

# A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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EN ESPAÑOL  
PÁGINAS 17-20

## Palestinian Flag Raised in Fresno

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

On Dec. 8, the Palestinian flag was raised at Eaton Plaza in downtown Fresno, a month after the flag of Israel was raised there. Only three other U.S. cities have raised the flag of Palestine.

More than 500 people, many from the Palestinian American community, showed up to commemorate the event. The lively crowd chanted phrases such as "Ceasefire now!" and "Free, free Palestine." Many had tears in their eyes when the flag was raised.

Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias, who facilitated the flag-raising effort,



Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias wore a kaffiyeh as he addressed the crowd at the raising of the Palestinian flag in Fresno on Dec. 8.  
Photo by Peter Maiden



The Palestinian flag waves at Eaton Plaza in Fresno. Photo by Peter Maiden

and Paul Dictos, Fresno County assessor/recorder, spoke at the flag raising. Arias says that he has since received more than 500 e-mail threats, all from out of town, including death threats and threats of rape of a family member.

"Fresno is the fifth largest city [in California] and the ninth most diverse city in the United States," said Arias. "In recent months, we have raised the Armenian flag, the Mexican flag, the LGBTQ [Pride] flag, the Ukrainian flag, the Israeli flag and now the Palestinian flag."

Addressing the war casualties, Arias said that "my god doesn't differentiate between Israeli and Palestinian lives, and the City [of Fresno] shouldn't either."

Fresno resident Yasir Amireh is a member of the Palestine Freedom Project, a local group that organized the event. He said it

was time to unite the community and took time to wish Happy Hanukkah to his friends and the Jewish community in Fresno.

After the flag raising, Amireh said, "Thank you, everyone. This is the first time in my life that I feel that I have an identity."

This flag raising "would not have happened without your support, protesting, educating people, going to speak at City Hall, visiting with and calling members of the state government and Congress," he said. He called for an immediate ceasefire and decried the indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Gaza.

Layla Darwish, also a member of the Palestine Freedom Project, said that the event made her feel proud, validated and included. "For the first time ever, I feel like I've been heard and listened to," she told FresnoLand.

"Before, people wouldn't even know what Palestine was when asking about my ethnicity. Today, everyone will know what Palestine is."

Several speakers asked City Council Member Garry Bredfeld to publicly apologize for continuing to spread falsehoods, such as the beheading of babies in the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas.

As the war rages on, peace activists, Palestinian Americans and all people of conscience continue to call on the Fresno City Council to pass a ceasefire resolution, joining Oakland, Richmond, Cudahy, Detroit, Atlanta and other cities across the country.

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Bob McCloskey is an activist and a reporter for the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

## A New Beginning

BY PAULINA CRUZ

In early 2023, a Fresno restaurant was forced to shut down when it was bombarded by baseless racist accusations. Several months later and after much heartache, it reopened with a new name and a new outlook.

Love & Thai, formerly known as Tasty Thai, is a family-run Fresno business that blew up on social media in May of last year. After being open only a few months, it was forced to shut down when Maria Garcia, via TikTok, falsely accused the restaurant of using dog meat. Although the accusation was quickly proven wrong, the damage had already been done; it seems that racists don't really care about facts.

The Tasty Thai family received a seemingly endless wave of hate and death threats from people who blindly believed bigoted slander. For the family's safety, the restaurant was

forced to close. David Rasavong had to watch the dream of his immigrant parents collapse.

Although some were quick to attack Rasavong and his family, other members of the community offered their support. Organizations such as the Fresno Center and the LACF (Laotian Community of Fresno) reached out to Rasavong and helped him connect with local law enforcement and take steps to recover.

On Nov. 3, the community joined Rasavong and his family at the grand opening of their new location. This location sports a different name, Love & Thai, and a fortified mindset of unity and culture for a family restaurant in Fresno. The name is meant to emphasize the love Rasavong's family puts into the food and the love received from the community.

People gathered at the ribbon cutting for Love & Thai on that warm fall morning to celebrate with the family and remind them that they are an appreciated part of the Fresno community. Leaders including Pao Yang, president of the Fresno Center; Diane Phakonekham, president of

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central California; Efrain Botello-Cisneros from the State Attorney General's Office; and Khampha Thephavong, executive director of the LACF, spoke in support of the Rasavong family. They touched on the hate incident and how painful and damaging it was to the family, as well as to the people of Fresno.

Fresno City Council Member Luis Chavez called the reopening a "story about resilience" following a "vile and hateful" incident.

Rasavong also shared his perspective. "It's a time that when I look back, it doesn't feel real. When you have people that have such disgust for you and have such disgusting accusations, it is hard to get out of that feeling...it's not something I would wish for anyone."

It was a dark time for Rasavong and his family, having to shut down his parents' dream while also facing such hatred over false and racist claims. It was unimaginable.

Rasavong stressed how incredible and world changing the local support was. "Once the word got out, once people started to realize what actually happened—the amount of love and kindness we received,

Continues on page 2

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# A New Beginning

Continued from page 1

that is something I wish for everyone.”

He went on to thank his wife, the community, local organizations, the Fresno Police Department, Council Member Chavez and the Mayor’s Office for connecting with him and offering reinforcement and kindness. He also thanked the local media for allowing his family to “spread the love” and share their story.

The new name, Love & Thai, is all about that—spreading love in our community. “Today marks the end of a chapter filled with hate and the beginning of a new one that’s filled with love,” said Rasavong.

Hate, love and strength in community. At its core, that is what this story is about. Racism, homophobia, xenophobia and hate will always exist in some form. Sometimes the call comes from inside the house.

Being part of a community comes with responsibility. We watch out for each other. We lend support when possible. We connect with one another.

The Central Valley, just like this country, is incredibly diverse. We must be willing to learn about other cultures, connect over similarities and respect our differences. We can fight harmful stereotypes and stand together.

If you have the ability to help someone when they are being a victim of a hate crime or incident, speak up: Every voice makes a difference.

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*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.*



David Rasavong and his wife, Anna Nguyen, cut the ribbon opening their new restaurant, Love & Thai. On the left is Pao Yang, president and CEO of the Fresno Center, and on the right is Fresno City Council Member Luis Chavez. Photo by Peter Maiden

## Our Community Supports Independent Media

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

Every time the *Community Alliance* asks for support from this community, you come through with the love and do-re-mi that keeps this newspaper humming. Not just printing every month but growing, expanding and moving in new directions.

The purpose of the fundraiser, of course, was to raise money for the newspaper, and we are pleased to announce it was a huge success. This was one of our most successful Fall Fundraisers ever. Executive Director Mike Rhodes said that more than “\$11,000 was raised, which will keep us going in the right direction in 2024.”

At the fundraiser, Rhodes talked about the past, present and future of the newspaper. “We have gone from being a small photocopied newsletter in 1996 to a newspaper that is building a progressive movement and telling the story of those working for peace, social and economic justice.”



Robin McGehee is the new LGBTQ+ liaison with the City of Fresno. She was the keynote speaker at the 2023 fall fundraiser for the *Community Alliance* newspaper. Photo by Peter Maiden

Rhodes believes the future of the paper will mean hiring younger journalists who will create a social media project that can deliver the news from a progressive perspective to a whole new generation.

“Even my own children get most of their news from social media platforms,” says Rhodes. “We need to reach young people where they are at and only young journalists are able to do that. That is our challenge, and with your support we will be a vibrant part of this community for many years to come.”

The other significant area of expansion for the newspaper is the Spanish-language section. With small regional newspapers collapsing all over the San Joaquin Valley, having content in Spanish is more important than ever. We are expanding our reach in rural areas where the need is greatest and will continue providing high-quality content for our monolingual Spanish-speaking audience.

Other notable developments with the paper are our ability to receive grants through the San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We have already received multiple grants that have allowed us to grow and expand.

The Stop the Hate grant we received from the State Library system made possible the four Stop the Hate town halls we organized. Each event exceeded our expectations. The next event will be on Jan. 24. You can find out more about that event on page 3.

Another project, also made possible by a grant, is “The Cycle of Exclusion in the San Joaquin Valley,” which will feature information about the incarceration of the Japanese in this region during World War II.

Our keynote speaker at the fundraiser was Robin McGehee, who gave a marvelous presentation. McGehee is the new City of Fresno LGBTQ+ liaison. She was instrumental, on a national level, in getting marriage equality laws passed.

McGehee told us how she came from Mississippi and ended up in Fresno. She was an important part of Meet in the Middle, an exciting organizing project that brought out 7,000



Retired Judge Dale Ikeda identified two Fresno locations where Americans of Japanese ancestry were rounded up and sent to concentration camps during World War II. Photo by Peter Maiden

people to the steps of City Hall. McGehee said “at that time we were fighting against Alan Autry (the former mayor of Fresno), who was taking our City Hall and using it as a bully pulpit for Jim Franklin to speak out against our families.”

That demonstration at City Hall resulted in some dialogue with the powers that be about the issue of LGBTQ+ rights, but McGehee and Meet in the Middle organizers realized that a larger action was needed. They helped organize a march in Washington, D.C., with 250,000 people.

You can view McGehee’s entire presentation at our fundraiser at [youtu.be/dAwJyspQiSg](https://youtu.be/dAwJyspQiSg).

Retired Judge Dale Ikeda, our other primary speaker, said that more than “125,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were interned for approximately three years during World War II.” These people did not stand trial; they were forced to leave their homes and businesses and were put in concentration camps around the country. Two gathering locations were in Fresno: one at the Fairgrounds and the other in Pinedale.

“I think the topic is relevant today because of 9/11 and, more recently, former President Donald Trump has stated that his goal is to round up and intern hundreds of thousands of immigrants who are in the country without papers,” Ikeda said.

More details about events related to this civil liberties issue will be available soon.



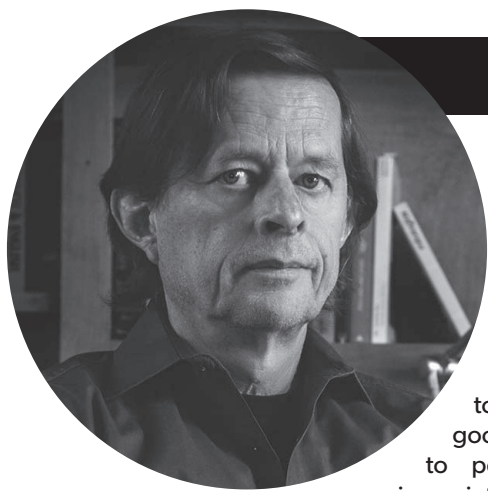
The *Community Alliance* Fall Fundraiser was held at the SEIU 521 union hall and was a huge success. Thanks to everyone who came and contributed. Photo by Howard Watkins

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FROM THE EDITOR

# Our Polarized World



It seems that we have lost that “in the middle” ideology. The thought of “balance” between two opposite worlds that used to make some people feel good. I remember listening to people analyze opposite viewpoints and try to find “the best” or “the positive” from each perspective.

They certainly enjoyed that exercise, and it made them look like intelligent folks.

I wonder where they are now. I rarely see such people anymore. These days, discussions are passionate, often without logic of any kind. Of course, I am talking about discussions involving social issues. When the topic is sports, for instance, you could understand the passion and lack of logical arguments.

It is as if the arguments have given way to poison and hatred. And this basically comes from “the top,” which makes the situation even more dangerous. A TV network that institutionalized racism and vitriolic

speech. A former president—now running again for the presidency—who openly insults his opponents and anybody he doesn’t like. These are among the main “influencers” of this new way of talking, which doesn’t necessarily mean “communicating.”

In short, everything now is black and white, which is wrong and dangerous because it makes reaching a consensus almost impossible especially when we have so many issues on the table, such as climate change. It is essential that our leaders come up with solutions to address these issues. However, we see the opposite: wars, autocratic leaders refusing to listen to a different tune and imposing certain views (theirs), fanaticism and more (of the same).

There is not much room for optimism. However, I think it’s worth it to keep on going and try to dialogue, bring valid arguments to the forefront and avoid worthless confrontations—without giving up your principles and values. To be firm and strong is not the same as being a fanatic. We don’t need more fanatics. What happens when you get too many of them in the same room? Well, look at our Congress, particularly the Republican side.

Depressing, isn’t it?  
Till next month.

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

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**Deadline:**  
15th of the previous month. Articles 800-1,200 words. For more details, contact editor@fresnoalliance.com.

**Peace and Social Justice Calendar:**

Please submit all activities to calendar@fresnoalliance.com by the 15th of the previous month.

**Letters to the Editor:**

E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com. Up to 200 words.

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PROVIDE FEEDBACK. E-MAIL EDITOR@FRESNOALLIANCE.COM.

## Letters to the Editor

### Planned Destruction?

Democracy is in peril. Whether from Donald Trump, the Tea Party/MAGA/Republican Party, ambivalent independents or complacent (or willfully ignorant) Democrats, the future of our republic is in imminent danger of being displaced with authoritarianism, or worse.

As the largest Democratic entity in the country aside from the DNC (Democratic National Committee), one would expect the California Democratic Party (CDP) to be leading the effort to save democracy. But that ain’t happening.

By all appearances, the state party is AWOL in this effort and the problem seems to be at the top.

Since becoming the state party chair, Rusty Hicks has done the following: moved from Los Angeles County to Humboldt County, passed the bar exam and teaches every week in a prison. These might be laudable actions for your average citizen, but Hicks receives a six-figure salary for heading the CDP—at a time of national crisis unparalleled since the Civil War. And he’s asleep at the wheel.

But it gets worse. Now, Hicks is running for the State Assembly in his new locale without stepping down as CDP chair.

With friends like this, who needs enemies?

America is at a crossroads, and it is imperative that the Democratic Party rise to the occasion.

Saul Ross  
Selma

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# What If All the Cops Were Criminals?

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

"Just as every cop is a criminal and all the sinners saints."—Rolling Stones

Unhoused residents say the Fresno Police Department's Homeless Assistance Response Team members commit crimes everyday. There are many witnesses to these crimes. The crimes include theft of property, civil rights abuses and violations of the Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clause of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

A 2018 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling, *Martin v. Boise*, found that cities cannot impose criminal sanctions against the unhoused sleeping outdoors when there is no access to shelter.

A complaint filed by the author with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding Fresno Ordinance Sections 10-2101 of the Municipal Code was accepted, and the City of Fresno was required to respond to the complainant (see the sidebar).

The encampment sweep referenced in the sidebar took place behind the Travelers Inn shelter on Parkway Drive. Most of the people at the encampment were back on the streets as of the day before Thanksgiving because they were "exited" from the shelter for trivial reasons.

It seems that the shelter operator, RH Community Builders, is unfairly exiting people to make it appear that the shelter is shifting people to permanent housing. That allows the shelter to provide a room to a new unhoused person and increases payments to RH for shelter services.

Rudy Salazar, a current resident of Travelers Inn, said that "people are often kicked out for little or no reason. Things like a dirty room. Like having recyclables in the room. My friend, Kevin J., was hospitalized for several days and when he came back he was kicked out."

Walter Parker, an elderly encampment resident, was being forced to move that day. He has stayed in several shelters in the past year and a half and was recently exited out of Travelers because he was not there for a "wellness check." He was previously exited from the Ambassador, another RH Community Builders shelter, after a friend died on the street and he was away for a few days.



Fresno's finest overseeing the destruction of property on Nov. 22. Photo by Bob McCloskey

Kyle Portillo and Andrea Martinez, also residents at the Travelers Inn, said that "an elderly woman named Cassie was kicked out in 105° weather last summer. She passed away from heat exhaustion the same day. She wasn't a criminal. She was an old lady. And she's not the only one that died on the streets here after being kicked out of the shelter. There have been at least four or five others."

Sadly, after being "exited" from shelters people will meet the same fate as all unhoused people: the constant harassment, forced relocation and theft of property by the Fresno Police Department.

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Bob McCloskey is an activist and a reporter for the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

## Response to the City of Fresno Position

Bob McCloskey, an advocate for the unhoused, filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) relative to Fresno Ordinance Sections 10-2101 (the "Ordinance" in the letter below) of the City of Fresno's Municipal Code. HUD required that the City respond to McCloskey, the complainant, and the city manager, Georgeanne White, did so. McCloskey forwarded the following reply to the City. To date, the City has not responded to McCloskey and the HUD complaint remains open.

In your letter you state the Ordinance "does not criminalize the unhoused but is intended to protect the public and ensure that sensitive areas remain accessible." This statement is patently false.

You further state that "the City was intentional in following the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision regarding *Martin v. Boise* ensuring that the Ordinance included the provision of notices with information on

how individuals can retrieve their property and where to get it. Additionally the Ordinance does not include any imposition of fees, taxes or fines to retrieve items." Again, this statement is false.

