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Carnage in
California
Prisons

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY AND
MORGHAN VÉLEZ YOUNG

“The integrated yard policy (IYP) is per force a staged fight because integrating rival factions will always lead to violence...In my experience, the IYP was always a device used to break the leadership of the gangs and to prevent the gangs from acting with impunity,” said Fresno attorney Robert Navarro.

Navarro was part of a team of attorneys that successfully litigated a case against the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) for the shooting death of Preston Tate, who was incarcerated at Corcoran state prison in 1994. The case, filed by Fresno attorney Catherine Campbell, resulted in an \$825,000 settlement.

Through the efforts of Campbell and the team of attorneys, the CDCR’s policy and practice of placing rival gang members in the same prison exercise yards, for the orchestration of gladiator fights, was exposed.

There is ample evidence that delineates the use of the IYP as a method of employing gangs’ own required violence toward rivals in an attempt to control and punish at the cost of everyone in the prisons, their families and our tax dollars. Video recordings of these staged fights in the 1990s are openly available on YouTube.

There seemed to be less use of this policy during the 1990s following a series of articles by journalist Mark Arax, who exposed the policy and provided Congressional testimony.



Photo by Maria Oswalt/Unsplash

Unfortunately, we have evidence that the policy was fully embraced again in 2003 when a gang at the California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility in Corcoran attacked a single imprisoned man, which ended in his death.

In 2007, Lieutenant John Kavanaugh, from the Corcoran state prison, wrote a commentary entitled “Anatomy of a Failed Prison Yard Integration” published in *Peacekeeper* magazine (Vol. 24 Jan/Feb). He states that “the history of violence between [rival gangs] in the CDCR is lengthy and well-documented. Each institution that houses these disruptive factions in the same general population facility documents numerous cases of violence between them, and corresponding lengthy disruptions of institutional operations.”

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Hunger Strike
at Immigration
Detention Centers

BY GERARDO VAZQUEZ

On Feb. 26, several detainees at two immigration detention centers in Kern County—the Golden State Annex and Mesa Verde—went on a hunger strike to protest inhumane treatment and unsanitary conditions. Relatives of the strikers and immigration rights activists converged at the sites to support the protest.

Family members of the detainees just outside of the wire fence at the Golden State Annex leaned inward to perhaps catch a glimpse of their loved ones held behind barbed wire. There were shouts from loved ones on both sides of the fence, “Libertad! Libertad!”

You could hear the shouts of the visitors outside the fence: “Do not despair, you are not forgotten!”

Then a few inmates in the facility yard would scream back: “We hear you, thank you for coming!”



Nestor Chavez with his two daughters. Photo by Gerardo Vazquez

One family member’s eyes tear up as she does not see her loved one in the yard. She holds a sign that says “We are with you hunger strikers.”

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Maderans Receive
Insight to Hospital
Closure

BY JOHANNA TORRES

The Madera Community Hospital (MCH) announced its closure less than a week before officially closing last year, leaving Maderans with many questions and concerns. As the MCH slowly and reluctantly released information in the past two months, the Madera Coalition for Community Justice (MCCJ) organized a town hall on March 2.

More than 250 residents attended the town hall in person and an estimated 75 via Zoom. State, county and city representatives participated in a panel with MCH board members and other local health service providers. MCH’s CEO, who is still employed by MCH, was invited but did not attend. Residents submitted a variety of questions as to why the closure was so abrupt.

Stell Manfredi, a MCH board member who participated on the panel, acknowledged that the MCH leadership was aware of the inevitable closure for more than two years. They focused their efforts on securing an acquisition by the Saint Agnes Medical Center, which fell through due to the financial issues MCH faced, Manfredi referenced.

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One wonders what is wrong with Fresno—with the “leaders” of the city and the county.

The City of Fresno closed its three warming centers on the morning of March 21 in a downpour at 6 a.m. The “atmospheric river” rain continued that evening, through the night and into the next day. Bad weather, including low temperatures, continued the following days, too.

More than 150 people using the centers were thrown onto the wet streets of Fresno, many with little or no survival gear. It is “shameful for the mayor and [the] entire [City] Council to be so inhumane,” wrote our colleague Bob McCloskey.

Homeless activists and supportive organizations have provided City Council members with ideas to tackle the situation of the unhoused, however, the City hasn’t implemented any plan.

Let’s be clear: This is a nationwide problem based on the inequality of income and opportunities for millions—including housing access. However, something could be done but the City of Fresno is doing it all wrong. (See “Fresno: A Tale of Two Cities” on page 5.)

If you think the leadership situation at Fresno City Hall is bad, look at the Fresno County Board of Supervisors (BOS). By a 3-2 vote, they

decided to spend thousands of your taxpayer dollars to sue the State over the name change of “S— Valley” to Yokuts Valley. It’s like the BOS is competing with the City Council on ineptitude. (See “Fresno Supervisors File Frivolous Lawsuit Using Public Dollars” on page 4.)

The name change will not roll back, and it’s perfectly legal. So, as this is a lost cause for the supervisors, why are they suing the State? Just to “send a message.” About what? A message that they are not only conservatives but also backward, old-fashioned males. Old-fashioned *machos* with no other interest but their own, and their chums.

Most of the supervisors brag about their backward ideology, blast “liberals” for anything and do nothing positive for the county. For instance, with the money they are going to spend on this frivolous lawsuit, they could help renters for at least one year.

But they won’t. Same with the unspent (yes, unspent!) money the State sent the County for Covid prevention and relief. The supervisors refused to act because they just don’t care about people.

They feel safe due to the conservative ideology that keeps them in power through gerrymandered districts. But the good news is that the situation won’t last forever. The Valley is changing, albeit slowly. One day, we’ll see intelligent, educated people leading the county—and the city. It all depends on us—and our votes.

Till next month.

Letters to the Editor

About Your “Prison Gladiator Fights” Article

Reader comments regarding “California Prison Gladiator Fights, Again!” (March 2023 issue):

First of all, that was a really good article. You covered almost everything about the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) subjecting the Bulldogs to credible harm.

My brother was one of the two who was injured with life-threatening injuries on Nov. 30, 2022, when he was set up by the CDCR in their gladiator fights at the Corcoran Substance Abuse Treatment Facility (SATF). To this day, the CDCR has never called his mom to inform her that her son was stabbed eight times with life-threatening injuries and survived.

There was a similar incident at Folsom in December 2022. Since this incident did not get mentioned, do you think if they killed someone that it would get reported?

Also, let’s not forget [former Fresno police chief] Jerry Dyer’s plan to eliminate the Fresno Bulldogs (FBD). He went on TV to tell the whole

world that he promised to do everything he could to eliminate the FBD with his apprehension teams in full force; he promised to do whatever it takes. But his Operation BD failed in 2006.

I believe he is implementing his plan through the wardens in the prisons. Just because he isn’t saying anything does not mean he stepped away from his failure.

That’s why these prisoners are dying. If this isn’t some kind of genocide, then its Dyer behind all these violent gladiator fights. Killing off the BD like he promised to the world.

Name Withheld

I am so glad this is coming to light. Although this is happening in the prisons, this is the work of the CDCR headquarters. This is the after-effects of prison integration constructed by the CDCR when in return prisons have the opportunity to stage these flights. Why should our loved ones be their entertainment and money makers? When will it stop?

Name Withheld

Keep up the good reporting, but please also include how we can move the readership, and progressives generally, toward collectively generating solutions.

Saul Ross

Selma

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https://fresnoalliance.com/

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Community Alliance Content

Generally, the content of the *Community Alliance* is informative and provides a reasoned perspective not otherwise available in the Central Valley.

I have observed a worrisome trend with a couple of authors, though.

In “Climate Politics” and “Alternative Needed in Supervisorial District 2 Race,” the authors seem to be expecting someone else to do the necessary work, rather than them or us.

In the climate pieces, there are frequent references to elected officials not delivering and the author holds out no expectation that they ever will deliver, yet he doesn’t offer remedies for how we, the readers, or he, presumably an activist, could help facilitate that change.

In the “District 2” piece, the author places out the argument for an alternative candidate and then lays the burden for that on the local Democratic Party. He seems unaware that the party is one entity among many who are part of the candidate search. And does he really want the local party playing the dictatorial role that the national party does in designating endorsed candidates?

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

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Fresno Supervisors File Frivolous Lawsuit Using Public Dollars

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

On March 14, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted 3-2 to sue the State of California, using public dollars to favor a racist, sexist, derogatory name. They voted in a closed-door session to sue over a recent law that they claim usurps local control and threatens our very freedom and liberty.

That law, AB 2022, states that the word “squaw,” which appears in more than 100 place names in California—is a racist and derogatory slur that demeans Indigenous women. The law requires that S— be replaced and that all public signage with the name be removed. Yokuts Valley, which recognizes the original inhabitants of this region, is the new name that replaces S— Valley.

Supervisors Nathan Magsig, Steve Brandau and Buddy Mendes voted in a secret meeting to spend your tax dollars on a frivolous lawsuit to overturn federal and state law.

They frame the issue solely in terms of big government versus local control. But five powerful arguments—linguistic, historical, moral, constitutional and procedural—make the case for welcoming the change.

Linguistic. As has been abundantly documented, s— is not an innocuous “Indian” word for woman. It has been commonly used in our white colonial settler culture in a way that denigrates Indigenous women. It is an extremely offensive word to an overwhelming majority of Indigenous people.

However, the BOS refuses to acknowledge this. Brandau said at the Oct. 11, 2022, Board meeting that he was “not convinced” that s— is a racist slur.

It’s easy for the average person to read into what Brandau meant: “The term is not offensive to me, a rich, privileged white male in a white-dominated culture. It doesn’t matter to me if Indigenous people and language experts have extensively documented that the term has been and is used as a derogatory racist slur. I don’t need to pay any mind to them.”

Historical. For 10,000 years or more the San Joaquin Valley and the Sierra foothills eastward were the homeland to the Yokuts people. Then came the Gold Rush, when white miners, settlers, vigilantes and militias, driven by opportunity and greed, invaded the state. They carried out a vicious and deliberate war of extermination against Aboriginal California “Indians,” including the Yokuts people.

The genocide was devastatingly effective. By the early 1900s, 99% of the Yokuts had disappeared. If we want to be honest about our history and to take steps toward repairing that massive wrong, we must stop pretending, stop making excuses, face the facts and acknowledge the horrors of the California genocide.

History is important, but the BOS refuses to acknowledge this important historical fact.

Moral. Murder is immoral. Genocide is immoral. Casting racist slurs against victims of genocide is immoral. Yet the BOS refuses to honestly deal with this immoral part of our California history.

Constitutional. “Local control” is not the final word on what happens in the United States. We are local jurisdictions governed by states, and all of those are under the federal Constitution.

Mendes said in a post with Magsig on Facebook on March 14 that California’s renaming from S— Valley to Yokuts Valley is similar to the old Soviet Union under Stalin or China’s Red Guards under Chairman Mao. These are wildly untrue and ignorant comments.

The federal and state governments have the authority to override the opinions of local residents if those opinions are racist or go against the Constitution. Think federal marshals escorting Ruby Bridges to integrate an all-white school while the local residents vilified her with horrible insults.

Procedural. In November 2021, Deb Haaland, our first Indigenous Cabinet secretary, in an effort to redress the problem of racist and exclusionary place names, ordered

that S— be removed and replaced for almost 650 place names in the United States.

In September 2022, the California state legislature unanimously passed AB 2022, which called for the removal and replacement of “squaw” in about 100 place names in California. Both the federal agency, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (USBGN), and the state agency, the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN), publicly announced lengthy comment periods.

In November 2022, taking all public comments into account, and vividly aware of the hostility of the BOS to the name change, the CACGN recommended to the USBGN by a vote of 8-0 that the name Yokuts Valley be adopted. This decision was ratified by the USBGN a month later in January 2023.

For the BOS to say the process did not allow for local residents’ input is a falsehood and misrepresentation of the process.

The process of removing S— from locations in the United States and California followed the law and is certainly not a threat to our democracy. The changes were and are legitimate outcomes of representative democracy. They did not and do not menace our republic in any way.

“Local control” has its place. As the Declaration of Independence declares: “Governments derive their just powers [their legitimacy] from the consent of the governed.” But “local control” is not an absolute, and it is not the only consideration.

The BOS’s decision to spend your tax dollars on outside counsel in an expensive, senseless lawsuit is outrageous and must be challenged.

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’s of divinity graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Contact him at bayardtaylor1@aol.com.

Take Action!

Call your Supervisor today and express your views concerning the Board of Supervisors’ decision to spend your taxpayer dollars on a frivolous lawsuit to overturn federal and state law relative to the renaming of S— Valley to Yokuts Valley.

District 1	Brian Pacheco	559-600-1000	district1@fresnocountyca.gov
District 2	Steve Brandau	559-600-2000	district2@fresnocountyca.gov
District 3	Sal Quintero	559-600-3000	district3@fresnocountyca.gov
District 4	Buddy Mendes	559-600-4000	district4@fresnocountyca.gov
District 5	Nathan Magsig	559-600-5000	district5@fresnocountyca.gov

Hunger Strike at Immigration Detention Centers

Continued from page 1

At that time, the detainees were on the 10th day of their hunger strike.

A young man shouting in support of the hunger strikers was Fidel Garcia, an ex-inmate of this facility. He was born in Mexico, was detained by immigration and brought to the Golden State Annex, where he stayed for a year and a half.

As we stood along the fence at the detention facility, Garcia spoke about the living conditions he experienced there.

“The conditions went from bad to worse, to horrible. To the extent of not just having the basic needs. The deodorants they provided gave us rashes. We raised these complaints, but they disregarded them.

“Then it built up to things like cockroaches in our food, nails and hair in our food, spoiled milk, spoiled beans, and it was all brushed under the rug. We have mold in the showers. When it rains, the roof leaks. ICE is aware of this. I have made multiple complaints to ICE.

“I have papers by GEO [which runs the detention center] stating they were going to fix it; nothing got done. I have those grievances! They tried to minimize our situation. They tried to make it seem that we were just complaining. ICE and GEO minimize everything.

“GEO is a multimillion dollar corporation which profits off of immigrants. As of 2021, GEO Group owns and manages 106 prisons and ‘community corrections’ centers worldwide with a total capacity of 86,000 beds and e-carcerates an additional 250,000 people using electronic monitoring technologies.

“At the end of the day, this is a civil rights case. We are being treated as less than human beings. We deserve to be free, we deserve to be with our communities. And, most importantly, we deserve to be with our families.”

A GEO Group spokesperson denied any wrongdoing in a prepared statement released to the media. He called the

hunger strikes a baseless allegation and said that inmates are given three free meals every day created by a registered dietician. Detainees’ actions are a “politically motivated and choreographed effort by outside groups,” he said.

On March 5, at the Mesa Verde Detention Facility in Bakersfield, many more showed up to support the inmates’ hunger strike that was then on its 17th day. People from Los Angeles to San Jose held signs and listened to testimonies over the phone from inmates still locked up inside just a few yards away.

Nestor Chavez, a young father of two daughters who went into foster care when ICE detained him, has a soft and polite voice with a slight nervousness in it. He shows a strong determination to right a wrong situation—to bring to light not only the injustice endured by the inmates but also the pain loved ones go through waiting for them to come home.

Chavez shares how hard it was from 2018 to 2021 when he was locked up at the detention center. He points to a large scar from a broken leg he got while in custody. “Right there, I got a broken leg. Look at how my foot is.” He has a surgical scar at least eight inches long close to his ankle.

“Can you imagine having a broken leg and staying in bed

for three days without being taken care off? Without even an aspirin? That is inhumane. When they did look at me, my leg was purple all the way up here (holding the top of his leg).”

They finally took Chavez to the hospital for surgery. He paused and said, “Do you know what they told me then? ‘I’m sorry, Chavez.’ That’s sincerely ridiculous; it’s inhumane.”

Chavez then addressed how those people outside, waiting, are going through bad moments as well. He knew his daughters suffered without him.

“Believe me that to be in there isn’t easy..Those that are in there are fathers, brothers, uncles..In the evening, I would go out into

the detention center’s yard and look at the sky. I would see the moon and begin to cry thinking of my daughters.

“They (the detention center) didn’t want to give me an opportunity to be with them. I was there for a long time in Mesa Verde...yeah, sincerely, it’s nothing easy. Finally, they gave me my leave on Feb. 16, 2021.”

Chavez looks at his daughters, who are playing, laughing and glancing to see that their papa is really there, and says, “They are happy, super happy, that is priceless.” He smiles.

On the other hand, the Mesa Verde Detention Center’s actions are no less than torture. Their owners are making millions out of the suffering of the detainees.

“I ask the community to unite,” pleads Chavez. “That we raise our voice! So that these places get closed down because it’s shameful that these places exist.”

Inmates continue their hunger strike to create awareness of ICE and GEO’s systemic actions of neglect, torture, horrific conditions and the ongoing retaliations that exist within the detention centers.

Gerardo Vazquez is an organizer for the Dolores Huerta Foundation.



Monthly meeting the first Tuesday
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Recall Supervisor Nathan Magsig

BY LINDA TUBACH

Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig has led the Fresno County Board of Supervisors to decide to sue the State of California to stop the replacement of S— Valley’s racist and sexist name as mandated by AB 2022. And he is doing this with our tax dollars, secretly, in closed session. This is a violation of the intent of the Brown Act, which requires notification on a public agenda at least 24 hours in advance so that public tax dollars are not spent without public knowledge and input.

Ironically, Magsig has told his Facebook followers that this is not about the “s—” word but rather about the process failing to include local input. This is a complete lie, and Magsig has only himself to blame for not facilitating public input.

Instead of holding real community meetings for dialogue, he chose to pander to the racism and sexism of some poorly informed constituents, to build his base. He lied about sponsoring a “community” meeting behind the local library, inviting just his Facebook followers and members of a Dunlap church, and stacking the meeting in favor of his own views.

He lied again on the so-called ballot mailed to 93675 households when he kept the name “S— Valley” as an option after a federal order and AB 2022 clearly outlawed the slur and required a replacement name.

Furthermore, Magsig is lying about the name change process itself, which requires extensive periods for public input. Every resident of zip code 93675 and Magsig himself had the opportunity to comment on both the state and federal decisions to rename S— Valley.

After U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland’s Order 3404 in November 2021, the public comment period was open from Feb. 23 to April 25, 2022. And then, because S— Valley fell into the special category of “populated place” (as opposed to geographic feature), the U.S. Board on Geographic Names announced more time for public comment, before its final decision in January 2023.

In addition, AB 2022 included public hearings before it passed unanimously, and the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN) invited public comment both before and during its decision-making meeting on Nov. 18, 2022.

The opportunities for public comment were announced by members of the Rename S— Valley Coalition at a Bear Mountain Library meeting last summer and at a Board of Supervisors meeting in October 2022. Magsig was present at both meetings, and both were well attended by the small group of vocal residents opposing the name change.

The community heard about the CACGN meeting in November that they could call in to, but no one besides the Residents for Renaming called in. Of all the written comments submitted to the CACGN, including an online petition supporting the name change signed by hundreds, only one person opposed the name change to Yokuts Valley. This is a matter of public record memorialized in the minutes of the CACGN meeting.

Shame, shame on Supervisor Magsig. He lies to use racism, sexism and ignorance to build his popular base. He

OPINION & ANALYSIS



Supervisor Nathan Magsig (far right) wants to sue the State of California on your dime.
Photo courtesy of Bob McCloskey

refuses to represent everyone in the community, just those who agree with him. Magsig was asked for more than two years to sponsor a community meeting at Bear Mountain Library to dialogue about the name. He publicly refused to sponsor a community meeting on something he disagrees with.

Magsig alone is responsible for failing to provide opportunities for public input and information. He foments division instead of reconciliation in our community and does not deserve to hold public office. He should be recalled.

Linda Tubach lives in Yokuts Valley 93675. She is a retired high school government teacher and community activist.

Fresno: A Tale of Two Cities

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

Fresno is two cities, like most American cities. It’s a city of haves and have nots. It’s near the bottom of the list in America for income equality. Some of the haves are employers who fail to pay living wages. Some of the haves are landlords who raise rents that low-income residents cannot afford. Some of the have nots have gotten evicted and ended up on the streets of Fresno, some never to gain housing again.

The sad truth is the haves of Fresno don’t seem to care much about the have nots, especially the people living on the hard streets of Fresno. The haves consistently call 311 to report unhoused people near them or near their property.

In addition, even if a property owner allows unhoused residents to camp on their property, the City will cite and fine that person for not removing the unhoused from their property.

The Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) shows up and forces people to move time and time again. Some street family members say they have been forced to move up to a dozen times a year.

Courtney Duke, a disabled woman who uses a wheelchair to get around, was living at an encampment near Highway 41 on Barstow Avenue that was swept on March 17. She says that she had been displaced by HART at least five or six times in the last year.

“Every time, it’s a terrible hardship,” she said. She added that she felt safer at an encampment than alone on the streets. Fortunately, Duke got housing that day but she and her partner were the only ones who got housing of the 25-plus residents at the encampment.

