

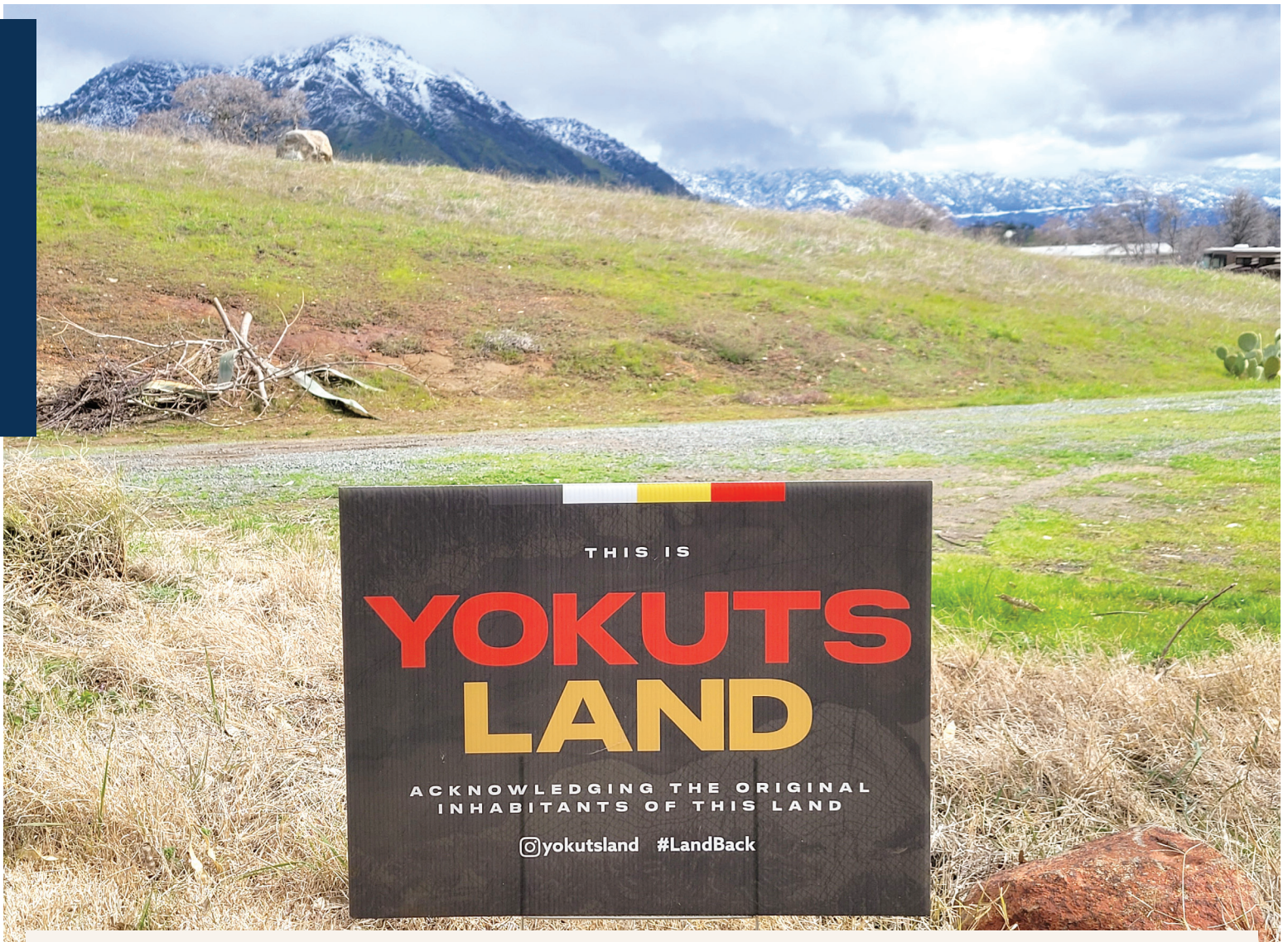
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Dustup over Naming of Yokuts Valley



BY BAYARD TAYLOR

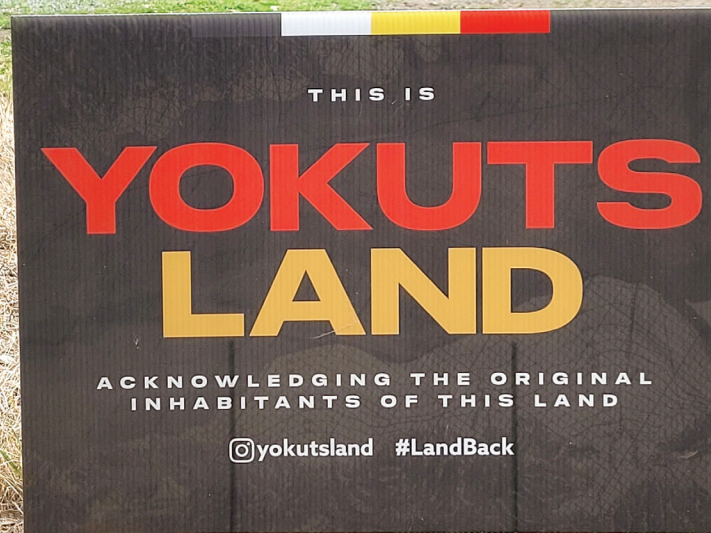
It's the beginning of 2023, and already we're having a dustup over the new name of Yokuts Valley.

But first the good news: On Feb. 2, CalTrans took down two official green highway signs that displayed the discontinued name of S— Valley (with population info). These removals were the first in a series of concrete moves by the state to eventually enforce AB 2022, the law that gets rid of "squaw" from nearly 100 place names in California.

On Feb. 7, also pursuant to AB 2022, a work crew from Fresno County removed the large 8 x 6 foot unofficial "Welcome to S— Valley" sign that had stood on Highway 180 in front of the Bear Mountain Library, which is located on Fresno County-owned land.

Now for the melancholy news: Supervisor Nathan Magsig, one of five Fresno County supervisors, directed a County crew to reinstall the sign, which they did on Feb. 9.

Magsig described his position in a video on his official Facebook page on Feb. 7, where he expressed concern that "signs are disappearing in the area." He went on to say on a private Facebook page for the area that "residents should be aware that 'S— Valley' signs have been the new target for vandalism/removal" (Feb. 9). As we are unaware of any unauthorized "vandalism/removal" of signs, we consider this to be not only false but also inflammatory.



The official new name of the former S— Valley is Yokuts Valley, although Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig continues to mislead residents by using the former name. Photo by Bob McCloskey

Magsig's action was a flagrant violation of AB 2022, which specifically prohibits repairing or restoring signs having "squaw" in the name. Here is text excerpted from the law enacted on Sept. 23, 2022:

- The term "squaw" is a racist and derogatory term that has historically been used as an offensive ethnic, racial and sexist slur, particularly for indigenous women.
- No geographic feature or place name in the State of California should have a name that includes racial and sexual slurs and stereotypes targeting Native Americans.

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California Prison Gladiator Fights, Again!

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY AND MORGHAN VÉLEZ YOUNG

In July 2022, populations inside all California prisons began being forced by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to intermix across hostile groups, resulting in dangerous gladiator-style fights, which include intentions of severe injury and murder.

In April 2022, Connie Gibson, director of the Division of Adult Institutions, framed the new policy as "expanding rehabilitative efforts." All persons are required to participate in general population activities under threat of discipline, that is, being placed in "higher level housing" if persons resist this change to intermixing.

In her letter to announce this change from the practice of bifurcating populations, she framed intermixing populations as a longstanding policy although a review of historical actions suggests otherwise.



"Multiple inmates received injuries consistent with weapons being used. A total of eight uncontrolled weapons were discovered," noted a program lieutenant at Calipatria State Prison concerning a riot between rival gangs involving 30 inmates on Nov. 29, 2022. Photo by Hédi Benyounes via Upsplash

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Stop the Hate Town Hall in Madera

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

You are invited to the next Stop the Hate town hall on March 28 at 5 p.m. at the Pan America Community Center (703 Sherwood Way) in Madera. This is the third Stop the Hate town hall in the Central Valley.

We are building a network to stop hate crimes in Madera and Central California. That will take a coalition that includes community groups, individuals and government agencies.

The first town hall was held in Huron in November and focused on the institutional racism that has left this community without a high school. Students, parents, elected officials and community members came together to develop a strategic plan to build a high school in Huron.

The second town hall was held in Fresno in January and 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.

Planning for the Madera town hall is under way. To assist with the town hall, contact Daren Miller at ibedam@gmail.com.

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Dustup over Naming of Yokuts Valley

Continued from page 1

- A public agency shall no longer replace any sign, interpretive marker or any other marker or printed material with the discontinued name containing the word “squaw.” Supervisor Magsig and the other supervisors must be held accountable to comply with the law.

Magsig’s actions fit a larger pattern. For the past two years, his agenda has been to block the renaming effort. Magsig refused to meet personally with Roman Rain Tree, the local Indigenous activist who began this initiative. Moreover, Magsig refused to hold public hearings on the matter—except for one belatedly and hastily called on Sept. 20, 2022, at the Bear Mountain Library’s outdoor pavilion.

At that Bear Mountain Library meeting, the so-called town hall lacked the slightest semblance of civility or decorum. Magsig acted as moderator. For more than an hour, Magsig allowed an overwhelmingly white crowd to verbally abuse and shout down Rain Tree. It was beyond disgraceful.

Some in the crowd were caught on camera making threats against Rain Tree’s life. Had six or so sheriff’s deputies not been present the meeting could easily have turned violent. What happened that night was a total repudiation of the Board of Supervisors’ Guiding Principles, which include “to work for an improvement of life for all,” “to respect all viewpoints” and “to respect cultural and ethnic diversity.”

Shortly after the Bear Mountain Library fiasco, Magsig sent a bogus, unscientific “ballot” (the term “ballot” falsely implying a legitimate election) to 1,400 households in the 93675 zip code. He asked for their opinion, with “no name change” as the first option, misleading readers into the false hope that they could keep the discontinued S— Valley name.

Furthermore, Magsig encouraged those who opposed the name change to photocopy the “ballot” and mail back as many responses “as needed” (amounting to ballot box

stuffing). After his office collated responses to the bogus survey, Magsig publicly declared that “87% of the respondents opposed the name change,” falsely implying that those respondents represented the whole area.

Rain Tree and other Indigenous activists have shown extraordinary grace and courage to stand up to Magsig’s bullying and say in effect: “Enough with the denigration. Enough with the insults. Enough with the racist slurs. Enough with the threats. Enough with white supremacy. Let’s try to live in harmony with each other.”

But now the Residents for Renaming S— Valley are left to wonder:

How is the State of California and the federal government going to respond to this obvious and hateful defiance?

How soon will the U.S. Postal Service act to assign Yokuts Valley to the 93675 zip code?

How long will it take for government databases and databases that depend on government databases (e.g., weather, maps, banks, insurance companies and the DMV) to be populated with the correct information about Yokuts Valley?

And will the State of California and the federal government just let Magsig get away with thumbing his nose at the law with no consequences?

The Board of Supervisors is hostile to the name change. Magsig is trying to subvert the law. Given this active resistance, might it not be prudent for state and/or federal agencies to do something to cool things down—like putting together information packets that explain what has happened and why? And that counter misinformation and disinformation about what the name change means for the residents?

Might it not be prudent for the state to install security cameras to catch any vandals who attempt to deface or steal the new Yokuts Valley signs?

And might it not be prudent for state officials to let Magsig and the other supervisors know, publicly, and in no uncertain terms, that they intend to enforce the law?

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.

California Prison Gladiator Fights, Again!

Continued from page 1

Bifurcating populations has been policy on and off at some sites for decades to increase safety and decrease violent assaults, particularly along gang lines. The result of Gibson’s implementation of the CDCR’s mandate is the context of gladiator-style fights some of which appear, based on our evidence, to be encouraged and/or neglected by correctional officers with possible spillover into gang retaliation actions in community settings.

For example, in 2018, the Fresno County Sheriff’s Office warned of spillover from these prison gladiator fights, citing the potential of “[an] increase in shootings/acts of violence involving [rival gang members] targeting each other.” The potential for increased violence in Fresno County affects all of us and is directly linked to harmful policies that should be abandoned immediately.

Since the summer of 2022, the increase in gladiator-style prison fights includes cases such as men from one population engaging in deadly fights with men from a different population, often with weapons. We have evidence of at least eight cases and hundreds of men involved since September 2022 with these repeating factors involved: group-on-group violence, weapons used by some and correctional officers failing to implement practices such as pat-downs before the groups intermix in newly shared spaces.

A.C., who has a partner inside, said, “Last year, my boyfriend was transferred to a prison down south. I started to look into the agenda of the CDCR. I started getting information from the inside. Since August 2022, we know of over 20 [violent] incidents that occurred.”

Hence, along with CDCR documents, we are investigating dozens of dates of violence between rival gangs and the specific resulting injuries with information provided by those incarcerated across several state prisons and their concerned family members, including Corcoran, Ironwood, California City, Folsom, Pelican Bay, Wasco and Calipatria.

Historical records show that for decades the CDCR has oscillated between bifurcating and mixing populations at some sites; the official motives for this oscillation are unknown. Most alarming, however, is the 2022 policy that forces all prison sites to intermix populations.

It appears that each time the CDCR chooses to mix populations, gladiator fights result. Hence, the bloody and traumatic results of the 2022 end to bifurcation are unsurprising.

It is well documented that in the 1990s the mixing of rival groups resulted in violence; the *UCLA Law Review* has shown that in the 1990s correctional officers conducted gladiator fights among multiple gangs at Corcoran State Prison (i.e., Yokuts Land) and that correctional officers were betting on fight outcomes. During this time, over an eight-year period, seven men were shot dead and 43 wounded when combatants failed to stop fighting when ordered to do so.

Following the cases in the 1990s, eight correctional officers were exonerated in a federal civil rights trial because the jury believed their alibis, but it was revealed

that top CDCR officials implemented the policy of mixing rival groups in prison yards, called “incremental release,” and that the policy created the atmosphere for the staging of fights.

After the Corcoran cases, the CDCR paused its policy of mixing rival gangs in the general population. The prisons were generally bifurcating hostile groups from 2000 until 2018, when programming and “incremental release” were again implemented at some prisons.

In fact, a 2018 Avenal State Prison (i.e., Yokuts Land) case involved 12 men who were attacked by about 180 men with weapons for 10–15 minutes. In this case, a Southern California attorney has continued to engage the CDCR with ongoing concerns about the mixing of groups and continued evidence of resulting violence.

In early September 2022, before a major riot at Ironwood State Prison (i.e., Quechan Land), the attorney emphasized that “[a] clear and deliberate indifference to a known, credible threat of violence” was the reality of the current CDCR policies and practices.

In 2020, the CDCR again paused its policy on mixing groups at specific sites after several large riots occurred in state prisons beyond the Avenal State Prison cases in 2018 and 2019 until the system-wide restart of the mixing policy in 2022.

Intermixing hostile groups under the guise of accessible rehabilitative programming and “incremental release” have now been reinstated with predictable results. On Sept. 27, 2022, as documented in a CDCR Rules Violation Report, a large-scale riot erupted between rival gang members at Ironwood State Prison.

The report states that “over 150 inmates were involved in the riot, ignoring orders to get down and stop fighting necessitating the use of force. In some instances force was used to stop imminent loss of life because some suspects were attempting to murder each other.”

It is unknown how many men were injured in the riot. Another riot broke out at Calipatria State Prison (i.e., Cocopah Land) on Nov. 29, 2022, in the recreation yard. Sixteen rival gang members wearing state-issued blue shirts, and who were allowed to bypass the correctional officers mandated to do a clothed body search, were set upon 14 rivals wearing white and gray clothes. These 14 people had been searched for weapons.

Staff used “multiple force options” to quell the riot because “the two groups of inmates ignored orders and continued fighting.” Multiple men received cuts, slashes and puncture wounds that required medical attention.

We are investigating another riot between rival gangs that occurred on Nov. 30, 2022, at the Corcoran State Prison Substance Abuse Treatment Facility in which 12 men were injured.

We have documentation of four other fights between rival gangs at the Calipatria recreation yard even after the riot on Nov. 29 because the prison continues to use “incremental release” and to set up violent confrontations. The latest incident (that we have documented) related to “programming” occurred on Feb. 1 when a handcuffed known gang member was attacked by a rival gang member with a weapon while being escorted by guards back to his cell.

Speaking to the issues of programming and “incremental release,” A.C. said that “to my knowledge, they [the correctional officers] are setting [up] gladiator fights because you have all of this unfolding; it’s happening again and again. There’s no other logical explanation besides the staging of gladiator fights.”

A.C. and her friend L.Q., who has a brother inside, say they have reached out to prison officials, elected leaders and the governor about the issue to no avail. They say the Fresno Bulldogs, classified as a security threat group, “want to program into the general prison population safely and securely.” Prison officials seem to be making that impossible.

L.Q. said that “[prison officials] say they didn’t know that these rival gang confrontations were going to happen. They say they have never been warned, but our lawyer warned them [in early September 2022].”

She shared a TikTok post from a correctional officer with us; we are trying to confirm the audio content, which appears to suggest that from one of these gladiator fights “six innocent people were stabbed because of the staff’s action. It was as if they came to watch this as an event. Some laughed about it.”

Over the next few months, we will continue to process the evidence that was provided to us; further investigate the details surrounding the CDCR knowingly placing populations at risk of injury and death; document the CDCR’s record of allowing correctional staff to neglect and, possibly in some cases, support gladiator fights; and examine the historical patterns of pausing and restarting the bifurcation of groups across several decades.

We have reached out to leadership and associations to inquire into both the permissibility of the gladiator fights and the spill-out into California communities. We also continue to learn from families, community organizing groups and attorneys who are trying to bring an end to this dangerous policy.

The ultimate goal is to end the violence stemming from the CDCR’s actions and hold accountable those who are making California prisons even more inhumane than their reputation precedes.

Bob McCloskey is a prison rights advocate and journalist. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

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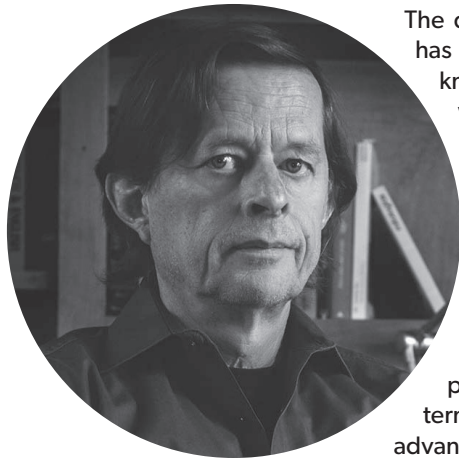
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The drama of the 2024 elections has already started. What we know so far is that Joe Biden will seek reelection, however nothing is set in stone. Many Democrats have expressed their desire for a younger candidate, but they are not high on Kamala Harris. So the Democratic primary could be quite competitive. Nevertheless, to have a president seeking a second term could be a political advantage, particularly someone who is doing a decent job overall.

Although far from perfect, if we compare Biden's performance to that of his predecessor, the difference is as big as the distance between the earth and the moon.

Donald Trump—yes, we were talking about him—will try to return to the White House, despite being defeated by eight million votes in 2020.

There is no question that he is popular among right wingers, but the potential entrance into the race of Ron DeSantis, the Florida governor, could make for a hotly contested Republican primary.

Expect a true duel between two right-wing fanatics trying to convince their voters who is more extremist. We'll hear about plans to dismantle Social Security and Medicare, to get easier access to guns so that mass shootings will continue, to destroy the public school system on behalf of private education, to give religious zealots access to power and so much more. Nothing new but still disgusting and a real threat to democracy.

At the local level, candidates are slowly jumping into the electoral fray. The race that promises the most noise is Fresno County Supervisorial District 2, where incumbent Steve Brandau and soon-to-be former Fresno City Council Member Garry Bredefeld, both right-wing champions of nothing positive in our society, appear destined to face off. That would be a true battle of negatives that one wishes both could lose; see James Mendez's related article on page 4.

Even though it seems too early, we need to prepare for the 2024 elections. Let's get active and defeat those candidates trying to take away our democracy.

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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For more details, contact
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Up to 200 words.