In your response, you also claim the Ordinance is intended to keep sensitive areas accessible to the disabled. As you know, the Ordinance goes beyond that. It bans unhoused individuals from being in alleyways or under freeway overpasses. It goes well beyond banning unhoused people from sidewalks, it also bans people from parks, libraries, being near homeless shelters and almost everywhere in the city of Fresno.

You imply the Ordinance is meant to assist the disabled when in fact the city routinely forces disabled unhoused people to move their property on a daily basis. The city does not provide access to the warming centers in the winter and cooling centers in the summer for disabled unhoused people. The city does nothing to assist the unhoused residents that are disabled. In fact, the city punishes and criminalizes them.

You claim the city is not criminalizing the unhoused with this ordinance, however, on a daily basis, the Fresno P.D. Homeless Assistance Response Team harasses and forces people to move somewhere else.

Housing is never offered. Routinely, possessions are thrown into trash trucks by city personnel. This practice is, in itself, criminalizing the unhoused. It is cruel and unusual punishment. I have witnessed and documented this many times. It violates the *Martin v. Boise* decision.

In addition, although you claim no fines or storage fees are imposed, there are costs. To retrieve property, the cost of transportation, travel time and the health effects caused by stress must be considered. These are real costs for unhoused people, many who are elderly and disabled.

I was at a recent encampment sweep which I documented on video. The Homeless Assistance Response Team and public works personnel there offered no storage to the 25 to 30 people that were there. No housing was offered. The unhoused people at this sweep were treated cruelly by the Fresno P.D. HART.

They were harassed and hurried. Many people's possessions were thrown away in violation of the letter and intent of the *Martin v. Boise* decision. As you know, the destruction of property and the cruel and unusual punishment of the homeless is prohibited by this decision.

## Supervisors' Political Appointees to Censor Books

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

On Nov. 28, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted to establish a censorship panel for the Fresno County Library system. An 11-member panel, with two members appointed by each supervisor and one by the County Administrative Office, is empowered to review all books currently in the Children's Sections of libraries within the Fresno County Library System, as well as new acquisitions. They will determine whether books will remain freely accessible or be removed.

Supervisor Steve Brandau brought this resolution, absurdly named Parents Matter, to the BOS initially at its Nov. 7 meeting. Some changes were made to his original proposal. The amendments included posting a list of censored books and creating an "appeal process." The so-called appeal process is right back to the original censorship board!

This panel has no requirements for membership other than residence in the district of the appointing supervisor. Members will not be required to have any background or experience in library services, literature or child development. They don't have to be parents. In fact, there is no requirement that members of this panel even know how to read.

Initially, the plan was to place this measure on the consent agenda, where formula stuff like minutes of the last meeting

are approved without discussion and by consensus without a vote on each item. However, Supervisor Sal Quintero moved this item onto the regular agenda so that there could be public discussion and a measure-specific vote.

A large number of members of the public passed through metal detectors and swarms of armed police to be present at this meeting and express their opinions. All who had a chance to speak spoke against the measure, except Clovis City Council Member Diane Pearce, who said she represented hundreds of people.

Some spoke from the basis of law and principle, citing the obvious conflicts with First Amendment rights. Some spoke from personal experience, with moving accounts of how books dealing with diversity were important and how their removal would be harmful.

It is no secret—one can check the American Library Association list of books most often banned in the United States—that non-white experience and history, as well as sexual diversity, are behind most decisions to censor. *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison top the list of banned books.

Supervisors Quintero and Brian Pacheco voted against the censorship measure, while Supervisors Brandau, Nathan Magsig and Buddy Mendes voted in favor of a censorship board. See you in court, fellas, as well as at the polls. What did County Counsel Daniel C. Cederborg advise them about the legality of this measure?

If the BOS does manage to set up this board before the court declares it in violation of First Amendment rights, we need to take full advantage of our Brown Act (Sunshine Act) freedoms. The meetings of the censorship board must have public notification and be open to the public. So all should participate and publicize the meetings. Let the sun shine.

The pre-censorship of library materials by political appointees is a violation of the rights of free speech and

expression, First Amendment rights that should be upheld, not threatened, by the BOS, in this case clearly working from a basis of perfect ignorance.

When Brandau was asked by ABC30 news reporter Kate Nemarich, "How often did you say you visited the library?," he replied, "Oh, I visited the library years ago. I haven't been to the library in years, but all of those questions and those answers, they're meaningless."

Parents have the right to choose the books their own children read. No one has the right to censor the reading of others, or of the children of others.

The creation of the censorship board for our libraries is an egregious overstepping of boundaries for the BOS. It is such a clear violation of our rights that it is almost irrelevant that there are no qualifications listed for appointment to the censorship board. There is no legitimate role for political-hack censors in our libraries.

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



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# Yokuts Valley: Respect or Racism?

BY LINDA TUBACH

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors are making a last-ditch attempt to hold on to S— Valley and erase the town’s new name, Yokuts Valley. The supervisors voted 3-2 for a charter amendment that would put place naming and renaming power under their control. The amendment will appear on the March 4 primary election ballot as Measure B.

Supervisors Nathan Magsig, Buddy Mendes and Steve Brandau, along with some vocal residents, remain blind to past and present injustices against Native Americans and to the present-day derogatory meaning of the s— term. S— Valley was renamed Yokuts Valley by the state and federal governments after extensive public input that prioritized the recommendations of local tribes. Yokuts is an inclusive ethnic and regional term encompassing many tribes in the central Sierra foothills and Central Valley.

The residents and the supervisors who fail to embrace Yokuts Valley profoundly disrespect the opinions and experience of Native Americans who have lived here for many generations and have educated us.

At Supervisor Magsig’s so-called community meeting, we learned from Kenneth Woodrow, chair of the Wuksachi tribe, that during the 1850–1870 California genocide against Native Americans this valley was filled with indigenous women when it got its name because the men were murdered for bounties offered by the governor beginning in 1855.

We learned from public comment by Delaine Bill at the Board of Supervisors about the bullying endured by Native American kids on the Dunlap school bus riding through S— Valley.

We learned from Dunlap Mono tribal vice chair Shirley Guevara and her daughter, Taweah Garcia, about the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, in shocking percentages higher than any other group.

Finally, the name Yokuts Valley supports local indigenous tribes’ efforts to gain federal recognition. Roman Raintree, who launched the renaming campaign in 2020, noted that 18 treaties with 120 tribes were destroyed when California became a state and that, today, California and Fresno

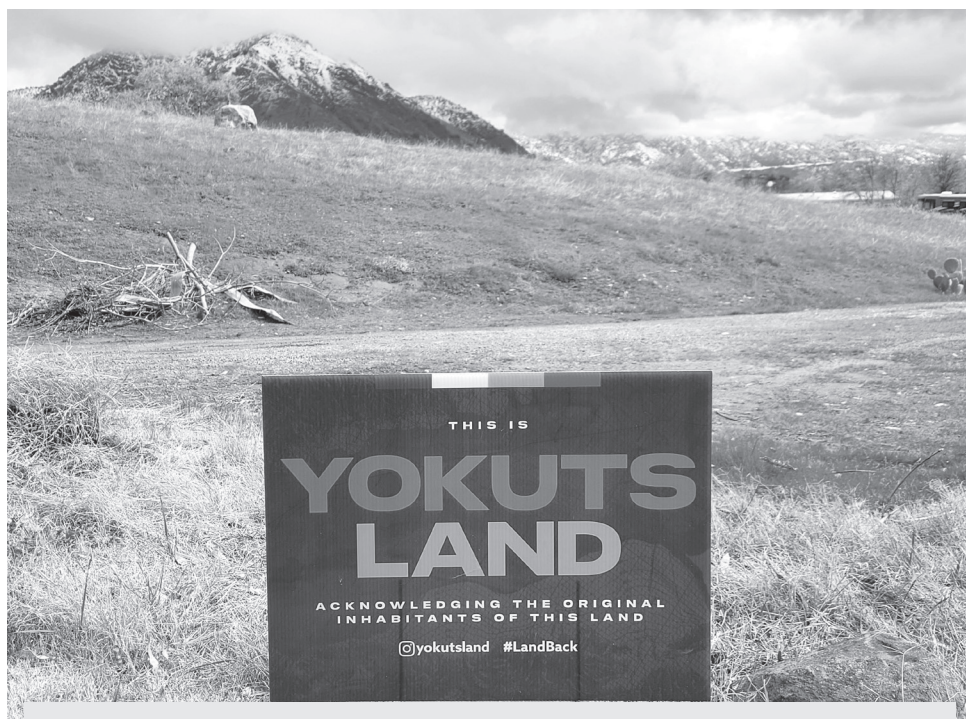


Photo by Bob McCloskey

County have the largest number of tribes still seeking acknowledgement as Native Americans from the federal government.

Ending the name S— Valley for the ancestral homeland of local tribes and the renaming of Yokuts Valley are essential

steps forward. Voting no on Measure B will support Yokuts Valley.

\*\*\*\*\*

Linda Tubach is a retired high school civics teacher and resident of Yokuts Valley.

# Smoggies Return in January

BY KEVIN HALL

Fresno’s premier awards ceremony for worst quotes and votes by local polluters and those who serve them—The Smoggies—is returning for a third straight year. Renowned for its sarcasm, lack of trigger warnings (sorry/not sorry, Young Dems) and many dairy cows in attendance (so many cows), nominees have a chance to take home the highly coveted Golden Inhaler for their 2023 performances.

Broadcast live before a select studio audience, The Smoggies will air on the *Climate Politics* radio show on Jan. 12 at 5 p.m. on KFCF 88.1 FM. The following quotes are just a few of the past year’s highlights in polluter politics as practiced in, around and on Fresno.

As a warmup for this year’s festivities, you’re invited to play a special, pre-show game of Smoggies mix-and-match. Here are some quotes. Below are the sources or related projects. Tune in on Jan. 12 to learn how well you do.

### What they said:

“This is a sprawl project. This assumption just doesn’t make sense. It’s not a legally adequate environmental review. It needs an overhaul. Right now, it’s woefully deficient.”

“The doors are open to any company that wants to benefit from exploiting a low-income community with cheap land.”

“No populations were identified within the project area; therefore, it was determined that the project would not have a disproportionate adverse environmental impact.”

“The Dumna tribe of the Yokut Native Americans once called this home, living in harmony with the environment, and fishing for Chinook salmon in the San Joaquin River... Now, thanks to the efforts of a select group of the most respected builders, we believe it’s time to live in harmony.”

“Motivated by my strong belief in creating a healthcare system that is inclusive and accessible to all individuals in our region, I felt compelled to pursue a board seat.”

“The climate transition is fully under way, and there’s an intense need for open land to build green projects on.”

“And when you drive on this freeway, or this overpass, and you get to the top of it, slow down a little bit, look at the blue sky. I’m a man of faith, and I know that there is something after this, and those veterans that gave it all are looking down, and they are saying thank you.”

“This is just another tool in our toolbox to expand the availability of housing across our entire city...We’re laying the groundwork for the market to be able to develop.”

“So in essence, [the] ‘no net increase’ language would essentially stop us from being able to meet a lot of our climate goals in terms of transitioning to an increase in electric vehicles...In short, the conflict and zoning with neighborhood mixed use is going to potentially prohibit businesses down there from being able to clean and green their operations.”

“We are not here today to alienate any part of our community. However, if people in this community or anywhere else support the terrorist activity that occurred on Saturday in Israel, then I would question their allegiance to the United States of America.”

“A lot of that new technology can be sited in rural California...We met with Japan, and Japan has a real need for hydrogen.”

### Who said it?

- A. Politician
- B. Developer
- C. Bureaucrat
- D. None of the above

### Where is it?

- 1. American Avenue
- 2. Community Regional Medical Center
- 3. Downtown Fresno
- 4. Dubai, UAE

## CLIMATE POLITICS



The coveted Golden Inhaler will be awarded to winners at the Third Annual Smoggies, airing on KFCF 88.1 FM on Jan. 12 at 5 p.m.

- 5. Eaton Plaza
- 6. Elm Avenue Rezone
- 7. Friant Ranch
- 8. Southeast Development Area
- 9. The Preserve
- 10. Veterans Boulevard

Hold onto your answers and tune into The 2023 Smoggies to see how well you did. The show airs on *Climate Politics*, Jan. 12, 5 p.m.–6 p.m., on KFCF 88.1 FM.

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

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# Japanese Concentration Camps in Images

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

In 1942, the infamous Executive Order 9066, signed by then President Franklin D. Roosevelt, ordered all Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans living on the West Coast to be interned in concentration camps because, according to the authorities of that time, they represented a danger of espionage or sabotage in favor of Japan during

World War II. The executive order was signed after the attack of Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, by Japan.

There remains no proof of any espionage or sabotage carried out by citizens of Japanese origin.

More than 120,000 people were sent to camps around the country. The majority of them were *nisei*, those born in the United States. The rest were *sansei*, the children of *nisei*, and *issei*, immigrants born in Japan with residency in the United States.

Although the United States took similar action against Germans and Italians, they represented a small group of people incarcerated compared to the Japanese, which led to the conclusion that racism played an important part in who would get incarcerated. At the time, most Americans approved this measure without any evidence of disloyalty by the Japanese.

When WWII was over, the incarcerated Japanese were liberated. Many of them lost their property during the incarceration, which represents an ominous act of state violence and abuse.

The Japanese fought over time for the U.S. government to recognize the abuse and for their dignity. It finally paid off when in 1983, a report,



A man holding his grandchild at the Manzanar Relocation Center (undated)

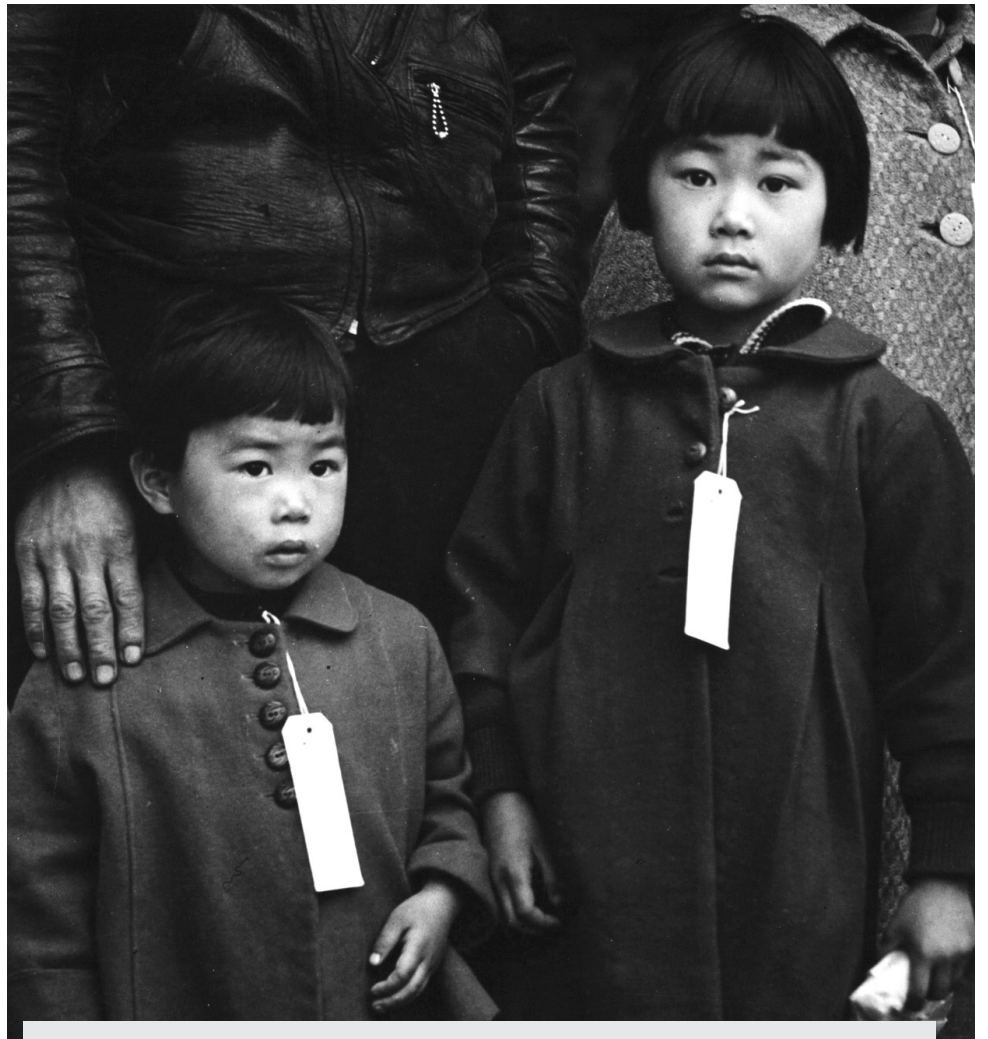
“Personal Justice Denied,” by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC,) found “little evidence of Japanese disloyalty at the time and concluded that the incarceration had been the product of racism.”