As people left, all properties around the encampment had security guards standing there to prevent anyone from



Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) supervisor Alice Green (right) stands around during a recent sweep. She refused to answer questions. Photo by Bob McCloskey

setting up a tent anywhere. The Highway Patrol was out in force to ensure that no one set up a tent on state property. It was a sad day as people struggled to move their belongings with nowhere to go.

Alice Green, a supervisor and member of the HART outreach team, was present at the sweep. She refused to comment. She quickly walked away deep into the private property where the police would not let this reporter go.

On Feb. 27, Tommy Thompson, at an encampment at Inyo and F streets, was being removed with the others from the encampment of about 10 people just before a big rain storm. He said that he had been moved four times in the last three months.

Regarding the last time he was moved, he related that “they [HART] put me in a pickup, locked the doors, and went over and threw all my stuff away, my tent and everything.

“They didn’t arrest me, they kept me in the truck until they were done throwing all my stuff away.”

He also said that no one from Poverello House or the HART outreach team came by before the raid to offer housing or shelter on the day of the raid. Sadly, he was forced to move but wasn’t sure where he would go.

Alejandra Munoz was at the same location on Feb. 27. She said that “there’s no reason for them to do this, to make us move. They tell us to go to the Poverello area.

“It’s not safe. The youngsters around there think they own the place and they kick you out. It’s especially not safe for women around there.

“My mom and I are waiting for approval for an apartment. We’re struggling. They don’t need to do this to us.”

Her encampment neighbor, Rosetta Landrum, said that “they threw away two tents, food blankets, clothing. They don’t care. They even threw away my sister’s wheelchair.”

What is particularly galling about the HART harassment and abuse is that Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer publicly pledged on Jan. 25, 2022, to minimize the role of law enforcement when responding to resident and business owner complaints about unhoused people, claiming the City was rolling out a new approach that would be totally different

from the Homeless Task Force approach created under his direction when he was police chief.

The task force was renamed the Homeless Assistance Response Team in January 2022. At that time, City officials committed to a more “compassionate” and “humanitarian” response to addressing street homelessness. The mayor also said, “Honestly, I am trying to minimize the involvement of our police officers in the area of homelessness and the area of mental health.”

City leaders said the new heart would be more compassionate and humanitarian. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

HART continues to abuse the unhoused, constantly forcing them to move, throwing their only possessions away, and continuing an insane and inhumane policy of trying to make those unfortunate enough to be on the harsh streets of Fresno disappear.

The mayor and the City Council continue the failed and cruel past practices that have been used for many years to criminalize and punish the homeless. Any person with a conscience should loudly object to the continuation of such practices.

Bob McCloskey is a retired union representative and a homeless advocate. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

Take Action!

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Court Orders Reconsideration of Cancer-Causing Pesticide Regulation

BY JANE SELLEN AND ANGEL GARCIA

In early March, the Alameda County Superior Court ruled that a proposed regulation fails to protect farmworkers who labor near fumigated fields from harmful levels of exposure to the cancer-causing pesticide 1,3-dichloropropene (1,3-D).

Judge Evelio Grillo gave the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) six months to propose a new regulation that protects farmworkers and other occupational bystanders.

The DPR was also ordered to continue the current 1,3-D use limit of 136,000 adjusted total pounds per 6 x 6 mile “township,” which the draft regulation would have eliminated, and to maintain a prohibition on December applications* of this pesticide until the new regulation is finalized and adopted.

At more than 12 million pounds reported use per year, 1,3-D is the third most heavily applied pesticide in California agriculture, used as a pre-plant soil fumigant for berry crops along the Central Coast and for almonds, walnuts, sweet potatoes and other crops in the San Joaquin Valley. 1,3-D is highly volatile, is classified as a Toxic Air Contaminant and a Prop 65 carcinogen, and is banned in 34 countries. It is manufactured by Dow Chemical, an intervenor on the side of the DPR in the case.

“We applaud the court’s ruling striking down DPR’s immoral and unjust draft regulation,” said Angel Garcia, co-director of the Lindsay-based Californians for Pesticide Reform.

“The court has ruled that a draft rule that would have allowed farmworkers to work right next to the edge of treated fields while they are being fumigated was unlawful. We look forward to a new regulation that corrects the profound environmental injustice of failing to protect farmworkers from this highly hazardous and drift-prone chemical.”

Two Agencies, Two Different 1,3-D Cancer Risk Levels

State law mandates that the DPR must involve the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) as a partner in the development of pesticide regulations that address risks to workers, including both fieldworkers and pesticide handlers. The DPR and the OEHHA are sister offices within the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), but have reached strikingly different conclusions about the hazards of 1,3-D exposure.

In June 2022, the OEHHA adopted a lifetime cancer risk level for 1,3-D—known as a No Significant Risk Level, or NSRL—of 0.04 parts per billion (ppb), which is 14 times lower than the level (0.56 ppb) that the DPR used for its draft regulation. In comments, Dow Chemical publicly supported the DPR’s target level.

By excluding workers from their draft regulation, the DPR hoped to skirt the law and ignore the recommendations of the OEHHA. A regulation based on the OEHHA’s cancer risk level would be far more health protective.

“OEHHA scientists have already informed Californians what the unsafe level of exposure to cancer-causing 1,3-D is,” said Yanelly Martinez, Greenfield City Council member and organizer of Safe Ag Safe Schools. “But DPR completely ignored that, siding with their buddies at Dow Chemical by proposing to allow for 14 times more 1,3-D in the air in Latino farmworker communities like mine.

“We’re glad the judge sent DPR back to the drawing board to listen to OEHHA, because DPR’s proposal was unscientific and racist, as well as illegal.”

Are communities safe from 1,3-D?

The DPR’s pesticide air monitoring network in farmworker communities indicates that, at all nine stations that tested 1,3-D in the air for more than two years, average air concentrations were above the OEHHA’s 0.04 ppb NSRL. Schools have been the sites for five of these air monitor testing stations.

While the air monitors were placed near fields, some of the readings came from applications miles away. A one-day January 2020 spike of 20.8 ppb at Sequoia Elementary in Shafter originated from a 1,3-D application 7.5 miles away, according to the DPR. 1,3-D can drift for miles at harmful levels.

Melissa Dennis, a second grade teacher at the 98% Latino Ohlone Elementary School where one of the pesticide air monitors sits, commented: “My students are worth 14 times less than others in California. That’s what DPR was telling us with its 1,3-D proposed regulation.”

Bianca Lopez, co-founder of the Modesto-based Valley Improvement Projects, says that “the court’s decision is a huge win for farmworkers and puts the agricultural industry on notice that it can no longer go on poisoning workers with harmful chemicals. It’s no mystery why a department like the DPR, which gets 80% of its funding from pesticide sales, would be so determined to preserve the use of a heavily used chemical like 1,3-D.”

Lopez added that the “DPR has shown itself to be more interested in preserving use of this hazardous pesticide than in protecting human health. Now, they must listen to the scientists at OEHHA who have called for far greater protections from this deadly chemical.”

Jane Sellen and Angel Garcia are co-directors of the statewide coalition Californians for Pesticide Reform.

*Under existing rules, no 1,3-D usage is allowed during December, when atmospheric conditions contribute to higher air concentrations. Under the draft regulation, the December ban would end and would be replaced with more stringent restrictions (not a ban) from November to February as compared to the restrictions from March to October. The reasoning is that the ban in December caused a spike in applications and air concentrations immediately before and after, in November and January. Note that the court ordered the DPR to keep the December prohibition in place until the new regulation is finalized.

Annual 1,3-dichloropropene Air Concentrations

Concentrations are above the OEHHA’s 0.04 ppb NSRL for lifetime cancer risk at all nine air monitor stations that were tested for more than two years.

Site	County	Annual air concentration of 1,3-dichloropropene in parts per billion (ppb), reported by the DPR											
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Avg.
Kearney Ag, Parlier	Fresno	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.62	2.94	0.27	0.51	1.55	1.16
Shafter High, Sequoia Elementary—2/19	Kern	0.23	0.08	0.57	0.20	0.18	0.34	0.11	1.52	0.13	1.80	0.16	0.49
Schendel Elementary, Delhi	Merced	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.13	0.02	0.15	0.46	0.68	0.32
Ohlone Elementary—North	Monterey	*	0.16	0.13	0.09	0.12	0.07	0.09	0.05	0.06	0.12	0.06	0.10
Salinas Airport	Monterey	0.30	0.06	0.09	0.01	0.04	0.04	*	*	*	*	*	0.09
Chualar—East Well	Monterey	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.10	0.03	0.04	*	*	0.06
Ripon Police	San Joaquin	0.31	0.05	0.19	0.07	0.08	0.09	*	*	*	*	*	0.13
Santa Maria High, Bonita Elementary—11/19	Santa Barbara	0.16	0.19	0.19	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.08	0.06	0.05	0.11	0.08	0.12
Rio Mesa High, Oxnard	Ventura	*	0.19	0.17	0.09	0.21	0.11	0.11	0.06	0.06	*	0.03	0.12

*No testing

DPR: Department of Pesticide Regulation; NSRL: No Significant Risk Level; OEHHA: Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



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Some Thoughts on the Stop the Hate Campaign

BY ALEXIA BACA MORGAN

I am a 65-year-old Hispanic female from Albuquerque, N.M., who lives in Fresno. In my childhood, which took place in the 1960s and 1970s, my family and many Black and Brown families were supportive of the Jews and Blacks. The reason was the historical context.

We had Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for a role model. My father, although the son of a widow, volunteered to go to World War II as a 17-year-old. As children, our parents told us that they wanted to let us know what was going on in the country. They took us to the Deep South where we saw the riots. They took us to the hot spots in the Bay Area and Los Angeles for observation.

My childhood bookends: in my first semester of the first grade, President John Kennedy was assassinated, whereas in my senior year of high school President Richard Nixon resigned.

I came from an informed family and community; we were actively encouraged to support Jewish and Black people. To prepare me for the first grade, my mother said, “You’re going to go to school and they are going to tell you, ‘don’t play with those children over there, cause they’re Black as midnight.’ You tell them, ‘I’m a quarter to 12 myself, and I most certainly will play with those children.’”

We had people come to the door asking us to sign a petition to keep a Black family out of the neighborhood. I observed my mother say, “The only way I’m going to sign that petition is if it’s a letter of congratulations because they had to work twice as hard as me to get into the neighborhood and three times as hard as you.”

I had role modeling both as a Hispanic and as a Catholic to stand up. We supported the New Mexico Lobos basketball team. My parents, family and community stood up against the Brigham Young University team with our fists raised proudly. This took place right at the basketball games in response to their racism. It took, as my dad said, the church, the community and the family.

Now things are different. People who are younger than me did not live through the 1960s and 1970s. My cousin Louise Baca pointed out that as baby boomer cousins, all 40 of us did not seem like we were from the same generation.

She pointed out that the cousins born after 1960 were not the same as the cousins born before 1960. They did not live through the assassinations or the civil rights issues with the same consciousness that we had. They did not have our dedication because they did not live it.

I think a big part of misunderstanding and hatefulness is because of different experiences. They did not have friends march in the Bataan death march as my dad did. They did not stand up for Black children in elementary school as my mother did.

Fast forward to California in the 2010s, and I’m watching a film with the Progressive Democrats of America that included Jewish people in the United States calling out Israeli Jews for their treatment of Palestinians. Sometimes within the same Jewish family, some are supporting Israel and some Palestine.

Stopping the hate also requires knowing the timeframe one was born in and the timeframes other people were born in. For me, American Jewish people standing up against the policies of Israel was unheard of when I was a child.

Rather than dismissing a person who disagrees with you wholly, it is important to understand why people think differently than you do.

Another way to look at stopping the hate is that we are distorting time. Another recent example that might seem innocuous was on a Steve Colbert monologue where he told the joke that while searching Joe Biden’s home there were notes from back in the 1970s.

He said an open handwritten note said “Be-bop-baluba she’s my baby.” The difficulty was that the song was from the 1950s, not the 1970s. For those of us who lived through it, the 1950s were very different from the 1970s. You might just say that it was a joke, yet the distortion of time can be a big part of hate culture.

If we are meant to believe that nothing that bad was going on, for example, for Black and Brown people and that they are just playing the system to get into school easier or we should be treated better and that white lives matter too, then we are not seeing the realities of an uneven playing field that was apparent in the 1960s and 1970s.

The way we see ourselves can be distorted. My 34-year-old daughter and I were talking about time, and I told her that there was a song called “Louie Louie” that horrified our

STOP THE HATE

parents. I even asked my principal what was so terrifying about the song.

My daughter looked up the song on Google and found that it referred to Robert F. Kennedy, who was the U.S. attorney general at the time. The song was referred to the FBI for investigation, but it concluded there weren’t any pornographic lyrics.

This seemed absolutely crazy and so repressed to me. But younger people would have to understand that I grew up in a repressed time.

It is important in the Stop the Hate campaign that we stop warring against each other and try to understand where the other person is coming from and where their individual differences such as age, gender, race and even birth order lead them.

One project that I liked is people can visit a library and instead of reading books several people can be sitting. One person might be Hispanic, one gay and another straight and you can go up to that person and ask questions, period.

Also, to stop the hate we have to understand that the idea of faith, family and friends has expanded in the 21st century. People are more mobile, don’t necessarily live with their families or go to church with them, and we don’t often have the same group of people living around them for many years.

When I worked for the State of California, a Hispanic woman told me that she hadn’t talked to a Black woman before working with her and she was surprised how similar their cultures were.

We have to be more open to healing and celebrating the differences that backgrounds bring. We need to be able to listen to each other and not rush to judgment. Finally, we need to be able to listen to people different from ourselves who might be able to teach us something that we don’t yet know. It is fortunate that we have Google, Wikipedia, YouTube and the like because we can utilize them to find out not only about other people but also a lot more about ourselves.

Alexia Baca Morgan is a good friend, family member and community member. She is a clinical psychologist in private practice and works hard to be a better person, with partial success.

Tools to Defend Ourselves

BY PAULINA CRUZ

As a child, I knew what hate incidents and hate crimes felt like even though I didn’t know there were terms for them.

I knew that gut feeling—the fear and uncertainty. Was I over-exaggerating? Was I being sensitive? Would I make it worse if I responded? Would there be retaliation? Was it even worth the risk?

These fears and questions were part of why I rarely spoke up.

The other reason was: I did not know where to go.

My stepfather had been a cop in his youth. He often boasted with stories of corruption and self-indulgence at the dinner table. This helped foster fear and doubt in my mind.

Like many minorities, it made me even more unsure of who to call when in need. How could I trust anyone in asking for help if they could be as selfish and cruel as him?

Moving to California, my mom was cut off from her family, her community and her support system.

Over time, we found new communities to be part of.

Neighbors, coworkers and friends from school. People like us, people going through similar experiences. They helped translate, provided support and eventually began telling us of organizations they had gone to.

My psychology professor recently said something I found unexpected. He said that current research suggests people struggling with mental health issues are more likely to recover in Third World countries than in First World countries. The reason he provided was a strong sense of community.

It made me really reflect. Sometimes we don’t ask for help because we don’t know how. Sometimes it’s because we don’t know who to ask.

This is why I am so thankful to the *Community Alliance* for inviting me to be part of the “Stop the Hate” campaign. The goal has been clear at each town hall it has held: to inform communities on resources and organizations that could provide them with help. To form stronger ties. To provide support.

We are stronger together. We are stronger informed.

The “Stop the Hate” campaign has provided funding to organizations meant to help victims of hate incidents and hate crimes. This is about creating a network of allyships and expanding both our communities and knowledge.

I live an hour away from Huron. Until the planning for the first town hall, (I am embarrassed to admit) I had no idea it even existed. I didn’t know their struggles and their need for a local high school.

Before writing my article about Gen Z, I had no clue Lindsay had elected a new mayor (I live a little under 30 minutes away). Sometimes in the hustle and bustle of daily life it’s easy to lose track of the world around us and the issues that matter—especially the local ones. Our phones and TVs are flooded with diversions and terribly stressful stories. It can get overwhelming.

It’s important to remember that change starts at home, within our communities, neighborhoods and homes. Change comes from becoming informed on the resources around us and the struggles local communities are facing.

This is vital, not only to help ourselves but also to offer help to those in need. If you know where to go and see someone experiencing a hate crime, you can send them exactly where they need to go for help.

Some of the organizations and groups that have participated in our town halls include the Fresno Center, the Department of Justice, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Dolores Huerta Foundation.

The Fresno Center, for example, has 20 programs where you can get an array of assistance such as immigration/citizenship resources or mental health services.

STOP THE HATE

Where To Go for Help

- Dolores Huerta Foundation: doloreshuerta.org
- The Fresno Center: fresnocenter.org
- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR): cair.com

The Dolores Huerta Foundation is a San Joaquin Valley entity that provides much-needed support to nonprofits and individuals as well as educating and laying strong cultural foundations.

CAIR is a civil rights and advocacy nonprofit. It focuses on protecting the civil rights of American Muslims nationwide.

The *Community Alliance* is also working on creating a comprehensive, free and accessible online list of nonprofit organizations with the type of support/resources listed that they offer. This is part of our mission to continue informing our communities.

Sometimes it can be scary stepping out into the world and asking for help, especially if you don’t know who to ask. We hope that through our town halls, articles and projects we can provide those answers. We hope to provide the tools for victims to stand against hate and to encourage allies to step up when needed.

Asking for and offering help are the first steps toward justice.

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



Jimena Montes speaks, as Reyna Rodriguez translates (behind Jimena), during the “Stop the Hate” town hall in Huron on Nov. 17, 2022. Photo by Peter Maiden

“Natural Energy” Initiative Fires Up

BY KEVIN HALL

Fresno politicians joined hands, linked arms and stood tall with private interests on the first of the month and announced a bold new direction for the county’s one million–plus urban and rural residents: free, sustainable, locally produced energy.

At a press conference held in front of the smoldering remains of yet another dump fire at the Fresno Area Recycling and Transfer Station, they moved upwind and announced the ignition of an unprecedented regional effort to be coordinated by a new joint powers authority, the Bureau of Unlimited Renewable Natural Sources (BURNS).

“We can generate our own power, make it affordable for everyone and have it last forever,” said BURNS Chair Sonny Skyes. “We have wood. We have manure. We have plastic. Most important of all, we have votes.”

Officeholders and their controllers across the political spectrum have endorsed the effort and are forming a political action committee to push out a joint message, Politicians and Oligarchs Organized for Our Own Prosperity (POOOOP). POOOOP head Fresno City Council Member Ivana B. Mare pledged to flush away bureaucratic blockages with campaign slush fund infusions. “We want to cut the red tape and roll out the red carpet for private investors. Unfettered carbon capitalism will save us,” she gushed like a future oil lobbyist.

BURNS will receive \$100 million in start-up funds through the state’s guiding climate investment program, Diverse Energy Leaders Advocating for Youth (DELAY). “DELAY is really the backbone of our focus on achieving net-zero emissions by an eventual year. It runs through all our programs,” said California Air Board member Lotta Time, a business equity advocate. “And this is a whole new generation of DELAY strategies: larger grants, no-interest loans, unproven technologies and, as usual, unlimited carbon credits to sell to fellow polluters.”

POOOOP PAC’s goal of responding to the climate collapse with unlimited industrial growth is an approach pioneered by dairy owners known as Bowel Movement Capitalism. “Big Manure has really led the way on this front,” said BMC innovator, billionaire hedge fund money herder Cole Cash. In concert with public pension managers, Cash has created a “climate collapse guaranteed profits” fund: Carbon Offset Wealth (COWs) and offers investment opportunities known as Cash COWS. Small investors are offered smaller Cash GRABS (Green Renewables Always Buy Sustainability).

“The more we burn, the more we make, and the more we make the sooner we craft a profit-based answer to our environmental crisis,” explained Cash. “There is money to be made off disaster and maybe even a future.”

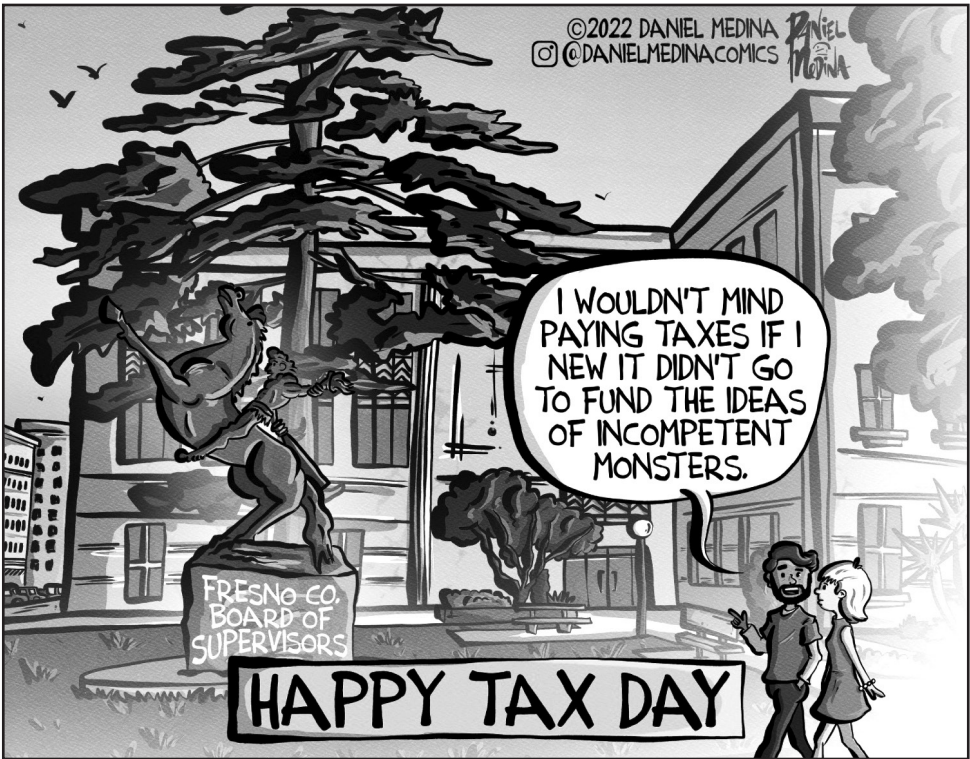
BURNS has targeted South Fresno, Calwa and Malaga for its activities and plans to create “pop-up” environmental collapse economic enterprise zones known as South of Clovis Anywhere Renewable Energy Yards (SCAREY). “We’ll put SCAREY facilities of any size next to anything or anyone any time,” said Council Member Mare. “POOOOP politicians will push them through.”

