



EN ESPAÑOL  
PÁGINAS 20-19

# Why I Risked Getting Arrested on April 6

By Mike Rhodes

The City of Fresno passed an ordinance to stop witnesses and the media from observing the demolition of homeless encampments. The ordinance that threatens to arrest witnesses went into effect on April 1, 2022, and this was the first test.

As *Community Alliance* editor Eduardo Stanley and I arrived, we could see that the police, bulldozers and garbage trucks had gathered at one end of the encampment. We headed in that direction. It didn't take long before they were dispatched into the field at 1725 W. Nielsen Ave. (near Highway 180 and Hughes Avenue).

Eduardo and I followed them in and started taking photos. They gave the first homeless person five minutes to move out. Thirty minutes later, the city was still holding back before destroying the tent and anything else left behind. They had noticed people were watching them.

As the demolition got into gear, so did some of the homeless and their advocates. A line was formed, and you could hear the emotionally charged yelling about the right for everyone to have housing. Homeless advocates seemed to step back, and about a dozen homeless people took over. They stood in front of and sat down so the garbage trucks could not conduct their business.

The City workers seemed to withdraw and began milling about. They were likely waiting for the protesters to get tired while the City crew took a break. After all, these City workers get paid whether or not they are harassing the homeless. This had been their tactic 15 years ago when I went to just about every demolition by the City of homeless encampments.



Dez Martinez argues with a City of Fresno staff person about the destruction of homeless people's property, getting them a safe place to live and how outrageous it is to treat people this way. Photo by Mike Rhodes

Sometimes the City workers would pull back and just wait out the homeless. After 4–8 hours, most of the hardcore protesters would be gone. If not, the bulldozer would just come back the next day.

Eduardo and I left after a couple of hours, and I returned to the scene of the crime in the late afternoon. Almost the entire homeless encampment was leveled. There were a few tents left, but I was told by reliable sources that the City

planned to come back bright and early in the morning and finish the job—bulldozing the entire encampment.

Mary, a resident of the encampment, told me that before the City crew left they told her they would find housing for all the residents. Mary said that a list was made of the homeless who needed housing, and promises were made by City officials to get them the housing they need.

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Many City of Fresno personnel surrounded the victims of the April 7 encampment sweep. Photo by Bob McCloskey

# Rage Against the Unhoused (by the City of Fresno)

By Bob McCloskey

On April 7, a massive fleet of California Highway Patrol cars, Fresno Police Department cars, public works vehicles, trash trucks, skip loaders and other heavy equipment arrived

in the early morning hours to evict and remove 25-plus unhoused residents of an encampment community called Camp 180 in West Fresno.

Dozens of City employees, both salaried and hourly, were present as they were the day before when the encampment sweep and “trash removal” began. The camp was located in a remote industrial area near Highway 180 and has existed for about two years. Many of the residents have lived there for some time, and it was a real community of people supporting each other. The question is, why now?

The obvious answer is retaliation and vindictiveness by the City of Fresno. The encampment was the residence of Lewis Brown, the lead plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit against the City.

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# Oil, Garlic and \$\$\$

By Michael D. Evans

Money rules with the Fresno County Board of Supervisors (BOS). The BOS has made it abundantly clear that private-sector profit, most recently in the form of prospective oil and gas and garlic-related income, is more important to the county than addressing climate change or using ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds for the community.

At the March 22 BOS meeting, Supervisors Steve Brandau and Nathan Magsig introduced a resolution to expand domestic oil production.

The resolution supports “the embargo of oil and gas imports from the nation of Russia and its territories for the duration of their hostilities against the nation of Ukraine” and urges “State and Federal representatives to assist in expansion of domestic oil production within Fresno County, the State of California, and other U.S. states and territories to supplement the energy supply for American consumers, to alleviate fuel prices and bolster American energy security.”

“Many people don't realize this, but in Fresno County we produce oil,” added Brandau. He further noted that Chevron has been one of the county's top five taxpayers in four of the past five years.

Magsig quoted Ryan Jacobsen, the CEO of the Fresno County Farm Bureau, as saying “so goes oil will go our food supply as well” and added that “this ultimately leads to insecurity.”

“In many cases when we are bringing in oil from foreign sources,” Magsig added, “some of these nations that we do get oil from don't have the same values as the United States.”

“I don't think people realize that oil produced in the state of California is actually produced under the most strictest [sic] procedures in the world,” Supervisor Buddy Mendes weighed in.

From the public, David Schewgel spoke in support of the motion then proceeded to talk about the importance and thrill of electric vehicles.

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COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

MAY 2022

# Why I Risked Getting Arrested on April 6

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A homeless man named Daniel had a different view of how this was all going to end. He believed the City would put them on a list already populated with thousands of people and that getting housing would take years, not days.

One thing was clear, the City of Fresno was pretty far along in its scorched earth policy. Yes, there were a few people remaining on the land, but their time was limited and the offer of housing was uncertain.

Intrepid *Community Alliance* reporter Bob McCloskey returned the next day and said that the City had found housing for 25 people on the list. McCloskey noted, however, that “many individuals left prior to the sweep, moved to other locations nearby and suffered immense disruption to their lives, including the loss of their property.”

It is important to cover the City of Fresno’s continued mistreatment of the homeless, to acknowledge when homeless people stand up for their rights and not be intimidated by ordinances that would limit our right to a free press. *Community Alliance* staff will risk arrest to bring you important news about what is happening in this community.

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Mike Rhodes is the executive director of the *Community Alliance* newspaper, writes about homeless issues in Fresno and is the author of *Dispatches from the War Zone about homelessness in Fresno*.



A mattress is put into the back of a garbage truck to be hauled to the dump. Photo by Mike Rhodes

## Rage Against the Unhoused (by the City of Fresno)

Continued from page 1

The case was filed in March and widely publicized. Soon after, law enforcement officials arrived at the encampment community and announced their intent to shut it down. Camp residents were told that no housing would be offered.

On March 31, the City posted an announcement: “The City of Fresno has received complaints concerning individuals who are loitering near or residing in temporary shelters that have been constructed. Any persons in this area may be trespassing and will need to immediately move off this site and remove any personal property they own. On 4/6/22, at 8:30 am, the City of Fresno will seek the voluntary cooperation of any individuals who remain on-site to relocate, and will enforce trespass laws against any individual who fails or refuses to move off this site.”

A subsequent notice said the property would be stored by the City, but on April 7, the second day of the sweep, I witnessed a lot of personal property being destroyed and put into trash trucks and containers.

I personally assisted many individuals attempting to save their only possessions including an elderly, disabled man who complied with the City’s order to vacate. I used my truck to move all his property to the back of his relative’s apartment, where half was later stolen and the other half was taken by the police and thrown away. Everything he owned in life was taken, including his ID and debit card.

He returned to the destroyed encampment on April 8 seeking shelter and was initially denied, however, through the efforts of homeless advocate Dez Martinez and other advocates on the scene he got a room at one of the motels being used as shelters.

To be clear, it was the City’s intent, from the beginning, to destroy this encampment, offer no shelter and simply disperse people into the neighborhoods. I e-mailed the mayor, and his response to my inquiry as to why the City was not offering shelter was “private property,” just two words, which I assume meant that because the encampment was on private property, the City did not have to comply with the *Martin v. Boise* court decision that requires cities to offer shelter before destroying encampments.

In the author’s opinion, shelter should have been offered, as the intent of the decision is to protect the constitutional rights of the unhoused community. No one came in the days prior to the raid to offer shelter. No one from the Poverello House Outreach Team came to the camp.

It wasn’t until April 6 when camp residents staged a vocal protest, and several residents, in a brave act of civil disobedience, lay down in front of a trash truck, blocking its path, when things changed.

Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias had just arrived on the scene and observed the action. When I informed him that no shelter was being offered, he acted surprised and said he would talk to the mayor, however, it wasn’t until Martinez, several other advocates and several residents of the encampment showed up and threatened to disrupt the mayor’s press conference at Chaffee Zoo that the City agreed to offer shelter to those displaced by the sweep.

Shelter was finally arranged for 25 people on April 8. However, as in every encampment sweep, many individuals left before the sweep, moved to other locations nearby and suffered immense disruption to their lives, including the loss of their property.

This latest sweep was cruel and costly. Not only cruel to the residents as the whole three-day experience was highly stressful for everyone due to the uncertainty but also costly in terms of property loss for the unhoused and the cost to taxpayers.

I would estimate that over the three-day period, 75–100 public employees or contract employees were involved in the sweep, including top City officials with average salaries of \$100,000 per year, numerous law enforcement personnel with big salary and benefits packages, well-paid public works employees and other city, state and contract employees.

All to implement a sweep at an encampment of about 25 people? What is the cost? It will take an information request and audit to find out.

City leaders estimate that Fresno’s homeless population is about 4,200, whereas the Fresno-Madera homeless population is about 5,200.

Between July 2019 and December 2021, the Fresno area received more than \$144 million from federal, state and local sources to increase housing and services for the unhoused in 2021. These funds went to the City, the County, the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCOC) and the Fresno Housing Authority.

The City of Fresno received \$60 million of that funding, which it used to add around 600 emergency temporary shelter beds and some transitional housing. This is called Project Home Key and involves converting motels into housing for the homeless.

No permanent housing has been provided, and all the transitional, temporary housing provided now in the renovated motels will end because the motels allegedly are to be converted for sale, two years after opening as a shelter.

The process has already begun with the scheduled conversion for sale of the Days Inn, now called the Welcome Inn, in June, seven months earlier than promised. Instead of creating more housing for the unhoused, incredibly, the City is reducing it at this time.

The City also claims it used some of the funds to assist about 8,000 people with one or more services between July 2019 and December 2021, however, some people could have been double-counted if they engaged with multiple City services.

Also, the City received another \$172 million in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds and the County received

\$192 million in such funds. As the ARPA funding is intended for “underserved communities,” certainly some of this funding could be used for housing and homeless services.

The County, the City, the FMCOC and the Fresno Housing Authority need to use all available resources to shelter and house the growing population of unhoused people or the number of encampments will rise. Instead of razing encampments, the County and the City could approve and establish safe camps with services.

Understanding the reasons why individuals experiencing homelessness live in encampments and how servicing encampments can be part of a response to homelessness is important to developing a more compassionate and effective temporary solution until more housing is built and a Housing First program is established.

Sweeping encampments without providing comprehensive support is an immense and costly failure. The County and the City can direct the same resources toward assisting people with moving out of encampments and into safe, quality and affordable housing. Funding sources are available, and more funding is coming from the state.

Fresno County recently released a document called “Updated Priorities to Address Homelessness Countywide.” The focus is as follows:

1. Outreach, informed by reporting parties and law enforcement to engage, provide services and hygiene kits at encampments, linkage to programs/resources, track key data related to homelessness and service needs, and strengthen medical outreach resources.
2. Relocation and sanitation, through continued enforcement of ordinances to address hazardous or unsanitary conditions, which constitute fire, health, and/or safety risks.
3. Transportation, to connect individuals to services and maintain engagement.
4. Safe shelters/triage centers, through coordination with cities and partnerships with community faith-based organizations and include emergency housing for those who are not ambulatory and have health needs.
5. Transitional and affordable housing that includes exploration of independent living, rehabilitation of existing homes, and other housing opportunities.
6. Wraparound services to include substance use disorder and mental health services that continue once individuals exit programs and/or jail and expand diversion from homelessness and rapid rehousing services.
7. Job placement and training, to train/retrain individuals entering/re-entering the workforce.

Some of the priorities are beneficial and can be supported, however, the second priority, relocation and sanitation, is code for increased sweeps and harassment.

The fourth priority would provide shelters and triage centers in partnership with faith-based organizations, which calls into question the separation of church and state. Also, a faith-based approach does not work for all and many refuse faith-based services because of the judging and castigation that comes with it.

The City will soon release its new housing plan, and there is a new effort at cross-sector coordination between the County, the City, the FMCOC and other agencies called MARCH (Multi-Agency Response to Community Homelessness). This multi-agency plan is to be released soon and is a step in the right direction. The City and the County have long been criticized for a lack of coordination.

As these plans are released, we will continue to keep readers informed and follow the money.

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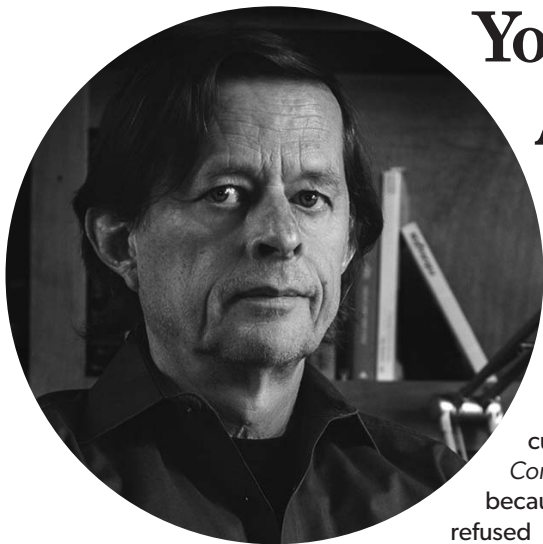
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# Young Democrats Against the First Amendment

As most of our readers already know, the Fresno County Democratic Party decided to cut ties with the *Community Alliance* because our newspaper refused to ban one of our writers who they don't like.

The party approved a long resolution with unsubstantiated accusations against the writer, Kevin Hall, demanding that the *Community Alliance* ban him. The resolution was brought to the party by three members of the Fresno Young Democrats.

In a comment posted on our newspaper's Facebook page, Navkaran Gurm, who works for Fresno City Council Member Nelson Esparza, acknowledges that he is the author of the party's resolution—and proud of it, apparently. He also engaged in a dialogue with some readers who in most part criticized the party's resolution.

To ban a newspaper because these Young Democrats don't like one of its writers smells like Trump's and Devin Nunes's tirades against some newspapers and journalists.

According to Gurm, Hall "has engaged in misogyny, racism and Islamophobia in his online presence and that has also slipped its way into the *Community Alliance*."

Some of the Young Democrats sent messages to our newspaper accusing Hall of aggressive activity on Twitter. They seem not to understand we have nothing to do with that online platform. And regarding his "misogyny, racism and Islamophobia," we are still awaiting proof.

We offered the Young Democrats and other Democrats and elected officials who have taken issue with the newspaper's reporting space to present their arguments and engage in a civil discussion. Instead, the Young Democrats reiterated their rejection of Hall. It is black and white for these Young Democrats—which is different from "democratic." I wonder what the "Older" Democrats think about this.

In his dialogue with Facebook readers, Gurm, responding to a critical reader, says that the Democratic Party doesn't need to cut ties with GV Wire because it has no relationship with that online media outlet. But he stops short of explaining how GV Wire's publisher, the Assemi family, "owns" several Fresno City Council members through generous campaign donations.

