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In Yosemite Valley, Snow Melt Flows and Falls

BY VIC BEDOIAN

Yosemite Valley’s waterfalls are especially abundant this year due to the enormous snowpack in the southern Sierra. History was made as the Merced River’s watershed was buried under a snowpack that was 346% of normal. That wild, churning Merced River is now flowing from the high country and spreading its reach into San Joaquin Valley meadows and campgrounds.

The iconic Yosemite waterfall is now bigger and stronger due to the snow melting. Photo by Vic Bedoian

Yosemite’s rangers are facing the challenging task of managing the big melt. Even Yosemite veterans, like Scott Gediman, are amazed by the amount of water flowing and falling into the iconic Valley. Gediman is the park’s public information officer.

Like everyone, Gediman is amazed by the historic winter California witnessed this year, “This is the biggest snowpack I’ve seen in 27 years as a park ranger here in Yosemite National Park.”

And that big snowpack is now being transformed into a big melt. Gediman says that park personnel are working hard to manage the water flows, acknowledging that it is a challenging task balancing the power of nature with visitor safety.

“With our last snow survey, we got about two and a half times of a ‘normal year’ both on the Merced River drainage and the Tuolumne River drainage here in Yosemite National Park,” notes Gediman.

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Kill the Poor

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

The well-known punk rock band, the Dead Kennedys, released a song in 1980 about the neutron bomb called “Kill the Poor.” Here’s some of the lyrics.

Now that we have the neutron bomb
It’s nice and quick and clean and gets things done
The sun beams down on a brand new day
No more welfare tax to pay
Unsightly slums gone up in flashing light
Jobless millions whisked away
All systems go to kill the poor tonight, gonna kill, kill, kill,
kill, kill the poor tonight

Fresno’s new anti-camping, anti-sitting, anti-standing and anti-lying down ordinance, banning unhoused residents from all places, written by Fresno City Council Members Miguel Arias and Garry Bredefeld, will do just that. It will kill the poor (see “Fresno Policy Kills” in the June issue of the *Community Alliance*).

Why is a liberal Democrat, Arias, joining forces with an extremist Republican to implement a radically harsh ordinance? They will kill the poor.

The ordinance specifically bars unhoused residents from being near both shelters and cooling/warming centers. It bans people from being near intake facilities, where unhoused people must go to seek services and housing.

The new ordinance bans unhoused residents from nearly all places in Fresno. It prohibits sitting, standing, lying down, sleeping and having any possessions within 500 feet of schools, childcare facilities, parks, libraries, warming and cooling centers, shelters, even navigation centers (like the Poverello House), freeway ramps, tunnels, under bridges, pedestrian bridges, active railways, alleys, sidewalks and many other places.

In the triple-digit heat on the streets of Fresno, unhoused residents will die from heatstroke because areas of shade, such as freeway underpasses, will be unavailable because of the ordinance. Several unhoused men died from heatstroke last summer.

There is an added section that allows for people to be prohibited wherever the Council determines to put signs prohibiting them, and the city manager can execute how this ordinance is implemented.

It’s broad in how it could be used, and it limits acceptable belongings to a backpack or less. It allows for belongings to be taken without notice. Fresno’s Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) already does this every day, as many have documented.

Homeless street sweeps are frequent operations in many U.S. cities in which government agencies move unhoused people living in public outdoor areas. Little research exists on the health impact of street sweep operations.

What research has been done shows that street sweeps might negatively impact health through two outcomes. The first outcome is material loss, including belongings and medical items. The second outcome is instability, including geographic displacement, community fragmentation and the lost opportunity to follow up with health and service providers.

These outcomes could contribute to less effective management of chronic health conditions, infectious diseases and substance-use disorders and might increase physical injuries and worsen mental health. Providers also reported that sweeps could negatively impact the

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In Yosemite Valley, Snow Melt Flows and Falls

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“Over the past several weeks, as the flows have gone up and down, we’ve been opening and closing the campgrounds. But now that the flood watch is over, we’re still at high water, but we were able to reopen most of the sites.

“What we’re doing is just monitoring the water flow. And other factors that we look at are water across roads, for example, water on trails and things like that.”

Water is truly everywhere in the Valley this year, and waterfalls are thundering. From across the valley a mile away you can hear Yosemite Falls continually booming as it plunges onto the rocks below. Expansive meadows, usually luxuriant this time of year, are submerged, having become part of the Merced River’s floodplain.

In some places, water from the distant river channel laps at the edge of the road. That’s actually a good thing because the floodwater has a beneficial impact on rejuvenating the riparian habitat and meadow vegetation.

In mid-June, the Merced River was consistently at or near flood stage as measured at the Pohono Bridge at the western end of the valley. Gediman explains that keeping constant watch on the volume of snowmelt flowing into the Valley is a critical operation.

He credits the National Weather Service and the California Nevada River Forecast Center for keeping park rangers appraised with accurate information as the river level rises and falls.

“What we’ve been doing is getting daily briefings where every day they tell us what the flows are, what the projected flows are, things like that,” says Gediman.

“So, it’s those weather forecasts and flow predictions for the river that are helping us manage the park and take actions.”

Yosemite’s high country, blanketed with up to 18 feet of snow, is rapidly melting. The Tuolumne River basin received 257% of average snowfall.

Gediman reports that crews are plowing Highway 120 through Tuolumne Meadows and Tioga Pass to clear the pavement and mitigate avalanche zones. It’s especially slow and perilous work this year due to the sheer volume of snow and consequent avalanche danger.

As of this writing, the park does not have a projected date for opening Tioga or Glacier Point roads, except to say that it will be later than usual.

As the flood of summer vacationers flows into Yosemite Valley, they can expect to encounter a lot of water on the Valley floor and places like the wet and slippery Mist Trail to Nevada Falls.

Last year, a reservation system reportedly kept visitor crowding to a reasonable level. Gediman says reservations won’t be required this year.

In the meantime, Yosemite is taking another look at the visitor experience. “We have initiated a planning process called the Visitor Access Management Plan that is going to help us look at the long-term visitor access to Yosemite,” said Gediman.

“We’re just in the early phases of this planning process. We’ve had public meetings. We’re asking for the public to be engaged, and it’s really important to get robust public participation.”

With post-pandemic, social media-driven tourism burgeoning in national parks, blueprints for moderating the impacts on the country’s precious natural resources are now more important than ever.



Because of the melting of the historic snowpack in Yosemite, the Merced River is now flowing from the high country and spreading its reach into Valley meadows and campgrounds.
Photo by Vic Bedoian

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

Kill the Poor

Continued from page 1

healthcare system by promoting increased usage of emergency departments and inpatient hospital care.

Take Action!

If you don’t like your tax dollars wasted on lawsuits, protest the latest draconian ordinance from the Fresno City Council that bans unhoused residents from most areas of Fresno. Contact the mayor and City Council members now.

Also, you can provide aid to the unhoused residents of Fresno: 1) purchase some tents and blankets and pass them out, and 2) provide cold water to the unhoused on these hot summer days. Show some compassion to distinguish yourself from the elected “leaders” of Fresno.

Mayor Jerry Dyer
Call 559-621-8000
Comment at fresno.gov/mayor/

Fresno City Council Members
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District 1: Annalisa Perea
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District 3: Miguel Arias
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On June 14, Fresno’s Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) moved unhoused residents from a field near Barstow Avenue and Highway 41 to the sidewalk. On June 15, HART returned to throw away all of their possessions. Photo by Bob McCloskey

Unfortunately, this ordinance will take effect on July 7. The sole dissenting vote was Council Member Annalisa Perea. This vote begs the question: Are the other six Council members and the mayor sociopaths? If not, they are exhibiting at least two traits of sociopathology: a glaring lack of empathy and repetition of failed practices.

The City of Fresno lost a lawsuit in 2008, *Kincaid v. Fresno*, and was ordered to pay out several million dollars to unhoused plaintiffs for the same Constitutional violations

they are intentionally planning to commit now. The City also lost a lawsuit in 2022 for implementation of an ordinance that barred advocates from being near encampment sweeps. They were forced to abandon the ordinance under a court-ordered injunction.

Don’t let your tax dollars be wasted on lawsuits.

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

Letters to the Editor

More on Clovis

Regarding “Clovis Is Not in Compliance with Housing Laws” (May 2023 issue):

It’s amazing that a town with that many churches has so little charity, compassion, goodwill toward their fellow man or Christian principles in general. Anders [in a June 2023 letter to the editor] perfectly demonstrates the “Clovis way of life.”

Nick Harbison
Fresno

Bullying at Schools

Regarding “Racism Is a Virus” (June 2023 issue):

My daughter went through the same thing. It’s the adults in control that keep allowing this type of behavior to exist because of understaffing, the fear of being labeled as a whistleblower, and being retaliated against by other staff members and school board leaders.

Society has made wrong things right and right things wrong. Believe me, there are many educators that will turn

a blind eye in the public education system when it comes to bullying and racism. It’s terrible in Fresno, especially when dark-skinned folks are involved.

I really do have more to say and suggest different types of solutions, but the system is not set up to create successful children but only to make good workers.

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Corporate Arrogance at Its Best

In the last few years, we’ve been bombarded by corporate media diverting us with tales of the rich and famous. Nothing new per se, but lately our rich guys are looking for new boundaries to show off their extravagance: trips to outer space, the desire to conquer other planets and the like. And they are all over the news.

Obviously, they have plenty of time on their hands and plenty of money in the bank.

Although some want to go to outer space, other capricious rich guys prefer to go deep into the oceans.

This was the case with Stockton Rush, chief executive of OceanGate Expeditions, who promoted underwater tours for wealthy tourists to visit famous debris sites such as that of the Titanic, the ocean liner that sank in 1912.

The last tour by an OceanGate submersible, the Titan, took place on June 18, with Rush as the pilot and four tourists who each paid \$250,000 for the trip. They were headed to visit the Titanic, resting 12,500 feet (3,800 meters) below the surface. They never made it because the

submersible imploded—an inward explosion due to the high water pressure.

This could be considered an unexpected and regrettable accident. However, what really seems outrageous are reports of serious construction problems with the Titan for which the warnings were ignored by Rush, who considered his vessel “innovative” and almost perfect. He reportedly dismissed several warnings from experts.

Of course, these types of vehicles are not controlled by any agency and no rules apply to them. Sounds familiar, right? Corporations and/or rich people who are untouched by rules, laws or simple moral standards.

This incident will likely decide the fate of OceanGate Expeditions, however, it is unclear if such adventures and vehicles being regulated will be an outcome from this disaster.

Perhaps we should let the Titanic rest peacefully instead of polluting the area with people and vessels visiting the area just for some rich people to take a selfie. And for the corporate media, one only can ask: Why the obsession with the rich and famous?

While all the big newspapers and broadcast stations were talking about the Titan, a vessel with hundreds of immigrants sank in the Mediterranean Ocean, with at least 100 children missing. How many people heard about that story?

Till next month.

The Fall of Bitwise

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

On May 29, Bitwise Industries furloughed its 900 employees nationwide “effective immediately.” Why? The company ran out of cash and couldn’t pay its employees. As news about the company’s financial problems unfolded, we learned that almost two years earlier Bitwise failed to pay its employees’ federal taxes and its City of Fresno business taxes.

In addition, the company got into trouble by asking for a loan using as collateral properties another company claimed to own. That company, NICbyte LLC, of Texas, sued Bitwise.

But what is (or was) Bitwise? Why did the demise of this company have such an impact on Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley?

According to its website, Bitwise’s mission is to be a transformative tech company offering technology-based solutions for underserved communities and clients. But the company is also involved in real estate, renting office space, and buying and selling properties.

Bitwise applied for and received loans and financial support in the last year or so but is incapable of paying those back.

Bitwise suspended its operations effective May 30, and its board terminated co-CEOs and co-founders Jake Soberal and Irma L. Olguin Jr. The Board of Directors appointed Ollen Douglass as the interim president, effective June 1. The board is conducting an investigation to determine what caused the financial “implosion” of the company.

Bitwise was the “poster child” of what a “young, innovative” company could do in an underserved area such as the San Joaquin Valley. The dream of our own “Silicon Valley” became a reality—Bitwise was it.

Watch “visionary” Olguin’s presentation on *TED Talks* from 2021—now with 2.5 million views—to understand how Bitwise sold us a dream. In a well-articulated presentation, Olguin “introduces the work she’s done to uplift and empower people in her community in Fresno and shows how it can be a model to elevate ‘underdog’ communities across the world.”

Not small potatoes.

However, the co-CEOs of Bitwise made decisions and secured loans without informing their own board. So what was cooked in the dark, behind the scenes, is now public domain.

The most surprising thing about this fiasco is that it could have been avoided by applying a simple rule: Regulate corporations. But corporations don’t like rules, and elected officials help them because, well, the money for their electoral campaigns comes from somewhere.

When regular citizens apply for welfare assistance, they have to navigate a heavy bureaucracy and controls—you know, people in power impose these controls because they are afraid John or Jane Doe might get an extra penny they “don’t deserve.” But they don’t mind letting corporations go unregulated.

Unless we change something in our political system, the Bitwise story will be repeated.

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



One of the Bitwise buildings in downtown Fresno. Photo by Peter Maiden



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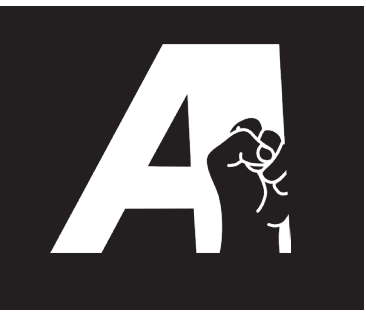
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The *Community Alliance* is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly newspaper is to build a powerful progressive movement that will support social, environmental and economic 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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Tulare Lake Lives!

BY MIKE RHODES

Imagine the largest lake west of the Mississippi on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. About 200 years ago, you could see flocks of birds arriving that were as loud as a freight train. Turtles, fish and Yokuts living in harmony with nature.

The population of Yokuts at that time is estimated at about 20,000. Robert Hansen, a professor at the College of the Sequoias, says that there was a high density of Native Americans in Central California “because there was so much reliable food from year to year that they did not even have to go to war with one another...There were more Yokuts in compact communities/villages than in any other Native American group anywhere.”

Civilization brought changes such as stealing the Yokuts land; paying a bounty for every indigenous man, woman and child’s scalp; and blocking the rivers to the lake so that it would dry up and cotton could be grown. The domination of people over nature and enriching a few big farmers (e.g., J.G. Boswell) have brought us to where we are today.

On the verge of an environmental catastrophe because of global warming, we are seeing the reemergence of this once magnificent lake. This winter, with record rain and snowfall, Tulare Lake has covered roads, farmland and some homes. As the snow melts, we will see the lake grow even larger.

Should social, economic and environmental justice include the encouragement of a permanent Tulare Lake and giving land back to the Yokuts? Let the conversation begin.

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



Mike Rhodes stands next to the reemergence of Tulare Lake on May 29. Photo by Pam Whalen



A group of unidentified men and a dog camping at the shores of Tulare Lake, around 1880. This image is now housed at the Sarah A. Mooney Memorial Museum in Lemoore. It is one of two photographs that survive of the historic lake from that era.



A Chukchansi woman preparing acorns for grinding, 1920. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration/Public Domain

Water Forum Ponders Valley Water Concerns

BY VIC BEDOIAN

There are few places this year where water has been more of a preoccupation than in Kings County. That’s mainly because of a partial rewatering of the historic Tulare Lake, along with flooding due to a historic series of atmospheric river storms. While the national media has been obsessed with the Tulare Lake aspect, Kings County’s residents, farmers and public officials have been dealing with consequences on the ground.

