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State AG Tells Environmentalists He Has Their Back

By Vic Bedoian

California Attorney General Rob Bonta made a whirlwind visit to Fresno on Aug. 9 to hear from residents living in communities that are environmentally and economically stressed. What he heard were concerns over a litany of problems such as air pollution, industrial development, deficient infrastructure and public officials who are unresponsive to community needs.

Soon after Bonta became the state's attorney general, he expanded the Environmental Justice Bureau. Since then, he has been using the tools of that office to investigate problems around the state such as warehouse development in the Inland Empire, Walmart failing to safely dispose of hazardous chemicals and holding farmers accountable for the harm caused by pesticide drift.

Bonta met with residents of Calwa, a small unincorporated community south of Fresno. It's a place feeling the full impact of environmental justice distresses. He sat with a circle of a couple of dozen people at the Friends of Calwa office, listening to their presentations and expressing his support.

"Your fight is my fight. We care deeply about environmental justice, making sure that every person in every community—regardless of your zip code, your income, your race, your ethnicity—has access to clean water and clean air and a healthy and safe environment."



California Attorney General Rob Bonta met with residents of Calwa, a small unincorporated community south of Fresno. It's a place feeling the full impact of environmental justice distresses. Photo by Vic Bedoian

"And there are frontline communities that are being hurt the worst, that are overburdened and under-resourced." Bonta vowed to fight for those communities as attorney general.

The discussion circle of mainly Latinas and other women of color included longtime Calwa residents. They told the attorney general in English and Spanish about the range of problems they have to endure in their everyday lives because of where they live.

Laura Moreno is Friends of Calwa's leader and a lifelong resident. She expressed concerns that reflected the anxieties faced by many residents here.

"Calwa has struggled with road maintenance and asthma because of industry. We have bad air. I have asthma, my father has asthma...and I think that it is mostly because of industry. The county, the city needs to come in and actually see what our community needs."

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No New Oil and Gas Leasing on Our Public Lands

By Cesar Aguirre and Nayamin Martinez

A major victory occurred on Aug. 1 when a federal judge accepted an agreement between environmental justice organizations, conservation groups and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that will suspend new oil and gas leases across more than one million acres of public lands in California's Central Valley and Central Coast.

But that is not all. Another agreement requires the BLM to conduct new environmental analysis before drilling is allowed on 4,000 acres that were leased in Kern County in December 2020.

These agreements require federal officials to disclose the harm that fracking does to the air, water and communities, something that the BLM has done poorly in the past.

Another part of its work that the BLM has not done properly is to evaluate the significant harms of oil extraction and fracking to communities and the environment before authorizing new leases. On the contrary, the BLM has approved leases for new oil wells, the most recent ones in December 2020 in Kern, without properly analyzing and documenting the impacts to air and water quality and public health.

Although all types of oil drilling pose unacceptable risks to public health, safety and the climate crises, fracking is more dangerous. A 2015 report from the California Council on Science and Technology concluded that fracking in California happens at unusually shallow depths, dangerously close



Community members from Fresno and Kern counties delivered more than 90,000 comments to the Bureau of Land Management offices in Bakersfield in June 2019. Photo by Cesar Aguirre

to underground drinking water supplies, with unusually high concentrations of chemicals, including substances dangerous to human health and the environment.

And, according to BLM estimates, up to 90% of new wells on federal lands are fracked. New drilling in general, but in particular fracking, would have intensified air and water pollution in the Central Valley, which already has some of the most polluted air in the nation and faces water scarcity and drought.

In 2019, the BLM, under the Trump administration, announced the end to a moratorium of new onshore oil and gas leases on California public lands, which began in 2012, when climate and community groups successfully sued the BLM and the moratorium was established.

Communities in the Central Valley and the Central Coast that were threatened by the end of the moratorium

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California to Launch New Hate Initiative with a Focus on Healing

By Jenny Manrique

Hate crimes and hate-related incidents have been on the rise in recent years, prompting fear and anger across communities. But according to experts and civil rights advocates, more public engagement—not increased policing—is key to addressing the issue.

And, they say, raising public awareness is a critical step toward individual and communal healing.

"Hate doesn't happen in a vacuum," says Becky L. Monroe with the California Civil Rights Department. "If we're truly going to address hate incidents and hate crimes, we have to enforce all of our civil rights protections."

Monroe, among a panel of speakers during a media briefing hosted by Ethnic Media Services, referenced her former mentor at the Department of Justice, Ron Wakabayashi, whose family was among some 120,000 Japanese Americans sent to concentration camps during World War II.

"He used to say: 'There is a reason for hope, and that reason is actually in all the people who are targeted for hate.' Many communities who had every reason to give up on this country refused to give up on the idea of making this a more just place for all."

In response to the rise in hate crimes and hate incidents, California's Civil Rights Department is launching the California vs. Hate initiative, a resource line and network to support victims and to increase awareness around what is a hate crime and how to report them when they occur.

California state and federal law define a hate crime as a criminal act targeting individuals on the basis of gender, race, nationality, religion or political affiliation.

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"Industry is not what Calwa needs. They need to take more interest in what our community needs. We need transportation. We want green space. We want affordable housing.

"There's a lot of things. They haven't even come to find out what our community needs. They haven't done any outreach to us."

Likewise, Fresno County has not conducted outreach to small towns and unincorporated villages regarding the Measure C reauthorization campaign. That controversial and ongoing transportation tax will be on the ballot in the Nov. 8 election. Neither has the County included in Measure C the kind of infrastructure that people in communities like Calwa say they need.

Most of the issues that Calwa residents brought up were underscored by Bonta earlier this year when he criticized Fresno County's General Plan. In a letter to County officials, he outlined the General Plan's numerous violations of the state's environmental laws and even civil rights violations.

He warned officials that targeting south Fresno neighborhoods such as Calwa and Malaga for industrial development likely violates housing discrimination laws. Those regulations prohibit land-use practices resulting in pollution that could adversely impact current residents. Such effects are considered a form of discrimination.

Bonta also took the County to task for its failure to take residents' concerns into account when crafting the General

Plan.

In addition to his warning letter regarding the County's General Plan, Bonta asked that the County hold off on putting Measure C on the ballot until a more balanced transportation plan could be crafted. Fresno County supervisors voted to put it on the ballot anyway, as did the Fresno City Council.

California's top law enforcement official says that he's willing to use the power of his office on behalf of people like those in the room, emphasizing that people who live in these targeted communities have his full backing, "You are all my constituents. I care about all of that and will fight for all of you."

"And part of this specific circle, this moment, hearing your story, your lived experiences, your testimonials, that has always been for me, as an elected leader, the most powerful, informative, motivational thing."

When people tell him they face injustice, Bonta says that is what "really inspires me to act."

Bonta was asked how cities can have robust economic development and still provide for clean, safe neighborhoods with the amenities that many other places in Fresno take for granted. He replied that decision makers have accepted the wrong paradigm of development for too long. He insists it doesn't need to be that way.

"Look what we did in Fontana. We got involved in a lawsuit when a warehouse was proposed, and it was being developed right by sensitive receptors by schools and students and people.

"And we got involved in a way that allowed for there to be buffer zones and electrification and uplifting and protection of the communities while a warehouse was still built.

"And so that was, I believe, nation leading. It was precedent-setting and provides a good blueprint for the answer to your question—how do you do both."

Bonta pointed out that county planning agencies can grow their economies and uplift residents at the same time and that the two goals are not mutually exclusive as shown in Fontana. And he promised that with his Environmental Justice Bureau, he plans to show that it can work in other places as well.



California Attorney General Rob Bonta listening to Calwa residents during his visit to Fresno on Aug. 9.
Photo by Vic Bedoian

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Vic Bedoian is an independent radio and print journalist working on environmental justice and natural resources issues in the San Joaquin Valley. Contact him at vicedoian@gmail.com.

No New Oil and Gas Leasing on Our Public Lands

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mobilized in strong opposition to the new leases for drilling and fracking. In jeopardy were not only areas that have been already heavily affected by oil extraction—Kern, Fresno, Kings, Ventura, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties—but also places that have not experienced it before, including Tulare and Madera counties.

Despite BLM efforts to limit public participation by holding only one public meeting for the entire region and not offering interpretation for non-English speakers, buses with hundreds of concerned residents from Madera, Fresno and Tulare counties traveled at the end of May 2019 to Bakersfield and waited for hours to give public comments.

Furthermore, 85 community and advocacy groups submitted written comments and on June 10, the last day to submit public comments, environmental and community groups again traveled to Bakersfield to deliver more than 90,000 public comments opposing the new leases.

When all these efforts failed and the BLM announced that more than one million acres would be open to leases, a diverse group of organizations that included environmental justice groups (e.g., the Central California Environmental Justice Network), conservation groups (e.g., The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Earthjustice, the Natural Resources Defense Council), business groups (e.g., Patagonia) and even the State of California filed lawsuits challenging this decision based on the failure of the BLM to conduct a full environmental assessment.

The agreement that was finally reached between the BLM and the plaintiffs gives some hope that at least for now our public lands will remain protected from the greediness of the oil industry. It is already torturing to the eyes, our health and the environment to see the thousands of oil rigs that are scattered throughout Kern County and some parts of Kings and Fresno counties. We do not need more of that harm in our iconic national parks, such

as Sequoia and Kings Canyon, that were included in the proposed leases that the BLM was willing to authorize.

Fossil fuel extraction has wreaked havoc on numerous neighborhoods in Kern County for far too long, putting people's lives at risk. We do not want that risk to be exported to threaten the wildlife and ecosystems of our public lands and to exacerbate our climate crisis.

In the words of Daniel Rossman, the California deputy director with The Wilderness Society, “this agreement represents an important step towards ensuring our public lands are managed to prioritize people, clean air, clean water and climate over fossil fuel industry profits.”

This win feels good. It shows that the activism of diverse stakeholders can really make a difference in protecting our backyards from the oil industry.

But there is much more work to be done. Our elected officials remain cozy with Chevron, Aera and many other oil companies. We still need to continue pushing Governor Newsom to stop oil permits; the ban on fracking he announced last year is not enough, as fracking is just one of several oil extraction methods.

At the national level, we need to ensure that President Biden fulfills his campaign promise of locking new oil extraction to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

But the road ahead will not be easy. As the climate crisis continues and gas prices remain high, who are our politicians going to hear? Us or the oil and gas industry that cries that it is severely affected by the war in Ukraine and tighter environmental regulations.

All while they continue to rake in record profits (in 2021, Shell, Chevron and BP made more than \$75.5 billion in profits according to the watchdog organization Accountable.US) as communities pay the price at the gas pump and in the form of increased pollution and climate change effects including but not limited to wildfires, heat waves and drought. But don't get discouraged: Enjoy this victory and recharge for the many battles ahead.

* * * * *

Cesar Aguirre is a community organizer for the Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN) in Bakersfield.

Navamin Martinez is the executive director of the CCEIN.

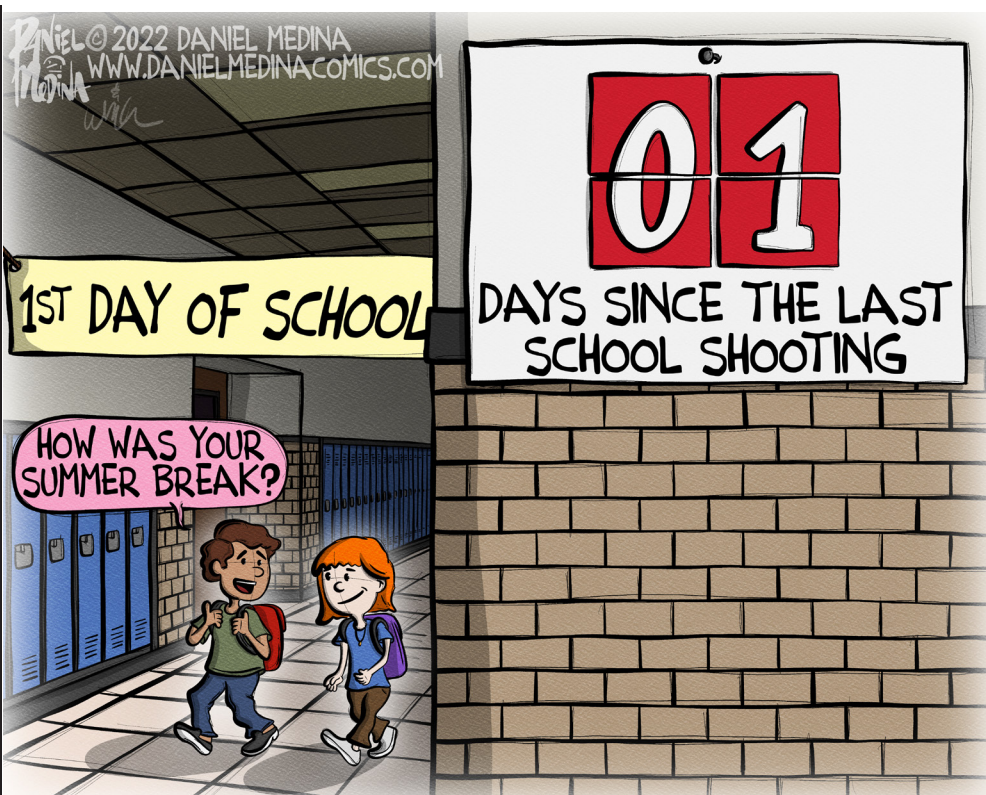
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Is Our Democracy Working?

President Biden finally decided to help millions of college graduates stranded by thousands of dollars in debt. Those who owe money they borrowed to pursue an education can see their debt reduced up to \$20,000.

The United States has one of the most expensive educational systems in the world—if not the most expensive. This is a nonsense system in which people from low-income status, or even the middle class, end up deeply in debt after four or more years of college. So thousands of young people start their professional careers—if they get a job in their field—with \$30,000 or more in debt.

While the Biden decision is positive and welcomed, let’s keep in mind that the system is still in place and a new generation of college students is already borrowing money to pursue a career. And while students are doing so, most colleges are investing their funds in the stock market and asking for more donations instead of helping students exit their debt.

This is because in the United States higher education is not for everybody. So much for our democracy.

And talking about democracy, recently Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias mentioned that the Fresno County district attorney (DA), Lisa A. Smittcamp, is acting politically. Arias referred to the fact that the DA’s office charged Fresno City Council President Nelson Esparza with one felony count of attempted extortion and one count of attempting to violate the city charter, indicating that Esparza threatened the employment of former Fresno city attorney Doug Sloan. Apparently,

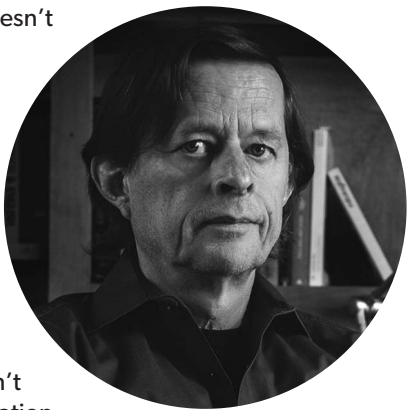
the evidence is weak, but that doesn’t bother Smittcamp.

It appears that Smittcamp, a conservative, acts fast when a potential suspect of anything that could be labeled as a crime—or something close to it—is a Democrat. Remember when she charged Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula of child abuse in 2019? Child Protective Services got involved in the domestic dispute and didn’t produce any serious recommendation about the case or take the child away from her dad. Yet, Smittcamp put Dr. Arambula on trial, and lost.

The evidence was weak. Or nonexistent. Yet she moved ahead. This is taxpayers’ money wasted in a nonsense and pathetic politically motivated performance.

Somebody should read Smittcamp her responsibilities and duties. In the meantime, our democracy is not properly working.

Till next month.



Bill Simon, RIP

Bill Simon, of Fresno, passed on Aug. 17 due to complications from diabetes. He was 79. Simon was raised in the Chicago area and served as a priest in the Archdiocese of Chicago. After leaving the priesthood, he settled in Fresno where he raised a family, worked for PG&E.

Later, he devoted his retirement to local activism as a member of Peace Fresno, chair of the Fresno area chapter of the ACLU and chair of the Bishop Steinbock Homeless Advocacy Committee, among other concerns. He was also frequently published letters to the editor in the *Fresno Bee*, lending his thoughts on a variety of issues.

Visitation is 4:30 p.m.–8 p.m. on Sept. 7 at St. Paul Catholic Newman Center (1572 E. Barstow Ave., Fresno). The funeral mass is at St. Paul Catholic Newman Center on Sept. 8 at 10 a.m.



Bill Simon (left) was a dedicated activist in the local area as a member of Peace Fresno, ACLU and other organizations. Photo courtesy of Mike Rhodes



Another name for “Critical Race Theory” is “Actual American History”

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The *Community Alliance* is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly newspaper is to build a powerful progressive movement that will support social, environmental 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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San Joaquin: An American Dream Turned into a Nightmare

By Paulina Cruz

The City of San Joaquin, a small incorporated city in west Fresno County, has been openly accused multiple times by various residents of scamming them.

Buying your own home is part of the classic American dream. It is a sign of economic stability, an investment your children can rely on once you’ve passed away. But much like the American dream, owning a home has become increasingly impossible for the disappearing middle class and low-income families.

Over the past couple of decades, the City of San Joaquin offered loans to families that desperately needed repairs to their homes or assistance with purchasing a home. This was largely done with funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the California Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) and the Cal Home Program.

Unfortunately, something designed to lift up those in need has landed them in more distress than before. Many of the recipients now regret having applied all together. These individuals are lost in varying issues, not sure how they got into this situation and feeling tricked by their local government.

Each case is different, some being surprised with terms and rates they were not aware of. Or trying to live in homes without functioning appliances. Others are even facing threats of eviction. Regardless of the severity, they feel more at a loss than before reaching out for help.

One woman, a hardworking mother, shared concerns, confusion and frustration. She received the loan to help fix several urgent issues in her home. However, she was shocked to find out the agreement she was verbally told was not what she signed. She claims agreeing to a loan of approximately \$30,000, which she would not have to pay unless she sold the house. Instead, the loan was nearly double that amount and would have to be paid if she ever moved or passed away.

How could such a severe “miscommunication” occur? Well, like many in her situation, she was never given a translator. How can someone truly consent to an agreement without fully understanding the language the terms are set in? This seems like something that could have been easily avoided considering California has so many Spanish speakers (in the top three states with a high percentage of Spanish speakers).

As if this wasn’t bad enough, the amount and terms are unfortunately not the only issues with her loan. Everything that was “fixed” is now worse or just as bad as when the contractors arrived. She explained that even the smaller “fixes,” such as her kitchen cabinets, are falling apart. The contractors hired under the CDBG program never supplied her with a clear breakdown of what was being fixed and what the costs were. She has no idea what the money went to but is convinced it didn’t actually go to fixing her home.

The son of another loan recipient shared a similar story. He claims his parents’ house is now in complete disarray, after it was supposed to have been fixed. His parents had been displaced for months waiting on repairs that never

seemed to end. When he went to check on the house, he was shocked by its awful condition. He states that the pipes need to be replaced as the water that comes out is so filthy they can’t even use it to wash clothing. He has also had to bring in professionals in an attempt to fix several issues with the installation of the air-conditioning and heating unit of the house.

Everyone we spoke with agreed that the workmanship was shoddy at best and negligent at worst. It was clear to them that the workers had no idea what they were doing. They thoroughly believed the workers had little to no experience and were not equipped to have made the “repairs” in the first place.

Many San Joaquin Valley residents have stepped forward, sharing their horror stories or those of loved ones who feel as if they do not have a voice. Some toe the line cautiously, waiting and hoping things will end in their favor.

One of these individuals is Delia Montana, who even launched a lawsuit against the City of San Joaquin in 2018. She had tirelessly requested documents from the City to better understand why a debt was being claimed on her aunt’s home. As far as her family knew, the debt had fully been paid off several years ago. In 2019, the suit failed, but not without calling more attention to the issue at hand.

