for public education.” My source continued that this legislation is “gonna be struck down like the LAUSD – Mayoral takeover piece was struck down. Juan is not making friends, but he is showing his big ears and trunk (elephant’s head) through his donkey costume again.”

A major agenda item of the “right wing” is to privatize services like education. Many find it regrettable that Juan and Amy are furthering the right’s agenda in the education sector.

Comcast Agrees to Serve as Big Brother

Comcast has agreed to be the eyes and ears for

local law enforcement. In the first program of its kind in California, Comcast workers will be looking out for “suspicious activity” and reporting it to the police and sheriff’s department. Alan Roberts, a sales manager for Comcast, quoted in The Fresno Bee about the new project said “we’re excited about it; Sheriff Mims is excited about it.” Civil liberties advocates say this project seems very similar to the aborted plan (following 9-11) to make Post Office employees snoop for the government.

Pastors for Peace - Caravan to Cuba comes to Fresno

The Pastors for Peace caravan came to Fresno on July 7 on their way to Cuba. While here the group shared a meal and we learned something about Cuba - where they put peoples needs before corporate profits. For more information see: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/07/08/18434030.php>. Gerry Bill, a professor at Fresno City College, went with the group. Listen to KFCF 88.1 FM on Wednesday, August 8th, 2007, at 3 PM and hear Bill discuss his recent trip to Cuba. Richard Stone will host.



Sharon Peters (left) and Carol Cross (right) are taking the bus in the background to Cuba. They are part of the Pastors for Peace group that came through Fresno on July 7. To see a 15 minute interview with Sharon and Carol, go to: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/07/08/18434030.php>



Sherri Williams

room, Sherri was getting hot as temperatures climbed to over 100 degrees. The officer was sitting in his air conditioned cruiser as he wrote up the citation. It was at this time when my daughter and filmmaker Simone Whalen-Rhodes arrived on the scene with her video camera. As she filmed the developing scene McDonald's manager Torres came out and said "I'm going to have to ask you to leave, you can not video on our property." Simone responded that she has a legal right to be there and Torres said "you don't have a right to be on my property and video tape, so I'm going to have to ask you to leave." The intrepid journalist stood her ground and refused to leave.

That was when I arrived, hearing Torres say "sir, you are not allowed to take pictures. . . and I'm asking you to leave." I replied that just because Torres didn't want me there does not revoke my rights as a journalist. There was a story unfolding and I was determined to find out what was happening. She claimed McDonald's had a rule about photography on their property and I continued to insist on my right as a journalist to cover the story. Torres eventually went inside and the issue was dropped.

The police were now aware that this incident was being documented and decided not to arrest and book Sherri. As one officer stood in the shade and another

sat in his air conditioned car, Sherri continued to bake in the hot sun. Soon, a Sargent and more officers arrived. The Sargent asked for my identification and informed me that I could keep my photos and the video. This generous gesture (allowing me to keep my photos and video) was tempered with a threat that they might get a court order to use them in a criminal proceeding should this incident end up in court.

Officer Onruh emerged from his cruiser to issue the citation. He told Sherri he was issuing the citation because she was "trespassing and interfering with the business and Michelle is the store manager, she is the one who arrested you." Sherri was finger printed and signed the citation.

Earlier in the morning, and the reason why an officer was in McDonald's in the first place, was that there had been a robbery. One officer responded to the robbery call. On the other hand, there were at least three police cruisers on the



McDonald's Manager Threatens Journalists
She claimed McDonald's had a rule about photography on their property. I continued to insist on my right as a journalist to cover the story. Torres eventually went inside and the issue was dropped.

scene and six or seven officers involved to sort out the alleged crime of a homeless woman needing to use the bathroom. What is wrong with this picture? For a list of articles and documents about the struggle for civil liberties for homeless people in Fresno, see: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/homelessness.htm>

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Greenaction Opens Kings County Environmental Justice Office in Hanford

By Bradley Angel

The days of business as usual in Kings County for polluters and some government officials are over. Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice has opened an office in Hanford to work with Hanford and other Kings County residents to protect our health and environment from polluting industries. Greenaction will also work with community members to encourage clean economic development that provides jobs that are healthy and safe in industries that do not poison the air, soil, water, people and agriculture of Kings County.

Now in its tenth year, Greenaction was founded in late 1997 by community leaders from Hanford, Kettleman City and other communities in California and Arizona facing pollution threats to their health and environment. Greenaction's roots go back twenty years in Kings County, with key members being involved in the historic battle that started in the late 1980's in Kettleman City that defeated Chem Waste Management's plans to build a giant hazardous waste incinerator in that small community.

Greenaction is now working actively in Kings County to address a wide range of pollution issues including the proposed expansion of the Chem Waste hazardous waste dump, concerns about the noxious odors from the Avenal dump, proposed sewage sludge "composting" and the siting of polluting industries in Hanford. Greenaction has a Kings County community organizer, Anna Martinez, who is helping to staff the local office as well as working in the communities across



Kettleman City residents and Greenaction protest at March 24th US EPA public hearing on PCB dumping at the Chem Waste landfill. Photo by Bradley Angel, Greenaction.

the county educating and mobilizing residents to take action to protect their families.

In 2004 Greenaction discovered that Kings County Planning Department and the San Joaquin Valley Air District had issued permits to Plastic Energy LLC to build a plant allegedly to "recycle" plastics into diesel and energy, without even requiring an Environmental Impact Report, holding a public hearing or seeing data to back up the company's claims of "no pollution." Greenaction alerted residents, proved

there would be pollution, and got the company to drop the project.

Greenaction's office is at 130 East 8th Street in Hanford. Phone (559) 583-0800 Visit Greenaction's website www.greenaction.org

Bradley Angel is the Executive Director of Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice. He can be contacted by email at bradley@greenaction.org

Cows, Asthma, and the Price we pay for Dirty Air

By Sabina Gonzalez

Every one of us in Fresno County pays a minimum of \$1,124 every year to cover healthcare costs of polluted air. Not to mention that entire families cope with severe asthma and related diseases every day. Are we the only ones that should cover the cost?

On July 9th, the Fresno Healthy Dairy Commission packed the county's second public meeting on mega-dairies, making it clear that the time for cleaning up the air is now. Their message was clear: we want the dairies to stay, but we also need air we can breathe. After a long exchange with county planners this groups of doctors, teachers, parents, civic and faith leaders, is ready to do what it takes to win a fair ordinance for new and expanding dairies. A set of TV ads related to grassroots efforts has launched recently to let the dairy industry and elected officials know just how serious Fresno communities are about protecting what's left of our air.

Turns out large dairies are not only incredibly profitable (county milk production is worth \$296 million a year), they are also top contributors of smog-forming emissions, right up there with passenger vehicles and pesticides. If projections are right and the industry keeps expanding quickly, they will soon be the top source of smog precursors like Volatile Organic Compounds and ammonia. Fresno is the only county in the Central Valley that has no local level ordinance for regulating dairies.

The Fresno Healthy Dairy Commission asks that our county rule *require* new and expanding dairies (500 or more cows) to implement the "Best Available Control Technologies" recognized by the regional air board as the most effective. These pollution controls, like enclosed barns and covered waste lagoons, are currently *suggested* by the air district as part of a menu of options. The Healthy Dairy commission represents several groups like the Fresno Madera Medical Society, the League of Women Voters, the Lung Association, local churches, parents, and teachers among others. Now is the time to call your county Supervisor and let them know you want clean air. To find out more about this issue and how you can participate, visit www.fresnohealthydairy.org or call (559) 304-2462.

Sabina Gonzalez is a Community Organizer at SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West, which is a member of the Fresno Healthy Dairy Commission. She can be reached at sagonzalez@seiu-uhw.org

Pesticide Hearing held in Parlier

By Anne Katten and Stephanie Camoroda

Over the past year, the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) drafted proposed regulations which are supposed to reduce smog-producing emissions from fumigant pesticides. The Department was forced to create regulations following a lawsuit filed in 2004, when community organizations sued the Schwarzenegger Administration for failing to keep a promise that California regulators made in 1994 to reduce smog-forming emissions from fumigant pesticides.

The proposed regulations include limiting fumigant emissions in certain geographic areas and makes pesticide manufacturers responsible for limiting emissions from their products and restricting sales when a certain emissions level is reached. Farmers or applicators would be required to report field fumigant use by method. The proposal also includes

requirements for how field fumigations must be done, and assigns emission levels or percentages to different fumigation methods with the intent of limiting emissions.

On Thursday July 12 the DPR presented a general overview of the proposal and then took statements from all who wished to testify in Parlier. The Department provided English-Spanish translation, as they have for the past several years, after many years of holding English-only public comment forums. Following the general format of rulemaking hearings, DPR did not respond to any of the testimony at the hearing but stated that they would review comments and possibly revise the proposal based on comments.

About a dozen people testifying personally or on behalf of community or statewide advocacy organizations stressed the urgent need to respond to the air pollution crisis in the valley and resulting epidemic in asthma and other respiratory illness along with their observations that this proposal wouldn't do enough to reduce pesticide air pollution and that reducing fumigant use was the only effective solution. Speakers included representatives from Coalition for Clean Air, Latino Issues Forum, Lideres Campesinas, La Union del Pueblo Entero, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, El Comité Para el Bienestar de Earlimart, Association of Irrigated Residents, Quinto Sol, Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment and California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation



To see 5 min SunMt video of this event, go to: <http://www.sunmt.org/pesticide7-07vid.html>

Rishi Chaniok, spokesperson for Center on Race Poverty and the Environment, the organization representing community groups which brought the lawsuit resulting in the court order, commented that the regulations as drafted will not comply with the court order and are not enforceable because industry was put in charge of tracking emissions and there is no mechanism for stopping further use when the emissions cap is reached.

Carolina Simunovic from Fresno Metro Ministry ex-

Continued on page 9

pressed her concern that in order to reduce the serious smog problem in the valley, the DPR should have required a 20% reduction in fumigant use, not just emissions a long time ago and this proposal was an attempt to do the minimum required and that it is very, very late. She added that the proposed emission limits should apply year round, not just from May through October, because this year there were ozone violations in the valley in March and that fumigant applications should not be allowed on Spare the Air days.

Irma Arroyo observed that many children and other people have developed asthma since moving to the valley. Tom Franz, a Shafter area teacher, grower and member of the Association of Irrigated Residents stated that chemical companies are trying to scare the farmers but that farmers

have always been good innovators and can get more efficient in their use of pesticides and alternative pest control.

DPR may release a revised draft of the proposed regulations in the upcoming months after taking into consideration all of the public comments, verbal and written.

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For more information about how you can get involved, contact:

Teresa De Anda
Californians for Pesticide Reform
661-304-4080
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Anne Katten is a pesticide and work health and safety specialist with California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation in Sacramento. She can be reached at akatten@cal.net

Stephanie Camoroda is a Policy Analyst at Latino Issues Forum, a public policy and advocacy non-profit organization and is an active advocate throughout the San Joaquin Valley. She can be reached at: stephanie@lif.org

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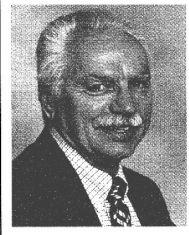
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Word On The Street

By Wendy Russell

I'd forgotten what it was like to be amongst my reggae family. I almost didn't come here. My path to Sierra Nevada World Music Festival had been blocked by tragedy, but this family had pushed all obstacles aside to make it impossible for me not to come here. I felt bolstered up by love and friendship as I walked through the thousands of people, a few of which passed warm greetings, big hugs and little gifts to me. Here, in a multi-racial village built in one week, thousands live close together in cars, tents, vans and RVs, with open doors and no locks, sharing and caring for our neighbors. Here, I was not a political minority nor ecology kook. Here, women are equal and in fact often 'run tings.' Here, children are safe to run and play amongst strangers of all age and social strata. Here, people from the entire world converge onto Boonville, California, and One People/One Love rules. For just a few days it is the world as it *could* be.