In 1988, the U.S. government apologized for the Japanese incarceration and paid \$20,000 in compensation to each former detainee.

Photos courtesy of the Central Photographic File of the War Relocation Authority and the Dorothea Lange Digital Archive



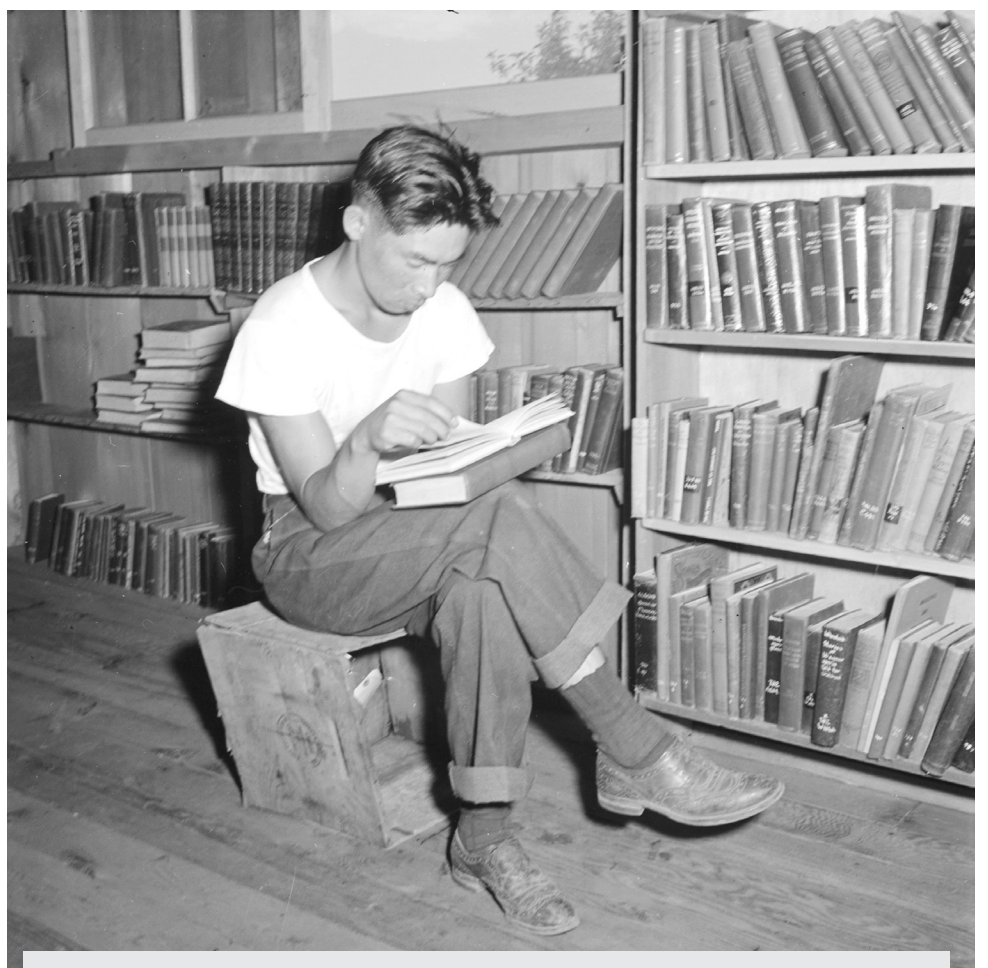
Families of Japanese ancestry arrive at the Turlock Assembly Center on May 2, 1942.



Two children of the Mochida family who, with their parents, await an evacuation bus in Centerville on May 8, 1942.



A grandfather awaits the evacuation bus in Centerville on May 19, 1942.



A barrack building has been turned into a library at the Manzanar Relocation Center (July 1, 1942).

# The Passing of Comedian and Activist Tou Ger Xiong

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

The actor, comedian and activist of Hmong origin, Tou Ger Xiong, died on Dec. 11. According to a statement from Xiong's family, he was murdered in Colombia after being kidnapped by criminals who demanded a ransom.

Xiong had traveled to Colombia to visit and was in a romantic relationship with a woman from Medellín.

Xiong, 50, was born in Laos and later settled in Minnesota, although he traveled often to visit family and friends in Fresno.

Xiong performed in three editions of the Tamejavi Festival in Fresno, in 2002, 2004 and 2006, having a great impact on the audience due to his humor, dynamism and social commitment.

The following is a statement produced from the Pan Valley Institute of Fresno about the influence Xiong's work in our area:

The news of the tragic and violent death of our dear friend, Tou Ger Xiong, profoundly saddens us. Tou Ger was a Hmong artist, storyteller, educator, comedian and cultural organizer. He was a headliner of the First Tamejavi Festival in 2002. He quickly became part of the Tamejavi family because he understood and shared the values guiding the work. He performed in three Tamejavi festivals and engaged in strategic thinking gatherings and dialogues as we set the foundation for promoting social change through the critical intersection of culture, creative expression, and active citizenship.

With his storytelling and comedy, Tou Ger contributed to the healing process from the collective trauma of forced displacement of his Hmong and other communities of color. He humanized the Hmong story and constantly encouraged young people to learn, embrace and tell their own stories. "Tell your own story because if you don't, somebody else will, and it might not be your true story." Tou Ger would often say.

Tou Ger, we will miss you dearly and commit to carrying on your mission of bringing joy to communities that have experienced so much pain. We will continue enabling communities of color to tell their stories and preserve their collective memory.



Comedian Tou Ger Xiong performing at the Tamejavi Festival in Fresno in 2004. He was a charismatic performer and loved to involve the audience. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

Lar Yang, a local graphic designer and cultural activist, expressed sadness for the death of Xiong. "He made us feel proud of ourselves, of our culture. He worked with youth, especially from rural communities, where he really made an impact.

"It's not easy to go through life with your memories of displacement, of not belonging, of losing friends and relatives in a war. Xiong gave us a sense of pride and belonging. He will be really missed."

\*\*\*\*\*

Eduardo Stanley is the editor of the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at [editor@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:editor@fresnoalliance.com).

## Getting to Know a School Board Candidate

BY STEVEN ROESCH

(Author's note: Dan Bordona has announced his candidacy for a school board seat in the November 2024 election. The author worked as a teacher at Edison High School when Bordona was also there—first as a student teacher, later as an administrator.)

When some people retire, they decide to travel, often taking multiple trips to exotic locations. Others devote themselves to hobbies that they'd previously neglected: painting, woodworking, playing music.

Dan Bordona, though, has chosen a different path.

After a 33-year career with the Fresno Unified School District (FUSD), he has decided to run for the Hoover area seat on the school board.

Should he get a seat on the board? That's something that voters will have to decide in November 2024. But given the amount of time that he worked in the FUSD—both as a teacher and as an administrator, at various sites as well as in the downtown office—his candidacy deserves attention and serious consideration.

What prompted him to take this step? First and foremost, he's tossing his hat into the ring because he's always been passionate about this district and about education in general. "We do the most important work there is as educators. That might be a cliché, but it's the truth."

Which critical issues need to be addressed in the district, in his opinion? He provides a wide-ranging list.

### District Facilities

Some sites have been neglected for a variety of reasons and urgently need an upgrade. Hoover High School, where Bordona worked for 10 years, provides a salient example. There, the quad has always looked bad—mud, dry grass or both at the same time. For years, there's been talk at Hoover about remodeling the office and building a theater, but to date those plans haven't come to fruition.

Hoover, and other schools like it, need to get the attention they deserve.

### Spending Decisions

How wisely are funds being allocated district-wide? Fiscal responsibility—an ongoing focus on the way spending impacts education—needs to be front and center. Here, above all, he has in mind "the district's penchant for spending money on outside consultants," a long-standing habit that needs to be reined in.

### Relations with Teachers and the FTA

Last spring, when the union-district negotiation sessions were available online, Bordona was disappointed by what he saw. The district team was consistently unprepared, he

feels. In many instances, the Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) would make a proposal and the FUSD response would be something like "We'll get back to you about that."

That sort of behavior led many teachers to feel that the district leadership was dragging its feet. Teacher discontent rose accordingly: They felt that they weren't being taken seriously.

He approves of the deal that was finally struck—"it included some good give and take"—but it could have been completed back in May.

His conclusion: The district needs to learn from its missteps in this round of contract talks and, moving forward, conduct future negotiations in a more streamlined and productive fashion.

### Nonacademic Use of Digital Devices

When Bordona worked at Bullard High School for three weeks last winter, he witnessed that site's "pouch policy" in action. In one sense, the protocol—designed to restrict nonacademic use of phones and other devices in classrooms—wasn't working at all.

The policy called for students to place their phones in Yondr pouches in the morning and get them unlocked when classes were over for the day. Surprisingly, only a handful of students actually followed the procedure when Bordona was there. One afternoon, for example, only seven students needed their pouches unlocked. In that sense, the policy hadn't turned out the way that people had envisioned.

From a broader perspective, though, it was having a major impact in classrooms, Bullard teachers assured him. Now, they rarely need to report nonacademic phone use to the office. Teachers told Bordona that the learning environment in their rooms had greatly improved.

Originally, when Bullard proposed introducing the Yondr pouches, there was lots of community pushback. Now, however, given the results that Bullard has seen, he wonders why the district hasn't decided to implement this approach or something like it more widely. He believes that it's high time to tackle the undesirability of out-of-control phone use at many sites.

### Student Achievement

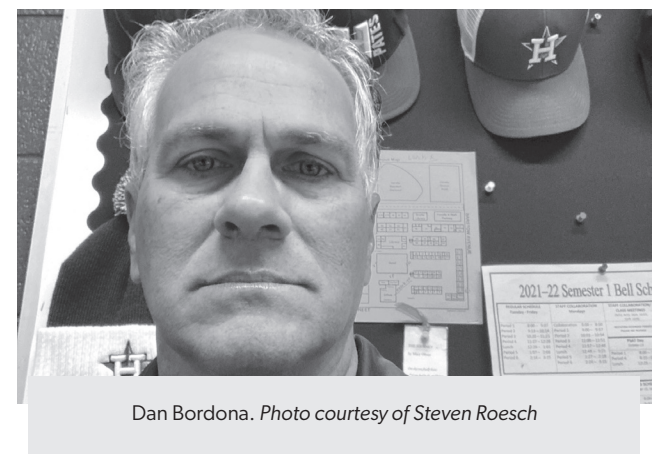
A high priority for Bordona—something that's concerned him since the start of his career—is bolstering real student achievement.

How much students have actually learned isn't always obvious. Apparent markers of academic success can sometimes be deceptive.

Given his background at secondary schools, he's especially troubled by the "denigration of the value of a high school diploma." Ongoing grade inflation has contributed to this weakening of a diploma's traditional value.

Another contributing factor is the relatively new strategy of credit recovery, an opportunity that's now available in all of the district's comprehensive and alternative secondary schools. A company called Edgenuity supplies the materials for these courses.

Instead of attaining credits the traditional way, in a classroom for an entire school year's worth of instruction, students attend relatively short "classes" in a computer lab. Those who "teach" Edgenuity sessions don't need to have



Dan Bordona. Photo courtesy of Steven Roesch

credentials in the subjects being offered; they're merely present to monitor the students who work independently at their individual computers. The content of these courses doesn't always match state standards: an Edgenuity chemistry class, for example, won't necessarily include all of the material that should be covered in such a course.

"It's not about learning," as one Edgenuity instructor once put it. "It's about credit recovery."

The Edgenuity program is now well entrenched in the FUSD; several months ago, a district spokesperson said that since 2014 more than 21,407 students had gotten credits for courses using credit recovery.

Counselors, under pressure to get as many kids as possible to fulfill the A-G requirements (the requirements needed for students to apply for a place at a University of California campus), have on occasion turned to Edgenuity to raise these numbers—giving students a semblance of impressive academic success that the reality of credit recovery hardly warrants.

For Bordona, that's "ludicrous" and needs to stop.

Beyond that, he feels strongly that there needs to be an upper limit as to how many credits can be earned toward graduation using the Edgenuity route.

Some students have in fact earned two years' worth of credits—half of their academic coursework—in Edgenuity courses. This trend undermines the authority of teachers and undercuts attempts to impose academic rigor.

He concedes that Edgenuity has been improved since it originally appeared. It's now more rigorous than before and contains built-in features that check for possible cheating.

Still, he argues that it's unfair—to students, to their families and to the community—to diminish the worth of a diploma in this fashion.

To jump-start his campaign, Bordona has gotten involved with Facebook. There, starting in early 2024, he plans to share his thoughts about educational matters on a regular basis.

His approach to all the jobs that he's ever held has always been the same: to do the best work that he can and make the work enjoyable.

Should his election bid prove to be successful, he plans to bring that same mindset along for the ride.

\*\*\*\*\*

Steven Roesch is a retired German and English teacher who taught in the Fresno Unified School District for 30 years. Contact him at [stevencast12@comcast.net](mailto:stevencast12@comcast.net).



Did you know that the *Community Alliance* newspaper has had a Spanish-language section since 2012?



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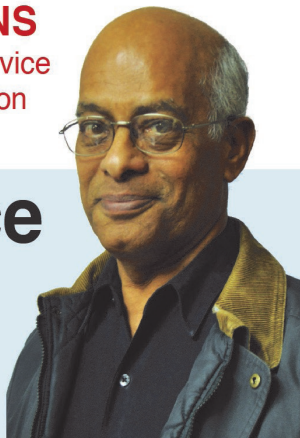
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# Impact of Climate Change on Food Security

BY DEBAY TADESSE

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) warns that the progress made in human development in recent decades could be slowed or even reversed by climate change when new threats emerge to food security and water, agricultural productivity and access, nutrition and public health.

Sea level rise, droughts, heat waves, floods and variations in rainfall are some of the effects of climate change that could cause an increase in the number of people experiencing food insecurity. Many climatic phenomena could become more intense, including river floods, flash floods, urban floods, sewer floods, glacial lake outbursts and coastal floods.

Furthermore, one of the world's leading scholars on the topic, American environmental economist Robert Mendelsohn, expressed his concerns, saying that because agriculture is essential to human survival, the effects of global warming on productive croplands are likely to threaten population welfare and national economies.

Until recently, most analyses of how climate change would affect the food and agriculture industries concentrated primarily on how it would affect food production and the world's food supply, giving other links in the food chain less weight. Food costs have increased dramatically in recent years, severely hurting vulnerable people.

Although definitions of *food security* help drive its goals and guide policy decisions, it's equally important to consider the processes that result in the intended ends. All four dimensions of food security—availability, accessibility, food utilization and stability of food systems—are impacted by climate change.

Based on the reviewed literature, climate change will severely impact food security. The effects will range from local to national and global when any of these four dimensions of food security are affected.

Its effects will be long term due to shifting precipitation and temperature patterns and short term due to more frequent and intense extreme weather events. Nevertheless, although food availability has been the main topic of most research, the other three dimensions of food security have not received enough consideration.

## Food Availability

The physical amounts of food produced, stored, processed, distributed and traded determine food availability. The adequacy evaluation is conducted by contrasting the availability of a food item with its estimated consumption demand. This method balances domestic markets, considering the significance of both domestic production and international commerce in guaranteeing a nation's food supply.

These components are analyzed in the Food and Agriculture Organization's national food balance sheets, among others. Food balance sheets provide crucial information on a country's food system in three categories: domestic food supply, food utilization and per capita total food supply values.

According to the 2022 statistics by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Economic Research Service, in the United States, there are more than two million farms and agricultural production occupies more than half the country's land. The statistics indicate that the number of farms has been slowly declining since the 1930s, though the average farm size has remained unchanged since the early 1970s.

## Food Accessibility

Food accessibility is a function of one's capacity to get entitlements, which are the social, legal, political and economic resources necessary to access food. Accessible and healthful food is essential for survival. Also, food has strong ties to social interactions, community and family.

The absence of safe and reliable food access can also negatively impact social networks and community support systems. The issues surrounding food access are complicated and have many overlapping causes. These include corporate dominance of agriculture and food, unemployment and poverty, unequal access to healthcare, and unpredictable weather and climate.

