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## Community Unites Against Hate

BY MIKE RHODES

Daren Miller, Ed.D., the facilitator of the Stop the Hate town hall and the primary organizer of the coalition that led to the event, talks to the press before the event. *Photo by Peter Maiden*

Speakers at the Jan. 25 Stop the Hate Town Hall identified the path to ending the violence against marginalized communities: Report all incidents of hate crimes, increase solidarity between impacted groups and build a community that supports diversity.

Representatives from the California Department of Justice and the U.S Attorney's Office spoke about the dramatic increase in hate crimes locally and the importance of reporting them to law enforcement. If you are a victim of a hate crime, you are urged to

- Contact the local law enforcement agency right away.
- Get medical attention (if you need it).

- Write down the exact words that were said.
- Make notes about any other facts.
- Save all evidence (e.g., graffiti, eggshells, writing on the victim's vehicle). If safe, wait until law enforcement arrives and takes photos.
- Get the names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mails of other victims and witnesses.
- Try to get a description from any eyewitnesses of the criminal or the vehicle.
- Contact community organizations in your area that respond to hate crimes.

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## Central Valley Groundwater Sinking Faster Than Ever

BY VIC BEDOIAN

Aquifers in the Central Valley are being depleted at an ever-increasing rate according to a study recently published online by the prestigious *Nature* magazine. The research looked at two decades of data collected from on-the-ground measurements combined with remote sensing data gathered from satellite surveillance.

The stunning scientific paper documents an increasingly rapid rate at which groundwater has been lost over three drought periods during the 23-year megadrought currently afflicting the West and especially the San Joaquin Valley.



Increased pumping is sinking groundwater levels further down. To get more water, farmers install more powerful pumps to extract the water from deeper aquifers. *Photo by Vic Bedoian*

Groundwater accounts for nearly half the irrigation supplies for farms and cities in California's Central Valley. When surface water is abundant, groundwater provides

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## Human Cost of Madera County Losing Hospital

BY OMAR SHAIKH RASHAD AND DYMPNA UGWU-OJU

*(Editor's note: This story was originally published by Fresnoland (fresnoland.org), a nonprofit news organization.)*

For the past 15 years, Tammie Myers worked as a licensed vocational nurse in Madera Community Hospital's postpartum department. Her job was to take care of new mothers and their babies, following birth. She loved the mothers she worked with, mostly Hispanic, whom she described as "very appreciative" of whatever help she gave.

But with the recent closure of the Madera Community Hospital, Myers, who is 64, is newly out of a job. She's within a couple years of retiring and she even set the date—the end of July 2025. Now, she has no income and no health insurance, and is unsure of her next steps after a nursing career that spanned 40 years. Her age, she said, is a big issue.

"I can't go to CRMC (Community Regional Medical Center) and work in their emergency department," Myers said. "I just can't do it. Knees will not hold up."

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# Community Unites Against Hate

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Patience Milrod, a local attorney and a member of the Jewish community, appreciates law enforcement taking this issue seriously but said that “one of the most important ways to protect ourselves and each other is through mutual support and solidarity.” This was a theme throughout the town hall.

Following the event, Milrod said that “the panel of leaders was inspiring—so many differences among them, and still committing unanimously to solidarity, to protecting and supporting each other when any one of our communities comes under fire from hate groups.”

Sukaina Hussain, deputy executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations Sacramento Valley/Central California, responding to a question from Lorin Hubbard

about the need for groups to break out of their silos, said that “the key to our work is organizing our communities, and so I know all of our groups are building community power through organizing, which means being in relationship with each other.”



Speakers at the Jan. 25 Stop the Hate town hall included (from left) Jim Grant, chair of the Interfaith Scholar Weekend; Pastor D.J. Criner, senior pastor of Saint Rest Baptist Church; and Jess Fitzpatrick of the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission's LGBTQ+ Resource Center. Photo by Peter Maiden

Eduardo Stanley, editor of the *Community Alliance* newspaper, said that the newspaper and the San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance “decided to organize town halls around the Valley in order to reach out to a larger audience to bring the issue of hate into focus, to discuss it and to educate ourselves on how to prevent it.

“Two town halls have taken place already—one in Huron and this one in Fresno. The next one will be late March in Madera.

“Each of these events allow us to reach different audiences, an expression of the rich and diverse society the Valley has become over the years.”

Cyndee Loryang, program manager at the Fresno Center, represented the interests of the Asian Pacific Islander (API) community. She reminded us that sometimes it is hard for members

of her community to report crimes because of the fear of retaliation. She said it is important for law enforcement to be culturally sensitive when getting reports of hate crimes from the API community.

Speakers at the event included Jess Fitzpatrick, community outreach educator at the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission's LGBTQ+ Resource Center; Naindeep Singh, executive director of the Jakara Movement; Jim Grant, chair of the Interfaith Scholar Weekend; and Pastor D.J. Criner, senior pastor of Saint Rest Baptist Church.

A presentation by Phillip Talbert, an attorney in the Eastern District of the U.S. Attorney's Office, presented a slideshow on what to do in the event of a hate crime. Catherina Nou and Efrain Botello-Cisneros, from the California Department of Justice, talked about how seriously the department takes hate crimes and incidents in this region.

Daren Miller, Ed.D, was the facilitator of this town hall and the primary organizer of the coalition that led to the event. He is also on the board of the *Community Alliance* newspaper.

“It was a very successful event,” Miller said. “I think the best thing was we brought together various groups in our community and we got commitments from them to work together to stop the hate throughout the entire city.”

This Stop the Hate town hall was organized by the *Community Alliance* newspaper and the San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance and was made possible by a grant from the California State Library under the statewide Stop the Hate initiative.

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Mike Rhodes is the executive director of the *Community Alliance* newspaper and author of *Dispatches from the War Zone, about homelessness in Fresno.* Contact him at [mikerhodes@comcast.net](mailto:mikerhodes@comcast.net) or visit his website at [www.mikerhodes.us](http://www.mikerhodes.us).

# Central Valley Groundwater Sinking Faster Than Ever

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about one-third of the water used by the state's farms and cities. But in times of drought, groundwater supplies two-thirds of the water consumed.

The region stretching from Redding to Bakersfield produces nearly 25% of the nation's food. But the dramatic growth of permanent, water-thirsty orchards and vineyards is driving an increasingly precipitous decline in groundwater resources, especially during periods of drought.

The groundwater analysis combined measurements over the 20-year stretch of the current megadrought, from sources on the ground and data from NASA's GRACE satellite project.

Jay Famiglietti was director of the Global Institute for Water Security at the University of Saskatchewan during the study period and a lead author of the research paper. He said that “it's hard to overestimate the importance of groundwater. Without groundwater, we have no desert cities, we have a drastic reduction in food production and we lose our climate resilience.”

GRACE stands for Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment, a satellite experiment run by the Jet Propulsion Lab at CalTech. Using sophisticated detection tools, the satellite can measure the amount of groundwater loss or gain within millimeters.

Pang-Wei Liu is a NASA scientist and the other lead author of the investigation. He says that “the dataset has been long enough to provide some indicative findings and scientific findings in the groundwater from these two decades. We calculated the groundwater change from the remote data set.”

Liu matched satellite measurements to ground-based data. “Then we found that the (groundwater) depression keeps going on and that the depression rate is increasing in the past 10 years.”

Liu explains how the satellite data over a large area is analyzed to determine how much groundwater there is in the Central Valley and compare that over the 23-year time frame of the megadrought, “GRACE

typically measures the gravity change of the earth.

“So conceptually, the gravity change can be related to the weight change of the earth. And the major weight change from the earth is the relocation of the water.

“From this, then we can measure the total water storage change on the earth. So, we compare with the well data and kind of confirm that this finding is correct.”

Data from NASA's GRACE and subsequent GRACE-Follow On satellite missions over the past two decades were merged with groundwater measurements taken from gauging wells throughout the region along with data collected by public agencies such as California's Department of Water Resources.

The GRACE satellites can measure the amount of water in reservoirs, stream flows, snowpack and surface moisture. All that information is analyzed to calculate changes in the amount of water in the Valley's aquifers.

Groundwater depletion was especially serious during three drought episodes over the past two decades. The first was 2006 to 2010, the second was 2011 to 2017 and the most recent was 2019 to 2021.

Each drought was followed by abundant precipitation and groundwater recharge. But in every instance increased pumping drove groundwater levels further down. Groundwater recharge couldn't keep up with depletion.

In 2014, California finally created a plan to manage groundwater use in response to the crisis. Famiglietti confirms that their research findings played a key role in that decision.

“You know, we've been doing this work for a while. So, our message is out there. And I would say that it has been very impactful in California.

“The work that we did on our team helped take the conversation to the public and therefore then gave the Governor the political mandate to go ahead and move forward with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.”

After each drought episode researchers found abundant rain and deep snow helped recharge Central Valley aquifers. But not completely.

Throughout the drought periods, pumping continued and increased, pushing the water table ever lower. Groundwater would be partially replenished during wet interludes but then sink even further when pumping ramped up again during dry intervals.

Famiglietti says their research shows groundwater depletion has been mainly propelled by the rapidly expanding estates of perennial, water-devouring crops such as almonds, citrus and wine grapes.

“It is industrial-scale groundwater mining,” notes Famiglietti. “So even a really good winter is not enough. It hasn't done it for a hundred years. It's not going to do it. We'll recharge our reservoirs. Things will look great on the surface.

“And, you know, even if we have a few good winters in a row, great. If not, three years from now it will just be doing this again.”

The numbers coming out of the research are staggering. Imagine what a cubic kilometer looks like if you're standing next to one. Now imagine 44 cubic kilometers of water.

Over the past two decades of megadrought, the Central Valley consumed that much, nearly 36 million acre-feet of groundwater. That translates to 11.7 trillion gallons of our most precious resource. Almost one and a half times the capacity of Lake Meade, the nation's largest reservoir.

Much of the groundwater depletion has occurred in the San Joaquin Valley. Kern County alone accounted for 40% of the loss over that time. In the most recent drought, from 2019 to 2021, researchers found aquifers are being depleted at an increasingly rapid rate, in fact 31% faster than in the previous two droughts.

Just in the past year more than 5,300 wells in the state have dried up. Most of those failed wells are in Madera, Fresno, Tulare and Kern counties.

Famiglietti, now a global futures professor at Arizona State University, is doubtful in an era of global warming

and climate instability that atmospheric rivers alone will be sufficient to recharge the Valley's aquifers.

“Deeper stuff. No, that's never coming back. We've been doing this for a hundred years, and we get a little bit of replenishment. Most of that replenishment happens near the surface because it's closer.

“So those are the aquifers that when we talk about managed aquifer recharge and replenishment, that's the stuff that's easier to recharge. But when you're getting down to 2,500 feet, you're not replenishing. That's not coming back.

“That stuff took place in geologic time. Hundreds of thousands, millions of years ago. We're burning through it in a century.”

“Water isn't valued like oil, right?” Famiglietti queries, “and if it were, we'd be doing a much better job of using our water extremely carefully, of exploring the aquifers and knowing exactly how much is there and where it all is, and what's the availability, and what are the timelines. But because it's so undervalued, we haven't really done that.”

Famiglietti concludes that stress on groundwater resources will only increase in a drying climate and depletion will likely continue without strong management intervention.

“You cannot manage what you don't measure,” he says. “But if we're not measuring every well or measuring groundwater use at the farm level, we're in trouble. There's always been resistance there. But you know, we're past that point. We can have no more resistance.”

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# A Dysfunctional Congress

FROM THE EDITOR



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FEBRUARY 2023



The House of Representatives finally has a Speaker. Kevin McCarthy achieved his dream after a long and tedious voting marathon—15 votes. Yes, 15 times. McCarthy was blocked by a handful of extreme right-wing Republicans who wanted more concessions from McCarthy if he wanted their votes. So the Bakersfield representative knelt and promised to obey these fanatics to get the position.

Among other concessions, McCarthy placed many of these fanatics on key Congressional committees, which besides being dangerous is a complete lack of respect for the citizens at large because the fanatics don't even qualify as "intelligent" people.

You want your reps to be intelligent and to work in Congress for the common good of our society. Instead, we got several irrational people whose main agenda is to impose their delusion of a robbed election (of 2020, when Donald Trump lost by 8 million votes), impose more Jim Crow laws to deter minorities from voting, attack women's rights and block every initiative coming from the White House unless it pleases their own agendas.

So much for "bipartisan" work. The next two years we'll see a dysfunctional Congress and hope for better electoral outcomes in 2024.

McCarthy conceded to a group of fanatics who in fact kidnapped Congress and the country. This is the most anti-democratic process in modern history.

We have to work to reverse this situation. After all, the next elections are around the corner.

Till next month.

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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## Letters to the Editor

### A Rude and Insolent Restaurant Owner

I need to share an incident that happened to me here in January that really bothered me. To be honest, it was shocking, but maybe I shouldn't be surprised. Anyway, I want your readers to know about it.

On Jan. 10, right around lunchtime, I visited the Elbow Room Bar & Grill restaurant at Fig Garden Village in central Fresno, and I was shocked when I was berated and verbally assaulted by Mike Shirinian, owner of the establishment.

I don't know if Mike was having a bad day or what, but the experience was awful and very unpleasant. I couldn't believe how anybody—much less the owner of a popular public restaurant—could be so insolent and rude to a guest as Mike was to me. I was truly dumbstruck and dumbfounded by his cocksure boorishness, and I just can't get his caustic screaming and insults that he repeatedly hurled at me out of my head. Mike was belittling and embarrassing, even traumatizing.

"Get out, get out!" he screamed at me. "You aren't worthy to be here—Get out!"

I think he also called me "stupid" or "really dumb" (or something like that) in between the "you aren't worthy" yells and "get outs," too. When he started screaming at me, things became a blur. It was a very triggering experience.

I'm still trying to wrap my head around what happened since I was totally sideswiped by his overwhelming impudence. I remember walking in and talking with the nice, hospitable hostess. I told her that I was the director of advertising at the *Community Alliance* newspaper, as I showed her a copy of our January edition. I asked who I should talk with about placing an ad with us. She smiled and told me that it was good timing since the owner was in. She immediately offered to go get him. Great, I thought, how nice—a perfect time to introduce myself and maybe get a drink or a quick bite before my next appointment.

After a couple of minutes of waiting in the lobby, Mike walks up to me and starts yelling at me in front of his staff and other guests, screaming that it wasn't a good time to stop by, and, before I could even get a word out, he begins to insult me, saying, "You aren't worthy to be here," over and over again.

He didn't even give me a chance to say, "No problem" (which is what I actually said, but he couldn't hear me over his histrionics), or that I really liked the Spicy Summer Nights tequila cocktail on the menu. How unfortunate.

Maybe he didn't like the fact that I am associated with the *Community Alliance* newspaper, a well-known progressive print publication here in the Valley that supports social justice and the underrepresented populations in our community. After all, the front page of the January edition shows a picture of a local proud gay man and tells his story of being a victim of a hate crime in our community. Maybe that's why I wasn't "worthy" to be in Mike's restaurant.

Or, maybe I wasn't worthy to be in his restaurant because I don't look like him. When you look at me, I myself may represent some of those underrepresented groups in our society that the paper supports. I have brown skin and a bountiful beard. Maybe that's what Mike meant when he screamed that I wasn't worthy.

Who knows?

Anyway, I mentioned this to a local friend who used to work at the Elbow Room, and she wasn't surprised for a second. She told me, just imagine how he'd talk to you if you worked for him. Yikes. I don't want to imagine. Instead, I want to imagine a place where I can enjoy good food and drinks all while being treated with respect—a place that respects both its guests and workers alike.

Is that too much to ask?

In fact, I want to imagine a place where the owner and his workers remind me that indeed I am "worthy" to be one of their guests when I visit their establishment.

You know, I'm not impressed with great food and drinks if I'm not "worthy" to enjoy it. Good business is about equality and respect. We should celebrate and promote businesses that feel the same way, Fresno!

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# Human Cost of Madera County Losing Hospital

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Fresnoland interviewed more than a dozen community members about the drastic impacts of Madera Community Hospital's closure—including patients, nurses, physicians and housekeepers. They all insisted that losing a critical piece of Madera's health infrastructure is much more than the end of an institution, its bankruptcy or about whom to blame for the collapse.

It's about lives—their own, their families, their patients—and a fatal blow dealt to a largely low-income and underserved community, where cancer and heart disease are the top two causes of death. Besides greatly shrinking Madera's healthcare access, the sudden end of the hospital—which has been around since 1971 and had a staff of more than 700 people—has also stripped its employees of income and health insurance.

Hospital board members have said publicly that Madera Community Hospital began experiencing increased expenses—due to low Medi-Cal reimbursements and travel nurses—at the beginning of the pandemic. Those two factors cut deeper into the hospital's finances, resulting in up to a \$2.5 million monthly shortfall for the second half of 2022, said Robert Poythress, who serves on the Madera County Board of Supervisors and was secretary of the hospital board of trustees.

While hospital board members have spoken to Fresnoland, repeated requests for interviews with the Madera hospital's administration were not returned.

## No Emergency Room between Merced and Fresno

Not only have Maderans lost the only general acute care hospital in their county, they're also at least a 30-minute drive away from the closest hospital with an emergency room. (Valley Children's Hospital, in southern Madera County, has an emergency room but serves only youth.)

"If you have a car accident, you have to go to Fresno," said Jonathan Mayer, an OB-GYN practitioner who provided services at the Madera Community Hospital.

"If you have a heart attack or stroke, you've got to go to Fresno. If you're in labor, and there's a problem, you've got to go to Fresno or Merced. If someone needs acute care, and there's [a] delay in transport, it can mean the difference between life and death."