This winter’s dramatic climate events, and the promise of more in the future, inspired the Kings County Democratic Party to sponsor a Water Town Hall in Hanford on June 16. The event brought together Kings County Supervisor Doug Verboon and several local experts who are working firsthand on water and agricultural matters. Pulling it all together was author and investigative journalist Mark Arax, who gave a wide-ranging talk weaving together a tapestry of Valley history, economics and politics.

Verboon comes from a farming family going back generations in Kings County and is a 13-year member of the county’s Board of Supervisors (BOS). He reported on the struggle lasting 11 years to rein in the export of groundwater to Southern California water agencies.

Action was spurred when billionaire farming giant John Vidovich built an expansive pipeline that sparked fears that it would enable him to sell groundwater. Last year, Verboon reported, the BOS achieved at least partial success when the supervisors adopted a water export ordinance. Verboon asserted that the county’s \$2.3 billion agriculture industry requires the county to protect groundwater resources for dry years ahead.

Another urgent episode involved the community of Allensworth, which is notable for its historic stature as a state historic park representing the first African American-founded town in the state. Less known close by is the actual town of Allensworth with around 600 souls. When mid-March floodwaters from swollen rivers threatened evacuation, residents stayed and fought hard to save their homes.

That story was told by Valerie Jasso Gorospe and Frank Herrera. Gorospe is communications director for the Allensworth Progressive Association, a civic fundraising and planning group. She described the desperate hours trying to inform residents and acquire any help they could from any agencies they could contact.

Meanwhile, Herrera expressed a sense of dire emergency as Allensworth residents took matters into their own hands in a race against time and surging water. That experience, he concludes, underscores that they, and everyone, need to be ready for the next time, especially as El Niño is at our

doorstep, emphasizing the need to effectively coordinate local, county and state officials.

Equitable access to water is an essential human rights concern in the San Joaquin Valley. Many thousands of Valley households, especially those in rural or unincorporated places, have only tainted tap water to drink, or their wells have gone dry. The problem is widespread still, notwithstanding that the Human Right to Water is law in California.

Fortunately, groups like the Community Water Center and Self-Help Enterprises are active in helping families and small towns to connect with state money and services. Jessie Snyder, veteran organizer with Self-Help Enterprises, said that there is now a lot of money available for water projects from state and federal sources. However, there are also challenges because of the fractured jurisdiction of water-governing agencies.

Governing water is an ages-old snarl in the Valley. Dan O’Connell made a case for untying the knot with greater inclusion into decision-making venues for those who are impacted but whose voices are not often heard. O’Connell, representing the Central Valley Partnership, a coalition offering a progressive and more just water policy, stated the need for a new narrative in water governance—one that includes previously underserved populations being involved in water decisions that affect their lives.

Citing the imminent threat of a wet-dry climate whiplash future, O’Connell warned, “This ecological crisis is occurring within longstanding, seemingly endemic social, racial and economic problems unique to the San Joaquin Valley.”

With a sweeping Valley overview, Arax wrapped up the event with the observation that what makes the Valley so abundant and verdant is that rivers run through it. For decades, Arax has plowed the rich soil of the San Joaquin for a bounty of deeply told stories about the land and its people.

He has brought his research and storytelling prowess to bear in works like *The Dreamt Land: Chasing Water and Dust Across California*, which paints a richly detailed picture of the Valley, and *The King of California: J.G. Boswell and the Making of a Secret American Empire*, a thorough and riveting history of the Boswell farming enterprise that to this day casts a wide shadow in Kings County.

Describing the cornucopia of farm goods due to the region’s benign



Mark Arax during his presentation at the Water Town Hall in Hanford on June 16. Photo by Peter Maiden

climate primed with rivers of fresh water, Arax envisioned a more balanced approach to the Valley’s future.

“It makes sense to turn this land into food. We haven’t exactly turned it into food. We’ve turned it into nuts and fruits and some salads and things like that.

“But let’s make an argument for this ground to not be subdivisions, to not be mini malls, to be agriculture that is environmentally sustainable and in a human rights way, sustainable too. And that’s what we’re kind of all trying to achieve. It’s taken us a century and a half of extraction to get to where we’re at.”

He compared the small-farm, small-town dominated east Valley to the industrialized vastness of the west side with

Continues on page 5



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

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Huron High School and the Fight Against Institutional Racism

BY MIKE RHODES

The mayor of Huron sent the *Community Alliance* this message on June 6: “FLASH**HOT OFF THE PRESS** CHUSD Board prefers to support separation than a high school. Voiced at tonight’s board meeting.” Mayor Rey León was referring to the Coalinga Huron Unified School District Board meeting held that day.

The board meeting took place following a high-profile meeting in Huron the previous month with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, State Senator Anna Caballero (D-Merced) and other elected officials. At a press conference after that meeting, all parties agreed that funding for the new high school was attainable and a high priority. The land for the high school has been donated, the community is behind the effort and it looked as if the wheels were in motion to secure the funding.

Huron students (mostly Latinx), currently bused to Coalinga, would benefit from the

opportunity to get an education equal to that of the largely white student body in Coalinga. No more getting up before the crack of dawn to catch the bus, getting home after dark and no more losing out on opportunities to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities because of busing. The students, parents and community activists in Huron want their students to graduate and attend college.

CHUSD Superintendent Lori Villanueva, speaking before the Board on June 6, outlined a long list of reasons why Huron would never get its own high school. Villanueva said that “for any project to happen, the following is required: Board direction to proceed with the project, full funding for the construction building and other costs, and a funding plan for ongoing costs.”

After Villanueva’s presentation, a proposal was made not to bring up the Huron high school issue for further discussion unless those elements were in place. One board member stated that even if all of those conditions were met he would still not vote for a high school in Huron. If Huron was successful in securing the funding needed, the idea of removing Huron from the CHUSD was discussed.

Following the vote, León said that “while the board has historically been untrustworthy, I can believe that they might have the courage to move in that direction simply due to their disdain of farmworker students. Of course, it would be a blessing to the community of Huron and its Latino families and students.”



Maritza Orozco, center, made a video along with other community members outside the City Council chambers in Huron, while policymakers met inside about plans for a high school.
Photo by Peter Maiden

After the meeting with Thurmond, it seemed that everyone in the room was in agreement to find the funding necessary to build the new high school from local, state and federal sources. But that spirit of cooperation and “*Si se puede!*” (“We can do it!”) seemed to disappear when Villanueva spoke before the school board on June 6.

With León’s hard work and connections (at the state and federal level) and the strong support of the community, this high school will be built, even if it is without the support of the CHUSD Board.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. reminded us that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” Change takes a long time, but it does happen.

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

Patient Care Crisis

BY PAULINA CRUZ

On May 25, a sea of purple engulfed the Capitol in Sacramento. More than 600 healthcare workers, medical assistants, home caregivers, clinic workers, resident physicians and patients wearing purple shirts and capes surrounded the State Capitol for a press conference and to march. This was an opportunity for patients and healthcare workers across California to express how important it is for SB 525 to pass.

The purple capes joined at the steps of the Capitol sharing their struggles and desires to continue taking care of their patients. Many of them shared similar stories: inability to cover their own bills and take care of themselves and families. Having to work multiple jobs just to keep their families fed. Sleeping in cars because of the commute and long hours. Not being able to afford to work.

Many spoke out about their experiences with burnout, and how there is too much to do and not enough trained employees to do it. They talked about the high turnover, watching their coworkers quit and understanding why. It wasn’t because of a lack of dedication, rather an inability to stay.

Teary-eyed healthcare workers insisted that passing SB 525 and properly paying healthcare workers would be an investment in the future of healthcare.

The State Senate has endorsed the \$25 healthcare minimum wage bill. This new minimum wage is set to help fix many of the problems plaguing our healthcare system.

SB 525 would be the first ever statewide healthcare minimum wage and would help retain workers and attract new workers to the field.

We all know what a clinic is like. It often feels like an inconvenience rather than going somewhere that will make you feel better. Being left behind in the back by accident, not being called with your results, medicine being sent to

the wrong place or not ordered, or appointments not being available for months at a time.

Patients are slipping through the cracks because there aren’t enough properly trained people staying long enough.

The term *Great Resignation* refers to the increased rate of U.S. workers leaving their jobs since the spring of 2021 due to the strong demand for labor and low unemployment rates. Healthcare is one of the sectors that has been hit the hardest. Healthcare workers feel overwhelmed with low staffing and high demand, making it less likely for people to stay on.

According to the study “Burnout and Health Care Workforce Turnover,” the “prevalence of burnout, low engagement and turnover were high, with 53% of both clinicians and staff reporting burnout, only 32% of clinicians and 35% of staff reporting high engagement, and 30% of clinicians and 41% of staff no longer working in primary care in the same system 2 to 3 years later...”

“Primary care physicians have among the highest rates of burnout among physician specialties, with more than 60% of those in the United States.”

All healthcare workers deserve to make an honest living. They spend their days taking care of patients, but who is taking care of them? A \$25 minimum wage would also help fight against discrimination in the workforce.

“Workers of color and women workers, who form the backbone of our healthcare system, are disproportionately underpaid and devalued. At every level of healthcare, underpaying and undervaluing essential health care workers has created a patient care crisis,” stated the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in a statement to the media. SEIU represents a majority of the healthcare workers in California.

This bill would cover everyone working in clinics, no matter the position. That includes secretaries and even janitors. People would be able to focus on their jobs without worrying about their second/third jobs and falling behind.



Healthcare workers marching at the State Capitol in support of SB 525 on May 25. Photo by Paulina Cruz

It would create a path toward dignity and respect for both healthcare workers and their patients.

On May 31, the bill passed the Senate with a 21-11 vote. “California’s healthcare workforce crisis and the crisis in patient care are one and the same—I can’t cover two or three times my share of residents without staying up at night worrying that fragile elderly people in my care are more likely to fall, get an infection or suffer from feeling abandoned,” said Christina Lockyear-White, a certified nursing assistant at Bakersfield Rehabilitation Center and first vice president of SEIU 2015.

“I’m exhausted and heartsick from the physical and emotional stress, but with today’s victory, I’m even more optimistic that California’s leaders are hearing us and taking action.”

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

Water Forum Ponders Valley Water Concerns

Continued from page 4

its sparsely populated mega-farmland. This farmland was created by the Central Valley Project with its iconic California Aqueduct moving water from northern watersheds down along the spine of the Valley.

“When you don’t live on your land, you have a kind of psychic distance from that land that allows you to be detached from it somehow. And that’s where the debate

happens. Does it make sense for us to have spent this huge amount of money and infrastructure to grow farmland in places where nature didn’t intend it to grow?”

Zooming in closer to home, Arax traced the origins of today’s landscape, “What was done in the Tulare Lake Basin really has few parallels in American history, if not world history. They took the flow of those rivers and started siphoning it.

“And then when Boswell arrived in 1920, immediately they started thinking of a dam on all those rivers. And it took them 25, 30 years, but they dammed them too.”

Taming rivers was only the beginning, as Arax emphasized, “They took the hog wallows of the Valley and flattened them with the Fresno scraper, and we turned desert and marsh into the most industrialized farm belt in the world.

“It’s an extraordinary act. It’s an act of a lot of things. It’s an act of will. It’s an act of

power. It’s an act of hubris, arrogance. It’s an act of defiance. It’s an act of greed. It’s an act of ambition. It’s an act of capitalism.”

There have always been dairies in the Valley. But not the massive cow factories that now spread across the Valley with the outsized impact on air and water quality coming from their effluence and methane. That happened after Southern California dairy operators sold out to real estate developers and moved into Valley counties with no questions asked or any concern over what the environmental consequences might be.

Arax pressed that hot button as well: “Along these rivers that feed Tulare Lake, there are mega-dairies galore. Dairies are the single biggest polluter, and I know this is sacrilege. We’re in Hanford, and I’m talking about dairies.

“But dairies are the single biggest polluter of the ground and the air in this valley. And

we’re not regulating dairies when it comes to air pollution.”

Although the challenges facing the San Joaquin Valley are multifaceted and serious, Arax expressed hope that we can meet them, and in closing pointed out how his own work has been inspired by the work of groups like those at the town hall, “Some of those people are heroes and heroines of mine who educated me about what they are seeing in the Valley and given me a new set of eyes.”

For the rest of us, Arax advised, “Let’s keep telling stories. Let’s keep figuring this place out.”

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

BY PAULINA CRUZ

This May, Fresno went viral. Unfortunately, it wasn't for one of Fresno's better moments. It was unusual to see the #559 hashtag blow up as multiple videos on TikTok had millions of views and thousands of likes and comments.

Maria Garcia posted a series of videos after spotting a dog panting outside in the heat. She immediately confronted the owner, yelling at him and accusing him of animal abuse for having the dog out in the heat. Having concern for an animal in the Central Valley heat is understandable—her following actions, however, are not.

The owner of the dog happened to be an older Asian man living near an Asian restaurant called Tasty Thai.

So what does Garcia do? She makes the leap of a lifetime. She decides to make a video accusing this random Asian restaurant of using dog meat. "It makes more sense they are using the meat, selling the meat," she stated in a since deleted video.

She had no basis for her racist accusation, just an Asian man owning a dog and living within the vicinity of a restaurant. Did she have any evidence to support her racist claim? No. Nothing. She simply allowed her

knowledge of disgusting and dangerous stereotypes to push an untrue narrative.

After investigating, the Fresno Police Department (FPD) determined that the dog was not being abused and that there was no evidence of dog meat being used or sold. The FPD even made a Facebook post regarding Garcia's video:

"Recently, a short video depicting a female pit bull was uploaded to multiple social media accounts. The video alleged the pit bull was being abused. Fresno Police officers were quickly alerted to the situation and thoroughly investigated the incident. The short video posted on social media was a snapshot and did not show the complete and thorough picture of the incident. We are happy to report that the investigation revealed the dog was not abused...We would like to thank the community members that were concerned for the safety of the dog."

Garcia even admitted that Fresno Humane Animal Services asked her to drop the accusations and leave the man and restaurant alone. She refused and claimed that she wouldn't stop.

According to Soogia (a TikTok creator who has covered the story), Maria Alavers Garcia created the video and it gained traction when shared on Isabel Guzman's TikTok page. Garcia has taken down the video and turned off her comments. Guzman posted an apology video later, but it was too little too late. Her account no longer exists.

David Rasavong, owner of Tasty Thai (which had only been open for eight months), became overwhelmed with phone calls and online harassment that included false accusations, racist slurs and death threats. To keep himself, his family and his employees safe, Tasty Thai was forced to shut down.

On May 18, they announced a temporary closing, "Due to the high amount of threats and harassment we've received, we have decided to temporarily close for our own safety and the safety of our staff. We apologize for any inconvenience."

However, on May 30, another two posts were made, indicating the more permanent closing of the restaurant. "WE ARE CLOSING. Thank you to everyone who reached out in support during this challenging time.

"Your comments and messages have been a bright light in this whole situation. After much thought and consideration, we, as a family, have decided to close this location of Tasty Thai due to all the threats and harassment."

They continued, "As immigrants, it has always been my parents' dream to pass on the richness and traditions of our culture through food and service to the community. We are currently looking at a couple [of] options to relocate to and open a new Tasty Thai, in order to continue my parents' dream."

This is a heartbreaking and disappointing story. When people deny racism exists,



they choose to ignore situations like this. If Garcia felt there was abuse, all she had to do was report it. Instead, she made up a story that destroyed the livelihood of the owners and employees of Tasty Thai. She put their lives in real danger over a baseless, hateful and ignorant accusation and defended her stance after evidence to the contrary was provided.

