

Is the Party Over?

Two long years ago, veteran political reporter Thomas Edsall published Building Red America: The New Conservative Coalition and the Drive for Permanent Power. In the course of several hundred fluidly argued, thoroughly dispiriting pages, Edsall threw a wet blanket on the hopes of Democrats who thought their party stood a fighting chance of wresting power back from Karl Rove & Co. Republicans were more ruthless, more unified and more generously bankrolled by big business, Edsall maintained, in addition to being inordinately savvy. He was, of course, hardly alone in this view. "Republican hegemony in America is now expected to last for years, maybe decades," crooned conservative writer Fred Barnes after the 2004 election. "We are in a tremendous amount of trouble," sighed a glum Democratic chairman in the New York Times that same fall.

Although the Democrats may still find a way to lose the election in November, no serious observer would suggest today that it would be because they succumbed to an indomitable foe. Less than a full election cycle after Rove's "permanent majority" was said to be upon us, Bush's approval ratings have sunk to the lowest level of any President since presidential job-approval ratings were introduced. Republicans in Congress are streaming for the exits. Surveys show young voters identifying as Democrats over Republicans by double-digit margins, and the 81 percent of Americans who believe the country is seriously "on the wrong track" have conservatives wondering aloud whether Rove's dream has become a nightmare.

"Without change we could face a catastrophic election this fall," warned former House Speaker Newt Gingrich in a May 6 article on the website of the journal Human Events. His prognosis is echoed in several new books written by conservatives that come wrapped in optimistic packaging about how the situation may be righted with the proper adjustments but that are full of gloomy pronouncements about the disaster to come if the same tired formula is pursued. "A generation of young Americans has been lost to our party," worries former Bush speechwriter David Frum in Comeback: Conservatism That Can Win Again, the content of which is far less sanguine than the title suggests. "Conservatives have conspicuously failed to earn [Americans'] trust on most domestic policy questions," write journalists Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam in Grand New Party, which argues that Bush's plutocratic policies have begun to alienate even many on the right.

The chastened tone of these books is striking in a move-

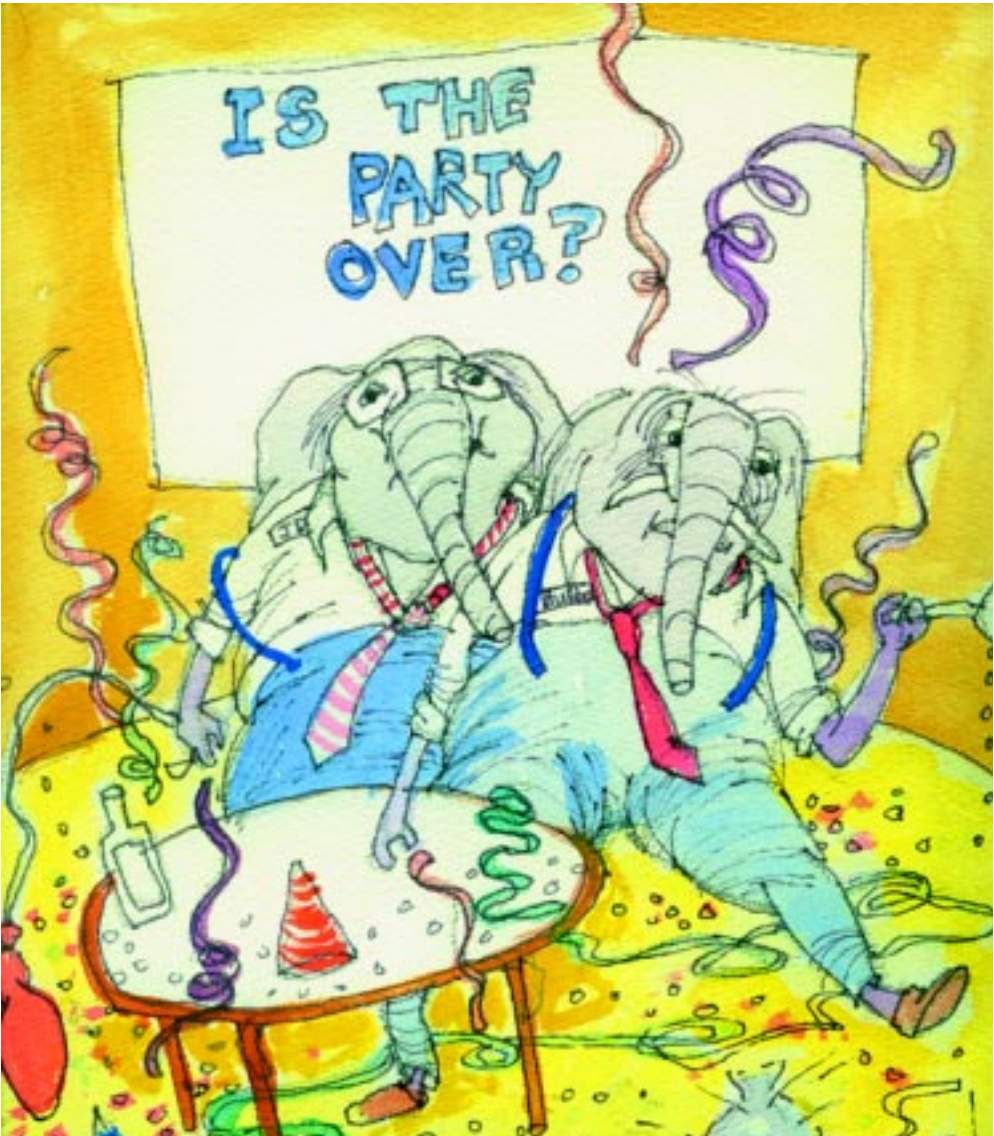
By Eyal Press

To some degree, strategic and philosophical tensions among conservatives are nothing new. The priorities of Friedrich von Hayek devotees and James Dobson fans, to say nothing of pro-empire neoconservatives and isolationist paleocons, have never been neatly aligned. In many ways, it's a wonder such disparate groups ever found a home in the same party. Yet every time hopes have risen on the left that the various strands of the conservative coalition might unravel, these hopes have been dashed. The conservative movement that has reshaped the political landscape over the past four decades has proven resilient and enviably adept at pressing forward with an agenda that never seems to moderate. Will now be any different? Will the conservative crackup under Bush come to be seen as a minor detour on the right's steady march to power? Or will it bring an era to a close?

Some who see a lasting realignment under way point to demographic factors, in particular the growing numbers of Hispanics, Asians, professional women and unmarried people who have joined the electorate in recent years and to whom the GOP has done little to endear itself. But while the number of registered Republicans has been falling steadily, more Americans still identify themselves as conservative than liberal. The main problem facing the conservative movement is not demographic. It is doctrinal. It is the problem that confronts any insurgency whose heady idealism comes crashing up against reality once power is seized.

For forty years, the most important trait of conservatives of all stripes has been their unshakable conviction that their vision and their ideas are right. Moral permissiveness, a feckless foreign policy, a welfare-dependent underclass: all the viruses that had infected the body politic under the stewardship of liberals would be cured if only conservatives were given a chance. The right was united above all in its belief that a new Eden would dawn when Americans were liberated from the tyranny of government, whose intrusive hands reached unwarrantedly into every aspect of citizens' lives (save, of course, the bedroom, where those hands were needed to prevent overly liberated citizens from indulging the wrong impulses). When Bill Clinton ended welfare and declared that the era of big government was over, the argument seemed to have been cinched: at long last, even Democrats had come to realize the folly of their ways. But something funny happened on the way to making the revolution complete: when Republicans were finally given the opportunity to free the citizenry

Continued on page 6



Local (City Council member Jerry Duncan and Fresno mayor Alan Autry - above), state, and national Republicans are like the dog that caught the car. The Republicans have run this city, state, and nation for years and where has it left us - in an endless war, a foreclosure crisis, and the price of gas going through the roof. It is time for a change! Special thanks to Dixie Salazar for the image above.

ment that could scarcely have sounded more sure of itself a few years ago, when the myriad factions of the Republican Party—libertarians, opponents of abortion, champions of big business, neocons—appeared to be marching in lockstep to Karl Rove's tune. Now Republicans are hurling blame at Bush for betraying conservative principles as they search about for scapegoats. "Everyone is sniping at each other," a member of the House Republican Conference recently told Politico shortly after the GOP lost a special election in Louisiana's 6th District, a seat it had held since 1975. The defeat came on the heels of a similar setback in March in Illinois, in the district formerly represented by Dennis Hastert. These turnovers, and a widely anticipated special election loss on May 13 in Mississippi, cast a grim shadow over a recent meeting on Capitol Hill where Tom Cole, chair of the National Republican Congressional Committee, warned members there were no resources to "save" incumbents facing well-heeled Democratic challengers.

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

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

Letters to the Editor

The *Community Alliance* just came in the mail today. CA just keeps getting better and better. What a valuable resource for our community.

Best,
Thomas Breen, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology, Emeritus

I guess the CA is not interested in the David and Goliath win by Heritage Fresno against the City of Fresno on the removal of Armenian homes out of the Armenian Town complex?

Twice now, the appellate courts have decided in favor of the preservation of these homes. I have not heard yet the closed session decision to settle or appeal the appellate decision to the California Supreme Court by our City Council. We believe the high court will not take the case, if appealed and let the appellate decision stand.

After reading the position of Democratic legislators and leaders (front page - July 2008 issue), we oppose the war, but NOT THE TROOPS of the Iraq people. All of the funding bills have had attachments to them, such as feeding the Iraq people, infrastructure funding, school buildings, etc. How can Democrats vote against these needs? What we truly need is a clean funding bill strictly on FUNDING THE WAR.

Great publication! Keep up the fine expose pieces such as Eddie Jessup's on the garden. I was not aware that was going on.

Ray Ensher

I've not read the whole issue yet, but the cover story on "Why the Democrats won't..." just about did me in! It's much more than I wanted to know about the machinations of the Players. I'd rather have heard about the many dimensions of the Uprising! being an up-rising sort myself....

Of course, I'll read the whole issue, I always do.

John Morearty

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(This letter was sent to the Barack Obama fund raising campaign and the Community Alliance)

Much as I appreciate Obama's call for a new direction, and for adjustments to certain way-off-base policies (like health care), I have not heard him directly address the issues I believe to be most critical, including:

—An end to U.S. exceptionalism that upholds our right to a predatory share of the world's resources, and demands a military supremacy to enforce that claim

—Re-designing our economic system to preclude domination by global corporations

—A commitment to approaches to global warming created by an international consensus.

Until Obama speaks to these issues, my support is as half-baked as his call for change. Here is a down payment [\$5] on what I would contribute if I believed his vision would truly take us down a path worth traveling, one that would give me hope that we can survive the ecological and political disaster we are creating.

Yours,
Richard Stone

Thanks for the article "From the Greenhouse" It is such a shame that people do not move to act to save our planet because they still consider "What people will think". I am reading *Six Degrees* by Mark Lyman. Each chapter is a degree of warmth of the planet and its result. The author lives in England "down the street" from the Oxford Library which houses the scientific research done on Global Warming. One day it occurred to him that those studies were gathering dust and no one was consulting them. Consequently, he synthesized the findings and wrote the book. Though he admits the experiments are not perfect as the scientists worked with known laws of science, it is conclusive that the green house effect is caused by greenhouse emissions such as soot which speeds melting and carbon dioxide. Effects of the first three degrees already have manifested themselves. Today we are feeling the affects of what we spewed into the air 25 years ago. I wonder what it will be like in five years. Fires, hurricanes, floods are increasing all over the world. Species whose environment has disappeared are extinct. Islands in the ocean are disappearing. Mount Shasta is in snow. Still we are surprised that this is happening rather than take it in as something we need to consider and move toward pressing congress for 40% reductions in emissions ASAP. The President this week is demanding that congress move to drill in Alaska and our coastline only indicating to me that he is the Tsar of the oil industry. Ignorantly or greedily he becomes the henchman of destruction moving us to leave all to the cockroaches. This authority figure is very irresponsible. Are we really frogs sitting in warm water getting use to this climate change and letting it happen? Where is our intelligence and will to do our best to slow down devastation? Each of us must do our part and not wait for the authority figure to act. It doesn't matter what people think when we are saving *our house on fire*. There is still time to reduce the emissions and the likelihood of events to come if we change our ways and refrain from using toxic products to lessen our footprint on this planet.

Lydia Flores

I am a good friend of Edie and Bryan Jessup, who have provided me with a running account of the courageous work you have done on behalf of people who happen to be homeless in Fresno. Well done, and you should be proud. So should the ACLU and the folks who supported this good work, not the least of whom are the people who happen to be so poor they have no home, little hope, and no three-piece-suits stumping for them at City Hall.

This really is noble work, you know, and you're all doing it very well.

Donald H. Gean
Executive Director
York County Shelter Programs, Inc.
Alfred, Maine 04002

Each year, millions of loving, companion animals are confiscated by animal dealers and sent to laboratories where there are tortured — force-fed poisons, exposed to extreme radiation, injected with painful infections and operated on without pain medication.

These hapless animals are procured
a) from unsuspecting citizens selling or giving away their pets and/or litters
b) through theft, often in broad daylight, from people's homes and backyards
c) from shelters that make huge profits selling animals

The following is but one example of this hideous practice.

Genesse, a dog abandoned by her human at a shelter, was sent to a laboratory in Ohio. There she was purposely infected with "a skin disease that spreads over the entire body, causing intense prolonged itching, open wounds, and, eventually, death. She was infected so severely that she turned in constant circles, unable to rest because of the intense itching. She cried out when handled, wouldn't eat or drink, and lost her balance. Her anguished howls could be heard through closed doors until she finally died - without veterinary treatment because that would have "interfered" with the experiment."

We must end this barbarism. Please visit http://www.peta.org/MC/factsheet_display.asp?ID=41 Questions? Solutions? [Mailto:krishna7000@hotmail.com](mailto:krishna7000@hotmail.com)

Krishnapriya Mallela
krishna7000

Correction:

In the July issue of the Community Alliance newspaper, we wrote that Ashley Swearengin was a member of the Peoples Church. Swearengin is not a member of the Peoples Church. She is a member of the University Vineyard Church.

Imagine - Equal Justice Under the Law

By Mike Rhodes

What would happen if Fresno mayor Alan Autry was brought into the emergency room at Community Medical Center (CMC) with severe head trauma, the result of being beaten nearly to death? You would expect the Fresno Police Department (FPD) to waste no time investigating the crime, interviewing suspects, and bringing those responsible to justice. The mayor would get first rate medical attention, just like everyone deserves, right?

What happens if you find yourself in this situation and you are a homeless woman who is the lead plaintiff in a class action lawsuit against the City of Fresno? In the case of Pamela Kincaid (a real case), there was no police investigation of the crime and in less than a month she ended up dead after falling from the fourth floor at CMC. Some people believe the police were involved in the attack and her death. The Coroner's office has not, to this day, released an autopsy report.

Mayor Autry often talks about the *Tale of Two Cities*. The story of Pamela Kincaid puts a spotlight on the largely unexamined underbelly of this city and is a great example of why this community needs an Independent Police Auditor (IPA). This is the first of a series of articles that will run in the Community Alliance demanding police accountability in Fresno.

When Pam Kincaid arrived at the emergency room at CMC on July 13, 2007 she had bruises all over her body and was disoriented from the beating. Subdural hematoma, bleeding inside the skull, left her disoriented and confused. Officer Guy Ballesteroz from the FPD interviewed Pam. This is the narrative section of his report:

"I contacted Kincaid, the poss vict. She was being treated. Unk per sons dropped her off. She had numerous abrasions on her body and face. Her face and head was purple. One doctor thought she had severe sunburn as the skin was peeling uniformly on her face.

We asked her what happened and she said the people at a hospital did this. She said she was not beat up. The injuries looked approx 3 to 5 days old. When asked how she got them she got mad and told me she had already told me. they did this to her at a hospital. The nurse said that's what she told them also. She talked as if she was mentally ill but I could find no priors."

Pam's boyfriend Steve said he saw who beat Pam and that the police were involved. According to Steve, he and Pam were living near the freeway, just north of Ventura and east of R street. Steve and Pam were walking to the store when a police officer stopped them. The officer checked their ID's and let them go. As they were leaving, a group of six or seven people (at least one them has been identified by Steve as a drug dealer) walked by and went to the police car. Steve said that he looked back and saw the officer pointing at him and Pam while he talked to the group. Pam decided to stay at her encampment and Steve continued on to the store. Feeling something might be wrong, Steve returned (without going to the store) to see four of five women from the group savagely beating Pam.



Pam Kincaid's family. Paul, Pam, and their daughter Kayla. They deserve equal justice under the law, not the tragic consequences of the Tale of Two Cities, which they have had to endure. This is why we need an Independent Police Auditor now!

Steve said, "Pam is on the ground and one of them has these boot heels, you know like these dress boots, you know what I'm talking about? With the big heels? And they are just. . . ." (Steve jumps up and down as if stomping something on the ground.) According to Steve, they were saying, "Drop the suit, drop the suit, you're hurting us, you're hurting them, now we're hurting you."

Steve says that after he stopped the assault on Pam he tried to flag down a police patrol car. The first police vehicle that went by on R Street did not stop. Within 15 minutes another patrol car came by. This time the officer stopped and Steve explained what had happened. The officer left, saying he was going to find the perpetrators of the crime, but he never came back to follow up on the victim or write a re-

port of the assault.

I talked to Jeff Cardinale, the Fresno Police Department Public Information Officer, about police involvement in this incident. Cardinale insisted that there is no record of any contact with Pam or Steve on R street that day. Cardinale could not explain why the police did not investigate the beating incident. It is troubling that they did not investigate Pam's beating, even after being told about Steve, the eyewitness. Why did they not bother to even interview him? Would the FPD behaved any differently if mayor Autry had been beaten?

An Independent Police Auditor would be able to investigate an incident like this with alleged police involvement and either reassure the community that the police were not involved or remove bad cops from the force.

Kincaid spent the next two weeks at CMC. In the first conversation I had with her doctor, he wanted to know if he could have her taken to a homeless shelter - he was ready to immediately release her. Pam, at that time, did not know what city she was in and could not tell you the year, but her doctor was looking for a way to dump her back onto the mean streets of Fresno. I demanded that she be given the care she deserved and the doctor relented.