Today, there's not a single hospital emergency room in the 55 miles between Merced and Fresno.

"Patients are going to die," Mayer said.

On Jan. 9, Muhammad Ashraf, a cardiologist who has worked in Madera and Fresno for more than 40 years, saw a patient at his Madera office—a woman in her 80s with multiple health conditions. She paid him a visit because she was having chest pain and needed medical attention.

Ashraf determined she needed to go to a hospital. The woman said she has no family, no friends—no one—to take her. Ashraf said an ambulance could, so together, they called for one.

The operator asked whether Ashraf's patient was having a heart attack. If not, the ambulances were too busy to take her to a hospital.

"So she went home," Ashraf said. "She could not go to the hospital. The ambulance would not take her—of course the ambulance was busy. Where would this patient go? This is just one example."

Ashraf added that in one day, about 10% of patients in the emergency room have heart-related issues. After the Madera hospital's closure, Ashraf said there isn't a single facility in town that can perform a CT scan—key to making critical diagnoses, including brain damage, heart abnormalities and cancerous tumors.

"At this time, if I wanted a chest X-ray, I cannot get one," Ashraf said. "It is really very sad that we came to this stage."

The hospital also operated rural clinics in Madera, Chowchilla and Mendota—where patients could see specialists, including cardiologists, gynecologists and dermatologists—making the hospital the focal point of healthcare infrastructure in Madera County.

## Madera Hospital Closure Causes Panic

Being a half-hour drive away from adequate healthcare and critical health diagnoses will have grave impacts, especially with community health needs the way they are.

Stephanie Martinez, 35, is a mother to seven children who were all born at the Madera Community Hospital. She was born there herself. Her husband worked in the hospital's maintenance department and lost his job.

In addition to losing the family's sole income, Martinez is anxious about her three-year-old daughter's medical situation and what she would do in the case of an emergency. Martinez gave birth to her at 26 weeks. She weighed only one pound and seven ounces and her lungs were underdeveloped, leading to recurring health issues.

On two occasions, Martinez has had to take her daughter to the emergency room after she fell sick and was having



The closure of the Madera Community Hospital will bring deep health problems for Madera County residents. Photo courtesy of the Madera Community Hospital

difficulty breathing. In both instances, Madera emergency nurses got her daughter stable before transporting her to Valley Children's Hospital.

"What if there was an emergency and I had to take her somewhere really close?" Martinez said. "And I call the ambulance, and they're all full? What am I going to do? It's scary. It's really, really scary."

While she heard some news about the hospital closing in January, Aliyza Zamora, 22, didn't think it would affect her scheduled appointment to check on the health of her baby the day before her due date.

But when she showed up at the hospital on Dec. 29, staff told her they would not be able to perform the nonstress test appointment she had previously scheduled. The hospital's closure threw off her plans.

"It was nerve-wracking because I didn't know what hospital to go to or what doctors or whether I was going to be able to do my delivery," she said.

Zamora ended up at Saint Agnes Medical Center in Fresno and gave birth on her due date, but not the way she planned—with the rest of her family, including her partner's side, and friends also there.

"It just wasn't the same, close to home with my mom and everybody able to come in and see me," she said.

Olga Breazel, who worked at the Madera hospital for 28 years, remembers a period around 2014 when there were rumors that it would be closing. Patients came to the door crying, saying they were told they'd need to go to Fresno to see a doctor.

"Those patients are still out there," said Breazel, who has been a registered nurse for 19 years. "Same patients that didn't have a car, they still don't have a car. They still don't have a way to get to Fresno."

## Blindsided Employees and a Merger Deal Gone Wrong

Madera hospital's employees found out about the closure on Dec. 23, the same day it was publicly announced. At a company town hall meeting that morning, the hospital CEO, Karen Paolinelli, made two major announcements: Madera hospital would be filing for bankruptcy and Trinity Health Corporation backed out of a merger deal that would have made it the new owner of Madera Community Hospital.

This came after Attorney General Rob Bonta assessed the deal, as is required per California law, and issued conditions that would require Trinity Health to make several commitments to "protect the communities in Madera County and their access to affordable healthcare," according to a press release.

After Bonta presented his conditions, Trinity Health "representatives did not make any good faith effort to engage with us—on the Medi-Cal rates or on any other details—and did not contact us after the conditions were issued," a spokesperson with Bonta's office wrote in an e-mail to Fresnoland.

Trinity Health, which owns Saint Agnes Medical Center, along with more than 80 other hospitals across the country, did not respond to e-mailed questions from Fresnoland. Trinity Health backing out of the merger deal meant there was no one saving the Madera hospital from bankruptcy.

It's unclear whether Madera Community Hospital's administrative leadership did enough to keep its doors open, and whether it positioned itself poorly in the merger deal. Nothing kept Trinity Health from backing out after giving the already distressed hospital a \$15 million loan at the end of the summer.

Board members have blamed the financial state of the hospital on low Medi-Cal reimbursement rates and the high cost of travel nurses. With mounting monthly shortfalls in 2022, hospital board member Poythress said they were not in a dominant position in the deal.

"We were really in no position to negotiate," said Poythress in an interview with Fresnoland. "We had signed an agreement with them (Trinity Health): take the First Deed of Trust—they loaned us money with the idea that we're

moving forward to an affiliation. Unfortunately, that didn't happen."

When the Madera hospital was seeking a new owner, it didn't garner much interest due to its financial state, said Poythress. CRMC and Saint Agnes Medical Center were the only two legitimate interested parties, the latter being the most sound option, Poythress added.

Trinity Health "is in a very senior position," Poythress said. "We will be working with the courts to see if there is a solution outside of liquidating."

Between 2012 and 2021, Madera Community Hospital's annual revenue ranged from \$171 million to \$205 million and its annual operating expenses, along with healthcare deductions, ranged from \$172 million to about \$212 million. During the same decade, the hospital's average annual profit was about \$1.5 million. The hospital's total assets in 2021 were \$91 million.

The most recent annual financial reports indicate that in 2020, the Madera hospital had about a \$1.07 million shortfall and, in 2021, it had about a \$2.39 million shortfall, according to California's Department of Health Care Access and Information.

The hospital's 2022 annual financial report is not yet available.

## "They pulled a fast one on us"

Former hospital staff shared sadness, despair, betrayal, anger and grief in interviews with Fresnoland. Although hospital staff were told by management they'd have medical insurance until the end of January, they quickly found out that would not be the case.

Breazel, the former registered nurse at Madera Community Hospital, said the closure was abrupt, especially since she soon found out her last day at work would be Dec. 30. She was also told her medical coverage would actually end the following day. How was she going to afford her medication, including an inhaler for her asthma? Or how would she pay for her son's visits to Valley Children's Hospital every six months?

"For them to tell us, 'OK, so your department is closing on Jan. 3—that was already a shock,'" Breazel said. "Then to call us on the 30th and say, 'You're laid off as of today, and you will not have insurance in January'—it was a slap in the face."

Jaimi Kilcrease, 58, worked in the labor and delivery unit at Madera Community Hospital until she was notified through a Dec. 30 phone call that she was being laid off and should not come in to work on Jan. 2, her next scheduled shift.

With a B.S. in nursing, she had few worries about getting another job, but she had a health concern that needed immediate medical attention. With only a day to sort things out, she canceled all the appointments she had barely managed to schedule.

"They kind of pulled a fast one on us," Kilcrease said. "In the blink of an eye, I had no health insurance."

Diane Perez, 54, started working at the hospital when she was 18 and, since then, held different roles at its kitchen and cafeteria. Most recently, she was a dietary aide preparing and serving food and providing hot meals to patients.

"I did everything I was asked," said Perez, who never finished high school and does not have specialized skills that could help her get another job. "Now, I have no income. I have to go to social services to get EBT."

Guadalupe "Nena" Falcon, also a nurse on the labor and delivery floor, said it was the connection she felt with her colleagues and patients that kept her at Madera Community Hospital. "We were a family," she said.

Falcon shares a home with her mother, daughter, son-in-law and four grandchildren. She worked at the Madera hospital for 28 years and said it's hard to move on. While she is in high demand as a registered nurse, she wonders whether she can find another place where everyone—

Continues on page 6

# Remembering Dr. King: Tributes to Greatness

BY SUDARSHAN KAPOOR

Jan. 16 was a federal holiday in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 94th birthday, observed across the nation and around the world. It is a holiday to some but a holy day to others.

Reflecting on the life of an iconic figure in the history of this nation, we all know that Dr. King inspired millions of us. Why? Dr. King was a drum major for peace, justice and righteousness. He was the conscience of his generation. He was an uncompromising champion of human rights and nonviolence; like Mahatma Gandhi, he believed that nonviolence is an infinitely superior method of achieving social justice and resolving conflicts.

When Dr. King shared his dream in one of the most famous speeches in history, it also became our dream. But he was also a great man of action. He led the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 nonviolently and led the movement resulting in the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

His activism and nonviolent protests became a triumph of courage and love bringing down the wall of segregation and hate through the power of love and nonviolence. His words sparked a nonviolent revolution that changed the course of history in this nation.

Dr. King is not with us today, but he lives in our hearts and minds. We can still draw on his message, courage and wisdom with these words:



Flowers were placed around the bust of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 15. Kneeling is Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor, an original member of the MLK Committee. Standing (left to right): Fresno Police Chief Paco Balderrama, Fresno County Board of Education Trustee Kimberly Tapscott-Munson, Fresno City Council Member Annalisa Perea and Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer. Photo by Peter Maiden

His life informs us and enlightens us.  
 His dream sustains us and nurtures us.  
 His words inspire us and empower us.  
 His struggle energizes us and strengthens us.  
 His cause still endures, and his dream still lives on.

Today, Dr. King would strongly condemn the violence that we witness today across the nation—the violence we see in our homes, our communities and our schools, as well as the violence that occurred on Jan. 6 two years ago at the Capitol Building.

He would not only speak against the epidemic of gun violence but also advocate for a ban on assault weapons.

He would oppose the war and violence in Ukraine as he opposed the war in Vietnam. He would instead strongly recommend dialogue and diplomacy. He would also reach out to moral and spiritual leaders of the world to intervene in the Ukraine-Russia conflict, leading the efforts himself.

In the United States:

He would want to see a new era in the political history of the nation. Republicans and Democrats working together to find common ground for the benefit of the entire nation. Addressing healthcare for all, homelessness, mental health, Covid-19, elimination of student debt, the climate crisis and sound immigration policies that would pave the way for citizenship. He would condemn and protest strongly the suppression of voting rights, for which he fought vigorously.

He would also ask all of us an important question: "What are you doing for others?" Let us not forget that Dr. King's birthday is also a "National Day of Service."

In honor of the National Day of Service, volunteers gathered for the Beautify Fresno project, which offered cleanup events at different locations in the community. In the year ahead, volunteers can contact HandsOn Central California for a list of other opportunities for service in our community.

Dr. King might well say it eloquently today:

My Dear Fellow Americans,

It is a time for healing, not hate or finger-pointing. There is no room for hate in any form or shape in this nation—no room for antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia or Hindu- or Sikh-phobia.

It is a time for unity, not polarization or divisiveness.

It is a time for compassion, forgiveness and understanding, not revenge or retribution.

It is a time for acceptance and celebration of diversity, mutual respect and civility, not provocation, harassment or bullying.

It is a time to work for integration, not separation or segregation.

It is a time for redemption and reconciliation, not dehumanization or demonization.

It is a time to serve those who lack resources to meet their basic needs and are suffering because of circumstances beyond their control.

On Dr. King's birthday, let us recommit ourselves to nonviolence and nonviolent resistance. Dr. King gave us a blueprint to follow on the journey as we fight for justice, equality and human rights for all.

In his speeches and writings, Dr. King mentioned his dream of creating a "beloved community." He believed that a community of love, justice and solidarity would eventually be realized.

Let us be the beacon of light. Let us set aside our differences for the betterment of all. Let us work together to realize the dream of Dr. King in creating the beloved community and symphony of brotherhood.



A dancer in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School African Dance Troupe celebrating Dr. King's birthday on Jan. 15 at the Fresno Courthouse. Photo by Peter Maiden

He further articulated his dream in "World House"—the final chapter in his book titled *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*. He wrote that "all inhabitants of the globe are now neighbors...Together we must learn to live as brothers or together we will be forced to perish as fools."

The major barriers in the realization of Dr. King's dream, as mentioned in his writings and speeches, are racism, materialism (consumerism), militarism and sexism.

Let us remember that we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all of us indirectly because we are one human family and are connected. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Let us remember the lesson that he taught us, that we will not judge people by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Let us remember Dr. King's belief that "darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hatred cannot drive out hatred, only love can do that." His words and teachings influenced this author's mantra: Fear not, hate not and hurt not.

Dr. King's message of love, peace, justice and brotherhood is relevant today and will remain relevant for generations to come.

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*Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor is a professor emeritus of social work education and peace studies at Fresno State and co-chair and a founding member of the MLK Unity Committee for the City of Fresno.*

## MLK Jr. and the Class Question

BY MALIK SIMBA

As an undergraduate student, at his father's house in Atlanta, a young inquisitive Martin Luther King Jr. read Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* and therefore Marx's critique

of capitalist social inequality. This reading informed King's thought and behavior for the rest of his life.

This fact eventually brought King to Memphis, Tenn., in 1965 to support the class struggle of city garbage workers on strike for higher wages and safer working conditions.

Echoing a Marxist sentiment, King said, per the poor paid workers, "But what does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he can't afford a burger or a cup of coffee?"

King further stated in an earlier class observation in 1963, "God never intended for one group of people to have...

inordinate wealth while others live in abject and deadening poverty."

Before his assassination, King planned his most significant march to address capitalist class exploitation—the 1968 Poor People's March.

And lest we forget, the March on Washington was for jobs and freedom. Yes, at that march, King's "dream" was encased in the class question.

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*Malik Simba, Ph.D., is professor emeritus of Africana studies and history at Fresno State.*

**National Women's Political Caucus**  
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# Hate Is in the Heart

BY I. SMILEY G. CALDERON

Each month—no, each day—it seems the ugly face of hate forces itself upon us. Senseless violence, heartless killings, stone-cold murders. Last year, we had 647 mass shootings in the United States. That’s almost two every day of the year—or one every 14 hours. In the first three weeks of 2023, there were 38.

And that doesn’t include all gun violence—not by a long shot. Remember, a *mass shooting* is officially defined as a shooting incident that results in four fatalities (not including the shooter). According to the Gun Violence Archive, we lost more than 44,000 people to gun violence in the United States last year alone.

Gun violence is now a leading cause of death for Americans of any age. According to the Giffords Law Center, it is the No. 1 cause of death for those under age 24.

America has a serious problem with hate that just can’t be denied or ignored any longer. Especially in California. Monstrously in our dear Central Valley.

The truth is that we are the ones killing us, to be honest. With our facile access to firearms, it’s easier than ever to multiply the carnage. Yet, we know that guns don’t kill people—neither do knives, sticks or stones, for that matter—people do.

And it all starts in the heart.

That’s what Pastor B.T. Lewis of Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church said during a candid conversation on what to do about hate crimes in Fresno. “The hate is there before the crime,” he bluntly told me.

Pastor Lewis, a Black man, is a community liaison with Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer’s Office of Community Affairs (OCA), an office focused on unifying Fresno with the One Fresno initiative. Pastor Lewis wants to create a more loving Fresno community, but is convinced that to accomplish this we must first nurture relationships and bridge gaps within our community.

“It’s awfully hard to hate someone when you get to know them,” he explained.

He stressed the importance of community members being mutually willing to be vulnerable and uncomfortable in getting to know one another. Removing walls and barriers is a key step in building relationships, he noted.

He also stated that you have to be confident enough in yourself to take that risk. “This is how I can be of service to anybody and everybody, like Jesus was—to all people created by God.”

Pastor Lewis is optimistic that our community can come together as we get to know each other. In his role as community liaison with the OCA, he and his community affairs colleagues aim “to assist in the practical delivery of the One Fresno mission by fostering unity and equity across the City of Fresno.”

Their goal is to make Fresno “an inclusive, prosperous, beautiful and safe city, where people take pride in their neighborhoods and communities.” Extinguishing divisive hate is a dream that is surely attainable when we come together as a united community.

In the January issue of the *Community Alliance*, we highlighted the experience of a local openly gay man who was a victim of a violent hate crime in the Tower District and discussed the seven federally protected distinct social groups and categories that constitute a hate crime. These are crimes perpetrated on people because of their race/color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender/sex, gender identity or disability.

A “hate crime” is not the same as a “hate incident,” to be sure. The distinction is important, however. The former is an illegal action—a bonafide crime—with serious legal consequences and ramifications; the latter can be troubling yet not be a criminal act.

You might not be sure which you’re experiencing as a victim. Both experiences can be traumatic. This is why it’s important to notify the police if you think you have been the victim of either a hate crime or a hate incident.

The police will document and investigate your experience. If the incident in question is indeed a hate crime, the authorities will take action on your behalf. If it’s a hate incident,



Illustration courtesy of MGN

they will document it. This documentation is important and will come in handy if future incidents occur, especially if a hate crime eventually happens.

Proving and establishing that a crime has been committed on the basis of hate toward a federally protected group is important for prosecutors. They need to prove the crime was committed as a hate crime, and previously documented hate incidents can assist with this. Documentation is crucial.

Another local religious leader, Pastor Raygan Baker, previously of the First Congregational Church of Fresno, United Church of Christ, aka the Big Red Church, discussed the status of hate crimes in Fresno. An openly gay man, Pastor Baker said that “some things are getting better, but there still is a lot of work to do...Still, within the queer community [as a gay man], I still am in the position of the most privileged.