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

False Narrative of Affirmative Action

BY MALIK SIMBA

While teaching at Binghamton University in New York for a number of years and at Fresno State for more than 30 years, the author served on admissions committees at both institutions and was struck at how similarly each regulated which students were admitted to matriculate to fulfill their dreams and which students were rejected for admissions. The regulations had two broad categories, one being the "regular-admit" category and the other being the "special-admit" category.

Regular-admit students were accepted based on raw and objective grade-point average (GPA), whereas special admittance was based on a host of sub-factors, such as age, parental alumni status, unique social talent such as the ability to play the cello and other musical instruments and athletic talent.

Many of these students had low overall GPAs but were admitted based on their unique talent. And this is the conundrum rarely discussed or debated when considering the pros and cons of affirmative action.

As each freshmen class has a limited number of seats available, the central question of law and emotion is, "Who took my seat when I was denied admittance?" However, that question can never be answered given the admittance category of "special admit."

Was a seat given to a white co-ed who is a superb cello player and would add greatly to the university concert or marching band or to the frosh football player, neither of whom passed a high school science or social science course.

Or was a seat given to an old "fart" who was twice rejected for admission. This was the case of 33-year-old Allan Bakke, who applied to the UC Davis medical school in 1978. Bakke claimed race was a special admit category that discriminated against him, and this has become the focal point of the idea of reverse discrimination.

Bakke won his case as the Supreme Court permitted his admittance but said race still could be a factor in regulating who gets in.

In the 2003 Barbara Grutter case at the University of Michigan Law School and the 2015 Abigail Fisher case at the University of Texas–Austin, the answer to the salient question remains unanswered. But Grutter lost her case

when the Supreme Court said race could be used but narrowly, and so did Fisher. In these cases, the Supreme Court said higher-education institutions can use race as a limited and narrow factor in creating a diverse class of students.

However, in the 2003 Jennifer Gratz case the Supreme Court said that quotas are unconstitutional. Bakke, Grutter, Gratz, Fisher and many other white and Asian students claimed "reverse discrimination" based on the idea of equal protection per the 14th Amendment and other foundational statutes of equality of all citizens before the law. This idea led to the formation of the organization Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA).

Nonetheless, the category of special admit is trying to reverse the history of discrimination and put a stop to it by admitting qualified minority students once denied admission. This preferred treatment for minorities, once excluded, to now be included as "special admit" with set-aside seats is driven in a moral sense by white guilt.

Whites' past immoral acts vis-à-vis Black Americans and minorities is the basis for affirmative action. Whites knew then and now know the evils that they perpetrated within past national sins, and the special admit category is a type of "I am sorry."

To understand the false narrative of "which minority" special admit took a seat from a more deserving white or Asian student per the current cases the Supreme Court is reviewing out of Harvard University and the University of North Carolina, one needs to look at the Abigail Fisher case at the University of Texas–Austin.

Fisher, a good student, scored outside the top 10% of her high school class. If she had scored within that 10%, that would have given her automatic admission. However, many white students and minority students scored the same as Fisher but were admitted as special admits.

A white student admitted with the same score as Fisher could have taken her seat. However, white versus white is not a case in law; only white versus Black is what drives race relations law. Now, given the new conservative majority of the Trump appointee Court, and decisions like the *Dobbs* abortion case, the projected rulings on affirmative action will be *muerte*.

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

(Author's note: In the June 2023 issue of the *Community Alliance*, I wrote an essay on the complex relations between Browns and Blacks. I mentioned two organizations that worked together, which were the Black Action Association



The conservative Supreme Court will soon decide about affirmative action, which could affect the possibilities of minorities to access higher education. In the image, one of the buildings of Harvard University. Photo courtesy of The Commons

and the Chicanos for Action. The names of the individuals who helped form these two activist organizations were Kathy Fuller, Charles Darden, Leonard Floyd, Kendell Hogue, Cliff Frazier, Sandy Robinson and Cindy Threlkeld (Black Action Association), and Alberto Duran, Lucille Maravilha and Martin Sern (Chicanos for Action). I believe that comrade workers should always be mentioned and remembered.)



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Improving California Gun Safety

BY JAMES MENDEZ

Gun violence makes all our communities less safe. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, California had the highest firearm death rate in the United States. Over the past 30 years, California showed the country that it is possible to pass gun safety and violence prevention laws.

In doing so, California significantly decreased all gun-related deaths—mass shootings, suicides and homicides. California is now one of the safest states in the United States in regard to gun-related injuries and death.

Numerous studies have shown that harsher punishments, longer incarceration times and the death penalty have not been able to prevent or deter future gun violence.

To decrease gun violence nationwide, on June 8, Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed adding a 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The amendment would enshrine gun safety laws throughout the nation similar to the laws currently in place in California. Numerous polls suggest that the proposed measures are broadly supported by the general public.

Newsom’s 28th Amendment would install these publicly supported laws throughout the nation. The following measures proposed in the amendment are already law in California:

- Raising the federal minimum age to purchase a firearm from 18 to 21
- Mandating universal background checks to prevent truly dangerous people from purchasing a gun that could be used in a crime
- Instituting a reasonable waiting period for all gun purchases
- Barring civilian purchases of assault weapons, which serve no other purpose than to kill as many people as possible in a short amount of time (These are weapons of war our nation’s founders never foresaw.)

The national organization Brady United, along with the state organization Brady of California, advocates for policies and laws that support gun safety and prevent gun violence.

As of June 10, Brady United had not issued a formal response regarding Gov.

Newsom’s 28th Amendment proposal. In the past, the nationwide Brady organization has supported similar measures. The Brady organization works to get results, but the likelihood of passing Newsom’s 28th Amendment in the current political environment is zero.

People are trying to decide if this is another episode of Newsom leading from the front, as he did with gay marriage, or an instance of his grandstanding and self-promoting.

There are basically two ways to amend the U.S. Constitution: two-thirds of both houses in Congress pass the amendment or two-thirds of the state legislatures call for an Article V National Convention to write an amendment. In either case, afterward there would need to be ratification by three-fourths (38) of the state legislatures or by conventions in three-fourths (38) of the states.

Newsom is proposing that the California Assembly and Senate bring forth a resolution for an Article V National Convention to write the 28th Amendment with gun safety proposals.

The U.S. Constitution was written in 1787, ratified in 1788 and has been operable since 1789. Since 1789, there have been more than 11,000 amendments proposed, but only 27 amendments added. Although the chance of passage is low, proposing the 28th Amendment might enhance American consciousness of the ongoing issues of gun safety.

Rather than showboating, the Brady California organization held an Advocacy Week June 5–10. Members of local Brady California chapters held video meetings with their state representatives.

The local Brady chapter, Enough Gun Violence/Brady Greater Fresno (EGV/BGF), is an interfaith, nonpartisan, multiracial, grassroots, volunteer community organization that works to eliminate gun violence. EGV/BGF became a Brady chapter in March 2023.

During Advocacy Week, members of EGV/BGF met electronically with legislators from the Central Valley encouraging them to pass SB 2, SB 241, SB 452, AB 1089 and AB 28. These bills would help to make California’s communities safer.

All these bills have passed in their house of origin and are now in the other house.

SB 2 would revise California’s current concealed carry law to conform to the Supreme Court’s recent decision in the Bruen case. The bill identifies statewide eligibility standards (e.g., training, not at risk of harming self/others) rather than

Enough Gun Violence

Enough Gun Violence/Brady Greater Fresno (EGV/BGF) is hosting a free public information event on recent gun safety bills and how gun violence impacts residents of the greater Fresno area on July 22 at Fresno City College (Skylight Room, Old Administration Building, Room 251). Parking is free on the McKinley Avenue side of the college. Registration is at 2:30 p.m., and the program begins at 3 p.m.

Speakers will discuss issues pertaining to EGV/BGF’s three subgroups of Legislation, Mental Health and Social Disparities. Afterward, there will be information booths from community organizations.

Sign up for the local Brady United chapter (EGV/BGF) using this QR code.



perceived need for an individual to receive a concealed weapons license.

SB 241 addresses training for gun dealers and their employees to prevent illegal sales of guns. All legitimate gun dealers have a federal firearms license, but currently there is minimal training/oversight on preventing illegal sales.

SB 241 would require that firearm retailers and their employees complete regular training created and overseen by the state’s Department of Justice. This training would show gun dealers how to prevent illegal sales, reduce the likelihood of straw purchases and decrease sales to people who seem to be a risk to others or themselves.

The bill should reduce theft and burglary and help keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have guns and thus decrease gun violence.

SB 452 would require all new semiautomatic handguns (whether a new or older model) sold in California to have microstamping technology, which imprints a unique code onto a bullet casing when a gun is fired. That code allows law enforcement to trace a bullet to a specific firearm.

AB 1089 would close a loophole by limiting ghost gun manufacturing using 3D printers. Ghost guns, which have no identification numbers that can be used to trace ownership, are increasingly being used in the commission of crimes.

Due to changes in the law, it is now more difficult to purchase ghost guns. To get around the law, 3D printers are being used to produce ghost guns. AB 1089 would regulate

ghost guns and prohibit unlicensed (and currently unregulated) manufacturers from using 3D printers and milling machines to manufacture ghost guns.

AB 28 would place an 11% excise tax on firearms and ammunition. It would establish the Gun Violence Prevention, Healing and Recovery Fund, which would help California comprehensively respond to the public health, safety and equity crisis of gun violence.

Gun violence is the leading cause of death for American children today. The excise tax would help fund community violence interruption and prevention programs (such as Advance Peace in Fresno), protect and heal survivors, and improve the implementation and coordination of gun violence prevention throughout the state.

Since 2022, the motto of EGV/BGF has been, “You can’t do everything, but you can do something.”

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

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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

WILPF FRESNO SUPPORTS PRIDE

On June 3, we celebrated and supported our LGBTQ+ community by joining Fresno Rainbow Pride's "Qu33r All Year" parade and festival. Leni and I carried our Fresno WILPF banner in the parade on Olive Avenue through the Tower District.

The parade had more than 100 entries, lasting about two hours this year! The festivities continued up the street at the festival, held again outside at Fresno City College, where we had a booth to share info about our branch and offer free ice water, which surprised and pleased so many warm festival attendees.

The festival was bigger than ever, with 200 vendors including schools, banks, churches, community organizations, healthcare, artisans of all types, creative treats and baked goods, clothing, body care and food trucks. Plus entertainment from our local drag queens was offered at the main stage for all to enjoy and in the beer garden, which offered pop-up drag shows and dancing.

It was a good rainbow Pride celebration day, but we also encourage all to celebrate and support our LGBTQ+ community year-round! Standing behind our WILPF values, we express the importance of being an active ally and supporter.

With our country's current climate of phobia, hate and fearmongering against trans folk and drag queens, it's more important than ever to take a stand for justice—to be an ally to help protect against violence and false narratives.

Currently, we support the request that the Fresno City Council add an LGBTQ+ liaison to the Office of Community Affairs. Representation matters and can only come through fair and equal policies and treatment, but it cannot happen when voices are silenced.

We ask all to do what you can to help. Fresno Rainbow Pride, Community Link and Fresno EOC Sanctuary LGBTQ Resource Center are a few places to look for info, to volunteer and/or to support all year.

—Teresa Castillo, Fresno WILPF Branch Chair



The Fresno WILPF booth at the Fresno Pride Festival featured a hydration station. Photo by Teresa Castillo



Fresno WILPF President Teresa Castillo and Secretary Leni Villagomez Reeves marching in the Fresno Pride Parade. Photo by Peter Maiden

FRESNO FREEDOM SCHOOL

Fresno Freedom School was founded by Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr. and Dr. Jean Kennedy, with Maria Else, who has joined the ancestors, essential to its development. Rev. Harris, Freedom School Chair Aline Reed and volunteers, led by Shi Joyce, are keeping the dream alive.

The Fresno Freedom School uses agricultural training, vocational training, educational and cultural enrichment projects, and field trips to teach and reinforce concepts of positive self-identity, respect for nature and appreciation of the contributions of those who've come before us.

The first session of Summer 2023 featured composting and gardening, a class in nutrition with Nutritionist Sarah and a cooking class with Chef Celeste.

This year's schedule: June 10, June 24–July 8, and July 22

Free nutrition, gardening, composting and cooking classes for youth ages 5 and up!

Contact Aline Reed to register or volunteer at 559-470-5172.



Freedom School students with volunteer master gardener Nancy Godwin. Photo by LVR



Rev. Floyd Harris teaches use of a cultivator. Photo by Shi Joyce



Freedom School students ready to learn to cook with Chef Celeste. Photo by Shi Joyce

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.

TEATRO DE LA TIERRA OFFERS FREE MUSIC CLASSES IN JULY



Teatro de la Tierra co-founder and instructor Patricia Wells-Solorzano with students. Photo by Richard Iyall

Would you like to learn to play guitar (or baritone ukelele) and sing? Teatro de la Tierra will be offering free music lessons every Friday in July at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence (1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno). Classes are at 5 p.m., and all ages from 7 to 100 are invited. The first class is July 7! For more information, contact Teatro de la Tierra at 559-485-8558 or visit <https://teatrotierraonline.org>.



Students of all ages learn music with Teatro de la Tierra classes. Photo by LVR

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WILPF MEETING

July 13 (second 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 call-in number. For more information, contact Teresa at taca_03@yahoo.com or Leni at lenivreeves@gmail.com.

STIR IT UP-WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

July 26 (4th Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

UNPACKING RACISM

August 27 (last Sunday), 6:30 p.m. With Dr. Jean Kennedy. To join and get a link, RSVP with your e-mail address to drjeankennedy@yahoo.com or text 559-270-1023. No July meeting. In Cuba with Pastors for Peace Caravan!

WOMEN IN BLACK

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

Climate-Proofing Our Communities

BY KEVIN HALL

“There is no later. This is later.”—*The Road*, Cormac McCarthy, RIP (1933–2023)

The road to preparing communities for climate shocks is narrow and short. It has been mostly destroyed by market-based regulations that have dominated society’s policy response to the crisis since the creation of “emissions trading” in the 1980s; activists following the remaining course must wend their way through inept politicians and status quo profiteers, people seemingly as devoid of concern as the cannibals inhabiting McCarthy’s post-apocalyptic wasteland.

For those struggling to understand why world leaders have failed for generations to face the crisis head on, look no further than local government for insights into human nature. There you will find the same impediments at work—primarily greed and ambition. Oligarchs call the shots and a Professional Managerial Class of courtiers and sycophants carries out their orders, a group first named by Barbara and John Ehrenreich in 1977.