People in need reached out to their local government and now find themselves worse off. They are left lost, waiting in limbo. Not sure what is going to happen to their homes and livelihood. Wondering when they will get concrete answers to their questions and what those answers will result in.

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

Rehabilitating the Finances of California Incarceration

By Morghan Vélez Young and Jaime Leyva

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB), the Transformative In-Prison Workgroup (TPW) and many more community-based organizations and coalitions are shining a light on taxpayer funds that are invested in imprisoning bodies. These organizations are important for many reasons, but here we focus on their contributions to problematizing the uses of taxpayer dollars for harming bodies.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) maintains an annual budget of \$14 billion for incarcerating a daily average of 103,000 people. The top uses of these funds go to prison healthcare (\$3.7 billion), paying counties to keep incarcerated people local (\$255 million), Covid prevention and safety practices (\$240 million), facility improvements (\$132 million) and substance abuse services (\$126 million).

Ultimately, the budget is geared toward fulfilling the wider White supremacy directives of maintaining population control and oppression by disproportionately incarcerating BIPOC and poor people. The very history of prison use immediately following the Civil War was officially and overtly about the imprisonment of Black Americans as a secondary means of enslavement and chattel labor.

First the Black Codes and then Jim Crow laws ensured that generations of Black Americans were incarcerated for non-crimes, providing a powerful means of enacting U.S. White supremacy. U.S. prison use has maintained these purposes even as prison use jumped again with high rates of incarceration via racialized laws and their implementation in the War on Drugs. The CDCR simply fulfills the instructions of the racist intentionality of incarceration.



First the Black Codes and then Jim Crow laws ensured that generations of Black Americans were incarcerated for non-crimes, providing a powerful means of enacting U.S. White supremacy. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation simply fulfills the instructions of the racist intentionality of incarceration.
Photo by Zulmaury Saavedra/Unsplash

While White supremacist frameworks ensure racism and classism remain robust within all institutions, abolitionism is frequently framed as the looniest and most left-field idea. We argue that this misframing is really about deflecting attention away from public awareness of the White supremacy priority of the legal system and its prisons.

Abolitionism is a threat to business-as-usual because it requires the end of White supremacy.

The control and oppression of BIPOC communities is the top priority no matter the public relations efforts of institutions. White supremacy in other Western countries has unfolded according to the cultural features of those spaces. We can see the variations in White supremacy in the ways that money is spent, or not, on imprisoning bodies.

In some Western spaces, White supremacy control and oppression of BIPOC communities seem to occur outside the use of incarceration. This is a helpful insight for consideration in the U.S. context. Without anti-racist and decolonizing practices, control and oppression of BIPOC communities simply reshapes itself, shapeshifting because White supremacy is still the ultimate priority.

In Western cross-cultural examples, no one deserves an award for a lesser fixation on imprisoning bodies; White supremacy is likely enacted in a kaleidoscope of other ways even when it doesn’t look like California’s investment in entrapping BIPOC and poor communities generationally within the legal system.

CURB, the TPW, IJ and many more community-based organizations are important illuminators of the financial agenda backing the White supremacist methods of controlling BIPOC and poor bodies. They are also powerful examples of creative solution-building within a White supremacy society.

They problematize the uses of taxpayer dollars by indicating the minimal amount needed to engage in rehabilitative programming inside or outside of prisons and create revealing contrasts to denormalizing the management and punishment of our loved ones.

To learn more about prison abolitionism, check out the podcast *Abolition Is for Everybody*.

Morghan Vélez Young, Ph.D., is an educator and researcher focused on transformative opportunities for those involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. She consults and trains through browngirlhealing.org and lectures in the Anthropology Department at Fresno State. Contact her at mvelezyoung@csufresno.edu.

Jaime Leyva facilitates restorative processes for persons returning to the community from prison. Located in Fresno, he creates healthy and safe spaces for healing and restoration. Contact him at jaime@communityjusticecenter.com.

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Some of the organizations that are challenging the uses of California taxpayer funds deliver programming inside of prisons, and still other organizations call for prison abolition. No matter the programming or the call for prison closures, the organizations draw attention to business-as-usual practices that earmark billions for imprisoning bodies as if these are “natural” and “inevitable” practices in terms of both state money management and population management.

For example, CURB focuses its organizing efforts on the reduction of “the number of incarcerated people in California, reduc[tion of] the number of prison and jails in our state, and shift[ing] wasteful spending away from incarceration and toward health community investments.” Its constant tracking of spending, organizing for powerful alternatives and redirecting funds into communities is well known across legal system reformers.

The TPW invests its coalition’s attention in “offering trauma-informed healing programs in California and New York prisons” with an advocacy and programming agenda. It spends a significant amount of time drawing attention to

state budgets and the need for moving carceral funds into research-informed in-prison programming.

The 1% Campaign is one example of the TPW’s advocacy efforts, working with the California legislature to focus 1% of the CDCR budget on in-prison programming.

Furthermore, Initiate Justice (IJ) undertakes robust policy and organizing strategies to “end incarceration by activating the power of the people it directly impacts.” It engages the California legislature to write laws and policies that benefit people behind bars and change political trends, and comprise a team of members inside and outside of prisons.

Prison abolitionism is the strongest money-saving approach. More important, however, prison abolitionism has historically set its goal on deconstructing the racist agenda of the U.S. legal system and its uses of prisons for society-wide control of BIPOC and poor populations. Money savings is not the major aim of abolitionism; it is simply an aftereffect.

The Dog Whistler

By Vickie M. Fouts

Most of you have heard of a horse whisperer, who can calm horses and build trust. Well, Oakhurst and the Madera County Supervisorial District 5 race have a dog whistler.

Candidate Mark Reed has perfected the dog whistle, known as a coded message communicated through words or phrases commonly understood by a particular group of people, but not by others. More often than not, those words are of a racial or racist nature. Reed uses these to reach out to get supporters who are bigots, intolerant of others not like them, prejudiced and hateful, while hopefully not offending others.

Throughout the supervisorial primary campaign, Reed referred to his opponent (singular) although he had two opponents, Bobby Macaulay, a young White man, and Beau Campbell, a middle-aged Black man. Reed almost never referred to Campbell as an opponent, just Macaulay. It was as if Campbell didn't even exist.

Reed mailed out a flier calling five local women active in the community supporters of his opponent Macaulay. Here again he used dog whistles, naming two women as being part of Witches and Warlocks. Talk about scary—witches in eastern Madera County.

The truth is that they took part in a Halloween paddle on Bass Lake to raise money for charity and didn't even know each other. They are not truly pagan witches, which would really upset the conservative Christians in town.

One was named a member of the local Democratic club, one a member of the Democratic Socialists of America and the Peace & Freedom Party, and one as a founder of a local LGBTQ+ Facebook page. Such scary groups if you are a conservative and Reed supporter.

On the flier, mailed to more than 4,000 local voters, Reed said of the five women: "Here are his [Macaulay's] most vocal supporters from the Far Left that he doesn't want you to know about." At least one of them was not a Macaulay supporter and didn't make up her mind to vote for Macaulay or Campbell until the last moment. She has stated that to Reed over and over, but he still called her a Macaulay supporter whenever he could.

These women had previously questioned some of Reed's comments on Facebook and elsewhere. They pointed out the many discrepancies and more. He seemed to take offense to that so he outed them as members of groups that his supporters would be against.

He also mentioned SEIU, Macaulay's union at his Madera County job, and BLM, or Black Lives Matter. To this day, no one has been able to get a straight answer from Reed about how Black Lives Matter was a supporter of Macaulay.

Many have guessed the reason could be that the Oakhurst Boys & Girls Club, of which Macaulay is a board member, has a Black Lives Matter poster on their wall. Somehow they made it seem as if BLM supports Macaulay. Why wouldn't they support his Black opponent, Campbell, instead? Everyone mentioned on the flier was a dog whistle to his supporters.

Also, on the flier Reed lists many different reasons one should vote for him. See the possible dog whistles below in parentheses.

Greening of a House on McGee Street

By Peter Maiden

Shauna and Mark, both retired software engineers, live in a small two-bedroom house on McGee Street in Berkeley. The house was built in 1907. In 2022, they gave it a "greening."

We sat and talked in chairs in the garden in their backyard. Shauna wore a t-shirt that was emblazoned with the words "Bringing Back the Natives Tour." The tour it refers to is of gardens in the East Bay area where at least 60% of the plants are native to the area.

She was saying that native plants complement each other and feed beneficial birds and insects. Then she broke off and said, "See, there's a monarch butterfly right there hanging out in our yard." It began sunning itself on the leaf of a tomato plant next to a milkweed bush in full bloom.

The butterfly was a sign of rebirth. After a precipitous drop in its population, the monarch (which is native to the United States and Mexico) is starting to come back. There is a movement of sorts of folks who grow milkweed just because the monarchs eat it and breed on it.

Shauna and Mark's neighborhood is full of gardens: fruit and vegetable plants, native plants and every other sort of greenery. On the sidewalks, there is a flow of foot traffic of people of many different cultures, all of whom make Berkeley their home. They smile and say hello. It feels almost utopian.

OPINION & ANALYSIS



Sarah Roemer (left), from Witches and Warlocks, and Lorelee Bergdall (speaking) during the June 2 press conference where several women denounced being targeted in a mailer from Madera County Board of Supervisors District 5 candidate Mark Reed. Photo by Mike Rhodes

- Vote to protect our mountain lifestyle. (Keep our rural area conservative; keep out the liberals and leftists.)
- Vote to protect our children. Vote to protect proper education. (Keep critical race theory and gender issues out of our schools.)
- Vote for law and order. (Keep the poor and riffraff out of our communities.)

Reed has made statements about a proposed low-income housing project. With it being near Oakhurst schools, he questions if Megan's Law and drug laws will be enforced. A dog whistle that low-income people are sex offenders and drug users.

He proposes other locations, with one being between a Christian preschool and a community college. It seems he has no worries about Megan's Law and drug laws being enforced there or at the other locations he recommends. Reed has stated that the property management would not enforce these laws at the proposed location but doesn't mention the same problem at the other locations he recommends.

Anyhow, property management does not enforce these laws. Law enforcement does that.

Reed stated that the project process was sandbagged in the community and pushed through carelessly. However,

this project has been in the works for years. No one is pushing it through without thought.

He states that Macaulay has bragged about his part in this. Macaulay has worked on this project for several years in his position as chief of staff of the current supervisor, nothing more. Reed further alleges that this project will drain local emergency and law enforcement resources, but only at the proposed location. Not at his other suggested locations.

All these accusations are dog whistles that the project Macaulay has worked on for years is wrong. Only Reed's recommendations are valid.

Lastly, though not a dog whistle, Jack Porter, editor of *Big Valley News*, has stated that Reed called Campbell the "n" word, which Reed says is a lie. Who does one believe in this situation, a news reporter who has been an active member of our media community since 1989 or a professional candidate who no one had seen or heard about before he decided to run for supervisor, even though he says he has lived here for 15 years?

Vickie M. Fouts is the director/organizer of the Uprooting Racism Project and a member of EMCACTION (Eastern Madera County Active Communities That Include Our Neighbors).



Shauna and Mark's green home. Attached to the wall on the second floor to the right is an HVAC unit, with conduits leading to three indoor heating/cooling units. On the porch is a battery for solar power, about the size of a small refrigerator. At the far left is a stainless steel cabinet inside of which is a water tank for the water heater. If you look carefully, next to the hot water tank, toward the porch, is a catchment tank for rainwater from the roof for watering the garden. Photo by Peter Maiden

Continues on page 13

C Stands for Community-Labor Coalition

By Kevin Hall

"Abortion rallies do not improve roads."—Lynne Ashbeck (*Fresno Bee*, Aug. 7, 2022)

Wuh? The Measure C debate hit its lowest and perhaps weirdest point in early August when Clovis Mayor Pro Tem Lynne Ashbeck argued for nonpartisanship in local politics with some ugly examples of very partisan identity politics. Her mash-up of abortion rights and road repair, followed by a pairing of gay marriage and police staffing, are rooted in the ongoing transportation sales tax renewal effort. And fear.

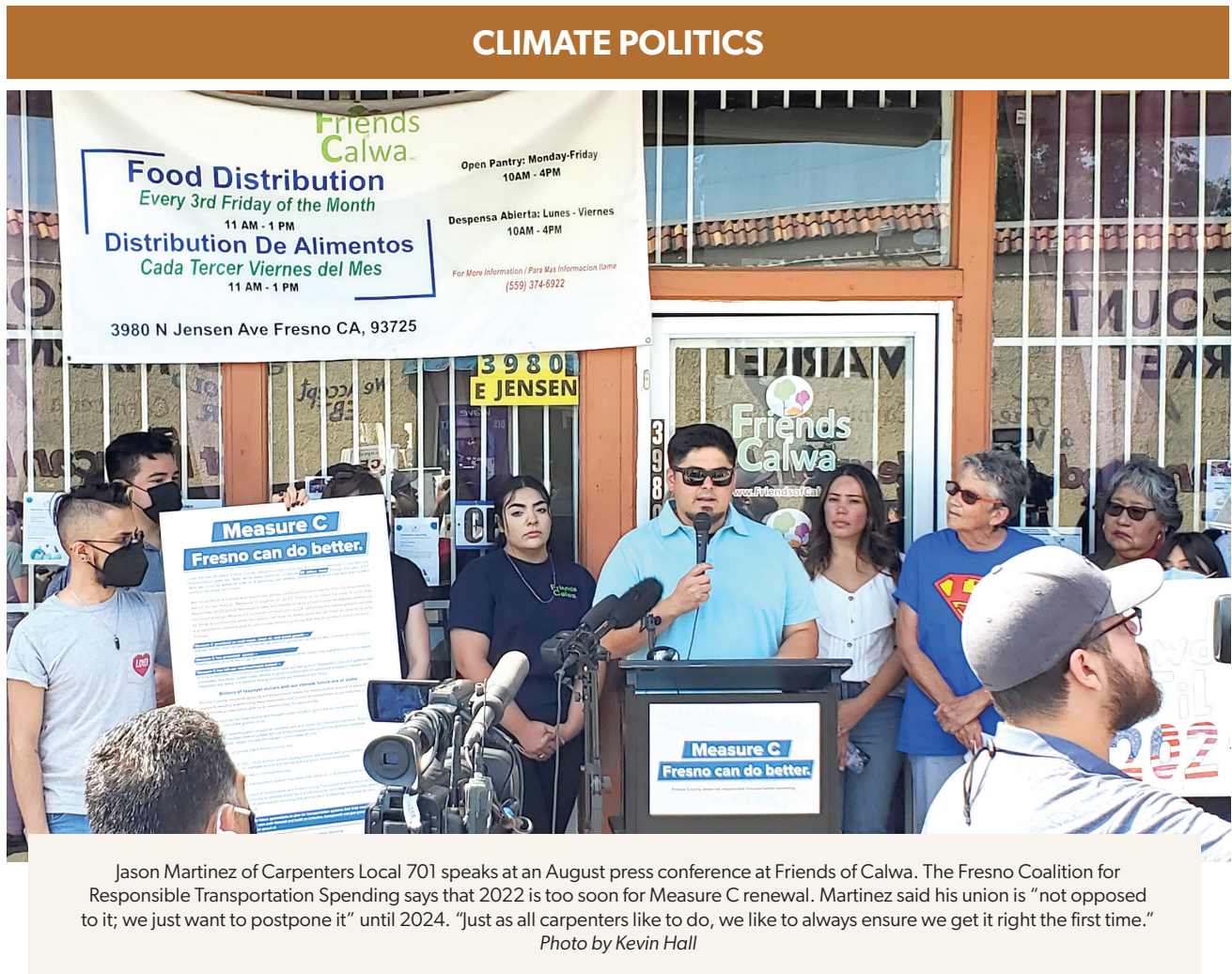
Conservative backers of the road subsidy-laden proposal are getting desperate. Designed to fool the public with promises of pothole repair, the \$6.8 billion program is riddled with loopholes to fund its 30-year project list.

Fresno's transit funding would be frozen and concentrated on limited routes, reducing service everywhere else, as Clovis does now. Dedicated rural transit funding would be slashed, forcing the agency to compete with local road money on a city-by-city basis to patch together its essential service.

All to fund a road plan that favors new major four-lanes reaching out from the Fresno and Clovis city limits to sprawl developments leapfrogging across the countryside without adequate dedicated funding for repair and completion of streets and sidewalks in existing neighborhoods.

They also want to double down on exurb development in the foothill and mountain wildfire zones beyond the ends of Friant Road and Highways 168 East and 180 East. An entire housing belt is emerging across the base of the Sierra Nevada and on up into the mountains; the bridge below Friant connecting Fresno and Madera counties is to be widened to better connect these highly flammable bedroom communities.

On the other side of the county, officials seek to build out Highway 180 West all the way to I-5 with a new stretch of



Jason Martinez of Carpenters Local 701 speaks at an August press conference at Friends of Calwa. The Fresno Coalition for Responsible Transportation Spending says that 2022 is too soon for Measure C renewal. Martinez said his union is "not opposed to it; we just want to postpone it" until 2024. "Just as all carpenters like to do, we like to always ensure we get it right the first time." Photo by Kevin Hall

highway starting in Mendota. Kerman would become the next Los Banos, its downtown further choked with truck traffic. Like the years of fatal accidents along Highway 41 South, cars and trucks hurrying between Fresno and I-5 will have to traverse a new death alley of intermittent two-lane and separated four-lane roads. The funding would also further concentrate mega-warehouse trucking centers in south Fresno fed by all four local freeways.

Now their campaign of deception begins in earnest. Ashbeck is rolling out talking points designed to tap into

identity politics; they'll be portraying anti-C people as "woke," their favorite slur for progressive politics, in order to convince their anti-tax base that this government plan is trustworthy because they control it.

But the pro-C developers and landowners fear that this flawed Measure C won't win over the wave of voters coming out in November to support Prop 1, the Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment. And they're right. Pro-abortion voters are pro-health; they're not going to like this recipe for higher rates of asthma, heart attacks, strokes and more, and you can't message around those inescapable impacts.

Measure C as written would worsen air pollution, increase greenhouse gas emissions and leave rural communities and inner-city neighborhoods further behind. Backers see this unexpected bloc of voters working heavily against them in November unless they can confuse enough "informed voters" with false promises of a better environment and sustainability; lies that are—in terms of climate change—criminal.

So it's onto the ballot fight. As of my deadline, formal opposition had yet to emerge, but a promising press conference was held in front of the Friends of Calwa last month featuring a strong coalition of community and labor interests. Veronica Garibay, co-executive director of Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, said, "This is an incredible opportunity to clean our air, to confront the very deadly impacts of climate change. The plan as written is full of potholes; it is riddled with loopholes."

League of Women Voters of Fresno President Marianne Kast criticized the measure's "slush fund" allocations and failure to address transit needs, equity, air pollution and climate change.

Jason Martinez with Carpenters Local 701 said that his union is "not opposed to it; we just want to postpone it" until 2024. "Just as all carpenters like to do, we like to always ensure we get it right the first time." He pointed out Fresno County still has five years to develop the plan.

Continues on page 12

Clovis City Councilkaren

By Kevin Hall

In stating that "abortion rallies do not improve roads," Clovis Mayor Pro Tem Lynne Ashbeck was writing in response to criticisms leveled at her in the *Fresno Bee* by Clovis resident Nayamin Martinez, CEO of the Central California Environmental Justice Network, who wrote: "Ashbeck's misunderstanding is clear to me now. She didn't grasp my meaning, misquoted me, and misjudged me and my colleagues."

Both women sat on the Measure C Renewal Executive Committee, which wrapped up its work last month. Ashbeck was appointed to co-chair it 18 months ago; Martinez and other advocates gained their seats at the table in December after more than a year of struggle (*Community Alliance*, December 2021), only to be ignored and rushed once there.

Martinez was prompted to write her column by a July 30 *Bee* news story in which Ashbeck was quoted as saying of the leaders of community-based organizations: "The inability of your constituents to have their voices heard is a result of your performance in this process..."

If you had spent as much time bringing people here to oppose the measure as to help us shape (the spending plan), we might be in a different place."