While at the downtown CMC, Pam suffered an additional injury that resulted in a large egg size knot on her forehead. The nursing staff could not explain what happened, but one homeless person could. Nora (not her real name) said she saw a police officer push Pam down the stairs at CMC. I can't confirm Nora's story, but a lot of people on the streets believe its true. An IPA could sort out the fact and fiction and get to the bottom of stories like this.

Pam was moved, at the end of July 2007, to a long term care facility, also run by CMC, at Ventura and Cedar. While under their care, Pam somehow was allowed to get on the 4th floor balcony. Pam was disoriented and how she ended up falling, we might never know. What is clear is that Pam did not receive the care she needed to keep her safe and make her better. If mayor Autry had been beaten, suffered additional injuries while a patient at CMC, and then died from a suspicious fall, inquiring minds would want to know what the heck happened. I don't think Autry's family would be satisfied with the explanation Pam Kincaid's family received - that this is just business as usual in *The Tale of Two Cities*.

To find out more about how to establish an Independent Police Auditor in Fresno, visit the Central California Criminal Justice Committee website at www.cccjc.org



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Catholic Workers - Faith in Action

by FA Hart

Three days a week, eleven months a year, homeless gather at the Fresno County Jail at Fresno and M Streets. By 7 PM, when St. Benedict Catholic Worker starts serving food, there are, most nights, a couple of dozen people waiting. By 7:15 or 7:30, the line usually stretches around the corner, so that the SBCW workers literally cannot see how many clients are there. The serving goes on till 9:30 or later.

These are the people who live in encampments that are routinely hassled and dispersed, their possessions often destroyed or confiscated, by Fresno authorities. These sweeps have been callous and unfair. The authorities, if nagged publicly enough, come up with totally inadequate proposed solutions for the plight of these victims of our affluent society.

Besides the homeless, SBCW also serves jail prisoners as they're released, prisoner's families waiting for their loved ones to come out or to visit them inside, sheriff's deputies, bail bondsmen, and a few who can afford to feed themselves but come because they like company. One, an elderly truck driver, comes early, chats, helps some with the serving, and stays as long as he feels like it.

"Homeless" is a misleading word. All of us are, to some degree, homeless in our souls. Despite having a loving family and loving friends and feeling the love of God

as long as we cannot see them and they do not ask for help. Some conservatives claim that America is a Christian country, but treat the poor in ways that would make Jesus weep. Some liberals, who could do volunteer work—whose family and work obligations leave time available—decry America's treatment of the poor, but do not come to help where the poor are.

Too many conservatives treat government social programs as if they are a conspiracy against their alleged right to big bank accounts and big SUVs. Too many liberals sit in Starbucks or stand at cocktail parties and condemn injustice, without even writing checks to nonprofits that provide real aid to the impoverished.

I have spent some time the last year and a half, serving at the SBCW food tables. This gives me no claim to special virtue. The ones who deserve deep admiration are those like Liza and Bryan Apper, who run St. Benedict Catholic Worker, tirelessly helping those our political leaders do not care about. Or do not care about enough.

In one respect, none of us has a claim to special virtue. It does not make us wonderful people when we feed our children, or help our friends when they need help, or vote tax increases when the needs of our fellow citizens require them. To do so is not to do something extra. It is part of a minimum obligation. For Christians, it is part of what God asks of us.



The St. Benedict Catholic Worker - protesting the war in Iraq

we are them...

America should not just be about business and war machines and politics. It should be about groups reaching out to each other, caring about all Americans, not just our own special grievances within our own mental ghettos. It should not make any difference whether we are Liberal or Conservative, middle class or poor. black, white, brown, Asian, Native American and the whole glorious rainbow that makes up our E pluribus Unum.

Many of the homeless are homeless because of mental illness. Our society does incredibly little to help the mentally disturbed poor—or mentally disturbed prison inmates. Upper middle class whites like me often have insurance so good that it will cover all or most expenses for treatment of catastrophic mental health problems. That is not true for the average lower middle class service worker, and much less true for the homeless.

Many are homeless because of addictions to alcohol or illegal drugs; they bear some responsibility for their own plight. But as any honest non-drinking alcoholic will tell you, it is pretty hard to get straight without help. Many of the homeless have less chance of achieving a stable life with a house and a job than they would if their society had provided them with a decent education. PhDs like me seldom turn up as clients in soup lines.

To send a donation to Saint Benedict Catholic Worker, write the check in that name and send it to 4022 N. Cheryl Avenue, Fresno, CA 93705. Donations by check are tax deductible. If you would like to volunteer for work with SBCW, call Bryan or Liza Apper, (559) 229-6410.

And the next time you meet someone poor or homeless, look them in the eye - you might learn something - you will receive something. Because their lives are so hard, they know things that most of the rest of us do not. They know how important it is to give spiritual support to others, because they have found it so hard to get that for themselves.

###

Andy Hart is retired from the English Dept. at CSU Fresno. Two of his current hobbies are birdwatching and praying for a good outcome in our November elections.



The St. Benedict Catholic Worker - serving children in front of the jail.

and Jesus, I am in another sense homeless. We are all locked in our own skulls, feelings and experiences, reaching out, always imperfectly, to loved ones, friends, work associates and—if we know how—to strangers.

I, and everyone else who works with SBCW, have come partly because of our own homelessness. We want and need a specific kind of extra family: one in which we can give to strangers and receive from them their loving thanks and the privilege of looking, briefly, into their eyes and souls.

And the homeless are, while at their meal with SBCW, not homeless at all. They are at home with us—we, who bring them food.

So:
The un-housed jail inmates and the recently released and their families;
Drug addicts who got clean and want help staying clean in halfway houses and other facilities;
Low income working people who need affordable housing near jobs, instead of in downtown and south Fresno ghettos;
Migrant farm workers;
The people who work two or three jobs, in a desperate attempt to care properly for their children, but still cannot earn a decent income -

All these groups are ignored, marginalized, beaten down, and too often treated with heartless and uncaring contempt by too many Americans. We let them live

types of human behavior. Or—perhaps a better way to say it—if we do not nurture others, we make it harder to value ourselves.

One ultimate benefit from helping others is to recognize our commonality with them. They are our brothers and sisters—or, if you prefer, our fellow Americans, our fellow passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all in the same boat. The poor and the homeless are us and



The St. Benedict Catholic Worker - serving the homeless in downtown Fresno

Progressive Religion ... Is Not an Oxymoron

By David E. Roy



One Community Alliance reader (Bill Young) made several suggestions for possible topics for this column, including a fuller look at the “pastor problems” that both presidential candidates have had. While quite different, I believe that the issues surrounding both pastors are relevant to CA readers. For Barack Obama, the pastor is, of course, Jeremiah Wright. For John McCain, the pastor is John Hagee. This month, I will tackle Wright. Next month, I will focus on Hagee’s dramatic and highly unbiblical apocalyptic scheme.

My Country, Wright or Wrong

The Rev. Jeremiah Wright caused quite a stir last May, punching the air and punching holes in mainstream America’s understanding of itself. The mainstream, white for the most part, is not used to hearing this level of intense energy from a preacher nor is it used to hearing a serious, biblical condemnation of its imperialistic shortcomings.

While there were also shortcomings in the pastor’s approach, attitude, and motivations, I believe one of the biggest problems with his message was that all too many Christian clergy have strenuously avoided serious prophetic preaching. As a result, many Christians do not even know what prophetic preaching means. Prophetic, in this case, does not mean a supernatural ability to predict the future. It means to lay out judgment about how current evil deeds, if not stopped, will lead to outcomes that are contrary to God’s aims and disastrous as well (not because God punishes evil doers, by the way).

Arguably the most central Christian message is that God loves everybody completely and without reservation (as well as all the rest of creation). This means that God seeks to promote the well-being of all. Those actions that go against this aim of universal well-being are wrong, even evil, from this perspective.

Two Modes of Divine Influence

Underlying the principles in the preceding paragraph are two distinct modes of the divine influence on the world. On the one hand, there is unconditional acceptance and love. On the other hand, there is the sacred lure to seek the well-being of others as well as self. This sacred invitation manifests itself as justice for those who are without, who are oppressed; and simultaneously as judgment against those who have and will not share and those who oppress or participate in oppression.

Unfortunately, America’s Sunday morning revelations of God’s Word in many Christian churches tend to focus heavily on the first mode for those present and all too often on the second mode only as it applies to those

who are seen as “the others.” God loves you and God doesn’t love those other bad people. (But if you behave like those other bad people, God won’t love you any more either.)

Few Christian clergy have the courage and conviction of a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German-born Lutheran pastor who, though safe in the US, felt he had to return to Germany to speak out as a prophetic witness against the Nazi regime. He was locked up and executed virtually at the end of the war.

But many could be doing more to speak out vigorously against unjust wars (for some this would be all wars), against a US-led global economic system that destroys human communities and the very earth that sustains us, against solving deep and complex social problems largely through prison sentences, against ignoring and marginalizing the citizens who have the least, against an ideological approach to the application of power that ignores all contrary opinions (including both scientific and common sense).

To do so most likely would run the risk of making the preachers unpopular with the very people to whom they are preaching. So often, instead, clergy play it safe, gently chiding, barely hinting, if at all. This, obviously, is not Rev. Wright’s approach. If many more of clergy had prepared the way over the last century, his message would have made far more sense. This in turn would have made his real shortcomings more obvious.

As it is, even the more intelligent articles and commentary about his various speeches and sermons seldom comprehended the fuller meaning and purpose of his words. One article in the New York Times, for example, accused him of grandiosely using big words like “hermeneutics” and sprinkling his speeches with literary quotes as though all of this was an affectation. The implication: “He’s not as smart as he makes himself out to be.” I don’t think that is true.

In his formal addresses, he obviously was working from a written manuscript (though he spoke as though he were delivering his remarks extemporaneously). The ideas often were supported by scholarly references – even the ones that I thought were wrong (assigning left-brain functions to all whites and right-brain to all blacks, for example).

But when he responded to questions following his speech at the National Press Club, he seemed to shift into a more contentious and defensive mode, far less thoughtful. Yet even these comments should have been held in the larger context of all that he had said.

An issue that troubled many is his unwavering allegiance to Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam, who has made statements that are anti-Semitic, anti-white, anti-homosexuality, among other things. This facet of Wright’s presentation, while clearly important to explore, will have to be left to another time.

Why Did Wright Do This at This Time?

Another critical question is about his timing. The moderator at the National Press Club asked him just that twice. Wright’s replies were defensive and cryptic and not to the point. He answered “why” but not “why now.” He talked about people “playing the dozens” with him, as though people would know what that meant. I suspect many of those in the audience who

were black would understand the reference, but I had to research it. Playing the dozens refers to a dissing contest – the “yo mama” match up. The roots go back to slavery where the deformed and the worn-down slaves would be sold by the dozens. This meant they were at the bottom of the bottom, the ultimate “dis.”

As for some of the other objections, the fact that he is dramatic, that he loves the spotlight, that he weaves a complex pattern of expression that conveys both intellect and passion – none of these are an issue for me. Many clergy love the spotlight; would anyone really want a shy, timid preacher? The drama adds to his charisma and his intelligent use of ideas is a plus.

But why he chose this time to explain to the nation who he was and what he was really trying to say is a puzzle because his message became instantly and predictably tangled up with the election campaign. While this undoubtedly increased his audience, a possible motive, it also meant that it was automatically filtered through judgments about how it impacted Obama’s candidacy – and therefore not allowed to stand more clearly on its own.

Moreover, this set the stage for Wright’s views to be shorn easily of any context and shaped into bullets fired at Obama by Foxy journalists and by his then-political opponent, Hillary Clinton. On the one hand, it is hard to believe that Wright would want his views subject to that kind of distortion; the man passionately believes he has something important to say. On the other hand, it is impossible to believe that someone as experienced as Wright would not anticipate how much of the media would use his words. This suggests the very real possibility that he was angry at Obama for distancing himself from Wright. If so, and a number of writers have come to this conclusion, this would explain the timing and the added furor that has distracted from the truth of his underlying message.

Needed: More Prophetic Preaching

Regardless, he has had his say. I have some hope that the shock of this event can increase the possibility that the rest of us who preach will feel challenged to summon up the courage to deliver prophetic sermons that can make our listeners uneasy, that confront the status quo of our nation in those areas where it needs to be confronted.

The ideals of our nation, embedded in our founding documents, are powerful, even sacred in my view. Some of the most important of these values have been seriously compromised over the last two centuries and the rate of this degradation has gradually accelerated since the end of WWII. In the past eight years, the rate of increase has been dramatic.

In our current setting, prophetic preaching becomes both dangerous and absolutely necessary. If many more pastors were to preach in this manner, Rev. Wright would begin to look and sound more normal.

###

Ordained in the United Church of Christ, David Roy is a pastoral counselor and a California licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who directs the Center for Creative Transformation. He has a Ph.D. in theology and personality from the Claremont (California) School of Theology. Send comments to him at admin@cctnet.com.



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from the chains of the Leviathan state, the result was crony capitalism, fiscal recklessness and bumbling incompetence on an unprecedented scale. The opportunity to govern without interference from liberals came, and the consequences—in New Orleans, in Baghdad, in neighborhoods ravaged by housing foreclosures, in levels of inequality unmatched since the Gilded Age—have been calamitous.

Conservatives stunned by this turn of events shouldn't be: it's not exactly shocking that a party committed to the idea that government is the problem did not appoint qualified experts to run agencies like FEMA. Or that a party that views the market as a solution to everything found a way to disburse no-bid contracts to the likes of Halliburton and tax cuts to billionaires in the midst of a war. Yet the idea that Republicans could shrink the bloated government down to size without compromising the national interest—indeed, while enhancing freedom—has proved anything but easy to rebut. Ronald Reagan won landslide victories by promising to get big government off ordinary Americans' backs. Democrats were routinely pilloried as "tax-and-spend liberals" who poured voters' hard-earned savings into outmoded social programs that only exacerbated the problems they promised to solve.

It took Bush's ruinous tenure to illustrate that there are some problems—predatory lending, escalating energy costs, natural disasters—for which the government is a necessary remedy and, perhaps, to persuade less affluent voters to think twice before aligning themselves with the Republican Party against "liberal elites." For several decades, Republicans have succeeded in luring such voters into their ranks not merely by promising to lower their taxes but also by tapping into their cultural anxieties on issues like gay marriage, abortion and guns. A few years ago, one would have been hard-pressed to find a pundit in the country who didn't think this strategy was working. Indeed, the evidence suggested as much: in 2004, for example, white working-class women with annual household incomes between \$30,000 and \$50,000 backed Republicans by a margin of 60 to 39 percent. Their support helped Bush carry crucial blue-collar states like Ohio. Soon thereafter, Time magazine named Bush its Person of the Year.

Two years later, however, this same group of female voters swung to the Democrats, and just like that the GOP majority in Congress was gone. The shift undoubtedly had something to do with growing disenchantment over the war in Iraq. But it's also possible that, at a time when more and more Americans are vulnerable to the dislocations of an increasingly volatile economy, the right's pro-family, antigovernment rhetoric has worn thin. The paradox of championing stability and traditional values, on the one hand, and unfettered capitalism, on the other, is apparently no longer something only liberals find odd. In a cover story in National Review, Ramesh Ponnuru and Richard Lowry observed that on domestic issues "it is almost impossible to exaggerate the Democratic advantage" and warned that ignoring the economic anxieties of working-class voters who've been absorbed into the GOP could prove fatal. "We don't have to support 'universal coverage' on health care," they wrote. "But we ought to talk more about health care than about the budget." Douthat and Salam agree, citing a Pew survey conducted in 2005 that divided the electorate into nine discrete categories. Voters in several of the conservative groups expressed criticism of big business and support for more government involvement to address the economic risks facing families, even if this required paying higher taxes. On domestic issues, they conclude, the Republican Party "isn't just out of touch with the country as a whole; it's increasingly out of touch with its own base."

If these analysts are right, the GOP may be in far greater trouble than even they fear, because the solution they recommend—serious measures to address the insecurity facing the working class—is unlikely to come from a party increasingly wedded to the interests of the ultra-privileged. At one point in Grand New Party, Douthat and Salam propose wage subsidies for low-income workers. It's a nice idea but not one likely to be greeted with great enthusiasm in a party that has consistently blocked efforts to raise the minimum wage while carving out tax loopholes for hedge fund managers. The same goes for broadening access to affordable healthcare, which in any serious plan would require vastly expanding the role of government, long a no-no on the right.

There is, in fact, a growing chorus of conservative critics who attribute the Bush Administration's failures not to its reckless tax cuts but to its insufficient fealty to the tenets of free-market orthodoxy. According to this camp, Bush's domestic agenda would have succeeded but for out-of-control domestic spending and the lack of zeal displayed in the drive to privatize Social Security. It's not hard to imagine how this wing of the right will respond to a major healthcare initiative in the years to come—by launching a campaign to sabotage it, as happened in 1993 when the Clinton Administration introduced such a plan.

If the drive to "slay the beast" of the federal government has begun to give even some conservatives pause, so too has the messianic foreign policy Bush and his advisers have so relentlessly pursued since 9/11. The reason, of course, is Iraq, which even the war's most avid supporters concede has done the Republican Party potentially irreparable harm. "Iraq is the great wreck and failure of this presidency, the great enduring shadow on our party," writes David Frum in Comeback, words it undoubtedly pained him to pen and that some of his comrades will surely see as coming too late. Frum is the neoconservative widely credited with having coined the phrase "axis of evil" (he actually called it the "axis of hatred"). In 2003 he wrote a National Review article titled "Unpatriotic Conservatives" in which he declared that paleoconservatives who did

shows that Democrats hold an eleven-point advantage over Republicans on the question of which party will do a better job on foreign policy, and a staggering 33 percent edge when it comes to restoring America's respect in the world. In the 2006 Congressional election, 18-to-29-year-olds—voters whose political consciousness was forged between 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq—backed Democratic Congressional candidates by a margin of 60 to 38 percent. It is the exact opposite of the trend that took place during the Reagan era, and for conservatives it is a deeply worrisome sign: once formed, the political allegiances of such voters tend to last.

Judgments about the future of American politics often turn out to be wrong, especially when the subject is the fate of conservatism. Defenders of traditional cultural values were supposed to disappear after the 1925 Scopes "monkey" trial. A quarter-century later, Lionel Trilling described liberalism as "not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition" in the United States, a view many postwar intellectuals shared, dismissing the American right as a fringe movement of xenophobic cranks enamored with the likes of Barry Goldwater, whose trouncing in the 1964 election appeared to confirm the marginality of conservative ideas. As it turns out, Goldwater's landslide defeat marked a key moment in modern conservatism's rebirth, ushering in an era of Republican dominance in the formerly Democratic South and fracturing the New Deal coalition that until then had seemed impregnable.