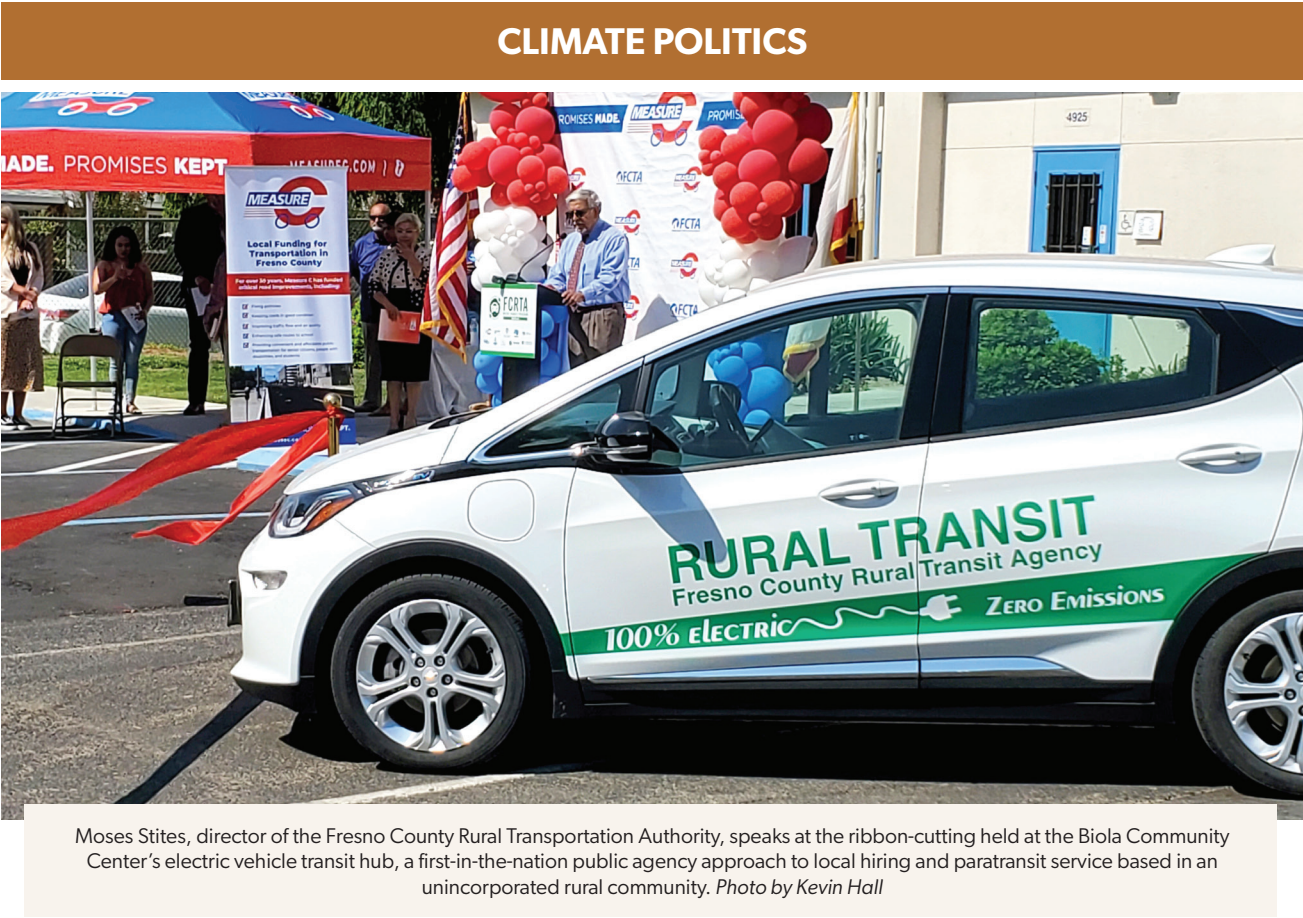
To literally travel that road, take a short drive along Shaw Avenue headed west out of town to the unincorporated farmworker community of Biola. The bright spot comes at the end, a simple, inexpensive project representing a first step in the right direction: the Fresno County Rural Transportation Agency’s Micro Transit Project.

A solar power and storage system isn’t in place yet, nor has the Biola Community Center been upgraded to climate resiliency center status. That’s coming.

What’s being heralded as “first of its kind in the United States” for a public transit agency is the dedicated placement of an electric, five-passenger vehicle at a rural transit hub there to be driven by two local residents hired through a third-party employer, MV Transportation, at least one unit of which in San Jose is represented by the Transport Workers Union of America.

The fledgling, one-car Biola project will rely on a pair of retirees working on a part-time basis. Fully trained and insured, they will be able to provide low-cost rides with one day’s notice; technically, the system is classified as paratransit and is designed to connect stranded residents of all ages with goods and services.

A fully funded countywide system could provide higher levels of service free of charge and place transit hubs in the county’s more than 30 unincorporated communities and 13 rural cities. No other type of transportation project deserves greater priority or higher funding, with one notable exception—needed repairs to the neighborhood roads and sidewalks lining those same neglected and unfinished communities. Both come at a fraction of the cost of wider, faster roads and freeways.



Moses Stites, director of the Fresno County Rural Transportation Authority, speaks at the ribbon-cutting held at the Biola Community Center’s electric vehicle transit hub, a first-in-the-nation public agency approach to local hiring and paratransit service based in an unincorporated rural community. Photo by Kevin Hall

Ironically, at the Biola June 16 ribbon-cutting, officials there to pontificate found shade beneath a Measure C pop-up canopy, created for the November 2022 failed sales tax renewal effort and emblazoned with the empty campaign slogan “promises made, promises kept.” The sales tax renewal campaign was opposed and defeated by a local community-labor coalition specifically because of its cuts to such transit projects and the failure to prioritize electrification and neighborhood road repair.

The road to Biola begins at Highway City where Highway 99 dips below Shaw Avenue. In 1960, the new freeway alignment split the community, originally named Biola Junction, down the middle. High-speed rail has gouged another cut in recent years. The freeway interchange there hasn’t been improved in decades; less than a mile back, the railroad tracks cut directly across Shaw Avenue. Long delays in both areas are daily problems.

Yet, saying that Shaw Avenue was Caltrans’ problem, the Measure C-created Fresno County Transportation Authority instead prioritized construction of a new \$140 million freeway interchange and railroad crossing at Veterans Boulevard between Shaw and Herndon avenues, connecting Golden State Boulevard east of the tracks to the sprawl subdivisions of single-family residential homes in quarter-mile-long, walled compounds connected by high-speed surface streets.

Growing in leapfrog fashion, the sales tax renewal proposal defeated by voters would have prioritized

widening a grid of major arterials throughout this vast growth area west of Highway 99 at taxpayers’ expense, calling them “gap” roads.

Intermittent subdivision construction sites pop up along Shaw; signs point to others to the north and south. Nothing new or transformative is being done here. While little Biola, population 1,600, starts to turn the corner, half a million strong Fresno’s age-old growth pattern of car-dependent growth spread thinly across the countryside continues unabated and developers’ demand for road subsidies grows louder.

A climate-proof community will be able to provide shelter, energy, water, heating, cooling, communication, transportation and food distribution at the neighborhood level, primarily through community centers and schools equipped to operate autonomously during crises. Basic transit infrastructure must also include public restrooms available to all.

The coming second round of debates over the pair of transportation sales tax renewals defeated last year, Measure C in Fresno County and Measure T in Madera County, are the local frontline in the fight for climate resiliency. They won’t be back on the ballot until 2026; advocates have opened a window for community engagement and debate. It’s time to act.

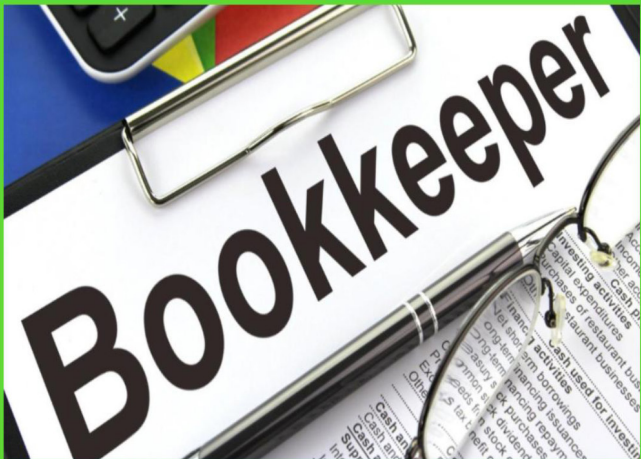
Kevin Hall hosts Climate Politics on KFCF 88.1 FM every second and fourth Friday, 5 p.m.–6 p.m. He tweets as @airfresno and @sjvalleyclimate, coordinates an informal network of climate activists at valleyclimate.org and can be contacted at sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com for presentations and information.

Green Raiteros Program

The idea to enhance public transportation in rural communities by using cars driven by locals—mainly retirees—started in Huron before the pandemic. Traditionally, in most rural communities people need to travel to bigger cities for medical appointments. And in many cases, they need—and pay—for the *raite*. (The term *raite* is common in Mexico and means to take someone by car. Among farmworkers, to have a *raite* means to have transportation to work, to the fields. And as often happens, the *raite* is shared by more than one person going to a medical appointment or to a similar task.)

Huron’s mayor, Ray León, pushed the idea to use the city’s vehicles and later to use green cars, or hybrids. Huron’s paid *raites* got a strong lift with grants and the support of some corporations, like General Motors, which in 2021 provided three electric cars for six months to support the program called “Raiteros” (*raiteros* are the drivers). Check the *Community Alliance* coverage of this story in our September 2021 edition.

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Thousands Participate in Pride Parade

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

On June 3, thousands of local residents attended the 33rd Fresno Pride Parade on the streets of Fresno’s Tower District. After the parade, people enjoyed a related event at Fresno City College. Vendors, artists and food trucks were featured at the event.

The parade marked the beginning of a month-long celebration with several flag-raising ceremonies, including at Fresno State, Fresno City College and Clovis College.

This year’s celebration was the largest ever with 100 parade entries. The theme was “Qu33r All Year.”

Assembly Member Esmeralda Soria (D-Fresno) and Fresno City Council Member Annalisa Perea were among the grand marshals. Perea is the first openly gay member of the City Council. Other lawmakers who participated were Council Members Miguel Arias, Luis Chávez, Tyler Maxwell and Nelson Esparza; Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno); and Assembly Member Joaquín Arámbula (D-Fresno).

Community colleges from several Central Valley cities, as well as some churches, businesses and organizations, were well represented. This strong support for our LGBTQ+ communities comes in a year in which several Republican-controlled states have passed, or plan to pass, bills suppressing basic rights for these communities—as well as bills aiming to suppress women’s rights and voting rights.



The rowdy contingent of The Source LGBT+ Center.

Photos by Peter Maiden



Having a good time waiting for the parade to start.



A woman in rainbow colors, with her pup.



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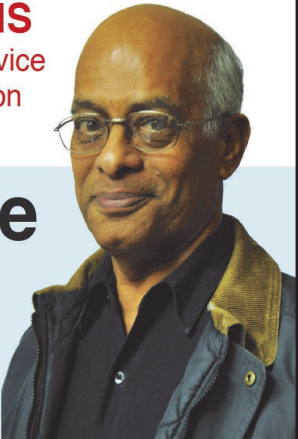
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Celebrating Juneteenth in Madera

BY JOHN TIPTON

About 100 people, including many local officials, turned out on June 19 for the third annual Juneteenth celebration at Courthouse Park in Madera. Black Saints United and the City of Madera, with support from the Madera chapter of the NAACP, sponsored the event. Longtime Madera County resident Barbara Faye Nelson was recognized as this year’s Trailblazer.

Juneteenth is celebrated every year on or about June 19 to commemorate the end of the American Civil War and freedom for the former slaves. It was proclaimed by Union General Gordon Granger in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, two months after the war officially ended—a fact the slaves in Texas were unaware of until then and that the slave owners claimed they didn’t know.

The proclamation also occurred more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation made by President Abraham Lincoln, which officially freed slaves liberated in the rebellious Confederate states, though not at the time in the border states that remained loyal to the Union.

More than 12 million Africans were enslaved and transported to America between 1825 and 1866. Enslaved Africans were also shipped to the rest of the continent.

Photos by John Tipton



Attendees at the Juneteenth event in Madera



Donte McDanials plays a traditional African drum as the African Drum Corp of Fresno entertained the crowd at Madera’s Juneteenth event.



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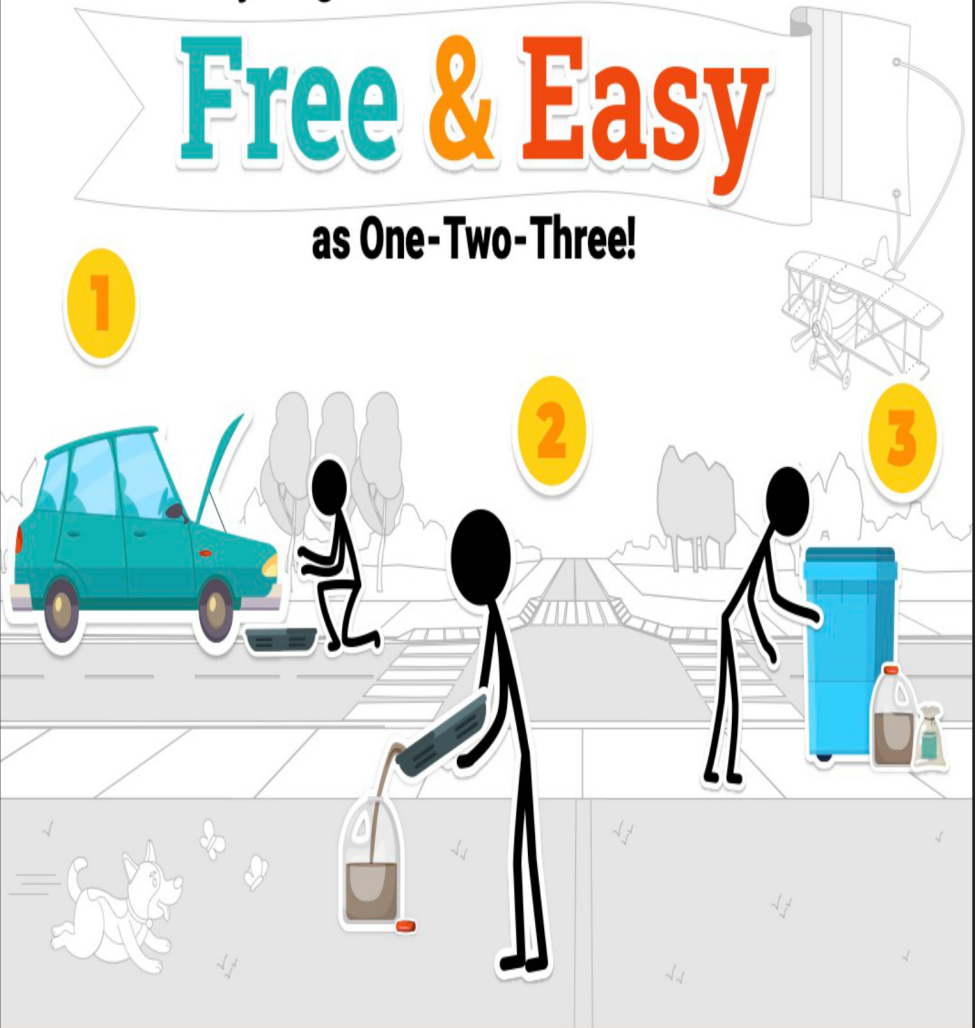
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How the “Cellephant” Controls Instructional Time

BY STEVEN ROESCH

One Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) teacher calls it the “cellephant.”

For a significant number of middle and high school students in FUSD, attending classes regularly involves slipping into a digital world for a major chunk of instructional time. The problem of the cellephant has become entrenched over the past several years, and—as has happened in many other districts—FUSD hasn’t yet gotten it under control.

About 20 years ago, FUSD’s leadership initiated a single district-wide policy, one that imposed consequences for students who were using “communication devices” inappropriately on school grounds. Over time, however, that policy lapsed, and now, according to a district spokesperson, site administrators are allowed to determine for themselves how this issue should be dealt with.

Some sites, notably Bullard High School, have attempted to rein in phone use and made some headway. Others have opted for a relatively lax approach to digital misbehavior. In some classrooms, teachers just look the other way and ignore the issue completely.

However, evidence pointing to the dangers of excessive exposure to digital media—including social media and “games”—has been mounting.