It was a Clovis-Karen* tirade so, of course, all of it's untrue. There was no "here." Advocates made multiple attempts to open up the process to the public, but were refused by the committee majority.

Instead, behind the scenes the Fresno County Transportation Authority, while rebuffing advocates, budgeted \$700,000 for a public relations firm to run surveys, film everything for online promotions and host a few meetings in late spring after the plan's structure had been finalized by staff and consultants. It was an old school dog and pony show—many glittering promises, few real commitments.

Martinez continued, "But I would never claim to represent 'constituents' and said so at a Measure C steering committee meeting. I'm not a politician, and I don't have constituents; nor does our organization have members. That's not how community organizing functions, but it's clear to me now that local politicians don't understand our work."

*"Karen" is a widespread meme referencing a specific type of middle-class White woman who exhibits behaviors that stem from privilege.

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**"Celebrating
Small
Victories"**



with wine & scrumptious hors d'oeuvres on **Saturday, September 24th from 4-6 pm** at 2046 E Brown Ave in Fresno.

Meet Malachi Suarez, the local middle school student who led a successful campaign to re-name Polk Elementary. And celebrate with Jaguar Bennett, Heather Parrish, and Haley White, some of the organizers for "Tower to the People," the successful campaign to stop the sale of the Tower Theater to the Adventure Church.

Tickets are \$50. Get a free ticket if you become a new KFCF sustaining member for at least \$10/month between now and the event, and if you bring someone who is not a current subscriber you'll be entered in drawing to win a door prize at the event. For more information, go to www.kfcf.org or call 233-2221.

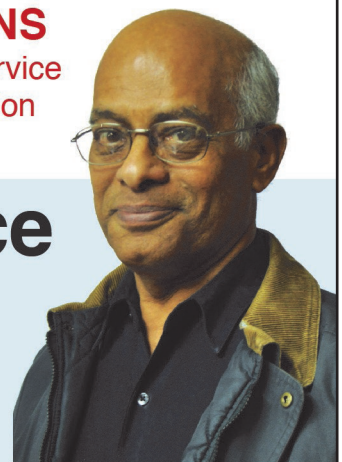
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One Fresno. Not.

By Bob McCloskey

Fresno’s mayor and City Council have coined the term *One Fresno* even though, according to a 2019 Urban Institute report, Fresno ranks No. 59 of 59 cities in California for economic inclusion and racial inclusion, making it a very divided city.

Across the United States, Fresno ranks 253rd out of 274 cities on overall inclusion. It ranks 263rd on economic inclusion. *Inclusion* is defined by looking at income differences in poverty and wages by race and ethnicity, the number of working poor people, disparities in homeownership and the number of families that spend more than 35% of their income on rent.

Throughout Fresno County, many people remain jobless (the unemployment rate was 10% in December), underemployed or underpaid. Opportunities for gainful employment are limited for Black people, Latino people and immigrants. Opportunities are limited for those who lack higher education, grew up in poverty, live in poverty areas or were formerly incarcerated.

Access Sites for Homeless Assistance

If you or someone you know is homeless or at risk of being homeless, reach out to the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care at 559-785-3011 or info@fresnomaderahomeless.org. For immediate assistance, call one of these access sites:

Facility	Address	Phone	Hours
Poverello House	412 F St., Fresno	559-498-6988	24 hours
Golden State Triage	1415 W. Olive Ave., Fresno	559-368-8831	24 hours
The Welcome Center	2904 E. Belgravia Ave., Fresno	559-334-6402	24 hours
Marjaree Mason Center*	1600 M St., Fresno	559-233-4357	24 hours
Fresno EOC	1046 T St., Fresno	559-475-8047	M–F 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Clinica Sierra Vista	1305 E. Divisadero St., Fresno	559-457-5960	M–F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Fresno Home	2550 W. Clinton Ave. #213, Fresno	559-403-5001	M–F 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
Selma Map Point	2045 Grant St., Selma	559-512-6777	M–F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Help Center at Community Action Partnership of Madera County	1225 Gill Ave., Madera	559-673-9173	M–F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
*For persons fleeing domestic violence			

The above information was provided by the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care. The *Community Alliance* newspaper makes no claims regarding these providers.

FOLLOW THE MONEY



Throwing away people’s only possessions is a daily task for the Fresno Police Department’s Homeless Assistance Response Team. *Photo by Bob McCloskey*

The lack of economic inclusion, low rental vacancy rates and increases in rent have led to a significant increase in the number of unhoused people in the region. Currently, rental vacancy rates are around 4%. Rents have increased 10.8% in the past year.

The median monthly rent for all types of rental units in Fresno is estimated at \$1,390. Before the pandemic in 2019, the median rent was \$1,045. Average rents have grown more than 35% in the last five years. According to the California Housing Partnership, Fresno County is short of more than 36,000 affordable housing units.

One popular explanation for homelessness is that personal attributes are the main reason why people are unhoused. Although substance abuse, poverty, mental illness, discrimination, domestic abuse, unemployment and other institutional and personal factors increase the risk for becoming homeless, extensive research shows that structural issues are the main cause.

The research shows that homelessness is not a result of individual failures. Rather, it is the structure of the housing market that drives homelessness and the affordable housing crisis. Being short 36,000 affordable housing units in the region is the primary cause, and throwing millions of dollars into temporary shelters, transitional housing and inadequate services will never be a solution.

The city and county should do the research and development of modular homes, container homes, tiny homes and other lower-cost development. Using a lower-cost development strategy and a Housing First model is the only answer to an increasing crisis. De-criminalizing the unhoused and recognizing that housing is a basic human right should be our priority.

Until more housing is built, can we, the people of Fresno, show some compassion? Can we lobby the mayor, the City Council members and the Board of Supervisors to use a small amount of the millions of dollars they have received from the state and federal governments on basic services? Services such as water, basic sanitation facilities, healthcare access, harm reduction services and other social services.

Can we demand an end to the sweeps, an end to the destruction of property, an end to the constant harassment and other abuses by the Fresno Police Department HART (Homeless Assistance Response Team) officers? Instead of calling 311 to complain about unhoused folks, why don’t you, the good citizens of Fresno, call 311 to complain about the continued abuse by the Fresno Police Department?

Stand up for the unhoused members of our community. If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.

Bob McCloskey is an advocate for the unhoused. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

Brilliant African Diaspora Culture in Cuba

By Leni Villagomez Reeves

Creating universal literacy and an environment where education is universal and free and accessible at all levels leads to a cultural flowering so extensive and deep as to be perhaps better characterized as an explosion. When culture, both in the sense of the cultural arts and the essence of the thought and feeling of the people, including memory, history, heritage and values, is viewed as a prime necessity rather than as an adornment, profound changes occur.

One of the greatest achievements of the Cuban Revolution has been and is the democratization of culture.

In 1998, while Cuba was still in the grip of the so-called Special Period—the period of economic depression produced by Cuba’s loss of trading partners after the end of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies, coupled with increased attempts by the United States to isolate Cuba and cut off all trade—Fidel Castro said, “*Lo primero que hay que salvar es la cultura*” (“The first thing we must save is culture”).

Now that the combination of the ravages of the pandemic and another period of increased U.S. sanctions and heavily successful attempts to isolate Cuba economically, cutting Cuba off from international trade and finance, has created another period of hardship for the Cuban people, culture is still seen as a necessity.

Pre-Revolutionary Cuba

In 1953, in Cuba only 56% of children ages 6–12 were enrolled in school, and this hides a huge urban-rural disparity. The basic literacy rate of urban dwellers was about 90%, whereas that of rural people was roughly 60%, and about half the Cuban population was rural in 1950. A 1950

save the dates!

FILM FESTIVAL

CUBAN WOMEN of the AFRICAN DIASPORA: INSPIRATIONS FOR CHANGE



Fatima Patterson



Zuleika Romay



Nancy Mórejon



Georgina Herrera



Gisela Arandía

A series of five Sunday evening programs by Filmmaker Juanamaría Cordones-Cook

October 2 • 9 • 16 • 23 • 30

Presented online via Hothouse

Photo by Gayatri Mahotra on Unsplash

The film festival “Cuban Women of the African Diaspora” will expose a little-known reality of Cuba’s society.

study by the World Bank found that 60% of rural residents and 40% of urban residents were undernourished; 40% lacked regular, full-time employment; and 40% had never attended school.

The last in line for educational, cultural and occupational opportunities were rural Black girls. The experience of my friend Justina Temozán, from La Curva, in Holguín Province, who went to work at age eight helping in the coffee harvest, is typical. (You will be glad to know that she says, “After the triumph of the Revolution, I began to study in night school, near my house, in Gertrudis de Avellaneda, in Marianao, and I was able to get to sixth grade.”)

Changes with the Revolution

“Before 1959, it was the countryside versus the city,” according to Luisa Yara Campos, director of the National Literacy Museum, in Havana.

“The Literacy Campaign united the country because, for the first time, people from the city understood how hard life was for people before the revolution, that they survived on their own, and that as people they had much in common.”

Many of the literacy volunteers also remarked that the learning and teaching was a two-way process. One remarked, “I think I learned more from them than they did from me, because I gave them the light of learning but they taught me how to be a person.”

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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM
WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

The Time to End the Nuclear Era Is Now

Nagasaki Day Recognition: Aug. 9

Photos by Sandra Iyall

Nuclear weapons are unique. Their impact is primarily on innocent civilian non-combatants, women and children, and their effects persist for generations after their detonation. They are indiscriminate and largely uncontrollable, but above all they are instruments of mass murder on a scale unparalleled in human history.

We can debate the reasons or causes for Russia invading Ukraine, but there is no debate about the desecration resulting from a nuclear attack or even the unintentional accidental release of one of these weapons. The nuclear bombs today are far more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and no longer require planes to deliver them.

There is no way to protect oneself in the event of a nuclear attack. The vaporizing thermal heat, followed by intense fires, and the resultant radioactive fallout leaves nothing in its pathway unharmed.

Since 1945, there have been 2,060 nuclear tests performed around the world. The people of the surrounding communities have been left to deal with the aftermath. The survivors of these tests are now known worldwide as the Hibakusha, from the original word applied to the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; some of them are still living to tell their stories as well.

If these weapons were a deterrent to war, one might ask oneself, "Why then, would we not want every nation to possess them, and put an end to war forever?"

The enormity of their costs alone should delegitimize them. The expense of their production, maintenance and storage, as well as the costs to the environment while other basic human needs go unmet, is immoral!

The United States is prioritizing these weapons over climate change, education, healthcare, housing and other serious issues.

The profiteers are the weapons industry; that industry maintains numerous lobbyists and donates to election campaigns to ensure that contracts and profits keep coming in, and they do.

All of this might sound foreboding, but there is hope. The non-nuclear nations of the Global South, joined by numerous peace organizations, have come together to form the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). WILPF is one of the partners in this campaign.

In 2017, ICAN presented the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) to the United Nations. This treaty makes it illegal to develop, test, manufacture, possess, receive, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. They are inhumane, immoral and now illegal as well under international law. So far, 68 states have ratified the treaty and others are in the process of doing so, but regrettably, the nine nuclear armed nations so far have boycotted it.

We in this country cannot control what other countries might do, but we can work to hold our own government accountable and that is what each of us must do.

We must increase the conversation around nuclear weapons and encourage the media when speaking about war to include speaking about the treaty, which is the pathway to the elimination of these weapons.

This is not a glamorous subject, but it is an imperative one, a conversation to have in our faith communities, our schools and our homes. Our children, our friends and their loved ones all deserve a world that does not pose a risk to our lives or threaten us 24/7.

WILPF desires a world where we do not feel hatred toward other nations or feel that we have to resolve differences through armed conflict. Rather, we would see other people just like us, who merely see the world through a different lens, and we would cooperate to embrace each other's differences and views, even when we do not agree.

If you have not yet, please sign WILPF's petition to Congress and the President to ask them to sign and ratify the TPNW, so that we can all enjoy a future nuclear-free world.

—Written by Melissa Fry and read by Jean Hays at the event at the Shinzen Friendship Garden organized by the Human Rights Coalition of the Central Valley, as they and we declare: "We gather in solidarity to commemorate the 77th anniversary of those who died, who continue to suffer, and in the hope of peace and justice."



Patricia Wells-Solorzano and Jean Hays collecting signatures for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and informing people about WILPF.



Jean Hays presents a statement written by Melissa Fry, from our Disarm/End War Committee, at the Nagasaki Day Recognition on Aug. 9 at the Shinzen Friendship Garden.



Camille Russell from Peace Fresno explains the petitions to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the Nagasaki Day Recognition on Aug. 9 at the Shinzen Friendship Garden.



Dr. Veena Kapoor leads the meditation for the group at the Nagasaki Day Recognition on Aug. 9 at the Shinzen Friendship Garden.

End Racism. Build Peace.

Sept. 21 is the International Day of Peace and the 2022 theme for the day is "End racism. Build peace."

Each year, the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on Sept. 21. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of nonviolence and ceasefire.

But achieving true peace entails much more than laying down arms. It requires the building of societies where all members feel that they can flourish. It involves creating a world in which people are treated equally, regardless of their race.

As Secretary-General António Guterres has said: "Racism continues to poison institutions, social structures and everyday life in every society. It continues to be a driver of persistent inequality. And it continues to deny people their fundamental human rights. "It destabilizes societies, undermines democracies, erodes the legitimacy of governments, and...the linkages between racism and gender inequality are unmistakable."

As conflicts continue to erupt across the globe, causing people to flee, we have seen race-based discrimination at borders. As COVID-19 keeps attacking our communities, we have seen how certain racial groups have been hit much harder than others. As economies suffer, we have seen hate speech and violence directed at racial minorities.

We all have a role to play in fostering peace. And tackling racism is a crucial way to contribute. We can work to dismantle the structures that entrench racism in our midst. We can support movements for equality and human rights everywhere. We can speak out against hate speech—both offline and online. We can promote anti-racism through education and reparatory justice.

—Excerpt from the UN website: www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace

WILPF MEETING

Sept. 8, Thursday, 7 p.m., online. Watch your e-mail for an announcement with a link and call-in number. For more information, contact Teresa at taca_03@ymail.com or Leni at lenivreeves@gmail.com.

MEMBERSHIP

Please renew if you haven't already. Send dues to WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

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

WILPF-US membership is \$35/year. WILPF-Fresno sponsors a low-income rate of \$20.

STIR IT UP-WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

Sept. 28, 3 p.m. (fourth Wednesday of each month). Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

UNPACKING RACISM

Sept. 25, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom. With Dr. Jean Kennedy. RSVP with your e-mail address to drjeankennedy@yahoo.com or text 559-270-1023.

WOMEN IN BLACK

Sept. 7, noon, Courthouse (first Wednesday of each month). Check with Sue Kern at skern@netptc.net or 559-439-3777.

A March for Their Rights

By *Community Alliance Staff*

A group of farmworkers marched 335 miles from the United Farm Workers’ (UFW) headquarters near Delano to the State Capitol in Sacramento. The three-week march was aimed at pressuring Governor Gavin Newsom to sign a bill that would allow farmworkers a choice, including vote-by-mail, in how elections are held in unionization drives.

Currently, farmworkers can vote to join the UFW only if they do so at a polling place designated by the Agricultural Relations Board, making them subject to retaliation, the union argues.

“When farmworkers vote they are subject to reprisals, and in some cases they lose their jobs just to practice their rights to vote like any citizen can do during a given election day,” said Eriberto Fernandez, a representative of the UFW Foundation.

“What we want is for farmworkers to be able to cast their ballots in secret, from their homes, like any voter.”

New ways of voting sanctioned by Assembly Bill 2183 would change that. Newsom vetoed a similar bill last year.

The UFW believes that if farmworkers are allowed to vote in secret, more will join the union and get representation.

“And this is what big agribusiness doesn’t want to happen,” said Fernandez. “If [farmworkers] have representation, they will have basic rights such as health benefits.”

The march started on Aug. 3 in Delano and ended on Aug. 26 in Sacramento.

As marchers and supporters gathered in front of the Capitol on Aug. 26, Governor Newsom released a statement explaining that he would not sign AB 2183 “in its current form.” However, he said that he is open to negotiate, meaning that if the bill is rewritten he would sign it.

Photos by David Bacon

PHOTO ESSAY



A priest holds a short service with the marchers early in the morning before they start walking.



After a short service, marchers get ready to march. From left: UFW march captain Antonio Cortez, farmworker Lourdes Cardenas, UFW President Teresa Romero and an unidentified marcher.



Marcher Yolanda Chacon Serna grew up in the union. Her father, Joe Serna, became the mayor of Sacramento.



A young marcher comes out with his family before going to the first day of school in Farmersville.



UFW President Teresa Romero leads the march as it heads out of Farmersville on the way to Visalia, on the sixth day of the march.



Paul Boyer, mayor of Farmersville, marches with the workers as they leave town.

Christian Nationalism Is a Perversion of Faith

By Bayard Taylor

Lately, we have been hearing politicians and preachers telling us that we need to embrace “Christian nationalism.”

Superficially, the language and purported motives of Christian nationalism might sound “Christian” and “patriotic,” however, at the core they are an utter repudiation of the teachings of Jesus and a grave threat to our democratic republic.

Christian nationalism goes against the teachings of Jesus when it

- pushes the narrative that, out of all the peoples on the planet, God chose White America to be His Special People to Bring About His Will Upon the Earth.
- teaches that the proof of God’s favor on America is that God gave America victory in military battles—implying that America’s wars are God’s wars and that America fights its wars with holy violence.
- asks us to believe that America is “exceptional” and “blessed” with wealth because America is morally superior to other nations.
- spurs us to give our loyalty to con artists who scorn principle—instead of supporting people with integrity.
- flouts a constant river of flagrant lies—and “cancels” truth and any semblance of honesty.
- assumes that Republicans are the righteous party of God-and-Country—and the Democrats are “demons” that want only to “destroy America.”
- imposes legalistic religious laws on the general public who by and large are not members of a particular brand of that religion.

Christian nationalism menaces our democratic republic when it

- treats America nearly as reverently as the kingdom of God.
- elevates one leader as a near-messiah who alone can save the country.
- assigns to that one leader the “divine right” not to lose elections.
- says “yes” to authoritarianism—and “no” to the peaceful transfer of power after elections.
- makes excuses for deliberate acts of heartless cruelty—such as Trump’s “zero tolerance” family separation immigration policy.
- stokes civil distrust, divisiveness, hatred and racism—by encouraging the Proud Boys, Oathkeepers, neo-Nazis and neo-Confederates.
- gins up fear and suspicion of darker-skinned “others” who will bring crime and degradation, “mongrelize” our society and “replace” good White Christians.
- claims that our society is “colorblind” and that “liberty and justice for all” has been by and large achieved—while ignoring abundant evidence to the contrary.
- bans books in schools that cover our country’s legacy of White supremacy, slavery, Jim Crow and the 500-year genocide against the people who were here first, the indigenous Americans.
- attacks the LGBTQ+ community and refuses to endorse universal human rights.
- suppresses the voting rights of minority voters through gerrymandering, unjustified purging of voter rolls, reducing the number of polling places that serve minority communities, revoking the voting rights of people who have been incarcerated but have “served their time” and other tactics.

Christian nationalism is full of falsehood when it

- misuses “pro-life” rhetoric—as if you can be “pro-life” and at the same time deny poor people healthcare, or you vote against environmental protections for air, land

OPINION & ANALYSIS



Some Christian denominations are aggressively getting involved in the political and electoral arena, even promoting so-called Christian nationalism. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

and water, or you support the selling of AR-15s to anyone and everyone, without any restrictions or background checks.

- claims to be “America First” but is against working people by opposing a living wage, working to bust unions and chomping at the bit for more wars.
- claims to be for working people, but in reality gives huge tax breaks to Big Business (“corporate welfare”) and the super-rich—increasing the economic pressure on and desperation of the working-class and low-income people.
- complains about persecution and discrimination against White people while averting its gaze from the long-standing and obvious persecution and discrimination by White Christians against non-White non-Christians.