## Letters to the Editor

### Stop Discrimination of the Homeless

This letter concerns the flagrant discrimination against our long-suffering homeless individuals and leaders' refusal to provide nice studio [or] one-bedroom apartments and related services for them the way they embellish families.

Shame on all for allowing this abuse. This abuse must stop once and for all.

If "families" were treated like homeless individuals are treated, the whole National Guard would be right there to stop it, but they refuse to do the same for our homeless.

I hope *Community Alliance* staff can please be the impetus for change to ensure our homeless individuals are given justice and all the services that they have been deliberately denied for far too long.

We need to be "inclusive" and "together" so that homeless individuals can be indistinguishable from the non-homeless and stop putting the homeless in a subservient category. This is the key "ingredient" to genuine (not fake) "togetherness and justice for all."

Compliance is in order now, and all responsible entities need to make this happen for our homeless.

Paula Sorvino  
Fresno

## FROM THE EDITOR

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 and 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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# Oil, Garlic and \$\$\$

Continued from page 1

What’s missing in this discussion? The global instability and the high price of oil have created a rare opportunity to wean people quickly from their oil and gas addiction. Instead of pushing for renewed drilling, which we know is environmentally unsound, costly and an ineffective short-term solution at best, why not use this crisis as an opening to provide incentives to purchase electric vehicles, shift homes to solar power and promote other green energy options—real longer-term solutions?

Nevertheless, the resolution passed unanimously. Subsequent to the BOS meeting, on the developer-owned and -operated GV Wire streaming program *Unfiltered*, Brandau, a co-host of the show, doubled down, “We need to stop our war against oil and petroleum and gasoline in the United States. It’s really kind of silly.” Now, that’s a real-life example of *Don’t Look Up*.

At the same meeting, the BOS took up a request from National Food Festivals Inc. to receive \$225,000 of ARPA funding to help put on a garlic festival in the county. Approval of the request occurred at the March 22 meeting and approval of the contract at the April 5 meeting.

ARPA funds are intended for specific uses. County staff says that the harm to the festival organizer justifies the use of ARPA funds to “address the negative economic impacts to local travel and tourism and hospital sectors” in that the garlic festival was originally planned for 2020.

Supervisor Brian Pacheco expressed his opinion that the request was not a purpose for which ARPA funds were intended.

Peter DeYoung, the CEO of National Food Festivals, challenged that saying that he ran his request by the City, which advised that the funding was an appropriate use. Of course, staff attorneys for Central Valley governance entities would rationalize funding to import elephant dung from Mars if establishment interests requested funds for such an effort.

“This should be a privately funded event,” said Pacheco. “I don’t see any revenue lost because [the festival] was never started.”

Pacheco noted that other successful community events—the Clovis Rodeo, the Big Fresno Fair, the Kerman Harvest Festival, the Firebaugh Cantaloupe Festival and the Carruthers District Fair—operate successfully without county funds.

“We have trouble giving \$10,000 in October to the kids to have their teeth fixed, [and] we can’t find money for the veterans,” said Pacheco. “How do we not fund projects like



that and say that we’re going to give a quarter of a million dollars for a weekend party?”

“In the unincorporated communities, I’ve got at least nine community service districts that have gotten no ARPA help at all, and they are really in need of this ARPA money,” added Mendes in a rare but welcome instance of standing up for his constituents.

The other supervisors, however, were gung-ho for the proposal.

Magsig said that he wanted to hear from the public before deciding on this item, then, true to form, proceeded to make comments that revealed his mind had been made up all along. “I can support this because I truly believe that it will generate more resources than it will consume.”

At the April 5 meeting regarding the contract approval, several members from the public spoke in favor of the garlic festival but most did not address the applicability of using ARPA funds for the effort.

Of particular concern were comments from Jeff Aiello, the CEO of Valley PBS. “Agriculture is under attack and has been really for a long time from groups that don’t want to see agriculture thrive,” he said.

That is a complete misrepresentation of the concerns relative to ag in the Central Valley and a deeply disturbing perspective from the head of a presumably objective media outlet.

“Valley PBS is behind this event,” Aiello added.

Mendes reiterated his opposition noting that “the City of Fresno and even the City of Clovis have done nothing, and this has just been basically dumped on us...We’re not against the garlic festival, we’re against the aggregate amount.”

Pacheco added that the largest farmer growing garlic in Fresno County “supports the festival but didn’t believe that amount of public money should be used for a private event.”

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## Leadership Institute Funding Challenged

By Michael D. Evans

“They’re hyper-political in nature,” alleged Supervisor Steve Brandau in pulling a Consent Agenda item at the April 19 Board of Supervisors meeting that would provide funding to the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) for youth substance use disorder prevention.

Typically, items are placed on the Consent Agenda because no opposition is anticipated. In this case, Brandau opted to express his concerns with the entity being funded.

Brandau said that he had experience with YLI when he was on the Fresno City Council “but real quickly we found out that it was a very activist organization.” That is rich coming from the former head of the Central Valley Tea Party.

He then read a blurb from YLI’s website: “At YLI, we take a social justice lens to the work combating the racist war on drugs mind-set that criminalizes individual behaviors and shifting the focus to predatory corporations that target low-income people of color.” OK, where’s the problem?

Brandau, the irony completely escaping him, then proceeded inadvertently to argue the need for YLI’s service. “Not too long ago, the five supervisors stood with District Attorney [Lisa] Smittcamp as she talked about how fentanyl is ravishing our community.”

“I think it’s very important that anyone that is involved here at the county, and especially using funding that comes through the county, is apolitical,” said Supervisor Nathan Magsig.

How “apolitical” is the Board itself, which allowed the redistricting process to proceed with a consultant that the chief administrative officer admitted was politically motivated?

“Yes, we do social justice work because we think that young people should help to shape their communities so that everyone in Fresno County can thrive in a healthy and supportive community,” responded Patricia Barahona, the CEO of YLI.

“We believe that young people living in neighborhoods with easier access to liquor stores than healthy foods is a social justice issue and that young people should lead on creating solutions that make Fresno County a healthier and safer place to live.”

Supervisor Sal Quintero, after declaring his appreciation of YLI’s work, suggested a disclaimer on their contract, presumably so that this social justice work wouldn’t actually be considered social justice work.

Despite Brandau’s opposition, the funding for YLI was approved by a 4-1 vote.

## Community Alliance Fundraising

May 1, 2022

Every month, the *Community Alliance* newspaper tells the story of people in Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley who are making history—working for peace and social and economic justice. You are a part of this bold endeavor as we turn the San Joaquin Valley from being controlled by conservatives into a more progressive landscape.

You can rely on this paper to bring you stories that uplift immigrants, the homeless and people struggling to survive. Our writers tell a narrative of people organizing to improve their lives and what our readers can do to be a part of that struggle.

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# Local Housing Market on Fire

By I. smiley G. Calderon

The real estate housing market in the United States is hot—practically on fire. It is a sellers’ market because sellers have the coveted housing inventory.

With scores of buyers eagerly overbidding every reasonable asking price, prices are surging. A recent survey of U.S. residential real estate prices in 20 major U.S. metropolitan areas showed a 19.1% average price increase in houses since last year.

Before the pandemic, in 2019, the yearly average 30-year fixed mortgage rate was 3.94%. In 2020, the first year of the pandemic, it was 3.11%. And in 2021, the annual average was 2.96%, due to the Federal Reserve lowering the federal funds rate to essentially zero to help counter the emergent pandemic economic slump.

We saw the first huge change in October 2021. That’s when the mortgage rate jumped from 2.90% to 3.07%. In April, it surpassed 5% and just keeps rising.

Normally, higher mortgage rates help keep the real estate market in check, but that’s not happening now. In this post-pandemic bull market, strong demand is choking the already tight supply of housing, outweighing the buffering effect of rising mortgage rates.

Brace yourself for even higher mortgage rates.

With record low levels of unemployment, coupled with a now booming job market, inflation is active. At the end of March, the U.S. annual inflation rate hit 8.5%—a 0.6-percentage-point increase in as little as a month from the record 7.9% in February. It hasn’t been this high since December 1981.

Prices are indeed going up. And so are housing prices. Rampant home price appreciation is the result. We have survived the pandemic and people are ready to live again, with better opportunities for a hopeful future and with money in hand.

Houses are being listed and sold faster than you can shake a stick at them—even with the rising prices. In California, for example, the median time on the market for available houses in March was just eight days. In Fresno County, it was even shorter—seven days. Imagine that, just a week on the market.

Frankly, the reason is that Fresno is more affordable than other California counties. Homeowners and investors alike benefit from lower relative costs here than in other places. And, because many employees can now work remotely from home (a positive externality of the pandemic), homeowners can benefit from higher out-of-county wages and relatively lower housing costs here.

Now, that doesn’t mean that house prices or rents are low in Fresno County. They aren’t, and they are rising. But they are relatively low compared to, say, Orange County or San Francisco. That explains why people move to Fresno, “the best little” affordable city around, to buy homes or invest in rental properties.

Normally, the market would self-modulate and adjust, with suppliers meeting buyers’ demand, and everything would be fine. But that’s not happening now because there isn’t the available supply.

We have a serious supply chain problem for residential housing across the country and state, especially in Fresno. Part of the problem is fewer new houses having been built because of labor and material shortages during the pandemic.

Whenever house prices rise more than 32% in the short span of two years, something’s wrong. Consistently paying more than 100% of the asking price, bidders are pushing house prices through the roof (literally). Which is great if you’re selling but not so much if you’re buying.

In March in California, a whopping 71.5% of all houses sold were sold above the asking price. There doesn’t seem to be a shortage of buyers anywhere in sight.

Especially here in Fresno, the fifth-largest city in the state. Buyers are so eager to eat up the available housing supply here that, apparently, we are now recognized as the nation’s top big city with the highest rent increases in the past four years despite the fact that “Fresno makes regular appearances on lists of America’s worst places to live.”

In fact, housing insecurity and housing instability—especially for low-income residents in the Valley—is a real-life nightmare—especially in Fresno where every day we see rampant homelessness.

If you have to spend 30% of your monthly earnings or more on rent, you’re in trouble. But there are Fresnoans who actually have it worse. Many live month to month, just a single



paycheck away from the streets. And the current housing crisis has made things worse and exacerbated housing insecurity and instability.

Fresno is one of the most affordable places to live in California, but that’s changing. As rental prices soar due to strong demand and housing supply constraints, the median wage in Fresno hasn’t been too hot. Fresno’s average wage is only \$58,000—about 30% below the state average. Although the housing market is booming with lots of sales in Fresno, houses are not all being bought by locals. They can’t afford them.

Out-of-town buyers and investors are a strong driver of rising housing prices, which ultimately displace the blue-collar service workers and farmworkers who just can’t compete. It’s a scary time for housing-insecure Fresnoans.

The City of Fresno has established some first-time home buyer programs and is engaged in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in partnership with the Marjaree Mason Center and Breaking the Chains. The City also has launched the highly successful Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

It is reassuring that the City is taking action to stimulate access to affordable housing while also focusing on displacement avoidance. The million dollar question, however, is will there be enough housing supply for this plan?

In a recent interview with ABC 30 Action News, Steve Flach, president of the Fresno Association of Realtors (FAR), expressed concern about the available inventory of homes in the city and noted that the median house price in Fresno is now \$380,000—some 36% higher than two years ago.

Kim Huckaby, government and public affairs director for the FAR, issued this poignant statement on the current housing crisis in Fresno: “In recent years, this crisis has reached historic proportions. As a result of the housing affordability crisis, younger Californians are being denied the opportunities for housing security and homeownership that were afforded to previous generations.

“Families across economic strata are being forced to rent rather than experience the wealth-building benefits of homeownership.”

This crazy surge in house prices can’t be sustainable for long. A slowdown in the market has to come eventually—but when? After all, Wells Fargo Home Lending abruptly fired hundreds of its mortgage processors in mid-April. Clearly, it must have a good idea of what’s around the corner in the U.S. residential housing market.

“Bottom line,” reflected Huckaby, “we have to build our way out of this housing crisis—we cannot legislate our way out of it.”

The housing market is on fire in California. As Californians, we know that to get through this tough time we need to work together with the professionals to get it under control. Together, we can quench this inferno. Together, we can get the market under control.

\*\*\*\*\*

I. smiley G. Calderon is a Gen X Chicano and lifelong educator who spent a career in academia in Southern California but is most proud of being a father.

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# Daren Miller: Focused on Education

By *Community Alliance Staff*

In the June 7 Primary, Fresno County voters will have the rare opportunity to vote for the superintendent of schools without there being an incumbent (elected or appointed) on the ballot. One of the candidates seeking the office is Daren Miller, a near-lifelong Fresno County resident with a diverse and expansive background in education work and long involvement in various community interests.

Three candidates are vying for the superintendent position. In addition to Miller, Eliseo Gamino, an education administrator based in Firebaugh, and Michele Cantwell-Copher, who currently works at the Office of Education, are running. In an unusual scenario for a countywide race in Fresno County, all three candidates are registered Democrats. But that’s where the similarity ends.

Miller outlines five key areas of focus should he be elected superintendent.

- *Investments in early education.* “The superintendent of schools has got to do a better job of tying what happens in early education into what goes on with K-12. There’s a lack of investment in early education, and we need to develop partnerships to support the school districts.”
- *English language learners.* “We have some systems and programs in place right now for second-language learners, but we have a bunch of English-only kids who also are unable to use the English language effectively. It’s not an either/or, we need to do both.”
- *Technology systems.* “The county superintendent can be a leader in bolstering and getting our technology systems up to the 2030 standards that we need.”
- *Investments in social-emotional.* As students return, “what goes on with their fears and the socialization skills they lost” while isolated? “And how do we ensure that teachers’ social and

emotional health is good to be able to deliver instruction to our students?”

- *Extra- and co-curricular activities.* “I will make sure that kids have opportunities to be involved in art, music and athletics. I am always going to be a champion and a beacon making sure that kids are engaged in something more than ABCs and 123s.”

The superintendent of schools is “heavily influential,” says Miller. The position “has input and direction and provides resources and manpower to all 32 school districts supporting their business and their functionality.”

Specifically, Miller says that the direct services overseen by the superintendent deal with transfers, expulsions, some financial oversight and overseeing education for specific student populations (e.g., students who are incarcerated and students who are medically fragile).

During his campaign, Miller has attended school board meetings throughout the county. That type of engagement is how he intends to lead as superintendent. “If there’s something of importance, I’m going to be there,” he says. “I am not afraid to go to nontraditional settings to better understand.

“For example, I will never be a Hmong citizen, I will probably never speak Hmong, but that doesn’t mean that I can’t understand the plight and the circumstances of our Hmong students and our Hmong parents.”

Miller found a recent school board meeting in Huron particularly instructive. “I have been aware of the Huron situation for about 10 years, but I was always under the impression that they wanted their own school district,” Miller says. “Now I understand that is no longer what the Huron community wants. What they want is a high school.”