This is a perfect place to ask this month's Question:

As a foreigner in our country what have you observed about the USA and its citizens?

Yes, it was strange to not be working here. For years I had helped build and run this festival, but this time I was a last-minute guest thrown into the cogs of a well-run machine peopled by a tight-as-family reggae crew. Yet I was not forgotten by those busy folks: around my wrist was the coveted silver ARTIST wristband and I had been told by staff I could do anything I wanted. Wow! So I danced for hours in the photo pits of both stages to 'live' performances of favorite songs I play on the radio, by the foundational artists I respect and have promoted for so many years. Having also quit my job as the Editor of Reggae Festival Guide, I only took photos of who and what I wanted to. I even volunteered to help at the 9am Friday morning crunch when the gates first open to let all the campers in, where I searched RVs for hidden dogs, nitrous tanks and people, and then again when the music venue opened at 5 pm, where I helped 'wristband' folks at the Main Gate. It was fun and exciting seeing all the happy people go inside - and when it got slow and boring I left to watch Sugar Minott, and then ex-Gladiators' Clinton Fearon - more favorites! - on stage. I sat around camp circles - missing entire performances - listening to stories from dear friends that I only see at festivals. Once I told my husband I'd be back in three minutes and came back two hours later with four new purses and three old friends. And when the Refugee Allstars came off the stage after an awesome performance I chased after them to get our first answer to this month's Question from their second lead vocalist, who provides that modern dancehall-style voice which contrasts nicely with the lead vocalist's more traditional style, twenty-year-old BLACK NATURE:

"I have been on tour in your country for two weeks. Everywhere we go it has been positive. You accept all types of people. When I see the faces of the crowd they are all smiling!"

This band had coalesced in the violence-wracked refugee camps of Guinea, Africa, having escaped from war-torn Sierra Leone, and their joyous music mixing African beats, reggae riddems, lively world-pop and cookin'



The Refugee Allstars' Black Nature

jazz "is a little testament to all we went through there" with cool lyrics like, "*when two elephants fight, the grass dem suffer*" giving thoughtful notice to the little people caught underfoot when bigger powers battle.

I next flashed that shiny wristband when Jamaican reggae star, Barrington Levy, arrived - where - enjoying my years-long friendship with this icon - I monopolized most of his off-stage time, not caring about sharing him! (If I'd been working, one part of my job would be to network, sharing him with other Press and industry folks). He didn't care either, as BARRINGTON LEVY answered our Question while we all 'relaxed' in his dressing room tent after his bumpin' 90 minute - with two encores - set:



Barrington Levy

As a foreigner in our country what have you observed about the USA and its citizens?

"I think people are seeing the crisis that's happening and are going to do something about it. We still all have power and we better use it! The more we are together 'This World Will Be a Better Place' - that's my new album title too - and that's the best way to be." Using a towel, he wipes off the evidentiary sweat of his high-energy performance, looking at me eye to eye, and continues, "If you are happy with what you do, you are a happy person. It's all about who you are, inside. Like you: all smiles; you are a happy person, doing what you like."

I wonder if he remembered calling me 'Smiles' other times at other festivals? The Detour Posse joins in. These are musicians I have seen grow up and we share memories a while, then Barrington crooks a finger at me to come over to him and he continues with his answer to our Question: "From your stages I see smiling people and I love to perform for the people! I don't even care about recording - I'd rather perform!"

I piped in about how the crowds were singing along to his songs, as he sang. Had he seen the wild young girl in front? The three big guys jumping up and down, near her? And I dared not say out loud the compliments we women in the photo pit - young and old - were whispering amongst ourselves as we watched this short, stocky, past-middle-aged reggae superstar command the stage to - again - win our hearts! The people in the tent joke around, and we start singing bits of Barrington's songs that are favorites, "*Murderer!*" or, in my case, most requested on the radio; "*... if you give to me a pocket full of gold, it don't mean a thing, a thing, without your love...*" was what I offered up, and with my poor singing voice. Laughter fills the tent.

Again, Barrington motioned me to follow him to a corner of the tented dressing room, and in a low confidential voice, said to me "You know you are African, right?"

I chuckle, remembering his words later as I stroll through the food vendors. We are all One People, is what Barrington was saying, I think. I stop at the booth selling both the raw green soup and the watermelon juice - my perfect sustenance during the extremes of these festival weekends - that, plus a morning cup of coffee and afternoon Red Bull. A kaleidoscope of happy festival go-ers swirl and swarm around me, the picnic tables and the food booths, when, in that buzzing crowd I discern laughing foreign accents so I stop the cheerful group. Turns out I was in a bunch of real smart mathematicians with multiple degrees between them all. Our next words answering our Question come from



Mariko Sasso

Japanese citizen, MARIKO SASSO, age 38:

"Americans are not nice to Japanese - especially in California - but in New York it's different. There I have many non-Asian friends, but here it's hard. Here there is also less diversity in the colleges." Her friend, Wayne Lemmin from Trinidad, interrupts her, teasing, "But then, mathematicians *never* have any friends!" stressing that word *never*, producing more laughs between the group of friends. "Politically it's so different here," Mariko continues, "In Japan we can't vote for our Prime Minister; instead the government chooses. And in Japan, with its decreasing population you get money for having many children. Most women get married and stay home. The company supports the wife staying home. The company helps you get a house with a loan or gives you a company house. And Japan has age discrimination; if you are a woman over 35, it's very, very hard to get a job."

They wander on their merry way as I continue walking through the 6,000 people, drinking my refreshing food as I go. After only a few steps a lean, tanned and blonde man stops me, saying, "I live on a sailboat in Columbia - for eight years now" I guess he had eavesdropped but how interesting! and I blurt out my first thought; "Isn't that dangerous?" He snorts in derision and I realize I had stepped into a *ceynote* (a spanish word for sinkhole) as he answers, "You Americans! Your streets are much more dangerous than Columbia's high seas! Go live in the world, it's much safer than you are told!" with that said, he turns and merges into the crowd. 'Ego' makes me want to run after him proclaiming, 'But I DO travel! I know that TOO!' and to take his photo and get his name, but he was gone.

With three days of top reggae and world music on two stages, plus the late night Dancehall, all the arts and crafts vendors, many non-profit booths, the Drum Temple, the Kid's Zone, the Press Tent and all the campsite fun (where you can listen to the main stage's music broadcast on your car radio), it was guaranteed that I would miss something! One act I missed was Grammy winner, Les Nubians, but as I wandered by the Press Tent I heard their beautiful accents and veered inside,



Cecelia Fausser of Les Nubians



Helene Fausser of Les Nubians

where two beautiful women were at the mic, telling the assembled world press about their mixed race French-Cameroonian heritage, the history of their worldwide rise to fame, and about taking control of their own musical direction instead of being molded by recording conglomerates - giving credit to Prince for that: “Your artist, Prince, has fore-head-vision,” she touches her forehead, “forward vision - because he was first to say to the artists, ‘Don’t be a slave’.”

Both women still wear the African face-design, “respecting their ancestor’s belief with the dots that rendered them invisible as ghosts” and the colorful costumes from the stage. It was Helene Fausser speaking: at the age of four she “saw Fela perform and knew what he was putting into the music.” Hearing Fela had “shaped their lives forever.” Now, in that full circle of life, Les Nubians were releasing a cd, “Red Hot Riot,” a tribute to Fela that will also raise money to fight AIDS in Africa.

Grassroots Profile

Dr. Alireza Rezapour is a typically a-typical grassroots activist. As an immigrant from Iran with a full-time medical practice and a young family he is devoted to, Ali could well have been expected to remain a contented householder voting Republican and serving at the mosque. But whatever potential there was for that Ali to exist, it was banished by a return visit to Iran some years ago. “I visited my grandmother’s grave and nearby was a section of the cemetery for the dead of the Iran-Iraq war. It was as big as some towns, and each grave had a picture—hundreds of thousands of faces looking like my friends and me. ‘Why wasn’t I among them?’ I asked myself...and I vowed that since I had been allowed to survive, I must use my voice to speak for those who hadn’t. I would find ways to challenge the racism and ignorance that breeds hatred, fear and war.”

Ali has chosen two institutions through which to channel the work entailed by his vow. One is KFCF (FM 88.1), the listener-supported radio station that features Amy Goodman’s Democracy Now, and the voices of many of the local activists this paper reports on. Ali determined that media free of corporate bias, and the distortions of fact so bred, is crucial not only to the political freedoms he cherishes but to the health of people like his medical patients. “Their health is not just a matter of their individual bodies and choices. It is affected by air and water pollution, what goes into their food, the toxins in their environment. People need to know the facts. KFCF is the only local station that provides that information.” Ali sought nomination for, and was elected to, the KFCF governing board, where he currently serves.

Ali’s other major involvement is the Islamic Cultural Center of Central California (ICC), an institution devoted to keeping the practice of Islam connected with contemporary thought and events, and to fostering dialogue with non-Muslims. The ICC’s involvement with the Interfaith Alliance and other community groups with shared concerns became critical after 9/11 when mistrust of anyone appearing Middle Eastern or professing Islam became rampant. (Ali gratefully acknowledges the swift support from the Japanese-American community at that time based on recollections of their own mistreatment during World War II.) Ali works with the ICC to engender awareness of the pacific, spiritual aspects of Islam, which shares

So when my turn at the mic came, I ask LES NUBIANS; HELENE and CECELIA FAUSSERT, this month’s Question:

As a foreigner in our country what have you observed about the USA and its citizens?

“In France, we strike and march ALL the time! We have - and exercise - Freedom of Speech. In the USA everyone sleeps and enjoys their privileges, like cheap gas. They don’t want to know what’s going on out there! In France, student protests changed our Minister of Education four times in the last ten years! That’s empowerment!” answers Helene passionately. Her English is better, she explains, but sister Cecelia understands and nods her head in agreement often, as Helene continued: “The rest of the world owes so much to Africa. We need to not forget where our ancestors came from! The USA says to immigrants...” (and here Helene’s melodic voice imitates a disdainful whine), “‘We don’t want you, you come to eat our bread.’” Returning her voice to normal she says emphatically, “Your citizens do not know that in many parts of Africa, the youth don’t want US visa - that we are doing fine!”

Cecelia interrupts, “And you {US citizens} don’t know that about Africa!” Then she answers our Question:

“We should love each other; we are all world citizens. Here, I love to see the reggae tribe. We are becoming a world of tribes - reggae tribes, political tribes, jazz tribes, religious tribes... I love to see the tribe here!”

Satisfied, I step back from the mic, and as I duck out of the tent the next DJ steps up to ask his question.

On Sunday afternoon, across the street at the Ox, in the revelers’ mix of locals, wine tourists and festival goers, I hear a graveled country voice say, “... the wind was blowing so hard that the cows grazed at 30 miles per hour...” so I tuned in to listen. Musician and “old moonshiner,” Billy Owens, said that he was a foreigner too: “a transplanted Okie turned into a Californian!” But there were accents even more out of place in this western-style bar, (a ‘civilized saloon’ it says on the sign), so I lassoed AUSSIE MARK, from Australia, to ask him our Question:

As a foreigner in our country what have you observed about the USA and its citizens?

the universal aspirations for peace and justice central to every major religion.