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FROM THE ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Let's Promote Businesses That Treat People Well

Last month, I wrote about an awful experience that I had at a popular local restaurant, and from multiple responses to my letter, it looks like I'm not the only one who has experienced such distasteful and rude treatment from the owner of that establishment.

That horrible ordeal got me thinking that we as a community need to highlight the great businesses and restaurants that are really doing it right here in the Valley.

So, as advertising director of the *Community Alliance* newspaper, I would like to invite our readers to place an ad in our paper to highlight their businesses or to support one of their favorite businesses.

Instead of focusing on the negativity of a bad owner and his business, I want to promote the good ones in our community and let our readers know that when they visit the businesses that we promote, not only will they be treated with dignity and respect as customers and clients but they can also be confident that their employees are treated decently as well.

I invite our readers in this appeal to make a positive difference in our community by promoting the good guys in our publication so we all can show them some love.
I. smiley G. Calderon



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Efrain Botello-Cisneros, right, and Catherina Nou, left, of the California Department of Justice's Office of Community Awareness, Response and Engagement, during the Stop the Hate town hall on Jan. 25 in Fresno. The next town hall will take place in Madera on March 28 to inform the community about the importance of the Stop the Hate campaign.
Photo by Peter Maiden



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Alternative Needed in Supervisorial District 2 Race

BY JAMES MENDEZ

Voters are best served when they have clear choices of rational, knowledgeable and civil candidates. Recently, there has been much activity among Republicans in the Fresno County Board of Supervisors (BOS) District 2 race. As of Feb. 13, no Democrat had announced an intention to run for the position. That would leave voters in the district to choose only between Republicans.

In November 2022, 74-year-old Assembly Member Jim Patterson (R-Fresno), who will term out of the Assembly in 2024, said he planned to run against the incumbent, Steve Brandau, a Republican, for the District 2 seat.

On Feb. 4, Garry Bredefeld, also a Republican, who will term out of his Fresno City Council position in 2024, announced via Twitter that he also plans to run for the seat.

On Feb. 5, Patterson notified the *Fresno Bee* that he had decided not to run.

On Feb. 6, Brandau announced that he would seek reelection.

There are many complex problems facing District 2 and Fresno County that require diligent attention. Some important issues that the BOS has failed to address are as follows:

- The climate crisis, which has led to severe drought and extreme heat conditions in the Central Valley. (Although the Central Valley has received rain in the past few months, it remains in a drought with falling aquifer levels.) As of April 2022, the BOS had continued to allow watering three times a week in the county.
- Poor air and water quality
- Adequate access to healthcare
- Racial gerrymandering resulting in voter suppression and disenfranchisement of voters
- The affordable housing crisis and increasing homelessness

- Disinvestment that pervades both the city of Fresno and rural communities, for example, the lack of countywide high-speed Internet
- High poverty levels
- Lack of non-agricultural jobs and a diversified economy

Based on what they have said and written, there is little difference between Brandau and Bredefeld. Both are right-wing extremists, racists, anti-LGBTQ+, anti-immigrant and White Christian nationalists. Both are anti-government and anti-mask. Both have questioned the integrity of elections. At the May 4, 2021, BOS meeting, without presenting any evidence, Brandau raised doubts about the integrity of the 2020 Fresno election.

Both use fear-based rhetoric designed to dehumanize people they disagree with. Both have exhibited disrespect toward residents who brought their concerns to the City Council and the BOS. Both have been uncivil in dealing with the public and their colleagues. Both are conspiracy followers, climate change deniers and advocates for broadening Second Amendment rights.

Given that there is little difference between the two, residents of District 2 need another, better choice.

District 2 is a difficult race for a Democrat to win due to the gerrymandering done by the current BOS.

Although there are 37,000 more Democrats than Republicans countywide, District 2 has more Republicans than Democrats. As of Oct. 27, 2022, District 2 had 120,000 registered voters with 42,684 Democrats, 46,247 Republicans, 5,035 American Independents and 22,619 No Party Preference.

Even though Democrats are outnumbered, the seat should be contested. There are a fair number of voters who want a change. The two right-wing extremist Republicans act as though there are no moderate, liberal or progressive individuals in District 2.

They make it clear they do not think they need to hear from those who disagree with them or include those constituents in their decision-making. Both have stated that their constituents are only their like-minded conservatives. Bredefeld said he's only committed to conservative voters, "to be their voice in a time where radicals and leftists are promoting destructive policies to our community."

A reasonable, rational and knowledgeable person with good funding could beat both Bredefeld and Brandau.

OPINION & ANALYSIS

There is evidence that a sizable number of people who live in District 2 would support a candidate other than Bredefeld or Brandau.

In the nonpartisan primary election on March 3, 2020, Brandau ran unopposed. In that low-turnout election only 59,170 (less than 52%) of the 114,693 registered voters in the district voted. Of those, only 39,277 voted for Brandau; 19,889 voters left the box blank, preferring not to vote for Brandau.

The same is true of Bredefeld's March 3, 2020, election for Fresno City Council District 6. He also ran unopposed. Again, there was low turnout with only 24,513 of the 45,650 voters (53.7%) voting. Bredefeld received 16,472 votes with 8,041 voters preferring to leave the box blank. Many of those 8,041 were probably also part of the 19,889 who did not vote for Brandau.

With no opposition, Bredefeld and Brandau did not have to spend money on their reelection. As a result, they have accumulated significant war chests. As of February 2023, Bredefeld had \$228,388 in his City Council campaign account, which he believes can be used for a supervisorial campaign. Brandau reported \$173,619 in cash on hand.

The problem for Bredefeld is that in August 2020, under threat from a state law, the Fresno BOS capped the contribution amount a candidate can receive from a single contributor to \$30,000. The County, for now, is interpreting that to include transfers from one political committee to another. If the County's interpretation holds, Bredefeld's financial advantage quickly disappears.

District 2 needs a better choice than either Brandau or Bredefeld. To beat Brandau and/or Bredefeld for the District 2 seat, a Democratic candidate would have to be well funded, knowledgeable of the issues, civil, reasonable, rational and personable. For the good of the district and the county, let's hope the Fresno County Democratic Party can produce that candidate.

James Mendez came to Fresno in 1977 for his medical residency training at what was then called the Valley Medical Center. He stayed to practice medicine and raise a family. He is now a retired physician and a community activist.

Decontextualized Analysis That Drives Gang Legislation in Fresno

BY MARCEL WOODRUFF

In the spring of 2016, an ordinance to "protect" Fresno's youth from the insidious encroachment of gangs was proposed by a Fresno City Council member. Triggered by a complaint, or maybe several complaints, from the community, this Council member created a plan to dissuade a group, believed to be a gang, from harassing nearby children on their way to school.

The newly imagined law would impose potential jail time of up to six months and a \$1,000 fine for any suspected gang member found within 1,000 feet of a school. The ordinance died amid debates around potentiality for racial profiling and whether it would be an effective use of time for law enforcement officers.

The measure was defeated but the commotion surrounding the immediate issue was perplexing. Out of all the solutions proposed to "solve the problem," no one ever suggested just simply going and talking to the group that was allegedly causing the problem.

We revisit this proposal because it provides a clear example of the disengaged, shallow and decontextualized analysis that drives legislation in our city. In a seemingly automated response, this proposal erases several internal assets and opportunities already present within these communities, while imbuing a subgroup of the community with a grossly exaggerated power and reach.

Under this rationale, the only viable response is law enforcement, therefore a new law must be created so that it can be enforced. The cyclical nature of this legislative pattern that centers law enforcement as the solution to every social ill has created a gridlock that keeps residents trapped in a state of social and untimely death.

Systemic racism, classism and overall negligence live at the core of Fresno's perpetual decay, and a limited political imagination to render social progress cultivates the very environments that have been deemed unsafe.

A proper analysis is needed regarding alleged gang activity factors in social, economic and political factors that operate as community stressors. It is inaccurate to designate areas with high rates of gang activity or criminal activity as areas "unfortunately overpopulated with wrongdoers."

A more accurate perspective understands that higher levels of crime and gang activity in a community indicate that the socioeconomic conditions of that area have become too devastating for relationships to endure. From a relational vantage point, policy that supports, reinforces and resources communal relationships yields the best results for public safety.

Every day, community members, leaders and the occasional grassroots

laborer naturally operate as our community's largest apparatus for public safety and crime prevention. This communal network, sustained through relational capital, is what should have been leveraged, invested in and integrated into a political strategy that seriously intends to meet the needs of concerned residents.

The daily provision of essential spiritual, emotional and physical needs, through a caring and concerned support system, is and has always been the best pathway for safety.

Reimagining our justice system is critical in the process of liberating Fresno's communities from economic despair.

One of the impediments of economic prosperity for many communities in Fresno is the longstanding presence of weak legislation with political resolve that operates under a misinformed moral framework. Under this framework, millions of taxpayer dollars are allocated to the detention and displacement of alleged wrongdoers, while the government's role in engineering the very social ills that create antisocial behavior is ignored.

What is needed is a migration from the ethos of blame and punishment that hypes focus on wrongdoers and/or wrongdoing to a more diverse array of investments into community well-being, which centers on right relationships. Under this model, incidents within the community do not have to result in multimillion-dollar taxpayer expenditures.

A \$5 pizza and conversation between people who love one another will suffice.

Marcel Woodruff is the director of the Community Justice Network and a volunteer with Advance Peace Fresno and Faith in the Valley.

Provide feedback.
E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com



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

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Ignorance of Institutional Racism and Its Consequences

BY THOMAS STEWART

"The American Dream feels very far away from me now," despaired the woman next to me.

While the call for help drifted before me, the four walls that I sat within remained grounded in southwest Fresno—the home of Edison High School, where I have attended for four years.

When my Black Student Union adviser invited me and a few other students to a listening session focused on recognizing Fresnans struck by poverty, I jumped at the opportunity. I drove to the community center and took my seat among the other Fresnans. The host, former Stockton mayor Michael Tubbs, welcomed everyone to the event. After opening the floor for comment, a flurry of testimonies proceeded.

As the stories unfolded, a common theme soon revealed itself. A weathered lady told the horror story of her life in Spanish. Through a translator, we got a glimpse of the woman's recent struggles. She related her stories of a white mal-intentioned neighbor who "didn't want any Mexicans as neighbors" and a system that was designed to oppress her. She described feeling hopeless as she filed for bankruptcy and learned how to live a homeless life on the streets.

Another Fresnan recounted his exhaustive relationship with the City. He couldn't count the number of trips he had made to City Hall to advocate for supportive policies in our community. His protests for better transportation, industries and opportunities to assist the people of southwest Fresno remained just that. Protests. Protests that rested upon passive ears.

So many of the people in the building felt invisible. The city that they lived in refused to recognize their calls for justice, and many were tired of being treated like an afterthought by their city.

Some people claim that the impoverished are responsible for their situation. That is the furthest assumption from the truth. I couldn't bear the thought of people thinking that, because I had just heard our community members express the injustices of the system they were trapped in. The whole way home the stories spun through my head until I developed a solution to help the people of southwest Fresno.

I understood that Edison has always been considered "the smart kid" school, so how come its students aren't supporting their community more? I realized it's because many of them are like me, transfer students who drive 20 minutes to get to school.

The majority of these students are oblivious to the struggles surrounding them. If they're driving from north Fresno, they can watch the number of grocery stores decline as the convenience and liquor stores increase. Many students don't recognize why their surroundings are so different at school from what they are at home.

If students were made to understand that the aftershocks of historical racism still plague the society they live in, I feel as though they would want to do something about it.

That's why I'm calling for an addition to the Fresno Unified School District curriculum, one that educates students on the disparities of their community. Students must understand that it's their neighbors and classmates who are hurting. In 2019, an estimated 80% of students at Edison were socioeconomically disadvantaged while 1.2% were homeless.

Through community events such as listening sessions or even school carnivals, students could engage in face-to-face conversations with the people around them.

These would be opportunities for students to understand that southwest Fresno consists of many disadvantaged Black and Hispanic people because of racial redlining. You cannot understand the present without first analyzing the past.

Grasping the current struggles that we face is a good first step but is futile without action. We need students to not



Thomas Stewart in front of Edison High School in Fresno. Photo by Peter Maiden

only engage, listen and understand our community but also move forward and collaborate on solutions.

These are the students who will grow up to be political leaders, community advocates and societal figureheads. Southwest Fresno needs advocacy and support, and the students of the region have the potential to provide that.

If someone had read me the stories of the session from an article, I would have endured a few fleeting moments of sympathy and gone about my day. It was the impact of hearing the stories from the source in real time that stuck with me long after my drive home.

The public, especially students, need more experiences like that—to face the ugly parts of our society in broad daylight and be forced to reconcile with them.

Students are the key to our success in the mission to eliminate institutional racism. Without them, our future will remain as uncertain as it is now.

Thomas Stewart is a senior at Edison High School and a four-year member of the school's Black Student Union. After graduating, he hopes to pursue further education with a possible major in journalism or public policy.

Farmworkers in Tulare United to Confront Unfair Eviction

BY GERARDO VAZQUEZ

On Feb. 18, many in Tulare County's Linnell Camp came together and said, "Ya basta! We will be heard!" People stood with their heads held high, trembling inside from the courage it takes to risk everything. But enough is enough; they would be pushed no further without speaking the truth.

Approximately 80 community members gathered at Linnell Camp to expose the gross and illegal attacks of intimidation and threats against the underrepresented population of this low-income farmworker community.

New management of the Tulare County Housing Authority at Linnell Camp reportedly attempted to evict about 50 residents of the labor camp, telling them they had three days to move. They were told the police would be called to arrest them if they did not leave.

Other residents were told to expect new rules added to their contract, such as no BBQs on the property, a ban on swings for the children and children not being allowed to play outside. Management rationalized this by saying the facility did not have the insurance to cover the children.

One resident who is legally going through the process for citizenship complied with the Housing Authority eviction demand out of fear of jeopardizing her legal status. She and her three children moved out and have been living in her van during this winter's freezing cold nights.

Male and female residents spoke of the many injustices being perpetrated against them by the Housing Authority. Attendees held back tears while listening to these stories.

Members of community organizations who attended the meeting included Armida Quezada, a family advocate for the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency; Arturo Rodriguez, communication/organizing director for the Central Valley Empowerment Alliance; Raymond Macareno and John Hess of the Tulare County Housing Authority; Larry Micari and Amy Shuklian, Tulare County supervisors; Hernan Hernandez and Gladys Flores of Unidad Popular Benito Juarez; Captain Joe Torres of the Tulare County Sheriff's Office; and Reyna Rodriguez, public relations specialist for Proteus.

On Feb. 15, Reyna Rodriguez took a group of Linnell Camp residents to a Housing Authority board meeting to give testimony. The board then notified Supervisor Micari, who arranged for the Feb. 18 meeting at Linnell Camp.

Housing Authority Chair Hess said that he was just learning of the issue and would immediately suspend all eviction notices until he could find out what was going on.

Captain Torres, who was raised in the Central Valley and knows farm work, assured the labor camp residents that only the Sheriff's Office can evict people from their homes. He



Dozens of residents of the Linnell labor camp in Tulare County gathered to express their complaints about the new Housing Authority management on Feb. 18. Photo by Gerardo Vazquez

said that if it wasn't a member of the Sheriff's Office at their door, they did not have to leave their home.

Torres also left his business card for residents to contact him if they are threatened again. Hernandez assured the farmworker community that a three-day eviction notice is against the law. He noted that if you have lived in your home for one year, you must be given at least 30 days; if two years, it is 60 days.

On this night, farmworkers came together and got as real as you can get. They were united and spoke their truth. Standing not only to defend their families but also to speak against injustice. Their voices were heard. They saw that being poor does not mean you are helpless and weak. The community stood together and was strong. The people were united as One Village.

Si se puede!

Gerardo Vazquez is an organizer for the Dolores Huerta Foundation in Tulare County.

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Abortion Bans an Indicator of Misogyny

BY JANET SLAGTER

We have returned to the situation of 50 years ago, when abortion was available only in some regions of some states. As an abortion counselor in southern Illinois in the 1970s, the author raised money to pay for women to travel to St. Louis for an abortion and took the journey herself on two occasions. Now Missourians, faced with a total abortion ban, travel to that same Illinois town to get abortions.

We are reprising women's struggle to access abortion and other forms of healthcare. Although misogyny has never faced death in the United States, female gendered persons, cis or otherwise, are under renewed assault.

We live in an era where reproductive rights are increasingly limited for people with uteri. Not only was federally guaranteed legal access to abortion reversed by the Supreme Court (SCOTUS) in June 2022, but contraception access also is under threat, and pregnant and potentially pregnant people are being surveilled and incarcerated by some states.

Hospitals are refusing to perform tubal ligations mothers request after giving birth. State government and private agencies in Missouri, for example, are using digital technology to peer into search history and GPS data on phones and texts and are monitoring online shopping habits and social media activities to see how women are strategizing to access abortions.

Texas civil law provides a bounty of up to \$10,000 to those successfully suing anyone who has helped a pregnant Texan get an abortion. Florida just narrowly defeated a requirement that female high school athletes would be forced to share detailed menstrual information to school administrators—to show they're "real" women and to monitor their pregnancy status.

The Centers for Disease Control's just published Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 18% of teen women experienced sexual violence in the past year, up 20% since 2017; 14% had been forced to have sex, a 27% increase since 2019.

Eleven states that have outlawed abortion do not grant an exception for pregnancies resulting from rape and incest. Even in states that do, victims are discovering that authorities are loath to give and hospitals are afraid to apply for these exemptions.

Every year, about 50,000 ectopic pregnancies end up in hospitals. These pregnancies are never viable and always lethal to the mother if not aborted.

Some states now require the end of fetal heartbeats before an abortion can be performed. And that means taking time to convene a death panel to decide when

ectopic abortion can be performed and the mother's life saved.

The most common form (54%) of abortion in the United States now, via two Food and Drug Administration-approved medications, a form that has been used millions of times since 2000, could be made illegal at any moment. A Trump-appointed right-wing evangelical judge in Amarillo, Texas, will rule in late February on a lawsuit that would make mifepristone, one of the two drugs, illegal. The second drug, misoprostol, can be used alone.

An increasingly powerful tripartite of players is involved in the contemporary reproduction legal battles.

One group is the dark money-funded organizations that are designed to file lawsuits. Three among many are the Alliance Defending Freedom, the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine and the Christian Medical and Dental Associations. The Alliance Defending Freedom has had 14 wins at the Supreme Court in 12 years. One of those wins protects such organizations from disclosing its donors.



The United States is going back in history and, led by conservative politicians, judges and religious groups, is banning women's right to decide about their own bodies. In this image, a young woman expresses her view with a sign during a reproductive rights protest in 2021 in Fresno.

Photo by Peter Maiden

A second group is the Christian right-wing law firms who represent the filers.

The third is the group of right-wing judges willing to hear these cases.

Many times, central players in these cases have histories with all three groups. In the mifepristone case, Matthew Kacsmayk is the theocratic Trump-appointed judge in the northern Texas district court in Amarillo. He comes from representing exactly the kind of Christian legal advocacy group that argues such cases and is a member of the Federalist Society.

Moreover, designated as the only judge in the northern Texas district to receive cases, Kacsmayk has total control of which cases go forward. He has exercised his unlimited authority many times. Twice he has ruled

that the "remain in Mexico" policy had to be reinstated.

He has struck down new guidelines protecting transgender people in the workplace, and he ruled that teens under 18 need parental protection to get contraception from federally funded clinics. Appeals of his decisions go to the Fifth Circuit, which is full of Republican appointees, and we now know how appeals to SCOTUS will likely turn out.

Concern for the well-being of fetuses does not extend to the bodies and persons of those—overwhelmingly women—who carry and nurture pregnancies and deliver and care for babies. Fetal content of uteri has assumed nearly holy status, and fetuses are gaining legal protections.

Women are being sent to jail for aborting and miscarrying. Alabama is using a chemical endangerment law designed to prevent children being raised in meth labs to accuse women of making their wombs toxic.

At least 44 women with addiction issues have been imprisoned in Alabama, South

processes and vote counting.