“You know, I’m still a cis White man—trans people have it a lot harder than I do and have a lot more violence committed against them—and so I don’t want to say ‘it’s better’ until it’s better for everybody—it’s our whole community.”

He’s right—it’s about community and unity if we are to ever eradicate hate crimes. Yet, as Pastor Lewis explained, until we allow ourselves to become vulnerable and even uncomfortable in getting to know one another in love, we’re just going to stay divided. And there’s no more time for that.

It takes courage and confidence to come together, and today is that day—a day to break barriers and tear down the walls that divide us within our community.

As we celebrated the life of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. last month, we were reminded of the poignancy of his enduring and immortal words: “Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.”

May love drive out the residual hate in our hearts as we stand in solidarity today against hate crimes of every form.

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

**Provide feedback.**  
**E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com**

## Human Cost of Madera County Losing Hospital

Continued from page 4

doctors, nurses and support staff—work in unison to support their vulnerable patients.

“I’ve thought of going to CRMC or Saint Agnes,” Falcon said, “but will I be allowed to take as much time as I need with a patient? To really make a difference?”

### County Scrambles to Restore Medical Services

In the months leading up to Trinity Health backing out of the merger deal and the announcement of plans to file for bankruptcy, Madera hospital leadership sought help from the City of Madera and Madera County. They sought federal relief dollars allocated to the city and county from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Madera’s city officials decided against giving the hospital \$1 million for capital projects—usually expensive, long-term investments in building or improving facilities and infrastructure—considering the City had already allocated a bulk of its ARPA funds to sewer and water projects it desperately needed. However, the Madera County supervisors approved giving \$1 million to the hospital to expand its pharmacy department.

It is unclear why Madera Community Hospital sought ARPA funds for capital projects instead of increased operation and payroll costs—especially when the hospital’s board members have claimed the cost of travel nurses cut deep into the hospital’s money reserves. Fresno County allocated \$10 million to its local hospitals for Covid-related cost increases including travel nurses.

Poythress said he and his colleagues on the Madera County Board of Supervisors were under the impression that they could not allocate ARPA funds to operational expenses, despite hearing about neighboring Fresno

County doing so. He added that by the end of the hospital’s run, travel nurses accounted for about 40% of payroll, making up to \$200 an hour.

The Madera hospital’s former employees are greatly upset about the hospital’s closure. Worst of all, there are few concrete answers.

“There’s no clarity as to what really was the problem, other than ugly rumors about Karen Paolinelli (CEO),” said Kilcrease, the registered nurse. “I can’t seem to get any clarity, or peace.”

### What Happens Next? It’s Complicated.

Madera Community Hospital’s closure has caused three hospitals in Fresno County to take on its emergency patient volume. Stacked atop flaring Covid-19, flu and respiratory illnesses during winter months—which are crowding hospital emergency rooms and beds—Fresno County hospitals already have a lot on their plate.

“All of these factors are straining our hospital system and depleting our resources,” said Robyn Gonzales, vice president of operations for CRMC in Fresno. “If there continues to be an increase of patients coming in, then the need for increased resources to treat them also grows.”

Saint Agnes Medical Center’s emergency room is also seeing an influx of patients for similar reasons, including Madera’s hospital closure. “We are extremely busy and while ED wait times are longer than we would like, our staff and physicians are doing everything possible to accommodate every patient who comes through our doors,” said Kelley Sanchez, a hospital spokesperson.

On Jan. 3, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors declared a state of emergency due to the increased patient volume at its hospitals. On Jan. 9, Joe Prado, the assistant director of Fresno County’s public health department, said, “All hospitals in Fresno County were above 100% capacity and one hospital was at 118% capacity.”

What’s next for the Madera Community Hospital is complicated to say the least. The hospital will enter bankruptcy once paperwork is finalized, which presumably will happen soon.

Right now, even if the hospital were given money by the government or a wealthy donor, it is unlikely the money could even go toward reopening the hospital itself. Moving

forward with a Chapter 11 bankruptcy would prioritize settling the hospital’s debts.

“Cash contributions to the hospital by the County could be redirected to the creditors, versus utilized for reopening the MCH facility,” wrote Madera County Administrative Officer Jay Varney over e-mail.

It also seems that the Madera County Board of Supervisors are leaning in the direction of not simply giving money to the hospital. On top of having identified about \$7 million in ARPA funds that could be used to restore vital medical services to the county, staff are currently seeking a consultant who can lay out how much it would cost the county to establish either a healthcare district or a community facilities district.

Regardless, it will take at least two months before a clear plan to restore medical services in Madera County is put into place.

All employees interviewed said they’d return to the hospital if they could have their job back. Some said they’d only return under new management.

Myers, the vocational nurse, said she wishes a rich donor could come in and save the day.

“I would put aside any feelings of anger and disappointment for what they’ve put us through already,” Myers said. “I will go back out there and work till I retire. For me, that’s the best-case scenario.”

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*Omar Shaikh Rashad is the government accountability reporter for FresnoLand. Dr. Dympna Ugwu-Oju is the senior editor for FresnoLand.*



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# Identity Politics Trump Climate Crisis

BY KEVIN HALL

It's 2023. Do you know where your climate solutions are?

Between the climate change doomer camp of all-is-lost fatalism and the boomer tribe's false promise of win-win solutions lies a path to survival for much of humanity into the distant future, rather than just a few more decades of excessive consumption for some.

The shift in direction needed will require a hard turn to get there in time, one requiring near unanimity of opinion due to the resulting social order disruptions, which are coming regardless due to ever-destabilizing weather patterns. Dr. James Hansen and colleagues wrote last summer, "We suggest that 2024 is likely to be off the chart as the warmest year on record."

Blocking the path to survival—which the United Nations says will be needed by 700 million climate refugees worldwide this decade alone, meaning far more people than the entire population of North America will be displaced—are wealthy elites and their support system: that 20% of adults working in industrialized nations' white-collar class as professionals, managers and small farm and business owners, plus their retired predecessors.

Unfortunately, these are the people in power, and they're quite comfortable because the system is working just fine for them. It also helps that they're easily distracted by entertainment and travel. A few donations to worthy causes and membership in some relevant organizations and they figure they've done their part.

To win their votes, authoritarian-minded Republicans and virtue-signaling Democrats first pledge allegiance to a set of party positions on every social issue. It's easy to be a Democrat, easier to be Republican. Simple even. Just don't cross the bright line that's there for every candidate, officeholder, political action committee, campaign contributor, journalist and voter to see.

But the line splitting our political ledger ends at a bottom line of far more importance: American capitalism. Below that line Democrats and Republicans alike swear fealty to their financial backers and an economic system defined by University of Wisconsin-Madison sociologist Joel Rogers as "low-road capitalism."

Rogers' work is cited in the 1619 Project article by Matthew Desmond, "In order to understand the brutality of American capitalism, you have to start on the plantation."

Desmond describes the state of our state: "In a capitalist society that goes low, wages are depressed as businesses compete over the price, not the quality, of goods; so-called unskilled workers are typically incentivized through punishments, not promotions; inequality reigns and poverty spreads.

"In the United States, the richest 1 percent of Americans own 40 percent of the country's wealth, while a larger share of working-age people (18-65) live in poverty than in any other nation belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development."

In short, this country's legacy of slavery, plantations and human exploitation beyond measure gave birth to many modern-day corporate financing structures and management practices. These were originally created to fund and capitalize on the cotton boom of the 18th and 19th centuries, speculative market crashes and all, except then enslaved humans rather than land, more of which was being constantly cleared by genocide, were used as collateral for loans with age-based depreciation tables and all. Thomas Jefferson mortgaged 150 enslaved people to build Monticello, Desmond points out.

That legacy is also found in contemporary politics, which haven't changed much through the centuries when it comes to politicians' support for the low road. Many working-class White Americans enjoyed a 40-year reprieve that began crumbling for most in the 1980s, about the same time hope for stopping the worst impacts of climate change was officially crossed.

Now society is trapped on the runaway climate train. Partying in its caboose is the political class of elected officials and their backers; collectively, they lack the education and experience needed to understand the gravity of scientists' warnings and the will to lead the transformation of our economy being called for by the United Nations.

"Elected officials have largely been unwilling to choose policies they fear could cost them the next election when the benefits might not be felt for several more decades,"

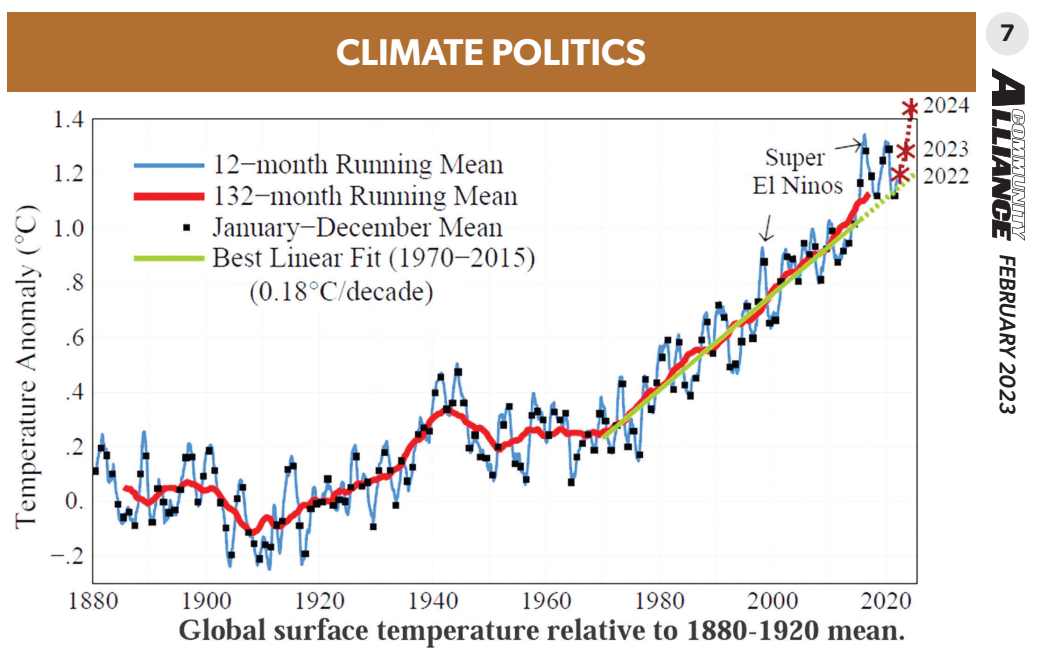
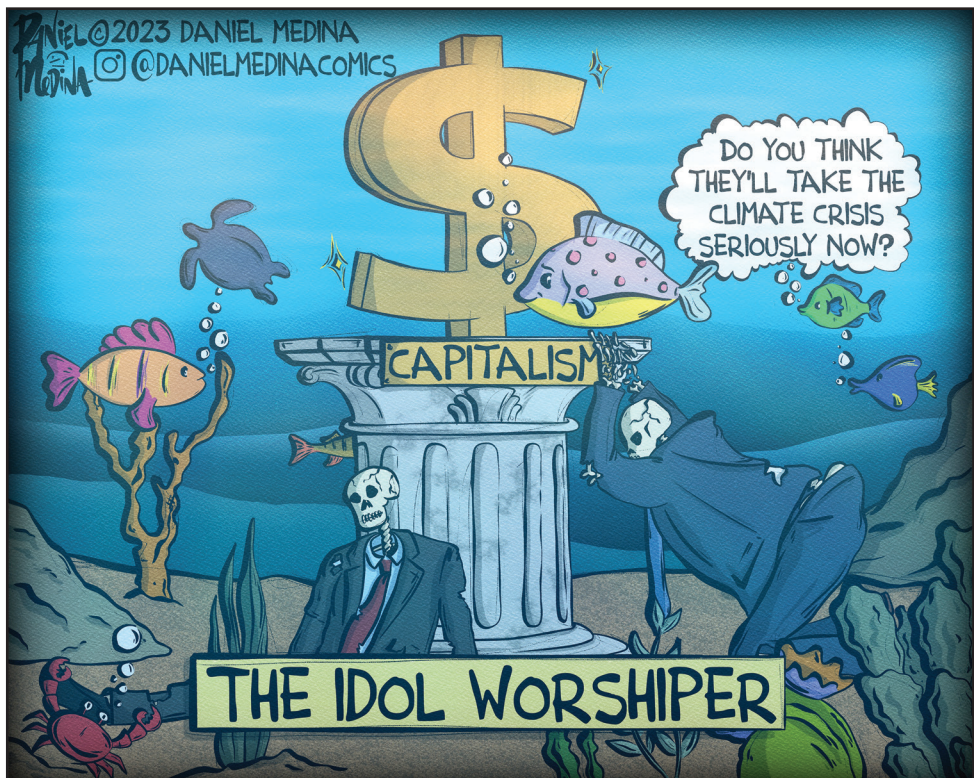
explained *Washington Post* reporters Sarah Kaplan and Brady Dennis in their April 2022 article, "The world is running out of options to hit climate goals, U.N. report shows."

Instead of leading on solutions, politicians are being led by industry yet again. Billions of taxpayer dollars are being misdirected into cap-and-

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A record Earth energy imbalance spurred by rapid growth of greenhouse gasses, reduction of human-caused aerosols and the rising phase of the solar irradiance cycle indicate "off the chart" temperatures ahead. Source: *August Temperature Update, a Thank You & Biden's Report Card*, Sept. 22, 2022, James Hansen, Makiko Sato and Reto Ruedy

trade market mechanisms that allow continued pollution of every type and perpetuate low-road capitalism rather than seeking to fundamentally alter the system.

In the coming months and years, Fresno residents will see their city council members, mayor, county supervisors, and state and federal representatives proclaiming their climate awareness and solutions. Don't be fooled.

The Producers Dairy's greenwashing campaign will continue to offer photo ops for low-road capitalists and their political pawns at the cost of people's health from east Mendota to the Tower District.

A prominent Fresno developer's favorite finger puppets on the City Council will propose a "climate smart" subdivision ordinance, but it will be a charade. Industrial trucking warehouses, biomass operations and waste haulers will be declared "green" industries and allowed to expand throughout south Fresno, despite a city council with a 6-1 Democratic to Republican advantage.

There is no political separation on this front due to billions in public subsidies.

Accountability-free, identity politics will continue to determine most people's political involvement, and the low-road priorities of our elected representatives will be decided behind closed doors. It seems the more the climate changes, the more politics stay the same.

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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](http://www.valleyclimate.org) and can be contacted at [sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com](mailto:sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com) for presentations and information.

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11:15AM - 12:45PM Visit third ag site or farm, enjoy lunch and wine tasting (or beer garden)  
1:15PM Arrive back at Kearney Park  
2:00PM Complimentary tour of Kearney Mansion Museum & Gallery (optional)  
*Need a hotel? Self-book at [candicehill.inteletravel.com](http://candicehill.inteletravel.com) OR [visitfresnocounty.org/hotels](http://visitfresnocounty.org/hotels). Note: You'll need to Uber/Lyft or drive/carpool to Kearney Park. When navigating, search Kearney Park.*

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# Shelter Emergency— Homeless Lives Matter

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

"I could care less about Disney on Ice when there are people [not] waking up, dead on the streets. I am the one who has to drive through Tower seeing bodies lying there, lifeless, because the warming centers are not open and they should have been," said Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias at the Jan. 5 regular Council meeting.

"I have been asking for a long time, what is the plan for more shelters?"

Arias was responding to the city manager's question about a suggestion from himself and Council Members Luis Chavez and Annalisa Perea to declare a housing emergency and consider using parts of the Convention Center as temporary shelters and her question involved what to do about planned events such as the upcoming Disney on Ice show.

The proposal was tabled for further discussion, however, the Council did vote to declare a "shelter crisis" and agreed that the declaration was a starting point for further discussion.

Arias responded to questions about the costs of running a shelter at the Convention Center. "We are already spending millions of dollars on HART [Homeless Assistance Response Team] just to shift [unhoused] people from one part of town to the other," he said.

"I would like to acknowledge that I am a guilty party, as I too, have asked city staff to go and clean up encampments."

He went on to criminalize those unfortunate enough to be unhoused, exclaiming that "once they become a camp of five people, 10 people and 20 people, the drug elements, the crime elements all take over."

Undeniably, a number of unhoused people have addiction issues. The 2022 Point in Time Count cites about 45% do, not the majority. Many become addicted after being on the street for a while.

The misery of life on the streets and seeking to escape that misery with drug use should be understandable. In addition, drug policies and the war on drugs have made drugs plentiful, especially on the streets of Fresno.

Crime is prevalent on the street, however, most of the victims of crime are the unhoused themselves, especially the elderly and disabled.

Homeless camps can provide stability, safety, autonomy, community, access to services, storage for belongings and overdose prevention. If Arias and other city officials were serious about reducing drug use and crime, they would support more drug treatment programs and other social services. If encampments were supported with water, toilets, waste collection, fire equipment and naloxone kits, they could be made safer.

Continual displacement causes immense harm. Unhoused people who are constantly displaced lose connections with friends, family and services. Displacement causes mental and physical health problems.

People have no control over their lives and possessions. They are relentlessly pushed daily to move on with no place to go, and it further traumatizes their already difficult lives.

Business owners and residents should take heed of the suffering they cause when calling the City to complain about a homeless encampment. There, but for fortune, go you or I.

At the Jan. 5 Council meeting, advocates and several unhoused individuals spoke about HART and its daily abuse of the unhoused community. That includes daily sweeps and having all their possessions thrown away, even in rainy weather, with constant harassment and humiliating treatment.

A woman named Gloria spoke emotionally about how she and her brother suddenly became homeless after they could not get enough money together to rent an apartment. She said the tent that they were living in was torn down that very morning.