Last year, CalMatters reported that researchers at a nonprofit cobbled together profiles on TikTok in which they pretended to be 13-year-old girls. The content that began to appear for their fake profiles included videos about eating disorders and body image. TikTok even “recommended suicide content within 2.6 minutes and eating disorder content within 8 minutes.”

Catering to young digital users has proved to be highly profitable.

BBC reporters have documented how computer games tempt children to spend money online.

In one case, a youngster shelled out \$200 within days while playing Roblox. And those playing World of Tanks, for example, are prompted to upgrade their weapons using PlayStation credit.

Many gaming firms rake in a lot of their profits with the help of these “microtransactions”; in fact, that’s a key part of their business model. Younger gamers can be particularly susceptible to this type of manipulation.

To make things even more profitable, some companies employ “obfuscation techniques”—such as currencies established within games—to make it more difficult to figure out how much you’re actually forking over.

Joel Bakan examined the strategies of child marketing at length in his book *Childhood Under Siege*. He observes that “having discovered that manipulating children’s deep emotions is a formula for success, kid marketeers push that formula as far as they can, doing whatever it takes without apparent constraint or concern, to work the emotions of youth into profit.

“It is this dynamic...that drives them to ramp up media violence, cultivate addiction, cynicallyexploitsocialnetworkfriendships,sexualizegirlsandpromotehyperconsumerism.”

Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, the U.S. surgeon general, weighed in on this topic recently. On May 23, he issued a public advisory that warns about the risks that social media pose for the young.

According to his findings, “95% of teens reported that they used at least one social media platform—and more than a third said that they used social media ‘almost constantly.’ Such digital habits could lead to significant changes in the developing brain—specifically to the amygdala and prefrontal cortex.”

This is especially troubling because, as Dr. Murthy pointed out in a *New York Times* interview, “adolescents are not just smaller adults...They’re in a different phase of development, and they’re in a critical phase of brain development.”

He called on policymakers, parents and others to “urgently take action” to safeguard against such possible risks.

Many school districts have already stepped up to the plate and gone to the courts.

In January, Seattle Public Schools became the first district to file a lawsuit against social media companies. It wasn’t alone for long.



The Fresno Unified School District hasn’t yet controlled the use of cellphones during instructional time. Photo by Carissa Rogers/The Commons

On March 13, the San Mateo County School Board filed a federal lawsuit that similarly targeted social media giants like YouTube and TikTok, arguing that their products and algorithms have led to increased anxiety, bullying and depression among young users.

The San Mateo lawsuit represents 23 school districts. So far, 60 school districts in the United States have filed lawsuits aimed at social media behemoths.

It appears to be high time for all schools to take robust action about this situation, in particular, districts such as FUSD, which have introduced programs to promote students’ social and emotional well-being.

Over the past few years, the learning loss that arose due to Covid-19 has received much attention and rightly so. What also urgently needs to be addressed, however, is the learning loss that emerges cumulatively through nonacademic phone use in classrooms.

Filing lawsuits is one way to confront the cellephant, but that approach has a downside: Its benefits most likely won’t be felt for quite a while.

More immediate action could also be taken.

The Bullard model—distributing Yondr locking pouches to students—could be implemented at middle schools and high schools throughout the district. Students at Bullard are instructed to place their phones inside the pouches at the start of the school day and keep them there throughout the school day.

Reports about the effectiveness of this initiative have been mixed but, as one instructor there put it, “I rarely see a phone out in class and that’s the issue we were really trying to solve.”

What else could be done to tame the cellephant in the short term?

“Perhaps the district should really look into blocking the free WiFi access for all but district-approved devices,” another FUSD teacher suggests.

“Maybe that would slow some students down depending on the power of their plan. At present we are...subsidizing poor behavior with universal WiFi availability.”

Ray Bradbury’s “The Murderer,” a story that first appeared in the early 1950s, depicts a world in which inhabitants are swamped with messages from omnipresent devices. Their lives are no longer their own; they’ve been co-opted by technical advances that have gotten out of control.

Nowadays, that message sounds eerily prescient. Yet, even Bradbury failed to foresee the myriad ways in which the young—and, indeed, all of us—can be manipulated and exploited by digital gadgets and the forces that lie behind them.

Steven Roesch is a retired bilingual teacher who’s lived in Fresno since 1985. Contact him at stevenroesch12@comcast.net.

The War on Culture, the War on Cuba

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

As almost everyone knows, for more than 60 years the United States has maintained a blockade of Cuba that encompasses financial, economic and trade transactions. It’s not simply an “embargo” because the United States does its best, which is considerable, to force it on other countries as well.

An additional focus has been added recently: an open war on culture. Artists, musicians and writers who support the Cuban Revolutionary Project have been attacked by right-wing forces, who have made an attempt to silence them, to blockade Cuban music and poetry so that it cannot be heard outside the island itself.

The most recent attack was on Afro-Cuban poet Nancy Morejón. She was invited to be honorary president of the 2023 Poetry Market in Paris. An organized attack led by Jacobo Machover, a leader of the European Association Cuba Libre, amazingly led to the event organizers withdrawing their invitation to Morejón.

It’s unclear whether this was done as a response to information about Morejón—one of the main accusations was that she edits *Unión*, the magazine of the Cuban Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC)—or whether they simply feared right-wing violence.

Machover’s activities with the European Association Cuba Libre included signing a declaration, together with organization president Laurent Muller, proclaiming support for and solidarity with the gasoline bombing of the Cuban Embassy in Paris on July 26, 2021. This lets us know Machover’s positions: in favor of bombings and against publications by a cultural workers’ union.

Who is Nancy Morejón? She is the best-known living Cuban poet.

Born in 1944 in Havana of working-class Afro-Cuban parents, Morejón graduated from the University of Havana where she studied Caribbean and French literature.

Morejón has received Cuba’s Critic’s Prize (1986) and National Award for Literature (2001). She has collaborated with prominent musicians, playwrights and actors, and extended her artistic talents into the visual arts. She directs the Caribbean Studies Center’s Casa de las Américas in Havana, and edits and publishes the periodical *Unión* for the UNEAC.

Morejón’s work addresses contemporary issues of ethnicity, gender, history, politics and Afro-Cuban identity. Her poems stand as vibrant reflections on the mix of Spanish and African cultures in Cuba, what it means to be a child of both traditions, and how the bright threads of this heritage are part of the greater web of the African experience in the Americas.

Somehow she doesn’t pass the white male right-wing test of ideological purity so they want to block her invitation to preside over the Poetry Market in Paris?

This sounds like exactly the same people who want to make sure that people cannot read Black history, Chicano history or books about LGBTQ+ folks right here in the United States. According to Pen America, 41% of banned books involve the LGBTQ+ community and 40% include “characters of color.”

When libraries resist censorship, right-wing legislators attempt to defund and close the libraries. Recent examples include the legislative attempts to do this to all libraries in Missouri, in Llano County, Texas, and the closure of the library in Jamestown, Mich.

The threat of violence is also always present—libraries were closed due to “credible bomb threats” in all of Hawaii, along with Denver, Nashville, Salt Lake City, Boston, Fort Worth and other cities and towns in what appears to have



Nancy Morejón in the garden of the Union of Writers and Artists building in Havana. Photo by Leni Villagomez Reeves

been a widespread organized campaign in September 2022.

In March 2023, the American Library Association felt the need to issue a statement: “The American Library Association (ALA) condemns—in the strongest terms possible—the violence, threats of violence and other acts of intimidation that are increasingly taking place in America’s libraries, including last week’s bomb threats.”

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

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SIERRA CLUB

TEHIPITE CHAPTER

ATTENTION, FOREST ADVOCATES:

The Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter in Fresno is preparing to file a lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service to halt a proposed logging project in a the Nelder grove of Giant Sequoia Trees in the Sierra National Forest. The project area is located just south of Yosemite National Park. This so-called "emergency" logging project (hardly an emergency, given that the forest is emerging from ten feet of snow this past winter). It would, however, if the Forest Service succeeds in its plan, evade a legally required 2- to 5-year environmental review under the federal National Environmental Protection Act.

If you are concerned about this abuse of our environmental laws and want to be kept informed about our lawsuit, contact Gary Lasky at the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter at tehipite.chapter@sierraclub.org or 559-790-3495.

By Chad Hanson, Ph.D. Director and Principal Ecologist The John Muir Project
The Sierra National Forest is implementing a huge commercial logging project in the Nelder Grove of Giant Sequoia Trees (see Gigantea Fuels Reduction and Restoration Project, at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/sierra/?project=63529>). The agency began a portion of the logging last fall, without first allowing any public comment or conducting environmental analysis, claiming that an "emergency exemption" from the National Environmental Policy Act allowed them to do this, ostensibly to protect mature sequoias from wildfire. No meaningful explanation was included to defend the "emergency" claim, especially since the Grove recently experienced a mixed-intensity fire when the Railroad fire spread through nearly all of the Grove in 2017, and potential for another fire remains low.

The Forest Service's 1,432-acre logging project includes commercial "thinning" of live, mature trees up to 20 inches in diameter in the low/moderate-intensity fire areas, and post-fire logging and clearcutting of ecologically-important snags (standing dead trees) in the high-intensity fire areas. The Forest Service plans to sell the live trees to logging companies for lumber, and plans to sell snags to logging companies to burn for energy production at biomass facilities that emit large amounts of carbon and pollute the air of adjacent environmental justice communities. The Forest Service would keep the revenue for its budget.

There are numerous major problems with this logging plan. Among them is the fact that the Forest Service claims there is a need for "reforestation" of sequoias in the high-intensity fire patches. However, detailed field surveys by independent scientists has found abundant natural post-fire sequoia regeneration in these high-intensity fire patches in the Nelder Grove, in the places where no post-fire logging has occurred yet, but over 80% mortality of giant sequoia seedlings and saplings where post-fire logging has already been conducted. The logging machinery is crushing and killing the young, new sequoia trees that the Forest Service falsely claims does not exist. Sequoia seedlings are being cut along with snags, and bulldozed into giant piles, waiting to be hauled away to biomass energy facilities.

In addition, a large and growing body of the Forest Service's own science is directly contradicting

the agency's claims about logging as a wildfire management approach. For example, regarding post-fire logging and tree planting, Forest Service scientists concluded: "Areas that were salvage-logged and planted after the initial fire burned more severely than comparable unmanaged areas . . ." (<https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.0700229104>).

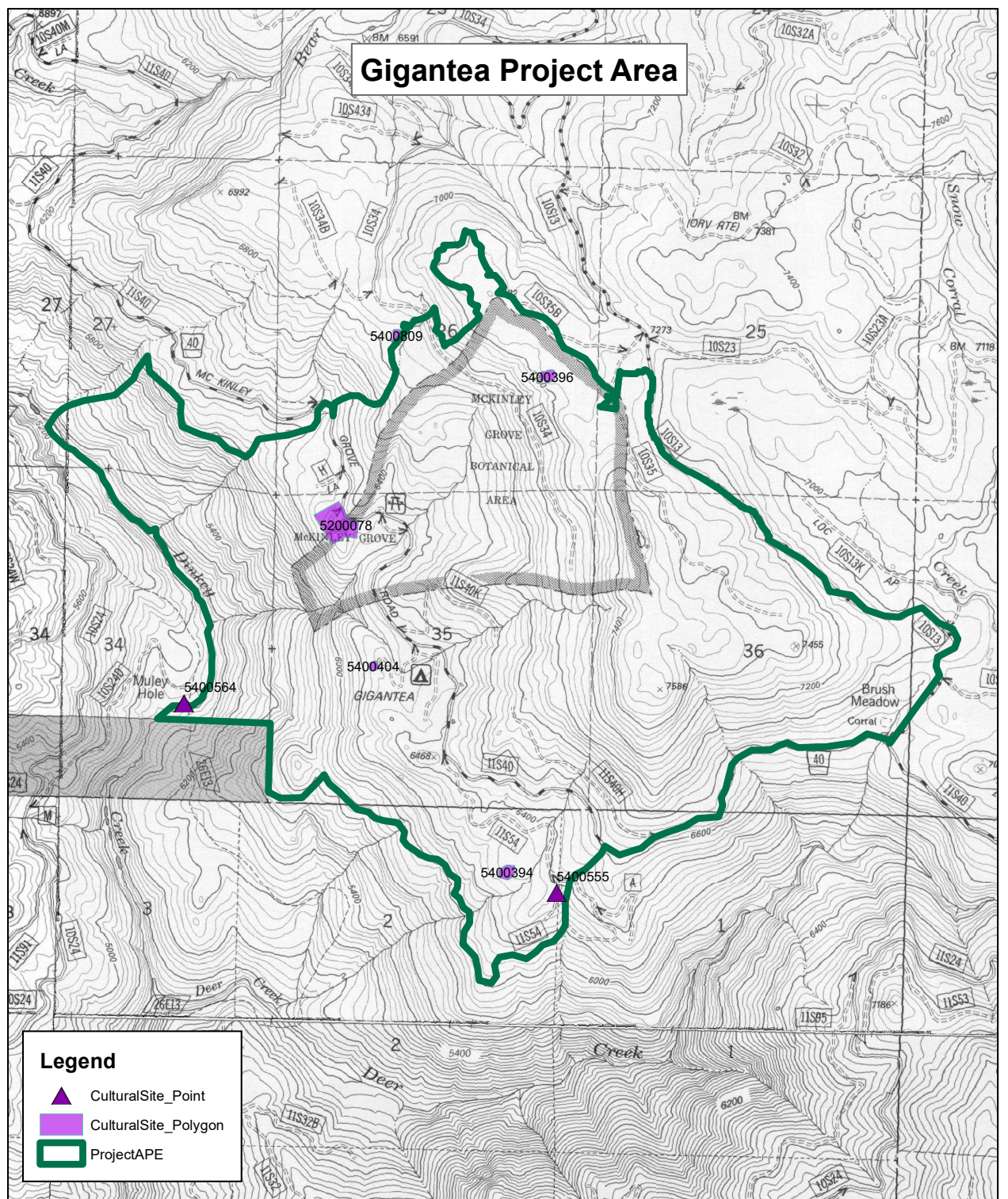
And, in a huge 30-year analysis of wildfires, Forest Service scientists recently concluded: "More open forests with lower biomass had higher fire severity, because the type of open, lower-biomass forests resulting from thinning and other logging activities have 'hotter, drier, and windier microclimates, and those conditions decrease dramatically over relatively short distances into the interior of older forests with multi-layer canopies and high tree density . . .'" (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s42408-021-00118-z>).

National Forests were established for the public good and include most of the nation's remaining examples of intact forests. Out National Forests are a wellspring of clean water for millions of Americans, a legacy for wildlife, sequester vast quantities of carbon important in climate change

mitigation, and provide recreation and economic opportunities to rural communities if responsibly managed. Thought it may seem at first glance that a post-fire landscape is a catastrophe, numerous scientific studies tell us that even in the patches where forest fires burn most intensely, the resulting wildfire habitats are among the most ecologically diverse on western forestlands and are essential to support the full richness of forest biodiversity.

Post-fire renewal of the forest, known as "snag forest," is quite simply some of the best wildlife habitat in forests, and is an essential stage of natural processes that eventually becomes old-growth forest over time. This unique habitat is not mimicked by clearcut logging, as the Forest Service incorrectly has suggested at times.

After a fire, the new forest is particularly vulnerable to logging disturbances that can set back the forest renewal process for decades. Post-fire logging has been shown to eliminate habitat for many bird species that depend on snags. It compacts soils, removes biological habitat (snags and downed logs) essential for new forest growth, and spreads invasive species that increase the flammability of the new forest. While it is often claimed that such logging is needed to restore conifer growth and lower fuel hazards after a fire, many studies have shown that logging tractors often kill most conifer seedlings and other important vegetation and actually increases flammable logging slash left on site. Increased chronic sedimentation to streams due to the extensive road network and runoff from logging on steep slopes degrades aquatic organisms and water quality.