Four decades later, another Arizona Senator, John McCain, clearly senses that the movement Goldwater helped to inspire is in need of a makeover, at least of its image. McCain's carefully choreographed visits to places like Youngstown, Ohio; Inez, Kentucky; and the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans on his recent "It's Time for Action" tour were designed to signal that less privileged Americans will not be invisible to him, as they were to Bush. Then again, voters have witnessed this before—Bush ran as a "compassionate conservative" in 2000. While McCain promises to be different, he has also suggested the government should do little to assist families engulfed by the subprime mortgage crisis. He has tried to have it both ways on foreign policy as well, assembling a team of advisers drawn equally from the realist and

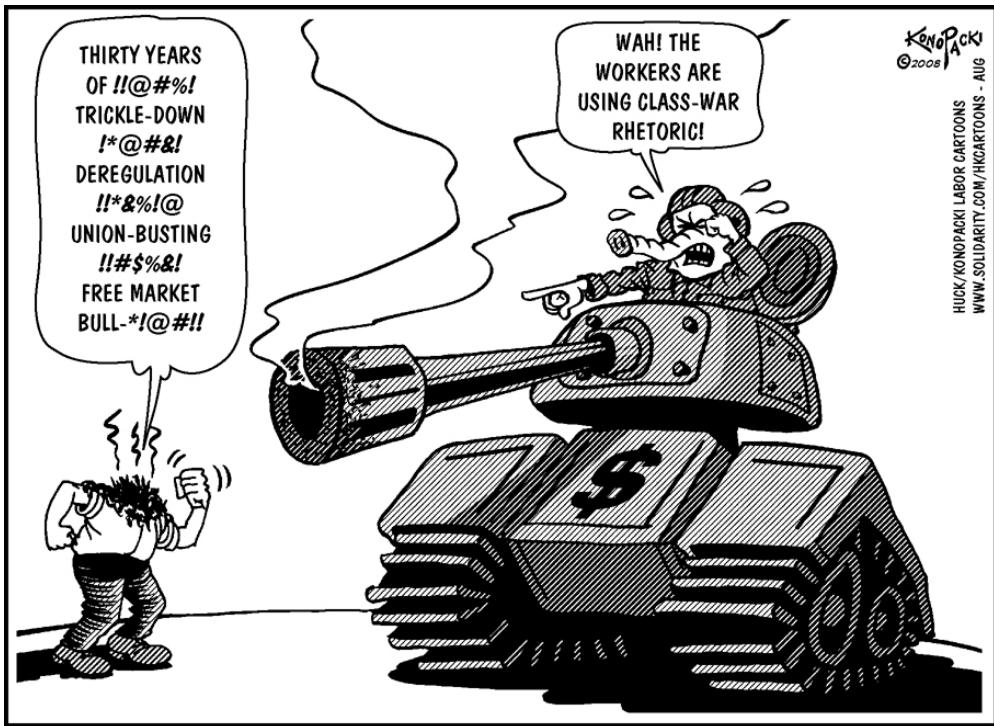
neoconservative camps. McCain has criticized the Bush Administration's unilateralism while slamming those who want to "cut and run" from Iraq and indicating his openness to trying regime change in neighboring Iran.

More than ever before, McCain must hope his reputation as a maverick will lead voters to forget he's actually a conservative Republican. He will undoubtedly try to overcome the baggage his party carries by framing his campaign less around issues than character: the plainspoken war hero running against an out-of-touch liberal elitist. Should his opponent be Barack Obama, we will surely be hearing plenty more about flag pins and the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. The strategy might succeed, but it also risks reinforcing the impression that while one party is promising change, the other is reaching into its familiar bag of tricks to disguise the fact that it is offering more of the same. "The Republican brand has been so badly damaged that if Republicans try to run an anti-Obama, anti-Reverend Wright, or (if Senator Clinton wins), anti-Clinton campaign, they are simply going to fail," argued Gingrich in his recent article in Human Events.

It's a bit early to say whether Gingrich will be proven right, or for that matter whether the Age of Bush has brought an era to a definitive close. But at the least, it has shattered an illusion, leaving the right in need not merely of an image makeover but of structural repair, something McCain almost surely won't give it, and thus giving progressives an opportunity they have not had in a long time. As historian Rick Perlstein puts it, "Conservatives have always been able to say, 'just wait until we get control of the government—then you'll see the wonderful things we can do.' Well, the dog finally caught the car it was chasing, and most of the country thinks the result has been nothing but ruin."

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This article originally appeared in the June 2, 2008 issue of The Nation magazine. Learn more about The Nation by visiting their website at: www.thenation.com. Eyal Press is a Nation contributing writer. The paperback of his first book, Absolute Convictions: My Father, a City, and the Conflict That Divided America, is just out from Picador.



not support the war "have turned their backs on their country. Now we turn our backs on them." And so it is all the more striking to hear Frum announce that conservatives must "turn a new page" in foreign policy. What he means is that they should not feel ashamed to join the diplomacy-adoring appeasers on the left: "We should make clear that we as Republicans and conservatives are ready to go the extra mile on negotiation. Direct talks with Iran? Why not?"

The billions of dollars wasted and thousands of lives ruined by Bush's war may eventually recede from public consciousness; they have already faded from the headlines. But the damage to the right (to say nothing of the damage to the country) may prove lasting all the same, because the "war on terror" was not a cause embraced solely by the band of neoconservatives who brought us the war in Iraq. It was the template for a grand moral struggle that, like the fifty-year battle against the Soviet Union, was supposed to infuse conservatism with a sense of purpose and clarity not witnessed since Reagan rallied the faithful against communism. Several years ago, Joseph Bottum, an editor at First Things, wrote "The New Fusionism," an essay in which he explained why Bush's foreign policy had appealed to everyone from social conservatives obsessed with the evils of abortion to neocons preoccupied with the evils of the Taliban (who, on the matter of women's rights, would find much to admire in a journal like First Things). What brought them all together was a shared insistence that "there are truths about human life and dignity that must not be compromised."

Now that this impulse has led to disaster, many conservatives are having second thoughts. As the one in six Republicans who cast a vote for Ron Paul in the Pennsylvania primary attest, the streak of isolationism that has long existed on the right appears to be undergoing a resurgence. The skepticism of conservative realists who viewed the war in Iraq with wariness from the start has grown more vocal and pronounced. The raw fear that once persuaded large numbers of soccer moms, professionals and young people to vote for Bush has given way to widespread disgust at a party that has squandered the nation's moral credibility while ignoring equally pressing problems that future generations will have to deal with—the impending meltdown of the planet, for example. A recent poll

How Grassroots Politics Changed Fresno County

By Howard K. Watkins

This November will mark the 37th anniversary when a few dedicated individuals came together to help elect a progressive majority to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. They formed Citizens for Responsible Government (CRG) in 1971 and helped to elect the following year attorney Armando Rodriguez and Fresno State physics professor John Donaldson to join then County Supervisor John Krebs on the Board of Supervisors to form a three-vote majority for open and progressive county government.

CRG's goal was to bring integrity and openness to local government and to stop the ability of local developers to get approval for leapfrog development. The impetus for this action was the Board of Supervisor's vote, over John Krebs' objection, to remove one of his appointees to the Fresno County Planning Commission, Heyward Moore, a political science professor at Fresno State. In a secret meeting of a majority of the Board members, they voted to remove Moore because he had publicly complained about how the Board majority was controlled by a local developer. As Donaldson later noted in a Fresno Bee story, "the Board majority had voted to approve zoning changes allowing thousands of foothill acres to be subdivided over the objection of citizen opposition."

Good government advocates were appalled by Moore's removal and helped him get reinstated through court action. They also decided to carry their message of good government to the voters. Leaders in CRG included people like Linda Mack, Bette Noblett, Art Gafke, the late Ruth Albright and Ernestine Leas, Lester Leas, Betty Rodriguez, Sally Kayser, and others. They formed



Linda Mack, one of the founders of Committee for Responsible Government, was elected to the Fresno City Council in 1973. Mack is a long time member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and League of Women Voters.

committees to meet regularly with Donaldson and Rodriguez to discuss issues affecting local government.

CRG members were among the first to create precinct-walking lists in Fresno and inspired others to join them in volunteering time to walk precincts and telephone voters. The issues raised helped to lead The Fresno Bee to endorse both Donaldson and Rodriguez, the latter being the newspaper's first ever endorsement of a Hispanic candidate for office. While the two candidates ran separate campaigns, the support and work of the CRG was a critical factor in their election night victories.

The results were stunning. John Donaldson defeated two-term incumbent Wesley Craven by more than 4,000 votes. In a nail biter, Armando Rodriguez defeated Fresno City Councilmember Pat Camaroda by a mere 221 votes to become the first Hispanic elected to the Board.

The day after the election, The Fresno Bee described Donaldson and Rodriguez as "political unknowns who rode the shoulders of an army of volunteers and promised a new direction to county government ... it was as much a victory for grassroots politics as it was for Donaldson and Rodriguez." In an editorial entitled "Good News For Fresno County," the Bee observed that while "they did not run as a team, Rodriguez and Donaldson share the belief that county government should serve all the people and not just a special few.

Each was supported by a broad base of the citizenry who mainly used face-to-face persuasion to advance their candidates' cause, rather than expensive advertising campaigns."

Rodriguez, who left the Board after three years when he was appointed a judge to the Fresno Municipal Court later stated that the CRG was "the best grassroots campaign ever in Fresno." The importance of voting and getting others to vote in local elections was further underscored by the election of Rodriguez's successor, Bruce Bronzan. In a special election, Bronzan defeated FUSD Trustee John Toomasian by a final 41-vote margin, or less than one vote per precinct.

In 1973, Citizens for Responsible Government helped to elect Linda Mack to the Fresno City Council. Thereafter, the organization gradually lost steam as its leadership moved on to other activities and organizations. This included Mack's election to the City Council and Bette Noblett later becoming President of the Fresno Chapter of the League of Women Voters. Art Gafke, who had been Metro Ministry's founding director was called to pastor a church in Mendocino County. Ruth Albright was appointed to serve on LAFCO, which oversaw expansion of city boundaries. Ernestine Leas became President of the local chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and her son, Lester Leas, ran unsuccessfully for State Assembly. Betty Rodriguez continued on as an active member of several local groups, and Sally Kayser was elected to the Clovis School Board.

While the CRG did not continue as its own organization, many of its supporters continued their work for good government as active members of other civic organizations and political groups, and inspired many others, including myself after moving to Fresno in 1973, to be actively involved in local campaigns. As CRG noted, good government depends on people willing to spend their time and money supporting candidates who will actively promote transparency in government and make decisions based upon improving the quality of life for the residents of Fresno and not just catering to special interests, especially when those interests are detrimental to the community.

Today, the Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee works to re-energize the legacy left by the Citizens for Responsible Government. Like CRG, the CVPPAC limits its political activities to local, non-partisan races such as City Council, School Board, and County Offices. For more information about CVPPAC, go to www.cvppac.org.

###

Howard K. Watkins is a Fresno attorney and the current Chair of CVPPAC.

COMMITTEE FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Committee for Responsible Government is formed as a non-partisan citizens' group for the purpose of promoting good government and acting as an advocate for citizens on a continuing basis.

The Committee for Responsible Government is concerned that:

- all citizens have fair and equal hearing before governmental bodies;
- conflict between private interests and the public good be resolved in favor of the public good in open hearings and meetings where all evidence is part of the public record;
- elected and appointed officials conduct meetings in accordance with fair, written procedures and make decisions after due consideration of evidence publicly presented;
- the rights of citizens guaranteed by the Bill of Rights be upheld by elected and appointed officials; and,
- qualified people be encouraged to serve as elected and appointed officials.

FUNCTIONS:

The following functions are all seen to be possible courses of action, carried on at various times and/or simultaneously, in accordance with the above statement of purpose. Other actions are possible, depending upon member interest and participation.

- watch-dog the actions of local governmental bodies;
- research public policies and decisions, including planning policies and programs, for dissemination of information to the public and for use in the formulation of actions;
- play an advocacy role on behalf of citizens or groups who are victims of unjust decisions, including financial support of litigation on their behalf;
- identification and support of non-partisan candidates; and,
- support of appropriate referendums and initiatives.

(Adopted 10/28/71)

Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee

cvppac.org

PO Box 5845, Fresno, CA 93755

559-435-7360

The Valley's Voice for Progressives

Saturday, August 9th
3:30-5 PM

Our speaker is Fresno Mayoral candidate Ashley Swearengin. Members and the public are welcome to hear and ask questions of Ashley as she shares her views on major issues facing the City of Fresno. The meeting is at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence (1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno). Information on the November 4th ballot measures will be provided. For more information, go to our website at www.cvppac.org or call 559-435-7360.

Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

Let me introduce you to Carlos Fierro, the editor of our sister alternative monthly newspaper *The Undercurrent*. I've wanted to interview Carlos for a while, to give our readers some insight into the journal that, in many ways, is a valued complement to our Alliance. If you have not read The Undercurrent, I recommend you look it over. It provides excellent thematic commentary on important issues (largely written specially for the paper, not taken off the internet); and coverage of not only the culture scene but also of the people who bring that scene to life. This is the kind of coverage the Bee has obviously been scrambling to emulate the past couple of years.

I met Carlos at one of his "off-site work stations", the Javawava Cafe across from Fresno High. As we entered, he waded through several greetings before we could settle down to conversation. Carlos, a genial bear of a guy, offers a self-effacing presentation, much preferring to talk about the paper and his work than about himself.

Carlos says his activist journalism began while he was in a Masters program in Mass Communication in Milwaukee. He became involved with a student movement in support of the custodial staff's work demands, and helped produce a pamphlet. The impact of the 3,000 per month pamphlets the group distributed clued him into the power of the press—when you have your own, as they say.

Carlos returned to Fresno for the proverbial "a while", and was re-united with friends who, here before, had discussed with the fervor of youth the vision of a different kind of periodical for Fresno. Now, all with skills and experience in hand, they asked themselves "Why not?" Having just celebrated their second birthday with a great party/fundraiser, the paper can already be judged a success, resting on the tripod of dedicated editors and writers, advertisers (mostly small businesses) willing to support the venture, and a devoted core of readers and boosters.

The Undercurrent is a side-project for Carlos, as it is for all the key editors, who work regular jobs outside the paper. Carlos is an instructor at Fresno City College; and, he says, his work there is not just a way to support his journalism habit. "Teaching is very important to me, it's another way to make real connection with the community, like the paper is." He's also excited by the prospect of a new class he'll be starting next fall which will produce a magazine each semester built around the choices of the students.

But The Undercurrent is where his distinctive interests are given most scope. He has become particularly interested in the intersection of food and politics. How do the sources of food and the methods of production affect our health and the environment? How might the creation of neighborhood gardens impact the way people live together? Such pragmatic questions—rather than overarching ideology—guide Carlos to political involvements and stances.

Carlos also takes seriously the responsibility as editor he feels to the paper's readership. "I try to answer personally every letter or e-mail addressed to the editor. I know in some cases people are very surprised by responses. In some cases we exchange several messages." He is also concerned for his paper to develop continuity in covering key topics (such as Palestine and health) as well as maintaining the policy of a monthly theme. (The June/July issue, for example, present several perspectives on our degrading environment.)

While proud of what The Undercurrent is able to do, Carlos also sees important City news goinguncovered. "There's little anywhere on the specifics of the different quarters of the City—the southwest, for instance, of the northside. And what do we know about the Hmong community except for their New Year celebration?" And he is appreciative of the coverage of local political struggles, and of the groups and individuals who frame those struggles, that the Alliance excels in.

With typical modesty, Carlos seems genuinely surprised at, and grateful for, the reception of the paper. "It is humbling to feel the power of expression afforded by editing a paper; and to have your ideas and intentions embraced, as when someone goes to their usual pick-

up site and calls to ask "Where is it?" if we haven't gotten there yet or they've run out...what a feeling of acceptance."

(Carlos can be reached at editor.undercurrent@gmail.com)



Identity Box

Name: Carlos Fierro
Birthplace: Fresno
Ethnic Identity: Mexican/California Native American/ Spanish
Political Affiliation: Independent
Most Frequented Places: Javawava, Corazon Cafe
Inspirations: The Zapatistas, Nigerian Mothers movement, UFW
Motto: If you can walk, you can dance; if you can talk you can sing
Non-political Interests: Gardening, teaching
Unexpected Pleasure: Going to baseball games



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Serving Our Community



QUEER EYE

Will It Ever Stop?

by Dan Waterhouse

Exactly one week after Fresno State's baseball team won the College World Series title, a community weary of bad news learned of yet another lawsuit linked to wrongdoing at the university. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of Yolanda Cerrillo by attorney Dan Siegel, alleges that Cerrillo was fired from her job as assistant to the principal of a local elementary school because of her service as the jury foreperson in the Stacy Johnson-Klein discrimination case against Fresno State.

Siegel is part of the legal team that represented Johnson-Klein, former associate athletic director Diane Milutinovich, and former women's volleyball coach Lindy Vivas in their discrimination cases against the university. Siegel is also representing former men's basketball employee Iris Levesque in her age discrimination and retaliation lawsuit against Fresno State.

Cerrillo says that she was fired less than one week after returning to work at West Park Elementary School after serving as a juror in the Johnson-Klein trial. Prior to the trial, Cerrillo said she was considered to be an excellent employee by the school's principal, Steven Irby. She said she was called for jury service on October 10, 2007 and the trial concluded with an approximately \$19.1 million dollar judgment against Fresno State on December 6th.

According to Cerrillo, she returned to work fulltime on December 7th. She said that at the beginning of the workday on the 7th, she told Irby that members of the media might try to contact her at work. She added that Irby asked her "why they would be attempting to contact her. Ms. Cerrillo informed" him "that the likely reason the media might contact her was due to her role as Jury Foreperson."

Irby's face, according to Cerrillo, turned a red shade. He supposedly replied, "oh, I see," and left the room. She

believes Irby then went and told district superintendent Ralph Vigil of Cerrillo's role on the jury. She said Irby and Vigil then became "hostile and cold" towards her. She added that "the tone of meetings with Irby changed drastically as he suddenly became quiet and unfriendly in them."