- Increase the number of justices on the Supreme Court.
- Pass laws that go beyond the Constitution's limited protections.
- Expand access to medication abortion, clandestinely where necessary, where they are illegal.
- Strengthen legal education that produces lawyers who work for reproductive justice.
- Support SisterSong, the women of color and indigenous women's reproductive justice network.
- Support Women on Waves and its spinoff, Women on Web, which provide abortion services to women who can't access them.
- Reclaim know-how and the right to do our own low-tech abortions and teach others these skills, underground, if necessary, as did the Federation of Feminist Health Centers in the 1970s and 1980s. Educate ourselves to take our healthcare into our own hands, to manage contraception, abortion, pregnancy, birth and post-birth care so that we are not dependent on finding willing doctors and hospitals.

The late Democratic Socialist activist and author Barbara Ehrenreich, who earned a Ph.D. in cellular biology, once quipped that given the Supreme Court's interest in fertilized eggs, and the fact that 60% or more of those are washed out of uteri in menstrual blood, women ought to send their used menstrual pads and tampons to SCOTUS so they could protect possible future geniuses. Indeed, as life doesn't begin at conception—both eggs and sperm are alive—sperm producers too should be monitored for ejaculation when baby-making will not result.

French writer Annie Ernaux, the 2022 Nobel Laureate in Literature, provides another suggestion. In an October interview, she observed that the United States, which legalized abortion before France did, has "returned to savagery."

In her book about her abortion, she noted that she feels a total lack of guilt. For years, she held anniversary celebrations! The more we speak of our abortions and for abortion access, the less shame and greater freedom exists.

National Condom Week occurred in mid-February. Sadly, another marker of women being burdened with full responsibility for the outcomes of heterosex is revealed as some California women's health centers are handing out condoms to their clients—women. It seems men can't even be relied on to find and use these.

Janet Trapp Slagter, Ph.D., is professor emerita from Fresno State's Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies Department. A lifelong peace and feminist activist, she is the Americas Region representative to the International Board of WILPF and board secretary of Rape Counseling Services in Fresno.

Carolina and Oklahoma after miscarriages or stillbirths, even when fetuses were too young to be viable. These are nearly the only cases where drug use, not possession or sales, has been criminalized.

Apparently, women are to be pure vessels for holy fetuses. No one imprisons sperm-producing bodies for using drugs.

Feminist Activist Strategies

Reproductive justice entails that we need to work for subsidized childcare, guaranteed paid sick leave and an expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act. And to counter the trends outlined above, the following work is necessary:

- Redefine how legislative districts are redrawn and monitor election

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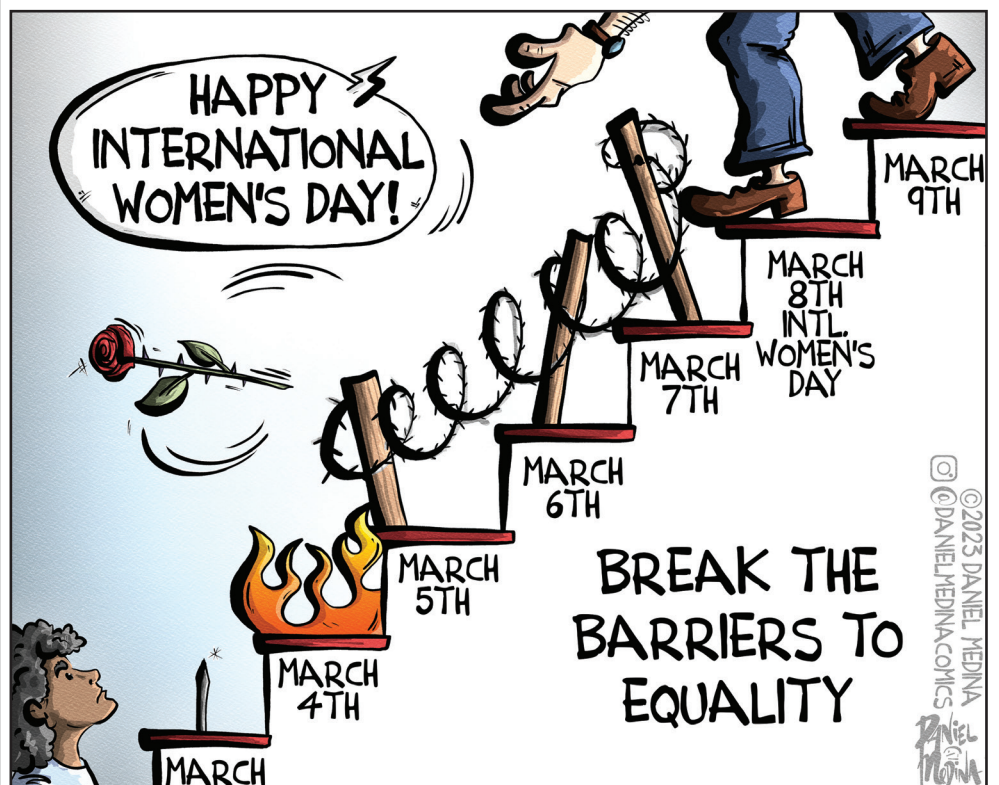
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What's in a Climate Name?

BY KEVIN HALL

Last Chance Alliance, 11th Hour Project, Third Act—get the message? Time's up. The remaining question is: Can you handle the radical prescription necessary for humanity's survival?

Apparently not, because behind those loaded monikers lie familiar campaigns of simple targets and simpler solutions drawn from a playbook written by people with one eye always on their funding sources. If we truly hope to heed the United Nations' call for a radical restructuring of society, the climate crisis messaging team needs a reboot, its strategists simply the boot.

Whether derailed by the amoral mores of its billionaire backers or diluted by the competing priorities of union leaders (see what they've done to the state Democratic Party), the burgeoning San Joaquin Valley air pollution turned climate movement is adrift, despite the sense of urgency those worrying names are meant to impart.

Movement leaders would proclaim the exact opposite to be true. A large coalition, they would argue, has formed in Last Chance and is focused on the immediate harm and long-term dangers posed by Big Oil & Methane. The fight for oil-jack setbacks has been won in Sacramento and must now, predictably, be defended at the ballot against an oil industry-backed statewide referendum. They might also point to major climate legislation and regulatory policy debates being waged in the state capital.

But for Valley residents these are pyrrhic victory laps, a forced run of incremental steps through our signature haze of wildfire smoke and dairy ammonia laced with diesel exhaust and pesticides. Transactional politics have led many to stay silent on proposals for ill-fated measures, most notably carbon capture at Kern County oil operations, because beneath it all lies a system based on market mechanisms offering "green" investments generating green returns; it's society's salvation through redirected consumption.

In short, the message and strategy aren't working and won't, certainly not in time. The coming ballot debate over setbacks will throw into sharp relief the chasm between climate messaging and people's reality, image and substance, wishful thinking and economic disparity. While voters are likely to agree with the obvious need for setbacks, climate activists no doubt hope to use this as an educational opportunity, one in which they engage voters in a deeper climate change debate.

Unfortunately, they won't go deep enough.

It's more than wanting to keep voters in their comfort zone; it's more about staying on their own. The problem is largely a matter of resources and individual backgrounds. Institutional funding to a movement led by white-collar activists virtually guarantees status quo outcomes for Valley residents. From Tom Steyer's "movement capitalism" with investment opportunities in his Galvanize Climate Solutions fund to Al Gore's Generation Investment Management, the investor class is calling the shots.

The center of political power in this country lies firmly in the conservative category, not even "leans" conservative, we're there. Locally, the right wing's extremities can be found in the Tea Party vs. MAGA battle brewing in the Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 2 race between incumbent Steve Brandau and Fresno City Council Member Garry Bredefeld. It'll be an ugly contest for the title of most racist, misogynistic, authoritarian, Trump-iest candidate.

CLIMATE POLITICS



The left side of the spectrum is found a little to the right of the true center. Locally, it's bound there by unions representing construction and oil field workers, groups not renowned for their liberal tendencies, and the Republican-run construction firms with whom they have master contracts with prevailing wage requirements. Together, they elect Democrats to office who, in return, join Republicans and obligingly vote to ignore public health concerns, climate change threats and economic exploitation of their own constituents.

Don't get me wrong. Public works projects and democratic workplaces are essential to saving civilization from itself. The "building trades," as they're known collectively, are one of the last refuges of union membership, though not always union democracy. Equally important, these are the men and women doing the heavy lifting. Many people's bodies don't last, injuries are commonplace, workplace deaths a reality. Lists of the most dangerous jobs in America include logging workers, derrick operators, roofers, garbage collectors, ironworkers and power linemen. Most have no union representation.

But the big but in the equation is "but what should we build?" Because that is society's climate paradox: We must keep functioning yet our activity is doing us in.

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

Climate Whiplash Is in California's Future

BY VIC BEDOIAN

In the wake of California being slammed by a series of atmospheric river storms, a special legislative hearing was held in Sacramento to consider California's preparedness and response to future extreme weather events. They heard from climate scientists about what to expect in the future, and from state and county emergency response officials about the challenges they face now.

The Assembly brought together three key committees to learn about the devastation and human misery left in the wake of those ferocious downpours: Emergency Management; Water, Parks and Wildlife; and Utilities and Energy.

Legislators heard from experts about the human and physical impact of the wave atmospheric rivers that swept across California over a four-week period. The damage to private and public infrastructure, according to a federal government report, could exceed a billion dollars.

They also learned from scientists about the outlook for even more extreme storm events in the state's climate-warming future.

Daniel Swain is a climate scientist at UCLA. Using the latest science and modeling tools, he developed ArkStorm 2.0, which creates physically realistic scenarios for mega-storm and flood events. He told lawmakers that they should expect a future of what he calls "climate whiplash."

"We should be expecting quite large increases in the likelihood of hydro-climate extremes on both ends of the spectrum," said Swain. "So, both very dry conditions and a warming climate, but also very wet conditions.

"And this may come as a surprise to some folks, but the increase in the very wet conditions may well be greater than the increase in the very dry. The reason for this primarily is that we know that a warming climate increases the ceiling on how much water vapor the atmosphere can potentially hold.

"And so, because of this we anticipate significant increases in the strength and the amount of moisture contained in atmospheric river storms."

The dynamics of atmospheric rivers are being intensively studied by researchers, and their findings are increasingly utilized by statewide and local agencies responsible for emergency response. By measuring the location, intensity and duration of a storm, scientists can better pinpoint where it will land.

Dr. Martin Ralph is a researcher at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography at UC San Diego. He explains that information measured by aircraft flying up close to the atmospheric river (AR) is pooled with ground-based meteorological data to fine-tune predictions about its behavior for the public and first responders. He says the goal is about moving science into action.

"The fundamental message of AR science and impact studies on the west coast is where they hit and how long they stall for. How strong they are is really what determines the impacts.

"It's not just how strong the AR is at a moment, but it's how long it lasts over your location. If an AR stalls, that's how we get floods. So, we really need to pay attention to the antecedent conditions on the ground and the details of where this hits."

Predicting and preparing for extreme AR events will be even more crucial in the coming years.

Swain indicates that storms of the future will be much more intense and destructive than the atmospheric river sequence the state just experienced. "Climate change has probably already doubled, and I'll just emphasize that, probably already doubled the likelihood of an extremely severe storm

sequence in California capable of producing major flooding.

"This is somewhere on the order of about 20% bigger than what we just saw. So essentially there's about a two in three chance of seeing an event that is about 20% to 30% larger than what we just experienced over the next 40 years or so."

Emergency services up and down the state struggled to keep up with the relentless deluge. Coastal counties took the heavy blows first.

Santa Barbara County saw flooding, landslides and debris flows, widespread power outages, farmland inundated and thousands of evacuated residents. First responders, risking their own lives, could barely keep up.

Kelly Hubbard heads the county's office of emergency services. To keep pace with the changing climate and extreme weather, she says local agencies need more of everything: funding, equipment, dedicated staffing and training.

"Within emergency management, our hurdles and our abilities to continue to support our community are impacted by constant activation. I have been activated for more than 80% of my three and a half years [with the county]: 14 activations, five local declarations, two federal, one California Disaster Assistance Act declaration and one mass casualty with 34 deaths.

"This keeps me and my team from being able to move forward on the emergency preparedness efforts that we would like to be able to implement for our community and for our team members. Training, emergency plans, implementation of legislation—all of those concepts get delayed when we have that constant activation."

It was the same story elsewhere. In hard-hit Santa Cruz County, emergency services director David Reid reported on the difficulty of planning for future events because they are always in a constant cycle of disaster and recovery.

Continues on page 15



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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY:
MARCH 8**

International Women's Day is a radical holiday, with its roots in socialist and communist movements. In the United States, the first Women's Day was organized by the Socialist Party in 1909.

In 1910, German women's rights activist and Marxist Clara Zetkin proposed an annual Women's Day at the International Socialist Women's Conference.

In March 1911, more than a million women demonstrated and marched in several countries in Europe, demanding voting rights and protesting discrimination.

The UN declared March 8 International Women's Day in 1970.

In 1994, Rep. Maxine Waters (and 79 co-sponsors) introduced a bill to recognize International Women's Day. This bill was deliberately bottled up in committee to avoid a vote, therefore it's not an official holiday in the United States.

**WORLD WATER
DAY—ACTION ON
MARCH 22; FILM
ON MARCH 17**

Each year, WILPF Fresno's Earth Democracy issues group works with Dr. Mary Husain, who heads Fresno State's CineCulture, to choose a film about water in honor of World Water Day, March 22. This year's water film will be shown on March 17 and promises to be informative and entertaining. Visit either Fresno State CineCulture's website or WILPF Fresno's Facebook page for more details about which film will be shown.

Another activity for March 22, World Water Day, will be a silent river walk along the San Joaquin River. Other environmental organizations will be involved, including the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust. The walk is open to the public. Visit WILPF Fresno's Facebook page for more details or contact the Earth Democracy co-chair, Kyla Mitchell, at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

Our Earth Democracy group will visit several classrooms on or close to World Water Day to do various student water activities and increase awareness of the importance of water in our lives.

According to the United Nations, this year's theme for World Water Day will be Accelerating Change. The UN states that all of us can make a difference by changing the way we use, consume and manage water in our lives. Our commitments will be added to the Water Action Agenda, to be launched at the UN 2023 Water Conference—the first event of its kind in nearly 50 years!

—Jean Hays



**WILPF US SAYS PASS THE GEORGE
FLOYD JUSTICE IN POLICING ACT**

WILPF US joins the National Call for Action to reintroduce the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021. As WILPF members, take the time to let your voice be heard. Call President Biden and your Congressional Representative to express your support of legislative or executive action to combat police misconduct.

In the wake of Tyre Nichols's death at the hands of abusive police in Memphis, the time to act is now. We cannot let abusive, deadly police practices continue in cities across the nation. National action is needed now. No more deaths at the hands of abusive law enforcement officers nationwide.

All people in America should be able to trust the police to be fair and just, not fear for their lives whenever their paths cross! The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021, HR 1280, passed in the House, but Republican opposition stopped it in the Senate a year ago.

Join the Black Congressional Caucus, lawmakers and other activists in their demand that HR 1280 be reintroduced and passed. Demand an end to police impunity and to racist, abusive police actions.

Call President Biden at 202-456-1111, the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and your Representative directly.

—Teresa Castillo

**"LET MY PEOPLE
GO": SENATOR
WARNOCK ON
ENDING MASS
INCARCERATION**

In January 2023, I had the pleasure of attending the second national "Let My People Go" Ending Mass Incarceration Conference in Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church.

This conference was a multifaith initiative to End Mass Incarceration. According to the Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock, Senior Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist and U.S. Senator for Georgia, this is to be a "national movement committed to harnessing the moral and people power of our faith communities to eliminate the pipeline of men and women to prison."

The Senator reminded us that dismantling the systemic injustice of mass incarceration has long been his prophetic passion. So the launching of this second annual conference to End Mass Incarceration is to remind faith communities of this pressing issue.

Warnock challenged congregational engagement to change the public narrative surrounding the criminal legal system and urged us to support policy changes that keep people out of prison and to find ways to make sure those who have been incarcerated do not return to the prisons.

"The United States of America, the land of the free, is warehousing nearly 25% of the world's prison population and is the incarceration capital of the world. Our jail and prison population has increased 500% in the past 40 years" according to the Senator, even while crime was decreasing in some areas. Warehousing bodies, Black and Brown in particular, is big business in the United States.

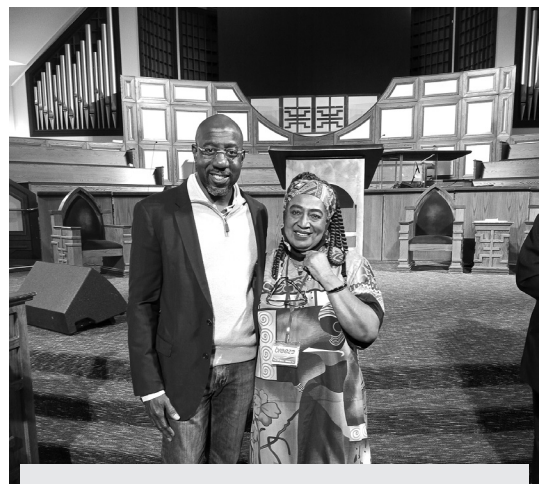
Moreover, those who have served their time and paid their debt are part of a "caste system" that routinely imposes voting discrimination, job discrimination and housing discrimination, the very reasons for the Civil Rights movement.

The Senator reminded us that the so-called war on drugs has been a "tragic war on communities of color and the poor. It has been the chief tool of the racial politics of backlash and it is the terrain upon which those of us who believe in Dr. King's vision must fight."

As for me (Dr. Jean), I am making plans to be back next year for the third national "Let My People Go" Ending Mass Incarceration Conference taking place again in Atlanta, and I'm hoping to take another picture with my dear friend and pastor, Sen. Warnock.

—Dr. Jean Kennedy, PsyD.OB/OD

Dr. Kennedy is the Co-Facilitator for the Unpacking Racism and Understanding Our Blind Spots online discussion group, which meets on the last Sunday of each month. E-mail Dr. Kennedy at drjeankennedy@yahoo.com to be included.



Dr. Jean Kennedy and Sen. Raphael Warnock of Georgia at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta for the second national "Let My People Go" Ending Mass Incarceration Conference. Photo by Dr. Jean Kennedy

**IN HONOR AND
MEMORY OF
DAVID HARRIS
AND ELLIE
BLUESTEIN**

David Harris (1946–2023). The anti-draft and anti-war movement has lost one of its most influential voices with the passing of Fresno High School graduate David Harris. He attained national prominence, yet retained his connection with Fresno WILPF.

In 1972, he contributed a pocket of the pants he wore for 20 months in prison for refusing induction into the draft. That fabric was included with many other anti-Vietnam war activists' contributions in a WILPF Peace Quilt.

In 1980, he was the guest speaker at our commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of WILPF/15 Years of the Fresno Branch, speaking on "Stopping War Then and Now." In 2019, he attended the local event, 50 Years of Resistance, where he and Fresno WILPF branch founder Ellie Bluestein were reunited.

—Sandra Iyall



Ellie Bluestein and David Harris at the 50 Years of Resistance event in Fresno in 2019. Photo by Howard Watkins

THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY WILPF. THE WILPF PAGE IS USUALLY COMPILED AND EDITED BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES (LENIVREEVES@GMAIL.COM).

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 or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

WILPF MEETING

March 9, Thursday, 7 p.m., online and 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 or Leni at lenivreeves@gmail.com.

STIR IT UP—WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

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

UNPACKING RACISM

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

WOMEN IN BLACK

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



DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION

INSPIRING AND ORGANIZING COMMUNITIES TO BUILD VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS
 EMPOWERED TO PURSUE SOCIAL JUSTICE.

LET'S GET COVID-19 BOOSTED!

COVID-19 Vaccines and Booster doses are safe, effective, and free to all community members regardless of immigration status!



COVID-19 Vaccines and Booster doses are safe, effective, and free to all community members regardless of immigration status!

As we fight through this cold and flu season, protect your loved ones by getting your updated COVID-19 booster. The updated boosters provide increased protection against the original COVID-19 strain and new variants.

All eligible people age 5 and older should receive an updated booster dose at least two months following completion of their primary vaccine series. Eligible children 4 and younger should receive their Bivalent dose following two monovalent doses of their primary series.