San Quentin Plantation Paradigm

BY DONALD RAY YOUNG

Using the Norwegian model as a template, San Quentin State Prison wants to be the model gulag for California, the nation and beyond. This comes with a sticker price of \$380 million, which was rejected by the state legislators. San Quentin is the oldest prison in California. Abolition is the answer. Changing the name to San Quentin Rehabilitation Center? Building a better plantation has never been a good position for Black people in America. If we're truly transforming prisons in California, let's transform them into extinction. A transformed prison is still a plantation.

Our most difficult and urgent challenge to date is that of creatively exploring new terrains of justice where the prison no longer serves as our major anchor.

—Angela Davis

If we can't abolish prisons, we must chip away at the Prison Industrial Complex. Governor Gavin Newsom's prison reform is more politically courageous than his predecessors. Dismantling San Quentin's death chamber and placing a moratorium on all executions is evolutionary. Making calls free for California prisoners is progress.

Positive reform must equal permanent reform; political winds fluctuate. We must advocate against wrongful convictions and for the human rights of incarcerated people.

If the 95,000 California state prisoners could vote like Norwegian prisoners, that would be transformative. We must reform society as well. Systematic racism saturates every segment of America. This includes the very criminal justice system that populates prisons.

Reimagine what real prison reform looks like in 2023. Is it this tablet with free calling, to connect with invisible friends and family, who've moved on over the decades? What is the plan for ending custody staff's toxic culture of systematic racism, violence and abuse? Overseeing the overseers and correcting the correctional officers, that's evolutionary.

San Quentin does not provide safe drinking water for prisoners. Recycled sewage water pushes through these 1852 pipes—staff buy bottled water. Non-contaminated drinking water is a basic human necessity.

As a few of the 34 state prisons slowly close across California, the prison budget continues to grow. The entities and individuals who feast on the prison economy will resist true prison reform—this is their cash cow. We don't need pretty prisons, we need less incarceration. Let's invest in people, not in prisons.

When one of two state prisons in Susanville was slated for closure, the town protested. They sued to stay in bed with the Prison Industrial Complex. They lost. Sectors of society in California subsist off this plantation economy. We can't have real reform when prisons are viewed as profit-making mechanisms.

Prisons in the United States stem from slave plantations. Humane plantations and perfect prisons don't exist. Racism is at the heart of American prisons. Slavery continues to be legal in prisons pursuant to the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.

VOICES FROM PRISON



San Quentin prison in 2005. Photo courtesy of The Commons

Over-incarceration of Black and Brown bodies fills these inhumane spaces. At 2.3 million, America cages 25% of the world's prisoners with only 4.4% of the world's population. The United States is No. 1 in mass incarceration.

The last of us, 500 death row prisoners, must have disappeared from San Quentin Rehabilitation Center this year. This transition helps justify the new name and cleanse the death row stigma. And there is the irony of having death sentence prisoners at your "California Model—that will lead the nation."

The Norwegian model works for Norway, as it should. Norwegian prison guards are actually trained in social work and psychology. California prison guards only need a high school diploma. Norway doesn't have the death penalty, LWOP (life without parole) or life sentences. And Norwegian prisoners are mostly Caucasian.

In America, we start with a stolen continent, genocide, enslavement and Jim Crow laws. We are legally less than humans. History and culture cannot be erased. This is not Norway.

We've all been acculturated into accepting the inevitability of wrongful convictions, unfair sentences, racial bias and racial disparities, and discrimination against the poor.

—Bryan Stevenson

I've suffered for 26 years of wrongful incarceration. Where's the transformation for this trauma? Will it be included in the next gulag reform package? Squatting on this concrete couch, struggling for freedom and abolition, I am making the best out of a wrongful conviction. I've earned my paralegal degree along with five associate degrees. Imagine eradicating wrongful convictions and allowing that to be the California Model for the nation to follow.

Donald Ray Young has been an incarcerated person for three decades. He obtained a paralegal degree and is currently studying law with the purpose to fight for his exoneration.

Unprecedented Crime, Unprecedented Indictment

BY RUTH GADEBUSCH

And more to come! Yes, I know a basic principle in our nation is innocent until proven guilty; however, this ex-President has given us the evidence many times over.

He with the "big mouth" is his own worst enemy. He has no stop switch, no restraint, as he just keeps bragging without regard to self-restraint, morals or law while his lawyers clinch their teeth.

As this is written, the ex-President, set to report to a Miami court soon, appears to be without adequate defense lawyers. I am just cynical enough to wonder if delaying the trial while new lawyers get updated isn't part of his tactic.

This entire situation continues to be devoid of any ethics on his part. For that matter, he has previously counted as allies some rather questionable lawyers, such as an ex-mayor of New York City, perhaps with neither competence or ethics.

It isn't all bad news for him. With the "luck of the Irish," a bizarre judicial assignment has designated a Trump appointee known for tilted opinions as the presiding judge for this particular trial. We all know many do not have "recuse" for conflict of interest in their vocabulary. Wow!

This ex-President needs to also be told that it is no defense to accuse another as being worse in similar law breaking. In this case, a President known for his ethics also failed to properly protect top secret security papers. The vast difference is that the current President immediately turned over the nation's property to officials for proper storage, whereas the ex-President used all manner of deceit to hide and retain the materials.

That is not to excuse the current President or anyone else for such lighthearted treatment of information valuable to an enemy. It matters not if intentional or just careless—the damage is done.

Being in the general age category of these men and a former naval officer serving in code/cryptography security, it is incomprehensible to me how relaxed they were in handling these papers. After all, we came to maturity in the age of "loose lips sink ships."

Today, when we have much more horrible weapons, a sad but necessary turn of events, even more is at stake. Relatively recently, I have recognized the fruition of deeply buried operations that were mere hints in my day even to those of us with top secret clearance.

It might have been seven decades ago, but I am still completely engrossed in the sanctity of military secrets. We can talk about enlightenment, an open society, all we want, but there are still some things that must be protected. There is nothing pleasant about war, and preparation remains the best defense on a planet populated with people many of whom are not endowed with good intentions of sharing the planet's resources.

Alas, power would seem to be the guiding star for many and unfortunately this ex-President is well-endowed with the idea. I can only include his many Republican supporters. No one has ever seized power alone. It requires assistance.

It is a mystery to me how so many who should know better—like an appreciation of our society of democracy and laws and even compromise—continue to jump on his bandwagon. They are dancing on the head of a pin at the expense of the nation as they continue to support him either by voice or silence.

Unlimited power means "my way or the highway," and there is little trust between such cohorts involved. They dare not trust each other for each feels they alone should be in control ready to pounce on any opportunity to take over as the lead dog. If nothing else, we should learn from this current situation with this ex-President having used the marvels of technological communication to influence so many who fail to appreciate what a great institution our forefathers developed in our Constitution.

ONE WOMAN'S VIEW

We often note that our government is meant to protect justice for all. We are usually thinking in terms of the behavior of those lower in the scheme of things being punished while the powerful get a pass. This time, it must apply to the powerful.

We must not let this ex-President escape justice. I recognize the fear that his MAGA minions with no concept of the truth will continue to be troublemakers, but we cannot allow them to prevail.

Going after this ex-President is necessary. The evidence is incontrovertible, so much so that an impartial jury will be difficult or impossible. Judgment regarding the evidence will have to suffice. The future of the nation is hitting us in the face.

We either seize the opportunity to live up to our morals, our responsibilities, our laws or the promise of the greatest nation on Earth disappears just as we are learning more and more about our origins and possibilities as we drill into the core, explore space, consider the interactions for climate change and such for this little ball.

That is our choice. Just because the actions of this ex-President are unprecedented does not mean it is wrong to indict. Considering what we know it would be far more wrong not to prosecute.

Nor is it political. Special prosecutors are not unique. Just ask one recent President, whose offense was more a personal moral offense than constitutional, about that. This latest ex-President has managed to involve himself in both aspects.

Prosecution is exactly what should be done. The only question is why has it taken so long. What more evidence do we need? Where are the responsible members of the Grand Old Party? Where have we failed to teach civic knowledge? If not now, when? If not us, who?

Misbehavior demands prosecution. The evidence demands conviction. High office is no excuse. We can do better. At a minimum, we must enforce our Constitution with its prohibition of anyone who has participated in insurrection not serving in public office.

We can do better. We must do better.

Ruth Gadebusch, a former naval officer, is a community activist having served as a trustee of the Fresno Unified School District, a governor's appointee on the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the Board of the Center for Civic Education and other community organizations such as the Women's Symphony League, the YWCA, the American Association of University Women, the PTA and the National Women's Political Caucus, and remaining active in a local senior living facility.

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Jack Ortega: Friend, Mentor, Organizer (1929–2023)

BY STAN SANTOS

Jack Ortega was born in Los Angeles on Dec. 7, 1929. He graduated from St. Joseph’s Catholic High School in Alameda and went into the U.S. Army, serving in the Korean War as an artillery observer. After his military service, and long before the birth of the Chicano movement, Ortega began a life of community work, supporting causes in predominantly poor, Spanish-speaking and working-class communities. He would join the stream of Chicano consciousness and activism that began after World War II, when Mexican American veterans decided to fight for “their place at the table.”

This coalesced around the G.I. Forum, which was founded in 1945, and later, the Community Services Organization (CSO) headed by Edward Roybal in 1947. A Mexican labor activist, Bert Corona, led the CSO in Oakland, Herman Gallegos in San Francisco, a then unknown Cesar Chavez began organizing in San Jose and Hector Abeytia in Fresno County.

Ortega was eventually hired by Alameda County Legal Services where he met the famed “Brown Buffalo,” attorney Oscar Zeta Acosta, of the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund. It was during the 1960s’ awakening of “the sleeping giant” that Ortega encountered, or perhaps was discovered by, Corona, and Armando Rodriguez of Fresno, and they would become his lifelong friends.

Also, during that time Ortega, Corona and Rodriguez came together with leaders of the G.I. Forum and the CSO and concluded that the Democratic Party was not representing or promoting Latinos. In 1960, they met in Fresno and founded the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) and elected Roybal as the first president; he would go on to be the first Latino elected to Congress since the early days of California. Dolores Huerta and Gallegos coordinated the Viva Kennedy campaign in California and, in 1960, John F. Kennedy would be elected President of the United States.

The Fresno MAPA became the largest and most active chapter in the San Joaquin Valley and brought together formidable community leaders, including Armando Rodriguez and Bettie Rodriguez, Theresa Perez, Maria Rodriguez, Esteban Santos, David Arredondo, Angie Cisneros, Jess Quintero, Frank Quintana, Albert Ramirez, Josie Mena, David and Dollie Arredondo, Sal Salcedo, Al Molina, Maria Hurtado and Julia Balderas to name a few.

Ortega was always at the center of activities or hustling between Fresno and Sacramento. By 1964, he and Abeytia had organized MAPA chapters in Madera, Firebaugh, Hanford, Visalia, Sanger, Reedley, Porterville, Hollister, Modesto and Watsonville. Civil rights lawyer Cruz Reynoso organized MAPA in Imperial County, and MAPA won elections in Selma, Sanger and Mendota.

In 1966, they teamed up to help Jim Lorenz and Gary Bellow launch California Rural Legal Assistance. Cruz Reynoso would become the director and Armando Rodriguez would open the Madera office.

In 1968, Corona introduced Ortega to Bobby Kennedy. During the uncertain days of the early primaries, Ortega was sent to Indiana “with a bag of clothes and a box of Viva Kennedy stickers” to mobilize the Latino vote. He organized a rally in a large basketball auditorium, and when Kennedy arrived, he was mobbed by throngs of Mexican Americans and Latinos in one of the largest shows of support of the campaign.

On June 6, 1968, Chavez, Huerta and Corona were getting out the vote in the Los Angeles barrios. Ortega was back home in Fresno and watched Kennedy on television as he delivered his victory speech. Ortega would never forget the deep sadness he felt when Robert Kennedy and the hopes and dreams of the Latino community were struck down by an assassin’s bullet.

But MAPA remained undeterred in fulfilling its main mission of political empowerment through voter registration, candidate development and getting out the vote. MAPA was instrumental in electing Al Villa to the Fresno City Council and Bob Arroyo to the Fresno Unified School District board. Reynoso would eventually rise to associate justice of the Supreme Court of California, and Armando Rodriguez would become a Fresno County supervisor and then a Superior Court Judge. For many years, Ortega pioneered as the only



Jack Ortega (center) with Lourdes Oliva (left) and Huron Mayor Ray León during a tour of Huron on Nov. 28, 2017. Photo by Lourdes Oliva

lobbyist for Chicano candidates and causes in Sacramento out of his headquarters, known as the “Brown House.”

Throughout his life, Ortega was involved in all kinds of issues and actions, such as the strikes at the Partex auto parts assembly plant in southeast Fresno and the Livingston Foster Farms poultry plant. Foster Farms would subsequently be organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers and in later years by the United Farm Workers. Ortega was always calculating, planning and organizing.

Between 1970 and 1980, Ortega engaged in economic development on the Mexican border. He was the project director for the 60-acre Calexico Industrial Park. The development would provide business opportunities and jobs to residents of Calexico and the surrounding communities for many years to come.

It is a challenge to characterize Ortega or tell his story: He never ran for political office or sought notoriety for his achievements. And his achievements and the relationships that he built were far too many to capture in this statement. It is sufficient to say that his life was part of the story of California: a dialectical relationship with history and the environment of racism, reaction and social progress.

Later in life, Ortega would continue his work in the Canal District of San Rafael for another 40 years where he organized day laborers from Mexico and Central America. In 2017, Ortega and his spouse, Maria, returned to Fresno where he would celebrate his 93rd birthday in 2022. He continued to appear at meetings of elected bodies, forums and protests.

Ortega’s journey was one of constant struggle and the sacrifice of his time and life energy in the service of poor and working-class communities. Everywhere he went, he challenged the power structure with compassion and strategic thinking to lift the people. He mentored and developed hundreds of individuals who would go on to become leaders, providing a multiplier effect beyond the capacity of many of the men and women of his time.

In his last days, Maria recalls hearing him on numerous occasions repeat, “Tiger, tiger, burning bright, in the forests of the night...” Ortega has gone with the other giants of his times to join the ancestors. But his light will shine, guiding the way, for many generations to come.

Stan Santos is an activist in the immigrant and labor community. Contact him at comworkeradvocate@gmail.com.

Central Valley Fuego in June

BY PETER MAIDEN

Fuego FC lost to the Richmond Kickers 2-1 in a June 10 game. Richmond was third in the standings, and Fuego FC was working its way up from the bottom. Fuego FC had a lot of chances and led Richmond 1-0 for a short while. But then Emiliano Terzaghi scored twice for Richmond, once with a successful shot on goal and then with a penalty kick.

Billy Forbes, a player new to Fuego, came on the field after the penalty as a substitute forward. He quickly made a couple of aggressive plays, but after eight minutes on the field, he fouled Richmond goalie Akira Fitzgerald. Forbes made a high kick and struck Fitzgerald above the left eye with a cleat. Fitzgerald lay on the ground for 12 minutes as medical staff treated a cut above his left eye that was bleeding a great deal. He was replaced with a backup goalie. Forbes was shown the red card for the foul.



Villyan Bijev of Fuego FC competes with the Richmond Kickers’ Nil Vinyals for the ball. Photo by Peter Maiden

On June 17, Fuego FC lost 1-0 to Greenville (South Carolina) Triumph SC. The Greenville goal was unexpected—it was scored in the last 60 seconds of the game.