One regular feature of Ali’s activist life that brings it all together for him is his work on the radio program “Common Ground”, aired alternating Fridays at 2:30p.m. on KFCF. Ali and co-host Maribel Valencia Castillo (of the Pan Valley Institute) interview members of various ethnic groups to air and explicate to others issues in their communities. A timely recent interview was with Hmong leaders about the arrest and allegations involving prominent Hmong-Americans for conspiring against the government of Laos.

Ali is fortunate in feeling his spirituality, his professional work and his community work so integrated. His allies and advisors come from all these areas—including Dan Yaseen (from PeaceFresno and the Center for Nonviolence), Kamal Abu-Shamshieh and Imam Ali Ghazvini from the CCI, and Dr. Roger Larson who was a founder of Valley Medical Center. As an activist, Ali has identified a long-range goal : a national health care system that “removes money from physicians calculations and help’s create a nation with healthier hearts and spirits and inquisitive discerning minds”—another indication of how interconnected are his involvements and thoughts.

So it is not surprising to learn that Dr. Rezapour now hands a copy of the Community Alliance to all his patients as part of their treatment, and urges them to see Michael Moore’s “Sicko”. (He notes there is a personal aspect here, too. “The insurance mess eats up my time, and since Medicare B went into effect I’ve had to wrap my hand for tendonitis.”) For our readership, he prescribes large doses of KFCF, and support of State Rep. Sheila Kuehl’s SB840, which would bring a single-payer health system to California, and of Rep. Conyer’s national health care bill.

Ali says that his involvement in community activism, fueled by the injunction of his faith to do what is right, has brought him in contact with people who have buoyed his hopes. “These are true citizens of the world, whose efforts are turning the tide against global tyranny. Working with them, I’ve learned to keep focus on effort—after all, if we got graded on saving the world, even Muhammed would get an F.”

As for achievement, we’ll follow Ali’s advice and let oth-

“My observations about US citizens? They work too hard and don’t enjoy life. They are very materialistic. I say go with the flow!”

With all the words that I need gathered up now, and Aussie Mark’s words, ‘Go with the Flow,’ still in my head, I was on the way to enjoy my personal ‘real whipped cream topping’ on the entire weekend; not one, but three legends of reggae’s roots, ska and rocksteady styles - founding fathers, so to speak - appearing on the second stage: first the Maytones, next the Ethiopians (who had headlined Fresno’s 2001 Jamaica My Weekend Festival), and then Derrick Morgan - all while Richie Spice and then Ojas De Brujo rock the other main stage - but I’m right *here*, enjoying the classics of reggae ‘live’ on stage! Smiling friends and family, (whether I know them or not) are packed around me as we all dance on the grass, amongst a few oak trees and vendor tents, to these venerated elders singing of love, peace and understanding under the moon and stars.

I go with the flow.



Aussie Mark

ers give out the marks. But I rest my case that here is one grade-A human being.



IDENTITY BOX

Name —Dr. Alireza Rezapour

Birthplace —Tehran, Iran

Primary identity —Iranian-American

Religious affiliation —Shiite Muslim (‘I sometimes grow my beard and wear ethnic clothes just so my patients will see we’re not all terrorists’)

Political affiliation —independent (who has voted for Nader and Comejo)

Favorite Fresno places —the San Joaquin River, the ICC, the bookstores at River Park

Motto —(taken from traditional Jewish writings) Don’t do unto others as you wouldn’t have them do unto you.

Inspirational figures: Imam Hossein (‘a key figure in early Shiite history who inspired me as a child to stand up for what is right.’; Malcolm X; Arundhati Roy; Amy Goodman

Non-political interests: family, nature and animals

Unexpected pleasures —shepherding, soccer (playing and watching)



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

One thousand women convened in the Netherlands in 1915 to protest against World War I. Out of that convention the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was born. Ninety years later, the same issues threaten personal and community freedoms. The peace we desire for our families, our country, and the world is still illusive. Today WILPF members worldwide educate themselves about important issues, then look for opportunities to act individually and collectively to create a peaceful change.

SAVE THE WATER CAMPAIGN

"Save the Water" is a National WILPF Legislative Campaign. In Fresno, we encourage individuals to stop buying and using bottled water, which is one way to discourage privatization of local water sources. On a global level, we must put pressure on the UN Human Rights Council to guarantee Water as a Human Right. The right to local water resources is a huge issue in California and throughout the world because of the insatiable demand for water for farming and our growing city populations, complicated by the increased pollution of fresh water sources. In 2002, The United Nations acknowledged that humans have a right to local water. However, the UN "Comment 15" has no provision to enforce and protect these rights. WILPF provides an on-line petition calling for 1) the full implementation of the Human Right to Water from member states, and 2) mechanisms to hold the private sector accountable to the requirements of International Law concerning water rights. You can sign this petition today at http://wilpf.org/water_petition.

Our right to freely be who we are in this colorful, complex world is another issue of concern today. Unfortunately, prejudices abound in all communities. Many of us are not aware of our own hurtful attitudes and behaviors because so many prejudices are unconsciously learned. WILPF has tackled this issue by encouraging "Building the Beloved Community" programs in local sites.

BUILDING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

"The Beloved Community" is a term originated in the early days of the 20th century by the philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce, who founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a member of the Fellowship, popularized the idea in his many stirring speeches. Dr. King believed that The Beloved Community is an achievable global goal, in which all people share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of dis-

crimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. In the Beloved Community, international disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of military power. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail over war and military conflict. Our own Fresno activist, Vickie Fouts, is an enthusiast for this all-inclusive spirit. She is an active member of the National WILPF "Building the Beloved Community" (BBC) issue group. Lucky for us, Vickie has also worked tirelessly to create programs here in Fresno to involve WILPF members and others in eradicating racism and all forms of prejudice. The Uprooting Racism Book Discussion group begun in March 2006 is one of her accomplishments. Because of Vickie's advocacy of the Beloved Community and her efforts to find co-sponsors and multiple funding sources, the Uprooting Racism group continues independently from WILPF. Her work on the national level and locally helps us learn and grow together to create a peaceful, safe, and accepting community here in Fresno.

Here is Vickie's report on the latest "Building the Beloved Community" event:

PREJUDICE REDUCTION WORKSHOP

On June 23rd WILPF co-sponsored a Prejudice Reduction Workshop with the Uprooting Racism group at CSU Fresno. The workshop was facilitated by members of CSU Fresno's National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI). Thirteen people of diverse backgrounds attended, including five WILPF members. The one-day Prejudice Reduction Workshop consisted of a series of incremental, experiential activities that helped participants to:

- * celebrate their similarities and differences
- * identify and heal from internalized oppression (the discrimination members of an oppressed group target at themselves and each other)
- * claim pride in group identity
- * understand the personal impact of discrimination through the telling of stories, and
- * learn hands-on tools for dealing effectively with bigoted comments and behavior.

Some of the prejudices that were covered included racism, sexism, youthism, classism, xenophobia, and homophobia.

We wish to thank WILPF for making this possible with a \$500 donation from our education fund. We also wish to thank WILPF members Ann Merrill, Barbara



Vickie Fouts

Hormann, Betsy Temple, Jeanmarie Quinn, Lydia Flores and Lucille Wheaton and Uprooting Racism member Diane Marks for their donations towards Uprooting Racism work during Women's Herstory Month. Their donations enabled two youth leaders and their facilitator from Madera Coalition for Community Justice to attend. We also wish to thank WILPFers Ellie Bluestein and Meta Schettler and Uprooting Racism members Diane Marks and Marcia Kamiya-Cross for their donations towards scholarships for some of those who attended. Thanks also to NCBI members Francine Oputa and Denni Blum for facilitating the workshop, and to our empowerment people Deborah Napoleon, Jody Hironaka-Juteau and Marilyn Shelton. For information about future Uprooting Racism programs contact Vickie Fouts at socialjustice@sti.net or phone (559) 658-8260.

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Fresno Center for Nonviolence



1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno, CA 93728 – www.centerfornonviolence.org – info@centerfornonviolence.org

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

In the Shadow of the Bomb

by Jackie Cabasso and Jedidjah de Vries

from Tri-Valley CAREs' July 2007 newsletter, Citizen's Watch

Sixty-two years after the United States dropped atomic bombs on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, we find ourselves still "In the Shadow of the Bomb."

We invite all who cherish peace and justice to join us on August 6 for a vigil and nonviolent direct action at Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab to commemorate the victims of nuclear horror, from Hiroshima to the present.

We will honor the suffering of those who died instantly and those who endured lingering illnesses, and of the Hibakusha who survived, as we speak up to insist that the U.S. government acknowledge and apologize to the people of Japan for what it has done.

We gather, too, because we understand that the devastation that accompanies all aspects of the nuclear cycle continues to the present day — polluting our lands and poisoning our children, here in the Bay Area and around the world.

We choose to gather at the place where the next U.S. nuclear weapon is being designed. We will demand that the U.S. implement its nuclear disarmament obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, not create new horrors.

We ask you to gather with us to make our message loud and clear.

What: Hiroshima Memorial, Action

When: Monday, August 6th, 7:30 a.m.

Where: Livermore Lab, Westgate at Vasco Rd., Livermore

Those interested in carpooling to the action please call the FCNV @ 23-PEACE

Council of Light

invites you to join our "Experiments in Truth." This month we will be looking at our clothing - how much, what kind, bought where, etc. Can we change our habits to create more justice? Let us know what you discover - send "results" to the center.

info@centerfornonviolence.org or

1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno, CA 93728

stir it up

with Richard Stone and Gerry Bill who will be discussing his recent trip to Cuba with Pastors for Peace

Wednesday, July 11th- 3 p.m. - KFCF 88.1 FM.

NOW COLLECTING BOOKS

for our October 6th booksale. Books can be dropped off at the FCNV M-F 11 am – 3 pm. 1584 N. Van Ness (SE Corner of McKinley and Van Ness Please use boxes if possible.

For more information call: 23-PEACE

Second Wednesday Video Series

As Seen on HBO

LAST BEST CHANCE

Last Best Chance is a docudrama that shows the threat posed by vulnerable nuclear weapons and materials around the world and underscores what the stakes are.

In the movie, al Qaeda operatives organize three separate operations aimed at getting nuclear weapons. The material is then fabricated into three crude nuclear weapons by small groups of trained terrorists, who have recruited bomb-making experts to help them manufacture their weapons.

Because the government had failed to take sufficient action to secure or destroy the nuclear weapons material, they are helpless to prevent an attack.

FCNV – 7 P.M.

Potluck 6:30

Details: Call 23-PEACE

PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Through August 23

A photographic journey exhibition documenting the lives and communities of indigenous Mexican farmworkers in California titled “Living Under the Trees” by David Bacon at Arte Américas 1630 Van Ness, Fresno, CA 93721. For more information, see: <http://www.arteamericas.org> or call 559-266-2623 .

Friday, August 3 • 4:30-6:30 PM

Join Peace Fresno at its monthly demonstration at the Peace Corner: Blackstone and Shaw. Come and tell your elected officials to stop the war in September by doing nothing - no more funding bills for the Iraq Occupation and no attack against Iran.