Christian nationalism is all about fascistic White nationalism when it

- hearkens back to a golden era when America used to be “great” because of its “Western European” heritage.
- yearns to “make America great again” by installing in positions of power and influence the people who rightfully “should be” in charge—White Christians, naturally!
- presents America as formed of White Christians, by White Christians and for White Christians; others might be permitted to live here, but they are not “true” Americans and must recognize their inferior status.

Christian nationalism is a perversion of faith. It is a direct assault on our democracy, it is based on lies and disinformation and it serves an authoritarian, fascist agenda.

It must be emphatically renounced especially by Christians.

Bayard Taylor is a resident of the 93675 zip code, a nature-lover, the author of two books, a former English teacher and a master of divinity graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Contact him at bayardtaylor1@aol.com.

Brilliant African Diaspora Culture in Cuba

Continued from page 7

Another said, “It gave us the values with which we’ve lived our lives ever since. And for those of us who were women, it liberated us; our entire generation of women gained a completely different perspective of life. The Literacy Campaign changed the meaning of life for Cuban women.”

Cuban poet Nancy Morejón joined the campaign when she was still a student. She said, “An irreversible phenomenon began...I did not imagine that, years later, my efforts from 1961 would contribute to multiplying the number of Cuban readers who could not only express themselves freely but also, and above all, who could broaden their intellectual and existential horizons irreversibly.”

Inspirations for Change

Morejón, as a major poet and an Afro-Cuban woman, is central to the Cuban Women of the African Diaspora—Inspirations for Change project. This series of five film programs with discussion will be presented online, via Hothouse, on Sunday evenings in October, showing some of the many films made by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook, University of Missouri professor and Emmy-nominated filmmaker, who has built her scholarship around the

related and complementary areas of gender studies, Afro Latin-American theater, the Afro-Cuban renaissance and documentary filmmaking.

- In the film *Paisajes Célebres*, Morejón offers a unique perspective on contemporary Cuban culture and intellectual life, with other outstanding Afro-Cuban intellectuals who came of age with the 1959 Cuban Revolution.
- Poet Georgina Herrera is featured in two films, *Cimarroneando con G.H.* and a testimonial documentary, discussing memory, gender, race and Black rebellion.
- Playwright and director Fátima Patterson explores race, gender and African popular religion through theater and oral history in the film *Race, Gender and Theater*.
- There’s more. This is an opportunity to see how Cuban women of the African diaspora have seized the opportunity to define culture and make it glorious.

The primary sponsor of this project is WILPF-US; other sponsors include U.S. Women and Cuba, the Literacy Project, Code Pink, the National Network on Cuba, the Southern Anti-Racism Network and Teatro de la Tierra.

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/).

Nancy Morejón, one the most distinguished living Cuban poets. Photo courtesy of Juana María Cordones-Cook



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Afro-Centric Legacy of Dr. James Turner

By Homer Gee Greene Jr.

Dr. James Turner, the founder of Africana studies, has passed away at the age of 82. He was the founding director of Cornell University’s Africana Studies and Research Center and a professor emeritus of African and African American politics and social policy in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell.

For more than 50 years, Turner taught and shaped generations of Black scholars and a diverse population of students. He had a multidisciplinary approach to exploring constructs pertaining to the African diaspora. His approach created a template for teaching Africana/African American studies that has spread throughout the world in articulating the Black/African diaspora experience.

He was a mentee of the great Pan-Africanist and historian John Henrik and was in the audience of several Malcolm X lectures in New York City.

“Malcolm was a master teacher,” Turner said. “You couldn’t listen to him and not come away with something. It was more than charisma; it was the way he was able to use the language of our people and make (them) understand.”

Turner earned a master’s degree in African studies from Northwestern University, a certificate in African studies from Northwestern’s African Studies Center and a Ph.D. from Union Graduate School in Cincinnati.

As a graduate student and after completion of his doctoral studies, Turner was an activist and an intellectual thinker. Because of his activism, Cornell offered him a position to lead the Black studies center.

Turner accepted the position in 1969 and indicated that his goal was to make the center “one of the most far-reaching, imaginative and creative programs in the country.” His vision was based on the demands of Black students who wanted to learn more about their history and how Africans/African Americans shaped America.

As we look back at Turner’s vision, we observe that the center was originally called the Center for Afro-American Studies, but Turner’s vision was more global. Although the term *Africana* had been used by African and African American scholars of that time, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, the term gained momentum when Turner used it to define the global experience of all African descendants who are a part of the African diaspora.

“In Africana studies, you cannot dissect it and say, well, here is a little piece of history, here is another section of the literature, here is the sociological part of your contribution, here is the psychological, here is the political,” said N’Dri Thérèse Assié-Lumumba, professor of Africana studies and director of the Institute for African Development.

“You hear now about interdisciplinarity; well, African studies, with Professor Turner’s conceptualization, was the precursor.”

This was and is Dr. Turner’s legacy in the academic discipline of Africana/African American studies.

When I was a student at Fresno City College in 1969, I was part of a group of African American students who demanded that the college hire an African American instructor to teach Black/African American history. The college hired Kehinde Solwazi in 1971 as a full-time instructor to teach Black history and some related courses leading to an associate of arts degree in cultural studies.

The program now leads to non-transfer or transfer degrees in African American studies. Solwazi retired two years ago after teaching Black/cultural and African American studies at Fresno City College for 50 years.

As Turner did at Cornell, Solwazi taught many African American and non-African American students during his long tenure at Fresno City College.

In my opinion, Africana/African American studies can also be viewed as follows:

- Telling the histories of Africans in the diaspora through the gaze of critical race theory (CRT)—research, theories and arguments into how racism, White supremacy and governmental policies were used to thwart the economic, political and social advancements of African Americans and Africans in the diaspora.
- Telling the stories of Africans in the diaspora through the gaze of critical resistance theory—research, theories and arguments into how Africans and African Americans have been fighting White racism and White supremacy before 1619 and after this date to make America a more just, inclusive, diverse and democratic nation.
- Telling the history of African Americans through their gaze of interpreting historic events and movements that African Americans were either a part of or leaders of and their goal to make America a more perfect union.

As we all know, African-American history is also American history.

I attended an event at Fresno State in October 2019 titled “Ethnic Studies @50: Memory and Celebration.” It was a one-day event commemorating 50 years of ethnic studies at Fresno State. Here are some of my thoughts and observations on this event.

It was good to hear the different historical developments of ethnic studies at Fresno State. I am sure that similar developments happened at other American colleges and universities. Similar developments happened at Fresno City College and other California community colleges. I also liked the overview of how the name of a specific ethnic studies program has changed over 50 years: Black studies, African-American studies, Pan-African studies and Africana studies.

As I reflect on the presentations, I would like to posit a simple dialectical analysis upon the development of ethnic studies over 50 years.

Thesis. Education in America was developed to educate the sons and daughters of those who were White and could afford an education. The historical focus of education prior to the Civil War and after was the glorification of historical accomplishments of White people or European Americans. This pedagogy can also be identified as a Euro-centric approach to education in America.

Antithesis. As more and more people of color were permitted to study at White dominant colleges and universities, the question arose as to where were their historical accomplishments recorded in the history that they were being exposed to—an Afro-centric argument as to how academics and the academy interpret and analyze history.


For African Americans, if you were not attending a historically Black college or university (HBCU), you would get a primarily whitewashed telling of your historical participation in the development of America and your contributions to world history.

Because of the Black power movement, the Black community started demanding courses and historical investigations and analysis that indicated African American contributions to the development of American idealism and African and African American contributions to the development of world history and American history. That led to the arguments for and the development of ethnic studies programs on the campuses of American colleges and universities.

Ethnic studies programs challenged the traditional Euro-centric teaching at American colleges and universities. These programs also enabled the training and hiring of instructors and professors of color to teach these courses, which presented a challenge to Euro-centric pedagogy.

Synthesis. A pedagogy in American education surfaces in

OPINION & ANALYSIS



Ethnic Studies @50 : MEMORY AND CELEBRATION

**October 15, 2019
11 am - 6 pm**
Fresno State- Second Floor Henry Madden
Library-Room 2206
5200 N Barton Ave, Fresno, CA 93740

Henry Madden Library
5200 N Barton Ave, Fresno, CA 93740

A one-day event commemorating 50 years of Ethnic Studies at Fresno State. Panels will feature early founders of Ethnic Studies on its history, and current faculty members and students discussing why Ethnic Studies remains a vital and expanding field of research and teaching today.

Lunch and Hearty Refreshments will be served.

This is a free event. All participants are welcome. For more information or special accommodations, please contact: Jenny Bann, Jill Fields, DeAnna Reese, Cristina Herrera. jennibann@mail.fresnostate.edu

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Poster produced for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of ethnic studies at Fresno State on Oct. 15, 2019.
Photo courtesy of Homer Greene Jr.

which there is the development of a world-centric approach to teaching history—an analysis and interpretation of the contributions of all people of color and their historical influences toward the development of American idealism: Native Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans and African Americans.

The interpretation and analysis of historical periods in America highlights historical developments and the reaction to these developments by non-White or by White people. Basically, we see the historic struggle of non-White people against the ideology and philosophy of White supremacy.

This educational approach should start at the grade-school level and proceed in an orderly and structured manner all the way through high school. This way, an American student will not have a Euro-centric education but rather a people-centric education that includes all ethnic groups in the telling and documentation of American and world history.

Colleges and universities can keep their ethnic studies program, but based on this pedagogy, when students enter a college or university, they will have an objective view of their ethnic history and their contributions to American and world history. Then the college or university, through ethnic studies classes, will expand on this knowledge. The goal is for students not to be encountering this historical information for the first time at the college or university level.

Basically, this synthesis would be for the development of a pedagogy for America that will provide to American citizens a true historical telling of what it means to be an American and the ethnic and cultural contributions to American idealism by all Americans.

Homer Gee Greene Jr. is a freelance writer and photographer, documentarian for the Clark Bonsai Collection, and founding partner and business manager for the start-up tech company ScholarDev LLC. He is retired from Fresno City College.



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Peace & Social Justice Calendar September 2022

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FRI
02

CineCulture: *Skies of Lebanon* (Sous le ciel d’Alice) 5:15 p.m. Discussion via Zoom. Discussant: Isabelle Zighondi (actress). Combining live action with animation, the film creates a vivid picture of Lebanon, inspired by the family history of the filmmaker (Chlo   Mazlo). Using stories told to her by her grandmother of life during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90), Mazlo crafts a touching and heartbreaking story of love during wartime. Link to view the film posted 3–5 days earlier at cineculture.csufresno.edu. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu.

SAT
03

Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley 9 a.m. Via Zoom. Speakers: Augie G. Blancas and Toni Tinoco, information officers for the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Topic: High-Speed Rail. For more info, contact 559-435-4043.

SUN
04

Central Valley Progressive PAC Fundraiser 5 p.m. Wolk Garden, 6661 N. Forkner Ave. Speakers: PAC-endorsed candidates. Music by Lance Canales. For more info, contact 559-978-4504 or simone.rhodes@seiu521.org or visit cvppac.org.

MON
05

Democratic Women in Action 6 p.m. Marie Callender’s Restaurant, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, contact 559-681-3140 or ggaston1234@aol.com or visit www.dwiafresno.org.

TUE
06

National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC) 5:30 p.m. Los Amigo’s Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. Speakers: Kerri L. Donis, Fire Chief of the Fresno Fire Department. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pbyoga.com.

WED
07

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!* 3 p.m. *Community Alliance* radio show hosted by Daren Miller. For more info, visit www.kcf.org.

THU
08

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.

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) 7 p.m. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or taca_03@ymail.com.

FRI
09

CineCulture: *As Far as I Can Walk* 5:15 p.m. Discussion via Zoom. Discussant: Stefan Arsenijevic (director). The film follows a couple who left Ghana with a dream of a better life in Europe and now live as refugees in Belgrade, Serbia. It is a re-imagining of a traditional medieval epic in which contemporary African migrants take the place of Serbian national heroes. Urgent and timeless at the same time, the adaptation raises questions about identity, tradition, race and love. Link to view the film posted 3–5 days earlier at cineculture.csufresno.edu. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu.

Farewell Fundraiser 5:30 p.m. Location provided upon RSVP. The Fresno County Democratic Party says goodbye to longtime chair Michael D. Evans, who is relocating. \$50. Register at https://bit.ly/fresnodems. For more info, contact 559-495-0606 or dems@fresnocountydemocrats.org.

SAT
10

Mapping Queer Fresno 2 p.m. Fresno EOC LGBTQ+ Resource Center, 1252 Fulton St. “From Stonewall to Fresno: Marching for Our Rights in Face of Opposition. The History of the Fresno Rainbow Pride Parade.” Local activists, researchers and community members

share stories and histories of Fresno’s diverse LGBTQ+ community. For more info, contact qistoryfresno@gmail.com.

Labor Day Festival and Tailgate 3 p.m.–7 p.m. O’Neill Park, Fresno State. Sponsored by the Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council. Lunch, ice cream, drinks, beer, field games and kids zone, followed by the Fresno State vs. Oregon State football game. For more info, contact dsavory@myunionworks.com.

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

MON
12

Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) 5:15 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-916-2590 or swgamble@aol.com.

TUE
13

Stonewall Democratic Club 5:30 p.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St. Endorsements for Fall Election. For more info, contact 559-709-8016 or conantm@aol.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
14

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

THU
15

ArtHop Metropolitan/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.

Mapping Queer Fresno 6:30 p.m. Fresno EOC LGBTQ+ Resource Center, 1252 Fulton St. “Finding Community: The Importance of LGBTQ2+ Social Spaces in Fresno.” Local activists, researchers and community members share stories and histories of Fresno’s diverse LGBTQ+ community. For more info, contact qistoryfresno@gmail.com.

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.

Fresnans against Fracking 7 p.m. Chipotle Mexican Grill, 4978 N. Cedar Ave. For more info, contact 559-390-1338 or martinrj93638@yahoo.com.

FRI
16

CineCulture: *Eternal Spring* 5:15 p.m. Discussion via Zoom. Discussant: Jason Loftus (director). Combining present-day footage with 3D animation inspired by exiled Falun Gong practitioner Daxiong’s art, the film retraces the hacking of a state TV signal in China by members of the banned spiritual group Falun Gong in March 2002 and brings to life an unprecedented story of defiance, harrowing eyewitness accounts of persecution and an exhilarating tale of determination to speak up for political and religious freedoms, no matter the cost. Link to view the film posted 3–5 days earlier at cineculture.csufresno.edu. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu.

SAT
17

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

SUN
18

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

MON
19

California Latina Democrats–Fresno 6:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-284-0408 or chaircalatinadems@gmail.com.

TUE
20

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

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

WED
21

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. Via Zoom. For more info, call 559-312-3925.

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter 7 p.m. Via Zoom. Speaker: Dr. Larry Riley of Fresno State. Topic: Taking Fresno State Students Backpacking for Their First Time: High Altitude Biology Course. In this immersive course, students monitor their physiological responses to high altitude, lead discussions on how plants and animals survive the high-altitude environment and discuss the negative impacts that climate change and pollution have on high altitude environments. Advance registration is required. To register or for more info, visit sierraclub.org/tehipite.

THU
22

Clovis Democratic Club 7 p.m. Denny’s Restaurant, 710 W. Shaw Ave., Clovis. For more info, contact 559-322-9740 or jenikren@gmail.com.

FRI
23

CineCulture: *Mariupol: The Chronicles of Hell* 5:15 p.m. Discussion via Zoom. Discussant: Liza Tatarinova (director). Mariupol, a city in the east of Ukraine, with almost half a million people, has survived the occupation, total destruction and a humanitarian catastrophe. The occupiers were murdering civilians, preventing them from escaping. This film tells the story of the survivors, their life in hell and ultimately salvation. Link to view the film posted 3–5 days earlier at cineculture.csufresno.edu. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu.

SAT
24

Buddhist Meditation Retreat 9 a.m.–1 p.m. Kearney Boulevard private residence. Half day with Rev. Kinrei Bassis of Berkeley Buddhist Priory. Meditation training and Dharma talks followed by a potluck. Current vaccinations required. Sign up at www.shorturl.at/brzLP. For more info, contact levy.michael3@gmail.com.

MON
26

Fresno County Democratic Women’s Club 11:30 a.m. Marie Callender’s Restaurant Garden Room, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. \$25/person. For more info, contact 559-905-1836 or patrbarr73@gmail.com.

TUE
27

California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) Via Zoom. 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Annual Regional Convention and Senior Vote Forum. Register at bit.ly/CARA2022FresnoKern. For more info, contact 510-663-4086 or cynthial.cara@gmail.com or visit californialliance.org.

FRI
30

CineCulture: *Father* 5:15 p.m. Discussion via Zoom. Discussant: Srđan Golubovic (director). Nikola, a day laborer and father of two in a small town in Serbia, is ordered to give up his children to social services after poverty and hunger drive his wife to commit a desperate act. When Nikola discovers the local administration might be corrupt, he decides to travel across Serbia on foot and take his case directly to the national ministry in Belgrade. Against all odds and driven by love and despair, this father refuses to give up on justice and his right to raise his children. Link to view the film posted 3–5 days earlier at cineculture.csufresno.edu. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu.

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

C Stands for Community-Labor Coalition

Continued from page 6

The current proposal is devoid of the enforceable commitments to create employment opportunities through apprenticeship programs and community benefit agreements like the Fresno City Council recently approved, but the countywide language would have to be negotiated later and approved by the Fresno County Transportation Authority, a body dominated by conservative interests.

While many of the dozens of entities that signed an earlier petition calling for a postponement to 2024 and public engagement cannot participate directly in a campaign, there can be no missing the political ramifications of their

participation in the Fresno Coalition for Responsible Transportation Spending (www.transportation4all.org) and our elected leaders’ rejection of their demands for equity and inclusion. That hurts.

But, really, the status quo-ers’ initial, fatal miscalculation came in early 2021. They doomed Measure C from the start when elected officials on the Fresno County Transportation Authority, their CEO Mike Leonardo and Fresno Council of Governments CEO Tony Boren assembled the original renewal committee and intentionally excluded political and policy powerhouses Fresno Building Healthy Communities and Leadership Counsel.

There has been steady growth in what used to be called “people power” that the status quo stakeholders, which includes people on both sides of the aisle and those with no aisle at all, cannot turn back. The tide of change sweeping in began with policy and funding fights in south Fresno, went citywide with the parks measure, and will now cover all of Fresno County.

Vote no on C. Let’s build a 2024 plan for the future. It’s the right thing to do. Spread the word.

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



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California to Launch New Hate Initiative with a Focus on Healing

Continued from page 1

A hate incident, on the other hand, is an action that, while motivated by hate, might not cross the line into criminality. Common examples include racist name calling or displaying hateful messaging targeting protected groups.

Monroe says that while hate incidents might not technically be criminal acts, they can have a “devastating impact on the person and the community” being targeted.

And while there is ample data available on hate crimes, experts say the numbers are likely far from accurate.

“There is no question when you look at the data that hate crimes are on the rise, but they are also underreported,” Monroe explained. The FBI counts just above 8,000 hate crimes per year, notes Monroe, but the real number could be closer to 250,000.

The disparity is explained in part by the fact that many victims often do not see law enforcement as a safe or reliable option when it comes to reporting hate crimes. For Monroe, focusing on community-centered strategies will “help us to connect individuals with culturally competent resources and support.”

Another factor has to do with state and local law enforcement agencies, which are not mandated to provide data on hate crimes to the FBI. In fact, 85% of law enforcement agencies serving jurisdictions with more than 100,000 people in California routinely report zero hate crimes in their area.

Nationwide, the majority of hate crimes continue to be perpetrated by White men, while the majority of victims are African American. But in recent years there has been a spike in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans, Latinos, Muslims and Jews.

According to Stop AAPI Hate data (AAPI stands for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders), there have been 11,000 incidents of hate targeting the AAPI community since 2020. The majority have taken place in public spaces and have targeted largely women and elders.

Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino and Vietnamese Americans are among the groups most targeted, with 63% of cases involving verbal harassment, 16% physical assault and 11% civil rights violations.