Huron is part of the Coalinga-Huron Unified School District, and it is the largest incorporated community in Fresno County without a high school.

“In my role as county superintendent,” says Miller, “it would be to support the families [of Huron] and make sure they have the correct information they need to develop their argument.”

“You can’t be a good leader if you’re not leaving your office, if you’re not getting out of your comfort area,” notes Miller.

In recent years, many have lamented the declining emphasis on civics education.

Miller says that civics is still part of the curriculum but is not being enforced. He said that a requirement to complete the eighth grade used to include passing a test on the Constitution.

“That was done away with by William Bennett, who was secretary of education in the Reagan administration,” says Miller. “In my mind, that was a plot of the conservative side to make sure that they had an uninformed, uneducated political populace.”

Miller believes there are ways that the superintendent can encourage school districts to refocus on civic education. He suggested implementing a History Day program that would be presented throughout the county, employing debates on civics-related topics and developing contests to encourage a renewed interest in civics.

“I want schools, school districts and our countywide education system to be the heartbeat, the pulse, the thriving part that connects all of us to betterment—to better jobs, to better communities, to a better existence,” notes Miller. “Right now, our educational system is not like that.”

“We need to make sure that we have people who are working with our kids for whom this is a passion,” adds Miller. “Yes, you’re getting paid, you get a monthly paycheck and you’re being compensated for this. But to be an effective educator, especially in the days that we are in right now, there has to be some passion.”

He understands the diversity of school districts throughout the county and that one-size-fits-all solutions are unrealistic. “What works to motivate Clovis teachers is not going to be the same thing that you can get done in Cantua Creek, and what happens in Cantua Creek, a smaller school district, might not work in a large school district such as Fresno Unified.”

Regarding his campaign, Miller says that he is focused on how to “galvanize my 55 years of relationships in the Fresno area and turn those into votes so that I can ultimately become the county superintendent.”

His endorsements include Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA), the San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club, the Central Valley Progressive PAC (CVPPAC), Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias, former Fresno City Council Member Cynthia

Sterling and Dezi Woods-Jones, the state president of BWOPA.

“I am comfortable with where I am in this race,” he says.

Following graduation from Roosevelt High School in southeast Fresno, Miller attended Weber State on a football scholarship. Since then, he has earned five degrees at Central Valley universities, most recently acquiring his doctorate in education from Fresno State.

For more than three decades, he has held leadership positions in middle schools and high schools including counselor, vice principal, principal and director for various districts in Fresno and Madera counties. Those employers include Washington Union High School and the Clovis, Fresno, Madera and Central unified school districts. He has also worked with adult learners at Fresno City College and the Madera Center (now Madera Community College).

Miller was appointed to the Fresno County Board of Education representing Trustee Area 3 where he filled the balance of Nelson Esparza’s term when Esparza left the Board after being elected to the Fresno City Council.

Miller has been actively involved in several local organizations including Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC), BWOPA, the California Latina Democrats, the CVPPAC, the *Community Alliance* newspaper and the Fresno County Democratic Party.

“Being involved in education has always been part of my personal DNA,” concludes Miller.

“I want schools, school districts and our countywide education system to be the heartbeat, the pulse, the thriving part that connects all of us to betterment—to better jobs, to better communities, to a better existence.”

—Daren Miller, candidate for Fresno County superintendent of schools

# Eliseo Gamino: Educate Children, Combat Crime

By *Community Alliance Staff*

Born in Mexico, Eliseo Gamino is the son of a bracero farmworker. He graduated from Fresno State, where he also obtained his master’s in education, with an emphasis on administration supervision. Currently, he is employed by the Raisin City School District. Gamino was voted “Teacher of the Year 2021 of Fresno County.”

“I am running for superintendent of education because I want to make a positive impact. I see a lot of issues with kids: dropping out, deserting the public school system, high unemployment and homelessness.

“We are not educating the kids at an early age, for instance, they are not able to read in third or fourth grade. These are kids at risk, on the way to the pipeline to prison.

“I want to make residents of Fresno County aware that only 7%–8% of our residents have a BA. We have a poorly educated population, and this affects us.

“This will affect our economic development. Companies are looking to get established in areas with an educated population. That’s why education is so important. I want to put this issue at the forefront of the discussion.

“We have to address the low-performing schools. Why is that, and what do they need to improve their performances?

“Low-income kids can’t make it to the big leagues. How can we balance this situation?

“We have to invest resources in all segments of our society. If there is an imbalance, then you have a gap.

“As a superintendent, I’ll ask for equity and balanced resources to make sure that all schools are spending their revenue in the correct locations and categories. We have subgroups of vulnerable populations, and they need adequate attention to help them to bridge the academic gap. If this gap widens, then we are not providing a good service.

“In the county, we have an estimated 2,000 new cases of juvenile arrests. In part, this can be prevented with a good education

“‘If we don’t educate children, we are going to punish adults,’ says a proverb. So I prefer to invest in children, to make sure they are reading at a great level. As a society, we can do better by exposing these issues.

“When kids need to be motivated, they need to be exposed to a different curriculum, such as robotics, arts. These are things that inspire kids to excel, and you give them a reason to go to school.

“In the [San Joaquin] Valley, all children should get their fair shot. So we have to make sure all schools have adequate resources. For instance, Fresno County had the funding to help



Eliseo Gamino, candidate for Fresno County superintendent of schools.  
Photo courtesy of Eliseo Gamino’s campaign

English learners, but it was found out a couple of years back that close to \$500,000 was used in a partnership with the police department.

“The County cannot take away money allocated to education and then expect children to perform well. This type of thing has to change; we have to be sure mistakes are not repeated.

“When we are educating children, we are combating crime. This is a basic solution to stop the pipeline to prison. We need to see the value of educating the kids.

“We have a crisis with drugs, whether meth or fentanyl. We have to educate our children and build their self-esteem, and we need to have high expectations for them.

“If we don’t do it, they will be condemned to low-skilled, low-paid jobs, [and] they will contribute to the homelessness problem.

“Education is linked to social mobility. That’s why the education of our children and our youth is so important so they can succeed as adults and be the backbone of the county and the Valley.

“We have a drug abuse problem in our area. But I like what once I read, ‘drugs don’t kill people, ignorance does.’ Education can help people to confront problems.”



# 2022 Primary Election Endorsement Grid

	DEM	REP	Labor	Chamber	Green	Stonewall	CVPPAC
U.S. Senate	Padilla	—	Padilla	—	Parker	Padilla	—
Governor	Newsom	—	Newsom	—	Rodriguez	Newsom	—
Lt. Governor	Kounalakis	—	Kounalakis	—	Arif	Kounalakis	—
Secretary of State	Weber	—	Weber	—	Blenner	Weber	—
Attorney General	Bonta	—	Bonta	—	Kapelovitz	Bonta	—
Treasurer	Ma	—	Ma	—	Adams	Ma	—
Controller	Cohen	—	Cohen	—	Wells	Galperin	—
Insurance Commissioner	Lara	—	Lara	—	Hirzi	Lara	—
Supt. of Public Instruction	Thurmond	—	Thurmond	—	—	Thurmond	—
Board of Equalization	Murphy	Gaines	—	—	—	Murphy	—
Congressional District 5	Barkley	McClintock	Barkley	Magsig	—	—	—
Congressional District 13	Gray	Giglio	—	Gray	—	—	—
Congressional District 20	Wood	McCarthy	Wood	McCarthy	—	Wood	—
Congressional District 21	Costa	Maher	Costa	Costa	—	Costa	—
Congressional District 22	Salas	Valadao	Salas	—	—	—	—
State Senate District 4	Robertson	—	Robertson	—	—	—	—
State Senate District 12	Gundy	Grove	—	—	—	Gundy	—
State Senate District 14	Caballero	Shor	Caballero	—	—	Caballero	—
State Senate District 16	—	Shepard	—	—	—	—	—
State Assembly District 27	Soria	Fleming	Soria	Karbassi	—	Soria	—
State Assembly District 31	Arambula	—	Arambula	—	—	Arambula	—
State Assembly District 33	Sigala	Mathis	Sigala	—	—	—	—
State Assembly District 35	Perez	—	Perez	—	—	—	—
Fresno County Sheriff	—	—	Salazar	Zanoni	—	—	—
Superintendent of Schools	—	—	—	Cantwell*	—	—	Miller
Board of Supervisors District 4	Ramirez	Mendes	Ramirez	Mendes	—	Ramirez	Ramirez
Fresno City Council District 1	Perea	—	Perea	Perea	—	Perea	Perea
Fresno City Council District 3	Arias	—	Arias	—	—	Arias	Arias
Fresno City Council District 5	Chavez	—	Chavez	Chavez	—	Chavez	Chavez
Fresno City Council District 7	Esparza	—	Esparza	Esparza	—	Esparza	—

Note: As of April 16, 2022. A dash means that either the organization did not endorse in that race or that our capable staff could not track down the entity’s endorsement.

<b>DEM:</b> California Democratic Party; Fresno County Democratic Party	<b>Labor:</b> California Labor Federation; Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council	<b>Green:</b> Green Party of California
<b>REP:</b> California Republican Party; Fresno County Republican Party	<b>Chamber:</b> Fresno Chamber PAC	<b>Stonewall:</b> Fresno Stonewall Democrats
		<b>CVPPAC:</b> Central Valley Progressive PAC

## “Stop Talking to GV Wire”

By Kevin Hall

They’re fightin’ words in Fresno, but when the fascists went on a GV Wire–inspired attack at Fresno Unified School District Board meeting in February, Dr. Lars Maischak’s words of warning from a recent KFCF interview came to mind: it’s important to not surrender our public spaces to fascists. And to know one when you see one.

I observed the first round at the old Pink Palace from outside the building and online. I spoke at the next two meetings and called out the connection to the Assemi family and the role they’re playing in local politics, and submitted a list of more than \$200,000 in campaign contributions that their network of 15 family members, companies and employees dropped into local races in the 2019–20 election cycle alone.

In April, I went before the Fresno County Transportation Authority to repeat my original message and to add an economic argument to help explain the Assemi family’s motivation: road subsidies for sprawl. Created by voters in 1986, the Authority decides on Measure C sales tax dollar allocations. There’s a \$5 billion renewal effort under way that’s ignoring community demands for inclusion in planning, equity in spending and a focus on climate resilience.

The powerful but little-known agency is chaired by Fresno County Supervisor Buddy Mendes. His vice chair is Lynne Ashbeck, mayor pro tem of Clovis. Rounding out the body are Supervisor Steve Brandau, Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer, Fresno City Council Member Esmeralda Soria, Mendota Mayor Rolando Castro, Parlier Mayor Alma Beltran and public member Paul Sihota, a rural trucking interest.

I spoke twice. First when the Measure C renewal report was given, then under public comment. Here are my remarks:

Good morning Mr. Chairman, and Board Members, my name is Kevin Hall. I live in Fresno.

The most popular sales tax in Fresno County’s history was the Measure C renewal effort in 2006. Only 22% of voters opposed it. The least popular ever was the Measure C renewal effort four years earlier in 2002. Opposition was double, at 44%. The difference, of course, was the organized opposition of a small coalition of community groups who could only scrape together \$11,000.

But it’s not about the money.

Consider the 2018 City of Fresno vote on Measure P for Parks. Then [Fresno Police] Chief Dyer and Darius Assemi put together a \$400,000 opposition campaign. But they only picked up another two percentage points of opposition. And it apparently cost \$390,000.

Who here has actually worked on a countywide sales tax that faced opposition? Because there hasn’t been one since 2002. I think it’s safe to say that 20% of voters will never support a sales tax. That’s a conservative estimate of conservatives. Of the remaining votes, you have to take four out of every five to reach 66%.

You’re ignoring the 20% on the other end of the spectrum: that’s the informed voter. They read the ballot arguments and the list of names opposing and supporting. Half will only read the names and decide against you.

In short, you’ve got 60% support at best for this Measure C renewal, six-zero. If you have opposition. And it appears you do.

And the community groups that Tony Boren cynically disparaged in the recent [Fresno] Bee article are so much more organized than we were then, I think you’ll be lucky to top 55% if you go to the ballot in 2022.

But I hope you do. I think it’s the only way to clear the cobwebs out of this place.

And it’s not right for Mayor Dyer to call the sprawl subdivisions west of [Highway] 99 the “forgotten Fresno” when talking about Veterans Blvd. That term has been stolen by these Measure C consultants from the residents of West Park, who live more than 10 miles south near Church and Valentine; they named themselves the “Forgotten Ones” and now that’s being taken from them. Thank you.

Public Comment:

Something very dangerous is happening in Fresno County that threatens everyone’s safety, so I’m here to make a request of every board member—stop talking to GV Wire.

### CLIMATE POLITICS

Stop participating on *Unfiltered*. These platforms are products of the public relations and campaigns department of Granville Homes and nowadays they’re a threat.

They can hire all the former *Bee* reporters they want; these people are now Granville Homes publicity agents, and they’re functioning as provocateurs.

Fresno politicians face an ugly choice: They can either take the Assemis’ campaign contributions, sign onto their sprawl agenda and agree to interviews, or they get attacked online with headlines about false controversies for the political attack ads that are coming later, and now they’ve added on a layer of fascist intimidation—of violence in our political discourse: I witnessed it at Fresno Unified board meetings in February and March.

This is where we have to draw the line. There is no place in the public square for fascism. It is not acceptable speech. They tried to overthrow the U.S. government in January of last year, yet there was one being platformed three months later on *Unfiltered*. And the *Bee* did it this February [see April’s *Community Alliance*], following the GV Wire storyline. That’s mainstreaming.

The Assemis call GV Wire an online digital news site. But in the last election cycle, their family members, companies and employees gave more than \$200,000 in Fresno County races alone. I’ve attached the list for you. \$200,000 in just two years.

Ask Channels 21, 30, 24, 47, 26, the *Bee*, how much their companies gave to politicians last year. The answer will be zero. Even KMJ comes up dry. That’s because they make their money from ads and subscribers, not home sales and public subsidies.

The Assemis are playing with matches and gasoline, and you’re playing along whenever you talk to GV Wire or go on *Unfiltered*. Now is the time to stop. Thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*

Kevin Hall hosts Climate Politics on KFCF 88.1 FM every second and fourth Friday, 5 p.m.–6 p.m. He tweets as @airfrezno and @sjvalleyclimate, coordinates an informal network of climate activists at [www.valleyclimate.org](http://www.valleyclimate.org), and can be contacted at [sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com](mailto:sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com) for presentations and information.





## WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

### WILPF Fresno Celebrates World Water Day

On March 22, the United Nations observes World Water Day. The theme of 2022 was "Groundwater: Making the invisible visible," and WILPF wished to make this day more visible.