Furthermore, food accessibility ensures that everyone has physical, social and economic access to enough wholesome food that satisfies their dietary demands and preferences while meeting their needs for an active and healthy life.

Food consumption might be hampered by health problems and loss of access to drinking water, and it is expected that food access and utilization will be indirectly impacted by collateral impacts on household and individual incomes. The data demonstrates that significant funding is required for mitigation and adaptation measures in order to create a "climate-smart food system" that is more resilient to the effects of climate change on food security.

## Food Utilization

The term *food utilization* describes how food is used and how a person gets necessary nutrients from the food they eat. The changing climate is expected to bring changes in eating patterns and new problems for food safety, all of which could impact nutritional status in different ways.

There are significant adverse implications of climate change on food consumption. The decreased availability of wild foods (a collection of fresh fruits, fresh mushrooms, and fresh plants and vegetables) could impact food consumption and restrictions on small-scale horticulture production because of water constraints or labor shortages brought on by climate change. In addition, new pest and disease patterns, a recent phenomenon exacerbated by the changing environment, will impact human and plant health.

## Food System Stability

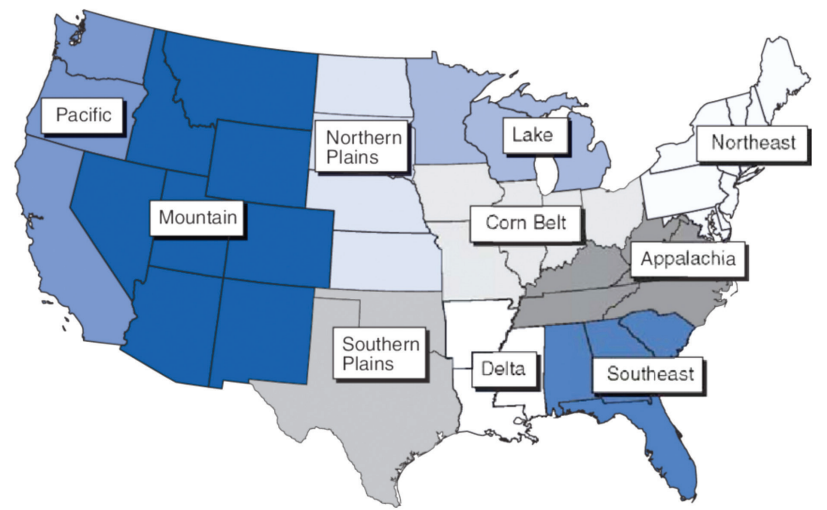
In addition to food and agricultural production, other food system activities such as processing, distribution, acquisition, preparation and consumption are crucial for ensuring food security. One of the most significant issues in adapting to climate change is ensuring food security in the setting of rising disaster risks. Rising food prices have increased the potential for adopting better land management techniques. However, several adaptation options in agriculture face a dilemma.

## Adaptation to Climate Change

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took effect on March 21, 1994. The 198 nations that have ratified the agreement are Parties to the Convention.

The ultimate goal of the UNFCCC is to stop "dangerous" human meddling with the climate system. Annual UN climate change conferences, often known as COPs, are the world's sole global climate change decision-making platform, with nearly all nations participating.

In this case, little East African countries like Djibouti, home to just over a million people, or major powers like the United States, China and Russia have the same influence over decision-making processes.



Farm production regions in the United States.  
Image courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Economic Research Service

What is adaptation? The UNFCCC defines *adaptation* as "the processes through which societies make themselves better able to cope with an uncertain future." Taking the necessary steps to mitigate its negative consequences (or capitalize on its good ones) through the required modifications and adjustments is part of adapting to climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines *adaptation* as "adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which exploits beneficial opportunities or moderates harm." Additional adaptation components include developing resilience to change and learning to manage new hazards.

An IPCC study from April 2007 cautioned that the world was not moving fast enough to stop the severe effects of excessive greenhouse gas emissions on the environment and economy.

The Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund and other bilateral, regional and multilateral channels have all offered funding proposals for adaptation measures; however, these proposals must be significantly increased in order to meet the challenge of climate change adaptation.

The goal of international negotiations such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) capacity-building framework is to provide financing bodies with a framework for carrying out their capacity-building initiatives related to climate change.

COP decisions can have global authority. Furthermore, decisions can only be reached by consensus. Every year, COP is held; COP 28 is the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC that took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from Nov. 30 to Dec. 12, 2023.

Parties to the UNFCCC send representatives to participate in the negotiations. Observer organizations also send delegates, and industry representatives and lobbyists attend. Other specialists and stakeholders are present, including business executives, youth, climate scientists, Indigenous peoples and media.

A COP includes blue and green zones. The UNFCCC is in charge of overseeing the blue zone. Delegates from UNFCCC-accredited organizations can attend speaker and panel events and country negotiations.

The host nation is in charge of the green zone, which gives unaffiliated groups a platform to advance the conversation on climate change. More than 69,000 people attended COP28. Negotiations at COP28 hope that Parties will deliver an ambitious agreement that sets the world on a more sustainable future.

In short, the purpose of the COPs is to reach a global consensus on solutions to the climate catastrophe, like keeping the increase in global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, assisting societies that are most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

Additional adaptation strategies involve land-use changes that take advantage of modified agro-climate conditions. Agriculture extends beyond farms. It includes industries such as food service and food manufacturing. It also relies heavily on land, water and other natural resources that climate affects.

The pace, intensity and degree of adaptation of farmers and ranchers will determine how climate change affects agriculture. Crop rotation and integrated pest management are only two of the several climate change adaptation strategies now used in American agriculture.

Regarding agricultural production and water, climate adaptation might include the following:

- Water-wise irrigation systems
- Risk management
- Initiatives to help small farmers and other vulnerable groups protect and promote agricultural production, including improving agricultural extension services to increase yields
- The establishment of independent climate information exchange networks between farmers and among communities, cities and counties across the region
- Using crop species and types with stronger resilience to shocks, drought and heat stress
- Modifying irrigation techniques, including amount, timing or technology (e.g., the drip irrigation system)
- The adoption of water-efficient technologies to harvest water, conserve soil moisture and reduce siltation and saltwater intrusion
- Enhanced water management to stop erosion, nutrient leaching and waterlogging
- The integration of the crop, livestock, forestry and fishery sectors at farm and catchment levels
- Planning for inclusive, accountable and transparent adaptation, with the active involvement of people all around the region

## Conclusion

Building capacity to adapt to and address the problem of climate change requires immediate investment at all levels. The domains of climate science and institutional frameworks need capacity building for human resource experts. Furthermore, climate change poses a significant national threat that necessitates swift, cooperative, equitable and responsibly shared action.

To effectively cooperate on climate change concerns, political commitments from both the federal and state levels are required, as well as the involvement of major stakeholders from the climate change community where they are not currently active.

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*Debay Tadesse has a Ph.D. in African studies specializing in public policy and development from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and an M.A. in African history and a B.A. in world history from Georgia State University in Atlanta. He currently teaches at Fresno City College and Fresno State.*



# SIERRA CLUB

## TEHIPITE CHAPTER

**This month, to commemorate the New Year, our Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter will review some of our work in 2023 and our plans for 2024.**

**Sprawl in the City and County of Fresno:** Just as our natural resources are being vacuumed up by corporations intent on accelerating the depletion of fossil fuels, the City and County of Fresno employ wishful thinking and outright denial of both natural and environmental laws to propose even more unsustainable urban sprawl into agricultural lands.

The City's Southeast Development Area (SEDA), is the latest fantasy-based proposal for an additional 130,000 residents, nearly all in single-family homes. Proposed between Fresno and Sanger, SEDA is to house a larger population than Clovis. With tax increases a forbidden subject in our region, and the City of Fresno's limited funds for roads and other infrastructure again destined for the edge of town, existing neighborhoods — even solidly middle-class ones — face declining health in the future. Without sufficient City funds to repair our crumbling infrastructure, homeowners will face declining property values as the City greenlights massive expansion. SEDA sets a precedent as the first large development in the County which does not require funding for new schools or fire and police services.

The Tehipite Chapter retained the CEQA attorney Doug Carstens to write detailed EIR comments critiquing the SEDA plan, which we believe violates state environmental law — not to mention common sense — just as the State of California and the courts are cracking down on cities that refuse to build multi-family and affordable housing.

For 2024, we can anticipate the long-awaited Fresno County General Plan Update, which no longer requires infrastructure before new housing is approved, and the return of the Friant Ranch project proposal thirteen years after it was originally proposed. The Sierra Club and League of Women Voters successfully halted this project after winning a landmark decision from the California Supreme Court in 2018.

**Sequoia forest protection campaign:** Our federal lands have come under assault by (now retired) Rep. Kevin McCarthy of Bakersfield. After ex-President Trump installed new management for Yosemite and Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks, Trump demanded in 2019 that the Parks produce a logging plan to join the U.S. Forest Service in managing the Park as an extractive industry might. Now, McCarthy's Orwellian "Save the Sequoias Act" bill would join together a number of federal agencies in a coalition to impose their industrial vision on Wilderness areas of the Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks, evading environmental review and denying forest science.

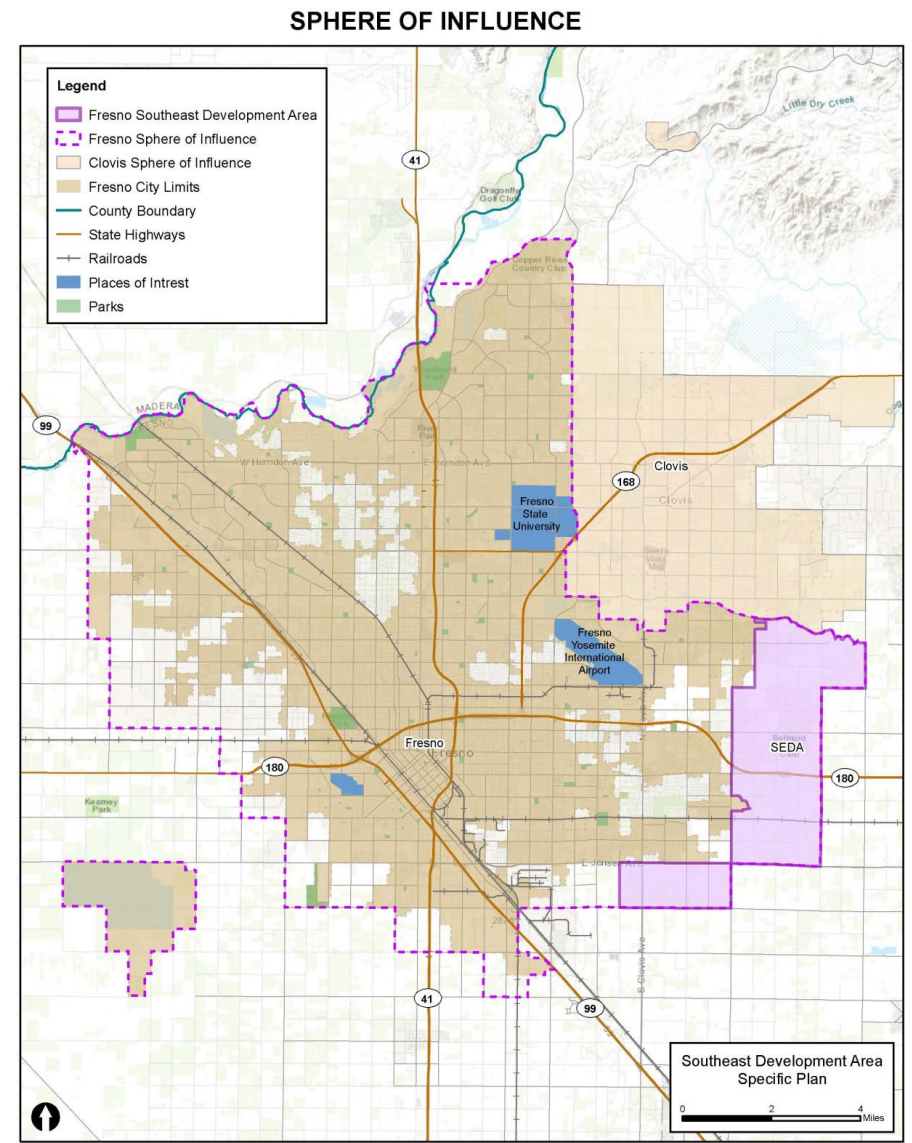
Recent, naturally occurring lightning-caused fires in the Parks, aggravated by the suppression of fire in the giant sequoia groves for more than a century, led to a loss of 8% of the sequoia trees. The National Park Service predicted that these trees may never grow back. However, recent photographs taken of the high-intensity burn areas reveal an emerald carpet of sturdy, 2-3 foot tall sequoia seedlings, just 15 months old. Embarrassed by this unexpected rebound of a tree species — which, after all, has adapted to high-intensity fire

The Sierra Club California/Nevada Wilderness team invites you to a Zoom presentation by Dr. Chad Hanson: "Stop Messing with Mother Nature: Keep Our Forests Wild." Author of the recent book *Smokescreen: Debunking Wildfire Myths to Save Our Forests and Our Climate*, Dr. Hanson will discuss the remarkable rejuvenation of giant sequoia groves following recent wildfires, how and why government agencies have misled the public, and how the media has gotten this issue so wrong regarding the misguided plan to create tree plantations in recently-burned Sequoia groves in designated Wilderness in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.



Chad Hanson visiting Redwood Mountain Grove, scorched by fire, with a carpet of giant sequoia seedlings. Kings Canyon National Park, Oct. 2023.

Please join us on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 5:30 pm on Zoom. To receive the Zoom link to this presentation, email JoAnne at jo\_clarke@att.net.



Map 2.1 Sphere of Influence

for tens of millions of years — the Park Service and U.S. Forest Service have closed these groves to the public.

Our Fresno-based Tehipite Chapter has led Sierra Club opposition to this disastrous forest planning and the McCarthy bill. We filed a lawsuit against the Forest Service in federal court, retained some of the best forest litigation attorneys in the nation, the Earthrise Law Center in Portland, and persuaded the national Club to launch a comprehensive campaign to protect these majestic monarch trees from destruction. Our smaller partner groups have simultaneously challenged the National Park Service in Federal court. Our forests are needed to suck up atmospheric CO2, maintain cool and shade, preserve moisture, and retain carbon to limit global warming. And the only living giant sequoia groves are all in the southern Sierra.

Spring 2024 will bring our annual Earth Day Fresno celebration in April and we're excited to see the return of our traditional March potluck banquet, following an extended, Covid-based hiatus. The public is welcome, of course. Stay tuned to this page for details.

January General Meeting IN-PERSON at the Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Fresno. Join us **Wednesday, January 17 at 7 PM** for Master Gardener Gwen Olshove. Gwen will present "Making the Most of Warm Season Vegetables," covering such topics as designing your own garden, growing from plants and seeds, how to improve your garden soil, encouraging the good bugs, and preventing garden problems.



If you'd like to receive a 2-page planting guide that you can print and bring to the meeting, email Karen Hammer at ecuagirl45@yahoo.com and type "planting guide" in the subject line.

## RECLAIMING REVOLUTIONARY MLK

What would MLK say about the  
Gaza Genocide?



### Event Program:

- **Welcome Address: Reverend Floyd D. Harris**
- **Moderated Panel Discussion: Hosted by Reza Nekumanesh**
- **Question and Answer Session**
- **Light Refreshments**

FRESNO A.M.E. MINISTRIES  
806 COLLINS AVE  
FRESNO, CA 93706

MONDAY  
JANUARY 15, 2024  
2:00P-4:00P

Brought to you by the *Revolutionary MLK Organizing Committee*

### NAMES MATTER, VOTE NO ON MEASURE B

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors have placed Measure B on the March 4, 2024 primary election ballot. The proposed measure gives authority to the Board to “establish or change geographic feature or place names within the unincorporated portions of the County of Fresno”. The Board falsely argues that Measure B is about local control.

Measure B is not about local control of geographic names. It is a specific response to the name squaw (“sq\_\_\_”). The job of naming places has been and still is, a local responsibility. This Measure will reverse the renaming of Squaw Valley to Yokuts Valley, which violates state law!

The first Native American Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland declared that the term “Sq\_\_\_” was offensive and derogatory, and in 2023, the word “Sq\_\_\_” was removed from nearly 650 places ACROSS AMERICA, including Fresno’s “Sq\_\_\_” Valley.

California’s first Native American Assemblymember James Ramos authored AB 2022 to remove “Sq\_\_\_” from all California place names by 2025. This state law passed with a unanimous vote of both houses of the legislature.