Stop AAPI Hate Director and Co-Founder Manjusha Kulkarni says the drivers behind these incidents vary, and so “a one size fits all solution doesn’t work.” She added, “Policing is not going to be the answer. We need a comprehensive civil rights infrastructure all across the country.”

Stop AAPI Hate is currently pushing two bills in the California State Legislature to work with state officials in three core areas: civil rights, community safety and educational equity.

Brian Levin with the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at Cal State San Bernardino says rhetoric from elected officials and media has helped fuel the uptick in hate crimes and hate incidents across the country.

“Anti-Latino hate crimes in 2018 were the highest in a decade because of the craven discussion on TV,” noted Levin, adding that hate crimes targeting the LGBTQ+ community doubled in Los Angeles and rose 40% nationwide in that same year, with attacks becoming “more vicious and more violent.”

And while Levin agrees that non-carceral solutions are an important tool in addressing the rise in hate, he also notes that the Justice Department currently prosecutes fewer than 20% of referrals.

For Sassana Yee, whose grandmother died after being brutally beaten in San Francisco in 2019, healing has meant

building cross-cultural connections between communities that often exist side by side.

“Her death has sparked in me an awareness to reach across cultural lines and develop friendships,” said Yee, who advocates for what she calls transformational justice.

As part of her work, Yee led a month-long road trip around the country with 10 high schoolers: half African American and half Chinese American.

“We went to 16 cities to learn about each other’s culture, history and contributions to the U.S.,” she said. “We got to understand who we are as individuals and as a collective.”

Last May, the legislature approved renaming the playground where Yee’s grandmother, Yik Oi Huang, was attacked as Yik Oi Huang Peace and Friendship Park. “A Black elder in the community suggested this name,” noted Yee, “which is a very potent symbolic gesture of solidarity.”

Jenny Manrique is a Colombian journalist living in the United States. She has worked for the Dallas Morning News and Univision, among other media outlets. She has written widely about human rights and immigration. She has received the Neuffer, the IWMF (International Women’s Media Foundation) and the Ochberg fellowships, as well as the Health Journalism fellowship from USC.

Greening of a House on McGee Street

Continued from page 5

The couple met in the mid-1980s volunteering for Tecnica, an organization that sent tech workers to do two-week training and other support in Nicaragua. They also spent six months providing technical support in Mozambique and Zimbabwe with Tecnica around the time the apartheid system fell in South Africa.

Shauna’s mother was a social worker, and her father was an avid gardener, laying the basis for her concerns with social justice and the environment. Upon arriving in Berkeley as a student, she began to absorb political and environmental influences from her peers. She learned, she said, to “think globally and act locally.”

The decision to green their house was made primarily to lower their carbon footprint. It also made them more resilient. If there are power cutoffs, the new battery on their back porch stores electricity from their new solar panels and will take over the powering of their home.

They switched from gas to electric with a new heat pump water heater, heater and induction stove. Switching from gas improved their earthquake safety, made them more efficient and brought an improvement in functionality.

“I think a lot of things start here in Berkeley, and the rest of the country kind of laughs at them for a while,” Mark said. “And then eventually they start becoming more mainstream.”

For example, a new ordinance went into effect in 2020 that bans natural gas hookups in new home construction. Reading about that in Fresno, I did think it was kind of funny. However, learning from Shauna and Mark, I can see it is mission critical in the effort to reduce fossil fuel use.

They switched from gas heating and cooking to electric with new heat pump versions and an induction stove. Heat pumps are the product of constantly improving technology originally based on refrigeration, which can efficiently produce both cooling and heat from small amounts of electricity.

They installed two heat pump units, one for HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) and one for hot water. The HVAC “mini-split” system uses its single outside compressor to send either warmer or cooler liquid (as needed) to three separately controlled, fan-driven wall-mounted indoor units.

They placed 12 solar panels on their roof after they insulated the roof and put on reflective shingles. They went for high-end panels with microinverters that convert from DC to AC before sending the power they gather down to the home and its battery.

While the heat pump for the water heater is in the crawl space beneath the house, its tank is on the outside, inside a stainless-steel cabinet. It stands next to a catchment tank, one of two, that collects rainwater for watering the garden. “Gray water,” which is water from the washing machine and the bathtub, flows underground to where there is a small, but thriving apple tree.

Online during the pandemic there was a green homes tour. It produced a dozen videos, Shauna said, of different people’s houses. The videos showed “the unique ways they each dealt with greening their homes, which really inspired me.”

Shauna and Mark’s greening took five months. Choosing top-of-the-line products, it came at a cost of \$76,500 after rebates and tax credits. They worked with various contractors, and they worked in stages, insulating the roof first, then adding solar panels, then installing the new electrical systems and appliances.

The induction stove uses electromagnets to heat and cool quickly. It needed installation of 220-volt wiring. That will also make possible a charger for an electric car in the future. To top off everything, they installed a new circuit breaker, replacing a creaky old one that was a fire hazard.

“We fall at the tail end of what you would call early adopters,” Shauna said. “The technology has been improving quickly, and the information [on how to use it] hasn’t gotten out to people so well. So, we wound up having to research things on our own.

“But that’s changing because the information is getting out. And nonprofit agencies are helping out, helping people to keep track of everything.”

Early adopters have done the service of making it possible for prices to go down for an increased number of subsequent users.

However, as more consumers go solar, PG&E and other electricity and gas corporations have been influencing the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to reduce financial support for the installation of solar energy equipment and even to charge a prohibitively expensive monthly fee for connection to the grid for solar users. The fee would go in part to maintain power lines, as PG&E strives to make a profit.

Glen Garfunkel, legislative chair for San Jose Community Energy Advocates, said that in mid-August the PUC decided to postpone decisions about support of solar for a full year so they can be better considered. He thinks this is salutary.

“It’s a complicated problem,” Garfunkel said. “Overall, I think the big overriding goal of all this is to be able to reduce [costs] for everybody equitably, reduce our emissions [and] our carbon footprint and keep the grid reliable at the same time.

“There’s many different stakeholders. The rooftop solar installer industry is a strong vocal stakeholder, but their interests, of course, might go against the utilities, and the homeowners have another set of interests and so on.

“So, it’s hard to make everybody happy, but in the end what we want is a system that [respects that] the most important thing is reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as quickly and financially as practically and equitably as possible.”

Garfunkel added that experts will be going over President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act to figure out exactly what further supports there are for environmentally sound home energy policies.

In the meantime, rebates and credits stay in place for going solar. There is also financing available, which can be paid off, in part, by savings from electric bills, including credits for adding power to the grid (when excess power is generated).

The structure for those credits could change for new users when the PUC makes its ruling in a year. During that year is a time for folks interested in greening their homes to one extent or another to exercise their influence.

Peter Maiden is the photo editor of the Community Alliance newspaper.



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2022 Pandemic School Closures



In 2020, despite being in the midst of a global pandemic, Vecinos and youth were successful in advocating for improved policies and practices to support students during distance learning. Some accomplishments include:

- Arvin Union improved access to school board meetings by providing a “call-in” option rather than video conferencing for English and Spanish speakers.
- Parlier Unified delivered school meals using buses, provided culturally relevant food such as tamales and jicama, adopted protocols to address issues with food spoilage, and added a location and additional time to pick up school meals.
- Lindsay Unified contracted with a professional interpreter for Spanish speakers at school board meetings.
- Bakersfield City School District moved school board meetings from 10 am back to 6 pm to allow working parents to participate.
- Fresno Unified removed police officers from middle schools and committed to investing \$38 million in mental health resources and staffing.

Local Control & Accountability Plan



The Local Control and Accountability Plan known as “LCAP” is a state law that allows parents, students, and community members the opportunity to provide recommendations to school districts on how funding should be allocated. Parents and youth received a series of LCAP training that led to 51 Vecinos and youth presenting 58 recommendations to 8 school districts. The recommendations included increasing school counselors, healthy start programs, cultural celebrations like Black History month, mentorship programs, and LGBTQIA+ youth support. School district budgets will be finalized in July for the school year 2022-2023.

Improving School Meals

- Vecinos and youth continue to advocate for better quality and access to school meals.
- DHF partnered with the University of California’s Cooperative Extension program offering workshops on planning, saving, shopping, and cooking healthier meals.
 - Vecinos met with Parlier Unified School District’s Food Service Director Marina Navarro to design a community survey to increase school meal participation.
 - Recognized by Parlier Unified School District with the “Empowering Communities” award for our school meal advocacy.
 - DHF and parent leaders were awarded the “Hunger Hero” award from No Kid Hungry for improving access to school meals during the pandemic!

- Stanford published the research paper “Mitigating childhood food insecurity during COVID-19: a qualitative study of how school districts in California’s San Joaquin Valley responded to growing needs” with the support of DHF’s education department

DHF Education Justice Academy



DHF is excited to introduce the Neighbors United (Vecinos Unidos) Education Justice Academy starting September 8th, 2022. The academy is a matriculated monthly program for parents, students, and community members to expand their knowledge on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and learn how to better support students in schools. Participants will receive opportunities to engage with education leaders throughout the Central Valley and will graduate from this program.

Spotlight: Local Action



In response to the retirement of BCSD’s Migrant director, Janie Flores, parents created a petition to urge the BCSD board to find a candidate who could continue building on the success of the migrant program. Vecinos collected signatures, presented recommendations for transparency in BCSD’s hiring process, and participated in media.

Back to School 2021-2022

In the school year, 2021-2022 Vecinos and youth were tasked with navigating the impact of COVID-19 as students returned to in-person instruction. DHF is proud of student and parent leaders who worked tirelessly to uplift the needs of their communities.

Back to School Announcement!



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Now Is Not the Time to Drop Our Guard on Covid

By Jenny Manrique

Health experts say that even as more people are vaccinated and boosted, the coronavirus is here to stay. And they warn that future variants will likely keep medical practitioners and researchers on their toes as they work to keep both infections and the severity of infections down.

Their message to the public: Don't let your guard down. "Covid is going to be with us for the foreseeable future," said Dr. William Schaffner, professor of medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

"We're struggling to figure out how we can keep this virus down and minimize its damage, and still at the same time enjoy a reasonably normal life."

Schaffner was among a panel of speakers for a July 29 media briefing organized by Ethnic Media Services on the latest Covid variant, and the mounting questions around the pandemic and vaccine efficacy.

Covid-19 cases, deaths and hospitalizations are again on the rise in the United States. More than two-thirds of Americans have tested positive for Covid, including President Joe Biden, who tested positive for the second time in a case of Covid rebound. The BA.5 subvariant of Omicron is now responsible for more than 78% of infections in the country, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

But public health experts say the figures could represent a severe undercount, with many people failing to report positive results from at-home tests.

Shaffner stressed that updated vaccines will continue to be an essential part of the broader strategy. "We need more durable, long-term protection against a broader array of different variants, the ones we know and the ones we don't know yet," he said.

"We would like vaccines that abort and prevent the actual infection at the surface of the mucous membranes, not just vaccines that protect against serious disease."

Nasal vaccines, which can be administered via a spray or a dropper, are gaining more attention among clinical researchers and could offer another route to increasing vaccination rates. The NovaVax vaccine, recently authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), was licensed for an initial two-dose series but not yet for a booster.

But Dr. Ben Neuman, professor of biology and chief virologist of the Global Health Research Complex at Texas A&M University, has his doubts.

"NovaVax vaccine is fine, but it's about two years too late," he said, adding the drug does not replicate the virus as effectively as other vaccines.

"NovaVax has this very delicate spike protein that is transported and protected very carefully; a little bit survives

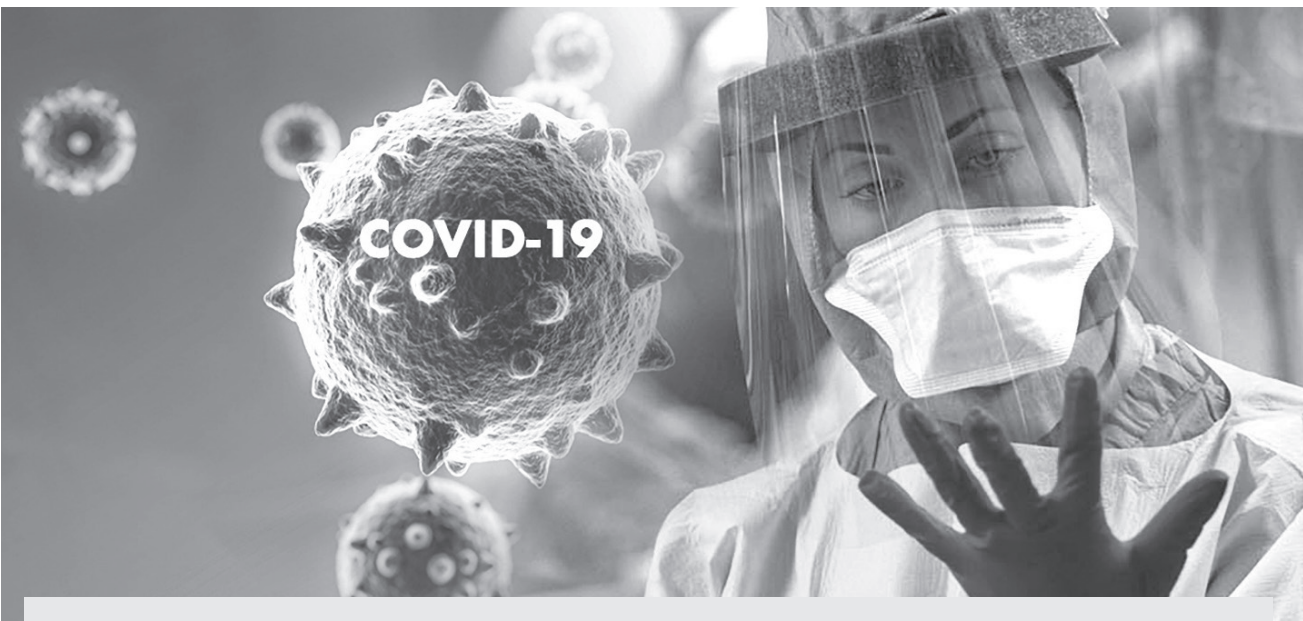


Photo courtesy of Ethnic Media Services

to go into your body...With the mRNA vaccine, you get perfect pristine spikes exactly the way nature intended."

Neuman noted that to date there have been 15 mutations of the Omicron variant, including the newer BA.5 and BA.2.75 subvariants, for which the current vaccines appear less effective.

"We are still vaccinating against the 2019 virus and it is now late 2022," he said. "We have a problem."

Nearly a third of Americans remain unvaccinated, while a majority of Covid-related deaths are occurring among people 65 and older, including those who have been vaccinated.

Speakers stressed that masks continue to play a critical role in slowing the spread of the virus, particularly for those who are at high risk because of age or underlying conditions.

Currently, no state mandates mask wearing in public, though several states still require mask wearing in high-risk settings, including hospitals and long-term care facilities.

In April, a federal judge struck down the Biden administration's mask requirement for public transit, airlines and transportation hubs. The Justice Department is expected to appeal the ruling.

Meanwhile, one-third of Americans have managed to avoid being infected by the virus altogether. According to Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, associate dean for regional campuses at UC San Francisco, four factors help explain this trend.

Some people might be genetically disposed to having higher resistance to the virus, said Chin-Hong, something doctors saw during the early years of the HIV/AIDS crisis. These individuals could play a role in future research on therapeutics for Covid, Chin-Hong noted.

Behavior could be another factor, "as some people in the same household may be taking more precautions" in terms of wearing a mask or having close contact with other people. The timing of vaccines also plays a role, as the risks of infection have fluctuated over time during the pandemic.

Finally, says Chin-Hong, some people might have been infected and just did not realize it, either because they were asymptomatic or because they were never tested.

Chin-Hong believes that wastewater inspections can help to clarify the picture around actual infection rates. Unlike relying on tests and self-reporting, wastewater can help researchers understand the extent to which the virus is spreading within a community.

"For example, in California, the level of wastewater virus is very similar to [reported Covid levels] in January, when more people were getting tested," explained Chin-Hong. Based on this data, current case rates would be far higher than the 130,000 daily infections now being reported.

A summer surge of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which can cause Covid-like symptoms, could also explain why a lot of people have received negative results on their home testing kits, said Shaffner.

"The rapid tests are also less apt to give you a positive result in this BA.5 era...That is why the CDC keeps focusing on hospitalizations, because they remind us that there is this important public health problem."

Therapeutics such as PAXLOVID have proven to be effective in preventing more severe diseases, mostly among older adults. And there is a monoclonal antibody that can be given to some people who are resistant to PAXLOVID. But experts insist that vaccines remain the most essential tool to fight the virus.

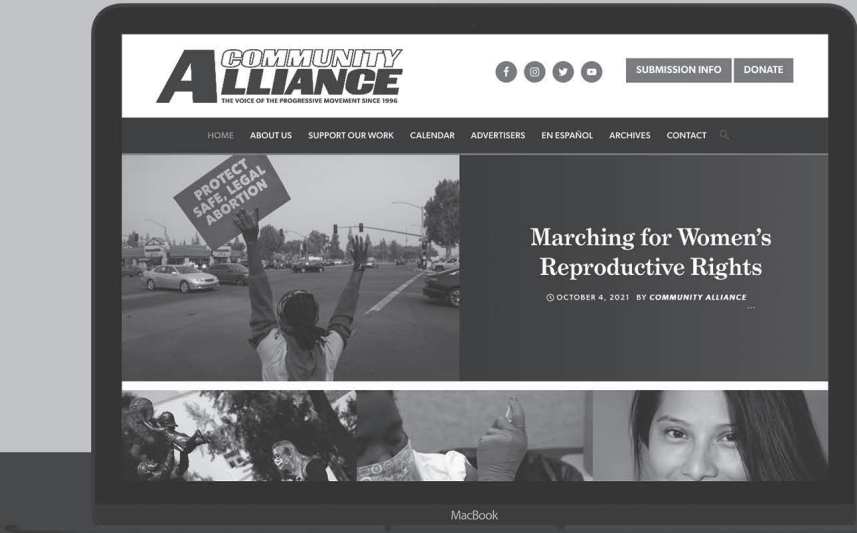
"We know we have too many deaths, like 430 a day," says Chin-Hong. "We have to manage (the virus) and we have the tools to do that right now," he concluded.

Jenny Manrique is a Colombian journalist living in the United States. She worked for the Dallas Morning News and Univision, among other media outlets. She has written widely about human rights and immigration. She received the Neuffer, IWMF (International Women's Media Foundation) and Ochberg fellowships, as well as the health journalism fellowship from USC.

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Freedom Demands Responsibility

By Ruth Gadebusch

With so many demands in the name of freedom from those who seemingly interpret freedom as letting them do anything and everything that they choose, it is time to think of just how that attitude works in a society. The Jan. 6, 2021, attempted insurrection of the U.S. government certainly did not benefit anyone.

If it were possible just to allow each and everyone of us to consider only ourselves without consequences we would not need any laws. Fortunately, or unfortunately, for those who believe only they matter, we do need rules and regulations to live together in some peace. After all, the planet is shared territory. In the words of James Madison, "If men were angels, we would not need government."

It is painfully obvious that all too many believe they should be able to yell and scream their demands without any consideration of the law, much less the concerns of anyone except themselves. It matters not who else or what else is affected. My way 99% doesn't count; I have my freedom 100%, be it speech or action.

The brilliant concept for this nation hardly expected that attitude to prevail and most assuredly not to the extent the idea is being abused by segments in this nation. There are those who

have perfected almost as an art the ability to use our wonderful communication tools to exploit the idea that freedom has no restraint for their followers. We all pay the price as individuals, as a society.

We must find a way to put *responsibility* back into the picture as the founders of this nation understood it, as thinking people still practice.

That responsibility includes restraint, restraint of our own worst inclinations to put ourselves above all others. Yes, take care of our own needs be they physical or concepts of a functioning society, but let it be one that says my rights stop where yours begin in this shared space. No one, absolutely no one, stands alone, not even in this nation of freedom, a concept not shared in many places on the planet.