Friday, August 3 • 5:15 PM

Cineculture & The Undercurrent present the film *Life + Debt* (Jamaica, re: effects of globalization on Jamaica). This film will be shown at the Peters Auditorium, which is the Leon P. Peters Auditorium on the west side of Save Mart at Woodrow and Shaw Aves. Enter through the entrance marked “Student Recreation Center.” Cineculture Club promotes cultural awareness and addresses diversity issues through film and post-screening discussion. For more information contact the Cineculture Club advisor: Dr. Denni Blum dblum@csufresno.edu 278-0248 or The Undercurrent: Abid Yayha abid.undercurrent@gmail.com

Friday, August 3 • 6 - 8 PM

West Fresno Town Hall Meeting to Stop Fresno Police Brutality. Location: 2519 S. Elm St. Fresno, Ca 93706. For More Information call: Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr (559) 803 - 0286 or Visit www.nationalnetworkinactin.org

Friday, August 3 • 6:30-8:30

The Reedley Peace Center will present speaker: David Hasegawa. The topic will be Dualism and Truth.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on ‘L’ street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen0@gmail.com

Saturday, August 4 • 8 - 10 AM

Breastfeeding: First Step to a Healthy Life. The Babies First Breastfeeding Task Force invites the community, including health care providers, to participate in its 2nd Annual Breastfeeding Awareness Walk and Celebration at Woodward Park. Last year’s Breastfeeding Awareness Walk drew over 300 participants and 32 community sponsors. It was a successful community event to support and promote the important health benefits of *breastfeeding* and a healthier community. For more information on how to register or help sponsor the walk, visit www.fresnohumanservices.org/communityhealth or call Priscilla Newsome at 445-3307.

Saturday, August 4 • 10 AM – 2 PM

The Day of the Crane - a Tribute for Peace. The South Valley Peace Center, the American Friends Service Committee - Proyecto Campesino, and the ImagineU Children’s Museum are holding joint celebrations for the Hiroshima Day, Memorial Day, and World Peace Day.

There will be a collaborative crane folding event on at the ImagineU Children’s Museum at 700 E. Main Street in Visalia. Admission is free, and all materials will be provided. Children will fold cranes, with wishes if they like, that will later be sent to Hiroshima. Other crafts and activities are also planned such as lantern making.

Saturday, August 4

Unity Conference led by MAPA and NAACP will be held at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Fresno.

Monday, August 6 • 9 AM - 12 Noon

Health Care for All presents A “Kuehl” Solution for a Hot Issue!!! at the Fresno Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 2425 Fresno Street. The program will include:

- Personal Stories: the Crisis is Real
- “SiCKO,” the movie
- Valley Voices on Health Care

For more information contact Gene Roza at (559) 905-3521.

Monday, August 6 • 7:30 AM
Hiroshima Commemoration

On the morning of August 6, 1945, the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb used in war on the people of Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, a second nuclear bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. We gather to say “never again” at the nuclear weapons lab that is developing the NEXT U.S. nuclear weapon, euphemistically-named the “Reliable Replacement Warhead.” Join us for a solemn vigil and memorial for the victims, and to advocate for an end to nuclear weapons and war. The keynote speaker will be Bob Watada, father of Ehren Watada who refused deployment to the Iraq war on moral grounds. For those who so choose, there will be an opportunity to nonviolently risk arrest following the ceremony.

Location: Westgate entrance on Vasco Road, Livermore
More Info: 925-443-7148 for details

Monday, August 6 • 7:30 PM

Hiroshima Day Memorial Lantern-floating Peace Ceremony at the Plaza Park Pond, Visalia, Hwy 198 exit on Plaza Dr., next to the Holiday Inn. (Lantern-making at 7:30 pm, materials provided.) Floating of the lanterns at 8:00 pm. Ages: Adults and all ages.

Tuesday, August 7 • 5 -7 PM

Friends of Barbara Boxer will be holding a special event in Fresno! You are invited to join them at this event to support the re-election of U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer at Love & Garlic, 5351 North Diana Fresno, CA 93710. \$2300 Event Co-chairs \$1000 Co-hosts \$500 Sponsors \$50 per individual. For questions or to RSVP-only, please contact Shari Rubin at 415-572-3891 or email shari@integratedfundraising.com

Wednesday, August 8 • 3 PM

The Center for Nonviolence hosts the monthly second Wednesday “Stir it Up” on KFCF 88,1 FM. Topic: Gerry Bill will discuss his recent trip to Cuba, where he was part of the Pastors for Peace annual expedition. Richard Stone will host.

Wednesday, August 8 • 7 PM

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence Monthly Video Series. At the Center, 1584 N. Van Ness.

- All are welcome – Free. Film Name & Topic TBA. There will be a potluck at 6:30, prior to the showing, and a discussion afterward. For info call 237-3223 Note: There Will Be No Noontime Showing During Summer Months, until School Resumes in the Fall.

Friday, August 10 • 5 PM and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents “The Valet” at the Tower Theatre. This new farce from Francis Verber (“La Cage aux Folles” and “The Dinner Game”) combines hilarious slapstick with quick-witted dialogue as a valet at a posh Paris hotel gets caught-up in an industrialist’s sneaky infidelities. In French, with English subtitles. Tickets can be purchased at 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 \$10; \$8, for students and seniors. Tickets can also be purchased online through PayPal at www.fresnofilmworks.org . For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to www.fresnofilmworks.org

Friday, August 10 • 6:30-8:30

The Reedley Peace Center will present the documentary: Two Days in October. In October 1967, a U.S. regiment walked into a Vietcong ambush that killed 61 soldiers — and raised doubts about whether the war was winnable. Meanwhile, University of Wisconsin students were protesting the presence of Dow Chemical recruiters on campus; the demonstration soon spun out of control, marking the first time a protest became violent. Told by those who took part in the events, the film offers a window into a defining American moment.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on ‘L’ street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen0@gmail.com

Thursday August 16 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents Inner Ear Poetry Jam \$5.-cover, 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com

Friday, August 17 • 5:15 PM

Cineculture & The Undercurrent present the film *Thirst* (filmed in Bolivia, India, and USA, re: Privatization of Water). This film will be shown at CSU-Fresno music room 160. Cineculture Club promotes cultural awareness and addresses diversity issues through film and post-screening discussion. For more information contact the Cineculture Club advisor: Dr. Denni Blum dblum@csufresno.edu 278-0248 or The Undercurrent: Abid Yayha abid.undercurrent@gmail.com

Friday, August 17 • 6:30-8:30

The Reedley Peace Center will sponsor a presentation by the Interfaith Youth Alliance of Fresno.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on ‘L’ street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen0@gmail.com

Tuesday, August 21 • 7 PM

John Morearty will read and sign copies of his new book Walking to Omega: Tales of a Peacenik Carpenter. John has been a peace activist in Stockton for almost 30 years. Peace Fresno is hosting this event, which will be held at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence - located at 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. (at McKinley) Fresno. For more information call 559 487-2515

August 22, 23, 24 • 11:00 PM

Three part program, one part each night “A Brief History of Disbelief” Johnathan Miller will be aired on KVPT ch 18, Fresno. <http://www.americanhumanist.org/press/historydisbelief.php>

Friday, August 24 • 6:30-8:30

The Reedley Peace Center will present speaker Valentina Satvedi, Topic: Anti-racism

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on ‘L’ street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen0@gmail.com

Friday, August 24 • 7:30 PM (doors open • 8 PM (concert starts)

Dr. Loco’s Rockin Jalapeño Band will perform at Arte Americas, 1630 Van Ness Avenue in downtown Fresno. See www.arteamericas.org and www.drloco.com for more information.

Friday, August 24 • 5:15 PM

Cineculture & The Undercurrent present the film The Revolution Will Not Be Televised (Venezuela, re: coup & Hugo Chavez). This film will be shown at CSU-Fresno music room 160. Cineculture Club promotes cultural awareness and addresses diversity issues through film and post-screening discussion. For more information contact the Cineculture Club advisor: Dr. Denni Blum dblum@csufresno.edu 278-0248 or The Undercurrent: Abid Yayha abid.undercurrent@gmail.com

Saturday August 25 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents “The Furious Slugs” \$5.-cover 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com

Friday, August 31 • 6:30-8:30

The Reedley Peace Center will present speaker Steve Penner will present a program about the music of Peace and Justice in contemporary rock/folk music.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on ‘L’ street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen0@gmail.com

Saturday, September 8

First Annual National Youth Summit. TOPICS of concerns to be discussed at the Summit.

focus: school bullying, hate crimes & hate motivated incidents, harassment and socio-economic/cultural intolerance. This event will be held at the CSUF Satellite Union, 5241 N. Maple ave in Fresno. For more information CALL (559) 664-2003 or (559) 474-6861.

Sunday, September 9 • 5:30 PM

The KFCF annual dinner at Love & Garlic (5351 N. Diana Court, off Barstow, behind Trader Joe’s). The featured speaker is Norman Soloman.

Thursday, September 20

The San Francisco Mime Troop returns to Fresno. Topic of play: “War Profiteering.” Location: Roosevelt High School. Time: TBA. Tickets: \$20.00. Low Income: \$10.00. Students: \$5.00. For Information call 237-3223.

Saturday, September 22 • 11 AM - 8 PM

Tamejavi Festival at Radio Park and the Fresno Art Museum. A daylong event free to the public, a gathering to celebrate and experience the rich culture and traditions of California’s Central Valley through visual and performing arts. This year’s festival also includes:

- Spaces for dialogues, which will address various current topics
- A photo exhibit chronicling the journey of Tamejavi
- A film festival presenting Hmong, Latino, and Native American film

The theme of Tamejavi IV “Hands that Forge History” invites you to recognize the traditions, struggles and contributions of Central Valley immigrants. For more information call 559 222-7678 or visit www.tamejavi.org

Sunday, September 30 • 2 - 4 PM

Stop the Violence, Build a Culture of Peace. Musical and Floral Tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at the Peace Garden, California State University, Fresno. Contact Dr. Kapoor at 435-2212 for additional information and if you would like to participate in the program.

Tuesday, October 2

Candle Light Vigil for World Peace at Sunset, Peace Garden at CSU-Fresno. Contact Dr. Kapoor at 435-2212 for additional information and if you would like to participate in the program.

PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY GROUPS ACTIVE IN THE FRESNO AREA

15 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE AUGUST 2007

ACORN
3636 N First #139 • Fresno Ca 93726
Ph (559) 222-9013 • Fax (559) 222-9159
caacornfrr@acorn.org • www.acorn.org

Californians for Justice
2014 Tulare Avenue Suite 718 • Fresno, CA 93721
Ph: 443-1394 • Fax: 433-1343
bernardo@caljustice.org • www.caljustice.org

California Prison Moratorium Project
1055 N. Ave Van Ness. Suite C1
Fresno, CA 93728
(559) 916-4370
pmpvalle@sbcglobal.net • www.prisonactivist.org
<http://calipmp.org>

California Rural Legal Assistance
2115 Kern St, Ste. 370 • Fresno, CA 93721-2100
Ph. (559) 441-8721
<http://www.crla.org/>

Center for Independent Living
3008 N. Fresno Street • Fresno Ca 93703
Ph. (559) 221-2330 • Fax: (559) 221-2340
j_barraza@cil-fresno.org

Central California Alliance
Post Office Box 16422 • Fresno, California 93755
Ph (559) 265-7117
speechadvice@yahoo.com • www.ccafresno.org

Central California Criminal Justice Committee
Post Office Box 4555 • Fresno, CA 93744
(559) 229-9807
<http://cccjc.org/home/>

Central California Legal Services
1999 Tuolumne St., Suite 700 • Fresno Ca 93721
Ph. (559) 570-1209
fresno@centralcallegal.org
<http://www.centralcallegal.org>

Central Valley Counter-Recruitment Coalition
P. O. Box 5115 • Fresno, CA 93755
(559)487-2515
cvcrc@riseup.net • www.peacefresno.org

Central Valley Progressive PAC
P. O. Box 5845 • Fresno, CA 93755
(559) 559-444-2204
info@cvppac.org • www.cvppac.org

Centro Azteca de Información en Fresno
Franco Duarte
2203 Norris DR W • Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 485-0944 • Fax (559) 459-0744
centroztecacfresno@hotmail.com

Centro Bellas Artes
453 N. Fresno Street • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 237- 2783

Centro La Familia Advocacy
2014 Tulare St., #717 • Fresno, CA 93721
Ph. (559) 237-2961 • Fax (559) 237-2968

Coalition for Clean Air
1055 N. Van Ness Ave, Suite K • Fresno, CA 93728
sarah@coalitionforcleanair.org
(559) 486-3279

Coalicion por los Derechos de los Immigrantes del Valle de San Joaquin
453 N. Fresno Street • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 498-6033 • Fax 497-0206
IWAPGH@aol.com

Comité No Nos Vamos
453 N. Fresno Street • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 498-6033
IWAPGH@aol.com

Comite PRO UNO
453 N. Fresno Street • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 498-0206
IWAPGH@aol.com

Community Alliance for a Fair Economy (C.A.F.E.)
PO Box 4496 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 445-0887
nancymarsh@yahoo.com

Community Alliance newspaper
P.O. Box 5077 • Fresno, CA 93755
Ph. (559) 978-4502 • Fax (559) 226-3962
AllianceEditor@Comcast.net
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/>

Community Link
PO Box 4959 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 266-5465 or 226-5377
Fax (559) 486-3464
clinkinc@aol.com
<http://www.communitylinkfresno.com>

Fresno Copwatch
453 N. Fresno Street • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 498-6033
IWAPGH@aol.com

Death Penalty Focus
Families & Friends of Prisoners Support Group
1917 S. Chestnut Ave., #13-G • Fresno, CA 93702
Phone/Fax: (559) 255-9492
maria.telesco@sbcglobal.net
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/focus/>

El Com. Para Bienestar de Earlimart; Californians for Pesticide Reform, Central Valley
P.O. Box 10725 • Earlimart, CA 93219
Ph. (661) 849-0669 • Fax: (661) 849-2205
teresahbd@adi.com

El Concilio Immigration Project
1532 Fresno St • Fresno, CA 93706-1627
Ph. (559) 485-0679
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/ElConcilio/>

Fresno County Bicycle Coalition
P.O. Box 218 • Clovis, CA 93613
(559) 444-2065
info@fresnobike.com • www.fresnobike.org

Food Not Bombs (Saturday)
fresnofnb@yahoo.com
<http://home.comcast.net/~fresnofnb/>

Sunday Food Not Bombs
933 F Street • Fresno, CA 93706
<http://cafefresno.org/>

Frente Indigena Oaxaqueno Binacional (Office)
2014 Tulare Street, Suite 223 • Fresno, CA 93721
(Mailing Address)
P. O. 106 • Fresno, CA 93707-0106
Ph. (559) 499-1178 • Fax (559) 268-0484
lvasquez@sbcglobal.net • <http://www.fiob.org/>

Fresno Center for New Americans
4879 E Kings Canyon Road • Fresno Ca 93727
Ph. (559) 255-8395 • Fax. (559) 255-1656
silascha@fresnocenter.com • www.fresnocenter.com

Fresno Center for Nonviolence dedicated to peace and social justice
1584 N. Van Ness • Fresno Ca 93728-1941
Ph. (559) 237-3223
info@centerfornonviolence.org
www.centerfornonviolence.org

Fresno County Green Party
PO Box 4501 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 265-3647
fresno@greens.org • www.fresnogreens.org

Fresno Folklore Society
P.O. Box 4617 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 229-8808
ckjohns@pacbell.net • ckj12@csufresno.edu
<http://home.pacbell.net/ckjohns/>

Fresno Metro Ministry
1055 N Van Ness Suite H • Fresno, CA 93728
Ph. (559) 485-1416 • Fax (559) 485-9109
metromin@fresnetmin.org
<http://www.fresnetmin.org/>

Fresno Free College Foundation/Radio station KFCF
P.O. Box 4364 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 233-2221 • Fax (559) 233-5776
Studio, Call-in Line: (559) 266-8888
office@kfcf.org • <http://www.kfcf.org>

Habitat for Humanity
2219 San Joaquin • Fresno, CA 93721
Ph. (559) 237-4102 • Fax (559) 237-1451
habitatfresnotm@hotmail.com
<http://www.habitatfresno.org/>

Health Care for All
devinc@sbcglobal.net
http://www.healthcareforall.org/central_valley.html

Interfaith Alliance of Central California
P.O. Box 9122 • Fresno, CA 93790
Ph. (559) 225-1438
iaccfresno_1@hotmail.com

Interfaith Youth Alliance
P O Box 26134 • Fresno, Ca 93729
Senior Advisor: Kamal Abu-Shamsieh
(559) 244-9360
Email: shamiseh@sbcglobal.net

KNFS (A Progressive Low Power FM radio station in the South Valley)
693 E. Kern Ave. • Tulare Ca 93274
knfs@comcast.net
<http://www.knfs.org> (Under construction)

Latino Issues Forum (LIF)
Fresno Regional Office
550 E. Shaw Ave, Suite 240 • Fresno, Ca 93710
(559) 241-6561 (Office) • (559) 241-6563 (Fax)
Maria Leon
559-241-6572 • rleon@lif.org
<http://www.lif.org>

League of Women Voters
1345-A East Bulldog Lane • Fresno, CA 93710
Ph. (559) 226-8683 • Fax (559) 268-1930
info@fresno.ca.lwvnet.org
<http://fresno.ca.lwvnet.org/>

The Living Room
601 E. Belmont • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 485-3667 • Fax (559) 485-3669

Living Wage Committee
PO Box 4496 • Fresno, CA 93744

The Merced Labor Party
P.O. Box 1136 • Merced, Ca 95341
(209) 631-6461
ssandovala@comcast.net

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
Fresno Chapter
P.O. Box 11811 • Fresno, CA 93775-1811
Voice: (559) 485-5778 • Fax: (559) 485-5783
naacp41038@aol.com

National Network in Action
xyfloyd@aol.com

Pan-Valley Institute
1440 W. Shaw Ave., Suite A • Fresno, CA 93711
Ph. (559) 222-7678 • Fax (559) 222-7682
mnateras@afsc.org • www.afsc.org

Parents & Friends of Lesbians/gays
1343 E Barstow
Fresno, CA 93710-6399
Ph. (559) 434-6540

Peace and Freedom Party of Fresno County
P.O. Box 2191 • Clovis CA 93613-2191
<http://www.peaceandfreedom-sjv.org/>

Peace Bakersfield
1906 18th Street, Apt. 24 • Bakersfield, CA 93301
Ph. (661) 633-2930
peacebakersfield@sbcglobal.net
<http://www.geocities.com/bakproactnet/peacebakersfield.html>

Peace Fresno
P. O. Box 5115 • Fresno, CA 93755
559-487-2515
president@peacefresno.org • www.peacefresno.org

People with Power
4836 E Belmont, Suite 102 • Fresno Ca 93727
Ph. (559) 255-3818
peoplewithpower@yahoo.com

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
633 N. Van Ness • Fresno, CA 93728
Ph. (559) 488-4913 • Fax (559) 488-4940
<http://www.pppmarmonite.org>

Proyecto Campesino
208 W Main St Suite U-2 • Visalia, CA 93291
Ph. (559) 733-4844 • Fax (559) 733-2360
gmartinez@afsc.org
<http://www.afsc.org/pacificmtn/visalia.htm>

Radio Bilingue
KSJV 91.5
5005 E. Belmont Avenue • Fresno, CA 93727
Ph. (559) 455-5777
mariax@radiobilingue.org
<http://www.radiobilingue.org/>

The Sleeping Bag Project
4618 N. First St., #183 • Fresno 93726
Ph. (559) 226-1356
jeanchipp@sbcglobal.net
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/sbp/>

South Valley Peace Center
17206 Avenue 296 • Visalia, CA 93292
info@svpc.info • <http://www.svpc.info/>

St. Benedict Catholic Worker
4022 N Cheryl • Fresno, CA 93705
Ph. (559) 229-6410 • Cell. 977-3648
Lizaosb@aol.com • www.sbcw.org

Stone Soup
1345 East Bulldog Lane, Suite 4 • Fresno, CA 93710
Ph. (559) 224-7613 • Fax (559) 224-2981
stonesoupfresno@yahoo.com
www.stonesoupfresno.org

Stonewall Democrats
c/o Chuck Krugman
Ph. (559) 226-3717 • ckrugman@sbcglobal.net
fresnostonewall@mangen.com
<http://www.mangen.com/stonewall/>

Sun Mt
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mail@sunmt.org • <http://www.sunmt.org>

Tehipite Chapter Sierra Club
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Ph. (559) 229-4031
<http://www.tehipitesierraclub.org/>

Union De Exbraceros Y De Inmigrantes
2502 Merced St #101 • Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 266-5291, (559) 341-4556
leonflor5@aol.com

United Black Men
1929 E. Church Ave • Fresno 93710

The Wheelchair Project
5205 E Washington • Fresno, CA 93727
Ph. (559) 251-3814
wheelchairbusproject@juno.com
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/wheelchairproject/>

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
P.O. Box 5114 • Fresno, CA 93755
Ph. (559) 439-0280
skyhorse3593@sbcglobal.net
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/wilpf/>

Walking to Omega Tales of a Peacenik Carpenter

review by Mike Rhodes

The Central Valley is a harsh political environment for progressive political activists to thrive in. That is why it is so interesting to read a story about a man who has spent a great deal of his life here working for peace, social, and economic justice. What motivates him? What sustains him? What insights into life does John Morearty, who lives in Stockton, have to share with us?

John came to Stockton in the late 60's to teach at Callison College, which was a part of the University of the Pacific (UOP). Callison was an experimental/alternative educational school where a well educated and progressive graduate from the University of Chicago would fit right in. John doesn't make this argument, but it might have been to his advantage that he did not grow up in the Central Valley. Coming from Chicago and having spent time in India gave him the opportunity to look at life here through a different set of eyes.

John did not become a political activist while teaching at Callison, but he did speak out against the war in Vietnam. He spoke at one demonstration on the UOP campus where 1,200 students and faculty turned out. The campus only had 3,000 students at the time. After the rally he recalled that "one evening came a knock on our front door. There stood a man my own age with wild red hair and beard. . . 'Hey, man, are you the one who gave the speech against the war that was in the paper?' " He said he was, and the guy said "well, I agree with you a hundred percent. Those pigs are killing us. We gotta do some really radical stuff to stop this American imperialism crap. Whadya say you and I get together and get down?!" Morearty wisely said "no thanks." This person pops up later in the book - his probable motivation revealed.

This story was interesting because something similar



John Morearty

happened to me in Fresno. I too had a stranger knock on my door saying how he was "down with the revolution" and he was "there for me" if I needed any help robbing banks or offing the pigs. I told him not to call me but if I needed his services I would call him. I did not ask for his phone number. There were many instances during the 70's and 80's when law enforcement would try to set us up.