Unhoused resident Sean Anthony said, "Our possessions were thrown away this morning just as my pregnant wife and I were about to move into an apartment. We lost both our IDs." Without identification, they might not get the apartment.

In further testimony, Gloria Wyatt said, "I am not used to being homeless, but I cannot cover rent. Our tent was torn down this morning, and we have no place to go. I am scared."

Another unhoused woman, Crystal, described having her tent taken away by HART.

The City Council members asked the public speakers no questions about HART. Council Member Mike Karbassi seemed to question the integrity of the unhoused persons who spoke by saying, "We've heard testimony from folks, but we don't know the whole story."

No sympathy was offered by any Council member, and there was no explanation for HART's actions to tear down camps during storms when there is no available shelter space.

The suggestion to convert a part of the Convention Center to a shelter was controversial and met with opposition from Council Members Garry Bredefeld and Karbassi. In the end, there was simply an agreement to continue the discussion in the future.

Mayor Jerry Dyer later weighed in on the issue and stated that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) would not approve an aggregate shelter at the Convention Center because

## FOLLOW THE MONEY



Calm before the storm of the HART destroyers. Photo by Bob McCloskey

of Covid guidelines. This statement is rich because the mayor and the Council continuously violate CDC guidelines to end encampment sweeps to prevent the spread of Covid.

The important issue of the lack of shelter beds was initially raised by Arias because the current motel shelters are scheduled to be converted to permanent housing, and the City has no plan to place the current homeless residents of the motels anywhere. Advocates have been pressing the mayor and the Council for months to develop a plan to no avail. Soon, there will be a dire shelter emergency if no action is taken.

Under pressure from the community and advocates, at the previous Council meeting on Dec. 22, the Council adopted a measure to open four warming centers throughout the city at community centers with extended hours through Jan. 31, every night, regardless of the temperature.

This was a major victory for advocates who have been lobbying the City every winter to do this. Last winter, the City opened only one warming center and only when the temperature dropped below 35 degrees!

In another development, finally recognizing the threat cold weather poses to unhoused people, the City opened the four warming centers as storm relief centers all day during a weeklong storm from Jan. 9 through Jan. 15, providing three meals a day. The centers filled up quickly and remained full.

Advocates continue to lobby to keep these shelters open all winter. People using the shelters express extreme gratitude for having a warm, safe place to stay and sleep without the ever-present fear of sleeping on the streets.

In more positive news, the California Interagency Council on Homelessness recently implemented the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) program. The ERF program will fund actionable, person-centered local proposals that resolve the experience of unsheltered homelessness for people residing in encampments.

Resolving these experiences of homelessness will necessarily address the safety and wellness of people within encampments, resolve critical encampment concerns and transition individuals into interim shelter with clear pathways to permanent housing or directly into permanent housing, using data-informed, non-punitive, low-barrier, person-centered, Housing First and coordinated approaches.

Proposals could bolster existing, successful models and/or support new approaches that provide safe, stable and ultimately permanent housing for homeless people in encampments.

The California Interagency Council on Homelessness will

- Assist local jurisdictions in ensuring the safety and wellness of people experiencing homelessness in encampments.
- Provide grants to local jurisdictions and continuums of care to resolve critical encampment concerns and transition individuals into safe and stable housing.
- Encourage a data-informed, coordinated approach to address encampment concerns.

The ERF program was initially authorized in 2021 through AB 140, which allocated \$50 million for what would become the first round of funding. SB 197 amended the program in 2022 and allocated an additional \$300 million for Round 2 of ERF funding.

It is unclear if the City has applied for this funding. The practice of breaking up encampments continues, and this funding is badly needed.

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Bob McCloskey is a homeless advocate. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

## Let the Healing Begin!

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

On Jan. 12, the U.S. Board of Geographical Names (USBGN) gave the 93675 zip code a new name: Yokuts Valley. This marks the culmination of a two-year process that began with local Indigenous activists. It has been supported by local residents, accelerated by the first Indigenous secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, bolstered by the unanimous and bipartisan decision of the California Assembly and Senate, and followed the unanimous recommendation of the California Advisory Council on Geographical Names (CACGN).

The name change came because the term *squaw* is widely recognized by Indigenous (and non-Indigenous!) people as an offensive, derogatory, misogynist slur (on par with the n-word or the j-word). It needed to be replaced.

Nathan Magsig, Fresno County Supervisor for District 5, was none too happy about the new name. By 1 p.m. on Jan. 12, he had issued a "clarification" to readers of the Facebook group "Squaw Valley: The Original 93675" that in actuality muddied the waters. After reporting the USBGN's decision about Yokuts Valley, Magsig stoked White grievance and anger with falsehoods.

- Magsig claimed that the USBGN "decided to ignore the comments and resolutions by my office and the residents of S— Valley." Not true! The USBGN carefully considered everything that Magsig had submitted (at the Board's request)—and weighed them with considerations from all interested parties. Carefully considering is not "ignoring."
- Magsig claimed the USBGN "does not have the authority to name recognized locations" that are not on federal land. Not true!

In September 2022, the USBGN renamed more than 650 places, not just federally owned lands, that previously had had "squaw" in their names.

Furthermore, the USBGN worked closely with the CACGN, which had plenty of local input, so the implication that the USBGN's decision was arbitrary and without local input is manifestly false.

## OPINION & ANALYSIS

- Magsig claimed that he expected the California legislature also to "ignore" his office's comments and resolutions. Not true!

While the California legislature does have the authority to change place names, in the case of S— Valley, this is not a future decision. AB 2022 already became law (past tense) in November. And the CACGN had already selected "Yokuts Valley" as the replacement name.

It is ironic that Magsig complained about being "ignored," while for two years he blocked requests from the local Indigenous community (and others) to get a hearing on this issue. He has dismissed the statements of Indigenous leaders that the term *squaw* is a derogatory and racist slur, and he has refused to acknowledge the fact that genocide cleared the way for White settlement of this region.

Magsig has not been "ignored." His efforts to stop the name change through the channels available to him have failed.

As a professional politician, he is supposed to know how politics work. If he didn't fill out the right forms, or didn't pay sufficient attention to the process he is complaining about, that's his responsibility.

To cast aspersions at the USBGN, the CACGN, the California legislature and anybody else is blame-casting, unprofessional and unproductive.

The objections to the name change to Yokuts Valley play to unacknowledged White bigotry and racism against Indigenous people. The objections are part of a "cultural war" that centers White grievance against "liberals who are taking over" America.

The objections stem from a view of government itself as "evil" (which, admittedly, sometimes it can be, but not in this case). And the objections are willful ignorance by Whites to deny the trauma their ancestors caused in the catastrophic California genocide.

Continues on page 17





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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

### WILPF FRESNO DONATES GREAT BOOKS TO LOCAL LIBRARIES

Outstanding and engaging, recently published children's books have arrived at our Fresno libraries, courtesy of WILPF Fresno. The Jane Addams Children's Book Award donations made to six local libraries are part of WILPF's 40-year ongoing support of literacy and reading, plus its promotion of values such as peace, social justice, world community and equality of the sexes and all races.

At this particular time in our world, it's so important that all children see themselves in books as well as learn about those who are different from them. These donated books open our children's worlds, minds and hearts. These books are where children can feel seen, celebrated, valued and empowered to discuss, question and act.

In November 2022, Cheryl Caldera, chair of the WILPF Library Committee, presented sets of 2022 Jane Addams Children's Book Awards to six libraries: Downtown Central, Betty Rodriguez, Mosqueda, West Fresno, Gillis and Sunnyside.

In addition, a privately donated copy of *Light for All* by Margarita Engle, a local author, was included.

For younger children, you can now request from any Fresno library *Shirley Chisholm Dared* by Alicia D. Williams, and for older children, you can request *How to Find What You're Not Looking For* by Veera Hiranandani.

Also honored for younger children: *Runaway: The Daring Escape of Ona Judge* by Ray A. Shepard and *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre* by Carole Boston Weatherford

Also honored for older children: *Strong as Fire, Fierce as Flame* by Supriya Kelkar and *Rez Dogs* by Bruce Bruchac

—Ann Carruthers, Library Chair Emerita



Giving and receiving the Jane Addams Children's Book Award Winners for 2022 at the Doris Gates Children's Room, Fresno County Public Library, Central Branch, are Clarisa Bernabe, Collection Development & Special Collections Supervisor; Cheryl Caldera, Nancy Hatcher and Sandra Iyall, members of Fresno WILPF; Sally Gomez, Associate County Librarian; and Joy Sentman-Paz, Central, Mosqueda and West Fresno Branch Supervisor. Photo by Jill Potter, Fresno County Public Library Photographer

### UPDATE ON THE DAKOTA ECOGARDEN— PART 2

Continuing last month's update on the Dakota EcoGarden (DEG):

Owned by the nonprofit EcoVillage Project of Fresno, DEG's Board strives to continue the goal to provide "safe and dignified living spaces in an environmentally sustainable manner, giving each resident the educational, emotional and physical tools, caring support and training to escape the cycle of homelessness.

"The Dakota EcoGarden represents Nancy [Waidtlow]'s version of Architect Arthur Dyson's original vision for an eco village... Dakota EcoGarden provides a place and resources for residents to learn new skills or further their existing skills. (DEG) provides computer access that residents can use to seek educational opportunities or find employment."

The above excerpts are from the EcoVillage Project of Fresno website, [ecovillagefresno.org/](http://ecovillagefresno.org/).

Plan to visit DEG to see and learn how a communal living property can exist in Fresno. This is a truly unique property, with a traditional house and unique single bedroom properties.

Located behind the main Dakota EcoGarden house are nine individual shelters. Architect Arthur "Art" Dyson designed three unique permanent eco-structures and six semi-permanent "tent" homes. All are run on individual solar power. The EcoVillage Project plans to eventually replace the six tents with permanent eco structures.

Donations and volunteers are always needed to continue the success of this project. An open invitation stands for volunteers to join the second Saturday work party plus enjoy the treat of a vegan blueberry pancake breakfast, cooked by Gerry Bill, as a thank you for your help. Check Facebook for updates.

To learn more about Art Dyson, please view his retrospective exhibition at the Fresno Art Museum (FAM), Feb. 11-June 25. A visionary architect inspired by his own social consciousness, Dyson was a student of both Frank Lloyd Wright and Bruce Goff. In this show, FAM's executive director and chief curator, Michele Ellis Pracy, highlights Dyson's 56 years of both private and public work.

—Teresa Castillo, Branch Chair and Treasurer of Fresno WILPF



#### Second Saturday Work Party at Dakota EcoGarden—Volunteers Welcome!

At the EcoVillage Project/Dakota EcoGarden at 2231 W. Dakota Ave. in Fresno on the second Saturday of every month there is a garden work party with vegan/blueberry pancakes and fresh-squeezed orange juice. Volunteers are always welcome, so join us! Or you can volunteer for other EcoGarden work. Contact Gerry Bill at 559-341-2254 for information.

Photo by Gerry Bill



Cuba delivers healthcare at home and around the world. Photo by Yoamaris Neptuno Dominguez

### WE CAN RIGHT THIS WRONG— CUBA OFF THE U.S. "TERRORIST LIST"

The National Network on Cuba—of which WILPF-US is a member organization—is getting ready for a major new campaign: to get the Biden administration to remove Cuba from the U.S. list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

- Trump placed Cuba on this list just before reluctantly leaving office.
- Cuba does not belong on the U.S. list of State Sponsors of Terrorism: There is absolutely no evidence of any kind for Cuba having carried out, planned, supported or sponsored any acts of terrorism.
- Cuba has repeatedly been the victim of U.S.-sponsored acts of terrorism, including bombings and sabotage.
- For many years, Cuba's international role has been marked by providing medical aid to other countries, free for poor countries or in disaster situations.

We need to share the facts so that people in the United States know the truth about Cuba. We also need to build overwhelming public opinion so that unfair and damaging policies against Cuba are no longer politically expedient.

- These U.S. lists might be arbitrary, totally political and false, but the economic consequences are real. The United States pressures other governments, banking institutions and companies throughout the world, as well as obsessively pursuing any sources of hard currency transactions for Cuba. The intention is to cause an economic collapse. This is considered an act of war by international law.
- The State Sponsors of Terrorism list creates still more difficulties for even the simplest transactions, as well as for financing.

One means is to pass resolutions, initially designed for city councils, but applicable to all organizations—unions, churches, others—to show what is in fact true: that large numbers of people oppose the current U.S. policy of attacking Cuba and wish to normalize relations. We need to create a constituency for positive change.

Join us! It's going to be a creative and passionate campaign to do the right thing.

Get in touch with me for a sample resolution and/or to join the WILPF Cuba and Bolivarian Alliance Committee. You might even get a chance to go to Cuba and see for yourself.

—Leni Villagomez Reeves

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#### WILPF MEETING

Feb. 9, Thursday, 7 p.m., online for sure, and maybe also in person at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Watch your e-mail for an announcement with a link and a call-in number. For more information, contact Teresa at [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com) or Leni at [lenivreeves@gmail.com](mailto:lenivreeves@gmail.com).

#### STIR IT UP—WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

Feb. 22, 3 p.m. (fourth Wednesday of each month). Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

#### UNPACKING RACISM

Feb. 26, Sunday, 6:30 p.m. With Dr. Jean Kennedy. RSVP with your e-mail address to [drjeankennedy@yahoo.com](mailto:drjeankennedy@yahoo.com) or text 559-270-1023.

#### WOMEN IN BLACK

Feb. 1, noon, Courthouse (first Wednesday of each month). Check first with Sue Kern at [skern@netptc.net](mailto:skern@netptc.net) or 559-349-3777.

#### YES! RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW! HERE'S HOW:

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

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

For questions and information updates, e-mail Nancy Hatcher at [nhatcher46@gmail.com](mailto:nhatcher46@gmail.com) or Kyla Mitchell at [kyla.noelle@gmail.com](mailto:kyla.noelle@gmail.com).

## Peace & Social Justice Calendar February 2023

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

**WED 01** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. Community Alliance radio show hosted by Daren Miller. Guest: Dr. Malik Simba, professor emeritus at Fresno State. Topic: Importance and Impact of African People/Black History Month. For more info, visit [www.kfcf.org](http://www.kfcf.org).

**THU 02** **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](https://www.facebook.com/FACarthop) on Facebook.

**Fix Your Own Bike** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. 1755 Broadway St. Experienced volunteers will guide you to repair your bicycle. Sponsored by Tower Velo Bicycle Shop and the Fresno County Bicycle Coalition. Donations welcome.

**ArtHop Special Event: Black History Month** 6 p.m. 1600 Fulton St. Featured artist: Will Portis. Entertainment: Baybee and Michael Miller Duo. Sponsored by the Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce.

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** 7 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com).

**FRI 03** **Workshop on Local Hiring Agreements** 9 a.m. Via Zoom. Discover how project labor agreements can impact the community's economic future. Transform the local workforce by creating opportunities for good-paying jobs. Directly shape the training pipeline for youth into the construction sector. Featured presenters: Michael Bernick, research director, California Workforce Association; Chuck Riojas, secretary, Fresno-Madera-Kings-Tulare Building Trades Council; and Ashley Matthews, senior project coordinator, Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board. Sponsored by the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board. Register at [tinyurl.com/LocalHiringWorkshop](https://tinyurl.com/LocalHiringWorkshop).

**Fabulous Friday Forum** Noon. Via Zoom. Learn about the GOP's proposals to cut and privatize Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. Find out how you can fight back. Register at [bit.ly/SocialSecurity2023](http://bit.ly/SocialSecurity2023). Sponsored by the California Association of Retired Americans (CARA). For more info, contact 559-360-5955 or 559-704-8384.

**Cineculture: *Map of American Dreams*** 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion with Martin Weber (director). Between 1992 and 2013, Argentine artist Weber photographed powerful yet intimate people in Latin America. He asked them to write their dreams with chalk on a wooden board. Decades later, he wondered if any of those wishes had been fulfilled. This film is a new journey in the search for the same people to give testimony from their lives. View the film Jan. 30–Feb. 3 (link at [cineculture.csufresno.edu](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu)). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail [mhusain@csufresno.edu](mailto:mhusain@csufresno.edu) by Feb. 2.

**SAT 04** **Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** 9 a.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. Speaker: Dr. Thomas Holyoke, Fresno State professor of political science and published author. For more info, contact 559-435-4043.

**MON 06** **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](mailto:ggaston1234@aol.com) or visit [www.dwiafresno.org](http://www.dwiafresno.org).

**TUE 07** **Leavenworth & Jefferson Neighborhood Improvement Discussion** 10 a.m. Via Zoom. Discuss issues in your neighborhood with the City of Fresno's School Area Team. Spanish interpreter available. Access at [zoom.us/j/91488834645](https://zoom.us/j/91488834645).

**DRIVE Innovation Series** 2 p.m. 10F, The Grand 1401, 1401 Fulton St. Speaker: Professor Christopher Edmin, director of youth engagement and community partnership at the USC Race and Equity Center. Edmin is the creator of the #HipHopEd social media movement, Science Genius BATTLES and the CREATE Accelerator. To RSVP, search DRIVE Innovation Center Events at [eventbrite.com](https://eventbrite.com).

**National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)** 5:30 p.m. Los Amigo's Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. Speaker: Dr. Rashanda Booker. Topic: Diversity at Fresno State. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or [joanne@pyoga.com](mailto:joanne@pyoga.com).

**WED 08** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit [www.kfcf.org](http://www.kfcf.org).

**THU 09** **Leavenworth & Jefferson Neighborhood Improvement Discussion** 3:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Discuss issues in your neighborhood with the City of Fresno's School Area Team. Spanish interpreter

available. Access at [zoom.us/j/91488834645](https://zoom.us/j/91488834645).