Our forefathers—no foremothers or other equally unconsidered groups were allowed or even much thought of in the debate, a story for another time—worked diligently and brilliantly to develop a government that served the needs of humans (at that time property owning men above all) existing in a shared society. They designed a format of representative government that has come as near performing its intended mission as

any government existing on the planet.

Yet, instead of striving to carry out that responsibility many humans would destroy it in the guise of being the only ones capable of managing. In reality, all too often a selfish grabbing of power to benefit themselves. In its final form known as dictatorship.

With this attitude, we have reached a day of reckoning. Let us think of the more obvious results when citizens think only of themselves, be it the action of an individual nature or that of the group.

Those who without medical reasoning refuse vaccinations for Covid-19 and masks are not just affecting themselves, their freedom, as they so loudly proclaim, but can expose their fellow/sister humans. Smallpox did not vanish from the world without vaccinations eliminating the entire source of the virus. Nor do I believe my parents ever signed a permission slip for me and my classmates to receive typhoid prevention.

Many other vaccinations we know today were unknown. As each classroom of students lined up, we were grateful that we had a way to protect ourselves and our community. The needles were not nearly as sharp as today! Nor do I know of anyone at a later time

less than overjoyed that we could prevent the scourge of polio. The whole society rejoiced in our good fortune.

Wearing a mask does not infringe on one's freedom. It is little enough for each of us to do to protect all.

We have traffic lights and stop signs. We have speed limits. We have requirements of cleanliness in our preparation of food. We have safety standards in manufactured goods and pay scales for labor, and on and on. All because common sense and human restraint is insufficient to prevent chaos and worse.

We even have the ability to predict what our actions are doing to the future regarding the world's resources. It isn't a loss of freedom when we take responsibility to control use of our resources to protect them for the future, like doing what can still be done to mitigate climate change.

We register vehicles and record property deeds. It is protecting, as it would be to register guns even restricting them from some persons thereby possibilities of reducing likely damage when in the wrong hands.

We are belatedly developing standards for respecting our fellow/sister humans in our everyday treatment of them whether it be for education, job availability or property rights. The same service for all, voting rights and the many other encounters of daily life. These are




not infringement of freedom but recognition of our responsibility to treat others as we would like to be treated.

Yes, we have freedom, especially in our nation, but it comes with a price: how we behave with other humans and how we use the resources of the planet. In short: Freedom exists only with *responsibility*.

Ruth Gadebusch has served as a naval officer, an elected member of the Fresno Unified School District Board, a governor-appointed member of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, an officer of the Board of the Center for Civic Education and a variety of other community organizations.

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Streets of Laredo versus Today's Streets of Outlaw Culture

By Dr. Malik Simba

It's strange that *Gunsmoke's* U.S. Marshall Matt Dillon did not require all the rough-and-tumble cowboys arriving in town from cattle herding to turn in their guns at Dillon's office before going to the Long Branch Saloon for heavy drinking and womanizing. Dillon preferred to out-quick-draw the bad guys and send them to Boot Hill, and that is the opening scene that introduces every episode of *Gunsmoke*, which aired on television for 22 seasons.

In that opening scene, viewers see Marshall Dillon, at "high noon" on Dodge City's main street, doing a fast draw and dispatching another bad guy to Boot Hill. In the streets of Dodge City, the law was quick and decisive.

However, in the 1957 episode titled "Bureaucrat," a federal agent is sent to Dodge City to implement gun control (turn in all guns at the sheriff's office). That policy failed miserably because individuals began wearing hidden derringers.

Yet, in a number of the 1950s and 1960s Hollywood televised westerns and films, the approach to the maintenance of law and order in the Old West was framed in the

way the local sheriff required all citizens, especially wild cowboys just off the range and hired gunslingers, to turn over their guns at the sheriff's office. Law, order and peace would follow this regulation.

In the scripts written for television and movies, not one cowpoke or hired gun argued for a Second Amendment right to bear arms and keep his Colt 45 in a public carry. Hollywood has produced numerous television dramas from *The Rifleman* to *Bat Masterson* to *Gunsmoke*, revealing how courageous western sheriffs cleaned up the wild, wild west and made law and order a staple of peace and safety in the Old West.

By the 1880s, many pioneer newspapers advocated some version of gun control. *The Black Hills Daily Times* called carrying guns a "dangerous practice." The *Montana Yellowstone Journal* called for gun regulation, and another paper called packing a gun "a senseless custom."

In modern-day television dramas, such as *The Streets of San Francisco*, however, the wild, wild west of crime and disorder resurfaced within the urban "outlaw culture" of narcissistic individualism, greed and aimless violence expressed in the musical cultural form of gangsta rap. One such song in 1991, "Mind Playing Tricks on Me," was a hit by the group Geto Boys. One stanza includes the words "sleeping with my finger on the trigger."

Young Black men in today's violent outlaw urban culture are comparable to Africa's child soldiers. The essence of the song expresses the paranoia of real ghetto boys living in a state of fear. Ergo, the hue and cry of the Second Amendment to protect and serve when Marshall Dillon or his modern prototype, Dirty Harry, are not around to save the day.

Specifically, the National Rifle Association (NRA) has used the public fear of urban disorder to argue the Second Amendment gives each American citizen the right to own

her or his own Colt 45 or AR-15 assault rifle. The classic 1955 film *Wichita* starred Joel McCray as Wyatt Earp. The plot revolves around the motto of the town, posted on a banner at the entrance to the town, which reads, "Anything Goes in Wichita."

After some drunken cowherders shoot up the town and accidentally kill a young boy, Earp is hired as sheriff to clean up the town and make it safe for law-abiding citizens. Earp accomplishes this by requiring all who enter Wichita to hand over their guns to the sheriff's office until they leave town. No wild cowboys objected by shouting out their Second Amendment rights.

However, in today's American streets of outlaw culture, with the rabid support of the GOP and the NRA, the Second Amendment is used to defend the right to own assault weapons, which have been used to kill children in elementary schools, as in Uvalde, Texas, and Black senior citizens while they shopped for groceries in Buffalo, N.Y.

Time, space and history are important if one is to understand the complexities, inconsistencies and contradictions concerning the right to own a weapon that is produced for the mass killing of human beings. In 1994, a bipartisan Congress passed the 10-year Federal Assault Weapons Ban (AWB). President Bill Clinton signed the bill on Sept. 13. The ban ended on Sept. 13, 2004.

But with the killing of children at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., in December 2012, there was renewed effort in Congress to reinstate the AWB. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) introduced the bill, but it failed in the Senate by a vote of 40 to 60. Many critics and anti-gun advocates blamed the monetary power of the NRA.

Both the Obama and Biden administrations desired and publicly advocated for the previous AWB to be reinstated. Biden's proposed ban came in



Wyatt Earp became famous as a sheriff in Wichita by requiring all who entered town to hand over their guns at the sheriff's office until leaving town. No wild cowboys objected by shouting out their Second Amendment rights. As you might suspect, the town became a peaceful one.
Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

the wake of the mass shootings at an Atlanta spa and in Boulder, Colo., at a grocery store, both in 2021. These calls for gun regulation fell on tightly closed ears by GOP members of Congress.

In conclusion, Americans are caught between the Matt Dillon approach to law and order and the Wyatt Earp approach. This divide is possibly insurmountable due to the money power of the NRA, or as the old gangsta notes, "Money talks" and nothing else matters.

Malik Simba is an emeritus professor of Africana studies and history at Fresno State.

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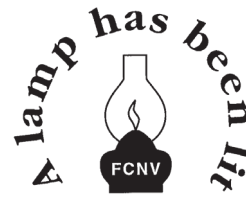
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Fresno Center for Nonviolence 2022

September 2022

As the weather begins to cool, oh wait this is Fresno. Another month before the temperature becomes tolerable. Yet with Christmas products already in the stores, America gets ready to forget and back off from the holy, holidays.



Edited by
Richard Gomez.

Dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through

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Nuclear fall- out, continues to fall.

Live and let live, it happened so long ago, and we have learned our lessons, right? Wrong! Since the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki over 77 years the United States has learned to build more and more weapons of destruction and of different varieties. Smaller and more dangerous, currently we may have nuclear weapons that can fit in a lunch box, enjoy your meal. We have handed the technology, spawned an industry, like candy on Halloween to friendly (?) nations like Iraq and Iran. We are on the cusp of surrounding Russia ready to blame Putin for anything that goes wrong. Does this sound like we learned anything? Instead of learning to put away such dangerous toys and make agreements never to go nuclear again, especially after seeing its destructiveness. We continued to build more and more as well as to deceive the public with propaganda techniques claiming that that it wouldn't be harmful or used for peaceful reasons. This actions of a small group of people continue to reverberate around the world bringing the most negative consequences to our planet.

Back then our own Military's Chief of Staff condemned the dropping of these bombs saying that it was dishonorable to bomb a purely civilian population, but they were overruled, perhaps, due to the desire to see how effective, how many people that this device could kill and destroy. During the war, theses designated cities were left alone from any bombing or strafing by Allie forces despite that Tokyo had been firebombed constantly which led to the deaths of nearly 100,000 people. At Hiroshima, the bomb was set to explode at 100 feet in the air thus avoiding the fear that had it exploded on contact with the ground that the ground would muffle the effectiveness in total killed. The results were devastating but not satisfying to all. Somehow the need for death needed more fear, more idiocy, and more weapons.

Of course, these bombs were never meant used to end the war, that had already been accomplished. The only impediment was weather the emperor would abdicate and hand himself over to the allies or to remain as a figure head to the Japanese people. This outcome was decided by our President Harry Truman who as a young Lieutenant at the end of the first world war had written in his diary that he believed the world would be much better if before or even after the Armistice was to go into effect that American and Allied troops should swoop into Germany and kill every German man, woman and child considering that the German race was nothing more than a violent and cruel race deserving of annihilation. The world would be better without them he wrote. A little less than 30 years later, after looking over pictures of Hiroshima and the damage, he must of became scared to believe that he would be known as the world's worst mass murderer. Truman accepted the terms of keeping the Japanese emperor and order that boats that had shipment of food and aid to the Soviet Union and was diverted to Greece, continuing a lie that since then, has consistently built up to this trouble world.

Eisenhower upon preparing to leave the White House as President spoke out against these forces that with every bomb, every war planes every instrument of war would take away from the children and the future that they're parents hope they could achieve. Much has been done trying to convince such a small number of people that the nuclear is deadly to humans, even California own Governor Newsome has back down on de-activating, San Onofre, a coastal nuclear reactor. In my day, liberals were made of sterner stuff.

So, when all is said and done, we can look back and say that only a few demented people got us into this mess but that so many people that could have gotten out of this failed to do so. You can sit back and sing that old Monty Python song, "*Always look on the light side of Death*", and don't forget to whistle or it's up to all of us. The price of living should cost a little more than dying but what do I know. Somehow to Live and let Live shouldn't be about death but contradictions are what humans do best. Fortunately, the Holi daze season is coming up. -RG

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Wednesday September 14th at 3 pm



In September our show will be hosted by Josh Shurley with guest Bob McCloskey from Community Alliance on homelessness in Fresno. For more information call on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at (559) 237-3223 or check our website at www.centerfornonviolence.org

In August our show was hosted by Josh Shurley with Gerry Condon of Veteran for Peace's Golden Rules Committee discussing the danger of possible nuclear disaster. To hear it again go to: https://soundcloud.com/joshua-shurley/stir-it-up-aug-10-2022?si=c1566c3f1cdf4e60963783ac3bf4149e&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

In July our show will be hosted by Josh Shurley with guest Aaron Foster of Advance Peace that helps kids who shoot. To hear again go to: [Stream Stir It Up - July 12 2022 by Dr. Shurl | Listen online for free on SoundCloud](#)



THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROGRESSIVE PAC FALL FUNDRAISER

Progressives and Electoral Politics

By Mike Rhodes

We all want a lot of the same things:

- A living wage for all workers.
- Reproductive health rights for women.
- Environmental Justice
- Immigrant rights.
- Clean air and water
- LGBTQ rights
- Health Care for All

This is our progressive agenda. We all work hard to achieve our goals on the issue(s) we are most passionate about. Then we come together and vote for who we think can best fulfill our vision for a better world.

The Central Valley Progressive PAC has been working to get progressives elected in Fresno, the San Joaquin Valley and Sierra Mountains for years. The concept behind this effort was that the majority of people in this area want the same things we identify as progressive. There are way more of us and yet this region is dominated by conservative politicians.

How Can That Be?

Updating the Power Structure Analysis first produced by the Service Employee International Union the CVPPAC made some interesting discoveries about how wealthy conservative interests maintain power even though they are vastly outnumbered.

Public records show the extent in which builders, developers and other business interest finance candidates who will look favorably on their "requests." If you look favorably on these requests, they will shower you with campaign contributions. It is essential to have money to run a viable campaign and special interests have that kind of money.

Thirty years ago Chris Peterson, a friend of mine on the Fresno City Council, told me what happens if you don't play ball with these guys. He was visited one day by a representative from a developer who wanted to rezone some land. The man put an envelope on his desk, told Chris what he needed and started to leave. Chris stopped him in the outer office, with lots of City Hall staff members around and said "this man just handed me this envelope and asked for a favor to benefit his business." Chris opened the envelope and counted out the money as he returned it to the corrupt courier. Next election? All of the builders and developers poured money into Chris's opponent's campaign and that was the end of my friend's political career.

You may have heard of Operation Rezone where they FBI had to clear up the corruption at City Hall. They discovered City Council members were being bribed with a new set of tires for their car, a business suit and just plain cash. One even wore the cheap suit to court the day he was sentenced. It was embarrassing how cheaply they sold their souls.

Another major factor in how the rich and powerful maintain their control in this town is the voting system. If you look at a map of voter turnout you will see that we are not playing on a level playing field. Voters in the more affluent areas of the Northern part of the city have turnout rates

Sunday, September 4, starting at 5 p.m. in Pat Wolk's beautiful backyard at 6661 N. Forkner Ave. in Fresno

of 85%. In the Southwest and Southeast turnout is 20 - 30%. The North Fresno affluent voters vote for Republicans and conservative ballot initiatives 85% of the time. The opposite is true in South Fresno where 90% of the people vote for more progressive candidates.

The 3,500 people locked up in the Fresno County Jail can't get out to vote. 2/3 of them have not been convicted of a crime and are too poor to bail themselves out. The reasons why folks in impoverished areas of town don't vote are many. For example they move more than rich people. If you move you have to re-register at your new address to be eligible to vote. Some have transportation or work issues that limit their ability to get to a polling place.

The CVPPAC was established as a counter balance to the injustice of the voting process in Fresno and to show that when people come together they can change the world. By becoming a member of the CVPPAC you are standing up for your rights and empowering others to stand for the things we believe in.

If the CVPPAC had 1,000 members we could present a serious challenge to the ruling elite. 10,000 members and we could wrest control from the corrupt "good old boy" system and make some serious changes.

Of course it takes more than money, we need you to walk precincts, get your neighbors to vote and some members will have to run for public office. We need progressive, passionate and articulate people who will provide leadership on our journey.

The Fall Fundraiser

We invite you to join us as we share our plan to get more progressives elected in Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley. Central Valley Progressive PAC-endorsed candidates will join us. There will be music, food and good friends as we share the evening under the stars. This event will be held on Sunday, September 4, starting at 5 p.m. in Pat Wolk's beautiful backyard at 6661 N. Forkner Ave. in Fresno.

Lance Canales and the Flood will provide our musical entertainment. This is a roots-blues-influenced Americana trio from California's breadbasket, where Canales lived the life that so many songs have been written about since the birth of roots music-hard labor, one-room shacks and taunting ghosts whispering of a better life. Canales' guttural vocals combine a hard-edged storytelling approach beneath a stripped-down, foot-stomping, acoustic instrumentation.

Canales' rendition of "Plane Crash at Los Gatos: Deportee," written by Woody Guthrie in 1948, reveals the names of the Mexican casualties whom were simply referred to as "deportees."

The next CVPPAC meeting will be on Saturday, September 10, 2022.

For more information, visit www.cvppac.org.

The upper left photo - the photographer is unknown. All other photographs by Howard Watkins and Mike Rhodes.



Lance Canales



Jaguar Bennett talks to us about the Tower Theater



Heather and Andrew Janz. Andrew ran for mayor of Fresno in 2020



Janice Mathurin and Sean Boyd



Dolores Huerta and Robin McGehee



FUSD Trustee Veva Islas speaking at the 2021 Fall Fundraiser.



CVPPAC members Bev Fitzpatrick and Loretta



Group shot at Fall Fundraiser featuring Dolores Huerta



CVPPAC president Simone Whalen

Bucha, Ukraine: Life after Horror, during the War

By Zarina Zabrisky

Paradise Turns to Hell

On Feb. 25, glued to the Internet, Nadiya, a long-time Kyiv resident, watched the Russian troops enter Bucha. Russian tanks surrounded her mother’s private boarding retirement home, just the previous day “a paradise in the forest.”

For the next few days, fierce street fighting and massive explosions would not stop. Nadiya browsed through the first photos of destroyed Bucha, in disbelief. The main street was cluttered with burned tanks. A friend’s home bombed.

The reports from the staff of the retirement home were grim: the heating system off; the food supplies running out; the power and Internet down. The basements, where people hid from the air strikes, were freezing cold.

The grocery shops closed. Volunteers delivered food. The staff cooked food in the yard, on the fire.

The worst, though, was the lack of water. First, the employees fished leaves and dirt from the water of an open swimming pool and boiled it, or melted snow.

In a week, though, stepping outside became impossible. It meant death by a Russian bullet. Volunteers bringing food got killed.

Starving and freezing, the retirement home residents started to die. The Russian invaders forbade the burial, and the employees just stored the bodies in one of the rooms.

By mid-March, the management succeeded in negotiating a “green corridor” with the Russian occupiers, to evacuate the elderly. To get to the bus, barely alive people were expected to walk in the snow for miles. When finally the Russian military agreed to bring the buses closer to the entrance, the people were shoved and piled into the buses.

Nadiya’s mother survived and stays at a family home, in relative safety, as no place is safe in Ukraine. Every night, sirens of the air raids sound all over Ukraine. To attack, the Russians military choose the time of the night when people sleep the deepest.

Every morning, there are reports of more civilians killed and injured and more infrastructure facilities destroyed. On Aug. 17–18, two overnight air strikes on Kharkiv took at least 18 lives and nearly 40 were wounded. The Russians shelled two dormitories of boarding institutions, one for people with disabilities.

The invaders continue to damage power lines, gas pipes and water pumping systems. Thousands of Ukrainians live without power, heat or water. Mykolaiv and many cities in Donbas have been living without water for weeks.

The memories of the Bucha are haunting Nadiya’s family, but they are recovering. Many did not survive the Russian occupation.

Paradise

Before the Russian invasion, the thriving upper-middle-class community, IT professionals, PR experts and business owners enjoyed life in a beautiful setting—pine-tree parks, fountains, gourmet restaurants, posh supermarkets, state-of-the-art beauty salons and auto salons, private kindergartens and retirement homes, pet stores and fully-stocked shopping malls. Many had moved to Bucha earlier, escaping the Russian aggression in the east of Ukraine.

In the spring of 2014, on Sasha and Marina’s first wedding anniversary, the explosions boomed their beloved city of Donetsk in Donbas. Aspiring amateur photographers Sasha, an IT expert, and Marina, a linguist, used to spend weekends taking pictures of the rare rose gardens, rivers and lakes and spotting birds in Donetsk.

After Russia started the war in Donbas, those passionate about Ukraine, their roots and language had to flee. Sasha and Marina, like many, refused to live in the Russian proxy state and fled to Bucha, leaving behind a newly bought apartment and families.

They built a new home in Hostomel, a five-minute ride to Bucha and had to abandon it on Feb. 24, when the Russians entered the area on their way to Kyiv. Their new house was looted and damaged, with many bullet holes in the walls.



A view of the city of Hostomel, Ukraine, after a Russian bombardment.