Five days later—on December 12th, says Cerrillo, she reported for work. Shortly after arriving, she was called into a meeting with Irby and district human resources director Cassandra Simpson. According to Cerrillo, Simpson told her she had been fired as of Tuesday, the 11th. Simpson refused to tell Cerrillo why she was being terminated, saying "they did not need to give her a reason." After being told the firing decision had been made by "upper management" by Irby, Cerrillo asked to speak with Vigil. Simpson told her it was "against the law" for her to speak to Vigil. Simpson then told her she needed to write Simpson a letter to find out why she was being let go. Cerrillo says she did so; however, in her reply Simpson refused to explain why she had been fired.

The verdict in favor of Johnson-Klein prompted much controversy and discussion in the Fresno community, as well as nationally. Angry community members went after the jurors and the legal system in general. Postings on "The Barkboard," an internet blog for Fresno State boosters were typical: "how did the 12 dumbest people in Fresno get selected to try this case? I have never been as disappointed in the legal system as I am now." And, "screw that stupid —, I am sorry, but as a taxpayer and student I am sure that I am paying a portion of that 19 million. What is wrong with our sue happy society? And 19 million?" And, "this verdict, but not the super excessive award to the sweet, sinless, fairy prince\$\$ should have been expected in this twisted PC world. Shame on the people that awarded this to her!" and finally, "where do they find these people? *** idiots!!"

Cerrillo believes she was fired because of her service as foreperson on the Johnson-Klein jury. According to Siegel, retaliation by an employer because of jury service violates California law and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.


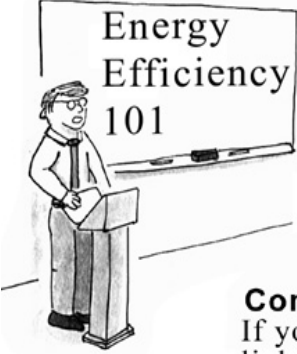
Active lawsuits connected to discrimination, alleged or otherwise, at Fresno State include the Levesque, and the Steven King and Richard Snow cases.

Iris Levesque, a former employee in the men's basketball office, says she was laid off and then not rehired as promised by university president Dr. John Welty in retaliation for her gender advocacy efforts. She said she reported numerous violations of university and NCAA policies and rules by then-men's basketball coach Ray Lopes and his staff to her superiors. According to Levesque, the violations included lending athletes vehicles and attempts to "sexualize" the recruitment of male athletes by hiring "young women exclusively" to help basketball assistant coaches "recruit male players for the basketball team."

Former campus police lieutenant Steven King and former sergeant Richard Snow were two of three former Fresno campus police officers who recovered a \$1.17 million verdict (reduced from \$4.5 million) for reverse discrimination against the university in 2000. The lawsuit resulted from efforts by the campus police chief to force them out of the department, after one of the three officers refused to ignore criminal behavior of student-athletes occurring on campus in the mid-1990s. At that time, it was not unusual, according to old-time officers, for the campus chief to be pressured not to pursue criminal cases against athletes.

Snow suffered a work-related hip fracture in November 2000 and was placed on disability retirement. He filed a new lawsuit alleging that the university discriminated against him because of his disability, failed to accommodate him, and retaliated against him because of the verdict in favor of Dan Horsford, King and him in 2000. King also filed a new lawsuit after the Horsford verdict claiming that the university discriminated and retaliated against him, because he was not appointed lieutenant and/or chief of police.

 <p>COMMUNITY LINK <small>A Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Community Service Organization</small></p> <p>NEWSLINK monthly newspaper PINK PAGES QUEER VOLLEYBALL GRAY ALLIANCE BOWL-A-THON</p> <p>YOUTH ALLIANCE LAVENDER PROM FALL GARDEN & TEA TOUR "IT'S A QUEER THANG" RADIO SHOW GLBT PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL</p> <p>Questions? Call 559-266-LINK or visit www.CommunityLinkFresno.com</p>	 <p>Perfect Balance Yoga</p> <p>NW corner of Fresno & Shaw</p> <p>info1@PB Yoga.com www.pbyoga.com 559-222-6212</p> <p>5091 N Fresno St Ste 133 Fresno, CA 93710</p>	<p>Jacob M. Weisberg Attorney at Law</p> <p>LAW OFFICE OF JACOB M. WEISBERG 844 N. VAN NESS AVE. FRESNO, CA 93728</p> <p>(559) 441-0201 FAX (559) 442-3164 EMAIL: jmw@jweisberglaw.com</p>
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The Council of Light: The Art of Happiness

—a proposal from James Fletcher

The Council of Light is a small circle of people interested in social justice. Soon we will be beginning an on-going discussion on the topic of Happiness as an essential element in the well-being of the planet, and how happiness relates to the pursuit of social justice in our own lives. If you are interested in joining our weekly gathering, contact Richard Stone at 266-2559.

Come, let's revolutionize the way we think and act!

Measure C Extension - Helping you get Down the Road

By Mary Savala

The first year of the Fresno County transportation sales tax has passed with extensive work by Fresno County Council of Governments, its member agencies, and the public to develop procedures and guidelines for local agencies (the cities and the County of Fresno) for spending the revenues from the tax. Regional Transportation Mitigation Fees (RTMF) on new development in Fresno County are also a requirement for the cities and the County with penalties for non-compliance.

The Measure C extension of the former tax is a different animal than the 1986-2006 sales tax. The former tax directed most of its revenues to roads and highways, funding a large portion of SR 168 through the Cities of Fresno and Clovis, completing SR41 and extending and improving SR180. The extension has much larger pots of money for public transit, car and van pool commuter programs, new school buses, research and development, railway consolidation, and transit oriented development incentives. New programs such as a senior taxi script subsidy required inventing some new wheels or adapting old wheels to Fresno County.

The cities and the county are having to learn new funding requirements on their portions of the revenues for ADA compliance, expenditures for pedestrian and bike trails/bikeways, and for street maintenance.

The Local Agency Handbooks have been approved by the Council of Governments and now serve as tools for the implementation of Measure C. The Regional Transportation Mitigation Fee schedule remains a point of contention between the development community, the public and the cities and the county. But the RTMF ordinance must be enacted by all the cities and the County to be effective January 1, 2009. Any jurisdiction which does not enact the ordinance shall forfeit annually a Measure C street maintenance allocation in proportion to the amount of fees that would otherwise have been paid for development projects in that jurisdiction that year.

The Measure C Extension Citizens Oversight Committee, consisting of 13 members representing public constituencies all over the County of Fresno and stakeholders such as the Taxpayers Coalition, the Bike Coalition, and the League of Women Voters, has been meeting quarterly to organize the committee, to assist with the preparation of reporting formats for Measure C budget reports, and to keep informed with the implementation of the new Measure C. The real work of the Oversight Committee will begin after October 15th this year when the member agency expenditure reporting forms are submitted. A tentative date of January, 2009 has been scheduled for the oversight committee's first report and recommendations.

The revenues for Measure C were conservatively estimated for the ballot campaign, but the past year's economic environment has resulted in a reduction of revenues even below the conservative estimates of sales tax proceeds. That revenue shortfall along with enormous increases in costs of fuel and construction materials has put a new light on the Measure C program, and those impacts on Fresno County transportation remains an important and interesting question for everyone.



Members of the Female Leadership Academy who lobbied in Sacramento during Planned Parenthood Capitol Day in April of this year.

The “F” word in the Central Valley???

By Robyn Flores and Erin Garner-Ford

Yep – a feminist organization, ACT for Women and Girls has created an avenue to work on social justice issues and create leadership opportunities for women in Tulare County. ACT is a grassroots non-profit organization that provides a safe venue for women to grow their leadership talents and effectively promote social and personal change. ACT has made strides in connecting local women to broader movements as well as grass roots advocacy work on reproductive and social justice issues affecting our communities, such as pesticide drift and environmental impacts on reproductive health. ACT utilizes two overarching strategies: (1) the Female Leadership Academy (FLA); and (2) the Central Valley Alliance for Women and Justice (CV Alliance).

Through the creation of the Female Leadership Academy in 2005, positive changes have resulted in the Central Valley by empowering women to be leaders of their communities and hold policymakers accountable to ensure that rights of the constituents are being upheld. The FLA is an intensive 8 month academy, during which young women (ages 16-23) attend 2 hour evening sessions and weekend retreats to gain knowledge of feminism, women's health and reproductive justice and develop leadership skills such as public speaking, community organizing and legislative advocacy. They complete the academy with a community project such as: educating school boards on SB 71 – Comprehensive Sex Ed in the Schools; educating young women about access to Emergency Contraception; organizing a community rally about reproductive health options; leading marches to educate about reproductive rights and other issues facing women in the Valley, and writing editorials in the local papers. We are recruiting for our fourth year and applications can be found on our website www.actforwomenandgirls.org. We are recruiting mentors for this next year as well. If you are interested please email us at actforwomenandgirls@yahoo.com.

ACT also plans to host a Coming Out For Justice each year and needs volunteers to help with that event as well. The purpose of the event is to begin building bridges with other social justice organizations and promoting a unified voice among valley progressives.



Ana Suarez holds a megaphone as she leads the Planned Parenthood march from the Capitol to the Convention Center.

The Central Valley Alliance for Women and Justice (CV Alliance) is a newly created collaborative with the help of Planned Parenthood Mar Monte. For activists working in geographically rural areas we know all too well the frustration of working in “silos,” often struggling to get our voices and those of our constituents heard among the more organized and allied groups in both the northern and southern areas of the state. Our goal with the CV Alliance is to break out of these silos by establishing a connectedness among like-minded activists and advocates working in the Valley. Please contact us if you and/or your organization would like to get involved.

Please contact us via our website (www.actforwomenandgirls.org) or email us at (actforwomenandgirls@yahoo.com) and we will get in touch with you!

###

Robyn Flores is the Director of ACT. Erin Garner-Ford is the Female Leadership Academy Coordinators, Robyn and Erin, are both very passionate about women's issues and rights and work together to ensure women have a voice in Tulare County. They can be reached at actforwomenandgirls@yahoo.com or by calling 559.679.2114

China Earthquake Shakes up Fresno Native

By Gene Richards

As I've said before, there was a whole lotta shakin' goin' on. Longest quake I've ever felt (7.9), and I've been in quite a few, though never in a Chinese building while I'm wondering just how they constructed it. That gave me pause to consider my life. But there was no damage that I could see except for the panicked students, who have never been in an earthquake and hadn't gotten much instruction on what to do. This even though the area to the west of here, Longmenshan, is a known active fault zone due to the India subcontinent pushing continuously northward into the Eurasian continental plate. Chinese scientists had been predicting quakes of high magnitude for some time. Well, welcome to China.

For myself, I didn't get it at first, when the shaking started. The students were wide-eyed, the way you get when you're wondering if the building is going to fall on you. They dived under the desks momentarily before super-panic struck and then dashed for the exits, then down the stairwells. My first thought was – this is Sichuan and this is NOT supposed to happen here! I kept saying to myself, This is very strange, while watching the ceiling to see if things were going to start falling in – the computer project swaying lazily, the acoustic tiles, the improperly installed fans, dust from years ago. My knees felt weak but I was more concerned with what the students would think about my actions than what was going to happen to me so I tried not to show it. There were moments of panic but I wouldn't let myself leave the building. I really didn't think it would fall down after the first few moments and I've been trained well, in the furnace of California quake history. Still, I was in a fuddled state.

But here's the saddest part. Many public buildings were not constructed well, especially in the poorer mountainous areas where the quake centered – un-reinforced masonry! I saw a school near my apartment that was built on fill, out over a slope of the local hill. The part furthest from the original slope was much more damaged due to ground shaking. It didn't collapse but the students and teachers aren't soon going to forget that experience. And that was just a microcosm compared



With the students, walking in the flower farm / exhibition / tourist area near Chengdu.

with the total collapses in the mountain areas near the epicenter.

I went back into the building to fetch my bike, everyone looking at me as though I were mad or grabbing at my shoulder to stop me. Then I rode home to see if my apartment was ok and if there were any gas leaks. That was my first rational thought – gas!

The government did actually respond fairly quickly though the army wasn't at all prepared to deal adequately in the first few hours with the scale of the disaster and therefore a lot of poor countryside people, especially children at schools, were lost. You can picture desperate soldiers trying to dig out mounds of rubble with their hands while listening to the survivors below them.

They had a really big quake in 1976 in the north, Tangshan, which killed about 240,000 people. Can you imagine what would happen if that many died in America? This one has so far killed over 70,000. How

would even that play in the U.S.? Nothing in our own history comes even close unless you consider war fatalities. The Korean War only cost about 36,000 and the Vietnam War 58,000. So consider China's loss – just the sheer magnitude of dislocation, suffering and anxiety.

The quake struck in the mountains about 55 miles west of here at about 2 pm. Most of my students were still napping but I was having class on the fourth floor of our classroom building. As I said, no serious damage – some heavy ceiling tiles fell and a few cracks opened up between ceiling and wall, especially in our large, open office. They cancelled classes for a week, let the students back for a couple of days, then, due to the many fairly large aftershocks (6.1), cancelled classes for another week. I'm thinking, My god, let them get on with their lives and put the tragedy behind. Remember, yes, but time to move on and attend to school and the future. That's the message I carried, not terribly successfully.

Their dorms were closed at first so everyone was outside in temporary shelters, rain or shine. And it rained the first night but after that, students were pretty clever about setting up temporary shelters with tents and plastic, etc. Most residents did the same so the streets and medians and sidewalks were quite crowded come evening. I went back to my apartment, noticed no gas smell and no damage and went to bed. I got awakened occasionally over the next few days with shaking (the ground, not me) but felt pretty good about having survived to teach another day.

I hope the survivors will pressure their government to enact some much needed changes and they have gotten angry, especially with the number of students dead.

Whoa Gene, what ARE you thinking! This is China. Anytime there's any concerted or organized resistance to the government line, they squash a few people and things go back to normal, or normal for China. But I can wish.

###


Gene Richards, a longtime Fresno resident (Tower/Roeding Park neighborhoods) has been teaching English at a small college in the suburbs of Chengdu, Sichuan, PRC, for the past 3 years. He can be reached at gene1@cvip.net



With the students, walking in the countryside outside Chengdu during the peach blossoming season - a favorite local tourist attraction.



These are sophomore English majors at The College of Arts and Sciences, Sichuan Normal University, Chengdu, Sichuan, PRC. Pretty typical of my college, the girls making up about 90% of the English majors!



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Arts in Corrections - A Glowing Hope

By Boston Woodard



Since the eighteenth century, prisoners of every ilk develop methods to survive in the tumultuous and violent insanity inherent throughout the history of the prison system. It was a consuming struggle just to find a meal each day in the early days of confinement, as the authorities made little or no provision for the support of prisoners. It took more than a hundred years for society to figure out that those who meticulously manufactured the U.S. Constitution clearly wrote it for all citizen's — including prisoners.

Prisoners have historically been an under-represented group within the social strata and in this epoch of "Three Strikes You're Out," brought on by the "tough on crime" crowd, the atmosphere inside prison walls has become enveloped by a shadow of hopelessness and frustration, as even the most liberal members of our society turn their backs on prisoners and their families for fear of appearing to be soft on crime.

It seems the policy of California's governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and of some seemingly virulent politicians to keep prisoners from important self-help programs is a perfect example of how today's prison system is working against rehabilitation and social involvement for prisoners. It is just plain wrong to leave prisoners ill prepared before release on parole. As abhorrent and ill-fated as the current climate of our state's temperament towards prisoners increasingly grows, many prisoners feel there is no one who cares whether they receive rehabilitation while behind these prison walls. Occasionally, a glow of hope shines despite the ostracism imposed on prisoners.

It wasn't until the mid-twentieth century that a tide of change would flow over the prison system in the United States. In the 1940's, warden Clinton Truman Duffy, who was dubbed "the man who reformed San Quentin," came on scene. Warden Duffy began sweeping changes in the way San Quentin's prisoners were treated. He fired sinister guards, closed the dungeon and was not afraid of the prisoners.

Warden Duffy was the son of a former prison guard and was raised on the grounds just outside the walls of San Quentin in Marin County, California. Throughout his entire life Duffy grew up in the presence of convict workers who tended the gardens that surrounded the walls of San Quentin and who did other convict work assignments inherent during that prison history era. After becoming warden, Duffy did everything to change the brutal methods used in the prison by the guards. Duffy started new and better programs for the convicts to stay occupied, giving them the opportunity to improve their educational skills and learn new trades. Duffy was also very aware that many prisoners were heavily involved in the arts before coming to prison.

Duffy started the prison newspaper The San Quentin News and originated Alcoholics Anonymous at the prison. He began a boxing program, organized baseball and began enhanced music and arts programs, allowing the convicts to perform at special prison functions. It was soon learned that the sports, religious and especially the arts programs such as creative writing, music and various painting and drawing mediums, changed for the better the lives of the prisoners as well as those who worked behind the walls of the prison. Recidivism plummeted dramatically among pris-

oners who were matriculated into Warden Duffy's programs.

These programs softened tensions and allowed prisoners to work toward self-betterment. There was a significant drop in gang activity. Fewer fights and stabbings took place. The rest of the prison's general population frequently gathered for music performances and art shows provided by participating arts students. These activities eased the overall anxiety of prison life for the convicts as well as prison staff.



Lower Yard San Quentin State Prison" by Ronnie Goodman, painted in Arts in Corrections, instructor Patrick Maloney.

There were some old-time guards who resisted these new rehabilitation programs for the prisoners; it was foreign to them and stood in the way of what they believed they were hired to do – degrade, humiliate and punish the horrible convicts. If prison staff refused to acclimatize with the new rehabilitative measures, they were promptly dismissed from their duties by Duffy.

Warden Duffy surmised that for 150 years, the dark draconian methods leveled against the convicts contributed nothing toward the rehabilitation of anyone who would eventually be paroled. It is important to know that if the arts programs are taken seriously, they can have a profound rehabilitative impact on those prisoners who were involved upon their release from prison. If society expects prisoners who parole (which is 90 plus percent of them) to remain free as productive members of society, fair and just attention needs to be given to prison arts programs.

Throughout the decades, insight and understanding of the benefits of Warden Duffy's rehabilitative arts, sports and religious programs, afforded prisoners the opportunity and the tools to develop and hone their skills.

Ernie Schaffer, a prison music teacher in California in the 1970's once explained, "When these men are with an instrument, their world changes for the better as will mine and yours."