WILPF members Gerry Bill, Nancy Waidtlow, Jean Hays, Janet Capella, Walt Shubin and Melissa Fry and friends Rosalie Brown and Ari Kinman gathered at Lost Lake to honor our great San Joaquin River and the water. As we sat along the river's bank, enjoying its peaceful, yet powerful force, Hays played a water song on her Native American flute, followed by a poem from a book of invocations honoring the Earth.

Discussion ensued around the question, "What does water mean to us?" As we went around our circle, comments included that "water is life—it sustains our bodies and all living things—that the earth would be a far less pleasant place without the flowers and trees—that some of our smaller local communities have had to go without fresh drinking water during times of drought causing distress—it provides habitat for critters that

contribute to the natural biology—it provides recreation and cooling—our food system is dependent on great amounts of water, both vegetation and stock—and that some water in the Valley is stolen by more prosperous landowners and resold at a great profit to Los Angeles."

We concluded the afternoon by asking ourselves what could be done to better conserve and protect this natural resource? Conservation and preservation efforts mentioned included the use of rain barrels, re-landscaping with drought in mind, low-flow shower heads and shorter showering, the recycling of greywater from laundering clothing (which they are already doing at the Dakota EcoGarden), using less toxic cleaning products and preventing chemical pollution of our waters, as well as preventing the building of expensive dams or storage facilities that might not be reliable ways to benefit public water usage.

Groundwater is an extremely important resource being the majority of the world's available freshwater is used primarily for agriculture, sanitation and drinking purposes. With the ever-increasing populations of the world, our water needs continually grow, so it is imperative that it be used wisely, sustainably and kept free from pollution.

—Melissa Fry



WILPF World Water Day at Lost Lake: Talk by the River (L-R with backs to camera) Walt Shubin, Nancy Waidtlow, Gerry Bill; (on bench, L-R) Melissa Fry, Jean Hays, Rosalie Brown, Ari Kinman. Photo by Janet Capella

### Unpacking Racism and Understanding Your Blind Spot(s): The Dynamics of Unpacking Structural Racism—Part A

Recently, I read an article that identified 11 racism dynamics. Let me comment on two in this article.

*Progress and retrenchment.* This speaks to the improvement of legislation. The idea is that passing certain legislation, court rulings and other formal mechanisms are aimed to promote racial equality.

But unfortunately, certain groups still struggle to get equal access. There continues to be a pattern in which the American government/Congress undermines the rights of certain people to advance politically. Retrenchment in this situation refers to the ways in which progress is challenged, neutralized, curtailed or undermined.

We saw that with Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson. Even after she spoke to "values, faith, patriotism and love for her family," some in Congress (the opposition) wanted her fired before she even began her job. But even with tears in her eyes, she persevered.

The Senate voted 53 to 47 to confirm Jackson, making her the first Black woman on the Supreme Court. Today, we see her as the 116th justice in U.S. history receiving bipartisan backing.

Progress and retrenchment sometimes have the same motives to dumb down, soft pedal and even sensationalize when it comes to People of Color. We saw that with the now vice president of the United States, Kamala Harris. The fight for BIPOC to be seen as equal continues to be a difficult one in this society and nation, but fight we must.

If we are talking about "progress," why are we struggling as a nation to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights

Advancement Act of 2021–2022 (H.R.4). If we are talking about "progress," why is this bill that would modernize and revitalize the Voting Rights Act of 1965 still struggling?

As of this writing, we know that the John Lewis Act was unable to pass as a stand-alone. Instead, it was combined in a package with the Freedom to Vote Act and still struggled to be signed and adopted to make it safer and easier for Blacks (BIPOC) to vote.

The truth of the matter is that we have seen fights over affirmative action and real estate practices that indirectly target and place invisible barriers for BIPOC. So, we cannot talk about progress without recognizing the struggles we have with the racism dynamics of progress and retrenchment.

*White privilege.* This is a big conversation among White folks and others still today. Sometimes White privilege gets confused with White supremacy, and while organizations such as WILPF-US have been challenged by the (BLC) folks in the southern states, it is an important and sensitive topic of discussion.

The question still must be addressed: How do White people who have enjoyed the benefits of "generational wealth" pay their share of reparation? "Reparation" should not be a scary or dirty word. It is a difficult question to answer if the truth be told. Only White people can truly answer this question honestly.

People of Color can only continue to point out all the "institutions that have harmed People of Color, mainly because of the 'color of their skin.'" After all, many of our presidents had slaves while in office, and we know that slavery made many men and women wealthy.

Peggy McIntosh wrote about "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," and this is what our local WILPF Branch is doing the last Sunday of each month. We have created a safe space to discuss recognizing our blind spot(s). We are attempting to unpack racism within our own community-at-large.

It is important to hold institutions, people and community leadership accountable, to not operate under



Bev Fitzpatrick and Melissa Fry at ArtHop April 2022 with Dangerous Woman t-shirts and mugs, peace jewelry and calendars. Find the WILPF table at Silva/Salazar Studio (654 Van Ness at Mono) at ArtHop on May 5! Photo by Teresa Castillo

White privilege, or to make the process hard for Black, Indigenous, People of Color. We cannot have blind spots around structural racism, racial equity, systemic racism, White privilege, institutional racism, individual racism, diversity, ethnicity, cultural representations, national values, or progress and retrenchment.

We do not want to just have an awareness, on a theoretical or intellectual level, but also on a practical and personal level. As I always say, we are better and stronger TOGETHER when we do the work TOGETHER.

There are several ways to learn about structural racism, and our monthly discussions provide those opportunities. I invite you to our monthly Zoom discussions on the last Sunday of each month at 6:30 p.m. The discussion is open, not just for members of WILPF. It is open to all, including BIPOC, male/females or non-binary.

If you wish to provide feedback and/or be a guest, have further discussions with me or get a recording of our most recent meeting (with former Tulare mayor and Fresno Fire Department officer Carlton Jones), contact me at 559-270-1023 or e-mail drjeankennedy@yahoo.com. Special thanks to Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris, co-facilitator.

—Dr. Jean Kennedy, PsyD.MOB/O.D.

#### WILPF MEETING

May 12, Thursday, 7 p.m. online. Watch your e-mail for an announcement with a link and a call-in number. For more information, contact Teresa at taca\_03@gmail.com or Leni at lenivreeves@gmail.com.

#### STIR IT UP—WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

May 25, 3 p.m. (fourth Wednesday of each month). Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

#### MEMBERSHIP

Send dues to WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

For questions and information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

WILPF membership is \$35/year. The low-income rate is \$20, sponsored by our contributions above the \$35 of WILPF-US dues.

#### COMMITTEES—STILL AT WORK!

##### DISARM COMMITTEE

Contact Melissa Fry at mjfry2008@icloud.com.

##### LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Contact Jean Hays at skyhorse3593@sbcglobal.net.

##### LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Contact Cheryl Caldera at grammy44cac@gmail.com.

##### EARTH DEMOCRACY

Contact Jean Hays at skyhorse3593@sbcglobal.net.

##### CUBA AND THE BOLIVARIAN ALLIANCE

Contact Leni at lenivreeves@gmail.com.

##### ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS/WINGS

Contact Bev Fitzpatrick at dfitzpatrick29@comcast.net.

#### RAGING GRANNIES

Contact Evonne Waldo at evonnewaldo@yahoo.com.

#### UNPACKING RACISM

Zoom discussion on the last Sunday of each month at 6.30 p.m. RSVP with your e-mail address to drjeankennedy@yahoo.com or text 559-270-1023.

#### WOMEN IN BLACK

May 4, noon (first Wednesday), Courthouse. Check first with Sue Kern at skern@netptc.net or 559-439-3777.

#### Find us on Facebook!

- **WILPF Fresno:** [www.facebook.com/Wilpf-Fresno-395764603812264/](https://www.facebook.com/Wilpf-Fresno-395764603812264/)
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- **Fresno WILPF Cuba Solidarity Committee:** [www.facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/](https://www.facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/)



# The Social Price of Being a “Real Man”

By Douglas E. Noll

Reflecting on the fact that our society programs us for relationship failure, the author is increasingly convinced that much of human conflict is caused by the cultural suppression of natural human emotions.

Let’s take men as an example. Per 20th century social psychologist Geert Hofstede, masculine cultures expect men to be assertive, ambitious and competitive; to strive for material success; and to respect whatever is big, strong and fast. Men are taught to refrain from showing any emotional vulnerability or weakness and are expected to show only a limited range of emotions.

It gets worse. At many levels, men might feel that they must achieve and continually re-achieve their manhood. The social status of being a “real man”—or simply a “man”—is not automatically granted to all adult male-identifying people. Instead, this social status must be achieved, often by successfully meeting many difficult, internally contradictory standards.

For instance, a “real man” must be simultaneously physically strong, a financial provider, a protector of his family, a husband and father, and an impervious emotional rock. These ideas are stereotypes to the extent that no individual man can possibly live up to all of them, but they are real in the sense that they shape many men’s ideas and actions in profound ways.

The social status of “being a man” is also strongly policed. In many milieus, men and boys are implicitly instructed that they are not “real men” or are not “man enough” if they do not live up to certain stereotypical standards.

When a person’s performance violates social norms, or breaches the boundaries of expected behaviors or performances, in many settings this individual can expect social policing or punishment (e.g., criticism or stigma) from those invested in maintaining the status quo.

Men’s emotional well-being is damaged by a trained incapacity to recognize, communicate and understand their emotions. Likewise, men’s friendships suffer when they are not allowed to be emotionally expressive. In addition, in settings where men are instructed to eschew many elements of their emotionality, these emotional needs nonetheless remain essential elements of all human lives.

Although not having done an exhaustive review of the literature on the causes of these stereotypes, a foundational cause appears to be the fear of emotion.

For thousands of years, philosophers and theologians have taught us the myth of rationality—that what separates humans from other animals is our ability to reason. Within



The Village People, pictured above, had a hit with the song “Macho Man.”  
Photo courtesy of Kings of Disco

the past 30 years, brain scientists have discovered the truth: Humans are 98% emotional and 2% rational.

Still, most people’s experience with strong emotions is unpleasant and the myth of rationality as a normative and descriptive model fits well with experience, even if it’s not true.

If correct, then masculine identity can be seen as a means of covering up childhood emotional wounds. If you don’t feel, you can’t be hurt.

And thus, our society programs us for relationship failure because if we cannot master our emotions, deal with the typical emotional invalidation of childhood and truly mature, we cannot master the intimacy of human relationships.

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Douglas E. Noll, J.D., M.A., left a successful career as a trial lawyer to become a peacemaker. His calling is to serve humanity, and he executes his calling at many levels. He is an award-winning author, teacher, trainer and highly experienced mediator. His work carries him from international work to helping people resolve deep interpersonal and ideological conflicts to training life inmates to be peacemakers and mediators in maximum-security prisons. His website is <https://dougnull.com>.

## A Community in Need

By Paulina Cruz

Since the end of last year, Visalia Planned Parenthood had planned to move from its downtown area location to a larger spot on Mooney Boulevard. Planned Parenthood would have occupied one of the many vacant buildings surrounding the Sequoia Mall and offer a full-service clinic.

The current clinic on Stevenson Street is small and open only three days a week, whereas a larger location would enable Planned Parenthood to help more people and be open six days a week. Plans for the clinic were approved by the Visalia City Council without issue in mid-December of last year.

Unfortunately, things took a turn when David Paynter submitted an appeal. Paynter owns various properties around the location Planned Parenthood was attempting to move into and cited parking availability as a concern. To anyone who knows Visalia this is laughable, as the parking lots surrounding the dying mall are more desolate than a college student’s savings account.

Over the years, businesses have been leaving the Sequoia Mall and even with the newer addition of Raising Cane’s and an array of food trucks, there isn’t enough business to take up even half the parking spots on any given day.

Due to rising pressures and violent threats from anti-choice individuals, Planned Parenthood and its developer decided to amicably part ways, leaving Planned Parenthood to search for a different location. This did not stop both anti-choice and pro-choice Visalians from attending the March 7 City Council meeting to voice their opinions on the situation for more than an hour.

Some of the anti-choice speakers were representatives of Visalia First and Tulare Kings Right to Life who spent the night arguing irrelevant topics. Fueled by ignorance and bigotry, they waited in line to spread misinformation on abortion and Planned Parenthood. Not only were many of the anti-choice remarks problematic and factually incorrect, but also 100% irrelevant to the Planned Parenthood office planned for the Mooney Boulevard location.

Their arguments mostly revolved around their beliefs on abortion, something that this Planned Parenthood is not going to offer. They might have known that had they asked questions first rather than making assumptions. Some anti-choice speakers even asked the Council to place emergency ordinances against Planned Parenthood to prevent the organization from establishing itself in Visalia. Unbeknown to them, Planned Parenthood has been in Visalia for more than 20 years.

Planned Parenthood was first available on the College of the Sequoias campus (at the other end of Mooney Boulevard). With its success and growing number of patients, Planned Parenthood moved to its current location on Stevenson Street but has been looking to move for the past six years as demand for its services grows everyday.

Within the crowd, many patients and supporters expressed the importance of having Planned Parenthood in the community. Community leaders such as Dolores Huerta spoke on the importance of respecting other people’s rights and the importance of access to clinics like those Planned Parenthood has.



Empty parking lot at Sequoia Mall. David Paynter cited parking availability as a concern for Planned Parenthood to move in. Photo by Paulina Cruz

Individuals from varying age groups and faiths spoke on the value of Planned Parenthood in their own lives, the lives of loved ones and many like them.

Many expressed how Planned Parenthood was a safe space, especially for members of the LGBTQ+ community who do not feel that other clinics in Visalia have the proper training to help them or treat them with basic respect. This is important as Planned Parenthood is the only clinic with gender-affirming training and care in Visalia; for some people there is nowhere else to go.

They spoke to a real need in Visalia and pleaded to not have something vital to their livelihood stripped from them.

As to the plans for a new location, Patsy Montgomery, associate vice president of legislative campaigns at Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, said, “We want to accommodate the needs of the people. Tulare has a need to access specific care.”

She explained that a full range of clinics could offer so much more than they offer now including gender-affirming care, prenatal care, preventive healthcare, sex education and testing for sexually transmitted diseases.

Socorro Santillan, regional director of public affairs for Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, spoke on creating a sanctuary for everyone in need, including immigrants. She spoke on the training Planned Parenthood staff receive to better protect immigrant patients from illegal ICE (Immigration and Custom Enforcement) searches.

Planned Parenthood continues to look for a new location and was given options by the City Council.

Some would rather Planned Parenthood stay in a more hidden spot, almost as if visiting the clinic should be shameful. But one should never be ashamed of seeking any form of healthcare. There is nothing beautiful about taking care of yourself.

Planned Parenthood is a part of our community and has helped countless people in need and plans to continue that work here for years to come.