Please wear a mask in public spaces, practice social distancing, & wash your hands. Together we can work towards better health and protect one another from COVID-19.

COVID-19 and Booster doses are available in many places, including healthcare providers, clinics, and local pharmacies. Californians can visit: MyTurn.ca.gov or call 833-422-4255, or visit Vaccines.gov to make an appointment or find a walk-in vaccine clinic near you.

All COVID-19 resources are from Vaccines.gov & Vaccinateall58.com



Kern County Board of Education Approves CAAT Petition

On January 10th, 2023 the Kern County Board of Education approved the The Central Academy of Arts and Technology (CAAT) petition to build a charter school in Downtown Bakersfield despite student and parent opposition. The petition was denied in August 2022 by the Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) and petitioners filed an appeal to the Kern County Board of Education where it was subsequently approved in January. The Dolores Huerta Foundation (DHF) in partnership with the California Teachers Association (CTA), Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association (BETA), and California School Employees Association (CSEA) worked tirelessly alongside community members and partnering organizations to collect 384 signatures in opposition of the CAAT petition.

Youth from the Dolores Huerta Foundation Liberated Youth for Empowerment (LYFE) program members and Vecinos Unidos Chapters shared personal testimony and urged the board to vote no on the petition. DHF will continue to fight for education equity for all students. We are inspired by the voices of our youth and community members and are grateful to all the partner organizations for their commitment to education equity. The fight continues... Si Se Puede!

UFW to Provide Relief to Farmworkers Affected by COVID-19

In September 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a \$665 million Farm and Food Workers Relief (FFWR) program to reimburse frontline farm and food workers with pandemic-related costs. Through this program, a one-time direct relief payment of \$600 will be available to qualifying frontline farm, grocery, and meatpacking workers for expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The FFWR program has selected fourteen nonprofit organizations and one tribal entity to administer the FFWR program. The United Farm Workers Foundation (UFW) has been selected and will be providing technical assistance to organizations assisting farm workers.

For support and to apply for the FFWR program please contact UFW via email at FFWR_Admin@ufwfoundation.org or via phone at 1-877-881-8281.

For updates regarding the FFWR Program visit: www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/ffwr



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

Peace & Social Justice Calendar March 2023

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

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

Substantial Amendment to City of Fresno Annual Action Plan

Available for public review and comment until March 20 at 4 p.m. The amendment enables the City to develop affordable senior housing alongside the development of a senior center at a site acquired in July 2022. View the amendment at www.fresno.gov/housing. Comment by e-mailing HCDD@fresno.gov or calling 559-621-8300. The Substantial Amendment is scheduled for consideration by the City Council at its March 30 meeting.

VITA Free Tax Preparation Ongoing. 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.

WED 01 **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. *Community Alliance* radio show hosted by Daren Miller. Guests: Carmen Zamora and Debbie Darden. Topic: Women's History Month. For more info, visit www.kfcf.org.

Screening: *The Boys Who Said No* 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m. Forum Hall 103, Fresno City College. Directed by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Judith Ehrlich, this film tells the inspiring story and impact of the draft resistance movement. Hundreds of thousands of young men opposed to an unjust war said “no” to being drafted into the military, risking up to five years in federal prison. Their individual courage and collective nonviolent actions helped end a tragic war and the draft.

Getting Started with CMAC 6 p.m. Suite 201, 1555 Van Ness Ave. Learn how the Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) can help you tell the stories that are important to you and your community. This pre-production workshop will teach you how to get a project started at CMAC. For more info, visit cmac.tv/workshops.

THU 02 **1960s Anti-War Movement in Fresno: Lessons from the Last Revolution!** 1 p.m., Forum Hall 101, Fresno City College. A panel discussion of Fresno's movement to stop the draft and stop the war in Vietnam—and lessons for today. Panelists: Joel Eis, author of *Standin' in a Hard Rain*; Mike Rhodes, author of *Dispatches from the War Zone*; Raul Pickett; and Doug Rippey. Sponsor: FCC Campus Community Colloquium. For more info, contact 559-442-4600 ext. 8361.

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

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) 7 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or 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. Sponsor: Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board. Register at tinyurl.com/LocalHiringWorkshop.

50 Years Later: Lessons from the Last Revolution! 4 p.m., Room 101, Grosse Industrial Tech Building, Fresno State. A panel discussion of Fresno's movement to stop the draft and stop the war in Vietnam.

Cineculture: *The Forger* 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion with Maggie Peren (director). Taking place in Berlin in 1940, a young Jewish man won't let anyone take away his zest for life, especially not the Nazis. As the best hiding spots are in plain sight, he audaciously adopts the identity of a marine officer to escape being deported like his family before him. Based on a true story. Sponsors: Jewish Studies Program and Jewish Studies Association. View the film Feb. 27–March 3 (link at cineculture.csufresno.edu). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail mhusain@csufresno.edu by March 2.

SAT 04 **Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** 9 a.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, contact 559-435-4043.

Central Valley Leadership Round Table 10 a.m. Westside Youth Center, 1709 7th St., Mendota. Discussion of successes, hardships and long-term goals. Hosted by Mendota Mayor Pro Tem Liberty López and Firebaugh Mayor Felipe Pérez. For more info, contact 559-250-1253 or gamayer20@gmail.com. **Standin' in a Hard Rain Book Tour** 2 p.m. Petunia's Place,

6027 N. Palm Ave. Author Joel Eis discusses the anti-Vietnam war movement in Fresno in the 1960s and beyond. He further traces the difficult transition after this revolutionary period of a generation trying to do something productive with their lives in a country in which they felt alienated. After his presentation, Eis will sign copies.

Getting Started with CMAC 2 p.m. Via Zoom. Learn how the Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) can help you tell the stories that are important to you and your community. This pre-production workshop will teach you how to get a project started at CMAC. For more info, visit cmac.tv/workshops.

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 or visit www.dwiafresno.org.

TUE 07 **National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)** 5:30 p.m. Los Amigo's Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. Speaker: Wilma Tom Hashimoto, executive director for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Fresno and Madera Counties. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pbyoga.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.

Screening: *Oscar-Nominated Short Films* 5:30 p.m. Animation, 7:30 p.m. Live action. Strummers, 833 E. Fern Ave. \$10 general admission, \$8 student/senior.

THU 09 **Screening: *Oscar-Nominated Short Films*** 5:30 p.m. Documentaries. Strummers, 833 E. Fern Ave. \$10 general admission, \$8 student/senior.

FRI 10 **Cineculture: *A Man of Integrity*** 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion with Dr. Jamsheed Akrami (filmmaker and scholar). Reza, having distanced himself from the urban quagmire, leads a simple life along with his wife and young son, in a remote village in northern Iran. Nearby, a private company's shareholders, accumulating wealth, power and economic influence, have been pushing local farmers and small owners to sell off their belongings, farms and estates, to the benefit of the company's influential network and its monopoly. View the film March 6–10 (link at cineculture.csufresno.edu). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail mhusain@csufresno.edu by March 9.

Interfaith Scholar Weekend 6 p.m. Cardinal Newman Hall, St. Paul Catholic Newman Center. Theme: Celebrating Inclusive Religious Freedom in a Diverse Nation. Speaker: Rev. Paul Brandeis Raushenbush, president and CEO of the Interfaith Alliance. Respondents: Dr. Andrew Fiala, Dr. Veena Howard, Dr. Ken Hansen and Sukaina Hussain. Free. Register at interfaithscholar.org.

SAT 11 **Interfaith Scholar Weekend** 8 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Temple Beth Israel, 6622 N. Maroa Ave. 8 a.m.: Breakfast. 9 a.m.: Reflections on sacred Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist readings that sustain these communities in troubled times. 10:45 a.m.: Rev. Paul Brandeis Raushenbush shares the Interfaith Alliance's report on “Big Tech, Hate and Religious Freedom Online.” Noon: Lunch. 1 p.m.: Rev. Raushenbush will inspire the group to reflect on their present reality and what needs to change if religious freedom is to be not only celebrated but also truly inclusive. \$50 general admission, \$10 students, scholarships available. Register at interfaithscholar.org.

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

Youth Liberation Institute Conference TBA. Fresno State. Solidary Is Power! One-day youth conference. In-person event with community workshops, games, sports, prizes and more. Open to all youth across California ages 13–21. Register at bit.ly/YLIConvening23. For more info, contact youth@sirenimmigrantrights.org.

SUN 12 **Interfaith Scholar Weekend** 10:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 2762 E. Alluvial Ave. Free. Register at interfaithscholar.org.

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

TUE 14 **Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC)** 6 p.m. For more info, contact 559-287-1308 or 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.

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.

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

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 on Facebook.

Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee 5:30 p.m. Tower Theater Lounge, 815 E. Olive Ave. Or via Zoom by phone at 669-900-9128, Webinar ID: 914 6492 2057. These meetings are a part of a series in which together the committee and the community will explore ways to preserve, promote and enhance the economic health, diversity, and unique historic character and vitality of the Tower District.

Clovis Democratic Club 6 p.m. Seven Cafe & Grill, 25 Clovis Ave. For more info, contact 559-322-9740 or jenikren@gmail.com.

Screening: *Kasturba Gandhi: Accidental Activist* 6 p.m. Peters Educational Center, Fresno State. This documentary is a story of a courageous woman breaking boundaries. Register at bit.ly/kasturba-gandhi. Free parking code: 269408. Sponsors: Department of Philosophy, the M.K. Gandhi Center, and Jain and Hindu Dharma Initiatives. For more info, contact vehoward@csufresno.edu.

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter 7 p.m. Woodward Park Library Community Room, 944 Perrin Ave. Topic: Zambia Safari Adventure. Traveler, photographer and outdoor enthusiast Robert Groos will focus his lens on his recent adventure in Zambia. In a series of action-oriented photos and close-up videography, you will witness wild animals in their native habitat undisturbed by the hordes of tourists that flock to other safari destinations. Learn about the ecosystem in Zambia's South Luangwa National Park. Free and open to the general public. For more info, visit sierraclub.org/tehipite.

FRI 17 **Workshop on Local Hiring Agreements** 10 a.m. Via Zoom. See March 3 entry. Register at tinyurl.com/LocalHiringWorkshop.

California Day of Action 1 p.m., meet at Yokuts Park, 4200 Empire Dr., Bakersfield; 2 p.m., rally at House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's office, 4100 Empire Dr., Bakersfield. Advocate to protect, improve and expand Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. Free bus transportation from Fresno; snacks, water and lunch provided. Sponsors: California Association for Retired Americans and California Labor Federation. For more info, contact 209-354-7489 or ycuevas.cara@gmail.com.

SAT 18 **West Fresno Democratic Club** 9 a.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St. For more info, contact 559-930-4909 or westfresnodemclub@gmail.com.

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

TUE 21 **Central Valley Partnership** 5:30 p.m. Location TBD. For more info, contact 559-967-1940 or agrariandemcracy@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.

FRI 24 **El Concilio de Fresno** Noon. Chicano Youth Center, 1515 E. Divisadero St. For more info, contact 559-360-9797 or eddiev@elconciliodefresno.org.

Cineculture: *Our Secret Life in Kherson* 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion with Dmytro Bahnenko (director). The director, a Ukrainian journalist in Kherson, southern Ukraine, spent three months secretly recording the city's resistance to the Russian occupation. The film chronicles the harsh reality of life under occupation, as food and medicines become scarce, people flee and others begin to disappear. View the film March 20–24 (link at cineculture.csufresno.edu). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail mhusain@csufresno.edu by March 23.

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.

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.

Stop the Hate Town Hall 5 p.m. Pan America Community Center, 703 Sherwood Way, Madera. Build a network against hate in Madera. Learn more about the tools and local agencies that can help combat hate. For more info, visit fresnoalliance.com or sjvmediaalliance.org.

WED 29 **City of Fresno Civic Academy** 5 p.m. In-person/virtual sessions. Session 1: City Government 101. Five sessions overall. Learn about city government, city departments and functions, engaging your City Council representative and the difference your participation can make in city government. Sponsor: City of Fresno Mayor's Office of Community Affairs. To register, visit bit.ly/MayorsCivicAcademySpring23.

FRI 31 **Workshop on Local Hiring Agreements** 10 a.m. Via Zoom. See March 3 entry. Register at tinyurl.com/LocalHiringWorkshop.

Lanare: Free of a Major Dump Site!

BY NAYAMIN MARTINEZ

Have you ever heard of Lanare? If you have not, you are not alone. Most people ignore that Lanare is a small unincorporated community 24 miles southwest of the city of Fresno. Despite its small population (according to the 2010 Census 589 people live in Lanare), this community has earned a reputation of having community leaders who are fearless when it comes to advocating for solutions to the problems that threaten their well-being.

In the mid-2000s, the residents learned that their water had higher than the state limits for arsenic. The state's first response was to provide funding to the local water district for a treatment plant, but they lacked the funding to keep it operational, so the community suffered from contaminated water for more than a decade.

Lanare residents, with the support of nonprofits such as California Rural Legal Assistance and Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, formed the local group Comunidad Unida Por el Lanare (Community United for Lanare), which engaged in a long advocacy journey that took them numerous times to Sacramento, until finally in 2019 two new wells were completed and the community finally had access to safe drinking water.

In 2018, Lanare community leaders engaged in another uphill battle, cleaning what they described as an "eyesore" on Garfield Avenue—a place that was easy to spot because squatters had accumulated massive amounts of debris and trash (e.g., heavy-duty tires, furniture, building materials, broken household appliances, dismantled cars, ag waste) that was piled on a surface that at one point covered half a mile.

To make matters worse, numerous times the trash caught fire (or was set on fire on purpose) causing black clouds of

smoke that sent at least one resident who suffered from asthma to the emergency room and cost thousands of taxpayer dollars so firefighters from the closest station in Caruthers could put out the fire.

For five years, residents reported the accumulation of trash and the fires to local agencies such as the code enforcement division of Fresno County, the office of Supervisor Buddy Mendes, the Environmental Health Department and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Sadly, the response of these agencies was not what the community wanted: prompt abatement.

It took more than one year for these agencies to identify the owners of the property, who, according to the government agencies, were responsible for the cleanup. And when the heirs of this property were finally reached, two more years went by without any of these agencies willing to do more than send letters to the owners asking them to clean up.

In the meantime, trash continued to accumulate and burn. But where was this trash coming from? Lanare residents were convinced that the squatters living on the property were getting paid to allow the illegal dumping. Brave neighbors took photos that showed company trucks unloading trash, but when these photos were sent to the government agencies, they said it was not sufficient proof because the photos did not show money being exchanged.

In 2022, the cleanup finally started and concluded in February 2023. It took the joint efforts of the state agency CalRecycle and various departments in Fresno County (County Counsel, Public Works, Environmental Health, the Sheriff's Office) to dismantle this illegal dump.

For community leader Isabel Solorio, who works tirelessly to help her community (e.g., she has organized two community cleanups, leads two food distributions every month and represents Lanare in a statewide advisory group of the State Water Board), this is a success and "proof that when we work as a team—residents, community organizations and government entities—we can make a difference, and we can improve the places where we live." With a big smile, she proudly showed us some pictures of how the dump site looked before and after the cleanup.

Report Illegal Dumping

You can help by doing what Lanare residents did: Report and speak up to denounce illegal dumping.

- To report illegal dumping while it is happening, contact the Sheriff's Office dispatchers at 559-600-3111 and, if possible, e-mail photos to agcrimes@fresnosheriff.org.
- To report trash along roads and on private property, contact the Department of Public Works at 559-600-4240 or rdmaint@fresnocountyca.gov.
- Report infractions to the Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods (IVAN) network at ivanfresno.org or by calling 559-396-3839.

While we are happy for Lanare, this is not the only community affected by illegal dumping. The Fresno County Sheriff's Office states that "illegal dumping sites are getting out of hand in Fresno County" and that they represent a significant problem as an environmental hazard affecting the quality of life.

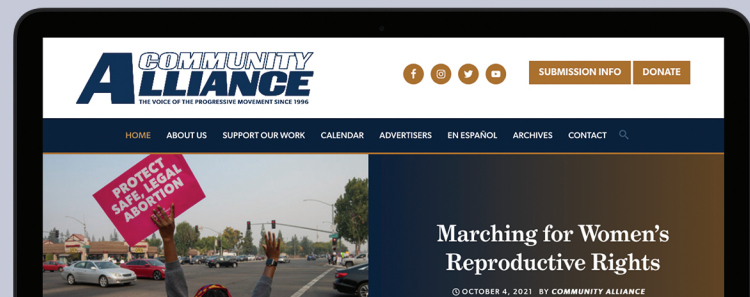
The escalation of this problem prompted the collaboration of the Sheriff's Office—specifically the Agricultural Task Force—and the Department of Public Works. These two agencies announced in May 2021 an allocation of \$150,000 over three years to have more staff to address this problem.

Three years after this announcement, the problem continues and anyone driving around rural areas can attest to it. Orchards, empty lots and sides of the roads are plagued with broken appliances, mattresses, tires and all sorts of trash.

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

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FCHS's Fields of Fresno AG TOUR

Fresno County Historical Society

Our **Fields of Fresno Ag Tour** season runs from February through November. Check-in will always start at the Kearney Mansion Museum at 7160 W. Kearney Blvd, Fresno, CA 93706 from 8:15AM to 8:40AM. Then you will hop on our spacious motor coach bus for a lively game of Ag Trivia and prizes with our Tour Director, Candice Hill, as you travel to three agricultural sites for curated tours from 8:40AM to 1:15PM. All tours include lunch and tasting at a local winery or beer garden. You will return to the Kearney Park by 1:15PM.

BOOK NOW

ValleyHistory.org/ag-tour

Tickets \$85 each

Call 559-777-4091 for Group and Member Pricing

Parking is included

2023 SCHEDULE | February 25th, April 29th, July 29th, August 26th, October 7th & November 18th

Tour are run rain or shine. Dates may be subject to change.

TOUR ITINERARY

The **Friday before Tour Day:** 3:00-4:30PM, visit Kearney Mansion Museum for history and wine!

Saturday Tour Day:

- 8:15AM Check-in at Kearney Mansion 7160 W. Kearney Blvd., Fresno, CA
- 8:40AM Board the Motor Coach & Welcome
- 9:15AM - 10:00AM Visit first ag site or farm
- 10:15AM - 11:00AM Visit second ag site or farm
- 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 OR visitfresnocounty.org/hotels. Note: You'll need to Uber/Lyft or drive/carpool to Kearney Park. When navigating, search Kearney Park.

MADE POSSIBLE BY:

For sponsorship & ticket inquiries email Candice Hill, at chill@valleyhistory.org

For the Love of Books

BY MIRANDA LARA

(Editor's note: March 3 is World Book Day, an annual event organized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to promote reading, publishing and copyrights. This date is increasingly important because of pressure by right-wing zealots to ban from schools books they consider "dangerous"—meaning books that could educate our youth.)

The first time I walked into a library, I was a star-struck seven-year-old wondering why the San Bernardino Public Library housed books, animals and a garden underneath one roof. At the time, it was not obvious that the library served a greater purpose than computer games and wild chinchillas in cages.

Years later, when I signed my name on my new library card for the Fig Garden branch in Fresno, the impact still went unnoticed. From poetry competitions and DIY ice cream workshops to career fairs and Wi-Fi-enabled vehicles, communities and politicians do not notice the importance of libraries. Libraries are pillars of our communities as a valuable resource.

My middle school years hold my favorite memories, and it isn't a coincidence that those years were spent in the school library. Every day, I would take my lunch, haul my heavy backpack from class and walk directly to the library.

What gave me the confidence to browse the countless titles, and to shamelessly share my poetry in English class, was the support of the school librarian, Ms. Lum, and her book club. As all school employees should strive to do, she empowered my ambition to become a writer and

encouraged me to show off my work with confidence and a proud sense of ownership.

The book club, formally known as Battle of the Books, provided me with an outlet to find my new favorite books and make new friends, and it introduced me to the world of nerdy competitions.

The importance of the Battle of the Books was not lost on me even at the time. This voluntary reading incentive program encourages young readers to improve their literacy and foster a love of reading. The idea was simple, but exciting.

Schools were provided a list of books for students to read, and at the end of the year a competition similar to a quiz bowl was hosted at a local university. I lived and breathed those books all year until we brought victory to our school two years in a row.