Fuego FC has three league home games in July at the Fresno State Soccer Stadium, on July 1, 15 and 29. There is also a friendly match there with Club Atlético Morelia on July 5. For more info, visit fuegofc.com.

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

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Peace & Social Justice Calendar July 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.

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

Fresno Center for Nonviolence 31st Anniversary 2 p.m. Community UCC, 5550 N. Fresno St. Guest speaker: Susan Schnall, national president of Veterans for Peace. Presentation of Way of Peace awards. Silent auction. For more info, contact 559-237-3223.

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 dwiafresno.org.

TUE 04 **National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC)** 5:30 p.m. Los Amigo’s Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. 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 kfcf.org.

WED 05 **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. *Community Alliance* radio show hosted by Daren Miller. For more info, visit 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 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. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. 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 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 kfcf.org.

THU 13 **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.

SAT 15 **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 kfcf.org.

WED 19 **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Speaking Truth to Empire*** 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

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

THU 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.

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter 7 p.m. Woodward Park Regional Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Free and open to the general public. To register in advance or for more info, visit sierraclub.org/tehipite.

FRI 21 **2023 Community Champion Awards and Fundraiser** 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Bankers Ballroom, 1060 Fulton St. Hosted by Fresno Building Healthy Communities. Purchase your tickets at fresnobhc.org/cc2023. For more info, contact yhernandez@fresnobhc.org or 559-256-8722 ext. 109.

SAT 22 **Stopping Gun Violence** 3 p.m. Skylight Room (Room 251), Old Administration Building, Fresno City College. Informational event on recent gun safety bills and how gun violence impacts residents of the greater Fresno area. Speakers will address legislation, mental health and social disparities. With information booths from community organizations.

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 559-435-4043.

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 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 kfcf.org.

FRI 28 **El Concilio de Fresno Noon.** Julia’s Mexican Restaurant (Banquet Room), 2160 H St. For more info, contact 559-360-9797 or eddiev@elconciliodefresno.org.

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

A Ticking Bomb in Arvin-Lamont

BY NAYAMIN MARTINEZ

On June 13, nine persons from various communities met virtually to hear updates about a project that will help them improve the indoor air quality in their homes. Although getting filters for their swamp coolers and air monitors to measure the air quality inside and outside their homes might sound relevant to residents in Huron, Avenal and Coalinga, Arvin residents who joined the meeting were worried about a more urgent problem: 27 idle oil wells were found leaking methane gas, some at explosive levels.

“What is going to happen to my family, to my house? What are they going to do?” asked Elvia Garcia.

Garcia was referring to updates that residents in Arvin and Lamont received from the Methane Task Force, which comprises the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) and the California Air Resources Board. Special inspections conducted by the two agencies at the end of May discovered the 27 idle oil wells leaking methane. Those wells are within 3,200 feet of homes, and three are within 1,000 feet of schools.

Garcia’s fear is justified as these leaks are indeed a danger to public health, and the explosive levels in some places are an imminent public safety risk.

If you are feeling déjà vu, thinking you have read this story before, it is because you have. A year ago, we reported massive methane leaks in 45 wells in Bakersfield that posed an immediate danger to homes that were less than 300 feet away. The leaks were sealed, but in the aftermath of last year’s discovery we all knew the story would repeat.

Why? There are more than 10,000 idle wells throughout California that could be dangerous, and last year CalGEM recognized publicly that it did not have the capacity to inspect all the abandoned wells to verify if they were properly sealed.

Furthermore, CalGEM’s ability to enforce the compliance of existing rules and ensure that companies fix leaks and plug abandoned wells properly has been limited as evidenced by what happened last year and again this year.

SunRay Petroleum Inc., one of the operators of the leaks found in 2022, has been violating CalGEM rules since 2017. When CalGEM issued an order to SunRay to plug its abandoned wells, the company appealed the order and the case is pending in court.

This year, the parties responsible for 11 of the leaking wells have indicated they do not intend to fix them. Therefore, CalGEM will pay contractors to fix the wells. Supposedly, these repairs will be paid for from a fund covered by industry fees.

Well, fellow taxpayers, let’s pray that this fund is huge because experts estimate that cleaning up decommissioned oil and gas infrastructure in California could cost \$21.5 billion! If California’s leaders don’t ensure that Big Oil cleans up its own toxic mess, the public health and safety dangers will only worsen and if that fund is insufficient, our public dollars will have to pay the difference.

To be fair, we must acknowledge that some things have improved since the leaks in Bakersfield were discovered last year. The Methane Task Force was formed, and it has been conducting more inspections to identify leaks and prevent tragedies. That is how the Arvin-Lamont leaks were discovered.

However, the state needs bolder actions to protect public safety and our economy. These actions should include the following:

- Order CalGEM to urgently plug all leaking wells across the state.
- Give CalGEM more authority to deal with operators that refuse to fix leaks.
- Establish a notification system to alert residents who live close to the leaking wells.
- In locations where methane is identified, test for carcinogenic volatile organic compounds that sometimes accompany methane releases.
- Implement an immediate moratorium on new permits or rework permits for wells within 3,200 feet of sensitive receptors.

Governor Gavin Newsom prides himself as a leader of innovative climate policies and champion of protecting disadvantaged communities. We recognize that he has rightfully taken a stand against Big Oil by curbing gas-price gouging, signed the legislation for the most ambitious safety setbacks between oil operations and sensitive receptors, and asserted the people’s interest over corporate profits, but that is not enough.

Frontline residents in Arvin, Lamont, Bakersfield and many other areas of California deserve to live free of methane and other cancer-causing gasses.

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



The cleaning of abandoned oil pumps and wells is the responsibility of the companies that own the wells, but they are not following through on that. *Photo by Eduardo Stanley*

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



Edited by
Richard Gomez

Rita Bell is the current President of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence after mentoring under Angela Price until Angela stepped down as President in 2021. She began serving on the board in 2016. She also worked on the Earth Day Fresno committee from 2014 through 2022. Rita has also been a longtime board member and past President of Fresno Filmworks. Rita moved to Fresno in 2003, and she and her husband have enjoyed raising their family in the Central Valley and volunteering in the community.



Our Way of Peace Award Recipients.



Roman C. Rain Tree (Dunlap Band of Mono, Choinumni, Wukchumni). "Seeds of Sovereignty" Chief Impact Officer, "Rename S-Valley, Fresno County" Chairperson, Organizational Co-Sponsor of CA AB2022, "Acknowledge ALL California Tribes" Co-Chair and Youth Advisor, University of California, Davis Native American Studies Bachelor of Arts, and an Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) community organizer. Successfully championed the geographic renaming of his ancestral homeland from the former pejorative of "Sq**w-Valley" to "Yokuts Valley", in honor of the Valleys first inhabitants. As an IAF community organizer he promotes sustainable community relational power through congregations and other institutions working together across the area to address neighborhood issues, housing, jobs and more. Currently, he is calling upon Gov. Newsom to use powers of executive order authorizing the establishment of a formal process of tribal state acknowledgement for all tribes indigenous to California.

Dr. Joshua Shurley is a peace activist and political science professor at both Fresno City College and Clovis Community College. A US Army veteran and former conflict researcher, Josh now works with Veterans For Peace, an international group of military veterans dedicated to exposing the true costs of war and building a culture of peace. In addition to his national work with Veterans For Peace, Joshua started up a local chapter of Veterans For Peace in 2017. He also serves as board member and secretary of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence and continues to educate and inform the public on matters of peace and social justice through his frequent voice on the KFCF radio's "Stir It Up" program and consistent efforts with progressive causes.



Our Youth Award goes to:

Paulina Cruz is a Mexican immigrant and an anthropology major at California State University, Fresno. She is also a fellow with Fresno's Community Alliance newspaper and has become a prolific addition to the progressive journalism the Alliance produces. Her work has focused on anti-racism, the struggles of immigrant communities, and the rising power of the youth of "Gen Z." Recently, Paulina's reporting (in both English and Spanish) helped to expose a predatory loan scandal affecting vulnerable people in the rural valley town of San Joaquin. Her compassion and energy have been an enormous benefit to the community, and we look forward to her ongoing activism and advocacy.

Our Organization Award goes to:

The Environmental Collaborative of Central California, or EC3,

formed in 2022, after organizing the annual Earth Day Fresno for many years. The organization was born out of the idea that Earth Day should be every day. EC3's goals are broad and growing, with plans to enhance existing organizations through intra-organizational collaboration. They strive to increase awareness of environmental stewardship through participation in conversation efforts and sustainable practices. Every action EC3 takes comes from a love of the environment and a desire to protect and grow with it.



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Stir it, UP!



Our next show is Wednesday July 12th at 3pm.

This July's radio should light the skies with our host Joshua Shurley with his guest, TBA. For more information call on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at (559) 237-3223 or check our website at www.centerfornonviolence.org.

Our June show was hosted by Joshua Shurley who interviewed the national president of Veterans For Peace, Susan Schnall. They discussed her involvement in the peace movement since the days of her military service during the Vietnam War through her work with Veterans For Peace today, as well as the connections between the drivers of endless war then and now: the Military Industrial Complex and the corporate interests that benefit from ongoing conflict. Joshua and Susan also announce her upcoming visit to Fresno as keynote speaker for the Fresno Center for Nonviolence's anniversary celebration on July 1, 2023. To hear it again goto: <https://on.soundcloud.com/NChVA>.

In May our show with Josh Shurley and his guest Leni Villagomez-Reeves about the Pastors For Peace Cuba Caravan and then recent news surrounding ongoing US-Cuba relations. To hear again go to: <https://on.soundcloud.com/4wpTv>

El periódico Community Alliance (Alianza Comunitaria) se publica mensualmente por San Joaquín Media Alliance, ubicada en 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA 93728. El periódico Community Alliance (Alianza Comunitaria) se distribuye gratis o por subscripción. Las subscripciones son de \$40 por año; \$60 por año para activistas; y \$15 para personas de bajos ingresos.

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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Juegos electorales

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Desde la Administración de Biden no mordieron el anzuelo en un principio, pero sí lo hizo la contraparte mexicana, en voz de su presidente, quien de inmediato contestó y advirtió que México no permitirá la intrusión de gobiernos externos en el país. Así, el presidente mexicano regresaba con fuerza el saque inicial que, aunque no venía directamente del gobierno demócrata de Biden, era claramente una declaración de intenciones, pues el tema del narcotráfico y específicamente el fentanilo, estará presente en el debate electoral. López Obrador no esperó a que fuese una postura oficial de política estadounidense y atacó el rumor aun y cuando este provenía de un nivel de gobierno no a la altura de su envergadura.

El líder mexicano ha fijado una postura fuerte en cuanto a la soberanía del país. Y aunque él ha dicho que en cuanto termine su mandato desaparecerá de la vida política y pública mexicana, sí se ha pronunciado abiertamente sobre su deseo de que el movimiento de su llamada Cuarta Transformación tenga continuidad.

Para ello, MORENA ha definido ya seis precandidatos que pelearán por la candidatura oficial, la cual dada la fuerza del partido, será la que lleve al nuevo portador o portadora de la banda presidencial.

López Obrador quiere marcar línea desde ahora, enviando un claro mensaje a quienes aspiran a sucederlo y al propio vecino del norte: la soberanía es innegociable.

Desde acá, la Administración de Biden ha regresado la pelota. Fue mediante un anuncio de la DEA que lanzó una fuerte embestida en contra del cártel de Sinaloa, específicamente contra los llamados Chapitos, hijos del capo mexicano Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, quien purga cadena perpetua en una cárcel de máxima seguridad en este país. En dicho anuncio, los oficiales de la DEA anunciaron cargos contra 28 integrantes del cártel, entre ellos cuatro de los hijos del Chapo, incluido Ovidio, actualmente preso en México y a quien ya pidieron en extradición. Los acusan de fabricar y traficar con fentanilo, la droga más mortal a la que se ha enfrentado este país, según los oficiales, causante de numerosas muertes de estadounidenses. Según la DEA, los Chapitos han inundado al país con fentanilo en los últimos ocho años.

El anuncio parece ser la medida más significativa que ha tomado el presidente Biden para atacar la llamada crisis de opiáceos que enfrenta el país. Recientemente, en uno de sus actos proselitistas, Trump criticó a Biden por su inoperancia en el tema y anunció que ha pedido a sus asesores opciones para intervenir en México si es elegido presidente.

Sin duda, el reto de Biden además de dicha crisis, es evitar a toda costa que su posible contrincante saque crédito político de este problema. Lo más fácil para ambos, es echar toda la culpa a México y a los cárteles mexicanos. Recurrir al populismo funciona. Le funcionó a Trump cuando llamó “Bad hombres” a los inmigrantes mexicanos y prometió construir el tristemente célebre muro fronterizo cuando fue elegido presidente.

Ahora, hablar de una intervención militar para “solucionar” un problema mucho más profundo seguro le dará votos.

Según informes de salud pública, en 2021 más de 107,000 estadounidenses murieron de sobredosis, dos tercios a causa de fentanilo. Pareciera como que con estas acciones y esta narrativa el gobierno de este país estuviera preparando el terreno, por si acaso.

Por supuesto que desde México López Obrador devolvió nuevamente la pelota. Dijo que si bien México cooperará con los esfuerzos por erradicar la producción y tráfico de dicha droga, acusó al gobierno estadounidense de no hacer bien su trabajo en atacar el problema. Criticó a las autoridades y medios de comunicación, a quienes acusó de contubernio para hacer ver mal el trabajo en México y no hacer un mea culpa por lo que se ha dejado de hacer en este país.

Si bien Biden no se involucra directamente como sí lo hace su homónimo mexicano, tanto este gobierno como el de México se equivocan en reaccionar como lo están haciendo. Culpar a México como si fuera el único responsable del problema es querer tapar el sol con un dedo. Es no reconocer que gran parte del problema tiene que

CV Fuego en Junio

POR PETER MAIDEN

Fuego FC perdió ante los Richmond Kickers 2-1 el pasado 10 de junio. Richmond estaba tercero en la clasificación y CV Fuego se estaba abriendo camino desde abajo. CV Fuego tuvo muchas oportunidades y lideró a Richmond 1-0 por un corto tiempo. Pero luego Emiliano Terzaghi anotó dos veces para Richmond, primero con un buen disparo al arco y luego por medio de un penalty. Billy Forbes, un jugador nuevo en Fuego, ingresó al campo después del penalti como delantero suplente. Rápidamente hizo un par de jugadas agresivas, pero después de ocho minutos en el campo, le cometió una falta al portero de Richmond, Akira Fitzgerald. Forbes tiró una patada alta y golpeó a Fitzgerald por encima del ojo izquierdo con uno de los tapones de su botín. Fitzgerald estuvo en el suelo durante doce minutos mientras el personal médico trataba el corte sobre su ojo izquierdo que sangraba mucho. Fue reemplazado por el portero suplente y Forbes vio la tarjeta roja por la falta.

El 17 de junio, Fuego FC perdió 1-0 ante Greenville (Carolina del Sur) Triumph SC. El gol



Nate Shultz, de Greenville Triumph, intenta contener a Alexis Cerritos, de CV Fuego. Foto de Peter Maiden

Julio. Para obtener más información, visite www.fuegofc.com.

Peter Maiden es el editor de fotografía de Community Alliance.

Miguel Ángel Baez es un periodista del Valle Central nacido en México. El se graduó de CSU Bakersfield y fue editor del periódico Noticiero Semanal, de Porterville.

futbolero.