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Paulina Cruz is a fellow with the Community Alliance newspaper. She is currently attending Fresno State working on an anthropology major with a minor in psychology. She spends her free time writing poetry or painting.



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# Time to Put a Stop to Oil Drilling

By Nayamin Martinez, Ruben Rodriguez and Cesar Aguirre

According to the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published on April 4, the world must quickly and radically cut its dependence on fossil fuels or face disaster. The window to prevent global temperatures from rising by more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial averages is rapidly closing.

While world leaders are engaged in seeking an urgent solution to this climate crisis, local decision-makers in Fresno County (and our neighbor to the south in Kern County) have recently taken public positions to emphasize their denial of the climate crisis.

First, they declined to accept a grant that would have allowed a diverse group of stakeholders (that included the Fresno County health officer, physicians affiliated with UC San Francisco and environmental justice groups) to conduct a community-engaged vulnerability and adaptation assessment of Fresno County to inform the development of a plan to build local resilience to health impacts of climate change.

Second, the Fresno supervisors organized on April 12 a press conference urging an increase in oil production in California and particularly in Coalinga.

Fortunately for Fresno and Kern counties, the poor judgment of the supervisors continues to be challenged by environmental justice and environmental groups. Activities and residents



Protesters hold a banner at a press conference in front of the Fresno Board of Supervisors’ building on April 8 to demand that Governor Gavin Newsom halt new oil and gas drilling in California and put a plan into effect to phase out the industry. Photo by Peter Maiden

in the two counties joined a series of statewide actions that were organized by members of the Last Chance Alliance to demand an end to new fossil fuel projects in California, a strengthened health and safety setback separating oil drilling and communities, and a just transition plan that puts communities and workers before the profits of oil companies.

The Last Chance Alliance is a coalition of more than 800 groups that have come together with the goal of protecting both the climate and public health from oil and gas extraction in California. Eleven Alliance actions took place on April 7 and 8 from Sacramento to San Diego.

The Central Valley actions started on April 7 in Coalinga, where representatives from El Pueblo para el Aire y Agua Limpia de Kettleman City, Xicas Super Poderosas HEAL and the Central California Environmental Justice Network gathered to send a clear message to Governor Gavin Newsom and, most important, to the Fresno supervisors: “We are here to take a stand against big oil and defend mother earth. It is time to work together and build a brighter and safer future for the generations to come.”

Two dozen residents joined the action, which was well received by most of the community members that drove by except for one older man who screamed “We need more oil.”

The Coalinga demonstration was followed by a second action in downtown Fresno. Three dozen people representing Fresnans Against Fracking, the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, Fresno Building Healthy Communities and residents concerned with the climate change crisis gathered in front of the Fresno County Hall of Records to demand that the state stop issuing oil permits and to tell Fresno supervisors that Coalinga does not need more oil extraction as too much harm has been done already.

Few are better to explain this harm than Cecilia Moreno, a descendent of the Tachi Yokut people who were displaced by the oil companies in Coalinga.

“The Central Valley is a wide and beautiful land that is bountiful,” says Moreno. “It is home to me and my ancestors. My ancestors were the Tachi Yokut people. They lived and took care of this beautiful land for many years.

“In the Central Valley, numerous tribes called this place home. We lived in peace and tranquility being hunters and gatherers. Many of our native tribes were relocated so that the oil industry could make a profit.

“We were moved to harsh living conditions. My grandmother, Lawona Icho (a full-blooded Native American from the Tachi and Wukchumni), told me the story of the long walk from Coalinga to Lemoore.

“Out of thousands of natives who made that walk, only a few hundred lived. Those who were elderly, sick or too young passed away during the journey. Those who survived kept our culture going after that traumatic experience.

“Now it’s my turn to keep this fire going and pass this information to the next generation of culture seekers. Governor Newsom tells us he will fight polluters, but if he is serious about making fossil fuels part of our past, he must immediately stop approving new oil and gas permits.

“We have had enough; it’s time to put a stop to oil drilling!”

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Nayamin Martinez is the executive director of the Central California Environmental Justice Network.

Ruben Rodriguez is a community organizer and air quality specialist with the Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN). He lives in Coalinga and used to work for an oil company.

Cesar Aguirre is a community organizer with the CCEJN, a Bakersfield resident and a co-founder of the Youth vs. Big Oil statewide coalition.

# Fresno to Buy Tower Theatre for \$6.5 Million

By Community Alliance Staff

On April 21, the Fresno City Council voted 4-3 to buy the iconic Tower Theatre. Council Members Esmeralda Soria, Miguel Arias, Tyler Maxwell and Nelson Esparza voted “yes,” whereas Mike Karbassi, Luis Chavez and Garry Bredefeld voted “no.” But the controversy and the legal battles will continue.

In September 2020, the owner of the Tower Theatre decided to sell the theater to Adventure Church, which sparked protests from community members, particularly the LGBTQ+ community, which considered the move a direct hit against them. The theater is located in the LGBTQ+-friendly Tower District. Residents expressed concern that Adventure Church is not LGBTQ-friendly and that such a purchase would affect the lifestyle of the neighborhood. Area merchants also expressed concern.

Sequoia Brewing filed a lawsuit against Adventure Church over its attempted purchase, exercising a right in its rental agreement to buy its portion of the property.

The City’s attorneys say the deal between Adventure Church and the owners of the Tower expired, paving the way for the City’s purchase.

Now, the church has threatened the City with a lawsuit.

Jaguar Bennett, one of the leaders of the “Save the Tower Theatre” movement, expressed satisfaction with the news of the City getting involved.

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A man changes the marquee of the Tower Theatre, a Tower District landmark that will likely be purchased by the City of Fresno. Photo by Peter Maiden

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No War in Ukraine   Ceasefire Now   End Russophobia

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# Can the People and the Environment Win the Election in Colombia?

By Leni Villagomez Reeves

## Unity on the Left

The progressive forces in Colombia have come together on the Historic Pact ticket, with Gustavo Petro for president and Francia Márquez as vice president. Polling, and the results in the March 13 primary, indicates that they are likely to win. The people of Colombia are rejecting a series of right-wing governments, supported by the United States, that have mishandled everything: health, education, the economy, the environment, foreign policy, police and military violence and, of course, the pandemic. Community, labor, feminist, environmental, Afro-Colombian and campesino/Indigenous organizing for change has been suppressed by paramilitary death squads and assassinations.

## The Candidates

Márquez is a lawyer and environmental leader who won the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2018. She is the first Colombian of African descent to be a candidate for national executive office, and she stated that she will work for the reparation of the rights of Colombian Afro-descendant communities.

“In our community, we have learned that dignity is priceless—to love and value the territory as a living space, and to fight for it, even at the risk of our own lives,” Márquez said.

Like many activists, she has endured a number of near-fatal attacks for her work against illegal mining, including one where two of her bodyguards were killed.

Petro was a member of the April 19 Movement (M19), which was a group for armed resistance that disarmed in 1991 and has since engaged in electoral politics and participated in drafting the constitution of Colombia. He is a senator and was mayor of Bogotá. He has also survived at least one assassination attempt, in 2018.

## The Program

The Petro-Márquez ticket plans to

- Distribute wealth more fairly. Currently, more than 40% of Colombians live below the poverty level and

- there is massive inequality. Land reform and a wealth tax are planned.
- Curtail oil and gas extraction. Petro has pledged to ban new fossil fuel exploration on his first day in office. Existing reserves would continue to be exploited and present contracts would be honored, but the plan is to move Colombia away from dependence on fossil fuels and from an extractive economy, although currently these represent more than half of Colombia’s export revenue.
  - Increase revenues from tourism and encourage small-scale agriculture and manufacturing to replace fuel profits.
  - Implement a peace process. Colombia is the world’s most dangerous country for human rights defenders and environmentalists. The intense criminalization of protesters and rampant extrajudicial killings are an ongoing genocide.

More than 300 former FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) members have been killed since the peace accords were signed in 2016, and at least 145 Indigenous Colombian activists, rural organizers, trade unionists and other leaders were killed last year.

The weapons used in those killings come from the United States, which provides huge amounts of military aid used for eliminating dissent against the neoliberal policies imposed by successive right-wing governments, causing massive civilian casualties, widespread displacement and the systematic killing of social movement leaders.

## Death Threats and Assassinations

The far-right paramilitary group Aguilas Negras recently issued death threats against several members of the left-wing Historic Pact coalition, including the presidential candidate Petro and the vice-presidential candidate Márquez. Márquez stated that it was the third death threat she had received in less than one month.

“They are trying to impose terror in Colombia,” she said. “We demand guarantees for the exercise of our political rights.” (A copy of the death threat shows the racist and sexist terms with which Márquez is attacked, as death to both candidates is declared to be the mission of this armed paramilitary group.)

In addition to Petro and Márquez, 18 other political, labor and social leaders have been threatened. These include legislators recently elected to Congress.

For the last month, Petro and Márquez have been calling on the Colombian government to protect their political rights and for the Prosecutor’s Office to investigate the threats. In the first 95 days of this year, 50 environmentalists; land defenders; human rights defenders; and Afro-



Pacto Histórico (Historic Pact) candidates.  
Photo from Francia Marquez’s Twitter

descendent, Indigenous, peasant and social leaders have been assassinated.

In addition, during this period, 13 former combatants of the FARC who were in the reincorporation process, that is, disarmed and in civilian life, were murdered. Also, more than 130 people have been killed in 31 massacres.

## United States Supports the Killers

After two centuries of right-wing oligarchy rule, Colombia is trying for change. Petro and Márquez represent a center-left coalition, with policies that would not be remarkable anywhere in Europe. However, a substantial portion of Colombia’s GDP goes to the United States to oil and coal companies and to pay historic debt and Colombia is key in the U.S. strategy for Latin America.

In 2017, Colombia became NATO’s first Latin American partner, then signed the U.S.-Colombia Strategic Alliance Act. The United States is unlikely to accept even a moderate center-left government, especially one that has pro-environment goals.

Does a pro-peace, pro-environment, pro-people coalition that includes a spectrum of the left and Black and Indigenous activists have a chance against the Colombian elite and the United States? When the disinformation war doesn’t work, they will escalate to election fraud and to military and paramilitary violence.

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Leni Villagomez Reeves is a local physician and activist. Contact her at lenivreeves@gmail.com. Check out her news and views about Cuba on Facebook (fresnosolidarity/).

# From Ukraine to Tijuana, Refugees Flee the Russian Invasion

Text and photos by Manuel Ortiz Escámez

A growing wave of Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Russian invasion is reaching Tijuana, Mexico, where people hope to cross into the United States in search of asylum.

There are currently 2,000 Ukrainian refugees waiting in Tijuana to enter the United States, according to Enrique Lucero Vázquez, municipal director of Attention to Migrants of the Tijuana City Hall.

The arrival of Ukrainians to Tijuana shot up in mid-March, after U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas announced the creation of temporary protected status (TPS) for 18 months for Ukrainians. Just days later, the White House announced that the United States would receive 100,000 refugees from Ukraine.

According to Lucero, the Ukrainians, mostly women, children and senior citizens, enter Mexico as tourists on flights to Cancun and Mexico City from European countries such as Germany and Italy. According to the official, Russians seeking asylum in the United States are also arriving in Tijuana, but on a smaller scale and they are staying in hotels, not in shelters.

Once in Tijuana, it takes Ukrainian families an average of 35 hours to cross into the United States. Some 400 Ukrainians enter per day.



## PHOTO ESSAY

Since March 6, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) warned that the exodus of Ukrainians would be “the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.”

Currently, according to the UNHCR, there are 4 million Ukrainian refugees, which registers as a Level 3 emergency, the highest for this institution.

In addition, more than 6.48 million people have been internally displaced in Ukraine, according to figures from the International Organization for Migration.

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Manuel Ortiz Escámez is a freelance writer for Ethnic Media Services.





# Almost 60 Years Later, Cesar Chavez Continues His Fight

By Emily Garcia

For nearly 60 years, farmworkers around the country have celebrated the legacy and momentous actions of Cesar Chavez.

In 1965, Chavez began his first steps toward changing the lives of farmworkers. That year, he was asked by Filipino farmworkers to support their strike demanding a pay raise. The Filipinos were mostly involved in the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), led by Larry Itliong, whereas Mexican-American and Mexican farmworkers had formed the National Farm Workers of America (NFWA), led by Chavez and Dolores Huerta.

One year later, those organizations combined as the United Farm Workers (UFW). The UFW and its case for better working conditions in the fields got support from across the nation following their 340-mile march from Delano to Sacramento—from March 17 to April 10, 1966.

At that time, most farmworkers were earning a mere 40 cents an hour and did not qualify for unemployment insurance. The hardworking individuals who put food on America’s tables were unable to do so for their families.

This year, on March 30, the Pan Valley Institute (PVI) of the American Friends Service Committee held an event at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno in celebration of Cesar Chavez Day. The event was part of PVI’s Artevism Project. Lea Ybarra, Ph.D., recently retired from Johns Hopkins University and a Fresno State alumna, hosted the event. She reiterated the importance of Chavez’s achievements and what they mean for many Latinx families.

For decades, the Latino community has been emotionally and physically brutalized in exchange for wanting a better life for their families. “There has always been a struggle for rights in this country,” says Ybarra. “For instance, in the 1800s, you have people like Tiburcio Vasquez and Joaquin Murrieta, who were called ‘bandits,’ but they fought for the rights of Mexicanos.

“We know about the lynching of African Americans, mainly in the South, but also hundreds and hundreds of Mexicans and Native Americans had experienced the same fate.”

Ybarra pointed out that the struggle in the fields for better working and living conditions started earlier than the 1960s. There was a strong movement in the 1930s in the cotton fields around Delano when hundreds of farmworkers went on strike.

*Mendez v. Westminster* was one of the first major court cases to address this discrimination.

Gonzalo Mendez was told that his daughter would be placed in a remedial school simply because the Westminster school assumed that she did not speak English; in fact, his daughter was born here and spoke English well. When the case made its way to the Supreme Court, Mendez’s victory opened the gate for many schools in western California to be desegregated.

Discrimination against Latinos occurred not just in a nutshell but also in major areas of history such as World War II, with soldiers of color coming back from war to face discrimination. Even dead soldiers were not buried in local cemeteries because the cemeteries were segregated.

There have long been fights for the rights of Latinos. The 1960s was a time filled with enraged minorities wanting to speak their minds and obtain their human rights. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights movement and the women’s rights movement were just a few of the groundbreaking stepping stones for future generations.

Ybarra was a student at Fresno State during the 340-mile march. She recalls how all the Chicano and agriculture students went to watch Chavez speak. The agriculture students brought boxes of grapes to the speech and ate them in front of him and began throwing grapes at the Chavez supporters.

Most Latino students supported Chavez’s cause. “Every worker deserves dignity. And every worker deserves decent wages and so forth,” says Ybarra. Like her, many of those students were the children of farmworkers.