Described by one former Fresno mayor as the city’s dirty little engine that could, the SCAREY area encompasses Edison, Roosevelt, Sunnyside and Washington Union high schools. Emissions from wood grinding and burning, dairy digesters, dump fires of batteries and electronics, high-speed rail construction, and diesel truck–choked warehouses regularly blanket schools and homes in a toxic cloud.

The first SCAREY BURNS project to be built is a biomass and wood pellet plant operated by Sierra Log and Almond Stump Hydrogen Inc. (SLASH). “SLASH will be powering dozens of nearby homes while adding mitigated truck traffic and particulate pollution,” said City Council Member Cal “Enviro” Screems. “This project demonstrates that we can locate industry next to residential neighborhoods with no harm to business owners or additional costs to those industries. It’s a win-win!”

The third leg of the BURNS stool of a plan is combustion of methane from dairy herd manure, the gasses of which can earn owners more than milk. Through the Milk Our Manure

CLIMATE POLITICS



(MOM) program, methane digesters will be added to every dairy in the county with priority DELAY grants. “With that kind of backing, we can increase herd size, manure and milk production, and create a stream of endless carbon credits to sell,” said local dairyman and county supervisor Doug Hole.

Not to be left out, the fossil fuel industry effortlessly joined the effort with the introduction of its latest scheme: Captured Carbon Underground Leaky Technology (CCULT). “Our CCULT members just want unlimited oil and methane production throughout the transition to Armageddon...unlimited, unlimited,” chanted faceless CCULTists who stood at the press conference in hooded black robes.

And to ensure the coalition’s approach is irreproachable, POOOOP has passed gas money to an advisory “citizens’ stakeholder committee” with representation from community, business, labor and faith leaders committed to the South Fresno BURNS vision. “We might live on the other end of town, but we know this is the best thing for these people,” said coalition member Dee Tatched, head of the carbon tax advocacy group Deceptive Economic Benefit Taxation (DEBT). “Our youth need carbon DEBT and regulatory DELAY,” she insisted.

BURNS’ Skyes couldn’t agree more. “The synergy and cumulative impacts of the coalition’s efforts will be difficult to measure, but if by promising free energy to the many we can guarantee uninterrupted profits for the few, that—plus our bloated salaries—that’s reward enough,” emitted Skyes. “The BURNS POOOOP and SLASH with MOMs and SCAREY CCULTs’ DELAY and DEBT strategy of public pension funds invested in Cash COWS and Cash GRABS is the future of capitalism, or its end,” he explicated. “But we could all disappear tomorrow and these systems would keep on producing. It’s natural energy after all.”

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.

POLITICAL HUMOR

Rumor Has It

BY R. J. MITCH CANTWELL

If the Tea Party QAnon Republicans take over our government, the United States will have to change the Pledge of Allegiance to the following: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of hypocrisy, and to the corruption for which it stands, one nation under superstition, badly divided, with Liberty and Justice for only the wealthy.”

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis recently boasted arrogantly that “people are willing to walk barefoot over broken glass to vote for me because I am such a superlative leader.” That’s because Florida voters tend to spend much of their time sitting their bare butts on broken beer glass and smoking weed while hurricanes around them are blowing their brains away.

Donald Trump recently hawked one of his NFT cards with a picture of him showing his “stable genius” bone spur. Most people thought he was “mooning” them with his stable genius hemorrhoids.

Former Arizona radio shock-jock Kari Lake recently announced that she would be willing to run alongside presidential candidate Donald Trump as his running mate. She said she felt that she could do an excellent job being in charge of vice.

It is unlikely that Donald Trump will face prison time for his many crimes against humanity. He has been described as too mentally incompetent to even stand trial. Instead, it is likely he will be sentenced into an institution for the criminally insane. A special room will be assigned for him, approximately 12 x 16 feet, with ketchup-resistant rubber walls and a large closet to house his diapers.

“Spoiler alert”—Nancy Pelosi says, regardless of her experience in working with small children, she is turning

down an offer for a second job teaching Trump how to change his own diapers. Instead, she recommends he be given a self-teaching booklet on “sanitation procedures for idiots.” Trump’s family has been quite taken aback by her suggestion since it is well-known that “his college professors neglected to include learning to read” as part of his curriculum. “Second spoiler alert”—the institution’s employees will not be including diaper changes as part of their curriculum.

According to Christian biblical scholars, there are three different versions of the Old Testament creation tale, the “P,” the “J” and the “RNC.” One has a great footprint in the sky fashioning both Adam and Eve equally out of clay. The second one has Eve being fashioned out of Adam’s rib. The RNC version has all women, liberals and LGBTQ+ persons being fashioned out of Adam’s rib, and that’s why conservative white males only should be given the right to privacy when it comes to being audited by the IRS. Yes! Really!

I recently learned that the title “45” was assigned to Donald Trump to indicate his position in the continuum of U.S. presidencies. All along I thought they were referring to his IQ!

When Marjorie Taylor Greene and Lauren Boebert agree to hold their long-anticipated duel, the House of Representatives will assign them a lovely 8 x 10 foot cat box and give them some catnip.

If DeSantis runs for president in 2024, his one big request will be that only white members of the Proud Boys, Three Percenters, Oathkeepers, Ku Klux Klan members and unconvicted sex offenders be allowed to vote. He might include a few members of Trump’s Secret Service agents, also.

Recently, archeologists in Germany discovered the skeletal remains of a Neanderthal youth buried in a shallow grave in association with fossilized hyena bones and human excrement. An analysis of DNA recovered from the 48,000-year-old Neanderthal remains indicated the closest living descendants were—wait for it—yes, the Donald Trump

family. The archeologists had become suspicious of the relationship based on the fact that the Neanderthal youth had been found with a huge Mammoth thigh bone lodged in his jaws, that had probably resulted from his attempt to eat the whole thing and choking to death.

R.J. Mitch Cantwell, Ph.D., is a professor of archeology, retired from College of the Sequoias. He has written many historical and science fiction novels and lives in Dunlap.

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Siversk: Spring in Donbas

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

When Galyna was in her 20s, she, with her husband and friends, liked to plant trees in their beloved town of Siversk. Chestnuts, apricots, cherries and acacias grew in her yard and along the quiet streets.

“Siversk used to be a pretty town before the war,” says Galyna, sitting on a broken bench by her destroyed building, speaking through the noise. The non-stop siren of an air raid, the thunder of non-stop artillery fire and explosions mix with the thud of axes chopping wood.

Several men nearby make splinters and firewood from the trees Galyna planted in the 1970s. Two small dogs are playing by her feet, and she pats them as she speaks. “We must cut the trees down to burn our wood stoves, to heat the basement and cook food. My heart is crying. It hurts.”

Nothing in Siversk resembles the pretty town of Galyna’s memory. Not a single building is intact. Glass shards, broken cement and torn wires cover the ground with a nightmarish gray carpet screeching under one’s feet. No glass on the windows anywhere—it does not matter as people have lived in the basement for a year now, hiding from the death coming from the skies. Even then, getting food or water brought by volunteers from nearby Kramatorsk, many are killed and injured.

Eleven people live in the basement of Galyna’s building. No children are left on their block. Swings at the playground in the yard serve as a clothes rack. The administration provides technical water in large tanks. A well with drinking water is a 20-minute walk down the hill, but it is dangerous. Russian troops are showering Siversk with cluster bombs and missiles.

Every day, volunteers bring water in an old ambulance vehicle, and locals line up with large canisters and plastic bottles. Greg and Ben, American and British volunteers, bring water to Siversk in the old ambulance, driving it via a broken road from Kramatorsk twice daily.



Sergiy with a piglet. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

Iranian-made Russian drones cruise over the road and attack convoys often. As we follow the ambulance across the bridge, our car goes under fire. Working is only possible with bulletproof vests and helmets due to constant shelling.

“We deliver water as all human beings have the right to fresh water,” explains Ben. “We have measured water quality in the river and the wells, and it is beyond the standard. Drinking this water will lead to irreversible health damage.

“We found a local person in Kramatorsk to filter the water. First, we just paid all the expenses ourselves, but soon we ran out of funds, so we did crowdfunding.”

Problems with drinking water are common in war-torn Ukraine because the Russian military targets the pipelines and critical infrastructure. Mykolaiv, a large seaport by the Black Sea, lived without drinking water for nine months as the Russian troops destroyed the water access at the beginning of the full-scale invasion in March 2022.

Currently, most towns and villages in Donbas live with little to no water, power, heat and communication, relying on volunteers like Greg and Ben for food supply. All enterprises are destroyed, and there are no jobs.

Leaving is hard not only due to the bonds with the land, animals and memories. There is simply no money to relocate. For the elderly, leaving is unthinkable. Life in basements becomes a habit.

Women use the water Ben and Greg deliver to cook breakfast porridge and soup for lunch. Dinner is whatever is left from the two previous meals, with bread, delivered weekly by the city administration. People keep busy with daily chores and risk getting outside for some air as spring arrives in Donbas.



Galyna. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

“After breakfast today, we went out to clean up our yards, a spring cleaning,” explains Galyna. “We found the first flowers sprouting from the ground. That gave us hope: We will live. Ukraine will survive.

“You know, my son is not in Siversk anymore; he drives postal packages around Ukraine. Sometimes, my husband and I climb to the top floor of the destroyed college across the street and try to get the Internet connection to call him to tell him we are okay. Last time we lucked out, he told me, ‘Mom, I drive everywhere, and I wish you could only see how beautiful our country is, east to west. Everything is blossoming.’”



A resident in front of her destroyed house in Siversk. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

As Ben and Greg stop at another destroyed, empty street, people climb out of the basement to line up for water. Vera and Boris, a couple in their late 60s, wait with two large canisters in a line, their dog sitting next to them. Their house was hit on July 18, at 12:30 a.m., as they were asleep.

Cluster munitions destroyed a significant part of the house, the living room and the kitchen, but their bedroom, even though damaged, did not collapse entirely. Vera and Boris got only light injuries.

Since then, they have lived in an unheated basement, without power, gas, water and communication, just like the rest of the Siversk population. They have a small generator, listen to the radio in the morning and evening to catch up with the news, and read books to each other. Three cats and two dogs keep them company.

Their children and grandchildren live in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, and they have not seen them for a year, as it is too dangerous to visit Siversk.

“We lived well before,” said Boris, speaking Russian. “Nobody here is rich, but we had our houses, our farms, we had a cow and a few pigs. We had peace; we used to have fun gatherings. Some speak Russian, some speak Ukrainian, and some speak a dialect called Surzhik. None of it was ever a problem until this horror started.”

“We have 20 family graves here to care for,” says his wife, speaking Ukrainian. “Why should we leave? This is our land. We were born and raised here, and we will die here.”

Dying in Siversk is easy. We see fresh graves in the hospital’s yard as we drive through the apocalyptic landscape, as the wind whistles through the empty door frames and windows and the thumps of artillery fire get louder.

“A cluster bomb injured me and killed two young men as we were lining up here last year,” says Sergey, another resident waiting for water. “I could not walk for three months, but it is unbearable to think these young men’s lives were cut short—for what?”

Sergey does not want to leave as he has a small farm: a dozen Vietnamese piglets and their mother, several dogs and cats and chickens. Since childhood, he has adored animals. Sergey suffers from Parkinson’s disease, and caring for his animals is hard, especially as he cannot get the medicine he needs—all pharmacies in Siversk closed long ago. Only two small shops are open several hours a day. Ben takes his number to try to help.

“These animals are like my children,” he says as another explosion nearby rocks the ground. “I cannot take them with me. If we go, who is going to take care of them? Who needs them? I can’t leave.”

Yet, as the front line gets closer to Siversk, many residents might face the need to move soon. As we worked at a rescue-and-evacuation center in Kramatorsk, we interviewed many families who were reluctant to leave nearby Bakhmut until the last minute.

They had to be evacuated from their town after Russian shells destroyed their houses and the streets burned down. Volunteers like Ben and Greg from around the world risk their lives to save them.

Maryna, a math teacher with 30 years of experience, said she and her husband stayed until the last minute in Bakhmut and now had nothing left besides his wheelchair and their passports. The people of Siversk are aware of the threat and hear the stories from Bakhmut but do not give up hope.

“We might not have much,” said Galyna back in her dark, cold basement in Siversk. “Yet, we will plant new trees after the war. We will keep our heads high, feel better and find beauty in our city and our hearts. We will leave our beautiful trees for a new generation, for our kids and grandkids.”

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).

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Winter Bonsai Silhouette Exhibition

BY HOMER GEE GREENE JR.

The Golden State Bonsai Federation's Clark Bonsai Collection in the Shinzen Japanese Garden has rotated to its Winter Bonsai Exhibition. The collection is rotated quarterly to display the four seasons of the year and the seasonal appreciation and experience of viewing bonsai trees.

This rotation was accomplished by leaving the deciduous trees currently on display that have dropped their leaves and have exposed their winter silhouette. Most of the evergreen trees were removed and replaced with winter silhouette trees from the collection's reserve area.

The Japanese art of bonsai has been practiced for more than 1,000 years. In Japan, the winter silhouette exhibitions are not a rare occurrence.

It is believed that the first winter silhouette exhibition in America was in California—in Los Angeles organized by Frank Nagata. He was a nurseryman and bonsai teacher who passed away in 1980 at the age of 90.

The Nagata family, daughter Kay and son-in-law Khan Komai, both bonsai teachers, decided to continue his tradition of the winter silhouette exhibition of deciduous bonsai trees. The Clark Bonsai Collection honors the memory of Frank Nagata and the tradition of exhibiting deciduous bonsai trees in their yearly winter silhouette exhibition.

What is so enlightening about the winter bonsai silhouette of deciduous trees? Winter, for many, is the best season to view bonsai trees.

The presentation of the deciduous bonsai tree is bare and stark with no leaves to

distract the viewer from the essence of the tree. The architectural silhouette of the tree is revealed.

The silhouette is created by the artist, or the curator of the collection, to imitate a mineralized version of a natural tree in winter. If the tree is wired, you will be able to see and appreciate how the wire snakes from the trunk to the branches, shaping the tree into the envisioned aesthetic shape of the artist.

To observe the tree is to experience the dialectic of a live tree in its dormant state denoting the stillness of living and the living process of a deciduous tree.

When observing a bonsai tree in the winter silhouette, focus on the trunk, the textured or smooth bark, the weak or strong branches, and the ramifications of the branches. This experience puts one into a Zen state of total focus.

View the tree with a harmonious balance of my mind and body. Similar to the tree dropping all its leaves, drop all illusions, seeing and feeling events without distortion created by one's own thoughts or desires. This creates a Zen way of being and the creation and development of a state of a Zen mind through meditation.

Viewing a winter silhouette tree on a foggy or rainy morning will connote a Zen sense of stillness, peace and calmness. You can create oneness between you and the tree or Zazen: an awareness of the nature of existence. We hope that visitors to the Winter Bonsai Exhibit will experience their own Zen moment.

The spirit of a Zen monk visited the collection and the winter silhouette display of deciduous trees and wrote the following haiku:

Winter Leafless Trees
Architectural Vistas
Zen Mind Reflection

Homer Gee Greene Jr. is the documentarian of the Clark Bonsai Collection in the Shinzen Japanese Garden.



Winter is the best season to view bonsai trees: The presentation of the deciduous bonsai tree is bare and stark with no leaves to distract the viewer from the essence of the tree. Photo courtesy of Homer Gee Greene Jr.

The Clark Bonsai Collection is located inside the Shinzen Japanese garden at Woodward Park.

The current hours are 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Wednesday–Friday and 10 a.m.–1 p.m. Saturdays, Sunday and holidays.

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Interfaith Scholar Weekend

BY PETER MAIDEN

The Interfaith Scholar Weekend takes place yearly in Fresno. This year marks the return to an in-person format for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. It was held the weekend of March 10–12.

At the morning event on Saturday, held at Temple Beth Israel, Rabbi Rick Winer said prayers in Hebrew during a Torah interpretation. The Torah is a sacred Jewish scroll, and a different portion is interpreted each week of the year.

Following Rabbi Winer, representatives of several other faiths gave short talks and prayed aloud.

Afterward, Hajj Reza Nehumanesh, the executive director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, came up to the Rabbi, excited, and said, “Hey bro! Didn’t we have, like, six languages?”

They counted off the six: Hebrew, Arabic, the Lakota language, Armenian, Punjabi and English. A little later, there was a Buddhist meditation that was done partly in Japanese. This is the essence of the Interfaith movement—each language a testimony to its culture and its people.

Rev. Paul Raushenbush came from New York to headline the event. He spoke at the Saint Paul Catholic Newman Center on Friday, at Temple Beth Israel on Saturday and at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Sunday.

Raushenbush is president and CEO of the Interfaith Alliance. He is an imposing figure, at almost six feet five inches. He is a Baptist minister and for eight years was associate dean of religious life and the chapel at Princeton University. He is openly gay, married and with children. He has experience with web publications and religious journalism, including a stint as executive editor of global spirituality and religion with the Huffington Post.

In his keynote address at the Newman Center, Raushenbush said that “nearly one in five Americans assert that not only is the United States a white Christian nation, but also that they are willing to fight to preserve it.

“We saw this when the white Christian nationalists marched through Charlottesville with torches saying, ‘Jews will not replace us!’ Or when President Trump used tear gas and violence on the protestors in Lafayette Square in order to hold up a Bible as a prop at St. John’s Church.

“And of course, most notably on January 6, 2021, in the deadly attack in our nation’s capital by insurrectionists holding crosses and waving Jesus banners as they attempted to thwart the will of the people in the election and subvert our democracy.”

Raushenbush, whose great-grandfather was Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, offered the legal principle for opposing these Christian nationalists: “Your freedom to swing your fist ends where my nose begins.”



People of different faiths gave short sermons at Temple Beth Israel. Clockwise from top left: Dr. Matt Jendian, an Armenian deacon; Rev. Anna Lopez, a Lakota language speaker; Hajj Reza Nehumanesh, executive director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno; and Paula Kanagawa, chair of the Central California Buddhist Education Committee. Photo by Peter Maiden

He also found reason for optimism in America’s religious-political climate: “We’re going to stand up to Christian nationalism by naming it, by saying [that] it’s not what we want our country to be.

“And we’re also going to win by casting a much more beautiful vision for this country, for our communities, for our city, for our nation that invites everyone to participate with equal dignity for the people of faith and no faith to live their life freely together.

“We will celebrate an inclusive understanding of religious freedom and demand that our religious and moral and ethical commitments—around racial equity, marriage equality, freedom of women and public schools—deserve equal treatment to those who claim the mantle of religion, but mean it to benefit the very few.”

Several local figures gave responses to the keynote speech. Among them was Sukaina Hussein of the Council of American-Islamic Relations. She said that the Quran has several references to religious freedom.

She said, “One of the verses I want to highlight is chapter two, verse 256. God tells us, because the Quran is the word of God, he literally says [she read the citation in Arabic]. That means there is no compulsion in religion.

“And so God is literally telling us you cannot force someone to believe something. You cannot force someone to have a change in their heart. You cannot force faith upon someone.

“We talk about ‘there is no compulsion in religion’—you hear that from Muslims a lot. We’re talking about what God told us. That might not be what you see in some Muslim governments, and it might not be what you see from some oppressive rulers, but it is what our faith teaches and what God teaches.”

Raushenbush took the mic again and gave Hussein glowing praise: “Every time I hear all those stories, those stories from the prophet Muhammad, from the tradition, I’m like, yeah, oh my God, thank God for those stories. They give me language; they give me strength as a Christian. You’re basically creating a corridor, creating a broad, a beautiful entrance and saying, ‘Hey, come learn.’”

The next afternoon, Raushenbush’s lecture was titled “Response to Online Hate and Offline Violence.”

“Hate speech is content intended to vilify, humiliate or incite hatred against a person or a group on the basis of their identity,” he said. “Online harassment is a weaponization of content against members of marginalized communities, including religious communities.

Continues on page 15

What To Do about Hate on the Internet

Call out, but don’t engage. Instead of engaging with the harasser, engage with the impacted person. Avoid sharing hateful content, even when demonstrating your opposition.