**Ethical Leadership Lecture** 5 p.m. Via Zoom. 2022 Ethical Leadership honoree Dr. Paul Binion will offer reflection and inspiration on ethical leadership. Dr. Binion is senior pastor of Fresno's West Side Church of God. His work includes a focus on increasing college preparation, enrollment and graduation among African-American and low-income students. Register at [bit.ly/Feb9Ethics](http://bit.ly/Feb9Ethics). Sponsored by the Fresno State Ethics Center and the Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. For more info, contact [afiala@csufresno.edu](mailto:afiala@csufresno.edu).

**FRI 10** **VITA Free Tax Preparation** Binational of Central California, in partnership with United Way Fresno Madera, is offering free tax preparation to low- and moderate-income individuals, families and seniors. Tax returns will be prepared by trained and IRS-certified volunteers. Start booking appointments today by calling 211 or 559-243-3669 for either site: United Way Building (4949 E. Kings Canyon Rd.) or Calwa Recreation Park (4545 E. Church Ave.). For more info, contact 559-367-4020 or [claudiaboccfresno@gmail.com](mailto:claudiaboccfresno@gmail.com).

**Cineculture: *A Family for 1640 Days*** 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion. Director Fabien Gorgeart's film is inspired by true events that happened when he was a child. This "remarkable, sensitive and highly accurate drama" explores what makes a child happy and what it means to be a family. Sponsors: The French Program and the Department of Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures. View the film Feb. 6–10 (link at [cineculture.csufresno.edu](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu)). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail [mhusain@csufresno.edu](mailto:mhusain@csufresno.edu) by Feb. 9.

**SAT 11** **BAPAC Statewide Political and Economic Development Planning Conference** 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Vision View, 4974 E. Clinton Way. Develop an ongoing process that clearly outlines both long-range economic development strategies, activities and international programs and projects that will provide financial access and stability in African American communities throughout the state. \$100/person. For more info, contact 559-647-3425 or [stti\\_inc@yahoo.com](mailto:stti_inc@yahoo.com).

**Fix Your Own Bike** 11 a.m.–3 p.m. 1440 N. Van Ness Ave. Experienced volunteers will guide you to repair your bicycle. Sponsored by Tower Velo Bicycle Shop and the Fresno County Bicycle Coalition. Donations welcome.

**Chinese New Year** 11:30 a.m. On the streets of Chinatown. Celebrate the Year of the Rabbit with the Chinese New Year Lion Dancers. For more info, contact 559-393-0774 or [chinatown93706@gmail.com](mailto:chinatown93706@gmail.com).

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

**TranzBall 2023 Rock & Roll Fairytale** Fresno City College, 1101 E. University Ave. Sponsored by Imperial Dove Court de Fresno. For more info contact [info@idcfresno.org](mailto:info@idcfresno.org).

**MON 13** **Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)** 5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact [swgamble@aol.com](mailto:swgamble@aol.com).

**TUE 14** **Council District 3 Project Review Committee** 5:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For the agenda and more info, contact 559-621-7833 or [gabriela.olea@fresno.gov](mailto:gabriela.olea@fresno.gov).

**Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC)** 6 p.m. For more info, contact 559-287-1308 or [bapacfresno@gmail.com](mailto:bapacfresno@gmail.com).

**Stonewall Democratic Club** 6 p.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St. For more info, contact 559-709-8016 or [conantm@aol.com](mailto:conantm@aol.com).

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

**WED 15** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Speaking Truth to Empire*** 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit [www.kfcf.org](http://www.kfcf.org).

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

**Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter** 7 p.m. Via Zoom. Presenter: Beth Pratt, regional executive director of the National Wildlife Federation. Program: Saving LA's Cougars—Building the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing. This visionary structure will preserve biodiversity across the Los Angeles region by connecting an integral wildlife corridor and help save a threatened local population of mountain lions from extinction. When complete, the crossing will be the largest in the world, the first of its kind in California, and it will serve as a global model for urban wildlife conservation. Visit [sierraclub.org/tehipite](http://sierraclub.org/tehipite) to register in advance.



**THU 16** **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](https://www.facebook.com/FACarthop) on Facebook.

**Clovis Democratic Club** 6 p.m. Seven Cafe & Grill, 25 Clovis Ave. For more info, contact 559-322-9740 or [jenikren@gmail.com](mailto:jenikren@gmail.com).

**FRI 17** **Workshop on Local Hiring Agreements** 10 a.m. Via Zoom. See Feb. 3 entry. Register at [tinyurl.com/LocalHiringWorkshop](https://tinyurl.com/LocalHiringWorkshop).

**Cineculture: *Goliath*** 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion. Directed by Frédéric Tellier, this thriller that deals with environmental and agricultural issues. It was inspired by the "Monsanto Papers" and "Monsanto File" investigated by the French daily *Le Monde*. These two cases involved the American agro-industrial corporation Monsanto and its glyphosate-based herbicide sold under the name "Roundup." Sponsors: The French Program and the Department of Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures. View the film Feb. 13–17 (link at [cineculture.csufresno.edu](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu)). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail [mhusain@csufresno.edu](mailto:mhusain@csufresno.edu) by Feb. 16.

**SAT 18** **West Fresno Democratic Club** 9 a.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St. Program: Black History Month. For more info, contact 559-930-4909 or [westfresnodemclub@gmail.com](mailto:westfresnodemclub@gmail.com).

**SUN 19** **3rd Annual Black History Month Celebration** 3 p.m. McNally Park, 825 S. A St., Madera. Honoring Madera trailblazer Marcella Andrews. Sponsored by Black Saints United and the City of Madera. For more info, contact 903-305-1965.

**MON 20** **California Latina Democrats—Fresno** 6:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact [chaircalatinadems@gmail.com](mailto:chaircalatinadems@gmail.com).

**WED 22** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info visit [www.kfcf.org](http://www.kfcf.org).

**FRI 24** **Cineculture: *The Investigator*** 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion with Viktor Portel (director). A former investigator for The Hague Tribunal in The Hague, The Netherlands, returns to the Balkans, to places in Southern Europe where war crimes were committed in the 1990s. Can justice be brought from the outside? View the film Feb. 20–24 (link at [cineculture.csufresno.edu](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu)). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail [mhusain@csufresno.edu](mailto:mhusain@csufresno.edu) by Feb. 23.

**Black History Month Celebration** 6 p.m. 1st Class Events and Designs, 1028 N. Fulton St. Honoring local trailblazers: Brenda Buckingham, Dr. Arrie Smith, Dr. Crystal Jackson, Anita Evans, Kimberly Tapscott-Munson, Judge Glenda Allen Hill, Larry Cormier, Pastor B.T. Lewis and Professor Thomas-Whit Ellis; Jesse McDonald Jr. Award: Rodney Murphy; Shining Star Award: Ryan McClarty; and Passing the Torch Award: Shantay Davies-Balch. \$100/ticket. Sponsored by ABC 30. For more info, contact [swgamble@aol.com](mailto:swgamble@aol.com).

**SAT 25** **Central Valley Leadership Round Table (CVLRT)** 10 a.m. Westside Youth Center, 1709 7th St., Mendota. For more info, contact 559-250-1253 or [gamayer20@gmail.com](mailto:gamayer20@gmail.com).

**MON 27** **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 [patbarr73@gmail.com](mailto:patbarr73@gmail.com).

**TUE 28** **California Association of Retired Americans (CARA)** 10 a.m. SEIU Local 521, 5228 E. Pine Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-5955 or 559-704-8384.

SAVE THE DATE  
March 10–12

**Interfaith Scholar Weekend** Theme: Faith in a Multicultural Nation. Featured speaker: Rev. Paul Raushnebusch, president of Interfaith Alliance. For more info, visit <https://interfaithscholar.org/>.

Submit upcoming community activities to [calendar@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:calendar@fresnoalliance.com) by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

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# Life under Russian Occupation

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

Kherson, a southern Ukrainian city of 250,000 before the full-scale Russian invasion, was under Russian occupation since March 2, 2022. After its liberation on Nov. 11, the author visited the city of Kherson and the region and spoke with many locals about their life under the occupation.

## Kherson

In occupied Kherson, residents avoided going outside at all costs. Russian armored vehicles marked with the letter "Z" were patrolling the streets and squares, with armed soldiers seated on top. Bags were searched at checkpoints.

"The daughter of our neighbor and her friend were arrested," said an elderly man. "Their daughter was released a week later, but her friend has not been found. We don't know where she is."

"It was dangerous to be inside, even in your own house," said a woman who came to celebrate the liberation in the central square. "The Russians could break into the courtyard during the day or at night. They could have held you up for a phone transaction after checking your account."

During the occupation, the Russians blocked Ukrainian television channels and social media channels. The residents of Kherson and the region could only watch Russian television. Russian propaganda posters encouraged Kherson residents to vote in a referendum to join the Russian Federation, promising a bright future forever with Russia.

"When they held their 'referendum,' a woman with a ballot box walked the streets, followed by two men with Kalashnikovs. People didn't open their doors. I personally did not see a single person who would vote," shared Victoria, an employee of a small café.

The café was not operational, as there was no water, electricity and heat and not enough food, but people gathered inside and outside.

"Everyone was hiding," Victoria continued. "Kherson was like a ghost town."

"This whole referendum was a circus. They knew their numbers even before the referendum because at the very beginning of the occupation, we had a massive pro-Ukrainian protest. The Russians rode on top of their armored vehicles, and everyone shouted to them: 'Go home!' They knew very well that this is a pro-Ukrainian region."

Several patrons of the café said that in areas near the city dump, residents smelled burnt hair and flesh and that the corpses of both Russian military and Ukrainian civilians were burned there.

One young man, Ivan, said that in the spring the Russian military arrested him, with a bag over his head, and took him to a basement where they tortured him with electric shocks, strangled and beat him, demanding a confession for carrying out intelligence activities in favor of Ukraine. Ivan did not confess, and they let him go, taking him to the outskirts of town with a bag on his head.

Another young man, Dima, who was kept in the basement of the National Police Headquarters for 75 days, was tortured with electric shock, beaten with a baton and a pipe, and was not fed for several days. They covered his head with duct tape, and fired over his head, using blanks, and threatened that the next shot would be to the head.

There was a torture chamber next to Dima's cell. The cries of the victims and the laughter of the Russian military were heard from it in the morning and evening.

At least four places of torture and several mass graves were found in the Kherson region where the investigation of the Russian war crimes continues.



Mariya. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

"Recently, a man tried to disassemble a shell, and it tore him apart. The village is still mined. The sappers cleared around a bit so there was an opportunity to drive around. Yet, in the kitchen gardens, you see cluster shells sticking out of the ground."

"My house is completely destroyed. Burned to ashes. Nothing is left. On July 7, our whole street was burned down by a phosphorus bomb, and only one house survived. I live in my father's house. We need everything, from building materials to furniture."

Mariya, in her 80s, stood in the central square in freezing temperatures, waiting for volunteers' bread delivery. Her house was destroyed, too, and her family now lives in ruins.

"On February 25, tanks entered here," Mariya said. "In July, a Russian tank shot at our calves, burned the first one alive and broke the second calf's leg. They shot day and night. During the day, at 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 2 p.m., from behind the bridge, and that's when they hit my house."

"I heard a strong explosion. It blew off the roof, and the slate flew in every direction. It was very scary. Now, when it rains, it leaks. We [haven't had] running water, electricity and heat for months."

In Pravdyne, Kherson Oblast, a teenage girl and seven young men were brutally killed by the Russian occupants.

Galina, a neighbor, said that the Russian collaborator Victor Khalak in the past had served a term in prison for brutally killing and beheading his father, and during the war was consistently raping his stepdaughter Victoriya Volokhova, 15, and his biological daughter, nine.

When Victoriya started to date a Ukrainian security guard, Khalak got jealous and reported all seven security guards to the Russian occupational authorities, falsely claiming they were Ukrainian military. Young men from Kyiv, Kherson Oblast and Donetsk had been hired by local farmers before the war to watch tractors, grain and other valuables.

On April 18, 2022, at the edge of the village, the Russian military tied up the guards' arms, blindfolded them and shot them in their foreheads, according to the villagers' accounts. Victoriya was also killed and the house was blown up.

The Russian occupants did not let local residents bury the remains and put tripwires around the open grave. The decomposing bodies were being pulled apart by dogs, and, eventually, locals were allowed to bury them in the yard.

After the liberation, the Ukrainian police exhumed the remains and took them for DNA tests. Serhiy, a young man who helped to exhume the bodies, said, "The bodies were just bones by then, but you could see that three of them had ropes around their arms. The police found the holes in the skulls of three victims."

Lena, a woman in her late 80s, lived right next to the security guards' base and said that she saw the explosion. She also said that the Russian military was

constantly shooting at her house from across the canal as she and her family were planting potatoes.

Another neighbor, a young father of two, was blown to pieces in front of Lena's house. As the Russians were retreating, they looted carpets, bedding, sofas and beds.

"Thank god, we were saved by the Ukrainian army," she said.

"Life here in Pravdyne was hard during the occupation," commented a group of women in the central square of Pravdyne. "We didn't have a connection with our relatives."

"We helped each other in any way we could. Many of our village folks have left, especially those who had kids."

"Only five kids were left. When Russians arrived and asked where were Ukrainian soldiers, one four-year-old said, 'I am a Ukrainian!'"

\*\*\*\*\*

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), writes 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 the sites and interviews with military experts and eyewitnesses for these and other publications, including The Byline Times (UK).



Kherson on Nov. 14 at the celebration of the Nov. 11 liberation. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

## Kherson Oblast

In the village of Posad-Pokrovske, every building was destroyed or badly damaged by shelling.

"Only 30 people or so are left," said Serhiy, a man in his late 40s. "Ten were killed; I knew all of them. One child. My classmate's father."

"Three guys drove to the nearby village Chornobayivka. All were shot on Feb. 26. Right there, on the lake, my neighbor's legs were torn off by a mine and he died on the way to the hospital in Mykolaiv."

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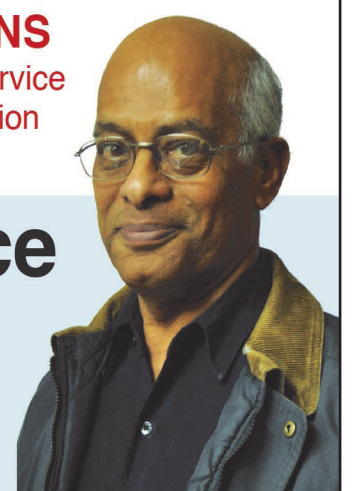
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# Strong Peace Movement Needed to End War in Ukraine

BY PEACE FRESNO BOARD

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words are as true now as they were on April 4, 1967, at the Riverside Church in New York City when he said that "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today [is] my own government."

When Rev. King spoke those words, the national Peace Movement had just taken off. Young men were being drafted to fight in the American war in Vietnam. The Peace Movement played a major role in ending the war.

There was a brief flurry of antiwar activism in the early 2000s as our country brought its war machine to Afghanistan

and Iraq. Now there is little national interest in curbing U.S. militarism abroad as we don't feel the effects here.

The leadership team of Peace Fresno is passionate about the well-being of our fellow humans and other creatures on this planet. War and its devastation are intolerable to us.

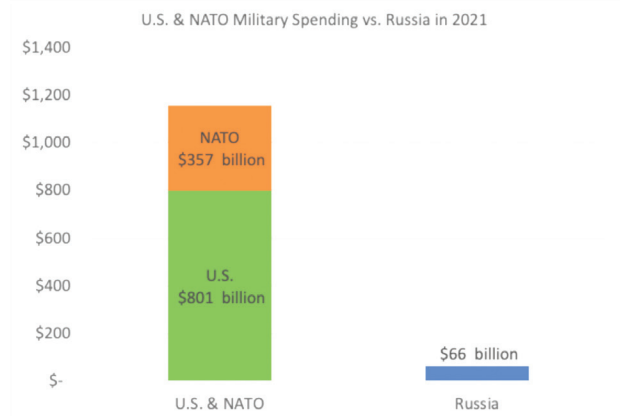
We, the people, must demand a change in U.S. policy regarding war in Ukraine because

- Supplying arms and support to Ukraine intensifies and prolongs the killing and destruction.
- It reduces the possibility of a negotiated resolution of the war.
- People in the United States, Europe and worldwide are experiencing economic collapse, energy infrastructure decline and food shortages due to the war.
- It is causing nations large and small to join together against U.S. domination.
- This war could purposefully or accidentally trigger a nuclear war that would end life on earth.
- Money spent on war by all parties reduces money that could be spent making the world a better place.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the U.S. Congress approved \$68 billion in aid to Ukraine, which is about \$235 million per day. In December, Congress appropriated an additional \$345 billion in aid to Ukraine.

In his address to the Riverside Church, Rev. King said that "a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." Peace Fresno believes opposing war is our moral responsibility.

The reasons for the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has a backstory. And the reasons for the U.S. funding, arming and supporting Ukraine are much more complex than the stories told to us by our government and repeated by big media. As citizens, we have a responsibility



Source: National Priorities at the Institute for Policy Studies, SIPRI, 5/9/2022

## Take Action

Contact Peace Fresno's president, Ken Hudson, at [ken.hudson@peacefresno.org](mailto:ken.hudson@peacefresno.org). Find updated information on Peace Fresno at [facebook.com/peacefresno](https://www.facebook.com/peacefresno) or [www.peacefresno.org](http://www.peacefresno.org). Meetings are at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence (1584 N. Van Ness Ave.). E-mail [camille.russell@peacefresno.org](mailto:camille.russell@peacefresno.org) for occasional e-mail messages.

to learn more about why the United States wants war in Ukraine—which is, admittedly, a proxy war against Russia.