The William James Association, an organization that promotes work services in the arts, environment, education, and community development currently provides the Prison Arts Project. The Prison Arts Project contracts with professional artists to provide in-depth, long-term arts experiences for incarcerated men and women. Begun in 1977, the program selects and hires professional visual, literary and performing artists to teach in California state prison facilities. The Prison Arts Project also establishes Artists-In-Residence programs for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

The William James Association is a nonprofit community service corporation founded in 1973 by Page Smith and Paul Lee. The association is named for the American philosopher, William James, who was deeply concerned with the relationship between philosophical thought and social action.

Through the vision and efforts of Eloise Smith, the William James Association began the Prison Arts Project in 1977 as a pilot program at the California Medical Facility (CMF) prison in Vacaville, Ca. Since that time, WJA has dedicated itself to providing arts experiences to incarcerated individuals in the belief that participation in the artistic process significantly and positively affects one's views of oneself and the world.

There was also much interest by some elected officials regarding the positive possibilities of arts being part of the bigger rehabilitative picture. In 1980, California State Senator Henry Mello, was responsible for getting legislation passed to allow the Arts In Corrections program to expand.

In 1980, Jack Bowers began working at Soledad State Prison as a music instructor with the Arts In Corrections (AIC) program. Bowers was sincere and very courageous at doing something good for prisoners. He was very successful in his effort to instill the qualities necessary to become a good, all around musician. Bowers was co-responsible for the Stars Behind Bars music program at Soledad with the help of Buddy Harper, a Duke Ellington alumnus. The Stars Behind Bars program took prisoner musicians from neophyte status to levels they could only dream of. The confidence and self-esteem levels Jack Bowers raised in his charges could not be any better. Over the years, hundreds of prisoners benefitted from the hard work and efforts of Jack Bowers.

Today, Jack Bowers is Chairman of the Board of Directors for the William James Association based in Santa Cruz, California; a job he truly deserves.

When asked about why doing what he did for so many years in prison was important to him, Jack offered a few examples. He spoke of one prisoner who picked up a guitar for the first time and actually knew how to play it. The prisoner told Jack that he had constructed a guitar neck out of cardboard, drew in the strings, and learned how to finger the notes to various music patterns on the cardboard neck. This determination and desire to be involved with the arts amazed Jack. Another young prisoner of about 18 years old

If you are a prisoner and would like to receive a complimentary subscription to this newspaper, send your request to: Community Alliance Newspaper, PO Box 5077, Fresno Ca 93755



Portraits from Patrick Maloney drawing class at San Quentin State Prison.



Bookbinding class in the art center at San Quentin State Prison. Loft window Steve Emrick, Artist Facilitator and program coordinator San Quentin State Prison and instructor Beth Thielen, book artist.

- Rico, not assigned to the arts program, would appear in Jack's class and was sort of a nuisance. Jack said if he wanted to "hang around" he would have to at least act as if he were doing something. Rico's motivation was uncanny and, according to Jack, Rico became one of the most accomplished musicians he ever instructed. The story that sounds most abstruse is of a prisoner in Soledad State Prison's infamous "0-Wing" segregation unit ("the hole") that Jack helped present an award to. This prisoner had won a national writing contest, but before he could accept the award, he had to sign a release before the award could be officially presented and publicized. Jack explained that it was both overwhelming and surreal to be part of this event; one he was proud to be part of. The prisoner was hand-cuffed with waist chains and bound with ankle shackles. He was then escorted to a designated area in the prison where he signed the release and was presented with the award. He was hurried back to

Interest shifted from rehabilitation to the depletion of programs such as Arts In Corrections onto punitive measures.

Creative writing teacher and author Judith Tannenbaum worked for many years inside the walls of San Quentin. Judith explains that, "What I offer depends on the needs of the particular class I will meet with — anything from reading, to one-on-one consultation, to work with basics of poetry (image, sound,



Ben Ballard, student in Arts in Corrections program at San Quentin, Desert landscape acrylic on canvas.



Painting student in Arts in Corrections program San Quentin State Prison

his cell. This prisoner was eventually released from administrative segregation and continued to write.

It is the need and want for the opportunity to change that is important to understand when talking about prison arts programs. There are so many men and women behind prison walls that crave the opportunity to get involved with the arts. These programs are lacking in resources/funding and also lack official understanding of just how rehabilitative these programs are. You would think that the Department of Corrections would pay more attention to these programs, see the rehabilitative benefits, and help them accordingly. This acknowledgement would also prove that the recently added word "Rehabilitation" to its official logo is not a smoke and mirror maneuver to appease some federal court order.

In the mid 1980's, San Quentin's ARTS IN CORRECTIONS program was headed by arts facilitator Jim Carlson. Carlson, an accomplished artist and educator, assembled one of the

Retired California Medical Facility Arts Facilitator Jeff Hesemeyer said many prisoners come to prison when they are young. Hesemeyer feels this is when they are at the height of their learning abilities. Communication, survival and learning skills all help toward the sense of accomplishment which are all attainable through the prison arts programs. Hesemeyer explained that Arts In Corrections teaches prisoners to discover new things about what they do not know and that it is also a great healing force.



Scott McKinstry, detail work on painting in Arts in Correction painting class.



Instructor Katya Mc Colluch, printmaking instructor with students and the print portfolio which has been accepted into the Library of Congress collection.

largest and most productive running arts programs the Department of Corrections has ever allowed. With painting and drawing classes, crafts, various art projects and a very active music program, Carlson set the standard for well organized prisoner rehabilitation programs guided through the arts. Today, Carlson works as the Arts Facilitator at New Folsom State Prison in Represa, California.

During the 1990s, the public was bombarded with a barrage of talk about crime, those who commit it and the punitive measures that should be leveled against them. Longer prison sentences spawned by the 'Three Strikes You're Out' law and the obscene amount of money pumped into it, took the attention and funding straight out of the rehabilitation coffers. Instilling this unfounded fear in the public lead to the belief that all prisoners are irretrievable miscreants and should not be given the opportunity to grow as humans.

ognized and understood the rehabilitative benefits of prisoners participating in creative programming, he had the courage to do it during the tumult of a dark prison era.

With the need for programs to accommodate the multitude of prisoners who want and need to change for the better, the already established Arts In Corrections program and the William James Association deserve everyone's support.

The guidance, experience, opportunity and rehabilitative prospects these groups offer to prisoners and the general public are outstanding and necessary.

###

Boston Woodard is a prisoner/journalist who wrote for The San Quentin News, The Soledad Star and edited The Com-

Arts Facilitator/Musician Bill Scholer at Solano State Prison in Vacaville, California explains, "we are all born with our own temperament. Some of us are born to be creative and it is harmful to neglect our nature. If neglected, it can create havoc in our community. In order for prisoners to rehabilitate themselves, they have to find some positive aspect to their nature — Arts In Corrections provides that positive venue. It should be important for us all to understand the value of the humanities and the importance of self discovery through the arts, as did warden Duffy so many years ago."

Warden Duffy not only recognized and understood the rehabilitative benefits of prisoners participating in creative programming, he had the courage to do it during the tumult of a dark prison era.

With the need for programs to accommodate the multitude of prisoners who want and need to change for the better, the already established Arts In Corrections program and the William James Association deserve everyone's support.

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###

Boston Woodard is a prisoner/journalist who wrote for The San Quentin News, The Soledad Star and edited The Com-

municator. Boston has been a student of and participant in programs that were facilitated by every teacher and Arts Facilitator talked about in this article.

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For more information about the William James Association and the Arts-In-Corrections program, see <http://www.williamjamesassociation.org/>

Teacher and poet Tracy Gourdine once said, "It's amazing how attentive and willing to engage in the arts prisoners are when given the opportunity."

You can read Boston's previous articles here:

Appealing the Impossible
Sunday May 18th, 2008
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/05/18/18500099.php>

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Bottom Feeding Hypocrite?

By Boston Woodard

Well, well, well! Welcome to the criminal - world Henry T. Nicholas III. You are now California's newest, biggest, richest, indicted hypocrite. I'll bet the Republican party is real proud of you my man. I almost feel like you are one of us (prisoners) now, but after thinking about that possibility. I decided that most prisoners wouldn't want to be associated with a bottom feeding hypocrite like you.

Nicholas is the Republican billionaire who was recently indicted for a pattern of criminal behavior which involved "prostitution, drug peddling, bribery and death threats" federal prosecutors say. The 48-year- old co-founder of Broadcom, a computer chip—making company, donated nearly \$10 million to several California Republican candidates and causes over the past several years. Let's not forget that he was Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's top donor.

One of the crime initiatives backed by Nicholas is the so called "Marsy's Law" initiative. This initiative is a confusing tangle of twisted proposals to enhance already existing stringent, over-the-top laws. Billions and billions of California taxpayer's dollars that do not exist will become part of the already astronomical debt the state can't get out from under as it is.

Because proponents of Marcy's Law like Assemblyman Todd Spitzer (R) Orange, hustle criminals like Henry Nicholas to finance a multimillion dollar stratagem doesn't necessarily mean that the taxpayers of California are ready to go deeper into the abyss of economic ruin. The construct of Marcy's Law entails spending billions of dollars the state does not have. An informed California voter understands that existing sentencing laws are more than adequate. Voting for initiatives like Marcy's Law would be tax-wasting redundancy at its worst. Driving a nail into the coffin of California's empty public coffer is just plain wrong and vindictive.

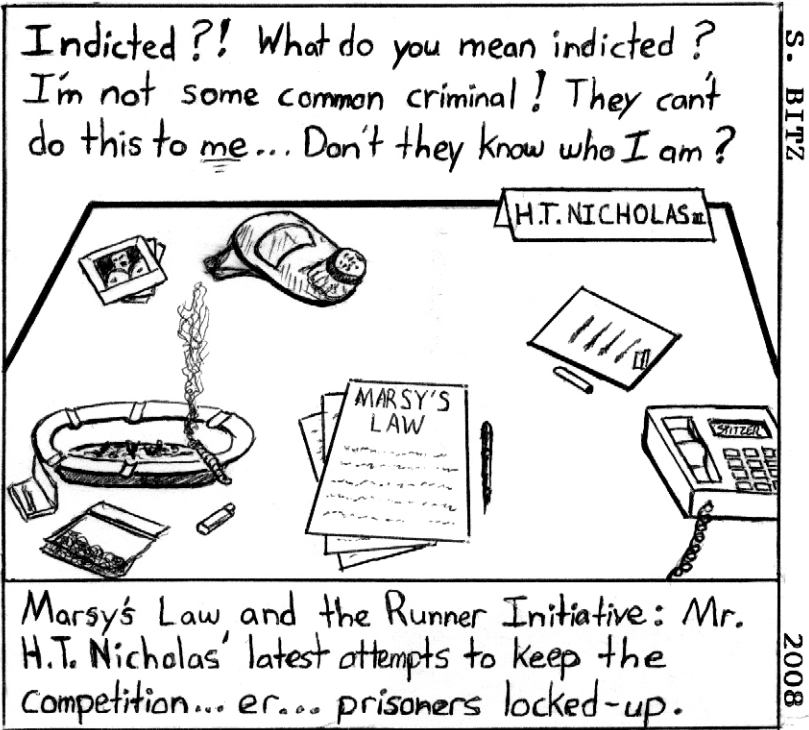
Are the friends and proponents of Republican Henry T. Nicholas III, like Todd Spitzer, who ride around on their holier-than-thou steeds proclaiming to save California, possibly indulging in salacious activities sullyng their party's image also? After all, who would believe that a seemingly intelligent billionaire would be involved with such iniquitous pursuits? How many of Nicholas' close friends and associates knew or were involved with these serious crimes? Do these Repub's think everyone is stupid? Give me a break!

We don't know if politicians and close friends of Nocholas like Spitzer have ever been involved with prostitutes, drug peddling, bribery or death threats, but a Federal Grand Jury sure found enough evidence to indict his good friend and close associate Nicholas on some very serious charges.

Common sense and logic screams out when trying to distinguish one criminal from another in cases like this. In the Marijuana smoke-filled flight (according to the Sacramento Bee) in Nicholas' private jet from Orange County (home to the constituency of Todd Spitzer) to Las Vegas, "the pilot flying the jet had to put on an oxygen mask" in order to fly the damn thing. Wouldn't it be interesting to know who else was in that jet during Nicholas' high flying drug party? Why do you think

the other people on that drug filled jet have not been made public? Are they afraid other prominent businessmen or political figures names might be revealed? Lots of questions need answering.

The Marsy's Law campaign will now be managed by Assemblyman Todd Spitzer who absolutely went silent when asked to comment about his close friend Nicholas' alleged multi-criminal activities. Is Spitzer's silence a sign of guilt? "No comment" at all! How will honest, hard-working California voters feel if it's proven that the millions financing the over-exaggerated Marsy's Law was the result of a death threat or drug deal by Nicholas? Death threats and bribery were part of the indictment. How many lives did Nicholas ruin while he allegedly indulged in prostitution used and peddled drugs and threatened to kill people? Accord-



ing to prosecutors, Nicholas tried to buy the silence of one Broadcom employee, paying \$1 million to conceal his "unlawful narcotics activities." He also allegedly "used threats of physical violence and death" to hide his drug activities say prosecutors.

Who else knew about all of these criminal activities? His friends, associates, family members? How many others got high with him or dabbled in a little paid for

**FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO HELP STOP THE
"MARSY'S LAW" INSANITY,
PLEASE CONTACT THE T.I.P.S. ORGANIZATION AT:**

**Taxpayers for Improving Public Safety
P.O. Box 255456
Sacramento, CA. 95865-5456
www.ForPublicSafety.com**

piece of tail from an over-paid prostitute? Big shots never do these things alone. Did Henry T. Nicholas III spend so much time and money financing crime initiatives to hide his own criminal activities? After all, who would even think that a big-shot Republican would be so stupid? Well, that is why intelligent Grand Juries are convened, they know a whole lot more about billionaire Nicholas than we do.

It's one thing to be a crime victim or a family member of a victim, but when someone is falsely claiming to be a victim's advocate who has committed serious crimes

as alleged by prosecutors against Nicholas, the real victims become victimized all over again.

Nicholas also donated \$1 million to the campaign sponsored by Senator George Runner and Assemblywoman Sharon Runner, two Lancaster Republicans. The Runners said they would not refund Nicholas' money. HHMmmmm! Does hypocrisy run in the party's family? Senator Runner had the balls to actually accuse the measure's opponents of playing politics (referring to Nicholas being indicted) and according to the Sacramento Bee, "This is Just their [Democrats] newest way to undermine an initiative that they never supported," Runner spewed. Senator Runner seems to be forgetting that it was a Federal Grand Jury who indicted Nicholas, not members of an opposing party. Runner probably blurred that partisan rhetoric with a straight face. Unbelievable!

Slipping Ecstasy into the drinks of business associates, maintaining a drug warehouse. and concealing his illegal conduct with bribes and death threats are included in the indictment against Nicholas.

While free on a \$3.3 million dollar bail, there is no doubt that Nicholas is probably thinking like the criminal he is, trying to figure out what sort of spin his billions can put on the strong evidence against him. After all, he is facing up to 20 years for the drug charges and up to 340 years for the stock backdating counts.

So, when you see Assemblyman "No Comment," I mean, Assemblyman Todd Spitzer flying around the state (hopefully with an oxygen-maskless pilot) in an attempt to sell the insanity of Marsy's Law, ask the questions that need asking about his good friend Henry T. Nicholas and his own dealings with him.

Prisoners in every penitentiary in California hold fund raisers for victim's groups. They raise hundreds of thousands of dollars state wide through food sales and donate the proceeds to local child and victim development centers and other youth orientated groups throughout the state. The only difference between convicted criminals raising funds for victims and hypocrites like Nicholas is, prisoners do not lie about who they are in the process.

Opponents of the so-called Victim's Protection Act (Marsy's Law) never believed that the hypocrite financier's purchased ballot proposition was well intended. Many believe that Henry Nicholas' purpose was driven and fueled by pure hate and vengeance to appease the pro-active victim's groups, and to possibly mask his own involvement with criminal activities.

It's sad that someone with the financial means as Nicholas chooses to expend large sums of money to finance over-the-top, vindictive measures like Marsy's Law, rather than invest in meaningful crime reduction by creating opportunities which would deter criminal activity.

###

Boston Woodard is a prisoner/journalist who wrote for The San Quentin News, The Soledad Star and edited The Communicator. Boston is not serving a life sentence.

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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

All content paid for by WILPF

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

Four members of the Fresno WILPF branch recently attended the 30th Triennial WILPF Congress June 25-29. Here are reports of the Congress by two of the participants.

Joan Poss, Jean Hays, Jan Slagter and I attended the 30th WILPF National Congress in Indianola, just outside of Des Moines, Iowa at lovely Simpson College, founded by the Methodists in 1860. There was no damage in that area; the whole world was green, and the air was fresh and clean. Although Des Moines is the state capital, it is half the size of Fresno, and the WILPF membership of about 150 devoted themselves to taking care of all our needs in a most congenial and impressive fashion. On Saturday morning we helped out at the table on water issues they had set up at their fabulous farmer's market in downtown Des Moines. It seemed that the whole city was there, with kids in stroll-

WILPF Coming Events:

On Saturday, August 16, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., WILPF Fresno will have its annual Retreat and planning for the coming year. The event will, again, be held at the home of WILPFer Sandra Iyall. Call 222-6429 for directions. There will be a potluck lunch at noon.

revisit that issue in Fresno using the new packet. The movie and discussion on White Privilege was also well attended and highly praised.

The plenary on organizational issues was very important. The "Strategic Planning" was discussed and there was an acceptance of responsibility by the outgoing

national board members for some serious mistakes that had been made, an obvious determination on the part of new board members to ensure greater transparency and communication with the grass roots members. Many people attended specifically for the purpose of dealing with the consequences of some of the precipitous actions of the outgoing board, and the newly elected board members are committed to



From left, Joan Poss, Jan Slagter, Jean Hays, and Ellie Bluestein at the WILPF Congress in Des Moines.

ers, dogs, people of all ages. Many stopped by to pick up information about conservation, pollution, the commodification of water by international corporations. Interest was high, and about 30 Raging Grannies sounded off with many great songs which had been brought by Granny groups from around the country-Florida, San Jose, Madison, Boston, etc. After we exhausted the water issue songs we went on to the anti-war songs, and kept singing them all over again until our voices gave out. There was great interest and support from passers by. We have brought back copies of the songs and plan to do a Fresno action at a local farmers' market.