Report the hateful content to the platform. Although they might not be perfect, most social media platforms have mechanisms by which you

can report hateful content. Report hate when you see it to stop it from spreading. Incidents of hate speech should be taken seriously.

Block the source. Unfollowing or blocking the speaker can help limit the reach of their hateful content.

Show solidarity with the targeted person or community. Lifting up the voices of impacted communities can help drown out hateful content. Show your support for the persons targeted by reaching out and showing your support.

Source: Interfaith Alliance

Interfaith Climate Summit

BY MAGDALENA WENGER

There is a connection between humans and the natural world; faith can help us to see this connection in new and deeper ways. Many religions and spiritualities share a common sense that our relationship to nature is connected to our spirituality and that our spiritual understandings should affect how we relate to the natural world, even as they have different understandings of nature and of the Divine.

The spiritual perspective is often missing from public discourse on climate change, but this does not mean it is not important.

Faith communities have wisdom and knowledge that can help to guide the rest of society into a new relationship with the natural world and to help society transition to a future increasingly shaped by climate change. They have resources, spiritual and organizing power, and unique understandings and perspectives that can change the world, especially when organizing together.

Faith communities and people of faith are uniquely positioned to both act and encourage action on climate change.

This is why some faith communities have organized the one-day Fresno Interfaith

Climate Summit on April 15, hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. Numerous workshops led by advocates, faith communities and organizations from around Fresno and the state are in the works with opportunities to discover common values, inspire hope, build community and make space to learn from each other.

You might ask, why do we need an interfaith climate summit? For many of those involved with this summit, their climate advocacy and/or relationship to the Earth is part of their faith. Their motivation to care for the Earth does not come from logic or ethics, but from their spirituality.

The summit provides an opportunity to reflect on how our faith contributes to our actions to help the Earth, to connect with neighbors from across the city and find ways to organize together and advocate for our own, local communities and to learn about the abundance of ways the Divine is working in our lives and communities to encourage people to care for the Earth.

We can only take actions to improve our environment and address the current climate crisis when we do it together: across all barriers, with respect, and centering our best wisdoms.

The keynote speaker will be Ron Goode, an Indigenous elder and the tribal chair of the North Fork Mono tribe.

Learn more by contacting fica_internship@gmail.com.

Magdalena Wenger is a college student who has been interning with the Fresno Interfaith Climate Alliance.

Registration now open!

fresno interfaith climate summit

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At the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The Honorable Ron Goode, Tribal Chairman of the North Fork Mono Tribe

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11

ALLIANCE COMMUNITY APRIL 2023

Reproductive Justice

BY JANET SLAGTER

As noted in last month’s “Abortion Bans an Indicator of Misogyny,” 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.

What does RJ include to this revitalized misogyny should we adopt?

Most defenses of abortion in the United States rely on legal rights and individual choice. But given the multiple constraints in which poor women, immigrants and women of color live, this response is ill-founded. In 1997, African American feminist and anti-racist theorist Loretta Ross outlined a multifaceted and inclusive approach to reproductive issues called reproductive justice (RJ). Ross is a founding member of the African American SisterSong collective that developed it.

What does RJ include?

The right to not have children. We need reproductive healthcare that focuses on providing appropriate services and addresses the social determinants of health. Yes, we need reproductive rights, such as access to legal abortion and contraception, but we don’t start and cannot stop there.

RJ works to build a movement that focuses on all the linked human rights that reproduction requires. It builds coalitions with indigenous rights, immigrant rights, workers’ rights, prison abolition and Black Lives Matter movements. It focuses on better lives for women and girls and sustainable communities.

The right to have children under conditions pregnant persons choose. We also need birth justice, controlled by pregnant persons: the right to midwifery, doulas, birth plans we design and the right to refuse sterilization and unnecessary cesareans.

We need to dismantle the problematic structures of inequality within which pregnancy and birth are experienced. There are 600 living survivors of California’s eugenics sterilization law; 144 women prisoners were illegally sterilized from 2005 to 2014.

The right to parent children in safe and healthy environments. We need the right to raise our children in safe environments that meet families’ needs, away from gun violence, polluted air and water, poisoned soils, poorly funded schools, inadequate healthcare and racist policing.

Although 12 months of postpartum care is available through federal programs, the seven states with the most restrictive abortion laws have not implemented this option. None of the states with restrictive abortion laws provide paid family and medical leave or have policies requiring paid sick leave for employees.

They require no accommodations for pregnant workers nor have fair work hours scheduling laws. They are states for which the minimum wage is \$7.25. How are women able to afford having children in these circumstances?

Clearly, looking out for fetuses does not mean looking after the needs of pregnant people. White evangelicals have sued to regain the right to separate Native children from their families, which has been prohibited by the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Unlike the usual approach to abortion based on rights, RJ requires focusing on human interdependence rather than on separate individuals. Besides legal abortion, RJ includes socially guaranteed access to all the appropriate resources we need independent of cost.

Mere legal access does not ensure that abortion services are nearby and affordable, or suitable for people from different cultures and classes, and with differing bodies and gendered identities.

Abortion is not primarily a medical decision, and its parameters should not be prescribed as though it is. Even low-tech vacuum aspiration abortions can be and have been performed safely by women themselves.

RJ critiques “choice.” Choice disappears when we foreground the reproductive constraints imposed on Black women. A potent sign at our local May 14 protest after the leaked SCOTUS decision said, “Black Women Warned Us.”

Black women slaves were forced to breed, raped by their enslavers, forced to leave their children unattended, forced to watch their children ripped from them and forced to care for white children. Once “free,” they have been forcibly sterilized, forcibly implanted with contraceptives, denied public support for their children, had their erotic and family lives subject to state surveillance, and been forcibly separated from their children through racially targeted law enforcement, police killings and imprisonment.

“Choice” masks how laws, policies and officials punish or reward reproductive activity of different women differently. Right-wing Christian evangelical media speak endlessly of the duty of white women to have lots of babies.

Whose childbearing is protected and whose is stigmatized? For example, when can an immigrant person with no documents “choose” whether to go to a medical provider for prenatal care? What sense does choice make when African American women disproportionately face infertility issues and can only afford to live in areas with high concentrations of pollutants? When abortions are 400 miles away and too expensive? When trans people are denied reproductive services?

Arline Geronimus uses the concept of “weathering,” an erosion caused by living in constant stress, to explain why poorer women of color suffer more chronic health conditions than whiter, better-off people. A just-published California study on maternal and child mortality finds that the richest new Black mothers and their infants die at a higher rate than the poorest white mothers and their infants. In Mississippi, the post-Roe maternal mortality rate has increased dramatically for Black women.

Who gets offered or channeled into which services? Women of color have routinely been treated without their consent and have been overprescribed long-acting contraception.

Forced sterilization has also been routinely used on Native American, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Asian-American, African American and disabled women. Women prisoners of color have been routinely sterilized, and in 2020, forced hysterectomies of dozens of Latinx immigrants

imprisoned in U.S. immigration detention facilities were documented.

Is surrogacy a choice when it exploits poor women in a coercive scheme to earn money to meet their families’ needs? Reproductive justice requires that abortion and birthing and child-raising be designed with policies that do not further commodify human life. It asks, which strategies are human-centered and not market-based?

Why the current backlash against abortion and contraception?

To effectively struggle against the new and old laws enacted against women’s reproductive control, we need to understand our current political context. There are several reasons for the backlash:

- Household hierarchies: Reaction to women’s limited but increasing power in the home because of paid work. Women spend less time performing traditional services at home and are less devoted to childbearing.
- Manipulation of election district boundaries by partisan legislatures to favor right-wing candidates and weaken the voting power of more liberal people, especially people of color.
- Manipulation of elections themselves, forcing voters of color to stand in long lines. In some districts, handing a potential voter a bottle of water is a crime.
- Corporate oligarchs who control nearly all media have aligned themselves with the racist misogynist right to support eliminating abortion—a recent shift. To sell their politicians to right-wing voters, they band together to draft legislation that reinscribes women as breeders.
- The increasing strength of the Federalist Society and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), whose lawmakers, lawyers and judges restrict abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, immigrants’ rights and contraception.
- Racist replacement theory. White women should reproduce to maintain white dominance and white “culture” in Euro-descendant countries to prevent whites from becoming a minority. Popular right-wing talk shows discuss this endlessly.
- Whitewashed education. Billionaire-funded right-wing organizations and their Christian-right allies have successfully lobbied to pass laws that ban books that detail the U.S. founding in slavery, settler colonial violence and misogyny from classrooms in at least 14 states. Teachers who present the truth are fired.

When schools do not address children’s questions about their country’s history and sociology, they will look elsewhere. For many, that means right-wing media. Millions of boys visit online chat rooms linked to multiplayer war games. White supremacists who lurk there provide racist and misogynist accounts to fill the voids in children’s exposure.

White men have also shot abortion providers and bombed abortion clinics. For these white terrorists, how do we characterize the form of militarism they embody?

- Erasing the lines between church and state. Post *Roe*, few churches worked to overturn it. Now, extremely conservative Christian churches openly advocate against abortion.

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.

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We, the People, must demand a change in US policy regarding war in Ukraine because:

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Blooming Beginnings: Sweet Girl Farms

BY BRISSA REYES

As the citrus season comes to a sweet end and the warmth of spring turns our acres pink, Sweet Girl Farms, a farm stand run by Liset Garcia continues to flourish. At her stand off of Alta Avenue, you will find fresh-squeezed juices, bright ranunculi and various other fresh grown goods.

Garcia is a small organic farmer specializing in herbs, flowers and vegetables. She began her farming journey several years ago when living in Los Angeles. At the time, she worked in healthcare helping women during their pregnancies to receive resources before and after childbirth.

However, life took a turn and she made the switch to farming after an accident that made mobility difficult in her arms and hands. After returning to the Central Valley to live with her parents, she began to plant flowers as a way to heal and move around.

“Flower farming served to me as my physical therapy—my therapist—so I could let go of so much of the physical trauma I was suffering at the time...I was like, ‘Wow, this little seed can grow into something very beautiful and fruitful.’

“I started to put myself in those shoes in the sense that this could be the beginning of something new.”

She began with small and used seeds purchased from big box stores. “It started very basic. I went to Home Depot or Lowe’s, and then I got little trays and my soil. That is how I started to plant a few flowers; the very first flowers I planted at the farm began like that. I just went to buy flower seeds that I thought were cool.”

Next she began exploring herbs, making arrangements and growing vegetables.

Garcia has since moved toward regenerative and sustainable farming practices such as the lasagna method and no till techniques.

With the lasagna method, a layer serves as a barrier, like straw, to diminish the amount of sunlight that the weeds receive, smothering them. The plants at the top are able to grow healthy by racing and beating the weeds in the growth process.

“What I did was purchase a whole bunch of cardboard [and] saved cardboard for a year to cover the plot where I was planning on doing the cardboard method. Finally, I achieved that last winter...It’s been working out really well! I didn’t have to have any equipment really, even though we have it. I opted not to [use that], and it’s been working.”

She is proud that no pesticides or herbicides are used in her farming processes.

Garcia emphasizes the no till practice and its significance for the soil. The soil is essential to healthy plants and must provide a good base to keep things nourished and content to reap good products, she says.

“[The] soil is its own living organism. There’s lots of microorganisms living in there, and they’re the ones that help nourish the soil.

“The soil is the fundamental thing for plants to grasp onto minerals and their nutrients. It maneuvers the plant to have a good growth cycle or a poor growth cycle... That’s where everything is extracted from.

“So then that’s why I emphasize the no till part because I’m trying to make sure we also have a good soil base for the plants to be able to nourish themselves and they can grow really well and give us good products—whether that be the flowers, the herbs or the vegetables.”

Currently, the farm is at the tail end of its bloom season, however, the recent rain and thunderstorms have minimized the number of tourists visiting the farm. Nonetheless, Garcia and her team are enjoying the last of the blooms as young fruits begin to emerge.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE



Liset Garcia at the Sweet Girl Farms stand off of Alta Avenue. Photo by Peter Maiden

“Even though we’ve gotten a lot of rain, again, trying to see the positive in everything...This winter season has hit us with storm after storm after storm...We needed the Valley to have a good drink of water.”

Garcia is putting in an immense effort to get the flowers in on time, however, if that does not happen it will be due to the recent harsh weather conditions. Depending on the results of the crop, she hopes that the outcome will be an opportunity to educate the community and consumers on how local farmers navigate weather-related issues.

The farm welcomes many customers each day and has gained a large following on social media, especially on TikTok where most of Garcia’s content is in Spanish. Her bilingual content reaches a broad audience, and she receives orders from all across the country.

Garcia is thankful for her social media supporters and the local community. “One of the things I really appreciate and love about Reedley (where the farm is based) is

that the customers are the ones who spoke out about me in terms of word of mouth [and] giving my farm stand recognition. So that’s how it all stemmed from community support and how I have a supportive customer base.”

As opposed to viewing public health in a formal healthcare setting, her perspective has changed to a more relaxed approach. However, she has the “goal of making communities healthier.”

Sweet Girl Farms is looking forward to more flowers, specifically dahlias, and their upcoming birthday on July 4. “We are gearing up to prep everything for the summertime, and we’re looking forward to the summer harvest. [But] not so much the heat,” she laughs.

Brisa 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.

Making Sense of Mental Illness

BY EVA MAIDEN

There are so many ways we are confused about mental illness. What is going on in the minds of people whose words and behavior don’t make sense? Where can a family turn for help when a loved one shows signs of serious mental illness? Why are so many mentally ill persons homeless? What would a well-functioning mental health system be like, if California were to develop one?

Fresno has an organization to help families learn about and deal with mental illness in a loved one. NAMI Fresno, a chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, provides classes and discussion groups for families, recently on Zoom during Covid. NAMI also advocates for improved treatment programs for persons in need, whom they call “consumers” or “neighbors.”

Psychiatrist Dr. E. Fuller Torrey documents a shocking political history that explains the lack of a functional mental health treatment system in California today. His 2014 book, *American Psychosis*, has a title meant to imply that it is America that is nuts, lacking a mental health solution.

Back in 1959, about 37,000 persons in the state lived in mental hospitals. However, the public was beginning to learn that the conditions there were poor, and the length of hospital stays was often excessive. Soon a trend for shutting down these hospitals developed.

In 1963, President John Kennedy signed the Community Mental Health Act. This was intended to make the federal government responsible for psychiatric patients. The plan was to create a network of community mental health centers for

consumers to receive care in their local region outside of a hospital. However, shortly after the president signed the act, he was assassinated. When new programs developed in the following years, the funding generally disappeared quickly.

As governor of California, Ronald Reagan played a hand in the gradual sale of state mental hospitals. The notion was publicized that the cost of community mental health centers would come from these sales and from the federal government. By the 1980s, a combination of corruption and confusion as to who was responsible for setting up new programs led to the programs being torpedoed altogether.

Nowadays, a brief hospitalization to evaluate a person in a mental health crisis, called a 5150, is common in local hospitals. During this three-day stay, a consumer might start on appropriate medication and on sharing his/her life stresses with mental health professionals. This should be the beginning of a comprehensive individualized treatment program. That is often not the case.

All of us need to change our thinking and attitudes to begin to solve the problems currently faced by distressed families, tired mental health caregivers and overwhelmed police. What if we were to understand a mental illness to be a brain disorder to be faced just as we deal with cancer or diabetes? Could the families and consumers involved be freed of blame and stigma? Could mental health workers be incentivized to promote community programs instead of just their own careers?

Everyone benefits when we use therapeutic treatment rather than imprisonment for nonviolent psychiatric patients. Everyone would feel relieved not to see more and more homeless mentally ill persons on the street. And the creativity and skills of recovering individuals could be contributing to our community.

The author recalls with deep sadness a consultation decades ago with the mother

of a young mentally ill son with whom she had lost contact. From friends of his whom he had known before his illness, she learned that he was sleeping in the parks of two different cities near the Bay Area.

She kept in contact with these friends, hoping to bring about a reunion with him so that she could bring him to treatment. Instead, some months later, he was found dead in his sleeping bag on the banks of the Sacramento River due to exposure.

Serious depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are conditions that can indeed be helped with the medications and psychotherapies that are known today. This process could take considerable time and should not be subject to shortcuts. And at each step, the consumer needs respect for his/her dignity, secure housing and an ongoing support system.

Two particularly challenging situations for treatment are persons who have a dual diagnosis (both mental illness and addiction) and those who need help but do not believe that they are mentally ill. A recent law, the CARE (Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment) Act of 2023 aims to consider the needs of these individuals by including a budget for treatment, housing and ongoing support.

The act includes a voluntary Care Court that can offer this program to consumers, sometimes as a diversion from a charge that might land them in jail. An agreement is reached in Care Court and both the client and the county services are held responsible for carrying it out. In principle, the consumer’s individual rights are defended by an attorney during this process.

Fresno County is not among the five counties in California that have adopted this law, but its inclusion is anticipated before the end of 2024.

There is some controversy about whether the rights of the consumer are fully respected when a judge is making decisions. If the offer of services is handled in a fully collaborative manner, with built-in

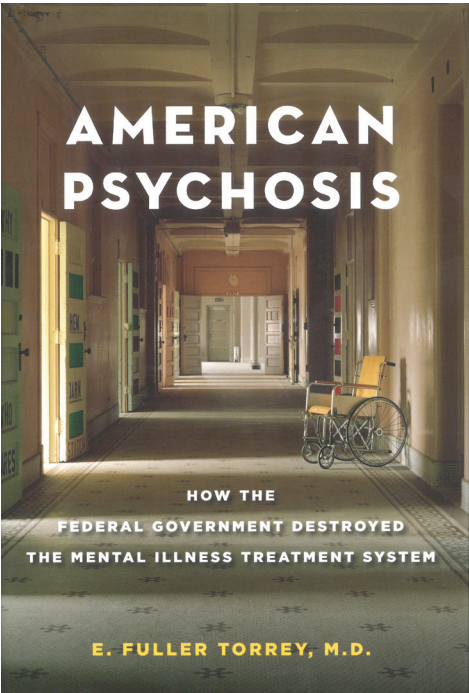
protections, it could be a success for some of our most difficult situations.

Since the blows against the mental health system that took place in the 1960s, California has been struggling to provide adequate care for mental illness. Now, new funding and a new structure could result in an improved system. This is the hope of families that include people with serious mental health issues.

Eva Maiden is a retired school psychologist and psychotherapist.

Accessing Support

NAMI Fresno can be reached by calling 559-224-2469 or visiting namifresno.org. For more information about Spanish-speaking groups, call NAMI California in Sacramento at 916-567-0163 or visit namica.org.



Wokeness and the Great Fear of History

BY MALIK SIMBA

While teaching American history survey courses at Fresno State, I handed out questionnaires on the first day of class. Three key questions were 1) How do you view historical events (conservatively, liberally or radically) and why?; 2) What do you think was the most important event in your lifetime and why?; and 3) Who were Jackie Robinson, Kennesaw “Mountain” Landis and Margaret Sanger as historical figures?

After collecting the questionnaires, I gave this short but important commentary: “We are going to study our national history and the stories within it. And it is critical that each of you not place yourself in the chaotic or the inspirational past we are going to study.

“None of you were there, and so you should not identify with either the inspirational stories or the non-inspirational stories. Be objective in your study and research, and do not bring emotion into your attempt to make sense of the nation’s past.”

At present, there is a cultural war over the ingredients of history. Which facts should be taught, and which ignored? Selected facts of African American history have been deemed too dangerous for the hearts and minds of young people to intellectually ingest.

Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida has called these historical ingredients “woke,” which means for him and many conservative Republicans something morbidly obese intellectually. This term has been co-opted from its positive meaning within Black culture that defined “woke” as being

informed and hip to the real world in which they live, for example, racial inequality, sexism, ageism and the plight of family members who cannot find a decent “slave,” which, in the hood, means a decent job.

DeSantis was concerned with a new Advanced Placement (AP) course focusing on African American history. The dialectic or clash between how DeSantis and other conservatives want to cherry-pick history and the truth that should be taught, as argued by the Black intellectual community, or what W.E.B. DuBois called the “Talented Tenth,” rages on with the cultural wars.

These Black thinkers label Nat Turner as a Black freedom fighter, whereas DeSantis and his “two live crew” of like conservatives label Turner as a “menace to society” who should be deleted from the AP course. The struggle over the historical past between the forces of light and darkness has been real since the NAACP organized a boycott, in 1915, of the racist, ahistorical film, *Birth of a Nation*.

One should keep in mind the ignorance visited upon American students when the historical truth is hidden from them and let history be their guide. In the 1960s, the young white students of the “counterculture” movement became angry when they learned about poverty in what author Michael Harrington called the “Other America.”

The students, isolated in the new 1950s “vanilla suburbs” of endless whiteness, became “awoke” to Harrington’s description of poverty on the other side of the proverbial tracks. Coupled with the awokeness resulting from the glaring war in Vietnam and the King-led civil rights movement, this awoke generation demanded a relevant education system that would advance their minds.

I see this today after perusing decades of answers on my questionnaires. Students tend to think differently depending on time, place and our political culture.