Another lesson John learned while working at Callison was the value of treating each other with mutual respect, especially when working in a small peace community in a middle American city. He writes, "if a tight group is engaged in valuable work, then its members must treat each other with respect. No badmouthing, no grudges; that will tear the work apart. Learn to accept difference, and to apologize."

Total immersion in activism came after he had left his teaching position at Callison and realized, through an epiphany, that thermonuclear war could end his children's lives. At 40, he found the Stockton Peace Life Group, who were already engaged in this work. As John writes, "they were happy to get a new recruit." The new friends he found became his "community" and they supported and sustained each other. Reading about their adventures - organizing marches, leafleting at the post office on tax day, bringing speakers to town, showing films, was a lot like what people were doing in other valley towns.

Tuesday, August 21 • 7:00 PM

John Morearty will read and sign copies of his new book *Walking to Omega: Tales of a Peacenik Carpenter*. John has been a peace activist in Stockton for almost 30 years. Peace Fresno is hosting this event, which will be held at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence - located at 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. (at McKinley) Fresno. For more information call 559 487-2515

John kept pushing and found himself more and more committed to organizing anti-nuclear actions. He was involved with the Nuclear Freeze, becoming a speaker at numerous events. He describes a scene at a rally in Marysville, the home of a nuclear bomber Air Force base. Speaking to the rally he said "and at a distance of 35 miles, a thermonuclear blast will set human hair on fire." He cut off a patch of his long red hair and held a burning match to it. He writes that he was not sure if he should have been proud or embarrassed by the action.

But, don't get the idea that this book is all about political activism in the Central Valley. There is also a spiritual quest that weaves throughout the pages and includes insights into Catholicism, Buddhism, and other religions. It is instructive how family, woodworking (his new career), community, political action, and the near constant search for a mate combined to sustain John when times got hard, as they inevitably do.

In a dream he had while in the Santa Rita jail, after participating in a civil disobedience action to stop the Livermore nuclear program, he glimpses his future. The vision, which was far from clear at the time, leads him to combine his love for teaching and political activism into a show on public access TV. The show, Talking it Through, lasted for years educating and entertaining the community. The show reached out to an audience (television land) that would not have heard many of the ideas about peace, social, and economic justice without it. He was also deeply involved with the local alternative/independent Stockton Connections newspaper and still writes



Brian Morearty tickling his dad, 1978.
Photo by Liane Enkelis Photography

the Sawznhammers column.

I loved the story about the sit in at congressman Norman Shumway's office in protest of U.S. intervention in Central America. After weeks of protesting outside his office and asking to meet with Shumway, they decided to wait inside until he agreed to talk with them about that immoral and shameful war. Unlike the sit in we had in congressman Pashayan's office in Fresno, they didn't stop. After one group got arrested, they sent in a new crew the next day. This went on until they ran out of volunteers and then people started going back and getting arrested a second and third time. If you were active in Central America solidarity work in the 80's, you won't want to miss this chapter. It is great reading!

Many political activists will relate to the story about supporting a progressive candidate as a way to bring about social change. There are predictable details about how the electoral system is stacked against progressive candidates like a Gerrymandered district set up for a Republican victory that runs from Stockton to the Oregon border. This is a tale of betrayal (at the last minute) by the Democratic party and hope that a grassroots campaign that does not accept PAC money (even from progressive groups) could win. Unfortunately, they don't. But, there are lessons to learn even in our defeats.

John is a man with a big heart, he listens to his intuition, is good at what he does, and has lived life well. There is always something valuable to be learned by reading about a life well lived. If you are a progressive political activist in the Central Valley, you are in for a special treat. I'm sure everyone will find nuggets of wisdom and insight when they read *Walking to Omega, Tales of a Peacenik Carpenter*.

###

Walking to Omega
Tales of a Peacenik Carpenter is available from www.lulu.com and www.johnmorearty.com
\$24.95 + shipping.

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

2131 N. Van Ness Blvd. (South of Clinton)

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E-mail: irenezupko@aol.com

California Prison Moratorium Project

1055 N. Ave Van Ness. Suite G1

Fresno, CA 93728

(559) 916-4370

pmpvalle@sbcglobal.net

www.prisonactivist.org

http://calipmp.org



ORGANIZATION

DESIGN &

DEVELOPMENT

636 EAST FLORADORA

FRESNO, CA 93728

559.264.4421

PAULPIERCE@COMCAST.NET

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Golden Gulag

Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California

388 pp., University of California Press by Ruth Wilson Gilmore

A book review by Sara Olson



California embraces the nickname, the Golden State. It is the home of much natural beauty within bent rectangular borders; northern rugged to southern smooth seashores, magnificent mountains to sere stretches of greedily overdeveloped desert lands. Its state flower is the orange golden poppy. Its state power is exemplified by its golden gulag.

California’s prison industry is well hidden from the ordinary citizen. It is detectable not so much by sight and sound because the massive system of prisons, several the size of large towns, are nestled in its mountains, tucked far off in the deserts, well away from the roads behind and among the almond groves of its Great Central Valley where no one not looking for it will ever see it. The best indication of its existence lies in the observant taxpayer’s scan of the state’s annual budget. Billions have been dumped into it for years, a great deal in guards’ salaries, much into its death-dealing medical services now in federal receivership. If one wonders how the state’s education system was sacrificed to the harshest, cruelest, least-humane system of human-devised social control, an explanation can be found in Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California. Gilmore exposes the hows and whys of a journey from a system of genuine rehabilitative programs in the late 1940’s through 1970 to what author Mike Davis describes in his blurb on the cover of her book as, “the political economy of superincarceration and the slave plantations that California calls prisons.”

Gilmore, an Associate Professor of Geography and the Chair of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, tells us right off the bat that the crime rate in California peaked in 1980, declining thereafter “unevenly but decisively.” The state “prisoner population grew nearly 500 percent between 1982 and 2000.” Although California ranks “fifth-or sixth-largest among the world’s economies,” relative poverty compares with that of the country’s poorest states such as Mississippi, Louisiana or West Virginia.

Breastfeeding: First Step to a Healthy Life

The Babies First Breastfeeding Task Force invites the community, including health care providers, to participate in its 2nd Annual Breastfeeding Awareness Walk and Celebration on August 4, 2007, from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, at Woodward Park. Last year’s Breastfeeding Awareness Walk drew over 300 participants and 32 community sponsors. It was a successful community event to support and promote the important health benefits of *breastfeeding* and a healthier community.

The 2006 Breastfeeding event was made a reality by dedicated Babies First Breastfeeding Taskforce community members, who are passionate about spreading the message regarding the positive impact breastfeeding can have on life-long health. The goal of the Babies First Breastfeeding Taskforce is to increase Fresno County’s breastfeeding rates through education and awareness in order to stimulate change in social norms and increase compliance with state laws to ensure that

The “state’s poverty rate rose in the national rankings, from thirtieth in 1980 to fourteenth in 2001.”

She lays out the history of California’s political economy so that we understand the role that government and private capital, particularly in the form of Department of Defense billions bequeathed by the Military Industrial Complex to the growth of the financial and social operations, played in the growth of the prison industry. She reveals how crucial waging constant war, in one form or another, has undergirded the entire U. S. economy as well as California’s. “The ‘creative destruction’ of World War II boosted California and national economies out of depression.” A form of what she terms “military Keynesianism,” social and economic guarantees by the military industry in aerospace, consumer products, educational infrastructure to produce a “new and specialized labor force,” private research universities and so forth made California a beacon of promise for people of all classes who came from all over the country, a “welfare-warfare” paradise.

In the late sixties, profits began to decline in annual increase nationally and locally. Economic belt-tightening, resulting from changes in the world economy, hit the entire country and impacted greatly on U.S. workers’ material safe haven, especially in the fiscal and bargaining guarantees enjoyed by union workers. Thus began the slow dismantling of citizen welfare programs. That left the poor completely vulnerable to increasing cuts in all forms of spending that protected their personal lives and communities from the state’s predatory law enforcement apparatus. Corporate welfare continued to grow but not vice versa.

Jobs disappeared. Poverty increased. Crime rose. Prison populations went up to 24,700 in 1974 from 16,500 in 1967 but fell to 19,600 in 1977. Prisoners sued to “remedy constitutional wrongs.” Courts ruled in their favor to relieve overcrowding and to increase potential for rehabilitation and release.

The legislature reacted with the passage of the 1977 Uniform Determinate Sentencing Act (USDA) which stated, “The

women can make the healthiest feeding choice for their infant and themselves.

California’s Department of Health Services-Women, Infant and Children’s (WIC) Nutrition program and the California Breastfeeding Coalition have recognized the success of Fresno’s Breastfeeding Awareness Walk and Celebration by encouraging communities around the state to organize their own breastfeeding walk in August 2007. To provide support to communities, the state has unveiled a Breastfeeding Awareness Walk Toolkit that is based on components developed by Fresno’s Breastfeeding Taskforce last year.

Please plan on participating in the 2nd Annual Breastfeeding Awareness Walk and Celebration along with mothers, their families and members of this community to show support for all mothers who have made or will make the breastfeeding choice. For more information on how to register or help sponsor the walk, visit www.fresnohumanservices.org/communityhealth or call Priscilla Newsome at 445-3307.

purpose of imprisonment for crime is punishment.” The key issue was length of sentence which, besides eventual prisoner population growth by leaps and bounds, became a legislative crusade.

The year 1982 was the seminal year in modern corrections in California when it began its transition to an industry for human incapacitation. The CDC began to plan new facilities and the voters approved construction bonds to build them. Gilmore tells the story of (Republican) Governor George Deukmejian’s tenure of prison expansion. Under his aegis, government solved the problems of devising laws to cage more and more people and methods by which to finance cage-building. The “law’n’order” craze gripped politicians in the 1980’s and passed, like a virus, through succeeding generations and enthralls them until this day.

Tales of prison-sitings are illuminating, especially in light of how it became clear that the addition of a prison to a community, particularly rural communities, did not enhance jobs creation or increase local revenues. In fact, the prisoners shipped into rural-sited prisons, like Corcoran in the southern San Joaquin Valley, often mirrored the population that resided in those communities. The only residents who made out like bandits in these prison-siting deals were land-owners, corporate farmers, who had taken land out of production due to reasons such as drought, floods or market fluctuations. It’s also a tale of citizen resistance to prisons. Corcoran’s conversion to a prison town illustrates similar transformations in other rural areas throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s.

Gilmore takes us through the evolution of the legal maneuverings to increase sentences such as the 1988 Step Act (Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention), an anti-gang mechanism that added sentence enhancements via almost no evidence. The national War on Drugs sucked in tens of thousands and, alone, has been the main element supporting California’s growing prison population figures. The state’s notorious Three Strikes Act of 1994 produced statistics that exemplifies the targets of superincarceration. Gilmore says that the purpose of Three Strikes was to imprison violent criminals but that crime and violence became synonymous “ . . . in the period March 1994-January 1996, 15 percent of controlling offenses were violent crime, 31 percent were drug offences and 41 percent were crimes against property. Third-strike prisoners were 43 percent Black, 32.4 percent Latino, and 24.6 percent Anglo.”

These figures reveal the communities who’ve suffered most by California’s move to mass imprisonment whereby the state became the leader in a nationwide mania to lock up the poor and people of color. Gilmore introduces the reader to real cities whose lives have been irrevocably altered by legislative/legal/carceral predation.

Golden Gulag is the result of academic research as well as real world experience. To some extent, it reads like a PhD thesis. Because it is chock-full of facts, statistics and analysis, it requires concerted attention. As a resource book, it is invaluable. It includes extensive chapter notes and an expansive bibliography.