That, of course, is one of the highlights of the national gathering, finding out what other branches are doing,

dealing with their concerns. I spent much time working out my own suggestions for what needs to be done and will be happy to forward them to anyone who wishes to see them. They are in the hands of the new board, and I feel confident they will be given strong attention. The issue of the sale of our national office was also discussed. The article in our last Peace and Freedom concerning that issue is excel-



Raging Grannies gather from across the US to combine their voices in song on the last night of the Congress.



Raging Grannies gathering behind the "Save the Water" information table at the giant Des Moines downtown farmers market.

and bringing it back. The water issue is definitely high on the agenda, as was the Middle East. Hanan Awwad, president of the Palestinian section gave most informative insights about what is happening there both in formal workshops and informal gatherings. Odile Hugonot-Haber from Michigan is also totally involved in the Middle East work, and we picked up materials and ideas from her offerings. We have the Middle East Study packet that WILPF has prepared, and people from various sections recommended it very highly. The second packet on Corporations is also being used very successfully by branches, and maybe it's time for us to

green Indianola, Iowa. Besides an address by Amy Goodman, I'd like to point to three highlights of the conference. First is the presence, the poetry, and the political analysis and testimony of Hanan Awwad, who is founder and chair of the Palestinian WILPF branch. Dr. Awwad made a stirring call to action to US members to work for peace in Palestine/Israel, as living conditions especially in Gaza, but also in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are deteriorating for Palestinians, who can no longer even travel between Palestinian areas.

Second was a plenary session on the topic of White

Privilege, similar to workshops Vickie Fouts has been conducting in Fresno, which called on members to examine our own experiences enacting white privilege, in having to live in a society constructed on white privilege, and in working to dismantle it.

Third was a presentation by the Cambridge, MA branch on their ongoing struggle against environmental racism in the form of highly dangerous, contaminating, government-funded bio-labs planned to be built in low-

income neighborhoods, in this case, the Roxbury section of Boston.

Although WILPF is suffering from some of the same problems that afflict other progressive organizations, notably lack of monies to run the national office, more than 150 members attended the 5 day meeting and worked toward addressing these difficulties, along with informing each other about the kinds of programming currently engaging WILPF branches.

- Submitted by Jan Slagter

* * * * *

Kudos to WILPFer Ingrid Carmean, who was one of the recipients of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence's Way of Peace awards for 2008. At the Peace Dessert Reception on June 29 fellow WILPFer Judy Stege introduced Ingrid to the audience, pointing out that she is a past Treasurer of the Fresno branch, and the faithful coordinator of the WILPF Peace Craft Faire for many seasons. We are very proud of you, Ingrid!

Watch this space in the next two months for details of a nationwide "Save the Water" campaign: Blue October. This will be done in coalition with peace and social justice groups throughout the US. Remember: It's Our Water! Have you noticed that public drinking fountains are disappearing in cities? Try counting them in Fresno. Are they in working order? More on this and other water topics next month.

Fresno Center for Nonviolence



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

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

With this issue, we are initiating a practice we will continue from time to time of introducing organizations that have made use of our non-profit status to obtain grants. Many of these organizations, like this month's subject, Healing Hope, become independent non-profits; in some cases, most notably The Living Room, they become much larger than we are. In any case, we look at the opportunity to help "incubate" new organizations whose goals are compatible with our ends as one of the important services we offer the community.



Healing Hope, Inc. is a newly-incorporated 501(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2006 to primarily serve the Southeast Asian families and youth of Fresno County. Healing Hope's mission is to bring healing and hope to families. Its objectives are to help improve family relations with parents and their children, improve bonds between spouses, increase cultural awareness and family values. Healing Hope has a unique culturally sensitive mental health aspect because it is rooted in Southeast Asian philosophy and ethics. Healing Hope's primary aim is to serve

Hmong families who are at risk with youth delinquency and family breakdown. Its target populations are youth from 11 to 24 and adults from 35 to 50. The goal of Healing Hope is to reduce divorce rates, marital/family conflicts, and youth delinquency or truancy.

Healing Hope's emphasis is:

- Counseling (premarital /family/post-divorce/bereavement);
- Referrals to other service agencies and long-term follow-up counseling;
- Clan /spiritual leader incorporation into the counseling sessions when appropriate;
- Classes: (family dynamics, support groups, anger management, self identity/esteem, and cultural awareness);
- Providing cultural competency education to the public/health providers about Southeast Asian cultures and traditional practices.

Healing Hope is expected to open its doors to the public shortly. Its staff and colleagues (also volunteers) are willing to volunteer their time and service to families and youth while the organization is still seeking full funding sources. Healing Hope was founded by Mor X. Chang and co-founded by her three siblings. Ms. Chang began this organization as a result of the personal challenges in her life. She is of Hmong Descent born in Laos during the Secret War. Ms. Chang came to the United States as a teenager still remembering all the horror and hardship from the secret war. From then she married at a very young age and had five children, all of whom are in college today. Being a Hmong-Asian American woman and former refugee, she has faced many challenges: post traumatic stress from the war, marital conflicts, cultural/language barriers, mental and physical health problems, and other issues. It was through those unmet challenges that she developed the passion and dream (a moment of obligation) to create Healing Hope, Inc. Those challenges motivated her to strive every single day to succeed in carrying out this project. Healing Hope is an endeavor that arose from Ms. Chang's heart in building stronger Hmong families in America. In the three decades plus since the war in Vietnam, immigrants from Southeast Asia have resettled in communities across the United States. Since this type of transition presents its own problems, many youth and their families have struggled for identity and stability. Second-generation American Southeast Asian children and families are often challenged between the old ways of their parents and ancestors and the new ways of the American culture. Due to cultural clashes, family and marital conflicts and youth delinquency issues are among the most pressing issues in the Hmong community. The Hmong have a very strong reliance on cultural beliefs, clan hierarchy and traditional healing practices. Its community handles family issues through a process where one must address parents first, then elders, and finally clan or spiritual leaders to resolve needs. Healing Hope, Inc. proposes to keep these traditional processes intact while continuing to address the Americanization challenges impacting the Southeast Asian community. Ms. Chang hopes that Healing Hope would be a center for Hmong families and youth to share their personal struggles when it comes to family issues. Mor X. Chang intends Healing Hope to become a place where families and youth find strength, hope and healing in family nurturing. Ms. Chang states that "Life can be at ease if we make our hearts home for one another." Mor X.Chang's goal is to make Healing Hope becomes a home for hurting, struggling and broken-hearted families and youth. Lastly, Healing Hope, Inc. wishes to thank those who are making a difference in the development of this organization: God, family, colleagues, friends, volunteers, professors, doctors, supporters, sponsors and also its (previous and current) board members.



Stir it Up Aug. 13th, 3pm **KFCF 88.1 FM** – Richard Stone will discuss Hmong and Laotian issues in the community with Mor Chang.

ANNUAL BOOK SALE

October 7th – 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.
SW Corner of Van Ness & Olive



Bring Donations to the
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Second Wednesday Video

AUGUST 13TH

SECRET WARS An Exit Strategy in Action

Secretly funded by the United States, Hmong soldiers, were our most feared fighting force in Vietnam. Now, thousands still fight, while many more have fled to the United States where no one even knows who they are... (114 min)

Join us! Free Event. 7:00pm
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For more info:
Center for Nonviolence: (559)237-3223
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Word on the Street

By Francine Ramos

For the last few months the price of gas has remained steady at well above four dollars a gallon. Yet, there is still a way for us locals to save a little money and help reduce greenhouse gases. And that would be public transportation. It's cheap only one dollar a trip. You can get transfer slips that allow you to switch buses and continue your travel. The transfer slips are free and good for up to one hour. You can also buy a month pass for about thirty-five dollars.

Last week, I did something I hadn't done since I was seven- years old; I used the public transportation system. I took the bus from near my home at Olive and Palm, to Fresno State at Cedar and Shaw. The first ride was difficult, I didn't understand the system. But people sitting at the bus stops were very kind and explained the routes to me as best they could.

The Manchester Station was the best. On Friday morning it was teeming with people of different ages some going to work, some shopping and some just trying to get from one place to another. They were all quiet and focused, not at all as I had first expected. I thought the atmosphere would be hectic, I wouldn't feel safe and that I wouldn't be able to read on my way to school. However, I read half of William T. Vollman's book, Poor People, without any distraction at all. Several people read books, or had musical devices in their ear. The one thing I did find annoying didn't come from the bus system it came from people and cell phones. Some bus travelers talked so loud while on their cell phone it was a painful experience to hear.

My only complaint, well not a complaint but just a recommendation for improvement would be for FAX to offer more shelter at certain bus stops. When I was coming home on Friday, the sun and its raging heat near the Fresno State bus stop on Blackstone was grueling. I tried to seek shelter near a tree while waiting but found little. Luckily, the buses are pretty prompt there and come around every 15 minutes. Others I spoke to about what they thought needed improvement placed better shelter at the top of their list. Also, if FAX city bus drivers read this, always, always stop for people in wheelchairs. I met Robert Earl Jacobs while out there and he was such a kind man the thought of

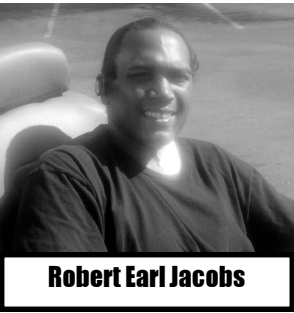
him being left out there in the sun is just wrong. He should be picked up just as anyone else waiting to get on the bus.

Lastly, I will definitely use FAX again, I spared my car the unneeded miles and saved a few bucks on gas and met some pretty cool Fresnans. So my recommendation is use public transportation- FAX is the most affordable alternative when it comes to saving money on gas, and catch up on some reading, all while curbing greenhouse gases. You can't beat that. So on to the question....

What is working on the FAX system and where, if any, is there a need for improvement?

"We need transportation. Everybody needs it, especially for people that don't have access to vehicles or friends to take them somewhere. Everybody needs the opportunity to travel throughout Fresno. Fresno is so big and spread out. Transportation is essential to getting anything done here. The way the price in gas is going, I would prefer to take the bus. But I would like to see some changes on the bus system. For one, it is too damn hot, to sit in a bus stop that is not covered. Who wants to sit out there in 100 degree plus weather? I mean it's great that on the bus there is air conditioning. Also, I don't know enough about the bus system schedules I don't know exactly how the connections work. They could possibly make those a little easier to read. It doesn't always seem convenient."

Name: Erin Alvarez
Fresno Location: Fresno State



"Well the thing I like about the Fresno Transportation bus system is the convenient times. The buses are sufficient for people in wheelchairs. The things I don't like are that sometimes the drivers won't stop for people in wheelchairs, especially if there are two of you out

there. They know it will take a little more time to get you on, not all of the drivers do this but some do. They just leave you hangin' out there especially if there are two of you. Do I complain about that? No, I don't complain. I haven't because its time consuming and it is really hot. I just need to get to where I'm going."

Name: Robert Earl Jacobs
Fresno Location: Shields and Fresno

"I think that the timing is real convenient, most buses are every 15 to 30 minutes but some are every hour. This is my only form of transportation because I can't afford a car right now. The only thing I would say needs improvement is the bus stops that take up to an hour and more shelter is needed."

Name: Tony Robinett
Fresno Location: Manchester Bus Station



"Buses are very convenient. You only have to take at the most two buses to get anywhere in Fresno. The Belmont and the Cedar buses have too long of a wait time. If you miss a bus there you can be stuck almost an hour. Sometimes the teenagers that get on the bus near Cedar, they can be rude. They won't even get up and offer their seat to an elderly person. They either need to get more buses in that area because you have a lot of high school students and you also have a lot of elderly people trying to get to UMC or Community Hospital and they have nowhere to sit or they need to teach teenagers manners. Other than that Fresno buses can be very comfortable and air conditioned.

-Name: Pricella Baca
Location: Cedar and Kings Canyon

Attention - All Homeless People in Fresno

By Mike Rhodes

If you have been homeless in Fresno, at any time since October 17, 2003, you may have been affected by the City of Fresno and Caltrans policy of taking and immediately destroying your property. A class action lawsuit, brought about on behalf of homeless people, has resulted in a settlement that could compensate you for your losses. If you filed a Claim Form to be a part of the lawsuit, then you should call Liza Apper, Settlement Administrator, at 559-229-6410 and talk to her about the procedure that has been established to give you your money.

If you were affected by the City of Fresno and Caltrans policy but have not yet filled out a Claim Form, you need to immediately contact the settlement administrator. Because some people who are eligible to be a part of the settlement did not file a Claim Form (for a variety of reasons), the deadline has been extended. You have until August 22, 2008 to file a new claim. The reason this opportunity is being made available is because some homeless people were out of town, incarcerated, confused about the instructions, or in a treatment facility and unable to complete the paperwork by the original deadline. If this applies to you, you have until Friday, August 22 to turn a Claim Form into the system administrator. There will be no more extensions.

If you mailed your Claim Form from the Poverello House, you should call the Settlement Administrator at 559-229-6410 and confirm your form was received. The \$2.3 million settlement is the largest settlement of its kind in the United States and was made possible through the tireless work of the attorneys and the brave homeless people who volunteered to be named plaintiffs in the case. Pam Kincaid, the lead plaintiff in the case, died under suspicious circumstances (beat up on the street and then ended up falling from the 4th floor of a long term care facility - see the story on page 3) while this case was in Federal Court. Appreciation and thanks should be given to all of the named plaintiffs in this case, without whom this victory would not have been possible. In addition to Pam Kincaid, the named plaintiffs are Doug Deatherage, Charlene Clay, Cynthia Green, Joann Garcia, Randy Johnson, Sandra Thomas, Alphonso Williams, and Jeannine Nelson. Give them a smile and a thank you the next time you see them.

Without the resources of three major law firms representing the homeless in this case, homeless people's human and civil rights would not have been successfully defended. Bulldozers and garbage trucks would still be rolling through Fresno homeless encampments today. Special thanks go out to Paul Alexander, Oren Sellstrom, Elisa Della-Piana, Michael T. Risher, Melyssa Minamoto, Eric Trostad, Eric Loyd, and the support staffs at the American Civil Liberties Union - Northern California, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights (LCCR), and the HellerEhrman law firm.

Judge Oliver Wanger, during the court proceedings finalizing the settlement, read into the record that the "court recognizes that this is exemplary pro-bono work." Fresno mayor Alan Autry's childish tirade against the settlement and legal fees was summed up by Paul Alexander, lead attorney for the plaintiffs, as "sour grapes from a poor loser." Perhaps what Autry was most concerned about was that all of the legal fees are being given to the ACLU and LCCR who

will use those funds to continue defending homeless people's rights in Fresno and throughout the country.

As a result of the settlement of this case, the group of homeless people who lost their property in City of Fresno and Caltrans raids will receive a total of \$485,000 in cash. They will also be given \$1,000,000 in vouchers for housing, utilities, and other living expenses.



Did you or anyone you know lose property in an incident like this?



Young Activists Meet

By Andrusha Garcia

For young adults interested in political change and meeting like minded people, there is a new youth spin-off of Peace Fresno geared towards the adults of tomorrow keen on activism today. Meeting every Thursday in August at 7 PM at the Center for Nonviolence across from Fresno City College, 1584 N. Van Ness (at McKinley), the group is dedicated to expanding awareness, cultivating the community and networking within their peer group. It's hard growing up progressive in Fresno—that's why we've formed this group. To join socially conscious young people into a solid bloc. We are not a cultural minority: we represent valid and practical change and together we stand to realize it! Through our new group we mean to organize beyond the campuses, beyond the churches, and into a citywide collective. Anyone who is interested in the group is invited to join us—we are high school students, college students and college graduates, we embody a montage of diverse skills and talents, and we're always open for more. For more information contact Raquel Busani, rbusani@msn.com, cell (213) 503-9047 or Carolyn Hudson, 338-0162, PeaceEdison@gmail.com.

Green Power Could Save you Money

By Mike Rhodes

In June of this year the Community Alliance newspaper had an ad from Energyrecyclers who claimed that they could save customers up to 25% off of their electric bill. Their product is an electrical panel that they say makes more efficient use of electricity, reduces the demand from PG&E (or whatever power company you get power from), and saves you money.

Energyrecyclers "Green Box" costs \$599 (installed), but they point out that if your monthly electric bill is high enough, it would not take too long to recover your cost. If you have an average size house in Fresno, use an air conditioner, and have a few appliances (like a refrigerator, clothes washer, etc), this product will probably save you money.

People that have already bought the Green Box report savings from 8 - 30%. On Energyrecyclers website < <http://www.recyclemyenergy.com> > they describe how it works: "As the demand for power runs through your home, there is non-productive current (heat) that strains your home appliances and wiring. This heat is wasted energy that you are paying for. The KEC optimizes the power that comes into your home, allowing your appliances and equipment motors to operate more efficiently. This reduces heat (wasted electricity), which in turn lowers your electric bill, reduces the chance of fires, and increases the life of your appliances and motorized equipment. By reducing the Amp draw we reduce the Watts and Watts = Kwh which is what you pay the electric company for."

On the Internet you can find some animated discussions about how the KVAR Green Box works and if it is worth installing in your home. You can read one such thread here: < <http://ths.gardenweb.com/forums/load/wiring/msg0821554329789.html> >. The discussion starts out with the writers being very skeptical, but nobody really disputes that users realize a significant savings on their electrical bill. You can also see the manufacturers website here: < <http://www.kvarenergysavings.com/> >.

Saving energy, by cutting back on electrical usage, is an important way in which each of us can reduce our carbon footprint. Installing solar energy panels is another way to decrease your dependence on PG&E, save money, and make the world a little greener. Don Loweberg, of Off Line Independent Energy Systems has been designing and installing solar energy systems for 23 years. You can see Don's website at www.psnw.com/~ofln or call him at 877-7080.

John Richau of Certified Energy Consulting www.certified-ec.com offers several levels of energy audits for residential customers to help them determine where their energy dollars are going. Their services include duct testing, infiltration testing, and infrared imaging. They empower home owners by helping them develop an action plan for energy efficiency without bias. You can call John at 226-1840.


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Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley

Meets on third Sundays at Noon for pot luck
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Poetry Corner

By Richard Stone

Bob Billings was an English Professor (and for ten years Department Head) at CSUF. He was a vocal and generous supporter of many of our local progressive institutions until his death last November, along with his wife Bette Peterson. Bette (herself the proprietor of Poppy Lane Publishing Company) recently uncovered some poems among his papers that are reflective of his attitude toward war, shaped no doubt by his five years of service in World War II, including the horrific Battle of the Bulge. With Bette's permission, we are printing one of these, with diction and rhythm that echo, to my ear, the World War I poetry of Wilfred Owen and Rupert Brooke. We will let this stand as a small tribute to Bob's life and work.