When Fresno County filed a lawsuit claiming that AB 2022 violated residents’ rights, the Judge recognized that the term ‘squaw’ is considered to be racist, sexist, and offensive to many people,” and so used “Sq\_\_\_” instead.

We are deeply opposed to this Measure for many reasons:

For decades, Native Americans have argued against the use of the word “Sq\_\_\_”, which perpetuates prejudice and disparages Native women.

California has moved beyond the days when willful ignorance of native peoples prevailed. Words matter. Offensive slurs are not protected speech.

The renaming of “Sq\_\_\_ Valley” was decided by the rules we have in place, after two years of extensive local public input that prioritized local Native American opinions.

The County now wants to ignore state law, which will result in costly and needless litigation that we will all pay for.

Vote NO ON MEASURE B. Honor and respect the opinions of the Native Americans who have lived in the Valley for generations.

Vote No on Measure B Coalition

PAID FOR BY THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROGRESSIVE PAC

# VOTE

## DR. DAREN MILLER

FRESNO  
COUNTY  
DEMOCRATIC  
PARTY

Tuesday, March 5th  
Primary Election

**DECADES OF  
PROVEN  
LEADERSHIP**



## KEEP US OUT OF THE LANDFILL



### AND SAVE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

**ALWAYS RECYCLE CRV BOTTLES & CANS!**

CITY OF FRESNO RECYCLING PROGRAM

559-621-1111

[WWW.FRESNO.GOV/RECYCLE](http://WWW.FRESNO.GOV/RECYCLE)

# Justice in Honduras?

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

Berta Cáceres was killed on March 3, 2016, one day before what would have been her 45th birthday. Cáceres was an Indigenous Lenca woman in Honduras who co-founded the COPINH—Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (The Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras)—to fight for Indigenous rights and territories.

The Indigenous community fought the Agua Zarca dam and project for many years and they were effective in community organizing and in getting international attention. Cáceres won the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015.

Cáceres spent her life in the struggle. In addition to her environmental and Indigenous activism, she fought for women's liberation. She fought against the 2009 military coup in Honduras that overthrew elected centrist President Manuel Zelaya. This coup was supported by the United States, trying to build a right-wing dictatorship state in Honduras.

In December 2019, the triggermen—seven of them—were sentenced to prison for the murder. Of the seven men arrested for the murder initially, three were linked to the U.S.-trained elite military troops: Two had been trained at Fort Benning, Ga., the former School of the Americas (renamed WHINSEC). Graduates of this U.S. "school" have committed thousands of murders, tortures and other human rights violations in Latin America.

Roberto David Castillo Mejía, a planner and instigator of the murder of Cáceres, was finally convicted in July 2021, more than five years after the crime. In 2022, he was sentenced to 22 years in prison.

Castillo was president of the private energy company Desarrollos Energéticos SA (DESA), developers of the Agua Zarca

hydroelectric project. This project was planned to go through the territory of the Indigenous Lenca people without their consent.

But he's not just a company president. He is also a former Honduran military intelligence officer who was trained at West Point, and a former National Electrical Energy Company employee, who was able to exert illegal influence on government contracts and get the help of the government security forces for his actions, including human rights abuses, most notably murder.

But everyone has known that there was yet another higher level of wealth and power implicated in this particular killing.

Now Honduran authorities have issued an arrest warrant for another person involved in the planning and payoff of the Cáceres murder. The Public Ministry examined the phone communications that implicated Castillo and found forensic evidence implicating Daniel Atala Midence, the former financial manager of the hydroelectric company DESA. Atala Midence's father and two uncles are the majority shareholders in the dam company. The Atala family is one of the richest in Honduras.

Cáceres was assassinated precisely because she led the fight against DESA's massive hydroelectric dam on a river in southwestern Honduras that's sacred to the Lenca people. After the U.S.-sponsored 2009 coup overthrew the elected president and installed a right-wing government, the dam project on the Gualcarque river was approved even though it had not complied with national and international environmental and community requirements.

Cáceres's oldest daughter, Olivia Zúñiga Cáceres, is the Honduran ambassador to Cuba. Her statement was concise: "Acompáñennos una vez más por favor, orando porque la justicia llegue a quien deba llegar" ("Be with us once more, please, as we pray that justice will come to those who deserve it").

Berta Zúñiga Cáceres, another daughter who currently heads the COPINH, has said

that "everyone in the criminal organization involved in this crime should be brought to justice," referring to the Atala family.

Gustavo Castro Soto, a Mexican environmental leader, was the only witness to the murder of Berta Cáceres. He was also shot in the attack and survived only because the attackers thought he was dead.

"Justice has only been half-done because finally those who planned, executed, bought the perpetrators and paid them off are free," says Castro Soto. "These are the members of the Atala family, one of the richest in Honduras; they are the intellectual authors."

“

**"Berta Cáceres was assassinated precisely because she led the fight against the construction of a massive hydroelectric dam on a river in southwestern Honduras that's sacred to the Lenca people."**

Bringing Atala to justice is something that could not have happened under the corrupt right-wing governments installed after the U.S.-sponsored coup in 2009.

Current President Xiomara Castro is a businessperson who became involved in the National Resistance Front after the coup deposed her husband Manuel Zelaya. She was elected president on the LIBRE party ticket and assumed office in 2022.

In her inaugural speech, President Castro called for "justice for Berta Cáceres." She has banned open pit mining, applied for membership in the New Development (BRICS) Bank, implemented a plan in which the poorest families in Honduras will no longer pay electric bills and their costs will be assumed by a surcharge on the largest consumers of electricity, recognized the Chinese and Venezuelan governments, and recalled the Honduran ambassador from Israel on Nov. 4, stating that "Honduras energetically condemns the genocide and serious violations of international humanitarian law that the civilian Palestinian population is suffering in the Gaza Strip."

Two notes in conclusion:

Given the history of Latin-American center-left governments, it is clear that the Xiomara Castro government is and will be a target for overthrow. The problem is that people can hope for better and elect progressive presidents, but other fundamental institutions remain under the control of the same rich powerful forces that oppose change. The economy, the communications media, the judiciary, the legislature, organized crime and the military are all means that can be exploited and manipulated so that the rich and the United States can maintain control of the country.

"Lawfare" or false charges, legislative coups, deliberate economic sabotage and massive media campaigns of disinformation have become common methods of manipulation and exploitation, along with the tried and true tactic of military overthrow of an elected government.

So far in Honduras, the legislative path to overthrow was tried at the outset of her term of office, and the economic sabotage was attempted when the country's electrical supply, under the control of a few oligarchical families, mysteriously failed last July. Having lived through one coup, Castro knows the risks, but knowledge is not always sufficient.

It seems miraculous that even one member of the family that planned and financed the murder of Berta Cáceres might finally be brought to justice. These conspirators were so confident of impunity that they made no attempt to disguise their involvement or conceal their phone message group as they arranged murder plotting and money transfers for payoffs. So far, the warrant has been issued but no actual detention has occurred, much less a trial. Please stay alert for news.

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

## Fresno Center for Nonviolence January 2024

Dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through

SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY

1584 N. Van Ness Ave., 93728 - email: [info@centerfornonviolence.org](mailto:info@centerfornonviolence.org) - [www.centerfornonviolence.org](http://www.centerfornonviolence.org) - (559)237-3223. To see a more colorful and complete version of our page, go to our website.

Edited by  
Richard Gomez



Well congratulations everyone, you have made it through another year. So have we at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Your tax-deductible contributions, your willingness to care and help has sustained us for another few months. We thank you immensely. So once again it's time to put away the party hats and get down with reality and by a reality,

**"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." -John Kennedy.**  
So let's remember someone who had his life taken away from us a long time ago. Just because he's gone, doesn't mean that he's really gone. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. maybe he is hiding in us waiting to come out. Maybe he's our greatest strength and we don't know it yet. Shouldn't we begin to know it. - Editor

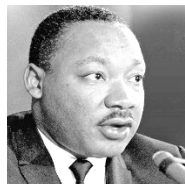


Next show is

Wednesday January 10th at 3pm.

Our host Joshua Shurley and hopefully, Rabbi Rick as possible guest to follow up after Reza's appearance. For more information call on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at (559) 237-3223 or check our website at [www.centerfornonviolence.org](http://www.centerfornonviolence.org).

In December, our host Joshua Shurley engaged with activist and faith leader Hajj Reza Nekumanesh. They discussed the ongoing brutal onslaught against Palestinians and the intersectionality of struggle, connecting what happens abroad with the ways that vulnerable communities are marginalized here at home. To hear again go to: <https://on.soundcloud.com/NRxRn>



We all know that Dr Martin Luther king Jr. was a man who gave his life to fight for justice for black and all people following God's teaching. Dr. King gave his life. Now every year there is a March in the street of Fresno to celebrate the history of Dr. King and all the sacrifices he made, along with other civil rights leaders. Yet there are tons of injustice taking place in the City of Fresno - from Police Brutality, Homelessness, Unemployment, Inadequate Public Education, Environmental Racism, Bad Air Quality, Bad Water. The City of Fresno had received an All-American City award in June 2000 but the problem with the award is it does not include poor people. Back then, the ACLU, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, and the Heller Ehrman law firm had to come into Fresno to File a temporary restraining

order and a permanent injunction in order to stop the relentless attacks on Fresno homeless residents. If Dr. King were alive today, I know he would have been on the front lines with us in Fresno denouncing The Fresno Police Department, Mayor, City Manager, Sanitation Department, and others for violating the constitutional rights of poor people. These people who say they believe in Dr. Martin Luther Kings Jr.'s life in put themselves in the front of the march and the microphone every year speaking about how wonderful he was, while they act totally opposite of Dr. King's legacy. If we are going to march for the celebration of Dr. King, then let's march for something that will bring justice to the community. Stop letting the government dictate how we organize or celebrate anyone's birthday. We will not march to feel good or to get some exercise, but we will march to demand FREEDOM, JUSTICE, PEACE and EQUALITY for all people. Once again, we are expected to march hand in hand with the politicians who are making life hell for people and those who DON'T GIVE A DAMN about God's people when we Sing " WE SHALL OVER COME SOME DAY."

God's people when we Sing " WE SHALL OVER COME SOME DAY." When politician cannot stand up for you when you are being abused, then those representatives need to be recalled. Many politicians are well practiced turning a deaf ear to the Genocide going on in Gaza and the problems of this city, state, nation, and the world. What Dream are we living, or Freedom, Justice, Peace or where is the healing we need to begin that road to make that dream our need to live a happy and healthy life a reality?

I once dreamt that I and others were running away from something horrible and then I and some others tripped or fell over a fallen tree. When I stood up, I was filled with the realization that what I was running from only existed in my mind. It wasn't real and I started to laugh as did the others. We walked back to our village to continue our lives. I don't remember how difficult the rebuilding felt but it wasn't as fearful as the non-existent horror that chased us. As I get older, will there be tranquility in my time.

I cobbled this article from two articles written in the [Community Alliance](http://www.communityalliance.org) by Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris thoughts on the "white washing" being done by our city of the memory of Martin L. King Jr. on 2006 and 2017. Some things haven't changed. Yet... Editor

# Textile Workers Village Struggles to Survive

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

Poselok Tekstilshchikov, literally translated as Textile Workers Village, appeared in the 1960s in the Soviet Union. Almost 20,000 people, mostly women, worked at the Kherson Cotton Mill. The mill closed in 2013, but the suburb, labeled a “settlement of urban type,” is still a home to the veterans of the mill and their families. Located only a 10-minute drive from downtown Kherson in southern Ukraine, the place presents a challenging reality during the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

On a cold November day in 2023, we visited the village, struggling to move along the unpaved roads. In a spacious house, 87-year-old Leonid battled dementia that set in after the onset of war. Leonid’s monthly pension is \$190. According to his daughter—his sole caregiver—this is quite a handsome sum. She described managing his daily falls and self-inflicted injuries.

Lost in his world, Leonid often conducts an imaginary work meeting and gives orders. He worked for 50 years at the mill and loved his job.

“The dementia only started when the Russian Federation started the invasion,” said his daughter. “Because of the daily shelling and logistics difficulties, I cannot take my father to the doctors and try to manage everything myself.”

Across the street, Lida, 88, bedridden for four years, relies on a \$162 pension to survive. Her monthly needs, totaling \$540 for medication and care, far exceed her income. Yet, Lida is lucky: Her family did not flee the war zone and works hard to provide for her.

Nina, in her late 70s, faces the struggle for survival on her own. She is still grieving the loss of her only son in the summer of 2022. The Russian occupational forces arrested, tortured and killed him, but his military records were destroyed during the fire at the office during the Russian retreat. Nina faces challenges in receiving his pension. Her gas and power bills are unpaid, and she is left without heat and ways to cook food in the winter.

Next door, Luda, a shy woman in her late 50s, also grapples with unpaid bills and loss of power for more than a year, as she cares for her severely handicapped daughter Victoria, 20.

Another Nina, a retired librarian and war veteran, risked her safety to shelter injured Ukrainian soldiers in her home during the Russian occupation. One of them died, and she had to secretly transport his body out in a blanket. Nina loves to show her book collection and offers tea, coffee and cookies. Later, Luba, a woman who introduced us, explained that Nina has a small pension but never asks for help or money from her family.

Like many Khersonians, the residents of Poselok Tekstilshchikov are fiercely independent. Grisha, in his late 80s, battles solitude and physical limitations: He has one eye and walks on crutches. Living alone after his family moved away, he reluctantly accepts his neighbors’ food and care but has refused any assistance from the volunteers.

Raya, aged 88, almost deaf and blind, lives in a hut with her Down syndrome granddaughter Yana. She raised two granddaughters herself, selling milk from two cows and produce from her vegetable garden at a market. Her older son died, and the younger one tried to make money working abroad but got detained in Russia. Raya also declined help.



Luba comforts Nina, whose son was murdered by the Russian occupational forces. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

“We are doing all right,” said Raya. “I just want the war to end so my children and grandchildren can come back.”

Luba shoulders the responsibility of caring for her neighbors while grappling with her own health challenges and issues. She has three young kids attending an online school, a father dying from cancer and a bedridden mother.

Luba suffered six micro-strokes. In her yard, she has a giant Caucasian shepherd she saved during the flood caused by the Russian explosion at the Nova Kakhovka dam. Still, Luba runs a fundraiser to bring Christmas gifts to 188 children still living in the village.

Despite the recommendations to evacuate, many families choose to stay for various reasons. Mostly, it is the lack of funds and bedridden or handicapped relatives.

“I cannot leave,” said Luba. “These people rely on me to survive. We have 33 bedridden folks. Only yesterday, a woman had gangrene and later died during the surgery.”

Volunteers such as Luba have a hard time helping the community. In Kherson City, on Dec. 5, National Volunteer Day, the Russian Federation targeted, damaged and destroyed two volunteer centers and humanitarian hubs, killing two civilians, including one volunteer, and injuring four health workers, a man returning home from a market and a young woman walking a dog.

Another volunteer, Olha, helps the elderly with humanitarian aid and errands while running a grocery store in Kherson. Her store has been hit and damaged five times, after being flooded after the dam explosion.

Volodymyr, a volunteer fearlessly delivering food, hygiene products and medications to the neighborhoods close to the Dnipro River, often doesn’t have wheels as his car breaks or the tires are punctured from driving on shrapnel and cluster munition. His house is under fire every day and every night and was hit several times. Volodymyr finds a way to deliver help even if he has to walk across town under fire.

In mid-December, these and other volunteers managed to get toys and sweets for 188 children of Poselok Tekstilshchikov and deliver them, under fire.

The attacks on the Kherson Region intensified. According to the Kherson Regional Military Administration reports and the Head of the City Military Administration for Kherson City public reports, from Dec. 1 to 11, 2023, Russian troops initiated 836 attacks on the Kherson Region, with daily attacks ranging from 69 to 264, averaging 86 attacks per day.

The total number of shells employed in these attacks was 4,834, including ordnance from mortars, artillery, “Grads,” tanks, drones and aviation. Three missiles hit the residential areas.

On Dec. 12 only, Russians launched 113 attacks and used 606 shells. The exact number of guided aerial bombs over the entire period is not available, but on Dec. 2, Russian troops dropped 43 guided aerial bombs on the villages of the left and right banks of the Dnipro River in the Kherson Region. Casualties included nine civilians killed and 48 injured for 11 days. Kherson City was targeted with 3,227 shells during this period, with a daily range from 32 to 145, averaging 84 daily attacks.

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

## Another Fresno Opportunity

BY RUTH GADEBUSCH

A believer in a “downtown,” a heart of any city, I was overjoyed with the new dreams and plans for Chinatown. Then I remembered what happened to Fresno’s Fulton Mall. It was exciting, unique and promising. Today, it is only a memory as interest turned elsewhere.