That was a defining moment for her, along with the rest of the Chicano students, she admits. Chavez noticed the influence the university students could have and held a conference in Coachella specifically for students. Thousands of students showed up in support of their community’s struggles.

The protests by Mexican American students, farmworkers, soldiers and community members were the context of the Chicano movement, including protests against the Vietnam War. The 1960s was a period of many changes. “Think about Martin Luther King, the bus boycott, the women’s movement, Asians fighting for their rights, Chicanos in the west and Puerto Ricans in the east...All this happening at the same time,” said Ybarra.



Dr. Lea Ybarra during her presentation, “The Struggle Continues,” on March 30 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

She also mentioned the importance of the Vietnam War, which started in the mid-1950s and ended in the mid-1970s. “If you were in the Chicano movement, you were against the war. For those in college, they could get a deferment not to go to war, but poor people of color, as well as poor Whites, could not get such a deferment, so they fought not to be sent to Vietnam,” explained Ybarra.

Professor Ralph C. Guzman (1925–1985) of UC Santa Cruz states that Latinos were 9% of the population (in the mid-1960s) but 25% of the casualties in Vietnam, a war in which people of color were fighting against people of color.

The struggle continues today because if there are no established labor contracts in the fields, there are no rights for a worker’s protection. Ybarra says there is still much work to be done, for example, education. There are still too many Latino dropouts and not enough faculty representation.

The Latino community has made progress. There were almost no Mexican doctors or university professors 50 or so years ago.

Progress is something to be proud of, but never forget the sacrifices that needed to be made to achieve this level of Latinx representation.

As Chavez said, “We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.”

\*\*\*\*\*

Emily Garcia is a fellow of the Community Alliance newspaper. She is a journalism and mass communications major at Fresno State. Contact her at emilybvb432156@gmail.com.

## On the Edge

By Ruth Gadebusch

Just as we began to relax with the pandemic moving along, we received a rude awakening from Europe once again. This time, it is Russia further intruding into Ukraine beyond the southeastern provinces that it had illegally seized several years back.

Are we destined to go into Europe again? Didn’t we fight the war to end all wars just over a century ago? Would it have been different if we had gone to the rescue of Poland and Czechoslovakia when the Nazis invaded those countries in the late 1930s? There is no simple answer.

We stand on a sharp edge looking down into a deep crevasse. Horrible as it is, atrocious as it is, what is our responsibility? Bad as previous wars have been, this has potential even greater than those two previous events engrossing the major parts of the planet. There is the nuclear bomb!

Following the armistice of 1918, President Woodrow Wilson proposed the League of Nations as part of his plan to forestall such conflicts of the future. Unfortunately, the United States did not join.

We took a different action in 1945 following that conflict known as World War II but does it really have power? Whether it is designated as a war between nations or by a group within a nation (civil war) determined to rule overall, it is hardly humankind’s best moment.

One has to wonder if torture and greed are inherent in humankind. Can respect be taught or is some form of depravity so ingrained that we are doomed to always have conflict?

It is generally believed that preparation for military aggression—mutual deterrence—is the best prevention of an attack. Even in the interest of peace, few of us would fail to retaliate when attacked. It is generally believed that Putin underestimated the

fierceness, the determination of the Ukrainians to protect their homeland.

Alas, none of us can see into the future sufficiently to direct our action at this point. Is our responsibility self-protection? moral responsibility? common decency?

Can any of us remember a time in our lives when this planet did not have any serious conflict somewhere on it? Do we know of any recent times when this nation did not spend a major portion of its budget on weapons of war? Has that expenditure protected us from more war or does it make war seem inevitable?

If we joined in this current conflagration, would we shorten and protect or make it worse? After all, there are nuclear weapons not only in our hands but also in those of the aggressors in Ukraine.

There is little doubt that the aggressor would use such weapons despite the well-known guaranteed obliteration. Knowing the ultimate capability of such weapons, we have for years depended on mutual deterrent. But, what now?

Given the depravity that we have already witnessed, there is little doubt that the leader orchestrating this travesty will likely stop at nothing short of complete victory or utter destruction. Several weeks into this conflict, there is ample evidence that the invading nation is devoid of compassion or decency.

The word *moral* does not seem to exist in the Russian conscience. Yes, their actions are beyond explanation. However, before we too quickly condemn with a holier-than-thou attitude, we had best slow down and look at our own history—some of it relatively recent. Nor am I thinking of our criminal element, our civil rights abuses or our plain day-to-day missteps. Can any of us forget that naked, burning child running down the road from that Vietnam village?

Then there is Guantanamo Bay, hardly our finest moment, breaking our principles even to this good day: guilty without trial; failure to release upon completion of punishment (not imposed by legal action), torture and

more. This can hardly be justified even to gain the desperately needed information and certainly not for the sins of their fellow countrymen.

We brag about our democratic protections, but we had embarrassing stories coming out of Baghdad during that conflict instigated by us on incorrect information. It does seem to be all too easy for humans to fall into what we call war crimes when others indulge.

It seems that from the beginning of time, conquering armies inflict rape, often in the presence of loved ones, as the most notorious damage short of death on the population of the overpowered nation. There is something about crowd bravado that convinces an individual to go beyond normal boundaries.

We have so-called rules of war against damage to women and children, presumably not the fighters, but we all know it is common. Actions abound in the cities of Ukraine with buildings known to be hospitals or schools or even those designated as “safe houses” for fleeing refugees clearly deliberately targeted.

We have seen this same action in Syria—sometimes mistakenly by our own troops! Or was it a mistake, or perhaps only a part of the war, undeclared or not? Yes, let us not forget that part of the world is pushed to the back of our minds as Russia finds another target.

And there’s Afghanistan, where we and the Russians are both guilty of “war crimes” arguably as bad as the damage we were attempting to mitigate.

Currently, we face a deep dilemma: Just what do we owe Ukraine? Would assisting them help to prevent some of the damage or just pour more fuel on the fire?

We know that our and the Russian military are capable of inflicting great harm on each other and any bystanders. No military conflict damages only one side. The perpetrator and the victim pay a huge price. It matters not the cause, why or who started the whole mess. We can only count up the

### ONE WOMAN’S VIEW

damage done by both sides once it gets to that point. And what does it accomplish? We hope it was worth it.

Worth it for what? Here at home, we, who thought it could not happen to us, as we just escaped the nearest thing to an overthrow of the government we have ever experienced during the transfer of power.

We have one political party declaring anything, anything, vaguely with any connection to the Democrats as dead on arrival, be it the vote access, a well-qualified Supreme Court justice appointee, previously fought for legislation and the like. Furthermore, the party leaders have declared it to be a continuing policy. All this while turning a blind eye to its own unquestionable criminal acts. We go to war now, that is what we are defending.

Even with this sad frightening picture, we are still the best, most promising nation in the world. It is the place where others seek refuge.

Given our own disarray, it is no wonder we have trouble deciding on our responsibility/obligation to this latest conflagration with Russia seeking what is not theirs and the attacked begging, pleading with the rest of the world for help in saving their nation, their land and their lives.

It appears too late for Syria, Yemen and others. What do we do about Ukraine? Let us not fall off that edge. It is a long unpleasant dropdown.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ruth Gadebusch is a former naval officer and continuing community activist.





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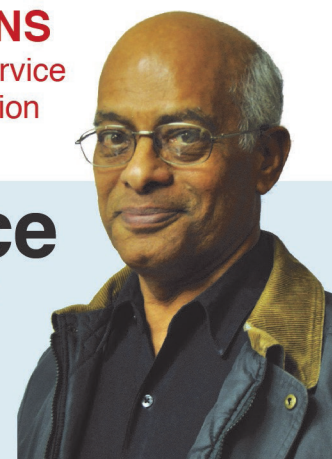
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lograr lo  
imposible!"

**Equity Inclusion Academic Success**

Four Reasons why I am Running:

1. Our educational system is broken. We are failing our children. Producing skilled readers is one key element to stopping the prison population pipeline in Fresno County.
2. Students and Fresno families are living the American Nightmare oppose to the American Dream? Only about 8% of Fresno County Residents hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. This is due to the broken educational system. How can our kids experience upward social mobility without inheriting a good public education?
3. If Fresno County K-12 School Districts are not preparing our students adequately in math as indicated in all the pre-pandemic SBAC scores and state data, "how are we going to produce the next generation of doctors, scientists, chemists, and engineers in the Heart of the Valley (Fresno County)?"
4. Parents and families are concerned that their children lack the basic skills to be hired in a good paying job after graduation. Many students lack the basic skills in reading, math, writing, completing a job application, and how to balance a checkbook (finances).
5. Among the poorest educated cities is Fresno, Detroit, and Cleveland.

Qualifications (Education Experience): Associate Dean, Director of College Center, Vice-Principal, Administrator Designee, College Professor, K-14 Instructor, Tenured Bilingual Cross-Cultural Teacher, Dual Immersion Educator, and over 20 years of experience.

Degrees: Administration Services Credential, Professional Clear BCLAD Teaching Credential, Master's in Education/Supervision, and Bachelor's in Liberal Studies.

**Equidad Inclusión Éxito Académico**

Cuatro razones por la que estoy buscando su voto:

1. El sistema educativo está quebrantado. Estamos fallándole a nuestros hijo(a)s. Produciendo buenos lector(a)s es clave para detener el crecimiento de la población en las prisiones y correccionales de menores!
2. Los estudiantes del condado de Fresno y familias están viviendo "La Pesadilla Americana" en vez de "El Sueño Americano." Solo 8% de los residentes de Fresno han obtenido su bachillerato "B" título más alto de estudio. Esto sucede por la mala educación del condado. Como pueden nuestros hijo(a)s tener modo de subir la escalera económica si no heredan una buena educación pública?
3. Si el Condado de Fresno no está preparando adecuadamente a nuestros hijo(a)s en matemáticas como indican las pruebas del SBAC y datos del estado antes de la pandemia—"¿Cómo vamos a producir la siguiente generación de ingeniero(a)s, químico(a)s, y doctor(a)s en el corazón del Valle (Condado de Fresno)?"
4. Muchos estudiantes del condado de Fresno no están preparados adecuadamente en lectura, escritura, matemáticas, y no pueden completar una aplicación de trabajo, o balancear sus finanzas.
5. Entre las ciudades menos educadas: Fresno, Detroit, y Cleveland.

Calificaciones/Experiencia En Educación: Decano Asociado, Director de Centro de Colegio, Sub Director/Vice Principal, Administrador Designado, Profesor de Colegio, Instructor K-14, Maestro Titular Bilingüe Transcultural, and Educador de Doble Inmersión.

Titulos: Administration Services Credential, Professional Clear BCLAD Teaching Credential, Maestría en Educación/Supervisión, Bachillerato en Estudios Liberales, y más de 20 años de experiencia.

## The Central California Progressive PAC Endorses These Candidates in the June 7 Primary Election

### We want

- Social Justice
- A Living Wage
- An End to Homelessness
- Environmental Justice
- Police Accountability
- Immigrant Rights

If you share these core progressive values, join us as we vote for these candidates on Tuesday, June 7, 2022.



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COUNCIL DISTRICT NO. 1  
<https://annalisaperea.com>



**MIGUEL ARIAS**  
INCUMBENT (RUNNING FOR REELECTION)  
FRESNO CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT NO. 3  
<https://miguelariasforcouncil.com>



**LUIS CHAVEZ**  
INCUMBENT (RUNNING FOR  
REELECTION) FRESNO CITY COUNCIL  
DISTRICT NO. 5



Peace & Social  
Justice Calendar  
May 2022

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

Note: Contact the organizer for up-to-date information on whether meetings are in person or via Zoom.

**SUN 01** **Fresno May First March** Noon. Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno St. Theme: May First, a Day Without Immigrants for an Immigration Reform. Rally and march for International Workers Day to demand dignified treatment, comprehensive migration reform and the rights of the immigrant community for agricultural and labor workers, and all migrant communities. For more info, call 559-776-6642.

**MON 02** **Democratic Women in Action** 6 p.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. Speakers: Fresno City Council Member Luis Chavez and Fresno City Council Candidates Brandon Vang and Annalisa Perea. For more info, contact 559-681-3140 or ggaston1234@aol.com.

**TUE 03** **National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)** 6 p.m. Los Amigo's Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. Speaker: Diane Milutinovich, retired head coach and athletics administrator at Fresno State. Topic: 50th Anniversary of Title IX: History, Myths and Current Issues. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pbyoga.com.

**THU 05** **ArtHop Downtown/Tower District** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. For more info, visit FACarthop on Facebook.

**FRI 06** **CineCulture: Children of the Exodus (Los Niños del éxodo)** 5:15 p.m. Discussion via Zoom. The film documents the displacement of hundreds of communities in the Tierra Caliente de Guerrero, a region in southern Mexico. Many have been forced off their land by organized crime that wants to control drug traffic and exploit the natural resources in that area. Refugees in a strange city, the children reveal the humanitarian crisis of forced displacement as well as the consequences of relocation and violence in their lives. Secure a link to view the film at cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** 9 a.m. Via Zoom. Speaker: Patty Hughes. Topic: Tribal Gaming Initiative. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or claval@comcast.net.

**SAT 07** **Fresno County Democratic Women's Club Fundraiser** 11 a.m. Pardini's, 2257 W. Shaw Ave. Theme: New Beginnings: Expect the New in 2022. Three dynamic speakers talk about what's new in health, education and labor. Live and silent auctions. \$50/person. Sponsorships: \$100 and up. For more info, call 559-289-3989.

**MON 09** **Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)** 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, call 559-392-8718.

**TUE 10** **Stonewall Democratic Club** 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-709-8016 or conantm@aol.com.

**Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC)** 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-287-1308 or debbiejdarden@gmail.com.

**Peace Fresno** 7 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 Van Ness Ave. In person/via Zoom. For more info, call 559-355-9717.

**WED 11** **KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up!** 3 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show. For more info, visit www.kcf.org.

**THU 12** **First Annual Labor's Choice Awards** 5:30 p.m. Toca Madera Winery, 36140 Avenue 9, Madera. Sponsored by the Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council. For ticket purchases, sponsorship information and questions, contact 559-269-0165 or dsavory@myunionworks.com.

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom** 7 p.m. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or taca\_03@ymail.com.

**Central Valley Progressive PAC** 3:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-978-4504 or simone.rhodes@seiu521.org.

**SUN 15** **National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) Fundraiser** 2 p.m. Pat Wolk's Garden, 6661 N. Forkner Ave. Honoree: Howard Watkins for "Lifetime Commitment to Feminism and Social Justice." \$40/person. RSVP to fresnonwpc@gmail.com. For more info, call 559-645-2591.

**MON 16** **California Latina Democrats–Fresno** 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-859-6203 or chaircalatinadems@gmail.com.

**TUE 17** **Central Valley Partnership** 5:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-967-1940 or agrariandemocracy@gmail.com.