HOW STILL THEY LIE
SO LONG, AND YET STILL YOUNG STILL RESTING
AND STILL YOUNG
NO LUST TO DIE
HAD EVER CROSSED THEIR TONGUE
NO BUGLE CALLS
THAT NOW RESOUND FROM HALLOWED WALLS
ARE MUCH TO GIVE
THEM FOR THEIR LUST TO LIVE

NO FLAGS, NO DRUMS

WILL PAY THE DEBT WE OWE
NO PLEDGE BECOMES
MORE THAN A VERBAL SHOW.
WHERE IS THE DEED
TO SHOW THEIR GIFT HAS SOWED GOOD SEED—
LIVES LIVED IN HASTE
HAVE NOT ALL TURNED TO WASTE.

TO SAY LOST JOYS THEY'D
NEVER TASTE
HAVE SOWED GOOD SEED—
THEIR LIVES WERE NOT ALL WASTE.

NO HEROES ALL—
JUST ANSWERING
DUTY'S CALL
THEY WERE MEN
OF A DARKER TIME.

THE PRIMAL HATES
THEY LIVED BY WERE
HARDLY STATES
OF A TRENDSO SUBLIME.

THEY LIE SO STILL
THEIR EYES THOUGH CLOSE ACCUSE
THE LIVING WILL
BUT WHOSE?

August, 2006

PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, July 31 • 7 PM

Come to a meeting of students and young adults interested in activism for peace, social justice, and the environment. A group of like minded young people is exploring the formation citywide organization for their generation. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno (Van Ness and McKinley by Fresno City College). Contact: Carolyn Hudson, 338-0162, peaceedison@gmail.com or Raquel Busani, cell (213) 503-9047, rbusani@msn.com

Friday, August 1 • 4:30 - 6:30 PM

Peace Fresno will be at Peace Corner - Shaw and Blackstone, to participate in the national Emergency Call to Action: STOP WAR ON IRAN which will include a march in New York City on August 2. Peace Fresno will insist that we not start, or allow Israel to start, another unjust war. Peace Fresno will supply signs or bring your own sign insisting that we not attack Iran. For more information, see: www.peacefresno.org

Friday, August 1 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents the documentary: Crude Impact. A powerful and timely exploration of the interconnection between human domination of the planet and the discovery and use of oil. It exposes our deep-rooted dependency on the availability of fossil fuel energy and examines the dire implications of the pending threat of global peak oil. 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 8 • 5:30 and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents "Roman de Gare" at the Tower Theatre, directed by Claude Lelouch. The film tells the story of three lives about to cross: a woman abandoned, a stranger awaiting his chance, and an author who imagines the thriller of the year. In French, with English subtitles. Tickets cost \$10 general and \$8 for students and seniors. Tickets can be purchased by check or cash at the Tower Theatre box office, 815 E. Olive Ave.; at JA Photography, 2003 N. Van Ness; and also via PayPal at www.FresnoFilmworks.org. For details, visit www.FresnoFilmworks.org or call (559) 221-0755.

Friday, August 8 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Rev. Andrea Zaki Stephanous, Vice President of the Protestant Churches of Egypt. Topic: Civil Society in the Arab World. 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 9

A Vigil in commemoration of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki bombings will take place in Livermore. Contact the Fresno Center for Nonviolence if you are interested in going and would like to participate in a car pool. For more information about the vigil, see: <http://www.trivalleycares.org/>. For more information about the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, see: <http://www.centerfornonviolence.org/>

Saturday, August 9 • 3:30 - 5 PM

Ashley Swearengin, candidate for Mayor of Fresno will be the speaker at the Central Valley Progressive PAC meeting. Members and the public are welcome to hear and ask questions of Ashley as she discusses major issues facing the City of Fresno. The meeting is at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence (1584 N. Van Ness Ave. (at McKinley)), Fresno. For more information, visit www.cvppac.org or call 559-435-7360.

Sunday, August 10 • 5 - 10 PM

Jamaica My Weekend Caribbean Music at St. Therese Lawn (Floradora & Maroa Avenues) in Fresno. Description: Reggae and Caribbean music, arts and crafts booths, Jamaican food, children's activities, and the famous Beverage Oasis.

Monday, August 11 • Registration & Reception 8:30 AM, Camp Begins 9 AM, Camp Closes 5 PM

Gandhi Peace Camp (Day Camp for Youth 10-18 years old) Sponsored by Hindu Temple of Fresno and Central California Cultural Society of India. Based on Gandhian philosophy and principles, the youth will learn about:

1. Service and Self Reliance
2. Leadership and Team Work
3. Meditation and Stress Reduction
4. Peace and Religious Harmony
5. Values and Virtues
6. Peaceful Methods of Conflict Resolution
7. Healing the Planet

For additional information, please contact: Yashu Toprani: 930-4341, Srikanth Rao: 281-7028 or Dr. Kapoor: 435-2212

Wednesday, August 13 • 7 PM

Monthly Every Second Wednesday Video Presentation: "Secret Wars" a documentary about the Hmong experience. About 2000 BC the Hmong were a peaceful people living in China. Four thousand years later they are a people ravaged by war and dispersed around the globe. "Secret Wars" explores a war of Imperialism, Communism, clandestine action, and one of the most feared fighting forces in history. The Hmong were recruited by the CIA during the Red build-up, and the entire race became vital to America's war efforts during the Vietnam conflict. Mor Chang will lead a discussion following the film. This event will be held at the Woodward Park Library, 944 East Perrin Avenue, Fresno 93720. Phone 559-433-3135. FREE. For info: 237-3223. (Note: NO NOON-TIME SHOWING during summer, will resume in September)

Thursday, August 14 • 6 PM

The National Women's Political Caucus of Fresno County, a multipartisan organization, will be hosting their annual Women's Equality Day dinner and honoring artists and writers: Dixie Salazar, Patti Handley, Jean Ray Laury, Fran Levine, and David Masumoto. Location: Pardini's 2257 W. Shaw Ave. Silent Auction, no-host bar at 6 p.m., Dinner at 7 p.m.

Tickets \$75. For information call 439-3176 or email nwpc.events@sti.net.

Friday, August 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the September 2008 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to AllianceEditor@Comcast.net

Friday, August 15 • 8 PM

Musicians Randy Sharp and Jack Wesley Routh are coming back to the valley with two performances of masterful and beautiful singing and songwriting. That's valley native Randy Sharp, with more charted songs than you can count, and Johnny Cash sidekick Jack Wesley Routh. Together they make great music rooted in people and places familiar to us all. They'll be at the Full Circle Brewpub, 620 F Street in historic chinatown. For details phone 264-6323. On Saturday August 16th at 8 pm, they'll play in the Three Rivers Art Center located at the intersection of Highway 198 and North Fork Road in Three Rivers. For more info, call 802-8811 for more information.

Saturday, August 16 • 9:30 AM - 3 PM

Regional INFO & ORGANIZING Meeting - Strategy Sessions for Grassroots Leaders in the Central Valley. The "VALLEY" Impact of Proposition 6:

- \$1 billion+ in 2009 and \$500 million every year after for prisons, jails, and law enforcement. This money will come from cuts to education, services for elders and healthcare!
- Increased incarceration rates of community members into a failing system. Automatically prosecutes youth as young as 14 as adults for many charges!
- Removes all community representation on juvenile justice coordinating councils. Locking community members out of juvenile system reform efforts.

For more information contact the California Prison Moratorium Project, 1055 N. Van Ness, Suite C, Fresno, CA 93728. Contact D Reyes: (559) 367-6020, pmpvalle@sbcglobal.com. Also see: www.defeatrunner.org

Saturday August 16 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co Presents Jeff Bowman & The Sunset Steel Drum Band \$5 Cover 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com

Wednesday, August 20 • 6 PM

David C.Codell to speak in Fresno. Noted LGBT attorney David Codell will address the community as the guest speaker at the meeting of the San Joaquin Democratic Club. The public is invited to the Denny's Restaurant at 1110 East Shaw Ave. in Fresno to hear his expert legal opinion on the ramifications of same sex marriage in California. For more information contact the Club President James Williams at (559) 312-3925.

August 22 thru August 24

The United Farm Workers' 18th Constitutional Convention. Convention delegates elect UFW leaders, debate resolutions and make decisions that will shape the course of the UFW for the next four years. The theme is "Organización es la Solución." They are anticipating this will be one of the most exciting conventions in our history. The UFW will be celebrating victories such as: D'Arrigo, one of the largest vegetable growers in the country who employs 1,800 workers in the Salinas Valley; and our first contract in Oregon with Three Mile Canyon Farms, America's largest dairy employing more than 350 year-round dairy workers; a contract with Charles Krug Mondavi and an end to the boycott of their wines; and much more. For more information, see: www.ufw.org

Friday, August 29 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents Troubadors of Turmoil with Joe Halpen. Protest - (A demonstration of objection), Song - (A lyric poem or ballad). This will be an audio program presenting a collection of protest songs both old and new, We will listen to various artists giving voice to their anger, frustration and hope. Many topics will be covered which go beyond the anti-war messages of yesterday. The lyrics will be visually showcased. 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 30 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co Presents Tanjora Tribal Dancers \$5 Cover, 620 F St. Downtown Fresno. 559-264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com



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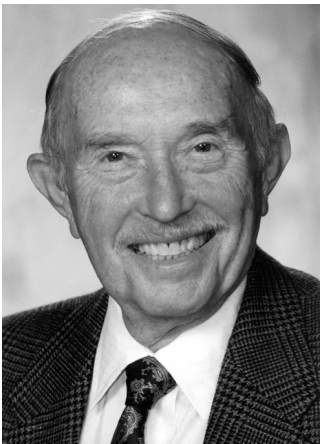
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OPINION & ANALYSIS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

From the Greenhouse

by Franz Weinschenk

You've probably been too busy making a living, taking care of the kids—or both—to notice some creepy things happening to good old mother earth. But they are. Never mind the big things—like the fact that the north pole seems to be melting, the world's average temp is up, the oceans are rising, and the polar bears made the endangered species list. There are some small things right in our own neighborhood to wonder about: How come we're now finding airmen lost up in the Sierra during WW II, buried up there in snow and ice for more than 60 years? And what about Marc Jacobson, the Stanford scientist, who predicts our greenhouse gas emissions will worsen people's health in cities like L.A., Bakersfield, Visalia, Fresno, Merced, and Sacramento?



The villain, of course, remains our inclination to use more and more fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas to generate energy. Take oil for example: Right now, America consumes 21 million barrels a day—mainly to keep our transportation system rolling. 65% of that oil is imported; that's up from 35% thirty years ago. In 2005, we paid over 40 billion dollars to purchase foreign oil—even more in '06—and now with prices skyrocketing daily, the amount paid to foreign producers continues to be truly cataclysmic. The purchase of all that foreign oil is one of the reasons our balance of payments is so massively in the red—one of the reasons for our obscene national debt. In his book, *The Age of Turbulence*, former FED Chairman Alan Greenspan, a life-long Republican, maintains we invaded Iraq for its oil, and he's probably right. Does anybody really think we would have gone after Saddam had he been the dictator of a non-oil producing country? And because so much of our oil comes from unstable sources, we spend another huge amount protecting oil pipe lines, refineries and shipping lanes, many of them thousands of miles from our shores. Many economists have concluded that the world wide oil supply is at its peak and will be declining. It's just a fact that as sources of oil become more and more scarce, more countries will be competing and scuffling over the diminishing supply.

The question is should America just accept the ever-increasing scarcity and price explosion of fossil fuels, or can we do something about it. Can we accept the fact that, though the transition may take some time, there is an abundant life and a vibrant economy after big oil has burned itself out? Let's admit it, burning fossil fuels is one of the main reasons for global warming; it keeps us in the poorhouse; it will continue to get us into international scrapes because of our need to grab what we consider to be our share of a dwindling supply before somebody else gets it. With world oil production pretty much limited, from here on out, if one country manages to get more, another will have to settle for less. So now is the time to get out of the oil rat race all together—quit lobbying for more drilling and billing and seriously start transitioning into clean renewable energy which, while it can't be done overnight, is a goal that's quite achievable, and a goal that will result in fantastic rewards. Liddell Hart got it right when he said: "The prime condition of national survival is adaptation to changing conditions." And conditions have changed—big time!

In 40 minutes the sun delivers as much energy as human beings use in a year. The trick is to figure out ways to capture that energy and use it for our purposes. Wind power has enormous potential. Traditional hydro-electric and geo-thermal power will play their parts. Extracting methane from biomass—which we're now starting to do in Fresno County—will help. Scientists are even working on two different kinds of ocean power—underwater turbines activated by strong currents and wave power which harnesses the up and down motion of waves.

But for those of us who live right here in the South-West, our abundance of sunshine and marginal, desert-like land now become our treasures. Two different kinds of solar electric power plants (photovoltaic and parabolic) have already been tested, proved viable and are

currently on line (witness Nevada Solar One near Las Vegas and the massive solar fields being built in the Mojave Desert). Both systems are now producing electricity at night when there is no sunlight because we've learned to store excess energy generated in the daytime in the form of heat (stored in molten glass) and compressed air (sealed in caves) which are used to generate electricity at night.

And there is another benefit: changing over from fossil fuels will create an explosion of new jobs—renewable energy planners, energy efficiency experts, architects, engineers, builders and managers, green transportation engineers, factory workers and mechanics for hybrids and plug-ins, electricians, carpenters, pipe fitters, utility workers, heating and cooling professionals, solar panel installers—on and on—all jobs that are not easily out-sourced.

To sum up, transitioning to domestically produced, clean and renewable electric energy will dramatically slash our greenhouse gas emissions, substantially cut our foreign oil dependence, create hordes of new jobs, decrease global tensions, and reduce our massive trade deficit. It's absolutely something we CAN and NEED start to do RIGHT NOW because the sooner we get started, the sooner we'll get there.

What Do They Fear?

By Ruth Gadebusch

What is it that the police officers union so fears about an independent police auditor? It seems to me that if they are even half as good as they say they are they should be thrilled to have an outsider validate their operation. After all, an independent police auditor (IPA) would note the good, as well as the bad. Wouldn't the good far outweigh the bad? It would, if the operation is as healthy as it is presumed to be.



We don't have to ask what it is that the council members fear about an IPA. We know that it is the fear of the disappearance of the campaign contributions from the union! Still, two council members are to be commended for supporting the proposal for an independent police auditor.

Also supporting the long sought position are the mayor and the police chief which would appear to be a rather good endorsement. At this point neither of the two contenders in the mayoral election have voiced support. There seems to be a bit of dancing on the head of a pin when the issue is approached.

I appreciate that the police force has an internal affairs unit but for those of us on the outside that always sounds rather mysterious. Despite supposedly being specially selected for the position, they are, without doubt, part of the operation. They are insiders, no matter how well insulated from the day to day operation on which they are called to evaluate in disputed matters. To say that Internal Affairs is insufficient is not to denigrate them. Right or wrong, the perception to outsiders is that of the fox guarding the hen house.

Of necessity any law enforcement force must be close-knit. They must be able to depend on each other. Nevertheless there are times when the public will question their interaction with law enforcement. There are times when it is unjustified but there are times when it is entirely justified for the police are human too, making mistakes as do all humans.

The Fresno area is populated by large minority groups who have often times felt alienated from the majority community which has largely controlled law enforcement. There are cultural variations which make for the perfect misunderstanding on both the part of the civilians and law officers. An IPA is designed to be the middle person to mitigate such misunderstandings, or better yet, prevent them. Wouldn't that make us a better community?

Though that is not its original intent, I wonder if an IPA might have foreseen the recent concerns about moving

the community centers from parks to police. This move brings a whole new connotation to community centers and someone outside the operation most likely would have recognized that and, at the very least, forewarned the citizens so affected. Sometimes there is much more to be considered than a funding source which seems to have been a driving force in this transfer. Maybe, an IPA would have recognized that it might not be such a good idea.

I believe that an IPA is a preventive measure, far more than just someone to sooth ruffled feathers after the fact. Nor is it a "gotcha" operation. An IPA can, and should, be an ally of the police as well as of the citizens. If the police operation is as pure as they, and we, would like to think the IPA would be a booster for the force. Of course, too much so would invalidate the reason for the IPA. The key word is independent. Wherever an IPA has been installed the relationship between law enforcement and the community have generally been much improved. Citizens feel they have recourse without fear of retaliation. It prevents escalation of anger.

In San Jose which is so often held up as a model for Fresno there are built-ins for police protection. To name a couple: The IPA is precluded from auditing administrative investigations of officer-involved shootings (due to City Attorney ruling). The names of officers involved in complaints are not retained thereby failing to establish a pattern that would identify a rogue officer. To my mind these prohibitions weaken the usefulness of the IPA because these are two of the issues about which there is most likely to be disagreement. Certainly with these limitations the police should feel more than protected from "off the wall" complaints.

Obviously, the Fresno mayor and police chief have confidence in the operation of our police force. They do not fear outsider monitoring of the operation. Neither should the officers on the street. Secrets build fear. Openness builds confidence. Increasing transparency would enhance public trust in the Fresno Police. An IPA should be embraced, not feared. It is time - past time- for an Independent Police Auditor in Fresno.

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Ruth Gadebusch is a former naval officer, 13 years as a Fresno Unified School District Trustee, Vice-President of the Center for Civic Education, Community Activist.

Why We Can't Wait

By Rev. Floyd D. Harris



Citizens of city council district 3 the time has come for us to replace our present council representative before the complete demise of our district is undermined. Many of us held on to the belief, that Ms Sterling would do a better job of listening to those of us who voted and supported her. We held fast to the notion that she would lean to her parents' long time commitment to our community.

When this did not happen in her first term of office, many of us reluctantly supported Ms Sterling's second term, with hope, she would step up to the plate. Her record in the second term is as reprehensible as her first term. As we waited for her to fulfill the commitment she made to many of you personally, we watched decision after decision made in council meetings without representation or regard for her constituents. As a direct impact of Ms Sterling's incompetence and neglect she has allowed the community as a whole to herald itself into a colossal nightmare.

As we watch, more and more social services, formally provided by the city leave our community and representation of city personnel be replaced by people who have no knowledge of or commitment to our neighborhoods. We've watched Ms Sterling support the crack-down by law enforcement on our law abiding citizens under the guise of "gang suppression". During the running horse project we waited to hear details about the project while finding out that she had information months prior, before district voters were made aware by the media.