Programs such as Battle of the Books exist in different variations but with the same purpose—improving literacy rates in schools and creating a love for reading.

Librarians everywhere actively create educational environments to be more inclusive with this ideal intact. However, recent changes in our political climate have led to a war on books led by both parents and elected conservatives. Popular books such as *The Bluest Eye* and *The Hate U Give* were two of the most challenged books of 2022 for their "profanity" and "anti-white agenda."

School librarians in Texas have been given different lists of at least 80 books to remove from their libraries. Several of the listed books have been deemed "pornographic" because they discuss sexuality and gender identity. For example, *Lawn Boy* and *Gender Queer* appeared on multiple school districts' banned lists.

Nevertheless, librarians have become increasingly passionate and are actively fighting these bans. Texan librarians have started a freedom-fighting movement, known as #FReadom (or @FReadomFighters on Twitter), to challenge these lists and advocate for the often ignored voices of our children and youth.



When I applied to the master's program in library and information science at the University of Washington, I did so knowing that I would be walking into an unappreciated, underpaid profession.

What helped me make this decision was not only a love for books but also a love for my community and the importance of libraries. It is a career that can minimize knowledge gaps and provide essential resources for new generations.

Librarians can repair communities and are always fighting for the freedom of information. As a future children's librarian, I will join the fight to ensure that inclusive titles will always be available for curious students to flip through.

Eventually, I will give back the same confidence that Ms. Lum gave to me during the most important years of my life.

Miranda Lara is a recent graduate of UC Riverside and was recently admitted into the University of Washington's library and information science master's program. After working at an academic library for four years and another two years for afterschool programs, she plans to combine her two passions by becoming a children's librarian.

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United We Don't Stand

BY RUTH GADEBUSCH

"United We Stand" has long been a heralded phrase in the United States, but currently it describes anything but the condition of our country. We lose that feeling at our peril.

Make no mistake. This is more than ordinary disagreement. Our constitution was designed to provide for disagreement with respect that calls for compromise for the good of the whole.

This nation fought a war over disagreement. We have paid a great price for unification both in becoming an independent nation and in fighting a civil war.

Arguably, much of the discourse of today seems to have its roots in matters that we thought were settled by that war. We are changing the names of schools and destroying monuments recognizing that the honorees practiced and advocated for things that we now consider anathema.

A suggestion: Think of how future generations will look at what we have created. After all, it is the hope that society continues to develop into a more enlightened environment.

Yet, look at our society today. Instead of the carefully thought-out government we have so proudly proclaimed, on Jan. 6, 2021, we experienced a power play that we thought we were immune to, a power play that we disdainfully designate as banana republic action when in another land.

Instead of bringing us together to enforce the government that we have been developing for over two centuries we are more divided than ever. We are even split about prosecuting the culprits in what was

clearly an insurrection.

It has become a power attempt by one political party in which previously assumed responsible citizens refuse to consider any balance. Is there any name for it other than an irresponsible grab for power?

When one man, elected by a relatively small number of voters, in his desire to become Speaker of the House of Representatives, third in succession to the presidency, makes all manner of questionable commitments, or if you prefer, a selling of his soul, a bargain with the devil, what will be the result? It is hardly a path to unity.

Nor has it been just an occasional attorney, forgetting his/her oath, who partakes in legal action questioning elections for which there is not one iota of evidence of fraud. They have joined a former president who has insisted on flaunting all the rules of law as well as moral standards. This is a man trying more than one way to disregard any laws that put any restraints at all on him. How can it be for anything except personal power?

When the president of the nation, a president elected by the majority, sworn to be the leader for all of us, gives his State of the Union address and the Congress acts like misbehaving children, what does it portend for unity?

The office is due respect regardless, admittedly difficult when the president displays the character of the immediate previous holder of the office now spending his time further diminishing the office so we should hardly be surprised at the outcome.

Still, it seems there is no way to justify booing, bad language or other spoiled brat type behavior. It is particularly jarring when the president addressing Congress is known for his ethical years of service.

Such bad behavior as that displayed by the Congressional Republicans should be left for political rallies, or perhaps some sports events. Granted, it seems that even sports events deserve a certain amount of decorum.

It is a sad state of affairs when the president of the United States cannot speak before a joint session of Congress, and ultimately the American people, without jeering from those whom we have elected to come together to make laws appropriate for all of us sharing this land. Where are the adults?

It is frightening that these are the people who damn the president for compassion for immigrants—those so-called destroyers of our vaunted nation trying to escape the horrors created by humankind and/or Mother Nature in their homelands.

These misbehaving members of Congress, seemingly devoid of compassion, consider themselves as anointed to rule the nation in their own image, apparently the poor bowing to the rich! We even have a Congress member whose entire resume was fabricated, but members of his party welcome him.

As if this were not enough, the Supreme Court, a bedrock part of our tripartite government, is seemingly more rogue than we thought possible.

A premature leak on a decision and a wife of one justice involved in questionable action with a president whose action was under question by the court have come to light.

And now it has become public knowledge that the wife of the chief justice has received astronomical payments for work with corporations who have

cases before the court. We expect the Supreme Court to be the purest of the pure, but it has no code of personal behavior and obviously the justices do not have the judgment or the honor to excuse themselves from cases with such obvious ethical requirements.

Without doubt, there are more questions than answers at this time about the state of the union, but we had best be finding some answers if we do not want the nation, this nation, the hope of the world, to go the way of the Roman Empire, to use another common expression. It won't be easy, but it is necessary.

For people to peacefully exist together, and peacefully exist must be the goal, we have to find ways to consider the needs of all. In other words, United We Stand.

Having served in elected public office and various volunteer community organizations, Ruth Gadebusch, a former naval officer now in her ninth decade, retains an interest in helping Fresno be the best it can be.



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SIERRA CLUB TEHIPITE CHAPTER

More Water Will Not Bring San Joaquin Valley Salt-Impaired Farmland Back into Production

By Deirdre Des Jardins
 California Water Research (2/17/2020), Edited and updated by Gary Lasky, 2/18/2023.
<https://cah2oresearch.com/2020/02/17/more-water-will-not-bring-salt-impaired-land-in-the-san-joaquin-valley-back-into-production/>

Last month, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, bending to San Joaquin Valley agribusiness interests, issued an emergency drought declaration in the midst of record January storms. Why? To bring more water to San Joaquin Valley farms. This announcement set aside environmental regulations designed to protect water quality and endangered salmon from extinction. See Feb. 17, 2023 LA Times editorial, "Newsom's drought order amid wet winter threatens iconic California species." <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2023-02-17/editorial-newsoms-drought-order-amid-wet-winter-threatens-iconic-california-species>.

The Bay Delta's habitat has already been altered by salinity; seawater pushes inland when rivers are diverted to farms. When the Trump administration approved a sharp increase in federal water exports from the Delta to Valley farms in 2020, experts correctly predicted catastrophic impacts for migrating salmon. Increased Delta pumping to satisfy an unlimited thirst by

industrial growers for almonds and other water-intensive crops has brought profits to San Joaquin Valley west side growers. But impoverished local communities such as Huron and Mendota have not benefited.

Soil salinity on the Valley's west side occurs due to the peculiar character of the landscape. First, an impermeable clay layer lies below the surface. Second, roughly one-third of the Valley's irrigated land has naturally-occurring salts, including selenium, which can be deadly to fish and wildlife. A temporary solution is to flush the soil with irrigation water. But unless the soil is drained, groundwater trapped above the clay layer eventually rises into the root zone and kills crops. Salt can even appear on the soil as a white crust.

In 2002, the Westlands Water District received federal payments to retire 37,100 acres of farmland (58 square miles) containing high concentrations of selenium. But this was only the start; the Valley still has over 1,000 square miles of marginal farmland likely to become unprofitable due to salt impairment. Satellite data reveals 811 sq. mi. of land on the Valley's west side and in the Tulare Lake region of Kings County strongly or extremely impaired by salinity. Another 681 square miles is moderately impaired and could go out of production by 2040.

Growers have been following salt-impaired lands and reallocating surface water supplies to grow permanent crops on better land. Westlands' 2017 Water Management Plan Update shows a loss

of 418 sq. mi. from irrigated production since 1985; an additional 379 sq. mi. of agricultural land has been converted to non-irrigated uses, including dry farming, grazing, and solar power.

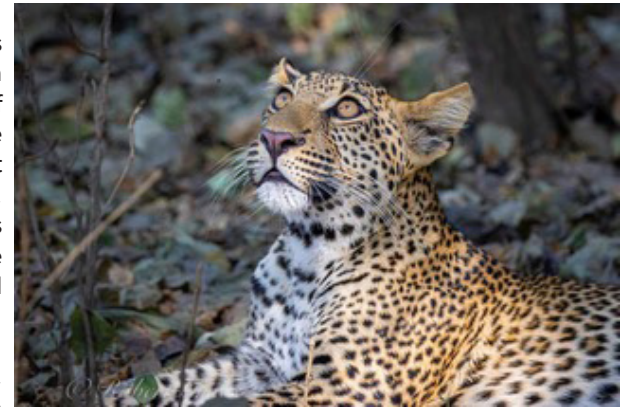
Meanwhile, local communities have been left to deal with blowing dust and the loss of local jobs. An example is the City of Huron, where 2 out of 5 residents live in poverty. The simple fact is, there is currently no financially viable way to bring the salt-impaired lands back into production.

Huron's Mayor, Rey León, sees the future of Huron in Westlands' planned 20,000-acre solar farm and the Valley's growing renewable energy industry. Renewable energy project construction and energy-efficiency projects created 105,400 jobs in the San Joaquin Valley 2002-2015 (UC Berkeley Labor Center). A 2017 study found that, of 1,862 entry-level solar jobs in Kern County, 43% were filled by workers from disadvantaged communities. In a February 14, 2020 Fresno Bee opinion piece, León stated:

We can save our Valley communities and create a better world for future generations [with] more rooftop solar and battery storage at our homes . . . solar and wind farms combined with large-scale energy storage . . . paired with . . . student scholarships, skills upgrading and employment. This approach will allow us to transition away from polluting fossil fuels once and for all while we uplift our community and quality of life.

Our Sierra Club members agree, and recognize that the future of Huron and other west side San Joaquin Valley

communities lies in a transition to a sustainable economy with good jobs — not in dead-end industrial agriculture, with its toxic legacy of salt-impaired farmland.



Tehipite Chapter Sierra Club **Zambia Safari Adventure** Thursday, March 16 at 7 PM. Note: This will be on a THURSDAY. In-person meeting: Woodward Park Library community room, 944 Perrin Ave, Fresno.

Traveler, photographer, and outdoor enthusiast, Robert Groos will focus his lens on his recent adventure in Zambia. In a series of action-oriented photos and close-up videography, you will witness wild animals in their native habitat undisturbed by the hordes of tourists that flock other safari destinations: lions, leopards, giraffe, zebra, elephants, hippos, buffalo, and birds. Learn about the ecosystem in Zambia's South Luangwa National Park.

Free and open to the general public. More information available at sierraclub.org/tehipite. Register there at the chapter web page if you'd like to receive an email reminder about the event.

A Government That Contributes to Peace Isn't Terrorist

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

The vice-president of Colombia, Francia Márquez Mina, came to Cuba for the 31st Havana International Book Fair, which this year celebrates Colombia as the guest country of honor.

In May 2022, Gustavo Petro was elected president and Márquez Mina vice-president of Colombia on the center-left Pacto Histórico ticket. This is the first time in two centuries that Colombia has had a progressive government. It is the first time that an Afrodescendent woman has been among the country's leaders.

Márquez Mina's presence in the country's leadership is a recognition and vindication of environmentalism—she is a Goldman Environmental Prize winner—of Black culture and marginalized people in Colombia, of women and of peace.

It is not the first time Márquez Mina has been in Cuba. During the negotiations between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) she was also present. "I went to Cuba myself as one of the fifth delegation of victims even though I do not consider myself a victim. I am a political activist who has been victimized, which I think is different from being an actual victim."

This time, as soon as Márquez Mina landed at the airport in Havana, she spoke to the press saying, "I came to Cuba more than six years ago as a victim of armed conflict with my dreams, hope and heart fixed on peace and expectations that the process taking place between the FARC and

the Colombian government could bring relief to many communities.

"I came here today with the same commitment.

"To return to Cuba as vice-president of the Republic of Colombia, after having come here some years ago as a member of the panel of victims in the peace dialogues between the Colombian government and the FARC, is evidence that in Colombia we are turning our dreams of total peace into reality. Of course, the role of Cuba on this path has been fundamental.

"From 2012 to 2016, Cuba served as the official seat of peace dialogues between the government of Colombia and the former guerrilla movement of the FARC. These were four years during which our country was able to rely on a space to think and rethink about itself from the viewpoint of a new vision in which policies of life, not death, allowed us to mark out a more hopeful direction for those who suffer from war and for those who come afterward, and those of us who participated in the panels of dialogue on behalf of civil society can vouch for the fact that this was a process done through hard work but also through conscience.

"I can never cease to be grateful to Cuba, its leaders and its people, for having been the site for this process. And for its readiness to support the interests of peace in our country.

"It is unjust that a country like Cuba, that has contributed so much to the peace of Colombia, should be part of a list of countries that support terrorism. Today, from Havana, I declare my support for this island nation to be removed from that list.

"I believe that Colombia owes a debt to Cuba."

Márquez Mina explained that this debt is related to the efforts of Cuba to be a home for peace dialogues. "We know that Cuba was placed on the Sponsors of Terrorism list for helping Colombia to achieve a commitment to peace, so we will not spare our efforts in continuing to demand on behalf of our government that Cuba be taken off this list," she said, adding that "a government that contributes to peace cannot be called terrorist."

Nine days before leaving office, Trump designated Cuba a State Sponsor of Terrorism. Two years later, Biden has kept Cuba on the terrorism blacklist. Ironically, Cuba has been a victim of U.S.-based terrorism—not a sponsor of terrorism. There is no credible evidence to support the designation, which is aimed at devastating Cuba's economy by cutting it off from international credit and investment.

For more than 52 years, the FARC and the series of right-wing governments of Colombia were at war. Neither side was able to achieve a decisive military victory.

In 2012, formal negotiations began to establish peace, with a preliminary General Accord, establishing commitments, an agenda and conditions. The goal was an agreement that the Colombian government would cease to attack the rebels, and the FARC would give up its armed struggle and instead participate in the political process.

To create conditions in which this could be possible, the parties agreed on a limited, five-point agenda that



Cuban Vice-President Salvador Valdés Mesa greets Colombian Vice-President Francia Márquez Mina.
Photo courtesy of Granma

would include land policies and agrarian reform, political participation, the end of the conflict (this would include, among other things, questions of ceasefires and cessation of hostilities, security guarantees and addressing paramilitary violence), drug production and trafficking, and truth and reparations for victims. The negotiations took place in Havana over a four-year period, and Cuba and Norway were the guarantors.

Subsequent talks took place in the same site and with the same guarantors and similar agreements as the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) remained as the last segment of organized armed struggle in Colombia. The ELN negotiating team has been in Cuba since the 2019 breakdown of talks. The then-government of Ivan Duque demanded their return despite the agreements.

The current government of Colombia supports the resumption of negotiations and rejects any use of Colombia by the United States as a pretext for including Cuba on the U.S. list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

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

Take Action!

Stand with Cuba, with the new Colombia, with justice. Demand that Cuba be removed from the U.S. List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

- E-mail President Biden via www.whitehouse.gov/contact/.
- Call the White House: special call-in days, March 15–16, from 9 a.m. to noon; Pacific Comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.
- For more information and other ways to take action: acere.org.

Are Students Achieving Their Greatest Potential?

BY STEVEN ROESCH

On the marquee in front of a Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) elementary school, there stands a bold and spirited message: "Achieving our greatest potential."

It would be wonderful if that were always true—if the district were indeed supporting students as they gain the skills and knowledge to make sense out of their lives and enter the adult world of work and responsibility with confidence.

Many teachers, though, have grave doubts that students' potential is in fact being consistently achieved.

Instead, they've argued, some trends in education actually undermine students' chances of getting the most out of what formal public education could, and should, offer them.

In a November 2022 *Community Alliance* article, we addressed how "diploma downsizing" has become part and parcel of the FUSD's procedures. One element of such downsizing is so-called credit recovery, which allows students who would otherwise fail courses to "earn" credits toward graduation by taking quickie "classes" in front of a computer screen.

We also reported on AB 104, which has allowed many students to receive high school diplomas even though they hadn't earned the number of credits that are typically required to earn diplomas.

Perhaps the most important element of diploma downsizing, though, is simple grade inflation.

It's nothing especially new.

In his book *A Slap in the Face*, philosopher William B. Irvine considers the self-esteem movement that got under way in the United States in the late 1980s, one that sought to improve the quality of individuals' lives and society at large

by bolstering people's sense of themselves. Achieving this goal came to involve praising students—and downplaying negative feedback that could undermine their self-esteem.

And so the devaluation of grades became commonplace. Irvine notes that between 1968 and 2004 "the percentage of students receiving As in high school went from 17.6 percent to 47.5 percent."

Supposedly standardized measurements of academic prowess were hardly immune from this trend. In 1994, SAT scores were altered so that students earning a 500 in that year would have earned only a 424 earlier.

Even in the early 2010s, he reports, some high school graduating classes sported 40 or more valedictorians, something that would have been unheard of before.

Nowadays, the equity-in-grading movement is another way assessment of student work is watered down. Proponents of this approach argue that students who get a zero on an exam should still receive 50%; doing otherwise would be "unfair" and discourage them from making progress in the future.

"We have to give the students hope" is the way that one high school principal in the FUSD justifies this philosophy.

And so turning a blind eye to gaps in student learning becomes interpreted as a way of supporting young people, of building their self-esteem.

Going hand in hand with this perspective is the complaint that low grades "punish" students. It's often leveled at teachers whose class rosters show many students with Ds and Fs—that they're grading "harshly." Objective assessment of student work becomes vilified as something damaging students.

All of this becomes especially problematic and dangerous in a time of Covid-induced learning loss.

What would help students in the long run, one could argue, would be objective, straightforward assessments of their needs in, say, math or English courses. Instead, the ongoing march of grade inflation conceals students' true learning needs. Because many report cards now look impressive, it appears as if learning loss hasn't been that bad after all and that the students have indeed made real progress.

But the accoutrements of success don't always reflect actual success.



Many teachers have grave doubts that students' potential is in fact being consistently achieved.
Photo courtesy of The Commons

Prodded by her administrators, one instructor experimented with the equity-in-grading methods in her classes, entering 50% for students who had actually earned zero points on an assignment or exam.

She found that lower-achieving students tended to like the system—after all, they were abruptly getting better grades—but that others felt slighted and complained that their efforts weren't being properly rewarded.

Just like diplomas, grades in school aren't what they used to be. They can't always be counted on to accurately reflect the abilities and accomplishments of students.

But has a grade issued recently in an FUSD course ever been outright bogus and fraudulent?

Unfortunately, yes. One instructor shared a situation that happened to him a few years ago. He was teaching high school seniors that year, and one of his students had completed, literally, no work at all.

Three days before the end of the second semester the student came to him and asked if there was something that he could do to earn a passing grade. The instructor—who'd offered him, along with all other students, opportunities to

Continues on page 16

Climate Whiplash Is in California's Future

Continued from page 7

California's emergency response agencies and residents alike will need to ramp up their efforts considerably to mitigate the danger and damage that will be caused by even more powerful storms in the future.

Reid enumerated several ways in which state agencies could be more helpful, such as financial aid in cleanup efforts, more accurate and detailed weather forecasts, improved warning systems and hazard mitigation funding for local governments.

Rural regions of the state have been especially vulnerable to damage and economic losses by the intense storm events. Huron in western Fresno County has been impacted over the years by floods inundating and damaging State Route 269, a critical highway for the town's residents and its agricultural economy.

Whenever nearby Pasajero Creek overflowed, people were forced to drive miles out of the way to detour or were exposed to dangerous road conditions and even fatal accidents. In 2017, Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula secured \$18 million from the California Transportation Commission to build a bridge that would alleviate the problem.

In the future, such local and state collaboration will be necessary to secure critical infrastructure.

Swain's ArkStorm 2.0 research reveals the probability in our time of an atmospheric river event like the renowned 1862 storms that flooded vast regions of the state and devastated the economy.