The city of Irpin, Ukraine, after a Russian bombardment. Photo courtesy of Zarina Zabrisky

After the liberation, they returned and are starting over with remarkable strength and stoicism, amid the air raid sirens and occasional bombings.

Sasha and Marina consider themselves lucky: Many of their neighbors had to hide in basements for weeks and lost their entire houses—and some were killed.

Hell

Russian troops occupied Bucha, Irpin, Hostomel and other small towns in the western suburb of Kyiv, on March 3 during the first week of the full-scale Russian invasion. The Battle of Bucha, a part of the Kyiv offensive, lasted from Feb. 27 to March 31. Failing to encircle and capture Kyiv, the Russians withdrew forces and retreated to the east. Ever since, the bodies of the victims are being discovered in the area.

During the occupation, the Russians tortured and killed local residents to instill fear and control the seized territories—and, sometimes, just for fun. Overall, the killings in Bucha took close to 500 lives.

The families of the people killed by Russians brought the bodies to the morgue of the nearby hospital, but the occupiers banned access to the cemetery. The nearby St. Andrew Cathedral priest gave the morgue staff permission to temporarily bury the dead in the churchyard, in mass graves. After liberation, 116 bodies were exhumed from the mass graves by the church.

Once a busy town, it was now a desert. The Russian military turned many of the residential buildings and businesses to piles of charred rubble. Cars and people disappeared from the streets. Shops were closed and the whole area lived with no power, Internet or mobile connection.

Several high-rise buildings suffered damage. Many were left without roofs and windows. A junkyard with demolished cars, mostly civilian, is another site of the Bucha war crimes: Some of the charred cars were found with families burnt alive inside.

At Yablonska street—now known as “the horror street”—more than 20 bodies were found, on both sides of the street and in yards, some with arms tied-up, shot from the

back. The Russians parked their tanks in the yards to use the civilians as a “human shield” to prevent the Ukrainian army from attacking. Local residents had to live in the basements. Getting outside was extremely dangerous: Russians shot anyone, on foot or on a bike.

Back to Life

By August 2022, the City Council was working on restoring the buildings that could be rebuilt and looking for grants to help fix the destroyed and damaged schools and hospitals. The Vokzalna street had to be cleaned from the remains of Russian tanks.

Just four months after the liberation, the residents are rebuilding their homes and reopening their businesses to the sounds of air raids and occasional explosions. Everywhere, women and men work in their gardens, gathering plums, apples and grapes, watering and trimming their lawns and planting roses. The construction sounds are in the fragrant air. Kids are playing at the newly constructed playgrounds.

Now free of the Russian troops on the ground, Bucha has opened the doors to many internally displaced people from Zaporizhzhia, Donbas, Kharkiv and Mykolaiv, cities and regions being bombed daily.

“We refuse to be a place of tragedy,” said the deputy mayor of Bucha in an interview. “Russia is a terrorist state and has committed unspeakable horror crimes. Yet, Bucha is a normal, green town, and we want our life back. Ukraine will win and stay a free, sovereign state.”

Zarina Zabrisky is an American journalist and an award-winning novelist currently reporting on the Russian war in Ukraine. She is a war correspondent for Bywire News (UK); has written a Daily Review column for Euromaidan Press, an online Ukrainian English-language independent newspaper, since 2014; and contributes articles and podcasts on information warfare, reports from sites and interviews military experts and eyewitnesses for these and other publications, including The Byline Times (UK).



Sasha and Marina

El proyecto de ley de comida rápida de California podría vincular a las corporaciones con el robo de salarios y otras violaciones laborales

Continúa de página 22

con las que hacen negocios, aunque no empleen directamente a los trabajadores.

Por ejemplo, en 2014, la Legislatura responsabilizó a las empresas que utilizan trabajadores contratados por el robo de salarios cometido por las agencias de esos trabajadores. Posteriormente, los legisladores hicieron lo mismo con los contratistas de las industrias de limpieza, jardinería, construcción y hogares de ancianos.

El año pasado, la Legislatura aprobó una medida responsabilizando a grandes marcas de diseñadores de moda por el robo de salarios por parte de los fabricantes de prendas de vestir en sus cadenas de suministro.

Robo de salarios en comida rápida

La comida rápida es la última industria que atrae este tipo de regulación, y es una de las más grandes y visibles.

Restaurantes como locales de comida rápida, negocios de comida para llevar y cafeterías emplearon a más de 700,000 trabajadores en todo el estado, según datos federales de junio. Los defensores del proyecto de ley estiman que el 80% de los trabajadores son negros, latinos o asiáticos y dos tercios son mujeres.

SEIU y Fight for \$15 dicen que la industria está plagada de violaciones laborales. El sindicato dió a conocer una encuesta de 400 trabajadores este año en el que el 85% dijo haber sido víctima de robo de salario.

Los grupos empresariales dijeron que el proyecto de ley apunta innecesariamente a la comida rápida. El Instituto de Políticas de Empleo, un grupo de expertos nacional con vínculos con restaurantes, publicaron un informe de este mes que muestra que el porcentaje de reclamos salariales presentados contra este segmento de negocios es menor que su participación en la fuerza laboral de California.

Si se aprueba, la legislación propuesta podría marcar un punto de inflexión en la legislación laboral estadounidense.

Por lo general, bajo el modelo de franquicia, las corporaciones de comida rápida firman acuerdos con los dueños de franquicias que dictan una variedad de estándares para vender alimentos bajo su marca, pero deja los salarios, los horarios y las condiciones laborales en manos del dueño de la franquicia.

El modelo ha brindado avances a la propiedad de negocios para muchos empresarios minoritarios, señalan los partidarios.

Pero los críticos dicen que a empresas como McDonald's y Domino's se les ha permitido obtener ganancias mientras se distancian de cualquier responsabilidad sobre cómo se trata a los empleados del restaurante.

¿Empleadores conjuntos?

La cuestión de la relación de los franquiciadores con los trabajadores sigue sin resolverse a nivel federal. A lo largo de tres administraciones presidenciales, la Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales ha ido y venido sobre si considerar automáticamente a los franquiciadores y franquiciados como "empleadores conjuntos". Los tribunales, incluida la Corte Suprema de Justicia de California, en general han rechazado esa idea bajo las leyes actuales.

"Estos modelos de franquicias han sido una vía para que las empresas eviten la responsabilidad de ser empleadores", dijo Emily Andrews, directora de educación, trabajo y justicia laboral del Center for Law and Social Policy, una organización nacional de izquierda contra la pobreza. organización.

Los estudios han encontrado que los franquiciadores pueden ejercer una cantidad significativa de presión y control sobre los dueños de negocios de franquicias.

En un artículo publicado el año pasado, profesores de derecho de la Universidad de Miami y la Universidad de Cornell examinaron 44 contratos de franquicia de 2016 y encontraron que más de las tres cuartas partes le dieron a la cadena poder exclusivo para rescindir contratos, poniendo a un franquiciado "en una posición de dependencia económica".

"Los franquiciados pueden responder a la supervisión intensiva del franquiciador y los márgenes de beneficio ajustados al recortar ilegalmente los salarios como la única variable de costo que el franquiciador no supervisa directamente", escribieron los profesores de derecho.

La Asociación Internacional de Franquicias no está de acuerdo, argumentando que el modelo de negocio se define por la independencia de los propietarios de las franquicias en las decisiones laborales. El proyecto de ley de comida rápida, dijeron, reduciría a esos propietarios a gerentes intermedios, y las empresas más grandes retirarían oportunidades en California si se les exige que supervisen el cumplimiento de la ley laboral.

"Estaría responsabilizando a una entidad o asignando responsabilidad por cosas sobre las que no tiene control", dijo Jeff Hanscom, vocero de la asociación con sede en Washington, DC, que incluye franquiciadores



y franquiciados. "Estás tomando una franquicia y convirtiéndola en una entidad corporativa".

El caso de The Cheesecake Factory

Ese argumento tiene cierta influencia entre los legisladores del Senado estatal.

Durante una audiencia en junio sobre el proyecto de ley de comida rápida ante el Comité Judicial del Senado, algunos legisladores demócratas cuestionaron si es necesaria una expansión automática de la responsabilidad. El senador Bob Wieckowski, demócrata de Fremont, señaló que, según la ley actual, un juez ya puede encontrar a un franquiciador responsable de una violación laboral si se prueba. sobre una base de caso por caso.

Los representantes de algunos franquiciadores, incluidos McDonald's, Jack in the Box y Burger King, no respondieron a las solicitudes de comentarios sobre el proyecto de ley de comida rápida de California.

Para los defensores de los trabajadores, extender la responsabilidad es clave para hacer cumplir las leyes salariales y laborales.

Yardenna Aaron es directora ejecutiva del Fondo Fiduciario de Cooperación de Mantenimiento, un centro de trabajadores de limpieza que impulsó la responsabilidad conjunta en esa industria en 2015.

Antes de la aprobación de esa ley, dijo Aaron, los contratistas a menudo cerraban sus negocios o se declaraban en bancarrota cuando se enfrentaban a denuncias de robo de salarios, solo para reabrir más tarde con otro nombre o entidad comercial.

La nueva ley ha permitido que el comisionado laboral del estado emita citaciones contra empresas más grandes y prominentes en casos de presunto robo de salarios.

En un caso muy publicitado de 2018, el Comisionado Laboral de California nombró a Cheesecake Factory como corresponsable con una empresa de servicios de conserjería, diciendo que le debían casi \$4 millones a 559 trabajadores de conserjería que limpiaron ocho de los restaurantes de la cadena en el sur de California. Fue uno de los casos más grandes de robo de salarios en el estado.

El estado ha presentado casos similares contra el fabricante de autos eléctricos Tesla por sus contratistas supuestamente pagando menos a los conserjes en sus fábricas de San José, y al gigante Amazon por un contratista que supuestamente no pagó las horas extras a sus repartidores.

El poder del dinero

Los expertos laborales dijeron que es demasiado pronto para saber si la responsabilidad conjunta ha facilitado que el estado recupere los salarios impagos. Las investigaciones estatales de robo de salarios toman meses. Y cuando el estado cita a los empleadores, en busca de salarios no pagados y multas, los empleadores suelen apelar, lo que desencadena procesos de audiencias administrativas que pueden llevar años.

El caso de Cheesecake Factory sigue pendiente de audiencia, cuatro años después. Los defensores esperan una resolución este año, dijo Aaron. El Fondo Fiduciario de Cooperación para el Mantenimiento representó a los trabajadores entrevistados en ese caso; su directora en ese momento, Lilia García-Brower, es ahora la Comisionada Laboral del Estado de California.

Los funcionarios de la oficina del comisionado laboral en 2020 señalaron la creciente complejidad de las leyes de responsabilidad por las largas demoras en el procesamiento de las decenas de miles de reclamos salariales individuales que los trabajadores presentan cada año.

Aún así, los miembros del personal legislativo predijeron que la responsabilidad conjunta "casi con certeza" mejoraría el cumplimiento laboral en comida rápida obligando a las empresas más grandes a controlar el comportamiento de los franquiciados.

Aaron dijo que eso ha sido evidente en la industria de la limpieza desde el cambio de ley de 2015. El centro de trabajadores se reúne con empresas clientes que contratan a contratistas de limpieza para educarlos sobre las leyes laborales.

"Encontramos, en general, que los clientes quieren evitar la responsabilidad que los contratistas traerían en términos de casos de robo de salarios", dijo Aaron. "El poder del dinero es real".

Jeanne Kuang cubre temas sobre la división económica en California. Previamente cubría asuntos del gobierno y política para The Kansas City Star; asuntos de gobierno local y estatal para The News Journal, de Delaware, y temas de justicia criminal en Illinois. Es graduada de la Escuela Medill de Periodismo de la Universidad Northwestern y actualmente escribe para Cal Matters.

La Alianza Comunitaria es una voz independiente para los trabajadores y los grupos progresistas en el Valle Central de San Joaquín. El objetivo de este periódico mensual es construir un poderoso movimiento progresivo que respalde la justicia social, ambiental y económica; derechos de inmigrantes; y un salario digno para todos los trabajadores. Buscamos exponer las injusticias sociales y políticas y vincular la diversa red de activistas que trabajan en nuestra comunidad.

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Los expertos afirman que no es el momento de bajar la guardia con respecto a Covid

Por Jenny Manrique

Los expertos en salud afirman que, aunque más personas se vacunen con refuerzos, el coronavirus ha llegado para quedarse. Y advierten que las futuras variantes probablemente mantendrán en vilo a los médicos e investigadores que trabajan para mantener a raya tanto las infecciones como su gravedad.

Su mensaje al público es que no hay que bajar la guardia. “El Covid va a estar con nosotros en el futuro inmediato”, dijo el Dr. William Schaffner, profesor de medicina en la División de Enfermedades Infecciosas de la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Vanderbilt. “Nos esforzamos por averiguar cómo podemos mantener este virus a raya y minimizar sus daños, y seguir disfrutando al mismo tiempo de una vida razonablemente normal”.

Schaffner fue uno de los ponentes de una rueda de prensa organizada por Ethnic Media Services el 29 de Julio, sobre la última variante de Covid, y los crecientes interrogantes en torno a la pandemia y la eficacia de la vacuna.

Los casos, las muertes y las hospitalizaciones por COVID 19 vuelven a aumentar en los Estados Unidos. Más de dos tercios de los estadounidenses han dado positivo en la prueba de Covid, incluido el presidente Joe Biden, por segunda vez en un caso de rebote de Covid. La variante BA5 de Omicron es ahora responsable de más del 78% de las infecciones en el país, según datos de los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC).

Pero los expertos en salud pública afirman que las cifras podrían representar un grave subregistro, ya que muchas personas no informan de los resultados positivos de las pruebas caseras.

Shaffner subrayó que las vacunas seguirán siendo una parte esencial de la estrategia más amplia. “Necesitamos una protección más duradera y a largo plazo contra un conjunto más amplio de variantes diferentes, las que conocemos y las que aún no conocemos”, dijo. “Queremos vacunas que prevengan la infección real en la superficie de las mucosas, no sólo vacunas que protejan contra la enfermedad grave”.

Las vacunas nasales, que pueden administrarse a través de un aerosol o un gotero, están ganando más atención entre los investigadores clínicos y podrían ofrecer otra vía para aumentar las tasas de vacunación. La vacuna NovaVax, autorizada recientemente por la Administración de Alimentos y Medicamentos (FDA), fue autorizada para una serie inicial de dos dosis, pero aún no para un refuerzo.

Pero el Dr. Ben Neuman, profesor de biología y virólogo jefe del Complejo de Investigación de Salud Global de la Universidad de Texas A&M, tiene sus dudas.

“La vacuna NovaVax está bien, pero llega unos dos años tarde”, dijo, y añadió que el medicamento no replica el virus con tanta eficacia como otras vacunas. “NovaVax tiene la proteína de espiga muy delicada que se transporta y se protege con mucho cuidado; solo un poco sobrevive para entrar en el cuerpo... Con la vacuna de ARNm, se obtienen espigas perfectas y prístinas, exactamente de la forma en que la naturaleza las concibió”.

Neuman señaló que hasta la fecha se han producido 15 mutaciones de la variante Omicron, incluidas las subvariantes más recientes BA.5 y BA2.75, para las que las vacunas actuales parecen ser menos eficaces.

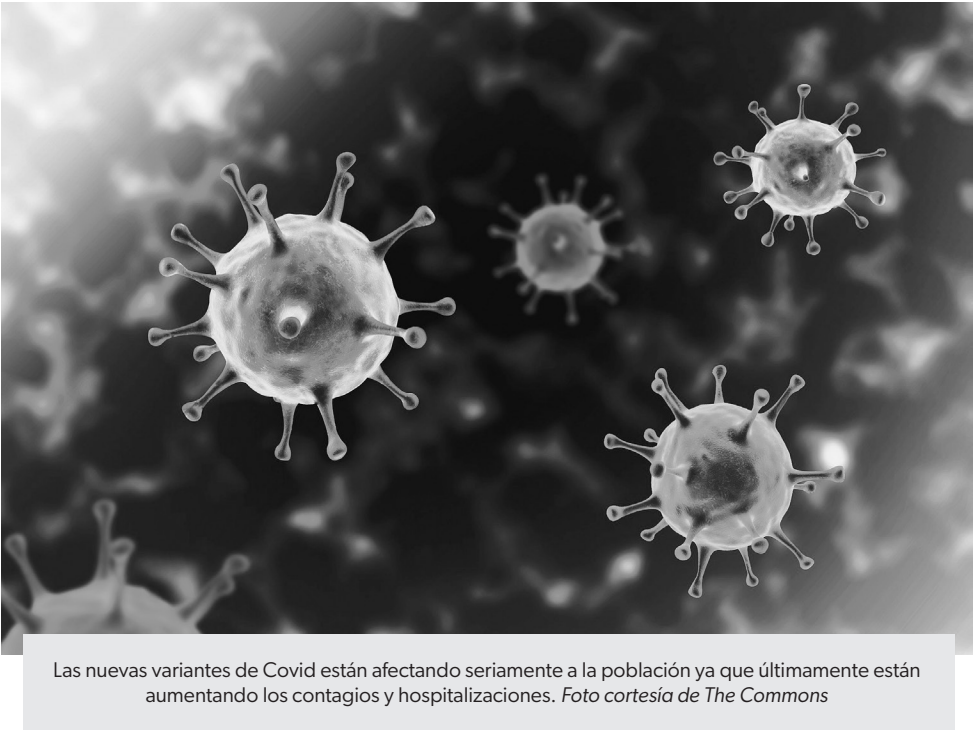
“Seguimos vacunando contra el virus de 2019 y ya estamos a finales de 2022”, dijo. “Tenemos un problema”.

Casi un tercio de los estadounidenses siguen sin vacunarse, mientras que la mayoría de las muertes relacionadas con la Covid se están produciendo entre personas de 65 años o más, incluidas las que han sido vacunadas.

Los oradores destacaron que las mascarillas siguen desempeñando un papel fundamental para frenar la propagación del virus, especialmente en el caso de las personas que corren un alto riesgo debido a la edad o a enfermedades subyacentes.

En la actualidad, ningún estado impone el uso de mascarillas en público, aunque varios estados siguen exigiendo el uso de mascarillas en entornos de alto riesgo, como hospitales y centros de atención a largo plazo.

En abril, un juez federal anuló el requisito de uso de mascarilla impuesto por el gobierno de Biden en el transporte público, las aerolíneas y los centros de transporte. Se espera que el Departamento de Justicia apele la sentencia.



Mientras tanto, un tercio de los estadounidenses ha conseguido evitar totalmente la infección por el virus. Según el Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, decano asociado de los campus regionales de la Universidad de California en San Francisco, hay cuatro factores que ayudan a explicar esta tendencia.

Algunas personas pueden estar genéticamente dispuestas a tener una mayor resistencia al virus, dijo Chin-Hong, algo que los médicos vieron durante los primeros años de la crisis del VIH/SIDA. Estas personas podrían desempeñar un papel en la futura investigación sobre tratamientos de la COVID, señaló Chin-Hong.

El comportamiento podría ser otro factor, “ya que algunas personas del mismo hogar pueden tomar más precauciones” en cuanto a usar una mascarilla o tener un contacto estrecho con otras personas. El momento en que se administran las vacunas también influye, ya que los riesgos de infección han fluctuado a lo largo de la pandemia.

Por último, dice Chin-Hong, algunas personas pueden haber estado infectadas y simplemente no se han dado cuenta, ya sea porque eran asintomáticas o porque nunca se hicieron la prueba.

Chin-Hong cree que las inspecciones de las aguas residuales pueden ayudar a aclarar el panorama en torno a las tasas reales de infección. A diferencia de lo que ocurre con las pruebas y las declaraciones de los propios afectados, las aguas residuales pueden ayudar a los investigadores a comprender el grado de propagación del virus en una comunidad.

“Por ejemplo, en California, el nivel del virus en las aguas residuales es muy similar (a los niveles de Covid notificados) en enero, cuando más personas se hacían las pruebas”, explicó Chin-Hong. Según estos datos, las tasas actuales de casos serían muy superiores a las 130.000 infecciones diarias que se notifican ahora.