En fin, la pelota sigue rodando. A ver quien finalmente logra controlarla y ponerla en el piso, aunque este sea un término más nuevoamente al poder, lo mismo de lo que se está quejando.

a Trump, quien ha insinuado una intervención militar en México si llega Y segundo, debe tener cuidado con lo que desea. Está defendiendo en Estados Unidos.

sabe que no solo los mexicanos que viven en su país escuchan lo que dice, sino también la gran comunidad de compatriotas suyos que viven solo para evitar que compita en las elecciones. El presidente mexicano contra Trump son por un “asunto de falidas”, una afirmación errónea de su parte. Y que los cargos por no entregar documentos clasificados son Primero, es irresponsable decirle al pueblo mexicano que los cargos Casa Blanca y detalles de inteligencia militar.

Y siguió en el mismo tenor ante los 37 cargos federales que enfrenta el ex presidente estadounidense por retener información clasificada, obstruir la justicia y hacer declaraciones falsas. Dicha información tiene que ver con el armamento nuclear en Estados Unidos y las capacidades nucleares de otros países, así como información de inteligencia de la Casa Blanca y detalles de inteligencia militar.

apareciera en las boletas electorales. Fox quería evitar a toda costa que el nombre de López Obrador por la presidencia de México, cuando el entonces mandatario Vicente proceso de desafuero que él enfrentó previo a su primera candidatura

Incluso fue más allá al comparar el caso que enfrenta Trump con el Stormy Daniels. El anuncio parece ser la medida más significativa que ha tomado el han inundado al país con fentanilo en los últimos ocho años. El anuncio parece ser la medida más significativa que ha tomado el presidente Biden para atacar la llamada crisis de opiáceos que enfrenta el país. Recientemente, en uno de sus actos proselitistas, Trump criticó a Biden por su inoperancia en el tema y anunció que ha pedido a sus asesores opciones para intervenir en México si es elegido presidente.

En dicho anuncio, los oficiales de la DEA anunciaron cargos contra 28 integrantes del cártel, entre ellos cuatro de los hijos del Chapo, incluido Ovidio, actualmente preso en México y a quien ya pidieron en extradición. Los acusan de fabricar y traficar con fentanilo, la droga más mortal a la que se ha enfrentado este país, según los oficiales, causante de numerosas muertes de estadounidenses. Según la DEA, los Chapitos han inundado al país con fentanilo en los últimos ocho años.

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No hace mucho aseguró que a Trump le están levantando cargos por “asuntos de falidas” para evitar que participe en la contienda electoral y sea rival de Biden en las próximas elecciones. Esto por los cargos de falsificación de registros empresariales por los pagos a la actriz porno Stormy Daniels.

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Estos resultados podrían contribuir a una gestión menos eficaz de las condiciones de salud crónicas, las enfermedades infecciosas y los trastornos por uso de sustancias y podrían aumentar las lesiones físicas y empeorar la salud mental. Los proveedores también informaron que las redesadas podrían tener un impacto negativo en el sistema de atención médica al promover un mayor uso de

Crisis de Atención al Paciente

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El Senado del Estado de California avala el proyecto de ley de salario mínimo de atención médica de \$25. Este nuevo salario mínimo se establece para ayudar a solucionar muchos de los problemas que afectan a nuestro sistema de salud.

La propuesta de ley SB 525 sería el primer salario mínimo de atención médica en todo el estado, que ayudaría a retener y atraer nuevos trabajadores al campo.

Todos sabemos lo que es ir a una clínica. A menudo se siente como un inconveniente en lugar de ir a un lugar que te hará sentir mejor. Ser postergado por accidente, no ser llamado con nuestros resultados, que nos envíen medicamentos al lugar equivocado o no pedirlos, o no tener citas disponibles durante meses.

Los pacientes no están recibiendo la atención adecuada porque no hay suficientes personas debidamente capacitadas que se queden el tiempo suficiente.

El término "Gran Renuncia" se refiere al aumento de la tasa de trabajadores estadounidenses que dejan sus trabajos desde la primavera de 2021 debido a una fuerte demanda de mano de obra y bajas tasas de desempleo. La Salud es uno de los sectores más afectados. Los trabajadores de la salud se sienten abrumados por la escasez de personal y la alta demanda, lo que hace que sea menos probable que las personas se queden.

Según el estudio, 'Burnout and Health Care Workforce Turnover', "el constante agotamiento, la baja participación y la rotación fueron altas, con un 53 % de los médicos y el personal que informaron agotamiento, sólo un 32 % de los médicos y un 35 % del personal informaron una alta participación. Y el 30 % de los médicos y el 41 % del personal ya no trabajan en atención primaria en el mismo sistema 2 o 3 años después... Los médicos de atención primaria tienen una de las tasas más altas de agotamiento entre las especialidades médicas, con más del 60 % de los médicos en los Estados Unidos."

ahora. La ciudad también perdió una demanda en 2022 por la implementación de una ordenanza que prohibía a los defensores estar cerca de los barrios de campamentos. Se vieron obligados a abandonar la ordenanza en virtud de una orden judicial. No permita que el dinero de sus impuestos se desperdicie en juicios. *****

Bob McCloskey es un defensor de personas sin hogar en Fresno. Póngase en contacto con él en bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

Todos los trabajadores de la salud merecen ganarse la vida honestamente. Se pasan el día cuidando pacientes, pero ¿quién los cuida a ellos? Un mínimo hijo de \$25 también ayudaría a luchar contra la discriminación en la fuerza laboral. "Los trabajadores de color y las trabajadoras que forman la columna vertebral de nuestro sistema de atención médica están desproporcionadamente mal pagados y devaluados. En todos los niveles de la atención de la salud, el pago insuficiente y la subvaloración de los trabajadores esenciales de la atención de la salud ha creado una crisis de atención al paciente", según una declaración del Sindicato Internacional de Empleados de Servicios (SEIU).

Este proyecto de ley cubriría a todos los que trabajan en clínicas, sin importar el puesto. Eso incluye secretarías o incluso consejeros. Las personas podrían concentrarse en sus trabajos sin preocuparse por su segundo o tercer trabajo y atrasarse en los pagos regulares. Marcaría un camino hacia la dignidad y el respeto tanto para los trabajadores de la salud como para sus pacientes.

El 31 de mayo, el proyecto de ley fue aprobado en el pleno del Senado con una votación de 21 a 11.

"La crisis de la fuerza laboral de atención médica de California y la crisis en la atención al paciente son lo mismo: no puedo cubrir dos o tres veces mi parte de residentes sin quedarme despierta por la noche preocupada de que las personas mayores frágiles a mi cuidado tengan más probabilidades de caerse, de contraer una infección o de sentirse abandonadas", dijo Christina Lockyear-White, asistente de enfermería certificada en el Centro de Rehabilitación de Bakerfield y Primera Vicepresidenta de SEIU 2015. "Estoy exhausta y desconsolada por el estrés físico y emocional, pero con esta victoria me siento optimista ya que los líderes de California nos están escuchando y tomando decisiones".

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

Fresno se Vuelve Viral

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permitió que sus prejuicios y estereotipos repugnantes y peligrosos impulsara una narrativa falsa.

Después de investigar, la policía de Fresno determinó que el perro no estaba bajo ningún tipo de abuso y que no había evidencia de que se usara o vendiera carne de perro, incluso hicieron una publicación en Facebook sobre el

vídeo de García.

"Recientemente, se subió un vídeo corto que mostraba a un pitbull hembra en varias cuentas de redes sociales. El vídeo alegaba que el pit bull estaba siendo abusado. Los oficiales de la policía de Fresno fueron alertados rápidamente de la situación e investigaron a fondo el incidente. El breve vídeo publicado en las redes sociales era una instantánea y no mostraba la imagen completa del incidente. Nos complace informar que la investigación reveló que el perro no fue abusado... Nos gustaría agradecer a los miembros de la comunidad que se preocuparon por la seguridad del perro".

García incluso admitió que la sociedad Fresno Humane Animal Services le pidió que retirara las acusaciones y dejara en paz al hombre y al restaurante. Ella se negó y afirmó que no se detendría.

El restaurante "Tasty Thai", propiedad de una familia, se vio obligado a cerrar debido a llamadas de odio y amenazas.

Según Soogia (una creadora de TT que ha cubierto la historia), María Alavers García creó el vídeo y ganó fuerza cuando se compartió en la página de TT de Isabel Guzmán.

Isabel ha quitado el vídeo y ha desactivado sus comentarios. María publicó un vídeo de disculpa más tarde, pero era

Juegos electorales

POR MIGUEL ANGEL BAEZ

Hasta hace un par de meses todo parecía un simple juego amistoso de ping-pong entre dos amigos acostumbrados a jugar seguido. Uno lanzaba la pelota y el otro la regresaba.

Así estaba el partido entre vecinos. Ambos con un ojo puesto en mantener la relación en buenos términos y con el otro en algo más importante: asegurar la respectiva continuidad en el poder.

En México, todo parece indicar que el sucesor del actual presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador saldrá de MORENA, partido fundado por el mismo mandatario y que daría continuidad al proyecto Lópezobradorista. Mientras que en este país, la apuesta del partido Demócrata se centra en la reelección del actual presidente Joe Biden.

Sin embargo, lo que parecía un simple juego amistoso ha ido escalando poco a poco ante la aparición de nuevos factores y nuevos jugadores. Ante ello, Biden ha sido más cauto y habla y habla y necesario, mientras que López Obrador ha sido más abierto en su discurso y ha llegado incluso a defender al ex presidente Donald Trump, quien a pesar de sus problemas legales, es quien lidera las encuestas para ser el candidato republicano para competir por la presidencia de este país.

Pero todo empezó cuando un par de legisladores republicanos, Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas) y Michael Waltz (R-Florida) propusieron una resolución conjunta para dar autoridad al presidente de utilizar el poder militar en contra de los cárteles mexicanos.

Luego, la idea fue secundada por el Senador por Carolina del Sur, Lindsey Graham, figura prominente del partido Republicano, quien anunció planes de legislar para que los cárteles mexicanos fueran catalogados como grupos

demasiado poco y demasiado tarde, su cuenta ya no existe. David Rasavong, propietario de "Tasty Thai" (que solo había estado abierto durante 8 meses), se vio abrumado por las llamadas telefónicas y el acoso en línea que incluía acusaciones falsas, insultos racistas y amenazas de muerte.



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necesarios para derrotar a Biden.

Esta clase de acciones se suman a la retórica electoral y populista de la derecha estadounidense a la que se acomodan tanto Graham como el grueso de los políticos republicanos que siguen apoyando la candidatura de Donald Trump. Y es que a pesar de los problemas legales que éste enfrenta, temen perder el voto de la numerosa base de MAGA (Make America Great Again, el slogan electoral de Trump durante su campaña de 2016) que ha cultivado Trump y que, por ahora, está estacionada en el partido Republicano. Saben que sin esta base de votantes, difícilmente los republicanos pueden conseguir los votos necesarios para derrotar a Biden.

LIBERTAD BAJO PALABRA

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Maten a Los Pobres



Una mujer en situación de calle revisa sus pertenencias. Las nuevas disposiciones de la Ciudad de Fresno sobre los desamparados prácticamente elimina los derechos de estas personas sin que se les ofrezcan más o mejores servicios. Foto de Eduardo Stanley

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POR BOB MCCLOSKEY

La conocida banda de punk rock, “The Dead Kennedys”, lanzó una canción en 1980 sobre la bomba de neutrones llamada Kill the Poor (Maten a Los Pobres). Parte de la letra dice:

Ahora que tenemos la bomba de neutrones Es agradable, rápida, limpia y hace las cosas bien. El sol brilla en un nuevo día

No más subsidios del bienestar para pagar Barrios marginales antiestéticos desapareciendo en un estallido de luz

Millones de desempleados evaporados Todos los sistemas van a matar a los pobres esta noche,

van a matar, matar, matar, matar, matar a los pobres esta noche

La nueva ordenanza de Fresno contra acampar, sentarse, pararse y acostarse, que prohíbe a los residentes sin

vivienda en todos los lugares, escrita por los miembros del Ayuntamiento de Fresno, Miguel Arias y Garry Bredetfeld,

hará exactamente eso: matará a los pobres (ver “La política de Fresno Mata” en la edición de junio de *Community Alliance*).

¿Por qué un demócrata liberal, Arias, une fuerzas con un republicano extremista para implementar una ordenanza

radicalmente dura? Matarán a los pobres.

La ordenanza prohíbe específicamente que los residentes

sin vivienda estén cerca de los refugios y los centros de

enfriamiento/calentamiento. Prohíbe a las personas estar cerca de las instalaciones de admisión, donde las personas

sin hogar deben acudir para buscar servicios y vivienda. La nueva ordenanza prohíbe a los residentes sin vivienda

de casi todos los lugares de Fresno. Prohíbe sentarse, pararse, acostarse, dormir y tener cualquier posesión dentro

de 500 pies de escuelas, guarderías, parques, bibliotecas, centros de calentamiento y enfriamiento, refugios, incluso

centros de navegación (como la *Casa Poverello*), rampas de autopistas, túneles, debajo puentes, puentes peatonales,

vías férreas activas, callejones, aceras y muchos otros lugares.

POR PAULINA CRUZ

Crisis de Atención al Paciente

El 25 de mayo un mar púrpura envolvió el capitolio. Más de 600 trabajadores de la salud, asistentes médicos, cuidadores domiciliarios, trabajadores de clínicas, médicos residentes y pacientes que vestían camisas y capas moradas rodearon el Capitolio Estatal, en Sacramento, para marchar y ofrecer una conferencia de prensa.

Esto fue una oportunidad para que los pacientes y trabajadores de la salud de todo California expresaran lo importante que es que el proyecto de ley SB 525 se

convierta en ley. Las prendas moradas se unieron en las escalinatas del capitolio compartiendo sus luchas y deseos de seguir

histórias similares:

incapacidad para pagar sus facturas y cuidarse a sí mismos y a sus familias. Tener que trabajar en múltiples trabajos solo para mantener y alimentar a sus familias. Dormir en sus autos

debido a los viajes entre empleos. Muchos hablaron sobre sus experiencias de agotamiento. Lo mucho que hay que

hacer pero con insuficientes empleados capacitados para hacerlo. Hablaron sobre la alta rotación de personal, viendo

a sus compañeros de trabajo renunciar y entendiendo por qué. No por falta de dedicación, sino por incapacidad para

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Los trabajadores de la salud, con ojos llorosos, insistieron en que aprobar este proyecto de ley y pagar adecuadamente a los trabajadores de la salud era una inversión para el futuro de la atención médica.

POR PAULINA CRUZ

Fresno se Vuelve Viral

Este mes de Mayo, Fresno se volvió viral, pero lamentablemente no fue uno de sus mejores momentos. Es inusual ver el hashtag #559 en varios videos en Tiktok (TT) explotando con millones de vistas y miles de ‘likes’ y comentarios.

María García publicó una serie de videos después de ver a un perro en la calle jadeando de calor. Inmediatamente se

enfrentó al dueño, le gritó y lo acusó de maltrato animal por tener al perro en el calor. Tener preocupación por un animal

en el calor del Valle Central es comprensible; sin embargo, sus siguientes acciones no lo son.

El dueño del perro resultó ser un hombre asiático mayor que vivía cerca de un restaurante asiático llamado “Tasty Thai”.

Entonces, ¿qué hace García? Da el salto de su vida. Ella decide hacer un video acusando a este restaurante asiático

de usar carne de perro. “Tiene más sentido que estén eliminado desde entonces. Ella no tiene base para sus

acusaciones racistas, solo un hombre asiático que tiene un perro y vive cerca de un restaurante. ¿Tenía alguna prueba

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