"It would involve a temporary or even medium-term displacement of millions of people [along with] major and long-term destruction of transportation infrastructure, affecting essentially all of California's economic sector simultaneously, because it wouldn't just be confined to one major city like a big earthquake probably would, but it would affect Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, agriculture, Silicon Valley, tourism [and] the movie industry all at once."

As the state grapples with the impacts of widespread storm wreckage, Swain cautions that climate extremes of flood and drought are two sides of the same coin. He emphasizes that the state's policies and disaster response planning should be aimed at co-managing both the overabundance and the scarcity of water. The key to a sustainable future in California, he suggests, will be leveraging one disaster to reduce the risk of the other.

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

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Interfaith Scholar Weekend Focuses on Inclusive Religious Freedom

BY JIM GRANT

Since 1998, the Interfaith Scholar Weekend has been bringing scholars from diverse faiths to Fresno to share with our local interfaith community the points of similarities and differences that our many faiths possess. It has been a collaboration of

- congregations (Bodhi Oak Zen Sangha, Community United Church of Christ, First Congregational Church of Fresno, Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, Sophia's House, St. James Episcopal Cathedral, Roman Catholic Diocese of Fresno, Second Church of Christ Scientist, St. Paul Catholic Newman Center, Temple Beth Israel, Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno and Wesley United Methodist Church),
- organizations (American Friends Service Committee, Human Rights Coalition of the Central Valley, Interfaith

Alliance of Central California, Sikh Council of Central California) and

- universities (Fresno State University, Fresno Pacific University and Fresno City College).

These entities have brought to the Central Valley scholars from Islamic, Jewish, Christian, Unitarian Universalist, Hindu and Sikh traditions around great issues to which these scholars have dedicated their lives.

For the past two years, the Interfaith Scholar Weekend was conducted via Zoom, but on March 10–12 there is a return to a normal in-person weekend with a special speaker, Rev. Paul Brandeis Raushenbush, the new president and CEO of the Interfaith Alliance, which is based in Washington, D.C.

On Friday, Rev. Raushenbush will start the weekend at the St. Paul Catholic Newman Center (1572 E. Barstow Ave.) at 6 p.m. with a free lecture, "Celebrating Inclusive Religious Freedom for Our Diverse Nation." This will be responded to by Dr. Andrew Fiala, Dr. Veena Howard, Dr. Ken Hansen and Sukaina Hussain, each from their own perspective and experience of "inclusive religious freedom."

On Saturday, the weekend continues at Temple Beth Israel (6622 N. Maroa Ave.) from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. After breakfast, there will be sacred readings from Judaism, Islam, Christianity and Sikhism and discussion of how their texts support these faiths in difficult times such as we face today.

Later in the morning, Rev. Raushenbush will present the Interfaith Alliance's report on "Big Tech, Hate and Religious Freedom Online." The report reflects the Interfaith

Alliance's four core values—affirming religious pluralism and celebrating difference, protecting minority rights, defending separation of church and state, and engaging civility in public debate—which are needed in our polarized society and challenged democracy now more than ever.

After a lunch provided by Temple Beth Israel, attendees will brainstorm as a community and share the most important challenges we face as communities and the most valuable resources we can bring to address them. These challenges and resources will be recorded for deeper work in a follow-up session in the near future.

Saturday is the only day with a fee: \$10 for students and \$50 for non-students with scholarships available if requested.

On Sunday, many will join the community at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno for the 10:30 a.m. service at which Rev. Raushenbush will preach on "Shall the Christian Nationalists Win? The Critical Role of Congregations in Protecting Our Diverse Democracy."

We hope you will participate for at least part of this important weekend.

Jim Grant is the chair of the Interfaith Scholar Weekend Committee. Contact him at jimgrantbc@gmail.com.

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

Are Students Achieving Their Greatest Potential?

Continued from page 14

make up tests and extra credit earlier on—let him know that no, it was too late to turn a zero into something worth more than an F.

The next day, the boy's counselor dropped by the classroom. He asked if there really wasn't anything that could be done so that the boy could earn a passing grade and thus get his diploma.

"The mom's breathing down my neck," the counselor let him know.

The boy's parents were litigious. They'd sued the district before and were prepared to do so again.

Going to summer school to retake the course and pass it would have been an option, but the parents wanted their son to graduate and go on to college without any delay.

The teacher stuck to his guns.

He felt the rising pressure from a vice principal and then from his principal, and he pondered what he should do. Soon he'd have to formally declare this individual's grade, and it seemed fraudulent to make up some percentage that the student had ostensibly earned—say 60%.

He landed on a solution that, for him, was satisfactory. When entering his official grades, he gave this individual an A+ along with zero percentage points. (A percentage isn't required for the grade but is a part of the Atlas computerized grading system that the FUSD uses.) Nobody in the administration commented on this decision, and the boy was able to graduate.

The district has recently been sharing equity-in-grading materials with teachers. Clearly, elements of the district leadership find much to like in this approach.

Irvine, as might be expected, would see things differently. He draws a distinction between self-esteem—feeling good about yourself—and a "secure self-image," something that's based on a fairly accurate sense of one's actual strengths and weaknesses.

As he writes, "Negative feedback about a student's classroom performance is painful, but it can motivate her to study harder. In the absence of such feedback, a student can take it easy.

"She knows, after all, that despite not opening her books, she will get good grades, will be promoted to the next grade level [and] will ultimately graduate."

One Fresno teacher put it this way: "Don't [administrators] see that by holding students to a higher standard we are setting them up for success? If we expect them to learn, they will learn. I don't have the mentality...of giving something for nothing. That makes zero sense; we are setting our kids up for failure in my mind."

Not to mention not helping students to actually achieve their potential.

Steven Roesch is a retired bilingual teacher who has lived in Fresno since 1985.

Draft Resistance Leader David Harris Dies

BY MIKE RHODES

David Harris died on Feb. 6 after battling lung cancer. Harris was a national leader of the draft resistance movement who had strong ties to Fresno. He graduated from Fresno High and returned with his wife Joan Baez in support of the local Vietnam antiwar movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

He returned as a speaker at the 50 Years of Resistance event held at Fresno's Unitarian Universalist Church in 2019. Joel Eis, a key organizer of the event, said that he "knew David as a personal friend, a mentor and a comrade. David Harris challenged us by his example to act on what we knew was right.

"The government's view was that citizens were to be used for corporate gain by taxing our labor or sending us to kill and die on their battlefields. David showed us that this was rotten to the core.



David Harris spoke at the 50 Years of Resistance event held at Fresno's Unitarian Universalist Church on June 22, 2019. Photo by Peter Maiden

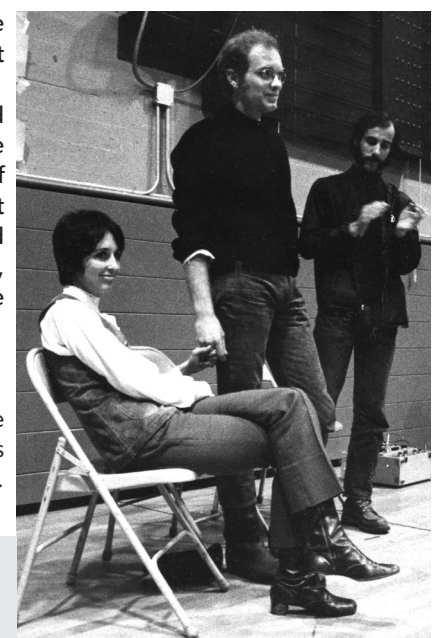
"What is time in prison compared to the unpardonable sin of killing people we did not know for corporate profit?"

Baez posted this on her Facebook page. "David Harris died last night. As he was approaching the precipice of his time here, perhaps already out of hearing range, I reminded him softly that our short and tumultuous marriage of so many years past had been a success, because of the son we'd created, and because after the dust had settled we became and remained the closest of friends.

"I already miss his being on this earth."

Mike Rhodes is a writer for the Community Alliance newspaper and author of the book *Dispatches from the War Zone*, about homelessness in Fresno. Contact him at mikerhodes@comcast.net.

Joan Baez and David Harris at a concert in support of the Fresno Draft Resistance movement in 1969. Photo courtesy of the Fresno Bee





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The Central Valley Progressive PAC Is Celebrating Women's History Month

The Central Valley Progressive PAC supports progressive women running for political office. We want the women we endorse to have political power, which will lead to social, economic and environmental justice in our community.

For example, **Genoveva Islas** was endorsed by the CVPPAC, we gave her as much financial support as possible and our members worked on her campaign—knocking on doors, phone banking, etc. Veva has been a powerful voice on the FUSD school board, tirelessly advocating for progressive values. Veva is a member of the CVPPAC.

Nasreen Johnson is also a member of the CVPPAC and received our endorsement. Johnson is the president of the State Center Community College District's board of trustees and has been a strong advocate for homeless youth. When Fresno city's only homeless youth shelter shut down in November 2022, Nasreen was there with progressive solutions that will solve this problem.

It was an honor to endorse and support **Elsa Mejia** who was sworn in as the representative of District 5 on the Madera City Council. Elsa is the first Latina of indigenous origin to win an election in the United States. Her grandfather was a Bracero and her parents came from Oaxaca, Mexico, to California to work in the fields.

Elsa was able to secure a community center where the *Community Alliance* will hold a Stop the Hate Town Hall on March 28. Her connections with the Oaxaca community will help make this event a success.

The CVPPAC has endorsed dozens of great women candidates over the years, including the following:

- **Magdalena Gomez** is on the State Center Community College District, Trustee Area 4
- **Annalisa Perea** is a member of the Fresno City Council representing District 1
- **Esmeralda Soria** was a Fresno City Council member and was recently elected to State Assembly District 27



Elsa Mejia

- YES, I want to join the CVPPAC**
- Enclosed is \$100 for one year's membership.
- I would prefer to pay monthly (\$8.33).
- Student/low-income rate: \$20 a year.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 E-mail _____ Phone _____
 Employer _____ Occupation _____

Make checks payable to: Central Valley Progressive PAC, P.O. Box 5845, Fresno, CA 93755. To pay with Paypal or credit card, go to www.cvppac.org.

THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROGRESSIVE PAC

These times call for creativity and imagination, led by those most harmed by enduring structures of violence and oppression.

Join us for our upcoming national encuentro (gathering), "Salt of the Earth: Cultivating Climate, Food, and Land Justice." This national encuentro will celebrate Earth Day from Friday, April 21 to Saturday, April 22, 2023, at the Madera Community College 30277 Ave 12, Madera, California 93638.

With a focus on the radical potential of cultural work that centers land, farming, cooking, and food culture, the "Salt of the Earth" encuentro will:

- Bring recognition to the Indigenous immigrants in the region who cultivate the land that produces approximately 25% of the food that feeds the U.S. population.
- Raise awareness surrounding food insecurity amid agricultural plenty.
- Promote opportunities for immigrants and refugees to share experiences and build connections in working toward a just Central Valley economy.

Funds raised through the conference will help AFSC launch the next phase of the Pan Valley Institute (PVI)—the first-ever immigrant and refugee-led popular education center in California's Central Valley.

You can find registration and sponsorship opportunities at this link <https://panvalleyinstitute.org/home/salt-of-the-earth-lp/> For more information contact Minerva Mendoza mmendoza@afsc.org or call (559) 222-7678.



Salt of the Earth



A national encuentro of the AFSC Pan Valley Institute

Cultivating Climate, Food, and Land Justice

April 21–22, 2023

Madera Community College · 30277 Ave. 12 · Madera, CA

American Friends Service Committee's Pan Valley Institute



American Friends Service Committee

THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY THE PAN VALLEY INSTITUTE

Fresno Center for Nonviolence

March 2023



Edited by Richard Gomez

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

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In Memory of: *María Telesco August 7, 1933–January 30, 2023*

On January 30, 2023, we lost a dear friend and past President of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Maria grew up in New York and became involved with U.S. death penalty laws in high school in the early 1950s when Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were tried and executed in Sing Sing in 1953, near where her family lived at the time. Maria came to Fresno many years later. An established activist, she joined Amnesty International, Death Penalty, Focus (DPF), FCNV, and California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty, and continued her work. She organized a local DPF chapter, and later, the Friends and Families of Murder Victims for Reconciliation. Maria is survived by her daughter, Denyse, whom she loved dearly. We honor Maria, our dear leader and mentor, with the following sentiments.



I got to know Maria because someone gave her my number when she was organizing an event for Friends and Families of Murder Victims for Reconciliation and needed help. I knew from the outset I wanted to work with her in the future. I'd long been against the death penalty (which had long ago been abolished in my country, England). I started learning a lot from her about the difficulties involved in prison reform in the United States. Shortly after I met her, Maria joined the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, concentrating on prison and prisoner issues. I found her to be dedicated (actually rather bossy!) but so sincere in her wish for prison improvement and, of course, the abolition of the death penalty that one forgave her. I miss her sense of humor, often irony, and her friendship over many years. She did not "suffer fools gladly," and in this respect we both learned a lot from our friendship with our late friend Richard Stone! Her health issues hampered her so much in recent years, but instead of giving up she kept fighting for what she believed using whatever tools that were available to her.

—Angela Price

I met Maria in 2015 when I joined the Fresno Center for Nonviolence Board of Directors. She made me feel welcome from the start and did not hide the fact that she was glad I was so young joining the board (at 44, it had been a while since someone called me young). I sensed a toughness to her and could tell she was no-nonsense when it came to, well, pretty much anything. I was inspired by her work and dedication to ending the death penalty, humanizing the Prison Industrial Complex and her dedication to peace, social and economic justice, which are goals of FCNV. Unfortunately, I did not get to know Maria well; we did not get to work on any projects together and I only got glimpses of her sense of humor. But her strength of character leaves a lasting imprint, and that is fortunate for anyone who knew her.

—Rita Bell, President, Fresno Center for Nonviolence

I met Maria in 2003 when I joined the board of the Fresno Center of Nonviolence. I was impressed with her dedication to prisoners, prison issues and her stand against the death penalty. I looked forward to her monthly reports on her visits with prisoners. I joined her at vigils that she organized for prisoners on death row. She was always outspoken and had a dry sense of humor. I miss Maria.

—Dan Y.

I met an angel who changed my life, Maria Telesco. We first connected in 2009 when I was serving a 14-year sentence at a Californian prison in Avenal. After five years of incarceration, I was struggling to hold onto my emotional well-being and my life felt hopeless. Desperate for a connection to the outside world, I found an article written by Maria about the abolition of the death penalty in a copy of the Community Alliance gifted to prisoners. I was struck by her passion for social justice and wrote to her about my desire to start a men's self-help group within the prison. To my surprise, she responded and we began a collaboration that lasted several years.

Together, we worked with organizations such as the Fresno Center for Nonviolence and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno to promote tolerance, inclusion and positive thinking within the prison walls. Our relationship grew from a working partnership to a close friendship, and Maria became a mentor and an inspiration to me. Maria had a strong and determined personality, but she was also kind and compassionate. She would often close our meetings by leading us in singing her favorite song, "Amazing Grace."

When I was released from prison, I would travel to visit Maria regularly. I remarried, became a welcome member of my wife's family and worked hard to expand our family business. I now volunteer and work with various local organizations to give back to my community.

As Maria grew older and her mobility and mental acuity declined, I continued to visit her and was grateful for her influence in my life. She recently passed away, and I can't help but miss her amazing presence in my world. But I take solace knowing that she was able to achieve something very important. Her life became the embodiment of the virtues of that beautiful song "Amazing Grace":

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see."

Thank you, Maria, your amazing integrity helped me find the path back home. You are my angel of mercy. I love you.

—CJ, a former prisoner turned productive citizen

Maria has been and will be missed by more than people will know. She didn't want a fuss, but she does want everyone to know that she loves you and not to mourn her. Of course, she would want us all to get off our asses and get back to organizing and making this a better world. There are plenty of problems and she dealt with a few. Just try to help one problem at a time and not to worry about the rest.

—Editor



**88.1 FM
KFCF**

Stir It UP!

Wednesdays at 3 p.m.

Next Show:
March 8



Our March radio show will be hosted by Josh Shurley with guest TBA.

For more information, call (559) 237-3223 on Monday, Wednesday or Friday or visit www.centerfornonviolence.org.

In February, host Josh Shurley's guest was Paulina Cruz from the *Community Alliance* newspaper. To hear again, visit <https://on.soundcloud.com/ZVaAA>.

In January, just before the Martin L. King Jr. Holiday, host Josh 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.'s life and struggle for racial, global and social justice and how its impacts reverberate through to today. To hear again, visit <https://soundcloud.com/joshua-shurley/stir-it-up-january-11-2023>.

Donbas: In the Line of Fire

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

Donbas, an abbreviation for the toponym “Donetsk coal basin,” is an umbrella term applied to two regions of Ukraine: Luhansk (aka Luhanshchyna) and Donetsk (aka Donetskhchyna).

“These territories were and are Ukraine albeit perverted by the Soviet ideology,” explains Olga Kryazhich, a Ukrainian author and scholar.

“It’s a good example of the Soviet mentality, which wipes away national distinctions and identity. The language was twisted [and] traditions eradicated and replaced with the cultish mentality when the area was part of the USSR.

“Yet, at all times, Ukrainian roots sprouted through. In villages, people spoke and still speak Ukrainian. The historical evidence of the Ukrainian origin of Donbas is indisputable.

“In my opinion, the very concept of Donbas will be obsolete after the war: There will be just Ukrainian Luhanshchyna and Donetskhchyna.”

Kryazhich, whose apartment was bombed by the Russian military, says that “the destroyed cities will be reborn but they will not be the same. Some things will never be: the old photos that burned along with my apartment, my grandma’s porcelain that was smashed by the Russian missile along with the wall of the building.

“I used to live in Sievierodonetsk, a city from which only ruins are left. I will never be able to rebuild what was ruined, and I don’t know where I will live.

“Russia left me homeless; it literally took away my home, but it could not take away Ukraine from me. My home is Ukraine. It’s inside of me. I am not moving to another country at such a hard time, and I will do everything I can to speed up victory.”

“Donbas is either in the line of fire or captured by the enemy. A lot of people from these territories have left,” said Serhyi Zhadan, the most prominent Ukrainian novelist and poet, an essayist, a literary translator, a rock musician and the author of seven award-winning novels.

Lyuba Yakimchuk, another celebrated Ukrainian poet, playwright and screenwriter, and author of the poetry book *Apricots of Donbas*, had to relocate from Donbas to the Kyiv region when the Russian Federation’s proxies first started hostilities in her birthplace. In 2014, the Russian Federation annexed Crimea; its regular troops and proxies occupied parts of Donbas. Yakimchuk had to build a new home. The Russians came to seize it again on Feb. 24, 2022, but failed.

“I was born and grew up in the industrial part of Luhanshchyna,” Yakimchuk said. “I miss our Eastern steppes and terricons—the piles of minerals shaped like Egyptian pyramids—terribly. I also miss apricots, of which we have endless amounts.

“In my house in Luhanshchyna, an occupant has been living for many years. I hope that they bomb my old home so that my parents nor I have any more hopes to return. It is impossible to live fully if you always turn back to the past. That’s why I am looking into the future.”

Olena Stepova, a multi-genre writer and blogger from Donbas, had to relocate to a small village in the center of Ukraine. She shared, “Something died inside of me in March 2014 when I saw people in our city waving Russian Federation flags.

“Russian propaganda destroyed not only everything Ukrainian. It also destroyed the most important thing—humanity. Looking at the photos of Donetsk, I saw how it was dying, degrading. One day it was a modern city, a 2014 city. Today, it is the city from the 1980s.

“I do not want to go there, in this dark, gray, gloomy place. After the ‘Russian world’ arrived, everything got so dirty. Dirt is everywhere: on the streets, inside of people. It’s the Soviet in them, the world in which a smile or being sincere turns you into a foreign spy.

“It’s a poison of sorts, the poison that transforms people forever. For me, it’s just territory that should be liberated.”

Iya Kiva, a poet, translator and journalist of Jewish descent, born in Donetsk, just like her mom, told a story of her ancestors. Her grandparents’ generation came from all over Ukraine, ending up in Donetskhchyna due to forced relocation during Holodomor (“The Great Famine”) or attempting to run from the Holocaust.