An effective Peace Movement needs thousands more individuals coming together and standing against our country's addiction to war and international domination.

Peace Fresno is an antiwar education, advocacy and activist organization. Its goal is the abolition of war. Peace Fresno works to build the peace movement locally and nationally.

**Wasteland of The Free**  
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## SIERRA CLUB TEHIPITE CHAPTER

### Westlands Water District Imperils California Salmon and Steelhead

Although it might seem a long time ago — as the San Joaquin Valley is presently being pounded by Pacific storms — in February 2014, California was in its fourth year of drought, and Central Valley Project (CVP) deliveries of Sierra Nevada water were cut off to farms. A product of the Great Depression, the CVP is an engineering marvel designed to siphon water from the Sierra's mighty rivers, including the San Joaquin and the Kings, to enable Valley farms to thrive. See map.

Surprisingly, the powerful Westlands Water District is last in line for Central Valley Project water deliveries, which are allocated to farms depending on their date of first use. The District was not created until 1952. Farming an arid landscape on the Valley's Westside where rainfall averages just 8-11 inches per year, water deliveries are essential, but Westlands was late to the game. In 2014 and 2015, Westlands was forced to purchase water on the open market at \$1,500 an acre-foot.

But Westlands has another strategy to find water — it uses its political influence with government regulators to change the rules to get what it wants. In early 2014, at a Special Meeting of the Westlands Water District, then-General Manager Tom Birmingham was in charge. Polished, persuasive, and at first glance, in total control, Birmingham was attempting to persuade a skeptical board of directors

to contribute 4 million dollars for the proposed Delta Tunnels. Supported by Gov. Jerry Brown, the massive Twin Tunnels promised more water to Valley farmers by drawing from the Sacramento River, bypassing the San Francisco Delta estuary, and pumping it to Valley farms.

The Tunnels — which have yet to be built — were promised as a way to avoid fish kills and relieve drought. Fish were a problem because the massive Delta pumps have a voracious appetite for more than Delta water: endangered chinook salmon, steelhead trout, Delta smelt, and other juvenile fish are killed by the pumps. Survival of salmon and steelhead depend on plentiful, cold, oxygenated mountain stream water. In the drought, with stream flows at historic low levels — summer water temperatures can exceed 80 degrees in some reaches — many salmon die, gasping for oxygen.

Tom Birmingham made two remarks in his presentation which revealed the hubris and undisguised agenda of a power broker. First, he promised the Board that the Delta would increase water deliveries to Westlands. This contradicted public statement of Tunnel proponents, who promised more water to the Delta estuary, improving the chances of survival for endangered salmon, which means less water for farms. Second, Birmingham voiced his outrage that federal government fisheries biologists refuse to listen to Westlands' demands for further diversions from the Sierra rivers. Westlands was demanding a reduction of freshwater

inputs to the Delta — inputs essential to the survival of the Delta ecosystem — that would drive California's salmon runs into extinction.

Birmingham pounded his fist on the long meeting table and shouted that federal fisheries scientists at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries Services were uncooperative: "They don't understand! Their management does, but the scientists don't." In other words, scientists who spent their lives dedicated to the endangered salmon's survival, facing a 90-98% decline in salmon populations, were expected by the powerful Westlands boss to cave to raw political pressure. In 2019, with Trump in the White House, the influence of Westlands was at its peak, and a Westlands former lobbyist, David Bernhardt, was Secretary of the Interior. Faced with an expert biological report concluding that California salmon were imperiled, government bureaucrats disbanded the committee and erased from the report any mention of threats to the salmon. Today, even given the improved Biden Administration and a more



enlightened Westlands board, we need to remain on our toes, organizing with our water watchdog allies to hold Westlands accountable for its impacts to our fragile environment, and to recover California's salmon and steelhead populations.

Our Sierra Club chapter in Fresno is seeking water issue volunteers. Contact Gary Lasky at [tehipite.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:tehipite.chapter@sierraclub.org) or (559) 790-3495 if you are interested in getting involved.

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 7 PM via Zoom

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter General Meeting:  
**Saving LA's Cougars: Building the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing**



Ground was broken on Earth Day 2022 for this visionary structure that will preserve biodiversity across the Los Angeles region by connecting an integral wildlife corridor and help save a threatened local population of mountain lions from extinction. When complete, the crossing will be the largest in the world, the first of its kind in California, and it will serve as a global model for urban wildlife conservation. Join the National Wildlife Federation's Regional Executive Director, Beth Pratt, who leads the #SaveLACougars campaign, to learn how a dedicated group of partners worked across decades to make the landmark crossing a reality.

Go to [sierraclub.org/tehipite](http://sierraclub.org/tehipite) and click on a registration link. Advance registration required.

# Honoring Ana Belén Montes

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

Ana Belén Montes was released on parole Jan. 8 after more than 20 years in U.S. prisons. She was convicted of espionage. Her actions were motivated by conscience and were uncoerced and unpaid.

She served those years of imprisonment in a special unit of a federal prison for violent offenders with psychiatric problems, although she had no sign of psych problems or violent behavior, in the Federal Medical Center, located on a U.S. Marine compound in Carswell, Texas.

"Prison is one of the last places I would have ever chosen to be in," Montes wrote, "but some things in life are worth going to prison for."

Montes is and was more than heroic. We can honor her best by doing exactly what she requested: putting our focus on achieving Puerto Rican independence, ending the U.S. blockade of Cuba and working for global cooperation to deal with urgent environmental problems.

A press release issued by attorney Linda Backiel on behalf of Montes:

"I am more than happy to touch Puerto Rican soil again. After two rather grueling decades and in need of earning a living again, I would like to pursue a quiet and private existence.

*"I hope my case in some way will encourage our government to abandon its hostility towards Cuba and to work with Havana in a spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding."*

—Ana Belén Montes

"Therefore, I will not participate in any media activities. I encourage those who wish to focus on me to instead focus on important issues, such as the serious problems facing the Puerto Rican people or the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba. Who in the last 60 years has asked the Cuban people if they want the United States to impose a suffocating embargo that makes them suffer?"

"The pressing need for global cooperation to halt and reverse our destruction of our environment also deserves attention. I as a person am irrelevant. I am unimportant,

while there are serious problems in our global homeland that demand attention and a demonstration of brotherly love."

Montes' testimony at her sentencing:

"An Italian proverb perhaps best describes the fundamental truth I believe in: 'All the world is one country.' In such a 'world-country,' the principle of loving one's neighbor as much as oneself seems, to me, to be the essential guide to harmonious relations between all of our 'nation-neighborhoods.'

"This principle urges tolerance and understanding for the different ways of others. It asks that we treat other nations the way we wish to be treated—with respect and compassion. It is a principle that, tragically, I believe we have never applied to Cuba.

"Your honor, I engaged in the activity that brought me before you because I obeyed my conscience rather than the law. I believe our government's policy towards Cuba is cruel and unfair, profoundly un-neighborly, and I felt morally obligated to help the island defend itself from our efforts to impose our values and our political system on it.

"We have displayed intolerance and contempt towards Cuba for most of the last four decades. We have never respected Cuba's right to make its own journey towards its own ideals of equality and justice.

"I do not understand why we must continue to dictate how the Cubans should select their leaders, who their leaders cannot be and what laws are appropriate in their land. Why can't we let Cuba pursue its own internal journey, as the United States has been doing for over two centuries?"

"My way of responding to our Cuba policy may have been morally wrong. Perhaps Cuba's right to exist free of political and economic coercion did not justify giving the island classified information to help it defend itself. I can only say that I did what I thought right to counter a grave injustice.

"My greatest desire is to see amicable relations emerge between the United States and Cuba. I hope my case in some way will encourage our government to abandon its hostility towards Cuba and to work with Havana in a spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding.

"Today we see more clearly than ever that intolerance and hatred—by individuals or governments—spread only pain and suffering. I hope for a U.S. policy that is based instead on neighborly love, a policy that recognizes that Cuba, like any nation, wants to be treated with dignity and not with contempt.

"Such a policy would bring our government back in harmony with the compassion and generosity of the American people. It would allow Cubans and Americans to learn from and share with each other.



Graphic from the Pro-Libertad Freedom Campaign, which is available for public use, favoring the freedom of Puerto Rican political prisoners.

"It would enable Cuba to drop its defensive measures and experiment more easily with changes. And it would permit the two neighbors to work together and with other nations to promote tolerance and cooperation in our one 'world-country,' in our only 'world-homeland.'"

Montes was arrested by FBI agents on Sept. 21, 2001. She was charged with conspiracy to commit espionage for Cuba. "She told investigators after her arrest that a week earlier she had learned that she was under surveillance. She could have decided then to flee to Cuba, and probably would have made it there safely." But she felt that "she couldn't give up on the people (she) was helping."

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

## SCRIPTURES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS: Select Topics and Companion Verses

By [Dr. Jerome E Jackson](#)



### Scriptures at Your Fingertips

Christian counseling is a most challenging and rewarding vocation. At the core of Christian counseling is the affirmation that God is in charge. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). This positive view shared in session after session with client after client is the cornerstone of success in Christian counseling.

The word of God brings comfort and assurance to the troubled and hope to the faint of spirit. In times of trials and sorrow, as well as times of joy God's word strengthens those who put their trust in Him.

This book is a tool designed as a quick reference guide on select subjects. All scripture cited in this handbook are from the Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version. This handy book is a great study source for beginning students, and a wonderful teaching tool for advanced Bible instructors. It is designed for rapid searches and valid answers to practical questions. In about 240 pages the author provides users with a permanent personal supplemental resource for daily devotion, spiritual encouragement, and biblical counseling. Dr. Jackson is the Senior Pastor of the Christian Community Baptist Church, Fresno.

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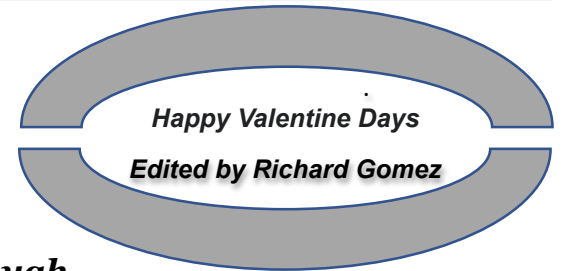
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# Fresno Center for Nonviolence 2022

**February 2023**

If things keep going the way they are going, the planet will be fine. It may take millions of years, but the planet will heal itself but it's the people who are screwed. - George Carlin.



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## Conspiracy

So what is a conspiracy? The dictionary tells us that a conspiracy con-spir-a-cy [kən'spɪrəsē] is a secret agreement made between two or more people or groups to do something bad or illegal that will harm someone else. Otherwise, they are called "Lone Gunman theory" and yes, we have had so many of them, in fact, maybe as many conspiracies as there are stars in the heavens. Of course, the most interesting plot against conspiracies is that over 95% of them are false, exaggerations, and downright ridiculous. But what about the rest of them.

Of course, conspiracies need not only due to questionable deaths of famous or near famous people. They may include political intrigues like elections or graft and corruptions, shady deals made between public officials and wealthy business interest even putting friends or relatives in positions of powers or wealth. Seems like anything that has two or more people involved could be a conspiracy, but the most important ingredient is that it needs someone or something famous to make the news. Face it, two people getting into a fight over a football game won't get people watching and that is the most important mixture in the pot. If you don't care neither will the media. The interest must be big so that governments entities or TV executives will sell commercials to make a buck or two.

Commissions, committees and investigation are usually called into actions. People of all sorts are running around this and that way to create the phenomenon that they care and want to do something about it. Experts, sexperts, governmental and business executives are being called for their often-ridiculous opinions that amount to nothing important but face time on TV designed mostly to confuse people.



Information comes pouring out like fiery molten volcanic lava slowly moving down the mountain side towards the village but in unequal amounts. You see, all this information, news, is slanted towards protecting the public interest or not the real people in power.

Then Director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, pushed hard to get then Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren on the Warren Commish to give credence to the government version of the Kenney Assassination- the lone gunman theory. When published, the Warren Commission Report was unable, and still has, to get more than a quarter of the American people to believe it. For the first time on history, Abraham Zapruder's film of the assassination, which had been bought and locked away for no one to see had been forced out of hiding to the American people and exposed the lies of the government. Yet despite this and so much more legitimate evidence presented to the American people, governmental and the media still present the lone gunman theory as the truth. Many people like American columnist, journalist Dorothy Kilgallen died or was killed to continue the theory. Even former President Richard Nixon recorded in the Watergate tapes that people that had been involved with the cover-up that led to his resignation had been involved in the Bay of Pigs and the Kennedy assassination.

Edwin Stanton, Secretary of War under Abraham Lincoln had told friends that the truth would never be known. He feared that the truth would cause the destruction of the Union. He died with that secret but why would any questions needed to be asked? The committee prosecuted and hanged the men besides Booth, and Mrs. Surratt, the home owner where the plot was made. One of her sons, who was involved in the plot, had escaped through Canada to Europe and after a few years arrested as a member of the French Foreign Legion. He was returned to the United States and imprisoned before being pardoned years later. If anyone of that time was asked that who would be responsible for Lincoln's death, I'm sure that most would say the South, who had lost the Civil War. In the following years, the South was punished despite Lincoln's desire before his death that the South should be allowed to return to the Union as quickly and as painlessly as possible. Instead, many in the Republican Party wanted the South to pay for their war crimes. The South was immediately occupied by Northern troops preventing the South from going back to the old slavery ways. Newly freed slave became Senators like Hiram R. Revels of Mississippi and members of Congress like Benjamin S. Turner of Alabama, Robert Carlos De Large, Joseph H. Rainey, Robert B. Elliot of South Carolina, Jefferson F. Long of Georgia and Josiah T. Walls of Florida. Surely the tides of history had been changed for the better.

By the time of the Presidential election of 1876, the troops had been gone but due to the irregularities of the election, then President Grant, sent Northern troops into the Southern states where the irregularities had existed to make sure that the election was legitimate. Eventually, removal of all Northern troops was an important condition for a resolution that led to someone other than the one who had received the highest vote count to win. This allowed the Jim Crow laws to flourish but that's a conspiracy for another time. -RG



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In January, just before the Martin L. King jr. Holiday, our host, Joshua Shurley talked with Dr. Jean Kennedy, psychologist, WILPF activist, restorative justice advocate and community organizer. Through the lens of the "beloved community" concept, they disclosed the legacy of Dr. Martin L. King Jr. life and struggle for racial, global, and social justice and how it impacts reverberate through to today. To hear again go to: <https://soundcloud.com/joshua-shurley/stir-it-up-january-11-2023>

In our December show with our host Josh Shurley spoke with his guest Gerry Condon from Veterans for Peace (VFP) about the U.S. ongoing proxy war with Russia in Ukraine, the threat of further escalation and a possible nuclear exchange and to begin to build peace. To hear again go to: <https://soundcloud.com/joshua-shurley/stir-it-up-dec-14-2022>.

# Your Attention Please: Gen Z Wants to Tell You Something

BY PAULINA CRUZ

Every new generation seeks change, and Generation Z is no different.

Although most people picture little kids glued to their parents' iPads or phones when they hear the term *Gen Z*, the truth is many of us are all grown up. Generation Z (also known as Zoomers) encompasses everyone born from 1997 to 2012, making the oldest of our generation (born in January) already 26. Not only that but according to the U.S. Census, Gen Z and millennials make up 42.3% of the population, while baby boomers and Gen X make up 41.7%.

Despite making up almost half the population, millennials and Gen Z are grossly underrepresented in every level of leadership in this country. This is deeply concerning as in 50 years we (and the generations to come) will be the ones reaping the benefits or paying the price for decisions made today.

However, that is changing. The news has recently been filled with surprisingly young political leaders and activists marking the "firsts" of Gen Z's stepping into the world of leadership.

Some, like Greta Thunberg (age 20), make international headlines by challenging and addressing world leaders on

shortcomings and imploring much needed action against climate change. She has brought a voice to worried youth who want a healthy, beautiful world to live in and to avoid the catastrophe we are spiraling toward.

Democrat Maxwell Frost (who turned 26 on Jan. 17) made news by becoming the first (and only) Gen Z elected to Congress. This was particularly shocking when you consider in 2021 the "average age of Members of the House at the beginning of the 117th Congress was 58.4 years." This means that on average the majority of his colleagues are more than double his age.

Alex Lee (age 25) is not only the first Gen Z but also the first openly bisexual to become a California state legislator. Lee refused to accept campaign donations from any large corporations and wants to push for future legislation to keep corporate funding out of politics.

There are also many young people here in our own backyard trying to make a difference.

Lindsay is a small agricultural city in Tulare County with a population of 12,659 (2020 Census). This is where Hipolito Angel Cerros grew up, graduating from his local high school with honors in 2016. He graduated from UC Davis in 2022, two years after being appointed to Lindsay's City Council (making him the youngest to serve on the Council in Lindsay's history).

Now, he is Lindsay's youngest mayor. In December 2022, Cerros took on the mayoral title after having been mayor pro tem.

Since becoming mayor, his team has

- Approved \$3.5 million in street repairs
- Approved a water rebate program
- Secured a \$5 million grant for a city park
- Hired a new police chief

Cerros is actively representing the Central Valley and has dreams to represent the struggles it faces in Congress.

He's even alluded on social media that becoming a Congressperson is his goal.

According to his bio on Lindsay's website, Cerros "hopes to improve the city's infrastructure, promote economic development, and reestablish a trusting relationship between public officials and their constituents during his time."

“

**Representation matters in every aspect of life...It is important for our needs and existence to be acknowledged.”**

Representation matters in every aspect of life. It matters in entertainment, where we can see our stories, struggles and dreams play out. It matters in the media, where we learn the truths about ourselves and those around us. It is important for our needs and existence to be acknowledged.