At the end, Gilmore offers ten theses to the effect change through movement—and community-building. She offers suggestions to help recognize and confront the twentieth century practices of dehumanization which led to mass incarceration and world-wide genocide. Change must be political, economic, spiritual and, most importantly, collective.

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Poetry Corner

By Richard Stone

We received the following poem from Pearl Tilton, who I know nothing about. Pearl, if you care to identify yourself further, send us a few lines.

Weary of Weeping

I am weary of Weeping
I am tired of weeping for young men and women
Cut down before they have fulfilled their life’s promise
In World War II, I wept for brothers and classmates and neighbors
In Korea, I wept for nephews and the husbands and sweethearts of younger women
In Vietnam, I wept for contemporaries of my son
Between wars I have wept for civil rights workers who laid their lives on the line
For their ideals and were trampled and reviled by the ignorant dupes of the demagogues
I have wept for the Kennedys and for the Kings and for the fear and hate and ignorance
that brought them down
Today, I weep for the world’s leaders and followers who will not acknowledge that peace
and goodwill are superior to war and violence
I am growing old and weary of weeping

Pearl Tilton

Who Gets the Best Medical Care in this Country?

Two patients limp into two different medical clinics with the same complaint. Both have trouble walking and appear to require a hip replacement.

The FIRST patient is examined within the hour, is x-rayed the same day and has a time booked for surgery the following week.

The SECOND sees his family doctor after waiting 3 weeks for an appointment, then waits 8 weeks to see a specialist, then gets an x-ray, which isn’t reviewed for another week; and finally has his surgery scheduled for a month from then.

Why the different treatment for the two patients?

The FIRST is a Golden Retriever.
The SECOND is a Senior Citizen.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS FROM THE GRASSROOTS



Ethics over Emotions and the Quest for Peace

Ruth Gadebusch

This madness has got to stop! I mean that of this imperial president who feels he can continue this horrible war in Iraq, as well as abrogate civil rights at home. To him it matters not what the polls say, or expressions by ordinary citizens, or worse yet, what the duly elected Congress says. He, and he alone, controls it all as the Commander in Chief.

Worse yet, are the congress members who put party before country. They support, or at least won't contradict, him because he is of their party. There is hope, in that a few are beginning to express doubt in the direction this president is taking the nation. As we move closer and closer to the next congressional and presidential election there is indication that more and more will see the light; however, we can ill afford to wait for that election another 15 months hence.

Some way, some how, we must convince our elected representatives that more is at stake than the fate of one political party. How many of us have actually sat down and taken the time to write our local congressman? Demonstrations and speaking out regularly are good and worthwhile, but a letter is even more important.

In this time of a burst of patriotism surrounding our nation's birthday, a minister I know expressed it this way: ".....until very recently, an unholy silence has left unchallenged the highly questionable morality of this war in Iraq. Fear has paralyzed our moral conscience and strangled our protest. It has driven us to become the *kind of people we are not.*" (Italics are mine) Norman Broadbent's message was to the Christians of his church but they are applicable to all Americans. With so many fearful that questioning is undermining the troops, he goes on to state, "You honor those who have given the full measure of their devotion by raising those kinds of questions and by striving to live the vision of our forebears of becoming a nation built on justice and peace."

Dr. Broadbent further expressed the thought that civic freedom as expressed by our Pledge of Allegiance is a function of fidelity and justice and that people of faith must recognize religious faith as a "function of fidelity to the law of love...ethics over emotion." Would that our lawmakers who profess such great religious faith recognized this: "ethics over emotion." Then, this country might be turned in a different direction from this disastrous venture in the Mideast. We might once again become the country that we have professed to be.

Bill Moyers in addressing the General synod of the United Church of Christ put it this way: "It is kindness and mercy that drives and proves the power of faith and it's justice that measures the worth of the state, not empire..." The current President of the United States of America professes to being a person of faith, but where is the justice at this time in the nation's history?

It is time — past time — for us to remove our military from Iraq. We do not need the empire that building the largest embassy in the world in Baghdad implies. We do need to turn our interest, our resources, to human needs around the world. We have hungry children here in Fresno as well as around the world. We have those who need medical care, now unavailable due to lack of finances. We need to solve our immigration dilemma, our school dropouts, our infrastructure deterioration, global warming and other environmental consequences, joblessness, our prison situation, and on and on. The list is long.

Just think what the billions and billions we are spending making war in Iraq, thereby harming them and destroying our reputation around the world, could do if those dollars were available for improving the lives of humans. With peace, justice could regain its rightful place in our society. With peace, we could return to our constitutional rights. With peace, we might once again become the beacon of hope and goodness around the planet. We can be the people we were meant to be. It is a big order, but we fail at our own peril.

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



Fresno "Good To Go"—Or Is It?

by Franz Weinschenk

Just about a year ago, I went down to the Fresno City Council a number of times to try to get them to join the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Started by Mayor Greg Nickels of Seattle, Washington, the Agreement challenges all member cities to voluntarily reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 7% of 1990 levels by the year 2012 (This is basically the Kyoto Agreement). At the time 195 cities had already joined, and my punch line was "Let's make Fresno number 196."

It's getting to be a lot easier to convince people that not only is global warming a fact, it's partly caused by man. Why? Because the evidence is just overwhelming: Nine out of the last ten years have been the hottest in recorded history; the earth's arctic caps are shrinking; glaciers are melting; sea levels are rising; weather patterns are changing; thick layers of CO₂ are out there in the atmosphere like giant insulation blankets allowing heat to come in but not to radiate out—on and on!

So in about the next seven months, the Council twice approved motions by Member Brian Calhoun to have Fresno join the Mayors Agreement, but in both instances, Mayor Autry neither approved nor vetoed these motions. The reason for his inaction was that (as quoted in The Bee) "I'm not going to veto it (the motion) because there's a lot of good stuff in there," but then he wasn't approving it either because, again according to The Bee, the Agreement was born out of opposition to President Bush. Bottom line: he pulled a sort of permanent pocket veto.

Well, he evidently hadn't read Fresno's Charter which states that "In the event the Mayor fails to file an approval or a veto (of a resolution) within the required ten-day limit, the tenth day shall become the date of final passage."

So that after it passed the Council the last time, I waited 10 days, then called the City Clerk's Office and was told, yes, since the Mayor hadn't vetoed the resolution in the required time, it was "in effect." I then asked, "Well, has anyone in City government actually filled out the membership forms and sent them off to Seattle?" "Oh, you'll have to talk to the Mayor's office about that," was the response. When I called that office, a gruff male voice barked, "No! He ain't signin' nothin' like that!"

Finally the City Attorney ruled that the City Manager could sign the papers on behalf of the Council and ship them off. Well, one morning in January of this year, I just happened to be browsing through the list of member cities in the Agreement and guess what? Here was good old Fresno listed in between Freemont and Hayward. Hallelujah! I was so tickled I hustled down to the City Council to congratulate them—only to find out a week later that somebody from the Mayor's office had called Seattle and had us removed from the list! Back to square one.

I was so frustrated I sent a letter to Bill McEwen, a columnist for The Bee, outlining the whole crazy mess, and to his credit, he wrote a great column about what had occurred. He was even able to contact City Manager Andy Souza who told him not to worry that Fresno was "good to go," and indeed, about a month later, we made it on the list a second time—the 405th American city to join.

Hope we stay a member, and what's even more important, hope we actually address the problem of climate change and really DO something about reducing Fresno's emissions of greenhouse gases.

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Franz Weinschenk has been a teacher and school administrator in Fresno for over fifty years. He can be contacted by e-mail at franzie@SCCCD.org

What Would It Really Take to Clean the Valley's Air?

By Alvin Valeriano

Wisdom and courage from all of us is the answer. Let me explain.

Recently we saw changes in leadership at the very top of this state's premier agency charged with cleaning up the air we all breathe. One day, Governor Arnold

Schwarzenegger fired Dr. Robert Sawyer from his chairmanship of the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and a few days later, Ms. Catherine Witherspoon resigned as Executive Officer of the CARB. The news wires about these "personnel changes" were soon filled with he said/she said allegations.



Interviews with the actors in this drama—from the governor's staff, to the pair of ex-officials, to environmental advocates—filled our plates with topics about global warming, ozone pollution, interference with staff, influence pandering, reflective paint, cap-and-trade, etc.—enough items to make the best smorgasbord places in Fresno wish that their gut-filling menus had as much entrée. Meanwhile, the governor's office was preparing a confectioner's delight for dessert, like Vianne played by Juliette Binoche, of the famed movie *Chocolat*, creating her Nipples of Venus chocolate truffles, so irresistible with its aphrodisiac-like effects. Before one can say *gesundheit*, the action-man governor served up UCLA's Ms. Mary Nichols as new Chair of the CARB. Pleasing to everybody, Arnold could not have thought of a better strudel from the old country. Maria must have been proud.

With the sumptuous feast over, it is now time to pass around fortune cookies with the following sagacious sayings:

* If you are denying that technologies to clean the air exist, stop lying or take a refresher course in Science and Technology 101. * For your future prosperity, "Privatizing the gain, socializing the pain," as a social policy, should be abandoned. *Remember that a hearse is never followed by a U-Haul truck.

Technologies to clean the air exist. This is what got lost in the CARB drama. Too much to explain here, but to say otherwise is a huge insult to this country's scientists and inventors. The ex-officials' statements that technologies to clean the air don't yet exist are perplexing. I can only surmise that all they heard was what their staff was saying, without further inquiry into its accuracy. "Delaying cleaning the air is unavoidable, because technologies don't yet exist to do so" became a mantra that was repeated over and over again, from the bottom of the ladder and all the way to the top. This line originated from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (District).

Privatize the gain, socialize the pain. Valley residents may soon pay \$30 more, when licensing a vehicle (CA SB 240, authored by Sen. Dean Florez). The fee increase is supposed to fund District efforts that are directed towards attaining air standards. Let us all admit that we are part of the problem and that this fee is necessary. However, there is an absolutely crying need to spread the pain around, especially to those that cause significant pollution, in the first place—such as diesel engine users—truckers, farmers, and heavy-equipment operators. Delaying clean air until 2024 lets the polluters off the hook. I'm sure Sen. Florez understands this. But if the current 2007 Ozone Plan that delays clean air is not revisited to put in place an earlier attainment year target, then this fee increase is nothing more than business-as-usual "privatizing the gain, socializing the pain."

A hearse is never followed by a U-Haul truck. I owe this phrase to the homeless denizens of Roeding Park, co-picnickers with Food Not Bombs on Saturdays at 1 PM. The monetary cost of cleaning up the valley's air will be very high. But then again, the benefits are even higher—less occurrences of asthma attacks, kids able to play outside, pride in a clean valley, seeing the hills more often, healthy trees in our national forests—there are many more. It will really be tragic, if greed prevails in this fight to have clean air in the valley. Everyone passes on eventually, and a hearse is never followed by a U-Haul truck.

Finally, like a grateful, sated diner who savors memorable, exquisite cuisines, give your most gracious kudos to the chef. Please call the governor's office and thank Arnold for his wisdom and courage, thus far. Tell him to follow through with his promises. Tell him that if he succeeds in expeditiously cleaning up the valley's air, we just might want him to work in an even larger setting, like the U.S. Senate. Tell him that it is possible to attain the 8-hour ozone standard sooner than 2024. Tell him that with all of us practicing wisdom and courage in fighting air pollution, all valley residents will breathe clean air by mid-2018, if not sooner

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Alvin Valeriano, an agricultural engineering graduate of the University of the Philippines, worked in the planning section of the air district for 4 1/2 years and cofounded Fresno's Food Not Bombs in 1996. He can be reached at alvin.valeriano@sbcglobal.net.