“Forced displacement due to the war cuts off normal and usual life from you as if it was something unnecessary, redundant, vain, something that you’ll never need,” said Kiva.

“I haven’t been to Donetsk since 2014, and I don’t know if I can ever find myself at home again or if there will be a place to return. When it is over eight years, you cannot speak of this state as temporary. And it is definitely not the same as losing a home because of a flood or fire.

“There is no feeling of accident or injustice—you feel abuse instead as if a hump on your back deforms your every step and move. All the time, you feel the Russian violence that has changed the trajectory of your life.

“After Feb. 24, the notion of home has gained even more relativity for me. When the shelling of Donetsk and the region became regular and ruthless, there was a feeling that my city would be razed to the ground.

“I mean the city as material reality because Donetsk, as my city, Donetsk before the occupation and the war, exists only in my memory. When I think about the city of my



A devastated home in Donbas. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

childhood, I realize that I still remember my home phone number, although I can’t share it with people anymore.”

In January 2023, the author visited the biggest hospital in the Donetsk region, located in Kramatorsk. It treats mostly wounded military, although the doctors still attend to civilians.

Vasyl, 26, had just finished med school when the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine started. He is now performing surgeries around the clock for days on end. He said that anywhere from 10 to 80 wounded are delivered to his ward from the front line near Bakhmut.

Andriy, an orthopedic surgeon and an aspiring rock singer in his early 30s, left his practice and band in Lviv and managed his department, in addition to amputating limbs. He said that playing guitar and speaking to his daughters helped him cope.

Oleksiy Yalovenko, the hospital’s general manager, said that the full-scale war had changed everything in his life and thanked charities from many countries for support and for providing much-needed equipment. Within two hours of the author’s visit, five severely wounded soldiers were rushed to the ICU. A week after the visit, the area around the hospital was bombed, and residential buildings were damaged, and civilians were killed and wounded.

In villages near Vuhledar, one of the hottest spots at the front in February 2022, shelling continued nonstop. In Bohoyavlenka, a Russian missile hit a residential building. The earth was on fire, and black smoke rose into the sky, where a drone fight was ongoing.

In Novoukrainka village, Nina, a pensioner who had resided there since 1984, her three dogs at her feet, explained why she did not want to leave. She left her home for one month in March 2022 but returned in April. She was too homesick.

As explosions rocked the ground, she said, “I believe in Ukraine. We will survive. We are a strong nation. We will win.”

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).



Olga Kryazhich’s apartment. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

Protest in Fresno Against the War in Ukraine

Peace Fresno and the local Libertarian Party sponsored a rally at Blackstone and Nees avenues on Feb. 18 against the war in Ukraine. The demonstrators called for cutting off all military aid to Ukraine and for a negotiated end to the conflict. Fresno was one of 19 cities to hold simultaneous protests; the largest was in Washington, D.C. The protests were called “Rage Against the War Machine.”

Photos by Peter Maiden



Importance of Public Art in Small Towns

BY BRISSA REYES

If you go to the corner of Sheridan and Valley View streets in Selma, right off Highway 99, you'll find the local Boys and Girls Club decorated by a large orange butterfly and a pair of hands holding the soil. Alongside are a stack of books, grapes, raised fists, Aztec imagery and corn that is still in the process of coming to life.

This mural is being worked on by 559 Mural Project, a collective of activists working to address injustices and inequalities through art in Fresno County towns. A part of their mission is to empower and spark community dialogue, or conversation, with each mural.

Although movements for change have long been present in these small rural towns, recent events have sparked momentum for such community artwork.

During the global pandemic and social unrest, Selena Martinez-Mak, a recent master's graduate, felt the ripples of injustice across the country. She had the idea of murals for a while, and was inspired by other artists such as Vicki Filgas Treviño. The murder of George Floyd was a catalyst for her community organizing in Selma and Kingsburg.

At the time, she thought, "Let's try to create art that sparks conversations, that isn't just pretty and is agricultural, but is culturally representative and socially relevant to the issues today. So that's how it got started with me and Sirina."

While in college, co-founder Sirina Resendez was introduced to social justice organizing through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). She ran for City Council in Kingsburg in 2018, afterward connecting with Martinez-Mak to create a grassroots community group with high school friends called Central Valley Allies for Change.

One day, the founders reached out to their friends on Facebook to gather around Kingsburg's city hall in solidarity with the Black Lives Matters movement, partnering with a local youth group called Make a Change. Later, their group branched out on its own to do racial equity work alongside art.

"Holding a space in Kingsburg saying we see this, we recognize this, we are not okay with this. The way that Black Americans are being treated here in America. It was powerful," said Resendez.

The organization has grown its network of artists and now has murals in Del Rey, Selma and Reedley. But why are these murals so important to small rural towns? Why is it important to have art in public spaces?

Miguel "Mikey" Blanco, a native of Selma, has always been a part of the arts and is working on the most recent mural titled "Educate to Elevate." He works full-time at an agricultural company and has two little ones. Despite his full schedule, he always made time for art on the side and never wanted to let go of his passion.



Muralist Michael Vasquez. Photo courtesy of Michael Vasquez



Brandi Nuse-Villegas and Nicole Jimenez taking a break from painting. Photo by Brissa Reyes

He is excited for the upcoming piece, saying it's about "never forgetting where we came from. I love that we have an image of hands growing out of soil because that's where it stems from. The hardworking hands of Mexican people who are just trying to get ahead and make something for themselves, for their children."

These small rural communities have rich histories of labor movements and migration, but often that story is not told or forgotten.

"Murals anywhere can teach people about their history," says Michael Vasquez, another collaborating artist.

Vasquez, izeilillustrations on Instagram, worked on a piece titled "Cultural Awakenings." Located on a corner of Morro Avenue in Del Rey, the flowers and eye-catching patterns are vibrant and capture the area's history.

The mural features inspiration from the Yokut indigenous peoples who inhabited the land and are still here to this day and the Masumoto family to represent Japanese-Americans and the history of internment camps in California during World War II.

Part of Vasquez's work was holding a painting and drawing event for the local Boys and Girls Club to engage the community. This allowed him to get an idea of what the local residents wanted to see in their town.

"So that's the idea, expressing the beauty of what the Central Valley is right now and also expressing the history of what it has gone through and continues to go through."

On the mural project's most recent piece, lead artist and Fresno State graduate student Brandi Nuse-Villegas also used a community-driven approach to illustrate the mural.

"I think one thing that is important about this mural is that it reflects what the community wants...Part of this process was going out to the neighborhood and the community to get their feedback on what goes into the mural. It isn't just trying to bring in an idea, it is deeply involving the community to create a mural that reflects them."

She continues, "As an artist this is the chance for me to do the kind of art that I feel is important to me. I get to put my creativity and artistic expression to these things. I feel like I'm partnering with a collective voice to express and elevate these important issues with social justice and community justice."

The current mural is also being worked on by artists Blanco and Nicole Jimenez. Jimenez hopes that the mural can promote the idea of education in the area. "For me personally, I have a family history of farming. And agriculture is a huge part of the Central Valley, so the tribute to the farmworkers as well was a really big thing."

"For me it has a lot to do with pride and loving who you are and where you're from and in no way having shame in that," Blanco adds. I think that's very important.

"A lot of people grow up and get out of the area and get out of the situation they're in and completely ignore or forget it. But I think there is beauty in where we come from and how hard we have to work to get where we are."

"They [559 Mural Project] have succeeded in doing something that is very important, which is to address social justice," says Nuse-Villegas. "But, also, I think a big part of that social justice is recognizing and acknowledging the people in the community, their history, their struggles, their dreams. To really see them. Really seeing the community and reflecting that through art."

"I believe that's a huge part of their vision and the 559 Mural Project have done that with several of their murals...I'm glad that these pieces reflect the heart and the story and the voice of the people in the community."

Brissa Reyes is a recent college graduate and facilitator for the community-based project Block-by-Block Reading Circles. She is based in the greater Fresno area and loves music.

Rogue Festival Returns March 3-11

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

The Rogue Festival, Fresno's most uncontrolled performing arts event, returns to the Tower District March 3-11 with more than 170 separate performances from 40 performing groups in eight venues, featuring theater, music, dance, comedy, magic, poetry, storytelling, performance art and indescribable, unadulterated weirdness.

Founded in 2002 by Fresno playwright Marcel Nunis, the Rogue Festival is now one of the oldest and best respected fringe theater festivals in North America. The Rogue is an uncensored, unjuried, uncensored festival.

Performers are selected through a random lottery, and there are no restrictions on what performers can say or do. At a dangerous time when politicians are banning books, silencing teachers and erasing history, the Rogue Festival remains a fortress of unrestrained free speech that celebrates the power of outsider art to challenge society.

The Rogue Festival features independent artists performing their own original work, often for the first time. The Rogue provides a venue for artists to present their most daring and experimental work and gives audiences a unique chance to see new, bold and utterly unconventional performances before anyone else.

At the Rogue Festival, only the audience judges what is good or bad, expressed through word of mouth, reviews on the Rogue website and ticket sales. And best of all, 100% of Rogue ticket sales go directly to the artist.

Buying Rogue Tickets

- Get a Rogue wristband. A Rogue wristband is required for entry to every Rogue performance. Rogue wristbands cost just \$6. You can buy your Rogue wristband on the Rogue website, at any Rogue venue or at the Rogue Store, located in the Chicken Pie Shop parking lot.
- Buy tickets with credit/debit at the door or online. You can purchase tickets to any performance with credit or debit at the door, starting 30 minutes before the performance. Or you can buy tickets in advance at roguefestival.ticketleap.com.

Rogue Festival Venues

- Dianna's Studio of Dance, 826 N. Fulton St.
- Goldstein's Mortuary & Delicatessen, 1279 N. Wishon Ave.
- Spectrum Art Gallery, 608 E. Olive Ave.
- Veni Vidi Vici, 1116 N. Fulton St.
- ViSTA Theater, 1296 N. Wishon Ave.
- Hart's Haven, 950 N. Van Ness Ave.
- LAByrnth Art Collective, 1470 N. Van Ness Ave.
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La Teoría del Gran

Reemplazo Presagia Más

Ataques Contra Inmigrantes

POR GABRIEL LERNER

(Nota del Editor: la siguiente nota fue publicada originalmente en el portal de internet www.hispanica.com. https://hispanica.com/

¿Qué dicen estos fascistas? Dan Primack y Russell Contreras lo describen en el portal de internet

la-teoria-del-gran-reemplazo-presagia-mas-ataques-contra-inmigrantes-75923)

Que estamos viviendo una "invasión" de migrantes que hay que detener

"América", todo con un lenguaje pseudomilitar. Que los inmigrantes no

blancos votan por los demócratas, por lo que las políticas pro inmigrantes tienen como

propósito erosionar la influencia política de los estadounidenses blancos. Y lo infatigable,

que son los judíos quienes lo idean, organizan, promueven y financian.

En el imaginario de sus adherentes, su afibrada idea de que se enfrentan a una

conspiración absoluta justifica para ellos sus propias conspiraciones y actos de violencia.

Y un lugar principal en su desfile de malvados lo ocupan los inmigrantes, particularmente los

latinos, tanto indocumentados como legales. Bien lo define Cameron Joseph en Vice:

"La versión supremacista blanca original de la teoría falsa postula que hay una

camarilla secreta de élites que presionan para importar inmigrantes para "reemplazar" a las

poblaciones blancas nativas de los Estados Unidos y los países europeos. Muchas

versiones afirman que los judíos están detrás de esto, con el objetivo de que las poblaciones

de inmigrantes superen a los blancos nativos para crear una población que puedan controlar

mejor. La versión republicana cambia a judíos por

demócratas y afirma que los liberales y las grandes empresas se están confabulando para

importar grandes cantidades de inmigrantes a cambio de mano de obra barata y para abumar

a los republicanos en las urnas y controlar las elecciones para que no vuelvan a perder".

El rol histórico de Trump

Pero quien todavía cree que la creencia en esta teoría conspirativa—y otras no menos

perniciosas—es patrimonio de una minoría exigua está equivocado. Lo que hasta

hace pocos años era compartido por unos pocos extremistas hoy se ha convertido

en "mainstream". La era de Donald Trump

ha servido de catalizador que aceleró este proceso, cuyas raíces se pueden encontrar

sin embarco en la historia estadounidense, en las altas esferas del poder, entre dirigentes

republicanos nacionales y estatales. El mismo Trump dijo durante su campaña

electoral en 2020 que si ganan los demócratas: "va a haber gente cruzando la frontera, va a

haber inmigrantes ilegales entrando, y van a ser legalizados, y van a poder votar y una vez

que los republicanos tienen posibilidades de ganar", dijo.

Y entre muchas mentiras que hacen La Gran Mentira de que perdió los comicios

atacó la sinagoga del movimiento Chabad en Poway, California, matando a una mujer

e hiriendo a varios, entre otros al rabino de la congregación, también él motivado por la

teoría del Gran Reemplazo. En octubre de 2018, un asesino supremacista,

gritando "todos los judíos deben morir", atacó la sinagoga Arbol de la Vida en Pittsburg, h

matando a 51 personas e hiriendo a 40. También ha acelerado la formación de

movimientos políticos neofascistas que en varios casos han llegado al poder, como los

Hermanos de Italia de Giorgia Meloni o el Fidesz de Victor Orban en Hungría.

El balance demográfico

Es cierto: el balance demográfico en Estados Unidos cambia. Lo dice la oficina federal del

Censo. Los blancos serán menos del 50%—hoy son el 60%, los latinos 18% y los afroamericanos

12%—en treinta años. Pero no olvidar que los latinos son considerados "blancos" por la

oficina del Censo, por lo que el porcentaje de 60% de blancos en realidad es menor.

Desde 2018, los blancos constituyen menos de la mitad de los residentes menores de 15

años. El temor a perder sus privilegios, de pasar

de poder ser dueños de esclavos a menos de la mitad es lo que alimenta la teoría del

Gran Reemplazo y los movimientos neonazis en Estados Unidos. Es ahí donde deben ser

combatidos. Las encuestas confirman que numerosos

simpatizantes de MAGA—el movimiento fundado por Trump—creen que están siendo

reemplazados, no solo por inmigrantes que llegaron en los últimos 25 años, sino también

por mujeres, afroamericanos y los judíos. Una investigación del Dr. Robert Pape de la

Universidad de Chicago arroja que "el 63% de los 21 millones de insurrectos inflexibles en el

país creen en el 'Gran Reemplazo'". Y según un estudio de abril pasado llevada

a cabo por el Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) y la encuestadora Tulchin Research, dos

de cada tres republicanos creen en esta teoría conspirativa.

La misma que inspiró al asesinato de Buffalo y a los insurreccionistas del Capitolio, y a los

manifestantes en Charlottesville. *****

Gabriel Lerner es fundador y co-editor de HispanicLA. Editor en jefe del diario La Opinión

en Los Angeles hasta enero de 2021. Nació en Buenos Aires, Argentina, vivió en Israel y reside en

Los Angeles, California. Es periodista, biógrafo, poeta, novelista y cuentista. Fue director editorial

de Huffington Post Voces entre 2011 y 2014 y editor de noticias, también para La Opinión.

Anteriormente, corresponsal de radio. Tiene tres hijos adultos que son, dice, "la luz de mi vida".



Grupos de derecha preparándose para entrar al Parque de la Emancipación, de Charlottesville, en 2017, portando banderas nazis y de la Confederación.

Foto de Anthony Cridler/The Commons

Alianza 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 al de 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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A un País Que Contribuye a la Paz no se le Puede Llamar Terrorista

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No es la primera vez que ella visita Cuba. Durante el proceso de las negociaciones del acuerdo de paz entre el gobierno de Colombia y la FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), también estuvo presente. "Llegué a Cuba en la quinta delegación de víctimas, aunque no me considero víctima. Soy activista política que ha sido victimizada, que considero es diferente a ser víctima."

Esta vez, en cuanto aterrizó en el aeropuerto de la Habana habló con la prensa, declarando "Yo vine a Cuba hace más de seis años como víctima del conflicto armado con el sueño, con la esperanza y con el corazón puesto en que la paz y el proceso que se estaba dando entre las FARC y el Estado colombiano permitieran dar alivio a muchas comunidades (...) hoy vengo aquí como vicepresidenta con el mismo compromiso".

"Regresar a Cuba como vicepresidenta de la República de Colombia, después de haber venido hace unos años como integrante de la delegación de víctimas en los diálogos de paz entre el Estado colombiano y las FARC, es evidencia de que en Colombia estamos haciendo realidad nuestro anhelo de paz total. Por supuesto, el papel de Cuba en ese camino ha sido fundamental"

"Desde el año 2012 hasta el 2016, Cuba se desempeñó como sede de los diálogos de paz entre el gobierno colombiano y la antigua guerrilla de las FARC. Fueron cuatro años durante los cuales nuestro país contó con un espacio para pensar y repensarse desde una nueva visión en la que la política de la vida y no de la muerte, nos permitiría trazar un rumbo más esperanzador para los que sufren la guerra y para los que vienen detrás y quienes participamos en las mesas de diálogo por parte de la sociedad civil, podemos dar fe de que se trató de un proceso hecho a pulso, pero también a conciencia", dijo la vicepresidenta.

"Hoy no puedo dejar de agradecer a la isla, a sus dirigentes y a su pueblo por haber sido la casa común para ese proceso. Y su disposición para apoyar el interés de la paz en nuestro país".

"No es justo que un país como Cuba, que tanto ha aportado a la paz de Colombia, haga parte del listado de países que apoyan el terrorismo. Hoy, desde La Habana, nuestro mi respeto a esta nación insular para que sea retirada de dicho listado"

"Creo que Colombia tiene una deuda con Cuba."

La Vicepresidenta explicó que la deuda está relacionada con el esfuerzo de Cuba, "de ser casa" de los diálogos de paz, "Sabemos que los colocaron en la lista como propulsores del terrorismo por apoyar a Colombia en la



Francia Marquez Miña (derecha), actual vicepresidenta de Colombia, junto al presidente argentino, Alberto Fernández, durante su visita a Buenos Aires siendo vicepresidenta electa, en 2022. Foto cortesía The Commons

agendas y condiciones. El objetivo era lograr un acuerdo que el gobierno de Colombia dejara de atacar a los rebeldes y que la FARC dejara la lucha armada para participar en el proceso político.

Para crear condiciones de hacer posible estos fines, se acordó una agenda limitada a cinco puntos, incluyendo reforma agraria, participación política, el fin del conflicto, las treguas, las garantías de seguridad, la violencia paramilitar, el narcotráfico y producción, y un proceso de Comisión de la Verdad y reparaciones para víctimas. Estas negociaciones tuvieron su sede en La Habana durante cuatro años y Cuba y Noruega sirvieron de Países Garantes. En años siguientes, una serie de negociaciones tuvo lugar en el mismo sitio y con los mismos países garantes y con acuerdos semejantes, mientras el Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) quedaba como el último vestigio de lucha armada organizada en Colombia. Desde la ruptura de estas negociaciones en 2019, el grupo de negociadores del ELN se ha quedado en Cuba, aunque el entonces gobierno de Iván Duque hizo demanda para su devolución a Colombia, ignorando los acuerdos previos. El gobierno actual de Colombia apoya la reanudación de negociaciones de paz y rechaza cualquier intento de los EEUU de utilizar a Colombia de pretexto para incluir a Cuba en la Lista Estadounidense de Países Patrocinadores de Terrorismo.

Leni Villagomez Reeves es una médica local y activista. Puede contactarla en lenivreeves@gmail.com. Chequee sus comentarios y noticias sobre Cuba en Facebook (fresnosolidarity/).

Justicia.

Vamos a apoyar a Cuba, a la nueva Colombia, y a la paz no se le puede llamar terrorista."

la paz no se le puede llamar terrorista."

Nueve días antes de salir de la Casa Blanca, Trump designó a Cuba como País Patrocinador de Terrorismo. Biden, después de más de dos años, todavía mantiene esta designación injusta. Es una ironía el hecho de que Cuba ha sido víctima de terrorismo lanzado desde los EEUU, y no "patrocinador" de terrorismo. No existe ninguna evidencia para apoyar esta designación, que tiene como objetivo devastar la economía de Cuba, aislando la isla de inversión y de financiamiento internacional.