Currently, and let's face it, for most of this country's history, those in power have not represented the people. From women, people of color, LGBTQ+, etc., we should all have a voice. That is true democracy, not a bunch of out-of-touch rich White men.

And despite what we are told, our singular votes do matter. Change has to start in our own backyard. We must focus on both the large and local scale of things to ensure that at every level we are heard.

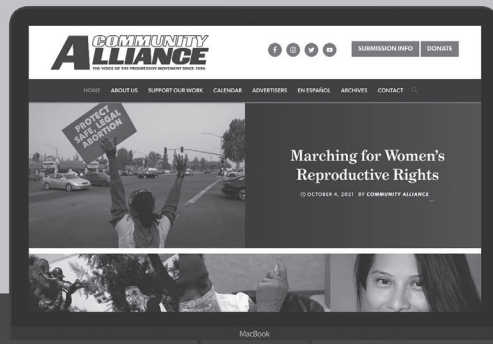
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Paulina Cruz is a fellow with the Community Alliance newspaper. She is a Mexican immigrant currently attending Fresno State. She is currently working on an anthropology major with a minor in psychology. She spends her free time writing poetry or painting.

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ONE WOMAN'S VIEW

# No Laughing Matter

BY RUTH GADEBUSCH

Tempting as it might be to enjoy the chaos of the Republicans' election of Kevin McCarthy as speaker of the House, it truly is no laughing matter. After all, once in the office he is supposedly second in line to the U.S. Presidency should misfortune befall the President or Vice President. How could that not be a frightening prospect to any thinking person? Worse yet, it is we Californians who made this gift to the nation. In the not-too-distant past this man had the promise of being an authentic conservative Republican. Even we Democrats recognize

the validity of having two respectable political parties, but respect, and its derivatives, seem to be the missing words in our current political world. To achieve this lofty office, what did this man surrender? It is often said that no one wants to watch sausage being made but at least a good tasting product is the result. It remains to be seen what this product is going to taste like, and we will all be served from the same table. It is obvious that the ultra conservatives ruled over the fiasco that we watched occur in one of the greatest legislative bodies ever created by mankind. Yes, it is man, not humankind, in that women were denied any meaningful role in its creation. That means that a small contingent within a slim majority birthed Rep. McCarthy's victory—if indeed, it is a victory. It isn't much glory presiding over an empty vessel that was expected to be full. After all is said and done, we are all under the gavel of this man and the colleagues with whom he dined. Where in the world have

all the good, the responsible, Republicans gone? Did they fall off the flat earth the perpetrators seem to believe we live on? They are strangely quiet, apparently just searching for their own power slot. Not a peep has been heard about why all those lazy "peasants," anyone who disagrees with them, are going to willingly serve the exalted power contingent, those legislators and their wealthy friends. Then too they still have their MAGAs to deal with. Unfortunately, they will not go away and there will likely be a time when the MAGAs bite the hand that feeds them. They might like the idea of no IRS, but no Social Security and no Medicare might not have the same appeal. Speaker McCarthy might have to decide if he is for or against the former President, and whether said president should be prosecuted for his role in inciting the insurrection.

With modern communication, we watched this sausage being made and we are left to wonder just what it will actually taste like. We did not see ethics, respect, loyalty, honesty, trust or any of those spices mixed into the product. Now we have the sausage and who wants to eat it? At the very least, it has an odd taste. As for Speaker McCarthy, be careful what you wish for. It might come true, but the price could be exceedingly high. Unfortunately, not just for him but for all of us. \*\*\*\*\* Ruth Gadebusch, a community activist, is a former U.S. naval officer, elected member of the Fresno Unified School District board and governor-appointed member of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. An emeritus member of the board of the Center for Civic Education, she has served on various civic organizations and retains an active interest in the community.



# The Passing of Jay Hubbell (1946–2023)

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

Jay Hubbell—born Berl Jay Hubbell—was an active member of our community. Although a member of the Democratic Party, his activism went well beyond the party. He was also a member of the Central Valley Progressive PAC and the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. In his own words, here is Hubbell's short bio: "I began my Democratic Party activism in the election of 2000 by picking up campaign literature at the Democrats in Action office and using it to walk precincts for the Democratic Party ticket in east Fresno. In 2001, Barbara Pyle

[now Pyle-Rodgers] appointed me as her alternate on the Fresno County Democratic Central Committee. "Early that same year, I became the founding president of Fresno Stonewall Democrats and have remained committed to the principle of equal rights for members of the LGBT community. "I have spent countless hours of Democratic Party activism doing voter registration work, helping with fundraising events, chairing the Fair Booth Committee at the Big Fresno Fair, doing precinct work, doing graphic arts work for candidates' campaigns, writing letters to the editor, lobbying office holders for progressive issues, being an officer of the Fresno County Democratic Party Central Committee, being a member of the Fresno County Democratic Women's Club and almost every other Democratic club in the county, and I [was] a Fresno County Democratic Central Committee delegate to the annual California Democratic Party state convention for 10 years in a row." Hubbell was the recipient of the 2011 Eleanor Roosevelt "Walking in Her Footsteps" Award.



Jay Hubbell

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# 2023: Opportunities for Disadvantaged Communities

BY NAYAMIN MARTINEZ

It is hard to believe that the first month of 2023 has already ended, but what has not ended are the needs and challenges faced by disadvantaged communities. Which are these communities and why are they called that? What are the challenges, but also the opportunities, for these communities?

Although I am not a fan of the term *disadvantaged communities*, it is widely used by government agencies to refer to communities that suffer from a combination of economic, health and environmental burdens. These burdens include poverty, high unemployment, air and water pollution, and the presence of hazardous wastes, as well as a high incidence of asthma and heart disease.

Are you thinking that many communities in Fresno County and other Central Valley counties fit this description? You are right.

For specific names and to learn what type of pollution is more prevalent in these communities, you can access CalEnviroScreen, an analytical tool created by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) that combines different types of data to create a score that determines which communities are most disadvantaged.

The most recent edition of CalEnviroScreen in July of last year identified 2,310 Census tracts that fall within the “disadvantaged” category, of which 124 are in Fresno County.

As depressing and pejorative as this term sounds, it means some advantages for the communities that are deemed by CalEnviroScreen standards as “disadvantaged.”

For example, SB 535, which went into effect on July 1, 2022, directed that at least a quarter of the proceeds of the cap-and-trade program go to projects that provide a benefit to disadvantaged communities and at least 10% of the funds go to projects located within those communities.

Other government agencies at the federal, state and regional levels also use this “disadvantaged communities” classification (although in some cases they use other terms such as “overburdened”) to determine eligibility for funding and programs.

For example, President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative and Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad directed that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to overburdened communities that face disproportionately high and adverse health and environmental impacts.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District established residency in a disadvantaged community as one of the eligibility requirements to qualify for free air purifiers or other incentives.

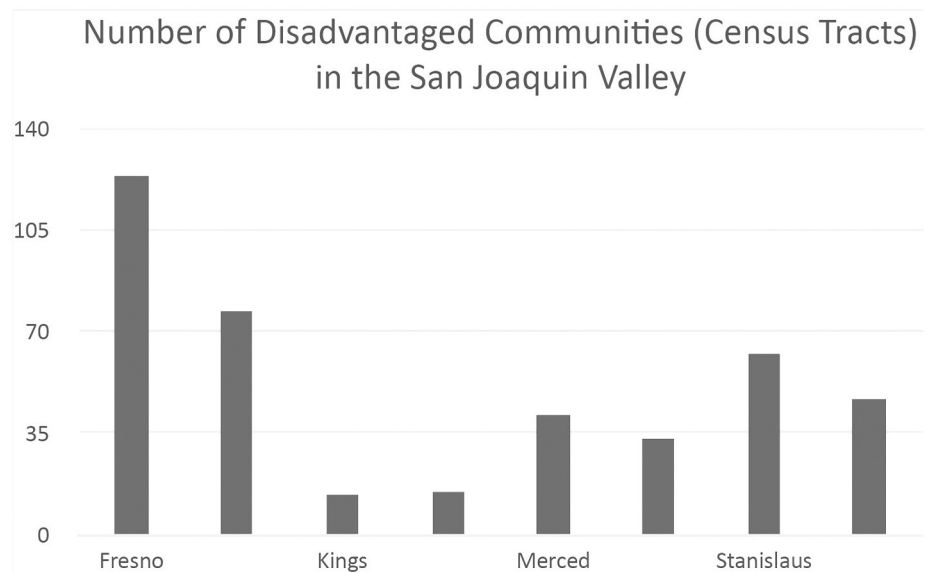
Although allocating more funds and programs to disadvantaged communities is a good first step, it is not enough to remedy a history of unfair treatment of communities, predominantly communities of people of color and/or low-income residents. These communities have been subjected to disproportionate impacts from one or more environmental hazards, socioeconomic burdens or both. Residents have been excluded in policy-setting or decision-making processes and have lacked protections and benefits afforded to other communities.

While not all the systemic problems will be resolved in the short term, let’s review a few of the opportunities that 2023 brings for disadvantaged communities.

On Jan. 9, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) announced the availability of approximately \$100 million for projects that advance environmental justice in underserved and overburdened communities across the country. This funding, made possible through President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, marks the largest amount of environmental justice grant funding ever offered by the U.S. EPA.

Furthermore, also in January of this year, U.S. EPA Region 9 released the first draft of its “Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights Implementation Plan.” The goal of this

Figure 1



Source: Data Obtained from the CalEnviro Screen 4.0

Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the disadvantaged communities nested in the Central Valley. Image courtesy of CalEnviroScreen 4.0

plan is to outline what is needed to achieve tangible progress in fiscal 2023 and beyond for historically overburdened and underserved communities and ensure the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income in developing and implementing environmental laws, regulations and policies.

These two concrete actions are a good start for the year, and we look forward to monitoring their implementation and evaluating if they will end up benefiting our disadvantaged communities.

At the state level, there are also opportunities on the horizon. In terms of funding, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research announced in January an investment of \$125 million in grants that will support projects that advance climate resilience with a focus on supporting communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts, including disadvantaged communities.

Having extra dollars is helpful, but it is as important to have information of where these investments are needed the most. One way to do this is by following the example of the recently adopted “Racial Equity Action Plan” of the State Water Quality Control Board, which will identify climate change impacts (related to State Water Board authorities) and how they might disproportionately impact BIPOC communities and will collect additional data to better identify gaps in programs and policies that help advance racial equity and environmental justice.

Efforts to support disadvantaged communities by promoting environmental justice through policies and programs are not new, but they are certainly increasing, and we will keep our eyes open to identify and report on those opportunities that can help the 455 disadvantaged communities (Census tracts) that are nested in the Central Valley. A breakdown of these Census tracts by county is provided in Figure 1.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

## Let the Healing Begin!

Continued from page 8

The objections reveal a sentiment among Whites that Whites(!) are the victims of “White genocide,” that Whites(!) are being persecuted by our government and that Whites(!) are facing “forced assimilation.” This historical and moral blindness is awful to behold.

The Yokuts Valley decision has been made. What we as a community need to do now is quit bickering about the name change, accept that change happens and get on with the healing.

There is no better place to start the healing than with the Indigenous people who initiated the naming effort—descendants of the survivors and resisters of the White-supremacist genocide that happened here.

So the first thing that needs to happen is for us as a community, and especially White Christians (who often have been taught that the United States is “a Christian nation, founded on Christian principles”), to listen, really listen, to our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Renaming S— Valley to Yokuts Valley was a step in the right direction, but it is only part of a needed change of perspective.

An example: As Roman Rain Tree and other Indigenous people keep reminding us, we as American people (and as human beings) need to return to living with the Earth, not just living on it. The Earth is the only home we as a human family have. We need to respect it and cherish it, not just exploit it for profit.

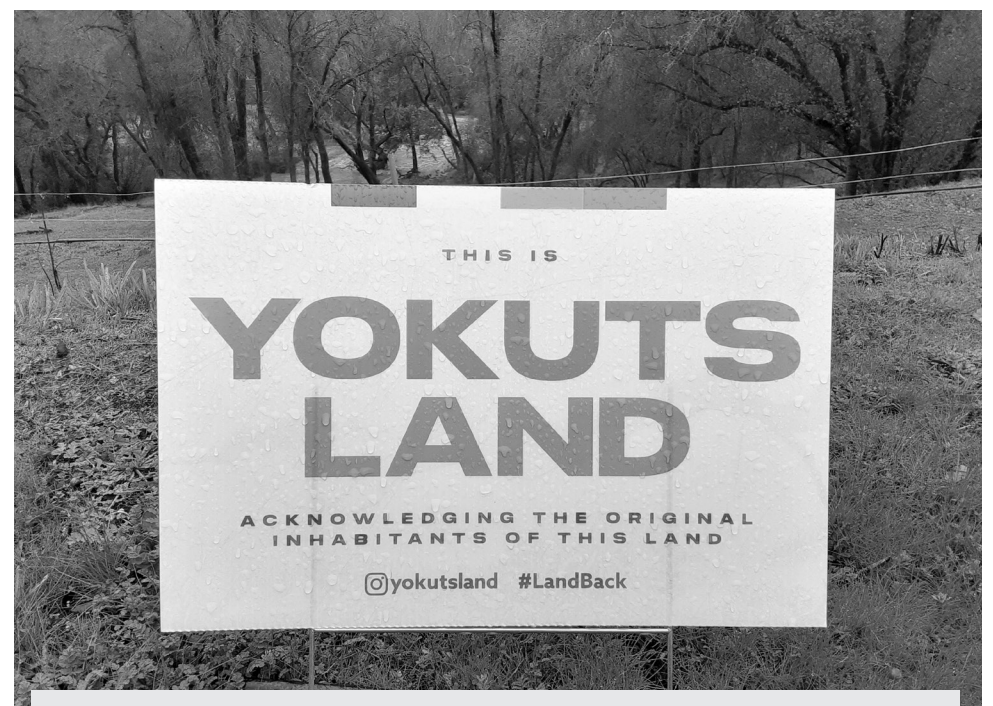
Another example: We need to be as honest about our history of genocide as Germany has been about theirs. White supremacists in the United States perpetrated genocide against the Native Americans and slavery, lynchings and Jim Crow against African Americans.

Hitler and the White supremacist Nazis paid close attention to how we used both legal and extralegal tactics to accomplish those ends. After World War II, Germany acknowledged the Holocaust and did not evade the truth. To this day, Germany does not sugarcoat its history and makes sure its children are aware that White supremacy and fascism lead to horrible results.

But here in the United States, White supremacy is not dead, denial that White supremacy exists is widespread and fascism is on the rise. Many Whites in our country prefer our myths of “American [moral] exceptionalism.” We need to open our eyes to what is happening. And that means teaching our children the truth about our history.

A third example: The name change points toward righting deep historical wrongs. Back in the 1850s, federal treaty commissioners came to California and made 18 treaties with 119 local indigenous communities—but then the federal government reneged on those promises in secret and then hid the record of that treachery for 50 years.

Indigenous people thought that in exchange for moving from their ancestral homes to reservations, the government would protect them from killers and provide enough food so they wouldn’t starve. The government lied on both counts.



A sign with the new name of the community previously known as S— Valley. Photo courtesy of Bayard Taylor

Native Americans were hunted down like animals for their “pelts” (scalps and other body parts) for which vigilantes and militiamen were paid handsome bounties. Yes, there was money to be made in the genocide.

As a result, Rain Tree and other members of his local Indigenous community are still not lawfully considered American Indians by the federal government.

Ideally, the name change to Yokuts Valley will help move forward the federal recognition of those 119 tribes. As Rain Tree says, “Seeing your tribal language on public municipal property fosters convictions [that] positive changes are possible for Non-Acknowledged tribal people in America; a sentiment of being acknowledged and remembered, no longer displaced and forgotten.”

There is much more to be learned. There is much more to be said. There is much work to be done. Let the healing begin!

\*\*\*\*\*

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.



Allianza Comunitaria es una voz independiente para los trabajadores y grupos progresistas del Valle de San Joaquín. El objetivo de este periódico mensual es construir un poderoso movimiento progresista en apoyo a la justicia social, ambiental y económica; y también a los derechos de los inmigrantes y a los trabajadores para lograr un salario justo. Buscamos exponer las injusticias políticas y sociales y conectar las diversas redes de activistas que trabajan en nuestra comunidad.

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# Abuso laboral: tibios e indiferentes

Continúa de página 20

que llegaron aquí muchos antes que yo también con la idea de la temporalidad y no de la permanencia. Para mí, había un camino; para muchos de ellos, no... ni lo habrá pronto.

Salte de una visa de trabajo a otros con los ojos enrojecidos por las lágrimas. Los permisos temporales de empleo pueden ser también una forma de esclavitud moderna. Por muchos años tuve que trabajar más duro que los demás, ganarme el puesto y el patrocinio, y justificar el ser, estar y respirar en un país al que yo sentía mío, pero que no me habla adoptado.

Callar y aguantar por miedo

Sufri mucho en silencio. Fui el espejo de esa doble moral de contar historias de trabajadores abusados y tener que callar la propia por miedo. Los entendía mejor que nadie, quizá porque siempre fui consciente también de mis privilegios.

Los pocos que sabían, me pedían que denunciara. Pero yo ya tenía hijos, una casa y hasta el perro y me daba pavor que me rechazaran. Como trabajadora migrante, incluso con visa, son muy altas las posibilidades de que te digan: "si no te gusta, regresas a tu casa". Así que cobardemente aguanté, con noches de desvelos e incertidumbre, con ganas de planear un futuro para el que no tenía derecho ni garantía, con una resignación dolorosa a la que te obliga la necesidad y con todas las promesas de lograrlo, aunque muriera en el intento. Y lo logré, pero no debería ser así.