**WED 18** **KFCF 88.1 FM: Speaking Truth to Empire** 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit www.kcf.org.

**San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club** 6:30 p.m. Denny's Restaurant, 1110 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, call 559-312-3925.

**Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter** 7 p.m. Via Zoom. Speaker: David Kollen, Xerces Society Ambassador. Topic: Bring Back the Pollinators. An introduction to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and a focus on pollinators and their importance to natural systems and our food system. He will also address how we can play a role in pollinator conservation in our community and in our backyard. For more info or to register, visit sierraclub.org/tehipite. Advance registration is required.

**THU 19** **ArtHop Downtown/Fresno Metro Area** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. For more info, visit FACarthop on Facebook.

**Fresno Move to Amend** 6:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Support a constitutional amendment to establish that corporations are not entitled to constitutional rights and that spending money is different from exercising freedom of speech. For more info, e-mail fresno@movetoamend.org.

**Clovis Democratic Club** 7 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-322-9740 or jenikren@gmail.com.

**SAT 21** **West Fresno Democratic Club** 9 a.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-930-4909 or westfresnodemclub@gmail.com.

**SUN 22** **Democratic Socialists of America** 2 p.m. For more info, visit Facebook @ Democratic Socialists of America, Fresno, CA

**MON 23** **Fresno County Democratic Women's Club** 11 a.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-960-2292 or ms.keshiathomasvp@gmail.com.

**TUE 24** **California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)** 10 a.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 510-663-4086 or californialliance.org.

Submit upcoming community activities to calendar@fresnoalliance.com by the 15th of the month preceding publication.



Monthly meeting the first Tuesday of the Month. Check the web site or Facebook for details.

Fresno, National Women's Political Caucus is a pro-choice, multicultural, intergenerational, and multi-issue grassroots organization dedicated to increasing women's participation in the political process and creating a true women's political power base to achieve equality for all women.

NWPC Fresno recruits, trains and supports pro-choice women candidates for elected and appointed offices at all levels of government regardless of party affiliation.

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HOWARD'S HOPEFULS

Here are my June 7, 2022 primary election voting recommendations. Most are clear choices, some are close calls. I hope you find this list helpful. However you choose to vote, PLEASE VOTE! Thank you.

Howard K. Watkins

FEDERAL

U.S. Senate (2x)	Padilla
Congress #5	Barkley
Congress #13	Arballo
Congress #20	Wood
Congress #21	Costa
Congress #22	Hubbard

STATE

Governor	Newsom
Lieutenant Governor	Kounalakis
Secretary of State	Weber
State Controller	Cohen
State Treasurer	Ma
Attorney General	Bonta
St. Ins. Commissioner	Lara
St. Supt. Pub. Instr.	Thurmond
St. Bd. Of Equal. #1	Murphy
St. Senate #12	Gundy
St. Senate #14	Caballero
St. Senate #16	Hurtado
St. Assembly #27	Soria
St. Assembly #31	Arambula
St. Assembly #35	Sigala

FRESNO COUNTY

Supt. Pub. Instr.	Copher
Assessor/Recorder	Dictos
Aud. Controller/Treas.	Garcia
County Clerk	Kus
District Attorney	Smittcamp
Sheriff	Salazar
Bd. of Supes. #1	Pacheco
Bd. of Supes. #4	Ramirez

CITY OF FRESNO

City Council #1	Perea
City Council #3	Arias
City Council #5	Chavez
City Council #7	Esparza



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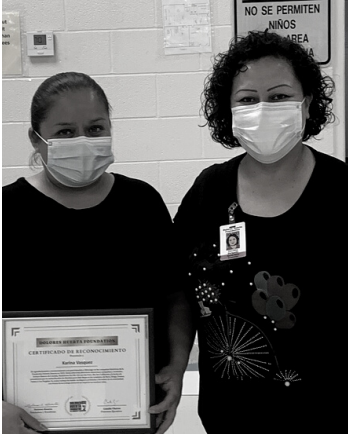
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## Celebrating the Victorious Vecinos Unidos®

With thriving Vecinos Unidos® chapters in Arvin, Lamont, Weedpatch, Greenfield, California City, Rosamond, Bakersfield, Tulare, Lindsay, Woodlake, Caruthers, Sanger, Parlier, Palmdale, and Lancaster, DHF has been instrumental in increasing voter turnout, passing progressive local and statewide legislation. Years ago this was only a dream, a dream turned into reality through the ambition and dedication of the community members who help organize for health access, education equity, and civic engagement. As we continue to support community leaders with hands-on training through collective action we understand that it's important to celebrate the big and small victories. For the first time since the pandemic, each chapter gathered safely to recognize and honor their accomplishments. DHF Organizer Cecilia says, "We wanted them to feel acknowledged for their efforts and hard work."



"I like attending the meetings because it keeps us informed about our rights. I also like attending the education meetings because we are able to bring up issues that happen at our kids' schools and they guide us to resolve the problems..." - Karina Vasquez

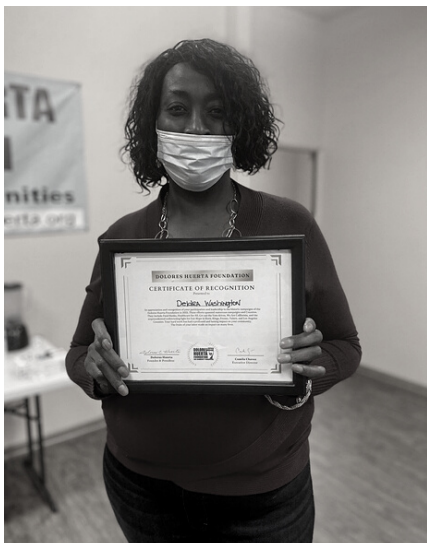
she/her/ella, Arvin Vecino

Pictured Above: Karina [L] & Cecilia [R]



The most memorable member in the Arvin chapter was Karina Vasquez. She was under the spotlight when I shared with everyone that during our big food distribution event, despite her just giving birth to her son she came out to help. It was phenomenal! Each regional chapter organized the event with the Vecinos preferences and dietary restrictions in mind. "I started to plan out the celebration by asking the Vecinos Unidos® for suggestions. Pozole was most voted and we also accommodated those who don't eat meat by having salad available for them. Kids were also spoiled by having pepperoni pizza. We had plenty of desert and treats for everyone," said Cecilia. Each chapter awarded the Vecinos Unidos® members with Certificates of Recognition. This followed an emotional share out where each member had the opportunity to share their favorite experiences in grassroot organizing throughout the various campaigns over the past two years. Karina states, "It was our first gathering after not having any meetings at all and it was nice to have unity as the big family that we are. It was nice to see everyone in person." DHF Organizers also had a raffle opportunity where folks walked away with prizes. However, the prizes weren't the selling point, the people and movement building were. Cecilia says, "They were all very happy to be acknowledged and they felt proud of what they did for their community. Everyone left the celebration thanking us for everything and asking me when the next action was. They were excited to continue to do bigger and better things for this 2022 because they know their actions benefit us all."

"It's the power of both entities [DHF & Vecinos Unidos] that make a difference in the communities." -Van Roberts  
he/him/his, Antelope Valley  
Pictured [L]



## Creating Safe, Supportive, Police-free Schools



Vecino Unidos®, youth and partners gathered at the Kern High School Board meeting (03/07/22) to stand in solidarity with the youth and families traumatized due to police brutality within the Kern High School District. Youth and Vecino Unidos® members were able to provide public comment and provide recommendations to the KHSD board in hopes for a social and policy change that fosters students wellness.

## History was made!



History was made! Bakersfield City Council votes in favor of a community map 5B that will impact communities of color for years to come. Thank you to all the Vecinos Unidos® who advocated and organized throughout the entire redistricting process!

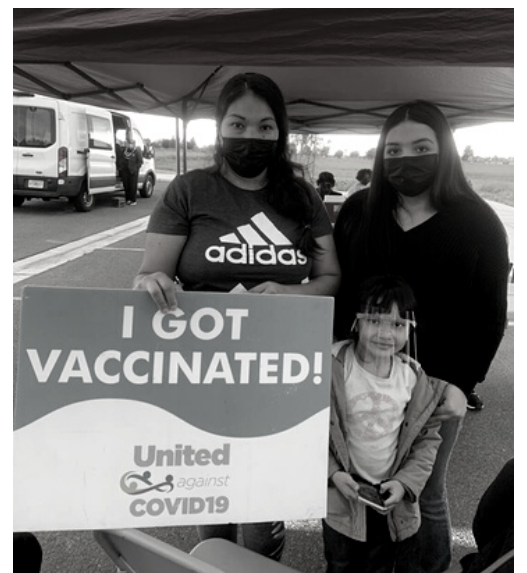
## DHF Youth Program (LYFE)



DHF's Youth Program LYFE welcomes a new opportunity to connect with the community. Youth can now be seen, alongside a DHF Youth Organizer, conducting outreach, hosting raffles and providing resources to families at the California City Farmer's Market every week. Most recently, Youth member Nickolas had the opportunity to speak with Council Member James Creighton and with the Parks and Rec supervisor at a previous event!

## United Against COVID-19

Even on a rainy day 28 Individuals chose to get vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones from the deadly COVID-19 virus at the most recent Delano United Against COVID-19 event. Make an appointment today at [myturn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov) or call 1(661) 383-2588 for more information on a vaccination pop-up clinic near you.



For more information on how you can join the Vecinos Unidos® contact 1-833-564-6343 or 1-833-JOIN-DHF  
To support the organizing work of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, please visit [Give2DHF.org](https://Give2DHF.org)



# Running for Governor: An Interview with Luis J. Rodriguez

By Peter Maiden

Luis J. Rodriguez came to Fresno on April 16 for a kickoff of his Green Party gubernatorial election run. The following week he spoke with the *Community Alliance*’s Peter Maiden by phone from a Southern California backyard, touching on his work and his campaign.

Peter Maiden: You’ve written extensively about your life as a young person, when you were involved in gang life. Your memoir *Always Running* is taught in so many classrooms. When did you start writing?

Luis J. Rodríguez: Well, I would have to say it started when I would go to the public library. At 15, I used to actually live in the streets. I was mostly homeless, sometimes living in garages or things like that.

I would find refuge in the public library downtown. And I think that sparked the idea that I could write. For some reason, I loved all the books I was reading, and then this idea came up that I could write. And I started to write little things here and there. I remember that I really took it on when I was in jail. When I was 16, I was put in the Hall of Justice jail.

And when people were playing cards or goofing around, somebody [might have] a pad of paper, a pencil and I started writing. And I remember that was the beginning of the seed that got planted.

I kept writing even in my most troubled days, even when I was homeless. I carried a little writing pad, and at one point I found an old typewriter that my dad had thrown away, practically. He had it in the garage, just pushed aside with all kinds of things and I picked it up and it was all broken up, but I used it and it helped me type some of my writings at the time.

PM: Was it your writing that allowed you to turn your life around?

LJR: I consider it as one of the keys that helped me turn my life around. There were a lot of things, but writing was definitely important because, you know, the idea that you don’t have a voice, that your voice doesn’t matter I think is very, very prominent, especially in poor communities.

For some reason, and I can’t tell you why, I felt my voice was important. I’ve always had this feeling. Nobody told me that, nobody supported that, I didn’t have anything to back that up other than my own internal push, you know, and my own internal drive, that what I have to say and what I’m seeing in the world is important. And I think that helped because you can get distracted so easily.

You can forget, you can say, “Ah, I don’t want to write.” You can have those moments where you think, “Who cares what I write,” you know what I’m saying? But I never really totally let it go that I needed to write, tell these stories and bring my voice out there.

PM: Did you ever imagine that you would publish poems, stories, essays, a children’s book and a novel and be the recipient of multiple writing awards?

LJR: No, never. Nothing in what I was doing calculated any of that. I had no idea what that part of the world meant. I wanted to write. I think about what I did when I was 15, walking among those shelves, looking for books to read—I think I had a little vision there.

It wasn’t very long. [It was] of having a book with my name on it. You know what I’m saying? Because there were no García’s, no Rodríguez’s, no López’s. There was nobody’s name like that.

And I think that I had an imagination there, a short one where I thought “Man, what if a book with my name was on there.” I mean, that’s kind of a crazy thing for somebody to think about when writing wasn’t what anybody set up for me, but it’s just a vision.

And now, years later, you go to those shelves, and you go to the sections, and I have all my books in those libraries now. So it is something that I couldn’t imagine, but somehow it was connected to some deep destiny thing. It was something that I was meant to do. I’m glad I did it. I could have gone off. I could have not done it. But I’m glad that I did it.

PM: Were you aware as a youth that you wanted to get involved in politics?

LJR: Well, it’s kind of funny! I’ll tell you a story. When I was about 10 years old, Lyndon Johnson was running for president against Goldwater. And we were just kids, and a couple of us—I don’t know if a teacher encouraged this or we just did it—we were passing out stuff about Lyndon Johnson to classmates.

Now people made fun of us. You know, it was a rough school. People bullied you all the time. So they made fun of me. What’s wrong with you? You know, trying to bully me. But for some reason I just did it. I don’t know why.

And again, it’s these little seeds that I look back on and they were planted somehow with me. Because I’ve always had a political end of what I was doing, either running for office or speaking on these issues.

I always looked at politics as a very important part of whatever I was involved with. It’s hard to explain. I don’t want to get mystical about it, I just want to point out that there is some interesting destiny.

PM: You first ran for governor of California on the Green Party ticket in 2014.

LJR: That was the first time as you know. In 2012, I was running for vice president, with Rocky Anderson for president, for the Justice Party. And then in 2014, I ran for governor with the Green Party’s endorsement.

PM: And in that primary you received 66,807 votes.

LJR: That’s what I got.

PM: 1.5% of the vote.

LJR: Right. There were 16 candidates, I think. And I beat all the independents and the [other] third party candidates.

PM: What were the lessons of the 2014 campaign for you, and how might they influence your run this year?

LJR: Well, I learned firsthand that money matters. It’s sad because we don’t have public finance reform in this country. Big money comes in and even if you’re a good candidate, you’re not going to get very far.

We did everything we could to raise money. I don’t want to tell you how much it was—very little. A shoestring budget. But we did a lot with it. We went up and down the state 12 times. I met with a number of key people.



Green Party candidate for California governor Luis J. Rodriguez (center) with supporters at his April 16 campaign kickoff rally in Fresno. Photo by Peter Maiden

I went on marches with people. In Salinas, I marched against police killings; in Watts, I marched for better schools. I just went to as many places as I could, but still big money controls pretty much all the politics. Maybe not locally as much, but especially the big state and national politics.

And that’s a problem. It’s something that I’m willing to speak on. I’m going to try to raise more money this time, but it’s still a big issue when it comes to being heard in politics—that there is no public finance reform.