As Mrs. Sterling, our supposed representative of our community, deliberately sat and watched the homeless community be dismantled. Seizing and destroying the personal possessions of the homeless residents was a violation of the Constitution. The 4th and 14th amendment rights were violated. Recently it has been published, that there has been a class action settlement, issued by the Federal Courts, awarding the homeless community 2 million dollars. Once again, community suffers due to her non committal, non action, attitude towards her own community that she was elected to represent.

Only a handful of people from the community have started businesses in Southwest Fresno and none with the help of our elected representative. Our schools in the district are in disrepair and suffering, they have some of the lowest test scores in the state. Yet there has been no meetings called from her office to the school board, representing her area, to develop a plan to correct the situation. Ms. Sterling's demand that new businesses planning, to locate in her district, "hiring pri-

orities should first be emphasized in our community", has been largely ignored with no strategy to hold businesses accountable.

With HIV/AIDS spreading at an alarming rate within her district and the fact that African American women are the fastest growing group of people infected with this disease, we would expect the councilwoman to lead the charge, yet she remains silent. As we have observed during this year's budget hearings, not one request has been made by the councilwoman, of the more than four hundred million dollar annual budget allocated, for the fight against AIDS, for her community.

We cannot wait until the end of the current term to act. Our district is suffering. Our neighborhoods are being neglected. Our schools are failing and with the lack of quality schools, there will never be sustaining growth for our neighborhoods. Our citizens are dying from HIV and other illnesses and if we don't stop the train now it may not matter later. We need to make a change now

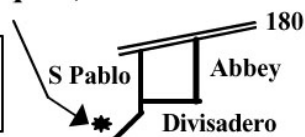
for the sake of our children and our future. The situation is bleak, and this is why I am taking the stand, that we can't wait. We Must Act Now!

Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr
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James Finley lived as a monk at the cloistered Trappist monastery of the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, where the world-renowned monk and author, **Thomas Merton**, was his spiritual director.

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About 6,000 members of United Healthcare Workers-West (several hundred of them for the Fresno/Clovis area) gathered last month to protest a plan by their parent union, SEIU-International, to split nursing home and homecare workers from the statewide healthcare workers' union. The workers rallied outside the two-day SEIU jurisdictional hearing in Manhattan Beach, Monday, July 14, 2008. (Photo by Stefano Paltera)

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West Fresno Community Centers Threatened

By Mike Rhodes

The Police Activity League's (PAL) attempt to take over the Frank Ball Community Center made residents angry and put a spotlight on the neglect and disrespect many in West Fresno say they feel from city officials. In June, city officials held a meeting to announce an ownership change at Frank Ball and the conversion of the basketball court into a boxing ring. Assistant City Manager Bruce Rudd and Parks and Recreation Director Randall Cooper seemed stunned by the large turnout demanding the city keep their hands off the community center. Rudd and Cooper promised to hold a follow up meeting in three weeks.

At the July 19 follow up meeting, both Rudd and Cooper apologized to the community for not communicating with them before making the decision to turn Frank Ball over to PAL and announced the plan had been

scrapped. Instead, Rudd said that renovations on the aging community center had begun. He pointed to new lights, a new sound system (they upgraded the eight track system), and announced the installment of a new computer center in the basement. While many attending the meeting saw those developments as a step in the right direction, numerous speakers wanted to know why it had taken so long to get the city's attention and why they received used computers, while community centers and libraries in north Fresno get new ones.

Brunette Harris demanded to know how the city could spend millions of dollars on new facilities, but they couldn't find the money to repair the Frank Ball Center. She said "you have a police department that wants to come in here and put a boxing ring up and then they tell you they don't have no funds. You all need to wake up and listen to what you are hearing here. There is no money in the budget? But PAL is going to come over here and put in a boxing ring? Somebody is lying and it is from here (she points at Rudd and Cooper) back up to City Hall."

City Council member Cynthia Sterling, who represents west Fresno at City Hall, did not attend either of the meetings at the Frank Ball Center and that had some residents angry. At a meeting at the Hinton Community Center later in July, she explained what had happened at Frank Ball. She said "It was not Randall Cooper, it was the police department and PAL that told Parks and Recreation that this (the take over) was going to happen." Sterling said that she had been kept out of the loop on the take over attempt and felt disrespected by those involved. Sterling said she told the City Manager to "straighten it out, with the west Fresno community, straighten out Frank H Ball,

and let the community know that this is not coming from us, this is coming from you and you have disrespected me, because if I had known this, I would have said to bring it to the community, held a meeting, and you would have had an opportunity to know about it."

The Hinton Center

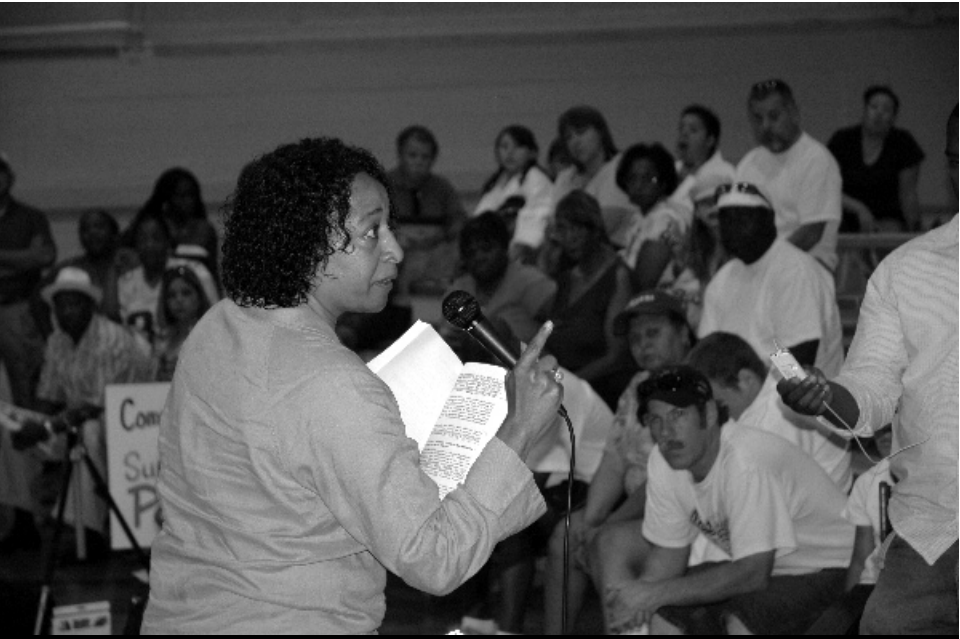
Sterling was at the Hinton Community Center, also in west Fresno, to discuss problems they are having. The Hinton Center Action Community Committee (HCACC) organized the meeting and invited residents to share their experiences about how the center has changed since a new board of directors took over. The Hinton Center is not owned by the City of Fresno, but the city does provide some funding for its operation.

Neighbors and users of the facility complained that since the new board took over, services have declined dramatically, the doors are often locked, and the bathrooms are filthy - when they are available at all. Pamela Young-King, a member of HCACC, said the new board has been unresponsive in addressing the problems at the center and that they have filed a lawsuit. She said "our goal is to reclaim the community center, have a viable board, a board that wants to operate legally and operate as a partner with the City of Fresno." The lawsuit will be heard on September 8 at 3 PM at the new courthouse on Tuolumne and M street.

Robert Mitchell, who facilitated the meeting for HCACC, said "the State of California has recognized west Fresno as the most poverty stricken area in the state of California. The Food Bank used to give away food and commodities out of this center for our senior citizens, the new board came on and that has all ceased."

Sterling was sympathetic with HCACC and said the City of Fresno was addressing the problems with the new board and if things do not improve in four months, the city would cut their funding, which is about \$4,800 a month. She agreed that the goal was to get a board that ran the Hinton center for the benefit of the community.

For more news and information about West Fresno, see: <http://www.westfresno.org/>



Brunette Harris demanded to know how the city could spend millions of dollars on new facilities, but they couldn't find the money to repair the Frank Ball Center.

THIS MODERN WORLD



KFCF Executive Director, Grassroots Journalist, Makes a Change

By Rick Flores

The character Joe in William Saroyan’s Pulitzer play “Time of your Life” philosophizes: “Living is an art. It’s not book keeping. Takes an awful lot of rehearsing for a man to get to be himself.”

Don’t ask me why, because I’m not even sure, but that piece of dialogue stands out in my mind when I think of Vic Bedoian. Before it begins to sound like I might be eulogizing the man, let me point out that Mr. Bedoian is not dead, far from it. However, circumstances have made it happen he no longer is the executive director for KFCF 88.1 Fm Fresno.

Well, I suppose you could call those circumstances “retirement.” But I’m fairly certain, knowing Vic as I do, he’s not not ready to take on that role full bore. Adjustment to life after having devoted the better part of the last two decades to a local listener supported radio station will have its big upsides, and yet when I meet with Vic a few days after his official departure from the station, it’s obvious his passion for community radio still survives. This comes through as he answers my random questions while we sit at his dining table in his home neatly decorated with oil paintings by modern artists and photographs of his Armenian kin.

“I guess I’m what they call a ‘freelancer’ as ‘retiree’ sounds too old and final,” Vic comments. “Doing my job at the station meant maintaining the environment for programmers to do their thing, the business side of journalism . . . now I want to concentrate on the creative side of journalism.” I personally find this very encouraging. Life at KFCF without Vic would simply not be the same. As corny as it sounds in my head right now, I think it is because he is a people person. I ask him what he will miss the least about the station? The book keeping and other bureaucratic tasks he answers. That further reaffirms Joe’s dictum in my mind.

I suppose a little background on Vic and his relationship not only recently with KFCF but also his experiences earlier with KPFA are in order. “Back when I was a student at UC Berkeley in 1964, I had heard KPFA broadcasting the tumultuous politics of the Free Speech Movement and also my dorm roommate liked the clas-

sical music. So I was intrigued by what I was hearing which was, of course, different than the Top 40 stations I was used to. What really got me hooked was the book review program by Kenneth Rexroth, perhaps the most erudite radical literati of our time.”

Vic goes on: “At some point in about 1972 I walked into the station and offered to volunteer. My first job was working with computer printouts in the subscription department. From there I started learning audio skills and began recording poetry readings, editing tapes and other production chores.”

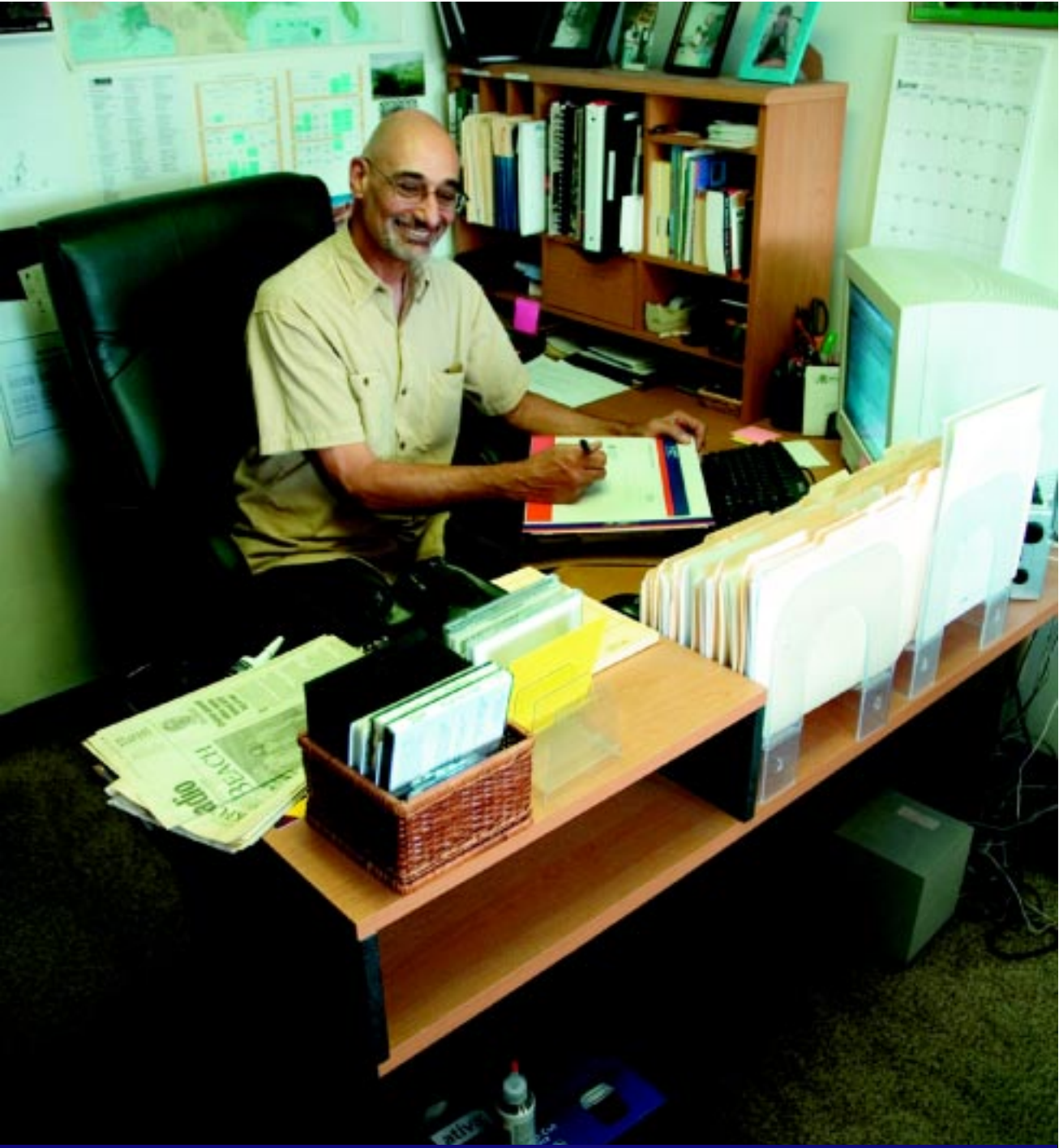
I’m reminded how critical those times were for our country, especially for free speech, and Vic’s early cutting edge involvement with it certainly wins my respect. “In 1974 I started working in the news and public affairs department,” he explains. Even though I was still on a steep learning curve, I was thrust into doing daily programming as well as long-form documentaries. This was a pretty exciting time because the Vietnam War was still raging and there were other hot spots all over the world in Africa, Central America as well as Nixon and Watergate domestically. There were a lot of specials like the Senate hearings on the CIA in 1976, which KPFA broadcast live. I was lucky enough to work with, and learn from, some of the seminal people in alternative radio at KPFA. I’m talking about Larry Bensky with his outstanding and historic political reporting, Alan Snitow who transformed the newsroom into an award winning operation, Eric Bauersfeld, one of the great all-time radio dramatists and renaissance men, and, Charles Amirkhonian, a fellow Fresnan, who was the music director for years and constantly broke new ground with his creative presentations.

Those KPFA experiences for Vic awarded him the rehearsing he would need for the job he fulfilled as executive director for KFCF. “I’m really happy I’ve been able to nurture a wide spectrum of local programming and bring into radio some of the most creative political and cultural activists in our community. We have a local program lineup that incorporates some very important facets of valley life and the issues people are dealing with locally. I feel that our relationship with KPFA

has become stronger during my tenure because of my years of experience there. Over the years we’ve worked well together and helped out one another in times of need. I’m sure everyone remembers the great “lockout” at KPFA when we at KFCF had to come up with our own programming and give our KPFA colleagues a voice. That was an important moment - it proved we could make it on our own if required to. I also feel good that KFCF is on solid financial grounding, even in these precarious times.”

Precarious times for KFCF? Vic’s ending comment there makes me pause in deliberation. If the U.S. economy continues to tank can a small radio station like KFCF survive? How possible will it be for the listener sponsor to support it? Not only that, but questions arise about the health of the station internally. Randy Stover, the station’s chief engineer is of failing health lately and Alex Vavoulis a founding father and guiding light for the station has retired. Personally, I have hope for the station to continue its mission. I have this faith not in a Pollyanna sort of way, though while on the subject I can’t help reflect on her advice to the wayward minister in that story on how “no person can own a church.” To me, the same thing is true for a community radio station. And it was just that type of non-ownership attitude Vic Bedoian brought to KFCF.

Or I should say still brings. Vic is still concerned about the station pushing for more local news reporting which not only would be broadcast on KFCF but fed to KPFA as well, so people in the Bay area could be more familiar with vital issues that affect our valley. And certainly, there are a myriad of ways in which KFCF could still use some improvement, for example, a more accessible musical library for all volunteer programmers to draw from. It is up to us, the community, to decide KFCF’s future. I know Vic Bedoian wouldn’t have it any other way. Just ask him.



Vic Bedoian, who was the Fresno Free College Foundation/KFCF 88.1 FM executive director, has moved on to new adventures. Photo by Isaac Flores. Isaac Flores is a visual artist from Fresno who recently toured with and videographed renowned musician Serg Tankian on his recent European tour.

Fresno Free College Foundation Hires New Executive Director/ KFCF General Manager

From the FFCF/KFCF website

The Fresno Free College Foundation, a Fresno based 501c(3) non-profit organization, is pleased to announce that Rychard Withers has been appointed as Executive Director of the Foundation and General Manager and Program Director of the Foundation’s broadcast station KFCF-FM. Mr. Withers replaces Vic Bedoian, who is retiring.

Withers has served on the Foundation’s Board of Directors for 15 years, as President, and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge of the Foundation to his new position. Gerry Bill, a Sociology Professor at Fresno City College will assume the role of President of the Foundation and Marc Scalzo will become vice-president.

Withers has previously worked as a broadcast engineer for Peak Broadcasting and CBS Radio, and has also worked in various on air, production, and news positions for area broadcasters for the past 33 years.

“My goal is to help the Foundation grow,” says Withers, “and continue to be a part of the intellectual, artistic, and cultural communities.” The Foundation, in addition to the operation of KFCF-FM, has served as an umbrella organization for many projects over the years, including The Fresno Poets Association, Keyboard Concerts, Orpheus concerts, The Ananda Fund and Tibetan Mountain Waters Project, among others.

“With the current economic climate, arts organizations and non-profits are feeling the effect of the tightening of people’s finances”, Withers said “and we plan to continue to be available, with news, arts, music, literature and to enrich our culture, but we also want to keep things within the means of our listeners and supporters. That is one of the great things about radio - it allows us to do that for everybody.”