All manner of competing areas were allowed particularly in the affluent north, and we were surprised when shoppers preferred their glossy freshness with free easy access parking including stores that once graced downtown to the historical facades of the mall buildings.

Showing off the mall with its world-renowned art elicited palpable excitement from visitors. Especially well-remembered are the trollies that allowed my mother to enjoy it despite her serious foot problems severely limiting strolling. May the new trolley connecting the downtown entertainment district to Campus Pointe be more positive for uniting Fresno than the nearby complex that siphons business (entertainers, sports, lecturers) from the downtown. Meandering outward growth is not good land use as it demands urban amenities, transportation, schools and more.

Another facet of the northward move was the donation of land for a major hospital, surprising us with the rush of medical services that followed. It was only exacerbated when our children’s hospital moved across the river with little consideration for the lack of any fire protection or public transportation.

To the rest of the state, Fresno is neither north nor south with many breezes through without air-conditioned vehicles until fairly recently on their way to vacations elsewhere thought of as a furnace 13 months of the year.

Where else would one find an easy one day trip to the coast and three nearby national parks providing year-round recreation including snow? Not to mention the absolutely gorgeous views with our spring blossoming fruit trees and rows of growing vegetables.

Let us hope this promising Chinatown renovation is not another “pig in a poke.” Let us be in it for the long run as a terrific heritage.

While we will never surpass San Francisco, there is more and more “San Francisco is not the city we once knew” talk: The timing would seem to be right for some of the glow its Chinatown once had to slip our way. Is that too much to dream about?

Are we going to shortchange it when some of the hopes and dreams get tarnished? Are we going to polish the “New Chinatown” or turn our attention to some other dream? Have we learned anything from our experience with the Fulton Mall, the ever northward move of medical facilities or

### ONE WOMAN’S VIEW



the roadblocks delaying the high-speed rail and its station, which itself is another promising jewel for downtown?

It is an opportunity not to be missed.

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Ruth Gadebusch, a former naval officer, is known for participating in various community efforts including education, arts, welfare and others.

# Peace & Social Justice Calendar January 2024

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

**TUE 02** National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) 5:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. Speaker: "Good Guy" Rep. Jim Costa. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pbyoga.com.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**WED 03** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!* 3 p.m. Community Alliance radio show hosted by Daren Miller. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**THU 04** 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](http://FACarthop) on Facebook.

**SAT 06** 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 or [claval@comcast.net](mailto:claval@comcast.net).

**MON 08** Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) 5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact [swgamble@aol.com](mailto:swgamble@aol.com).

**TUE 09** Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC) 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-287-1308 or [bapacfresno@gmail.com](mailto:bapacfresno@gmail.com).

**Stonewall Democratic Club** 6:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. For more info, contact 559-285-1641 or [info@fresnostonewalldemocrats.org](mailto:info@fresnostonewalldemocrats.org).

**KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**WED 10** 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](http://kfcf.org).

**Transform Fresno Community Meeting** 6 p.m. Hotel Fresno, 1241 Broadway St. Join a tour of the newly renovated Hotel Fresno. Learn more about the development and affordable housing across the city. For more info, contact [transformfresno@fresno.gov](mailto:transformfresno@fresno.gov).

**THU 11** West Fresno Ministerial Alliance MLK Prayer Breakfast 8 a.m. Westside Church of God, 1424 W. California Ave. For more info, contact [paulbinion@wscog.org](mailto:paulbinion@wscog.org).

**Fresno County Schools MLK Art, Essay and Speech Contest Reception** 5:30 p.m. Clovis Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 808 4th St., Clovis. For more info, contact [jhunt@fcoe.org](mailto:jhunt@fcoe.org).

**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](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com).



40th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration 40 Years Later: Reflecting on the Past, Pursuing a Future of Inclusivity and Solidarity

**FRI 12** 6th Annual Business Salute: Martin Luther King Jr. Luncheon 11:30 a.m. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, 2233 Ventura St. Keynote speaker: Pastor DJ Criner. Register at [fmbc.com/events](http://fmbc.com/events).

**MLK Celebration Garlanding Ceremony** 11:45 a.m. Courthouse Park, 100 Van Ness Ave. Welcome by 2024 Fresno City Council President Annalisa Perea. Greetings by District 3 Council Member Miguel Arias. Keynote speaker: Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher, Fresno County superintendent of schools. Featuring the Fresno Unified School District Black Student Union and King Elementary School Dancers. For more info, contact 559-435-2212 or 559-681-3140.

**MLK Celebration Community Awards Program** 5 p.m. Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno St. Keynote speaker: Rev. Dr. Robert M. Franklin, president emeritus of Morehouse College and professor of moral leadership at Emory University. Educational Leadership Award: Fresno Unified School District Trustee Keshia Thomas; Community Leadership Award: Rabbi Rick Winer, Temple Beth Israel; Les Kimber Community Service Award: Rev. Chester Riggins. Reception to follow. For more info, contact [summer.gaston-gehris@fresnounified.org](mailto:summer.gaston-gehris@fresnounified.org).

**SAT 13** MLK Celebration Clovis Police Department Community Breakfast 9 a.m. California Health Sciences University, 2500 Alluvial Ave., Clovis. Keynote speaker: Dr. Kimberly Armstrong, president of Clovis Community College. \$5 (prepayment/reservation required). For more info, contact 559-324-2476 or [erinf@cityofclovis.com](mailto:erinf@cityofclovis.com).

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

**SUN 14** MLK Celebration Candlelight Peace Vigil 5 p.m. Martin Luther King Elementary School, 1001 E. Florence Ave. For more info, contact 559-435-2212.

**Countdown to King Concert and Rally** 7:30 p.m. Bethel Christian Center, 4665 N. First St. Some of the biggest names in the Valley unite to push the message of peace, unity, equality and love. For more info, contact [edwardthomas858@icloud.com](mailto:edwardthomas858@icloud.com).

**MON 15** MLK Celebration Community March 9:30 a.m., assemble at St. John's Cathedral, 2814 Mariposa Ave. March begins at 10 a.m., stops at Fresno City Hall and then proceeds to Veterans Memorial Auditorium for the Commemoration Program. For more info, contact 559-284-6420.

**MLK Celebration Commemoration Program** 11 a.m. Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 2425 Fresno St. Celebration of the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his contributions to community diversity and our enriched culture. Speakers, dancers and other tributes. For more info, contact 559-908-0639 or [eric.paynecmc@gmail.com](mailto:eric.paynecmc@gmail.com).

**Reclaiming the Revolutionary Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King!** 2 p.m. Free AME Ministries, 806 Collins Ave. Theme: What would MLK say about the genocide in Gaza? Celebrate the real MLK, an uncompromising revolutionary, not the bleached bland version you've been fed by those who hated him when he was alive. Panel discussion, Q&A and refreshments. For more info, contact 559-790-4277.

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

**TUE 16** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**WED 17** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Speaking Truth to Empire* 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

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

**Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter** 7 p.m. Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Speaker: Master Gardener Gwen Olshove. Topic: Making the Most of Warm Season Vegetables. Olshove will cover such topics as designing your own garden, growing from plants and seeds, how to improve your garden soil, encouraging the good bugs and preventing garden problems. To attend via Zoom, e-mail [jo\\_clarke@att.net](mailto:jo_clarke@att.net) for the link. For more info, contact [ecuagirl45@yahoo.com](mailto:ecuagirl45@yahoo.com).

**THU 18** 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](http://FACarthop) on Facebook.

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

**FRI 19** Fresno State Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Noon. Ellipse Gallery, 2F, Fresno State Library, 5200 N. Barton Ave. Presented by Fresno State African American Programs and Services Cross Cultural and Gender Center. For more info, contact 559-278-8529 ext. 88529 or [mblathers@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:mblathers@mail.fresnostate.edu).

**SAT 20** Democratic Women in Action 6 p.m. Manhattan Restaurant, 1731 W. Bullard Ave. 7th Annual Celebration Honoring Woman of Action recognizing Fresno City Council President Annalisa Perea. \$65/person (includes annual club membership). For more info, contact 559-681-3140.

**TUE 23** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**WED 24** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!* 3 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**Take Action Workshop** 5:30 p.m. The Fresno Center, 4879 E. Kings Canyon Blvd. Find out how you can Stop the Hate in your community: police accountability, reporting and community advocacy. Food, childcare and Spanish interpretation. For more info, contact 599-344-4498.

**THU 25** Peace Fresno 6:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. In person/via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-668-0591.

**MON 29** Fresno County Democratic Women's Club 11 a.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant Garden Room, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or [claval@comcast.net](mailto:claval@comcast.net).

**TUE 30** California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) 10 a.m. SEIU Local 521, 4228 E. Pine Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-5955 or 559-704-8384.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

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



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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

**WE WILL NOT STOP TALKING ABOUT PALESTINE**



Fresno WILPF members were represented at the raising of the Palestinian flag.  
Photo by LVR

**Genocide in Palestine**

It is clear to all who open their minds that Palestine is under attack

by Israeli genocidal forces willing and eager to kill civilians indiscriminately. Palestinians killed in Gaza approached 20,000 on Dec. 15; more than a third are children. An unknown, uncounted number are still buried under the bombed rubble. It's estimated 50,000 Palestinians are injured.

**Israel Commits Human Rights Violations and War Crimes**

Reckless disregard for civilian lives; bombing of UN refugee camps, schools and hospitals; deliberate killing of an unprecedented number of journalists and healthcare workers; collective punishment; the use of white phosphorus on civilian populations. Now it is winter; the survivors are unsheltered, starving and dying of diseases produced by the deliberate destruction planned and carried out by Israel. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant stated that "there will be no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel."

**Daily Atrocities**

- WHO estimates 360,000 cases of infectious diseases recorded in Gaza's shelters.
- The UN World Food Program warns that half of Gaza's population of 2 million people is starving, that nine of 10 people cannot eat daily.
- Israeli troops, backed by tanks and heavy artillery, stormed Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, where 3,000 displaced people were sheltering. Medical staff inside the hospital

were shot and killed on Dec. 11, plus two mothers were killed when the Israeli military bombarded the maternity ward.

- The Biden administration approved an emergency sale to Israel of nearly 14,000 rounds of tank ammunition, worth more than \$106 million, for use in Gaza. This bypassed the Congressional review requirement for foreign military sales.

Human Rights Watch verified videos taken in Lebanon and Gaza on Oct. 10 and 11, 2023, showing multiple airbursts of artillery-fired white phosphorus over the Gaza City port and two rural locations along the Israel-Lebanon border. White phosphorus burns flesh, thermally and chemically, down to the bone as it is highly soluble in fat. White phosphorus fragments can exacerbate wounds after treatment, entering the bloodstream causing multiple organ failure. Dressed wounds can reignite when wounds are re-exposed to oxygen. Even relatively minor burns are often fatal. For survivors, extensive scarring tightens muscle tissue and creates physical disabilities. The World Health Organization's official site published this account on Dec. 12:

WHO reiterates its call for the protection of health care and humanitarian assistance in Gaza:

"On 9 December 2023, a WHO team, in collaboration with Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and support from United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), completed a high-risk mission to Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City to deliver medical supplies, assess the situation in the hospital, and transfer critically-injured patients to a hospital in the south. The mission delivered trauma and surgical supplies, enough to treat 1500 patients, to the hospital, and transferred 19 critical patients with 14 companions to Nasser Medical Complex in south Gaza, where they can receive a higher level of care.

On the way north, the UN convoy was inspected at the Wadi Gaza checkpoint. Ambulance crew members had to leave the vehicles for identification. Two PRCS staff were detained for over an hour, further delaying the mission.

WHO staff saw one of them being made to kneel at gunpoint, then taken out of sight, where he was reportedly harassed, beaten, stripped and searched.

As the mission entered Gaza City,

the aid truck carrying the medical supplies and one of the ambulances were hit by bullets.

On the way back towards southern Gaza, with the patients from Al-Ahli Hospital on board, the convoy was again stopped at the Wadi Gaza checkpoint. PRCS staff and most of the patients had to leave the ambulances for security checks. Critical patients remaining in the ambulances were searched by armed soldiers.

One of the same two PRCS staff temporarily detained earlier was taken for interrogation a second time. The mission made numerous attempts to coordinate his release, but eventually—after more than 2 1/2 hours—had to make the difficult decision to leave the highly dangerous area and proceed, for the safety and well-being of the patients and humanitarian workers. (Three ambulances carrying extremely critical patients had already continued onwards earlier, while three remained with the convoy.) PRCS reported afterwards that during the transfer process, one of the injured patients died as a result of his untreated wounds.

The PRCS staff member was released later that night after joint UN efforts. Yesterday, the WHO team met him, with his father, supervisor, and colleagues. He said he was harassed, beaten, threatened, stripped of his clothes, and blindfolded. His hands were tied behind his back and he was treated in a degrading and humiliating manner. Once released, he was left to walk towards the south with his hands still tied behind his back, and without clothes or shoes."

<https://www.who.int/news/item/12-12-2023-who-calls-for-protection-of-humanitarian-space-in-gaza-following-serious-incidents-in-high-risk-mission-to-transfer-patients--deliver-health-supplies>

We can just imagine the U.S. media and government's outrage if this had been perpetrated by anyone other than Israel. Instead, the gasps and pearl-clutching are directed at the imaginary horror of people saying "From the river to the sea."

None of this is happening for the first time! Even the Israeli use in Gaza of white phosphorus, supplied by the United States, has been documented and proven before, in 2008–2009. The calendar didn't start in October 2023. Israel began large-scale attacks on the people of Palestine 75 years ago. The United States continues to finance and supply these attacks. We are responsible.

Tell the U.S. Government We Want a Ceasefire Now  
No U.S. Tax Dollars for Apartheid or Genocide

**RECLAIMING THE REVOLUTIONARY DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**

People have become tired of the cop co-opted vanilla fake celebrations of a fluffy imaginary MLK.

There will be an event that honors the real Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. this year.

When? Jan. 15, 2024, 2 p.m.–4 p.m.  
Where? Free AME Ministries, 806 Collins Ave., Fresno

You are invited. The event will include a panel discussion, Q&A and refreshments.

This year's theme: What would MLK say about the Gaza genocide?

The Fresno community has come together demanding a ceasefire now!

Contact: Dr. Floyd D. Harris Jr. at 559-790-4277

**WILPF BOOK CLUB RESUMES MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY**

Our WILPF Book Club is now meeting in person. Look for e-mails from our chair, Cheryl Caldera, for the location of our next

gathering. We will meet the second Monday of each month, starting on Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. Below is a list of the books we've chosen to read in the next few months:

Feb. 12: *Killers of the Flower Moon* by David Grann

March 11: *Tastes Like War: A Memoir* by Grace M. Cho. "The ghosts of the past are given a seat at the dinner table in *Tastes Like War*, an

intimate account of the historical violence behind a mother's mental illness. Grace M. Cho documents the psychological toll of racism while exploring the redemptive power of food."

April 8: *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*, a novel by James McBride

May 13: *Fight: How Gen Z Is Channeling Their Fear and Passion to Save America* by John Della Volpe

**WILPF MEETING**

Jan. 11 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., online and in person, Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Watch your e-mail for an announcement with a link and a call-in number. For info, contact Teresa at [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com) or Leni at [lenivreeves@gmail.com](mailto:lenivreeves@gmail.com).

**STIR IT UP-WILPF**

**KFCF 88.1 FM**  
Jan. 24 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

**UNPACKING RACISM**

With Dr. Jean Kennedy. Moving toward community event participation. To

join, RSVP with your e-mail address to [drjeankennedy@yahoo.com](mailto:drjeankennedy@yahoo.com) or text 559-270-1023.

**WOMEN IN BLACK**

Jan. 3 (first Wednesday), noon, Courthouse. Check first with Sue Kern at [netptc.net](mailto:netptc.net) or 559-349-3777.

**REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WAS AN UNCOMPROMISING REVOLUTIONARY**

"They know they must move on or be destroyed by our bombs. So they go, primarily women and children and the aged. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted." (This was about Vietnam. Does it apply today to Palestine? Of course it does.)

"Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself."

"We must see now that the evils of racism, economic exploitation and militarism are all tied together. And you can't get rid of one without getting rid of the other."

"The problems of racial injustice and economic injustice cannot be solved without a radical redistribution of political and economic power."

"If peace means a willingness to be exploited economically, dominated politically, humiliated and segregated, I don't want peace. If peace means being complacently adjusted to a deadening status quo, I don't want peace. If peace means keeping my mouth shut in the midst of injustice and evil, I don't want it. Peace is not simply the absence of conflict, but the existence of justice for all people."