Se puede mandar correo al Presidente Biden, con la demanda que quite a Cuba de la Lista de Países Patrocinadores de Terrorismo en este sitio: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>. Y se puede llamar a la Casa Blanca (días especiales de hacer estas llamadas: 15-16 marzo, de 9 am a 12 mediodía, hora del Pacífico). Comentarios: 202-456-1111, Switchboard: 202-456-1414. Para más información y otras acciones: <https://acere.org>

Durante más de 52 años, la Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) y una serie de gobiernos derechistas de este país se mantuvieron en estado de guerra, sin que ninguna de las dos partes lograra una victoria decisiva. En 2012 comenzaron las negociaciones formales de un acuerdo de paz, con un Acuerdo General preliminar para establecer compromisos,

García Luna, de Super Policía a Traidor a su País

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Estados Unidos debería responder, dar explicaciones a las víctimas de esta Guerra global contra las Drogas que aquí se declaró desde los '80s y que en México encontró un eco décadas más tarde en el sexenio de Calderón y su propia versión de Guerra contra el Narcotráfico.

No es suficiente y no fue solución la iniciativa Mérida, acordada entre Calderón y George W. Bush mediante la cual el gobierno estadounidense otorgó millones y millones de dólares, armas, equipos y entrenamientos para llevar a cabo la guerra de Calderón.

Se sabe ahora que esos abundantes recursos estuvieron a disposición de García Luna y que, en gran medida, sirvieron para manchar de sangre al país. Las drogas no se han ido, las vidas sí.

Sin duda, el resultado del juicio contra García Luna dejó muy mal parado al Estado mexicano y a un sector de la prensa mexicana. Incluso en el juicio también salió a relucir que el diario El Universal recibía dinero para "cuidar" la imagen de García Luna y otros favores.

Aunque no salieron nombres, durante esa época el director editorial de El Universal era Raymundo Riva Palacio. La conductora Denise Maerker recordó hace poco que fue bochornoso montaje preparado por García Luna y que fue televisado "en vivo" en Primero Noticias, programa dirigido por Lore de Mola, en el que los televidentes vieron cómo la AFI supuestamente rescataba a víctimas de un secuestro.

En realidad los supuestos secuestradores habían sido capturados el día anterior (este por sí solo es otro caso de los tantos que tiene pendientes García Luna y que está muy bien documentado en el libro "Una Novela Criminal", de Jorge Volpi). El caso es el de la supuesta participación en México. Ella fue arrestada y sometida a juicio en 2008, donde fue condenada a 96 años de prisión. En 2013, la Suprema Corte dictaminó la libertad de la acusada debido a las irregularidades en su detención y juicio. Cazess regresó a Francia.

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Miguel Angel Baez es un periodista local y ex editor del periódico Noticiero Semanal, de Forterville.

El Capitán Joe Torres, que se crió en el Valle y que conoce el trabajo agrícola, aseguró a los residentes del campo de trabajo que solo la oficina del alguacil (Sheriff) podía desalojar a las personas de sus hogares. Que si no era un miembro de la Oficina del Sheriff en la puerta de su casa, no tenían que salir de su casa. El capitán Joe Torres también dejó sus tarjetas de presentación para que llamaran a la residencia si volvían a ser amenazados. Hernán Hernández, de la Unidad Popular Benito Juárez, aseguró a la comunidad de trabajadores agrícolas que un aviso de desalojo de tres días era ilegal. Que si ha vivido en su hogar durante un año, la cantidad mínima para ser expulsado de su hogar es de al menos treinta días. Si ha vivido en su casa por más de dos años, el tiempo mínimo que tienen que darle para mudarse es de sesenta días.

En esa noche, los trabajadores agrícolas se unieron para expresar y decir su verdad. No solo estaban de pie para defender a sus familias, sino contra la injusticia. Sus voces habían sido escuchadas. Esa noche vieron que ser pobre no significa ser indefenso y débil. La comunidad se mantuvo unida y fuerte. Esa noche la gente se unió en una sola voz.

¡Sí Se Puede!

Gerardo Vázquez es un organizador de la Fundación Dolores Huerta en el condado de Tulare.

febbero para que expongan sus quejas y preocupaciones. Así lo hicieron y como consecuencia de estos comentarios, las autoridades de la vivienda convocaron a otra reunión para el 18 del mes, a la que se sumaron Armida Quezada, de Family Advocate Human Services Administration; Arturo Rodríguez, Director de Comunicación/Organización de Central Valley Empowerment Alliance; Raymond Macareno, Miembro de la Junta Autoridad de Vivienda del Condado de Tulare; John Hess, Presidente de la Autoridad de Vivienda de Supervisores del Condado de Tulare; Amy Shuklian, Distrito Uno de la Junta de Supervisores del Condado de Tulare; Larry Micari, Distrito Uno de la Junta de Supervisores del Condado de Tulare; Amy Shuklian, Distrito Tres de la Junta de Supervisores del Condado de Tulare; Hernán Hernández, Unidad Popular Benito Juárez; Gladys Flores, Unidad Popular Benito Juárez; Gerardo Vázquez, Fundación Dolores Huerta; un abogado de Luac; Capitán Joe Torres, Departamento del Sheriff del Condado de Tulare y Reyna Rodríguez.

Una residente que está en proceso de obtener la ciudadanía cumplió con las demandas de desalojo de la autoridad de vivienda por temor a poner en peligro su estado viviendo en su camioneta durante las heladas noches de este invierno. Una y otra vez, los residentes hablaron de las injusticias perpetradas contra ellos por esta agencia. Los asistentes contuvieron las lágrimas al escuchar las historias. John Hess dijo que acababa de enterarse de todo esto y que suspendería de inmediato todos los avisos de desalojo

política los arrestaría si no desalojaban. A otros residentes se les dijo que se agregarían nuevas reglas a su contrato, como no hacer asados en la propiedad, no se permitirían columpios para los niños y, de hecho, que sus hijos tenían que permanecer adentro y no sería permitido jugar afuera, indicando que la instalación no tenía seguro para cubrir a los niños.

Algunos residentes buscaron asesoramiento con agencias de la zona y así fue como Reyna Rodríguez, de Proteus, invitó a los residentes de Linnell a una reunión de la Mesa Directiva de las Autoridades de la Vivienda el pasado miércoles 15 de

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Trabajadores Agrícolas en Tulare, Unidos Para Enfrentar Desalojo Injusto

Varios de los libros ennumerados se han considerado "pornográficos" porque tratan sobre la sexualidad y la identidad de género. Por ejemplo, Lawn Boy (Niño del Césped) y Gender Queer (Género Queer) aparecieron en varias listas prohibidas del distrito escolar. A pesar de esto, los bibliotecarios se han vuelto más apasionados y luchan activamente contra estos desafíos. Los bibliotecarios de Texas han iniciado un movimiento de lucha por la libertad, conocido como #FreeReadom (@FreeReadom), para desafiar estas listas y defender las voces de nuestros niños y jóvenes que son ignorados.

Cuando solicité el ingreso al Programa de Maestría en Biblioteconomía y Ciencias de la Universidad de Washington, lo hice sabiendo que entraría en una profesión poco apreciada y mal pagada. Lo que me ayudó a tomar esta decisión no fue solo el amor por los libros, sino el amor por mi comunidad y la importancia de las bibliotecas. Es una carrera que puede minimizar las brechas de conocimiento y proporcionar recursos esenciales para las nuevas generaciones. Los bibliotecarios pueden reparar comunidades y siempre están luchando por la libertad de información. Como futura bibliotecaria infantil, me uniré a la lucha para garantizar que los títulos inclusivos siempre estén disponibles para que todos los estudiantes curiosos los hojeen. Eventualmente, les devolveré la misma confianza que la Sra. Lum me dio durante los años más importantes de mi vida.

Miranda Lara se graduó recientemente de la Universidad de California Riverside y recientemente fue admitida en el programa de Maestría en Biblioteconomía y Ciencias de la Información de la Universidad de Washington. Después de trabajar en una biblioteca académica durante 4 años y otros 2 años en programas extracurriculares, planea combinar sus dos pasiones y convertirse en bibliotecaria infantil.



La periodista mexicana Anabel Hernández durante una presentación en EE.UU. en 2011. Ha tenido que refugiarse fuera del país por amenazas de muerte. Foto cortesía The Commons

actitud defensiva, a centrar el debate en la doble moral de los Estados Unidos por ser juez y parte, y en apelar al nacionalismo diciendo que era un juicio contra México.

Y finalmente para, ahora sí, exigir que Calderón salga a dar explicaciones. Pero nadie de estos medios salió a decir algo cuando, por ejemplo, la periodista argentina Olga Wornat, tuvo que refugiarse en su natal Argentina por amenazas y presiones de García Luna para que no publicara su libro "Felipe el Oscuro", el cual fue censurado desde el poder.

Uno de sus colaboradores también fue amenazado por gente de García Luna y tuvo que exiliarse en Fraga, ayudado por una organización de protección a periodistas porque su vida corría peligro.

Si bien es cierto que en esto de la doble moral de los Estados Unidos sí les asiste la razón, ya que el juicio a García Luna no profundiza en el papel de las agencias estadounidenses y el trabajo que, supuestamente, hacen en países como México. Y que tampoco se hace un

García Luna es responsable en gran medida de mucha de la sangre que se ha derramado

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García Luna, de Súper Policía a Traidor a su País

POR MIGUEL ANGEL BÁEZ

Termino el juicio en contra de Genaro García Luna (54 años, ex titular de la Secretaría de Seguridad Pública durante el sexenio del presidente Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, 2006-2012) en Nueva York y tras tres días de deliberaciones, el jurado lo encontró culpable de todos los cargos, incluyendo los relacionados al trasiego de cocaína hacia los Estados Unidos.

Durante las casi cinco semanas que duró el proceso en un tribunal federal de Brooklyn, en Nueva York, estuvieron desfilando testigos cooperantes, algunos convictos o ex convictos narcotraficantes, políticos, policías y un agente de la DEA, quienes declararon contra García Luna, dando al jurado los elementos que necesitaban para declararlo culpable.

Desde el principio del proceso un sector de la prensa mexicana imponía una narrativa en los medios que, por lo menos, resultaba extraña.

Primero, centraban sus argumentos en la crítica al sistema estadounidense de impartición de justicia a través de juicios con jurado. Intentaban descalificar por ese lado el hecho que la fiscalía sólo presentaba testigos y no pruebas físicas.

Más que periodistas cubriendo el caso, parecían miembros del equipo de la defensa de García Luna a quienes habían asignado crear dudas en la opinión pública.

Basta con revisar los textos de periodistas como Raymundo Riva Palacio, en El Financiero; Carlos Loret de Mola, en Latinus y El Universal; o revisar los comentarios de Leo Zuckermann, en Televisa, entre muchos otros, para darse cuenta. Aunque dicha narrativa fue mutando a medida que avanzaba el juicio.

Todo lo contrario del trabajo de periodistas independientes, quienes con menos recursos se las ingeniaran para cubrir el juicio, lo que permitió a los lectores y/o televidentes no quedarse solo con la cobertura tradicional de los medios tradicionales

En los grandes medios de comunicación mexicana nadie tocaba a García Luna.

La consigna parecía ser la de desacreditar todo aquello que fuera en contra del ex mandatario. Ni por equivocación se atrevían a cuestionar o insinuar la culpabilidad del ex Secretario de Seguridad Pública.

Y me refiero a los periodistas con espacios de mayor alcance, de la élite, por llamarles de alguna manera porque, por otro lado, hay notables trabajos de periodistas y escritoras como Anabel Hernández y Peniley Ramirez, así como Francisco Cruz, Jesús Lemus, entre varios otros, quienes han escrito el historial criminal de García Luna, desde que éste era director de la Agencia Federal de Investigación (AFI). Hernández incluso ha tenido que refugiarse fuera del país por amenazas de muerte.

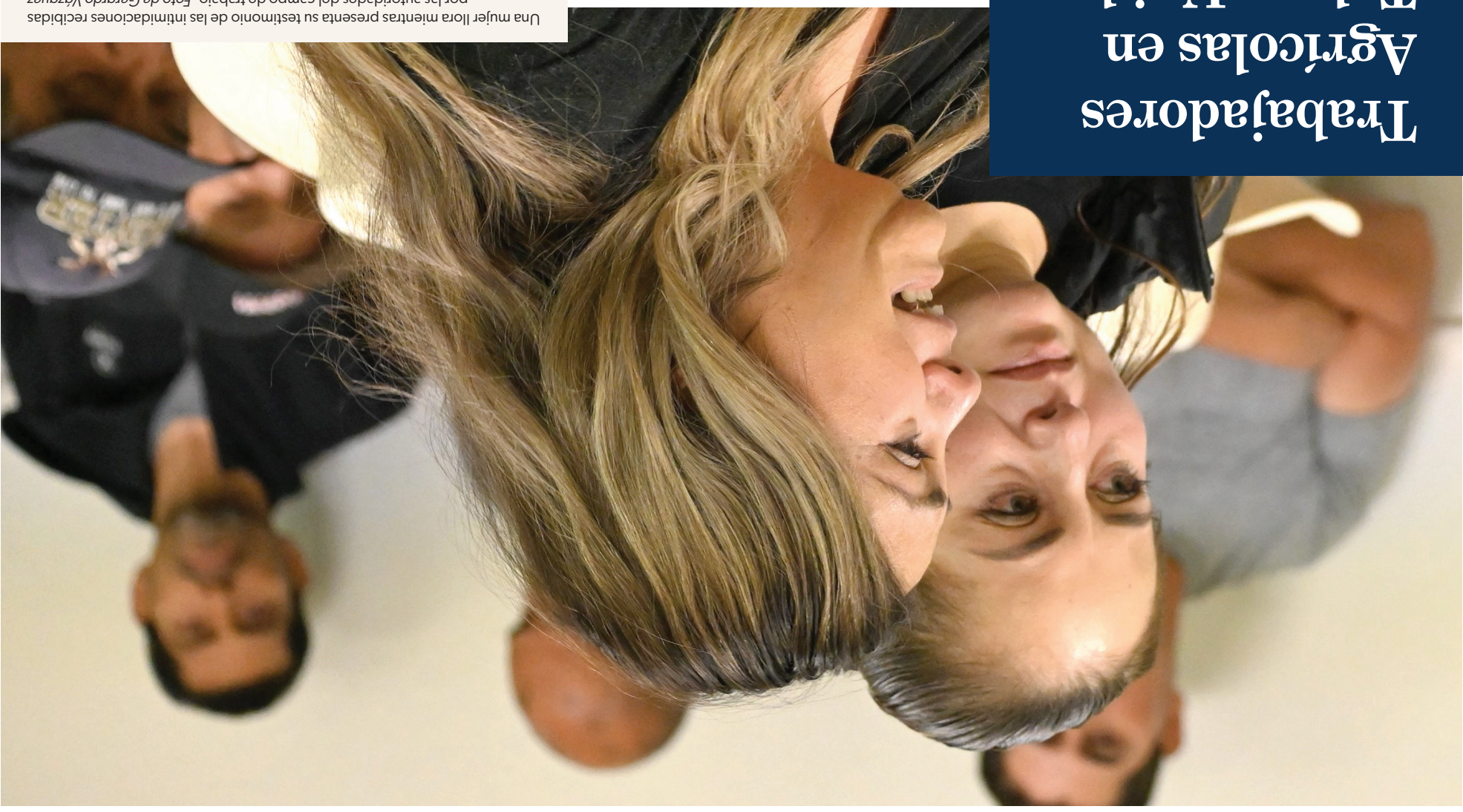
Muchos comunicadores se hacen ahora los sorprendidos, como si no hubiese habido argumentos para sospechar de García Luna y crear que Felipe Calderón no estuviera enterado de las prácticas de su mano derecha.

A medida que avanzaba el juicio, la narrativa periodística de este sector seguía mutando, cambiando poco a poco, pero aún sin tocar a García Luna. Pasaron de escribir textos con

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Una mujer llora mientras presenta su testimonio de las intimidaciones recibidas por las autoridades del campo de trabajo. Foto de Gerardo Vázquez

Trabajadores Agrícolas en Tulare, Unidos Para Enfrentar Desalojo Injusto

POR GERARDO VÁZQUEZ

El sábado 18 de febrero de 2023, a última hora de la tarde, muchos miembros de la comunidad del campo laboral Linnell, en el condado de Tulare, se reunieron y dijeron: "¡Ya basta! ¡Seremos escuchados!" Personas de pie, con la frente en alto, temblando por dentro por el coraje que se necesita para arriesgarlo todo. "Pero ya estuvo, no seremos presionados más sin decir nuestra verdad". Aproximadamente 80 miembros de la comunidad se reunieron en Linnell para exponer los graves —e ilegales— ataques de intimidación y amenazas contra la población subrepresentada de esta comunidad de trabajadores agrícolas de bajos ingresos.

Los trabajadores informaron que la nueva administración de la Autoridad de Vivienda del Condado de Tulare intentó desalojar a cerca de 50 residentes del campo Linnell, diciéndoles que tenían tres días para mudarse. Les dijeron que la

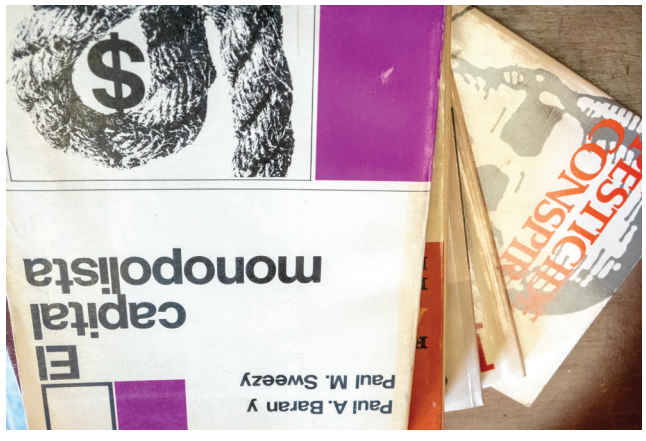
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Por Amor a Los Libros

POR MIRANDA LARA

(Nota del editor: el 3 de marzo es el Día Mundial del Libro, un evento anual organizado por la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO) para promover la lectura, la publicación y los derechos de autor. Esta fecha es ahora más importante que nunca debido a la presión de fanáticos de la derecha para prohibir libros en nuestras escuelas que consideran "peligrosos", lo que significa libros que podrían educar a nuestra juventud).

La primera vez que entré en una biblioteca, era una niña de 7 años completamente maravillada preguntándome por qué la Biblioteca Pública de San Bernardino albergaba libros, animales y un jardín bajo un mismo techo. En ese momento, no era obvio que la biblioteca tuviera un propósito mayor que los juegos de computadora y las chinchillas salvajes en jaulas. Años después, cuando firmé mi propio nombre en mi nueva tarjeta de biblioteca en la sucursal de Fig Garden, en Fresno, el impacto aún pasó desapercibido. Desde concursos de poesía y talleres de helados caseros, hasta ferias de empleo y vehículos activados por Wi-Fi, las comunidades y los políticos no se dan cuenta de la importancia de las bibliotecas. A pesar de



esto, las bibliotecas son pilares de nuestras comunidades como un recurso valioso y como nuestros mayores defensores.

Mis años de escuela guardan mis recuerdos favoritos, y no es una coincidencia que esos años los pasé en la biblioteca de la escuela. Todos los días tomaba mi almuerzo, cargaba mi pesada mochila de la clase y me iba caminando directamente a la biblioteca.

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A un País Que Contribuye a la Paz no se le Puede Llamar Terrorista

POR LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

La Vicepresidenta de Colombia, Francia Márquez Mina, llegó a Cuba para la inauguración de la edición 31 de Feria del Libro de La Habana, que tiene a Colombia como país invitado de honor.

En mayo de 2022 Colombia eligió a Gustavo Petro como presidente y a Francia Márquez Mina como vicepresidente por el Pacto Histórico, un partido de centro-izquierda. Es la primera vez en dos siglos que en Colombia se ha elegido un gobierno progresista. Además, es la primera vez que una mujer afrodescendiente se encuentra entre los gobernantes. Su presencia entre el liderazgo de su país es un reconocimiento y reivindicación de los pueblos históricamente oprimidos, del afrofeminismo, y de los derechos del medio ambiente—ella es ganadora del Premio Goldman.

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