West Side Victory Celebration

By the Community Alliance staff

Early Saturday morning the West Fresno Community awakens to a surprise Block Party Celebration called “Unity in the Black and Brown Community”. This event was organized by the joint efforts of Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr., Cammie Belt and Fresno Emergency Printing. Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr., the founder of ‘National Network In Action’ a national civil and human rights organization. Their web site address is www.nationalnetworkin.org.

Over 300 hundred people attended the Victory Block Celebration, which was held on June 17, 2007. Several community members approached Rev. Harris with the idea of bringing people together from all parts of Fresno. Harris said he was asked to hold this celebration as a “victory over forces that have torn down the positive whole sprit of the community and promoted an atmosphere of apprehension and suspicion.”

Entertainment included R & B, Free Food, Free Medical Health Screening, Free Blood Pressure & Sugar Check, D.J. Music, Know Your Rights When Confronted by a Police Officer, HIV-AIDS Information, Bounce House, games, prizes for the children and the Senior Citizens received a gift basked of appreciation. Rev. Harris gave an electrifying speech to the community about social justice and why the community must get involve to hold their government officials accountable. Rev. Harris, speaking before the diverse crowd, said that “for eleven years we have been trying to get an independent police auditor for our community but there are individuals on the Fresno City Council who do not feel you deserve what is best. We have police officers who don’t live in our community and want you to believe that they care about you. They come into our community with a bounce house and hot dogs and pat our children on the head at the age of 5 years old, but when they become 15 years of age they shoot them in the back unarmed.”

Here is more of what Rev. Harris had to say at the victory block party: “Fresno County has the largest Juvenile Hall facility with Fourteen Hundred beds to place your children into. The Fresno Homeless community’s civil and human rights were violated by the Fresno Police Department by throwing away their clothes and personal belongings, but the progressive community took a stand for equality, Freedom and Justice.”



Dancing in the Street. Photo by Phillip Ivn Wali.

It’s time to come out of the Church House and go into the community where Gods people are suffering, tell them there is still hope and we can accomplish great things through commitment and working together. The education system has failed for the black and brown children who are failing in public school. In order for our children to be leaders we must demand better education and take a greater interest in what is being taught to our children. Children who are in the 9 grade reading on a 3 grade level they are being set up to go to the prison.

Who will benefit by your children going to prison? Be informed; The Prison Industrial Complex is a growing industry comprised of a number of American corporations which develop household and business products, but human rights groups condemn them for gaining profits which roll off the backs of prison inmates they claim are unjustly paid cents on the dollar.

At issue, they charge, is a criminal justice system which herds primarily Black youth into the hands of private prison enterprises to work illegally under a modern day slave system called ‘involuntary servitude,’ disguised as prison work release programs.

According to a 2006 bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, approximately 8 percent of Black males between 25 and 29 were incarcerated in 2005, compared to 2.2 percent Latinos and 1.1 percent Whites. Black males in general

accounted for nearly 550,000 of the 1.4 million federal and state prison inmate population, and Black females almost 30,000.

In 1934, Congress established the Federal Prison Industries (FPI), trade named UNICOR, to employ and provide job training to inmates within the Federal Bureau of Prisons, requiring those medically able to work for 12 to 40 cents per hour for institution work assignments, and 23 cents to \$1.15 for work in UNICOR factories.

In 2005, it generated \$765 million in sales from its 106 factories. And as of last September, its highest net sales in electronics at \$233.2 million, derived from 3,348 inmate workers throughout Texas, Connecticut, New Jersey, California, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Tennessee, New York, Wisconsin, Arizona and Minnesota.

Are your eyes wide open.....I ask you again who is benefiting by your child going to prison? Is this a set-up?”

Rev. Harris would like to see his block celebration happen all over West Fresno. If you would like a Victory Celebration in your neighborhood Contact National Network In Action (NNIA) Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr., email address; xyfloyd@aol.com P.O. Box 16127 Fresno, CA. 93755-6127, Phone# 559 803 – 0286

On The Move for Justice

Do you know what’s really causing the problems in our healthcare system... and what isn’t?

Over the years Americans have heard varying excuses for what ails our healthcare system. Get the facts about many of the common myths associated with heathcare in the United States,

Myth 1: Healthcare costs are increasing because healthcare consumers are going to the doctor too much.

Fact: While numerous factors contribute to healthcare cost inflation, hospital costs are the single largest contributor, accounting for 54 percent of the annual growth in healthcare spending through 2005.

Fact: Providers are demanding double and triple increases in their rates.

Conclusion: The conventional wisdom about Americans “using too much healthcare” isn’t what is causing rates to increase. Rates are skyrocketing because of an unaccountable industry run amok.

Myth 2: Those darn trial lawyers are filing frivolous lawsuits, which is the reason healthcare is too expensive.

Fact: In 2005, the federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) performed a study and found that less than 2 percent of the premium increases in healthcare are due to lawsuits filed on behalf of patients.

Fact: Insurance companies and the pharmaceutical industry are reporting record profits. Insurance companies alone saw their profits rise by 246 percent from 2000 to 2004. The healthcare industry has consolidated itself into large, for-profit corporations that are responsible to Wall Street shareholders instead of healthcare consumers.

Conclusion: Insurance companies and for-profit medical providers are reaping record profits, while more Americans lose coverage because the cost of healthcare has become so expensive.

Myth 3: The United States has the best healthcare system in the world.

Fact: The United States is rated 37th in overall performance by the World Health Organization, just above Slovenia.

Fact: The Institute of Medicine reports that patients get treated according to clinical guidelines only 50 percent of the time, and that there are 98,000 deaths per year due to medical error. This is equivalent to a jumbo jet crashing every day. In addition, the United States rates 23rd in infant mortality, down from 12th in 1960 and 21st in 1990.

Fact: Outcome studies on a variety of diseases, such as coronary artery disease and renal failure, show the United States ranks below many industrialized nations, including Canada.

Conclusion: Despite having the best-trained healthcare providers and the best medical infrastructure of any industrialized nation, the United States ranks poorly on healthcare relative to other industrialized nations with universal healthcare systems.

Myth 4: Universal healthcare is too expensive.

Fact: The United States spends at least 40 percent more per person on healthcare than any industrialized country with universal healthcare.

Fact: Federal studies by the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office show that single-payer, universal healthcare would save \$100 to \$200 billion per year while covering all of the uninsured and improving healthcare benefits for everyone.

Fact: The cost of healthcare in Canada as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) was identical to that of the United States when Canada changed to a single-payer, universal healthcare system in 1971. Canada’s cost has increased at a rate much lower than the United States, despite the U.S. economy being much stronger than Canada’s.

Conclusion: Healthcare costs under a single-payer, universal system in the U.S. would be cheaper than our current system due to lower administrative costs, global budgets and accountability of providers.

Myth 5: Universal healthcare would result in government control of our healthcare.

Fact: A publicly administered finance system will put medical decision-making back in the hands of medical professionals and their patients—unlike today, when doctors have to get permission for medical tests or treatments from an insurance administrator who has little or no medical training.

Fact: A single-payer plan can have provisions to protect the healthcare system from undue influence on its administration: strong conflict of interest rules and prohibitions on financial connections to any for-profit insurance and pharmaceutical companies.

Conclusion: A single-payer healthcare system administered by a state public health agency would be much more democratic and less abuse-prone than our current system. Consumers and providers would have a voice in determining benefits, rates and financing.

Continued on page 20



Continued from page 19

Myth 6: Universal healthcare is socialized medicine and is unacceptable to the public.

Fact: Single-payer, universal healthcare is not what critics call “socialized medicine.” It is a healthcare *payment* system, not a healthcare *delivery* system. Healthcare providers, such as doctors, would be returned to a fee-for-service type of practice and would not be employees of the government, as they are under what critics describe as “socialized medicine.” Single-payer healthcare is civilized medicine in the same way that public funding of Medicare is civilized medicine.

Fact: Repeated national and state polls have shown that between 60 percent and 75 percent of Americans would like a publicly financed, universal healthcare system.

Conclusion: Universal healthcare is not “socialized medicine” and is preferred by the majority of the citizens of this country.

Myth 7: The problems with the healthcare system are best solved by managed care companies (private corporations) because they are the most efficient.

Fact: Private for-profit insurance corporations are the least efficient at delivering healthcare. They spend between 20 percent and 30 percent of premiums on administration and profits, while programs such as Medicare spend about 3 percent on administration (and zero on profits).

Fact: After hospitals went from not-for-profit to for-profit, the cost of hospital care increased as much as 30 percent.

Fact: In national polls, 80 percent of citizens and 71 percent of doctors believe that managed care has caused the quality of care to be compromised.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL
PRESENTS
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For A HOT Issue !!!!
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9:00 AM — 12:00 Noon

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Valley Voices on Health Care

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Gene Roza 559-905-3521 or Joyce Hale 559-244-5315

Conclusion: For-profit, managed care insurance companies cannot solve the healthcare problems in our state or country. Healthcare is not a commodity that people should shop for, but rather a human right that should be available to all.

Myth 8: Canadians are flocking to the U.S. because they can’t get services in Canada that they need.

Fact: Studies based on in-patient discharge data, by the prominent research periodical Health Affairs, show that most Canadian admissions to U.S. hospitals were unrelated to waiting times or to leading-edge technology commonly associated with this myth.

Fact: The vast majority of healthcare services provided to Canadians by U.S. hospitals was for emergency or urgent care, mostly related to travel within the U.S.

Conclusion: Canadians are not coming to the United States because they cannot access healthcare in their own country. In fact, polls indicate that Canadians are extremely satisfied with their healthcare system.

Myth 9: Universal healthcare would deprive Americans of needed services.

Fact: Studies show that citizens in universal healthcare systems in other countries are allowed more doctor visits and more hospital days to recuperate than in the United States.

Fact: About 46 million Americans and 6 million Californians are uninsured. The U.S. already deprives its residents of healthcare when they can’t afford it or can’t get insurance because of pre-existing conditions.

Fact: Americans have far more problems than any other industrialized nation when it comes to accessing healthcare (due primarily to payment problems or lack of available care). Approximately 75 percent of ill people who are uninsured have trouble accessing or paying for healthcare.

Conclusion: The United States is the only modern industrialized nation in the world that does not provide accessible, affordable healthcare to its residents.

Myth 10: In order to be able to afford to insure everyone under a universal healthcare system, benefits would have to be reduced for people who currently have a good health insurance plan.

Fact: Given that everyone in the United States—consumers, employers and taxpayers—now pays \$2,000 more per year, per person than any other industrialized nation, we could have a “Cadillac” universal health-care system just by using our dollars more efficiently.

Fact: A single-payer system would replace the current system of multiple public and private insurers with a single, reliable insurance plan. This plan would save \$20 billion in administrative costs alone. In addition, buying prescription drugs and durable medical equipment (e.g., wheelchairs) in bulk would save another \$5.2 billion. That is more than enough to provide every Californian with a high-quality, affordable health plan and to cover the uninsured, who are currently forced to use expensive emergency room treatment that taxpayers end up paying for anyway.

Conclusion: The best solution to the healthcare crisis is for California to assert its purchasing power, get rid of our for-profit insurance system, and cut administrative waste out of the healthcare system. This can be achieved through a single-payer, universal healthcare system.

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The 10 common healthcare myths was produced by the California School Employees Association.