In the 1970s, students tended to answer that they are more liberal, whereas in the



In several southern states controlled by Republicans, politicians have led a movement to ban a wide variety of not only books but also discussion topics such as Black Lives Matter. Photo by Peter Maiden

age of Nixon, Ford, Wallace, Reagan and the two Bushes, students tended to answer that question as they are more conservative. What is interesting, no matter what decade, students overall did not know the three famous individuals.

Most students answered the most important event in their lifetime was either the civil rights movement, the war against terrorism or climate change. Only a few students answered police brutality, Black Lives Matter or gender-identity concerns.

DeSantis and others want American students not to be awoke to these issues but asleep in “La La Land.” However, the American people should be aware or awoke to this sleeping bear of ignorance that abounds in the dark curriculum today—thus, the counterproposal of lightness, the AP course. If AP in African American history is stopped, then America will continue to “educate” a nation of ahistorical, imbecilic citizens who live in fear of the truths of the past.

In 1970, while teaching at Binghamton University, I taught a course on the civil rights movement. I selected a text by Julius Lester

entitled *Look Out Whitey, Black Power Gon’ Get Your Mama*. A high-level conservative administrator decided that the book should be banned.

Today, in several southern “red” states, politicians have led a movement to ban a wide variety of not only books but also discussion topics such as Black Lives Matter, Black queer studies, Black Power, critical race theory and books concerning the life and times of Roberto Clemente, Leroy Jones (Amiri Baraka), Malcolm X and many more.

Florida’s DeSantis and a state education board said the AP in African American history “lacks educational value,” and DeSantis had the state legislature pass the Stop Woke Act. In response, Florida experienced a statewide student walkout called “Stand for Freedom,” voicing their support for diversity and equity, which included racial minorities and LGBTQ+.

The banning is driven by the fear of learning history from the bottom up, such as workers and their class struggle against capitalists, feminists and their struggle against male chauvinism, Hispanics and

Continues on page 23



Original artwork by Jose Arenas

Salt of the Earth

Cultivating Climate, Food, and Land Justice



A NATIONAL ENCUESTRO OF THE AFSC PAN VALLEY INSTITUTE

April 20–22, 2023 · Madera Community College

THURSDAY 4/20

Photo gallery opening: Hands that Forge History photos, work of Tudor Stanley, Eduardo Stanley, and David Bacon

Workshop: *Theater of the Oppressed*, with Gina Sandí Díaz, CSU

FRIDAY 4/21

Round Table on Wheels: Getting to Know California’s Central Valley* with Lunch at Cheng Saetern Farms for those attending the tour

Blessing Ceremony / Opening Ceremony / Framing the Encuentro

A Taste of Home: Every Dish Tells a Story (Cultural Kitchen)*

SATURDAY 4/22

A Traditional Oaxacan Breakfast (and later lunch) by Colectivo Sabor a Mi Tierra

Keynote Speaker Carlton Turner, performing artist, arts advocate, and policy shaper

Pláticas (Dialogues):

The Socioeconomic Impact of Agribusiness (3 concurrent sessions)

Alternatives to Industrial Scale Agribusiness (3 concurrent sessions)

Guiding Principles and Strategies for Social Justice (5 concurrent sessions)

Outdoor Market with small farmers and food vendors

Closing Ceremony (performances):

La Norteña, by actor, director, and playwright Rodolfo Robles Cruz, PVI ArteVism Fellow

Theater of the Oppressed, a play by Gina Sandi Diaz and workshop participants.

Code Switch, a monologue by Joshua Slack, ArteVism alumni

* Advance registration required, paid separately for those not attending the entire conference. Capacity limited.



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TO REGISTER
FOR THIS
EVENT

See the full event program and schedule at panvalleyinstitute.org

Celebrate Earth Day, Join us at the National Encuentro Salt of the Earth: Cultivating Climate, Food, and Land Justice

Interfaith Scholar Weekend

Continued from page 11

And importantly, no matter where it occurs, hate speech puts the safety of our friends and our neighbors at risk on and offline.

“If you think about the Tree of Life [synagogue] murderer, he was on Twitch telling a community that he was going to go do this. And then he went and did it because he was in a like-minded group. [The Internet] creates a dangerous political climate.”

Sadly, he added, “Silicon Valley and other tech areas are going through economic turmoil, a lot of layoffs, [and] the first people who are laid off are the teams that monitor hate and misinformation online.”

In the big picture, it’s safe to say that Raushenbush is amazed by the power of the Internet.

“There’s a parable that goes, two fishes are swimming along, and they pass an older fish,” he says. “And the older fish says, ‘How’s the water?’ And the two younger fish

kind of swim on and they say, ‘What the hell is water?’ The Internet is water. And we have no sense of what we’re diving into when we dive in.

“The Internet is the most important invention that humanity has ever made. And we’re living through the beginnings of it. We’re just at the beginning of it. You might say, ‘Oh, well, the printing press.’ The printing press? Forget it. How many apps do you want for a Bible?”

At one point, he held up his smartphone and said, “This is the largest theological library that’s ever existed in the world.”

The final part of Saturday’s event was a workshop on advocacy. The Interfaith Alliance lobbies legislators for religious and democratic rights.

“For the most part,” Raushenbush said, “we have not been invited into Silicon Valley.” Given the enormity of the changes big tech has made, and the impact they have on our society, perhaps that is a dialogue the progressive religious could undertake. In the generally positive and forward-looking atmosphere of the Interfaith Scholar Weekend, that even seems possible.

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



Rev. Paul Raushenbush at the Catholic Newman Center in Fresno on March 10, giving his keynote speech for the Interfaith Scholar Weekend. Photo by Peter Maiden



SIERRA CLUB TEHIPITE CHAPTER

FRIANT RANCH IS BACK!

In February 2011, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors gave developers the green light to construct the *Friant Ranch Project* — a 2,550-unit residential development on former grazing lands, rolling hills along the east side of Friant Road near the community of Friant.

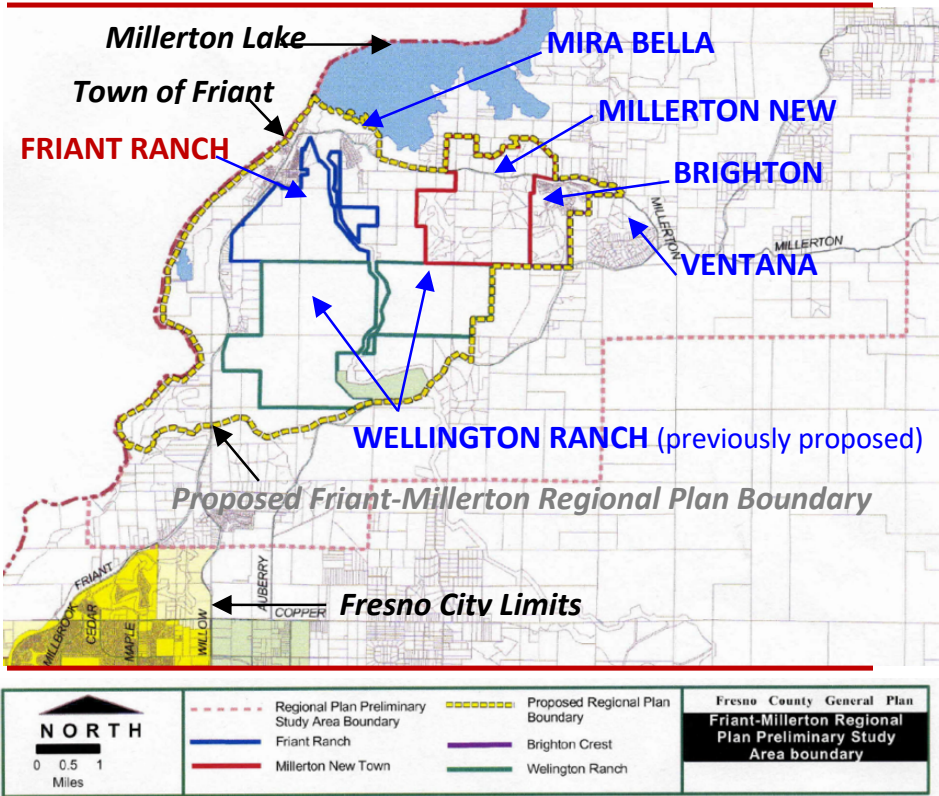
But there are no houses there today — and that’s because we successfully sued Fresno County for violations of CEQA, the California Environmental Quality Act.

Although we lost initially, our Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter and the League of Women Voters of Fresno won in the Court of Appeal, and in December 2018, the California Supreme Court handed down a unanimous, landmark decision in our favor. The high court ruled that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared by the County failed to analyze how increased air pollutants from new homes and 5,000 additional daily auto trips to Fresno would harm the health of residents.

As a result of that court ruling, in the spring of 2021, the Board of Supervisors had no choice but to decertify the EIR and void its 2011 project approvals. To reapprove the project, the County would first need to revise the EIR, and the Board of Supervisors would need to go through the process again to certify the EIR and approve the project.

The County has just recently revised the EIR. **Comments are due to the County by 5:00 PM on April 24th.** The revised Draft EIR is available on the County’s website at: <https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-works-planning/divisions-of-public-works-and-planning-development-services-division/planning-and-land-use/environmental-impact-repo-1580>.

TO LEARN MORE about how you can help us in our successful effort to halt the Friant Ranch housing project, contact Gary at the Sierra Club, at 559-790-3495.



A NEW, SERIOUS PROBLEM HAS ARISEN!

The County is telling county residents to public comments to the subject of air quality. **NOT TRUE! CEQA requires the County to review ALL new information and changed conditions** since the project was approved in 2011. **THESE CHANGES INCLUDE:**

- Passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in 2014.
- Discovery that water contracts could leave the project without water.
- New California climate-change and transportation policy & legislation.
- Changes in California law related to environmental justice analysis.
- New information regarding seepage from project’s wastewater pond.
- Application by CEMEX for a 100-year hard rock mine near the project.
- Table Mountain Casino is 8x larger (w/ concert arena & 12-story hotel).

SIERRA CLUB TEHIPITE CHAPTER APRIL ZOOM MEETING

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 7 PM:

“The Buzz Around Regenerative Agriculture and What This Looks Like in California”

Our guest presenter is Jeff Mitchell, the Leader of UC’s Conservation Agriculture Systems Innovation Center with the University of California, Davis. Jeff will discuss ongoing work to create, test and refine conservation agriculture food production systems in the San Joaquin Valley. This work is becoming widely known as “regenerative agriculture.” He will trace the development of Ag conservation and share the recent evolution of these food production systems right here in California.

This event is free and open to the general public. **Visit www.sierraclub.org/tehipite to register in advance.** The Zoom link will be emailed to you the day of the event.”



Celebrate Youth Civic Engagement

BY JOHN MINKLER

The American Founding Fathers chose the motto “E Pluribus Unum” to emphasize the vital principle of bringing diverse people together to work for the common good. They knew that their plan, the Constitution, was not perfect. They included an unfinished pyramid in the Great Seal of the United States to challenge each generation to correct mistakes and contribute to creating a “more perfect union.”

The tragic mistakes of past generations, such as slavery, the genocide of Native Americans, gender bias, poverty and the climate crisis, must be understood as we seek to prevent these kinds of injustice, heal the harm done and restore equitable relations with all people and with our ecosystem.

Today’s youth experience increasing anxiety and fear from their unresolved trauma, the complex problems facing their generation and the dysfunction of government. They learn about the civic values of equality, liberty, democracy, unity and the rule of law, but they rarely experience these in school.

The mission of public schools includes academic instruction, career education and preparing students to be informed, ethical and engaged citizens in our democratic republic.

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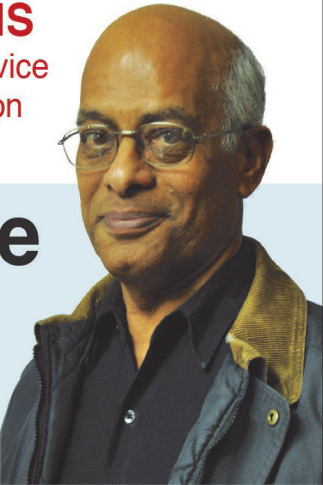
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Second Annual Civic Service Showcase

May 10, 3 p.m.
Tower Theatre, 815 E. Olive Ave.

Student leaders will present the top civic engagement projects in the Central Valley. Support these youth leaders. Nominate a student-led civic service project on the Civic Education Center website. Teachers are invited to the Civic Education Summer Institute at Fresno Pacific University on June 26–28. For more information, visit civicedcenter.org.

We know how to teach students our American ideals and the skills to analyze and create solutions for complex problems in their community and the world. Over the past 25 years, these best practices were replaced by programs to raise scores on standardized tests.

We are at a critical point in the American experiment with democracy. The generation in school now faces complex challenges: gun violence, racism, an escalating arms race, global climate change, terrorism, addiction, growing income inequality, political gridlock and economic uncertainty. As students face these challenges, they should be prepared with the knowledge, skills and values to address them.

Good news! With the new State Seal of Civic Engagement for graduating seniors, we can now reward the students who solve real problems and serve their school, community or nation. The Civic Education Center (CEC) consults with districts and schools to support students earning this award.

Students need guided practice in governing themselves, creating democratic classrooms and schools, and organizing solutions to real problems. Imagine how much more effective students will be when they have a commitment to American civic values and the participation skills to collaborate with community partners and implement civic service projects.

The CEC takes high school students for an annual retreat at Wonder Valley to dialogue critical issues, practice democratic skills and develop proposals for civic engagement projects to address their identified concerns. They discuss the issues that affect them. Students are passionate about understanding these problems and creating solutions.

John Minkler is co-founder and COO of the Civic Education Center. Contact him at john@civicedcenter.org.

KENNEDY CLUB OF THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

Founder: Lawrence J. Kelly



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FRESNO COUNTY

**YOUTH
CIVIC SERVICE**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY MAY 10TH
TIME: 3:00PM TO 6:00PM
LOCATION: TOWER THEATRE 809 E OLIVE AVE FRESNO, CA
FREE EVENT - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



SHOWCASE



~~YOUR~~ YOUTH VOICE MATTERS

We Invite you to attend our Youth Civic Service Showcase. The Youth in our community have worked hard all year on their youth civic learning projects to solve real problems in our community. We invite you to watch them present! This is a great way to support our youth and listen to their proposals.

Need More Info?

Email: clinay@civicedcenter.org

Project submission link can be found on our website in the event section in showcase details

Projects Must Be Submitted by April 22nd 2023

website: www.civicedcenter.org





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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

EARTH DAY

Visit the WILPF Booth on Earth Day.
For the first time since 2019, Earth Day Fresno is returning with an in-person event! It will take place at Fresno City College on Saturday, April 22, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The family-friendly free event will have

educational booths with fun activities for kids, electric vehicle test drives, a bike clinic, local food trucks and much more. Let's celebrate 53 years of Earth Day by joining with others and expanding our understanding of how to be good stewards of the earth.

—Kyla Mitchell

OBSERVANCE OF WORLD WATER DAY

March 22 was World Water Day. The United Nations says this day is about accelerating change to solve the water and sanitation crisis. And because water affects us all, we need everyone to take action. It was ironic that, on this World Water Day 2023, we here in California and beyond were given an atmospheric river of water! As of this writing, it is hoped that the water will be allowed to sink down to replenish the aquifer.

WILPF Earth Democracy invited one and all to come to celebrate water at Lost Lake. Then, Lost Lake was closed because of flooding. With only a week to prepare, we were given permission by the San Joaquin River Conservancy to have a quiet Water Walk on their Lane Road property.

Lance Canales provided Native American flute music to prepare us for a quiet walk on the hillside just above the spectacularly swollen San Joaquin River. Other remarks were made for us to ponder by Native Americans. Then we embarked on a quiet 15-minute walk, seeing and listening to river sounds.

When we came back together on the large covered patio of the Conservancy house, each person wrote a sentence or drew a small picture on a large canvas provided for later reflection. We hope this simple experience will be revisited in our thoughts, reminding us of the beauty and necessity of this liquid treasure. Without it, we wouldn't be here.

—Jean Hays

**PRO-PEACE/
ANTI-WAR
DEMONSTRATION**

WILPFers joined other peaceful protesters at a rally against the war in Ukraine on Sunday, February 19, on the corners at Blackstone and Nees avenues. The different local groups gathered to call for both sides to choose negotiations over violent conflict and for the United States to stop funding the war.

One of my favorite signs (held by Nancy Waidtlow), because of its simplicity, read, "We tried war Let's try negotiation." We cannot keep going in the direction of war, hatred and destruction.

I'm reminded of Jane Addams' sentiment when she said, "Nothing can be worse than the fear that one had given up too soon and left one unexpended effort which might have saved the world." What might that one unexpended effort be? Going to rallies, writing and calling your representatives, having conversations with people you don't agree with to find common ground are good ways to make sure we don't find out what that one effort might be.

—Kyla Mitchell



Gerry Bill, Nancy Waidtlow and Kyla Mitchell: United Against War. Photo courtesy of Kyla Mitchell



Anne Merrill and Patricia Wells-Solorzano: WILPF for Peace in Ukraine. Photo courtesy of Kyla Mitchell

**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, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

WILPF MEETING

April 13, 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@gmail.com or Leni at lenivreeves@gmail.com.

STIR IT UP—WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

April 26, 3 p.m. (fourth Wednesday of each month). Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

UNPACKING RACISM

With Dr. Jean Kennedy. April 30, 6:30 p.m. To join and get a link, RSVP with your e-mail address to drjeankennedy@yahoo.com or text 559-270-1023.

WOMEN IN BLACK

April 5, noon, Courthouse (first Wednesday of each month). Check first with Sue Kern at skern@netptc.net or 559-349-3777.

**VOLUNTEERING
IN THE NAME
OF PEACE AND
FREEDOM**

When I think of the word "international" as in "Women's International League for Peace and Freedom," I think of countries all over the world on every continent. I don't necessarily think of islands or territories or commonwealths even though there are vital communities of people living and working together in those places. I would not have thought of Puerto Rico when I would think "international."

Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory of the United States (since 1898). There are more than 2 million people living in Puerto Rico who are U.S. citizens but who cannot vote in U.S. elections. Puerto Rico is self-governing, but the U.S. government maintains control over many functions of government including currency, trade and immigration.

In February, I went to Maunabo, Puerto Rico, for the second time, as part of a team of 17 volunteers working with a U.S.-based nonprofit organization providing assistance to families whose homes had been significantly damaged in recent hurricanes.

Families who live on the far side of this island territory do receive emergency services at the time of a hurricane but not the kind of attention that benefits the capital of San Juan and definitely not long term. This is where volunteers like myself and others come in the name of lending a helping hand, peace, goodwill and extending the kind of specific rebuilding that needs teams of people.

On any typical day, our team could be found working on a roof, replacing windows and doors, framing in a much needed room. Concrete is mixed, spackling made, cracks filled, ceilings and walls scraped, preparations made for painting. And all the while, our team of 17 was also building friendships, trust and cooperation as we shared our work, our common experiences and our meals.

For me personally, at the end of every day my muscles might ache but my heart was full of compassion and I am grateful for the opportunity to reach out "internationally" to help others find their own sense of peace and freedom from the worry that has occupied their hearts and minds as they continue to recover from a devastating natural emergency.

—Nancy Hatcher



Volunteers work to repair hurricane damage in Maunabo, Puerto Rico. Photo courtesy of Nancy Hatcher



Nancy Hatcher on the job! Painting louvers after masking with newspaper, as part of hurricane damage repair in Maunabo, Puerto Rico. Photo courtesy of Nancy Hatcher

RAGING GRANNIES SENDING AN SOS

The Raging Grannies invite all (whether you are a grandparent or not) to join them to tell the message of social justice with a little humor, innovation and imagination. Although the grannies are grateful no members were lost due to the pandemic, some of the "rage" has been tempered by restrictions caused by Covid and physical circumstances.

The quality of singing has never been as important as the message of social and environmental justice, but most of our voices crack now and then. Nevertheless, we continue to sing out.

Our passion to tell the people of the world that they can do better is as strong as ever, but physical limitations make it difficult for some of the Grannies to make impromptu appearances on street corners or in front of corporate and government establishments. Due to these conditions, it is more important than ever that the RGs find new members to help carry the torch, rolling pin, cane, whatever, into the future.

Those who like to sing, dance, make up rhymes and work for social justice are urged to join the Raging Grannies practice on the first Friday of the month at 10 a.m. and the third Monday at 2 p.m. For the location and more information, contact Kay Pittsat at 209-532-3554 or Evonne Waldo at evonnewaldo@yahoo.com.

The Raging Grannies will be making appearances at the Fresno City College Earth Day event on Saturday, April 22, and at the Free AME Church with Rev. Floyd Harris (date to be announced).

—Evonne Waldo

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Fresno Center for Nonviolence 2023



April 2023

March, March, March is leaving us behind. Bringing April showers?
Dancing through the Valley, haven't we had enough. Never say never
says the small dancing mouse. For when our sun bakes the ground
we will remember the storms of March, March, March.



Edited by Richard Gomez
Happy Holidaye

Dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through

SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY

**1584 N. Van Ness Ave., 93728 - email: info@centerfornonviolence.org - www.centerfornonviolence.org -
- (559)237-3223. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FresnoCenterforNonviolence/>**

To see a more colorful version of our page go to our website.