PM: So, in your campaign this year, what are the central issues of your platform?

LJR: Last time, it was called “Imagine a New California.” Now it’s “Imagine a New California for Shared Well-Being, Then Let’s Build It.” It’s kind of long. I shortened it to “Dream and Deliver.”

I think we need a big dream in the state, a big dream about what the state can be and should be. And then we’ve got to find a big delivery to match it.

We shouldn’t have poverty; we shouldn’t have homelessness. We shouldn’t have deadly police practices. We shouldn’t have [people’s] healthcare all over the place: some people getting it and some not.

We have so many issues, and I don’t think that the fifth largest world economy should be having these kinds of issues. So, my main slogan is “Dream and Deliver.” And that’s what I’m trying to do.



Luis J. Rodríguez speaks in Fresno. Photo by Peter Maiden

PM: You had an event in Fresno on April 16. How did that go for you and how does the Central Valley figure in your campaign?

LJR: Fresno to me is key because it’s the doorway to the whole Central Valley. The Central Valley is the poorest part of the state. Most of the Central Valley is as poor as any place in the deep South.

Agribusiness is huge. And oil drilling. They’ve extracted so much profit from the land, but it’s not coming back to the people. I think it’s important that we emphasize in the Central Valley the problem of a state that is not run with people’s needs in mind.

I’m glad we did it in Fresno. It actually got rainy and got windy. We didn’t have a lot of people there. It wasn’t a good day to actually have a kickoff, but the people that were there were great people, they were amazing. It was a quality of people.

We had Aztec dancers, we had the Brown Berets, we had a union of the homeless. We had a number of people there that were representative of a lot of the issues that I’m concerned about. So, in that sense, it was a success, and it was important that we start there, and we hope to come back to meet with other people up and down the Central Valley.

PM: Is there anything else you’d like to tell our readers?

LJR: Well, only that I really want people to know how easy it is to vote. In the primary, anybody can vote. You don’t have to be Green to vote for me. You can be a Democrat. You can have No Party Preference. Anybody can vote for me in the July primary.

I think that people should make sure they’re registered and vote early. And I would like for them to put me as the primary challenger to [Governor Gavin] Newsom on the way to November. I think I’m the one person that can really challenge him.

Maybe they like Newsom. They can still see me as a proper challenge for Newsom all the way to November, bringing up the issues he leaves behind.

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Peter Maiden is the photo editor for the *Community Alliance* newspaper. He studied media at UC Berkeley. Contact him at [maidenfoto1@gmail.com](mailto:maidenfoto1@gmail.com).

*Love is Our Doctrine*



**Unitarian Universalist**  
Church of Fresno

Sunday Services with Rev. Tim Kutzmark 10:30 a.m.

Children and Youth Religious Exploration Sundays 10:30 a.m.

UU Buddhist Study and Meditation Wednesdays 2:00 p.m.

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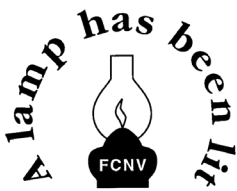
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# Fresno Center for Nonviolence 2022

May 2022

Your welcomed to come celebrate the Fresno Center  
for Nonviolence on Saturday, June 11,2022.  
Tickets available soon



Edited by  
Richard Gomez.

*Dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through*  
**SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY**  
**1584 N. Van Ness Ave., 93728 - [www.centerfornonviolence.org](http://www.centerfornonviolence.org) - email: [info@centerfornonviolence.org](mailto:info@centerfornonviolence.org)**  
**- (559)237-3223. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FresnoCenterforNonviolence/>**



Environmentalist Bill McKibben to speak at the  
Unitarian Universalist Church in Fresno on the  
afternoon of Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

## Bill McKibben speaker of FCNV 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*This article is from a transcript form [Democracy Now!](#) Apologies to Amy Goodman's other guest Svitlana Romanko for her comments being removed for space. To read the transcript in its full goto: [Bill McKibben: Latest IPCC Climate Report Underscores "Fossil Fuel Is at the Root of Our Problems" | Democracy Now!](#)*

**AMY GOODMAN:** I want to get both of your actions to this climate report, beginning with Bill McKibben, getting lost, to say the least, in the top news of Russia's war on Ukraine. But the significance of this and how it directly connects to the war?

**BILL McKIBBEN:** Well, yeah, I mean, first of all, it's not as if there's something brand new in what they said, but what's new is the tone. I mean, every time the **IPCC** (the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,) issues another report, we're further down this road without having done anything. And it was quite interesting, Amy, to listen to António Guterres, the secretary-general [of the UN]. This man is the top diplomat on the planet, so he's used to speaking in diplomatic language. He has abandoned that. He's also the one guy whose political jurisdiction is the whole Earth, and he's clearly scared.

He said, among other things — I thought this was maybe the most important... because of the amazing work she's been doing on banks. He said, "At this point it is economically and morally insane to continue new investment in the development of fossil fuels." And yet, last week we also saw the release of this new report showing that the biggest U.S. banks are doing just that, which is why at Third Act we've got this pledge to get people to, at year's end, cut up their credit cards from Citi, Chase, Wells Fargo and BofA [Bank of America] if they haven't changed.

But that report reminds us that fossil fuel is at the root of our problems. It is at the root of the despotisms we see in Russia or in Saudi Arabia or indeed the Koch brothers' efforts to deform our own democracy. And it's also at the root of the biggest existential challenge that we've ever faced. Remember, it was late last month when we watched temperatures in the Antarctic climb to 70 degrees Fahrenheit above normal. That's a horror that connects so deeply with what's going on in the Ukraine, and they both need to scare us to the, really, core of our beings.

*Bill McKibben, author, environmentalist, founder of Third Act and [350.org](#), co-*

FCNV 30th Anniversary will be  
Saturday June 11th at the Unitarian  
Universalist Church. Currently at  
this writing we have commitments from Bill  
McKibben who will be in the Bay Area earlier in  
that week. We are so happy to have him come  
down to Fresno to speak to us. He also is having  
his latest book for sale at the event.



### Way of Peace Awardees:

Individual awards:

**Ron Martin:** founder/activist of  
"Fresnans Against Fracking," member of  
the Sierra Club.

**Nayamin Martinez:** Executive Director  
of the Central California Environmental  
Justice Network.

**Ann Caruthers.**

Organizational award:  
**Citizens Climate Lobby**

Youth Award:

**Pratham Hombal, Andrew Wong,  
and Adam Staley (from Buchanan  
High School)**

**KFCF 88.1 FM**

**Stir it, UP!**

**Wednesday April 13<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm**



In May, our radio show will be hosted by Joshua Shurley with his guests TBA soon.  
For more information call on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at (559) 237-3223 or check our website at  
[www.centerfornonviolence.org](http://www.centerfornonviolence.org)

In April, Gerry Bill who interviewed David Waters, a war tax resister on the speaker's bureau of the National War  
Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee. To hear it again:  
<https://soundcloud.com/user-32180140/0411322-fcnvs-stir-it-up>

Our radio show in March was hosted by Josh Shurely with his guest, Marianne Kast from the Fresno League of  
Women Voters on the topic of voting rights. To hear it again:  
<https://soundcloud.com/user-32180140/stir-it-up-030922>







LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

LA MANZANA COMUNITARIA

## Una Comunidad Necesitada

Por Paulina Cruz

Desde finales del año pasado, Visalia Planned Parenthood había hecho arreglos para mudarse de su ubicación en el centro de la ciudad a un lugar más grande en Mooney Blvd. Planned Parenthood habría ocupado uno de los muchos edificios vacíos que rodean el Sequoia Mall y ofrecería una clínica de rango completo. La clínica actual en la calle Stevenson es pequeña y solo está abierta tres días a la semana, mientras que una ubicación más grande les permitiría ayudar a más personas y estaría abierta 6 días a la semana. Los planes para la clínica fueron aprobados por el consejo de la ciudad sin problemas a mediados de diciembre del año pasado.

Desafortunadamente las cosas cambiaron cuando David Paynter presentó una apelación. Paynter posee varias propiedades alrededor del lugar al que Planned Parenthood intentaba mudarse y citó la disponibilidad de estacionamiento como una preocupación. Para cualquiera que conozca a Visalia, esto es exagerado, ya que los estacionamientos que rodean el centro comercial moribundo están más desolados que la cuenta de ahorros de un estudiante universitario. A lo largo de los años, las empresas han estado abandonando el Sequoia Mall e incluso con la incorporación más reciente de Raising Canes y una variedad de camiones de comida, no hay suficientes negocios para ocupar la mitad de los lugares de estacionamiento en un día determinado.

Debido a las crecientes presiones y amenazas violentas de personas que se oponen al derecho a decidir, Planned Parenthood y el propietario del local decidieron separarse amistosamente, dejando a Planned Parenthood en búsqueda de una ubicación diferente. Esto no impidió que los residentes de Visalia tanto en contra como a favor del derecho a elegir, asistieran a la reunión del consejo del 7 de Marzo para expresar sus opiniones sobre la situación durante más de una hora. Algunos de los oradores en contra del derecho a

## Las nuevas prioridades de deportación

Por Maritza Lizeth Félix

La Policía de Phoenix detuvo a Luis (se omite su apellido para proteger su privacidad) en mayo de 2008. Parecía ser una parada de tránsito de esas que ameritan una advertencia, quizá una multa, pero todo se complicó. Luis, quien vive desde hace más de 20 años en Arizona, habla inglés perfecto y sin acento. Saludó con naturalidad a los oficiales, quienes al escucharlo decidieron seguir revisando la camioneta y tardaron a voltear a verlo. Cuando alzaron la vista se dieron cuenta de que Luis es moreno, muy moreno.

De inmediato le pidieron la licencia, pero la de Luis era de México y tenía más de 15 años vencida. Nunca sacó un permiso o identificación en Estados Unidos, ni siquiera cuando era fácil hacerlo, porque quería seguir debajo del radar en espera de una reforma migratoria. Su camioneta estaba a nombre de un tal “Jhonny”, el mismo que aparecía con su foto en la tarjeta de seguro social “chueco” que traía en la cartera. No hizo falta decir más. A las pocas horas fue trasladado a un centro migratorio con una orden de deportación por cumplir. Duró casi tres meses encerrado. Salí, dice él, por un millagro. Luis se rehusó a firmar la salida voluntaria. Pelió su caso dentro y fuera de detención. Un abogado logró demostrar el daño irreversible que provocaría la repatriación en la familia y le dieron un permiso temporal de trabajo. El golpe emocional y económico fue devastador, pero se consolaba al saber que no fue expulsado del país y que, al final, esa detención le había solucionado la vida y lo había sacado de las sombras.

El constructor no tiene antecedentes penales y se cuida de no inmiscuirse en situaciones peligrosas o que puedan comprometer su buena conducta. Paga impuestos, ahora con su nombre y su seguro, y se siente—a pesar de su estado migratorio confuso—como un ciudadano ejemplar. Pero no tiene los mismos derechos. Por su buena conducta, la puntualidad y la situación familiar, el juez de inmigración que llevaba su caso decidió darle carpetazo justo antes de que Donald Trump se convirtiera presidente; le dijo que de esa manera solo era cuestión de tiempo para que sus hijos pudieran pedirlo y regularizar su estado. Mientras, cada año tendría que renovar



Muro fronterizo entre EE.UU. y México en Tijuana. Las cruces representan migrantes fallecidos al intentar cruzar rumbo a EE.UU. .Atrás pueden observarse torres de vigilancia electrónica. Foto cortesía de The Commons

su autorización de empleo e identificaciones y evitar meterse

en problemas.

Pero con la llegada de Trump, Luis se convirtió en un caso de alta prioridad de deportación. Todos los migrantes que estaban en el sistema en la misma situación también recibieron un blanco en la espalda. Las autoridades federales retomaron las redes y las visitas a domicilio. Luis solo recibió cartas. Regresaron las citas con los agentes de inmigración y el miedo de ser expulsado del país por cualquier razón. Acudió con miedo a cada entrevista y, antes de presentarse en las oficinas de ICE, dejaba órdenes en casa de qué hacer en caso de que no voliera. Fueron cuatro años de vivir en constante temor.

Pero esta semana Luis sintió alivio. Este lunes entraron en vigor las nuevas prioridades de deportación en las que no para la seguridad nacional, pública o fronteriza. Justo a tiempo, su hijo mayor, quien es ciudadano naturalizado de Estados Unidos, cumplirá 21 años en octubre y el abogado les dijo que ya pueden empezar la petición migratoria familiar. Hoy puede respirar más tranquilo. Una vez más, las autoridades deberían destinar los recursos en sacar a los criminales y no perseguir a todos los indocumentados solo por estar parados en este país.

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*Maritza Lizeth Félix es una periodista, productora y escritora independiente en Arizona. Nació en Magdalena de Kino, Sonora, México. Su trabajo ha sido publicado en importantes periódicos de Estados Unidos, México y otros lugares del mundo, así como en las principales cadenas de televisión de habla hispana Univisión y Telemundo. Actualmente trabaja de manera independiente para la Organización Editorial Mexicana, Channel 4, Proyecto Puente, Uniradio Noticias, Telemax y Prensa Arizona.*

## Efecto de la Pandemia En Trabajadores de la Tercera Edad

Por Eduardo Stanley

Covid 19 alteró nuestras vidas. La pandemia no ha quedado atrás a pesar de las decisiones de algunos gobiernos de “relajar” las medidas preventivas para evitar el contagio—por ejemplo, no exigir el uso de mascarillas en lugares cerrados. En parte se argumenta que las vacunas han contribuido a crear inmunidad frente al temible virus.

Sin embargo tenemos que recordar que en EE.UU. hay casi un millón de fallecios por Covid 19, según datos del CDC (Center for Disease Control) de la última semana del mes de abril.

“Hemos sufrido mucho por las familias que se enferman”, dice Israel Toledo, de 73 años y residente de Porterville, en el Condado de Tulare. “Tengo amigos que han muerto, no estaban vacunados”. Tampoco estaba vacunado su nieto cuando se enfermó, pero después de recuperarse se vacunó.

Toledo asegura que se cuida, además de tener las dos dosis de la vacuna y el refuerzo. “Si estas vacunado igual puedes enfermarte pero ya no es tan grave”, comenta. El se aisló desde inicios de la pandemia, a comienzo del año 2020.

Toledo, un jornalero agrícola jubilado, asegura que la pandemia afectó la dinámica del trabajo en el campo: muchos jornaleros dejaron de trabajar para evitar contagios, lo que afectó a sus familias. María León, de 66 años y residente de Poplar, comenta que durante el aislamiento ella y su familia padecieron de fuerte estrés. “Al principio no había mascaras así que yo empecé a hacer”, afirma. “No podíamos visitar a nuestras familias... Pensábamos que esto iba a pasar pronto, pero resulta que no, la pandemia todavía sigue”.

Continúa en página 19