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Gracias!

El gobierno de EE.UU. implementará un programa para que los trabajadores inmigrantes que son víctimas de abusos laborales puedan reportar esos abusos sin temor a la deportación. La falta de una reforma migratoria permite los abusos sobre los trabajadores inmigrantes sin residencia. En la imagen, miles participaron en el rally más grande de la historia de Fresno a favor de una reforma migratoria, el 1 de mayo de 2006. Foto de Eduardo Stanley



Hace muy poco, el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de Estados Unidos (DHS) anunció un programa para ofrecer protección a los trabajadores migrantes abusados, víctimas de empleadores "discrecionalidad" al oficial para saber a quién ayudar o a quién no, oportunidad de poder obtener un permiso de trabajo temporal. Este es un primer paso, pero no el final. El abuso laboral es eso, abuso; romper el círculo es duro. Un permiso temporal es solo una curita en la herida que sangra y no representa un camino a la legalización. Seguimos tibios e indiferentes.

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Maritza Lizeth Félix es una periodista, productora y escritora independiente en Arizona. Nació en Magdalena de Kino, Sonora, México. La frontera ha sido su hogar y su inspiración por más de 15 años.

Su trabajo ha sido publicado en importantes periódicos de Estados Unidos, México y otros lugares del mundo, así como en las principales cadenas de televisión de habla hispana Univisión y Telemundo. Actualmente trabaja de manera independiente para la Organización Editorial Mexicana, Channel 4, Proyecto Puente, Uniradio Noticias, Telemax y Prensa Arizona.

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# Refugios de Emergencia: Las Vidas de Las Personas Sin Hogar Importan

*Continúa de página 20*

La propuesta se pospuso para una discusión más amplia, sin embargo, el Ayuntamiento votó por declarar una “crisis de vivienda” y acordó que la declaración era un punto de partida para una mayor discusión.

Arias respondió a las preguntas sobre los costos de funcionamiento de un refugio en el Centro de Convenciones. “Ya estamos gastando millones de dólares en HART (Equipo de respuesta de asistencia para personas sin hogar) solo para trasladar a las personas [sin vivienda] de una parte de la ciudad a la otra.”

“Me gustaría reconocer que soy culpable, ya que yo también le pedí al personal de la ciudad que fuera a limpiar los campamentos”.

Continuando criminalizando a los que tuvieron la mala suerte de quedarse sin hogar, exclamando que “una vez que se convierten en un campamento de cinco personas, 10 personas y 20 personas, los elementos de la droga, los elementos del crimen, todos toman el control”.

Sin lugar a dudas, varias personas sin hogar tienen problemas de adicción. El 2022 Point in Time Count cita alrededor del 45%, no la mayoría. Muchos se vuelven adictos después de estar un tiempo en la calle.

La miseria de la vida en las calles y la búsqueda de escapar de esa miseria con el consumo de drogas debería ser comprensible. Además, las políticas de drogas y la guerra y las drogas han hecho que las drogas abundan, especialmente en las calles de Fresno.

El crimen prevalece en la calle, sin embargo, la mayoría de las víctimas del crimen son las personas sin hogar, especialmente los ancianos y los discapacitados.

Los campamentos para personas sin hogar pueden brindar estabilidad, seguridad, autonomía, comunidad, acceso a servicios, almacenamiento de pertenencias y prevención de sobredosis. Si Arias y otros funcionarios de la ciudad se tomaran en serio la reducción del consumo de drogas y el crimen, apoyarían más programas de tratamiento de drogas y otros servicios sociales. Si los campamentos contratan con agua, retretes, recolección de desechos, equipo contra incendios y kits de naloxona, podrían volverse seguros.

El desplazamiento continuo causa un daño inmenso. Las personas sin hogar que se desplazan constantemente pierden conexiones con amigos, familiares y servicios. El desplazamiento provoca problemas de salud física y mental.

Las personas no tienen control sobre sus vidas y posesiones. Todos los días se les presiona incansablemente para que sigan adelante sin un lugar a donde ir, y eso traumatiza aún más sus ya difíciles vidas.

Los dueños de negocios y los residentes deben prestar atención al sufrimiento que usted causa cuando llama a la Ciudad para quejarle de un campamento para personas sin hogar.

Ahí, pero por fortuna, vamos tú o yo.

En la reunión del Consejo del 5 de enero, los defensores y varias personas sin hogar hablaron sobre HART y su abuso diario de la comunidad sin hogar. Los barrios diarios y tirar todas sus pertenencias, incluso en tiempo de lluvia con acoso constante y trato vejatorio.

Una mujer llamada Gloria habló con emoción sobre cómo ella y su hermano de repente se quedaron sin hogar después de que no pudieron reunir suficiente dinero para alquilar un apartamento. Dijo que la tienda de campaña en la que vivían fue derribada esa misma mañana.

El residente sin hogar Sean Anthony dijo: “Nuestras posesiones fueron tiradas esta mañana justo cuando mi esposa embarazada y yo estábamos a punto de mudarnos a un apartamento. Perdimos nuestras dos identificaciones”. Sin identificación, es posible que no obtengan el apartamento

Conocí a Sean y su esposa varias semanas antes en el centro de calentamiento Ted C. Willis. Les di un saco de dormir, que desde entonces ha sido tirado por HART.

En otro testimonio, Gloria Wyatt dijo: “No estoy acostumbrada a estar sin hogar, pero no puedo pagar el alquiler. Nuestra tienda fue derribada esta mañana y no tenemos a dónde ir. Estoy asustado.”

Otra mujer sin hogar, Crystal, describió que HART le había quitado su tienda

Los miembros del Concejo Municipal no hicieron preguntas a los oradores públicos sobre el HART. El concejal Mike Karbassi pareció cuestionar la integridad de las personas sin hogar

## Su Atención Por Favor, La Generación Z Nos Quiere Decir Algo

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marcan los “primeros” pasos de la Generación Z en el mundo del liderazgo.

Algunos, como Greta Thunberg (20 años), llegan a los títulos internacionales desafiando y dirigiéndose a los líderes mundiales sobre las deficiencias e implorando una acción muy necesaria contra el cambio climático. Ella ha dado voz a los jóvenes preocupados que quieren un mundo saludable y hermoso para vivir y evitar la catástrofe hacia la que nos dirigimos.

El demócrata Maxwell Frost (que acaba de cumplir 26 años el 17 de enero) fue noticia al convertirse en la primera (y única) generación elegida para el Congreso. Esto fue particularmente impactante si se considera en 2021 que “... la edad promedio de los miembros de la Cámara al comienzo del 117.º Congreso era de 58,4 años”. Esto significa que, en promedio, la mayoría de sus compañeros de trabajo tienen más del doble de su edad.

Alex Lee (25 años) no solo es la primera generación, sino también la primera bisexual abiertamente en convertirse en legisladora del estado de California. Alex se negó a aceptar todas las donaciones de campaña de grandes

“La representación es importante en todos los aspectos de la vida. Importa en el entretenimiento, donde podemos ver nuestras historias; las luchas y los sueños se desarrollan. Importa en los medios; donde aprendemos las verdades sobre nosotros mismos y los que nos rodean. Es importante que nuestras necesidades y nuestra existencia sean reconocidas.”

corporaciones y quiere impulsar una legislación futura para mantener el financiamiento corporativo fuera de la política. También hay muchos jóvenes aquí en nuestro patio trasero, tratando de hacer una diferencia.

Lindsay es una pequeña ciudad agrícola en el condado de Tulare con una población de 12,659 (censo de 2020). Aquí es donde creció Hipólito Ángel Cerros, que se graduó de la escuela secundaria local con honores en 2016. Se graduó de UC Davis en 2022, dos años después de haber sido designado para el Concejo Municipal de Lindsay (lo que lo convierte en el más joven en servir en el concejo en la historia de Lindsay).

Ahora, es el alcalde más joven que tuvo Lindsay. En diciembre de 2022 Hipólito asumió el título de Alcalde luego de haber sido Vice-alcalde.

Mientras estuvo en el cargo, el alcalde ha logrado mucho con su equipo, como:

- Aprobación de \$3.5 millones en reparación de calles
- Aprobó un programa de reembolso de agua

- Asegurar una subvención de \$ 5 millones de dólares para un parque de la ciudad
- Contrató a un nuevo jefe de policía

El alcalde Cerros representa activamente al valle central y suena con representas que enfrenta en el congreso. Incluso ha aludido en las redes sociales que convertirse en congresista es su objetivo. Según su biografía en el sitio web de Lindsay, “... espera mejorar la infraestructura de la ciudad, promover el desarrollo económico y restablecer una relación de confianza entre los funcionarios públicos y sus electores durante su tiempo”.

La representación es importante en todos los aspectos de la vida. Importa en el entretenimiento, donde podemos ver nuestras historias; las luchas y los sueños se desarrollan. Importa en los medios; donde aprendemos las verdades sobre nosotros mismos y los que nos rodean. Es importante que nuestras necesidades y nuestra existencia sean reconocidas. Actualmente, y admitimoslo durante la mayor parte de la historia de este país, quienes están en el poder no han representado al pueblo. Desde las mujeres, las personas de color, los LGBT, etc., todos deberíamos tener una voz. Esa es la verdadera democracia, no un grupo de hombres blancos ricos desconectados. Y a pesar de lo que nos digan, nuestros pequeños y singulares votos sí importan. El cambio tiene que empezar en nuestros propios patios traseros.

Debemos enfocarnos tanto a nivel local como general para asegurarnos que nuestras voces se escuchan en todos los niveles.

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*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.*

que hablaron al decir: “Hemos escuchado testimonios de personas, pero no conocemos toda la historia”.

Ningún miembro del Consejo ofreció simpatía, y no hubo explicación de las acciones del equipo HART para derribar campamentos durante las tormentas cuando no hay espacio de refugio disponible.

La sugerencia de convertir una parte del Centro de Convenciones en un refugio fue controvertida y encontró la oposición de los concejales Garry Bredefeld y Karbassi.

Al final, simplemente hubo un acuerdo para continuar la discusión en el futuro.

El alcalde Jerry Dyer luego intervino en el tema y declaró que los Centros para el Control de Enfermedades (CDC) no aprobarían un refugio agregado en el Centro de Convenciones debido a las pautas de Covid. Esta declaración es enriquecedora porque el alcalde y el Concejo violan continuamente las pautas de la CDC para poner fin a los barrios de campamentos para evitar la propagación de Covid.

Arias planteó inicialmente el tema importante de la falta de camas en los refugios porque los refugios de los moteles actuales están programados para convertirse en viviendas permanentes y la Ciudad no tiene planes de ubicar a los residentes sin hogar actuales de los moteles en ningún lugar. Los defensores han estado presionando en vano al alcalde y al Concejo durante meses para desarrollar un plan. Pronto, habrá una grave emergencia de refugio si no se toman medidas.

Bajo la presión de la comunidad y los defensores, en la reunión anterior del Consejo del 22 de diciembre, el Consejo adoptó una medida para abrir cuatro centros de calentamiento en toda la ciudad en centros comunitarios con horario extendido hasta el 31 de enero, todas las noches, independientemente de la temperatura.

Esta fue una gran victoria para los defensores que han estado presionando a la Ciudad todos los inviernos para hacer esto. ¡El año pasado, la ciudad abrió solo un centro de calentamiento y solo cuando la temperatura descendió por debajo de los 35 grados!

Finalmente, reconociendo la amenaza que representa el clima frío para las personas sin hogar, la Ciudad abrió los cuatro centros de calentamiento como centros de alivio de tormentas durante todo el día durante una tormenta de una semana del 9 al 15 de enero, proporcionando tres comidas al día. Los centros se llenaron rápidamente y permanecieron llenos.

Los defensores continúan presionando para mantener estos refugios abiertos durante todo el invierno. Las personas que utilizan los refugios expresan su extrema gratitud por tener un lugar cálido y seguro para quedarse y dormir sin el miedo siempre presente de dormir en la calle.

En noticias más positivas, el Consejo Intergencial sobre Personas sin Hogar de California (Cal ICH) implementó recientemente el programa de Financiamiento de Resolución de Campamento (ERF). El programa ERF financiará propuestas locales procesables y centradas en la persona que resuelvan la experiencia de personas sin hogar para las personas que residen en campamentos.

Resolver estas experiencias de personas sin hogar necesariamente abordará la seguridad y el bienestar de las personas dentro de los campamentos, resolverá las preocupaciones críticas de los campamentos y hará la transición de las personas a un refugio provisional con vías claras hacia la vivienda permanente o directamente a la vivienda permanente, utilizando información basada en datos, no punitiva, baja.-enfoques de barrera, centrados en la persona, Housing First y coordinados.

Las propuestas podrían reforzar modelos exitosos existentes y/o apoyar nuevos enfoques que brinden viviendas seguras, estables y, en última instancia, permanentes para personas sin hogar en campamentos.

Las funciones del Consejo Intergencial de California sobre Personas sin Hogar:

- Ayudar a las jurisdicciones locales a garantizar la seguridad y el bienestar de las personas sin hogar en los campamentos.
- Proporcionar subvenciones a las jurisdicciones locales y la continuidad de la atención para resolver las preocupaciones críticas del campamento y hacer la transición de las personas a una vivienda segura y estable.
- Fomentar un enfoque coordinado basado en datos para abordar las preocupaciones de los campamentos.

El programa ERF se autorizó inicialmente en 2021 a través de AB 140, que asignó \$50 millones para lo que se convertiría en la primera ronda de financiación. SB 197 enmendó el programa en 2022 y asignó \$300 millones adicionales para la Ronda 2 de la financiación del ERF.

No está claro si la ciudad ha solicitado esta financiación. La práctica de desmantelar los campamentos continúa y esta financiación es muy necesaria.

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*Bob McCloskey es un activista de los derechos de las personas sin hogar. Puede contactarlo en bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.*

# LLAMAZA

## COMUNITARIA

LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996



En la reunión del Ayuntamiento de Fresno del 5 de enero, defensores de los derechos de los desamparados y varias personas sin hogar hablaron sobre el abuso diario que padece la comunidad sin hogar por parte de las autoridades. Denunciaron los barrios diarios y tirar todas sus pertenencias, incluso en tiempo de lluvia, con acoso constante y trato vejatorio. En la imagen, una "limpieza" a un campamento de desamparados en Fresno en abril 2022. Foto de Eduardo Stanley

FOR BOB MCCLOSKEY

"No podría importarme menos 'Disney on Ice' cuando hay personas que amanecen muertas en las calles. Yo soy el que tiene que conducir a través del barrio Tower de Fresno para ver cuerpos tirados allí, sin vida, porque los centros de calentamiento no están abiertos y deberían haberlo estado", dijo el concejal de la ciudad de Fresno, Miguel Arias, en la reunión ordinaria del 5 de enero.

"He estado preguntando durante mucho tiempo, ¿cuál es el plan para más refugiados?"

Arias estaba respondiendo a la pregunta del administrador de la ciudad sobre una sugerencia de él y de los concejales Luis Chávez y Annalisa Perea para declarar una emergencia de vivienda y considerar usar partes del Centro de Convenciones como refugios temporales y su pregunta se refería a qué hacer con los eventos planeados como el próxima presentación de 'Disney on Ice'.

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## Refugios de Emergencia: Las Vidas de Sin Hogar Importan

## Su Atención Por Favor, La Generación Z Nos Quiere Decir Algo

FOR PAULINA CRUZ

Cada nueva generación busca el cambio, y la generación z

no es diferente.

Aunque la mayoría de las personas se imaginan niños

pequeños pegados a los iPads o teléfonos de sus padres

cuando escuchan el término 'Gen Z', la verdad es que

(también conocida como Zoomers) abarca a todos los

nacidos entre 1997 y 2012, lo que hace que el mayor de

nuestra generación (nacido en enero) ya tenga 26 años.

No solo eso, sino que, según el censo de EE. UU., la

Generación Z y los millenials constituyen el 42,3 % de la

población, mientras que los baby boomers y la generación

X representan el 41,7%.

A pesar de representar casi la mitad de la población,

los millenials y la generación Z están sumamente

subrepresentados en todos los niveles de liderazgo en este

país. Esto es profundamente preocupante ya que en 50

años nosotros (y las generaciones venideras) seremos los



Hipólito Angel Cerros, el alcalde más joven de la historia de Lindsay. Foto del sitio oficial de Lindsay

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que cosechemos los beneficios o paguemos los precios de

las decisiones que se toman hoy.

Sin embargo, para mi placer, eso está cambiando.

Recientemente, las noticias se han llenado de líderes

políticos y activistas sorprendentemente jóvenes que

## Abuso laboral: tibios e indiferentes

FOR MARITZA FELIX

(Nota del Editor: Esta nota fue originalmente publicada en [www.hispania.com](http://www.hispania.com))

Llegué a los Estados Unidos cuando las marchas por la

reforma migratoria llenaban las calles de las grandes

ciudades al unísono. Podía sentir la angustia y la

incertidumbre, pero no la entendía. Viví una migración

muy privilegiada; crecí en la frontera, yendo y viniendo, sin

miedo a cruzar. Siempre volvía a casa. Hasta que me quedé

y las raíces en dos tierras. Solo entonces comprendí la

complejidad de la melancolía y el arrebató de la añoranza.

El acceso a la legalidad está congelado

Estuve en un capullo por mucho tiempo y me consolaba

saber que Estados Unidos era mi mientras y nunca mi para

siempre. Hasta que construí un hogar y no me quise ir.

Entonces descubrí que quedarme no sería tan fácil y que

un sistema obsoleto de migración podría arrojarme a las

sombras, esas mismas de las que querían salir millones

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