Earth Day Event on Saturday, April 22 at Fresno City College from 10-4pm. Fresno City College is the new home for Fresno's official Earth Day activities! Along with the Environmental Collaborative of Central California (E3C), a 501 (c) (3), Fresno City College's Math, Science, and Engineering Division is a co-sponsor. The event will be held on the College Mall from the main fountain to Veterans Square formerly known as the Free Speech Area. The Fresno Center for Nonviolence was the sponsor and fiscal agent for Earth Day Fresno from 2015 – 2019.
For more information contact info@earthdayfresno.org



The organizers of Earth Day Fresno share the sad news that Dawn (Celia) DeLozier passed away, unexpectedly, on March 3rd. Dawn was an enthusiastic supporter of Earth Day Fresno. She coordinated the entertainment for every Earth Day event since we began hosting them in 2010. She was planning the entertainment for this year's event, with her usual energy and enthusiasm, until she was suddenly hospitalized and passed away. Dawn was a genetic counselor at Community Medical Centers, a member of the band, "Happenstance", and a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. She is survived by her three adult children. A Celebration of Life will be held for her on Saturday, April 1st, at 2pm, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave (between Chestnut and Willow). The service will be live-streamed. Dawn's spirit will be with us as we carry on the tradition of honoring and celebrating this beautiful planet, we call home.



A few Excerpts from A friends from L. A.

LGBT GREEN/OUT AGAINST WAR NEWSLETTER

(FROM March 2023 Vol 23 #3)

INTERNATIONAL

Another potential HIV vaccine has failed its clinical trial for Johnson & Johnson (*Science* 379: Jan 27 p314; *Chem Eng News* Jan 30 p13); other HIV problems were discussed (*Am J Public Hlth* 113: Feb p175;194-201). Monkeypox is much harder to treat when the infected person also has untreated HIV (*Science* 379: Feb 24 p745). Better antivirals that selectively kill HIV-infected cells have been discovered (*Science* 379: Feb 24 p791).

An activist Indian Supreme Court has received many petitions for same sex marriage that the Modi government opposes (LAT Feb 7 A3).

Muslim nations in the Middle East and Africa are targeting LGBTs online (LAT Feb 22 A4).
Spain is becoming more LGBT favorable, now granting abortion and Trans rights (Time Feb 27/Mar 6 p56-59; LAT Mar 2 A3)

Last Valentine's Day, we hope that you have the privilege to celebrate love in your community. After all, a LOVE FOR ALL is in the heart of every revolutionary who works to build equitable, compassionate, inclusive, and thriving communities. As Ernesto Che Guevara reminds us:

"At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality."

We believe that, "love for all" must be present and center to drive any people's revolution, so as you share quality time with loved ones the following Valentine's Day, we hope that you will also share your love and compassion with all in your community and pay forward the privilege of LOVE. Love always shines the way to a better world. There is perhaps no better story of the power of LOVE shining the way to the better world we need, than the 1967 case of two teenagers in love.

"It wasn't to make a political statement or start a fight. We were in love, and we wanted to be married." - Mildred Loving, on her marriage to Richard Loving.

**Next show is Wednesday April
12th at 3pm**

**88.1 FM
KFCF**

Stir it, UP



Our radio show in April has our host Josh Shurley with guest TBA. For more information call on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at (559) 237-3223 or check our website at www.centerfornonviolence.org.

Our radio show in March has our host Josh Shurley with guest Bob McCloskey from the Alliance back on to provide a winter update on the humanitarian crisis we face with so many unhoused people who are homeless during this wet and cold weather. The takeaway: a right to housing is a must. To hear again go to: <https://on.soundcloud.com/ZVRZb>.

In February our show with Josh Shurley and his guest was Paulina Cruz from the Community Alliance. To hear again go to: <https://on.soundcloud.com/ZVaAA>

Across the Trucks

PHOTO ESSAY BY DAVID BACON

(Editor's note: Photojournalist David Bacon visited Fresno in November 2022. He walked around downtown Fresno and captured some special moments he now shares with us. His work has been supported by the Economic Hardship Reporting Project.)

In the most productive agricultural area in the world, poverty is endemic. Crisscrossed by irrigation canals and railroad tracks, Fresno is the working-class capital and largest city of the San Joaquin Valley.

The polarization of rich and poor is a constant theme in the city's history and in its present. The banks and growers of the Valley built ornate office buildings and movie palaces when the downtown was their showplace. Now, as developers have abandoned downtown for the suburbs, the

theater entrances and building doorways have become sleeping spaces and refuges from the rain for those without a home.

Fresno has one of the oldest Mexican barrios in California. Here, the abandonment is visible in closed theaters and dance halls, which leave their marquees as vestiges. Alongside them are small taquerias trying to survive. Today, the street in front of the Azteca Theater is hauntingly empty at night, but older residents remember when Cesar Chavez and a column of grape strikers stopped in front on F Street in 1966.

Bisecting downtown are the railroad tracks and the old Highway 99: a defining geography for the settlements of unhoused people. Community activists and the homeless people in the area have pressured a normally intransigent city government to provide at least enough housing to keep the dream of life off the streets alive.

In 2019, Fresno had a larger percentage of "unsheltered" homeless people than any other city in the country—that is, people sleeping on sidewalks, in cars or in places the government calls "not suitable for human habitation."



Looking for Volunteer Delivery Drivers for the Community Alliance!

We need help with any or all of these towns south of Fresno in Fresno County: Caruthers, Selma, Fowler, Reedley and Parlier.

Help us get out the "voice of the progressive movement."

Contact Peter, Distribution Manager, by email:

maidenfoto1@gmail.com



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Prodigal/Radical Son Returns to the Big Farm Town

BY JOEL D. EIS

It's been two generations since I cruised Blackstone Avenue, went to Torquer's Club dances at the Rainbow Ballroom, made out with a girl in a summer dress parked out in the fig orchards and then marched against the Vietnam War and got myself busted. Many years have rolled over both me and the town I grew up in.

A few weeks ago, I came back for something different. Because of my political involvement in Fresno, back when I still had hair on my head, I was recently invited back to town by the *Community Alliance* newspaper, two local colleges and Petunias Bookstore to be part of a panel on "Lessons from the Last Revolution."

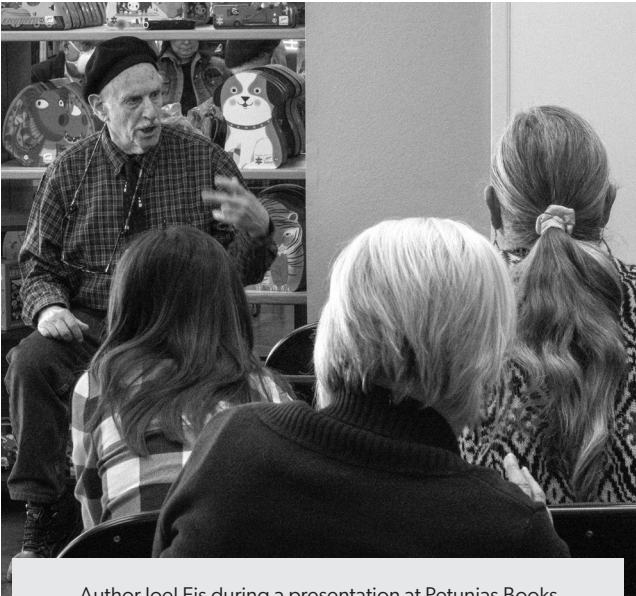
I read from my memoir, *Standin' in a Hard Rain, the Making of a Revolutionary Life*, recently published by World BEYOND War in Charlottesville, Va., and chatted about life in the Central Valley back in the day.

With me on the podium at Fresno City College, the location of the main event, was Raul Pickett, former organizer for the grape strike and the Chicano Liberation Front and a student at (then) Fresno State College, and Mike Rhodes, draft resister, longtime activist and executive director of the *Community Alliance* newspaper. Doug Rippey, a member of El Teatro Campesino and a Fresno draft resister, joined us from Denver through the magic of Zoom. It was a groovy trip.

Despite the efforts of its organizers, the event at Fresno State was not as rewarding as it could have been. The event at Petunia's Bookstore was a warm, welcoming event with an enthusiastic and appreciative group. The event at Fresno City College was a speaker's dream. It was well-organized and advertised. There was a room packed to the rafters with eager students of every color of interest. Their instinct that something is wrong in Amerika is on the money.

With three radicals on the podium, this event was about more than me.

In the last 60 years, Fresno has changed in that it is more of the same. It wanders outward instead of upward. Strip malls proliferate like vines watered by money from the one-story banks along Shaw Avenue that look like military bunkers. Covid and the shifts in community have left old shopping districts blighted. Most of the fragrant orchards near town are gone.



Author Joel Eis during a presentation at Petunias Books in Fresno. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

If you read the *Community Alliance*, it will not blow the foam off your latte to hear that the same power brokers from back in the paisley tie-dye days are still pushing people around for their own profit and to hell with the social carnage they leave in their wake.

Few people cruising the strip malls today realize that back in the day, with one of only three army induction centers in California, the grape strike, the political shenanigans at the university and a Black community isolated and depressed, Fresno in the late 1960s was Ground Zero for the last revolution. Its importance as a hot button political town far outstripped its size and location.

The likes of Cesar Chavez, grape strike leader; David Harris, organizer of the National Draft Resistance; and a thriving radical protest poetry scene at Fresno State made it an ideological crossroads.

The panel of old lefties turned the students at Fresno State and Fresno City College on to details from legendary events right out of the pages of their history books. The idea for the panel, "Lessons from the Last Revolution," was that ordinary people could find themselves caught up in the events driven by a sense of rightness.

If the death of young soldiers from the Valley—most of them Chicanos—could rise from their graves, they'd tell the students that history is personal. That's the big takeaway from the memoir and the tagline for the book. Despite the fact that we were branded as unpatriotic and dupes of the evil Commie Empire, it turned out we were right.

But that was then, and now. The students know that there is a difference. We are now even more inundated with aggressive anti-information that is engineered to mislead.

Young people, especially targeted by advertising, fadism and inflammatory rhetoric, feel they are being lied to but aren't sure how to see through the razzle-dazzle of non-speak. The most important message from the panelists was not to let the opposition define the terms of the debate.

The panel united in declaring the crucial survival value of determining the sources of what they read and hear. Doing this as a knee-jerk reaction needs to become a national survival sport.

What is needed is a required class at every junior high and high school in America in real media literacy—how to tell the difference between a snow plow and a snow job.

Taking the rhetoric and watchword phrases from the civil rights movement, the manipulators of the White Supremacy Movement have cast themselves as the victim of efforts to level the playing field economically, socially and in the court system for people of color, women and the LGBTQ+ community.

There was an audible gasp in the room when one of the panelists noted that more young women died of then-illegal abortions during the Vietnam War than men killed in action. This statistic never appeared in the mainstream press. It is still eclipsed from histories of the period. This single remark time-warped the connection between the politics of that generation and that of today.

But this is smoke and mirrors. The American worker is the most exploited working class in the history of the world, but they have been convinced that they are the privileged ones, not the exploited ones. That is the cornerstone of their oppression. American workers work harder, longer hours and have the greatest percentage of their income extracted from their labor than anyone else on the planet—living or dead.

The worst thing you can tell an American—especially a white Republican American—is that she or he has been used against their own interests. This is called "faith-based politics," or "we can say and believe anything we want if we don't have to actually prove it's real."

They'd rather slip into a flak jacket and grab an AR-15 than read your media post complete with real quotes from factual sources. They really hate that. Looking around to find their real enemy is what they are most afraid of doing.



Activist Joel Eis at the entrance of the auditorium of Fresno City College where he and other activists spoke to a large audience. Photo by Toni Labori

They'd have to pick up the remote and change the channel or worse yet—read a book. They'd have to admit they've been used, in which case they'd have to turn all those guns around the other way.

Basically, they can't stand the idea that they have to share and earn their place in a more competitive world. The right wing actively engages in revising history while it is happening. Truthful information as a basis for saying anything at all is attacked as being against "balanced reporting." But you know all this.

But here's a bit of news. On my visit, I learned, sadly, that Fresno State is plagued with a brewing racial crisis. Discussion with Dr. Matthew Jendian revealed a disturbing state of affairs. Students of color have come to him with complaints of harassment by campus police.

While crowds of white students leave the library with books, Black and Latinx students are stopped and asked to show their library checkout slips. They are accosted by campus cops and asked to show student IDs while moving about the campus. This is racial profiling and harassment pure and simple.

This situation existed on the campus 60 years ago. I felt like this was 1968 all over again. It's only a matter of time before a cop on too many donuts or a student who's had a bad day escalates one of these unnecessary confrontations. If these incidents can be, somebody needs to document them with a camera and bring the hammer down on this now.

The students can feel that things are coming around again. There is a sense among the future citizens that they are about to deal with a tectonic shift in history—and therefore their personal lives—that will make the 1960s look like a barbeque compared to a forest fire. Very bad vibes and worse karma.

What I learned on my return to my roots is that what is compelling and miraculous about Fresno is that people there seem willing to listen. That might be its best feature and its brightest hope.

If you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own.

After a 35-year career teaching and doing professional theater with a slant toward progressive material, Joel D. Eis and his wife Toni now own and run a small used bookstore, the Rebound Bookstore (reboundbookstore.com) in San Rafael. The store serves as a progressive "cultural engine" for the community. His memoir, *Standin' in a Hard Rain, the Making of a Revolutionary Life*, is available at Petunias Books (6027 N. Palm Ave., Fresno) or on Amazon.com.

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Vecinos Unidos® in Action!



Through a community organizing model, invented by Fred Ross Sr., the Dolores Huerta Foundation (DHF) organizers mobilize rural, low-income residents for social change. DHF Organizers in each region host monthly community forums where community members receive leadership training, resources, and legislative information and discuss community needs. Through their collective efforts and the tools provided by DHF organizers, a Vecinos Unidos® (United Neighbors) chapter is created.

In August 2022, Maria del Pilar Gonzalez took the lead within the Sanger Vecinos Unidos® chapter to have the city reinstate the use of school buses to transport children to and from: Sanger High School, Washington Academic Middle School (WAMS), Jefferson Elementary and Wilson Elementary. Pictured below is Gonzalez standing front and center at the Sanger Unified School District Board Meeting to submit her public comment to the board. Gonzalez continuously encourages her surrounding Vecinas to raise their voices to create the future they envision. Through her leading action, Vecinas were able to experience firsthand true 'People Power'. With her dedication to her Vecinos Unidos® Chapter, Gonzalez will continue to be an inspiration to her community members!

DHF Sanger Chapter Vecinos Unidos® continue to advocate for transportation for students. To join Sanger community members in these efforts invite you to join the upcoming Sanger Unified School Board Meeting biweekly on **Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at 1801 7th Street Sanger CA 93567** alternatively you can also contact DHF Organizer, Olga Loza at (559) 420-0648 Ext: 1527 or via email: oloza@doloreshuerta.org



Have you already received P-EBT benefits or Pandemic EBT Emergency School Meals Program?

P-EBT is a pandemic benefit that provides food benefits to families with students (age 21 and under) who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to COVID-19, children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals at school will get additional meal benefits. P-EBT is a new, temporary food benefit to help families buy groceries because schools were closed.

Any family with a child in grades K-12 who is eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, including children who attend a school where meals are free to all students. P-EBT is for all students regardless of citizenship or immigration status. The only requirement is that a child must be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. All P-EBT benefits have been distributed since August 2021 but will be fully distributed by September 30, 2023.

Remember that P-EBT does not require registration or an application and will not affect other benefits you may be receiving or affect immigration. It will not

make the review a public charge. Families who have not received a P-EBT card but have questions about their eligibility can call (877) 328-9677 Monday through Friday, 6 am-8 pm. **Source: Pandemic EBT (ca.gov)**

Kern County Board of Education Approves Central Academy of Arts and Technology Petition



On January 10th, the Kern County Board of Education approved 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) due to its alarming discrepancies such as a lack of support for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. The 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), Disability Rights California (DRC), and California School Employees Association (CSEA) worked tirelessly alongside community members and partnering organizations to collect 384 signatures in opposition to the CAAT petition.

Youth from the Dolores Huerta Foundation Liberated Youth for Empowerment (LYFE) program and Bakersfield Vecinos Unidos shared personal testimony and urged the board to vote no on the petition. DHF will continue to educate Vecinos Unidos and LYFE members of the Education system and ways they can participate in civic engagement to bring change to their schools and districts. 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!*

Support Our Comrades on Hunger Strike!



As part of the Rapid Response Network, the Dolores Huerta Foundation joined in unity outside of the Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center and Golden State Annex to support the 77 detainees on strike against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and GEO Group Officials.



The detainees launched a hunger strike demanding both facilities be shut down and immediately release all individuals in custody at these facilities as they have had to endure inhumane living conditions, retaliation from GEO Group officials, and unfair wages. DHF will continue to support their comrades until justice is reached and these individuals are united with their loved ones! **To learn more and support these efforts please visit: bit.ly/MVGSAHungerStrike**



**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 April 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.

2023–2024 Annual Action Plan for Housing and Community Development Draft available for public comment until April 6. To access the plan, visit www.fresno.gov/housing. To submit comments, e-mail hcdd@fresno.gov, call 559-621-8300 or complete a survey at surveymonkey.com/r/2324AAP.

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. Book appointments 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.

SAT 01 **Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** 9 a.m. Marie Callender’s Restaurant, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. Speaker: Samuel Molina. Topic: Financial Literacy. For more info, contact 559-435-4043.

MON 03 **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 04 **National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC)** 5:30 p.m. Los Amigo’s Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. Speaker: Dr. Russel Statham, CEO of the Girl Scouts of Central California South. Topic: Changing the World One Girl at a Time. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pbyoga.com.

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Weekly radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit www.kfcf.org.

WED 05 **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. *Community Alliance* radio show hosted by Daren Miller. Guest: Nayamin Martinez, director-of the Central California Environmental Justice Network. For more info, visit www.kfcf.org.

THU 06 **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.

SAT 08 **Central Valley Leadership Round Table** 10 a.m. Burrito King Mexican Restaurant, 319 N. Gateway Dr., Madera. For more info, contact 559-250-1253 or gamayer20@gmail.com.

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

MON 10 **Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)** 5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact swgamble@aol.com.

TUE 11 **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.

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Weekly radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit www.kfcf.org.

WED 12 **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.



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THU 13 **Building a New Future: Art and Activism in the Central Valley** 5 p.m. opening reception, 2F, Kolligian Library, UC Merced; 6:30 p.m., conversation, COB1-116, UC Merced. Photographs by George Ballis (exhibit through July 28). Conversation with Agustín Lira, co-founder of El Teatro Campesino. Ballis documented farm labor and living conditions in the Central Valley beginning in the 1950s. His images provide a historical lens to consider how people came together to enact change to improve these conditions.

Fresno City Council District 1 Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Teague Community Resource Center, 4718 N. Polk Ave. City Council Member Annalisa Perea will discuss neighborhood updates and hear areas of concerns from residents. For more info, contact district1@fresno.gov or 559-621-7817.

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) 7 p.m. Online/In-person, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or taca_03@ymail.com.

FRI 14 **Labor’s Choice Awards** 5 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Toca Madera Winery, 36140 Avenue 9, Madera. Join the Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council to connect with hundreds of local leaders, union members and grassroots activists celebrating this year’s awardees. Rising Star: Assembly Member Esmeralda Soria; Union of the Year: Ironworkers 155; Labor Leader: Michael Lopez, president of the FMTK Building Trades Council. Become a sponsor and help power the local labor movement. For more info, contact dsavory@myunionworks.com.

Cineculture: *Motherland* 5:30 p.m. Zoom discussion with Vic Gerami (director). Through a journalist and activist’s lens, *Motherland* focuses the world’s attention on the atrocities, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Azerbaijan and Turkey against Artsakh and Armenia. Sponsor: Armenian Studies Program. View the film April 10–14 (link at cineculture.csufresno.edu). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail mhusain@csufresno.edu by April 13.

SAT 15 **Fresno Interfaith Climate Summit** 8:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave. A youth-led event featuring workshops, special speakers and activities to support spiritually rooted climate action. Keynote speaker: The Honorable Ron Goode, tribal chair of the North Fork Mono Tribe. For more info, contact fica_internship@gmail.com.

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

TUE 18 **Central Valley Partnership** 5:30 p.m. Location TBD. For more info, contact 559-967-1940 or agrariandemcracy@gmail.com.

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Weekly radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit www.kfcf.org.

WED 19 **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.

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter 7 p.m. Via Zoom. Presenter: Jeff Mitchell. Topic: The Buzz Around Regenerative Agriculture and What This Looks Like in California. Mitchell is the leader of the Conservation Agriculture Systems Innovation Center at UC Davis. He will discuss ongoing work to create, test and refine conservation agriculture food production systems in the San Joaquin Valley. Free and open to the general public. To register in advance or for more info, visit sierraclub.org/tehipite.

THU 20 **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.