**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](mailto:nhatcher46@gmail.com) or Kyla Mitchell at [kyla.noelle@gmail.com](mailto:kyla.noelle@gmail.com).

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



# Ciudades Verdes: Un Asunto de Vida o Muerte

POR SELEN OZTURK

A medida que la humanidad se vuelve cada vez más urbana, el plantar árboles y crear parques—lejos de limitarse a embellecer las ciudades—se convierte cada vez más en una cuestión de vida o muerte.

En una conferencia de prensa celebrada el viernes 1 de diciembre con el apoyo de Ethnic Media Services, funcionarios forestales de Los Angeles y expertos en ecologismo urbano expusieron la ciudad como un caso de estudio en la relación entre espacios verdes y la salud humana. Explicaron cómo añadir casi un millón de años de esperanza de vida en el condado de Los Angeles mediante el reverdecimiento de espacios urbanos (ecologismo urbano), podría servir de modelo para otras ciudades.

## Los espacios verdes y la esperanza de vida

Cuantos más parques y árboles haya en un barrio determinado, mayor será la esperanza de vida de la zona, afirma Michael Jerrett, refiriéndose a un estudio de la UCLA (Universidad de California en Los Angeles), del que es coautor, publicado en julio de 2023. De acuerdo a este estudio, el llevar los espacios verdes del condado de Los Angeles a niveles medios podría añadir hasta 908,800 años de esperanza de vida colectiva a los residentes de comunidades con pocos recursos.

Michael Jerrett, profesor del Departamento de Ciencias de la Salud Medioambiental de la UCLA y codirector del Centro de Soluciones Climáticas Saludables de la Escuela Fielding de Salud Pública, comparte datos sobre la distribución de los espacios verdes en Los Angeles y su correlación con la esperanza de vida.

De acuerdo al estudio, la esperanza de vida en la comunidad acaudalada y “verde” de Beverly Hills era de 90 años, mientras que en las comunidades del sur de Los Angeles, situadas a menos de 24 km, la expectativa de vida era de 77 años. La esperanza total oscilaba en todo el condado entre los 68 años de las zonas más pobres del centro-sur y los 93 años que se registran en lugares acaudalados como Malibú, explicó Jerrett, profesor de salud ambiental de la UCLA y codirector del Centro de Soluciones Climáticas Saludables.

En zonas ya de por sí “muy frondosas, como Brentwood, o partes del oeste de Los Angeles, añadir más espacios verdes no tiene mucha repercusión”, añadió, pero en las zonas desproporcionadamente menos verdes del este, el sur y el extremo norte—donde residen dos tercios de la población negra y latina del condado de Los Angeles—la mera ampliación de los parques hasta las medianas del condado añadiría 164,700 años de esperanza de vida a la región, de los cuales el 72%, es decir, 118,000 años, corresponderían a los residentes negros y latinos.

## Árboles sanos, personas saludables

Los beneficios para la salud que se derivan de un mayor número de parques y árboles dependen de algo más que de que sean plantados, afirma Rachel Malarch, (Primer oficial forestal de la ciudad angeleno), es responsable de los bosques de Los Angeles). “Para conseguir esos beneficios, necesitamos tener árboles sanos, con mantenimiento regular para que vivan toda su vida útil en los barrios que más los necesitan”.

El Plan de gestión de bosques urbanos—Urban Forest Management Plan—de la ciudad tiene cuatro pilares: plantar árboles nuevos, mantener los existentes, preservarlos en medio de nuevas construcciones y urbanizaciones, e invitar a participar a las comunidades que viven con estos árboles en estos espacios.

“Cuando hablamos con los miembros de la comunidad, a menudo se sienten frustrados porque los árboles no han recibido mantenimiento”, explicó Malarch. “La norma del sector es inspeccionar los árboles y podarlos si es necesario cada cinco o siete años; el ciclo actual de la ciudad se acerca más a los 18 años... Ahora estamos celebrando talleres de participación comunitaria y encuestas de opinión tanto para mejorar la desigualdad de acceso a los espacios verdes, como la desigualdad en la forma en que se mantienen estos espacios”.

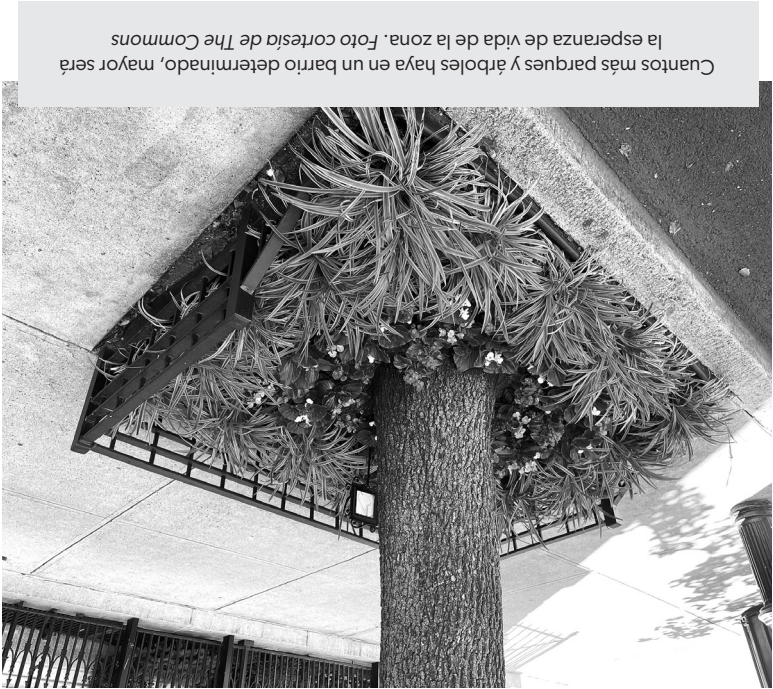
## Reverdecimiento sobre-la-marcha

Los bosques urbanos más sostenibles son los que son plantados y que los mismos miembros de sus propias comunidades mantienen, afirma Marcos Trinidad, Director Forestal de TreePeople (Gente de los árboles). En su 50 aniversario, esta organización sin ánimo de lucro dedicada al reverdecimiento urbano ha pasado de un modelo de plantación, mantenimiento y educación comunitaria exclusivamente voluntario a un modelo híbrido que incluye el “desarrollo de la mano de obra”.

Ahora se ha puesto énfasis particularmente en la formación de jóvenes interesados en carreras medioambientales para que trabajen con organizaciones comunitarias en el reverdecimiento de “los barrios que más necesitan árboles”, como el noreste y el sureste de Los Angeles, explicó.

Comprender las necesidades y prioridades de las zonas que carecen de árboles y vegetación es clave para incorporarlas con éxito a los esfuerzos de ecologización (reverdecimiento), afirma Marcos Trinidad, Director Principal de Silvicultura de TreePeople.

Aunque TreePeople (Gente de los árboles) tiene su sede en el condado de Los Angeles, Trinidad afirmó que su modelo de inversión comunitaria en “lo que se necesita para tener bosques urbanos sostenibles”—a saber, plantación, mantenimiento, conservación y educación—pretende compartirse mucho más allá de Los Angeles: Actualmente estamos en Inland Empire y Antelope Valley... y queremos compartir nuestro proceso con el resto del mundo”.



Cuantos más parques y árboles haya en un barrio determinado, mayor será la esperanza de vida de la zona. Foto cortesía de The Commons

“Igualdad ecológica” como forma de “custodia verde”

Invertir en más espacios verdes para las comunidades desfavorecidas significa invertir en esas comunidades como cuidadoras o “guardianas” de estos espacios, afirmó Bz Zhang, director de proyectos de Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT)—Fideicomiso de las tierras de la comunidad de Los Angeles—, que, desde su creación en 2002, ha creado alrededor de 30 parques y jardines en 21 acres de espacios verdes para más de medio millón de residentes del condado de Los Angeles.

Dado que las comunidades mayoritariamente no blancas “tienen un 64% de menor acceso a espacios verdes que las comunidades de los barrios blancos, y las comunidades con menores ingresos tienen un 66% menos”, lo mejor para ecologizar el condado de Los Angeles es “hacerlo explícitamente desde el punto de vista de la equidad”, explicó Zhang. Lo más importante para esta equidad es una custodia centrada en la comunidad: LANLT mantiene los parques que siempre “contratando a tiempo parcial a administradores del propio barrio en el que están localizados”.

Bz Zhang, Directora de Proyectos de Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, explica cómo un programa de custodia de parques garantiza la salud de los parques locales, al tiempo que ofrece oportunidades a los miembros de la comunidad, incluidos los estudiantes.

“En estas comunidades creamos programas de capacitación para custodiar las áreas verdes... especialmente para los jóvenes, a través de nuestro Programa de Aprendizaje de Jardinería. Este programa ha trabajado con más de 350 estudiantes de secundaria en el sur de Los Angeles desde 2013 para capacitar a la próxima generación de “guardianes” con las habilidades para cuidar de estos espacios que son tan cruciales para la salud de su comunidad... Siempre podemos crear parques, pero también tenemos que asegurarnos de que los más afectados por la “desigualdad verde” tengan acceso a ellos”, añadió Zhang.

## ‘Un asunto de vida o muerte’

De acuerdo con Jon Christensen, este acceso a la vegetación urbana es cada vez más crucial a medida que la humanidad se convierte en una especie cada vez más urbana: “En 2007, más de la mitad de nosotros vivíamos en ciudades, y se espera que esta cifra aumente un 70% para 2050. Las ciudades son nuestro hábitat y nuestra resiliencia frente al cambio climático—la adaptabilidad de nuestra propia salud como especie—requiere que invirtamos en las ciudades, lo que significa remediar las desigualdades que han configurado nuestro entorno urbano. Es una cuestión de vida o muerte”.

En sus esfuerzos por remediar la desigualdad ecológica, “Los Angeles se ha convertido en un modelo de interés mundial para comprender los ecosistemas urbanos”, afirmó Christensen, profesor adjunto del Institute of the Environment (Instituto de Medio Ambiente), el Centro Luskin de Innovación y el Laboratorio de Estrategias Narrativas Medioambientales de la UCLA. Sólo en California, prosiguió, “se invertirán 100,000 millones de dólares en infraestructuras verdes, ecologización urbana y resiliencia climática en los próximos años, la mitad del gobierno federal y la otra mitad del estatal”. A medida que los gobiernos de todo el mundo empiezan a aplicar medidas similares, “tenemos que reconocer que plantar árboles no es suficiente; tenemos que garantizar que las comunidades que más los necesitan puedan prosperar junto con sus árboles”.

Selen Ozturk es una editora asociada de Ethnic Media Services.

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*Continúa de página 19*

# Las Elecciones Tienen Consecuencias

Correa, sin embargo, dice

llegan a la Corte Suprema. Con o que con el triunfo el movimiento sin razón, es la ley y López Obrador Lpezobradorista sólo ganó las elecciones y no la estructura de poder. Citando al autor Alain

Rouquié y su libro América

Latina, introducción al Occidente

considerado necesarios. Más allá no ha podido porque en muchos

sudamericano agrega que existen otros factores culturales

que mantienen en este caso a países latinoamericanos en el

subdesarrollo, tales como el llamado pacto de dominación,

una especie de verticalidad de las relaciones sociales de dominio

de ciertas élites, condición que es aceptada por los que dominan

Y por los dominados. “Es más fácil tener una coalición política

para mantener el estatus quo que tener una coalición política para

llevar a cabo reformas profundas, reelegirse, algo que esta

unidad de inteligencia militar del ejército hondureño—

antes empleado por la compañía National Electrical Energy

Company. Tenía las conexiones para ejercer influencia ilegal

en cuanto a los contratos del gobierno y también conseguir

la ayuda de las fuerzas armadas de seguridad del estado

para apoyar sus acciones, hasta para abusos de derechos

humanos y asesinatos. Pero siempre se supo que había aún

otro nivel más alto de riquezas y de poder implicado en este

asesinato.

Ahora las autoridades hondureñas han presentado orden

de captura para otra persona involucrado en la planificación

y soborno en el asesinato de Cáceres. El Ministerio Público

examinó las comunicaciones telefónicas que implicaron

a Castillo y descubrieron evidencias forenses también

implicando a Daniel Atala Midence, antes jefe de las finanzas

de la compañía hidroeléctrica DESA. El padre y dos de los

tíos de Atala Midence son los accionistas mayoritarios de

esta empresa. La familia Atala se encuentra entre las más

ricas de Honduras.

A Berta Cáceres la asesinaron precisamente porque

encabezó la batalla en contra de la presa masiva

hidroeléctrica de DESA en el río sagrado del pueblo Lenca,

en el sureste de Honduras. Después del golpe militar

apoyado por los EEUU, en 2009, que derrocó al presidente

elegido e instaló a una dictadura derechista, se aprobó el

proyecto en el Río Gualcarque, aunque no cumplía con los

requisitos nacionales e internacionales de protección del

ambiente natural ni de la comunidad de la región.

La hija mayor de Berta, Olivia Zúñiga Cáceres, es la

Embajadora de Honduras en Cuba. Su declaración fue

concisa: “Acompañémos una vez más por favor, orando

porque la justicia llegue a quien deba llegar.”

Otra hija, Berta Zúñiga Cáceres, ahora jefa de COPINH

dijo, refiriéndose a la familia Atala: “Todos los de esta

organización criminal implicados con este crimen se deben

llevar a la justicia.”

Gustavo Castro Soto, líder mexicano del movimiento pro-

ambiente, es el único testigo al asesinato de Berta Cáceres.

El fue herido en el ataque y sobrevivió porque los asesinos

lo dieron por muerto. “La justicia está a medias porque

finalmente los que planearon, ejecutaron, comparon a la

gente y dieron el dinero están libres, que son los integrantes

de la familia Atala, una de las más ricas de Honduras; son los

autores intelectuales”, comentó Castro Soto.

Llevar ante la justicia a Atala es algo que nunca hubiera

sido posible bajo los gobiernos derechistas corruptos

instalados después del golpe militar apoyado por los

Estados Unidos en 2009. La presidenta actual, Xiomara

Castro, es una empresaria que se involucró con El Frente

Nacional de Resistencia Popular después del golpe que

derrocó a su marido Manuel Zelaya; fue elegida presidenta

como candidata del partido LIBRE y asumió en 2022.

Y aquí el punto no es juzgar las

decisiones de los salvadoreños

y las acciones de su presidente

(no por ahora), sino establecer

que no basta con la presidencia

para hacer una diferencia. Como

bien lo ha dicho el mismo Bukele,

citando el ex presidente Barack

Obama, “las elecciones tienen

consecuencias”.

En el caso de López Obrador,

se puede decir que el poder

medático es uno de sus más

fértos adversarios.

El trato de la prensa corporativa

es cada vez más confrontativo,

La vieja Televisa de Emilia

Azcárraga Milmo se autonoómbro

en su momento como “soldado

de combate” y se convirtió en un

asesino de periodistas y políticos

de izquierda. La familia de

los medios informativos

mexicanos tienen una larga

historia de manipulación.

Los medios informativos

salieron a relucir durante el juicio de

Genaro García Luna en Estados

Unidos, durante la época en que el

periodista Raymundo Riva Palacio

era el director editorial.

Televisa y la campaña a favor de

Enrique Peña Nieto, con primera

dama incluida en el paquete.

Campañas de odio como lo que

se ha venido publicando en la

revista Siempre, donde publicaron

una foto de la candidata

Sheinbaum con símbolos nazis

(esvásticas).

En fin, más allá de la afinidad

entre el actual gobierno y el

papel que ha desarrollado López

Obrador, lo mismo en el caso de

Bukele en El Salvador, la realidad

es que Correa tiene razón, no

basta con ganar la presidencia

para realizar verdaderos cambios

estructurales.

Para ello se necesita ganar

también la mayoría de las otras

estructuras de poder. Y entonces sí

podemos decir que las elecciones

tienen consecuencias.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Miguel Ángel Báez es un periodista*

*del Valle Central nacido en México.*

*El se graduó de CSU Bakersfield y*

*fue editor del periódico Noticiero*

*Semana, de Porterville.*

En su discurso de investidura, la Presidenta Xiomara

Castro hizo un llamado por “justicia para Berta Cáceres.”

Honduras se asocie con BRICS, implementado un plan

para que las familias mas pobres de Honduras no tengan

que pagar sus electricidad y sus gastos sean pagados por

los consumidores más grandes, con un cargo adicional.