Una oleada estival del virus respiratorio sincitial (VRS), que puede causar síntomas similares a los del Covid, también podría explicar por qué mucha gente ha recibido resultados negativos en sus kits de pruebas caseras, dijo Shaffner.

“Las pruebas rápidas también son menos aptas para dar un resultado positivo en esta era del BA5... por eso los CDC siguen centrándose en las hospitalizaciones, porque nos recuerdan que existe este importante problema de salud pública”.

Terapias como Paxlovid han demostrado su eficacia en la prevención de enfermedades más graves, sobre todo entre los adultos mayores. Y existe un anticuerpo monoclonal que puede administrarse a algunas personas resistentes al Paxlovid. Pero los expertos insisten en que las vacunas siguen siendo la herramienta más esencial para combatir el virus.

“Ahora tenemos demasiadas muertes, como 430 al día”, dice Chin-Hong. “Tenemos que controlar (el virus) y tenemos las herramientas para hacerlo ahora mismo”, concluye.

Jenny Manrique es una periodista colombiana radicada en Estados Unidos. Trabajó para The Dallas Morning News y Univision, entre otros medios. Manrique escribió ampliamente sobre derechos humanos e inmigración. Recibió las becas Neuffer, de la IWMF (International Women’s Media Foundation); Ochberg, de la Escuela Columbia de Periodismo; y la Beca de Periodismo de Salud de la USC.

El proyecto de ley de comida rápida de California podría vincular a las corporaciones con el robo de salarios y otras violaciones laborales

Por Jeanne Kuang

Los legisladores de California están considerando este mes un proyecto de ley de comida rápida que cambiaría significativamente la relación entre los trabajadores de restaurantes y las cadenas corporativas que venden sus productos.

Si se aprueba el Proyecto de Ley 257 de la Asamblea, California sería el primer estado en asignar responsabilidad laboral a las corporaciones de comida rápida y no solo a sus propietarios de franquicias individuales.

Las disposiciones del proyecto de ley permitirían a los trabajadores y al estado nombrar a las cadenas de comida rápida como parte responsable cuando los trabajadores reclaman violaciones del salario mínimo o horas extras no pagadas en una ubicación de franquicia.

El lenguaje del proyecto de ley también permitiría que un dueño de franquicia demande a una cadena de restaurantes si sus contratos de franquicia contienen términos estrictos que no le dejan otra opción que violar la ley laboral.

Es parte de un proyecto de ley más grande impulsado por los sindicatos para regular más estrictamente los negocios de comida rápida. AB 257 también incluye una medida para crear un consejo del sector de comida rápida administrado por el estado para establecer estándares salariales y laborales en toda la industria.

La semana pasada, el proyecto de ley sobrevivió al proceso conocido como “Expediente de suspenso”, donde los proyectos de ley controvertidos a menudo se eliminan en silencio. Después de ser aprobado por el Comité de Asignaciones del Senado, el proyecto de ley espera una votación en el pleno.

El gobernador Gavin Newsom no ha declarado una posición sobre el proyecto de ley, pero su Departamento de Finanzas se opone, diciendo que crearía “costos continuos” y empeoraría retrasos en el sistema de cumplimiento laboral del estado.

Si se convierte en ley, los defensores dijeron que podría disuadir el robo de salarios y otros abusos en la industria de bajos salarios.

“Cómo responsabilizar a las empresas en la parte superior de la cadena alimentaria, que realmente establecen los términos y condiciones de empleo, de los niveles más bajos: California ha estado muy por delante en eso”, dijo Janice Fine, profesora de estudios laborales y relaciones laborales en la Universidad de Rutgers. “Lo que sucedió en California es un esfuerzo real para tratar de descifrar la economía agrietada”.

Proyecto de ley de comida rápida de California

El proyecto de ley de comida rápida es una de las medidas más polémicas que la Legislatura está considerando durante sus últimas semanas de sesión.

La Cámara de Comercio de California y la asociación de restaurantes del estado han presionado fuertemente en su contra, argumentando que el proyecto de ley cambiaría el modelo comercial de franquicia y, en última instancia, aumentaría los costos para los propietarios de franquicias y los consumidores. El miércoles, un grupo de dueños de franquicia inundó el Capitolio para oponerse al proyecto de ley.

El Sindicato Internacional de Empleados de Servicio y su campaña Fight for \$15 encabezaron una serie de huelgas este verano para movilizarse por la aprobación del proyecto de ley, incluyendo un mitin nocturno en el Capitolio.

Actualmente, la mayoría de los trabajadores que alegan robo de salarios, por ejemplo, en McDonald’s, Burger King o Jack in the Box, solo pueden nombrar al propietario de su franquicia específica como responsable de devolverles el dinero, incluso cuando trabajan bajo la bandera de una empresa multimillonaria.

En otras industrias, California ya ha hecho algo de lo que propone AB 257 para la comida rápida. En algunos casos, el estado ha ampliado la responsabilidad por las condiciones de empleo más allá del nivel de subcontratista o proveedor a las empresas más grandes

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Como si esto no fuera lo suficientemente malo, lamentablemente la cantidad y los términos no son los únicos problemas con su préstamo. Todo lo que se arregló, ahora está peor o igual de mal que cuando llegaron los contratistas. Explicó que incluso los “arreglos” más pequeños, como los gabinetes de su cocina, se están desmoronando. Los contratistas contratados bajo CDBG nunca le proporcionaron un desglose claro de lo que se estaban arreglando y cuáles eran los costos. No tiene idea de en qué se destinó el dinero, pero está convencida de que en realidad no se destinó a arreglar su casa.

El hijo de otro beneficiario de un préstamo compartió una historia similar. Afirma que la casa de sus padres ahora está en completo desorden, después de que se suponía que había sido reparada. Sus padres habían estado desplazados durante meses esperando reparaciones que nunca parecían terminar. Cuando fue a ver cómo estaba la casa, se sorprendió por su terrible estado. Afirma que hay que cambiar las cañerías porque el agua que sale está tan sucia que ni siquiera pueden usarla para lavar la ropa. También ha tenido que traer profesionales en un intento de solucionar varios problemas con la instalación de la unidad de aire acondicionado y calefacción de la casa.

La falsedad Republicana se Hace Noticia

Por Maribel Hastings y David Torres

Al iniciarse el conteo regresivo para las elecciones intermedias del 8 de noviembre de 2022, las campañas de desinformación en plataformas sociales—e incluso en medios tradicionales—florecen como hierba silvestre, como lo hacen desde 2016.

El odio republicano y las teorías conspirativas

Ahora tienen un aliado. El Partido Republicano sin pudor, que no sólo reproduce la desinformación, sino que ha normalizado la retórica extremista de grupos supremacistas blancos.

Es una estrategia a la que han tenido que recurrir con base en el temor a perder privilegios y en la hipocresía, más que en una visión de Estado y de gobierno para el bien común, a sabiendas de que Estados Unidos cambió hace mucho tiempo, desplazando, por la vía democrática y de la inclusión, la idea de un país blanco solo para blancos.

Se trata de un cóctel letal porque las falsedades que buscan agitar a su base política, amedrentar opositores y generar confusión entre la población con fines político-electorales se fusionan con la retórica racista y antiinmigrante que es parte integral de los mensajes de campaña de este partido.

No hay que olvidar que esta etapa antiinmigrante cobró fuerza precisamente en la “era de Trump”, quien ganó no solo la candidatura presidencial de un Partido Republicano secuestrado por sus ideas, sino que logró llegar a la Casa Blanca a partir de una campaña por demás racista y xenófoba que logró captar la mente de millones de blancos, al culpar a los inmigrantes y diversas minorías de color de todos los males del país.

Así, las teorías conspiratorias sobre la “invasión” de migrantes en la frontera sur y la “teoría del reemplazo” son utilizadas abiertamente por legisladores y candidatos republicanos. Y los líderes republicanos del Congreso lo saben, pero se hacen de la vista gorda legitimando estos conceptos, que se limitaban solo a grupos extremistas y supremacistas blancos.

Desinformar para dominar

Esta desinformación desestabilizadora tiene consecuencias serias en el mundo real. Los responsables de masacres en diversas partes del país donde el objetivo han sido minorías han citado algunas de estas teorías como la razón para perpetrar los ataques.

Por otro lado, las audiencias de habla hispana son uno de los objetivos favoritos de muchas de estas campañas de desinformación. En Florida, en las elecciones de 2020, se regó como pólvora a través de diversas plataformas sociales y algunos medios radiales en español, que el aspirante presidencial Joe Biden era “comunista” y que sus políticas eran de corte “socialista”, similares a las del presidente de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro. En este estado que concentra cubanos, cubanoamericanos, venezolanos, nicaragüenses y hondureños, entre otros, decir comunismo es invocar al mismo diablo, de manera que la intención de lastimar a Biden y beneficiar a Trump tuvo una audiencia muy receptiva, aunque haya sido una mentira.

La retórica antiinmigrante

Florida, en efecto, es terreno fértil para las campañas de desinformación y es también laboratorio del uso de retórica antiinmigrante, incluso por funcionarios latinos. Esta semana la vicegobernadora de Florida, Jeannette Núñez, cubanoamericana, hizo noticia al responder durante una entrevista de radio sobre la gran cantidad de cubanos que llegan a ese estado que el gobernador republicano Ron DeSantis debería enviar a los migrantes en autobuses hacia Delaware, el estado del presidente Biden, tal como lo ha hecho el gobernador de Texas, Greg Abbott, hacia Nueva York y Washington, DC.

Y aunque el equipo de campaña de DeSantis trató después de enmendar el desatinado comentario de la vicegobernadora al decir que ella no se refería a los cubanos, sino a otros migrantes, el daño ya estaba hecho, pues la pregunta del entrevistador fue específicamente sobre la comunidad cubana, la de mayor presencia en su estado. De hecho, Núñez dijo en esa entrevista que “esto va a ser peor que Mariel, peor que todo lo que pasó en la década de 1980, y no hacer nada no es una opción”.

¿En serio? Que una cubanoamericana, hija de refugiados cubanos, diga que otros cubanos que buscan asilo en Estados Unidos deben ser enviados en autobuses a Delaware es noticia en cualquier liga. También es evidencia del doble discurso de los republicanos, sobre todo de hispanos republicanos que quieren vender la falsa idea de un partido incluyente para atraer votantes latinos, mientras repiten una narrativa antiinmigrante y ofensiva contra su propia comunidad.

Y lo hacen sin chistar porque su lealtad está con el partido y con Trump, no con su comunidad. Pero no podemos circunscribir este fenómeno exclusivamente a la comunidad cubana, pues en todos y cada uno de los conglomerados latinoamericanos que confluyen en Estados Unidos hay quienes prefieren rechazar el avance de esta pluralidad social que nos tocó vivir y abrazar un discurso ofensivo, aunque en el fondo nunca serán totalmente bienvenidos entre los supremacistas que lo promueven.

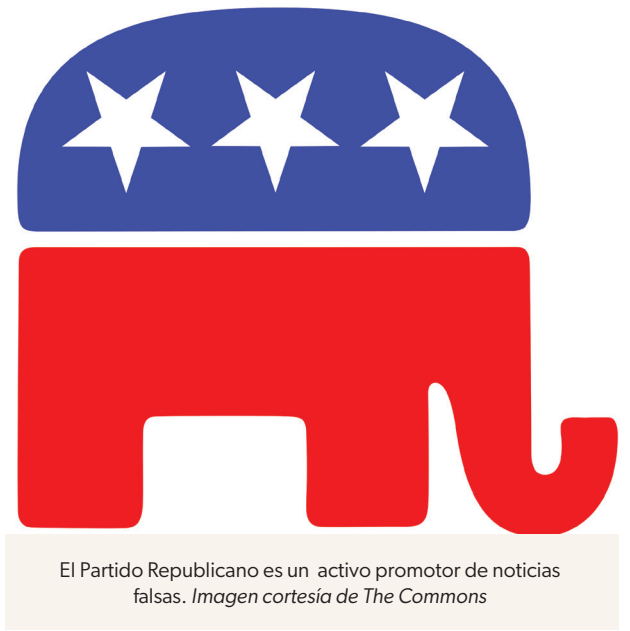
Todos con los que hablé estuvieron de acuerdo en que la mano de obra fue mala en el mejor de los casos y negligente en el peor. Les quedó claro que los trabajadores no tenían idea de lo que estaban haciendo. Creían completamente que los trabajadores tenían poca o ninguna experiencia y que no estaban equipados para hacer las “reparaciones” en primer lugar.

Muchos residentes del Valle de San Joaquín han tenido que dar un paso al frente, compartiendo sus historias de terror o las de sus seres queridos que sienten que no tienen voz. Algunos siguen la línea con cautela, esperando y esperando que las cosas resulten a su favor.

Una de estas personas es Delia Montana, quien incluso presentó una demanda contra la ciudad de San Joaquín en 2018. Incansablemente había solicitado documentos a la ciudad para comprender mejor por qué se reclamaba una deuda en la casa de su tía. Por lo que sabía su familia, la deuda había sido pagada en su totalidad hace varios años. En 2019 la demanda fracasó, no sin antes llamar más la atención sobre el tema que nos ocupa.

Las personas necesitadas se acercaron a su gobierno local y ahora se encuentran peor. Quedaron perdidos, en un limbo. No están seguros de lo que va a pasar con sus hogares y medios de supervivencia. Preguntándose cuándo obtendrán respuestas concretas a sus preguntas y cuáles serán esas respuestas.

Paulina Cruz es una becaria de Community Alliance. Ella es una inmigrante mexicana y actualmente está estudiando Antropología y Psicología en CSU Fresno. Paulina dedica su tiempo libre a escribir poesía y pintar.



Una forma de cuidado

Los medios en español, en particular las principales cadenas televisivas Univision (El Detector) y Telemundo (TVerifica), entre otros, así como diversos organismos independientes, monitorean la información para mantener a sus audiencias al tanto de lo que es real y lo que es falso. Es un gran paso en la dirección correcta, pero a la vez es un síntoma de estos tiempos en que las noticias falsas arrasan con la verdad.

Pero es una labor titánica, sobre todo ante la proliferación de plataformas sociales donde los latinos se informan, particularmente YouTube y WhatsApp. Aunque plataformas como Twitter, Facebook y TikTok y otras dicen estar implementando controles en torno a la información que circulan, no queda claro ni seguro cómo controlarán las falsedades, sobre todo en español. Basta escuchar o leer ciertos comentarios de los usuarios en torno a temas específicos para darnos cuenta de que, en efecto, la propagación de mentiras encuentra terreno fértil en la falta de argumentos.

Lo peor del caso es que el Partido Republicano, principal promotor de falsedades, borra la línea entre lo que es real y lo que es mentira para su conveniencia política.

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LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

Residentes Acusan a la Ciudad de San Joaquín de Estafarlos

Por Paulina Cruz

Comprar su propia casa es parte del clásico “Sueño Americano”. Es un signo de estabilidad económica y una inversión en la que sus hijos pueden confiar una vez que los padres hayan fallecido. Pero al igual que el Sueño Americano, ser dueño de una casa se ha vuelto cada vez más difícil para las familias de clase media y de bajos ingresos. A lo largo de los últimos años, la Ciudad de San Joaquín ofreció préstamos a familias que necesitaban desesperadamente reparaciones en sus hogares o que necesitaban ayuda para comprar una casa. Esto se hizo en gran parte con fondos del Programa de Subsidios en Bloque para el Desarrollo Comunitario (CDBG) del estado, el Programa de Asociación de Inversión en Viviendas de California (HOME) y el Programa Cal Home del estado.

Desafortunadamente, algo diseñado para ayudar a los necesitados los ha dejado en más angustia que antes. Muchos de los beneficiarios ahora lamentan haber solicitado esos préstamos en primer lugar. Estas personas están perdidas en diversos problemas, no están seguras de cómo llegaron a esta situación y se sienten engañadas por su gobierno local. Cada caso es diferente, algunos se sorprenden con plazos y tarifas que desconocían. O tratando de vivir en casas sin electrodomésticos que funcionen. Otros incluso enfrentan amenazas de desalojo. Independientemente de la gravedad, se sienten más perdidos que antes de buscar ayuda.

Una mujer, una madre trabajadora, compartió preocupaciones, confusión y frustración (los nombres de varios de los entrevistados no se incluyen por temores de represalias de la ciudad). Recibió el préstamo para ayudar a solucionar varios problemas urgentes en su hogar. Sin embargo, se sorprendió al descubrir que el acuerdo que le dijeron verbalmente no era lo que había firmado. Dice haber aceptado un préstamo de aproximadamente 30



De izq. a derecha: Marcel González con una foto de sus padres (Marcelino y Jesusa González), Delia Montana con una foto de sus abuelos (Benjamín y Genoveva Gómez) y Angelina Aguilar. Las tres fueron afectadas por los programas Community Development Block Grant Program y First Time Homebuyer Program de San Joaquín. Foto cortesía de Delia Montana

mil dólares que no tendría que pagar a menos que vendiera la casa. En cambio, el préstamo era casi el doble del monto y tendría que pagarse si alguna vez se mudaba o fallecía.

¿Cómo podría ocurrir una “falta de comunicación” tan grave? Bueno, como muchos en su situación, nunca le dieron un traductor. ¿Cómo puede alguien realmente dar su consentimiento a un acuerdo, si no entiende completamente el idioma en el que se establecen los términos? Esto parece algo que podría haberse evitado fácilmente considerando que California tiene tantos hispanoparlantes (es uno de los 3 primeros estados con un alto porcentaje de hispanoparlantes).

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Una Marcha Por Sus Derechos

Por Alianza Comunitaria

Todas Las Fotos Cortesía de David Bacon

Un grupo de jornaleros agrícolas marchó 335 millas desde la sede del Sindicato de Campesinos (UFW por sus siglas en inglés), cerca de Delano, hasta el Capitolio, en Sacramento. La marcha de tres semanas fue para presionar al gobernador del estado, Gavin Newsom, para que firme la propuesta de ley que otorgaría a los trabajadores del campo opciones electorales, como la de votar por correo en caso de elecciones para decidir una sindicalización.

Actualmente los jornaleros agrícolas pueden votar para formar parte de un sindicato solamente si lo hacen en mesas de votaciones en lugares establecidos por la Mesa de Relaciones Laborales Agrícolas, lo que los hace blanco de venganza, según la UFW. “Cuando los campesinos votan son objeto de venganzas y en algunos casos hasta de despido solamente por ejercer su derecho a votar como cualquier ciudadano lo hace un día de elecciones”, dice Heriberto Ferneandez, representante de la Fundación UFW. “Lo que queremos es que los trabajadores del campo puedan votar desde su casa como lo hace cualquier votante en el país”.

En la propuesta de ley AB 2183 se establecen nuevas opciones para votar que cambiarían la manera de cómo se hace ahora. Newsom vetó una propuesta similar el año pasado. La UFW dice que si a los trabajadores del campo se les permite votar en secreto, muchos más se incorporarían al sindicato y de esta manera lograrían representación ante las empresas y patrones. “Y esto es algo que las empresas agrícolas no quieren”, dice Fernández. “Si los trabajadores logran representación sindical, van a tener derechos básicos como acceso a la salud”.

La Marcha empezó el 3 de agosto y culminó el 26 del mismo mes.

Al llegar al Capitolio, el viernes 26 de agosto, los caminantes fueron recibidos por un gran número de simpatizantes. Entonces ya se había dado a conocer un comunicado de la oficina del gobernador Newsom en el cual explicaba que no aprobaría la propuesta AB 2183 “tal como está escrita”, pero que está abierto a negociar. Se estima que la propuesta podría ser modificada, incorporando propuestas del gobernador, para que de esta manera sea aprobada. Esta negociación puede demorar varios días, o semanas.

La jornalera agrícola Lourdes Cardenas marchando al canto de “¡Newsom, escucha, estamos en la lucha!” y “¡Que queremos? ¡Que se firme la ley!”



Un simpatizante con su hija y un póster que dice “No hay justicia climática sin justicia para los trabajadores”.