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

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FRI 21 **Cineculture: *I’ll Meet You There*** 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion with Iram Bilal (director). This dramatic thriller follows the father-daughter journey of Majeed, a Chicago police officer, and Dua, his teenage ballerina daughter. Eager for a raise, Majeed is cherry-picked to go undercover in a mosque for a special FBI co-assignment. The family explores new truths about their present, past and future until everything comes to a head in a surprise bait and switch by the FBI. View the film April 17–21 (link at cineculture.csufresno.edu). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail mhusain@csufresno.edu by April 20.

SAT 22 **Earth Day Fresno** 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno City College, 1101 E. University Ave. Free outdoor festival with educational exhibits, a bike clinic, children’s activities, local cuisine and much more. Nonprofit organizations, government agencies and local businesses will provide information, goods and services related to sustainable living and environmental stewardship. Sponsors: Environmental Collaborative of Central California and Fresno City College Division of Math, Science and Engineering. For more info, contact info@earthdayfresno.org.

Electric Vehicle Ride and Drive Event 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno City College, 1101 E. University Ave. Experience being behind the wheel of an electric vehicle without the pressures typically associated with test driving a vehicle at a dealership. Learn about the EV Equity Program and how to apply for state and local incentives to help make EV ownership a reality. Sponsor: Clean Vehicle Empowerment Collaborative. For more info, visit VEequity.org.

MON 24 **Fresno County Democratic Women’s Club** 11:30 a.m. Marie Callender’s Restaurant Garden Room, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. \$25/person. For more info, contact 559-905-1836 or patrbarr73@gmail.com.

TUE 25 **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.

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Weekly radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit www.kfcf.org.

WED 26 **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info visit www.kfcf.org.

THU 27 **Public Hearing: 2023–2024 Annual Action Plan for Housing and Community Development** ~10 a.m., Council Chamber, Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno St. For participation instructions, visit fresno.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx and select the agenda for the April 27 meeting. For more info, contact 559-621-7650 or clerk@fresno.gov.

FRI 28 **El Concilio de Fresno** Noon. Chicano Youth Center, 1515 E. Divisadero St. For more info, contact 559-360-9797 or eddiev@elconciliodefresno.org.

Cineculture: Pakistani Short Film Program 5:15 p.m. Zoom discussion with Marya Javed, Tabish Habib, Fatima Sattar and Areeba Naved (directors).

- *Baadi* is a coming-of-age story about a young girl’s desperation to make sense of her inner world, which is in conflict with her outer world.
- In *May I Have This Seat*, a woman on a city bus accuses a male passenger of harassment while he maintains his innocence. As the two argue, the other travelers watch in shock, awe and amusement.
- In between the mandalas and paisleys on the lines and pores of the bride-to-be’s palms, a Mehndi applicator finds a space for herself in *Kiran*.
- In *City of Men*, an orthodox Muslim Pashtun household in Peshawar is led by a strict patriarchal mother who is greatly alarmed by her two naïve and rebellious daughters.
- *It’s a Boy* features an emancipated couple open to the ideas of homosexuality and gender fluidity, but when it comes to their own son, displaying “unconventional” behavior for a boy, their introjected fears start to surface.

View the films April 24–28 (link at cineculture.csufresno.edu). For a link to join the Zoom discussion, e-mail mhusain@csufresno.edu by April 27.

SAT 29 **League of Women Voters Annual Meeting** 11 a.m. business meeting, 12:15 p.m. luncheon. Stone Soup Fresno, 1345 E. Bulldog Lane. Guest speaker: Danielle Bergstrom, executive director of Fresnoland. \$20/person. For more info, contact 559-226-8683 or info.lwvfresno@gmail.com.

MAY 01 **March for an Immigration Reform** 3 p.m. Courthouse Park, 1100 Van Ness Ave. “United We Make the Power.” Food bank, entertainment, resources and PPE. Sponsor: May 1 Coalition. For more info, contact 559-776-6642 or 559-750-8076.

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

Wokeness and the Great Fear of History

Continued from page 14

their struggle against racism, and Blacks’ struggle up from slavery.

White Republican conservatives, controlling various state legislatures, argue that the banning is to protect white students from “feeling guilt” or “feeling uncomfortable” as they study the national history. Ironically, Black students have the same emotions, and that is why few Black students select Africana studies as their major.

Black students say it is difficult to study African American history that reveals “the blood of the slaughtered.” Jewish students have the same emotions when studying the Holocaust or Armenian students taking a course on their genocide by the Ottomans, or the original Native American “Indians” studying the massacre at Wounded Knee or countless other white “holocaust” type aggressions.

Tracking their ancestors’ pain and suffering is uncomfortable. On this point, does the AP course that

covers Buffalo soldiers require students to examine the contractions of Black men killing Red men for white men.

This brings me to an important point, which is that within African American intellectual thought, there has been a thriving debate on how to understand the historical narrative. It began with the 1970 book, *Black Nationalism*, and the co-editors could not agree on the ebb and flow of Black history.

The two white authors, Elliot Rudwick and August Meier, argued the narrative arc is toward integration, and the young Black editor, John Bracey, argued that arc leaned toward separation. Bracey cites Henry Highland Garnett and Martin Delany and, of course, Marcus Garvey, who all sought a homeland in Africa while DuBois helped organize the NAACP, which became the iconic civil rights integrationist organization.

The controversy over African American AP courses is not far removed from how historians divisively view the Black historical past. In creating such a course, would the content emphasize Garvey or DuBois, Delany or Booker T. Washington, Angela Davis or Rosa Parks?

Interestingly, DeSantis and other conservatives are not even aware of one important knowledge unit missing from the AP in African American history, which is information about African Americans on the left, sans Angela Davis.

Three towering figures who should be included are Peter H. Clark, Paul Robeson and Carlotta Bass. Clark was a

contemporary of Frederick Douglass, and both spoke on the anti-slavery lecture circuit. Clark, in the 1890s, organized the Workingmen’s Party. He is known as America’s first Black socialist.

Paul Robeson was a giant and champion of the Russian revolution and, during the Cold War, said that Blacks should not fight against Russia, which was trying to build an anti-racist worker state.

Bass was an activist in Los Angeles in the 1930s and helped, with Louisa Moreno, to form an Afro-Chicano coalition. In 1952, Bass was selected as the vice president for the Progressive Party as it attempted to attain the presidency.

History and memory are embedded in the contested soil of America’s past. Black Lives Matter and to be awake to and fight against injustice and for freedom is a constant struggle opposed by the Republican Party and its MAGA base.

The controversy surrounding such things as the National History Standards of the 1990s is now being played out over an AP course in African American history. The stakes are immense in that whoever controls how the past is remembered not only controls the mass consciousness of those living in the present but also their descendants in the future.

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

Happy Birthday, Dolores

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

On April 10, civil rights icon Dolores Huerta turns 93. She keeps her indomitable energy and passion for social justice, women’s rights and more.

How is she going to celebrate? In Sacramento, she will meet with legislators, and in Los Angeles, she will attend an event at the Plaza de la Cultura. She will later be honored by the University of Southern California. Similar to a regular day in her life: traveling, attending conferences, talking to people, planning.

She keeps herself busy through her nonprofit organization, the Dolores Huerta Foundation (DHF; doloreshuerta.org).

“When I left the UFW, I wanted to go back to help people to help them to change their conditions,” said Huerta during a brief interview with the *Community Alliance*. She was inspired by the Community Service Organization (CSO), founded in 1947 by legendary organizer Fred Ross.

The CSO was a Latino civil rights organization. Huerta founded the Stockton chapter of the CSO in 1955. “[The] CSO was responsible for the election of the first Latino to the Los Angeles City Hall, Edward Royball, who later became the first Latino to get elected to the U.S. Congress,” explains Huerta.

She also mentions other achievements of the CSO such as the passing of legislation to allow residents to obtain their drivers’ licenses in Spanish, to get ballots and voting literature in their language, and to provide assistance to children—including immigrants.

Huerta was born Dolores Clara Fernandez in New Mexico to a Mexican immigrant family from whom she learned stories about labor organizing. She grew up in Stockton, where she attended high school and later graduated from San Joaquin Delta Community College.

Huerta is concerned about current social issues affecting our community. “Republicans are lying to our people on issues like abortion, homosexuality...I like to tell people, ‘Listen, I had 11 children, but none of my kids had that many children, and one of my daughters didn’t have any, and I respect her decision.’”

“To have or not to have children is a woman’s decision, or a family’s decision. Same with who you live with. If you fall in love with a person of your same sex, that’s your business. It’s part of your rights; we can’t tell you what to do.”

Regarding immigration, a hot issue among immigrants, Huerta explains that many people come to her saying the country needs immigration reform. “And I ask them, ‘Are you voting?’”

The last immigration reform passed in 1986 through which approximately three million people became residents. Since then, Congress has failed to agree on a new immigration bill that could deal with the issue.



Civil rights leader Dolores Huerta turns 93 this month. Photo by Peter Maiden

Some verbiage makes things more complicated, such as calling immigration bills a “path to citizenship,” suggesting that undocumented immigrants could easily become citizens. In fact, immigrants who qualify must first become “legal residents” and after five years they might qualify for U.S. citizenship.

“We can make bills to pass if we vote, if we are active...If we don’t, those who oppose immigration reform will continue to hold power,” says Huerta, who continually encourages people to register and vote.


Regarding the role of the DHF in current political affairs, Huerta explains that it was active during the last Census ensuring that people were counted and participated in local elections. She proudly mentions that the DHF helped more than 10,000 people get the Covid-19 vaccine. Currently, the DHF operates in five counties with headquarters in Bakersfield.

“We are also concerned about climate change,” says Huerta. “See what is happening now [with the floods]. We can make changes, but we have to work hard for it, and we have to get involved.”

Eduardo Stanley is the editor of the *Community Alliance* newspaper. Contact him at editor@fresnoalliance.com.

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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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El libro se basa en una investigación realizada en México durante tres años. Además de entrevistas directas con trabajadores de Uber, la investigadora se conectó con decenas de ellos a través de grupos de Facebook y una encuesta a 315 choferes, y nos presenta los primeros esfuerzos de sindicalización de los trabajadores de apps, que luchan por “el reconocimiento de sus derechos laborales”. Asimismo, la autora se conectó a la app Uber Driver con la que trabajan los conductores, para poder analizar los efectos específicos de la uberización del trabajo y para poder estudiar—con relativo detalle—las nuevas formas de vigilancia y control algorítmico del trabajo. El libro propone el concepto de app-propiación para pensar el sistema de poder de plataformas como Uber que le permite la acumulación de capital. Estas apps constituyen un verdadero mecanismo extractivo a través del cual las empresas se apropian de un conjunto de cosas—una verdadera succión. Según la autora, entre esas “cosas” que estas apps se apropian, figuran:

“Las plataformas digitales de trabajo (como Uber, Didi, Rappi) son un nuevo formato de giros en las relaciones entre empresas, Radetich. “La plataformaización del trabajo (en la que el trabajo a menudo se lleva a cabo a través de un smartphone, o de otra aplicación móvil) constituye una de las mutaciones más notables del mundo laboral en los últimos tiempos”.

El libro está disponible en Amazon.com.mx. También se puede ordenar en la editorial Siglo XXI. En ambos casos se envía a EE.UU. Siglo XXI: <https://sigloxxieditores.com.mx/tienda/ols/products/capitalismo-la-uberizacion-del-trabajo>

Donde Comprar el Libro

Natalia Radetich Filinich es profesora-investigadora del Departamento de Antropología de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Iztapalapa, de la Ciudad de México. Es doctora en Antropología por la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Maestra en Filosofía por la misma universidad y Licenciada en Etnología por la Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH). Pertenecce al Sistema Nacional de Investigadores. Entre sus libros se encuentran *Capitálismo: la uberización del trabajo* (México: Siglo XXI), *La risa y el quebranto* (México: Conaculta / Fonca, 2006), entre otros. Ha publicado también capítulos en libros colectivos y artículos en revistas especializadas en ciencias sociales. Contacto: nataliaradetich@xanum.uam.mx

Sobre la Autora

Precisamente, un libro recientemente publicado en México explora esta nueva modalidad de explotación y abuso patronal: “Capitálismo: la Uberización del Trabajo”, de la Dra. Natalia Radetich, publicado por Siglo XXI. Aunque no sabemos quién es realmente nuestro empleador. Publicado en México explora esta nueva modalidad de explotación y abuso patronal: “Capitálismo: la Uberización del Trabajo”, de la Dra. Natalia Radetich, publicado por Siglo XXI.

La explotación de la mano de obra por el Karl Marx en su libro *Das Kapital*, publicado en 1867—son complejos y no son fáciles de visualizar. La explotación de la mano de obra se mantiene en la actualidad pero los cambios en nuestra sociedad la hacen más sofisticada, incluso casi “invisible”. Tomemos por ejemplo el caso Uber. Trabajar para Uber es presentado como algo incluso romántico: “¡lo haces cuando quieres”, “no tienes patrones”, etc. Sin embargo, la realidad es muy diferente y la nueva modalidad de trabajar a través de una plataforma digital no evita ni la explotación de la mano de obra ni los abusos patronales, aunque no sabemos quién es realmente nuestro empleador.

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

Libro Explora La Uberización del Trabajo

digitales funcionan como un nuevo mecanismo de explotación que lleva a cabo una vieja tendencia del capital: la de la transferencia de las riquezas periféricas hacia los centros de acumulación. La relación centro-periferia (que ha sido intrínseca al desarrollo del capitalismo) está intensificada en el actual capitalismo digital: del valor de cada viaje realizado por un conductor de Uber en México, en Guatemala o en Kenia, Uber retiene un gran porcentaje, cuyo monto, además, desconocemos puesto que estas empresas funcionan en un estado de absoluta opacidad informativa—hay una opacidad algorítmica que convierte a estas empresas en verdaderas cajas negras. App-propiación de las infraestructuras públicas. Uber no paga impuestos en México (y, en general, en los territorios en los que opera): las ganancias de la empresa quedan fiscalmente intocadas. Uber usufructúa—a la distancia y desde su sede en San Francisco—las infraestructuras públicas de las ciudades, usufructúa las calles, los semáforos, las señales de tránsito, toda esa infraestructura urbana que es construida y mantenida con recursos públicos. Los trabajadores de Uber sí pagan impuestos (e injustamente pagan como si tuvieran “actividad empresarial”). App-propiación de trabajo informal. Uber no reconoce a sus trabajadores como tales: los llama “socios”, “proveedores independientes”, entre otros eufemismos. Los trabajadores de Uber y de otras apps no tienen ningún derecho laboral: pese a que pagan impuestos, no tienen seguridad social, seguro médico, jubilación, vacaciones, días de descanso, no tienen derecho a nada: los gigantes digitales tienen derecho a nada.

explotan trabajo informal, trabajo sin derechos, de modo que el capitalismo de plataformas nos retrotrae a condiciones laborales del siglo XIX, cuando aún no habían surgido los derechos laborales; estamos volviendo a ver condiciones similares a las que se vivieron en la explotación del capitalismo industrial que funcionó con obreros sin derechos. Las empresas que operan a base de apps están sostenidas como estuvieron sostenidas las primeras fábricas, por trabajadores sin derechos, sin sindicatos. App-propiación de los recursos de los trabajadores. Para trabajar en Uber, los conductores deben poner sus propios recursos: el carro, el teléfono celular, pagar los datos de internet, la gasolina, vigilancia y control algorítmico del trabajo.

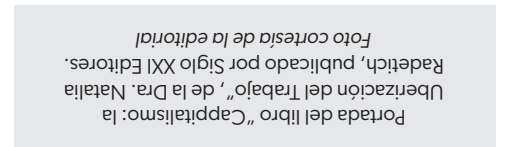
El libro propone el concepto de app-propiación para pensar el sistema de poder de plataformas como Uber que le permite la acumulación de capital. Estas apps constituyen un verdadero mecanismo extractivo a través del cual las empresas se apropian de un conjunto de cosas—una verdadera succión. Según la autora, entre esas “cosas” que estas apps se apropian, figuran:



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Eduardo Stanley es el editor de Alianza Comunitaria. Puede contactarlo en editor@fresnoalliance.com.

El libro también estudia los grupos de apoyo mutuo que crean los trabajadores a través de Whastapp, Zello y Facebook y la gestión logarítmica del trabajo y que la autora llama, siguiendo al sociólogo hindú Aneesh, gestión logacrática: cómo se vigila y controla a los trabajadores a través de la propia tecnología con la que trabajan: el smartphone. O la smartphonización de la vigilancia. En el último capítulo del libro, la Dra. Radetich nos presenta el movimiento emergente de trabajadores y trabajadoras de apps que están demandando el reconocimiento de sus derechos en México. Nuevas organizaciones sindicales que agrupan a trabajadores de apps (como el SUTRAM o la UNTA, entre otras) están impugnando este modelo empresarial basado en la figura del trabajador sin derechos y están impulsando hoy una reforma legislativa que reconozca a los trabajadores de plataforma como lo que son: trabajadores. Este movimiento demuestra que, aun ante el totalitarismo corporativo que rige en la economía digital y que el libro describe, la organización es posible. El libro aspira a contribuir a las luchas de este movimiento de trabajadoras y trabajadores digitales.



RESEÑA DE LIBROS

Dar Sentido a la

Enfermedad Mental

POR EVA MAIDEN

Hay muchas cosas que no sabemos o entendemos sobre las enfermedades mentales. ¿Qué está pasando en la mente de las personas cuyas palabras y comportamiento no tienen sentido? ¿A dónde puede acudir una familia en busca de ayuda cuando un ser querido muestra signos de una enfermedad mental grave? ¿Por qué hay tantas personas sin hogar que padecen enfermedades mentales? ¿Cómo sería un sistema de salud mental que funcionara bien, si California desarrollara uno?

De hecho, tenemos una organización en Fresno para ayudar a las familias a conocer y tratar las enfermedades mentales de un ser querido. NAMI Fresno, un capítulo de la Alianza Nacional sobre Enfermedades Mentales, brinda clases y grupos de discusión para familias, y por Zoom durante Covid. NAMI también aboga por mejores programas de tratamiento para las personas necesitadas, a quienes llama “consumidores” o “vecinos”. Consulte el final de este artículo para obtener su información de contacto.

El psiquiatra Dr. E. Fuller Torrey documenta una impactante historia política que explica la falta de un sistema funcional de tratamiento de salud mental en California hoy. Su libro de 2014 “American Psychosis” tiene un título que implica que es Estados Unidos el que está loco, al carecer de una solución para la salud mental. En 1959, unas 37,000 personas en el estado vivían en hospitales psiquiátricos. Sin embargo, el público comenzaba a darse cuenta de que las condiciones allí eran malas y que la duración de las estadías en el hospital a menudo era excesiva. Pronto se desarrolló una tendencia a cerrar estos hospitales.

En 1963, el presidente John Kennedy firmó la Ley de Salud Mental Comunitaria. Esto tenía la intención de responsabilizar al gobierno federal por los pacientes psiquiátricos. El plan era crear una red de centros comunitarios de salud mental para que los consumidores recibieran atención en su región local fuera de un hospital. Sin embargo, poco después de que el presidente firmara el acta, fue asesinado. Cuando se desarrollaron nuevos programas en los años siguientes, el financiamiento desapareció rápidamente.

Como gobernador de California, Ronald Reagan participó en la venta gradual de hospitales psiquiátricos estatales. Se hizo pública la idea de que el costo de los

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Se puede comunicar con NAMI Fresno llamando al 559-224-2469. Su sitio web es namifresno.org. Para obtener más información sobre grupos que hablan español, llame a NAMI California en Sacramento al 916-567-0163. Su sitio web es namica.org.

La Importancia y los Beneficios de Hablar con tus Hijos Sobre la Sexualidad

POR CLAUDIA POWELL

Una de las principales razones por las que los temas relacionados con sexualidad continúan siendo un tabú en muchos hogares y muchas instituciones es por la falta de comunicación de parte de los padres hacia sus hijos. Es muy frecuente que se evite hablar sobre estos temas cuando tenemos estas conversaciones estableciendo lazos familiares muy fuertes que nuestros hijos están cambiando no solo físicamente pero también emocionalmente, Es sumamente importante abrir canales de comunicación para hablar sobre los cambios naturales que el cuerpo estará afrontando en la adolescencia, como padres estar conscientes que nuestros hijos están cambiando pero también emocionalmente, cuando tenemos estas conversaciones estamos estableciendo lazos familiares muy fuertes y eso abre la oportunidad que nuestros hijos puedan venir a contarnos cualquier situación por más difícil que sea. Con el fin de facilitar todo este proceso y evitar posibles consecuencias en el futuro, Planned Parenthood ha publicado información y guías para asesorar y recomendar a los padres de familia en todo este proceso. Una Guía de como entablar esta conversación en la página internet de Planned Parenthood detalla y segmenta varias de las dudas más frecuentes en el tema como lo son: ¿Qué debo enseñarle a mi hijo en la escuela primaria sobre el embarazo y la reproducción? ¿Qué debo enseñarle a mi hijo en la escuela primaria sobre la identidad?