Bajo su dirección el gobierno de Honduras ha reconocido

a los gobiernos actuales de China y Venezuela, ha retirado

a su embajador en Israel, diciendo “Honduras condena

energicamente el genocidio y las graves violaciones al

Derecho Internacional Humanitario que está sufriendo la

población civil palestina en la Franja de Gaza”,

**Dos notas como conclusión:**

Tomando en consideración la historia de gobiernos

centrozquierdistas en América Latina, es evidente que

objetivo de intentos de golpes de estado. El problema es

el gobierno de Xiomara Castro en Honduras es, y será,

una continuación de intentos de golpes de estado, junto

con la común y comprobada táctica de implementar un

golpe militar para derrocar a un gobierno elegido. Hasta

ahora en Honduras se ha probado la vía legislativa para

desplazarla de la presidencia al comienzo de su mandato,

luego se intentó el sabotaje económico cuando el sistema

de electricidad, bajo control de unas cuantas familias

poderosas, tuvo una misteriosa caída en julio. Como ha

vivido un golpe de estado, Xiomara conoce los riesgos,

pero no conoce no siempre es suficiente.

Para eso miagroso que siquiera un miembro de la familia

que planificó y subvencionó el asesinato de Berta Cáceres

podría ser llevado ante la justicia. Estos conspiradores se

confían tanto en su impunidad que ni siquiera hicieron

intento de distraer su implicación ni de esconder sus

mensajes telefónicos en grupo mientras organizaron el

asesinato y las transferencias de fondos para sobornos.

Hasta el momento se ha emitido la orden de captura, pero

la detención todavía no se ha llevado a cabo, mucho menos

se ha emitido una orden de captura, pero

tema.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Leni Villagomez Reeves es una médica local y activista.*

*Chequee sus comentarios y noticias sobre Cuba en Facebook*

*(https://www.facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/).*

# Las Elecciones 2024 Estarán Marcadas por el Voto Étnico y el Racismo

Continúa de página 20

que sacó una ventaja del 12%. En Arizona, Trump ganó el 3% de los votos y en Texas, Florida y California, la comunidad latina apoyó más a Trump, sobre todo en el padrón masculino". Si bien a la intención de voto latino la sigue encabezando Biden, ya no es (según el canal de TV en español Univisión) por un 66% contra un 31% como en septiembre, sino que ahora la balanza democrata está por encima por un 58% contra el mismo 31% de los republicanos. Y tiende a equilibrarse cada vez más.

## Síndrome de "Mexicolmo"

La pregunta se cae de madura: ¿cómo es posible que el presidente que construyó el muro anti-inmigración más grande del mundo y trató a los mexicanos de "narcotraficantes y violadores" cuente con tanto apoyo de esa comunidad? ¿Cómo se explica esta suerte de "Síndrome de Estocolmo" que acaso debiera llamarse "de Mexicolmo"? La propia Claudia Sandoval intenta una respuesta.

"El apoyo creciente de los jóvenes latinos hacia Trump no tiene que ver con el tema de la inmigración ni con suscribir al partido republicano. De hecho, la comunidad latina, históricamente votó a partidos de izquierda. Este corrimiento se debe a la figura de Trump como empresario exitoso. Y los jóvenes latinos piensan que, por eso mismo, Trump sabrá conducir los destinos del país mejor que cualquier político tradicional".

## Un Nuevo Comienzo

Continúa de página 20

Odio, amor y fuerza en comunidad. En esencia, de eso se trata esta historia. Racismo, homofobia, xenofobia: el odio siempre existirá de alguna forma. A veces la llamada proviene del interior de la casa. Ser parte de una comunidad conlleva una responsabilidad. Cuidense unos a otros. Brinde apoyo cuando sea posible. Conéctese unos con otros. Recuerde que el

## El Fallecimiento del Comediante y Activista Tou Ger Xiong

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

El actor, comediante y activista de origen hmong, Tou Ger Xiong, falleció el lunes 11 de diciembre. Según un comunicado de la familia de Xiong, fue asesinado en Colombia luego de ser secuestrado por delincuentes que exigían un rescate.

Xiong había viajado a Colombia de visita y estaba en una relación romántica con una mujer de Medellín. Xiong, de 50 años, nació en Laos y luego se estableció en Minnesota, aunque viajaba con frecuencia para visitar a familiares y amigos en Fresno.

Xiong actuó en tres ediciones del Festival Tamejavi de Fresno, en 2002, 2004 y 2006, teniendo un gran impacto en el público por su humor, dinamismo y compromiso social. La siguiente es una declaración del Instituto Pan Valley, de Fresno, sobre la influencia del trabajo de Tou Ger en nuestra área:

"La noticia de la trágica y violenta muerte de nuestro querido amigo, Tou Ger Xiong, nos entristece profundamente. Tou Ger fue un artista, narrador, educador, comediante y organizador cultural hmong. Fue cabeza de cartel del primer Festival Tamejavi en 2002. Rápidamente se convirtió en parte de la familia Tamejavi porque entendió y compartió los valores que guiaban el trabajo. Actuó en tres festivales de Tamejavi y participó en reuniones y diálogos de pensamiento estratégico mientras sentábamos las bases para promover el cambio social a través de la intersección crítica de la cultura, la expresión creativa y la ciudadanía activa.

Con su narración y humor, Tou Ger contribuyó al proceso de sanación del trauma colectivo del desplazamiento forzado de comunidades como hmong y otras de color. Humanizó la historia hmong y animó constantemente a los jóvenes a aprender, acoger y contar sus propias historias. "Cuenta tu propia historia porque si no lo haces, alguien más lo hará y puede que no sea tu verdadera historia", decía Tou Ger a menudo.

## Las Elecciones Tienen Consecuencias

POR MIGUEL ANGEL BÁEZ

Ganar elecciones no necesariamente significa ganar el poder.

Tanto en México como en muchos países de Latinoamérica no es suficiente con ganar la presidencia, pues hay intereses muy arraigados difíciles de derribar. Dichos intereses son defendidos por poderes económicos, mediáticos, militares y hasta religiosos, además de partidistas. En una conversación en 2019 entre el ex presidente ecuatoriano Rafael Correa y el escritor Paco Ignacio Taibo II, actual director del Fondo de Cultura Económica de México,

de color a favor de Biden fue de un 92%, marcando una brecha de género. Biden se ha ocupado de la comunidad de color, muy especialmente de las mujeres. De hecho, el 95% de ellas lo votaron. Sin embargo, el voto de Trump aumentó desde 2020 hasta ahora. Esto significa que hay una desconformidad con el partido demócrata, especialmente entre los más jóvenes; y que eso guarda una relación directa con la caída en la imagen de Biden".

## La importancia del voto latino

Es evidente que el actual presidente se enfrenta a un momento crucial. Y deberá acercarse a las comunidades latina y afroamericana si quiere reasegurar ese voto. Y es que, cuando Biden ganó la presidencia en 2020, contaba con el apoyo de más del 70 % de votantes no blancos según el New York Times. En septiembre pasado y de acuerdo al mismo medio, esa cifra había descendido a un 53 %.

El resultado de 2024 dependerá, seguramente, de la oscilación de esos guarismos en una elección que, como remarcan algunos periodistas, cada vez se hace menos blanca como nunca antes en la historia de los Estados Unidos.

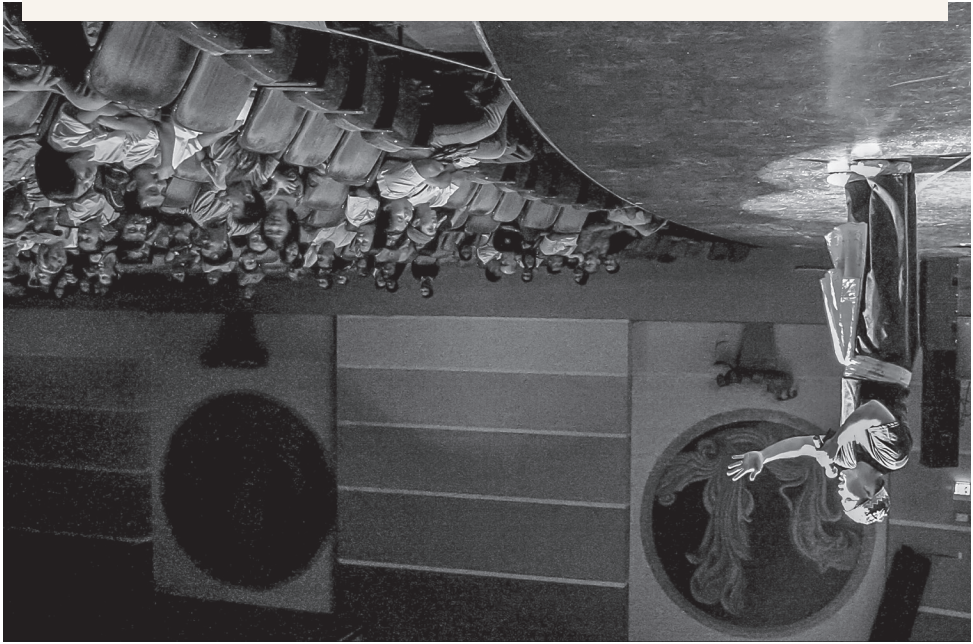
Sin embargo y pese a la obligación de llegar "al corazón de las comunidades", el discurso de los republicanos sigue siendo racista, sobre todo contra los latinos y personas de color. Aunque lo paradójico ("lo alarmante", "debiéramos decir") es que ese discurso, lejos de alejar a los votantes de las comunidades impactadas, pareciera atraerlos aún más.

Andrés Oppenheimer, columnista de Miami Herald, dice que "aún más enigmático es entender por qué muchos venezolanos, cubanos y nicaragüenses en Estados Unidos, que huuyeron de dictaduras brutales, apoyan a un aspirante a autócrata populista como Trump". Y Oppenheimer cierra su editorial diciendo que "al 51% de la comunidad latina, según las encuestas, le interesa por encima de todo el tema inflacionario. Y creen que Trump es la persona indicada para solucionarlo".

Pareciera que los latinos estarían dispuestos a olvidar los problemas de inmigración y trabajo en negro, portación de armas o cambio climático si les solucionan la economía. En una palabra, el bolsillo por encima de los derechos humanos.

Valle Central, al igual que este país, es increíblemente diverso. Debemos estar dispuestos a aprender sobre otras culturas, conectarnos a través de similitudes y disfrutar de nuestras diferencias. De esta manera podemos luchar contra los estereotipos dañinos y unirnos fácilmente. Si tiene la capacidad de ayudar a alguien cuando está siendo víctima de un incidente o delito de odio, diga algo, cada voz hace una diferencia.

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Paulina Cruz es una ex-beccaria 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.*



Tou Ger Xiong durante su presentación en el Teatro Tower, de Fresno, durante el Festival Tamejavi 2004. Xiong dedicaba tiempo y energía en comunicarse con los jóvenes, a quienes inspiró respeto por la cultura Hmong y otras. Foto de David Bacon

permitiendo que las comunidades de color cuenten sus historias y preserven su memoria colectiva".

Lar Yang, diseñador gráfico y activista cultural local, expresó su tristeza por la muerte de Xiong. "Nos hizo sentir orgullosos de nosotros mismos, de nuestra cultura. Trabajó con jóvenes, especialmente de comunidades rurales, donde realmente tuvo un impacto. No es fácil vivir la vida con recuerdos de desplazamiento, de no pertenencia, de perder amigos y familiares en una guerra. Xiong nos dio un sentido de orgullo y pertenencia. Lo extrañaremos mucho".

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Eduardo Stanley es el editor de Community Alliance. Contáctelo en editor@fresnoalliance.com.*

## LIBERTAD BAJO PALABRA

Continúa en página 18

# LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

# COMUNITARIA

# LAMANZA

## Las Elecciones 2024 Estarán Marcadas por el Voto Étnico y el Racismo



Los votos de los ciudadanos de color podrían determinar quién será el presidente de EE.UU. en las elecciones del año 2024. En la imagen, votantes hacen fila en un centro de votación en Davis, CA, en 2020. Foto cortesía The Commons

POR IVAN WIELIKOSIELEC

El 15 de mayo de 2018, el por entonces presidente Donald Trump autorizaba la construcción de un muro en la frontera mexicana de 300 millas. ¿La razón? "proteger al país de una invasión de drogas y criminales", según declaró.

Con la asunción de Joe Biden en 2020, las políticas migratorias cambiaron, al menos en un comienzo. Y no solo se ordenó detener la construcción del muro sino que todo lo contrario. Y es que en octubre, el presidente dio el visto bueno para continuar el tramo faltante. "No se puede hacer nada para evitar los planes del presupuesto anterior", explicó, con más frialdad que tristeza.

### Anti migración y xenofobia

Hoy, redoblando la apuesta de recrudescimiento anti migratorio y con serias chances de asumir por segunda vez la presidencia, Trump dijo hace apenas un mes que "en adelante, los futuros hijos de extranjeros ilegales no recibirán la ciudadanía estadounidense". Y amenazó a los inmigrantes diciendo, "les avisamos que cuando llegue 2025, los encontraremos y los deportaremos".

## Un Nuevo Comienzo

POR PAULINA CRUZ

A principios de este año, un restaurante local se vio obligado a cerrar cuando fue bombardeado con acusaciones racistas infundadas. Varios meses después y después de mucha angustia, ha reabierto con un nuevo nombre y una nueva perspectiva.

"Love & Thai", anteriormente conocido como "Tasty Thai", es una empresa familiar de Fresno que explotó en las redes sociales en mayo de este año. Después de solo estar abierto unos meses, se vio obligado a cerrar porque una mujer llamada María García los había acusado falsamente de usar carne de perro en Tiktok. Aunque estas acusaciones no tenían ningún fundamento y se demostró que eran erróneas, el daño ya estaba hecho; después de todo, a los racistas realmente no les importan los hechos.

La familia "Tasty Thai" recibió una ola aparentemente interminable de odio y amenazas de muerte por parte de personas que creían ciegamente en las calumnias de García. Por su propia seguridad, se vieron obligados a cerrar. David Kasavong tuvo que ver cómo se derrumbaba el sueño de sus padres inmigrantes.

Finalmente, este 3 de Noviembre, la comunidad se unió a David y su familia en la gran inauguración de su nuevo local: "Love & Thai". Este local lucirá un nombre diferente y con él, una mentalidad fortalecida de unidad y cultura para el restaurante familiar. El nombre pretende enfatizar el amor que la familia de David pone en la comida y el amor que recibió de la comunidad.

La gente se reunió en la inauguración de "Love & Thai" en esa cálida mañana de otoño para celebrar con la familia y recordarles que son una parte apreciada de la comunidad de Fresno. Líderes como Pao Yang (Presidente del Centro Fresno), Diane Phakonekham (Presidenta de Big Brothers Big Sisters de California Central), Effain Botello-Cisneros de la Oficina del Fiscal General del Estado y Khampha Theppahavong (directora ejecutiva de la Comunidad Laosiana Americana de Fresno) habló en apoyo de la familia de David. Hablaron del incidente de odio y de lo doloroso y dañino que fue para la familia, pero también para la gente

El Concejal de Fresno, Luis Chávez, lo calificó como un incidente "vil y odioso", pero destacó que se trataba realmente de una "...historia sobre resiliencia". David también tuvo la oportunidad de dirigirse a los asistentes y compartir su perspectiva. "Es un momento en el que, cuando miro hacia atrás, no lo siento real. Cuando tienes gente que siente tanto disgusto por ti y tiene acusaciones tan repugnantes, es difícil salir de ese sentimiento... no es algo que le desearía a nadie". Fue una época oscura para David y su familia, ya que tuvieron que acabar con el sueño de sus padres pero también enfrentaron tal nivel de odio por afirmaciones falsas y racistas. Era inimaginable.



David Kasavong, dueño del restaurante "Love & Thai", detrás del mostrador. Foto de Peter Maiden

David destacó lo increíble y cambiante que fue el apoyo local también. "Una vez que se corrió la voz, una vez que la gente comenzó a darse cuenta de lo que realmente sucedió: la cantidad de amor y amabilidad que recibimos, eso es algo que deseo para todos". Continuó agradeciendo a su esposa, a la comunidad, a las organizaciones locales, al Departamento de Policía de Fresno, al concejal Chávez y a la oficina del alcalde por conectarse con él y ofrecerle apoyo y amabilidad. También agradeció a los medios locales por permitirle a su familia "difundir el amor" y compartir su historia. De eso se trata el nuevo nombre.

Difundiendo amor en nuestra comunidad, "Hoy marca el final de un capítulo lleno de odio y el comienzo de uno nuevo lleno de amor".

Continúa en página 19

Continúa en página 19