Uno de los edificios de la organización Planned Parenthood. Foto cortesía de Robin Marty/The Commons

¿Qué debo enseñarle a mi hijo en la escuela primaria sobre el sexo y la sexualidad? Planned Parenthood también realizó una encuesta en donde se le preguntó a los padres de familia en Estados Unidos si estaban de acuerdo con la implementación de la educación sexual en los colegios. Dicha encuesta arrojó como resultado que el 93% de los participantes afirmó estar de acuerdo con esta educación en la etapa de la primaria y el 96% en la etapa de la secundaria. Otro ejemplo concreto sería el estado de Texas, que en la encuesta mostró que el 80% de los padres encuestados están de acuerdo con se enseñe en las escuelas sobre el uso de métodos anticonceptivos, sexualidad y abstinencia. Si desea acceder a más información sobre educación sexual y reproducción con los hijos desde temprana edad, puede consultar Planned Parenthood en el siguiente enlace, solo haga clic aquí.

Claudia Powell es la Directora de Asuntos Comunitarios de Planned Parenthood, de Los Angeles.

centros comunitarios de salud mental provendría de estas ventas y del gobierno federal. En la década de 1980, una combinación de corrupción y confusión sobre quién era responsable de establecer nuevos programas llevó a que los programas fueran bombardeados por completo. Hoy en día, una hospitalización breve para evaluar a una persona en una crisis de salud mental, llamada 5150, es común en los hospitales locales. Durante esta estadía de tres días, un consumidor puede comenzar con la medicación adecuada y compartir el estrés de su vida con profesionales de la salud mental. Este debería ser el comienzo de un programa integral de tratamiento individualizado. Ese no suele ser el caso.

Todos nosotros necesitamos cambiar nuestra forma de pensar y nuestras actitudes para comenzar a resolver los problemas que actualmente enfrentan las familias angustiadas, los cuidadores de salud mental cansados y la policía abrumada. ¿Y si entenderíamos una enfermedad mental como un trastorno cerebral que hay que afrontar del mismo modo que nos enfrentamos al cáncer o la diabetes? Podrían las familias y los consumidores involucrados ser libres de culpa y estigma? Se podría incentivar a los trabajadores de la salud mental para que promuevan programas comunitarios en lugar de solo sus propias carreras?

Todos se beneficiar cuando usamos tratamiento terapéutico en lugar de encarcelamiento para pacientes psiquiátricos no violentos. Todo el mundo se sentiría aliviado de no ver cada vez más enfermos mentales sin hogar en la calle. Y la creatividad y las habilidades de las personas en recuperación podrían estar contribuyendo a nuestra comunidad.

Recuerdo con profunda tristeza una consulta que tuve hace décadas con la madre de un joven enfermo mental con el que había perdido el contacto. Por amigos suyos a quienes había conocido antes de su enfermedad, supo que estaba durmiendo en los parques de dos ciudades diferentes cerca del Area de la Bahía. Ella se mantuvo en contacto con estos amigos, con la esperanza de lograr un reencuentro con él para poder llevarlo a tratamiento. En cambio, algunos meses después, fue encontrado muerto en su saco de dormir a orillas del río Sacramento debido a la exposición.

La depresión grave, la esquizofrenia y el trastorno bipolar son condiciones que de hecho pueden ser aliviadas con los medicamentos y psicoterapias que se conocen hoy en día. Este proceso puede llevar un tiempo considerable y no debe estar sujeto a atajos. Y en cada paso el consumidor necesita respeto por su dignidad, vivienda segura y un sistema de apoyo continuo.

Dos situaciones particularmente desafiantes para el tratamiento son las personas que tienen un diagnóstico dual (enfermedad mental y adicción) y aquellas que necesitan ayuda pero no creen que tienen una enfermedad mental. Una ley reciente conocida como la ley CARE de 2023 tiene como objetivo considerar las necesidades de estas personas al incluir un presupuesto para tratamiento, vivienda y apoyo continuo. El nombre CARE significa Ley de Asistencia, Recuperación y Empoderamiento de la Comunidad. Incluye un Tribunal de Atención voluntaria que puede ofrecer este programa a los consumidores, a veces como una opción de



Médicos y enfermeras de Kaiser se manifiestan en favor de un mejor cuidado de salud mental para sus pacientes en 2018. Foto de Peter Maiden

eliminar un cargo que podría llevarlos a la cárcel. Se llega a un acuerdo en el Juzgado de Atención donde tanto el cliente como los servicios del condado se responsabilizan de llevarlo a cabo. En principio, los derechos individuales del consumidor son defendidos por un abogado durante este proceso. El condado de Fresno no se encuentra entre los cinco condados de California que han adoptado esta ley, pero anticipa su inclusión antes de finales de 2024. Existe cierta controversia sobre si los derechos del consumidor se respetan plenamente cuando un juez toma decisiones. Si la oferta de servicios se maneja de manera totalmente colaborativa, con protecciones integradas, creo que puede ser un éxito para algunas de nuestras situaciones más difíciles.

Desde los ataques contra el sistema de salud mental que tuvieron lugar en la década de 1960, California ha estado luchando para brindar una mejor atención de salud mental. Ahora, con mayor presupuesto y una nueva estructura, el sistema de salud mental podría mejorar. Esta es la esperanza de las familias con miembros que tienen serios problemas mentales.

Eva Maiden es psicóloga escolar y psicoterapeuta jubilada.

?Nos Protegen las Mascarillas de los Virus?

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También subrayaron la importancia de no perder la confianza en los responsables de la sanidad pública, que cambian sus consejos con el tiempo para mantenerse al día con las últimas investigaciones científicas.

Las mascarillas “no son mágicas”

El Dr. William Schaffner, catedrático de la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Vanderbilt, abrió la sesión describiendo los retos que plantea el realizar estudios sobre el uso de mascarillas, ya sea en un entorno sanitario o en la comunidad. “No se puede controlar en todo momento el comportamiento de las personas con respecto al uso de mascarillas. Eso es algo que ciertamente no se puede hacer y, por supuesto, (las mascarillas) tienen que utilizarse correctamente”, afirmó.

Aun cuando muchos investigadores han estudiado múltiples medidas físicas para evitar que las personas contraigan un virus, los responsables del estudio de Cochran evaluaron estudios en los que se compara el desempeño de sólo tres intervenciones: mascarillas quirúrgicas, mascarillas de respiración N95/P2 y la higiene de las manos.

Según los resultados, no estaban seguros de que las mascarillas ayudaran a frenar la propagación de los virus, pero decidieron que la higiene de las manos “puede ayudar a frenar la propagación de los virus respiratorios”, afirmó Schaffner.

Sin embargo, también señaló que, en la mayoría de los casos, el uso de mascarillas iba acompañado de distanciamiento social y... “en ciertas comunidades, estábamos en un encierro. Nos quedábamos en casa. Así que hicimos todas esas cosas más o menos simultáneamente. Y es difícil—imposible en realidad—determinar qué proporción de la reducción que vimos en Covid se debió al uso de las mascarillas por sí solas”. En cuanto a su propio consejo, Schaffner recalcó que “las mascarillas no son mágicas”. Pero afirmó que las personas de alto riesgo podrían empezar a usarlas de nuevo la próxima temporada de gripe. “Ofrecerá otra capa de protección para protegerme a mí, una persona muy vulnerable, de adquirir una infección de otros”.

Se acabaron los mandatos de usar mascarillas

“No creo que podamos seguir imponiendo a la población el uso obligatorio de mascarillas”, afirmó la Dra. Monica Chandi, catedrática de Medicina y jefa adjunta de la División de VIH, Enfermedades Infecciosas y Medicina Global de la UCSF de San Francisco. Gandhi se refirió a un estudio danés sobre el uso de mascarillas en el que no había ningún mandato en vigor en ese momento y a otros dos en Bangladesh y Guinea-Bissau en los que todos los aldeanos llevaban mascarillas. El estudio concluyó que “el uso de mascarillas era muy poco eficaz”.

Durante la oleada de la variante Delta, el condado californiano de Orange no impuso el uso de mascarillas, pero el cercano condado de Los Ángeles sí lo hizo. “Y no hubo diferencias en las tasas de transmisión o mortalidad. Lo más importante es que las tasas de vacunación hicieron la diferencia”, afirmó Gandhi.

Lo más importante que puede hacer la gente durante la pandemia es vacunarse, aconsejó Gandhi. “Creo que tenemos que mantener la opción de usar una mascarilla”.

El libro de Gandhi recientemente publicado, Endemic, trata sobre la politización de la política de salud pública. Dijo que el cierre de las escuelas durante la COVID fue una decisión políticamente impulsada y “no buena para los niños en los Estados “azules”, porque los Estados “rojos” mantuvieron sus escuelas abiertas”.

La Dra. Milna Hakim, especialista en pediatría del South Central Family Health Center de Los Ángeles, ofreció una opinión similar sobre las mascarillas “desde las trincheras”.

California Rescinde su Objetivo del 15% de Conservación de Agua a Medida que se Acerca otra T tormenta

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Los funcionarios estatales también anunciaron hoy un gran aumento en la cantidad de agua que los proveedores locales obtendrán del Proyecto Estatal de Agua, aumentando del 35% anunciado el mes pasado al 75% de los suministros solicitados. El agua se proporciona a 750,000 acres de tierras de cultivo y a 27 millones de personas, principalmente en el sur de California.

Los anuncios se producen cuando algunos de los embalses del estado están cerca de su capacidad, y se espera que algunos de los más grandes del estado se llenen a fines de la primavera. Y la capa de nieve de Sierra Nevada, acercándose a niveles récord en la parte sur de la cordillera, continúa creciendo.

Cuando Newsom emitió su objetivo de conservación voluntario hace casi dos años, muchos expertos en agua dijeron que Newsom debería haberlo hecho obligatorio, como lo hizo el exgobernador Jerry Brown durante la sequía anterior. También lo criticaron por no reducir el uso por parte de los agricultores, que consumen el 80% del suministro de agua entregado por el estado.

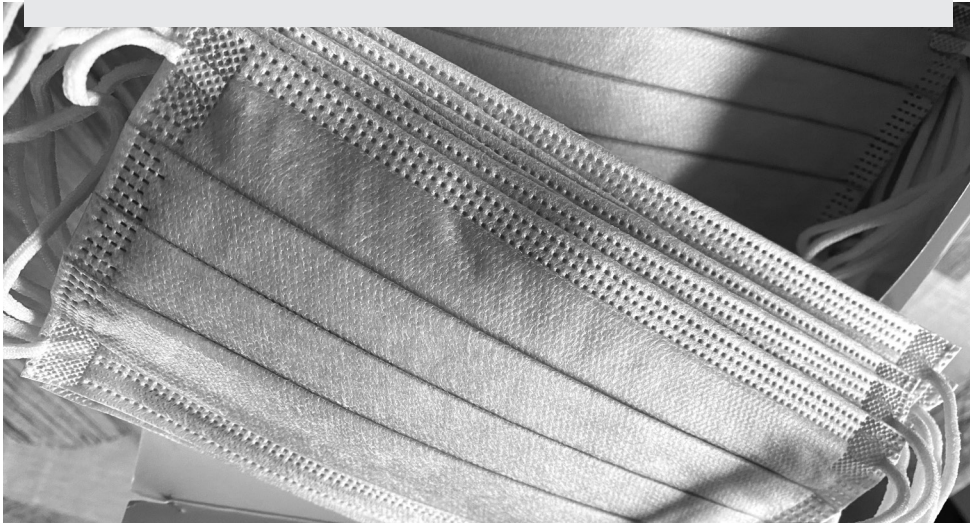
Los funcionarios estatales dicen que aunque el objetivo del 15% fue voluntario, funcionó. Sin embargo, los datos no respaldan eso: los californianos usaron un 6% menos de agua desde julio de 2021 hasta diciembre de 2022 en comparación con 2020, muy por debajo de la meta del 15% de Newsom.

Heather Cooley, directora de investigación del Pacific Institute, un grupo de expertos sobre el suministro de agua de Oakland, dijo que California no debe relajar su espíritu de conservación del agua.

A pesar del clima húmedo, el suministro de agua más grande del estado, sus cuencas de agua subterránea, siguen agotados.

“Aunque los embalses se están recuperando, los acuíferos subterráneos siguen agotados. El río Colorado, una importante fuente de agua para el sur de California, también enfrenta un déficit masivo”, dijo Cooley. “La realidad es que no tenemos agua para prepararnos para California. Necesitamos seguir invitando en la eficiencia del agua para prepararnos para un futuro más cálido, más seco y con sequías más intensas”.

Mike McNitt, portavoz del Distrito Municipal de Agua de Las Virgenes en el condado



Los expertos de salud recomiendan el uso de mascarillas para personas de alto riesgo y aseguran que la mejor protección contra los virus son las vacunas. Foto de Eduardo Stanley

“Los resultados del estudio fueron claros en el sentido de que las mascarillas quirúrgicas, las mascarillas N95, no marcaron ninguna diferencia en la transmisión del COVID o de la gripe”, afirmó Hakim.

“La mascarilla es una pequeña pieza de un escudo mucho mayor que tenemos contra el COVID. Yo utilizaría la pieza más grande del escudo, que es una vacuna, y no recomendaría las mascarillas para la población general”, añadió Hakim. Al igual que Schaffner y Gandhi, recomendó las mascarillas para las poblaciones vulnerables.

Niños y mascarillas

Según él, la colaborativa Cochran analizó algunos estudios específicos sobre niños, y los resultados fueron aún más definitivos.

“Los niños son los que peor la usan. Tendrías suerte si tuvieras a un niño con los pantalones puestos al final del día, por no hablar de tener una mascarilla que aumenta la humedad, aumenta la dificultad para respirar y es incómoda en general”, dijo Hakim.

Están constantemente tocando cosas, limpiándose la nariz, quitándose la mascarilla para comer y beber. Comparten lápices y bolígrafos que han estado en la boca de otros niños. Y a los adolescentes se les da fatal ser obedientes, añadió Hakim.

Al igual que Schaffner y Gandhi, Hakim recomendó el uso de mascarillas para las personas vulnerables.

“Si pudiéramos proporcionar mascarillas sobre todo a las personas de alto riesgo, creo que aumentaría la confianza, porque no se las impondremos, sino que las ponemos a su disposición, de modo que la gente se sienta más cómoda y segura de que es algo bueno”, afirma Hakim.

Los tres ponentes coincidieron en que, a medida que estudios como el informe Cochran revelan nuevos hallazgos sobre la eficacia de la atención preventiva, éstos no deben mermar la confianza del público.

“Una de las cosas más difíciles de entender para el público en general es que hoy le daremos nuestro mejor consejo, pero si aprendemos algo esta noche, es posible que mañana tengamos que cambiar ese consejo, y que se trata de un proceso continuo”, afirma Schaffner.

“Por qué publicar mensajes que dicen algo diferente, que dicen: ‘Puedes conservar si quieres, pero no es necesario’?” dijo McNitt, cuyo distrito que atiende a 75,000 personas depende totalmente del agua del acueducto estatal.

“La próxima sequía ciertamente está a la vuelta de la esquina”, agregó. Los californianos redujeron su uso promedio de agua en 600,000 acres-pie en casi dos años. Eso es casi dos tercios del volumen del embalse de Folsom y suficiente agua para abastecer a 1.2 millones de hogares en un año.

Crowfoot enfatizó que la sequía no ha terminado y señaló que el estado de sequía “no es una situación completamente binaria”. En algunas partes del estado, las condiciones de sequía han disminuido drásticamente, pero no en otras. Crowfoot dijo que la cuenca del río Klamath y la región del sur de California que depende del agua del río Colorado continúan enfrentando una “escasez aguda de agua”. Miles de hogares carecen de agua potable debido al agotamiento de las cuencas de agua subterránea, que han estado sobreexplotadas durante décadas y los expertos coinciden en que no se recuperarán en un solo invierno lluvioso.

Joquin Esquivel, presidente de la Junta Estatal de Control de Recursos Hídricos, dijo que la esperanza es que las ciudades “no solo se estén recuperando” a las viejas formas de uso de agua.

“La conservación sigue siendo una prioridad”, agregó Crowfoot. Michael Anderson, climatólogo del Departamento de Recursos Hídricos de California, dijo que la capa de nieve está en un 278% de lo normal, y se espera que otro sistema de tormentas golpee la costa norte y se mueva tierra adentro y hacia el sur a partir del lunes. El sistema, dijo, generará una tormenta relativamente fría que se originará en el Golfo de Alaska, a diferencia de algunas ráfagas recientes de humedades tropical. Esto significa que caerá más nieve en las montañas.

“No son acumulaciones masivas, pero podrían ser localmente pesadas”, dijo. *****

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LIANZA COMUNITARIA

LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

Derechas un Poco Chuecas

POR MIGUEL ÁNGEL BÁEZ

Desde su famosa conferencia mañana el Presidente mexicano Andrés Manuel López Obrador se ha atrincherrado para defenderse y contestar a los constantes ataques de aquellos a quienes él se refiere como conservadores. Y es que los ataques le llegan de varios frentes. No son solamente de la oposición formada por la unión de PAN, PRI y PRD (poco probable en otros tiempos) y que representan a gran parte de la derecha mexicana, sino que ahora también se les ha unido la derecha anticinigrante, racista y ultraderechista que lo llevó a la presidencia. Es actualmente la cabeza más visible del partido Republicano y representa a esa derecha bastante chueca, valga la expresión.

Algo parecido sucede con el PAN y Felipe Calderón, aunque esta relación parece cada vez más frágil. Recientemente salió a decir que dudaba de la culpabilidad de Genaro García Luna, secretario de Seguridad Pública durante su mandato y quien fue encontrado culpable en una Corte de Nueva York por tener nexos con el cártel de Sinaloa. Para luego argumentar que es un perseguido político del gobierno de López Obrador. En ambos casos, pareciera que sus respectivos partidos no saben qué hacer con ellos. Los dos quieren mantenerse vigentes y seguir propagando su discurso, lo que sea con tal cacahuete.



El presidente de México, Andrés Manuel López Obrador ofrece diariamente una conferencia de prensa llamada "la Mañanera". El usa parte de esta conferencia para criticar a la derecha, que constantemente lo ataca. Foto de Eneas/The Commons

de golpear políticamente a sus oponentes. Trump, por ejemplo, lanzó críticas al presidente Joe Biden por no atender a la comunidad de East Palestine, Ohio, luego de la derrama de químicos peligrosos tras el descarrilamiento de un tren que los transportaba. Sin embargo, durante su mandato como presidente quedó claro que el medio ambiente le importa un cacahuete.

Herramientas para Defendernos

POR PAULINA CRUZ

Cuando era niña, sabía cómo se sentían los "incidentes" y los crímenes de odio, aunque no sabía que había un término para ellos. Conocía ese sentimiento...el miedo y la incertidumbre. ¿Estaba exagerando demasiado? ¿Estaba siendo sensible? ¿Lo empeoraría si respondiera? ¿Habría represalias? ¿Vale la pena el riesgo? Estos miedos y preguntas eran parte de por qué rara vez hablaba.

La otra razón era: no sabía adónde acudir. Mi padrastro había sido policía en su juventud. A menudo se jactaba de historias de corrupción y autocomplacencia a la hora de la cena. Esto ayudó a fomentar el miedo y la duda en mi mente. Como muchas minorías, me hizo aún más insegura de a quién llamar cuando lo necesitaba. ¿Cómo podía confiar en alguien para pedir ayuda, si podían ser tan egoístas y crueles como él? Al mudarse a California, mi madre quedó aislada de su familia... su comunidad... su sistema de apoyo. Con el tiempo encontramos nuevas comunidades de las que formamos parte. Vecinos, compañeros de trabajo y amigos de la escuela. Personas como nosotros, personas que pasaban por



Dos de los más de 100 asistentes al foro comunitario convocado en Huron por Alianza Comunitaria el 17 de noviembre de 2022, para discutir temas relacionados a crímenes de odio y cómo controlarlos y denunciarlos. Foto de Peter Maiden

experiencias similares. Ayudaron a traducir, brindaron apoyo y eventualmente comenzaron a hablarnos de las organizaciones a las que habíamos ido. Mi profesor de psicología dijo recientemente algo inesperado para mí. Dijo que los estudios actuales sugieren que las personas que luchan con problemas de salud mental tienen más probabilidades de recuperarse en países del tercer mundo que en países del primer mundo. La razón que proporcionó fue un fuerte sentido de comunidad.

¿Nos Protegen las Mascarillas de los Virus?

POR PETER WHITE

(Nota del Editor: esta nota fue originalmente publicada por Ethnic Media Services, <https://ethnicmediaservices.org/category/spanish-translations/>) Una red internacional de investigadores sanitarios revisó 78 estudios sobre mascarillas protectoras y concluyó que el uso de éstas tiene poco o ningún efecto sobre el contagio de la gripe, el COVID u otras enfermedades respiratorias. Los estudios fueron seleccionados al azar. La colaboración Cochran publicó sus conclusiones en un informe en enero de 2023 en el que se concluye que lavarse las manos con frecuencia contribuye más que las mascarillas para prevenir las infecciones virales. En una conferencia de prensa celebrada el 3 de marzo por Ethnic Media Services, tres expertos médicos compartieron sus opiniones sobre la eficacia de las mascarillas a la luz del estudio. Excepto en el caso de los pacientes vulnerables, en los que las mascarillas ofrecen una capa adicional de protección, su consenso fue olvidarse de usar mascarillas y vacunarse.